Carolina Messenger

www.carolinaministries.org Fall/Winter 2014

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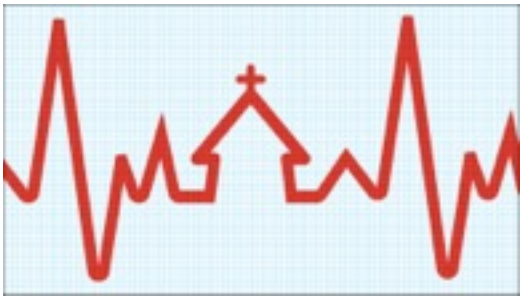
Does your Church Need Revitalized?



"Elevate" Renewal Process

Over 90% of the churches in the United States are plateaued or declining. This percentage appears to be accurate for the Church of God as well. In short, the church is in desperate need for renewal. **Is your church on of them?**

"Elevate" is a church health renewal process that will help churches refocus their mission, methods and ministry to be more effective in reaching their communities and discipling people.

The process involves attendance by the pastor and lay representatives from each congregation at two workshops scheduled for March 13-14, 2015, and Sept. 25-26, 2015. Two additional two day workshops will be scheduled for 2016. There are one day pastors' workshops/coaching sessions scheduled about 8 weeks after the retreats. This will give the pastors additional training and coaching as each church attempts to develop their ministry plan and implement it.

Tim West, Regional Pastor for the Church of God in Texas is scheduled to be one of the facilitators along with Carolina Ministries Coordinator, Mike Claypool. Pastor West developed and implemented this process in Texas with 12 churches. 85% of those churches experienced growth in this two year process.

The workshops will focus on helping churches evaluate current ministries and methods. It will help them develop a ministry plan touching on 9 different systems. Those systems include: the Weekend Service System, the Evangelism System, the Assimilation System, the Discipling System, the Ministry System, the Stewardship System, the Leadership System, the Strategic System, the Communication System. Please consult the Carolina Ministries website or call for registration information.

CBH Annual Conference in NC Continues to Inspire

By Maxine McCall

The 2014 “CBH Retreat to the Cove” treated participants to testimonies and music by special guests GiGi Graham, Buddy Green, Jay and Amy Rouse. Informative and inspiring conferences were led by Jim Lyon (Church of God Executive Director and CBH Viewpoint Host) and Bob Moss (former Executive State Minister for Indiana and two-term Chair of the National COG General Assembly). Motivational audio-visual presentations created by CBH Coordinator John Walters and Media Specialist Logan Ritchart shared the story of opportunities and challenges for CBH radio ministries around the world.

The CBH Conference, launched at Montreat 33 years ago, still draws participants from North Carolina to California, Michigan to Texas, Maine to Florida for a time of renewal and spiritual growth. This year marked the 10th year of meeting at the Billy Graham Training Center near Swannanoa. In additional to the mentally and spiritually stimulating conferences, recreational opportunities in the stunning beauty of Western NC in the fall included private moments for reflection at the Cove, as well as scenic bus tours led by Maxine and Don McCall, and hikes led by Bob Moss and Allison Gustin (CBH Staff Specialist for Outreach and Donor Relations).

Words like “spiritually uplifting,” “informative,” ”purposeful,” “mentally stimulating,”“refreshing,” “warm fellowship” still describe this special time of personal renewal and partnership with CBH enjoyed by hundreds of participants through the years. Many repeaters have claimed this time as part of their annual vacation.

God works individually and uniquely in this retreat experience. Next year’s opportunity is October 18-21, 2015. Mark your calendar. Plan ahead to join us at The Cove. You won’t be disappointed.

Call Allison Gustin at the CBH office in Anderson, IN, for more information and registration: 1-800-848-2464.

CBH Conference at the Cove

Bible Bowl Competition Scheduled

The annual Bible Bowl Competition is scheduled for Saturday April 25, 2015, however, now is the time to order your materials and begin practicing. For more information including registration ($15) and materials, please contact Carolina Ministries.

CST Ministerial Development Institute

The Church Service Team Ministerial Development Institute (CSTMDI) will launch its developmental curriculum on January 10, 2015 at Branchview Church of God, Concord, NC, with the class *Leadership: Know Your Leadership Style*. This first class will be taught by Rev. Rosilynn Noble, Associate Minister of Seigle Avenue First Church of God in Charlotte. Two succeeding classes on Leadership will be taught by Rev. Cornelius Atkinson, Pastor of Wilson Heights First Church of God, Charlotte, NC and Rev. Dr. Velma Champlain, Pastor of Joseph Christian Mission, Raleigh, NC.

On December 5th the course syllabus and registration form for the first class will be posted on the Carolinas Ministries website. Please be on the lookout for further information on CSTMDI courses so you can make appropriate plans to enroll in classes that you desire to take. The cost is $25.

News From Around the Carolinas…

News from Aiken, SC

September 21,2014 we baptized 3 candidates at the Williams Chapel Church Of God located in Aiken, SC (Rebecca Tony-Mosely, Carol Brockington, and Louise Gerideau)

We also have an outreach ministry called “The Croft House” which is a home for the elderly we minister every 3rd Sunday of each month.

October was breast cancer month so in a special service we honored all cancer survivors.

We also celebrated what we call ‘Harvest Feast’ every 2nd Sunday in October we have a fellowship dinner for the church, family, and friends.

Senior Pastor Dr. Joyce O'Conner

Sumter, SC

The Fall has been very active for FCG in Sumter. Another Palmetto Softball tournament was hosted at Dillon Park with 18 teams participating. $3,000 was received from the participants in support of the Joshua Allen Scholarship Fund at Warner University. We had a wonderful worship service with Greg Bentley sharing the message at the Sunday Morning Worship Gathering. Then in November we celebrated another Friend Day with a packed worship service followed by a delicious barbecue lunch. Next year's Friend Day will be the 100 year celebration of Sumter FCG. God continues to bless our church's efforts at helping people build their lives in a personal relationship with Jesus. One more thing, pray for us as we send a delegation to Guatemala in February for a week of building friendships and facilities!

Lula Street Church of God

Winston-Salem, NC

The Church of God in Winston-Salem continues to reach out to souls by witnessing, visiting the sick, feeding the hungry, at times helping to buy prescriptions and providing clothing for families.

The pastor is busy providing counseling to families who are in need of assistance and guidance.

We have had a variety of special services including a rainbow tea, men’s day, a women’s day, communion services, baby christening and two marriages.

As a result, we have seen fruit from the ministry in the form of the baptisms of two new believers this year.

As for tuture plans… we hope to keep the church moving forward, peach the gospel, witness and bring in souls to be saved.

Pastor Installed

Barnwell, SC

The Allen Street Church of God in Barnwell, SC celebrated the installation of their new pastor, Rev. Trevor S. Cropp, I on October 12, 2014. The Installation Message was given by his father, Rev. Isaac Cropp, Jr., State Chairman of the SC Presbytery of the Church of God. Saints from South Carolina, North Carolina and Georgia came to witness this blessed occasion. The saints at Allen Street are excited about what God is doing at this time in the history of the church.

Joseph Christian Mission

Raliegh, NC

On December 13, 2014, beginning at 11 am, JCMission will have the second Advent Event as part of the C.O.M.E initiative. "Community Outreach Mission Evangelism". The event begins with devotions then a time of fellowship with refreshments and KT- Kids Time. Again there will be Bible story telling with crafts, face painting and goody bags for the children. Clothing, non-perishable food and other items will be available free from the Mission storehouse. Toys, books and stocking stuffers will also be available. We want to thank Harvest Time Ministry, Walter Raleigh Guest House and Chapel Funeral Home for joining with us in this outreach. Ministers will be available throughout the event to pray and counsel with the people. We desire the prayers of all that souls will be attended spiritually and physically. Anyone desiring to support this outreach ministry may call me at (919) 695-2987 or send an offering to JC Mission PO Box 46026, Raleigh, NC 27620. May God Bless His people with Peace.

New Minister Joins Solid Rock Salisbury, NC

Minister Anthony McCullough and his wife Tierria joined Solid Rock in 2013. Anthony received his commission from the Church Service Team in January 2014. They have been and are a great addition to the ministry of Solid Rock.

Rev. Samuel A. Washington, Pastor
Solid Rock Church of God
Salisbury, NC

News from First Church of God, Darlington SC

We are giving thanks for God's blessings here in Darlington. We are so grateful to have Rev. Kendall and Sissy Williams continuing to serve as our Interim Pastors. They have been in leadership with us for two years now and God is blessing his ministry here. We are seeing new families come into the life of the fellowship … we are seeing lives being changed … and we are seeing a renewed sense of purpose and mission for our work here in the community. We are trusting God completely for the future because we know that His timing is perfect.

We are excited to share with you that we had 11 people baptized over the last few months. We had a service here in Darlington where we baptized 4 individuals. Our Student Ministries had a Fall Beach Retreat in October with 55 students in attendance. At the final service of that weekend, they shared in a service and received communion on the beach. This was followed by seven students publicly professing their faith by being baptized in the ocean. It was an awesome weekend as we felt God's presence and His moving among our students in a very powerful way.

Our Worship and Arts Team is busy preparing for a special Christmas presentation. "Unspeakable Joy" will be an evening of celebration of the Christmas season. It will be held on Sunday, December 14th beginning at 6:00 PM. It will feature soloists and groups sharing a variety of traditional and contemporary music along with a little humor and a few other surprises. There is no admission fee, but we are asking those who would be willing to bring a non-perishable food item for our local food pantry, The Lord Cares. We invite everyone to come and be a part of the celebration.

Busy Fall at FCOG Columbia

Nostalgia hit FCOG in Columbia as we celebrated 50 years at our Covenant Road location on September 20th & 21st. The theme for the weekend was, "*Ministry Then and Now*." Many pictures and memories were shared both on Saturday night and Sunday morning as we heard from members from the past as well as the present speak about things they either remembered or had experienced. Larry & Che-Che Mobley led an energetic Saturday evening worship that brought back songs of the Church of God and included a spontaneous quartet singing "Victory in Jesus." We also enjoyed hearing music by those who used to sing while they attended First Church. Bro. Arley Cravens and Bro. Mike Claypool both shared words with us on Sunday morning in areas that were specific to them and to the church. So many had driven for hours just to help us celebrate this milestone of ministry. A huge thank you to all who attended and especially to those who shared their memories of ministry of years gone by.

On Saturday, October 11th, First Church also hosted a memorial motorcycle ride in memory of "Biker" Bobby Soland. Bobby was a biker who had been moved by the Holy Spirit to accept Jesus Christ as his Savior early in 2013. He was later killed in a hit-and-run accident on Dec. 21st of that same year. The "Iron Riders," the local motorcycle club that Bobby belonged to, contacted Pastor Rusnak and asked if they could start and end the memorial ride at the church. This request was made because Bobby had talked so much about the church to them. Pastor Rusnak accompanied them and rode in the "fallen man's" position for the 123 mile ride. We ended up back at the church in the Fellowship Hall sharing fried chicken with all the sides and plenty of desert. It was our prayer that friendships could be made to influence more of the club for Christ.

On Sunday, Nov. 2nd, several of the Youth from First Church presented the musical "*Jesus the Only Name Yours Will Be*" in our Sunday morning service. It was evident early on in the presentation that the Holy Spirit was at work as tears began to flow throughout the congregation. At the end of the service, several of those present raised their hands in affirmation that they needed more of Christ in their daily lives. Thank you to Alexis, John, Lauren, Shantalia, Shaylor, and Towanda for their hard work and for allowing God to use their gifts for His purpose. Also, a big thank you to Sandra Rusnak for all her hard work in developing the musical talents within the lives of our Youth. The musical will be able to be seen on the web at fcogcolumbia.org soon. Look for the November 2nd service under the Preachit tab!

NCGA Chair

It has been my privilege to serve the NCGA for two terms as your State Chair. I have had the opportunity to work along side many wonderful leaders on the State Leadership Team. Also, I count it a blessing to have been involved with many congregations across the state. Best of all, this position has given me the platform to meet and develop relationships with many of you. Thank you for the opportunity and I would like to encourage you to support and follow the leadership of Rev. Cornelius Atkinson as he will be serving as our new Chair in January 2015. He will lead us with a deep commitment to Christ and the Assembly. He is a gifted man of God and I know that we indeed have bright days ahead.

God bless you,
Rev. Derek Specht

Youth Convention Update

Approximately 185 youth and leaders gathered at the Great Wolfe Lodge in Concord, NC for a phenomenal weekend of worship, conferences, and fellowship. Rev. David Colp was the speaker and Outpouring did a wonderful job leading in worship. Next year's convention is scheduled again for the weekend before Thanksgiving Nov. 20-22, 2015.

Children's and Youth Camp Dates

Camp Dixie will be the site for our children's and youth camp programs in 2015.

Mark your calendars…the dates are Aug 2-7, 2015.

One way to grow your Youth Ministry:

Last year I looked at our youth group and saw... one regular attending student in a local public school, one student that lives out of county and four homeschool students. That was our core group. There were a few others that attended occasionally. Our out of county student did not have lots of friends that would come because of the drive. Our four homeschool students were friends with other homeschool kids that were already churched. Therefore, this did not leave me with a large pool of students to recruit from.

My first strategy has been to build from within. We have a larger children's ministry than youth. I have shifted more of my time to this ministry than before. Embracing the thought that many will be coming of youth age in the next few years we amped it up by doing the following.

1. Children's Day Camps: We had two weeks this past summer that we operated an in house camp for the kids daily 8am-5pm.
2. Improved Children's Church: We had put all of our kids together in the past. The year we divided our k-5 grades. They have received more individual time, attention and a whole lot less chaos.
3. Bible Bowl through Carolina Ministries: We participated in Bible Bowl. This gave us extra times for our team of kids to meet and study and memorize scriptures. I asked our youth to help coach the kids so they could build closer relationships. They had pizza parties together and now all of the kids that participated are excited about being in the youth group one day.
4. Kids Day Out: This fall we kicked off a monthly fun trip with our kids. One Saturday a month the go hiking, Lazy 5 Ranch (petting zoo on steroids) and other fun activities. This has been great for the kids and their parents have joined in as well.
5. We are planning to include the 5th graders in some of the youth activities to build excitement for them to be a part of the youth in next school year.

This may not be the fastest way to build the youth, but I believe it is healthy and I know our kids are excited about their ministry and have high hopes of being in the youth one day.

Pastor Derek Specht
Hickory First Church of God

Annual Minister's and Spouse's Retreat Feb. 23-25, 2015

Springmaid Beach Resort will be the location for our annual retreat for ministers and their spouses. Registration information will be sent out after the first of the year. Rev. Kevin Summers will be the facilitator for the event. He has a successful ministry in Bloomington, IL and has a heart for those in ministry.

This event has proven to be a great opportunity for renewal, and encouragement as ministers have time to sharpened their skills, receive peer coaching and get some rest.

Scholarships are available from the NCGA and SCGA for ordained ministers. For more information please contact Carolina Ministries.

Guatemala Missions Update

This year there were a number of churches who participated in mission trips in Guatemala. Two churches sent representatives for the first time, Drexel, NC and Fairview Church of God, Polkton, NC. Other returning churches included West Columbia, SC, Summerville, SC, Hickory, NC, Sneads Ferry, NC and Archdale, NC who had a group in February and June.

This year 11 houses and numbers chicken coops were built, the Gospel was shared through Vacation Bible School, and a soccer camp, a church was painted, a school was rebuilt, professional development workshops were held for teachers, village school children were taken to the Guatemalan zoo for the first time, water filters were distributed, many families were prayed for, over 20 people accepted Christ through sharing the *Jesus* film and holding Bible studies, and many other ministries. The feeding program has expanded to over 700 children 5 days a week and there are plans to go to over 1000 children in January.

Give and Teach has purchased land and is fund raising to build a multi-use building on the property. They have been challenged with $50,000 in matching funds. If they can raise $50,000 they will receive an additional $50,000 to build a multi-use building for education, spiritual and community needs.

This building would provide a facility for:
- a pre-school
- an after school program to supplement the inadequate education children are receiving
- a vocational training center for adults so that they might acquire skills and trades that would allow them to better provide for their families
- a place of worship where spiritual needs can be met
- a medical clinic for the ever increasing health needs

If you would like to be involved by going to Guatemala or by supporting this ministry, please contact Mike or Carol Claypool or visit the Give and Teach website at www.giveandteach.org

(From L to R) Drexel youth building a chicken coop, Sneads Ferry VBS, Land for ministry building, school being re-built

Unity Banquet Held in Sumter

The Walker Ave Church of God in Sumter, SC graciously hosted at Unity Banquet for all the pastors and ministers of SC from the SCGA and the Presbytery of the Church of God.

The event was planned in collaboration with the Unified Credentials Committee, the Chair of the Presbytery, Rev. Issac Cropp, the Chair of the SCGA, Rev. Mickey Kennedy and the Carolina Ministries Coordinator, Rev. Mike Claypool.

Approximately 100 persons were in attendance. There were games and door prizes and a delicious bar-b-que dinner was catered. The event was closed with a fervent time of praying together. It was a lovely evening and a wonderful time of fellowship. It is that this will become an annual event.

News from Church of God Ministers Serving in other Congregations

Rev. Jeremy White
Goldsboro, NCWe are
Serving at The Bridge

We are starting a 9am Sunday service in February so we will offering 3 services a week. Out goal is to reach 600 on a weekly basis by the end of next year and to increase our Life Groups (Small Groups) from 7 to 20. God also put on our heart that we are not dreaming and believing enough so I want to reach 2,000 people just at the Goldsboro Campus by 2020!!!

We have had Salvations/Rededications 32 and 21 baptisms. Our Next Steps (Assimilation Classes) has had 218 people in it this year and we have and 495 1st time guest 495 (183 family units).

It's been such an incredible year and it's not even over yet! We are blessed to be a part of seeing so much life change happening.

Upcoming Events

Jan. 10	Ministerial Development Institute
Feb. 23-25	Minister's Retreat
March 13-14	Elevate
April 25	Bible Bowl
May 1-2	NC CWC Conference
July 12-15	NC State Convention
Aug 2-7	Camp
Sept 25-26	Elevate Part 2
Oct 3	NCGA General Assembly Meeting
Nov 20-22	Youth Convention