

***PAUL BOTICA, Ph.D.***

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***Ministry Vision:*** To serve in a church that has a clear vision, is dedicated to bring the unchurched into a life-transforming relationship with Jesus Christ, enables her members to become mature Christian disciples, equips them for ministry and cares for them, and loves to worship God.

***Ministry Experience***

**2004 to present: Senior Minister of CedarcrestCommunityChurch, LaGrange, GA.  
(Membership: 230 on roll; 45-60 attendance)**

**Preaching and Teaching.** Prepared and delivered sermons for the Sunday morning worship service. Prepared and delivered biblical and topical studies for Sunday and Wednesday evening Worship and Bible Study meeting. All sermons were audio recorded, typed word by word, and mailed to shut in members, and others who could not attend. Delivered sermons and messages for special occasions. Delivered sermons for revival services. Assisted the Deacons Team in preparing worship services. Sang in the choir and worship teams.

**Pastoral Care and Visitation.** Made around 130 home, hospital, and nursing home visitations each year. Prayed with, counseled, and provided help to members, visitors, and friends of the church experiencing different hardships. Was present in hospitals or hospices when a church member passed away to pray with the family and provide support. Used the Benevolence Fund to help church members and other persons struggling financially. Performed weddings and funerals.

**Leadership.** Provided overall guidance, support, and suggestions to the main ministry teams and boards of the church: the Church Council Team, Deacons Team, Trustees Team, Mission and Outreach Team, Youth Ministry Team, Christian Education Team, Women's Fellowship Team, and Church Life Team. Provided support to the members of these teams and lifted them up in prayer. Encouraged lay members to serve on these teams.

Offered conflict resolution when needed and worked diligently toward maintaining unity around our vision. Our church's vision is: ***CedarcrestCommunityChurch is dedicated to growing deep in faith, branching out in the community and the world, and producing fruit for the glory of God.***

Provided leadership during an essential stage in the history and life of CedarcrestChurch, namely moving from a 2.0 acres campus with an 80 year old sanctuary to a 9.5 acres campus in a strategic new location. Led the church during the building of a new debt-free sanctuary in 2008, and engaged in a fundraising campaign. At present time the church has over \$100,000 surplus in her budget.

**Outreach and Evangelism.** Led door-to-door evangelistic teams to invite community residents to our church. Personally told people in the community about our church and invited them to worship with us. Assisted the Mission and Outreach Team in preparing and mailing 600 church brochures in the subdivisions around our church each year. I showed special attention to visitors on Sunday Morning, invited some to lunch, followed up with others during the week, and wrote letters to all inviting them back and offering my personal help. Assisted Women's Fellowship Team with their ministry in the local Nursing Homes.

Implemented with the help of Dr. Doug Flor of LaGrangeCollege two distinct outreach ministries:

**Divorce Care**-designated to minister to persons experiencing divorce and separation, and **Grief Share**-designated to minister to persons passing through grief due to loss of family members or friends.

Assisted the Deacons Team in preparing revival services and music concerts. One such special musical event featured internationally known singer and artist **Christie Sutherland** of Nashville, TN.

Assisted the Mission and Outreach Team in preparing an *End of School Fun Day* for the children in our community on the campus of our church.

**Spiritual Growth and Discipleship.** Implemented the evening service on the first Wednesday of each month as a church-wide prayer service. Implemented a *Prayer Chain Ministry* in which church members signed up for different prayer times during the week. Many of my Bible and topical studies on Sunday and Wednesday evening services were designated to help church members grow spiritually and become mature Christian disciples. One book we studied lately and which had a powerful impact on our church was *A God-Centered Church: Experiencing God Together* by Henry Blackaby.

**Marketing.** We advertise our church regularly in the *LaGrange Daily* and *Troup County Newspapers*. Participated in local radio interviews and TV Stations shows. Was the subject of several wonderful newspaper articles. Produced a *Church Brochure* to be mailed out in the community. Edited *Cedarcrest Community Church Newsletter*, which is mailed to over 100 friends of our church.

**Missions.** Challenged and encouraged Cedarcrest Church to increase sponsoring mission projects. Presently the church sponsors the following missions: Emmaus House- a ministry to single mothers and battered women; the LaGrange Food Closet; Servants In Faith And Technology of Lineville, AL; Bread of Life- a ministry to Hispanic children in Plant City, FL; Kim and Bruce Thomson- missionaries to Latvia; and St. Labre Indian School of Ashland, MO.

**Inter-Denominational Cooperation.** Attended local ministerial associations meetings. Attended ministers' meetings and events of the Alabama/Georgia Association of Congregational Christian Churches. Involved our church in local interdenominational events and rallies. Initiated joint services with other local churches to promote Christian unity and cooperation.

**1990-2003: Ministered part-time in American Evangelical Churches while getting my BA at Asbury College and M. Div. and Ph.D. at Asbury Theological Seminary.**

Volunteered as a Mission Consultant for BuckRun Baptist Church of Frankfurt, Kentucky. Trained missionary teams and accompanied them to Romania, Eastern Europe where we did street evangelism, construction projects, and humanitarian ministries in hospitals, asylums, orphanages, and prisons. I preached the gospel in churches and also translated for the American ministers. Ministered as a pastor for Maranatha Baptist Church of La Habra, Los Angeles, California. Preached the gospel during worship services. Taught Bible studies and discipleship classes. Trained leaders and helped young Christians dedicate to full-time ministries. Implemented spiritual growth and discipleship studies and ministries.

**1986-1990: Lay Minister for Romanian Evangelical Churches, Romania, Eastern Europe.**

Organized and prepared church services and ministries for small churches without pastors, during communist persecution. Communicated the Christian message in preaching and shared the good news of the gospel to unbelievers. Formed young Christians as leaders and involved them in church ministries and activities. Mentored and counseled young Christians and new believers. Developed spiritual growth programs and outreach ministries. Brought churches together in common projects and activities.

### ***Education***

- 1994**            **Asbury College**  
Bachelor of Arts in Bible and History
- 1998**            **Asbury Theological Seminary**  
Master of Divinity with concentration in Church Growth and Evangelism
- 2009**            **Asbury Theological Seminary**  
Doctor of Philosophy in Intercultural Studies with concentration in Church Growth and Evangelism and Mission and Leadership

### ***Published Works***

Botica, Paul. "Kissing the Crucifix--Practical Steps Toward Effective Ecumenical Dialogue and Cooperation in Romania." *Religion in Eastern Europe*, April 1999, Volume 19, Issue 2; 21-42.  
URL: [http://www.georgefox.edu/academics/undergrad/departments/soc-swk/ree/Botica\\_Kissing\\_April%201999.pdf](http://www.georgefox.edu/academics/undergrad/departments/soc-swk/ree/Botica_Kissing_April%201999.pdf)

"Toward addressing split-level Christianity: A study of the interaction between Christianity and folk religions in Romania" by *Botica, Florin, Paul, Ph.D.* Asbury Theological Seminary, 2010, 335 pages; 3421143. URL: <http://gradworks.umi.com/34/21/3421143.html>

### ***Special Skills***

Proficiency in two foreign languages, using computers to enhance instruction, using media services to enhance worship, and coaching soccer.

### ***Hobbies***

Writing, reading, fishing, gardening, and playing soccer.

## ***Personal and Family Information***



*Paul Botica*, born July 31, 1968.

**Spouse:** *Corina Botica*, born August 5, 1970

**Children:** *Philip Botica*, born August 12, 1994

*Cristinne Botica*, born April 25, 2001

## ***Personal Statement***

I received Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior in 1983 at the age of 15, under communist persecution, while attending a spiritual revival service at Golgotha Baptist Church of Bucharest, Romania, Eastern Europe. One year later I was baptized and also surrendered my life to His call to ministry. I became involved in different church ministries, and I was elected youth minister. In August 1990, I married Corina and decided to enter full-time ministry. Corina is a dedicated believer and daughter of a faithful and successful minister (***read more about my conversion story on my webpage***).

In order to prepare better for ministry and serve the Church we studied at Asbury College where we received our bachelor degrees and at Asbury Theological Seminary. I graduated in 1998 with Master of Divinity and Corina graduated with Master of Biblical and Theological Studies. In May 2009, I graduated Asbury's Ph. D. program majoring in ***Church Leadership and Christian Mission***.

God has blessed us with two wonderful children a boy Philip who is 16 years old and a girl Cristinne who is 10 years old.

We have been serving *Cedarcrest Community Church* of LaGrange, GA since 2004, where we have witnessed wonderful experiences with God and with our church members. We believe, however, that God is leading us to anew chapter in our ministry life and are praying for a church where we can love and serve our brothers and sisters in Christ, reach out the lost and the unchurched, and put down roots long-term.

## ***Philosophy of Ministry.***

-I believe that leading God's people is one of the most important, responsible, and rewarding tasks that God gives to those whom He calls and appoints to full-time ministry (*1 Timothy 1:12*).

In my view, being a pastor is a call from God, not a job or profession, and therefore, as a minister I should be available to serve God and His church 24/7. I am firmly committed to Scripture as the divine and inerrant Word of God, which is our primary authority (*Romans 1:16-17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:16-17*).

-I believe that the task of the pastor is to equip the saints, to build up the church, and to fulfill His purposes (*Ephesians 4:11-13*) for which He has called us, in particular His commandment in *Matthew 28:19-20*, "***Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.***"

-I believe that each Church should have a clear God-given vision for existence and mission and strong core values. The Church should be dedicated to reaching the unchurched, discipling her members, and supporting local, national, and foreign missions. I also believe that the ministries of the church should be people oriented, not program oriented, with an emphasis on lay members involvement. As part of the family of God every church member is important and needed (see *1Peter 2:9* and *1Corinthians 12*), and everyone should use his or her spiritual gifts to serve the Lord and build up the church.

-My strongest spiritual gifts are *preaching, teaching, and evangelism*. As a minister, however, I give equal importance, time, and energy to the pastoral care of the church members, and to visiting and counseling. I also like to take teams to door-to-door evangelism and community canvassing.

-Another essential aspect in my work as a minister is to help members discover their spiritual gifts and use them in the ministries and programs of the church. I also like to train and form leaders and to encourage younger church members to enter full-time ministry if called by God.

-My leadership style is based on leading by example, being an encourager and facilitator, and implementing change under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I function best as a leader in the context of leadership teams united around a common vision. I love being around people and I get energized and uplifted by positive and faithful persons.

-All I am and have achieved is by God's grace and through His strength (*Philippians 4:13*), and as I have experienced in my life of ministry what is impossible with men is possible with God. I believe, therefore, that all we can do as Christians is to plant seeds and gather the harvest, but only God makes the harvest grow.

-Finally, my wife and I have kept the Daniel Diet (see *Daniel 1*) for the last three months to draw closer to God and lose weight.

### ***My Statement of Faith***

I believe:

- There is one God, who is infinitely perfect, existing eternally in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- Jesus Christ is true God and true man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He died upon the cross, the Just for the unjust, as a Supreme sacrifice, and all who believe in Him are justified on the ground of His shed blood. He arose from the dead according to the Scriptures. He is now at the right hand of the Majesty on high as our great High Priest. He will come again to establish His kingdom of righteousness and peace.
- The Holy Spirit is a divine Person, sent to indwell, guide, teach, empower the believer, and convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.

- The Old and New Testaments, inerrant as originally given and preserved in the Received Text, were verbally inspired by God and are a complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men. They constitute the divine and only rule of Christian faith and practice.
- Man was originally created in the image and likeness of God: he fell through disobedience, incurring thereby both physical and spiritual death. All men are born with a sinful nature, are separated from the life of God, and can be saved only through faith in the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The portion of the impenitent and unbelieving is existence forever in conscious torment; and that of the believer, in everlasting joy and peace.
- Salvation has been provided through Jesus Christ for all men; and those who repent and believe in Him are born again of the Holy Spirit, receive the gift of eternal life, and become the children of God.
- It is the will of God that each believer should be filled with the Holy Spirit and be sanctified wholly, being separated from sin and the world and fully dedicated to the will of God, thereby receiving power for holy living and effective service. This is a progressive experience wrought in the life of the believer subsequent to conversion.
- Provision is made in the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ for the healing of the mortal body. Prayer for the sick and anointing with oil are taught in the Scriptures and are privileges for the Church in this present age.
- The Church consists of all those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, are redeemed through His blood, and are born again of the Holy Spirit. Christ is the Head of the Body, the Church, which has been commissioned by Him to go in the world as a witness, preaching the Gospel to all nations.
- The local church is a body of believers in Christ who are joined together for the worship of God, for edification through the Word of God, for prayer, for fellowship, the proclamation of the Gospel, and observance of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- There shall be a bodily resurrection of the just and of the unjust; for the former, a resurrection unto life; for the latter a resurrection unto judgment.
- The Resurrection of the Church to meet the Lord is the Blessed Hope of the Christian. Until then, unconditional love is the greatest virtue and demonstration of the reality of Jesus Christ and the fullness of His Spirit in our lives. As Christian believers, we should endeavor to show a Christ-like love towards all men. Love should be exhibited in our lives by our words and actions. (John 13:34-35; 1Corinthians 13).

Reference Persons will be provided upon request. Please, contact me if more information is needed. Please, do not contact my church members at this time.

*'There is a sense of unity in our city'*



Volunteers from Southaven Baptist Church in Springfield, Mo., raise the first wall on the new Cedarcrest Community Church building at 2380 Roanoke Road.

## Local, out-of-state volunteers aid church

By **Brittney Williford**  
Staff writer

For months now, a sign at 2380 Roanoke Road has marked the future home of Cedarcrest Community Church. Construction on the new building began this week with some out-of-state help.

Paul Botica became pastor of Cedarcrest Community Church, formerly United Congregational Christian Church, four years ago. He moved to the United States from Romania after the fall of communism in 1990, and moved to LaGrange with his wife, son and daughter after attending seminary in Kentucky.

In 2000, United Congregational Christian Church purchased the property on Roanoke Road. Botica, 39, arrived just as the church was preparing to relocate.

This week, a group of 21 men from Southaven Baptist Church in Springfield, Mo., are working as volunteers to begin the wood framing of the building.

Noel Blankenship, the group's coordinator, said the group does volunteer construction work every year during the first week of June.

"We feel led to do the work and, with our help, people will have a place to worship," he said.

Botica said he appreciates the work the group is doing.

"What's amazing about these people is they are leaving their churches

and families," he said. "This is their vacation time."

Botica said he hopes the church will be a help to the community.

"We want to be a blessing for this area," he said. "That's why we call it a community church."

The church recently held a "School's Out Fun Day" for children in the community, featuring inflatable slides, water activities and a short Bible study.

The former United Congregational Christian Church building on Juniper Street recently was sold to the Boys & Girls Club of West Georgia.

The church is meeting in trailers behind the new building until it is completed. Botica said attendance is growing every week.

The new building consists of a 132-by-60-foot sanctuary and a 50-by-50-foot connecting section. It is one story, unlike the old building, making it "friendly" to worshippers of all ages.

Area businesses and churches have been generous during the construction process, Botica said.

"Local construction businesses who are working with us have given us great discounts on the work they have done or will be doing, and some have even let us use their equipment for free," he said.

He said members of Second Baptist Church offered to cook dinner for the volunteers.

"There is a sense of unity in our city," Botica said.

He said ministers and other leaders in the community were welcoming during his difficult transition to the United States.

"We barely spoke English," he said. "It was a great shock. We went from communism to a world of freedom."

Botica said he knew he needed to leave Romania, even though he left behind his parents, brothers and sisters.

"When Jesus calls you to go some place, you go," he said.

Blankenship and his group have been volunteering all over the country since 1980. Although he suffers from Parkinson's disease and is 76 years old, he continues to lead the team.

"I'm still the head honcho around here," he said with a chuckle.

He said less than 10 percent of the team has a background in construction.

"They come from all walks of life," he said.

Follow-up groups will come to continue work after Blankenship's group leaves Friday. The congregation hopes the building will be completed by the end of the summer.

*Brittney Williford can be reached at (706) 884-7311, Ext. 230.*



Matt Jones / Daily News

The congregations of Church of the King, pastored by the Rev. Scott Young, right, and United Congregational Christian Church, led by the Rev. Paul Botica, left, will worship together on Easter morning as a symbol of Christian unity.

## Joint Easter service to emphasize unity

By Andrea Lovejoy

The distance between Church of the King on Murphy Avenue and United Congregational Christian Church on Juniper Street is short - no more than a few blocks.

The churches have very different worship styles, however.

Church of the King is charismatic and spontaneous, with contemporary Christian music. "Not disorderly, but where you end up with may not be where you started out," says the Rev. Scott Young, pastor.

United Congregational is more traditional and structured, with an order of service outlined in a bulletin and familiar hymns.

Sunday, the distance between the two churches will become even shorter as the congregations meet together at Church of the King for an Easter service blending both worship styles.

"Easter is a good time to show Christian unity," said the Rev. Paul Botica of United Congregational Christian. "The message is that while we have our own denominational distinctions, we can also unite in Christ and worship Him who is the Lord of our churches, especially now

as we celebrate His crucifixion and resurrection," Botica said.

Hosting United Congregational Christian will be a personal reunion for Young, who was raised in that congregation.

"I think that's a good bridge," he said. "Most people will come knowing me."

The show of unity also has special meaning for Botica, a native of Romania who experienced persecution of Christians under Communist rule.

Before the Communist takeover, he explained, there were denominational differences in Romania, too.

"But the Communists didn't make distinctions. They persecuted all," Botica said. "And in prison, there were no denominations, just brothers and sisters in Christ."

Both churches have a tradition of outreach across racial and denominational lines. Each has held joint services with black churches and Botica envisions a joint service with a Hispanic congregation.

Botica likens it to Jesus' experience of walking on the Sea of Galilee.

"You have to get off the boat to walk on the water," he said.





Mike Jacoby / Daily News

The Revs. Paul Botica, left, and Ernest Parham will lead a joint service Sunday for their churches, the United Congregational Christian Church and Sound Doctrine Christian Church, at the congregational church's Juniper Street sanctuary in LaGrange.

## Black, white churches to worship together

By David Rogers  
Staff Writer

Though their congregations are of different races, two area churches are coming together for a common cause this weekend.

On Sunday, the predominantly black congregation of Sound Doctrine Christian Church will meet at United Congregational Christian Church, a primarily white congregation, for a joint service.

"Generally when you go to churches, everyone (in the church) looks alike," said the Rev. Paul Botica, pastor of United Congregational Christian. "In Christ, we are all equals — that's the message we want to send."

The idea originated when the pastor of Sound Doctrine Christian, the Rev. Ernest Parham, became interested in

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# Joint service: 'I believe it was divine moment'

**Editor's note:** One week ago today, two LaGrange churches - one white, one black - met for a joint worship service. At the request of the LaGrange Daily News, Rev. Paul Botica of United Congregational Christian Church shared this account of the experience, in which his congregation hosted Rev. Earnest Parham and Sound Doctrine Christian Church. A future article, including Rev. Parham's perspective, will reflect more on the event.



**Rev. Paul Botica** is pastor of United Congregational Christian Church.

By The Rev. Paul Botica

The joint service was wonderful. We had over 150 in attendance with Sound Doctrine bringing around 100 persons. Several of them came from Atlanta, Roanoke, Lanett and other close cities. There were white visitors from our neighborhood, as well as black visitors.

In my opinion this was the beginning of something we definitely would like to continue. I suggested

to Rev. Parham to have Thanksgiving and Christmas together. He was excited.

The climax of the service was when Rev. Parham challenged the participants to stand and extend a greeting to each other. He said: "Don't greet who you already know, but somebody you don't know..." For around 20 minutes there was a lot of hugging and greeting between the whites and the blacks. This was something I had never seen before in my 20 years of ministry. I believe it was a divine moment. The blacks surely know how to hug.

I talked with my members afterward. They liked it although the Sound Doctrine worship is different. The music was louder, faster, and more alive than what we are used to, but it was attracting. I gave up dancing when I became a born again Christian, but for some reason the Spirit stirred me up. I was dancing for the Lord and it felt differently. At one moment the blacks made a circle around me. They were dancing too but I was in the middle and I felt like they were there to encourage and protect me. I just couldn't keep on very long and I collapsed on the floor. Two strong arms lifted me up.

Another interesting moment was toward the end of the service after Parham preached. He asked if anybody would like to say anything else. A black lady came to me and said: "Preacher I see you as a teenager standing in the kitchen of your house. There is an older lady with you and her head is covered with a

scarf... She is telling you about salvation through Christ..." I remembered my grandmother and the day we were in the kitchen and she told me about Christ. Then this black lady said: "I also see many people coming to Christ and God using you and your church to minister to them..."

Many of my members knew many of the Parham's members already. They either went to school together or worked in the same job places in Lagrange. It was exciting for them to see each other in church worshipping together.

Now for this service I felt we should let Sound Doctrine lead most of it, and they did it their style. In future we will probably try to balance the worship and shorten it. I believe churches can come together in worship and experience the touch of God in a new in fresh way. Paul the Apostle says in Ephesians 2:14. "For Christ is our peace; in his flesh

"In my opinion this was the beginning of something we definitely would like to continue."

he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us..."

Every person who believes in Christ can cross the wall that Christ tore down and extend His peace and love to the other. The wall is down now it depends on us if we want to cross it or not. If we who call ourselves born again Christians would do it more often our world would probably be more peaceful, and the church is a place were we can come together.

# Singer to give free concert

From staff reports

Nashville, Tenn.-based singer/songwriter Christy Sutherland will perform at 7 p.m. Wednesday at Cedarcrest Community Church at 2380 Roanoke Road.

Now a nationally known performer of country and Christian music, Sutherland's earliest public performances were in church in her native Texas, including a 1992 appearance at Lakewood Church in Houston, considered the largest church in America.

Sutherland enrolled in Nashville's Belmont University aiming for a career in country music, and performed on the Grand Old Gospel radio show and in churches with classmate Allan Hall, who went on to form the group Selah. In

1993 she won the female vocalist prize on the 700 Clubs national New Artist Search.

Sutherland gives private voice instruction to a number of recording artists and conducts vocal seminars tailored to worship leaders. She has been associated with famed vocal coach Renee Grant-Williams for 13 years and has worked with performers Julie Roberts, Kim Carnes, Jeff Hanna of the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Jason Michael Carrol and Matraca Berg.

Songs written by Suther-



land include "I Believe," recorded by Rizen, "You Call Me Yours," recorded by Sandi Patty and the new group Prelude and "Cry in the Dark," picked by Lifestyle for its Christmas musical.

Sutherland's latest radio single is "Somebody Died for Me," a song she wrote with Kyle Matthews, and her most recent CD is titled "You Can Get There from Here."

Since 2006, she has been married to Matt Dudney, oldest son of country performer Barbara Mandrell. Together they travel the country in full-time ministry, performing contemporary Christian music.

Her Cedarcrest performance is free. A free will offering will be taken.