



Bethel ON MISSION

Equip ~ Send ~ Go

Summer 2025 Newsletter ~ January-June 2025 In Review

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Reaching Our Neighbors and The Nations



Bethel ON MISSION

A Note from the Missions Pastor



Here at Bethel Baptist Church, we believe that the gospel is for everyone—our neighbors, our nation, and the nations of the world. We believe this is true because this is the heart of God. In Acts 1:8 Jesus said to his disciples, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” That is why as disciples of Jesus Christ we are committed, compelled rather, to missions locally, nationally, and internationally.

Locally, we engage our community with the love of Christ through evangelism, outreach, compassion, and service ministries. Nationally, we support evangelism, church planting, theological education, disaster relief, and discipleship efforts. Internationally we support evangelism, church planting, and discipleship efforts in places like the Republic of Georgia, Colombia, Tanzania, and Canada, where new

churches are reaching communities with the hope of the gospel.

Will you join us on mission? Maybe God is calling you to step out in faith and serve Him on a mission trip whether it be local, national, or international. Maybe you are unable to go but God is asking you to give sacrificially to help fund a mission’s effort. Maybe God is impressing upon your heart to commit to praying for the lost. Did you know that there are still thousands of UUPGs (Unreached, Unengaged People Groups) around the world. This means that there are millions of people around the world that have no access to hearing the gospel.

Two years ago, Bethel adopted one of these UUPGs, the Zigua of Tanzania. At that time there were no evangelical workers working with or attempting to reach this people group. The Zigua adhere to Islam and are highly resistant and even hostile to the gospel. However, our God is mighty and can break down all barriers! Recently God has moved in the hearts of a neighboring people group, the Maasai, to proclaim the gospel among the Zigua! There are no conversions reported amongst the Zigua yet, but we continue to pray in faith that soon there will be many who will surrender to the lordship of Christ Jesus and that He will build his church there in Tanzania and throughout all nations!

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Front cover photo: The new Peninsula
Rescue Mission Women’s Ministry Building

MILITARY MINISTRY REPORT

2nd Quarter, 2025

By David Bates

Support for Langley Air Force Base Squadron

At the request of Dawn Mulkey, the MilMin team accepted a unique opportunity to provide sweet treats and other culinary items to the 83rd Network Operations Squadron at Langley Air Force Base during their recent inspection, held from April 28 to May 5.

Dawn asked the team to supply breakfast foods, desserts, or homemade items to help boost morale and reduce stress for the 300 squadron members during their intensive review. The MilMin team welcomed the chance to offer direct outreach to a military unit on base but quickly realized the magnitude of the request required some “reinforcements” from the rest of the church.

After reaching out to their Bible Fellowship classes, church members generously contributed items to support this important ministry. Through Dawn’s logistical coordination, Chuck Weddle and Kirk Deitrich delivered a variety of snacks, treats, and other goodies to the unit on May 2. Dawn facilitated the transfer of these items inside the facility to the squadron’s work areas and included a sign noting that the treats were donated by Bethel Baptist Church.

Dawn expressed her sincere appreciation for the donations, as did the squadron commander, who sent a handwritten note to the MilMin team. The combined efforts of all involved provided a powerful example of direct ministry on military bases—something the MilMin team hopes to continue in the future.

Armed Forces Day Recognition

The Bethel Baptist congregation honored the church’s military members and families with an Armed Forces Day Recognition on Sunday, May 18. The recognition took place during the worship service, and active-duty personnel were encouraged to wear their uniforms for easy identification.

Traditionally, military personnel served as greeters or ushers prior to the time of recognition. Although no uniformed individuals spoke during the service, Dr. Jeff Mingee offered heartfelt words of appreciation and encouragement to military members and their families.

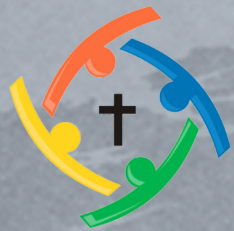
He also addressed the next generation preparing to take up the mantle of military service, including his own son who will attend West Point in the fall.

Active Duty Military Ladies Dinner

The MilMin team hosted its quarterly Active Duty Military Ladies Dinner on June 9 at the home of David and Jane Bates in Yorktown.

The team invited active-duty women and the wives of active-duty personnel to enjoy a delicious meal, with food contributed by MilMin team members. The evening offered not only great food but also a time of fun, fellowship, and shared experiences. Guests had the opportunity to glean military wisdom and folklore from the MilMin ladies, making it a meaningful and memorable gathering.





PENINSULA RESCUE MISSION PARTICIPATING IN GOD'S WORK AT THE PRM MEN'S SHELTER

By Stuart Johnson

We at Bethel Baptist Church have been given a great opportunity to show the love of Christ by serving others at the Peninsula Rescue Mission. BBC members provide dinner at PRM on the first Thursday of every month. We help prepare, serve, and clean up after the meal, as well as make ourselves available to talk with the men. This is a chance to participate in God's work by lifting up people in a season of need in their lives.

Matthew 25:35 "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me."

When we are with Jesus in eternity, I believe we will all long to hear these words spoken to us.

While the circumstances and choices that bring men to need the PRM services are varied, I believe God has given them this chance to see his grace and hope for their eternal lives. By his grace, we have been given a roll to play at this point in their lives. In this broken world that we live in it is difficult to discern the differences between truly helping someone in need, verses enabling them to continue in a harmful lifestyle or ungodly mindset. That is why I am encouraged by the approach PRM takes to help these men rebuild their lives and become self-sufficient.

Not only have they provided meals and shelter for over 500 men so far in 2025, but they have 15 men participating in the "Bridge" program which provides the Godly path

forward for those who are ready to make a real change in their lives. That's 15 men that are currently building a better life and a whole bunch more that are witnessing it happen.

Our role is to be there to support this effort. We at BBC can help provide the personal touch which helps make God's love a known reality to these men. By showing respect for their value as human beings, we can help them on their path forward.

I encourage you to make yourself available and stretch your comfort zone by joining this effort. It really is easier than I thought it would be and I always consider it time well spent.

A FAMILIAR FACE SERVES AS NEW DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AT PENINSULA RESCUE MISSION

BETHEL MEMBER, TIFFANY HINSON RECENTLY TOOK ON THE ROLE



Bethel member Tiffany Hinson has joined the Peninsula Rescue Mission as their Director of Development! Here is an excerpt from the PRM May Newsletter highlighting Tiffany's new position:

"Tiffany Hinson has joined the PRM family as the Director of Development. She graduated from the University of North Carolina at Pembroke in 2010 with a Bachelor's degree in Public Health. For many years, Tiffany's primary role was a wife and mother to her two children, now ages 13 and 11.

Before moving to Virginia, Tiffany worked as a case manager for Medicaid recipients. After relocating, she served in administration at her church, Bethel Baptist in Yorktown. She later became the Director of Development at a private Christian school before God led her to PRM."

HOPE FOR PENINSULA WOMEN IN NEED PENINSULA RESCUE MISSION OPENS NEW WOMEN'S SHELTER

By Debbie Messick

How Would You Answer This Question: "What Would It Look Like to Live Well?"

A believer might answer, "Living well is knowing Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord of my life." But someone who has yet to profess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior might give many different answers.

The Peninsula Rescue Mission (PRM) was founded in 1966 and has been a beacon of hope and light in Newport News ever since—reaching out to homeless men, providing a safe place to sleep, eat, and hear the Good News: the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

But what about homeless single women? Where can they go?

There was no place on the Peninsula for them to find help and hope—until now!

Praise God for His provision of the PRM Women's Ministry Home, located at 9308 Warwick Blvd in Newport News. What was once a Bayport Credit Union call center is now a beautiful home, ready to welcome twenty women who will live there for up to two years.

God gave PRM the vision, the plan, and all the provisions needed—including the favor of men and women—for the Women's Ministry to become a reality. He led His people, the "Big C" Church on the Peninsula, to go, give, and help in countless ways to transform an office building into a home.

In John 4:4, Scripture tells us, "Now he had to go through Samaria." Jesus had a divine appointment with a Samaritan woman He sovereignly knew would come to the well at noon that day.

God knows each of the twenty women He will bring to PRM. He knows their stories and has prepared this home where they will hear how they can "Live Well" by placing their faith in Jesus Christ.

Jesus answered the Samaritan woman in John 4:10, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."

In His sovereignty, God has prepared a safe residence where twenty women will live, sleep, find rest, and hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Each woman will receive Christian counseling, participate in Bible study, and learn life skills to help them live well today, tomorrow, and—by God's grace—forever with Jesus Christ, their personal Savior.

Please pray that each woman will recognize the gift of God offered through Jesus Christ—His life, death, and resurrection. And when she leaves PRM, just like the Samaritan woman, may she go and tell others how Jesus Christ knows her and has transformed her life to "Live Well" now and for eternity.

Bethel's PRM Partnership is excited to include the PRM Women's Ministry alongside the PRM Men's Ministry.

The PRM Women's Ministry held its official ribbon-cutting on Thursday, June 26. According to God's perfect timing, twenty women He loves will call PRM home for several months.

God calls His people to pray, to go, and to give!

Please pray for these twenty precious women as the Holy Spirit leads, and lift up the requests shared in Bethel's weekly prayer list. If you don't receive the prayer requests by email, contact the church office to be added.

WOMEN OF BETHEL

-ASK: Will you ask God how He wants you to get involved with the PRM Women's Ministry?

How has God gifted you?

What talents and time has He given you to lavish love on the twenty residents He has appointed to live at the PRM Women's Ministry Home?

-PLAN: to attend the Prayer Meeting at PRM on Thursday, August 7, from 7–8 pm.

Meet at Bethel at 6:15 p.m. to carpool—leaving promptly at 6:30—or meet us at PRM, 9308 Warwick Blvd, at 7pm.

We will continue to share opportunities to go, serve, and spend time with the residents.

Step out in faith to be the hands and feet of Jesus to the women God loves so much.

Knowing Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord is the ONLY way to "Live Well"—today, tomorrow, and for eternity.

Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." — John 14:6

If you have questions about PRM Women's Ministry, call Debbie Messick, at 757-268-4026.

Come join in what God is doing at PRM Women's Ministry!

SUPPORT PRM!

Purchase Items from their Amazon Wishlists and have them shipped directly to them!



WOMEN'S MINISTRY



MEN'S MINISTRY



KITCHEN WISHLIST



HELPING PENINSULA FAMILIES IN NEED

BETHEL CONTINUES PARTNERSHIP WITH THRIVE PENINSULA

By Christine Miles

The congregation at Bethel has been very active in supporting Thrive Peninsula, an organization that assists families experiencing financial hardship by providing food, financial aid, and counseling.

In February, Bethel filled a shopping cart with soup and crackers, AWANA collected 130 cans of food, and the Penny Leonhard Circle assembled Blessing Bags filled with cleaning supplies for Thrive clients. In March, Bethel took over running The Market at Thrive on a Saturday, helping clients as they shopped for food. In June, Bethel hosted a food drive focused on breakfast items.

In addition to these special projects, about ten Bethel members volunteer weekly at Thrive. These volunteers serve by packing and sorting food, partnering with local grocery stores for pickups, tending the garden, and answering phones.

Bethel also maintains donation carts in the Main and Slate foyers, where anyone can donate non-perishable food items, as well as paper and plastic bags, anytime the church is open. So far in 2025, Bethel has donated over 2,100 pounds of food.



BETHEL BAPTIST CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

A YEAR OF GROWTH, GRATITUDE, AND GOD'S GOODNESS

By Kim Green



The 2024-2025 school year has just wrapped up, and we are filled with praise and gratitude for all that God has done. Our 43 staff members and 208 students—and their families—are now enjoying summer break. We pray for a restful, fun, and safe summer for each of them, with a joyful return this fall.

Throughout the year, daily learning and engaging activities—both in and out of the classroom—contributed to a successful and blessed school year.

Here's just a glimpse of what's been happening at BBCS:

- Educational field trips to Williamsburg, Jamestown, the zoo, and the pumpkin patch
- Parent Teacher Fellowship (PTF) events like Paint Night, Field Day, and fundraising dinners
- Science Fair projects and outdoor learning in our new Outdoor Education Area
- School-wide Carnival, Read Across America Week, and "Tea with Me"
- Bible Time, weekly chapels, and the making of the Gospel of John video
- "Stay and Play" sessions and visits from the fire department, sheriff's office, and other community helpers
- Mission projects, STEM activities, food drives for Thrive, and toy drives for the Peninsula Rescue Mission
- Monthly support of Helen through Compassion International
- Graduations, promotions, end-of-year showcases, and discipleship classes

Each weekday, the Slate foyer, preschool, children's, and recreational wings are filled with students and staff learning in a Christ-centered academic environment. While meeting state educational standards, our greatest goal is to help students grow in faith, knowledge, character, productivity, and joy in Christ.

Many of our church members share classroom space with BBCS through their Bible Fellowship classes. A new Prayer Partnership Initiative encourages members to pray for the teachers and students who use the same rooms throughout the week.

We ask for continued prayer for:

- Salvation and discipleship among students
- Wisdom and direction for staffing
- Scholarship opportunities and substitute teachers
- Discernment for future growth
- God's continued presence and blessing on our school

As shared in the last Missions Team newsletter, the mission of BBCS is to function as an outreach ministry of Bethel Baptist Church. We partner with families to provide a Christ-centered atmosphere for children ages 2.5 through 8th grade. Our goal is to create a loving, safe environment that fosters spiritual, physical, social, and academic growth—laying the foundation for faith and lifelong learning.

The Four Pillars of BBCS:

- Biblically Based Teaching
- Financial Accessibility
- Academically Robust Curriculum
- Evangelistic Focus

These pillars guide us in making disciples in obedience to the Great Commission. The Bible is our final authority, and key verses such as Proverbs 22:6, Matthew 22:37-39, Mark 12:30-31, and Galatians 5:22-23 shape our mission.

If you're interested in supporting or serving at BBCS, please contact our Executive Director, Sandra Chambers, at 757-867-6216.



Ways to Support BBCS:

- Visit our website: bbcnyorktown.org
- Pray regularly for our students and staff
- Participate in the School Supply Drive (July)
- Join the Mentorship Program (launching Fall 2025)
- Enroll in Kroger Rewards - NPO #93733 or "Bethel Baptist Church Yorktown"
- Use Box Tops for Education - select BBCS in the app
- Make a Direct Financial Donation - choose "BBCS Sponsorship" at bbcnyorktown.org/giving

BETHEL BAPTIST STANDS FOR LIFE!



2025 VIRGINIA MARCH FOR LIFE

By Dawn Henry

The 2025 Virginia March for Life in Richmond on April 2nd was an encouraging event that brought together a diverse group of advocates united in the mission to protect the unborn.

With Lieutenant Governor Winsome Sears as one of the key speakers, the rally set a powerful tone for the day. Sears emphasized the importance of supporting post-abortive women, highlighting the need for compassion and resources to help them heal and find hope after their experiences.

Other notable speakers included representatives from the Virginia Society for Human Life and the Family Foundation of Virginia, who shared their insights and experiences, emphasizing the importance of community support and legislative advocacy.

It was heartening to see families, students, and seasoned activists standing side by side, all committed

to the cause, reminding us that the fight for life transcends generations.

If you're passionate about making a difference, I encourage you to join us next year for the March for Life. This event is not just a rally; it's an opportunity to stand in solidarity with individuals who believe in the sanctity of life. Whether you're a young student eager to make your voice heard or a seasoned advocate with years of experience, your presence can help amplify our message and inspire change. Together, we can raise awareness about the importance of supporting women and families facing unplanned pregnancies and advocate for life-affirming policies in Virginia.

Mark your calendars and be part of this impactful movement—your voice can make a difference, and together, we can create a brighter future for all!



2025 CARE NET PENINSULA WALK FOR LIFE

By Christina Brandal

This year at the Care Net Walk For Life, the organization celebrated 40 years of supporting mothers & babies. Bethel Baptist continued their active support of Care Net Peninsula with a large showing of support for the 2025 Walk for Life. Members of all ages (and even some 4-legged companions) participated.

Bethel Baptist raised over \$7,500 for this year's Walk For Life event and was also recently honored by Care Net for over \$100,000 in gifts since we began support.

The annual Walk For Life is just one way CareNet continues its ongoing mission (quoted from their website):

Women with unplanned pregnancies often feel scared and alone. When they're alone in crisis, abortion can feel like the only way out. Care Net wants to be their first call for help.

They provide a safe space where mom's can process and learn the truth about their pregnancy. Care Net provides options such as counseling, ultrasounds, and parenting support. All for FREE so women don't default to abortion.

When pregnant women have the help & hope they need, they choose life for their baby!

Keep your eye out for ways you can be a part of our continued support of Care Net Peninsula!

2025 NATIONAL MARCH FOR LIFE

By Shirley Paz



2025 MARCH FOR LIFE

January 24, 2025 | Washington, D.C.

As I prepared myself for the March for Life in Washington D.C. with Bethel Baptist Church on Jan 24, 2025, I had no idea what I would learn by attending the march and its impact even after Roe v. Wade was overturned.

I was excited to attend for the very first time. It was always so cold during that time of the year and with little ones I felt I was never able to attend. But this year my daughter and I saw the opportunity to attend and signed up to ride on the bus the church had provided.

The very first March for Life was held on January 22, 1974 because organizer, Nellie Gray, was hoping that Roe v. Wade would be overturned that day. Unfortunately, it was not. So, she decided to hold a March for Life every year until it would be overturned. On June 24, 2022, Roe v. Wade was finally overturned and U.S. Supreme Court officially reversed the earlier decision and declared that the constitutional right to abortion no longer exists.

So why do we still march if Roe v. Wade has already been overturned? The court case may have been overturned but the option to abort an unwanted unborn still exists in many states.

The ruling gives each state the right to decide how they want to handle the abortion issue in their own states. In addition, there are still pro-abortion politicians ready to put more laws in places to ensure abortions are made available to all women in all states.

Many abortions are still performed daily. Very few are done to save the life of the mother. Most are performed to terminate an unwanted pregnancy (a human life) out of convenience. March for Life wants to keep marching to build a culture that respects human life on Capitol Hill and advocate for the advancement of federal pro-life policies. Not only on Capitol Hill but also at the state level as well to urge state legislators to pass lifesaving protections for the unborn.

When we finally arrived in Washington D.C. that cold January morning, seeing all the people come together and march for life was energizing. What made it even more special was Vice President JD Vance was going to speak along with several other politicians and guest speakers to encourage us to keep up the fight for the sanity of life. Knowing that there is a Vice President of the United States ready to stand and defend the sanctity of life was a blessing.

I would encourage everyone to take a stand for the unborn. One easy way to do this is by attending a March for Life. Bethel Baptist church provides transportation to D.C. and Richmond every year. Another thing you can do is to consider donating to pro-life organizations. There are many national and local charities such as pregnancy centers like Care Net. Finally, I would encourage everyone to be in prayer for our law makers and mothers who feel like they have no other choices.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2025 TO GOD BE THE GLORY FOR A FANTASTIC WEEK!

By Christine O'Shields



The week of Vacation Bible School was marked by grace, peace, and love—the kind only God can provide. As believers, we're called to share the Gospel with the nations... and that includes the littlest ones.

Seeds of truth were planted in their hearts, and now we pray for continued watering—that something stirs within them to chase after the Lord, to lift His name high, to turn to Him in desperation, and to praise Him in the good.

VBS is a massive undertaking—and one that absolutely cannot be done alone. I'm so incredibly grateful for the 125+ volunteers who showed up and poured their hearts into this week. From group leaders to the worship team, the kitchen crew to our custodians—every role mattered.

A simple thank you doesn't feel like enough. We may never fully know the eternal impact of this week, but God knows. He sees every moment, every conversation, every seed planted.

"It's like a mustard seed that, when sown upon the soil, is the smallest of all the seeds on the ground." — Mark 4:31

To God be the glory — for every laugh, every tear, every heart moved this week.

FAMILY PALOOZA

NC CHURCH PARTNER PROVIDES COMMUNITY OUTREACH OPPORTUNITY

By Christina Brandal



On Friday, June 13, Bethel hosted its Family Palooza, a vibrant evening of fun, food, and fellowship that brought together families from across the community. Members of Bethel, BBCS, and the community came together for this fun event!

From 6 to 9pm, the church grounds were transformed into a lively festival space filled with music, games, and laughter.

The event featured a wide array of free attractions, including delicious

food, upbeat music, exciting games with prizes, a bounce house, and a giant inflatable slide that was a hit. The atmosphere was electric with joy and connection as families enjoyed quality time together and made new friends.

Organized by a mission-minded church from North Carolina, Family Palooza was more than just a fun night out—it was a meaningful opportunity for Bethel families to extend hospitality and invite neighbors into a welcoming, faith-filled environment. There was a

special time during Family Palooza where families got to hear the gospel as a part of an exciting presentation and counselors were available to talk to those interested in making a decision.

Thanks to the hard work of volunteers and the generosity of the organizers, the event was a resounding success, leaving attendees with full hearts and lasting memories.



QUILTING FOR A CAUSE

BETHEL GROUP SERVES NURSING HOMES, CHILDREN, AND PROVIDES DISASTER RELIEF

By Carolyn Fedder



In March 2022, the Bethel Quilting Group was formed. We meet the second and fourth Wednesday mornings of each month (with only a few exceptions) from 9am-12pm.

In 2022, we made 39 lap quilts for the residents of Dominion Nursing Home in Poquoson for Christmas.

Bayside Nursing Home in Poquoson was provided 56 lap quilts along with 20 lap quilts for a unit at Warwick Forrest where Mr. Blankenship, a member of Bethel Baptist, resided for Christmas 2023.

In 2024, 105 lap quilts were given for Christmas to the residents at Dominion Nursing Home in Newport News.

The quilting group also made 21 lap quilts, 19 baby quilts and 7 crochet throws that Christina Brandal took to Cedar Mountain Baptist Church in Brevard, North Carolina to help those impacted by Hurricane Helene.

Over these three years, 8 Bethel Baptist Church shut-ins were provided lap quilts.

We are very thankful members of Bethel Baptist for donations of 3 sewing machines along with material, thread, and batting to be used in making these lap quilts.

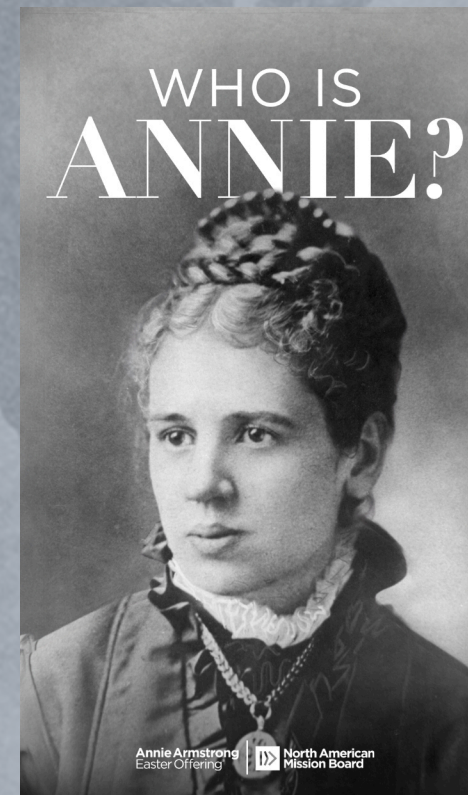
We would like your help. If you do not know how to quilt, we can help you learn if you are interested. We also need help cutting material and hand sewing labels onto the lap quilts.

If you are interested, please call Carolyn Fedder at 757-865-1452 or Dottie Bauman at 757-865-1766.

WHO IS ANNIE ARMSTRONG?

ANNUAL NATIONAL MISSIONS OFFERING HONORS THE WORK OF MISSIONARY

Excerpts Compiled from the North American Mission Board website



The Annie Armstrong Easter Offering was started in 1895 by Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) to benefit the work of the Home Mission Board (now North American Mission Board).

In 1934, it was named in honor of Annie Armstrong, a bold missions advocate and WMU's first national executive leader.

Today, more than \$2 billion has been donated by Southern Baptist churches and individuals.

Annie (1850-1938) was born in Baltimore at a time when there was little opportunity for women. Yet, her devotion to Christ led her to a life of service and leadership.

She organized women to pray, to give and to meet the needs around them. She challenged pastors and churches to action and rallied vital support for missionaries. Ultimately, Annie was recognized as a national Southern Baptist trailblazer for her visionary leadership that still inspires millions today.

Annie's Contributions

- Started Bay View Mission for Baltimore's poor and addicted
- Served as the first executive of Woman's Missionary Union.
- Led the formation of missions' organizations for children
- Raised support for missionaries to Italian and Jewish immigrants
- Refused a salary because she would never give to the Lord "that which costs me nothing." (2 Samuel 24:24)
- Initiated fund-raising "brick cards" to build churches in Cuba
- Gained support for the first black, female missionaries
- Secured funds to relieve China missionary, Lottie Moon, who had served for 11 years without a furlough
- Advocated for Native Americans and impoverished mountain people
- Honored in 1934 when The Home Missions Offering was re-named for her to encourage more to follow her sacrificial example

GOOD NEWS!

COLOMBIA 2025 - SHARING THE GOSPEL OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE

By Neal & Rhonda Robinson



Have you ever been too comfortable in your comfort zone?

Are you now?

We all like to have stability and a routine—the desire for predictability and safety is natural. If we are “too comfortable”, it can stagnate us spiritually and paralyze us from action especially when God may call us to join Him in short term ministry in international missions.

Once we decided to go to the South American country of Colombia, it was a leap of faith. It was a leap to overcome FEAR: the FEAR of drug cartels; the FEAR of potential violence, the FEAR of the language barrier, the FEAR of the UNKNOWN. God reminded us Jesus lovingly rebuked His disciples in difficult situations by asking, “You of little faith, why do you doubt?” When God was refocused as GOD then FEAR became “fear.” God prepared and equipped us through proper training and personal encounters that unfolded into an awesome experience.

Pastor Brian Parker, and his wife, Wendy, are outstanding mission leaders. They prepared us for the trip with thorough pre-trip training, information sessions, and prayer. It was at that time we learned that we would partner with Ingelsia Bautista Leon de Juda (Lion of Judah Church); a small but growing congregation of about 25 to 30 believers. Over time, we learned and practiced evangelism techniques, were advised on cultural norms, determined ministry assignments, and provided travel/logistics information; the Holy Spirit, through the Parkers, made us mentally and spiritually ready for

the trip. It was during this time that the team, who ranged in age from mid-70s to 16, began to “gel.” We were ready!

On January 2, 2025, show time at Bethel Baptist Church was a brutal 3:30 a.m. (thanks Brian). Spirits were high and a calm came over us as we headed to the airport to catch our flight on Spirit Airlines (the “Yellow Birds”). Destination ... Bogota, Colombia. The trip was uneventful and pleasant as we passed over the Gulf of America and crossed the northern coastline of Colombia. As the “Yellow Bird” made its final descent over the country, we saw the lush green mountains dotted with colorful homes in a patchwork of towns. The national tourism slogan began to make sense “Colombia, the Country of Beauty.” We settled into our accommodations for the night ready to meet with the Lion of Judah congregation the following day.

The next morning, we split into two teams (Adult and Youth Ministries), linked up with our translators (Diana “Dee-Awna”, Juan Carlos, Valerie, and Diego) and support teams, and headed west out of Bogota to an area known as “Soacha.” Little did we know, in over three short days, we would become close brothers and sisters in Christ.

On the way out we were enveloped by motorcyclists lane splitting and well inside American personal comfort zones—what an exciting ride! Our drive meandered through busy avenues and the cityscape changed from universal big city scenes to low-income areas. After a 45-minute drive, we wound our way through dusty side streets to a concrete and plaster building sandwiched in between

several small Colombian businesses. Through the doorway, we immediately ascended about 20 steps in a stairwell to the main floor that served as a sanctuary; it was just large enough to accommodate the five rows of five chairs that served as pews. They were a small congregation but the expression of hospitality was enormous!

It was in this “Upper Room” where we met the first members of the Lion of Judah Church—boy was that a treat! The couple who greeted us were Oscar and Anna. Oscar was gregarious and welcoming--Anna was a bit reserved but both were friendly. Nonetheless, there was an instant connection enabled by a common bond--the Holy Spirit! Oscar told us, through our translator Juan Carlos, “they were excited to meet us and were very much looking forward to what God was going to bring to Lion of Judah through your team!” Wow! That struck a positive chord; they were “looking forward to us!?” Who were we but regular lay people from a church in Yorktown, VA? It was evident, from the very first interaction, that God had already prepared the way! That was both humbling and exciting!

Pastor Brian coordinated with Pastor Jose, the soft-spoken, spirit-filled, and compassionate leader of Lion of Judah, for selected training ministries. The Youth Ministry team partnered with another church plant of Lion of Judah in another area. Our team (Adult Ministry) was tasked with training sessions, over 3 days, on: “Evangelism”; “Theology and Doctrine Matters”; “God’s Grace and His Workmanship in Us”; “Biblical Teaching with Application”; “What a Spirit led Life Looks Like”; and “God’s Plan for Marriage and Parenting.” As

we prepared for our sessions, the church members began to arrive: Carlos and Lorena, Arturo and Adonai, , Jorge and Angela, Elli (mom) and Angie (daughter), Javier, Julio, Sylvia, Estephan (Pastor Jose’s son), and several more along with a good group of children.

After a brief welcome by Pastors Jose and Brian, we were ready to go! When the first class started, the congregation was READY TO GO! It was much different than what we see in churches in our country. They displayed an intense desire to learn and hear the word! The first class was on evangelism and Gospel presentation strategies like “The 3-Circles.” Our team explained we wanted them to learn and use these techniques to present the Gospel in their communities and to draw people to their congregation. They had their notebooks ready and were taking many notes! After the evangelism training, our team partnered with members of the church to go into the community to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We went to a local park about 4 blocks away from the church.

Gospel presentations can be intimidating in the U.S. for a variety of reasons. In Colombia, the work is a little less so because, from a cultural perspective, the people are willing to listen even if they don’t agree. They will not immediately dismiss you or hurl insults. Oscar was in our group and he presented the Gospel to a man named Daniel, a street vendor, who accepted Christ! Amazing—the very first one! The second encounter with a couple in the park was not as successful in that regard but allowed Oscar to gain confidence in his presentation as he engaged for about 20 minutes or so with the male. Then we met a woman named Daliana.

Daliana was in the park the same time Oscar and our team were speaking with the couple. We noticed Anna was separated from the group and speaking with her. After we finished with the couple, we walked into an emotional scene. Wendy Parker did a great job translating. Daliana was upset about her home life and marriage relationship. Although she professed a relationship with God, she admitted she had been out of fellowship with a church for a while. We shared scripture with her about the love and patience of God which resonated mightily with her and caused her to shed “hopeful” tears.



We invited her to church and she agreed. Then she came about an hour later and stayed the rest of the weekend committed to that body of believers! Again, God had prepared the way!

We partnered with the church in food distribution work and Gospel sharing in a much poorer community in the foothills about 25 minutes’ drive further away. The people were destitute and comprised of a number of refugees. However, even in this situation the Spirit of the Lord allowed for great fellowship with the people during the afternoon. We split into groups and carried food and the Gospel door to door. What an amazing time to witness several people accept Christ!

The remaining sessions went extremely well with the congregation eager to participate and learn. The praise and worship time was phenomenal! Although, the time was in Spanish without interpretation, we were all on one accord and intuitively knew what was sung and said. It was an amazing demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit!

Rhonda connected with the women exceptionally well and spoke on the benefits of developing a Women’s Ministry team. They listened intently and were taking notes. Anna, who was reserved at the initial meeting, took the lead and became comfortable speaking with Rhonda. She organized the women and was determined to form the group. It was encouraging to see the women come together even the next day wanting to talk more about this subject! After we returned, we learned the women

organized their first team meeting. How exciting is that!

The time spent in ministry with a mission team is wonderful! During those 45 minute rides, in small vans, to and from our ministry locations, we learned so much about each other and developed close friendships. We were able to get to know people much better than a “Hi, howya doing” on a Sunday morning. Now, when we see each other in church it’s accompanied with a hug or hearty handshake in a more personal way. What a way to strengthen the church body!

We were glad to partner with God on this trip to Colombia! We stepped out of our comfort zone and God allowed experiences and demonstrated His power in ways we will never forget. Our prayer is that as you read this you too will be prompted to take your own “leap of faith.”

The most important thing we can do is share the Gospel with others as it will determine their eternal destiny. God’s family will consist of people from every tongue, nation, and tribe—Americans and Colombians. We are reminded of Romans 10:12-15:

“For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”

GIVING AND RECEIVING BLESSINGS WHILE ON MISSION

COLOMBIA MISSIONARY PERSPECTIVE ON BETHEL'S WORK

By Diana Carolina Carrillo E. Missionary in Bogotá. Colombia



Sometimes God surprises me in the way that he works, and the connections that he makes. I met pastor Brian last year with the missionary Matthew, so this year we had the opportunity to work together with their team.

We were working in Soacha, south of Bogotá, with the community that lives there with Pastor Jose and the planting church “Lion of Judah”

It was a wonderful time with teaching sessions and evangelism.

We have the opportunity to learn about women's and men's ministry, and about parenting.

We learned about sharing the gospel with the people in the park, we made teams with the local church, Bethel Baptist Church, and a translator and shared the “three circles” and also some experiences, testimonies and we prayed together. I know that God use every interaction, every smile, every way to show his love to other, so I am so grateful to Bethel Baptist Church and Pastor Brian, Wendy, and all the team (young and adult), because God used them to bless many people, sharing the gospel, and also sharing food.

I learned a lot from each person on the team—their love for the people and how intentional they are. For example Karsten showed me that you don't have excuses to go, you just need to be obedient and also you need a really good friend like Brent to help you and support you every where.

Pastor Brian and Wendy have a beautiful family with a missionary heart, and they are teaching their children to follow their example, Bill is a prayer warrior and Stuart showed us the importance of being intentional even with the van drivers. Each day he share a bible verse with Diego. Everyone on the team was a big blessing.

I think that a mission trip is an experience that blesses the team, the missionaries, the church, the pastor, the translators, the drivers, and the people that we evangelize. For me it is such a special time, to invest in the growth of God's kingdom.



God give us the opportunity to spend time together and see the passion of the team to spread the gospel.

We are so thankful for each teaching session that we have, and for the food distribution.

So I just want to say thank you so much Bethel Baptist Church for your beautiful team members, because each one was a huge blessing. God taught me a lot, and it was a wonderful experience together.

I want to encourage everyone to be part to the next mission trip, that you could be part that the God is doing in the field. In different parts of the world exist people that need to hear the good news, so for that you need to be brave to share the gospel, maybe in other country or maybe with your neighbors.

Ask God “Lord where do you want me to serve you” and when the Lord responds to you, please be obedient, and decide to obey him and trust him, if He is guiding you he will help you.

I hope that you could be a part of the next mission trip.

Thank you so much Bethel Church, May God Bless you!!

Bethel Team Supports Gospel Outreach in Georgia

Encouraging New Believers and Spreading the Gospel

By Sally Johnson



In March, a small team from Bethel traveled to the Republic of Georgia to continue working with IMB partners (names will not be included in this article for their safety). The Republic of Georgia is bordered by Russia to the north, the Black Sea to the west, and Turkey, Armenia, and Azerbaijan to the south and east, and is approximately half the size of our state of Georgia, with a diverse geography of snow-capped mountains, valleys, forests, and beaches.

As a former member of the Soviet Union, Georgia still struggles for political and economic independence from Russia, and is increasingly being influenced by a growing Muslim population. The dominant religion practiced is Georgian Orthodox, and many of the homes we visited had a prayer corner of icons of Mary to which they would pray for intercession. There are very few born-again Christians in Georgia, and the Baptist church is often considered to be a cult. The Georgians we met were very welcoming and open to having Gospel conversations. Most discussions were through interpreters, although we met several teenagers who had learned enough English in school for simple communication with us.

Pastor Brian had to leave the group for medical treatment in Turkey, leaving Bill Heely and Stuart

and Sally Johnson to continue with the mission, traveling to T-town, K-town, O-town, and several small towns to encourage new believers and to share the Gospel message through home visits and participating in leading two worship services.

The team visited the homes of a number of new believers and people open to the Gospel, working alongside two pastors who are in the process of establishing new house churches. We distributed food to the families and had Gospel conversations with them. The pastors used our visit to draw together potential members of three future house churches in K-town and two neighboring towns.

We also visited a blind pastor who became blind due to war injuries decades earlier and after struggling with depression for many years had come to Christ and now leads worship services in his house.

We were joined on our trip by two other IMB partners who are new to Georgia and still getting established in their work. They traveled with us to O-town, where they helped us lead an after-school activity for local children with crafts, Bible stories, and games and we then visited two homes, delivering food and the good news of the Gospel.

We also visited the Teen Challenge facility in T-town, where we met a former Ukrainian soldier who was beaten severely by Russian soldiers in the Ukraine war and was struggling with depression and addiction. We visited the same group of Ukrainian orphans as on the last trip, and we led them in a craft activity and some Bible stories.

Overall, the trip offered numerous opportunities to share the Gospel to unbelievers who were struggling for answers, to encourage new believers by sharing our testimonies and clarifying basic Biblical tenets, and to support pastors and partners in ministering to Georgians.



EQUIP

**And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,
to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ”**

Ephesians 4:11-12

SEND

**“For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing
from the Gentiles. Therefore we ought to support people like these,
that we may be fellow workers for the truth.”**

3 John 6-8

GO

**“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of
the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that
I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”**

Matthew 28: 19-20