



JUNE/JULY 2025

# HBC ALIVE!

Harrisonburg Baptist Church's Newsletter

## Keep Being You

PASTOR MATT WINTERS

Over the past few Sundays following Easter, our worship services have highlighted stories and testimonies of how you serve. I believe you make a real difference in lives around us—both inside and outside the walls. From the music to the discipleship classes, from the meals we share with strangers to those we share with friends, we are making marks on other's lives. I'm sure you're not surprised to hear this, but I often hear great compliments about the uniqueness of our community of faith. We have men and women from all walks of life, of all ages, from all over the world finding community and finding a home among us. The special union we have allows us to explore all possibilities as to who we can truly be. The depth and breadth of our community may allow us to stretch beyond what any of us ever thought possible.

Paul imagines the Christian community as a body—the complex system that our DNA creates with its muscles, bones, glands and organs. A healthy body utilizes each member. Nothing is obsolete and each part matters. I see this same value in you. You hold each person's story as important and work to welcome each person into our community. I truly believe there is a place for each of us and an opportunity for each of us to participate in God's work together. Please keep that ministry going—find

## This issue:

Gary's Retirement Celebration  
Summer Adult SS Class  
PAGE 02

No Regrets  
Community Mosaic  
PAGE 03

Upcoming JOY Events  
Wonder Women  
PAGE 04

Prayer & Story Circles  
Community Prayer Walk  
Summer Bible School  
PAGE 05

High School Graduates  
PAGES 06 - 07

Mercy House Proposal  
PAGE 08

Financial Updates  
Prayer Concerns  
PAGE 09

Calendars & Birthdays  
PAGES 10-11



## Gary Ritcher's Retirement Celebration

SUNDAY, JUNE 22

As Gary Ritcher prepares to retire from Harrisonburg Baptist on June 30, we're planning to honor him with a special musical tribute featuring "Total Praise." We're inviting anyone who is interested to join us in the choir for this special anthem on Sunday, June 22. To prepare, you're welcome to attend rehearsals on Wednesdays, June 11 and 18 at 6:30 PM, with a final run-through on Sunday, June 22 at 10:05 AM.

Following the worship service on June 22, we invite everyone to stay for a time of refreshment and celebration of Gary. We will have a card tree for anyone interested in sharing personal thoughts with him.

Gary, we thank you for all the ministry you have shared with us and being the follower of Christ you are. You have brought so much life to our church, and we're so thankful for you.

ways to serve and to share your service with others. Continue to learn the names of people you have not met. And be courageous when God opens a pathway for you to serve him. In doing so, we'll be forming the community we long to be.

## Adult Summer Sunday School Class Series

SUNDAYS AT 9:15AM, JUNE 22 - AUG 3

Priest, professor, writer and theologian Henri Nouwen said, "If there is any concept worth restoring to its original depth and evocative potential, it is the concept of hospitality."

This summer, all Adult Sunday School classes are invited to a journey of studying *The Gift of Hospitality* and the fact that God calls each of us to practice hospitality as we strive to care for others. Pastors Matt and Eli will lead us in conversation and sharing where we look at exactly what hospitality is. Is it really something we are each expected to practice? What does the Bible say about hospitality? How did Jesus practice hospitality? And how can I practice hospitality even if my house is a mess?

We will be inviting special guests to participate occasionally, and some of our Sunday School classes will be providing refreshments on the first and last Sundays of the series.

We hope you'll plan to join us!



## No Regrets

MARK GRIFFIN, DEACON

One of the greatest blessings that I have been a part of in my 15 years at HBC is the men's prayer breakfast that meets each Monday morning. It's an important part of my routine and a great way to start off the week. This group has met for over 10 years now and there have been many men come and go. It is a good group that always makes me think, ponder life and my faith.

I am the one that usually brings a devotion each week and I recently came across one that I wanted to share from *Our Daily Bread*. The author titled it "No Regrets." She was a palliative care nurse who always asked her patients who were in their last days, "Would you do anything different if you could again?" She compiled a list of the top five regrets most people have at the end of their lives:

- 1) I wish I had the courage to live a life true to myself
- 2) I wish I hadn't worked so hard
- 3) I wish I had the courage to express my feelings
- 4) I wish that I had stayed in touch with my friends
- 5) I wish I would have let myself be happier

Hmmm. I thought this was very good advice to all of us.

The bible passage referenced here was Luke 12:13-21. The parable that Jesus tells in the text is about a rich man who decides to build bigger barns to store his great harvest, after

which he tells himself that he will retire in style, sit back, relax and live until he dies. God demands of his life with a rather harsh address: "You fool! What will become of all your stuff?"

Is it possible to die with zero regrets? That's hard to know for certain but the scripture tells us that storing up stuff for ourselves is a dead end. True riches come from a life invested in God.

What if your life was demanded of you today? Would wise or foolish be applied to you? Why?

*Dear Jesus, when the time comes, I want to have as few regrets as possible. Please help me to live wisely, building a life rich in You. Amen.*

This is just one of the many great questions that we ponder so I would invite any man to come out on Monday mornings and join us. Your life will be richer for the fellowship and your week will be off to a great start.

## Creating a Community Mosaic

The fine folks at Oasis Fine Art & Craft in downtown Harrisonburg are sponsoring a community mosaic project and we are joining this colorful and creative effort. Keep watching for more information to come for this fun summer project that we will be working on together as a church family!



## Upcoming JOY Events

Our Senior Adult group now has a new name: JOY - as in Just Older Youth!

### LUNCH AT BIG MEADOWS LODGE

*June 5 - meet at the church at 10:15am*

This event includes riding up on Skyline Drive and lunch at Big Meadow Lodge. We will be taking the church van(s) for those who need a ride. Please be at the church promptly at 10:15 am so that we can leave by 10:30 am. The costs of the lunches are from \$15-\$20, not including beverage and/or dessert. If you need financial assistance, please contact Eli or Pastor Matt.

Please sign up at the Info Desk or contact Mary Smith at [mary22936@yahoo.com](mailto:mary22936@yahoo.com).

### HYMN SING WITH STORIES

*Thursday, July 3 at 2pm*

Let's come together to sing and learn the stories behind some of our favorite hymns. This event will be in the sanctuary. Refreshments will be provided afterward by the JOY team.

### ICE CREAM SOCIAL AT SMILEY'S

*Thursday, August 7 at 2pm*

We'll beat the heat by coming together at Smiley's Creamery for some ice cream and fellowship. This has become one of our most popular outings. We hope you will join us.

## Wonder Women

Trappist monk Thomas Merton once said, "We are living in a world that is absolutely transparent, and God is shining through it all the time... You cannot be without God. It's impossible. It's simply impossible. The only thing is that we don't see it."

Our Wonder Women group is a group of ladies who gather regularly to remind one another to keep our eyes open to the wonder and enchantment of God in our world that is sometimes not the first thing we see when we look around—but we believe it is still there. In fact, we build our whole life of faith believing that it is still there! The Gospel story is still being lived out! Our ladies will continue to meet on the third Tuesday of the month through the summer (June 17, July 15, and August 19) at 6 pm in room B4. If you haven't been able to join us yet and have been interested—this is a great time to start. We will be taking a look at the book *The Gift of Hard Things—Finding Grace in Unexpected Places* by Mark Yaconelli. It promises to be a challenging and encouraging journey for us. Pastor Eli has books available for \$10, or you can pick one up at your favorite bookstore. Please let her know if you plan on joining us for the summer! Let's help one another keep our eyes open!



## Prayer & Story Circles

Our Prayer and Story Circles have been going for over two years and folks have learned so much about themselves, one another, and God. We will be taking a break through the summer months and will reevaluate and perhaps reconfigure a bit in the fall which will be a great opportunity for some of you to join up who haven't been able to join us in the past.

## Prayer Walk in our Community

Beginning on Thursday, June 12, join us as we gather at the church at 9 am for an opportunity to meander around our local community in an intentional time of silent prayer and reflection on what God is already doing around us and what God is calling our attention to in the shadow of our steeple. It will also be a time when we ask God to help us know how we can reach out and help with the needs of our community. The goal is to do this regularly throughout the summer and meet up at a local coffee shop for a time of reflection and encouragement as we support our local businesses. Join us on June 12<sup>th</sup>!



## Summer Bible School

Howdy Pardners, Rawhide McSpur here inviting you to a giddy-up good time on the ranch as we gallop into Yee-Haw VBS 2025. We are rounding up side-kicks to celebrate God's Greatest Gift. Of course that is Jesus.

Preschoolers (potty trained 3's and 4's) and elementary kids (just finished kindergarten – 5<sup>th</sup> grade) will meet us on the ranch Wednesday evenings, July 9, 16, 23 and 30 from 5:30-8:15. We start at 5:30 with some yummy chuck wagon food (parents & siblings invited to eat too). Please pre-register at [hbcalive.org/vbs](https://hbcalive.org/vbs) by July 1 to reserve your spot for a Yee-Haw good time (and in the chow line so we know how many to cook for). Enter through Liberty Street doors only to sign-in, get your own bandana, crew assignment (your crew leader will wear a bandana to match yours) and go downstairs to the fellowship hall before you get in the chow line. After eating, mosey on over to the stage area at 6:00 with your crew leaders for opening corral. You will be joined by me (you will recognize me by my hat), your trusty VBS volunteers and many new friends. These action-packed Wednesday nights will be something to sing about as we have a "Moo-sic" good time. Share the invite and QR code with your friends too! We can't wait to meet you and discover how together we are "Celebrating God's Greatest Gift." Yee-Haw!

P.S. Parents will pick you up in the fellowship hall after our closing corral at 8:15.





## Recognizing Our High School Graduates

REV. KATELYN BELCHER

The youth group has been working hard to plan Youth Sunday, which will take place on June 8 at 10:30. In addition to most pieces of worship being presented by the members of our youth group, we will also recognize and pray a special blessing for our four high school graduates. Our students are also working on a musical piece to perform alongside the church choir. We hope you will join us on this special day!



### *Jonas French*

Jonas will graduate from Spotswood High School on June 6. He plans to continue to study independently and to continue working following graduation.



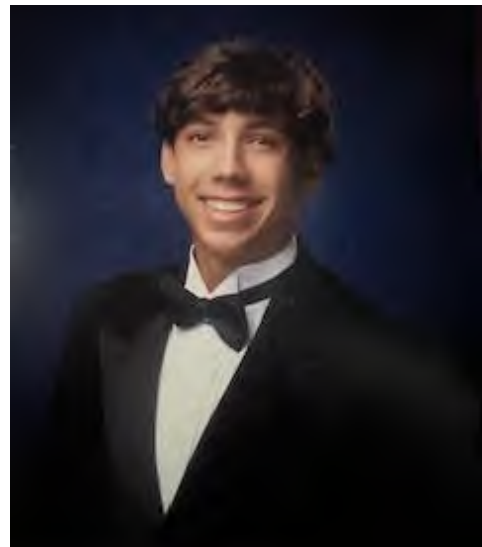
### *Schuyler Hall*

Schuyler will graduate from Spotswood High School on June 6.



### *Adyson Patnode*

Adyson graduated from Fort Defiance High School on May 21. He plans to spend the summer working for Blue Ridge Fence and Windows. He also plans to begin working for Rockingham County Fire and Rescue in the fall.



### *Johnny Whetzel*

Johnny graduated from Fort Defiance High School on May 21. He accepted a scholarship to play football at Southern Virginia University. He plans to major in psychology.

## June Youth Events

### JUNE 1

9:15am Sunday School  
4:30-8:30pm Summer Bible Study

### JUNE 8

9:15am Sunday School  
4:30-8:30pm Summer Bible Study

### JUNE 11

6:15-7:45pm Clothes Closet

### JUNE 15

9:15am Sunday School  
No evening activities

### JUNE 22

9:15am Sunday School  
4:30-8:30pm Summer Bible Study

### JUNE 29

9:15am Sunday School  
3:30pm Passport Camp Meeting  
4:30-8:30pm Summer Bible Study

## July Youth Events

### JULY 6

9:15am Sunday School  
4:30-8:30pm Summer Bible Study

### JULY 9

6:15-7:45pm Clothes Closet

### JULY 13-18

Passport Choices Camp, Spartanburg SC

### JULY 20

9:15am Sunday School  
4:30-8:30pm Summer Bible Study

### JULY 27

9:15am Sunday School  
4:30-8:30pm Summer Bible Study



## Mercy House Proposal

PASTOR MATT WINTERS

At the Spring Business Meeting, I shared a request about the possible purchase of some of the church's property by Mercy House. I'll briefly lay out the proposal here but please expect more conversations to come. At some point this Fall, we will need to make a decision, but, until then, let's commit to pray about this matter.

Let me share the background first. The lot beside the church where Lindsey Funeral Home sits is slated to be sold, and new construction will take place. One facet of this project is to extend Paul Street from South Main to South Liberty. The white house adjacent to the church is scheduled to be demolished as a result of the street extension. A local organization wants to save the house and donate the house to Mercy House, which is a non-profit that aims to help families achieve permanent housing. They develop skills and cultivate responsibilities for families who have faced struggles, including losing permanent housing. Their goal is for these families to achieve complete independence without relying on outside support.

**Proposal 1:** While Mercy House may be gifted the house, they have no land on which to resettle the house. One proposal is to purchase the property behind HBC's South Liberty Street Properties and move the house once they have purchased the land. Currently, the property in question is the backyard grass sections of the three houses

(305, 303 and 301 South Liberty). We can choose to help Mercy House achieve its goals by selling them the land for a cost (currently undetermined).

**Proposal 2:** Members of HBC purchased the three Liberty Street houses in the early 2000s and gifted them to the church in the past ten years. The land and houses were purchased to guarantee the church land in case it would like to expand in the unknown future. The houses have largely been student rentals, though two families now occupy two of the houses. The third house is vacant as of June 1, 2025, and is set for some small renovations. The second proposal could be that HBC commits to allow Mercy House to rent one of the existing houses for its family. This option saves the church's land and allows Mercy House to accomplish its mission of helping families without the burden of costs of moving and renovating a donated house. It still allows the church to support the mission of Mercy House. HBC would retain its land and benefit from the rental income from Mercy House.

Of course, the church may opt for neither of these options. We'll need to have many conversations in the months to come, including with the families that purchased these homes to begin with. As you can see, there are many pieces of information to think about and pray over. Please look for an update in the weeks to come as we will share information as it comes about. Please pray for us that we continue to seek the Lord to be good stewards of God's resources as well as good neighbors.



## Stewardship Snapshot

Budget needs as of 4/30/25      \$ 210,579.00  
Budget receipts as of 4/30/25    \$ 163,760.93

### Non-Budget Designated Funds

- Annie Armstrong Easter Offering    \$175.00
- Alma Hunt State Missions            \$20.00
- Community Bag Lunch                \$120.00
- Operation Inasmuch                    \$100.00
- Love Fund                                \$405.00

## Additional Prayer Concerns

### PASSPORTKIDS!

Please be in prayer—even now—for our 3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> graders as they head to Passportkids! camp at Eagle Eyrie. They will be there from Wednesday, June 11<sup>th</sup> through Saturday, June 14<sup>th</sup>. Please also be in prayer for our chaperones who are so willingly giving of their time so that the kids can have this incredible opportunity. We pray that God will move in a powerful way in the lives of our young ones.

### DIRECTOR OF MUSIC & WORSHIP SEARCH COMMITTEE

As of this publication, we are in the process of interviewing several candidates. We hope to be able to present a candidate to the church in the summer months. We do covet your prayers in this search process.

## PRAYER CONCERNS

### HBC FAMILY

Gary Creasy  
Vickie Westlake  
Joyce Deavers  
Genny Kline  
David Downey  
Judi Fields  
Faye Bland  
Dale Wright  
Debbie Snyder  
Edy Cupp  
Diane Gray  
Nancy Russell

### NURSING CARE/HOMEBOUND

Bryan Acker  
Chris Gamble  
Dennis Greene  
Wayne Hannah  
Neil Showalter  
Constance Via

### EXTENDED FAMILY

Cynthia Shifflett  
(Joyce Deavers' daughter)  
Freddie Roach  
(Joyce Deavers' brother-in-law)  
Jack Wampler  
(Sharon Wampler's grandson)  
Bella (Angela Hayes' niece)  
Pat Long (Lyn Weaver's cousin)  
David & Bobbi Wachter  
(Debbi Wachter's parents)

### SYMPATHY

We grieve with  
- Don Cude and family upon the death of Sandy Cude  
- Nancy Shomo the death of her father-in-law, Glenn "Kay" Shomo, Jr.

# JUNE 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5 10:15am Senior Adult Lunch @ Big Meadows Lodge (meet at church)	6 6pm First Friday Event Fishbowl Five Brass Quintet	7
8 Youth Sunday	9 6:30pm Leadership Team Mtg (B4)	10	11 6:15pm Youth Clothes Closet	12	13	14
15 <b>HAPPY FATHER'S DAY</b> 2-6pm Kachin Church	16	17 6pm Wonder Women (B4)	18	19	20	21
22 11:45am Gary's Retirement Celebration	23	24	25	26 11:30am Brookdale	27	28
29 3:30pm Youth Passport Camp Mtg (B4)	30				<b>Staff Out of Office</b> Susan: June 5-12 Gary: June 8 Matt: June 30-July 6	

## JUNE BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Dale Wright
- 3 Irv Byrd
- 5 Sallie Darling
- 5 Donna Downey
- 5 Larry Ecklund
- 7 Dennis Greene
- 10 Delma Dara
- 10 Emily Hartman
- 14 Hunter Hayes
- 20 Randy Dail
- 22 Michael Kopcinski
- 27 Daisy Howard
- 27 Steve Smith
- 30 Danny Carroll

## WEEKLY REOCCURRING EVENTS

### SUNDAY

- 9:15am Sunday School
- 10:30am Community Worship
- 4:30pm Youth Bible Study @ the Belchers' (except 6/15)

### MONDAY

- 7am Men's Prayer Breakfast (Mr J's)
- 1pm Staff Meeting (Parlor)
- 6:30pm Scouts

### TUESDAY

- 10:30am Tuesdays Together (B4) (ending 6/17)

### WEDNESDAY

- 10am Ladies' Prayer Group (B4)
- 6pm Choir Practice

### FRIDAY

- Office Closed

### SATURDAY

- 10:30am Community Bag Lunch

## DEACON OF THE WEEK

- Jun 1 — Randy Dail
- Jun 8 — Laura Fly
- Jun 15 — Nico Nguimbi
- Jun 22 — Donna Downey
- Jun 29 — Karen Folsom

## COMMUNITY BAG LUNCH

- Jun 7 — @ St. Stephens
- Jun 14 — Kathy Ritcher
- Jun 21 — Heidi Ruiz
- Jun 28 — Jeff Obenschain

# JULY 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>Staff Out of Office</b> Matt: June 30-July 6 Susan: July 14-17 Eli: July 21-27 Katelyn: July 26-Aug 9		1	2	3 2pm Senior Adult Hymn Sing	4 <b>HAPPY 4th of July</b>	5
6	7 <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b> July 4 <sup>th</sup> Holiday Observed	8 5:30pm Finance Cmte Mtg (B4)	9 5:30-8:15pm Summer Bible School 6:15pm Youth Clothes Closet	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Youth Passport Choices Camp						
	6:30pm Deacon Mtg (B4)	6pm Wonder Women (B4)	5:30-8:15pm Summer Bible School			
20 2-6pm Kachin Church	21 Aug/Sept Newsletter Articles Due	22	23 5:30-8:15pm Summer Bible School	24 11:30am Brookdale	25	26
27	28	29	30 5:30-8:15pm Summer Bible School	31		

## WEEKLY REOCCURRING EVENTS

### SUNDAY

9:15am Sunday School  
 10:30am Community Worship  
 4:30pm Youth Bible Study  
 @ the Belchers' (except 7/13)

### MONDAY

7am Men's Prayer Breakfast (Mr J's)  
 1pm Staff Meeting (Parlor)  
 6:30pm Scouts

### WEDNESDAY

10am Ladies' Prayer Group (B4)

### FRIDAY

Office Closed

### SATURDAY

10:30am Community Bag Lunch

## DEACON OF THE WEEK

July 6 — Mark Griffin  
 July 13 — Dustyn Miller  
 July 20 — Jeff Obenschain  
 July 27 — Cathy Lawrence

## COMMUNITY BAG LUNCH

TBD

## JULY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Don Aittama
- 2 Don Cude
- 7 Gary Stiteler
- 10 Jean Holthaus
- 15 Amleset Okubazgi
- 17 Mary Petit
- 22 Liz Garber
- 22 Mary Smith
- 25 Dorothy Layman
- 29 Joe Laughland
- 29 Anne Wright
- 30 Mary Laughland
- 30 Doug Skelley
- 31 Lee Chapman

## HARRISONBURG BAPTIST CHURCH

501 South Main Street  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

### HBC ALIVE!

*A publication of*

HARRISONBURG BAPTIST CHURCH

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#### STAFF

Rev. Dr. Matthew Winters, Senior Pastor

Rev. Eli Withers, Associate Pastor

Rev. Katelyn Belcher, Youth Pastor

Dr. Gary Ritcher, Director of Music & Worship

Erin Waddell, Praise Team Leader

Rosemary Lonberger, Organist

Harold Bailey, Pianist

Susan Kiser, Financial Ministry Assistant

Kim Brubaker, Administrative Ministry Assistant

AUG/SEPT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

JULY 21, 2025

Please submit articles to  
Kim Brubaker at [kim@hbcalive.org](mailto:kim@hbcalive.org)

