NOMINATIONS TO THE VIRGINIA BAPTIST MISSION COUNCIL

The regions nominate the following persons to serve on the Virginia Baptist Mission Council.

CAPITAL REGION

2029

Greg Kitts (Minister)
Central Baptist Church
1st Term, term to expire 2029
Greg is a 1995 graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He served as pastor of Green Lakes Baptist Church in Portsmouth, Virginia (1996–2001); Black Creek Baptist Church in Franklin, Virginia (2001–2017); and Dorcas Wills Memorial Baptist Church in Trinity, Texas (2017–2025). He has served as pastor of Central Baptist Church in Church Road, Virginia, since 2025. Greg is married to Suzanne and is the father of four and grandfather of two.

Jennifer Mullins (Minister)
Gayton Baptist Church
2nd Term, term to expire 2029
Jennifer is the Youth/Young Adult & Discipleship Pastor at Gayton Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia. She holds a B.A. in Religion and Church Ministries from Averett University and an M.A. in Christian Education from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and is pursuing a doctorate from Newburgh Theological Seminary. Her skills include leadership, organization, preaching and speaking, leader training, vision, relationship building, and communication.

Richard Sandberg (Minister)
Corinth Baptist Church
2nd Term, term to expire 2029
Richard has served as a pastor since 2008. He is a graduate of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary with a master's degree in Christian apologetics. Richard has served with BGAV through Impact Virginia and Impact Disaster Response and as a trainer for Darkness to Light sexual abuse response training. He previously served on the Mission Council representing the Northern Region and is currently pastor of Corinth Baptist Church. Richard is married to Ashton.

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CENTRAL/VALLEY REGION

2028

Jeanette McCloud (Minister)
Bybee's Road Baptist Church
1st Term, term to expire 2028
(filling an unexpired term of Steve Nethery)
Jeanette previously served on the Mission Council and has long appreciated BGAV's missions and affiliations. She graduated from Leland School of Ministry in 2015 with a diploma in theology and currently serves as youth leader at Bybee's Road Baptist Church. Jeanette was ordained to the ministry by Bybee's Road in 2023 and occasionally provides pulpit supply. She also serves as vice moderator of the Central Virginia Baptist Association.

2029

Debby Ashley (Layperson)
Calvary Baptist Church
2nd Term, term to expire 2029
Debby has been an active member of Calvary Baptist Church for more than 50 years, serving in numerous leadership and teaching roles. She previously served on the Board of Trustees for WMU of Virginia and the BGAV Mission Council. She currently serves as an Awana T&T leader, VBS teacher, Church Council member, and WMU director, a role she has held for more than 20 years. Debby is a graduate of Mary Baldwin College with a B.A. in business administration and a minor in marketing and management. She has three adult children and nine grandchildren.

Karen Blackburn (Layperson)
Bedford Baptist Church
1st Term, term to expire 2029
Karen was born and raised in Bluefield, West Virginia, and became a Christian at age 11. She pursued a career in nursing, earning a master's degree and becoming a midwife. Through volunteer mission trips, Karen felt called to full-time missions and later earned an M.Div. from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. In 2002, Karen was appointed by the International Mission Board and served in eastern Russia, Macedonia, and Serbia. She returned to the United States at the end of 2015 to care for her mother and later moved to Virginia. Her early involvement in GAs and Acteens, along with local and international missions, helped shape her lifelong commitment to missions.

Manny Hernandez (Minister)
Clifton Forge Baptist Church
1st Term, term to expire 2029
By God's grace, Manny came to faith in Jesus Christ in 1971. He earned a B.A. in communication and leadership from Trinity International University and a master's degree in biblical studies from Calvary Baptist Theological Seminary. Manny has served churches in Arkansas, Mississippi, Florida, and North Carolina, including in revitalization ministry. In September 2024, he was called as pastor of Clifton Forge Baptist Church, where he serves as a revitalization pastor. Manny considers the opportunity to serve on the BGAV Mission Council a great honor.

Gloria Newton (Layperson)
Antioch Baptist Church
1st Term, term to expire 2029
Gloria is a lifelong member of Antioch Baptist Church in Scottsville, Virginia, where she has served in numerous roles, including Acteens leader, youth leader, Vacation Bible School director, and teacher. She currently serves as church clerk, a Church Council member, and an adult Sunday School teacher. For the past five years, Gloria has participated in regional outreach through Hope for Appalachia mission trips and the Bland Mission Center in cooperation with the James River Baptist Association. She is a graduate of Averett University and has two daughters and five grandchildren.

Austin Williams (Minister)
Mulberry Baptist Church
2nd Term, term to expire 2029
Austin joined the staff of Mulberry Grove Baptist Church in October 2020 as associate pastor and transitioned to senior pastor in January 2023. Before serving as senior pastor, Austin was director of Baptist Collegiate Ministries at Longwood University. He holds a B.S. in business management from Virginia Commonwealth University and is pursuing an M.A. in ministry leadership from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

NORTHERN REGION

2029

Michael Gunter (Minister)
Concord Baptist Church
1st Term, term to expire 2029
Michael is a graduate of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and has served Baptist churches in South Carolina, Wyoming, Tennessee, and Virginia. He served as an associate pastor at Gayton Baptist Church from 2007 to 2018 and began his ministry at Concord Baptist Church in 2020 as interim pastor, becoming full-time pastor in 2023. Michael and his wife have two children and four grandchildren.

Habacuc Diaz Lopez (Minister)
Primera Iglesia Bautista Maranatha
1st Term, term to expire 2029
Habacuc was born in Mexico and is married to Ana Luisa Macias de Diaz. They have two children and three grandchildren. He holds a Doctor of Ministry degree from Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond and has been a pastor for 42 years. His ministry experience also includes service as an adjunct professor at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México and Leland Seminary and as a Latino Network coordinator.

Judy Montag (Layperson)
Alum Spring Baptist Church
1st Term, term to expire 2029
Judy was raised in Madison County, Virginia, and made her profession of faith at Vacation Bible School at age 16. She currently attends Alum Spring Baptist Church in Culpeper, where she serves as treasurer. Judy holds a master's degree in technology management with a CIO certificate from George Mason University, a B.S. in chemistry from James Madison University, and an A.S. from Germanna Community College. She retired from L3Harris in 2021 after a career spanning quality, environmental, and safety work. During the final 20 years of her career, she worked as an engineer, quality assurance manager, and auditor for Department of Defense companies. She also contributed to journal articles, conference papers, and workshops in these fields.

Tom Sutterfield (Minister)
Oakland Baptist Church
1st Term, term to expire 2029
Tom is a retired businessman who spent 36 years in the aluminum industry in corporate management. He earned a B.S. in management and an MBA from Virginia Commonwealth University and completed additional studies in advanced manufacturing and business management. He was ordained as a deacon by Monument Heights Baptist Church in 1988.Tom is married to Becky. They have a daughter and granddaughter; their son died of pediatric cancer at age four.

Tom and Becky have been longtime volunteers with Goochland Cares and have been active in community service in Goochland County. Tom has participated regularly in mission trips with Carpenters for Christ. At Oakland Baptist Church, he has served as a deacon and Sunday School director and is active with the Goshen Baptist Association and its pulpit supply ministry. In November 2025, Oakland ordained him to the gospel ministry and licensed him to preach. He recently completed a 13-month interim pastorate at a Goshen church.

Abbie Tolbert (Minister)
Church at Clarendon
1st Term, term to expire 2029
Abbie is a native of Killeen, Texas. She earned a B.B.A. from Baylor University with a double major in entrepreneurship and nonprofit marketing and an M.Div. from George W. Truett Theological Seminary. In 2020, she founded Imprfct Minister, a ministry focused on spiritual, mental, and emotional healing from trauma through teaching about God's passionate love and restorative power. Abbie is executive associate and registrar at Leland Seminary and serves as an associate minister and Christian education director at the Church at Clarendon in Arlington, Virginia.

SOUTHSIDE REGION

2029

Jonathan Hilliard (Minister)
Moffett Memorial Baptist Church
2nd Term, term to expire 2029
Jonathan accepted the Lord at age eight and was ordained to ministry in 2004. He has pastored three BGAV churches and participated in numerous mission trips. He is honored to be considered for service on the Mission Council. Jonathan is married to Bethany, and they have two children.

Linda Mays (Layperson)
Grace Hills Baptist Church
2nd Term, term to expire 2029
Linda has been active in WMU and other missions for more than 40 years. She has twice served as associational WMU director and currently chairs the Associational Mission Team. At Grace Hills Baptist Church, where she is a charter member, she serves as missions director, Mission Friends leader, an ordained deacon, and Sunday School teacher. Linda is married to Monte, and they have two sons and four grandchildren.

Charlie Shaeff (Layperson)
Calvary Baptist Church, Lynchburg
1st Term, term to expire 2029
Charlie is a retired schoolteacher who taught high school for 30 years and served as an adjunct college instructor for 16 years. He holds a degree in biology. A baptized believer for nearly 70 years, Charlie helped found Calvary Baptist Church, where he now serves as moderator and has held numerous roles, including ordained deacon. He served two terms on the former Virginia Baptist Mission Board and chaired its Committee on Glocal Missions. Charlie has participated in volunteer mission trips to Kentucky, the Bahamas, Grenada, Moldova, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic and has attended meetings of the Baptist World Alliance and European Baptist Federation. He looks forward to the possibility of returning to BGAV missions work.

Charles Swanson (Minister)
Melville Avenue Baptist Church
1st Term, term to expire 2029
Charles has served as pastor of Melville Avenue Baptist Church in Danville, Virginia, for 30 years and also serves as music director. He has been active in associational leadership and local mission work. A retired English teacher, Charles taught at Gretna High School, as an adjunct professor, and at the Academy for Engineering and Technology in Danville. He holds master's degrees from Southeastern Seminary, Radford University, and Queens University of Charlotte and edits the online magazine Flowers of the Field. He and his wife have three grown children and seven grandchildren.

TBD

SOUTHWEST REGION

2029

Doug Ballew (Minister)
Green Valley Baptist Church
1st Term, term to expire 2029
Doug grew up in the Asheville, North Carolina, area and came to know Christ in 1981. A year later, he felt called to ministry. He earned a Bachelor of Ministry from Covington Theological Seminary and has served in active ministry for 44 years, pastoring churches in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. In 2006, Doug planted Grace Fellowship Baptist Church in Pulaski County. He currently serves as pastor of Green Valley Baptist Church in Lebanon, Virginia.

Mike Hatfield (Minister)
Chatham Heights Baptist Church
2nd Term, term to expire 2029
Mike has served as pastor of Chatham Heights Baptist Church since 2000. He and his wife, Susan, are from Danville, Kentucky, and have two children, Sean and Sarah. Mike earned a B.A. from Eastern Kentucky University and both an M.Div. and doctorate from Southern Seminary in Louisville. During his ministry, Mike has served churches in Kentucky and Virginia, including New Hope Baptist Church, Shakertown Baptist Church, North Pamunkey Baptist Church, Chatham Heights Baptist Church, and First Baptist Church of Martinsville.

Donna Hutchinson (Layperson)
Wise Baptist Church
1st Term, term to expire 2029
Donna grew up at First Baptist Church of Norton, where early involvement in GAs, Acteens, and other church activities shaped her commitment to faith, service, and missions. A graduate of Berea College, she returned to Virginia and worked as a police officer while also serving for eight years as choir director at First Baptist Norton. She later joined Wise Baptist Church, serving in the choir, teaching Sunday School, and participating on the Missions Committee. Donna has helped plan annual mission trips for more than 15 years, including seven years as trip administrator. She also serves with the Wise Baptist Association, on the board of Brumley Cove Baptist Camp, and as music director at Wise Baptist Church.

PJ Johnson (Minister)
Uplift Church
1st Term, term to expire 2029
PJ is the bivocational pastor of Uplift Church in Weber City, Virginia, which he and his wife planted in 2012. Vocationally, he serves as network administrator for Scott County Schools. He has been in ministry for 21 years.

Shawn White
First Baptist Church of Bluefield
2nd Term, term to expire 2029
Shawn came to the Bluefield area to serve at Bluefield University in 2009. Previously, Shawn and family lived in Scotland while Shawn pursued doctoral studies in Hebrew Bible at the University of Edinburgh. Ordained to Christian ministry in 1999, Shawn served Edith Avenue United Baptist Church in Saint John, New Brunswick, for eight years and later served as an interim volunteer preacher and teacher at several Virginia churches. Shawn currently volunteers as pastor at First Baptist Church of Bluefield. Shawn and Beverly have been married since 1997 and have two sets of twins, all of whom are university students.

TIDEWATER REGION

2029

Ben Caldwell (Minister)
Orcutt Baptist Church
2nd Term, term to expire 2029
Ben grew up in Pensacola, Florida, where he accepted Christ and first felt called to ministry. He earned a B.A. in religion from Samford University, an M.Div. from Beeson Divinity School, and a D.Min. from Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, where his doctoral work focused on faith development through small groups. Ben served churches in Birmingham in youth, children, education, and associate pastoral ministry before being called as senior pastor of Corinth Baptist Church in New Kent, Virginia, where he served for 18 years. He now serves as senior pastor of Orcutt Baptist Church in Newport News. His ministry passions include discipleship and helping believers grow in biblical living. Ben is married to Leslie, managing editor of communications for the International Mission Board. They have four young adult children: Olivia, Vika, Adam, and Eric.

Samuel (Alex) Crocker (Minister)
Surry Baptist Church
2nd Term, term to expire 2029
Alex is pastor of Surry Baptist Church. After graduating from Smithfield High School in 2004, he enlisted in the Marines and served two tours of duty in Iraq. He earned a B.A. in history from Old Dominion University in 2015 and an M.Div. from Virginia Beach Theological Seminary in 2019, where he developed a passion for rural ministry. Surry Baptist Church called him as pastor in October 2019, and he continues to serve there today.

Andrew Garnett (Minister)
Hampton Baptist Church
2nd Term, term to expire 2029
Andrew is pastor of Hampton Baptist Church in Hampton, Virginia. He enjoys hiking, reading, traveling, and visiting historical sites. He is married and has two daughters.

Robert Lee (Minister)
Collinswood-Agape Baptist Church
2nd Term, term to expire 2029
Robert is a native of Norfolk, Virginia, and served in the U.S. Air Force before beginning a 33-year career at Norfolk Naval Shipyard. He accepted Christ at Centennial Baptist Church in 1983. Robert and his wife, Valerie, have two adult sons, Daniel and Matthew.

Robert joined Fairwood-Agape Baptist Church in 1992, was licensed to preach in 1995, and was ordained in 2001. He became senior pastor in 2002 and continued in that role after Fairwood-Agape merged with Collinswood Baptist Church in 2019 to form Collinswood-Agape Baptist Church. He retired as senior pastor in June 2026.

He has served as an adjunct chaplain at Bon Secours Maryview Medical Center, participated in mission trips to South Africa and Romania, and served through the Portsmouth Baptist Association, The Bridge Network of Churches, and BGAV boards and committees.

Robert has completed ministry studies through Boyce Bible College and Roanoke Theological Seminary and additional coursework in biblical studies at Angelos Bible College. In 2023, he received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Providence Bible College & Theological Seminary.

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