

**VLC Approves Denominee Mission Focus, Statements**

The CMBA Visionary Leadership Community (VLC) met Tuesday, March 15, at Kilbourne Park Baptist Church to conduct business and share ministry updates. Pastor Terry Smoak welcomed the group along with member and CMBA Clerk Cookie Adams, who was previewed in CMBA’s [VLC Member Spotlight](https://columbiametro.org/vlc-member-spotlight-clerk-cookie-adams/) last week.

In February VLC members were presented with the Denominee Journey team’s preliminary work as presented by Executive Director George Bullard, one of eight team members working through the process. On Tuesday, VLC members heard a recommendation for the following formalized work to be adopted by CMBA as its vision moving forward:

Mission Focus, “One Thing” – *Unleashing Future Stories*

Mission Statement – *Unleashing future missional stories of our family of congregations.*

The Denominee team also recommended measurements for this strategy that include elements of awareness, leadership, engagement and progress. VLC members voted to accept the recommendation.

VLC members heard and approved additional recommendations during the meeting:

* Messengers to the CMBA WMU Spring meeting elected Cathy Locklear to serve as WMU administrative assistant. According to CMBA Bylaws, Impacting Communities presents this role to VLC for final approval.
* FBC Winnsboro requested a $500 grant for the church’s after school ministry, which is seeing significant number of salvations, life change, a new JV basketball team and sponsoring additional sports teams.
* First Baptist of Lykesland and the Hispanic congregation it planted and currently meets on Lykesland’s campus were approved as Church Network Connections in 2021. Both are finalizing application processes for full Southern Baptist Convention and South Carolina Baptist Convention affiliation. Both churches are financial contributors to CMBA and requested to become full member churches. Pastors Odell Belger and Alfredo Vargas met with VLC members during the meeting, sharing about their churches and answered questions regarding membership. Per CMBA Bylaws, Moderator Craig Bailey opened a separate session for the official voting on the two Lykesland Churches.
* A recommendation was made for approval of additional months of financial assistance to Tony Danastor, who is finalizing housing paperwork before relocating to Columbia to pastor the First Haitian Baptist Church.

VLC members heard Team Huddle reports from its subgroups regarding ongoing work with CMBA churches through Our One Priority to “start and strengthen congregations to serve as vital and vibrant missional communities.” These targeted ministry area reports included engaging leading-edge missional churches, CMBA’s Church Planting Fellowship, Our Family Stories and recent Impacting Communities projects which included block party trailer rentals and work exploring new ways churches can partner in hunger ministry.

VLC members were introduced to Lesley and JJ Joseph, new Baptist Collegiate Ministry (BCM) leaders to Benedict College and Allen University. USC BCM Director Jamie Rogers reports several Benedict students have become believers in recent years, and he is excited the Josephs are here to focus ministry to these campuses. Lesley is an engineer and teaches at USC, and JJ is earning a counseling degree at Columbia International University. The couple has four young children and say they are excited to partner with CMBA churches to establish separate BCM groups on these two campuses.

“Every college student has unique challenges. But when you begin looking at black students there is an added need to love and care for them. We want them to see us and know us as people who care about them, and care about all the things that will influence them as they are in school. We want to be salt and light on these campuses, sharing the gospel in ways that are contextual and influence them in new ways,” Lesley Joseph says.

Treasurer Brenda Sheets reported on CMBA’s continued financial stability during the meeting.

VLC will reconvene April 19.