

Alpha South Carolina

July 2018 Newsletter

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Happy Fourth of July!



Hope you are all having a good summer so far and I pray that you have a safe and happy 4th! It seems early to be thinking about fall Alpha courses, but some of the planning should be done soon and, of course, I am here to help.

We have some churches who will start Alpha for the first time this fall. And it's even more exciting to report that we will have the first Alpha courses starting for the Clemson and USC campuses!

Speaking of that, as I mentioned in my last communication, it's critical that we help college students in their relationship with Jesus. ***Research shows that over one million youth – even those raised in the church – will choose to leave each year for the next three decades.***

That's over 30 million young people who will abandon their faith. One of the priorities of Alpha South Carolina has always been and continues to be to help courses get started on or adjacent to college campuses. One of the big draws to come to Alpha is for the dinner which precedes the talk and small group discussion. We know if we can feed students physically, we can then feed them spiritually.



Will you help?

We need to raise a minimum of \$5,000 to assist these campus ministries in offering Alpha. We currently have a donor who has offered \$500 and we challenge each of you to make a donation of any amount to match and exceed his donation.

If you are a graduate of one of the campuses we help (The Citadel, College of Charleston, Coastal Carolina, USC, or Clemson) or if you have children or grandchildren there, please consider making a donation to Alpha South Carolina through our PayPal account (www.paypal.me/alphasc) or by sending a check to Alpha South Carolina, 1928 Davant Circle, Mt Pleasant, SC. Please indicate which college you are supporting and remember, all donations to us are tax deductible!

We challenge you to support your campus!

We will keep tally and let you know which school receives the most. Remember you are helping these young people, the future leaders of our country, to find the love and grace of Jesus!

Hope you enjoy reading this month's partner and church profiles!

Partner Profile

An interview with Patti E.

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

I heard about Alpha in 1991 when my Presbyterian Church Winston-Salem, NC, was offering it.

How has Alpha impacted you personally?

I first took it when St Andrew's in Mt. Pleasant was offering it in different locations. I took the Nicky Gumbel version which was shown at an assisted living facility. After that, I took it at St Andrew's with Steve and other St. Andrew's leaders doing the talks. After that, I began being a small group leader and led small groups for years.

What prompted you to start supporting Alpha financially or in other ways?

I began supporting Alpha financially when Margaret Cotton, who had been my co-leader of one of the groups I led, was asked to partner with Alpha at a statewide level, and needed financial support. I was so impressed with her as a Christian, as a wonderful spokesperson, and as a strong leader that I was happy and felt privileged to be able to help her in a small way answer God's call to this particular ministry.

What would you say to someone who might be considering financially helping Alpha South Carolina?

I would say I think it's a wonderful investment which will have eternal consequences. This ministry has been so effective in bringing many seekers and nominal Christians into a vibrant, personal, and everlasting relationship with Jesus.

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

I would encourage them to offer Alpha. I've seen it be effectively used with different ages and in different denominations and by using the DVDs or giving the talks live. I believe the topics and the format and the prayers of the leaders produce a wonderful environment for the Holy Spirit to work and draw people to JESUS.

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

I would encourage anyone considering taking this course to do so. I believe it is helpful no matter where a person is spiritually. I believe it will strengthen the faith of the strong Christian and give solid answers to the person who is trying to see if Christianity is credible, pertinent, and the one true religion.



Featured Church

**St. Mary Magdalene
Catholic Church**
Simpsonville, SC

Pictured: Michael J. McGarry and his lovely wife, Paula. Michael is the Director of Evangelization at St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Church

How and when did you first encounter Alpha?

In 2015. Alpha is a key component of Father James Mallon's Divine Renovation and our

Parish was looking at using the Divine Renovation model for transforming our Parish culture from a maintenance one to one of missionary discipleship. You start that by getting people's hearts on fire. That is what Alpha does – brings people to Christ.

Over the past couple of years, how many times has your parish run Alpha?

We are in our 9th season. We run a fall, spring and summer season.

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

I see hearts changing. I see people becoming fully aware of the Love that God has for them and that they matter to God. This realization brings them to want to serve.

Have you used any of the other Alpha resources (Alpha Youth, Marriage Course, etc.)

Both the Fall and Summer have a English and Spanish Alpha's and last Fall we added the Alpha Youth series. Finally, we've started the Marriage course this spring.

What advice would you give to a church considering Alpha?

Start with a pilot with your potential leaders or take it somewhere local to you. See how it's run but go through it yourself. The pilot is really important because that will give you an idea of what your challenges are for your Church.

Or to a person considering taking Alpha?

Go with an open mind and just give it a try – "come and see."

How has Alpha impacted you personally?

Me personally, it changed my life. I sold my business and took the job as Director of Evangelization. One of my primary responsibilities is overseeing Alpha!

Any other thoughts you'd like to share?

Alpha is something that I wished I had been part of way before 2015. It's been around since '92 but now that I'm a part of it, I want to share it with as many people as possible. Changed hearts is the answer to what ills our society now. Jesus left us the answer. All that we have to do is get the answer to as many people as possible and little by little we will change the world!

Final Thoughts

Prayer is one of the key foundational elements of Alpha. On the first Monday of each month at 4:00 PM we hold a prayer conference call, during which we pray for Alpha South Carolina and the courses being held around the state. You are invited to join us.

Our call in number is (515)739-1034

Access code 656709#

