

Experiencing the Overflow at Camp Cowen



Throughout the summer at **Camp Cowen**, students have been studying Ephesians 3:20-21: *“Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen.”*

Packaged into the theme “Overflow,” each camp is responsible for helping make that verse understandable, memorable and applicable to the age groups they serve. It is always fun to see how each camp uniquely approaches that task.

Lee Boso, the Family Life Pastor at New Baptist Church and the director for High School 1 Camp, shared, “When our camp leadership team first read that verse at the beginning of the year, little did we know how applicable it would become to our lives. Through weddings, medical scares, frequent ‘coincidences’ and miraculous provisions, just within our leadership team alone, God has done immeasurably more than all we could ask or imagine.”

During the week leading up to High School 1 camp, God was still teaching Lee that lesson. “While it’s a good problem to have, the camper numbers continued to climb. But that also meant we needed more counselors. Our team reached out to several former counselors, and there were also several individuals who reached out to us, telling us their schedule had changed and they were now free to help if we needed them. We of course invited them and put them to work. It was amazing how many schedules freed up just in time to help us at camp!”

In total, High School 1 welcomed 221 students for the week, plus an additional 56 counselors and volunteers. Several churches brought both a van full of students and several cars full of leaders. It has been noted that there is often a direct correlation between leader involvement and student participation.

New Hope Community Church from Charleston was one of those churches who brought both leaders and students. Pastor Jeff Biddle also serves on the High School 1 Camp leadership team and brought with him seven counselors, six of whom were formerly students at that camp. In addition, they brought 25 students from their church or the church’s Midian Leadership Project.

Jorge, a high school student from Charleston, admitted his only reason for coming was to get out of the group home and hang out with his football friends. But if you’ve ever been to Camp Cowen, you likely know the motto. Camp Cowen is a place *“where people meet Jesus and grow as His disciples in a community of faith.”* That became true for Jorge, as well.

During one of the Bible studies, an illustration was given over clear water being poured into a pitcher of murky water, and eventually the cleared water overflowed the pitcher and the murky water was gone. The illustration represented what Jesus seeks to do in all of our lives. Jorge reflected later of that study, “It was there that the waters of my soul were agitated. But once it became clear, I could see much better. That is when I realized I needed to give my life to Jesus.”

Jorge was one of 12 students that week who gave their lives to Christ. There were also 19 others who rededicated their lives.

“While we were unaware of how God was working,” Lee shared, “God was orchestrating all of it. He was overflowing the hearts of both the campers and the leaders that week.”

High School 1 Camp is just one of the 12 camps hosted at Camp Cowen over the summer. It truly is a ministry that could not take place without the faithful commitment and support of our WVBC family.

The West Virginia Baptist Convention is a family of churches committed to reaching all generations for Jesus Christ both here and abroad by equipping one another to be healthy, growing and unified in Christ and for Christ.

Doing *Christ’s Work* Together

by Mike Sisson, Executive Minister

God is Good All the Time...

It is with great joy and anticipation that we look forward to the 161st Annual Meeting of our West Virginia Baptist Convention family at New Baptist in Huntington, WV, on October 15 & 16. If you have never attended, or if it has been a while since you did, let me personally encourage you to join us this year! The Annual Meeting is a time to encourage one another and experience the rich fellowship and relationship building opportunities that define us as WV Baptists! It is a special occasion of celebration, worship, fellowship, learning and dreaming as together we anticipate all the wonderful things God has for us to accomplish for His Kingdom and His glory in 2027! This year we continue our theme drawn from the Baptist Father of Modern Missions, William Carey, who challenged us to, "Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God." Our emphasis will be on the Greatness of God that both encourages us and provides us with the faith and courage to attempt great things that often are well beyond our finite human abilities. Our key verse, "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable" (Psalm 145:3).

As we pause to recap the emphasis of the last four years, we have looked closely at:

- 2022 - Micro Church: expressions to gain insights and ideas of how to become more effective in creative outreach and evangelism by considering Jesus' command to go where the people are (Matthew 28:19-20).
- 2023 – Dinner Church: to focus on the role community plays in evangelism, discipleship and outreach as we considered how to follow His example of spending time with those who are overlooked and join them for a meal (Luke 15:2, Matthew 9:10-13).
- 2024 – Discipleship: how to be more effective at discipleship and to rethink the approaches we employ to walk alongside others to grow closer and more faithful to Jesus (John 15:5).
- 2025 – Developing Leaders: how to better identify potential leaders and develop them in the church through discipleship principles (Ephesians 2:20-21).

This year, we will focus intently on the Majesty of our Great God with our keynote theme of "God's Goodness Across Generations" featuring two sessions. Keynote in Session One will be Pastor Joel Harpold. Joel and his wife Debbie are both Kanawha County natives, having grown up in neighboring Dunbar. Joel has been in full-time ministry in the local church setting for 44 years, with the last 31 years at First Baptist Church of St. Albans. Joel is a graduate of: West Virginia University and Ashland Theological Seminary. Joel and Debbie have three grown children: Danielle and her husband Anthony, Joshua and his wife Amanda, and Josiah and his wife Paula...as well as 12 grandchildren, and counting.

Session Two will feature a multigenerational group of five speakers, each covering a different generation, who will share their stories of how they have witnessed God's Goodness in their lives. It will be exciting in these sessions to hear how "God is good all the time, and all the time God is good!"

I hope to see you in October!

Blessings,
Mike



Vol. LXXXII, Issue 05 August-September 2026

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



2026 Association Meeting Schedule

Rockcastle Association

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

Fayette Association

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

Broad Run Association

Sunday, August 2 at 3 PM
Fisher Baptist Camp

Harrisville Association

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

Greenbrier-Raleigh Association

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

Little Kanawha Association

Thursday, August 6 at 5 PM
Rush Run Baptist Church

Teays Valley Association

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

Good Hope Association

Sunday, August 16 at 1 PM
Spencer First Baptist Church

Elk Valley Association

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

Eastern Association

Sunday, August 23 at 3 PM
Bethel Baptist Church

Goshen Association

Sunday, August 30 at 4 PM
Pleasant Grove Baptist Church

Kanawha Valley Association

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

Fairmont Association

Sunday, September 13 at 3 PM
Fairmont Baptist Temple

Parkersburg Association

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

Hopewell Association

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

Twelve Pole Association

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

Union Association

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

Panhandle Association

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

Guyandotte Association

Thursday, September 24 at 5:30 PM
Camp Ona

Coal River Association

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

Judson Association

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

Logan-Mingo Association

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

For the latest association
meeting details, visit:
wvbc.org

Did You Know?

August is:
**National
Make-A-Will
Month**



You can leave a legacy gift to:

- ✓ Your church
- ✓ The WVBC
- ✓ A WVBC ministry

Legacy gifts are an important
part of the work we do together
as a WVBC family.



Questions? Contact:
todd@wvbc.org

Building Bridges for the Gospel in Japan

*Written by Sarah McCloy,
International Ministries Global Servant*

One of the greatest blessings of this past season of ministry was hosting my first short-term mission team in Sendai. The team of three—including my younger brother and sister—came to encourage the work of Shokei Baptist Church, experience ministry in Japan and explore opportunities for future teams to serve alongside us.

From the moment they arrived, the team became an invaluable encouragement to our church. They strengthened our English outreach by leading a special English Café and participating in our weekly English conversation class. These ministries create natural opportunities to build relationships and share Christ with people who may never otherwise enter a church. Their enthusiasm and willingness to engage with students and church members opened the door for many meaningful conversations.

The team also met several practical needs by troubleshooting our sound system, diagnosing projector issues and organizing our children's ministry area. These projects had been difficult for our church to complete on our own, and their service was a tremendous blessing.

One especially memorable highlight was a Saturday morning prayer breakfast. The team prepared a traditional West Virginia breakfast of biscuits and sausage gravy, scrambled eggs and fresh fruit. For many of our church members, it was their first time trying biscuits and gravy, and they were pleasantly surprised! More importantly, the meal provided an opportunity to gather for prayer, fellowship and mutual encouragement.

Throughout the week, the team invested intentionally in students at local schools and universities. At Shokei Gakuin University, attendance at International Café grew from its usual five or six students to nearly thirty. They also participated in chapel services, Bible classes and a lunch with the high school Bible Club at Shokei Gakuin Junior and Senior High School. Later in the week, they joined English Café events at Tohoku Gakuin Junior and



Rebekah McCloy, Daniel McCloy and Cole Linder outside of Shokei Baptist Church in Japan

Senior High School and Tohoku Gakuin University, where we welcomed a record number of students and missionaries and completely filled the meeting space.

The team worshiped with us on two consecutive Sundays, and on their final Sunday the congregation sang the Japanese version of "God Be With You Till We Meet Again" as a farewell blessing.

It was a beautiful reminder that the Church is one family, united by Christ across every culture and language.

While many of these conversations may have seemed simple, they are foundational to ministry in Japan. Relationships often develop slowly, and every genuine connection creates another opportunity for the hope of the Gospel to be shared. Thank you for your prayers and faithful support, which make ministry like this possible.

world
mission
offering

Many churches use the months of September and October to promote the **World Mission Offering**. This offering is the best way to support the entirety of the work of **International Ministries**.

You can give generally to help fund administrative and development costs OR designate your offering toward a specific missionary's personal support. If you need help designating, contact Todd McClure at todd@wvbc.org.

Resources available at:
WorldMissionOffering.org

Building Hope, Changing Lives at Brothers' Keeper

For 27 years, **Brothers' Keeper (BK)**, a ministry of Parchment Valley Conference Center, has served the Jackson County community. BK is a week-long youth mission camp that welcomes students from across West Virginia and neighboring states to complete construction projects for low-income families and families with disabilities.

This year, BK welcomed 72 youth and adult leaders who completed 21 projects throughout the community. Their work included building porches and wheelchair ramps, pressure washing homes and clearing overgrown hillsides. The group also partnered with Sleep in Heavenly Peace for a community service project, building 14 beds for children in need.

One homeowner shared, "Brothers' Keeper has really meant a lot to my family. My wife has a chronic illness that will make it difficult for her to get around. Not only did these students help our family, but they also restored our hope."

In addition to their work projects, students gathered each evening for Bible study and worship, followed by group games and campfire. Special thanks go to Todd McClure and Rob Ely for leading the Bible studies, Kyle Huffman for leading worship and Sam Gasaway for leading campfire.

Each evening also concluded with "Porch Time," an opportunity for students to reflect in small groups and discuss what God had been teaching them throughout the day. It was during one of these conversations that **one student placed their faith in Christ.**

Brothers' Keeper is made possible by the many volunteers, churches and donors who faithfully support this ministry. Parchment Valley's mission is to be a place "where lives are changed," and this year was another reminder of God's



BK team completes building a ramp for a homeowner.

faithfulness. Because of your prayers and generous support, we celebrate not only the practical impact made in the lives of homeowners but, even more importantly, the eternal difference God made in the hearts of students.

If you are a youth leader, we hope you will join us next year for Brothers' Keeper. Bring your team and help make an impact for eternity!

FALL YOUTH RALLY

Camp Cowen | September 25-26

Saturday only \$20 per person
Friday & Saturday \$35 per person
Adults \$25 per person

T-shirts available online and at event

Register at wvbc.org

BCM: The Importance of Early Connection with Students

Rob Ely: "Hi, I am Rob. What is your name? Where are you from?"

Student: "My name is RL. I am from Ravenswood."

Rob Ely: "Oh yeah! Your church told me you would be on campus! "

How do you think the rest of the conversation will go? The tension is gone, the student recognizes someone cared enough to send their name to a college ministry and they can trust this person!

For **Baptist Campus Ministry (BCM)**, it is vital that we know your students are arriving on campus and have their contact information. The research is clear, early connection is important.

One 2024 survey of nearly 44,000 college students found that 57% said they felt lonely. Another survey found that it was closer to 65%, also stating that college students who report feeling lonely are over four times more likely to experience severe psychological distress.

Scripture demonstrates the importance of meeting people and engaging with them as they share life. As Jesus was calling His first disciples He met Andrew. Andrew immediately brought Simon (Peter). Jesus later met Philip, who brought Nathanael. All of these people stayed with Jesus to do ministry and share life.



Fairmont State BCM students ready to help students move into their dorms last August.

"BCM helped me to stay grounded when the weight of other things, like school work and other commitments, felt like a lot. Along with helping me to grow in my faith and character, BCM showed what true godly friendship looks like."

- Gretchen Foster

"Making connections with other followers of Christ was so important to me when I showed up at college. The friends I made helped uplift me, encouraged me and even told me the truth when I went wrong."

- Josh Mills

Concord University

BCM Associate: Ethan Starcher

Time: Thursdays at 6:00 PM

Location: Student Center Room AB

Contact:

Davis & Elkins College

BCM Associate: Brett Rinehart

Time: Tuesdays at 9:00 PM

Location: The Chapel

Contact: rinehart.brett@gmail.com

Fairmont State University

BCM Associate: Karla Carr

Time: Tuesdays at 8:08 PM

Location: 108 Turley Room

Contact: fairmontstatebcm@gmail.com

Glenville State University

BCM Associate: Lance Linden

Time: Wednesdays at 7:30 PM

Location: Anchor Bible Church

Contact: lance@gassawaybaptist.com

Marshall University

BCM Associate: Rob Ely

Time: Wednesdays at 9:15 PM

Location: Campus Christian Center

Contact: ely@wvbc.org

Potomac State College

BCM Associate: Shannon Earle

Time: Mondays at 7:00 PM

Location: Heritage Room

Contact: pastorjshannon@gmail.com

University of Charleston

BCM Associate: Lori James

Time: Mondays at 6:00 PM

Location: Clay Tower 7th Floor Lounge

Contact: lorijames@ucwv.edu

West Virginia State University

BCM Associate: DaVontae Edwards

Time: TBD

Location: TBD

Contact: davontae@dunbarfirstbaptist.org

West Virginia University

BCM Associate: Kevin Sions

Time: Thursdays at 7:07 PM

Location: Towers Room G58

Contact: sions@wvbc.org

WVU Institute of Technology

BCM Associate: Anthony Pratt

Time: Thursdays at 7:00 PM

Location: Life Science Build 208

Contact: anthony_pratt@hotmail.com

Do you have a student attending a college in West Virginia? Help us connect with them!

Contact the BCM Associate or send an email to Rob Ely at ely@wvbc.org.



THE 161ST ANNUAL MEETING OF OUR WVBC FAMILY



Joel Harpold
Keynote Speaker



Mike Sisson
Executive Minister



Jonathan Butcher
Annual Sermon



October 15-16, 2026



New Baptist Church

610 28th St., Huntington, WV

- FELLOWSHIP
- WORSHIP
- CELEBRATION
- PRAYER

2026 Theme:

**Expect Great Things from God.
Attempt Great Things for God.**

"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be
praised; and his greatness is
unsearchable."
- Psalm 145:3



Register online at: **www.wvbc.org**



West Virginia
Baptist Convention

Host Church Welcome Letter

Dear West Virginia Baptist Family,

The psalmist declares in Psalm 145:3, "Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom." This is not a polite religious sentiment. It is a thunderous, unqualified confession. The greatness of God exceeds the capacity of every mind that has ever tried to contain it. We cannot measure His greatness, nor can we exhaust it. We can only worship before it.

And that is precisely where William Carey began. Before he ever attempted great things for God, he had first learned to expect great things from God. His confidence was not in his own resources or resolve. It was rooted in an unshakeable conviction about who God is — vast, faithful, and wholly worthy of the most audacious obedience his servants could offer. Worship was the wellspring of his mission.

This is why we gather. Not simply to conduct the business of a Convention. We gather because we need to be reminded, together, that the God we serve is still greater than our greatest need, our deepest discouragement, and our most stubborn circumstances. We gather to hear what He is doing in our churches across this state — and to have our hearts stirred, once again, toward the kind of expectant faith that dares to attempt something for His glory.

With joy, I welcome you to New Baptist Church in Huntington for the Annual Meeting of the West Virginia Baptist Convention. My prayer is that you will arrive with open hands and expectant hearts — ready to worship, ready to listen, and ready to return home with renewed conviction that the greatness of God is more than sufficient for whatever He has called you to do.

Come expecting great things. Leave attempting great things.

To Him be all glory,
Pastor Trent Eastman

Local Arrangement Committee



Left to Right: John Baisden, Pat Baisden, Noah Lambert, Dolores Adkins, Courtney Powers, Myra Lydick, Joyce Adams, Kelli Estep, Kathleen Napier, Jay Powers, Trent Eastman, David McMellon, Carl Pemberton, Sandy Pemberton & Mark Napier

Joel Harpold

Keynote Speaker

Joel is the Senior Pastor at Saint Albans First Baptist Church, where he has served since 1995. Prior to that, he served as pastor of Salem Baptist Church, associate pastor of Twentieth Street Baptist Church and youth pastor of Church of the Savior in Wooster, OH. Combined, he has 47 years of professional ministry experience — 44 of those years serving within our WVBC family.

Joel is a graduate of West Virginia University with a BA in psychology, as well as Ashland Theological Seminary with an MDiv centered on pastoral care. He has served on various boards throughout our Convention and serves as a mentor in our Mentoring for Pastoral Excellence program.

He and his wife Debbie have been married 49 years and have three grown children: Danielle and her husband Anthony, Joshua and his wife Amanda, and Josiah and his wife Paula. They also have 12 grandchildren, and counting.

Jonathan Butcher

Annual Sermon

Jonathan is the Head Pastor of Union Valley Baptist Church in Parkersburg, where he has served since 2024. Prior to that, he served as pastor of Hamlin First Baptist Church.

Jonathan is a graduate of Marshall University with a BA in Communications. While there, he was also part of Marshall's Baptist Campus Ministry and served on the leadership team. He later earned his MDiv at Palmer Theological Seminary.

Jonathan and his wife Anna were married this summer and now live in Vienna.

Curt Mann

Worship Leader

Curt is the Worship Minister at New Baptist Church, where he has served since 2007. He also works as the Executive Director of Secondary Schools for Cabell County Schools. He is a graduate of both Marshall University and Salem University. He and his wife Katelyn have two sons: Carter and Case.

Lodging Options

Fairfield Inn and Suites - 304-696-8777
536 Kinetic Drive, Huntington, WV 25701

** A discount is available at this hotel until October 9th by mentioning "WVBC Group Rate" when booking.*

Annual Meeting Schedule

Thursday, October 15

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

2:45 PM: Session 1

- Welcome from the Host Church
- Business Meeting 1
- Recognition of New and Retired Pastors
- Executive Minister Address

5:00 PM: Baptist Campus Ministry Banquet

6:30 PM: Session 2

- Ward Hibbs Award
- Annual Sermon
- Communion

8:30 PM: Camp Cowen Reception

BAPTIST CAMPUS MINISTRY

BCM Banquet (All are invited) - \$25

Time: Thursday, October 15 at 5:00 PM

Location: New Baptist - Hospitality Area

* All proceeds benefit the ministry of BCM

CAMP COWEN

Camp Cowen Reception (All are invited) - FREE

Time: Thursday, October 15 at 8:30 PM

Location: New Baptist - Hospitality Area

Friday, October 16

8:00 AM: Workshop Session 1

9:15 AM: Session 3

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

11:00 AM: Workshop Session 2

12:00 PM: Lunch Break

1:30 PM: Exhibit Hall with Dessert

2:30 PM: Session 4

- Business Meeting 2
- Installation of Officers
- Keynote Address
- Commissioning

Pre-Convention Activities

Registration for Pre-Convention activities are done on the Annual Meeting Registration form even if you are not planning to attend any of the Annual Meeting sessions.

American Baptist Men of WV - \$15

Registration: 9:00 AM at New Baptist

Event Location: Facing Hunger Food Bank

* Everyone will meet at Fifth Ave Baptist after registration

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

Registration: 9:00 AM at New Baptist

Event Location: New Baptist - Sanctuary

Speaker: Sara McClure

Missions Speaker: Alice Walker

Topic: Nothing New Under the Sun

* Nursery provided for preschool children

Pastors4Pastors - \$20 for non-members, \$15 for members

Registration: 9:00 AM at New Baptist

Event Location: Marshall Campus Christian Center

Speaker: Kristina Gutierrez

Topic: Health and Excellence in Ministry

* Due to limited parking, everyone must take shuttle

WV Baptist Education Society Lunch (Members Only)

Time: 12:00 PM

Event Location: Marshall Campus Christian Center

Cost: FREE

Child Care Lunch - \$6

Location: New Baptist - Childcare Area

Friday Lunch Options

Ministers' Wives' Fellowship - \$15

Location: New Baptist - BYKOTA Room

WV Baptist Historical Society - \$20

Location: New Baptist - Hospitality Area

Special Event: Concert by the Putnam's

Palmer Theological Seminary - \$15

Location: New Baptist—Youth Area

Child Care Lunch - \$6

Location: New Baptist - Childcare Area

Exhibit Hall with Dessert

Enjoy dessert while visiting with exhibitors one last time before the final session.

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 5. Online registration will be open on wvbc.org until October 11.

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 (\$15)
_____ American Baptist Women's Ministries of WV (\$11)
_____ Pastors4Pastors (\$20, \$15 for members)

* Please mark if you need a Gluten Free meal option: _____

KIDS LUNCHES

Please mark how many kids lunches you will need for each day.

_____ Thursday (\$6 each) _____ Friday (\$6 each)

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 (\$25)

FRIDAY:

- _____ Ministers' Wives' Fellowship—Noon (\$15)
_____ WV Baptist Historical Society—Noon (\$20)
_____ Palmer Theological Seminary—Noon (\$15)

* Please mark if you need a Gluten Free meal option: _____

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: _____

Growing Spiritually: ABWM of WV Holds 92nd Annual Conference

Written by Salina George
ABWM of WV Conference Coordinator

The 92nd Annual Conference of the **American Baptist Women's Ministries (ABWM)** of WV was held on June 6, 2026, with the theme "Growing Spiritually." Approximately 100 women gathered for a meaningful time of worship, learning, fellowship and spiritual encouragement. We were honored to welcome Charmaine Stulp from Canada as our guest speaker. She shared inspiring messages centered on spiritual growth and deepening our walk with Christ.

"The conference was great," remarked Terrie Workman, member of Starcher Baptist Church. "Charmaine kept our attention. I also loved the music. We sang songs we grew up singing at church. The plants were also nice as take-home gifts. I'm glad I was able to attend."

Rob Ely also joined us to present information about India, our Mission Outreach Project (MOP) for 2026, highlighting opportunities to support and engage in mission work.

The conference attendees enjoyed a variety of enriching workshops and training sessions. These sessions provided practical tools, encouragement and inspiration for women serving in their churches and communities.

Lori Daniels, women's ministry leader of Elkins First Baptist Church, attended a workshop led by Kim Conrad titled *Building Meaningful Connections*. Lori shared, "I learned that in order to build meaningful connections, we must be intentional, prayerful and plan people-focused activities. It doesn't happen by accident. It is intentional. Women need opportunities to serve others and support one another."



Charmaine Stulp leading a Bible study in Hill Hall.

We were also blessed to have Amanda Emrick and Becca Marlow from New Life lead worship throughout the conference, creating a meaningful atmosphere of praise and reflection.

"I honestly felt this was one of the best conferences I have been to," shared Glenna Lawing, member of Dunbar First Baptist Church. "We were talking about starting small groups at church, so I chose a workshop on that topic. It gave me several good ideas which we have now discussed and are going to try."

Overall, the 92nd Annual Conference was an uplifting, informative and spiritually enriching gathering that encouraged women to continue growing in their faith and ministry. **If you missed it, we hope you will join us for our next event: our Spiritual Growth Retreat, scheduled September 18-20 at Parchment Valley Conference Center.**



2026 Spiritual Growth Retreat *Knock at God's Door*

**September 18-20, 2026
Parchment Valley Conference Center**

Keynote Speaker: Cecily Thompson

Worship Leaders: Brian and Sara McClure

Questions? Contact Kathy Sponaule, Coordinator, at (304) 633-4016 or kathysponaule@gmail.com

Sponsored by American Baptist Women's Ministries of WV

Northwest Area News

by Mark McCloy, Northwest Area Minister

God is Doing Amazing Things

*"Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered."
- Joel 2:32*

Wow! God is doing amazing things. Churches have gathered around the baptistry or at the river for baptisms. Some have been meeting at the park for outreaches and picnics and are generally doing exciting things. Praise be to God! Some have experienced real revival. Many are preparing for Vacation Bible School, and some churches have come together with others to do Bible School together.

Since May, three churches have called interim pastors. A pastor has been licensed by Cairo Baptist. Mission certificates are being delivered. Several pastors are in the ordination process across four of my five associations. And the associations are preparing for their annual meeting, which for most will occur in August and September.

Several others are going through seasons of transition as we have had two pastors retire – Judi Bartlett-Tomes and Bob Keen. Bob finished this portion of the race with thirty years of service at Mill



FBC Glenville baptism service in the river.

Creek (Good Hope). Also, prayers for those pastors who have resigned current positions to move on to their next phase of the journey, and prayers for all the churches currently searching for a pastor.

Regardless of your place in the race, rest assured that God is in control and will deliver those who call upon Him.

Southwest Area News

by Evan Arkell, Southwest Area Minister

Churches Celebrating Major Anniversaries

On Saturday and Sunday, May 16-17, Nitro First Baptist Church celebrated their 125th anniversary. On Saturday, they invited the neighbors to the church yard and celebrated with special singing, food and a lot of fun. On Sunday, the celebration continued during the worship hour with anniversary certificates given by Executive Minister Mike Sisson and Gary Higginbotham with the West Virginia Baptist Historical Society, and I presented them with their annual mission giving certificate. Following Pastor Michael Perry's message, a delicious dinner was served.

On Sunday, June 28th, Hampton Baptist Church in East Bank celebrated their 150th anniversary. Their special service included special singing, some minutes and stories read from years past, and I was able to present them with both their 150th anniversary certificate and their annual mission giving certificate. Following Pastor Don Stennett's message, we enjoyed a delicious meal.

Pastor Greg Lunsford Returns to Pulpit

Beulah Ann Missionary Baptist Church celebrated the return of Pastor Greg Lunsford back to the pulpit after being revived from cardiac arrest and the following open-heart surgery only eight weeks earlier. It was a true blessing to all who were present. There were many across our WVBC family who were regularly praying for him, and we are glad to see him back!



Amber Elmore following her Ordination Council at Dunbar FBC.

Amber Elmore Celebrates Ordination

Dunbar First Baptist Church requested that the Kanawha Valley Association (KVA) Ordination Committee meet with Amber Elmore to start her ordination process. After meeting three times with Amber, the committee recommended to the church to call for an ordination council from the KVA churches. On Sunday, June 28th, the KVA council convened for Amber's reading of her position paper and questions. There was a unanimous vote for Dunbar First Baptist to move forward with Amber's ordination. Her ordination was then held on July 5th, and Amber will soon be leaving for her new job as a chaplain in Florida.

Northeast Area News

by Kevin Sions, Northeast Area Minister

Petersburg FBC Hosts Mission Team

(Submitted by Pastor Shannon Earle)



Mission team visits Blackwater Falls.

For the third year, a team of missionaries from Church of the City in New London, Connecticut, returned to Petersburg to serve the community through a variety of ministry and service projects. During their stay, the group worked at the local food pantry, visited the

local nursing home, painted at the high school and performed various tasks at multiple churches. The team of 24 was led by Pastor Jesus Garcia and was hosted by Petersburg First Baptist Church (Eastern).

In addition to their service, the group enjoyed experiencing some of the area's natural beauty, visiting Blackwater Falls and Smoke Hole Caverns. Petersburg First Baptist Church is grateful for the opportunity and resources to host such groups.

Harmony Baptist Hosts Community Worship Service

(Submitted by Pastor Jason Sleeth)

On June 7th, Harmony Baptist Church (Fairmont) hosted their first of four community worship services in Hundred, WV. Harmony unites with other community churches and pastors to worship together. This is a great outreach in the community to invite all to come together for worship. The next outdoor services will be held August 16th at the community building in Hundred, WV.

Southeast Area News

by Jon Villers, Southeast Area Minister

Beginning My 4th Year as Area Minister

The past two months of May and June complete my third year as the Area Minister to 92 churches in the southeast region.

When I began in 2023, we had several churches needing pastors. I was able to assist each of those churches in finding a pastor, with the exception of one of our dear churches in the Rockcastle Association. For them, it was over three years and they were still looking! However, it is with great privilege that I can announce Pastor Paul Brown has now been called to Lacoma Baptist Church!

Paul and his wife, Karen, have been active members of a sister church, Bright Prospect Missionary Baptist, for a long time, where Paul held several positions including Sunday School teacher and deacon. He lives a few miles away from Lacoma, and we are blessed to see him answering the call to serve as pastor.

While that fills the final pastoral opening from when I arrived three years ago, there are now several more churches in my area who are searching for pastors.

One opening is at Gatewood Baptist Church, where Pastor Harry Fuller retired after 24 years of faithful service in the Fayette Association. He has now entered a different chapter of his Gospel calling, serving as pulpit supply and doing interim work. I am grateful for the way he continues to serve!



Pastor Paul Brown at Lacoma Baptist Church

Throughout this time, I have learned that God is still active and that none of this ever catches Him by surprise. We get to be surprised by His faithfulness every day, as He continually displays to us His grace, love and mercy.

May—June 2026

Leadership Updates

JASON WILSON to Mill Creek Baptist Church (Good Hope Association) as interim pastor 5/28/2026

PAUL BROWN to Lacoma Baptist Church (Rockcastle Association) as pastor 6/1/2026

HOLLEY FAULKNER to Sutton Baptist Church (Elk Valley Association) as interim pastor 6/1/2026

BRIAN FLANERY to Cairo Baptist Church (Harrisville Association) as interim pastor 6/1/2026

RICK WATSON to Fayetteville Baptist Church (Fayette Association) as interim pastor 6/1/2026

JOSH RADCLIFF to Hebron Baptist Church (Fairmont Association) as pastor 6/26/2026

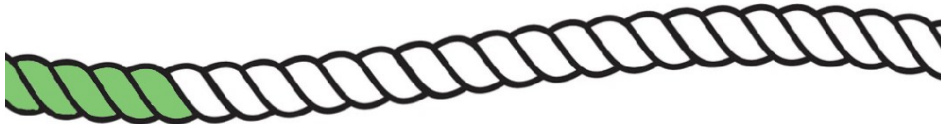
JOYCE MERSING HARDMAN, 82, of Kingwood, died on May 25, 2026. She was a member of Kingwood Baptist Church, where she served in the church nursery.

FAYE FOSTER RAMSEY, 98, of Peterstown, died on June 3, 2026. She was a member of the Peterstown Missionary Baptist Church and also a member of the Kathleen Hamm Circle. She served on the church's Social and Bereavement Committee.

SHARON LYNN RAMSEY, 73, of Burnsville, died on June 28, 2026. She was a member of Burnsville First Baptist Church, where her husband is the pastor.

ROPE HOLDER UPDATE:

Rope Holders are individuals who financially support the work of our WVBC family through both one-time and recurring monthly gifts. Numerous individuals have also given through stock donations, Qualified Charitable Distributions and estate gifts. Rope Holders have become to our mission of **Doing Christ's work together.**



2026 YTD: \$17,486

2026 Goal: \$100,000

Ways to Give:

Check:

Mail to WVBC Office

Website:

Visit wvbc.org and click "Give Online"

Phone:



MINISTRY EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Pastor to Youth and Families (Part-Time)
Location: Ravenswood area

Pastor (Full-Time)
Location: Ripley area

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

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

Pastor (Part-Time)
Location: Weirton area

Director of Worship Ministry (Part-Time)
Location: Huntington area

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

Youth Director (Part-Time)
Location: Marion County

Senior Pastor (Full-Time)
Location: Boone County

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

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

August 2026

AUGUST 1 – AB Men & Boys Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen
AUGUST 2 – Fayette and Broad Run Associations as they celebrate their annual meetings
AUGUST 3 – The ministry of Little Capon Baptist Church; Paul “Tony” Baker, pastor (Eastern Association)
AUGUST 4 – Greenbrier-Raleigh and Harrisville Associations as they celebrate their annual meetings
AUGUST 5 – The ministry of Orlando Baptist Church; Scott Posey, pastor (Elk Valley Association)
AUGUST 6 – Little Kanawha Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
AUGUST 7 – Camp Global happening this weekend at Camp Cowen
AUGUST 8 – Marci Carvalho, International Ministries Global Servant to Spain
AUGUST 9 – Mike Mann, International Ministries Global Servant to Thailand
AUGUST 10 – The ministry of West Union Baptist Church; Adam Cheeseman, pastor (Broad Run Association)
AUGUST 11 – Vicki Ramey, member of the WVBC Outreach Commission
AUGUST 12 – The ministry of Minden Baptist Church; Ronald Richards, pastor (Fayette Association)
AUGUST 13 – Teays Valley Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
AUGUST 14 – The ministry of Huntington Baptist Temple; Justin Berry, pastor (Guyandotte Association)
AUGUST 15 – The ministry of Flint Chapel Baptist Church; James Anderson, pastor (Greenbrier-Raleigh Association)
AUGUST 16 – Good Hope Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
AUGUST 17 – The ministry of Antioch Baptist Church; Larry Peck, pastor (Hopewell Association)
AUGUST 18 – The ministry of Kingwood Baptist Church; Charles Warger, pastor (Goshen Association)
AUGUST 19 – Kathy Rice, International Ministries Global Servant to the Democratic Republic of the Congo
AUGUST 20 – Chad Mugrage, WVBC president and member of the WVBC Stewardship Commission
AUGUST 21 – Deliris Carrión-Joseph, International Ministries Global Servant to Mexico
AUGUST 22 – Elk Valley Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
AUGUST 23 – Eastern Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
AUGUST 24 – Connie Byars, member of the WVBC Discipleship Commission
AUGUST 25 – The ministry of Sand Fork Baptist Church; Terry Sponaugle, pastor (Coal River Association)
AUGUST 26 – The ministry of Hill Grove Baptist Church (Good Hope Association)
AUGUST 27 – Kelley Epling, member of the WVBC Leadership Commission
AUGUST 28 – The ministry of Mannington First Baptist Church; Jason Marshall, pastor (Fairmont Association)
AUGUST 29 – The ministry of Harrisville Baptist Church; Robert Perine, pastor (Harrisville Association)
AUGUST 30 – Goshen Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
AUGUST 31 – Walt White, International Ministries Global Consultant

September 2026

SEPTEMBER 1 – Ketly Pierre, International Ministries Global Servant to the Dominican Republic
SEPTEMBER 2 – Yvette Shafer, chair of the WVBC Stewardship Commission
SEPTEMBER 3 – Stacy Reese, International Ministries Global Servant to the Dominican Republic
SEPTEMBER 4 – The ministry of Summit Park Baptist Church; Richard Owens, pastor (Union Association)
SEPTEMBER 5 – The ministry of Judson Baptist Church; Charles Bolen, pastor (Kanawha Valley Association)
SEPTEMBER 6 – John Vannoy, member of the WVBC Outreach Commission
SEPTEMBER 7 – Rodney Ragwan, International Ministries Global Consultant
SEPTEMBER 8 – Todd McClure, Minister of Missions, Finance and Communication, West Virginia Baptist Convention
SEPTEMBER 9 – Mark McCloy, Northwest Area Minister and Director of the School of Christian Studies, West Virginia Baptist Convention
SEPTEMBER 10 – The ministry of Lacoma Baptist Church; Paul Brown, pastor (Rockcastle Association)
SEPTEMBER 11 – Kanawha Valley Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
SEPTEMBER 12 – Paul Rollet, International Ministries Global Servant to the Philippines
SEPTEMBER 13 – Fairmont Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
SEPTEMBER 14 – Fall Golden’eeers Conference beginning today at Parchment Valley
SEPTEMBER 15 – Parkersburg Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
SEPTEMBER 16 – Hopewell Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
SEPTEMBER 17 – The ministry of Providence Baptist Church (Teays Valley Association)
SEPTEMBER 18 – The American Baptist Women’s Ministries’ Spiritual Growth Retreat beginning today at Parchment Valley
SEPTEMBER 19 – Twelve Pole Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
SEPTEMBER 20 – Panhandle and Union Associations as they celebrate their annual meetings
SEPTEMBER 21 – The ministry of Newark Baptist Church; William Cottrell, pastor (Parkersburg Association)
SEPTEMBER 22 – Lisa Williams, member of the WVBC Discipleship Commission
SEPTEMBER 23 – Mercy Gonzalez-Barnes, International Ministries Global Servant to Iberoamerica and the Caribbean
SEPTEMBER 24 – Guyandotte Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
SEPTEMBER 25 – The Fall Youth Rally happening at Camp Cowen
SEPTEMBER 26 – Coal River Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
SEPTEMBER 27 – Judson and Logan-Mingo Associations as they celebrate their annual meetings
SEPTEMBER 28 – Mylinda Baits, International Ministries Global Consultant
SEPTEMBER 29 – The ministry of Burnsville First Baptist Church; Roland Ramsey, pastor (Little Kanawha Association)
SEPTEMBER 30 – Matt Ash, Committee on Ministerial Standing chair and member of the WVBC Leadership Commission

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

Upcoming Events

AUGUST

August 7
P4P Couples Boat Cruise
Marietta, OH

August 7-8
Camp Global
Camp Cowen

August 15
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Community Ministry (Mod-5)
Parchment Valley Conference Center

SEPTEMBER

September 14-16
Golden'eers Fall Retreat
Parchment Valley Conference Center

September 15
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Old Testament II (B-02)
Online

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

September 18-20
AB Women's Ministries Spiritual Growth Retreat
Parchment Valley Conference Center

September 25-26
Fall Youth Rally
Camp Cowen

OCTOBER

October 2
WVBC Executive Committee
Parchment Valley Conference Center

October 3
WVBC Executive Board
Parchment Valley Conference Center

October 15-16
WVBC Annual Meeting
Emmanuel Baptist Church, Charleston

October 24
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Ministerial Ethics (Mod-2)
Parchment Valley Conference Center & Goshen Baptist Church

NOVEMBER

November 7
Fall Children's Rally
Parchment Valley Conference Center

November 13-15
Senior High Convention

November 15
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Discipleship Essentials (M-02)
Online

November 15
Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Spiritual Formation (Mod-01)
Online

Newsletter Submissions

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

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

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PLEASE JOIN US FOR
FALL
GOLDEN'EERS
A CONFERENCE FOR ADULTS 55 YEARS OF AGE
AND OLDER

SEPTEMBER 14-16, 2026
at Parchment Valley Conference Center

THEME: JESUS CHANGES THE GAME
Matthew 19:26

SPEAKER: MIKE SISSON, WVBC EXECUTIVE MINISTER

To learn more or register, visit: wvbc.org

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