

# The West Virginia Baptist Newsletter

October—November 2025

## Calling All WVBC Family!!

160TH  
**ANNUAL  
MEETING**  
OF OUR WVBC FAMILY

October 16-17 Emmanuel Baptist Church



Keynote Speaker: Mac Lake

Register  
Online  
Now



This year, we will be celebrating the 160th gathering of the WVBC family on October 16 & 17 at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Charleston. And what a time of celebration it is shaping up to be! This will be a wonderful time of reunion as we gather to worship, sing, fellowship, learn and celebrate the many wonderful things the Lord has done over the past year.

As the WVBC family, we are humbled that Christ is working through our collective efforts to advance His kingdom. It is exciting to report that in 2024, the number of baptisms in WVBC churches was up for the first time in five years. This year, the trend continues with numerous churches of all sizes and locations sharing with me that they are baptizing people and seeing new people attend their services. Some share this is the first time in recent years they have celebrated baptisms. Add to these celebrations the fact that, in two months, Camp Cowen and Parchment Valley have reported a combined 194 people have received Jesus as their Savior, and another 179 have rededicated themselves to greater commitment to following Him as Lord! These are only some of the things God is doing that are worthy of celebration!

Our theme for the coming year is a call to move forward with courage to the greater work He has called us to. William Carey, often referred to as the “father of the modern missions,” prior to going to India challenged his Baptist brothers and sisters to take seriously their responsibility to take the Gospel to unreached lands. Andrew Fuller, one of those men, declared that the mission to India was like a few men who considered going into a deep, dark, unexplored mine without a map or guide. Carey responded, “Well, I will go down, if you will hold the rope.” Fuller answered I will! Carey would later express his courage and motivation to go to India with the phrase “Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God.” Linked with the promise in Scripture that

God is “able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Ephesians 3:20), we as a Convention family of churches have a clear reminder that we have a great big God working in and through us to accomplish His purposes. Like Carey, this should provide us with the courage and motivation we need to attempt great things for God!

One of the challenges we face is finding more leaders to serve in our churches, to follow a call into ministry and to pastor our churches. Based on the 48 young people who expressed a call to ministry at Cowen and Parchment Valley this summer, I am fully convinced God is still calling out leaders. The question is: How can we better identify those He is calling and disciple them to faithfully lead where God calls them?

To help us equip developing leaders, we are excited to announce that our keynote speaker this year will be Mac Lake. I know from speaking with pastors who have incorporated Mac’s approach in their churches that it works! Equipping developing leaders has translated into a great impact of the gospel in their churches.

Mac has deep roots in WV, having grown up in the state and attending Handley Baptist Church as a child. His recent book, *The Multiplication Effect: Building a Leadership Pipeline that Solves Your Leadership Shortage*, shares compelling ideas firmly founded in Scripture that provide insights into how to create a culture within the local church to help identify, equip and disciple new leaders. I personally invite you to join us on October 16 & 17 as Mac teaches these concepts and much more.

These are just a sampling of the exciting things in this year’s gathering. Please plan to join us!

Blessings,  
Mike Sisson

*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**

# Pre-Convention Activities

## Download the WVBC APP!

Have the WV Baptist Newsletter delivered to your phone!



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

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All Pre-Convention Activities are on Thursday, October 16th with registration taking place at 9:00 AM. You can register for these activities on the WVBC Annual Meeting registration form.

## Women's Day—\$11

Organized by the American Baptist Women's Ministries of WV, this year's theme is "Emmanuel, God with Us," and the keynote speaker is Sherry Husted, president of the ABWM of WV. Worship will be led by Marsha Raker and the missionary speakers will be Kim Weaver and Shelly Dawson. Also included in the program is a discussion of next year's WV Hope Ministries, Mission Outreach Project and Special Project.

Registration is at 9:00 AM, followed by the start of the program at 9:30 AM. Lunch is included, and the program will end prior to the first session of the WVBC Annual Meeting.

## Men's Day—\$11

Organized by the American Baptist Men of WV, the Men's Day activity will involve a service project for low-income residents in the area.

Registration is at 9:00 AM and departure is scheduled for 9:30 AM. Lunch at South Charleston First Baptist Church is included, and the event will end prior to the first session of the WVBC Annual Meeting.

## Pastors4Pastors Event—\$25

Organized by Pastors4Pastors, all pastors from across the WVBC family are invited to join at Oakwood Baptist Church for this special event. The keynote speaker will be Mac Lake (also the keynote for our WVBC Annual Meeting), and the topic will be "Leading Yourself."

Registration is at 9:00 AM, followed by the start of the program at Oakwood Baptist at 9:30 AM. Shuttles will be available from Emmanuel Baptist. Lunch is included, and the program will end prior to the first session of the WVBC Annual Meeting.



DOING CHRIST'S WORK *together*

by Intentionally Engaging Communities for Christ

# 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:** \_\_\_\_\_

## A Journey of Grace: Esmeralda's Mission Experience

Written by Keith Myers, Global Servant,  
International Ministries



Left to Right: Esmeralda, Yasmin and Baillie.

In early August, we had the joy of hosting a Discovery Trip team through International Ministries (IM), led by Baillie Myers—IM's Short-Term Missions Associate (and our daughter!).

As part of this special journey, we invited Esmeralda Cano Ponce, a young woman from one of our partner communities, to join us. We've known Esmeralda since we first arrived in Mexico nearly 13 years ago, and it was a gift to watch her participate and grow throughout the week.

We asked Esmeralda to reflect on the experience, and she shared a beautiful testimony titled: "A Journey of Grace: Esmeralda's Mission Experience."

*This past week, I had the privilege of joining the Myers family and their team on a mission trip, and I want to share a little of what God did in my heart.*

*From the beginning, we saw God's provision and guidance. In each place we visited, His presence was evident. We weren't just there to bless others—we were also blessed by the love and hospitality we received.*

*When the Myers arrived in Zongozotla, they invited me to join the trip. Baillie led the team, along with Lindsey and Alex. Lindsey's Spanish impressed me, and Alex's kind and helpful attitude spoke volumes even without words.*

*On Monday, we traveled to San Juan Atzingo. Keith shared a message from Matthew 6:25–34, reminding us not to worry but to seek God's kingdom first. That verse stayed with me throughout the week.*

*In Calihuala, I reconnected with friends and rejoiced with a pastor and his wife who are expecting a baby. Then, in Santa Bárbara Huacapa, we spent time with Pastor Fidel's family, shared roasted corn in the fields and led a joyful devotional activity with the church.*

*Ten years ago, I came to this same place with the Myers, but I didn't want anything to do with God. My heart was wounded, and I had no faith. Now, I return as a disciple of Jesus, transformed by His grace. He rescued me and gave me a new life.*

*This trip meant more than just travel—it was a reminder of how far God has brought me. I'm grateful for His faithfulness and for the Myers, who have been mentors, friends and family to me.*

God is at work in the hearts of young women like Esmeralda all throughout CICEM. It is the privilege of a lifetime to accompany people on their journey as we are making disciples of Jesus Christ.

## Church Camp in Japan: About 60 People Attended

Written by Sarah McCloy, Global Servant,  
International Ministries

This summer has been full of activity! At Shokei Baptist Church, I have started some new programs, continued leading Shokei Kids and stayed involved in the preaching and teaching ministries. On top of that, I was invited to take part in activities at three Christian schools here in Sendai. It has been a busy season, but also a very fruitful one.

There are so many stories I would love to share, but one I'm particularly excited about is the Japan Baptist Union's youth camp, which took place this past August.

Every August, the Japan Baptist Union holds a church camp in Osaka. But since Osaka is so far away, youth from the Tohoku region (where I serve) haven't been able to join in for many years. This summer, for the first time in over 20 years, youth from Tohoku were able to attend, thanks to scholarships made possible by your generous giving! From me and from all the youth who were blessed to go—**thank you so much!**

In total, about 60 people (youth and leaders) attended the camp, including seven participants from the Sendai area. At first, our youth were a little nervous, but they ended up having a wonderful time! One of the greatest joys for me was seeing some of them make Christian friends for the very first time. Because there are



Students at Japan Baptist Union's church camp.

so few Christian young people in Japan, it is rare—and so important—for them to find peers who share their faith.

The three days were filled with worship, discussion and lots of fun. I was also honored to be invited to preach during one of the services, where I shared part of my own story and how God brings freedom from shame. Overall, it was such a meaningful time, and I'm excited to see how God will continue working in the lives of these young people.

## Missionary Internship Program: Joining God in His Work in India

Written by Isabell Roop, WVBC Missionary Intern



Isabell poses with other women from Tura Christian Hospital.

This past summer, I participated in the **WVBC's Missionary Internship Program**. I first heard about the program during a weekly meeting at Marshall's BCM. Rob Ely spoke about an opportunity to go to India through the program. I was not only interested in the international experience, but also the opportunity to put my education and interest in medicine to practice at the Tura Christian Hospital.

After applying, I—along with Faith Lambert and Hunter Mitchell—was accepted into the internship program. Throughout the spring, we joined other interns for some virtual trainings, and we then spent three weeks serving together in Northeast India. Through the internship, I had a front row seat as I watched God's love in action through His people.

Each morning, we enjoyed Bible study at the hospital. We would have a lesson, sing a hymn and pray together. It was humbling to witness how they started every surgery with prayer, inviting God's presence into even the most critical moments. Tura Christian Hospital 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 only partially worked, handmade gauze and sutures, reused instruments that are decades old. And still, these healthcare workers pressed on, using every skill they had not just to heal bodies, but to minister to souls.

As “white Americans,” we stuck out! And while many there saw us as helpers coming to solve big problems, we quickly realized how humbling it was just to witness their strength, talent and quiet faithfulness. These individuals aren't waiting for outsiders to rescue them. They are already living out the Gospel in ways that challenged and inspired me deeply. We didn't go to lead. We went to walk alongside, uplift and hopefully equip them in small ways for the long haul.

What struck me most was their simplicity of life. They were content, joyful, generous. In many ways, it felt like they were living how God has called all of us to live – grounded, faithful and completely dependent on Him. Being back in the U.S. after such a trip, I feel more thankful than ever to live in a country where the Bible is accessible and Christianity is still very much alive. But I now also have a renewed perspective on what it means to follow Jesus, simply and sacrificially.

Though my internship is now finished, the work in India continues. The people we served alongside remain on the ground, doing the hard, holy work, day after day. I am also encouraged that others from the WVBC will continue to go and serve in this same area in the future.

God is always at work, even when we don't see the full picture. Thank you for your prayers, your encouragement and your support. I pray for the chance to return to India someday, better equipped and ready to serve again!



### Are you a young adult, interested in exploring a long-term calling to missions?

The Missionary Internship Program is a 3-6 week, customizable internship that allows you to come alongside one of our global mission partners. In addition to international experience, you will also participate in several training events on the topics of mission theology, culture, conflict resolution and much, much more.

**Registration Deadline: December 31, 2025**

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

## Parchment Valley Conference Center: "Where Lives are Changed"

What a year we have had at the Parchment Valley Conference Center! Over 6,000 people have entered the grounds this year, enjoying summer camps, church retreats, family reunions, conferences, veteran's events, Palmer Seminary classes and more. We also continue expanding our community events, partnering with local soccer leagues, the Jackson County Hunting Heroes, the Ripley Volunteer Fire Department and the list goes on. So far this year, we have hosted more than 350 events!

Whether hosting WVBC events or community events, our mission remains the same – to be a place "where lives are changed."

The following statistics provide just a small idea of how God has worked through Parchment Valley this year:

Salvations: 98  
Rededications: 86  
Calls to Ministry: 11  
Baptisms: 21

Praise God for allowing us to be part of His incredible work!

We also continue working all over Parchment Valley to maintain and improve our conference center. We are in the planning process for lower lodge room remodels, as well as a new playground addition (thank you ABWM of WV!!). The Santrock Education Building has also recently been updated with new couches and chairs for the common room. In addition, we have received a generous gift to replace the exterior doors, window blinds and bathroom fans in the Santrock Education Building. Window valances have been purchased and installed in the classrooms.



Students celebrate a baptism in the pool at Parchment Valley.

As part of the WVBC family, this is YOUR conference center! We are eternally grateful for the 230+ volunteers who have served in various capacities this year, for the numerous churches and individuals who have financially supported us and for every one of you who have joined with us in prayer. God is doing an amazing thing, and it is an honor to be a part of it.

# Fall Children's Rally

*For children currently in grades K-5, 6th grade 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](http://www.wvbc.org)

## BCM is Witnessing the Quiet Revival

"I really think the increase we are seeing is reflective of something cultural with these students. They're curious. They want to talk about hard questions. It's like they're collectively reconstructing their faith without having had to deconstruct it first. It's awesome!"

Ethan Starcher, is our **Baptist Campus Ministry (BCM)** associate at Concord University. In his quote above, he attempts to describe the incredible fruit he has seen so far this semester at Concord University. Attendance has nearly doubled compared to last year.



More than 70 students engage in study during Fairmont State's BCM.

However, this growth is not unique to only this campus.

Fairmont State BCM has also exponentially grown over the last couple of years, forcing them to relocate on multiple occasions to handle the increase. Now averaging more than 70 students at their weekly meetings, they have also had nearly 40 students sign up for small groups this semester.

"The students are hungry," says Karla Carr, our BCM associate at Fairmont State. "They're asking hard questions. They're wanting to know more. This is a very tech savvy generation. But they're discovering that there is a consistency and satisfaction in Jesus they cannot find anywhere else. In a world of brokenness, in a world of constant change, our message doesn't change—God is still God."

Lori James, our BCM Associate at the University of Charleston agrees. "The students at UC are so hungry and excited about Jesus! Each week, they have shared so much about their plans to be more intentional in their walk with God, about their testimonies of how God has provided, about examples of seeing His presence in difficult situations and about how God has been answering their prayers."

Numerous national research groups have been tracking these trends over the past year. Several are referring to this as "the Quiet Revival." When studying the Gen Zers (ages 13 to 28), the 2025 Bible Society report highlighted an increased interest in Christianity, an increase in church attendance and an increase in spiritual engagement. Another report shared that Bible sales were up 22% in this age group. Barna reports they are seeing "a groundswell of commitment to Jesus over the last four years." It is "quiet" in the sense that it is characterized by a less noisy, less dramatic, but steadily growing spiritual hunger rather than massive, attention-grabbing events.

Each of our BCM associates can attest to the fact that this "Quiet Revival" has hit the campuses in West Virginia also.

At Marshall University, as can be seen in the picture below, both the floor and the balcony of the Campus Christian Center have been completely full through each of the first few weeks. But Marshall BCM Director, Rob Ely, shared that what excites him most is the fact that nearly 100 students have already signed up for their quad (four-person) discipleship groups. "Students are hungry to learn more and dig deeper together."



More than 200 students fill the room at Marshall's BCM.

As this "Quiet Revival" continues, please join us by praying for BCM, our associates and the students this semester. Pray that God would continue to work in the hearts of the next generation and that He would continue to use BCM for that purpose.



Do you know students at any of our university campuses in West Virginia? If so, help us connect them to BCM!

Send their contact information to Rob Ely ([ely@wvbc.org](mailto:ely@wvbc.org)) or Kevin Sions ([sions@wvbc.org](mailto:sions@wvbc.org)). They will forward their information to the correct BCM associate.

## 2025 Statistics

Total Campers: 1,613

Counselors/Leaders: 417

Salvations: 96

Rededications: 93

Calls to Ministry: 37

Desire to be Baptized: 33

# Camp Cowen



What is camp without messy games?



Each week provides alone time with God.



The Sunny Day Activity Center provided new opportunities for camps.



Family Camp brings multiple generations experiencing camp together.



Friendships started at camp can last a lifetime.



Counselors make camp fun!



Thanks to those who helped



Campers learned the value



Vespers had an overflow

# Summer Recap



make this summer possible!



Children show us what it looks like to worship God without fear.



Camp Global focused on prayer for the world.



of community this summer.



This summer, students took God's word seriously.



Interest Groups provided kids with different activities.



of students during several of the camps this summer.



The Spirit was present in every time of worship this summer.



Camp provided lots of smiles.



God's Word is a priority at Camp.



Counselors helped cabin groups build community.

## Ministry Internship Program: Investing in Today's Leaders

The WVBC is investing in today's leaders as they prepare for a future in leadership. The American Baptist Women's Ministries (ABWM) of WV chose to help with this initiative by providing resources this year for interns at Marshall University. The specific focus of these interns is on young ladies and international students.

Lauren Cale (member of Saint Albans First Baptist Church) was one of those interns. She graduated from Marshall last year but chose to stay involved for another year on the leadership team at Marshall's Baptist Campus Ministry (BCM). During the spring semester, her role was focused on new young ladies and developing small groups. Lauren's groups experimented with a new model of discipleship and I-teams, meeting weekly with a group of three and another time with an individual. Lauren wrote,

*"With each week, I saw growth, not only in them but also in myself. I was facilitating the same study on the book of John three days a week, but never once did I feel like I was just repeating myself. Rather, there was something new that popped up each time, reminding me that God's Word truly is living! To hear the different perspectives and thoughts of each group was so cool."*

During the summer, Emma Londeree (member of Pea Ridge Baptist Church) moved into this internship role. She is now a senior at Concord University and is the president of their BCM, but she was able to assist with Marshall's Summer BCM program. Emma described her summer in this way:

*"Throughout the internship, I met weekly with Rob Ely to go through *Leading Yourself* by Mac Lake. The content of the book, paired with our ongoing conversations, gave me a strong leadership foundation that I'm excited to take back with me to Concord. These sessions challenged me to grow personally and spiritually and equipped me with practical tools to lead more intentionally. One of the most impactful aspects of this*



Some of the girls meeting during Marshall's Summer BCM.

*summer was the relationships I formed with other women close to my age—connections that were both spiritually enriching and personally encouraging. One of the girls was Alexandra, who returned from Vanderbilt for the summer and became involved in Summer BCM right away. I had the privilege of meeting with her regularly for one-on-one Bible study during the latter half of the summer. Through those times, a sweet and genuine friendship rooted in the Gospel was formed, and I'm so thankful for the growth and encouragement that came from it."*

Both Lauren and Emma have made an enormous impact on the discipleship of young women in the past year. We are grateful for their investment, as well as the investment from the ABWM of WV.

Marshall BCM will add another intern this fall to foster growth among the international students. Please pray for Ally Sexton (member of New Baptist Church) as she begins the internship process.

# Ministry Internship Program

The Ministry Internship Program provides individuals with the opportunity to explore their long-term calling to ministry by giving them an opportunity to serve within our family of churches and placing them under a mentor for a summer-long internship. Internships are customizable to the interests of the applicant, but include pastoral ministry, youth ministry, worship ministry, communications or intercultural ministry.



To apply for next year's program—or to request an intern for your church—visit [wvbc.org](http://wvbc.org) or scan the QR code to the left.



## YLC Welcomes 19 Students from 13 WVBC Churches

Every August, through **Youth Leader Core (YLC)**, I have the joy of meeting a new crew of 10th and 11th grade students, eager and full of potential. Over the months, I watch them grow, wrestle with big questions, embrace their gifts and step into leadership with confidence. Then, every March, as we gather to celebrate their journey, I stand in awe of what God has done and will continue in each of them in their lives.



This year's YLC students and leaders during their first meeting.

This year, 19 students from 13 WVBC churches join in the legacy of this program, which has existed since 1978. YLC's mission has been "to empower youth called and commissioned by their local church to learn about themselves, grow in their faith and discover ways to live out their beliefs and ministries." The program begins with the new school year and includes five weekends focused on discipleship, personal development, faith principles, cultivating leadership foundations and ministry opportunities. Good leaders exemplify authenticity, passion, integrity, faithfulness, servant leadership, dedication, humility, competence and more! YLC is more than a classroom setting where these skills are taught; it is a community through which these ideals are exemplified.

YLC provides students with more than leadership training. It offers them a place to deepen their faith, discover their identity in Christ and develop a heart for service. Each year, we have the privilege of walking alongside these students as they explore their God-given gifts and step into roles of leadership in their churches, schools and communities. Through worship, learning and hands-on experience, they are equipped not only with skills but with the spiritual foundation needed to lead with wisdom, integrity and love. Watching them grow new skills and step into roles with confidence reminds me that God is raising up a new generation of passionate, faithful leaders, and that gives me hope!

- Jill Narraway, Director of Camping and Youth

WVBC YOUTH

IDENTITY

Galatians 2:20

SR HIGH CONVENTION

NOVEMBER 14-16, 2025

First Baptist of St Albans  
9th-12th grade

JR HIGH CONVENTION

FEBRUARY 20-22, 2026

South Parkersburg Baptist  
6th-8th grade

# Northwest Area News

by **Mark McCloy**, Northwest Area Minister

## *A Season of Transitions*

*“To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.”*

- **Ecclesiastes 3:1**

As we head into a season of transitions, the Lord continues to move amongst his people. Ordination committees have been active over the summer. Rev. Matthew Husted was ordained by Gilboa Baptist (Good Hope) in July. He is active in the technology ministry of his church and was a regular counselor and Bible study instructor at the Hope Center. Rev. Joe Smith was ordained by Sunrise Baptist (Parkersburg). He is a graduate of the Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies, is active in the ministry of his church, regularly provides pulpit supply at churches in both the Harrisville and Parkersburg Associations and leads the Riding in Faith ministry in Elizabeth (a ministry to those active in riding horses). Currently, at least four other candidates are active in the ordination process across my area.

We also just finished the season of association meetings. All five of my associations – Good Hope, Harrisville, Little Kanawha, Panhandle and Parkersburg – had their annual meetings. It is always a blessing to get together, renew relationship and celebrate what God is doing in our churches and in the ministries we do together.



**Prayer of Ordination at Gilboa Baptist Church.**

Several churches are also in the search process for a new pastor, and we continue to work together to find those whom God is calling to fill those positions.

# Southwest Area News

by **Evan Arkell**, Southwest Area Minister

## *Leadership Change at Mount Vernon Baptist Church*

Mount Vernon Baptist Church voted in Jonathan Brooks to be their new senior pastor on August 24. Jonathan had previously served the church as the Associate Pastor of Youth and Family ministries for the last three years. Jonathan is married to his wife, McKenzie, and they have an adorable baby boy.

This transition started when Pastor Ron McClung retired as the senior pastor. But like so many “retired” pastors, Ron has taken on a new role. His new role at the church is Kinship Pastor and Missionary.

Out of Mount Vernon Baptist, there have been several Bible study groups that they call Kinship Groups. These groups are designed to grow and then split to create more groups, making room for folks to invite others to the studies. As of this writing, they have five groups that meet at differing times and locations throughout the week. Three meet on Tuesdays - one at the Starbucks inside the Teays Valley Kroger, one at a realty office in the area and one at someone’s home; another group meets on Wednesdays, also at Starbucks; and the fifth group meets on Thursday mornings at the Teays Valley Bob Evans. Several more groups will be forming soon.



**Jonathan and McKenzie Brooks, with their newborn son.**

Pastor Ron also recently taught a short class on the Kinship Groups at the Teays Valley Association’s Annual Meeting. I am sure that if you are interested in learning more about these groups, he would be excited to tell you about them and help you get one started.

# Northeast Area News

by **Kevin Sions**, *Northeast Area Minister*

## *Forks of Cheat Celebrates 250 Years*

Forks of Cheat Baptist Church (Goshen) celebrated 250 years of ministry on Sunday, July 18th, during their homecoming service. Pastor Charles 'Chuck' Bowers shared a message and discussed the history of Forks of Cheat as the church began under British rule. Even though the church has not been able to meet together inside the sanctuary since mid-April due to a storm that damaged their roof, the church was committed to celebrating together on the church property using large tents outside. Please pray as Forks of Cheat continues the rebuilding/restoration process of their sanctuary.



Forks of Cheat Baptist celebrates 250 years of ministry.

## *Reverse Approach to Pastor Appreciation*

Pastor Brian Thompson provided an opportunity to show his appreciation for the congregation at Wilsonburg Baptist Church (Judson). In August, Pastor Brian and his wife, Tracy, showed their appreciation for the Wilsonburg congregation with food and encouragement – a unique and reverse approach to pastor appreciation.

## *Tim Brown Installed at Philippi Baptist*

On Sunday, August 17th, Philippi Baptist Church (Union) installed Rev. Dr. Tim Brown as their pastor. There was a good spirit of worship and community present during the service. Pastor Tim's two sisters shared a song together in worship, Mike Sisson provided a welcome message from WVBC and I provided the charge to the church and Pastor Tim. Following the service, everyone gathered for a fellowship meal together.

## *Rock Grove Baptist Marriage Retreat*

Rock Grove Baptist Church (Broad Run) had 11 couples participate in their 2nd annual marriage retreat. This took place at North Bend State Park. The speakers were Pastor Doug Moss from Rock Grove and Pastor Mark Evans from Weston First Baptist Church. The couples enjoyed Christ-centered fellowship, focusing on what it means to have a Godly marriage.

# Southeast Area News

by **Jon Villers**, *Southeast Area Minister*

## *120 Years of the Elk Valley Association*

What happens when you get nine churches together for the 120th Annual Meeting of the Elk Valley Association? You get an impromptu Pastor's Choir singing "Just A Little Talk with Jesus!"



Pastor's choir at the Elk Valley Association's Annual Meeting.

We gathered at Big Union Baptist Church in Dille, WV, and were greatly blessed! Pictured left to right are Jon Villers, Pastor Gary McClung (New Hope Baptist), Pastor Chris Tatman (Birch River Baptist), Pastor Peter Shaffer (Big Union Baptist), Pastor Rich Demastus (Hope Baptist), Pastor Scott Posey (Orlando Baptist), Pastor Teddy Legg (Stump Chapel), Ministry Leader Alfred Clay (Holly River Baptist), Pastor Robey Godfrey (Long Run Baptist) and Pastor Eric Thomas (Sutton Baptist).

Our moderator, Pastor Robey Godfrey, reminded us of the importance of being part of the Elk Valley Association and, in only the way Robey can do it, articulated so many connections of those present and the ones we remember that have gone on to their reward. He talked about looking around realizing he is one of the "old guys" now, which was different than when he came into the association in the 80's as one of the "young guys!" We are blessed to see the next generation stepping forward while we focus on reaching all generations for Jesus. There was such an amazing spirit of love and support for one another at our meeting!

Rhonda Reed was able to join us, as well. She shared a warm word of thanks to her home association for all the continued love and support as she continues serving on the mission field through International Ministries.

**LINDA CAROL RIDER ALLEN**, 80, of Oceana, died on August 10, 2025. She was a member of Oceana First Baptist Church, where her husband, Rev. Jerry Cook, serves as pastor.

**STEPHEN EDDIE “ED” BALL**, 78, of Vienna, died on June 30, 2025. He was a member of Vienna Baptist Church, where he served as a trustee, usher, Sunday School teacher and member of the choir.

**ETHEL MAE BOGGS**, 94, of Gassaway, died on August 19, 2025. She was a member of Gassaway Baptist Church, where she served as a deaconess, Sunday School teacher and member of the Missions Board.

**REV. DONALD R. BOWLES**, 76, of Edmond, died on August 6, 2025. He pastored for several years at Dixie First Baptist Church. He and his wife were also active at Sunday Road Baptist Church at Hico.

**ROBERT R. “BOB” JONES**, 84, of Sand Fork, died on August 8, 2025. He was a member of Sand Fork Baptist Church. Over his life, he took great financial interest in both his local church and the restoration of Camp Cowen.

**SHIRLEY MARIE KEATON**, 89, of Dillwyn, VA, died on August 14, 2025. She was the wife of Rev. Robert Keaton, who served as pastor of several WVBC churches.

**RUTH ANN CUMMINGS KOCH**, 86, of Huntington, died on July 23, 2025. She was a member of New Baptist Church, where she was part of the Friendship Class. She was married to Rev. Neal Koch, whom she served alongside in several American Baptist Churches in neighboring states.

**LOIS JEANNE SMITH MERRITT**, 92, of Huntington, died on August 7, 2025. She was a member of New Baptist Church, where she taught Sunday School, was a member of the choir, served as an AWANA helper, church clerk, librarian and director of the church's Home Ministry Program. She was also active in the Guyandotte Baptist Association and served as secretary of the West Virginia Baptist Convention for 19 years.

**ADELIN PRICE**, 87, of Buckhannon, died on August 16, 2025. She was a member of Buckhannon First Baptist Church, where she taught Sunday School and served as president of the American Baptist Women's Ministries for both the church and the Broad Run Association.

**LULA GAY SALYER**, 87, of Foster, died on August 19, 2025. She was a member of Madison Baptist Church, where she served as the secretary for the New Fellowship Sunday School, volunteered in the nursery and was part of several other committees.

**BONITA L. “BONNIE” SHEPPARD**, 78, of Cottageville, died on July 5, 2025. She was a charter member of Parchment Valley Baptist Church, where she served as a treasurer, Sunday School teacher and organist. She was a current member of the Hopewell Baptist Church in Mt. Alto.

### Leadership Updates

**CLAYTON LAGASSE** to Welcome Baptist Church (Judson Association) as pastor 7/1/2025

**TIMOTHY BROWN** to Philippi Baptist Church (Union Association) as pastor 7/27/2025

**ALLEN BURNSWORTH** to Valley Bend Baptist Church (Union Association) as pastor 8/15/2025

**JONATHAN BROOKS** to Mount Vernon Baptist Church (Teays Valley Association) as pastor 8/24/2025

## MINISTRY EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to the work our Area Ministers do to help churches fill ministry positions, we also created a job posting page on our website to help further advertise those positions. All postings are generic in location to allow our staff to properly vet applicants before referring them to our churches.

**Youth Pastor (Part-Time)**  
Location: Parkersburg area

**Pastor (Part-Time)**  
Location: Parkersburg area

**Pastor (Part-Time)**  
Location: Bridgeport 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 Ministries (Part-Time)**  
Location: Huntington area

**Lead Pastor (Full-Time)**  
Location: Princeton area

**Associate Pastor for Families (Part-Time)**  
Location: Charleston area

**Director of Music (Part-Time)**  
Location: Beckley area

**Youth Director (Part-Time)**  
Location: Marion County

**Senior Pastor (Full-Time)**  
Location: Boone County

To learn more about any of the above positions, visit: [wvbc.org](http://wvbc.org)

# Prayer Calendars

## October 2025

**OCTOBER 1** – Tracie Emerick, WVBC Outreach administrative assistant  
**OCTOBER 2** – The ministry of Sutton Baptist Church; Eric Thomas, pastor (Elk Valley Association)  
**OCTOBER 3** – Deborah Myers, International Ministries Global Servant to Mexico  
**OCTOBER 4** – The WVBC Executive Board/Commissions Meetings happening today at Parchment Valley  
**OCTOBER 5** – The ministry of Marmet First Baptist Church; Tom Burnside, pastor (Kanawha Valley Association)  
**OCTOBER 6** – The ministry of Send the Light Baptist Fellowship; Jim Anderson, president (Greenbrier-Raleigh Association)  
**OCTOBER 7** – The ministry of Connolly Memorial Baptist Church; Ezekiel Stepp, pastor (Logan-Mingo Association)  
**OCTOBER 8** – Patti Long, International Ministries Global Servant to Mexico  
**OCTOBER 9** – The ministry of Weirton First Baptist Church (Panhandle Association)  
**OCTOBER 10** – The ministry of The Anchor Bible Church; Lance Linden, pastor (Little Kanawha Association)  
**OCTOBER 11** – Trent Eastman, member of the WVBC Leadership Commission  
**OCTOBER 12** – Jonathan Nambu, International Ministries Global Servant to the Philippines  
**OCTOBER 13** – Kihomi Ngwemi, International Ministries Global Servant to the Dominican Republic and Haiti  
**OCTOBER 14** – The ministry of Minden Missionary Baptist Church; Ronald Richards, pastor (Fayette Association)  
**OCTOBER 15** – Jon Good, International Ministries Global Servant to Europe  
**OCTOBER 16** – The WVBC Annual Meeting beginning today at Emmanuel Baptist Church, Charleston  
**OCTOBER 17** – Nelson Fisher, Site Maintenance Manager at Parchment Valley Conference Center  
**OCTOBER 18** – The ministry of Olive Baptist Church; Josh Clay, pastor (Coal River Association)  
**OCTOBER 19** – The ministry of Masontown First Baptist Church; William Winston, pastor (Goshen Association)  
**OCTOBER 20** – Brenda Fisher, member of the WVBC Discipleship Commission  
**OCTOBER 21** – The ministry of Mount Vernon Baptist Church; Roger Fontaine, pastor (Broad Run Association)  
**OCTOBER 22** – The ministry of Gilboa Baptist Church; Larry Greathouse, pastor (Good Hope Association)  
**OCTOBER 23** – The ministry of Olive Branch Baptist Church; Stuart Stover, pastor (Hopewell Association)  
**OCTOBER 24** – The ministry of Harmony Baptist Church; Gary Crislip, pastor (Eastern Association)  
**OCTOBER 25** – John Vannoy, member of the WVBC Outreach Commission  
**OCTOBER 26** – The ministry of Strait Creek Baptist Church (Harrisville Association)  
**OCTOBER 27** – Jonathan Villers, Southeast Area Minister, WVBC  
**OCTOBER 28** – The ministry of Boothsville Baptist Church; Orville Wright, pastor (Fairmont Association)  
**OCTOBER 29** – The ministry of Portersville Baptist Church; Harry Moore, pastor (Guyandotte Association)  
**OCTOBER 30** – Don Stennett, WVBC trustee and member of the WVBC Stewardship Commission  
**OCTOBER 31** – The ministry of Reynoldsville Baptist Church; Jon Hayes, pastor (Judson Association)

## November 2025

**NOVEMBER 1** – The Fall Children’s Rally happening today at Parchment Valley  
**NOVEMBER 2** – The ministry of Union Baptist Church of Crossroads; Jacob Thompson, pastor (Fairmont Association)  
**NOVEMBER 3** – The ministry of Cook Memorial Baptist Church; William “Chuck” Cook, pastor (Rockcastle Association)  
**NOVEMBER 4** – Sandy Foster, chair of the WVBC Discipleship Commission  
**NOVEMBER 5** – The ministry of Goshen Baptist Church; Dan Meadows, pastor (Goshen Association)  
**NOVEMBER 6** – Mike Akers, member of the WVBC Outreach Commission  
**NOVEMBER 7** – The ministry of Williamson First Baptist Church; Jarrod Belcher, pastor (Logan-Mingo Association)  
**NOVEMBER 8** – The ministry of Good Hope Baptist Church; Chad Clark, pastor (Guyandotte Association)  
**NOVEMBER 9** – The ministry of Old Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church; Scott Riffle, pastor (Twelve Pole Association)  
**NOVEMBER 10** – Kit Ripley, International Ministries Global Servant to Thailand  
**NOVEMBER 11** – The ministry of Richwood First Baptist Church; Gary Carpenter, pastor (Hopewell Association)  
**NOVEMBER 12** – David Hoge, WVBC secretary and member of the WVBC Stewardship Commission  
**NOVEMBER 13** – The ministry of Rock Grove Baptist Church; Douglas Moss, pastor (Broad Run Association)  
**NOVEMBER 14** – The Senior High Convention beginning today at Saint Albans First Baptist Church  
**NOVEMBER 15** – The ministry of Mount Zion Baptist Church; Mary Beth McCloy, pastor (Parkersburg Association)  
**NOVEMBER 16** – Michael Cornell, first vice president of the WVBC and member of the WVBC Leadership Commission  
**NOVEMBER 17** – The ministry of Milhoan Ridge Baptist Church; Lester Morgan, pastor (Good Hope Association)  
**NOVEMBER 18** – The ministry of Nitro First Baptist Church; Michael Perry, pastor (Teays Valley Association)  
**NOVEMBER 19** – The ministry of Fayetteville Baptist Church; Andrew Kiddle, pastor (Fayette Association)  
**NOVEMBER 20** – The ministry of Old Greenbrier Baptist Church; Derek Hall, pastor (Greenbrier-Raleigh Association)  
**NOVEMBER 21** – The ministry of Middleville Baptist Church; Paul Boyles, pastor (Union Association)  
**NOVEMBER 22** – Jill Narraway, WVBC Director of Youth and Camping  
**NOVEMBER 23** – The ministry of Eskdale Baptist Church (Kanawha Valley Association)  
**NOVEMBER 24** – Joel Hoefle-Magal, International Ministries Global Servant to Thailand  
**NOVEMBER 25** – The ministry of Long Run Baptist Church; Robey Godfrey, pastor (Elk Valley Association)  
**NOVEMBER 26** – Alemia Ao, International Ministries Global Servant to India  
**NOVEMBER 27** – Count your blessings...name them one by one!  
**NOVEMBER 28** – The ministry of Marshville Baptist Church; John Mark Camenga, pastor (Judson Association)  
**NOVEMBER 29** – Christina Muteyo, International Ministries Global Servant to Zimbabwe  
**NOVEMBER 30** – Teresa Miller, WVBC Office Manager

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

## Upcoming Events

### 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
- November 7-8**  
**AB Women's Ministries Board Meeting**  
Parchment Valley Conference Center
- November 14-16**  
**Senior High Convention**  
Saint Albans First Baptist Church
- November 15**  
**Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Teacher Training (M-03)**  
Online
- November 15**  
**Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Baptism & Communion (E-06)**  
Online

## Newsletter Submissions

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

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

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# mountain state MISSION OFFERING

DOING CHRIST'S WORK *together*

All of the ministries mentioned in this newsletter are financially supported by the **Mountain State Mission Offering**.

As a church, would you prioritize this offering? Promotional resources can be found at [MountainStateMissionOffering.org](http://MountainStateMissionOffering.org).

You can also support this offering as an individual by becoming a "Rope Holder." Rope Holders commit to \$20 (or more) per month. You can start your recurring gift at [wvbc.org](http://wvbc.org) or by scanning the QR code.



If you have questions about how to maximize your gift to the ministries you care about most, contact Todd McClure at [todd@wvbc.org](mailto:todd@wvbc.org).

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