***SPECIAL EDITION!***

**Thursday, March 21, 2019**

***Our One Priority* Briefing for Ministers from George Bullard**

A Family of Baptist Congregations in the Midlands of South Carolina

***Our One Priority***

*Starting and Strengthening Churches to Serve as Vital and Vibrant Missional Communities.*

**Recent Actions by the Visionary Leadership Community**

In recent meetings of the Visionary Leadership Community (formerly Administrative Team) of CMBA, several significant decisions were made that increase the services available to undergird the work of our congregations.

**Mission House:** Since 2016 CMBA has owned and operated a mission house for use by furloughing missionaries. During that time, we have had two occupants of the house. The house itself needed significant repairs and upgrades. The decision was made to sell the house and invest the proceeds in services that can enhance the ministry of our congregations. The mission house sold on March 15th.

Proceeds from the sale will be used in two ways: 1. A grant fund is being established to assist contributing member and network churches in CMBA in providing housing for furloughing missionaries, and who also may be providing temporary housing for staff transitioning into the Columbia area. The grants will supplement the costs that congregations are incurring. Guidelines should be available by May 1st.

2. Funds were made available to secure two contract workers who will enhance our services to congregations regarding the interim between pastors, pastor/staff search processes, ministerial ordination processes, stewardship education, conflict mediation, legal issues, constitution and bylaws issues, legacy planning, and staff compensation issues. Announcements about these two contract workers and how congregations can access their services will be forthcoming. See the article on this [***HERE***](https://www.columbiametro.org/mission-house-sold-minister-and-missionary-grant-program-begun/).

**Hunger Ministry:** A grant program was established to assist congregations to engage in hunger ministry efforts. The goal is to support contributing church members and network connection churches in their effort to make a difference in their communities through hunger ministry based on the biblical mandate to demonstrate the love of Christ by helping those in need. This grant program is active now. Congregations wishing to apply should contact Cathy Locklear at 803.622.0303 or ***CathyLocklear@ColumbiaMetro.org***. For more details about the Hunger Ministry Grant Guidelines, go [***HERE***](https://www.columbiametro.org/hunger-ministry-grant-program-established/).

**Network Connection Churches:** The constitution of CMBA has allowed for many years two levels or types of membership in CMBA. In recent months the Visionary Leadership Community has more carefully defined the second level or type of membership and is using the title “Network Connection Churches” for this year, and then will seek approval to formally revised the constitution to include this language.

The first church to take advantage of this second level or type of membership is Alice Drive Baptist Church in Sumter, SC. Their primary associational membership remains the Santee Baptist Association. Alice Drive is financially contributing to our association and participating in a peer learning community with a couple other congregations that association director – George Bullard – is facilitating. See the article about

Alice Drive [***HERE***](https://www.columbiametro.org/alice-drive-baptist-church-in-sumter-connects-with-cmba/).