BGAV Launches *Embrace the Joy* to Cultivate Stewardship in Churches

The Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV) has developed a new three-week tool that has the potential to increase giving in local churches by helping people experience the joy of generosity. In the Old Testament book of Nehemiah, the Israelites were told that “the joy of the Lord is your strength,” and the text records that they went away “to celebrate with great joy.”

Research statistics show that the average churchgoer gives less than 3 percent of his/her earned income to the church. While there are many reasons for this trend, one way to address it is to help churchgoers discover—or perhaps rediscover—the joy they experience when they give to their church in support of its missions and ministries.

Embrace the Joy is a plan that offers a focused approach to church giving over a three-week period. While it ideally utilizes an outside leader/consultant, it is primarily led by a team approach within each church. The short time period of the emphasis is ideal for bringing results without causing a burnout effect among the church leadership.

Using the tool, a church has the opportunity to participate in a specific, need-based giving experience in order to set the stage for the overall emphasis. The plan culminates in a celebration event on a Sunday, which includes corporate worship and a fellowship dinner for members to express their “anticipated generosity.” The plan provides for personal, one-on-one contact with every church member and opportunities for those who already experience the joy of generosity to inspire others with their testimonies.
Elements of this emphasis have already been introduced in several BGAV churches, and they have seen overwhelming excitement and success. Recently, one congregation saw a nearly 50 percent increase in the anticipated generosity of its members over the previous year. “The steps are simple, low pressure, and generate a lot of excitement,” explained Eddie Stratton, Chief Development Officer for the BGAV.

To learn more about Embrace the Joy, visit BGAV.org/embrace or contact Eddie Stratton or Don Campbell at 800.255.2428.