



*Working Toward A Visible Demonstration
Of The Unity of the Body Of Christ
to Bless Florence...*

REPORT BACK
April 14, 2016

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GET INVOLVED! IT'S TIME TO SERVE!

SERVEFLO

SAVE THE DATE: JUNE 12-26, 2016

*"If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also.
If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him."*

- John 12:26



MISSION OF HELPING FLORENCE FLOURISH:

Helping Florence Flourish works toward a visible demonstration of the unity of the body of Christ (Jn 17:21) to bless Florence. (Jer. 29:7)

ServeFLO is a means by which HELPING FLORENCE FLOURISH strives to accomplish its vision.

ServeFLO is area churches coming together to bless Florence.

Teams from churches and ministries will fan out around our community to serve and bless during this season. Register your team or church at the Helping Florence Flourish website.

www.helpingflorenceflourish.org or call **843-662-2583**

Teams can determine how they want to bless our community; or HFF will assist you in finding a way to be a blessing!

Welcome

Helping Florence Flourish (HFF) thanks you for your interest, and encourages you to get involved! There is nothing better than working together to build God's Kingdom. The work you see represented in this booklet comes from others who have gotten involved after our early meetings in 2015. Four focus groups were established as a result of a survey given to sixty eight Christian leaders in our community that asked them to identify the greatest needs in our community. The work of those focus groups along with the City Wide Prayer Gathering are "reporting back" a way forward as a movement.

HFF joins over three hundred other Gospel City Movements in the United States. <http://gospelmovements.org/cities/> Billy Graham's Lausanne movement in the 70's called the Whole Church to take the Whole Gospel to the Whole World. Gospel City Movements have taken up that challenge on the local level so that now the Whole Church takes the Whole Gospel to the Whole City.

HFF is a distinctly Christian movement seeking to live into **two biblical realities**. The **first reality** comes to us from John 17. Jesus prays in John 17:21 that those who would follow Him would be one. The love and unity Jesus shared with his heavenly Father, he prays, will mark his followers. HFF, as it works to be an answer to that prayer, will continue to build relationships among believers and churches in this community.

The **second biblical reality** is found in Jeremiah 29:7 as the Lord through the prophet says to the people in exile, "seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf." Those who longed for their home in the promised land were called by God to be a blessing right where they were in those days of waiting. Our challenge, as "exiles" waiting for our heavenly home, is to bless this place! As we live and serve by way of word and deed **together**, we will be the "light on the hill" drawing people to our Lord.

The great desire and prayer of those involved in the HFF movement is that the Church in Florence will continue to draw together to address the various kinds of brokenness of our community for the sake of God's name.

Sincerely,



Rev. Chris Handley

Associate Pastor, First Presbyterian Church
Team Leader, Helping Florence Flourish

Gospelmovements.org is a place for movement leaders to connect and share ideas, as well as a place of learning for those interested in initiating or joining a movement in their city.

Education Focus Group

Group Members:

Ed Love (co-chair) – Central UMC

Adam Richardson (co-chair) -- Church at Sandhurst

Will Malambri – Central UMC

John Collins -- Grace Baptist

Sheila Gallagher --

Susan Muse --

Charles Muse --

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The Education sub-committee's task is to bring a report to the Helping Florence Flourish full committee. To accomplish this task, we decided on the following action plan. Through personal interviews and surveys, we wanted to: (a) identify what currently exists for FSD1 students and (b) determine the greatest needs for FSD1 students. The surveys and interviews revealed the number one need in FSD1 is one-on-one mentoring with students. Rather than re-creating the wheel, HFF seeks to reinvigorate and oversee the Adopt-a-School program implemented years ago in FSD1. The pairings previously established are attached.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Increase our partnerships for sponsored schools and become more active in the adopted schools. Please review the attached listing to see where your church is partnered. If your church is not partnered, please contact us to become involved in this program.
2. Serve our children and community. On June 18, 2016, we look to spend just one day of service through cosmetic improvements for our schools. We envision high impact and we invite you to view the video on this website for an idea of how we can make a difference: <http://www.beundivided.com/>

June 18, 2016
A Day of Service for Our Schools
a part of
SERVEFLO

School	Church Adopter	Good News Club Sponsor
<p>Briggs Elementary Tara Newton, Principal 1012 Congaree Drive Florence SC 29501-5791 (843)664-8169</p>	<p>Dr. William Curtis Cornerstone Baptist Church 2930 Master's Way Darlington, SC 29532 bcurtis@exit137.org Rev. Will Malambri Central United Methodist Church 265 W. Cheves St. Florence, SC 29501</p>	<p>Cornerstone Baptist Church Julie Fullerton, Coordinator juliebfullerton@gmail.com 665.2065</p>
<p>Carver Elementary Chris Rogers, Principal 515 North Cashua Drive Florence, SC 29501 (843)664-8156</p>	<p>Cumberland United Methodist Church Rev. Anthony Hodge 163 S Coit St, Florence, SC 29501 (843) 662-2904 cumberlandchurch@bellsouth.net Northgate Baptist Church Rev. Bobby Earls 1217 N Ebenezer Rd, Darlington, SC 29532 (843) 662-0732</p>	<p>Palmetto Street Church of God Carol Moore, Coordinator ctm254@bellsouth.net 665.7278 H</p>
<p>Davis Elementary School Sonya Graves, principal 201 Westfield Drive Florence SC 29501 (843)665-5977</p>	<p>West Florence Baptist Church Rev. David (Dave) Morgan, Pastor 3354 Hoffmeyer Road, Florence 29501 (843)6699-3399</p>	<p>Pisgah UMC and Hoffmeyer Road Baptist Church Tara Arant, Coordinator tbarant@yahoo.com 662-3318</p>
<p>Delmae Elementary Roy Ann Jolley, principal 1211 South Cashua Drive Florence, SC 29501-6399 (843)664-8448</p>	<p>Rev. John Collins, Pastor Grace Baptist Church 2400 3rd Loop Road Florence, SC 29501-6458 Ridgecrest Baptist (no pastor) 1011 S. Parker Drive Florence, SC 29501</p>	<p>Grace Baptist Church Melanie Collins, Coordinator collins1012@bellsouth.net 661.2193 H</p>

School	Church Adopter	Good News Club Sponsor
<p>Dewey Carter Elementary Wendy Frazier, principal 4937 South Irby Street Effingham, SC 29541-9420 (843)664-8479 **POSITIVE FEEDBACK</p>	<p>Elim Baptist Church Rev. Ken Moore, Pastor 1303 Olanta Hwy. Effingham, SC 29541</p>	<p>Elim Baptist Church Sally Ham, coordinator elimsally@att.net 662.5860 W</p>
<p>Greenwood Elementary School Susan Collins, principal 2300 East Howe Springs Rd. Florence 29505 (843)664-8451 **POSITIVE FEEDBACK</p>	<p>Greenwood Baptist Church Rev. Johnny McDaniel 2401 Claussen Road Florence, SC 29505</p>	<p>Greenwood Baptist and Unity Baptist Tori Douglas, Coordinator tdouglas@sc.rr.com 665.8677 H</p>
<p>Lester Elementary School Gregory Mingo, principal 3501 East Palmetto Street Florence, SC 29506-4014 (843)664-8459</p>	<p>Trinity Baptist Church 124 W. Darlington Street Florence, SC 29501</p>	<p>Trinity Baptist Church Deborah Floyd, Coordinator dfloyd@fsd1.org 229.5864 We are looking for another church sponsor also</p>
<p>McLaurin Elementary Debbie Cribb, principal 1400 McMillan Lane Florence 29506 (843)664-8457 **POSITIVE FEEDBACK</p>	<p>Rev. Stan Sullivan Sparrow Swamp Baptist 3234 South Hill Road Timmonsville, SC 29161 Southside Baptist Church Rev. Jay Perez, Associate Pastor 1356 Pineland Drive Florence, SC 29505-2743 Calvary Baptist Church Rev. Eddie Stewart, Associate Pastor 915 Cherokee Rd. Florence, SC 29501</p>	<p>Calvary Baptist Church Louanne Stewart, Coordinator LGS5155@aol.com 843.662.5921</p>
<p>Moore Intermediate Carol Schweitz, principal 191 Westfield Drive Florence, SC 29501 (843)664-8171 **POSITIVE FEEDBACK</p>		<p>West Florence Baptist Church Paula Hooss, Coordinator phooss@fsd1.org 687-1545 cell</p>

School	Church Adopter	Good News Club Sponsor
<p>North Vista Elementary Sharon Dixon, Principal 1100 North Irby Street Florence, SC 29501-1599 (843)664-8159</p>	<p>Central Baptist Church Rev. Waymon Mumford 1402 E. Pocket Road P.O. Box 945 Florence, SC 29506</p>	<p>Central Baptist Senora Mumford, Coordinator smumford@fsd1.org 843-496-4477 cell 843-664-8159 school</p>
<p>Royall Elementary School Julie Smith, Principal 1101 Cheraw Drive Florence SC 29501 (843)664-8167</p>	<p>First Presbyterian Church Dr. Barry Jenkins 700 Park Ave Florence, SC 29501 St. Paul Methodist Church Dane Morehead and Michael Grady 1629 W. Palmetto Street Florence, SC 29501 Ebenezer Baptist Church Dr. David Wike 524 South Ebenezer Rd Florence, SC 29501</p>	<p>First Presbyterian Church and Ebenezer Baptist Church Alexis Morris, Coordinator amorris@florencefirst.org 662.2583 W</p>
<p>Savannah Grove Elementary Dr. Sam Whack, Principal 2348 Savannah Grove Road Effingham, SC 29541-9522 (843)664-8463</p>	<p>Cross and Crown Lutheran Church Rev. Mary Finklea 3123 West Palmetto Street Florence, SC 29501-5937 843-669-2355 cross-n-crown.org Savanah Grove Baptist Church Rev. R. W. Canty, Pastor 2620 Alligator Road Effingham, SC 29541-4313</p>	<p>Church at Sandhurst Bo Myers, coordinator JunebugsCare@gmail.com 843.409.1588</p>
<p>Timrod Elementary School Michelle McBride, Principal 1901 E. Old Marion Hwy. Florence SC 29506 (843)664-8454</p>	<p>Quinby Baptist Church Rev. Keith Hinson 950 East Ashby Road Florence, SC 29506 Rev. Eugene Thomas, Pleasant Grove Baptist Church??</p>	<p>Quinby Baptist Church Margaret O'Reilly mtoreilly3@sc.rr.com 665-4723</p>
<p>Wallace Gregg Elementary Gloria Muldrow 515 Francis Marion Road Florence, SC 29506-9804 (843)664-8481</p>		<p>Southside Baptist and Mizpah Baptist Teresa Godwin, Coordinator tgodwin@southsidebaptist.org 669.7288 W</p>

Restoration of the Family Focus Group

Group Members:

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Debbie Hylter	dhyler@theschoolfoundation.org
Farrah Hughes	Farrahpaige@yahoo.com
Frances Swink	Greenybird@aol.com
Jill Hindman	JWHMAG@AOL.COM
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Laura Marechal	marechalel@bellsouth.net
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Reeves Cannon	reeves.cannon@sandhurst.net
Shonette Dargan	sdargan@peedeecoalition.org

Brief Background

On June 2015, we began meeting with the Deterioration of the Family Focus Group. Our mission was to address the condition of the Deterioration of the Family in Florence County and offer solutions that would bless our community. After a few meetings we agreed to rename the group to: “Restoration of the Family Focus Group”. The name change is a more positive expression of the mission and best reflects the desired outcome of our effort.

The group asked two fundamental questions: What is in place to help the family? “Where is a niche where no one is doing anything to help needy families?” If that is determined we would have clarity in direction **for us** to move **forward**.

Family is the foundation in any society. **The results revealed that** the Deterioration of the family is a major concern in our community. The Team needed a clear definition of the word Deterioration **to chart our path forward** and more specifically **define the meaning** for our Focus Group.

Deterioration implies that things are falling apart: something once in good condition is now weakened, worn out, or otherwise in decline. **Deterioration is a result** of neglect. The word *deteriorate* describes condition(s) when anytime something gets worse **due** to neglect or decline in value, **such as** a relationship or institution it can deteriorate.

What is the operational definition for “Deterioration of the Family?”

Deterioration of the family can be anything that causes the family not to function in a healthy state. (What is meant by “healthy family”a family who may have

some issue but is able to cope via their own internal motivation and life skills as well as being able to connect into a resource system). One or more of the limited number of issues listed below may contribute to the “deterioration of the family” if additional support and/ resources (i.e. education, family support, job training) are not available to address the challenges that can accompany each issue:

1. Single parent
2. Lack of job
3. Illiteracy
4. Blended families
5. Chronic illness
6. Lack of the father in the home or missing in the life of child/children
7. Poor or no available living quarters
8. Inadequate wages
9. One or both parents with psychological issues
10. Lack of spiritual value or decline in spiritual value or religious background
11. Limited access to adequate healthcare
12. Socioeconomic barriers
13. Limited or no transportation
14. Limited or no healthy coping strategies
15. Abuse (e.g. emotional, psychological, physical, sexual)
16. Unhealthy environmental factors (i.e. violence)
17. Incarceration
18. Death of parent, paternal figure or child

Summary

We began our work by 1.) Reviewing family statistics in the area (See Attached) and 2.) Interviewing all the major organizations/agencies in the city and county already providing services and assistance to families. Our work further involved studying the agencies already providing services. We review their mission, where their services are being used effectively, there funding or lack thereof, the number of volunteers and how they were used.

- All of the State and non-profit agencies we interviewed are addressing the causes to the degree within their range of services and resources available.
- Still according to the 2013 statistics, 19.8% of the county population remains under the poverty level.
- It was also apparent the services provided by the various agencies at best only help to maintain an existing quality of life at or below the poverty level.
- At any time the service was no longer available the family was devastated and left in same state as before receiving the service(s).
- All the services being provided are of great value for

families but none was a transforming agent to lift families to a better quality of life and sustainability once the service(s) was no longer available or no longer needed.

The Team agonized over the right approach to help families that would be true to our Mission; Restoration of families. We set the bar high which made our hard job even more difficult. We agreed our recommendation must be something that transforms families and not just a program to maintain at best a minimum sub-standard of living.

We discussed possibly partnering with Light House Ministry to act as a central location or hub for the various services. We concluded Light House Ministries is already well organized and is very effective within the limits of the expertise and limited funding.

We invited Dr. Floyd Creech to meet with the Team to gain a better understanding of his service with School Readiness and FSD1 (**Florence District One**) Home Visiting programs. Dr. Creech presentation provided great background on the family that began with “the Ecology of the Child”. He explained that the family is like a microcosm and prepares the child for the bigger world. He further explained research on the perfect triad as a father, a mother and a child. He stressed how an intimate link between parents is best, noting that even a dead father is better than an absent father, because the mother can still reference things such as your father wanted you to ...etc. He noted that with a single mother, someone really needs to fill the role of the father, and often it is a grandmother or aunt, a grandfather or uncle. However, even **maternal and paternal grandparents are** still missing in many families.

There was discussion about how home visitors could pair each family with a HFF “mentor” as needed. The second way churches could assist in this effort is to help recruit families to sign up for the home visiting program. Training of the home visitors to qualify to partner with Dr. Creech Program was a major barrier to form a partnership.

Conclusion

- There are between fifteen (15) to twenty (20) agencies in Florence County that provide some level of service to families.
- Several of the services appear to be a duplication of services.
- All of the agencies provides “value to the families

they service”, however at best the service just “maintain” the family in a state of need. Once the assistance is no longer available the family is devastated.

- Lack of convenient transportation is a barrier for many families to get to and from the places of service.
- There is no central “Hub” where families can go to get information on all services provided in the county.
- Many of the agencies are dependent on volunteers which are not always easy to secure
- Very few of the agencies/organization provide services for the whole family unit. Most are child related service or mother/child/children related services.
- Of all the services provided few if any are lifting families from poverty to a quality of life free of poverty. The goal should be to teach the family life skills necessary to be self- sustainable above poverty where the service is no longer need.

Recommendations:

1. Churches can assist in the School Readiness and FSD1 Home Visiting programs by referring families to the program from the congregant.
2. After seeking best practices that have the potential to move families out of poverty permanently, we recommend that our community speak with “Open Table” (based in Arizona) and learn their system to the end that we may engage their expertise going forward.
3. We recommend Inviting Open Table founder, Jon Katov to Florence to give a presentation to our community
4. Secure funds through churches, HFF, businesses, and private donations to start a Table(s).

Challenges:

1. Funding the OpenTable
2. Securing committed volunteers for the duration of the Table period
3. Time/Available for scheduled meetings
4. Screening families
5. Getting the community to see the vision and a collaboration of faith based communities, government, business and nonprofits working through Open Table, a shared community model, to transform poverty, to transform families.

Family Statistic in Florence County - 2013 stats
Data Provided by: Children's Trust of South Carolina

Median family (with child) income

Location	Data Type	2006 - 2010	2007 - 2011	2008 - 2012	2009 - 2013
Florence	Currency	\$46,384	\$45,993	\$45,648	\$46,609

Annual unemployment rates in SC by county

Location	Data Type	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Florence	Percent	11.3%	11.4%	11.0%	9.6%	8.5%

Children in poverty

Location	Data Type	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Florence	Number	9,270	9,990	10,362	9,697	9,519
	Percent	27.7%	29.9%	31.0%	29.1%	28.7%

Babies born to mothers with less than adequate prenatal care by race

Location	Race	Data Type	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Florence	Total	Percent	29.5%	29.8%	27.1%	33.7%	28.8%
	White	Percent	20.6%	21.3%	20.6%	24.2%	21.6%
	Black	Percent	37.0%	38.2%	33.9%	42.2%	35.6%

Children living in single parent families (American Community Survey Series)

Location	Data Type	2006 - 2010	2007 - 2011	2008 - 2012	2009 - 2013
Florence	Percent	45.5%	48.8%	51.2%	50.0%

Live births to mothers with less than a high school education

Location	Data Type	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Florence	Percent	19.7%	20.8%	19.1%	17.2%	15.5%

Live births to single mothers (includes paternity acknowledged)

Location	Data Type	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Florence	Percent	55.8%	54.0%	53.6%	57.7%	55.7%

Children living in areas of concentrated poverty by race and ethnicity

Location	Race	Data Type	2006 - 2010	2007 - 2011	2008 - 2012	2009 - 2013
Florence	White Non-Hispanic	Number	720	780	1,030	1,090
		Percent	5%	5%	7%	7%
	Black or African American	Number	4,580	4,620	5,400	4,930
		Percent	29%	30%	35%	32%
	Some Other Race	Number	10	50	180	410
		Percent	1%	4%	10%	24%
	Hispanic or Latino	Number	90	120	30	100
		Percent	8%	10%	2%	8%
	Total Population	Number	5,390	5,550	6,620	6,450
		Percent	16%	17%	20%	19%

CityWide Prayer Gatherings

Group Members:

Anne Chapman

CityWide Prayer Gatherings was born out of two prayer groups who were praying for families and Florence. In the fall of 2014, we were led to direct a 3-week Daniel Fast. Many people participated. A desire followed for regular corporate prayer to continue and grow. Joining with Helping Florence Flourish, we began to meet in a different church each month to ask God to bring revival and spiritual awakening to Florence and beyond.

It has been clear from the beginning that God is calling for the One Body of Christ to work together with unity of purpose: to win the lost to Jesus Christ by loving each other beyond our differences, and joining together to serve the community.

Each gathering's format is chosen by the host and is refreshingly different. We go eagerly expecting the Lord's presence and He always arrives before we do. Our host churches are varied by denomination and by race. We meet other believers and form bonds that continue to grow each time we gather. Participating in the racial bridging that results from worshiping and praying together brings such joy that we are sure our Father is smiling on us.

List of Previous Hosts

First Presbyterian, Highland Park Methodist, Grace Baptist, King of Kings Church of God, Calvary Baptist, Abundant Life, Cumberland Methodist, First Baptist, Lamb's Chapel, Central Methodist, Palmetto Street Church of God, Church At Sandhurst, New Life Church, Church At King Ave., Mt. Zion A.M.E., FMU InterVarsity Christian Fellowship with Baptist Collegiate Ministries

We've had as many as 160 attend with 30+ churches represented.

Your Church Is Invited To Host

If your church would like to host a prayer gathering, ask your pastor to contact Anne Chapman at: achapman@sc.rr.com.

May's CityWide Prayer Gathering – The National Day of Prayer

Millions will be praying across the country on this day.

More Info: <http://www.nationaldayofprayer.org>.

In Florence, we will observe NDP on Thursday, May 5th at 7 p.m.

St. Paul Methodist Church – 1629 W. Palmetto St. - (843) 669-3134

June's CityWide Prayer Gathering will be part of Serve Flo. On Saturday, June 18, we will come together at First Presbyterian to pray for the service teams and provide information on Prayer Walking from Pray4everyhome.com.

NEW PRAYER INITIATIVE – Persistent Prayer – Praying Around The Calendar

Luke 18:5-7 ..yet because this widow keeps pestering me, I will give her justice, so she doesn't wear me out by her persistent coming." 6 Then the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. 7 Will not God grant justice to His elect who cry out to Him day and night? Will He delay to help them?"

This initiative invites pastors from different churches to select a week to focus on prayer in their church as the Lord leads each one. To book a specific week: contact Anne Chapman at: achapman@sc.rr.com.

Why Corporate Prayer? – excerpt from Lloyd Stilley's Sermon: Praying together is a vital key to opening God's presence and work among His people in unique ways. God has sovereignly ordained the corporate praying of a church, such that His mighty workings increase exponentially and His purposes are accelerated when we pray together. Understand that this message is not given to minimize personal prayer. Instead, it is to show you that personal prayer alone will not result in the working of God to the degree needed for spiritual transformation in our lives, our church, our cities, and our nation.

Praying together was a priority for the apostles.

The Book of Acts records the mighty works of God for and through His church in its early years, and clearly connects them to unified, corporate prayer.

Praying together was modeled and practiced by Christ.

Matt. 7:7: "Keep asking, and it will be given to you. Keep searching, and you will find. Keep knocking, and the door will be opened to you."

Corporate prayer in history preceded all the great moves of God.

One Example

In 1857, America was riding the wave of a strong economy, and, as tends to be true in times of prosperity, showed a radical decrease of interest in the things of God. There was a layman named Jeremiah Lamphier whose concern led to a call for prayer. He tacked up notices in NYC calling for a weekly prayer meeting on Wednesdays from noon till one at a rented space on Fulton Street.

The first prayer meeting was on September 23, 1857. Only six people came, and they didn't arrive until just before 12:30. The next week, the attendance jumped to 20. The numbers continued to climb week-by-week. Then, on October 10th, the Stock Market crashed and financial panic ensued. Trouble had its humbling affect and the hearts of many turned to spiritual matters. It wasn't long until somewhere between 10 and 50,000 businessmen were meeting every day in NYC to pray at noon. By week 15, the meetings moved from weekly to daily. In 1858, this prayer movement leaped to every major city in America. The Second Great Awakening swept our land. Estimates are that a million Americans out of a population of 30 million at that time were converted in less than two years. And it all started with prayer.

In almost every quarter of the globe, Christianity is advancing...except for four primary areas: North America, Japan, Australia, and Western Europe. Guess what one of the common denominators is everywhere Christianity marches forward? Christians spend time in prayer together. Track what God is doing in Korea, in China, in India, in Eastern Africa, and you will find behind the scenes prayer meetings.

Daniel 6:10

Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.

Ephesians 6:18

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

16 Rejoice always *and* delight in your faith; 17 be unceasing *and* persistent in prayer; 18 in every situation [no matter what the circumstances] be thankful *and* continually give thanks *to God*; for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.



**CityWide
Prayer Gathering
National Day of Prayer
Thursday, May 5th, 7 pm
St. Paul Methodist Church
1629 W. Palmetto St.
(843) 669-3134**

Homelessness Focus Group

Group Members:

Tucker Mitchell	Anne Chapman
Cindy Mitchell	Sharonda Eagle
Janet Brand	Linda Harrison
Adele Weatherford	Janice Howard
Christine Harrison	Amber Turner
Chris Scott	Lesley Kirby
Bryan Braddock	Jane Snipes
Darryl Bridges	Frances Welch
Ken Charles	Marty Hucks
Will Malambri	Dean Lisenby
Modestine Brodie	Nancy Bailey
Allie Brooks	

Summary and Conclusions

The Help Florence Flourish Homeless Focus Group met seven times. Our work involved studying the services that are already rendered to the homeless in and around Florence by a variety of agencies, looking at homeless ministry in other cities near and far for ideas and examples, and discussing ideas amongst the group regarding ministry in this area. This process led us to several observations and conclusions.

* Homeless ministry in Florence lacks the necessary capacity required to meet day-to-day *emergency* needs of the homeless. This is especially true during times of severe weather.

* Homeless ministry in the area could be more coordinated.

* There are many good agencies providing useful services, but some gaps remain. Among the most notable is suitable space and ministry for teenage boys, in the roughly 13-16 year-old range. This is an issue associated with a need to minister to families facing living space challenges.

* Homeless ministries suffer from inconveniently located service providers. This circumstance is exacerbated by a lack of transportation, or to put it another way, the inconvenient location of services creates additional transportation woes for a population that already struggles in this area.

Recommendations

1. Support in any way possible the development of an ongoing “emergency” shelter for the homeless and catastrophically indigent in our community. Support temporary accommodations as needed.
2. Support the creation of an umbrella organization, and location, for indigent services in the Florence community.
3. Support the creation of additional assets to assist problem “niche” areas of the local homeless population, in particular young teen boys who currently are often forced to separate from their families in

shelters.

4. Organize and promote the creation of a well-organized faith-based volunteer network to support homeless ministry in our community.
5. Organize and support the creation of an effective and efficient transport ministry to assist the homeless and indigent in our community.

Good news addendum

Serendipitously, as the HFF Homeless group was meaning, other forces were at work in the community, bringing about the creation of new emergency shelter of great promise. A broadly based coalition that includes city and county government, local health care organizations, local charitable foundations, and the local faith community, have come behind the Courtney McInnis Graham Community Shelter, administered by House of Hope. The Graham Shelter will provide regular nightly shelter for 50-plus individuals. It will include space for men, women and families; offers the opportunity for on-site expansion; and is positioned for collaboration with a variety of existing ministries.

The story of how the shelter came together is a powerful witness to God’s hand in the world. The story and the shelter will impact believers for generations to come.

Updated Recommendations

Because of the rapid progress of the Graham Shelter project, the group’s original recommendations can now be seen in a somewhat differently light.

1. HFF now has a tangible target to support in the Graham Shelter. Making sure it is up and running should be our first goal.
2. Recommendation No. 4 – form a faith-based volunteer network – should move up the list as it would appear to dovetail nicely with the top goal of supporting the Graham Shelter.
3. Supporting the creation of an umbrella organization remains a key initiative. It also connects nicely with the new shelter because of the possibilities of expansion and collaboration produced by the Graham Shelter site.
4. Dealing with niche areas remains an issue to be addressed. The advent of Family Promise in the Florence community will help mitigate this but issues will undoubtedly remain.
5. A transportation ministry will still be useful, although again, the Graham Shelter location mitigates this need somewhat.

Racial Bridging Focus Group

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Focus Group Journey and Recommendations

The Helping Florence Flourish Racial Bridging Focus Group meets once a month at Cumberland UMC. At the first meeting, we immediately realized the importance of relationship building as a foundation for racial bridging. The first few months centered on discussions of current race-related events; storytelling and listening; and building trust through frank and honest conversations. In between monthly meetings, focus group members intentionally had a meal with someone from a different race or worshiped at a church predominantly of the opposite race. This intentional effort broke down barriers, fostered understanding of cultural differences, and led to the “Cousin” concept (we are all related through God’s creation and related as members in Christ’s body).

The group worked in parallel to the relationship building by reaching out to the community and an established organization for ideas and guidance. The group wanted the perspective of multiple generations and interviewed high school student government leaders on the issue. The Appendix shows the next generation’s perspective on the race barriers and solutions.

Next the group reached out to The Welcome Table at The Winter Institute in Mississippi. The institute was founded in 1999 with a mission to build more inclusive communities. They have a well established and proven method to help communities and the primary objectives are listed below. The Appendix shows the guideposts set by the Welcome Table when having small group discussions about race. We also learned they are working with leaders in Columbia, SC and USC to bring the

initiative to South Carolina. An important resource The Welcome Table can provide is a best practice for moderated discussions and cultural understanding.

Objectives

The Welcome Table assists partner communities to:

- *Understand the importance of listening, storytelling and relationship-building as prerequisites to producing real and measurable change*
- *Understand the consequences of the systems we have inherited, in order to develop, together, community-specific initiatives to redress inequities*
- *Become equipped with the communications tools to accomplish the goals stakeholders identify together to improve their communities*
- *Share the process with members of their own community and other communities*

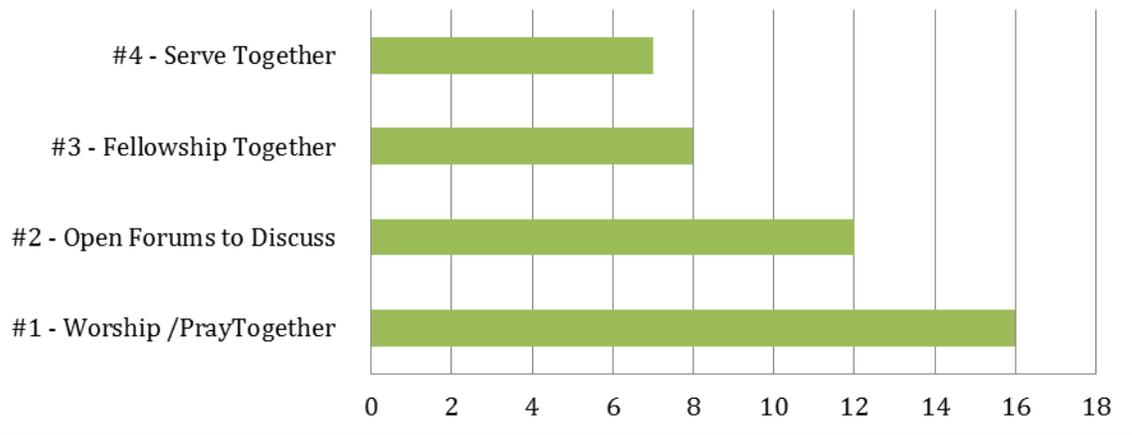
<http://winterinstitute.org/community-relations/the-welcome-table/>

The Racial Bridging Focus Group has reached out into the community in two ways. The first was through hosting a coffee fellowship after the Citywide Prayer events this past Winter/Spring. This was in an effort to encourage racial togetherness. Second, the group hosted a pastors’ breakfast in January and will again on May 11. During the January meeting, the group surveyed the pastors who attended and collected 16 surveys. The Appendix lists the survey questions and results. The survey showed a unanimous response that racial bridging and healing is the church’s responsibility, interest in a Unity Sunday (June 12th), and to work toward solutions. The May meeting will again promote the Unity Sunday and education pastors on the race landscape in Florence County through the research of Dr. Louis E. Venters.

Recommendations

1. Organize a regular meeting for pastors and ministry leaders to meet and network, learn and discuss race and other local issues, and pray for each other and the city.
2. Support and promote the current Helping Florence Flourish citywide service and prayer efforts.
3. Encourage inter-church fellowship and worship to help build trust and friendships.
4. Promote Unity Sunday on June 12

Survey Results Summary



Organization	How to Address Racial Division & Racial Healing
John Calvin Presbyterian	Worshipping Together; Working/Volunteer Together; Playing/ Fellowshiping Together
Wesley UMC	Having open forums to discuss the issue; Worship together as one body
Central Baptist Church	Come together as one people in unity; Love ye one another; Embrace all humanity
The Missing Link Street Ministry	Begin to be transparent in our dealing; Relationships with each other; Speak where there is injustice and stand firm
Cross and Crown Lutheran Church	Partnering /Pairing Churches (guest preaching); Confession and Repentance; Clergy lunch groups to build up fellowship /networking
Living Water Outreach Ministries	Prayer and Fellowship; Demonstration through working together; Visiting other worship services and joining in community
Lamb's Chapel Christian Center	Assisting in Communities to let people know that they are loved equally. Just as Christ Jesus Served.
New Grace Temple Ministries	Panel Discussion on Race Relations and the kingdom Fellowship services between different races. Community Development and Empowerment
Resurrection Outreach	Acknowledge it openly Assess the attitudes of congregations Work together on solutions
Church at Sandhurst	Inter-church prayer and fellowship meals/events Inter-church community outreach events (fairs, movies, etc)
Lebanon FWB	Bridging Racial Programs / Classes More Sermons on Racial Divide
Effingham Presbyterian (ARP)	Sermon Intentional Invites to Outreach Events Joint Services w/ other churches
Central UMC	Common Service Projects Panel Discussions with well-chosen presenters & moderator Common Worship Services

UPCOMING EVENTS



CityWide Prayer Gathering: National Day of Prayer on Thursday, May 5th at 7 p.m. at St. Paul Methodist Church – 1629 W. Palmetto St. - (843) 669-3134

Pastor's Breakfast: Wednesday, May 11, 2016 at 7:30 AM at Bazen's Family Restaurant (704 S. Irby St). Pastors, please join us for breakfast and discussion as Dr. Louis E. Venters, history professor at FMU, presents research on the racial landscape in Florence County. He will present Cultural Competency and Sensitivity: Black, White and Shades of Gray: The "New Diversity" and the Legacy of Jim Crow. Breakfast is on us! RSVP to helpingflorenceflourish@florencefirst.org/843.662.2583...or just show up!

Unity Sunday: June 12: The idea of Unity Sunday is the collective Florence County church body is unified through teaching of and praying through the same topic (To Love Your Neighbor) and same scripture (Ephesians 2:14-18) on the same day. We are asking each pastor to be a voice in their respective churches. The individual church can choose whichever way is most helpful and fruitful for the individual congregation. Suggestions are a sermon, prayer emphasis, musical portion, Sunday School topical class, or other way. In addition to teaching on Unity Sunday, there will be unity events happening around the city through ServeFlo.



ServeFlo: June 12-26, 2016: Teams from churches and ministries will fan out around our community to serve and bless during this season. Register your team at www.helpingflorenceflourish.com



City Convene: September 19-20: City Convene will help faith leaders from across the nation identify chronic problems in their cities and teach strategies and best-practices to work with people of faith and goodwill to build processes that create good cities. Glenn Barth is the author of *The Good City: Transformed Lives Transforming Communities* (Good Place Publishing, 2010). He has been working since the 1970s as a visionary and innovator among faith-based leaders mobilizing people to serve cities.