



VOICE OF THE APPALACHIAN CONFERENCE OF THE IPHC

# MESSENGER

Vol. 84, No. 8 September 2023

## Quadrennial Conference

SEPTEMBER

23

09:00



## OCTOBER RETIRED MINISTERS' BIRTHDAYS

### October 1

Rev. Mrs. Marysue Freeman  
P.O. Box 1886  
Morehead City, NC 28557

### October 3

Rev. Clarence Aker  
324 Apache Run  
Max Meadows, VA 24360

### October 9

Rev. James Abram  
1153 Rosenbaum Road  
Bluefield, VA 24605

### October 14

Rev. Robert Presnell  
232 E. 36<sup>th</sup> Street  
Buena Vista, VA 24416

### October 31

Rev. Mrs. Barbara Early  
75 Church Street  
Christiansburg, VA 24073

### October 1

Rev. Bobby Lewis  
185 Old School Road  
Wytheville, VA 24382

### October 5

Rev. Richard Kingrea  
P.O. Box 6654  
Christiansburg, VA 24073

### October 10

Rev. Carl Early  
75 Church Street  
Christiansburg, VA 24073

### October 22

Rev. Ms. Sharon Hartman  
1911 Haworth Circle  
Salem, VA 24153

## Appalachian Conference *Messenger*

Vol. 84— September 2023— No. 8

Executive Editor – Preston Mathena

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### Deadline for all script to reach the office:

First of each month for the next month's issue  
Email to Sandy Wood at [woodsh12@gmail.com](mailto:woodsh12@gmail.com)

WEBSITE: [www.appconf.org](http://www.appconf.org)

## Rev. Walter Vernon Neese

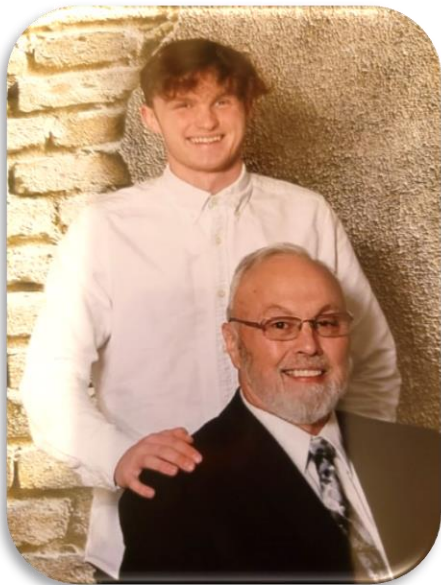


Walter Neese, 65, of Glasgow, went to be with the Lord on August 17, 2023. He was licensed with the Appalachian Conference in 2017. A memorial service was held on August 26 at the Lexington P.H. Church, with Pastor George Close officiating. Another faithful soldier has gone home to his reward.



# The Bishop's Page

Preston Mathena



## PASSING THE TORCH TO THE NEXT GENERATION

I am pastor Paul Basham from Mossy Living Word Church in Mossy, West Virginia. I write today concerning a special honor that was given to me by Bishop Preston Mathena. My grandson, Jeremiah Light, was on summer break from Holmes Bible college and did a summer internship under my tutelage. What a blessed, busy & exciting summer it has been! Our Bishop gave me a list of 11 different activities to have Jeremiah do in the 12 weeks he was home. He was a very busy young man and also worked 4 to 5 days weekly at his job.

Words seem quite inadequate when I attempt to express what a blessing this has been to me – watching Jeremiah grow in knowledge and understanding of God's word, seeing the passionate manner in which he communicates the Holy Scriptures to those he speaks it to. These things have encouraged my soul and

many others.

Our young people have been encouraged to be involved in music, singing, teaching and preaching since they were babies. They are the church of today and the future. Now is the time for us to encourage and equip them. Now is the time for us to pray that God use them mightily. As Jeremiah steps out to do greater things for the Lord, we will watch and pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers. What an honor to have even a small part in seeing the passion of our Savior come to life in a new generation of ministers.

So, to my beloved grandson Jeremiah I say, Behold He comes! Prepare ye the way of the Lord Jesus.

### Reflections on my Internship – by Jeremiah Light

Over the summer, I was given the opportunity to work alongside my grandfather, Pastor Paul Basham, in the work of ministry. In this position I preached, taught, served, among many other duties and tasks that came up. Moreover, given the duties that I undertook, I learned a lot of practical wisdom which I am convinced will aid me for the rest of my life. However, I must say that the most joyous part of the experience was getting to make memories alongside my grandfather. Even as I type, my mind is filled with memories of the car rides we took to go out to eat and visit with individuals from the church, or of all the time we spent doing yardwork around the church. Though these are not typically what one usually thinks of whenever they think of ministry – we are more apt to think of the preaching aspect of things – these things (and things like them) are truly what stood out to me. The church was blessed, I grew closer with the young people, and had a wonderful time working youth camp. But that which will always stick out to me about this summer was the time I got to spend with my grandfather.

# RETIRED MINISTERS' DINNER



The Retired Ministers' Dinner was held on Tuesday, June 13th, in the Lodge of the Appalachian Conference campgrounds.

There was a warm sense of camaraderie as a large number of our retired ministers and their spouses gathered for dinner prior to the first service of Camp Meeting. Bishop Preston Mathena welcomed the group, expressing appreciation for the many years of Christian service represented by the men and women present.

Everyone enjoyed a bountiful meal catered by Mary Cochran and her wonderful staff. Special thanks to First Lady Kathy Mathena, Gloria Meadors, Beth Neff, Pam Fredericks, Sunshine Cope, Kitten Tunnell, and Vanessa Scruggs in ensuring everyone was properly served.

Wanda Myers played the keyboard and led everyone in some beloved old hymns. What a sweet spirit filled the room as the congregation sang together in unity with praises to our God!

Rev. Roger Crigger, who has been with the Appalachian Conference for forty-four years, led the devotions. Pastor Roger drew from 2 Timothy 4:7, as he compared Cliff Young, an Australian shepherd farmer, who won the inaugural Sydney to Melbourne Ultramarathon (a distance of 544 miles) at the young age of 61 years. The farmer ran at a slow and loping pace, (aka "The Young Shuffle") and kept running while his competitors stopped to rest and sleep. Cliff finished the race after running non-stop for five days, fifteen hours, and four minutes. Pastor Roger encouraged the retired ministers and their families to be assured that he (and they) will finish their race as they reach for their own goals in life.

Following Rev. Crigger's remarks, Bishop Mathena drew for the door prizes. The winners of the restaurant gift cards were Sandy Wood and Walter Wood, Jr. Our time together concluded with friendly chatter, as some of the attendees prepared leftover plates to take home.

Submitted by Vanessa Scruggs

# The Top Ten Reasons Why Pastors Have Anxiety (And How to Overcome It)

By Sam Rainer

“The best pastors have a healthy level of paranoia.” My father’s advice struck me as off. I was in my early 30s, pastoring through a difficult situation with the potential to split my congregation. I was anxious. He didn’t feed my anxiety, but his words weren’t comforting either. The advice was honest. And real.

At the time, a group of people intended harm, and I needed to be cautious. Or, as my father put it, have a healthy level of paranoia. “I emphasize the word *healthy*,” he reminded me, “but you must watch your back.” Platitudes only make anxiety worse. What I needed was a realistic perspective and practical solutions. My father offered both.

Pastors and church leaders experience anxiety for a variety of reasons. Unsurprisingly, **almost two out of three pastors report stress in ministry**. Usually, it is the compounding of multiple stress points rather than one singular item that creates anxiety.

1. **Constant availability.** The pastor’s role often requires round-the-clock availability for emergencies, further blurring the line between work and personal time.
2. **Perceived isolation.** Despite being surrounded by people, pastors can often feel alone, particularly if they can’t share their struggles for fear of seeming weak or lacking faith.
3. **Public scrutiny.** As public figures, pastors can feel pressure to always be “on” and maintain a certain image.
4. **Emotional labor.** Pastors are frequently the first point of contact during personal crises or grief. They must keep confidence about any number of personal issues in the congregation. Sexual sins, substance abuse, and spiritual neglect are common problems among parishioners that pastors must keep secret. This emotional labor can be exhausting.
5. **Financial pressure.** Many pastors face financial instability, often working with limited resources and sometimes receiving inadequate compensation for their work.
6. **Personal neglect.** Pastors can become so involved in meeting the needs of their congregations that they neglect their personal needs, including physical health, mental well-being, and quality time with family and friends.
7. **Increased polarization.** Like other areas of society, churches have people at the extremes – politically, ideologically, and theologically. Navigating spiritual waters is challenging when more people are rocking the boat. Conflict is almost always stressful. Add in a couple of bullies, and the ride can be nauseating.
8. **Uninformed criticism.** All leaders should expect criticism, but the burden of answering uninformed critics is wearying. I once had someone get quite upset with me. She went on a long, forceful diatribe about one of our ministries. After several minutes of hearing from her, I realized she was talking about another church.
9. **Unfair comparisons.** Some pastors place unreasonable expectations on themselves and their churches. You cannot be someone else. But church members can also be guilty of unfair comparisons. The best sermons from the best preachers can be assessed instantaneously from anywhere. Why can’t you preach like him? Why is our worship service not like that? The questions are deflating, if not humiliating.
10. **Unhappy spouse.** When a spouse struggles in a church, the pastor’s job becomes incredibly difficult. Some churches place unreasonable expectations on the spouse. The mentality of hiring two-for-one is a common problem. In other cases, the spouse can feel pressure to minister in ways that do not align with their gifting.

The combination of these stress points can create complex and nuanced problems in ministry. But there are some practical ways to combat the inevitable anxiety of ministry. Consider these tactics:

**Stop using all-or-nothing reasoning.** Idealists make terrible pastors. Perfection is an unachievable goal. One error does not ruin an initiative. The perfection-or-failure mindset can create a massive amount of stress. Rather than letting one setback create a domino effect of anxiety, view failure as a way to learn. Besides, most things in the church are a mixture of good and bad, positive and negative. Optimism, as opposed to idealism, is the better approach. The optimist recognizes the setbacks for what they are but keeps plodding forward.

**Make potential stress an ally and not an enemy.** Fine furniture is not crafted without the friction of sandpaper. The best art and music pieces are usually produced in a crisis. Identify what makes you stressed and channel your emotional energy into productive exercises. Ask questions about what you can control rather than dwelling on what you cannot change. The power once went out in our sanctuary. There was no need to panic over what I could not control. I called everyone closer to the front and preached from the floor. No one complained. The Sunday service was memorable but not a failure.

**Learn to laugh at the one-off blunders.** I was once so sick preaching. I walked backstage, passed out, and puked in a live mic. The sound guy was asleep as usual, so everyone got to hear the thump of my body on the floor, followed by what sounded like an exorcism going badly. My nickname was “puking preacher” for several weeks to follow. You have two choices in a situation like this one. Be anxious. Or laugh.

**Use the word “no” more often.** You can’t do everything! Nor should you. Pastors should be *accessible* to the congregation, but there is no way a pastor can always be *available*. This tiny, two-letter word may be the most powerful tool you have to reduce anxiety. Most pastors do too much, not too little. Properly shepherd your church’s expectations. When you try to do everything for everyone, you train the congregation to expect “yes” every time. It’s unfair to you, your family, or a future pastor who may have to replace you due to burnout.

Every pastor will experience stress. Do not let the pressure build to the point of anxiety.



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# World Missions & Evangelism

Larry Meadors



## Jungle Fire



Pivotal moments are ones that set and sustain a course of action. A fire in the jungle became that moment for our Conference missions' team to Peru. The team was prayer walking the IPHC property in Puerto Maldonado, when a smoldering fire on neighboring land quickly became an inferno spreading to the church property. Each one immediately began to carry water and throw dirt to extinguish the flames. However, it was God who answered the prayers of those interceding by shifting the wind away from the church. Soon the fire was under control. God is the

one who is in control of this important outreach center in the Amazon basin!

Truly, spiritual fire has been spreading in this region through the efforts of many pastors and evangelists, among whom are our own IPHC missionaries to Peru: David & Cesi Hodges, Jason & Catrina Bickett and Ben & Desi West. The evidence of this fire is the over 9,000 souls who were saved in the Rivers of Fire outreach in 2022. Our 26-member conference team, from 10 different churches, went August 20-30 to serve them by jump-starting the construction of the church and training center and reaching out into the community with children's ministry.

Despite very hot conditions, Children's Team Leader Heather Reynolds and Construction Team leader Wes Galford set the pace for everyone and much was accomplished for the glory of God.

A special thank-you for all who have given to this conference special project (#61000P) for the construction of this church in Peru. Through your giving, \$50,000 was raised and our goal was met...Praise the Lord! Should Jesus tarry, it will serve for generations to come in reaching the harvest in this region of the world.



**The  
Peru  
Team**



**Peru construction**

**“The team was also blessed to distribute the ‘shoe that grows’ to the children. This is the result of all those that have been giving to the Conference shoe project (#43420).”**

# Fall Foundry Seminar:

## Digital Cocaine & Digital Rehab

Conference  
Training Center  
**Tuesday**  
**October 16**  
**9:30 AM**



We welcome **Brad Huddleston**, an internationally respected speaker, consultant, teacher, and author on important issues such as technology and culture. He has worked with universities, schools, churches, and law enforcement. He has spoken to hundreds of thousands worldwide on the advantages of well-used technology tools and the dangers of the growing trend toward technology addiction.

### Seminar Topics:

*Digital Addiction: What the Neuroscience Shows*

Neuroscience has revealed that brain scans of hard-core video gamers are nearly identical to cocaine addicts. Brain scans of porn addicts show more damage than heroin addicts. Thirty-five percent of victims of cyberbullying scored above the threshold for symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and twenty-nine percent of the teenagers who did cyberbullying also showed signs of PTSD. Research shows that more 35-year-olds play video games than teenagers. Mothers are often more addicted to social media than their daughters. This session explores these issues and more.

### *Does Digital Education Work?*

Globally, most students lost two years of education during the pandemic. Clearly, most digital education was proven ineffective. And the dirty little secret is that it wasn't working before the pandemic either. Where do educational tools fit in? Should pastors use digital Bible study tools when preparing their messages? What about those who are forced to use digital tools in their workplace for hours on end? There are answers to these complex issues. Unless the electricity goes out, we will continue grappling with these issues. Based on research, this session explores best practices when using digital resources in work and education.

### *Digital Rehabilitation: How Long Does It Take?*

South Korea has won the war for digital supremacy globally, but they are paying a heavy price. The government of that small country has opened 400 technology rehabilitation centers. This section explores some of the research surrounding digital addiction and offers strategies and solutions from a scientific and, most importantly, Biblical worldview. God wants His children to be well and fully engaged with Him.

### *Technology vs. Intimacy with God*

1 Corinthians 6:12 says everything is permissible, but we must not be enslaved by anything. Neuroscience has clearly shown over and over that digital technology is highly addictive. Whatever we are addicted to, our emotions follow. In other words, we are highly intimate with the source of our addictions. God has reserved that level of intimacy for Him. There is Good News! God is more than willing to restore our intimacy with Him.



# Discipleship Ministries

Ron Fredericks

[www.appconf.org](http://www.appconf.org)



## APPALACHIAN CONFERENCE GOLDEN EAGLE ENCORE MINISTRIES

A GREAT day for our 2023 Senior Picnic at Claytor Lake, with over 200 in attendance! Good food, great fellowship and wonderful friendships made and renewed! A special thank you to all that pitched in and helped out: our cooks, Harvey Early, Jared Ross, Don Webb, Sarah Taylor, Laura Cole, Misty Comer; to Rev. Walter Lee Wood for bringing our devotion, and our pontoon team of Roger & Alice Crigger, Harvey & Liz Early, Steven & Gabe Crigger, for helping us see the lake! Looking forward already to 2024!







## **ATTENTION...ATTENTION...ATTENTION**

**We have 3 seats that have become available on our Senior Ministry Christmas trip to Sight & Sound and The American Music Theater for December 5 – 7, 2023.**

**If interested, contact the Discipleship Ministries office at 540-674-4131 ext. 201**





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# Men's Ministries

Steve Winesett



## Men's Ministries A.T.A.M. Golf Tournament 2023

Thank you to Natural Bridge Christian Fellowship, Little Vine PHC, Cross Point, New Vision, Bethel & Hillsville for participating with 8 teams! A great day of fellowship and fun, although we started with a little rain, but for a tremendous cause!

First place went to Hillsville Pentecostal Holiness Church with Pastor Jeff Pickett, Eugene Keene, Greg Edwards & Bishop Preston Mathena. Second place went to Natural Bridge Christian Fellowship with Justin Strowbridge, Bryan Kessinger, Dean Cash & Pee wee Hines. Third place went to Bethel Pentecostal Holiness Church, Organ Cave, West Virginia, with Josh McMillian, Tyler Edwards, Gary Wilson & Jared Shrewsberry.



Special thanks to Men's Ministries Director Steve Winesett. Thank you to everyone who participated! If you would like information about our Golf Tournaments, contact the Conference Office or Steve Winesett.





# Women's Ministries

Tammy Porter



## Draper Valley IPHC Women's Event



**Melissa Gaona**

Draper Valley IPHC Women's Fellowship hosted an inspirational and encouraging event on July 29, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. Melissa Gaona from Ignition Ministries was our speaker. Wow, what a blessing! The evening started with an enormous rain/hailstorm outside, but that didn't stop the women from attending. We had a tremendous crowd of beautiful women and the rain of God's Spirit was on the inside.

The service started with praise and worship which led into Melissa's message. She shared her testimony and tied it into the Word. While Melissa had a rough childhood and satan wanted that to destroy her, God had a different plan. She challenged us all to go and reap the harvest that is ripe! It is time for the believers to stop fighting our battles with words and start fighting them on our knees. God help us all to do just that.

Women from all denominations were in attendance worshipping, praising, and fellowshiping together. The Draper Valley Women provided an abundance of delicious food for all. Door prizes were awarded as well. The rain stopped and allowed everyone to get home safely, "Thank you, Jesus." To God be the glory for all that was accomplished at the meeting and all that continues to be accomplished in all our lives that were in attendance. Thanks to any and all that participated in any way to make the night a success.

Submitted by Mary F. Mabe





As fall is quickly approaching, I would like to remind you that **Vision 4 Education** is just around the corner. I will be traveling to Holmes Bible College and Emmanuel University to present

your offerings for the 2023/2024 school year in October. Your donations are much appreciated and vital in keeping these institutions moving forward. Let's make this the best year of giving yet! Please have all offerings into the conference office by September 29.

# "GATHER"

## WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2023**

BLACK FOX LODGE  
3171 PARKWAY  
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(865)774-4000

Guest Speaker  
Beth Stephens-Johnson



Visit this [event page](#) for more info and to register.

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**\*Please note: The Black Fox Lodge is not offering special rates for the conference.**



## THE SPIRIT OF UNDERSTANDING

*“The Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 2:10-11).*

The Spirit of God illuminates our hearts. Like a LIGHT, he allows us to see God’s goodness, even in times of darkness. (Psalm 27:13)

### HOW CAN UNDERSTANDING HELP US?

The Spirit of Understanding helps us trust God, especially during times when we don’t see answers to prayers! This Spirit helps us to know that God is working behind the scenes. Answers to our prayers are not being ignored; they are being addressed.

The Spirit of Understanding helps us in relationships with people. When people react to us in angry and even wrong ways, and cause heart wounds, we can remain free from anger and bitterness.

When we have this Spirit of Understanding, we can be kind and gentle in difficult situations. This is because the Spirit assures us that God is with us. God’s Spirit helps us respond to difficult people in right ways.

*“A man has joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good it is” (Proverbs 15:23).*

The Spirit of Understanding helps us discern spiritual attacks, and respond effectively. The Spirit of Understanding helps us to understand God’s timing.

### CONSIDER MOSES

He had escaped from Egypt when his life was threatened. He traveled to the land of Midian and found a good life. He met Jethro, who became his father-in-law. He married his daughter Zipporah, and was accepted in this family. He was given the job of keeping the sheep of Jethro. He was content.

However, one day as he kept the flock, he saw a burning bush at Mount Horeb. An angel of the Lord appeared to him in the bush. The bush burned with fire but was not consumed. The Lord called Moses to go back to Egypt and to set his people free.

Moses asked, "What is your name?" God responded, "*I AM THAT I AM.*" Even though Moses did not understand at this time, he trusted God. He had a Spirit of Understanding! (Exodus 3)

### **RETURN TO EGYPT**

With Aaron, his brother, Moses returned to Egypt. He did not understand why God told him to speak with the cruel Pharaoh. But he went before the king. In the palace, the Lord revealed a miracle. He told Moses to throw his rod down. When he did, his rod became a snake.

However, Pharaoh's magicians also threw their rods down and snakes appeared. But the rod of Moses and Aaron swallowed up the rods of the Egyptians. This was the beginning of many mighty miracles. (Exodus 7) Every time the Lord asked Moses to do something, he obeyed and miracles occurred which set the people of Israel free.

### **DANIEL WAS ALSO A MAN OF UNDERSTANDING**

Daniel was a man of prayer, and he had great understanding. He helped solve many problems in the kingdom with his gift of understanding.

*"As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams" (Daniel 1:17).*

### **WHAT ABOUT YOU?**

Have you suffered a loss that you cannot understand?

Are you struggling with financial affairs?

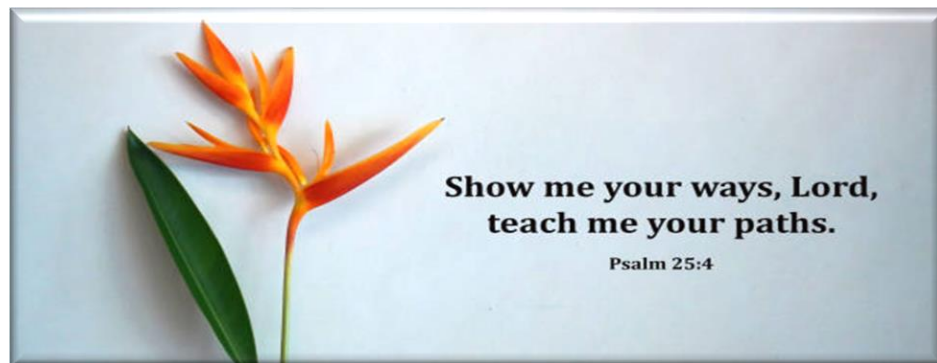
Are you having a conflict with another person?

Have you been betrayed by other people?

Have you been accused by other people?

Is there trouble in your family?

Pray for understanding. Daniel prayed for understanding during a time of prayer for the nation. He was shown things by God that he could not understand. God sent an angel to help him understand. Most often, the Scriptures will give understanding. The angel Gabriel appeared to him. The angel told Daniel that he had come to "give him skill and understanding." (Daniel 9:22)



# October Calendar



- 8 Pastor Appreciation Day**
- 13-15 IPHC Girls' Conference – Brown's Summit**
- 16 The Foundry**
- 16 Boss's Day**