

# Blue Ridge Region Covenant Brethren Church

## BRR Gathering Sep. 23, 2023

About 100 folks gathered at Antioch for great food, fun & fellowship. Highlights: 15 gallons of homemade ice cream & a delicious barbeque meal. Speakers: Grover Duling, Scott Kinnick & Mark Teets.  
(More photos, p. 4 )



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Pray

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"For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer."

--1 Timothy 4:4-5

Give  
Thanks!



## Message from BRR Chair

Greetings brothers and sisters in Christ!

We hope if you were among those who joined our September 23 fellowship event, it blessed you to hear from our national leadership and you enjoyed fellowship with others in our region. We must continue getting together! It gives us all refreshment and rejuvenation!

As we watch the world events continue to spiral further out of control, it causes all of us to question what is next, and maybe feel a little anxious about what may happen in our country. Perhaps you are pondering our role as Christians in this specific place in time on God's prophetic calendar. Perhaps you are reevaluating your priorities and how you are spending your time, talents, and energy. I know I am; perhaps even today Our Lord may return!

David Greene, founder of the arts and crafts store Hobby Lobby, wrote in his book, *Giving It All Away (and Getting It Back Again)* that he tries to keep what is truly important and lasting in the front and center of how he lives out his Christian walk. He offers a maxim that, especially in today's world, should be contemplated by all of us who follow Christ. It is this: "The only things in this world that will last forever are the souls of boys, girls, men, and women and The Word of God".

As Covenant Brethren, we hold to The Word (both Christ and The Bible) as our authority and roadmap to help us through every twist and turn this world sends us. We should continue to share the Good News of Jesus with all of the souls we touch in our daily living.

We hope you will consider and pray about how God is asking you to get more involved in His Work in our region (and perhaps even beyond). We need more folks to help our region continue to be a light that points to Christ, especially in the days ahead.

God bless you all,  
Ann Jones & your Blue Ridge Regional Board

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

*Phil. 4:6-7, NKJV*



**Blue Ridge Region of the Covenant Brethren Church  
Budget for year ending December 31, 2024**

	Actual Jan-Aug 23	Projected 2023	Budget 2024
<b>Income</b>			
Camp Registration Fees	6,070	6,070	11,000
Contributions			
Contributions:Churches	5,670	6,300	9,000
Contributions:Individuals	436	436	500
Contributions:National CBC	7,000	15,000	15,000
Total Contributions	13,106	21,736	24,500
Interest Earned	151	300	350
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>19,327</b>	<b>28,106</b>	<b>35,850</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
<b>Administrative Expenses</b>			
Annual Meeting for our Region			3,000
Background Checks	107	350	200
Corporation Fees	75	75	75
Liability Insurance		1,150	1,200
Office Supplies	120	250	300
Postage	13	40	50
Publications/Marketing		250	300
Congregational Life Activities			3,000
Technology/Zoom	157	250	250
Travel		300	400
Web Site		200	200
Total Administrative	473	2,865	8,975
<b>Benevolences (10%)</b>			
CBC for Rwanda Flooding	500	500	
Other		2,000	2,500
Total Benevolences	500	2,500	2,500
<b>Congregational Support/Church Planting</b>		4,000	6,000
<b>Summer Camp Expenses</b>			
Summer Camp Expenses:Background Checks	98	98	100
Summer Camp Expenses:Camp Rental	2,500	3,550	7,000
Summer Camp Expenses:Food	2,100	2,600	5,600
Summer Camp-Crafts	470	470	900
Summer Camp Expenses:Insurance		750	800
Summer Camp Expenses:Supplies	153	300	400
Total Summer Camp	5,320	7,768	14,800
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>6,293</b>	<b>17,133</b>	<b>32,275</b>
<b>Net Profit</b>	<b>13,034</b>	<b>10,974</b>	<b>3,575</b>
Less: Set Aside for Next Year's Camp		4,000	2,000
<b>Surplus</b>	<b>13,034</b>	<b>6,974</b>	<b>1,575</b>

Approved 8-22-23 Board Meeting



# BRR Fellowship Event

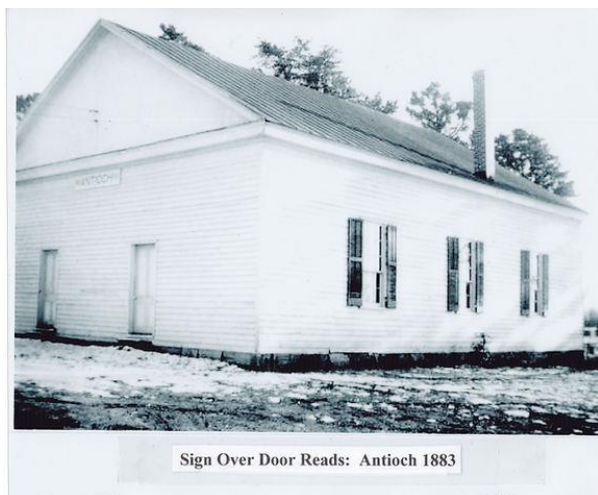




# Church Spotlight

## Antioch Church

Antioch Church just celebrated their 155<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and Homecoming on September 24<sup>th</sup>. The church began four years after the Civil War in 1868 as a part of the Woodstock Congregation of the German Baptist Brethren. On October 24<sup>th</sup> of that year, John Rickard purchased 7¾ acres of land from Jacob and Elizabeth Haun and laid off 1½ acres for the “Tunkard Church,” later known as the Dunkard Church at Calvary. In 1869, the Haun, Schumaucker, and Rickard families built a 40’ x 60’ church that could comfortably seat 200 people under the supervision of William Peters, a pastor from Fort Valley. Regular services were held for about 50 years. In 1908, the denomination became the Church of the Brethren. Sadly, the church closed in 1921 due to the lack of interest and no services were held for about 10 years.



In July of 1931, interest revived by a few faithful members led by Bro Walter Burner and work started to restore the building. Two chimneys were built, a wooden ceiling installed, interior walls were papered, electric lights installed, a pulpit built, window lights replaced and the woodwork refinished. The dedication services for the remodeled church were held on November 15, 1931 with Elder J. Carson Miller preaching the sermon.

Sunday School was organized the same year. The first Love Feast in the remodeled church was held on August 5, 1933 conducted by Brothers Lawrence Helsley, Russell Showalter, and S. I. Bowman. In 1957, the members erected an addition on the back of the church for bathrooms

and Sunday School rooms and dug out the basement which was used as a kitchen and fellowship hall. In 1958, a vestibule was added and on September 26, 1960.

In 2000, the picnic shelter was converted into 3 classrooms. In 2003, the Pastor’s position became fulltime. In 2004, a new fellowship hall, a new kitchen, and bathrooms were added. Nearly 4 additional acres were also purchased to provide for future expansion. In 2007, the Antioch Little Duckling Preschool began and that same year, a second worship service was added at 8:30am to accommodate continued growth. In 2012-13, a new sanctuary was constructed to seat 354 and the basement classrooms were finished a few years later by church members. In 2022, the congregation purchased a ½ acre plot to the west, left the Church of the Brethren, and joined the Covenant Brethren Church.

Some of the pastors over the years have included: Elder H.R. (Ramsey) Mowery, J.K. Leedy, Walter Burner, Lawrence Helsley, Clyde Hilton, Harry Lau, Olen Landes, and Fred Mauck. Currently George Bowers, grandson of Walter Burner, serves as Sr. Pastor and Dale Bennett as Associate Pastor for Youth and Visitation. Becky Leland is the Administrative Assistant.

***Our mission statement: Antioch Church is a Bible based family of God, led by the Holy Spirit, helping others to know Jesus and learning to be living examples of Christ in our community***



*Pastor Dale & Pastor George*

# Baptisms in the North River: A Remarkable Journey in Faith and Resilience

In the early spring of 2023, I immersed myself in a deep study of the Book of Acts. During this time, the Holy Spirit spoke to me about the story of Philip and the baptism of the eunuch on the road to Gaza. If you recall the narrative, Philip, guided by the Holy Spirit, met an Ethiopian man who was traveling and reading from the Book of Isaiah but couldn't comprehend its meaning.

The Bible tells us that Philip joined the man on his journey, explained the scriptures, and deeply moved, the eunuch expressed a desire to be baptized. As they came across some water, the eunuch asked, "What prevents me from being baptized?" Philip responded, "If you believe in your heart, you may." The eunuch professed, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God!"

When they came to a place with water, the command was given for the chariot to stand still, and both Philip and the eunuch went down to the water, where Philip baptized him.

As I delved into this inspiring story of baptism, God clearly communicated with me, saying, "Darren, why don't you baptize My believers, like Philip did? Why don't you make yourself available for people to come, confess their faith in Me, and be baptized?" To be honest, I had never considered doing this before. I had always associated baptism with the local church.

But what about Philip's story? What about his baptism of an absolute stranger? With Philip's example in mind and the Holy Spirit's prompting in my heart, I marked a date on the calendar for a Mt. Solon community baptism.

I chose late July for the baptism. I thought July's warm weather would be ideal for an outdoor baptism, and it would give me ample time to plan the event. Spring transitioned into summer, and to our dismay a severe drought hit our area. For two months rain was rare as diamond. Our corn crops withered, our gardens looked desolate, and worst of all, the once-flowing North River had run dry. What was I to do?

My date was set for baptism, but I had no river, no water! I questioned if this was a sign from God. Was I not meant to have a community baptism? Was God telling me to give up? My faith wavered. Perhaps I had misinterpreted the scriptures? I must confess that during this rain drought, I experienced a spiritual drought as well. I lost faith in what God had told me. I wanted to let go of the idea, and my mind desired to erase any notion of a community baptism. But God wouldn't let me. The more I tried to forget, the more God kept telling me, "Darren, go and baptize."

So, I presented it before the Lord. I prayed, "God, if You want me to baptize Your people in the river, I must have a river!" I felt confident about this ultimatum, thinking it might be my way out. Let the Lord decide! No river, no baptism! Can you guess what happened next? Yes, it rained. It rained like I had never seen before. It poured. In a single day, we received 5 inches of rain. It continued for an entire week, and our once-parched North River began to rise to suitable levels for a baptism. I must have appeared stunned during that week. I couldn't believe it. God had quelled my doubt with a deluge from above. I was meant to have a community baptism, and God was making it possible.



## MEET ME AT THE RIVER



## BELIEVERS BAPTISM

**ARE YOU A CHRISTIAN? HAVE YOU BEEN SAVED? WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE BAPTIZED?**

**IF YES TO THESE QUESTIONS- MEET ME, PASTOR DARREN HOWDYSHHELL OF THE MOSCOW COVENANT BROTHERS CHURCH, ON JULY 16TH, 2:00 P.M. AT "GRADY'S SLAB" ON TOWERS ROAD IN MOUNT SOLON AND BE BAPTIZED.**

**(QUESTIONS CALL DARREN @ 540-421-4520)**

The following Monday, I started preparing a flyer to distribute throughout the Mt. Solon community, informing them about the upcoming community baptism—an event, as far as I knew, the first of its kind in our area. The flyer simply read, "Are you a Christian? Have you been saved? Would you like to be baptized? Join me at the river for Believers Baptism."

My next concern was whether people would attend. I had no idea if anyone would show up to a community baptism. It was all so new and different. Nevertheless, in the midst of my uncertainty, on July 16th, I upheld my commitment to conduct a community believers' baptism. To my amazement, 13 souls arrived that day, ready to profess their faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior, just like the eunuch on the road to Gaza.



Perhaps, like me, you struggle with the idea of an open baptism. I must be brutally honest; this challenged my faith in every way. But irrespective of our feelings, you and I both cannot deny the results. Thirteen people came that day to commit to Jesus. Thirteen people declared their faith in Jesus. Thirteen people, one of them having traveled as far as Florida, were baptized through believers' baptism, by triune immersion, in the name of Jesus. Praise be to God!

Submitted by Pastor Darren Howdeyshell, Moscow Church



## Prayer Team

### When Prayer is a Priority



I recently read this about prayer from S.D. Gordon: “The great people of the earth today are the people who pray! I do not mean those who talk about prayer; nor those who say they believe in prayer; nor those who explain prayer; but I mean those who actually take the time to pray. They have not time. It must be taken from something else. That something else is important, very important and pressing, but still, less important and pressing than prayer. There are people who put prayer first, and group the other items in life’s schedule around and after prayer. These are the people today who are doing the most for God in winning souls, in solving problems, in awakening churches, in supplying both men and money for mission posts, in keeping fresh and strong their lives far off in sacrificial service on the foreign field, where the thickest fighting is going on, and in keeping the old earth sweet a little while longer.”

It made me ask the obvious question. Why is prayer so critical to our lives and our Church? I’ve heard people say and I have said myself, “I’m too busy to pray!” But the real truth is, “I’m too busy NOT to pray!” So, let’s look at a few things that happen when we pray.

First, it causes us to be humble. None of us can live the Christian life under our own power, but many times we try to do just that. I can do it with my own power, strength and endurance, but in reality, we can’t. But when we spend time in prayer, we become more aware of our short-comings and weaknesses. We come to understand that we can do absolutely nothing apart from Christ. Paul said it this way, “*Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.*” 1 Thess 5:16-18 (NIV-1984)

Second, praying will make us kind. It is interesting that prayer helps us to be conformed into the image of Jesus. Romans says that it is God’s kindness, tolerance and patience which leads us toward repentance. But James also tells us that the wrath of man does NOT produce the righteousness of God. Therefore, we all need to have God’s kindness incorporated into our lives and one of the ways to get it, is through prayer. Let’s say we pray with a group of people every week for a year, would not God knit together the hearts of those people in love?

Lastly, when we pray, prayers get answered. Now that might sound obvious, but we have already seen some amazing answers to prayer from the “Sweet Hour of Prayer.” Specific things that folks have prayed that God graciously answered. Andrew Murray said it this way, “Prayer opens the way for God Himself to do His work in us and through us. Let our chief work as God’s messengers be intercession; in it we secure the presence and power of God to go with us.”

We are still longing and desiring for revival in the Shenandoah Valley and we know that every revival has started with prayer. When the Church begins to pray, the power of God will be released in our community and in our world. “God shapes the world by prayer. The more prayer there is in the world the better the world will be, the mightier the forces against evil...” E.M. Bounds

Love in Christ Jesus,  
*Pastor Charlie Estep*

Source: *The Calvary Messenger*, Sept. 2023, Vol. 20, No. 9, p. 1, Calvary Covenant Brethren Church





O come let us adore  
Thee  
Christ the Lord



Antioch



Calvary



Columbia Furnace



Elk Run



Moscow



New Beginnings (MD)



New Life



St. Luke



**Trail Life – VA777  
Calvary Covenant Brethren Church  
Fundraiser Opportunity**



Trail Life is a Christ Centered, Boy's Outdoor Adventure Program seeking to raise young men to be Godly men in this world. If you are interested in learning more about Trail Life or starting a troop at your church, please contact Pastor Jonathan Martino, [pastorjonathan@calvarycbc.org](mailto:pastorjonathan@calvarycbc.org)

**This fundraiser will not only go to help buy wreaths (Wreaths Across America), but for every wreath bought using the attachment to this email, our troop, VA-777 will get five dollars. This money goes to help fund our purchase of supplies and awards, but also it can go to helping families that send their sons to our program.**

*Statement of Faith: We believe there is One Triune God – God the Father; Jesus Christ, His one and only Son; and the Holy Spirit – Creator of the universe and eternally existent. We believe the Holy Scriptures (Old and New Testaments) to be the inspired and authoritative Word of God. We believe each person is created in His image for the purpose of communing with and worshiping God. We believe in the ministry of the Holy Spirit, who enables us to live godly lives. We believe each of us is called to love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. We believe God calls us to lives of purity, service, stewardship and integrity.*

## Praise Reports

Fellowship event on Sep. 23<sup>rd</sup>  
Love feasts  
Baptisms  
New congregations added to CBC  
Our pastors  
Salvation

## Prayer Requests

Unity within our churches, region and CBC  
Physical, emotional & spiritual health  
Guidance as our region grows  
Israel  
Elections  
Godly Leaders

### CONTACT US

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### PARTNER AGENCIES

