

# Breaking Down BARRIERS

ESL

**Mount Pleasant Baptist Church** in Colonial Heights is always looking to see “where God is working and join Him.” Its leadership noticed the Lord bringing people from different cultures and languages into the church and community.

One such multi-generational family began to attend the church. The grandchildren spoke English, their parents spoke broken English, and their grandfather spoke very little English. Even with language barriers, the family regularly attended. This, and other church events, shed light on the growing number of internationals in the church community.

Pastor Joey Anthony shared, “We began to pray to see if the Lord would have us start an English as a Second Language (ESL) ministry, and over and over again, we felt the prompting to move forward.”

As the church prayed and promoted the possibility of starting an ESL ministry, the Lord affirmed His prompting by raising up a husband and wife to lead the ministry. Eventually, teachers and helpers were mobilized and trained through an ESL Basic Workshop resourced through the SBC of Virginia.

Mount Pleasant’s ESL ministry was launched in September 2023, and the response has been overwhelming.

Various levels of English classes are held on Wednesday nights during the church’s mid-week activities. Testimonies abound of how the Lord is working through the new ministry. ESL students attend Wednesday night dinners, bring their families on Sundays, and attend outreach events while teachers initiate Gospel conversations.

The church has welcomed internationals who otherwise may have never entered

the church building. ESL leaders and teachers are encouraged as they see the church take time to interact with the students. Trusting relationships are being built, and church members are being drawn to serve.

After getting to know some students, two church members became part of the ESL ministry team as teachers. An ESL “helper” expressed that God was leading her to move from helping to teaching a class. Increased interest and a growing number of students has prompted the church to host a second ESL Basic Workshop to prepare and train more volunteers.

As the first semester began to wind down, a potluck supper came about when the church canceled mid-week activities due to Thanksgiving. The ESL ministry wanted to maintain their class schedule, so the students were asked to bring a cultural dish to share.

Twelve ESL volunteers and 13 students sat down to a unique Thanksgiving feast. When Pastor Anthony went to bless the international meal, he was greatly impressed by the excitement among families from the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Mexico, Palestine, Vietnam, China, Honduras, and Nicaragua. He walked away praising the Lord for His great work through the ESL ministry.

What nations have become your neighbors? Would you ask the Lord to open your eyes to see where He may be working and then obediently join Him? ■

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*Editor’s Note: From multi-lingual evangelism to church planting, the story of Gospel outreach continues on the next page. Please read how MPBC has decided to invest with the main goal to send!*



## RESOURCE:

*The SBCV is here to help you with the next steps. For details, contact Cindi Melvin.*



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