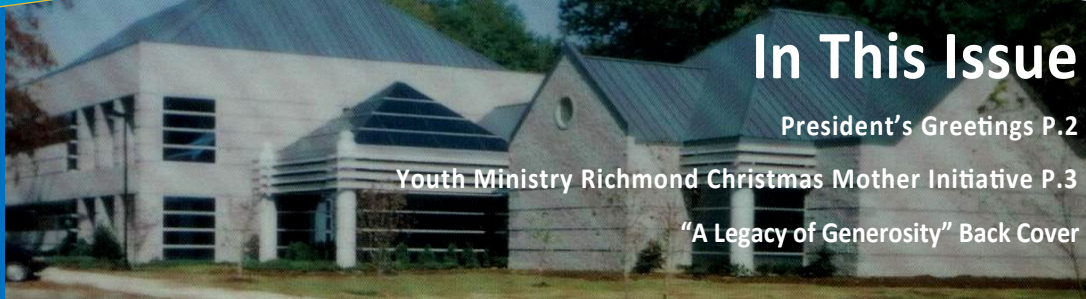


Baptist Herald

Seasons Greetings from the Officers and Staff of the Baptist General Convention! Especially at Christmas, constituents and friends of the BGCVA family remind us of how God blesses us through you. We are sincerely appreciative of your participation in our events and your financial contributions. Our prayer during this season and throughout the year is that God will continue to bless you. May all that the Christ Child brings come alive in you this season and throughout the coming year.

**President Steven L. Blunt
Interim Executive Minister
David L. Chapman
The BGCVA Officers and Staff**



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Young Clergy Retreat

On September 1st and 2nd, the Baptist General Convention of VA (BGCVA) in conjunction with the Virginia Council of Churches sponsored the "Young Clergy Summit", an ecumenical retreat to engage young pastors in discourse about the future of the church. These leaders, age 40 and under, and spanning different denominations and localities, convened at the Roslyn Center in Richmond, VA and addressed the theme: "Ministry in the Age of Apathy". The presenters for the retreat included Dr. Adam Bond, professor of Christian Education at Virginia Union's Samuel Dewitt Proctor School of Theology, who dealt with the call of the pastor, and Dr. Chrisy Lohr Sapp, Dean of the Chapel at Duke University, who discussed ministry and cultural diversity.

The BGCVA was represented well by three very gifted pastors: Rev. Marvin Gilliam, Jr, pastor-elect of Mt. Oni Baptist Church of Ruther Glen, VA; Rev. Marcus Allen, pastor of Union Branch Baptist Church of Prince George, VA; and Rev. Albert Jackson, pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church of Alexandria, VA. Though all three participants were from similar contexts, each was blessed by the experience in their own unique way.

Standing out for Allen was the spirit of unity that was in the room. "Everyone was very welcoming and joyful to be around," said Allen, "even though we were separated by denominational doctrine, it felt as if we were of one community." He also was encouraged by the freedom provided by the space. He continues, "I am grateful because everyone was able to express themselves and their theological beliefs without judgment and criticism."

For Jackson, the retreat was an opportunity to be both rejuvenated and challenged. "This summit was the renewal that I needed as a young pastor," said Jackson, "Dr. Adam Bond gave renewed hope in my context and he caused me to get out of my comfort zone." He continues, "It was pleasantly uncomfortable to think about my personal space changing because of where I feel God is taking me. We often preach, 'take the limits off of God', yet as pastors we can be guilty of not [internalizing] what we preach."

For Gilliam, it was the interaction with other clergy that bore the most fruit. "In our discus-

sions with other young church leaders, there were two things that really resonated with me, he begins, "First was uncovering the source of the apathy we experienced from those with whom we sought to serve in ministry. What looks like apathy may not be apathy at all, but could be the effect of being in the wrong place with our goals and concepts of

ministry." "The second point that resonated with me," he continues, "was reclaiming the idea of serving as the highest call and intentionally keeping this at the forefront of ministry. In emphasizing the servanthood of discipleship, we acknowledge that all people have an authentic and significant role in the life and work of the faith community."

We are grateful that God continues to both bless our Convention to stand on the pulse of ecumenical relevance and provide us with quality representation to do so. And though the overall theme of the retreat centered on the concept of "apathy", we at BGCVA can be comforted by the fact that when speaking of our leaders, the term simply does not apply.



Baptist Herald

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President's Greetings

Greetings BGC Family!

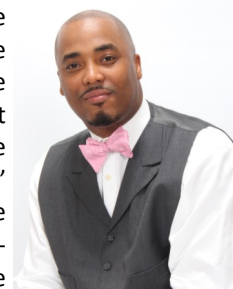
It is certainly my prayer that this missive finds each of you operating fully within the grace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I would like to take this opportunity to thank each of you for all of the prayers, sacrifices, gifts, and the numerous measures of support and advocacy that you have provided for our convention throughout this year. The testimony of our convention's efficacy is truly a testament of the wonderful men and women from across this state that have been faithful in the shadow of our Lord's cross.



As we celebrate the Coming of our Lord during this Advent Season, it is my prayer that each of us will be appreciative in celebrating "the spirit of expectancy" that accompanies this season. As children of faith we should be "expectant" with divine anticipation regarding the will of the Almighty for our lives and His Kingdom. As believers our expectations are not in the cultural trappings of the season (consumerism, capitalism, materialism, objectifi-

cation, etc.) but rather in the exultant joy in sharing the Good News pertaining to the Coming and Returning Christ into the world. This measure of "Advent expectancy" should carry us well into the New Year as we seek to remain faithful to the Will, the Way, and the Word of the One who by virtue of His Advent has yet again "called us out of the darkness into His marvelous light." Please continue to keep our state convention in prayer as we are "expecting" great things of the Lord and our members in this upcoming year. Happy Advent and Merry Christmas to you and yours! Shalom!!

The Reverend Dr. Steven G. Blunt



Service of Appreciation



The Northern Neck Ministers' Conference recently sponsored an Appreciation Service for retired pastor, **Reverend William I. Roane** on October 24. Reverend Roane and his wife, Mrs. Shirley Temple Roane were longtime supporters of BGCVA until their health began to fail.

Health, Men and Social Justice Update

Greetings!

As we prepare ourselves this Advent Season and throughout Christmas and Christmastide let us all be thankful for every blessing throughout this year. I am thankful for your continued support and commitment to the BGCVA ministries of Health, Men, and Social Justice.

This year we have been blessed with numerous partnerships that enable us to provide beneficial information, seminars, training and technical assistance for our members throughout the year. Our partnership with Optima Family Health Care has expanded our presence via participation in health events all over the state. We are reshaping the Men's Ministry to intentionally focus on spiritual growth, outreach across generations and social action. The Men's Ministry next event is the Mid-Winter Retreat, February 19-20, and we encourage all men, women and clergy to attend.

BGCVA has a long history of being the voice for our churches via the Social Concerns Commission. In light of the many current challenges related to social justice (childhood hunger, voter

suppression, mass incarceration, drug policy and policing, redistricting, oppressive payday lending, and other issues), the work of the Social Concerns Commission was assigned as a staff function.

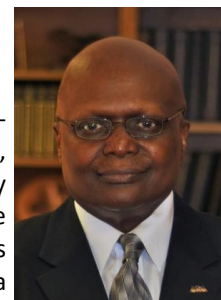
However, we still need Commission members. If you or someone you know has a heart for this area of ministry please let me know (we need statewide representation). We especially need church leaders and members to become active in Social Justice (a Biblical mandate) in their respective localities.

To further our Social Justice efforts we are currently working with the following organizations:

Ecumenical Poverty Initiative (ECI), Virginia Council of Churches Virginia Interfaith Council for Public Policy, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), Center for Responsible Lending, Virginia Advocates, and Virginia State Conference NAACP.

We need you to pray and join with us as we Connect to the Cross, the Church and the Community.

The Reverend Dr. J. Elisha Burke, Director of Health, Men and Social Justice, eburke@bgcva.org



TIS THE SEASON...

TIS THE SEASON...

TO BE THANKFUL...for all the blessings that our Lord has showered on each of us. Many of us have experienced hardships and have had to deal with stuff that we thought would never come our way, but God's infinite Love, undeserved Grace, and immeasurable Mercy has brought us through and kept us to this day. What tomorrow holds we do not know, but we know who holds tomorrow.

TO REFLECT...on a year in which the Baptist General Convention of VA has continued to move forward and upwards. The Finance Conference, Men and Women's Conference, the 116th Annual Session and Congress of Christian Education, Youth Workers Conference and Youth Retreat were all outstanding events. Numerous workshops were conducted across the state by the staff of BGC and others who are always on standby to help us carry out this great mission that God has given to this great Convention. BGCVA involvement in matters of social concerns has increased tremendously. The Convention is not only involved in seeking to positively impact our churches but also our overall society. This year the Convention has been partnering with other Faith-based and community organizations to fight hunger among our school children, stand up against mass incarceration that has devastated the African-American community, trying to alleviate the oppressive pay-day lending that takes unfair advantage of the poor and marginalized of all ethnicities, and promote voting and voter's rights in our state.

TO HOPE...for the Convention to continue to move forward and upwards in its financial strength but at a stronger and more rapid pace. By the time you receive this Herald, you should have already received a mailing or email containing a packet that ask you as an individual to give to the Convention. Please don't ignore or throw it away. Respond to the request and help your Convention realize the hope that was previously expressed. The Convention wants to express its thanks to the 2016 Honorary Chairs of this campaign "A Legacy of Generosity", Dr. Grady W. Powell and Dr. Willis A. Johnson, for having already made their pledge for the coming year. Our thanks also goes out to those who agreed to be a part of the 2016 committee. God bless all of you.

Hope for churches and associations of the convention to become more responsive in their support of the Convention. I know from where I sit that the Convention is responsive

in its support of our associations and churches.

Hope for our nation to come to a place where greater appreciation is shown to the President of these United States of America for the great things God has allowed him to accomplish, even, in the face of constant opposition.

That we pray for him as we lament the decisions or positions of which we do not agree.

God bless our President!

Hope for all pastors, may the Lord continue to bless you, your family and ministry in this coming year. For our associations and churches, may you reach new heights in service to our God and one another.

The work goes on and our God is glorified.

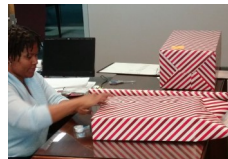
The Reverend David L. Chapman, Interim Executive Minister

Youth Ministry



The Baptist General Convention of Virginia Staff and Youth Ministry was excited to participate in the Christmas Mother Initiative this year! For those of you who are unfamiliar, Christmas Mother serves as a holiday adoption agency, pairing organizations with less fortunate families. This year we partnered to provide a family with a Christmas dinner and gifts for the children.

The BGC was assigned a family consisting of a single mother and three children ages 11, 8, and 5. We provided underwear, clothes, books toys and non-perishable items to ensure that the children in our adopted family would experience God's care and love through our efforts. We Thank those who joined us in this very worthy cause to bring some much needed joy to the hearts of some wonderful children.



Clergy, Men & Women Mid-Winter Retreat

February 19-20, 2016

3:00 PM Fri.—2:30PM Sat.

Hilton Mark Center
5000 Seminary Avenue
Alexandria, VA

Connecting the Cross, the Church,
and the Community

Cost is \$150 per person, cost includes registration materials, Friday reception, Saturday breakfast and lunch.

Registration Deadline is January 30, after that there is no meal guarantee.

Hotel Reservation Deadline is January 20.

Church Finance and Tax Compliance Conference

January 9, 2016

8:00 AM 2:00PM

Fifth Baptist Church
1415 West Cary Street
Richmond, VA

Cost is \$50 per person, cost includes registration materials, Morning coffee and juice and lunch. Registration Cost for VUU School of Theology Senior students who are not pastors is \$10.00 per student.

Registration Deadline is January 2, after that there is no meal guarantee.

Register for these events Today:

1. Online at www.bgcva.org
2. By mail
3. At the BGCVA Office
4. Or call 804-228-2421



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Celebration of Life Services

On behalf of the President Blunt, Interim Executive Minister Chapman, staff, and officers, our thoughts and prayers continue to be with the families of the following persons who have entered eternal rest since May, 2015.

- **Mr. Alfonso Roane**, member, Jerusalem Baptist Church, Hague; husband of Mrs. Odessa Roane, Area C, BGCVA Women's Ministry
- **Mrs. Colethia Holcomb**, member, First Baptist Church, Hampton; Area H, BGCVA Women's Ministry
- **Mr. Covye M. Stubbs**, member, Ebenezer Baptist Church, Richmond; husband of Mrs. Portia James Stubbs; son-in-law of The Reverend Dr. Alix B. James
- **Dr. Alix B. James**, Ebenezer Baptist Church, Richmond; beloved distinguished and illustrious former president and Chancellor of Virginia Union University; former Dean and Professor of the Virginia Union University School of Theology
- **Mrs. Mary Winslow Burke**, mother of The Reverend Dr. J. Elisha Burke, BGCVA Director of Health, Men and Social Concerns
- **The Reverend James E. White**, retired pastor, Macedonia Baptist Church, Colonial Beach

STVU Student to Complete Service Learning at BGCVA



BGCVA welcomes the Reverend Desiree Jenkins, a senior at the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University, who will complete her required service learning hours at the BGCVA State Office. Reverend Jenkins is no stranger to BGCVA. Since a teenager, she has attended BGCVA Youth Retreats; and, over the past year assisted with the 2015 Annual Session and Youth Retreat.

2016 Budget

As you prepare your 2016 Church Budget, please include the Baptist General Convention of VA, it's missions and ministry in your budget. We would appreciate it.



Also if you have not sent in your 2015 contribution, we pray that you will be able to do so by December 31, 2015. God Bless.

A Legacy of Generosity

Dear BGC Family,

The state of the Baptist General Convention of Virginia is good. This is being written to ask you to help the Convention move from good to better so that the Convention might operate at its best.

With this objective in mind, you will find on our web site (and some were mailed) information that describes our 2016 giving campaign and the means by which you can participate. The thrust of this campaign is individual giving. The giving by our associations and churches is improving but does not afford the Convention the resources it needs to operate at its best.

It is a joy to know that so many of you embrace the opportunity to partner with us in moving our great convention forward.

The theme for this annual campaign is "A Legacy of Generosity". Please take the time to read the material and then contribute your gift to the Convention.

Any gifts received by December 31, 2015 will be listed in the upcoming Annual Session's financial giving report. Gifts received in 2016 will be reported in the following year's Annual Session report. Please note carefully all the ways in which you may give.

The work goes on and our God is glorified.

