

NOVEMBER ISSUE 2024

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Baptist Herald

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**GREETINGS FROM THE
BGCVA PRESIDENT**



**BGCVA GIVE
THANKS TO
GOD
EVERYDAY!**

Beloved, Paul in I Thessalonians 5: 16-18 urges us to rejoice always and delight in your faith, be unceasing and persistent in prayer, in every situation, no matter what the circumstances, be thankful and continually give thanks to God for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.

BGCVA Family, this reminds me of the need for us to give thanks to God every day in every situation. In fact, I argue that all God wants is our recognition, gratitude, and obedience daily. Therefore, the sin of ingratitude can be avoided in every situation, no matter what the circumstance, by recognizing God and being thankful to God for life throughout each day. We should have an attitude of gratitude that does not allow us to forget God nor fail to recognize His benefits in our lives. We should thank Him for being chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world! We should thank Him for salvation and the indwelling of The Holy Spirit. We should thank Him for His unconditional love. We should thank Him for His presence in our lives! We should thank Him for providing for our needs daily. We should thank Him for our Divine Protection! We should thank Him for God's atonement through Jesus Christ! We should thank Him for the forgiveness of our sins! We should thank Him for the storms of life that create space for our lives to be used mightily for His Glory! We should thank Him that we have the Word of God to guide our lives! Yes, when you thank Him daily it will leave little to no room for fussing, complaining, jealousy, envy, arrogance, nor pride.

Baptist General Convention let us give thanks to God everyday as we walk together **Shoulder to Shoulder: Reimagining, Reassessing, and Realigning for Relevance.** During this season, we should recognize God as the source of our supply in all things! We should thank Him for providing each of our shoulders as we come together in obedience to do His will. I don't know about you, but I look forward to Him who is able to do exceedingly, abundantly, above all that we can ask or think, according to His power that works in us helping us as the Baptist General Convention of Virginia to express in the future Unthinkable Thanks! To Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen! Remember, **together is our superpower!** Happy Thanksgiving!

Sincerely,

James E. Coleman, Jr., D.Min.
President, BGCVA

**GREETINGS FROM THE
BGCVA EXECUTIVE MINISTER**



Grateful Gatherings!

“And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another...” Hebrews 10:25

Praise GOD for GOD's faithfulness! During this season of thankfulness, we are grateful for the glorious 2024 BGCVA gatherings! We began with the Church Finance and Tax Compliance Conference in January with the introduction of the Lilly Grant. The BGCVA has had a workshop, conference, webinar, retreat, or seminar every month; in some instances, there have been three or more! I have travelled extensively across the five BGCVA regions to partic-



Gravel Hill BC, South Richmond

ipate and support the ministries of our churches and associations. I am grateful for those of you who travel to our BGCVA events to make them moments to always be cherished. When we go, we grow and glow in GOD who makes it so!

The Youth, Women's, Men's, and Clergy Ministries have experienced tremendous growth in attendance and participation. The stellar leadership of these ministries helps realize the missions, goals, and objectives of the BGCVA. Our faith community has benefited from the Family ACP workshops, SACRED SPACES' webinars, the regional Lilly Grant seminars, and the Holy-Spirit led 125th Annual Session and Congress of Christian Faith Formation. Indeed, our collective cups of stewardship, fellowship, and fellowship overflow with blessings! The refreshing, rewarding, and revealing witness of the BGCVA family lends itself to continuing growth, grace, and greatness through the power of JESUS CHRIST! The BGCVA leadership team has demonstrated grace and unity in planning, implementing, and supporting the ministries in our communities, Commonwealth, nation, and world!

Leading Lady Cathy, Reverend Yohance, Adom Whitaker and I praise and pray to GOD for you and yours; and we thank you for the ways in which

you honor us as your BGCVA family.



Happy Birthday, Dr. Leo Whitaker!

As we enter this moment, let us intentionally work together "Shoulder-to-Shoulder - to Reimagine, Reassess, and Realign for Relevance" by continually "Bringing People Together, Growing Churches, and Changing Communities!"

For the Kingdom of GOD, I Am,

Dr. Leo Whitaker, Executive Minister

ELLISON JONES CONVOCAATION HIGHLIGHTS



CHURCH AND PASTORAL ANNIVERSARIES, RETIREMENTS, & INSTALLATIONS

The following millstones (ending in 0 or 5) have been celebrated (from June 2024 to November 2024):

Churches

- Queen Street Baptist Church, Norfolk – 140 years (December 7, 2024)

Pastors

- The Reverend Robert R. Jones – 25 years (October 13, 2024)
- The Reverend Dr. Archie German, Sr. – 5 years (September 22, 2024)
- The Reverend Dr. Darrell K. White – 25 years (November 2, 2024) *Retirement*
- The Reverend Jason N. Knight – 10 years (November 15, 2024)
- The Reverend Dr. Melvin T. Blackwell – 20 years (November 17, 2024)

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 Coleman, Executive Minister Whitaker, staff, and officers of the Baptist General Convention of Virginia, Inc., our thoughts and prayers continue to be with the families of the following persons, who have transitioned into eternal rest in 2024.

- Trustee John Henry Finney
- Sister Rhandi M. Stith
- Brother Michael W. Ruffin
- Sister Nicole L. Hunt
- Dr. Thomas Samuel Simmons
- Dr. Marcellus Lee Harris, Jr.
- Sister Janice Marie Cadore
- Sister Carolyn Hilton Bell
- Brother Joseph Martin, Jr.
- Sister Lois E. Lane Parson
- First Lady Reverend Pamela (Holly) McLaughlin
- Dr. George H. Spicer
- Brother David Mitchell Jackson
- Sister Shunteal L. Thompson-During
- Sister Myrtle Carlillian Lee
- Pastor Emeritus Dr. Melvin Archer Woodson, Sr.
- Sister Cheryl Anita Hitchens
- Sister Dawn Bowens Ward
- Brother Norman S. Davis
- Brother David Bernard Marriner
- Pastor Lewis W. Jackson
- Brother Ronnie Earl Harvey
- Reverend Willis A. Funn
- Leading Lady Donna Gayle Venable
- Reverend Aaron L. Dobyns, Jr.
- Brother Ricky Jones
- Deacon Mary V. Hall
- Sister Camilla Dawn Nichols
- Reverend Henry Lee Williams
- Brother Lester Gilliam

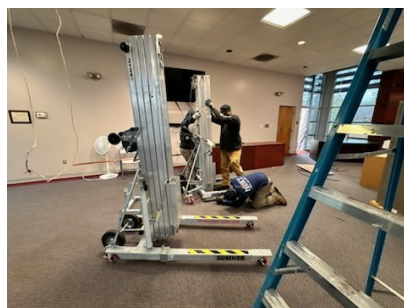
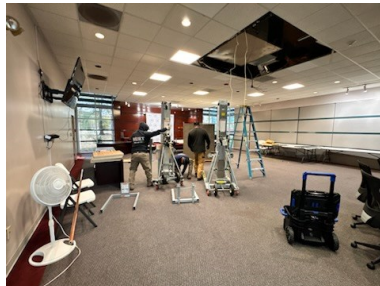
THE BGCVA HVAC CAMPAIGN UPDATE



Because of your prayers and generosity, the replacement of the 33-year-old HVAC system started on Monday, November 25, 2024! HURT HVAC Company of Richmond, a well-established and trusted African-American business, is diligently working to ensure the kitchen, restrooms, multi-purpose room, and administrative offices will benefit from the new heating, venting and air-conditioning system.

The 2022 BGCVA -energy audit identified spaces and places that needed upgrades and. The HVAC replacement and installation was at the top of the list. This current phase will cost \$35,000 and we celebrate how the BGCVA faith community has responded to the financial costs for this initial phase. Your giving of \$19,386 (as of this printing) is greatly appreciated. The pictures on this page give you an idea of the depth and scope of the work that is being done.

While this project has started, the need for continued and sustained financial support from our members, churches, individuals, and associations is greater than ever. We humbly ask that our BGCVA family and friends immediately join us in continuing to raise the \$100,000 identified in the energy audit to repair, replace, and renew the needed spaces and places of the 33-year-old BGCVA building and grounds. We recognize and applaud the many accomplishments of the past that have allowed us to maintain the BGCVA office. We thank you for your ongoing spiritual and financial support. Your prayers and sacrificial gifts are requested. The BGCVA easy-giving methods are listed on the last page of The Herald.



Since November 2023, BGCVA has been accepting donations to address the facility challenges that our 33-year old State Office currently faces. The first phase of updating the HVAC has begun.



The following have contributed to the BGCVA HVAC Special Campaign:

Individuals

- ◆ Dr. Griselda Amy Bayton*
- ◆ Sister Joyce Bellamy
- ◆ Rev. Ciarra Smith Bond
- ◆ Sister Monica E. Brooks
- ◆ Sister Burnette S. Brown
- ◆ Dr. Earl M. Brown
- ◆ Dr. Ricardo L. Brown
- ◆ Sister Jacqueline Lee Colbert
- ◆ Dr. James E. Coleman*
- ◆ Sister Barbara J. Coleman-Brown
- ◆ Dr. Roscoe D. Cooper
- ◆ Brother Larry L. Copeland
- ◆ Brother Larry Custis
- ◆ Minister Cynthia Downs
- ◆ Dr. Margaret Delk Edney*
- ◆ Sister Beverly H. Epps
- ◆ Rev. Joseph A. Fleming*
- ◆ Dr. Archie German
- ◆ Sister Patricia A. Grant
- ◆ Brother Coolidge Hamlett, Jr.*
- ◆ Sister Mary Marie Hamlett
- ◆ Sister Lillian Haymes
- ◆ Sister Diana Hodge
- ◆ Rev. F. D. Holmes
- ◆ Dr. Johnie Hopkins *
- ◆ Sister Valerie James-Gilbert
- ◆ Rev. Edith Joy Jones
- ◆ Sister Regina M. Kenney
- ◆ Dr. Alonza Lawrence
- ◆ Rev. Frank Lomax, III*
- ◆ Dr. George W. C. Lyons, Jr.*
- ◆ Rev. Delores L. McQuinn
- ◆ Dr. Joshua Mitchell
- ◆ Sister Gloria J. Murphy
- ◆ Rev. Tyrone Nelson

- ◆ Sister Louise "Mozelle" T. Parker
- ◆ Dr. Sheldon Pleasant
- ◆ Dr. Keith Savage*
- ◆ Rev. Passionate Penni Sweeten-burg-Lee
- ◆ Sister Joan Tarpley-Robinson
- ◆ Rev. Alden G. Vaughan
- ◆ Brother Kenneth Watkins
- ◆ Dr. Leo Whitaker
- ◆ Dr. Darrell K. White*
- ◆ Sister Mary A. D. Whitt
- ◆ Sister Pauline J. Young

Churches & Organizations

- ◆ Antioch Missionary Baptist Church Norfolk
- ◆ BGCVA Women's Ministry Area A
- ◆ Fifth Baptist Church Richmond
- ◆ First Union Baptist Church Crozier
- ◆ Gillfield Baptist Church Petersburg
- ◆ Greenwood Baptist Church Boydton
- ◆ Metropolitan African American Baptist Church Richmond
- ◆ Mount Nebo Baptist Church Surry
- ◆ Pine Street Baptist Church Covington
- ◆ Saint Level Baptist Church Clarksville
- ◆ Shiloh Baptist Association
- ◆ Third Baptist Church Portsmouth
- ◆ Trinity Baptist Church Center Cross

On behalf of the President James E. Coleman, Jr., Officers and General Board of the Baptist General Convention of Virginia, we are honored that these VIP Donors support BGCVA's commitment to "Standing Shoulder To Shoulder as we Bring, Grow, and Change Congregations and Communities Together!"

* = Indicates BGCVA General Board Members



WOMEN'S MINISTRY UPDATE

We have so much to be grateful for in this season of thanksgiving. The Women's Ministry of the Baptist General Convention of Virginia has been on the move and God has bountifully blessed at every endeavor.



We engaged with the cluster workshop with the awesome women of Areas "A, C, & K). We had an awesome learning experience at the Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church in Richmond, VA on October 26, 2024. We will meet with the sisters of areas B, H, & I very soon. We had a stimulating presenter for our BGC OF VA Fall Session at the Fifth Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia. She was Dr. Carmina Eder of Halifax, Virginia. The third Monday Wonder Working Prayer Line is still growing and strengthening. In November, we had 58 participants and the prayers were soul stirring. The presence of the Lord dwells heavily in that hour.

We also had our second "Sister-to-Sister Round Table discussions on November 19, 2024. The topic of discussion was "incarcerate youth". The presenter was Minister Robin Turner of Fredericksburg, Virginia. She provided us with a wealth of information and suggestions as to how we, the Women's Ministry might be able to come alongside and help reduce the new trend of increasing incarceration and addressing the root cause of the problem. The Women's Ministry of the Baptist General Convention of Virginia are "Launching Into the Deep at God's Word", and we are doing it "Shoulder to Shoulder".

Be blessed and when tempted to complain, begin to count your blessing starting with the fact, that you are living and go on from there.

Sister Barbara Coleman-Brown

YOUTH MINISTRY UPDATE

As we approach this season of Thanksgiving, I want to take a moment to reflect on the many blessings we have received as a youth community and as a family of faith. The journey of growth, service, and empowerment has been deeply fulfilling, and I am truly grateful for each person who has been part of this transformative experience.



This Thanksgiving, we celebrate not only the harvest of blessings but also the love and support of our church family. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to our elders—our parents, youth leaders, and church leadership. Your wisdom, guidance, and unwavering support form the foundation upon which we stand. You have been our mentors, teaching us not just with your words but with your actions. Your example shows us what it means to live a life of faith, service, and commitment. We are thankful for your prayers and the sacrifices you make to ensure our spiritual and personal growth.

To the youth, I encourage you to be equally grateful for the elders in your life. They have paved the way for us to have a place in the church, a voice in our communities, and the resources we need to succeed. Their experience and leadership are invaluable treasures. It is important that we honor them—not only with our words but through our actions—by striving to carry forward the lessons they have taught us.

Since August, our youth have been actively engaged in a variety of initiatives and have made significant strides in impacting the church and our communities. We kicked off the Fall Session with inspiring fellowship, learning, and reflection. A video message from the youth officers was sent

out to encourage continued engagement and collaboration across the state, which has fostered a deeper sense of unity and purpose among us.

We are also excited to announce that we are currently planning a Youth Revival, a time of renewal and spiritual growth that will serve as a beacon of light for our youth and the entire church community. In addition, we have begun soliciting youth ambassadors on a regional level to further expand our efforts to engage young people in the life of the church. We are proud to share that we already have two youth ambassadors, and we look forward to welcoming more as we continue to build a strong network of young leaders.

As we celebrate Thanksgiving and enter the holiday season, let us reflect on all that we have accomplished and give thanks for the many opportunities before us. Let us also remember that this time of year is a season for giving and sharing. Whether through acts of service, kind words, or simple gestures of love, we are called to be a light in our communities. The holiday season is an opportunity for us to extend the same grace and generosity that God has shown us.

In the coming months, I encourage all of us—elders and youth alike—to continue working together, lifting each other up in prayer, and supporting one another in our shared mission. The work we do today will lay the foundation for a vibrant, faithful, and empowered future for the Baptist General Convention of Virginia.

May you all have a blessed Thanksgiving and a joyful holiday season, filled with gratitude, love, and the joy of serving others.

In Christ's love and service,
Alexandria Hunt-Quarles
Youth Ministry President



GREETINGS FROM CLERGY MINISTRY!

Thanksgiving greetings to our BGCVA Family, from your Clergy Ministry Leadership Team. Look how the Lord is blessing us as one body in Christ. Your spiritual, physical and financial support is greatly appreciated. We look forward to sharing in a greater Godly way in the years to come as we walk in agreement, "Shoulder to Shoulder." Zephaniah 3:9 (NIV).



Please join us as we continue to expand and explore with our Church Clergy and Ministry Leaders each month. Our noon day (12pm), Clergy Conversation on most first Thursdays, led by yours truly (President), Reverend Karen Downing (Vice-President), Reverend Cynthia Ball (Secretary), Reverend Dabble Gable (Assistant-Secretary and our soon to be announced Chaplain, as we comprise your Clergy Ministry Leadership Team. Our Ministry Training Track is led by Dr. William "Bill" Whitaker (Director of Clergy Ministry and Leadership Development) on the third Monday of most months at noon and 6pm. Join us and share with us the various workings of becoming and being a healthy God lead Spiritual Congregation of believers in Jesus Christ that impact our Church, Community and the Uttermost parts of the world.

Join us via the BGCVA website or through I D 876 5365 4568 Passcode 790104 or on our Conference call 1 (301) 715-8592 If you miss any of our recorded sessions, you may log in to our BGCVA website and click on the Virtual Library Tab. Enjoy the many, many Clergy Conversations and Ministry Training Tracks offered.

Have a very Blessed Thanksgiving with Family, Friends and the New Friends You've come to know through our Beloved BGCVA.

Peace and Shoulder to Shoulder Blessings,

Reverend Michael E. Shannon, Sr.
President, Clergy Ministry

BAPTIST GENERAL CONVENTION OF VIRGINIA COMPLETING ITS FIRST PHASE OF ITS MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR GRANT



The Baptist General Convention of Virginia (BGCVA) is pleased to share that it is completing the first phase of its five-year, \$1,250,000.00 Lilly Endowment Grant initiative. Thirty-six churches have participated in the initiative that is designed to assist congregations by helping them deepen their relationships with God, enhance their connections with each other, and contribute to the vitality of their communities and the world. The Lilly Grant team walked alongside the churches by providing curriculum and guidance to assist congregations in meeting the goals of the grant. The curriculum created, allowed churches to incorporate the study into the life of their church, based on their needs. Churches that have completed the three-part curriculum will continue to partner with the BGC's Lilly Grant team in receiving optional wrap-around services to further meet their needs to honor the work for the Kingdom of God.

Additionally, the Lilly Endowment grant provided churches the opportunity to apply for individual grants in the amount of \$1,500. Twenty-five churches, including congregations that are not part of the cohort initia-

tive, applied for the one-time Church Learning Grant. The grant is specifically for churches. Other organizations and associations are welcome to call the BGCVA if they have questions or want to inquire about opportunities that the Convention provides.

The Church Learning grant is designed to help churches identify and execute community-based programs in response to growing needs that will benefit the community. Some of the needs may have been prompted by the realities of the pandemic and its continuing effect on communal life. The grants will be awarded in December of this year, 2024.

BGCVA and the Lilly Grant team are honored to have been selected by the Lilly Endowment's Thriving Congregations Initiative to do the work of "Bringing, Growing and Changing Congregations and Communities Together". We hope that your church will take full advantage of these opportunities—cohort teams and the Church Learning Grant-- in ways that will help your congregation and your community. We are looking forward to beginning our next phase of the initiative with new cohort churches in early spring of 2025. Please visit our website or email the BGCVA Lilly Grant team at info@bgcva.org.

MEN'S MINISTRY UPDATE



President: Dr. Johnie E. Hopkins, Sr.

During this 2024-2025 year, our theme is "Men, Dressed for Battle" with a scripture focus on Ephesians 6: 10-17, The Whole Armor of God. I think it is quite fitting with the scriptures we have adopted for our ministry. Our first scripture is **Proverbs 27: 17 Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the coun-**

tenance of his friend. (KJV)

This scripture was selected because we believe that every participant should feel their worth to BGC. The Men's Ministry will continue to use their knowledge, skills, and abilities to strengthen and better our lives.

1 Samuel 18: 1 And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. (KJV)

We also chose **Zephaniah 3: 9 Then will I purify the lips of the peoples, that all of them may call upon the name of the Lord and serve Him shoulder to shoulder, (NIV).**

Our leadership team have made ourselves available to Men's Ministries to assist in any way we can to help get started or advise. Deacon Charles Reese and I were pleased to visit with Pastor Bryan Stevens of the Mount Zion Baptist Church at Powhatan, Va. on November 09, 2024. We have had several fantastic and timely speakers who have shared topics of great interest to our men. We participated in the 124th Annual Conference and our Fall Session, each well attended.

THANKSGIVING

The giving of thanks is one of the most important decisions a Christian can make. Our Heavenly Father rewards thankfulness.

David in Psalms 100: 4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him and bless his name.

5 For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.

During this Thanksgiving season, as we reflect upon His goodness, His mercy, His grace, His peace, protection, provision, and love; we can but shout with voices of praise and worship.

When we kneel at the altar, we can lay our burdens at His feet and give God glory in confidence that He will remove or lighten our load so we can

stay in the race pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling. (Philippians 3: 14)

This Thanksgiving, let us make a conscience effort to be thankful and voice our thanksgiving.

I do not think that there is a coincidence that Thanksgiving is placed at the end of harvest time. Having been raised in a farming community in Craven County, North Carolina, I experienced the joy of seeing God provide a bountiful harvest, but also the agony of a scarce one. I could see God's word played out in "real time." **Hab. 3: 17 Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:**

18 Yet..... I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

Our trust in an Omnipotent God will still give us cause to be thankful.

1 Thes. 5: 16: Rejoice evermore.

17 Pray without ceasing.

18 In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING !!!!!

Moving forward, we envision that the Men's Ministry will be successful with one hundred percent (100%) participation throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.

AMEN



ADVENT 2024

First Sunday – Anticipation December 1, 2024

Reader 1

In great anticipation, we listen to a voice who declares in Malachi 3:1-4 (NIV):

“I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the LORD you are seeking will come to HIS temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the LORD ALMIGHTY.

But who can endure the day of HIS coming? Who can stand when HE appears? For HE will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap. HE will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; HE will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years.”

Light 1 Purple Candle



Reader 2

As we approach this marvelous season with anticipation of the coming of CHRIST, let us rejoice and hold fast to GOD’s promise of a day of reformation, when we will behold the CHRIST CHILD, our SAVIOR and REDEEMER.

Congregational Response

Alleluia, LORD Come!

Reader 1

HE will come as a ROOT OF JESSE and HE will reign forevermore!

Congregational Response

Alleluia, LORD Come! Let it be so!

Second Sunday – Expectancy December 8, 2024

Reader 1

In humble expectancy of the coming CHRIST CHILD, we listen to Romans 15:5-6 (NIV):

May the GOD who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that CHRIST JESUS had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the GOD and FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Relight Purple Candle & Light Another Purple Candle



Con-

gregational Response

With longing and expectation, we wait for the coming CHRIST CHILD. We shall rejoice when HE comes!

Reader 2

As our days elapse, we continue to sit in expectancy of our HEAVENLY KING to walk among us, sharing His knowledge so freely to all who will hear. HE will come as a servant of GOD’s truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs that we may glorify HIS name forever.

Reader 1

As we prepare our hearts for the coming CHRIST CHILD, we do so expecting GOD will give us endurance and encouragement as we wait

Congregational Response

And, so we wait in great expectation of CHRIST who is our ROCK. Amen! Let it be so!

Third Sunday – Joy December 15, 2024

Reader 1

Joy, unspeakable joy is about to be born! Listen to the reading of Luke 1:39-45 (NIV):

At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the CHILD you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my LORD should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that the LORD would fulfill HIS promises to her!”

Relight first 2 Purple Candles & the Pink Candle – The Candle of Joy



Congregational Response

Rejoice! Again, we say Rejoice!

Reader 2

Rejoice I say rejoice, for the LORD is coming and HE will bring us back from the captivity of sin. HIS coming will restore laughter and songs of joy.

Congregational Response

Rejoice! Again, we say Rejoice!

Reader 1

Mary, Mother of the coming CHRIST CHILD, will be exalted among all women for she will conceive a miraculous CHILD!

Congregational Response

Our SAVIOR! Our REDEEMER will soon arrive!

Reader 2

Those of us who sow in tears will sing a new song! The LORD will do great things! Miracles, Grace and Mercy will HE bring to comfort those who watch and seek HIM!

Congregational Response

We praise you, O GOD! With anticipation, expectancy, and now, with great joy as we wait for YOUR arrival anew in our hearts! Prepare us, O GOD, that with open hearts we will continue to embrace YOU and rejoice in who YOU are. Amen.

Fourth Sunday – Peace December 22, 2024

Relight first 2 Purple Candles & the Pink Candle; Light the 3rd Purple Candle



Read- **er 1**
Isaiah 9:6-7 states (NIV):

For to us a CHILD is born, to us a SON is given, and the government will be on HIS shoulders. And he will be called WONDERFUL COUNSELOR, MIGHTY GOD, EVERLASTING FATHER, PRINCE OF PEACE. Of the greatness of HIS government and peace there will be no end. HE will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD ALMIGHTY will accomplish this.

Congregational Response

Grant us your peace, O GOD. A peace that comes only from YOU.

Reader 2

Grant us your peace, O GOD. A peace that surpasses all understanding and logic.

Congregational Response

A peace that we cannot achieve on our own. Hear our prayer, O GOD! Grant us YOUR peace. Amen.

Christmas Eve or Christmas Day Light – December 25, 2024

Reader 1

Can you believe it! The day has finally arrived! The day we celebrate anew the arrival of the LIGHT OF LIGHTS! The GREAT LIGHT is here! No longer do we live in darkness. It is written in Isaiah 9:1-2 (NIV):

The day has come when—The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

Congregational Response

We have all been waiting for this day! Our Advent wreath will now be completed by the lighting of the CHRIST Candle – the GREAT LIGHT that dispels all darkness. Darkness and light cannot live together.

Relight first 3 Purple Candles, Pink Candle, & the Large White Center Candle



Reader 2

With the birth of JESUS, our lives will be forever changed. We are transformed by HIS model and message.

Congregational Response

We thank you for your presence, Dear GOD, and delight in YOUR majestic ambiance. May we forever praise YOU and remember YOUR great deeds. Help us to stop our crying.

Reader 1

Today we celebrate and rejoice in your first coming and live in anticipation of YOUR next coming. May we forever keep watch for YOUR appearing, because we don’t know the day nor the hour when YOU shall appear for YOUR second coming.

Reader 2

Prick our minds LORD, that we will be ever watchful.

Congregational Response

Guide our footsteps today and every day that we may walk in YOUR way and not slumber. Help us to prepare daily for YOUR coming so when you arrive, no one will be lost. Let it be so! Amen. Amen. Amen.

Sing Exuberantly Together – Joy to the World or JESUS the Light of the World



GREETINGS FROM THE BGCVA 1ST VICE PRESIDENT

The Baptist General Convention of Virginia,

I am writing to thank you for your generous support and continued participation in the vision, mission, programs, and general expenses for the ministries of The Baptist General Convention of Virginia (BGCVA).



As you gather around the table with family and friends for Thanksgiving, we, Dr. James E. Coleman, President, Dr. Leo Whitaker, Executive Minister, and I, praise and pray to GOD for each of you. We can also see those who have already embraced the Christmas Season, and we acknowledge that the New Year is rapidly ascending upon us. This is a wonderful time of remembrance and reflections.

While remembering and reflecting on the many blessings you have received throughout 2024, we solicit your end-of-the-year financial gifts to the BGCVA to help advance the goals, objectives, missions, and ministries of the Convention. Your collective witness, worship, and work can propel us to do greater things for the Kingdom of GOD.

As we embrace this season of Thanksgiving, we thank you in advance for your sacrificial end-of-the-year gift to the BGCVA! The BGCVA easy-giving methods are listed on the last page of The Herald. We rejoice in knowing that we are BGCVA, where “Bringing People Together, Growing Churches, and Changing Communities Shoulder to Shoulder!” is the resounding mantra of our faith community! After all, BGCVA Is The Place To Be!

Be blessed as you continue to be a blessing!!

Gratefully yours,
Dr. Griselda Amy Bayton
1st Vice President

NEW RELEASE
COMING
JANUARY 2025

JUDSON PRESS
CHRISTIAN PUBLISHER

GLENN E. PORTER SR.
AUTHOR

JOURNEY With Jesus Through Black History

Sermonic reflections cleverly interweave the Gospel of Luke's orderly account of Jesus' life and ministry with Carter G. Woodson's inspiration to present Black history to the US and the world accurately. Discover more titles by Glenn E. Porter Sr. at JudsonPress.com

JUDSONPRESS.COM

Psalm 107:1

Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; His love endures forever.

Happy Thanksgiving

H.S.

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

BAPTIST GENERAL CONVENTION OF VA

VIRTUAL CHURCH FINANCE AND TAX COMPLIANCE CONFERENCE 2025

9:00 AM—2:00 PM
VIA ZOOM MEETING

JAN 25TH

REGISTRATION IS \$30 PER PERSON

REGISTER ON-LINE AT: www.bgcva.org
For more information: Call 804.228.2421 Email: info@bgcva.org

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



Baptist General Convention of VA

2025 Event Calendar

January

- 15 Day for All People at General Assembly
- 19 Statewide BGCVA Day
- 20-21 MLK Celebration and Day of Ministry Service
- 25 **Virtual Church Finance and Tax Compliance Conference**

February

- 4 Heart Health Webinar
- 6 SACRED SPACES Webinar
- 7 VUU Founders' Day
- 22 FAMILY ACP Workshop, Richmond

March

- 13 SACRED SPACES Webinar
- 21-22 **Mega Ministries & Youth Retreat, Hampton**

April

- 10 Hybrid Executive Committee Meeting
- 17 Virtual Spring General Board Meeting
- 27 FAMILY ACP Workshop, Richmond
- 26 **Hybrid VBS Conference**

May (First Responders Month)

- 2-3 Regional Institute, Roanoke
- 17 FAMILY ACP Workshop, Richmond
- 22 SACRED SPACES Webinar

June

- 7 Hybrid Children, Youth, & Youth Workers Conference & Empowerment - No Judgement Zone!
- 22-26 **Hybrid 126th Annual Session and Congress of Christian Faith Formation, Hilton Roanoke Hotel & Conference Center, 110 Shenandoah Ave NE, Roanoke, VA 24016**

July

- 5 77th Children's Home Founders' Day
- 12 BGC Day @ Kings Dominion

August

- 15-16 Virtual Back 2 School Weekend

September (Christian Faith Formation Month)

- 11 Virtual General Board Strategic Planning Meeting
- 13 **Virtual Faith Formation Conference**
- 20 SDPSTVU Leadership Conference

October (Clergy Appreciation Month)

- 2 Hybrid Executive Committee Meeting
- 9 Virtual Fall General Board Meeting
- 12 Clergy Appreciation Day
- 12-18 BGCVA Week of Prayer

November

- 1 **Hybrid Fall Session, Fifth Baptist Church, Richmond**
- 4 Day of Social Action
- 11-13 Virtual Children's and Youth Revival
- 11-15 VUU Ellison Jones Convocation

December

- 19 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 3rd Monday @ 12 PM & 6 PM – Virtual Ministry Training Track
 Every 4th Thursday @ 7 PM – Virtual Moderators' & Association Leaders' Meeting

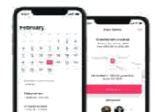
**** Some Events are Virtual Due to COVID-19. ****
 *** Dates and Locations are Subject to Change. ***

Phone: 804-228-2421 Email: info@bgcva.org

More information on our events can be found at 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)





Baptist General Convention of Virginia

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