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"...Write the vision and make it plain on the tablet so that it might be read quickly."

Habakkuk 2:2 (LEB)

Meet Rev. David & Marilyn Smith – New Pastoral Family at Tibitha CHOG



Bob Neace welcomes David and Marilyn to COGVA

Tibitha Church of God in Reedville offers a warm welcome to their new Pastor, Rev. David Smith and his wife, Marilyn. An installation was held on February 19. Participating in the service was Interim Pastor David Baez, Dr. Norman Clark, Pulpit Search Committee Chair, Rev. Lucia Lloyd, Ministerial Association Chair and Pastor of St. Stephens Episcopal Church in Heathsville, and Rev. Neale Schools, Pastor of Fairport Baptist Church in Reedville. COGVA State Minister, Dr. Bob Neace brought the message and prayed the Installation Prayer

Rev. David Smith was born and raised in the

Akron, Ohio area where his family attended the Barberton Church of God. At the age of 12 he accepted Jesus as his Savior. It was at the age of 18 that he first felt the call to pastoral ministry.

He attended Anderson College where he met his wife, Marilyn. Over the course of the following years he was employed as a cost-estimator, purchasing agent and CAD/CAM programmer. Also, during this time David and Marilyn were very active as they attended the First Church of God in Goshen, Indiana. It was not until he was in his early 40's that his call to ministry

was renewed. He attended Anderson University School of Theology and received his M.Div. His first pastorate

was at the First Church of God in Cassopolis, Michigan where he served for 5 years bi-vocationally. Then he went to Royal Chapel Church of God in Hickory, North Carolina for 8 years. On December 1, 2016, he became the pastor at Tibitha Church of God in Reedville, Virginia. David and Marilyn have two children, Rachel and Nathan. Rachel lives in Bloomington, Indiana and works at the Indiana University library. Nathan currently lives in Michigan but will soon be relocating to St. Louis, Missouri.



Rev. David and Marilyn Smith

I've Been Thinkin...



Dr. Bob Neace COGVA State Minister

About my childhood friend, John. Not long ago, he texted me concerning a request from his pastor in southern Illinois. His pastor had challenged the church to do things in their service to Christ that made them slip out of their comfort zones. For John, this meant for him to speak publicly about Jesus, more specifically, bring a Sunday message to his church. Not knowing where to begin, my friend asked for prayer and I assured him I would be praying for him.

I called John the evening of the morning he spoke. He was encouraged and believed he had done the best he could do, and hoped the Lord was

pleased. He shared I'd be able to listen the next day, "If I wanted..." IF I WANTED?!?!?! Absolutely, I told him.

The next day, I listened to this message – The story of David and Goliath. King Saul, not knowing how to handle Goliath (a giant over 9 feet tall with seemingly impenetrable armor and massive weaponry), put forth a bribe to anyone willing to fight this giant that entailed marriage into the royal family and tax exempt status for his father's family. David was a young shepherd boy with no military training or experience, but he also had no fear. As David does battle with Goliath, we know David wins the

fight. The point my friend makes is this, David may have fought this giant, but it wasn't his giant to fight....

This giant was a problem. But he was Saul's problem. David could have walked away from the battlefield. After all, he was sent by his father, Jesse, to bring some supplies to his brother and bring home news of the battle. He could have just thrown his hands up and said, "it's not my problem" and went home. But he didn't.

I have often said, and stand by it, that this David and Goliath story reminds us that God will fight for us, and in His name, He will help us face our giants.

(continued on page 5)

Abingdon FCOG Honors Pastor Neace for 20 Years as Pastor



Pastor Bob, Kathy, and Abigail

On February 12, the congregation of Abingdon FCOG celebrated the anniversary of twenty years of pastoral ministry with Dr. Bob Neace. The event was partnered with an annual fund raiser for the local W.C.G. as a means to keep it as a surprise for him.

Pastor Neace came to the Abingdon congregation in December of 1996 and began his pastoral ministry on the first

Sunday in January, 1997. He married Kathy Sutphin on October 27, 2001 and is the daddy to Abigail Neace. His family includes April and Scott Taylor of Anderson IN, along with grandson, Ethan, and Scott Jones of Wytheville, VA.

He came to our church with a passion to serve others and preach the Word of God. He is currently maintaining a nursing home ministry that

spans close to 24 consecutive years at Valley Healthcare in Chilhowie, and is a regular visitor in other local nursing homes. In addition to this avenue of ministry, he ministers to the sick in our congregation, visits the local jail and serves as a voluntary chaplain at Johnston Memorial Hospital.

(Continued on page 10)



Depiction of Some of Pastor Neace's Hat's

Wellon St. CHOG is a Praying Church

Pastor Melvin Hooker is teaching the Suffolk Church of God to pray more. He is encouraging the church to be greater individual and corporate prayer warriors. After the morning service, every second and fourth Sundays, the church enters prayer for one hour. We have seen God answer prayer. We believe we did not pray enough in 2016, therefore we are trying to correct this in 2017. The following are some of our prayer concerns:

1. Church growth through salvation from sin
2. Families: marriages, seniors, young people,

- children, and extended family members
3. Ministries: Preaching, Teaching, Counseling, Women, Men, Youth, Children, Outreach, Food
4. Finances and good organizational skills
5. World situations and political leaders
6. Christians to be more loving, kind, sharing, and encouraging
7. Especially for religious leaders to be the leaders that God desires them to be
8. Physically sick and bereaved
9. Prison bound or incarcerated



Rev. Melvin Hooker and His Praying Church

10. Reclaim the ones who left the fellowship

As a church, the central focus in all we do should be winning the lost. We believe God will continue to redeem in 2017.

Teen Challenge/Knoxville Hosted by Anderson CHOG/Bristol

Anderson Church of God in Bristol, VA hosted the Knoxville, TN based Teen Challenge Choir Voices of Victory on Sunday, January 8, 2017 during the AM service. Each of these women (ages ranging 18-50) shared inspiring songs and stories of freedom from addiction offering a word of hope to all in attendance. Some of these women were as new to the program as three weeks, others had been there over a year, but you could hear the

struggle and see the pain of each one as they shared their personal battle to break free from addiction. Most refreshing were the stories about the focus placed on God, how He is working in their lives, and the steps each one is taking to include Him as part of their daily routine (regular Bible study, Bible memorization, prayer, coping and life skills training so they can live addiction free outside of the Teen Challenge program).



Eastern Region CWC/WCG Holds “Moments of Peace” Banquet



Rev. Lola Dixon



Rebecca Wiles



Rev. Lori Egan

“Moments of Peace” was the theme for the regional CWC/WCG luncheons for 2016-17. The eastern region held their luncheon on Saturday, February 18 at Joynes Road Church of God. It was a beautiful Saturday afternoon with sixty women and three men in attendance. We were blessed to have our state minister, Dr Bob Neace and his wife Kathy with us along with four ladies from Blacksburg area. This is an annual event and is always well attended.

The afternoon was filled with great food, fellowship, music and two speakers. Rebecca Wiles, a longtime friend of our state president and a missionary, was given opportunity to share a little bit about her missionary work. Lola Dixon, from Joynes Road Church of

God brought us into the presence of the Lord by singing “Peace, Peace, Wonderful Peace.” It was a wonderful introduction to our guest speaker’s talk. Lori Egan, associate pastor at Riverside Church of God, spoke on God’s peace in our lives. In Sister Lori’s message, she stated that the peace of Christ cannot umpire our heart if there is anger, strife, and malice in our hearts (Colossians 3:8), and in its place put on love, compassion and humility (Colossians 3:12). She drew a spiritual comparison between the peace of God and an umpire. We need to put on the right equipment, to know the rules of the game, have good vision, need constant communication, and we need to let God have the final authority. We were

challenged to allow God to be our Umpire and to choose His peace.

At every luncheon, time is given for sharing prayer requests and praying for those needs. Saturday was no exception. We boldly brought the spoken and unspoken requests to the throne of God. As the luncheon ended, we knew that we had been in the presence of the Lord.

It is with great anticipation that we look forward to the Spring

convention which will be held on April 28-29 at Riverside Church of God in Fredericksburg. The theme for the weekend is “Shout for Joy,” with Arnetta McNeese Baily as our guest speaker. Every year, we say this was the best convention, and I truly believe, we will say it again this year! Please keep this event in your prayers

Grant Writer Needed!!!

Twenty First Street CHOG is looking for a grant-writer. For many years, the pastor and congregation of this church has reached out to their community by providing physical food to those who are in need. This is a costly endeavor. We understand there are

grants available from various source that could help to offset the cost incurred by this type of ministry, but writing proposals for these types of grants is not easy. Therefore, if you or anyone you know has experience in writing grants or grant proposal,

you are encouraged to help 21st CHOG by contacting Harold Parker at (804) 514-2702 or via email at harolddparker@gmail.com

A Plea for Help!

Currently, there are fifty churches within the Church of God in Virginia. Of those congregations, twenty-nine of us are consistent financial backers of the Ministry Teams of COGVA. If one were to look at the budget, specifically the most current, you will see a shortfall for the month of February in the amount of over \$3,200.00. This is the result of a quarterly insurance premium in the amount of about \$3,400. During the months after this bill is paid, the churches supporting COGVA regularly tends to make up that shortfall throughout the quarter, usually to keep us from operating in the red.

To the 29 churches pulling this load, we say a hearty "THANK YOU!" for your consistency and faithfulness. I am convinced that your commitments to God through COGVA are being and will continue to be honored.

To those who are pastoring or serving in leadership of any capacity of a church not currently supporting COGVA financially, will you please prayerfully consider stepping up to the plate and helping us fund the ministries of the Church of God in Virginia? Through these ministries of COGVA, we find support for fellow congregations

through camp meetings and retreats, pastoral support in areas of the newly formed S.H.A.P.E. Clusters across the state, opportunities of fellowship among our brothers and sisters through ministerial gatherings, dissemination of information through COGVA News, ministry to our young people through camps and retreats, along with numerous other ministries.

Your help is desperately needed and it is never too late to begin placing COGVA within the budget of the local church.

Please prayerfully consider how your church can help.

I've Been Thinkin... (continued)

However, this powerful insight reminds us that God not only wants to fight for us, be our protector and provider, but we have responsibility to help others overcome their giants as well. David is mentioned as "a man after God's own heart." He loved the Lord. His relationship with him was not new on that battlefield with Goliath. David's relationship goes many years back. He tells Saul while he had protected his sheep, he had fought a

lion, he had fought a bear, slaying them both. As God had been with him in the past, he'd be with him now, and he would be victorious in slaying this giant, because he "came in the name of the Lord."

David relied on what God had done for him in the past. Seeing His protection and provision then gave him the wherewithal to face, not only his own problems of protection for the sheep, but also the strength, knowledge, wisdom, and

peace that God would help him conquer Saul's giant as well.

As we think about David and Goliath, let's keep in mind our responsibilities to be Jesus in our world. Let us strive to see, not only our own giants, but the giants in other people's lives. It may be that our Christian walk and experience carries whatever is needed to slay someone else's giant, and thus bring them into a closer walk with Christ.



Mark Your Calendar

March

13th Mountain Empire Minister and Spouse Supper at El Campestre/Chilhowie, VA 6:00 pm
16th -17th COGVA Ministers Fellowship, Walmsley Ave FCOG/ Richmond
19-23 Reformation Renewal Rally, 7:00 nightly, Abingdon FCOG
31st - April 2nd COGVA State Youth Convention

April

1st – Men’s Ministry Training, Wellon Street CHOG – Focus on men’s health.
28th -29th C.W.C./W.C.G. Convention Riverside CHOG/Fredericksburg

May

21-26 Indoor Camp Meeting/Mountain Empire District hosted at Chilhowie FCOG

June

28th – July 1st Middler Camp grades 1-5

July

10th – 15th Junior and Senior High Camp
30th – August 5th COGVA State Camp Meeting



September

27 – 29 JRCOG Fall Revival, Conference, and Annual CWC Day; 7:30 nightly with Rev. Mikki Merrit, Pastor, New Cote Brilliante Church of God, St. Louis, MO and Presiding Elder. National Association of the Church of God,
30th from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, JRCOG - Fall Conference, Rev. and Mrs. Mikki Merritt, followed by fellowship lunch TBD

October

1st 11:00am JRCOG Rev. Mikki Merritt, Speaker 4:00 pm, JRCOG Annual CWC Service, Rev. Carol E. Merritt, Speaker.

Abby Neace has found her calling — helping others

Doing extraordinary things is not uncommon for 11-year-old Abby Neace.

When Abby was only four years old, she stood on a chair and read Bible scripture to residents at Valley Health Care in Chilhowie, Virginia. She's read to them every Christmas since then.

So, it was no surprise when the sixth-grade student at Cornerstone Christian Academy in Abingdon accepted a challenge from her school's grammar principal, Dana Dando, last year.

The sixth-grade class assignment was to organize a community project during the summer after reading the book, "Do Hard Things: A Teenage Rebellion Against Low Expectations" by Alex Harris and Brett Harris.

Written by teens for teens, the book inspires youth to think outside the box to help change the world. "We encourage our students to reach out to people who are hurting and needy, and this is one way they can do that at their young ages," said Dando.

The open-ended assignment allowed

students to come up with their own ideas for projects.

Abby said half way through the book, she realized her best project would be one that helped the sick.

Using her own allowance money, the student helped her parents purchase personal care items for 20 gift bags to give to patients at Wellmont Cancer Institute in Bristol, Tennessee. After working months to compile the gift bags, Abby finished presenting her gifts to the patients earlier this month.

"We offered to help her purchase some of the items, but Abby wanted to buy the supplies with her allowance money as it became available," said her father Bob Neace, who is pastor at Abingdon First Church of God.

"I am thrilled to see her taking an active part in doing things to help other people."

Her mother, Kathy Neace, said the project was a perfect fit for her daughter. "Abby has always wanted to become a doctor and oncology is her interest."

Abby packed the bags with lotions, shampoos, water, hand sanitizers, tissues, candy, gum,

notepads and pencils, and peanut butter crackers.

To remind the patients there are people in the community who care about them, she decorated a handmade book mark for each bag and included a handwritten encouragement note with a Bible verse and a picture she'd drawn.

"When I was younger, I took care of my family when they were sick and that was important to me. I've always wanted to help the sick and those hurting," she said.

"I chose to do a project for God that was too big to accomplish alone, but I feel it will have amazing long term pay offs in my walk with God," Abby wrote in a school essay about her assignment.

"I felt really good because I knew I had helped others and that's what God wants me to do."

Carolyn R. Wilson is a freelance writer in Glade Spring, Virginia. Contact her at news@washconews.com.



COGVA Budget				
August 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017				
		Aug-Oct	Nov-Jan	Feb
Categories	Budget	1st Qtr	2nd Qtr	3rd Qtr
		Expenses	Expenses	Expense
1000 State Office				
1100 Business Office	\$3,500.00	\$905.49	\$856.34	\$166.11
1200 Insurance	\$14,800.00	\$3,491.00	\$110.50	\$3,449.00
1300 Office Manager	\$14,437.50	\$3,609.36	\$3,609.36	\$1,203.12
1400 Income Taxes	\$3,320.00	\$879.82	\$879.81	\$261.37
Subtotal	\$36,057.50	\$8,885.67	\$5,456.01	\$5,079.60
1500 Chair	\$800.00	\$	\$	\$
2000 State Minister				
Reimbursement Fund	\$16,050.00	\$1,423.05	\$3,627.89	\$808.20
Subtotal	\$16,850.00	\$1,423.05	\$3,627.89	\$808.20
3000 Executive Council/Standing Ministries				
3100 Executive Board	\$800.00	\$	\$	\$
3200 Ministry of Church Service/Credentials	\$300.00	\$38.20	\$57.85	\$
3300 Ministry of Christian Education	\$75.00	\$	\$	\$
3400 Ministry of Evangelism	\$50.00	\$	\$	\$
3600 Ministry of Program	\$2,000.00	\$24.32	\$765.64	\$
3800 Ministerial Fellowship	\$100.00	\$	\$	\$
3900 Church Property Team	\$ 75.00	\$	\$	\$
Subtotal	\$3,400.00	\$62.52	\$823.49	\$
5000 Property and Maintenance				
5110 Camp Bedford				
5110 Caretaker	\$5,000.00	\$1,250.01	\$833.34	\$
Health Insurance	\$840.00	\$210.00	\$140.00	\$
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	\$968.59	\$1,125.86	\$256.92
Subtotal	\$14,390.00	\$2,428.60	\$1,699.44	\$256.92
5200 Camp Christi				
5210 Caretaker	\$26,565.12	\$6,641.28	\$6,641.28	\$2,213.76
5220 Health Insurance	\$7,000.00	\$1,788.00	\$1,788.00	\$ 596.00
5250 Utilities	\$14,000.00	\$4,739.58	\$2,325.52	\$554.46
5260 Maintenance	\$4,000.00	\$	\$350.00	\$ 350.00
Camp Christi Mkt/Advertising	\$500.00	\$	\$	\$
5270 Capital Improvements	\$750.00	\$	\$	\$
5280 Vehicle Maintenance	\$500.00	\$	\$	\$
5300 Legal Fees	\$500.00	\$48.50	\$104.36	\$45.75
5400 Ministry Expenses	\$300.00	\$	\$	\$
Christmas Bonus	\$1,300.00	\$	\$1,300.00	\$
Subtotal	\$55,415.12	\$13,217.36	\$12,509.16	\$3,759.97
Total Expenses	\$126,112.62	\$26,017.20	\$24,115.99	\$9,904.69
Total Income		\$23,974.31	\$26,553.97	\$6,633.38
Difference		(2,042.89)	\$2,038.22	(3,271.31)

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Abingdon FCOG (Continued)

Throughout his pastorates, both current and in previous settings, he has maintained a radio ministry. From its beginnings in Saltville to just recently, "Strolling through the Word" and "The Church's Jubilee" could be heard in five different markets throughout the United States.

Under his leadership, we have remodeled our sanctuary and built an educational wing to our current facility to facilitate our changing demographics. Church health has been steady over the years and the church rejoices with our pastor every time a soul is saved and baptisms occur.

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

He has always been active in state and local organizations within the Church of God. He has served in youth camps consistently since being directed of the Lord to serve in Virginia. He currently serves the church at large as a member of the Steering Committee for Pastor's Fellowship and is the current State minister for the Church of God in Virginia.

During our celebration of twenty years, members of the congregation presented Pastor Neace and his family with cards of encouragement, love and gratitude for his long term service. Various members of the church

also took opportunity to share special thoughts and memories of the previous twenty years.

Pastor Neace is quoted as saying that "If all churches were as gracious to their pastor as Abingdon has been to me, it would be very difficult for any pastor to entertain thoughts of seeking positions anywhere else. I am indeed a blessed man to be able to serve Abingdon FCOG."

We in the Abingdon congregation feel very blessed Pastor Neace as our shepherd and we look forward to working in the Kingdom of God with him for as long as the Lord allows.

2,500 constituents each Sunday Morning. Our current State Leadership consists of Chair - Rev. Dick Gilbert, Vice-Chair – Rev. Henry Haskins

Secretary – Sister Cathy Atkins, and State Minister – Dr. Bob Neace.

CHURCH OF GOD IN VIRGINIA

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