

For the Sake of the Gospel

A Fresh Start

South of Roanoke in Boones Mill, VA, Ridgeview Church has seen the providence of God intersect with His transforming grace. And Dr. Michael Palmer has had a front row seat to it all.

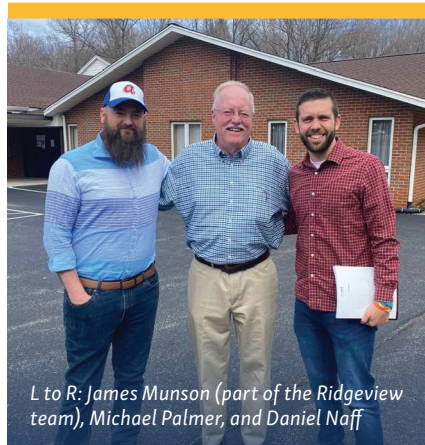
Through SBC of Virginia regional strategist Don Cockes, **Boones Mill Baptist Church** connected with Pastor Palmer, and Palmer began serving as the transitional pastor there in November 2020. A long-time pastor, Palmer had completed Transitional Pastors Training through the SBCV and had served at several churches, but Boones Mill was not what he expected.

“I’ve been trained in how to help a church become a healthier church, but I had never seen anything like what I saw at Boones Mill Baptist Church when I went there,” said Palmer. “They didn’t trust anybody. They had been so hurt by some situations over time, which led to losing 150 members from their congregation in recent years.”

Palmer’s emphasis on loving the people and preaching the Bible systematically for a year helped the congregation begin to trust again. Hearing this transitional pastor’s prayers for a breakthrough, God opened a door of opportunity.

SBCV church planter Daniel Naff and a group of 31 launch team members had planned to start **Ridgeview Church** in Franklin County (the same county as Boones Mill Baptist Church). Naff was from the area and had sensed God calling him to plant a church to reach people where he grew up. Ridgeview’s launch team was sent out from **Petsworth Baptist Church** in Gloucester to relocate to Franklin County for this new work.

When they visited Franklin County for a vision weekend, Pastor Naff met with Pastor Palmer. Palmer recalled, “After Daniel shared his vision with me over a Friday



L to R: James Munson (part of the Ridgeview team), Michael Palmer, and Daniel Naff

Willing to Trust Again

Boones Mill Church, south of Roanoke, had been hurt many times in the past, but through God’s providential opening of a door of opportunity, the church began a fresh start and is now advancing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to reach its community.

breakfast, he and his team visited our church for worship that Sunday. They shared that they were going to plant a church in the area, and the folks at our church liked them a lot and wanted to hear more.”

A few weeks later, the leadership team of Boones Mill began discussing the new church plant coming to the area. Church member Joel Camp proclaimed his personal desire to help with Naff’s plan, regardless of what Boones Mill did.

Camp emphasized, “Having that many people be willing to pick up and move shows a dedication to the Lord that is inspiring. We [have been] in survival mode, not ‘outreach mode,’ and we should consider whether a ‘replant’ would work in our case.” Pastor Palmer encouraged the leadership team

to pray to see if it might be God’s will to partner with the Ridgeview Church team.

“Over a four-month period, from the team’s visit in November 2021 to February 2022, I saw the Lord change the attitude of the whole church,” said Palmer. “They came to the point where they were willing to yield their rights, buildings, land, and control to join in with Ridgeview to form a new church. They gave up everything in order to have a fresh start for the sake of the Gospel. It was awesome!”

Boones Mill Baptist Church voted to close and join with Ridgeview Church starting in the fall of 2022. The new church will meet in the building once called Boones Mill Baptist Church. God has opened the hearts of the people in an amazing way. Camp expressed with joy, “It’s definitely a work of the Lord!”

The contagious vision of a church planter—Daniel Naff—coupled with the wise leadership of a trained transitional pastor—Michael Palmer—has brought new Gospel opportunities to a community that needs the Good News. To God be the glory! ■



Seeking God's Transforming Grace