IRELAND

Missional partners: Dermot O’Mahony; Justin & Laura Gearing
Dermot is a native Irishman and is the lead pastor at Elevate Community Church. Justin and Laura are from the US and are also on staff with Elevate – Justin as the executive pastor and Laura handles all church communications and events.

Elevate is located in Limerick, Ireland, and is a church plant of Orchard Group that was launched in 2013. Elevate is a group of people that believes that life is an adventure. They are not about mere religion or a specific denomination; they are about introducing people to the adventure that a life with Christ can bring, and then challenging and encouraging them to live a life of significance. They want to be an Irish Church that’s known for its service to the city of Limerick. They don’t want to be a Church that talks the talk, but a Church that serves people.

The people:
Ireland is young, growing and global. Forty percent of the population is under the age of 25, and 60 percent is under age 40. Due to an economic boom, newfound wealth and jobs attracted others from the European Union and other nations. In just 15 years Ireland has changed into more of a cosmopolitan nation with construction, employment, and immigration rapidly on the rise.

Of all English-speaking countries in the world, Ireland has the lowest percentage of evangelical Christians. Less than 1% of the population (30,000 people) would even call themselves evangelical Christians. Most of the population claims to be Catholic (84%), though a majority are not practicing. Ireland ranks fifth among all European nations in teenage suicide (with the city of Limerick having the highest percentage in Ireland). Drug use is also rapidly on the rise in Ireland. This has brought a dramatic increase in violent crime and gang-related activity. The secularization of Ireland has brought about many changes over a short period of time and Ireland is certainly not the country it was 20 years ago.

Trip Overview:
While in Limerick you will get to interact with the local people and culture in a variety of ways – meeting local University students, prayer walks throughout the city, learning from Elevate church members, and participating in various outreach opportunities on behalf of Elevate.

Passport & Visa information:
Each person needs a US passport, and it must be valid at least six months beyond stay in Ireland. No travel visa is required.

Immunizations:
Make sure you are up to date on all routine vaccines (MMR, Tetanus, etc).
Weather:
Weather in Ireland varies often, but is rarely extreme. Ireland's climate is influenced most by the Atlantic Ocean. As a result, it doesn't have the extreme temperatures that other countries at similar latitude would have. In summer months the high temperatures average in the mid 60's. A major warm ocean current keeps sea temperatures mild too. Hills and mountains, mainly around the coast, shelter the rest of the island from strong winds coming off the ocean. As for clothing, you'll need to be adaptable so go for layers that you can put on or take off as the temperature changes.

Accommodations:
While in Ireland, the group will stay in apartment units that are normally used by University of Limerick students during the school year. Since it will be summer, the school will be out of session and local students will not be using these apartments.

Ground Transportation:
The group will fly into Shannon which is about a 30 minute drive from Limerick. Once in Limerick, there will be a lot of walking within the city, possibly even using the public bus system. A bus will be rented for travel outside of the city.

Medical attention:
In the event of a serious illness or medical emergency, there is a hospital in the city. Included in your trip cost is travel medical insurance that should cover expenses if medical attention is needed.

Things to know:
- UK Adapters (3 rectangular pegs)
  Electronics like computers, cameras, and phones will charge fine with just an adapter to make the plug match. If you want to confirm on other electronics (ie. straightener, curling iron, etc.) check where the power info is etched. It will say how many volts (v) it uses. US only will say something around 110v, but if it says 110-210/220v, it should be fine to use in Ireland. Hair dryers will blow the fuse and potentially ruin the dryer, even if an adapter is used. The power is different and would need a transformer to change the power.

What to bring:
- Passport
- ATM card or Euros (can get in advance from your local bank)
- Clothing
  - Set of work clothes (okay for possible paint/bleach)
  - Good pair walking shoes (tennis shoes)
  - Elevate Sunday service, wear whatever you would wear to church
  - Waterproof coat with hood (or a travel umbrella)
  - Daily clothes should have layering options. Weather can change in moments between cold and warm (many inside locations will be warm or cold). Have options of t-shirts, sweatshirts, etc. that can easily come on and off.