

We Should Never Let Go of the Rope



While recently organizing the West Virginia Baptist Historical Society (WVBHS) vault at Parchment Valley Conference Center, WVBHS member Todd Godby stumbled across several important, original documents written by the likes of William Carey, Charles Spurgeon and King George III. He also found a document written by Andrew Fuller, dated 1793, where he recalls a conversation he had with William Carey shortly before Carey departed as a missionary to India. In Fuller's own words, he wrote:

"...whilst we were deliberating, Carey, as it were, said, 'Well, I will go down, if you will hold the rope.' But, before he descended, he, as it seemed to me, took an oath from each of us ..., to this effect that 'whilst we lived, **we should never let go of the rope.**'"

That theme of "holding the rope" is hopefully one that is familiar to you by this point, as it has been our fundraising emphasis for the past two years. Since its inception, more than 150 families have signed up to be Rope Holders, giving at least \$20 per month to support West Virginia Baptist Convention (WVBC) ministries. In addition to families, various churches, Sunday school classes, men's and women's groups and associations have also given to this fund. Rope Holders have become critical to our mission of **doing Christ's work together.**

But the need for Rope Holders has increased as we explore new ministries together. Will you hold the rope? And will you never let go of it?

As was the case for William Carey, ministry opportunities are endless in the communities around us. That is why our theme this year focuses on **intentionally engaging communities for Christ:**

- With nearly 1.6 million residents of West Virginia identifying as unchurched, we must be intentional about planting new churches.
- With many of the unchurched admitting to having no interest of setting foot into a church building, we must be intentional about reaching them through microchurches or other forms of creative outreach.
- Responding to the statistic that more than half of the youth in our state are being raised by grandparents, we must be intentional about equipping grandparents to better disciple their grandchildren.
- As Baby Boomers begin the transfer of their wealth to younger generations, we must be intentional about helping them do so in a way that carries on our rich, spiritual legacy.

Each of these emphases were shared about in more detail during our WVBC Annual Meeting. You will also read and hear about these emphases throughout the remainder of the year. With a world that is hurting and in desperate need for hope, we must be intentional about engaging our communities with the hope of the gospel.

The West Virginia Baptist Convention is a family of churches committed to doing Christ's work together. This year, we are going to **do Christ's work together by intentionally engaging communities for Christ.**

Are you with us? If so, we invite you to hold the rope and to never let go of it.

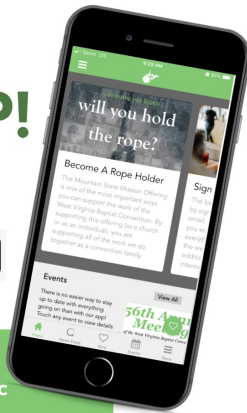
The West Virginia Baptist Convention is a family of churches committed to reaching all generations for Jesus Christ both here and abroad by equipping one another to be healthy, growing and unified in Christ and for Christ.

Doing Christ's Work Together

by Mike Sisson, Executive Minister

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Vol. LXXXIX, Issue 02 February-March 2022

Table of Contents

Mike Sisson: Commentary	2
Sarah McCloy Endorsement/ Senior High Convention	3
Parchment Valley Legacy/ Brothers' Keeper 2022	4
Intentional Biblical Grandparenting/ Spring Children's Rally	5
Join Camp Cowen Staff/ Camp Cowen 2022 Schedule	6
Microchurch/ Annual Bible Conference	7
2021 Impact Report	8-9
Ministry Internship Program/ National Men's Prayer Breakfast	10
America for Christ Offering/ Weirton Christian Center Update	11
Area Minister News:	12-13
Obituaries / Tempered Resilience	14
Prayer Calendars	15
Coming Events / YMPT	16

I recall watching an interview with Tony Dungy, then head coach of the Indianapolis Colts, just before his team was to meet the Chicago Bears in the 2006 Super Bowl. Coach Dungy, who takes his faith in Jesus Christ very seriously, was asked about the game and his expectations. He said two things in his response that caught my attention. First, he said that "I welcome the opportunity to demonstrate to the world that one can coach with Christian convictions and be successful." Secondly, he said, "We plan to win the game..." Understood in right context, his statement about winning was not at all intended as pious or arrogant. Rather, he was stating the simple fact that they were not simply glad to appear in the Super Bowl, but they were planning and preparing to win the game.

This should be the goal of every Christian and every church. First, it is to always make every effort to live, serve, speak, act, play, etc. with Christian character and conviction. Second, it is to strive to be the very best we can be in everything God has called us to do! In other words, Christians and churches alike should plan to win the game!

The apostle Paul explained it this way, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for me" (Col. 3:23). In fact, Paul exemplifies these two principles in his own life. He explains, "Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training ... Therefore, I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air" (1 Cor. 9:24-25). Eugene Peterson paraphrases Paul this way, "I don't know about you, but I'm running hard for the finish line. I'm giving it everything I've got."

In a biography on the great preacher D.L. Moody, the story is told of the encounter that set him hungering and thirsting after a deeper Christian experience and launched the ministry that would follow. During his first trip to Britain, Moody was sitting with his friend and well-known evangelist Henry Varley. Varley commented, "The world has yet to see what God will do with and for and through and in and by the man who is fully consecrated to Him." Upon hearing this statement, Moody said to himself, "He said 'a man.' He did not say, 'a great man,' nor 'a learned man,' nor a 'smart man,' but simply 'a man.' I am a man, and it lies with the man himself whether he will or will not make that entire and full consecration. I will try my utmost to, by the grace of God, be that man."

In this new year, these are the challenges that remain before us as individuals, churches and a Convention family: to live out in our lives and ministries with the Christian convictions and character Christ has called us to. And to do so with excellence and the expectation that for Christ we must do so with the intention of being victorious.

Blessings,
Mike



DOING CHRIST'S WORK *together*

by Intentionally Engaging Communities for Christ

Sarah McCloy Endorsed to Serve in Japan

We are excited to announce that Sarah McCloy, a member of our West Virginia Baptist Convention (WVBC) family, has been endorsed to serve as a global servant with International Ministries (IM).

In partnership with the Japan Baptist Union, Sarah will work in partnership with the Japan Baptist Union's sister school, Shokei Gakuin University and at the associated church, Shokei Baptist Church, in Sendai, Japan. Her role will be as a part-time instructor at the university where she will teach English as well as work with the chaplains' department taking part in the spiritual life of the school. Her ministry at Shokei Baptist Church will be to serve as an assistant pastor at the church as she preaches, teaches and contributes to the pastoral ministry.

Sarah has many years of experience that have prepared her for this role. She is a graduate of Houghton College with a BA in Theology and International Development. She received her Master of Divinity degree from Gardner-Webb School of Divinity in North Carolina where she studied Pastoral Care and Counseling. Since graduating, she has served as a special assistant for short-term mission with IM, has worked as a hospital chaplain, currently serves as interim pastor of Goose Creek Baptist Church (Harrisville) and also teaches in the Wirt County School system as a substitute teacher.

Sarah grew up in the WVBC with both of her parents, Mark and Mary Beth McCloy, serving churches within our WVBC family. She has been involved in teaching through the Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies, she was a recipient of educational assistance from both the Bowen Charitable Trust and the West Virginia Baptist Education Society, and she is also a product of our Ministry Internship Program, having served as an intern at Milton Baptist Church (Guyandotte). These numerous



experiences have allowed hundreds of people to be involved in her preparation.

With this endorsement, Sarah becomes the 42nd missionary from our WVBC family to serve full-time with IM. Over the course of the next year, she will be busy visiting individuals and churches, as she raises the personal support needed to serve in Japan.

Is your church interested in joining in this exciting adventure? If so, contact Todd McClure at todd@wvbc.org.

SENIOR HIGH CONVENTION 2022

ROB ELY



RENDER THE HEARTS



FEBRUARY 25-27 | GRADES 9-12

NEW BAPTIST

610 28TH STREET HUNTINGTON, WV

- Bible Study
- Worship
- Mission Projects
- Girl/Guy Time
- Games
- Interest Groups

Register online at
senior-high-convention-2022.eventbrite.com

**\$40 PER PERSON
(\$50 AFTER FEBRUARY 15TH)**

Contact kayla@wvbc.org with questions.

Expanding God's Kingdom at Parchment Valley

The **Parchment Valley Conference Center** has served as a place “*where lives are changed*” since the land (originally a dairy farm) was purchased in 1965. Much of the space we enjoy today was built or developed under the leadership of Charlie Swisher, who served as the director from 1990 to 2004.

Prior to coming to Parchment Valley, Charlie worked as an industrial mechanic for 25 years. His wife, Judy, worked full-time as a dental assistant. They were members of New England Baptist Church (Parkersburg). Sensing that God was calling them to expand His kingdom, they left their careers and applied for the job at Parchment Valley. Little did they know how much “expanding” they would do.

In the fourteen years that Charlie served as director, the swimming pool was remodeled, many of the picnic shelters were constructed, one of the rental houses was built, the gymnasium was erected and the entire Vision 2000 project was completed. Vision 2000 was a \$3 million campaign that constructed the Santrock Education Building and brought significant upgrades to both the dorms and the lodges.

However, Charlie would quickly remind you that there were a lot of people involved in each of those projects. “The people we had at that time were the best ever,” Charlie recalled. “I know we could not have done it without them.”

While Charlie oversaw much of the day-to-day operations, Judy oversaw the kitchen and cleaning. Working on a very limited budget, she would often clip coupons from the newspaper to save money on groceries. They also sold timber from the Parchment Valley property on two occasions to raise money for ministry needs. In total, they made nearly \$220,000 in those transactions. Judy was a very diligent steward of God's resources.

Not only did Parchment Valley expand their facilities in those fourteen years, they also expanded their ministries. With the help of Brian Sweeney and Roger Adams, an Annual Bow Hunters Retreat was established, which has continued for 25 years. Additionally, Brothers' Keeper began, which still reaches out to the Jackson County community and will be celebrating their 23rd anniversary this summer.



Frank Miller (left), the current Parchment Valley director, having a conversation with Charlie Swisher (right).

Charlie recalls that he and Judy would often work 12-14 hour days just to get everything done. In the evenings, he and the Parchment Valley maintenance director, Dale Kerns, would then drive over to help build what is now Parchment Valley Baptist Church (Good Hope). That is now where Charlie is a member.

“None of it ever felt like work,” Charlie recalls. “The relationships we built during those years were some of our greatest memories.”

We are thankful that Charlie and Judy responded to God's call to expand His kingdom. Because of their faithfulness, God's kingdom is continuing to expand and will expand for many generations to come.

Is God calling you to step out in faith? Let Charlie and Judy be an example of how God can use you to change lives for eternity.



Register Now for BK 2022!

Bring your youth and skilled adult leaders and join us June 19-24 at Parchment Valley, as we intentionally engage our Jackson County community for Christ.

This year marks 23 years of Brothers' Keeper (BK). BK is a missional camp for middle school and high school youth that not only provides assistance to home owners in need of urgent repairs, but it also provides crews with opportunities to share the incredible good news of Jesus.

To register or volunteer, visit www.parchmentvalley.org or contact Frank Miller at (304) 372-3675.

Intentional Biblical Grandparenting

I am a Grandparent, and This is My Declaration: (excerpt from Legacy Coalition)

Yes, I am a grandparent, but I am more than a grandparent, I am a Christian grandparent. I believe in the Bible, and the God of the Bible. I have received the grace of the gospel, of the Christ of the Bible and I desire to be a life-long devoted disciple. I want my grandchildren to do the same! Yes, I am a Christian grandparent. But I am more than that; I am an intentional Christian grandparent, and this is my declaration. I love my grandkids, so I will hold them when they're born, cuddle them when they're one, chase them when they're two, read to them when they're three, play with them when they're four, and laugh at their jokes when they're five. I'll support them, exhort them, cheer them, revere them, I'll praise them, even help raise them – I will be there for them! But that's not enough. As an intentional Christian Grandparent, I will do more! I will pass on my faith. No, I will perpetuate my faith. Therefore, I will teach two generations. But I will not only teach two generations, I will think four generations. I will ponder, "What kind of grandparent must I be so my grandchild becomes one like me – and then carries on the legacy?" Yes, I am an intentional Christian grandparent.

Culture says, "Retire and go play." I say, "No thanks, I'll pray."

Culture says, "Pursue affluence." I say, "I'll pursue influence."

Culture says, "You're old – you did your time." I say, "Not so, I'm in my prime."

Culture says, "Those young generations – you can't relate." I say, "Ain't true – my influence is great!"

I know that my grandchildren need me. But from me they need: Godly wisdom, my Christ-like example, my faith stories, my earnest prayers, my uninterrupted time, my unconditional love and my God-authorized blessing.



Jon and Koreen Villers with a couple of their grandchildren.

So what is Intentional Biblical Grandparenting? Please attend one of the three Intentional Biblical Grandparenting seminars to learn how to be an intentional biblical grandparent. The seminar will help you overcome grandparenting obstacles, equip you to pass on your faith and provide you with a strategy for reaching the hearts of your grandchildren. No one else in your family can fill the position of an intentional biblical grandparent. God designed us to be a spiritual influencer.

Seminar Dates and locations for 2022:

March 26 – Vienna Baptist Church, Vienna

April 2 – Baptist Temple, Fairmont

April 23 – Emmanuel Baptist Church, Charleston

Register now at www.wvbc.org

Spring Children's Rally

For children currently in grades K-fifth grade, sixth grade is optional.

Saturday, March 5, 2022

Parchment Valley Conference Center, Greenlee Activity Center

COST:

\$13.00 (\$25.00 after February 14th)

SCHEDULE:

9:00AM—Registration
9:30-9:50 AM—Welcome, Singing
10:00-10:40 AM—Lesson 1
10:45-11:25 AM—Lesson 2
11:30-12:10 PM—Lesson 3
12:15-12:45 PM—Lunch
12:45-1:10 PM—Singing
1:15-1:55 PM—Lesson 4
2:00-2:40 PM—Lesson 5
2:45-3:00 PM—Singing, Closing



Register online at www.wvbc.org

MISSION PROJECT:

Blessing Boxes, Philippi, WV

DONATION ITEMS:

Ravioli
Spaghetti O's
Beefaroni (Pop Top Lids)
Tuna Packets
Chicken Packets
Velveeta Mac and Cheese
Peanut Butter Crackers
Ramen
Individual Snacks
Gift Cards to Walmart / Sam's Club

JOIN CAMP COWEN'S 2022 STAFF!

We're seeking 13 dedicated, highly motivated post-High School graduates to serve the Lord by working to create a safe, clean, and welcoming environment at camp.

\$275 weekly stipend plus room & board

Learn more and apply at campcowen.org/join-the-team



**APPLICATIONS DUE
MARCH 4TH
INTERVIEWS
MARCH 18-19TH**

Camp Cowen 2022 Schedule

MAY 13-15	Summer Kick-Off	JULY 9	Senior Day (<i>graduated seniors</i>)
JUNE 3-5	Younger Midler (<i>2nd-4th grade</i>)	JULY 10-16	High School 2 (<i>9th-12th grade</i>)
JUNE 5-11	Junior 1 (<i>5th-6th grade</i>)	JULY 17-21	Raleigh/Rockcastle
JUNE 12-18	Junior High 1 (<i>7th-9th grade</i>)	JULY 22-25	Family Camp
JUNE 19-25	Junior 2 (<i>5th-6th grade</i>)	JULY 26-29	Older Midler (<i>3rd-5th grade</i>)
JUNE 26-JULY 2	High School 1 (<i>9th-12th grade</i>)	JULY 29-31	Camp Global
JULY 3-9	Junior High 2 (<i>7th-9th grade</i>)	AUGUST 5-7	AB Men's Camp

Microchurch Basics: Salt and Light

When I was a pastor in the local church, we would spend a great deal of time, money, resources and manpower trying to attract people to our church. I would justify our extravagant efforts and spending by saying, "Well if just one person finds Jesus, then it's all worth it." Granted, there is no price tag you can put on a soul coming to Jesus, but in all honesty, it was often a way for me to excuse the fact we were spending a lot and had precious little to show for it.

What if we had taken a much older and less expensive approach and reached not only that person, but many more? That approach is **microchurches**. The term might be new, but the concept was introduced and enthusiastically endorsed by Jesus in Matthew 5:13-16. Jesus wants us to be salt and light. Commenting on Jesus' words, Brian Sanders writes, "Both elements are small in proportion but significant in effect. Given the implication of salt (arresting decay) and light (illuminating dark places) ...it makes sense that God would want the church to be as dispersed as possible" (*Microchurches: A Smaller Way*).

When the local church disciples and sends out ordinary believers to be "salt and light" in places where God has already planted them (neighborhoods, coffee shops, gyms), microchurches emerge. It is happening right now in West Virginia and people who would never in a million years darken the doors of a local church are finding Jesus and growing in relationship with him through a microchurch.

When Rick Bergdoll was pastor at Petersburg First Baptist Church (Eastern), he recognized God working in the lives of four men: Shannon Earle, Frank Ketterman, Rodney Sites and Steve Zywicki. Pastor Rick disciplined and encouraged these men in finding God's calling on their lives. Then, Rick sent them out.



Rodney Sites (right) serves as the chaplain at the Petersburg Volunteer Fire Department.

While God used each one of these men, I want to focus on Rodney for a moment. God had already planted Rodney as a firefighter at the Petersburg Volunteer Fire Department. So, Rodney planted a microchurch right there. Check out his story on our website (wvbc.org). As you will see and hear, the gospel has taken root, is growing and lives are being changed.

So, let's invest in a plan that really works. Disciple believers and then disperse them to be salt and light in places where God has already placed them.

David Hulme,
Director of Outreach Ministries

Annual Bible Conference



"Life in the Wilderness" - The Book of Numbers

Featuring: Dr. Trent Eastman

Saturday, March 5, 2022

Parchment Valley Conference Center

Cost: \$25

The book of Numbers is the story of the Israelites' 40-year journey from Mount Sinai to the edge of the promised land. It is a story that is both instructional and descriptive of our own journey to the promised Kingdom of God. Join us for the 2022 Annual Bible Conference as we walk through the Book of Numbers and encounter the beauty of God's Word and find ourselves in its story.

***A 50% discount is available for WVBC pastors and their spouses. Course credit is also available for the Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies.**

Register online at wvbc.org



2021 Impact Report

Doing Christ's Work Together

CAMP COWEN



928 campers last summer
314 adult volunteers
39 youth accepted Christ
14 cabins were adopted and updated by 9 churches and 7 families

PARCHMENT VALLEY



70 Brothers' Keeper (BK) participants
50 projects completed during BK
49 individuals accepted Christ
111 individuals rededicated their life
20 individuals were baptized

BAPTIST CAMPUS MINISTRY



9 university campuses
225+ students involved in weekly discipleship
15 students served as interns in our family of churches through the **Ministry Internship Program**

CHURCHES



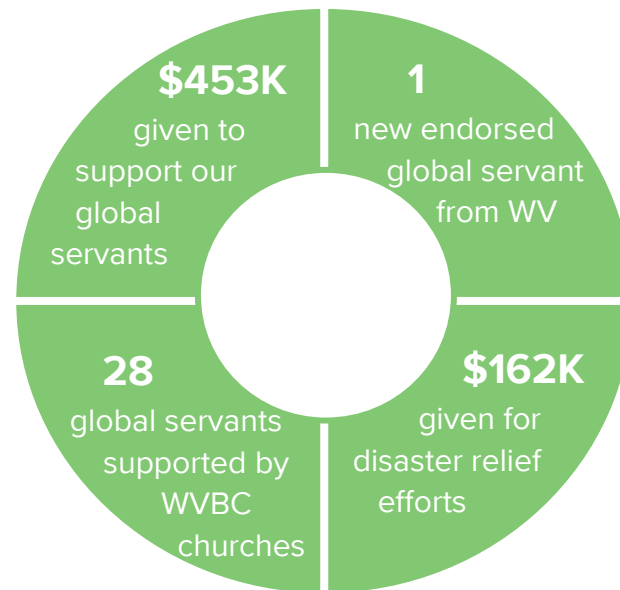
1 new church in the Teays Valley Association
21 new senior pastors in the last two years
6 pastors served as mentors and 9 participated as leaders in our **Mentoring for Pastoral Excellence Program**

EDUCATION

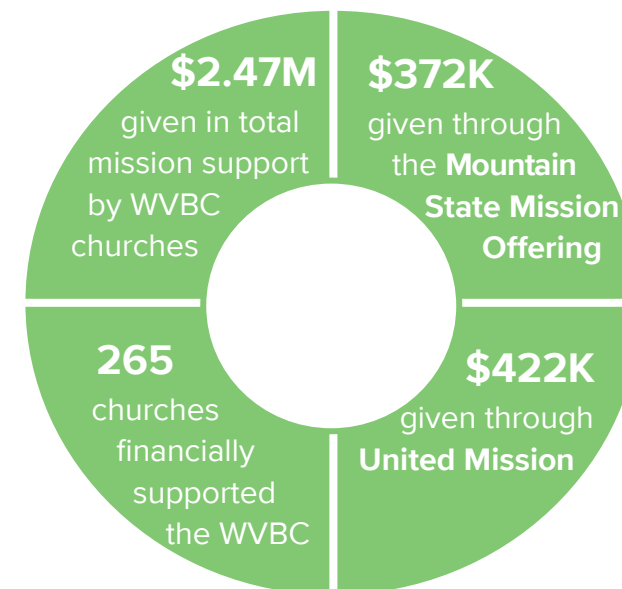
9 graduates from the **Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies**
127 students have taken classes this year
9 graduates from **WV's Palmer Theological Seminary**
28 students are currently enrolled in the program
14 girls received educational scholarships from the **American Baptist Women's Ministries of WV**
46 individuals received scholarships from the **WV Baptist Education Society**
\$250,000+ was distributed for educational assistance from the **Bowen Charitable Trust**



MISSIONS



WVBC SUPPORT



Hold the Rope

Rope Holders are critical to our mission of **doing Christ's work together.**

In 2022, we intend to carry out that mission more specifically by: **Intentionally Engaging Communities for Christ.**

In order to fund that mission, we are asking God to raise up **500 Rope Holders** to commit to \$20+ per month. Here are some ways Rope Holders have given over the past year:

- Give as an individual or family
- Give as a Sunday school class
- Give as a men's / women's group
- Give as a church

Will you commit to holding the rope?
Scan the QR code below to setup your recurring gift.



Individuals Holding the Rope at \$20+ per Month:



of Rope Holders:

134 Individuals

Total Amount Given:

\$49,439

The Ministry Internship Program is Making a Great Impact

*Written by Lance Linden
Pastor, Anchor Bible Church*

I thank God that He knows what we need when we need it. About three years ago, Anchor Bible Church (Little Kanawha) was planted in Glenville. For many years, we had ministered to people in our community and on the local college campus. We were initially a satellite ministry of Gassaway Baptist Church (Elk Valley) with the goal of becoming a self-sustaining ministry/church in the future. After about 12 years of serving part-time at both Anchor Ministries and Gassaway Baptist, we decided to plant Anchor Bible Church.

Planting a new church can be overwhelming because rarely do you have enough people to do the work that ministry requires. We had a small core of people who could carry out some of our ministry functions, but we needed more bodies to fill in areas we were lacking.

I leaped for joy inside when Mark McCloy, our Area Minister, shared with me about the Ministry Internship Program offered through the West Virginia Baptist Convention (WVBC).

As I looked around at some of the young people who were attending our church regularly, I saw people who had a heart for Jesus and wanted to serve Him more, but they needed direction and an opportunity. It clicked with me that the Ministry Internship Program was the answer to our current situation.

We have been participating in this program for three years now. We have been able to work with eight interns during that span, and we look forward to bringing on a couple more this spring. Our first intern was a college student who served our church for an entire summer. He helped us with evangelism, as well as secretarial responsibilities. Our next group of interns, which were also predominately college students, served our church during their spring semester. They helped in the areas of audio/visual, bookkeeping, maintenance, music, leading Bible studies and initiating outreach events. After several years of this now, I can testify that God is using this program to help young people grow, and He has also used this program to help grow our church.

I would like to thank the WVBC for being willing to think outside the box with this program. The Ministry Internship Program is a perfect example of how we are **doing Christ's work together.**

The Ministry Internship Program has been an incredible blessing to Anchor Bible Church. I believe it is one of the best ministries we have, and I hope we can continue to participate. If you are a church, big or small, I would encourage you to also consider participating in this program. Something or someone is going to grow!



Isaiah Sattelmair (center) served two years as a Ministry Intern.

If you would be interested in participating in this program, either as an intern or as a church, you can contact your area minister or Mark McCloy, who serves as the director for this program.

Mark can be emailed at mcclroy@wvbc.org.

You can also find more information on the WVBC's website:

wvbc.org

2022 National Men's Prayer Breakfast

Saturday, February 26th

Various locations

(Locations listed on the WVBC website)

Our annual Men's Prayer Breakfast is an important day for our American Baptist Men, where we invite other men from around our state to join us for a morning of breakfast, Bible Study and prayer.

Each year, we also collect an offering. This year's offering will go to support the **Ministry Internship Program**, which is a key component of the WVBC's leadership development initiative.



For more information, contact Frank Miller at 304-372-3675 or at miller@wvbc.org.

“I will praise you and testify about what you have done.” PSALM 22:22

“TESTIMONY”



AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING 2022

PLEASE GIVE TODAY! | www.abhms.org/afc

The Weirton Christian Center—Serving God and Community

*Written by Kim Weaver
Executive Director, Weirton Christian Center*

2021 has been good for the **Weirton Christian Center**, and a crucial part of that ‘goodness’ is our support from our West Virginia Baptist family! We truly appreciate your prayers, financial support and in-kind donations. With limited class size, we were able to serve 149 children in our preschool, afterschool and summer programs. Our COVID-19 disinfecting and mandatory masks have proven effective, only closing one week due to three staff members testing positive. As cases increase, we keep

praying we can stay open. Please keep our staff in your prayers, praying for those who are working with the kids now and for the two positions we need to fill.

The home where we foster children is also in need of prayer. We are currently looking for a Christian couple that would be willing to be our hosting/foster parents – although the house needs some major work. We are praying for the funding to complete those repairs. God always provides.

This past year brought about the completion of a couple wonderful projects: the Memorial Walkway (bricks are still available) and our new community garden, located across the street from the center. Our wonderful contractor made it all happen with the help of his foundation and other grants. We now have 50 garden beds to rent or work for the community food banks – and each of our classes has their own bed to learn to garden. Our first summer with Deronda’s Gardening Curriculum was so successful, and we know the interest will keep growing.

We also received a grant for our Leadership Journey Project, which will help us begin training middle school students in life skills, also giving them an opportunity to volunteer with younger children and then transition into a paid position at the center. This project has continued to evolve since it began four years ago.

Meanwhile, in addition to each of these projects, we still provide the children we serve with homework help, computer access, a meal and snack, daily Bible lessons and free transportation. We also fill emergency needs such as clothing, groceries for their families and more!

Thank you so much for making this all possible. We could not do what we do without you!



The Weirton Christian Center staff.

Northwest Area News

by Mark McCloy, Northwest Area Minister

What Makes a Good Church

Every year, our family reads Dr. Seuss's story, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. It has become part of our celebration. I love that book. There is a great quote, which comes right after the Grinch realizes he has failed to stop Christmas: "It came without ribbons! It came without tags! It came without packages, boxes or bags! Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before. 'Maybe Christmas,' he thought, 'doesn't come from a store. Maybe Christmas, perhaps, means a little bit more.'"

Each year, I am reminded that what makes it Christmas is Jesus – and the celebration of the birth of a special child who would change the world and change our lives. That is what we just celebrated. All of the things we have added to Christmas, although I enjoy many of them, are not really what it is about. What makes Christmas "good" is the same thing that makes it Christmas at all – Christ.

Recently, I was asked, "What makes a 'good' church?" It is an important question, especially because people so often get it wrong. It is not about buildings. It is not about swag. It is not about programs, or flowers or "brag." It's all about people. It's all about God. Living better through Jesus – it's not a façade. You make the difference. You are what it's about. God-seeking people – caring



Pictured is the antique kerosene lantern at Goose Creek Baptist (Harrisville), dated 1889, which is lit only at Christmas time.

Northeast Area News

Dr. C. Michael Hopkins Retires at Simpson Creek

Pastor Mike Hopkins, senior pastor at Simpson Creek Baptist (Union), retired on December 31, after 55 years in ministry. The last 30 years have been at Simpson Creek. Pastor Hopkins was called to Simpson Creek in April 1991. Previously, he had served three other churches.

Pastor Hopkins always challenged the congregation to stand firmly and uncompromisingly on God's Word. During his ministry at Simpson Creek, he was a friend to the Bridgeport community, a strong supporter of the West Virginia Baptist Convention and an advocate for missions at home and abroad.

In a letter announcing his retirement to the church, Pastor Hopkins wrote, "My greatest request is that you pray daily for our church. God has good things ahead if we trust His leading, stay faithful to His Word in unity and continue to be a beacon of good works in this community to bring glory to His name."



Pastor Mike Hopkins preaching at Simpson Creek Baptist Church.



Sabraton Hill Baptist Church is part of the Goshen Association.

New Hill and Sabraton Become Sabraton Hill Baptist Church

Two Goshen Association churches, New Hill and Sabraton, have merged to become one church. Due to the pandemic, New Hill had been unable to worship at a local school building. Sabraton graciously allowed New Hill to worship in their facility on Sunday afternoons. That is when merger discussions began. After months of prayer, discussion and planning, the two churches held their first service together as one church on October 17, 2021. The church's name is Sabraton Hill Baptist Church. Stephen Dodrill is pastor.

Southwest Area News

by *Evan Arkell, Southwest Area Minister*

New Things in the New Year

It is always exciting to sit and think about the good things that our Lord is doing in our lives and all around us—even in the challenging times that we have been facing. In fact, the apostle Paul tells us as much in Philippians 4:8. One of the best things that we can keep in the forefront of our minds is that God is still in control and He still has great plans for us.

However, to seek His plans, we need to allow Him to lead us. This is why it is so exciting for me to share that we have established a new **Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies** site at Mount Vernon Baptist Church (Teays Valley), which officially launched in January. I feel blessed to have the opportunity to give back and teach in this program. Over the first 12 twelve weeks of 2022, I will be teaching New Testament I and II.

I am excited about the Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies because of the great impact it had on my life. Of course it was great way to learn and grow in my faith, but what has had a greater impact on me were the relationships that were built along the way. When I initially enrolled in the program, I felt like God may be calling into ministry, and I can say with certainty that He affirmed that call through the experience of these classes.



Evan Arkell teaching at Mount Vernon Baptist Church.

If you are reading this, no matter where you are in the state (or even outside of the state), no matter your position, let me encourage you to take a step out of your comfort zone and go deeper with our Lord Jesus by enrolling in the Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies. You will be amazed at how God will use it to help you make a greater impact where you serve.

Southeast Area News

by *Jim Anderson, Southeast Area Minister*

A Time to Remember

On Sunday, December 12th, I was first blessed to be at Page Baptist Church (Fayette) for a morning to remember and celebrate the life of one of my fellow Bolivia Amigos, Alex Garrett, who tragically died of an ATV accident in March. On behalf of his family, from donations that were given throughout 2021, the church presented a check for the House of Hope in Bolivia for \$4,125 in his memory. For reference, this is the equivalent of around \$28,000 in Bolivian currency). We ended the service with the final words of a poem that his mother, Lisa Garrett, wrote:

“Alex finished his race on this earth...
Another reason to be thankful for Jesus’ birth,
Jesus paved the way
and Alex resides with him in Heaven today,
So be an Alex and open your heart’s door,
Reach out to help others like never before.”



(From left to right) Lisa Nelson, Mike Nelson, Greg O’Neal, Jim Anderson and Rick Hogan.



(From left to right) Sarah, Allison, Amy and Doc Adkins.

I then had the privilege of traveling to Beckley First Baptist Church (Greenbrier-Raleigh) to celebrate the ministry of Pastor Doc Adkins with a fellowship dinner. Doc retired at the end of the year. He has served in ministry since 1972, which includes his pastoring of the following West Virginia Baptist Convention churches: West Point Baptist (Greenbrier-Raleigh), Lacoma Baptist (Rockcastle), Rockcastle Baptist (Rockcastle) and Beckley First Baptist since March of 2011.

Doc, Sarah and daughters Amy and Allison Adkins, were present and wish to thank everyone for their kind words and good wishes for their future endeavors together as a family.

October 2021—January 2022

WILLIAM “BILL” ROY BOWERS, 79, of Wellsburg, died December 15, 2021. He was a member of the Weirton Heights Memorial Baptist Church (Panhandle), where he enjoyed playing the piano and the organ.

DENNY JENNINGS CRUISE, 91, of Huntington, died November 7, 2021. He was a member of Milton Baptist Church (Guyandotte), where he sang in the choir and was a mentor to many of the youth in the church.

MARY ELLEN DAVIS, 81, of Huntington, died on November 30, 2021. She was a longtime member, secretary and Sunday school teacher at Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church (Twelve Pole).

VIRGINIA GROVES DODRILL, 97, of Saint Albans, died December 6, 2021. She was a long-time member of Highlawn Baptist Church (Teays Valley), serving on the Deacon Board and Hospitality Committee.

DONALD G. ESTEP, 89, of South Charleston, died October 25, 2021. He was a member of Starcher Baptist Church (Kanawha Valley).

ROY WARREN HELMICK, 71, of Dawson, died November 30, 2021. He was a lifetime member of Meadow Grove Baptist Church (Hopewell), where he served as a deacon, Sunday school teacher, and youth leader.

GREGORY R. JIMISON, 68, of Ona, died November 20, 2021. He was a lifelong faithful member of Union Baptist Church (Guyandotte), where he was a Sunday school teacher, trustee and officiator of the sound booth.

REV. ERIC A. KEISTER, 69, of Rainelle, died January 1, 2022. He was a member of Hilton Village Baptist Church (Hopewell), where he was ordained in 2004 and served as pastor for more than 18 years.

AVIS DARE LINGER, 92, of Weston died November 23, 2021. She was an active member of Broad Run Baptist Church (Broad Run), where she served as a deaconess and Sunday school superintendent, and was active in Bible studies and in the missionary society of the church.

MAYSHA “ARLENE” STONE MELTON, 105, of Huntington, died November 20, 2021. She was a faithful member of Seventh Avenue Baptist Church (Guyandotte) for 68 years, where she taught Sunday school and was a member of the Helping Hand Circle.

IDA JOLEENE MINEAR, 83, of Grafton, died December 7, 2021. She was a member of Beulah Baptist Church (Union).

VIRGINIA C. OXLEY, 95, of Parkersburg, died December 5, 2021. She was a member of Lauckport Baptist Church (Parkersburg), where she was baptized in 1952. She served as deaconess, Sunday school teacher, held offices in the Ladies Mission Society, served on numerous committees at the church and sang in the choir.

GARY LEE PARSONS, 78, of Waverly, died November 13, 2021. He was a very active member of Pine Grove Baptist Church (Parkersburg) since 1993. He devoted a lot of his time to his church family, serving on the Property Team and on various boards and ministries with the church.

GUY C. PORTER, JR., 94, of Charleston, died November 16, 2021. He was a lifelong member of Charleston Baptist Temple (Kanawha Valley), serving many years on the property and finance committees and was currently serving as a trustee.

JOSEPH SMITH SNODERLY, 81, of Fairmont, died December 12, 2021. He was a faithful member of the Willow Tree Baptist Church (Fairmont) where he served as deacon and was also active in the American Baptist Men's ministry.

WILLIAM HOWARD SOMMERVILLE, 86 of Barboursville, died November 11, 2021. As a devoted Christian, Bill was a long-time member of Fifth Avenue Baptist Church (Guyandotte), where he was a member of the choir and the Homebuilders Sunday school class.

DANIEL ROY TOURNAY, Sr., 89, of Weirton, died December 2, 2021. He was a member of Weirton Heights Memorial Baptist Church (Panhandle), where he served as chairman of the Trustee Board and was also a member of the Board of Deacons. He was also a member of the American Baptist Men.

HERBERT J. “JERRY” WETZEL, 95, of Mannington, died November 18, 2021. He was a member of the First Baptist Church of Mannington (Fairmont), where he served as the financial secretary and taught Sunday school for many years.

Leadership Updates

REV. CHARLIE STARR to Bethany Baptist Church (Union) as pastor on 10/10/2021

REV. JEREMY NICHOLAS to Smoot Baptist Church (Hopewell) as pastor on 1/1/2022

REV. RICK WATSON to Beckley First Baptist Church (Greenbrier -Raleigh) as interim pastor on 1/9/2022

YOU ARE INVITED TO:

A webinar with
Dr. Tod Bolsinger

Sponsored by
Mission Northwest &
Great Commission Fellowship

Contact Todd McClure at
todd@wvbc.org
for the Zoom link

STRONG FLEXIBLE
LEADERSHIP

TEMPERED
RESILIENCE

Thursday, February 24th at 11:30 AM EST via Zoom



February 2022

FEBRUARY 1 – The ministry of Hopewell Baptist Church; Joe Lamm, pastor (Goshen Association)
FEBRUARY 2 – The ministry of Quiet Dell Baptist Church; Edward Carpenter, pastor (Fairmont Association)
FEBRUARY 3 – The ministry of Glen Falls Baptist Church; Bryant Bailey, pastor (Judson Association)
FEBRUARY 4 – The ministry of Strait Creek Baptist Church; Bernard “Dobby” Thrash, pastor (Harrisville Association)
FEBRUARY 5 – The Annual Training Event happening today at Parchment Valley
FEBRUARY 6 – The ministry of Petersburg First Baptist Church (Eastern Association)
FEBRUARY 7 – Connie Stewart, member of the WVBC Leadership Commission
FEBRUARY 8 – The ministry of Spencer First Baptist Church; Mark Wood, pastor (Good Hope Association)
FEBRUARY 9 – The ministry of Forks of Coal Baptist Church (Coal River Association)
FEBRUARY 10 – Harry Drake, member of the WVBC Outreach Commission
FEBRUARY 11 – The ministry of Ten Mile Baptist Church; Bradley Tenney, pastor (Broad Run Association)
FEBRUARY 12 – The ministry of Calvary Baptist Church; Archie Snedegar, interim pastor (Kanawha Valley Association)
FEBRUARY 13 – The ministry of Parkersburg First Baptist Church (Parkersburg Association)
FEBRUARY 14 – Jae Stockton, International Ministries Global Servant to Mexico
FEBRUARY 15 – Eliberto Juarez, International Ministries Global Servant to El Salvador
FEBRUARY 16 – Tan Coats, International Ministries Global Servant to Myanmar and Thailand
FEBRUARY 17 – The ministry of Anchor Bible Church; Lance Linden, pastor (Little Kanawha Association)
FEBRUARY 18 – The ministry of Providence Baptist Church; Roland Ramsey, pastor (Elk Valley Association)
FEBRUARY 19 – Caleb Villers, chair of the Camp Cowen Board and member of the WVBC Discipleship Commission
FEBRUARY 20 – The ministry of Athens Baptist Church; Timothy Mitchem, interim pastor (Greenbrier-Raleigh Association)
FEBRUARY 21 – Ricardo Mayol-Bracero, International Ministries Global Servant to Guatemala
FEBRUARY 22 – The ministry of Scarbro First Baptist Church; Kenny Smith, pastor (Fayette Association)
FEBRUARY 23 – Brian Morrison, trustee and member of the WVBC Stewardship Commission
FEBRUARY 24 – Michael Sisson, Executive Minister, WVBC
FEBRUARY 25 – Boyden Myers, International Ministries Global Servant (youth) to Mexico
FEBRUARY 26 – The AB Men’s Prayer Breakfasts happening around the state
FEBRUARY 27 – Senior High Convention happening this weekend at New Baptist Church, Huntington
FEBRUARY 28 – The ministry of Barboursville Baptist Church; Monty Foster, pastor (Guyandotte Association)

March 2022

MARCH 1 – Emerson Wu, International Ministries Global Servant to South and East Asia
MARCH 2 – Annie Dieselberg, International Ministries Global Servant to Thailand
MARCH 3 – David Parajon, International Ministries Global Servant to Nicaragua
MARCH 4 – Taku Longkumer, International Ministries Global Servant to India
MARCH 5 – Annual Bible Conference and the Spring Children’s Rally happening at Parchment Valley
MARCH 6 – The ministry of Providence Baptist Church; William Spears, pastor (Guyandotte)
MARCH 7 – The ministry of Wolf Run Baptist Church; Jim Higginson, pastor (Panhandle Association)
MARCH 8 – The ministry of South Charleston First Baptist Church; Jody Pistore, pastor (Kanawha Valley Association)
MARCH 9 – The ministry of Crum Missionary Baptist Church (Twelve Pole Association)
MARCH 10 – Nathan Reed, International Ministries Global Servant (youth) to Bolivia
MARCH 11 – The ministry of Philippi Baptist Church; Jonathan Villers, pastor (Union Association)
MARCH 12 – Samuel Blaylock, member of the WVBC Leadership Commission
MARCH 13 – The ministry of Beaver First Baptist Church; Steve Gibson, pastor (Greenbrier-Raleigh Association)
MARCH 14 – Jim Anderson, Southeast Area Minister, WVBC
MARCH 15 – The ministry of Concord Baptist Church; Justin Moran, pastor (Teays Valley Association)
MARCH 16 – The ministry of Maysel Baptist Church; Jim Hamrick, pastor (Elk Valley Association)
MARCH 17 – The ministry of Prosperity Baptist Church; Ken Heiney, pastor (Little Kanawha Association)
MARCH 18 – Tim Long, International Ministries Global Servant to Mexico
MARCH 19 – Rick Gutierrez, International Ministries Global Servant to South Africa
MARCH 20 – Mayra Giovanetti, International Ministries Global Servant to Iberoamerica and the Caribbean
MARCH 21 – Steve McCartney, Site Maintenance Manager at Camp Cowen
MARCH 22 – The ministry of Baileysville Baptist Church; Ronald Harvey, pastor (Rockcastle Association)
MARCH 23 – Rob Clevenger, member of the WVBC Discipleship Commission
MARCH 24 – Donna Snyder, assistant for Leadership Ministries, WVBC
MARCH 25 – The ministry of Mount Zion Baptist Church; Mary Beth McCloy, pastor (Parkersburg Association)
MARCH 26 – The ministry of Harmony Baptist Church; Jason Sleeth, pastor (Fairmont Association)
MARCH 27 – Libby Young, president of the WV American Baptist Women’s Ministries and member of the WVBC Outreach Commission
MARCH 28 – The ministry of Central Big Creek Baptist Church (Guyandotte Association)
MARCH 29 – The ministry of Webster Springs First Baptist Church; Eric Shawn Frame, pastor (Hopewell Association)
MARCH 30 – The ministry of Wallace First Baptist Church; Keith Swiger, pastor (Judson Association)
MARCH 31 – Rose Copenhaver, member of the WVBC Stewardship Commission

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

Upcoming Events

FEBRUARY

February 5
Annual Training Event
Parchment Valley Conference Center

February 25-27
Senior High Convention
New Baptist Church, Huntington

February 26
AB Men Prayer Breakfasts
Various locations around the state

MARCH

March 5
Annual Bible Conference
Parchment Valley Conference Center

March 5
Spring Children's Rally
Parchment Valley Conference Center

March 15
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies Digital Learning Initiative: Theology II (T-02)
Online

March 15
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies Digital Learning Initiative: Intro to Missions (Mod-03)
Online

March 26
Intentional Grandparenting Seminar
Vienna Baptist Church

APRIL

April 2
Intentional Grandparenting Seminar
Baptist Temple Fairmont

April 8-9
AB Men Work Party
Parchment Valley Conference Center

April 22-23
AB Men Work Party
Camp Cowen

April 23
Intentional Grandparenting Seminar
Emmanuel Baptist Church, Charleston

April 29
WVBC Executive Committee
Parchment Valley Conference Center

April 30
WVBC Executive Board and Commission Meetings
Parchment Valley Conference Center

MAY

May 2-4
Golden'eers Retreat
Parchment Valley Conference Center

May 15
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies Digital Learning Initiative: Communicating God's Word (M-01)
Online

May 15
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies Digital Learning Initiative: Worship and Music (E-03)
Online

Newsletter Submissions

Send submissions for *The West Virginia Baptist* to: thewvbaptist@wvbc.org or mail submissions to the West Virginia Baptist Convention, Attention: Todd McClure, P.O. Box 1019, Parkersburg, West Virginia, 26102. If you are submitting text, send typed copy only. 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.

The **West Virginia Baptist** is a newsletter of the West Virginia Baptist Convention, associated with the American Baptist Churches, USA.

PO Box 1019, Parkersburg, WV 26102;
304-422-6449, US Postage Paid at
Parkersburg, West Virginia

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YMPT

Youth Ministry Planning Team 2022-2023 Nominations Open

Do you know a high school sophomore or junior who loves the Lord and would thrive in ministry with their peers? Nominate them for YMPT at wvbc.org/ministries/youth.

Nominations and applications due March 30th.

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