

**Church Planting, Church Renewal & Missional Partnerships
in Tennessee Valley Presbytery**

CHURCH PLANTING, CHURCH RENEWAL, & MISSION IN TENNESSEE VALLEY PRESBYTERY

As we wait for Jesus to return and make all things new, we hold close the good news of his first coming, the gospel of incarnation. The Son took on human flesh, entering a path at birth that led inevitably to his utter brokenness in crucifixion, to mend our broken lives and this broken world. Christmas encourages us to look for gospel renewal anywhere, in a little town like Bethlehem, or Trenton or Jasper, or behind prison walls.

Church Planting in Trenton GA

If looking for Grace Community Church in Trenton GA, you'll find them gathering for worship at the Handyman Salvage building where they have met since the fall of 2014.



Grace Community Church,
Trenton GA.

"It's not a pretty place," Church Planting Pastor Hutch Garmany explains, "but the salvage building has become a part of our story." Rock Creek Fellowship, while still a fairly young daughter church of Lookout Mountain Presbyterian, took the lead in planting Grace Community.

"This is where people bring their useless junk. The gospel story is for people who are unwanted, have failed, feel burned out on religion, or who have made a mess of their lives. The gospel tells us that God wants you



Hutch Garmany, pastor at
Grace Community Church.

and he salvages your life. We are not offering a better program than other churches. Those who are hungry for authentic community stick with us to find out more about Christ and to serve," said Garmany.

The local schools are central for the Garmany family. "In a rural town, the school is a hub of community life. On a Friday night, everyone is at the football game. Teen suicide is a major problem in our community. So is the rural poverty that is harder to see than urban poverty, isolated, hidden back in the hollers. Teachers see it when their students don't eat or bathe over the weekend. A number of teachers began coming to Grace and now see teaching as their mission field, doing kingdom work as they invest in the lives of their students," said Garmany.

Joining the local CrossFit gym and coaching little league teams in the community offer further connections. "With coaching, everyone who has kids connects with you."



Caitlin, five-year-daughter of single father who attends Grace Community Church.

said Garmany. "My office is at Guthrie's Fried Chicken. A former Methodist minister gave me a free office space in the back, offering access to the 'preacher man' as they call me. And everyone here believes that 'preachers love fried chicken!' I've found that people thought they knew the gospel but didn't. Meeting them where they are, in their pain, is the best way to share the gospel with them. I knew God had placed us here when a lifelong resident of the community welcomed me with the words, 'It's not my town, it's our town.'"

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-Hutch Garmany, Grace Community Church

MISSIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

“The members have such a large capacity to love, and they have a passion to see lost people saved and become members of the church.”

~Erik McDaniel, Grace Presbyterian Church

Church Renewal in Jasper TN

Just as God is at work in the planting of new churches in Tennessee Valley Presbytery (TVP), he is also making all things new through church renewal. Pastor Erik McDaniel was looking for a call to move from his part-time assistant pastoral role at Faith Presbyterian Church in Anniston AL into a full-time ministry. At the same time, Grace Presbyterian Church in Jasper TN was saying farewell to their retiring first pastor, John Paulsen. Begun with a group leaving another denomination, Grace had not grown and was considering whether God had a future for the church at all.

TVP connected McDaniel with Grace Presbyterian. God led both to take the next steps in their journey together. Immediately, the McDaniels felt at home in their new city and church. “Jasper, like Anniston, is a small-town community. The members of Grace Presbyterian are beautiful people who love Jesus. Many of them have suffered in different ways throughout their lives

and therefore have a huge capacity to love deeply. My family and I have already benefited from that love,” said McDaniel.

McDaniel was installed as pastor at Grace last July and believes God has wonderful things in store for Grace and their community. “God has given us strength through weakness. We do not have many members,



Erik McDaniel, pastor at Grace Presbyterian Church.

but through our weakness, God will be proven strong. The members have such a large capacity to love, and they have a passion to see lost people saved and become members of the church,” said McDaniel. “We are praying for very specific ways in which we can meet needs in our county. We’ve already been able to host the local high school’s girls varsity soccer team for a kickoff supper. My hopes are that we will be a blessing to our community as God’s instruments who seek to reconcile all aspects of life to him, serving as a loving, unified body that is able to meet the needs of the people in our community.”

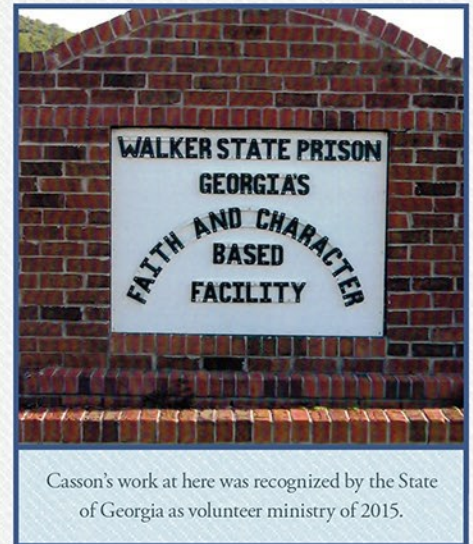


Congregation at worship, Grace Presbyterian Church, Jasper TN.

Missional Partnership – Metanoia Prison Ministry

TVP engages in many missional partnerships (see the article overleaf in this *Multiply* issue), that focus on God’s call to preach the gospel, serving among the poor and those who need advocates and helpers. MNA Metanoia Prison Ministry Director Mark Casson personally answered this call. In 1989, while awaiting trial, Casson became a believer through a prison ministry. Granted parole after 15 years, he emerged a strong believer with a tender heart toward the incarcerated.

Today, Casson spends his days discipling, mentoring, and reintegrating incarcerated men into society, and organizing volunteers to do the same. Casson serves churches across the United States and Canada. His



Casson's work at here was recognized by the State of Georgia as volunteer ministry of 2015.

home base in Chattanooga TN has opened up local ministry opportunities. His work with Metanoia’s Community Mentoring Ministry at Walker State Prison was recognized by the State of Georgia as the volunteer ministry of 2015.



The mentoring ministry was launched in 2012 through the leadership of 15 men from First Presbyterian in Chattanooga. Today the ministry has 107 active mentors from 42 different churches in the community. Metanoia hosts a weekly service at the prison, with an additional Friday night chapel service hosted by Grace Presbyterian in Dalton GA.



Choir from First Presbyterian leading worship.

The choirs of Chattanooga churches First Presbyterian, Covenant Presbyterian, and New City Fellowship have provided worship music in prison services, along with



Father and son reunion, Family Day 2015.

the preaching of PCA pastors. Each year the prison puts on a Family Day where families of the incarcerated are invited into the prison. Churches donate food for the event at the prison, and more than 100 PCA members visit the prison for Family Day, including mentors and their wives.

And the ministry continues as prisoners are paroled. "At First Presbyterian, we have five ex-prisoners as members of the church. Three prisoners are members, even while they are serving life sentences, because they understand the importance of belonging to the local church. I count it an honor to serve on the church session. More than 100 people from First Presbyterian are in some way involved in this ministry. It has been awesome to see God work in the hearts of



Closer than brothers – mentor and wife, with mentee.

so many," said Casson. Grace in Dalton GA is currently hosting a new member class for six men who faithfully attend the Friday service, with the goal of bringing them into membership.



Mentor with 3 generations of mentee family, Family Day 2014.

The prison system has asked Casson to replicate the program in 20 other prisons in Georgia. "We have called PCA pastor Randy Jackson Jr to help expand the mentoring program. We plan to expand to one prison at a time as God provides the resources," said Casson. "When we began this mentoring ministry in Chattanooga back in 2012, we had no idea the impact it would have on the prison, the prisoners, the individuals in our churches, and our churches as a whole. God has done an amazing work. It is an incredible privilege to be a part of it."



Prayer with inmate following Choral Worship Service.

"When we began this mentoring ministry in Chattanooga back in 2012, we had no idea the impact it would have on the prison, the prisoners, the individuals in our churches, and our churches as a whole. God has done an amazing work. It is an incredible privilege to be a part of it."

-Mark Casson, MNA Metanoia Prison Ministry Director

PRESBYTERY MISSIONAL PARTNERSHIPS



HOPE
for the Inner City

Tennessee Valley Presbytery (TVP) hosts a number of missional partnerships, primarily in greater Chattanooga TN and north Georgia. TVP Mercy Ministry Chair, and Rock Creek Fellowship founding Pastor, Eric Youngblood provides a quick overview. The TVP Mercy Committee was formed at the initiative of Randy Nabors. During the 30 years Nabors served as the church planting pastor of New City Fellowship in Chattanooga TN, God used his leadership to encourage a steadily growing number of ministries. Currently, Nabors serves as MNA Urban and Mercy Ministries Coordinator. New City Fellowship continues to provide key leadership and resources to mercy ministries with current Pastor Kevin Smith.

Chalmers Center/Community Development Major at Covenant College
Provides training in domestic and international holistic ministries serving the poor.

Financial Counseling – Deacon Gene Johnson, New City Glenwood
Johnson, a full-time mercy deacon, offers financial counseling and initiates help for the materially poor.

Mercy Programs – First Presbyterian Church Chattanooga
Development of life and financial skills, utilizing Jobs for Life and Faith & Finances.

LifeSpring Health Clinic – Michelle Pickett, MD, Chattanooga
Medical care among the materially poor and traditionally uninsured, especially children.



LifeSpring Health Clinic,
Chattanooga TN.

Refugee & Immigrant Ministry of East Ridge Presbyterian - Pastor JR Caines
Serves refugee and immigrant populations in Chattanooga and Knoxville.

Latino Ministry of Grace Presbyterian Dalton GA and New City East Lake
Serves Latinos in their neighborhoods, providing translation and care during Sunday services.

Chattanooga Eats & Expression Engine Ministries at New City East Lake – Pastor Jim Pickett
A food co-op and after-school arts program for children.

After-School/In-School Tutoring
Tutoring for inner city children through First Presbyterian, Lookout Mountain Presbyterian, ELECT program of New City East Lake, and GLAD (Glenwood Learning Adventure Days) program at New City Glenwood.

Chattanooga Sports Ministry
Serves inner city middle school kids through sports and mentorship, sponsored by Chattanooga Football Club pro team, with a cooperative camping program by Ridge Haven.

Hope for the Inner City – Paul Green
Offers food, dental care, life skills training, urban farming, inner-city youth leadership development, and summer youth program for Chattanooga's inner city.

Chattanooga Widows Harvest Ministry - Andy Mendonsa
Assists widows with housing needs (roof repair, house painting, lawn mowing, etc). Brings widows together for shared meals, fellowship, prayer.

Lookout for Orphans
Helps fund adoptions and provides adoption support to adopting families.

Food in the Fort at Redeemer Knoxville
Serves the homeless and lower income population in downtown Knoxville.

Safe Families for Children
Supports families in crisis through mentoring, hosting, friendship, and childcare.

Prison Ministry at Walker Valley State Prison
See article overleaf this issue of *Multiply*.



New City Fellowship,
Chattanooga TN.

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From the Coordinator

“And he who sits on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” -II Kings 7:9



This is the season in which the church remembers that Jesus came once in humility as a baby and that he surely will come again in glory as king, to reign over new heavens and new earth, having made all things completely new, even the perfected souls and resurrected bodies of his people. Hallelujah! Amen.

As we live between these First and Second Advents of Jesus, we look for his coming to us repeatedly now, by his word and spirit, by his gospel breaking into our lives more deeply and breaking out into the world more widely. This is the hope of all our efforts in church planting, church renewal, and engaging in missional partnerships – that Christ is still active now, powerfully active, to continue to make things new, even as we await his return.

And because Jesus came in the obscurity of a stable birth, born to peasant parents, under the harsh oppression of Rome that forced a teenage pregnant girl to endure a long journey away from home as her time of delivery approached, we can be confident that he is present and active now in the most obscure, forgotten, neglected and oppressed spaces of our culture, active in love and mercy towards the people in those places. Jesus still loves to come into those places. So, let us follow him there, carrying the gospel with us.

Blessed Advent, Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year!

Paul Hahn
MNA Coordinator