



The Baptist Bridge

By the grace of God, the Philippi Baptist Church shall **Embrace, Model, and Share** the love of God through Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

March 2018

Philippi Baptist Church ♦ 69 Church St. ♦ Philippi, WV 26416 ♦ (304) 457-3206



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You can give online at pbcwv.net



E-mail: office@pbcwv.net

Website: www.pbcwv.net

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Jon Villers, Pastor Jud Bracey, Choir Director Emily Delligatti, CRBC Leader
Lucretia Moyer, Secretary Zvezdana Vlasic, Custodian

Hannah Dixon, Praise Team Leader
Brenna Dugan, Assistant Praise Team Leader

Michele Moore, Pianist
Marj Campbell, Organist

Robert Villers, Youth Ministry Intern
Taylor Wagner, Youth Ministry Intern



We have been spending this Lenten Season focusing on Hope for Mental Health and the Church's Response. I want to thank Michael R. Lyles for contributing a response to the following question!

Is Your Church Healthy for People with Mental Illness?

3 ways your congregation can embrace those with mental disorders.

My office is crowded with parishioners who are afraid to disclose their struggles with mental trauma to anyone in their local congregations. For the most part, they fear some sort of rejection or judgement if they are authentic in describing their struggles.

I routinely ask my patients, who are members of local churches, if they have shared their struggles with their pastor, small group leader, or anyone in a discipleship role. Some wish they hadn't. One woman with bipolar illness told me that the behavior of her local church re-traumatized her in a different manner. "I now feel spiritually defective to go along with my defective mind."

She continued:

I feel so alone at church. I invite people over for meals and try to make friends. But when they find out that I am bipolar, they either preach to me about sin and healing or ignore me. I refuse to be invisible about my illness. However I long for true friendships and community. I don't need a sermon. I need a friend who will see me as a person. I need a hug ... and perhaps someone who will try new recipes with me. Many people of faith are too ashamed, guilty, or embarrassed to take the risk of revealing their struggles with mental illness.

In contrast, some of my patients have experienced tremendous emotional healing because of their experience with their local church. One middle-aged man struggled with depression since his college years. He struggled through a successful business career while being active as a Bible study leader. He felt like a fraud as he taught others about the Bible, while battling deep hopelessness and depression in his private life.

He took the risk of sharing his story with his pastor who referred him for psychiatric evaluation, while spiritually supporting him. The evaluation revealed several significant medical and genetic problems that caused his brain to function abnormally. In fact, the tests suggested that he should have barely graduated high school and should be on disability from severe depression. He had a graduate degree and a 30-year business career. When confronted with this paradox, he gave the following response:

I am overwhelmed with the information that you shared with me. I am extremely grateful to God and a small, select group of people who tried to understand me, supported me, and stood by me—even when my behavior was not understandable or pleasant to be around.

Why are some churches redemptive to my patients and their families, while some leave my patients feeling alienated and angry? The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30–35) provides a model for how churches can minister to those with mental illness.

1. Healthy churches know what to look for.

The Good Samaritan did not jump to any conclusions. He saw the injured man where he was and ministered to him where he was. Perhaps the Good Samaritan could "see" him because the Good Samaritan had been through some things himself. Perhaps he, too, had been victimized and left on the side of a lonely road. Perhaps someone in his family had been helped by someone that refused to pass by on the other side.



“I feel so alone at church. I invite people over for meals and try to make friends. But when they find out that I am bipolar, they either preach to me about sin and healing or ignore me.”

Many people in churches have been through issues themselves or in their families. If these experiences were handled in a healthy way, they can prepare someone to minister to someone else in need. Coming from a place

of pain or dysfunction may sharpen your vision for those on the side of the road if you allow God to help you through your pain.

Helpful churches make an effort to see my patients and are minimally knowledgeable about mental illness. They know clinical depression involves physical symptoms such as appetite and sleep problems, lack of interest in pleasurable activities, social isolation, spontaneous crying spells, and sometimes physical symptoms such as pain. These are the people who are quiet and may isolate at church. These are the people who may disappear from small groups or Bible studies. These are the people who assume no one will miss them or come looking for them. These are the people who believe that the promises in the Bible do not apply to them and that prayer is an act of futility—at least for them.

Helpful churches know bipolar disorder is characterized by periods of elevated mood, grandiosity, spending sprees, sexual impulsivity, driving fast, and irritability. These are referred to as manic symptoms. These people can be the life of the fellowship group at first and then go over the lines of appropriate behavior. They may flirt or try to take on responsibilities for which they are not gifted. They may be moody and have feelings that are easy to hurt. They are prone to periods of extreme depression in contrast to their mania. Some people have speculated that King Saul in 1 Samuel may have had bipolar disorder.

Helpful churches know that the “bad child” at church may have attention deficit disorder, which can masquerade as behavior problems in kids due to impulsive behavior, hyperactivity, and an inability to focus on non-interesting topics. These kids know right from wrong and repent of their mistakes. Yet they can’t seem to help themselves, in part because of medical problems with how the dopamine systems function in their frontal lobes.

Helpful churches have learned to see these problems by getting training and learning what to look for.

2. Healthy churches have innkeepers.

The Good Samaritan was a safe person who did not rob the man of whatever dignity he had left. He assessed the man’s situation and gave him what he was able to give at the time. He was not traumatized into inaction by his fear of the unknown. He partnered with someone—the innkeeper—who could provide what he was not trained to provide.

Many of my patients feel as if they have no name, only a diagnosis.

Mental health professionals serve in the innkeeper role for many churches. The innkeeper does his job in partnership with the Good Samaritan, who never abandons the injured man. The Good Samaritan takes ownership of the situation and comes back to check on the man. The churches my patients adore never leave them or forsake them (Heb. 13:5).

Innkeepers are varied. Sometimes they are psychiatrists, but most psychiatric medications for mood and anxiety problems are written by OB-GYNs and primary care doctors. Some innkeepers are devout believers, others are not (just like all medical specialists).



3. Healthy churches have a mental health plan.

Churches that effectively minister to those in emotional distress have a plan. They know these are our people and family—not *those* people. They develop relationships with their local mental-health community before they need them. They identify the mental health resources in their community

and meet with them and minister to them. They take food to the staff at psychiatric hospitals during holidays. They send cards of encouragement to mental health professionals when there is not a holiday. They encourage dialogue to ascertain how the mental health professional would approach a person of faith.

The church can and should continue to shepherd the spiritual status of the person through this process, with assistance from a Christian counselor as needed. Effective churches encourage their members to get complete assessments and do not make assumptions. They serve their members, even if that means cutting grass, applying nail polish, or preparing a meal. They focus on the whole family system, not just the individual. They treat them as people, not diagnoses, and do not neglect their spiritual needs.

Your plan needs to answer the common questions patients ask their churches:

Is it safe to be honest here? Will I face rejection and blame? Will anyone listen to me ... I mean really hear me out? Will I just get preached to or talked at ... not *with*? Will anyone walk with me through the pain? Will I be abandoned? Can I find hope? How is Jesus relevant to my situation?

Many of my patients feel as if they have no name, only a diagnosis. However a mental illness is an adjective, not a noun. These people have names before God, and those names are not Depressed, Bipolar, or Attention Deficit. Their struggle is real, but so is their God who wants to show his love through his people in local churches (Isa. 61:1–3).

Churches need to become “Christian firemen,” running towards those burning with mental illness while everyone else runs away. See the people in need, create a safe environment, and listen to them, for they are our brethren. Then minister to them with the trifecta of truth: hope based on God’s love, appropriately applied science, and the ultimate truth of the Word.

This article is adapted from [The Struggle Is Real](#) (WestBowPress, 2017), edited by Tim Clinton and Jared Pingleton.

Michael R. Lyles, MD, is a consultant to a variety of religious organizations, internet sites, and professional athletics organizations. He is board certified in adult psychiatry by The American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology. His major areas of clinical activity are mood disorders, anxiety disorders, and ADHD.



The Board of Christian Education is asking for donations of small pieces of candy, toys, etc. that will fit in a plastic Easter egg.



Rev. Gene Adkins
 AB University, Faculty, staff, and students
 ABU Mission Team
 Barbour County Homeless
 Phil Bowers and other officials
 Gayle Bruns
 Geraldine Bush
 Gwen Carpenter
 John Carter
 Celebrate Recovery
 Amanda & Nora Cobb
 David Cobb
 Code Blue
 Brant Dugan
 Madison Graski
 Linda Howell
 State & National Leadership
 Local ministries
 Judy Mossburg
 Roger Nestor Family
 Karen Riffle
 Margaret Salimi
 Stevie Seago
 Mary Lou Streets
 Sara Stout
 Jim Warfuel Family
 Aubrey Wright
 PBC Abide Youth

Unspoken requests for family members, unsaved people, community concerns, job and home loss, financial difficulties.

Also, in need of prayer: Our nation, state, and country leaders and officials. Please pray for victims of crime, war and violence throughout our country.



Pray for protection for military personnel and their families throughout the world and those serving our country:

Captain Aaron Cross
 Tim Jenkins,
 Brian Lundell
 Amber Underwood
 Major Kris Wood



Pray for these missionary families serving around the world:

The Myers in Mexico
 The Aragons in Mexico
 The Smiths in Haiti
 The Vances in Kenya
 The Orners in Madagascar
 The Reeds in Bolivia
 Debbie Mulneix consultant for International Ministries



Blair Marks (VA Nursing Home), Vangie Shaffer, Christina Wentz (Mansfield Place), Austin Whitman (Talbot Nursing Home), Germaine Whitman (Texas)



Praises

Stella Marilyn Cobb
 Fundraiser
 Stephanie McQuaid
 Leo Nahlik
 Christina Wentz
 Jennifer Weyandt & Cody Curkendall

Upcoming Events

Saturday, March 3rd– 7:30am– Men’s prayer Breakfast
Sunday March 4th– 10:30am– Communion & Deacon Relief Offering
4:30pm– Diaconate meeting
6:00pm Union Association Lenten Service at Union Baptist Church
Saturday, March 10th– Spring Children’s Rally
8:00am- WV CR at Clarksburg Baptist Church
Sunday, March 11th– 11:45am– Board of Christian Education
11:45am– Board of Trustees meeting
3:00pm– Blue & Gray Choir Rehearsal
3:00pm– Pastoral Relations Committee Meeting
4:00pm– Church Council Meeting
6:00pm– Union Association Lenten Service at Belington Baptist Church
Saturday, March 17th– 9:00am– CRBC Leadership training
Sunday, March 18th– 3:00pm– Blue & Gray Choir Rehearsal
6:00pm– Union Association Lenten Service at PBC
Sunday, March 25th– 3:00pm– Blue & Gray Choir Rehearsal
3:30pm– Rev. Hamby’s Ordination Service at Elkins First Baptist Church
5:00pm– Board of Worship Meeting
7:00pm– School of Missions
Wednesday, March 28th– No Mid-week Bible Study
Thursday, March 29th– 7:00pm– Maundy Thursday Service at Crim Memorial
Friday, March 30th– 12:00pm– PBC to provide soup & sandwiches for the Good Friday Service at
Philippi United Methodist.
6:00pm– Jesus Walk at Blue & Gray Park
Easter Sunday, April 1st– 7:00am– Sunrise Service on the patio of Burbick Hall at AB
8:00am– Breakfast at PBC
10:30am– Communion & Deacon Relief Offering
11:45am– Egg Hunt



The Board of Worship is looking for volunteers to work in the sound booth on a rotating basis. Training will be provided. Please contact the church office or Dianna Wright to sign up.

The Board of Christian Education would like to thank everyone for their gifts for the college student's Valentine boxes. Your generosity was greatly appreciated.

Thank You!

Weekly Events

Sundays	Sunday School AM Worship PBCY	9:15am 10:30am 6:00pm
Mondays	Celebrate Recovery Praise Team Practice Celebrate Recovery	4:45pm 6:30pm
Tuesdays	Women's Bible Study (@ Sarah Cobb's house)	12:45pm
Wednesdays	Midweek Service Chancel Choir	6pm 7:15pm

Children's Volunteer Watch and Teach Calendar for March

	March 4th	March 11th	March 18th	March 25th
Nursery Birth to 4 years	Sarah, Pete & Sam Ferguson	Rebekah Hicks	Zvezdana Vlasic & Bonnie Daugherty	Cheryl Wolfe
Children's Church 5 years to 4th grade	Jim & Wanda Steele	Kelly Bracy & Jennifer Weyandt	Koreen & Bobby Villers	Crystal, Wes & Jacob Gray



Men's Prayer
Breakfast on March
3rd at 7:30AM at
the Medallion

Happy Birthday!

Happy Anniversary

8- Jason & Emily Meader
17- George & Carolyn Davis
24- Craig & Sarah Cobb
24- Jovan & Zvezdana Vlasic

1-Nina Lindsey
4- Katie Mullens
5- Patty Phillips
10- Craig Cobb
11- Lindsey Bracey
11- Sarah Ferguson
13- Cheryl Blankenship
13- Faith Cline
14- George Whitman
15- Kristina Vlasic
20- Lars Byrne
21- Barbara Smith
22- Mark Phillips
25- Daniel McGuire
25- Jacob McGuire
27- Abigail Blankenship
28- Jacob Steele



Philippi Baptist Church
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Celebrate Recovery

Barbour County

A Christ-Centered Recovery Program

MONDAY NIGHTS
6:30-8:30PM

The Landing (6th– 12th grade)
Celebration Place (K-5th grade)
Nursery Provided

Philippi Baptist Church

