

**JAMES RIVER BAPTIST ASSOCIATION**  
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*Accomplishing Together What We Cannot Do Alone*  
**January 2025**



**Report From Your Moderator, Gwynn Tyler**

It is hard to believe another year has passed and the challenges and opportunities of a new year are a few days away. As we think back over 2024, it has been a very good year for the JRBA. A lot of ministries and mission work have been done through the churches as well as individuals as we have tried to help folks in need and to share the love of Christ.

We sent teams to the Bland Ministry Center, Hope for Appalachia in Kentucky, disaster relief to Bland County, Damascus in southwest Virginia and to North Carolina after Hurricane Helene. We packed a record number of meals for Rise Against Hunger. Churches and individuals prepared meals for local families in need, took folks to doctor appointments, ministered in the nursing home, assisted families whose homes burned, and many other ministries I may not be aware of. We also sponsored the youth revival where the Gospel was shared with our young people, as well as the baccalaureates for seniors in our local high schools.

As 2024 comes to an end and a new year begins, let's continue to be faithful to God and His call to serve whether it is here within the Association or around the world.

Isaiah 6:8: Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here am I, Send me!"

Like the prophet Isaiah, will we be willing to go and to serve as God calls?

May God bless each of you in 2025 and have a Happy New Year.



**Meet Your Treasurer-Rev. Austin Williams**

I am originally from Buckingham, VA. I grew up going to church and my family joined Mulberry Grove when I was in high school. Through college and my time in the Baptist Collegiate Ministries, I felt the call to vocational ministry. After graduating, I joined the staff of the BCM at Longwood and Mulberry Grove as Associate Pastor. Then in 2023, I had the opportunity to step into the Senior Pastor role at Mulberry Grove. It's a privilege to serve in the church I grew up in. My undergraduate degree was in Business, so it's fun to use those skills as your JRBA Treasurer. I am passionate about financial stewardship and organizational management, so excited to use my gifts for service in the Association. If you have any questions about our finances or budget, you can reach me at [Austin@mulberrygrovebaptistchurch.com](mailto:Austin@mulberrygrovebaptistchurch.com) or (434) 390-1305.

## Suicide is a Complicated Thing-



especially as a Christian. I think a lot of us grew up thinking doing something like that would send your soul straight to Hell. Over the past 4 years, I have realized that mental health struggles are no different than physical health struggles in the eyes of the Lord. Mental health can be easily hidden, but it's still an illness nonetheless. My brother, Scotty, was one of the seemingly most happy people I have ever known and I think anyone who knew him would agree. He dedicated himself to his family, his friends, his church and his community. He was very well known and loved in our community.

He was a member and a youth leader at **Jones Chapel Baptist Church**. He loved spending his time being a mentor to the young people. He's also remembered for being a great help and a great

friend to the older members of our church.

After his death in 2020, I wanted to do something. I wanted to make a difference and I wanted to make sure his name and memory stayed present and relevant. In 2021, I decided to start a team in honor of him for the Out of the Darkness Walk, an event held by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. Saving just one life, just one family, church, or community from the pain and questions suicide leaves behind would be an amazing way to honor my brother. He was a first responder, so saving lives was at the forefront of his mind at all times. I quickly contacted Angel Chambliss because I knew she'd want to participate and help organize it all. This is how Team Maverick started to become what it is today. The team name is a representation of him because he loved Top Gun and we always wear blue, his favorite color.

This year was our 4th year. We moved our team from Richmond to Farmville and had a team of about 30 people. I have always wanted my brother to be remembered for the impact he made while he was here, not for how he left this world. I've always heard the dates on a headstone don't really matter, it's the hyphen between them that represents what you did while you were here. This year, we had numerous people join our team and walk in Scotty's memory who had never met him. But, they see the impact he left on our church and on those of us left behind who love him. The hyphen on his headstone only represents 26 years, but he changed so many lives. He led young people in the community to Jesus, he was a role model and an inspiration.

Team Maverick and the support from the community, friends and church family has been imperative in the healing journey. You genuinely never know what someone is struggling with internally, even if you are very close. Team Maverick is a reminder to spread love, kindness and joy to everyone you can.

Thank you, Candice Thompson

Donations can be made in memory of Scotty Thompson at [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention - Make a Donation](#) or mail to American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), Attn: OOTD Walks, 199 Water Street, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10038 with "In Memory of Scotty Thompson in the memo of check.

## EverBless Meeting

On Monday, December 2, folks gathered at Rodeo's for an informational meeting led by Phillip Brown, Relationship Manager for the EverBless Foundation, formerly the Virginia Baptist Foundation. Gwynn Tyler (Moderator), Phyllis Tyler (Clerk), Rev. Bob Silby (Pastor – **Goshen**) and his wife, Sheree, and Rev. Skip Wallace (BGAV Field Strategist) were in attendance. Each one in attendance received a folder of information outlining the eight main ways the EverBless Foundation assists individuals, churches, and other institutions with investments and endowments. EverBless has over 100 years of experience in endowment and trust oversight. Operating with a large pool of investors, the programs are individualized, strive for greater returns on your investment, and are less risky than many secular investment opportunities.

The following programs were briefly described:

1. Money Management (Equity, Balanced, and Fixed Income Portfolios)
2. Creating Church Funds (Building, Mission, Scholarship, Reserve, Cemetery, and Endowment)
3. Church Transitions (Distribution of Church Closure Funds and Continuing Ministry)
4. Last Will & Testament (Assistance with Will Preparation for those wishing to leave money to their church or a specific church program)
5. Charitable Remainder Trusts (Conversion of stock, real estate or cash into lifetime income to reduce income taxes and/or estate taxes and to leave money to one's church or other charities)
6. Endowed Scholarships (Create an EverBless scholarship for students active in a BGAV church)
7. Donor-Advised Funds (Minimum \$5,000 contribution to EverBless for an immediate tax deduction and avoidance of capital gains taxes while providing funds to nonprofits or churches)
8. Qualified Charitable Distribution (Helps taxes associated with required distribution from IRAs beginning at age 73)

A limited number of informational packets are available at the JRBA office upon request. Those in attendance enjoyed a delicious lunch and fellowship getting to know about one another and each one's role in ministry.

THANK YOU to the EverBless Foundation for lunch and to Jennifer Hellerstedt for setting up and providing goodies for all participants. -Submitted by Phyllis Tyler

### **EVERBLESS SCHOLARSHIPS**

- Scholarships are available for current High School Seniors and those enrolled in College, Community College, Trade School, or Seminary who are active in your church.
- No Limit on the number of recipients per church.
- Applications are available at [www.everbless.org/scholarship](http://www.everbless.org/scholarship) and must be submitted by **January 31, 2025** for the 2025-2026 academic year.
- Scholarships are not restricted to faith-based majors.
- Students may apply every year.
- 132 undergraduate, graduate, doctoral & seminary scholarships were awarded last year totaling 1.3 million dollars.
- Sponsored by EverBless (Not a BGAV scholarship, so apply for both!)

## JRBA Reaches Out

The WMU and other members of **Mulberry Grove** have assisted a family of five with Christmas gifts. A family donated \$200 to BGAV Disaster Relief to help with continued assistance to victims of Hurricane Helene. On Saturday, December 14, approximately 30 of the **Mulberry Grove Church** family gathered for a movie night in the fellowship hall. Everyone enjoyed the showing of *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* along with snacks and fellowship. On Sunday, December 15, the worship service centered on the Christmas Story. The children sang "Twinkle, Twinkle, Christmas Star" and a Christmas poem was read by one of the youths. The youth made announcements, read scripture, and lead the worship service. The Adult Choir presented a medley of Christmas carols. Then the Christmas story was read by one of the youth as the story was acted out by a young couple and their baby as well as the children of the church. The portrayal ended with the cast singing "Silent Night". The service ended with the singing of "Away in A Manger" and the Benediction/Blessing was given by Rev. Austin Williams. Everyone then enjoyed a soup and sandwich meal in the fellowship hall. The children and youth also enjoyed games as the adults sat around the table and enjoyed fellowship.

**Mulberry Grove Baptist** would like to invite you to the following:

1. Youth Bible Study every Tuesday at 7:00 PM.
2. Women's Prayer Group every Wednesday at 9:00 AM.
3. January 8 – Senior Citizens Fellowship 11 AM – 1 PM: Pot-Luck Lunch and Bluegrass Music for any Seniors of the Community
4. January 10 – Men's Conference - 6:00 - 8:30 PM  
Guest Speaker: Rev. Skip Wallace, Music by Drew Bowles, BBQ Dinner and Worship, \$10/person  
Register at <https://www.mulberrygrovebaptistchurch.com/men>

Submitted by Phyllis Tyler

**Sharon's** congregation gifted numerous toiletry items to the residents of Heritage Hall, and \$200 each to *Grace Inside* and *Christ in Christmas*. Contributions are ongoing for the *Lottie Moon Christmas Offering*. Rose of Sharon continues sharing meals, visits, calls, and notes of encouragement with those in need of a little extra love and support.

The **Cedar Church** Family is happy to announce the donation of eleven *Operation Christmas Child* Shoeboxes. On Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup>, forty-five Thanksgiving meals were prepared and taken out in the area. On Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, fifteen members shared Christmas Carols with the community and brought smiles and joy to the faces of many. On Sunday, Dec 15<sup>th</sup>, the children and youth presented the Christmas Program, "We Came to Take, but Jesus Gave." They did a wonderful job of presenting the real meaning of Christmas. Jake Davis, Lydia Waycaster and Maggie Llewellyn did a beautiful job on their solos. We have a total of 70 angels on the "Angel Tree" all of which were shopped for by the church family. The Women on Mission used \$250 to shop for an adult individual with special needs. We are so blessed to be able to bless so many.

Submitted by Pat Allen.

**Buckingham Baptist** announces they have collected \$2015 for Lottie Moon. They season has been recognized by the Advent celebrated with readings and lighting of candles.

Submitted by Betty Toney



**Antioch Scottsville** is happy to announce that their church collected 383 boxes for Operation Christmas Child! Congratulations of spreading God's love, one box at a time! On December 13<sup>th</sup>, there was an annual women's Christmas retreat there the women of the church were invited for food, craft time, a gift exchange, and devotion. It was a time to take a break from the Christmas chaos and enjoy fellowship with one another. Submitted by Lauren Watkins, Administrative Assistant

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### HOPE FOR APPALACHIA



Bell Central School in Kentucky is the school JRBA provides the Pre-K and Kindergarten students gift bags with the fall Hope for Appalachia Trip. While there the team also delivers blankets, coats, hats, and gloves.

A family from **Mulberry Grove** provided 65 Teachers' Gift Bags. Another family provided 6 dozen cookies for the teachers and staff. Christmas gifts were provided for 4 children.



You may remember with **Mt. Zion Baptist** Sewing ministry gathered together to sew for Hope for Appalachia. Look at this sweet face when they received the Santa Stocking that was made by you! Many will feel God's love this Christmas!

**Gladstone Memorial** had a wonderful Christmas program and fellowship afterwards. 2025 - New Vision for a New Year. We are excited about 2025 and what the Lord has in-store. Until then, Dr. James Fetty, Pastor, Gladstone Memorial Baptist Church John 4:24



December 8, **Mt. Zion's** GA Leader Dorothy Davis recognizes the Girls in Action for their hard work for missions and their support of missionaries. They received badges to add to their banners that hang on the wall in our fellowship hall.



Mt. Zion's Christmas Pageant, a wonderful blessing

## In Appreciation

Hi Hunger Champions at James River Baptist Association,

As we gather with loved ones to celebrate Thanksgiving, I wanted to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude for your partnership. Your contributions to Rise Against Hunger have been invaluable, and I'm truly grateful for your hard work, dedication, and unwavering support. Your investment in those we serve is a gift! I look forward to continuing our strong partnership and creating more impact together. Happy Thanksgiving.

Blessings, Rev. Rusty Lee, Rise Against Hunger Area Manager/Richmond

## Celebration

Welcome! On Sunday, December 1st, **Cedar** has a baby/child dedication: The following children were dedicated:

John and Ashton Moore, children of John and Kristin Moore

Charlie and Maggie Midkiff, children of Thomas and Karly Midkiff

Thomas (Tropp), Tucker and Whitley Jackson, children of Way and Kathlenn Jackson

Olive Hickman, daughter of Kevin and Haley Hickman



## In Loving Memory

Sympathy is extended to the family of Jimmie Quesenberry who passed away on November 16, 2024. Jimmie was a member of Cedar Baptist and his celebration of life was held at Cedar on November 22nd. He will be greatly missed by all.

[https://www.dunkumfuneralhome.com/obituary/Jimmie-Quesenberry?utm\\_campaign=marquee-share-button&utm\\_term=copy-link&utm\\_content=Share Obituary](https://www.dunkumfuneralhome.com/obituary/Jimmie-Quesenberry?utm_campaign=marquee-share-button&utm_term=copy-link&utm_content=Share%20Obituary)

## Important Dates

January 1	JRBA Office Closed	
January 1 9 AM	Women's Prayer Group	Mulberry Grove
January 6	JRBA Office Opened	JRBA
January 7 10am-noon	All Blessings Flow	First Baptist



January 7 7 PM	Youth Bible Study	Mulberry Grove
January 8	JRBA Office Opened	JRBA
January 8 9AM	Women's Prayer Group	Mulberry Grove
January 8 11AM	Senior Citizens Fellowship Lunch and Bluegrass Music	Mulberry Grove
January 10 9AM	Blue Ridge Food Distribution	Crystal Cathedral
January 10 6 PM	Men's Conference	Mulberry Grove
January 11 Noon to 2 PM	Women's Ministry Event	Jones Chapel
January 13	JRBA Office Opened	JRBA
January 13 7 PM	JRBA Quarterly Executive Meeting	First Baptist
January 14 10AM-noon	All Blessings Flow	First Baptist
January 14 7PM	Youth Bible Study	Mulberry Grove
January 15	JRBA Office Opened	JRBA
January 15 9AM	Women's Prayer Group	Mulberry Grove
January 20	JRBA Office Closed	
January 21 10AM to noon	All Blessings Flow	First Baptist
January 21 7PM	Youth Bible Study	Mulberry Grove
January 22	JRBA Office Opened	JRBA
January 22 9AM	Women's Prayer Group	Mulberry Grove
January 23	JRBA Office Opened	JRBA

January 24 9AM	Blue Ridge Food Distribution	Crystal Cathedral
January 27	JRBA Office Opened	JRBA
January 28 10AM to noon	All Blessings Flow	First Baptist
January 29	JRBA Office Opened	JRBA
January 29 9AM	Women's Prayer Group	Mulberry Grove

### November 2024 Financials

Contributions			
11/05/2024	Cedar Baptist,	\$300.00	Benevolence Offerings
11/05/2024	Cedar Baptist,	\$3,000.00	Church Offerings
11/18/2024	Fork of Willis Baptist,	\$541.50	Church Offerings
11/18/2024	Jones Chapel Baptist,	\$170.00	Church Offerings
11/30/2024	Bank Interest,	\$1.24	Individual & Other Offerings
11/30/2024	Bank Interest,	\$0.11	Knights Pantry Offerings
	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$4,012.85</b>	
Missions Expenditures			
<b>(Shows expenditures from all line items in Missions Category)</b>			
11/05/2024	Gwynn Tyler	-\$100.00	Mission Trip: Honduras
	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>-\$100.00</b>	

Fund Balance	
General Fund	\$25,703.62
Rise Against Hunger	\$1,093.00
Bland Missions	\$600.00
Benevolence	\$6,154.83
Youth Revival	\$2,765.33
Savings	\$15,901.70
Missions Blitz	\$648.52
Knights Pantry	\$2,699.19
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$55,566.19</b>

### Alma Hunt Offering for Virginia Missions

The James River Baptist Association churches have collected \$5145 as of this report. Congratulations to all for your hard work in this endeavor. If your church contributed to this state mission offering and have not reported, please email the Phyllis Tyler, the clerk at [ptyler@centurylink.net](mailto:ptyler@centurylink.net) for the end of the year reports.

#### EXTRA!!

**Jones Chapel** donated a total of \$3,035 to Disaster Relief – Hurricane Helene which was sent to the BGAV for relief efforts. **Jones Chapel** Youth Group decorated for “Lights at the Lake” at Bear Creek State Park. Youth Group also had a gift exchange at church on December 22<sup>nd</sup>. **Jones Chapel** participated with Payne Memorial Church in Cumberland for advent lunches two Sundays during December. An elderly lady who is battling cancer, undergoing dialysis and broken hip, has been adopted by Jones Chapel during this Christmas season. She also has a 58-year-old son who is mentally disabled. The church was able to purchase several gifts for them, plus a monetary gift to assist with other needs. **Jones Chapel** is collecting items needed by Madeline’s House and will be collecting thru the first Sunday in January.

Upcoming: January 11<sup>th</sup> 12-2pm – **Jones Chapel** Women’s ministry will meet for a soup and salad luncheon with a theme of “Find REST & REFRESHMENT by Drinking from the Living Water.” Activities will follow and all ladies are welcome to attend.