

The West Virginia Baptist Newsletter

August—September 2025

Brothers' Keeper: Celebrating 13 Salvations!



Established in 2000, **Brothers' Keeper (BK)** reaches out every year to the community surrounding Parchment Valley Conference Center for mission projects. Most are construction projects for low-income families or families with disabled members. Every year, youth groups from around West Virginia and surrounding states come in to do mission work in Jackson County.

This year at BK, we welcomed 110 youth and adult leaders from three different states. They completed 37 projects around the area. Here are a few quotes from those involved this year:

"I wasn't sure I would be able to do anything to make a difference. I do not know how to use many tools, but I wanted to come. On the first day, I was asked to pressure wash and paint a porch, which is something I knew how to do. When my team finished, the homeowner was so happy. Brothers' Keeper taught me that God can use any skill for His glory!"

- **Beth, BK participant**

"I didn't know much about power tools, other than the fact you could get hurt. But my crew chief leader taught me how to safely use drills and saws, and I was able to help my team repair a homeowner's deck! After we finished, our team told her about Jesus and prayed with her. She was in tears and grateful for the work we did."

- **Brian, BK participant**

"The BK team was so loving, and they did so much for me that I could not have done myself. My house is now safe. Even though it was hot outside, they never complained. They worked together with joy and made me feel like we were visited by angels."

- **Janice, Homeowner**

"I have not been able to get out of my house for a while now because my ramp had rotted. When the BK team showed up, they repaired both my ramp and my stairs, and I am now finally able to go to doctors appointments again. Afterward, they prayed with me and asked if I had Jesus in my heart. These folks really do love the Lord!"

- **Bonnie, Homeowner**

"This was my first year at BK, and I really did not know what to expect. I was assigned a team with only two other adult leaders, and WOW, I was blown away! Every kid on the team was respectful, loved Jesus and worked hard. We completed projects, shared the Gospel and loved like Jesus. I'll be back next year!"

- **Tom, BK Leader**

It was an incredible week of ministry that was highlighted by 10 youth who gave their lives to Christ, as well as three homeowners! Parchment Valley's mission is to be a place "where lives are changed." This year, BK once again fulfilled that mission.

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

Strengthening Relationships

Recently, I was reflecting on the busyness of life that everyone seems to be experiencing in this season. One of the things that came to my mind was just how easy it is to place, on the back burner, things that matter most to be swept along by all the things calling for our attention. I once heard a pastor say, "it is not really about time management, it is about self-management. Everyone has the same amount to time, 24 hours in a day, but how well do we manage ourselves in how we organize that time?"

It seems that relationships can often be placed on the back burner because we believe we can catch up on them "when things slow down." Only, days, weeks, months and years sneak by and the next thing we know, we find ourselves looking back on time missed with regret over the time that can never be recaptured.

This can certainly be a danger with our families and friends, but it can also be true with our larger church family. The writer of Hebrews reminds us, "consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25-26).

Honestly, the need for our Convention churches to pause and strengthen our relationships with one another has been weighing heavy on my heart. Especially as we face ministering amid today's many challenges. **So, I want to invite you to attend this year's Annual Meeting of the West Virginia Baptist family on October 16-17 at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Charleston, WV.** Every year, those who attend share the joy of spending time with the wider body of believers who they often do not see during the rest of the year.

Along with fellowshiping, praying and worshipping together, we'll be focusing on how we can meet the challenges before us. This year's theme is taken from William Carey, an early Baptist leader, who understood what it meant to step boldly into uncertainty, trusting fully that the Lord would make a way. Like Carey, we as the WVBC will pursue the call to, "Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God." As scripture informs us, "Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us" Ephesians 3:20 (NIV).

One question we are all asking in our churches and ministries is, "How do we find more leaders?" While it took two years to get on his schedule, I am excited to share that Mac Lake, author of *The Multiplication Effect: Building a Leadership Pipeline that Solves Your Leadership Shortage*, will be our keynote speaker and workshop leader. Mac founded the Multiply Group, a consulting company that focuses on helping leaders and organizations build and implement strategies to multiply healthy leaders.

This is promising to be an exciting and timely event, and I hope you will join us!

Blessings,
Mike



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Table of Contents

Mike Sisson: Commentary	2
ABWM 91st Annual Conference / ABWM Spiritual Growth Retreat	3
Missionary Interns to India / Camp Global / World Mission Offering	4
Camp Cowen / Fall Youth Rally	5
Baptist Campus Ministry / Pastor and Spouse Dinner Cruise	6
Annual Meeting Information	7-9
Annual Meeting Registration Form	10
Dominican Republic Mission Team / Fall Golden'eers Conference	11
Area Minister News	12-13
Obituaries / Ministry Employment Opportunities	14
Prayer Calendars	15
Coming Events / Fall Children's Rally	16

PASTORS & LEADERS

You will not want to
miss this exciting
opportunity!

Learn more on Page 7



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

ABWM of WV Celebrate 91st Annual Conference

More than 120 women gathered at Parchment Valley Conference Center on the first Saturday of June for the 91st Annual Conference of the **American Baptist Women's Ministries of West Virginia**. This year's theme was: "What Kind of Vessel Are You?" Cecily Thompson, from Williamstown First Baptist Church, was the guest speaker, leading an in-depth Bible study on 2 Timothy 2:20-21. Amanda Emerick and Becca Marlow, both from New Life Baptist Church, served as the worship leaders.

Not only does the annual conference provide a great opportunity to grow closer to God and to other women around the state, it is also a great way to learn more about the ABWM and what is being accomplished through this ministry. Each ABWM board member was responsible for leading a workshop to share an update on their particular ministry emphasis, and the state officers created displays to provide updates on the following:

- **2025 Special Project** – Baptist Campus Ministry at Marshall University, a \$12,000 fundraising goal to sponsor both a women's ministry intern and an international student intern for two years.
- **2025 Mission Outreach Project** – "Sewing the Faith in Tribal Culture," a \$6,000 fundraising goal to purchase sewing machines and materials for women in Kenya.
- **WV Blessings**—This new offering focuses on supporting the statewide work of our ABWM, the International Ministries missionaries from WV and the overall ministry of the WVBC.

If you missed the Annual Conference, please plan to join us for the next ABWM event: the Spiritual Growth Retreat on September 19-21 at Parchment Valley.



Cecily Thompson leading the Bible study during the Annual Conference at Parchment Valley.

Letters to God thru Prayer

**2025
Spiritual Growth
Retreat**



**September 19-21, 2025
Parchment Valley Conference Center**

Keynote Speaker: Jill Narraway

Worship Leaders: Brian and Sara McClure

Questions? Contact Kathy Sponaugle, Coordinator, at (304) 633-4016 or spiritual.growth@abwmwv.org.

Sponsored by American Baptist Women's Ministries of WV

Three WVBC Missionary Interns Return from Northeast India

“God is being magnified in the West Garo Hills!” That is how Faith Lambert, a WVBC Missionary Intern, described her experience after returning from a three-week stint in northeast India this summer. “In a country where Christianity is not welcomed, they proclaim Christ anyway and you can see the evidence of God’s goodness in their ministry.”

The **Missionary Internship Program** exists to provide individuals with the opportunity to explore a long-term calling to missions by pairing them with one of our global partners. The Garo Baptist Convention is one of those many partners who have deep ties to American Baptists—and particularly to West Virginia Baptists. Rob Ely, the Director of Student Ministries for the WVBC, has served as an International Ministries Special Assistant to India for nearly 20 years. He is the one that challenged Faith and other Marshall Baptist Campus Ministry (BCM) students to consider an internship in India this summer.



Hunter, Isabell and Faith posing for a picture on the streets of Tura.

Faith, a member of Kenova First Baptist Church, wrote this about her experience:

My favorite part was working alongside the staff at Tura Christian Hospital and seeing how they selflessly care for their patients. It was a joy to see healthcare providers show Christ’s love to their own people in a way they will receive it. They took the luxury of being a doctor and exchanged it for sharing Christ in a private hospital, and I have so much respect for that.

Faith was joined by Hunter Mitchell and Isabell Roop, all of whom graduated from Marshall this past May. Each participated in various trainings with other interns throughout the spring, and each were tasked with raising their own support.

When asked what stood out most to her, Isabell wrote the following:

Each morning, we enjoyed leading Bible study at the hospital. We would have a lesson, sing a hymn and pray together. It was humbling to witness that they started every surgery with prayer, inviting God’s presence into the most critical moments. The hospital we partnered with has been faithfully serving its community for over four decades. We had the opportunity to shadow and serve in various departments, often with extremely limited supplies: mercury blood pressure machines that partly worked, handmade gauze and sutures, reused instruments that are decades old. And still, these healthcare workers press on, using every skill they have not just to heal bodies, but to minister to souls. Their work is evangelism in action. They are truly the hands and feet of Jesus.

We are excited to see how God continues to work in the lives of Faith, Isabell and Hunter in the months and years to come. We are grateful for the way they represented our larger WVBC family as interns this past summer.

If you would like to learn more about the Missionary Internship Program, visit our WVBC website. If you would like to learn more about how you can get involved in the work in India, contact Rob Ely at ely@wvbc.org.

CAMP GLOBAL
A two-day missions camp for the entire family

August 8-9, 2025
at Camp Cowen

Only \$75 per person
Register at: wvbc.org

world mission offering

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: Let Everything That Has Breath Praise the Lord

There is something special about **Camp Cowen**—a place where thousands have gathered over the years to grow in faith, build friendships and experience God in meaningful ways. Each summer, campers and leaders return to this familiar setting, where simple moments become sacred: worship in Hylbert, quiet reflection during alone time with God and honest conversations in discussion groups. It is a place where faith deepens and hearts are renewed. Each summer, thousands of students, counselors and leaders gather here—not just for fun and friendship, but for sacred encounters with the living God. This sacred ground holds more than trees, rocks and buildings—it holds prayers, commitments and the unmistakable presence of Christ.

This summer's theme, "Praise the Lord" from Psalm 150:6, has echoed through the hills and hearts of campers, counselors and staff alike. "*Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.*" It has been more than a verse. It has been a call to worship with our whole lives—in worship service, around campfires and during quiet moments of prayer.

During High School 1, we witnessed the unmistakable movement of the Holy Spirit. Fifteen students made first-time decisions to follow Jesus. That is fifteen lives forever marked by the grace of God. But the work of the Lord did not stop there. Cabin discussion groups were a places of vulnerability and authenticity—places where walls came down and masks came off. Students and leaders shared openly about the highs and lows of life, and what it means to carry both in faith.

One question echoed throughout the week: Who alone is worthy to sit on the throne of your heart? It is a question we all wrestle with, whether we are 16 or 60. And in a world filled with noise and distraction, it is in the stillness of camp that many students heard God's gentle voice calling them back to center.



Senior High 1 Camp had more than 200 campers and additional 60+ counselors and leaders.

Camp Cowen has always been a place "where people meet Jesus and grow as His disciples." This summer, that mission is alive and well.

You can find more updates on both Facebook and Instagram by searching for @CampCowen. But even more, we invite you to continue to pray for the campers as they transition back to life at home. May we all remember that every breath is a gift—and every gift is a chance to praise the Lord.

FALL YOUTH RALLY

Camp Cowen | September 12-13

Saturday only \$20 per person

Friday & Saturday \$35 per person

Adults \$25 per person

T-shirts available online and at event

Register at wvbc.org

Baptist Campus Ministry: Help Us Connect with New Students!



BCM students meeting new freshmen at the University of Charleston

Since 1967, **Baptist Campus Ministry (BCM)** has been “changing lives that change the world” on university campuses all around our state. Currently, we have an active presence on 10 different campuses.

Besides prayer and financial support, an important way you can serve this ministry is by connecting us with new students. If you have a child, grandchild, church member, neighbor, friend, etc. who will be attending any West Virginia college this fall, let us know! Even if they will not be attending any of the listed campuses, we will still make sure one of our BCM associates reaches out to them.

To learn more about what God is doing through BCM around the state, contact Rob Ely (ely@wvbc.org) or Kevin Sions (sions@wvbc.org). To connect with a specific campus, see the contact information to the right.

BCM Campus Information

Concord University
Time: Thursdays at 8:00 PM
Location: AB Conference Room
Staff: Ethan Starcher
erstarcher@gmail.com

Davis & Elkins College
Time: Thursdays at 9:00 PM
Location: Chapel
Staff: Brett Rinehart
rinehart.brett@gmail.com

Fairmont State University
Time: Tuesdays at 8:00 PM
Location: Newman Center
Staff: Karla Carr
fairmontstatebcm@gmail.com

Glenville State University
Time: Wednesdays at 7:30 PM
Location: Anchor Bible Church
Staff: Lance Linden
lance@gassawaybaptist.com

Marshall University
Time: Wednesdays at 9:15 PM
Location: Campus Christian Center
Staff: Rob Ely
ely@wvbc.org

Potomac State College
Time: Thursday at 7:00 PM
Location: Heritage Room
Staff: Earle Shannon
pastorjshannon@gmail.com

WV State University
Time: TBD
Location: TBD
Staff: DaVontae Edwards
davontae@dunbarfirstbaptist.org

West Virginia University
Time: Thursdays at 7:07 PM
Location: Towers Room G58
Staff: Kevin Sions
sions@wvbc.org

WVU Tech
Time: Thursdays at 7:00 PM
Location: Science Building 208
Staff: Anthony Pratt
anthony_pratt@hotmail.com

University of Charleston
Time: Mondays at 5:30 PM
Location: Clay Tower 7th Floor Lounge
Staff: Lori James
lorijames@ucwv.edu

PASTORS4PASTORS

DINNER CRUISE

AUGUST 22ND | 6:00-8:00



Pastors4Pastors invites all pastors and their spouse to join them for a night of fellowship and entertainment. The registration deadline is August 15th.

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



QUESTIONS?

Contact Anthony Pratt at anthony_pratt@hotmail.com

THE 160TH ANNUAL MEETING OF OUR WVBC FAMILY

EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH



Mac Lake
Keynote Speaker



Mike Sisson
Executive Minister



DaVontaé Edwards
Annual Sermon

**16-17
OCTOBER**

EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH
1401 W Washington St, Charleston, WV 25387

Register now at wvbc.org or by scanning:



Host Church Welcome Letter

Dear West Virginia Baptist Family,

I want to extend an invitation to join our WVBC family here at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Charleston on Thursday, October 16, and Friday, October 17. We are excited to be your host this year and hope you will be able to join the Annual Meeting. Our local arrangements committee has been busy preparing for your arrival and hope to make your time with us a blessing.

As we make our preparations, we are reminded of Paul's declaration in Ephesians 3:20 – God can do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine by the work of the Holy Spirit within us. We realize He will give us the strength and provisions to host our statewide family as we rely on Him. I invite you to come and experience His faithfulness as we hear and celebrate all He has done in and through our Convention in the past year. From that point, may we begin to dream what He has planned for us as we seek to engage our communities for Him!

We are excited to have Mac Lake, the founder of Multiply Group – a ministry dedicated to helping organizations and leaders achieve their full potential – give us insights into strategies to develop leaders within our churches, helping us to be effective and healthy. We are also excited to have Rev. DaVontaé Edwards, a former member and leader of Emmanuel Baptist Church, now pastor of Dunbar First Baptist Church, share the annual sermon. I pray you come with expectant hearts and prayed up lives to engage our Risen Savior as a Convention family.

Again, we look forward to the privilege to have you join us in just a few weeks for our 160th Annual Meeting of the West Virginia Baptist Convention. May God richly bless you and your church family as we seek to minister and share missions together.

Pastor Don Biram

Local Arrangement Committee



Left to Right: Sandi Bates, Shannon Bates, Joyce Downey, Mark Miller, Jim Downey, Carla Saunders, Don Biram, Jane Mooney, Linda Miller, Jeff Branham, Debbie Shadowen, Mark Shank, Jeannie Robinson, Ken Sayre

Meet Mac Lake

Mac grew up in West Virginia and attended Handley Baptist Church, a WVBC congregation. Mac is gifted at equipping leaders and organizations with actionable strategies to multiply their leadership impact. Whether he is 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, 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.

Meet DaVontaé Edwards

DaVontaé is a passionate pastor, counselor-in-training and community leader dedicated to spiritual growth, mental wellness and social impact. As a proud graduate of both Palmer Theological Seminary and Marshall University, he currently serves as the Senior Pastor of Dunbar First Baptist Church and brings a heart for inclusion, healing and biblical truth to every space he enters. With a background in ministry, counseling and community outreach, DaVontaé inspires others through faith, resilience and authenticity.

Lodging Options

Microtel Inn and Suites by Wyndham - 304-744-4900
600 Second Avenue, Charleston, WV 25303

** A discount is available at this hotel until October 5th by mentioning "WVBC Group Rate" when booking.*

Annual Meeting Schedule

Thursday, October 16

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

2:45 PM: Session 1

- Welcome from the Host Church
- Business Meeting 1
- Recognition of New and Retired Pastors
- 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) - \$20

Time: Thursday, October 16 at 5:00 PM

Location: Emmanuel Baptist —Great Room

* All proceeds benefit the ministry of BCM

CAMP COWEN

Camp Cowen Reception (All are invited)

Time: Thursday, October 16 at 8:30 PM

Location: Emmanuel Baptist—Main Lobby

Friday, October 17

8:00 AM: Workshop Session 1

9:15 AM: Session 3

- Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies Graduation
- Keynote Address
- James Anderson, Sr. Bivocational Pastor Award

11:00 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

5:00 PM: Palmer Seminary Centennial Dinner

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 - \$11

Registration: 9:00 AM at Emmanuel Baptist

Event: Service project for low-income residents

* Shuttle is available for transportation

American Baptist Women's Ministries of WV - \$11

Registration: 9:00 AM at Emmanuel Baptist

Event Location: Emmanuel Baptist Sanctuary

Speaker: Sherry Husted

Missions Speakers: Kim Weaver and Shelly Dawson

Topic: Emmanuel, God with Us

* Nursery provided for preschool children

Pastors4Pastors - \$25

Registration: 9:00 AM at Emmanuel Baptist

Event Location: Oakwood Baptist

Speaker: Mac Lake

Topic: Leading Yourself

* Shuttle is available for transportation

WV Baptist Education Society Lunch (Members Only)

Time: 12:00 PM

Location: Emmanuel Baptist Choir Room

Cost: FREE

Friday Lunch Options

Ministers' Wives' Fellowship - \$12

Location: Emmanuel Baptist—Room 201

WV Baptist Historical Society - \$17.50

Location: Emmanuel Baptist—Great Room

Speaker: Rev. James Butcher

Topic: "Christian Pharisees"

Exhibit Hall with Dessert

Enjoy homemade pies while completing your Scavenger Hunt cards. Completed cards can be turned in for prizes.

Friday Dinner Options

Palmer Theological Seminary - \$45

Location: Emmanuel Baptist—Great Room

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 6. Online registration will be open on wvbc.org until October 12.

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 (\$11)

American Baptist Women's Ministries of WV (\$11)

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:

Baptist Campus Ministry Banquet—5 PM (\$20)

FRIDAY:

Ministers' Wives' Fellowship—Noon (\$12)

WV Baptist Historical Society—Noon (\$17.50)

Palmer Theological Seminary—5 PM (\$45)

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: _____

Saint Albans FBC Shares the Love of Jesus in the Dominican Republic

Written by Debbie Harpold, Mission Trip Leader,
Saint Albans First Baptist Church



Pastor Joel Harpold speaking with the kids during Bible School.

I have been an American Baptist all of my life. One of the biggest reasons is the major importance missions plays in our Baptist family. Jesus speaks of the importance of telling the world about Him in Matthew 28: "Go and make disciples of all nations...". Whatever we do as a church, we do with Jesus in mind and with a heart that wants to adore and share Him.

I was so glad to be a part of this mission team from Saint Albans First Baptist Church that traveled this summer to the Dominican Republic (DR). We used to regularly travel to the DR to work with International Ministries (IM) missionary, Madeline Flores-López. This was our first trip back since her passing.

This year, we worked with six of our IM missionaries. It was a joy to see how God used each of them to help our team connect with others from a very different culture. I was so proud of how each of our team members stepped up to help when needed.

Some thoughts as I was reflecting back on our week:

- We only had cold water, but we were still able to take showers.
- Toilet paper had to be disposed of in the trash can, but we still had use of a commode. (VERY thankful)
- It was very hot, but it helped us understand discomfort and how often when we are not comfortable, we lean even more on Jesus.
- We could not speak the language (Spanish or Creole), but we were still able to communicate, even through a hug or smile.
- We saw so many happy children, even though material possessions were absent.
- On the construction site, it wasn't always done the way we would do it, but the job got done.
- We learned how important it was for us to be flexible, teachable and humble in this new area of the DR we were able to serve.

We will continue to pray for our new missionary connections: Ketly and Vital Pierre, Carlos Bonilla and Mayra Giovanetti, and of course, Tim and Stacy Reese and their children, Liam, Samantha and Garrett. What a blessing for our team to not only work alongside them, but to hear their stories of how God called them to be missionaries.

Fall Golden'eers Conference Sept. 8-10, 2025

at Parchment Valley Conference Center

**A CONFERENCE FOR ADULTS 55 YEARS OF
AGE AND OLDER.**

**Bible Study, Musical Concert, evening group
activities, indoor/outdoor games, bookstore,
puzzles, crafts and much more....**

The Conference will begin on Monday in the Santrock Education Center with registration and lunch at noon and will end on Wednesday at 11:00 AM.



Todd McClure
Guest Speaker

Northwest Area News

by **Mark McCloy**, Northwest Area Minister

A Summer of Celebration

Life This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.

- Psalm 118:24

We have had the opportunity to share with a couple of churches in celebration this summer. Sand Fork Baptist Church ordained two deacons – Greg Shackleford and Dana Frederick. The whole congregation gathered around to pray for them and their spouses as they enter this important ministry. Pastor Tony Conrad brought the message to the candidates on this special day.

One week later, Glenville First Baptist Church celebrated their 175th anniversary. The morning began with a meet and greet and continental breakfast. This was followed by worship time, which included presentations from Mike Sisson, our Executive Minister, as well as from the West Virginia Baptist Historical Society (represented by Rev. David Carpenter) and the American Baptist Women's Ministries of WV (represented by Sandy Foster Currey).

The message was a tag-team presentation by Rev. John Putnam and Rev. Jared Fitzwater (senior pastor and youth pastor of the church). Included in the service was a summary of the church's history, which was particularly interesting, and greetings from former pastors of the church. Of special interest was how God has blessed the church in recent years with both baptisms and new members. The service concluded with a concert by Rev. Josh Smith and friends. A wonderful dinner followed the service.



Pastor John Putnam receiving 175th anniversary certificate.



Greg Shackleford and Dana Frederick are joined by wives and fellow deacons.

Southwest Area News

by **Evan Arkell**, Southwest Area Minister

Racine First Baptist Church Does Dinner Church

For the last couple of years, the WVBC has been teaching and telling anyone who will listen about different forms of Dinner Church that can be done to reach people outside of our church walls with the Good News of Jesus Christ. The following is one example written to me from Anthony Pratt, the pastor of Racine First Baptist Church.

On the fourth Monday of each month, Racine First Baptist Church makes the journey to the Black Diamond Arbors, an assisted living facility in Danville, WV, for what we call Dinner Around the Table. This monthly adventure has been organized by one of our church members – Melissa Bowen – where the church provides a meal, a time fellowship and a worship service with our guests. We are excited that our youth, children and several church members attend and provide this ministry each month. For several of the residents, this is the only church they are able to attend, and this is the only home-cooked meal that many of the residents are able to enjoy.

This entire ministry began with a simple visit from our church's children and youth nearly two years ago. Today, this ministry has blossomed to more than 50 residents every month. We also deliver several additional meals to the shut-ins in the facility. Friendships have been formed and lives have been changed, bringing glory to God around the table.



Guests enjoying worship at the Black Diamond Arbors in Danville.

Northeast Area News

by **Kevin Sions**, Northeast Area Minister

Broad Run Association Youth Camp

The Broad Run Association Youth Camp took place at Fisher Baptist Camp during the week of June 22-27. There were more than 50 students who attended the camp. Several churches and leaders from the Broad Run Association served and prepared meals, lead games and provided activities. One focus was teaching students how to use and study the Bible. Different association pastors led vespers each day. The theme scripture for the camp was Hebrews 4:16-17: *Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*



Youth participate in a time of worship at Fisher Baptist Camp.

More Updates in the Northeast Area

The Union Association hosted a Youth Revival at Middleville Baptist on June 6-7.

Point Pleasant Baptist (Broad Run) hosted a three-day revival in May. Pastor Carl Radcliff preached on the spiritual part of the Ten Commandments.

Goshen Baptist (Goshen) has focused on the WVBC prayer emphasis this year. One Wednesday in June, they planned a prayer walk for the youth, children and families.

With the recent flooding in Marion County, the churches within the Fairmont Association served together by providing help to a local pastor whose home was affected.

Southeast Area News

by **Jon Villers**, Southeast Area Minister

22nd Annual Choir Sing of the Rockcastle Association

O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

- Psalm 95:1

On Sunday, June 1st, the Guyandotte Missionary Baptist Church, of Wyoming County, hosted the 22nd Annual Choir Sing of the Rockcastle Association. This was a beautiful representation of the praise mentioned in the verse above.

Rev. Glenn Hatfield, the association's moderator, opened with a welcome and prayer. Fairley Jewell, who served as our master of ceremonies, then invited all the pastors to come forward for a time of prayer for them and for their churches. It was a great reminder for us all to be lifting up our spiritual leaders each and every day!

Rev. Michael Knotts, song leader, and Ginny Shirley, pianist, made sure the congregational singing also reflected a time of spiritual renewal and harmony that soared to the heavens. There were 115 persons representing 12 different churches that joined in the singing. It was a little taste of heaven as we lifted our voices together to the Lord!

The conclusion of our time together was very appropriate in that we ended the night singing, *"What a day that will be, when my Jesus I shall see! When I look upon His face, the one who saved me by His grace. When He takes me by the hand and leads me through the promised land. What a day, glorious day, that will be!"*

I can truly attest to the fact that a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation was made, and I am already looking forward to the 23rd Annual Choir Sing next year!



Fairley Jewell leads the congregation in a time of prayer for the pastors and the churches.

PAUL JOSEPH BOCK, 59, of Barboursville, died on June 24, 2025. He was a member of Pea Ridge Baptist Church, where he previously served as the director of youth ministry, director of children's ministry and a long-time Sunday School Teacher. He was also very active in the ministries at Camp Cowen.

BARBARA ANN BOWLES, 93, of Denver, NC, died on April 30, 2025. She was a member of South Parkersburg Baptist Church, where she served as a greeter, a nursery worker and was a member of the "Happy Hearts" Sunday School class.

WILLIAM MICHAEL "MIKE" BYUS, 52, of Saint Albans, died on June 8, 2025. He was a member of Highlawn Baptist Church, where he served as a deacon.

JAMES "JIM" OTTO DANIELS, 73, of South Point, OH, died on May 25, 2025. He was a member of New Baptist Church, where he served as a deacon and greeter.

KAREN KAY FEIGHT, 81, of Salem, died on May 17, 2025. She was a member of Salem Baptist Church, where she served as a deacon.

THELMA JEAN GARBART, 86, of Kingwood, died on May 26, 2025. She was a member of Kingwood Baptist Church.

BETTY LUCILLE LOCKHART, 89, of Washington, died on June 11, 2025. She was a member of both South Parkersburg Baptist Church and Lubeck Community Baptist Church, serving as an administrator at both churches. She was also active in the American Baptist Women's Ministries on the local, association and state level.

JUDITH ELLEN SCHROEDER, 82, of Clarksburg, died on May 27, 2025. She was a member of Wilsonburg Baptist Church, where she taught Sunday School. She had also previously served as president of the Judson Association American Baptist Women's Ministries, board member of the WV statewide ABWM and member of the Judson Association's leadership team to plan youth rallies.

REV. DANIEL WILKERSON, 77, of Charleston, died on June 14, 2025. He was a member of Charleston Baptist Temple, where he served as the chairman of the deacons, member of the Executive Board, member of the Bylaw Revision Committee, and was active in the choir and Sunday School.

WV Baptist Education Society is Searching for an Executive Director

The **West Virginia Baptist Education Society, Inc.**, exists for the purpose of providing financial assistance to students from churches affiliated with the West Virginia Baptist Convention who are preparing for vocational ministry.

The West Virginia Baptist Education Society is now accepting applications for an Executive Director. This is a part-time position and, generally, involves providing leadership to the Society, corresponding with students, and representing the Society in fund-raising and publicity.

Qualifications include:

1. Experience in both ministry and higher education
2. A passion for the mission of the Society.
3. The ability to represent the Society to the churches of the WV Baptist Convention.
4. Computer skills sufficient for preparing reports and publicity materials, and for corresponding with students.
5. The ability to work as part of a team with the Society Board of Directors.
6. The ability to speak at a meeting of churches or their representatives.
7. Sufficient time availability to accomplish tasks as indicated in the job description or as assigned by the Society Board of Directors.
8. Creative leadership skills in addressing the ever-evolving changes in higher education.

Those applying should send a resume, including references, and a brief letter describing your interest in and qualifications for this position. These may be sent to hireing@wvbes.org

Applications will be accepted until August 31, 2025.

Leadership Updates

BRYAN CANTRELL to Milton Baptist Church (Guyandotte Association) as youth pastor 4/01/2025

TIMOTHY UNDERWOOD to Auburn Baptist Church (Harrisville Association) as pastor 4/27/2025

JACK EADES to Rainelle First Baptist Church (Hopewell Association) as interim pastor 5/4/2025

ED ROGERS to Vienna Baptist Church (Parkersburg Association) as interim pastor 7/1/2025

MINISTRY EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Pastor

Location: Weirton area

Pastor of Student Ministries

Location: Hurricane area

Director of Worship Ministry

Location: Huntington area

Youth Director

Location: Marion County

Lead Pastor

Location: Princeton area

Senior Pastor

Location: Boone County

Associate Pastor for Families

Location: Charleston area

Pastor

Location: Barbour County

Director of Music

Location: Beckley area

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

August 2025

AUGUST 1 – AB Men & Boys Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen
AUGUST 2 – Robert Bates, member of the WVBC Discipleship Commission
AUGUST 3 – Fayette Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
AUGUST 4 – The ministry of North Mill Creek Baptist Church; Billy Miller, pastor (Eastern Association)
AUGUST 5 – Greenbrier and Harrisville Associations as they celebrate their annual meetings
AUGUST 6 – Keith Myers, International Ministries Global Servant to Mexico
AUGUST 7 – Little Kanawha Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
AUGUST 8 – Marci Carvalho, International Ministries Global Servant to Spain
AUGUST 9 – Mike Mann, International Ministries Global Servant to Thailand
AUGUST 10 – The ministry of Broad Run Baptist Church; Steve Proctor, interim (Broad Run Association)
AUGUST 11 – Ethan Starcher, chair of the WVBC Outreach Commission
AUGUST 12 – The ministry of Page Baptist Church; James Keith Cook, pastor (Fayette Association)
AUGUST 13 – The ministry of Maysel Baptist Church; Jim Hamrick, pastor (Elk Valley Association)
AUGUST 14 – The ministry of Providence Baptist Church; William Spears, pastor (Guyandotte Association)
AUGUST 15 – The ministry of Fairview Baptist Church; Charles Drake, pastor (Greenbrier-Raleigh Association)
AUGUST 16 – Teays Valley Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
AUGUST 17 – Good Hope and Goshen Associations as they celebrate their annual meetings
AUGUST 18 – The ministry of Albright Baptist Church; Joe Lamm, pastor (Goshen Association)
AUGUST 19 – Kathy Rice, International Ministries Global Servant to the Democratic Republic of the Congo
AUGUST 20 – Erich Reggi, WVBC past president and member of the WVBC Stewardship Commission
AUGUST 21 – Broad Run Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
AUGUST 22 – Scott Coats, International Ministries Global Servant to Myanmar
AUGUST 23 – Elk Valley Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
AUGUST 24 – Eastern Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
AUGUST 25 – The ministry of Bethel Baptist Church; Todd Pauley, pastor (Coal River Association)
AUGUST 26 – The ministry of Reedy Baptist Church; Bill Stewart, pastor (Good Hope Association)
AUGUST 27 – Anthony Pratt, Ministers' Council/Pastors4Pastors president and member of the WVBC Leadership Commission
AUGUST 28 – The ministry of Fairmont Baptist Temple; Allen Copehaver, pastor (Fairmont Association)
AUGUST 29 – The ministry of Auburn Baptist Church; Timothy Underwood, pastor (Harrisville Association)
AUGUST 30 – Jorge Damasceno, International Ministries Global Servant to the United Kingdom
AUGUST 31 – Walt White, International Ministries Global Consultant

September 2025

SEPTEMBER 1 – Rhonda Reed, International Ministries Global Coordinator for Health and Wellness
SEPTEMBER 2 – Chad Mudge, first vice president of the WVBC and member of the WVBC Stewardship Commission
SEPTEMBER 3 – Stacy Reese, International Ministries Global Servant to the Dominican Republic
SEPTEMBER 4 – The ministry of Mount Vernon Baptist Church (Union Association)
SEPTEMBER 5 – The ministry of Saint Paul Baptist Church; Michael Poke, pastor (Kanawha Valley Association)
SEPTEMBER 6 – Mark Evans, vice chair of the WVBC Outreach Commission
SEPTEMBER 7 – Rodney Ragwan, International Ministries Global Consultant
SEPTEMBER 8 – Todd McClure, Minister of Missions, Finance and Communication, West Virginia Baptist Convention
SEPTEMBER 9 – Mark McCloy, Northwest Area Minister and Director of the School of Christian Studies, West Virginia Baptist Convention
SEPTEMBER 10 – The Fall Golden'eers Retreat happening at Parchment Valley
SEPTEMBER 11 – Lanutemjen Ao, International Ministries Global Servant to India
SEPTEMBER 12 – Kanawha Valley Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
SEPTEMBER 13 – Fall Youth Rally happening at Camp Cowen
SEPTEMBER 14 – Fairmont Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
SEPTEMBER 15 – Moise Joseph, International Ministries Global Servant to Mexico
SEPTEMBER 16 – Parkersburg Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
SEPTEMBER 17 – Hopewell Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
SEPTEMBER 18 – Lauran Bethell, International Ministries Global Consultant
SEPTEMBER 19 – The American Baptist Women's Ministries' Spiritual Growth Retreat beginning today at Parchment Valley
SEPTEMBER 20 – Twelve Pole Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
SEPTEMBER 21 – Panhandle and Union Associations as they celebrate their annual meetings
SEPTEMBER 22 – Connie Byars, member of the WVBC Discipleship Commission
SEPTEMBER 23 – Mercy Gonzalez-Barnes, International Ministries Global Servant to Iberoamerica and the Caribbean
SEPTEMBER 24 – The ministry of Two Ripple Baptist Church; Gary Richmond, pastor (Parkersburg Association)
SEPTEMBER 25 – Guyandotte Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
SEPTEMBER 26 – The ministry of Harmony Baptist Church; David Radcliff, pastor (Teays Valley Association)
SEPTEMBER 27 – Coal River Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
SEPTEMBER 28 – Judson and Logan-Mingo Associations as they celebrate their annual meetings
SEPTEMBER 29 – The ministry of Bridgeport Baptist Church; Rodney Kittle, pastor (Judson Association)
SEPTEMBER 30 – Matt Ash, Committee on Ministerial Standing chair and 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 1-3
AB Men and Boys Camp (All Ages)
 Camp Cowen

August 8-9
Camp Global
 Camp Cowen

August 16
Bobby Wood School of Christian Making Peace (Mod-4)
 Parchment Valley Conference Center

August 22
P4P Couples Boat Cruise
 Marietta, OH

SEPTEMBER

September 8-10
Golden'eers Fall Retreat
 Parchment Valley Conference Center

September 9
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Teacher Training (M-03)
 Various Locations

September 12-13
Fall Youth Rally
 Camp Cowen

September 15
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: New Testament II (B-04)
 Online

September 15
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Weddings & Funerals (E-05)
 Online

September 19
P4P Book Club
 Glenville First Baptist Church

September 19-21
AB Women's Ministries Spiritual Growth Retreat
 Parchment Valley Conference Center

September 27
P4P Training Event
 Milton Baptist Church

OCTOBER

October 3
WVBC Executive Committee
 Parchment Valley Conference Center

October 4
WVBC Executive Board
 Parchment Valley Conference Center

October 16-17
WVBC Annual Meeting
 Emmanuel Baptist Church, Charleston

October 25
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Spiritual Formation (Mod-1)
 Parchment Valley Conference Center & Goshen Baptist Church

NOVEMBER

November 1
Fall Children's Rally
 Parchment Valley Conference Center

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.

The *West Virginia Baptist* is a newsletter of the West Virginia Baptist Convention..

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Fall Children's Rally
 For children in grades K-5, 6 is optional
Saturday, November 1, 2025
 At Parchment Valley in the Greenlee Activities Center
WHAT a MESS!
 Cost: \$14 (or \$26 after October 14th)
 Register today at www.wvbc.org

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