

The West Virginia Baptist Newsletter

April - May 2021

Spring is Coming!

It has certainly been a long, dark winter. In a sense, it has been a long, dark winter since March 2020. It is a proven fact the shortened days and lower light conditions that mark the winter season have a depressing effect on many people. During these last twelve months, the light of positivity and hope has dimmed for many people, making the effect of the stay-at-home measures to combat the spread of the virus even more difficult. People are experiencing cabin fever on steroids. So, using the imagery of a long winter as an analogy for the past 12 months may even be an understatement for many. So much isolation, frustration, fear and uncertainty created a long, dark season that has impacted many people emotionally, physically and even spiritually.

However, the good news is spring is coming! Spring brings with it new hope, new beginnings and new life. With spring, that which has lain dormant, restrained by the grip of winter's darkness breaks forth in newness and life! This is a parable of sorts for the promise of hope, of new beginnings and the newness of life we have in Jesus Christ. His resurrection establishes this hope. It brought the victory of life over death. The power of light over darkness. The promise of hope in the midst of despair. The presence of joy, regardless of the circumstances. And this is the encouragement we all need in this season.

It is Christ's remarkable gift of joy that creates in us the assurance of the hope that shines the light which chases away the darkness winter has cast upon us. Joy is not the same as happiness. Happiness is derived from happenstance or circumstance. In fact, they share the same root word "hap," an old Norse word meaning chance or luck. In other words, happiness is conditioned upon the chance that everything is going well. Jesus did not promise things would always go well. Jesus said, "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). How can we take heart in the time of trou-



ble? It is because Jesus promised us joy. A sense of security, hope and well-being independent from any outward pressure or circumstance, because its source comes from our relationship with Jesus Christ. Jesus compares our relationship with Him to the way branches are given life through their connection to the main vine. He follows that analogy with these words, "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full" (John 15:11). The source of our joy is not dependent on happenstance, because it is found in our unalterable relationship with Jesus Christ. "The joy of the Lord is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10).

Although trouble has the power to take away our happiness, we do not have to let it rob us of our joy in Christ. Charles Stanley once said, "As Christians, we should never think it's our job to make sure everything works out the way we want. Instead, our confidence should be that the Lord will meet our needs as He desires. Then we can rejoice in Him, letting joy become an immovable foundation that undergirds our lives."

The old hymn, *Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus* says it well:

*O soul, are you weary and troubled?
No light in the darkness you see?
There's light for a look at the Savior
And life more abundant and free.*

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus;
Look full in His wonderful face;
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace.*

*Blessings,
Mike Sisson,
Executive Minister, West Virginia Baptist Convention*

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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Will You Hold the Rope?

In 2019, when the *Rope Holder* initiative was launched, no one could have imagined the magnitude of the global pandemic that was soon to follow. Nor could anyone have imagined the financial impact that *Rope Holders* would have on our West Virginia Baptist Convention (WVBC) finances. Since the official launch of this initiative at the 2019 Annual Meeting, nearly 200 individuals have contributed more than \$90,000. It is because of *Rope Holders* that the WVBC finished financially in the black in 2020 for the first time in more than a decade.

In 2021, many of our ministries continue to be impacted by the restrictions brought about by COVID-19. This is especially true for Camp Cowen and Parchment Valley Conference Center. Because income opportunities will likely be limited for those ministries, *Rope Holders* will continue to be essential for carrying those ministries forward. In fact, *Rope Holders* will be essential for carrying all of our ministries forward!

When William Carey initially communicated his desire to take the gospel to India in the late eighteenth century, the challenge he gave his fellow pastors was he could only go "if they would hold the rope." *Rope Holders* are necessary for gospel ministry to flourish.

While there are millions in India who are in need of the gospel (which is why we are committed to our WVBC-India Partnership), there is also an increasing number within West Virginia who need the gospel. A recent survey (prior to COVID-19), indicated 89% of our state was unchurched. That number is likely higher now.

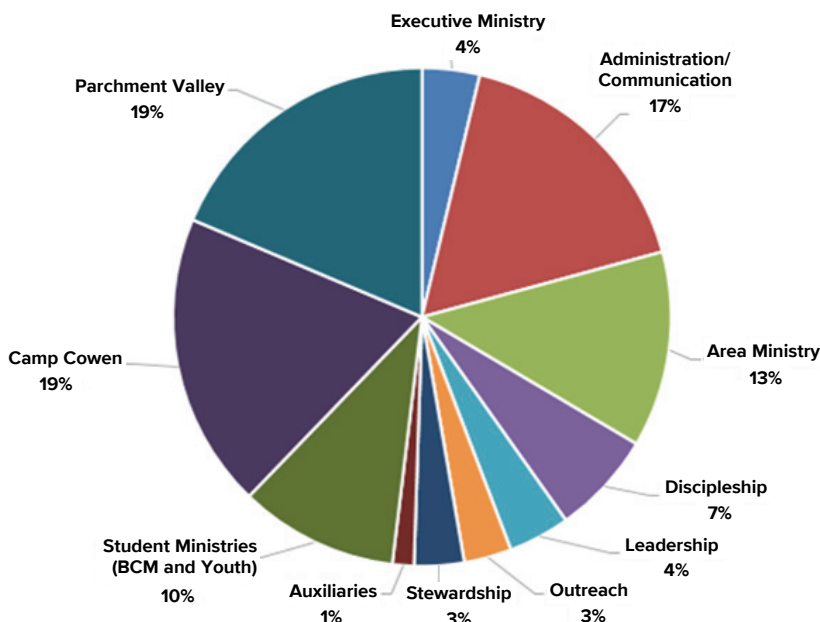
Rope holders are needed to fund our new church planting initiative. They are also needed to fund our intern program which is raising up the next generation of leaders. *Rope holders* are also used to help fund our educational opportunities, our mission training programs and our discipleship resources for people of all ages. Of course, *Rope Holders* also help fund Camp Cowen and Parchment Valley. *Rope Holders* help fund all of our WVBC ministries.

With a new year also bringing about new opportunities, the question for you is: **Will you hold the rope?**

To sign up to be a *Rope Holder*, fill out the included *Rope Holder Card* or use your smartphone to scan the QR code at right. A commitment of \$20 per month (or more!) can have an eternal impact!



2021 WVBC Budget



continuing our legacy

will you hold the rope?

WVBC Goal:

\$350,000

Resources now available at:

www.wvbc.org


mountain state
MISSION OFFERING

Annual Training Event Recap

The Annual Training Event has become a staple for our West Virginia Baptist Convention (WVBC) family over the last several years. Usually held at Parchment Valley Conference Center, hundreds of individuals typically gather for fellowship, worship and workshops tailored toward the various church offices. During a “normal year,” participants are limited to just two workshops - one in the morning and one in the afternoon. However by this point, we all realize this is not a “normal year.”

Forced to adapt, this year’s Annual Training Event was moved online and took place over a series of three evenings during the first week of February 2021. With more than 200 participants, more than one-third of those surveyed indicated this was their first time attending the event. Not only did this digital option allow for greater involvement, but it also allowed people to participate in more than just the standard two

workshop limit. Several individuals took advantage of participating in up to six live workshops throughout the course of the week.

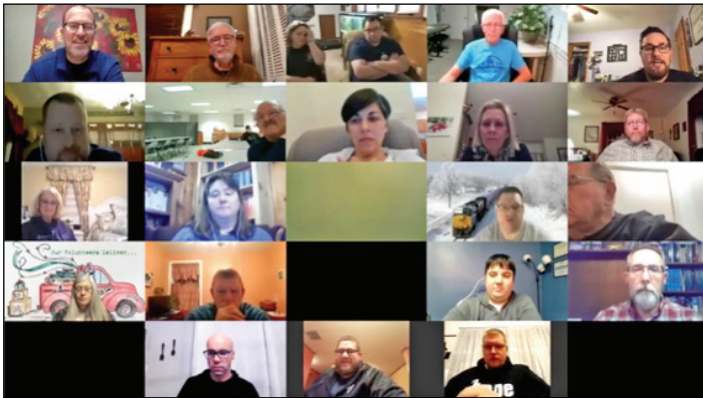
Don Dague, senior pastor at Sand Fork Baptist Church (Little Kanawha), is a regular participant at the in-person event, but had this to say about the digital option:

“The training event was a great experience. I felt the online sessions were more relaxed and the information was very informative. There was a nice variety of topics and there was an appropriate amount of time for discussion and questions. I particularly liked the information other participants would share in the chat box as I found it to be very helpful.”

If you missed this year’s event, you can watch a recording of any of the ten workshops by contacting any of our WVBC staff or by scanning the QR code at right. The full list of this year’s workshops included:



- Deacons
- Trustees
- Clerks
- Treasurers and Financial Secretaries
- The Benefits and How To’s of Online Giving
- Biblical Intentional Grandparenting
- Family Discipleship at Home
- An Introduction to Phygital - Reach and Engage
- Phygital Part 2: Church Planting and Microchurches
- Global Missions in 2021 and Beyond



Participants in the Introduction to Phygital - Reach and Engage workshop.

Additional Resources Available Through the WVBC

Interested in hosting:

ESTATE PLANNING SEMINAR

Learn how by contacting
Todd McClure at todd@wvbc.org

Reducing the Risk

Child Protection in Ministry

- Screening and selection process
- Training
- Supervision scenarios
- Best practices to reduce the risk

Koreen Villers
villers@wvbc.org

Phygital

Physical + Digital

Improve your worship’s reach and engagement

Contact David Hulme
at hulme@wvbc.org

Building Intentional Community in the Workplace

by Rodna Blain,
member, South Parkersburg Baptist Church

The year 2020 was challenging on so many levels and the new year brings more of the same. My husband, Rich, is the lead pastor at South Parkersburg Baptist Church (Parkersburg). His recurring message for the last year has been to be the church outside the walls of our building. Get creative!

On the morning of November 28, 2020, during my quiet time, I felt God nudge me to ask my coworkers to a Bible study. For a few years, I had been feeling a shift in my soul, which included the desire to connect with my coworkers on a more spiritual level. We are nurses and healthcare workers in a neonatal intensive care unit. So that day, I extended an invitation to each of them to participate together in a Bible study via Zoom. With the pandemic and challenges of travel time, it was clear utilizing technology would be necessary for this to be possible.

The level of interest and different work schedules have led us to have two sessions each week. We are completing our

second study and planning a third. We meet at 8:30 p.m. for about an hour. Then comes the meeting after the meeting, when an opportunity is given for more sharing if desired. A session without tears is a rare thing and laughter is frequent.

We have a “worship leader” who loves to share links to music. Another gal says she is going to have children’s church because of all the little ones popping in and out during our sessions. At this point we have 37 members in our Facebook group where loving messages and prayer requests are shared. For example, one coworker was almost hospitalized with COVID-19. Another requested immediate prayer for her 17-year-old sister, newly diagnosed with diabetes.

This has created an opportunity for us to walk a path together we would not have collectively walked before in these moments. There is a shared sense something more is going on here - more than just individuals sharing love and grace within a study group and a trickling out to others in our workplace. It is sharing and participating in God’s kingdom. Beauty in the midst of COVID-19 ashes.

ABMen: Nearly 100 Years of Giving Away the Gospel

The American Baptist Men (ABMen) of West Virginia is planning to celebrate 100 years of ministry in 2022. One of the places we plan to celebrate is at our annual Men’s Camp at Camp Cowen. One of our long time faithful members at that camp is



Mr. Herb Walker of Diamond Baptist Church (Kanawha Valley), still shining his light.

Herb Walker (at left), 105 years old. Herb has never missed a camp and continually wins the “Methuselah Award” as the oldest camp participant. Every year, he reminds us that it is time to give the award to someone else. He also reminds us there is something more important to give away: the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Herb is just one of the many men across our state who serve in this important ministry. Another is David Hoge, who had this to say

about Men’s Camp: “It is a time of spiritual nourishment and personal rejuvenation. Like so many others, I anxiously await the annual opportunity to break away from my regular routine, connect with my brothers in Christ and enjoy a lot of fellowship and delicious food.”

The mission of ABMen is to bring men into a saving relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. This is done at the local church level, with nearly 100 ABMen groups serving in

our churches, and this is also done at the state and national level, with numerous opportunities to fellowship and serve.

If you are looking for a place to serve, come and join us! Below is a list of some of our upcoming events:

- **ABMen Work Party at Parchment Valley - April 9-10**
- **AB Men Work Party at Camp Cowen - April 23-24**
- **Men’s Camp at Camp Cowen - August 6-9**
- **Men’s Day (WVBC Annual Meeting) at Mount Vernon Baptist Church - October 21**

To learn more about how you can get involved, contact Frank Miller at miller@wvbc.org.

Frank Miller,
WVBC Advisor, AB Men of WV



Men’s Camp at Camp Cowen

Feeding Sheep at Parchment Valley Conference Center

The purpose statement of Parchment Valley Conference Center (PV) was written by the Rev. James Cunningham in 1974. James was the director of PV at the time, and he wrote that PV was “to provide a setting where persons, as individuals and in community, may worship, study and reflect in relation to themselves, others and God.” For over 50 years, this has been true of this place.

However, the pandemic caused us to re-evaluate that purpose - not the statement itself, but how we live it out. With restricted gatherings, the forced cancellation of camps and the inability for others to come to us, we realized we needed to go to others.

Jesus said to Peter in John 21:17, “Simon, son of John, do you love me? ... Feed my sheep.”

This past season, a miracle happened through an urgent request of a widow at our local church. She simply asked that we go and find her son who was living in the wilderness and suffering from addiction. A group of us departed PV, bathed in prayer, and we found him, broken and in despair. We invited him to PV during the men’s bow hunt retreat hosted by Dale Mason annually, and it was there that we fed him, clothed him and provided him with shelter. It was a simple act of feeding that man a one-pound meal.

God took that one-pound meal and He began to multiply it, opening doors through relationships we have built over the years through disaster relief work. I was asked if I could help provide more people with meals, and you know my reaction: “Let’s just feed people.”

From that opportunity, food began to arrive at PV by the tractor-trailer load. Dozens of PV donors and local volunteers showed up, rolled up their sleeves and we began to feed ... and



Volunteers gather at Parchment Valley to distribute food.

feed ... and feed. Since that conversation in December 2020, we have distributed more than 131,000 pounds of FREE food!

Through the pandemic, the purpose of Parchment Valley hasn’t changed, we just changed the way we live it out. Continuing to be a place “where lives are changed,” we are grateful for the way God has used us in this season.

We look forward to hosting events and camps again as restrictions are beginning to be lifted, but we also look forward to continuing to go out to others. Are you interested in helping feed His sheep? Contact me, I would love to tell you how you can support and serve alongside us!

Brothers’ Keeper 2021

June 20-25, 2021
Parchment Valley Conference Center

At Brothers’ Keeper (BK) 2021, we will celebrate a legacy and vision that is now more than two decades strong. As we continue our mission work camp in Jackson County, we invite you to come and join us for a week of prayer, worship, fellowship and community service. This year’s camp will take place June 20-25, 2021 at Parchment Valley Conference Center (PV).

We will continue to abide by all COVID-19 policies put in place by local authorities and the PV board. With a limited number of participants this year, you will want to register early to make sure you don’t miss out!

To learn more about Brothers’ Keeper, visit: www.brotherskeeperwv.org.

Doing Christ’s Work Together



Spring Children's Rally Recap

The sights and sounds of children running, laughing and talking filled the air once again at Parchment Valley Conference Center. The Spring Children's Rally was held on Saturday, March 6, 2021, with the theme: "All Aboard! Let Jesus Lead the Way." Fourteen churches were in attendance, of which three had never attended a Children's Rally. Music filled the gym, led by



Tony Nutter, and lessons were taught by Levi Casto, Huntington Community Church; Jennifer Curkendall, Philippi Baptist Church (Union); Emily Fordyce, Calvary Baptist Church (Fayette) and Amber Ellmore, Mount Vernon Baptist Church (Teays Valley). Those in attendance brought items to donate to Life Choice of Clarksburg. Life Choice is a pregnancy and family resource center that provides education and baby/toddler items to new mothers. Life Choice is a WV Hope project this year for the American Baptist Women's Ministries of West Virginia. Items collected included diapers, wipes, onesies, receiving blankets, nasal aspirators, pacifiers, bibs, infant Tylenol and several gift cards.

Sandy Walker from Parkersburg Baptist Temple (Parkersburg) said, "I was super stoked to bring my grandchildren

as well as other children from our church. The music was great! The layout for COVID-19 restrictions and prevention were awesome! The teachers did a wonderful job teaching! The children loved swapping different items out of their lunch bags."

If you were unable to attend the Spring Children's Rally in-person, an online option is available. The cost is \$20 and you will receive the music as well as all four lessons. If you would like to receive these materials, contact Koreen Villers at villers@wvbc.org. Please plan to attend the Fall Children's Rally on November 6, 2021 at Parchment Valley.



Bible Conference: Galatians - Freedom in Christ

On March 6th, 2021, the sixth annual Bible Conference was held at Parchment Valley Conference Center and explored the Book of Galatians.

Originally planned as a three-pronged approach (in-person, livestream and recorded), the event took a slight turn when the livestream portion of the day had to be canceled. Over 20 people came out for the study, which practiced all the current safety protocols, including social-distancing. The in-person attendance was limited to 25 for safety considerations. Dr. Trent



2021 West Virginia Baptist Convention Annual Bible Conference

Eastman, pastor of New Baptist Church (Guyandotte) and adjunct professor for Palmer Theological Seminary, presented the study, and did a fabulous job, as always.

With the Spring Children's Rally being held simultaneously at the Greenlee Activities Center, the Bible Conference was held Hill Hall - the perfect venue. The study was a good time of learning and digging deeper into the word of God. Boxed lunches were served in Hill Hall as well as morning snacks.

Many thanks to all those who worked behind the scenes to make the event possible. A study is planned for the same weekend next year, which is always the first Saturday in March.

Churches or individuals interested in gaining access to the recorded version of the event should contact Donna at snyder@wvbc.org or 304.422.6449.

Annual Women's Conference: Saturday, June 5, 2021

This year marks the 87th year of the West Virginia American Baptist Women's Ministries' (ABWM) Annual Conference. Since 1934, the conference has taken on new locations and new themes, but the commitment has stayed the same: *challenging the women of the West Virginia American Baptist churches to participate in the missionary work that is needed at home and abroad.*

The 2021 Conference will be a live event and is scheduled for Saturday, June 5, 2021, at Parchment Valley Conference Center. How exciting it will be to once again have fellowship with ladies from across the state!

The day's event, centered around the theme "A Time to Serve," will focus on ABW ministries with special interests sessions, providing an opportunity to learn more about the special project, mission outreach project, Love Gift, scholarship fund and West Virginia Baptist Convention (WVBC) missionaries. Representatives from our 2021 WV Hope ministries: Fruits of Labor, House to Home, Life Choice and Weirton Christian Center will also be present.

The registration fee has been discounted this year to \$15 with a lunch option for \$7. Registration forms are available in the spring issue of *Seasons* and also on the ABWM page of the WVBC website.



2015 ABWM Conference at Parchment Valley Conference Center

Plan to attend and renew your passion for West Virginia American Baptist Women's Ministries' missions or become inspired to find new ways to serve our Lord. It truly is a time to serve!

For more information, contact Sandy Foster Currey at: sandyfostercurrey@gmail.com.



MENTORING

FOR PASTORAL EXCELLENCE

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



RENEW
TRANSFORMATIONAL STRATEGIES

Calling Young Pastors!!

Consider joining us for our Mentoring for Pastoral Excellence Program. Launched in 2020, this program inspires, encourages, supports and strengthens networks between experienced pastor-mentors and the gifted younger pastor leaders in our WVBC churches.

Participants meet monthly with their mentors

Cost: \$360 per year + one night of lodging for annual retreat at Parchment Valley.

Are you interested in being part of this program? To learn how, contact:

Mike Sisson at sisson@wvbc.org

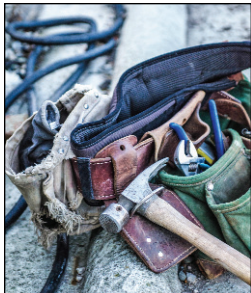
Join Us at Camp Cowen for Three Opportunities to Serve!



Spring is here and the West Virginia Baptist Camp at Cowen needs your help! As we look forward to future plans for on-site programming, it is time to get camp ready. We have three opportunities to serve:

Men's Work Party April 23-24, 2021

Join with the American Baptist Men of West Virginia on Friday, April 23 and/or Saturday, April 24. Bring basic tools, your work gloves and come ready as we prepare



Camp Cowen for guests. Meals are provided both days.

For more details or to sign up, contact Tommy Jamison at 304.588.4514 or tjamison409@gmail.com.

Adopt-A-Cabin



As a family or church group, adopt a cabin or area of camp to take care of with cleaning, general repairs, painting and small improvements.

Flexible work dates are available. Check out our webpage for more details on available areas: <http://www.campcowen.org/adopt-a-cabin.html>.

Youth Work Party May 14-15, 2021

Calling youth groups and families who want to give back and serve during our Youth Work Party as we clean, rake, trim and do other work around Camp Cowen.



Bring work gloves, rakes, tarps, shovels, brooms and basic cleaning supplies.

Contact Jill Narraway at 304.210.7030 or jill@wvbc.org for details or to sign up.

Camp Cowen 2021 Schedule:

Younger Midler (grades 2-4)
June 4-6

Junior 1 (grades 5-6)
June 6-12

Junior High 1 (grades 7-9)
June 13-19

Junior 2 (grades 5-6)
June 20-26

High School 1 (grades 9-12)
June 27-July 3

Junior High 2 (grades 7-9)
July 4-10

Senior Day (high school grads)
July 10

High School 2 (grades 9-12)
July 11-17

Family Camp
July 23-26

Older Midler (grades 3-5)
July 27-30

Camp Global
July 30-August 1

AB Men and Boys' Camp
August 6-8

Women's Camp (18 and up)
October 1-3

The camping program is sponsored by the West Virginia Baptist Convention and is conducted at: West Virginia Baptist Camp at Cowen, 276 Baptist Camp Road, Cowen, WV 26206.

If you have any questions about the camping program, please contact Jill Narraway at 304.210.7030 or jill@wvbc.org.

Evan Arkell, Southwest Area Minister

Let the Light of Christ Shine

I am so glad spring is here with its beautiful flowers blooming, the growing grass getting greener and the warmer temperatures allowing us to enjoy beautiful sunshine. At the time I am writing this however, at the beginning of March, these images are only in my mind. Currently in this area, there are families who have been without power for three weeks, and now so many things are under water as the rivers flood. The second half of February 2021 was brutal with a round of freezing rain, snow, more freezing rain and a little more snow. Personally, my family was without power for three days with the first round of ice, and then it was restored for about 24 hours before getting knocked out again for nearly four more days. We were blessed compared to so many, but these times certainly make me appreciate the lights and heat when they come on.

These times of tragedy give us, as the body of Christ, the opportunity to allow Christ's light to shine in the darkness. For several days during the ice storm, New Baptist Church (Guyandotte) opened their doors to the community so people without power and heat could come in to warm up, charge up, eat up and rest up. When the floods hit at the end of February, people in the Diamond community in Kanawha County were affected and one family lost everything. Diamond Baptist Church (Kanawha Valley) opened their doors to give these families a warm and dry place to stay and hot food to enjoy. At the time of



Olive Baptist Church (Coal River)

writing, there are family homes and churches in Cabell County, and the surrounding areas with flood waters still in them. It has been a blessing to witness the body of Christ reach out in any way they can to help those who have lost so much. This is a moment when the people of Christ have the opportunity to let the light of Christ shine brightly and I see so many of our churches doing just that!

Southeast Area News

Jim Anderson, Southeast Area Minister

Thoughts about Sowing and Reaping

As I write, a tough winter has almost passed (at least for most of us) and spring beckons with the call of serious thoughts of planting gardens of all varieties.

Many know that Susan and I live on a farm in Greenbrier County, Noah's Ark Farm, where I at least am considered a "gen-



tleman farmer." This is a southern term simply meaning I love to farm but lose money at it! We love to garden and much of our free time during the spring and summer is devoted to flower and vegetable gardening.

All of this reminds me of a favorite passage from Galatians 6:7-8, which has always been a reminder about sowing and reaping whether in the spiritual or physical realm; "Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow. If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh, but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit." (NRSV)

Make no mistake, we sow and plant to have a harvest whether physically or spiritually. One of the songs I share, *Drinking from the Saucer*, when visiting churches has this line, "As I go along life's journey, I'm reaping better than I sow." In our Christian life, no matter the circumstances, this is so true ... we just need reminders from time to time.

As a reminder, in the picture at left, Pastor David Bush (center) of Crab Orchard Baptist Church (Greenbrier-Raleigh) is baptizing a young lady in a very unique way ... that is harvest after many spiritual seeds have been sown by both the church and her family.

As we are called to sow for the harvest, here is something to think about: *Sow a thought, reap an act; sow an act, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny.*

A New Season

The kingdom of heaven ... is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. Luke 13:19a NIV

On a radio news program this week, I heard that the fastest growing hobby during the pandemic has been gardening - and not just here at home, but world-wide. Intrigued, I looked it up on the internet when I returned home, and found many articles which talked about the increase in gardening, the benefits of gardening, many different things. Jesus often talked about farming and gardening and growing things, and used them as illustrations of how God's kingdom works. Even now, with the cold breath of winter still felt in the air, new life is shooting up through the ground, preparing for spring. Two weeks ago, the first daffodils and tulips began pushing up - even through the snow, and soon the earliest flowers will be blooming again. All of these things should remind us that God is still working and that life will always find a way. It is a promise from God, one that is so important He has hard-wired it into the world's DNA.

With the season of Easter upon us and with the virus numbers trending in a better direction, many of us are looking for-



The first flowers of spring bursting through the ice and snow .

ward to celebrating together the life we have in Christ. We are not sure what this season will be like, but we are hopeful. I know many of you have just started in-person services, and others are making plans on how to safely celebrate in this special time. Know this - we rejoice with you in Christ our Savior, we remember the cross and His sacrifice. May God bless you and your times together. Be hopeful. Be careful. Be blessed.

Northeast Area News

David Hulme, Northeast Area Minister

Day-Traders of Long-Term Investors

As it relates to the stock market, a "day-trader" is an investor who jumps in and out of the market, often many times a day, to capitalize on small price changes. Day-traders have no interest in the companies whose stock they are buying and selling. They are simply trying to find quick-profit opportunities.

Related to the church, I'm sure you've known folks you might classify as Christian "day-traders." However, I only offer the description to contrast them with the other group you find, not only in the stock market, but also in our churches, the "long-term investor."

For the long-term investor, "long-term" is not defined by timeframes, but rather by a clarity of goals and vision. Long-term investors are those who, among other things, often take risks and see beyond present circumstances in the midst of ups and downs. Their investment goal is often multigenerational.



This year in the Northeast Area of the West Virginia Baptist Convention, we celebrate two long-term investors in the Kingdom of God:

- **Dents Run Baptist Church**

(Judson) top photo, located near Mannington, celebrates 150 years of ministry. Pastor Doug Cyphers has served Dents Run since 2016.

- **St. Paul Baptist Church**

(Fairmont) bottom photo, located in Fairview, celebrates 175 years of ministry. Pastor Larry Harker has served St. Paul since 1982.

Because of the multigenerational commitment of many long-term investors, both of these communities of faith continue to share the love of Christ in multiple ways, at home and abroad.

As we celebrate with these two congregations, we say "thank you" to the many long-term investors, present and past, who made and make eternal investments with their time, talents and treasure.

December 2020 - March 2021

MILDRED ARCHIE, 96, of Ohio, died February 11, 2021. She was an American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (ABFMS) alumna, who served in Africa.

RUTH ESTHER (DIETZ) BROWN, 92, of California, died December 30, 2020. She was an American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (ABFMS) alumna, who served in Congo/Zaire.

PATRICIA EVANS, 89, of Sutton, died March 3, 2021. She was a member of Sutton Baptist Church (Elk Valley) and was part of its many ministries including the church food pantry.

ESTHER MAE FRASER, 92, of Washington, died February 14, 2021. She was an American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (ABFMS) alumna, who served in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

FRANK M. HUTTON, 93, of Hurricane, died January 4, 2021. He was a member of Hurricane First Baptist Church (Teays Valley), where he served on the trustee board and as an usher.

BETTY M. LITTON, of Hurricane, died February 16, 2021. She was a member of Hurricane First Baptist Church (Teays Valley), where she was a member of the Harmony Sunday School class and Love Gift Chairperson for the Christ in the Center circle. She served as a teacher in the Children's Department.

FREDERICK LEE "FRED" LUNSFORD, 86, of Ona, died February 24, 2021. He was a faithful member of Beulah Ann Missionary Baptist Church (Guyandotte), where he taught the Willing Workers' Sunday School class for 42 years and was awarded Emeritus status. He served as a deacon for over 50 years.

CARL NUZUM, JR., 95, of Shinnston, died February 15, 2021. He was an active, faithful member of Shinnston First Baptist Church (Judson) for 64 years. He was a member of the board of trustees for over 50 years and served numerous terms as chairman and was named an Honorary Lifetime trustee. He sang in the church choir, served as a Sunday morning greeter and was a volunteer driver for the Meals on Wheels' program.

EVELYN "EVIE" (COWAN) YORKE MANIERRE, 97, of Connecticut, died December 30, 2020. She was an American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (ABFMS) alumna, who served in Japan.

ANNA PAULINE MILLER, 94, of Reedy, died January 22, 2021. She was a longtime and active member of Reedy Baptist Church (Good Hope). She was also involved in American Baptist Women's Ministries.

STANLEY (STAN) ARTHUR MURRAY, 71, of Pennsylvania, died January 12, 2021. He was an American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (ABFMS) alumnus, who served in Japan/Okinawa.

TIMOTHY E. PERINE, 58, of Shinnston, died February 5, 2021. He was a member of Ten Mile Baptist Church (Judson),

where he served as church pianist and comic relief. He used his God-given musical talents to serve several local churches over the years as well as having a life-long dedication to Judson Baptist Camp.

SHIRLEY JOE RINEHART, 85, of Petroleum, died January 9, 2021. He was an active member of Goose Creek Baptist Church (Harrisville).

GAM SENG SHAE, 81, of Florida, died January 2, 2021. He was an American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (ABFMS) alumnus.

KENNETH JACOB STAFFORD, 90, of Kopperston, died February 5, 2021. He was a member of Toned Missionary Baptist Church (Rockcastle) for over 50 years, where he served as a deacon, member of the advisory board, youth leader of Senior Baptist Youth Fellowship, chairman of the Missions Committee, an usher and greeter.

FLOYD "DONALD" STAMPER, died January 29, 2021. He was a member of Hampton Baptist Church (Kanawha Valley).

JOHN A. SUNDQUIST, 84, of Michigan, died February 21, 2021. He served as executive director of American Baptist International Ministries (IM) from 1989 until 2003.

WILLIAM B. "BILL" WEST, 93, of Parkersburg, died February 1, 2021. He was an 81-year member of South Parkersburg Baptist Church (Parkersburg), where he served in many capacities, including: deacon, choir director, Sunday School teacher, church camp director, soloist for the choir and singer in many musical groups.

STEVEN EDWARD ZYWICKI, 70, of Petersburg, died February 15, 2021. He was pastor of North Mill Creek Baptist Church (Eastern).

Leadership Updates

REV. LARRY FLEMING to Glenville First Baptist Church (Little Kanawha) as pastor on January 1, 2021

REV. STEPHEN GAMALLO to Spruce Grove Baptist Church (Rockcastle) as pastor on January 21, 2021

REV. RUFUS HOALCRAFT to Parkersburg Baptist Temple (Parkersburg) as interim pastor on January 1, 2021

REV. SCOTTIE LUSK to Toned Baptist Church (Rockcastle) as senior pastor on March 7, 2021

REV. JEFF MUSGRAVE to New Martinsville First Baptist Church (Panhandle) as pastor on August 9, 2020

REV. SCOTT WIGHT to Lauckport Baptist Church (Parkersburg) as interim pastor on January 1, 2021

April 2021

APRIL 1 - The ministry of Beckley First Baptist Church; Donald "Doc" Adkins, pastor (Greenbrier-Raleigh)

APRIL 2 - Pray a prayer of thankfulness for a Savior who died to save us from our sins.

APRIL 3 - The ministry of Saint Paul Baptist Church; Larry Harker, pastor (Fairmont)

APRIL 4 - CELEBRATE THE RISEN CHRIST!!

APRIL 5 - The ministry of Broad Run Baptist Church; Allen Burnsworth, pastor (Broad Run)

APRIL 6 - Rebecca Stanton, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to Hungary

APRIL 7 - Grace Reed, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant (youth) to Bolivia

APRIL 8 - Susan Hegarty, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to Costa Rica

APRIL 9 - American Baptist Men's Work Party happens this weekend at Parchment Valley Conference Center

APRIL 10 - The ministry of Romney First Baptist Church; Steven Wilson, pastor (Eastern)

APRIL 11 - The ministry of Oak Hill Baptist Church, Samuel Blaylock, pastor (Fayette)

APRIL 12 - The ministry of Madison Baptist Church; Jim Butcher, pastor (Coal River)

APRIL 13 - Shane Boggs, member, West Virginia Baptist Convention Christian Stewardship Commission

APRIL 14 - Brandy Stanton, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant (youth) to Hungary

APRIL 15 - Ginny Prunty, administrative assistant to the executive minister, West Virginia Baptist Convention

APRIL 16 - Greg Boso, member, West Virginia Baptist Convention Christian Discipleship Commission

APRIL 17 - The ministry of Ravenswood First Baptist Church; Toby Wagoner, pastor (Good Hope)

APRIL 18 - Jessica Wu, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant (youth) to South and East Asia

APRIL 19 - Brian Smith, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to Haiti

APRIL 20 - The ministry of Dent's Run Baptist Church; Doug Cyphers, pastor (Judson)

APRIL 21 - The ministry of Gassaway Baptist Church; Mark Stump, pastor (Elk Valley)

APRIL 22 - Rich Blain, chair, West Virginia Baptist Convention Christian Outreach Commission

APRIL 23 - Elijah Williams, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant (youth) to Thailand

APRIL 24 - American Baptist Men's Work Party happens this weekend at Camp Cowen

APRIL 25 - Lois Merritt, secretary, West Virginia Baptist Convention and member, West Virginia Baptist Convention Christian Leadership Commission

APRIL 26 - Cristina Parajon, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant (youth) to Nicaragua

APRIL 27 - Laura Parajon, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to Nicaragua

APRIL 28 - Thelma Nambu, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to the Philippines

APRIL 29 - Joyce Reed, International Ministries' (IM) Global Consultant

APRIL 30 - Valerie Osterbrock, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to Malaysia

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

May 2021

MAY 1 - West Virginia Baptist Convention Executive Board meeting happens today at Parchment Valley Conference Center

MAY 2 - Sarah Matos, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to Bolivia

MAY 3 - The ministry of Murphytown Baptist Church; Jason Hickman, pastor (Parkersburg)

MAY 4 - Isabella Smith, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant (youth) to Brazil

MAY 5 - The ministry of Grafton First Baptist Church; Todd Jarman, pastor (Union)

MAY 6 - The ministry of Cooper Memorial Baptist Church; Merle Walls, pastor (Rockcastle)

MAY 7 - Nora Kalkman, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to Europe, Middle East and Liberia

MAY 8 - The ministry of Good Hope Baptist Church; Chad Clark, pastor (Guyandotte)

MAY 9 - The ministry of Judson Baptist Church; Sam Gasaway, pastor (Teays Valley)

MAY 10 - Jill Lowery, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to the Democratic Republic of the Congo

MAY 11 - Lee Boso, president, West Virginia Baptist Convention Education Society and member, West Virginia Baptist Convention Christian Leadership Commission

MAY 12 - Nzunga Mabudiga, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to Haiti

MAY 13 - Frank Miller, director of Operations, Parchment Valley Conference Center

MAY 14 - The Youth Work Party happens this weekend at Camp Cowen

MAY 15 - Anastasia Osterbrock, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant (youth) to Malaysia

MAY 16 - Erich Reggi, chair, Camp Cowen Board and member, West Virginia Baptist Convention Christian Discipleship Commission

MAY 17 - Joshua Barnes, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant (youth) to Iberoamerica and the Caribbean

MAY 18 - Laura Freeman, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to Turkey

MAY 19 - The ministry of Connolly Memorial Baptist Church; Jim Adkins, pastor (Logan-Mingo)

MAY 20 - Hermelinda Damasceno, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to United Kingdom

MAY 21 - Lee Ann Hwang, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to Japan

MAY 22 - Vicki Ramey, trustee and member, West Virginia Baptist Convention Christian Stewardship Commission

MAY 23 - The ministry of Mountain Baptist Church; Reginald Berry, pastor (Hopewell)

MAY 24 - The ministry of Fort Gay Baptist Church; Timothy Preston, pastor (Twelve Pole)

MAY 25 - Dan Harbaugh, president, West Virginia Baptist Convention American Baptist Men and member, West Virginia Baptist Convention Christian Outreach Commission

MAY 26 - Sydney Juanes, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant (youth) to Thailand

MAY 27 - The ministry of Weirton Heights Memorial Baptist Church; William Stout, interim pastor (Panhandle)

MAY 28 - Kyle Williams, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant to Thailand

MAY 29 - Abie Reed, International Ministries' (IM) Global Servant (youth) to Bolivia

MAY 30 - The ministry of North Hills Baptist Church; Michael Harper, pastor (Kanawha Valley)

MAY 31 - Remember those who have gone on before us as we celebrate Memorial Day

Coming Events

APRIL

April 2

Good Friday Holiday

West Virginia Baptist Convention Office
CLOSED

April 17

Ministers' Wives' Encouragement Zoom

Online Via Zoom

April 23-24

American Baptist Men's Work Party

Camp Cowen

April 24

**Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies
Weddings and Funerals (E-05) One-Day
Class**

Parchment Valley Conference Center
and Online Via Zoom

April 30

West Virginia Baptist Convention

Executive Committee

Parchment Valley Conference Center
Sanrock Building

MAY

May 1

West Virginia Baptist Convention

Executive Board and Commission

Meetings

Parchment Valley Conference Center

May 4

**Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies
Discipleship Essentials (M-02) Six-Week
Class Begins**

Various Locations

May 14-15

Youth Work Party

Camp Cowen

May 15

**Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies
Digital Learning Initiative (DLI) Leading
People (M-05) 12-Hour Class Begins**

Online

May 15

**Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies
Digital Learning Initiative (DLI)**

**Community Ministry (Mod-05) Six-Hour
Class Begins**

Online

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May 31

Memorial Day Holiday

West Virginia Baptist Convention Office
CLOSED

JUNE

June 4-6

Younger Midler Camp (grades 2-4)

Camp Cowen

June 5

American Baptist Women's Conference

Parchment Valley Conference Center

June 6-12

Junior 1 Camp (grades 5-6)

Camp Cowen

June 13-19

Junior High 1 Camp (grades 7-9)

Camp Cowen

June 20-25

Brothers' Keeper 2021

Parchment Valley Conference Center

June 20-26

Junior 2 Camp (grades 5-6)

Camp Cowen

June 25-27

ABC Biennial/Mission Summit

Online

June 26

**Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies
Baptism and Communion (E-06)**

One-Day Class

Parchment Valley Conference Center
and Online Via Zoom

June 27-July 3

High School 1 Camp (grades 9-12)

Camp Cowen

JULY

July 4-10

Junior High 2 Camp (grades 7-9)

Camp Cowen

July 5

Independence Day Holiday

West Virginia Baptist Convention Office
CLOSED

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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