



Leadership News & Vision Update • Sept 24, 2017

Grace Mills River Staff Restructure

In the past few months, we've had a chance to restate and clarify Grace Mills River Church's vision for the future (see July 16 Leadership News & Vision Update PDF and Aug 21 "Back to the Future" Video). In that vision, three key values were identified. As Leadership has focused efforts against these values, we have realized the need to also refocus our staffing resources in the same direction:

1. Community & Care – Serving those inside our church. Putting more emphasis on the connection with and the care for our congregation but doing that more through the collaborative efforts of Leadership personnel via the Shepherding program and relying less on staff to service those needs.
2. Missional Living – Serving those outside our church in our community. We are assigning staff and resources behind a network that will help us to establish new church plants and help other similar gospel centric churches in our area. In addition, we are allocating resources to help Grace Mills River's small groups become more missional within the community.
3. Collaborative Leadership – Having session, staff, diaconate and the congregation working together towards our common vision. Our focus here is not only to be transparent and clear on our direction and vision but also to generate and maintain greater congregation participation and involvement in this church.

But the need for restructuring was not only driven by changes in our vision, but was also driven by some hard realities:

- In this last fiscal year ending in August, both attendance and giving were down significantly. Actual giving for the year was about 25% below the levels that were originally forecasted and budgeted. Fortunately, this decrease in giving was responsibly matched and managed with corresponding decreases in expenses.

- We also analyzed (through church comparisons nationally) the percentage of our total budget spent in staff expenses. Session felt there needed to be a decrease in the percentage of the budget going towards this area in order to make us more in line with national averages for churches of similar size and vision. This is reflected in our current ministry year budget that was recently approved by session.

Our staff restructure has changes in two areas. First are the changes within Grace Mills River Church and the second is the assignment and resourcing of future church planting and related network. All were effective the beginning of the current fiscal year (Sept 1). We have created or are in the process of creating videos for each Ministry Director to briefly talk about the changes and focus in their areas. Several are available this Sunday and the rest will be made available over the next few weeks.

Grace Mills River

Worship & Arts Ministry

We have combined the areas of music, arts, drama and worship service coordination under the leadership of one director, Tonya Hudson. **Tonya Hudson** has assumed the position of Director of Worship and Arts and in that role, will be responsible for pulling together all aspects of our Sunday worship services. She will also seek to develop and minister to new musicians, actors and artists. David Hudson, Molly Angel and Dusty Campbell will be supporting her in this ministry.

Discipleship Ministry

Colin P. Thornley has been tasked to become Pastor of Equipping. In that position, he will be providing leadership, direction and a systematic plan for the ministry area of discipleship at Grace Mills River. Specifically, he will be developing ways for our body to grow in spiritual health, gospel understanding and gospel application. He will also have the responsibility to spiritually care for staff, officers and lay leaders at Grace. John Shelley will be assisting Colin in this ministry and Jim Pearce will continue in his role as Director of Visitation.

Outreach Ministry

Amanda McLamb has taken on the newly created part time role of Missional Living Director responsible for helping our small groups become more outwardly missional towards our immediate community and developing new small groups with this same focus. She will also spend a portion of her time working with global and local mission lay teams.

Youth Ministry

Greg Lieb will continue in his role as Director of Youth Ministry and will maintain focus on the development of youth community. It is with sadness that we say goodbye to Chris Holder who has chosen to move to pursue new career opportunities. But we welcome Breanna Dobbins who has joined Greg to assist him in the youth ministry.

Children Ministry

Melanie Wilkins will continue in the role of Director of Children's Ministry. She, Jen Odom and Jill Lewison will continue the preparation and teaching of gospel lessons to our children as well as the Art and Drama camps that have been so successful in bringing non-attending families to our church.

Other Grace Mills River Staff

All other staff in the areas of Operations, Building and Administration, Communications and Ministries have not changed their roles or responsibilities.

Network

We are in the process of establishing a network that will have the specific mission to aid us in the planting of new churches and the nurturing and helping of other like-churches in our area. Grace Mills River is committed to grow God's church in Western North Carolina; we seek to do that by sharing structure (non-profit organization, accounting systems, etc.), programs (discipleship and training programs, missions committees, counseling services, etc.), Sunday worship elements (sermon focus, passages, videos, songs, support art, etc.) and events (concerts, plays, jointly sponsored events) within this network of churches.

Grace Mills River has allocated a portion of our budget to initially fund this network. In the future, churches within the network will also be providing funds to the network for its ongoing operations.

Within this network, **Craig Lotz** has assumed the role of the Director of Network. His short-term role will be to help Grace Brevard establish their new church plant while concurrently providing similar worship element development for Grace Mills River. In the longer term, Craig will help identify and recruit other churches to join our network and to expand the worship elements available to share within the network.

Ben Seneker is the Church Planter within the network and will focus initially on helping Grace Brevard establish its church plant. In this role, he will gain experience and expertise in church planting which will allow him to plant a new church in the not-so-far future.

Please look in the Grace Mills River website in the Leadership News and Vision section for more details. If you have questions, please contact Allison Rickman at allison.rickman@gmail.com.