



New
VALLEY
New
HOME



Westwood Baptist's neighbors are being reached through the transfer of its property to an SBCV church plant, New Valley Church.

New Valley Church of Waynesboro now has a new home, one they can call their own, and a struggling church is able to continue its neighborhood witness under a new banner.

With an aging congregation and declining attendance, **Westwood Baptist Church** was struggling to reach its neighbors. After years of strategies, prayer, and discussion (including consulting with the SBC of Virginia), Pastor John Brownlee approached the church with a new option in February 2021—the opportunity to become home to a new church. This proposal’s purpose was to continue honoring the church’s history of Gospel witness in its community. After more than nine months of talks, Westwood Baptist Church chose to give its property to another SBCV congregation—New Valley Church, led by church planter KJ Washington.

New Valley Church was not a stranger to the Westwood congregation. A young KJ Washington had even preached there

over a decade ago when Westwood needed help.

When Washington began planting New Valley Church, Pastor Brownlee asked, “What can we do help?” Living up to its offer, Westwood hosted some of New Valley’s afternoon worship gatherings in the church plant’s early days. New Valley Church formed in July 2019 as a planting team and launched public gatherings in January 2020.

Pastor Washington is a native of Waynesboro and returned to plant a church to reach his hometown. While spending time in rental spaces has proven fruitful, having a new home to call their own—has made a difference.

“In October,” Washington explained, “even before the transfer had taken place, we were able to do a Trunk-or-Treat outreach event with the Westwood congregation with more than 700 people in attendance. Since the change, new guests have been continuous, and five new members completed the membership process just

this past Sunday. In fact, the worship center is often full now with guests, seekers, and members.”

New Valley has experienced God’s blessings, and Westwood has been able to continue its Gospel legacy. In fact, Pastor John Brownlee serves as a transitional elder in the new congregation.

For churches considering a similar scenario, both pastors emphasize the importance of:

- 1 bringing wise voices to the table and the conversation
- 2 giving God room to work and then joining Him
- 3 reminding the younger church to be patient and to honor those who have come before (its legacy)
- 4 having the new pastor be intentional in relationship building

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According to Pastor Washington, "if people keep the mission of Jesus at the forefront... obstacles and hurdles can be overcome."

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As Pastor Washington said, "if people keep the mission of Jesus at the forefront, this can be done because prioritizing the Kingdom of Jesus can lead through hard obstacles and hurdles along the way. We can do more together than we can do separately."

Indeed, "Two are better than one, for they have a good return for their labor" (Ecclesiastes 4:9).

The SBCV is grateful to have been able to come alongside these local churches to advance the Gospel of Jesus Christ together to reach our neighbors and the nations. To God be the glory! ■



Under a New Banner

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