

Baptism Waters *Stirring in the Valley*

God is at work through the ministry of **Shenandoah Community Fellowship** (SCF) in the town of Woodstock, Virginia.

When Dr. Tim Shaw began as lead pastor at SCF in March 2020, he had the privilege of coming into a spiritually healthy church. SCF's founding pastor had retired and the church had encountered a positive season of transition through the assistance of the SBCV.

In his first three years, Pastor Tim cast biblical vision, led the church to a plurality of elders, and added godly men to the deacon ministry. He testified that SCF began to see a move of God at the end of 2023 into the beginning of 2024. Shaw stated, "We witnessed an increase in momentum and excitement for sure, but more importantly in spiritual vitality among our people as we saw them share the Gospel." In January 2024, the leadership of SCF led the church to engage in lostness in a simple yet profound way.

"In January we set up an empty jar in the worship center," Pastor Tim explained. "I asked our congregation to place a ping pong ball in the jar labeled Gospel Needed. Each ball represented a person they know who needs salvation. The empty jar beside that one was a Gospel Presented jar, and they could move the ping pong ball to that jar once they shared the Gospel with that person. A third Gospel Accepted jar was placed beside those two to put the ping ball into if that person accepted salvation."

He continued, "The goal is for our church to have every ping pong ball moved from Gospel Need to Gospel Presented by the end of 2024. It is a joy to see we are at 30 Gospel presentations and 14 who have accepted the Gospel!"

On Sunday, June 2, 2024, SCF saw these 14 people who accepted the Gospel, and 8 others, follow Jesus in believer's baptism. Twenty-one people (husbands and wives, young people, and children) were baptized in the Shenandoah River and one other person was baptized in the church baptismal for a total of 22 baptisms. In the 24-year history of SCF, this was the most baptisms the church had ever recorded in one day.

Just weeks after this baptism, SCF baptized five more students who accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior at summer camp.

SCF is now engaging these new believers by discipling them through foundation groups and life groups—the main discipleship strategies of the church.

"Perhaps the sweetest part of watching all this is to see several in our body get excited about sharing the Gospel," said Pastor Tim "We are hearing stories of some sharing for the first time after thinking they could not do it. Praise God as we watch others catch the vision and see the importance of living a Christ-centered life and serving Him in our church, community, and world." ■