

Alpha South Carolina

March 2018 Newsletter

Volume 1

Issue 3

Alpha

Personal Note...

Last month I attended the National Alpha Conference in Phoenix. There were over 800 people in attendance, representing churches, both Protestant and Catholic, from all over the US, some who have run Alpha for a long time, some who are new to Alpha. It was an amazing time of worship and prayer, along with some incredible speakers sharing ideas on the theme of Kingdom Culture.

Alpha USA recently sent out surveys to the participants. Around 96% of the attendees indicated the conference was definitely worth their time, and 94% said they would recommend others to attend. Some of the “takeaways” that were mentioned included the time spent in ministry and prayer, the unity and love that was shared, the presence of the Holy Spirit, and the radical hospitality offered by both the Alpha staff and the staff of Hillsong Church, the host location.

Comments included a person who wrote “In my 45 years of ministry, this was one of the best experiences I have ever had”. Another wrote, “this was a game changer” and another “what an empowering time”.

Next year the conference will be held once again at the Hillsong Mesa Campus near Phoenix, January 31 and February 1. It is open to anyone – whether you are a pastor, leader or member of a congregation. It doesn’t even matter whether your church as run Alpha. This is not a training on how to run Alpha, it is a conference on developing Kingdom culture, wherever you are! Please consider attending!

On another note, If you are in the Charleston area, I would like to invite you to the “God in the Workplace” meeting on March 15 from 7:15-8:45 at The Harbour Club. I will be speaking on “Experiencing Alpha”.

For more information or to register: www.godintheworkplace.com



Partner Profile...

Interview with M.B.

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

When we first became members of St. Andrews Church they suggested all new members take Alpha and wanting to become involved in St. Andrews we signed up and took Alpha.

How has Alpha impacted you personally?

It has helped me grow as a disciple and more importantly to me it has created an opportunity to share the Gospel with others. Helping with Alpha gives one the opportunity to share Christ’s love for people. Every time we help with Alpha lives are changed as folks either discover Christ for the first time or discover a new and deeper relationship with him.

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

We have long supported a number of missions and evangelism endeavors. In our experience, Alpha provided the most effective model for sharing the love of Christ to others so we just naturally wanted to support Alpha. Alpha is a fantastic return on our investment of time and money.

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

Do it! Use the model and train your leaders as Alpha is a different approach to sharing the Gospel. I believe the key is creating a safe environment of sharing and questioning. You have to let the Holy Spirit do the work and you are just a host and facilitator.

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

Jump in with an open mind and see what God has for you. Alpha is a bit unique in that there is something for everyone in Alpha. You just have to show up and let the Holy Spirit speak to you where you are in your search for truth.

Featured Church...

Church of Our Savior, John's Island

Pastor Karl Burns – pictured with his lovely wife, Susan

How and when did you first encounter Alpha?

I first encountered Alpha as I was preparing to leave for seminary in 2003. I was the youth pastor at All Saints' Florence and we had put together a team to explore and implement an Alpha course. Sadly, our celebration dinner was scheduled the month after my family and I left for Nashotah. I was excited about the program and really thought it had great potential to educate our parishioners as well as reach out into the Day School and our community. In seminary, I studied the various evangelical programs connected with Anglicanism but did not go through my first Alpha until 2017.

How many years has Our Saviour run Alpha?

Our Saviour has run an Alpha Course since March 2003. In my tenure as pastor we are just finishing our second Alpha Course and our first Youth Alpha, and will look into Alpha Sprouts next year

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

Alpha is critical to our mission of "Connecting to Christ and Community." We employ Alpha as a way of educating new members for ministry, providing a common base of Christian systematics and ethics, and as a way of spreading the Gospel in our community. I have seen lives transformed and healed during the course and Alpha has provided an avenue for the Holy Spirit to direct people to small groups and become more involved in the ministries of Church of Our Saviour. There is a multi-fruit production at Church of Our Saviour from Alpha that includes not just first fruits but also mature, disciples who make disciples fruit.

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

As I stated earlier, we are using Alpha Youth and are investigating the children's Alpha program. We have not used the Marriage Course – yet, but we will look into the possibilities in the very near future

What advice would you give to a church considering Alpha?

- 1) Pray for the right time for your church to hold an Alpha.
- 2) Prepare an exploratory team that will look into Alpha, view the videos, talk with you, and then talk with other churches that run Alpha programs
- 3) Send a team of folks (maybe the exploratory team) through a local Alpha (this will also provide small group leaders)



- 4) Put together a team and set a date of at least 6 months out.
- 5) Have a plan of beginning small groups if not already in existence.

How has Alpha affected you personally?

As a pastor, Alpha has helped me in several ways. The first that stands out is the empowerment of the laity to do the work of the Great Commission. And that is one of my greatest joys. It is set up to not only evangelize the unchurched, but also develop disciples that make disciples. Second, the new video's have helped me (and my leaders) hear from a whole new generation and realize that we are really living in a post-Christian world and that the work of spreading the Gospel must be recaptured. Third and maybe most important, I am blessed to have a team of dedicated workers and I am not "in charge." I can worship, listen, absorb and discern how the Holy Spirit is working and truly focus on the spiritual needs in that moment and not worry about if the dinner is ready, or coming up with small group questions, or spending time preparing a talk (though I have taught several of the modules and really enjoyed it!)... Alpha has been, is currently, and will continue to be a part of our ministry at Church of Our Saviour.

Seen in the Local Media

I was recently interviewed by the Carolina Compass – and the article was featured on the blog of a friend.

[Click here to read it](#)

Coming Event Reminder!

God in the Workplace, March 15, 7:15-9:00 at the Harbour Club, Charleston.
I will be the speaker: **Experiencing Alpha**. www.godintheworkplace.com

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!