

**VLC Approves New Member Church and Church Network Connection**

The CMBA Visionary Leadership Community (VLC) met Tuesday, March 16, at North Trenholm Baptist Church to conduct business and share ministry updates.

Riverbend Community Church was approved as a Church Network Connection (CNC) at the January VLC meeting. The church had no previous association affiliation and, after participating in CMBA projects and programs, committed financially to the CMBA and requested full Church Membership. The VLC approved this request.

VLC members also approved Primera Iglesia Bautista de Lykesland as a Church Network Connection. Jerry Zapata of the South Carolina Baptist Convention introduced CMBA to Pastor German Vargas, who leads the new congregation meeting in lower Richland County. Primera Iglesia has made a financial contribution to the association and will begin fellowshipping with the CMBA family of churches. The next opportunity for VLC to entertain full membership will be at the September meeting.

In other news, the VLC approved a $500 Congregational Resource Grant request to Hope Baptist Church’s hunger ministry. VLC members heard an Impacting Communities update from Cathy Locklear which included missional updates on the newly renovated Block Party Trailer, and information from Ralphetta Davis about recent Woman’s Missionary Union training and the April 22 Spring Meeting held at Killian Baptist Church. The VLC also heard about new actions taken by CMBA Huddle members, who have been organized by their strengths into smaller service groups named “squads.” The four squads are tasked with pursuing strategic actions, new congregational expressions and other intentional relationship building opportunities directly with CMBA churches.

VLC Treasurer Brenda Sheets gave a financial update and members learned about a new [donation](https://columbiametro.org/donate/) designation for Baptist Collegiate Ministries that has been added to the CMBA website.

Following the meeting, the VLC was invited to participate in the first ReGathered Lunch and Speaker for our One Priority Briefing Live! event. Guest Speaker Rabbi Andy Meyerson shared about the opportunity for CMBA churches to partner in planting a Messianic Jewish congregation in the Midlands.

VLC will reconvene Apr. 20 at North Trenholm Baptist Church.