

ELK CREEK
BAPTIST
CHURCH



Our
church
news

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ISSUE

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October
2026



NEWSLETTER

Words from our Pastor

“Hopeful Imagination”

Imagining is a theme for October – imagine what the weather may be, who may be elected in November, what teams will be in the World Series, what type of costumes children may wear on Oct. 31, or how good the warm air in the sanctuary will feel on a frosty Sunday morning. Imagining can lead to dreaming big, planning well and good results.

The source of imagining makes a difference. Imagining can be based on thoughts and speculation or based on God’s revealed truth under the leading of the Holy Spirit. Imagining can lead to the fear of “What if’s”, and “Why not’s”, or to the faith of, “I’m sure” and “Let’s try”.

Here are two verses on Christian imagining.

1 Corinthians 2:9 ESV *But, as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”—*

Ephesians 2:20 NIV *Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us...*

These verses teach that with all our imagining God’s ways and will are both greater and better than we can figure out on our own. Yet, God, who is great and providential, has good plans for the church, revealing those plans to a people who explore, pray, and yield to His leading.

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Worshipping Together...Beside the Lake

People do a lot of imagining. At times we get facts right and make rational decisions. At times we tend to go by feelings, trends, the seat of our pants, gut intuition, what's in our mind, or what's on our heart.

Imagining in the church context should be about God's will. Christian imagining is born out of Prayer, the application of Biblical truth, consideration of needs, availability of resources, and the willingness of a church to be creative and obedient. Imagining is not intended to upset the apple cart but for good.

Imagining can be both fun and productive, leading to great ideas and goals for ECBC. That is why it is called "Hopeful Imagination".

Blessings in Christ,
Pastor Mike

Sermons for October

04 <i>Walking Gainfully</i>	1 Corinthians 9:24-27
11 <i>Walking Forward Faithfully</i>	Philippians 3:10-15
18 <i>Walking Clearly Focused</i>	Hebrews 12:1-3
25 <i>Walking to the Finish</i>	2 Timothy 4:6-8

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Notes from the Editor

Since Virginia's establishment as a colony in 1607, the Church of England (Anglican) was the only state-sanctioned religion. Anyone who worshiped outside the established church was labeled a "dissenter" and faced harassment, fines, and even imprisonment.

The movement toward change first came about in May 1776, when George Mason drafted the Virginia Declaration of Rights, asserting:

"That Religion, or the Duty which We owe to our Creator, and the Manner of discharging it, can be directed only by Reason & Conviction, not by Force or Violence, and therefore that all men shou'd enjoy the fullest Toleration in the Exercise of Religion..."

A pivotal moment arrived on October 16, 1776, when the **Petition of 10,000 Dissenters for Religious Freedom** was submitted to the Virginia General Assembly. It resulted from a widespread petition drive organized by Virginia Baptists, calling for an end to all government interference in the practice of religion. As the petition circulated throughout Virginia, Presbyterians and Methodists also signed it. But Baptists signed it primarily, and it grew to 125 pages, containing nearly 10,000 freemen's signatures.

The Assembly responded by granting dissenters relief from paying taxes to support the Anglican church. More importantly, the petition fueled Thomas Jefferson's **Act for Establishing Religious Freedom**. It was introduced in 1777 and adopted into state law in 1786. Jefferson's statute permanently severed state control over personal faith in Virginia.

When Congress debated federal safeguards, Virginia's path toward religious freedom served as a blueprint. The religion clause, originally listed as Article 3 in the initial proposal of twelve amendments, would become the opening line in the First Amendment to the **U. S. Constitution**, passed by Congress in 1789 and ratified in 1791:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof;...

So, this October, remember that our fundamental constitutional freedom of religion traces its roots to a **Baptist petition** submitted in October 1776, when thousands of Virginia citizens signed their names to a document demanding religious freedom!

We would like the photo used on our cover to change with the seasons, and we would like **members** to submit their best shots. Please go through and **find your best photo** from fall, winter, spring, or summer and send it to the email address below. And don't forget to take new ones! Don't hesitate to let your newsletter team know how we can make your newsletter even better by dropping us your comments at: "elkcreeknewsletter@gmail.com"

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From the Admin Board

The Admin Board needs **updated photos** of all our church members. The church's new system tracks members as individuals, and many of our photos show groups or couples. Please submit a current photo of just yourself so that we can update everyone in our system. Thank you.

The Admin Board sent out a draft version of the **Constitution and Bylaws Revision #9** for comments. Comments have been received and updates made. A Question-and-Answer session is scheduled for 9/26/26 at 9 a.m. in Duerson Hall, and a final version of the draft will be presented to the congregation at the October 11 business meeting. A final vote by the congregation to approve the document is scheduled for November 15 (moved from November 8) in a special called business meeting.

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Goshen update

The September Goshen newsletter has information on the **Hope for Appalachia** project we helped support, as well as photos of the teams who went to Armenia this summer.

We encourage everyone to read the Goshen News at <https://goshenassociation.com/newsletters/>, our Goshen Baptist Association's newsletter; it contains lots of information on Goshen and the RuraLove Ministry activities that so many of our members support.

October 11 Goshen Mission Celebration and Mission Fair. Sponsored by Goshen WMU. Registration starts at 2:45 pm @ Mount Gilead Baptist Church [4768 Shannon Hill Road Columbia, VA](#)

October 27 Goshen Baptist Assoc. Fall Meeting. Registration at 1:30 pm @ Oakland Baptist Church [2965 Oakland Church Road Gum Spring, VA](#). Rev. Ken Kessler will preach.

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Comings and Goings

Don't forget: the Pastor's **Bible Study** meets every 1st and 3rd Wednesday at 6:45 PM in the Fellowship Hall.

And the **Book Study** meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at 6:45 PM in the Fellowship Hall. They are reading *Fully Devoted – Bible Study Book with Video Access* by Alex Kendrick, available on Amazon.

For Birthdays, Anniversaries, and Prayer Requests – please see your Sunday Bulletin.

Reading Glasses for Guatemala is an ongoing outreach project. If you have glasses you no longer need, please give them to Tony Wilson at church or contact him at wilsontony540@gmail.com.

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Looking Ahead

A **Blood Drive** is set for 13 October. Please contact Beth Larson at u2skyhag@gmail.com or use the sign-up sheets.

Extraordinary Women 2026 is Friday, October 16th in Lynchburg, VA. Please contact Mindy Ward to reserve a seat and coordinate hotel rooms.

Calendar Link: Calendar - [View by Calendar](#) [Ctl + Click]

Women's GRACE Fellowship -In September, we changed: two volunteers **will now provide breakfast** for our fellowship. You no longer need to bring a dish. We are also asking for volunteers to **share their God story or testimony**, one each month. Bring a friend on the third Thursday of each month. Hope to see many of you on **October 15th at 9:00 a.m.** If you need a ride, please call me, Alana, at 703-282-2393.



Election Day setup is Monday, November 2, and Election Day is Tuesday, November 3. The church will be closed to church activities both days.

Samaritan's Purse sends gift-filled Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes to children in need around the world together with the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Boxes and Labels are available in Duerson Hall. Due Date at ECBC - Nov. 15, 2026

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Staying Connected

- If your **contact information** changes, please remember to notify the church. Send changes to your address, phone number, and/or email address to Admin@elkcreekbaptistchurchva.org so they can update the directory.
- If you cannot attend in person, **tune in** at 8:30 am on Mixlr app. Download the app on your mobile phone or computer, select "Listen" and search for ECBC-5916.
- Visit our website – <https://elkcreekbaptistchurchva.org/>
 - Check out the archived church newsletters.
 - Make an online donation.
 - Email the webmaster, web@elkcreekbaptistchurchva.org, for access to the secure directories.
 - Check out the monthly **Goshen Baptist Association newsletter** for lots of information and opportunities to put your talents to work locally, around the country, and the world.
- Like us on Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/elkcreekbaptistchurchva>

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Spiritual Education

A **smaller-group Adult Sunday School Class** has been established and meets in the sanctuary every Sunday at 10 AM. If you are interested, please contact Tony Wilson or Pastor Mike. Shoot Tony an email at wilsontony540@gmail.com. Anyone interested in a smaller group setting is invited to attend.

Regular Adult Sunday School still meets every Sunday at 10 AM in Duerson Hall. Everyone is welcome.

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Audio/Visual

The church has many groups and individuals working behind the scenes to bring church functions together. The AV team's support is a small part of that effort, providing audio and streaming for each service.

A typical day supporting the Lakeside services starts early in the morning, with the team loading the trailer and pulling it to Lakeside. Before setting up, we coordinate which band members will play and any special situations that need our attention. The team sets up audio support for the band, announcements, and Pastor. This includes setting up MICs, monitor speakers for the band members, and music stands. During the band warm-up, we adjust levels for each MIC and monitor speakers to support the service. We also test the MIC for announcements and speak with the pastor to verify the Pastor's MIC. We verify audio levels for the congregation, enable the streaming service (known to most as MIXLR), and set up FM transmission for boat listeners.

After the service, we publish the service online, load the equipment and cabling, and bring it back to the church. At the church, we unload all electronics and recharge all battery-operated equipment for next week. So, in a nutshell, that is a day in the life of the AV team along with a bushel of jokes and some sweat. Always thanks to band members and congregation members for helping move equipment. Don't be offended when we store cables our way (some call it the Gerry way) or ask you to leave equipment at the ramp of the trailer. We feel the church's strong support for our efforts.



†

Deacons

The Deacons share the names of those rotating off in 2026: Kathy Tyler, Tom Pitcher, Tony Wilson. We are very grateful for their faithful service.

Nominations for election as Deacons at the October 11 Business Meeting: **Ted Kopp, Liz Violette.**

Recommendations for election as a **Deacon Emeritus:** Larry Edmonds, Peter Hoffman.

New Deacon family assignments will be announced in the new church year in January 2027.

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Woodchuckers

Rick said he and his crew are still collecting firewood and have a **large amount to distribute** this year. He also said that the recent storms have generated additional pickups, all before they start deliveries in October.

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...a time to laugh (Eccl 3:1-8)

The Pastor woke up Sunday morning and, realizing it was an exceptionally beautiful and sunny early Spring Day, decided he just had to play golf. So, he told the Associate Pastor he felt sick and convinced him to preach for him that day. As soon as the Associate Pastor left the room, the Pastor headed out of town to a golf course about 40 miles away. This way he knew he wouldn't accidentally meet anyone he knew from his Church.

Who's he going to tell?

Setting up on the first tee, he was alone. After all, it was Sunday morning, and everyone else was in Church. At about this time, Saint Peter leaned over to the Lord, looking down from Heaven, and exclaimed, "**You're not going to let him get away with this, are you?**"

The Lord sighed and said, "**No, I guess not.**" Just then, the Pastor hit the ball, and it shot straight toward the pin, dropped just short, rolled up, and fell into the hole. It was a 435 Yard HOLE-IN-ONE!!!!

Saint Peter was astonished. He looked at the Lord and asked, "**Why did you let him do that?**"

The Lord smiled and replied, "**Who's he going to tell?**"

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Homecoming

This year's Homecoming was held on September 13th and featured a covered dish brunch.



Men's Breakfast

Our Men's Christian Fellowship met during September.



Women's Grace Fellowship



Baptisms

We had two lakeside baptisms on August 30th. Congratulations to everyone who took the plunge.



And the Kopps graciously allowed Pastor Mike to perform two baptisms in their pool on September 20th. Many church members attended.

