

Mid-Tidewater Baptist Association of Virginia, Inc.

Serving, Cooperating, Sharing



Poroporone Baptist Church
October 8, 1959 – 1st Annual Session



Newington Baptist Church
October 20, 2019 - 60th yr. Annual Gathering

1959 - 2019

Celebrating 60 Years, Diamond Jubilee, of Ministry



"As you come to him, the living Stone rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."
I Peter 2: 4-5

*HISTORY OF
MID-TIDEWATER BAPTIST ASSOCIATION*

1959 - 2019 (60 YEARS)

Diamond Jubilee

October 20, 2019



This booklet made available to you by:

Commemorative Committee:

Barbara Bareford (MTBA Office Administrator & Saluda BC)

Lillian Cox (Newington BC)

Annette Greenwood (Urbanna BC)

Wanda Watkins (Poroporone BC)

The MTBA family wants to express it's deepest appreciation to the Commemorative Committee for the excellent work in putting together this latest addition to our MTBA story. This was a very important task as our association celebrates it's Sixtieth Anniversary. Thank you Lillian Cox, Annette Greenwood, and Wanda Watkins for the time, energy, and effort you gave to this important document for the Mid-Tidewater Baptist Association. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

The Organization Year - 1959

Messengers and pastors from Baptist churches in King and Queen, Middlesex, Mathews, New Kent and Gloucester Counties came together on June 30, 1959 to prayerfully consider forming a new Baptist association in the Middle Peninsula area of Virginia. For some time there had been discussions among the churches of the need for a new association. Inconvenience in communication and difficulties in carrying out organized work over such a wide area were the main concerns and pivotal in making such a move.

Twenty of the churches represented at the meeting that night were members of the Rappahannock Association which had been organized in 1843. They included Beulah, Bruington, Ebenezer, Glebe Landing, Gwynn's Island, Harmony Grove, Hermitage, Lower King and Queen (Wares), Macedonia, Mathews, Mattaponi, Olivet, Petsworth, Poroporone, St. Stephens, Saluda, Spring Hill, Urbanna, Westville and Zoar. The Rappahannock Association encompassed an area including the Northern Neck and most of the Middle Peninsula of Virginia. Originally, it included the Baptist churches between the York and Mattaponi Rivers on the west to the Rappahannock River on the east, and extended northward to the Potomac River. Corinth and Liberty Churches in New Kent County sent messengers, as well as Providence and Newington in Gloucester County. These four were members of the Peninsula Association at that time.

A recommendation from the Tidewater Pastors' Conference brought the messengers, pastors, and other interested persons together for the historical meeting at Poroporone. Twelve pastors, thirty-eight messengers and twenty-one visitors were

recorded in attendance. Rev. William Engels, pastor of the host church, presided. He was elected temporary moderator and Mr. C. W. Blanchard of Mathews was elected Clerk and Acting Treasurer. Committees were chosen, including one to select a name for the new association, with Miss Olive Bagby from Bruington as Chairman. It was voted that the first regular meeting of the new association would be held at Poroporone October 8, 1959, at 10:00 a.m.

With only a few months between the organizational meeting and the first annual session, the committees elected in June all presented complete reports when they met October 8, 1959, again at Poroporone. There were sixty-six messengers and seventeen pastors present. A Constitution and By-Laws were approved as presented by Mr. Richard Cotter, from Westville. All officers recommended by the Nominating Committee were elected, including Rev. Fred Billups of Urbanna, Moderator; Mr. Fred Corr of Newington, Vice-Moderator; Mr. Blanchard, Clerk; and Mr. Landis Walker of Liberty as Treasurer. A budget of \$1,400 was approved. The total was based on an assessment of thirty cents per member from each church. Mr. Blanchard reported receipts from eight churches, totaling \$85. Disbursements had been \$10.76, leaving a balance of \$74.24.

Three names for the new association were suggested: **John Waller**, suggested by Miss Bagby, **Chesapeake**, presented by Rev. Broughman; and **Mid-Tidewater**, brought by Mr. Fred Corr. With a vote of fifty to twenty-two the name **Mid-Tidewater** was adopted.

The Women's Missionary Union, Auxiliary to the Mid-Tidewater Association, held its first meeting at Mathews Church

October 29, 1959. A constitution and full slate of officers were presented and approved. Mrs. Janice Engels was elected Superintendent, and Miss Bagby Assistant Superintendent. A budget of \$230 was approved.

A WMU group of primarily women who worked away from home during the day was formed and led by Mrs. Gladys Chewning of Urbanna. They were a part of the Business Women's Federation and later became known as the Gladys Chewning Group in her honor. The Association was geographically divided into three other WMU Groups. The Iverson Lewis Group was first headed by Mrs. Horace Lilly, the John Waller Group by Mrs. H. B. Miller and the Priscilla Pollard Group by Mrs. Purnell Drudge.

1960 – 1969

Mid-Tidewater held its first two-day annual session at Gwynn's Island Church on October 19-20, 1960. Excitement about the new association had spread through the surrounding communities and Beech Grove Church in Gloucester, coming from the Peninsula Association, made application for membership. The Association constitution was amended to include two additional standing committees including a Missions Committee and a Stewardship and Cooperative Program Committee. The Association budget for 1960-61 was set at \$1,700.

Reports presented at the 1961 and 1962 Association meetings gave an insight into the progress already having been made by the newly organized association. At that time, all churches in the Association had WMU organizations. Several churches including Glebe Landing, Hermitage,

Newington and Poroporone were commended for having hosted ten-day Vacation Bible Schools. An Association Temperance Committee was appointed and a donation of \$1,000 was given toward the construction of a health clinic at Camp Piankatank.

It was at the 1963 Association meeting that Good Hope Baptist Church in New Kent officially became a member of the Association. At its November 9, 1962 meeting the Association Executive Committee had reviewed Good Hope's letter expressing its desire to join and had granted them provisional membership until an official vote could be taken. Dues were set at thirty cents per member and the 1963-64 budget was set at \$1,910. An amendment was proposed to the Constitution to have a one-day meeting of the Association in the spring and a one-day meeting in the fall. The Constitution was amended at the 1964 session to read "*The Association shall meet bi-annually on the third Wednesday of October and the third Wednesday of April in each year...*" It was suggested that the April meeting be considered a business session and the October meeting be more inspirational, allowing time for business as necessary.

Reports at the spring 1965 meeting included information on an impressive School of Missions program held on March 21-27 in which twelve Association churches participated. A dozen guest speakers including foreign and home missionaries had made a number of addresses at the various churches with total attendance in excess of 4,700. Plans to hold an Associational School of Music were announced with the first session scheduled for May 17-21 at Newington Church. This school would be primarily for choir members, directors and accompanists. Fall

reports indicated that all twenty-six churches in the Association held Vacation Bible Schools with almost 2,000 enrolled. All churches were holding worship and Sunday School every Sunday, eleven had a library, sixteen had a choir and sixteen were holding Training Union.

A rather alarming revelation was reported by the Evangelism Committee at the spring 1966 meeting. A continuing decline in the church membership number had been noted for the past two years. Reports for 1964 indicated membership had been 6,083. That number dropped to 5,985 in 1965 and 5,957 in 1966. Dues remained at thirty cents per member and the 1966-67 budget was set at \$2,255.

The Association began to feel the need for additional funding and in 1967 dues were increased to forty cents per member to allow for an appropriation for guest speakers at the Association meetings as well as to meet additional needs of the Association's growing ministry. Providence Church left Mid-Tidewater that year to rejoin the Peninsula Association. Rev. Marion DuBose made the following motion which was adopted at the fall 1968 session:

"We wish to reaffirm our conviction to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage and hereby resolve that we oppose the sale of intoxicating beverages by the drink."

Reports for 1968 indicate that of the twenty-five churches reporting, seven were without a pastor. Total enrollment had dropped by almost four hundred due mostly to the transfer of Providence Church to the Peninsula Association. The budget for 1968-69 was set at \$2,225.

1970 – 1979

Association churches were encouraged to adopt the Southern Baptist Convention's "Shaping the 70's" program. This program's theme focused on "shaping the 70's through living the spirit of Christ" with specific emphasis topics set for the next decade. Reports given during the session revealed that the Association was sponsoring worship services at campgrounds in three counties, Bible School enrollment had been 1,645 and total church enrollment was now 5,447.

The Clerk reported 207 in attendance at the spring 1971 meeting; a big increase over the 167 in attendance at the previous spring session. The Resolutions Committee report presented at the fall session included the following statement:

"We register opposition to the legalization of gambling - pari-mutuel betting, lotteries, or any other form - in the Commonwealth."

The committee further urged Association members to write to their government representatives and express their opposition as well. Rev. John Garrett, Moderator, expressed concern that some churches were "cutting corners and having only one-week Vacation Bible Schools. To me the results of Bible School are more rewarding than a revival."

Virginia Baptist churches were encouraged to celebrate the Sesquicentennial of the founding of the Baptist General Association of Virginia in 1973. Churches in the Association which were established before 1823 were recognized at the spring meeting held at Urbanna Church. They were: Bruington, Glebe Landing,

Hermitage, Lower King and Queen, Mathews, Poroporone and Zoar. Many churches displayed banners, old Bibles and communion pieces from their early days. A portrait of Rev. Robert Baylor Semple, pastor of Bruington Church for 40 years, and first President of the General Association of Virginia was also on display. In order to have the portrait available for the Association meeting, it was necessary for Mr. Richard Gwathmey, Moderator, to secure a court order to have it removed from the King and Queen Court House. A gavel was presented to the Association WMU from Mr. and Mrs. Gwathmey. The gavel was made from a cedar tree which grew on the site of St. Clements or "Apple Tree" Church, the boyhood church of Robert Baylor Semple. The church was built in 1710 in King and Queen County and was also called Upper Church.

The Clerk's report given at the spring 1973 meeting indicated that 250 were present. The report also revealed a continued decline in church membership while there had been a continual increase in Cooperative Program contributions. New Hope Memorial Church was accepted into the Association bringing the total number of churches back up to twenty-six.

1974 was the centennial year for Virginia WMU. In addition to state-wide recognition and events, many of the Association churches held special events and programs in celebration of this milestone. Reports indicated that four young men had been licensed to preach the Gospel during the year: Charles Davis of Liberty, Amos Healy of Hermitage, Richard Lester of Beech Grove and Roy Foster of Spring Hill. The Association continued to put great emphasis on its worship and prayer services at local campgrounds.

1975 was another milestone year with the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Cooperative Program. Mid-Tidewater recognized this accomplishment with a resolution passed at its spring meeting. Reports indicated that eighteen churches had participated in a World Missions Conference in May. In connection with the Conference, a very well attended Associational Youth Rally was held at Gwynn's Island. Associational dues remained at forty cents per member and the budget for 1975-76 was set at \$3,175.

By 1976 improvement had been made in the downward trend in church membership noted back in 1973. A significant increase of 285 was reported over figures for the prior year. The Association voted to change its Constitution to allow for the office of Moderator to alternate between a pastor and a layman with each successor being from a different church. The 1976 report from the Resolutions Committee included the following:

"Whereas, perennial efforts persist toward the lowering of the moral standards in our Commonwealth, be it resolved: that we go on record as irrevocably opposed to any legislation that would encourage or involve our government or its citizens in any form of gambling, or would tend to sanction obscene or immoral practices, or would encourage the harmful use of drugs."

The annual Southern Baptist Convention was held June 16, 1976 in Norfolk, Virginia. With the convention being so close to home, many Association members were able to attend. Of all the business conducted at the convention perhaps the most significant was the

introduction of “Bold Mission Thrust” by the Missions Challenge Committee. The Convention’s primary missions challenge was “that every person in the world shall have the opportunity to hear the gospel of Christ in the next 25 years.” This challenge began to shape the ministry of churches in our Association as well as across the country.

The clerk’s report for 1977 showed that all twenty-six churches were holding weekly worship services and twenty-five were holding weekly Sunday School. Total church enrollment had dropped by 140 over the past year. Harmony Grove was reported to have the largest membership with 582. Churches holding Training Union were down to four, a decrease of three during the year.

By 1978 the number of churches in the Association had dropped to twenty-five with Good Hope Church in New Kent County having recently closed. Vacation Bible School had total enrollment of 1,621, Sunday School had total enrollment of 3,541 and total membership was 5,198 for the year. The WMU reported that the Baptist Lodge Camp in Mathews was scheduled to be closed next year and GAs would now be going to Camp Viewmont near Charlottesville. The issue of gambling once again was on the minds of Baptist across the state and a referendum to establish horse racing and pari-mutuel betting in Virginia was to appear on the ballot at the next election. As a result, the following resolution was noted in the minutes:

“We resolve that we, the messengers present, go on record as being unilaterally opposed to the issue of pari-mutuel betting and recommend that all Baptist and Christians vote ‘No’ November 7, 1978.”

The referendum was defeated.

1980 – 1989

Simultaneous revivals were held in all Eastern Virginia Baptist Churches on April 16, 1980. This presented a time conflict for our spring meeting and the sessions were moved to morning and afternoon rather than afternoon and evening. Reports given indicated that the Association currently had twenty-five member churches and that all but two currently had a pastor.

Of particular concern to Association members was the kidnapping of fifty-two American diplomats from the American Embassy in Iran on November 4, 1979. These diplomats were held hostage by a group of Islamic students. The Resolution Committee presented the following statement at the spring 1980 meeting:

“Let us resolve to continue “Bold Missions” while it is yet day, praying for our communities, our country, the early release of our hostages held in Iran, and for the peace of Christ to come to all the world.”

These hostages were held for 444 days, their release being January 20, 1981; just moments after Ronald Reagan was sworn in as President.

The clerk’s report given in 1981 indicated that membership in the Association churches was 6,045; an increase from 5,915 in 1980. Sunday School enrollment was 3,678 and VBS enrollment was 1,638. The Association budget for 1981-82 was set at \$4,690 with dues being forty cents per church member.

Corinth Church in New Kent County requested to be dismissed from the Association in 1982. Corinth had been one of the charter members of Mid-Tidewater Association and desired to join fellowship with Dover Baptist Association in 1983. Membership in Association churches had decreased by four with total membership being 6,041.

By 1983 total membership in the twenty-four Association churches was 6,116, up seventy-five from the previous year. There had been 138 baptisms and seventeen churches held Vacation Bible Schools with 1,281 enrolled. Brotherhood and Royal Ambassadors with total enrollment of just over 300 were meeting in sixteen of the churches while the WMU, comprised of a variety of auxiliary units (Mission Friends, Girls in Action, Acteens, etc.), boasted 94 individual units with over 1,100 enrolled.

1984 marked the 25th anniversary of the Association. With Corinth most recently having moved to the Dover Association, Mid-Tidewater was now comprised of twenty-four churches. The various reports given at the annual meetings clearly emphasized the great strides that had been made during the twenty-five years since the organization of the Mid-Tidewater Association. All twenty-four churches were holding weekly Sunday School and Worship Services and twenty held Vacation Bible Schools with well over 1,500 enrolled. The Brotherhood and WMU organizations reported on their continuing efforts in the areas of missions support and education. Plans for *Vision 88* were announced with its goal being to have two million women, girls and preschoolers enrolled in quality missions education by May 1988, the WMU centennial year.

The proposed budget for 1985 was almost \$5,000. The Budget Committee recommended that annual dues be raised to sixty cents per member in order to meet this budget. However, this recommendation was not passed. This same recommendation was brought to the body again in 1987 and was once again defeated.

Rev. James Robinson, former pastor of Beech Grove, was the guest speaker at the fall 1985 meeting. He and his wife Kathy had been called to Foreign Missions and would soon begin work in the French West Indies. The Association churches took a love offering totaling more than \$4,500 in support of their mission work. Association minutes contained the following:

We resolve to keep them in our prayers and trust that the expressions of love extended to them this day will serve as a constant reminder to them of our support.

Rev. and Mrs. John Upton from Urbanna Church, who had recently been appointed as missionaries to Taiwan, gave their testimonies at the spring meeting. The Pastors Conference Committee recommended that the churches set aside Sunday, June 22, 1985 as John Upton Family Day and use it as an opportunity to emphasize the importance of supporting our missionaries and perhaps take a love offering for the Uptons. Reports given at the fall meeting indicated that this had been a very successful campaign with almost \$8,000 having been collected.

1986 was the centennial year of Sunbeams (now called Mission Friends). Many of the Association churches placed special emphasis on this milestone and included singing of the original Sunbeams

theme song “*I’ll Be a Sunbeam*” in their services.

The Social Ministries Committee had arranged for Mr. Harvey Morgan, Delegate to the State Legislature from Gloucester, to speak at the fall meeting. A referendum regarding a state-run lottery would be on the ballot on November 3, 1987 and the Committee wanted to keep Association members informed. The Committee report included the following statements:

We urge each Pastor of the Mid-Tidewater Baptist Association to continue informing their Congregations of the evils of the Lottery and the burdens it will inflict upon the tax payers. It will not bring the “wonderful solution” to the many needs that we have and are being led to believe that it will do by the various news media. ... We urge each Christian to pray that God by his Holy Spirit impress upon the people of Virginia to defeat this referendum.

The state-run lottery referendum was passed with 57% of the vote.

1987 was the first year the Association WMU reported preparing health kits for migrants in Accomack County on the Eastern Shore. This mission activity was such a success that over twenty-two years later, it continues to be an annual event supported by the Association churches.

By the close of 1987, total church enrollment was 6,213; Sunday School enrollment was 3,473 and Vacation Bible School had 1,437 in attendance. Both Brotherhood and WMU enrollment figures showed a slight decrease in membership.

1988 marked the centennial year of WMU. Association churches planned a variety of special programs focusing on recalling the dreams of the founding ladies of 1888 as well as establishing goals for sharing God’s love, serving, giving and praying. The theme for the year was “***A Century to Celebrate, A Future to Fulfill***”.

Rev. George Turner, Moderator, made a recommendation at the Executive Committee meeting held in June 1988, that a study committee be formed to gather information needed and give serious consideration to seeking a part-time Director of Missions for the Association. Such a committee was formed with Rev. Edward Inabinet serving as chairman. The Committee gave its first report at the spring meeting in 1989 with additional reports at several subsequent meetings.

The Association also began to make plans in 1988 to send a church-building mission team to Tanzania. Funds were collected to purchase construction kits and to help defray expenses incurred by those going on the trip. A team of seven men from the Association journeyed to Tanzania in January 1989 where they constructed two churches from the funds and materials supplied by the Association. Among those participating in this project were Shirley Jones (Mattaponi), Richard Rasmussen (Zoar), Leonard Levis (Olivet), John Routh (Ebenezer/Beulah), Charles Phillips (Zoar), Garland Milby (Poroporone) and Corky Hogge (Newington). The Association collected over \$18,000 in support of this mission trip.

1990 – 1999

In 1990, the WMU contributed over \$6,500 toward Camp Little Cross Roads and

the Association sent a love offering of over \$3,500 to White Marsh Church to be used for building construction. This church is now well established and a part of the Peninsula Baptist Association.

The Director of Missions Study Committee reported at the spring 1991 meeting that they had completed their research and recommended the establishment of the position of part-time director of missions. The calling of someone to fill the position would be contingent upon adequate funding by the churches. The churches were asked to indicate the level of funding each could provide by the fall meeting in October. A special *ad hoc* committee was appointed to prepare a proposal outlining the expectations of a committee to work with a DOM. Along with recommendations of the committee, it was suggested that the group chosen to work with the DOM be called the Administrative Committee, and that it become a standing committee.

A detailed Working Covenant for Mid-Tidewater Association and the part-time Director of Missions was presented at the spring 1992 meeting and favorable votes of the majority of the churches and financial arrangements were completed. The churches were asked to give 2½% of their undesignated offerings to support the Association and prospective DOM, who would serve on a two-year trial basis.

Dr. William Russ was called as the first DOM of Mid-Tidewater on August 17, 1992 and began serving September 1, 1992. After building a new sanctuary, Ebenezer Baptist Church at Pinero graciously provided their former church building for the use of the Association at the cost of \$1.00 per year. In this manner the Association had an office and a meeting

place for large groups. For the first time since its inception, the Association had an office to call "home".

During the 1991-92 year, the Association continued its work by sending a mission team to service in Hungary. Those participating in this trip included Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Carter, Mr. William Gwathmey, Mr. Richard Rasmussen and Mr. Charles Phillips.

Reports presented in the 1992 Association Annual indicated that there had been 135 baptisms and that there were currently twenty-four churches in the Association. Vacation Bible Schools had been conducted by most churches and had enrolled over 1700. A report given by the Missions Committee indicated that in addition to the Association's continuing work in the area of Partnership Missions, a new church under the name of Friendship Baptist Church had been formed by a group of former members of Harmony Grove who were using the Syringa Recreation Hall as a meeting place. The Committee also reported on plans to conduct a survey to determine the need for establishing a new church in the Adner/Glenns area of Gloucester County.

The Association continued its support of mission work in foreign countries by sending mission teams to Costa Rica and Mexico City in 1993. Friendship Church officially became a member of the Association and an Administrative Committee was added to the Standing Committees to serve as liaison between the DOM and Executive Committee.

The Association held a "True Love Waits" Youth Rally at Ebenezer Church in 1994. This was a Southern Baptist Convention sponsored program and was

very well attended by the Association youth. Also during that year, two seminary students housed at Newington undertook an Association mission project and spent the summer investigating the feasibility of establishing a new church in the Adner area. Their research indicated that conditions were not favorable at the time.

Dr. Russ announced that in June of 1994 he would be leaving his position as Director of Missions to pastor a church in Portsmouth. When the majority of churches voted at the spring meeting to continue the position of DOM, a search committee was appointed with Rev. John Upton as Chairman. Liberty Church, who had left the Peninsula Association in 1959 to become a part of Mid-Tidewater, announced its intentions to leave Mid-Tidewater after 35 years and rejoin Peninsula.

A World Missions Conference was held at fifteen Association churches in 1995 with Mrs. Jean Gwathmey as chairperson. The Association also voted to enter into a Strategy Planning Program for the future. The Director of Missions Search Committee recommended the call of Dr. John W. Patterson at the spring meeting. This recommendation was unanimously approved and he began his service in October 1995. The following year the Association office moved from the former Ebenezer Church to a new office building in Saluda, a geographically more central location in the Association service area.

The Association elected its first woman Vice Moderator, Mrs. Catherine Prince, in 1997. She was elected Moderator in 1998 and began serving as such in 1999. In support of the expanding work of the Association, Mrs. Patricia Patterson, wife of our Director of Missions, became the Association Secretary and a computer was

purchased for the Association office. Reports given in 1997 indicated that the annual WMU migrant health kit ministry had continued to grow with 108 kits being prepared and donations of over \$900 having been received to purchase additional supplies. A good number of Hispanic migrants were working in the Middlesex County area and a supply of Spanish Bibles was purchased to facilitate ministering to the spiritual needs of these people.

The former building of the Ebenezer Church was offered for use by the congregation of the first Hispanic congregation in this area. Named La Iglesia Bautista El Camino, which means "*The Way Baptist Church*", it was established on December 7, 1997 as a mission of Ebenezer and was formally organized as a church and became a member of the Association in 2000. In its first year, the church experienced thirty-one professions of faith and fifteen baptisms. Rev. Pedro Burgos has served as pastor since the church's formation.

The Association celebrated its 40th Anniversary in 1999. A committee composed of Mrs. Eloise Davidson, Chairperson; Mr. Ben Borden, Jr.; Mrs. Margaret Bristow; Mrs. Lillian Cox; Mrs. Ruth Horton; Mr. Temple Ryland; Mrs. Ann Byrd Tubbs and Mrs. Louise Gray, serving as a consultant, was appointed to make plans for the celebration. Dr. John Patterson, Director of Missions, served as *ex-officio* member along with Rev. Roger Crump, Moderator (later Mrs. Catherine Prince).

Plans were made to host three major events in the anniversary year. They included special emphasis for the "kick-off" of the celebration at the spring meeting held at Ebenezer Church on April 22nd. Rev. Edward Harrow, Sr. who was in attendance

at the organizational meeting at Poroporone in June 1959 was the guest speaker. A family picnic was held at Camp Piankatank on August 28th and Dr. Fred Anderson from the Virginia Baptist Historical Society, Dr. Reginald McDonough, Executive Director of the Virginia Baptist Mission Board and Rev. John Upton from the Virginia Baptist General Association were guest speakers at the fall meeting held at Poroporone Baptist Church on October 28th.

A video entitled “Roots and Wings: Mid-Tidewater at Forty” was produced and a history written to show events and progress in the Association over the first forty years. These were offered for sale at the fall meeting.

At the close of its first forty years, the Association reported membership at 5,662, baptisms at 159, Sunday School enrollment at 3,189, WMU membership at 767 and Brotherhood membership at 314.

Dr. John Patterson celebrated his 50th year of ordained ministry in 1999. He was recognized for this great accomplishment and presented with a plaque from the Association at the spring meeting.

2000 – 2008

The spring 2000 meeting focused on providing educational conferences for church key leaders. Sessions were held for Sunday School teachers, Vacation Bible School workers, deacons, Women’s Missionary Union workers, Brotherhood workers and church music leaders. Reports given at the fall meeting held later that year clearly revealed the increase in mission activity among the churches of Mid

Tidewater. Services in the areas of Emergency Disaster Relief, literacy training, English as a Second Language classes, campground ministries and minor home repairs were among the many mission activities being provided. The Church Ministries Action Group reported that Spanish-speaking migrants had been invited to a “Celebration of the Harvest” held at Zoar on August 12th. The purpose of the celebration was to thank the migrants for harvesting our crops; to let them know we care about them and to see what we could do to help them. Food, recreation, Bible study and singing were a part of the evening’s events. By close of the celebration, participants were asking when the next celebration would be held and there were four professions of faith.

An effort was launched to increase community awareness of the Mid-Tidewater Association and its churches. Many localities in the service region were hosting annual festivals and holiday parades and it was believed that these would be good venues for spreading the word about MTBA. A parade float was constructed with the theme “Mid-Tidewater Baptist Association – Helping Churches Serve Their Communities”. The float consisted of a boat outfitted with a net full of fish and a lighthouse. The names of MTBA churches as well as some of the work being done in Mid-Tidewater were also featured on the float. MTBA brochures were prepared to be distributed along the parade route. This float was displayed at numerous local events and since has been retired from service.

Mid-Tidewater hosted a Missions Fair with the theme “Missions – 2001 Ways” at St. Clare Walker Middle School on April 7, 2001. This program, with about 450 in attendance, had been two years in the making and focused on profiling the mission agencies and organizations that Mid-

Tidewater churches were providing to the communities they served. The W.M.U. also reported on their national project "Project Help: Literacy". The purpose of this project was to give every person the opportunity to learn to read, write or speak English and to learn the meaning of God's word. Among other mission activities reported for the year were over 2000 packets of seeds shipped to Liberia, Disaster Relief workers had been sent to New York as a result of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and a number of youth in the Association had participated in IMPACT Virginia mission trips and the annual Youth Evangelism Conference.

Church reports for 2001 indicated that total membership in the Association was 6,136; that 1,897 had been enrolled in Vacation Bible School and that there had been 155 Baptisms. Total receipts had been \$3,203,859 and the Association budget was \$79,382.

In early 2001 the Virginia Baptist Mission Board announced its plans for extensive improvements and expansion of the facilities and ministry of Camp Piankatank located in Hartfield, Virginia. Facility expansion plans included the addition of several resident cabins as well as a thirty-six room, four million dollar facility to be constructed on the waterfront. Expansion of the facilities would allow the ministry of the camp to expand as it developed into a comprehensive conference center in the years to come.

March 17, 2002 marked another significant event in the life of MTBA; Center Cross Community Mission was organized with Rev. Jack Moody as its Pastor. The Association developed a long-range strategy plan which led to the restructuring of several Association

committees and the creation of Action Groups (Church and Pastor Support, Community Ministries, Intercessory Prayer and Evangelism and Missions Action). The spring meeting held on April 21st at Harmony Grove with 265 in attendance went on record as having the largest attendance of any annual meeting in the history of MTBA. Reports given at the fall meeting indicated that we continued to show increases in the areas of mission giving and mission involvement; the ministries to migrants and summer visitors continued to grow as well.

Reports given by the various organizations and action groups in 2003 depicted Association involvement in a wide variety of mission projects. Some projects mentioned included Franklin Graham's Samaritan's Purse Shoe Box ministry, sleeping bags for the homeless in Richmond, a clothing drive in support of the Laurel Shelter in Gloucester, Seeds to Liberia, an ongoing ministry at the regional jail and a very active migrant workers ministry.

The 2003 annual report for the Missions and Evangelism Action Group noted among its projects for the year providing assistance to the members of the First Baptist Church of Harmony Village in making repairs to the exterior of their building in Topping. Labor, materials and equipment were donated in order to make necessary exterior siding and window repairs.

In September 2003 members of the Mid-Tidewater Disaster Relief Team were called to action again as a result of the devastating effects of Hurricane Isabel here in our own community. Fall reports noted that Petsworth Church in Gloucester County had doubled its size from a congregation of 450 in 1996 to just over 900 in 2003 and led

the Association in the number of baptisms and church additions. The Association budget for 2003 was \$88,782.

In 2003-2004 an *ad hoc* Strategy Plans Committee was established to formulate and recommend a plan of action for growth and revitalization within the Mid-Tidewater Association. The Committee met with various Association action groups to discuss their plans for the future and presented their first report and recommendations at the fall 2004 Association meeting.

The Moderator read a letter from Ebenezer Church at the March 22, 2004 Executive Committee Meeting in which they stated their desire to remove their membership from the MTBA. Action was delayed in order to allow time for Association representatives to meet with members of Ebenezer to discuss this decision. The June 28, 2004 minutes reflect that contact had been made with Ebenezer members and that no further action would be necessary. Their March 22, 2004 request to withdraw was approved.

The spring Association meeting was held on April 25, 2004 at Newington. The Association Clerk reported 287 in attendance, breaking the attendance record previously set at the spring 2002 meeting. It was at this spring meeting that an application for membership to the Mid-Tidewater Association was presented from First Baptist Church Harmony Village in Topping and as required by our bylaws, a Church Credentials Committee was appointed to work with the church in consideration of this application. When the Association convened again on October 17th, a motion was made to admit the church to the full membership and fellowship of the Mid-Tidewater Baptist Association and the vote of approval was unanimous.

The WMU reported continuing support of a variety of mission projects, among them over 230 health kits prepared for migrant workers. Mid-Tidewater ladies had dressed forty dolls and the Brotherhood had provides sports balls to be given to incarcerated persons in the jails in Gloucester and Saluda. These items would be used by the inmates as Christmas gifts for their children.

In late September seventeen members of our Disaster Relief Team were called to service in Wheeling, West Virginia as a result of the flooding caused by Hurricane Ivan. Twelve individuals served in the feeding unit and five participated in various recovery activities. Through the generous donations and support of Association members, a Disaster Relief Tool Trailer was purchased and fully stocked with a variety of tools to be used in support of our Disaster Relief ministries.

Dr. Greg Frizzell with the Baptist State Convention of Oklahoma and the North American Mission Board lead over one hundred people in a prayer retreat held on September 25th at Harmony Grove Church. This retreat and the ongoing work of our Intercessory Prayer Action Group had ignited a new focus on prayer among the churches. New prayer groups were started, books on prayer were being taught and mid-week prayer meetings were being revitalized.

In an effort to provide better response for disaster relief and other emergencies, the Administrative Committee recommended that the Director of Missions appoint an individual to serve as Disaster Relief Coordinator. Mr. Charles Atkinson was later appointed to this post.

2005 marked the tenth year of Dr. and Mrs. Patterson's service to the Mid-Tidewater Association. During the last ten years, the Association had grown from twenty-four churches to twenty-six and the annual Association income had increased from about \$31,000 to \$61,000. In his 2005 Director of Missions report, Dr. Patterson stated that it had been a great honor and privilege to serve as our Director of Missions but due to failing health, he felt it would be necessary to retire in April 2006. He felt strongly that although the Association was doing a tremendous ministry, there was so much more that could be done and a larger budget would help facilitate that. He urged each church budget planning committee to appropriate a minimum of 5% of their 2006 budgets in support of Associational Missions. Dr. Patterson continued to serve as Director of Missions until Dr. Robert May assumed the post on October 16, 2006. Mrs. Patterson served as Association Secretary until Sharon Bowman was named as her replacement.

2005 was a very active year for the Association in many respects. Mid-Tidewater Disaster Relief teams were called to action as a result of the devastation of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast by Hurricane Katrina in late August followed by the destruction left by Hurricane Rita in Texas and Louisiana in late September. Scores of men and women from our Association lent a hand in providing hot meals, clothing, nonperishable food items and shelter to those in need. Many of our churches sent in additional funds totaling well over \$30,000 in support of Disaster Relief to help purchase items needed in the Gulf Coast region and to offset the travel cost of the twenty-two individuals who journeyed there to minister to the needs of the storm victims.

Our WMU organizations once again had a mission action packed year. Our migrant ministry had produced 237 health kits and \$800 to fill additional kits and our doll ministry for inmates in local jails to give to their daughters was up to sixty dolls this year. A new ministry to provide lap quilts to the sick and shut-ins in our churches was also started with about eighty quilts donated.

The Strategy Plans Committee reported that a growing trend of dwindling youth and young adult involvement had been noted in many Association churches. The number of individuals age forty or less who were serving in leadership positions was very small in comparison to those over forty. This trend would clearly produce serious consequences for the future of our churches. The Committee recommended that a new action group charged with focusing on ministering to the youth and young adults in our area be organized. This recommendation was approved and the Youth Action Group was added to the list of action groups in the Association constitution with Pearl Sadler of Spring Hill serving as its first chairman.

2006 was the first year with a Youth Ministries Action Group in place. One of the first priorities of the group had been to survey the Association churches and determine what services and opportunities were being provided for youth. A highlight of the year's activities included a "Together in Christ" (TIC) rally sponsored by Doug Davis and the members of Glebe Landing held at the Upper Middlesex Fire Department in Waterview on September 17th. Musical entertainment was provided throughout the afternoon by several Christian rock bands. This rally was deemed an overwhelming success and very

well received by the youth of the Association.

Reports given at the fall 2006 meeting once again highlighted the extensive involvement of Mid-Tidewater churches in missions. Mrs. Lillian Cox, Partnership Missions Coordinator, reported that ten churches had members totaling 112 persons sent out on mission trips over the past year. Fourteen of those persons had traveled to foreign countries. Various WMU groups had also been involved in numerous projects including but not limited to sleeping bags for homeless, toiletry kits for migrant workers, food pantry and clothes closet support, back-to-school supplies for needy children, dolls and sports balls for prison inmates and the Franklin Graham shoebox ministry. Mr. Charles Atkinson, Coordinator for Disaster Relief reported that eighty-nine individuals in our Association had been trained to work with Disaster Relief. He also noted that the tool trailer was well on its way to being fully stocked and ready to respond when needed.

The Director of Missions Search Committee presented its findings at the fall 2006 meeting and recommended that Dr. Robert May become Director of Missions, effective October 16, 2006. This recommendation was unanimously approved.

In addition to the many mission and outreach opportunities in which it was already heavily involved, the Mid-Tidewater WMU endeavored to establish an Association-wide puppet ministry in 2007. Money and materials were donated by several of the churches to get this ministry up and running.

Partnership Missions continued to be well supported by the Association. Forty-

four individuals had ministered in Virginia, sixty-nine traveled to other states and seventeen ministered in countries other than the United States including Costa Rica, Uganda, Granada, India and Brazil.

The Missions and Evangelism Action Group reported at the January 29, 2007 Executive Committee Meeting that the Center Cross Mission had withdraw from the Association. Rev. Jack Moody had retired at the end of 2006 and the church wished to become independent.

The Youth Ministries Action Group had made great strides the previous year and lost no momentum in 2007. A second TIC rally was held on September 16th with over 500 in attendance. At the conclusion of the evening, some sixty-two young people had made decisions or commitments to the Lord. Mid-Tidewater's annual youth rally had caught the attention of state level coordinators for the annual Youth Encounter for Christ (YEC – formerly Youth Evangelism Conference). The success of our rallies had been so tremendous that they were turning focus toward encouraging associations to sponsor regional rallies in their own localities.

The Association moved its offices in 2008 to the parsonage of Saluda Baptist Church. Saluda graciously offered the use of its property at no charge to the Association. This move would reduce overhead costs and allow those funds normally expended on rent to be used in support of the various ministries of the Association.

The Youth Ministries Action Group continued its focus on planning and providing meaningful opportunities for youth of the Association to fellowship together in the name of Christ. The Power

Team visited the Mid-Tidewater area in March and through the use of impressive feats of strength, shared the life-changing message of the cross with youth in several churches and schools in the area. This was a tremendous success with a number of youth making decisions for Christ each night. On May 17th a group of twenty youth enjoyed the day together as they participated in a variety of survivor-like activities and Bible study on Camp Piankatank's own "Survivor Island". Mid-Tidewater sponsored its third Together In Christ Rally on September 21st. With over 600 in attendance; twelve first-time professions of faith and twenty-seven commitments to vocational ministry or missions, this event could be called nothing less than a major success.

The Community Ministries Action Group announced that it had started the process of inviting "Transformers" to come to our area in spring 2009. Groups of skilled men and women would come to Mid-Tidewater for several days to do major home repairs. Local churches would be asked to support the ministry by providing volunteers to assist at the job sites as well as meals for the workers and the residents of the homes being repaired.

Discussion and investigation into the process of incorporating the Association had been ongoing for a number of years. An *ad hoc* committee was formed and after further study, recommended that the Association move forward with incorporation. An attorney was consulted to assist with the process of preparing Articles of Incorporation for approval by the Association Executive Board and then submission to the State Corporation Commission for final approval.

The 50th Year - 2009

It's been fifty years now since the start of the Mid-Tidewater Baptist Association. Mr. John M. Bareford, Jr. of Saluda Baptist has the honor of serving as Moderator. The budget is set at \$90,490 and membership in the twenty-five churches is now over 6,200. It's already been a year packed with much missions work. Approximately thirty adults composed of members from eight Mid-Tidewater churches as well as others from across the state completed four construction projects within the Mid-Tidewater service area on May 27-30 as a part of a Transformers mission team. Twenty-five individuals from Hermitage Church traveled to Big Stone Gap to hold Vacation Bible School the week of June 27 – July 3. Mathews Baptist hosted more than eighty Impact Virginia workers from across the state July 12-18 and a number of Association churches sent members to hold Vacation Bible School and Bible Studies at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation located in North and South Dakota the week of July 19-25. The annual TIC Rally occurred on September 20th at Waterview. This year's rally was co-sponsored by MTBA and the Rappahannock Baptist Association. Chad Norris with Wayfarer Ministries was the guest speaker and music was provided by the John Ivins Band from Richmond, Virginia. This was the fourth rally and was tremendous success. Plans are in place for a formal Anniversary Celebration to be held at the fall meeting in October at Poroporone Church, site of the organizational meeting back in 1959. A number of guest speakers, including Dr. John Upton, Executive Director of the Baptist General Association of Virginia and Dr. Fred Anderson, Executive Director of the Virginia Baptist Historical Society will be present.

In Closing

The membership of the Association and churches has changed significantly over the past fifty years. Some of the charter member churches have moved to other associations while others have chosen to unite with Mid-Tidewater. The number of original churches was twenty-four and the number in 2009 is now twenty-five. Beech Grove Church in Gloucester joined the new Association in 1960, coming from the Peninsula Association. Good Hope Church in New Kent County became a part of Mid-Tidewater in 1962, but the 1978 annual minutes from the spring session state: "Good Hope has closed for the present time..." Providence Church requested transfer back to the Peninsula Association at the fall meeting in 1967. New Hope Memorial became a part of Mid-Tidewater in 1973. Corinth Church in New Kent left the Association in 1982. Friendship Church in Middlesex County was voted into the Association in 1993. Liberty Church located at Lanexa in New Kent County requested to leave in 1994 to rejoin the Peninsula Association. La Iglesia Bautista El Camino joined in 2000 followed by the Center Cross Church in 2002. Ebenezer withdrew in March 2004 and the First Baptist Church of Harmony Village joined in October 2004. The Center Cross Mission withdrew at the close of 2006.

The ministry of the MTBA has been blessed in so many ways over the years. The experience and dedication brought to the Association by the many pastors who have served in our churches; the commitment of each committee or action group member; the service of each Moderator; the direction and leadership of each Director of Missions and the commitment of each Association church to reach out spreading the Gospel into their

respective communities have all played an integral part in the successful ministry of the MTBA. We thank Jimmie Williams for his faithful stewardship, as he retires as the Associational Treasurer, after 12 years of faithful service. It is truly amazing to look back over the years and see what the Lord has been able to accomplish through his willing servants here in the Middle Peninsula area.

It has also been a true blessing to have Camp Piankatank located within the bounds of the MTBA service area. Originally opened in 1961 as an all boys' camp, the offerings were expanded to allow for weekend retreat opportunities and eventually day and week-long resident camps for girls. MTBA has been fortunate to be able to make use of the camp and its facilities in support of a number of its ministries. Individual churches have held numerous picnics and socials on the grounds as well. We wait with anticipation as the expansion plans revealed back in 2001 come to fruition.

Much has been accomplished by the Mid-Tidewater Baptist Association in its first fifty years. MTBA continues an extensive ministry in the communities served by its churches. Prison, migrant and Hispanic ministries thrive. The Association's ministry also reaches far beyond the local area and includes skilled Disaster Relief workers ready to jump into service at a moments notice and youth and adults willing and able to travel across the state, the country and the world to do the Lord's work wherever He leads. Even with all that has been accomplished, there will always be much more to be done. A quotation from Dr. Robert May in the May 2007 MTBA annual clearly defines what lies ahead for the Association:

“No matter how much we have accomplished ..., we face the future knowing that so much more needs to be done, can be done, and should be done. The task before us often seems daunting. This has always been true of the challenge facing the local church, from the first century to the twenty-first century.”

Grateful to the Rappahannock Association for its early direction and beginning, the Mid-Tidewater Association has felt Divine guidance over the past fifty years. Surely it was such guidance that brought the first twenty-four churches together in 1959 and it has been that same guiding hand that has brought the Association to where it is today. With dedicated lay leaders and pastors too numerous to mention, the spirit of cooperation and reverence that laid the foundation for this Association still prevails. May God continue to bless our ministry in the years to come.

Special Thanks to:

Mrs. Margaret Bristow and Mrs. Lillian Cox for their efforts in compiling the history of the first forty years of Mid-Tidewater Baptist Association.

Mrs. Lillian Cox for her years of service and impeccable record keeping as Association Clerk.

The Clerks of each and every Mid-Tidewater Church who have so faithfully submitted their church annual reports.

The Chairmen of Association Action Groups and Committees who have so well documented each and every meeting and event held or sponsored

by their respective groups/committees.

Dr. Robert May and Mrs. Sharon Bowman for their leadership, guidance and unwavering patience.

Each and every member (past and present) of the twenty-five Association churches who have taken an active role in their respective churches and in the support of Mid-Tidewater Association ministries these past fifty years.

*And the list could go on and on . . .
You all gave me the information I needed . . . all I had to do was read and write.*

Thank you!

*Wanda Watkins
MTBA Historian*

Resources

Mid-Tidewater Baptist Association 1959-1999, “Roots and Wings: Mid-Tidewater at Forty”, by Mrs. Margaret Bristow and Mrs. Lillian Cox, 1999.

Annals of the Mid-Tidewater Baptist Association of Virginia, 1959 – 2008 editions.

www.biblicalrecorder.org – article on “Bold Mission Thrust after 25 Years” by Mike Clingenpeel, April 20, 2001.

Article from the (BP) Baptist Press, on “Living the Spirit of Christ” To Be Recommended as Theme”, May 12, 1967 (Southern Baptist Convention’s “Shaping the 70’s” program)

www.camppiankantank.org

This writing is a supplement to the “Mid-Tidewater Baptist Association of Virginia 1959-2009 Celebrating 50 Years of Ministry” publication.

2010 – 2019

Having just celebrated its 50th anniversary, the Mid-Tidewater Baptist Association embarked with excitement and wonder into a new decade of seeking where the Lord was working and joining Him.

The Spring 2010 MTBA Meeting was held on April 18th at Newington Baptist Church in Gloucester and focused on providing educational opportunities for attendees. Sessions were held on church leadership, hospice, Impact Virginia, partnership missions, reaching new people and Vacation Bible School. Rev. Rod Hale served as keynote speaker and the theme for the evening was “*Encourage one another and build each other up.*” This is an action for which MTBA churches have become well known in their service area. The encouraging and building up is not only evident within our churches but can also be seen extending well out into our communities. A good example of this was the IMPACT Virginia mission week hosted by MTBA on July 18th through 25th. Approximately 265 youth from across the state descended upon the MTBA to participate in a variety of home improvement projects including but not limited to painting, roofing and the construction of access ramps. Thanks to the many MTBA volunteers who stepped up to encourage, provide financial support and feed those involved, seventeen projects were completed over the course of the week. Little did we know the great success of this IMPACT Virginia week would lead to

MTBA’s decision to host a number of other IMPACT weeks in the years to come.

Although there were two major earthquakes in 2010, there were no disaster call-outs involving MTBA members. Many MTBA churches provided financial support to Disaster Relief in Haiti and Chile. MTBA continued its practice of providing training opportunities to equip new volunteers for Disaster Relief as well as providing refresher courses for those who had previously received training. It has been and continues to be a MTBA focus to have well-trained Disaster Relief team members ready to mobilize when called.

At the Close of 2010, the MTBA was comprised of 25 churches with over 6,100 members. Church membership ranged from as small as nine to as large as 1,257. There had been 77 Baptisms and 88 other additions during the year. Sunday School enrollment was almost 2,700 and almost 2,000 had participated in Vacation Bible Schools. The work of the Association was overseen by a Director of Missions, seven standing committees including Executive, Administrative, Finance and Stewardship, Minister-Church Relations, Nominating, Program and Strategy Planning and five action groups including Church and Pastor Support, Community Ministries, Intercessory Prayer, Missions and Evangelism and Youth Ministries. The Association’s operating budget was just under \$103,000.

In 2011, the Association office was moved from the Saluda Baptist Church parsonage at 1006 General Puller Highway to office space located at 884 Gloucester Road (current office – 2019).

The 2011 Spring Meeting was held at Newington Baptist Church on April 10th

with a number of other MTBA churches serving as the hosts. This gave smaller churches who were not able to accommodate such a large crowd the opportunity to serve. The theme of this meeting was “*Churches Connecting with People*” and included break-out sessions on connecting with men, women, youth and children. Virginia Baptist Field Strategist for the Tidewater Region, Rev. Eddie Heath, served as our keynote speaker.

Over the years church members within the MTBA had gone to many other places to work in Disaster Relief. The week after the spring meeting we would find ourselves in the middle of the first of a number of natural disasters affecting our state and community in 2011. On April 16th an EF2 to EF3 tornado (winds up to 165 mph) destroyed Page Middle School in Gloucester County and the Zoar Baptist Church sanctuary in Middlesex County. Many homes were also destroyed and there were three deaths reported in our area. The morning after the tornado, our Director of Missions, Dr. May, and our Disaster Relief Coordinator, Mr. Clyde Groover, went out to the areas hardest hit to offer the services of the Virginia Baptist Mission Board (VBMB). In the days that followed, members of a number of churches, both from MTBA and others in the neighboring communities, began a coordinated response to aid with the clean-up and to provide other services to the residents. Mr. Groover, as well as Disaster Relief Coordinator for the VBMB, Dean Miller, also met with members of the Citizens Emergency Response Team and church pastors to assess the need for the call up of additional volunteers. Although the MTBA area experienced significant damage, it was determined that the tremendous outpouring of local volunteers was sufficient. Calls requesting assistance for other tornados in

the western part of Virginia and Massachusetts were received. Other 2011 natural disasters affecting our area included:

- a 5.8 magnitude earthquake on August 23rd,
- Hurricane Irene which brought high wind, water, fallen trees and power outages on August 27th and 28th, and
- Flooding from Tropical Storm Lee on September 7th and 8th.

MTBA hosted a “*Stop Hunger Now*” meal packing event at Newington Baptist Church on July 16th. There were over ninety in attendance and 10,000 meals were packed in forty-eight minutes. A very good example of “many hands make light work,” this event had been scheduled to run from 9:00 a.m. to noon.

Mr. Groover was contacted by Dean Miller the day after Hurricane Irene requesting assistance with unloading water in Warsaw (Richmond County) and a forklift to assist with unloading food for a feeding unit at St. Stephens Baptist Church (King and Queen County). He had also requested that a needs assessment be made of King and Queen County to determine if there were other needs with which the VBMB could assist. Mr. Groover and Dr. May met with the emergency manager and found that water and 7,000 meals per day were being provided and that a shower unit was on the way. Again, it was determined that the level of support and volunteers was sufficient and no additional volunteers were called in. Calls requesting assistance with a feeding unit in Pennsylvania and for help with mud-out operations and chain saws in New England were also received with Baptists from many states including Virginia responding.

In Dr. May’s 2011 Director’s Report, he stated, “*We should all be inspired by the*

fact that MTBA churches, through their members, were and are involved in various types of ministry. ... These ministries take place locally, in other parts of Virginia, in other states and even foreign countries. Most of these ministries will never be known except by those involved in them and those touched by them. This is as it should be for we do not minister to bring attention to ourselves, but to help those in need, to point people to Jesus Christ and to bring glory to God."

The MTBA hosted its first Children's Ministry Day Celebration on February 18, 2012 at Saluda Baptist Church in Middlesex. This was a wonderful opportunity for children to learn about how they could be involved in missions. Attendees were encouraged to bring school supplies to send to the children at the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in North and South Dakota.

The MTBA was saddened to learn of the loss of Dr. John W. "Jack" Patterson on February 28, 2012. Dr. Patterson, with his wife Patricia at his side, had served as MTBA Director of Missions from October 1995 until October 2006.

The Intercessory Prayer Committee began hosting monthly prayer meetings at churches scattered across the Association in 2012. These prayer meetings continue to grow in attendance and the number of churches serving as hosts also continues to increase.

Recognizing the important role of Vacation Bible School in our communities, MTBA hosted an association-wide VBS workshop at Poroporone Baptist Church on March 17th. VBS workers were given the opportunity to meet in small groups to discuss the upcoming VBS curriculum and

to get pointers on crafts, decorations, snacks and instructional aids. Those in attendance left excited about their upcoming VBS programs and armed with the tools to make VBS a memorable experience for each student.

Continuing the practice of recent Spring MTBA Meetings, the Spring 2012 meeting offered additional training sessions focused on encouraging churches to develop their own distinct ministries to the people where they were located. This meeting was hosted by Urbanna Baptist Church and featured a keynote address from Rev. Ken Kessler of the Virginia Baptist Mission Board. Training sessions were led by individuals with personal experience in a variety of ministries including the Bland Ministry, IMPACT Virginia, the Mattaponi Indian Ministry, the Prison/Chaplain Ministry and the Spanish Speaking Ministry. A special training session was also provided for church clerks. The theme for this meeting was "*Bind Us Together, Lord*" and attendees were reminded that we should strive to work together as described in Ecclesiastes 4:12 which states "*Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.*"

MTBA hosted another "*Stop Hunger Now*" meal packing event at Newington Baptist Church on June 9th. MTBA volunteers continued to clearly demonstrate true joy in working together. There were 71 in attendance and 20,000 meals were packed in about 30 minutes. There are no limits to what we can do when we are working for and with the Lord.

Given the increasing number of instances across the country which have caused church congregations to question their safety in God's house, a Safety and

Security Conference was held at Poroporone Baptist Church on July 12th. Pastors and Deacons were encouraged to attend this informative session on the many ways to improve upon and ensure the safety of church attendees as well as the security of church facilities.

MTBA once again hosted a very successful IMPACT Virginia the week of July 22-28, 2012 with approximately 225 youth, leaders and crew chiefs participating. Youth from ten MTBA churches were involved and a total of twelve projects were completed in Mathews, Middlesex and King and Queen Counties. Christchurch School hosted the youth during the week and the Crew Chiefs stayed in the Saluda Baptist Church parsonage. This year's IMPACT was funded through a variety of sources including but not limited to a grant from the Virginia Baptist Foundation, a gift from the Middlesex Ministers' Association and donations from MTBA churches. Lunches for work crews and home owners were provided by several MTBA churches. Those delivering meals were encouraged to stay and eat with the work crews and participate in the daily lunchtime devotional.

MTBA had begun hosting annual *"Together in Christ"* (TIC) youth rallies in 2006 as a way to reach youth for Christ in our area and beyond. MTBA was now one of at least eight other associations which were providing a ministry once provided solely by the Virginia Baptist Mission Board's annual Youth Evangelism Conference. Our TIC event is part of a Virginia-wide partnership with the VBMB which is known as *"Youth Encounter"* providing customized events hosted by churches and associations in various regions for an evangelistic and inspirational experience. MTBA's seventh rally was held on September 16, 2012 at the Upper

Middlesex Fire Department in Waterview. Special music was provided by the Dana Jorgensen Band and loose change was collected for the *"Change Matters"* campaign to fight world hunger.

At the close of 2012 (with 21 of 25 churches reporting), total membership was over 5,350. These 21 churches also reported 123 additions through baptism and transfer of membership and 16 of the 21 churches reported total enrollment in Vacation Bible School in excess of 1,100.

The second MTBA Children's Ministry Day with the theme *"Helping Hands"* was held on March 16, 2013 at Westville Baptist Church in Mathews County. Attendees were encouraged to bring paper products for the Bland Ministry Center and Dental Clinic in Bland, Virginia. A *"Helping Hands"* wall-hanging depicting the hand prints of the children who participated was presented to Dr. May for hanging in the MTBA office.

The Spring MTBA Meeting was hosted by Mathews Baptist Church on April 21st. Rev. Maria Lynn, Adult Missions Coordinator for the WMU of Virginia, served as the keynote speaker. Break-out sessions focused on missions with special emphasis on myMission VIRGINIA, Children: The Hope of Tomorrow, Relief to Development: An Introduction to Asset Based Community Development and Operation Inasmuch.

The spring meeting also marked the official announcement of a new association-wide ministry, *"More than Nets."* It was at this meeting that the Missions and Evangelism Action Group issued a challenge to all MTBA churches to raise money in support of the *"More than Nets"* anti-malaria campaign in Ghana (West

Africa). Each church was asked to give an amount equal to their average Sunday attendance times \$10.00. Of each \$10.00 donation, \$6.00 would purchase the net, \$1.00 would transport the net to a village in Ghana, \$2.00 would support education on how to use the nets and \$1.00 would support church planting. Members of the Association also took action at this meeting to use \$1,000 from the spring missions offering to purchase a motorcycle to be used in the Ghana ministry. This campaign was organized through a partnership between the Baptist General Association of Virginia and the Ghana Baptist Convention and was expected to be a two-year project.

Dr. May announced on April 21st that the New Hope Fellowship Pastor, Dr. Leonard L. Edloe, had approached the Association on behalf of his congregation requesting membership in the MTBA. Dr. Edloe reported his congregation had voted unanimously on March 24, 2013 to make this request. Dr. May also reported this congregation had purchased the former Friendship Church building in Hartfield (Middlesex County). The MTBA Moderator had appointed a committee to shepherd this request and a report and recommendation would be brought back at the fall meeting in October.

MTBA hosted its third “*Stop Hunger Now*” meal packing event at Newington Baptist Church on July 27th. There were 93 in attendance and 10,000 meals were packed in 48 minutes. Including setup and cleanup this entire event takes about two and a half to three hours and was such a rewarding experience for all involved.

The Fall MTBA Meeting was held at Zoar Baptist Church in Middlesex on October 20th. This was a very special meeting for a number of reasons including

the fact that this was the first opportunity many attendees would see the new sanctuary. As you may recall, a tornado had struck the church on April 16, 2011, destroying the sanctuary and extensively damaging the educational wing. Through all of this, Zoar was able to remain strong and reopened its Educational Building and Fellowship Hall in September 2012 and the new sanctuary had been completed a year later. It was also at this meeting that by unanimous vote, New Hope Fellowship was welcomed into the MTBA. This was a process started the previous spring and such a blessing for the Lord to have chosen to join New Hope Fellowship with the MTBA.

The Missions and Evangelism Action Group provided an update on the “*More than Nets*” challenge issued at the spring meeting. As of October 20th, \$15,610.66 had been raised for the “*More than Nets*” anti-malaria campaign in Ghana. These funds would be used to purchase 1,561 nets and aid with planting many churches in Yendi, Ghana. Additional funds were also donated to purchase two motorcycles to be used by the pastors of the newly established churches and a number of individuals from several MTBA churches felt the call to go to Ghana to be a part of this ministry.

MTBA had started 2013 with 25 churches and an operating budget of \$98,488. By the end of the year, the number of churches had grown to 26 with the welcoming of New Hope Fellowship and a 2014 operating budget totaling \$99,319 had been adopted. The MTBA continued to function with the same organizational structure with the exception of the addition of a seventh committee, the Strategy Plans Committee. This Committee would begin its work in 2014 with a focus on assessing the MTBA’s progress in fulfilling its

mission and goals. With 23 churches reporting, total membership was 5,869. These churches also reported 109 baptisms and 110 other additions. Of these 109 baptisms, 32 were children ages 12 to 17 and 29 were eleven years old and under. Nineteen of the 23 churches reported conducting Vacation Bible Schools with 1,089 enrolled. Three of these churches had reported triple digit enrollments including Poroporone with 179, Hermitage with 138 and Petsworth with 120.

The third annual Children's Ministry Day Celebration was held on February 15, 2014 with two separate celebrations planned at opposite ends of the MTBA service area. One meeting was led by Robin Cade and Lillian Cox at Newington Baptist Church and the other led by Robin Cade and Janice Richardson at St. Stephens Baptist Church. There were approximately 50 participants and those attending the Newington session were able to have a conversation through Skype with a missionary and their children serving the Lord in Africa.

The Missions and Evangelism Action Group had kicked off a local fund-raising campaign for "*More than Nets*" on April 21, 2013. By March 2014, almost \$16,000 had been raised. A team comprised of four MTBA members and pastors had also traveled to Yendi, Ghana in February to assist with the distribution of nets and provide the recipients with education on how to most effectively use them. During the seven days the team was there, over 2,000 nets were hung, seven churches were started and 108 people were baptized.

MTBA had been hosting an annual "*Week of Prayer for Associational Missions*" for a number of years. May 18th through May 25th had been set as our 2014 week of prayer with a goal of \$8,000. These

funds would be earmarked to cover some of the costs of construction materials for IMPACT Virginia – Gloucester. The total collected was \$11,726.43. This was clearly another example of what we can accomplish when we are working together for the Lord.

A number of MTBA churches had individuals who were making annual trips to the Standing Rock Reservation Little Eagle site in North and South Dakota. A group of ten adults and youth representing Newington, Olivet and Hermitage made this trip from June 19th – 28, 2014. Bible studies and craft activities were provided for children in Kindergarten through eighth grade as well as Bible studies for the ladies and men. Nursery services were provided so mothers would also be able to attend. Daily morning devotions were conducted specifically for the workers and a number of the Native Americans also participated. The mission team conducted afternoon worship time and provided a variety of recreation activities for the children. One MTBA team member assisted in the kitchen preparing lunch, dinner and snacks. Team members served the Native Americans first and then joined them for meals. Shoes and other clothing items collected by a number of MTBA churches were also distributed.

The Missions and Evangelism Committee reported they had granted a combined total of \$2,102.00 in financial assistance for eleven individuals to participate in mission trips. Four of these individuals had gone to Ghana and the other seven to the Standing Rock Reservation.

MTBA hosted its fourth IMPACT Virginia week from July 13th to 19th. Construction projects focused on the Gloucester County area and included building ramps, putting on roofs, repairing indoor flooring, painting and general

carpentry. Newington Baptist Church hosted the 250 plus attendees. Once again MTBA churches pitched in to prepare and deliver lunches to the various work sites. The Disaster Relief trailer was used to prepare evening meals and Urbanna Baptist Church also prepared a meal for one evening. Funds from the 2014 Week of Prayer offering as well as funds carried forward from 2013 totaling almost \$17,000 were used to purchase building materials for the completion of eighteen projects.

MTBA hosted its ninth regional youth encounter event on September 14, 2014 at Mathews High School. There were over 120 participants present to enjoy music and worship provided by Ben Kolarick and his band. Danny Quirin, Minister of Youth at Bonsack Baptist Church in Roanoke, Virginia delivered the message and students from Bluefield College were also present to provide support.

The Fall MTBA Meeting was held on October 19, 2014 at Harmony Grove Baptist Church in Middlesex County. Rev. David Donahue, Pastor of Beale Memorial Baptist Church in Tappahannock served as the keynote speaker. The theme for the evening was *"Empowering Leaders."* The services of Mrs. Sharon Bowman, MTBA Secretary for eight years, was recognized. Mrs. Bowman had announced earlier in the year that she would be leaving after the fall meeting. It was also announced that Mrs. Barbara Bareford had been selected to serve as MTBA secretary effective November 3, 2014. The 2015 operating budget totaling \$100,319 was also approved.

Director of Missions, Dr. Robert May had also announced earlier in the year that he would be retiring from his position in the near future. No specific date was set as he had expressed his desire to have a few

weeks to provide the new Director of Missions with some on-the-job orientation. In accordance with MTBA Bylaws, Dr. Roger Collier, the MTBA Moderator, announced his recommendations for the membership of a Director of Missions Search Committee and his recommendations were approved at the fall meeting.

The Spring 2015 MTBA Meeting was held on April 19th at Poroporone Baptist Church. Keynote speakers included Mr. George A. "Buck" Rogers, Construction Coordinator for Mid-Tidewater IMPACT Virginia events in 2009, 2010, 2012 and 2014 and Rev. Mike Gray, Pastor of Newington Baptist Church for 23 years. Their messages emphasized ministries that local churches could be involved in as they seek to reach people in their communities for Christ. The theme for the evening was *"Missions – Serving Others in the Name of Christ."*

The MTBA Executive Committee took action at its June 29th meeting to extend a temporary call to Rev. Eddie Heath to be the Director of Missions beginning January 1, 2016. This temporary appointment was made permanent by action taken by the Association at the October 18th fall meeting.

The Community Ministries Action Group sponsored a *"Stop Hunger Now"* meal packaging event at Mathews Baptist church on July 11th. Sixty-three volunteers of all ages packaged 10,153 meals in just one hour thirteen minutes at a total cost of \$2,900.

Understanding we must all follow God's call, the MTBA said goodbye to Dr. and Mrs. Robert May at the close of July, 2015. The Mays had planned to remain in Virginia through the end of the year but the

quick sale of their home accelerated their departure.

The Missions and Evangelism Committee provide financial assistance to several individuals participating in missions trips. Four individuals went to the Standing Rock Reservation, seven to Tanzania (East Africa) and two to Southwest Virginia.

MTBA hosted a “Summer Jam” event on Thursday, August 20th at Harmony Grove Baptist Church. The speaker was Rev. Rob Marsh, Saluda Baptist Church Pastor, and special music was provided by the band, “Scarlet Fade”. This event was open to youth in grades six through twelve and featured food, music, games and prizes.

MTBA and the Baptist General Association of Virginia hosted a Sunday School training seminar entitled “Effective Sunday School for the 21st Century” on Saturday, September 12, 2015, at Poroporone Baptist Church. Five BGAV consultants provided training sessions for Pastors and General Officers, Adult Workers, Youth Workers, Children’s Workers, Preschool Workers and Special Needs Workers. A variety of literature samples were available and attendees were encouraged to help themselves to the free materials. This seminar was very well attended and was a wonderful opportunity for current Sunday School teachers, as well as those who were considering serving as Sunday School teachers to receive valuable training.

The MTBA Executive Committee took action on Monday, September 28, 2015 to authorize Pastor Jonathan Davis to assemble a committee for the purpose of developing a proposal outlining the costs, features, equipment, fees, policies and procedures for a MTBA Block Party Trailer.

The trailer would contain children/youth recreation items, food prep items, bounce houses, a sound system, lights and Bibles. For a small fee, MTBA churches would be able to utilize the trailer for evangelism and outreach activities.

The Fall Association Meeting was held on Sunday, October 18th at Gwynn’s Island Baptist Church. Keynote Speaker was Rev. Ed Inabinet, former Pastor of Mathews Baptist Church (retired in 2010) who shared the message “*For All That Has Been – Thanks! To All That Shall Be –Yes!*” The theme for the evening was “*God is Good All the Time*”. Dr. Robert May, who had retired in July, was present and honored for his more than eight years of service and ministry with the MTBA. Dr. John Upton, Executive Director of the BGAV was also present to bring greetings from the BGAV and congratulatory comments to Dr. May. Special music was provided by the Gwynn’s Island Choir and Marilyn May on the piano. Mrs. May, who is an extremely gifted pianist, was honored with a standing ovation.

Donations in support of the lifesaving “*More than Nets*” campaign sponsored by the Missions and Evangelism Action Group in early 2013 continued to pour in. Poroporone Baptist Church hosted a pancake breakfast fundraiser for this cause on October 31st for all MTBA churches. Attendees had the opportunity to hear a message presented by Pastor Emmanuel “Muss” Mustapha of Ghana on the progress made by the More Than Nets ministry. “Muss” reported the goal of this ministry was to distribute 100,000 nets and at that time, 63,000 nets had been distributed in approximately 250 Yendi villages.

Recognizing the power of prayer, the Intercessory Prayer Action Group continued

hosting prayer meetings on the second Monday of each month. Meetings were held at various churches across the Association. Meetings had grown to twenty or thirty participants and the group had initiated a prayer chain. Churches were encouraged to publish meeting dates in their bulletins and to encourage members to participate. Churches were also encouraged to contact the Intercessory Prayer Action Group to have their church added to the meeting rotation.

The Association began 2016 with an operating budget of \$102,695 and Rev. Eddie Heath at the helm as Director of Missions. Rev. Heath had recently retired from his position as a Field Strategist with the Baptist General Association of Virginia. The MTBA Executive Committee had taken action at its June 29, 2015, meeting to extend a temporary call to the Rev. Heath to be the Director of Missions beginning January 1, 2016. This temporary appointment was made permanent by action taken by the Association at the Sunday, October 18, 2015, Fall Meeting. The Association had eagerly awaited Rev. Heath's arrival since that date.

La Iglesia Bautista El Camino, which had been organized in 2000 and was MTBA's only Hispanic church, closed its doors with the retirement of Rev. Pedro Burgos in February 2016. Because of the lack of work for Hispanics in the Middle Peninsula area, attendance had been in a steady decline for some time. Former Director of Missions, Dr. Jack Patterson, had been instrumental in the El Camino church uniting with the Mid-Tidewater Baptist Association. Rev. Burgos and his wife, Gladys, left with plans to settle somewhere in the Atlanta area. With the departure of the El Camino church, MTBA churches now totaled 25.

The Executive Committee had taken action at its September 28, 2015, meeting to purchase a Block Party Trailer to be used as an evangelistic tool. By March 2016 the wheels were moving full speed ahead with the trailer having been ordered as well as many other supplies. The trailer would be fully stocked with inflatables, games, a popcorn popper, a hotdog and bun warmer, sound system and many other supplies. Association churches would be able to reserve the trailer for use in outreach events they were hosting. At the close of the year, the Ministry Outreach Trailer (MOT) had been used at sixteen church events with more than 2,300 in attendance. The MOT would continue to help support the MTBA mission of Serving, Cooperating and Sharing.

The Community Ministries Action Group had been making plans to host an IMPACT Virginia Mission Camp the week of July 24-30, 2016. Recognizing fundraising as a big part of the planning process, MTBA hosted a golf tournament on Friday, April 15, 2016, at the Piankatank River Golf Club in Hartfield with all proceeds to benefit Impact. This was a well-organized and attended event and a wonderful opportunity for fellowship.

The Spring Association Meeting was held on April 17th at Urbanna Baptist Church. The theme for the evening was "*Serving, Cooperating and Sharing*". Messages on Serving, Cooperating and Sharing were presented by Lillian Cox of Newington Baptist Church, Rev. Jay Butcher formerly of Macedonia Baptist Church (Mathews County) and Rev. Edward Harrow, Sr. of Hermitage Baptist Church, respectively. Servant Leadership Awards for Serving, Cooperating and Sharing were presented to Mr. Ellis Hall of Gloucester, to Macedonia Baptist Church for their "FINS"

Ministry (Friday Nights in the Spirit) and to Mr. “Buddy” Moore of Saluda, respectively.

2016 IMPACT Mid-Tidewater was held the week of July 24-30. This partnership with the BGAV was a huge success. Over a thousand people were involved in making this effort such a success. Approximately 100 middle and high school students, as well as a number of chaperones and crew chiefs, came to the area to work on nine homes. Harmony Grove Baptist Church provided lodging and the Pilot House in Topping provided breakfast and dinner each day. Urbanna Baptist Church hosted a barbecue dinner for everyone on Thursday and Association churches provided lunches at the work sites. Association churches had been divided into five feeding hubs with each hub being responsible for the preparation and delivery of lunches for one day. This was a new concept and was amazingly successful. In addition to being an efficient means to prepare and serve the lunches, this concept offered hub churches a wonderful opportunity to fellowship and encouraged more individuals to be a part of IMPACT. News and pictures of this event were published in five local newspapers.

The Fall MTBA Meeting was hosted by Hermitage Baptist Church on October 16th. Early arrivers were treated to a concert by Rev. David Medlen (retired from Olivet and Lower King and Queen Baptist Churches) and Kathy Thrift from Hermitage Baptist Church. Keynote speakers were Rev. Michael Gray, Pastor of Newington Baptist Church, who shared the message “*Fellowship, the Strength of MTBA*” and Dr. Jim Somerville of First Baptist Church in Richmond, who shared the message “*Remember Me.*” The 2017 operating budget totaling \$104,491 was adopted. The Administrative Committee had also

recommended several changes to the MTBA Bylaws which were approved at this meeting.

Noting that 2016 had been an extremely good year for MTBA, Rev. Heath suggested that the most critical time to plan for the future was when an organization was strong and doing well. Waiting until a time of crisis, decline, fear and anxiety about survival would not be a good time to start planning for the future. The Strategy Plans Committee was charged with taking time in 2017 and perhaps into 2018 to develop a Strategy Plan for the future of the MTBA.

MTBA hosted “*Lunch with Chaplain Lynn Litchfield*” at Hermitage Baptist Church on Thursday, January 19, 2017 at 10:30 a.m. An evening program, including a pizza party, specifically for youth was also offered. Approximately 85 attended the morning session and 70 attended the evening session. As Director of Development for Virginia’s Prison Chaplain Service GraceInside program, Rev. Litchfield had served for over eleven years at the Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women. This program was offering offenders an opportunity to participate in the most developed religious program in any state penal institution.

The Administrative Committee reported in January that the Ministry Outreach Trailer had been used at numerous events involving more than 2,300 participants in 2016. The trailer, which had been purchased by MTBA in 2016, would continue to be a wonderful asset MTBA’s ministry.

The Mid-Tidewater Children’s Ministry Day was held on Saturday, February 18th at Spring Hill Baptist Church in Mathews County. This was a fun-filled

mission event for boys and girls in first through sixth grade. Participants enjoyed crafts, games and birthday cake and learned about missions in Norway and Tanzania.

The MTBA Intercessory Prayer Action Group hosted a prayer retreat on Saturday, February 18th at Camp Piankatank. Retreat leaders were Dr. John Snow of Zoar Baptist Church and Rev. Rob Marsh of Saluda Baptist Church. Approximately 30 people attended this inspiring event.

The Second Annual MTBA Golf Tournament was held on Friday, April 28th to benefit the MTBA "*Rise Against Hunger*" (formerly known as "*Stop Hunger Now*") project. Participants were treated to a steak cook out at Camp Piankatank following the tournament. This event was held at the Piankatank River Golf Club in Middlesex County.

The Annual Mid-Tidewater Week of Prayer was celebrated May 21st – 28th. Churches were encouraged to consider giving a love offering above their regular offerings to the Association. These offerings would go toward the cost associated with the "*Rise Against Hunger*" meal packaging event scheduled for September 16th.

The Spring Association Meeting was held on April 30th at St. Stephens Baptist Church. The themes for the evening were "*Serving, Cooperating and Sharing*" and "*We will not grow weary and lose heart.*" The program for the evening included a walk through several significant historical years including 1772, 1842, 1959 and 2010. 1772 was the year our oldest two churches, Glebe Landing and Lower King & Queen Baptist, had been founded. Three Mid-Tidewater churches, including Olivet, Saluda and St. Stephens, had been founded

in 1842 and were celebrating their 175th anniversaries. 1959 had been the year the Mid-Tidewater Association had been founded and 2010 was the year our youngest sister church, New Hope Fellowship, had been founded. Various readers provided glimpses of daily life in each of these years and a brief history of the churches was shared. Hymns with significant connections to these years were also sung by the congregation. Special music was provided by Associate Minister Serita Hamilton-Edloe on behalf of New Hope Fellowship. Servant Leadership Awards for Serving, Cooperating and Sharing were presented to Chief Ann Richardson of the New Freedom Congregation for her outstanding work with the Mattaponi Indian Nation, Spring Hill Baptist Church in recognition of their partnership mission trip to Tanzania and Saluda Baptist Church for the generous way they have made their people and facility available to so many in our community, respectively.

The Community Ministries Action Team also launched the "*Loving Our Neighbors 52 Weeks A Year*" project at the Spring Association Meeting. The goal of the project was to have each of the Association's 25 churches sign up for two of the 52 weeks between the first week of May 2017 and the last week of April 2018. Each church was given the mission of identifying someone in their respective community who was not a member of their church and to perform some act of kindness for that individual or family during their selected week.

The MTBA Youth Ministries Action Group hosted "*Summer Splash*" on Sunday, June 11th at Camp Piankatank. Participants enjoyed swimming in the pool, a variety of sports activities including Knockerball and GaGa Ball, Bible trivia and pizza. There

were forty-eight (48) individuals representing eight MTBA churches in attendance.

Vacation Bible School programs continued to be offered across the Association. MTBA churches continued to report a great deal of interest in VBS programs with enrollments remaining consistent or increasing at many churches. Several churches who have continued to offer VBS programs for students beyond the sixth grade also reported having very good attendance for this age group.

MTBA hosted a “*Rise Against Hunger*” meal packaging event on Saturday, September 16 at Hermitage Baptist Church. During this event, approximately 150 workers representing 16 MTBA churches packaged 20,000 meals at a cost of \$5,000. “*Rise Against Hunger*” is part of a worldwide effort to end hunger in our lifetime.

The Fall Association Meeting was held on Sunday, October 15, 2017, at Zoar Baptist Church. The theme for the evening was “*With Shouts of Joy*”. A special segment of the meeting was entitled “*With Shouts of Joy We Reach Out*” and featured a video chat with Rev. Charles Blackman of Houston, Texas. Houston had recently been devastated by Hurricane Harvey and the conversation focused on joy in the midst of the hurricane. Another note-worthy segment of the meeting was entitled “*Our Greatest Joy*” and featured special music by Donna Williams of Ivy Memorial Baptist Church in Hampton. Mrs. Williams sang “*Something in the Water*” while a video of MTBA baptisms was played. Also notable was an inspiring demonstration of the joy in our congregations. As members of various MTBA churches shared God moments and points of joy from their respective churches, colorful ribbons representing reaching out

into the community were stretched out into the sanctuary. Mrs. Wanda Watkins was presented with a plaque recognizing her eleven years of service as MTBA Historian. The 2018 Operating Budget totaling \$106,265 was also adopted at the Fall Meeting. The Administrative Committee had received a recommendation from the Nominating Committee that the Church and Pastor Support Action Group be removed from the MTBA structure and bylaws (Article VI – Action Groups). It had been determined that services to be provided by this action group were actually being provided through other avenues. A vote was taken and removal of the Pastor Support Action Group was approved.

In October 2017, conversations had begun with Farnham Baptist Church in Richmond County about the possibility of joining the MTBA family. Farnham was a member of the Rappahannock Baptist Association (RBA) and Rev. Rodney Morrison had felt that the MTBA was providing training and ministry opportunities that would be of great benefit to his congregation. Farnham desired to be dually aligned with both the RBA and MTBA. Those conversations had moved to the point that an invitation had been extended for a MTBA Leadership Team to visit Farnham Baptist Church and meet with some of their leaders, as well as members of the congregation. A few weeks after that meeting, Farnham had called a special business meeting for the purpose of voting on whether or not to proceed with a formal request to seek membership into the MTBA. The vote had been unanimous and their request was made to the MTBA Administrative Committee and MTBA Executive Committee.

In November 2017 the White Stone Baptist Church in Lancaster County had also

notified the MTBA of their church's interest in joining the MTBA.

In January 2018 the Administrative Committee recommended the removal of the two inflatables from the MTBA Ministry Outreach Trailer due to liability/insurance requirements. This recommendation was approved at the January 29th Executive Committee meeting. The trailer which had been purchased in 2016 had and would continue to richly bless MTBA churches even without these items. The trailer would still include games including cornhole boards, volleyball and net, dodge ball, kick ball, a hotdog machine, popcorn machine, snow cone machine as well as other items and was now available to MTBA churches at no cost. The Executive Committee also voted on January 29th to move forward with taking a motion to the Spring 2018 MTBA meeting to receive Farnham Baptist Church into the MTBA.

The Youth Ministries Action Team sponsored a Youth Leadership Conference led by Danny Quirin, Minister in Residence with the BGAV at Harmony Grove Baptist Church on March 3rd. The topic was Discipling Digital Teens and over thirty individuals attended.

The WMU hosted Children's Ministry Day for children in grades one through six on March 24th. Two sessions were scheduled including one at Hermitage Baptist Church and another at Mathews Baptist Church. Those attending enjoyed learning Bible verses and participating in a variety of activities.

The Spring 2018 MTBA was held at Harmony Grove Baptist Church on April 15th. The theme was "*Leadership Training – Equipping the Saints.*" Seven breakout sessions to assist with training our leaders

were available. The keynote speaker was Mr. Matt Thornhill, president of the Southeastern Institute of Research's Boomer Project. Mr. Thornhill delivered a message of "*Winning Churches of Tomorrow.*" A vote was taken and Farnham Baptist Church was received unanimously into the MTBA.

In April 2018, the MTBA office received an official letter from the White Stone Baptist Church requesting membership into the MTBA while also maintaining membership in the RBA.

MTBA hosted a Conflict Workshop on April 28th at Saluda Baptist Church. This workshop was led by Mrs. Cynthia Burton Shackelford of Macedonia Baptist Church and provided insight as to how churches were to deal with conflict. Representatives from thirteen churches were in attendance.

The MTBA Week of Prayer was May 20-27. Offerings collected would be used in support of MTBA missions such as IMPACT Virginia, Rise Against Hunger and responding to extended repair projects beyond IMPACT Virginia.

The MTBA Administrative Committee brought the acceptance of White Stone Baptist Church to the June 25, 2018, Executive Committee meeting for consideration. The Executive Committee voted to move forward and present a motion for acceptance at the fall 2018 meeting on October 21st.

The MTBA Community Ministries Action Group hosted a "*Rise Against Hunger*" meal packing event at Hermitage Baptist Church on September 22nd. In just over two hours, 50,112 meals were packed by over 200 volunteers representing 27 churches. "*Rise Against Hunger*" is one way our sister churches work together by

Serving, Cooperating and Sharing. The MTBA was awarded the Meal Packaging Milestone Award in recognition of our efforts in the fight against hunger.

Realizing the need to provide training for our leaders, “*Grassroots Seminary*”, an advanced Biblical training was birthed in September 2018. A fall 2018 semester was taught by Dr. Brian Williams, Pastor of Ivy Memorial Baptist Church in Hampton. Fifteen sessions on “*Interpreting the Bible/Story of the Bible*” were held weekly beginning on September 10th at Harmony Grove Baptist Church. Thirteen students were enrolled.

The Fall 2018 MTBA Meeting was held on October 21 at Mathews Baptist Church. The theme for the meeting was “*Learning From the Past ... Looking To the Future.*” Servant Leadership awards were given to Gwynn’s Island Baptist Church for Sharing, Zoar Baptist Church for Cooperating and to Mrs. Barbara Bareford (MTBA Office Administrator) for Serving. A vote was taken and White Stone Baptist Church was also unanimously received into the MTBA.

The Strategy Plans Committee had been charged with taking time in 2017 and into 2018 to develop a Strategy Plan for the future of the MTBA. The Committee had met numerous times and had gathered input from MTBA members through six Listening Hubs. Members had been asked the following questions:

- What does a dream association look like?
- How can the Association be better at connecting churches and believers?
- What is missing?

The Committee’s research and input from members had resulted in the development of core values including:

- Fellowship that enriches our relations with God and one another.
- Shared Ministry that connects churches and persons of faith.
- Kingdom Diversity ... Race, Gender and Generations.

The Committee’s annual report also included five strategic initiatives of the MTBA and suggested the implementation of the core values and initiatives would be in the hands of the MTBA Committees as well as the four Action Groups.

At the start of 2018, the MTBA membership had been comprised of 25 churches but with the additions of Farnham Baptist Church and White Stone Baptist Church that number had grown to 27 at the close of the year. From 20 churches reporting, there had been 37 baptisms and 56 other additions during the year. Sunday School enrollment was 1088 and 960 individuals had participated in Vacation Bible Schools. The MTBA office was staffed by Rev. Eddie Health, Director of Missions, and Barbara Bareford, Office Administrator. The MTBA was operating with six officers including Moderator, Vice Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, Historian and WMU Director, six committees including Executive, Administrative, Finance and Stewardship, Nominating, Program and Strategy Planning and four action teams including Community Ministries, Intercessory Prayer, Missions and Evangelism and Youth Ministries. A 2019 operating budget of \$111,865 had also been adopted.

THE 60TH YEAR – 2019

The MTBA received a letter in January 2019 from Beale Memorial Baptist Church in Tappahannock requesting membership into the MTBA. The Administrative Committee made a motion at the MTBA Executive Committee on January 28th to begin the dialogue sessions with the Beale Memorial leaders.

Beginning on January 28, 2019, a second semester of “*Grassroots Seminary*” with nineteen students enrolled was held at Harmony Grove Baptist Church. The spring semester which was taught by Dr. Bruce Powers, Pastor of Urbanna Baptist Church, focused on “*The Story of the Church/Christian Theology*”.

The MTBA Youth Action Committee hosted a Youth Leadership Conference on February 16th at Harmony Grove Baptist Church. This conference was led by Danny Quirin, Minister in Residence with the BGAV.

Rev. Heath began meeting with Rev. Jonathan Davis, Pastor of Beale Memorial in February to discuss Beale’s desire to join the MTBA. A group of MTBA leaders met with a group of leaders from Beale on February 28th to discuss core values, mission objectives, organization structure and the desire that Beale was looking for a dual partnership with both the RBA as well as the MTBA. There was a unanimous feeling from all participants that the time was right to bring a motion for membership to the Spring 2019 meeting.

The Spring MTBA Meeting was held at Gwynn’s Island Baptist Church on March 31st. The keynote speaker was Dr. Chuck Warnock, Pastor of Chatham Baptist Church

in Pittsylvania County. Other speakers included:

- Mr. Glenn Maddox with BGAV Disaster Response,
- Rev. Jonathan Davis, Pastor of Beale Memorial Baptist Church who spoke on “*Small Church Culture*,”
- Mrs. Cynthia Burton Shackelford, Macedonia Baptist Church who spoke on “*Church Conflict*” and
- Dr. Susan McBride, BGAV Field Strategist.

A motion to welcome Beale Memorial Baptist Church into the MTBA was approved unanimously.

The MTBA Intercessory Prayer Committee hosted a National Day of Prayer Event on May 2, 2019. MTBA churches were encouraged to invite everyone to join together from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at Poroporone Baptist Church for focused, targeted prayer for our nation and related issues.

The annual MTBA Week of Prayer was May 19th through May 26th. 100% of the monies received through the Week of Prayer Offering will be used to fund MTBA missions such as IMPACT Virginia and “*Rise Against Hunger*.” The 2019 offering would be used specifically to support ongoing Disaster Relief efforts in North Carolina. Even though it has been almost a year since the tragic hurricane and flooding, there was still much work to be done and many volunteers were still needed.

At this writing, the MTBA is making plans for its Fall meeting which will be held on October 20th at Newington Baptist Church. This meeting will mark the 60th anniversary of MTBA ministry. Plans for this special celebration meeting include an Associational Choir and a pictorial presentation of significant events in our churches over the past ten years. The theme will be “Celebrating 60 years, Diamond Jubilee, of Ministry”.

IN CLOSING

Much has been accomplished by the MTBA in its first sixty years. The MTBA continues an extensive ministry in the communities served by its 28 churches. The Association’s ministry also reaches far beyond the local area and includes skilled Disaster Relief workers ready to jump into service at a moment’s notice and youth and adults willing and able to travel across the state, the country, and the world to do the Lord’s work wherever He leads. Even with all that has been accomplished, there will always be more to be done. We must press on and never lose courage.

Grateful to the Rappahannock Association for its early direction and beginning, the MTBA has felt divine guidance over the past sixty years. Surely it was such guidance that brought the first 24 churches together in 1959, and it has been that same guiding hand that has brought the Association to where it is today. With dedicated lay leaders and pastors too numerous to mention, the spirit of cooperation and reverence that laid the foundation for this Association still prevails. May God continue to bless our ministry in the years ahead.

Respectfully submitted,

*Wanda Watkins
Poroporone Baptist Church
June 27, 2019*



MTBA FALL GATHERING:

OCTOBER 20, 2019

**NEWINGTON BAPTIST
CHURCH**

60 YEARS OF MINISTRY

DIAMOND JUBLIEE

Diamonds are cut into many sizes and shapes as well as created in many different colors.



Beale Memorial Baptist Church

Tappahannock
Organized 1875
Dr. Jonathan Davis
(Pastor)
Member of MTBA since 2019



Beech Grove Baptist Church

White Marsh
Organized 1904
Dr. Richard Croxton
(Preaching Interim)
Member of MTBA since 1960



Beulah Baptist Church

Gloucester
Organized 1875
Rev. Tom Cohick
(Pastor)
Member of MTBA since 1959



Bruington Baptist Church

Bruington
Organized 1790
Dr. Roger Collier (Senior Pastor)
Dr. Fred Skaggs (Co Pastor)
Member of MTBA since 1959



Farnham Baptist Church

Farnham
Organized 1776
Rev. Rodney Morrison
(Pastor)
Member of MTBA since 2018



First Baptist of Harmony Village

Locust Hill
Organized 1885
Rev. Woodland Holmes
(Pastor)
Member of MTBA since 2004



Glebe Landing Baptist Church

Laneview
Organized 1772
Rev. Gene Cumbia
(Pastor)
Member of MTBA since 1959



Gwynn's Island Baptist Church

Gwynn
Organized 1874
Dr. Edward Jordan
(Pastor)
Member of MTBA since 1959



Harmony Grove Baptist Church

Topping
Organized 1859
Dr. Barbara Filling
(Interim Pastor)
Member of MTBA since 1959



Hermitage Baptist Church

Church View
Organized 1789
Rev. Edward Harrow, Sr.
(Interim Pastor)
Member of MTBA since 1959



Lower King and Queen Baptist Church

Mattaponi
Organized 1772
Rev. Terry Morrison
(Pastor)
Member of MTBA since 1959



Macedonia Baptist Church

Foster
Organized 1886
Rev. Everett Hughes
(Pastor)
Member of MTBA since 1959



Mathews Baptist Church

Hudgins
Organized 1776
Rev. Brian Kramer
(Pastor)
Member of MTBA since 1959



Mattaponi Baptist Church

King & Queen Court House
Organized 1785
(vacant)
Member of MTBA since 1959



New Freedom Congregation

Gloucester
Organized 1992
Rev. Walt McKibbin
(Pastor)
Member of MTBA since 1992



New Hope Fellowship

Hartfield
Organized 2010
Dr. Leonard Edloe
(Pastor)
Member of MTBA since 2013



New Hope Memorial Baptist Church

Shacklefords
Organized 1929
Rev. Dan Grantham
(Pastor)
Member of MTBA since 1973



Newington Baptist Church

Gloucester
Organized 1873
Rev. Michael Gray
(Pastor)
Member of MTBA since 1959



Olivet Baptist Church

Mattaponi
Organized 1842
Rev. Terry Morrison
(Pastor)
Member of MTBA since 1959



Petsworth Baptist Church

Gloucester
Organized 1881
Rev. John Pouchot
(Pastor)
Member of MTBA since 1959



Poroporone Baptist Church

Shacklefords
Organized 1807
Rev. Doug Davis
(Pastor)
Member of MTBA since 1959



Saluda Baptist Church

Saluda
Organized 1842
Mr. Eddie Harrow, Jr.
(Pastor)
Member of MTBA since 1959



Spring Hill Baptist Church

Cobbs Creek
Organized 1874
Dr. Charles McDaniel
(Pastor)
Member of MTBA since 1959



St. Stephens Baptist Church

St. Stephens Church
Organized 1842
Rev. Mark Holland
(Pastor)
Member of MTBA since 1959



Urbanna Baptist Church

Urbanna
Organized 1888
Dr. Bruce Powers
(Pastor)
Member of MTBA since 1959



Westville Baptist Church

Mathews
Organized 1878
Mr. Robert (Bob) E. Huff
(Pastor)
Member of MTBA since 1959



White Stone Baptist Church

White Stone
Organized 1895
Dr. Jeff Shanaberger
(Pastor)
Member of MTBA since 2018



Zoar Baptist Church

Deltaville
Organized 1808
Dr. John Snow
(Pastor)
Member of MTBA since 1959



Mid-Tidewater Baptist Association

Saluda
Organized 1959
Rev. Eddie Heath
(Director of Missions)
Mrs. Barbara Bareford
(Office Administrator)



MTBA Association Banner was first displayed at the MTBA Fall meeting on October 24, 1996, at Newington Baptist Church and depicts the cross of Christ planted with the four counties of Gloucester, King & Queen, Mathews, and Middlesex. We are grateful to Mrs. Lillian Cox (Newington BC) and Mrs. Jean Gwathmey (deceased – Bruington BC) who had this banner made. Mr. William Gwathmey (Bruington BC) made the pole and stand. The flag materials, the stand and labor were a donation. The stand is made of walnut from Rosemount, the birthplace of Robert Baylor Semple.

Thank you to Mrs. Billie Spence and Ms. Terry Cooke of New Hope Memorial BC who had this banner modified in June 2019 by adding the counties of:

Richmond (Farnham BC joined MTBA in April 2018),

Lancaster (White Stone BC joined MTBA in October 2018),

Essex (Beale Memorial BC joined MTBA in March 2019).

MTBA TABLE CENTERPIECE



October 15, 2017 at Zoar BC



March 31, 2019 at Gwynn's Island BC

During the 2017 Fall Program Committee meeting, Rev. Eddie Heath, MTBA Director of Missions, wanted the Program Committee to come up with a way to visually show members the connection between and among the MTBA churches. He wanted a visual aid that would show how the MTBA churches were connected through Serving, Cooperating, and Sharing, no matter their size. The visual aid created was a three-foot long board with twelve-inch high MTBA letters mounted. Behind the letters, a wooden dowel held 25 spools of ribbon, one for each MTBA member church. At the MTBA Fall meeting on October 15, 2017, at Zoar BC, the MTBA centerpiece was first displayed. One of the 25 ribbon ends was given to a church representative who then pulled the ribbon out into the sanctuary to about a length of fifteen feet. The representative stopped and told members about what their church was doing to advance the Kingdom of God. When you sing the third stanza of "*Onward, Christian Soldiers*", that is what Eddie wanted us to see.

"Like a mighty army moves the church of God, Brothers, we are treading where the saints have trod; We are not divided, all one body we, One in hope and doctrine, one in charity. Onward, Christian soldiers, Marching as to war, With the cross of Jesus Going on Before!"

By: Tammy Faulkner (Macedonia BC), Program Committee (May 6, 2019)

MTBA DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS



Dr. William Russ
September 1992 – June 1994 (First DOM)



Dr. John "Jack" Patterson
October 1995 – October 2006



Dr. Robert May - October 2006 – July 2015



Rev. Eddie Heath – January 2016 - present

MID-TIDEWATER STAFF AND OFFICERS

October 21, 2018 – October 20, 2019

Association Office Mailing Address: P.O. Box 302, Saluda, VA 23149

Street Address: 884 Gloucester Road, Saluda, VA 23149

Phone: 804-758-4385

Website: www.midtidewaterbaptist.org

Facebook: Mid-Tidewater Baptist Assoc.

DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS

Rev. Eddie Heath, (office: P.O. Box 302, Saluda, VA 23149) (office) 804-758-4385

E-mail: eddie@midtidewaterbaptist.org

Residence: 1401 Bridge Crossing, Yorktown, VA 23692 (cell) 804-921-3658

OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

Mrs. Barbara Bareford, P. O. Box 432, Saluda, VA 23149 (office) 804-758-4385

e-mail: barbara@midtidewaterbaptist.org (home) 804-758-4611

MODERATOR

Mr. Don McNamee, 197 Beach Drive, Hartfield, VA 23071 (cell) 757-897-6087

e-mail: donmcn57@gmail.com (home) 804-776-0966

VICE MODERATOR

Dr. Barbara Filling, P. O. Box 423, Urbanna, VA 23175 (cell) 804-824-4757

e-mail: bmfglf@va.metrocast.net

CLERK

Mrs. Cynthia Burton Shackelford, P.O. Box 97, Foster, VA 23056

e-mail: cshack494@gmail.com (home) 804-725-9030; (cell) 804-513-9125

TREASURER

Mrs. Betty Kennon, 405 Locklies Creek Road, Topping, VA 23169 (cell) 804-512-3357

e-mail: thekennons@va.metrocast.net (home) 804-758-9709

HISTORIAN

(vacant)

WOMAN'S MISSIONARY UNION DIRECTOR (until April 2020)

Mrs. Robin Cade, 115 Pinetree Drive, Urbanna, VA 23175

e-mail: rjcadebsa@yahoo.com (home) 804-694-9270

DISASTER RELIEF COORDINATOR BETWEEN BGAV & MTBA

Mr. Tom Brooks, 2457 Water View Road, Water View, VA 23180 (home) 804-758-4831

e-mail: hollywoodbrooks43@gmail.com (cell) 804-832-4755

DISASTER RELIEF CO-COORDINATOR BETWEEN BGAV & MTBA

Mrs. Debbie Jones, 126 Old Stage Road, Toano, VA 23169

e-mail: debbiehj420@aol.com (home) 757-566-1377; (cell) 757-880-9133

MINISTERS' CONFERENCE

President: Dr. John Snow, P. O. Box 1010, Deltaville, VA 23043 (cell) 804-229-0271

e-mail: pastor.zoar@va.metrocast.net

Vice-President:

Rev. Mark Holland, 8225 Silkwood Drive, Mechanicsville, VA 23116 (cell) 804-301-6536

e-mail: marktholland@gmail.com