

Getting Connected

A monthly newsletter highlighting the ministry of the Churches of God in
Maryland, Delaware, Washington, D.C. and the Virginia Peninsula

At the Mercy of Love

Church of God Delmarva-DC Region Resource and Training Center

7127 Long View Road
Columbia, MD 21044
410.531.5351

cogdelmarvadc.com

M. Darrell Rice

Administrative Bishop

Marsha Rice

Women's Discipleship
Director

Landon Roberts

Youth & Discipleship
Director

William A. Reid

USA Missions/REACH
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Girls' Club Coordinator/
Credentialing Secretary

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Treasurer/Accountant

Betty Moore

USA Missions
Administrative Assistant

Angie Sharpe

Youth & Discipleship
Administrative Assistant

Andrea Veliz

Hispanic Ministries
Administrative Assistant

At your mercy.

The phrase conjures up medieval images, doesn't it? Picture a swordsman, his weapon slapped from his hand, backed up against a wall with his rival's sword point against his throat . . . or see a breathless maiden, hands spread outward in pleading helplessness as she spins around and kneels in the center of the forest path along which she has been fleeing her pursuers.

At your mercy.

It suggests uncertain destiny, possible death, or, at best, some manner of enslavement.

It conveys an idea of an unpleasant, although preferable, option -

- an alms, instead of nothing at all;
- a lease on life instead of death;
- an opportunity for ransom instead of permanent abduction.

It is something **better** than the worst, but not necessarily good.

The mercy the Scriptures teach, however, is of another kind. It is completely **compassionate**, entirely **benevolent**, and is totally **paid** for. Best of all, it is an abounding trait of God Himself who is "**rich in mercy**" (Ephesians 2:4). Even the facts of my failure-deserving-judgment are met by God's mercy. Astoundingly, His great kindness manifest through this trait of His nature makes it possible for righteousness and peace to "**kiss each other**" (Psalm 85:10). And as though that weren't amazing enough, Scripture tells us that the Father's mercy "**endures forever!**" (This is stated dozens of times, and more than twenty all at once in one chapter of the Bible - Psalm 136.)

With God, "mercy" isn't an uncertain option but rather a divine certainty. It is guaranteed compassion. It is paid-in-full forgiveness at the specific moment and point of need (Hebrews 4:16).

In His wisdom, He frequently chooses to meet our needs by showing His love toward us through the hands and hearts of others. We have all been at the mercy of love - a love which the "**Father of mercies**" (2 Corinthians 1:3) has produced and multiplied in our hearts. We have been the helpless recipients of an outflow of merciful thoughtfulness and kindness. We have been blessed beyond our capacities to produce adequate words of thanksgiving to those who have prayed, cared, called, given, cooked, helped, encouraged . . . and on and on.

His mercy has been great, and He has shown it to each of us. It is wonderful to receive such mercy at the hand of one of His loving children. It is more wonderful still to **be** the hand that touches at the end of His arm that reaches.

That, too, is a privilege born of His mercy.

- Pastor Darrell Rice



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UPDATES

Our deepest sympathies to . . .

. . . **Yvonne Sweeney** (Odenton, MD) upon the passing of her mother, Exa Dianne Hatmaker of Lexington, NC, on January 6, 2018.
. . . the family of **John C. "Leslie" Osborne** (North East, MD), retired minister, who passed away January 28, 2018.

Please pray for . . .

. . . **Tyler Cooper** (Severn, MD), son of Reverend Michael and Cindy Cooper, underwent surgery on January 11, 2018 at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.
. . . **Julia Massie** (North East, MD) was recently hospitalized and is home recovering.

PASTOR CHRIS LOCKEMY INTRODUCES WEEKLY "FWD: FOCUS"

FWD: FOCUS

QUICK CONTENT TO KEEP LEADERS MOVING FORWARD

Pastor Chris Lockemy (Epic Church Baltimore Lead Pastor and Regional Launch/Re-Launch Coordinator) recently introduced his weekly pastor's leadership "quick content." Check your email inbox and Facebook-feed every Friday for the best in leadership tips and articles for greater effectiveness.

CHURCH PLANTERS GATHERING - SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24

Bishop Bill Reid, USA Missions/REACH Director, will host a day of fellowship and training for church planters on Saturday, February 24, 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. (lunch provided), at the Regional Office Resource Training Center. Register by calling the USA Missions Office - 410 531-5351.

MEN'S BREAKFAST - SATURDAY, MARCH 17



Dr. David C. Cooper, Senior Pastor of Mount Paran Church of God in Atlanta, GA, is the featured speaker for the annual "Empowering Godly Men" Breakfast at Heritage Community Church in Severn, MD, March 17, 8:00 a.m. Register online at www.cogdelmarvadcc.com.

MAY 5, 2018: ELEVATE . . . VISION, LEADERSHIP, MISSION

Training, resourcing, inspiring, and equipping are the means of "elevating" vision, leadership skills, and mission fulfillment. The **Elevate Conference** is designed for all local church ministry leaders: pastors, staff, music/arts, family, students, etc. Complete information and registration will be rolled out in early March. In the meantime, mark your calendar, share with your leaders, and plan to join us at Heritage Community Church (Severn, MD) for a full day of *elevating vision, leadership and mission*. Guest speakers for the pastoral ministry track include:

Pastor Johnny Moore - Family Worship Center/Cairo, GA
Pastor Michael Nations - Church of God Vital Initiative Coordinator/Clyde, NC
Pastor Lynn Hancock - Briarwood Church/Pampa, TX

Women's Conference - April 13 - 14, 2018 - Severn, MD



Delmarva-DC Church of God Learning Opportunity



April 4 & 5

NATURAL CHURCH



Empowering LEADERSHIP
Gift-based MINISTRY
Passionate SPIRITUALITY
Effective STRUCTURES
Inspiring WORSHIP SERVICE
Holistic SMALL GROUPS
Need-oriented EVANGELISM
Loving RELATIONSHIPS

DEVELOPMENT

COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING FOR PASTORS & FUTURE NCD COACHES

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WHAT: Two-day in depth opportunity to learn about increasing the health of your church using the NCD Process

WHO IS THIS FOR: Pastors, who are or will be, using the NCD process to develop a healthier church. Also for Pastors who desire to become a certified NCD Coach.

FACILITATOR: Petr Cincala: serves as the US national NCD partner (cofounder of www.NCDAmerica.org company) and managing editor of the Journal of Applied Christian Leadership.

CO-FACILITATOR: Andy Stevens: Pastor, Milford DE. Certified NCD Coach, Leadership Coach & Consultant.

LOCATION: Delmarva-DC Church of God Regional Offices

WHEN: April 4 (9:00am—5:00pm) & April 5 (9:00am—3:00pm)

~~\$475~~

\$250

Per Participant
COG Group Discount

Delmarva DC Church of God



March 10, 2018
Chesapeake Christian Center
Registration: 8:00am
Program: 9:00am