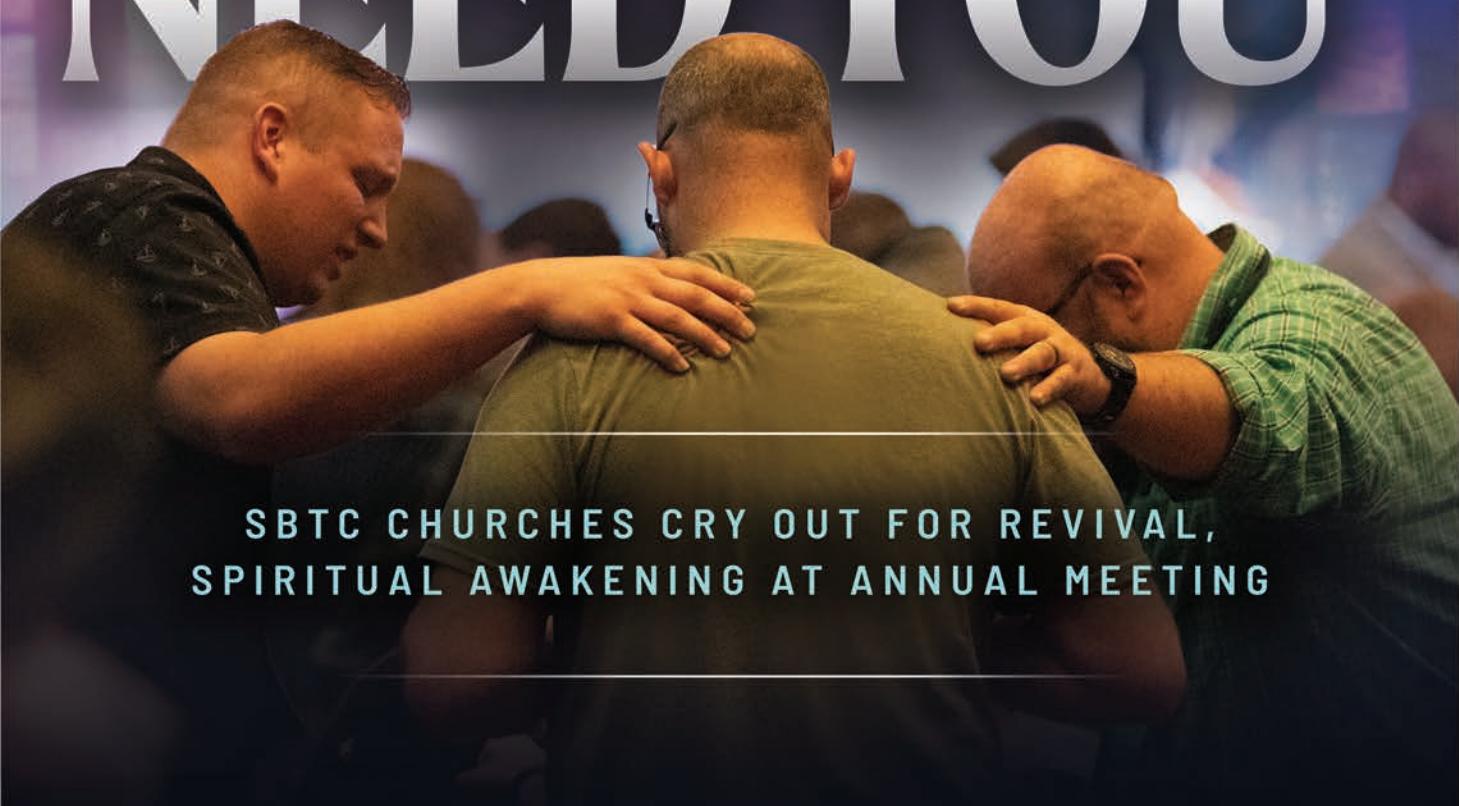


SOUTHERN BAPTIST

# TEXAN

DECEMBER 2022 • VOL. 21 | NO. 12

# ‘GOD, WE NEED YOU’

A photograph showing three men from behind, their heads bowed in prayer. The man on the left wears a dark t-shirt, the middle man wears a green t-shirt, and the man on the right wears a green plaid shirt. They are positioned in front of a large crowd of people, suggesting a church service or meeting.

SBTC CHURCHES CRY OUT FOR REVIVAL,  
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING AT ANNUAL MEETING

+ Rural East Texas church impacting thousands with Christmas outreach

+ 5 rhythms to strengthen your walk with the Lord in 2023

# A CALL TO PRAYER

**O**n a Monday night 25 years ago, something happened to me that changed the trajectory of my life and calling. I was 17 and attending a night of worship with our student ministry. It was on that night in that worship service that the Lord began dealing with my heart about becoming a person of passionate prayer. Immediately after the service, I asked our student minister if I could begin a student-led prayer gathering each week.

Every Tuesday evening, students would gather and cry out to God for our families, friends, and schools. We didn't exactly have the manual on how to pray, nor did we have a highly organized prayer service. We simply had a heart for God to move among us, and we believed one of the keys to that was to be on our knees together praying.

As I transitioned to college, I wanted to serve. I approached our campus ministry and asked where they needed someone to serve or lead. As you can imagine, there was no one to lead the prayer ministry. I was elated to give new leadership to this group of college students in praying.

My love and passion for prayer transitioned with me into the pastorate. In my last church, we took prayer seriously. The turning point for our church came when we had a prayer summit that became a launching pad for our people to make prayer a priority. We would have people fill out prayer requests and leave them on the altar anytime during the service. I told our church we would never end the invitation until every card was picked up and someone committed to pray for that

**"In my last church, we took prayer seriously. The turning point for our church came when we had a prayer summit that became a launching pad for our people to make prayer a priority."**

request for the next seven days. We never had to wait, and our church became such a praying church that as soon as we opened the invitation, prayer warriors would rush down and pick up the cards.

At our annual meeting in November, I challenged Southern Baptists of Texas Convention churches to begin a prayer gathering at every church. While I am no longer a pastor of a church, I still have a burning desire to see God move among us. One of the ways I firmly believe this can happen is if we are praying.

If you are at a church that doesn't hold some type of consistent prayer gathering, can I encourage you to commit to starting one in 2023? Our team at the SBTC would be happy to walk with you as you design what that prayer gathering could look like for your church. While I certainly challenge all 2,700-plus SBTC churches to begin prayer gatherings, wouldn't it be incredible if we had even 500 of our churches with consistent prayer gatherings calling out to God to move among them?

If you already have a prayer gathering at your church, I praise God for that! I would love to know about it. Would you please email me at [nlorick@sbtx.com](mailto:nlorick@sbtx.com) and let me know what church you are a part of and when your prayer gathering is? I want to pray for you as you call out to the Lord together.

If you currently do not have a prayer gathering but will commit to beginning one in 2023, I would love to know so I can pray for you as well. Again, please email me and let me know of your commitment to begin. We want to come alongside you and be a resource as you pray.

I am so excited about what God is doing through the churches of the SBTC. Let's lead the way for other states and be a network known for our passion for prayer. I believe God will bless our efforts. I am thankful for you. I am honored to serve you. I am in your corner. I am praying for you!

Dr. Nathan Lorick  
SBTC Executive Director



## What's Inside

From the editor

- 2 GOD MADE HISTORY IN 2022, AND WE GOT TO DOCUMENT IT**



- 4 METROPLEX CHINESE HOUSE CHURCH NETWORK MODELS WORSHIP FOR THOSE WHO MAY ONE DAY RETURN TO NATIVE COUNTRY**

From the president

- 6 PLEADING FOR REVIVAL**

- 14 O LITTLE TOWN OF MONTALBA**

Thousands have heard gospel through rural church's 'Walk Through Bethlehem' event

- 7 A DIFFERENT WAY TO THINK ABOUT YOUR 2023 GOALS**



- 18 LOUD & CLEAR**

Emphasis on the gospel—and one another—fuels deaf church in Amarillo

- LONE STAR SCOOP**

**20**

- 22 THROUGH THE TOUGHEST CHALLENGES LIFE CAN BRING, JESUS IS EVERYTHING**



- 11 CONTAGIOUS FAITH**

In the midst of pandemic, church sees massive growth after waitress comes to Christ, begins inviting neighbors and co-workers



- 12 UNA FE CONTAGIOSA**

En medio de la pandemia, iglesia ve un crecimiento masivo por medio de una mesera que aceptó a Cristo y comenzó a invitar a sus vecinos y compañeros de trabajo

- FACES OF THE FAITHFUL**

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

- 28 YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIFE OF A MISSIONARY**

Pastor to pastor

**24**



# God made history in 2022, and we got to document it

In a sense, the Southern Baptist Texan is the culmination of tens of people putting in hundreds of hours of work, expressed in thousands of words read by tens of thousands of subscribers.

And yet, each month, all of this begins with a simple and singular—yet weighty—mandate: tell the stories of what God is doing in our Southern Baptists of Texas Convention churches.

My calling here is as much historian as journalist. In 100 years, I'll be long gone and mostly forgotten. But the stories of what God did in 2022 will remain. He is, after all, the God of lasting impressions.

As much as the end of this year sends my thoughts ahead to 2023, I can't help but reflect on the privilege we have had this past year of documenting and sharing with our readers some of the most inspiring stories you'll find anywhere.

In January, we told the story of how God moved in the life of Jack Peaslee. After nine decades of living, he finally—for the first time—heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. In response, he surrendered all. The words of his pastor, Michael Gossett at Green Acres Baptist Church in Tyler, stuck with me all year long: "God is always pursuing us. He is never finished with us."

A few months later, we shared with you the story of Earl Alcanzar, a Filipino pastor in the Houston suburb of Stafford who couldn't help but notice a growing population of Afghan refugees moving into his neighborhood. He admitted to being afraid to reach out to them because of their cultural differences, but asked the Lord to provide a way. The Lord answered, and before long, Alcanzar started noticing some of those refugees showing up at his church. If that doesn't make your goosebumps raise their hands in worship, I don't know what will.

I love the story we got to tell over the summer of Daisy, who heard the message of hope because an Arlington pastor dialed the wrong number one day while making visitor follow-up phone calls. Turns out it wasn't so wrong after all, and Daisy ultimately gave her life to Christ.

People, God is alive and moving every ... single ... day. Our job—and I mean all of us—is to tell a watching world about it. There are millions of people who have never sensed the presence and the power of God and millions more who don't even believe He exists.

Let's work together in 2023 to show them something that can't be denied. Let's join with our Lord in making history.



Would you like to share a story about something the Lord is doing in your life or in your church? Email [jl Larson@sbtx.com](mailto:jl Larson@sbtx.com)



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# Setting the Example

**METROPLEX CHINESE  
HOUSE CHURCH NETWORK  
MODELS WORSHIP  
FOR THOSE WHO  
MAY ONE DAY RETURN  
TO NATIVE COUNTRY**

## GRAND PRAIRIE

Chinese believers who accept Christ while living in the U.S. might not be able to find an American-style church if they return to China. That's part of the reason why Eugene Zhang is leading a house church movement in the Dallas-Fort Worth area as a model for what to expect if such a transition occurs.

Most Chinese believers who return to China never join a church there, Zhang said, because they cannot find one like they've known in America. "If you start a Chinese house church and they worship just like a house church in China, when they go back, it's easier for them to fit in the culture there," he said.

Zhang grew up in a house church in China and briefly served as a missionary in Russia before immigrating to the United States, where his primary employment has been as a truck driver. He and his wife, Lily,



◀ Eugene and Lily Zhang are committed to reaching, discipling and sending Chinese in the United States for the glory of God.

▼ Homemade Chinese food comforts Chinese students who are far from home, and it's part of every house church meeting, pastor Eugene Zhang said.

PHOTOS SUBMITTED



attended Hillcrest Baptist Church in Cedar Hill, and along the way they began ministering to Chinese students at Dallas Baptist University (DBU).

The couple learned the students often were uncertain about the future and were looking for purpose in life, so as an outreach, they started providing opportunities to engage with American culture in activities such as horseback riding, target shooting, and fishing.

"Food always makes good friends, especially in Chinese culture," Zhang said, noting that providing homemade Chinese food reminded the students of home. "We started to talk about Jesus. Some believed, and we had a Bible study. Later on, we bought a home not far from DBU because we want to continually share the gospel with Chinese students."

The first week of 2020, Zhang's group formed a house church in Grand Prairie, hosting not only a Bible study but worship services and weekly evangelism training. During the pandemic, two more house churches started, and now the number is up to six throughout the Metroplex.

Using the name Hillcrest Chinese Church Network, Zhang partners with Hillcrest Baptist Church, the North American Mission Board, and the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention to reach not only Chinese students, but Chinese of any age or station in life. "God has really blessed



**"THIS MINISTRY COULD POTENTIALLY REACH INTO THE HARDEST-TO-REACH PLACES ON EARTH."**

EUGENE ZHANG

the ministry, and I am very happy with that," he said.

Zhang explained that some house churches in China can accommodate a thousand people if the home has a large yard or appropriate facility, but generally house churches have 50 to 100 people. In the Hillcrest network, each church has around 20 people—although the original Grand Prairie location has grown to 40.

"Every meeting we have a meal, just like the early church did," Zhang said.

One of his main challenges now is training leaders to care for each of the house churches, he said. He has handed four of them over to others, and he is leading two of them.

Church planting is important, Zhang said, because he sees Chinese unbelievers but doesn't see people sharing Jesus with them. "God loves everyone and wants them to be saved ... [This is] about eternal death or eternal life. It's very serious," he said.

The house churches in the Hillcrest network allocate at least 5% of tithes and offerings to the Cooperative Program, and Zhang emphasizes that all future churches he hopes to plant—even throughout the U.S.—will be encouraged to participate in CP.

Zhang envisions that many of the Chinese in the house church network in Texas will return to China well-equipped to start or serve similar churches there.

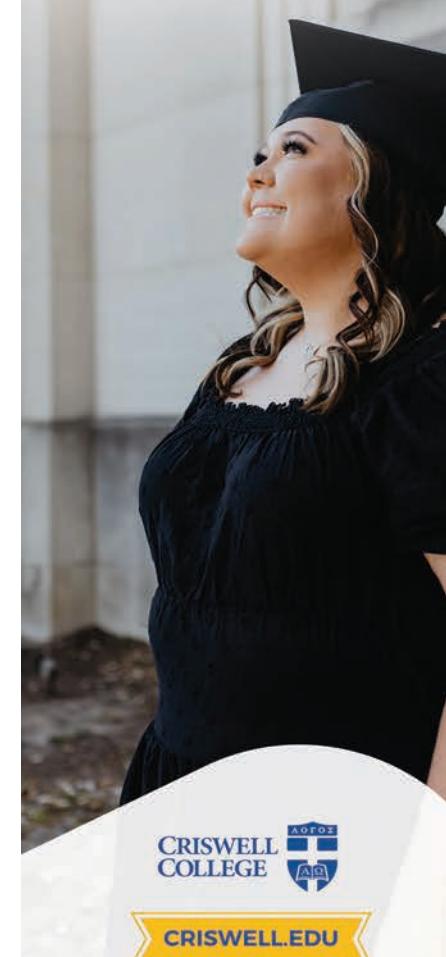
Research shows 80% of Chinese students will return to China, Zhang said, and a student trained and experienced in house church ministry is equipped to replicate the ministry in China, perhaps impacting generations.

"This ministry could potentially reach into the hardest-to-reach places on earth," Zhang said.

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## Pleading for revival

**F**or the past two years, our church has been praying together weekly, asking God to bring revival to our church, our city, and the churches of our convention. We have been desperate for God to pour out His Spirit in a fresh way, but we reached a place where we needed to step back and understand why we have been praying for revival.

In Isaiah 64, Isaiah recognizes the physical ruins in Jerusalem as reflecting the spiritual ruins of God's people. The temple in Zion, the city of God, is the place where God's manifest presence would dwell, but it now lies in ruin. It's as if they do not even belong to God because His presence and power have been removed. The enemy has completely destroyed them. Can you imagine Isaiah's agony as he remembers his encounter with God a few chapters earlier (Isaiah 6)? He saw God in His temple, full of power and holiness, but now it is a pile of rubble. The physical devastation revealed the spiritual destruction. We, too, must recognize the real spiritual ruins of our churches today.

**"When we are filled with the Spirit, the church prays, the gospel is preached, worship is authentic, sinners are radically saved, disciples are made, people are healed, marriages are restored, communities are transformed, unity is enjoyed, and Jesus is the hero!"**

We are the covenant people of God and the dwelling place of God. We are to gather weekly to encounter His presence and be transformed by His power. We are to be filled with the Holy Spirit and display the glory of Jesus. We are to share and show the gospel daily, pushing back the darkness. But is this what we are seeing in our churches today?

We have become a people who see gathering with God's people as optional, and many attend with no intention of encountering God. Church members are present but the Holy Spirit is absent. We have innovation but no manifestation. We have programs but no power. This is not about guilt, shame, or poor sinful me—this is about the recognition of reality. But the goal here is not recognition for the sake of depression. It is recognition that leads to desperation. We need to be desperate for God!

Revival is about rescue. Isaiah's response is not an indictment, but a prayer for intervention. This is the heart of revival prayer. It is coming to the end of ourselves and calling on the name of the Lord. We need a glimpse of Jesus and His glory that leads us to a moment of recognition that leads us to a desperation, allowing for a visitation and resulting in a transformation.

When we are filled with the Spirit, the church prays, the gospel is preached, worship is authentic, sinners are radically saved, disciples are made, people are healed, marriages are restored, communities are transformed, unity is enjoyed, and Jesus is the hero!

As we were challenged at our annual meeting in November, let us become a convention that pursues the presence of God by leading our churches in corporate prayer.

## A different way to think about your 2023 goals

It's that time of year when we begin thinking about goals for the next year. Too often, these goals are not related to our walk with God. More than simply setting "New Year's resolutions" we might break quickly next year, I hope one or more of these goals will become part of your Christian walk in 2023:

01

**Tell somebody something about the goodness of God each day.**

It's never difficult to think about God's blessings, but we usually have to intentionally decide to talk about them. Even if you're talking with only believers, don't let a day go by without saying something about God and His grace. You'll find that you're more likely to talk with non-believers if you're already in the practice of speaking about God every day—and your obedience will bring you joy.

02

**Pray with somebody daily.**

If you're married, pray with your spouse every day. If you're single, be intentional to find someone to pray with. The prayers need not be long, and you'll likely need to fit them into your busy schedule—but praying with others should be a priority in our lives. Taking this step is an admission that we need God's presence guiding us and others walking beside us (and most of us, I fear, could use more of this prayerful humility).

03

**Memorize at least two scriptures per month.**

I wish I didn't view this goal as a unique one, but I recognize the struggle with this discipline. At the same time, the godliest men I know—with exception—know the Word so well that it naturally drips off their lips. Here's a suggestion if memorization is not already your practice: choose two of your favorite chapters in the Bible and memorize them throughout the next year.

04

**Get to know a missionary family and ministry this year.**

We Southern Baptists are privileged to give through the Cooperative Program that supports thousands of missionaries on the field—but they're too often only distant, unnamed friends to our churches. We don't really know them, and we miss the blessing of hearing what God's doing in their lives. Church leaders, I challenge you to correct this issue this year by connecting with missionaries through the IMB or NAMB.

05

**Decide today, and every day that stretches ahead of you in the next year, that you will finish 2023 well.**

I realize we're not even in the new year yet, but I also know that nobody finishes a year well by accident. Faithful church leaders who endure well to the end do so because they commit to finishing each day well. Indeed, I am praying as I write that anyone who reads these words will reject the enemy's lures over the next year. In God's grace, you're included in that prayer.



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](http://chucklawless.com).



## ANNUAL MEETING MESSENGERS CRY OUT IN UNITED VOICE:

# 'GOD, WE NEED YOU'



**CORPUS CHRISTI** Throughout the weekend, hundreds of messengers made their way to this gulf city on the southeastern edge of Texas to do the business of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention at its 25th annual meeting.

But as knees hit the floor during a prayer service to punctuate the meeting's first day on Monday, the most important business—crying out to God—was being transacted.

This year's annual meeting held a form similar to its predecessors, taking an intentional glance backward to celebrate all that God has done among SBTC churches over the previous 12 months. But this year, convention leadership made a pronounced effort to exhort God's people to look ahead in an effort to make 2023 a year defined not by social upheaval or deep political division, but by prayer, revival, and a spiritual awakening that could sweep across not only the Lone Star State, but the entire nation and world.

"I want to ask you to wrestle with this question: do you want to see revival?" SBTC President Todd Kaunitz asked those gathered at Monday night's prayer service. "Do you want to see revival in your own life? Do you want to see revival in

your church? Revival ... in our state and in our nation? Is that something that is the true core of your heart?"

Kaunitz, who pastors New Beginnings Baptist Church in Longview, led the gathering through a handful of prayer emphases. What started with prayers of confession and repentance gave way to a time of thanksgiving, and then to a unified appeal for God to reveal His glory. Those gathered then spent several minutes asking the Lord to give a fresh outpouring of His Spirit—the sole catalyst for any and every revival in history.

"In the Scriptures, specifically in the book of Acts, we see that when God's people were desperate for Him to move, they cried out to the Lord," Kaunitz said. "They didn't just pray safe prayers. Moved and stirred by the Holy Spirit, they cried out to the Lord. What if we began to pray like that?"

The prayer service, which included worship led by Matt Boswell, pastor of The Trails Church in North Texas, ended with those gathered praying for others who publicly expressed a need for personal prayer, and finally, with prayers for those who are lost and in need of Jesus.

Unified prayer continued to be a theme on the second and final day of the meeting. SBTC Executive Director Nathan Lorick used the final portion of his annual report on Tuesday to call prayer "one of the pillars of who we're going to be and what we're going to do" as a state convention. He said it would be a "dream" if the SBTC could see 500 churches holding regular prayer gatherings in 2023.

"I just believe if we had that many churches on their faces like we were last night together, crying out to God, Texas could see a move of God like we've never experienced before," Lorick said. "May we be known as the network of churches who are on our faces pleading for the hand of God to be on our churches, pleading for a move of God to be in our cities and across our state to the glory of God."

**"MAY WE BE KNOWN AS THE NETWORK OF CHURCHES WHO ARE ON OUR FACES PLEADING FOR THE HAND OF GOD TO BE ON OUR CHURCHES, PLEADING FOR A MOVE OF GOD TO BE IN OUR CITIES AND ACROSS OUR STATE TO THE GLORY OF GOD."**

—NATHAN LORICK

## ANNUAL MEETING:

### Messengers conduct business as SBTC pursues God's presence

**CORPUS CHRISTI** The 25th annual meeting of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention on November 14-15 drew 1,031 messengers and guests. Following the theme "Pursuing Presence," convention president Todd Kaunitz led messengers to emphasize prayer in the life of local churches.

Kaunitz preached to the convention Monday night from Jeremiah 29:11 and encouraged listeners to seek God's presence, saying "... a spiritual awakening is a byproduct of a church revived, and without a revived church, there is no spiritual awakening in the culture."

#### Sexual Abuse Advisory Committee

A committee appointed by the convention president brought four recommendations intended to resource affiliated churches in preventing, responding to, and reporting sexual abuse. The Sexual Abuse Advisory Committee arose from a motion approved at the 2021 annual meeting. The committee recommended:

1. That the SBTC contract with a consultant(s) and/or organization(s) to aid the convention and its member churches regarding matters of sexual abuse;
2. Development of a church resource guide for (a) assisting churches in training their congregations for sexual abuse prevention, (b) ministering to sexual abuse survivors and their families, (c) protocols for sexual abusers and accused sexual abusers in the church, and (d) appropriate reporting of suspected sexual abuse in accordance with state law;
3. Cooperation with the Southern Baptist Convention's "Ministry Check" effort;
4. That the SBTC strengthen its internal policies and practices regarding reporting sexual abuse, accessibility of resources to affiliated churches, and informing staff of available resources and services.

Implementation of the recommendations will be overseen by the SBTC Executive Board and the SBTC staff.

**"... A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING IS A BYPRODUCT OF A CHURCH REVIVED, AND WITHOUT A REVIVED CHURCH, THERE IS NO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING IN THE CULTURE."** —TODD KAUNITZ

#### Items of business

Messengers approved a \$27.8 million budget for 2023. This represents a 4.8 percent increase over the 2022 budget. SBTC Chief Financial Officer Joe Davis reported that receipts were \$408,275 over budget through September 2022. The 2023 budget continues to allocate 45 percent of undesignated receipts for in-state ministry and 55 percent to Southern Baptist causes in North America and around the world.

A motion was approved intended to clarify Article IV, Section 1, of the SBTC Constitution regarding "Affiliation Qualifications." The motion clarifies that the phrase, "The office of pastor [shall] be limited to men," will be interpreted by the convention to refer "not only to the titles of senior pastor or lead pastor, but to any role designated by the noun, 'pastor...'" Regarding already affiliated churches, the interpretation will be applied beginning Jan. 1, 2024.

The convention's Executive Board awarded the Leaders Legacy Award, for individuals who have distinguished themselves in service to Christ through the SBTC, to John Greene—who has served at Harmony Hill Baptist Church in Lufkin for five decades.

Messengers approved five resolutions dealing with gratitude for the host city and convention president, expressing opposition to gambling, affirming a biblical view of gender, and celebrating the overturn of Roe v. Wade in the June Dobbs v. Jackson case, which returned abortion to individual states for regulation.

Kaunitz was elected by acclamation for a second term as president. He was joined by Eddie Lopez, en Español pastor for FBC Forney, who was elected by acclamation as vice president. Sharonda Cooper, a member of Emmaus Church in Georgetown, was elected convention secretary.



The 2023 SBTC annual meeting will be held Nov. 13-14 at Cross City Church in Euless.

## SPANISH SESSION: Lopez calls for 'renewed commitment' to pursuing God's presence



**CORPUS CHRISTI** The statewide call for Southern Baptists of Texas Convention churches to pursue the presence of God began at the American Bank Center Sunday night during the Spanish session preceding the beginning of the 2022 annual meeting.

In his exposition of Deuteronomy 13:4, Luis Lopez—director of Hispanic relations and mobilization for the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee—brought a challenging message to the Hispanic pastors and church leaders present.

Lopez called for a renewed commitment to pursue God's presence "until He calls us into His presence." Pursuing His presence, Lopez said, assures followers of Jesus they are going in the right direction. He added that there is much work left for the church to do and that it cannot get there without being connected to God. That connection will naturally drive the church toward reaching the lost and having compassion for others.

"THE HISPANIC COMMUNITY HERE IS VERY LARGE, AND WE DIDN'T HAVE A HISPANIC WORK IN THIS CITY."

—CHUY ÁVILA ON COMMISSIONING OF NEW HISPANIC CHURCH PLANTER RUBEN DE RUS IN CORPUS CHRISTI

"I am here to encourage you to seek God's presence and consecrate ourselves as we have never done," Lopez said, "[so] that in our last days on Earth, Jesus will find us praying, serving others, and longing to serve the Lord."

### Celebrating what God has done through the Cooperative Program

Among the accomplishments celebrated during the first session, Chuy Ávila, SBTC en Español lead associate, and Jesse Contreras, SBTC en Español associate, reported that more than 500 lay leaders and pastors were trained in ministry through regional "Capacitarte" conferences in 2022. Ávila also noted that for the first time, a session was held entirely in Spanish at the Equip Conference. The annual "Florece" (Flourish) retreat for women and the "Hombres de Impacto" (Men of Impact) men's retreat drew around 600 people each.

Youth Week had a victory, seeing 450 students attend—of whom about 50 gave their lives to Christ or reaffirmed their faith. They also celebrated victories in evangelism, led by Bruno Molina, who testified that more than 1,000 people have been trained to evangelize and in excess of 100 people have come to Christ.

### New planter commissioned

Ávila said it is his prayer—and something SBTC en Español hopes can become a tradition—to commission a new Hispanic church planter in each location where the SBTC Annual Meeting is held. Ruben de Rus, along with his wife, Azucena, and their children, were commissioned at this year's meeting to plant a Hispanic work in Corpus Christi. "The Hispanic community here is very large, and we didn't have a Hispanic work in this city," Ávila said.

### Ministerial legacy recognition

Mike Gonzales, former director of SBTC's en Español department, recognized and presented a plaque to Pastor Marcos Ramos and his wife, Irma, for their ministry faithfulness in Texas and at First Baptist Church of Galena Park for the last 20 years.

# CONTAGIOUS FAITH

In the midst of pandemic, church sees massive growth after waitress comes to Christ, begins inviting neighbors and co-workers

**W**hen it came to the gospel work being done by churches, COVID did not discriminate. It presented challenges to megachurches and tiny congregations alike, to churches urban and rural, to established churches and newly planted ones—like Vida Victoriosa in Tioga.

Within a year of Vida Victoriosa's founding, pastor Over Ochoa's plan of connecting with people in Tioga—a community of about 1,200 people in Grayson County, less than an hour's drive from the Texas-Oklahoma border—was stymied by the global pandemic. The doors they wanted to knock on were closed. The gospel conversations he and his wife, Cristina, wanted to have were, to some degree, silenced as people limited their exposure to anyone outside their household.

"The pandemic created all the challenges you can imagine for a church planter," Ochoa said.

It was a frustrating experience for the Ochoas, who had previously seen the Lord make quick work of what often seemed like impossible circumstances.

After sensing the Lord's call to plant a Hispanic church in America while serving the Lord in his home country of Colombia, Ochoa knew it could take years to work through the process of being granted residency in the U.S.

Instead of many years, it took one.

The family, which includes their daughter, Lina, ultimately landed in McKinney and began holding prayer meetings in their apartment. Soon after, they began having a church service on Sundays until so many people were coming, they began to outgrow the space.

Even so, the Lord was already at work. One of the men who had been attending church at the apartment also mowed the property at the First Baptist Church of Prosper. One day, the pastor there told him FBC Prosper wanted to reach



the growing number of Hispanics in the neighborhoods around the church, but were hindered from doing so because nobody in the church spoke fluent Spanish. The worker decided to connect Ochoa with the pastor, who, in turn, connected Ochoa to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention for training and support.

The collaboration resulted in the planting of Iglesia Vida Victoriosa in Prosper, which currently has about 75 members and attendees.

### Dreaming a new dream

A few years later, God began to put on Ochoa's heart the vision of starting another Hispanic work. Once again, his family began to pray and ask for the Lord's provision and direction. Before long, Ochoa received a call that he considered a miraculous answer to his

Juanita Lopez (top photo pictured left) met the Ochoas at a restaurant where she works. The Ochoas have grown close not only to Juanita, but many of the people she has guided to the church through her own faith journey.

PHOTOS SUBMITTED

"SOMETIMES WE GET TOO FOCUSED WITH PREACHING TO CROWDS.

BUT WITH JUST ONE PERSON COMING TO CHRIST, WE CAN SEE MULTITUDES COME TO GOD BECAUSE THAT ONE PERSON CAN BRING MANY MORE."

OVER OCHOA

prayers. The call was from the Denton Baptist Association, offering use of an abandoned church to plant the first Hispanic church in Tioga.

It seemed the Lord had cleared all the obstacles for the vision to become a reality. And then COVID hit, closing tightly all those doors the Ochoas had planned to knock on.

On their knees, they cried out for God to give them some opportunity to make connections with the Hispanics in town. They heard that in the next town over, there was an Italian restaurant that had not closed during the pandemic and that employed many Hispanic people. So they intentionally went, prayerfully looking for opportunities to share the gospel.

That's where they met Juanita Lopez, a waitress who Ochoa says "had a slight interest in learning about the gospel." With that small glimmer of hope, he and his wife decided to frequent the restaurant for lunch so they could befriend Juanita and tell her more about Jesus.

For two years, they intentionally shared the love of Christ with Juanita, until one day she accepted Christ as her Savior. Before long, Juanita was attending Vida Victoriosa in Tioga and inviting her co-workers to come as well.

"It got to the point where all the employees accepted Christ in their lives and the owner decided to close on Sundays because everyone wanted to go to Vida Victoriosa," Ochoa said.

Today, around 45 people attend the church—many of them are Juanita's co-workers and neighbors with whom she intentionally and regularly shares the gospel. She hosts barbecues every Saturday in her community to invite neighbors to church and, little by little, her neighbors continue to be added to the family of faith.

"Sometimes we get too focused with preaching to crowds," Ochoa said, "but with just one person coming to Christ, we can see multitudes come to God because that one person can bring many more."

# UNA FE CONTAGIOSA

En medio de la pandemia, iglesia ve un crecimiento masivo por medio de una mesera que aceptó a Cristo y comenzó a invitar a sus vecinos y compañeros de trabajo

Por Arlene Sanabria | Texan Correspondent

**C**uando se trata de la labor evangelística que realizan las iglesias, el COVID no discrimina. Presentó desafíos tanto a las mega iglesias como a las pequeñas congregaciones, a las iglesias urbanas y rurales, a las iglesias establecidas y a las recién plantadas, como la Iglesia Vida Victoriosa.

Un año después de la fundación de Vida Victoriosa, el plan del pastor Over Ochoa de conectar con la gente de Tioga—una comunidad de unos 1,200 habitantes en el condado de Grayson, a menos de una hora en automóvil de la frontera entre Texas y Oklahoma—se vio obstaculizado por la pandemia mundial. Las puertas a las que querían tocar estaban cerradas. Las conversaciones sobre Jesús que él y su esposa, Cristina, querían tener fueron, hasta cierto punto, silenciadas, ya que la gente limitó su exposición a cualquier persona fuera de su hogar.

"La pandemia creó todos los desafíos que se pueden imaginar para un plantador de iglesias," dijo Ochoa.

Fue una experiencia frustrante para los Ochoa, que anteriormente habían visto al Señor hacer un trabajo rápido en lo que a menudo parecían circunstancias imposibles. Despues de sentir el llamado del Señor a plantar una iglesia hispana en Estados Unidos mientras servía al Señor en su país natal, Colombia, Ochoa sabía que podría tomar años el proceso de obtener la residencia en Estados Unidos.

## En lugar de muchos años, tardó uno.

La familia acabó aterrizando en McKinney y empezó a celebrar reuniones de oración en su



"A VECES NOS ENFOCAMOS EN PREDICAR A LAS MULTITUDES.

ERO CON SÓLO UNA PERSONA QUE VENGA A CRISTO, PODEMOS VER MULTITUDES VENIR A DIOS PORQUE ESA PERSONA PUEDE TRAER A MUCHAS MÁS."

OVER OCHOA

planeado tocar. De rodillas, clamaron para que Dios les diera alguna oportunidad de hacer conexiones con los hispanos del pueblo. Se enteraron de que en el pueblo de allá había un restaurante italiano que no había cerrado durante la pandemia y que empleaba a muchos hispanos. Así que fueron intencionalmente, buscando en oración oportunidades para compartir el evangelio.

Allí fue donde conocieron a Juanita López, una mesera que, según Ochoa, "tenía un ligero interés en conocer el evangelio." Con ese pequeño rayo de esperanza, él y su esposa decidieron frecuentar el restaurante para almorzar y así poder hacerse amigos de Juanita y hablarle más de Jesús.

Durante dos años, compartieron intencionalmente el amor de Cristo con Juanita, hasta que un día ella aceptó a Cristo como su Salvador. En poco tiempo, Juanita estaba asistiendo a Vida Victoriosa e invitando a sus compañeros de trabajo a venir también.

"Llegó al punto en que todos los empleados aceptaron a Cristo en sus vidas y el dueño decidió cerrar los domingos porque todos querían asistir a la Iglesia Vida Victoriosa," dijo Ochoa.

Hoy en día, alrededor de 45 personas asisten a la iglesia -muchos de ellos son compañeros de trabajo y vecinos de Juanita a los que comparte el evangelio de forma intencional y regular. Todos los sábados organiza barbacoas en su comunidad para invitar a los vecinos a la iglesia y, poco a poco, sus vecinos siguen sumándose a la familia de la fe.

"A veces nos enfocamos en predicar a las multitudes," dijo Ochoa, "pero con sólo una persona que venga a Cristo, podemos ver multitudes venir a Dios porque esa persona puede traer a muchas más."

# O LITTLE TOWN OF MONTALBA

BY JANE RODGERS  
TEXAN CORRESPONDENT

## THOUSANDS HAVE HEARD GOSPEL THROUGH RURAL CHURCH'S 'WALK THROUGH BETHLEHEM' EVENT



### MONTALBA

**O**ne woman's vision has resulted in a small East Texas church reaching thousands with the message of Christ.

Wayne Frazier had only been pastor of Montalba Baptist Church a few years when longtime member Carolyn Bledsoe, whose husband, Charles, chaired the deacons, made an unexpected request.

"I had a dream that we turned our little property here into Bethlehem," Bledsoe told Frazier.

That vision became a reality, resulting in gospel presentations to more than 10,000 people since 2008 through an annual Christmas event—A Walk Through Bethlehem—that continues to attract visitors from across the state and nation.

The property to which Bledsoe referred was a corner tract of 10 acres, mostly pastureland, beside the main church building. The house that once stood on the property had long been moved, with only the black-topped driveway leading into a pecan grove remaining.

Where most saw an empty lot, Bledsoe envisioned the Holy Land. It would take nearly the entire congregation of 40-50 in the unincorporated Anderson County community of fewer than 1,000 to pull it off, but they were "full on board" from the beginning, Frazier said.

Mrs. Bledsoe directed the first three years of the event before turning over the reins to volunteer Susan Shelton.

#### How the walk works

Held Friday to Sunday during the second weekend of December, the walk is a literal walk rather than a drive-through, although it starts with an old-fashioned hayride. Guests park at the church, enter the fellowship hall, where they enjoy cookies and cocoa and receive goodie bags filled such items as gospel tracts, a Christmas ornament, and Christmas crafts for the kids—all with an emphasis on the nativity.

Church volunteers greet guests and help load each group of 20-25 on a hay trailer.



#### The gospel

The heart of the walk is the sharing of the gospel, Frazier said.

"Our church hasn't grown a lot physically, but its outreach has grown exponentially," he said, explaining that Montalba Baptist's location in a primarily retirement-aged community with no school nearby precludes some traditional outreaches. Still, Montalba's people desire to be kingdom-focused, and the walk provides an opportunity to do just that, as does the church's annual Fourth of July community picnic and fireworks show.

Both events are part of the church budget and offered free of charge to attendees.

"We try to do all we can," Frazier said. "We want to invest in people so that when they go back to Fairfield, Crockett, Dallas, or wherever, they impact their communities."

The day before the 2021 walk opened, Carolyn Bledsoe was laid to rest in South Texas. Frazier preached the funeral service and rushed back to Montalba in time for the first guests.

He knew "Miss Carolyn" would have wanted it no other way.

*The 2022 Walk through Bethlehem is scheduled for December 9-11 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.*

**"WE WANT TO INVEST IN PEOPLE SO THAT WHEN THEY GO BACK TO FAIRFIELD, CROCKETT, DALLAS, OR WHEREVER, THEY IMPACT THEIR COMMUNITIES."**

WAYNE FRAZIER



# DISASTER RELIEF: A YEAR IN REVIEW

AS 2022 WINDS DOWN, SBTC DR LOOKS BACK ON A 'INTERESTING' SEASON OF MINISTRY

BY JANE RODGERS Texan Correspondent

The day after tornadoes ripped through Northeast Texas in early November, Southern Baptists of Texas Convention Disaster Relief volunteers were on the field, these latest deployments capping off an unusual DR year that included statewide, national, and international disasters.

"It's been an interesting year," said Scottie Stice, SBTC DR director. "We began with deployments to Colorado with the wildfires, then tornadoes and fires hit Texas. Things slowed down domestically, and we kicked off our international ministry in March, a couple of weeks after the invasion of Ukraine. Then Hurricane Ian hit and now the tornadoes in East Texas."

The recent Texas tornado response came even as some SBTC DR volunteers and equipment remained in Fort Myers, Fla., serving Hurricane Ian survivors as rotating crews have since early October.

## Northeast Texas tornadoes

"Our volunteers rapidly became a presence in Henderson, Lamar, Hopkins, and Bowie counties," Stice said of the November storms. "Our chaplains had a tremendous ministry in Lamar County, where they made some 70 spiritual contacts with folks who needed comfort."

As is typical with rural disasters, locals were quick to help their neighbors. "Everyone who has a chainsaw in East Texas was already out there cutting trees," Stice said, adding that SBTC DR recovery teams deployed to serve areas around Athens in Henderson County.

## War displaces millions of Ukrainians

Volunteers journeyed halfway across the world to help with the Ukrainian crisis, serving in support of



Baptist organizations and churches in Romania, Moldova, and Poland, ministering to refugees fleeing the war with Russia.

Working alongside members of other state Baptist DR teams with the coordination of Send Relief, SBTC DR personnel performed a variety of tasks. They passed out snacks, water, Bibles, and tracts at border stations. They served meals at children's homes and church refugee centers, praying with first responders and displaced Ukrainians alike. They did repair work on refugee facilities.

"It was an all-out effort to support Baptist agencies helping to meet the crisis," Stice said, adding that Ion Miron, general secretary of the Baptist Union of Moldova, told him the Ukrainian Baptist Union had prepared for the possibility of war and the massive displacement of civilians by contacting Baptist groups in neighboring countries for assistance.

"As war threatened, the Baptist agencies went to work immediately," Stice said. "I'm grateful we could help."

## Migrant ministry sees record salvations

The displaced are not only from Ukraine. Stice noted that among the year's biggest blessings continued to be the ministry of Carlos Navarro and West Brownsville Baptist Church among migrants. The controversial border crisis offers good news with the more than 6,700 professions of faith among refugees recorded by Golan Ministries.

"It turned out to be a busy, productive year when we thought it was going to be slow," Stice said. "We are grateful for the opportunity to serve and to be witnesses for the gospel."



27

## DISASTERS

(6 out of state; 18 in Texas; 3 international sites)

2,326

Total SBTC DR & Texas Relief volunteer days

23,260

Volunteer hours

87,282

Meals prepared

81

Chainsaw jobs completed

60

Flood recovery sites cleared

44

Fire recovery sites completed

14

Temporary roofs installed

199

Total clean-up and recovery sites

29,678

Total spiritual contacts (many from West Brownsville Baptist)

6,780

Professions of faith (many from West Brownsville Baptist)

2,409

Prayers shared

972

Bibles distributed

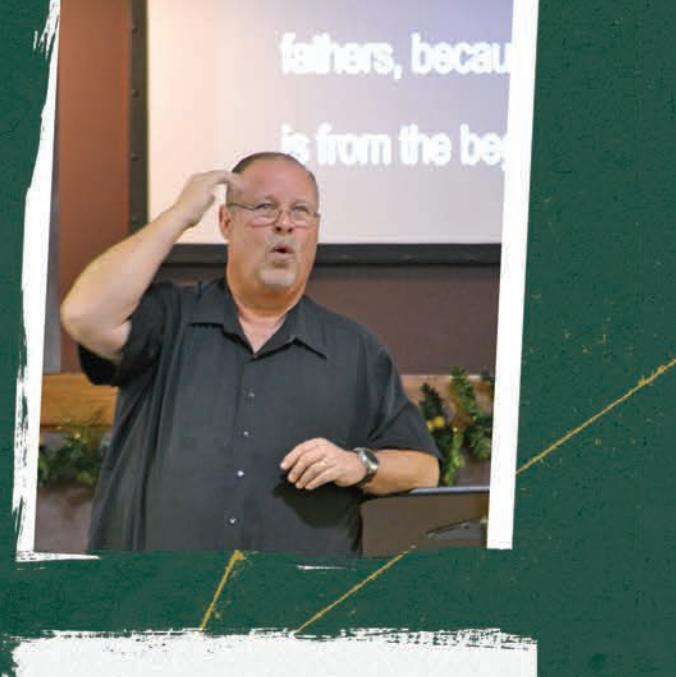
# LOUD & CLEAR

BY HOLLY CAREY — TEXAN CORRESPONDENT

## EMPHASIS ON THE GOSPEL—AND ONE ANOTHER—FUELS DEAF CHURCH IN AMARILLO



DEAF MINISTRY was introduced in May, 1980



### AMARILLO

**O**n Sunday mornings at Amarillo Deaf Church, the worship is loud with bass that deaf people can literally feel. Congregants watch lyrics on a screen and follow by the beat. They mimic the signs of the worship leaders signing the songs. Pastor Darrell Bonjour signs, rather than voicing, his sermons—using an interpreter to translate his messages into spoken words for those in attendance who can hear.

But these are mechanics. What worship at Amarillo Deaf Church looks more like is a group of believers who have broken barriers of language delay and isolation. They have grown in number, grown spiritually, and have morphed into a self-supporting community that does life together as they reach the deaf for Christ.

Growth has been part of the church's story since its beginning. Formerly Paramount Baptist Deaf Church, Amarillo Deaf Church began as an interpreting service with three deaf persons on Easter Sunday in 1980. They expanded into a mobile

**"WE WANT PEOPLE TO BECOME OBEDIENT FOLLOWERS OF JESUS. THE GOSPEL IS THE SAME. AT AMARILLO DEAF CHURCH, IT'S JUST PRESENTED IN A DIFFERENT WAY."**

DARRELL BONJOUR

building where they met on Sunday mornings for deaf church and then went into regular service Sunday nights to interpret. They outgrew the mobile unit and moved into Paramount's chapel, where continued growth necessitated having two services.

In 1999, they moved into their current building under the mission support of Paramount, and since 2017 by God's grace, Amarillo Deaf Church has been independent, taking care of everything, including property and facilities, salaries, and one another.

They give as well. When they left Paramount, members and attendees gave \$19,000 annually. Today, giving exceeds \$100,000 annually.

"We are actively taking care of ourselves," Bonjour said. "We struggle, but we are making it here." The church has approximately 300 members with an average Sunday attendance around 60.

The church produces the fruit of its labor, with congregants taking the lead. Those who were picked up by the church van as children now lead the van ministry or drive the van. They take care of the building and grounds. They visit. They teach. They fix things when things need fixing. Some of the men take care of the internet technology. A deaf team films, edits, and publishes web content.

They do all these things despite unique challenges. Deaf people can tend to isolate, hiding themselves as well as their children. Some, especially those raised prior to early hearing screenings, have faced language delay—a difficulty in understanding or responding to spoken language. Technological aids such as PowerPoint and the American Sign Language Video Bible, completed just last year, have helped with reading and advancing scriptural knowledge. Job opportunities have also been a challenge in the community. Ministry assistant Melanie Lyons compares the church to the early Christians described in the New Testament: community driven and focused on each other. The deaf are very effective at reaching one another because they share the same struggles.

"As a hearing person, I get to be there and support and say, 'How can I help you as you go out and reach out to



other deaf people?'" Lyons said. "I want to be supportive and help in any way possible. If that means I clean the building so they can do that, great!"

October marks the 42nd anniversary of the church's founding and of Bonjour's leadership; he will retire at year's end. They are celebrating with the theme of "See What God Has Done." Scott Tankersley, who joined the church in 1982 after Bonjour visited his home, will lead as interim pastor, focusing on ministry, while Bonjour serves as an elder to support him. Again, the heart of the hearing people in the church is to help the deaf reach others who are deaf.

"We love God, we love people, but we also love the Word," Tankersley said. "These three things together are the core."

Scripture is the focus because that's where the commonality is—with the gospel. The congregation is diverse: original members from Amarillo, folks from Mexico and other countries, those raised Assembly of God, Catholic, Charismatic—and all with varying levels of language experience.

"We want people to become obedient followers of Jesus," Bonjour said. "The gospel is the same. At Amarillo Deaf Church, it's just presented in a different way."

Darrell Bonjour (opposite page) has led Amarillo Deaf Church for more than four decades. Over that time, the church has seen much growth as it reaches out to an often-underreached deaf community.

PHOTOS SUBMITTED

## RURAL CHURCH COMPLETES 400 CONSECUTIVE NIGHTS OF PREACHING

**KRUM** After 400 days of preaching, pastor Tim Robinson of Plainview Baptist Church ended a sermon streak begun more than a year before in late October 2022.

The 400 days of preaching involved more than 500 sermons, since Robinson preached twice on the 57 Sunday mornings during the streak and also did Sunday evening services. Members invited friends to come to "the church that meets every night." Weekday sermons featured simple hymns to keep things "relaxed and less formal."

Holidays fueled the streak. At the church's recent fall festival, Robinson preached about the Holy Spirit to about 400 guests, "the largest gathering of any kind in the church's 128-year history."

The goal was "to see more souls saved," and the church added a Roku channel and streamed the sermon series on Facebook each night. Demographic reports from Roku and social media revealed Plainview Baptist had reached more than 20,000 across the country and internationally, Robinson said.

—JANE RODGERS



## PASTOR, FORMER SBTC PRESIDENT BOWMAN TO STEP ASIDE IN 2023

**AUSTIN** J. Kie Bowman, senior pastor of Hyde Park Baptist Church and The Quarries Church, announced plans to transition from his pastoral role in March of 2023, following 25 years at the Austin church.

Bowman told congregants in a special video announcement that being called as senior pastor of Hyde Park in 1997 was "the greatest privilege" he had ever been offered.

"I have loved every minute of this journey, and I still love it today," the pastor said.

In addition to his time in the pulpit, Bowman has authored six books and contributed to 13 others. His prayer literature has been read by more than 1 million people. In 2018, he was chosen to preach the keynote sermon at the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting in Dallas. He also served more than a decade on the executive board of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, including two terms as president in 2020 and 2021.

—HYDE PARK BAPTIST CHURCH



## 5 SBTC PASTORS AMONG THOSE HONORED BY SABA

**SAN ANTONIO** The San Antonio Baptist Association honored 19 pastors with an accumulated 573 years of ministry service at its 164th annual gathering on Oct. 16.

Among the honorees were five current Southern Baptists of Texas Convention pastors: Steve Branson of Village Parkway Baptist Church (28 years of service), Carlos Navarro of Iglesia Bautista West Brownsville (29 years), H. Statt Riddlebarger of Pearsall Road Baptist Church (28 years), Dennis Wall of The Hills Church (44 years), and Robert Welch of Parkhills Baptist Church (28 years).

Each pastor honored received a special plaque bearing images of the San Antonio area.

On the opportunity to honor long-serving pastors, SABA Executive Director Darrell Horn said, "When some Baptist associations across the U.S. might only have 19 churches, we are grateful to have 19 pastors who have served 25 years or more in one church. They are an example of faithfulness and longevity in ministry. These men leave a legacy for others to follow."

—JANE RODGERS

## BRADFORD TO SERVE IN NEW EVANGELISM CHAIR AT SWBTS



**FORT WORTH** Carl Bradford, an assistant professor of evangelism at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary since 2018, will be seated in the newly established Malcolm R. and Melba McDowell Chair of Evangelism in the Roy J. Fish School of Evangelism and Missions at Southwestern effective Jan. 1.

Through his academic role, Bradford teaches several evangelism-related classes, including Contemporary Evangelism, Theology of Evangelism and Missions, and the Historical Development of the Kerygma and the Gospel, in the Roy J. Fish School of Evangelism and Missions. Additionally, he serves on the evangelism team in the Missional Ministries department of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention.

Bradford not only teaches evangelism as an academic discipline, but he lives it out with his students, too. He spearheads the group of Southwestern students each year at Crossover, which precedes the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting each June, and he leads a group of students in Everyday Evangelism, which is a ministry opportunity where Southwestern and Texas Baptist College students go out into various places each week in the Fort Worth community to share the gospel.

—SWBTS

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# THROUGH THE TOUGHEST CHALLENGES LIFE CAN BRING, ***Jesus is everything***



**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Jimmy Pritchard, a former Southern Baptists of Texas Convention president and pastor of First Baptist Church of Forney, died February 24, 2021. His wife, Jeanette Pritchard, has graciously agreed to share her story of grief, loss, and of God's provision through it all.

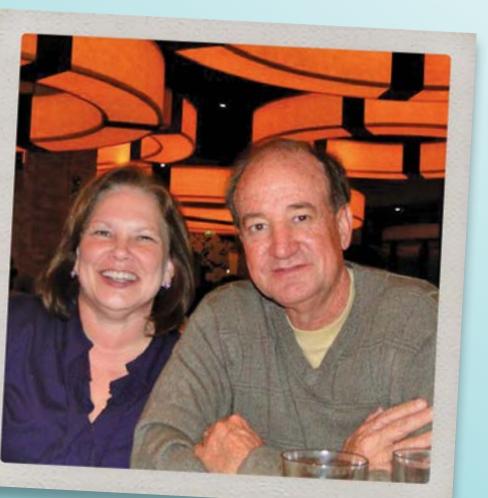
**I**t all began during the 2021 ice storm. During that time, Jim and I stayed away from people as much as possible because our daughter was going to have her third son. Jimmy was going to be the one to take care of the kids while I went to the hospital. So, we were trying to stay COVID-free. The storm hit, and Jimmy got COVID, and then I got COVID. But he decided that it wasn't that bad; he didn't need to go to the doctor, and he wasn't going to get out in that ice to do it. Well, he got worse. And on the 19th of February, he went to get an IV treatment.

Jimmy had a kidney transplant 45 years ago. Because of that, his immune system was almost non-existent. But anyway, the IV didn't help and that night I had to put him in the hospital. It was about 10:00 that same night. I didn't know that was going to be the last time I saw him. I had to drop him at the hospital and go home. None of the family was able to go be with him. He was in isolation.

And then of course I had COVID and was by myself at home. He lived four days. On the 24th of February, Jimmy went home to be with the Lord. The kids could not come be with me because they had not had COVID shots. The Lord provided three sisters in Christ who had either already had COVID, or had the shots, to stay with me and take care of me. At the time, doctors didn't know what strain of COVID I had. I feel like these women put their lives on the line for me; they had families, too.

They ended up taking me to the hospital four days later. It was February 28. My oxygen level was low and I was in the hospital. My children planned their father's funeral without me. My daughter was in the hospital when her dad passed away because of the C-section that she'd had. We couldn't be together through this time of grief.

The second day I was in the hospital, I was feeling hopeless and helpless, in a fog, shocked. I was talking to the Lord and said, "I've got to have you. I've got to have you." And



Jeanette with Jimmy.



The women who stayed close to Jeanette through her illness.

PHOTOS SUBMITTED

I remembered that some of the biggest blessings for me are hearing people's testimonies and thought, "Well, what do I have to lose? I could be dying. I'm just going to ask people." So, when the hospital staff came in, I just started saying, "I need to talk. Do you have a minute?" They'd say yes, of course. "Well, I just need to know if you know Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior."

Most of them said they did and most of them told me their testimonies. I did have some chances to witness. Some of my doctors were believers and would actually come and put their hands on me and pray over me. All of this because I said, "I need to hear from God." So, I feel like He spoke to me through these people. On the seventh day, some sweet friends who had already had COVID were able to be in my room so that I would have someone with me during Jimmy's funeral.

Before the funeral started, my friends were praying over me, and a nurse bebopped in and happily announced that I was COVID-free and was able to have others visit with me. Those same three friends who had already had COVID stayed with me around the clock. They took care of my physical needs. They prayed over me. And God healed me.

I still am indebted to them. All through it, I had my church family, and people were reaching out to me right and left. But that was only the beginning of the struggle. Now, I had to go home alone and face grief without Jimmy. He was my soulmate for 41 years and fellow servant of Christ. My physical provider, best friend, and pastor.

I'm still dealing with grief a year and a half later. But another blessing is from one of my favorite verses, and it's 3 John 4 that says, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth." Well, God gave us three kids, and man, they're a wealth of wisdom like their dad. Anytime I reach out to them, they give me very much the same godly counsel that he would. One of them, in one of my days of going through grief, said, "Mom, go to what you know. Go to the foundation."

I started thinking about the foundation of Christ and what He's provided. So I went back to the very first, when I came to know Jesus as my personal Lord and Savior, and I thanked the Lord for that. I went back to his living Word. One of the blessings that God gave me is Jimmy's sermons. I would go back and dig and find sermons that would minister to whatever I was going through at that time. I started asking God to provide for me because I didn't know how to get out of this wave of grief.

A favorite verse is, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not into your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your path." My understanding was a mess, but I had to trust in the Lord and trust that He will direct my path. I also go back to thinking that His mercies are new every morning. And so I started just praising Him every morning for a good night's sleep. A lot of widows do not have a good night's sleep. I've not struggled with sleep. I asked the Lord to restore the joy of my salvation and He has.

So, I'm now back home at First Baptist Forney. My intention is to serve the Lord wherever He wants me. One of the last things Jimmy said to me through his struggle of breathing was, "I fought the good fight, and now I'm leaving it to the next generation." Well, I have a new pastor, and Nathan and Nicole [Lino] have welcomed me with open arms. They pray for me, and they make me feel like I'm one of their own. I couldn't ask for better.

So, what's my story? I would leave it with this very last thing. And it's the way Jimmy signed everything. It's what he said to people: "Jesus is everything."

what's  
your  
story?

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

Scan the QR code or e-mail [jlarson@sbtx.com](mailto:jlarson@sbtx.com) to tell us your story.





## FACES OF THE FAITHFUL

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

**Bob Crowder**  
Age: 73  
Spouse: Linda  
Church/Years at Current Church:  
**Senior pastor, Lakeview Baptist Church, Belton (5)**  
Total Years in Ministry: 17



**WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU'VE BEEN ABLE TO CELEBRATE AT YOUR CHURCH RECENTLY?**  
In a time of declining attendance in Baptist churches, we are actively receiving new members by faith, baptism, and letter. God has been so good in planting this church many years ago, and we are seeing a boom in new housing all around our church. We are both rural and city.

**WHAT'S ONE LESSON YOU'VE LEARNED TO THIS POINT OF YOUR MINISTRY THAT YOU KNOW YOU'LL NEVER FORGET?**  
Even in the darkest of times, God is still active and moving in the hearts of people. When COVID-19 hit, few churches were prepared for the consequences of decisions that were being made that affected the church. Yet, when we began meeting again, it was a time of growth and not decline. Then in the winter of 2021, our area lost power for three days. Our church building became cold and we suffered a flood from several breaks in water lines. And yet, God was faithful.

**HOW CAN OTHER SBTC CHURCHES BE PRAYING FOR YOU?**  
Pray to the Lord of the harvest to send workers.

**Drake Osborn**  
Age: 28  
Church/Years at Current Church:  
**Pastor of teaching and liturgy, Grace Church, Waco (4)**  
Total Years in Ministry: 5



**WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU'VE BEEN ABLE TO CELEBRATE AT YOUR CHURCH RECENTLY?**  
We are seeing incredible fruit from our pastoral residency program. Every year we take men who are growing in the qualifications for the pastorate and develop them for ministry in our context. In our third year of the program, we have several men who are almost ready to take the step toward ordination.

**WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES IN YOUR MINISTRY LATELY?**  
It is always difficult to navigate the challenges of a university city, which for us means a growing but transient congregation. Last year, we welcomed over 100 new members in, but we sent out around 65 to new places and churches.

**WHAT'S ONE LESSON YOU'VE LEARNED TO THIS POINT OF YOUR MINISTRY THAT YOU KNOW YOU'LL NEVER FORGET?**  
The call to the pastorate is not a vocational career guaranteed to those who pursue it, but a stewardship from Almighty God for those He appoints. Understanding the pastorate as a gift before a job can promote a church culture of familial relationships and work against a culture of pastoral professionalism.

**Josh Bonjour**  
Age: 38  
Spouse/children:  
**Libby/Noah, Jude & Jonah**  
Church/Years at Current Church:  
**Pastor, New Life Deaf Fellowship, Fort Worth (13)**  
Total Years in Ministry: 20



**WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU'VE BEEN ABLE TO CELEBRATE AT YOUR CHURCH RECENTLY?**  
Our children's ministry has exploded! God has opened the door for us to minister to deaf children and their families. And we are seeing salvations and baptisms among children and adults. On the other end of the spectrum, God has been growing our senior adult ministry as well. After a long time period of limited outreach at a nearby assisted living center for the deaf, we now have full access to reach and serve deaf senior residents.

**WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES IN YOUR MINISTRY LATELY?**  
Anytime the Lord is at work, the enemy goes into overdrive. We have seen an increase in attacks, specifically in marriages and in the physical health of our members. It's been a challenge to walk through suffering when we don't always understand the reasons behind it or why it's happening.

**WHAT'S ONE LESSON YOU'VE LEARNED TO THIS POINT OF YOUR MINISTRY THAT YOU KNOW YOU'LL NEVER FORGET?**  
God will not be stopped. No one is beyond His reach, and He draws some of the most unlikely people into His service.

**Kacey Jackson** Age: 39  
Spouse/children:  
**Chris/Addie (11), Cooper (9) & Beckett (7)**  
Church/Years at Current Church:  
**Special needs minister, First Baptist Church, Forney (5)**  
Total Years in Ministry: 3



**WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CELEBRATE AT YOUR CHURCH RECENTLY?**

On August 16, we set measurable prayer requests for our ministry areas. My request for our special needs ministry was that we would find four leaders to lead a Bible study class for adults with special needs. Four days later, three individuals told me God was calling them to lead a class for adults with special needs. A week later, a fourth leader came to me.

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

I have learned that all God's children deserve the opportunity to learn about the love of Jesus, to hear the gospel, and be given the opportunity to attend church together as a family. Individuals with special needs and their families are craving Jesus.

**HOW CAN OTHER SBTC CHURCHES BE PRAYING FOR YOU?**

Please pray for the families that our special needs ministry serves, both our regular attenders and the families that currently only take advantage of our community outreach programs. Pray that they feel loved and welcomed and their hearts are softened to hear the Word of God. Pray for more volunteers so we can expand our infrastructure to serve more families with special needs.

**Manuel Martinez** Age: 30  
Spouse: Karla  
Church/Years at Current Church:  
**Lead/preaching pastor, Logos Baptist Church, Brownsville (3)**  
Total Years in Ministry: 10



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

We had a very fruitful summer! We partnered with Mission City Church from San Antonio to host a Vacation Bible School at a local apartment complex. We also had a back-to-school bash at a different apartment community, and the summer culminated with two college students confessing Jesus as Lord and getting baptized.

**WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES IN YOUR MINISTRY LATELY?**

In May 2022, we launched a Spanish service to reach more families. One of the biggest challenges has been to pastor what sometimes feels like two different groups of people. Our English service consists of mostly, if not completely, college students. Our Spanish service consists of mostly families. Bringing them together in fellowship has been fun, but challenging.

**HOW CAN OTHER SBTC CHURCHES BE PRAYING FOR YOU?**

Pray for us as we continue to do campus evangelism at the university and one-on-one evangelism. Also help us pray for more laborers in God's vineyard. As we train up brothers and sisters to bear the burden of ministry, we pray they can get rooted at Logos and serve for many years. Lastly, we pray for wisdom in the area of logistics. Our meeting space can only fit about 45-50 people. We are at capacity and may need to look for a new space.

**Kevin Alvarez** Age: 41  
Spouse/children:  
**Yvette/Cassandra, Gabriela & Madison**  
Church/Years at Current Church:  
**Senior pastor, Long Point Baptist Church, Houston (11)**  
Total Years in Ministry: 14



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

Despite renovations going on in our church building, we have found multiple creative ways of engaging our local community. From delivering goodie baskets filled with snacks to our very first pumpkin patch, we have seen God open up many doors to build new relationships. This has caused more guests on Sunday mornings and the opportunity for our church members to show the love of Christ to first-time visitors.

**WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES IN YOUR MINISTRY LATELY?**

Limited space for mid-week Bible studies, events, and everyday operations. However, even though renovations have taken away multiple programs for the time being, this has caused many of our members to rise up to the occasion and provide their own resources for the growth of the church body. Truly amazing!

**Morgan Goodrow** Age: 30  
Church/Years at Current Church:  
**Minister of preschool and children, Lakeland Baptist Church, Lewisville (9)**  
Total Years in Ministry: 10



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

Don't get so wrapped up in your own convictions about what is "best" that you miss how God is actually moving. What worked last year may not work this year, and that's OK. Keep adapting, keep pivoting, and don't get stuck in what is comfortable.

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

I want to see parents who have been apathetic or overwhelmed with disciplining their own children take a leap of faith into having more Deuteronomy 6 moments with them. I want parents to be so in love with God that their children are consumed by the same fire. I want to see God open their eyes, convict their hearts, and give them the courage it takes to be the disciplemakers He is calling them to be.

**HOW CAN OTHER SBTC CHURCHES BE PRAYING FOR YOU?**

Pray for protection against burnout. Pray that as we seek revival for our church that I would lead through transparency and dependency.

# Church Positions

For the latest listings, visit [texan.digital/church-positions](http://texan.digital/church-positions)

## PASTOR

**Oakville Baptist Church, Oakville** seeks a FT pastor. We are affiliated with the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention and adhere to the BF&M 2000. Our mission: to lead people in believing in Christ, belonging to a local church family, and becoming mature disciples of Christ. Email resume to [OakvilleBCPastorsearch@yahoo.com](mailto:OakvilleBCPastorsearch@yahoo.com).

**Kentuckytown Baptist Church in Whitewright** is prayerfully and actively searching God's Heart for who He has chosen to be our next FT shepherd, pastor, and preacher. Please send resume with references to: [kbcresume22@gmail.com](mailto:kbcresume22@gmail.com).

**McMahan Baptist Church, McMahan (Dale)** is seeking a FT pastor for a small rural church. Full job posting on the SBTC job board. Send resume to [jwhite.mbc@yahoo.com](mailto:jwhite.mbc@yahoo.com) or mail it to: McMahan Baptist Church, 6084 FM 713, Dale, TX 78616.

**FBC Springtown** is seeking a FT senior pastor. We are a SBTC church in a growing community. Send resume to [fbcsttown@firstbaptistspring.town](mailto:fbcsttown@firstbaptistspring.town) (attention Pastor Search Committee).

**Oak Street Baptist Church Graham** is seeking a FT senior pastor. Please send cover letter and resume to: [oakstreetbaptistchurchsearch@gmail.com](mailto:oakstreetbaptistchurchsearch@gmail.com). Please refer to NextStep Connections posting for pastor profile.

**New Hebron Baptist Church of Elysian Fields** is seeking a FT senior pastor. Min 5 years experience with masters/seminary degree. Church and pastor profiles are posted at: [newhebronbaptistchurch.com](http://newhebronbaptistchurch.com). Interested candidates should email resumes to [nhbc.psc22@gmail.com](mailto:nhbc.psc22@gmail.com).

**Trinity Hills Baptist Church, Benbrook** is seeking a FT senior pastor. Send resume to [pastorsearch@trinityhills.org](mailto:pastorsearch@trinityhills.org).

**First Baptist Church, Skidmore**, a traditional Southern Baptist Church, is seeking a FT pastor. Send resume to: [fbcskidmorepsc@gmail.com](mailto:fbcskidmorepsc@gmail.com).

**First Baptist Church, China** is seeking a FT pastor. Email resume to: [fbccchinapsc2022@gmail.com](mailto:fbccchinapsc2022@gmail.com)

**Highland Terrace BC in Greenville** is seeking a FT senior pastor. Please send resumes to [pastorsearch@highlandterrace.org](mailto:pastorsearch@highlandterrace.org).

**West End Baptist Church, Beaumont** seeks a FT or bivocational pastor. We are a financially secure, loving congregation that enjoys traditional worship. Send resume to WEBC, 8180 Phelan Blvd., Beaumont, TX 77706, or email [webcbeaumont@gmail.com](mailto:webcbeaumont@gmail.com).

**Second Baptist Church of Amarillo** is seeking a FT lead pastor. Email resume to [sbcpsc@sbcama.org](mailto:sbcpsc@sbcama.org).

**Pinecrest Baptist Church, Linden** is seeking a FT pastor with at least 3 years of staff experience and a seminary graduate. Please send resume to P.O. Box 1002, Linden, TX 75563.

**Hope Reformed Baptist Church in Port Lavaca** is seeking a permanent FT pastor. We are a 50-person church located on the Gulf Coast of South Texas. For more information email [ruston.raybon@outlook.com](mailto:ruston.raybon@outlook.com).

**Calvary Baptist Church, Woodville** is seeking the pastor God has chosen to lead us into the future. The position is bivocational, but with opportunity for a status change as the church grows. The compensation includes use of a parsonage, as well as paid utilities. Email resumes to [bk.harding@gmail.com](mailto:bk.harding@gmail.com).

**First Baptist Church, Splendora** is seeking a bivocational pastor. Church is located just outside of Houston in a rural area with great potential for growth. Send resume to [wecare@fbcsplendora.org](mailto:wecare@fbcsplendora.org).

**Mt. Hebron Missionary Baptist Church**, 1233 State Highway 66 Garland, TX 75040, is seeking a PT interim pastor. Email resume to [pastorsearch@onthemount.org](mailto:pastorsearch@onthemount.org).

**Forest Grove Church, Lucas** is seeking a bivocational pastor. Email resume to [gary@rodenbaughs.com](mailto:gary@rodenbaughs.com).

**Second Baptist Church of Jacinto City** in Houston seeks a bilingual (English/Spanish) bivocational pastor to shepherd our church to its next chapter of God's plan. Please respond by submitting resume to [SecondBaptistJC@outlook.com](mailto:SecondBaptistJC@outlook.com).

**Garner Baptist Church Weatherford** is seeking a PT or bivocational pastor. We are a small, faithful congregation with room to grow in a growing community. Please send resumes to [GarnerBaptist@gmail.com](mailto:GarnerBaptist@gmail.com).

## MUSIC

**Hillcrest Baptist Church in Cedar Hill** is seeking a FT minister of worship who is well-versed in leading traditional and contemporary praise. This includes leading the production team, recruiting/scheduling/organizing worship teams for all services, and producing special music events. Apply online at [www.hillcrestbc.com/about/jobs](http://www.hillcrestbc.com/about/jobs).

**Sherwood Baptist Church, Odessa** is seeking a FT minister of music and outreach to lead Christ-centered worship, reach people with the gospel, and connect them to our church family. Send resumes to: [personnel@sherwood.church](mailto:personnel@sherwood.church).

**FBC Alta Loma in Santa Fe** is looking for a PT minister of music. Santa Fe is located in between Houston and Galveston. Apartment with paid utilities available. Call 409-925-3505 for more details.

**The Endeavor Church in Forney** is seeking a PT worship leader. Young, multicultural, contemporary, and growing congregation of about 70+ is a 1½ year old church plant. For more details text Pastor Kyle at 214-773-8000.

**Nolan River Road in Cleburne** seeks a PT music minister. Experience leading a blended but contemporary leaning service preferred. To apply, send cover letter and resume to [allenc@fbcjewett.org](mailto:allenc@fbcjewett.org).

Lord. Resumes can be sent to [officefbcactx@gmail.com](mailto:officefbcactx@gmail.com).

**Emmanuel Baptist Church in Pittsburg** is searching for a FT student minister. Please visit our website for application and more information: [www.emmanuelpittsburg.org/staffapplications](http://www.emmanuelpittsburg.org/staffapplications).

**FBC Sealy** is seeking a FT youth minister. Join us as we "Be the Church" for our community! Feel free to email us if you have any questions before applying. Email questions and resume to [YouthSearch@fbcsealy.net](mailto>YouthSearch@fbcsealy.net).

**FBC New Braunfels** is seeking a FT student and college pastor. He will teach students (7th grade - college) the essential doctrines of the Christian faith and to communicate and apply the truth of Scripture. To apply please visit: [www.fbcnb.org/student-pastor-search](http://www.fbcnb.org/student-pastor-search).

**First Baptist Church, Jacksboro** is seeking a FT student pastor with a passion for making disciples and a desire to guide students to make a difference for Christ's kingdom in our church, schools, and community. Those interested in joining our staff team may submit resumes or inquire at [info@fbcjacksboro.net](mailto:info@fbcjacksboro.net).

**First Baptist Church, Stowell** is seeking FT or PT youth minister to reach students with the gospel and disciple them, seek out service projects for youth and their families, and support the core values of FBC Stowell. Contact Daniel Andrews at [dandrew0@yahoo.com](mailto:dandrew0@yahoo.com) or Shane Frederick at [dandsshane@gmail.com](mailto:dandsshane@gmail.com).

**First Baptist, Burk Burnett** ([fbcburk.com](http://fbcburk.com)) is seeking a FT associate pastor of students. Healthy church and staff culture. Competitive salary & full benefits (health + dental) for entire family. Send resume to [office@fbcburk.com](mailto:office@fbcburk.com).

**First Baptist Jewett** 509 West Division Street Jewett, TX 75846, is seeking a PT youth minister. Contact Allen Crosby at [allenc@fbcjewett.org](mailto:allenc@fbcjewett.org).

## CHILDREN

**First Baptist Church, Katy** is seeking a FT children's minister to lead in vision-casting, coordinating, and developing authentic community of discipleship for children and their families within K1 Kids Children's Ministry. Submit resume via [info@katsfirst.org](mailto:info@katsfirst.org).

**Travis Avenue Baptist Church, Fort Worth** is seeking a FT children's minister. Seminary grad, 5 year exp. or more. Complete package. Send resume and questions to [johnny.derouen@travis.org](mailto:derouen@travis.org).

## COMBINATION

**Bannockburn Church, Austin** is seeking a FT associate campus pastor/student pastor to help establish and grow the student ministry. Contact Brett Connolly, [brett@vanderbloemen.com](mailto:brett@vanderbloemen.com)

**First Baptist Church of Caldwell** is seeking a FT staff person to minister in the area of children & one other area (based on giftedness/experience). The church is located in a rural-but-growing town. Send resume to FBC Caldwell, P.O. Box 609 Caldwell, TX 77836 or email to [pastor@fbccaldwell.org](mailto:pastor@fbccaldwell.org).

**First Baptist Church Crane** is seeking a FT worship & student pastor. This is an exciting opportunity to serve in a growing church. Email resume to [chris@fbccrane.com](mailto:chris@fbccrane.com).

**Emmanuel Church, Weatherford** is seeking a FT pastor for worship & family ministry. We are looking for someone with a passion to lead volunteer teams and make disciples. Email: [Search@emmanuelweatherford.com](mailto:Search@emmanuelweatherford.com).

**Chapel of the Hills BC, Buchanan Dam** is seeking a FT associate pastor of youth and worship. Chapel of the Hills is a growing church with a blended service, seeking an

individual to continue building its youth program and lead the congregation in worship. Please send resume to [staffing@hillcountrychapel.com](mailto:staffing@hillcountrychapel.com).

**Meadows Baptist**, 3301 Los Rios Blvd, Plano, TX 75074 is seeking a FT worship and communication pastor. Send resume to [searchteam@meadowsbaptist.org](mailto:searchteam@meadowsbaptist.org).

**Nolan River Road Baptist Church** is praying for an experienced FT associate pastor to lead our next-gen ministries. This person will serve as the primary support person for the senior pastor and as the primary overseer of the youth and family ministry of NRRBC. Email Adam Mathews at [office@nrrbc.org](mailto:office@nrrbc.org).

## OTHER

**Nassau Bay Baptist Church, Houston** is seeking applicants for a FT associate pastor. Please send resumes and a cover letter to [pastor@nbbchurch.org](mailto:pastor@nbbchurch.org).

**Southcrest Baptist Church, Lubbock** is seeking a FT college pastor. The college pastor's purpose is to create a culture and strategy in the college team and ministry that helps a growing number of college students find their greatest pleasure and purpose in Jesus. Email resume to Brett Connolly, [brett@vanderbloemen.com](mailto:brett@vanderbloemen.com).

**Lakeview Baptist Church (LBC), Belton** seeks a FT associate pastor of family ministries who, along with his family, will have a heart for children, youth ministries, and local missions. Email resume to [pastorbob@lbcbelton.org](mailto:pastorbob@lbcbelton.org).

**First Baptist Church of Keller** is seeking a FT (Monday-Thursday) HR/administration ministry assistant to support our HR/administrative team. Email BJ Cranford at [bjcranford@fbckeeper.org](mailto:bjcranford@fbckeeper.org).

**South Side BC Abilene** is looking for a FT associate pastor who is passionate about teaching, overseeing, planning, and developing leaders. You will assist the lead pastor especially in areas of college, men, and adult discipleship ministry. Please send resumes to [blake@ssbpastor.org](mailto:blake@ssbpastor.org).

**First Baptist Church, Vidor** is seeking a FT executive director of Nehemiah's Vision to lead our organization in helping families and churches rebuild after disasters such as storms and floods. To receive a job description or send resume, email [andynarramore2@gmail.com](mailto:andynarramore2@gmail.com).

**North Richland Hills BC, North Richland Hills** is seeking a FT business services coordinator for their financial office - FT bookkeeper, payroll, HR, office support. Send resume to [nrbc.org/jobs](mailto:nrbc.org/jobs).

**Texas Baptist Home for Children, Waxahachie** is seeking a FT development supervisor for TBHC foster care & adoption. Must have a 4-year degree and 2 years experience is preferred. Apply at [www.tbhc.org](http://www.tbhc.org).

**The Servant House**, a small multiethnic church, is seeking a PT media director. Pay range is \$400.00 to \$600.00 depending on experience. Send resume to The Servant House, 911 West Round Grove Road Lewisville, TX 75067 or email [duffer4him@gmail.com](mailto:duffer4him@gmail.com).

**The Servant House, Lewisville** is seeking a PT Christian education pastor for a small multi-ethnic loving church. Please contact Will Langstaff at [duffer4him@gmail.com](mailto:duffer4him@gmail.com).

# Paid Classifieds

For the latest listings, visit [texan.digital/church-positions](http://texan.digital/church-positions)

## PASTOR

**Parkway Baptist Church, Creve Coeur, MO** seeks a FT senior pastor to lead our church into the future. Parkway Baptist is located in an increasingly diverse area of West St. Louis County, MO. Please visit our website at [www.parkwaybaptist.net](http://www.parkwaybaptist.net) for more information about the church. Send resume and cover letter to [pastorsearch@parkwaybaptist.net](mailto:pastorsearch@parkwaybaptist.net) or Senior Pastor Search Committee, 12465 Olive Blvd, St. Louis, MO 63141.

**FBC Hollis, OK** is prayerfully seeking a FT pastor. Small town that is close to Amarillo, OKC, and Lubbock. Parsonage is provided. Please send resume to: FBC, P.O. Box 589, Hollis, OK 73550 or [fbcollis@pldi.net](mailto:fbcollis@pldi.net).

**Christian Temple Church Colorado City, TX**, is seeking a FT senior pastor for a non-denominational church. Size: 100-150 Sunday School (9:45) Sunday worship: (10:45) Wednesday (5:45) meal for youth and adults Wednesday (6:15-7:30) Youth and Adult Bible Study Qualifications: Minimum qualifications for this position are described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Compensation - competitive annual salary. Please email résumé which includes your qualifications, [Forresthubbard6@gmail.com](mailto:Forresthubbard6@gmail.com).

## YOUTH

**Concord Baptist, Anderson, South Carolina** is seeking a FT student pastor (grades 6-12). Degree required from an accredited seminary and minimum of three years church/ministry experience. Submit resumes via e-mail to [jjames@concordbaptist.com](mailto:jjames@concordbaptist.com) or to Concord Baptist, 1012 Concord Road, Anderson, SC 29621, Attn: Dr. Don Cox.

## OTHER

**Crowfield Baptist Church of Goose Creek, SC** is seeking candidates for a FT ministerial staff position entitled Great Commission Pastor. This man will lead our church's discipleship, outreach, and missions ministries. Candidates must possess an M.Div. or equivalent (or higher) degree from an accredited seminary. A minimum of five years of ministerial experience is preferred. Please email resumes to Crowfield Baptist Church, Attn: Great Commission Pastor Search Team, [mdenton@crowfieldbaptist.org](mailto:mdenton@crowfieldbaptist.org).

**Audubon Park Baptist Church, Garland** is offering the following items - contributions not required: black baby grand piano, 42 green choir robes, choir music collections. If interested, email the church at [apbcstaff@att.net](mailto:apbcstaff@att.net).

**Cash paid for large and small libraries.** Baker Book House has been buying and selling used Christian books since 1939. Please email us at [greg.stevens@bakerbookhouse.com](mailto:greg.stevens@bakerbookhouse.com) or call 616-957-3110.

**FBC Mansfield has 4 portable buildings for sale:** Portable Buildings 1 & 2: 64 x 25. Beige and brown trim color. Concrete siding outside material. Used as youth ministry area. Two entrance doors. Windows in unit. Insulated and with lighting. Two HVAC units. Recently remodeled. Entrance ramp and steps. \$14,500 each. Portable Building 3: 90 x 25. Same attributes as Buildings 1 & 2. With front and side entrances, 4 locations. Entrance ramp and steps for front and side locations. \$19,500. Portable Building 4: 24 x 44. Same attributes as Buildings 1 & 2. Used as annex office area. Front and rear entrances with porch. HVAC unit and water heater. Restroom with shower. Two office rooms with seven workstations, total. Large common area room with a separate private room. Entrance ramp and steps for front and rear locations included. \$24,500. Please send direct inquiries about all 4 buildings to the Facilities Director, [Tray@firstmansfield.com](mailto:Tray@firstmansfield.com), at First Baptist Church, Mansfield, (817) 463-1161.

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# You can make a difference in the life of a missionary

Last year, International Mission Board President Paul Chitwood asked every IMB missionary to make connections with 10 Southern Baptist churches. This was one of the IMB's best decisions over the past 10 years.

Building stronger relationships between missionaries on the field and SBC churches has obviously produced financial results, as Lottie Moon Christmas Offering giving this past year set an all-time record at \$203.7 million. However, another reason this emphasis on building such relationships is so important is that it can breathe life into struggling missionary units—especially first-term missionaries.

Our family served two separate terms with the IMB in different locations. Looking back, I realize those years on the field were the loneliest years of my life. I have spoken with many missionaries who have this same struggle. Missionaries live in a culture not their own and communicate in a foreign language. We often endure governmental or social corruption that targets us for exploitation. Consider all this with the fact we leave behind every relationship in our lives to serve the Lord. We struggled every day during those years feeling like we didn't belong and often felt we were just barely hanging on.

But God had already placed in our lives the support system that kept us moving forward in the work: our sending church. Not only our pastoral staff, but also members of our church were continuously checking in on us and trying to find ways to minister to us. Unfortunately, many missionaries do not have sending churches that engage to that level.

Here are a few ways churches can reach out and provide missionary care to those serving on the mission field:

## CONNECT

Start communicating with a missionary on the field. This can be done by responding to an email sent to you from an IMB missionary or through reaching out to the IMB's church mobilization strategist. For more information about how to connect with missionaries on the field, visit [imb.org/for-churches](http://imb.org/for-churches).

## PRAY

Ask your missionary unit how you can specifically be praying for them. Then take those prayer requests before your church and lift them up weekly. Missionaries need your prayers as much as they need your financial support.

## CARE PACKAGES

Many churches don't have the financial means to send teams overseas, but there are cheaper ways to support a missionary. Care packages are a great tangible way to foster relationships. The time used to discover what a missionary needs, or misses from home, helps build relationships. The packages we received reminded us that we were loved and understood.

## TRIPS

Take a trip to serve with your missionaries that intentionally incorporates missionary care into the trip. Come join in their strategy to reach their people group, but leave them feeling blessed and loved.

## BE THE CHURCH

Missionaries leave behind friends and family members who are lost. They trust and need American churches to continue to intentionally share the gospel and preach the Word of God so their loved ones will come to know Christ and be like Him.

SBC churches have done an amazing job financially supporting the IMB, and those missionaries are incredibly grateful. But they need relational support as well. Let's strive to be the lifeline that keeps missionary units on the field expanding the kingdom of God.



David Washer is associate pastor for administration and missions at Lane Prairie Baptist Church in Joshua.

# WHAT'S UP NEXT?

2022/23 CALENDAR



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## LOTTIE MOON CHRISTMAS OFFERING

DEC. 4-11

[lottiemoon.org](http://lottiemoon.org)



## TAX SEMINARS

JAN. 17, 18, 24, 26 VIRTUAL

[sbtx.com/tax](http://sbtx.com/tax)



## M3 WKND

JAN. 13-14 EULESS

[sbtx.com/students](http://sbtx.com/students)

## DECEMBER

1 Student Ministers Getaway, Austin

9 Pastor/Wife Date Night, San Antonio

## JANUARY

21 Women's Roundtable (multisite)

23 Bivo Pastors Network Regional Gathering, Grapevine

## FEBRUARY

6 Bivo Pastors Network Remote Gathering

24-25 Empower Spanish Session (Apoderados), Irving

27-28 Empower Conference, Irving

27 Interim Pastor Equipping, Irving



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