

**CMBA Staff Retirements Announced at VLC Meeting**

The CMBA Visionary Leadership Community (VLC) met Thursday, June 10, at Belmont Baptist to conduct business and share ministry updates. This was the first meeting following the decision to transition to virtual CMBA operations. Monthly VLC meetings will now be held in different churches throughout the association, allowing new introductions to these church campuses and staff members.

During the meeting Community Impact Ministry Mobilizer Cathy Locklear announced her retirement effective August 31, 2021. Citing the need for more time with family, Locklear expressed appreciation for the ministry opportunities she has experienced during her 22 years with the CMBA. Executive Director George Bullard praised her service, saying she is “the most valuable employee we have had at the association” given her extensive knowledge of individual and church ministries throughout the Midlands. He said an ad-hoc committee will address a plan for interim ministry needs.

Bullard officially presented his own letter of retirement to VLC members effective June 30, 2022, fulfilling his long-held plan to transition out of his current leadership role and join his wife Betty in pursuing their retirement “bucket list.” Bullard assured the VLC that his work with churches will continue unchanged through the coming year and reminded them that CMBA’s upcoming Denominee Journey visioning process can provide a seamless entry point for the next director of missions.

Per CMBA bylaws, Moderator Jay Thompson, pastor of Cedar Creek Baptist, will assemble a search committee for a new executive director. Thompson told VLC members that in the coming weeks there will be celebration plans for Locklear’s retirement and Bullard plans to allow a new executive director to fill the Community Impact Ministry Mobilizer position. Thompson said he will present the names of a five-member executive director search committee with alternate members to VLC in August.

Other items of business included ministry reports and updates on new congregational expressions, including the Beth Shiloh Messianic Jewish congregation meeting at Spring Valley Baptist. VLC members heard reports from the CMBA Team Huddle groups, which Bullard described as a self-directed work team tasked with specific ministry and leadership growth resourcing directly with churches.

VLC approved a grant request in support of the forthcoming Vietnamese congregation, being planted by several CMBA churches under lead sponsor North Trenholm Baptist.

As the CMBA prepares to vacate its current office space at North Trenholm by June 30, 2021, some items will be available to churches free of charge and will require pick up. Locklear said photos of these items and related information will be posted to the CMBA Facebook page in the coming days.

Treasurer Brenda Sheets announced that CMBA spending is under budget in all areas and continues to be financially stable, and that paperwork has been submitted for forgiveness of the CMBA’s Paycheck Protection Program loan.

VLC will reconvene August 17.