

The West Virginia Baptist Newsletter

August - September 2020

Cancelled ... But God Knew

Cancelled. This spring it seemed almost everything was “cancelled.” It became the status we expected to hear more often than that not. School, in-person church meetings, sporting events, mission trips and vacations. It seemed almost everything was cancelled.

The camping ministry did not go unscathed as the difficult but necessary decisions were made to cancel camps for this summer. For the first time since 1943, no campers would be at camp.

However, none of this was a surprise to God. And God is good all the time! God’s plans for us are good and His timing is perfect. In the middle of hearing all the things we couldn’t do, God opened the door to something we could do: Camp-in-a-Box!

There were a lot of questions: What is Camp-in-a-Box? Would anyone want one? How could materials in a box minister to people? There was very little that we knew at the beginning of the summer. However, God knew!

Mailed to homes across West Virginia, God knew how each box - filled with Cowen gear, devotions and activity cards - could multiply the message of the gospel in the perfect way to people who needed it at just the right moment!

God knew ... of the family that would need this box at just the right time to bring them hope when they couldn’t leave their home for months.

God knew ... of the student who needed truth, community and connection right in the middle of a time when all that was once safe had been stripped away.

God knew ... how the unexpected arrival of this box in the mail as a gift from grandparents to out-of-state grandchildren would bring joy to a new generation of Cowen campers.

God knew ... how families would utilize this resource to grow their family discipleship as they started daily family devotions together.

God knew ... how churches partnering with this program would bring ministry connections and the camp community to hundreds of children who had never been to camp.

God knew ... how families would gather together and watch videos filmed at camp as they shared the camp experience.

God knew ... how children whose medical condition prevented them from going to “traditional” camp would have their chance to go to camp for the first time.

God knew ... how a youth leader dropping off a Camp-in-a-Box from their church would bring connection in this time of distance.

God knew ... that through the online videos, the message of His love and salvation through Christ would be heard by hundreds and shared to thousands of people.

God knew ... how children’s ministry leaders would use the devotions to connect with students in weekly Zoom Bible

study groups to bridge the gap while their churches weren’t able to meet in-person.

God knew ... that the West Virginia Baptist Camp at Cowen was poised in just the right place at just the right time to do all that and more. God knew that through what we saw as “cancelled” and “closed,” what He really was doing was opening doors and opening hearts as nearly 1,000 boxes were shipped that impacted more than 1,500 people!

During this whole pandemic, God knew.

We rejoice and give thanks to the Lord for His abundant blessings in this time! We are so thankful for the ministry partners: camp directors, leaders and counselors, office staff, the printers who worked to keep the Cowen gear in stock, the church volunteers in Summersville who packed and shipped boxes, the individuals and churches who purchased boxes and every student impacted this summer.

Thank you God for allowing us this privilege. We look forward to seeing what you do next!

Jillene Narraway
Associate Director of Camping and Youth



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

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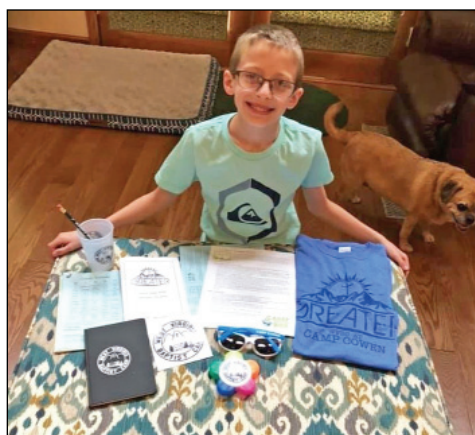
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2020 Camp Cowen "Campers"



"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." John 1:5



Facing Life's Challenges



Mike Sisson

To say that this year has been challenging and full of uncertainty would be an understatement. For many, if not all, in our West Virginia Baptist family the way we go about our lives and ministries has been upended. The question for those who follow Jesus Christ is how do we respond to these difficult challenges and uncertainties?

Christian author and speaker Chuck Swindoll once said, "Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% your attitude in response." While I believe his equation is accurate, how do we go about applying this principle to the surprises life throws at us? Can we find an example of this principle in Scripture? We can always turn our attention to Jesus. He is the ultimate example of faithful living amid many unfair and difficult events in life. The problem is, that while we know Jesus was fully human and suffered as we do, He was also fully God and we are not. So, in the back of our minds we might say, "BUT with Jesus it was different!"

Enter the apostle Paul! Paul was human just like us, and yet, he was able to proclaim from the confines of a cold damp prison, "I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation." So, what was Paul's secret? Paul calmly responds, "I can do everything through Him who gives me strength."

Paul was certainly no stranger to life's difficulties. In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul shares some of his struggles. In chapter 11 he writes,

I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. I have labored and

toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches (23-29).

Then, in the next chapter he shares the struggles he was facing with health, "there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me." (7) In fact, he sums up his challenges in chapter four when he writes, "We are hard pressed on every side ... perplexed ... persecuted ... struck down" When I read Paul's testimony, I wonder how much more can one person endure? We may be asking that same question, "How much more?"

Paul makes it clear that his intention in sharing these things is not so we will feel sympathy for him, but that we may know the grace of God that provides us with hope, peace, guidance and strength in all of life's circumstances. Paul explains that in every single case God provided the answers to his needs. He writes, "We are hard pressed on every side, **but not crushed**; perplexed, **but not in despair**; persecuted, **but not abandoned**; struck down, **but not destroyed**." (2 Corinthians 4:8) The reality was that when the circumstances became difficult Paul felt stronger in his faith. God answered Paul's distress call with the promise, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, Paul could say, "I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong." (9-10)

Paul learned about the power of God's presence and the availability of God's grace which forever changed how he saw life's difficulties and pain. Paul encourages us all to remember "Our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." (2 Corinthians 4:17) After all Paul had experienced, it all seemed "light and momentary" compared to the great things God has in store for His people.

Remember, the same God who was there for Paul is there for each of us. Do not lose heart, trust in Jesus and His strength to bring you through.

VISION 2020 - Holding the Rope at \$20 per Month:



Current Number of Rope Holders:

Equivalent of 290 Individuals

2020 Rope Holders' Goal:

2,000 Individuals

Youth Ministry Interns at Fifth Avenue Baptist Church

by DeVontae Edwards, associate pastor, youth and young adults
Fifth Avenue Baptist Church (Guyandotte)

No one has ever written a manual about youth pastoring during a pandemic, but having three heads to think through events, curriculum and outreach sure has helped.

Thanks to the partnership between the West Virginia Baptist Convention (WVBC) and Fifth Avenue Baptist Church, Bradley Chenault and Caleb Wise are both serving as ten-week interns in the youth ministry department. We are blessed to have these two gentlemen give up their summer to work within our youth ministry. Both Brad and Caleb have been essential to the ministry environment here in Huntington. Both young men exhibit the qualities to become great leaders and pastors. The boys (as we affectionately call them) have played vital roles in worship development and outreach for the church as a whole in addition to the weekly events for the youth ministry. The training from the WVBC has provided Brad and Caleb with the necessary skills, demeanor and attitudes to give them the ability to connect relationally to our students, families and community.

During their time with us, the boys have studied two books that will aid in solidifying their call to the ministry. The first book, *In a Pit With a Lion on a Snowy Day* by Mark Batterson,

highlights our ability to trust God in uncertain circumstances (trust God and He will provide everything you need to do the job He has called you to do). The second book, *HD Leader* by Derwin Grey, highlights God's multicultural kingdom here on earth and how we are called to be part of ministering to all people.

It has truly been a blessing to serve with Bradley and Caleb and assist in leading them during this short internship. My prayer for them is to go out and change the world wherever they are. May God be glorified by every action these young men take in ministry.



(l-r): Bradley Chenault, DeVontae Edwards and Caleb Wise

WVBC Children's Ministries Summer Intern

The West Virginia Baptist Convention (WVBC) Children's Ministry has had its first summer intern, Elisabeth Palmer. When asked why she wanted to be an intern, Elisabeth said that an internship allowed her the opportunity to influence decisions and implement ministry in a different and more comprehensive way than any of the other places she has served in ministry. This summer, she put this to the test. As most of our summer plans changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Elisabeth was able to think outside the box in how to do children's ministry online.

As the WVBC Children's Ministry intern, Elisabeth helped plan upcoming children's events, such as the Fall Children's Rally, she researched how to do Vacation Bible School (VBS) during a pandemic and many other things. She also served at Philippi Baptist Church (Union), assisting with their online Wednesday Children's Bible Club as well as teaching a lesson for their virtual VBS. As



Elisabeth leading a virtual VBS class

part of the internship, we studied and discussed several books together. One particular book we chose to read, related to children's ministry, was *Kids Ministry that Nourishes* by Jana Magruder. We also read and discussed *The Gift of Being Yourself* by David Benner. This book was our favorite from the books provided to the interns by the WVBC.

When asked about her favorite part of working with children, Elisabeth said, "I enjoy teaching them." She also added, "Children give you a perspective on things that are different from the way we would look at them." We have thoroughly enjoyed having Elisabeth as an intern this summer and look forward to seeing how God continues to grow her heart as she returns to Cedarville University this fall.

Koreen Villers,
Director of Discipleship Ministries

Phil Newhart: A True Pastor's Pastor

"Phil Newhart was a true pastor's pastor." That is how Mike Stephens, former West Virginia Baptist Convention (WVBC) Northwest Area Minister, described Phil after his death nearly two years ago. He also added that "Phil was used by God to bring healing to churches facing uncertain times." That statement could not be more true today.

When Mike wrote those words, he was referring specifically to the interim work that Phil was known for. Phil served as an interim pastor for 15 churches throughout Ohio and West Virginia. He was a full-time pastor for five different churches and he also served as an area minister for the Ohio Baptist Convention. He was particularly fond of the Parkersburg area, where he served both Parkersburg First Baptist Church (Parkersburg) and Union Valley Baptist Church (Parkersburg). He also served several years as president of the Parkersburg Baptist Ministerial Association.



However, the legacy of Phil Newhart continues. In the midst of a pandemic that has closed all of our camps, cancelled most of our events and has had an enormous impact on WVBC

finances, we received word a couple of months ago that Phil had left a legacy gift to be used for WVBC ministries. An equal amount was left for American Baptist Women's Ministries of West Virginia (ABWM WV) to be used on their girls' scholarship program. His first wife, Doris, was very active in ABWM WV. When Kathy Hudson, president of ABWM WV heard about the gift, she responded, "That could not have come at a more needed time!"

Legacy gifts are an incredible way you can have an eternal impact. If you are interested in learning more about how you can leave a legacy gift for your church or the WVBC, contact Todd McClure, minister of Missions and Finance, WVBC. Legacy gifts are critical to helping us ***do Christ's work together.***

To the Phil Newhart family, on behalf of your WVBC family, thank you! Your gift could not have come at a more needed time!

American Baptist Women's Ministries Announce Scholarship Recipients

The American Baptist Women's Ministries Scholarship/Loan Fund began when a missionary speaker in the Teays Valley Association returned \$8.00, given for expenses, saying she wanted the money used as the beginning of a larger fund designated to aid worthy young women. This happened some-time after 1914.

A motion was passed on October 12, 1920 at the 36th Annual Meeting of the Women's Society of West Virginia in Elkins to establish a memorial fund in recognition of Ella Webb Eddy's service to the state and this fund was to be known as a scholarship fund. The state society assumed the responsibility of the fund and asked the General Association to sponsor it. This was really the beginning of our present scholarship fund.

The Scholarship Fund (later named Scholarship Endowment Fund) was disbursed by a member of the executive board of the state convention. In the 30's, a Scholarship Committee was formed, and the chairman becoming an ex-officio member of the Board of Managers (present Executive Board) upon her appointment.

The amount and number of scholarship/loans vary from year to year depending on the amount of contributions, loan repayments and interest from the Scholarship Endowment Fund.

The scholarship girls for 2020/2021 are as follows:

- **LAUREN CALE**, Saint Albans First Baptist Church (Teays Valley)
- **KAREN COLEMAN**, Calvary Baptist Church (Fayette)
- **ALLISON COPENHAVER**, Fairmont Baptist Temple (Fairmont)
- **JACINDA DEVART**, Beulah Baptist Church (Union)
- **MARISSA EARLE**, Petersburg First Baptist Church (Eastern)
- **LAUREN GAAL**, Hurricane First Baptist Church (Teays Valley)
- **ABBY MARANO**, Oakwood Baptist Church (Kanawha Valley)
- **REBEKAH MCCLOY**, Newark Baptist Church (Parkersburg)
- **LEAH MITCHELL**, Philippi Baptist Church (Union)
- **ELISABETH PALMER**, Worthington Baptist Church (Fairmont)
- **ELLIE RAITZ**, Emmanuel Baptist Church (Parkersburg)
- **ABIGAIL REED**, South Parkersburg Baptist Church (Parkersburg)
- **DESTINY THOMAS**, Ravenswood First Baptist Church (Good Hope)
- **CARLY VICKERS**, Hurricane First Baptist Church (Teays Valley)
- **BAYLEY WELLINGS**, Glenville First Baptist Church (Little Kanawha)
- **SAVANNAH WILLIAMS**, Spencer First Baptist Church (Good Hope)

The Gift of Presence



WVU Tech 2020 graduates: (l-r) Devan Lamb, Noah Julian, Luke Keaton, Hunter Neal and Keith Carter

This fall, Baptist Campus Ministries (BCM) will have a presence on nine college campuses around the state. Those campuses include Alderson Broaddus University, the University of Charleston, Concord University, Fairmont State University, Glenville State College, West Virginia University, West Virginia University Institute of Technology at Beckley, Marshall University and Potomac State College. However, the challenge will be figur-

ing out how each BCM group will be present as we navigate the different COVID-19 guidelines.

Baptist Campus Ministries exists to “*change lives that change the world*” among young adults and college students around the state. Students entering college are often excited and nervous. Baptist Campus Ministries will be present to offer both stability and an opportunity to deepen their faith. Each campus is already making plans to meet the needs of their students this upcoming semester.

With that in mind, we need your help! Typically, we seek contact information for all incoming freshmen, and we still need that! But in this turbulent time, we are also seeking contact information for all college students. We want to make sure that all of our students are cared for.

Hebrews 13:8 states, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” Baptist Campus Ministries will continue to challenge college students to seek Jesus and make a difference in their world! The world is different, the methods of ministry may be different, but Jesus is mighty and will overcome all the chaos. Baptist Campus Ministries promises the gift of presence to walk alongside students as they develop their faith.



Changing Lives that Change the World

Do you know a college student?
Send their contact information to:

Rob Ely (ely@wvbc.org) or Kevin Sions (sions@wvbc.org).

**For more information about
Baptist Campus Ministry, visit:**

www.wvbcm.com

American Baptist Men of West Virginia Disaster Relief Team Answers the Call in Fayette County

The American Baptist Men of West Virginia Disaster Relief is a volunteer organization ministry that provides assistance to those affected by local, state and federally declared disasters. They respond with volunteer laborers specializing in post disaster cleanup. Their focus is removing storm damaged possessions, dry wall, paneling, insulation and floor coverings, etc., as necessary for the home to dry out before rebuilding can begin. Any remaining debris after the storm is also removed by the volunteers and piled by the curbside for the National Guard to remove. Our response is usually initiated within 48 hours of a valid request for assistance.

Recently, the Disaster Relief Team was activated for clean-up during the flooding that took place in Fayette County. Those answering the call to serve were John Vannoy, Terry Mayfield, Joyce McVicker, John Holt and Kevin Barker.



The recent rising flood waters in Fayette County

The Disaster Relief Team arrived at Calvary Baptist Church (Fayette), where their accommodations were met during the week. Pastor Greg Swisher and his wife, Melanie, connected them to the local emergency services and identified the 12 homes requiring assistance.

This is a wonderful ministry opportunity for both men and women to serve during times of emergency. Serving communities during natural disasters is just one of the many ways that we ***do Christ's work together.***

If you are interested in serving, please contact us at 304.372.3675 or e-mail Frank Miller, director of Operations, Parchment Valley Conference Center, at miller@wvbc.org. We would love to get you connected!

***Frank Miller,
Director of Operations,
Parchment Valley Conference Center***

The Founding of a West Virginia Seminary

*by Allan Copenhaver, director,
Palmer Theological Seminary at West Virginia Program*



When considering the importance of legacy, it is no exaggeration to say that without Dr. Robert Matherly there is no West Virginia Palmer Seminary extension. Bob, a native of Raleigh County, began his ministry at Calvary Baptist Church (Fayette) before enrolling at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary (now Palmer Theological Seminary) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Bob then spent the next several years pastoring churches in the Philadelphia area before returning to West Virginia to finish his ministry career as an area minister.

It was upon his return that he introduced a vision for establishing a seminary extension here in West Virginia. Utilizing the facilities at Parchment Valley Conference Center, the program

gave pastors and other potential ministry leaders an opportunity to get a theological education without moving away from home. For over 25 years, Palmer Theological Seminary has been faithfully training ministry leaders in West Virginia. Alumni are scattered around the state (and beyond) serving in numerous roles.

It has been a privilege to carry on the work Bob Matherly began many years ago. I am honored to present a yearly award at our graduation banquet in memory of Bob. The Robert E. Matherly Award of Excellence is given to someone who "has assisted and advanced the mission" of the West Virginia Palmer Seminary program. Last year's recipients were Frank and Teresa Miller.

I am also thankful to share a personal connection to Bob. After retirement, he and his wife, Gaye, resettled in Raleigh County around the time I began in pastoral ministry. One of the first things I did when I became pastor of Beaver First Baptist Church (Greenbrier-Raleigh) was to invite Bob to speak at our annual homecoming. Bob served as a mentor to me during those years as well as many other pastors. His passing in 2007 left a significant void, but we can celebrate his lasting legacy through the ongoing work of Palmer Theological Seminary and the work of the West Virginia program. We also thank Gaye Matherly for her continued support of the program.



This year's *Brothers' Keeper* encouraged individuals to serve in their home communities. With more than 200 participants from West Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania and even a family from Spain, this was a fun way to **Do Christ's Work Together!**



To see more pictures or watch some of the virtual content, visit www.brotherskeeperwv.org.

Starting off the Year with a Bang

by J.D. Reed,

International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to Bolivia

Just like everyone else, this year has been a strange one for us. We were planning on returning to the United States (US) for our year of US/PR assignment (more in a minute) in late June 2020. Instead, the pandemic changed all that, and on April 30 we returned to begin our home assignment year a little early. Part of the challenge of this pandemic has been the funding for the *Fundación Proyecto de Esperanza* (FPE). This is where so many of you have stepped up to help us get things back on track.

In May, we put out a plea for help from individuals and churches to make 10,000 masks to help us get a grant from Wheaton College for \$10,000 to go to FPE and the House of Hope. Over the course of two months, hundreds of people helped us make masks and I think it is safe to say ... we did it! This grant will go a long way in helping to sustain FPE to continue ministering to the Bolivian community. We need to say a huge thank you to each and every person who made masks; to Sarah Nash, our colleague in Bolivia; and most importantly, to the Lord for providing this opportunity.

Also, we have already begun scheduling with churches to share about God's ministry in Bolivia. We would love to come give an update at your church! We currently have more places to visit than we have Sundays to do it in, so help us be creative about how we can get to your church. If you have any ideas or would like to begin scheduling us to visit you, e-mail Todd McClure, minister of Missions and Finance, at todd@wvbc.org and get us on your calendar today.



Rhonda Reed (l), International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to Bolivia and her mother, Valma Adams, office manager, West Virginia Baptist Convention, sort and count masks in the convention office workroom.

Serving the Community Through Salsa

by Rowena Sizemore

Out of This World Salsa is a mission project under the non-profit La Casa De La Amistad that provides assistance to



Out of This World Salsa

women and children in poverty. Originally started by John and Lisa Simmons, all proceeds go to projects which educate, empower and enable women and children to have a better life.

Field workers in southeastern Ohio pick the tomatoes, green peppers and jalapenos that we use in the salsa. Veterans raise most of our specialty peppers like Hungarians, habaneros and Carolina reapers. Volunteers do the rest, such as chopping and processing the salsa in a USDA (United States Department of Agriculture)-approved kitchen at Parchment Valley Conference Center. We are a seasonal, limited run, second harvest operation that has a lot of fun cooking together.

Bill Stewart and I have both attended process control school to be certified in overseeing the salsa processing. The salsas that we make are: Sweet Salsa with West Virginia Maple Syrup, Mild Salsa, Medium Salsa, Hot Salsa and Reaper Salsa. To learn more about how you can get involved, contact me at rsizemore@mail.casinternet.net or follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/outofthisworldsalsa/>.

Over the past year, we have made more than \$8,300 to assist women and children in poverty. God has a reason for us to make salsa!

An Update from Chiapas, Mexico

by Juan Aragon,

International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to Mexico

Dear West Virginia Baptist Convention family, we hope you are doing well. Without a doubt, these last few months have been challenging - to say the least. We have been praying for you, asking that God grant you endurance, wisdom, discernment and creativity as you continue **doing Christ's work together**. As always, we are thankful for your continued prayers and financial support.

We are on our third year of service in Chiapas! The current COVID-19 crisis, however, has forced us to cancel all of our



Literacy program in Carmen Grande

traveling, training and teaching events with our Tsotsil and Tselal sisters and brothers. We remain in contact with them through phone calls and text messages. We are also creating short voice messages and videos with brief and encouraging biblical reflections to share with them. The situation here remains uncertain. In at least five communities - not where we serve - people have attacked medical staff and vandalized medical facilities, blaming them for the spread of the virus. This has left thousands without medical care. Others, who still think the virus is not real, are ignoring all precautions.

The extended time at home has strengthened our family's devotional time. We are reading through the book of Acts together and are remembering how the early disciples faced scores of trials that tested their commitment and loyalty to Jesus. In foggy conditions and with bumpy roads, they relied on bold, fervent prayer and the leading of the Spirit. In an instance, against the looming of persecution and uncertainty, they prayed for boldness for the mission. (Acts 4:29-30) And in a decisive moment in the history of the early church, they allowed the Spirit to challenge and shatter their prejudices. (Acts 10 and 11) God's grace often amended their actions and decisions as they spread the good news of God's kingdom to everyone everywhere.

Please pray that we would have boldness. Additionally, pray for the ministries that are still going on, such as the literacy program in the Tsotsil community of Carmen Grande. Please also pray for the overall ministry of CICEM (Council of Rural Indigenous Evangelicals of Mexico).

Thank you for your generosity and prayers that enable us to proclaim God's kingdom in Chiapas!

2020 Mission Outreach Project Update

by Dee Lallemond,

American Baptist Women's Ministries of West Virginia
Coordinator of Mission and Service

The American Baptist Women's Ministries of West Virginia (ABWM-WV) have adopted Camp Alpha for our Mission Outreach Project (MOP) 2020. Camp Alpha is a church camp located in Ryazan, Russia, built on inspiration from our very own Camp Cowen and Parchment Valley Conference Center. Twenty years ago, the West Virginia Baptist Convention (WVBC) entered into a partnership with the Ryazan Baptist Union, and there are currently 17 WVBC churches partnered with 17 Ryazan Baptist Union churches. This partnership allowed us to share details of our facilities with our Ryazan Baptist friends. Here in West Virginia, we have all been touched by the power of Camp Cowen and Parchment Valley. It has been said that these are places, "where people meet Jesus." We want to help our friends at Camp Alpha have those same opportunities.

The Ryazan Baptist Union bought the land for Camp Alpha in 2016 and started hosting children in 2017. In 2019, there

were 65 children that attended Camp Alpha. The camp currently has two shelters, two storage containers repurposed into cabins, outhouses, fields and an open campfire where some meals are prepared. Other meals are brought in from local churches. The camp currently uses tents to house the other children.



Camp Alpha, located in Ryazan, Russia

Our goal for the year is to raise \$6,000 for Camp Alpha. They have several needs including finishing the fencing around the complex for safety and security (\$4,500); a water pump that will bring clean, running water to the entire camp (\$10,000); and a building that will house a kitchen, dining facilities and additional cabins. To date, we have raised \$1,300.

Please help Camp Alpha teach kids to be disciples of Jesus. Donations should be routed through your local American Baptist Women's (ABW) Circles and associations or be sent straight to the ABW State Treasurer, Amy Starkey, at 921 Whispering Pines Road, Ravenswood, WV 26164. Please write

MOP 2020 on any checks.

If you have any questions, please contact Dee Lallemond at dlallemond@yahoo.com.

Evan Arkell, Southwest Area Minister

Learning to be Flexible

One thing most churches are not known for is their flexibility. Most of our structure from programs, order of services and the way we do things in general have been set in stone and are not to be messed with. And then the coronavirus comes along and shatters our routines. We had to start learning how to stretch ourselves and learn new ways to minister in the new reality we found ourselves in. As we have changed the way we do nearly everything in our churches the last few months, there is a desire that makes us strive to want things to get back to "normal." The thing with learning to be flexible is we may never see normal as it once was. We have to continue learning to stretch ourselves to be more flexible, which seems to be our new reality. Unfortunately, just as stretching and using muscles that haven't been used in some time, we will experience discomfort and pain. But in the end, our muscles are strengthened. This can make us fearful and create conflict or we can embrace it and join God in strengthening His church to better do ministry in the 21st century.



Pastor Jim Adkins (r), Connolly Memorial Baptist Church (Logan-Mingo), pandemic baptism

This flexibility is not only being learned in our churches, but within our associations as well. Most of the associations in the Southwest Area haven't had any ordination candidates in quite some time. But now, four of the six associations I serve: Kanawha Valley, Teays Valley, Logan-Mingo and Coal River are at some stage in the ordination process or beginning to get their ordination committees together, because several ministers are stepping forward in pursuit of following the call into the gospel ministry to serve our Lord Jesus.

Hallelujah, praise the Lord! We continue to see folks accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior through these times, and I have been able to watch outdoor baptisms on Facebook and speak to some excited pastors. I often wonder if we would change all of the pandemic stuff we have had to endure if we could. Then, I realize God is reaching people through these times that may have never been reached if we had not been forced to stretch ourselves and do ministry in different ways. Glory be to God!

Southeast Area News

Jim Anderson, Southeast Area Minister

14th Annual Golf Scramble for Bolivia Missions

A full field of nine teams gathered together on Saturday, June 27, 2020 for the 14th Annual West Virginia Baptist Churches Golf Scramble for Bolivia Missions at Greenbrier Hills Golf Course in Rainelle.

Churches represented included Millbrook Baptist Church (Hopewell), Page Baptist Church (Fayette), Sewell Valley Baptist Church, Athens Baptist Church (Greenbrier-Raleigh), Crab Orchard Baptist Church (Greenbrier-Raleigh), Scott Street Baptist Church (Greenbrier-Raleigh), Springdale First Baptist Church (Hopewell), Oakwood Baptist Church (Kanawha Valley) and Send the Light Fellowship (Greenbrier-Raleigh).

Millbrook Baptist Church Team C (pictured) and Page Baptist Church tied for first place, shooting 61's with Millbrook being named winner, using the hardest hole tiebreaker system. Crab Orchard Baptist Church came in third place, shooting a 63 with all receiving prizes from the House of Hope, Bolivia.

It is with great praise to our Lord that \$2,105 was raised to support the House of Hope ministries in Bolivia. This amount includes three churches who sponsored holes: Helen Baptist Church (Greenbrier-Raleigh), Little Laurel Baptist Church (Hopewell) and Millbrook Baptist Church. This was the most ever raised since the inception of the tournament. Thanks to all the churches and golfers for their support.

Carmen Flores Choque, director of the House of Hope in Bolivia, sends her thanks to all who participated and for all the West Virginia Baptist Convention churches who support their mission efforts. In Bolivian currency, \$2,105 is worth over \$14,000,

and will be a special blessing during this challenging, COVID-19 time. She also wishes to let everyone know the House of Hope family, as well as its partners, are well and anxious for the time short-term mission groups can return.

Finally, special thanks goes to the course manager, Terry McClung and his staff. Without all their hard work this tournament would not have happened. Plans are in place for June 2021 for the 15th annual tournament to be held again at Greenbrier Hills.



First place team, Millbrook Baptist Church Team C: (l to r) Billy Lego, Aaron Williams, Chris Thomas and Greg McClanahan

Restart

The song "Restart" by the Newsboys has been going through my mind lately.

I was finished, game over
Couldn't carry the weight on my shoulders
At my end, in trouble
Knocked down on the ground seein' double
But then...
You hit the restart.

I think all of us have realized by now that it is going to take more than a plan in order for things to return to normal. It is going to take a restart, and the only one who can hit the restart button is God.

In recent editions, I have used this article to highlight the ministry efforts of one church, with the thought that we can always learn from what others are doing. For this edition, I want to dedicate this article to all the pastors who are continuing to minister in the midst of a pandemic, and instead of having a lighter burden, have added even more work for themselves. For virtually all churches this time has created a major disruption in activities, and has necessitated new ways of thinking and functioning. Even now, not all churches have opened their buildings back up, and for those who have, some have had to take a few steps back and close again.

Yet, the gospel is still being preached, and in some instances, is reaching more people than ever. (As weeks have turned into months, many have noticed people regularly joining live worship from other states and even other countries. People have also seen phenomenal numbers of views on Facebook or



Harrisville Baptist Church (Harrisville) has been holding "parking lot church" since April 5. Pastor Bob Perine is pictured above delivering the July 5 sermon.

YouTube - even exceeding what used to gather in person). For most, this time has involved reaching to technology to bridge the connection to our people. Facebook live videos or video pre-miers and Youtube videos have been the mainstay for many, and in most cases, continue even if the building is open. Sometimes the creation of these has caused stress - like the week your

browser no longer supports Facebook live, and the "go live" button won't light up (five minutes before service is to start). Three computers and an hour later, the service has made it onto the internet. Now, because of instances like that, you preach every service and teach every Bible study twice, so it can be pre-recorded and premiered at the same time as your regular service. Some people are not healthy enough to risk a return to the building and can't watch it on Facebook because they don't use the internet, and for them you make DVD's with the sermon and Bible study lesson and mail it each week.

Some churches have found a working solution in a drive-in service. People stay in their air-conditioned car, tune in their radios to the broadcasted service and safely listen while social distancing, and still see some of their friends - even if from afar. Open air sermons at outside worship venues are the mainstay for some. One pastor even wrote out sermons for the technologically limited and mailed them to his parishioners.

I mentioned in my last article the pastor who took his lawn chair and did social distancing visits by sitting out in the yard while his parishioners were on the porch.

To all the pastors who have spent time, effort and personal stress in order to bring the gospel to the world, thank you for your continuing efforts. May God bless you indeed!

Northeast Area News

David Hulme, Northeast Area Minister

Romney First Recognized for 100 Years of Ministry

Plans for a weekend celebration of the 100th Anniversary of Romney First Baptist Church (Eastern) in April were postponed due to COVID-19. The church, however, took a moment in their June 28th worship service to receive a framed certificate of recognition from The West Virginia Baptist Historical Society (WVBHS). Rev. David L. Hulme, Northeast Area Minister, presented the certificate to Pastor Steven Wilson on behalf of the WVBHS. Additionally, the service was an opportunity to dedicate the church's **2020 Mountain State Mission Offering** and celebrate their ongoing commitment to "**Hold the Rope.**"

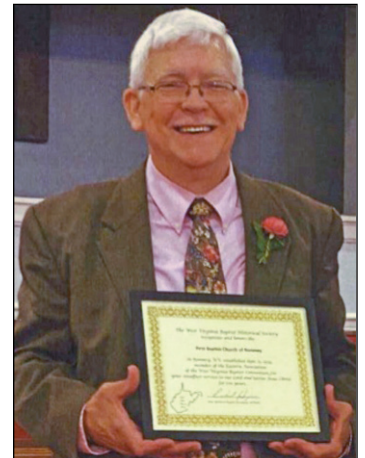
In a booklet prepared by the church for their celebration, members were asked to share some of their thoughts and memories about the ministry of Romney First Baptist Church:

Sandra Wilson: "This church family has been kind, thoughtful and generous to us. We feel loved here."

Missy Strite: "The Bible and a Christ-led life have been foremost in the teachings here."

Natalie Sions: "No one is left out and if you ever have a problem, the people here will be the first to help you."

Larry See: "... let us carry on that tradition of faith, service and honor, knowing that as He has in the past, the Lord will always be by our side to be our Helper and Guide in all the work we do for Him."



Pastor Steve Wilson accepts a certificate from the West Virginia Baptist Historical Society.

February - June 2020

NINA JEAN BOWLES, 83, of Southside, died June 12, 2020. She was a member of Harmony Baptist Church (Teays Valley), where she had served as clerk.

KATHY LEE BUCKLEY, of Hurricane, died June 18, 2020. She was a member of Mount Vernon Baptist Church (Teays Valley), where she taught Sunday School for over eight years to various grades. Additionally, she enjoyed tutoring students in Homework Buddies, part of the West Side Initiative through River Ridge Church. Her benevolence further manifested itself in traveling with her family to Rainelle, providing flood relief through Mount Vernon Baptist Church.

STEPHEN K. DARST, 82, of Point Pleasant, died June 19, 2020. He was a member of Concord Baptist Church (Teays Valley), where he was a deacon.

MARY ANITA MATHEWS, 98, of Vienna, died May 25, 2020. She was an active member of Vienna Baptist Church (Parkersburg), serving as clerk, deaconess and member of the Historic and Publicity Committee as well as volunteering her time to assist at the West Virginia Baptist Convention office in Parkersburg.

GEORGE W. MULLINS, 75, of Cottageville, died June 27, 2020. He was a member of Parchment Valley Baptist Church (Good Hope), where he served as a past deacon and sound technician for over 13 years. He and his wife, Clara, served as youth leaders of the church and in the community for several years. Together with the youth, he helped design and build the church prayer garden.

BETTY L. CHICHESTER NESSELRODE, 73, of Parkersburg, died June 21, 2020. She was a charter member of New Hope Baptist Church (Parkersburg), where she taught Sunday School.

CAROL (WOODS) ROGERS, 73, of Dog Run, died June 11, 2020. She was a member of New Antioch Baptist Church (Elk Valley), where she was clerk for many years.

JAMES "JIM" LAND SETTLE, 81, of Wriston, died June 15, 2020. He was a member of Page Baptist Church (Fayette), where he was a deacon, trustee and van driver. He and his wife, Eva, sang at many local churches and on WJLS.

CHRISTOPHER "CHRIS" COLUMBUS TATHAM, JR., 75, of Kingwood, died May 14, 2020. He was an active member of Kingwood Baptist Church (Goshen) for 42 years, where he served in many capacities, including deacon.

WILLIAM C. TAYLOR, 96, of Summersville, died May 27, 2020. He was a retired Baptist minister and member of Summersville Baptist Church (Hopewell). He served on the West Virginia Baptist Convention staff from 1974-1976 as an area minister.

JOHN R. TINNEY, 75, of Sutton, died June 16, 2020. He was a member of Stump Chapel Baptist Church (Elk Valley) for over 60 years, where he was a trustee, Sunday School teacher and choir member.

BECKY RAE TRASK, 69, of Pickerington, Ohio, died June 10, 2020. She was an International Ministries' (IM) alumna, who served in Hong Kong.

RUBY NORA WILSON, 86, died February 9, 2020. She was a member of Hampton Baptist Church (Kanawha Valley) and was piano player for over 70 years. She was an active member of American Baptist Women's Ministries, where she served as coordinator of Love Gift.

Fall Golden'eers' Conference Postponed

I am so sorry to pass on the news that we are going to postpone our fall Golden'eers Conference until May of 2021. We have been monitoring the current situation related to the pandemic, and we feel it is best to wait until spring to get our seniors together. As Christians, we must live by Romans 12:10, "Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another." I would rather forego my personal thoughts and think of the safety and welfare of someone else who may be at risk. I pray you have a safe fall and winter season and will plan to join us at Parchment Valley Conference Center in May 2021 for our next Golden'eers Conference. God bless you!

Jerry Losh,
Director of Senior Adult Ministries

Leadership Updates

REV. WILLIAM (CHUCK) C. COOK to Cook Memorial Baptist Church (Rockcastle) as senior pastor on June 14, 2020

REV. ALLEN DONALDSON to Cowen First Baptist Church (Hopewell) as interim pastor on May 17, 2020

DR. CYRIL JOHNSTON to Buckhannon First Baptist Church (Broad Run) as interim pastor on June 1, 2020

REV. LESLIE (LES) P. MULLENS to Rainelle First Baptist Church (Hopewell) as interim pastor on June 1, 2020

MR. DON STENNETT to Hampton Baptist Church (Kanawha Valley) as pastor on March 8, 2020

August 2020

AUGUST 1 - Baillie Myers, International Ministries' (IM)
Global Servant (youth) to Mexico

AUGUST 2 - The ministry of Grantsville First Baptist Church;
Ron Chesser, pastor (Little Kanawha)

AUGUST 3 - Alberto Bonilla, International Ministries' (IM)
Global Servant (youth) to Colombia

AUGUST 4 - The ministry of Kenova First Baptist Church
(Twelve Pole)

AUGUST 5 - Keith Myers (6th), International Ministries' (IM)
Global Servant to Mexico

AUGUST 6 - The ministry of Wellsburg First Baptist Church;
Christopher Sidwell, pastor (Panhandle)

AUGUST 7 - The ministry of Bethel Baptist Church (Coal River)

AUGUST 8 - The ministry of Hopewell Baptist Church;
Joe Lamm, pastor (Goshen)

AUGUST 9 - The ministry of South Fork Baptist Church;
Tom Burrill, pastor (Harrisville)

AUGUST 10 - Jarrod Belcher, member, West Virginia Baptist
Convention Christian Leadership Commission

AUGUST 11 - The ministry of Huntington Baptist Temple;
Andy Magnusson, pastor (Guyandotte)

AUGUST 12 - Zola Miller, member, West Virginia Baptist
Convention Christian Outreach Commission

AUGUST 13 - The ministry of Charity Baptist Church (Elk Valley)

AUGUST 14 - The ministry of Gentry Baptist Church;
Lewis Sanson, pastor (Fayette)

AUGUST 15 - The ministry of Harmony Baptist Church;
David Radcliff, pastor (Teays Valley)

AUGUST 16 - The ministries of the Good Hope Association

AUGUST 17 - The ministry of Layland Baptist Church
(Hopewell)

AUGUST 18 - The ministry of Fort Spring Baptist Church;
Joseph Morgan, pastor (Greenbrier-Raleigh)

AUGUST 19 - The ministry of Curtis Baptist Church;
Danny Thomas, pastor (Rockcastle)

AUGUST 20 - Broad Run Association as they celebrate their
annual meeting

AUGUST 21 - Deliris Carrion-Rosa, International Ministries" (IM)
Global Servant to Mexico

AUGUST 22 - Scott Coats, International Ministries' (IM)
Global Servant to Myanmar and Thailand

AUGUST 23 - Eastern Association as they celebrate their annual
meeting

AUGUST 24 - The ministry of Grass Lick Baptist Church;
Jimmie Compton, pastor (Good Hope)

AUGUST 25 - Robert Bennett, trustee and member, West Virginia
Baptist Convention Christian Stewardship Commission

AUGUST 26 - The ministry of Bethel Baptist Church;
John Vetter, pastor (Eastern)

AUGUST 27 - Casey Dawson, chair, West Virginia Baptist
Convention Christian Discipleship Commission

AUGUST 28 - Vinicius Damasceno, International Ministries' (IM)
Global Servant (youth) to the United Kingdom

AUGUST 29 - The ministry of Sago Baptist Church; Wease Day,
pastor (Broad Run)

AUGUST 30 - Judson Association as they celebrate their annual
meeting

AUGUST 31 - The ministry of New Life Ministries;
Charles Chipps, pastor (Fairmont)

September 2020

SEPTEMBER 1 - Rhonda Reed, International Ministries' (IM)
Global Servant to Bolivia

SEPTEMBER 2 - Brooke Estep, member, West Virginia Baptist
Convention Christian Discipleship Commission

SEPTEMBER 3 - The ministry of Philippi Baptist Church; Jonathan
Villers, pastor (Union)

SEPTEMBER 4 - Carrie Smalley, International Ministries' (IM)
Global Servant to Hungary

SEPTEMBER 5 - Michael Skurka, member, West Virginia Baptist
Convention Christian Outreach Commission

SEPTEMBER 6 - The ministry of Elizabeth Baptist Church;
Leary Vanhorn, pastor (Parkersburg)

SEPTEMBER 7 - Carole Sydnor, International Ministries' (IM)
Global Servant to Nepal

SEPTEMBER 8 - The ministry of Clendenin First Baptist Church;
Joe Seese, pastor (Kanawha Valley)

SEPTEMBER 9 - Mark McCloy, Northwest Area Minister and
director, School of Christian Studies, West Virginia Baptist
Convention

SEPTEMBER 10 - Aaron Osterbrock, International Ministries' (IM)
Global Servant to Malaysia

SEPTEMBER 11 - Caroline Bonilla, International Ministries' (IM)
Global Servant (youth) to Colombia

SEPTEMBER 12 - The Fall Youth Rally happens today at Camp
Cowen

SEPTEMBER 13 - The ministries of the Fairmont Association

SEPTEMBER 14 - Maryann Postlethwait, trustee and member,
West Virginia Baptist Convention Christian Stewardship
Commission

SEPTEMBER 15 - Parkersburg Association as they celebrate their
annual meeting

SEPTEMBER 16 - The ministries of the Fayette Association

SEPTEMBER 17 - Kanawha Valley Association as they celebrate
their annual meeting

SEPTEMBER 18 - Women's Camp (19th) happens online

SEPTEMBER 19 - Twelve Pole Association as they celebrate their
annual meeting

SEPTEMBER 20 - Logan-Mingo and Panhandle Associations as
they celebrate their annual meetings

SEPTEMBER 21 - The ministry of Antioch Baptist Church;
Larry Peck, pastor (Hopewell)

SEPTEMBER 22 - The ministry of Reynoldsville Baptist Church;
Jon Hayes, pastor (Judson)

SEPTEMBER 23 - Mercy Gonz'alez-Barnes, International
Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to Iberoamerica and the Caribbean

SEPTEMBER 24 - Guyandotte Association as they celebrate their
annual meeting

SEPTEMBER 25 - Dwight Bolick, International Ministries' (IM)
Global Servant to Chile

SEPTEMBER 26 - Coal River Association as they celebrate their
annual meeting

SEPTEMBER 27 - Juancito Aragon, International Ministries' (IM)
Global Servant (youth) to Mexico

SEPTEMBER 28 - Krista Rogers, member, West Virginia Baptist
Convention Christian Leadership Commission

SEPTEMBER 29 - Abraham Williams, International Ministries' (IM)
Global Servant (youth) to the Democratic Republic of the Congo

SEPTEMBER 30 - Union Association as they celebrate their
annual meeting

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

Coming Events

AUGUST

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.

August 15

**American Baptist Women's Ministries
Annual Conference**
Online

SEPTEMBER

September 1

**Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies
Caring for People (M-04)
Six-Week Class**
Various Locations

September 7

Labor Day Holiday
West Virginia Baptist Convention Office
CLOSED

September 15

**Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies
Old Testament II (B-02) Digital Learning
Initiative (DLI) 12-Hour Class**
Online

September 15

**Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies
Making Peace (Mod-04) Digital Learning
Initiative (DLI) Six-Hour Class**
Online

September 19

Women's Camp
Online

OCTOBER

October 2

**West Virginia Baptist Convention
Executive Committee**
Parchment Valley Conference Center/
Santrock Building

October 3

**West Virginia Baptist Convention
Executive Board and Commission
Meetings**
Parchment Valley Conference Center/
Santrock Building

October 6

Retired Ministers and Mates' Luncheon
Parchment Valley Conference Center
Event begins at 11:30 a.m.

October 9-11

**American Baptist Women's Ministries'
Spiritual Growth Retreat**
Parchment Valley Conference Center

October 9-11

Baptist Campus Ministries' Fall Retreat
Camp Cowen

October 15-16

**West Virginia Baptist Convention
Annual Meeting**
Online

West Virginia Baptist Newsletter Submissions

Send submissions for *The West Virginia Baptist* to: 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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The 155th Annual Meeting of the West Virginia Baptist Convention

Due to an ongoing increase in COVID-19 cases, the in-person 155th Annual Meeting has been cancelled. Instead, there will be a virtual celebration that will take place during the month of October. Specific details will be released soon.

For more information, visit:

www.wvbc.org

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