

Alpha South Carolina

April 2018 Newsletter

Volume 1

Issue 4

Alpha

Alleluia, Christ is Risen!

I hope you had a glorious Easter celebrating the resurrection of our Lord. It was certainly a great day in the Charleston area, as we had churches doing their Easter services not only at their churches, but some at plantations and some at beaches. There was even a sunrise service at The Battery in downtown Charleston. Wherever you celebrated, I hope it was a meaningful time for you.

Here are some updates on Alpha in the area. We have several churches who are starting Alpha this week, including two that are brand new to Alpha. I'm sure they'd appreciate your prayers! Please remember I am here to assist you in planning, training and coaching.

I spoke at the March 15 meeting of God in the Workplace and shared a bit about evangelism then gave everyone the chance to experience a first session of Alpha. Four companies have responded that they are interested in running Alpha at their companies and one has actually already started.

Workplaces are a great mission field and Alpha can easily be run over a lunch or at the end of a day. If you are interested in starting Alpha at your company, please let me know! Also, remember that Alpha really can be run anywhere – in your home, at a coffee shop, on a campus or anywhere you have the option of showing a short video and having a discussion.

Speaking of spreading the gospel, I read an interesting article from the Barna Group. In a recent study of US churchgoers, 51% said they were not familiar with the "Great Commission", from Matthew 28:18-20. Approximately 25% said they had heard the term but really did not know to what it referred. Not surprisingly, of the churchgoers who were familiar, 29% were "seniors" or "elders" as Barna called them, and 26% were "boomers". Only 10% of millennials recognized the term at all, and only 17% of Generation X. Since the Great Commission is the call to evangelism, to "go" and make disciples, it seems we have some work to do! And Alpha is one of the greatest evangelism tools we have at our disposal. Again, please be sure to let me know if I can help you.



Partner Profile...

Interview with Brock B.

How did you first hear about Alpha or get involved with Alpha? How has Alpha impacted you personally?

The first time I heard about Alpha was from a good friend who had just taken it at a different church than the one that I had been attending. It was on a Tuesday night so I jumped in and thoroughly enjoyed it as well as some newfound fellowship among our small group table.

Whether taking Alpha for the first time or leading new Alpha small groups, Alpha has always strengthened my beliefs and understanding of Christianity as well as a stronger personal relationship with Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

What prompted you to start supporting Alpha financially or in other ways? What would you say to someone who might be considering financially helping Alpha South Carolina?

The reason for my support of Alpha financially as well as a volunteer leader is simple. It's imperative for all of us to give back to this wonderful ministry so it can grow & thrive.

What I would say to someone who is considering giving to Alpha financially is what an honor you have to be able to do so. Every dollar you give allows someone to learn of Christianity and Jesus for the first time. You're financially allowing the great commission to be carried out first hand.

What would be your advice to a church considering running Alpha?

My advice to a church getting ready to start Alpha for the first time would be several things. First, try to plan and get started organizing a year to six months in advance. Second go to other churches that are running Alpha and see how they are running it. Find out from them any potential obstacles so you'll all be ready when it's time to run the course.

What would be your advice to someone who is considering taking an Alpha course?

My advice to someone who is considering taking Alpha is to jump in with an open mind and ready to learn. Do it. Whether you are a lifelong Christian or atheist or agnostic this class is perfect for all involved!

Featured Church...

St. Andrew's Mount Pleasant

The Rt. Rev'd Stephen D. Wood, Rector, and Bishop of the Diocese of the Carolinas

With a track record going back many years, St. Andrew's, Mt. Pleasant is a prime example of how Alpha is intended to be offered to its surrounding community. In February, the N. Charleston campus of St. Andrew's launched its first Alpha course! We recently spoke with the lead pastors from both campuses.



How and when did you first encounter Alpha?

I first encountered Alpha in the early/mid 90's when a friend passed around audio cassette tapes from an Alpha conference.

How many years has St Andrew's run Alpha?

I think we started in 1996.

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

Questions of faith are addressed. Relationships developed. Many, many people have come to faith.

Do you use any of the other ALPHA resources? (Marriage Course, Alpha Youth, etc)

We've run the Marriage Course and Youth Alpha.

What advice would you give to a church considering Alpha?

Make a 3 year commitment and pray.

How has Alpha affected you personally?

I have found great joy in the Alpha course. There's nothing like seeing people come to faith in Jesus.



St. Andrew's Park Circle, North Charleston

The Rev'd David Libbon

St Andrew's Mt Pleasant has been running Alpha for many years but your campus, St Andrew's Park Circle, ran Alpha for the first time starting in February. How did it go?

I think it went really well. We intentionally hosted Alpha outside of a church building so to keep the threshold low for those who don't believe to attend. It was tricky to organize setting up and breaking down with food and when people could get off work to make our gatherings but overall by week 2 or 3 we had it down and our leaders really played a big part.

Is there a particular story of someone who participated in the course that you could share?

A lot of stories came out of our first Alpha. One, in particular, was a lady who was disconnected from her family and wrestling with loneliness. By the midway point of our course, she had found not just faith in Christ but also the powerful metaphor of Church as a family. It really changed her life.

What advice would you give to a church that is thinking of utilizing Alpha?

Two bits of advice. Start intentionally small and grow as people get the vision for inviting others. Second, a successful Alpha hinges on your team. Our team started meeting in July of 2017 to pray together, then in the Fall of 2017, they plugged in with an existing Alpha Course all to be prepared to lead our own in the Spring of 2018. They were committed and ready. Investing in a good team pays major dividends down the road.

What impact has Alpha had on you personally?

Personally, with all the details and planning aside, Alpha was a great opportunity to sit with non-believers and share the gospel. It was challenging but also beautifully simple. As a pastor, it was affirming to see our people not only engage but really get excited about sharing their faith. After our final night, the first question one of my leaders asked was... "When are we doing this again? I already know who I want to invite!"

How Can You Help?

PRAY • SERVE • GIVE

Pray:

- You are invited to join our monthly prayer call on the first Monday of each month.
- Our call in number is **(515) 739-1034**, then enter access code **656709#**

Serve:

- We need volunteers to serve in various avenues of ministry: prisons, training, and technology
- Please contact me if prison ministry is an area in which you feel called to serve. We provide special training for prison volunteers.

Give:

- You can donate to the work of Alpha South Carolina via PayPal: [Click Here](#) or by mailing a check made out to Christian Ministries of the Carolinas, with the memo designation: "Alpha South Carolina" to 1928 Davant Circle, Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464
- 100% of our funding comes from individual donors, churches, and foundations who support our mission of sharing the Gospel through Alpha.

Your gift is tax deductible, and yields eternal rewards!