

**God is Doing a New Thing at Pine View Baptist**

Pine View Baptist was established more than 80 years ago in the perfect spot for the growth and development that would be happening around it in the year 2023. Today, as farmlands are transitioning to developments and neighborhoods, new businesses and families are moving into the area. Pastor DJ Kirkland says his congregation has renewed its commitment to reach new neighbors with the hope of the gospel.

“We are a small church with an intimate family feel,” he says. “We are all here for each other.”

Under Kirkland’s leadership for the past five years, Pine View has recognized its need for revitalization in order to become an effective ministry presence in the area moving forward. They sought assistance from James Nugent with the South Carolina Baptist Convention and CMBA Associational Missions Strategist Jamie Rogers who, along with CMBA Strategist David Waganer, have provided critical assessments, training, and advising. The congregation is currently in the early stages of beginning its next chapter.

According to Rogers, the church and its leadership have shown “great humility in seeking input on the future vision of their church with the associational leadership team.” He points to Pine View’s humble attitude in the process and the evidence of God’s provision in response.

“It’s been amazing how God has honored their humility by already letting them see great growth since this process has been moving forward, and that’s only been about a month now,” Rogers says. “If God’s people would just humble themselves before Him and seek His will in a united effort, we believe God will bless that. He’s done so in the past, He’s doing it right now, and we believe He’ll do so in the future. God will honor and glorify His Name and no other. That’s His goal, and it should be ours.”

Kirkland said the revitalization process actually started last fall, when Pine View was searching for a youth pastor. Conversations led church leadership to explore the revitalization process, and the congregation agreed to make some necessary adjustments.

“That led to a team researching our church and analyzing the community, which helps us focus efforts in needed areas of ministry,” Kirkland explains.

Some of the feedback was simple, such as walking the church campus as if it was their first time there. Kirkland said they realized none of the key areas – like restrooms or the children’s area – were clearly marked, so that “opened our eyes to how unaware we were about what a first-time visitor would experience.”

There have been new folks visiting Pine View and others who have plugged into ministries and leadership. Last fall, Kirkland’s teenage daughter volunteered to start a children’s church that started with two children and recently saw 14 children participate. The congregation has been able to show love to a family with past “church hurt,” by intentionally exemplifying grace, mercy, love, and forgiveness. Another member has shown leadership abilities and is currently preparing to start a new life group this summer.

“We are still at the beginning of this process. Our church heard the official recommendation in early March [2023], and in mid-March we made the official commitment to move forward with the recommendation to enter into a mentoring/fostering relationship with a sister church,” Kirkland says. “But we had a unanimous commitment to this, which has been a positive affirmation that we are hearing accurately from God.”

As Kirkland shares his church’s revitalization story to this point, he repeatedly shares messages of humility, trust, and gratitude. He encourages other pastors or churches that identify with Pine View’s story to reach out for help, because “the process is not as scary as it sounds, and there is hope for churches of any size to be effective in their community.” He also expresses trust in the assistance offered from CMBA and SC Baptist Convention.

“There are people outside of your own church community that care about your church, and want it to thrive. Pastors shouldn’t have a ‘silo mentality.’ It’s a great help to reach out and have someone who listens and encourages you,” he says.

As he leads during revitalization, Kirkland is also thankful for the support and encouragement he has received from these outside sources and, perhaps most of all, from his wife, Joanie.

“There is nothing our church is doing right now that would be possible without the support from my wife, who is present at times when I can’t physically be there,” says the bivocational pastor. “I am the pastor, but I could not pastor this church without her right beside me.”

That sentiment sums up many aspects of a church revitalization story – how the critical components of relationship, communication, and partnership all work together to facilitate a church’s unique calling from God at a specific time in the life of that church.

“Our faith is in God. I also have to own the leadership impact that I have as a pastor, and it’s a humbling thing,” Kirkland says. “The entire thing is so humbling, that God would allow these things to happen for us and to realize that we are worth the time, energy, and resources being given. I am just so excited.”