

LIFE IN FELLOWSHIP

SPRING 2018



a transforming
VISION

P. 12



FELLOWSHIP
GREENVILLE
fellowshipgreenville.org

FROM THE DIRECTIONAL LEADER & TEACHING PASTOR

SENSE OF COMMUNITY

When Karen and I get together with the church's potential members at Dessert Night, we often hear some version of the same comment: "We've been visiting various churches, but when we came here to Fellowship Greenville, we felt a sense of community," "we felt like we belonged," or "we felt like we were home." What an encouragement this is! The warmth and generous spirit of our people who serve each week is felt by those who visit. Our ministry is growing because of its connection to our guests and, hopefully, they will find a home here. We want to see them come to know Christ, grow in biblical knowledge, and get involved in the community that makes us such a welcoming church. We, of course, continue to seek the same for our regular attendees and members.

Fellowship Greenville is doing something right, and we want to keep it up. Such an effort requires regular discussion and evaluation. We must be willing and able to change to meet needs as they become evident. We want to see God continue to use Fellowship Greenville in the lives of our people, both those who are

established here and newcomers.

This edition of *Life in Fellowship* is dedicated to FG's broader vision and varied ministries that serve our people and enable us to reach the needs of individuals and families. Next Steps serves our general congregational questions while FG Kids and Students address the needs of our children. Our community groups also enrich the lives of our adult members and guests with personal connections. We have great staff members and volunteers who work in our local community and our global outreach. Volunteers also make events possible by facilitating parking, extending welcoming greetings, and providing great hospitality at the coffee venues and in other areas around the facility. We also have dedicated workers who keep our kids happy and healthy while we worship and visit. The IT department enables all of us to see what is happening, register to get involved, or just seek an answer to an important question.

Thanks to all our people who help make Fellowship Greenville *feel like home*.

Grace and peace,

Charlie



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We live in an age and culture full of misconceptions about Christianity. As a result, many people are left with negative impressions of Christians and the church as a whole. At Fellowship Greenville, we want to live in such a way that others can't help but see what authentic Christianity looks like. Our hope is that the misconceptions people might have carried for a long time will begin to fade away as we seek to become a community of grace, passionately pursuing life and mission with Jesus. We long for people to be reintroduced to Jesus, seeing him and the life he offers in a fresh, new way.

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MEET THE EXECUTIVE PASTORS

BY TARA QUINT

On December 31, 2017, our beloved Executive Pastor Art Ringger retired after 19 years of service to Fellowship Greenville, and two FG leaders stepped up to take his place: Todd DeVaney and Rob Marks. This marks a new and exciting season for our church, looking forward to what God will do in and through the new leadership! As these two pastors adjust to their new roles on staff, let's get to know them: where each came from and what they will be doing as Executive Pastors.

TODD DEVANEY

Todd DeVaney was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He and his wife, Tena, married between their junior and senior years of college, and both started teaching at Hilton Head Christian Academy after graduation. In 1999, Todd completed his Masters in Educational Leadership and Administration, and the DeVaneys moved to Greenville where Todd began teaching at Southside Christian School. In September 2001, he became the high school principal, and in July of that year he was invited to join the pastoral staff at FG.

When Todd first joined the pastoral staff, he was hired to be a community pastor and lead the women's ministry. He said leading the women's ministry was one of the best things he ever did! That role grew for him, and he soon began to oversee the formation of what we now call Adult Ministries. In 2012, he became the Outreach team leader.

Around the same time Todd transitioned to Outreach, he began helping Art with operations. That experience led to his new role today. "I consider this an incredible honor to be leading operations after Art," Todd says. "I always said that when I grow up, I want to be like Art: who he is, what he does, and how he does it! [He's an] incredible man who has taught me so very much."

What does the Executive Pastor of Operations do?

Operations is responsible for the *who does it* and *how we get it done* of the church. While Rob's job is to create the ministry strategy, Todd's job will be to direct the business, logistics, and support to see the strategy come to life. According to Todd, "We have an amazing opportunity to reintroduce people to Jesus and the life he offers. Anything Operations can do to remove the distractions and allow the main thing to be the main thing—that's what we work on. We have a great team here, and I want to serve them well and equip them to continue to do great work."

Let's learn more about our new Executive Pastor of Operations.

Favorite hobbies: Coffee, golf, and watching sports. He also enjoys learning about health and wellness.

Favorite team:

Michigan Wolverines

Favorite vacation spot:

"My favorite trip Tena and I have been on is a recent trip to Green Bay, WI, for a Packers game with friends."

Three items you would bring with you to a deserted island: Coffee, all the



TODD
DEVANEY

books he wishes he had time to read, and Tena. ("But," he said, "not necessarily in that order.")

Favorite books: *Delivering Happiness* by Tony Hsieh and Patrick Lencioni leadership books.

Current favorite music: He loves Christmas music during the holiday season! The rest of the year, he enjoys country music.

The DeVaney Family: Todd and his wife, Tena (married for 23 years), Kaylyn (19), William (17), and Ashlyn (14).



Todd's
family

ROB MARKS

Rob traveled quite a bit before settling down in Greenville, SC. He started as a public school teacher in Oxford, OH, which is where he met his wife Sherry. He was a first-year teacher, and she was a senior at Miami University who couldn't wait to leave Oxford after graduation... That is, until she met Rob.

After teaching for 12 years, Rob left the profession to join the staff of FamilyLife (an organization committed to providing biblical help for marriage and family relationships) in Little Rock, AR, with Sherry. Three years later, they moved to Sydney, Australia, and then fourteen months after that, they found themselves praying for a church in which Rob could serve as a children's pastor. God brought the Marks family to Fellowship Greenville where Rob assumed the role of FG Kids Pastor in 2007.

In that role, Rob led a team of staff and volunteers that God used to build an effective and growing children's ministry. As the ministry of the church grew, the leadership made the decision to put children's ministry and student ministry under the same directional leader in 2012. Rob Marks was chosen to move into this new position of Next Gen Pastor, overseeing a unified ministry team of kids, students, and

families. When the recent change in our organizational structure came about, that placed ministry and operations into separate categories, Rob's experience and abilities made him the perfect fit for the role of Executive Pastor of Ministry.

What does the Executive Pastor of Ministry do?

The Executive Pastor of Ministry brings the vision and direction set by the Elders and Directional Leader to bear in creating a holistic strategy from which the staff will work. In Rob's words, "I am putting the right people in the right spots and moving in the right direction for the right reasons in order to accomplish the mission of the church."

When asked what he is most looking forward to in this new role, Rob answered, "I believe God is at work at Fellowship Greenville in some big ways. He continues to show us that through his grace, he wants to use our people for his glory! Being a part of leading people toward that future is exciting to me." We are excited, too!

Let's get to know the man behind the title.

Favorite hobby: Sailing! "I have two sailboats that started out as projects. I love doing projects, whether woodworking, car repairs, or boats.



There are always car repairs and boat projects at my house."

Favorite team: Ohio State football

Favorite vacation spot: "Any place where the air is warm, the water is clear, and the sand is white."

Three items you'd bring with you to a deserted island: His Bible, a journal with a pen, and fishing gear

Favorite book: *Good to Great* by Jim Collins

Current favorite music: His signature Kenny Chesney playlist

The Marks Family: Rob and his wife, Sherry (married for over 25 years), Jake (21), Emma (19), Nathan (16), Kyle (14), and Autumn (14). 🍷



Fearlessly Authentic

WOMEN'S RETREAT
APRIL 13 & 14

For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.
-II Timothy 1:6-7 (ESV)



BY MARY BETH WILLIAMS

Grab your Bible-study group, your community group, a bunch of neighbors, good friends, and join us for the Women's Retreat in Downtown Greenville, SC.

Friday night is a time to relax and enjoy friends—both old and new! We will paint a piece from Truth Be Told Art with instructor Ann Marie Sanderson. Not the crafty type? No worries; the process is easy and fun, and you will love your unique piece of artwork. Following the project, we will enjoy a custom-dessert-bar reception provided by the Hyatt. Hang out in Greenville's beautiful downtown afterward, or head to your room to spend some quiet time with friends.

WHAT IF WE FOLLOWED GOD WITH PERSEVERANCE INSTEAD OF INSECURITY?

On Saturday, we will seek the answer to the question above. Beginning at 9:00am, we will gather for a day filled with teaching from IF:GATHERING 2018 along with live worship throughout the day.

We will look at one of Paul's letters, in which he reminds Timothy of the power and responsibility of spreading the gospel. We want to share God where he's placed us, so we are going to focus on the reasons following God and making disciples matters. This session will remind us the work we do to share the gospel is worth it, and God moves even through the little things that nobody sees.

All participants will walk away with their paintings (keepsakes to remember our weekend together), a greater understanding of what God has called us to do, and memories that will last long after the weekend is over! 🎨



Retreat Details

Location:

Downtown Hyatt in Greenville

Sessions:

Friday, April 13, 7-10pm

Saturday, April 14, 9am -5pm

Cost:

Attend both Friday and Saturday at \$75 per person. (Cost includes Truth Be Told Art, Dessert Social, Saturday lunch, and all sessions. Hotel room is not included.)

- OR -

Attend only Saturday at \$55 per person. (Cost includes lunch and all sessions.)

Stay Overnight:

Extend your time by going out for dinner downtown with friends or taking advantage of our special room rates and staying a second night!

Special Room Rates:

- Single Occupancy—\$155
- Double Occupancy—\$155 (\$77.50 per person)
- Triple Occupancy—\$165 (\$55 per person)
- Quadruple Occupancy—\$165 (\$41.25 per person)

Online Registration:

fellowshipgreenville.org

Further IF Information:

ifgathering.com



BY MIKE HAWKINS

NEWLYWEDS

I once heard a friend offer this analogy: "Marriage is like flies on a screen door: all those on the inside want out and all those on the outside want in." I thought that comparison pretty funny until I started working with couples here at FG. For years it felt as if we were working with only struggling or failing marriages, and little was being done to prevent or address the challenges. Over time, we've come to commit significant time and resources to help spouses live out the gospel in their relationships.

I'd like to draw your attention to the newlywed phase (see chart below). FG presently has three newlywed groups. Each consists of two mentor couples and up to five newlywed couples. The mentor couples share the responsibilities of discipling the young couples toward the view of a gospel-centered marriage and oneness. I often hear our mentors make comments like, "Leading these young couples has

brought a renewed focus in our marriage. We are now putting more emphasis on what the gospel looks like in our own marriage." There is an old saying: "If you want to become an expert at something, teach it to someone else." Our mentors do not claim to be experts at marriage because marital expertise requires a lifetime of learning; however, they want their marriages to continually reflect Christ.

The most important objective in discipling couples is to build strong relationships with them. As you share your struggles and shortcomings, their ears perk up, and they realize that even experienced, mature couples in Christ have struggles.

The goal is to show vulnerability and to be real so they can see how Christ-centered couples approach life and grow through difficulties. One newlywed couple shared, "We are so thankful for the Kruithofs

and the O'Neals. They have taken time out of each week for over a year to encourage and minister to us. They are such a blessing. God has definitely worked through them to bring us closer to him and to strengthen our marriage. I will always consider the time they have invested in us as a priceless gift."

Marriage is a beautiful illustration of Jesus and his church. It is transformative because there is, perhaps, no greater relationship God uses to make us more like him. It is our goal to help us all build stronger marriages for stronger families and stronger communities for the glory of God. From premarital counseling to support systems for the journey, couples are finding strength to weather the storms.

Maybe you would like to partner with another couple to invest in the next generation, or have someone invest in you. Visit our website to set up an appointment with our Care Coordinator, Amy Allen. ☒

| INTENTIONAL BEGINNINGS | PREPARING FOR MARRIAGE | ESTABLISHING FOUNDATIONS | ENRICHING MARRIAGE | RESTORING MARRIAGE |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| DATING/PREMARITAL | PREMARITAL | NEWLYWED | MARRIAGE | RE ENGAGE |
| WHO: Those who are looking to get married and those outside of FG who would like some premarital help. WHAT: This is provided in a weekend event at FG, three times a year. There is a \$60 cost per couple that includes meals, materials, and resources. WHEN: Friday 6pm-9pm and Saturday 9am-3pm OUR NEXT EVENTS: 01/19-20/2018 05/18-19/2018 | WHO: Members and active attendees who are engaged and preparing for a lifelong marriage. WHAT: Our goal is to help couples prepare for the days and years after their wedding day. Each couple will meet with a pastor and be assigned a marriage mentor couple. WHEN: Couples need to start at least three months before their wedding date. They meet for seven sessions, bi-weekly. | WHO: Couples at FG who have been married for less than three years. WHAT: The purpose of this 18-month group is to help establish a gospel-centered marriage and to help the couple to learn how to live in oneness in all areas of life. Groups are led by two mentor couples and consist of four to five newlywed couples. WHEN: These groups are formed throughout the year and meet weekly. | WHO: All married couples at FG, regardless of length or state of marriage. WHAT: Connecting couples into community at FG and equipping them through marriage events and conferences. WHEN: This happens through: Sunday teaching, community groups, and marriage events. | WHO: All married couples at FG, no matter where you are on your journey and whether your marriage needs to be reignited or is in need of a complete resurrection. WHAT: The purpose is to help enhance your marriage or to help you get out of being "stuck." WHEN: This class runs every Sunday evening for 16 weeks, Spring and Fall. OUR NEXT CLASS RUNS: 01/14/2018-05/13/2018 |

* There is a material cost for all resources.

** Ideas have been taken from *Watermark Marriage Mentor Training* February 2017



FG Moves

CITY INVOLVEMENT OUTREACH OPPORTUNITY:

Walk, Run, Bike!

BY SUSAN SALAMONE

As Christ-followers, we're compelled to ask what is the most *loving and sustainable* way to serve our community. At FG, we believe part of that answer is to come alongside worthwhile non-profit organizations in our city to *assist them in accomplishing their mission*. **To that end, our City Involvement Team creates and fosters relationships with local ministry and community partners to address issues like hunger, homelessness, vulnerable children, and the marginalized.** We're striving to make connections between the talents and interests of our people and opportunities to serve our city.

Do you ever wonder where you fit in? Would you like to combine an interest or talent for something as simple as moving (walking, running, biking, even swimming) with your compassion for struggling people—all to the glory of God? Well, we've got a great way for you to serve with a new team "*exercising*" their right to participate in local 5K's and other races. Why? For fun, fitness, fellowship, and to be the faithful presence of Christ's love in the Upstate. If you can *move*, you can assist worthwhile organizations in accomplishing their mission.

Whether you're nine or ninety-years-old, a couch potato or an endurance athlete—or anywhere in between—this team ministry is for you! Interested parties are invited to join us at 11am on Sunday, February 25, in Room 177/178. We'll share our vision for the team with you, and invite you to share your ideas for "*moving*" this project forward. 🚶

POTENTIAL 2018 EVENTS:

April 14 Harvest Hope Duathlon (*running/biking*)

April 28 Wheels for Meals Charity Ride

June 2 Miracle Hill Super Hero Cycle

Intrigued by the concept but not (yet) passionate about fitness? Consider these unlikely athletes:

Think you're too old to start running? Or too out-of-shape? Look to Margaret Hagerty for inspiration. At the age of 81, this marathon runner held the Guinness Record for "oldest person to complete a marathon on each of the seven continents." Hagerty took up running when she was 64, to try to help her quit smoking.

Iram Leon was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer in November 2010. Not wanting to give up running or time with his young daughter, Leon decided to combine the two. Over the next few years, Leon ran and won several marathons while pushing his daughter, Kiana, in a stroller.

Rick Hoyt was born with cerebral palsy and told he'd never live a "normal life." In 1977, Rick told his dad, Dick Hoyt, he wanted to participate in a five-mile race benefiting a local lacrosse player who had been paralyzed. Dick agreed to push his son in a wheelchair. They finished the race in next to last place, but that night Rick told his dad that "when I'm running it feels like I'm not handicapped." A new purpose was born that day. Father and son went on to finish over 1,000 races, competing in everything from 5K's to duathlons, triathlons, marathons, and a number of Ironmans.

August 4 Julie Valentine Center Run2Overcome
October United Ministries Transformation Walk
Piedmont Women's Center Race for Life 5K



THE GLOBAL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

20
18

from a Manager's Perspective

BY DEBBIE THURSTON

This past August, Fellowship Greenville served as a host site for the Global Leadership Summit, a two-day event held at the Willow Creek Community Church in suburban Chicago. We provided a live telecast of the event, allowing participants in the Upstate to enjoy the same experience as those who attended the event in Chicago.

With a rich history of more than 25 years, the Summit provides leadership training as well as ongoing support through various online resources. As someone who has spent over 30 years in management, I found this year's sessions to be very informative and helpful.

Those in attendance were challenged by Willow Creek founder, Bill Hybels, to identify and develop young leaders in their own organizations. He encouraged the audience to understand that mentoring begins with living out the example of strong leadership—considering the interests of others, being courteous, and seeking forgiveness when we fail. He also

emphasized the importance of succession planning, reminding us that God writes our story, and it's far better than the story we would script for ourselves.

We also heard from Marcus Lemonis, the star of CNBC's *The Profit*. Lemonis encouraged the attendees to take time to determine how we become who we are. He emphasized the need to invest in the lives of those around us, understanding that we must be open to different perspectives.

Other speakers addressed important topics that are relevant to any leader, from a homemaker to a C-Suite executive. These topics included time management, how to get buy-in from team members (change management), and leading from the inside out.

Immaculée Ilibagiza shared the incredibly moving story of her 91-day survival during the 1994 Rwandan genocide, reminding us that when you feel you can't, God can, as his peace truly can replace our anger and bitterness in seemingly hopeless situations.

There's simply no way to convey in this brief forum the long list of benefits from the Summit that will make a difference in your life. And once again, it's not only the speakers that add value—the podcasts, white papers, and informational links that come with your registration provide a great library of leadership resources you can use again and again.

**Global Leadership Summit
returns August 9-10, 2018**

Whether you are a leadership veteran or a young leader in a new role, the Global Leadership Summit will enrich your life as you seek to serve others on mission and in community with Jesus. ☯



Everyone has

INFLUENCE.

By definition, influence ˈin-flü-ən(t)s is the power to change or affect someone.



**THE GLOBAL
LEADERSHIP SUMMIT**

practicing GOSPEL FLUENCY

BY JONATHAN PARKER

Whether you're around the table in your house, having dinner with friends, or busy at work, at some point most everyone struggles with the nagging question: *Am I all alone?* When you find yourself asking this question, we believe being gospel-fluent can be a great comfort.

We have all been there: lying in bed staring up at the ceiling and wondering if anyone understands.

The quiet is deafening and the isolation is real as we wonder if anyone cares.

Loneliness knows no boundaries and it finds us in all the ordinary places. Yes, we may smile, interact, and put on a good show, but inside we are disconnected, distant, and lonely.

Jesus understood loneliness. Loneliness in the garden. Loneliness in trials. Loneliness while being

beaten. Loneliness on a cross. Loneliness in a grave. Jesus gets it; Jesus gets you.

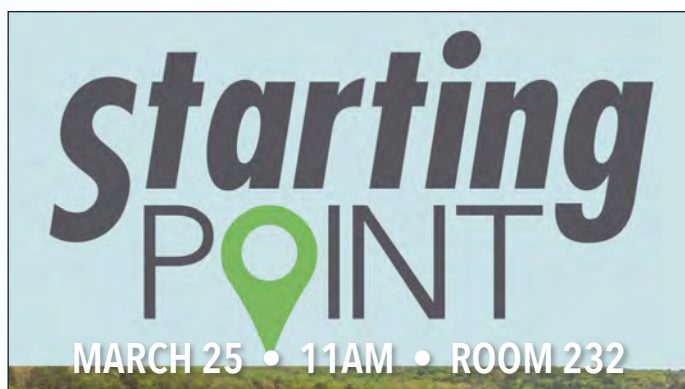
Yet, that is hard to remember when we feel like everyone, including Jesus, has abandoned us. Instead of convincing yourself that you're alone and your situation is hopeless, ask yourself the following questions, and then reach out to your community group or contact us for support. ☒

QUESTIONS

1. Think back to a time when you felt all alone. What were the circumstances? How did you live during that period of loneliness?
2. What did you believe or not believe about the gospel during seasons of loneliness and isolation?
3. How did you come out on the other side of this season? Are you in a season of loneliness now?
4. What has loneliness taught you about yourself and the gospel?
5. In what part of the gospel do you need to become more fluent to prepare for another time of feeling abandoned, lonely, or alone?

NEED TO GET CONNECTED?

Stop by Next Steps on a
Sunday morning or visit
FELLOWSHIPGREENVILLE.ORG/HELP.





Lebanon

BY CASSANDRA MARTIN

In Matthew 6, Jesus gives us "the Lord's Prayer" saying "pray like this: *for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever.*"

Theologian N.T. Wright makes a moving argument that the church needs to be prepared to subvert the kingdoms of this world by advancing God's kingdom in the here and now. Last fall, I spent time with pastors from Lebanon and Syria, listening to their stories of sacrifice, courage, and persecution stemming from the ongoing crises in the Middle East (ME). My trip provided the opportunity to see God's kingdom at work subverting the kingdoms of the world in an "in-your-face" kind of way. I witnessed the power and glory of God in a real way.

One Lebanese pastor shared how he recently dreamed Jesus invited him to come up to heaven to hear the new rhythm there. Pastor Magdi said in his dream, Jesus impressed upon him that heaven's rhythm is a much faster beat. Jesus said heaven is now running and if Magdi wanted to keep up, he was going to have to run too.

You see, the harvest is ready and the workers are few. God is doing something in the Middle East that has not happened in 1,400 years. Muslims are coming to Christ in large numbers. One Syrian church located on a busy route for visitors from other Middle Eastern countries is manned 24-7 and gives out free Bibles. A lady from Saudi Arabia passes through every year and picks up a Bible while she is there.

SHE SAID, "YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT A BLESSING THIS IS—ONE BIBLE IS READ BY OVER A 100 PEOPLE WHO PASS IT AROUND SECRETLY."

Another sentiment that resides deep beneath the sacrifices and scars of Syrian Christians is, "We Christians have lost everything, but the kingdom of God is gaining." Because of the wars, Christians in the region have lost businesses, property, and lives; they have been persecuted, raped, and displaced. In Iraq and Syria, there is only a minority of believers left. Most fled to Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, US, and other European countries. God is using this remnant, those who have chosen to remain behind, to offer the gospel in places where Islam is collapsing. Vast numbers of Muslims are disillusioned. "The evil and darkness of Islam have been uncovered" is a phrase that you will often hear from Christians in Syria and Lebanon.

The Lebanese and Syrian pastors we met with are running to keep up with the harvest Jesus is delivering.

He's now calling incredible numbers of Muslims to himself in that part of the world. These pastors are on the front lines actively subverting the kingdoms of the world with the kingdom of God. They know 60% of educated Muslims are rejecting Islam. They work with Muslims every day who are hungry for Jesus and the gospel.

So every time you think of the words "*for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever,*" please know God is ruling and reigning in the hearts of multitudes of new converts in the war-torn Middle East. He is using war and the refugee crisis to spread the gospel. Syrian and Lebanese pastors are, first and foremost, asking for our prayers. They understand that our earnest prayers translate into more strength for them to meet daily challenges.

If the rhythm of heaven has changed, and heaven is running—then let's do our part to run too by praying generously for this important work. ☕

FELLOWSHIP GREENVILLE
Outreach
LOCAL • NATIONAL • GLOBAL

**2018
GO JOURNEY
OPPORTUNITIES**

Sunday, March 4 | THE COMMONS



a transforming **VISION**

BY ROB MARKS

Vision is the view of possibilities for the future. Often, visions are fueled by seeking solutions to problems or facilitating preferred outcomes. Therefore, visions are not so much plans as they are the results of plans.

Our vision is for God to transform us into a community of grace, passionately pursuing life and mission with Jesus. This vision is one of being more than doing. At its core, the vision does not change, but the path to that vision often does. We clearly understand that to realize our goal of becoming a community of grace, we have to allow God to do his transforming work in our lives. So our plans need to reflect hearts that see where God is working and join him there.

Along this journey toward our vision, we affirm our plans by understanding what God is doing in the lives of people through stories. These stories of God's transforming work honor him and help us know we are on the right path as our vision is ever more realized.

We have discovered that using the simple idea of a triangle can help us think well about this transformation. Just like a triangle has three angles formed by connected lines, **our life is formed by three areas that are supported and connected to one another: our life with Jesus, our life in community, and our life on mission.** The profiles included on the following pages are only a few that illustrate these areas of our lives reflected in the triangle. ☒

LIFE WITH JESUS

Understanding what
God says about
himself and us



LIFE IN COMMUNITY

Experiencing
authentic community
in a variety of contexts

LIFE ON MISSION

Serving with
no expectation
of return

**CARTER & LESLIE BORTON****IN COMMUNITY**

- ➔ **How did God prompt you to step into Community Life?** It was our desire from the time we started attending FG to become connected. We came from a Sunday School background, so we were excited to try something new. Our neighbors, the Tedders, invited us to join their group. We have been involved in community groups for four years.
- ➔ **What blessings have you seen as a result?** We have developed great friendships that have made us feel more connected to FG... and have given us a sense of belonging. It is also encouraging to know we have a group of people who pray for us and do life alongside us.
- ➔ **How has experiencing community grown your faith?** Listening to group members share their life stories and seeing how God has brought all of us together has made us stronger in our faith. It is exciting to share struggles and problems and see God take care of them.
- ➔ **Any specific stories you want to share?** Our son had major surgery within the first three months of joining the group. Several people came up to the hospital and spent the day with us. This was one of the first experiences we had of how community life should be done. We have also taken trips to Gatlinburg with our community group. These trips have always been a great time to strengthen our connections.
- ➔ **Has your perception been changed since engaging in community?** YES! At previous churches, our relationships felt shallow at best. With community life, we have developed lasting friendships and deeper relationships. It was exactly what we needed.

**THE CUNEIO FAMILY****ON MISSION**

- ➔ **How did God prompt you to start serving as a family?** One Sunday, the need for door greeters was presented, and I [Matthew] said, "That's it! That's what we're going to do. We're going to be door greeters!" Initially, it was just Tina and I that signed up. Our kids came along because we go to church as a family. They jumped right in, finding doors that didn't usually have greeters. Josh, the rest of the staff and the weekly team embraced and encouraged them in their service and they LOVE it!
- ➔ **What blessings have you seen as a result?** We've enjoyed the interaction with people we know, but rarely see, because our schedules don't line up. Seeing the number of young families strolling through the doors, knowing they're hearing the gospel, still chokes me up a bit at times. I can't help but see Tina and myself when we showed up 13 years ago in our religious chains. A third blessing has been getting to know our usher friend Joe, and we just love him.
- ➔ **How has this experienced grown your faith?** It's been a great tool for our family, having fun doing something as simple as opening doors for people who are coming to hear the gospel. It's simple, but it's a need FG has and we get to fill it.
- ➔ **Has your perception been changed since engaging in this type of service?** It's caused me to reflect on all of the people who do the behind-the-scenes activity that makes a Sunday morning what it is. I've walked through the doors many times beat up from life, but for the past 13 years a smiling face has greeted me at the door, as well as poured my coffee each and every Sunday.



JERRY & GEORGIANN SHORE

IN COMMUNITY

- **How did God prompt you to step into community life?** Georgiann and I [Jerry] have been in small groups for many years. Also, I attend two men's groups and have benefited greatly from fellowship with strong men of God. Finally, Georgiann and I are Stephen Ministers.
- **How has experiencing community grown your faith?** Oh yes—I'm more dependent on the Holy Spirit for guidance, more eager to apply God's word to my life, and more sensitive to other's needs and responding to them, hopefully, as Jesus would.
- **Are there any specific stories you can share?** On two occasions my wife and I appealed to the benevolence ministry on behalf of folks in need outside our church. In one case the recipients were flat on their backs and desperate. FG stepped up and with amazing grace moved the couple and their goods to a relative's home, and gave them vouchers to sustain them. In the second case, FG used the same sensitive approach to help a person at the end of her rope, who later joined FG.
- **Has your perception been changed since engaging in community?** I have become way more sensitive to the "one-another-ing" scriptures of Jesus, Paul, and other writers of the New Testament, and use these to guide me in this: *"as often as you do this to one of the least of these, you do them unto me."* People are stretched in community, which is so good for growth; people are not what is reported in secular news outlets, but are more caring, more understanding, and more tolerant of others. Relationships can get messy, and that has driven us to Jesus to work in the mess. As a result, we've come to really know people, instead of just seeing the clean-up version we often present on Sundays... and we love them so much better!



BOB & NINA BENSON

IN COMMUNITY

- **How did God prompt you to step into community life?** We are committed to Jesus and to walking with him—and we've learned over the years that we need to connect with other believers. The community group is a great way to accomplish all that—great relationships, growth, fun, challenge, and ministry together.
- **What blessings have you seen as a result?** Our community group provides a surrogate family of like-minded believers. The blessings come as we participate in one another's lives. One couple in our group had a series of losses in one season. Seeing how the group surrounded that couple with love was such an encouragement. Our group has helped build ramps through Restore Upstate. The work was both tiring and invigorating—a blessing for the helped and the helpers alike.
- **How has experiencing community grown your faith?** There's a line in a song: *"God bless the broken road...."* Each one of us walks what appears to be a broken road, though to the Lord it is the straight path to his purpose in each of us. The broken road is much less difficult when it is being walked together with others who encourage, admonish, and help us around and through the rocky parts. Walking with friends always makes the trip more enjoyable!
- **Has your perception been changed since engaging in community?** We know FG is a large church, but we have come to realize it wasn't that we needed a small church—we needed a way to connect in a smaller setting. I could not have predicted how deeply the group has encouraged and embraced one another. Community with believers is truly a gift of grace! And that particular grace is found, ironically, only with others in the family of Christ.



COMMUNITY

IS THE RESTAURANT WHERE WE NEED TO EAT A MEAL BY TRENTON STOKES

Do you have a favorite restaurant? What makes it so unique? Is it because life events have been celebrated there—such as engagements and birthdays? Perhaps it is owned by a friend, and you enjoy supporting them. Maybe the restaurant is woven into family tradition as the location for holiday meals, Sunday brunches, or watching sports events. The least and most basic of reasons though, is the food. We go because of the food and the appetite that needs to be satisfied.

For many people, their souls are fed primarily at church on Sunday mornings and perhaps in their personal time with Jesus as they read the Bible and pray. But I would tell you that there are cafés, diners, and restaurants throughout the Upstate serving a rich fare that is shared family style in the context of community. These eateries are known as Community Groups, with 8 to 14 people gathering to grow

in relationship with Jesus, together, and giving their lives away with no expectation of return.

At FG, we try to see to it that biblical community is available to anyone who wants it. Several years ago, author and counselor Larry Crabb reiterated the importance of biblical community like this:

Maybe we don't take seriously enough that we are Christ's body. Maybe that's more than a metaphor. You're actually representing Christ to me, and I think he wants to feed us through each other. If we're locked in a Tibetan prison and can't talk to anyone, then he'll figure a more direct way to give us what we need. But if community is available, maybe that's the restaurant where we need to eat a meal.

Biblical community is more than people gathering together to have a good time, although that may certainly be a part of it. Biblical community is about joining with others who desire to know Jesus more fully, and feasting on God's Word together. It's about us pointing each other to Jesus through the "one anothers" of Scripture: love one another, forgive each other, regard each other more highly than yourselves. Teach and correct each other, encourage each other, pray for each other, and bear each other's burdens. Be friends with one another, be kind, compassionate, and generous in hospitality. Serve one another and submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. This list just scratches the surface, but it's enough to remind us we need the community of faith to grow up in Christ.

So where are you consistently dining so that you are experiencing biblical community? If you have no such space, I want to invite you to our next Group Connect, on February 11. Here, you will have a chance to meet others who are wanting biblical community and leaders who are prepared to launch groups in which this can happen. I believe as more and more people give themselves to biblical community, we'll find the vision of Fellowship Greenville more concretely embodied, that is, that God will transform us into a community of grace passionately pursuing life and mission with Jesus. **Visit our fellowshipgreenville.org/events to register.** ☒



GROUP
connect
...a step toward finding community

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11 | REGISTER NOW!



NEXT

STEPS

BY JOSH AMOS AND TONYA WILSON

STOP BY THE NEXT
STEPS CENTER JUST
OUTSIDE AUDITORIUM
ONE TO START THE
CONVERSATION.

With 2018 well underway, if you're anything like us, you're working hard to keep New Year's resolutions and discover more and more about the liberating power of the gospel in the everyday stuff of life. To that end, we want to make sure you know about a vibrant ministry here at Fellowship Greenville—Next Steps.

What started as a center for information has blossomed into a conversational hub where folks can discover more about life with Jesus.

Since its original launch in March of 2017, we've been able to guide many into serving, giving, studying, and more—all aimed at promoting spiritual growth in the context of the FG community.

The Next Steps team has also ministered to many who were searching and hurting, answering their questions, fostering conversations, and establishing connections that will have a lasting impact on their lives.

Those who have benefited from the Next Steps experience also let us know how much they appreciate this consistent engagement. They've

connected to relationships in which they thrive, and to ministries in which they serve.

It may seem daunting to consider the next step for you and your family, but much like those New Year's resolutions, making that first move is often the most challenging step, and you're always glad you did.

So how can you take your next step at Fellowship Greenville? Most of the time, the best next step naturally emerges as you share your story, express your concerns, and articulate your interests.

In short, we believe your spiritual growth can be greatly enhanced in 2018 by taking your next step at Fellowship Greenville. Doing so isn't the same for everyone, so we invite you to reach out to one of our Next Steps team members to start that conversation soon.

Whether your interest is serving, joining a small group, supporting a particular ministry, being baptized, or learning more about what it means to trust Jesus with your life, we are eager to assist you in your next step. ☒



KASIE SOMERVILLE
ON MISSION

→ **How did God prompt you to start serving? How long have you been serving at Next Steps?** Tonya asked me to serve at Next Steps. I was hoping it would be a good fit for me considering I love people, and helping others. I have been serving there since FG opened the Next Steps area.

→ **What blessings have you seen as a result?** I have truly been blessed beyond all I've hoped for. I knew I would enjoy the fellowship, but being able to welcome, meet, and guide those who come to the Next

Steps table has been more enriching than I imagined. Many people who visit us want to take the next step in their faith, so this is very exciting, as I love encouraging folks to continue growing their relationship with Christ.

→ **How has this experience grown your faith?** To get a glimpse of how the Lord is calling others is so reminiscent of his faithfulness and his love. He does not ever discriminate—in any way—he created us all and loved us all with perfect fatherly love. He is reaching out and calling all of us to himself. I love the privilege of meeting those who are responding to his call, as it's encouraging to behold. It also reminds me that the Lord wants to continue deepening my relationship with him as well.

→ **Are there any specific stories you want to share?** One Sunday, a gentleman came to the Next Steps table to ask

for a Godly man to mentor him. It was apparent he was burdened and he shared that he was going through a painful marriage separation. He expressed it was not his desire to divorce, and he was concerned for his children. After he received prayer that morning, I was very excited to hear that one of the pastors had already met with him that same week! The body of Christ is helping and encouraging one another.

→ **Has your perception been changed since engaging in this?** Honestly, there have been many times when I have wondered if there was a place where I could volunteer and know it was right where God has called me to be. When Tonya asked me to volunteer at Next Steps, I knew the Lord must have laid my name on her heart for a reason, so I accepted, and I am so grateful I did.





ONE YEAR *in...*

BY CHELSEY BRILLIANDT

January 22, 2017, we began two service times in two auditoriums. As a church, we have seen so many blessings this last year, and we know God has much more in store. Having two auditoriums and new kids/students space has allowed us to average around 1,800 people a week at FG.

There are many things we know now that we didn't know when we began this exciting journey. We are still figuring out how to balance our service times, accommodate hundreds more children, and to look to the future as we continue to grow. Already we see increases in attendance from our 15-minute change to 9am and 11am service times, as well as much more balanced attendance. We rely heavily on the Lord to help guide us through all of these transitions and decisions. If you consider the number of members, attendees, and guests in our database, 9,147 people are actively engaging with Fellowship Greenville. Though not all of these attend weekly, our technology allows us to interact with more people than ever before.

We're excited about the ways we have seen our church body give to our building campaign. Over seven-million

dollars has been already been paid toward the cost of our building project, which totaled over \$10.5 million. We have seen 531 people fulfill their pledges and an additional 206 people donate to this campaign since we opened the new buildings. We ask that you prayerfully participate in helping us retire this debt as we use these facilities to equip our body, to invite our neighbors into the gospel story, and to serve our community in response to God's transforming grace. ☕

Visit fellowshipgreenville.org/give to contribute to the Capital Campaign.



FG Students



Auditorium 2



K5-2nd Grade



3rd-5th Grade

IT's all about SUPPORT

OUR IT TEAM
SUPPORTS THE STAFF,
CONGREGATION, AND
GLOBAL CHURCH IN
ADVANCING GOD'S
KINGDOM.

BY PAUL TEDDER

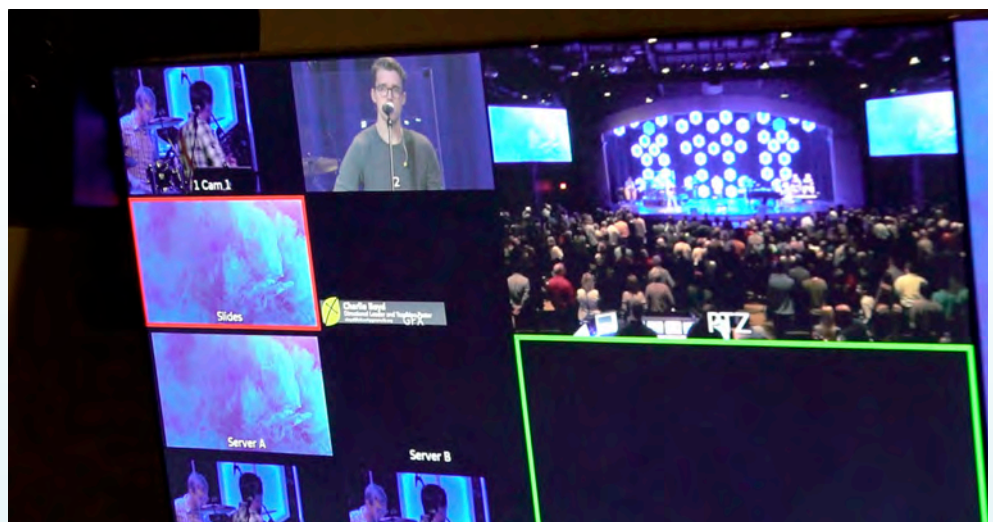
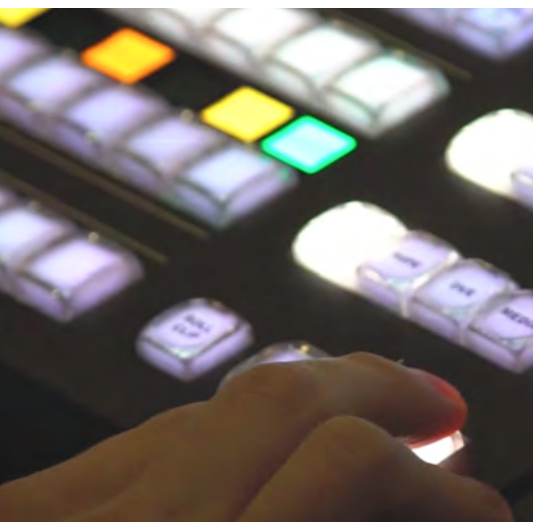
Every week, Fellowship Greenville is served by an outstanding team of people.

- » Adults and teens lead children in worship while their parents attend the regular worship service.
- » Friendly folks, at multiple host desks, greet newcomers and answer questions for guests.
- » Group leaders facilitate discussion during the Community Group Experience.
- » Technicians work controls and adjust settings, so we all sing the right words during a worship song.

These are just a few of the many ways volunteers serve Fellowship Greenville, but what would happen if the connection between the audio speaker and sound board failed? Or what if the worship team's music software went offline? What if the doors to be held open by greeters were locked instead? Or the rooms for children's worship had no heat?

For volunteers and staff to serve FG well, they depend on those serving them. One group of these serving the servers is the Fellowship Greenville Information Technologies (IT) staff.

The IT team is a small group of staff with a wide range of responsibilities, all relating to technology. Eddie Holeman, the IT director, says that if IT is doing its job well, no one should ever notice. But let's take some time to notice, in this article, what they do to sustain ministry at FG.





SERVING THE STAFF

A significant part of what the IT staff does is serving and supporting full- and part-time staff as they carry out their roles across a wide range of ministries.

In a church the size of Fellowship Greenville, staff have very diverse technology needs. From basic office tasks and on-the-go computing to music creation and video production, these tasks all demand a wide range of technology needs. Our IT team meets these needs with desktops, laptops, and tablets, Macs, PCs, Chromebooks, phones, printers, and multiple databases. In our always-connected world, the team maintains a wired and wireless network for both staff and guests alike.

SERVING THE FG BODY

While IT spends a lot of time serving staff, they also support the entire church body. One of the primary ways they do so is by managing the church's website and database.

WEBSITE

It's hard to imagine that FG's website was first launched 20 years ago. In the early years, it was limited to providing basic information about the church, but more recently it has become a primary communication tool. It's not uncommon for first-

time guests to say they heard about Fellowship Greenville by doing a Google search, and then checking out the website for service times and other information.

It's also common for our pastoral staff to receive questions or comments from someone far away who listened to a sermon via the website, mobile app, or our live-streaming broadcast, which also enables FG-supported missionaries to watch or listen on a weekly basis.

The FG website also enables donors to access their giving history and generate tax forms online, saving hundreds of dollars in postage and printing. None of this was possible 20 years ago, and none of this would be possible today without the support of our IT department.

CHECK-IN

Another critical area where IT serves the entire FG community is in the management of our check-in system—maybe the most crucial system in use on Sunday morning.

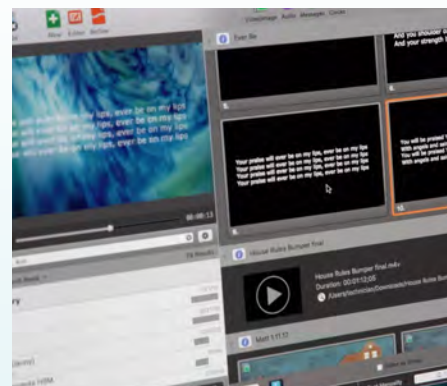
Each Sunday, hundreds of families use this system. While the process is user-friendly and simple, the technology that drives it is not. But this robust technology allows for that simplicity of our church family, while also doing much to support the care and security of each child visiting our campus.

SERVING THE GLOBAL CHURCH

The work of the IT team does not stop with its service to FG. Locally, they interact with the IT teams from several churches to talk about best practices and software/hardware issues. They host regional events for the church IT community (yes, there are regional and national church IT groups).

The team's kingdom-mindset also extends beyond state lines. Just within the last month, our IT team has helped a Christian camp in Kentucky upgrade their website, assisted a church in Alberta, Canada with some technical reporting issues, and even sent some computer hardware to our ministry partners in Liberia.

Through it all, there is a desire to take the knowledge and skill available here and share it in our community and across the world. 🌐





The Gfellers IN GERMANY BY JANA JOHNSON

This year, Fellowship Greenville began supporting the ministry of the Gfeller family, recently commissioned missionaries to Berlin, Germany. With the refugee crisis continuing to grow in Europe, God moved the Gfellers to Berlin Ministries International to coordinate outreach to refugee communities in Berlin. The Gfellers involve themselves in these communities through a weekly sports ministry with the intention of starting Bible studies and connecting new believers with local churches. They are also developing an effective model to share with churches around Europe, purposed in engaging their communities with the gospel in a culturally relevant way.

In their most recent newsletter, Chad described how the Lord has also used his entry into language school to further grow him and his ministry:

■ **I had the opportunity to begin language school recently.** It has been an intense and humbling experience. It is easy to take for granted the ability to hear others and comprehend what they are

saying. *I have been reminded of this daily as I hear my new language and learn how to converse with the other people in my class. We come from all over the world, with many different languages represented from Russia, Bulgaria, Belarus, Iran, Syria, Sudan, Ghana, China, Japan and America.*

My class in itself is a mission field. We look very different than each other and you would think that with our different cultural backgrounds we would have little in common. But language brings diverse people together. We did not understand each other very well when class started, but we are now slowly beginning to speak the same language. The more we hear each other speak, the more we recognize the message being communicated.

This reminds me of the importance we have as followers of Christ to daily speak the language of the gospel. It is easy to speak our own language and disregard others as just noise. Our opinion becomes the only one that matters and we forget the greatest message is not our own and we are not our own. We forget Jesus did not regard equality with God a

thing to be grasped, but taking on the form of a servant he humbled himself to the point of death, even death on a cross. We lose sight of his willingness to set aside his own rights and privileges to identify with us. Many times, instead of speaking the language of the gospel, we choose to engage a lost world with our own words.

WE CANNOT POINT PEOPLE TO CHRIST BY SPEAKING OUR OWN LANGUAGE. WE MUST SATURATE OUR WORDS WITH THE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL SO THAT OTHERS SEE CHRIST AND NOT US.

This is my desire, that when I encounter others they would begin to recognize the life-giving words of the gospel and not my own.

May Chad's words encourage us toward gospel-fluent lives—speaking the language and message of the gospel—as we interact with those around us, including family, friends, coworkers, and classmates. ☒





FOLLOW US...



[FACEBOOK.COM/FGKIDSATFG](https://www.facebook.com/FGKIDSATFG)

BY MELANIE GRAINGER AND JANA JOHNSON

Fellowship Greenville's kids' ministry continues to grow and thrive! Hundreds of children participate in our FG Kids Jr. (preschool) and FG Kids (kindergarten-fifth grade). Each week these kids get to take part in fun songs, interactive Bible stories, silly games, and many more activities intended to introduce them to Jesus and the life he offers.

THE WHAT: Every kid is created in the image of God to love him with heart, soul, and strength, and to trust Jesus with the future. These truths are affirmed in the curricula of both kids' programs.

FG Kids Jr.—First Look

This curriculum takes a look at who God is and helps the kids understand these truths:

- God made me.
- God loves me.
- Jesus wants to be my friend forever.

FG Kids—252 Kids

This curriculum is based on three basic but powerful truths modeled by Jesus in Luke 2:52:

- Wisdom: I need to make the wise choice.
- Faith: I can trust God no matter what.
- Friendship: I strive to treat others the way I want to be treated.

THE HOW: We want every child to feel welcome and loved as he or she is introduced to the Heavenly Father and his love. Through the stories of the Bible, our children discover the character of God and where they fit into his story.

WE NEED YOU!

We, as a church, have an amazing opportunity to instill these truths into the lives of so many children, to be a part of their stories, and to help shape this new generation of disciples through meaningful mentoring. When you say "yes" to the next generation, you are not just another warm body that shows up for an hour in a classroom and reads a Bible story to a group of kids; you are not merely a volunteer. Our

mentors play a vital role in FG Kids ministry. You provide a consistent presence in the children's lives. You become trusted sources to whom these kids can turn with questions and problems they face while reminding them that they are loved and valued by God.

NEXT STEPS: Our mentors serve during either first or second service every week. If you are interested in showing the love of God and being a consistent voice in the lives of children, we would love to have you! No theology or seminary degree is required—you need only the willingness to trust God and allow him to use you to do great things.

**JESUS REACHED THE WORLD BY
LEVERAGING THE INFLUENCE OF COMMON
PEOPLE AND EMPOWERING THEM TO DO
UNCOMMON THINGS. —REGGIE JOINER**

Will you join us in saying "yes" to the next generation? **To get started, visit our website and fill out the application.** ☒



Men's Retreat



MAN ALIVE THE HEART OF MAN

→ MARCH 2-3, 2018 ←

**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT ALL THE EVENTS AND STORIES OUTLINED IN THIS
ISSUE BY VISITING OUR WEBSITE: FELLOWSHIPGREENVILLE.ORG**

A Ministry of Piedmont Women's Center

ABORTION **RECOVERY** ASSISTANCE

— Greenville, SC —

If you are suffering from a past abortion and are interested in the
Forgiven and Set Free Bible study support groups, we can help.

Please call (864) 244-1434 or email ara@piedmontwomenscenter.org to begin your
recovery. All communication is confidential.


**Piedmont
WOMEN'S CENTER**
Pregnancy Medical Clinic