

outreach



newsletter

Churches working together

A Community Effort

By Rev. Jan Sattem

Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, League City, Texas



I pastor Good Shepherd Church, ARP in League City, Texas. We are a church, now organized from a church plant, and still awaiting land and a permanent building. In the meantime, however, the congregation is vibrant and strong and interested in transforming our community.

A member at Good Shepherd introduced me to George Haines. George started Fellowship Community Church in Kemah, Texas many years ago. One failing church in the area gave him their land after they closed. Another church closed their doors, integrated with Fellowship Community, and left them money to build. George and the congregation built a water-tight shell and then the building stopped. Everyone who drove by noticed that progress had ceased. When I met George he told me the sad story of how the contractor had absconded with their funds. My wife Peg and I meet regularly now with George and his wife Twyla, and I would like to tell you how they have blessed our church.

Soon after that first meeting, the Kemah building inspector called George and ask why the progress had slowed down. George replied honestly and the building inspector was horrified. He immediately drew alongside the church and offered them more time and greater leniency. Then an older man walking his dog stopped in while George was working alone inside the building. The dog owner was a retired pastor, new to the area, and wanted to know why the progress had halted. When he heard the story, he said that he would make some phone calls. Volunteer Christian Builders (VCB) contacted George and asked what he needed and when. They requested building plans and then arranged for their teams to finish the interior framing and dry-walling. They would also do the wiring and plumbing - all for free. George and Fellowship Community would only have to purchase the materials and feed them over the 2-3 weeks that they would be on site. Did I mention that Fellowship Community Church is fewer than 50 people? George and Twyla tried to acquire a short term loan for the supplies. When that failed, they put the materials



Fellowship Community

Continued on page 2



From the Director

God Designed Us to Work Together

Dr. Alan J. Avera, Executive Director

Have you ever thought about how the various word pictures used to describe the Church speak about our vital connection to one another? Let me give two examples.

The Bible pictures the Church as the body of Christ, and each of us is an important part of the body. But we need the other body parts to be a healthy, fully functioning body, so we all need each other.

The Bible pictures the Church as a living Temple. We all, like living stones, are being built into a living building in which God dwells by his Spirit. As living stones, we are all connected to one another as part of one Temple.

Then there are all the “one another” passages in Scripture that talk about how we are meant to work together. These include such passages as:

- *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another (John 13:34).*
- *Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor (Romans 12:10).*
- *Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ (Ephesians 5:21).*
- *Encourage one another and build one another up (1 Thessalonians 5:11).*
- *Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works (Hebrews 10:24).*

The basic concept of God’s covenant with us is that he will be our God, and we will be his people. There is only one covenant people, the people of God.

God designed us to work together much more than we actually do. In this issue of *Outreach*, we bring you some stories of churches working together. We want you to consider how working together can improve our church planting efforts.

Building Resources

- **Volunteer Christian Builders**
www.vcbuilders.org
- **Builders for Christ**
www.buildersforchrist.org
- **ARP Lay Ministries**
George Moser 704.634.9703; gmbco@windstream.net
(more info on page 4 in *News and Notes*)

The Joy of Giving

By Rev. Ross Durham
Grace Hill Church, Hillsborough, NC



We wanted to do it, but we also knew we had to do it. From the beginning of the vision and plans that have become Grace Hill Church, we knew we wanted to be as generous in partnering with others in missions as possible. We are a mission church ourselves, but even in the smallest ways we want to be supporting, encouraging, and enabling others who are building Christ's church and expanding His kingdom. So we built into our budget that 20% of core group giving would be set aside to local and global missions (10% to the Denominational Ministry Fund and 10% for other local and global missions).

Of course it is not easy. Just like in the rest of life, the flesh wants to hold onto money for our own comfort, pleasure, and security. But there is great joy in having funds set aside to go to works of missions. When the Spirit is leading us,

“there is great joy in having funds set aside to go to works of missions”

the joy of giving is almost unmatched. It was a great joy to have the funds to be able to encourage Riverside Church with a gift to help “up fit” their new worship space. Other churches had helped Grace Hill with big and small gifts, and so we wanted to be showing grace (2 Cor 8:7) just as we had received it.

But, we also knew we had to do it. Even for a young church plant, the world, the flesh and the devil fight to kill the vision of living as a gospel movement. Having a set percentage for outside mission built into the budget encourages a movement and mission culture. It helps us as a church; it helps other churches; it flows from the generosity of God. Paul had no

qualms putting the gospel in clearly financial terms: For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich (2 Cor 8:9).

Having a set percentage set aside helps us practically. We streamline expenses to make sure we have the money to give. We use that second 10% to go to missions that have a specific face that we as a congregation can know and we connect to. So far we have made small one time gifts to help families get overseas to their areas of ministry, encourage an ARP seminarian in his training, and support various local ministries.

Christ gave Himself for us; it was extremely costly, but He also did it with great joy (Gal 1:4, Heb 12:2). We too experience His joy as we walk with Him in giving out of His riches towards us. †



... Community

Continued from page 1

on their credit card. But, the feeding of the masses was going to be a problem. One church leader had priced it out at close to \$10,000!

When Peg and I met with George and Twyla, we assured them that even though our congregation did not have many craftsmen that could help them, we absolutely did have a reputation as eaters! Without knowing all the facts, I assured

George that Good Shepherd would love to handle this responsibility. It was soon after that I was confronted with a harsh reality. The one person that I was certain knew how to feed this large a group was going to be unavailable during that time. It was also then, that the congregation got involved and they made my *dream* become a reality. People made phone calls to businesses and restaurants, and favors were called in. One member of the congregation smoked many briskets for two of the meals. A former member heard of our involvement and paid for all of the participants to be feted at a local restaurant. A recent attendee at Good Shepherd opened up her beach side home for a celebration dinner for all. Folks in the church signed up to be servers and cleaners for each meal on each day. Overall, it was a love-fest! Folks from Good Shepherd, VCB, and Fellowship Community all working together so that Christ might have a lighthouse in the community.

“all working together so that Christ might have a lighthouse in the community”

At one of the dinners, the leaders from VCB remarked how grateful they were that people from Fellowship Community had also pitched in to work ON THEIR OWN BUILDING! Then they turned to us and said that in all of their years of helping churches, that this was the first and only time that they had seen another church from the town pitch in and help. We were all silenced and a bit ashamed.

The following Sunday, Fellowship Community Church came and worshipped with us. It was again, a love-fest. What joy this produced in our people to serve the Lord in this way. All I can tell you is that everyone was blessed all around. We all witnessed God working powerfully and we were honored to be a part of it. The occupancy permit has not been granted yet, and the work still continues. But, the highest hill has been climbed. †

Working in Concert

By Rev. Duff James
Asheville, North Carolina



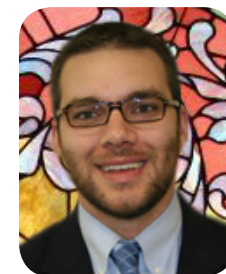
We moved to Asheville, North Carolina in May to begin exploring the city for the purpose of planting a church. Shortly after moving here, I began taking advantage of the considerable music scene in Asheville. While frequenting quite a few of the music venues and concerts this city has to offer, I was once again struck by the amazing effort that goes into making a couple of hours of music happen. The stage hands, the sound people, the lighting crew, the instrument technicians, the managers, and even the bus drivers work as a team to make sure that all that needs to be done is accomplished. And then, there are the musicians themselves who must work in a concerted effort to present their music. I am sure it is a rigorous and extensive endeavor, even for the smallest of shows, and the most experienced of crews.

Church planting is rigorous and extensive too. So much so that it requires the concerted effort of individuals, local churches, presbyteries, and Synod's board of ONA to start a new mission work. An essential ingredient in a successful church plant is a strong support team. This is one of the reasons why church planting residencies or internships have been created. The idea is to give potential church planters needed support from a local, well-established ARP congregation through the early stages of church planting. Through these first few months in Asheville, we have been connected to Reformation Presbyterian Church in Hendersonville. Though Reformation is over 25 miles away from our home in Asheville, our relationship with them has been invaluable to us. They have welcomed us with open arms and sought to support us in a myriad of ways: regularly praying for us, caring for us during the birth of our second daughter, allowing us to continue to explore, exercise, and develop needed skills for church planting, ministering to us in word and deed, and providing needed

encouragement along the way. It is sometimes easy as a church planter to feel alone, especially when there is no ARP church in the city in which you are seeking to plant a church, but Reformation has provided us a church home to which we may belong while getting settled in our new city. They have been one of the essential team members working in concert to help plant a new mission here in Asheville. Of course, the great conductor of this concerted effort is the Lord Jesus himself, to whom we have much to give thanks, not least of which is His work and ministry to us through Reformation Presbyterian Church. †

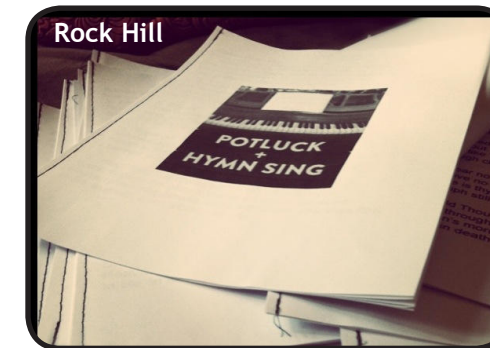
Collaboration

By Rev. Andy Stager
Rock Hill, South Carolina



In April, my wife Ellie and I began partnering with two local churches beginning a one-year church planting residency in Rock Hill. The goal of this collaborative residency is for me to develop ministry competencies and spiritual maturity under a mentor and a coach as we explore a possible ARP church plant in Rock Hill.

My mentor is Chairman of Catawba Presbytery's Church Extension Committee Marty Taylor, who pastors Living Waters (ARP) Church in Lake Wylie, SC. I often preach and lead Bible studies there, and Ellie and I worship there regularly, occasionally leading their music. I meet with Marty each week for accountability, strategizing, and encouragement.



The Living Waters congregation has also had the opportunity to encourage us. The church has been challenged by their participation in my evangelistic vision to cultivate a missionary posture toward their own community. Living Waters began 10 years ago as a collaborative effort among local ARP churches, and is now a partner in planting a new church in the area.

My coach is John Chambers, lead pastor of Remedy Church in Rock Hill, a Reformed Baptist church plant that is part of the interdenominational Acts 29 church planting network. John has put church multiplication and city-wide gospel-centered church collaboration at the heart of Remedy Church's DNA from the church plant's beginning in 2009. Ellie and I began attending a Remedy small group in April, and in October, that group commissioned 5 of their members to help start the first missional small group of what we hope will become Hill City Church (ARP) in Rock Hill. Remedy plans to commission more people as the vision for Hill City Church develops.

Beyond developing prospective church planters, collaboration among churches is crucially important for the evangelistic saturation of cities and regions. Collaboration melts away stingy, territorial mind sets among churches. Turf wars are replaced with camaraderie in spiritual warfare. Both Living Waters and Remedy are relatively new and small, yet they are already involved in planting a new church. Collaboration, especially for local church multiplication, makes sense in light of a shared passion to ensure that every man, woman, and child has ongoing opportunities to hear the gospel and taste its fruit. Ultimately, as Marty, John, and their respective churches have demonstrated, collaboration is not about sharing resources, but about sharing a gospel burden. †

Parent Church Community

By Rev. Kyle E. Sims



Three ARP churches in Rock Hill established a Parenting Church Community (PCC) in 2009. This is part of ONA's strategy of helping build communities to support church planters and is designed specifically to help established churches plant new churches. The idea of churches planting daughter churches is not a new one. Many ARP churches were started by a mother church. This idea of a Parenting

Church Community is a return to our roots and to a holistic approach to church planting. It seeks to develop nurturing relationships between several established churches and their daughter churches. Ebenezer, First Rock Hill, and Tirzah have formed a community for mutual encouragement, training, support, and prayer.

We are now in the process of looking for our first mission developer. We continue to meet for encouragement, prayer, and to spur the local churches to continue to train their committees and congregations in the concepts learned through the PCC. It is our hope to have a mission developer on the field next year! †



News and Notes from the Field

ARP Lay Ministries takes donations (organs, pianos, furniture, hymn books, etc.) from churches and places them when/where needed in mission churches. They help coordinate the pickup, the match-up, and the delivery. They will also help organize work trips to assist mission churches in various projects (building construction, building renovations, landscaping, literature distribution, etc.) ARP Lay Ministries is also interested in helping mission churches and small congregations with VBS. Contact: George Moser, 119 Barber Loop, Mooresville, NC 28117; gbmco@windstream.net; 704.634.9703.

In the Lake Wylie/ Rock Hill area, Andy and Ellie Stager hosted a BBQ at the end of October. They had 87 people, and it was a great gesture of hospitality and inclusive community for lots of their neighbors who are not churchgoers.

SonLife Church in Jacksonville, Florida helped raise \$1,600 and served at the Down Syndrome Association of Jacksonville's Buddy Walk, on November 5.

Great Commission Resources are available for free for one year for mission congregations. Contact the ONA office for more information.

Mission Developer Retreat January 10-13 at Bonclarken for church planters and their families. Main speakers: Dr. R.J. Gore (Erskine Seminary) and Dr. Mark Dalbey (Covenant Seminary), and the theme is *Worship in a Changing Context*.

864.232.8297 x229 ona@arpsynod.org www.ona-arp.org

Postmaster: Return service requested

General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church
1 Cleveland St., Ste. 110
Greenville, SC 29601-3696

Outreach North America

