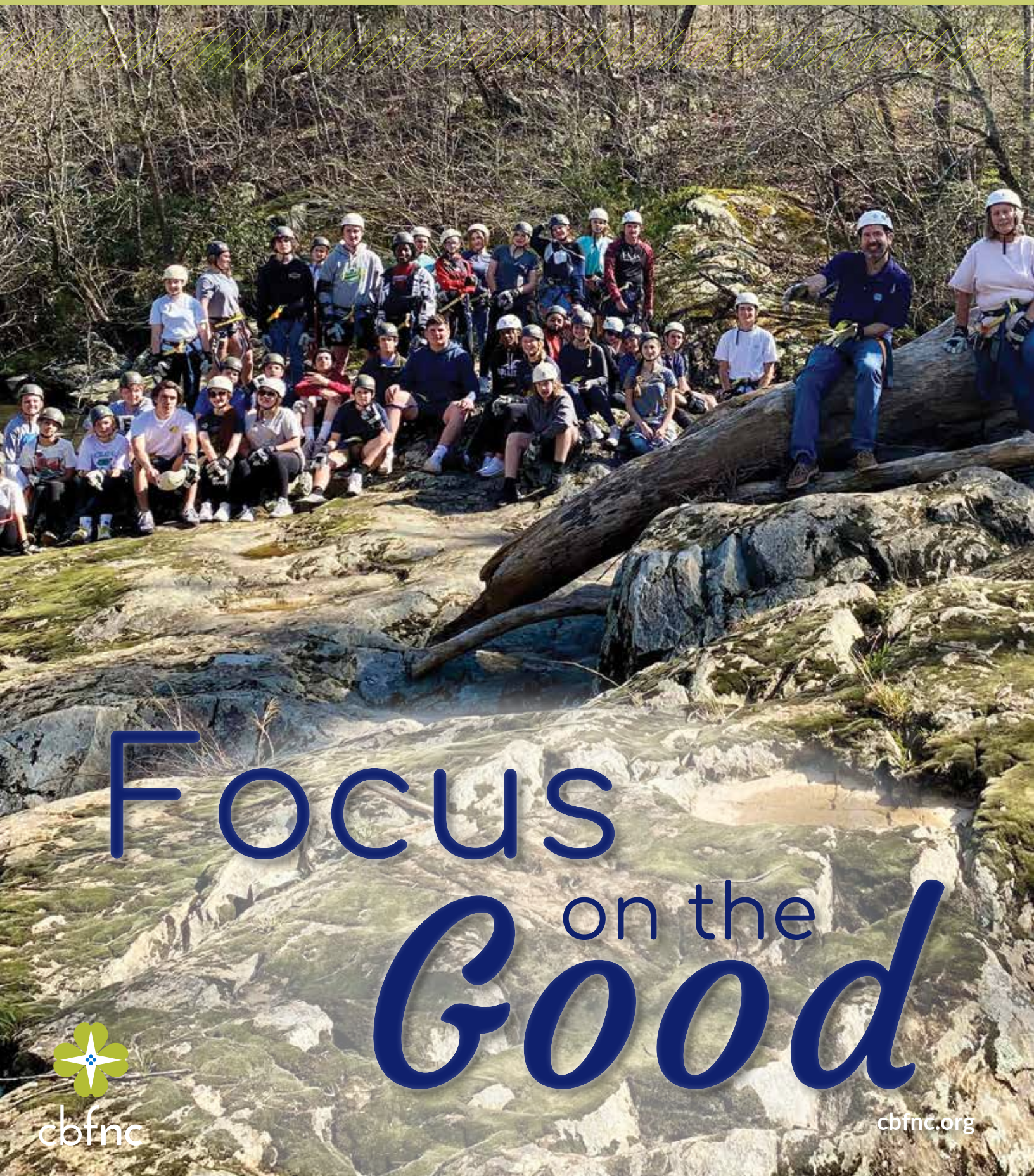


# *The Gathering* of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina



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# The Gathering

of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina

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**On the Cover:** First Baptist, Hamlet's thriving youth ministry includes fun youth fellowship outings like zip lining.

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# Think About These Things



By Larry Hovis  
CBFNC Executive Coordinator

**N**owadays, church people have plenty of reasons to be discouraged. In most congregations, attendance is down and the average age is up. Political divisions in society often creep into churches. Finances are strained. Old approaches to ministry have lost effectiveness but new approaches can create conflict and don't always produce the intended outcomes. The culture no longer accommodates church schedules and programs; it competes with them.

With all of these challenges, it's easy to slide into negative thinking.

The Epistle to the Philippians seems to have been written for times like these. Philippians is perhaps Paul's most joyous, intimate, personal and positive letter. It contains many memorable sayings, but the eighth verse of Chapter 4 just might sum it up:

*Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there*

*is any excellence and anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*

In spite of the challenges facing churches today, we are still greatly blessed. We have gifted leadership (clergy and laity), greater financial resources than in most periods of history, immense freedoms to practice our faith and loving communities of mutual support. Most of all we have the Gospel itself, which is the most valuable asset.

In my sabbatical this summer from July to September (see related article), I was reminded of the need to focus on the positive, to see the glass as half full rather than half empty, and to recapture joy in ministry. Basically, I was reminded of Philippians 4:8, to "think about these things."

This issue of *The Gathering* is devoted to shining a light on some of the positive stories in our fellowship. We hope they inspire you to reflect on the things in your life and your church that are "worthy of praise."

## SABBATICAL REFLECTIONS

*As I approached my 18th anniversary in the role of CBFNC executive coordinator, I found myself suffering from tremendous fatigue, brought about by cultural, congregational and organizational change. My sabbatical priorities were rest, family, reflection and renewal with the desired outcomes of approaching my third decade of CBFNC ministry and my seventh decade of life with energy, enthusiasm and excellence.*

## What I Did

**This sabbatical experience was divided into three phases:**

### PHASE 1: MONGOLIAN ADVENTURE

To start my sabbatical, my wife Kim and I traveled to Mongolia to visit our daughter Lauren who had been serving there as a Foreign Service Officer with the U.S. State Department. It was wonderful to experience a small part of the world that we may otherwise have never visited.

One goal was to learn more about religion in that country, which is mainly Buddhism. There is also a small Christian, primarily Catholic, and Muslim presence. They continue to revere the greatest leader in their history, Genghis Khan. Though best known for being a brutal empire-builder, some scholars credit him with being the father of religious freedom or at least religious toleration because he encouraged his conquered subjects to practice whatever faith they chose.

Today, Mongolians are pretty secular. Christian groups from outside the country are often suspect and sometimes have difficulty operating freely. The U.S. Embassy has made advocating on behalf of these groups an area of focus.



Larry and Kim Hovis in Mongolia's capital, Ulaanbaatar, during the national Naadam Festival with women in their region's native dress.

See "Think About These Things" on page 4.



## PHASE 2: DOWN TIME AT HOME

The second phase consisted of being home with a flexible schedule. My goals were to rest, exercise, perform household chores, read, reflect and work on the CBFNC 30th Anniversary history.

Another highlight of this phase was my participation in the Cycle NC Mountain Ride in Madison County with Steve Bisette, my cycling partner. We camped beside the French Broad River and enjoyed three days of riding in the mountains with plenty of miles and lots of climbing.

## PHASE 3: TRAVEL WITH FAMILY

Lauren concluded her assignment in Mongolia and came home, which afforded us the opportunity for some family vacations. We traveled to Sunset Beach, Orlando, FL and Hilton Head, SC where we visited with extended family before I returned to the CBFNC office on September 7.

Larry Hovis and his cycling partner, Steve Bisette, during the Cycle NC Mountain ride.



***By design, my sabbatical did not contain any formal educational experiences. However, it was a time of deep learning about myself and my call to ministry at this stage of my life. Here are some of the lessons I learned:***

- **I need time and space away from work on a regular basis.**

This time away was like water in the desert. I admit that there are many years where I don't take all my vacation days and when I do take them, I rarely do so for more than a week. I also haven't taken advantage of study leave. In the future, I plan to take all eligible vacation and study leave time and to make one of my blocks away at least two weeks in duration.

- **I am recommitted to vocational ministry.**

Before my sabbatical, I found myself thinking about retirement. I wondered if the sabbatical would make me desire retirement even more. The opposite occurred. I have renewed energy, enthusiasm and excitement to give my best to Christ and CBFNC for as long as the Lord (and the Coordinating Council!) see fit.

- **I want to live and work with more intentionality.**

For much of the last few years, I have lived, ministered and led CBFNC in a more reactive posture than I would like. I am a person who prefers to be proactive and intentional.

This summer, one of the books I read was *Atomic Habits* by James Clear in which he makes the case for and provides practical ways to set goals and develop regular habits to live more intentionally and effectively. I have developed a habit plan and accountability structure for both personal and professional goals.

- **Loving God and people is more important than institutional preservation.**

In recent years, CBFNC has experienced the same institutional stresses as most churches and denominational organizations. I, in turn, have felt pressure (self-imposed) to somehow return us to our "glory days."

But I returned from sabbatical with a new outlook. Our true purpose is to obey what Jesus called the Greatest Commandment – loving God and loving our neighbors. Putting God and people first should be our main objective.

- **We need to "Make Ministry Fun Again."**

During the first decade or more of my ministry at CBFNC, our work was exceedingly fun – for me, our staff, our volunteer leaders and the pastors and laity in our fellowship. For the last few years, ministry has been less enjoyable and more draining. We have spent way too much time lamenting what we have lost.

The time has come for us to shift our focus from institutional preservation to the Great Commandment; from what we have lost to what we still have; from those aspects of ministry and church life that bring us stress and anxiety to those that bring us joy and fulfillment. Of course, the purpose of ministry is not to have fun. After all, we serve a Savior who suffered a cruel, painful death. But there should be times of enjoyment to sustain us through the inevitable periods of struggle and disappointment.

What I  
Learned





*I wholeheartedly recommend that every church develop and implement a sabbatical policy for their ministers. Such a recommendation naturally raises a number of questions:*

## Why should our church offer our minister(s) a sabbatical?

First, sabbatical is a thoroughly biblical concept. From Scripture's earliest pages, God teaches the importance of sabbath, which is the foundation of sabbatical. God rested from work on the seventh day (Gen. 2:3) and commanded the children of Israel to set that day aside as a day of rest (Ex. 20:8-11). In addition, God told Moses that the Israelites must give the land (and its workers) a sabbath rest every seventh year (Lev. 25: 1-7). Finally, God commanded that every 50th year (seven sabbath years) is the year of Jubilee, a time to "proclaim liberty throughout the land" (Lev. 25: 10) when work ceases, debts are forgiven and land is returned to the original owners.

Second, sabbatical is thoroughly practical. Even with attempts at days off and vacation, ministry is a 365/24/7 enterprise. A minister is rarely "off duty," and that takes a tremendous toll over time – physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Extended time away is not a luxury but a necessity for effective pastoral leadership.



Larry Hovis fellowshiping with Mongolians in a ger (yurt) at a horse race during the national festival.



The Hovis family visiting the gigantic steel Genghis Khan statue, the largest statue of an equestrian in the world.

## What are other churches doing?

If your church does not have a sabbatical policy, you don't have to start from scratch. CBFNC has sample policies from sister churches you can use as a starting point to develop a policy that fits your church. Multi-staff churches often provide sabbaticals for the senior pastor and associates, though they may vary in length for different positions.

## How can we pay for a ministerial sabbatical?

In general, there are two ways to pay for a ministerial sabbatical. First, there are some programs that provide financial support for the minister, and sometimes the church, to pursue a sabbatical experience. These include:

- The Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Programs
- The Louisville Institute Pastoral Study Project
- CBFNC's Pastor In Residence Program (through our Helping Pastors Thrive ministry)

Second, a church can offer a sabbatical experience with good planning and minimal funds. Sabbaticals don't need to be expensive; the time away is more important than fancy trips. It is helpful, though, for a church to provide some funding for education or travel. A relatively easy way to do that is to set aside funds in the budget each year that are transferred to a restricted account to be used for the sabbatical when the minister is eligible.

## How can we cover the pastor's duties during a sabbatical absence?

One reason many churches are reluctant to offer their ministers a sabbatical is that they don't know who will preach, provide pastoral care or perform church administration during a pastoral absence. Typically, the minister's duties can be covered by a combination of other staff, lay leadership, chaplains in the area, retired ministers in the church or community or ministers from partner organizations such as CBFNC, CBF, seminaries and other ministries. In fact, a pastoral absence can give lay leaders an opportunity to exercise gifts and grow in ministry and leadership capacity. It can also give the congregation an opportunity to deepen relationships with partners.

## Why should ministers receive a sabbatical when this benefit is offered in few other professions?

It is true that there are other professions that are under tremendous stress today, professions that are on duty 365/24/7 with heavy responsibilities and relatively low pay. They also deserve a sabbatical. Every job or profession deserves a sabbatical. But the church has no power or authority to offer a sabbatical to them. We do have the power and authority to offer a sabbatical to our ministers.

We should not take a "least common denominator" approach, only providing the minimum based on the world's practices. We should do what's biblical and right, as a witness and guide to the rest of the culture. Who knows, maybe we can inspire other organizations to offer sabbaticals for their employees. ✚





By Jeff Harris  
Pastor, First Baptist  
Church, Tryon &  
CBFNC Moderator

# The Need for **RENEWAL** and **REST**



A stream in the Absaroka Range in Wyoming.

I was sitting around a campfire on a cool fall evening with a colleague and a friend of his. The colleague and I were talking shop, swapping funny stories about church life and sharing “woe is me” anecdotes.

His friend entered the conversation, “The problem with you ministers is that you think you have the most difficult job in the world when it’s mostly just a few hours on Sunday morning. You have no idea what it’s like in the real world.”

I didn’t say anything at the time, as I didn’t know this person and I mostly wanted to enjoy the campfire. But I wish I had said, “I don’t think that ministers have the most difficult job in the world, but I do work far more than *just a few hours on Sunday morning*. And, trust me, it’s not as easy as you think it is.”

Like many vocations, pastoral ministry can be difficult and draining. Many congregations are doing more with less—less money, less volunteers and less staff. The political polarization that divides our culture is also present within our congregations, making the already challenging work of formation and preaching more difficult. The recent

pandemic exacerbated the decline and polarization.

In fact, there is a good chance that the pastor(s) leading your congregation are TIRED. And not just tired in the usual way, but “soul tired;” weary from paddling upstream for too long without sustained renewal or rest.

I spoke with our church leadership a few years ago about my own weariness and the need for a sabbatical. After examining a more traditional sabbatical of three to four months every five, seven, or ten years, we decided on a more regular pattern for renewal and rest.

The congregation I serve, First Baptist, Tryon, decided to offer two sabbatical weeks each year. In addition to the two sabbatical weeks, I can add two vacation weeks, allowing me to be away for four consecutive weeks each year.

This past summer, I was able to take four weeks for my first sabbatical. The time away was wonderful. I spent the first two weeks with family at Ring Lake Ranch in Dubois, WY. We hiked, swam, played wiffle ball, took naps, spent a couple of days in Yellowstone and in general had a blast. I spent the last two weeks in Wyoming with a life-long friend fly fishing and hiking.







“The time  
away was  
**LIFE-GIVING.**”

Above: Jeff and his family enjoy the time away while in Wyoming. Below: The family also had fun fly fishing in the Absaroka Range during their trip to Yellowstone.

**In fact, there is a good chance that the pastor(s) leading your congregation are TIRED. And not just tired in the usual way, but “soul tired;” weary from paddling upstream for too long without sustained renewal or rest.**



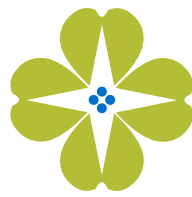
The time away was life-giving.

If you’re a lay person, I hope you will advocate for a sabbatical policy that fits your context and congregation. Each October is clergy appreciation month and I can think of no better way to demonstrate your appreciation than beginning this conversation.

If you’re a minister, I encourage you to begin this conversation. Sabbaticals are not a practice for many of our congregations so it is up to us to pave the way.

Sabbaticals do not have to be expensive, exotic or last for several months. This means that most congregations can offer regular times for renewal and rest. The benefits are more effective leaders, longer tenures and healthier congregations. ✚

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**March 23 – March 24, 2023**

**Ardmore Baptist Church, Winston-Salem**  
*(In-Person & Livestreamed)*

**REGISTRATION  
OPENS**  
*in January*

*Living Together*

*How very good and  
pleasant it is when kindred live  
together in unity! – Psalm 133:1*



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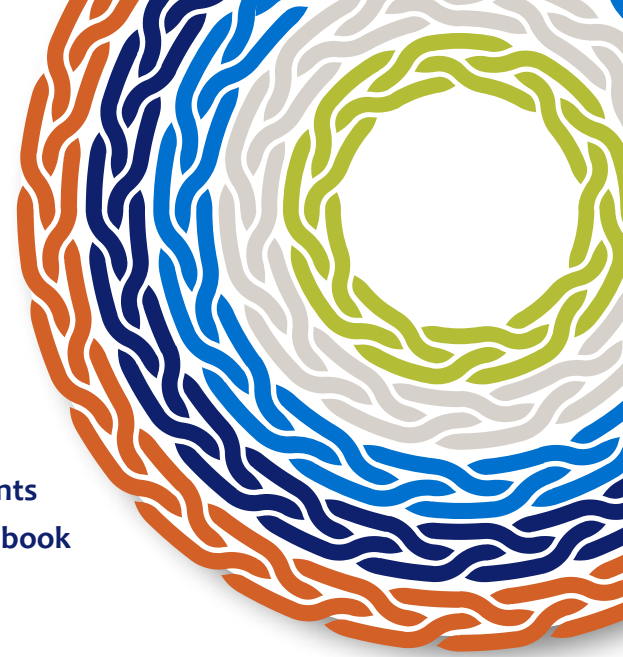
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# Worthy of Praise in Collegiate Ministry

## Snapshots from Cooperative Baptist Student Fellowship Groups



By Caitie Jackson  
CBSF Campus Minister

### CHARLOTTE AREA CAMPUSES

The UNC-Charlotte group has been going through many personal and mental health issues, which has made the semester shift to a smaller but closer group. We've created new rhythms between small group meetings, fellowship events, community coffee once a month and service projects within the community. As we discuss different topics, it has led to conversations about who we are as CBSF Charlotte and ways we can be inviting and welcoming to more students. It also challenged our students to consider more seriously how they can step into leadership in a way in which they are passionate.

The CBSF Wingate group meets regularly on Tuesdays for small group at 4:00. The students voted on an earlier meeting time because many were often exhausted by the evening. This time move has led to a completely different format. It is now an open coffee hour focused on

open discussion about different topics. These topics range from recent news, to topics students specifically request, to topics that students bring to the table when they show up from something they are working through. Our main students continue to attend and we've had new people walking up and joining us throughout this hour so it looks different each week. One week a professor joined us as well. I'm looking forward to seeing where this leads.



Local college students participate in fall fellowship events with CBSF Charlotte.



By Charity Roberson  
CBSF Campus Minister

### EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

The word for our ministry this year is "partnership." We have started the year with great partnerships that have been building with CBFNC churches in Greenville. Tyler Roach, the associate pastor at The Memorial Baptist Church, helped us collect names of new students at the beginning of the year information fair by donating an Eno Hammock for a raffle prize.

We have also been partnering with other denominational campus ministry groups for fellowship. We are grateful for all of our partners, especially our churches.

Representing the CBSF group during ECU's information fair.







College students participating in CBSF activities at Western NC campuses in the fall.



## WESTERN NC CAMPUSES

Campus Ministry in Western North Carolina is solid and growing. This fall we have seen more freshmen come out to participate than we have seen in a number of years, even the pre-Covid years. We are so thankful to be able to open our worship time back up to guest proclaimers (pastors, youth ministers, professors, and campus chaplains), throughout our WNCBF and CBFNC networks. It has been wonderful to hear them preach and lead Bible studies as our campuses wrestle with our theme this semester of our “Identity in Christ.”



By David Stone  
CBSF Campus Minister

This fall, in addition to our weekly worship services at UNC-Asheville, Mars Hill University and Western Carolina University, we have student-led prayer groups starting. We also get out on the campus quads, offering free lemonade or sno cones in an effort to meet new students and make our ministry known. Additionally, fun social events are back in full swing like movie nights and game nights once a month. Service opportunities are available for students too, like the fall festival our college students put on for the Baptist Children’s Home of NC in Clyde.

Thank you CBFNC for making ministry to college students possible through your generosity. Again, we are also thankful to have local members of our fellowship back on campus to connect with students each week. Pray for us as we continue to be a welcoming presence of Christ to college students in Western North Carolina!



By Chris Towles  
CBSF/BSU Campus Minister

## WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY

We are so grateful to be able to continue having guest speakers and worship leaders from the community join us for our weekly meal/worship program called Horizons. Kara Kump brought us speakers such as Jonathan Walton, Andy Hale, Liz Orr, Bill Leonard, Terry Eddinger and Georgia McKee. Our group also had a wonderful time participating in WFU’s Hit the Bricks fundraising campaign for cancer research. Thanks to everyone’s efforts, our interfaith team raised \$1,385! We placed 7th out of 47 teams in total laps!

We continue to host the Muslim and Baptist cookout, which started in 2014 as a time to meet new people and break stereotypes. Our group also participated in Project Pumpkin on campus, a time when there are games set up around the quad and children can come dressed in costumes to play and get candy. Kids love our miniature “Dunk the Deacon;” what game says Baptist more than a dunking booth?



Left: WFU campus ministry weekly meal and worship. Below: Triangle area college students enjoy weekly fellowship.



## TRIANGLE AREA CAMPUSES

At this moment, we are going through a bit of a transition when it comes to campus ministry. For years this area has been strong and led by very strong leaders who have gone forward in ministry to serve and minister to others. We currently are working to reestablish groups on our college campuses, create partnerships with student organizations and working to recruit new students. The blessing that comes with reestablishing our campus groups is that it is a blank canvas with endless possibilities.



By Adrian Bullock  
CBSF Campus Minister

We are grateful to the area CBFNC churches that partner with us in hosting student Bible studies. Currently, our groups meet at the following times:

- UNC: Bible Study on Monday nights at 7:00 p.m. at University Baptist Church in Chapel Hill.
- NC Central University: Bible Study on Tuesday nights at 7:30 p.m. in the Mary Townes Building on the NCCU campus in Durham.
- Duke University: Bible Study on Wednesday afternoon at 2:00 p.m. in the Duke University Chapel in Durham, NC (beginning Spring 2023).
- NC State University: Bible Study on Thursday nights at 7:00 p.m. at Forest Hills Baptist Church in Raleigh. ✝





# SHINING A LIGHT


## *on First Baptist Hamlet's Youth Ministry*

**H**ow does the youth ministry in a rural church like First Baptist, Hamlet become a vibrant, growing ministry in the church and community?

Our congregation has always viewed youth ministry as vital, and we are fortunate that our church passionately supports meeting the needs of our students. When I came to First, Hamlet as pastor just over five years ago, the youth ministry was small but comprised of the most mature, devoted youth I had ever met. Most of these youth had grown up together and were comfortable with one

another. Wonderful ministry took place, and they helped lay a solid foundation on which our youth are building today.

Those youth soon began to graduate, and we were at a crossroads of how to nurture and grow our ministry.



The youth at First Baptist, Hamlet enjoy fun activities and events.

With the help and support of dedicated volunteers, a student intern and an interim youth minister, we held our youth together but knew there was much intentional work to be done. In September of 2020, Rev. Butch Farrah joined our staff. Together with trusted volunteers and a supportive church family, we began the purposeful and strategic work of reaching our youth and prioritizing youth ministry.

Because of that, our youth ministry has experienced growth over the last two years, even in the midst of a pandemic. Several key factors are contributing to that growth.

Regularly scheduled, thoughtfully planned meetings helped the youth realize that they are an integral part of the church family. They became excited and began to invite friends, and in some cases parents and other family members to church. The youth's enthusiasm in inviting friends has been a key factor in the growth we have witnessed.

Creating a space for our youth to call their own was another key step. With their help, we renovated the space and made it inviting and intimate for weekly gatherings.

Supportive parents have also been key to growth. They willingly sign up to provide suppers each week, serve as volunteers for youth fundraisers, and chaperone events. Parents are becoming more involved in other aspects of ministry and mission in the church and community. We have a committee that plans fundraisers for the youth ministry. Most often these are meals that have become far more than fundraisers. They serve as opportunities for the church family and community friends to gather around tables and share a meal, conversation, and personally get to know our students.

Encouraging youth to participate in worship has also helped our growth. Not only does it teach them the importance of worship, but it also allows the entire church family to get a glimpse into their hearts. It has resulted in some of their families coming to church and becoming members.

Technology and social media are crucial ministry tools. We use them in our weekly lessons to communicate with youth and parents, promoting the happenings in our youth ministry with the larger community. We also plan monthly outings for our youth. Anticipating them keeps the youth on their toes and eager to invite others to join us. Annual retreats geared toward spiritual growth and mission opportunities are an integral part of our youth ministry as well.

We are also establishing a mentoring program purposed for church members to "adopt" youth to nurture, affirm, support and encourage them in practical, tangible ways. The benefits of this endeavor will prove to be valuable for the youth and the entire church family.

Our goal each week is to plant the seeds of God's love in Christ in our youth. We hold fast to the words of the Apostle Paul in Galatians 6:9: "So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up." ✝



By Allison Farrah  
Pastor  
First Baptist, Hamlet



# SHINING



By Scott Hagaman  
Senior Pastor, First Baptist, Marion

## A LIGHT

*on First Baptist Marion's*

## *New Model for Music Ministry*

Coming out of pandemic shutdowns and slow-downs that often included no mass singing, First Baptist Church of Marion had a vacant part-time music director position. We needed to fill this vital staff vacancy while also restarting what had previously been a large, impactful music ministry.

Historically, our congregation's music ministry had been led by theologically-trained, full-time, ordained church musicians. These individuals were truly "ministers" of music. Our conversations returned to that classic full-time model, which represented the golden age of our music ministry.

However, our budget was now aligned for a part-time position, which had worked well for the last six years. We sought advice from church consultants who confirmed that traditional music ministers are very rare these days. Our universities and seminaries/divinity schools are producing very few. In fact, most church music programs have been shut down. The consultants forewarned, "You may have a full-time position but never find a theologically-trained church musician to fill it."

We heard the same from other churches that had already been down that road. So, after robust congregational discussions, we reaffirmed our need to fill a part-time position and desired someone already in our community or within a one-hour drive.



Justin Johnson, FBC Marion's new music director, leads the choir and congregation in worship.

**With the Holy Spirit's winds blowing, there is much new energy and synergy as we "team-up" to do ministry through music.**

We opted to do limited traditional posting of the position. Rather, we focused on "intensive networking" accompanied by much prayer. We contacted a host of church and music leaders within our region, which included music ministers, pastors, college/university music professors, choral directors in any context, divinity school faculty and especially any of the above who know our church well.

The response was neither fast nor large. However, within a few months we gathered a short list of potential candidates. Some of these people had deep backgrounds in church music and Baptist life; others did not. All had the training, skills and passion for church music.

Our process came to a successful conclusion in August. We hired Justin Johnson, an extremely talented, well-trained, young musician recommended by his long-time friend, a professor and choral director at Gardner-Webb University.

Justin has a bachelor's degree in music education from Campbell University and teaches chorus at nearby South Caldwell High School. In four years, he has grown their choral program to some 325 students while also winning national choral competitions. Justin is also a Christian, passionate about church music and has a strong background in church life, both AME and CBF.

Justin lives outside our community so he will commute an hour to Marion two days per week. In light of this, we are also developing a team approach to music ministry. Our very effective interim music team has become an ongoing committee that is working with Justin to provide a comprehensive music ministry. This arrangement is new for our congregation, but we are embracing the change and the opportunities it brings. With the Holy Spirit's winds blowing, there is much new energy and synergy as we "team-up" to do ministry through music. ✨

# Raleigh-Area Congregations Work Together on the Ever-Expanding Welcome House Community Network

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina (CBFNC) and CBF Field Personnel Kim and Marc Wyatt launched a network to provide temporary housing for immigrants and refugees who arrive in the United States. The network began with Welcome House Raleigh in 2015 and has since grown to include over 30 houses from the coast, to the mountains and beyond.

On a recent Sunday afternoon, volunteers gathered from four congregations that operate or support Welcome Houses: First Baptist Church in Hillsborough, Hope Valley Baptist Church and Temple Baptist Church in Durham, and Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist Church in Mebane. They discussed steps required to receive and support guests in their Welcome Houses. The fruit of their labor will become a digital manual of best practices and procedures for operating a Welcome House.

Delores Stimpson, coordinator of the network's Triangle West region, guided participants to brainstorm all that is involved in preparing for a Welcome House family's arrival, helping them while they live in the home, seeing them off and following up their departure, and using volunteers. The congregations' pastors also considered implications for the churches.

"The experience in working with groups from multiple churches was inspiring," said Stimpson, a retired corporate executive and member of Temple Baptist Church. "Every comment, question and opportunity showed the love and care for the families we serve."

"The presence of Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist Church was valuable because some volunteers have mission experience 'on the ground' in Africa and other countries, which added to discussions about building relationships with Welcome House families," she added. "The input collected from participants gave us a great start in identifying best practices and operations protocols that we can share with other churches and volunteers throughout the network."

The digital manual detailing the participants' findings will be available soon, Stimpson said.

Marc Wyatt pointed to the Baptist principle of local-church autonomy. He stressed the manual will not be used to tell churches how to operate their Welcome Houses. However, lay member volunteers who participated in the workshop said they would eagerly welcome such a practical resource.

The Sunday afternoon workshop marked a milestone for the Welcome House Community Network, Wyatt added.

"The meeting of the four churches was evidence of answered prayers," he said. "It was proof that God is calling his people to be generous, welcoming, hospitable and loving toward vulnerable strangers who become neighbors."

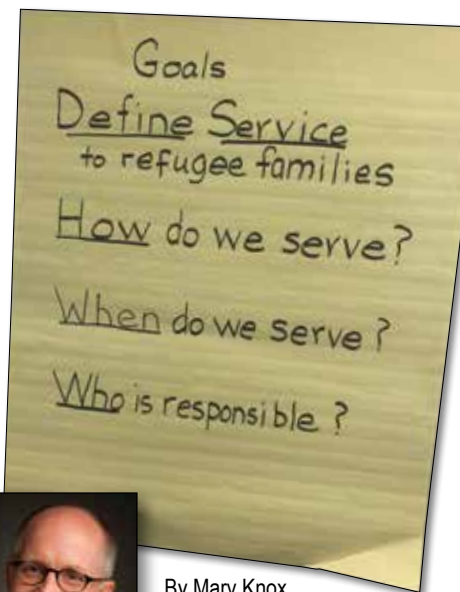
"The meeting and those who facilitated it moved the network forward by leaps and bounds. When one is inspired and fully engaged, we all are strengthened. When two of us serve faithfully, a church grows by depths of love and

grace. When churches ask other churches to serve alongside them, centuries of misunderstanding and suffering melt away, creating bridges rather than walls, open hearts, minds and limitless possibilities."

Those limitless possibilities will become reality as other congregations across North Carolina and beyond join and expand the network.

For more information about the Welcome House network and how your church can join in this ministry, contact the Wyatts at [wyatt@cbf.net](mailto:wyatt@cbf.net) or 910.632.4774. ✿

Welcome House volunteers spent a Sunday afternoon brainstorming and planning the creation of a digital manual for operating a Welcome House.



By Marv Knox  
Contributing Writer and  
Founder of Fellowship  
Southwest





# Celebrating Milestones

## Westwood Baptist Celebrates 30 Years of Joining in God's Work

"I heard that this is the first day of revival!" proclaimed Marc Wyatt at the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary worship service on September 18 at Westwood Baptist Church in Cary. As a CBF church start, it was a celebration of how Westwood has joined in God's work over the past 30 years, marking the anniversary with previous and current ministers, members, music, mission partners, photos, decorations and food. The Back Porch String Band played a rousing rendition of "When the Roll is Called Up Yonder." Also included was a missions project. The congregation collected practical supplies for a family in need in Kinstonw.



## First Baptist Church on Fifth Marks 150 Years of Ministry in Winston-Salem

Marking its historic presence in Winston-Salem, First Baptist Church on Fifth celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary on September 18. A special worship service illuminated the anniversary theme, "In Every Season." The services included former ministers, guest musicians and honored guests. Of the anniversary, Pastor Emily Hull McGee says, "Through the church's life together across these 150 years, we have lived the rhythms of order, disorder and re-order again and again . . . In a world that increasingly feels fraught with prolonged disorder, it is within God's graces of beloved community that we remember and practice the truth that persists through all the ages: God is with us."



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Jennifer and Seth Asbill *in honor of Jessie Croom*  
Deborah and Don Cherry *in honor of Anna Cherry*  
Kiwanis Club of Raleigh Midtown *in honor of Johnny Glover*

Dolores and Bob Shepherd *in honor of Fred Schuszler*  
Renee and Jim Bridges *in memory of Richard Poulliot*  
Betsy and Dennis Herman *in memory of Cindy Vestal*  
John Vestal *in memory of Cindy Vestal*



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## MINISTERS ON THE MOVE

Our encouragement and support go to the following ministers who have recently moved:

**Blake Benge**, Snyder Memorial Baptist, Fayetteville as Pastor

**Heath Burchett** to First Baptist, Huntersville as Minister to Youth

**Elisabeth Cothran** to Sandy Plains Baptist, Shelby as Pastor

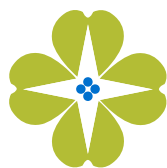
**Melissa Hughes & Paul Raybon** to Hominy Baptist, Candler as Co-Pastors

**Steve McKinion** to Woodland Baptist, Wake Forest as Pastor of Preaching & Vision

**Donald Waltz**, First Baptist, Elizabeth City as Pastor

*When you make a move or know someone who has changed places of ministry, please email [ahale@cbfnc.org](mailto:ahale@cbfnc.org). For assistance with transitions, visit [cbfnc.org/transitions](http://cbfnc.org/transitions) or call us at 336.759.3456.*





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A Look Ahead . . .

### JANUARY

#### MINISTER SEARCH CONVERSATIONS

On Zoom, Bi-Weekly

January 9 & 23

#### WINTER YOUTH SUMMIT

Providence Baptist Church, Charlotte, NC

January 13-15

#### HELPING PASTORS THRIVE WORKSHOP RETREAT

*Pastor as Spiritual Guide*

St. Francis Springs Prayer Center, Stoneville

January 22-24

### FEBRUARY

#### COLLEGIATE MINISTRY MID-WINTER RETREAT

Camp Caraway, Sophia

February 18-19

### MARCH

#### 2023 CBFNC ANNUAL GATHERING

Ardmore Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, NC

March 23-24



MERRY  
*Christmas*  
and a  
happy new year

*The staff of CBFNC wishes you many blessings  
as we prepare to celebrate our Savior's birth.  
We pray your Christmas and New Year will be  
filled with good health, peace and joy!*