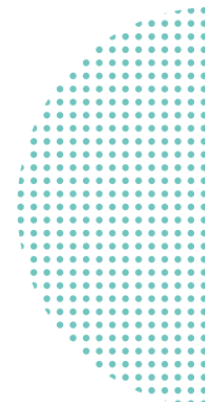


Rural Renewal Summit

SCHEDULE – April 21–22, 2023

*ALL TIMES LISTED AS EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME



FRIDAY, APRIL 21

7:00pm – Welcome & Introduction

Hosts: Jon Davis & Kathleen Blackey

7:20pm – Session 1: God Can Do Big Things in Small Places

Tim Thompson

Jesus grew up in the small and obscure town of Nazareth, His team was 12 disciples, He never traveled more that 200 miles from his hometown. He took 5 loaves and 2 fish and turned it into something substantial feeding 5000+. In an age where fast and big are admired, let us look for and cultivate where we are, with what we have for the sake of His kingdom!

7:40pm – Break

7:50pm – Session 2: Renewing Rural Mission: A New Vision for the Parish

Michael Beck

Life in rural North America is going through a profound period of transformation. Rural churches, once the centerpiece is small-town life, are experiencing the impact of decades of rapid change. However, this is also a moment of immense opportunity to re-imagine our future and the possibilities for ministry with old and new neighbors alike. In this session we will take a fresh look at the rural “parish” as a spiritual ecosystem as well as possible innovations in ministry leadership.

8:20pm – Q & A

8:45pm – Closing

SATURDAY, APRIL 22

10:00am – Welcome & Devotional

Hosts: Jon Davis & Kathleen Blackey

10:10am – Session 3: Essential Foundations to Missional Vitality in Rural Settings

Leah Hidde-Gregory

Through the power of the Holy Spirit rural congregations are finding a renewal and vitality. This comes from a redefined definition of what fruitfulness is and what it is not. In this session I will talk about the necessary attitudes and disciplines that must be present for Rural Congregations to experience an awakened sense of purpose and a passion for reaching those who have not heard about Christ's love and grace.



Summit Schedule (continued)

April 21-22, 2023

*ALL TIMES LISTED AS EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME

10:45am – Break

10:55am – Session 4: Cornerstones not Stepping Stones

Abraham and Amanda Gross

Small churches in rural places are often overlooked and overshadowed by larger ministries. This workshop examines the practice of Stability as essential for the spiritual health of these local congregations, their pastors, and the Church universal. It also explores how to apply this ancient discipline in the post-modern mission field.

11:30am – Workshop Session #1 (see next page for descriptions)

12:30pm – Lunch Break

1:30pm – Workshop Session #2 (see next page for descriptions)

2:30pm – Welcome & Prayer

Hosts: Jon Davis & Kathleen Blackey

2:35pm – Session 5: "Brave Towns & Communities" Building Kingdom Ecosystems

Hugh Halter

In this session Hugh will be challenging us beyond Sunday-centric metrics by sharing his story of building Kingdom ecosystems. As the righteous prosper...the cities we live in should be grateful and thankful for an alternative city to find themselves in. This ancient framework for the 'life of the church' is a doable and preferable option in the missionary context we all live in today.

3:00pm – Break

3:05pm – Session 6: Success In The Small Church

Ron Johnston

When people measure the success of a church, using the usual measuring sticks of numbers, programs, and budgets, they miss seeing the true value of a small church. The value of a church is not gauged by any of those things. It is measured by its relationship with Jesus Christ and the relationships that exist within the church family. The small church is not, as is so often thought, a failure or a smaller edition of what a successful church should be. Rather when seen in its proper context, it is a loved part of God's family with a unique role to play in the furthering of his kingdom.

3:30pm – Closing & Sending

Hosts: Jon Davis & Kathleen Blackey

Workshop Descriptions



11:30am–12:30pm – Workshop Session #1

Church as a Healing Agent: Nurturing Faith and Health Collaborations in Rural Spaces

Paul Byrd

From the pool of Bethesda to the Tombs of Gadarenes, Jesus modeled a healing ministry. Today, health care disparities are pervasive in rural Georgia. Is the ministry of healing still possible? This workshop shares perspectives about faith and healthcare from faith leaders, churches, patients, and healthcare providers in rural spaces and reviews how the Faith in Rural Health initiative (FIRH)* is working alongside them to envision and create collaborative solutions.

Re-Imagining Discipleship for Ministry and Mission

Matt Lake

If you ask any church to name its top three challenges, one of those three will often involve the topic of discipleship. Churches have learned how to offer significant Bible studies and to encourage personal growth for their members. But many churches struggle with raising up disciples who follow the ways of Christ in thought and deed. In this session we will explore a congregational approach to discipleship that goes beyond a discipleship pathway that raises up volunteers to a congregational alignment wherein each individual begins to live out authentic discipleship based on how God has wired them. Within ministry contexts that often consist of a mixture of solo pastor, bi-vocational staff, and lay leadership, it is all the more essential that discipleship become something that happens in the “flow” of congregational life and mission.

1:30pm–2:30pm – Workshop Session #2

The Rural Church in the Digital Age

Luke Edwards

Digital ministry is vital for the present future of the local church. Rural congregations have unique opportunities and challenges in digital outreach and digital faith formation. In this workshop we will explore principles, practical steps, and stories about how your church can find new life through digital ministry.

How Old Churches Reach New People

Jon Davis

Small towns are often full of residents who know about your church—and even like it—but will never show up on a Sunday. Discover how established churches can reach the people who have passed by your church building hundreds of times but never walked in. Join a discussion of how churches like yours can find new ways to share the hope found in Jesus in the Motocross Tracks, Dinner Tables, Watering Holes and other Third Places that make up daily life of your home.

