

The West Virginia Baptist Newsletter

December 2022—January 2023

“The Church of Christ Will Never Die!”



Michael Beck speaking during our WVBC Annual Meeting.

“The church of Jesus Christ will never die!” That is the promise Michael Beck shared with the nearly 300 individuals that were present at our WVBC Annual Meeting. Michael served as this year’s keynote speaker, speaking from his experience as a pastor and Director of Re-Missioning for Fresh Expressions. A fresh expression is, in its simplest form, a pattern for believers to share their faith in their everyday lives. They are about getting creative in your church’s reach.

The term our WVBC Outreach Commission adopted to convey the same concept is the word “microchurches.” Others have referred to this as “hometown missionaries.” Regardless of the terminology used, the goal is the same: to equip our church members to intentionally engage the communities they are already part of with the hope and truth of the gospel.

Michael spoke during both of our Friday sessions, providing biblical support for and practical examples of church members engaging their communities for Christ. One church member has started a Bible study at a tattoo parlor; another is sharing Christ with their running club; yet another has built relationships and is sharing about Christ at a local dog park; and another is reaching people at a local restaurant. With each example, these are places where the church member was already spending their time – they already had community. The goal, therefore, simply became to learn how to **intentionally engage those communities for Christ**.

The entire Annual Meeting, including the workshops, was built around this theme. Each of the main sessions, in addition to Michael’s workshop, was recorded and is also available on our website. You can contact any of our staff to request Michael’s PowerPoint slides.



This year’s meeting was hosted by Summersville Baptist Church.

With such a high percentage of West Virginia’s population unchurched, we have to find ways to engage our communities with the gospel. The rapid secularization of our culture is quickly widening the gap between the church and our neighbors. And so, if we truly love our neighbors, then we must be willing to cross that gap to share the love of Christ with them. Gone are the days when they are going to come to us. We **MUST** go to them!

“**Intentionally Engaging Communities for Christ**” remains our theme for 2023. With 358 churches spread across our beautiful state, we have the ability to advance God’s kingdom in a powerful way. The question just simply becomes, “Are we willing?”

If you or your church are interested in more resources about how you can further equip your members to intentionally engage the communities they are already a part of for Christ, contact David Hulme at hulme@wvbc.org.

We want to express our gratitude to Summersville Baptist Church, who hosted us for this year’s Annual Meeting. We also want to thank Jonathan Turner, who preached the annual sermon; Monty Foster, who served as our worship leader; and Cari Pauley, who served as president and presided over the meeting. We are also thankful for each of our churches who sent delegates.

Go ahead and mark your calendars for next year’s Annual Meeting, our 158th, which will take place October 19-20 at South Parkersburg Baptist Church.

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

Thanks-living!

What if I were to tell you that thankfulness is not an optional courtesy or an annual activity, but a guiding principle for a follower of Jesus Christ. This appears to be the Apostle Paul's direction for the church of Thessalonica. "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). There is a difference between pausing to be thankful to God on the Thanksgiving holiday and living a life of thanksgiving unto God. In his letter to the church at Colossae, Paul wrote, "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Colossians 3:17).

One author captures it well:

How have we grown so deaf? How have we grown so immune to awesomeness? Why are we so reluctant to be staggered or thunderstruck? Perhaps the frequency of the miracles blinds us to their beauty. After all, what spice is there in springtime or a tree blossom? Don't the seasons come every year? Aren't there countless seashells just like this one? Bored, we say Ho-hum and replace the remarkable with the regular, the unbelievable with the anticipated. Science and statistics wave their unmagical wand across the face of life, squelching the oohs and aahs and replacing them with formulas and figures. Would you like to see Jesus? Do you dare be an eyewitness of His Majesty? Then rediscover amazement. **(God Came Near by Max Lucado)**

Recently, a sense of thanksgiving to God happened for me during the Annual Meeting of the WVBC Family at Summersville Baptist Church. I entered the sanctuary for the start of the first session and just stopped, taking time to listen to the joyous buzz of conversations and to observe the smiles and the sense of genuine community that filled the room as WVBC family members from across the state entered. In that moment, I knew God was present and moving among His people in a marvelous way. In that moment, I was reminded that we are all part of something much larger than ourselves. We are indeed the body of Christ, called to give witness of His grace and love demonstrated through the redemptive power of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are called to bring glory to God as we strive to do Christ's work together by intentionally engaging all communities with the Good News!

It is easy in this crazy mixed up world we live in to feel we have little to be thankful for. However, it is an opportunity to focus our thankfulness for the God we serve who can shine light and hope into the chaos. And He has called each of us, both individually and collectively, to be instruments in His mighty hands to do so. The encouragement for us is to change the idea of thanksgiving to the opportunity for thanks-living!

Blessings,
Mike

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<https://tithely.app.link/wvbc>

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DOING CHRIST'S WORK *together*

by Intentionally Engaging Communities for Christ

Jim Anderson Retires After 21 Years as Southeast Area Minister



Mike Sisson recognized Jim Anderson during this year's Annual Meeting.

After 21 years of serving our WVBC family as the Southeast Area Minister, Jim Anderson is retiring on December 31, 2022. As an area minister, Jim's responsibility included serving as a resource to 99 churches, made up of the following associations: Elk Valley, Fayette, Greenbrier-Raleigh, Hopewell and Rockcastle. Prior to joining Convention staff, he also previously served several WVBC churches and has nearly 50 years of preaching ministry.

Raised as a son of a bi-vocational pastor, Jim served in a bi-vocational role before joining WVBC staff. This has always been an important designation for him, as the majority of pastors in his area (and across our WVBC family) are bi-vocational. Ten years ago, as a way of honoring his late father, the WVBC began presenting the James Anderson, Sr. Bi-Vocational Pastor Award during our Annual Meeting. Jim and his sister, Mary Jo Slater, presented this year's award.

Jim has also long been passionate about missions. Initially introduced to the ministry of the House of Hope in Bolivia by founders Mario and Iris Morales, Jim has been leading annual trips for more than 15 years. Jim also serves as the president of Send the Light Fellowship, part of the Greenbrier-Raleigh Association, which has committed to monthly support to the House of Hope. Unable to lead a trip over the past couple of years due to COVID, Jim is planning on leading a trip in 2023.

In his retirement, Jim plans to join his wife, Susan, in the school system. Burdened by the lack of teachers, and burdened even more by the lack of positive male role models in the lives of young boys, Jim is planning to start working as a substitute teacher in the upcoming spring semester. He will also be busy with his farm, where he always promises to serve a cup of coffee to anyone who wants to come visit.

We are grateful for Jim's leadership over these past two decades and look forward to seeing how God continues to use him to change lives around the southeast part of the state!

The WVBC Welcomes Dana Gatewood as Southeast Area Minister

The Rev. Dr. Dana Gatewood will begin his role as Southeast Area Minister on December 1, 2022. Dana brings 38 years of pastoral experience to his role, having served the WVBC churches of Flemington Baptist Church, Mount Hope Baptist Temple, Rainelle First Baptist Church and, most recently, Summersville Baptist Church. His education background includes a B.A. in Christian Studies from Alderson Broaddus University, an M.Div. with languages from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, an M.A. in Counseling from Marshall University and a D.Min. in Marriage and Family Counseling from Eastern Theological Seminary.

Along with his experience and educational background, Dana brings a commitment to the local church, having faithfully served four local congregations and re-opening a boarded-up church in Thayer, WV, where he holds Sunday afternoon services for that small community. He brings a passion for mission work and actively participates in annual trips to India. Dana also has a commitment to disaster relief ministry and has taken teams to minister in disaster recovery efforts in both West Virginia and across the United States and Puerto Rico. Most importantly, he brings a love for the Lord!

Dana lives in Summersville with his wife, Jennifer, and they have two adult children, Bethany Callaway and Seth Gatewood.

Mike Sisson, Executive Minister of the WVBC, adds, "I have known Dana for over 20 years. He is a humble and gifted leader and I look forward to serving our WVBC family alongside him in the coming years." Please join us in welcoming Dana. He can be contacted at dana@wvbc.org.



Dana Gatewood and his wife, Jennifer.

Don Biram Installed as 117th President of the WVBC

It was a great celebration during the final session of our WVBC Annual Meeting as Don Biram, pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Charleston, was installed as the 117th president of our WVBC family. A graduate of both Alderson Broaddus College and Ashland Theological Seminary, Don has spent most of his ministerial career serving churches within the WVBC. He also credits the ministries of the WVBC for leading him to where he is today – he was called to pastoral ministry at Parchment Valley at the age of 16, he received scholarships from the WVBC to pay for most of his education and he continues to benefit from the ongoing education that comes through WVBC conferences and retreats. We are extremely excited to have him serving in this role.

Also installed during the meeting was Erich Reggi as first vice president, Roselee Copenhaver as second vice president, David Hoge as secretary and Todd McClure as treasurer. The 2023 slate of board members was also approved.

Please join us over the next year by praying for Don and these other officers as we seek to “intentionally engage communities for Christ.”



David Moutz, pastor of Oakwood Baptist Church, installs Don Biram and the other 2023 officers.

Congratulations Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies Graduates

“Study to show yourselves approved...”

Many of the modern English versions use a different translation of the word for “study” (such as “be diligent”). But I believe the idea is the same: work hard, be passionate, make effort (or study). In other words, dig down in yourself and find a way to please God.

Let us be honest, studying can be hard, especially when you are trying to balance family, work, life and ministry on top of your studies. Certainly, I believe that our graduates have done that. They have worked hard, persevered in spite of hardships and have completed their program of study.

Prior to the **Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies**, over 70% of our bi-vocational pastors had no training at all. Thankfully, those days are gone. Soon, and perhaps even already, our graduates will discover the desire to continue to learn, grow and realize this is just a step – though an important one – on the path toward being able to “accurately handle the word of truth.”

Congratulations to the following graduates and their families:



Several of the Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies graduates with Mark McCloy at the WVBC Annual Meeting.

2023 BWSCS Graduates:

Heather Dawn Camp, Diploma in Pastoral Ministry
 James Stanley Carr, Diploma in Pastoral Ministry
 Karla D. Carr, Diploma in Pastoral Ministry
 Brink J. Frost-Doner, Diploma in Pastoral Ministry
 David Kendall Hays, Diploma in Pastoral Ministry
 Jacob Patrick Higgins, Certificate in Teaching Ministry
 Charles Kent Hinzman, Diploma in Pastoral Ministry
 Darrell Gene Mayfield, Diploma in Pastoral Ministry
 John Stephen “Troy” Nesselrode, Diploma in Pastoral Ministry
 Joseph F. Rogers, Jr., Diploma in Pastoral Ministry

Upcoming BWSCS Courses:

Theology I (T-01)

Various in-person locations
 Begins January 10

Church History (H-01)

Online
 Begins January 15

Hospital Ministry (E-04)

Online
 Begins January 15

Theology II (T-02)

Various in-person locations
 Begins February 21

Caring for People (M-04)

Online
 Begins March 15

WV Baptist History (E-02)

Online
 Begins March 15

Women's Camp 2022: "Share Your Story"

Written by Claire Cottrill,
Pastor, LifeSpring Community Church

It has been three and a half years...

Following Women's Camp 2019, the next camp was scheduled for spring of 2020, and – maybe you heard – there was a worldwide event which caused the camp to be delayed. Due to COVID-19, Women's Camp was postponed from spring of 2020 to fall of 2020, and then it was postponed again to fall of 2021, and then it was postponed once more to 2022. This fall, Women's Camp was finally held! There were three and a half years between the last two Women's Camps. And it was worth the wait!

On the last weekend of September, 90 women from across the state gathered at Camp Cowen to develop relationships, worship, laugh and rest. Centered around the theme of "Share Your Story," women from multiple generations studied the significance of sharing our testimonies throughout our entire lives. We learned that we slay the dragon of evil when we share our stories because our testimonies activate the power of heaven on earth. No matter how we came to believe in Christ for our salvation, we all have a story to tell: we were once dead and we are now alive. But our stories don't end there. In the majestic and mundane, sorrows and celebrations, hurt and healing, God has been working, and we always have a story to share about His faithfulness.

Every minute we were at camp it rained. Initially, that may have caused a slight disappointment – being inside all weekend, unable to have outdoor campfire, no four square or worship at Vespers. However, if there's one thing we now know, it is the fact that the best place to be is together. After years of cancellations and separations, perhaps it was God's grace that kept us all



Claire Cottrill (second from left) with a group of other ladies at Women's Camp 2022.

inside, where together, conversation flowed, and laughs, singing, dancing and coffee abounded.

As the rain poured outside, I sensed the Spirit say, "How much more is His grace pouring down on you?" For me, His grace in that weekend was discovered in the relationships that were developed with incredible women. Much has changed in the three and a half years since the last camp, but one thing remains: His love and grace toward us. For that, we have a beautiful story to share.

We hope you will join us April 14-16, 2023 at Camp Cowen for Women's Camp 2023.

Camp Cowen 2023 Schedule

| | |
|---|--|
| <u>MARCH 17-18</u> Staff Interviews | <u>JUNE 25- JULY 1</u> Junior 2 (grades 5-6) |
| <u>APRIL 14-16</u> Women's Camp | <u>JULY 2-8</u> High School 1 (grades 9-12) |
| <u>APRIL 20-22</u> Musician Summit | <u>JULY 9-15</u> Junior High 2 (grades 7-9) |
| <u>APRIL 23</u> Cowen Sunday | <u>JULY 15</u> Senior Day (graduated seniors) |
| <u>APRIL 28-29</u> AB Men's Work Party | <u>JULY 16-22</u> High School 2 (grades 9-12) |
| <u>MAY 12-13</u> Summer Kick-Off | <u>JULY 23-26</u> Older Midler (grades 3-5) |
| <u>JUNE 2-4</u> Younger Midler (grades 2-4) | <u>JULY 28-31</u> Family Camp |
| <u>JUNE 6-9</u> Leaders in Training | <u>JULY 31-AUG. 4</u> Raleigh Rockcastle |
| <u>JUNE 11-17</u> Junior 1 (grades 5-6) | <u>AUGUST 4-6</u> AB Men & Boys Camp |
| <u>JUNE 18-24</u> Junior High 1 (grades 7-9) | <u>AUGUST 11-12</u> Camp Global |

For more information on camps, events, and registration, visit campcowen.org

Upcoming Commissioning Service for Sarah McCloy

It was less than a year ago that Sarah McCloy was endorsed as our 42nd missionary from our WVBC family to serve with International Ministries. Called to serve in Japan, Sarah will serve as a part-time instructor at Shokei University, where she will teach English and work with the chaplaincy department. She will also serve as an assistant pastor at Shokei Baptist Church.

For the past year, Sarah has been traveling around the state and visiting other regions as she raises financial support. Thanks in large part to the individuals and churches of our WVBC family, Sarah has already reached the point of where she can begin planning her commissioning service!

International Ministries requires all missionaries to raise the entirety of their support prior to being commissioned for their first term. A term is considered five years (four years in-country and one year on home assignment). As a missionary preparing for her first term, Sarah had to raise funds for both one-time startup expenses and her ongoing monthly support (which includes salary, ministry costs, etc.). Her one-time costs were fully funded in only a few months. Her ongoing monthly support is nearing 90% in funding.

In addition to raising support, Sarah has had to go through extensive training as she prepares to serve overseas. She recently completed her security training, which began the day after she arrived home from her vision trip to Japan. After she moves to Japan, she will also be spending at least the first year of her term in language study. This is an important requirement for all missionaries who serve with International Ministries.

Everyone is invited to Sarah's commissioning service, which is scheduled to take place in the evening of Sunday, March 5th at Parchment Valley Conference Center. Specific time and details will soon follow.



In November, Sarah was finally able to complete her vision trip to Japan and is pictured above visiting an English class in Shokei Gakuin.

For those interested in meeting with Sarah prior to her departure, she no longer has any Sunday morning availability. We encourage you to consider evening gatherings or a mid-week lunch meeting. Sarah can be contacted at smccloy@internationalministries.org.



The **Missionary Internship Program** places individuals alongside one of our long-term missionary partners for a 3-6 week internship based off their interests and geographical preferences. We will assist individuals with raising their own support, and they will also participate in several training events on the topics of mission theology, culture, conflict resolution, and much more.

The application deadline is January 31, 2023.

Apply at www.wvbc.org

Ministry Internship Program

The Ministry Internship Program provides individuals with the opportunity to explore their long-term calling to ministry by giving them an opportunity to serve within our family of churches and placing them under the guidance of a mentor for a summer-long internship. Internships are customizable to the interests of the applicant, but include pastoral ministry, youth ministry, worship ministry, technology, or intercultural ministry.

Apply now at wvbc.org



ABMen's New Scholarship Program

The **American Baptist Men (ABMen) of WV** are excited to announce the start of their annual scholarship program, designed for young men of WVBC churches who will be attending college or technical schools after high school graduation. The scholarships will be awarded annually with the amounts determined by the ABMen Scholarship Review Board, based on available funds. Applicants can apply annually between January 1st and February 28th. The scholarship will be for the upcoming fall semester and selectees need to re-apply annually. To learn more, visit: <https://www.wvbc.org/ministries/auxiliaries/american-baptist-men-wv/>.



2021 Union Association National Men's Prayer Breakfast

National Men's Prayer Breakfast February 25th, 2023



2019 Judson Association National Men's Prayer Breakfast

In person locations throughout our state are now being sought for this important day in the American Baptist Men's ministry year; a time for our WVBC men to gather together for prayer and Bible study, while enjoying breakfast with friends.

This year's prayer breakfast offering will support the ABMen's Scholarship Fund. This fund provides assistance to our next generation of leaders to further their education.

If your church is interested in hosting a breakfast on this date, contact Tracie Emerick at temerick@wvbc.org. All prayer breakfast locations will be communicated out to our larger WVBC family via email and our website.

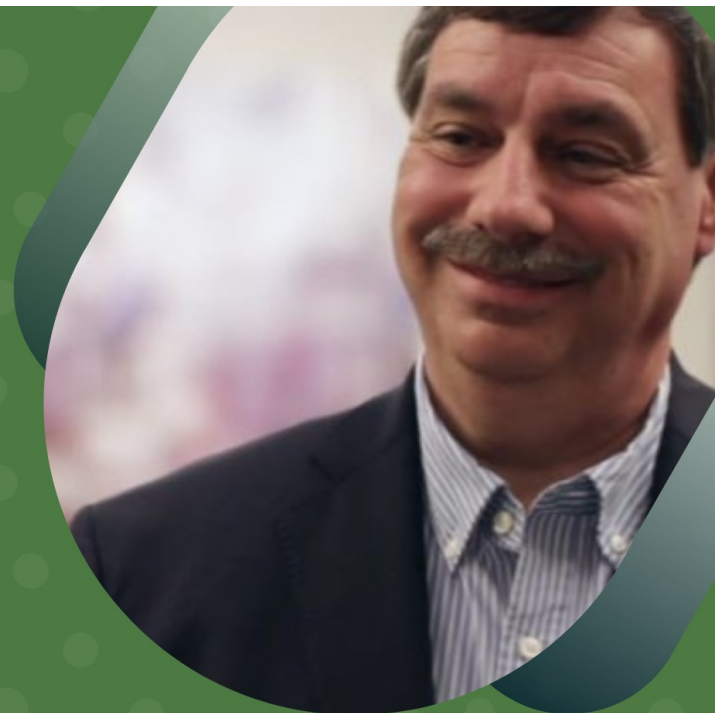
2023 ANNUAL BIBLE CONFERENCE

Saturday, March 4th
Parchment Valley Conference Center

THE BOOK OF GALATIANS: THE GOSPEL FOR ALL
FEATURING: DR. LEE SPITZER

COST: \$25 (50% OFF FOR PASTORS AND THEIR SPOUSE)

Register now at www.wvbc.org






DOING CHRIST'S WORK *together*
 by Intentionally Engaging Communities for Christ





West Virginia
Baptist Convention

Training Annual Event

Saturday, February 4, 2023

Parchment Valley Conference Center

REGISTRATION FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Email Address: _____

Church: _____

***Note:** Students in the General Studies program of the Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies are eligible to receive course credit for participating in two workshops of their choice.

Request BWSCS Course Credit

REGISTRATION FEE:

- \$25 Annual Training Event Fee
- \$27 Additional Fee for Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies (BWSCS)
- \$37 Additional Fee for BWSCS Couple

EARLY REGISTRATION ENDS FRIDAY, JANUARY 27

Registrations received after January 27 will not include lunch.

Make checks payable and mail to:
West Virginia Baptist Convention
P.O. Box 1019
Parkersburg, WV, 26102

Or register online at: www.wvbc.org

WORKSHOP LIST

Select one morning and afternoon workshop:

Morning Workshops (10:15 AM)

- Short-Term Mission Trip Leader Training (Part 1)
- The 21st Century Christian
- Preventing Church Hurt
- Dealing with Addiction: Uprooting Anger
- Archiving: Preserving the Past
- Church Clerks
- Church Trustees
- How to Be Successful with After School Programs

Afternoon Workshops (1:00 PM)

- Short-Term Mission Trip Leader Training (Part 2)
- The Hope of the Rural Church
- Healing and Helping
- Church Security
- Church Treasurers and Financial Secretaries
- Deacons
- Walk With Me: The Journey of Walking with Others

SCHEDULE

| | |
|----------|-------------------------|
| 9:00 AM | Registration– Hill Hall |
| 9:30 AM | Worship– Hill Hall |
| 10:15 AM | Morning Workshops |
| Noon | Lunch |
| 1:00 PM | Afternoon Workshops |
| 2:30 PM | Dismissal |

Fall Children's Rally: The Sweet Life

Written by Emily Fordyce,
Member of Children's Rally Leadership Team

The Fall Children's Rally took place on November 5th, 2022, at Parchment Valley Conference Center. It was a warm, beautiful day as 278 children and adults from 24 churches came together, eager to learn more about Jesus and His Word.

This year's theme was "The Sweet Life," accompanied by the theme verse from Psalm 34:8: "Taste and see that the Lord is good!" The theme was meant to encourage the children that it is sweet to trust God.

Overall, the children enjoyed the lessons led by our great teachers, had fun worshipping the Lord through singing and fellowshiped with other children over lunch. Every Children's Rally also encourages a mission focus which helps the children learn how important it is to help others. This year's focus was collecting supplies for the children at the Weirton Christian Center. In total, there were over 600 items donated, including toiletries, towels, flashlights, bug spray and sunscreen.

Children's Rallies are for elementary-aged students and always take place at Parchment Valley in both the fall and spring. **The Spring Children's Rally will be held March 4th, 2023.** We hope you will join us.



Children at the Fall Children's Rally learning about "The Sweet Life."

Junior High Convention Recap



Elliott Gregory speaking at Junior High Convention.

It was a joy to gather with 13 churches for Junior High Convention, hosted by Saint Albans First Baptist Church. Our speaker, Elliott Gregory, challenged students with the hope of the gospel, the foundation of Jesus Christ, the joy of fellowship with fellow Christians and the call to action as a community of believers! Kyle Huffman Worship taught students the purpose of worship and led us in powerful times of worship through song. The Youth Ministry Planning Team led engaging activities and discussion groups, making Junior High Convention a fun and impactful weekend for all.

Youth leaders wanting to stay up-to-date on state youth ministry events can join our text group by texting @WVBCYPS to 81010 to receive promotion updates straight to your phone!

SENIOR HIGH CONVENTION

February 24-26, 2023

Grades 9-12

South Parkersburg Baptist Church



Hebrews 10:23-25

register at wvbc.org/ministries/youth

Northwest Area News

by *Mark McCloy, Northwest Area Minister*

“Here am I, send me!” Perhaps Isaiah’s most important prayer, and certainly a life changing one, still speaks out to the part of us that wants to serve and the part of us that wants to go. Over forty years ago, I prayed that prayer one night while on the Baptist Campus Ministry Fall Retreat at Parchment Valley. Within a week, I found myself standing behind a pulpit, preaching my first ever sermon outside of my home church. It would jumpstart a lifetime of ministry for me. That prayer changed my life, and it is still being prayed and still changing lives.

The recent two months have seen a lot of activity on the leadership front. In my area alone, five leaders have been working their way through the ordination process, with three having been ordained. The other two continue to labor in the process.

Michael Rubin is the senior pastor of Pine Grove Baptist Church and was ordained on October 9th. He has served Pine Grove as both youth pastor and interim pastor prior to his current position. He came out of the ministry of Crab Orchard Baptist and is a graduate of the Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies with a diploma in the Pastoral Ministry track.

Sarah McCloy was ordained by Mount Zion Baptist Church on October 23rd. She is preparing to serve in Japan as a missionary with International Ministries. Sarah is a graduate of Gardner Webb Divinity School with a Master of Divinity in Pastoral Care, and Houghton College with a BA in International Development and Theology. She served Goose Creek Baptist as interim pastor and previously served as an intern with Milton Baptist Church. She is preparing to move to Japan to begin her service in March of 2023.



Michael Rubin celebrating his ordination with family.

Judy Bartlett-Tomes is the pastor of Weirton First Baptist Church and was ordained on November 13th. She previously served in a staff position at Weirton Heights Memorial Baptist Church and was the interim pastor at First Baptist before assuming her current role. She is a graduate of the Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies and is currently enrolled in the West Virginia extension of Palmer Theological Seminary, working on her Master of Divinity degree.

Southwest Area News

by *Evan Arkell, Southwest Area Minister*



The last four presidents of our WVBC family: Lee Boso (top left), Ryan Stoner (top right), Cari Pauley (bottom left) and Don Biram (bottom right).

It is good to be back! After having to be on medical leave for nearly three months, I was able to return to the work I love at the beginning of October. I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank each of you for your prayers and support during that time. They were certainly felt. God is good!

My southwest area continues to be blessed when it comes to folks volunteering to serve our WVBC family. Particularly in the role of president, over the last three years, they have all been from my area: Lee Boso, (New Baptist Church), Ryan Stoner (Pea Ridge Baptist Church) and Cari Pauley (Forks of Coal Missionary Baptist Church). Continuing the trend, at this year’s Annual Meeting, Cari passed the gavel to Don Biram (Emmanuel Baptist Church, Charleston), who will serve for the next year and then pass it to Erich Reggi (Hurricane First Baptist Church). We also have dozens of other individuals serving in other ways!

It was also a blessing for me to get to visit Beulah Ann Missionary Baptist Church on the Sunday before Veteran’s Day to celebrate the sacrifices these brave veterans have made for freedom in our country. Each veteran that was present – I believe I counted 14 – was presented with an Americana quilt that was handmade by several ladies from within the church.

As we move forward into the Christmas season and into the new year of 2023, I pray that your ministries be blessed by our Lord and that you seek to do the ministries that God is already blessing around us. Grace and peace Brothers and Sisters!

Northeast Area News

by David Hulme, Northeast Area Minister

Ethan Starcher Ordained at FBC Mannington

Pastor Ethan Starcher was ordained to the Gospel Ministry on Sunday, September 25, at Mannington First Baptist Church. Pastor David Bush, Crab Orchard Baptist Church, delivered the Ordination Sermon and Charge to the Candidate. Ethan's father, Pastor Brad Starcher, Mount Jackson Baptist Church, delivered the Charge to the Church. David Hulme, NE Area Minister, led the Ordination Prayer, Laying on of Hands and Signing of the Covenant and Code of Ethics. A lunch followed the service in the fellowship hall.



David Hulme congratulating Ethan Starcher on his ordination.

Church Health Check-Up Assessment Available



We are pleased to announce that the WVBC Outreach Commission has partnered with Renew Transformational Strategies (RTS) to make available "Church Health Check-up: First Steps to Re-missioning." This partnership makes available an in-depth assessment process for churches who would like to explore areas where they might improve organizational health. RTS takes a positive approach of first evaluating a church's spiritual growth, outward focus, congregational relationships, mission and vision, lay leadership, openness to change, facility and finances and administrative structure. After the assessment is complete, the RTS team will generate a report and meet with church leaders to discuss the results, and if the church desires, talk about possible next steps. **For more information, contact your Area Minister or Ed Rogers at ed@renewts.com.**

Southeast Area News

by Jim Anderson, Southeast Area Minister

During the WVBC Annual Meeting, I along with my sister, Mary Jo Slater, had the honor and pleasure to present our father's award to Jerry Cook, pastor of Oceana First Baptist Church.



Jim Anderson presenting Jerry Cook with award.

Jerry received his BA degree in Education from Concord College and later his MA degree in counseling from COGS. During this time, he answered the call to become pastor at Wharton Missionary Baptist Church and later Mount Zion Baptist Church, Mineral Wells. He returned to his hometown of Oceana to help care for his mother and became pastor at Oceana First Baptist Church, where he is beginning his 39th year.

During this time, Jerry became a teacher and later assistant principal at Baileysville Elementary School, where he worked for 28 years until his retirement. After retiring from teaching, Jerry continued to serve his community while employed by Evans Funeral Home in Oceana.

While serving as a teacher and pastor, Jerry also became the first dean of the WVBC's Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies within the Rockcastle Baptist Association. He also served as the vice-moderator of the association and the song leader during their annual choir festival.

Jerry has one daughter, two stepsons, six grandchildren and one great-grandson. He also, in his own words, is "happily married to his sweetheart, Linda."

Jerry simply says his goal in the later years of his life is to be a blessing in service to our Lord, his family and to his church family.

REV. J. CHESTER BIRD, 73, of Charleston, died on October 7, 2022. He pastored several WVBC churches and was a faithful member of Kanawha City Baptist Church. He was also part of the ordination committee for the Kanawha Valley Association.

ROGER L. BURR, 75, died on October 8, 2022. He was a member of Salem Baptist Church, where he served as a deacon, worship leader and treasurer.

DR. ROBERT V. DIGMAN, 92, of Philippi, died on September 7, 2022. He was a member of Philippi Baptist Church and served Alderson Broaddus University for more than 35 years.

THOMAS LIONEL FAIR, of Victor, died on October 3, 2022. He was a member of Hopewell Baptist Church, where he served as a Sunday School teacher and youth leader.

VELLNALEE GUM, 94, of Parkersburg, died on September 9, 2022. She was a member of North Parkersburg Baptist Church, where she was a deaconess and a member of the Heavenly Helper team that prepared the church for services each week.

LIONEL KOZEE, 76, of Hurricane, died on September 20, 2022. He was a member of Hurricane First Baptist Church, where he served as a deacon. He also previously served as the president (1996-1997) of the WVBC.

FERN LUTTRELL, 88, died on September 22, 2022. She was a member of Morgantown First Baptist Church, where she was active in their American Baptist Women's Ministries and held several church offices.

BETTY JO NEIL, 98, of DuPont City, died on October 4, 2022. She was a member of Judson Baptist Church, Belle, where she was a Sunday School and Vacation Bible School teacher and a faithful member of the Lydia Class.

KIM DAVID PATRICK, 66, of Cross Lanes, died on August 31, 2022. He was a member of Saint Albans First Baptist Church, where he served as a deacon.

MARY ANNE "MARYANNE" POSTLETHWAIT, 69, of Jane Lew, died on October 9, 2022. She was a member of Weston First Baptist Church, where she served as a deacon and member of the church finance committee, was part of the church prayer group and helped with the "Snackpack Ministry." She also served as a trustee (2018-2021) with the WVBC.

BOBBIE JEAN SPANLGER, 95, died on August 17, 2022. She was a member of Peterstown Missionary Baptist Church.

WILSON D. WATSON, 90, died on October 12, 2022. He was a member of Harrisville Baptist Church, where he served as Sunday School superintendent, trustee, choir member and a deacon.

ELIZABETH PEARL (SMITH) WITHERS, 87, of Beaver, died on September 16, 2022. She was a member of Philippi Baptist Church, where she was active in the American Baptist Women's Ministries, served as the Sunday School superintendent and was a member of the Mary Martha Sunday School class.

DAVID LAWRENCE WITHERS, 66, of Proctorville, OH, died on September 21, 2022. He was a member of Fifth Avenue Baptist Church, where he participated in several mission trips. He was also extremely active at Camp Cowen, where he served many years as a camp counselor and dedicated much of his time and resources to upgrading the electrical work of camp.

Leadership Updates

Mark Houser to Parkersburg First Baptist Church (Parkersburg) as interim pastor 9/4/2022

Scott McClure to Clarksburg Baptist Church (Union) as associate pastor 9/1/2022

Richard Pursley to Genesis Fellowship (Kanawha Valley) as pastor 9/18/2022

Sean Wegener to Simpson Creek Baptist Church (Union) as pastor 9/18/2022

MINISTRY EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Senior Pastor (Part-Time)

Location: Huntington area

Pastor to Student Ministries (Full-Time)

Location: Parkersburg area

Music Director (Part-Time)

Location: Charleston area

Youth and Family Life Minister (Full-Time)

Location: Huntington area

Maintenance Director at Camp Cowen

Location: Camp Cowen

Minister to Youth (Part-Time)

Location: Ripley area

Minister to Children (Part-Time)

Location: Ripley area

Minister to Children (Part-Time)

Location: Parkersburg area

Family Ministry Position (Part-Time)

Location: Charleston area

Church Pianist (Part-Time)

Location: Charleston area

To learn more about any of the above positions, or to see a list of our most current opportunities, visit wvbc.org.

Prayer Calendars

December 2022

DECEMBER 1 – Mark Shaffer, AB Men President and member of the WVBC Outreach Commission
DECEMBER 2 – Ray Schellinger, International Ministries Global Consultant
DECEMBER 3 – The ministry of Independence Baptist Church; Carl Trickett, pastor (Goshen Association)
DECEMBER 4 – The ministry of Morrisvale Baptist Church; Ron Scott, pastor (Coal River Association)
DECEMBER 5 – The ministry of North Fork Baptist Church; Darrell Farley, pastor (Harrisville Association)
DECEMBER 6 – The ministry of Gilboa Baptist Church; Larry Greathouse, pastor (Good Hope Association)
DECEMBER 7 – The ministry of North Hills Baptist Church; Michael Harper, pastor (Kanawha Valley Association)
DECEMBER 8 – David Hulme, Northeast Area Minister, WVBC
DECEMBER 9 – The ministry of Sardis Baptist Church; Garry Layfield, pastor (Judson Association)
DECEMBER 10 – Ivy Wu, International Ministries Global Servant to Asia
DECEMBER 11 – Dan Londeree, member of the WVBC Stewardship Commission
DECEMBER 12 – The ministry of Sweet Springs Baptist Church (Greenbrier-Raleigh Association)
DECEMBER 13 – The ministry of Leading Creek Baptist Church; George Jones, pastor (Little Kanawha Association)
DECEMBER 15 – Bill Clemmer, International Ministries Global Servant to the Democratic Republic of the Congo
DECEMBER 16 – The ministry of Orlando Baptist Church (Elk Valley Association)
DECEMBER 17 – Sarah Chetti, International Ministries Global Servant to Lebanon
DECEMBER 18 – The ministry of Dorcas Baptist Church; Steve Davis, pastor (Eastern Association)
DECEMBER 19 – Don Biram, WVBC President and member of the WVBC Discipleship Commission
DECEMBER 20 – The ministry of New Life Ministries; Charles Chipps, pastor (Fairmont Association)
DECEMBER 21 – Kevin Sions, Northern Director of Baptist Campus Ministry, WVU
DECEMBER 22 – JD Reed, International Ministries Global Servant to Bolivia
DECEMBER 23 – The ministry of Gentry Missionary Baptist Church; Lewis Sanson, pastor (Fayette Association)
DECEMBER 24 – Our families as we gather together to celebrate the birth of our Savior
DECEMBER 25 – Prayer of thanksgiving for a Savior that was born to save the world
DECEMBER 26 – The ministry of Indian Fork Baptist Church; Stanley Herrod, pastor (Broad Run Association)
DECEMBER 27 – Koreen Villers, Director of Discipleship Ministries, WVBC
DECEMBER 28 – David Sagar, International Ministries Global Servant to India
DECEMBER 29 – The ministry of Good Hope Baptist Church; Chad Clark, pastor (Guyandotte Association)
DECEMBER 30 – Lori Mann, International Ministries Global Servant to Southeast Asia
DECEMBER 31 – Connie Stewart, member of the WVBC Leadership Commission

January 2023

JANUARY 1 – Pray for a blessed New Year
JANUARY 2 – The ministry of Smithville Baptist Church (Harrisville Association)
JANUARY 3 – Zola Miller, member of the WVBC Outreach Commission
JANUARY 4 – The ministry of Kenova First Baptist Church; Kevin Hay, pastor (Twelve Pole Association)
JANUARY 5 – Mark Juanes, International Ministries Global Servant to Thailand
JANUARY 6 – The ministry of Fairview Baptist Church; Charles Drake, pastor (Greenbrier-Raleigh Association)
JANUARY 7 – The WVBC Executive Board meeting today at Parchment Valley
JANUARY 8 – Melanie Baggao, International Ministries Global Servant to Lebanon
JANUARY 9 – The ministry of New Martinsville First Baptist Church; Jeff Musgrave, pastor (Panhandle Association)
JANUARY 10 – Kyle Witmer, International Ministries Global Servant to Thailand
JANUARY 11 – Ann Borquist, International Ministries Global Servant to Southeast Asia and Japan
JANUARY 12 – The ministry of New Baptist Church; Trent Eastman, pastor (Guyandotte Association)
JANUARY 13 – Victoria Ramey, WVBC Trustee and member of the WVBC Stewardship Commission
JANUARY 14 – The ministry of New Found Freedom Baptist Church; Lloyd Stewart, pastor (Little Kanawha Association)
JANUARY 15 – The ministry of Black Eagle Baptist Church; Jeffrey Elkins, pastor (Rockcastle Association)
JANUARY 16 – Allan Copenhaver, chair of the Parchment Valley Conference Center Board and member of the WVBC Discipleship Commission
JANUARY 17 – The ministry of Williamson First Baptist Church; Jarrod Belcher, pastor (Logan-Mingo Association)
JANUARY 18 – The ministry of Mount Carmel Baptist Church; Leon Brown, pastor (Union Association)
JANUARY 19 – The ministry of Handley Baptist Church; James “Cook” Baldwin, pastor (Kanawha Valley Association)
JANUARY 20 – Andrea Fling, Bookkeeper, WVBC
JANUARY 21 – The ministry of Ravenswood First Baptist Church; Toby Wagoner, pastor (Good Hope Association)
JANUARY 22 – Joseph Vo, International Ministries Global Servant to Vietnam
JANUARY 23 – The ministry of Bethlehem Baptist Church; Randy Landes, pastor (Judson Association)
JANUARY 24 – The ministry of Albright Baptist Church; Randall Joe Lamm, pastor (Goshen Association)
JANUARY 25 – The ministry of Murphytown Baptist Church; Jason Hickman, pastor (Parkersburg Association)
JANUARY 26 – Carmella Jones, International Ministries Global Servant to Hungary
JANUARY 27 – Evan Arkell, Southwest Area Minister, WVBC
JANUARY 28 – The ministry of Bethel Baptist Church; Todd Godby, pastor (Teays Valley Association)
JANUARY 29 – Karla Carr, member of the WVBC Leadership Commission
JANUARY 30 – Faye Carol Yarbrough, International Ministries Global Servant to South Africa
JANUARY 31 – The ministry of Rainelle First Baptist Church; Jason Marshall, pastor (Hopewell Association)

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

Upcoming Events

JANUARY

January 6
WVBC Executive Committee
Parchment Valley Conference Center

January 7
WVBC Executive Board
Parchment Valley Conference Center

January 10
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Theology I (T-01)
Various locations

January 15
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies Digital Learning Initiative: Church History (H-01)
Online

January 15
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies Digital Learning Initiative: Hospital Ministry (E-04)
Online

MARCH

March 3
Pastor4Pastors Event
Parchment Valley Conference Center

March 4
Annual Bible Conference
Parchment Valley Conference Center

March 4
Spring Children's Rally
Parchment Valley Conference Center

March 15
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies Digital Learning Initiative: Caring for People (M-04)
Online

March 15
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies Digital Learning Initiative: WV Baptist History (E-02)
Online

FEBRUARY

February 4
Annual Training Event
Parchment Valley Conference Center

February 21
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Theology II (T-02)
Various locations

February 24-26
Senior High Convention
South Parkersburg Baptist Church

February 25
AB Men Prayer Breakfasts
Various locations

APRIL

April 14-15
AB Men Work Party
Parchment Valley Conference Center

April 14-16
Women's Camp
Camp Cowen

April 20-22
Musicians Summit
Camp Cowen

April 22
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Hospital Ministry (E-04)
Parchment Valley Conference Center

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.

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Executive Minister: Dr. Michael Sisson

Editor/Layout: Mr. Todd McClure

Assistant Editor: Mrs. Ginny Prunty

West Virginia Baptist Convention
P.O. Box 1019
Parkersburg, WV 26102-1019

For all they've done for you:
Pray. Listen. Baptize. Marry.
Direct. Lead. Bury. Comfort.
Counsel. Mourn. Welcome.
Intercede. Guide. Celebrate.
Enlighten. Give to RMMO.

The Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering takes place on December 4th. Please remember those who have served American Baptist Churches so unselfishly.

RMMO2022
I thank my God every time I remember you. Phil.1:3

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