

The West Virginia Baptist Newsletter

February—March 2025

Exciting News: We are Fully Funded!



What started as a dream in 2015 has become a reality; we are now fully funded for the construction of the Sunny Day Activity Center!

In October of 2023, two anonymous donors stepped forward to relaunch this campaign under the condition that we immediately start building and raise the remaining \$550,000 that was needed. That was announced during the 2023 WVBC Annual Meeting, where individuals had the opportunity to purchase symbolic blocks. Over the remaining months of 2023 and early part of 2024, churches and individuals continued to give, numerous people made donations from their Required Minimum Distributions and others gave gifts in someone's memory. Invested money also grew, allowing us to stay ahead on all of our invoices without the need to borrow any money.

Over the course of the summer, churches had fundraising challenges, individuals sold t-shirts, kids donated leftover store money and we continued to get closer to our goal. Amazed at God's faithful provision, the WVBC Executive Board voted in October to go ahead and add the sports flooring to the project, originally planned as a future enhancement. Not only would this save money in the long-term, but it would also provide a safer recreational area for our kids. It was announced during the 2024 Annual Meeting that there was only \$120,000 left to raise.

One of our churches heard about that number and made a sizable gift, which prompted other individuals and churches to also want to participate in the completion of this campaign. In the month of December, as donations poured in, we not only met but exceeded our goal of \$1,516,000. The extra funding allows us to start building a maintenance fund to care for this building long-term.

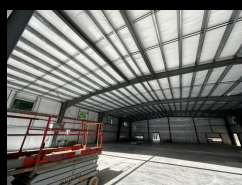
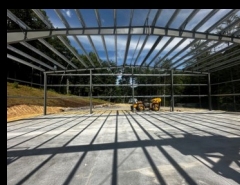
How incredible it has been to once again see the faithfulness of God and His people!

Many were able to view the progress of the construction at our Open House in November. Since that time, the rest of the original construction has been completed and the sports flooring has been ordered. The sports flooring will be installed in early spring when the outdoor temperatures get warmer.

We will host a Dedication Service for the Sunny Day Activity Center on Saturday, May 17th. We would love for our entire WVBC family to join us for this special occasion!

Thank you to the many individuals and churches who have helped contribute to this campaign. We are excited to see how God uses this tool to further our mission at Camp Cowen of being a place "where people meet Jesus and grow as His disciples in a community of faith."

Fall 2024 Timeline



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

Abiding in Christ

Hudson Taylor, Missionary to inland China, found himself in a season of struggle in his mission efforts that quickly began to affect him physically, emotionally and spiritually. One of his friends sent him a note that would renew both his strength and effectiveness. He simply reminded Hudson to "let the Savior work in him by abiding, not striving—trusting Christ for the power."

Jesus said, "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). Simply put, abiding in Christ, or as it is sometimes translated, remaining in Christ, is necessary for an individual, a ministry, a church or a convention family of churches to be effective in producing life-giving fruit for the Kingdom of God. Apart from Christ, nothing of true value can be accomplished.

Jesus' invitation to abide in Him is a call to spend time with Him. It's a call to prayerfully seek His will for our lives and ministries, and His strength to accomplish that which He has called us to.

Christian singer Jessica King illustrates this point beautifully in her song "Keep Me in Your Will":

Sometimes I think I'm in control / And I act so foolishly
Facing problems on my own / I don't know what's best for me
My mistakes at times disturb / All the plans You have made
Lord, keep me in Your will / So I won't be in Your way."

As Hudson Taylor was reminded, we are called to abide rather than to strive. Our desire is to follow God's will for our lives and our ministries. God's will done His way and in His power!

Elton Trueblood writes, "I have no doubt that He has a will for my life, but I am quite sure that I frustrate it time and again... Not only are we free to initiate action; we are also free to resist. In Christian experience, prayer is not telling God what to do, for that would be presumptuous; it is, by contrast, telling Him what we think we need. However, the humble practitioner always adds, at least tacitly, 'if it be thy will' because he recognizes his finitude and is sincerely glad that not all his petitions have been granted. Most of the problems relating to God's will are already solved when we see prayer not as an effort to change it, but as loving communication which may help in the promotion of that will, whereas without prayer it might be frustrated."

As we as a Convention focus on a call to prayer this year, let us seek to abide in Christ more deeply so that we may be fruitful in serving Him and that He may be glorified in our lives and ministries.

Blessings,
Mike



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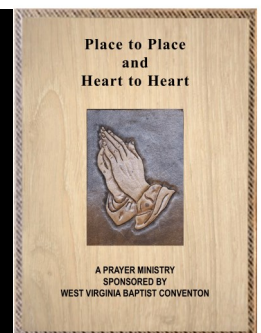
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Place to Place and Heart to Heart

We are inviting our WVBC family to pray together through 2025. The desire is that every church have the opportunity to pray with and for one another.

Be on the lookout for a delegation from a sister church as they bring the prayer book to your church for a time of prayer. Then a delegation from your church will take it to another church to have prayer with them. Our prayer is that we be led by the Holy Spirit to find a way to reach those in our communities who desperately need to be reached for Christ.



Executive Board Approves Plans for 2025

On Saturday, January 4th, the WVBC Executive Board met at Parchment Valley Conference Center to review and approve the ministry plans for 2025. Continuing the theme from the past three years, the focus remains on “Intentionally Engaging Communities for Christ,” with a special emphasis this year on “for Christ.”

Nancy Wolfe opened the meeting with a devotion on prayer. Her devotion proved to be extremely timely as the board agreed that prayer needed to be a major focus this year. As was shared at the WVBC Annual Meeting, we will be launching a statewide prayer initiative, inviting churches to pray together. To help facilitate this, four prayer books will be passed around the state for churches to record their requests and to pray for others. Be on the lookout for more details on this. Also be sure to contact your area minister if you want to be part of this.

After the devotion, each of the four commissions — the Discipleship Commission, Leadership Commission, Outreach Commission and Stewardship Commission — separated into their own meetings to discuss their plans for carrying out the theme. Following those meetings, the Executive Board once again gathered to report on the commission meetings and to approve the 2025 budget. That budget was passed unanimously.

The meetings not only provided an opportunity to look forward, but it also gave us a chance to look back at what God did in



Mike Sisson providing a ministry update during the WVBC Executive Board meeting.

2024. We celebrated the 209 salvations that took place at WVBC events this past year, the tripling of locations for the Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies, the exponential growth of Baptist Campus Ministry and the news that the Sunny Day Activity Center was now fully funded! We are grateful for how our WVBC family partners to do Christ’s work together.

Camp Cowen 2025

Camps

APRIL 4-6 Women’s Camp	JUNE 29-JULY 5 Junior 2 (grades 5-6)
MAY 16-17 Summer Kickoff (grades 6-12)	JULY 6-12 Junior High 2 (grades 7-9)
MAY 17 Sunny Day Activity Center Dedication	JULY 12 Senior Day (2025 graduates)
JUNE 6-8 Younger Midler (grades 2-4)	JULY 13-19 High School 2 (grades 9-’25 grads)
JUNE 8-14 Junior High 1 (grades 7-9)	JULY 25-28 Family Camp
JUNE 15-21 Junior 1 (grades 5-6)	JULY 29-AUG 1 Older Midler (grades 3-5)
JUNE 21 Senior Day (2025 graduates)	AUG 1-3 AB Men & Boys Camp
JUNE 22-28 High School 1 (grades 9-’25 grads)	AUG 8-9 Camp Global

Other Dates

MARCH 14 Staff Applications Due	MARCH 28-29 Staff Interviews	APRIL 25 Wear Your Camp Shirt Day
APRIL 27 Cowen Sunday	APRIL 25-26 AB Men’s Work Party	MAY 30-JUNE 1 Gopher & Steward Training

Camp Cowen 2025 registration opens February 24!

For more information, visit campcowen.org.

Despite Power Concerns, Cuban Christians Display an Infectious Joy

*Written by David Hulme
Cuba Mission Partnership*

This past November, I was able to lead a team to visit our partners in Cuba. That team consisted of Greg and Melanie Swisher (Calvary Baptist, Oak Hill), Cari Pauley (Forks of Coal Missionary Baptist), Phil and Tori Wayman, and Mark Rohrbough (Clarksburg Baptist). During our trip, we visited churches in Havana, Ranchuelo and Zulueta.

We arrived in Havana two days after Hurricane Rafael passed through. There wasn't much damage in the areas we visited. However, we were without power for the first day and part of the second.

Speaking of power, Cuba has been plagued with major power outages. Their power grid is a disaster. Random and lengthy power outages are a fact of life for most Cubans. Almost every place we visited experienced some type of power outage while we were there.

Food and medicine continue to be in short supply. Thanks to a gift from the Eastern Baptist Association, we were able to take a good amount of medicine with us. One of the ways we can help with the food shortages is through a company called Tuambia. Several times a year, through the generosity of churches and individuals, we can send shipments of much-needed food to the churches in the areas listed above.

The churches we visited are growing. Two have outgrown their seating capacity, so we were able to assist them with funds to add



Each member of the Cuba Mission Team received a banner from El Jordan Baptist Church on their last night.

seating to their sanctuaries. Again, these funds came from our group, along with gifts sent with us from individuals and churches in the US.

My biggest takeaway from this trip is the infectious joy of the Cuban Christians, despite their circumstances. Their worship and prayer times are genuine and powerful, baptisms are frequent and discipleship is real.

Thank you to our WVBC family for your support of our efforts in Cuba.



MEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST

FEBRUARY 22, 2024

This annual event is a time for men to gather together for prayer, Bible study and fellowship with friends.

This year's offering will once again support the **ABMen's Scholarship Fund**.

To host a location, contact:
Tracie Emerick
304-422-6449
temerick@wvbc.org

CONFIRMED LOCATIONS

Weston First Baptist at 8 AM
Petersburg First Baptist at 9 AM
Hope Baptist at 9 AM (February 15)
Bethesda Baptist at 8 AM
Fayetteville Baptist at 9 AM
Parchment Valley Baptist at 8:30 AM
Crab Orchard Baptist at 8 AM
Beulah Ann Baptist at 8:30 AM
Harrisville Baptist at 9 AM
Quinwood First Baptist at 9 AM
Reynoldsville Baptist at 8 AM
Judson Baptist Church (Belle) at 8:30 AM
Glennville First Baptist at 9 AM
New Martinsville First Baptist at 9 AM
Lubeck Community Baptist at 9 AM
Rockcastle Baptist at 9 AM
Hurricane First Baptist at 9 AM
Main Street Baptist at 9 AM
Fort Gay Baptist at 9 AM
Grafton First Baptist at 9 AM

Parchment Valley Welcomes New Director of Operations

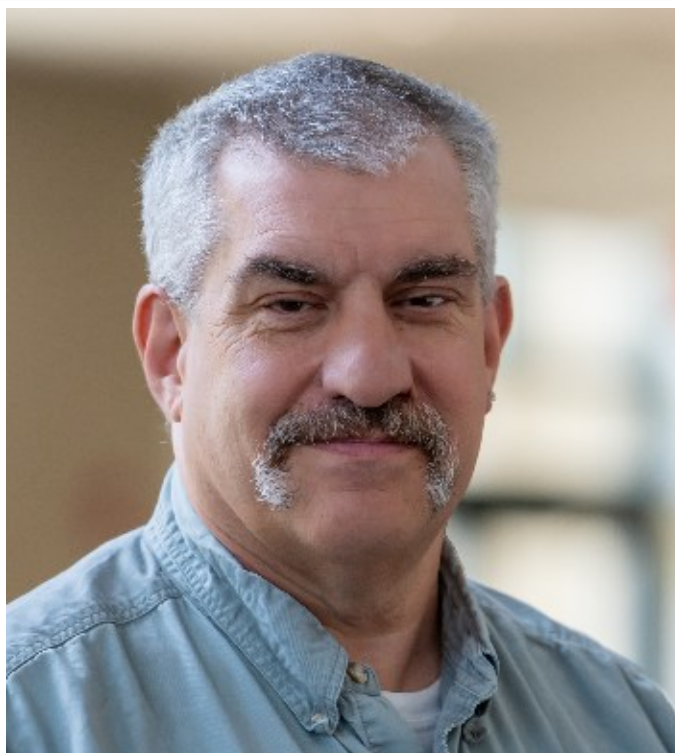
The WVBC Executive Committee, upon the recommendation of the Director of Operations Search Team and the Executive Minister, voted to extend the call to serve as the Director of Operations at the Parchment Valley Conference Center to Peter Coffey beginning on January 1, 2025.

Before being called to Parchment Valley, Peter served as Director of Camp at Prairie River Camp in Albert Lea, Minnesota, and Director of Sports and Outreach at The Bible Chapel in McMurray, Pennsylvania. He described the greatest joy of serving in these ministries as seeing young people come to know Jesus Christ as Savior. When asked about his priorities in ministry and life, Peter replied, "To know Christ and make Him known," and to accomplish that by "Building relationships to strengthen outreach and share the Gospel."

Peter looks forward to continuing to strengthen the long-standing relationships that Parchment Valley has maintained with our West Virginia Baptist family, with churches who have supported and regularly held events and camps at the Center, and with the local Jackson County community while seeking to develop many new relationships moving forward.

Peter has a genuine interest in serving others and has served communities wherever he has lived through his involvement with the local volunteer fire department.

Please join us in welcoming Peter and his wife Sherry to Parchment Valley and the WVBC family!



Peter Coffey, Director of Operations at Parchment Valley

JOIN US FOR BK '25

JUNE 15-20, 2025

PARCHMENT VALLEY CONFERENCE CENTER

A regional work camp for youth in grades 6-12

2024 Stats:

120 youth from 5 states
55 completed work projects
23 salvations!

COST:

\$245 / person before May 1
\$270 / person after May 1



Learn more at parchmentvalley.org



WEST VIRGINIA BAPTIST CONVENTION YOUTH 24-25

TEACH ME YOUR

Paths



JR HIGH Convention

FEBRUARY 21-23, 2025 6-9TH GRADE
SUMMERSVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH,
SUMMERSVILLE WV

Spring Children's Rally

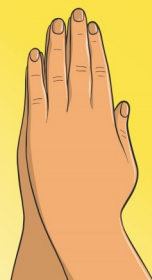
For children currently in grades K-5,

Saturday, March 1, 2025

At Parchment Valley in the Greenlee Activities Center

THE LORD'S PRAYER

PRAY GOD'S WAY



Cost:

\$14 until Feb 10

\$26 after Feb 10

Register online at www.wvbc.org

Ministers' Wives'

RETREAT

March 14-15, 2025 at Camp Cowen Staff House

Speaker: Susan Dale

Theme: Boundaries

Cost: \$40 for Whole Retreat / \$20 for Saturday Only

Learn more or register at wvbc.org

Investing in BCM Students in 2025

For the last 25 years, I along with my wife Chasity have been connected to Baptist Campus Ministry (BCM). We started as students and then joined the student leadership team. Later, we served as associates and had an opportunity to serve on the BCM Board. I also had the joy of serving in churches that hosted and supported BCM. Over the last nine years, my current ministry position as Northern Director has provided a unique perspective and opportunity to reflect on the impact of BCM in the lives of students and our family.

Recently, as our children have grown, their involvement in BCM has slowly become more noticeable. They frequently ask questions about ministry and the lives of students. With our oldest graduating high school in May, our prayer is that she gets connected to BCM next fall.

This past semester, our middle school son asked if he could attend BCM. He was a great servant, helping to carry supplies to the meeting and back to the car. I enjoyed watching him interact with the students, asking questions and listening as they shared.

The investment BCM has made in my life – personally and professionally – along with the investment it has made in my family's life cannot be measured or even fully communicated. I am truly grateful to God for BCM and the people who invest their time and resources into this ministry.

"Changing lives that change the world" is the mission and vision we communicate and strive to keep as a focal point when sharing the BCM story. Above is just a little piece of my story with BCM. What is your story with BCM? How is God calling you to be more involved? **If you or your church would like students to come share their story, please contact Rob Ely (ely@wvbc.org) or me (sions@wvbc.org).**



The Sions family with WVU BCM students at last year's Beach Week.

Your investment in the lives of students through BCM – as individuals, families, pastors, churches, campus leaders and board members – is evident and we pray increases. The numerical and spiritual growth within BCM on all of our campuses over the last semester has been amazing to witness! We are truly thankful to God for how the Holy Spirit is moving within the lives of students and within the BCM communities on each campus.

BCM is launching a giving campaign in 2025, asking people to commit to \$25 a month within the year 2025 to support and invest in the lives of college students. So will you prayerfully consider to join me, in giving \$25 a month in 2025? If just ten people gave, that would support an entire BCM campus for one year! **Visit wvbc.com/give to learn more.**

Thank you for helping BCM pursue its mission of "Changing Lives that Change the World!"

Kevin Sions

Northern BCM Director and Northeast Area Minister

CAMP COWEN

2025 STAFF OPPORTUNITIES



Are you or someone you know a driven, engaged Christ-follower looking for opportunities to serve the Lord this summer?

Camp Cowen is hiring!

APPLY NOW and learn more at campcowen.org/staff

SUMMER STAFF



- Must be 18 or older
- Full-summer schedule (with optional vacation week)
- \$325 per week
- \$100 bonus at end of contract
- Free room & board
- All positions available

INTERNS



- Must be 16 or older
- Flexible 2- to 6-week schedules
- \$275 per week
- Free room & board
- Positions available:
 - Kitchen & dishroom
 - Maintenance
 - Lifeguards**

**certification required



2024 MISSION IMPACT REPORT



Camp Cowen

Total Campers: **1,710**
Summer Volunteers: **384**
Rededications: **150**
Salvations: **97**



Baptism at Camp Cowen

Parchment Valley

Total Events: **372**
BK Participants: **157**
BK Projects Completed: **55**
Salvations: **105**



Brothers' Keeper 2024

Leadership Development

Ministry Interns: **4**
Pastors Being Mentored: **12**
New Pastors in 2024: **11**



Charles Hinzman, 2024 Ministry Intern

Baptist Campus Ministry

Total Campuses: **9**
Number of Students: **385**
Salvations: **2**

B.W. School of Christian Studies

Number of Students: **58**
Number of In-Person Locations: **11**
Number of Graduates: **5**

Mission Support

Mountain State Mission Offering: **\$345,793**
Disaster Relief: **\$248,856**
Global Missions: **\$423,084**
Sunny Day Activity Center: **\$504,650**



Disaster relief work in Bluefield, WV

Global Missions

Mission Partnerships: **4**
Endorsed Mission Trips: **5**
Missionaries Supported: **22**
Mission Trip Scholarships: **57**
Countries Impacted: **36**

Education Support

WV Palmer Seminary Students: **36**
WV Baptist Ed. Society Scholarships: **40**
WV AB Men Scholarships: **3**
WV AB Women's Ministries Scholarships: **13**
Bowen Charitable Trust Support: **\$250,000+**

Doing Christ's Work Together



We can do far more together than we could ever do alone. That is the value of partnering together as a WVBC family. As we enter this new year, we once again invite to join us as we do Christ's work together.



WV ABWM Mission Trip to Mexico

Cultivating Good Soil: Spiritual Disciplines for a Receptive Heart



February 28, 2025 5:30–8:00 PM

Parchment Valley Conference Center (Dining Hall)

Guest Speaker: Trent Eastman

Cost: \$15 (\$20 for non-P4P members)

Join us as we explore how spiritual disciplines are tools to soften our hearts and deepen our relationship with God.

Register online at wvbc.org

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

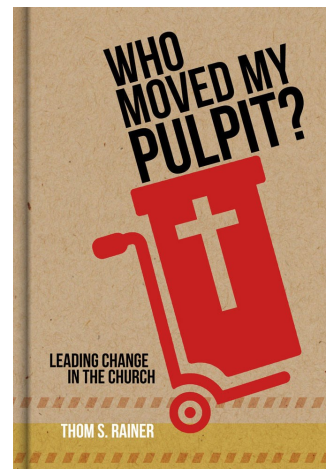
PASTORS4PASTORS BOOK CLUB

Attend, Learn, Share, Grow Together

All pastoral staff are invited to join us in reading *Who Moved My Pulpit?* We will also gather on the following Fridays at 12:30 PM to fellowship and discuss the various parts of the book:

- Apr 4 at Calvary Baptist
- Jun 13 at Parkersburg FBC
- Sept 19 at Glenville FBC

* Snacks will be provided



To allow us to plan for snacks, please let P4P President Anthony Pratt, know you are planning on joining us.
anthony_pratt@hotmail.com or (304) 382-3600

2025 ANNUAL BIBLE CONFERENCE

Saturday, March 1, 2025

Parchment Valley Conference Center

A STUDY OF ACTS, FEATURING DR. TRENT EASTMAN



REGISTER ONLINE
AT WVBC.ORG



Weirton Christian Center Has Had Great Year!

Written by Kim Weaver
Director, Weirton Christian Center



Signs of Hope group performing sign language to worship songs for local events and nursing homes.

Weirton Christian Center has had a great year, serving a total of 86 students in the afterschool program and 38 preschoolers for the 2024-25 school year. We just celebrated a wonderful CHRISTmas celebration with the help of many of our supporting churches! Once again, Vienna Baptist Church provided shoeboxes for each child, and we appreciate all the donations and gift cards for Christmas! We also opened our new playground this year, which was covered by two local foundations, and we are getting ready to expand the garden even further to add more raised beds and some fruit trees.

Our main goal with the students is to help with homework and learning, while also providing a hot meal and snack each day. It is a blessing to be able to add to their life experiences with piano, ukulele and dance lessons. We also provide the opportunity to perform in the Signs of Hope group.

Middle and high school students participate in a leadership program where they learn life skills and get the chance to work in the classrooms, earning a wage after meeting volunteer and education requirements. Our entrepreneurial group makes jewelry and crafts to sell at local events, where they earn half and the program receives the other half. This has been a tremendous program for the past six years, sponsored by Cleveland Cliffs.

We have been blessed by our WV Baptist family who has made it possible for us to continue our ministry. We are currently starting a Camp Campaign, to be able to continue to send our kids to camp this summer. A week of camp is \$275 per child. If you or your church would like to sponsor a child for a week, you can donate online or send a check to the Weirton Christian Center. We also need to rebuild our Quarters for Grades Program to encourage our kids to improve their grades. Outside of our operational expenses, our other main needs include the transportation fund and feeding our preschool students.

Many thanks to all who have put us in their mission budgets and continue to support and pray for our ministry.

What legacy are you leaving for your grandchildren? Do you want to see your grandchildren follow Christ? Do you desire to leave a lasting legacy of love to your grandchildren? Do you want to influence generations of your family for Christ? Then you want to attend the **Legacy Grandparenting Summit**.

This year's theme is *For This Purpose*. This theme will empower grandparents to embrace their divine purpose and crucial role in their family's spiritual journey. At the Legacy Grandparenting Summit, you will get timely insights and practical tools to help you speak powerfully into your grandchildren's lives.

Grandparents, we are called to be more than cheerleaders for our grandkids. We are commanded by scripture to pass on the faith to the next generations. Will you step up to be this spiritual influence on your grandkids? It is never too late to be an intentional biblical grandparent.

Gassaway Baptist Church is a host site for a live feed of the only national conference on Christian grandparenting. Register before January 31 to receive a price break. The price increases to \$39 after that. You can RSVP for lunch in your confirmation email. The price for lunch is \$10 payable at the door.

For more information, contact Koreen Villers at villers@wvbc.org or 304-531-2917.

Register now at
bit.ly/legacy-grandparenting-summit

or scan the QR code



✦ Legacy Grandparenting Summit • 25

FOR THIS PURPOSE



Larry Fowler
Find Purpose
as a Grandparent



Dr. Jeff Myers
Point Them
to Truth



**Anne Graham Lotz &
Rachel-Ruth Wright**
Think Four Generations



Dr. Crawford Loritts
Grandparenting
Wisdom



Dr. Rob Rienow
Build Family
Unity



Harvey Carey
Give Them
the Gospel



Trudy Cathy White
Instill Biblical
Values



Dr. James Banks
Love Your
Prodigal

Saturday, February 22nd | 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Gassaway Baptist Church

Registration starts at 8:00 a.m.

\$34 per person until January 31st

RSVP for lunch at the link in your email after you register for the event.
Lunch will be an additional \$10 at the door.

Northwest Area News

by Mark McCloy, Northwest Area Minister

Sing to the Lord

"Sing to the LORD, all the earth; proclaim his salvation day after day."

- I Chronicles 16:23

As we moved into a time of worship together on the first Sunday of a New Year, I reflected that all across our state people were doing similar things. Music was sounding forth, prayers were being lifted, scripture read, offerings given, the word preached. What a wonderful thing it is to praise the Lord!

A New Year has begun, and we look forward to a season of hope and new beginnings. The old year has brought both challenges and joys, but God has brought us through. We had good times of celebration. We had baptisms and salvations during this Christmas season. Debbie Myers, our global servant to Mexico, celebrated her ordination with us. Others continue to progress in their learning, moving onward toward ordination, graduation or other recognition. New pastorates have begun. Some are closing in on retirement. In all these things, God has been with us. He continues to move and to work among us. The seasons continue to progress, as God designed it. Even in the midst of our grief, sickness and mourning, we know that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ.

We cannot see the immediate future, but we know that in the end, we win. Remember, we are not alone, for we are family, God's household, His children, relatives, kinfolk, the people of God, a



Several gathered to lay hands in prayer during the ordination service for Debbie Myers.

kingdom of priests and a holy nation, a chosen generation. We are God's kids, and if God is for us, who can be against us?

May God bless your new year as you continue to serve him.

Northeast Area News

by Kevin Sions, Northeast Area Minister

Advent Service at Summit Park Baptist

For at least 40 years, Sunday evening Advent services have been occurring at Summit Park Baptist Church (Union). During these services, the focus is on Jesus and His birth. The expectant and hopeful anticipation of the Messiah being born is the primary theme throughout the services. Following the Advent services, the congregation gathers for refreshments and fellowship.



The sanctuary at Summit Park Baptist Church

Hepzibah Baptist Calls New Pastor

Back in August 2024, Fred Hawkins was called to his first pastorate at Hepzibah Baptist Church (Judson). Fred is a 2021 graduate of the Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies. Please join us in prayer for Fred as he leads.

Elkins FBC is Engaging their Community

Several churches gathered, donated and sent supplies to help with disaster relief in North Carolina. Pastor Brett Rinehart of Elkins First Baptist Church (Union) had the opportunity to travel to North Carolina with supplies gathered in the Elkins community. While there, he was also able to lead a time of prayer for those affected by the disaster and for those who were serving.

The church also hired a new youth/children's director, Natasha Evans, in December. Please join us in prayer for her.

Lastly, the church also planned their annual Night in Bethlehem, an interactive ministry experience for the Elkins community in December. This is always a great outreach event to their community. We are thankful for the many ways they are engaging their community.

Southwest Area News

by *Evan Arkell, Southwest Area Minister*

Beulah Ann Missionary Baptist Church Celebrates 150 Years of Ministry

On Sunday, December 29, 2024, Beulah Ann Missionary Baptist Church (Guyandotte) held a special celebration in commemoration of their 150th Anniversary. The morning kicked off with beautiful special music by a quartet of church members along with a slide of pictures of past church events. A moment in history was given by Mrs. Jo Ross from a letter that had been recently discovered written by their founding pastor. I was able to present a 150th Anniversary certificate from the WVBC, and then Gary and Deb Higginbotham gave remarks and presented a 150th anniversary certificate on behalf of the WV Baptist Historical Society.

At the 125th anniversary in 1999, the church put together a time capsule to be opened at the 150th anniversary, so former Associate Pastor, Tracy Mills, opened the capsule and gave remarks about the items inside. Pastor Greg Lunsford then preached a sermon on God's faithfulness and the church's unchanging mission. Following the sermon, the church filled another capsule to be opened at the 175th anniversary in 2049.

Deacon Ordinations

On December 15, 2024, Joseph "Randy" Walker was ordained as a deacon at Hampton Baptist Church (Kanawha Valley).

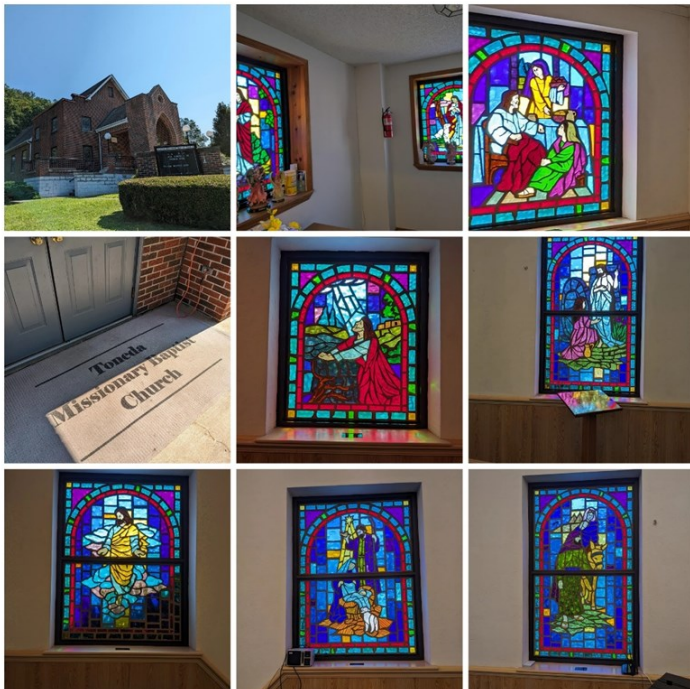
Billy Jarrell is also scheduled to be ordained as a deacon at Barboursville Baptist Church (Guyandotte).



Mrs. Jo Ross presenting a moment in history at Beulah Ann Missionary Baptist Church during their 150th Anniversary.

Southeast Area News

by *Jon Villers, Southeast Area Minister*



The stained glass windows at Toned Missionary Baptist Church

My Travel Log for December

In 1909, a group of committed Christ-followers in Wyoming County established a church at the mouth of Crany Road. Crany Missionary Baptist Church had already been established in 1888, five miles up the road, so they needed to come up with a different name. They wanted to convey that with the Lord, there are new opportunities each and every day to share the Good News of Jesus Christ! They came up with the theme: "To One Never Every Day Alike." They took the first letters of each of those words and they named the church Toned Missionary Baptist Church.

It has been my privilege to fill the pulpit at Toned twice since coming on board as the Southeast Area Minister! Pastor Scottie Lusk and his wife, Stephanie, are a great blessing to this almost century-old church! Toned also hosted the Rockcastle Association Annual Meeting last July. We had a wonderful turnout, and they prepared a wonderful meal before our meeting.

Every time I walk into Toned, I am blown away with the stained glass windows that surround the sanctuary. They depict the different scenes of Jesus' life. It is such a privilege to come alongside a Bible-believing church with pastoral leadership that continues to preach the Word of God! They continue to tell the stories of Jesus through Word, deed and even stained glass windows. Praise the Lord!

STEVEN R. BRATKE, 60, of Vienna, died on December 28, 2024. He was a member of Vienna Baptist Church, where he served as moderator, on the Construction Committee and was a member of the handbell choir.

LAMONA “MONA” RAE CASTO, 75, of Buckhannon, died on October 30, 2024. She was a member of Burnsville First Baptist Church, where she served as the church clerk and secretary of the women’s mission.

JARRETT WADE “JAY” COFFINDAFFER, 45, of Spencer, died on December 30, 2024. He was a member of Spencer First Baptist Church, where he served as chair of the finance committee and member of the Board of Christian Education.

VETA MAY COTTRILL, 91, of Copen, died on January 5, 2025. She was a member of Providence Baptist Church.

RICHARD LEE “PETE” GRAHAM, 88, of MacArthur, died on November 29, 2024. He was a member of Crab Orchard Baptist Church, where he served as a deacon, greeter and teacher.

BETTY LEE TAYLOR GRIFFIN, 83, of Logan, died on December 14, 2024. She was a member of Logan First Baptist Church, where she served as a Sunday School teacher, choir member and served on several other boards.

PHYLLIS JOY CARPENTER HANEY, 95, of Clarksburg, died on November 23, 2024. She was a member of Hepzibah Baptist Church, where she served as a Sunday School teacher and sang in the choir.

PHYLLIS LOUISE HARRIS, 77, of Gassaway, died on November 4, 2024. She was a member of Gassaway Baptist Church, where she taught the children on Wednesday nights, led the original helping hands ministry, served in Vacation Bible School and sang in the choir.

DR. FRANK “BUZZ” HARRISON, 82, died on December 26, 2024. He was the first director of Baptist Campus Ministry, serving in that position from 1979 to 1984.

BARBARA JEAN CARR HARVEY, 94, of Elkins, died on December 21, 2024. She was a member of Elkins First Baptist Church, where she served on the committee to form the first church directory, was a member of the ladies’ circle, helped count the offering and led the church visitation team.

JEAN ADAIR HUNT, 94, of Victor, died on November 17, 2024. She was a member of Sunday Road Baptist Church and served as the treasurer of the Hopewell Baptist Association.

REV. RONALD JAMES, 87, of Charleston, died on December 13, 2024. He was a member of Charleston Baptist Temple, where he taught Sunday School. Previously, he had served as the campus chaplain at Alderson Broaddus College and then as the pastor of Shinnston First Baptist Church.

JACK KATONA, 85, of Princeton, died on November 28, 2024. He was a member of Welch First Baptist Church, where he served as a Sunday School teacher and sang in the choir.

BARBARA ANN LEWIS, 84, of Williamstown, died on November 9, 2024. She was a member of Williamstown First Baptist Church, where she served as the treasurer, a Sunday School teacher and was involved with Awana.

DELORIS M. MINOR, 98, of Shinnston, died on January 7, 2025. She was a member of North Shinnston Baptist Church, where she served as a deaconess, teacher, secretary, president of their local ABW missions and member of the choir.

CHARLES WILLIAM “BILL” MITCHELL, 89, of Forest Hill, died on November 9, 2024. He was a member of Fairview Baptist Church, where he served as a deacon and participated in several mission trips.

JAMES O. PARSONS, 85, died on October 31, 2024. He was a member of Mill Creek Baptist Church, where he served as a deacon and trustee.

LUCRETIA MARIE SPAULDING SCALISE, 73, of East Bank, died on November 20, 2024. She was a member of Hampton Baptist Church, where she served as a Sunday School teacher and in the church’s American Baptist Women’s Ministries.

REV. JAMES MICHAEL “JIM MIKE” WARD, 73, of Spring Hill, TN, died on December 16, 2024. He served as a pastor for 42 years at five WVBC churches, including North Parkersburg Baptist, Summersville Baptist, Williamstown First Baptist, South Parkersburg Baptist and Pine Grove Baptist.

MINISTRY EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

A dozen different ministry positions are currently listed on our website in the areas of senior pastor, youth and children’s pastor, pianist and more.

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

To see a list of available positions, visit:

www.wvbc.org

Leadership Updates

CHAD METZ to Jackson Mill Baptist Church as pastor 12/1/2024

JIM ADKINS to Clendenin First Baptist Church as pastor 11/1/2025

February 2025

FEBRUARY 1 – The Annual Training Event happening today at Parchment Valley
FEBRUARY 2 – The ministry of Mannington First Baptist Church; Jason Marshall, pastor (Fairmont Association)
FEBRUARY 3 – The ministry of Kingwood Baptist Church; Charles Warger, pastor (Goshen Association)
FEBRUARY 4 – The ministry of Welcome Baptist Church (Judson Association)
FEBRUARY 5 – Darrell Mayfield, chair of the WVBC Leadership Commission
FEBRUARY 6 – The ministry of Petersburg First Baptist Church; Shannon Earle, pastor (Eastern Association)
FEBRUARY 7 – Ruth Vindas, International Ministries Global Servant to Costa Rica
FEBRUARY 8 – Kayla Starcher, Student Ministries and Mission Support Assistant, WVBC
FEBRUARY 9 – The ministry of Yawkey Missionary Baptist Church; Toney Darrell Searls, pastor (Coal River Association)
FEBRUARY 10 – Sherry Husted, WV American Baptist Women's Ministries' president and member of the WVBC Outreach Commission
FEBRUARY 11 – The ministry of Salem Baptist Church; William Kniceley, pastor (Broad Run Association)
FEBRUARY 12 – The ministry of North Hills Baptist Church; Michael Harper, pastor (Kanawha Valley Association)
FEBRUARY 13 – The ministry of Goose Creek Baptist Church; Connie Johnson, interim pastor (Harrisville Association)
FEBRUARY 14 – Jae Stockton, International Ministries Global Servant to Mexico
FEBRUARY 15 – Eliberto Juárez, International Ministries Global Servant to El Salvador
FEBRUARY 16 – Tan Coats, International Ministries Global Servant to Myanmar
FEBRUARY 17 – The ministry of Hilton Village Baptist Church; John R. Hamrick, pastor (Hopewell Association)
FEBRUARY 18 – The ministry of Stump Chapel Baptist Church; Teddy Legg, pastor (Elk Valley Association)
FEBRUARY 19 – Caleb Baisden, member of the WVBC Discipleship Commission
FEBRUARY 20 – The ministry of Fort Spring Baptist Church; Joseph Morgan, pastor (Greenbrier-Raleigh Association)
FEBRUARY 21 – Junior High Convention happening this weekend at Summersville Baptist Church
FEBRUARY 22 – AB Men's prayer breakfasts happening today around the state and the Grandparenting Summit happening today at Gassaway Baptist Church
FEBRUARY 23 – The ministry of Calvary Baptist Church; Greg Swisher, pastor (Fayette Association)
FEBRUARY 24 – Michael Sisson, Executive Minister, WVBC
FEBRUARY 25 – Roselee Copenhaver, president of the WVBC and member of the WVBC Stewardship Commission
FEBRUARY 26 – The ministry of Grass Lick Baptist Church; Branden Deskins, pastor (Good Hope Association)
FEBRUARY 27 – Rebecca Mann, International Ministries Global Servant to Thailand
FEBRUARY 28 – The ministry of Union Baptist Church; Charles Stephens, pastor (Guyandotte Association)

March 2025

MARCH 1 – Annual Bible Conference and the Spring Children's Rally happening today at Parchment Valley
MARCH 2 – Annie Dieselberg, International Ministries Global Servant to Thailand
MARCH 3 – David Parajón, International Ministries Global Servant to Nicaragua
MARCH 4 – Taku Longkumer, International Ministries Global Servant to South and East Asia
MARCH 5 – The ministry of Victory Baptist Church; Trevor Pullen, pastor (Broad Run Association)
MARCH 6 – The ministry of Davis Baptist Church; Leroy Shook, pastor (Eastern Association)
MARCH 7 – The ministry of Pine Grove First Baptist Church; Jerry Kuhens, pastor (Panhandle Association)
MARCH 8 – The ministry of Charleston First Baptist Church; Paul Dunn, pastor (Kanawha Valley Association)
MARCH 9 – The ministry of Fort Gay Baptist Church; Timothy Preston, pastor (Twelve Pole Association)
MARCH 10 – The ministry of Oak Hill Baptist Church; Samuel Blaylock, pastor (Fayette Association)
MARCH 11 – The ministry of Flemington Baptist Church; Garry Whitescarver, pastor (Union Association)
MARCH 12 – Jim Hewitt, member of the WVBC Leadership Commission
MARCH 13 – The ministry of Flint Chapel Baptist Church; Jim Anderson, pastor (Greenbrier-Raleigh Association)
MARCH 14 – The Ministers' Wives' Retreat happening this weekend at Camp Cowen
MARCH 15 – The ministry of Riverside Baptist Church; Michael Hanna, pastor (Teays Valley Association)
MARCH 16 – The ministry of Little Laurel Baptist Church; David McLaughlin, pastor (Elk Valley Association)
MARCH 17 – The ministry of Mount Pisgah Baptist Church; Larry Fisher, pastor (Little Kanawha Association)
MARCH 18 – Tim Long, International Ministries Global Servant to Mexico
MARCH 19 – Richard Gutierrez, International Ministries Global Servant to South Africa
MARCH 20 – Mayra Giovanetti, International Ministries Global Servant to Iberoamerica and the Caribbean
MARCH 21 – The ministry of Mallory Baptist Church; Jim Saunders, pastor (Logan-Mingo Association)
MARCH 22 – The ministry of Welch First Baptist Church; Timmy Redden, pastor (Rockcastle Association)
MARCH 23 – Lisa Williams, member of the WVBC Discipleship Commission
MARCH 24 – The ministry of Spencer First Baptist Church; Mark Wood, pastor (Good Hope Association)
MARCH 25 – The ministry of Union Valley Baptist Church; Jonathan Butcher, pastor (Parkersburg Association)
MARCH 26 – The ministry of West Warren Baptist Church; Bob Scharnhorst, pastor (Fairmont Association)
MARCH 27 – Vicki Ramey, member of the WVBC Outreach Commission
MARCH 28 – The ministry of Huntington Baptist Temple (Guyandotte Association)
MARCH 29 – The ministry of Smoot Baptist Church; Jeremy Nicholas, pastor (Hopewell Association)
MARCH 30 – The ministry of Coon's Run Baptist Church; Max "Sonny" Palmer, pastor (Judson Association)
MARCH 31 – Nancy Wolfe, member of the WVBC Stewardship Commission

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

Upcoming Events

FEBRUARY

February 1
Annual Training Event
Parchment Valley Conference Center

February 21-23
Junior High Convention
Summersville Baptist Church

February 22
Grandparenting Summit
Gassaway Baptist Church

February 22
AB Men Prayer Breakfasts
Various locations

February 25
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: New Testament II (B-04)
Various locations

February 28
P4P Pre-Bible Conference Event
Parchment Valley Conference Center

APRIL

April 4
Pastors4Pastors Book Study
Calvary Baptist Church, Oak Hill

April 4-6
Women's Camp
Camp Cowen

April 11-12
AB Men Work Party
Parchment Valley Conference Center

April 25-26
AB Men Work Party
Camp Cowen

April 26
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Worship and Music (E-03)
Parchment Valley Conference Center

April 27
Camp Cowen Sunday
Various locations

MARCH

March 1
Annual Bible Conference
Parchment Valley Conference Center

March 1
Spring Children's Rally
Parchment Valley Conference Center

March 14-15
Ministers' Wives' Retreat
Camp Cowen

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

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

MAY

May 2
WVBC Executive Committee Meeting
Parchment Valley Conference Center

May 3
WVBC Executive Board and Commission Meetings
Parchment Valley Conference Center

May 5-7
Spring Golden'egers Retreat
Parchment Valley Conference Center

May 6
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Church History (H-01)
Various locations

May 16-17
Summer Kick-Off
Camp Cowen

Newsletter Submissions

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

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

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Register for Courses

The B.W. School of Christian Studies is open to all persons. Anyone may take courses for their own general improvement.

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