

NEW YEAR. NEW LOOK.

SOUTHERN BAPTIST

TEXAN

JANUARY 2022 • VOL. 21 | NO. 1

RENEW YOUR MIND

MENTAL
WELLNESS
BEGINS WITH
STRONG
CONNECTIONS
TO GOD
& OTHERS

+

AFTER 91 YEARS,
HE FINALLY HEARD
THE GOSPEL ...

PASTOR'S
NEAR-DEATH
EXPERIENCE

REAFFIRMS HIS
LIFE'S MISSION

Don't outrun your walk



I am a runner. Well, to be honest, I want to be a runner. I have completed one full marathon and two half marathons. I have somewhat of a love/hate relationship with running. I hate it while I am doing it and I love it when I am done. The one thing I like about running is the culture and community it creates. You can show up for a race with a few people or a few thousand people and, regardless of the size of the race, have the same goal as everyone else: to cross the finish line.

In March of 2012, I ran my first and last full marathon on the same day. It was a great—yet painful—experience. As I ran the 26.2 miles, I learned a life lesson. Marathons are not run in miles, they are run in steps. What every person in the race had in common was they had to take the race one step at a time. They had to put one foot in front of the other 55,000 times. I knew that every small step I took brought me closer to the big goal of crossing the finish line.

As we begin the New Year, we will inevitably face things that seem insurmountable, some planned and some unplanned. There will be victories to win and mountains to be climb. In all these things, the same principle that applies to running applies to our lives in 2022 ...

Just take the next step.

One of my mentors who is now with the Lord, Rod Masteller, used to tell me, "It's not in the day-to-day, it's in the daily." As a young man, I never fully understood that statement. However, the longer I walk with the Lord and serve the Lord, I have experienced exactly what he meant. The most satisfying things

in life are not found in the day-to-day experiences, but rather in the daily habit of walking with the Lord.

As we look to the New Year, may I suggest one simple thing to you? Don't outrun your walk. Simply put, life and ministry can get incredibly busy and demanding. There are things that come up that consume your days and nights. There are challenges that can drain every ounce of energy from you. If we are not careful, those same things can distract you from the daily routine of walking with Jesus.

I honestly can't count how many times I have let the day-to-day keep me from the daily. It is my commitment as I grow in the Lord and as I begin this new year to make sure my priorities are intact. If I am not diligent about this, the busyness of ministry can cause me to outrun my walk with the Lord. If I am not careful, I can let the challenges that come into my life be given an urgency that the situation doesn't truly deserve. In doing this, I shift all my attention to good things rather than the greatest things.

So, as we begin 2022, I again encourage you, don't outrun your walk. Take the small steps every day to grow in the Lord and to sit in his presence. Take the steps each day to fervently pray to the Lord and meditate on his words. Take the steps every day to find someone to share the gospel with. One step in front of the other. If we do this together, I believe we will see a powerful movement of God in our lives, churches, cities, and across Texas!

I am praying and believing 2022 will be a great year! I love you and I am honored to serve you!

Dr. Nathan Lorick
SBTC Executive Director



Engage.
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BEAUTIFULLY BROKEN

Jeremy Bradshaw, pastor of Liberty Baptist Church in Bridge City, was involved in an accident on his e-bike. His faith and the faith of his family was challenged and strengthened during his recovery.



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The battle for your mind

In the first part of Romans 12:2, followers of Christ are commanded to “not be conformed to this world.” I think most of us would say Paul is describing a life that, when compared to the rest of the world, looks different. It’s what we might call the “set-apart life.”

The second part of Romans 12:2 offers a second command: “... be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” What does that actually mean? This, in essence, describes a life that not only looks different, but thinks different. If you want to live like Christ, you must have the mind of Christ.

In realizing this truth, we come to one of the greatest (and most frustrating) questions the Bible poses: how do I renew my mind?

The path to mental and spiritual health begins with trusting Christ. That much we can say with absolute certainty. But what about the journey that comes after our decision to follow Jesus? For every follower of Christ, having a renewed mind is a life-long journey that requires a constant recalibration between biblical truth that never changes and life circumstances that constantly change—and often, at nauseating speeds.

Within the pages of this new-look Texan, you will find our attempt at offering tools

and encouragement intended to help you navigate that journey—whether you are a pastor, church leader, or lay member. You’ll read first-person accounts of pastors who have struggled with their mental health and been bold enough seek help. Some of the top Christian counselors across the state of Texas will share not only the kinds of struggles they’re seeing through their practices, but how those who are experiencing victory are turning a corner.

When you take a big-picture view of the content we have presented this month, I hope you will see something significant. None of the voices you’ll hear in this issue collaborated with one another, and yet their message is consistent in many ways: take your allotted time off and use that time to rest; connect with a small group of trustworthy people to share your struggles with; look for ways to serve others when you find yourself struggling; and so on.

So why should the Texan take on the issue of mental health? First, anyone who is alive has a mental health situation to manage. I love how one counselor in this issue said it (and I’ll paraphrase here): “If you’re struggling, you’re actually the normal one.” Everyone struggles from time to time.

But there is a better reason to do a deeper dive on mental and spiritual health and wellness: I believe the Bible commands us to. There’s a constant battle for our minds, with Satan prowling around like a roaring lion waiting to pounce on any and every follower of Jesus (1 Peter 5:8). Elsewhere in scripture, we find the battle for our minds emphasized when we’re told to “take every thought captive in obedience to Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5). As we reach back into the Old Testament, we find the truth that, “As a man thinks in his heart, so he is” (Proverbs 23:7). In Romans 7, Paul describes a constant inner conflict that “wages war” on his mind.

The struggle is real. But the hope we find in Jesus is stronger.

I pray that you’ll leave these pages more encouraged and one step closer to finding that place where you bring your struggles to God and place them into his all-capable hands. I also pray that in some small way more and more of our churches will accept the challenge of running toward the issues surrounding mental health, recognizing that in doing so, they will find a rich field of ministry opportunity waiting.

In that pursuit, eternities will be changed.



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SANCTITY OF LIFE MONTH:

SBTC churches taking 'all-of-life' approach to make a difference

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SAY WHAT?

A sampling of wisdom (and a few chuckles) from the Twitterverse



Patrick Nolen @teachnolen · 3h

The best mentors do more than just knowledge sharing they also give you wisdom by talking about the failures they've experienced over the years. That's because we learn twice as much from a loss than we do from a win. [#TransparentLeadership](#)



alex_g_gonzales @alex_g_gonzales

Many jobs never leave the mind of a professional. But far fewer jobs ever leave the heart, soul, and mind like that of a pastor. It's not something you can leave at the front door. It follows wherever he goes.



Catherine Renfro @CatherineRenfro

I overheard a young girl excitedly sharing about a neighbor she and her family have been sharing the gospel with. Blown away by her passion, I asked how old she is. She said, "11"

Jesus is using students to make an eternal impact!!



Steve Bezner @Bezner · 3h

The greatest apology for your theology is the way you treat people.

Unless, of course, you act like a jerk.

Then, the greatest threat to your theology is the way you treat people.

1 9 101



Jared C. Wellman @JaredcWe... · 11/1/21

The only acceptable alteration to the oreo is double-stuff.

Here I stand.

10 1 69



Hector Medina @HectorM91792981

No matter the season, there's always a reason to connect with community. The Gospel Connects and Cares!



Jada Edwards @iamJadaEdwards

Forgiveness is not erasing. It's releasing.



Bart Barber @bartbarber

So, does feminism or profit motivate pro-abortion politics in the USA?

Consider this: Every pro-abortion organization in the US supports sex-selection abortion—killing unborn daughters because you wanted a son.

That's not feminism, folks.

'I AM A BETTER PASTOR WHEN I AM A BETTER ME'

Pastors share progress, pathway to hope after opening up about personal struggles

BY GARY LEDBETTER

Near the beginning of the COVID quarantine in the U.S., the Texan spoke with pastors about mental health and their experience in addressing their own mental health needs. In the 18 months since, pastors and churches have faced increasing difficulty as new challenges rose while they sought to minister to members and communities.

Many pastors report added stress from learning new technology for remote worship services, seeking to comfort ailing and bereaved church members even as hospitals and nursing homes restricted visitation, member care, discipleship, and preaching—all the while sharing Wi-Fi with children at home attempting remote learning in the next room.

These common situations have piled on top of the challenges pastors faced prior to 2020. In a 2019 survey by Lifeway Research, 23 percent of pastors expressed a belief that they were struggling with mental illness (half of those pastors had been diagnosed by a doctor).

The Texan revisited two of the pastors we spoke with in spring 2020: Danny Forshee of Great Hills Baptist Church in Austin, and Byron McWilliams of First Baptist Church in Odessa. In the November 2019 meeting of the SBTC Executive Board, McWilliams (a former SBTC president) shared his testimony of having a mental health crisis and seeking help in dealing with it. Forshee, chairing that board meeting, mentioned briefly that he, too, had sought help to maintain his mental health.

Both men speak now of how they addressed the special ministry and personal challenges of the past 18 months. McWilliams has increased his delegation of some ministry duties and committed to take all his vacation in 2021.

“I did this in front of the church so that they would understand when their pastor is out of the pulpit that he’s taking much needed family time,” McWilliams said. “Making this commitment publicly has helped me be accountable to my family and my



church. I am a better pastor when I am a better me!”

Forshee also mentioned some ministry challenges that have arisen at Great Hills as he “acclimates to the ‘new normal’” in church life. His church is examining matters of ecclesiology as some continue to participate online only. “More people are tuning into church online, which is good,” he added, “but how we reach them and help gather them is an opportunity for church leadership to really address.”

Personally, Forshee cited transparency with his wife and a renewed joy in praise and worship as sources of strength for him.

He added, “Helping and serving others go a long way toward our own health and healing.”

The response the pastors received regarding their openness about their own struggles points to a need for greater understanding among our pastors and laypeople. One key to greater understanding is transparency.

“Just recognizing the reality of mental illness/health/depression/anxiety and that these issues exist in many churches and among pastoral staff ... is helpful,” Forshee said.

McWilliams agrees, stressing “transparency, with no judgment

Danny Forshee, pastor of Great Hills Baptist Church in Austin, cites transparency with his wife as a source of strength.



MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Find more at texan.digital or scan the QR code above

“Helping and serving others go a long way toward our own health and healing.”

—DANNY FORSHEE

attached.” He added, “Continue to inform that mental health is no different than physical health and both must be managed in order to be the best person one can be. If that means taking an ongoing medication long term, so be it.”

Although the article did prompt some helpful conversations with other pastors, McWilliams related a story about a pastor who was critical of his response to his own mental health needs, suggesting a greater commitment to personal devotion and prayer might be the problem.

“I experienced this [negative judgment] personally when a fellow pastor called me out for taking anxiety medication. His attitude expressed to me in an open forum was meant to shame me for taking the medication and not relying more on the Lord,” McWilliams said. “No responsible minister would ever tell a diabetic to stop taking insulin, or someone suffering from high blood pressure to get off their medication. This attitude must change before true progress can be made in the area of mental health.”

McWilliams also noted that his ministry with those who suffer from mental illness has become more effective since his own experience with anxiety.



Byron McWilliams of First Baptist Church in Odessa says pastors can help others in their struggle with mental health by encouraging them that it is no different than physical health in that it must be managed on a daily basis.

“Before I faced real anxiety myself,” McWilliams said, “I could not fully understand what someone was experiencing and would wrongly take the attitude of some today wherein I just encouraged a stronger walk with Christ. That is always a part of the solution, and perhaps the main thrust, but seeking the assistance of a healthcare professional is not a weakness, but a strength.”

Forshee noted the same advantage in his own ministry.

Mental health discussions continue to be at the forefront of Forshee’s life and ministry, he said. “Having to continue to deal with anxiety makes me sensitive to others with the same struggles; God’s grace is sufficient.”

Lifeway Research discovered in its survey of pastors suffering from some serious mental health disorders that 69 per-

cent of them believed that the primary way churches can help would be to know and share local resources available to help individuals address their mental health needs. Both pastors agreed that this is important, with McWilliams stressing that it is “naïve” for a minister to believe he should “impart mental health wisdom he does not have!”

Forshee additionally suggested that churches might provide subsidies for those who need professional or medical help to address their mental health. He also believes people can encourage their pastors in significant ways.

“Following the Holy Spirit’s lead is so important, he said. “An example is if you feel led to reach out to a pastor, then do so. A simple text or encouraging note goes a long way.”

“Before I faced real anxiety myself, I could not fully understand what someone was experiencing and would wrongly take the attitude of some today wherein I just encouraged a stronger walk with Christ. That is always a part of the solution, and perhaps the main thrust, but seeking the assistance of a healthcare professional is not a weakness, but a strength.”

—BYRON MCWILLIAMS



Jack Peaslee (seated) celebrates after being baptized at Green Acres Baptist Church in Tyler. Jeremy Jones, the church's minister to adults who baptized Peaslee, looks on.

GREEN ACRES BAPTIST CHURCH PHOTO

92-year-old professes Christ, proves 'God is never finished with us'

It started with enthusiastic cheering, transitioned to raucous applause and ended with a standing ovation. This kind of response—normally reserved for touchdowns and troop homecomings—instead was directed toward the baptistry at Green Acres Baptist Church last October, when after 33,855 days of living (that's 92 years, if you're doing the math), Jack Peaslee was baptized.

Needless to say, the folks at Green Acres were pretty pumped.

"We obviously celebrated like crazy with him," Pastor Michael Gossett said. "It was such a special moment."

Peaslee began attending Green Acres in early 2021 at the invitation of a friend. After several months, in response to one of Gossett's sermons, Peaslee expressed a desire to join the church. Staff were more than happy to talk to him about making that decision, but first, they talked to him about the decision that matters most: "Have you ever trusted Jesus as Lord?"

No, Peaslee said, he had not.

A staff pastor then spent the next 45 minutes using the 3 Circles method of evangelism to share the gospel with Peaslee and explain to him what it means to follow Jesus.

"He said he had never heard that before," Gossett said.

The staff pastor then invited him to follow Jesus, but Peaslee said he needed more time to think about what he had been told. As Peaslee spent the coming days thinking it over, the Green Acres staff took their pleas to the Lord.

"We prayed for Jack Peaslee by name for three weeks," Gossett said. "He came back three weeks later and said, 'I'm ready to give my life to Jesus.'"

Peaslee was baptized by Jeremy Jones, Green Acres' minister to adults. Jones said the congregation began cheering the moment he introduced his new brother in Christ from the baptistry the morning of Oct. 3. "I turned to Jack and said, 'There is a whole church out there full of people that are proud of you and who love you.' ... It was an awesome moment in the life of our church and one that we will not soon forget."

For his part, Peaslee said he was surprised at how the church responded to his baptism. "The standing ovation really blew my mind," he said. "I had no idea what to do. It felt wonderful. ... I had never received anything like that."

Gossett said the moment was meaningful for the church for many reasons, including the fact that they have been talking a lot about how God is a God of all generations. Over a span of months, the church saw tangible proof of that as a young child, a median-age adult and then Peaslee decided to trust Christ and be baptized.

"Our church loves to see life change no matter who it is, and to see a life transformed at the age of 92 – that was really big for our church" Gossett said. "God is always pursuing us. He is never finished with us."

‘We all walk with a limp’

Mike Schumacher, the counseling director at one of the most active church counseling centers in Texas, talks expectations, ‘radical honesty,’ and being vulnerable enough to let others pour into your life



JL: From a broad perspective, what would you say the state of mental health in the church is right now?

MS: In general, we’ve come a long way, but we’ve got a long way to go. There’s still a significant stigma about mental health and Christian counseling. We take very seriously that not everybody who calls themselves a Christian or a Christian counselor actually approaches counseling from a Christ-centered perspective. I do think we’re establishing more and more credibility in our church and in our community.

Just to put some context to this, I’ve got 14 counselors here in our counseling center—all licensed professional counselors. We see about 500 appointments a month—that’s a huge number of people. I say that just to give you some perspective of the need and the growth of this ministry. The numbers are growing and our ministry is growing, which I think is a good sign that the community at large and our church is recognizing the need for what we provide. It’s a constant battle educating people about the reality of mental health issues. Normalizing the struggle is a big part of what we like to try to do.

JL: I know there’s no easy answer for this, but why do you think that stigma exists?

MS: That’s a really good question. I did a message here a while back at Sagemont trying to communicate this very thing and illustrating various characters in the Bible. I focused a lot on Elijah and his struggle with depression and, frankly, suicidal ideation. I also illustrated the struggles that Paul alludes to, that even Jesus alludes to—a kind of emotional distress that was not uncommon even for him in his humanity. There’s a few points I think I would emphasize about why there’s this stigma.

I think some of it, unfortunately, is a certain amount of bad theology, to tell you the truth. Most of us evangelicals are aware of and cautious of the prosperity gospel, in terms of financial prosperity. But I think we as Southern Baptists and evangelicals have fallen prey to an emotional prosperity gospel. In other words, if you get saved, if you pray, if you’re active in reading the Bible and you go to church regularly and you serve and you give, then you should be living a victorious Christian life that doesn’t include struggle. Obviously, those [spiritual disciplines] are all relevant and important, but I contend that there is a kind of overpromising that I think pastors and teachers are a bit guilty of. I think even with the best of intentions, there’s a tendency to emphasize that if you walk seriously in the faith, your marriage will be great, your kids will be great, and you will be psychologically and emotionally healthy. That is not the reality for a lot of people.

What we’re saying is, that sinfulness of the fall—the depravity, the radical corruption—infiltrates every part of our life. It affects us relationally, psychologically, spiritually, neurologically, physically. So we’re trying to approach mental health much more comprehensively than a lot of the more simplistic thinking that exists out there about what it takes to be healthy.

JL: In Western culture, the idea is often that we're supposed to achieve, we're supposed to climb, we're supposed to rise to the top. But that kind of thinking seems to clash with the message of Christ, who says, "The first shall be last and the last shall be first."

MS: It's a bit paradoxical. I think it gets back to even why there's a stigma, because I agree with you—I deal with all kinds of people from all kinds of backgrounds every day in my office and I think there is more and more recognition that, because of the radical corruption of sin and the fall, we all walk with a limp. I mean that figuratively, but it's a very profound notion to get your head around as a Christian, as opposed to the message that if you're a Christian you don't have any limp at all and life should be great. I just don't think that's biblically true, theologically correct, and certainly it's not practically evident.

JL: Can you give me a general sense of what kinds of struggles you're seeing among leaders right now?

MS: Church leaders are dealing with so many of the same kinds of normal things that everyone else is. We see a lot of depression. Discouragement among pastors and staff is high because sometimes the expectations are so high. They struggle with a lot of performance anxiety, which I think of as "encore anxiety"—you know, "What are you going to do next time to make it bigger and better?"

We see a lot of addictions in church leaders and pastors. We've got a lot of pastors that are struggling with sexual addictions ... social media can be quite addictive, in its own right. So many pastors are just struggling with

I think another big part of what helps people get better is when they're heard—whether it's a good friend or a therapist or a mentor—somebody you trust enough to be open and authentic with, to share the real you.

the normal emotional issues that we all do, like fears of rejection and failure. Those kinds of things are so real in the lives of so many pastors who feel pressure to feed the monster—building the congregation and meeting the budget and attracting people. I do a lot of marital work and I see a lot of pastors and church leaders who look really good on the stage or behind the pulpit, but their marriages and their families are falling apart—for all kinds of reasons that yours or mine could, too, but with the additional stresses and strains, the expectations, the time and the energy—it's really difficult.

JL: Among those pastors and church leaders who seem to be turning a corner and improving, what are some of the commonalities you're seeing?

MS: First, they're reframing their expectations. That's a good place to start. They're coming to the realization that, "If I'm struggling, I'm not weird, I'm not messed up, I'm not crazy and, frankly, I'm more normal than the people who are not struggling." Just getting your head around that can help validate the struggle.

I think another big part of what helps people get better is when they're heard—whether it's a good friend or a therapist or a mentor—

somebody you trust enough to be open and authentic with, to share the real you. Get in the company of someone you trust that you can be radically honest with. I don't know of many people or pastors who wouldn't benefit from having a good friend or mentor or professional counselor. I've got my people that I have to talk to that give me perspective and let me vent and hurt and wrestle and be messy. I think those pastors and leaders who are making progress have that kind of open and honest relationship with someone else, too.

It takes a lot of guts for a pastor or a staff member to show up at a counseling center and admit that he or the family or the marriage is a mess. That takes a humility and a vulnerability, and I don't think that's easy. It may be hard to find that person, but that's such a crucial part of good mental health and self-care—having someone who can speak into your life. If you don't have that, you're going to die on the vine. If you don't have someone filling up your cup, you can give out of your cup for a while, but you're eventually going to run dry.

Mike Schumacher is an ordained minister and associate pastor at Sagemont Church in Houston. He has been the director of the Sagemont Counseling Center since 2001.

5 Ways Pastors Can Manage Their Own Mental Health



01

Intentionally develop genuine friendships with other believers

God created us with a need to have him and others in our lives (Gen 2:18). It really is not good for us to be alone in our spiritual walk. In healthy relationships we find love, support, accountability, and examples. In these relationships we find fellow spiritual warriors who help us fight against the enemy's arrows. To choose to be a loner, though, is to invite trouble. Our struggles almost always increase when we fight alone.

02

Enlist an ongoing group of prayer partners—and daily give them prayer needs

Don't wait until you have a significant need to request their prayer; instead, every day ask them to pray for you. Invite them to join you in praising God. Ask them to cover your day in prayer. Share your needs and burdens so they might pray for you with intentionality and insight. Something powerful happens within us when we know brothers and sisters are praying for us every day: we gain renewed hope because we know others have our back.

03

Invest in 2-3 other believers and model good spiritual disciplines for them

I've learned by experience that focusing on others helps turn our attention away from burdens that can wear us down. Others watch our lives. They look to us as spiritual examples. They pray for us and challenge us even as we equip and guide them. When we practice good disciplines, we feed our own souls and show them how to do the same for themselves. The joy of a growing relationship with God and others results.

04

Regularly take time off

Frankly, I confess my own struggle here, but I'm learning. In particular, I'm learning there's nothing spiritual about ministry workaholicism. At least one day each week, let the work go and relax. Take a walk. Get some exercise. Enjoy a hobby. Hang out with a friend. Then, be sure to plan your vacation—and take it. Make it long enough that you actually relax a bit. A rested pastor is almost always a healthier pastor.

05

Don't be afraid to talk with a Christian counselor

For some reason, many pastors aren't willing to do what we recommend others do: talk with another believer trained in counseling. Our ego gets in the way. Fear of what others will think captures us. Sometimes it feels like leaning on someone else is an indication of faithlessness. And, we aren't always sure how to find someone to help us. What we do, then, is remain silent—and we miss an opportunity for another Christian to help us manage our own mental health.



Chuck Lawless is dean of doctoral studies and vice president of spiritual formation and ministry centers at Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. For more from Lawless, visit chucklawless.com.

PASTOR TO PASTOR:

Critical connections will help in our battle against weariness

It's not just you. I am weary too. Every ministry context has enough challenges to wear any pastor down emotionally, physically, mentally, relationally, and spiritually. We know that perseverance is required. Remember the words of Paul, "Let us not get tired of doing good, for we will reap at the proper time if we don't give up." (Galatians 6:9)

Maybe we are not tired of doing good, but perhaps we are weary from trying to sort out all the complexities of the last two years. When COVID-19 began to change our world, I was six months into a new pastorate. Each day my list of areas of importance grew longer. However, responding to a global pandemic hadn't made my list of considerations. But who had that on their list?

Instantly the complexities of COVID-19 and its ripple effects began to steal our attention, drain our energy, and demand action. Our local church community has suffered devastating losses due to COVID-19, heart attacks, and even a murder in the last 18 months. Absolutely layers of awful. It makes me cringe just to think about it again along with all the meetings. Oh, the meetings!

Our experiences may differ but the emotional exhaustion, decision fatigue, no-win scenarios, and sideways energy expended have left all of us depleted and weary. Confusion mixed with irrational aggression surrounding speculative issues sure has worn me out! Where are we going to find the energy to re-establish ministries when we are so depleted from trying to navigate these complexities in leadership?

Through it all I am reminded that the

mission still matters and so does our leadership. In many ways we are weary as we attempt to rebuild ministries, relationships, and facilities all in the midst of collective trauma. It is hard work. It is spiritual work. It is worth it to cultivate a healthy church culture for the years ahead.

As pastors we understand the importance of basic spiritual practices, but often find that the tyranny of the urgent can steal away precious time from our own spiritual and relational health. Here are several intentional practices that continue to help steady my life during this time:

SLOW DOWN TO BE WITH JESUS

My intentional communal connection with Jesus should never be sacrificed on the altar of "I just didn't have time to get to it today." We have all been in crisis mode for far too long and slowing down to be in the word, walking quietly whispering prayers, journaling our experiences, and breathing deeply while looking at the horizon are all powerful rhythms we need.

EAT A MEAL WITH A TRUSTED FRIEND

Something special happens when we prioritize time with safe people who embrace us as a person rather than a position. I am so thankful for another pastor friend who takes the time to meet together on a weekly basis. We all need a friend who gets it. Be that friend and pray for God to send you that friend, too.

BE PRESENT AND ENGAGED WITH FAMILY

Our families have been impacted by the trauma of the last couple of years. They need us to be present and engaged. Turn off the phone, get off social media, take your day(s) off, use your vacation time, look your family in the eyes when you talk, ask open-ended questions, and pay attention to them. They need you!

Brother, it isn't just you. You are not alone. Your role in the kingdom matters. Remember that the shadows of suffering cover this world and we need the light of Christ to shine through you.

As Jimmy Draper said, "Don't quit before you finish." We believe there is hope and healing in Jesus. We believe we can experience it and help others experience it as we abide in Christ, build healthy relationships, and care for our community.

Let's take our weariness to Jesus and trust him to help us persevere one moment at a time.



Steven Gaither is lead pastor at First Baptist Church of McAllen.



COME TOGETHER

Counseling leaders say biblical friendships, churches helping each other key to navigating mental health issues

The state of addressing mental health-related issues is improving in our churches, but there's still work to do. We asked some of the top counselors and Christian counseling directors in Texas to chime in on topics ranging from the stigma that can exist in the church regarding mental health and wellness, to how pastors can take steps to care for their own mental health, and what churches of any size can do to minister to others who are struggling.

Why is mental health an issue that should be addressed by the church? Why is there still a stigma attached to the issue of Christians struggling with their mental health?

The church should care for people struggling with anxiety, depression, and other struggles, because hope is desperately needed. True hope is found in God (Psalm 42). The church has an opportunity to share the gospel with non-Christians and show Christians how the gospel is relevant for our problems in life. Trusting God doesn't mean problems will go away, but we can know joy and peace as we seek God's perspective through Scripture and depend on the Spirit (Romans 12:2; Galatians 5:22). Our confidence in life is not in ourselves, but in God who created us and knows us more intimately than anyone else in the world (Psalm 139).

Often, it's hard for Christians to talk about their struggles because of shame and fear of man. Sometimes, it's hard to share because we mistakenly believe that the Christian life means a happy life, at least on the outside. Church leaders promote transparency in the church when they acknowledge that the Christian life is hard and all Christians, including themselves, need God's help on a daily basis. God also created us to be relational beings, meaning that we need fellowship with other godly people.

— Lilly Park, associate professor of Biblical Counseling, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Based on what you're seeing professionally and gathering from colleagues and others, what impact has COVID had on mental health in the church?

I see a dramatic increase in depression and anxiety as the presenting problems especially since COVID. However, when I look a little deeper and explore a little further, I see something new and pervasive now more than ever and definitely since COVID. It's loneliness. New research from Harvard suggests that social isolation is on the rise especially among older teens and young adults. Research from other sources suggests that most of us, over 60 percent, feel lonely. Prolonged use of social media was also linked to greater feelings of loneliness.

According to the American Psychological Association and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, loneliness has been linked to physical and mental health issues like diabetes, insomnia, depression, obesity, and premature death. It's one thing to face depression and anxiety and other mental health challenges on a daily basis. It's quite different to feel like you are all alone in the battle and that no one really cares.

— Steve Hunter, professor and Hope for the Heart Chair of Biblical Counseling, Criswell College

The pandemic has been and still continues to be very difficult. Too many people hang on to every word that the mainstream media is putting out there. The mainstream media needs to up their ratings so, of course, they make it more exciting, but in turn it has ramped up anxiety in everyone, especially children. I also think that isolation contributes greatly to this issue. We are made to be in communion with God and with one another and sometimes it is just good to have interaction with someone in the flesh. One good thing that Texas Gov. Greg Abbott did early in the pandemic was to allow virtual sessions in order to allow counselors to access their clients. Prior to this order very few counselors did virtual counseling, in fact some of our ethical codes forbid it. Although the governor opened the door for access to everyone, working with a child or teen online is next to impossible. Children typically express themselves more through play and teens hate discussing their issues online. I have wondered if their hate is more of a paranoia that someone is listening, especially their parents.

— Sharon L. Good, LPC Superior, Christian Counselors of Texas treasurer

COVID has isolated people and that is never good for mental health. We are created to be with people. Upon God's review of all he created in the Garden of Eden, the only thing that was "not good" was that man was alone, so he created Eve. Corporate worship is an even deeper level of person-to-person connection. While watching church from home is a "next best" way of going to church, it is a far-second-place substitute that does not replace corporate worship. As such, I see that people have struggled more in their faith and in their mental health. Even now, as we are increasingly back in church on Sunday mornings, I know a lot of people who struggle to come on Sunday because they are used to the convenience of watching from their living room couch, drinking their coffee, and in their PJs.

Another aspect of COVID and the church is that the fear of getting COVID has created a lot of anxiety. This results in people staying home more, being more isolated, and then feeling more depressed. It becomes a downward cycle of mental unhealth.

— Audra Dahl, director of counseling, Rush Creek Counseling Center (Arlington)



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Why do pastors still struggle with admitting their own mental health struggles, and what can the church and its leaders do to minister to them?

I have worked with pastors and the main reasons they don't want to admit their own struggles with mental health is shame, embarrassment, and fear of losing their job. What I tell those pastors is that they are human and sometimes life just happens. Instead of living in fear, let their congregation know what is going on and trust that they will love and embrace their pastor. Churches can help by praying for their pastor (even if they aren't struggling—I firmly believe that we should be praying for those that shepherd their flock). Next, take your pastor a meal once in a while. I'm sure his wife would appreciate a day off from cooking. If your pastor has kids, offer to babysit so mom and dad can go out on a date. A healthy marriage goes a long way to mental health. There are so many other ways that can help: take him out to a ballgame, give him an extra week off for vacation time (your pastor has been under intense pressure for the last two years due to COVID, bless him with time to relax), or just offer to hang out and fellowship with him.

—Jonathan Okinaga, assistant professor of Biblical Counseling, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

I have been a pastor and a missionary. I think we have come a long way in getting the professional help we need, recognizing our limitations, sharing our own personal struggles, and seeking out biblical friendships with mature, same-sex Christians for the purpose of transparency, accountability, support, and encouragement outside of the context of our personal ministries. In addition, more than ever before, I am seeing more pastors and denominations publicly addressing mental health issues especially since COVID. It is a beautiful sight to see. For example, the SBTC is doing a great job in providing resources for pastors and their spouses during this difficult time. This includes financial help for counseling services. I have been honored to see the fruit of this ministry. At the same time, it is difficult for us as ministers to admit our own mental health challenges. One reason is because of unrealistic expectations, either self-imposed, perceived, or both

— Steve Hunter, professor and Hope for the Heart Chair of Biblical Counseling, Criswell College

What can churches do—especially smaller churches that don't have trained counselors or counseling ministries—to address and minister to those struggling with their mental health?

It is important for churches to provide resources that address mental health concerns. This can come in many forms including: training church pastors and staff to be on the front lines of mental health needs while knowing their limitations in providing services; partnering with community mental health providers who can act as referral targets for needs requiring professional intervention or for guidance in cases where the church staff may need direction; establishing support groups that can encourage community for those dealing with potential triggers for mental health problems, such as caregivers for persons with longterm health care needs, substance use, grandparents parenting their grandchildren, domestic violence and sexual assault recovery, and many more; and partnering with larger churches who may have mental health services available and cooperate on publicizing those services throughout the community.

—Dr. Bobbie Burks, 4:13 Center for Change (Tyler)

There are great group programs that churches can do or partner with other churches that already have them. Celebrate Recovery, ReGeneration, Grief Share, and Divorce Care are just a few. These programs are run by lay people who have been through the program themselves and then are trained as leaders. At the Rush Creek Counseling Center, we have many churches who refer to our counseling services. Many of these churches also help their members in financial need by providing scholarships for counseling. But, more than anything, being willing to have the conversations in church, doing what you are doing by having the conversations in other media, starts to remove the stigma and can even help put someone on the path to healing.

—Audra Dahl, director of counseling, Rush Creek Counseling Center (Arlington)

What else can churches, church leaders, and denominations do to help?

I think one of the first steps and probably one of the most difficult steps is to begin to change the way our church culture views mental health disorders and issues. We could even begin by changing our language when it comes to mental health issues. For example, we can change our language from what we "can" do when it comes to mental health to what we "must" do. We can change our language from "addressing" and "helping" to "prioritizing" mental health as one of the major issues in Baptist life and leadership.

— Steve Hunter, professor and Hope for the Heart Chair of Biblical Counseling, Criswell College

SBTC offering tax seminars for churches in January

Operational and legal issues continually distract from the kingdom focus of the church. Recognizing potential pitfalls and staying up-to-date on key issues can keep your church focused on productive ministry.

To assist churches in that area, the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention is offering four online tax seminars in January: January 18 from 1-5 p.m.; January 19 from 6-9 p.m.; January 25 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; and January 27 from 1-5 p.m. The seminars are free and will be led by professional tax accountants with PSK LLP, who specialize in providing audit and accounting services to churches.

“Participating in the SBTC’s tax seminars is a great way to stay current on tax law changes or just confirm best practices on the business side of things at your church,” SBTC Chief Financial Officer Joe Davis said. “Meeting by Zoom makes



it easy and efficient. I hope you will join us for one of the January dates. You never know what vital bit of information you may pick up.”

Topics will cover tax considerations of churches and ministers, top legal issues facing churches and ministers, and financial/stewardship issues, along with building and operational issues. Continuing Professional Education (CPE) will be offered at the January 25 virtual event.

Registration is required. If you have any trouble with registration, contact Easter Cooley at ecooley@sbtxas.com or call 817.552.2500.

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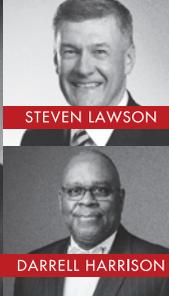
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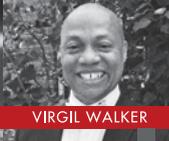
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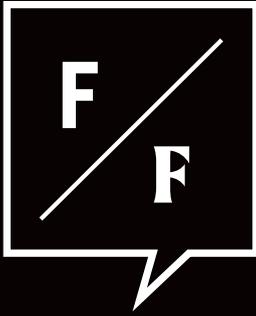


LANCE QUINN



PHIL JOHNSON





FACES OF THE FAITHFUL

A guide to celebrate—and pray—for those standing on the frontlines of the faith



ANTHONY SVAJDA

▶ Age: **38** ▶ Wife/Children: **Kristen/Gideon & Grace**

▶ Total Years in Ministry: **15**

▶ Church/Years at Current Church: **Harvey Baptist Church, Stephenville (6)**

WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU'VE BEEN ABLE TO CELEBRATE AT YOUR CHURCH RECENTLY?

We have seen a bunch of people go through our discipleship program and get saved and serious about their walk with Christ. God has used our church to make disciples who make disciples.

WHAT'S ONE LESSON YOU'VE LEARNED TO THIS POINT OF YOUR MINISTRY THAT YOU KNOW YOU'LL NEVER FORGET?

God can do anything.
Be diligent in prayer to ask for his presence and help.

HOW CAN OTHER SBTC CHURCHES BE PRAYING FOR YOU?

Pray that we can reach more people in the community for Christ, specifically that we would see an impact in our schools and at Tarleton State University.



CESAR GABRIEL

▶ Age: **54** ▶ Wife/Children: **Irma/Hefzi, Rodolfo, Josias & Celia Rocio**

▶ Total Years in Ministry: **36**

▶ Church/Years at Current Church: **Iglesia Bautista Trinidad, Laredo (21)**

WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGES RECENTLY?

The COVID time demand has brought many new challenges to my ministry. I started a devotional recording that has now run for 88 weeks, Bible studies for men, women, and youth weekly while also keeping the Sunday ministry.

WHAT'S ONE THING YOU WANT TO SEE GOD DO SPECIFICALLY IN YOUR CHURCH THIS YEAR?

Reaffirm the Christian conviction in every member.

HOW CAN OTHER SBTC CHURCHES BE PRAYING FOR YOU?

We are praying for God's vision for the church and starting a new mission in Mexico.



DARRELL VANG

▶ Age: **38** ▶ Wife/Children: **Kaitlyn/Eliana, Eden & Audrey**

▶ Total Years in Ministry: **13**

▶ Church/Years at Current Church: **Unity Point Church, Plano (2)**

WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGES?

Planting a church and having a newborn are very similar. Much nurturing has to be done for the newborn and the church plant. Trusting God becomes hard in moments and not being able to see results can be discouraging, but the Lord is faithful and I'm thankful for constant reminders that he is in control.

WHAT'S ONE THING YOU WANT TO SEE GOD DO SPECIFICALLY IN YOUR CHURCH THIS YEAR?

I'm trusting and believing the Lord will send people who want to be a part of the vision of Unity Point Church and who want to be a part of a multiethnic body of believers that not only reflects the community in diversity but also engaged in the community while being a community.

HOW CAN OTHER SBTC CHURCHES BE PRAYING FOR YOU?

Please pray that my desire would always be God's desire and that doors would be opened for Unity Point to reach and engage our community in ways we could never have imagined and that all of it would be for the glory of Christ.


JOSEPH OGLETREE

 ▶ Age: **38** ▶ Wife/Children: **Sherrell/Jaiden, Josiah & Jaxon**

 ▶ Total Years in Ministry: **12**

 ▶ Church/Years at Current Church: **Image Church, Cypress (4)**
WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU'VE BEEN ABLE TO CELEBRATE AT YOUR CHURCH RECENTLY?

The Lord recently blessed us with a 5,000-square-foot building on five acres of land in the heart of our community. We have been praying for this very moment. It has been such a blessing to serve our neighbors and have our very own place that we can call home.

WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGES RECENTLY?

Getting people back into the routine of being in community after COVID.

HOW CAN OTHER SBTC CHURCHES BE PRAYING FOR YOU?

Pray that as we continue to grow that God continues to provide for our staffing needs and resources. Pray that the Lord continues to equip us to empower others in our church to share the gospel and bring others to Christ. Pray that God gives us the courage to reach and meet the needs of this generation.


MICHAEL VISY

 ▶ Age: **29** ▶ Wife/Children: **Michelle/Harper & Gus**

 ▶ Total Years in Ministry: **7**

 ▶ Church/Years at Current Church: **Grace Church, Hewitt/Waco (3)**
AS A YOUNG PASTOR, WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGES?

Strategically selecting and developing other leaders, especially those older and more experienced than me.

WHAT'S ONE LESSON YOU'VE LEARNED TO THIS POINT OF YOUR MINISTRY THAT YOU KNOW YOU'LL NEVER FORGET?

Character is always more important than skill, and only time can tell that. So we must not be hasty to put people in positions of leadership.

HOW CAN OTHER SBTC CHURCHES BE PRAYING FOR YOU?

For continued faithfulness in evangelism and discipleship. We don't have massive Sundays with numerous professions of faith; we see slow, steady growth both qualitatively and quantitatively. It's hard to remain patient and not get discouraged, but God is faithful.


MURRY KIMBALL

 ▶ Age: **35** ▶ Wife/Children: **Tara/Makayla, Ava & Eric**

 ▶ Total Years in Ministry: **10**

 ▶ Church/Years at Current Church: **FBC Colmesneil (3)**
WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU'VE BEEN ABLE TO CELEBRATE AT YOUR CHURCH RECENTLY?

Last year we were able to see almost 40 people trust Christ and follow in baptism. All this in a town of under 600. Our people have embraced the "Who's Your One?" initiative and God has been blessing us greatly!

WHAT'S ONE LESSON YOU'VE LEARNED TO THIS POINT OF YOUR MINISTRY THAT YOU KNOW YOU'LL NEVER FORGET?

That there is no substitute in ministry for prayer! No program, curriculum, sermon, or seminary class will ever do for you what prayer will.

HOW CAN OTHER SBTC CHURCHES BE PRAYING FOR YOU?

Pray for encouragement. While we have seen God's work through so many different outlets, we have also been battling Satan and darkness every step of the way. Our little town has experienced more loss this year than ever before. Pray that the church would continue to be a beacon of hope for our community.


RYAN GILBERT

 ▶ Age: **33** ▶ Wife/Children: **Lauryn/Jacob, Martin & Joanna**

 ▶ Total Years in Ministry: **10**

 ▶ Church/Years at Current Church: **Lamar Baptist Church, Arlington (2)**
WHAT'S ONE LESSON YOU'VE LEARNED TO THIS POINT OF YOUR MINISTRY THAT YOU KNOW YOU'LL NEVER FORGET?

I've learned not to let problems fester. It took far too long for me to learn this, but I've learned to face problems or difficulties head-on and allow God to solve out in the open.

WHAT'S ONE THING YOU WANT TO SEE GOD DO SPECIFICALLY IN YOUR CHURCH THIS COMING YEAR?

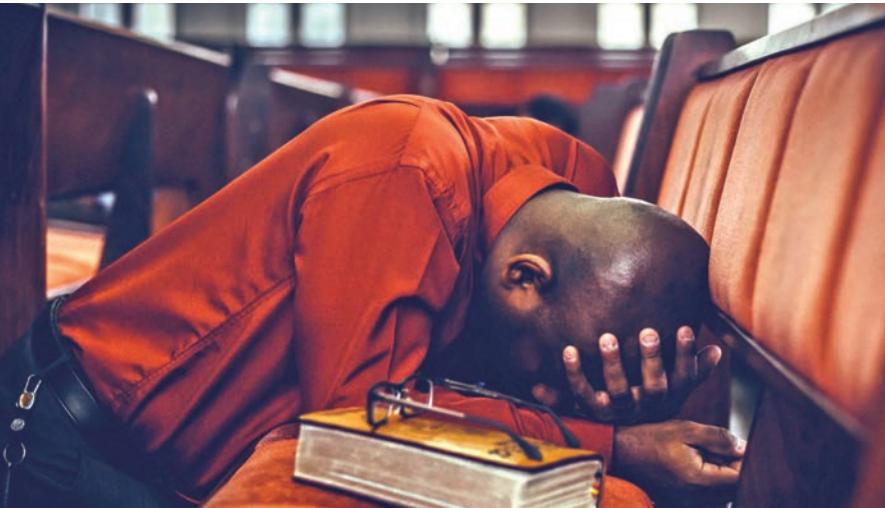
I want to see God continue to grow our brand new college & career, young adults and young families small groups. I also want to see God continue to allow us to reach into our immediate neighborhoods. Arlington is the 8th most diverse city in the country and we want to reflect that even more than we do already.

HOW CAN OTHER SBTC CHURCHES BE PRAYING FOR YOU?

Pray for me, and all our staff, to find their self-worth in being children of God (and) that God would help us to focus on faithfulness even over self-perceived fruitfulness.



It starts—and ends—on our knees



It is an understatement to say, “When God shows up, everything changes.” When the infinite power and presence of God enters the equation, it is impossible for things to stay the same. Just as a person could not stand directly in the Texas sun for a length of time without it causing significant physical change, a person cannot be in the manifest presence of the God who made the sun and remain spiritually unchanged.

This should bring us to the sad reality that God’s manifest presence is absent in most of the churches across our state. How can we see hundreds of thousands of people gathering weekly in our churches and see so little life change? I believe the root problem in the church today is not declining attendance, declining baptisms, or the absence of biblical preaching. These could only be symptoms. No, I believe the root problem is the absence of desperate prayer that has led to the absence of God’s manifest power and presence.

So, what is the answer? It’s not more manpower, better methods, or innovative ministries. The answer is a return to desperate prayer that is fueled by a deep desire for the presence of God. And here’s the encouraging news: we are actually seeing this happen! In recent days, God has been doing some incredible things across the country in an increasing number of our churches. There is a wave of revival happening! Stories are being shared of miraculous healings, repentance from sin, restored marriages, freedom from addictions, and an exponential number of salvations and baptisms.

What is the catalyst for this powerful move of God? The one common denominator in each of the churches experiencing this

move of the Holy Spirit is a return to desperate prayer motivated by a recognition of the absence of God’s manifest presence. In different ways, these churches came to the end of their earthly solutions to kingdom problems. They were honest about their true spiritual condition and placed seeking the face of God in prayer as their highest priority.

In the book of Acts, you clearly see the power and effect of corporate prayer by those who seek him. The early church was a praying church! They recognized the necessity of praying together for the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 1-2, what appears to be a 10-day prayer meeting led to the miracle of Pentecost and the radical conversion of thousands. In Acts 4, the church’s first response to persecution was a prayer meeting. In Acts 6, the church was growing so quickly that the apostles appointed more leaders to share the burden so that they would not neglect their highest priority—the ministry of prayer. Yet again, we see in Acts 13 another prayer meeting. In that season of prayer, the Holy Spirit called the church to send out Paul and Barnabas on the first global mission trip in the history of the church. The gospel went to unreached people because a reached people prayed together!

When God’s people pray together, there is a supernatural outpouring that happens in the church! There is also a supernatural favor or grace that he bestows upon us. Doors will open, resources will be provided, and divine opportunity will be given to God’s people! But most importantly, God’s presence will be encountered, enjoyed, and experienced.

My prayer for the SBTC, our state, and our nation is to witness the largest prayer movement among our churches we have ever had. In turn, I pray that it will usher in the greatest revival this generation has ever seen.

Pastor, you don't have to 'play injured'

After the Tampa Bay Buccaneers won the 2021 Super Bowl, it was revealed that Tom Brady played most of the season injured. Love him or hate him, you can't deny that any player who could win at his age while injured is something special. But, as special as Brady is, there's no way he could play every season injured. Why? Because if you continue to play injured, you will eventually be unable to play.

I believe a lot of pastors are playing injured.

Maybe it was a painful church fight years in the past that still haunts you. It could be a difficult family situation that just doesn't seem to find resolution. Or it could be because of the demands of your congregation (real or assumed) you're living an unsustainable life. Like the person who gets on the treadmill and sets it to a speed that's OK for the first two minutes but becomes painful after, you can't keep up.

All of us have painful moments and seasons. But pastor, while these mark and shape us, they must not lead us to play injured: to pastor angry, seeing people as obstacles to overcome. To pastor disconnected, going from sermon prep to sermon prep without spending your own personal time with the Lord. To pastor on empty, seeking escape in things like pornography and food.

Move from pastoring injured to pastoring healthy by giving attention to these key areas:

Spiritual Health

We were created for fellowship with God. Cultivate real intimacy with Jesus through regular, intentional time in the word. Don't make this an extension to or derivative of your sermon prep. Let this be a time where you are focused on real fellowship with God. Remember, the Bible is God's revelation of

himself. Be careful of reading the Bible as a textbook or a how-to manual. Real intimacy flourishes at the intersection of desperation for Jesus and assurance from Jesus. Express that desperation and experience that assurance as you read the Bible.

Relational Health

We were created for relationships. Pastor, you need real friends. These must be friends who are more than hunting buddies. These are people you experience real Christian community with. They know your sin, the state of your marriage, and who you shared the gospel with over the last month. They speak truth to your life and can rebuke, if necessary. Unpopular opinion: I think pastors should actually have these kinds of friends in their church. I know you might be saying to yourself, "I could get fired if some of my members knew my sin." That's possible. And to quote one of my friends, there's a difference between being vulnerable and being stupid. But maybe if a few more of us had real friends like this in our church there'd be fewer firings and implosions, not more.

Physical Health

We were created as physical beings. We are not disembodied spirits with no connection to our physical bodies. The state of our physical bodies impacts our emotional and I believe even spiritual well-being. One of the best things we can do when we are down is go for a walk or a run. "But I don't have time for that!" Like the man who keeps swinging the ax instead of stopping to sharpen it, pastors who don't exercise are swinging a dull blade. Building in exercise every week will limit the hours you can work on your sermon. But I guarantee the hours you do work on your sermon will be more effective.

Emotional Health

We were created as beings with emotions. For most of my ministry, I've focused on time management and productivity. This definitely has its place. But the longer I'm in ministry, the more I see the value of energy management. All of us have things that drain us and things that fill us. Guarding your schedule from an over-saturation of drains is one of the ways to guard your emotional health. Remember pastor, burnout thrives in a calendar that's filled with drains.

Pastor, don't go another season playing injured. Give attention to these areas of your life, or you may find yourself doing irreparable damage to your soul and your church.



Spencer Plumlee is senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Mansfield and director of the SBTC's Young Pastors Network.

Addition by Subtraction

Mother church sends its 'very best' to start Boerne church plant



Looking to the Old Testament example of giving God the best of flocks and herds, Currey Creek Church in Boerne sent 200 of its best members to plant The Bridge Fellowship, a new congregation in a fast-growing community northwest of San Antonio.

“These sheep belong to the Kingdom. They’re not my sheep or our church’s sheep,” John Free, pastor of Currey Creek, said. “They’re the Lord’s sheep, and we’re stewards, under-shepherds, of these sheep.”

Beyond recognizing the people are God’s and not his, Free saw a practical aspect to sending faithful church members.

“When you send spiritually mature people that are pursuing the Lord, that are active in serving in their local church, they’re going to do the same in a new environment where they’re going to be needed even more,” Free said.

Currey Creek learned how to send its best because First Baptist Church in Boerne, with pastor Bubba Stahl, sent members out to plant Currey Creek 20 years ago.

John Free, pastor of Currey Creek Church in Boerne, announced with Jared Patrick (right) in early 2020 that the church would be sending Patrick to plant The Bridge Fellowship. Free urged “the very best of Currey Creek to get up and leave with Jared.”

PHOTO SUBMITTED

Eight years ago, when Currey Creek had about 250 people, Jared Patrick was hired in part to oversee missions.

“I asked John what our missions philosophy was, and he said, ‘We’re going to plant churches,’” Patrick recalled of Free.

Currey Creek planned to plant once it reached 1,000 people. The church began to grow quickly, and Patrick said, “I didn’t really think about it too much until we kind of looked up and Currey Creek was 1,200 people, and John came in one day and said, ‘We need to plant churches.’”

Patrick knew in that moment he was supposed to plant the next church. When he mentioned it, Free told him, “I’ve been waiting for you to figure that part out.”

The church gave Patrick “a long runway,” he said, including a sabbatical to pray and visit other church plants.

“In February 2020, John gets up, and we announce the church together, and John says, ‘I want the very best of Currey Creek to get up and leave with Jared to go get this church started,’” Patrick said.

In March 2020, 180 people were at the first interest meeting for The Bridge Fellowship. After navigating COVID shutdowns, the plant launched in September 2020 with about 200 people. In the first year, they reached 300 additional people and baptized more than 50 believers.

What’s more, Currey Creek has backfilled everyone who left.

“They sent us out in a really healthy way with a bunch of people and a bunch of resources, and now they’re even seeing more people come, and we’re seeing our church over double in the first year,” Patrick said.



(Pictured at left) By meeting as a church plant in an elementary school, The Bridge Fellowship has been able to draw people who, for whatever reasons, may not feel comfortable attending an established church.

Jared Carter, pastor of community and discipleship, and Jared Patrick, lead pastor (right), are leading The Bridge Fellowship in reaching the fast-growing community of Boerne, northwest of San Antonio.

Free noted that Currey Creek has seen that they can't out-give God. "Money is way down on our list, but we grew the numbers back, and we met our [annual] budget at the end of the third quarter."

A principle promoted at Currey Creek is that when God's followers are open-handed, he can place something in their hands, Free said. "When we're tight-fisted, he can't put anything in our hands. When we say, 'Here, Lord, these are yours,' then he gives more to steward."

What happened with Currey Creek and The Bridge won't necessarily be replicated anywhere that principle is practiced, Free said, because the phenomenal growth rate of Boerne makes for a unique situation. Free spent the majority of his ministry in slow-growing or non-growing environments, he said, so he knows it's not always this easy.

The Bridge has been meeting in an elementary school which has a cafeteria with a stage and a wall that opens to a gym, and they're exploring opportunities for purchasing land in the near future. On their first anniversary, 607 people attended, and their average attendance is just under 500 people.

The idea of a church plant and a new start intrigues some people, including those moving to the area from other states, Patrick said.

"People who don't necessarily feel ready to jump into an established church for whatever reason will come to an elementary school just because it feels different, and the Lord certainly does his work through it," Patrick said.

An example is a former Marine who moved from California and showed

up at The Bridge because his fiancée "kind of dragged him," Patrick said. The man spoke casually with the pastor a few Sundays and then asked to meet for coffee, where he disclosed that God was working in his life. Three weeks later, he gave his life to Christ at church.

Lives are changing at The Bridge because Currey Creek gave them "a fighting chance," Patrick said.

"There are established church pastors who have so many people in their churches who, if they were given the green light to do some work together," Patrick said, "would see some really significant traction of people coming to know the Lord through the local church."

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Church Expansion Certificate investments are available to Texas churches and ministries.



Arriola servirá en SBTC como director de la alianza para plantación de iglesias de Send Network



FLINT, Texas, 10 de noviembre de 2021—Julio Arriola regresa a un paisaje muy familiar.

Una vez que ponga oficialmente los pies en suelo tejano, descubrirá que la necesidad del evangelio es más grande que nunca.

Arriola, de 45 años, ha aceptado el llamado para servir como el director principal de Send Network de la SBTC, una alianza para la plantación de iglesias entre la Junta de Misiones Norteamericanas (NAMB, por sus siglas en inglés) y la Convención Bautista del Sur de Texas (SBTC, por sus siglas en inglés). La Junta Directiva de la SBTC votó unánimemente la aprobación de la alianza con NAMB en agosto. Así mismo, el miércoles la Junta también confirmó a Arriola en su nuevo puesto.

Arriola será empleado de NAMB, pero trabajará desde la sede de la SBTC en la ciudad de Grapevine. Esta nueva colaboración le permitirá a la SBTC apoyarse en el amplio conocimiento y experiencia de NAMB para asesorarlos en las áreas de la plantación de iglesias, cuidado pastoral y capacitación de plantadores, así como en la recaudación de fondos.

Arriola dirigirá una alianza que permitirá a la SBTC ampliar sus esfuerzos de plantación de

iglesias utilizando los recursos de NAMB en las áreas de evaluación, capacitación, asesoramiento, cuidado pastoral y apoyo a los plantadores de iglesias en todo el estado.

Arriola comentó: “Estamos muy contentos de estar de vuelta en Texas”. Nos encanta el lugar. Pero así como Texas es grande, también lo es su necesidad de Jesús, y plantar iglesias sigue siendo la manera más efectiva de alcanzar a la gente con el mensaje vivificante de Jesús—el evangelio.”

El mexicano aporta un impresionante (y práctico) conjunto de herramientas a la creciente red de plantadores de iglesias de la SBTC. Arriola tiene experiencia vocacional en iglesias de varios tamaños, ha plantado y pastoreado una iglesia que ahora es la más grande de Guadalajara, México (una ciudad de 1.5 millones de habitantes), y se le considera un líder influyente entre la población latina, que es uno de los grupos demográficos de más rápido crecimiento en Texas.

Arriola se desempeñó recientemente como director ejecutivo de Relaciones y Movilización Hispana del Comité Ejecutivo de la Convención Bautista del Sur, en Nashville, cargo que ocupó desde diciembre de 2019. Mientras estuvo allí, trabajó para desarrollar e implementar estrategias para la máxima participación e involucramiento de las congregaciones hispanas y los líderes de las mismas en toda la CBS, y su red de cooperación entre iglesias. Sus funciones también incluyeron la movilización de las congregaciones hispanas en áreas clave, incluyendo el evangelismo y la plantación de iglesias (de acuerdo con las estrategias de Send Network y Send Relief de NAMB).

La necesidad de plantar iglesias en Texas es inmensa. De los 30 millones de residentes, se estima que 19 millones no han sido alcanzados. Según las cifras de la SBTC, 1000 personas se mudan a Austin semanalmente; casi 2000 se mudan a Houston semanalmente; y el área Metroplex de Dallas-Fort Worth (norte de Texas) registra casi 3000 nuevos residentes cada semana.

Los lazos de Arriola con Texas ya son fuertes. Él y su esposa, Carla, se casaron aquí y sus tres hijos (de 19, 17 y 15 años) nacieron en Houston. Arriola se ordenó en la Segunda Iglesia Bautista de Rosenberg en el 2003 y, tras un periodo de casi dos años sirviendo allí como pastor de jóvenes, se convirtió en líder de alabanza en la Iglesia Bautista Sugar Creek de Sugar Land. También obtuvo su ciudadanía estadounidense mientras vivía en Texas y alcanzó su maestría en Estudios Teológicos en el Seminario Teológico Bautista del Suroeste, en mayo de 2020.

CAN I GET AN AMEN?

Got something you're celebrating at your church?

SBTC churches want to say "amen" with you! Send your photos and information to jlanson@sbtexas.com.



sbtexan



sbtexan



Ricky Faust (right) celebrates his baptism in November as Kacy Benson, campus pastor of Bannockburn Church's South Austin campus, joins in. Faust and his wife, Cindy, were both baptized that day.

—PHOTO COURTESY
@BannockburnChurch/
bannockburnchurch.com



Retired pastor Casey Perry kneels in prayer during the final night of the SBTC's Annual Meeting in November. Perry pastored churches for nearly a half-century, including in Mercury, Muleshoe, Terrell, Arlington, and Malakoff, and was a key figure in the formation of the SBTC.

—SBTC PHOTO



Two-year-old Kinleigh Holt kneels down to look at the baby Jesus at the Nativity scene on display at the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention offices in Grapevine. From all of us at the SBTC, we pray you had a very Merry Christmas and that 2022 is off to a great start for you!

—COURTESY PHOTO

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TEXAS ROUNDUP



FBC CANTON GASOLINE GIVEAWAY A 'BLESSING' TO COMMUNITY

A Canton church gave free gas to the community late last year as part of a community outreach that lasted approximately five hours and resulted in plenty of smiles from surprised customers.

First Baptist Church in Canton set aside a block of money as a way to give back to the community and to bless others during the Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons, KLVT reported.

Each automobile got up to \$50 of gas, as the congregation partnered with a local gas station, Mr. D's.

"I'm disabled and I get a limited check every month so this is a real blessing. It's hard for me to fill up a truck," Darrell Jobe, one of the recipients of the free gas, told the television station.

All total, the outreach impacted between 250-300 people.

"Gas going up the way it is, it just seems like that would be an easy way to do it," said Rod Hite, the church's minister of music. "We've done things where we've given away food—ministry things in the community—but this just seemed like the perfect thing to do this year."

The church's Facebook page called the outreach an "amazing day." It was, the church said, an "answer to prayer for many" and "a blessing for all of us who got to serve, talk, and love on so many in our community."

SOURCES: KLVT, FBC CANTON

TYLER CHURCH CHOIR ONCE AGAIN ALLOWED TO SHARE LOVE OF JESUS AT CARE FACILITIES

For the first time since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, a Tyler church is singing concerts in senior living facilities.

Green Acres Baptist Church relaunched its choir-led concerts late last year, delivering joy to the residents of Primrose Retirement Community and The Hamptons—two senior living facilities located in the same city as the congregation.

The pandemic had canceled all concerts.

"We are delighted to be back and share the love of Jesus with music," the church's worship pastor, Mike Parks, told KETK.

"We love to get to come to this place and get to fellowship with them and get to worship the Lord with them," Parks added.

Residents laughed, smiled and sang along as the Green Acres choir performed Christmas classics and new songs alike.

"It thrills me to the bottom of my heart. My heart is in it," Hamptons resident Thelma Ruth Childs said.

SOURCES: KETK, GREEN ACRES BAPTIST

"IT THRILLS ME TO THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART. MY HEART IS IN IT."

HAMPTONS RESIDENT THELMA RUTH CHILDS

TEXAS CHURCH'S BAPTISMS SPOTLIGHTED IN NEW YORK TIMES STORY

A SBTC church in Waco and its non-traditional baptistry got a mention in The New York Times as part of a feature story on the modern trend away from built-in baptistries.

Because built-in baptisteries are prone to leaks and mold—in addition to taking longer to fill and heat—many churches have opted for non-traditional modes for baptisms, the Times article notes.

Grace Church moved into a bowling alley in 2016. Instead of constructing a built-baptistry, the congregation bought a foam model that costs about \$2,500. Using the foam baptistry "conveys this isn't your grandmother's church," Drake Osborn, pastor of teaching and liturgy at Grace Church, told The Times.

The story spotlighted a Florida church that conducts baptisms at the beach, a Kansas church that uses a hot tub, and an Iowa church that baptizes new members in a cattle trough.

"Maintaining baptistries is very expensive," said Evan Welcher, the former pastor at Vine Street Bible Church in Glenwood, Iowa, explaining the trend toward non-traditional methods.

Vine Church recently spent \$3,000 to fix a heat pump on a built-in baptistry.

"We have two baptistries, and at different times they both leaked," Welcher said. "The cattle trough looks really easy; it looks so much better. People might say 'Oh, the cool churches do it,' but it actually looks like a better way."

SOURCE: THE NEW YORK TIMES



SWBTS STUDENTS SHARE GOSPEL WITH 800-PLUS KENYANS DURING FIRST POST-COVID MISSION TRIP

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary reported in November that its students shared the gospel with more than 800 Kenyans during a 10-day international mission trip that marked the first seminary-led mission trip since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The team of eight served in Nairobi, Kenya, alongside two mission units from the International Mission Board (IMB) and saw more than 100 Kenyans come to faith in Christ. The trip was sponsored by the seminary's World Missions Center.

"Nairobi is a key city in East Africa," said Sam Brittain, associate director of the World Mission Center, and the mission team leader. "Strategically, serving in Nairobi would expose students to missions in a city in the most-rapidly urbanizing part of the world. The team in Nairobi also had ways for the team to serve that were in line with their long-term strategy."

Kenya was selected due to the relationship between the IMB teams and Southwestern Seminary, COVID-19 conditions within the country, and Kenya's allowance of short-term visitors within its COVID-19 parameters, Brittain added.

The IMB teams used the seminary team to engage in outreach efforts on three university campuses and in street evangelism.

SOURCE: SWBTS

ROCKWALL FRIENDSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH (LOCATED IN ROYSE CITY) BROKE GROUND ON 23,000-SQUARE-FOOT FACILITY

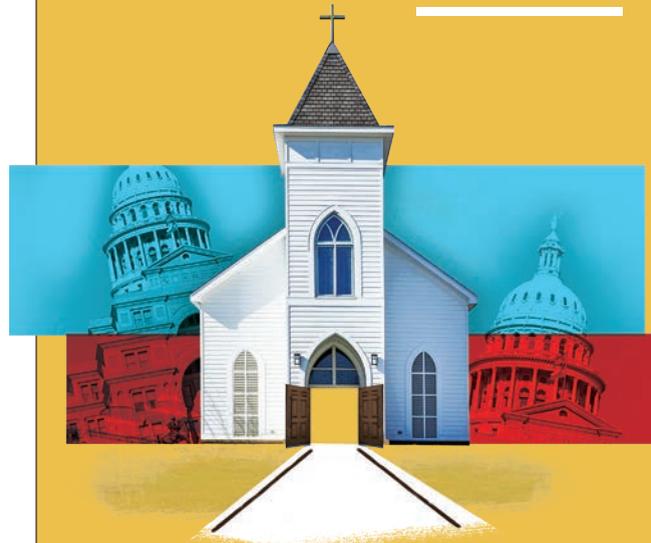
Rockwall Friendship Baptist Church broke ground in November on a 23,000-square-foot worship center and campus that, when completed, will serve as its first newly constructed meeting space.

The church was organized in 2003 through a mission effort started by Mesquite Friendship Baptist Church in cooperation with the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention and the Dallas Baptist Association. The construction will also include a worship room and commons area for children, as well as an expansive common area outside.

RFBC initially met in an elementary school building in Heath before moving to and then renovating an existing worship facility in Royse City in 2010.

"This is the result of the infinite faithfulness of our God," the church said on its Facebook page.

SOURCES: ROCKWALL FRIENDSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH



VOTERS APPROVE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT PROHIBITING GOVERNMENTS FROM CLOSING CHURCHES

A proposed Texas constitutional amendment that prohibits state and local governments from closing or restricting church services passed easily on Election Day.

Known as Proposition 3, it was placed on the ballot by legislators in response to a push by some governments to close houses of worship during the pandemic. Supporters of Proposition 3 said such a decision should be left up to churches.

Proposition 3, which passed with 62 percent of the vote, says state and local governments "may not enact, adopt, or issue a statute, order, proclamation, decision, or rule that prohibits or limits religious services."

State Senator Kelly Hancock, who sponsored the amendment, said its purpose is to "provide some belts and suspenders to what we know to be true within our constitutional rights already."

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott deemed churches "essential services" early during the pandemic—an action that limited what local governments could tell churches to do.

The constitutional amendment strengthens the religious liberty protections for churches.

"Churches provide essential spiritual, mental, and physical support in a time of crisis," said state Rep. Scott Sanford. "Closing churches not only eliminated these critical ministries and services, but it violated their religious freedom guaranteed by our laws and Constitution."

SOURCES: HOUSTON CHRONICLE, TEXAS SECRETARY OF STATE

BEAUTIFULLY BROKEN



↓

**IT WAS
FRIDAY
AFTERNOON,
SEPT. 18, 2020.**

Our church was still in recovery mode after Hurricane Laura and I had planned a meeting that night with some of the young leaders in our church to discuss post-COVID, post-hurricane church life and to set some disciple-making goals. This was a really important meeting for us.

So that afternoon, I decided to take my e-bike that I'd gotten over the summer out for a ride just to relax and clear my head. The last thing I remember is riding down an empty stretch of road in the back of our community and then ... nothing. My next memory is waking up in a hospital ICU bed three days later.

I would later learn that I'd had an accident—what my doctors called a “high-impact incident.” Based on the timeline, they think I lay there unconscious on the side of the road for a half-hour before a high school kid driving home from school found me. In the ER, my wife tells me I was saying, “I’ve got to get home and get ready to preach” and “Who’s going to preach for me?” I don’t remember any of that.

I’d suffered a traumatic brain injury that left me with bleeding and swelling between my brain and my skull that required two craniotomies to repair. Because I also had acute respiratory failure, I had to be put on a ventilator. My left arm was shattered. I later had a series of debilitating seizures in which I lost feeling and use of the right side of my body because it was a left-brain injury. I was immobilized for weeks.

In the days that followed I had severe hallucinations due to the brain trauma and some of the effects of the medication I was on. Seizures, memory loss, panic attacks, anxiety, I went into deep depression at times—and not just during the hospital stay. September through December, those were very difficult months. I also suffered from confusion, blurred vision, intense headaches, weeks of sleeplessness. I think the first time I slept through the night for five or six hours straight was sometime around Christmas. Rehab was very productive, but it was a grueling process.

During my second hospital stay (due to some setbacks I was having), my neurosurgeon, Dr. Ian Angel, came to follow up with me. That’s when he really gave us the scope of how severe these injuries were and brought the gravity of the situation to us. In that conversation, he said there’s something called



Jeremy Bradshaw, pastor of Liberty Baptist Church in Bridge City, was involved in an accident on his e-bike. His faith and the faith of his family was challenged and strengthened during his recovery.

PHOTOS SUBMITTED

the “Golden Hour” where, after a traumatic brain injury, doctors only have about an hour to treat you, save your life and to mitigate against long-term disability. He said, “You were past that hour. You shouldn’t be here.” My wife and I were in tears, and I just said instinctively, “Dr. Angel, thank you for saving my life.” This I remember clearly—he looked at us and said, “No, I didn’t save you. God saved you.”

I took that as a mandate. I’m responsible to share how God preserved me through suffering and to tell others of the hope that I have—and that we all can have—in the midst of suffering because of the suffering of Jesus. That has stayed with me every week, and I’m thankful for that. My pain reminds me of my responsibility to use this for God’s glory.

My first Sunday back in the pulpit was Jan. 3, 2021. Preaching normally feels so natural. It’s just what God has called and equipped me to do. But on that day, I was scared to death. It felt like my first sermon all over again. I preached out of Psalm 23, which felt very appropriate, and about how I walked through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, but it was just a shadow. I didn’t die and God was there with me.

God used that experience and the trauma that followed to really strengthen the faith of each member of my family. They had to care for me and they got to see

God at work in providing for us. Short of Jesus, my wife is my hero. It’s amazing how God used her to care for me, to care for our kids. She had to keep things going because I wasn’t able to be much of a husband at the time.

On one hand I’d say God used this trauma to do a sanctifying work in our hearts and in our home, but also, God used this as a platform to minister to others. Through this God has opened doors for me to share the gospel, to counsel others. In the last year we’ve been able to grieve with those who are grieving and encourage those who are hurting in a way that maybe we didn’t fully appreciate before and with an added sensitivity. We’ve tried as much as possible to use this, even if just for a moment, to express our hope in Christ and how God’s provided.

Oh, and remember how I was going to meet with those young adults in our church to cast vision and talk about goals and disciple-making before my accident? They eventually had that meeting without me and started discipleship groups on their own. It was such a joy to see that God doesn’t need me to accomplish his work. Don’t get me wrong—I’m glad that he wants me, but this is his church and he can raise up leaders and do what he wants. He’s got this covered.

So what’s my story? I’m a living example that God’s grace is sufficient for you and his power is made perfect in weakness.

**what's
your
story?**

Want to share a story of what God is doing in your life or your church?

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Church Positions

For the latest listings, visit texan.digital

PASTOR

New Hope BC in League City is seeking a FT pastor. We are an SBTC church that adheres to the Baptist Faith & Message 2000. NHBC is a loving, caring, and financially secure church looking for the man whom God is calling to lead us. Send resumes to PSCNHBC@gmail.com.

Mt. Zion BC in Lufkin is looking for a FT pastor with at least 3-5 years of experience (preferred) in pastoral work for a rural community.

Parsonage available if needed. Accepting resumes until Feb. 15. Send resumes Attn: Pastor Search Committee, 4303 FM 842 Lufkin, TX 75901, or mntzionbaptist@gmail.com.

Silver Lake BC in Grand Saline is seeking a FT pastor. Submit resume to Silver Lake Baptist Church, 150 US Highway 80, Grand Saline, TX 75140, or email to slbcgs22@gmail.com.

FBC Palmer is a family of faithful people that are prayerfully seeking the leadership of a pastor. Email your resume to pastorsearch@fbcpalmer.org or mail it to FBC, PO Box 70, Palmer, TX 75152.

West End BC in Beaumont is seeking a FT or bi-vocational pastor. Financially secure, loving congregation of 50 average attendance, traditional worship service. We are affiliated with the SBTC. Send resume to webcbeaumont@gmail.com.

FBC Guthrie is looking for a new pastor. Being bi-vocational may be necessary due to the geographic challenges. If you are interested in this position, please contact Nathan Canaday at 970-297-8574 or Gabe Gaudern at 337-396-9624.

Calvary BC in Rockdale is seeking a bi-vocational pastor. Seminary degree is not required but some form of formal training and pastoral experience is preferred. We also welcome interests from recent graduates and those transitioning to pastoral careers. Please submit your resume to Gary Johnson, Chair, Pastor Selection Committee at calvarychurchontherock.rockdale@gmail.com or PO Box 653, Rockdale, Texas 76567.

View BC near Abilene is seeking a bi-vocational pastor to help reach our growing community. Send resumes to View Baptist Church, 250 Boynton Drive, Abilene, TX 79606.

MUSIC

Rock Hill BC in Brownsboro is accepting resumes for a dynamic FT minister of worship for leading innovative worship experiences. Send resume to @rockhillbc.com.

FBC Mineola is searching for a minister of worship to facilitate meaningful worship in all its creative expressions and lead and prepare FBC Mineola's people with their talents and gifts to further God's Kingdom. Send resume to searchcommittee@fbcmineola.org.

Southmayd BC in Southmayd is searching for a PT music director. If interested, please send your resume to smaydbaptist@gmail.com.

Westwood BC in Tyler is looking for a PT associate pastor of worship. If interested, contact Pastor Tracy Holcomb at pastor@westwoodytler.com.

Westside BC in Corsicana is accepting resumes for a PT music minister for Sunday morning and evening. Email resume to westside.church@sbcglobal.net or mail to Westside Baptist Church, 1522 N 24th St, Corsicana, TX 75110.

Audubon Park BC in Garland is searching for a PT worship leader to lead a blended worship service for a small congregation. Please email resumes to apbcstaff@att.net or mail them to APBC, PO Box 495277, Garland, TX 75049-5277.

STUDENTS

Galloway Avenue BC in Mesquite is seeking a PT or bi-vocational youth pastor. Send resume to Gary@Gallowayavenue.com.

FBC Panhandle is seeking a FT youth pastor to serve the high school and junior high schoolers of the community with a desire to see the existing students grow in their faith and to see new students come to faith. Position includes a FT salary and a parsonage. Send resumes to fbcpanhandle@gmail.com.

CHILDREN

Central BC in Luling is seeking a PT kids ministry director to champion and facilitate ministry to preschoolers, kids, and their families. Apply at cbcluling.com/jobs.

FBC Dorchester is searching for a PT children's director to join us in reaching our community for Christ. Contact Zach Poling at zachdpoling@gmail.com.

COMBINATION

FBC Munday is seeking a FT family/worship pastor to coordinate youth ministry, lead worship and delegate children's ministry roles to volunteers. Resumes can be sent to wesclark9er@yahoo.com or FBC Munday, PO Box 718, Munday, TX 76371.

Heights BC of Liberty is seeking a FT minister of youth and children to oversee the educational needs for PreK-6th grades and directly lead and teach youth 7th-12th grades. Email resume and cover letter to youthsearch@heightsliberty.com.

FBC Palestine is searching for a FT associate pastor of worship and youth. Position could be divided into two PT positions, but the preference would be to keep it as a FT position. Two worship services: traditional and contemporary, but no regular choir. Prefer someone with experience in student ministry and/or worship ministry. Submit resume to Tony Watson, senior pastor, at tony@firstpalestine.org.

OTHER

Glenview BC in Fort Worth is seeking a FT business manager/bookkeeper. Please send resumes to MikeHardaway@glenviewchurch.org.

Bulverde BC is seeking a FT associate pastor. Located in the beautiful hill country in the 2nd fastest growing county in the United States. Looking to add to our healthy and established pastoral staff. Send resume to searchteambbc@gmail.com.

Classifieds

For questions or pricing on classifieds email gholt@sbtexas.com

First Baptist Church in Ruston, LA is seeking a FT college minister. The applicant needs to be passionate about college students and seeing life changes in those students. We are located within 5 miles of two colleges. Send resume to Ed Colvin at ed@fbcruston.org.

Sandia Baptist Church in Albuquerque, NM seeks to hire a minister to students. This man will be responsible for ministry of infants through high school, with a children's director handling the infants through elementary ministry under his supervision. His life must be consistent with

the qualities in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. Salary is competitive with great benefits. Some previous experience required. Resumes should be sent to studentsearch@sandiabaptist.org. More information is available at sandiabaptist.org/who-we-are/student-search.

WHAT'S UP NEXT?

2022 CALENDAR

FOR MORE ABOUT SBTC EVENTS OR TO VIEW A MORE DETAILED CALENDAR, VISIT [SBTEXAS.COM/EVENTS](https://www.sbtexas.com/events)



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[heartofthechild.net](https://www.heartofthechild.net)



TAX SEMINARS

JANUARY 18; 19; 25; 27
4 SEPARATE ONLINE EVENTS

[sbtexas.com/tax](https://www.sbtexas.com/tax)



PASTOR + WIFE DATE NIGHT

JANUARY 21 • FEBRUARY 4

[sbtexas.com](https://www.sbtexas.com)

January

1-3	New Year's holiday · SBTC office closed
12	Chapel, SBTC · sbtexas.com/live
17	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day · SBTC office closed
18	Tax Seminar, Online Event
19	Tax Seminar, Online Event
21	Pastor+Wife Date Night Rockpointe Church, Flower Mound
25	Tax Seminar, Online Event
27	Tax Seminar, Online Event

February

3	Student Pastors & Wives Prayer Meeting FBC Mansfield
4	Pastor+Wife Date Night, FBC McAllen
16	Chapel, SBTC · sbtexas.com/live
25-26	Spanish Session of Empower Conference, Fielder Church, Arlington
28- Mar. 1	Empower Conference, Irving Convention Center, Las Colinas



FOR MORE SBTC EVENTS **SCAN THIS QR CODE** WITH YOUR PHONE'S CAMERA



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FEB. 28 & MARCH 1, 2022

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