Churches issue challenge for adult day care center

By Pat Coleman
Freedom ENC

NEW BERN — Move by recent reports of the imminent closing of Tender Care Adult Day Care, residents and churches have stepped forward to offer assistance.

“We’ve had several private pledges and Colony Baptist Church has issued a challenge,” said Sharon Grodevant, executive secretary for Thelma Chadwick, the director of United Senior Services, Inc.

The board of USSI voted last month to close the facility because of a $2,000 a month shortfall. Grodevant said that by Tuesday morning, Saturday’s Sun Journal report — the third on the center’s closing — resulted in pledges for “not quite half” the amount it needs.

“We got a pledge from a lady in Carteret County who can’t even take advantage of our service,” Grodevant said. “She said, ‘We cannot be forgetting the elderly.’”

A man who said he didn’t want to have to worry about remembering to write a check for a monthly pledge wrote a check to cover a year.

Pastor Michael Williams, of Colony Baptist Church, issued the challenge to help support the center — first to his parishioners, then to the church community at large — after the story was emailed to him and others by Caroline Birch of the Atlantic Baptist Association.

“God just burdened my heart and said, ‘You need to do something here,’” Williams said. “If we band together, we can accomplish something.”

He contacted Grodevant and pledged $50 a month from his church.

“I really feel that amount is insignificant in the grand scheme of things, but I also feel that if we do our part, God is going to bless us with it,” Williams said. “He will take that little bit and multiply it.”

He challenged every church within Craven, Pamlico and Jones counties to match or exceed Colony’s pledge.

“If you get 10 people that said they’d commit to $5 a month, we’re talking $1.25 a week,” he said. “Don’t buy a soda at the convenience store one day and turn that money over.”
Colony Baptist Church has called the Rev. Bennie E. Pledger as minister, beginning June 1.

Pledger is coming from Colerain Baptist Church. He has served as minister of Carolina Pines Baptist,

Raleigh and First Baptist Church of Ayden and is a third-term trustee of Chowan College.

Pledger holds degrees from Wake Forest and Duke universities and has done graduate work at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.