

NEWSLETTER

Fall 2026

**Blue Ridge Region
Covenant Brethren Church**



Fall is a time of change, reminding us of the cycles of life that God has created. Just as the leaves change colors, we too experience seasons in our spiritual lives.

Isaiah 40:8: "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever."

Devotion from Pastor Jonathan Martino

In July we had a major change in our household...my brother's children unexpectedly came to live with us permanently. In a scramble we painted bedrooms, bought new furniture, set up medical and dental appointments, prepped for the coming school year, and many other things needed to get them settled and established in our home. In all the chaos, I would not change a thing. I am so grateful that God has opened this door for them to live with us.

This got me thinking about an even greater change in another family. Ephesians 1:5 says God laid a plan down that allows anyone to be adopted into the family of God through acceptance of Jesus Christ. In Galatians 4:5, Jesus redeemed us from the judgment of the law and made us adopted sons. Finally, in Titus 3:7, we are made heirs in hope of eternal life through the justification of God's grace.

All of these things point to the fact that when we trust in Jesus and His sacrifice on the cross (John 19:30), we have a loving Father who paid for us with His own blood (Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 2:9; 1 Peter 1:18-19, etc.). When we confess our sins, repent, believe on Him and His resurrection from the dead, we are brought to a new home (Romans 10:9-10; Acts 17:30; 1 John 1:9 etc.).

The Bible says there is great rejoicing (Luke 15:7) in Heaven, and a place is prepared for us (John 14:2-3; Matthew 25:34; Hebrews 11:16). This new place will have everything we need. We are part of the family of God, and we will dwell with our Heavenly Father for all eternity. The Bible says we are grafted in with others (Romans 11:17-24) who were not of the Jewish fold (John 10:16). We have a home, family, and an almighty, all good, Father who loves us.

This is the Christian life we have when we are believers. We are home and we never have to wonder if we are loved, or if we will have a place. If we are covered in the righteousness of Jesus, we are in His family.

Now, how do we live? We, as Brethren, are Pietist (and Anabaptist) at heart, and therefore, we take very seriously how our lives are to reflect our faith and belief. This fits with our walk and how it is to be worthy of bearing the name of Christ (Colossians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 2:12). James tells us as well, we are to have fruits that show our faith. As Christians, let us walk and bear fruits that show our new family.

If you have not accepted Jesus as your Savior, why not? What is holding you back? If you have accepted Jesus, how is your walk? Is it worthy of bearing the name of Jesus in word or deed? If not, confess that sin and ask Jesus to give you the strength to walk in the faith.

In Christ and His service,

Jonathan Martino

**SO THAT YOU MAY WALK IN A
MANNER WORTHY OF THE LORD
AND MAY PLEASE HIM IN EVERY
WAY: BEARING FRUIT IN EVERY
GOOD WORK, GROWING IN THE
KNOWLEDGE OF GOD,
- COLOSSIANS 1:10**

Meet your elected Board Members

Ronald Layman



I've lived in Winchester for the past 40 years. I'm joyfully married to my lovely wife Esther. We have two married children, 5 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren. I am an accountant by trade and was a public accountant for 22 years, but retired five years ago. Before that, I owned and managed a Christian bookstore and worked 15 years in hospital financial management. We spent six years in mission work in Nepal and Trinidad.

We have been a part of Calvary church for about 30 years where I am serving as elder, Sunday School teacher, financial secretary, and a board member. In the community, I currently serve on the Finance Committee for Habitat for Humanity and C-CAP (local charity) and have served as Treasurer and Board member for the Blue Ridge Regional Board of CBC for the past three years. While living in Winchester, we have taken quite a few needy individuals into our home giving them hospitality and mentoring them.

Pastor Darren Howdyshell

Pastor Darren has served as pastor of Moscow Covenant Brethren Church since 2012. He served as Chair of the Blue Ridge Region Ministry Leadership Team from 2023–2025 and currently serves as Chair of the Blue Ridge Region Board beginning in 2026. Since 2024, he has also been a member of the Covenant Brethren Church Planting Committee. Darren's passion is sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ and encouraging people to grow in their faith. He and his wife, Deborah, are deeply involved in ministry together. Deborah especially enjoys working with the children of the church and supporting the ministries of the congregation. Darren and Deborah have two sons: Isaac, age 20, and Ayden, age 17



Pastor Dan Rhodes

Pastor Dan is new to the Blue Ridge Region. He became the pastor at Barren Ridge Church on February 1st, 2026. He and his wife Patty came from Johnstown PA, where he served on the Region Three Board, Ministerial Leadership Team, Regional Meeting Planning Team and the Prayer Team. Patty served as Region Three Executive Assistant. He was ordained by the CBC in April, 2021. Pastor Dan previously served as pastor of the Moxham CBC in Johnstown for nearly 10 years before joining the Barren Ridge Church family. He knows that the Lord brought him to Barren Ridge and is extremely grateful for the church family he and his wife are now a part of.



Brenda Diehl

Brenda is the wife of Calvary Covenant Brethren Elder Steven Diehl and mother to her adult children, Austin and Nikki. She relishes her role as grandmother to Delaney, Sophia, Landon and Raphael. Brenda retired in May of 2025 from the Shenandoah District Church of the Brethren, where she served for over six years as the director of communications. She spent the bulk of her career as a public administrator with Frederick and Warren Counties. She is a graduate of the Christian Growth Institute and holds a master's degree from Virginia Tech in public administration. Her bachelors was completed at JMU where she majored in recreation. Currently, she is fully retired and enjoys writing, gardening and spending time taking care of family. She contributes monthly articles to the Calvary Messenger focused on the history and people of Calvary Covenant Brethren Church in Winchester. She and Steve reside in Stephens City, Virginia.



Meet your 2027 Blue Ridge Region CBC Board



Ann Jones, Scott Harris, Ron Layman, Dan Rhodes, Brenda Diehl, Darren Howdyshell, Gary Wingfield, Jonathan Farmer, George Bowers (Elder Rep) and Diane Pence (missing)

NEWS CORNER



Please note that our **MAILING**
address has changed to:

Blue Ridge Region CBC
1790 Barren Ridge Rd
Staunton, VA 24401



Reminder to make ALL **donation checks**
payable to Blue Ridge Region and mail to:

Ron Layman
2317 Wilson Blvd
Winchester, VA 22601



The Blue Ridge Region Board approved adding a
line item to the budget to help fund **Mission**
projects. They are accepting donations if you
would like to give.



Pastor's Gathering

When: October 19, 6:30 PM

Where: Wood Grill Buffet, Harrisonburg

Who: All retired, active, licensed, and lay ministers
(spouses encouraged!)

Cost: Pastors pick up their own tab

Questions: Contact Pastor Jonathan Farmer

****The Mission Leadership team will meet at 5:30
before the Pastor's Gathering****

NEWS CORNER



Congratulations to **Doug Hughes!** He took the step of Faith following a calling into being a licensed minister. We pray that God will use you to His Glory. What a blessing!



Mark
YOUR
Calendar

2027 Blue Ridge Region Summer Youth Camp July 4-8, 2027 at the Highland Retreat



Jr. Camp (Red Oak Lodge)

Completed 3rd - 7th Grade

Sr. Camp (Mountain View)

Completed 8th - 12th Grade

If you are interested in helping with camp, please contact Tammy Yoder,

at 540-686-2133 or tammydyoder@yahoo.com

(John 14:6 and John 11:25)

Jesus: The Way, The Truth, The Resurrection and The Life

A kickoff to the Blue Ridge Regional Conference was the **Leading Through Conflict class**, which was taught by Craig Alan Myers on Friday, September 11th, at Greenmount CBC. They studied Matthew 18 and learned how pastors can lead congregations through times of conflict.



REGIONAL CONFERENCE WRAP-UP

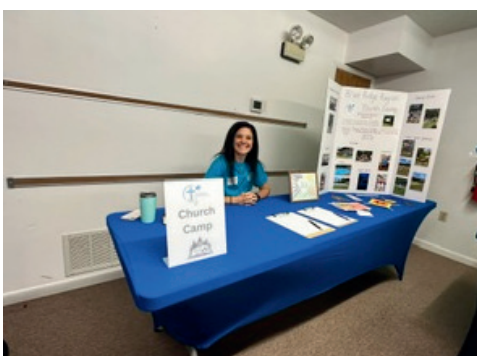


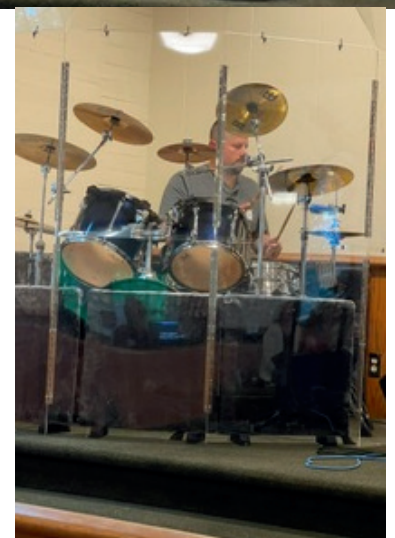
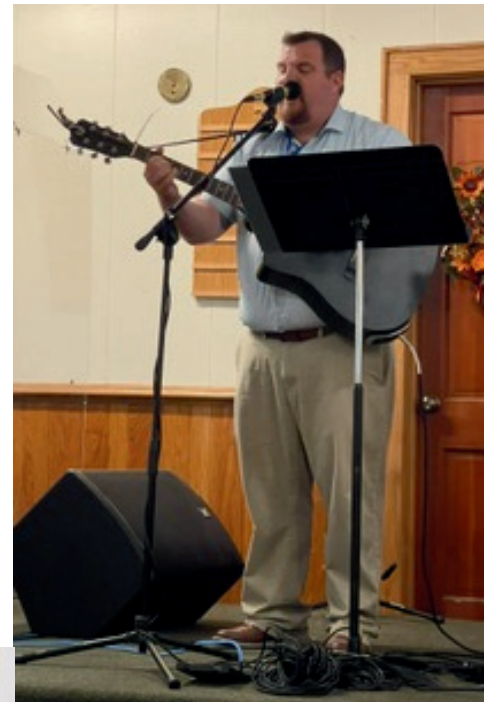
**Blue Ridge Region
Covenant Brethren Church**
Regional Conference
September 12, 2026



"Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord"

Mt Zion Church
10589 Mt. Zion Rd
Linville, VA 22834



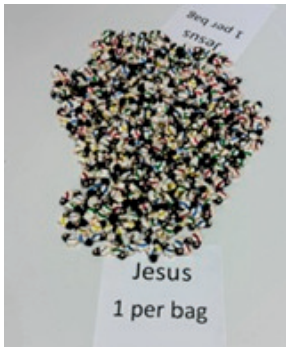






Our **service project** this year was the “Lunch Bag Program”. The Youth had a “packing party” during the conference and packed **460 lunch bags** to feed 460 meals to elementary children who need food for the weekend. They went to Hugh K Cassell and Plains Elementary Schools and to St Lukes Backpack program. Each lunch bag had a milk, juice, cereal, oatmeal, fruits, granola bar, snacks, entrees and other items to help them eat healthy over the weekend. Most importantly, we prayed for the children who will receive the lunch bags. A special thanks to ALL the Churches who donated, the members who sponsored a child with their \$40 gift, those who purchased from Amazon and to the Mission Team for heading this project up! Most importantly, thank you to the Blue Ridge Region Youth who packed these bags! Thank you for helping these children who need food!

Proverbs 22:9 – “The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their food with the poor.”





Sr Camp



Sr. Camp is for completed 8th-12th grades

We had:

23 campers

6 counselors

3 kitchen staff

We also learned about the Fruit of the Spirit and had a great week!

Submitted by Becky Leland



Jr Camp



The Jr. Camp was a great week! We had our camp at the Red Oak Lodge at Highland Retreat from July 5-9. There were 40 kids (23 girls, and 17 boys) in attendance. There was a total of 12 adult volunteers.

3 kitchen workers

1 nurse

4 female leaders / counselors

4 male leaders / counselors

All of the volunteers were amazing and did a wonderful job. I was blessed to see the unity and friendships made among them this week. Everyone was so easy to work with. The body of Christ worked and served together very well this week.

Our theme for the week was the Fruit of the Spirit.

Monday: What is the fruit of the Spirit and where does it come from.

Tuesday: Living by the Spirit v. Living by the flesh

Wednesday: Ways to grow spiritual fruit in every day life

Thursday: How to stay connected to God so we can continue to bear fruit that lasts.

We had chapels each morning and evening. Our speakers consisted of Dale Bennett, Randy Yoder, Phil Noel, Darren Howdyshell, Elijah Martino (Jonathan got sick at the last minute and his son filled in for him), and Jon Prater (we had a joint chapel with the Sr. Camp on Wednesday night).

We also had small group time each day after our morning chapel.

The days were filled with swimming, crafts, games, the game room and some relaxing as well. A lot of the kids enjoyed playing "Capture the Flag" in the evening. They also enjoyed the game room and other table games that were available. We offered the option of a movie night one night that some of the kids seemed to enjoy.

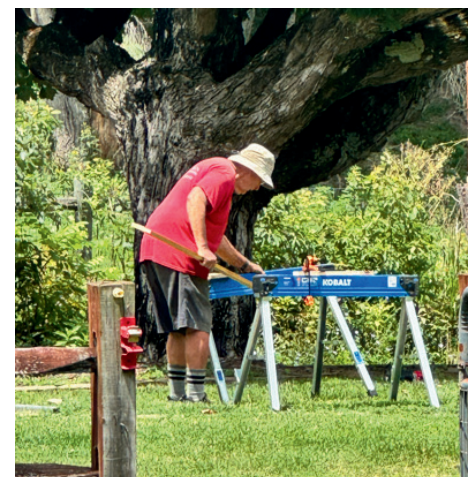
Thursday morning chapel was a highlight of the week. We had kids who came forward to accept the Lord for the first time and others that came to rededicate their life as well as support their friends. The Holy Spirit was evident in the room.

We also had a memory verse for the week (Galatians 5:22-25). We had 22 kids memorize the verse word for word!! Submitted by Tammy Yoder

Greenmount Covenant Brethren Church held its annual Vacation Bible School June 22nd through 26th with 70 children in attendance. The theme was Irish, based on Psalm 23. Here the children are shown learning about Jesus as their shepherd. They also got in some play time with Pastor Scott. A good time was had by all, even the adults. A big thank you goes to our directors, Alyssa Hinkle and Kendra Cowger and their staff!



Barren Ridge Church went on a Mission trip to Craigsville, VA on August 5th & 8th. They worked on a house for a single mother with 4 children. She works as an RN and was ready to close on a house, but found out it needed some work. Barren Ridge rounded up some men and got the job done! Great work!



What have our Teams been doing?

Ministry Leadership Team – Jonathan Farmer

- **Ministerial Leadership team** met on August 17th at Antioch.
- *Dakota Baker will be starting the ordination process.*
- *Henry and Janet Elsea would like to be moved to Emeritus status as they have retired and moving to Florida.*
- *Mentor Report Form for Licensed Ministers was presented to the team by Jonathan Farmer.*
- *Annual Licensed Minister Review Document will be sent to the Licensed Ministers by Tony Turley. We are asking to have them returned before our October 19th meeting. We will evaluate and send a list of re-licensing ministers to the National Board.*
- *MLT team will be meeting will be **September 21st** at 6:30 at Antioch with Ordination Interview with Dakota Baker.*
- *Regional Christmas Dinner has a tentative date of November 30th.*
- *We will have discussion at our next meeting about dividing up the Congregations/Ministers within our team members to pray for those in our Region.*

Mission Team – Gary Wingfield .

- **Missions team met on July 21.**
- *Discussed Operation Christmas Child and churches getting started with their collections*
- *Discussed desire to look for opportunities for local mission work.*
- *Discussed the great job Stephanie and Becky did at the Annual Worship and Business Conference in Pennsylvania. Stephanie will work on getting copies of her video presentation sent to us and we hope to tie it in with the other presentation soon to be developed to share with churches in our region.*
- *Discussed possibly getting youth that were involved on the mission trip to Guatemala to share their experiences with the congregations that supported their trip.*
- *Barren Ridge Church approved sending a donation to the Mission Team in the amount of \$5,000.*

Prayer Team-Diane Pence

The Prayer Team meets quarterly via phone conference using the conference bridge at Calvary CBC. Praises and prayer requests are sent out regularly. If you would like to be added to the prayer chain, please email brprayer@covenantbrethren.org. If you have praises/prayer requests to share, please send an email to the same email address. Please let us know how to word your request and be mindful of needs for privacy.

We invite you to join us in a weekly prayer strategy as follows:

Sunday - Yourself

- Pray for a closer walk with God
- Pray for a forgiving heart
- Pray for an attitude of gratitude for salvation and all God has provided
- Pray for wisdom and God's guidance

Monday - Family

- Pray for immediate family members (ask them for specific ways you can pray for them)
- Pray for friends of family members

Tuesday - Church

- Pray for the leadership in your home church
- Pray for the marriages and families of your church leadership; they are key targets of Satan.
- Pray for specific ministries within your church.

Wednesday - Community

- Pray for community leaders.
- Pray for the churches in your community.
- Pray for Christian endeavors in your community (pregnancy centers, ministries to the homeless, weekday religious education, etc.)

Thursday - Nation/State

- Pray for our president/vice president/cabinet, supreme court justices, congressmen and senators from your state
- Pray for elected officials from your state (governor, lt. governor, attorney general, senate and house of delegate members)
- Pray for specific national or state issues the Holy Spirit draws to your attention

Friday - World

- Pray for leaders around the world
- Pray for world peace
- Pray for Samaritan's Purse and other missionaries your church supports
- Pray for persecuted Christians around the world

Saturday - Afflicted

- Pray for those in prison
- Pray for those from your church who are hospitalized or sick.
- Pray for children in difficult family situations



This one-day event is open to all women who are looking for a time of spiritual renewal, connection, and encouragement. Whether you're coming with a group or stepping out on your own, you'll find a welcoming environment where you can grow in your faith and build meaningful relationships.

We'll be gathering at Calvary Covenant Brethren Church in Winchester, Virginia, and spending time together around the theme Rejoice! Even When You Don't Feel Like It. It will be a day to rest, reflect, and be reminded of the joy and strength that come from living a life rooted in praise.

Pastor Karen Grossnickle will lead us in a walk through Philippians 4:4-9 and Sister Bernie Tragoe will help us rejoice through worship music. Jeanie Kent will also bless us with special music. Breakout sessions will focus on the "Bait of Satan", "Prayer", "Made in the Image of God", and "Rejoice in Biblical Archaeology".

The cost is \$40 per person and registration will still be available at the door..

We would love for you to be part of this meaningful and memorable conference. Come expecting to be refreshed, inspired, and surrounded by the love and support of other women walking this journey of faith. We can't wait to welcome you!



FALL Festival

BARREN RIDGE CHURCH

Off Route 254 between Staunton & Waynesboro



SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26TH, 2026



**DOORS OPEN
2:00 PM**



**SILENT AUCTION
2:00 TO 5:00 PM**



**CHICKEN CAN BE
PICKED UP BY NOON**

Silent Auction Includes:

Baked Goods ~ Handmade Crafts ~
Gift Certificates ~ and More

.....
Great Food!

Homemade Soup, BBQ Chicken,
Pulled Pork BBQ, Ham Sandwiches,
Hot Dogs, Baked Goods and MORE!

.....
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Everything You Wanted to Know About Aging *But Were Afraid to Ask*



Answers. Guidance. Peace of Mind. *Plan today for a better tomorrow.*

As we get older, we—and our loved ones—face important questions about health care, legal planning, and long-term care.

Join us for a **FREE** community seminar to get the answers you need.



Know Your Legal Options

- What legal documents should I have in place as I get older?
- What is a Power of Attorney?
- What are the different types of Powers of Attorney?
- What is an Advance Directive?
- What is a DNR?



Understand Health & End-of-Life Care

- What is hospice?
- What is palliative care?
- What types of care options are available as we age?
- Who needs these services—and how do I or my loved ones get them?



Explore Care Choices

- What is the difference between assisted living and a nursing home?
- What types of home-care services are available?



Representatives from the medical, legal, hospice, and adult-care fields will share their knowledge, answer your questions, and provide practical information to help you and your loved ones plan for the future.

Bring Your Questions!

**Q&A to follow
the presentation.**



**October 6
7:00 PM**



**Antioch Covenant
Brethren Church**

23501 Senedo Road
Woodstock, VA



Everyone is welcome! 

FREE

**COMMUNITY
SEMINAR**

CBC Anniversary

Sunday, October 18, 2026



**COVENANT
BRETHREN
CHURCH**

Go, Make, Baptize

The CBC Executive Board joyfully invites all CBC congregations and members to join us for our second annual CBC Anniversary Sunday. Last year we celebrated our five-year milestone, and we are excited to continue this tradition this year. This year's celebration will be held on **October 18**, just before our founding anniversary on October 24, 2020.

There were worship resource packets available at the CBC Annual Worship and Meeting Conference at Johnstown to help enrich your October 18 service.

Pastors are encouraged to preach on our annual theme from

Matthew 28:18–20: Go, Make, Baptize!

You may also choose

a sermon focus drawn from the CBC Statement of Faith. We invite congregations to encourage members to reaffirm their agreement with the Statement of Faith during this service.

We also encourage churches to host a fellowship meal as a

Feast Day Anniversary Celebration ~ a wonderful opportunity for members to invite friends, neighbors, and guests to join in this special day.

Blue Ridge Region Churches

Church:	Pastor/Associate Pastor:	Address:
Antioch	George Bowers/Dale Bennett, Sr.	23502 Senedo Rd, Woodstock VA 22664
Barren Ridge	Dan Rhodes	790 Barren Ridge Rd, Staunton VA 24401
Calvary	Jonathan Martino/Charlie Estep	578 Front Royal Pk, Winchester VA 22602
Collinsville	Roy McVey	553 John Redd Blvd., Collinsville VA 24078
Columbia Furnace	Bill Fitchett/Buster Doman	20910 Senedo Rd. Edinburg VA 22824
Community Mission	Dale Bowers	50 Coffmantown Rd, Woodstock, VA 22664
Elk Run	Jonathan Farmer	1599 Scenic Hwy., Churchville VA 24421
Greenmount	B. Scott Harris	4881 Greenmount Rd, Rockingham VA 22802
Leake's Chapel	Vacant	2334 Honeyville Rd, Stanley, VA 22851
Moscow	Darren Howdyshe	866 Nash Rd., Mount Solon VA 22843
Mt. Zion	Jon Prater/Kristi Zirkle	10589 Mt. Zion Rd. Linville VA 22834
New Life	Vacant	P O Box 123, Bridgewater VA 22812
Newport	Duane Painter	408 Newport Rd., Shenandoah VA 22849
St. Luke	Dakota Baker	3250 Back Rd., Woodstock VA 22664



Contact Us:

Joy Mauzy, Administrative Assistant

Mailing Address:

**1790 Barren Ridge Rd
Staunton, VA 24401
(540) 209-4862**

Physical Address:

**3250 Back Rd
Woodstock, VA 22664**

2025-2026-Executive Board

Darren Howdyshe, Chair

Ann Jones, Vice Chair

Ron Layman, Treasurer

Diane Pence

Scott Harris

Jonathan Farmer

Gary Wingfield

Jon Prater, Elder Rep

E-MAIL

blueridge@covenantbrethren.org



blueridge.covenantbrethren.org



**Find us on Facebook at Blue Ridge
Region of Covenant Brethren Church**