

Baptist Herald
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# Greetings from the BGCVA President



Greetings, my beloved BGC family,

It is December 2023, and we have been blessed to once again experience God's

love, grace, and peace. As we enter the holiday season, let us take a moment to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas - the birth of Jesus Christ. My prayer is that you never forget that no matter what challenges you may face in life, our Savior, Immanuel, is always with us. We have a Wonderful Counselor, a Mighty God, an Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace who will provide comfort and joy to you not only today but also for eternity.

On behalf of myself, the officers, staff, and ministries of the Baptist General Convention of Virginia, we extend our warmest greetings and wish you and your family a joyous Christmas and a prosperous New Year!

The Reverend Milton P. Bunting President

# Christmas Greetings from the BGCVA Executive Minster



"And there were shep-herds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the LORD appeared to them, and the

glory of the LORD shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel

said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you Good News that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a SAVIOR has been born to you; he is the MESSIAH, the LORD.'" Luke 2:9-11 NIV

We celebrate you and this majestic season with the joyful peace that is found in the blessed SAVIOR.

December is the time when Christmas around the world is wonderfully celebrated, with great joy and peace because of the birth of JESUS CHRIST. The assurance and encouragement indicative in this birth narrative is the basis for the joy that is paramount in the service provided to and by the Baptist General Convention of Virginia (BGCVA) as a faith community. This joy undergirds the thankfulness that is being extended to each of you for your generous support of the goals and objectives of the BGCVA in 2023; and we pray for increase in your life and ministry, and in the work of the BGCVA. We encourage you to share in these goals and objectives through engaging conversations, inspiring activities, and intentional communal gatherings inspired by this season. The world needs our collective witness as people of faith. We have been entrusted with this sacred gift of "Peace." Let us shout it from the mountain top – "Let there be peace on earth and goodwill to all humanity." Regardless of our differences, we are created in the image and likeness of the GOD who gave us JESUS. Therefore, let us devote ourselves to the Babe of Bethlehem, who is the joy of this season.

Leading Lady Cathy Whitaker, Adom, Yohance and I offer our compliments of this season to you and yours. We thank GOD for all you do for BGCVA and the Whitakers!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Dr. Leo Whitaker, Executive Minister

### **Celebratory Recognitions**

The City of Richmond's decision to "memorialize individuals for their civic, cultural, humanitarian, or historically significant contributions to the Richmond Community" by renaming streets with their names continues to include BGCVA leaders. The latest honorary street names recognize the positive impact that past BGCVA president, Dr. Roscoe Cooper, Jr., Dr. Dwight C. Jones (who recently was honored on his Fiftieth Pastor Anniversary at the Historic First Baptist Church South Richmond), and the late Dr. Gordon Blaine Hancock have had in serving their congregations and communities. We salute and celebrate the work, witness, and worship of these pastors and graciously thank them for their faithful commitment to the Gospel ministry. Their actions illustrate the BGCVA's thematic focus of "Bringing People Together, *Growing Churches, and Changing* Communities!".

The legacy of serving Christ and communities is exhibited with the recent 20<sup>th</sup> Pastoral Anniversary celebrations for the Reverend Ralph Hodge, Second Baptist Church South Richmond, Dr. Carla E. Lightfoot, Angel Visit Baptist Church in Tappahannock, the Reverend Kevin Cook, Broad Rock Baptist Church in Richmond, and the Reverend Wayne Henley, Cedar Grove Baptist Church in Providence Forge. The Silver Pastoral Anniversary was celebrated by Dr. Charles Whitfield at First Baptist Church Martinsville and Dr. John Fountaine at First Baptist Church in Heathsville. Their faithful giving of time, talents, and treasures to preaching and teaching the Gospel is appreciated.

Another ministry highlight of this missive is the recognition that the historic Alfred Street Baptist Church in Alexandria celebrated is 220<sup>th</sup> year as a church on Sunday, November 27th! The existence of Alfred Street is evidence of GOD's providential care, concern, and commitment to GOD's people and purpose! Congratulations Dr. Howard-John Wesley, Pastor, and

the members of Alfred Street. We pray that GOD will give you the desires of your hearts as you continue to delight yourselves in GOD!

And, lastly, we recognize and salute each of you for the work you do for the kingdom.

Dr. Leo Whitaker, BGCVA Executive Minister

# A Message from the BGCVA 2nd Vice President

Let us all spread the Good News that, "Jesus is the reason for the season!" Be blessed as you continue to be a blessing!!



Dr. Griselda Amy Bayton 2nd Vice President

### Christmas Message from the BGCVA 3rd Vice President

"Christmas is not a time nor a season but a state of mind. To cherish peace and good will, to be plenteous in mercy is to have the real Spirit of Christmas." This statement made by

Calvin Coolidge at the turn of the 20th century inspires us to intentionally rejoice during the Christmas Season with the joy that is expressed by the birth of Christ. Now, spread joy, peace, and good will wherever you go in the New Year!

Dr. Ricardo L. Brown 3rd Vice President

# A Message from the BGCVA 1st Vice President

ENJOY THE GIFT OF CHRIST

You may remember the English Christmas carol that enumerates twelve days of Christmas listing



daily the gifts of "twelve drummers drumming, eleven pipers piping, ten lords a-leaping, nine ladies dancing, eight maids a-milking, seven swans aswimming, six geese a-laying, five golden rings, four calling birds, three French hens, two turtle doves, and a partridge in a pear tree." Well, let me tell you that greater than any of the previously mentioned gifts or any other gift imaginable, is the celebrated reality of the initial gift of the baby Jesus wrapped in swaddling clothes. As we continue to celebrate the birth of Jesus and marvel at the value of our gift in the Christ, might each of you have an amazing time with your families at home and in your local church. Please know that your Baptist General Convention of Virginia Family is praying for you and yours to have the best Christmas experience possible with the Christ. During this season, in honor of His name, let us enjoy the gift of Our Lord together and gain inspiration for an unparalleled future of success as we do the work of our great convention!

Dr. James E. Coleman, Jr. 1st Vice President



### **Greetings from the Clergy Ministry!**

At this Holy and Sacred time of the year, I would like to extend greetings to you and your loved ones from the Baptist General Conven-

tion of VA Executive Board and Staff. As the President of the Clergy Ministry, it gives me great Joy to greet you during the Advent Season. The Clergy Ministry Executive Team joins me in these special greetings to you.

We have been busy in 2023 sharing with the clergy and ministry leaders across the commonwealth through the Clergy Conversation and Ministry Training Track sessions. Our goal has been "bringing people together, growing churches, and changing communities" through conversations and study.

We pray you enjoy the presence of God, family, loved ones, and friends as you celebrate the birth of Christ. For without Christ, there is no Christmas.

He is Immanuel, (God with us). Matthew 1:23

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Rev. Gloria R. Newsome-Brickhouse, M.Div., Clergy Ministry President

### **Greetings from the Women's Greetings from the Men's Ministry!**

"Behold, I bring you good tidings of Great Joy!"

As citizens of a global community, it has become increasingly possible for our lives to be

flooded with news of poverty, food insecurity, covid, healthcare, mental health, disinformation and so much more. Therefore, the Women's Ministry of the Baptist General Convention of Virginia brings you that marvelous Word from our Lord and Savior -

... I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance [to the full, till it overflows]. John 10:10 Amplified Bible

In this Season and Spirit of Our Savior's Birth, let us live our faith-filled lives witnessing abundantly to Hope, Peace, Joy and Love – all of which our Lord freely gives!



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Women's Ministry Dr. Margaret Delk Edney, President









It is with great JOY that I write to wish the members and friends of this great Convention, a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I wish you



child-like excitement and anticipation in your celebration of the greatest and most important event known to all humankind. For unto us a child is born who has taken away the sins of the world. Praise God!!!!

Amen.

Rev. Dr. Johnie E, Hopkins, Sr. Men's Ministry President

### **Greetings from the Youth Ministry!**

As we embrace the spirit of togetherness and the joyous celebrations of this holiday season, let us remember the profound theme that



unites us: "Bringing People Together, Growing Churches, and Changing Communities!" May the warmth of love and fellowship fill your hearts, and may you find renewed strength and inspiration in the service of our faith and the empowerment of our youth. Together, we have the power to make a positive impact on our communities, and through our unity, we can bring about meaningful change. Wishing you a blessed and joyful holiday season, filled with love, hope, and the shared mission of transformation.

In Faith and Unity, Alexandria Hunt-Ouarles Youth Ministry President





### **BGCVA Sacred Spaces—A Year In Review 2023**



Baptist Church, Gloucester





### BGCVA Sacred Spaces— A Year In Review 2023

BGCVA SACRED SPACES: Preservation of African American Churches, Cemeteries, Historic Structures, Associated land, and Landmarks in Virginia. This initiative funded by Dominion Energy will enable Baptist General Convention of Virginia (BGCVA) to provide training for new and current Church Historians. These historians would research; document and archive all data related to the assigned church and would attend BGCVA sponsored training and other applicable training needed to conduct the work.

- Scanning BGCVA historical documents from BGCVA churches and Association
- Working with FamilySearch.org/ Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
- Attended Seminars of Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH®)
- Attended meetings and presentations of Central Virginia African American Historical and Genealogical Society (AAHGS) Central Virginia
- Attended meetings and presentations of Middle Peninsula AAHGS (Monthly Meetings and presentations)
- Attended meetings and presentations of Hampton Roads AAHGS (Monthly Meetings and presentations)
- Met with officers of "One Shared Story" to plan upcoming joint projects.
- Annual Session Class: Writing Your Church History
- New Flatbed Scanner installed and training session completed

# **BGCVA SACRED SPACES Webinars:**

April 28<sup>th</sup>—"Preparing to Preserve our Sacred Structures"

June 9<sup>th</sup>—"Who, What, Where? -The Church Cemetery"

August 25<sup>th</sup>—"Final Resting Places" (Preserving Church & Community

### Cemeteries

October 26<sup>th</sup>—Joseph Rogers, Director of Partnerships & Community Engagement—Virginia Museum of History & Culture

Nov 16<sup>th</sup>—Bessida Cauthorne White, Genealogist, Church Historian, Family Historian— "Education First & Foremost" Rappahannock Industrial Academy Angel Visit Baptist Church

### BGCVA SACRED SPACES/ LATTER DAY SAINTS (LDS) FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROJECT

June 22<sup>nd</sup> – September 26<sup>th</sup> – The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints donated food that was distributed at no cost to BGCVA churches and associations in cooperation with area churches, food pantries, and feeding sites. All foods were giving (not sold) to families in need. BGCVA SACRED SPACES staff and volunteers coordinated these distributions (see attachment). Each distribution was supported by the coordinators listed along with numerous volunteers representing BGCVA churches in each of the localities served.

### Dr. J. Elisha Burke Consultant

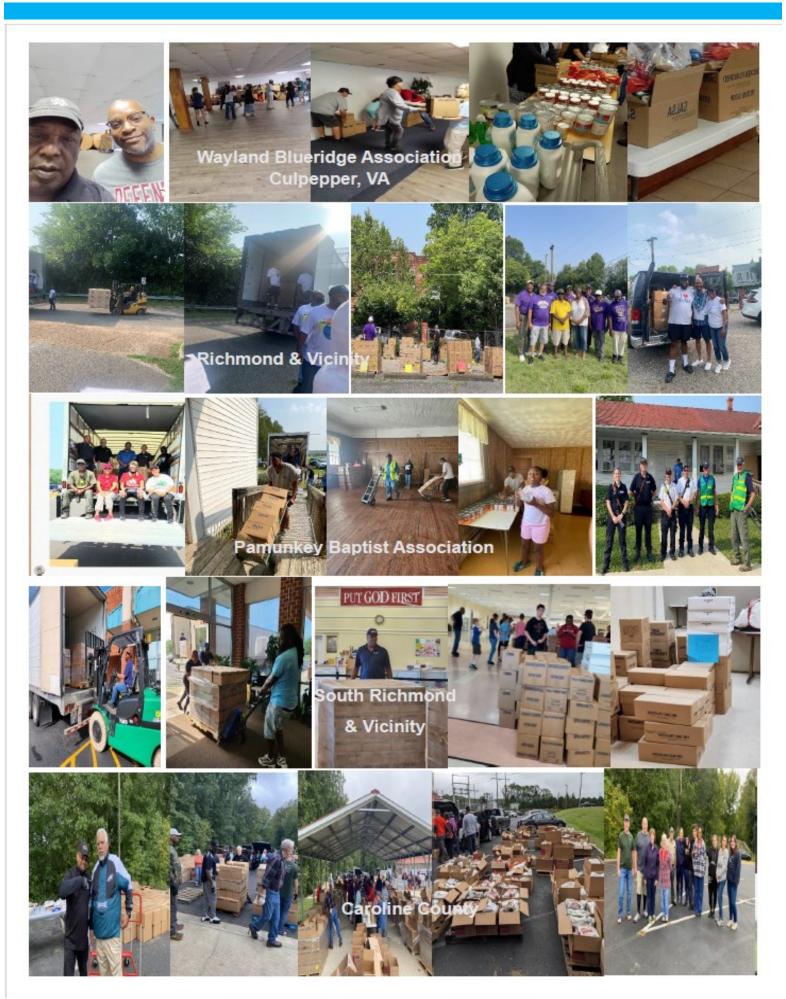
### Dr. Stephanie L. Wilkes Coordinator











# Fiscal Year vs. Calendar Year Accounting: Which is Best for Your Church?

By Dr. William H. "Bill" Whitaker, II

The fall and winter months of October – January are an extremely challenging time for most church finance entities. While most church members and leaders are able to see the Church's Liturgical Calendar of ministry and holiday events, what is not readily seen by many pastors and church officers alike is the annual. head-on collision of the church's holiday calendar with the finance committee's 4th quarter, end-of-year finance responsibilities. This could cause "a train-wreck" of sorts that, if not carefully navigated and attended to, can greatly hinder the church from doing ministry in the New Year.

### 4th Quarter Church Calendar

October

November

December

January

The Season for Fall Revivals, Harvest Festivals, and other Special Days (i.e. Church Anniversaries and Pastor's Anniversaries) Thanksgiving Advent/Christmas Watchnight/New Year's Eve Services & Year End Contribution

### 4th Quarter Finance Calendar

Statements

- Year-End Contribution Statements
- Clergy Tax Reporting Requirements
- Preparing the Upcoming Year's Calendar of Church/Ministry Events to Be Included in the New Year's Budget
- The Creation of the Upcoming Year's Budget to Include Budget Related Meetings with Ministry Leaders
- At Least Two Rounds of Next Year's Budget Revisions.
- The Presentation of the Next Year's Budget in a "Duly Called" Church Meeting

Wouldn't it be great if the two calendars did not occur at the same time? Well, since the world cannot change the dates of Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day, one way of avoiding the "Calendar Collision" is to consider placing the church's finances on a 12-month, *Fiscal Year Schedule* that begins at a time other than January 1st.



### What is a "Fiscal Year"

It is a 12-month period of time that begins on a date your finance committee believes better suits the finance calendar needs of your church ... typically on a date other than January 1st. While the majority of today's church finances do operate on a calendar-year system (January 1 - December 31), some churches have opted for a Fiscal Year calendar for the church's accounting (i.e. July 1 – June 30 or October 1 – September 31).

### Fiscal Year Advantages

The purpose of creating a Fiscal Year schedule that differs from the calendar year schedule of your church is to separate the busiest time of the church calendar from the busiest time of the finance calendar allowing church officers and ministry leaders to enjoy and focus on one at a time. Fiscal Year accounting is not for every church, but for some, it is the answer to your 4th Quarter prayers. For example, let's use a Fiscal Year of October 1st – September 31st. By October 1st, schools are already open and many other areas of the community have resumed their regular fall activities. A church with this fiscal schedule begins its budget process in the late spring and early summer month of May and June and then utilizes the remaining summer months of July and early August (which is typically a slower pace of ministry) to

create the church's annual budget. The budget is presented for the congregation's approval in late summer somewhere around late August. The month of September is then spent holding "budget finalization & implementation meetings" with ministry leaders in preparation for the beginning of the church's new Fiscal Year on October 1st. There's no collision of the Church Calendar and Finance Calendars.

Another advantage of the October 1 – September 31 Fiscal Year is that with December being in the middle and not the end of your fiscal year, when it comes to your church budget, you already know how your congregation's actual end-of-year giving figures are rather than having to do a budget based on projections. The point here is that by the time of the end-of-year finance responsibilities (contribution statements, tax related obligations, etc.), all donations have been received, the finance reports have been finalized, and the church budget and ministry calendar have both been approved by the congregation.

### Fiscal Year Challenges

"All-Things-Taxes" Must Remain the Same. Any and everything pertaining to the reporting and filing of taxes must remain on the IRS Calendar Year schedule of January 1 – December 31. The IRS does not change its schedule just because your congregation has voted to implement a new Fiscal Year Calendar.

- The End-of-Year Giving Deadline for members to submit contributions is still December 31st.
- Contribution Statement Distribution Date should still remain on
  January 31st to give your members ample time to prepare and
  file their annual taxes.
- The Church's Filing of Payroll
   Taxes must still be handled according to the filing schedule of the Internal Revenue Service.

### How to Change Your Church's Account Period from Calendar to Fiscal Year

Consult with your CPA and utilize "Stub Period" Accounting which is the creation of an "interim period" for a portion of the current calendar year. A "stub period" begins at the end of the old accounting period and ends on the last day of the new. For example, if your church is creating a Fiscal Year system that begins on October 1, you could plan for an interim, "Stub Period" of January 1 – September 31 and then, from that point, implement your new Fiscal Year period as of October 1.

# Calendar Year/Fiscal Year Transition Essentials

Communication is key in transitioning from Calendar Year to Fiscal Year accounting. Be sure to contact and inform <u>ALL</u> persons involved in or impacted by your church's change to Fiscal Year accounting. This will allow you to receive input on the change from different perspectives that you may not have considered.

- 1. Your CPA to ensure that they are aware of and included in the planning process for the change being. I have listed this first because one question that will be asked by the Pastor and Official Boards is, "Has the CPA been contacted for advice on this change?" If your church does not have a CPA, it is advised that your Finance Committee consult with one before implementing a change from Calendar Year to Fiscal Year accounting.
- 2. **Your Pastor** so he/she can promote and speak to the change from a pastoral perspective.
- 3. **Your Church Boards** to ensure that they are informed as a part of the official structure of the church.
- 4. **Your Congregation** although the change may not directly impact most members of the church.
- 5. Your Church's Employees just in case the date that benefit and pay rate changes are considered on a date other than the beginning of the calendar year.
- 6. The Financial Secretary, Counting Teams of your church to keep them "in the loop" of information and communication.
- 7. **Your Auditor** to ensure that he/she is aware that your church has changed to a Fiscal Year calendar before the audit begins.



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### BAPTIST GENERAL CONVENTION OF VIRGINIA

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### December 2023

To: Officers, Member Churches, Associations, Moderators, Family and Friends of the Baptist General Convention of Virginia

Re: Marking the 35th Anniversary of Vision for Establishment of the State Office and Its Renewal and Restoration!

"By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established."

Proverbs 24:3 NIV

The Baptist General Convention of Virginia is forever thankful to Virginia Union University and its Board of Trustees for deeding over 1.5 acres of land to us in June 1988 for the construction of a state office! Former BGCVA President, the late Dr. Willis A. Johnson asked VUU'S President, the late Dr. S. Dallas Simmons for the land upon which to build the BGCVA HEADQUARTERS. The late Reverend Charles F. Mapp was president during the construction. As the second President from the Eastern Shore, President Milton P. Bunting is leading our Renewal and Restoration.

Honoring and trusting the scripture reference for the project, Nehemiah 2:20, "Yes, the God of Heaven will prosper us, and we, God's servants will arise and build", the historic ground breaking ceremony was conducted on November 15, 1988. The collective collaboration of the BGC officers, member churches, associations, moderators, ministry leaders, family and friends culminated in the celebratory dedication of the BGCVA State Office Building at 1214 West Graham Road, Richmond, Virginia, on November 12, 1991!

As we recognize and celebrate the past accomplishments, we realize and commit to addressing the facility challenges our 32-year old State Office currently faces. An energy audit of the building was conducted in 2022 and this is a partial list of upgrades and/or replacements that need immediate attention:

- 1. The replacement of six (6) 32-year old HVAC systems servicing four first floor offices, multi-purpose room area and two second floor offices;
- 2. The 32-year old roof's unique construction needs updating to prevent continued leaks;
- 3. The building needs to be power washed, and caulking of windows, bricks, etc.;
- 4. New carpet/painting in the Multiple Purpose Room, Conference Room, and a first floor office suite which includes four office spaces and a large reception area;
- Removal of trees (especially ones towering over building), general landscaping;
- 6. Repaying of parking lot (not repatching), and
- 7. The Replacement of the hot-water heater.

While this list is not inclusive of all the upgrades the State Office needs, it does identify the ones that are most urgent. It is projected that these improvements will cost approximately \$175,000. We are asking that each church give at least \$175.00 or more towards accomplishing this goal. Therefore, we are asking for your support—over and above—what you, your church, or association regularly gives. We are asking that you, your church, association, family, or friend, let us know the amount you are able to make towards this endeavor. Please return the attached form, or email your financial pledge to info@bgcva.org by December 31, 2023. A financial update for this endeavor will be presented at the Annual Session.

For the Kingdom of GOD, we are,

M. P. Bunting
Reverend Milton P. Bunting

Reverend Milton P. Bunti President Dr. Leo Whitaker Executive Minister

We are BGC...Bringing People Together, Growing Churches, and Changing Communities!

~ Act I:8; Matthew 9:35-38; Mark I0:I3-I6

# **Baptist General Convention of VA**

# **2024 Event Calendar**

January	
15-16	MLK Celebration and Day of Ministry Service
17	Day for All People at General Assembly
20	Church Finance and Tax Compliance Conference,
	Richmond
21	Statewide BGCVA Day

### February

1	SACRED SPACES Webinar
2	VUU Founders' Day
6	Heart Health Webinar

24 FAMILY ACP Workshop, Richmond

### March

14	SACRED	SPACES	Webinar
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22-23 Mega Ministries & Youth Retreat, Norfolk

### <u>April</u>

11	Hybrid Executive Committee Meeting
18	Virtual Spring General Board Meeting
27	FAMILY ACP Workshop, Richmond
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29 Hybrid VBS Conference

### May (First Responders Month)

3-4	Regional Institute, Roanoke
18	FAMILY ACP Workshop, Richmond

23 SACRED SPACES Webinar

### <u>June</u>

1	Hybrid Children, Youth, & Youth Workers
	Conference & Empowerment - No Judgement
	Zone!

23-27 Hybrid 125<sup>th</sup> Annual Session and Congress of Christian Faith Formation, Alexandria

\*\*\*\* Some Events are Virtual Due to COVID-19. \*\*\*\*

\*\*\* Dates and Locations are Subject to Change. \*\*\*

Phone: 804-228-2421 Email: <a href="mailto:info@bgcva.org">info@bgcva.org</a>
More information on our events can be found at <a href="mailto:www.bgcva.org">www.bgcva.org</a>.

We are BGC...

Bringing People Together, Growing Churches, and Changing Communities!
(Act 1:8; Matthew 9:35-38; Mark 10:13-16)

### July

6 BGC Day @ Kings Dominion

6 77<sup>th</sup> Children's Home Founders' Day

#### August

SDPSTVU Leadership Conference
 Virtual Back 2 School Weekend

### September (Christian Faith Formation Month)

12 Virtual General Board Strategic Planning Meeting

14 Virtual Faith Formation Conference

### October (Clergy Appreciation Month)

3 Hybrid Executive Committee Meeting

Clergy Appreciation Day
 BGCVA Week of Prayer

10 Virtual Fall General Board Meeting

### November

7 Day of Social Action
 9 Hybrid Fall Session

12-14 Virtual Children's and Youth Revival 12-15 VUU Ellison Jones Convocation

### December

15 Virtual Youth Ministry Lock-In

### Weekly

Every Thursday @ 7:30 PM -

Virtual Youth Ministry Advisory Team: Meeting & Training

#### Monthly

Every 1st Monday @ 7PM – Virtual Men's Ministry Meeting Every 1st Thursday @ 12PM – Virtual Clergy Conversations

Every 3rd Monday @ 7 AM - Women's Ministry Prayer Call-in

Every 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday @ 12 PM & 6 PM — Virtual Ministry

Training Track

Every 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday @ 7 PM – Virtual Moderators' & Associate Leaders' Meeting



Baptist General Convention of Virginia 1214 West Graham Road Richmond, Virginia 23220

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