

# Shermont Baptist Church

## March 2026 Newsletter

Senior Pastor: *Rev. Ryan Riley*

Associate Pastor: *Mr. Dylan Gary*

Music Director: *Mrs. Ellen Petty*

781 Mount Cross Road Danville, VA 24540

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

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### Ryan's Reflections

As winter begins to wrap up and springtime approaches, I was reminded of a story a fellow pastor shared years ago: "Many folks love springtime: trees blooming, plants blossoming, beauty all around. Unless of course you're looking at my front yard earlier this year.

Last summer we bought three bushes that looked so promising. The leaves were supposed to turn all kinds of spectacular colors as the seasons progressed. We were so hopeful. But this spring all we had left were barren sticks.

Two of the plants seemed hopeless, but one had a few vestiges of leaves. I uprooted all three and tossed aside two of them but decided to give the barely alive plant a second chance. So, I took the lone survivor and replanted it in my back yard. Maybe a new location where it could get more sun would make a difference. With little hope for a recovery, I dug the hole, placed the plant in it, watered it, and waited to see what would happen.

The first week there was little improvement. The next week a little more. As of today, many of the once barren branches have given life to green leaves that show a hint of those spectacular colors we once hoped for.

I've felt like that struggling bush at times in my life. And maybe you have too. There have been times when much of what I once hoped never seemed to blossom. We experience hard seasons in our life where we don't get enough sun or water (or perhaps get too much). Life can be harsh and we sometimes find ourselves looking and feeling like barren sticks. But like that little bush that is now blooming, I've seen the same thing in my life and the lives of so many others. Sometimes a second chance is all it takes."

In those moments we may feel like that little bush, we must remember that God hasn't given up on us; He gives second and third and fourth chances to those who refuse to give up. It could be that you need a "new location" – perhaps you've been deprived of the light of God's love or lacked the refreshing water of supportive relationships. Maybe you're planted in toxic dirt of this world rather than the rich soil of God's Word.

We must not give up but remember that God has placed spectacular colors in us. The transformation may be slow and challenging, but one day, by His grace, we'll exhibit all the glory of springtime. Not only can we brighten up the landscape around us, but we can glorify the Father for the good works He continues to do in and through us. What a season!

Thankful to be growing in His Word alongside you,

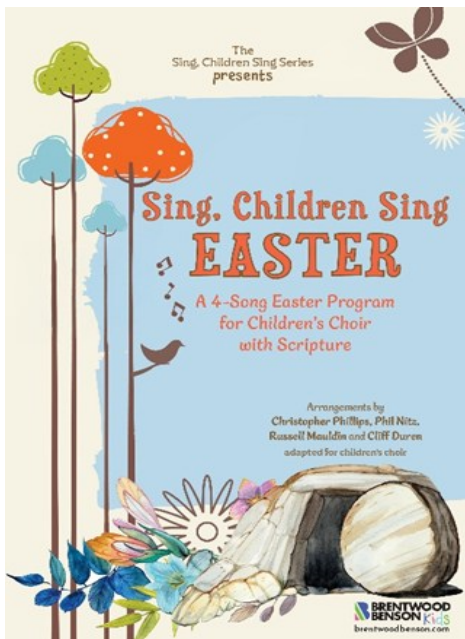
*Pastor Ryan*



### Funny Church Bulletin Bloopers concerning the choir

1. The Pastor will preach his farewell message, after which the choir will sing 'Break Forth into Joy.'
2. Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.
3. Miss Charlene Mason sang 'I will not pass this way again,' giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.
4. If you need to heave during the Postlude, please do so quietly.
5. Next Thursday, there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get.
6. The 'Over 60s Choir' will be disbanded for the summer with the thanks of the entire church.
7. The Oakland Quarter will provide special music next Sunday. Jesus Miller will have a solo.

*As a former, administrative assistant, I may or may not have provided you with some of these bloopers. I hope you got a good laugh out of them. I still shake my head over things I do not catch until it is too late. As Pastor Ryan says, we are not perfect but serve a perfect God. Amen!*



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**Sunday      March 29<sup>th</sup>      11:00 am**

KidZ PraiZe Choir will present an Easter program "Sing, Children Sing" Mark your calendars and invite your family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers and help us encourage these young people with your presence as they lead us in worship in celebration of the risen King!

Singing for JESUS,

*Ellen*

## March Birthdays

Mar 1 Kaylah Pritchett

Mar 4 Jeremy Sloane

Mar 6 Eric Mitchell

Mar 8 Eric Ellis

Mar 9 Al Powell

Mar 16 Louise Tucker

Mar 18 Mandy Riley

Mar 19 Eddie Boyd, Bessie Taylor

Mar 20 Erin Riley

Mar 21 Adam Harper

Mar 22 Judy Armstrong, Ethan Riley

Mar 23 Kathie Owen, Thomas Warren

Mar 25 Gary Gammon, Belva Presley

Mar 28 Pearline Buckner, Tim Kapornyai

Mar 29 Coy Hamlett

Mar 30 Donny Adkins

Mar 31 Phillip Hankins, Laurie Taylor



*Happy Birthday to All!*



## Library Spotlight—Carol McDowell

Sit back, put your feet up, grab your favorite hot beverage and relax with one of the many great books from our library.

***Leaning on Air***, by Cheryl Grey Bostrom

This is the second book in a series written by this author. This book tells the story of a marriage between a bright young man with autism who loves God (Burnaby) and a woman with a troubled background and trust issues (Celia). Both have jobs which are related to science. She as an Ornithologist, and he as a veterinary surgeon.

The author shows an honest look at marriage with it's challenges, and how God uses Burnaby to draw Celia out of a life of grief and trauma. You will also learn about Washington State's Palouse; a region famous for it's rolling hills and wheat fields.

We also have the first book in this series, ***Sugar Birds***, which gives background on Burnaby and Celia's younger years as they meet 12 years earlier.

If you have any suggestions, please let the library committee know!

Happy reading!

*Carol McDowell*



Growing up, I spent a great deal of time at my great-grandmother's home. Many of you know her by the name of "Big Mama" as no one called her by her actual name (Margaret) except her siblings. I remember she kept a handful of VHS tapes which included *Pretty Woman*, *Ghost*, *Uncle Buck* and *Hook*. Of course, growing up watching these films gave me quite an eclectic taste. Despite these films being secular films, each has its own theological elements, specifically the movie, *Hook*. For those unfamiliar with this film, it tells the story of Peter Pan; however, Peter Pan, played by Robin Williams, is depicted as an adult who moved away from Neverland, forgot how to fly, married, had children, and became a busy executive. Peter becomes so busy that he fails to show up for his children at their baseball games or dance recitals. He forgets the most important aspect of his life: his family. During the film, Captain Hook returns from Neverland and kidnaps Peter's children so that he may fight the Pan one last time. Peter, with the help of Tinkerbell, flies to Neverland where he trains for three days in order to fight Captain Hook. Therefore, the film's climactic sword fight shows Peter rescuing his children from the imprisonment of Captain Hook and realizing his true happiness is found in his family.

The most interesting aspect of Captain Hook's kidnapping and imprisonment is Hook's attempt to transform the children into him. Hook convinces Peter's son, Jack, to wear the same wardrobe, use the same pirate language, and forget who his true father is. Hook tries to take on the role that Peter should have fulfilled in the real world by taking up time with Jack, going so far as to create a baseball game in which the pirates play against Jack. Captain Hook is successful in swaying Jack until the climactic battle. As Peter Pan and Captain Hook fight, Jack looks on in amazement, realizing he recognizes his father. Peter flies up to Jack and says it took him three days to find his happy thought and his happy thought was Jack. After this revelation is made to Jack, the relationship between he and his father is rekindled. Jack realizes who his true father is and wants to ensure he leaves Neverland with him.

We, as God's children, should identify a great deal with Jack as those "powers and principalities" act just as Captain Hook did. Satan and the fallen spirits seek to sway us, to make us forget who our true Father is and to hold us captive. These entities want nothing more than to make us believe that our Father cannot provide what we seek and that in some way shape or form our heavenly Father has failed us. However, unlike Peter Pan, our Father is never so busy that he forgets to be there for us. In fact, Jesus used three days to rescue us. Christ returned, much like Peter Pan, to display who He is, to conquer this fallen world and death, and to remind us that we are His "happy thought." He reminds us that He wants to rekindle the relationship with humanity despite our tendency to forget who He is and how much He loves us. My challenge to us is to remember who our Father is, to remember that He rescued us and that we should seek to be more like Him. Let us remember, as Rosaria Butterfield said, "We may never know the treacherous journey people have taken to land in the pew next to us." If we display who our Father is and spread His good news, we remind His creation that it has been redeemed.

Yours in Christ,

*Colby Warren*, Chairman



## Missions



We are continuing the food drive for God's storehouse, due to February being a short month and weather closures. Please continue to pray for this ministry as God's Storehouse helps feed nearly 5,000 families annually, and the numbers continue to rise.

There are collection bins at each entrance for you to drop off your donations. If you are not able to shop, you are welcome to donate and I, or some of the mission group, would be happy to shop for you.

Items needed to help replenish the stock at God's Storehouse.

***They do not need canned vegetables.***

- ***Canned Meat (Tuna, Chicken, Beef Ravioli)***
- ***Canned Soup***
- ***Mac & Cheese***
- ***Dried Beans***
- ***Spaghetti Sauce***
- ***Pasta***
- ***Canned Tomatoes***
- ***Cereal***
- ***Oatmeal Packets***
- ***Breakfast / Granola Bars***
- ***Peanut Butter***
- ***Crackers***
- ***Canned Fruit***
- ***Rice***

On Sunday, February 15th we had a missions meeting, and it was heartwarming to see sixteen church members eager to serve God. Let us be inspired by 1 Peter 4:10-11 to use our gifts to serve others and be the light in the darkness, showing God's love through our actions. Please continue praying for missions, and remember that outreach involves everyone. Every member's participation is valuable. We will announce and post the next meeting in the bulletin soon.

Love in Christ,

*Amanda Crews*



***Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 4:10-11 (NIV)***

## Eggstravaganza Egg Collection

The Youth Committee is excited to host Shermont's yearly **Eggstravaganza** on **March 28<sup>th</sup>** from **4:00—5:30 pm**. You can participate by bringing pre-filled eggs with **individually wrapped candy** to be used during our egg hunt. You can place them in baskets located by the entrances. We also ask that everyone participate by praying that God would use this event to encourage believers and save the lost.

Though summer may feel far away, VBS will be here before we know it! This year, we are excited to journey into **Rainforest Falls: Exploring the Nature of God**. Throughout the week, children will discover the wonder of God's creation and grow in their understanding of who God is—His character, His power, His goodness, and His love.

As we look ahead, I ask you to begin praying now:

- Pray that God would give our leadership wisdom as we prepare.
- Pray that even now He is preparing the hearts of every child who will walk through our doors.
- Pray that He would raise up joyful, faithful volunteers from our church family.



Scripture reminds us in **Psalm 78:4**, ***"We will tell the next generation about the glorious deeds of the LORD, about his power and his mighty wonders."*** As a church, we have the **privilege** of passing the faith to the next generation. VBS is one of the most intentional and strategic opportunities we have all year to do exactly that.

Vacation Bible School is made possible when volunteers commit their time and energy to loving children and sharing the gospel through both word and action. Whether you serve as a group leader, on the music team, on the tech team, as a station leader, or anywhere else, your role matters. Each position contributes to creating a safe, joyful, Christ-centered environment where kids can clearly hear and see the gospel.

VBS is also a beautiful picture of the body of Christ working together. Students and adults serve side by side in carrying out the Great Commission. Whether you are 16 or 60, there is a place for you to serve. If you are hesitant because you feel unqualified, be encouraged: no prior experience is required!

We will provide guidance and support.

If you are willing to serve, we will come alongside you through this process.

Volunteer registration forms are available for pickup at the church. I encourage you to prayerfully consider how the Lord might use you this summer. Let's prepare with expectation and serve with joy as we look forward to all God will do through Rainforest Falls!

*Dylan*