



OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2025

HBC ALIVE!

Harrisonburg Baptist Church's Newsletter

The Unexpected Guests

PASTOR MATT WINTERS

When was the last time you received the unexpected guest? Most of us cringe at the notion of someone just showing up on our porch. We usually don't get excited to see the landscaper, the solar panel purveyor or the realtor show up asking if we'd like their services. I got a bit of a surprise this fall as I finally was able to harvest my Carolina Reaper peppers I planted in May. Throughout the summer, I carefully watered and manicured man's hottest peppers in order to try my hand at something flavorful and punch-packing.

Well, let's just say they're as hot as advertised. On two different occasions, I've tried to put on my big boy pants and try them, but they usually leave me gasping for air and chugging milk. I know what you're thinking: Yes, they're that hot. Yes, I'd love for you to try one. Yes, I have sixty available. Yes, I think we can turn them into communion wafers! But, in reality, they're a bit more than I expected, and my expectations were lofty.

I enjoy the other unexpected results I've been seeing among us too. I'm grateful that we've had so many newcomers finding their way into the church. We've been able to start a small group at a fraternity, which is most exciting and unexpected. God has a way of surprising us in ways we never expect. I look forward to the new and awe-inspiring ways that God will do among us in the coming holiday season as well.

This issue:

Fall Business Meeting
Transition to Realm
Mission Trip
PAGE 02

Upcoming Events
PAGE 03

Youth Update
PAGE 04

Faith and Compassion
in an Extremist World
PAGE 06

Looking Ahead to Advent!
PAGE 07

Staff Recognition
New Members
PAGE 08

Financial Updates
Thank You's
Prayer Concerns
PAGE 09

Calendars & Birthdays
PAGES 10-11



Fall Business Meeting

NOVEMBER 9 @ 11:45AM

Our Fall Business Meeting will be held immediately following worship on Sunday, November 9, 2025. During this meeting, we will vote on the 2026 church budget as well as on nominated deacons, trustees, officers, and committee members. We will also hear important updates from various committees and ministry teams.

Committee reports and the proposed budget will be available in the coming weeks. To give everyone an opportunity to review and ask questions in advance, a **2026 Budget Review Meeting** will take place on **Sunday, October 26, 2025**, immediately after worship.

FALL BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA

Recognition of Members Who Died

November 2024 - October 2025

- Victoria Alexander, 11/4/2024
- Wayne Robertson, 11/24/2024
- Ron Lyle, 1/3/2025
- Sue Jones, 2/13/2025
- Sandy Cude, 5/21/2025
- David Downey, 6/20/2025

Financial Report

Voting

- Proposed 2026 Budget
- Deacons and Officers
- Slate of Committees & Other Positions

Trustees' Report

Committee Reports

Deacons' Report

Leadership Team Report

Pastoral Reports

Announcement of Vote Results

Closing Prayer

Transition to Realm

We hope you've been enjoying the new Realm Connect app! On the church's administrative side, Realm has greatly improved organization and communication, reducing repetitive tasks by bringing everything into one streamlined system.

Because Realm allows us to share content in real time, it provides more timely updates than a traditional newsletter can. Beginning in 2026, we will move from publishing a newsletter every other month to producing one quarterly. The information you need—such as birthdays, calendars, events, and ministry updates—will continue to be available, now more conveniently through the Connect app.

Please note that the Instant Church Directory, the church's previous directory app, is no longer being updated and will be discontinued on October 15.

If you haven't signed up for Realm yet or need help getting started, please let us know—we'll be glad to assist!

Mission Trip

We are planning a summer Mission Trip to Kimball, West Virginia, to work with several partners. Most of the work will be consisting of flood damage recovery. We may be cleaning out flood damaged homes or working to rebuild them. There is no skill requirement needed—just willing hearts and hands. The week we plan to go is June 29-July 4. Let Pastor Matt know if you'd like to join.



Upcoming JOY Events

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

BINGO

Thursday, October 2 at 2pm

We would ask that everyone who attends bring a small \$5 to \$10 gift that we will use as prizes. Please seal in a paper bag so the winners won't know what their prize is until they open it. Refreshments will be provided.

FELLOWSHIP LUNCHEON

Thursday, November 6 at noon

All are welcomed to join us for a luncheon in the fellowship hall. The meal will be provided by the JOY Team. Please sign up for this event at the information desk. Our guest speaker will be Ashley Carr, Director of Women's Ministry at New Beginnings Church. Ashley is no stranger to HBC - she is the daughter of Vickie and the late David Westlake.

CHRISTMAS SING-ALONG

Thursday, December 4 at 2pm

All are welcome to join us in singing some of our favorite Christmas hymns and songs. Let's add to the festivities by wearing our Christmas sweaters, whether crazy, ugly or classic.

Stories, Songs, & Colors: A First Friday Event

OCTOBER 3 @ 7PM

Join us in the Fellowship Hall for an evening of fun, fellowship, and creativity as we welcome the fall season!

Do you have a poem, story, song, or piece of art you'd like to share? We'd love for you to showcase your talents! If you'd like to participate, please contact Pastor Eli as soon as possible.

Come ready to enjoy inspiring stories, creative performances, and delicious fall treats with friends and neighbors. Let's celebrate the season together!

Wonder Women

THIRD TUESDAYS @ 6PM

Ladies of all ages are invited to join us on the third Tuesday of each month at 6pm in Room B4 for some conversation, Bible study, and maybe even a little arting around on the side! We would love to have you join us on October 21 and November 18.

Fall Festival – Fun for All Ages!

OCTOBER 26 @ 5-7PM

Join us Sunday, October 26, from 5–7 p.m. for our annual fall celebration! Wear your best (family-friendly, not-too-scary) costume and enjoy games, sweet treats, and prizes for the best costume and the fastest relay team. And don't forget to bring a friend!



Oct Youth Events

OCT 4

9:30am-12pm Bag Lunch

OCT 5

9:15am Sunday School

5:30-7:30pm Dinner & Bible Study

OCT 8

6:15-7:45pm Clothes Closet

OCT 12

9:15am Sunday School

5:30-7:30pm Dinner & Bible Study

OCT 18

9:30am-2:30pm Youth Work Day

OCT 19

9:15am Sunday School

4pm Youth Committee Mtg

5:30-7:30pm Dinner & Bible Study

OCT 26

9:15am Sunday School

5:00-7:00pm Fall Festival

Nov Youth Events

NOV 2

9:15am Sunday School

5:30-7:30pm Dinner & Bible Study

NOV 9

9:15am Sunday School

5:30-7:30pm Dinner & Bible Study

NOV 12

6:00-8:15pm Clothes Closet

NOV 14-16

Fall Retreat at Eagle Eyrie

NOV 16

9:15am Sunday School

No evening activities

NOV 23

9:15am Sunday School

4pm Youth Committee

5:30-7:30pm Dinner & Bible Study

NOV 30

9:15am Sunday School

5:30-7:30pm Dinner & Bible Study

Youth Update

REV. KATELYN BELCHER

The youth group hosted a lasagna luncheon fundraiser on September 21. Thanks to the generous free will donations given by church members, they were able to raise \$1,043.00 for Passport Camp next July!!! The students and their parents did a great job working together to put everything in place for the fundraiser. They are also grateful for HBC's continued support in getting them to camp each summer.

Looking ahead, the youth group is continuing Sunday night Bible studies every week, and they continue to serve as a Bag Lunch team every six weeks or so. The students also volunteer at Clothes Closet every second Wednesday of each month. In addition to their "ordinary" serving, the youth are planning a workday on October 18th to lay down weed barrier and re-mulch the small church playground. In November, they are very much looking forward to the Fall Retreat at Eagle Eyrie Baptist Conference Center on the weekend of the 14th through the 16th.







Faith and Compassion in an Extremist World

JEFF OBENSCHAIN, DEACON

In an era marked by polarization, misinformation, and rising extremism, there is a renewed urgency to bring back faith and compassion. While extremist ideologies often thrive on division, fear, and dehumanization, we must focus on sharing God's love in the form of empathy, justice, and a shared humanity. Reclaiming this deeper moral center can become an antidote to cycles of hatred and violence.

Faith, even if it is secular, is sometimes a driver of division in our world. Yet historically, faith has also been a unifying force. Virtually all major spiritual and ethical beliefs emphasize compassion, mercy, and respect for life. When faith becomes weaponized, it's not the essence of belief at work but rather a distortion, often born from political, social, or psychological grievances.

Compassion, the ability to feel with and for others, is not weakness. In fact, it can be one of the most powerful forces in our society. Sharing a compassion born out of God's love defuses the fear and anger that extremists exploit. It redefines enemies as people with stories, pain, and dignity. From personal behavior to community-based initiatives to global peace movements, compassion is a practical tool for conflict resolution, prevention, and reconciliation.

Around the world, countless individuals and groups embody faith and compassion as resistance to extremism. Religious groups that shelter refugees from opposing groups, interfaith coalitions working for peace, and young activists promoting the opportunity for conversation are real-world examples of how values can be re-centered. These efforts demonstrate that compassion grounded in faith is not abstract; it saves lives and rebuilds societies. But how do we fit in? How can each of us make a difference on this global stage?

If extremism feeds on anger and fear, then the antidote is a steadfast practice of empathy, forgiveness, and justice. We can start small by listening to someone from a different background, supporting groups that bridge divides, and cultivating practices like prayer, or service that nurture compassion. Individually, our efforts are small, but when multiplied by all the others around us doing the same, they can become an enormous force.

Faith and compassion are not passive ideals but active responses to a fractured world. In the face of extremism, they are forms of courage, demanding that we see our shared humanity, especially when it's inconvenient. By embodying these values, the values taught by Jesus, we can help shift the narrative from fear to hope, from division to solidarity. In an extremist world, compassion grounded in faith may be one of the most powerful forms of resistance we have.



LOOKING AHEAD TO ADVENT!

Operation Christmas Child

JULIE AITTAMA

Our Operation Christmas Child campaign kicks off in October! Boxes, packing instruction sheets, and a supply donation basket will be available in the foyer all month long. You can pack a box (or several!) as an individual, family, Sunday School class, Bible study, prayer group—anyone can participate!

Donations of supplies for packing are also greatly appreciated. Filled boxes are due back at the church by November 16.

We'll gather for a **Packing Party on Thursday, November 13 at 12:00 noon.** The Tuesday Group, Senior Group, and anyone else who would like to help are warmly invited. A light lunch and dessert will be provided—please RSVP to Julie Aittama if you plan to attend.

Let's aim to beat last year's total of 30 boxes! Each box not only meets practical needs but also shares the hope of the Gospel through the Bibles included inside.

Advent Dramatic Scenes

Throughout Advent, we'll have some small dramatic scenes depicting the Christmas story. If you're interested in signing up for a small scene, just let Pastor Matt or Todd know. We'd love to let you shine!

Join the Choir for Lessons and Carols!

Step into the warmth of the season with a celebration that stirs the soul and engages the heart. This year's Lessons and Carols is more than music—it's a vibrant journey through the story of Advent, told through scripture, song, and live theatre skits.

Whether you're a seasoned singer or simply love to lift your voice in harmony, we welcome you to be part of this special offering. Come sing with us, make new friends, and help create an evening of beauty, reflection, and joyful anticipation.

Rehearsals begin Wednesday, October 8th, from 7:00–7:45 PM.

No experience necessary—just a willing heart and a love for music and storytelling!

Questions? Reach out to Todd at Todd@hbcalive.org.



Staff Recognition

SHARON WAMPLER

This school year is the 20th anniversary of Sharon Wampler leading the HBC Preschool. She has helped form countless children over these past 20 years, and she continues to go strong. We are so thankful for the ministry she provides and has been so influential in helping families introduce their children to the love of God. Her ministry has been a beautiful extension of HBC's witness to these families and we're so grateful for her leadership, love and legacy.



AMLESET OKUBAZGI

Many thanks to Amleset for her three years of dedicated service as our custodian! Her care and hard work have kept our building welcoming and ready for ministry each week, often in ways that go unseen but are deeply appreciated. We are so grateful for your service, Amleset.



New Members

TONY PLUME

Tony joined with HBC on August 3, 2025. He is self-employed and has been for 53 years. His interests include singing. In fact, you may notice him in the church choir some Sunday mornings!



Tony Plume

NOAH CARROLL

Noah joined with HBC on August 3 and was baptized at Riverbend on August 24. Noah is the son of Danny and Noelle Carroll.



Stewardship Snapshot

Budget needs as of 8/31/25 \$ 433,545.00
Budget receipts as of 8/31/25 \$ 383,037.27

July & Aug Donations to Designated Funds

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------|
| • Alma Hunt State Missions | \$20.00 |
| • Nasaruni Academy | \$200.00 |
| • Community Bag Lunch | \$605.00 |
| • Operation Inasmuch | \$20.00 |
| • Love Fund | \$805.00 |
| • Passport Kids | \$359.00 |

Thank Yous

Dear Church Family,

Thank you so much for the outrageously wonderful celebration in recognition of my 15th anniversary as Youth Pastor. I also want to thank you for the generous gift of the collection of New Testament commentary. I am so excited to use my new books when planning for sermons and Bible Study lessons. It was certainly a day I will never forget, and I am so grateful for your support and encouragement!

In Christ's Love,
Katelyn

The death of my Dad, Jerry Tutt, was a shock. I appreciate HBC family being there for me during this difficult time.

God Bless,
Kishia Tutt

PRAYER CONCERNS

HBC FAMILY

Avery McCray
Joyce Deavers
Faye Bland
Dale Wright
Nancy Russell

NURSING CARE/HOMEBOUND

Bryan Acker
Dennis Greene
Wayne Hannah
Neil Showalter
Constance Via

EXTENDED FAMILY

Freddie Roach
(Joyce Deavers' brother-in-law)
Jack Wampler
(Sharon Wampler's grandson)
Bella (Angela Hayes' niece)
Bob Withers (Pastor Eli's Father)
Tom Dagenhart (Cathy Baugh's brother)
Delmas Harper
(Austin Harper's grandfather)
Holly Conlon (Noelle Carroll's friend)
Michelle Matthews
(Noelle Carroll's friend)

October 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Staff Out of Office Matt: Oct 6-12 Susan: Oct 9-13, 27-29 Todd: Oct 9-14 Eli: Oct 13-18			1	2 2pm JOY (Just Older Youth) Bingo	3 7pm Stories Songs & Colors - First Friday event	4
5 World Communion Sunday	6	7 5:30pm Finance Committee Meeting (B4)	8 6:15pm Youth Clothes Closet	9	10	11
12	13 6:30pm Leadership Team Mtg (B4)	14 7pm College Bible Study (Parlor)	15	16	17	18 9:30am Youth Work Day
19 2-6pm Kachin Church 4pm Youth Committee Meeting (B4)	20	21 6pm Wonder Women (B4)	22	23 11:30am Brookdale	24	25
26 11:45am 2026 Budget Presentation 5-7pm Fall Festival	27	28	29	30	31	

OCT BIRTHDAYS

- 6 Julie Aittama
- 9 Matt Winters
- 10 Sherry Miller
- 10 Roi Ji Phaga
- 10 Leigha Winters
- 11 Todd Martin
- 13 Janet Hoskins
- 15 Sandy Weaver
- 17 Gary Creasy
- 18 Neese Spitzer
- 19 Evelyn Hoover
- 24 Vickie Westlake
- 26 Dustyn Miller
- 27 Lyn Weaver
- 29 Tom Reynolds

WEEKLY REOCCURRING EVENTS

SUNDAY

- 9:15am Sunday School
- 10:30am Community Worship
- 5:30pm Youth Dinner & Bible Study

MONDAY

- 7am Men's Prayer Breakfast (Chick-fil-A)
- 10am Skyline Literacy (Rms 111, 201-203)
- 1pm Staff Meeting (Parlor)
- 6:30pm Scouts

TUESDAY

- 10:30am Tuesdays Together (B4)
- 4pm Jubellation Practice

WEDNESDAY

- 10am Ladies' Prayer Group (B4)
- 2pm Healing Hearts (Parlor)
- 6pm Choir Practice

THURSDAY

- 10am Skyline Literacy (Rms 111, 201-203)
- 3pm Parables of Jesus Bible Study (B4)

FRIDAY

- Office Closed

SSATURDAY

- 10:30am Community Bag Lunch

DEACON OF THE WEEK

- Oct 5 — Laura Fly
- Oct 12 — Randy Dail
- Oct 19 — Nico Nguimbi
- Oct 26 — Donna Downey

COMMUNITY BAG LUNCH

- Oct 4 — HBC Youth
- Oct 11 — Emmanuel Episcopal
- Oct 18 — Heidi Ruiz
- Oct 25 — Jeff Obenschain

November 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 Remembrance Sunday  Daylight Saving Time Ends	3 3pm Creation Care Team Meeting	4	5 2pm Healing Hearts (Parlor)	6 12pm JOY Fellowship Luncheon (FH)		8
9 11:45am Fall Business Meeting	10 6:30pm Deacon Mtg (B4)	11 7pm College Bible Study (Parlor)	12 2pm Healing Hearts (Parlor) 6:15pm Youth Clothes Closet	13 12pm OCC Packing Party (FH)	14 Youth Fall Retreat	
16 2-6pm Kachin Church	17	18 6pm Wonder Women (B4)	19	20 Newsletter Articles Due 11:30am Brookdale	21	22
23 4pm Youth Committee Meeting (B4)	24	25	26	27 OFFICE CLOSED 	28	29
30	Staff Out of Office Matt & Eli: Nov 10-12					

WEEKLY REOCCURING EVENTS

SUNDAY

9:15am Sunday School
 10:30am Community Worship
 5:30pm Youth Dinner & Bible Study

MONDAY

7am Men's Prayer Breakfast (Chick-fil-A)
 10am Skyline Literacy (Rms 111, 201-203)
 1pm Staff Meeting (Parlor)
 6:30pm Scouts

TUESDAY

10:30am Tuesdays Together (B4)
 4pm Jubellation Practice

WEDNESDAY

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

THURSDAY

10am Skyline Literacy (Rms 111, 201-203)
 3pm Parables of Jesus Bible Study (B4)

FRIDAY

Office Closed

SSATURDAY

10:30am Community Bag Lunch

DEACON OF THE WEEK

Nov 2 — Karen Folsom
 Nov 9 — Mark Griffin
 Nov 16 — Dustyn Miller
 Nov 23 — Jeff Obenschain
 Nov 30 — Cathy Lawrence

COMMUNITY BAG LUNCH

Nov 1 — St. Stephen's
 Nov 8 — Kathy Ritcher
 Nov 15 — Sharon Miller
 Nov 22 — Anne Wright
 Nov 29 — Mike Clark

NOV BIRTHDAYS

2 Josie Leonard
 6 Hayley May
 6 Hayley Simmons
 6 Constance Via
 8 Karen Folsom
 8 Sarah Northen
 9 Jo Ann Martin
 11 Randy Shenk
 12 Dave Lawrence
 13 Donnie Shifflott
 14 Hope Sullivan
 14 McKenzie Webb
 15 Esmyele Elan
 15 Jenevieve Leonard
 16 Gabrielle Dawson
 17 Abigail Kopcinski
 20 Jane Branch
 22 Tom Smith
 23 Cindy Mandigo
 25 Liah Phaga
 27 Tony Graham
 29 Brittany Bowman

HARRISONBURG BAPTIST CHURCH

501 South Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

HBC ALIVE!

A publication of

HARRISONBURG BAPTIST CHURCH

501 South Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

(540) 433-2456 www.hbcalive.org

STAFF

Rev. Dr. Matthew Winters, Senior Pastor

Rev. Eli Withers, Associate Pastor

Rev. Katelyn Belcher, Youth Pastor

Todd Martin, Director of Music & Worship

Rosemary Lonberger, Organist

Susan Kiser, Financial Ministry Assistant

Kim Brubaker, Administrative Ministry Assistant

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

NOV 20, 2025

Please submit articles to

Kim Brubaker at kim@hbcalive.org.

I WILL PRAISE
the name of *God*
»————»
with a
song
I WILL magnify
HIM with
THANKSGIVING

PSALM 69:30