



ASSEMBLIES OF GOD
APPALACHIAN MINISTRY NETWORK
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David W. Dillon
Pastor/Superintendent

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Dear Network Ministry Family:

Autumn greetings from the network resource center! I hope and pray all is well for you, your family, and whatever ministry the Lord has placed you in and/or given you to. God is so good!

CLERGY APPRECIATION MONTH

Hopefully you are aware that October has been designated Clergy Appreciation Month. I know I am because of the many cards and gifts that Lisa and I receive each year from our ministers and churches during this month. Your sentiments and kind and encouraging words mean more than we could possibly express and we want you to know that we are very, very grateful for them and the love they represent. You've heard us say on numerous occasions that we love this network and consider it a high honor to be able to serve those to whom we personally owe so much. Thanks again. We do love and appreciate each of you.

I also want to take a moment to express appreciation to the ministers who are part of my immediate leadership team: Network Executive Secretary/Treasurer Tony Raffa and Network Youth and Christian Education Director Adam Pelfrey. Both of these men—first and foremost—love God with all of their hearts, having a passion to exalt Jesus Christ and to do so under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. They, along with their wives (Betty and Kristi, respectively), do so much to assist in the fulfillment of my duties as the network pastor/superintendent and I am thankful for them. I respect Tony and Adam greatly and am honored to serve alongside them as officers of the network.

As ministers, ours is a high calling. And as you well know, this doesn't mean it is an easy task. Demands and stresses of all kinds come with the work of God in this present world. (Thankfully, there are many joys and victories too.) For this reason I always take heart when I read the words of Hebrews 6:10: *"For God is not unjust; He will not forget your work and the love you showed for His name when you served the saints—and you continue to serve them."* So be encouraged friend! Whether or not you receive the recognition and appreciation you may justly deserve for your ministry and Kingdom service here on earth, the God who called you is taking note and will reward the faithful and obedient work you do *"for His name."*

PAUSE: 2019 UPDATE AND 2020 ANNOUNCEMENT

Just a few weeks ago many members of our network ministry family gathered in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, for PAUSE, our annual ministers retreat. Of all our responsibilities, this is Lisa's and my most favorite event to plan, coordinate and conduct. There is no way we can express how much we enjoy hosting PAUSE for our heroes: the ministers of this great network we are privileged to serve. It's a lot of hard work and effort—and not just on our part alone—but we know firsthand how important are these times of refreshing and renewal with ministry peers. No one understands and relates to what a minister's life and labor are like except another minister walking the same or similar ministry path.

Attendance at this year's PAUSE increased to nearly 80, with several first-time attendees, including many of our younger pastors and ministers. It was exciting to watch as new friendships were made and existing friendships were strengthened! Next year's PAUSE will be at a new venue, a nicely-renovated hotel property near the main strip with all the attractions that make a Smoky Mountain trip so much fun. Our new location has lots of on-site amenities that will give our ministers an enjoyable experience. PAUSE '20 will also have a different emphasis than normal, with guest speakers Jeff and Sue Duffield. Jeff and Sue combine humor, music and words of encouragement from a ministry perspective that hits home (literally). You will enjoy and be blessed by them. **September 28-30** are the dates for next year's PAUSE, so mark your calendars and begin to make plans to be there. You'll be glad you did!

NEW PASTORS

Congratulations to these ministers recently called to serve as shepherds of the following congregations:

VIRGINIA:

- Buchanan, New Beginnings AG, Wanda Scaggs (Jack)
- Dublin, Heritage Church, Mike Pierce (Susie)
- Galax, First AG, Curtis Christian (Betty)
- Pembroke, Pembroke AG, Bill Hankins (Norma)
- Salem, Bethel Assembly of God, Keith Jones (LaDonna)
- Wytheville, First AG, Michael Hoback (Heather)

WEST VIRGINIA:

- Dorothy, Dorothy AG, Steve Tincher (Cindy)
- Oak Hill, LifeBridge AG, Tom Carver (Alicia)
- Summersville (WV), New Life Assembly, Gene Campbell (Margaret)

NEW CHURCH

What to do with a church building that no longer has a congregation? Typically, if there is no apparent means of re-establishing ministry at that location, the most prudent option is to dispose of the property and use the assets generated from its sale for Kingdom purposes elsewhere. But, when an existing, healthy congregation has no building, that makes for an entirely different set of circumstances. Such was the case during recent months.

After a difficult period of striving to exist, the few remaining congregants of New Horizon Worship Center in Sydnorsville, VA, decided to disband. Some of them joined other AG churches in the area, including the interim pastor, David Koladish (and his wife Wendy), who accepted the position of associate pastor at Faith AG in Ferrum. About this time, a group of believers from nearby Collinsville, who formed Fairhaven Community Church nearly 20 years before, found themselves in need of a permanent home after their most recent location was severely damaged in a flood. A Pentecostal church, their pastor, Randy Sawyers, was known and respected by several of the network pastors in that region and had expressed interest years before in possibly affiliating the Fair Haven church with our fellowship. With the events and circumstances at Sydnorsville, it seemed like it might be the right time to explore the matter further. Calvin Hickson, Southeast Section Presbyter, initiated a dialogue with Pastor Sawyers and his leadership team about this possibility. That discussion culminated in a meeting with myself and the congregation just after May's network conference. At that meeting, Pastor Hickson and I answered many questions to the satisfaction of the people, after which they unanimously voted to affiliate with the Assemblies of God. An agreement was drafted that would permit use of the Sydnorsville property for a period of five years. If, at the end of that time the church is still in good standing with our network and fellowship, the property will be transferred to the church. So, we welcome Fair Haven Assembly of God and Pastor Randy Sawyers to our great Appalachian Ministry Network family.

OPEN CHURCHES

As of this writing, four churches of our network are in need of a pastor. In the Virginia portion **Covington** and **Saltville** are open. Covington is in the Blue Ridge-Metro Section where Jesse Bass is presbyter and Saltville is located in the Southwest Section where Jeff Carico is presbyter. In West Virginia, **Madison** and **Rock** are open. Madison is located in the Coalfields Section with Lowell Sparks as presbyter and Rock in the Two Virginias Section with Jimi Watson as presbyter. If interested in any of these opportunities, please contact the respective presbyter for information. Churches with interim pastors currently serving are Ewing (VA), Fairlea (WV), Floyd (VA), and War (WV).

GO2020 IS COMING TO APPALACHIA!

"100 million Christians reaching 1 billion people with the gospel in 2020!" This is the goal of **GO2020**, a global evangelism initiative that the Assemblies of God is part of and which our network will participate next May. Watch for information about this exciting and historic effort in the coming months from our network coordinator. Resources and helps will be freely available to participants. Find out more by visiting www.go2020.world.

BIBLE ENGAGEMENT PROJECT – APRIL 2020

Immediately upon his election as our General Superintendent at the 2017 General Council in Anaheim, Doug Clay made biblical literacy a primary emphasis for the fellowship. Though the Assemblies of God ranks better than many other groups and denominations in this critical component of Christian discipleship, there is still a great need to better equip our constituents with a working knowledge of God's Word. For this to happen, our pastors and church leaders must have the skills and resources needed to influence those to whom they minister. It is to this end that the **Bible Engagement Project** exists and why it is coming to our network next spring.

On Tuesday, April 14, at Calvary Assembly of God in Beckley, WV, a Bible Engagement Project (BEP) Cohort will take place. Every pastor and local church ministry leader is invited to this once-in-a-lifetime event. The 10:00 AM-2:00 PM meeting will reignite passion for the Bible and remind everyone of its preeminent role in our lives as believers and our labors as ministers and teachers of its truth. Here are some highlights of what's going to happen at the cohort:

- Equipping of pastors and church leaders in Bible engagement
- Free resources, including Logos Bible Software
- Professional training from Bible Engagement Project and Logos teams
- Sermon prep training and personal Bible study helps
- Ongoing monthly training cohort with free webinars
- First access to newly designed resources like Listen Bible Study and input into future products

Because of his great passion for the Bible and its place in the hearts of God's people, I have asked **Jimi Watson** to serve as the BEP Coordinator for our network. Pastor Jimi will be sharing more about the BEP initiative in the coming months. I have also asked him to work with his fellow presbyters to organize a personal contact with every pastor in their respective sections about the BEP meeting. Stay tuned for more info but mark your calendars now and plan to attend this special event. You can also visit www.bibleengagementproject.com to learn more. **GREATER!**

ACTS 2 JOURNEY COMING IN 2021!

A large percentage of Assemblies of God churches across the country are either in a plateaued state or declining. Sadly, this reality also reflects the status of many of our Appalachian Network churches. And there is no one-size-fits-all reason for this. Communities that have declined due to socio-economic reasons, aging populations, the flight of our young adults to more prosperous areas, church methodologies that are outdated and ineffective, lack of vision for reaching the lost, etc.—all of these and more contribute to the problems facing many of our congregations. Yes, “revival” and “a move of God” are desperately needed. But to simply spiritualize the problems facing today's local church is an affront to the principles and patterns of scripture and the history of how Jesus has built **His** church around the world since He made that pronouncement (Matthew 16:18). We must not spiritualize nor excuse our unwillingness as God's people and as His ministers to acknowledge the problems of our present reality and to take whatever action is needed to be the life-changing and life-preserving body that God ordained us to be as Christ's body.

As your superintendent, I feel very strongly about doing all we can as a ministry network to help our member churches and ministers. It is for that reason that I have already set in motion a process that will bring the **Acts 2 Journey** to our network in 2021. Facilitators are being recruited and trained (including myself as I travel next month to the national office for certification) and plans are being made for this to happen. Please pray with me that God will use this effort for His glory and to the advancement of His Kingdom and go to www.acts2journey.com to learn more.

FINAL THOUGHTS

God's promise that **OUR FUTURE WILL BE GREATER THAN OUR PAST** is as true today as when it was given. What He says, He will do and **IT SHALL BE!** Hope to see you soon in your part of the network. Blessings!

For Christ and you,

Pastor Dave

David W. Dillon
Network Pastor/Superintendent