

The West Virginia Baptist Newsletter

February—March 2026

Expect Great Things from God, Attempt Great Things for God



Baptisms taking place at Baptist Campus Ministry, Camp Cowen and Parchment Valley Conference Center.

In 2025, we witnessed what several media outlets referred to as the “Quiet Revival,” a growing, subtle resurgence in Christian faith, particularly among young people. It has been characterized by increased spiritual curiosity, a search for authentic Christian community and a return to church attendance. Gen Z in particular has become disillusioned with secularism and are desiring meaning and purpose beyond online life. It has been defined as “quiet” because it is less a single event and more a widespread shift.

In recent months, this “Quiet Revival” has come to West Virginia.

On our university campuses, many of our Baptist Campus Ministry (BCM) associates have witnessed this first-hand. Karla Carr, the BCM associate at Fairmont State University, shared, “This past fall, we had a record number of students coming to our weekly meetings. In the first two months, we had over 70 students each week. By the end of the semester, we were averaging around 60 – still nearly double that of what we had in the spring.”

Karla also shared about the two worship nights they co-hosted with other Christian groups on campus. “Over 50 baptisms were performed between the two nights, and the Spirit of the Lord was seen to be moving over the whole campus!”

However, this resurgence has not been limited to the university campuses. Camp Cowen witnessed 96 salvations last year – mostly among children and youth. Parchment Valley recorded 98 salvations, with several of them coming from secular rental

groups. One in particular was a young high school student who was there for her high school’s band camp. Seeking answers to her questions about eternity, she sought out Parchment Valley staff and, after getting answers for the first time, she made the decision – there during band camp – to give her life to the Lord.

At this past year’s Annual Meeting, our theme for 2026 was introduced. Using the title of William Carey’s sermon that he preached just before he departed to the mission field, our theme is: **Expect Great Things from God, Attempt Great Things for God.** Over the past year, we pray that your expectation of what God can and will accomplish has increased. Beyond what has been noted in our Convention ministries (see the *Impact Report* on pages 8-9), dozens of WVBC churches have also reported similar stories of an increase in baptisms, an increase in attendance – particularly among young people – and an increase in Bible reading.

Last year, as a WVBC family, we had a major emphasis on prayer, and we ask that you continue to pray, expecting great things from God.

But we also ask that you join us in action this year, attempting great things for God.

As Jesus noted in John 4:35, “The fields are ripe for harvest.” That statement is just as true today as it was in Jesus’s day. In fact, it may be even more true. Looking out at the world around us, there may never have been a time as exciting as now to be part of the WVBC family.

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

Koinonia

Are you familiar with the Greek word *Koinonia* (κοινωνία)? Perhaps you have read it in a Sunday School guide, in a commentary or in your study Bible. It is a word that is found throughout the New Testament. It appears in Acts 2:42 in the foundational verse defining the early church's life as being steadfastly devoted to "the apostles' teaching and fellowship (*koinonia*), and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." You might notice that the coordinating conjunction "and" is used to connect teaching and fellowship (*koinonia*) together as it is used in linking breaking of bread and prayer. These four together make up the *koinonia* of the early church – especially in a spiritual sense – describing the deep, mutual involvement and shared purpose, as well as the devoted communion with God and other believers.

Koinonia appears in other key passages, including 1 John 1:3-7 describing fellowship with God, Philippians 2:1-2 referring to unity in Christ and 1 Corinthians 10:16 declaring the communion of Christ's body. These passages indicate that *koinonia* has as its core concept the shared spiritual life, purpose and mutual support.

The church usually translates the word *koinonia* as fellowship and often interprets it to mean spending time together or enjoying one another's company around a meal. While these are certainly a part of fellowship, the biblical word has a much richer meaning. It conveys the idea of the church, as the people of God, living a deep shared life and common purpose, not just casual friendship, but a spiritual union. The body of Christ expressing the full embodiment of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) and the Great Commandment (Mark 12:28-31) all while proclaiming in action and in witness Jesus' newest commandment, "that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34-35).

Koinonia is the foundation of our purpose together as the West Virginia Baptist Convention family. It is summed up in our mission of "doing Christ's work together." As we move into this new year of potential and possibility, let us strive to be in full *koinonia*, living in shared purpose and passion of the Great Commission, the Great Commandment and the witness that comes from loving one another and proclaiming to the world that we are disciples of Jesus Christ! And in doing so, asking the Lord to grow our faith in Him so we can truly "Expect great things from God; Attempt great things for God." After all, our God "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" Ephesians 3:20-21).

Blessings,
Mike Sisson

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

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Expect great things from God,
attempt great things for God.



Sarah McCloy: An Update from Japan

During the Christmas holiday, Sarah McCloy had the opportunity to travel back to West Virginia. Sarah is our newest International Ministries global servant and is close to completing her third year of service in Sendai, Japan. Sarah works with Shokei Baptist Church, where she is involved in the preaching and teaching ministries. She also leads the kids' ministry at the church and is very active in the church's outreach to nearby schools and the community.

While her travels were primarily to visit family on this occasion, she did stop by to provide an update to the WVBC Executive Board. Over the summer, she was able to use funds provided by WVBC churches as scholarships to take students to the Japan Baptist Union's youth camp in Osaka (located more than 600 miles away). This was the first time in more than 20 years that students in her region were able to attend this camp. One student expressed to her that camp allowed her to make Christian friends for the first time in her life. With Christians making up only 1% of Japan's population, Sarah frequently shares that there are more vending machines than Christians in Japan. The opportunity to connect young Japanese believers is extremely vital.

During her update, she also read a letter sent with her from Rev. Yoshiro Tadokoro, pastor of Shokei Baptist Church. It read, "I'd like to express my sincere gratitude to the members of the churches of West Virginia. I hope and pray we can deepen our relationship. We appreciate your support, donations and encouragement, and we look forward to future opportunities to collaborate."

We ask that you continue to pray for Sarah as she starts her fourth year of service in her first term. With International Ministries, a term is considered five years, and global servants are expected to spend four consecutive years on the field, followed by one year of furlough – where they reconnect with supporting churches, debrief from their experience and prepare themselves for another term. The furlough period also provides them opportunities to continue expanding the vision of what God is doing through their partners and share how we can further join in those efforts.



Sarah providing an update to the WVBC Executive Board.

Brothers' Keeper

June 21-26
Parchment Valley







About Brothers' Keeper: BK is a week-long mission camp for youth entering grades 6-12 that reaches out into the Jackson County community.

2025 Statistics:

- 110 youth and leaders
- 37 completed projects
- 10 salvations!

Cost:

- \$270 per person by May 1st
- \$290 after May 1st

Learn More





<https://parchmentvalley.org/brothers-keeper/>

A Pretty, Sunny Day for Ministry at Camp Cowen

One year celebrating the Sunny Day Activity Center

On May 17, 2025, several from our WVBC family gathered to dedicate the **Sunny Day Activity Center** as a testimony to God’s faithfulness. It was also a testimony to the generosity of so many faithful saints. This \$1.5 million project represents far more than a new building. Sunny Day stands as a visible reminder of what God can accomplish through a faithful, praying and giving community.

Designed to provide safe, indoor gathering and recreation space regardless of storms, heat or cold, the Sunny Day Activity Center *immediately* proved its value during its very first summer of use! Throughout the season, it offered safety during thunderstorms, relief from heatwaves and expanded opportunities for programming activities. Looking ahead, this facility will also allow us to expand fall, winter and spring ministries, as well as community outreach initiatives.

The impact of Sunny Day was evident from the start. Younger Middler Camp opened with the looming threat of thunder storms. During dinner, dark skies rolled in and heavy rain soaked camp, leaving fields swamped. Yet, campers were unaffected as they were able to walk up to the beautiful new building and continue their activities without missing a beat.

During Junior 1 Camp, it seemed that game time was interrupted by rain and storms every single evening. Thanks to Sunny Day, the camp game leader was able to transition activities indoors, providing a dry, safe space for campers and counselors to keep playing and laughing together.

High School 1 experienced record-breaking heat, and Sunny Day’s full HVAC system offered much-needed respite from the high temperatures.



Kids enjoying the new Sunny Day Activity Center.

Later in the summer, Family Camp followed with a record attendance of 242 campers, and morning programming for preschool through sixth grade was held in Sunny Day. With expanded numbers, the previous space simply would not have accommodated the program!

Even into the fall season, Sunny Day has continued to bless ministry through Fall Groups, hosting new activities, interest groups, carnivals and glow-in-the-dark games.

As we look ahead to 2026, we prayerfully anticipate how God will open doors for new programming and community partnerships through this phenomenal facility. Thank you for your faithful support. You have helped create a place where, no matter the weather, we can truly say: it is a pretty, sunny day!

CAMP COWEN 2026 SUMMER SCHEDULE

APRIL 17-19
WOMEN'S CAMP

APRIL 26
COWEN SUNDAY

MAY 8-9
SUMMER KICKOFF

MAY 29-31
COLLEGE WEEKEND

JUNE 5-7
YOUNGER MIDLDER
(GRADES 2-4)

JUNE 7-13
JUNIOR HIGH 1
(GRADES 7-9)

JUNE 14-20
JUNIOR 1
(GRADES 5-6)

JUNE 21-27
HIGH SCHOOL 1
(GRADES 9-12)

JUNE 28 - JULY 4
JUNIOR 2
(GRADES 5-6)

JULY 5-11
JUNIOR HIGH 2
(GRADES 7-9)

JULY 12-18
HIGH SCHOOL 2
(GRADES 9-12)

JULY 24-27
FAMILY CAMP
(ALL AGES)

JULY 28-31
OLDER MIDLDER
(GRADES 3-5)

JULY 31 - AUGUST 2
ABMEN & BOYS
(ALL AGES)

**LEARN MORE AT
CAMPCOWEN.ORG**



Where people meet Jesus and grow as His disciples in a community of faith.

Introducing the 2026 Camp Cowen Theme: Overflow

For generations, Camp Cowen has been a place where people meet Jesus and grow as His disciples in a community of faith. Each summer, a theme helps guide our teaching, worship and experiences together. In 2026, our theme—**Overflow**—invites campers to discover the abundant, overflowing nature of God’s love, power and mission. Rooted in **Ephesians 3:20–21**, this theme reminds us that God’s work in our lives is immeasurably more than we could ever ask or imagine.

When God fills us with His Spirit, His presence doesn’t stop with us—it overflows! His goodness spills into our relationships, our worship, our service and the world around us. Overflow calls us to live from that abundance—to let God’s love and power flow through us so others may see His glory.

Whether as a camper, staffer or volunteer counselor, we hope you will join us this summer as we experience the overflow of God’s goodness at Camp Cowen. It is certain to be a summer you won’t want to miss!



Registration for camps opens on February 2nd.



Camp Cowen Summer Staff

We are seeking committed, servant-hearted individuals who desire to honor God by helping create a safe, clean, welcoming environment for every camper and guest. Visit the website for more details.

Qualifications:

- ✓ A committed Christian
- ✓ Desires to serve the Lord in a ministry setting
- ✓ Able to work hard and relates well with others
- ✓ Minimum of 16 years old, priority given to applicants 18+

Benefits:

- ✓ Free Room & Board for all Staff
- ✓ \$325 per week
- ✓ Fun, supportive Christian workplace
- ✓ Internship Experience



<https://campcowen.org/staff>

Applications are due by March 13th

Parchment Valley: Serving Veterans for the Last 13 Years



General Chris "Mookie" Walker (left) joins others in recognizing one of our Vietnam veterans and his wife.

For the last 13 years, **Parchment Valley Conference Center** has worked with the Jackson County Hunting Heroes to host a three-day hunt for US military veterans. This is one of several events they partner on with the mission of providing recreational and fellowship opportunities to assist veterans with their recovery and rehabilitation.

As former Parchment Valley director, Frank Miller, shared, "This ministry started with prayer and a \$10 deposit from my personal credit card to register with the state, but it has grown to become a sustainable non-profit with ongoing support from numerous local businesses and organizations." He added, "Over the years, we

have had over 500 veterans participate in our hunts, and we have been able to minister to several who were on the brink of suicide. This ministry has truly been life-changing for those who have participated."

Participants have traveled from as far as Oklahoma and New Mexico to participate in this ministry. One Florida veteran even moved to West Virginia to be closer to the community he found here.

Part of what makes this event so impactful is that local veterans donate their land and serve as guides to the hunters over the three days. This year's hunt brought together 20 veterans and guides who hunted across 75,000 acres in Jackson and Mason Counties.

Tom Willis is a state senator and longtime member of the West Virginia National Guard. Serving as the keynote for this year's dinner celebration, he spoke about the steps to rediscovering one's purpose in life. "The first step is to form relationships," Willis shared. "These relationships are fulfilling and help with healing. The second step is to serve others. Each of you is wonderfully and beautifully made with unique gifts. There are people out there who need you." He later added, "There is nothing sweeter in life than to know you are working in your purpose."

Throughout the three days, 25 deer were harvested. But more importantly, relationships were formed, the gospel was shared and hope was restored.

Parchment Valley's mission is to be a place "where lives are changed." Thank you for your ongoing prayers and support. You are impacting the lives of many, including those of our veterans.



2026 ANNUAL BIBLE CONFERENCE

Saturday, March 7, 2026

Parchment Valley Conference Center

A study of Ezra and Nehemiah: Restoring the People of God, featuring Dr. Trent Eastman.



Learn more at:
www.wvbc.org

Ginny Prunty Retires from the WVBC Staff



Ginny says goodbye to the Executive Board during the January meeting.

Ginny retired January 5, 2026, after 30 years of faithful service and ministry in the West Virginia Baptist Convention. However, she is not going far as she was immediately asked by the current Convention President, Chad Mugrage, to serve on the Nominating Committee to which she gave an enthusiastic yes!

Ginny's faithful services to the Convention began when her good friend, Phyllis Godfrey, asked Ginny to volunteer in helping to label the WV Baptist Newsletter. This was before email, so this was no small task as it involved adding address labels to around 10,000 copies. It was her volunteer work in the Convention office that led to her being approached about the possibility of coming on staff. Ginny accepted and began a career that would span the next three decades.

Ginny recently shared that she loved working for the Convention and considered the people from churches across the state as family. Highpoints for her included working closely on the WVBC

Annual Meetings. She mentioned she especially enjoyed gathering all the session participants together prior to the start of each session for introductions, assignments and most importantly praying together for the Lord's blessing and guidance. She said, "The Annual Meetings are much like family reunions where I get to see familiar faces and people from across the state that I may only see once a year." She also enjoyed the Executive Board meetings for much the same reason, getting to see her Convention family. Each Executive Board meeting she would make "homemade" desserts, snacks and goodies that everyone attending would rave about! When asked why she went to so much trouble in making homemade snacks, Ginny responded, "Because I like to make people happy and see them enjoy themselves."

During her time on staff, Ginny served as the Administrative Assistant to three Executive Ministers: Lloyd Hamblin, David Carrico and Mike Sisson, as well as two interim Executive Ministers: Jim Lutz and Michael Stephens. Mike remembers that when he began as Executive Minister, Ginny laughed and said, "You are the last! I'm not training another." Mike said, "I cannot express just how thankful I am for Ginny. When I started, there were no directions or guidebooks for how to serve in the role of Executive Minister. Ginny came alongside me that first year and, with her amazing institutional knowledge, helped guide me through the many responsibilities, meetings, etc. the job required me to attend to."

Though she will be missed, we fully suspect Ginny will remain active in Convention life. The WVBC staff wishes Ginny the very best in this next chapter of her life. Prayers for the Lord to bless her with health and many wonderful new experiences.

Welcome Daniel McCloy to the Convention Team!

We are excited to welcome Daniel McCloy as the newest member of the Convention office team. His primary responsibility will be to serve as an administrative assistant to Todd McClure in the areas of communication and database information systems. Daniel brings a wealth of education and training as well as a love for serving the Lord. He is a graduate of Marshall University with a B.S. in Computer Information Technology. While at Marshall, he served in leadership with Baptist Campus Ministry. Daniel strengthened his skills serving as a technical intern for the Purchasing Division of the WV Department of Administration, and communication internships for New Hope Baptist Church in Parkersburg and the WVBC, focusing on video editing, website design and creating databases for various ministries.

Daniel is a National Honors Society member and an Eagle Scout. Along with his education and accomplishments, Daniel loves to give back, volunteering with Project Feed Huntington and most recently as an esports (electronic sports) coach at Wirt County High School. The role of an esports coach, similar to traditional sports, is to train competitive video gamers, develop strategies, analyze gameplay, organize practice and improve players' mental/physical health and teamwork.

Daniel is a familiar face for the American Baptist Women's Ministries of WV, running the technology for many of their events. Mike Sisson said of Daniel's hiring, "I was so impressed with his diligence and efficiency working the technology at the Annual



Daniel McCloy in the WVBC Office Conference Room

Meeting of the WVBC that I invited him for a lunch meeting interview. After a time of prayer and much positive feedback, we decided to move forward with hiring him as staff. He is a remarkable young man, very talented and dependable, and he is already making a positive impact in the Convention office."

As with all Convention staff, we ask that you pray for Daniel as he serves our WVBC family of churches.

Enduring Love: Establishment of an Endowment Fund

The vision of **Enduring Love** is to see an Arab world that seeks Jesus and embraces the Good News that God loves them and cares for them. Founded in 2014, this ministry was launched from the dream of Dan Chetti, an International Ministries (IM) global servant in Lebanon. Dan and his wife Sarah have served in Lebanon since 1998, and for the majority of those years, they were the only IM personnel in the entirety of the Middle East and North African (MENA) region. Desiring to see IM's presence expand in the MENA region, and strategically planning of ways to better reach Arabs with the gospel, Enduring Love was formed to help equip Arabs to reach Arabs.

For reference – 10 Arab missionaries can be supported for the same cost as one western missionary. In most cases, Arabs already know the language, they already understand the culture and they already have the relationships to start discipling and planting churches immediately. In short, the strategy of Enduring Love is *"The gospel by the Arabs, for the Arabs."*

Dan has visited several of our WVBC churches on multiple occasions and has attended events such as Camp Global. Todd McClure also serves as the Associate Director of Enduring Love.

With Dan and Sarah officially retiring from IM this spring, we are excited to announce a new **Enduring Love Endowment Fund** that will not only provide immediate support to partners in the MENA region, but this will also allow us to support our partners for many years to come!



Todd McClure and Dan Chetti are joined by several Sudanese church planters who are supported through Enduring Love.

A couple of years ago, Todd met with Dan and several IM leaders to discuss the longevity of this ministry. From those discussions came the decision to start the Endowment Fund, which officially started in January of 2026.

If you would like more information about Enduring Love or how you can contribute to this new endowment fund, contact Todd McClure at todd@wvbc.org.

JR HIGH CONVENTION

February **20-22** **6-9th** **\$40**
 Grade Per Person

South Parkersburg Baptist Church

register at wvbc.org/ministries/youth

RENDER THE HEARTS
WORSHIP

Elliott Gregory
SPEAKING

IDENTITY

Galatians 2:20

Spring Children's Rally

Saturday, March 7, 2026

For children currently in grades K-5, 6th grade is optional.
At Parchment Valley in the Greenlee Activities Center

FEAR BUSTERS

2026 WVBC SPRING CHILDREN'S RALLY

BRAVE

STRONG

FIERCE

When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. Psalm 56:3

COST:
 \$15 (if postmarked by February 17th)
 \$28 (if postmarked after February 17th or at the door.)

My God is stronger than my problems!
My faith is bigger than my fears.

2025 Thailand Mission Team: Holding Up the Arms of our Missionaries

In October, a group of 11 ambassadors from four of our WVBC churches were commissioned to serve in Chiang Rai, Thailand. Partnering with the Thailand Baptist Missionary Fellowship (TBMF), the group helped serve as the leadership for the TBMF Annual Meeting.

The theme for the Annual Meeting was based on Psalm 23. More than 50 missionaries and family members were present at the meeting, representing five different Baptist sending agencies, including International Ministries (IM). The weekend was designed to be one of spiritual renewal, re-energizing and rest. The list of participating missionaries included Eric and Yuree Lembke, as well as Mike and Becky Mann. Both of these have visited several WVBC churches in recent years and have spoken at Camp Global.

"It's been a hard year for those serving in Thailand," said Brian McClure, who served as point person for the trip. At the 2024 WVBC Annual Meeting, Rhonda Reed and Joyce Reed sent video greetings from Thailand, having gone to assist amidst massive flooding. In the spring, severe earthquakes affected the Myanmar and Thailand region. In late spring and early summer, refugees were being sent home and foreign aid was being cut. "We just want to be like Aaron and Hur, holding up the arms of our missionaries as they continue encouraging those God has called them to serve."

Ethan and Zoë Tawney, joined by Ammie Rasmussen, led the student ministry for the weekend. Fifteen students played hard and prayed hard as they, too, studied Psalm 23. "They were so



The 2025 Thailand Mission Team before their departure.

easy to work with," said Zoë. "They would participate in essentially everything and were just one big family, which was really neat to see!" Ammie shared, "My biggest takeaway from working with the missionary students in Thailand was witnessing how deeply their faith, love and sense of calling reflect the example of their parents. As I served alongside them, I could see that same passion for ministry already taking root."

Our WVBC Family has a great reputation of serving not only locally, but also globally. Last year, multiple teams were sent out to serve in countries on five different continents. In early 2026, we are excited to send another team back to Kenya, as well as commission two of our WVBC Missionary Interns – Allison and Lillian O'Dell – who will be traveling back to Thailand to serve for the month of February.

P4P Presents: *Pre-Bible Conference for Pastors*

Compassion Fatigue:

What is It and How to Fight It

Questions? Contact Rev. Anthony Pratt
(304) 382-3600

Cost: \$15 for members
\$20 for non-members

Led By:
Christa Raitz

Parchment Valley Conference Center
Red Barn

March 6th, 2026
5:30-8:00



Northwest Area News

by Mark McCloy, Northwest Area Minister

Transitions

“As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall never cease.”

- Gen. 8:22

We have just crossed over into a new year and are grateful for both a season of celebration and transitions. This has been a season of reuniting with family, and we have been blessed to see some from afar. Our daughter and your missionary, Sarah McCloy, made it home for the holidays. She is near the end of her third year in Sendai, Japan. She was able to visit with the WVBC's Executive Board, and there were also many who visited her during an open house at Parchment Valley.

In the season leading up to this time, churches have celebrated in many ways the coming of our Savior – plays, concerts, cantatas, meals and of course through giving. People, and especially children, all over our communities, state and world have been the recipients of toys, clothes, food and especially love as we celebrated Christmas. One of our churches sent over 100 shoeboxes filled with gifts to the Weirton Christian Center children. Another sent over 300 pairs of socks. Many churches participated in Operation Christmas Child and sent gifts all over the world.

This has also been a season of transition in ministry. At our recent Annual Meeting, nine students graduated from the Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies. Brent Duncan, of Vienna Baptist, successfully completed his ordination council before the Parkersburg Association. Shelly Dawson, of Sunrise Baptist Church, was also ordained to the gospel ministry. Some are beginning a new season by retiring. Others are beginning new positions. May the Lord be glorified as we continue to serve Him.



Prayers lifted for Shelly Dawson during her ordination.

Northeast Area News

by Kevin Sions, Northeast Area Minister

Baptist Temple Celebrates 150 Years

During the weekend of November 20–22, 2025, Fairmont Baptist Temple celebrated 150 years of ministry. Over the three days, the church celebrated through worship services, dinners and opportunities to share and reflect upon ministry. There were several pictures and documents on display to reflect and remember the ministry and historical life of the church. Countless stories and memories were shared among the church as the strength of relationships with one another was evident.

Austin Helmick Ordained for Ministry

Pastor Austin Helmick was ordained by Petersburg First Baptist Church on January 4th, 2026. Austin serves as the associate pastor at the church and is a recent graduate of the Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies. Pastor Shannon Earle provided the charge to the church, while Pastor Scott Whetzel (Romney First Baptist Church) gave the charge to the candidate.

Churches Celebrated Christmas

Several churches celebrated the birth of Jesus through candlelight services, live nativities and special Christmas services/programs. Even though the snow on December 14th cancelled



Austin Helmick being prayed over during his ordination.

several services, churches rescheduled the Christmas programs, cantatas and activities to provide opportunities for the community to remember the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Southwest Area News

by **Evan Arkell**, Southwest Area Minister

Good Food, Good News at New Baptist Church

We have several churches in the state that host food pantries on a regular basis, and for this article I want highlight the efforts of New Baptist Church in Huntington. Huntington not only has a large homeless population, but also a large population of folks trying to survive on low incomes. I was recently speaking with Robin Crouch, Pastor of Adult Ministries at New Baptist, about the food pantry, and he couldn't brag enough on the work their volunteers do each week. Every Tuesday, for four hours, the team loads up families with food for the week and shares the love of Christ with each person they serve.

During the government shutdown, they served even more families than usual – easily several hundred. The mission statement from their website concludes: "We believe the words of Jesus that this is one way we can respond directly to God's love for us: 'For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in.'" - **Matthew 25:35**

Huntington Baptist Temple Hosts Thanksgiving for the Homeless at Harris Riverfront Park

On the Saturday before Thanksgiving, Huntington Baptist Temple set up a dinner in Huntington's Harris Riverfront Park. Everyone was welcome, but the location was chosen because of the large homeless population that lives on the riverbank and surrounding areas of the park. They were able to feed many people who were appreciative of that meal, as it was probably the only meal they had that day. Pastor Justin Berry searched out people on the riverbank and in the woods to let them know that the food was available. What an awesome witness of the love of Jesus!



Volunteers serve at New Baptist Church's food pantry.

Southeast Area News

Submitted by **Nancy Wolfe**, Director of H2O Ministries

H2O Ministries of Mount Hope Baptist Temple

The town of Mount Hope, once a booming coal town, has suffered the same losses as many small towns across our state. Empty store fronts and low-income housing are the norm where once coal barons and family-owned businesses invested in their hometown.

My husband answered the call to be interim pastor at Mount Hope Baptist Temple in the fall of 2022, and on January 1, 2023, he accepted the full-time pastorate position. One month later, H2O Ministries began what has turned out to be a source of provision for those in need of food and clothing in and around our community. At the present time our ministry is serving people from five different counties. Each month, we provide a hot meal, clothing and groceries. Our very first meal was in February of 2023, and we served 34 people. As we continued to serve, our number of meals increased. This year, we served 223 Thanksgiving dinners and 183 Christmas dinners.

Everything we are able to do is 100% donation-driven, and those who work in the ministry volunteer their time. Weekly, we are contacted by people who want to donate clothes. This holiday season, we were gifted with items from two local schools that held



Leigh Richardson volunteering at H2O Ministries.

food drives, and monetary donations come in regularly. H2O Ministries was also supported by the American Baptist Women's Ministries of WV in 2025 through their WV Hope offering. That was a tremendous blessing!

The tagline of H2O Ministries is "Help 2 Offer – Hope 2 Others." This important ministry is just one of many ways our WVBC churches are serving their communities and helping expand the kingdom.

November 2025—January 2026

GEORGE ARNOLD BRADBURY, 89, of Culloden, died on October 31, 2025. He was a member of Hurricane First Baptist Church, and was active in missions through the American Baptist Men's Disaster Relief team.

ELBERT B. BRADY, 79, died on November 7, 2025. He was a member of Highlawn Baptist Church, where he served as a deacon. He was also a recent graduate of the Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies.

EMILY ELIZABETH "LIBBY" BURDETTE, 93, of Scott Depot, died on October 15, 2025. She was a member of Nitro Baptist Church.

GRETA IRENE CONRAD, 94, of Gassaway, died on October 5, 2025. She was a member of Rush Run Baptist Church, where she served as a clerk.

RUTH EMOGENE WESTFALL CUNNINGHAM, 87, of Nitro, died on August 22, 2025. She was a member of Nitro First Baptist Church, where she served as a deaconess, Sunday School teacher, member of the Elsie Kittlitz Circle and a member of the church choir.

ELLEN MAE GRIGGS, 96, of Elizabeth, died on January 5, 2026. She was a lifetime member of Mt. Zion Baptist Church, where she served as a Sunday School teacher for many years.

HARVEY LEONARD HORNISH, 76, of Mineral Wells, died on December 12, 2025. He was a member of The Journey on Park Avenue, where he served on the board of ministry as a deacon, and as assistant treasurer.

ANDREW LANSING MILLER, 58, of Ansted, died on November 9, 2025. He was a member of Lover's Leap Baptist Church, where he served in the youth ministry.

PATRICIA ANN BOURN SPENCER, 83, of Frametown, died on November 7, 2025. She was a member of Hope Baptist Church, where she served as a Sunday School and Vacation Bible School teacher, missions coordinator, treasurer and member of the church choir.

Charitable Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs)

allow retirees to donate a portion of their RMD directly to the WVBC or to your church, bypassing the tax burden and avoiding higher income tax brackets.

Individuals aged 70 1/2 and older can donate up to \$111,000 directly from their IRA without incurring tax on the amount donated.

To learn more, contact todd@wvbc.org.

DID YOU KNOW?



Leadership Updates

KOLTEN JONES to Bethany Baptist Church as pastor 11/18/2025

JARED FITZWATER to Clarksburg Baptist Church as associate pastor 1/4/2026

JASON SKAGGS to Broad Run Baptist Church as pastor 1/4/2026

DOC ADKINS to Fayetteville Baptist Church as interim pastor 1/4/2026

SCOTT POSEY to Fairview Baptist Church as pastor 1/9/2026

MINISTRY EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Senior Pastor (Full-Time)

Location: Parkersburg area

Pastor (Part-Time)

Location: Spencer area

Youth Pastor (Part-Time)

Location: Point Pleasant area

Pastor (Part-Time)

Location: Parkersburg area

Youth Pastor (Part-Time)

Location: Parkersburg area

Student Pastor (Full-Time)

Location: Parkersburg area

Senior Pastor (Full-Time)

Location: Parkersburg area

Youth Pastor (Part-Time)

Location: Grafton area

Pastor (Part-Time)

Location: Weirton area

Director of Worship Ministry (Part-Time)

Location: Huntington area

Director of Music (Part-Time)

Location: Beckley area

Youth Director (Part-Time)

Location: Marion County

Senior Pastor (Full-Time)

Location: Boone 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.

To see a list of available positions, visit: www.wvbc.org

February 2026

FEBRUARY 1 – Jeremy Nicholas, member of the WVBC Discipleship Commission
FEBRUARY 2 – The ministry of Quiet Dell Baptist Church; Edward Carpenter, pastor (Fairmont Association)
FEBRUARY 3 – The ministry of Sabraton Hill Baptist Church; Stephen Dodrill, pastor (Goshen Association)
FEBRUARY 4 – The ministry of Ten Mile Baptist Church; Jeffrey Perine, pastor (Judson Association)
FEBRUARY 5 – Casey Dawson, member of the WVBC Stewardship Commission
FEBRUARY 6 – The ministry of Jordan Run Baptist Church; Rick Bergdoll, pastor (Eastern Association)
FEBRUARY 7 – The Annual Training Event happening today at Parchment Valley
FEBRUARY 8 – The ministry of Chapel Baptist Church; Harold Francis, pastor (Little Kanawha Association)
FEBRUARY 9 – The ministry of Racine First Baptist Church; Anthony Pratt, pastor (Coal River Association)
FEBRUARY 10 – Kenneth Heiney, member of the WVBC Leadership Commission
FEBRUARY 11 – The ministry of Mount Olive Baptist Church; Timothy Black, pastor (Broad Run Association)
FEBRUARY 12 – The ministry of Oakwood Baptist Church; David Moutz, pastor (Kanawha valley Association)
FEBRUARY 13 – The ministry of Cairo Baptist Church (Harrisville Association)
FEBRUARY 14 – Jae Stockton, International Ministries Global Servant to Mexico
FEBRUARY 15 – Eliberto Juárez , International Ministries Global Servant to El Salvador
FEBRUARY 16 – Tan Coats, International Ministries Global Servant to Thailand and Myanmar
FEBRUARY 17 – The ministry of Mountain Baptist Church; Reginald Berry, pastor (Hopewell Association)
FEBRUARY 18 – Jeff Fetty, member of the WVBC Outreach Commission
FEBRUARY 19 – The ministry of New Antioch Baptist Church; Gary Walker, pastor (Elk Valley Association)
FEBRUARY 20 – Junior High Convention happening this weekend at South Parkersburg Baptist Church
FEBRUARY 21 – The ministry of Wheeling First Baptist Church; Darrin Wright, pastor (Panhandle Association)
FEBRUARY 22 – The ministry of Fifth Avenue Baptist Church; Guy Sayles, interim pastor (Guyandotte Association)
FEBRUARY 23 – The ministry of Scarbro First Baptist Church; Kenny Smith, pastor (Fayette Association)
FEBRUARY 24 – Michael Sisson, Executive Minister, WVBC
FEBRUARY 25 – The ministry of West Point Baptist Church; Ronald Miller, pastor (Greenbrier-Raleigh Association)
FEBRUARY 26 – The ministry of Ravenswood First Baptist Church; Toby Wagoner, pastor (Good Hope Association)
FEBRUARY 27 – ABW State Executive Board Meeting happening this weekend at Parchment Valley
FEBRUARY 28 – AB Men's prayer breakfasts happening today around the state

March 2026

MARCH 1 – The ministry of Weirton Heights Memorial Baptist Church; William Stout, pastor (Panhandle Association)
MARCH 2 – Annie Dieselberg, International Ministries Global Servant to Thailand
MARCH 3 – David Parajón , International Ministries Global Servant to Nicaragua
MARCH 4 – Taku Longkumer, International Ministries Global Servant to South and East Asia
MARCH 5 – The ministry of Hopewell Baptist Church; Randall Lamm, pastor (Goshen Association)
MARCH 6 – The Pastors4Pastors Pre-Bible Conference Event happening today at Parchment Valley
MARCH 7 – The Annual Bible Conference and Spring Children's Rally happening today at Parchment Valley
MARCH 8 – The ministry of Montgomery Baptist Church; CJ Rider, pastor (Kanawha Valley Association)
MARCH 9 – The ministry of Twelve Pole Valley Baptist Church; Douglas Thompson, pastor (Twelve Pole Association)
MARCH 10 – The ministry of Liberty Baptist Church; Dwayne Matheny, pastor (Broad Run Association)
MARCH 11 – The ministry of Philippi Baptist Church; Tim Brown, pastor (Union Association)
MARCH 12 – Christa Raitz, member of the WVBC Discipleship Commission
MARCH 13 – The ministry of Clearview Fellowship; Roger Adams, pastor (Greenbrier-Raleigh Association)
MARCH 14 – The ministry of South Fork Baptist Church; Tom Burrill, pastor (Harrisville Association)
MARCH 15 – The ministry of Saint Albans First Baptist Church; Joel Harpold, pastor (Teays Valley Association)
MARCH 16 – The ministry of Birch River Baptist Church; Christopher Tatman, pastor (Elk Valley Association)
MARCH 17 – The ministry of Grantsville First Baptist Church; Ronald Chesser, pastor (Little Kanawha Association)
MARCH 18 – The ministry of Dorcas Baptist Church; Steve Davis, pastor (Eastern Association)
MARCH 19 – Richard Gutierrez, International Ministries Global Servant to South Africa
MARCH 20 – Mayra Giovanetti, International Ministries Global Servant to Iberoamerica and the Caribbean
MARCH 21 – The ministry of Man First Baptist Church (Logan-Mingo Association)
MARCH 22 – The ministry of Turkey Creek Baptist Church; H. Glenn Hatfield, pastor (Rockcastle Association)
MARCH 23 – Thomas Thompson, member of the WVBC Leadership Commission
MARCH 24 – The ministry of Mill Creek Baptist Church; Robert Keen, pastor (Good Hope Association)
MARCH 25 – The ministry of Lubeck Community Baptist Church; Chad Mugrage, pastor (Parkersburg Association)
MARCH 26 – The ministry of Harmony Baptist Church; Jason Sleeth, pastor (Fairmont Association)
MARCH 27 – Nicole Rowe, member of the WVBC Outreach Commission
MARCH 28 – The ministry of Pea Ridge Baptist Church; Daniel Londeree, pastor (Guyandotte Association)
MARCH 29 – The ministry of Mount Urim Baptist Church; Larry Gawthrop, pastor (Hopewell Association)
MARCH 30 – The ministry of Wilsonburg Baptist Church; Brian Thompson, pastor (Judson Association)
MARCH 31 – Krista Durden, member of the WVBC Stewardship Commission

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

Upcoming Events

FEBRUARY

February 7
Annual Training Event
Parchment Valley Conference Center

February 20-22
Junior High Convention
South Parkersburg Baptist Church

February 24
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Theology II (T-02)
Various locations

February 28
AB Men's Prayer Breakfasts
Various locations

MARCH

March 6
P4P Pre-Bible Conference Event
Parchment Valley Conference Center

March 7
Annual Bible Conference
Parchment Valley Conference Center

March 7
Spring Children's Rally
Parchment Valley Conference Center

March 15
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Theology II (T-03)
Online

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

March 20-21
Ministers' Wives Retreat
Camp Cowen

APRIL

April 10-11
Worship Summit
Camp Cowen

April 17-19
Women's Camp
Camp Cowen

April 24-25
AB Men Work Party
Camp Cowen

April 25
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Hospital Ministry (E-03)
Parchment Valley Conference Center

April 25
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Hospital Ministry (E-04)
Parchment Valley Conference Center

April 26
Camp Cowen Sunday
Various locations

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..

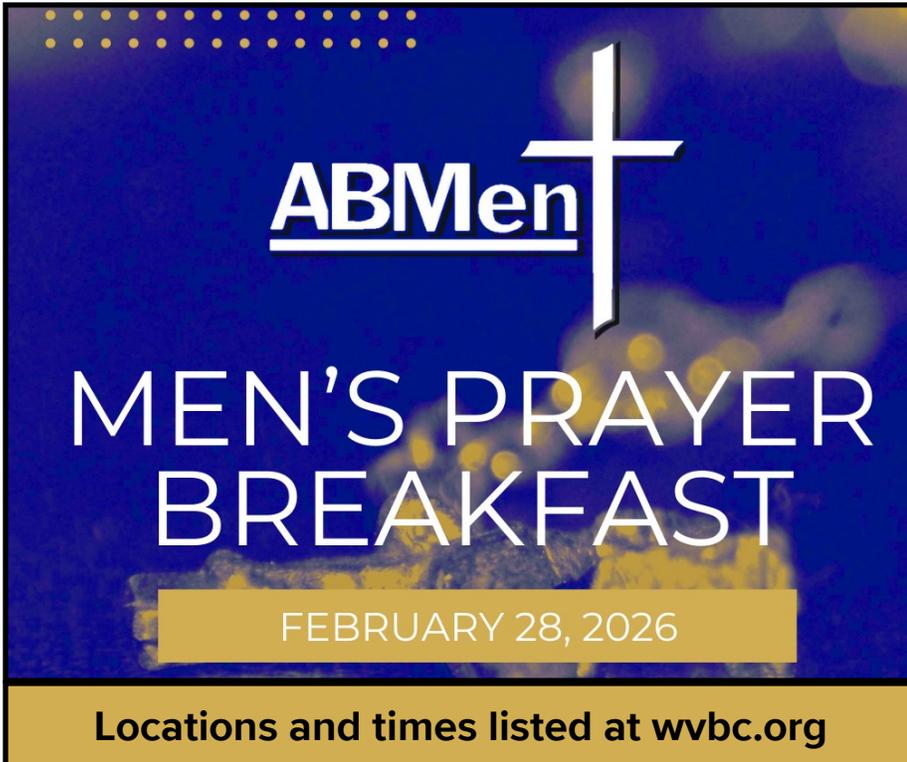
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ABMen

MEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST

FEBRUARY 28, 2026

Locations and times listed at wvbc.org

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