

The West Virginia Baptist Newsletter

August—September 2024

BCM: Changing Lives that Change the World



The community of **Baptist Campus Ministry (BCM)** has been growing and thriving throughout the state this school year. All of our campuses grew in number, leading many of our BCM groups to relocate to larger meeting places. They also grew in faith, witnessing multiple baptisms, rededications and calls into ministry.

Fall Retreat at Camp Cowen, Beach Week at Myrtle Beach and spring break mission trips to Puerto Rico and Mexico all had great attendance and touched lives for Christ. "This trip showed me that God's love is all over," said Katie Losh, a student at Marshall, about their trip to Puerto Rico. "He worked in us just as much as he worked in the people we served."

Fairmont State BCM outgrew their former meeting place and had to move to a larger location on campus, which allows them to reach out to even more students each week. They tripled in size in the fall semester and continued to grow in the spring semester.

A new gathering of BCM students began meeting on the campus of Davis & Elkins, led by Pastor Brett Rinehart from Elkins First

Baptist Church. A new associate, Laurie Starcher, also stepped into leadership at Concord University, which has been student-led for the past few years. These new co-laborers with God will help us reach students who otherwise may not hear the Gospel on campus.

Glenville State BCM saw record numbers of attendees this year. In addition to their growth in size, the Lord was moving in the hearts of the students. One freshman decided to get baptized, and when the time came, his mother and two siblings drove over two hours to join him in the waters of baptism! BCM's motto is "changing lives that change the world." This entire family was forever changed as a result of BCM reaching this one student.

As the new school year begins, please join us by praying for BCM. Pray for our students and leaders as they gear up for another semester of outreach, fellowship, worship and community.

Pray also for incoming students. If you know of a student on any of the campuses below, please reach out to one of our associates.

Concord University

Associate in Ministry: Laurie Starcher
Time: Thursdays at 6:00 p.m.
Location: TBA
Contact: ldstarcher@yahoo.com

Davis & Elkins College

Associate in Ministry: Brett Rinehart
Time: Tuesdays at 9:00 p.m.
Location: The Chapel
Contact: rinehart.brett@gmail.com

Fairmont State University

Associate in Ministry: Karla Carr
Time: Tuesdays at 8:08 p.m.
Location: Newman Center
Contact: fairmontstatebcm@gmail.com

Glenville State University

Associate in Ministry: Lance Linden
Time: Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m.
Location: Anchor Bible Church
Contact: lance@gassawaybaptist.com

Marshall University

Associate in Ministry: Rob Ely
Time: Wednesdays at 9:15 p.m.
Location: Campus Christian Center
Contact: ely@wvbc.org

Potomac State College

Associate in Ministry: Shannon Earle
Time: Mondays at 7:00 p.m.
Location: Heritage Room
Contact: pastorjshannon@gmail.com

West Virginia University

Associate in Ministry: Kevin Sions
Time: Thursdays at 7:07 p.m.
Location: Towers Room G58
Contact: sions@wvbc.org

WVU Institute of Technology

Associate in Ministry: Anthony Pratt
Time: Thursdays at 7:00 p.m.
Location: Life Science Building 208
Contact: anthony_pratt@hotmail.com

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

Dependence Day!

Each year on the Fourth of July, many Americans celebrate freedom, as well they should. It's one of the defining principles of our nation. Yet one might ask, "Of those celebrating freedom, how many are truly experiencing it?" The truth is that real freedom does not come from being independent to do whatever we please; it comes by placing our complete trust and dependence on the Sovereign and Eternal King of the universe, the Lord Jesus Christ!

Now, for America's founding fathers, it was a Declaration of Independence from the king that changed everything. But for us, as followers of Jesus Christ, it is our "Declaration of Dependence" on our Eternal King that changes everything.

Ron Hutchcraft writes, "Now, when it comes to God running our lives, we are all tempted to declare our independence. Even if our theology compels us to officially say we trust God, we can be 'Sinatra-ites.' Remember Frank Sinatra's signature song, 'I did it my way?' Even for us Christians, that's often how we really live – I'll do it my way. We'll figure this out by ourselves, we'll find a way, we'll make it happen, we won't wait, we'll get it done now. We tend to depend on our plans, our cleverness, our talent, our persuasiveness, our hard work, our connections. We'll count on our programs or our own strength."

Theologian Elton Trueblood explains, "The emphasis is upon discipline. In the conduct of one's own life, it is soon obvious, as many have learned the hard way, that empty freedom is a snare and a delusion. In following what comes naturally or easily, life simply ends in confusion, and in consequent disaster. Without the discipline of time, we spoil the next day the night before, and without discipline of prayer, we are likely to end by having practically no experience of the divine-human encounter. However compassionate we may be with others, we dare not be soft or indulgent with ourselves. Excellence comes at a price, and one of the major prices is that of inner control. We have not advanced very far in our spiritual lives if we have not encountered the basic paradox of freedom, to the effect that we are most free when we are bound. But not just any way of being bound will suffice; What matters is the character of our binding."

That's why we need to declare our dependence on the Lord daily! Jesus makes it very clear that the source of true life comes from our being bound to Him. In John 15:5, Jesus says, "I am the vine; you are the branches." In other words, the fruit of your life doesn't come from you; it comes from Jesus, through you, like the life of the vine comes through the branch.

Jesus goes on to say, "If anyone remains in Me and I in him, they will bear much fruit; apart from Me, you can do nothing." Nothing of any real consequence, nothing that matters, nothing that is eternal, nothing that really works over the long haul - nothing.

The quality and impact of our life depends on how big our dependency is on God. Joni Eareckson Tada said when she went to Africa that she was greeted by believers there who said, "Welcome to Africa, where our God is bigger. He is bigger because we need Him so much more!" In reality we need Him every bit as much too! We just have other things we can depend on. Our lives are smaller because our view of God is smaller, because we don't depend on Him desperately for each day's needs, each day's choices, each day's strength and each day's answers.

The frequency and content of our prayer is a good indicator of our level of dependence of Jesus Christ. What do your conversations with Him say about your dependence on Him?

Blessings,
Mike

Download the WVBC APP!

Have the WV Baptist Newsletter delivered to your phone!



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

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DOING CHRIST'S WORK *together*

by Intentionally Engaging Communities for Christ

ABWM of WV Celebrate 90th Annual Conference

*Written by Kim Conrad, Communication Coordinator,
American Baptist Women's Ministries of WV*

On Saturday, June 1, 2024, over 100 women from across West Virginia gathered at Parchment Valley Conference Center for the 90th Annual Women's Conference. The conference is an opportunity to educate and provide status reports to women regarding mission projects and other activities sponsored by the board. This year's conference utilized the theme "Passing the Torch" to reminisce the historical beginnings of American Baptist Women's Ministries (ABWM) of WV, be reminded of the current ongoing projects and activities, and consider future opportunities with anticipation, hope and excitement.



Sandy Foster Currey, joined by Mya Durden and Abi McClure, talking about "passing the torch" to the next generation.

The keynote speaker for the conference was Kim Conrad from Sand Fork Baptist Church. Hebrews 12:1-2 was the foundation for the messages as she spoke on identifying our own great cloud of witnesses, discovering the weight and sin that trips us up, and displaying our endurance in our service to God, church and community. Members of the ABWM of WV Executive Board shared information on our mission projects and activities such as Special Project, Scholarship Girls, Spiritual Growth Retreat, Women's Day and more. Elizabeth Johnson Carter (portrayed by Kathy Hudson) traveled from the 1800s to share her role in starting the ABWM of WV as the first state ABWM President.

An offering for the Special Project – the Missionary House at Parchment Valley – was taken for new appliances and needed repairs. The generosity of the women far exceeded our expectations with a total of \$1,376.77 collected. The Executive Board pledged to match the offering, meaning a total of \$2,753.54 will be used immediately to purchase a new dishwasher and refrigerator for the house.

A Commissioning Service was also held, with Rhonda Reed praying over the ABWM team that traveled to Mexico to work with Keith and Debbie Myers. Jane Mullen was recognized for her 24 years of service overseeing the Scholarship Girls program. Jane has chosen to retire and pass the torch on to Lou Ann Nichols. Jane was presented with a Blenko purple water bottle that had an engraved ABWM of WV logo.

Conference attendees also enjoyed the contemporary Christian music by New Creation from Parkersburg, they shared in the elements of the Lord's Supper, enjoyed great food, and had lots of fun and laughter.

American Baptist Women's Ministries of West Virginia Spiritual Growth Retreat

"God created you, crowned you, and made you a ruler! C'mon now!"*

September 27-29, 2024

Parchment Valley Conference Center

Keynote Speaker: Jill Narraway

Theme: Straighten Your Crown, Girl!

Worship Leaders: Brian and Sara McClure

Registration Deadline: September 6

Questions? Contact Kim Pickrell, Coordinator, at (304) 481-2632 or pickrellk@aol.com.

Mission Team from West Virginia Assists a Women's Retreat in Mexico

*Written by Karla Carr, Mission Trip Participant,
American Baptist Women's Ministries of WV*

What do a retired principal, a school secretary, an accountant, a car dealership office manager, a counselor, a college professor, a retired engineer turned pastor, a discipleship director and a men's worship leader all have in common? They all participated in our mission trip to Puebla, Mexico, to assist International Ministries global servants Keith and Deborah Myers with the 2024 C.I.C.E.M. National Women's Retreat. The retreat was held June 20-23 and consisted of 32 indigenous women from five different states of Mexico. This retreat was the first ever for the C.I.C.E.M. women!

Official planning for this event began in 2023 as the team committed to the work, and over many months, workshops were created, crafts were tested and events were prayed over. Deborah presented the book of Ruth, and the WV team supported in activities such as icebreaker games and workshops about joy, prayer, worship, health and identity in Christ. One of the most moving moments of the retreat was when Cecily Thompson taught on Jesus washing the disciples' feet, and each member of the team was honored to wash the feet of the Mexican women, and then the women washed our team's feet. The connection of Christ was deepened through this humbling and sacred act.

The desire of the women to learn and grow in Christ was evident through their stories of travel and struggles to attend. Some traveled over 23 hours on buses to attend the retreat, crossing

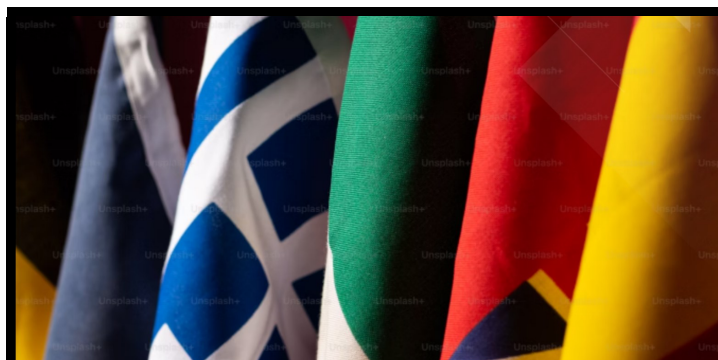


The WV Mission Team, alongside Keith, Deborah and Baillie Myers.

through dangerous areas. Others attended despite deaths in their family that week, desiring to be with sisters in Christ for peace and understanding.

The beauty of this first event is that these ladies were equipped with lesson plans, craft materials and instructions on how to teach these same workshops and crafts to the women in their communities. Now women in five states of Mexico are learning and hearing God's word as the WV team shared it, and the entire team is thankful for your prayers and support for this mission!

If you would like to hear more about the trip and the mission, don't hesitate to get in touch with me at 703-568-7480.



16TH ANNUAL

CAMP GLOBAL

August 9-10, 2024

Camp Cowen

\$50

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

Missionary guests include:

Dan Chetti

Mike and Becky Mann

Register today for only

\$50 with the promo

code **CG24**

Learn more or register at wvbc.org



The **World Mission Offering** is the best way to support the entirety of the work of **International Ministries**.

Give generally to help fund administrative and development costs OR designate your offering toward a specific missionary's personal support.

Resources available at:

WorldMissionOffering.org

Camp Cowen: The Place “Where People Meet Jesus”

Every summer, an increasing number of unchurched kids show up at **Camp Cowen**. However, being backed by the 350+ churches of the WVBC, Camp Cowen is perfectly suited to not only introduce these kids to Jesus, but to also connect them and their families to a local church.

At this summer's Junior 2 Camp, designed for fifth and sixth graders, Mason was one such kid who did not have a church, nor did he know anyone else at camp.

With things like small groups, family-style meals and lots of recreational activities, camp is an easy place to meet people. Many lifelong relationships have been formed here.

Two days into camp, Mason began asking his counselors lots of questions about Jesus. On Thursday night, he sat with one of his counselors and his Bible study leader, Bryson Morlan, and they answered more of his questions. Later that night, he accepted Christ!

Mason immediately wanted to be baptized, so Jill Narraway, the WVBC Director of Camping and Youth, called his parents and arranged for them to drive down and participate in his baptism. On Saturday morning, prior to the conclusion of camp, nearly 120 other campers gathered on the beach of the Gauley River to celebrate Mason's baptism.

Contact was also made with a pastor in his area to help get Mason and his family established in a church for further discipleship. What a joy it is to have these relationships!

Mason was just one of 10 kids who accepted Christ during this year's Junior 2 Camp. Another salvation was witnessed when two of our male counselors walked into Clarksburg Cabin and saw two students praying together, right after one had led the other to Christ!



Mason is joined by his family after being baptized by Bryson Morlan.

Camp Cowen's mission is to be a place “where people meet Jesus and grow as His disciples in a community of faith.” While Cowen might be the place “where people meet Jesus,” that “community of faith” extends to the entirety of our WVBC family.

Without the financial support of our churches, without the 300+ adults who volunteer every summer to counsel, without the numerous high school and college students who serve on summer staff, without the pastors and youth leaders who promote the camps in their churches, and without the individuals who drive the winding Birch River Road to drop off and pick up their kids, grandkids, nephews, nieces, neighbors, etc. ... none of this would be possible!

Thank you for helping Camp Cowen be a place, for 81 years, “where people meet Jesus and grow as His disciples in a community of faith.” Please join us by praying for the dozens of youth that, like Mason, met Jesus this summer.

A large group of young people are sitting on wooden bleachers in an outdoor setting at night. A large fire is burning in the foreground. The text 'FALL YOUTH RALLY' is written in large, stylized letters across the top. Below it, the text 'CAMP COWEN | SEPTEMBER 13-14' is written. Further down, the text 'SATURDAY ONLY: \$20 PER PERSON' and 'FRIDAY & SATURDAY: \$35 PER STUDENT, \$25 PER ADULT' is written. At the bottom, the text 'T-SHIRTS AVAILABLE ONLINE AND AT EVENT' and 'REGISTER AT WVBC.ORG/MINISTRIES/YOUTH' is written.

FALL YOUTH RALLY
CAMP COWEN | SEPTEMBER 13-14
SATURDAY ONLY: \$20 PER PERSON
FRIDAY & SATURDAY:
\$35 PER STUDENT, \$25 PER ADULT
T-SHIRTS AVAILABLE ONLINE AND AT EVENT
REGISTER AT WVBC.ORG/MINISTRIES/YOUTH

A Student's Perspective on Brothers' Keeper 2024

*Written by Carter Keith, Crew Chief,
Brothers' Keeper 2024*

My name is Carter Keith and I am 18 years old. I have always loved the fun of summer, but for the past six years, the thing I have looked forward to most is **Brothers' Keeper (BK)**.

Some might describe BK as a camp, others as work, and others as fun. I would describe it using all three words. My mother has worked for a church my entire life, and I have been to many church camps and on numerous mission trips. But, by far, BK is the best thing I have experienced!

I have been going to BK every year since I was 12. Each year, I look forward to building something new, helping a family in need and connecting with the Lord. Every summer, this one week fills me with so much hope and faith for every community out there - that we can all work together to create a perfect neighborhood.

This year was my first year as a crew chief. Being a crew chief is something I have been looking forward to for many years. This year, my crew worked on four projects over four days. Our first project was building a new railing for a ramp and replacing some broken shingles. Our second project was painting a porch and shed, as well as fixing some siding. Our third project was assisting an elderly couple by cleaning out their gutters and weed whacking their tall grass. Our final project was making a French drain for a gentleman who was having a water pool in his front yard. We even rented a ditch witch for that project. I feel my crew had a great time on the last job because they got to use a large piece of equipment that they had never used before.

Brothers' Keeper means a lot to me. I have learned so much as a student, and now I finally have the chance to teach younger kids the same lessons others taught me. It has also helped me grow closer to Christ. I can't wait to see more people next year and help others grow closer to Him, too.



Carter Keith and William Raum at Brothers' Keeper.

Carter's BK experience is just one of many incredible stories from this year. At BK'24 we were able to minister to 30 home owners and 120 youth. As a result, we had 23 salvations!

Plans for BK'25 are underway. We hope you will bring your youth and join us next year

PASTOR & SPOUSE
RIVER
CRUISE

FRIDAY, AUGUST 30 6PM
VALLEY GEM, MARIETTA OH
\$100 PER COUPLE
INCLUDES DINNER AND ENTERTAINMENT

Pastors4Pastors invites all pastors and their spouse to join them for a night of fellowship and entertainment. The registration deadline is August 23rd.

Register online at wvbc.org or by scanning the QR code below:



QUESTIONS?

Contact Anthony Pratt at anthony_pratt@hotmail.com

159TH
**ANNUAL
MEETING**
OF OUR WVBC FAMILY



MIKE SISSON
Executive Minister



COREY BROOKS
Annual Sermon



BILL MOWRY
Keynote Speaker

17-18
OCTOBER

Calvary Baptist Church

1424 Main Street E, Oak Hill, WV 25901

**INTENTIONALLY ENGAGING
COMMUNITIES FOR CHRIST**

"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him,
he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."

-John 15:5 (ESV)

Register online at wvbc.org

Host Church Welcome Letter

Dear West Virginia Baptist Family,

John 15:5 is the “verse du jour” for the Convention. Although we normally use ‘du jour’ to mean of the day, it can also mean of the year, which is our context. In this verse, Jesus says, “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.” In this verse we see a mutual relationship. Jesus is the vine from which life flows to us as the branches. In order for life to flow, for fruit to abound, we must abide—live, find rest and community—in Him, and Him in us. This is perhaps to what the apostle Paul alludes when he expresses to the Galatians “...Christ lives in me.”

Over the past few years, the theme of the Convention has been “Intentionally Engaging Communities for Christ.” We have defined community, we have defined intentional/intentionality and we have defined engagement. This year, we will bring everything together with the impetus behind it all. We do not simply engage with programs, events or spectacles of entertainment. Rather, we intentionally engage communities for Christ. As my friend and mentor, Pastor Herman Robinson used to say, “If Christ isn’t in it, it’s not worth doing.”

It is our pleasure to welcome each of you to this year’s Annual Meeting of the WV Baptist Convention at Calvary Baptist Church in Oak Hill. On the cross of Calvary, Jesus made community possible for us through His broken body and shed blood, and this fall at Calvary Baptist, we will come together as a faith community to celebrate what God is doing and to better learn how we can intentionally engage our communities for Christ.

Be Blessed and be a Blessing,
Greg Swisher, Senior Pastor
Jim Truman, Associate Pastor

Worship Leader

Monty Foster

Monty has served various churches within the WVBC as pastor, youth pastor, children’s pastor and music pastor. He has led music for every part of the WVBC at one time or another since he was 17 years old. He currently serves as the pastor of the Barboursville Baptist Church.

Lodging Options

Comfort Inn New River - 304-465-2300
801 Mall Road, Oak Hill, WV 25901

** A discount is available at this hotel until September 15 by mentioning “WVBC Group Rate” when making the reservation.*

Local Arrangement Committee



Back row: Ray Perdue, Connie Fox, Mary Jane Bowling, Jim Truman, Patrice Underwood and Keith Campbell

Front row: Greg and Melanie Swisher, Vonnie Wykle, Sharon Asbury, Kevin Garlow and Brandon Fox

Meet the Speakers

Bill Mowry—Keynote Speaker

Bill is a veteran staff member with The Navigators Church Ministry where he serves as an alongsider coach, a ministry innovator and a culture builder. Bill is the author of the NavPress/Tyndale Book, *The Ways of the Alongsider*. He brings a diverse disciple making background to his ministry of helping churches build disciple-making cultures. As a life and ministry coach to pastors and church leaders, he brings a first-hand knowledge of what it takes for leaders to grow intentional disciple making churches. Bill and his wife, Peggy, live in Columbus, Ohio, where they practice the craft of gardening, creating a yard and garden that is a spot of beauty in a fallen world.

Corey Brooks — Annual Sermon

Corey is the senior pastor at Breckenridge Missionary Baptist Church in Bolt, WV, where he has served since 2018. Prior to that, he served three years as the church’s youth pastor. He is a graduate of Liberty University, where he studied Religion and received his Bachelors of Psychology, specializing in Christian Counseling. He and his wife, Felicia, have two daughters—Lila and Daisy.

Annual Meeting Schedule

Thursday, October 17

9:30 AM—2:00 PM: Pre-Convention Activities

2:45 PM: Session 1

- Welcome from the Host Church
- Business Meeting 1
- Executive Minister Address

5:00 PM: Baptist Campus Ministry Banquet

6:30 PM: Session 2

- Ward Hibbs Award
- Annual Sermon
- Communion

8:30 PM: Camp Cowen Reception

BAPTIST CAMPUS MINISTRY

BCM Banquet (All are invited) - \$15

Time: Thursday, October 17 at 5:00 PM

Location: Calvary Baptist Gym

* All proceeds benefit the ministry of BCM

CAMP COWEN

Camp Cowen Reception (All are invited)

Time: Thursday, October 17 at 8:30 PM

Location: Calvary Baptist Fellowship Hall

Friday, October 18

8:30 AM: Workshop Session 1

9:15 AM: Session 3

- Recognition of New and Retired Pastors
- Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies Graduation
- James Anderson, Sr. Bivocational Pastor Award
- Keynote Address

11:15 AM: Workshop Session 2

12:00 PM: Lunch Break

1:30 PM: Exhibit Hall with Dessert

2:30 PM: Session 4

- Business Meeting 2
- Installation of Officers
- Keynote Address
- Commissioning

Pre-Convention Activities

Registration for Pre-Convention activities are done on the Annual Meeting Registration form even if you are not planning to attend any of the Annual Meeting sessions.

American Baptist Men of WV - \$35

Registration: 9:00 AM at Calvary Baptist

Event Location: Hawks Nest Jet Boat Ride

* Shuttle is available for transportation

American Baptist Women's Ministries of WV - \$10

Registration: 9:00 AM at Calvary Baptist

Event Location: Calvary Baptist Sanctuary

Speaker: Mexico Mission Team

Missions Speakers: Deborah Myers

Topic: Bridge to Joyous Living

* Nursery provided for preschool children

Pastors4Pastors - \$25

Registration: 9:00 AM at Calvary Baptist

Event Location: Oak Hill Baptist Fellowship Hall

Speaker: Bill Mowry

Topic: TBA

WV Baptist Education Society Lunch (Members Only)

Time: 12:00 PM

Location: Calvary Baptist Choir Room

Cost: FREE

Friday Lunch Options

Ministers' Wives' Fellowship - \$12

Location: Calvary Baptist Choir Room

Palmer Theological Seminary - \$12

Location: Calvary Baptist Gym

WV Baptist Historical Society - \$15

Location: Calvary Baptist Fellowship Hall

Speaker: Elder John Alderson, Jr.

Topic: Early Exploits in WV Baptist History

Annual Meeting Registration Form

This registration form can be used by delegates, visitors and exhibitors. Please use a separate form for each person. All mail-in registrations must be postmarked by October 7. Online registration will be open on wvbc.org until October 13.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Church: _____ Association: _____

REGISTRATION TYPE:

_____ Delegate (\$20)

_____ Non-Delegate (\$20)

_____ Exhibitor (\$20)

NOTE: DELEGATES MUST HAVE THIS FORM SIGNED BY PASTOR OR CHURCH CLERK

Pastor or Clerk Signature: _____

PRE-CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Please mark any pre-conference activities you plan to attend.

_____ American Baptist Men of WV (\$35)

_____ American Baptist Women's Ministries of WV (\$10)

_____ Pastors4Pastors (\$25)

MEAL OPTIONS

Please mark any meals for which you wish to purchase tickets.

They will be available for pickup at the registration table.

THURSDAY AT 5 PM:

_____ Baptist Campus Ministry Banquet (\$15)

FRIDAY AT NOON:

_____ Ministers' Wives' Fellowship (\$12)

_____ Palmer Theological Seminary (\$12)

_____ WV Baptist Historical Society (\$15)

CHILDCARE

Childcare is available during the following sessions. Please list the names and ages of children you will be dropping off.

ABWM—Women's Day	WVBC Session 1	WVBC Session 2	WVBC Session 3	WVBC Session 4

Registration Fee Total: _____

Construction is Set to Resume on the Sunny Day Activity Center

Through the first half of this year, nearly \$350,000 has been donated toward our campaign for the Sunny Day Activity Center. **That leaves only \$115,000 left to raise!**

The official campaign was re-launched last October when two anonymous donors stepped forward and committed a combined \$600,000 toward the \$1.5 million project. Since that time, not only have donations continued, but the invested amount has grown by tens of thousands of dollars.

The groundbreaking ceremony took place in March and most of the spring was focused on preparing the site and pouring the cement floor. Construction was put on pause during the camping season, but everything will resume later this month. The metal building has already been ordered and the project is on track to be finished by November.

We are grateful for the ongoing support and excited to see how God uses the Sunny Day Activity Center for His glory! Not only will the activity center provide an alternative to having to stay in cabins during the frequent summer rains, but it will also provide a place for churches and the community to use during the off-season months.



The concrete floor was poured in May prior to the camping season.

To donate to this project or to download promotional resources, visit campcowen.org. You can also scan the QR code.

If you are interested in donating stocks or making contributions out of your investments, contact Todd McClure at todd@wvbc.org.



FALL GOLDEN'EERS CONFERENCE

SEPTEMBER 9-11, 2024
at Parchment Valley Conference Center

A conference for adults age 55 and older

Theme: Grateful for Relationships: A Study of Philippians

Speaker: Kevin Sions

Learn more or register at wvbc.org

Northwest Area News

by Mark McCloy, Northwest Area Minister

God's Purpose

The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me....

- Psalm 138:8

Life has meaning. Not only that, but your life, specifically, has meaning. God has a purpose for you. Some years ago, a book was written about this very thing, and it took the world by storm. At last count, Rick Warren's Purpose Driven Life has sold over 50 million copies and been translated into 137 languages. Clearly, on some level this message resonates with people. It begins like this: "You are not an accident. Even before the universe was created, God had you in mind, and he planned you for his purposes." I think sometimes it is particularly helpful to realize God has a plan. Perhaps, at least in part, this belief is important because life seems so crazy and hard to understand. Why did this happen? Or why did that person move, or leave, or come here? Why did I have to look for just the right thing, or the right person, for so long? Why, indeed? As some have said, "why" is the most difficult question to answer, but may be the most important one to ask.



Rev. Judi Bartlett-Tomes



Rev. Jonathan Butcher

Southwest Area News

by Evan Arkell, Southwest Area Minister

Twelve Pole Association Camp

The Twelve Pole Association celebrated their annual Church Camp at Parchment Valley Conference Center June 16-22. Even though they had several cancellations the week before camp began, they still had seven students who accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior and five additional students who rededicated their lives to Christ.

During the camp, several of the Twelve Pole folks worked hard cleaning up around Parchment Valley – particularly in and around the prayer labyrinth. Pastor Denny Brown, Tabors Creek Missionary Baptist Church, put his maintenance skills to good use to help out in other areas as well.



Some members of the Twelve Pole Association Camp

New Pastoral Callings in SW Area

On July 1, Rev. Jim Butcher began his tenure as the pastor at Milton Baptist Church (Guyandotte Association.) Jim had been faithfully serving at Madison Baptist Church (Coal River Association) for the last 11 ½ years.

On July 7, Dunbar First Baptist Church (Kanawha Valley Association) voted to call Rev. DaVontae Edwards as their next pastor. DaVontae has served as the Associate Minister of Youth and Young Adults at Fifth Avenue Baptist Church (Guyandotte Association) for the last few years. He is scheduled to begin his new ministry with them in August, and Dunbar's current pastor, David Keeney, will begin his well-deserved retirement soon after.

It was a pleasure to work with the pulpit committees of both churches as they successfully found their next pastors. I look forward to seeing what our Lord has in store for these congregations in their new chapters of ministry!



Rev. Jim Butcher and wife Karen



Rev. DaVontae Edwards

Northeast Area News

by Kevin Sions, Northeast Area Minister

Eastern Association Camp

The annual Eastern Association Camp was held June 16th-20th at Camp Echo in Cabins, WV. The Lord blessed them with 81 campers from Grant, Hampshire, Hardy and Pendleton Counties, and they had a wonderful week of worship, Bible study, fun activities, crafts, great food and various guest speakers. Their theme was "Carry Your Cross," and the main scripture was Luke 9:23-24. The goals were to know Jesus, grow close to Christ and show Jesus to others!

They were blessed with many volunteers from the local churches in the Eastern Association. They even had some counselors from BCM at Potomac State College and WVU. The week ended with multiple campers rededicating their lives to the Lord, and five campers giving their lives to Christ.

Wallace First Baptist Plants a Garden

The youth at Wallace First Baptist Church (Judson) are intentionally engaging their community for Christ through a community garden. With the help of some adults, they planted a garden in June and are planning to give the fresh produce to community members who may not be able to plant a garden. Pastor Keith Swiger and Wallace First Baptist continue to serve the community with the love of Christ.

Victory Baptist Celebrates 175 Years

Victory Baptist Church (Broad Run) celebrated 175 Years of ministry on June 30th, 2024. The worship service included a couple readings and poem about the history of the church. Two other WVBC churches (Salem Baptist and Liberty Baptist) were formed from Victory Baptist. Pastor Trevor Pullen preached a sermon about standing on God's Word as they continue to serve their community and follow Christ.



Picnic during Victory Baptist's 175th Anniversary celebration.

Southeast Area News

by Jon Villers, Southeast Area Minister

Homecomings in the Southeast Region

Ah, summertime! A wonderful time for homecomings! I was asked to be a part of two very special ones this year. It's not every day that a church gets to celebrate 165 years of being founded nor is it every day that a church gets to celebrate their current pastor still serving after 51 years of being called to that church! I had the privilege of seeing both occasions happen in June.

On June 21, 1859, while the area of Asbury would have still have been considered in the state of Virginia, the West Point Baptist Church was founded in a community just a little north of now Lewisburg. Every five years, the church gathers to celebrate. Rev. Ron Miller has now been able to be a part of six of these celebrations in his 32 years of being their pastor. It was a wonderful day of remembrance and praise!

I also was invited to the Turkey Creek Missionary Baptist Church in Wyoming County for their homecoming services. They were celebrating the fact that 51 years ago, their current pastor, Glenn Hatfield, answered the call to be their pastor. Glenn has also pastored Big Cub Missionary Baptist Church for the past 53 years! They are truly blessed in so many ways.

It is exciting to see what God is continuing to do through the lives of the almost 100 churches in the Southeast region.



Pastor Glenn is one of the most "colorful" pastors I know. We are kindred spirits in that regard!

LINDA LOU EDWARDS CARPENTER, 73, of Washington, died on June 10, 2024. She was most recently a member of Mt. Zion Baptist Church, but she was previously a member of several different WVBC churches where her husband, David, pastored. She was actively involved in the American Baptist Women's Ministries of WV, where she served a term as president, as well as terms as treasurer and scholarship coordinator. She also helped with Vacation Bible School and taught Sunday School in every church she was a member.

BARBARA ANN CARROLL, 89, of Dunbar, died on June 19, 2024. She was a member of Charleston First Baptist Church, where she served as a Sunday School teacher, church clerk and member of the choir.

MORRIS JOE DAVIS, 87, of Baileysville, died June 13, 2024. He was a member of Baileysville First Baptist Church where he served as a deacon and trustee.

DORTHA "DOTTIE" MARGARET EVERLY, 82, of Kingwood, died on April 27, 2024. She was a member of Kingwood Baptist Church.

RONALD DEAN "RON" FLEMING, 78, of Wheeling, died on June 16, 2024. He was formerly a member of Weirton First Baptist Church, where he served as a deacon, Sunday School teacher and preached on occasion. He was later a member of Wheeling First Baptist Church, where he served as a trustee.

FREEDA MAE MADDOX, 93, of Saint Albans, died on May 26, 2024. She was a member of Saint Albans First Baptist Church where she served as a Sunday School teacher and helped with Vacation Bible School. She also served as the camp director for Teays Valley Baptist Association.

WANDA DURIG SPRINGSTON SHEPARD, 103, of New Martinsville, died on June 6, 2024. She was a member of New Martinsville First Baptist Church, where she sang in the choir and served as a deaconess. She was previously served a term as the president of both the American Baptist Women's Ministries of WV and the WVBC.

RICHARD F. "SHEP" SHEPHERD, 90, of Dry Branch, died on June 28, 2024. He was a member of Chesapeake First Baptist Church, where he served as a deacon, treasurer, clerk, Sunday School teacher, choir director and pianist.

THEODORE R. "TED" WARDEN, 69, of Delbarton, died on May 26, 2024. He was a member of W.A. Connolly Memorial Baptist Church, where he served as a janitor, Sunday School teacher, trustee and deacon.

BONNIE RUTH WHITENER, 92, of Beckley, died on May 26, 2024. She was a member of Beckley First Baptist Church.

JUANITA "PEARL" WINSTON, 92, of Helen died on April 28, 2024. She was a member of Helen Baptist Church.

GLENOLA PARSONS WOODYARD, 95, of Parkersburg, died on June 14, 2024. She was a member of Emmanuel Baptist Church, where she was a secretary and treasurer of the Harvesters Sunday School class and also served as a deaconess.

Leadership Updates

JUDITH BARTLETT-TOMES to Parkersburg First Baptist Church (Parkersburg Association) as pastor 6/2/2024

ADAM CHEESEMAN to West Union Baptist Church (Broad Run Association) as pastor 7/1/2024

BRANDEN DESKINS to Grass Lick Baptist Church (Good Hope Association) as pastor 2/25/2024

JAMES "FRED" HAWKINS to Hepzibah Baptist Church (Judson Association) as pastor 6/23/2024

KENNETH HEINEY to Grafton First Baptist Church (Union Association) as pastor 7/1/2024

BILLY MILLER, JR. to North Mill Creek Baptist Church (Eastern Association) as pastor 9/1/2023

DOUGLAS MOSS to Rock Grove Baptist Church (Broad Run Association) as pastor 5/1/2024

MINISTRY EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Lead Pastor (Full-Time)

Location: Rainelle area

Director of Music (Part-Time)

Location: Beckley area

Pastor of Student Ministries (Full-Time)

Location: Hurricane area

Youth Director (Part-Time)

Location: Marion County

Senior Pastor (Full-Time)

Location: Charleston area

Mid-High Student Ministries (Part-Time)

Location: Morgantown area

Senior Pastor (Part-Time)

Location: Parkersburg area

Pastor to Youth (Part-Time)

Location: Jackson County

Pastor (Full-Time)

Location: Barbour County

Student Ministries Pastor (Full-Time)

Location: Parkersburg area

Senior Pastor (Part-Time)

Location: Huntington area

Church Pianist (Part-Time)

Location: Charleston area

Music Director (Part-Time)

Location: Charleston area

To learn more about any of the above positions, visit: wvbc.org

August 2024

AUGUST 1 – Little Kanawha Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
AUGUST 2 – AB Men & Boys Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen
AUGUST 3 – The ministry of Send the Light Fellowship; Jim Anderson, president (Greenbrier-Raleigh Association)
AUGUST 4 – The ministry of Bethel Baptist Church; John Vetter, pastor (Eastern Association)
AUGUST 5 – Greenbrier and Harrisville Associations as they celebrate their annual meetings tomorrow
AUGUST 6 – Keith Myers, International Ministries Global Servant to Mexico
AUGUST 7 – Carmen Boso, member of the WVBC Discipleship Commission
AUGUST 8 – The ministry of Murphy's Creek Baptist Church; Wease Day, pastor (Broad Run Association)
AUGUST 9 – Mike Mann, International Ministries Global Servant to Thailand
AUGUST 10 – Camp Global happening this weekend at Camp Cowen
AUGUST 11 – Barney Stinnett, member of the WVBC Outreach Commission
AUGUST 12 – The ministry of Fayetteville Baptist Church; Andy Kittle, pastor (Fayette Association)
AUGUST 13 – The ministry of Charity Baptist Church (Elk Valley Association)
AUGUST 14 – The ministry of Mountain Baptist Church; Reginald Berry, pastor (Hopewell Association)
AUGUST 15 – Broad Run and Teays Valley Associations as they celebrate their annual meeting
AUGUST 16 – The ministry of Hopewell Baptist Church; Joe Lamm, pastor (Goshen Association)
AUGUST 17 – The ministry of Good Hope Baptist Church; Chad Clark, pastor (Guyandotte Association)
AUGUST 18 – Good Hope and Goshen Associations as they celebrate their annual meeting
AUGUST 19 – Kathy Rice, International Ministries Global Servant to the Democratic Republic of the Congo
AUGUST 20 – Yvette Shafer, chair of the WVBC Stewardship Commission
AUGUST 21 – Deliris Carrion-Joseph, International Ministries Global Servant to Mexico
AUGUST 22 – Lance Muteyo, International Ministries Global Servant to Zimbabwe
AUGUST 23 – The ministry of Danville First Baptist Church; Danny Mitchell, pastor (Coal River Association)
AUGUST 24 – Elk Valley Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
AUGUST 25 – Eastern Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
AUGUST 26 – The ministry of Hurricane Baptist Church (Good Hope Association)
AUGUST 27 – Gail McClure, member of the WVBC Leadership Commission
AUGUST 28 – The ministry of Boothsville Baptist Church; Orville Wright, pastor (Fairmont Association)
AUGUST 29 – The ministry of Strait Creek Baptist Church (Harrisville Association)
AUGUST 30 – Jorge Damasceno, International Ministries Global Servant to the United Kingdom
AUGUST 31 – Walt White, International Ministries Global Consultant

September 2024

SEPTEMBER 1 – Rhonda Reed, International Ministries Global Coordinator for Health and Wellness
SEPTEMBER 2 – Sue Hamric, president of the WV Baptist Historical Society and member of the WVBC Discipleship Commission
SEPTEMBER 3 – Stacy Reese, International Ministries Global Servant to the Dominican Republic
SEPTEMBER 4 – The ministry of Clarksburg Baptist Church; Phil Wayman, pastor (Union Association)
SEPTEMBER 5 – The ministry of Big Chimney Baptist Church; Gary Walker, pastor (Kanawha Valley Association)
SEPTEMBER 6 – R.L. Ely, member of the WVBC Outreach Commission
SEPTEMBER 7 – Fairmont Association as they celebrate their annual meeting tomorrow
SEPTEMBER 8 – Todd McClure, Minister of Missions, Finance and Communication, WVBC
SEPTEMBER 9 – Mark McCloy, Northwest Area Minister and Director of the School of Christian Studies, WVBC
SEPTEMBER 10 – The Fall Golden'eers Retreat happening at Parchment Valley
SEPTEMBER 11 – Hopewell Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
SEPTEMBER 12 – Paul Rollett, International Ministries Global Servant to the Philippines
SEPTEMBER 13 – Kanawha Valley Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
SEPTEMBER 14 – Fall Youth Rally happening at Camp Cowen
SEPTEMBER 15 – Panhandle and Union Associations as they celebrate their annual meeting
SEPTEMBER 16 – Alise Juanes, International Ministries Global Servant to Thailand
SEPTEMBER 17 – Parkersburg Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
SEPTEMBER 18 – Fayette Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
SEPTEMBER 19 – David Workman, member of the WVBC Stewardship Commission
SEPTEMBER 20 – The ministry of Weirton First Baptist Church (Panhandle Association)
SEPTEMBER 21 – Twelve Pole Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
SEPTEMBER 22 – Judson and Logan-Mingo Associations as they celebrate their annual meeting
SEPTEMBER 23 – The ministry of Bellemeade Baptist Church; Nathan Vance, pastor (Rockcastle Association)
SEPTEMBER 24 – The ministry of City Bible Church; Luke Easter, pastor (Parkersburg Association)
SEPTEMBER 25 – Dwight Bolick, International Ministries Global Servant to Chile
SEPTEMBER 26 – Guyandotte Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
SEPTEMBER 27 – The ministry of Judson Baptist Church; Sam Gasaway, pastor (Teays Valley Association)
SEPTEMBER 28 – Coal River Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
SEPTEMBER 29 – The ministry of Bethlehem Baptist Church; Randy Landes, pastor (Judson Association)
SEPTEMBER 30 – Joel Harpold, member of the WVBC Leadership Commission

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

Upcoming Events

AUGUST

August 2-4
AB Men and Boys Camp (All Ages)
Camp Cowen

August 9-10
Camp Global
Camp Cowen

August 17
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Evangelism (Mod-6)
Parchment Valley Conference Center

August 23
Pastors4Pastors Book Study
Glenville First Baptist Church

August 30
Pastors4Pastors River Cruise
Marietta, OH

SEPTEMBER

September 9-11
Golden'eers Fall Retreat
Parchment Valley Conference Center

September 10
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Leading People (M-05)
Various Locations

September 13-14
Fall Youth Rally
Camp Cowen

September 15
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Old Testament 2 (B-02)
Online

September 15
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Making Peace (Mod-04)
Online

September 27-29
AB Women's Ministries Spiritual Growth Retreat
Parchment Valley Conference Center

OCTOBER

October 4
WVBC Executive Committee
Parchment Valley Conference Center

October 5
WVBC Executive Board
Parchment Valley Conference Center

October 17-18
WVBC Annual Meeting
Calvary Baptist Church, Oak Hill

October 25
Pastors4Pastors Book Study
Oakwood Baptist Church

October 26
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Intro to Missions (Mod-3)
Parchment Valley Conference Center

NOVEMBER

November 2
Fall Children's Rally
Parchment Valley Conference Center

November 15
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Discipleship Essentials (M-02)
Online

November 15
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Spiritual Formation (Mod-01)
Online

Newsletter Submissions

Send submissions for *The West Virginia Baptist* to: thewvbaptist@wvbc.org or mail submissions to the West Virginia Baptist Convention, Attention: Todd McClure, P.O. Box 1019, Parkersburg, West Virginia, 26102. If you are submitting text, send typed copy only. We also accept hard copy and digital photos of 300 dpi (dots per inch). Please include a caption for your photo and your name and address if you want your photo returned.

Deadline for submission is the 3rd of odd numbered months.

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Fall Children's Rally

For children in grades K-5, 6 is optional

Saturday, November 2, 2024

Parchment Valley in the Greenlee Activity Center



Pirates Who Pray

Cost: \$14 (or \$26 after October 14th)

Register today at www.wvbc.org

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