

# The West Virginia Baptist Newsletter

June—July 2026

## It's So Good to Be With Family!



After a snowstorm forced the cancellation of this year's **Annual Training Event** (traditionally held on the first Saturday of February) there were numerous requests to reschedule. Each year, the Annual Training Event is one of our most well-attended gatherings, offering participants the opportunity to choose from a wide variety of workshops designed to help them better serve Christ and their local churches. Just as importantly, the event provides a meaningful opportunity for members of our WVBC family to reconnect with one another. Many participants arrive early and stay late simply to spend time catching up with friends from around the state.

After working with Parchment Valley Conference Center to find an available Saturday in their busy schedule, the event was rescheduled for Saturday, May 16.

Ammie Rasmussen, member of Parkersburg First Baptist Church, shared:

"I attend this event each year not only for the workshops, but for the fellowship. It is encouraging to spend time with people who all share the same desire to love God, serve their communities and lead others to Christ.

One of the things I appreciate most is that there is always something new to learn. The workshops are thoughtfully planned and offer practical information that can truly help in the work we do within our churches. Even in sessions covering topics I've heard before, I often leave reminded of something important that I needed to hear again."

Nearly 150 people attended the rescheduled event and selected from 22 different workshops — 11 offered in the morning and 11 in the afternoon. Workshop options included traditional sessions for church officers such as deacons, trustees, clerks, treasurers and financial secretaries, along with several new workshops focused on outreach, youth ministry, women's ministry and more.

Several college students were also in attendance. Baptist Campus Ministry hosted a three-day work party prior to the event, bringing students from both Marshall University and West Virginia University.

Other students, such as Lilly Knight from Fairmont State University, traveled to Parchment Valley just for the day. She commented:

"When I heard there was a workshop being offered on leading a short-term mission trip, I was immediately interested. As someone who has felt an increasing desire for cross-cultural ministry, I've also wanted to help organize mission trips so others can experience that as well. I felt this event created a wonderful opportunity to bring people — young and old — together into a space where we could learn from one another. The insights shared were incredibly beneficial to me. I also loved riding to Parchment Valley with Baillie Myers and having conversations with her about how we can most effectively show others the Kingdom of Christ."

Larry Smith, a member of Parchment Valley Baptist Church, attended workshops on trustees and on effectively communicating across generations. He shared:

"I thought the workshops were great! My only suggestion is that the WVBC offer more of these events so I can attend additional workshops. There were several I wanted to go to, but I could only choose two!"

While this training event is only scheduled once per year, resources are available and can be shared with anyone who was unable to attend. To request resources, contact Todd McClure at [todd@wvbc.org](mailto:todd@wvbc.org).

Mark your calendar for next year's event! Weather permitting, we will be back at Parchment Valley on Saturday, February 6th, 2027.

*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

## What Things?

This year, the WVBC has chosen as our annual theme to focus on the famous words of Baptist Missionary William Carey, “Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God.” This raises the question, “What does it mean to *expect* and *attempt* great things for God”? Attempting great things is not simply asking God to bless our efforts, rather it is aligning our efforts with the plan and will of God. Scripture reminds us often that there are many plans in a person’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails. Even when the Jewish leaders challenged Jesus on His actions, He responded that He was only following His Father’s example (John 5:19). And the apostle Peter reminds us that Jesus left us an example, and we are called to follow in His steps (1 Peter 2:21).

Henry Blackaby in his now classic, *Experiencing God*, challenged readers to “find where God is at work and join Him there.” Theologian Karl Rahner suggests that recognizing and cooperating with God means joining Him where He is already present and active. In other words, mission begins with God’s action, not human initiative.

Thomas Aquinas, friar and theologian, sought to unite contemplation and action under God’s ongoing activity in the world. Aquinas believed joining God in His work meant aligning human reason, love and action with God’s divine providence.

Suffice it to say that any vision of “joining God’s work” risks staying abstract unless it becomes tangible. James, in the second chapter of his letter, illustrates the need to add actions to intent when he asks what the benefit is of simply telling a person without clothes or food that you hope they stay warm and fed, and then do nothing to tangibly help them. James concludes poignantly, “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (James 2:26).

Dutch theologian, Herman Bavinck believed Christians are invited to reflect God’s glory by faithfully living out His purposes in every sphere — science, art, family and society. Christians, he said, “should not retreat from the world but enter into it as instruments of God’s renewing work.” The apostle Paul writes it this way, “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Colossians 3:17).

Perhaps *expecting* and *attempting* “great things” may be less about pursuing impressive achievements and more about costly obedience: restructuring our lives, resources and priorities so that they align with God’s will, His desire and His intent.

What are the things God is calling you to attempt for His glory? Where do you see His hand at work where you can join Him in what He is already doing? Perhaps the great things God wants us to *attempt* can be found where God’s heart for people, our giftedness and resources, and the opportunity to respond comes together.

Blessings,  
Mike



Vol. LXXXII, Issue 04 June-July 2026

## Table of Contents

Mike Sisson: Commentary	2
Golden'eers Recap / Camp Cowen Schedule	3
Tim and Stacy Reese / Camp Global 2026	4
Cuba Mission Trip Recap	5
ABMen’s Work Party Recap	6
ABMen & Boys Camp / ABMen Scholarship	7
A Message to High School Seniors	8
WVBC Annual Meeting 2026 / Association Meeting Schedule	9
Meet the 2026 WVBC Interns	10
Sewing in Faith Update/ Women’s Camp Recap	11
Area Minister News	12-13
Obituaries / Leadership Changes / Ministry Employment Opportunities	14
Prayer Calendars	15
Upcoming Events / Pastors4Pastors Family Picnic	16



One Great Hour  
OF SHARING

Promo materials  
are available at:  
[abc-oghs.org](http://abc-oghs.org)

## Golden'eers: Where Friendships Become Family



Rob Ely leading a Bible study on the book of Mark.

**Golden'eers** is a ministry for adults ages 55 and older that offers two retreats each year — one in the spring and one in the fall. Each retreat features a four-part Bible study, worship services, crafts, recreational activities and opportunities to enjoy the beauty of God's creation at Parchment Valley Conference Center. Originally started by Don Loudermilk in 1981, the ministry has become a cherished tradition for many participants who return year after year to reconnect with friends from across the state.

For Virginia "Jenny" Mullins, Golden'eers is also an opportunity to reconnect with family. Even before turning 55, Jenny accompanied her mother to the retreats as a way to spend time with her aunts, Patty Casto, Margy Stockton, and several others who have passed over the years. Living just outside of Chicago, Jenny still rides the train to West Virginia to continue the tradition. Over the years, the friendships she has formed through Golden'eers have become like family as well, contributing to the warm and welcoming atmosphere that makes the retreat so special.

Margy shared, "I enjoy coming here because sometimes the routine of life can wear you down, leaving you discouraged and exhausted. But when you come to Golden'eers, it's like a shot of adrenaline that restores you. I tell everyone how much I love it and encourage them to come."

While several longtime Golden'eers participants were unable to attend the spring retreat due to illness and other obligations, many first-time guests experienced the ministry for the very first time.

Rob Ely served as the Bible study leader, guiding attendees through a study on Mark 12. Participants also heard from Casey and Shelly Dawson as they shared about work with Kainos International and their ministry in Kenya.

**Whether you have attended Golden'eers before or are considering it for the first time, we invite you to join us for the Fall Golden'eers Conference, scheduled for September 14–16 at Parchment Valley.** Many have described it as a place to rest, a place to reconnect and a place to renew.

To learn more about Golden'eers, contact Koreen Villers at [villers@wvbc.org](mailto:villers@wvbc.org).



(Left to right): Margy Stockton, Jenny Mullins and Patty Casto.

# 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 MIDDLE  
(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 MIDDLE  
(GRADES 3-5)

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

LEARN MORE AT  
[CAMPCOWEN.ORG](http://CAMPCOWEN.ORG)



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

## Tim and Stacy Reese: Joining for This Year's Camp Global

Tim and Stacy Reese are International Ministries (IM) global servants, serving in the Dominican Republic. Their ministry focuses on discipleship and community development through the platform of education. Together, they provide classes in music discipleship, English, Spanish reading and math reinforcement. Alongside their ministry partners, IBAREDO, they host and facilitate these classes with local leaders and volunteers (Haitian and Dominican).

One of the individuals they work with is Mirka, a woman who does evangelism in the schools. Together, they focus on teaching about our identity in Christ. Tim has had the opportunity to pray at these

events, while he and Stacy often get to hang out with the kids for a while afterwards, talking with them about various life matters. This has been one of their many rewarding ministry experiences.

Their family recently completed their first term of service with IM, which included 30 months in the Dominican Republic, 10 months in Mexico for language school and a small gap in the middle while they waited for their Dominican visas. They are now starting their US assignment for one year, where they will be reconnecting with individuals and churches before starting their second term in the Dominican Republic next summer.

**Tim and Stacy were with us at Camp Global in 2023 while they were awaiting their visa, and they will be returning with their family for this summer's Camp Global.**



Tim and Stacy Reese with their three kids.: Liam, Samantha, and Garrett.



FBC Saint Albans Mission Team in the Dominican Republic last summer.

Join us for:

# CAMP GLOBAL

A two-day missions camp for the entire family

August 7-8, 2026 at Camp Cowen

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

A collage of four circular images showing various camp activities: a group of people sitting on a bench outdoors, a group of people participating in a team-building exercise with ropes, a group of people sitting on a wooden deck outdoors, and a group of children sitting around a table indoors.

## Faith Flourishing in Cuba Despite Daily Hardship

*Written by David Hulme,  
Cuba Mission Team Leader*

Even amid ongoing power outages, food shortages and economic uncertainty, our Cuban brothers and sisters continue to live out the words of Paul: “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18a).

From March 13–20, Jim Stinespring, Greg and Melanie Swisher, Brian and Janette Woofter, and I traveled to Cuba for a week of ministry, encouragement and partnership with local churches. It was a safe, productive and deeply meaningful trip as we witnessed firsthand how God continues to work through His people in difficult circumstances.

Below are a few highlights from the churches we visited and the ways your generosity helped meet practical and spiritual needs.

### **Iglesia Bautista “El Jordán” – Havana**

This congregation continues to experience encouraging growth in worship attendance, ministry outreach, baptisms and intentional discipleship.

A particularly meaningful moment came on Sunday, March 15, when Pastor Greg Swisher and Pastor Alexei Vega signed an official sister church agreement between El Jordán and Calvary Baptist Church in Oak Hill. The partnership marks an important step in strengthening the relationship between the two congregations. Calvary becomes only the second West Virginia Baptist Convention church to share this distinction with El Jordán, joining the church in Clarksburg.

### **Iglesia Bautista “Rev. Hierberto Rodriguez” – Ranchuelo**

Pastor Tomás recently celebrated his 80th birthday and has faithfully served in ministry for 60 years.

The church gathers in the pastor’s apartment and carries a warm “Acts 2” spirit of fellowship and care. Along with meeting spiritual needs, the congregation ministers to practical community needs by sharing food and over-the-counter medications whenever possible.

### **Iglesia Bautista “Remanente Fiel” – Zulueta**

In both setting and atmosphere, this church resembles many small country churches familiar to us in West Virginia.

During our visit, we had the privilege of participating in a baby dedication service — a first for several members of our team. The church’s children’s ministry and deaf ministry continue to impact many families in the surrounding community. Like the other



**(From left to right): Greg and Melanie Swisher, Jim Stinespring, David Hulme, Janette and Brian Woofter.**

congregations we visited, they also share food and basic medical supplies as resources allow.

### **How Your Generosity Helped**

Thanks to the faithful support of individuals and churches, our team was able to assist in several important ways:

- Distributed over-the-counter medications to each church. Every congregation has procedures in place for the oversight, storage and distribution of these supplies.
- Delivered a generous gift that will allow El Jordán to continue and expand its weekly feeding ministry for children and senior adults.
- Helped churches and families navigate frequent power outages by distributing portable generators, solar panels and rechargeable flashlights, while also providing funding in one case for a small whole-house solar system.
- Supplied medical items for diabetics.
- Provided financial assistance for the parents of a newborn with special needs.
- Offered general financial support for pastors, churches, individuals and ministry efforts.

Thank you again for your continued prayers and financial generosity toward ministry efforts in Cuba. Your support is making a tangible difference both spiritually and physically in the lives of many people.

**If you would like to learn more about opportunities to be involved, feel free to contact me at: [dlhministries@usa.com](mailto:dlhministries@usa.com).**



## **Interested in leading a short-term mission trip?**

The WVBC offers a 2-hour training for mission trip leaders to help you organize, prepare and lead a successful trip. This training is offered every year at the Annual Training Event and is also offered upon request by contacting Todd McClure at [todd@wvbc.org](mailto:todd@wvbc.org).

# American Baptist Men of WV

## Serving Together to Prepare for Summer Ministry

Every spring, the **American Baptist Men of WV** organize work parties at both Parchment Valley Conference Center and Camp Cowen to help prepare the facilities for a busy summer of camps and ministry. Alongside them, local scouting groups and other volunteers give countless hours of service to improve the grounds and facilities that so many churches and families enjoy each year.

These volunteers are an important part of the ministry we do together as a WVBC family.

This year at Parchment Valley, the men were joined by Troop 86 and later by the WV Christian Bowhunters group. Together, the volunteers contributed more than 140 hours of trail work and over 60 hours splitting wood and clearing fallen trees. Additional projects included:

- Restoring the logo on the welcome sign
- Beginning installation of the new playground (funded by WV American Baptist Women's Ministries)
- Repairing and restoring several lodge decks

Their efforts helped improve both the appearance and functionality of the camp as it prepares to welcome guests throughout the summer season.

At Camp Cowen, 30 men participated in the work weekend, assisting with a wide range of projects across the camp. Projects included:

- Fence construction
- Weed eating and grounds maintenance
- Pressure washing
- Wood splitting
- Framing walls and hanging sheeting
- Electrical work (completed by a volunteer electrician)

In addition, 75 volunteers from Trail Life came on Saturday to work trail maintenance throughout the property.

The work completed during these weekends represents far more than maintenance projects. Each repaired deck, cleared trail and completed building project helps create spaces where youth and families can meet Jesus and grow in their faith.

As you visit Parchment Valley or Camp Cowen this summer, take time to notice the improvements and thank the many volunteers whose service helped make them possible.



Beginning construction of the new playground at Parchment Valley.



Pressure washing the GaGa Ball pit at Camp Cowen.



Splitting wood to prepare for campfires at Camp Cowen.

# AB Men & Boys Camp

JULY 31 - AUGUST 2, 2026

CAMP COWEN

2026 THEME:

## Lessons in Fellowship



To learn more, visit:

[CAMPCOWEN.ORG/AB-MEN-BOYS-CAMP](http://CAMPCOWEN.ORG/AB-MEN-BOYS-CAMP)

or scan the QR code 



With program questions, contact Jim Mitchell at [jmitch6000@gmail.com](mailto:jmitch6000@gmail.com)

**ABMen** 

## SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

FOR MALE, HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES  
WHO ARE ACTIVE MEMBERS OF A  
WVBC CHURCH

APPLICATION DEADLINE: **JULY 31, 2026**

**LEARN MORE OR  
APPLY AT [WVBC.ORG](http://WVBC.ORG)**



## A Message to High School Seniors

Originally shared by Haleigh Muncy during  
Marshall BCM's High School Night

### The "Season of Shift"

Right now, you are in the middle of one of the biggest transitions of your life. Everyone is asking you "What's next?" But very few people ask "Who will you be with?" In high school, your community is often handed to you—by your zip code, your sports team or your seating chart. But in college, community is a choice. If you don't intentionally choose a godly community, you'll accidentally drift into whatever is closest.

### Why a Godly Community Matters

*The Proximity Effect:* states that you become like the five people you spend the most time with. If those people aren't running toward Christ, it becomes much harder for you to keep your pace.

College brings "the firsts"—the first time you are truly responsible for your schedule, your values and your faith. A godly community acts as a mirror to remind you of who you are when things get blurry. Ecclesiastes 4:12 says: "Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken."

### Finding Your Home at BCM

This is where Baptist Campus Ministry (BCM) comes in. It isn't just another club on campus; it's a family. It's a place where you can show up exactly as you are—stressed, questioning or excited—and find people who will walk with you. Through small groups and weekly gatherings, BCM provides the rhythm you need to keep your faith from becoming a "Sunday-only" thing.

### My Own Personal Story

When I first started college, I quickly realized that my faith had to finally become my own. In high school, it was easy to coast on the "fire" of my parents or my youth group, but stepping onto campus changed that. Finding a community like BCM forced me to look in the mirror and ask, "Who am I when no one is watching?" That honesty led me into a much deeper, more personal relationship with God than I ever had before.



Haleigh graduated this spring from Marshall University.

I have learned that while the "highs" of mountain-top experiences—like summer camps or retreats—are incredible, I actually grow the most during the "lows" of a random Tuesday in November. Having a godly community around me has been vital. Even on the days I didn't feel like praying or showing up, I had people in my corner encouraging me to keep going and to stay consistent.

College comes with so much pressure to be perfect, whether it's academically, socially or professionally. My community provided a rare space where I didn't feel like I had to "perform." Growing in my faith meant realizing that God's grace is sufficient, and having friends who reminded me of that truth whenever I felt overwhelmed was a total game-changer for my mental and spiritual health.

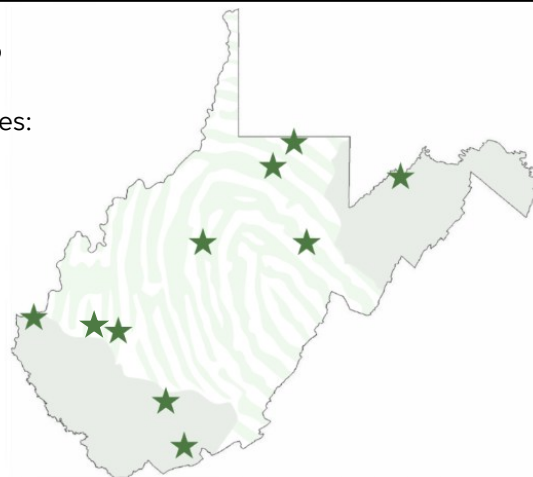
And my growth hasn't just been internal. As I've drawn closer to God through this community, it has completely shifted how I view my campus and my future. It turned my daily "to-do list" into a genuine calling. My life feels so much more purposeful now because I know I'm walking out my faith supported by a family of believers.

## Looking for a school with BCM?

Baptist Campus Ministry (BCM) currently exists on the following campuses:

- Concord University
- Davis & Elkins College
- Fairmont State University
- Glenville State University
- Marshall University
- Potomac State College
- University of Charleston
- West Virginia State University
- West Virginia University
- WVU Institute of Technology

Learn more at [wvbcm.com](http://wvbcm.com).





# The 161st ANNUAL MEETING

*of our WVBC family*

October 15-16, 2026

**New Baptist Church**  
610 28th St, Huntington, WV

“Expect great things from God.  
Attempt great things for God.”

New Baptist Church



For more information, call: **304-422-6449** or visit our website: **www.wvbc.org**

## 2026 Association Meeting Schedule

**Rockcastle Association**

Thursday, July 30 at 4:30 PM  
Crary Baptist Church

**Good Hope Association**

Sunday, August 16 at 1 PM  
Spencer First Baptist Church

**Twelve Pole Association**

Saturday, September 19 at 9:45 AM  
Cyrus Baptist Church

**Fayette Association**

Sunday, August 2 at 2:30 PM  
Fayetteville Baptist Church

**Elk Valley Association**

Saturday, August 22 at 8:30 AM  
Hope Baptist Church

**Union Association**

Sunday, September 20 at 2:30 PM  
Philippi Baptist Church

**Broad Run Association**

Sunday, August 2 at 3 PM  
Fisher Baptist Camp

**Eastern Association**

Sunday, August 23 at 3 PM  
Bethel Baptist Church

**Panhandle Association**

Sunday, September 20 at 4 PM  
New Martinsville First Baptist Church

**Harrisville Association**

Tuesday, August 4 at 9:30 AM  
Auburn Baptist Church

**Kanawha Valley Association**

Friday, September 11 at 5:30 PM  
Dunbar First Baptist Church

**Guyandotte Association**

Thursday, September 24 at 5:30 PM  
Camp Ona

**Greenbrier-Raleigh Association**

Tuesday, August 4 at 4:30 PM  
Fairview Baptist Church

**Fairmont Association**

Sunday, September 13 at 3 PM  
Fairmont Baptist Temple

**Coal River Association**

Saturday, September 26 at 9:30 AM  
Olive Missionary Baptist Church

**Little Kanawha Association**

Thursday, August 6 at 5 PM  
Rush Run Baptist Church

**Parkersburg Association**

Tuesday, September 15 at 4:30 PM  
New Hope Baptist Church

**Judson Association**

Sunday, September 27 at 4:30 PM  
Sardis Baptist Church

**Teays Valley Association**

Thursday, August 13 at 5:30 PM  
Hurricane First Baptist Church

**Hopewell Association**

Wednesday, September 16 at 4:30 PM  
Quinwood First Baptist Church

**Logan-Mingo Association**

Sunday, September 27 at 3:30 PM  
Mallory or Logan First Baptist Church

No details are currently available for the Goshen association.

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

## Meet the 2026 WVBC Interns



### Laura Gatewood

Laura is a religious studies and psychology student at West Virginia Wesleyan College. She is interning this summer at her home church, Fifth Avenue Baptist Church, assisting with the children's and youth ministries. She is also being mentored this summer by the church's Associate Children's Pastor.

### Lilly Knight

Lilly is an elementary education student at Fairmont State University. She is also involved with Fairmont State's BCM. She is a member of Clarksburg Baptist Church, where she volunteers with kids and youth ministry. She is interning this summer at Clarksburg Baptist, assisting with the kids and youth.



### Claire Londeree

Claire is a sophomore at Marshall University, where she majors in Advertising and Public Relations. She serves on both the worship team and leadership team for Marshall's BCM. She is interning this summer at her home church, Pea Ridge Baptist Church, assisting with communication and other ministries.



### Abby Lucas

Abby is an Elementary Education major at Marshall University, where she serves on the BCM leadership team as the Vice President. She has previously served as part of the YLC, YMPT and Camp Cowen Summer Staff. She is interning this summer at her home church, Summersville Baptist Church.



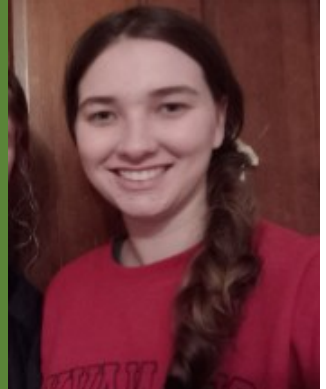
### Caleb McGrath

Caleb is a 2025 graduate of the Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies. He is a member of Pine Grove Baptist Church, where he is interning this summer. He will be preaching several times, assisting with visitation and learning other areas of pastoral ministry. He will also be helping develop outreach opportunities.



### Maylena Munson

Maylena is an elementary education student at Kentucky Mountain Bible College. She wants to teach children about Christ and Christian morals. She is interning at Pine Grove Baptist Church this summer, assisting with children's ministry. She will help plan VBS and also assist some with the youth ministry.



The WVBC's **Ministry Internship Program** provides individuals 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 the guidance of a mentor for a summer-long internship. Internship opportunities are customizable to the interests of the applicant, but include pastoral ministry, youth ministry, worship ministry, technology or intercultural ministry.

Since launching this ministry in 2019, we have had 57 interns serve within our family of churches. Several of these initial interns are continuing to serve within our churches or overseas as international missionaries. This program has proven to be an important tool in identifying, developing and placing young leaders across our state.

Please join us in prayer for these interns this summer, asking God to work both in and through these individuals.

## Interested in Hosting an Intern in 2027?

Is your church interested in hosting an intern next year? While the deadline for this year has already passed, we would love to talk with you about plans for 2027!

Typical internships are in the following areas: pastoral ministry, youth ministry, young adult ministry, children's ministry, worship or tech/communication/sound. As a church, we ask that you provide a job description and a mentor who can oversee the intern for the summer.

The expected compensation for the internship is \$2500 total (\$250 per week for 10 weeks). The WVBC has some limited funds to assist churches unable to pay the full amount.

If interested in learning more, you can contact Mark McCloy at [mccloy@wvbc.org](mailto:mccloy@wvbc.org).

## Celebrating the First Graduates from the Sewing Faith Project



Shelly and Boaz with the first six graduates of the program.

In April, Shelly Dawson returned to Kenya to celebrate the first graduates from the Sewing Faith in Tribal Cultures project, funded by the ABW Ministries of WV (ABWM).

The ABWM selected the sewing project as last year's Mission Outreach Project. Nearly doubling their fundraising goal, the

ABWM enabled the team to purchase 15 Singer sewing machines which they delivered during their January trip to Kenya. One of the purposes of that initial trip was to officially launch the new sewing ministry.

After completing their three months of training from a qualified government sewing instructor, Shelly returned to lead the first-ever ceremony for the six new graduates.

Shelly said of the graduation,

"The ceremony was deeply moving. The women expressed their deep gratitude to everyone who supported this program from both the ABWM and the WVBC. It was amazing to watch these ladies – some of whom have never received any type of certificate or diploma – get to have that moment in their life. It was sheer joy!"

This was the first of what is sure to be many graduations. This program was organized by Kainos Ministries, who works in cooperation with Boaz Keibarak, an international associate global servant with International Ministries.

**To learn more about Kainos Ministries, be sure to attend Camp Global! You can also learn more on their website: [kainosim.org](http://kainosim.org).**

## Over 200 Women Join for the 10th Annual Women's Camp

*Written by Maci Villers  
Director of Women's Camp*

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

On April 17-19, 224 women joined together at Camp Cowen for the 10th annual **Women's Camp!**

Women's Camp has prayerfully been a time for women ages 18-90+ from all around the state to come together, lay down the many plates they balance and rest in their relationship with Christ. Our packed weekend included three scripture-filled worship sessions, small-group guides to unpack each session together, several interest groups on Saturday afternoon and plenty of free time for fellowship. We are grateful for the many volunteers who use their gifts and talents to lead interest groups each year.

We spent the weekend in worship led by Lydia Nutter (and band), while Olivia Tunnell brought the Word during our morning sessions and Rev. Eli Withers guided us in an interactive message for Vespers on Saturday evening. You may know Olivia (Miller) Tunnell, who is originally from Parkersburg. She watched her parents (Frank and Teresa Miller) faithfully serve in ministry her entire life - inspiring her devotion to the Lord. Eli also has WV roots originating in Huntington, where her family still resides.

We were thrilled to host ladies from Summersville Baptist Church to share about Ryan's Case for Smiles. This organization cuts, pins, irons, sews, launders, packages and delivers handmade, fun pillowcases to four different hospitals in WV that care for children.



Enjoying a time of worship in Hylbert Hall.

Kasey Stevens closed out our session with a regional-based workshop pinpointing areas of need in our specific communities and providing tools to work toward solutions that we, as the hands and feet of Jesus, can provide by working together.

We ended each evening the Camp Cowen way - gathered around the campfire! Our weekend wouldn't be possible without several WVBC men who cooked, cleaned and served us well all weekend. We are so thankful for them and the hard work they put in all weekend for us!

**We hope you will join us at Women's Camp next year – April 2-4, 2027!**

# Northwest Area News

*by Mark McCloy, Northwest Area Minister*

## *Renewal and New Life in the Northwest*

*"To everything there is a season"*  
- Ecclesiastes 3:2

This is the time of year for renewal and new life, and this Spring did not disappoint. But on top of the physical beauty and change that God has brought to our West Virginia hills, it has also been the time for Spring revival, which has brought new life and excitement to our churches and associations.

The Harrisville Association began with a five-night revival the week before Holy Week. Each night was at a different church and had a different preacher. I was blessed to bring one of the messages, the night we were at South Fork. The Good Hope Association followed with a similar worship experience, which typically begins on the last Sunday night of April. Both events had food provided by the host church each evening, singers provided from a sister church and typically featured packed churches. It certainly is exciting to see our churches packed with their association families!

To top off this exciting time, two individual churches in neighboring associations held revivals at their churches – New England Baptist from the Parkersburg Association and Glenville First Baptist from the Little Kanawha Association. Both churches

experienced exciting, spirit-filled meetings, great music, personal decisions and followed up with baptisms.

A special shoutout also goes to Harrisville Baptist, which has begun construction on a new multipurpose building right next to their current church facility. Each week shows new progress as the workers press on with this project.

Spring association committees are meeting now to prepare for our annual meetings, which occur late summer and early fall. Prayers for them as officers are selected for the new church year.



**Construction begins for Harrisville Baptists' multipurpose building.**

# Northeast Area News

*by Kevin Sions, Northeast Area Minister*



**Pastor Sean Wegener gives the charge for Josh Sowards and David Tate.**

## *Vermont Baptist Hosts Holy Week Revival*

Vermont Baptist Church (Judson) hosted a community revival during Holy Week (March 30-April 3). Several WVBC churches led worship and shared special music. Pastor Clayton Lagasse (Welcome Baptist), Pastor Chad Ash (Vermont Baptist) and Pastor Dwayne Metheny (Liberty Baptist) each preached a sermon during the revival.

## *Two Ordinations at Simpson Creek Baptist*

On April 12, Pastor Josh Sowards and David Tate were both ordained by Simpson Creek Baptist Church (Union). Pastor Sean Wegener gave the charge to the candidates during the worship service.

## *Valley Bend Baptist Held a Three-Day Revival*

Valley Bend Baptist Church (Union) held a three-day revival from April 30-May 2. During each night of the revival, different worship leaders and pastors led the service. Pastor Allen Burnsworth organized the revival.

## *Grafton FBC Hosts Men's Retreat*

Grafton First Baptist Church (Union) hosted a Men's Retreat on Saturday May 2. Over 40 men gathered for worship, community and discipleship. Pastor Ken Heiney taught one of the sessions. The retreat focused on being the men of God in one's family, church and community.

# Southwest Area News

by *Evan Arkell, Southwest Area Minister*

## *Providence Baptist Church Celebrates 150 Years of Ministry*

On Palm Sunday, March 29, 2026, Providence Baptist Church from the Teays Valley Association celebrated 150 years of ministry on Rocky Step Road in Scott Depot. A good crowd was on hand to celebrate the special occasion for the church. Following the Sunday School lesson, lively music was sung and then a few certificates were presented. Gary Higginbotham was in attendance to present a 150-year certificate from the WV Baptist Historical Society, and I had the privilege of presenting a certificate from the WVBC. After the presentation of certificates, a stirring Palm Sunday message was brought by Interim Pastor Keith George. Following the morning worship, a wonderful meal was served for all to enjoy. We then enjoyed a picture slide show and some special singing to bring the festivities to a close.



Rev. Keith George delivers the message at Providence Baptist Church's 150th Anniversary.

# Southeast Area News

by *Jon Villers, Southeast Area Minister*

## *Christ has Risen! He is Risen Indeed!*

The last two months have allowed us to walk through another season of Easter in the Southeast Region. It has been a privilege to see how much our churches highlight this special church season.

The churches in the Rainelle/Quinwood area had quite a schedule leading up to Easter. Starting on the Saturday before Palm Sunday, there were 14 churches that hosted a station around Rainelle, living out a part of Jesus' story leading all the way to the cross and resurrection. Then, from Palm Sunday through Good Friday, the churches gathered each evening at different locations to hold Holy Week services. I had the privilege of speaking on Tuesday night of these services. Many of our Hopewell Association churches participated every night, filling almost every pew! During the day, Rainelle First Baptist also hosted Lenten luncheons, with different churches responsible for the message and the food.



Micah Blanks following his ordination service.

## *Charleston Baptist Temple Ordains Interim Pastor Micah Blanks*

After Micah Blanks met with the Kanawha Valley Association's Ordination Committee, it was voted unanimously for the church to move forward and invite the Ordination Council to convene at the church. On Sunday, April 19th, the KVA Ordination Council met to hear Micah present and defend his ordination paper. Several of the KVA churches were on hand to represent the Council. Following the presentation of the paper, after Micah was asked to step out of the sanctuary, a brief discussion was had and then the Council voted unanimously for Charleston Baptist Temple to move forward with Micah's ordination service. On Sunday, May 3, Micah's ordination was celebrated with a thoughtfully laid out service. A beautiful reception was held at the church following the service.

There is something special that is happening as the pastors of the different local churches in that area are realizing they can do more together than they can apart!

There are so many other examples of services in my area that were specially planned around Easter to proclaim the Good News of Jesus! I am so thankful for the soul-winning stations in the southeast region who continue to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel!



Tuesday night of the Holy Week services, Orient Hill Tabernacle was packed!

**ANNETTE LOUISE CUNNINGHAM JAMES**, 88, of Charleston, died on March 7, 2026. She was a member of Charleston Baptist Temple.

**MARGARET A. "PEGGY" KENNEY**, 72, of Rainelle, died on April 13, 2026. She was a member of McRoss Baptist Church, where her husband serves as pastor.

**JOAN MCHENRY**, 88, of Smithville, died on February 7, 2026. She was a member of Smithville Baptist Church, where she served as a Sunday School teacher, clerk and treasurer.

**GLORIA DOTSON PRICE**, 100, of Williamson, died on April 10, 2026. She was a member of Williamson First Baptist Church, where she founded several ministries, taught an exercise class for older members and also actively supported mission work. She was also president of the ABWM for the Logan-Mingo Association.

**GARY WAYNE RAY**, 76, of Oak Hill, died on March 12, 2026. He was a member of Calvary Baptist Church.

**CONNIE FAY TURLEY**, 76, of Handley, died on April 20, 2026. She was a member of Handley Baptist Church, where she served as a Sunday School teacher and president of the ABWM.

### Leadership Updates

**Micah Blanks** to Charleston Baptist Temple (Kanawha Valley Association) as interim pastor 3/15/2026

**Joshua Cox** to Gilboa Baptist Church (Good Hope Association) as pastor 3/26/2026

**Davin George** to Sunrise Baptist Church (Parkersburg Association) as youth pastor 4/1/2026

**Jack Eades** to Emmanuel Baptist Church (Parkersburg Association) as interim pastor 4/1/2026

**Terry Golden** to First Baptist Church of Rainelle (Hopewell Association) as pastor 4/12/2026

**Justin Blankenship** to New Hope Baptist Church (Parkersburg Association) as student pastor 4/14/2026

**Ethan Tawney** to New Hope Baptist Church (Parkersburg Association) as young adult pastor 4/14/2026

**Shelly Dawson** to Goose Creek Baptist Church (Harrisville Association) as interim pastor 5/1/2026

**Frazier McGuire** to Emmanuel Baptist Church (Rockcastle Association) as pastor 5/16/2026

## MINISTRY EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

**Middle and High School Ministries Coordinator (Part-Time)**  
Location: Morgantown Area

**Associate Pastor of Youth and Family (Full-Time)**  
Location: Hurricane Area

**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

**Student Pastor (Full-Time)**  
Location: Parkersburg area

**Senior Pastor (Full-Time)**  
Location: Parkersburg area

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

**Pianist (Part-Time)**  
Location: Barrackville 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

**Youth Pastor (Part-Time)**  
Location: Ravenswood Area

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

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

# Prayer Calendars

## June 2026

**JUNE 1** – Sarah McCloy, International Ministries Global Servant to Japan  
**JUNE 2** – Waleska Febres, International Ministries Global Servant to Colombia  
**JUNE 3** – The ministry of Oak Hill Baptist Church; Samuel Blaylock, pastor (Fayette Association)  
**JUNE 4** – Trish Magal, International Ministries Global Servant to Thailand  
**JUNE 5** – Younger Middler Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen  
**JUNE 6** – Jon Hayes, member of the WVBC Outreach Commission  
**JUNE 7** – Junior High 1 Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen  
**JUNE 8** – Philip Smith, International Ministries Global Servant to Brazil  
**JUNE 9** – Dilla Zelaya, International Ministries Global Servant to Honduras  
**JUNE 10** – The ministry of Zoar Baptist Church (Guyandotte Association)  
**JUNE 11** – Brian Woofert, member of the WVBC Leadership Commission  
**JUNE 12** – The ministry of Breckenridge Baptist Church; Corey Brooks, pastor (Greenbrier-Raleigh Association)  
**JUNE 13** – The Pastors4Pastors Family Picnic happening today at Parchment Valley  
**JUNE 14** – Junior 1 Camp happening this week at Camp Cowen  
**JUNE 15** – Vital Pierre, International Ministries Global Servant to the Dominican Republic  
**JUNE 16** – The ministry of Pleasant Dale Baptist Church; Wayne Litton, pastor (Elk Valley Association)  
**JUNE 17** – Daniel Harbaugh, member of the WVBC Stewardship Commission  
**JUNE 18** – Jeff Dieselberg, International Ministries Global Servant to Thailand  
**JUNE 19** – The ministry of Ten Mile Baptist Church; Bradley Lane Tenney, pastor (Broad Run Association)  
**JUNE 20** – Senior Day happening today at Camp Cowen  
**JUNE 21** – High School 1 Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen  
**JUNE 22** – Brothers' Keeper happening this week at Parchment Valley  
**JUNE 23** – The ministry of Petersburg First Baptist Church; Shannon Earle, pastor (Eastern Association)  
**JUNE 24** – Jeanine White, International Ministries Global Servant  
**JUNE 25** – The ministry of Sunday Road Baptist Church; Greg Smith, pastor (Hopewell Association)  
**JUNE 26** – The ministry of Grass Lick Baptist Church; Brandon Deskins, Pastor (Good Hope Association)  
**JUNE 27** – The ministry of Goose Creek Baptist Church (Harrisville Association)  
**JUNE 28** – Junior 2 Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen  
**JUNE 29** – The ministry of Union Valley Baptist Church; Bill Lewis, pastor (Fairmont Association)  
**JUNE 30** – Caleb Villers, chair of the Camp Cowen Board and member of the WVBC Discipleship Commission

## July 2026

**JULY 1** – The ministry of Judson Baptist Church; Sam Gasaway, pastor (Teays Valley Association)  
**JULY 2** – The ministry of Sago Baptist Church; Wease Day, pastor (Broad Run Association)  
**JULY 3** – Eric Lembke, International Ministries Global Servant to Thailand  
**JULY 4** – Theresa Truax, member of the WVBC Outreach Commission  
**JULY 5** – Junior High 2 Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen  
**JULY 6** – The ministry of Stump Chapel Baptist Church; Teddy Legg, pastor (Elk Valley Association)  
**JULY 7** – The ministry of Madison Baptist Church; William Cook, interim pastor (Coal River Association)  
**JULY 8** – Tim Rice, International Ministries Global Servant to the Democratic Republic of the Congo  
**JULY 9** – Karla Carr, chair of the WVBC Leadership Commission  
**JULY 10** – The ministry of Nutter Fort First Baptist Church; Ronald Owens, pastor (Judson Association)  
**JULY 11** – The ministry of Scott Street Baptist Church; Garry Moore Sr., pastor (Greenbrier-Raleigh Association)  
**JULY 12** – High School 2 Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen  
**JULY 13** – The ministry of Pine Grove First Baptist Church; Jerry Kuhens Jr., pastor (Panhandle Association)  
**JULY 14** – Yuree Lembke, International Ministries Global Servant to Thailand  
**JULY 15** – The ministry of Gauley Bridge Baptist Church; Raymond Butcher, pastor (Kanawha Valley Association)  
**JULY 16** – The ministry of Springdale First Baptist Church; Gary McClung, pastor (Hopewell Association)  
**JULY 17** – The ministry of Panther Baptist Church (Rockcastle Association)  
**JULY 18** – Katrina Williams, International Ministries Global Servant to Southeast Asia  
**JULY 19** – Caleb Baisden, member of the WVBC Discipleship Commission  
**JULY 20** – Tim Reese, International Ministries Global Servant to the Dominican Republic  
**JULY 21** – Larry Stanton, International Ministries Global Servant to Hungary  
**JULY 22** – The ministry of Elkins First Baptist Church; Brett Rinehart, pastor (Union Association)  
**JULY 23** – Don Stennett, member of the WVBC Stewardship Commission  
**JULY 24** – Family Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen  
**JULY 25** – The ministry of Mallory Baptist Church (Logan-Mingo Association)  
**JULY 26** – The ministry of Murphytown Baptist Church; Jason Hickman, pastor (Parkersburg Association)  
**JULY 27** – The ministry of Leading Creek Baptist Church (Little Kanawha Association)  
**JULY 28** – Older Middler Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen  
**JULY 29** – The ministry of Kenova First Baptist Church; Chris Baker, pastor (Twelve Pole Association)  
**JULY 30** – Rockcastle Association as they celebrate their annual meeting  
**JULY 31** – Rob Ely, director of Student Ministries, West Virginia Baptist Convention

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

## Upcoming Events

### JUNE

**June 5-7**  
**Younger Middler Camp (Grades 2-4)**  
 Camp Cowen

**June 6**  
**ABWM Annual Conference**  
 Parchment Valley Conference Center

**June 7-13**  
**Junior High 1 Camp (Grades 7-9)**  
 Camp Cowen

**June 13**  
**Pastors4Pastors Family Picnic**  
 Parchment Valley Conference Center

**June 14-20**  
**Junior 1 Camp (Grades 5-6)**  
 Camp Cowen

**June 20**  
**Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Community Ministry (Mod-5)**  
 Parchment Valley Conference Center

**June 21-26**  
**Brothers' Keeper**  
 Parchment Valley Conference Center

**June 21-27**  
**High School 1 Camp (Grades 9-12)**  
 Camp Cowen

**June 28-July 4**  
**Junior 2 Camp (Grades 5-6)**  
 Camp Cowen

### JULY

**July 5-11**  
**Junior High 2 Camp (Grades 7-9)**  
 Camp Cowen

**July 12-18**  
**High School 2 Camp (Grades 9-12)**  
 Camp Cowen

**July 15**  
**Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Old Testament I (B-01)**  
 Online

**July 15**  
**Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Making Peace (Mod-04)**  
 Online

**July 19-23**  
**Southeast Association Camp**  
 Camp Cowen

**July 24-27**  
**Family Camp (All Ages)**  
 Camp Cowen

**July 28-31**  
**Older Middler Camp (Grades 3-5)**  
 Camp Cowen

**July 31-August 2**  
**AB Men & Boy's Camp**  
 Camp Cowen

## Newsletter Submissions

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

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

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

PO Box 1019, Parkersburg, WV 26102;  
 304-422-6449, US Postage Paid at  
**Parkersburg, West Virginia**

**Executive Minister:** Dr. Michael Sisson

**Editor/Layout:** Mr. Todd McClure

**Assistant Editor:** Mr. Daniel McCloy

West Virginia Baptist Convention  
 P.O. Box 1019  
 Parkersburg, WV 26102-1019

PASTORS4PASTORS  
 INVITES YOU TO THE  
**Family Picnic**  
 AT PARCHMENT VALLEY  
 Saturday, June 13th  
 12pm- Shelter #1  
**Learn more at [wvbc.org](http://wvbc.org)**

Non-Profit  
 Organization  
 U.S. Postage  
 PAID  
 Permitting No. 36  
 Parkersburg, WV