

# The West Virginia Baptist Newsletter



June - July 2020

## *Now that is the Church*

I would doubt that on March 1, 2020, anyone could have imagined the interruption to everyday life the coronavirus would cause. This means that it was not something that pastors and leaders of churches could have envisioned, let alone planned and prepared for. Seemingly overnight, the familiar and comfortable way we functioned as a church came to an abrupt halt. However, faced with a situation for which there existed no road map or guide, the churches of the West Virginia Baptist Convention quickly rose to meet the challenge. The great British preacher, G. Campbell Morgan, once said, "It is a remarkable thing that the church of Christ persecuted has been the church of Christ pure." I think we could easily apply G. Campbell's quote to the unusual time in which our convention family finds itself. In fact, if we use a classic definition of the word *persecute*, which is "to harass or annoy persistently," we have a relatively accurate picture of the persistent annoyance the church has experienced during this coronavirus pandemic! And just as G. Campbell alluded, the church has risen to the challenge and emerged even more united and focused on its mission!

Someone once said, "There is nothing like the local church when it's working right. Its beauty is indescribable. Its power is breathtaking. Its potential is unlimited." And I feel that is exactly what we have witnessed with our West Virginia Baptist family of churches! For the last eight or nine weeks, convention churches throughout the state have demonstrated remarkable resiliency and creativity. Churches have found many new ways to continue to faithfully communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In 1918, another pandemic required churches to stop meeting in person. At that time, clergy would write out their weekly sermons and take them to the local newspaper to be printed. During this pandemic, pastors once again found new and productive ways to deliver their sermons. Some preached from the back of pickup trucks, some on the front porches of the church or their homes, others held drive-in services in the church parking lot using low-powered FM transmitters so people could listen through their car radios. Many moved services to online media platforms such as Facebook Live, Zoom, GoToMeeting and YouTube, delivering their messages from church sanctuaries, rooms in their home and outdoor venues with nature as a backdrop. And the results have been incredible as people who had perhaps been away from the church for a while or had never

attended church at all were able to hear and be transformed by the love of God communicated through His Word!

However, pastors and churches did not stop there. Many went on to add daily online devotions and Bible studies, providing much needed hope and encouragement to people as they faced the stress and concern of uncertain days. They proved to the watching world that the "church" was not a building, but a community of believers - the Body of Christ - as they fed people in need, communicated with those who were homebound or lived alone and provided grocery shopping and pharmacy trips for people who were more at risk or restricted in their ability to travel. Discipleship became a *family* word instead of a *church* word as the home replaced the Sunday School in the Christian education of children and teens. Throughout this time, churches developed unique and interactive online programs specifically designed to engage children and teens in God's Word at home.

It is amazing how quickly our pastors and church leaders have gone from "problem solvers" to "opportunity finders!" This is the point we find ourselves in at this stage of the pandemic battle. As plans are being made for churches to safely begin in-person worship and ministry, it is taking place through the lens of newfound possibility! Our focus has moved beyond the immediate circumstances to the anticipation and expectancy of what can be. Questions like what have we learned and of all we discovered what do we want to continue in the future? For example, how do you stay connected with the new people you engaged online and bring them into the loving presence of your faith community? Evaluating how we did things before and asking ourselves can we do them differently or even better? Even amid this crisis, God has given us a fresh opportunity to grow in grace and effectiveness as the church. The task before us is not to return to the comfort and complacency of the past, but to bring the same level of determination and creativity that inspired us during the time of quarantine with us as we move into the future. Even once the crisis of this virus passes, the urgency of communicating the Gospel is perhaps greater than ever! It will be exciting to see what comes next!

*Mike Sisson,  
Executive Minister*

*The West Virginia Baptist Convention is a family of churches committed to reaching all generations for Jesus Christ both here and abroad by equipping one another to be healthy, growing and unified in Christ and for Christ.*

***Doing Christ's Work Together***



West Virginia  
Baptist Convention

### There's an App for That!



The West Virginia Baptist Convention app is available for Android and Apple products. Download yours today!

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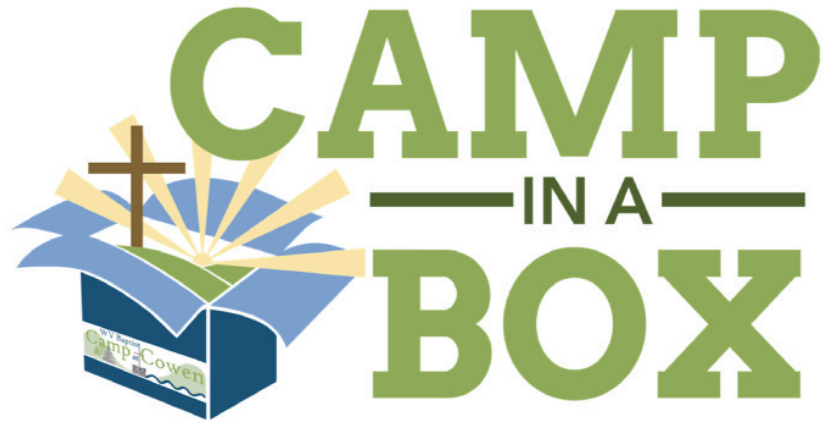
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Missing Camp Cowen this summer? We present **Camp-in-a-Box!**

This camp pack, mailed to your home, is a box of camp activities, along with Cowen gear and access to online content.

### Cost?

\$50 + optional additional items to customize the box for your family

### What is included?

- **Camp Gear:** A camp t-shirt, plus at least four other items such as a bracelet, cup, sunglasses, pencil/highlighter and stickers. Additional items will be available as add-ons to customize your box.
- **Devotional:** An eight-week devotional developed for your age group.
- **12+ Activity Cards:** Two crafts, four camp game cards, four summer recipes, two nature activities and more.
- **Summer Challenges:** Camp BINGO and Summer Scripture Memorization Challenge online content, a weekly Cowen Bible study through Zoom, wacky game nights and an invite a friend Friday.
- **Discount:** Receive a one-time 10% discount on a future 2020 or 2021 onsite event.

### When are the boxes available?

The first round of boxes will ship the first week of June. Subsequent orders will ship weekly.

### Can I order one for a friend?

Yes, that is a great idea! You can order one for a friend and have it shipped right to their door!

### How do I sign up?

Order online at [www.campcowen.org](http://www.campcowen.org) or contact Jennifer at 304.422.6449 for an order form.



## Mentoring for Pastoral Excellence



Derek Hall, pastor of Old Greenbrier Baptist Church

When the West Virginia Baptist Convention, in partnership with Renew Transformational Strategies, launched its new Mentoring for Pastoral Excellence initiative, the hope was that it would inspire, encourage, support and strengthen networks between experienced pastor-mentors and the gifted younger pastor-leaders in our churches.

Nowhere on our radar was the unexpected pandemic that would greatly impact Convention churches just two months later. However, in hindsight, the timing proved to be a God-moment and His

hand in the program becomes more evident every day.

Shortly after the stay-at-home order was announced by Governor Jim Justice, I spoke with one of the pastor-leaders participating in the mentoring program. He commented that it had really been great to have a mentor while trying to navigate the next steps of moving his church to online services and learning to minister in a radically different way. Then he added a very important observation, he and his mentor were able to share ideas and to learn from one another. This is key because the beauty of a successful mentoring relationship is best revealed when the learning and support flows both ways between the

mentor and the leader.

Recently, I spoke with Derek Hall, pastor of Old Greenbrier Baptist Church (Greenbrier-Raleigh). Derek's mentor is Bill Brown, senior pastor of Vienna Baptist Church (Parkersburg). I asked Derek if he would be willing to share his thoughts about the program and the mentoring relationship with Bill. Derek wrote, "Bill and I decided the first book we would cover would be Canoeing the Mountains because I have considered 'leadership' to be one of my weak areas. It was an amazing look at 'adaptive leadership' and I learned a great deal, not only from the material, but also from Bill's experience, wisdom and insightful questions! What I didn't know when I chose the book was that I would be living out that very process (as all of us have been) over the past few months. Bill has been a great comfort to me in navigating these "off the map" issues we've all been trying to address. Knowing he's praying for me and that I can bounce ideas off of him at any time has been a wonderful point of dependability in a rather chaotic and uncertain time."

My hope and dream as Executive Minister is that every pastor of every stage of ministry will be able to be connected with a mentor so they can experience the support, encouragement and mutual learning such as is taking place in this *Mentoring for Pastoral Excellence* initiative. If you are a pastor-leader and would be interested in being connected to a mentor, contact your area minister or the Convention office at 304.422.6449.

*Mike Sisson,  
Executive Minister*

## 2020 Palmer Seminary at West Virginia Program Graduates Announced

*by Allan Copenhaver,*

*Palmer Theological Seminary at West Virginia Program Director*

As with just about every other event this season, Palmer Theological Seminary had to cancel its annual graduation banquet scheduled for March 22, 2020 at Parchment Valley Conference Center. However, we would like to take this time to recognize the students who are on pace to fulfill their graduation requirements by the end of this summer semester.

Those completing their Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree include: Rev. Shane Boggs, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Sutton (Elk Valley); Rev. Jonathan Delgado, Minister of Family Life at Emmanuel Baptist Church (Parkersburg); Rev. Brent Hannah, pastor of Salem Seventh Day Baptist Church and Rev. Jim Saunders, pastor of Mallory Baptist Church (Logan-Mingo).

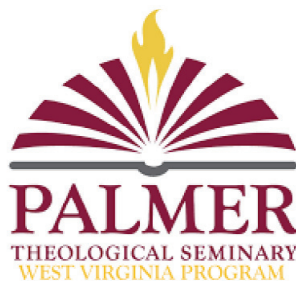
Also, Rev. Matt Ash, pastor of Parchment Valley Baptist Church (Good Hope) successfully defended his doctoral project during the spring semester to earn his Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) degree. Congratulations, Dr. Ash!

For those considering a seminary education, this is a great time to consider Palmer Seminary. Through our partner-

ships with the Bowen Charitable Trust and the West Virginia Baptist Education Society, theological education has never been more affordable. Convenient hybrid courses meet for seven weeks with two and a half day residencies at Parchment Valley Conference Center. We are now offering more courses than ever (including summer courses), which allow you to graduate in quicker time without traveling away from home.

In past years, we have been limited in the number of students we can admit without a bachelor's degree. However, our accrediting body, the Association of Theological Schools, now allows us to develop our own policy in this situation. So, beginning with the fall semester, graduates of the School of Christian Studies may now be considered for admission without an undergraduate degree. This eliminates one of the largest hurdles many of our potential students have faced.

If God is calling to you to further your education, please contact the West Virginia program director, Dr. Allan Copenhaver, at 304.763.8564 or [allancopenhaver@yahoo.com](mailto:allancopenhaver@yahoo.com) for more information.



# Meet the Interns

## BRAD CHENAULT

Brad graduated with a Regents Bachelor of Arts degree from Marshall University last August. He is planning on attending seminary and working in youth or pastoral ministry. He is currently a substitute teacher in the Huntington area. Brad attends New Baptist Church (Guyandotte). He served last summer as a children's ministry intern at Mount Vernon Baptist Church (Teays Valley) and is looking for placement in youth or music ministry. He enjoys playing the guitar and the piano, reading, hiking, sports and watching television shows and movies.



## CAROLINE MCCUMBERS

Caroline will be a senior at Alderson Broaddus University this fall. She is majoring in psychology and minoring in criminal justice. Her home church is New Beginnings Church in Chloe. She plans to attend graduate school at the University of Toledo and become a counselor. In her spare time, Caroline enjoys singing, painting and crafting.



## CHLOE COOK

Chloe, a junior at Marshall University, is an advertising and public relations major. She is also minoring in marketing. Her long term plans include working within the field of public relations and attending graduate school. Her home church is Cook Memorial Baptist Church (Rockcastle). In her spare time, Chloe loves to hike, read, journal and craft.



## MYLES HUTTON

Myles is from Pickens, South Carolina. Last fall, he transferred to Glenville State College, where he recently graduated with a major in natural resources management. In his spare time, Myles enjoys spending time outdoors, mountain biking and hunting.



## KAYLA STARCHER

Kayla will be a senior at West Virginia University this fall. She majors in journalism and minors in business, English and strategic social media. Following graduation, she plans to start a Christian media company so as to assist churches in navigating the modern digital landscape. She splits her time between Sabraton Baptist Church (Goshen) and Mount Jackson Baptist Church in Athens. In her spare time, Kayla enjoys reading, writing, learning how to play the ukulele and all types of video and production.



## JESSE NOWERY

Jesse, a communications major, will be entering his senior year at Marshall University this fall. He plans to obtain his Masters in Divinity following the completion of his undergrad, with the idea of going into ministry. Pea Ridge Baptist Church (Guyandotte) is Jesse's home church. In his spare time, Jesse loves photography, playing the guitar, hiking and spending time with his friends and family.



## ASA DICK

Asa, a Greenbrier County native, studies land surveying at Glenville State College. Following his graduation, he plans to work as a professional land surveyor while discipling his community, state, county and the world. He has a passion for world missions and exploring new places. In his spare time, Asa enjoys hunting, fishing and playing the bagpipes.

## ISSAC HESSE

Issac is currently majoring in business management at Glenville State College. He plans on using this degree to run his own business, possibly even a farm. He has been involved with Baptist Campus Ministries (BCM) for almost four years and has been a member of the leadership team for almost two years. In his spare time, Issac enjoys the outdoors, working with engines and serving our Lord and Savior.



## MEGAN SATTELMAIER

Megan is a resident of Glenville. She is married to Isaiah Sattelmaier, and her hobbies include writing, reading, singing and anything involving fellowship with other believers. Megan is particularly fond of the outdoors. Her favorite Bible verse is Proverbs 21:31.



## REBEKAH MCCLOY

Rebekah will be a senior English education major at Marshall University. She plans on becoming a teacher or a librarian following graduation, while also serving in children's/youth ministry. She is a member at Newark Baptist Church (Parkersburg) and attends New Baptist Church (Guyandotte). She is on the leadership team with Marshall University's Baptist Campus Ministries (BCM). She loves Star Trek, reading and collecting books. She is returning to Newark Baptist Church as a youth and children's ministry intern.



## ZACHARY CARDER

Zachary served last summer as a youth ministry intern at Philippi Baptist Church (Union), and will be joining their staff again this summer. He says, "I'm not sure what I want to do with my future yet, but I know I'm supposed to be a witness and share the gospel." His home church is Philippi Baptist Church. He enjoys traveling and connecting with people over their different opinions.



## ELIZABETH PALMER

Elizabeth is an early childhood education major at Cedarville University. She is a member at Worthington Baptist Church (Fairmont) and is active in women's groups at both the association and state level. She served last summer at Parchment Valley Baptist Church (Good Hope) as an intern in their youth/children's department, and is planning on interning at Charleston Baptist Temple (Kanawha Valley) this summer with their children's department.



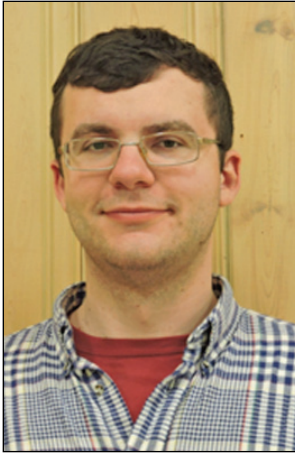
## BREELLEN FLEMING

Breellen will be a senior this fall at West Virginia University, where she serves on their Baptist Campus Ministries' (BCM) leadership team. Her major is intermedia photography. She was part of this year's Missionary Intern Program, but due to travel restrictions, she will now be using her gifts to support the ministries of the WVBC. Her hobbies include drawing and guitar.



## ROBERT VILLERS

Robert is a recent graduate of Alderson Broaddus University. He attends Philippi Baptist Church (Union), where he has been a youth ministry intern. He has spent the last two summers at Salem Baptist Church (Broad Run), interning with their youth department. He plans on a career in youth ministry, and is looking for placement in that area. He is part of Baptist Campus Ministries (BCM) at Alderson Broaddus University and was president of the organization last year.



## ISAIAH SATTELMAIER

Isaiah recently graduated from Glenville State College this past December. Following that, he married the love of his life, Megan Sattelmaier, in January. His hobbies include studying God's word and ministering through music. Isaiah plans to remain active in Glenville through his work at Anchor Bible Church.



## CALEB WISE

Caleb is a junior at Marshall University and is studying civil engineering. His home church is New Baptist Church (Guyandotte). His hobbies include playing disc golf, getting Cookout milkshakes and hiking. Caleb is working with Fifth Avenue Baptist Church (Guyandotte) in their youth ministry department.



## JOHN PARSONS

John comes to us from Pine Grove Baptist Church (Parkersburg). He is a graduate of Parkersburg High School, and has worked with the youth and children at his home church. He has been a leader in the church's Awana program. He is planning on attending Liberty University in the fall with a major in either youth ministry or pastoral care.



## KEEVIN GILLARD II

Keevin is a student at Glenville State College, where he is an athlete, musician and entrepreneur who loves to see the kingdom of God and His righteousness. He loves allowing God to enter into every area of his life. He is interning at Anchor Bible Church.

## TAYLOR CURRY

Taylor is currently a senior at Marshall University. She plans to apply to Palmer Theological Seminary to pursue a Masters in Divinity. Her home church is New Baptist Church (Guyandotte). In her spare time, Taylor enjoys spending time with family and friends, being outdoors and traveling.



## JOHNNY O'HARA

Johnny is currently attending Glenville State College, where he majors in elementary and early education (pre-k-6th). He enjoys reading, writing, martial arts, athletics, working with children, teaching, learning more about God and the wonders of His creation and loving others as he has been loved.



## Family Ministry Online

by Josh Weddle,  
Clarksburg Baptist Church

Over the last couple months, our methods have changed drastically, but the mission remains the same, and God has brought some huge opportunities into light through our challenges. We have been forced to adapt to an online approach to ministry, but we need to be careful we don't view the online platforms as a crisis-only approach to ministry. What we are learning now is a lot of what we've been forced to do should be implemented into how we do ministry in the future. We have an incredible opportunity to minister to the world through online platforms in ways we should have been doing all along. Almost everyone we hope to reach with the gospel can be found online, so why wouldn't we continue to try to reach them that way? Carey Nieuwhof says, "The online world is the biggest front door the world has ever seen. Suddenly, we are all connected."

This approach definitely is new to most of us and we are all trying to find the most effective and creative ways to minister to our families through the platforms we have been given. It has been inspiring to see the creativity of family pastors everywhere doing whatever it takes to lead families in discipleship.



I'm excited to see how churches continue to cultivate creativity as we keep pushing forward. At Clarksburg Baptist Church (Union), we have been able to connect and interact with our families through different online platforms and have been able to successfully deliver Biblical content to our families. For our kids, we have been able to record our kids church lessons and get them to our families through social media pages. We have also been able to provide them with activities, games and additional resources to supplement family unity and growth in the gospel. To connect with our middle and high school students, we have been doing weekly live devotions, weekly Zoom calls and have also been providing online competitions and games for our students to participate in. We have also made attempts to get families as a whole engaged and spending time with each other by doing things like surprise Easter egg hunts in people's yards and live family painting sessions through Facebook Live. We have received great feedback and feel like things have been most effective when they are interactive and connect our families.

It is tempting to try to be and do way too much right now, but we need to remember God is sovereign and totally in control. Let us remember to simply be the branches and trust Jesus to be the vine. "Apart from him we can do nothing (John 15:5)."

## The Legacy of P.W. and Dora Johnson

Located in Northview Cemetery, in New Martinsville, is a very ordinary headstone that simply bears the name "Johnson." If you were to stop long enough to read the equally ordinary grave markers, you would find they belong to P.W. Johnson (1898-1975) and Dora M. Johnson (1904-1995).

Born in Kentucky, P.W. Johnson was a builder and became very successful in the mining industry. Dora Johnson was a loving wife and homemaker. They had no children.

The Johnsons were active members of New Martinsville First Baptist Church (Panhandle) and donated the land for its present structure. P.W. would serve in a variety of roles at the church. He also served as president of the West Virginia Baptist Convention in 1954. To the best of anyone's knowledge, Dora was active, but never held any leadership positions in the church.

After P.W.'s death in 1975, Dora continued to live in New Martinsville for the remainder of her life. She went home to be with her Lord in 1995 at the age of 91. Hence, the headstone and grave markers in Northview Cemetery.



*A very ordinary headstone for a very extraordinary couple.*

Most legacy stories contain lots of information about a person's outstanding accomplishments, their leadership in the church or their contributions to their community. If you're looking for a recounting of such things here you won't find them. However, I can't help but believe that's the way P.W. and Dora Johnson wanted it. Again, I point you to their very ordinary headstone and grave markers in Northview Cemetery.

The truth, however, is the impact of the lives of P.W. and Dora Johnson is yet to be fully realized. You see, when Dora

passed away, she left a significant gift from the estate to the West Virginia Baptist Convention. One of the purposes of that gift was to support the planting of new churches. As we renew our commitment to plant new churches in West Virginia, how fitting that each new church is a tribute to the Johnson's desire to bring glory to God, not themselves.

So, the very ordinary headstone and grave markers in Northview Cemetery, I'm sure, suited P.W. and Dora Johnson just fine. That's because, instead of monuments, they were content with a recognition far greater ... "Well done, good and faithful servant."

*David Hulme,  
Northeast Area Minister*

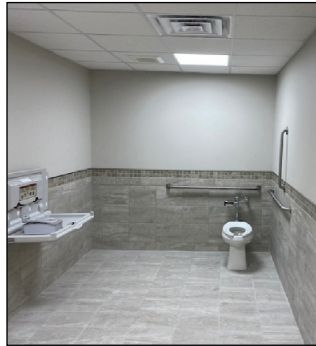
## A Time to be Still

At Parchment Valley Conference Center, the sun doesn't always shine, but the people sure do! In the perilous times of COVID-19, as the world came to a standstill, I was reminded that this was the perfect time to "be still." The Scripture tells us in Mark 4:39 that Jesus "got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, 'Quiet! Be Still!' Then the wind died down and it was completely calm."

Although we had to make several difficult decisions on events, we found ourselves investing more time in prayer for future opportunities. Some events were rescheduled and some were canceled altogether, but we found that "being still" allowed God to speak to us and provide us with new opportunities to be creative with our ministry plan. Over the next several weeks, you can still participate in the ministry at Parchment Valley by joining us for one of our virtual camps, where you and your family will be invited to join us in "being still" before God. Or you can join us by coming to take a refreshing nature hike, enjoying a picnic, fishing at the lakes or spending time alone with God enjoying the beauty of His creation.

Going forward, our goal is to provide the safest envi-

ronment possible for our West Virginia Baptist Convention (WVBC) friends and guests. In doing so we are sanitizing, painting and finishing projects that were much needed. We are grateful for our WVBC family and the support you have continued to offer.



**The new handicap accessible restroom at PV's administration building.**

One of the projects we have completed is the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) handicap accessible restroom in the administration building (the barn). The American Baptist Women's Ministries of West Virginia chose this as one of their 2020 projects, and are continuing to fundraise for it. This is such an amazing addition that will accommodate even more of our guests!

Another project completed was painting at the dorms. When you visit the 12 dorms, you will now see each door painted in a bright, vivid color. This idea came from one of our Twelve Pole Association church campers last year who suggested, "Let's brighten this place up!"

We look forward to seeing you at Parchment Valley soon. In the meantime, we invite you to "be still," knowing God has an even greater plan for the future.

## Baptist Campus Ministries

by Kevin Sions, Northern Director

### Changing Lives that Change the World ... in a Virtual Way

Throughout the state of West Virginia, each of the Baptist Campus Ministries' (BCM) campuses transitioned to an online format to continue meeting together in spite of the need to



**Last in-person meeting before WVU's campus was closed.**

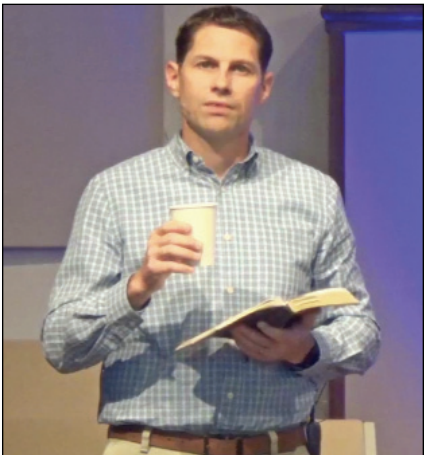
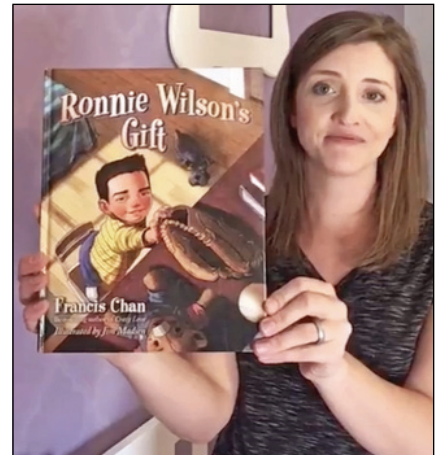
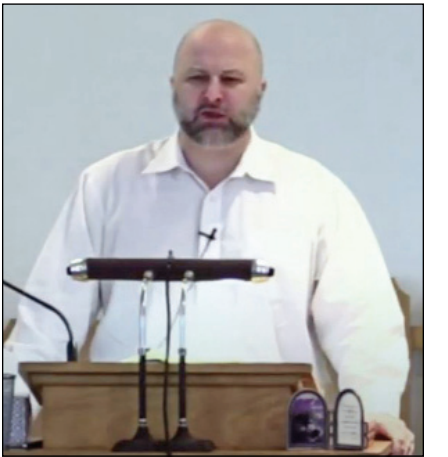
be separated because of COVID-19. Utilizing Zoom, Facebook Live, Instagram and other online/virtual media, BCM students worshipped, gathered to pray, studied God's Word and

remained connected to one another. Discipleship and community are two key components for BCM. Both of these are vital to college ministry.

While working with the BCM leadership from West Virginia University (WVU) these past few months, I was reminded of the following words from Paul, written to the church in Colossae: "We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people - the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the Gospel that has come to you. In the same way, the Gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world-just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace" (Colossians 1:3-6).

At a time when our campus was closed and students were scattered (many of them moving back home), the BCM leadership team at WVU continued to serve and continued to keep our community connected. Through their example, I was overwhelmed with gratitude and humility as the mission of BCM - *Changing Lives that Change the World* - was truly evident in their lives. Through the actions and words of these students, through their commitment to continuing to serve other students, and through their dedication to studying and sharing God's Word in online formats, they displayed great maturity and wisdom. For me, getting to witness their spiritual growth as disciples of Christ during this time was encouraging.

I am grateful and thankful to God for the opportunity to come alongside their faith journeys. Thank you for praying for and supporting BCM, which is continuing to *Change Lives that Change the World*.



DOING CHRIST'S WORK *together*

## Missionary Internship Program Cancels Summer Travel

The **Missionary Internship Program** provides individuals with the opportunity to explore their long-term calling to missions by pairing them up with a long-term missionary partner for a three to six-week internship. In addition to their international experience, they have the opportunity to participate in several training events on the topics of mission theology, culture, conflict resolution and much, much more. Last year's pilot group of interns spent their summers in Mexico, India and Lebanon and they provided very helpful feedback on how the program could be improved. Those improvements were made and six more interns were chosen to participate in this year's program.

Over the last six months, Becca Martin, Bree Fleming, Kali Wilkinson, Beth Perry, Shyra Freeman and Emily Fordyce devoted several evenings a month to preparing for their respective internships this summer. Their training was coordinated by Todd McClure, Minister of Missions and Finance, and included several area directors and global servants from International Ministries. Also new to this year's program was a partnership with Midwest Ministry Development, which administered cross-cultural adaptability, conflict resolution and personality testing. Each of these tests is something that would be required if any

one of these girls decided to pursue full-time missions any further.

At the start of the program, nobody could have imagined COVID-19 would bring international travel to a halt. However, because that became the case, it became increasingly clear both for the safety of our interns and their respective destinations, their plans for international travel would need to be canceled. Becca was planning to spend her summer in the Philippines, Bree in Myanmar, Kali in Mexico, Beth in Japan and Shyra and Emily in Honduras. While many of the decisions were made by international travel restrictions, others had to be made just out of respect and concern for the communities where they would be serving.

One of the primary lessons taught throughout the program was the need to remain flexible. That lesson was definitely realized with this year's group. Our prayer is that God opens a door in the near future for each of these girls to finish their internship. If not, they will be allowed to participate in next year's internship program and will have already completed several of the requirements.

One thing COVID-19 has reminded us is the harvest remains plentiful and the laborers remain few, and we need more individuals, like these girls, who are willing go into the harvest. Please join us in praying that God continues to guide each of them and that He continues to raise up even more individuals who are willing to go and reach the world with the good news of the Gospel.

## Virtual Mission Trip Series

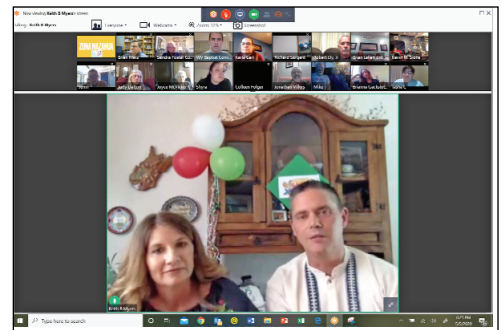
One of the greatest benefits of a short-term mission trip is that it provides individuals with the opportunity to come alongside a full-time missionary to learn about their ministry and gain a heart for what God is doing in that particular part of the world. Oftentimes, a short-term mission trip has a major impact on one's long-term calling. In the immediate week following the implementation of travel restrictions within the United States, five mission trips had to be canceled or rescheduled. In the weeks and months that followed, nearly a dozen other trips also had to be canceled.

This led to the idea of hosting a series of "virtual mission trips" to provide people with ongoing opportunities to connect with our missionaries around the globe. To date, well over 100 people have participated in these trips and several have requested these trips continue throughout the summer. There have also been numerous pastors and churches from other regions of the country that have participated.

In the first trip, J.D. and Rhonda Reed provided a ministry and funding update on both the House of Hope and the Masters in Theological Studies in Latino/a Ministries' program offered throughout the Latin American world in partnership with Palmer Theological Seminary. In the second trip, Juan and Denise Aragon provided a virtual tour to each of the churches of

their region using Google Earth. In the third trip, Keith and Deborah Myers talked about their ongoing work in creating Vacation Bible School materials for churches. And the most recent virtual mission trip was to South Africa to hear an update from Rick and Anita Gutierrez.

Several of these virtual mission trips have been recorded and are available on the West Virginia Baptist Convention Missions' Facebook page. We will also be hosting several more trips throughout the summer. To receive more information about these trips, follow us on Facebook or sign up for our weekly e-mails. Virtual mission trips provide us with a great opportunity to continue *Doing Christ's Work Together*.



*Keith and Deborah Myers allowed us to celebrate Cinco De Maya with them during their Virtual Mission Trip.*



## Ministry in a Time of Quarantine

by J.D. Reed,  
International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant

In Bolivia, the entire country is under a governmentally mandated quarantine, and in some cities (Santa Cruz being one of them) the military is “encapsulating the city” to help ensure that all are abiding by the rules of quarantine. In Santa Cruz and other hot spots for COVID-19, the total quarantine lifted at the end of May, but for other areas it is continuing. This plays out as each household can only have one person on one morning a week travel to get supplies, food and pay their bills. As you can imagine for a country that is filled with people who make their living in a day-to-day wage from an informal shop or trade work, this means that for months they haven't had any income at all, and there is an overwhelming feeling of anxiety about what the future holds. This is mixed with a healthy distrust of those in power and a national election hanging in the balance.

Churches and ministries like ours have been doing everything in our power to minister to our communities, but with limited contact and no transportation it has been almost impossible. For Fundación Proyecto de Esperanza (FPE) also known as the Project of Hope Foundation, the mobile medical and dental clinics have been canceled. Also, all leadership development training and Bible studies have moved online. Many we

work with do not have access to this technology. So, what does a foundation do?

After prayer and talking with leaders, the foundation came up with a plan. The husband of one leader is in the national police, so Fundación Proyecto de Esperanza began working with him to help provide much needed resources to the churches and communities that FPE serves. FPE provides an offering to each church pastor to serve their community in a way they view necessary. One particular pastor used their offering to buy food for their entire church family as well as all of their neighbors in a very poor indigenous neighborhood. So far, we have been able to be in contact with all 13 of our supported churches and ministries.

As many of you know, our family decided to return to the United States in late April to begin our year of home assignment. We have already begun scheduling visits to churches and individuals that will begin in late August 2020. We would love to come and visit your church or group. If you are interested in having us come and share, you can send an email to [jd.reed@internationalministries.org](mailto:jd.reed@internationalministries.org) or [rhonda.reed@internationalministries.org](mailto:rhonda.reed@internationalministries.org). You can also send an e-mail to Todd McClure ([todd@wvbc.org](mailto:todd@wvbc.org)). We look forward to sharing God's work in Bolivia and Latin America with each of you in the near future.

**CAMP GLOBAL 2020:**  
**UNDISCIPLINED PEOPLE GROUPS**  
JULY 31-AUG 2                      CAMP COWEN  
**REGISTER NOW AT [WWW.WVBC.ORG](http://WWW.WVBC.ORG)**



*Evan Arkell*, Southwest Area Minister

## God is Still Blessing

I have struggled knowing what to say in this article as I sit here writing in the early morning hours on Tuesday, May 5, 2020. In my last article, I had written about some events that were planned, but have ended up being canceled. This morning,



**Timothy Preston, right, pastor of Fort Gay Baptist Church, baptizes a new sister in Christ in the church's outdoor baptistry.**

there are many questions swirling as church leaders wrestle with difficult decisions on when to reopen church and what that will look like. Some are starting back this Sunday, May 10, with many precautions in place. Many are waiting until the beginning of June to reevaluate the situation. With all of the uncertainty in our lives, one thing we can always cling to is the knowledge that God is still blessing!

We can say He is still blessing because we know the Gospel of Jesus Christ is reaching people who need to hear the good news, even through their computer screens. I was blessed to speak to

Tim Preston, pastor of Fort Gay Baptist Church (Twelve Pole),

who told me about a new sister in Christ who accepted Jesus through a Facebook Live sermon. He was then blessed to baptize her in their outdoor baptistry and welcome her into the family. I also heard from Tony Perry, pastor of Big Hurricane Missionary Baptist Church (Twelve Pole), who mentioned getting comments and positive feedback from people, even in other states, about their online services. This was a true blessing for Tony and his family because his nephew and other fellow soldiers were able to participate in Easter services via Facebook Live while serving in Iraq.

Since the beginning of the shutdown, we have seen some churches utilizing drive-in services where people were hearing the Gospel from their cars. Jim Adkins, pastor of Connolly Memorial Baptist Church (Logan-Mingo), has been broadcasting on Facebook Live while preaching from the bed of his pickup truck in front of the church in downtown Delbarton. I can only imagine that many who live there are watching them and hearing the Gospel. The vast majority of churches in the Southwest Area have been broadcasting worship in a digital format, which has allowed God's Word to penetrate more hearts and homes than were being reached when things were "normal." We can see God's blessings reaching more than we can imagine during this pandemic. How has He blessed you and your family during this time?

## Southeast Area News

*Jim Anderson*, Southeast Area Minister

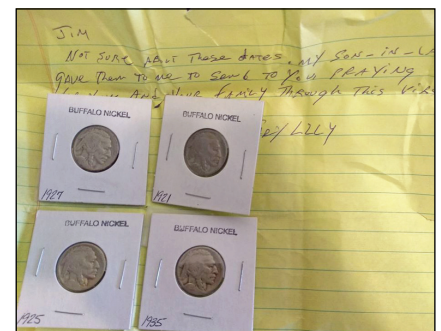
### Baptism and Buffalo Nickels

During this COVID-19 time of staying home, Susan and I have been blessed by several friends and pastors checking in on us. In the mail during Holy Week, I received four buffalo nickels and an encouraging note (see picture at right) from Gary Lilly and his son-in-law, both of Calvary Baptist Church (Fayette). The nickels and the note brought tears of joy to my eyes. Let me explain why.

As part of being an area minister with the West Virginia Baptist Convention, before I preach I share a song. Most recently, I have been singing *Baptism*, and in that song the little boy forgets to leave his buffalo nickel at home and loses it while being baptized. The song then goes on to say "but it seems like such a small small price to pay, for the blessed peace of mine that came to me that day." People laugh at the nickel part of the song, but also feel sorry for me because, except for losing the nickel, the song describes my baptism in 1965 in Lee Creek in Wood County almost perfectly.

Today, over the almost 20 years I have been singing this song, the first song I shared as an area minister, counting these four nickels, I have received 13 buffalo nickels. All are treasured and these could not have come at a better time!

Even in our time of separation, we take great comfort and strength in that nothing can separate us from the love of God through our Lord Jesus Christ. May we do as Gary did in the story, and by so many other conventional and creative ways, continue to share that love with others. Be careful out there and God bless!



**Four buffalo nickels and a note from Gary Lilly and his son-in-law.**

Mark McCloy, Northwest Area Minister

## Sand Fork Baptist Church: Ministering in a Pandemic

As I think about the creative ways different congregations and pastors have rallied in the midst of a time of pandemic and social distancing, I can't help but be proud of the good job many are doing. I recall the story of one pastor whose flock was largely elderly and lacking internet telling about how to do a pastoral call in a time of social distancing. He would knock on a door and hurry back to a chair he had placed in the parishioner's yard. They would come out and sit on the porch and visit long distance while keeping each other safe. For many pastors this has been a time where they had to learn new technologies and become their own tech, editing and video production crew. Certainly, the cell phone has also been a valuable tool. For most, it has been a time requiring us to figure out how to use what we have to accomplish our mission. And, although the mission has not changed, the methods we used had to do so.

One story I particularly enjoyed was that of Sand Fork Baptist Church (Little Kanawha). Years ago, I remember visiting their church for the first time and I was impressed then at the number of children and youth they were reaching through their ministry. No less than four vans (I'm told it's three vans and a



Electronic Bible study at Sand Fork Baptist Church.

bus) were sitting in the parking lot, back from gathering the children in the surrounding communities and bringing them to church. It clearly was a priority and it was also clearly bearing fruit. I have noted on several occasions the large percentage of their congregation made up by youngsters.

Then, the pandemic arrived. Suddenly, we all received word it was no longer safe to "bring them in." I imagine this was

difficult and harsh news to us all, but especially to a church that is so children-minded. What would they do now? Isn't it interesting how adversity sometimes brings out the best in people? Sand Fork, no longer able to bring the children in, instead sent the vans (and the bus) to take food out - for the children surely still needed them. And with the food, came not only the love of Jesus, but also the story of Jesus - included in Bible lessons and children's activities prepared and sent along with the meals. Each week, the church has made sure some 60 kids are fed - spiritually and physically. Besides the

church-prepared food, they have also served as a distribution center for the school prepared meals as well, making sure the meals made it to the kids who needed them. As they look forward to returning to church, Sand Fork Baptist Church continues to care for the kids and also provides Bible study and worship for all ages through electronic media as well.

## Northeast Area News

David Hulme, Northeast Area Minister

### News Without the "P" Word



Pastors livestream their Wednesday night Bible Study.

Everyone has heard the "P" word over and over again during the last three months. So, I was determined to write an article without using it. Instead, I want to use some other "P" words to highlight my observations of some of the things God has been up to in the Northeast Area during this challenging time:

1. **PARTNER** - I've seen pastors partnering together, meeting through Zoom conferences, to share ideas on the challenges of livestreaming and issues related to opening the church.
2. **POSITIVE** - There is an overwhelmingly positive outlook among pastors related to how God has used and will ultimately use this time for His glory.
3. **PRY** - God has certainly pried some of us free from inhibitions and fears about using or expanding the use of technology in ministry.
4. **PRODUCTIVE** - Related to #3, this expanded use of technology has resulted in people coming to Christ, the rededication of lives, an expanded audience for the good news, and in some cases financial stability for the church.
5. **PRUNE** - This time has caused us to take stock of what is and isn't working and prioritize the things that really matter.
6. **PIONEER** - God has given us a frontier with new and unknown possibilities.

**JEAN LOUISE (BROKAW) ABELL**, 93, of Penny Farms, Florida, died April 5, 2020. She was an American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (ABFMS) alumna, who served in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

**VIOLA LOUISE ALLAN**, 87, of Alhambra, California, died February 10, 2020. She was an American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (ABFMS) alumna, who served in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

**MARY MADELINE BLAKE**, age 91, died April 26, 2020. She was a lifelong member of Gauley Bridge Baptist Church (Kanawha Valley), where she was a Sunday School teacher, Vacation Bible School director, American Baptist Women's Ministries' president and Sunday School Superintendent.

**JUDITH "JUDY" (COOKE) BYUS**, 83, of Madison, died April 2, 2020. She was a longtime member of Madison Baptist Church (Coal River), where she had been active in the choir, women's circle and children's program.

**JAMES (JIM) BUCHANAN CLARK, JR.**, 96, of Houston, Texas, died March 7, 2020. He was an American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (ABFMS) alumnus, who served in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

**RALPH E. CORNELL**, 78, of Waverly, died March 14, 2020. He was a member of Pine Grove Baptist Church (Parkersburg), where he served as a trustee and chaired the first security team to protect the members of the church.

**RUTH VIRGINIA ELLIS**, 100, of Hurricane, died May 6, 2020. She was a member of Hurricane First Baptist Church (Teays Valley), where she was active in Sunday School activities and sang in the choir for 40 years. She was proud to be the church's oldest member.

**SHARON ALLEN JAMES**, 84, of Teays Valley, died April 2, 2020. She faithfully served at Glenville First Baptist Church (Little Kanawha), Parkersburg Baptist Temple (Parkersburg) and Hurricane First Baptist Church (Teays Valley).

**BETTY LEE SQUIRES KEENER**, 92, of Fairmont, died March 3, 2020. She was a lifelong member of Fairmont Baptist Temple (Fairmont), where she served on the board of deacons, was a member of the sanctuary choir, a Sunday School teacher and a member of the American Baptist Women's Ministries.

**BARBARA J. LAKE**, 84, of Lexington, North Carolina, formerly of West Union, died February 13, 2020. She most recently was a member of West Union Baptist Church (Broad Run) and South Fork Baptist Church (Harrisville). She was the widow of George E. Lake, who died in 2012. Together they served many churches in Illinois and West Virginia. She was a gifted Sunday School teacher.

**ELEEN "COOKIE" PALMER**, 78, of Shinnston, died March 19, 2020. She was a member of Coon's Run Baptist Church (Judson), where she was involved in Sunday School, women's ministries and decorating for Vacation Bible School. She was the wife of the pastor, Rev. Max "Sonny" Palmer.

**EDITH JANE (YATES) RIFFE**, 89, of Crab Orchard, died March 28, 2020. She was an active member of Crab Orchard Baptist Church (Greenbrier-Raleigh) for over 75 years, where she served in numerous leadership positions and committees.

**GEORGE TRUETT ROGERS**, 88, of Oakland, Maryland, died March 31, 2020. His professional career involved pastoring two churches in Colorado as well as the Morgantown First Baptist Church (Goshen). He also was a history professor at Alderson Broaddus College and an adjunct at West Virginia University's Honors College. He authored several professional articles and books concerning Baptist history, including "A Biography of David Jones 1736 - 1820" and "Bibles and Battle Drums." He also authored two books on West Virginia Baptist History: The Early Years, 1770-1865 and The Convention Years, 1865-1965. He gained much satisfaction from being part of Morgantown First Baptist Church's ministry to bring doctors, nurses, dentists and water wells to Haiti.

**JOHN (JACK) EDWARD RUMOHR**, 91, of Penny Farms, Florida, died February 29, 2020. He was an American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (ABFMS) alumnus, who served in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

**PATRICIA IRENE SHAWVER**, 89, of Williamstown, died April 18, 2020. She was an active member of Williamstown First Baptist Church (Parkersburg), where she enjoyed missions, helping in the nursery and serving as a deaconess.

**JOHN WANAMAKER**, 92, died March 10, 2020. He served as pastor of churches in Illinois and Ohio and on the staff of American Baptist Churches of Maine. He retired after serving as an area minister for the West Virginia Baptist Convention for 17 years. Alderson Broaddus University presented him with an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree in 1990.

### Leadership Updates

**MR. PHILIP WALTON** to Standard First Baptist Church (Kanawha Valley) as pastor on January 1, 2020

**REV. ORVILLE G. WRIGHT** to Boothsville Baptist Church (Fairmont) as pastor on March 15, 2020

## June 2020

**JUNE 1** – Phil Wayman, member, West Virginia Baptist Convention Christian Outreach Commission  
**JUNE 2** – The ministry of Bethlehem Baptist Church; Randy Landes, pastor (Judson)  
**JUNE 3** – The ministry of New Antioch Baptist Church; Gary Walker, pastor (Elk Valley)  
**JUNE 4** – Lynn Sanson, member, West Virginia Baptist Convention Christian Discipleship Commission  
**JUNE 5** – The ministry of Mannington First Baptist Church; Larry Kincell, interim pastor (Fairmont)  
**JUNE 6** – The ministry of Mount Pleasant Baptist Church; Michael Wamsley, pastor (Broad Run)  
**JUNE 7** – The ministry of Smithville Baptist Church; Charles Leisure, interim pastor (Harrisville)  
**JUNE 8** – Phil Smith, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to Brazil  
**JUNE 9** – Dilia Zelaya, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to Honduras  
**JUNE 10** – The ministry of Beulah Ann Missionary Baptist Church; Greg Lunsford, pastor (Guyandotte)  
**JUNE 11** – Nathaniel McCurdy, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant (youth) to Costa Rica  
**JUNE 12** – The ministry of Lover's Leap Baptist Church; Milburn Pack, pastor (Hopewell)  
**JUNE 13** – The ministry of Clearview Fellowship; Roger Adams, pastor (Greenbrier-Raleigh)  
**JUNE 14** – Sarah McCurdy, International Ministries Global Servant to Costa Rica  
**JUNE 15** – Vital Pierre, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to the Dominican Republic  
**JUNE 16** – The ministry of Comunidad Luz Y Vida; Moises Saravia, pastor (Eastern)  
**JUNE 17** – Bret Hensley, member, West Virginia Baptist Convention Christian Stewardship Commission  
**JUNE 18** – Jeff Dieselberg, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to Thailand  
**JUNE 19** – Daniela Bonilla-Giovanetti, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant (youth) to Colombia  
**JUNE 20** – Katherine Niles, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to the Democratic Republic of the Congo  
**JUNE 21** – The ministry of Glenville First Baptist Church; Larry Fleming, pastor (Little Kanawha)  
**JUNE 22** – The ministry of Scarbro First Baptist Church; Kenny Smith, pastor (Fayette)  
**JUNE 23** – Jessica Dickens, member, West Virginia Baptist Convention Christian Leadership Commission  
**JUNE 24** – Anita Gutierrez, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to South Africa  
**JUNE 25** – Valma Adams, office manager and administrative assistant for Discipleship Ministries, West Virginia Baptist Convention  
**JUNE 26** – Rita Chapman, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to the Democratic Republic of the Congo  
**JUNE 27** – Peter McCurdy, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to Costa Rica  
**JUNE 28** – Celestyna Hoefle, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant (youth) to Thailand  
**JUNE 29** – Marc Gutierrez, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant (youth) to South Africa  
**JUNE 30** – The ministry of Forks of Coal Missionary Baptist Church; Keith George, pastor (Coal River)

*West Virginia Baptist Convention staff and missionaries listed are on the occasion of their birthday.*

## July 2020

**JULY 1** – The ministry of Hopewell Baptist Church; Andrew Robinson, pastor (Good Hope)  
**JULY 2** – Pamala Williams, vice-chair, West Virginia Baptist Convention Christian Outreach Commission  
**JULY 3** – Andrew James, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant (youth) to Haiti  
**JULY 4** – Hefziba Aragon, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant (youth) to Mexico  
**JULY 5** – The ministry of Baileysville Baptist Church; Ronald Harvey, pastor (Rockcastle)  
**JULY 6** – The ministry of Masontown First Baptist Church; William Winston, pastor (Goshen)  
**JULY 7** – Michael Perry, member, West Virginia Baptist Convention Christian Leadership Commission  
**JULY 8** – Tim Rice, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to the Democratic Republic of the Congo  
**JULY 9** – Ryan Baumgart, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to Japan  
**JULY 10** – The ministry of Marmet First Baptist Church; Tom Burnside, pastor (Kanawha Valley)  
**JULY 11** – Madeline Flores-Lopez, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to the Dominican Republic  
**JULY 12** – The ministry of Wolf Run Baptist Church; Jim Higginson, pastor (Panhandle)  
**JULY 13** – The ministry of Mount Zion Baptist Church; Mary Beth McCloy, interim pastor (Parkersburg)  
**JULY 14** – Amy Vo, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to Vietnam  
**JULY 15** – Elianna McCurdy, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant (youth) to Costa Rica  
**JULY 16** – Catherine Longkumer, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to India  
**JULY 17** – The ministry of Turkey Creek Baptist Church; Harry Glenn Hatfield, pastor (Rockcastle)  
**JULY 18** – Katrina Williams, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to Thailand  
**JULY 19** – Rick Bergdoll, member, West Virginia Baptist Convention Christian Discipleship Commission  
**JULY 20** – Miriam James, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant (youth) to Haiti  
**JULY 21** – Gordon Hwang, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to Japan  
**JULY 22** – The ministry of Simpson Creek Baptist Church; Michael Hopkins, pastor (Union)  
**JULY 23** – The ministry of Concord Baptist Church (Teays Valley)  
**JULY 24** – The ministry of Logan First Baptist Church; Michael Hatfield, pastor (Logan-Mingo)  
**JULY 25** – The ministry of Old Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church; L. Scott Riffe, pastor (Twelve Pole)  
**JULY 26** – Yevette Shafer, member, West Virginia Baptist Convention Christian Stewardship Commission  
**JULY 27** – Ruth Vindas, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to Costa Rica  
**JULY 28** – The ministry of Enon Baptist Church; John Vannoy, pastor (Little Kanawha)  
**JULY 29** – The Rockcastle Association as they celebrate their annual meeting tomorrow  
**JULY 30** – Rob Ely, director of Student Ministries, West Virginia Baptist Convention  
**JULY 31** – The ministry of South Parkersburg Baptist Church; Rich Blain, pastor (Parkersburg)

## Coming Events

### JUNE

June 27

*Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies West Virginia Baptist History (E-02) One-Day Class with Allan Copenhaver*

Online

Class begins at 9:00 a.m. and concludes at 2:15 p.m.

### JULY

July 3

*Independence Day Holiday*

*West Virginia Baptist Convention Office*  
CLOSED

July 5-11

*Junior High 2 Camp (grades 7-9)*

*Camp Cowen*

July 11

*Senior Day (High School Grads)*

*Camp Cowen*

July 12-18

*High School 2 (grades 9-12)*

*Camp Cowen*

July 15

*Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies Old Testament I (B-01) Digital Learning Initiative (DLI) 12-Hour Class Begins*

Online

July 15

*Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies Baptist Polity (E-01) Digital Learning Initiative (DLI) Four-Hour Class Begins*

Online

July 24-27

*Family Camp*

*Camp Cowen*

July 28-31

*Older Midler Camp (grades 3-5)*

*Camp Cowen*

July 31-August 2

*Camp Global*

*Camp Cowen*

### AUGUST

August 7-9

*American Baptist Men and Boys' Camp*

*Camp Cowen*

August 14-15

*American Baptist Women's Ministries' Conference*

*Parchment Valley Conference Center*

August 15

*Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies Community Ministry (Mod-05) One-Day Class*

*Parchment Valley Conference Center*

Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. Class begins at 9:00 a.m. and concludes at 4:15 p.m.

## West Virginia Baptist Newsletter Submissions

Send submissions for *The West Virginia Baptist* to: [thewvbaptist@wvbc.org](mailto:thewvbaptist@wvbc.org) or mail submissions to the West Virginia Baptist Convention, Attention: Donna, P.O. Box 1019, Parkersburg, West Virginia 26102. If you are submitting text, send typed copy only. We no longer accept handwritten text. We also accept hard copy and digital photos of 300 dpi (dots per inch). Please include a caption for your photo and your name and address if you want your photo returned.

**Deadline for submission is the 3rd of odd numbered months.**

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