



OUTREACH

Winter 2024

New Executive Director



Rev. Morrie Lawing will begin serving as the Executive Director of ONA in January 2025.

Morrie is no stranger to ONA. He has been in the ARP for 35 years with 28 of them involved in church planting. In 1996, Morrie, his wife Lori, and his family moved to North Carolina to begin the work of planting Ballantyne ARP Church. After this mission church was organized, they moved in 2005 to Denver, NC, to start another ARP church with full financial backing from Coddle Creek ARP. Through their continued prayers and God's sovereign purposes, Christ Church ARP was born, and Morrie served there for the past 20 years. When he was asked by a member of the search committee to consider leading ONA, he had no reason to leave his pastorate. In the end, the ONA Board revealed ultimately God's call for Morrie to serve as ONA's director and he is humbled and excited to see what the LORD will do.

What is something you want members of every ARP Church to know about ONA?

- It is presbyteries, not ONA, who start churches and ordain men who are seeking to plant a church. ONA is a ministry of support, helping presbyteries in this endeavor.
- Church planting men are not wholly different from any other pastor. We all are ordained ministers of the Word and sacrament, first and foremost. Some are just ministers that God chooses to call to start churches.

Any prayer request as you begin your new role as ONA Executive Director?

I endeavor to make the ARP known nationally, to speak of what the LORD is doing in our denomination. He has graciously brought us out of the ashes of liberalism decades ago, and we are poised to see His mighty hand at work again; not being content with the status quo, but growing in our commitment to confessional, reformed, vibrant churches.

To this end, please pray

- that our LORD would raise up many godly men who are interested in expanding the Kingdom by starting an ARP church.
- that our LORD would incline the hearts of sessions and churches to become excited about starting and even daughtering an ARP church.
- and that our sovereign LORD would receive all the glory in what He will do in the ARP.

Look for the full interview in the January/February ARP Magazine.

Celebrating God's Faithfulness at Christ's Community Church



Rev. Mark Nelsen

What began as a humble gathering of 21 adults and 10 children studying the Book of Acts in November 2023 has blossomed into a multigenerational congregation which averages 45 souls. Over the past year, Christ's Community Church has witnessed God's providential hand guiding our growth and establishing our presence in the community.

From our initial home-based Bible studies to our current worship space in an open-air pole barn, we've embraced the unique opportunity to praise our Creator surrounded by His creation. Our official Sunday morning launch on October 6, 2024, marked a significant milestone in our journey, and we've already celebrated one adult baptism, with a covenant child baptism on the horizon.

Our quarterly "Pancakes in the Park" outreach has proven particularly fruitful, drawing people to fellowship over hot pancakes fresh off the Blackstone grill. Through this simple ministry of hospitality, we've welcomed four young families into our church family. Each new face reminds us of God's faithfulness in confirming His calling for this work.

As we look to the future, we continue to seek God's provision for a permanent worship leader and eagerly anticipate seeing the first convert come directly through the ministry of Christ's Community Church. Our story is one of God's grace, and we're excited to see how He will continue to build His church in our community.

Fletcher & Helene

Rev. Zack Keuthan
Fletcher Presbyterian Church

Starting January 1, we will officially be a church plant with a provisional session to oversee us! We will begin by starting once a month worship service. This will give us an avenue to invite friends and neighbors while preparing ourselves to sustain hosting worship every Sunday. We will also gather on Wednesday evenings for core team training as we prepare to launch small groups and outreaches in February. In addition, I will continue networking and pursuing opportunities for evangelism and outreach.

Like many in WNC, my family was impacted by Helene. A tree punctured a hole in our roof and destroyed our fence. While scary, God kept us safe. And, I've been encouraged by how active churches have been! One non-church goer said the way churches are loving the community is making him wonder if there is something to following Jesus! First ARP Gastonia delivered a large shipment of supplies and brought up a big work crew to help church members and people in the community. Gaston Community Church helped our family with getting our home repaired. Our core team has been very active in distributing supplies, helping neighbors, and supporting families in Fletcher. We delivered a truckload of apples (photo) and clothes (from First ARP Gastonia and Gaston Community Church) to Fletcher Elementary for families who lost food and clothes in the flooding. After going into Fletcher Elementary, one kid in our core team said, "Being God's friend means helping our neighbors." Pray God continues to help us see what it means to be his friend, and that God blesses the connections we are making in the community!



Annual Go2 Retreat



Rev. Dr. Jim Klukow, ONA Program Coordinator

Many GO2 Advocates described the GO2 Annual Advocates retreat at Bonclarken this past October as insightful and loaded with prayer for the ARP church planters.

Judy Buis from Ebenezer ARPC in Rock Hill, SC said the best part of the weekend was seeing World Witness and Outreach North America sharing how the ARP is fulfilling the Great Commission through foreign and home missions. “I became more aware of the needs of church planters through getting to know Zack Keuthan and learning about his new church plant. I know better how to pray for him and am more interested in praying regularly for all our church planters.”

Lesslie and Amy Blakey from Ora ARPC in Laurens, SC were first-time attendees. Lesslie mentioned, “I enjoyed getting to know Zack and learning about how a church plant begins. I also learned more about how the gospel spreads from ‘everywhere to everywhere’ and not just originating from America.”

Judy and Lesslie encourage each church to have its own GO2 Advocate. “Don’t hesitate—this is part of the Great Commission,” says Judy.



Dr. Alan J. Avera Retires



Rev. Peter Kemeny Good News Presbyterian, Frederick, MD

Alan Avera, the outgoing director of Outreach North America, is trusted and respected across the Synod. Alan served as the Executive Director of ONA from 2004-2012. After leading Christianity Explored in North America for 9 years, Alan returned to ONA in 2021 as the interim and then the part-time executive director.

Alan has led without drawing attention to himself. His steady disposition, kind manner, eye for detail, and seasoned wisdom has been an asset to church planters, to presbytery church extension committees, and to the ONA board and staff.

Tessa Taylor, Publications and Communications Administrator for ONA, summed up what many appreciate about Alan’s leadership style. She said that he does not get “lost in the weeds,” but keeps his eye on the goal and points those he leads in the right direction. He speaks to others diplomatically and does not polarize those with different points of view.

Alan’s ministry in the ARP goes back to 1984 when he served as an associate pastor at the Church of the Atonement in Silver Spring, Maryland. In 1988, Church of the Atonement sent Alan to Olney, Maryland, as the mission developer and then pastor of Faith ARP Church, where he ministered until 2004.

In the coming months, Alan plans to take a sabbatical to think, pray, and seek God’s call for the next season on his life. Alan and his wife, Eileen, also will invest in the lives of their grandchildren and travel. We thank Alan and Eileen for their fruitful 40-year ministry in the ARP.

God & Hope in Death



Rev. Brooks Pipher
Covenant Church in Burbank, CA

Covenant Church in Burbank is in the midst of a multi-year conference series on “God & Hope” in hard providences. We pray this series will have a lasting impact on believers around the world via YouTube and social media.

Our most recent conference took place on November 9, 2024. The idea for God & Hope in Death came from our keynote speaker, Rev. Bernard Westerveld (ERQ), as he recently has experienced two losses in his family. The painful experience of a loved one

dying is hard to describe – but we hope that the gospel truths proclaimed in this conference will be used by God as balm for souls.

Rev. Westerveld gave an excellent address on our hope, Christ, in the midst of grief and death. And our ARP panelists added very valuable insight. We're very encouraged by and grateful to the members of Covenant Church who have made these conferences possible.

The live streams of our first two conferences, “God & Hope in Infertility and Singleness” and “God & Hope in Death” are available for viewing at the link below. Edited versions of both conferences are coming very soon to the same link. We hope these are an encouragement.

www.covenantburbank.com/God-Hope-Conferences



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