

Are You Desperate for the Lost?



“Are you desperate for the lost or merely accommodating of the lost?” That is the question that was posed by Dr. Verlon Fosner during the first part of his keynote address at our **WVBC Annual Meeting**. Sharing from his 20+ years of experience in pastoring a church in a highly secularized, unchurched part of Seattle, he challenged our WVBC churches to live out our theme of “Intentionally Engaging Communities for Christ.”

More than 250 people gathered together at South Parkersburg Baptist Church for our 158th Annual Meeting. This two-day event felt more like a family reunion, as we joined together in celebrating all that God has accomplished over the past year. Phil Wayman, who preached this year’s Annual Sermon, also called us to look forward. Challenging us to dream big, he quoted famous missionary William Carey, who said, “Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God.”

There are many ways our churches can become more intentional in engaging communities for Christ, but one practical way that was shared during our gathering is through the use of **Dinner Churches**. This outreach idea models what is often seen throughout the New Testament. The goal is to invite individuals, who would not typically enter the doors of a church, to gather around a table for a meal. During the meal, a Jesus story is shared, followed with a time of discussion. When Dr. Fosner first attempted this with his 93-year-old church in Seattle, it quickly grew to more than 100 “seculars” who were attending every week.

From there, it spread into a multi-site Dinner Church Congregation, and then expanded into a national Dinner Church Network. In 2014, Verlon received a Doctoral degree for his research on “The Dinner Church of the Apostolic Era” and has written three books on the subject. Those books can be made available to you by contacting David Hulme at hulme@wvbc.org.

During the final session of our Annual Meeting, as we concluded our time together, we finished in a time of prayer for our “pilot churches,” (pictured above) who will be launching various forms of Dinner Churches over the next year. Each of these churches are receiving training on this outreach tool and will then have the opportunity to train other churches within our WVBC family.

Dinner Churches are just one of the ways we can become more intentional. Whether you employ this method or another, the mission remains the same: we must reach the lost for Jesus.

Want to learn more?

Join us on Saturday, February 3rd for our Annual Training Event at Parchment Valley. A “Dinner Church” workshop will be offered in both the morning and afternoon.

Register now at wvbc.org

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

Doing Christ’s Work Together

by Mike Sisson, Executive Minister

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Table of Contents

Mike Sisson: Commentary	2
Installation of Officers / BWSCS Graduation	3
Camp Cowen Schedule / BCM Fall Retreat Recap	4
Sarah McCloy Update / Internship Opportunities	5
2023 Annual Bible Conference / AB Men's Prayer Breakfast	6
Junior High Convention Recap / Golden'eers Conference Recap	7
Annual Meeting Pictures	8-9
Annual Training Event Form	10
Fall Children's Rally / Buy a Block for Sunny Day	11
Area Minister News	12-13
Obituaries / Leadership Updates / Retired Ministers & Missionaries Offering / Ministry Positions	14
Prayer Calendars	15
Coming Events / Annual Training Event	16

The Power of Counting Blessings

We are often reminded of important truths about God through the inspiration of hymnody. Many hymn writers, much like the psalmists of Scripture, were able to place into words how God is present in all aspects of our lives. I have recently found myself singing the words written by Johnson Oatman in his wonderful hymn, "Count Your Blessings."

"When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done."

The power of counting one's blessings not only brings us to a place of thanksgiving, but it allows us to recognize what the Lord has done and what He is currently doing or wished to do! Another prolific hymn writer was Fanny Crosby. Fanny lost her eyesight at six months of age and always believed it to be the result of a nurse's error in treating an eye infection she had developed. However, at only eight years old, she wrote the following of her physical condition: "Oh what a happy soul I am, although I cannot see; I am resolved that in this world contented I will be. How many blessings I enjoy, that other people don't; to weep and sigh because I'm blind, I cannot, and I won't." Again, the power of looking for blessings even in times of seeming despair or sadness.

The gospel writer Luke tells a story of how easy it is to miss out on the opportunity to connect the blessings we receive to the recognition and adoration of the One who provides those blessings.

Now on His way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As He was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!" When He saw them, He said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed. One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked Him—and he was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?" (Luke 17:11-18)

Recently, God opened my eyes to His many blessings during the Annual Meeting of the WVBC Family at South Parkersburg Baptist Church. As I entered the sanctuary, I was overjoyed to be in the presence of the family of God. Listening to the delightful buzz of conversations, observing the numerous smiles and the genuine sense of community that filled the room reminded me of the value of being part of the larger church family. Having been a part of the WVBC family for over 50 years, it was reassuring to see so many people who love Jesus deeply and are continuing to serve Him faithfully. In that moment, I knew God was present and moving among His people in a marvelous way and 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 and do Christ's work together in striving to intentionally engage all communities with the Good News!

In the midst of this chaotic world that we find ourselves in, take time to count your blessings and see what God has done, and perhaps even more importantly, what He is wanting to do in your life and the life of His church.

**Blessings,
Mike**



DOING CHRIST'S WORK *together*

by Intentionally Engaging Communities for Christ

Erich Reggi Installed as 118th President of the WVBC

During the final session of our WVBC Annual Meeting, it was a great time of celebration as Erich Reggi, member of Hurricane First Baptist Church, was installed as the 118th president of our WVBC family. Erich has been extremely active with the WVBC, currently serving on both the WVBC Executive Committee and Stewardship Commission, and also serving as the treasurer for the American Baptist Men of WV. He also previously served as chair for the Camp Cowen Board of Directors and has been instrumental in the planning of men's work parties for both Camp Cowen and Parchment Valley. Mike Sisson commented on his appointment, "Erich has a true heart for the Lord, which he regularly demonstrates through his faithful service to his local church and his dedicated participation with many of the ministries we do together as the WVBC family! I look forward to his leadership and the opportunity to serve alongside him as Convention President this year."

Also installed during the meeting was Roselee Copenhaver as first vice president, Chad Mugrage as second vice president, David Hoge as secretary and Todd McClure as treasurer. The 2024 slate of board members was also approved.

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



Erich Reggi was installed as WVBC President by Jon and Koreen Villers during the 2023 WVBC Annual Meeting.

Congratulations Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies Graduates

Bobby Wood, the founder of our school, believed that every church deserved a trained pastor, and every pastor deserved an opportunity to be trained within a reasonable drive of their home. 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. The School's mission is to provide a basic level of courses in all areas of practical ministry. Although originally envisioned as a training program for bi-vocational pastors, the School of Christian Studies is designed to meet the practical needs of any person interested in expanding their spiritual maturity, biblical knowledge and ministry skills. And it is not just for the part-time pastor anymore. While the School carries no college or seminary credit, it does provide creditable and recognizable training within the Convention family. Furthermore, **Palmer Seminary** now recognizes graduation from the school as a potential indicator of ability to succeed in seminary, and allows graduates the possibility of entry into seminary without the normally required bachelor's degree.

The scripture says, "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 the current state of the world to still be able to complete their program of study. Soon, and perhaps even already, our graduates will discover the desire to continue to learn and grow, and realize this is just a step – an important one – but just one step on the path, so that they may "accurately handle the word of truth." Congratulations to our graduates and to their families.

Mark McCloy

Director of the Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies



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

2023 BWSCS Graduates:

Chanda D. Adkins - Teaching Certificate
Sherrie Ann Ash - Certificate in Lay Ministry
Larry Roger Fleming, II - Diploma in Pastoral Ministry
James Edward Hamrick, III - Diploma in Pastoral Ministry
Alfred "Tuffy" Lee Hensler - Diploma in Pastoral Ministry
Moises Saravia - Diploma in Pastoral Ministry

Learn more at:

wvbc.org/school-of-christian-studies
or by scanning this QR code



Camp Cowen 2024

Camps

APRIL 5-7	Women's Camp	JUNE 30-JULY 6	Junior 2 (grades 5-6)
APRIL 19-20	Senior Day (2024 graduates)	JULY 7-13	Junior High 2 (grades 7-9)
MAY 10-11	Summer Kickoff (grades 6-12)	JULY 14-20	High School 2 (grades 9-'24 grads)
JUNE 7-9	Younger Midler (grades 2-4)	JULY 26-29	Family Camp
JUNE 9-15	Junior High 1 (grades 7-9)	JULY 30-AUG. 2	Older Midler (grades 3-5)
JUNE 16-22	Junior 1 (grades 5-6)	AUG. 2-4	AB Men and Boys Camp
JUNE 23-29	High School 1 (grades 9-'24 grads)	AUG. 9-10	Camp Global

Other Dates

MARCH 1 Staff Applications Due	MARCH 15-16 Staff Interviews	APRIL 19 Wear Your Camp Shirt Day
APRIL 21 Cowen Sunday	APRIL 26-27 AB Men's Work Party	JUNE 3-6 Young Leader Training

*camp dates subject to change

**Camp Cowen 2024
registration opens
February 26th!**

**For more information, visit
campcowen.org.**

More Than 80 Students Gathered at Camp Cowen for BCM's Fall Retreat

Witnessing a group of college students gather over a fall weekend (October 13–15) to build relationships and create community is definitely a humble privilege. Students from across several campuses in West Virginia were grateful for the opportunity to rest and renew during **Baptist Campus Ministry's** Fall Retreat at Camp Cowen. During the weekend, Jack Eades taught on relational wisdom and emotional intelligence as it pertains to relationships in life; Mike Sisson preached on how big and great God truly is in our lives; students shared in small groups, spent time in community and enjoyed worship. Every year, BCM Fall Retreat provides college students with an opportunity to connect with one another and campuses from across our state.

Listening to the students share and reflect the impact the BCM retreat had upon them is significant. Included are a few quotes from students who attended this year's retreat.



More than 80 students from four campuses gathered for Fall Retreat.

In the midst of a busy semester, the retreat was a renewal for my soul. I was able to enjoy God's beautiful creation and feel totally surrounded by His Spirit. I grew closer to friends and met other new people, as well.

—Anna Umpleby (WVU)

For me, I enjoyed the one-on-one conversations that I had with my friend toward the end of the weekend. I really got a better understanding on his life and grew my relationship with him. I've never been able to have those types of intentional conversations with him. And the whole weekend helped teach me how to have meaningful Christ-like conversations with others.

—Jonah Tincher (Marshall)

Fall Retreat was a wonderful weekend spent with an amazing community. This community and setting allowed me to learn more about myself and truly get immersed in God's Word.

—Ashley Bojanowski (WVU)

Through the support BCM receives from WVBC churches and associations, college students can gather at events like this to continue growing in their faith. BCM values and appreciates the partnerships in ministry from WVBC churches. We continually need your support through prayer, relationships and giving. As God continues to change the lives of students through BCM, students are changing their world as they follow Christ.

Language Learning and Relationship Building—An Update from Japan

Written by Sarah McCloy,
Global Servant, International Ministries

It was a busy summer full of learning and ministry. My life is positively overflowing with stories of God's blessings and provisions! I wish I could share them all, but that would make this update far too long.

Besides learning Japanese, my main focus during this first year in Sendai is to build relationships with people. Summer is a time of many festivals and events in Japan. It has provided lots of opportunities for relationship building!

One person I have gotten to know is A-san. We met at a local cafe and bonded through a shared interest in community development. She previously lived in the US and knows how hard it can be to move to a new country. She is constantly helpful and often invites me to different festivals and events. We also talk often about faith. She is not a Christian but finds Christianity very interesting. A-san is quick to share with others the meaning of my actions whenever I do some "new" Christian thing, such as praying before a meal. Her openness has been a blessing!

Another friendship I have formed is with M-san. She is a fellow student at the language school. She moved to Sendai from China for her husband's studies. Our conversations are a funny mix of Japanese, English and Chinese. It probably confuses anyone who overhears us. We love to go out and explore Sendai together!



Sarah preaching at the Japan Baptist Union Annual Meeting in July.

One day, M-san saw the Bible app on my phone and was curious. As I explained the app, I learned M-san had never heard of the Bible before. It was totally new to her. A little hard to imagine from an American perspective!

I have also had the chance to meet many Christians here. I meet every week for "English Talk Time" with a local pastor's daughter. B-san is a high school senior who wants to practice her English conversation skills. While she practices English, I also have the opportunity to be a Christian presence and mentor in her life. It is difficult for young people in Japan, especially Christians. They experience a lot of peer pressure and have few Christian influences. Having someone to talk to, especially a fellow young Christian woman, is so needed!



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



2024 ANNUAL BIBLE CONFERENCE

Saturday, March 2, 2024
Parchment Valley Conference Center

A STUDY OF 2 SAMUEL, FEATURING DR. TRENT EASTMAN



Register online at:
wvbc.org



ABMen's Scholarship Fund

Last year, the **American Baptist Men (ABMen) of WV** established a scholarship fund, designed for young men of WVBC churches who will be attending college or technical schools after high school graduation. The scholarships are awarded annually with the amounts determined by the ABMen Scholarship Review Board, based on available funds. This year, they were able to provide scholarships to three students: Wyatt Flesher (Harrisville Baptist), Robert Copenhaver (Baptist Temple, Fairmont) and Preston Cale (Saint Albans First Baptist).

The deadline to apply for next year's scholarship is February 28th. To learn more or apply, visit: <https://www.wvbc.org/ministries/auxiliaries/american-baptist-men-wv/>.



2023 Coal River Association National Men's Prayer Breakfast

National Men's Prayer Breakfast February 24th, 2024



2023 Good Hope 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.

Junior High Convention: Created in God, by God and for God

“God knows you, He created you and He wants to be known by you.” In Genesis, we read of how God spoke into the formless emptiness and filled the earth, calling it good. And we know that all creation continues to bear the effects of the brokenness of sin. Today, we too feel the effects of our sin and the brokenness. Sometimes it is hard to believe Ephesians 2:10 could be true of us: *“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.”* We were created in God, by God, for God.

At **Junior High Convention**, 150 people spent the weekend immersed in God’s Word, hearing God’s truth and responding to God’s call on their lives. The speaker, Elliott Gregory, spoke powerful truths to sixth, seventh and eighth grade students, and as God ministered to their hearts and minds, the students responded. Two students made first-time commitments to Christ, numerous others prayed for God to shine His light into the darkness and brokenness they face, and yet others asked God to help them shine the light of His love and grace through their lives so others could know the truth!

“If you have Jesus, you will ALWAYS have God’s peace in your emptiness and brokenness. Through our brokenness, God can shine all the brighter because of what he has done in our lives.”

We are blessed in West Virginia with talented, willing student leaders. The **Youth Ministry Planning Team** worked hard to plan this event. Youth leaders, chaperones and parents made a way for 13 churches to bring students to attend. Crab Orchard Baptist Church served as the host and many volunteers offered



Elliott Gregory challenging students to live for God.

hospitality to the group. Elliott Gregory was the speaker and Hunter Pritt guided us in worship. We are blessed!

And we are not done yet! **Join us for Senior High Convention this February 23-25 at Shinnston First Baptist Church.** Our speaker, Bryan Marvel, is excited to come and share with High School students as we look at what it means to be “Created: in God, by God, for God.”

Golden’eers Learn to “Listen Up” at Their Fall Conference



Several individuals enjoyed the new Whippoorwill Covered Campfire.

On September 11-13, there were 54 individuals from various churches around the state who attended the **Fall Golden’eers Conference** at Parchment Valley Conference Center. Jeff Davenport, pastor of Hurricane First Baptist Church, was the Bible Study leader and spoke on the theme of “Listen Up.” He reiterated the importance of God’s Word and how devastating the results can be when we do not hear Him.

Each morning started with a time of prayer. Judy Prater, member of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Parkersburg, led the choir in singing. The afternoons were filled with activities such as corn hole, bracelet making, watercolor, puzzles and other games. After dinner, we enjoyed a time of singing and a devotion around the campfire. At the conclusion of each Golden’eers conference, we share together in a time of communion following our final Bible Study.

The sense of community that is felt is a wonderful benefit of attending Golden’eers. Making new friends, building on past friendships and supporting each other makes this time together so special. Golden’eers gives those 55 and over the opportunity to stay active, be social and live life to the fullest.

The Spring Golden’eers Conference will be May 6-8, 2024, at Parchment Valley. Please plan to join us as we are making plans for another great experience.



Palmer Theological Seminary Luncheon



Don Biram, 2023 President



Enjoying the Parchment Valley display in the Exhibit Hall



David Reed speaking to pastors



Next year's officers for the WV American Baptist Women



Casey Dawson receiving the James Anderson, Sr. Award



Phil Wayman delivering the Annual Sermon



Some of the AB Men at the Oil & Gas Museum



Baptist Campus Ministry Banquet



DOING CHRIST'S WORK *together*

by Intentionally Engaging Communities for Christ



Keynote speaker Dr. Verlon Fosner



Eric Seckman and the South Parkersburg Baptist Worship Team



Mark Wood receiving the Ward Hibbs Award



Host Pastor Rich Blain



WV Baptist Education Society Luncheon



Mike Sisson delivering his annual Executive Minister Address



West Virginia
Baptist Convention

Annual Training Event

Saturday, February 3, 2024

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 (includes lunch)
 * Registrations after January 26 will not include lunch

_____ \$27 Additional Fee for Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies (BWSCS)

_____ \$37 Additional Fee for BWSCS Couple

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

SCHEDULE:

9:00 AM	Registration (Hill Hall)
9:30 AM	Worship (Hill Hall)
10:15 AM	Morning Workshops
Noon	Lunch (Gym or Barn)
1:00 PM	Afternoon Workshops
2:30 PM	Dismissal

WORKSHOP LIST

Select one morning and afternoon workshop:

Morning Workshops (10:15 AM)

_____ Short-Term Mission Trip Leader Training (Part 1)
 _____ Dinner Church
 _____ Ages and Stages of Childhood Development
 _____ Managing Thoughts and Feelings of Anxiety
 _____ Beneficial and Ethical Use of A.I. within Christian Ministry
 _____ CPR Training
 _____ Church Clerks
 _____ Church Treasurers and Financial Secretaries
 _____ Using Digital Ministries to Reach and Disciple
 _____ How to Talk to Unbelievers
 _____ Growing through Theological Education
 _____ ABW Officer Training

Afternoon Workshops (1:00 PM)

_____ Short-Term Mission Trip Leader Training (Part 2)
 _____ Dinner Church
 _____ Ages and Stages of Childhood Development
 _____ Mental Health: What Do We Know and How Do We Help?
 _____ Creating a Visual Presentation for Your Sermon
 _____ NARCAN Training
 _____ Using Recreational Ministries to Reach and Disciple
 _____ How to Identify and Develop Leaders
 _____ Leading Discipleship Pathways
 _____ Church Trustees
 _____ Deacons
 _____ How to Start a Women's Ministry in Your Church

Register for the Annual Training Event online at: www.wvbc.org

Kids Learned How Not to Worry at Fall Children's Rally

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

It was a beautiful day at Parchment Valley Conference Center as more than 200 kids gathered for our **Fall Children's Rally**. This year's focus continued the mental health emphasis of the Discipleship Commission with the theme, "Don't Worry About It." The goal was to help kids learn how to trust in God in the midst of life's difficulties.

As the children arrived, they were given the opportunity to put their worries in a box so they wouldn't have to think about them all day. They also had the opportunity to make a craft that reminded them of how God never leaves them. The kids then rotated through five different sessions, where they learned lessons that reminded them of the promises of Jesus. Each lesson was centered on Philippians 4:6: "Do not worry about anything. But pray and ask God for everything you need."

The day ended with a reading of the book, "What Do I Do with Worry?" by Dr. Josh and Christi Straub. The story tells of how a little girl learns to turn her "what if's?" into naming her worries, telling someone about them, praying to God about them and letting them fly away like a bird. The kids of this generation carry so many concerns, but our hope is that we helped them start to understand that God is greater and He will always be with them.

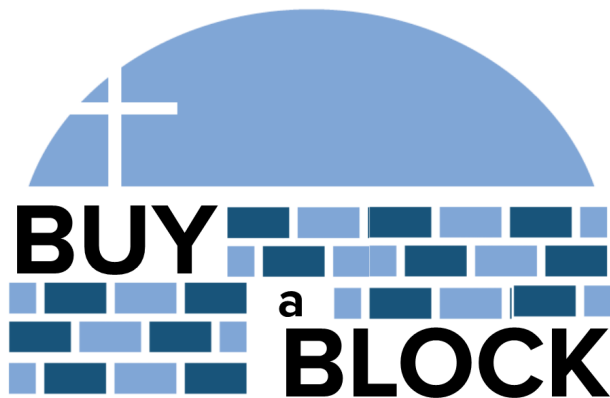
In addition to the lessons, the kids were encouraged to bring donations for Life Choice, a ministry in Clarksburg that helps expecting mothers and their babies. Many items were collected,



Kids enjoying a time of worship at the Fall Children's Rally.

including diapers, wipes, clothing and gift cards. We are thankful to the adult leaders who gave of their time to pour into these kids and for the individuals and churches who donated to our mission project.

Please join us in prayer for the kids in our churches. Also consider joining us at our Spring Children's Rally, scheduled for March 2, 2024, at Parchment Valley.



**Each \$20 donation helps us build
toward our goal of \$400,000**

**SUNNY DAY ACTIVITY CENTER
— at Cowen —**

In the past month, more than \$60,000 has been raised toward our \$400,000 completion goal for the Sunny Day Activity Center—totaling \$1.15 million total.

To make a donation, visit campcowen.org or scan this QR code with your phone.



DID YOU KNOW?

If you are over the age of 70 1/2, you may be required to take the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from your IRA - even if you don't need or want the funds, thus increasing your taxable income.

However, did you know that you could fulfill your RMD by making a Qualified Charitable Contribution (QCD) by a direct transfer of up to \$100,000 to a charity (or charities)? This enables you to save on taxes while also supporting a ministry or cause that you are passionate about.

Every year, the WVBC receives several QCD's that are designated to a particular ministry or missionary. These types of gifts are an important way in which we are able to do Christ's work together.

If you are interested in making a QCD for the Sunny Day Activity Center, our missionaries, the WVBC, your church or another ministry, contact Todd McClure at todd@wvbc.org.

Northwest Area News

by **Mark McCloy**, Northwest Area Minister

Come and See What the Lord Has Done

Come and see what the Lord has done, the amazing things he has done on the earth. Psalm 46:8

I read a book some years ago about all the bad things happening in the world. I remember thinking at the time, what a depressing book to write, if all you were going to do was keep track of the bad things. It was also not a very encouraging book to read. But what about the good things? It seems like it is human nature for us to focus on the bad and forget to be thankful for the good. As we head into the holiday season, perhaps we should flip that idea.

I imagine that each of us could think of something that God has done for us, for our family or for our church. Just in case you are having trouble, here are some good things to celebrate:

- Many churches have been having baptisms, including some that have not had one in years.
- Auburn Baptist has added a new youth and children's ministry.
- Strait Creek Baptist ordained Harry Dye as a deacon, and Harrisville Baptist ordained James Flesher as a deacon.
- The Good Hope Association sent a mission team of 14 in early November to help with relief work in Kentucky. Some of the ladies from the association also made 46 quilts for them to take and give out during the trip.



The Good Hope Association hosted a Quilt Dedication.

- Many churches celebrated homecomings, picnics, back-to-church Sundays and lots of other fun events.
- Newark Baptist has taught Church History and Ministerial Ethics from the Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies and made it available to all their people as a Sunday night class.
- Sunrise Baptist had an outreach in the Parkersburg City Park, had a community breakfast at their church and turned it into a "dinner church" style event.

Is there something exciting happening in your church? Tell us about it, we would love to share it!

Northeast Area News

by **David Hulme**, Northeast Area Minister

Pastor and Deacons Ordained in Northeast Area

Scott McClure was ordained to the gospel ministry at Clarksburg Baptist Church on September 24, 2023.

Dwayne Matheny and Waymond Cork II were ordained as deacons at Vermont Baptist Church on October 15, 2023.



Clarksburg Baptist Church is part of the Union Association.

Clarksburg Baptist Church Celebrates their 175th Anniversary

Founded in 1848, Clarksburg Baptist Church celebrated 175 years of ministry to the Clarksburg community and beyond with special services and activities on November 12 and 19. Although the church has had opportunities to relocate over the years, it has remained faithful in its presence and committed in its witness in the downtown community. In addition to the present sanctuary (dedicated in 1896), additions were added in 1951 and 2006 to enable the church to better meet the changing needs in the community and reach new generations with the gospel. Senior Pastor Phil Wayman says the church is "dedicated to providing ministry that reaches people in our community. That is what we are here for."

As it has for the past 175 years, Clarksburg Baptist Church continues to adapt to the challenges of sharing the gospel in an ever-changing culture. As they lead in the present, Pastor Wayman, along with Pastors Josh Weddle and Scott McClure, hope to continue to lay a solid foundation for generations to come.

Southwest Area News

by *Evan Arkell, Southwest Area Minister*

Ordination of Pastor Sam Gasaway

The Teays Valley Association was blessed to celebrate another ordination service. In the afternoon on October 8th, Judson Baptist Church, Winfield, ordained Pastor Sam Gasaway. Pastor David Workman (Starcher Baptist Church) delivered the sermon for the service, I delivered the charge to both Pastor Sam and the church and the music was handled by folks from Judson Baptist. Of course, with any celebration at a Baptist church, it gave the church the opportunity to host a reception and dinner following the service.



Sam Gasaway receiving his certificate of ordination

A Busy Fall in the Southwest Area

This fall was very busy with various church events. Several churches in the southwest area of the WVBC celebrated the harvest season with some type of trunk or treat, fall festival or other type of outreach event. I got to participate in a trunk or treat at New Baptist Church, where the vehicles were decorated to walk people through the Bible stories from the Old Testament to the New Testament. Although we are certainly getting too old for the role, my wife, Becky, and I played Mary and Joseph in the story of baby Jesus at the manger.

There were also several churches in the area that hosted fall revivals, which I have heard some great feedback. A few churches in the Kanawha Valley Association held a roving revival, going from church to church with a different speaker each evening. I have heard some positive reports from their revival as well.

It was a great fall and I look forward to seeing what the winter has in store for us!

Southeast Area News

by *Jon Villers, Southeast Area Minister*

Founder's Day at Rockcastle Baptist

It was a great privilege to be at Rockcastle Baptist's Founder's Day Service held on November 5th. Rockcastle Baptist is in the Rockcastle Association near the town of Pineville, WV. As the church celebrated their 167th anniversary, Rev. Silas Mullens welcomed us and shared a brief history of the church. Over the last 167 years, 17 pastors have been called, with the first one earning only \$30 a month. Barney Wyatt was a scholar and professor who attended the church in the 1860's, and he chronicled many events in his memoirs. He wrote about coming to a revival conducted by Woodrow Wilson Harrison Cook. He also wrote about coming into an old log church, where there were oil lamps on the walls and the pews that were made of two hewn logs. They did not use songbooks and there was a center aisle that separated the men and women on each side.

We had a great attendance and much enthusiasm during the service. We heard a wonderful church choir and local singer/songwriter who wrote a special song for this occasion, entitled, "This Little Country Church." The choir led us in great songs of the faith that included Amazing Grace, How Great is our God, Heaven's Jubilee and Old Country Church. I was able to offer a

message with the reminder that Jesus continues to be the Light of the World and that we are to be His reflection into a world that so desperately needs a Savior. Pastor Mullens recognized the families that are still part of the church since before the 1900's. Those families include the Cooks, Hallseys, Goodes and Brownings. After the morning service, we were treated to a wonderful meal and fellowship.

I was so encouraged to know that God's Word continues to be proclaimed through gathering and the sharing of God's love.



Rockcastle Baptist Church is located in Wyoming County, WV.

Members of the Raleigh/Rockcastle "Hall of Faith"

The West Virginia Baptist / December - January 13

September—October 2023

MALCOM D. ALLISON, 59, of Stouts Mills, died on September 12, 2023. He was a member of Sand Fork Baptist Church, where he served as a deacon.

PEGGY JOYCE BLYTHE, 88, formerly of Saint Albans, died on October 5, 2023. She was a member of Saint Albans First Baptist Church.

ROBERT STEVEN BOWERS, 61, of Milton, died on September 14, 2023. He was a member of Milton Baptist Church, where he served as an usher, deacon and trustee.

LILLIAN GRACE BRADY, 92, of Fairmont, died on October 3, 2023. She was a member of The Baptist Temple, where she was a member of the American Baptist Women and the Carl Cain Sunday school class.

WAYNE EDWARD FRIDLEY, 73, of Ravenswood, died on October 17, 2023. He was a member of Ravenswood First Baptist Church, where he served as the chairman of the Board of Christian Education, a member of the finance committee, served as an usher, assisted with the youth classes and sang in the choir.

SHAWN ERIC HALL, 59, of Hagerstown, MD, died on May 29, 2023. He served as a youth pastor at New Hope Baptist Church, as well as the senior pastor at Pine Grove Baptist Church.

WALLACE HILL JONES, 90, of Rainelle, died on October 10, 2023. He was a deacon of Rainelle First Baptist Church.

MARGARET ELLEN “SISSY” KINKAID OFFUT, 82, formerly of Saint Albans, died on October 8, 2023. She was a member of Saint Albans First Baptist Church.

HARRIETT LOU PHILPOTT, 85, of Saint Albans, died on September 16, 2023. She was a member of Saint Albans First Baptist Church, where she was a member of the choir and the Wifani Sunday School class.

NOLAN ARTHUR THOMAS, 86, of Kingwood, died on September 17, 2023. He was a member of Kingwood Baptist Church and served in various roles.

Leadership Updates

LARRY FLEMING to Smithville Baptist Church as pastor 9/1/2023

LARRY DALE to Belleville Baptist Temple as interim pastor 9/10/2023

DWAYNE MATHENY to Liberty Baptist Church as pastor 10/1/2023

Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering

The Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO) is a congregational offering collected annually in December from participating congregations. RMMO funds are distributed as thank you checks to retired ordained ministers and missionaries who have devoted 15+ years to our national denomination, as well as surviving spouses. A certain portion is also allocated for direct emergency assistance.

For resources, visit: abc-usa.org/rmmo/

RMMO2023: Good will come.



“Good will come to those who are generous and lend freely, who conduct their affairs with justice.” — Psalm 112:5 (NIV)

MINISTRY EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Pastor (Full-Time)

Location: Hampshire County

Youth Pastor (Part-Time)

Location: Beckley area

Pastor (Full-Time)

Location: Barbour County

Pastor (Part-Time)

Location: Weston area

Pastor (Full-Time)

Location: Grafton area

Associate Pastor of Youth (Full-Time)

Location: Bridgeport area

Accompanist (Part-Time)

Location: Charleston area

Student Ministries Pastor (Full-Time)

Location: Parkersburg area

Senior Pastor (Part-Time)

Location: Huntington area

Family Ministry Position (Part-Time)

Location: Charleston area

Church Pianist (Part-Time)

Location: Charleston area

Music Director (Part-Time)

Location: Charleston area

Children’s Ministry Director (Part-Time)

Location: Parkersburg area

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

December 2023

DECEMBER 1 –The ministry of First Southern Baptist Church (Elk Valley Association)
DECEMBER 2 – Ray Schellinger, International Ministries Global Consultant
DECEMBER 3 – The ministry of Kingwood Baptist Church; Charles Warger, pastor (Goshen Association)
DECEMBER 4 – The ministry of Yawkey Baptist Church; Darrell Searls, pastor (Coal River Association)
DECEMBER 5 –The ministry of North Fork Baptist Church; Darrell Farley, pastor (Harrisville Association)
DECEMBER 6 –The ministry of Two Runs Baptist Church; Michael Howerton, interim 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 Wolf Run Baptist Church; Jim Higginson, pastor (Panhandle Association)
DECEMBER 10 –The ministry of Oceana First Baptist Church; Jerry Cook, pastor (Rockcastle Association)
DECEMBER 11 – The ministry of Glen Falls Baptist Church; Bryant Bailey, pastor (Judson Association)
DECEMBER 12 – The ministry of Athens Baptist Church; Timothy Mitchem, pastor (Greenbrier-Raleigh Association)
DECEMBER 13 –The ministry of Man First Baptist Church; Perry Brown, pastor (Logan-Mingo Association)
DECEMBER 14 –The ministry of Dixie First Baptist Church (Hopewell Association)
DECEMBER 15 – Bill Clemmer, International Ministries Global Servant to the Democratic Republic of the Congo
DECEMBER 16 – The ministry of Prosperity Baptist Church; Kenneth Heiney, pastor (Little Kanawha Association)
DECEMBER 17 – Sarah Chetti, International Ministries Global Servant to Lebanon
DECEMBER 18 – The ministry of Davis Baptist Church; Leroy Shook, pastor (Eastern Association)
DECEMBER 19 – The ministry of Main Street Baptist Church; Jeff Fetty, pastor (Teays Valley Association)
DECEMBER 20 – The ministry of Lauckport Baptist Church (Parkersburg 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 Deep Water Baptist Church; Thomas Skaggs, 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 Victory Baptist Church; Trevor Pullen, 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 Providence Baptist Church; William Spears, pastor (Guyandotte Association)
DECEMBER 30 – Lori Mann, International Ministries Global Servant to Southeast Asia
DECEMBER 31 – The ministry of West Warren Baptist Church; Bob Scharnhorst, pastor (Fairmont Association)

January 2024

JANUARY 1 – Pray for a blessed New Year
JANUARY 2 – Matt Ash, chair of the Committee on Ministerial Standing and member of the WVBC Leadership Commission
JANUARY 3 – Molly Juarez, International Ministries Global Servant to El Salvador
JANUARY 4 – The ministry of Crum Missionary Baptist Church (Twelve Pole Association)
JANUARY 5 – Mark Juanes, International Ministries Global Servant to Thailand
JANUARY 6 – The WVBC Executive Board meeting today at Parchment Valley
JANUARY 7 –The ministry of Wallace First Baptist Church; Keith Swiger, pastor (Judson Association)
JANUARY 8 – Melanie Baggao, International Ministries Global Servant to Lebanon
JANUARY 9 – The ministry of West Union Baptist Church (Broad Run Association)
JANUARY 10 –Leigh Ellen Eades, member of the WVBC Discipleship Commission
JANUARY 11 – Ann Borquist, International Ministries Global Consultant
JANUARY 12 –The ministry of Central Big Creek Baptist Church (Guyandotte Association)
JANUARY 13 – The ministry of Pine Grove First Baptist Church; Jerry Kuhens, pastor (Panhandle Association)
JANUARY 14 – The ministry of Rush Run Baptist Church; John Vannoy, pastor (Little Kanawha Association)
JANUARY 15 –The ministry of Toneda Baptist Church; Scottie Lusk, pastor (Rockcastle Association)
JANUARY 16 –The ministry of Richwood First Baptist Church; Gary Carpenter, pastor (Hopewell Association)
JANUARY 17 –The ministry of Beaver First Baptist Church; Steven Gibson, pastor (Greenbrier-Raleigh Association)
JANUARY 18 –The ministry of Harmony Grove Baptist Church; James Baker, pastor (Union Association)
JANUARY 19 – The ministry of Maysel Baptist Church; Jim Hamrick, pastor (Elk Valley Association)
JANUARY 20 – Andrea Fling, Bookkeeper, WVBC
JANUARY 21 –The ministry of Comunidad Nueva Esperanza (Good Hope Association)
JANUARY 22 –Ethan Starcher, member of the WVBC Outreach Commission
JANUARY 23 –The ministry of Harmony Baptist Church; Jason Sleeth, pastor (Fairmont Association)
JANUARY 24 –The ministry of Independence Baptist Church; Carl Trickett, pastor (Goshen Association)
JANUARY 25 – The ministry of Vienna Baptist Church; Bill Brown, 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 Starcher Baptist Church; David Workman, pastor (Kanawha Valley Association)
JANUARY 29 –The ministry of Saint Albans First Baptist Church; Joel Harpold, pastor (Teays Valley Association)
JANUARY 30 –Faye Carol Yarbrough, International Ministries Global Servant to South Africa
JANUARY 31 – Erich Reggi, WVBC president and member of the WVBC Stewardship Commission

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

Upcoming Events

JANUARY

January 5
WVBC Executive Committee
Parchment Valley Conference Center

January 6
WVBC Executive Board
Parchment Valley Conference Center

January 9
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Old Testament I (B-01)
Various locations

January 15
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Theology I (T-01)
Online

January 15
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Evangelism (Mod-06)
Online

January 26
Pastors4Pastors (P4P) Book Study
Highlawn Baptist Church

FEBRUARY

February 3
Annual Training Event
Parchment Valley Conference Center

February 20
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Old Testament II (B-02)
Various locations

February 23-25
Senior High Convention
Shinnston First Baptist Church

MARCH

March 1
P4P Pre-Bible Conference Event
Parchment Valley Conference Center

March 2
Spring Children's Rally
Parchment Valley Conference Center

March 2
Annual Bible Conference
Parchment Valley Conference Center

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

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

APRIL

April 5-7
Women's Camp
Camp Cowen

April 16
P4P Book Study
Page Baptist Church

April 19-20
Senior Day (2024 Graduates)
Camp Cowen

April 20
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Weddings and Funerals (E-05)
Parchment Valley Conference Center

April 21
Camp Cowen Sunday

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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Saturday, February 3, 2024 **Parchment Valley Conference Center**

More information can be found inside on page 10

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