

# The West Virginia Baptist Newsletter

June—July 2025

## Repairing Homes and Repairing Souls



February brought devastating flooding to southern West Virginia. The counties of McDowell and Mingo were some of the most heavily impacted. However, our WVBC family stepped up in incredible ways—collecting supplies, donating more than \$50,000 and participating in numerous mission trips to help families recover from the devastation.

The **WV American Baptist Men Disaster Relief Team** helped to coordinate several mission trips to both counties. With their help, over 60 individuals volunteered to help 11 homeowners. Most projects consisted of tearing out drywall, ripping up carpet and cleaning up debris. Rob Ely also took several Baptist Campus Ministry (BCM) students from Marshall University to assist in the efforts. One student, Mika McCormick, had this to say about her experience:

*"During the mission trip to Mingo County, it is without doubt that we saw immense tragedy and unspeakable damage. So much so, that some people had to stay in the homes of their friends, or even worse, their cars. Over the course of our time there, I learned that missionary work doesn't always have to include a plane and packed bags. It can happen in our own backyards."*

While the BCM team was serving, there was also some miscommunication about one particular project. On the final day of their trip, the team thought they were traveling to one of the more impacted houses but ended up at a house with very little damage. Lauren Hutchinson, another BCM student, shared the following:

*"When we arrived, we were all disheartened. It didn't seem right to spend our last few hours washing a house that didn't need it, especially when so many others were in desperate need of help."*

*"The homeowner wasn't there, but we went ahead and pressure washed the house and took two small bags of trash to the curb. Honestly, it felt like a waste of time. But the Lord had a bigger plan. The next day, some other volunteers visited the homeowner to present the Gospel and a Bible. Though we hadn't seen the purpose at the time, we later learned that she had accepted Christ as her personal Savior!"*

Disaster relief is about more than just repairing homes. It is also about repairing souls and introducing people to Jesus. Because of your donations, your prayers and your investment, we can rejoice knowing that at least one more has been added to the kingdom!

However, just because the cleanup is finished and several other agencies have moved on from these counties, that does not mean our work is complete. Many of these families will be working for several years to replace what they lost, and this continues to provide us an opportunity to come alongside them in the name of Christ.

**If you are interested in learning of ways you can get involved, contact the WV American Baptist Disaster Relief Team at [disasterrelief@wvbc.org](mailto:disasterrelief@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

## Challenges are Opportunities

*"Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."*

- Isaiah 43:19

The Israelites are in desperate circumstances in Babylon. Life looks bleak and they are stuck in a pit of despair as they look back in life. But God is saying when you remember the past, look at the great work I have done for you and your ancestors. Then He reminds them He is still a God of miracles and provision, and He will make a way forward just as He has done for them before. He creates roads in the wilderness. He forms rivers in the desert. He will make a new way.

God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. While the challenges we face as the people of God today may be different than those of the Israelites in Babylonian captivity, our God and His abilities remain the same.

When William Carey – considered by many to be the father of Baptist world missions – declared "Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God," he did so against the backdrop of what seemed to be insurmountable obstacles combined with a great deal of unknowns in taking the Gospel to foreign nations. He was arguing that Christians must expect great things — and not only must we expect them; we must attempt them. No matter how small the beginning, no matter how complicated the task, in the power of the Spirit, under the authority of the risen Christ, we can have absolute confidence in the success of our mission.

Sometimes it seems like we place more confidence in the challenges and obstacles before us than we do in the God who has repeatedly proven that He is a sustainer of universes, mover of mountains, calmer of storms, healer of bodies, slayer of giants, destroyer of great walls and a defeater of sin, hell and the grave.

It is no mystery that there are unprecedented challenges before us in this present age. The people of God and the church of God are on the front line of overcoming these challenges as we carry the testimony of the greatness of God forward all while we live out its witness before a skeptical but searching world. Even the West Virginia Baptist Convention – with a rich history of an impactful mission and ministry that has lasted for 160 years – face challenges to the work we do together as financial support has shown recent signs of declining. However, as a family of churches, we believe God will provide for the continuation of the ministries we do together that bear fruit for His kingdom. As the words of the old familiar hymn declare, "Come, every soul by sin oppressed, there's mercy with the Lord; And He will surely give you rest, by trusting in His word. Only trust Him, only trust Him, only trust Him now..."

Jesus ended His command to the Great Commission with the promise, "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). To that command, William Carey would write in *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians*, "Where a command exists nothing can be necessary to render it binding but a removal of those obstacles which render obedience impossible, and these are removed already."

Blessings,  
Mike



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

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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. 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.







## Sarah McCloy: Celebrating New Life in Japan

*Written by Sarah McCloy  
Global Servant, International Ministries*

Spring has arrived here in Japan! April is one of my favorite times of the year here in Sendai. The cherry blossoms bloom and birds sing during this season of new beginnings. Students begin a new school year. Graduates begin new jobs. Churches celebrate new life through Jesus's resurrection on Easter Sunday.

As Romans 6:4 (ESV) says, "Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life."

It's with this spirit of newness that I've begun another chapter of life here in Sendai. This past month has contained many firsts—

preaching in Japanese, leading a communion service in Japanese, and assisting with translation work to name a few.

I recently graduated from my two-year Japanese language program. This has given me both the skills and the time to do even more ministry alongside Shokei Baptist Church. I continue to co-lead the church's children's ministry, while also assisting in the planning and launching of some new ministries! The church has a vision to reach out into the local community and share the gospel message. Please pray for the church and its ministries—for God's guidance and continued provision—as we navigate this season of newness.

Thank you, WV Baptist Family, for being part of sharing God's message of salvation and new life here in Japan!



Sarah working at Shokei Kids' Church on Easter Sunday.



Sarah enjoying the cherry blossoms in Japan.

Join us for:

# CAMP GLOBAL

A two-day missions camp  
for the entire family

August 8-9, 2025 at Camp Cowen



Learn more or register at [wvbc.org](http://wvbc.org)



## Keith and Deborah Myers: Enjoying God's Faithfulness

*Written by Keith Myers  
Global Servant, International Ministries*



**Fairmont State mission team with Keith and Deborah Myers.**

As we reflect on the first few months of 2025, our hearts are full. God's faithfulness has been clear—in quiet moments of prayer, joyful celebrations and even in sorrow.

We began the year hosting CICEM's new Board, dreaming together about the future and grounding ourselves in Christ-centered leadership. I (Keith) had the chance to speak to young students at Puebla Christian School, encouraging them to see others through Jesus' eyes and to love those the world often overlooks.

We traveled throughout Oaxaca and the Sierra Norte, visiting churches, celebrating birthdays and deepening relationships that

continue to grow in Christ. We also had the chance to travel to the Dominican Republic, where we helped lead a retreat focused on Micah 6:8—seeking justice, loving mercy and walking humbly with our God. It was a time of renewal for us and for the pastors who came.

Our family also celebrated a joyful milestone: Boyden proposed to Jette, and she said yes! We are honored to be part of their wedding this coming August—I will officiate and Deb will help bring beauty to the celebration through decoration.

In the midst of joy, we also experienced deep grief as we mourned the loss of our dear friend and fellow missionary colleague, JD Reed. We traveled back to West Virginia to be with his family. His life and legacy remind us to serve with love, humility and a full heart.

March brought fresh opportunities: women's retreats in our home, spiritual discipline workshops in several of our communities and youth events. We were honored to host a group of young adults from Fairmont State University BCM led by Karla Carr. We were especially blessed to serve alongside Esme Cano, a young leader we have discipled since childhood, as she taught and led with grace and courage. This year, she has traveled with us to each of our seven zones and four states throughout southern central Mexico.

We continue to pursue our Doctor of Ministry programs, stretching our minds and spirits for the road ahead. Through it all, God has been faithful. Deb is aiming to graduate in the spring of 2026, and I am shooting for the spring of 2027.

Thank you for praying, giving and believing in the work God is doing. You are part of every story we have shared.

## Rhonda Reed: Continuing to Serve on the Member Care Team for IM

*Written by Rhonda Reed  
Global Servant, International Ministries*

To my WVBC family, I can only say thank you. For those who have not heard, JD passed on February 16th surrounded by family and close friends. ALS took so much from him and the last four days, he truly suffered. However, he is no longer suffering. Our family is comforted by this knowledge, but it has been an extremely difficult time for all of us. I would ask that you continue to pray for our family as we grieve and learn to live life without him.

The House of Hope continues with their medical/dental mobile clinics on the weekends. Bolivia is continuing to economically decline. There has been a gas/diesel shortage for months. The lines for gas are long and sometimes it is impossible to find diesel for the bus. The money sent to the foundation in dollars has to be withdrawn in bolivianos. There have not been dollars circulating for over two years now. The boliviano has decreased in value, so, in the exchange, Carmen and Richard are only getting half of value of the dollar (1 USD = 13-14 BOB on the streets, but at the bank it is 6.96 BOB). They are living and working at 50% of what they had last year. If anyone would like to know more information about supporting the ministry, please let me know.

I continue working on the member care team for International Ministries. I recently went to France for a training on how to perform a debriefing of missionaries after a long-term assignment. I have had debriefing training in the past, but this was at a deeper level and more informative. I attended with people in member care from all over the world.



**Rhonda was joined by numerous IM colleagues at JD's funeral.**

Last fall, I had to withdraw from my clinical hours to take care of JD, but I will resume those at the end of August. I had finished all of my coursework last May. I finished my first of three clinical rotations last summer. I will hopefully graduate with my Master's in Clinical Mental Health Counseling in May of 2026. This degree paired with my nursing degrees will be extremely helpful in my new role of caring for the physical and mental health of my missionary colleagues.

Thank you for your continued support as I continue working with International Ministries. Keith, Debbie, Sarah and I are so blessed by our WVBC family. Thank you for your partnerships. We are truly cared for and feel God's love through you all.



# American Baptist Men of WV

## The ABMen of WV Help Prepare for a Busy Season of Camps

Every spring, the **American Baptist Men (ABMen) of WV** plan work parties to help prepare both Parchment Valley Conference Center and Camp Cowen for a busy summer of camps. This year's work parties were organized by ABMen officer, Stan Carr. Between the two locations, 25 men helped with the work projects. Parchment Valley also benefitted from the help of 11 Boy Scouts from Troop 86.

At Parchment Valley, firewood was cut, the Overlook Trail was cleared and opened for use again, a tree was removed from the prayer labyrinth and additional seating was placed at the outdoor campfire.

At Camp Cowen, the pool was cleaned, a concrete pad was poured for the new Sunny Day Activity Center generator, outdoor bleachers were repaired, firewood was moved and numerous other projects were completed.



The ABMen with Troop 86 at Overlook Trail at Parchment Valley



Stacking firewood at Camp Cowen



Cleaning the pool at Camp Cowen



Chopping firewood at Parchment Valley

## ABMen & Boys Camp

**August 1-3, 2025 at Camp Cowen**

Join us for a weekend of worship and fellowship for all men and boys. Camp begins with dinner at 5:30 PM on Friday and concludes with lunch on Sunday.

**Theme:** Coaching and Leading in Today's Church

**Cost:** \$90 for full weekend / \$70 for Saturday only

**REGISTER NOW AT [WVBC.ORG](http://WVBC.ORG)**



More information  
**304-422-6449**



Email Tracie Emerick at  
**[temerick@wvbc.org](mailto:temerick@wvbc.org)**

### SPEAKERS



**ROGER ADAMS**

*Keynote Speaker*



**BRAD STINE**

*Special Guest*



## Over 175 Attend the Ninth Annual Women's Camp at Camp Cowen

The ninth annual **Women's Camp** at Camp Cowen was held April 4-6, 2025. Over 175 women gathered to spend time studying 1 Corinthians 16:13-14.

Women's Camp has prayerfully been a time for women from all over the state to come together, set their responsibilities aside and focus on their relationship with Christ. Aside from three scripture-filled worship sessions, with the help of several volunteers, we were able to offer several interest groups, including fishing at the river, crochet, Bible journaling/painting, functional fitness, discussions on mental health, prayerful tips for health and healing and a book club.

We spent the weekend in worship led by Lydia Nutter and Alena Adkins while Katie Shull brought the Word. You may know Katie from her WVBC roots, as she was licensed for ministry by the WVBC in 2022 and served as pulpit supply in the Huntington area. Katie Shull serves as Lead Pastor at Park Ridge Free Methodist Church in Rochester, NY. We were so blessed by her careful study of the word and prayerful preparation for the weekend!

Continuing the WVBC's theme for 2025, our evening activity included a prayer walk. Stations were set up around camp, including prayer prompts and scriptures to facilitate group and personal prayers. Please know your families, churches and communities were prayed over this weekend! Because of a suggestion on a registration form, we were able to add a bit of creativity to our evening activity. At each prayer station, the women picked up a ribbon, then we gathered in the dining hall and made beautiful Bible tassels and keychains. We hope these tassels and keychains remind us of all the beautiful parts of life we can bring to God in prayer.



Over 175 women attended this year's Women's Camp.

Each year, we spend time together learning about Women in Missions. We have had several missionaries and their families come to share about their work for the Kingdom in the past. This year, Shelly Dawson and Alison Blankenship from Sunrise Baptist Church shared about their work with Kainos International Ministries in Kenya. They shared about their recent mission trips to work on their Sewing in Faith program and Living Water project.

We ended each evening the Camp Cowen way - gathered around the campfire! Our weekend wouldn't have been possible without several WVBC men who cooked, cleaned and served us well all weekend. They kept the coffee hot and the fire rolling for us.

**Mark your calendars for April 17-19, 2026 and join us next year for Women's Camp!**

### Schedule

JUNE 6-8	Younger Midler (grades 2-4)
JUNE 8-14	Junior High 1 (grades 7-9)
JUNE 15-21	Junior 1 (grades 5-6)
JUNE 21	Senior Day (2025 graduates)
JUNE 22-28	High School 1 (grades 9-'25 grads)
JUNE 29-JULY 5	Junior 2 (grades 5-6)
JULY 6-12	Junior High 2 (grades 7-9)
JULY 12	Senior Day (2025 graduates)
JULY 13-19	High School 2 (grades 9-'25 grads)
JULY 20-24	Southeast Association Camp
JULY 25-28	Family Camp
JULY 29- AUG 1	Older Midler (grades 3-5)
AUG 1-3	AB Men & Boys' Camp
AUG 8-9	Camp Global

### REGISTER NOW

Online or mail-in available at [campcowen.org/register](http://campcowen.org/register)

## Camp Cowen 2025



***Let everything that has breath  
praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.  
-Psalm 150: 6***

In a world full of objectification, branding and personal promotion, skepticism abounds about God, who requires our praise, worship, devotion, and adoration. Many people end up praising the wrong things. As Romans 1:25 says, "They exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever!" Let us not be swayed by the world's values, but instead focus on the eternal worthiness of God.

Students desire deep faith—not shallow or empty, but faith that's built on the Solid Rock! "Praise the Lord" will focus on the deep truths of who God is and why He alone is worthy of praise. Through studying the characteristics of God, the names of God, and the "I am" statements, students will see God's Word reveal His glory. They will learn what it means to praise and how we can faithfully praise God through good times, hardships, unknown circumstances, moments of immense blessing, doubts and everyday living.

**Attitude check? PRAISE THE LORD!!**



# PASTORS AND LEADERS

*You will not want to miss this exciting opportunity!*

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW!



### PASTORS PRE-CONVENTION EVENT

#### “Leading Yourself”

Oakwood Baptist Church, Charleston, WV

**October 16, 2025** at 9:00 AM

### WVBC ANNUAL MEETING

#### “Identifying Leaders and Developing a Leadership Pipeline”

Emmanuel Baptist Church, Charleston, WV

**October 17, 2025** at 9:30 AM and 2:30 PM

Mac Lake grew up in West Virginia and attended the Handley Baptist Church, a WVBC congregation. Mac is gifted at equipping leaders and organizations with actionable strategies to multiply their leadership impact. Whether helping individuals lead themselves to maximize their influence, guiding churches and organizations in creating effective leadership pipelines to identify and grow leaders, or empowering teams to be healthy and high-performing, Mac has a transformative approach to leadership.

In 1997, Mac founded Carolina Forest Community Church in Myrtle Beach, SC, and later transitioned to Seacoast Church in Charleston, SC, with multiple campuses across the Carolinas. There he served as the Leadership Development Pastor where he was instrumental in the church's efforts to grow and sustain healthy leadership.

In 2010, Mac co-founded the LAUNCH Network in Atlanta, GA, which grew to be adopted by the North American Mission Board. Through LAUNCH, Mac implemented leadership systems in 32 strategic cities across North America.

In 2019, Mac founded Multiply Group, a consulting company focused on helping leaders and organizations build and implement strategies to multiply healthy leaders.

He is also the author of seven books, including *The Multiplication Effect* and *The Discipling Leaders Series*, which offer practical tools for intentional leadership development.

He and his wife, Cindy, live in Charleston, SC, and enjoy spending time with their three grown children and six grandchildren.

Connect with Mac on YouTube at [youtube.com/maclake](https://youtube.com/maclake), [maclakeonline.com](https://maclakeonline.com).

You can also find out more about his company, Multiply Group at [multiplygroup.org](https://multiplygroup.org).





# THE 160TH ANNUAL MEETING OF OUR WVBC FAMILY

**October 16-17, 2025**

**Emmanuel Baptist Church**  
1401 Washington St. W, Charleston, WV 25387

*"Expect great things from God .  
Attempt great things for God."*



More information  
**304-422-6449**



Visit our website  
**[www.wvbc.org](http://www.wvbc.org)**

## **2025 Association Meeting Schedule**

### **Rockcastle Association**

Thursday, July 31 at 6 PM  
Welch First Baptist Church

### **Good Hope Association**

Sunday, August 17 at 1 PM  
Parchment Valley Baptist Church

### **Hopewell Association**

Wednesday, September 17 at 4:30 PM  
Hilton Village Baptist Church

### **Fayette Association**

Sunday, August 3 at 2:30 PM  
Calvary Baptist Church

### **Goshen Association**

Sunday, August 17 at 4 PM  
Location: TBD

### **Twelve Pole Association**

Saturday, September 20 at 9:45 AM  
Crum Missionary Baptist Church

### **Harrisville Association**

Tuesday, August 5 at 9:30 AM  
Strait Creek Baptist Church

### **Elk Valley Association**

Saturday, August 23 at 8:30 AM  
Big Union Baptist Church

### **Union Association**

Sunday, September 21 at 2:30 PM  
Beulah Baptist Church

### **Greenbrier-Raleigh Association**

Tuesday, August 5 at 4:30 PM  
Beaver First Baptist Church

### **Eastern Association**

Sunday, August 24 at 3 PM  
North Mill Creek Baptist Church

### **Guyandotte Association**

Thursday, September 25 at 5:30 PM  
Hope Christian Center

### **Little Kanawha Association**

Thursday, August 7 at 5 PM  
Glenville First Baptist Church

### **Kanawha Valley Association**

Friday, September 12 at 5:30 PM  
North Hills Baptist Church

### **Coal River Association**

Saturday, September 27 at 9:30 AM  
Sand Fork Missionary Baptist Church

### **Broad Run Association**

Thursday, August 14 at 8:30 AM  
Location: TBD

### **Fairmont Association**

Sunday, September 14 at 3 PM  
Union Baptist Church at Crossroads

### **Judson Association**

Sunday, September 28 at 4:30 PM  
Hepzibah Baptist Church

### **Teays Valley Association**

Saturday, August 16 at 9 AM  
Main Street Baptist Church

### **Parkersburg Association**

Tuesday, September 16 at 4:30 PM  
Sunrise Baptist Church

**No details are currently available for the  
Panhandle or Logan-Mingo associations.**

**For the latest association meeting details, visit [wvbc.org](http://wvbc.org)**



## Meet the 2025 WVBC Interns



### Kelci Armstead

Kelci is a junior Elementary Education student at Marshall University. She has been part of the WVBC's YLC and YMPT. She is now a member of Marshall's Baptist Campus Ministry (BCM). She will intern this summer at her home church, Pea Ridge Baptist, assisting with their technology and communications.

### Katie Gillespie

Katie is a junior Animal and Nutritional Science student at West Virginia University. She is also involved in BCM at Fairmont State University. She is a member of Summersville Baptist Church. She will serve as a missionary intern this summer in Mexico, working alongside Keith and Deborah Myers.



### Thane Howlett

Thane is a high school student from Charles City, Iowa. He is a member First Baptist Church of Charles City, where his dad is the pastor. He will serve as a missionary intern this summer in Mexico, working alongside Keith and Deborah Myers, who referred him to this program.



### Faith Lambert

Faith is a recent graduate from Marshall University, where she studied nursing. She also served as president of Marshall's BCM. She is a member of First Baptist Church of Kenova. She will serve as a missionary intern this summer in northeast India, working alongside our partners in the Garo Baptist Convention.



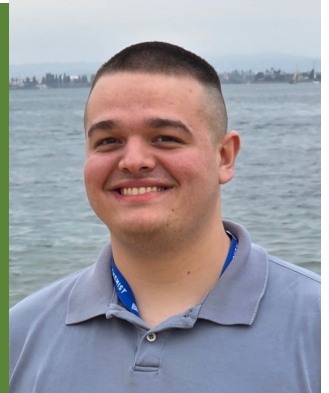
### Olivia McCroskey

Olivia is a junior Early Childhood Development student at West Virginia University at Parkersburg. She is a member of Smithville Baptist Church, where her dad is the pastor. She will intern this summer at New Hope Baptist in Parkersburg, assisting with children's ministry.



### Hunter Mitchell

Hunter is a recent graduate from Marshall University, where he studied Biochemistry. He also served on the leadership team for Marshall's BCM. He will serve as a missionary intern this summer in northeast India, working alongside our partners in the Garo Baptist Convention.



### Isabell Roop

Isabell is a recent graduate from Marshall University, where she studied biology. She also served on the leadership team for Marshall's BCM. She will serve as a missionary intern this summer in northeast India, working alongside our partners in the Garo Baptist Convention.



### Carrie Speirs

Carrie is a graduate of West Virginia University and now lives in Parkersburg with her husband, Andrew, working for Wood County Schools. She will intern this summer at her home church, Pine Grove Baptist, assisting with both children's and youth ministries.



 = WVBC Ministry Intern

 = WVBC Missionary Intern



# PASTORS 4 PASTORS UPCOMING EVENTS 2025

## BOOK CLUB SESSIONS

June 13th| First Baptist Church, Parkersburg| CH. 7-9  
Sept. 19th| First Baptist Church, Glenville| CH. 10-11  
Contact for More Info: Pastor Anthony Pratt  
(304)382-3600

**JULY  
19**  
SATURDAY

## P4P FAMILY PICNIC

**12:00-2:30**  
Parchment Valley Conference Center

**AUG  
22**  
FRIDAY

## COUPLES DINNER CRUISE

**6:00-8:00**  
Valley Gem Sternwheeler, Marietta OH

**OCT  
16**  
THURSDAY

## THE ANNUAL PRE- CONVENTION EVENT

Guest Speaker: Mac Lake  
**9:00-1:45**  
Oakwood Baptist Church, Charleston

Made with PosterMyWall.com

## Congratulations Palmer Graduates



Students from both the New Testament I and Teaching the Faith courses combined for a group photo this past spring.

For more than 30 years, **Palmer Seminary** has been training pastors and leaders across our state through the WV extension at Parchment Valley Conference Center. This May, we celebrated the next group of graduates.

Those completing their Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree include: Mark Evans, pastor of Weston First Baptist Church; Emily Fordyce, administrative assistant at Crab Orchard Baptist Church; and Scott McClure, associate pastor of Clarksburg Baptist Church.

Also, Greg Swisher, senior pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Oak Hill, successfully defended his doctoral project during the spring semester to earn his Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) degree. Congratulations, Dr. Swisher!

For those considering a seminary education, this is a great time to consider Palmer Seminary. Through our partnerships with the Bowen Charitable Trust and the West Virginia Baptist Education Society, theological education has never been more affordable.

If you think God might be calling to you to further your education, please reach out to the WV program director, Allan Copenhaver, at (304) 763-8564 or [allancopenhaver@yahoo.com](mailto:allancopenhaver@yahoo.com) for more information.

## BCM: Celebrating Graduation and Sending Students into the World



BCM graduates from Marshall University

*So Christ Himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip His people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up... - Ephesians 4:11*

"Changing Lives that Change the World" is more than a slogan—it is the mission of **Baptist Campus Ministry (BCM)**. Each May, that mission becomes reality as we celebrate graduation and send our students into the world.



BCM graduates from West Virginia University

BCM has the privilege of equipping future business leaders, doctors, physician assistants, physical therapists and teachers—not only for careers, but for kingdom impact. Our prayer is that they leave having grown as disciples, ready to be on mission in every classroom, clinic and office.

We ask that each of you continue to pray for and support these young adults as they go—not just as graduates, but as ambassadors for Christ in every corner of society.



# Northwest Area News

**by Mark McCloy, Northwest Area Minister**

## God Provides

*Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."*

- Mark 1:14-15



Night #3 of the Harrisville Association Revival at Cairo Baptist Church

As someone once said, "Where God guides, He provides." The world is not an accident. Neither is your church. Neither is your faith. Neither are you. In fact, *having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself*, God planned the whole thing. *Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God...by miracles, wonders and signs was killed for us*, but not by accident. He was *delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God. It is by His stripes we are healed*.

The world certainly is in need of healing. The times are in need of redeeming. For this purpose, God continues to call...servants, deacons, elders, teachers, pastors, preachers and missionaries. We rejoice with our family of churches as God continues to call, raise up and ordain leaders. This spring has included several ordinations of deacons and pastors. May God continue to bless this mighty work. May He continue to guide us and inspire us. May we never lose heart, lose hope, lose faith. Several churches and two associations just celebrated their revivals, with wonderful attendance and an encouraging spirit. May we all be revived as we seek to serve Him.

# Northeast Area News

**by Kevin Sions, Northeast Area Minister**

## Middleville Baptist Celebrates 200 Years

Middleville Baptist Church (Union Association) celebrated 200 years of ministry on Sunday, April 27. Middleville Baptist was formed in 1825 when Simpson Creek Baptist and Beulah Baptist (two WVBC churches from the Union Association) each sent a delegation to start a community of believers near the Harrison County/Taylor County line.

Executive Minister, Mike Sisson, shared some encouragement during the service. David Carpenter, representing the WV Baptist Historical Society, presented Middleville with a certificate. Pastor Paul Boyles and Associate Pastor Mark Moats preached a tag-team sermon. Former pastor Bobby Perine (current pastor at Harrisville Baptist) shared memories of his time serving at Middleville. There was a great spirit of community, worship and fellowship during the anniversary celebration.



Celebration fellowship dinner at Middleville Baptist Church.



Easter Sunrise service with several Goshen Association churches.

## Lenten and Holy Week Services

Several churches, as well as both the Fairmont and Union Associations, held special Lenten and Holy Week services. Shinnston First Baptist Church (Judson) hosted six Lenten (luncheon) services on Wednesdays. A few churches (Sabraton Hill, Goshen and Forks of Cheat) in the Goshen Association held a joint Good Friday service and Easter Sunrise service. The Union Association had a special service at the Robinson Grand Theater in Clarksburg that included the Last Supper portrayal.



# Southwest Area News

*by Mike Sisson, Executive Minister*

## *Saint Albans FBC Celebrates 165 Years*

Saint Albans First Baptist Church celebrated their 165th anniversary in a creative way. On Sunday, April 13, the congregation, along with visitors and special guests, gathered in the fellowship hall for a multigenerational birthday party, complete with games, singing, fun, fellowship and of course cake! Tables were decorated and organized by month with a wide variety of different cakes prepared by the ladies of the church at each table. Guests were instructed to sit at the table that matched their birthday month. Some took the opportunity to sample cakes from other tables (which was encouraged). Each person was asked to donate \$1.65 toward their annual Easter offering.



Cradle Role Call 1930s

The event was planned by the Board of Christian Education and directed by Gloria Kesselring. Gloria has a rich legacy within the WVBC family. She has served as children's minister at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Parkersburg and Emmanuel Baptist Church in Charleston before moving to Saint Albans FBC, where she shares her valuable knowledge and experience in mentoring the current children's director, Kelly Hensley. Gloria has participated in numerous WVBC ministries and served as a valuable resource for assisting churches in developing policies to help in safeguarding the children they minister to. The picture of Gloria and devotion leader Elisha Moncrief speaks volumes about the multigenerational nature of the celebration and Gloria's heart. The sweet spirit of the celebration very much represents the church's overall nature.



Gloria Kesselring and Elisha Moncrief

# Southeast Area News

*by Jon Villers, Southeast Area Minister*

## *Churches Partnering for Easter Events*

It was a joy to see such a great response to events leading up to Easter in the Southeast Region! There were at least two area-wide, multi-night revival services that took place, as well as several other Easter outreach events.

In the Rockcastle Association, Oceana First Baptist, Baileysville Baptist and Tonedale Baptist partnered together for a multi-night revival. I had the privilege of attending in the evening on Palm Sunday at Oceana First Baptist and was blessed with a wonderful service of song, testimony and preaching.

In the Hopewell Association, Smoot Baptist, Quinwood First Baptist, Orient Hill Baptist and Rainelle First Baptist hosted evening services as part of their traveling revival. With over a hundred in attendance each night, it was a wonderful time of renewal and connection. The Hopewell Association churches also partnered on the Saturday before Palm Sunday to host a "Drive-Through Easter Celebration" around Rainelle. The different stations had live depictions of the accounts of Jesus through His days of ministry and His final week leading up to His resurrection. Rainelle First Baptist also hosted a Holy Week luncheon every day at noon for the surrounding community.

The entire season was such a poignant reminder that Christ is Risen! He is Risen, Indeed!



One of the stations at the Drive-Through Easter Celebration in Rainelle.



Hopewell Association Revival at Smoot Baptist Church.

**March — April 2025**

**PEGGY JANE OXLEY BUSH**, 87, of Hurricane, died on March 12, 2025. She was a member of Hurricane First Baptist Church.

**REV. DR. LAWRENCE L. (HOPPY) HOPTRY**, 87, of Hurricane, died on March 5, 2025. He was a member of Mount Vernon Baptist Church, where he served as the Minister of Pastoral Care. He was the former pastor of Kingwood Baptist Church and Nitro First Baptist Church. He was also the Executive Director of the West Virginia Baptist Education Society, and he previously served as president of the WVBC and later as the secretary.

**MARY LOU LAKIN**, 89, of Huntington, died on March 17, 2025. She was a member of Fifth Avenue Baptist Church, where she participated in the choir, Women's Circle and the Fellowship Sunday School class.

**FRANCES WAMSLEY MASON**, 78, of Sistersville, died on March 6, 2025. She was a member of Sistersville First Baptist Church, where she served as the church clerk.

**REV. JAMES WALLACE PEARSON**, 82, of Bloomington, NY, died on April 9, 2025. He was formerly the pastor of Grass Lick Baptist Church.

**KAY DELL POE**, 76, of Hurricane, died on March 16, 2025. She was a member of Fairmont Baptist Temple, where she served on the board of deacons and was on the fellowship team.

**LOUIE "MIKE" ROMINE**, 80, of Hurricane, died on April 1, 2025. He was a member of New Hope Baptist Church, where he served as a deacon.

**KENDEL LEANN RUTHERFORD**, 66, of Weirton, died on April 15, 2025. She was a member of Weirton Heights Memorial Baptist Church.

**CHARLES EDGAR STARK**, 87, of Salem, died on April 18, 2025. He was a member of Vermont Baptist Church, where he served as a deacon, trustee, Sunday School teacher and Bible study teacher.

## Leadership Updates

**JUSTIN BERRY** to Huntington Baptist Temple as pastor  
2/2/2025

**WARREN EADES** to Gentry Missionary Baptist Church as pastor  
3/2/2025

**MARK FORDYCE** to Cedar Grove Baptist Church as pastor  
3/9/2025

**MICHAEL REXROAD** to Belington First Baptist Church as pastor  
4/30/2025

## MINISTRY EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### **Pianist (Part-Time)**

**Location:** Fairmont area

### **Pastor (Part-Time)**

**Location:** Weirton area

### **Director of Worship Ministry (Part-Time)**

**Location:** Huntington area

### **Lead Pastor (Full-Time)**

**Location:** Princeton area

### **Associate Pastor for Families (Full-Time)**

**Location:** Charleston 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:** Boone County

### **Pastor (Full-Time)**

**Location:** Barbour County

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

To see a list of available positions, visit: [www.wvbc.org](http://www.wvbc.org)



## June 2025

**JUNE 1** – Sarah McCloy, International Ministries Global Servant to Japan  
**JUNE 2** – Waleska Febres, International Ministries Global Servant to Colombia  
**JUNE 3** – The ministry of Gentry Missionary Baptist Church; Warren Eades, pastor (Fayette Association)  
**JUNE 4** – Trish Magal, International Ministries Global Servant to Thailand  
**JUNE 5** – Don Nestor, member of the WVBC Outreach Commission  
**JUNE 6** – Younger Midler Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen  
**JUNE 7** – The WV American Baptist Women's Ministries Annual Conference happening today at Parchment Valley  
**JUNE 8** – Junior High 1 Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen  
**JUNE 9** – Dilla Zelaya, International Ministries Global Servant to Honduras  
**JUNE 10** – The ministry of Mount Union Baptist Church (Guyandotte Association)  
**JUNE 11** – Konedá Devrick, member of the WVBC Leadership Commission  
**JUNE 12** – The ministry of Sweet Springs Baptist Church (Greenbrier-Raleigh Association)  
**JUNE 13** – The ministry of Holly River Baptist Church; Michael Cool, pastor (Elk Valley Association)  
**JUNE 14** – The ministry of Williamstown First Baptist Church; Tony Foreman, pastor (Parkersburg Association)  
**JUNE 15** – Brothers' Keeper beginning today at Parchment Valley  
**JUNE 16** – Junior 1 Camp happening this week at Camp Cowen  
**JUNE 17** – Daniel Harbaugh, member of the WVBC Stewardship Commission  
**JUNE 18** – Jeff Dieselberg, International Ministries Global Servant to Thailand  
**JUNE 19** – The ministry of Mount Pleasant Baptist Church; Michael Wamsley, pastor (Broad Run Association)  
**JUNE 20** – Katherine Niles, International Ministries Global Servant to the Democratic Republic of the Congo  
**JUNE 21** – The ministry of Independence Baptist Church; Carl Trickett, pastor (Goshen Association)  
**JUNE 22** – High School 1 Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen  
**JUNE 23** – The ministry of Little Capon Baptist Church; Paul "Tony" Baker, pastor (Eastern Association)  
**JUNE 24** – Anita Gutierrez, International Ministries Global Servant to South Africa  
**JUNE 25** – The ministry of Lover's Leap Baptist Church; Milburn Pack, pastor (Hopewell Association)  
**JUNE 26** – The ministry of Hill Grove Baptist Church (Good Hope Association)  
**JUNE 27** – The ministry of Harrisville Baptist Church; Robert Perine, pastor (Harrisville Association)  
**JUNE 28** – The ministry of Bethesda Baptist Church; Brooks David Cyphers, pastor (Fairmont Association)  
**JUNE 29** – Junior 2 Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen  
**JUNE 30** – Zola Miller, chair of the Parchment Valley Board and member of the WVBC Discipleship Commission

## July 2025

**JULY 1** – The ministry of Highlawn Baptist Church; Jason Robbins, pastor (Teays Valley Association)  
**JULY 2** – The ministry of New Hope Baptist Church (Elk Valley Association)  
**JULY 3** – Eric Lembke, International Ministries Global Servant to Thailand  
**JULY 4** – Mark Wood, member of the WVBC Outreach Commission  
**JULY 5** – The ministry of Sand Run Baptist Church; Greg Miller, pastor (Broad Run Association)  
**JULY 6** – Junior High 2 Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen  
**JULY 7** – The ministry of Barboursville Baptist Church; Monty Foster, pastor (Guyandotte Association)  
**JULY 8** – Boaz Keibarak, International Ministries Global Servant to Kenya  
**JULY 9** – Eric Kendall, president of the WV Baptist Education Society and member of the WVBC Leadership Commission  
**JULY 10** – The ministry of Dent's Run Baptist Church; Doug Cyphers, pastor (Judson Association)  
**JULY 11** – The ministry of Crab Orchard Baptist Church; David Bush, pastor (Greenbrier-Raleigh Association)  
**JULY 12** – The ministry of New Martinsville First Baptist Church; Jeff Musgrave, pastor (Panhandle Association)  
**JULY 13** – High School 2 Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen  
**JULY 14** – Yuree Lembke, International Ministries Global Servant to Thailand  
**JULY 15** – The ministry of Emmanuel Baptist Church; Don Biram, pastor (Kanawha Valley Association)  
**JULY 16** – Catherine Longkumer, International Ministries Global Servant to South and East Asia  
**JULY 17** – The ministry of Curtis Baptist Church; Danny Thomas, pastor (Rockcastle Association)  
**JULY 18** – Katrina Williams, International Ministries Global Servant to Southeast Asia  
**JULY 19** – Michael Harper, member of the WVBC Discipleship Commission  
**JULY 20** – Tim Reese, International Ministries Global Servant to the Dominican Republic  
**JULY 21** – Gordon Hwang, International Ministries Global Servant to Japan  
**JULY 22** – The ministry of Hepzibah Baptist Church; Alan Rosenberger, pastor (Union Association)  
**JULY 23** – Marijane Kiley, vice chair of the WVBC Stewardship Commission  
**JULY 24** – The ministry of Logan First Baptist Church; Michael Hatfield, pastor (Logan-Mingo Association)  
**JULY 25** – Family Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen  
**JULY 26** – The ministry of New England Baptist Church; Frank Miller, pastor (Parkersburg Association)  
**JULY 27** – The ministry of Enon Baptist Church; John Vannoy, pastor (Little Kanawha Association)  
**JULY 28** – The ministry of Big Hurricane Missionary Baptist Church; Anthony Perry, pastor (Twelve Pole Association)  
**JULY 29** – Older Midler Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen  
**JULY 30** – Rob Ely, director of Student Ministries, West Virginia Baptist Convention  
**JULY 31** – Rockcastle Association as they celebrate their annual meeting

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

## Upcoming Events

### JUNE

**June 6-8**  
**Young Midler Camp (Grades 2-4)**  
 Camp Cowen

**June 7**  
**ABWM Annual Conference**  
 Parchment Valley Conference Center

**June 8-14**  
**Junior High 1 Camp (Grades 7-9)**  
 Camp Cowen

**June 13**  
**Pastors4Pastors Book Club**  
 Parkersburg First Baptist Church

**June 15-20**  
**Brothers' Keeper**  
 Parchment Valley Conference Center

**June 15-21**  
**Junior 1 Camp (Grades 5-6)**  
 Camp Cowen

**June 22-28**  
**High School 1 Camp (Grades 9-12)**  
 Camp Cowen

**June 28**  
**Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Baptist Polity (E-01)**  
 Parchment Valley Conference Center

**June 29-July 5**  
**Junior 2 Camp (Grades 5-6)**  
 Camp Cowen

### JULY

**July 6-12**  
**Junior High 2 Camp (Grades 7-9)**  
 Camp Cowen

**July 13-19**  
**High School 2 Camp (Grades 9-12)**  
 Camp Cowen

**July 15**  
**Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: New Testament I (B-03)**  
 Online

**July 15**  
**Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Ministerial Ethics (Mod-02)**  
 Online

**July 19**  
**Pastors4Pastors Family Picnic**  
 Parchment Valley Conference Center

**July 20-24**  
**Southeast Association Camp**  
 Camp Cowen

**July 25-28**  
**Family Camp (All Ages)**  
 Camp Cowen

**July 29-August 1**  
**Older Midler Camp (Grades 3-5)**  
 Camp Cowen

## Newsletter Submissions

Send submissions for *The West Virginia Baptist* to: [thewvbaptist@wvbc.org](mailto: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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