What Happens When the Bottom Falls Out?



As believers, we are reminded that "all things work together for the good of those who love God: those who are called according to His purpose." ROMANS 8:28, CSB

"Not alone" is a thread that has run through every part of who we are as the SBC of Virginia. In fact, it is at the core of our identity. Our mission is to come alongside local churches as they reach their neighbors and the nations with the Good News of Jesus. We walk with churches as they are planted, revitalized, mobilized, and engaged in ministry. But what happens when the bottom falls out? When everything falls apart? What about congregations that have worshiped and served together for decades, only to find themselves divided, hurting, and hopeless, feeling completely alone?

This is where the beauty of partnership and the relationship between a church and the SBCV shine most brightly.

That was exactly the situation **Thomas Village Baptist Church** in Duffield faced. Everything the congregation had known about Thomas Village was suddenly different. A close-knit church family of more than 40 years found itself divided, grieving, and deeply wounded.

Dr. Jeff Iorg, speaking on leading through major change, said, "When going through major change, people grieve just as they do when they lose a loved one, and grieving people don't think right." With that reality in mind, the regional strategist went to work, knowing that the members who remained at Thomas Village would need intentional leadership during the interim period.

That is exactly what the Lord provided: a seasoned retired pastor who could help a grieving congregation rediscover hope and health through prayer and the Gospel message.

Pastor Don Paxton began serving as interim pastor at Thomas Village in January 2026. He led prayer gatherings and walked alongside church members as they pursued forgiveness and healing. Soon, healing began, and hope started to grow. New faces appeared in worship services, and people began professing new life in Christ.

By February, the church was celebrating the baptisms of new believers. By mid-summer, 13 new believers had been baptized and were becoming part of the life of the church.

Deacon Keith Roach said, "I haven't seen anything like this since the church's early days over 40 years ago. I believe what we have gone through was just the Lord pruning the church so it would produce more than before."

That is certainly what Jesus taught in John 15.

Otis Bowen, who has served as a deacon for more than 40 years, said, "You can feel the Lord at work here, and you can feel that the love we have for one another is real."

As believers, we are reminded that "all things work together for the good of those who love God: those who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28, CSB).

Even when the bottom falls out, you are not alone. Lean into your partnership with the SBC of Virginia. Intentional transitional ministry may be one way the Lord brings healing and hope to your church. ●

You are not alone.