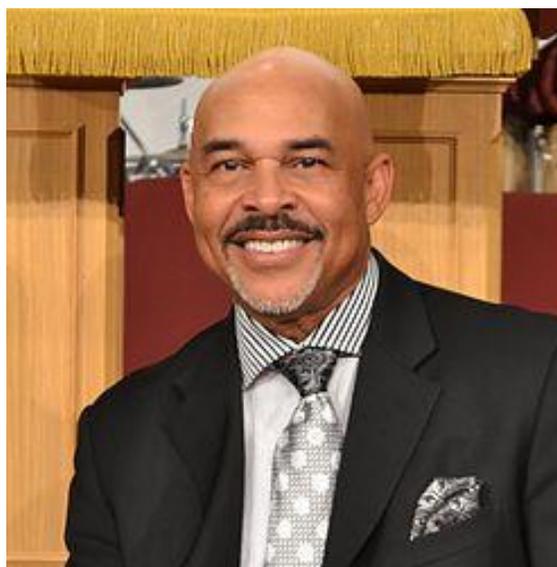


*"...Write the vision and make it plain on the tablet so that it might be read quickly."
Habakkuk 2:2 (LEB)*

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Camp Meeting 2016 Taking Shape



**Rev. Dr. Horace
Sheppard, Jr**

Camp Meeting for the Church of God in Virginia looks to be an inspiring tie for the people of God. Currently, the week will feature the preaching of Dr. Horace Sheppard, Jr., the music ministry of Rev. Mark Stayton of Kingsport Community Church in Kingsport, TN, as well as morning teaching sessions led by Dr. Mary Ann Hawkins of the Anderson School of Theology. Dates for Camp Meeting are July 31-August 6. Our C.W.C/W.C.G., will be very active with guest

speakers and full schedule, as will there youth activities throughout the week. Please mark your calendars for this exciting time in the life of the Church of God in Virginia, lifting this even in your prayers and making as much effort to participate in Camp Meeting 2016. For lodging information, please contact the state office via cogvaoffice@gmail.com or by calling 540-268-2040

Rev. Dr. Horace W. Sheppard, Jr is the senior

pastor of Bethesda Christian Fellowship Church of God, (formerly West Oak Lane Church of God) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He has been in pastoral ministry for twenty eight years. His previous pastorates include serving churches in East Palo Alto, California and Kansas City, Missouri. In addition to his pastorates he also spent a year as an associate pastor and three years as a full time revivalist.

Pastor Sheppard has been used extensively as a revivalist, conference leader and convention speaker both nationally and abroad. He is a graduate of Mid America Nazarene University and is the recipient of an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from the Southern California School of Ministry. He has served on numerous ministry boards and committees and continues to serve the larger church as time and opportunity permit.

(Continued on page 6)



Dr. Bob Neace
COGVA State Minister



I've Been Thinkin...

I've been thinking about what it means to be chosen. The Word tells us we are a "...chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation. His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy." 1 Peter 2:9 – 10.

I remember being in grade school, as early as second grade, and knowing I was not your typical boy of that age. (See the picture at

the left.) The boy in that picture is now old enough to realize paying good money for comic books in order to answer the old Charles Atlas ads in the back was fool hearty. If you don't know about them you are too young for it too matter ☺.

Looking at the exceptional physique, one might be astonished by this fact: I was never the first to be chosen for any gym class competitions. Hard to believe, huh? But it's true. As team captains were chosen, each had the responsibility to take turns calling children to be on their team until the last

person was chosen. It seemed our class always was an odd numbered class, meaning that one team would have one more person on it than the other. This left one student (usually me) in a very awkward place standing along the fence wishing either team wanted me with them. As a matter of fact, I actually heard the teacher of our gym class say to the group of oddly numbered students that, "We won't play until somebody takes him." This will build real self-esteem and character (note the sarcasm.)

(continued on page 8)



Freedom Sunday to Pair With COGVA "Leap of Faith" Sunday

communities around the world to unite through prayer and worship on behalf of the more than 30 million men, women, and children around the world who are enslaved today.

Join us for this global celebration and help us reach our goal of \$1 million dollars (nationally) to spread Jesus' good news of freedom around the world.

In years past, COGVA congregations have been asked to participate in a "Leap of Faith" offering in February to help offset the financial difficulties often incurred by decreased giving through the winter months. This year, we are

asking COGVA to receive an offering on the local level again. The difference is this: We (COGVA) are taking a "Leap of Faith" trusting that all money raised in what would normally be COGVA designated funds through this offering would be re-channeled to the CHOG Trafficklight. We are asking that all funds be sent through the COGVA State Office, and a note will be attached to our combined giving to this worthy cause indicating which churches participated. Should you need resources for this event, please go to <http://chogtrafficklight.org/freedom-sunday/>.

Feb. 14th has been designated as Freedom Sunday. This is an emphasis by the Ministries Council of the Church of God for the CHOG Trafficklight . CHOG Trafficklight is an effort to bring awareness and relief to those who are being persecuted and victimized by current day sex and slave trafficking.

COGVA Congregations are being challenged to join with believers and

Bellamy Avenue COG Celebrates Black History Month—Pastor Calvin Peterson



Rev Calvin and Chenell Peterson

During the month of February the nation celebrates Black History Month. This is a time when all Americans reflect on the rich legacy of African Americans who have contributed to the growth, development, and values of the nation since their arrival on the shores of the Virginia colony in bondage nearly 400 years ago.

Overcoming tremendous physical, legal, social and cultural barriers, African Americans found a way to excel in all walks of American life—through the labor of their hands, the gifts of musical expression, the creative genius of invention, the mastery of medicine and science, breaking racial barriers in sports, the arts, and entertainment, and last but not least, answering the call to arms in defense of the nation in every war or conflict.

Bellamy Avenue Church of God commemorates Black History month in a very special way. We organize our observance by selecting a theme and

exploring a different aspect of the theme each of the four Sundays in February. Our 2015 theme was “Celebrating the Black Church.” We explored the roots of “Negro Spirituals” as a means to sustain and inspire the people on the long and arduous journey from slavery to freedom. We learned of the rise of the organized church from secret worship in “Hush Arbors” in the South to the larger church structures in Northern cities.

As freedom came to millions of former slaves, mass migration in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries from the South to the North created many blended forms of worship and gave rise to contemporary gospel music. The social realities of times made the church the premier cultural, economic, and political institution in the black community. But through it all, God remained at the center of worship.

Black History Month at Bellamy Avenue strives to connect the African American experience to biblical parallels that will support our personal journey from spiritual bondage to spiritual freedom through Jesus Christ. And that is something we should all celebrate—regardless of race, ethnicity, or national origin.

We look forward to seeing you at Bellamy Avenue for our 2016 celebration of Black History Month!

Bellamy Avenue COG was organized in 1957 as a local mission in Norfolk, Virginia. In 1959, John D. Davis, Sr. declared his call to the ministry, was ordained as our first pastor, and served faithfully for 30 years. In July 1961 the church moved to our current location at 112 Bellamy Avenue, Norfolk, Virginia. In 1991, Reverend Calvin Peterson was ordained and installed as pastor with emphasis on expanding outreach and evangelism in the local community, dynamic Christian education, and reinvigorating our Men's and Women's ministries.

Bellamy Avenue's mission is to worship God in response to his Word, equip God's people for service, and witness to the world that Jesus Christ is Lord of all.



Bellamy Avenue fulfilling the Great Commission



Braylen Porter

The Church at Prayer for Braylen Porter

First, we would like to thank the saints for your prayers regarding Braylen Porter. For all of you that have not heard about this, Braylen is my great grandson and his mother is my granddaughter. He is now just over a year and a half old. His father is in the military and stationed in Washington State. Braylen has a cyst over his right eye. Therefore, a doctor at the military hospital there decided it would be in the best interest of the child to remove the cyst in August of 2015. The way we understand it, Little Braylen had been prepped for surgery and had a mask on for dispensing oxygen. As the doctor started the procedure, a piece of equipment emitted a spark which ignited the oxygen escaping from the mask. Braylen suffered severe burns to his face and head. After he was stabilized, he was transferred to a burn center in Seattle,

Washington. The burn center doctors and plastic surgeons there decided to wait until Braylen started to heal before attempting any surgical repairs. This past November the plastic surgeons completed one of his reconstructive surgeries to repair his right tear duct. Skin was taken from the top of his head to help rebuild it. This is just the first of many surgeries he is going to need. Braylen and his family were at home in Virginia for Christmas. On Christmas Day, he was at our home and acting as any about to be two-year-old child would act. He really enjoyed the Christmas tree decorations and my car in the garage that he insisted on waving bye-bye to over and over again.

When this first happened, it saddened us so very much. So, we took our concern to our church family first at Bellamy Avenue Church of God,

then the local Churches here in the Hampton Roads area on up to the Richmond, Virginia area and they immediately started to pray. I also asked those attending our Men's Prayer Breakfast at First Church of God, Norfolk, Virginia and our State Men's Training sessions to pray. They also started praying. There is not a more powerful tool we have at our disposal than prayer! It surely worked - for God is truly the great physician! When I saw little Braylen on Christmas Day I knew the Lord had heard and answered the prayers of the saints. I can't thank you enough, thank you!

Braylen and his parents have now returned to Washington State. We are asking all that know the power in prayer to continue to pray for Braylen and his family. Thank you

Bro. Edgar Myers

A New Season for First Church - Dublin

I have been reading, for the 'umpteenth' time, some devotionals from Oswald Chambers book, 'My Utmost For His Highest,' and I have been convicted. There, I said it. I have been convicted. Convicted by a simple thread of thought that has come from the pages of this old book. So here goes...

Am I so egotistical that I don't really believe that God can do what He says He can do?

I believe that His ideals are so lofty, and they impress me, but I am guilty of believing that He is not in touch with reality. I know God can do it but I still go on my own strength, and talent, and ability, to accomplish the 'work' that He has called me to. Sometimes I doubt God and when things don't happen in my ideal time frame, or in an ideal way, I start to explore what I can do for the situation.

I am kind of like the Samaritan woman in John 4. I see Him, but I doubt that He can restore me like that. She said, "Sir", the woman said, 'you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep.' John 4:11

We all know the reality is that not only can God do awesome things, He wants to do those awesome things for us.

Sometimes all He is looking for is a simple surrender in order that we can get out of the way and let Him take over.

It is with thoughts like this that Kelly and I have been wrestling with since our return to Virginia. We, not unlike many of you, have experienced great victories in our ministry and we have also experienced great difficulty and pain as a result of our ministry.

In the Fall of 2011 I actually told God that I would never return to vocational ministry because of the pain we had experienced in our previous church. I know that is a ridiculous thing to say but this is how I felt. I wish I could tell you that I rebuked that spirit within me and went right back to what God had called me to, but that is not how it went. Kelly and I shuffled through some awkward moments in our ministry and served a little here and there but vowed that we would not serve as Pastor's ever again. The awesome thing about God is that He heard our cries and knew what we needed best. In His patience, He gently restored what the Enemy had stolen.

After 12 months of rejecting the offer for me to come and fill the pulpit at First Church of God in

Dublin I finally conceded and filled in for ONE Sunday. I guess I did okay because they asked me to come back the next week. Then they talked me into being there every week through the end of the year. I was so hesitant but I realized that it was me that was standing in the way of what God had for the church and for us.

I was praying in the shower one day...don't judge...and I heard the Lord say very directly, 'it's time.' I thought to myself, 'time for what, time for me to buy more soap?' I knew what He meant, God wanted me to commit to pastoring the church in Dublin.

I had no idea but we needed the church as much, or more, than the church needed us.

What an incredible few years it has been for our church. God has been so good as we have sought together to Love God Fully and Love Others with Abandon. We are making simple commitments to do what we can to live out the gospel in our individual lives and as a church. No fancy programs, no fancy lights, no professional ministries, just committing to Love God Fully and Love Others with Abandon.

(Continued on page 6)



**Rev. Chris McMurray, Pastor
First Church of God/Dublin**



**The new Kids Annex at First
Church of God - Dublin**

Camp Meeting (Continued)



Rev. Dr. Maryann Hawkins

He and his wife, Linda have been married for thirty eight years and are the proud parents of three sons and one daughter and the delighted grandparents of nine grandchildren.

Mark Stayton is our minister of worship at Kingsport Community Church in Kingsport, TN and leads a blended worship experience drawing on the rich traditions of the past while valuing the body of work God is inspiring today. Their choir shares special music and cantatas throughout the year. Mark has served three other churches in the Midwest before coming to

Kingsport Community Church in 1978. He holds a B.A. degree from Bethel College. Mark and his wife Jenny have three children and four beautiful grandchildren.

MaryAnn Hawkins has been in ordained ministry in the Church of God for more than thirty years, serving the church in congregational ministry, as a missionary in East Africa, and in higher education. She is a graduate of Bartlesville Wesleyan College (BS in Religion), Azusa Pacific University (MA in Social Science), and Fuller Theological Seminary (PhD Inter-Cultural Studies). MaryAnn

married Rev. James T. Hawkins in 1973, and they have two grown children and four grandchildren. MaryAnn has attended eight of the previous Wesleyan Holiness Women Clergy conferences, teaching workshops at several.

Rev. Dr. MaryAnn Hawkins also serves as the president of Wesleyan Holiness Women Clergy. She is a professor of intercultural studies and associate dean at Anderson University School of Theology and is the author of "Called to Minister, Empowered to serve."



Rev. Mark Stayton

A New Season for First Church – Dublin (Continued)

My desire is to drink deeply of the well that He provides... 'Jesus answered, 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.' John 4:13-14

What a relief to know that I can place my full confidence in the One that provides this kind of refreshment. Oswald Chambers puts it like this, 'O Lord, with what abundant relief I turn to You! I need You in unfathomable ways, and with what amazed relief and joy I find in all I need in You.'

Sure, at First Church - Dublin, we have experienced an incredible growth, so much so that we had an immediate need for a place for our kids to worship. We knew that we had the need but sometimes the budget limits the desire, you know what I mean? We prayed one night in our Church Council that God would provide a space for our kids to worship and the next day, one of our Council members called and said God has done it, we have a building that will be so cheap that we can do it right now. And this is how God works, when we get out of the way.

Sure, we are getting increasingly limited in our

seating space for our Sunday Morning Worship. Sure, we had a full house of people at our 'Welcome to Our Church' event this past Sunday, but it is about so much more than these things. It is about a complete and total surrender to the Creator of the Universe. For me and for everyone that comes through our doors.

I am learning in a deeper way that God can and God does do what He says. He exceeds what our human mind can even fathom. May we never limit what He can do, after all He wants to do it for you, and for me. May we drink deeply from His well, for it will never run dry.

COGVA Budget

August 1, 2015 - July 31st, 2016

Categories	Budget	Aug-Oct 1st Qtr	Nov-Jan 2nd qtr
1000 STATE OFFICE			
1100 Business Office	\$3,800.00 \$	552.90 \$	1,095.77
1200 Insurance	\$14,800.00 \$	- \$	6,714.50
1300 Office Manager	\$14,437.50 \$	3,609.36 \$	3,609.36
1400 Income Taxes and Social Security	\$3,320.00 \$	880.07 \$	791.70
SUBTOTAL	\$36,357.50	\$5,042.33	\$12,211.33
2000 STATE MINISTER			
2100 Salary Package (Salary, House, Etc.)	\$9,000.00 \$	1,500.00 \$	1,500.00
Pension Contribution	\$450.00 \$	- \$	-
2200 Travel & Expenses	\$4,000.00 \$	1,192.62 \$	281.62
2300 Expenses for State and National Meetings	\$2,600.00 \$	- \$	840.71
SUBTOTAL	\$16,050.00	\$2,692.62	\$2,622.33
3000 EXECUTIVE COUNCIL/STANDING MINISTRIES			
3100 Executive Board	\$1,000.00 \$	- \$	-
3200 Ministry of Church Service/Credentials	\$300.00 \$	18.28 \$	2.60
3300 Ministry of Christian Education	\$75.00 \$	36.75 \$	-
3400 Ministry of Evangelism	\$50.00 \$	- \$	-
3600 Ministry of Program	\$2,000.00 \$	- \$	331.98
3800 Ministerial Fellowship	\$100.00 \$	- \$	-
3900 Church Property Team	\$75.00 \$	- \$	-
SUBTOTAL	\$3,600.00 \$	55.03 \$	334.58
5000 PROPERTY AND MAINTENANCE			
5110 Camp Bedford			
5110 Caretaker	\$5,000.00 \$	1,250.01 \$	1,250.01
5111 Health Insurance	\$840.00 \$	210.00 \$	210.00
5120 Campground Expenses (Maintenance)	\$1,000.00 \$	- \$	-
Capital Improvements	\$750.00 \$	- \$	-
Vehicle Maintenance	\$300.00 \$	- \$	-
Camp Bedford Mkt/Advertising	\$500.00 \$	- \$	-
5140 Utilities	\$6,000.00 \$	976.77 \$	1,156.79
SUBTOTAL	\$14,390.00 \$	2,436.78 \$	2,616.80
5200 Camp Christi			
5210 Caretaker	\$26,565.12 \$	6,641.28 \$	6,641.28
5220 Health Insurance	\$7,000.00 \$	1,788.00 \$	1,788.00
5250 Utilities	\$14,000.00 \$	5,929.42 \$	3,131.21
5260 Maintenance	\$4,000.00 \$	333.33 \$	-
Camp Christi Mkt/Advertising	\$500.00 \$	- \$	-

5270 Capital Improvements	\$750.00	\$	-	\$	-
5280 Vehicle Maintenance	\$500.00	\$	-	\$	-
5300 Legal Fees	\$400.00	\$	23.50	\$	84.16
5400 Ministry Expenses	\$300.00	\$	-	\$	-
Christmas Bonus	\$1,300.00	\$	-	\$	1,300.00
SUBTOTAL	\$55,315.12		\$14,715.53		\$12,944.65
TOTAL	\$125,712.62		\$24,942.29		\$30,729.69
Income		\$	24,423.67		\$27,148.06
Difference		\$	(518.62)	\$	(3,581.63)

I've Been Thinkin... (continued)

These events are not unique to me individually. Everyone has had times in their life when, whether perceived or in reality, no one wanted them around. For me, it was in the gym at grade school.

However, there came a time in Mr. Cox's American History class in 8th grade when I was exposed to a game called "Jeopardy". In order to make studying history more exciting and easier to grasp, as we studied each chapter in American History, we would come to a day when a review of the test was done and Mr. Cox's chalkboard (I told you I was old) was converted into a "Jeopardy" play board, complete with prizes for a winning competing team. While it is true, I never was called upon to be a captain, when it came to choosing teams, the team captains found that

the first to choose me for their team was usually the team that won the "Jeopardy" competition. I had gone from being rejected to being "chosen"... And I liked it. Still do.

It's a good feeling to be chosen. To know that, while man may look at each of us through lenses that do not allow us to see all there is in a person, God chooses to love us, care for us, and have relationship with us. While we rest in the knowledge that He has chosen us to be His people, let us be reminded that we are chosen by him to be a "peculiar person" so that we "may (are allowed, and even expected to) proclaim the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light."

We "were not a people but are now the people of God (the Church), who had not obtained mercy", but now as a result of His choosing us, we "have obtained

Mercy" (opportunity for relationship with God and his people).

My friend, Mickey Taylor has a phrase he uses often, and it is this, "You are loved." Everyone needs to hear this message, and I am of the conviction that, while a skinny runt in grade school who longed to be accepted by others, I was a representative all of humanity who longs to hear from God in heaven the message He sent to each of us by His Son, Jesus, "You are loved." While a student in history class, I felt what it meant to be chosen. It does not compare with my knowledge I am chosen by God as a member of the family of God, it still felt pretty good. As Christians we are "chosen" to be agents of God's grace, reminding others, they are loved as well. Find someone this week, at least one, and take the challenge of reminding someone, "They are loved."

February

14th Freedom Sunday/Leap of Faith Sunday (See article in COGVA News)

20th @ 12:00 Christian Women Connection/Virginia Women of the Church of God Eastern Region Luncheon
Joynes Road Church of God, Cost: \$17.00, Guest Speaker - Sister Vernetta Oliver

March

11th -13th Virginia State Youth Convention Great Wolf Lodge, 549 East Rochambeau Dr., Williamsburg, VA
Theme: "Confidently Transformed" Michael Thigpen, Speaker, "Exodus" leading worship. Registration packets
have been mailed. For questions, please contact Stuart May at 434-841-1615 or info@vasyc.com

19th C.W.C./W.C.G. Regional Prayer Breakfast – Roanoke FCOG,

20th PALM SUNDAY

27th EASTER/RESURRECTION SUNDAY

April

2nd Men's Ministry "Christian Men On Fire For God", Bellamy Ave. CHOG/Norfolk Host Congregation. Dave
Tackett will be speaking on Peter, the Disciple

3rd @ 4:00 pm - Church Dedication/Chesapeake Church of God, Ricky Morris/Pastor Revival services 4th -10th

3rd -6th Revival Atkins First Church of God

8th -9th Minister's Fellowship Greenview Church of God/Lynchburg, Theme: "Keeping a Kingdom Focus In
Conflict"

22nd-23rd C.W.C./W.C.G. Convention, Atkins FCOG, Theme: "He Calls Us Friend" Naomi Bryant- Resource
Leader

26th-28th Church of God Regional Convention and CHOG Table Vancouver, WA "SexualEthics"

May

8th Mother's Day

15th-20th Mountain Empire Churches of God Indoor Camp Meeting, Chilhowie FCOG, Dr. Dave Sebastian,

29th @ 4:00 pm Unity Service - Host Church: Chesapeake COG - Pastor Rick Morris
Speaker: Pastor Calvin Peterson, Bellamy Ave. COG

June

3rd -4th Men's Ministry Workday – Camp Christi

21st – 23rd Church of God Regional Convention, Anderson, IN "Immigration and Refugee Crisis"

JULY

1st Middler Camp, Grades 1-5

16th Men's Ministry Training, Mountain View CHOG Lynchburg, VA (Lonnie Wickard Host Pastor) Bro. Perry
Hargrove will be speaking about Moses

18th – 23rd Jr/Sr. High Youth Camp Grades 6-8 and 9-12.

Church of God in Virginia

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www.cogva.com

Submission Guidelines for COGVA News

COGVA News is a tool for the Church of God in Virginia to disseminate news of the Church at large and has begun to grow where clearer guidelines are necessary. Under direction from the Executive Board in their meeting of March 13, 2015, COGVA News will operate under the following guidelines. What follows is a work in progress as other State Newsletters are consulted. All articles should be limited to a length of 500 – 700 words. Submission to COGVA News implies

permission to edit submitted articles for clarity and space availability. Priorities of space will be given to items of news of local congregations/ministries, COGVA functions, regional activities, and COGVA Entities (C.W.CW.C.G., M.C.G., Christian Education, and all ministries of COGVA).

Non-news items and editorials must be original to the author and quotes attributed to its proper sources. Priorities of space will be given to items of news of local

church news, COGVA Ministries.

Submission of articles should be limited to a minimum of one article per local church/ministry per quarter. A quarter will be defined as Aug.-Oct., Nov. – Jan., Feb. – Apr., and May –Jul.

Please remember, these guidelines are a work in progress and a future set of guidelines governing COGVA News will be forthcoming

About the Church of God in Virginia..

The Church of God in Virginia consists of 50 churches across the Commonwealth and according to current accounting serve over 2,500 constituents each

Sunday Morning. Our current State Leadership consists of Chair - Rev. Gertrude Goode, Vice-Chair – Rev. Steve Hency, Secretary – Sister Cathy

Atkins, State Minister - Dr. Bob Neace

CHURCH OF GOD IN VIRGINIA

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