**CMBA Holds Annual Meeting, Reception Honoring Locklear**

Representatives from CMBA member churches met for the annual meeting Thursday, October 7, at Cedar Creek Baptist in Blythewood. Moderator James “J” Thompson, pastor of Cedar Creek, conducted the business portions of the meeting while Executive Director George Bullard shared ministry updates. At the conclusion of the meeting attendees celebrated Cathy Locklear who retired from her role as Impacting Communities Mobilizer on August 31 after more than 20 years serving alongside of CMBA churches.

“It has been an honor and privilege to serve CMBA churches. I have grown to understand and truly care for each one of you. I have been a part of things I never could have imagined and am thankful to have witnessed ministry miracles,” Locklear told the audience of attendees and family members.

Among the ministry reports Bullard presented, there were team huddle updates to ongoing work among the almost 100 churches that identify with the CMBA Family of Churches across the Midlands. In the last 12 months, CMBA has focused on 14 new or potential congregational expressions, and a cohort has formed for current and future church planters. Several new member churches and Church Network Connections affiliating with CMBA were welcomed, and a formal CMBA partnership with Columbia International University was announced.

Speaking to the work CMBA mobilizers are currently engaged in with seven unthriving congregations, Bullard shared that 41 CMBA churches are in various stages of need and will require intervention within the next 10 years. “We are working to be positive and proactive to assist them in discovering what God might do with them moving forward. I believe in many cases that God is not finished with them yet,” he said.

As CMBA looks toward future ministry, Bullard shared an update on the work of the Denominee Journey. CMBA is one of 29 associations The Future Church Company is working with nationwide for the 18-month long-term strategy process which, for CMBA, is expected to provide succession planning resourcing. Bullard has announced his retirement effective June 30, 2022.

In related news, Ryan Dupree, the new chair for the CMBA executive director search committee, greeted attendees on behalf of the committee. While the group is still in the early stages of the planning process, Dupree asks for prayer for “who God is preparing to lead” and said the committee will announce in the coming weeks when it is open to receiving resumes.

Thompson led actions for members to elect 2022 CMBA officers and affirm the 2022-23 budget, as presented by the Visionary Leadership Community. Craig Bailey, pastor of First Baptist Winnsboro, will serve as moderator; Freddy Johnson, pastor of North Point Community Church, will serve as vice moderator; Brenda Sheets, member of St. Andrews Baptist, will continue serving as treasurer; and, Cookie Adams, member of Kilbourne Park Baptist, will continue serving as clerk. In place of Sheets who was unable to attend for the budget presentation, Bullard shared that CMBA’s PPP loan has been forgiven.

At the conclusion of the business session, Locklear was thanked for her ministry and service by Bullard, former Executive Director Bill Dieckmann, CMBA Moderator J Thompson and CMBA WMU Director Ralphetta Davis, who also read a personal statement from Rev. Andre Rogers.