



OUTREACH

Fall 2023

This issue: Outreach. Outreach is making contact with people in our community, and then building relational bridges for sharing the gospel and connecting them with the Church.

Lessons Learned Through COVID

Interview with Soren Kornegay by Jim Klukow

Soren Kornegay is the pastor of the newly established church Christ the King in Savannah, GA.

Tell us about you.

My wife, Emma, and I grew up at First Presbyterian Church in Columbia, SC. We have two young children. I attended Covenant Seminary. My first calling was as a campus minister at The Savannah College of Art and Design, with RUF. There I connected with friends interested in planting a church that would be attractive to Christians and non-Christians. It would be joyfully courageous in sharing the gospel and kingship of Jesus.

How would you describe Christ the King?

We touch hearts and heads with joy in Christ as Lord. Our values include family, formation, and fun. We seek to develop thick relationships with one another. The worship style includes ancient liturgical dynamics with songs from every era of church history, including our ARP heritage. Only 15% of our community thinks church attendance is important.

What was your experience going through COVID?

We had about 40 people and were approaching the next stage of church development when COVID hit. We were two years old, growing, and thinking about going to Sunday morning worship. We lost about half of our people through COVID. It was discouraging and I felt like quitting.

After the lockdown, we met in a friend's backyard doing the same liturgy. Then, we began to grow. The way we navigated COVID was simple. The polarizing

issues associated with COVID could have meant major conflicts in the church, but we knew and loved one another. Differences in handling COVID became personal and incarnational. Our respect, honor, and love for God and others, including our neighbors, actually made us attractive. By asking about COVID mandate concerns and listening to our members, we gathered a bunch of people! Relational capital got us through COVID and attracted outsiders. The strength of relationships allowed us to survive COVID. The crisis provided an opportunity for a small church to really worship.

Tell us more about how crucial relationships are.

Let me add that you can perceive shame when you pastor a small ministry. I feel it. In response, we try to dignify small pastoral ministry by saying "small doesn't matter." I think small is better. There are some ideas that don't scale. Jesus loved the twelve. Ministry is life-on-life. Small ministries provide opportunities to develop relationships that build resilient faith over the long haul even during COVID.

Give us a few takeaways for churches.

First, we need to shift our vision from conflict as a bad thing to an opportunity. We spend lots of time trying to keep our congregations together. That is a fool's errand. We can't do that. What we can do is see conflict as an opportunity to understand one another better, to get underneath the conflicts, and stop arguing and start shepherding. Ask them what's going on in their heart and why it matters to them. Second, conflicts prepare people to be on mission together. Conflict isn't always a bad thing. It helps to understand what is going on in people's hearts. Conflict doesn't have to be a scary thing.

WHAT'S NEW?

Church of the Harvest



Ken and Kathy Bush met in a church plant and later Ken served as a church planting intern. This was the start of their long-term vision for church planting. Before going to seminary, Ken served as a line officer in the Army and returned to the military as a chaplain. They raised four daughters including a set of triplets. Kathy homeschooled them through school while on the move with the Army. Ken is currently an adjunct professor at the Rawlings School of Divinity (Liberty University). This allows him to be a tent-making church planter free from having to receive a salary from the church.

Tell us about your hopes as a church planter at Church of the Harvest?

Church of the Harvest was planted with an intentional focus on disciple-making, authentic community, and church planting. Our plan is to call a church planting intern to serve as an associate who is interested in exploring church planting. When we become a particular congregation, we hope to plant other churches. Our desire is to grow primarily thorough evangelism and reaching those who may have left church at some point in the past. You can find out more about our core commitments on our website: churchoftheharvestarp.org.

Join us in praying:

- For the right intern to be called to Church of the Harvest.
- For outreach events.
- For the growth of the core group.
- For future elders and deacons.
- For a musician(s).

MISSIONINSITE



How exciting that many ARP churches sense a call from God's Spirit to direct their energies into both feeding and gathering God's sheep! Rev. Todd McCoy from Greenwood ARP Church recently worked with ONA's Jim Klukow to utilize MissionInsite demographic information on how best to share Jesus with people living near the church. Todd states, "The report was both challenging and encouraging as we are seeking fresh ways to connect with our community. I encourage every ARP Church to use ONA's resources. It's a no-brainer!"

ONA offered Greenwood ARP a MissionInsite neighborhood report providing information on who their neighbors are and helping to prioritize ministries and outreaches that fit their available time, money, energy, volunteers, and neighbors. We also plotted church members on a map and searched for families with children living near those members. The results were eye-opening.

Along the river were mostly retired folks but almost no children. That meant the riverfront community's needs were primarily to care for and meet the concerns of older folks who often feel lonely and isolated. Second, pockets of families with children living closer to the church where members also lived appeared. Here are good places to begin outreaches to families.

Todd is using this to "help change and modify our existing ministries and help pinpoint the community needs around us. MissionInsite confirmed what we thought was the case in our community. Now we can decide how to intentionally reach our neighbors."

Your church can benefit from a demographic study too. Through prayer, information on who your neighbors are, and motivated outreach teams, your church can flourish. Jim Klukow, the ONA Program Coordinator can help you get started. Todd has also offered to talk to any pastors, elders, or outreach ministry team leaders who want to know how MissionInsite and other ONA resources can be used to build the Kingdom of God through their church.

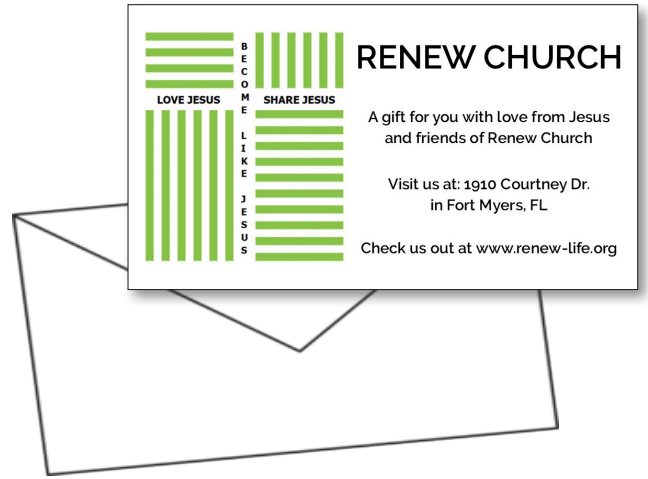
Hope & Hurricane Ian



Rev. Steve Reynolds
Renew Church, Fort Myers, FL

For many people in Southwest Florida September 28, 2022 changed everything. Hurricane Ian struck Fort Myers as a category 4 hurricane and much of the area was devastated. Many homes were flooded, some were destroyed, there was debris everywhere. Our denomination responded with overwhelming support to Renew, enabling many of our members to get back on their feet as well as extend help to others as they recovered.

Many of our members joined teams and helped clear out debris. They provided meals and other support. Our leadership was determined to get everyone at Renew involved in making a difference for Christ at this critical time. We decided to provide each member/regular attender at Renew with five envelopes containing \$20 each. Their task was simple: to materially bless someone who had suffered loss from Hurricane Ian and to use this as an opportunity to show them the love of Jesus. Our heart was to enable and encourage our members to



step out and engage others personally. Our view of outreach is one-on-one, equipping people to reach people with whom they come into contact daily. This tragedy served as a real-life opportunity to put this vision into practice.

In early October we had a fellowship meal – a "Renew-cue" – where we explained our purpose and handed out the envelopes to our members. Overall our people were excited to help make a difference for people. Some were skeptical, but opted to "give it a shot." The burden of investing God's money in others was now theirs. Some people opted to give the entire \$100 to someone in need, others divided it up into smaller segments. Many gave that money plus some of their own.



The stories began to pour in about how people were encouraged and touched by this generosity and thoughtfulness in Christ's name. A store manager whose entire inventory was a loss broke down in tears that someone cared. A waitress with a very hard exterior melted. One of our ladies who interfaces with homeless people fed more than a few.

This has not yet made a significant impact on church attendance, but the relationships that were built are still open and bridges to the gospel have been built. This gives us hope that God will work through our people and their love for neighbors, co-workers, and even strangers to win our community for Christ.



Seminary Ministry Lunches



ONA staff regularly host ministry lunches for seminary students to supplement their academic education with practical ministry insights, while also informing them of church planting opportunities in the ARPC. In a recent week, Alan Avera and Jim Klukow were at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary (GPTS), and then were joined by Wayne Frazier at Reformed Theological Seminary (RTS) in Charlotte, NC.

At RTS, Wayne led a student discussion on how churches can help connect people in their community with the means of grace. We need outreach because

people outside the church need the means of grace. A crucial bridge is building relationships.

A robust discussion produced many insights. One student asked how a busy pastor can find time for outreach (gathering the sheep) while consistently feeding the sheep in his congregation that are already gathered. How can he do this without burnout?

The students were encouraged to recognize that not all outreach needs to be large, time and energy intensive events. An occasional large event can show the community that the church is open to the community, but what is much more sustainable is incorporating outreach into things the church is already doing and places the pastor is already going.

Between GPTS and RTS, about thirty students and staff joined the luncheons and made deeper connections with the ARP. These attendees ranged from first to fourth-year students. They represented various states in the US, as well as Canada, Scotland, Portugal, and Brazil.

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