

June—July 2023

Engaging Mental Health with Hope Conference



Earlier this spring, the WVBC held the **Engaging Mental Health with Hope Conference** at Gassaway Baptist Church. This was the first conference of its kind for the WVBC. It was designed for those who work with youth, children and young adults and are concerned about the growing mental health crisis among these groups. Michelle Nietert (pictured above) was the guest speaker for the event. Michelle has over 25 years of professional counseling experience and is passionate about providing hope and help in the form of faith-based mental health solutions. Through speaking and writing, she regularly equips ministry leaders to better serve their church in this area.

The more than 200 conference participants also had the option of choosing to attend two of the seven workshops that were offered. Each workshop covered a mental health-related topic, such as grief, anxiety, suicide and more. These were led by Christian LPC's (Licensed Practical Counselors) from within our WVBC family of churches.

Recordings of each of the main sessions and all seven workshops have been uploaded to our website:

www.wvbc.org

The WVBC and the Discipleship Commission would like to thank Gassaway Baptist Church for hosting the conference, serving our meals and being so hospitable. We also want to thank the leadership team that was formed to plan this conference. That team included Annette Crislip, Kim Harrison, Christie Eastman, Amy Bush, Jason Robbins, Russ Philpott, Christa Raitz, Jill Narraway and Koreen Villers.

Simply hosting one conference does not mean we have fully grasped all there is to learn about mental health. This is just the start of our journey to better educate, equip and empower our churches to engage mental health with hope.

More Upcoming Opportunities:

Mental Health First Aid for Youth (6.5 hour training)

Date: Saturday, August 26

Location: Emmanuel Baptist Church (Parkersburg)

Mental Health First Aid for Adults (4-week training)

* This training will be offered via Zoom

Registration details coming soon

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

For Such a Time as This

The Book of Esther is one of only two books in the Hebrew Bible that does not mention the name of God directly. However, traditional Jewish and Christian scholars view the absence of God's overt intervention in the story as a clear example of how God can work through seemingly coincidental events and the actions of individuals, and we might add, churches. In the story, the words Mordecai offered to Esther highlight this very point, "And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14b).

I believe this is the charge for the local church today. In a time when the local church finds itself wedged between the voices of supposed church analysts predicting its impending demise and the societal claims that the church is "out of touch" and no longer has any real relevance, it can be easy to become discouraged. However, neither of these assessments match the promise and purpose Jesus Christ has for His church. A better way to view the current situation the local church finds itself in should be framed in Mordecai's words "for such a time as this."

The local church is not intended to be defined by its surroundings. On the contrary, it is to stand above them and provide a beacon of hope – a light shining into the darkness in the midst of them. In *The Message*, Eugene Peterson paraphrases the familiar verse from Romans 12:2:

"Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you."

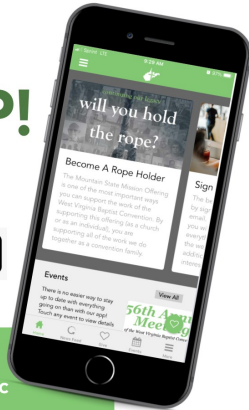
The time of the local church has not passed. Rather, it finds itself uniquely positioned to be as effective, or perhaps more so, than ever before. The challenge is to decide what attitude towards its mission the church will embrace and choose to live out. Will it be the attitude Doris Day sang about, "*Que Sera, Sera*" (Whatever Will Be, Will Be) or that poet Horace wrote about, "*Carpe Deum*" (Seize the Day), or better translated as "pluck the day [as it is ripe]." It seems the latter is more what Jesus intended when He said to the disciples, "Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest" (John 4:35b).

Someone once said, "There is nothing like the local church when it's working right. Its beauty is indescribable. Its power is breathtaking. Its potential is unlimited." There is much truth in that statement. As I have traveled around the state visiting the churches in the WVBC Family, I am truly encouraged that the spirit most often seems to be one of optimism. The church, more specifically the local church, your church, has been called by our Lord Jesus for such a time as this! Pluck it while it is ripe!

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

2023 Association Meeting Schedule

Rockcastle Association

Thursday, July 27 at TBD
Emmanuel Baptist Church

Elk Valley Association

Saturday, August 26 at 8:30 AM
Gassaway Baptist Church

Union Association

Sunday, September 17 at 2 PM
Beulah Baptist Church

Little Kanawha Association

Thursday, August 3 at 5 PM
Glenville First Baptist Church

Eastern Association

Sunday, August 27 at 3 PM
Dorcas Baptist Church

Parkersburg Association

Tuesday, September 19 at 4:30 PM
Mount Zion Baptist Church

Harrisville Association

Tuesday, August 8 at 9:30 AM
North Fork Baptist Church

Kanawha Valley Association

Friday, September 8 at 5:30 PM
Emmanuel Baptist Church

Fayette Association

Wednesday, September 20 at 6 PM
Gentry Baptist Church

Greenbrier-Raleigh Association

Tuesday, August 15 at 5 PM
Mount Jackson Baptist Church

Fairmont Association

Sunday, September 10 at 3 PM
Harmony Baptist Church

Coal River Association

Saturday, September 23 at 9:30 AM
Madison Baptist Church

Broad Run Association

Thursday, August 17 at 8:30 AM
Buckhannon First Baptist Church

Twelve Pole Association

Saturday, September 16 at 8:30 AM
Big Hurricane Baptist Church

Judson Association

Sunday, September 24 at 4:30 PM
North Shinnston Baptist Church

Teays Valley Association

Saturday, August 19 at 9 AM
Saint Albans First Baptist Church

Panhandle Association

Sunday, September 17 at 4 PM
New Martinsville First Baptist Church

Logan-Mingo Association

Sunday, September 24 at 4 PM
Connolly Memorial Baptist Church

Good Hope Association

Sunday, August 20 at 1 PM
Hopewell Baptist Church

No meeting details are available for the Goshen, Guyandotte or Hopewell associations. Those will be posted on our website when available.

158TH ANNUAL MEETING of the WVBC



October
19 – 20
South Parkersburg
Baptist Church

Women's Camp 2023



Names are important. Our name is one of the first things we share when introducing ourselves to someone. We are known by our name and maybe even more so by our nicknames! We give children names of blessing, family heritage and meaning. At this year's Women's Camp, speaker Claire Cottrill taught on the importance of knowing God's names because to know God's name is to know His attributes, and to know His attributes is to know His character. Knowing God's name is an anchor for our souls. The more we know His name, the more we trust Him!

As 125 women gathered at Camp Cowen in a community of faith, we encountered the truth of the Lord our God – Mighty Creator, the Great I AM, Master/Ruler, our Banner, our Provider, the Shepherd and God with us! Yuri Lembke shared a powerful testimony and about the call God has placed upon her life to return to Thailand to minister to Karen refugees. She and her husband Eric (and daughter Harper) are soon-to-be commissioned missionaries with International Ministries.

Gathered around the campfire on Saturday night, woman after woman shared testimony of the goodness of God in the midst of the joys, sorrows and their greatest struggles of life. What a blessing it is to gather together as God's beloved women at camp each year in community!

Join us next year for Women's Camp on April 5-7, 2024.

COWEN SCHEDULE

<u>JUNE 2-4</u>	Younger Midler (grades 2-4)
<u>JUNE 6-9</u>	Leaders in Training
<u>JUNE 11-17</u>	Junior 1 (grades 5-6)
<u>JUNE 18-24</u>	Junior High 1 (grades 7-9)
<u>JUNE 25- JULY 1</u>	Junior 2 (grades 5-6)
<u>JULY 2-8</u>	High School 1 (grades 9-12)
<u>JULY 9-15</u>	Junior High 2 (grades 7-9)
<u>JULY 15</u>	Senior Day (graduated seniors)
<u>JULY 16-22</u>	High School 2 (grades 9-12)
<u>JULY 23-26</u>	Older Midler (grades 3-5)
<u>JULY 28-31</u>	Family Camp
<u>JULY 31-AUG. 4</u>	Raleigh Rockcastle
<u>AUGUST 4-6</u>	AB Men & Boys Camp
<u>AUGUST 11-12</u>	Camp Global

4 The West Virginia Baptist / June—July

New Maintenance Director at Camp



Todd Godby enjoying his work on the new Mahindra tractor.

We are excited to announce the hiring of Todd Godby as the next Maintenance Director of Camp Cowen. Over the last year, the Camp Cowen Board has been working through the search process, and we are extremely glad to introduce Todd and look forward to the camp community meeting and working with him this summer.

Todd is an ordained minister, having served several churches within our WVBC family. He has been married to his wife, Angie, for 30 years, and they have two adult children who are both married: Samantha (Lucas) Willis and Nathan (Danielle) Godby. They also have a new grandson, Silas.

Todd brings over 20 years of industrial and commercial maintenance experience and is excited for this new ministry opportunity.

Be sure to pray for Todd and welcome him to his new role.



REGISTER NOW AT
[CAMPCOWEN.ORG/REGISTER](https://campcowen.org/register)

Charles Swisher Receives the Robert E. Matherly Award of Excellence

Written by Allan Copernhaver,
Director, Palmer Theological Seminary's WV Program

The **Robert E. Matherly Award of Excellence** is an annual award recognizing those who have contributed to the success of Palmer Theological Seminary's West Virginia Program. The initial recipient was Bob Matherly, himself, back in 2004. Since then, an individual or entity has been honored each year (except for 2011 and 2014).

This year's recipient is Mr. Charles Swisher. Mr. Swisher directed Parchment Valley Conference Center when the seminary partnership was established. He worked closely with Dr. Matherly to ensure a successful foundation was laid for the program.

Of course, at that time, the Santrock Education Building was still a dream. Classes were originally held in the administrative building, better known as "The Barn." Students were also originally required to take half of their courses on the Pennsylvania campus.

Thirty years later, the partnership between Palmer Seminary and the WVBC remains strong. Over 40 students are enrolled between our M.Div. and D.Min. programs. Students have their own dedicated classrooms, they can complete their program without leaving the state and a recent addition provides them an on-site library.

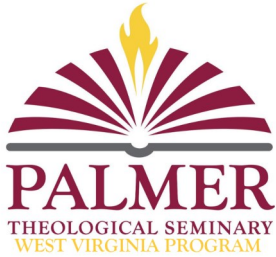
And because of pioneers like Dr. Matherly and Mr. Swisher, the WVBC has access to fully accredited theological education at our own conference center.



Allan Copernhaver presents Charles with the Matherly Award.

Hundreds of individuals have been trained as a result of this program. Mr. Swisher played an important role in the establishment of this great program.

To learn more about Palmer Seminary's West Virginia Program, you can contact me at (304) 763-8564 or rcopenha@eastern.edu.



Previous Robert E. Matherly Award of Excellence Winners

2004 - Robert E. Matherly	2010 - Ruth McFarland	2018 - Lawrence Hoptry
2005 - Lois Susan Wright	2012 - Bowen Charitable Trust	2019 - Frank & Teresa Miller
2006 - William and Betty Taylor	2013 - Allen Reasons	2020 - William Thomas
2007 - Doug Hill	2015 - Lloyd Hamblin, Jr.	2021 - David Bronkema
2008 - Manfred Brauch	2016 - Craig Miller	2022 - Donald Brash
2009 - Helen "Cookie" Hall	2017 - David Carrico	2023 - Charles Swisher

Pastors4Pastors & Ministers' Wives' Fellowship Summer Family Picnic 2023

Parchment Valley Conference Center, Shelter #1

Saturday, June 10

Noon - 4:00 p.m.

Everything is free!



Hamburgers, hot dogs and all the fixings provided.
Please bring your favorite covered dish item to share!

Special Event

Pastors4Pastors Dinner Cruise

Fri. Aug. 18, 2023 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
601 Front Street, Marietta, OH

VALLEY GEM

A Special Couples Event for
Active & Retired Pastors and their Spouses
across the West Virginia Baptist Convention

Register for both Pastors4Pastors events at wvbc.org.

Ministry Internship Program

Meet the 2023 Ministry Interns



Leanne Bibbee

Leanne recently graduated from Marshall University with a B.A. in Psychology and a minor in Religious Studies. She is from Parkersburg and has a great passion for camp ministry. She will serve this summer as an intern at Camp Cowen, helping with young leader and staff community development.

Garrett Keen

Garrett is a student at Glenville State University, where he majors in Wildlife Management. He is from Newton, WV, where he grew up on a cattle farm. Showing cattle remains a passion of his. He will be interning this summer at Parchment Valley Conference Center, shadowing and helping in all aspects of ministry.



Simon Bertram

Simon is a freshman Math Education student at Glenville State University. He is from Elkorn, WV, and hopes to impact the world for Christ as a school teacher or an overseas missionary. He served as an intern this spring at Anchor Bible Church in Glenville.



Sam Dudgeon

Sam is a junior Math Education student at Glenville State University. He plans to return to his hometown of Welch after graduation to become a school teacher and impact others for Christ. He served as an intern this spring at Anchor Bible Church in Glenville.



Elijah Dick

Elijah is a junior Natural Resources/Criminal Justice student at Glenville State University. He is employed by the Army Corps of Engineers and plans to continue working there after graduation. He served as an intern this spring at Anchor Bible Church in Glenville.



Donovan Haynes

Donovan recently graduated from Liberty High School and plans to attend Fairmont State University, majoring in Elementary Education. He is interning this summer at his home church, Clarksburg Baptist Church, where he will assist in several ministry areas.



Matthias Freeman

Matthias recently graduated from East Fairmont High School and plans to attend Culinary School at Pierpont Community and Technical College. He will be interning this summer at Clarksburg Baptist Church, assisting in several ministries, including helping to plan mission and outreach events.



Patrick Fisher

Patrick is a junior Music Education major at Glenville State University. He is from Clarksburg and enjoys singing and leading others in worship. He served this spring as an intern at Anchor Bible Church in Glenville.



BCM: Partnering Together to Rebuild Homes and Lives in Jenkins, KY

Partnerships in ministry are a great opportunity to create community and build relationships. Sometimes those ministry partnerships happen unintentionally, as was the case when our **Baptist Campus Ministry (BCM)** students at Marshall and West Virginia University (WVU) shared the same week for spring break. This allowed for BCM students from those two campuses to partner together on a disaster relief trip to Kentucky, helping a community that is still trying to rebuild after last year's tornadoes and flood.

We initially contacted the American Baptist Men's Disaster Relief team about potential opportunities. It was through them that we were put in contact with David Lester (WV Catholic Charities) about a trip that he was organizing. David had served with AB Men's Disaster Relief team in the past after they had helped him about 20 years prior when flood waters entered his home. It was because of that experience that he is still active in relief work.

During the second week of March, 15 BCM students from Marshall and WVU, along with Rob Ely and myself, partnered with David and five adults from Marion County to serve in Jenkins, KY. This community is one of the ones most impacted by the flooding.

There were a variety of jobs our team completed – repairing a ramp, power washing, laying subfloor, painting, installing drywall and cleaning up debris. Overall there were five job sites (homes and community buildings) that we were able to help rebuild. During the evenings, we had the opportunity of listening to people share their flood stories. The impact of these stories, along with meeting different people, really helped us grasp the significance of our WVBC theme of *“intentionally engaging communities for Christ.”*



Four BCM students help hang drywall in a house in Jenkins, KY.

“It all came together,” David said of the mission trip. “And I must say it was a really, wonderful group. The 15 young people who came from Marshall and WVU were very much into the mission experience. Not only did they help repair homes, but they also listened to people.”

BCM is grateful for AB Men's Disaster Relief team, who not only helped us make contact, but also generously supported our students so they could serve together during that week.

The need is great in Jenkins, KY. If any church or mission team is interested in serving the community of Jenkins, please contact Rob Ely (ely@wvbc.org) or me (sions@wvbc.org) to get connected.

Kevin Sions

Northern Director, Baptist Campus Ministry

SENIOR DAY

JULY 15, 2023
at Camp Cowen

- REFLECT ON YOUR WALK WITH THE LORD SO FAR & PREPARE FOR THIS NEXT PART OF THE JOURNEY
- FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHER GRADUATES
- MEET BAPTIST CAMPUS MINISTRY ASSOCIATES AND STUDENTS FROM YOUR COLLEGE CAMPUS
- LEAVE YOUR MARK ON CAMP COWEN

contact sions@wvbc.org or ely@wvbc.org
for more information



campcowen.org/register



2023 WV Hope Ministries

Union Mission: Meeting the Needs of the Most Vulnerable

*Written by Lindsay Stephens,
Director of Addiction Recovery, Union Mission*

Union Mission Ministries, Inc., was founded on October 11, 1911, as a soup kitchen by Pat Withrow with a financial gift of \$100 and a goal of providing “soup, soap and salvation.” In the beginning, Union Mission provided shelter for the homeless and job opportunities on a limited basis, but it soon expanded to other areas of ministry.

Today, Union Mission’s ministries include a men’s emergency homeless shelter, both men’s and women’s addiction recovery programs, an Emergency Response Team, state-wide food distribution, family services, preschool and a thrift store.

We provide shelter, food and opportunities for a person to change their life and their families lives forever. Participants in our programs have access to education, life skills classes, Bible studies and professional mental health services. Our recovery programs focus on leading a person to a place of spiritual, physical, mental and vocational health.

The Union Mission is proudly a Christian organization. We “help hurting people in Jesus’ name” regardless of their religious beliefs,



Each year the Union Mission organizes a Christmas Toy Shop which allows hundreds of families to hear the gospel and then choose toys for their children and teens.

ethnicity, gender, etc. We have seen God work in amazing ways through our various ministries to improve lives and draw people closer to him. Union Mission operates totally on contributions of gift-in-kind donations, generous volunteers and financial contributions.

Weirton Christian Center: Molding the Futures of Young People

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

As director at the **Weirton Christian Center** for 16 years, I have been able to see the children we serve grow into responsible, thriving adults – many who are serving the Lord or raising their families in a way they never knew growing up. Maleeah Smith, who was with us from preschool through high school, is one such story. Recently she was accepted to be part of the Summer Passionary Institute through the American Baptist Home Mission Society. Through that program, she will be teaching Bible lessons at the Center this summer and will later go on her third mission trip. Her life’s desire is to be a missionary!

Our free preschool not only provides kids with a wonderful education, but it also gives us the opportunity to tell kids about Jesus! Additionally, we have an afterschool program that makes sure kids receive homework help, computers, dinner, transportation, Bible lessons, clothing, hygiene needs, etc. We also offer summer camps and scholarships for kids to attend a Christian school. Our Leadership Program encourages responsibility, financial literacy, work ethic and accountability. Our Community Garden teaches them how to garden and eat healthy. Through all of these programs, we have the opportunity to show them Jesus by mentoring them and teaching them to love, pray and be kind. Now in our 106th year of ministry, we have another new and exciting opportunity, as we are planning to become a Community



The Preschool Class recently celebrated Superhero Day, learning that Jesus is the ultimate superhero!

Preschool for the county, since it is now possible for us to keep our Christian curriculum by extending our time. Please pray about this transition and staffing.

We truly appreciate the faithful support from our WVBC family! Your prayers for the Center and your faithful financial contributions are making a difference not only for today, but also for the future. As we try to help mold the futures of these young people, you are part of it. Thank you so much for making us ongoing support through your WV Hope ministry!

What is WV Hope?

WV Hope is a project created by the **American Baptist Women's Ministries (ABWM) of WV** to provide practical ways for individuals and churches to help those who are most vulnerable in our state. Created in 2019, it was formed after the national ABWM ended their similar White Cross project, and it was named in honor of the "Herald of Hope" chapel car that planted churches across our state and brought hope into dozens of communities.

The Gabriel Project of WV: Helping Babies Have a Healthy, Safe Start in Life



The mission of the **Gabriel Project of West Virginia** is to provide immediate, practical and compassionate assistance to needy pregnant women and families with children two years of age and younger. Through their caring efforts and tangible support, they help children in impoverished families have a healthy, safe start in life.

The Gabriel Project serves families who lack financial resources and emotional support to provide for a new baby. They are a direct service organization, providing much-needed items such as secure car seats, safe cribs, diapers, formula, clothing and hygiene products at no cost to the client. The Gabriel Project also provides

information to clients on baby care and child development to increase parenting skills.

Here is just one story of how the Gabriel Project helps: "Jessica" escaped with her infant and toddler from an abusive relationship and only had a few clothes that she could quickly gather. She timidly approached the Gabriel Project, seeking diapers for her infant. But as one volunteer talked with Jessica, it quickly became apparent that this family needed much more help. Jessica and her children were sleeping on old blankets on the floor of a trailer and there was little food to eat. The Gabriel Project provided diapers, clothing, a crib, a mattress and formula. They also rallied help from other agencies for additional emergency items and legal support for this family. The care and mentoring provided to Jessica has helped her start a new future.

To learn more about the Gabriel Project, you can visit their website at www.gabrielwv.org.

Hope Center Ministries: Changing Lives, Changing Families, Changing Communities

*Written by Brian McClure,
Center Director, Hope Center Ministries*

Hope Center Ministries is a Christ-based drug and alcohol recovery and discipleship program located in Jackson County. Its mission is to see addicts and their families become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. The men from Hope Center have participated in WVBC numerous events both at Camp Cowen and Parchment Valley over the past year, and they plan on returning to the AB Men and Boys Camp again this summer.

In the last year, we have witnessed 34 of our men be saved and baptized. Several family members of these men have also accepted Christ and followed in baptism. The American Baptist Women's Ministries of WV chose Hope Center as a recipient of this year's WV Hope project, more than 20 churches support us through both material and financial gifts, and numerous individuals are also involved. Hope Center Ministries would like to extend a huge thank you for welcoming these men into the WVBC family and being part of changing lives, changing families and changing communities for Christ.

To learn more about Hope Center Ministries, email me at b.mcclure@hopecm.com or visit our website at www.hopecm.com.



Several Hope Center Ministries guys help erect a cross at Gilboa Baptist Church.

American Baptist Men of WV



AB Men and Boys Camp

2023

AUGUST
4-6
2023

CAMP COWEN

LEARN MORE AT
CAMPCOWEN.ORG

AB Men Scholarship Fundraising Golf Outing

The **American Baptist Men of WV** are excited to announce details of their Scholarship Fundraising Golf Outing on Friday, August 4th, prior to the start of their AB Men and Boys Camp.

The outing will take place at Nicholas Memorial Golf Course in Summersville with a shotgun start at 10 AM. It is an 18-hole course and will consist of a four-person team scramble. The cost is \$300 per team or \$75 per player. Prizes are awarded to the top teams.

All proceeds from the event will go toward the AB Men's newly established Scholarship Fund, which provides scholarships for young men from across our WVBC family who are attending college or trade school. More information about the scholarship program can be found on the WVBC website under the American Baptist Men of WV page.

The registration deadline for the golf outing is Monday, July 31st. Registration can be paid by check and made payable to "WVBC" with "American Baptist Men of WV" written in the memo line. Those checks can then be mailed to:

Jim Mitchell
2748 North Terrace
Huntington, WV 25705

Tournament sponsorships are also available.

With all questions, contact Ron McClung at 304-542-4699 or Jim Mitchell at 304-690-3100.



Nicholas Memorial Golf Course is located at:
19 Memorial Park Road, Summersville, WV 26651

Katelyn Dorsey To Serve in Mexico as a Missionary Intern

The **WVBC Missionary Internship Program** was created to provide individuals with the opportunity to explore a long-term calling to missions by providing them with a customizable internship alongside one of our global partners. In addition to the internship, individuals are provided with several months of training on the topics of missiology, culture, conflict management, support raising and more. The program is designed to provide interns with an abbreviated, yet similar experience to the preparation process for long-term missionaries. The program was launched in 2019.

In 2020, the program came to a screeching halt as travel restrictions prevented our six interns at the time from actually being able to travel overseas. **However, in 2023, we are excited to announce that the program has resumed with our newest intern: Katelyn Dorsey.**

Katelyn graduated this May from West Virginia University Institute of Technology (WVU Tech) with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Management and a minor in Marketing. She was involved with Baptist Campus Ministry at WVU Tech and is also a member of Crab Orchard Baptist Church. It was through her relationship with Pastor David Bush and his wife Amy that she was encouraged to apply for the missionary internship.

David wrote of Katelyn:

"I could not recommend someone more! She has become dear to us. From leading worship, to loving our kids, to being present and just doing life, she is a real gift. We are so thankful for who she is and who she is becoming."



Katelyn is pictured with WVU Tech BCM leaders Patrick Huffman (left) and Anthony Pratt (right).

Katelyn will be serving this summer as a Missionary Intern alongside Keith and Deborah Myers in Mexico. While on home assignment this past year, the Myers were able to spend some time with Katelyn and agreed that it was a great fit. As part of her internship, she will spend around six weeks with them, assisting with ministry projects, helping with short-term mission teams and learning what life as a missionary is truly like.

Please be in prayer for Katelyn as she completes her internship. We are excited to see how God works both in and through her this summer!

Camp Global

at Camp Cowen

AUGUST 11-12

Camp Global is our family missions camp at Camp Cowen that is designed to inform, inspire and equip you with ways to better make disciples of all nations.

This year's theme is: **How to Better Care for Our Missionaries**

Learn more or register at wvbc.org

Northwest Area News

by **Mark McCloy**, Northwest Area Minister

Connections

“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.” (Romans 10:1).

Paul had a passion to see people connected to Jesus. It was his primary motivating factor. Although he was the apostle to the Gentiles, even the Israelites were on his mind and in his prayers. He wanted to see them saved.

I connected to Jesus one summer of my childhood – at Vacation Bible School. Other than Easter, it was the only time I was at church. *When did you connect to Jesus? What does your story teach you about coming to God?*

As we move into summer, we see many opportunities to bring people to Jesus – camps, Brothers’ Keeper, revivals, Vacation Bible Schools and church picnics. But one thing to remember – the primary way people connect to Jesus is not really events, but through relationship, through people. The events provide opportunities, but they are only opportunities if we make them so. When you come to the church and WVBC events this summer, bring someone. It may be how their story connects to Jesus.

As we look at the disciples, some of them found Jesus at work (James and John), some found him because of a family member (Andrew brought Peter, his brother) and some found him because of a friend (Andrew was influenced by John the Baptist, Philip brought Nathaniel). Kudos to those of you who will help this summer – planning events that will help people connect. But special honors to those of you who will bring someone to those events – and thus help them connect to Jesus. As Philip said to Nathaniel, “We have found Him...” Let us remember to share him.



People “connecting” during a pre-service dinner at Auburn Baptist Church as part of the Harrisville Roving Revival.

Joyce McVicker Retires

Joyce McVicker was honored on her retirement as Music Director



Joyce McVicker was honored following her retirement as Music Director at the Fairmont Baptist Temple.

at the Fairmont Baptist Temple with a reception on April 16th. Joyce began serving as Music Director in 1967. She was preceded by her father, who served in the same position for 30 years. Her mother also served the church as the organist.

Having served in a similar position for many years, I know that church music is always evolving, which presents its share of joys and challenges. However, amid all the changes in the past 56 years, one thing has remained constant: Joyce’s attention to quality and detail. The WVBC family joins in thanking you, Joyce, for your ministry.

Northeast Area News

by **David Hulme**, Northeast Area Minister

Middleville Presents Last Supper

Middleville Baptist Church (Union) presented “The Chosen,” a dramatic portrayal of the Last Supper on Palm Sunday evening to a capacity audience. Men from several area churches came together to step back in time and portray the apostles as they shared the Passover with Jesus on the night He was betrayed. This annual event serves as both a worship opportunity for believers and an outreach opportunity to the community.



Scenes from the Last Supper portrayal at Middleville Baptist Church.

Southwest Area News

by *Evan Arkell, Southwest Area Minister*



Luke Creasy leads worship during the Good Friday Sunrise Service.

Eric Thomas Ordained at Sutton Baptist

Eric Thomas, pastor of Sutton Baptist Church, was ordained on Sunday, April 30th. Eric earned a B.A. degree in Pastoral Leadership from Liberty University in 2013 and went on to earn his M.Div. degree from Liberty in 2020. His wife Meredith also has a M.Div. degree from Liberty. Before beginning his ministry at Sutton, Eric was the youth pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Virginia and also served as an intern at Summersville Baptist Church. As a youth, Eric was on the Hopewell Baptist Association Youth Cabinet for three years and also served on summer staff at Camp Cowen. In addition to his ministry with Sutton Baptist, Eric serves on the WVBC Executive Board and is the secretary for the WVBC Education Society. As Gassaway Baptist pastor, Mark Stump, said at the service “It is good to see that God is still calling men into the ministry, and it is good to see young men answering the call!”



Eric and Meredith are pictured with Eric's parents following his ordination service.

Changed Lives through Marshall BCM

This semester has been a true joy as my wife, Becky, and I have had the pleasure of attending most of Baptist Campus Ministry (BCM) meetings at Marshall University. Although the start time of 9:15 PM on Wednesday evenings is later than my normal bedtime, it is worth staying up late to witness so many students worshipping our Lord on Marshall's campus. It has been a blessing watching these students support each other through some good times, but especially through some of the hardest times of their lives – particularly with the loss of one of their leaders, a young man who seemed to be close with nearly every BCM student, as well as many other students on campus.

Although we were not able to attend every Marshall BCM event, we were able to witness their fun evening of food and square dancing at the Booth Family Farm, worship with them during their Good Friday Sunrise Service at the Memorial Fountain right in the middle of Marshall's campus and participate in their last BCM service, as five graduating seniors shared stories about how God had changed their lives over the last four years.

I now understand why Rob stays so excited about BCM. It is fun to watch these young people come in as wide-eyed freshman kids and be transformed into young adults that are “changing lives that change the world.”

Southeast Area News

by *Dana Gatewood, Southeast Area Minister*

I want to announce that I will be leaving the position of area minister to return as the senior pastor of Summersville Baptist Church effective June 1. Though I've enjoyed traveling southeast West Virginia, meeting pastors, worshipping with people who truly love the Lord, my heart still desires to live life consistently in a local church.

In my brief time of serving as an area minister, I have benefited in learning more about the passion and purpose of our WVBC office. They really care about you. I hope that you will join me in supporting the WVBC financially and prayerfully. We truly can accomplish much more working together than we can on our own.

Summersville Baptist has agreed to allow me to provide assistance when needed even after my departure from the Convention. Thank you for your understanding.

In Christ,
Dana Gatewood

I wish to thank Dana for his exceptional work in these last several months. Dana is a man of integrity with a tremendous pastor's heart, so while I am truly saddened to see him leave the WVBC team, I appreciate his love and commitment to the local church as well as his desire to be fully committed to ministering to a local congregation. I ask that you join me in praying for Dana and the wonderful folk of Summersville Baptist Church as they resume their ministry together.

Blessings,
Mike Sisson

March—April 2023

THOMAS HOWARD BAILEY, JR., 93, of Dunbar, died on March 2, 2023. He was a member of Dunbar First Baptist Church, where he served as a deacon, trustee and member of the advisory board.

MILDRED “MILLIE” LEAH BERRY, 66, of Rupert, died on April 12, 2023. She was a member of Mountain Baptist Church and wife of Pastor Reginald Berry.

ROBERT “BOB” CLARENCE BLEIGH, 65, of Weston, died on April 18, 2023. He was a member at Murphy’s Creek Baptist Church, where he served as a deacon.

EDDIE RAY BOWLING, JR. 68, of Oak Hill, died on April 19, 2023. He was a member of Calvary Baptist Church, where he served as a trustee and member of the Board of Finance.

GENE GRAHAM FERRIS, 100, of Beckley, died on March 22, 2023. He was a member of Crab Orchard Baptist Church, where he served as a deacon, Sunday School teacher and many other positions of service.

NANCY MCMULLEN, 69, of Sistersville, died on March 12, 2023. She was a member of Sistersville First Baptist Church, where she played the piano.

VIRGINIA RUTH MORGAN, 90, of Hepzibah, died on April 8, 2023. She was a member of Hepzibah Baptist Church, where she was a member of the choir, taught Sunday School, and active in the women’s missions group.

SCOTT ALLEN WRIGHT, 58, of Davisville, died on April 11, 2023. He was a missionary on the Hopi Reservation, where he resided with his wife Melinda for 10 years. He also served as a pastor, most recently at Lauckport Baptist Church.

MINISTRY EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Associate Pastor of Youth (Full-Time)

Location: Bridgeport area

Youth Pastor/Leader (Part-Time)

Location: Beckley area

Family Life Minister (Full-Time)

Location: Beckley area

Accompanist (Part-Time)

Location: Charleston area

Senior Pastor (Part-Time)

Location: Huntington area

Student Ministries Pastor (Full-Time)

Location: Parkersburg area

Family Ministry Position (Part-Time)

Location: Charleston 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

Minister to Youth (Part-Time)

Location: Ripley area

Minister to Children (Part-Time)

Location: Ripley area

Minister to Children (Part-Time)

Location: Parkersburg area

Church Pianist (Part-Time)

Location: Charleston area

Are you interested in learning more about any of these positions? Or is there a position at your church that you want to advertise? If so, contact Todd McClure at todd@wvbc.org.

To see a list of available positions, visit: www.wvbc.org



Do you feel called but not prepared?

The **Mentoring for Pastoral Excellence** program was created with the hope that it would inspire, encourage, support and strengthen networks between experienced pastor-mentors and the gifted younger pastor leaders in our churches.

Each participating leader is paired with a qualified mentor who has been selected on the basis of their experience and wisdom. Mentors and participants meet monthly for a minimum of one and a half hours. In addition to the monthly meetings each participant and mentor attend an annual conference to promote further learning and networking amongst the group.

To learn more about this program, contact Mike Sisson at sisson@wvbc.org.

Prayer Calendars

June 2023

JUNE 1 – Sarah McCloy, International Ministries Global Servant to Japan
JUNE 2 – Younger Midler Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen
JUNE 3 – The American Baptist Women’s Ministries Annual Conference happening today at Parchment Valley
JUNE 4 – Trish Magal, International Ministries Global Servant to Thailand
JUNE 5 – Cari Pauley, WVBC past president and vice chair of the WVBC Outreach Commission
JUNE 6 – The ministry of Freeman’s Creek Baptist Church; Kenneth Miller, interim pastor (Broad Run Association)
JUNE 7 – The ministry of Strait Creek Baptist Church; Bernard “Dobby” Thrash, pastor (Harrisville Association)
JUNE 8 – Phil Smith, International Ministries Global Servant to Brazil
JUNE 9 – Dilia Zelaya, International Ministries Global Servant to Honduras
JUNE 10 – The ministry of Union Baptist Church; Charles Stephens, pastor (Guyandotte Association)
JUNE 11 – Junior 1 Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen
JUNE 12 – The ministry of Crab Orchard Baptist Church; David Bush, pastor (Greenbrier-Raleigh Association)
JUNE 13 – The ministry of Little Laurel Baptist Church; David McLaughlin, pastor (Elk Valley Association)
JUNE 14 – Sarah McCurdy, International Ministries Global Servant to Mexico
JUNE 15 – Vital Pierre, International Ministries Global Servant to the Dominican Republic
JUNE 16 – The ministry of Romney First Baptist Church; Steven Wilson, pastor (Eastern Association)
JUNE 17 – Roger Sites, member of the WVBC Stewardship Commission
JUNE 18 – Brothers’ Keeper beginning today at Parchment Valley
JUNE 19 – Junior High 1 Camp happening this week at Camp Cowen
JUNE 20 – Katherine Niles, International Ministries Global Servant to the Democratic Republic of the Congo
JUNE 21 – The ministry of Hopewell Baptist Church; Randall “Joe” Lamm, pastor (Goshen Association)
JUNE 22 – The ministry of Mount Hope Baptist Temple (Fayette Association)
JUNE 23 – Joel Harpold, member of the WVBC Leadership Commission
JUNE 24 – Anita Gutierrez, International Ministries Global Servant to South Africa
JUNE 25 – Junior 2 Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen
JUNE 26 – The ministry of Parchment Valley Baptist Church; Matthew Ash, pastor (Good Hope Association)
JUNE 27 – The ministry of Big Clear Creek Baptist Church; Glen Kuhn, pastor (Hopewell Association)
JUNE 28 – The ministry of Willow Tree Baptist Church; Patrick Vincent, pastor (Fairmont Association)
JUNE 29 – Sue Hamric, president of the WV Baptist Historical Society and member of the WVBC Discipleship Commission
JUNE 30 – The ministry of Olive Baptist Church; Joshua Clay, pastor (Coal River Association)

July 2023

JULY 1 – The ministry of Zion Baptist Church (Teays Valley Association)
JULY 2 – High School 1 Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen
JULY 3 – Eric Lembke, International Ministries Global Servant to Thailand
JULY 4 – Harry Drake, member of the WVBC Outreach Commission
JULY 5 – The ministry of Mount Pisgah Baptist Church (Little Kanawha Association)
JULY 6 – The ministry of Welcome Baptist Church; Chad Raines, pastor (Judson Association)
JULY 7 – Karla Carr, vice chair of the WVBC Leadership Commission
JULY 8 – Boaz Keibarak, International Ministries Global Servant to Kenya
JULY 9 – Junior High 2 Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen
JULY 10 – Toya Richards, International Ministries Global Servant to South Africa
JULY 11 – Madeline Flores-Lopez, International Ministries Global Servant to the Dominican Republic
JULY 12 – The ministry of Wheeling First Baptist Church; Darrin Wright, pastor (Panhandle Association)
JULY 13 – The ministry of Two Ripple Baptist Church; Gary Richmond, pastor (Parkersburg Association)
JULY 14 – Yuree Lembke, International Ministries Global Servant to Thailand
JULY 15 – The ministry of Judson Baptist Church; Charlie Bolen, pastor (Kanawha Valley Association)
JULY 16 – High School 2 Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen
JULY 17 – The ministry of Saulsville Baptist Church; Michael Knotts, pastor (Rockcastle Association)
JULY 18 – Katrina Williams, International Ministries Global Servant to Thailand
JULY 19 – Caleb Villers, chair of the WV Camp Cowen Board and member of the WVBC Discipleship Commission
JULY 20 – Tim Reese, International Ministries Global Servant to the Dominican Republic
JULY 21 – Gordon Hwang, International Ministries Global Servant to Japan
JULY 22 – The ministry of Belington First Baptist Church; Julia Miller, pastor (Union Association)
JULY 23 – Older Midler Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen
JULY 24 – The ministry of Connolly Memorial Baptist Church; Ezekiel Stepp, interim pastor (Logan-Mingo Association)
JULY 25 – The ministry of Twelve Pole Valley Baptist Church; Douglas Thompson, pastor (Twelve Pole Association)
JULY 26 – Clark Swepston, member of the WVBC Stewardship Commission
JULY 27 – Rockcastle Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
JULY 28 – Family Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen
JULY 29 – The ministry of Fairview Baptist Church; Warren Eades, pastor (Hopewell Association)
JULY 30 – Rob Ely, director of Student Ministries, West Virginia Baptist Convention
JULY 31 – Amy Estelle Trout, International Ministries Global Servant to the Philippines

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

Upcoming Events

JUNE

June 2-4

Young Midler Camp (Grades 2-4)
Camp Cowen

June 3

ABW Ministries Annual Conference
Parchment Valley Conference Center

June 6-9

Leaders in Training
Camp Cowen

June 10

P4P / Ministers' Wives' Family Picnic
Parchment Valley Conference Center

June 11-17

Junior 1 Camp (Grades 5-6)
Camp Cowen

June 17

Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: WV Baptist History (E-02)
Parchment Valley Conference Center
& Comunidad Luz y Vida (Moorefield)

June 18-23

Brothers' Keeper
Parchment Valley Conference Center

June 18-24

Junior High 1 Camp (Grades 7-9)
Camp Cowen

June 23-25

ABC Biennial
San Juan, Puerto Rico

June 25-July 1

Junior 2 Camp (Grades 5-6)
Camp Cowen

JULY

July 2-8

High School 1 Camp (Grades 9-12)
Camp Cowen

July 9-15

Junior High 2 Camp (Grades 7-9)
Camp Cowen

July 15

Senior Day (High School Graduates)
Camp Cowen

July 15

Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: New Testament I (B-03)
Online

July 15

Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Ministerial Ethics (Mod-02)
Online

July 16-22

High School 2 Camp (Grades 9-12)
Camp Cowen

July 23-26

Older Midler Camp (Grades 3-5)
Camp Cowen

July 28-31

Family Camp (All Ages)
Camp Cowen

AUGUST

August 4-6

AB Men & Boys Camp
Camp Cowen

August 11-12

Camp Global (All Ages)
Camp Cowen

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
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