



Meet Our New Administrative Assistant: Sarah Halloran



Sarah is 34 and has been living in Maryland for two years now, coming from New Jersey. She currently lives in Hagerstown with her two cats. She works full time, from home, for an insurance agency since August of 2020, about a month after she moved to MD. She enjoys cooking, painting, hiking, kayaking, and reading: mostly books that expound on the Bible. She also enjoys service in the church when she can.

She received Christ back in 2018. A woman she had worked with for a few years had shared about Jesus with her in a time where she was in desperate need of hope and that was the beginning of the Lord drawing her in to Himself. She currently belongs to Pleasant Valley Baptist Church and says she is thankful for the family she has gained there and all of the support and wisdom she has received, which has especially strengthened her faith along the way. She says, "God has never failed to put the right people in my life at the right time and I'm thankful for His providence and giving me a family in the church, a family I never have experienced before."

How did she come to the position of Administrative Assistant? Bruce Conley was preaching at Pleasant Valley Baptist Church one Sunday and his message was particularly about service and evangelism. After the service, Sarah approached Bruce asking about opportunities where she could serve. She says, "As a single woman, my time is open outside of my day job and therefore I want to be of service in any way I can." Bruce reached out to her a couple months later and here she is!

Congratulations to Harold Renner - The New Spiritual Leader at Greenbrier Baptist Church

Harold Renner is starting something new in his 50's. He is becoming a bi-vocational church leader. The former USAF mechanic / home builder has spent the last 20+ years working in the information technology field. Never did he think that his life would take the many twists and turns of the last 5 years ... but as one of his former pastors once told him, "God has a plan and we're part of it."

In mid-2017 Harold experienced what he believed was a calling to preach. It was the last thing on his mind at the time, but was unmistakable. Shortly thereafter, he says that life went into shambles. Everything that could go wrong - did go wrong. But through it all he had faith that God was always there with him in the storms - and the calling was always there in the background. "I was in no shape to lead myself, much less lead a church" said Renner, and it took time for those storms to pass and life turmoil to settle down. He is thankful these days of the reminder that God often uses the weak to lead - providing them with divine strength in ministry and service to others.

This year, he says, the calling wouldn't let him rest. He could not bear the thought of facing his Savior one day, trying to explain why he never followed through on the calling. So when Pastor Dave Hughes resigned the pastorate at Greenbrier Baptist (stepping back into retirement), Harold stepped out in faith once again towards the call. This time things were different. God had calmed all the storms. Harold had been humbled by experiencing them and there became a groundswell of support from the membership of Greenbrier Baptist Church, who asked him to lead the church family.

BRBA paired him with a sister congregation in the Association, Smithsburg Valley Church, and they are now working with Harold to license him to preach the gospel. He is also researching educational opportunities so that he can better serve the congregation in the future and ultimately will be seeking to become ordained.

"I am steadfast in knowing that there is nothing special about me that makes me worthy of God's calling. As a bond-servant to Him I want to fully submit to His will and to lead in whatever direction God has in store for the future of His church and His people."

We welcome Harold to the Blue Ridge Baptist Association family of church leaders.



Dave's Corner

aka **Free Stuff to help Churches!**

Hello everyone! I am Pastor Dave Hays, and I manage equipment and vehicles for BRBA. We have a LOT of items that have been donated to help our churches in storage, and by way of this article every 60 days - we plan on drawing your attention to some of the things that we have that are FREE for your church to use, or in some cases - call your own at NO COST to you!



August and September we want to draw your attention to.....

LIGHTS, CAMERA,.....OUTDOOR MOVIES!! We have a **new inflatable movie screen and outdoor projector for you to borrow!** The screen is 33' diagonal. All that you need to do is **reserve it on the BRBA website**. Use the drop down menu to find Equipment Reservations and hit "other item". Let me know you want the Outdoor Movie equipment, and you will be good to go. We plan to have a

specific listing for it very soon.

If you need anything else, we have many books, bible study materials, and lots of sound equipment to fill your church's needs. **Contact me at Dave@blueridgebaptist.org** and I'll be happy to make arrangements for you to come to our storage facility in Hagerstown and take a peek at what we have.

Shepherds Cohort For Our Local Pastors

Shepherds *Cohort*

A time for Hagerstown area pastors to encourage one another as we delight in Jesus and shepherd His Church.

**1st Friday of every month,
beginning August 5th
11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.**

15 High Street, Hagerstown, MD 21740

Text [shepherds](tel:94000) to 94000 to join!

We are also looking for a coordinator/leader to form a cohort for pastors in Frederick County, MD. If you might be interested in taking this on, contact Director of Missions, Bruce Conley at (301) 821-0370.

DOM Sightings

Our Director of Missions, Bruce Conley, had a busy couple of months. See what he has been up to since our last newsletter:

- Assisted North Valley Church leadership
- Assisted with a prayer assembly for Pastor Joe Lindstrom
- Met with pastoral leaders who serve Adamstown Community Church
- Provided security consulting and service to the Frederick CareNet Crisis Pregnancy Center during the leak and the official announcement from the Supreme Court decision regarding Roe vs. Wade
- Met with the BRBA Disaster Relief coordinator re: preparedness
- Assisted the Constitution & ByLaws revision committee in getting a draft prepared for delivery to pastors in the BRBA
- Met with BCM/D officials re: mutual work and partnerships
- Provided support for several pastors in need (medical issues/church conflict/legal issues/etc.)
- Preached at several churches in our region
- Participated in monthly meeting of Associational leaders in MD/DE



WAR Mission Trip: Ramp Project - August 3-7th



BRBA has partnered with Calvary Baptist Church in War, WV to assist the impoverished and flood ravaged small town of War, WV.

- A team is scheduled to go to War August 4-7 to build an 80' handicap ramp for a family in the community whose husband/father recently had a stroke. BRBA is funding the project.
- During that same weekend, we will be helping Calvary Baptist with several booths during the town War Fest celebration by providing the music for the event, serving free popcorn, snow balls, cotton candy and face painting.
- BRBA is also trying to provide financial assistance and design planning for a new War, WV volunteer fire department lighted sign. They currently have an old faded and rotting plywood sign.
- Calvary Baptist also needs work on their handicap ramp and clearing out significant overgrowth behind their church property, as well as additional community projects in the works, serving War, WV through Calvary Baptist to reach the lost for Christ.
- **If you would like to help on the August 4th trip, it's not too late!! We could still use some help: with volunteers and financial help. You can also donate towards these missions through your church. Just designate that your donation is going towards WAR Missions through BRBA**

Please contact John Ely at 443-340-1028 or jely60@comcast.net or reach out to Bruce Conley at (301) 821-0370 or bruce@blueridgebaptist.org.



What's Happening!?!

1. Disaster Relief Training - New Life Community Church

August 6th @ 9am-4pm

4102 Tabler Station Road, Inwood WV

**Please visit the BCM/D for Registration and Fees

For Questions Contact:

Event Questions: Ellen Udovich eudovich@bcmd.org

Registration Questions: Demetra Bennett dbennett@bcmd.org

2. Connect Lunches! For Children & Youth Ministry Leaders - Host: Kris Buckman

August 10th & August 24th (pick your date or come to both) @ 12pm-2pm

August 10th at Mission BBQ in Columbia

**Free Event

3. Core Values Index Webinar - Online Conference via Zoom - Leader: Michael Sharp

August 23rd @ 11am-12:30pm

In this webinar, you'll learn all about the CVI assessment tool. You'll also learn the Core Values that anchor your leadership style and the way in which you can make the greatest contribution to your ministry or profession.

**Please visit the BCM/D for Registration and Fees

4. Healthy Leaders for Healthy Churches: Revitalizing Your Leadership

September 14 @ 10am-3pm

Held at Skycroft Conference Center: 9621 Frostown Rd, **Middletown** MD

Guest Speaker: Jay Vineyard

**Please visit the BCM/D for Registration and Fees

5. Healthy Leaders for Healthy Churches: Revitalizing Your Leadership

September 14 @ 10am-3pm

Held at Skycroft Conference Center: 10255 Old Columbia Rd. **Columbia** MD

Guest Speaker: Jay Vineyard

**Please visit the BCM/D for Registration and Fees



Upcoming and Important Events

1. Constitution & ByLaws Revision Meeting - August 1st @ 7pm

Location: Greenbrier Baptist Church - 20810 National Pike Boonsboro MD

This is your chance to weigh in and give input to the Constitution and Bylaws Revision Committee about the rough draft that was mailed out to all pastors and church offices in July. Any and all church leaders from BRBA churches are encouraged to participate in this Q and A time. We welcome your feedback!!

2. WAR Mission Trip: Ramp Project - August 3-7th

Location: War, WV

Anyone who knows woodworking or deck construction would be ideal for building this handicapped ramp project. If helpers can only come for a portion of this 4 day period --- we'll take whatever help you can provide. Workers can stay at the church (don't worry you will be able to shower!!). There is a town festival that falls the same weekend, so it is possible that the church's outreach could use more hands on deck to do face painting, water giveaways, and other things that are planned.

Contact John Ely for more information - 443-340-1028 or jely60@comcast.net

3. Women of BRBA Brunch - September 10th @ 9am-11am

Location: Faith Baptist Church

2212 Jefferson Pike Knoxville MD

Topic Discussed: Redemption through Adoption

Guest Speaker: Kristie Graves

Everyone in BRBA has heard the story about the Graves family and their adoption of a Ukrainian girl "Brizzy" into their family. Kristie Graves will share about how God watched over them as they embarked on a dangerous journey into the Ukraine to get their little girl out safely. You won't want to miss her testimony! Light food and drinks will be served.



4. BRBA Annual Meeting - October 10th @ 7pm-9pm

Location: Skycroft Conference Center: 9621 Frostown Rd, Middletown MD

Come and hear what God is doing in the churches of the Blue Ridge Baptist Association! We will be voting on the 2023 budget and the revised Constitution and Bylaws. There will be guest speakers, worship music, door prizes, fellowship, and light foods and drinks served afterwards. This year we will require 8-20 pre-registered credentialed members (per the old 2005 Constitution) to vote in the business session. Contact the BRBA office to see how many messengers your church can send. ALL are invited to attend this annual celebration! We'd love to see YOU there!

A Fresh Perspective on Supporting Christian Based Ministries

Bruce Conley, Director of Missions

Many of you know that in addition to working full time as your local Director of Missions, I still work one or two days a week doing security work. As a retired policeman, there is an old saying: "Old cops never die, they just work security" and I guess that has come true in my life as well.

I don't particularly enjoy security work; most times I have to travel to some of the worst crime ridden neighborhoods of Baltimore City or Prince George's County and protect people in hard working jobs from becoming the victims of crime. It's the nature of the work. But this past month I had the privilege of doing a different kind of security work that touched my heart and changed my perspective regarding our many local churches supporting Crisis Pregnancy Centers in our region.

In May, a draft opinion from the Supreme Court was leaked to the press saying that the high court was considering overturning Roe vs. Wade decision of 1973. There was an immediate response from pro-abortion activists and it got ugly pretty quick. Pro-life Christians have been praying for 50 years for this day to come but the deliverance that finally came, threw up cautionary red flags everywhere. Extremists went on record warning that if the court did decide to overturn Roe vs. Wade, the action would be followed by "a night of rage" or "a night of terror". Homeland Security put out warnings about possible attacks of churches that support anti-abortion causes, including local crisis pregnancy centers. In June, at the end of the court's session, the rule to overturn Roe vs Wade was officially released. Roe was dead!

I had been contacted by the Board of Directors of the CareNet Pregnancy Center in Frederick, MD asking if I could help them with some security services during a very anxious period of time. I happily answered the call. Many of our churches support this center throughout the year with various fundraisers and gifts. Our BRBA treasurer serves on the board there so it was a no-brainer to help them out in their time of need. What transpired over the next few weeks was much more than me just doing another security gig.

As I served the center I got to witness some amazing things. I met the employees and volunteers that work there and saw their hearts in wanting to preserve the lives of defenseless infants and love on new moms who find themselves in very difficult circumstances. Their dedication to the task at hand was more than compelling. I saw young mothers coming every day, some by car and others pushing a stroller multiple blocks though the City of Frederick, to get their baby needed items or a check up. I saw girls coming in for counseling support. Senior citizens would come by bringing cases of diapers or baby formula that they had purchased to donate to the center. The whole picture of the operation was amazing to me and I saw through fresh eyes how God can weave together a wonderful network of love and help through individuals, churches, and other various resources. My life was changed in how I viewed support of such para-church organizations and the importance of their work.

I want to challenge you and your church in the future, when you support a local center like this in the future with campaigns, like filling baby bottles with coins, take some time to go deeper. Meet the people who work and serve there. Get to know them and their calling in this work. Drop off lunch one day. Tell them you appreciate them. If you can, volunteer to pick up some duties that need to be addressed. After my experience I can tell you, you'll be more than blessed for digging in a bit deeper.



2 Cor. 9:8 reminds us; "God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work."

PRAYER REQUESTS:

- **Calvary Baptist Church: War, WV and our missions partnership with them. (trip Aug. 3 - 7)**
- **Joe Lindstrom, Pastor of Third Day Church: being treated for cancer**
- **Clayton Clark, Pastor of Pleasant Valley Baptist Church: that blood tests will continue to show no traces of cancer in his future tests. He is clear of any cancer as of now, Praise God!**
- **Summer camps at Skycroft: that many lives will be drawn towards God and salvation**
- **DOM Bruce Conley: being diagnosed for extreme arthritis in his spine.**

Blue Ridge Baptist Association
20810A National Pike
Boonsboro, MD 21713