

# PROCLAIMER

2024 | VOLUME 26, ISSUE 3

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, *baptizing them* in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ”

Matthew 28:19 (ESV)



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**SBCVirginia**  
You are not alone.



# PROCLAIMER

Winter 2024-25 — Issue 3

**PUBLISHER &  
SBC OF VIRGINIA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
Dr. Brian Autry

**SENIOR EDITOR**  
Brandon Pickett

**EDITOR**  
Ishmael LaBiosa

**PROJECT COORDINATOR**  
Mindy McCord

**DESIGNERS**  
Patti Spencer  
Melanie Rebsamen

## SBC OF VIRGINIA

The SBC of Virginia is a fellowship of Southern Baptist Convention churches cooperating to assist local congregations in their task of fulfilling the Great Commission as commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ.

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Where locals were paving an impromptu path to church, Pastor Mike Smith and members of Restoration Church saw God building a bridge for ministry.



# Praying for the Church

Our family has been to New York on several occasions, before 9/11 and afterward. Like so many, we visited the site of Ground Zero and the moving memorial. A place that drew my attention was St. Paul's Chapel, which was a place of rest and refuge for weary first responders and recovery workers. The pews in the church had the marks of firefighter boots, those who had collapsed in exhaustion and grief. The floors were scuffed from those wearied from hours of digging and searching. The Apostle Paul encouraged the church to serve others (Galatians 5:13-14; Philippians 2:3-8; Colossians 3:23-24). I praise the Lord for the work of His churches as they serve the mission of Christ among our neighbors and the nations.

As we seek to advance the Gospel together, let's be praying for churches. I invite you to join together in praying ten specific Scriptures...

1. **2 Timothy 4:2**—*Pray that the church will proclaim the Word of God without apology.*
2. **Colossians 4:2**—*Pray that the church would devote itself to prayer.*
3. **Acts 4:12**—*Pray that the church will boldly share Jesus as the only hope for salvation.*
4. **John 4:24**—*Pray that the church will worship God in spirit and in truth.*
5. **1 Peter 5:2-3**—*Pray that our leaders will serve humbly as godly examples to all.*
6. **Colossians 1:28-29**—*Pray that the church will labor and strive to present everyone mature in Christ.*
7. **Matthew 9:37-38**—*Pray that more workers step up to faithfully serve.*
8. **Ephesians 4:11-12**—*Pray that our leaders equip the saints for the work of ministry.*
9. **Revelation 2:4-5**—*Pray that the church does not lose its first love.*
10. **Matthew 16:18**—*Pray that we will trust Jesus to grow the church.*

SBCV exists to come alongside local churches. Let's be praying and seeking God's face. God is able!

Your brother in Christ,



Brian Autry



 BAUTRY@SBCV.ORG

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 FACEBOOK.COM/BRIAN.AUTRY.70



# PRAY FOR MISSIONARIES

*around the globe*

"Then Jesus came near and said to them, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'" Matthew 28:18-20 (HCSB)



## Pierce & Casey Bennett

📍 South Asia

Ever read about old-time missionaries who trekked through the wilds to get somewhere and tell people about Jesus? Our missionaries, Pierce and Casey Bennett, still do that in South Asia. They hike for hours to reach villages where the gospel has not been heard. Let's pray people start responding!



## Steve & Jen Hagen

📍 Philippines

The challenge: Get the gospel to the Agta tribe living in rough mountains in the Philippines. Our missionaries there, Steve & Jen Hagen, enlisted another tribe on the island, former headhunters now Christians, to take the gospel. They've sent 20 missionaries to the Agta. Pray for Steve and Jen!

**52**  
SUNDAYS

Each missionary highlighted in 52 Sundays is supported by your church's giving through the Cooperative Program. Find more missionaries to pray for by visiting [sbcv.org/52sundays](https://sbcv.org/52sundays).



## DANIEL & ABIGAIL CHAMBERS

📍 North African/Middle Eastern Diaspora

Millions of immigrants and refugees from North Africa and the Middle East (NAME) now reside across Europe, many from unreached and unengaged people groups (UUPGs). The Chambers family is a part of the IMB's work to reach them with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Daniel and Abigail were sent out for three years from their home church in Virginia to

work with their team to run English as a Foreign Language classes and outreach programs through a community center in the heart of an immigrant neighborhood. There, they helped to meet tangible needs and build relationships to share the message of Christ. They disciplined new believers and encouraged local churches to join in the Gospel work.

With their two boys, Daniel

and Abigail are now returning as career missionaries. They will continue to faithfully sow Gospel seeds and prayerfully trust the Lord of the Harvest to bring fruit. We get to partner with the Chambers family through our Cooperative Program and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering giving. Would you commit to praying for them and to continue to faithfully support their work to reach the nations?



### PRAY FOR ...

- the people of NAME who come in contact with the Chambers family, that they will see their greatest need is reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ,
- the Chambers family to find housing quickly in an area that will serve their family and ministry well,
- the boys to adjust well as they enter school and are faced with using a foreign language, and
- local European believers to be encouraged to join the effort to take the Gospel to their NAME neighbors.

## WHIT & KATHY CASE

📍 West Africa/Sub-Saharan Africa

Whit and Kathy Case left their home in southern Virginia in late 2020 with two young boys to serve in a city of four million people in West Africa. They spent three and a half years serving as church planters among unreached peoples in a spiritually and physically difficult nation. The spiritual darkness is everywhere, with about 97% of the population following folk Islam. They returned on their stateside assignment this

summer. While here, they spent their time learning language and working alongside national partner churches with urban and rural church planting strategies.

As Whit and Kathy return to West Africa with their now three children, they take with them a passion for working with local churches to reach Muslims with the Gospel while also strengthening Christians to join

the Gospel task. Sub-Saharan Africa is quickly becoming the epicenter of global Christianity, and the Cases' heart is to see the Lord develop strong, mature African brothers and sisters who rightly discern the Word of God.

We can join these SBCV-sent missionaries as they focus on evangelism, discipleship, and leadership development by praying for them.



### PRAY FOR ...

- God-given wisdom in equipping and working alongside the local church,
- relationships to be built with believers and open doors among the unreached as the Cases continue to learn the local language,
- God's healing of medical needs for the Case family before they return to Africa, and
- the African church to seek after Biblically sound doctrine. That they would be rooted in God's Word despite cultural differences and persecution, and for healthy churches to plant healthy churches.

# AFRICA

*Pray* for Missionaries

*Africa is the world's second-largest and second-most populous continent. With nearly 1.4 billion people as of 2021, it accounts for about 18% of the world's population.*



# God's Perfect *Timing*

**P**astor Steve Chromy's journey with the Averett University football team is a powerful testament to God's perfect timing.

When Pastor Steve moved to Danville in January 2017 to shepherd Mount Hermon Baptist Church, he couldn't have imagined the path God had prepared for him. Soon after his arrival, he was invited to become the chaplain for Averett University's football team—a role that allowed him to share the Gospel with the players every Saturday before their games.

For seven years, Pastor Steve faithfully ministered to the team. As his children grew older and his schedule became more demanding, he began to question whether he should step down from the chaplaincy.

"I really struggled because we had not seen any fruit from those seven years," Pastor Steve shared.

One spring, after prayerful reflection and conversations with his wife, Pastor Steve felt it might be time to step away from the role. But just as he prepared to meet with the coach to share his decision, he received a text that changed everything. The coach informed

him that a group of 20 players, along with their families, planned to attend Mount Hermon the following Sunday.

This unexpected visit was a clear sign from God that Pastor Steve's work at Averett was far from over. The Sunday service was just the beginning. The coach began attending church regularly and soon gave his life to Christ. As the coach grew in faith, he connected with a man who had been searching for someone to study the Bible with, leading to weekly meetings to delve into God's Word together.

This season, the coach encouraged the entire football team to attend church after their first scrimmage. That Sunday, Mount Hermon welcomed around 130 players and some of their families to worship and share a meal. One grateful mother approached Pastor Steve after the service, thanking him for the care and spiritual support he had shown her son and the team.

Looking to deepen these relationships, Pastor Steve and the coach have planned a Monday evening Bible study on campus this fall. They will walk through the Book of 1 John to cultivate

ongoing discipleship. In a beautiful display of God's grace, both the coach and one of the players will be baptized on November 17, the first Sunday after the season ends.

"This whole situation has just reminded me that God's time is not our time," said Pastor Steve.

Pastor Steve will continue his ministry with the Averett football team, offering pregame chapel services and leading the Monday night Bible study. The coach has even extended an invitation to other sports teams to join. Through these efforts, God is clearly at work, drawing more young men to Himself and strengthening their faith.

"We are praying that God will save souls as we present the Gospel, and we have a real desire to disciple these players to be men of God," Pastor Steve declared.

As Pastor Steve reflects on this journey, he is reminded that God's plans often unfold in ways we don't expect. His timing is always perfect, and when we remain faithful, He will show us the fruit of our labor in His time. ■



Game Recap: Football | 9/14/2024 4:46:00 PM | Drew Wilson/Director of Athletics Communications



# TRUSTING Christ and **CONNECTING** with Others

## Family Fusion

**W**e've seen one life changed, one eternity changed, one family changed because we moved here," said Caleb Eckerd. "That alone means everything, and even if nothing else ever happened, it would be worth it."

Eckerd and his wife, Braeley, prayed over 36 cities to determine where they should plant a church. When they stepped foot in Hampton Roads for a vision trip, the Lord spoke clearly to them, "It will work here."

In July, Caleb and Braeley invited families that participated in SBCV's Family Fusion to visit their neighborhood. This special time included prayer over the couple and the ministry ahead of them, as well as prayer walking the surrounding community.

Family Fusion was hosted by **Fox Hill Road Baptist Church** in Hampton, where 20 families met to worship the Lord. They received mission project responsibilities like landscaping, light construction, and meal preparation to provide opportunities to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

During the prayer walk in Eckerd's neighborhood, families met Steven. The presence of the Holy Spirit was evident as they shared the Gospel. They witnessed Steven trusting Christ as his Lord and Savior!

Caleb immediately connected with his neighbor about his decision. Steven shared that he had recently expe-





“...it’s one thing to believe you will stand; it’s another to **actually step out of the boat** and realize you are standing firm.”

rienced demonic-like encounters, and he did not know what to make of them. Once Caleb heard Steven’s story, it was clear spiritual matters were at the forefront of his mind, and the Holy Spirit was working in his life.

Steven and his family joined Caleb and Braeley for dinner the next night, and they had an amazing time of fellowship. Steven is now attending a Bible study in the Eckerd home.

“Before moving here, we lived in a space of trusting that when we stepped out of the boat onto the water, we would stand,” said Caleb. “This is all well and good, but it’s one thing to believe you will stand; it’s another to actually step out

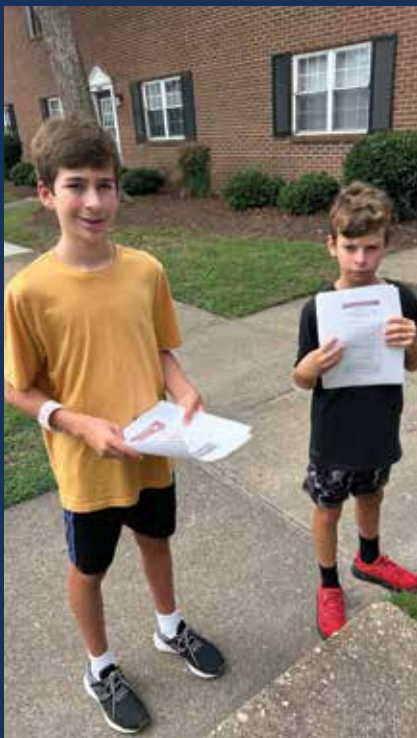
of the boat and realize you are standing firm. It felt like that—like we were witnessing God do exactly what He said He would and exactly what we believed Him for.”

Caleb was also the guest speaker for Student Fusion Camp this summer. Teenagers served together in Colonial Heights with **Swift Creek Baptist Church** as the host church.

“Proclaim” was the camp theme, taken from Romans 10:13: “For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” During the week, students and adults were trained through the 3 Circles resource to proclaim the Good News of Jesus. Churches were sent out each day to serve in local churches, schools, and organizations.

“This made sharing the Gospel with our neighbors and serving them so attainable,” said Chad Damon, youth pastor at **Grove Avenue Baptist Church** in Richmond.

“Fusion was an excellent trip for several reasons, but most importantly, it emphasized the importance of evangelism and service in the local community,” Caleb said. ■





# Persevere In These Things



By Dr. Rob Pochek,  
SBCV President

**"Pay close attention to your life and your teaching; persevere in these things, for by doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers." ~ 1 Timothy 4:16**

## I was shocked

when I saw his name. We went to college together. We took classes together. We ate meals together. We talked about the challenges and the blessings of ministry together. And now, his name appeared in a news story about a pastor sexually assaulting a teenage girl in the church he was serving.

Our hearts break every time we read such a story. First, our hearts must break for the victims. There is no rationale and no excuse for ever making light of the trauma a victim has endured. Pursuing justice for a victim must be our priority. Our hearts break for the church led by a pastor guilty of such things. Church members are often bewildered by what has happened, finding it incomprehensible that their pastor could do such a thing. In addition, the witness of that church in the community is terribly impacted. Our hearts break for the pastor's family. Often, he has a wife and children who have been betrayed and are deeply hurt.

Often, we are left wondering, how can things like this happen? I believe Paul provides some insight in 1 Timothy 4:16. In that passage, he advised young Timothy on how to lead well in his pastoral assignment. His guidance was not limited to pastors, of course, but that is who is originally in view in that passage. Paul identified two areas to which Timothy must

pay close attention: his life and his teaching.

His "life" refers to his outward actions as well as his inner thoughts and feelings. While pastors and ministry leaders are called to watch over others, we must not neglect watching over ourselves. While we do our best to disciple others, we, too, must be disciplined. We must take practical steps to ensure that we are open and accountable to others and that we have a group of people to whom we are accountable and can be honest about our struggles.

His "teaching" refers to what he believes and what he teaches. The temptation is great to water down biblical truth to gain favor with church members or those in the larger culture. Paul warned Timothy to be mindful that what he teaches will have eternal consequences in his life, as well as that of his hearers.

As pastors and ministry leaders, we must resist the temptation to go at it alone in ministry. We must model for our people the need to be in accountable relationships for our own good and the good of the people we lead. It is also a good practice to have someone outside the church watch one of our sermons and give us feedback. Doing so may help avoid straying into doctrinal error. Fortunately, our state convention of churches is the right place for these kinds of relationships to happen because—in the SBCV—you are not alone! ■



# Baptism Waters Stirring in the Valley

**God is at work** through the ministry of **Shenandoah Community Fellowship** (SCF) in the town of Woodstock, Virginia.

When Dr. Tim Shaw began as lead pastor at SCF in March 2020, he had the privilege of coming into a spiritually healthy church. SCF's founding pastor had retired and the church had encountered a positive season of transition through the assistance of the SBCV.

In his first three years, Pastor Tim cast biblical vision, led the church to a plurality of elders, and added godly men to the deacon ministry. He testified that SCF began to see a move of God at the end of 2023 into the beginning of 2024. Shaw stated, "We witnessed an increase in momentum and excitement for sure, but more importantly in spiritual vitality among our people as we saw them share the Gospel." In January 2024, the leadership of SCF led the church to engage in lostness in a simple yet profound way.

"In January we set up an empty jar in the worship center," Pastor Tim explained. "I asked our congregation to place a ping pong ball in the jar labeled Gospel Needed. Each ball represented a person they know who needs salvation. The empty jar beside that one was a Gospel Presented jar, and they could move the ping pong ball to that jar once they shared the Gospel with that person. A third Gospel Accepted jar was placed beside those two to put the ping ball into if that person accepted salvation."

He continued, "The goal is for our church to have every ping pong ball moved from Gospel Need to Gospel Presented by the end of 2024. It is a joy to see we are at 30 Gospel presentations and 14 who have accepted the Gospel!"

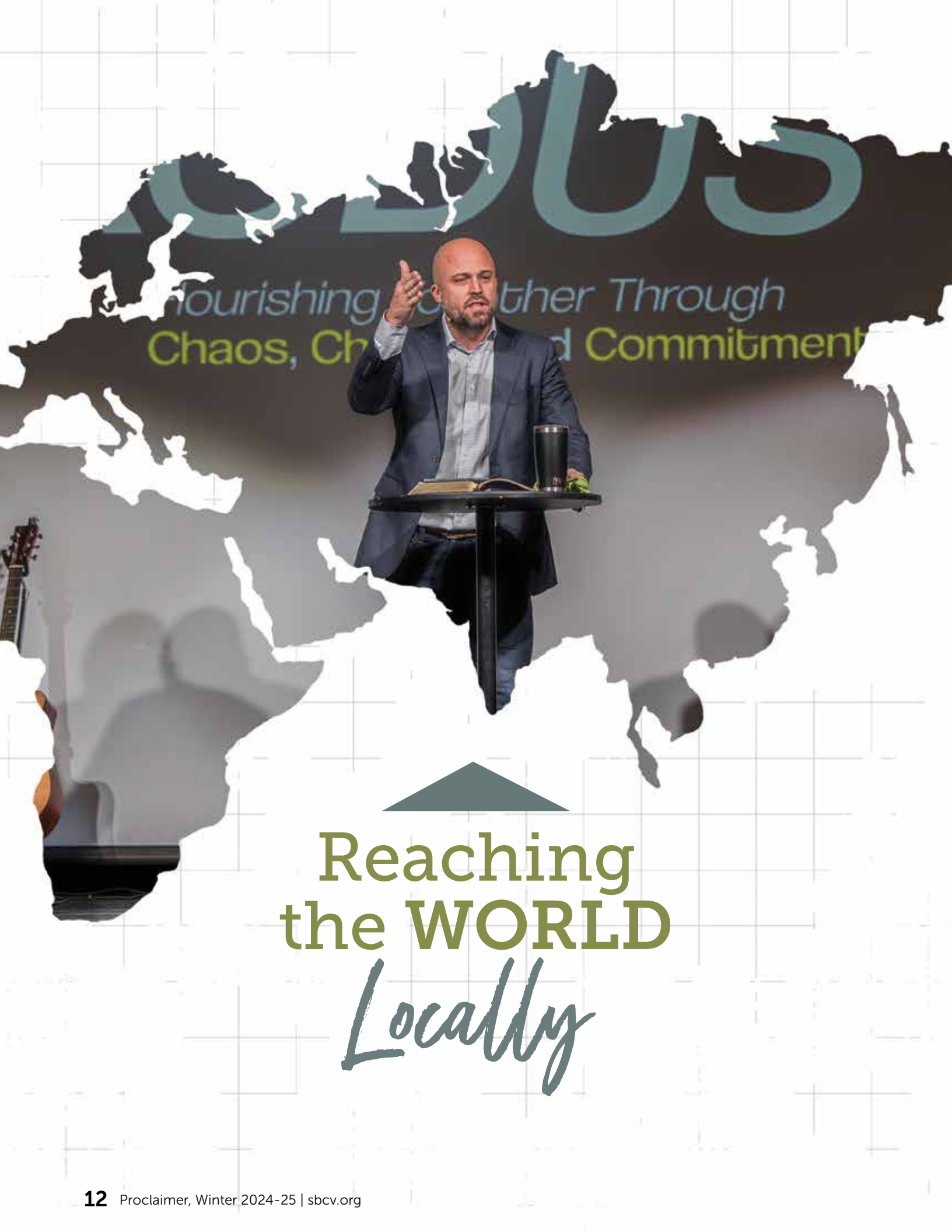
On Sunday, June 2, 2024, SCF saw these 14 people who accepted the Gospel, and 8 others, follow Jesus in believer's baptism. Twenty-one people (husbands and wives, young people, and children) were baptized in the Shenandoah River and one other person was baptized in the church baptismal for a total of 22 baptisms. In the 24-year history of SCF, this was the most baptisms the church had ever recorded in one day.

Just weeks after this baptism, SCF baptized five more students who accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior at summer camp.

SCF is now engaging these new believers by discipling them through foundation groups and life groups—the main discipleship strategies of the church.

"Perhaps the sweetest part of watching all this is to see several in our body get excited about sharing the Gospel," said Pastor Tim "We are hearing stories of some sharing for the first time after thinking they could not do it. Praise God as we watch others catch the vision and see the importance of living a Christ-centered life and serving Him in our church, community, and world." ■





Flourishing Together Through  
Chaos, Change, and Commitment

Reaching  
the **WORLD**  
*Locally*

**It's** been said that the nations are coming to America. And this phrase couldn't be truer than in the borders of northern Virginia and Washington, DC. The region's population includes 27% international residents representing 120 countries. This diversity prompted church planter Greg Gibson to have a heart for the northern Virginia and DC metro areas when he launched **Nations Church**. Nations Church has a desire to be a local church with a global impact.

The vision for Nations Church was born as Pastor Greg and his family were praying about moving to Kyiv, Ukraine, in the summer of 2022 to work to plant churches throughout Eastern Europe and the Russian-speaking world.

When Moscow invaded Kyiv on February 22, 2022, those plans were paused, and the Gibsons began to pray about anchoring into greater Washington DC

to see church planting work catalyzed around the world from this strategic area. It was also during this season in early 2023 when God burdened the Gibsons to plant a new local church in the DC area that worked to make disciples of all nations by reaching their neighbors. This was confirmed by their sending church, the North American Mission Board, and the Times 12 church planting network. The Gibsons returned to the DC area with the aim of planting Nations Church.

On September 10, 2023, a handful of families began meeting weekly, laying the foundation for a new church in the greater DC area that was serious about planting a church in Loudoun County/Fairfax County. Within six months, by January of 2024, this group had grown to 50+ people meeting in Pastor Greg's living room. Nations Church launched public services on March 31, 2024, at Mercer Middle School in Loudoun County,

Virginia. On May 19, Nations Church commissioned and sent their first missionary to Warsaw, Poland, just weeks after their public launch. ■





# United We Are Stronger

A distinctive characteristic of Christians is their unity among themselves. That unity strengthens them even during adversity.

So, the church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace, being built up and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, and it increased in numbers. Acts 9:31 (HCSB).

Providentially, this is what our Hispanic churches of the SBCV family are experiencing, too. These Spanish-speaking churches are part of the largest minority in the United States, and approximately one million live in Virginia alone, most of them first-generation immigrants. Most are concentrated in the greater metropolitan areas of Washington, DC, Hampton Roads, and the capital of Virginia, Richmond.

God, in His eternal plan, is working in the same way He did with the new believers of the early years of Christianity.

Under SBCV's strategic direction, Hispanic pastors and leaders throughout the state are called to encourage and mobilize Hispanic pastors and planters from Virginia.

There is unity among Hispanic churches in Virginia like never before. The first step was to invite all the pastors, planters, and leaders at **Iglesia Bautista Vida Nueva a las Naciones** in Richmond, Virginia. The champion pastors by region are Diego Fernandez (Central), Jose Mazariego (North), Vernig Suarez (Southeast), Carlos Payan (Central-West & Southside), and Julio Peredo (Valley).

Over the following months, they shared their experiences, listened to their needs, and provided training for the spiritual growth of leaders in their local churches.

In May, for the first time in Northern Virginia, a prayer summit was held in Spanish. **First Baptist Church in Woodbridge**, Virginia, opened its doors for a full day of prayer and worship. There were more than 35 participants praying together. The event was guided by the direction of local pastors, who were praying and worshipping in Spanish—the language of their hearts—as Hispanic brothers.

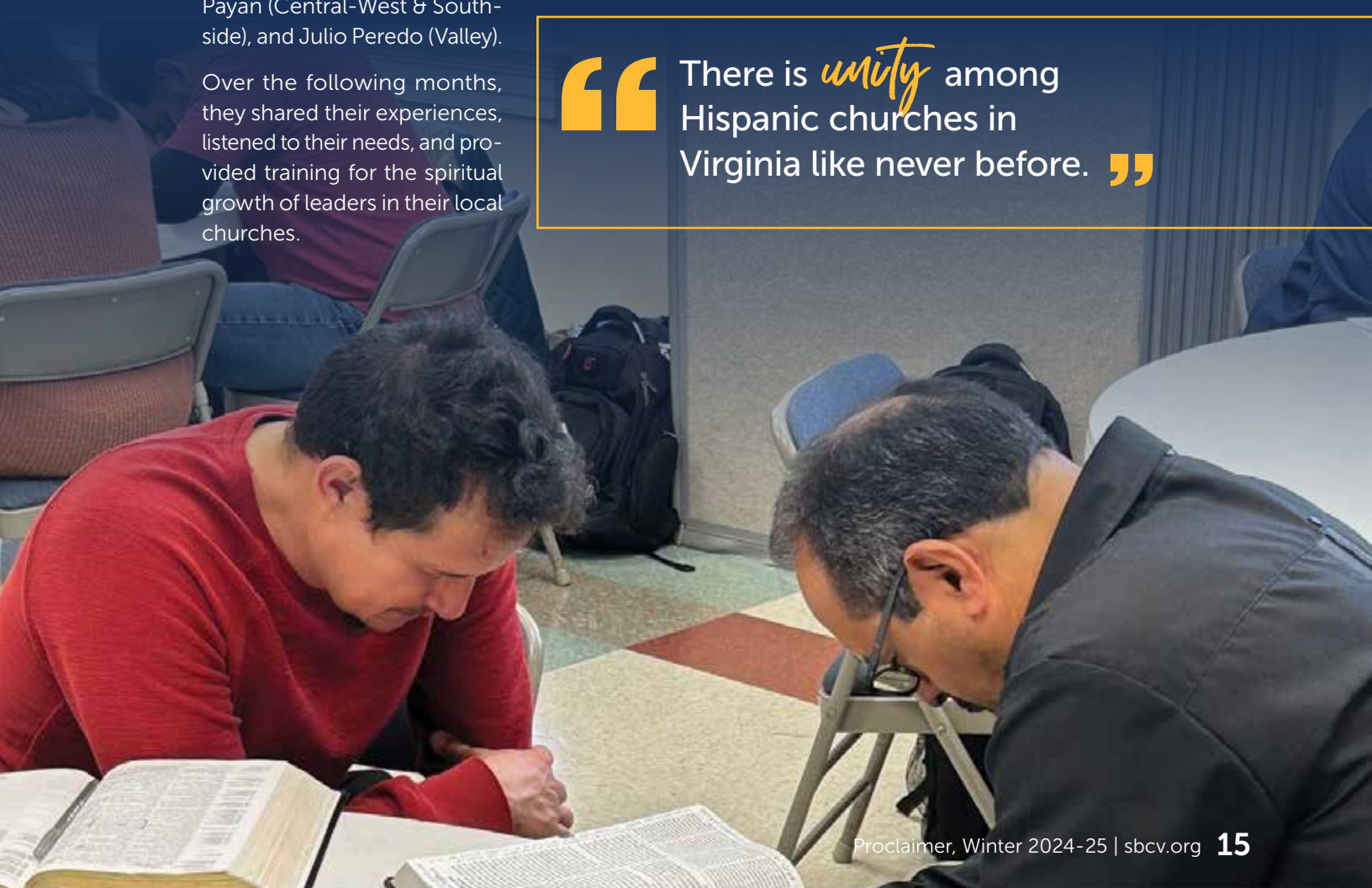
There were testimonies of how this event impacted those who assisted that day. Josefina from **Spotswood Baptist Church** in Fredericksburg expressed gratitude for this initiative. She was happy that the SBCV was interested in these activities that

encourage unity in the body of Christ.

Another event was in the central region, where the churches of Richmond and its surrounding area participated in a men's retreat for the first time. With 70 men attending the International Mission Board training facility in Rockville, Virginia, the event exhorted men to lead their wives and children.

Whether at a coffee shop for encouragement or a good time of fellowship around a carne asada (barbeque), these churches have peace, and God strengthens them to advance the Gospel among Hispanics. ■

“ There is *unity* among Hispanic churches in Virginia like never before. ”







If you happened to die *today*, do you know if you will go to heaven?

God says you must be born again. The Bible gives us a simple plan of salvation.

Admit that you're a sinner who needs to be saved. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)

Believe that Jesus died for you and rose again. "If you will confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9)

Commit to accepting Jesus as your Savior and Lord. "For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Romans 10:13)

Claim His gift of salvation. Believe, and you will be saved. All that's left for you to do is to receive Jesus into your heart as your personal Lord and Savior. If that is your sincere desire, then talk to God from your heart. Contact us today to let us know your decision and any questions you have: [info@sbcv.org](mailto:info@sbcv.org).

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# GROWING in *Unity and Diversity*

**T**he Chinese-majority churches of the SBC of Virginia gathered in Glen Allen, Virginia, for their third annual meeting in June 2024. Thirty-five ministry leaders representing eight churches received encouragement regarding their relationship with God, their spouses, and their children. Attendees reported feeling strengthened and joyful due to the instruction received and the new friendships made.

While the special focus of this Chinese Fellowship was creating unity and connectivity among the Chinese-majority churches in Virginia, there was also a growing diversity within this fellowship. Although most of the participants have a heart language of Mandarin, some prefer Cantonese or even English. Some of the ministry couples have been married for decades, while others are newlyweds. Some are first-generation immigrants, having moved to the U.S. while adults. Others are second-generation (born in the U.S.) or came to the

U.S. decades ago. There is a growing geographic diversity as well. At the inaugural meeting of the Chinese Fellowship, nearly every participant came from two regions of Virginia (Northern Virginia and Roanoke). This year, every region of Virginia was represented with first-time participants from Virginia Beach, Richmond, and Lynchburg.

One first-time church, **Family Bible Church** of Virginia Beach, though affiliated with SBCV for over 20 years, had lacked any in-person engagement for years. Pastor Bon Wong learned of the SBCV Chinese Fellowship just weeks before and was able to attend and bring others from his church. Pastor Bon said the fellowship gave him many resources that will strengthen Family Bible Church, but he also felt motivated to advocate for SBCV partnership with other churches nearby. For instance, Family Bible Church has three language groups within its congregation (Mandarin, Cantonese, and English). The translation service (Polyglossia) utilized at the Fellowship gave him

a new resource to consider at his local church. Through some of his new friendships, he became aware of a Mandarin program at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, which would be quite useful to several members of his church.

Years ago, SBCV church planting associate Joshua Wang dreamed of a day when there would be over 20 Chinese churches within the SBCV family. Since the start of the SBCV Chinese Fellowship—just three years ago—two new Chinese church plants have been launched. Additionally, three of this year’s participants are strongly considering planting a church within the next year. Already, the dream is near reality. ■





# ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

## Embracing AI in Church Ministry

By Don Barger, Director of Innovation, International Mission Board

**A**I Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming many parts of society. Church ministry is no exception. Understanding and embracing AI can help Christ-followers leverage technology to increase their efforts to make Christ known. Let's explore what AI is, address common misconceptions, and discuss how it can be safely, effectively, and ethically incorporated into ministry.

### What is AI?

AI refers to the development of computer systems that perform tasks typically requiring human intelligence. This includes activities such as visualization, speech recognition, and language translation. In simpler terms, AI involves getting computers to perform tasks that humans usually do.

### Common AI Misconceptions

Despite its growing usage in our daily lives, AI is often misunderstood. Here are a few common misconceptions:

#### Misconception 1:

*AI is conscious or sentient.* AI lacks self-awareness. It cannot experience emotions, intentions, or awareness. It operates purely on programmed algorithms and data input.

#### Misconception 2:

*AI has emotions or intentions.* Sometimes Hollywood makes it appear as if AI has an agenda all to itself. AI

doesn't have the ability to feel or have personal motives. It doesn't have independent thought. It's not RoboCop!

### *Misconception 3:*

*AI will replace human jobs.* Many fear that AI will take their jobs. Like many other innovations, AI will automate certain tasks, but it is best seen as a co-pilot, working alongside humans to make jobs easier. There should always be a human in the loop when utilizing AI solutions.

## **What Do We Believe About AI Safety and Ethical Considerations?**

As Christians, we should approach AI with both enthusiasm and caution, recognizing its potential while being mindful of ethical implications.

### *Intelligence Given by God:*

The creativity and intelligence required to develop AI are gifts from God (James 1:17). Using these gifts to create tools that further His kingdom honors that divine inspiration. We are given the mandate by God to be stewards of creation (Genesis 1:26-28).

### *Ethical Considerations:*

Ethical issues surrounding AI should be discussed both within the church and in broader society. The SBC passed a resolution about AI at the 2023 convention, providing a great starting point for discussion. As Christ-followers, we should ensure that AI is used responsibly and in ways that uphold Christian values (Micah 6:8).

### *AI is a Tool, Not a Replacement for Humans:*

AI should be seen as a tool that enhances our capabilities, not as a replacement for humans. It can support ministry efforts but cannot replace the spiritual leadership provided by human ministers nor the fellowship found in the body of local Christ-followers. Whatever we endeavor to do, including our use of AI, should be done to honor God and serve others (Colossians 3:23-24).

## **AI into Ministry**

AI offers numerous opportunities to enhance church ministry and outreach. Here are a few practical applications:

### *Translation:*

AI-powered translation and transcription tools can help break down language barriers. Tools like polyglossia.io can facilitate real-time translation of worship services. AI can also provide translation drafts of other documents and studies, though these should always be checked by a human.

### *Administrative Tasks:*

AI tools can automate routine administrative tasks, such as scheduling, member management, and content creation, freeing up church staff to focus more on pastoral care and community engagement.

### *Ideation:*

AI can be a valuable tool for coming up with new ideas. If you have a question about making plans for an event or are stuck on something, ask AI for help. Some describe AI as an ever-energetic college intern full of ideas. Like an intern, not all AI-generated ideas will be useful, but many will be. Talk to AI like you would an expert and see how it can help you.

AI is not a substitute for human activity and interaction. We shouldn't be looking to AI to act by itself. Likewise, we shouldn't be afraid of AI. At some point, churches didn't have electricity. There were probably churches that were afraid of adding lightbulbs. The first time someone suggested buying a computer for the church, there was probably pushback. Today, these are part of everyday life. AI will be much the same.

By understanding and embracing AI, Christians can enhance their ministry efforts, reaching more people and meeting their needs more effectively. AI is a powerful tool that, when used wisely, can support and strengthen the mission of the church. ■



# THE BLESS APP

## *Blessing Your Neighbors Just Got Easier*

- B Begin** praying for your neighbors
- L Listen** to your neighbors
- E Eat**—invite and share meals with your neighbors
- S Serve** your neighbors by meeting their needs
- S Share** your story and the Gospel story

**In** 2020, the SBCV introduced an outreach and evangelism tool called Bless Every Home. It encouraged churches to intentionally reach their neighbors. Since then, more than 185 churches have enlisted lights (individuals) to adopt over 106,555 homes, resulting in 3,191,605 recorded prayers and some 4,500 Gospel conversations. Additionally, resources and tools have been provided to help congregations pray for their neighbors by name, care for them, share the Gospel with them, and disciple them.

Today, Bless Every Home, under the new directorship of Tim Popadic, is revised and simple to use. The resource is now

called The B.L.E.S.S. App., based on Dave Ferguson and Jon Ferguson's book, *BLESS: 5 Everyday Ways to Love Your Neighbor and Change the World*, and its acronym.

Popadic said, "Some benefits of the revision include more tangible ways to measure and track activity; the framework is simpler. You now have the ability to identify believers in your neighborhood, the data structure is reorganized, downloads are easier, and an online enablement kit is also available."

Randy Larson, BLESS Systems Analyst, said, "Our goal is to provide churches with best practices for launching and using the tool, but also to help

churches create a culture for BLESS so that it becomes part of their DNA. The enablement kit will do just that".

The BLESS practices found in the book follow the example of Jesus.

The authors add, "The BLESS App is the tool for measuring your church's impact outside the building."

Larson said, "The BLESS App will empower your church members to live on mission, it will provide your church and church plants with an effective outreach strategy, and it is the number one method to help your congregation love your neighbor as yourself." He adds, "The BLESS App will



help turn your neighborhood into a personal mission field. Every day, receive the names of five neighbors and daily encouragement centered around the BLESS practices.”

Steve Bradshaw, SBCV Director of Evangelism and Ministry Resources, said, “It is the most effective interactive tool I have ever used. In today’s busy world, everyone could use prompting

and reminders to pray for and love their neighbors.” He added, “To sign up to be a light and adopt your neighbors for daily prompting is absolutely free. Your church can sign up for administrative benefits such as receiving information of new movers into your community, discovering community demographic connections, and more.” He went on to say, “The

SBCV will revise its webpage with direct links to sign up, offer special discounts for church partners, and many resources to help you with BLESS practices.” ■



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Daily prayer reminders with a map of 40 closest neighbors

Video messages to inspire creative and courageous use of the BLESS practices

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[sbcv.org/bless](http://sbcv.org/bless)

**"The #1 Tool to Love Your Neighbor as Yourself"**

- Dave Ferguson



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# REACHING THE *Lost in Appalachia*

Fulfilling your calling to reach the lost can sometimes lead to unusual, uncomfortable, and unpredictable places. Sometimes, that's just across town. That's what Mary Beth Adams of **Harmon Memorial Baptist Church** in Grundy, Virginia, discovered in the spring of 2024.

Mary Beth, a member of the SBCV Women's Ministry Leadership Team, is no stranger to serving in difficult situations. Her job as a court advocate for abused women and children in Buchanan County—one of the hardest hit areas in Appalachia for drug abuse and related crimes—has led her to experience people in the very worst seasons of their lives. In those hard seasons, she uses the opportunity to show the love and compassion of Christ.

In fact, Mary Beth was in a season of prayer about using some of her vacation time to join fellow team member Casey Weymouth and her husband Fred with the Fix Ministry to travel to the Philadelphia neighborhood of Kensington—known as “the worst of the

worst” for drug addiction on an epidemic level.

The Women's Ministry Leadership Team is comprised of women who lead in their churches, workplaces, schools, and communities. Using their God-given gifts, team members are encouraged to step out in faith, as the Holy Spirit leads, and to follow Him in humble obedience.

When she was stopped in traffic because of road construction, Mary Beth looked out of the car window at a run-down roadside motel known for drug use and other crimes. It was there that Mary Beth felt the Holy Spirit leading her to serve, impressing on her that this is “your Kensington,” and to help the people there.

Immediately, she presented the idea to her pastor, Dr. Shea Shrader, who agreed. After praying and working through logistics, they decided that this would become the summer mission project for Harmon Memorial. Door-to-door flyers were distributed, and personal invitations were given, often

while dodging liquor bottles and syringes.

From June to August, Wednesdays at 6:30 PM were spent feeding the residents dinner, worshipping together, offering the Gospel message, and prayer. Lots of prayer. So far, one woman has accepted Christ as her Savior and is preparing to follow Him in baptism. Attendance has been consistent with around 25-30 residents, and some have shown interest in attending church. About 15-20 church members have joined the effort each week; some seeing this harsh reality of life for the first time.

Many of these residents have “worn out their welcome” with their families, Mary Beth noted. “We have the opportunity to love on them, and to present the Gospel. That's what Jesus calls us to do.” ■

#### RESOURCE:

*If you would like to know more about the SBCV Women's Ministry Leadership Team, contact Dolly Mink at:*



[dmink@sbcv.org](mailto:dmink@sbcv.org)

# Discover & GROW



**M**aking disciples has always been part of the mission of the Church under Christ's command in the Great Commission. However, many churches don't have a clear process for a replicable disciple-making strategy. This leaves the Church in a vulnerable position as seniors are unable to hold their positions or pass away, vacating their positions with no one to replace them as elders, deacons, teachers, or even preachers. The effects aren't only in the Church but in the home as well. Strong, healthy families demand strong, healthy, godly men to lead them. Disciple-making does not naturally happen. It takes intentionality to discover, develop, and deploy future leaders, elders, deacons, teachers, preachers, and godly men in our homes.

Last fall, pastors and church leaders gathered from across Southwest Virginia for a leadership development workshop led by SBCV Executive Director Dr. Brian Autry and Director of Church Planting Dr. Josh Turner. The workshop was a resource for helping churches develop church planters. It was retooled by SBCV regional strategists to aid pastors in building a disciple-making strategy for their churches to discover, develop, and deploy healthy, strong disciples of Jesus.

Pastor Shea Shrader of **Harman Memorial Baptist Church** in Buchanan County began to work on a strategy. He wanted to discover men who were ready to grow deeper in their walk with Christ and discover the call of God upon their lives—whether that call was to preach God's Word, teach Sunday School, or lead their families well. Discovery is only part of that strategy. Once you discover who they are, then you must help them develop, pour into, and invest in those men.

Pastor Shrader began to organize panels of pastors, Christian leaders, and lay leaders each month who had a long tenure in various areas: how to prepare a sermon or Sunday School lesson, how to do hospital and home visits, and how to lead your family in devotions and prayer. Other areas included how to lead yourself for a successful ministry, and best practices for marriage and ministry. Resources became a vital part of the strategy. Each month, the group received a book to read and discuss together to help develop well-rounded disciples.

Deployment is what determines success. The Apostle Paul told his mentee Timothy, "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach

others also" (2 Timothy 2:2, NKJV). It is simply giving the encouragement to have confidence to use what you have learned. A simple principle is to transfer what you learn and teach for transformation. Deployment as a disciple growing in Christ is to automatically lead to sharing Christ.

Pastor Shrader received this message via text from a wife of one of the men involved with the program. "Hi Shea, I wanted to thank you for having the teach, preach, lead class. Yesterday we went to visit a guy we know and he gave his life to the Lord after Steve talked to him. I was there, but it was all Steve and God. He was a little nervous beforehand, but once he got started, he went with it and did fine. I am so proud of him and all of the changes he has made have just amazed me. I thank God and thank you for teaching him."

What is your process? Who are you investing in? Who is in your church or ministry that you may discover, develop, and deploy? What areas of leadership will be vacated unless you train up the next generation of those who will preach, teach, and lead? ■



# CHANGED MEN CHANGE *everything*

By Mike Young, Noble Warriors

"I'm married to a different man now," Rachel says about her husband, Calum. The first years of their marriage were tough. She knew Jesus, but he didn't. He went to church, but only to make her happy. She tried leading their family spiritually, but she wasn't effective.

Things started to change when Calum noticed that men at Parkway Baptist Church in Moseley, Virginia were different. They were visible, active, and engaged. Calum joined the church's softball team and began getting to know some of the guys he noticed on Sundays. Then, when Calum heard about a ten-week BetterMan study at the church, he was ready to jump in. That's when things started to become real. Calum recognized he couldn't be the man he wanted to be, the husband Rachel deserved, or the father their four kids needed without help. He said "Yes" to Jesus, and everything changed.

At Noble Warriors, we celebrate transformation stories like Calum's because we know that changed men change everything. We serve

local churches to engage, equip, and encourage men. Parkway's pastor, Derek Futrell, credits Noble Warriors for doing just that in the men's ministry at his church. Derek leads Parkway with a heart for men. He invests in men personally and ensures they are visible examples of leadership in their homes and the church. Pastor Derek doesn't do all the work, though. He delegates to godly men who share the vision and who have also been affected by the ministry of Noble Warriors.

Mike is one of those men. He is the Men's Ministry team leader at Parkway. Motivated by Noble Warriors conferences and workshops, he launched Parkway's softball ministry. He led others to host catalytic events that point men to small group discipleship as a "right next step." Then, there's Nolan. He introduced Calum to BetterMan and continues to disciple him as he grows in Christ. Because he's walked the same road, Nolan guides many men through prayerful repentance and course correction in life, marriage, and fathering. He has long been

connected with Noble Warriors. He attributes that connection and introduction of tools and resources to the vibrancy of his marriage, family, and a deep desire to invest in other men.

Pastor Derek leads the way with encouragement, Mike leads the team that plans and executes events to draw men in, and Nolan coaches small group leaders to grow with Jesus personally and to lead others well. This cycle of leadership and discipleship is proof of a healthy men's ministry and is why Noble Warriors exists. Jesus is Lord. Men are learning to lead well. Wives are encouraged. Kids are discipled. The church is growing, and Noble Warriors is working from the sidelines, coaching the players, cheering the team, and suggesting plays from time to time.

As for Rachel, "The growth that I've seen in Calum, surrounded by godly men, is indescribable. It's beautiful and has changed our home!" ■



# NOBLE WARRIORS.

At Noble Warriors, we believe changed men change everything. That's why we serve the local church to engage, equip, and encourage men. Visit us at [www.noblewarriors.org](http://www.noblewarriors.org) for resources to help you strategically invest in men.



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# Cooperation in Church Revitalization

THE *next chapter* IS  
partnership, mentoring, cooperation,  
and *teamwork*.

**First Baptist Church, Monroe**, Virginia, is a typical rural church steeped in a rich history. It has a warm fellowship and a community presence. Like many churches, it sought to turn the page on the next chapter of its history. However, with the changing realities facing many churches, moving into the future with vitality is not always a clear path.

The story of First Baptist Church, Monroe, shows the power of cooperation. In 2022, Brian Clabough was the pastor of the church. Pastor Brian not only attempted to lead First Baptist Monroe but also joined the church revitalization cohort of the SBCV. Pastor Brian cared for the church and attempted to devise plans during his pastorate. After a season of pastoring First Baptist Monroe, it became clear that Pastor Brian had been led to another place of ministry.

After joining the church revitalization cohort, Pastor Brian met its co-leader Pastor Michael Fitzgerald. In late 2022, Michael Fitzgerald, Pastor Emeritus at **Clifford Baptist Church** in Amherst, Virginia, committed to be the interim pastor of First Baptist Monroe for one year. The information that had been collected and the plans that had been devised by

Pastor Brian were known and evaluated by Pastor Fitzgerald. This unique partnership experience and smooth transition is a testament to cooperation within the SBCV.

Pastor Fitzgerald guided the church through a process of discovery and evaluation. Plans were made, and ideas for outreach were developed, all while the church searched for a full-time pastor. In God's timing, Kent Maitland was chosen as the next pastor. However, in the spirit of partnership, Pastor Kent was willing to allow Pastor Fitzgerald to stay on and guide him to become acclimated to his new role for six months. The plans that had been devised for years were coming to fruition during the early days of Pastor Kent's pastorate due to the power of partnership and cooperation. On June 2, 2024, Pastor Kent officially began pastoring the church without the assistance of Pastor Fitzgerald.

First Baptist Monroe has now turned the page on their next chapter. This next chapter tells the story of partnership, mentoring, cooperation, and teamwork. First Baptist Monroe serves as an example that we can do more together than we can alone! ■







# BACK to the Beginning

“ In the beginning, GOD CREATED the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1 (CSB) ”

**T**eaching children this foundational Bible truth is the core of **Rosedale Baptist Church** Creation Camp each July. During the summer months when God’s creation is in full display, the children take a concentrated look at God the Creator and His creation and then go outside to explore the creation around them.

“First and foremost, we teach the Word of God and present the Gospel every day they are there,” said Dexter Minton, Creation Camp director. “We show them the wonders of creation and some animals that show God’s work in creating them, and then go off in different groups to learn and enjoy creation firsthand.”

Minton experienced this type of camp as a youth in 2004 when his youth director took a group to camp. Bringing it to Rosedale Baptist was the result and 20 years later, they are still teaching children about God and His nature.

Following worship and Bible study, the campers enjoy biking, hiking, caving, rock climbing/repelling,

and fishing. “Biking is the most favorite,” Minton commented. “With rides on the Virginia Creeper Trail—depending on the age—the ride is up to 17 miles.”

“My children have been attending this camp since they were all able to,” commented parent and leader Lauren Blevins. “The excitement they experience from first learning about creation and then getting outside to explore it is such a joy for my heart. They hold God’s truth in their hearts and appreciate the beauty and magnificence of God’s creation in-part due to the Creation Camp. When children can understand that the God we serve is so mighty, great, and powerful

and can speak the entire universe into existence, they can also begin to understand that the same God came to earth as a man, lived a sinless life, was crucified, died, and was buried, then three days later rose again, all to save us from our sins; they can stand firm in the truth the Word of God holds.”

Across our nation, summer brings more outreach opportunities to reach children and their families through camps and Vacation Bible Schools. Rosedale will continue to hold VBS and Creation Camp to change the lives of every child that comes. ■

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**MARCH 22**  
8:45 AM – 3:50 PM  
Great Bridge  
Baptist Church  
CHESAPEAKE

DETAILS AT [SBCV.ORG/KMC](https://www.sbcv.org/kmc)







# Empty Church Building *Redeemed*

“Redemption Church ... moving into the *historic* church building, right outside downtown Roanoke.”

A few blocks from downtown Roanoke sits a beautiful historic church building—empty and recently for sale. No more worshippers are mingling around. No more sacred music is heard on the street. No more baptismal waters are being stirred. The church had “gone out of business.” Its property was purchased by a developer in 2022. Church plant **Redemption Church** of Roanoke is now redeeming that building as they move in for worship in the Fall of 2024.

Church planter Carter Mundy moved his family and church plant launch team to Roanoke to start Redemption Church in Spring 2021. Pastor Mundy was especially interested in reaching the Star City because it is his hometown. While nearing the end of his seminary education, his family was part of a church plant launch team in North Carolina. A few years later, Mercy Hill Church sent Pastor Mundy and a team of 21 adults from Greensboro to the Valley, planting Redemption Church to lead a restless culture to a redeeming savior—through maturing and mobilizing Christ followers.

The core group began with small group meetings and, with growth in attendance, has had different locations for worship including, providentially, a building space near the empty church. The church plant reached out to the developer who owned the empty church,

hoping to reach an agreement. This took months to complete. In the meantime, Redemption Church continued to accomplish its mission by reaching newcomers to Roanoke, encouraging growth in following Jesus, and mobilizing them in the mission field of the Roanoke Valley and beyond. In fact, in their four-year history, they have partnered with four church plants and are planning to “parent” a church plant themselves in the future. Now, they’re moving into a permanent home with needs for rent, renovations, furnishings, and utilities.

Pastor Mundy said, “We just signed a five-year lease to move into a permanent location in September 2024 in the historic church building, right outside downtown Roanoke. But it will put a greater financial burden on us than our monthly giving has caught up with. We have launched our first giving campaign with our church. But we’d also like to find other partners to help us move forward in the mission and keep the momentum going.” You can learn more about their *Whatever It Takes* capital campaign at [RedemptionRoanoke.com/give](https://RedemptionRoanoke.com/give).

Pastor Mundy said, “We really believe that once we move into this new location, we could double our growth and impact in Roanoke by the end of next year. We just need a little extra help to get there! I’m super grateful for what God has done already. Our church is trusting him to do more, and the generosity of God’s people

is usually how He does it!”

Pastor Mundy went on to say, “SBCV has been a great partner. We realize that it takes more than one church to reach our community. The resources and relationships through our SBCV family have proven invaluable.”

Our coalition of churches in the SBCV is grateful to be part of Redemption Church, which maintains a Gospel lighthouse in Roanoke by redeeming a closed church building. ■

## This Year

Some exciting things God has done this year in Redemption Church:

**27%** in **ATTENDANCE** has increased.

**More than 2 dozen** participated in “**STARTING POINT**” (the church’s assimilation process), in the first quarter of 2024, compared to 39 all of last year.

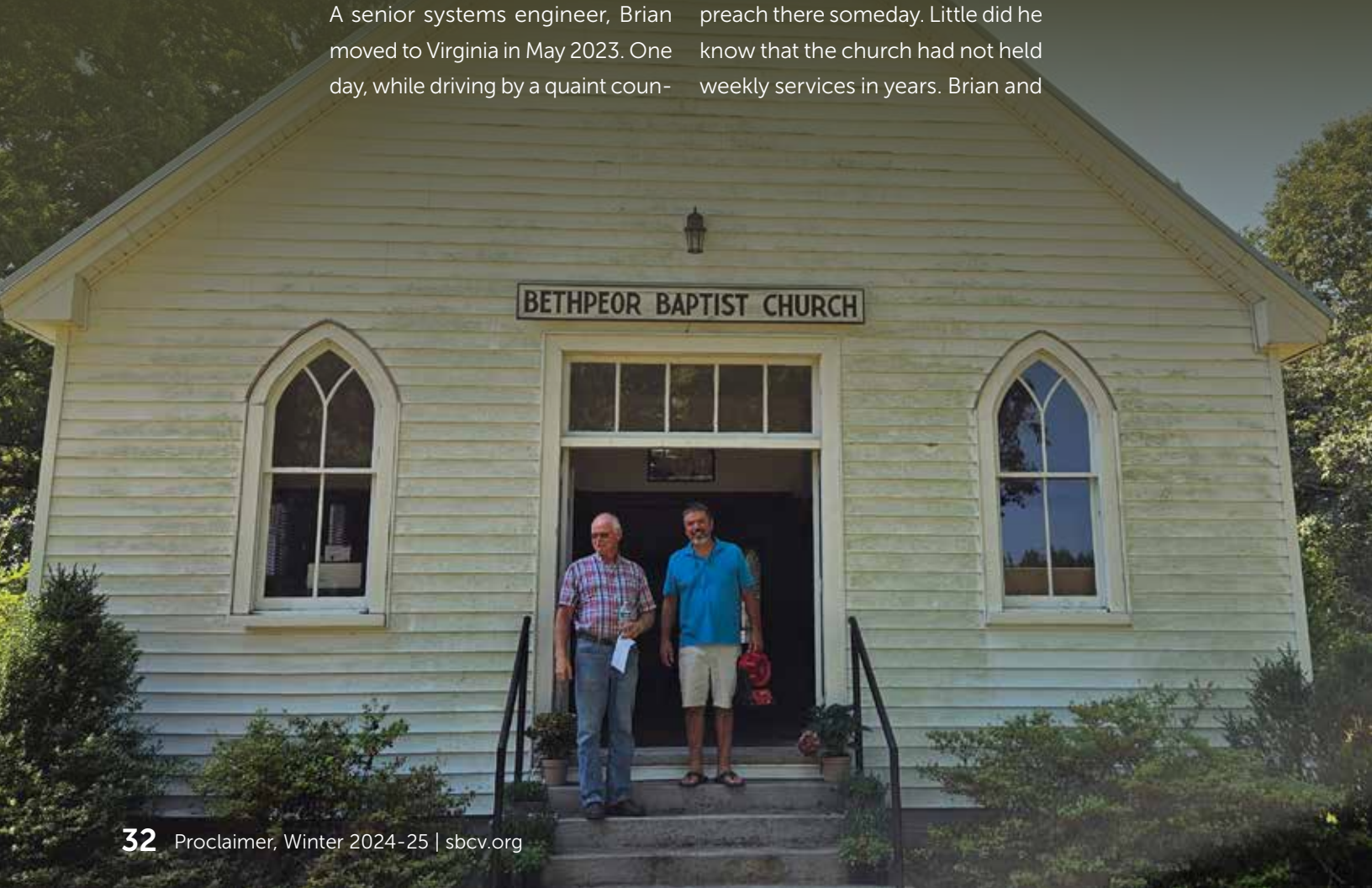
**8 BAPTISMS** in the first quarter, compared to 9 all of last year (24 baptisms since launching in April 2021).



# Can These Bones *Live?*

Brian Bauer's story echoes the Lord's question to Ezekiel in the valley of dry bones: "*Can these bones live?*"

**In** rural Five Forks, God is doing something new through Brian Bauer. A senior systems engineer, Brian moved to Virginia in May 2023. One day, while driving by a quaint country church with "Bethpeor" written above the doors, he mentioned to his wife that he would love to preach there someday. Little did he know that the church had not held weekly services in years. Brian and





his family settled into their new home and began engaging with the community, discovering numerous ministry opportunities, and reaching individuals who were often overlooked by or resistant to traditional church settings.

Eventually, Brian heard about and attended a monthly prayer breakfast at **Mt. Tirzah Baptist Church**, one of the SBCV churches in the area, where he met Pastor Charles Maney. Charles began praying for him and sending texts on Sunday mornings. "I text a lot of these pastors," noted Pastor Maney, "especially some of the young guys, to let them know someone is thinking about them and praying for them." This was a tremendous encouragement for Brian, who said, "When he would send it, it was always at the right time. Every time, it was an affirmation to me." Charles also encouraged Brian to explore the SBCV and consider its resources for churches and pastors.

Weeks later, while driving by the same country church, Brian's

four-year-old son exclaimed, "Daddy, there's your church!" Brian was surprised by the statement and wondered where his son got the idea.

Brian also joined the local fire station as a volunteer firefighter. It was there that fellow fireman Lou Gillam noticed Brian's passion for Jesus and invited him to church. When Brian attended, he discovered it was **Bethpeor Baptist Church**—the very church he had mentioned to his wife. It was just Lou and Brian. Lou then invited Brian to help relaunch a weekly worship service at Bethpeor, a church Lou's grandfather had helped build in the early 1900s.

Following Charles' advice, Brian contacted the SBCV's regional strategist, Shawn Ames, who explained the SBCV's goal of partnering with local churches to fulfill the Great Commission. Ames invited Brian to join the monthly Farmville Pastors Network luncheon, led by SBCV Pastor Rick Caldwell of **Concord Baptist Church** in Farmville. There, Brian found additional encouragement

from fellow pastors. "The guys were amazing!" Brian recalled. "Almost all of them came up to me and offered help. 'Whatever you need, just ask!' they said."

Brian also learned about SBCV resources like the upcoming Small Town/Rural Church Pastors and Leaders Workshop in Appomattox, Revitalization Cohorts, Church Planting, coaching, and more. Ames noted, "He seemed humble and willing to receive input from others, while also being bold in following the Lord wherever He might lead. It's amazing to see how SBCV pastors and resources have encouraged Brian and how God has opened doors for ministry."

Brian Bauer's story echoes the Lord's question to Ezekiel in the valley of dry bones: "Can these bones live?" With the help of the Spirit, encouragement from fellow ministry leaders, and Brian's leadership, dozens of people now gather each Sunday morning at Bethpeor Baptist Church, believing that they indeed can. ■





# Inspire

A word of hope, support, and encouragement

“

So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed." John 8:36

## His World, His Love, His Freedom

Lyricist Hal David and composer Burt Bacharach collaborated to write a song entitled "*What the World Needs Now*" ("Is Love"). They noted that the human troubles in society during the civil rights movement inspired them to write this song. It gained secular fame and its lyrics were accurate.

Sadly, the world plunges deeper and deeper into darkness. Without Jesus, the spirit of the world cannot deliver what it desperately needs most—the love of Christ (Romans 5:5). God gave the world that love, and He still does through the gift of Jesus (John 3:16). Though God has set the stage for love, humankind must be set free to live it.

Unconditional love (agape) is a command (John 15:17), and the Holy Spirit must teach us to love. It is not automatic. Nowhere in human DNA is there a desire to love or pray for an enemy (Matthew. 5:44). How, then, will the world get more of the kind of love it is screaming for? The answer is simple and twofold.

First, God empowers true believers to obey His instructions to practice love. He instructs unbelievers to be disciples of Jesus Christ (John 13:34-35). Disciples who display true love draw inquiring hearts to the living water of Jesus Christ (John 4:13-14).

Second, one must be free to love with a godly love. Being bound to sin keeps a person from loving himself or others (Matthew 22:39). The righteousness of God produces a love that, when practiced, transforms the believer to draw and point others to Jesus Christ (John 14:6). That's it! ■

Love you all!



**Milton Harding**

Prayer and Care Minister

✉ [mharding@sbcv.org](mailto:mharding@sbcv.org)

# A PATH TO *Restoration*

**B**ehind **Restoration Church** in Phoebus, Virginia, a patch of woods separates the church parking lot from an adjacent apartment complex. Families live in those apartments and may have little or no interaction with the church on the other side of the trees. Some families in the apartments use the woods as a shortcut and pass through the church parking lot. Eventually, these families created an impromptu path worn down by kids and neighbors looking for an easier way.

But where locals were paving an impromptu path, Pastor Mike Smith and members of Restoration Church saw God building a bridge for ministry. The church invested money and time into developing the path into an official walkway.

That simple act of missional intentionality opened the door

for six years of practical, consistent ministry to that community. Members of the complex saw the church welcoming them. One group of young siblings began attending the church while mom and dad refused to go. But God was at work.

Recently, Pastor Mike received a call from the mom that her daughter was putting Scriptures up around the house and the youngest child wanted mom (who is not a believer) to read the Bible to him every evening.

Restoration Church is a normative-sized church that took the simple step of missional intentionality to minister to its neighbors. Look around your church. Who has God strategically placed

you to reach and serve? How might you leverage your church location to build a pathway to restoration? ■







# Snapshots

At the end of every year, it is normal for everyone to look back at the highs and lows. Maybe your mind is like mine, where you almost have little pictures of the past on a reel that you can scroll through.

But while a flood of memories recently rushed into my mind—a literal hurricane was barreling up from the Gulf of Mexico into the Southeast. Hurricane/Tropical Storm Helene brought high winds, tons of rain, and incredible devastation.

The counties of Washington, Tazwell, Smith, Wythe, Grayson, and the City of Galax were declared disaster areas. Tens of thousands were without power in Virginia alone. Raging flood waters washed homes right off their foundations. The town of Damascus, with a population of about 788 people in Washington County, saw 19.5 feet of flooding in the southern end of the New River Valley. The stories go on and on.

Because of our partnership in the Gospel, SBC of Virginia Disaster Relief volunteers traveled directly to southwest Virginia and, within hours,


were assessing the damage. Within days they were providing hot meals and hygiene kits for those in need. SBCV churches held prayer meetings and reached out with donations. Many heard about the needs and went online for DR training and certification.


While many of the basic needs in Virginia were met within a few weeks ... those who have lost all they own to raging rivers and mudslides in Virginia and throughout other states number in the tens of thousands. Disaster Relief volunteers will be needed for months and months to come. Thank you for all you've done to respond so far – and thank you for continuing to respond in the future. Please keep up to date on opportunities for training and service through our website: [www.sbcv.org/helene](http://www.sbcv.org/helene)

It is truly amazing how God allows us to be His hands and feet to those we've never met and introduce them to the one who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Together, we can literally create new kingdom snapshots through these everyday acts of service. And while we serve— we let them know they are truly not alone! ■

## From the Editor

**BRANDON PICKETT**

 [bpickett@sbcv.org](mailto:bpickett@sbcv.org)

 [facebook.com/brandon.pickett](https://facebook.com/brandon.pickett)









# Watch stories, keynote speakers, and event highlights in the SBCV library.



Watch the full messages from these events and trainings:

Student Fusion

Vision Virginia

Annual Homecoming



Scan the QR code to find the video library.

[sbcv.org/videos](https://sbcv.org/videos)



## Ready to go. Ready to help.

Be the hands and feet of Jesus by loving those in life-altering situations. Disasters open doors to share the Gospel with and minister to the hurting.

#IWEARYELLOW

Find out more at [sbcv.org/dr](https://sbcv.org/dr)



## Connect the offering plate to the mission field

A missions resource filled with weekly highlights of missionaries

52  
SUNDAYS

Share the stories behind each dollar given through your church

[sbcv.org/52sundays](https://sbcv.org/52sundays)

# MINISTRY & EVENTS

You are  
not alone.

## 2024

### NOVEMBER

10-12

Annual Homecoming, *London Bridge BC, Virginia Beach*

28

Thanksgiving Day

### DECEMBER

1-8

Week of Prayer for International Missions & Lottie Moon  
Christmas Offering

25

Christmas Day

## 2025

### JANUARY

14

Noble Warriors Leaders Conference, *Staples Mill Road BC, Glen Allen*

15

Leadership Multiplication Workshop (Southeast)

17-18

Youth Evangelism Conference (YEC), *London Bridge BC, Virginia Beach*

### FEBRUARY

6

Leadership/Evangelism Summit, *First BC, Woodbridge*

8

Reaching the Nations, *Nansemond River BC, Suffolk*

22

DR Round Up, *Ministry Support Center, Glen Allen*

22

Noble Warriors Men's Conference, *The Mount Church, Stafford*

25

Send Virginia Summit, *Centreville BC, Centreville*

### MARCH

1

Kids Ministry Conference, *Swift Creek BC, Midlothian*

4

Seminary for a Day (Central)

8

Kids Ministry Conference, *Northstar Church, Blacksburg*

11

Seminary for a Day (Southwest)

15

ICS/IMT Administration & Logistics, *Ministry Support Center, Glen Allen*

15

Noble Warriors Men's Conference, *First BC, Charlottesville*

18

Leadership Multiplication Workshop, *Roanoke*

19

Leadership Multiplication Workshop (North)

22

Kids Ministry Conference, *Great Bridge BC, Chesapeake*

28-29

Send Relief Serve Tour, *Virginia Beach*

31-April 2

DC Metro Vision Tour (North)



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4956 Dominion Blvd, Glen Allen, VA 23060



Stay up to date by using the online calendar on our website!

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# SBC Virginia

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## PROCLAIMER

4956 Dominion Blvd  
Glen Allen, VA 23060

[sbcv.org](http://sbcv.org)

804-270-1848

[proclaimer@sbcv.org](mailto:proclaimer@sbcv.org)

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