

A Publication of the  
Baptist General  
Convention of  
Virginia

# Baptist Herald

## BGCVA Chrismon Tree: A Brief History

Chrismon Ornaments were originated and first made for use on the Christmas tree of Ascension Lutheran Church in Danville, Virginia, in 1957 by Mrs. Frances Kipps Spencer, a church member. The designs were monograms of and symbols for our Lord Jesus Christ. Because these designs have been used by his followers since biblical times, they are the heritage of all Christians and serve to remind each of us regardless of denomination of the One we follow. All Chrismon Ornaments are made in a combination of white and gold to symbolize the purity and majesty of the Son of God and the Son of Man.

### Chrismon Ornaments' Symbols:

- |                           |                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| ⇒ The Cross               | ⇒ Lamb of God             |
| ⇒ Chalice                 | ⇒ Butterfly               |
| ⇒ Crown                   | ⇒ Celtic Cross            |
| ⇒ Angel                   | ⇒ Trefoil                 |
| ⇒ Alpha and Omega         | ⇒ 5 Pointed Star          |
| ⇒ Descending Dove         | ⇒ Natal Star Cross        |
| ⇒ Anchor                  | ⇒ Lights                  |
| ⇒ Chi Rho                 | ⇒ Earth                   |
| ⇒ Peace Dove              | ⇒ Clam                    |
| ⇒ Triumphant Church Cross | ⇒ Fish or IΧTHUS          |
| ⇒ Jerusalem Cross         | ⇒ Lamp                    |
| ⇒ Round Cross             | ⇒ Heart                   |
| ⇒ IHS--Iota, Eta, Sigma   | ⇒ Symbol of Love          |
| ⇒ Trinity                 | ⇒ Star of David           |
| ⇒ Babe in a manger        | ⇒ 8 pointed Armenian Star |
|                           | ⇒ Grapes                  |
|                           | ⇒ Wheat                   |

*15The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. Colossians 1:15-18 NIV*

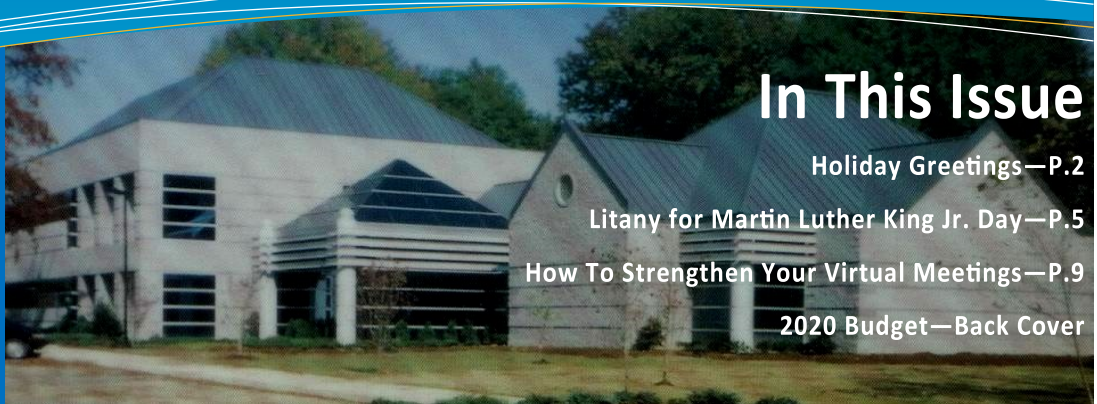
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Editor:

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## Holiday Greetings

BGC Family,

As we enter this special liturgical season, the meaningful motifs of Advent and Christmas resonate with us now more than ever before. Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love possess a restorative power which illuminates the human spirit when it sinks into the abyss of darkness and despair. Admittedly, the relentless tumults and crises of this year have swept many into what seems to be an endless, gloomy pit of pathos and pain. However, a vibrant and vigorous faith audaciously announces with the evangelist John that *the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it* (John 1:5). This reference to Jesus as the Light of the World is what makes Advent filled with expectation and causes Christmas to overflow with an inimitable joy.

While we continue to navigate the perils of this bleak time, The Executive Committee, our General Board, and our collective Staff wish you through the Light, which is the Christ, a very Merry Christmas! Our hope and prayer for this Convention, the Commonwealth, and the entirety of creation for 2021 is a Happy New Year abounding with the wisdom gleaned through trial, an unflappable confidence brimming with assurance, and an upbeat outlook abounding with proleptic possibilities.

Moreover, we thank you for your cheerful generosity and support of BGC during the duress of a pandemic in 2020. We know that every gift, great or small, was an enormous sacrifice and demonstration of your love for the Convention. Therefore, we admirably recognize and gratefully celebrate this kind of steadfast stewardship during an era of great instability. Although the turning point of the current predicament is yet undetermined, We humbly request that you consider making a personal year-end tax-deductible gift and that you will also continue to remember BGC and its work of ***Bringing People Together, Growing Churches, and Changing Communities*** as you contemplate your church budgets for 2021. We have an unshakeable belief in every church, every district, every moderator, every pastor, and every member to rise to the challenge for we are the children of Light known as the BGC!

May the Light from the Lighthouse shine brilliantly upon you!

President James E. Victor, Jr.

Executive Minister Leo Whitaker





# BAPTIST GENERAL CONVENTION OF VIRGINIA

1214 West Graham Road, Suite 1 | Richmond, Virginia 23220-1400

Phone: 804-228-2421 | Fax: (Administration) 804-228-1040 | Fax: (Program Ministries) 804-228-1998

Website: [www.bgcva.org](http://www.bgcva.org) | E-mail: [info@bgcva.org](mailto:info@bgcva.org)

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Operations Technician

December 2020

Dear Pastors, Moderators, Church Officers, and Supporters,

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you and yours.

We are thankful for your ongoing support of the Baptist General Convention of Virginia. As we move to the last few weeks of the year, we need your constant participation in reaching our financial commitment of ministry and missions. As your convention, we have faithfully served you in this pandemic and shared information and inspiration for virtual ministries and best practices for physical distancing. We have experienced unprecedented times, issues, and concerns in 2020. Nevertheless, we are grateful that all the BGCVA churches and associations were able to thrive amidst a worldwide crisis.

Today, we are appealing to you to assist us in meeting the budget for the year by increasing your financial contributions by at least \$500.00 (five hundred dollars). Before the end of the year, we hope that you and your church will send forth a sacrificial gift. For your convenience, we have enclosed the electronic means to make your contribution.

Over the years, your generous gifts made brighter our witness of love and labor for the CHRIST. We need your ongoing support in accomplishing our ministry and mission for in this year and 2021. Please continue to pray for us, for this appeal, and the people who serve you at BGCVA. We stand ready to assist you in the various ways of Christian Education, Pastoral Support, Health, Social Justice, and Stewardship as well as in Children, Youth, Young Adult, Men, Women and Clergy Ministries. We thank you for your kind consideration in this matter.

For The Kingdom of Christ, We Are

*James E. Victor*  
Dr. James E. Victor, Jr., President

*Leo Whitaker*  
Dr. Leo Whitaker, Executive Minister

## BAPTIST GENERAL CONVENTION OF VIRGINIA



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

~ Act 1:8; Matthew 9:35-38; Mark 10:13-16



# Virtual Lock-In 2020

## Do You See What I See?



December 18, 2020 @ 7 PM

A Time to Look Back,  
Look In,  
Look Out,  
Look Around,  
and Look Up!

Ecclesiastes 3:1-15



Bringing Children, Youth, and  
Young Adults Together!

**BGCVA Family!**  
Join Us for a Day of Fun, Fellowship,  
and Faith-Sharing that will  
Provide Encouragement, Engagement,  
and Excitement for All!

Also, each participant is encouraged  
to memorize Ecclesiastes 3:1-15 and  
video themselves reciting it. Send the  
recording to [info@BGCVA.org](mailto:info@BGCVA.org). Your videos will  
be shared doing the Lock-In and at other  
BGCVA Events.

**This Lock-In is FREE! Donations are Welcome!**

**Register Today!**

[www.bgcva.org/events.html](http://www.bgcva.org/events.html)



Baptist General Convention of Virginia

## 2021 Church Finance and Tax Compliance Conference

### Sense and Cents During a Pandemic

January 9, 2021

8:30 AM—1:00 PM

Inclement Weather Date: January 16, 2021

VIRTUALLY via Zoom

Registration: \$30 Per Person, \$100 Per Church

Deadline: January 8, 2021

*"But let all be done properly and in an orderly manner." (1 Cor. 14:40 NASB)*

This exciting, one-day  
conference is designed for  
Pastors, Trustees, Deacons,  
Treasurers, Finance Ministry,  
Finance Committee, etc.



**REGISTER ON-LINE AT: [www.bgcva.org](http://www.bgcva.org)**  
For more information call 804.228.2421  
Email: [info@bgcva.org](mailto:info@bgcva.org)

*We are BGC...Bringing People Together, Growing Churches, and Changing Communities! ~ Act 1:8; Matthew 9:35-38; Mark 10:13-16*



## Litany for Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Quotations from Letter from the Birmingham City Jail by Martin Luther King Jr.; Litany by W. B. McClain and L. H. Stookey, U.S.A., 20th Cent. From The United Methodist Book of Worship (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1992.) Used by permission. For information about reproducing this material, please contact the United Methodist Publishing House. Letter from the Birmingham City Jail © 1963 by Martin Luther King Jr.; © renewed 1991 by Coretta Scott King.

We remember the conviction of Martin Luther King Jr. that "freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed."

**Therefore, let us pray for courage and determination by those who are oppressed. . . .**

We remember Martin's warning that "a negative peace which is the absence of tension" is less than "a positive peace which is the presence of justice."

**Therefore, let us pray that those who work for peace on our world may cry out first for justice. . . .**

We remember Martin's insight that "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly."

**Therefore, let us pray that we may see nothing in isolation, but may know ourselves bound to one another and to all people under heaven. . . .**

We remember Martin's lament that "the contemporary church is often a weak, ineffectual voice with an uncertain sound. It is so often the arch-supporter of the status quo. Far from being disturbed by the presence of the church, the power structure of the average community is consoled by the church's silent and often vocal sanction of things as they are."

**Therefore, let us pray that neither this congregation nor any congregation of Christ's people may be silent in the face of wrong, but that we may be disturbers of the status quo when that is God's call to us. . . .**

We remember Martin's hope that "dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear-drenched communities and in some not-too-distant tomorrow the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their scintillating beauty."

**Therefore, in faith, let us commend ourselves and our work for justice to the goodness of almighty God.**

**A Litany for Martin Luther King, Jr., Day**  
(From University of South Carolina – Dr. Harris Pastides, President; Office of the Provost; Department of Athletics, Eric Hyman, Director of Athletics; Division of Business and Finance, Dr. William T. Moore, Vice President for Finance and Planning.)

**LEADER:** In a sermon delivered on August 11, 1957, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. stated "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'what are you doing for others?'"

**AUDIENCE:** In remembrance of Martin, "What are you doing for others?"

**LEADER:** King stated that "An individual has not begun to live until he can rise above the narrow horizons of his particular individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity."

**AUDIENCE:** In the name of service, "What are you doing for others?"

**LEADER:** King also said that "Every person must decide, at some point, whether they will walk in the light of creative altruism or in the darkness of destructive selfishness."

**AUDIENCE:** In the name of community, "What are you doing for others?"

**LEADER:** We are all the benefactors of the deeds, contributions and sacrifices of those who have gone before us. They left their mark; we enjoy the fruit of their labor. It is incumbent upon us, therefore, to leave our mark and to make greater contributions to the betterment of society.

**AUDIENCE:** In the name of those who have gone before us, "What are you doing for others?"

**LEADER:** To whom much is given, much is required. The freedoms and privileges of our citizenship along with the right to pursue our dreams are gifts of immeasurable proportion. What legacy will we leave those who will come after us?

**AUDIENCE:** In the name of generations yet to come, "What are you doing for others?"

**LEADER:** In remembrance of Martin, what will be our response to life's most persistent and urgent question?

**AUDIENCE:** In response to the question, we endeavor to rise above the narrow confines of individualistic concerns and commit ourselves to making a difference for the betterment of society at large and within the communities in which live.

## Optima Health BGCVA Health Food Network Church Participants

New Elam Baptist Church, New Kent—Deacon William L. Taylor (left) and Deaconess Fannie Burrell (right), of New Elam Baptist Church in New Kent, stand by canned good donations as part of "A Community of Caring Project" in conjunction with the church's 150th anniversary. The duo spearheaded the food drive looking to collect at least 150 items to donate, with the congregation responding with 275 cans to give to families in need.



Cedar Street Baptist Church Of God, Richmond—Located on 2301 Cedar



Street, is serving as a hub for food distribution. Every Saturday in August, the church distributed 1,300 boxes of fruit, vegetables, grain, protein and other perishable goods.

Queen Street Baptist Church, Norfolk—Community Day, Free boxed food, school supplies on August 5, 2020



### Other Participating Churches

- ❖ First Baptist Church Lamberts Point
- ❖ Mt. Olive Baptist Church, Arlington
- ❖ Third Baptist Church, Portsmouth
- ❖ Eastern Shore VA/MD Baptist Association
- ❖ First Baptist Church Hockley
- ❖ Southside Rappahannock Baptist Association
- ❖ Mt. Gilead Baptist Church, Norfolk
- ❖ First Baptist Church Butte Street, Norfolk
- ❖ Shiloh Baptist Church, Norfolk
- ❖ Zion Baptist Church, Portsmouth
- ❖ New Hope Baptist Church, Chesapeake
- ❖ Ebenezer Baptist Church, Virginia Beach



## Special Recognitions from our Executive Minister

Census Update—Overall, Virginia had a 99.9% response rate. Our total self-response rate was 71.5%, which was higher than in 2010 and placed us 5th in the Country! It was, and remains, a challenging Census for many reasons, but we should all be proud at the way Virginians worked together to be counted. Thank you!



Elections Matter—Thank you all who voted!



BGCVA has 15 Zoom accounts for member churches and association to borrow.



For the families, patients and first responders who are impacted by COVID-19 as well as the more than 286,000 loved ones who have passed from this virus.



VUU Student, Jae Howard, volunteers with the BGCVA State Office Building. Mr. Howard is a senior student and a member of Phi Beta Sigma, Fraternity Inc.

The following pictures are from the newly renovating kitchen in the BGCVA State Office Building. A special thank you to Women's Ministry President, Sister Polly Jones Mason and Deaconess



Virgie Simmons Jones and Mr. Phillip Battle for their donations and Mr. Bruce Martin for his creative renovations.



Blessings and Peace!

Executive Minister Leo Whitaker

## 7 Questions to Ask While Planning for Holidays During the Pandemic

Here's how you and your family can stay safer by Mike Zimmerman, [AARP](#), November 9, 2020

**We don't need more proof of how dangerous the coronavirus is.** We know that more than 286,000 Americans had died of the disease as of early November, and [95 percent of COVID-19 deaths](#) in the U.S. have occurred among people who were 50 or older. We know [preexisting conditions](#) such as obesity, heart disease, autoimmune diseases and type 2 diabetes make coronavirus infection even riskier. We know [COVID-19](#) can cause blood clotting that can ravage your lungs and inflammation that can damage your heart and organs; a viral attack on your pancreas can even cause "COVID diabetes." And infections can sometimes linger for months in so-called "long haulers."

For the latest coronavirus news and advice [go to AARP.org/coronavirus](#).

1. A relative had COVID-19 several weeks ago. Can he or she still make me sick?
2. I tested positive for COVID earlier this year. Does that mean I am immune now?
3. Is catching the coronavirus linked to how much time we spend together?
4. We've already had a bad outbreak in my town. Have we reached herd immunity?
5. If I do host a holiday gathering, are there any rules I should put in place for my family?
6. My whole family is in excellent health. Does COVID-19 really pose a threat to us?
7. Are our holiday traditions ruined? For answers to these questions [CLICK HERE](#).

### Holiday Gathering Safety Checklist

Make the most of the situation: Order or [make per-](#)

[sonalized masks](#) for everyone!

- If weather permits, go outdoors. If not, ventilate the room as best you can.
- Keep people circulating to limit extended exposures between individuals.
- Embrace aggressive hygiene: Have soap at every sink, hand gel in every room.
- Lean on technology. A [Zoom dinner](#) may not be ideal, but it can be fun.
- Respect those who choose not to attend or ask you to stay distant and not touch.
- Avoid unnecessary mass transit. If flying, be ultra-cautious and keep distant from strangers the best you can.
- If you're sick, [stay home](#). We'll see you next year!

### More on Home and Family

[Should your holiday guests get a COVID test?](#)  
[Tips for staying warm when entertaining outdoors this winter](#)  
[Evaluating the risks associated with family gatherings during COVID](#)

For the complete article visit:

<https://www.aarp.org/health/conditions-treatments/info-2020/coronavirus-holiday-planner.html>

Protect the ones you love  
**GET YOUR FLU SHOT NOW.**

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
 @vaccinatevirginia



## Hold On. Help is On the Way!

"Dr. Bill" Whitaker,  
whwhitaker2@bgcva.org

<sup>1</sup> "What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, 'The LORD did not appear to you?'" <sup>10</sup> Moses said to the LORD, "Pardon your servant, Lord. I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue." <sup>13</sup> But Moses said, "Pardon your servant, Lord. Please send someone else."

Exodus 4:1, 10, 13

When I first received my call to the ministry, I went to my Pastor, Dr. Noel C. Taylor and told him, "Rev. Taylor, I believe that Lord has called me to preach, but before I accept my call, there are a few things I want to correct in my life." I was 23 years old and I will never forget the advice he gave me that day in the parking lot of High Street Baptist Church in Roanoke, Virginia. He said, "Bill, if you wait until you have no problems to start preaching, you will never become a preacher. Preachers serve in spite of our problems and not in the absence of them."

There are many Christians who have refused to accept the call to preach because they have faults and weaknesses. Moses knew all too well of the challenges of serving God while living with human weaknesses and faults. When he received his call to serve the Lord, his first inclination was to think about his many weaknesses as reasons why he should not accept God's call into ministry service.

"I don't speak well. I don't know what to say. What if they don't believe me? Lord, I'm not good enough. Please send someone else." Those were the faults Moses tried to use as excuses to suppress God's call on his life. But God would not allow the weaknesses of Moses to stop His will from being done. He grew angry at Moses (Exodus 4:14) and provided him with four essentials needed by every minister for successful clergy life.

### 1. Support

"What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well." Exodus 4:1

Whenever God issues the call to ministry, it is accompanied by people who will support you in fulfilling His call. Many times, the support sent by God is either overlooked or not easily seen to the point you feel you are isolated in your ministry struggles. While Moses spent the majority of his conversation with God complaining about his weaknesses, I must commend him for one thing. He was conversing and talking with God. It was as he spoke with God that the Lord reminded Moses of the help he had in his brother Aaron.

***Rather than complaining to God about what you feel you are not able to do, take time to talk and listen to God to learn who God has provided as support for you in your ministry.***

### 2. Encouragement

"He is already on his way to meet you, and he will be glad to see you." Exodus 4:14 b

Every minister needs to be encouraged no matter how successful they may "appear" to be. The loneliest of ministers are those surrounded by hundreds and thousands of church members and acquaintances with no one who truly cares about their personal well-being. Just as God sent Moses one who would be "glad to see [him]", God also has "care partners" who are available to care for you.

***In your darkest moments, God is always able to remind you that "Help is on the way".***

### 3. Help

<sup>15</sup> You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do. <sup>16</sup> He will speak to the people for you, and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were God to him. Exodus 4:15-16

Whatever weaknesses you may have as a person, always remember that ministry is a "team effort" between you and those God has placed as leaders within your ministry. Many ministers are reluctant and fearful of depending on others because of past conflicts with ministry leaders. I have often had to resist the urge to "withdraw" and build walls that will protect me from further ministry hurt because walls don't just keep out church members with ill intentions. They also prevent loving church members with help and support from coming in.

***The beginning of you receiving help is your***

***willingness to open the doors to your heart, life, and ministry for God's help to come in.***

### 4. Guidance

<sup>17</sup> But take this staff in your hand so you can perform the signs with it." Exodus 4:17

God has great plans for you in ministry and sometimes, God guides (and sometimes, pushes) you beyond your comfort zone. God could have easily listened to Moses' plea to "...Please send someone else" (Exodus 4:13), but God's people had need for the leader Moses would one day become. In spite of Moses' fears, God chose to send him along with the guidance, support, and help he needed to free the children of God from slavery.

***God will listen to your fears, but when God is ready, God will send you forth along with the essentials you need to be successful in your ministry.***



### BGCVA Clergy Ministry

#### Ministry Essentials Available to You

Starting on Monday, January 4, 2021, *The Resting Place* devotional will be emailed to clergy and ministry leaders of the Baptist General Convention of Virginia churches. This is a weekly devotional written to provide clergy and ministry leaders with spiritual encouragement needed as you serve the people of God.

### Clergy Conversations

This is a monthly support group for clergy and those who are in training to become a minister that meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month at 12:00noon on Zoom. Discussions are centered on providing support, encouragement, and resources needed for ministers to remain healthy in the many areas of clergy needs and crisis. Clergy are able to receive spiritual guidance and professional mental health counseling in a confidential, yet supportive atmosphere. The next Clergy Conversation will be held on Thursday, January 7, 2021 at 12noon.

### Ministry Training Track (MTT)

The Ministry Training Track is provided every 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday at 12noon via Zoom and is available for all members of BGCVA churches desiring/needing training in ministry. Whether you're training needs are in preparation for ministry licensure, ministry ordination, Trusteeship, Diaconate (Deaconess or Deacon), the



## Project Stay Connected/Stay on Point—Faith Community Baptist Church, Richmond

When Richmond Public Schools decided that it would need to begin the 2020 school year with virtual learning for its students, the Faith Community Baptist Church knew that it would have to step in to serve the students in the surrounding communities of Fairfield, Whitcomb, and Creighton Courts. As a result, *Project Stay Connected/Stay on Point* was developed to assist in the education of those students who will be most at risk during this season of virtual learning in our public schools. This project realizes that the education of our students is the responsibility of all of us in this community, not just teachers, parents, and students.

*Project Stay Connected/Stay on Point* serves 30 students in grades K-5 and represents seven elementary schools in the City of Richmond. Because no transportation is available, the parents and/or guardians bring the students and pick them up every day. The sanctuary of the Faith Community Baptist Church has now been transformed into a virtual learning pod that serves 30 students, grades K-5, Monday-Friday from 8:00am – 2:00pm. Richmond Public School donated individual desks which allow the students to be seated at individual desks, separated by at least 6 feet. All students and adults are screened at the entrance and

required to wear masks on site. Breakfast, lunch, and snacks are provided.

*Project Stay Connected/Stay on Point* utilizes a diverse and dedicated team of staff and volunteers. Every team member fills a specific job responsibility to ensure the success of the project. The staff and volunteers have been working since the beginning of the project on September 14, 2020. Volunteers work with K-3 students one-to-one and the ratio for students in grades 3-5 is 2:1. From the inception of the program, volunteers offered their services without benefit of monetary compensa-



tion. Our volunteers range from retired school administrators and teachers to dedicated parents, community leaders, and youth workers. *Stay Connected/Stay on Point* presently has 1 Site Coordinator/Lead Learning Aide, 1 Pastoral Supervisor/Administrator, 17 learning Aides, 2 Sanitation Aides, and 2 Reception Greeters.

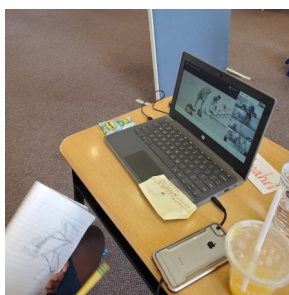
Beginning with no funding, *Stay Connected/Stay on Point* was supported by the Faith Community Baptist Church Family and those who heard of what we were doing and desired to help. We were initially given a large donation by the Toler/Williams Family in honor of their sister Rose Toler. Others donated ppe supplies and snacks for the students. The Buffalo

o Troopers Motorcycle Club was instrumental in donating 10 computers for a computer lab on the site as well.

In September, the Free Press of Richmond did an article on *Project Stay Connected/Stay on Point*. As a result, we were encouraged to seek funding from the City of Richmond's Cares Childcare Grant. We are blessed to have been awarded \$63,765.00 from the CARES Childcare Grant. This has allowed us to completely sanitize the site, increase our air filter system, order additional protective equipment, hire daily learners, and compensate the staff and volunteers retroactively for their service.

*Project Stay Connected/Stay on Point* is grateful for the opportunity to serve the children most in need during this

virtual learning season. Because of word-of-mouth and referrals by the schools and the Department of Social Services, we increased from our original capacity of 25 to 30 students. *Project Stay Connected/Stay on Point* has become a trusted staple in the community, and we have developed a strong relationship with the schools whose students are being served. The parents have expressed that *Stay Connected/Stay on Point* has been a "blessing and a God-send" because it allows them to work and to be assured that their children will not fall behind. We are grateful for this opportunity to serve these special students and their parents during this critical time.





# How To Strengthen Your Virtual Meetings

Virtual meetings aren't new. Many companies with partial or entirely distributed workforces have been using them for years. As more companies turn to remote work, these meetings have become essential to keep businesses moving forward. But like with many productivity tools, there are areas where we can improve virtual meetings to make work more efficient and inclusive.

It's important to have a smooth virtual meeting with the right collaboration and communication tools to work in real-time as they serve as a centerpiece for remote settings. Whether it's to do with audio issues, late attendees, or even just distracted participants, we're here to give you 5 tips on how to improve virtual meetings.

## 1. Plan for Participation

To give a virtual meeting more of the feel of an in-person meeting, participation is key. One way to encourage participation is to have participants introduce themselves if everyone is not familiar with each other. If most people on the call already know one another, you can also promote participation with a quick ice breaker before diving into the meeting—like having everyone share something positive about their day. It can be anything, big or small. This gets everyone engaged so they're more likely to participate.

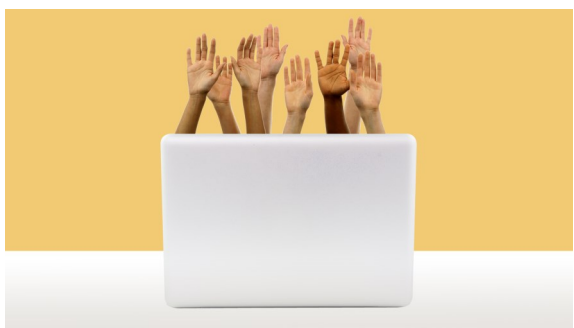
## 2. Set Objectives

Sometimes virtual meetings jump around and cover too many topics because attendees don't get to see each other face to face. Avoid doing this by setting a specific purpose for each meeting. Try to limit the meeting to a few related topics and have clear objectives on what you want to accomplish with the meeting. By limiting the topics, virtual meeting attendees can allocate the right amount of time and attention each topic and ensure a much more effective meeting. Your meeting attendees also won't be bombarded with too much information.

## 3. Manners Matter

While the coronavirus pandemic has forced us all to be a bit more forgiving and understanding about meeting distractions, we can

still do our best to be respectful and keep things moving.



Join the meeting on time: You don't want to miss information and you certainly don't want to come off as unprofessional.

Be away of everyone's time zones. If you work in a

business where workers are in different states – even different countries – it's easy to forget not everyone is on the same schedule. Depending on how distributed your company is, some participants may have to bend their schedules a bit outside of conventional business hours to keep business moving. But that doesn't mean that you can't try to schedule things when most people are available and make sure that one group is not always the group making the sacrifice to get on calls at odd hours. Not sure what time it is for your coworker? Try out this time zone converter.

Don't check your phone: Not only will this distract you but could also distract other attendees. On top of that, people may not give you their attention when it's your turn to speak if they don't think you've given them yours.

Dress appropriately. Traditionally, this would mean dressing like you would if you were in the office. Most companies have become more forgiving of casual attire during the coronavirus pandemic, but even then, some basic standards of decency still apply.

Mute your microphone if you aren't speaking: Again, coronavirus means we all have to be more forgiving of hard-to-control distractions. But we can still do our best to avoid being disruptive. If your home gets noisy with dogs barking, dishes getting washed, children yelling, etc., try to go on mute. And don't forget loud typing – that one is usually in your control.

If it's not an interactive session, try to save questions for the end: Let presenters go through their agenda before jumping in to ask questions. This will keep the meeting running smoothly without sidetracking.

Thank everyone for their time.

## 4. Stay Engaged

Many times, people join a meeting without turning their video on and zone out. When video is turned off, it's easier for participants to get distracted and work on other things during the meeting. Keeping attendees' videos on encourages them to focus on one thing as they know other people can see if they're multitasking. Sharing screens can also help attendees follow along during a presentation.

With MiTeam Meetings, it's easy to switch between a video conference and screen sharing. If you are planning to share your screen, make sure you close out of windows that you don't want to display on accident.

See 5 tips to help avoid embarrassing yourself during a screenshare >

## 5. Wrap Up Time

Don't feel like you must use the entire meeting time. As your virtual meetings come to an end, allow for a few minutes to discuss the next steps and task delegation (if you like collaboration tools with task management built in, you should check out Mitel Teamwork).

This will keep everyone on the same page and push for productivity even after the meeting has concluded. Quickly review what's been discussed and sum up any big decisions that were mentioned. Lastly, ask if anyone has questions. By ending your meetings on the same page, it allows the next meeting to start off strong and efficient.

Really want to get on people's good sides? Try leaving ending your meeting 5 minutes before the hour or half hour to give people a chance to grab a drink or stop by the restroom. Anyone who has been stuck in back-to-back marathon meetings will thank you.

Implementing these small tips can significantly improve your virtual meeting experience for you and your team. Teams that can't meet face to face rely on great virtual meetings to build those lasting professional relationships that help them get work done. Mitel offers leading solutions to help your teams collaborate no matter where they are. Check out our remote working resources to stay connected to your workforce.

Source: <https://www.mitel.com/articles/how-to-improve-virtual-meetings>



## The Weatherization & Energy Efficiency Services Initiative

The Weatherization & Energy Efficiency Services initiative will provide an intergenerational skilled [weatherization training series](#) to enhance the Baptist General Convention of Virginia's and Rebuilding Together Richmond's engagement of non-profits, academic institutions, government agencies, businesses, and civic communities in providing weatherization services for 15 households in need. The initiative has three significant facets, namely **(1) Weatherization & Energy Efficiency Workshops**, **(2) Weatherization & Energy Efficiency Coaches**, and **(3) Weatherization & Energy Efficiency Tune-Ups**. Each facet is designed to inform, to inspire, and to involve junior and high school students, disengaged young adults, college and graduate students, [veterans, and selected clients who are seniors or have a disability](#).

**(1) Weatherization & Energy Efficiency Workshops** will be developed virtually and shared through the ZOOM video conferencing platform. We will invite Dominion Energy's contractors, employees, and retirees to serve as instructors for the virtual Workshops and leaders of the Tune-Ups. When in-person gatherings are safe, programming will be held at the Baptist General Convention of Virginia and the Children's Home of Virginia Baptists, which will provide its facility and buildings as learning labs for the program.

Each workshop must be created and formatted for the various age groups/audiences by the staff and the consultants. There will be a curriculum for the areas of weatherization, energy efficiency, volunteering, the role of the coaches, and related disciplines. The instructors will teach life skills and provide hands-on experiences on practical weatherization, ecology, energy efficiency, and environmental justice.

Participants who complete the Workshops will have the opportunity to serve as a Coach to assist with performing Tune-Ups directed by RTR.

**(2) Weatherization & Energy Efficiency Coaches** will work with residents of the 15 assigned households to review utility bills and provide individualized, helpful tips to help them with cost savings. Each Coach will continue to follow the clients twice before the

end of the initiative to share additional information, conduct satisfaction surveys, and report on other improvements made on the home. The Coaches will also be available for public service announcements and conversations regarding the initiative and Dominion Energy's Share Programs. Coaches can allow the clients to speak to the benefits of both the Weatherization & Energy Efficiency Services and Dominion Energy Shared Programs.

**(3) Weatherization & Energy Efficiency Tune-Ups** will provide 15 low-income households—consisting of seniors, veterans, and persons with disabilities—with weatherization and energy efficiency services. With the guidance from Energy Conservation Inc. (ECI), RTR's trusted weatherization partner with over forty years of experience, we will provide weatherization and energy efficiency recommendations and relevant upgrades. The purposes of the Tune-Ups are as

follows:

- To reduce unnecessary energy consumptions,
- To reduce high energy costs,
- To reduce emissions that harm the environment, and
- To improve the living conditions of the home.

The Tune-Ups will be free of charge to each household. The exact services that each recipient receive may vary by home. Services may include but are not limited to, the following:

- Energy assessments
- Replacing incandescent lights with LED lights in high use areas
- Air vent and duct sealing
- Attic insulation
- Water-saving services
- Installation of energy-saving showerheads and high-efficiency faucet aerators
- Wrapping water heater and hot water pipes
- ENERGY STAR refrigerator replacement
- Indoor air quality improvements

Coaches will assist with volunteer-friendly weatherization and energy-efficient services that can be conducted during the assessment.

For more information contact Dr. Leo Whitaker, Executive Minister, at [executiveminister@bgcva.org](mailto:executiveminister@bgcva.org)



## Brotherhood Mutual Church Resources



<https://www.brotherhoodmutual.com/resources/church-security/church-security-resources/>

- Build A Safe Church Environment
- Preparing For Disaster
- Protecting Your Ministry's Youth
- Safety & Security Publications
- Online Safety Library
- Develop A Volunteer Safety And Security Team
- Surviving A Violent Attack At Church
- Responding To Violence Checklist

<https://www.brotherhoodmutual.com/resources/safety-library/risk-management-articles/disasters-emergencies-and-health/general-health-and-injury-prevention/coronavirus/>

- Before We Gather
- Funding And Loan Forgiveness
- Insurance Information
- Navigating The COVID-19 Pandemic



For these or other resources from Brotherhood Mutual go to the website or contact our exclusive Brotherhood Insurance Agent Mr. David Rogers at [rogersdh2@yahoo.com](mailto:rogersdh2@yahoo.com) or 804.334.4953 .

Continued from page 7

pastorate, or any other area ministry, if it relates to ministry leadership, the Ministry Training Track addresses your training needs. The next Ministry Training Track will be Monday, January 18, 2021 at 12noon. Registration is requested, but not required.

### Possible Additional Clergy Conversations & Ministry Training Track Sessions

The Clergy Ministry is considering additional, evening Clergy Conversations & Ministry Training Track sessions that would be held in addition to the noon, lunch hour sessions. However, we are trying to first determine the interest and need to do so.

Please Email Dr. Bill at

[whwhitaker2@bgcva.org](mailto:whwhitaker2@bgcva.org) if you...

- Are a Pastor interested in submitting a devotional to be included in *The Resting Place*.
- Have a clergy/ministry related topic you would like to have addressed in an upcoming Clergy Conversation.
- Have a specific area of training you would like to receive in MTT.
- Are unable to attend the noon Clergy Conversations and Ministry Training Track sessions.

## Preserving Sacred Spaces Update

Please visit our website for more information the Preserving Sacred Spaces survey. <https://www.bgcva.org/bgcva-preserving-sacred-spaces-survey.html>



## BGCVA Member Church Information Survey

We are updating our church directory. Visit our website for the questionnaire survey. [www.bgcva.org](http://www.bgcva.org) or go to this link, <https://forms.gle/WX6j2wUAbKvAED2o8>



## Who's Who In Government: African American BGCVA Church Members in Virginia Black Caucus

- ⇒ Dr. Luke Torian, Delegate 52nd District
- ⇒ Marcia Price, Delegate 95th District
- ⇒ Rev. Deloris McQuinn, Delegate 70th District
- ⇒ Dr. Robert Elliott, Surry County Chair, Board of Supervisors
- ⇒ James Holland, Chesterfield County, Board of Supervisors
- ⇒ Rev. Tyrone Nelson, Henrico County, Board of Supervisors
- ⇒ Dr. Linwood Blizzard, Northumberland County Board of Supervisors
- ⇒ Dr. Mark Whitaker, Portsmouth City Council
- ⇒ Dr. Ingrid Whitaker, Portsmouth City School Board
- ⇒ Dr. Roscoe Cooper, III, Henrico County School Board
- ⇒ Lashrecce Aird, Delegate 63rd District
- ⇒ Hala Ayala, Delegate 51st District
- ⇒ Lamont Bagby, Delegate 74th District
- ⇒ Jeffrey Bourne, Delegate 71st District
- ⇒ Jennifer Carroll Foy, Delegate 2nd District
- ⇒ C. E. "Cliff" Hayes, Jr., Delegate 77th District
- ⇒ Charniele Herring, Delegate 46th District
- ⇒ Jay Jones, Delegate 89th District
- ⇒ Joseph "Joe" Lindsey, Delegate 90th District
- ⇒ Sam Rasoul, Delegate 11st District
- ⇒ Roslyn Tyler, Delegate 75th District
- ⇒ Jeion Ward, Delegate 92nd District
- ⇒ Mamie Locke, Senator 2nd District
- ⇒ Louise Lucas, Senator 18th District
- ⇒ Jennifer McClellan, Senator 9th District
- ⇒ Lionell Spruill, Sr. Senator 5th District
- ⇒ Levar Stoney, Mayor City of Richmond
- ⇒ Dr. McKinley Price, Sr. Mayor City of Newport News
- ⇒ Justin Fairfax, Lt. Governor of Virginia

## Anniversaries

- ❖ Rev. Wayne Henley 7th Pastoral Anniversary—Cedar Grove Baptist Church, Charles City, VA
- ❖ Dr. Michael Sanders—9th Pastoral Anniversary—Mt. Olive Baptist Church Bells Road, Richmond, VA
- ❖ Mt. Olive Baptist Church Bells Road, Richmond, VA— 145th Church Anniversary

## VUU Founders Day Contributions

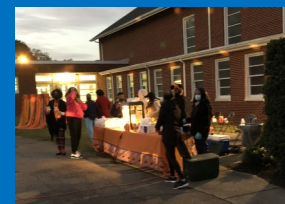
VUU Founder's Day is Friday, February 5, 2021! When all of our churches and associations make a generous donation to our dear VUU our goal of \$100,000 will be realized. Please plan to have a special offering this Christmas for VUU. We ask that your checks be written to BGCVA with VUU in the memo. All names and amounts will be shared at the rally on that day when the grand presentation is made.



## BGCVA Member Church's October 31st Celebration



First Baptist Church Centralia in Chesterfield, VA, Dr. Wilson E. B. Shannon Pastor





## Homegoing Celebrations

*May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word. 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17*

On behalf of President Victor, Executive Minister Whitaker, staff, and officers of the Baptist General Convention, our thoughts and prayers continue to be with the families of the following pastors, who have transitioned into eternal rest in 2020.

\* The Reverend Dr. Andrew M. Mosley, Jr. —*Quiocassin Baptist Church, Henrico, VA*



\* Trustee Nathan Russell Bayton Jr. - Husband of BGCVA 3rd Vice President Dr. Griselda A. Bayton



## Energy Assistance



While much has changed in our world, one thing will always remain the same — serving you when you need us most. Any balance you have on your Dominion Energy Virginia account greater than 30 days past due as of September 30th will be wiped clean. If you are still behind on your bill, even after outstanding balances are forgiven, we are here to help with payment arrangements or energy assistance funds.



### Balance Forgiveness

If you are struggling due to the pandemic and have a balance on your Dominion Energy account greater than 30 days past due as of September 30th, that balance will be wiped clean.

- In addition to supporting the budget language forgiving customer balances greater than 30 days past due as of September 30th, we have applied to CARES Act funding on behalf of eligible customers to provide additional relief for outstanding balances accrued after that date.
- It will take 1-2 billing cycles to determine the dollar amount by account granted but eligible customers could expect to see credits on their bills soon.
- We are not disconnecting customers in Virginia due to nonpayment.
- For past due amounts accrued on or after September 30, we are still here to support you with payment arrangements and energy assistance funds that can help you move forward.



### Payment Extension

If you need more time to pay your energy bill, we offer short-term payment extensions.

- Available to residential customers, small businesses, mid-size businesses, and places of worship.
- No fees, extra charges, or down payment required to enroll.
- Payment must be scheduled prior to your next bill date.



### Payment Plan

If you just can't keep up with your bill, we also offer long-term payment plans.

- Available to residential customers, small businesses, mid-size businesses, and places of worship.
- No fees, extra charges, or down payment required to enroll.
- Past balance is divided into equal payments for up to 12 months.
- Extensions can be made while on Bank Draft or Budget Bill.



### Bill Payment Assistance

If you are facing a crisis and need help with paying your energy bill, EnergyShare can help with your home's primary heating and cooling sources (wood, oil, natural gas, propane, kerosene, electric).

- EnergyShare is not income based, so any customer in crisis may be eligible to apply.
- If approved, the benefit is paid directly to your energy provider.
- Individuals 60 and older, military veterans, and individuals living with disabilities may be eligible for additional assistance.



### Weatherization

If you have received EnergyShare bill payment assistance, you may also be eligible to receive a free home energy assessment and the installation of free energy efficiency upgrades.

- A home energy assessment can help identify areas where your energy bill could be reduced.
- All services are provided by Dominion Energy at no cost to you.
- Enhanced safety measures have been put in place to ensure the safety and well-being of our customers and weatherization partners.



### Energy Saving Tips

If you are looking for some low-cost or no-cost ways to save on your energy bill, EnergyShare also offers some easy, practical solutions, most of which you can do yourself, to help you become more energy efficient at home.

To learn more about these offerings or other resources available to you, scan the QR code, visit, or call:



#### Dominion Energy

Call: 866-366-4357  
Visit: [DominionEnergy.com/virginia/billing](https://www.dominionenergy.com/virginia/billing)



#### 2-1-1 Virginia

Call: 2-1-1  
Visit: [211virginia.org](https://211virginia.org)



#### Department of Social Services

Call: 855-635-4370  
Visit: [commonhelp.virginia.gov/access](https://commonhelp.virginia.gov/access)

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## BGCVA Children and Youth Workers' Conference 2021



March 6, 2021

Bringing New Generations To Jesus ...

Mark 10:13-16; Act 1:8, Matthew 9:35-38

The Children and Youth Workers' Conference will explore and examine methods and models to bring current and future generations to Jesus, to the church and to the associations. Each presentation will place emphasis on enhancing intergenerational ministries and methods while creating new approaches to serving these diverse populations. All youth, parents, youth directors, youth ministers, youth workers, and youth friendly adults are encouraged to participate.

**Cost - \$20.00 Per Person or \$100.00 Per Church—Save The Date!**

# Baptist General Convention of VA

## 2020 -2021 Event Calendar

EST. 1899

### 2020 December

18 Children, Youth, & Young Adults Virtual Lock-In

### 2021 January

9 Virtual Church Finance and Tax Compliance Conference  
18-19 MLK Celebration and Day of Ministry Service  
24 Statewide BGCVA Day

### February

5 VUU Founders' Day  
19-20 Virtual Mid-Winter Ministries Session

### March

6 Virtual Children and Youth Workers' Conference  
13 VUU Church Leadership Conference

### April

2-3 Young Adult Weekend, Place: TBA  
8 Spring General Board Meeting, BGCVA State Office, Richmond

### June

27- 122<sup>nd</sup> Annual Session and Congress of Christian Education, Norfolk Waterside Marriott Hotel, Norfolk

### July

-2 122<sup>nd</sup> Annual Session and Congress of Christian Education, Norfolk Waterside Marriott Hotel, Norfolk  
10 BGC Day @ Kings Dominion  
10 Children's Home Founders' Day  
16-17 Youth Retreat @ VUU

### September (Christian Education Month)

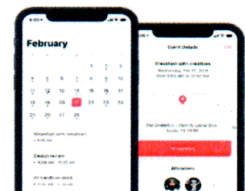
4 Church School Conference, BGCVA State Office, Richmond  
9 General Board Strategic Planning Meeting, BGCVA State Office, Richmond  
11 Church School Conference, Tidewater

### October (Clergy Appreciation Month)

10 Clergy Appreciation Day  
10-16 BGCVA Week of Prayer  
14 Fall General Board Meeting, BGCVA State Office, Richmond  
16 Church School Conference, Northern VA

### November

2 Day of Social Action  
6 Fall Session, Fifth BC, Richmond  
20 Church School Conference, Roanoke







**Baptist General Convention of VA**  
**Ministry Training Track (M. T. T.)**



# Preparing Leaders for Ministry in the Pandemic and Beyond

**EVERY THIRD MONDAY**  
**@ 12 PM**

Meeting ID: 889 5297 9107

Passcode: 457526

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88952979107?  
pwd=eStXTm5XNlR0aIRseER3dFAiYUtgdz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88952979107?pwd=eStXTm5XNlR0aIRseER3dFAiYUtgdz09)

Dial by your location: +1 301 715 8592 US

\*\* For more information contact the BGCVA Office 804.228.2421 or [info@bgcva.org](mailto:info@bgcva.org) \*\*

[www.bgcva.org](http://www.bgcva.org)



**Baptist General Convention of VA Clergy Ministry Invites You To:**



## CONVERSATIONS IN CLERGY MINISTRY

**EVERY FIRST THURSDAY**  
**@ 12 PM**

Topic Conversation  
Spiritual Closure: Caring  
for Ourselves  
While Remembering  
Those Who We Have  
Lost



Meeting ID: 876 5365 4568

Passcode: 790104

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87653654568?pwd=  
=c2d5Nm1TbDNNU1lWMWFGTkVJOVAwQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87653654568?pwd=c2d5Nm1TbDNNU1lWMWFGTkVJOVAwQT09)

Dial by your location: +1 301 715 8592 US

\*\* For more information contact the BGCVA Office 804.228.2421 or [info@bgcva.org](mailto:info@bgcva.org) \*\*

[www.bgcva.org](http://www.bgcva.org)



*We are BGC...Bringing People Together, Growing Churches, and Changing Communities!*  
~ Act 1:8; Matthew 9:35-38; Mark 10:13-16

# BGCVA Mid-Winter Ministries Session

FEBRUARY 19 – 20, 2021

Registration is \$100.00 per church, \$40.00 person.

(Includes virtual links and registration pack)

Save the Date!

*Baptist General Convention of Virginia  
Mark your CALENDARS for the*

*122nd Annual Session and Congress of Christian Education*

*June 27–July 2, 2021*

*@ The Norfolk Waterside Marriott  
235 East Main Street, Norfolk, VA 23510*



## Attendee Registration

*All week (including all-week registration pack & meals\*) - \$200.00*

*One Day (including one-day pack & one meal\*) - \$100.00 (\*Excludes Evening Gala)*

*Look Out For The Official Registration Packet In The Coming Months!!!*

**\*\*\*NOTE: Event may become virtual if COVID-19 restrictions are still in place.\*\*\***



## 2021 Budget

As you prepare your 2021 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 2020 contribution, we pray that you will be able to do so by December 31, 2020. God Bless.



**How your church can achieve your monthly giving to the Baptist General Convention of VA is by using the Church Contribution Matrix below. All amounts of giving are appreciated.**

### How Can WE Achieve Our Monthly Giving Goal?

If Your Church's Annual Budget is...	And Your Church's Annual Assessment at %1/%2/%5 is...	Then Your Church's Monthly Contribution Would Be...
\$50,000.00	\$500.00/\$1,000.00/\$2,500.00	\$41.00/\$83.00/\$208.00
\$100,000.00	\$1,000.00/\$2,000.00/\$5,000.00	\$83.00/\$166.00/\$416.00
\$250,000.00	\$2,500.00/\$5,000.00/\$12,500.00	\$208.00/\$416.00/\$1,041.00
\$500,000.00	\$5,000.00/\$10,000.00/\$25,000.00	\$416.00/\$833.00/\$2,083.00
\$750,000.00	\$7,500.00/\$15,000.00/\$37,500.00	\$625.00/\$1,250.00/\$3,125.00
\$1,000,000.00	\$10,000.00/\$20,000.00/\$50,000.00	\$833.00/\$1,676.00/\$4,166.00
\$2,000,000.00	\$20,000.00/\$40,000.00/\$100,000.00	\$1,676.00/\$3,333.00/\$8,333.00
\$3,000,000.00	\$30,000.00/\$60,000.00/\$150,000.00	\$2,500.00/\$5,000.00/\$12,500.00

**In-Kind Gifts  
are also  
appreciated!**



Baptist General Convention of Virginia

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Richmond, Virginia 23220

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Baptist General Convention of Virginia!**