

**VLC Welcomes New Members, Riverbend Church as CNC**

CMBA’s Visionary Leadership Community (VLC) met virtually on Tuesday, Jan. 19, for its first session of the year to conduct business and share ministry updates. Comprised of CMBA ministers and lay leaders, the VLC operates under the association’s vision of “starting and strengthening congregations to serve as vital and vibrant missional communities.” Executive Director George Bullard and newly-elected VLC Leader Jacob Helsley conducted the meeting.

The following individuals from CMBA churches were also elected to serve, beginning with the January meeting: Ethan Brown, Stephen Greene Baptist; Janey Colmorgan, First Baptist Columbia; Rhonda Failoni, North Trenholm Baptist; Yvonne Murray, NorthStar Christian Center; Lidia Navarrette, Primeria Eglasia Hispana; Dean Reynolds, Sawney’s Creek Baptist; and, Ed Stuart, Shandon Baptist.

Of note, the VLC approved two hunger ministry grant requests. Murray elaborated on the request NorthStar’s Center of Hope has made for grant funds to purchase a refrigerator for perishable food distribution to the community. Helsley described increased needs to Blaney Baptist’s ongoing hunger ministry, which regularly serves more than 300 individuals and, to this point, has been exclusively funded by church membership.

CMBA bylaws allow churches to gain membership with the association through full church membership and Church Network Connection (CNC), which allows for churches outside of the geographical lines of the association to participate in CMBA ministry or serves as an entry point for churches interested in becoming full members. CMBA received a letter of request for membership from Riverbend Community Church, which is located in Lexington and has been affiliated with the South Carolina Baptist Convention (SCBC) for about five years. The VLC voted for CNC approval of Riverbend Community Church and plans to vote on extending full membership to the church later this spring.

VLC will reconvene Feb. 23.