

RELIGION

Churches take on drug abuse

To provide help to area congregations

By Ann Efimetz

Several years ago the Historic Triangle Substance Abuse Coalition launched an initiative to involve area churches in helping to raise awareness about the growing problem of drug and alcohol abuse.

There has been continued interest in the program, which has resulted in the coalition partnering with the Rush Center of the Johnson Institute. The program offers training to lay people or church staff to help provide alcohol and drug awareness, education and addiction recovery to members of area congregations.

About a dozen area churches are participating in the initiative. Churches are invited to find out more about the program so they can better serve those who may need help.

Wellspring United Methodist on Longhill Road is one of the participating churches. Pastor Tim Tate recently shared a survey with his congregation that asked various questions about the history of alcohol and drug abuse within families.

"It is our hope that we can take that information and establish what kind of needs are within our congregation and within our community," Tate said. "My hope is that we have an ability for people to find support in those situations."

The church is considered a valuable component in helping people who may be facing issues relating to drug or alcohol abuse.

"The church is a safe place for people to come," Tate said. "People share things with a

pastor they don't share with anyone else. That is a sacred trust, and it is also a time to be able to reach out to people in need."

Those who participate in program training become familiar with resources that can help people who may turn to the church for assistance. Those who participate in the program have expressed interest about learning how to better address drug-related issues.

"They are interested in finding out more about how to have their churches ready to deal with issues that may present themselves at the church," said Susan Sullivan Tubach, project assistant for the coalition. "For example, if a parent comes in and has questions about prevention, a youth pastor could have ready access to resources by this training and to the coalition to provide information."

People may not think that alcohol or drug abuse affects them directly. However, Tate noted that most everyone has had the issue affect them either personally or indirectly through other family members, friends or colleagues.

Tate wants the church to be ready for those who seek help.

"Our mission statement is to care as Jesus cares," he said. "If that is who we are and who we are called to be, then we have to reach out to where people are."

More — Churches interested in participating in the program may call Tubach at 476-5070 or e-mail stubach@tmi.net. A team training is scheduled for April 28-29 at the James City-Williamsburg Community Center.

Precept inductive women's Bible study

Do you long to study the Bible and grow in a relationship with God, but don't know how? Inductive study will teach attendees a step-by-step method of digging into the Scriptures by marking the text and learning how to carefully observe and interpret them. Courses are ACSI accredited, and a five-week course entitled, "Lord, Teach Me to Study the Bible in 28 Days" will be offered during May. The study will be held Wednesday mornings, 9:30-11:45, at Colonial Baptist Church, 100 Carrs Hill Rd. No previous Bible knowledge is necessary. The \$15 course fee includes a workbook. Registration deadline is April 16. Call 258-8969.

Easter Sunrise in Memorial Garden

King of Glory Lutheran Church will hold its Easter Sunrise service at 6 a.m. in the Memorial Garden. In the event of inclement weather, worship will be held in the church nave. Vicar Jacob May will preach. The Rev. George F. Lobien will preach at the 8, 9:30 and 11 a.m. Celebration services, including Holy Communion, with special music by the Adult and Children's choirs, handbell choir, instrumentalists and Easter Festival Choir. The Sunday School hour will feature a Hallelujah! Party for children at 9:30 a.m. Easter breakfast follows the first three services of the day.

Worship With Us

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<p>Smith Memorial Baptist 6515 Richmond Rd · Williamsburg, VA 23188 "To Know Him and to Make Him Known" www.smithmemorial.org</p>		