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Empowering event held for men

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Pastor Stanley was Guest Speaker at the event.



By BobiGene Pack

On Saturday, July 27, 2024, the Leatherman Senior Center in Florence was ablaze with the power of God's unconditional love and His spirit of restoration. Love in Action Outreach Ministries hosted a free empowerment event for men in transition at 600 Senior Way.

The atmosphere was electric, filled with anticipation for an event that had been four months in the planning, guided by God's grace. Although the turnout was modest, with less than half of the expected 150 attendees, the event was deeply encouraging. As the founder noted, it was an act of obedience to "the call" to demonstrate God's love in action, reminding the men—whether sons, husbands, fathers, grandfathers, brothers, uncles, nephews, or friends—that God has not forgotten them and has a unique plan for each of their lives.

Love in Action Outreach Ministries aimed to reach men from various backgrounds and stages of life, including those transitioning from prison, homelessness, single fatherhood, and other emotional, mental, or relational challenges. The gathering, covered in prayer by Reverend Aquilla Best and others from Salem Baptist Church, sought to offer support and inspiration.

The event began with a delicious hot lunch, blessed by Pastor Robert Cooper of Mullins. This was followed by a warm welcome from the founder and an empowering blessing from Pastor James Williams of Truth Tabernacle of Effingham. Kevin McKoy from SC Works read Rudyard Kipling's poem "If," and Marian Richardson performed "Hold on a Little While Longer" to uplift the attendees. The special guest speaker, Pastor Stanley Jones from Salem Baptist of Darlington, delivered a

powerful, motivating message from Luke 15 about the prodigal son. The session concluded with a call-to-action song, "Wake Up Everybody," performed by the Salem Trio (Victor Poole, Jackson Johnson, Reginald Gilmore).

The highlight of the day was the "support and sharing session" moderated by Pastor William "Bo" Jones of Sumter. The panel included Pastor James Williams, Pastor Robert Cooper, Kevin McKoy, and Pastor Stanley Jones. Pastor "Bo" Jones, with his extensive experience and passion for God and people, was an ideal choice to lead the session. He currently serves as the Executive Director of Bridge of Hope Counseling Centers Inc. and represents the Transitional Impact Program in Sumter.

The attendees were highly engaged, asking questions, sharing experiences, and discussing personal challenges. The wisdom and guidance provided by the dedicated and compassionate panelists were invaluable.

This event reminded me of my mother's wisdom: while life may not always turn out as we wish, following in Jesus' steps ensures that things will accomplish their divine purpose. Like Jesus, who spoke eloquently in parables, Saturday's gathering was filled with symbolic meanings. Our color theme, purple, symbolized royalty, reminding everyone that these men, regardless of their past experiences, are made in the image of Almighty God and are royal and precious in His sight.

We also used clear glass mason jars with purple flowers and burlap bows. The jars, symbols of preservation and survival, paired with the burlap—a material associated with difficult situations—represented the men's past struggles. The beautiful floral arrangement signified the magnificent changes God can create, offering new beginnings filled with hope, faith, and resilience.

The organization hopes that men will give and yield their lives to fulfill the divine calling God has for them.