



APPALACHIAN MINISTRY NETWORK

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DATE: January 12, 2016
TO: Network Pastors
FROM: David Dillon
SUBJECT: Launch of Blacksburg, VA, Church Plant

New Year's greetings from the Network Leadership and Resource Center! I hope and pray that 2016 has gotten off to a great start for you and your church. Though our challenges as the people of God are great, our opportunities as the people of God are **GREATER** (1 John 4:4b).

Speaking of opportunities, I'm using my first correspondence of this new year to let you know about an exciting one that is about to happen within our network. As you can see from the enclosed flyer, **a new church is soon to open in Blacksburg, Virginia!**

Just over two years ago I was contacted by the leadership of our AG neighbors to the east, the Potomac Ministry Network. They wanted to know if our network would have an interest in partnering with them to plant a church within our boundaries. (It didn't take long to pray through on this request!) We began a dialogue to explore the possibility and to pray and dream together to see if God was in this. After some time, *"it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and us"* to move forward. Church planters Alvin and Charity Thomas said yes to the call of God in this venture and stepped out in obedience, leaving their place of ministry at New Life AG in Farmville, VA, and relocating to Blacksburg. Immediately they began to develop relationships within the community, sowing the seeds for a successful church plant. Now, what began as a dream in the mind and heart of God—a vibrant, Spirit-filled community of Christ-following disciples and Kingdom builders in Blacksburg—is about to become a reality with the launch of **Fireplace Church on Sunday, January 24.**

Many of you have already met Alvin and Charity, and some of you have had them minister in the church you serve and lead. However, for those who have not had the privilege of getting to know this precious couple, I thought it would be good to introduce you to them by way of this communiqué. Also, as network pastor and superintendent, **I want to invite and encourage every congregation within our ministry family to support this new work through prayer, finances and relational connections.** We need to do this and we must do this!

Statistics are very clear that the most productive and fruitful stage in a church's life are its early years. Sadly, as congregations age they tend to turn their focus and energies internally rather than externally and evangelistically. This means that **Fireplace Church** has incredible potential to impact a very important and strategic community within our network. Please, please, please join me in giving this new work your support. **Ask your church to pray for Alvin and Charity**, that God will anoint them greatly with His Spirit and Presence and use them mightily to introduce people to Jesus Christ and build them into mature disciples. **Support them financially** if you're able, and **connect with them** to let them know that their Appalachian Ministry Network family is behind them. Thanks, God bless, and **GREATER!**