Two Concord Baptist Churches, One Mission Together
Submitted by Concord Baptist Church

The Concord Baptist Church of Chase City has a sister congregation, mostly African-American, with the same name, located almost next door. Actually, a cemetery separates them on Highway 47.

After the Civil War and the Emancipation Proclamation, the black members of Concord Church asked to form their own separate congregation. A nearby property was donated by one of the members of the church, and the two congregations have lived as neighbors for the past 150 years. Yet they share the same name.

The two Baptist churches have existed separately, but no one can recall when the two congregations ever did anything together. Last summer, during a time of significant polarization across our nation, the pastor and deacons of the original Concord Church reached across the cemetery and invited their sister congregation to stand in Christian unity and solidarity with each other, recognizing that what unites them is their shared commitment to minister to their community in the name of Christ.

The two deacon leadership groups began to meet later in 2016 and decided that a shared ministry was the perfect place to begin expressing our unity in Christ. Operation Inasmuch was selected as the vehicle of that outreach, since the older Concord Church had already engaged in several previous Operation Inasmuch events in the past.

Members from both Concord Baptist Churches participate in a balloon launch before beginning their 10 mission projects.
Plans were made, and publicity was sought in the local newspapers. Then on April 29, 2017, the two churches gathered for a kick-off event with a balloon launch, and then proceeded to spread all across the Chase City community, wearing the distinctive red shirts displaying the OIAM logo and the verse in Matthew (25:40) that gives the activity its name. Approximately 75 persons staffed 10 different bi-racial teams that provided assistance with loading groceries into cars at a local Food Lion store, paid for laundry machines at a laundromat, washed windshield at a gas station, offered free blood pressure screening by a nurse in the congregation, visited in two local nursing and rehab centers, offered free breakfast sandwiches outside the food store, and gave water bottles to persons walking the sidewalks in town.

Another unusual activity included a $1 car wash, with the driver receiving one dollar and a note of God’s love when the car was finished. One final group spent the morning writing thank you notes to all local fire and rescue, police, mayor and town council and other public servants.

Whether the faces were black or white became insignificant when they all wore the red shirts that pointed to their commitment to share the love of Christ in tangible ways with the community.

Both pastors have marveled at how unified the two congregations have become over the decision to minister in the name of Christ. Rev. John A. Mann is pastor of the church that was founded in 1824. Rev. Raleigh Bagley is pastor of the church founded in 1871.