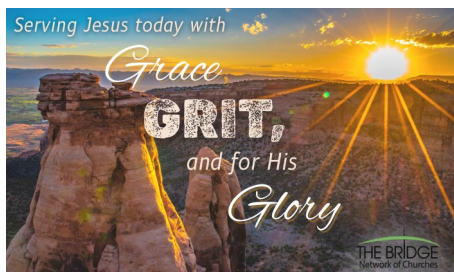




A View From The Bridge

May 2026

Annual Spring Meeting Recap



Alex Zabel (Horizon), Josh Starr (Great Bridge Community), and Nigel Anderson (CrossRoads), spoke fully into Serving Jesus today with Grace, Grit, and for His Glory! They reminded us that effective leadership requires modeling commitment to studying, living, and teaching God's word so that leaders possess the spiritual depth necessary to guide others with grace and grit. By prioritizing personal and kingdom-minded

fellowship, leaders protect their own souls and avoid the isolation that harms both the shepherd and the flock. True ministry demands an unwavering commitment to uncomfortable honesty and the ministry of reconciliation, ensuring the full grace and truth of Jesus is preached and lived out even in the most difficult transitions.

We celebrated Rev. Mack and Deborah Scott, Temple, for his long-term commitment to serving alongside The Bridge Network of Churches. Mack has served on various committees, as Moderator, and for the last 13 years as Treasurer. Mack has served faithfully with BNOG to see the Kingdom flourish. We will miss him greatly when he retires to Florida!



Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your Master.

Matthew 25:23



This year's Spring Mission Project supports Coastal Recovery, LLC — *Hope in the Chaos*. Led by Todd Woolston and a dedicated team of volunteers, this effort has taken teams to western North Carolina to assist with the ongoing recovery from Hurricane Helene. Volunteers are building tiny homes, clearing debris, and—most importantly—offering compassion, hope, and the message of the gospel to individuals and families who have lost so much. Thanks to the generosity of churches across the Network, a total of **\$12,947** has been raised so far to support this meaningful work.

Rev. Jake Scott, Coastal Community Church rounded out the evening speaking from Luke 5:7-11. He reminded us that **Bathos** is the call of Jesus to move beyond shallow safety into the deep, profound mystery of obedience to God. Jesus does not use the ordinary word for deep water but *bathos*—a word that speaks of depth, mystery, and wrestling—inviting Peter to trust God where obedience does not make sense and results are not guaranteed. Bathos is where leaders rely not on strategy or strength but on God's daily grace, taking one step of light at a time or running when the path is clear. The fish are not in the shallow water, and neither is transformation; the grace, grit, and glory of God are found when we faithfully follow Jesus into the bathos.



Slaying the Slump

Dr. Lynn Hardaway



Every pastor and ministry leader experiences “slump” times when ministry feels like a struggle; it is part of the human experience and is accentuated in church work.

Christian writers call it the “dark night of the soul.”

These seasons of sadness, dryness and weariness can usually fit into one of four categories: (1) **Burnout** (total exhaustion from over-functioning). You feel like you have nothing left to give, and even small tasks feel monumental. (2) **Compassion Fatigue** (the cost of caring). After absorbing the trauma and grief of others for too long, you might feel numb, cynical, or unusually irritable. (3) **Spiritual Dryness** (a sense that your connection to God has gone quiet). Your “output” for others far exceeds your personal “input” from time with God. (4) **Comparison Blues** (measuring your value by the ministries of others). This is like comparing your life to those whose Facebook posts present perfect and happy lives; it is not realistic, but all of us succumb to it occasionally.



Counselors tell us to counter these low points by shifting from “doing” to “being.” Rather than spend most of our energies and mental work on external production, we need to refocus our attention on what is **near**, what is **now**, what is **known** to be true – and to focus on the **next** thing, or the next step – and give our attention to just that one step.

Create time frames in which you are unavailable; turn off the phone and spend time with your family doing things that are not ministry related. One great idea is to turn off the notifications on your phone. Protect your days off by making them ‘sabbaths,’ in which you do **no ministry work whatsoever** – no exceptions.



Another good practice is to engage in a hobby that relaxes you and has nothing to do with the church. Some leaders do woodworking, others hike, read fiction, fish, hunt – any activity in which you are not “the pastor.”

One idea we promote at the Bridge Network is joining a roundtable of pastors. Peer-level community provides an outlet where conversations and humor can take place at a level only pastors and ministry leaders can appreciate.



Certainly, if you are depressed for a long period of time, see a therapist or counselor who understands clergy dynamics and can help you process the “vicarious trauma” we transfer to ourselves when counseling others.



May Staff and Spouse Birthdays

6	Scott Maccubin	Greenbrier
7	John Robertson	Red Bank
7	Michele Blakeslee	Point Harbor
7	Diana Purnell	First Camelot
7	Michael French	Zion
12	Dan Blakeslee	Point Harbor
14	Beth Anderson	King's Grant
17	Mark Clarke	King's Grant
17	Mike Muender	Maranatha
18	Arleen Dauernheim	Grassfield
19	Shannon Colvin	Great Neck
20	Kevin Tremper	Crossroads
21	Rob Vincent	Discover
26	Daniel Jung	Tidewater Korean
26	Melodi Terhune	Raleigh Heights
27	Shannon Terhune	Raleigh Heights





illuminating Your Path to a Life-Changing VBS

Dr. Kim Jessie

Summer is just around the corner, and for children's leaders, that means one thing: **Vacation Bible School**. It is arguably the most high-energy, high-impact week of the year. While the glitter, snacks, and catchy songs are fun, the true goal is creating an environment where kids can encounter **Jesus**.

As you gear up to transform your church halls into a rainforest, a spaceship, or a beach, here are four pillars to ensure your VBS is a resounding success.

1. Build Your "Dream Team" Early

A VBS is only as strong as its volunteers. Start recruiting early, but don't just look for "warm bodies"—look for passions. If someone loves being creative, put them on crafts or decorating. If they have boundless energy, they belong in recreation.



Bonus Tip: Focus on your teen helpers. For many middle and high schoolers, VBS is their first taste of leadership. Invest in them. When youth are excited, that energy trickles down to the kids immediately.

2. Over-Communicate (Then Communicate Again)



The biggest source of stress for parents and volunteers is not knowing what's going on. Use every channel available: emails, social media, and physical flyers.

- **For Parents:** Provide clear drop-off/pick-up instructions, allergy policies, and a daily "dinner table" prompt so they can talk to their kids about what they learned.

For Volunteers: Hold a "Vision Night" before the week starts. Don't just talk about logistics; share the *why*. Remind them that they aren't just babysitting—they are showing a child the love of God.



3. Keep the "Main Thing" the Main Thing

It is easy to get lost in the "production" of VBS. You might spend ten hours perfecting a cardboard volcano, but if the Gospel message is muddled, the week loses its purpose.



Choose a curriculum that points every song, craft, and game back to a singular, daily Bible truth. When a child goes home, they might forget the lyrics to the theme song, but they should be able to tell their parents, "God loves me no matter what."



4. Focus on the "One"

With tons of kids running around, it's easy to focus on the crowd. Challenge your leaders to find "the one" each day—the child who seems lonely, the one who is struggling to follow directions, or the one who has a lot of questions. One-on-one connections are where life changes happen. A simple "I'm so glad you're here today, Sam" can be the most important thing a child hears all summer.



The Finish Line



Finally, remember to breathe. There will be spilled glitter, a lost nametag, and at least one technical glitch with the music. That's okay. When the week ends, don't just pack up the decorations. Take time to celebrate

the wins, share the stories of what God did, and—most importantly—take a well-deserved nap!

You are planting seeds that will grow for eternity. Let's make this summer unforgettable!



PASTORS' WIVES GATHERING

Western District: Wednesday, May 13, 11:30am, Serve, Franklin

Southside: Wednesday, May 20, 11:30am, Aloha Hola, Greenbrier





1407 Stephanie Way
Suite F
Chesapeake, VA 23320

Baby Boutique

Once again Baby Boutique has been blessed with many amazing and needed donations! We have mothers needing help and we are excited to share! We received several private donations in addition to donations from churches! We are so humbled and overwhelmed by the generosity of so many people. When our inventory gets on the lower side, God always provides! If you know of anyone in need of our help, please have them go to www.thebridgenet.org and fill out a Baby Boutique application which is found under our resource tab. Someone will get in touch with them about an appointment. We offer a "one time only" visit to get free items for children up to age 2. Thank you for your continued support! Please feel free to contact me directly if you have questions about applications or donations!

Bonnie Cuthriell, Director
(757) 681-7056



Office Phone: 757-938-9793

Network Missionary
Leadership & Ministry Strategist
Financial Secretary
Office Secretary

Staff Connections

Donald Lynn Hardaway
Kim Jessie
Phyllis Wroton
Nichole Hensley

Website: www.thebridgenet.org

lhardaway@thebridgenet.org
kjessie@thebridgenet.org
admin@thebridgenet.org
officesec@thebridgenet.org