

Spencer First Baptist Plants Dinner Church

*Written by Mark Wood,
Pastor, Spencer First Baptist Church*

On March 11th, 2024, our church, Spencer First Baptist, took a huge step of faith as we launched our Dinner Church plant called “The Table.” The six months of planning were preceded by almost two years of prayer, seeking God’s guidance on how we could effectively and intentionally reach the unreached of our community. We wanted to feed our community spiritually and physically. The question of how we could do that – and it be more than just a dinner and devotion – was one we wrestled with. The dinner church concept seemed to be a viable pathway.

Now, two months later we are overwhelmed by the blessing of this ministry’s impact. In just a few weeks, we are consistently averaging 60 people per service. The feedback such as “this is the best part of my week,” “I am for the first time understanding the Bible,” and “I no longer feel empty on the inside” encourage us to know we are on the right track.

The service is very simple. We share a story from the Bible about Jesus. Then, we discuss it as we share a meal together in small groups. We then as a whole group share what was discussed at the individual tables and conclude with a life application principle. Before our dessert time, we have a time of prayer with an invitation to share prayer requests and to learn more about salvation.



Mark Wood sharing a Jesus story during their Dinner Church.

I realize this type of ministry is not for every church. It takes volunteers, time, long-term commitment and finances. But if you are looking for a way to reach the unreached of your community, Dinner Church may be what you need to do.

Begin the process like we did with prayer and discernment. Let God speak and guide you, and then follow His call. For us, sharing a meal and conversation has blessed our community and breathed new life into our mission to share the Gospel message.

A Recap of Our Dinner Church Weekend Training Event

On March 15-16, over 70 people gathered at South Parkersburg Baptist Church for a wonderful weekend of learning, inspiration and challenge. The **Dinner Church Weekend Training Event** was led by Verlon and Melodee Fosner and served as both an in-depth introduction to Dinner Church and training for launching Dinner Churches around our state.



Verlon Fosner speaking to a group at Dinner Church Weekend.

Verlon pointed out that during Jesus’ earthly ministry, “His suppers were a prominent and regular feature of His mission.” You would find Jesus “healing by day and having dinner with sinners by night.” He noted, “Jesus used the dinner table to reveal Himself and embrace people into the kingdom of God,” and that still today, “Jesus loves to reveal Himself at the table.”

We learned that Dinner Church provides a wonderful opportunity for Jesus to reveal himself to people in our communities who need Him yet aren’t finding him through our traditional efforts. Dinner Church intentionally, and regularly, engages a community for Christ as a dedicated team of believers invites, gathers and serves the least, lost and left behind in that community. Together, they share a bountiful meal, tell Jesus stories and talk around the table about where those stories intersect with their lives. All over the country, and right here in West Virginia, Jesus is showing up, and lives are being changed forever.

Find out how Dinner Church can make a difference for Christ in your community by contacting Evan Arkell at evan@wvbc.org You can also visit the Dinner Church website at www.dinnerchurch.com.

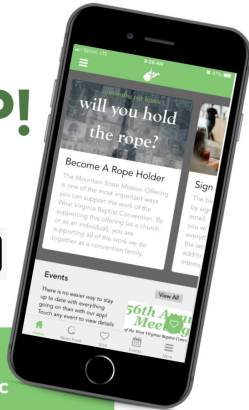
The West Virginia Baptist Convention is a family of churches committed to reaching all generations for Jesus Christ both here and abroad by equipping one another to be healthy, growing and unified in Christ and for Christ.

Doing Christ’s Work Together

by Mike Sisson, Executive Minister

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Wounded Healer

It's time to talk about a challenging topic that's been on a lot of hearts lately: pastor burnout.

As you know, ministry can be an incredibly rewarding and fulfilling calling. It can also be deeply challenging and exhausting. And unfortunately, many pastors are struggling with burnout and discouragement at historic levels.

Pastors and clergy are those often responsible to minister to and provide support to people when they are struggling with mental, emotional and spiritual challenges. This is why God has gifted them with a "pastor's heart" filled with empathy, compassion and genuine care for His people. Scripture uses the illustration of a shepherd to guide, protect and heal the sheep they have been entrusted to oversee.

However, pastors are human as well. Henry Nouwen refers to them as "wounded healers." In his book by the same name Nouwen writes, "Who can listen to a story of loneliness and despair without taking the risk of experiencing similar pains in his own heart and even losing his precious peace of mind? In short: 'Who can take away suffering without entering it?'" In other words, true ministry does not happen at an emotional distance. Rather, its nature requires close proximity. The definition of empathy is, "the ability to understand and share the feelings of another." Or as the apostle Paul reminds, "bear one another's burdens" (Galatians 6:2).

There are many studies reflecting the crisis levels of a decline in pastor's wellbeing, but one of note in a recent study reflects the following trend. In 2015, 72% of pastors said they felt "very satisfied" with their role as pastors. However, in late 2022, just 52% of pastors were "very satisfied with their roles." Barna CEO David Kinnaman recently explained, "A drop in the level of pastoral health this significant in just seven years isn't just unprecedented, it signals a crisis that the church has to address."

What can we do to help? First, if you are struggling as a pastor or church leader, please know you are not alone. Do not hesitate to reach out to any of the WVBC staff. We would love to help any way we can.

Second, congregations pray for, encourage, support and be aware and sensitive to your pastor. Are they taking time away for renewal? The best way to have a great pastor is to pray for and invest in the one God has placed in your church.

Additionally, the WVBC has a task force working on how to come alongside pastors to strengthen them personally and professionally so they may experience robust mental, emotional, physical and spiritual health and ministry. We recognize that pastors need trusted relationships and communities around them. We also recognize the need for continued education surrounding these important topics, as well as tools to assist pastors in accomplishing these personal and professional health goals.

Let us all, as the WVBC family, come together in supporting and praying for the wonderful faith leaders God has placed in our midst. Much like the story of Joshua prevailing in battle for as long as Moses could keep his hands lifted up. "When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset" so the battle could be won (Exodus 17:12-13)!

Blessings,
Mike



DOING CHRIST'S WORK *together*

by Intentionally Engaging Communities for Christ

2024 Association Meeting Schedule

Rockcastle Association

Thursday, July 25 at 5 PM
Toneda Baptist Church

Elk Valley Association

Saturday, August 24 at 8:30 AM
Sutton Baptist Church

Parkersburg Association

Tuesday, September 17 at 4:30 PM
Parkersburg First Baptist Church

Little Kanawha Association

Thursday, August 1 at 5 PM
Rush Run Baptist Church

Eastern Association

Sunday, August 25 at 3 PM
Romney Baptist Church

Fayette Association

Wednesday, September 18 at 6 PM
Page Baptist Church

Harrisville Association

Tuesday, August 6 at 9:30 AM
South Fork Baptist Church

Fairmont Association

Sunday, September 8 at 3 PM
Boothsville Baptist Church

Twelve Pole Association

Saturday, September 21 at 8:30 AM
Big Hurricane Baptist Church

Greenbrier-Raleigh Association

Tuesday, August 6 at 4:30 PM
West Point Baptist Church

Hopewell Association

Wednesday, September 11 at 6:00 PM
Millbrook Baptist Church

Judson Association

Sunday, September 22 at 4:30 PM
Reynoldsville Baptist Church

Broad Run Association

Thursday, August 15 at 8:30 AM
Weston First Baptist Church

Kanawha Valley Association

Friday, September 13 at 5:30 PM
Location: TBD

Coal River Association

Saturday, September 28 at 9:30 AM
Morrisvale Baptist Church

Teays Valley Association

Thursday, August 15 at 5 PM
Nitro First Baptist Church

Union Association

Sunday, September 15 at 2:30 PM
Union Baptist Church

Logan-Mingo Association

Sunday, September 29 at 3:30 PM
Man First Baptist Church

Good Hope Association

Sunday, August 18 at 1 PM
Mill Creek Baptist Church

Panhandle Association

Sunday, September 15 at 4 PM
Weirton First Baptist Church

No details are currently available for the
Goshen or Guyandotte associations.

For the latest association meeting details, visit wvbc.org

159TH

ANNUAL MEETING OF OUR WVBC FAMILY

OCTOBER 17-18, 2024

CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH, OAK HILL



INTENTIONALLY ENGAGING COMMUNITIES FOR CHRIST

Frank Miller to Retire on August 11th

Frank Miller has announced his plans to retire from his role as Director of Operations at **Parchment Valley Conference Center** (PV) after 15 years. His last day is planned to be August 11, 2024. Frank began his time with the WVBC as Director of Operations at Parchment Valley on May 1, 2009.

Frank's life experience made him uniquely qualified for the success he has experienced at PV. In just his third year at PV, Frank's admiration and respect for United States military veterans was the catalyst for organizing the Jackson County Hunting Heroes (JCHH). JCHH is often hosted at PV and celebrates 12 years of sustainable impact on veterans' lives.

Along with his military service and discipline, Frank honed his management and leadership skills with his 30 years of employment as an Account Executive with the Pepsi Bottling Group. The business and marketing experience has translated into managing PV employees and facilities well while expanding the client base of those renting PV to include community groups and nonprofits and churches from several states, in addition to the strong support of WVBC churches and associations.

Frank's many years of church ministry experience as an ordained minister and earning his Pastoral Diploma from the Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies has equipped him theologically and practically to ensure that PV was a place of spiritual renewal, evangelistic fervor and theological education.

Above all, it is Frank's heart for people and heart of empathy and kindness that will be missed the most. Whether he was serving some of the neediest of Jackson County through Brothers' Keeper mission teams, leading the charge alongside the WV AB Men with disaster relief, or directing tractor trailer loads of goods to homeless and others in need (and even distributing mattresses or pet food), Frank desired to serve Jesus and introduce Him to everyone as he went.



Caption needed

When asked what he valued most in his time at PV, Frank said, "Growing the programs, like Brothers' Keepers and JCHH to be catalysts to involve more people to walk closer with the Lord." He added, "My greatest accomplishment is connecting the community to Parchment Valley."

Executive Minister Mike Sisson said of Frank's retirement, "Frank has been a joy to serve alongside. His dependable and faithful work ethic is only overshadowed by his relational personality and genuine caring heart. While I am excited for Frank in this new chapter of life in retirement, I am saddened to lose him as a fellow team member of the WVBC staff."

Frank has already indicated he will still be excited to maintain the many relationships he has developed with the WVBC family, and he plans to continue filling pulpits on occasion and working with veterans and JCHH.

Join us in thanking Frank for his service and congratulating him on his well-deserved retirement.



Job Posting

**Parchment Valley Conference Center
Director of Operations**

APPLY NOW



Job Posting

Parchment Valley Conference Center Director of Operations

The Parchment Valley Conference Center, located in Ripley, WV, is a ministry of the West Virginia Baptist Convention. The Conference Center is currently seeking a Director of Operations to provide management, marketing, and leadership for the Conference Center.



A summary of the job expectations includes:

- Work with the Conference Center Board of Directors to provide oversight, leadership, vision and supervision for the Conference Center.
- Work with the churches, associations and auxiliaries of the West Virginia Baptist Convention to provide facilities and programs that are mutually beneficial.
- Provide direct supervision for the department managers (currently – Guest Services, Food Services and Maintenance) and serve as the personnel and training officer for the Conference Center.
- Be responsible for the preparation and management of the Conference Center financial budget.
- Maintain an atmosphere conducive to education and spiritual renewal at the Conference Center.
- Oversee and ensure that the Conference Center operates in a safe manner and all employees and activities are observing the policies and procedures established by the West Virginia Baptist Convention and Conference Center Board of Directors.
- Develop a marketing plan to maximize the utilization of the facilities according to the mission, vision and purpose of the Conference Center; create a source of revenue and financial support and increase the client base of the Conference Center.
- Build strong relationships with West Virginia Baptist Convention churches and leaders; with local community officials and organizations; and with volunteers and other nonprofits.
- Increase the client base of the Conference Center to include West Virginia Baptist Convention churches, associations, other church groups, non-profits, businesses, and individuals as meets the availability and mission of the Conference Center.

Minimum qualifications are:

- Committed follower of Jesus Christ.
- Person of integrity and good moral character.
- Faithful and dependable with a willingness to work long hours when necessary.
- Relational personality and willingness to initiate conversations with prospective clientele.
- College degree or equivalent.
- Five years of management experience.
- Experience in marketing, promotion and sales is preferred.
- Ministry and/or pastoral experience is preferred.
- General knowledge of the Parchment Valley Conference Center and the West Virginia Baptist Convention or willingness to learn.

To submit a nomination or an application, send documents via email to: sisson@wvbc.org.

Applicants should submit a brief letter of interest and resume.

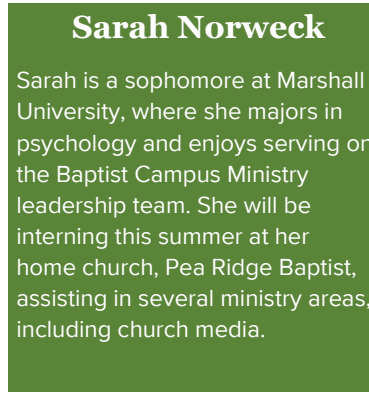
Interested persons are asked to apply no later than: July 1, 2024.

Meet the 2024 Ministry Interns



Geneva Whitlatch

Geneva is student at West Virginia University at Parkersburg and a member of Pine Grove Baptist Church, where she got connected in 2018 through their youth group. She will be interning this summer at Pine Grove Baptist in their children’s ministry.



Sarah Norweck

Sarah is a sophomore at Marshall University, where she majors in psychology and enjoys serving on the Baptist Campus Ministry leadership team. She will be interning this summer at her home church, Pea Ridge Baptist, assisting in several ministry areas, including church media.



Katie Nesselrode

Katie is a sophomore at Fairmont State University (FSU), where she majors in Graphic Design Technology. She is a Resident Advisor at FSU and is active in Baptist Campus Ministry. She will be interning this summer at her home church, New Hope Baptist, assisting with communication, digital media and technology.



Charles Hinzman

Charles is currently enrolled in Palmer Theological Seminary and is a graduate of the Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies. He is a member of Sand Fork Baptist Church and has previously served as a ministry intern with the WVBC. This summer, he will be interning at Sunrise Baptist Church.

BCM: Commissioning Graduates to “Change the World”

They made it!! Many of the graduating seniors began their freshman year of college during the Covid pandemic. Stories of God’s faithfulness outweigh the distractions of those Covid restrictions. **Baptist Campus Ministry (BCM)** has the mission statement of “changing lives that change the world,” and we are confident that God will use these graduating students to change the world.

The medical world will be impacted as we commission nurses, pharmaceutical salesmen and medical school students. The school system will receive Bible study leaders and worship team members to educate students across the country. Businesses are receiving godly people of integrity to invest others money, market their products and cast vision for the future. Every year, BCM

commissions another group of graduating seniors to serve as missionaries in our world. Please pray for these students as they secure jobs, find housing and search for new places of worship.

BCM concluded the school year with their 36th annual Beach Week retreat to Myrtle Beach, SC. This year, 56 students participated from both Marshall University and West Virginia University. Beach Week is a great way to end the year in fellowship with other campuses, while also preparing the students for their summer mission of home, camps or internships.

As we seek to change lives on campuses all around the state, you can support this work directly by visiting wvbcm.com/give.



Graduating seniors from BCM at West Virginia University



Graduating seniors from BCM at Marshall University

Sunny Day Activity Center is Taking Shape!

Construction kicked off on April 1st and made significant strides with ground and foundation work underway. The first five weeks of construction have seen a flurry of activity, including excavation, drainage, access roads, foundation concrete pours, column piers set, masonry for the stem walls, under slab plumbing, foundation stem wall insulation and grouting the masonry stem wall. These initial phases are laying the groundwork for the floor slab and future construction phases of the **Sunny Day Activity Center**.

This is not just another building project at camp. It is a transformative endeavor that will significantly enhance our ministry. The final building will span 80' by 100' for the gym and an additional 24' by 80' for the entry, bathrooms, classroom and storage facilities. This big building will make a big difference in our ability to serve and impact lives!

Looking back over 80 years of history at the **West Virginia Baptist Camp at Cowen**, one thing is clear: we are blessed. Despite numerous challenges over the decades, the Lord has moved, and Camp Cowen continues to be a place "where people meet Jesus and grow as his disciples in a community of faith."

In 2023, the Lord moved, and faithful donors gave nearly \$700,000, reigniting the Sunny Day campaign! To date, almost \$1.3 million has been raised, and there is less than \$200,000 left to raise. I know that God's faithful people will provide for this project, which is scheduled to be completed in November.



Installation of the masonry for the foundation stem walls.

How will you and your church join in this project? We have reaped the benefits of others for the past 80 years. Let's build something that others can enjoy for the next 80 years.

Join us in prayerfully supporting and donating to build Sunny Day! **Check out <https://campcowen.org/sunny-day-center/> for resources to promote this opportunity, including information on donating, informational materials, promotion videos and fundraising ideas.**

SCHEDULE

- JUNE 3-6 Intern & Gopher Training
- JUNE 7-9 Younger Midler (grades 2-4)
- JUNE 9-15 Junior High 1 (grades 7-9)
- JUNE 16-22 Junior 1 (grades 5-6)
- JUNE 23-29 High School 1 (grades 9-'24 grads)
- JUNE 30-JULY 6 Junior 2 (grades 5-6)
- JULY 7-13 Junior High 2 (grades 7-9)
- JULY 14-20 High School 2 (grades 9-'24 grads)
- JULY 21-25 Raleigh/Rockcastle
- JULY 26-29 Family Camp
- JULY 30-AUG. 2 Older Midler (grades 3-5)
- AUG. 2-4 AB Men & Boys Camp
- AUG. 9-10 Camp Global

REGISTER NOW

Online or mail-in available at campcowen.org/register

Camp Cowen 2024

THEME



**"Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love."
-1 Corinthians 16: 13-14**

Have you ever wondered what it means to be brave? We have plenty of examples of bravery in movies, video games, books, and real-life examples too. Yet, our world has contradictory

messages on bravery. On one hand, students are encouraged to live confidently and make choices that are brave. On the other, students hear messages of worry, doubt, and fear. So, what **does** it mean to be brave?

God calls believers to a better way of understanding life and living in our world. Our lives can be radically changed when we live knowing God is in control and God is at work around us. We can grow strongly rooted faith, choose to live courageously, gather our strength from God, and let love permeate all we do.

Spring in Sendai: An Update from Sarah McCloy

Written by Sarah McCloy,
Global Servant, International Ministries

Recently, I've been reflecting on just how difficult it is to learn a second language. I love studying Japanese—it's a beautiful language. Still, it can be easy to get discouraged at times with my language progress. There's always more I want to communicate or a more precise way to express my thoughts. Some days it feels like my brain is stuck in "English mode" and the correct Japanese word just won't come to mind.

Yet, amidst these occasional moments of frustration, is the continual reminder of how much I've grown in the past year.

Last year at my language school orientation, I didn't understand anything the instructors said. I struggled to say my self-introduction. This year, I was asked by the school to translate the orientation into English for the new students.

It was God's timely reminder that my Japanese HAS improved! This past month I also increased my ministry in the local church. In addition to my work with Shokei Baptist's kids' program, I've begun preaching at both Shokei and another local church. Right now, I preach the message in English, and it is translated into Japanese. I pray that someday soon I'll be able to preach in Japanese also. I did say the benediction in Japanese though!

The beginning of April is always hectic, but thankfully the end of April is a holiday season called Golden Week. I had time to meet with friends and explore more of Sendai. This included a day trip with a friend to a local onsen—a natural hot spring resort. It was the perfect re-energizer during this busy time!



Sarah translating for the new student orientation.

Weekly Updates! If you'd like to hear from me every week, please check out my "Sarah in Sendai" Facebook page. I post a weekly "Friday Fun Fact" from my experiences!

Prayer Requests: Thank you so much for your prayers! Please keep praying for:

1. My continued language learning—especially my Japanese speaking ability.
2. For my upcoming sermons at Shokei Baptist Church and Kashimadai Church.
3. For continued opportunities to share about Jesus with classmates and friends!

Support Update: I am 100% funded! Thank you to everyone who has donated. If you have committed to recurring support, please continue to give. If my support level drops too low, I will need to return to the US.

Enduring Love: Bringing Hope to Believers in Sudan in the Midst of War

Written by Dan Chetti,
Global Servant, International Ministries

Even in the midst of persecution, war and other challenges, God is continuing to open doors throughout the Arab world.

"Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went." (Acts 8:4)

As the church and its leaders were scattered in Sudan, our five **Enduring Love** partners never stopped sharing the Gospel and seizing every opportunity to disciple, baptize and teach people along the way. As a result, during the past three months, we have witnessed 249 people commit their lives to Christ, 26 people were baptized and two house churches were started.

The following are some testimonies from our partners:



Andrea and his co-leader, Mohammed, traveling with a group of believers.

Update from Yousif:

In the northern state of Sudan, Yousif is leading two groups (one online with 30 members and another physical with eight members) who are meeting regularly and studying the Bible in an interactive way. These groups not only provide a space for believers to grow deeper in the Word of God, but also a supportive community for the believers who are affected by war.

In one of the evangelistic services, Yousif spoke about forgiveness, and at the end of the service more than 30 people came forward and repented. One of those was 'Nader,' who shared how he has not forgiven his sister for the past 15 years and the extent of this has now reached the point of enmity between their children. But as he felt the Spirit move in his heart, he came forward, asking forgiveness from God and from his sister.

Update from Andrea:

Since the war erupted in Khartoum state, Andrea has not stopped serving among the internally displaced persons (IDPs) in camps in Madani, Gazira state. As a result of this ministry, more than 18 people have been baptized, and among them was a very influential businessman from Khartoum. Andrea had plans to expand the ministry in Madani, and he also wanted to return to Khartoum as soon as the war stops to complete the construction of his church. However, the clashes have escalated and the whole of Gezira state is now occupied, leaving all citizens, including himself, fleeing to the White Nile region for their safety.

To receive the full report of what God is doing through Enduring Love, contact Todd McClure at todd@wvbc.org.

An Update from J.D. and Rhonda Reed

*Written by J.D. Reed,
Global Servant, International Ministries*

It has for sure been a busy fall and winter for Rhonda and me. In September, we moved back to West Virginia from Bolivia. We are still global servants with International Ministries, but due to health reasons we decided to move back and work remotely. It has been quite a whirlwind since then.

Earlier in the fall, Rhonda took on a new role as the Global Coordinator for Health and Wellness for IM. In that role, she will also be part of the team that helps care for the Global Servants. Since September, she has been working with the team and has been providing care to the global servants on many levels. She also facilitates collaboration and networking with global servants who serve in global health and wellness ministries, represents IM in working with global health organizations, and supports IM's provisions for the medical and mental health of global servants through developing resources, providing advice and assisting with member care programming.

I am continuing my work in the Masters of Theological Studies Program as an adjunct professor and part of the admin team. In March, I was participating in residency weeks in Chile and Brazil (outside of São Paulo). In Chile, we welcomed 11 new students into the MTS program before their first class. In Brazil, we had 15



J.D. (second from the right) with a group of students from Chile.

students from five different South American countries. It was wonderful to be with the students in-person and hear how God has blessed and challenged them in the past year and how they hope to learn going forward.

After my time in Brazil, I was able to spend 10 days in Bolivia and visit Richard, Carmen and the girls at the House of Hope (Fundación Proyectos de Esperanza). While there, I had the opportunity to meet with ministry leaders and also to help with two dental clinics and reconnect with many that we work with.

16TH ANNUAL

CAMP GLOBAL

August 9-10, 2024

Camp Cowen

\$50

COME LEARN MORE ABOUT

- ✓ Business as Missions
- ✓ Short-Term Missions
- ✓ Our Missionaries

Special pricing until July 1
(Includes lodging and meals)

* Price increases to \$80 after July 1

With questions, contact
Todd McClure at todd@wvbc.org

REGISTER NOW AT WVBC.ORG

AB Men & Boys Camp

AUGUST 2-4, 2024

CAMP COWEN

Celebrating 100 Years

OF THE WV AB MEN

\$85 FOR FULL WEEKEND

\$65 FOR SATURDAY ONLY



LEARN MORE AT CAMPCOWEN.ORG

Work Parties Helped Prepare Parchment Valley and Camp Cowen for Camps

In April, the **American Baptist (AB) Men** hosted work parties at both Parchment Valley Conference Center and Camp Cowen to help prepare the WVBC facilities for this summer's busy camping season. Parchment Valley also benefited from a second work party led by the Parchment Valley Bow Hunters, and Camp Cowen benefited from a second work party led by the youth.

At Parchment Valley, groups helped repair broken water lines, installed new kitchen tile, made several roof and gutter repairs, and helped mow around the lake.

At Camp Cowen, they helped with pool cleanup, wood splitting, organization of the maintenance storage areas and cabin improvements.

We are grateful for all the volunteers who gave of their time to help us get ready for summer!



Women's Camp 2024: A Weekend to "Restore"

Written by Maci Villers,
Co-Director, Women's Camp

The 8th annual **Women's Camp** at the West Virginia Baptist Camp at Cowen was held April 5-7, 2024. Despite tornadoes touching down earlier in the week leading to a State of Emergency and frigid temperatures, 167 women gathered together with one main theme: "Restore." We spent the weekend in worship led by Lydia Nutter, while Karla Carr brought the Word. We worked through Psalm 23 one verse at a time. In our final session, we were charged to take the goodness and mercy of the Lord with us all the days of our lives.

Women's Camp has prayerfully been a time for women from all over the state to come together, set their responsibilities aside, and focus on their relationship with Christ. In addition to the three scripture-filled worship sessions, we were able to offer several interest groups including fishing at the river, beading, Bible journaling/painting, spiritual disciplines, informal discussion on counseling, and a book club with the help of several volunteers who lead each group.

This year, we had a special evening activity - watercolor! A local artist, Sarah Ferguson, from Philippi, WV, provided a video lesson for us and walked us through the steps of painting the three crosses in Vespers for everyone to paint and take home.

Each year, we spend time together learning about missions. We have had several missionaries and their families come to share about their work for the Kingdom in the past. This year, we switched it up. Everyone split into a group with women from their



A time of worship during Women's Camp.

association where they were encouraged to share about local mission projects. It was a blessing to hear of all the different ways the love of Christ is being shared and physical needs are being met across the state.

We ended each evening the Camp Cowen way – gathered around the campfire! Our weekend would not be possible without several WVBC men who cooked, cleaned and served us all weekend. They kept the coffee hot and the fire rolling for us!

We hope you will join us for Women's Camp next year on April 4-6, 2025!

Pastors4Pastors SAVE THE DATE!

2024

Pastors4Pastors exists to provide fellowship among the ministers of the WVBC; to provide opportunities for education, inspiration and personal/professional growth; and to encourage pastors and churches to maintain healthy relationships in ministry.

We have several upcoming events that pastors (and their families) are invited to join us for.

JUNE
8

FREE CONCERT W/ ISAACS

Sue Morris Sports Complex - at 7pm

FAMILY PICNIC

Noon at Parchment Valley Shelter #1 - Bring a covered dish. Pool Open. FREE RSVP to
Anthony_Pratt@hotmail.com or 304.382.3600

JULY
13

AUG
30

COUPLES CRUISE ON VALLEY GEM

at 6pm Includes dinner. \$100 per couple

PRE CONVENTION EVENT 9AM

at Oak Hill Baptist Church \$30 nonmember \$20 member

OCT
17

For more information, contact Anthony Pratt at Anthony_Pratt@hotmail.com

Southwest Area News

by *Evan Arkell, Southwest Area Minister*

Church Merger in the Kanawha Valley Association

New Hope Community Church

Join us at our NEW Location!
510 Maryland Avenue
Charleston, WV 25302
Behind West Side Kroger



On April 7, 2024, Calvary Baptist Church, in the west side of Charleston, voted to merge with New Hope Community Church, also in the westside of Charleston. Dr. Jeff Biddle, the founding pastor of New Hope, remains as the pastor of this newly merged congregation. This new church came together and began worshiping as one body on May 5th. Pastor Jeff is excited for the new opportunities as they continue to minister to the west side. The church is meeting and worshiping in the former Calvary Baptist Church building and is named New Hope Community Church.

A Story of Answered Prayer!

I bring you greetings from the heart of the Southeast Region!

At this year's Annual Training Event at Parchment Valley, I had the privilege of sharing a story about missionary Leota Campbell, who moved into the coalfields of McDowell County around 50 years ago to establish the Panther Mission. This ministry is still being run by Panther Missionary Baptist Church. Knowing that the church was currently without a pastor, I then encouraged the 250+ attendees to pray for the next missionary to move there. Let me share with you how God answers prayer!

Panther Missionary Baptist has been without a pastor for three years. Their former pastor, Steve Shumate, moved to North Carolina to care for his ailing wife and mother. However, in March of 2024 (exactly one month after we prayed!), Steve was able to return to the church to serve as interim. Rather than moving into the parsonage, he brought a mobile home and parked it next to the church.

Around the same time, the WVBC was contacted by J.T. Knowlton, a pastoral candidate who had spent some time in Vietnam. J.T. was adopted into a military family when he was ten. His family moved from Vietnam to Friendly, WV, where they lived for a year, before they moved again to Ohio before eventually returning to Vietnam. Fast forward 50 years and J.T. now holds a teaching degree and has recently felt a call to preach.

Looking for a place to live and some time to discern his next steps, I invited J.T. to West Virginia. He landed on May 2, where I picked him up at the airport. He stayed with us two days to get acclimated to our time zone. Then, following the gracious offer of Panther Missionary Baptist to allow him to live in their vacant parsonage, we moved him into the parsonage, where he currently lives.

Retiring Pastors

This has been a busy year for retiring pastors in the Southwest area of the WVBC. At the end of January, Pastor Allen Stewart retired from Milton Baptist Church after serving there for 18 years. Allen and his wife, Susan, will remain in eastern Cabell County. Allen has been filling pulpits since his retirement and plans to continue with that and looks forward to the possibility of serving a congregation as an interim pastor.

At the end of April, Pastor Joe Seese retired from Clendenin First Baptist Church after serving there for eight years. Joe came to Clendenin to begin his pastorate about a week after the devastating floods of 2016. Joe and his wife, Debbie, have relocated to North Carolina to be closer to some of their children and grandchildren.

Also at the end of April, Pastor Allen Donaldson retired from Gauley Bridge Baptist Church. Although Allen had only been at Gauley Bridge for a couple of years, he has served many years as a WVBC pastor. Allen and his wife, Trish, remain in Summersville, and I have a feeling we will see him popping up in pulpits around the area.

Southeast Area News

by *Jon Villers, Southeast Area Minister*

I know I should never be surprised by how God connects His dots, but this is so cool to me! A few months ago, we prayed for God to send another missionary to Panther, and He actually ended up sending two!

God is Good, All The Time! All the Time, God is Good!



From left to right: Kevin Morgan, Steve Shumate and J.T. Knowlton

BARBARA LEONARD BRYANT, 86, of South Charleston, died on April 3, 2024. She was a member of South Charleston First Baptist Church, where she served as the Sunday School superintendent, a Sunday School teacher, children's choir director and sang in the choir.

JEAN ANN CUNNINGHAM, 92, of Charleston, died on March 31, 2024. Her involvement in the WVBC was extremely extensive. She began teaching kindergarten and serving as a youth director at the Weirton Christian Center. After getting married, she and her husband Jim served numerous WVBC churches together. They later worked at Parchment Valley Conference Center and Camp Cowen. After Jim's passing, Jean served for several years as Minister of Administration at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Charleston. In addition to her work within the WVBC, Jean was active on the National Board of American Baptist Women and later on the Board of the American Baptist Churches, USA. She was also a trustee for and received the distinguished alumni award from Alderson Broaddus University.

LEWIS STEPHEN DEBRULAR, 76, of Weston, died on April 2, 2024. He was a member of Weston First Baptist Church, where he served as a deacon and adult Sunday School teacher.

VIRGINIA DUMONT GILLESPIE, 93, of Hurricane, died on April 17, 2024. She was a member of Hurricane First Baptist Church and also a member of the West Virginia Baptist Historical Society.

WANDA JEAN GUNTER, 97, died on April 3, 2024. She was a member of Mount Vernon Baptist Church, where she served as the church secretary, a trustee, a deaconess and member of the choir.

VIKI SUE JOHNSON, 72, of Big Battle community in Doddridge County, died on April 16, 2024. She was a member of Welcome Baptist Church, where she served as a Sunday School teacher, music director, choir member, church clerk and director of their Vacation Bible School.

ARTHUR L. MALCOM, 83, of Clarksburg, died on March 10, 2024. He was a retired pastor at Mount Vernon Baptist Church in Brownston.

DAVID ALLEN SNEED, 83, of Fayetteville, died on April 16, 2024. He was ordained at Calvary Baptist Church in Charleston, and later served as pastor of Fayetteville Baptist Church and Sunday Road Baptist Church. He also served as interim at numerous other WVBC churches. He was also a member of the West Virginia Baptist Historical Society.

REV. DAVID RICHARD WHITE, 79, of Oak Hill, died on March 29, 2024. He served several WVBC churches, including Racine First Baptist Church, Cook Memorial Baptist Church, Oak Hill Baptist Church and Mount Vernon Baptist Church in Hurricane. He also served as camp pastor at Camp Cowen and taught numerous classes for the School of Christian Studies, which he helped establish.

ALINE "HOPE" YATES, 100, of Beckley, died on March 5, 2024. She was a member of Crab Orchard Baptist Church, where she served in various ministries, including as treasurer of the American Baptist Women's Mission Circle.

MINISTRY EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Director of Music (Part-Time)

Location: Beckley area

Lead Pastor (Full-Time)

Location: Greenbrier County

Pastor of Discipleship (Part-Time)

Location: Parkersburg area

Pastor of Student Ministries (Full-Time)

Location: Hurricane area

Youth Director (Part-Time)

Location: Marion County

Senior Pastor (Full-Time)

Location: Charleston area

Mid-High Student Ministries (Part-Time)

Location: Morgantown area

Director of Children's Ministry (Part-Time)

Location: Huntington area

Senior Pastor (Part-Time)

Location: Parkersburg area

Pastor to Youth (Part-Time)

Location: Jackson County

Pastor (Full-Time)

Location: Barbour County

Accompanist (Part-Time)

Location: Charleston area

Student Ministries Pastor (Full-Time)

Location: Parkersburg area

Senior Pastor (Part-Time)

Location: Huntington area

Family Ministry Position (Part-Time)

Location: Charleston area

Church Pianist (Part-Time)

Location: Charleston area

Music Director (Part-Time)

Location: Charleston area

Children's Ministry Director (Part-Time)

Location: Parkersburg 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.

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

Prayer Calendars

June 2024

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 Page Baptist Church; James Keith Cook, pastor (Fayette Association)
JUNE 4 – Trish Magal, International Ministries Global Servant to Thailand
JUNE 5 – Mike Akers, member of the WVBC Outreach Commission
JUNE 6 – The ministry of Morrisvale Baptist Church (Coal River Association)
JUNE 7 – Younger Midler Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen
JUNE 8 – Phil Smith, International Ministries Global Servant to Brazil
JUNE 9 – Junior High 1 Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen
JUNE 10 – The ministry of Seventh Avenue Baptist Church; Robert Withers, pastor (Guyandotte Association)
JUNE 11 – Zola Miller, Parchment Valley Board Chair and member of the WVBC Discipleship Commission
JUNE 12 – The ministry of Scott Street Baptist Church; Garry Moore, pastor (Greenbrier-Raleigh Association)
JUNE 13 – The ministry of Faith Baptist Tabernacle; Timothy Skaggs, pastor (Elk Valley Association)
JUNE 14 – Sarah McCurdy, International Ministries Global Servant to Iberoamerica and the Caribbean
JUNE 15 – Vital Pierre, International Ministries Global Servant to the Dominican Republic
JUNE 16 – Brothers' Keeper beginning today at Parchment Valley
JUNE 17 – David Hoge, WVBC secretary and member of the WVBC Stewardship Commission
JUNE 18 – Junior 1 Camp happening this week at Camp Cowen
JUNE 19 – The ministry of Ten Mile Baptist Church; Bradley Tenney, pastor (Broad Run Association)
JUNE 20 – Katherine Niles, International Ministries Global Servant to the Democratic Republic of the Congo
JUNE 21 – The ministry of Masontown First Baptist Church; William Winston, pastor (Goshen Association)
JUNE 22 – The ministry of Quinwood First Baptist Church; Chad Rodes, pastor (Hopewell Association)
JUNE 23 – The ministry of Dorcas Baptist Church; Steve Davis, pastor (Eastern Association)
JUNE 24 – Anita Gutierrez, International Ministries Global Servant to South Africa
JUNE 25 – The ministry of Wilsonburg Baptist Church; Brian Thompson, pastor (Judson Association)
JUNE 26 – The ministry of Gilboa Baptist Church; Larry Greathouse, pastor (Good Hope Association)
JUNE 27 – The ministry of South Fork Baptist Church; Tom Burrill, pastor (Harrisville Association)
JUNE 28 – The ministry of Hebron Baptist Church (Fairmont Association)
JUNE 29 – Scott McClure, member of the WVBC Leadership Commission
JUNE 30 – Junior 2 Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen

July 2024

JULY 1 – The ministry of The Chapel; Chris Moles, pastor (Teays Valley Association)
JULY 2 – The ministry of Birch River Baptist Church; Christopher Tatman, pastor (Elk Valley Association)
JULY 3 – Eric Lembke, International Ministries Global Servant to Thailand
JULY 4 – Jon Hayes, member of the WVBC Outreach Commission
JULY 5 – The ministry of Tallmansville Baptist Church; Timothy Lewis, pastor (Broad Run Association)
JULY 6 – The ministry of Sardis Baptist Church; Garry Layfield, pastor (Judson Association)
JULY 7 – Junior High 2 Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen
JULY 8 – Tim Rice, International Ministries Global Servant to the Democratic Republic of the Congo
JULY 9 – Mike Cornell, member of the WVBC Leadership Commission
JULY 10 – Toya Richards, International Ministries Global Servant to South Africa
JULY 11 – Yuree Lembke, International Ministries Global Servant to Thailand
JULY 12 – The ministry of Sistersville First Baptist Church; Darrell Mayfield, pastor (Panhandle Association)
JULY 13 – The ministry of Good Hope Baptist Church; John Barker, pastor (Parkersburg Association)
JULY 14 – High School 2 Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen
JULY 15 – The ministry of Charleston Baptist Temple; Jim Hewitt, pastor (Kanawha Valley Association)
JULY 16 – Catherine Longkumer, International Ministries Global Servant to South and East Asia
JULY 17 – The ministry of Guyandotte Baptist Church; Harrison Abbott, pastor (Rockcastle Association)
JULY 18 – Katrina Williams, International Ministries Global Servant to Thailand
JULY 19 – Don Biram, WVBC past president and 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 – Dwight Brohard, WVBC trustee and member of the WVBC Stewardship Commission
JULY 24 – The ministry of Logan First Baptist Church; Michael Hatfield, pastor (Logan-Mingo Association)
JULY 25 – Rockcastle Association as they celebrate their annual meeting
JULY 26 – Family Camp beginning today at Camp Cowen
JULY 27 – The ministry of Grantsville First Baptist Church; Ron Chesser, pastor (Little Kanawha Association)
JULY 28 – The ministry of Old Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church; Scott Riffle, interim pastor (Twelve Pole Association)
JULY 29 – The ministry of Sunday Road Baptist Church; John Massey, pastor (Hopewell Association)
JULY 30 – Older Midler Camp happening this weekend at Camp Cowen
JULY 31 – Rob Ely, director of Student Ministries, WVBC

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

Upcoming Events

JUNE

June 7-9

Young Midler Camp (Grades 2-4)
Camp Cowen

June 8

P4P Appreciation (Free) Concert
Sue Morris Sports Complex, Glenville

June 9-15

Junior High 1 Camp (Grades 7-9)
Camp Cowen

June 15

Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Baptism & Communion (E-06)
Parchment Valley Conference Center

June 16-21

Brothers' Keeper
Parchment Valley Conference Center

June 16-22

Junior 1 Camp (Grades 5-6)
Camp Cowen

June 23-29

High School 1 Camp (Grades 9-12)
Camp Cowen

June 30-July 6

Junior 2 Camp (Grades 5-6)
Camp Cowen

JULY

July 7-13

Junior High 2 Camp (Grades 7-9)
Camp Cowen

July 13

P4P Family Picnic
Parchment Valley Conference Center

July 14-20

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: Baptist Polity (E-01)
Online

July 21-25

Raleigh Rockcastle Camp
Camp Cowen

July 26-29

Family Camp (All Ages)
Camp Cowen

July 30-August 2

Older Midler Camp (Grades 3-5)
Camp Cowen

AUGUST

August 2-4

AB Men & Boys Camp
Camp Cowen

August 9-10

Camp Global (All Ages)
Camp Cowen

August 10

Bobby Wood School of Christian Studies: Evangelism (Mod-6)
Parchment Valley Conference Center

August 23

P4P Book Study
Glenville First Baptist Church

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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