

ABIDE

Celebration National Conference 2023



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CELEBRATION

A gift with no strings attached!



Judy Graham
President,
Celebration Women's
Ministry, Inc.



Have you ever received a gift, a compliment, or a gesture, but with these “gifts” came implied expectations that you owe the giver of the gift something in return? It may require actions from you for future favors, or responses that may not be comfortable for you. We need to resist reacting out of intimidation or people pleasing rather than operating out of the love of God. How do we break free from the “strings” of control, manipulation and people pleasing.

In studying God’s gift to us, He gave His only son Jesus. We learn what a true gift is all about...it is the agape love of God. Agape denotes an undefeatable benevolence and unconquerable good will that always seeks the highest good of the other person no matter what he does. It is the self-giving love that gives freely without asking anything in return. The agape love of God loves us in spite of our disobedience, our weakness, our sin and our selfishness. We are not worthy of His love, but He gave it anyway. Agape is a love by choice, and it refers to the will rather than the emotion.

Paul describes God’s love for us in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. Love is very patient and kind, never jealous or envious, never boastful or proud, never haughty or selfish or rude. Love does not demand its own way. It is not irritable or touchy. It does not hold grudges and will hardly even notice when others do it wrong. It is never glad about injustice but rejoices whenever truth wins out. If you love someone you will be loyal to him no matter what the cost. You will always believe in him, always expect the best of him, and always stand your ground in defending him. All the special gifts and powers from God will someday come to an end, but love goes on forever...

Remember, God’s love can reach beyond the circumstances you are experiencing in your life. Paul tells us in Romans 8:37 “Yet in all these things (troubles, distress, persecutions, etc.) we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in creation, will be able to separate us from the Love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

We have a loving Father who is waiting with open arms to receive you into His love. He will cut the strings that have kept you in bondage and lead you into a love filled life that He has planned for you that is filled with His love.

Our prayer for you today is from Ephesians 3:16-21:

...from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God’s love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God’s people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.

In His Love,

Judy

CELEBRATION NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2023 SPEAKER MESSAGES

Did you miss National Conference 2023 or would you like to hear the speaker messages again? You can purchase all four messages on the Celebration website for only \$10!

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The screenshot shows the website for Celebration Ministries. At the top left is the 'CELEBRATION' logo. To the right is a navigation bar with links: HOME, ABOUT, EVENTS, PRAYER, and a DONATE button. The main heading is 'NC 2023 Equipping Sessions'. Below this are four video thumbnails, each with a red play button icon and a 'Watch on YouTube' link. The first video is titled 'NC 2023 Equipping Session - Sharing Your Faith - C...' and shows a woman at a podium. The second is 'NC 2023 Equipping Session - We are all Leaders - JoNell Gerla...' and shows a woman in a red top. The third is 'NC 2023 Equipping Session - Discipling through Fri...' and shows a woman in a blue shirt. The fourth is '2023 National Conference Soaking Worship and Prayer' by Christi Gardner, featuring a portrait of her and a background of grapes. Each video thumbnail also has a 'Watch later' and 'Share' option.

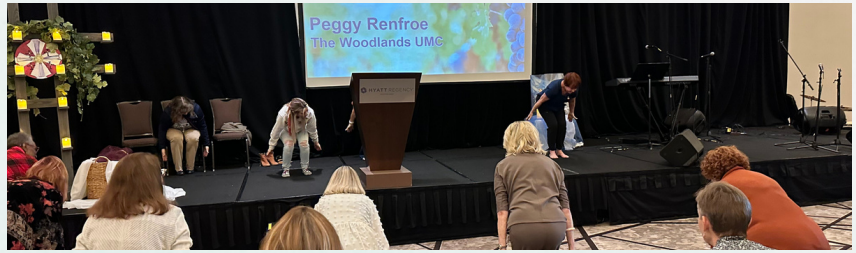
ABIDE

Celebration National Conference 2023



Stephanie Greenwald kicked off our ABIDE Conference on March 3 with the Parable of the Sower. In typical Stephanie fashion, she captivated us with a true childhood story about her dad's search for a Mimosa tree, AKA a "trash tree" to many, and then BAM! Jesus showed up. Her delightful gift of storytelling had women on the edge of their seats, with every true story leading back to scripture. She gave a powerful teaching on the Vine (Jesus) and the branches (us), explaining that our one purpose is NOT to produce fruit but rather to remain connected to the vine. When we do, the fruit will naturally come. Stephanie gave us 8 truths about vines from her personal experience growing grapevines, with each truth serving as an analogy of our lives in the One True Vine. She ended Sunday morning with a testimony about pride and the lies we believe, followed by a beautiful service of Holy Communion.





Pastor Suzette Caldwell and her team joined us on Saturday evening for a powerful healing service. She began by exhorting the ladies to step into the spirit realm where God meets us. "He expects us to trust Him, and the Holy Spirit will do the rest." She encouraged the ladies to have faith, which will heal you. She gave her testimony about "walking through the process" of her own healing from breast cancer. During that time she read God's word as medicine, and now God's word is her vitamin. She led the women in an exercise of forgiveness before beginning the healing service. Many were healed on Saturday evening and we were all amazed at what God did in our presence.

See you next year!

Sheila Davis
VP of Conference



THE IMPORTANCE OF ANOINTING OVER TALENT



Christi Gardner

VP of Worship,
Celebration Women's
Ministry, Inc.



We all know the talented musicians who can bring down a house with their beautiful vocal melodies or intricate instrumental lines. Whether inside or outside of the church, we all love to listen and applaud those who can bring chills and emotion through music. In our society and even in the church, we fill our stages with the most musically gifted. While there is nothing wrong with having these gifts, if talent becomes the most important reason for someone to be leading worship or on the praise team, than we will sadly miss out on what God intended for His church.

When Jesus proclaimed in Luke 4:18-19 that the Spirit of the Lord is upon Him and that He is anointed, we see the fruit of that anointing which is that He proclaimed the good news, set the captives free, opened blind eyes, broke the bondage of oppression, and declared a new day of the Lord's favor. Jesus is our example in every way in our lives and He said in John 14:12 that we "will do even greater things than these!" While on the earth, Jesus was not just a talented speaker and gifted teacher, He was the Son of God in the flesh and had the anointing of the Holy Spirit which was the source of His strength and power. So if Jesus stated that we would do greater things, than we know that it can only be done through the strength and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us.

Multiple times in the scriptures, anointing is associated with oil, and specifically olive oil. The oil was used to anoint the prophets, priests, and kings in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, oil is used as a metaphor for keeping our lamps lit and for not being caught without oil like the foolish virgins in Matthew 25. In our modern times, we can lose some of the significance of what olive oil would mean as a metaphor for the Holy Spirit in New Testament times. Particularly, that in order for lamps to burn using olive oil, the oil had to be **pure**, it had to be **pressed**, and it had to be **perpetually filled**. It is through the pressing (2 Corinthians 4) and through the daily pursuit of becoming more and more like Jesus that we have the anointing and purity to serve in any capacity in the kingdom of God. Especially in front of a congregation.

Some of the most anointed worship leaders are those who have walked with their shepherd through the valley of the shadow of death and know without a shadow of a doubt that He is the source of their song. When our churches are filled with leaders like that, Heaven will invade the earth.

Love,

Christi Gardner

CELEBRATION HIGHLIGHT

Appomattox Celebration Chapter Event

On April 1, approximately 100 women gathered for the Appomattox Celebration Women's spring event, titled, "Don't just survive... THRIVE!" Though the morning started out with torrential rainfall, the Family Life Center of Bible Baptist Church was filled with women who were ready to serve and love on one another - and who were ready to receive a good word from Sherry Ferguson, the co-founder of Journey Ministries in Appomattox County, and the founder of Crowned Ministries, an event-based ministry for those in the community with special needs to gather and have fun with others.

The theme "Don't just survive... THRIVE!" was decided upon because so many people have found themselves in a routine of just trying to survive these last few years. Just trying to survive COVID. Just trying to survive inflation. Just trying to survive, well, everything! Sherry Ferguson gave four steps to THRIVING, which are to Thank God, Worship God, Pray, and then Rest. God is in control and He is working all things out for the good of those who believe in Him. When we truly put our trust in Him, and we stop worrying, we begin to THRIVE!

Each woman who attended the conference was invited to verbalize the following affirmations at the end of the service, and you're invited to recite them out loud right now. **"I am going to walk in obedience. I am going to walk by faith. I am going to testify and bear witness to the Light of the world, Jesus Christ. Starting today, I am going to THRIVE and help others THRIVE!"** | Paula Martin, President of the Appomattox Celebration Chapter



HONORING WOMEN

IN MEMORY OF

Denise Taylor

Barbara Vincent

Would you like to honor someone in our next issue?

Your donation to honor these women will pass along the opportunity to make a difference in other women's lives through Celebration. Donate \$25 to honor each woman who has made an impact on you!

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CELEBRATION CALENDAR

June

July

20-22

ETXGlobal Methodist Church Annual Conference | Christ Church, College Station, TX

August

12 Appomattox, VA Event

10:00 AM | Liberty Baptist Church
Theme: The List: Write it down | A one day Biblical self awareness workshop for young high school/ college-aged ladies.
Contact: cwappomattox@gmail.com

If you want your Celebration meeting or event advertised, please send the information to news@celebrationministries.org

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