

# Alpha South Carolina

## June 2018 Newsletter

Volume 1

Issue 6

Alpha

### A note from my heart...

Last year was a truly exciting year with Alpha around the U.S. God has done amazing things through Alpha, both in the U.S. and here in South Carolina. Here are some statistics:

- 17% growth in the number of churches running Alpha nationally
- Alpha reached over 347,000 people in the U.S. (including thousands in South Carolina)
- 82% of non-Christians describe themselves as followers of Jesus since trying Alpha
- National partnerships were established with Prison Fellowship and YMCA to run Alpha throughout their network

Thanks to the prayers and support of many of you, Alpha South Carolina has had an amazing 2017 as well. A couple of highlights:

- Around 200 cadets at The Citadel participated in an Alpha, courses also held for C of C and USC/Aiken
- 20% growth in the number of churches running Alpha, including 50% growth in Catholic parishes using Alpha
- Forty youth pastors/leaders attended a seminar on youth ministry in a Post Christian world which we provided.



And there are many more exciting things happening here in 2018! All this does not happen however without funding for our ministry. We receive no support from Alpha USA, so all funds must be raised here locally, to be used locally. I hope you have read some of the past stories of our financial partners and why they support Alpha South Carolina. Could we count on you to make a donation now? Our needs are critical in order to continue providing training and support for churches, prisons and campuses. You may send a check to us at Christian Ministries of the Carolinas/Alpha South Carolina, 1928 Davant Circle, Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464, or donate through our PayPal link: [www.paypal.me/ALPHASC](http://www.paypal.me/ALPHASC). There are so many nonprofits and charities that are worthy, but a donation to this ministry has life changing and eternal benefits! Bless you.

## **Partner Profile...**

### **An Interview with Martha and Allen**

#### **When did you first learn of Alpha and how did you get involved?**

We first became involved in Alpha in 2009. Having just joined the Church of Our Saviour on Johns Island, our Rector at the time asked us if we would help with the formation of an Alpha program at the church. We had never heard of Alpha and had no idea what to expect. He suggested that the Alpha team attend the upcoming National Alpha Conference in Orlando, we did and it changed our lives forever!

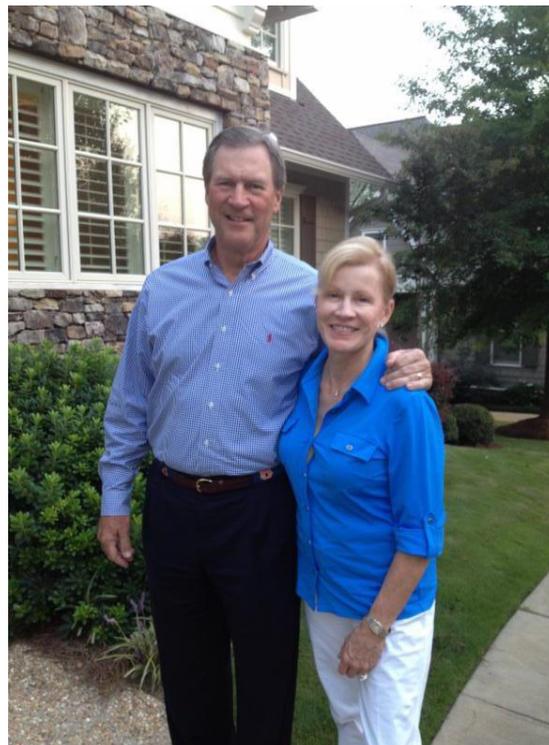
Both of us had grown up in the church but had never been filled with the Holy Spirit like we were at the conference. We came back to our church eager to tell everyone we met about the Alpha conference! Our first Alpha as leaders of a small group was a real learning experience or probably more like the blind leading the blind! Our first group was a wonderful group of people, many who went on to lead their own groups later.

#### **In addition to helping run Alpha at your church, how else do you support Alpha South Carolina?**

Since that very first Alpha in 2009, our church has offered an Alpha program every year. We have served as leaders many times and each time we see the change in people from start to finish and it is one of the most rewarding things we have ever done. We feel so blessed to be a part of this program and donate regularly to the Alpha South Carolina. Margaret Cotton is an excellent director and has worked tirelessly building the program to what it is today!

#### **What advice would you give to someone about taking Alpha?**

If you are considering taking an Alpha course, don't hesitate to do so, it will be the best 11 weeks you have ever experienced. You will make many new friends and the Holy Spirit will light your way!!



## **Featured Church...**

### **Catch the Fire, Myrtle Beach Pastor Mark & Jane Burlinson**

#### **How and when did you first encounter Alpha?**

We first encountered Alpha in the U.K. when the conference centre we helped to run hosted the Holy Spirit weekends for HTB. That's over 25 years ago now!

#### **Over the years, how many times do you think you have run Alpha?**

Jane led Alpha in our previous church multiple times, with great success. Probably 10+ times in all. We are also planning to incorporate Alpha into our new church as soon as we get off the ground!

#### **What do you see as some of the fruit of having run Alpha over the years?**

Primarily the relationships that form. It is easy for people to meet Jesus when they are accepted as they are, allowed to ask questions, and introduced to relationship with God through the Holy Spirit. We know of home-based life groups that formed from table groups at our first Alpha more than eight years ago that are still meeting!

### **Have you ever used any of the other ALPHA resources? (Marriage Course, Alpha Youth, etc)**

We have used Alpha Youth (with multiple young people finding Christ through it), and we love the Marriage Course and the Parenting Courses. We plan to use all of these in our new church, and the pre-marriage course when the need arises!

### **What advice would you give to a church considering Alpha?**

I would recommend that you do it for the impact you can have on your community, as well as for the benefits for your existing people. Don't be put off by logistics or practicalities, there is much help available here in South Carolina, especially through Margaret, and you will find other local churches running Alpha are excited to help you get started.

### **How has Alpha affected you personally?**

I have grown as a leader, and been able to encourage others into relationship with Jesus and into leadership, simply through involvement with Alpha. It is such a natural resource to introduce, and the fruit is lasting.

### **Any other thoughts you'd like to share?**

The track record of Alpha is now so extensive that I would encourage those who have been familiar with Alpha for a long time (like me) to try something new – use the film series, or add one of the other resources, or change the format and meet in homes, or start a workplace or prison Alpha. There are plenty of people who need to know Jesus, and we are God's strategy for introducing them, with Alpha as a powerful tool to make that easy!

## **How Can You Help?**

### **Campus Alpha in South Carolina**

*Statistics show that a large percentage of young people leave the church as they go off to college. And many others have never even had a personal relationship with Jesus. We are losing our young people!*

One of the priorities of Alpha South Carolina has always been and continues to be, to help courses get started on or adjacent to campuses. This requires funds. One of the big draws to come to Alpha is providing dinner prior to the talks and small group discussions. We know that if we can feed students physically, we can then feed them spiritually.



Currently we have worked with Coastal Carolina, College of Charleston and The Citadel to help them provide courses. This fall we are excited to announce that we will be helping Clemson, USC and Charleston Southern.

As alumni of any of these colleges, we invite you to help us to fund these important Campus Alphas courses. Please watch for details in a separate email; or, as always, I invite you to contact me directly if you'd like to learn more. You may also donate directly at [www.paypal.me/ALPHASC](http://www.paypal.me/ALPHASC).

**Your gift is tax deductible and yields eternal rewards!**