



MELROSE
BAPTIST CHURCH

The Messenger

September 2026

Something To Think About



“CHOICE”

“Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and the more as you see the Day approaching.”
Hebrews 10:23-25

As so many of our students start their fall semesters, I am reminded of this exact time of year in 1994 when I began my first year at Duke Divinity School. At the same time, I began working at Hester Baptist Church in Oxford, NC as the part-time youth & children’s minister. As I recently reflected on those days, an odd thought struck me. That Sunday morning at the start of the semester before I started at Hester was the last Sunday morning that I woke up and asked the question, “Am I going to church today?” Sure, there have been Sundays since then that I was traveling on vacation. However, by my estimate, 94% of the last 32 years of Sundays have not involved a decision about whether or not I was going to church.

What’s my point? Simply this: I sometimes forget that church is a choice.

Many people will talk about church not being a choice for them. Their parents made (or make) them come to church. They can’t imagine not coming to church. Church is a priority. And I understand and believe all of that. Yet, at least for independent adults, whether or not you go to church is completely a matter of your personal decision and will. We live in a country where freedom of religion means there is no legal requirement to be in church. Nowhere in Scripture is there a mandate of how many times you must attend church in order to still be called a Christian. Nothing external compels you to go. Church, for most, is truly a choice of personal will.

I have heard the words from Hebrews cited as justification of

approaching church as a requirement. “The Bible says you need to be here!” As someone whose job requires him to be at church, I can easily interpret those words that way. But when I allow myself to step back and really hear them, I realize that the author of Hebrews is not assuming church is a requirement as I have often assumed. “Let us consider....”. Those are words of choice, not obligation. The author of Hebrews is saying, “When you wake up on Sunday and consciously or subconsciously ask the question, ‘Am I going to church today?’, let these things factor in your decision.” What are the factors the author asks us to consider?

- Church is where we strengthen the confession of our hope. In church we are reminded of what we have to look forward to in this life and the life to come through Christ.
- Church trains our eyes to look for where the faithfulness of God is being revealed. Where has God answered prayers, provided blessings, offered comfort, and extended a call to be part of His Kingdom work?
- Church is the community encouraging one another to do good. In a world filled with temptations and selfishness, church is where we remind one another that we can be the salt of the earth that makes lives better and the light of the world that helps people see Jesus.
- Church is the encouragement that we do not face today or tomorrow alone. We are the body of Christ to one another, and we are the body of Christ with one another.

Whether church feels like a choice for us or not, maybe we all need to remember why it is an important choice to make. We should not choose church because we think we are appeasing God or appeasing someone else. Coming together with other children of God is not a job or an obligation, it is a participation in God’s continuing work of transforming creation into His image through His love, His mercy, His grace, and His hope.

Are you going to church this Sunday?

- Pastor Mark

Children & Youth Updates



CHILDREN IN ACTION RESUMING

After a summer break, our children's ministry program, Children in Action, will resume after Labor Day on Sunday, September 13 at 5 PM.

Children will begin the evening with Pastor Connie and explore the worship arts such as drama, music, and dance. Children will then work with Ms. Patty, Mr. Linley, and Ms. Melissa to learn about various missionaries and their work around the world as well as plan various service projects that serve both their church and community. Children will end the evening by sharing dinner with the youth.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS: CHILDREN'S MOVIE NIGHT

All children are invited to a movie night on Sunday, September 27 at 5 PM. The movie for the night will be "A Bug's Life." Snacks are being provided!

Music Ministry Updates



COME AND PRAISE THE LORD THROUGH SONG AND VOICE!

All of our music ministries are resuming meeting regularly after a summer hiatus. Our music ministries offer multiple opportunities to join together in praise through song or voice. If you are interested in joining but not sure where to start, contact Pastor Connie at music@melrosebaptist.org.

Shalom Handbell Ensemble

Tuesdays at 6:15 PM- Resuming on Sept. 15

A five-octave set keeps these ringers busy for sharing in worship. No experience is needed to keep up with this group- just an ear for music and a willing spirit! The group will work this fall on preparing selections for special Sundays and the Christmas cantata.

Sanctuary Choir- Wednesdays at 7 PM

Let the Lord hear your voice by joining the Sanctuary Choir. With a combined 25+ years singing experience between the members, this group welcomes all those who wish to share their voice and praise the Lord together! This fall the group will be spending most of their rehearsal time preparing for the Christmas Cantata.

Sonshine Choir

Every other Thursday at 10:30 AM- Resuming on Sept. 17

A part of our music and Senior Adult Ministries this energetic group periodically performs at local nursing homes and will travel to perform at some of our homebound members place of residence. They use special bells and books to ring and sing their favorite hymns. No music reading knowledge is required. Join us on September 17 at 10:30 AM for our first outing of the season at Alleghany Health and Rehab to perform for their residents!

Ministry Updates

FAITHFUL FITNESS MOVING BACK TO FRIDAYS

During the month of September, Faithful Fitness is moving back to meeting on Friday mornings at 11 AM in the Fellowship Hall.



DARTBALL FELLOWSHIP RESUMES

Dartball Fellowship will resume for monthly play on September 14 at 6 PM on the Fellowship Hall. The group will continue to meet on the first and second Monday through December. All levels of play are welcome- newbies and oldies! Also, those attending are welcome to bring a snack to share with the group.

WE NEED YOUR OPINION!

As we continue to try and keep up with technical advances and current trends, we are going to be evaluating our church communications and media. Through the month of September we will be collecting responses to a quick 10 question survey. All responses will be kept anonymous and will be used to help the church staff discern the future of how our church communicates with each other and our community.

[CLICK HERE](#) to take the survey now. Paper copies will be available on Sunday mornings starting September 6.

UPCOMING: SUNDAY SCHOOL APPRECIATION BANQUET

The Sunday School Directors invite all teachers, co-teachers, substitutes, outreach leaders, and spouses and plus ones to this year's Sunday School Appreciation Banquet on Sunday, September 27 at 5 PM. This year's banquet will feature a special performance by the "Let's Dance Band" featuring Pastor Connie. No RSVP required and casual dress please.

Featured Ministry Updates



TINY HOME PROJECT

On Saturday, September 12 at 10 AM, we will be kicking off the "tiny home" building project at Bonsack Baptist Church. Over the course of the next several months, we will be partnering with Bonsack Baptist and other congregations and groups to build a tiny home that can be deployed in the aftermath of a disaster to provide immediate housing for an individual or family who has lost their home. Whether you are a master craftsman or a willing heart and back, there will be a part you can help with in this project! We will be asking volunteers to sign up for particular work days as the nature of the project allows for only a certain number of people to be working at any one time. Future dates will be announced soon, but if you would like to sign up to work on September 12, please let Pastor Mark know ASAP. Please be in prayer that God would bless our efforts and use this home as a place of rest and healing.

MELROSE TO HOST CBF VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

We are excited to be the host for the 2026 Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Virginia General Assembly on Tuesday, September 22 from 9 AM - 3 PM. This is a great opportunity to come worship with fellow disciples of Christ from all over Virginia, attend breakout sessions on a variety of topics, and hear more about what CBF Virginia is doing now and what they hope to do as they begin their 35th year of ministry. Representatives from different ministry partners will be on site throughout the day to share more about their work as well. Breakfast and lunch are provided for those who attend, and the whole thing is completely free! I want to encourage you to come for any and all of this special day. If you would like to attend, please go [HERE](#) and register to attend. If you would like to help out during the day as a greeter or in the hallway giving directions, please let Pastor Mark know. Don't miss out on this wonderful opportunity!

Upcoming Events

OFFICE CLOSED FOR LABOR DAY

Please note that the church office will be closed on Monday, September 7 in observance of Labor Day. On that day if you find yourself in need of pastoral care, please call the church at 540-366-6631 and chose "2" for Pastor Mark. Leave him a voicemail and he will get back to you ASAP.

PRAYER BREAKFAST



SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13
8:30 AM

SAVE THE DATE: PRAYER BREAKFAST

The Baptist Men's Ministry invite all to join them for a home cooked breakfast on Sunday, September 13 at 8:30 AM in the Fellowship Hall. This is a wonderful time of fellowship, devotion, and a great way to start your Sunday!



COMING SOON: LIVING ABUNDANTLY AFTER FIFTY

- **When:** Tuesday, September 15 at 10 AM
- **Where:** Gathering will take place in Fellowship Hall followed by lunch at Wildwood Smokehouse
- **Who:** All those over 50 who are looking for a welcoming time of conversation, serving our community, and sharing a meal together!
- **What:** A short program from a local representatives from The Gideons and a mission project to benefit a local school!

CHURCH BUSINESS MEETING

September's church Business Meeting will take place on Wednesday, September 16 at 6:15 PM in the Sanctuary.



CREATIVES NIGHT: GLASS PAINTING

Creatives Night will be meeting on Friday, September 18 at 5:30 PM. The creative activity for the night will be glass painting and all are welcome! We will have different types of glass containers to choose from but feel free to bring your own! This month is free and instruction and materials are being provided. If you are planning to come, we are requesting that you RSVP on the church website [HERE](#) or by letting Blair know via email or text you plan to come. Letting us know you are coming allows us to properly plan materials.

MEMORIALS

In Memory of Bill Preston:

- to the Backpack Ministry & Youth Activities
- Truth Seekers Sunday School Class
- to Backpack Ministry by Larry and Eve Wirt

In Memory of Donald Tuck:

- Grace Sunday School Class to Property Committee

A NOTE OF THANKS

"Ladies, I just want to express a special thank you for your generous and delicious buffet after the funeral. What a special gift to offer families after a death.

My uncle Junior (Bill to you) loved to eat! He always looked forward to a visit to Lynchburg to see his sisters. My Mom would always insist they stay for dinner and you could see the smile of anticipation and appreciation before and after the meal.

How he would have enjoyed your bounty at church and would be so thankful for each and everyone of you.

Thanks, too, for providing such a wonderful opportunity to visit with family we that don't see often. As important as having full stomachs, we left with full hearts and that is such a "god kiss feeling".

With a grateful heart,
Mona May
(Rhonda Kessler's cousin)

"Dear church family,
Kathy and I thank you for your prayers, cards, phone calls and other forms of communication. We greatly appreciate all of your support and concerns during our separate hospital stays and beyond. We are still recovering from it all and still long for your continued prayers.

In Christ's love,
Alan and Kathy Malloy"

WEDNESDAY NIGHT DINNER

We welcome all to join us for dinner on Wednesday evenings at 5:15 PM. The cost is \$9.00 per person or \$20 for a family up to 4 people. Reservations are required and can be made by calling the church office at 540-366-6631, on the Melrose Baptist Church mobile app, or the church website **HERE**.

September Menu

- 9/2: Barbecue, macaroni and cheese, coleslaw, toffee cheesecake bars
- 9/9: Baked lasagna, tossed salad, garlic bread,

lemon buttermilk sheet cake

- 9/16: Grilled chicken breasts, broccoli, glazed carrots, chocolate chess squares
- 9/23: Hamburger steaks, pinto beans, lettuce and tomato salad, cornbread, pineapple dream dessert
- 9/30: Chef salads, fruit, cheese toast, fresh apple cake

VOLUNTEER SCHEDULES

Ushers

9/6: Jack Engel, Bill Caudill
9/13: Don Slone, Debby Hill
9/20: Don Slone, Debby Hill
9/27: Rhonda Kessler, Missy Wickham

Courtesy Team

9/6: Danny Jarrett, Annie Richerson
9/13: Donnie Daniels, Steven Kennedy
9/20: Larry Wirt, Chip Stephenson
9/27: Jeff Poore, Gary Dixon

Safety Team

9/6: Larry Hicks, Larry Wirt
9/13: Allen Journell, Danny Jarrett
9/20: Steve Kennedy, Jeff Poore
9/27: Gary Hurd, Suzanne Moses

Youth Dinners

9/6: No youth- Labor Day
9/13: Joan Mullins, Mary Gilley
9/20: The Wilson's/Rhonda Kessler
9/27: No dinner- Sunday School Appreciation Banquet

FINANCE REPORT- JULY 2026

July 2026

Monthly Income: \$47,381.45
Monthly Expenses: \$49,543.80

Year to Date

Total Income: \$403,636.65
Total Expenses: \$445,796.98

September Church Calendar

Aug. 31-Sept. 6

MONDAY- 8/31

10 AM Bible Study

TUESDAY- 9/1

12 PM Staff Planning Meeting
6 PM Softball Field in Use
6:30 PM Men's Bible Study

WEDNESDAY- 9/2

10 AM Beth Calloway
1:30 PM Sunday School Directors
2:30 PM Stitch & a Prayer
5:15 PM Wednesday Night Dinner
6 PM Youth on Mission
6:15 PM Prayer Meeting
7 PM Choir Rehearsal

THURSDAY- 9/3

6 PM Softball Field in Use

FRIDAY- 9/4

11 AM Faithful Fitness
6 PM Softball Field in Use

SATURDAY- 9/5

9-11:30 AM Fellowship Hall in Use
10 AM Softball Field in Use

SUNDAY- 9/6

9:30 AM Sunday School
10:45 AM Sunday Morning Worship
12 PM Fork Fellowship

Sept. 7-13

MONDAY- 9/7

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

TUESDAY- 9/8

2 PM Staff Meeting
6 PM Softball Field in Use
6:30 PM Men's Bible Study

WEDNESDAY- 9/9

11 AM Stewardship Committee
5:15 PM Wednesday Night Dinner
6 PM Youth on Mission
6 PM Finance Committee
6:15 PM Bible Black Belts
6:15 PM Prayer Meeting

THURSDAY- 9/10

10:30 AM Alma Hunt
6 PM Softball Field in Use
7 PM LaVora Sprinkle

FRIDAY- 9/11

11 AM Faithful Fitness
6 PM Softball Field in Use

SATURDAY- 9/12

9-11:30 AM Fellowship Hall in Use
10 AM Softball Field in Use

SUNDAY- 9/13

8:30 AM Prayer Breakfast
9:30 AM Sunday School
10:30 AM Ibada
10:45 AM Sunday Morning Worship
12 PM Fork Fellowship
5 PM Children in Action
5 PM Seeds of Youth

Sept. 14-20

MONDAY- 9/14

10 AM Bible Study
6:30 PM Dartball Fellowship

TUESDAY- 9/15

10 AM LAAF
2 PM Staff Meeting
6 PM Softball Field in Use
6:15 PM Handbell Ensemble
6:30 PM Men's Bible Study

WEDNESDAY- 9/16

5:15 PM Wednesday Night Dinner
6 PM Youth on Mission
6:15 PM Bible Black Belts
6:15 PM Business Meeting
7 PM Choir Rehearsal

THURSDAY- 9/17

10:30 AM Sonshine Choir
6 PM Softball Field in Use
6:45 PM Fellowship Hall in Use

FRIDAY- 9/18

11 AM Faithful Fitness
5:30 PM Glass Painting

SATURDAY- 9/19

9 AM-4 PM Fellowship Hall in Use
10 AM Softball Field in Use

SUNDAY- 9/20

9:30 AM Sunday School
10:30 AM Ibada
10:45 AM Sunday Morning Worship
12 PM Fork Fellowship
5 PM Children in Action
5 PM Seeds of Youth

September Church Calendar

Sept. 21-27

MONDAY- 9/21

No use of Fellowship Hall
6:45 PM Deacons Meeting

TUESDAY- 9/22

8 AM CBFVA General Assembly
6 PM Softball Field in Use
6:15 PM Handbell Ensemble
6:30 PM Men's Bible Study

WEDNESDAY- 9/23

5:15 PM Wednesday Night Dinner
6 PM Youth in Mission
6:15 PM Bible Black Belts
6:15 PM Bible Study
7 PM Choir Rehearsal

THURSDAY- 9/24

10:30 AM Sonshine Choir
5-8 PM Fellowship Hall in Use
6 PM Softball Field in Use
6:45 PM Marketplace in Use

FRIDAY- 9/25

11 AM Faithful Fitness
6 PM Softball Field in Use

SATURDAY- 9/26

10 AM Softball Field in Use

SUNDAY- 9/27

9:30 AM Sunday School
10:30 AM Ibada
10:45 AM Sunday Morning Worship
12 PM Fork Fellowship
5 PM Children's Movie Night
5 PM Sunday School
Appreciation Banquet

Sept. 28-Oct. 4

MONDAY- 9/28

10 AM Bible Study
5:30 PM WMU Fall Missions
Celebration at First Roanoke

TUESDAY- 9/29

2 PM Staff Meeting
6 PM Softball Field in Use
6:15 PM Handbell Ensemble
6:30 PM Men's Bible Study

WEDNESDAY- 9/30

5:15 PM Wednesday Night Dinner
6 PM Youth in Mission
6:15 PM Bible Black Belts
6:15 PM Prayer Meeting
7 PM Choir Rehearsal

THURSDAY- 10/1

10:30 AM Sonshine Choir
6 PM Softball Field in Use

FRIDAY- 10/2

11 AM Faithful Fitness
6 PM Softball Field in Use

SATURDAY- 10/3

Youth Group Reunion
10 AM Softball Field in Use

SUNDAY- 10/4

10 AM Homecoming Sunday
5 PM Children in Action
5 PM Seeds of Youth