



 **MELROSE**  
BAPTIST CHURCH

The Messenger

July 2026

## Something To Think About



### “250”

I write these words at the start of a significant week in the history of the United States of America – the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the birth of an independent nation called America. Over the years, I have discovered a great interest in reading about the moments and people that shaped the foundations of our nation. As I think about our national “birthday”, the thought I continue to return to is that what makes the celebration so special is that America represented a great experiment. Several of the ideas that would become the pillars of the American experience were, in their time, radical and risky. Perhaps chief among those ideas was the belief that America would be a land of religious liberty, a land where faith was not reinforced or required by the state and its laws. Even in the colonial era, this was not often the reality. Though several of the colonies were established in part by religious groups that had come to America to gain freedom from oppression in Europe, laws were passed by local and colonial legislators that required support of and/or loyalty to a particular denomination of faith, often times under pain of fines and imprisonment.

While certainly not the only voice, Baptists in America were among the loudest voices calling on the new nation that was being formed to reject tying together the forces of the state and the power of religion. Isaac Backus, a New England Baptist pastor, had witnessed the imprisonment of his mother and brother for falling behind on paying the state taxes that supported the Congregational Church. When Massachusetts adopted a state constitution that would allow the state to apply a tax for the specific purpose of supporting Protestant ministers, Backus tried to try to convince the legislators and the people to remove the troublesome article, saying, “It asserts a right in the people of this State to make and execute laws about the worship of God, directly contrary to the truth which assures us that we have but ONE LAWGIVER in such affairs.” Here in Virginia, John Leland, a traveling Baptist evangelist, made the

case for full religious liberty, saying, “Every man must give an account of himself to God, and therefore every man ought to be at liberty to serve God in a way that he can best reconcile to his conscience. ... Government has no more to do with the religious opinions of men, than it has with the principles of mathematics. Let every man speak freely without fear, maintain the principles that he believes, worship according to his own faith, either one God, three Gods, no God, or twenty Gods; and let government protect him in so doing.” Backus and Leland were just a few of the Baptist voices crying out for the new “land of the free” to be truly free in matters of faith.

The freedom of religion that is part of the American experience was not necessarily self-evident, as our early history too often shows. What is truly fascinating is that often times these conversations and debates were not between people of faith and atheists, but, such as in the case of Isaac Backus and his family, between one group of Christians and another group of Christians. That is why I find it fascinating that, even as we celebrate our nation’s 250th birthday, I come across Christian leaders and speakers and influences who see fault in the separation of church and state now. Like many religious leaders in the time of Backus and Leland, they believe that Christianity cannot survive in America without state support. It seems there is still a need for the historical Baptist witness that reminds us that Christ did not announce His Kingdom through the decrees of the Roman emperor or the laws of the Herods. Instead, Christ fished with disciples and talked with women at wells and welcomed children and healed the sick and dined with tax collectors. Christ nurtured faith not through the powers of the state but the incarnation of love and grace and mercy and righteousness.

As our nation celebrates 250 years of freedom and independence, let us also celebrate the freedom we have in Christ Jesus to call upon the Lord and to respond to His saving work. Let us nurture the freedom within each soul to encounter the gospel and respond not by force of will but by the choice to love as they have been so loved. This is the heritage and history that defines us and the commission that calls us forward.

- Pastor Mark

# Partnership Perspective: CBF Virginia



*Each month through the summer, Pastor Mark will be sharing a brief overview of several of our major denominational mission partners so that you can have a better understanding of the work of these partners and how Melrose Baptist Church participates in their work.*

The Baptist General Association of Virginia was established in 1823 for the purpose of “advancing the Redeemer’s Kingdom.” Today, the BGAV partners with over 1,200 congregations in Virginia, the United States, and around the world. The BGAV, in its own words, “...is a missionary movement unleashing the power of the resurrected Christ through the local church for the renewal of all things.”

## **Work that BGAV has engaged in recently includes:**

- Through Impact Missions, the BGAV was a pivotal presence and force in the Hurricane Helene relief efforts in Damascus, Virginia. For over a year, Impact Missions brought in volunteers and worked with local and state agencies to help rebuild or repair over 70 homes.
- Impact Mission Camps are taking place at 3 different locations this summer, including Roanoke. Youth groups will travel from all over the state and beyond to work in these communities.
- The first-ever Ascent Summit took place this past Spring, bringing together pastors and laypersons from different denominations and parts of the country to hear about a new movement to re-evangelize the United States.
- A new Baptist newspaper, Faith & Field, was started this year to share stories and resources from the work of the BGAV and churches that the BGAV partners with.
- Hired Joel Miller as the new Director of Eagle Eyrie Retreat Center

The BGAV holds its Annual Meeting in November each year. This year’s meeting will take place November 9-11 at the Virginia Beach Convention Center. Anyone can attend the meeting as a guest, but each church is allotted a specific number of messengers who are permitted to vote on items of business.

## **Highlights of Melrose Baptist Church’s support of BGAV**

- Financial Support: 2025 - \$13,509.94; 2026 (through May 31) - \$6,746.51
- Pastor Mark currently serves as the First Vice-President of the BGAV
- Pastor Connie currently serves on the Missions Council of the BGAV
- Blair Thurman serves on the Art for the Not Yet Task Force for this year’s Annual Meeting
- Mary Gilley currently serves on the BGAV’s Program Committee
- Teresa Wallace currently serves on the BGAV’s Religious Liberty Committee
- Butch Meredith works for Impact Missions and headed up the Hurricane Helene relief effort for Impact in Damascus, Virginia
- Our youth participated in the Impact Missions Camp in Mecklenburg County, Virginia from June 14-19
- Melrose hosted around 50 youth and adults for the Impact Missions Camp in Roanoke from June 21-27
- Our youth and children will be participating in Music Week at Eagle Eyrie sponsored by the BGAV
- Pastor Mark attended the Ascent Summit this past spring in Falls Church, Virginia
- Over the last several years, we have had several college students awarded scholarships from the BGAV and Everbless, a partner of BGAV
- Melrose Baptist Church was featured in the most recent issue of Faith & Field for our participation in the Art for the Not Yet initiative for this year’s Annual Meeting

For more information about BGAV, visit [www.bgav.org](http://www.bgav.org) or <https://www.facebook.com/Virginia.Baptists>. If you would like to subscribe to Faith & Field, [click here](#) to sign up for a free subscription.



## PLEASE BE IN PRAYER

Pastor Connie, some of our children and youth, and adult volunteers will be going to the Music & Worship Arts at Eagle Eyrie Conference Center the week of July 13-17. Please be in prayer for them this week as they travel and for their time at camp. If you wish, there will be prayer bracelets and a prayer guide available on Sunday, July 12 outside the Sanctuary.



## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY MEETING

As we move through this season of transition in our church, Pastor Mark would like to invite the families of children in our church to a time of conversation and dream casting for Children's Ministry at Melrose Baptist Church. This conversation will take place Sunday, July 12 at 3 PM in the Fellowship Hall. Light refreshments will be provided as well as some activities for children to share in. If you are not able to attend, please feel free to reach out to Pastor Mark and share with him on your own time.

## HYMN OF THE MONTH: "SEEK YE FIRST"

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." - Matthew 6:33

In 1971 during "The Jesus Movement" in America, Karen Lafferty went to a Bible study at Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa, California and was inspired by the study of the verse above. I relate to her on many levels: she was a classically trained musician with a degree in music education "navigating a period of personal uncertainty and spiritual reflection" when she wrote this song. Originally, she had added a series of "alleluias" which could be sung in a round. In July worship services, you may hear some of the "alleluia" as the choir members float that melody above the tune we know.

The acoustic era of worship song in the 1970s, simple melody, and faithfulness to scripture made "Seek Ye First" blossom to become one of the most widely recognized Christian worship songs, easily adaptable to modern worship albums, numerous hymnals and children's songbooks worldwide.

Over the years, other verses have been added to widen its scriptural foundation from Matthew 4:4 and Matthew 7:7. Especially with the alleluias, scripture song reaches across generations and the world's nations.

A Bible study. A personal spiritual experience at a Bible study.

God used a Bible study to create a worldwide echo of Jesus' own words, His call to each of us. As we continue with Pastor Mark seeking "the Kingdom of God", let us remember that it is Jesus' will that we also pursue His righteousness: the compassion-giving-confession-making-hurts-forgiving-loving-neighbor-unconditionally-living righteousness only Jesus can help us live, with the power of His Holy Spirit.

Seek out a Bible study here at Melrose at 10 AM with Dallas Norris on Mondays or online if that fits your schedule...and then seek to live out what you learn.

Blessings,  
Pastor Connie

# Ministry Updates

MELROSE BAPTIST CHURCH

**GRACE** *Filled*

**CONVERSATIONS**

SEASON 3 STARTING JULY 9

Listen at: [melrosebaptist.org/media](http://melrosebaptist.org/media).

An open dialogue featuring an array of topics with a focus on respect, love, and grace.

## COMING SOON: NEW SEASON OF CHURCH PODCAST

During our previous sermon series, "The Heart for the Not Yet", we received some questions that we decided needed to be answered. Starting on Thursday, July 9 we are launching a new season of our church podcast, "Grace Filled Conversations." The topics include dinosaurs, death, and the afterlife. If you are interested in hearing more about these topics, download the church app today to listen on July 9 or go to the church website at [melrosebaptist.org/media](http://melrosebaptist.org/media).

Melrose Baptist Church Creatives Ministry

**BIBLE JOURNALING LIVE**

**FRIDAY MORNINGS AT 10 AM**

Melrose Baptist Church Creatives Facebook Group

## BIBLE JOURNALING LIVE

Over the past year and a half, the Melrose Creatives Ministry has hosted monthly gatherings on Saturday mornings for individuals to come and learn various Bible journaling techniques. Starting this month instead of meeting in-person we will begin sharing instructions on Bible journaling techniques by offering weekly live video sessions on the Melrose Baptist Creatives Ministry Facebook group. Each live video session will be held at 10 AM on Friday mornings starting on July 10. A post will be made each Monday in the group letting you know what supplies are needed and the scripture for that Friday. Our hope is that by offering these sessions virtually more people can join us and began to learn more about this fun and creative way to interact with God's Word.



## DONATE NOW- SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE

Our mission center partners, Keystone Community Center and Friendship House Roanoke, have started preparing for the upcoming school year by collecting school supplies and backpacks for local students.

PLEASE NOTE that Keystone Community Center is collecting various school supplies from the list below. Friendship House Roanoke is ONLY collecting good quality backpacks this year and have provided a wish list from Amazon [HERE](#).

Donations can be placed in the collection bin located in the Fellowship Hall by Sunday, July 19. Backpacks for Friendship House Roanoke can be ordered online and sent directly to them. If you have any questions, please reach out to Pat Dillon, Karen Simmons, or the church office!

### Supply List

- Wide ruled notebook paper
- Small packs of tissues
- Bottles of glue and glue sticks
- Highlighters
- Spiral bound notebooks- 3 and 5 subject
- Wide rule composition notebooks
- Pocket and plain folders
- Markers
- Colored pencils
- Pencil pouches/boxes
- Crayola crayons- 8 color packs
- Scissors with cover and larger sizes for older kids
- Index cards
- Graph paper
- Pencil sharpeners
- Preschool writing tablets
- 3 ring binders- 2, 3, & 4 inch

# Upcoming Events



## PRAYER BREAKFAST

The Baptist Men invite all to join them for breakfast before Sunday School on Sunday, July 12 at 8:30 AM.



## THIS MONTH'S LAAF GATHERING

Those 50 and older are invited to this month's Living Abundantly After fifty (LAAF) gathering on Tuesday, July 21 at 10 AM. This month's meeting will feature a performance from the Joe Bass 40 Years Plus band. Patty Huffman is providing hamburgers for lunch but those attending are asked to please bring a side dish to share. The Mission Action Project is packing bags for local veterans. A list of needed items will be published closer to the date of the gathering.

## UPCOMING: SENIOR TRIP TO WOHLFAHRT HOUSE

The seniors are taking a trip on Friday, July 24 to Wohlfahrt House in Wytheville, VA to see a showing of "Church Basement Ladies." The cost of the trip is \$65 per person and payment must be received by the church office to reserve your spot on the bus!



## THIS MONTH: SWEET FELLOWSHIP

The Sunday School Directors invite everyone to enjoy a time of coffee, doughnuts, and conversation on Sunday, July 26 at 8:30 AM in the Fellowship Hall. All are welcome!

## COME JOIN US FOR SONGS & SWEETS

Join us for Songs and Sweets on Sunday, July 26 at 6:30 PM as we come together in song, praise, and fellowship! Come and enjoy a traditional hymn sing in the Sanctuary followed by a time of fellowship.



## SAVE THE DATE: FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT

Come and join us for a night of family fun!

🎬 Movie: "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory" (1971)

🕒 Time: 6-8 PM

🍿 FREE candy, popcorn, and drinks

!! Bring your own lawn chair, picnic blanket, or sleeping bag to enjoy the movie!

We will be showing the 1971 "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory" in the church Fellowship Hall. Candy and popcorn will be available for those in attendance! If you wish, please feel free to bring your own food and snacks as well. Remember to bring your own lawn chair, picnic blanket, or sleeping bag(s) to use to enjoy the movie. This is a FREE event and all are welcome so invite friends, family members, and neighbors!

## 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**.

### July Menu

- 7/8: Chef salads, cheese toast, fruit, cherry sheet cake
- 7/15: Meatloaf, mashed potatoes, green beans, banana pudding
- 7/22: Lasagna, steamed broccoli, garlic bread, eclair cake
- 7/29: No meal- Family Movie Night

## VOLUNTEER SCHEDULES

### Ushers

- 7/5: Jack Engel, Bill Caudill  
7/14: Jack Engel, Bill Caudill  
7/19: Don Slone, Debby Hill  
7/26: Don Slone, Debby Hill

### Courtesy Team

- 7/5: Billy Martin, Jeff Poore  
7/12: Gerald Willis, Barry Wickham  
7/19: Gary Dixon, Larry Wirt  
7/26: Danny Jarrett, Don Altice

### Safety Team

- 7/5: Allen Journell, Suzanne Moses  
7/12: Danny Jarrett, Jeb Wallace  
7/19: Gary Hurd, Barry Wickham  
7/26: Gary Dixon, Larry Wirt

### Youth Dinners

- 7/5: No youth  
7/12: Janet Bain, Linda Broughman, Alyce Bowman  
7/19: Lynette Martin, Jenny Moorer  
7/26: Amy Crawford, Jan Heath

## MOST RECENT FINANCE REPORT

### May 2026

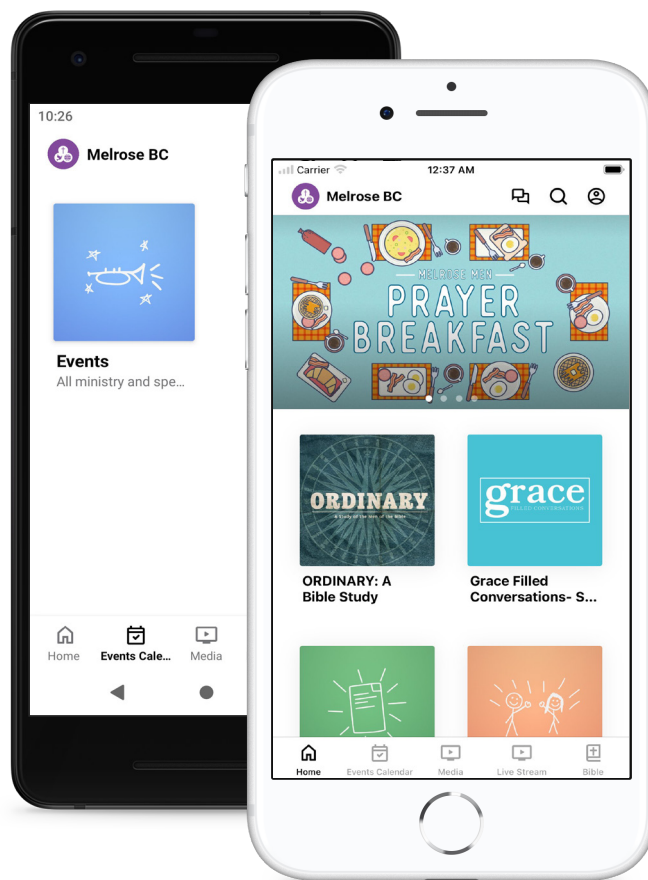
Monthly Income: \$51,532.22  
Monthly Expenses: \$67,638.90

### Year to Date

Total Income: \$252,655.90  
Total Expenses: \$271,862.98

# Melrose Baptist Church

Available in App Stores



DOWNLOAD TODAY  
<http://get.theapp.co/ab23>

SUBSPASH®

# July Church Calendar

## July 1-5

### WEDNESDAY- 7/1

10 AM Beth Calloway

### THURSDAY- 7/2

6 PM Softball Field in Use

### FRIDAY- 7/3

*Church Office Closed*

### SUNDAY- 7/5

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

## July 6-12

### MONDAY- 7/6

10 AM Bible Study  
11 AM Stewardship Committee

### TUESDAY- 7/7

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

### WEDNESDAY- 7/8

5:15 PM Wednesday Night Dinner  
6 PM Finance Meeting  
6:15 PM Prayer Meeting

### THURSDAY- 7/9

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

### FRIDAY- 7/10

6 PM Softball Field in Use

### SATURDAY- 7/11

10 AM-12 PM WMU Leadership  
10 AM- 2 PM Softball Field in Use

### SUNDAY- 7/12

8:30 AM Prayer Breakfast  
9:30 AM Sunday School  
10:30 AM Ibada  
10:45 AM Sunday Morning Worship  
12 PM Fork Fellowship  
3 PM Children's Ministry Meeting  
5 PM Seeds of Youth

## July 13-19

### MONDAY- 7/13

10 AM Bible Study

### TUESDAY- 7/14

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

### WEDNESDAY- 7/15

1:30 PM Sunday School Directors  
5:15 PM Wednesday Night Dinner  
6:15 PM Business Meeting

### THURSDAY- 7/16

6 PM Softball Field in Use

### FRIDAY- 7/17

6 PM Softball Field in Use

### SATURDAY- 7/18

10 AM-3 PM Fellowship Hall in Use  
10 AM- 2 PM Softball Field in Use

### SUNDAY- 7/19

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

# July Church Calendar

## July 20-26

### MONDAY- 7/20

10 AM Bible Study

### TUESDAY- 7/21

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

### WEDNESDAY- 7/22

5:15 PM Wednesday Night Dinner  
6:15 PM Prayer Meeting  
7 PM Choir Rehearsal

### THURSDAY- 7/23

5-8 PM Fellowship Hall in Use  
6 PM Softball Field in Use

### FRIDAY- 7/24

9 AM Senior Trip  
6 PM Softball Field in Use

### SATURDAY- 7/25

10 AM- 2 PM Softball Field in Use

### SUNDAY- 7/26

8:30 AM Sweet Fellowship  
9:30 AM Sunday School  
10:30 AM Ibada  
10:45 AM Sunday Morning Worship  
12 PM Fork Fellowship  
5 PM Seeds of Youth  
6:30 PM Songs and Sweets

## July 27-Aug. 2

### MONDAY- 7/27

10 AM Bible Study  
6:45 PM Deacons Meeting

### TUESDAY- 7/28

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

### WEDNESDAY- 7/29

6-8 PM Family Movie Night

### THURSDAY- 7/30

6 PM Softball Field in Use

### FRIDAY- 7/31

6 PM Softball Field in Use

### SATURDAY- 8/1

10 AM- 2 PM Softball Field in Use

### SUNDAY- 8/2

9:30 AM Sunday School  
10:30 AM Ibada  
10:45 AM Sunday Morning Worship  
12 PM Children's Committee  
12 PM Fork Fellowship  
5 PM Seeds of Youth  
7 PM Youth Council

