

Leadership Development Initiative (LDI)

The West Virginia Baptist Convention has launched a pilot program to match churches/associations with summer interns. The program seeks to enhance the ministry of the church and to provide structured environments for young adults to learn how to do ministry in the local church context.

LDI Interns for 2018

Justin Brown Panhandle Association

Justin Brown is a 23 year-old from Follansbee. He is a Youth Ministry intern for the Panhandle Association. In addition to his internship duties, he is getting a chance to give back to the Weirton Christian Center, where he grew up attending, as he works there this summer. Working with Christian youth programs, like the Panhandle mini Brothers' Keeper camp and the Panhandle summer youth rally, is a large part of Justin's internship. In addition, he is open to helping individual churches with their own youth programs. He finds one of the most rewarding parts of this ministry is getting to do what he was made to do. Justin is currently majoring in Evangelism at Valor Christian College and will be completing his final semester this fall. After that, he is open to go where the Lord calls him to go.

Breellen Fleming Convention Communications

Breellen Fleming, 19, is currently working at the West Virginia Baptist Convention office as a Graphic Design and Journalism intern. She is a native of Elizabeth and the daughter of Lesa and Larry Fleming, from Glenville First Baptist Church (Little Kanawha). What excites her most about this internship is using her God-given talents to benefit His kingdom. Breellen is currently attending West Virginia University (WVU) and is majoring in Printmaking. After graduating, she plans to pursue an Master of Fine Arts' degree in Illustration and continue to create artwork that glorifies God and starts conversations about faith. She is an active member of the WVU branch of Baptist Campus Ministries.

Emily Fordyce Calvary Baptist Church (Fayette)

Emily Fordyce is a 22 year-old from Charlton Heights. She is a Youth and Children's ministry intern with Calvary Baptist Church (Fayette). She enjoys assisting Youth Leaders of the church in supervising and teaching the children God brings into her life. Emily loves interacting with the kids and helping them learn how essential Jesus is and how to serve Him. She is also an English major at Ohio Valley University and works part-time at the Fayette County Extension Office during the summer. She plans to pursue a masters' degree after graduation and would love to work in a ministry for women and children in the future. Emily comes to us originally from Gauley Bridge Baptist Church (Kanawha Valley), and attends Vienna Baptist Church (Parkersburg) during the school year, where she assists in the church nursery.

Rebekah McCloy Newark Baptist Church (Parkersburg)

Rebekah McCloy is an 18 year-old from Elizabeth. She is the daughter of Mark and Mary Beth McCloy and has three siblings: Sarah, Ben and Daniel. Rebekah is currently interning at Newark Baptist Church (Parkersburg) in Children's Ministry and as a Leadership Trainee. Her favorite part of this ministry is educating the younger generation in the gospel. She loves seeing Christianity take root in young people, and one of her long-term goals with this ministry is to get people on fire for God. During the school year, Rebekah is a student at Marshall University, majoring in English Education. After graduating from college, she plans to teach English as well as pursue a degree in Library Sciences. She comes to us from Lifespring Community Church (Good Hope) and attends New Baptist Church (Guyandotte) during the school year. She is a part of Marshall University's Baptist Campus Ministries.

Mission-Encounter-Education-Training (M.E.E.T.)

Mission-Encounter-Education-Training (M.E.E.T.) is a ministry of the Convention that matches young adults who feel led to possibly pursue a call to missions with International Ministries' (IM) missionaries for summer mission externships. The program requires the externs to have training in cross-cultural ministries and mission context prior to their going.

M.E.E.T. Externs for 2018

Chiapas, Mexico

Gage Ross
Milton Baptist Church

My time in Chiapas, Mexico was a life-changing experience that has widened my vision of missions and God's intent for my life. We served with the Aragón family and ministered beside them to build relationships with the churches in the indigenous communities in Chiapas. We played with the kids, held workshops for the young adults and shared life around the dinner table. God has shown His divine love through His people in Mexico and His word is thriving through the local church. The Aragón's have a beautiful ministry ahead to further strengthen, train and enable indigenous pastors to effectively lead their congregations in the true word of God. Thank you for sharing this journey with me as I trust the Lord to guide me on mission and to grow deeper in Spirit with Him.

Isaac Brown
Vienna Baptist Church

Our trip to Mexico has brought many blessings into my life. The people of Chiapas have taken us in, treated us like one of their own and have shown endless hospitality. Christ is moving in these people and it has been a blessing to see that happen firsthand. One thing the Lord has laid on my heart while here is the challenge of being truly satisfied with Him and only Him. The people of Chiapas, in comparison to us in the United States, have so little, yet they seem to be satisfied with what they have and continue to love the Lord and seek him, even though they aren't blessed with even half of what we have. And even in having so little, they gave us so much. Seeing how they find satisfaction in the Lord has really challenged my view of how I find satisfaction in the Father.

Andrew O'Callaghan
Vienna Baptist Church

As I am writing this, I have been in Chiapas for two weeks, and have two weeks to go. The Lord has taught me so much from observing the lives of Juan and Denise Aragón. They are filled with compassion for the oppressed and those ignored by the world. They are patient, filled with humility and do all things in love and gentleness, and they trust the Lord in all things. These are only a few ways they have modeled Christ for me in the short time I have been with them. There are too many impactful things that have happened in this short time to write about, but the greatest impact I believe this trip will leave on me will be what I have seen in the Aragón family. I have had the opportunity to see firsthand the life of missionaries in action as they serve the Lord through great sacrifice and perseverance. I accepted the Lord's call on my life to full-time vocational ministry about three years ago. As to what capacity the Lord will have me serve Him, I have been open and seeking discernment. I have been aiming towards pastoral ministry to this point, but now that I have been blessed to spend this month with the Aragóns, the Lord has opened my heart to possibly going into missions at some point in my life, should that be His will for my life.

Thank you to all the brothers and sisters in West Virginia who have kept the three of us in your prayers. The Lord is doing a mighty work among the people of Chiapas. It has been a tremendous blessing to see firsthand and to spend time and build relationships with the believers here, and to be discipled by Juan and Denise.

Puebla, Mexico

Jordan Lallemont

Emmanuel Baptist Church (Parkersburg)

I have been in Mexico for almost three weeks now and God has already taught and revealed many new things to me. Although I am still trying to process everything, I would like to share some things I have learned and experienced so far. First of all, this trip was an answer to prayer. Last August, I began to talk to Keith and Debbie Myers (missionaries to Mexico) about coming to visit. While I wanted to explore missions further, I was struggling with the idea of leaving and could not discern if this trip was in God's plan. I was encouraged to put together a small team of prayer warriors, and by January 2018 I was pretty certain God was calling me to go. I talked with the Myers again and plans began to fall into place. On June 1, 2018, I joined the Myers as they returned to Mexico after being on home assignment for a year. It has been an amazing experience and I have gotten to see what the daily life of a missionary is really like. We ran errands, worked around the house, cleaned up, prepared for the Colegio de Ingenieros Civiles del Estado de México (CICEM) - College of Civil Engineers of the State of Mexico meeting, visited communities and have just gotten to be present in one another's lives. Through it all, I have learned to adopt the saying "poco a poco" which means "little by little." The Myers take one day at a time and thank God for whatever they accomplish that day, whether it be a lot or a little. They are flexible and trust God even when things do not go as planned. They see beauty in the little things and are present in the lives of the people around them - these things have been so encouraging for me to experience. God is teaching me to slow down and take each day one at a time. I am learning not to let the little things bring me down, but instead to focus on the things I am thankful for and how God is working around me.

God has also revealed his faithfulness to me during this trip. Three years ago, I came to Mexico with a team to serve alongside the Myers for a week. Last weekend, I stood in the Myers' kitchen with Debbie, Baillie and Denise Aragon (who was part of that team from three years ago). I was overwhelmed and brought to tears thinking about how God had united us again and has been so faithful in our lives over the past three years. Keith and Debbie are now beginning their second term as missionaries. Denise and her husband, Juan, have become missionaries in Mexico as well. Baillie has finished her freshman year of college and is exploring her call to missions. I finished my junior year of college and am discerning where God is calling me for the next season of life. Although I know all of us have experienced many highs and lows over the last few years, God has still been constant in all of our lives. I am so thankful for all He has taught me and that He has given me the opportunity to reconnect with these amazing people. God never ceases to amaze me and I look forward to what He has in store for the rest of the trip as well as the rest of my life.