

THE ROCK MINISTRY UPDATE



On Behalf of all of us at The Rock Christian Fellowship we want to say thank you for your continued prayer, support and love. Here is a ministry update from our church to just keep us close together as we continue to fellowship with each other in the furtherance of the Gospel.

Pastor Israel (Friendship Ministry)

As a Pastor and oversight of this ministry, it is my responsibility to continue to pray for the team and to make sure that we are on the same page with the visions that the Lord has placed in our lives.

It is important that I keep in touch making myself available to help out in any way possible. We want to be more proactive and effective in the areas that God has called us. Below are the different ministries that I oversee and manage under our umbrella Friendship ministry.

Prison Ministry

In the past, I was able to help out with a brother named Brookes with the ministry Free Within. We were able to do Outreach fish fry, and fry Oreos, creating the opportunity to teach and preach the Gospel. We are continuing ministering to the youth there to get them to know the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as I continue to help out with the vision for that Ministry. They are great opportunities to get these young man to do great things for the Lord. Just playing basketball with them you can see how they share their hearts and where there's opportunity of forgiveness that they need for the things they have done. Presently we have included Matthew to help out with that Ministry to teach and preach the gospel and to get them to know who the Lord is in a personal relationship.

Common Ground Ministry

Michelle is appointed to reach out to those that are in the church to pray and visit the congregation, so the people can be helped in growing in the Lord.

Me and Michelle are responsible to reach out, make phone calls, and keep in touch with those that we have not seen for a while and any new comers.

We have added someone to the team Crystal and she is there to help Michelle out with the females as I am there to help out with the Males. Great testimonies with Michelle sharing with these ladies and seeing God changing their heart from bad choices.

Even with me and taking time to do one on one, I can see God moving in these mens lives as we build personally. I'm looking in the future to see more people to serve in this area of ministry, our goal is to touch everyone that we come in contact with at The Rock.

Outreach events

Ruthie is responsible to put together Outreach events to the community to open doors to share the gospel in different ways. For example, street2street is a basketball tournament, Rock in the Block, Coat Drive, Harvest party, Christmas gifts, fish fries and anything else we can do to get the message of the Cross to a dying Lost World. We are praying that the Holy Spirit take over our city of Newark so that we can see a Revival.

We are praying in the future that people that are filled with the spirit will be able to help out with this ministry, this is not an easy task but more hands that can help more we can reach.

Mr. Brookes Stephens (Free Within Prison Ministry)

Where we were

As far as the operation of the ministry goes, from 2015 until mid 2017 the ministry ran steadily with myself or Pastor Ray going into the jail (mainly in units) to minister twice a month. Because we do not get a consistent group the messages have to be very foundational in nature and cannot easily be built upon. There is also a monthly coordinators meeting that I started attending along with Pastor Ray sometime in 2015.

In 2016 I took on the role of coordinator and started ministering on both monthly dates to relieve Pastor Ray. Most of the information from the coordinators meeting I would internalize and if something seemed important I would surface it informally. I was solely focused on bringing the gospel to the young men and women, and not proactive in engaging with the extracurricular activities of the detention center.

The kids themselves and the results of the ministry tend to vary. Sometimes many of them want to receive Christ after a session. Sometimes none of them do. The longer term residents can sometimes feel like they've heard your message before since they have had a lot of church groups come through. The newer residents sometimes have no clue about the gospel. Some seasons feel more effective than others. Sometimes they are engaged in a session and sometimes they are not. It's a dance between what we bring and what they are willing to receive. This has been consistent for the entire time I have gone into the detention center.

Where we are

From mid-2017 until now, I have been more proactively engaged with the detention center and the other ministers that volunteer. The Fish Fry in September 2017 helped with that. The addition of more teachers (namely Matt) is a help also. We are in a position where we are trusted to help in the extracurriculars as well as delivering the gospel. I am also seeking opportunities for a more consistent group. Because there are two bible study groups that happen now, we have to come along side of those.

Where we are going

In addition to seeking how we could contribute to a more consistent bible study group, I would like to see how we can help the kids and the staff alike. This include resources, like movies or food or social events, as well as people we can bring in to teach life skills. They are open to anything that will build up the kids. They have programs now that help teach the kids business, help with tutoring, teach them chess, grief counseling, etc. It would be good to see if we could contribute in that way also.

I should also hold myself to a standard of reporting back in a more regular cadence, as well as regularly chatting with Matt or whomever else goes in. I do so now but very sporadically. I will start off with a monthly email to all who are involved.

Mrs. Michelle Edwards (Common Ground Ministry)

In the past for Common Ground ministry, we have shown our appreciation to the various ministries that have supported us and have scheduled speaking engagements for Pastor Ray by sending out thank you cards and updates on ministry happenings. We have assisted with encouraging those being baptized and trying to make that moment memorable for the candidates by providing a photo and certificate of baptism.

Currently, We have been trying to keep people connected by following up with a phone call to new visitors who fill out a contact card to see how we can pray for and assist them. Also following up with people who have not been in attendance. We have been meeting up with women in small groups and one on one to build a closer relationship outside the church with the goal of encouraging them in their relationship with God and assisting with some of the natural supports needed. Attending baby showers and accepting invitations for home fellowships. Also connecting the men to those men who can use the call or visit.

In the future, we anticipate there will be more willing people to connect to the various ministries at our church, to support and grow and serve in the area God has put in their hearts to serve in. We seek help with event planning in-reach and outreach and mostly follow up within the ministries to help people feel a part of this local body.

Mrs. Ruthie Dash (Outreach Events)

The year ended with some great events so many kids had a great and safe night of fun at the October Harvest Party. Many of the parents and/or guardians also enjoyed a night of fun with their loved ones. The church was also able to see several families be sure they were able to have Thanksgiving meals available for their homes the following weeks. These meals were given to people that regularly attended the church as well as for those in the community that heard about the provisions. In December, we hosted our annual free flea market where our church partners with a Catholic Church that collects coats and brings their youth group to assist with the day. The day is filled with people receiving clothing, coats New and used, while receiving prayer, and having one on one conversations about Jesus. For Christmas, we partnered with a church that collected gifts for 40 specific kids from the church where they committed to keep that kid in prayer and the city also donated additional gifts for the many kids that are regularly here or around.

The first quarter of the year we have not hosted any event but we covet your prayers as we begin open gym, which we partner with the school and the local police department. Also, pray for the summer as it seems we will have several opportunities that are lining up to reach our community and city. And we ask that you keep our annual ROCK IN THE BLOCK in prayer for all provisions to be made as the Lord wills. In all these we desire that an effective door will be open for the Gospel.

Mr. Greg Edwards (Family Ministry)

Last year during the initial planning and organizing of The Rock's Ministry, it was very vague how much the Family category encapsulated. Men's, Women's, Young Adults, Youth, Children, Marriage, Hospitality, whew! It's a lot.

With our fellowship's vision being so outreach driven at its core, we eventually began to realize in-reach was vital to the long-term health of the ministry. We want to be effective in drawing them in, but once they're in, then what? Are their needs being met properly? Are the people growing and maturing properly? New converts become family members in an instant, so they need to quickly feel loved, welcomed and wanted, or they will leave. This is my responsibility to make sure all the ministries below this category are caring for each individual who calls The Rock their home church.

My prayer is that TeamFam will truly become the extended family, supplemental family or only family that people would be proud to be a part of.

Mr. Greg Edwards (Rock Solid Mens Ministry)

Rock Solid Men's formerly consisted of bi-monthly meetings where the men would gather and use previous two Sunday sermons as a catalyst for discussion. The groups were led on a rotating schedule by Pastor Ray, Pastor Israel or myself. The attendance was pretty steady, we noticed a consistent decrease in attendance. Therefore prayerfully we decided early last year to suspend the meetings for a time as the Lord opened doors for the fellowship to focus more on community outreach.

Towards the last Quarter of 2017, we prayerfully decided not to continue bi-monthly men's meetings and rather offer one-on-one discipleship building to the fellowship's men. Announcements began to be made every Sunday and eventually three consistent meetings were happening!

Unfortunately over the past few weeks, due to various circumstances, ranging from marital issues, housing situations, to no-shows, the meetings have not been consistent. Please pray for the men in our fellowship. We need disciplined men to disciple others and take on more leadership roles in ministry.

Mrs. Torrie Antoine (Children's Ministry Director)

Greetings Family!! As we continue into the New Year, we are seeking to build relationally with our children. We have an "unchurched" crew that differs sometimes week to week. About 80% are coming with an older child or on their own so it has become needful to incorporate modified teaching practices and stricter rules. As mom or dad for the day, we desire to teach the children lessons in personal courage, forgiveness, and remaining teachable. This is as much a personal thing as it is an instructional endeavor. As teachers, we strive to live this out first so that our words come from a place of conviction.

On a lighter note, we are looking to beautify the classrooms. By setting up informational billboards and award announcements we hope to let parents and children know they are valued. We will continue with our Answers in Genesis curriculum. The children seem to be thriving in it. Our teachers have been able to add their own unique style to the teaching now that we have become familiar with it. We are still being stretched, at times though. Sometimes a modification is needed for an talkative classroom, or a harder to understand concept. Then there are times we have a classroom full of children who have never been to church. When you get a question like "Who is Jesus", or they say "My family is Muslim", it becomes necessary to tweak the lesson. I admit I love these days because in those moments the Holy Spirit shows up and blesses the teacher with the right thing to say! Both teacher and class are blessed!

Looking forward to things ahead, as we are praying for our Resurrection Sunday service, will be able to show Christ's love and healing is available today and there is still room at the Cross for all who seek forgiveness. Please continue to pray for the teachers, and volunteers that they remain usable, and thirsty for righteousness, abounding in love for the children we serve.



Mrs. Ruthie Dash (Precious Stones Women's Ministry)

After a long break the "Precious Stones" women's ministry is up and running! Our ministry focus will be instructing and encouraging the women to take heed to the command in Matthew 28 to "Go and make disciples..." But before we "go" we have to make sure that we are disciples ourselves. We will dive into the scriptures to gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of the meaning of true biblical discipleship as taught by Jesus. This will be a time to be challenged, equipped and ultimately changed by God's Word. We do not only want to be hearers of the Word but doers as we answer the call to be disciples. Please keep this ministry in your prayers.

Mr. Matthew Smith (Boulders Youth Ministry)

Dear Family,

My name is Matthew Smith, and I have been working as the youth leader here at The Rock for the past two years. I mainly focus on grades 6 through 12 and the ministry is called Boulders. I work with them on Sunday mornings and Thursday nights during our mid-week service. Also, I run a Boulder Night, which is held every last Thursday evening of each month. It is a teen night filled with games, and food both physically and spiritually. I have learned through this ministry that our teaching throughout the week is great, but God uses the daily ministry of seeing them everyday after school and just sharing life with them mightily.

If you would, I have a few prayer requests. I would love to start a youth retreat every year for the kids, so they could get away and experience The Lord in a more intimate way. Most of these kids only know Newark and the projects they live in. I want them to understand there is a big world out there for them to experience and an even bigger God. Also, I am praying about mission trips. Sometimes our youth can tend to feel as though they're always being served, but I am trying to teach them they have amazing gifts to offer to the Lord and others as well. Additionally, we are starting a Bible Notebook for the youth. Every Boulder Kid will receive a notebook to take notes during the teaching of the Word. If they complete two months of note taking, it will result in a reward like bowling for example. My goal is to teach them to be scholars of the Word! I do not want them taking notes only for the reward, but my prayer is the Holy Spirit will change their hearts and their treasure will be knowing God.

Finally, if you could pray Jesus would continue lighting a fire in my heart to walk in what God is calling me to do and that I would be bold and not walk in fear of failing God or these kids, but to walk as Joshua was commanded. Pray that I would continue to see God's specific vision for the ministry.

Prayer list of names: Takiayah, Sheziayah, Destiny, Tyler, Alia, Nalyssa, Eric, Kasheem, Troy, Rayhona, Stacy, Emmanuel. And many more for another time.

Sincerely yours,

Matthew Smith

Everyone here at The Rock Christian Fellowship thank you for every prayer and all the support that you guys continue to give us. We appreciate your care to want to know more about what God is doing here in Newark, and we look forward to seeing how God keeps to bridging us together. We all have learned a deeper sense of the body of Christ because of you our brothers and sisters. We all are keeping you in our prayers and God will do an amazing work in California. We love you guys and may we continue keeping our eyes on our amazing Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.