



My parents taught me to be frugal. My kids used to say that I was cheap. When they were growing up, I used to hate the fact that Christmas wrapping paper was so expensive, and after going through all the trouble of wrapping gifts and putting on pretty ribbons and bows ... they would only tear the wrapping to shreds on Christmas morning like a tornado through a Kansas farmhouse, leaving all of that investment good for nothing but the trash can or the fireplace. As a frugal Father, how did I handle that? Well, starting in September each year - I would save the Sunday comics section from our Sunday newspaper (the Washington Post) and then come December, I would wrap some of their gifts in comics instead of sanctioned Christmas wrapping paper! WHY NOT? It was colorful, and everyone likes to see Snoopy and Charlie Brown at Christmas, right? As it turns out ... it really didn't matter to them WHAT the gifts were wrapped in on Christmas morning, as long as they got the presents they had been wanting so badly.

When Christmas rolls around each year, we can stress out about many things. Getting the right gift to make your loved one happy, or making sure you have the correct or

most beautiful paper to wrap it in can seem to be important. I want to challenge you this year however to focus on something else. About 2,000 years ago God sent His only son into the world as His gift to us. John 1 says that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. At His birth, angels appeared in the fields near Bethlehem to announce to shepherds that the Messiah had come. The instruction was to "go find Him". Luke 2:12 says, *"And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger"*. God's greatest gift was wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a feeding trough rather than in kingly garments in a palace. His gift was to ALL people who would receive Him.

Jesus was God's gift to us. What we do with that gift - is our gift to God. So many people like to leave Him as a baby lying in a manger, but His birth never saves them. That birth in Bethlehem was given so that God could be WITH us and *identify* with us. Christ knows our pains, our struggles - even our temptations. His eventual death on the cross was a *massive* gift which opened a way for us to be with God. He was born to die so that we may truly live, not only in this life - but for eternity. In response, our gift back to God should be a life wrapped in His grace, filled with His love and sharing His message to a world in need.

When we unwrap the story of His life and what He did for us, we should desire to live a life that reflects that kind of grace, love, and mercy. Listen - the wrapping doesn't have to be pretty and perfect because God doesn't look on the outside like we do. He sees our hearts.

I hope you all have a very, Merry Christmas !!!

Pastor Bruce



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Artwork by Mike DuBois

**LOTTIE
MOON**

OFFERING

give generously this christmas season

The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering (LMCO) is a Southern Baptist offering for international missions, and its national goal changes annually; for the 2025-2026 period, the goal is set at **\$210 million**, aiming to send more missionaries to unreached people groups globally, building on previous years' successes. This offering provides 100% of funds directly to International Mission Board (IMB) missionaries, enabling them to share the gospel worldwide

Every year, Southern Baptist churches collect an offering to send and support missionaries to reach out to people who have never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ.

LAST YEAR:

3,577

Missionaries on the Field

68,628

Baptisms

84,430

New Leaders

2,409

Churches Planted

144,969

Professed Faith in Jesus

1.6 Million

Heard the Gospel



BLUE RIDGE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Partnering together to reach our Communities for Christ

EVENT: PERSONAL EVANGELISM TRAINING

"The Heart, Head, and Hands of Evangelism"

DESCRIPTION: *Evangelism is more than a method—it's a way of life. In this workshop, we'll explore the heart of evangelism (cultivating compassion and gospel-centered love for others), the head (understanding the biblical truths and being able to clearly explain the message of Jesus), and the hands (practical tools and real-life practices to share your faith with confidence). This session will equip you to not only KNOW the gospel ... but how to live and share God's grace in your every day walk and life!*



FACILITATOR :

Richard Pope is pastor of CANVAS CHURCH in Salisbury, MD.

DATE: Saturday, January 31st, 2025 from 9 AM - noon
(light breakfast snacks + coffee provided)

LOCATION: Valley Baptist Church
5678 Holter Rd, Jefferson, MD 21769



PERSONAL EVANGELISM TRAINING at Valley Baptist Church in Jefferson, MD on January 31, 2026 from 9 - noon. See above flyer for details.



INTRO. to CHURCH SECURITY training at **West End Baptist Chapel** in Hagerstown on Saturday, Dec. 6th 2025 from 9 - noon

59 Winter St, Hagerstown, MD 21740 *This is a good class for those who are starting a new security ministry within their church(es) We will present practical ideas on how to protect your church family, and keep everyone safe from harm.*



**BLUE RIDGE
BAPTIST ASSOCIATION**

Partnering together to reach our Communities for Christ

**THE BLUE RIDGE BAPTIST
ASSOCIATION is hosting a bus trip
to Sight-N-Sound**

JOSHUA

**AT THE SIGHT & SOUND THEATER
LANCASTER COUNTY, PA**

MARCH 25, 2026

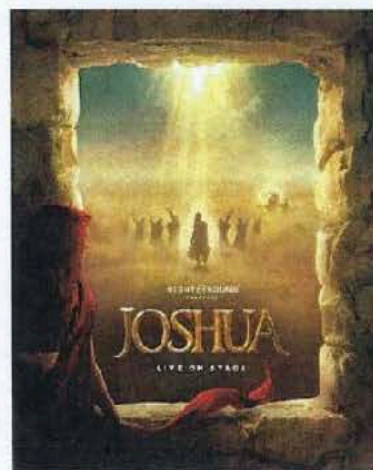
7:00 AM departure from First United Bank, Myersville MD

7:20 AM pick-up at Hagerstown Church, Hagerstown MD

**\$189 Per Person
Due by January 15, 2026**

PACKAGE INCLUDES:

- Performance of *JOSHUA* at Sight & Sound Theatre
- Buffet Lunch at Shady Maple
- Kitchen Kettle Village
- Taxes & Meal Gratuities
- Motorcoach Transportation



View an original, live performance of Joshua. From the banks of the Jordan River to the towering walls of Jericho, JOSHUA is a miraculous adventure. Journey alongside the people of Israel as they navigate their new-found freedom in an unforgiving wilderness. When Joshua is called to replace Moses as their faithful leader, tensions mount in the midst of dwindling supplies and approaching armies. With one last fortified city standing between the Israelites and the Promised Land, unexpected help emerges from behind enemy lines and Joshua's trust in God's plan is put to the ultimate test. Experience one of the most redemptive stories of the Bible as it comes to life for the very first time.

FOR INFORMATION AND RESERVATIONS CONTACT:

BAKER'S TRAVEL

(joined by Blue Ridge Baptist)

LeRoy Baker (301) 293-2488

or

Clara Mae Baker (301) 739-3705

9603 Baltimore National Pike

Myersville, MD 21773



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Congratulations to Pastor [Christian Kolthoff](#) on his ordination to the Gospel Ministry at South End Baptist Church in Frederick, MD on Sunday - November 23rd, 2025!

Christian is a graduate of the Liberty University School of Divinity. He is serving South End Baptist as an associate pastor and youth leader.

Pastors from within the Blue Ridge Baptist Association served on his ordination screening council along with ordained members of South End Baptist Church.



- **Equipped for Every Good Work: The BCM/D Pastors' Conference** December 4 @ 8:30 am - 3:30 pm

The Church at Severn Run Run 8187 Telegraph Rd, Severn, MD, United States

- **Pastor Formation Cohort**

February 19, 2026



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