



The Alabama Baptist

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May 30, 2019

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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

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New home for FBC Sutherland Springs built by Alabama construction firm

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Photo courtesy of Gulf Shores and Orange Beach Tourism

Jesus on the BEACH

Civic leaders, churches work to keep Alabama beaches family-friendly

By **Martha Simmons**
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Sugar white sands, warm blue waters and great seafood aren't the only selling points city leaders want to emphasize in marketing Alabama's Gulf Coast beaches: "Family-friendly" is key to the brand.

Orange Beach and Gulf Shores have worked for years to protect that image and

avoid the kind of hard-partying reputation drawing hordes of college students to beach towns in neighboring Florida.

For instance a 2013 Orange Beach ordinance banned public display of particularly naughty T-shirts and trinkets, resulting in area souvenir shops removing the blush-inducing items from their stores in both communities.

Baldwin Baptist Association also ensures families are a focus of its Gulf Area Resort Ministry (GARM), said Rick Ellison, Baldwin's associational mission strategist.

"We feel that our beach area is really a missions field," El-

lison said. "We use every opportunity to minister to families and to share the gospel."

The association works to ensure no shortage of worship services for seasonal visitors exists, Ellison said, offering multiple Sunday services at state parks, RV parks and on the beach.

One-on-one evangelism

"Baldwin Baptist Association churches reach out in these resort communities in different ways," GARM director Nate Diehl said. "Individually churches are reaching out on their own as part of their regular ministry efforts. They connect wherever the

door is open to do so."

For instance the Beach Outreach teams from First Baptist, Gulf Shores, engage in one-on-one evangelism on the beach throughout the summer and spring break, and offer prayer, transportation services and food to those in need.

"On the beaches we provide bottled water labeled with Scripture, salvation bracelets, face painting and other things in an effort to connect with visitors and share Jesus with them," Diehl said. "Often we are able to have prayer with families or individuals when those connections are made and the gospel is presented.

(See 'Baldwin,' page 17)

TAB to host benefit for tornado relief

Earlier this year *The Alabama Baptist* staff was excited to host several evenings of music and entertainment at our Servant/Leadership Appreciation Night events held across the state.

Now another evening of entertainment is planned Aug. 2 from 6 to 8 p.m., at Providence Baptist Church, Opelika, in Tuskegee Lee Baptist Association.

The same great lineup of comedy, music and illusion is planned for the event, but this time the focus is to provide encouragement and financial help to those whose lives were changed forever by the March 3 tornadoes that struck the Beaugard and Smiths Station communities in Lee County.



Photo by Tracy Riggs

On March 30 a night of fun and entertainment took place at Calvary Baptist Church, Wetumpka. The event was organized to bring a time of laughter and encouragement to a community that experienced a damaging tornado in mid-January.

Still work to be done

Twenty-three people were killed that day and hundreds were left homeless. In the aftermath volunteers staged out of Providence Baptist, where Rusty Sowell is pastor.

Bill King, associational mission strategist for Tuskegee Lee Association, said people in Lee County

are making progress, but there is still a lot of work to be done.

(To learn more about how you or your church or organization can help financially or by volunteering in cleanup and building projects, see King's article "How you can help the hurting" on page 4.)

The *TAB* benefit night is another way you can help those recovering from the damage of the tornadoes.

Donations will be taken at the door, and all proceeds will be used by Providence Baptist to help with the recovery and rebuilding efforts taking place across the county.

Thanks to Walmart for leading the way with a \$1,000 donation.

Doors open at 5:15 p.m. No reservations are necessary. The event is family-friendly for all ages.

Lineup of entertainers:

- ▶ Pianist Frank Jones
- ▶ Illusionist David Garrard
- ▶ Comedian Mickey Bell
- ▶ Gospel trio New Ground
- ▶ Comedian Aaron Wilburn

Bell said the evening will be a time to enjoy fellowship and encouragement with one another in a "fun and relaxed way" following months of cleanup. (*TAB*)

TAB's Watts celebrates 50 years in Baptist ministry

Fifty years ago Cynthia Walker Watts began her ministry as summer youth director at Eastern Hills Baptist Church, Montgomery, while a student at Judson College in Marion.

Since then she has served at Heritage Baptist Church, Montgomery; and First Baptist Church, Dothan; as well as churches in Georgia and Florida.

Her most recent post was children's ministry director at First Baptist Church, Birmingham.

In addition to staff positions

Watts has written curriculum for LifeWay Christian Resources, conducted training as a LifeWay ministry multiplier and state special worker in cities all over the U.S., including Ridgecrest, North Carolina, and Morieta, New Mexico.

She continues to serve as a special worker for Alabama Baptist Sunday School.

Watts' current ministry position is as executive assistant to the president and editor-in-chief of *The Alabama Baptist*, a position she started in January 2019. (*TAB*)



WATTS

VOICE YOUR OPINION

SPEAK UP on issues in the Baptist world by writing a letter to the editor of *The Alabama Baptist*.

Remember to:

- Include your name and address
- Focus on issues, not people
- Be as concise as possible

P	R	O	P	H	E	T		C	A	L	E	B
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"If ye continue in My word, then ... ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:31-32

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MY RASHIONALE

By **Jennifer Davis Rash**
President and Editor-in-Chief

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@RashionalThts



Culture of retweets and emoji-responses changes how we think

The conversation about the stained-glass windows of leaders within the conservative resurgence continues to surface among Baptists and others.

Sometimes the focus is on supporters being upset about the recent removal of those windows from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas; other times it is astonishment that such windows ever existed.

A good bit of discussion and plenty of opinions on the topic have been shared on various social media platforms, but *The Alabama Baptist* has only received one actual letter to the editor about the windows (a letter we ran in the May 2 issue).

I'll admit I have been surprised no one wrote to counter the defense of the windows noted by the recent letter writer.

But I was more surprised to learn that some readers assumed *TAB* had publicly announced an opinion on the matter because the submitted letter was published in the paper. Because the letter was published *TAB* staff must agree, the argument went.

The assumption confused me because the letter was clearly marked "Letter to the Editor" and was on the "Opinion" spread in the paper.

Traditionally what happens when a letter to the editor is printed in a newspaper or magazine is other readers who have differing opinions write a response and send it along to the editor as well.

The response is typically pub-

lished and then some back and forth is allowed until nothing new is being presented in the discussion.

The point of a letters to the editor section is not to express the opinion of the media outlet but to allow readers with varying viewpoints to explain their stance on the issue without name calling or mean-spirited attacks. To do this fairly means allowing subscribers and readers of the publication to share their true personal opinions.

So how was the recent letter assumed as *TAB*'s official opinion by some?

Likely because of the retweet and emoji-response culture for opinions posted on social media. How could I have missed that? It makes perfect sense.

Because so many intense discussions are now happening at warp speed on Twitter and Facebook people are agreeing or disagreeing instantaneously and passing the agreement or disagreement along immediately with an emoji-response, retweet or sharing of the post.

For those participating in or at least observing these cyber conversations the concept of retweeting would naturally flow

over into an opinion piece being printed in a publication.

Retweeting someone's comments on Twitter without offering a differing opinion indicates support or agreement. If we follow the same line of thinking then comments printed in *TAB* without a contradiction noted could be seen as support or agreement even on the "Opinion" page.

What this means for letters to the editor going forward I'm not quite sure yet, but it definitely has me considering ways to ensure both sides of issues are always presented together. 🌈

RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

TAB editors Macon, Baggett, Terry and now Rash — Mrs. Roberta tested; Mrs. Roberta approved

In January of this year Mrs. Roberta shared with her family that she wasn't so sure about the new editor of *The Alabama Baptist* (*TAB*).

She enjoyed the weekly publication like it was, her daughter-in-law explained as Mrs. Roberta nodded and added, "I knew it would change with a new editor and I wasn't sure I would like it."

But being the longtime, loyal reader she is, Mrs. Roberta decided to give it — and me — a chance. After all, she did the same for Bob Terry when he stepped into the role in 1995.

"I wasn't so sure about him either," she said with a chuckle.

And then there was Hudson Baggett who followed Leon Macon in 1966. She was skeptical of Dr. Baggett at first as well.



Photo by Debbie Campbell
Roberta Perrin (left) & Jennifer Davis Rash

I was a bit starstruck to meet this amazing lady who not only knew about our history but also has lived so much of it through the pages of *TAB* under four editors now.

She was born in 1921, two years after *TAB* became an official entity of the Alabama Baptist State Con-

vention and L.L. Gwaltney was named editor.

Mrs. Roberta didn't recall reading *TAB* under Dr. Gwaltney's leadership, but she definitely remembered Dr. Macon, who began as editor in 1950.

That means Mrs. Roberta started reading and engaging with *TAB* in her early 30s. And she hasn't missed a week — at least generally speaking — since.

So the pressure was on as I waited to hear the verdict. Did I pass the test? Would my column need to change to "Ir-Rashional Thoughts" after Mrs. Roberta's evaluation?

I felt a little nervous but then she gave me a hug, a big smile and a glowing review. Whew! Today's *TAB* and its current editor are Mrs. Roberta approved. 🌈

Your Voice



Share your comments, letters to the editor, blog excerpts, social media posts

How you can help the hurting in Lee County

By Bill King

AMS, Tuskegee Lee Baptist Association

More than two months have passed since horrific EF-4 tornadoes ripped through Lee County on March 3. Twenty-three people in Beauregard lost their lives that Sunday afternoon. Hundreds of residents in Beauregard and Smiths Station lost their homes. Grieving families and friends have laid their loved ones to rest. The injured are on the road to recovery. The property cleanup is still in pro-

cess and the rebuilding has begun. Life for many has not been the same but prayerfully and with much help they are making progress.

The outpouring of love and help has been staggering as well as heartwarming. Volunteers, phone calls, prayers and donations have come from across the nation.

I have been reminded many times that God comes through even when people sometimes don't. For example an out-of-state missions team had volunteered to come help us

tear down a storm-damaged house but had to cancel. I dreaded telling the homeowners the sad news.

However the very next day I received a message from Cal McIntyre, pastor of Mount Olive Baptist Church, Talladega, saying they wanted to come help us rebuild. When I asked if they would be willing to help tear down, he said, "Absolutely. Our team has a couple of guys who made their living tearing down houses."

How about you? Would you like to help? Rebuilding will be going on for quite some time. With funding from MEND, an initiative of East Alabama Medical Center (EAMC), the Fuller Center for Housing has already built and dedicated three new houses here. Volunteers are needed when they return to build 10 more the week of Sept. 30–Oct. 4. You or your team can sponsor the building of a house or volunteer to work. Register online at fullercenter.org. You may also contact my office at tuskegeelee@aol.com or EAMC (334-528-MEND) with questions. We need your help and we certainly appreciate it!

EDITOR'S NOTE — Bill King is associational mission strategist for Tuskegee Lee Baptist Association. The Alabama Baptist will host a benefit event for Lee County tornado relief Aug. 2, 2019, at 6 p.m. at Providence Baptist Church, Opelika, which served as a main hub of disaster relief work.

Though there was tragedy, God brings roses out of the ashes. He brings glory through those who are called according to His purpose even when we don't understand everything that is happening.

Pastor Frank Pomeroy
First Baptist Church
Sutherland Springs, Texas

We go to the hard places, we attempt the difficult things, not to be impressive, but for the glory of God and the work of His Kingdom and the salvation of the lost.

President Chuck Kelley
New Orleans Baptist
Theological Seminary

As a pastor, I realize I only have bandwidth to be known for a few things. And I want that bandwidth to be taken up by the gospel.

J.D. Greear
Author of "Above All: The Gospel Is the Source of the Church's Renewal"

People today are hurting physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually. Jesus' power can change anyone, and you are the conduit through which it flows.

President Jeff Iorg
Gateway Seminary

Letters to the Editor

The Alabama Baptist is great and I read it cover to cover. When I was in the service (long ago) my church sent me the paper each week and it was like being home. I could read all the local news and keep up with the Bible study.

Let me also comment on the new format — it was great before and is now even better. The Alabama Baptist just gets better each week.

Frank Britt
Leeds, Ala.

Since Roe v. Wade, abortion has stolen lifetimes worth of experiences from over 60 million Americans. This issue deserves our attention, our passion and

our resolve. We have work to do.

As people who identify as pro-life, we must address the circumstances that drive many to think abortion is the only option.

This means giving cheerfully and generously to the relief of the poor and to the support of adoption agencies.

It also means reaching out in love and compassion, not self-righteousness and judgment, to those who have had abortions or are in the midst of considering them.

Forgiveness, we would do well to remember, does not discriminate.

Parker Snider
Director of Policy Analysis
Alabama Policy Institute

Share online or email news@thealabamabaptist.org

“Evangelism is a work of the Holy Spirit.”

RICK GAGE
Evangelist, Go Tell Ministries

I very much appreciate the long hours and hard work the Alabama Legislature has put into helping address the complex, multi-faceted issues facing our prison system. ... I believe everyone — the Legislature, the Department of Justice, the courts and, most especially, the people of Alabama — realizes there is no single solution and there are no easy answers. ... I truly believe that together, we will finally take the necessary steps to move our corrections system toward a more stable, safer future.

Kay Ivey
Governor of Alabama

If your church facility is extremely underused, consider partnering with a church plant or like-minded

ministry. Many of them need space, and some churches have a great amount of unused space. Be creative in how and who uses your church facility during the week. Use your facility to minister to the community when possible.

Thom Rainer
thomrainer.com

Every human being ought to be treated with dignity, but placing sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes in this kind of legislation (the Equality Act passed by the U.S. House of Representatives on May 17) would have harmful consequences.

Russell Moore
President, Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC)

Catholicism’s definition of marriage is one man, one woman. Nothing else is marriage. We will respect the law, but it’s not our religion.

Chen Ke
Catholic priest in Vietnam speaking against the country’s legalization of gay “marriage”

If you had told me at Samford (University), “you are going to go to a church, you are going to stay there 42 years, you’re going to be working with children and still doing your magic,” I would have gone “you got the wrong crystal ball, buddy. Because that’s not me.”

David Garrard
Magician and retired children’s minister

From the *Twitterverse*

@Slsellers7170

Hurting people will never know you really care until [you] put the love of Christ into action. Sharing the love of Christ and then not showing the love of Christ will never meet the need of those in pain. We must do both.

@micahfries

The problem is, I fear that too many Christians view their Jesus through a Republican or Democrat lens. Until we can shed our political identities in favor of a Jesus-centered identity, the cause of life will never be best served.

@jcalvinward

“Whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life” (John 12:25). When I was in my early 30s I was just beginning my recording career. Did Jesus have

this perspective, in part, because he knew his life would be short? Probably a whole book about this.

@BruceAshford

[Jamie Dew] is one of my best friends in the world. Smart, humble, kind, strong leader, faithful. Congrats to him and to NOBTS!

@JohnAShepherd

I am incredibly proud to serve two families who have taken on this beautiful and difficult task of being a #FosterCare home. They are heroes of #life and #hope.

@bellevuepastor

It’s hard to strut and be cocky when you follow Someone who washed other people’s feet.

@NAMB_SBC

Every detail of the new worship

center for First Baptist Church of Sutherland Springs is designed with a purpose: to honor lives lost and look forward to the future.

@timkellernyc

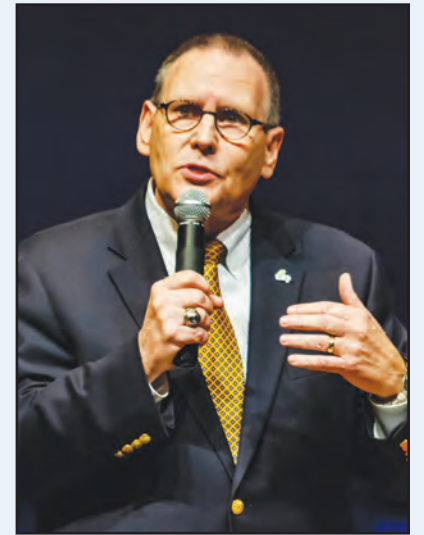
I am going to judge my circumstances by Jesus’ love, not Jesus’ love by my circumstances.

@BillyGraham

“Sin has tarnished every area of life, and Christ wants to erase its stain everywhere.” #BillyGraham

@Rgallaty

“The prayer offered to God in the morning during your quiet time is the key that unlocks the door of the day. Any athlete knows that it is the start that ensures a good finish.” —Adrian Rogers



TAB photo

Joe Godfrey serves as executive director of Alabama Citizens Action Program.

Lottery bill is dead

On May 21 the House of Representatives failed to pass the budget isolation resolution on Senate Bill 220 proposing a statewide lottery. Without the votes to support the bill, the lottery is dead for this session.

Bills to allow Greene and Macon counties to have electronic bingo machines (aka “slot machines”) at existing racetracks remained active in the Legislature at press time.

The bills could still come up before the end of the 2019 regular session, which may come as early as May 31. We hope to see these bills meet the same end as the lottery bill.

House Bill (HB) 361 which would legalize daily fantasy sports (DFS) in Alabama, was still under consideration by the Senate at press time.

This bill is not about friends and family playing season-long league games but is about online gambling. Proponents argue that it is not gambling because it involves skill. However, bad calls and injuries mean that a great deal of chance is involved.

Many people have lost thousands of dollars playing DFS and it must be pointed out that for someone to win others must lose — that is definitely gambling!

—Joe Godfrey

SBC annual meeting

related events

2019 SBC Pastors Conference

June 9–10, BJCC Legacy Arena
Website: SBCPC.net

9Marks @ 9

June 10–11, 9 p.m., BJCC Theater
Registration: eventbrite.com/
o/9marks-8189016644

Acteens for Life

June 7, 6 p.m., WMU National Office
Registration: wmu.com/acteensforlife

Baptist 21 Panel & Luncheon

June 11, 11:30 a.m., BJCC Concert Hall
Registration: eventbrite.com/e/2019-baptist21-panel-tickets-56440447899

Bivocational Luncheon

June 12, noon, BJCC, Level 3,
Forums G-H-I
Registration: Visit the Bivocational &
Small Church Leadership Network Booth
in the Exhibit Hall.

Council on Biblical Manhood & Womanhood Pastors' Panel

June 11, 7 a.m., BJCC Concert Hall

Executive Committee Plenary

June 10, 10 a.m., Sheraton Birmingham,
Level 2, Forum Theater

Fellowship of Baptist World Ministries

June 10, 8 a.m., BJCC, Level 3, Forum H

Fellowship of Native American Christians

June 10, 10 a.m., Sheraton Birmingham,
Level 3, Forum J

Filipino International Mission Board

June 11, 9 a.m., BJCC Concert Hall,
Level 1, Ballet Rehearsal Hall

Filipino Southern Baptist Fellowship of North America

June 10, 1 p.m., BJCC, Level 1,
East Ballroom B

For The Church Conference (Midwestern Seminary)

June 11, 11:30 a.m., BJCC, Level 1,
South Exhibit Hall
Registration: mbts.edu/event/ftc-at-sbc-birmingham/

Gateway Seminary Alumni & Friends

June 12, noon, BJCC, Level 3, Forum J
Registration: eventbrite.com/e/gateway-alumni-and-friends-luncheon-sbc-2019-tickets-59354036521

Gathering of Chinese Messengers

June 11, 3 p.m., BJCC, Level 2, Forum E

Child Care, Children & Youth

June 9–12, BJCC
Registration: sbcannualmeeting.net

Hispanic Leaders/Pastors Celebration

June 10, 4 p.m., BJCC, Level 3,
Forums G-H-I

IMB Dinner

June 10, 4:30 p.m., Sheraton Birmingham,
Level 1, Birmingham Ballroom
Registration: imb.org/events

LifeWay Breakfast

June 11, 6:30 a.m., BJCC, Level 1,
South Exhibit Hall
Registration: lifeway.com/SBCBreakfast

LifeWay Movie Screening — “Overcomer” by the Kendrick Brothers

June 11, 6:30 p.m., BJCC Concert Hall

Luther Rice Alumni & Friends

June 11, Noon, BJCC, Level 2, Forum B

Messenger Orientation

June 10, 4:30 p.m., BJCC, Level 2,
Forum A

Mid-America Seminary Alumni & Friends

June 11, 11 a.m., Sheraton Birmingham,
Level 3, Forums G-H-I
Registration: Call 901-751-3031

Midwestern Seminary Alumni & Friends

June 12, noon, BJCC, Level 1,
South Exhibit Hall

Ministers' Wives Luncheon

June 11, Noon, BJCC, Level 2,
South Meeting Rooms
Registration: lifeway.com/en/events/
ministers-wives-luncheon/womens-sbc-
ministers-wives-luncheon-2019-
birmingham.html

NAAF (National African-American Fellowship)

June 10, Sixth Avenue Baptist Church

NAMB Chaplains Fellowship

June 10, 3 p.m., BJCC Concert Hall —
Level 1, Ballet Rehearsal Hall
For more information, email David Bello
at chaplaincyevents@namb.net.

NAMB Send Luncheon

June 10, 11:30 a.m., BJCC Concert Hall
Registration: sendluncheon.namb.net

National Asian-American Fellowship

June 10, 7 p.m., BJCC, Level 1,
East Ballroom B

NOBTS Alumni & Friends

June 11, 6 p.m., Sheraton Birmingham,
Level 1, Birmingham Ballroom
Registration: wearenobts.org/pages/2019-
convention-banquet-registration

Ouachita Baptist University Alumni & Friends

June 11, 4:30 p.m., Sheraton Birmingham,
Level 2, Forum D

Pastors' Wives Session

June 10, 9 a.m., BJCC, Level 2,
South Meeting Rooms

Preschool Child Care

June 9, 8 a.m., BJCC, Level 3,
East Meeting Room D

Messenger Registration/Credentials

Beginning June 9, 4 p.m., BJCC, Level 2,
East Exhibit Hall Lobby
Pre-registration: sbcannualmeeting.net/
sbc19/preregistration

Samford University Alumni & Friends

June 12, 2 p.m., Sheraton Birmingham,
Level 2, Forum A

SBC Evangelists' Southwest Supper Sing-A-Long

June 10, 4:30 p.m., Sheraton Birmingham,
Level 3, Forum J

SBC of Virginia Reception

June 10, 8 p.m., BJCC Concert Hall,
Level 1, Green Room
Registration: eventbrite.com/e/dessert-
fellowship-at-the-southern-baptist-
convention-tickets-55019938116

SBC Women's Leadership Network Event

June 11, 8:30 p.m., Sheraton Birmingham,
Level 2, Forum A
Registration: eventbrite.com/e/womens-
leadership-network-at-sbc19-
tickets-59250931130

Sexual Abuse and the SBC Panel (ERLC)

June 10, 9 p.m., BJCC, Level 1,
South Exhibit Hall
Registration: erlc.com/upcoming-events/
sexual-abuse-and-the-southern-baptist-
convention

Southeastern Seminary Alumni & Friends

June 12, noon, BJCC, Level 2,
South Meeting Rooms

Southeastern Seminary Women's Leadership Breakfast

June 12, 7 a.m., BJCC, Level 1,
East Ballroom B
Registration: eventbrite.com/e/sbc-

womens-leadership-breakfast-hosted-by-
sebts-tickets-60273915905

Southern Baptists of Texas Reception

June 10, 8:30 p.m., BJCC Concert Hall,
Level 1, Lobby

Southern Seminary Alumni & Friends

June 12, noon, Sheraton Birmingham,
Level 1, Birmingham Ballroom
Registration: eventbrite.com/e/southern-
seminary-alumni-friends-luncheon-at-the-
sbc-tickets-53593555768

Southwestern Seminary Alumni & Friends

June 12, noon, Sheraton Birmingham,
Level 1, Birmingham Ballroom
Registration: swbts.edu/sbclunch

Tennessee Baptist Messenger Fellowship

June 10, 8:30 p.m., Sheraton Birmingham,
Level 2, Forum B

Union University Alumni & Friends Taco Buffet

June 11, 5 p.m., Cantina Laredo Restaurant

WMU General Sessions & Dessert Party

June 9, 3–5 p.m., The Church at Brook Hills
Registration: wmu.com/?q=simple-page/
annual-meeting-2019-pursue

WMU Missions Celebration

June 10, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (check-in opens
at 8 a.m.), WMU National Office
Registration: wmu.com/birmingham

Women & Work: Stepping into Kingdom Productivity

June 11, 7 p.m., Sheraton Birmingham,
Level 2, Forum Theater
Registration: eventbrite.com/e/women-
work-forum-be-inspired-to-take-
the-next-step-into-your-calling-
tickets-60240914196

Youth on Mission

June 11, 8 a.m., BJCC, Level 3,
East Meeting Room F
Registration: tinyurl.com/2019-YOM

Editor's Note — *The Alabama Baptist* is producing a special SBC issue exclusively for those attending the SBC and related activities as well as those connected to churches partnering with the various events. The issue will provide information related to the meetings as well as other features related to Alabama, Baptists and *The Alabama Baptist*. It will be available in print and on the SBC app.

'Gracious hospitality'

How Birmingham was chosen to host 2019 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Bill Townes' road to Birmingham began in 2014 — that's when the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) Executive Committee (EC) performed its first site visit there.

"Probably the most significant thing I remember is the gracious hospitality of those we interacted with in Birmingham," said Townes, the EC's vice president for convention finance who oversees planning for the SBC annual meeting. "They were genuinely excited about their city and about the possibility of welcoming and hosting Southern Baptists from around the United States to their hometown for an event our attendees would not soon forget."

Site visits

It would be the first of many site visits. Each year Townes and his colleagues are tasked with the overall responsibility of identifying possible future locations for the SBC annual meeting, then making a recommendation to the convention messengers for consideration.

It's a big job. There's a lot to consider.

First, does a city possess enough hotel rooms? For it to be a "yes," a city must have up to 4,000 hotel rooms, with a minimum of 1,500 rooms within two miles of the selected meeting venue, according to the convention guidelines written in 2011.

As for the meeting venue itself it must include a minimum seating capacity of 16,000 and an exhibit space of at least 90,000 square feet (that space also must be in the same building complex as the main convention hall). And of course there must be enough additional space in the building for luncheons, dinners and other meetings Southern Baptist groups want to host in conjunction with the main meeting.

The EC takes into consideration other factors too — such as cost, transportation accessibility and good geographic proximity to the Southern Baptist population. They also try to move it around as best they can.

"In practice that involves identifying eastern, central and western locations in a generalized rotation," Townes said.

Once they've identified some future sites they reach out to the city



Photo courtesy of Greater Birmingham Convention and Visitors Bureau

The Four Spirits memorial, across from Sixteenth Street Baptist Church at Kelly Ingram Park, was unveiled in 2013 and pays tribute to the four girls who lost their lives in the bombing of Sixteenth Street Baptist in 1963.

and facility and ask them to submit a "request for proposal" or RFP. Then after they receive the RFP they carry out even more site visits to review the venue and hotel accommodations.

And for each year's meeting the EC submits three RFPs.

"This multiple bid process allows us to negotiate the best possible pricing and venue for each year's SBC annual meeting in order to recommend several sites that have availability and fit our general site rotation pattern," Townes said.

Once the convention approves a site planning is in full swing. Five years out they finalize contracts with the hotels and convention center. One to two years out they select additional hotels. About a year out they start initial engagement with a local arrangements committee and have a gathering with the committee in October before the summer meeting.

Then in the meeting year site visits transpire in January, March and May, and monthly conference calls take place in February and April.

"As with any event this size it takes an incredibly committed team to make it happen," said Townes, who serves on the EC logistics planning team with Lynn Richmond, the meeting planner.

Townes has worked on seven of

the past SBC annual meetings and is currently working on eight future ones.

Richmond has worked on the past 25.

"I handle site visits, contracts, assign sub-blocks for entities and monitor all housing issues from beginning to end," Richmond said.

She also manages catering, equipment inventory, child care, security, police, shuttle services and a host of other things.

'Father's business'

"During the annual meeting my office is command central," Richmond said. "I like to say I am the 'fire chief' — I put out whatever fires come up during set-up and throughout the event."

Townes said each and every one of the EC staff is involved in multiple aspects of the planning and preparation each year, as are a number of volunteers and contractors.

"Each year I look forward to seeing all of the planning come to fruition to support the mission and ministries of Southern Baptists as we come together to be about our Father's business and to ultimately see Him glorified in all that we do as we renew our commitment to share the gospel around the world," he said. ✝



Photo courtesy of Greater Birmingham Convention and Visitors Bureau

Vulcan is the largest cast iron statue in the world. It was built to represent Birmingham's material resources at the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis. It now sits atop Red Mountain at 1701 Valley View Drive overlooking the city.

Mount Signal Baptist Church honors local police officers

By Michael J. Brooks
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Mount Signal Baptist Church, Chelsea, in Shelby Baptist Association, honored police officers May 19, including a special remembrance of Sgt. WyTasha Lamar Carter, a Birmingham police officer killed in January.

“National Peace Officers Memorial Day is May 15 so I thought it would be a good time to try to do this,” said Mount Signal pastor Leonard Irvin. “This is a difficult time for police officers. We wanted to take a moment and honor them in our church.”

Irvin’s background in law enforcement gave him the idea to honor local officers during the service.

‘Happy to help’

Irvin worked in the Birmingham Police Department for 23 years and at the Jefferson County Youth Detention Center for more than 15 years.

“I called the chief’s office in Birmingham for guidance and his administrative assistant remembered me from years ago. She put me in touch with a liaison officer who was happy to help us. She attended the service and brought a contingent of Birmingham-area active and retired police officers,” Irvin said.

Retired officer Rod Glover spoke at the service. A 14-year veteran of the Birmingham police force and a 24-year veteran of the Hoover po-

lice department, Glover worked as a bomb-defusing technician and a member of a child pornography task force. He now leads a weekly Bible study for active and retired law enforcement.

“He understands law enforcement,” Irvin said.

Glover used Romans 13 as his text and spoke about honoring those in authority.

“We don’t live in an idyllic world. The world groans under the curse of sin and we’re subject to misery and heartache. Bad things still happen to good people.”

Glover cited 2018 being an especially sad year in America.

“We lost 86 soldiers in Afghanistan last year, but we lost 146 officers in America,” he said.

Glover concluded his sermon with a clear call to Christian commitment.

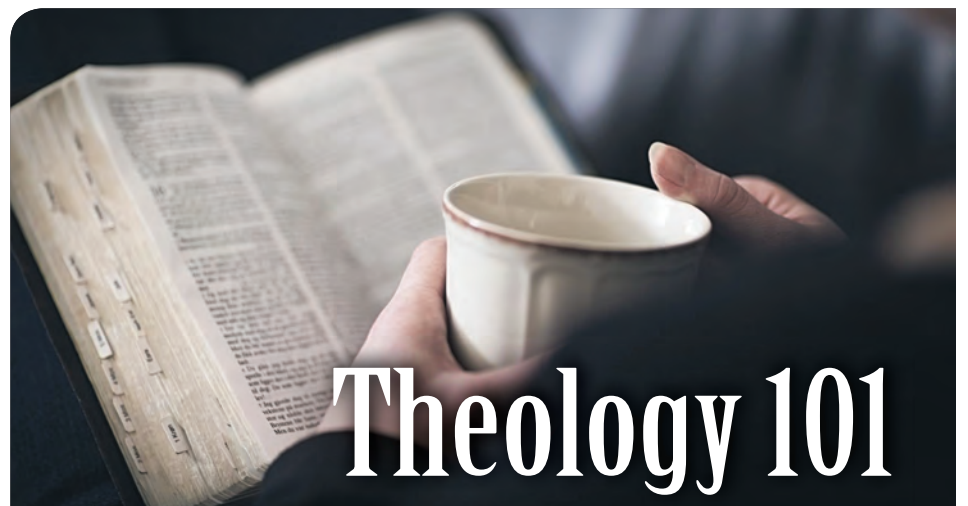
In appreciation for Carter’s service Mount Signal presented embossed Bibles to police representatives to be delivered to Carter’s widow and children.

According to the “Officer Down Memorial Page” (odmp.org), more than 40 officers have died in 2019. Officer William Buechner of Auburn was the 3rd Alabama officer to die in the line of duty this year. Buechner was shot when he and fellow officers responded to a domestic disturbance May 15, the same day Mount Signal hosted the memorial service.✝



Photo courtesy of Leonard Irvin

Birmingham-area active and retired police officers were honored May 19 at Mount Signal Baptist Church, Chelsea. The service included a special remembrance of Sgt. WyTasha Lamar Carter, an officer killed in January 2019.



BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

Eternal Security

Divine Ability, Divine Promise

By Jerry Batson, Th.D.
Special to The Alabama Baptist

For the past several weeks Theology 101 has considered eternal salvation in terms of a divine birth, a divine gift, a divine grip, a divine seal, a divine guard, a divine union, a divine anchor, divine decrees and divine intercession. In this concluding session we give thought to divine ability and divine promise.

The assertion of Hebrews 7:25 says God is able to save to the uttermost those who come to Him through Christ. We can understand uttermost in a temporal sense that means God saves His children not only in time but also all the way into and throughout eternity.

We also might understand uttermost in the sense of the uttermost possibility of our redeemed humanity that is unto full and final perfection. The emphasis in both ideas is upon God’s unlimited ability, authority and power.

‘Great power’

In light of this truth believers can adopt the simple yet profound declaration of the three Hebrew children who were thrown into the fiery furnace: “Our God ... is able” (Dan. 3:17). Or we can make the prayer of Jeremiah our prayer: “Ah Lord God! Behold You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You” (Jer. 32:17).

Based on His divine ability God’s divine promises are precious and powerful. Security in eternity future is rooted in eternity

past as indicated when Titus 1:2 speaks of the “hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began.” To this might be added the truth of Romans 11:29: “For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.”

The divine ability of God undergirds the benediction of 1 Peter 5:10 in which reference is made to “the God of all grace who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus.” The faithfulness of God’s promises undergirded Abraham’s trust in God “being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform” (Rom. 4:21).

Divine faithfulness

A Christian’s eternal security in God’s salvation through Christ is not based primarily on a person’s ability to have great faith, but on God’s ability to keep His great promises made to those who are trusting Christ for salvation. God, who is faithful to His promises, will never disown one of His own who is trusting His Son as Savior. In another application 1 Corinthians 10:13 declares simply, “God is faithful.” In that divine faithfulness to His exceeding great and precious promises we find our eternal security firmly rooted.✝

Jerry Batson is a retired Alabama Baptist pastor who also has served as associate dean of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University and professor of several schools of religion during his career.



'Foodie city'

SBC annual meeting restaurant list features 100 of Birmingham's best dining options

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

When you're at the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting this June you're going to have to eat and you're going to need coffee.

Lucky for you you're coming to a city with a lot to offer, said Ashley Chesnut, a Birmingham author and blogger and a staff member of The Church at Brook Hills. (See story, this page.)

"Birmingham is definitely a foodie city," she said. "Why go to a chain restaurant when you can eat local?"

Chesnut provided this year's SBC restaurant list, something that's been made available to SBC meeting attendees since 1998.

This year's list contains more than 100 restaurants broken down by

area of downtown. You can access Chesnut's recommendations through the SBC Annual Meetings app or at sbcannualmeeting.net/sbc19/dining. It will also be available at the information desk when you register.

Part of the list suggests restaurants within walking distance of the meeting venue — some familiar chains (Subway and Chick-Fil-A) for convenience alongside some local gems. Chesnut said if you want to

eat something tasty and local, but are thinking about your wallet and the speed of getting in and out, maybe try one of these three:

▶ **Eugene's Hot Chicken (2268 9th Avenue North)** — You choose the heat of your chicken. Have it by itself, in a sandwich or on a waffle.

▶ **Mugshots (2311 Richard Arrington Jr Blvd N #100)** — Consider burgers of all kinds.

▶ **Miami Fusion Café (2015 5th Avenue North)** — At this Caribbean restaurant try the pan con bistek, thin-cut palomilla steak with grilled onions, lettuce, tomato and potato sticks on panini-pressed Cuban bread.

If you have time to venture past easy walking distance a couple of Chesnut's favorite restaurants in the Morris Avenue/5th Avenue North area downtown are:

▶ **John's City Diner (112 Richard Arrington Jr Blvd N)** — The menu varies from Southern comfort to gastro pub. Try the chicken and waffles, Not Your Mama's Macaroni and Cheese and skillet corn.

▶ **The Pizitz Food Hall (3112, 1821 2nd Ave N)** — The hall has two restaurants and 12 food stalls ranging from Ethiopian to burgers — and lots of food court-style seating. It also has a parking garage



Niki's West Facebook photo

that's free for up to two hours.

Chesnut also recommends you check out these in the First Avenue South/University Boulevard area:

▶ **Mile End Deli (1701 1st Avenue South, Suite 135)** — Try the prime rib sandwich, Hoyt dog, Reuben or pastrami. They cure their meats in-house which makes the poutine gravy fabulous too, Chesnut said.

▶ **Taco Mama (707 Richard Arrington Jr Blvd S #103)** — This trendy taco joint has several locations around town.

And try these in the Pepper Place and Lakeview area:

▶ **Sky Castle (2808 7th Ave S)** — Go for burgers and comfort food.

▶ **Babalu Tapas and Tacos (2808 7th Ave S #117)** — Try the guacamole, queso blanco dip, Baba Burger

and Mexican street corn.

Try these in the Avondale area:

▶ **Taco Morro Loco (417 41st Street South)** — Chesnut said for a while she got something different every time and liked them all, but once she tried the chimichanga with steak her order never deviated again. She said their salsa has a delicious smoky flavor and they have great queso and guacamole.

▶ **MELT (4105 4th Ave S)** — A modern twist on grilled cheese sandwiches. Try the classic with tomato basil soup or their buffalo chicken sammich. Top it off with fried oreos.

▶ **Saw's Soul Kitchen (215 41st Street South)** — This ranks as one of Chesnut's top five in Birmingham, period. From their pork 'n' greens to their sweet tea fried chicken sandwich to their burger and wings, it's all good.

And in Five Points South try:

▶ **Delta Blues Hot Tamales (1318 Cobb Ln)** — They specialize in Mississippi Delta hot tamales. They contain a little heat but they're good.

▶ **Dreamland BBQ (1427 14th Ave S)** — Try the ribs and banana pudding — it's what the beloved BBQ joint is known for.

To learn more about what to do and where to eat in Birmingham visit downintheham.com or follow @downintheham on Facebook or Instagram.



Blog offers Birmingham food, activity recommendations

Ashley Chesnut says she didn't originally set out to make restaurant recommendations to the masses. She just loves to eat good food and she wanted her people to get to know Birmingham's great food scene.

"At my job I was always meeting singles and college students at the church who were new to Birmingham," said Chesnut, who serves as the associate singles 20s/30s minister at The Church at

Brook Hills, Birmingham. "They would ask me for a good place to go eat after church, or we would have new staff members who wanted recommendations so I just made a 'restaurants to try' list on my phone that I started passing around when people asked."

As Chesnut kept trying and recommending new restaurants she also began

to pray for new ways to love and serve her city. Along the way she got the idea to write a children's book — "Down in the Ham: A Child's Guide to Downtown Birmingham." The book shares things to see

and do and tells the story of the city's past and its civil rights movement in a way children can understand.

"Down in the Ham" also contains a scavenger hunt

element — families can take it, read it and use it to explore their city together.

As Chesnut prepared for her book's release in 2017 she started a Down in the Ham blog with a similar purpose — to try new and old things in the city and let people know how great they are.

Local favorites

That's why Southern Baptists are drawing on her foodie experience as the convention's 2019 annual meeting comes to Birmingham.

(See story, this page.)

Her favorites are ever changing, but she said if she had to pick today — for BBQ she'd say go to Avondale and try Rodney Scott's BBQ or Saw's Soul Kitchen (or go there for a burger too). For Italian Giuseppe's Café or Nabeel's Café and Market (they serve Mediterranean food too). And if you want a meal and dessert in one Hero Doughnut has a great doughnut burger. (Grace Thornton)

To check out Ashley Chesnut's blog and recommendations for things to do in Birmingham, visit downintheham.com.

"The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field." ~LUKE 10:2 (NIV)

PLANTING ALABAMA



Almost five million people call Alabama home, but approximately three million do not have a church to call their spiritual home.

"It's sad," said State Missionary Lamar Duke, lead church planting strategist with the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM).

"Alabama is considered to be the heart of the Bible Belt, yet over half of our residents do not attend church. We have to do something about it."

Duke and SBOM have a comprehensive strategy to address the lack of churches and church attendance in Alabama, and the plan has been largely successful in church planting efforts fostered by the SBOM and partnering Baptist associations.

With a 90 percent success rate, Duke's church planting strategies have led to 85 churches and almost 800 baptisms during the past six years.

Duke's process, fully described at PlantAlabama.org, consists of three steps: assessment, training and coaching. This multi-step endeavor, he said, ensures that the people tasked with planting churches in the state are called, qualified and prepared for the hard work that church planting requires.

"Church planting, as you can expect, is not easy, and we want to be sure we have the right man for the job and that we have helped him as much as we can," Duke said.

Often, the first step a potential church planter takes is to attend Alabama Church Planting Basics Training hosted by their local Baptist association and an interested sponsoring church.

The training consists of three days covering topics such as Biblical foundations, demographics and administrative requirements for a church plant.

These trainings take place in various locations across Alabama throughout the year. During March, the Tuscaloosa County Baptist Association hosted its first-ever training

in Spanish. Several potential planters and interested pastors of recently planted churches attended to learn more about how to succeed in such a difficult field.

The training to prepare and strengthen Hispanic churches was led by Annel Robayna, who in June will begin serving as a state

missionary in the SBOM Office of Associational Missions & Church Planting.

"I have seen how impactful this training can be, and I know the Spanish-speaking community in Tuscaloosa wanted to go through it," Robayna said. "I was more than willing to help because I want to see a thriving Hispanic community of Christian leaders here in Alabama, and I cannot wait to play a role in that when I start work in June."

Robayna will work to translate much of what SBOM already does

into Spanish, particularly in the area of church planting. Duke said he is excited to see Alabama church planting "break the mold" of traditional Southern Baptist Churches and grow in new and diverse ways.

Another man working to "break the mold" of traditional church planting in Alabama is Marcus Collins, pastor of Grace Community Church in Montgomery. Almost two years ago, a group began meeting in a space in downtown Montgomery designed for 100 people but grew eventually to 120 in attendance.

Recently, Grace officially had a grand opening and reopening at a new venue: a former bar on Vaughn Road in

east Montgomery. Collins said the initial service in the new location was attended by approximately 200 Montgomery residents and 10 accepted Christ.

Grace has a goal of "loving people to life," something Collins said was influenced by church planting.

"With church planting, it is all focused on outreach and discipleship," he said. "The nuts and bolts of practical planting and support provided by the State Board has helped me stay motivated and committed to loving people even when church planting got difficult."

Collins added that the church planting resources provided by Duke helped him plan strategically and navigate the process, particularly since east Montgomery is an underserved area.

"I would not be here, and more importantly Grace Community Church would not be here, without the training, resources and support provided by the association and the State Board of Missions."

Duke said his work, along with the addition of Robayna in the coming months, helps to ensure that Alabama continues to be a place where churches like Grace are planted, and people are reached with the Gospel.

"We have to reach out to the people in our own state who have been left out," Duke said. "Our training and resources help to prepare church planters to go out in our state and change the lives of the three million people in need of the Gospel."

For more information, please go online to PlantAlabama.org or contact State Missionary Lamar Duke at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 332, or (334) 613-2332, lduke@alsbom.org.

By Sydney Basden
SBOM Intern



Annel Robayna leads a recent church planter training workshop taught in Spanish. In June, Robayna will join the SBOM staff as a state missionary in the Office of Associational Missions & Church Planting. (Photo by Sydney Basden)

'Saturate the city'

Crossover Birmingham to put gospel in 20,000 homes in one day; needs your help

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

How do you put the gospel in 20,000 homes in one day? That's the question Sammy Gilbreath has been working to solve in the months leading up to Crossover Birmingham, an evangelism push the week before the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting.

Evangelistic outreach

"The idea (is) that all of these Southern Baptists are coming in for the meeting — we'll saturate that city with the gospel," said Gilbreath, director of the office of evangelism for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM).

Joel Southerland, director of evangelism for the North American Mission Board (NAMB), said the goal is to make Crossover work in the parameters and context of each host city.

As NAMB and Gilbreath worked together to decide what would be the best fit for Birmingham they decided the best way to help local congregations reach their communities would be to share the gospel with the neighborhoods around each church.

Fast forward months later and the plan is in place. They've got 20,000 Bibles, tracts and door hanger bags ready to go. And they need your help, Gilbreath said.

At 8 a.m. on June 8 volunteers from all over Alabama and the nation will spread out into an area roughly a half mile to three miles around the church.

They will knock on doors, have gospel conversations with people who answer and connect them with local

churches if possible. Gilbreath said he's excited.

"I want to be a part of something so big that only God can explain it, to see a revival start right here in Birmingham," he said. "But we will celebrate and rejoice over even one decision that's made. We want everyone involved to experience the joy of sharing their faith."

They need a lot more volunteers. Here's how you or your team can be involved.

1. Attend the kickoff rally (June 5).

On June 5 at 6:30 p.m.,

Johnny Hunt, NAMB's

senior vice

president of

evange-

lism and

leader-

ship,

will in-

spire and train Crossover volunteers at a kickoff rally. He will preach live at The Church at Brook Hills and the service will be live streamed at four other churches — First Baptist, Trussville; The Baptist Church at McAdory, McCalla; First Baptist Church, Mount Olive; and Sixth Avenue Baptist, Birmingham. You can attend the rally at any of these locations.

2. Share the gospel (June 8).

On Saturday morning,

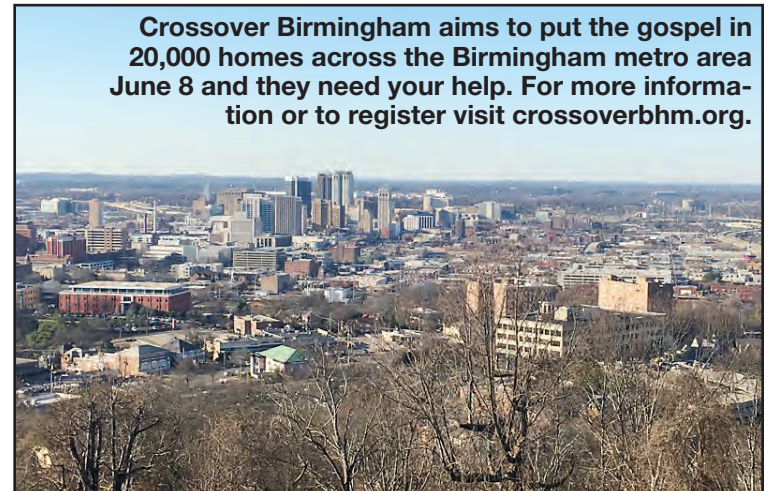


Photo by Jessica Ingram



June 8, go out with a team at a hub church location to reach people with the gospel.

The hub churches are:

▶ The Baptist Church at McAdory, McCalla

▶ The Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham

▶ First Baptist Church, Trussville

▶ Oak Grove First Baptist Church, Adger

▶ First Baptist Church, Mount Olive

▶ First Baptist Church, Pelham

▶ First Baptist Church, Moody

▶ Mount High Baptist Church, Warrior

3. Spread the word about a mobile medical and dental clinic (June 8).

Medical and dental personnel will be running a mobile clinic at Sixth Avenue Baptist Church, Birmingham, 8

a.m.—4 p.m. on June 8.

They will be doing free medical screenings (hearing and vision tests, glucose testing, blood pressure, etc.) and free dental exams, extractions and fillings. Anyone is welcome.

4. Pray for other activities going on.

During the week leading up to the main Saturday Crossover event other groups will be doing outreach of various kinds.

On weekday afternoons students from Baptist seminaries will be going out in teams for an early start on neighborhood outreach at the hub churches. On Thursday and Friday various groups — including students from the state's Baptist Campus Ministries will be prayer walking and prayer driving in the neighborhoods where volunteers will go on Saturday.

Rick Lance, SBOM executive director, says he hopes that Alabama Baptists will take part in Crossover.

"We are especially grateful for the opportunity to help facilitate Crossover Birmingham," he said. "Please pray for those who hear the gospel — that they will receive it gladly and experience the new, abundant life that only Christ can offer."

For more information or to register visit crossoverbhm.org.

WEEKDAY MORNINGS ON WXJC

ADRIAN ROGERS JIM DALY DAVID JEREMIAH
ROBERT JEFFRESS CHARLES STANLEY MICHAEL YOUSSEF
TONY EVANS JAMES DOBSON CHARLES MORRIS
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AND AFTERNOONS LIVE

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Like *The Alabama Baptist*, Jimmy covers our state helping seniors improve the quality of their lives.

3 stories you should know



Photo by Chris Carter/IMB

An estimated 80,000 Venezuelans cross the Colombia border daily seeking food and medicine. Venezuela has lost electricity and gas, the currency has been devalued, food isn't easily available and health care is nonexistent. Southern Baptist missionaries, Colombian and Venezuelan Baptist pastors and other 'hope-givers' are providing meals, showers, warm clothing and hope at roadside shelters near the Simon Bolivar International Bridge. (BP)

Alabama lottery bill fails to pass this year

A bill proposing a statewide vote on the establishment of a state lottery failed to pass a procedural motion in the Alabama House of Representatives on May 21 that would have brought the bill to the House floor for debate.

The 53–36 vote fell one vote shy of the three-fifths majority required to pass. Most Republicans voted yes while most Democrats voted no.

Rep. Steve Clouse said the bill is “dead for this session”

The House bill would have directed 75% of net lottery revenue to the state General Fund and 25% to the Education Trust Fund. The Senate bill called for all funds to go to the General Fund.

Legislators cited disagreement about the distribution of revenue and the expansion of gambling as reasons for the defeat. (TAB)

Extremists threaten family in Uganda

Yusuf Tulo, a Ugandan man who converted from Islam to Christianity in October 2018, was worshipping with his family in their home in eastern Uganda on April 28 when neighbors began shouting, “Fire!”

When the family went outside neighbors were standing around the house looking at the smoke. One told Tulo to go back inside. The family refused and an hour later the roof collapsed in flames destroying the home.

The attacks were the latest of several instances of persecution of Christians in eastern Uganda, which has a large Muslim population. Uganda's constitution and other laws provide for religious freedom, including the right to propagate one's faith and convert from one faith to another. (MS)

— NEWSBRIEFS —

Northcutt to retire as Eastmont pastor after 32 years of leadership

Neal Hughes says he and Mike Northcutt showed up in Montgomery on the same Sunday — Father's Day 1987. Hughes was the new pastor of McGehee Road Baptist Church, and Northcutt was the new pastor of Eastmont Baptist Church. And over the years the two men and their wives became friends.

It was a return home for Northcutt, a Montgomery native who came to faith and was ordained to preach at Capitol Heights Baptist Church. After graduating from Samford University in Birmingham and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, he returned home. Along the way he served churches in both states.

“Eastmont, along with Montgomery Baptists, have been inspired by Mike's humble leadership and winsome spirit,” said Hughes, now associa-

tional mission strategist for Montgomery Baptist Association.

And now after 32 years as Eastmont's pastor, Northcutt is retiring. His last day at the church will be June 16.

“We as Alabama Baptists owe a debt of gratitude for the Northcutts' Christ-like example displayed in a lifetime of serving King Jesus,” Hughes said of Northcutt and his wife, Connie. (Grace Thornton)



NORTHCUTT

Survey says one-third of Protestants expect more sexual abuse allegations

Most Protestant churchgoers feel they and their children are safe from abuse or harassment at their churches. But many seem unsure whether new cases of abuse are yet to be revealed.

A new survey released May 21 by LifeWay Research found that 1 in 3 Protestant Christian churchgoers think there are many more stories of sexual abuse by pastors that have yet to come out.

The survey shows 32% of those churchgoers believe many more Protestant pastors have sex-

ually abused children or teens than has already been reported. Twenty-nine percent believe there are many more unreported cases where adults were assaulted.

In both cases a similar number say they disagree or don't know if there are more unreported cases.

Meantime 94% say teens and children are protected from abuse at their churches, according to the survey. Ninety-three percent say adults are protected.

“When they're talking about their own church the confidence level is really high,” said Scott McConnell, executive director of LifeWay Research. “But still there's this perception that there's a wave (of reports about abuse) coming.” (RNS)

Nones in Canada have an easier path than those in U.S., study finds

Nearly a quarter of Canadians today say they have no religious affiliation — about the same as in the U.S. But two Canadian researchers suggest it is easier to be a “none” in Canada.



News near you

BIRMINGHAM METRO ASSOCIATION

▶ On May 5, **Cahaba Heights Baptist Church, Birmingham**, celebrated its 125th anniversary. Chris Crain, executive director of Birmingham Metro Baptist Association, was the guest speaker. Debbie Campbell presented a certificate to church trustees Rex Smith and Ed Duke on behalf of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission. Lunch followed the Sunday morning service and a singing was held in the afternoon.



Photo by Debbie Campbell

“Everyone enjoyed the day,”

church member Barbara Duke said. “We had people come back from all over.”

COFFEE ASSOCIATION

▶ **County Line Baptist Church, Enterprise**, will host Camp CLBC for preschool through sixth grade June 13 from 12:30 to 5:30 p.m. A family meal will be held at 5:30 p.m. The program theme will be *Creatures of the Galaxy* by *Animal Tales*. Activities will include Bible study, music and hands-on activities. For

more information call 334-347-6082. To register visit www.CLBCOnthe.net. Danny Wiggins is pastor. ▶ **First Baptist Church, Elba**, will host Bible camp June 7–8 for preschool through sixth grade. Friday camp will be from 5 to 8 p.m., and Saturday camp will be from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tom Anderson is interim pastor.

ESCAMBIA ASSOCIATION

▶ **Larry Beauchamp** is the new interim pastor of **Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Atmore**. He spent 20 years in the Air Force before entering the pastoral ministry in 1986. He has served churches in Escambia and Baldwin Baptist associations, and served on staff at Woodridge Baptist Church, Mobile. He holds degrees from University of Mobile; Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia; Gulf Coast Bible Institute in Fort Walton Beach, Florida; and International Bible College and Seminary in Independence, Missouri.



BEAUCHAMP

GENEVA ASSOCIATION

▶ **New Hinson Baptist Church, Slocomb**, will host a homecoming service June 9 at 9 a.m. Brandon Thorne will be the guest speaker and The Crowe’s Nest will bring special music. Bryan Klobe is pastor.

MORGAN ASSOCIATION

▶ **Shiloh Baptist Church, Somerville**, will celebrate its 200th anniversary June 30 at 9:15 a.m. Scenes and music from the founding of the church to the present will be performed. Lunch will be provided. Charles Owens is pastor.

PICKENS ASSOCIATION

▶ On April 28, **Garden Baptist Church, Aliceville**, celebrated its 75th anniversary. Pickens Baptist Association associational mission strategist Lyle Dease and retired director of missions Gary Farley were the guest speakers. Angie Cooper presented the church with a certificate on behalf of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission.

Lifelong member Elizabeth Kelley was surprised with a special recognition during the service. She has been a member of the church since its founding in 1944 when she was less than a year old.

“It was a great time,” said Pastor Mike Ezelle. “Everyone enjoyed it.”

PLEASANT GROVE ASSOCIATION

▶ **Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Vance**, will host its annual Woman’s Missionary Union (WMU) yard sale June 7–8. The yard sale will be open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Friday and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday. The yard sale will be located at 13675 Rock House Road. Proceeds will help fund WMU missions projects. Jonathan Blackstock is pastor.

SULPHUR SPRINGS ASSOCIATION

▶ **Calvary Baptist Church, Warrior**, will hold a fabric sale at the Regional Library and Arts Center at 140 Cane Creek Road on June 7–8 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The fabric sale benefits the Calvary Baptist building fund. The church also will host a community-wide gospel singing at the arts center June 8 following the end of the sale. Participants will need to bring a chair or blanket to sit on. Earl Goode is pastor. ✝

— NEWSBRIEFS —

“It’s more normal in Canada to say you have no religion,” said Sarah Wilkins-Laflamme, a professor of sociology at the University of Waterloo and author, with Joel Thiessen, professor of sociology at Ambrose University, of “None of the Above: Having No Religion in Canada and the U.S.”

“In Canada there is a more accepting social environment for leaving religion. There’s less of a social stigma,” added Thiessen.

The two researchers decided to study nones in Canada when they found most of the information about the rapidly expanding group of religiously unaffiliated came from the U.S.

“We wanted to see what was similar, what was different,” said Wilkins-Laflamme.

The big difference, they found, is that the decline in religious affiliation started earlier in Canada. Just 4% of Canadians said they had no religion in 1971. The number spiked to 12% in 1991 and 17% in 2001. The nones’ rise began

later in the U.S., from 5% in 1972 to 8% in 1990 before jumping to 14% in 2000.

As the notion of being nonaffiliated caught hold more quickly in Canada it seemed more normal sooner, the researchers said.

At the same time evangelicalism continues to have a much stronger influence in the U.S. than it does in Canada. This, along with a stronger sense of Christian nationhood in the U.S., makes it harder for some Americans to “come out” as having no religion, the researchers say, noting that in parts of the U.S. “a fervent stigma exists toward those in the religious none community.” (RNS)

SEBTS professor Jamie Dew chosen to lead New Orleans Seminary



James K. “Jamie” Dew Jr., vice president for undergraduate studies and distance learning at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS) in Wake Forest, North Carolina, has been nominated as the next president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBTS). The presidential search committee will present Dew

to the full trustee board for a vote June 5.

“As a committee our focus has been to find the heart of God and the man that God has chosen for this role,” said Frank Cox, chairman of the search committee. “After much prayer and research we have been led to unanimously nominate Dr. Jamie Dew.

“We believe he will make a great president and will bring out the best in the next generation of Southern Baptists,” Cox said.

Dew was elected to serve on the SEBTS faculty in 2011. Cox cited Dew’s academic preparation and experience, his ministry background and his engaging personality among the top reasons the committee is recommending the 42-year-old North Carolina native for the role.

If elected during the special-called trustee meeting on the NOBTS campus Dew will become the school’s ninth president, following NOBTS president Chuck Kelley who will retire July 31, 2019. (BP)



BP photo/submitted



Photo by Creative Commons



Photo by Cynthia Walker Watts

Westlake Church minister of music, Goldon Gill (right), distributes flowers to each of the mothers present at the church's recent Mother's Day service.

Westlake relaunch prioritizes church involvement, outreach

By Cynthia Walker Watts
The Alabama Baptist

As Vaughan Gardner was settling into his ministry at Trinity Baptist Church, Wilmer, in 2016 he quickly realized change was on the horizon.

A look at the Mobile Baptist Association church's recent history revealed a story. The church had failed to partner with the elementary school across the street. Their unused gym was buried in cobwebs. They had not conducted Vacation Bible School in 10 years. On Easter Sunday in 2017 and 2018 the attendance was only 25.

New direction

The church had enough money to last approximately one-and-a-half years. Gardner intentionally shared this information repeatedly in meetings and services with the small congregation.

"Let's talk about your future. You don't have one," Gardner told them.

"The first time he told them they gasped," said Gardner's wife, Virginia.

Gardner didn't stop there. He explored options and found a training opportunity.

That's when he met George Yates, church health strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

Gardner approached Yates about coming to Trinity and advising them. Yates traveled to Wilmer, visited with Gardner and the church, and then Yates and Gardner began to plan.

"The quicker churches realize the need for a turnaround and ask for help the easier it is and the stronger it is for that church to make the turn," Yates said.

But Trinity needed more than a turn. They needed a whole new direction. So Gardner formed a steering committee.

"We could have a graceful closing or an embarrassing death. We chose the graceful closing," Gardner said.

They agreed to close Trinity Baptist Church on Dec. 23, 2018. The church closed and the sign came down. They began meeting at the Tanner-Williams Civic and Historical Society building next door.

Although they were not meeting in the church building Gardner and volunteers began working on the

church. The cement block walls became Sheetrock. The old maroon carpet became hardwood floors. Video screens were installed.

Bright start

As the remodeling was taking place passersby stopped and asked if they were selling the building. Inactive members stopped to inquire what was going on. Often those who stopped offered to help or donate materials.

The proceeds from the sale of the old parsonage and the generous donations of time and materials gave the building a completely new look with no debt.

On March 3, 2019, former Trinity members and the neighborhood were invited to an open house for the launch of Westlake Church. The church had 75 in attendance on Easter Sunday.

On Mother's Day, Gardner announced he invited 400 children to this summer's Vacation Bible School. That same day the church held a baby dedication, a bright new start led by everyone, not just one person.

"It all had to be everyone's decision for [the relaunch] to work," Gardner said. 🌟

TAB CLASSIFIEDS

For information on placing a classified ad call 205-870-4720, ext. 102 or email ads@thealabamabaptist.org.

CHURCH POSITIONS

PASTOR

Cave Spring Baptist Church, Priceville, Alabama, seeks full-time pastor with minimum five years experience. Only a God-called, energetic minister who cares for multi-generations, ready to reap the harvest; a person whose professional and personal life align with 1 Timothy 3:1-7 need apply. Deadline: June 30. Email: info@thecsbc.com for more information.

PASTOR

Camellia Baptist Church, 201 Woodvale Rd., Prattville, AL 36067, prayerfully seeking God's choice for a full-time pastor. All applicants should have previous senior pastor experience and have earned a masters of divinity. Resumes with photo may be mailed: ATTN: Pastor/Search. www.cbcprattville.org.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

South Mobile First Baptist Church is seeking a dynamic, spirit-filled servant of God to serve initially as a bivocational pastor with the potential for transitioning to full time based on church growth. Send resume to: 10575 Dauphin Island Parkway, Theodore, AL 36582 or email c/o Search Committee at vgnelson@bellsouth.net.

MINISTER OF MUSIC

Parkview Baptist Church in Decatur, Alabama, is seeking a minister of music. Candidates should have a strong passion and sincere calling to lead all ages in worship, disciple and mentor new Christians and advance the gospel of Jesus Christ. Candidates must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university. Please send resumes to: jenny.russell@parkviewdecatur.org.

PART-TIME MUSIC MINISTER/WORSHIP LEADER

Grace Baptist Church is seeking a part-time music minister/worship leader. Please send resumes to: chuckoliver1@bellsouth.net or Grace Baptist Church, Music Search Committee, 1656 Temple Avenue N, Fayette, AL 35555.

STUDENT MINISTER

The Church at Eastern Oaks in Montgomery, Alabama, is seeking a full-time student minister. Eastern Oaks is a diverse and growing congregation in east Montgomery. The student minister will be responsible for lead-

ing and overseeing all student ministries including children, youth and college. A theological degree and experience are preferred. Submit your resume to: admin@easternoaks.org.

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MINISTRIES

TAB PODCAST

The TAB News podcast provides content from *The Alabama Baptist* each week in a radio-show-style format for listeners to download and listen to at their convenience. A host will guide the show, along with several readers and guests who will be invited in to talk about some of the story topics in depth. Listen to the TAB News podcast anywhere you get your podcasts such as iTunes, Stitcher, etc., or visit www.thealabamabaptist.org/explore/podcasts. New episodes are released weekly.

'Stronger together'

FBC Sutherland Springs dedicates new worship center built by Alabama firm

By Jane Rodgers
Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

Sherri Pomeroy, wife of Pastor Frank Pomeroy, quoted from Jeremiah 33 to the standing-room-only crowd at First Baptist Church, Sutherland Springs, in Texas, on Sunday, May 19: "In this place which you say is a ruin ... there will be heard again a sound of joy and gladness" (vs. 10-11a).

It was a fitting passage as the congregation dedicated its new worship facility 18 months after the Nov. 5, 2017, shooting that claimed 26 lives and injured 20.

The celebration featured Texas and national dignitaries, Southern Baptist leaders and friends of First, Sutherland Springs, joining together in prayer, praise and remembrance.

Community beacon

The morning included a private service before the 11 a.m. dedication. Overflow crowds watched livestreams from both services in the new fellowship hall adjacent to the sanctuary. The hall was part of a design addition made two months into the 14-month process, said Scott Gurosky of Birmingham-

based firm Myrick, Gurosky & Associates, which led the construction effort.

As doors opened for the dedication Frank Pomeroy greeted crowds filtering in to the auditorium.

Speakers included the Pomeroyes, Gurosky, local pastors, Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President J.D. Greear, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, U.S. Sen. John Cornyn and, via videotape, U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz.

Gurosky recalled Pomeroy's insistence the new church be a beacon to the community and incorporate the church's bell.

The result: twin towers containing a light and the bell, respectively, that are now the tallest buildings in town.

Gurosky introduced architect Mike O'Kelley, project manager Gary Nazaruk — who came out of retirement in nearby Boerne to oversee the construction — CFO Paul Head and general supervisor Tom Durham.

The project involved "hard work and commitment from people all over the country, from Oregon to Ohio to Alabama," Gurosky said, mentioning many of the companies

"Only God can help a community transcend the type of tragedy that struck Sutherland Springs."

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott



Photo by Jane Rodgers/NAMB

Texas pastor Paul Buford closes in prayer as survivors of the 2017 shooting at FBC Sutherland Springs are surrounded by guests including Texas Gov. Greg Abbott (center, right) and Scott Gurosky (center, back).

that donated materials or services.

Especially rewarding was the construction of the memorial room just off the main entryway designed by Birmingham designer Ivy Schuster of Birmingham's Hatcher Schuster Interiors.

Praising the welcoming spirit of the congregation throughout the project, Gurosky called the experience "life-changing," noting he told Nazaruk, "This'll be one we carry with us."

The worship center is built on donated land referred to as "Karla's corner," in memory of victim Karla Holcombe, who often walked the perimeter of the once weed-filled land, praying the tract would somehow be given to the church.

The building site and construction costs were paid for by donations, including Cooperative Program (CP) funds provided by Southern Baptists through the North American Mission Board (NAMB).

"NAMB told us to give them what they need," Gurosky said.

Greear, pastor of The Summit Church in Raleigh/Durham, North Carolina, and current SBC president, affirmed the CP's importance.

"When the worst evil and the

worst darkness intruded on this small congregation I am glad but not surprised to say that the best of who Southern Baptists are stepped forward to help," Greear said, applauding the cooperating entities.

"Our world is broken" Greear said, suggesting that tragedies such as that of First, Sutherland Springs, will not be prevented by legislation, education or prosperity but only through Jesus. "Better laws may certainly help us contain the damage but only the gospel can heal the soul."



Photo by Jane Rodgers/NAMB

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, a man Pomeroy introduced as "with us from the very first day," spoke next.

Citing several Psalms, Abbott expressed empathy with the victims.

Transcending tragedy

"Only God can help a community transcend the type of tragedy that struck Sutherland Springs," Abbott said.

Along with the videotaped message from Sen. Cruz, Sen. Cornyn shared during the special service.

"The church is not four walls and a roof. It's the people," Cornyn said. "In a stunning building like this or in a tent on a baseball field, this church refuses to quit and let evil win."✠



Photo by Jane Rodgers/NAMB

Kris Workman, FBC Sutherland Springs worship leader and survivor of the 2017 church shooting, talks with a child in front of the memorial wall designed by Birmingham designer Ivy Schuster. The memorial displays pictures of the 26 victims.

CROSSOVER BIRMINGHAM 2019



Wednesday, June 5
6:30 pm - Kickoff Rally and Training with **JOHNNY HUNT**
at The Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham
(Visit CrossoverBHM.org for simulcast locations)

Saturday, June 8
8:30 am - Training
10 am
Evangelistic Visitation Across 7 Associations

For information about specific locations and to register, visit CrossoverBHM.org




ATTENDING THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION JUNE 11-12?
Stop by and visit the State Board of Missions booth in the East Hall, located between the NAMB and New Orleans Seminary booths!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Event and location is followed by SBOM contact person and extension. For more information on these events, call 1-800-264-1225 or (334) 613-2 + the extension, or visit alsbom.org.

JUNE

- 5 **Crossover Birmingham Training**, various locations, Amy Nelson, ext. 258
- 6 **Small Church Tax Conference**, CrossPoint, Trussville, Linda Hicks, ext. 263
- 6-7 **Missions Adventure Camp for Mom & Me** (One Night), WorldSong, Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223
- 6-8 **Missions Adventure Camp for Mom & Me** (Two Nights), WorldSong, Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223
- 8 **Crossover Birmingham**, various locations, Amy Nelson, ext. 258
- 9-10 **WMU, SBC Celebration/Annual Meeting**, Birmingham, Candace McIntosh, ext. 222
- 10-14 **Missions Adventure Camps for Girls & Teen Girls**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223
- 11-12 **Southern Baptist Convention**, Birmingham, Debbie Oliver, ext. 242
- 16 **Father's Day**
- 17-21 **Missions Adventure Camps for Girls & Teen Girls**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223
- 20 **Small Church Tax Conference**, SBOM Office Facility, Prattville, Linda Hicks, ext. 263
- 24-28 **Missions Adventure Camps for Girls & CITs**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223
- 25 **Church Administrative Guidelines**, SBOM Office Facility, Prattville, Lee Wright, ext. 241, or Linda Hicks, ext. 263
- 30 **Citizenship & Religious Liberty Sunday**, Keith Hinson, ext. 289

JULY

- 1-3 **Mini Missions Adventure Camp for Girls, Boys & Leaders**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223
- 1-3 **Mini Missions Adventure Camp for Teen Girls**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223
- 4 **Independence Day**
- 4-6 **Family Missions Adventure Camp (Two Nights)**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223
- 5-6 **Family Missions Adventure Camp (One Night)**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223
- 8-12 **Missions Adventure Camps for Girls, Boys & CITs**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223
- 8-12 **Northwest Alabama Baptist Lad (1st-3rd Grade) & Dad Camp**, Earle Trent Assembly Baptist Camp, Florence, Monica Thompson, ext. 227
- 8-12 **Super Summer Alabama**, Samford University, Birmingham, Scooter Kellum, ext. 280
- 11 **Acts 1:8 Connections Celebration**, Lakeview, Birmingham, Scotty Goldman, ext. 387, or Barbara Owen, ext. 334
- 11 **Church Financial Issues**, Woodward Avenue, Muscle Shoals, Linda Hicks, ext. 263
- 12-13 **Children's Choir Summit**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, Karen Gosselin, ext. 318
- 15-19 **Missions Adventure Camps for Girls, Boys & CITs**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223
- 15-19 **Mix MusiCamp@Shocco**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, Keith Hibbs, ext. 217
- 15-19 **Missions Adventure Camp for Girls, Boys & CITs**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223
- 16 **Church Financial Issues**, Tennessee River Baptist Association Office, Scottsboro, Linda Hicks, ext. 263
- 18 **Church Financial Issues**, Northport BC, Northport, Linda Hicks, ext. 263
- 19-20 **SPEAK, Eastmont, Montgomery**, Scooter Kellum, ext. 280
- 22-26 **Missions Adventure Camp for Boys & Teen Boys**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223
- 23 **Church Financial Issues**, Calhoun Baptist Association Office, Anniston, Linda Hicks, ext. 263
- 25 **Church Financial Issues**, Mobile Baptist Association Office, Mobile, Linda Hicks, ext. 263
- 25-26 **Literacy Missions Conference**, SBOM Office Facility, Prattville, Kristy Kennedy, ext. 311
- 26-27 **Equip...for Missions, for Ministry, for Life**, Shocco Springs, Talladega, Pat Ingram, ext. 292
- 26-27 **Missions Adventure Camp for Lad & Dad**, WorldSong, Cook Springs, Amanda Armstrong, ext. 223

Baldwin Association uses beach as missions field

(continued from page 1)

“Our effort is friendly and free and often seems to be an encouragement to those we are able to serve.

“In local RV parks we provide free day camps for kids, block parties, movie nights, worship services, concerts and more,” Diehl said. “We connect through local community events such as the Shrimp Festival and the Baldwin County Fair with the partnership of volunteers from local churches. The local churches connect with similar events in their various communities throughout the county.

“Volunteers and support from Baldwin Baptist churches, along with churches visiting from outside of our area, help to make a difference in the resort community,” Diehl added, “providing a light in the midst of the darkness in people’s lives.”

Alabama’s family-friendly brand was threatened a couple of years ago when a Florida beach town’s excesses finally came home to roost.

Panama City Beach’s national reputation took a blow in 2015 when a deeply disturbing cell phone video surfaced of an intoxicated teen girl being gang-raped in broad daylight while hundreds of young partiers did nothing to intervene.

In response the Florida Panhandle beach town — long the setting for cable TV’s raunchy reality shows depicting spring break debauchery — enacted laws to crack down on spring breakers, prompting many of them to seek new, more lax locales for their next annual revelry.

Law enforcement

The following year youthful hordes descended on Gulf Shores and Orange Beach bringing with them a host of behaviors that definitely didn’t fit the towns’ “family-friendly” brand.

Officers more accustomed to dealing with comparatively sedate tourists suddenly faced massive gatherings of rowdy students on the beaches leading to hundreds of arrests.



Photo courtesy of Gulf Shores and Orange Beach Tourism

“During the first several days of spring break 2016, (Gulf Shores Police Department) encountered numerous issues with large groups of spring breakers binge drinking, using illegal narcotics and creating a dangerous atmosphere for themselves and other visitors,” Chief Ed Delmore said in a report to the city council. “The potential for large scale confrontations with police officers existed in a very real way.”

City leaders scrambled for a solution to the sudden siege. Orange Beach beefed up patrols and enforcement of existing laws, while

Gulf Shores implemented a ban on all alcohol on the beaches during spring break. Both cities’ tactics quickly improved the situation and spring break arrests have dropped substantially each ensuing year.

Expanded ban

For 2019 the alcohol ban on Gulf Shores beaches was expanded to 58 days to match the spring break calendars of the majority of schools and colleges with students typically visiting the area. The original ban in 2017 lasted 33 days.

Although Orange Beach

hasn’t banned alcohol on its beaches Mayor Tony Kinnon amped up warnings this year that zero tolerance would be allowed for underage drinking, disorderly conduct and illegal drug use, and undercover officers and other methods would be employed to enforce the city’s ordinances.

Sleeping in cars or on the beach; playing loud, offensive music; having alcohol at the state park; digging large holes in the sand or having glass containers on the beach are some of the infractions that could result in a run-in with local law enforcement.

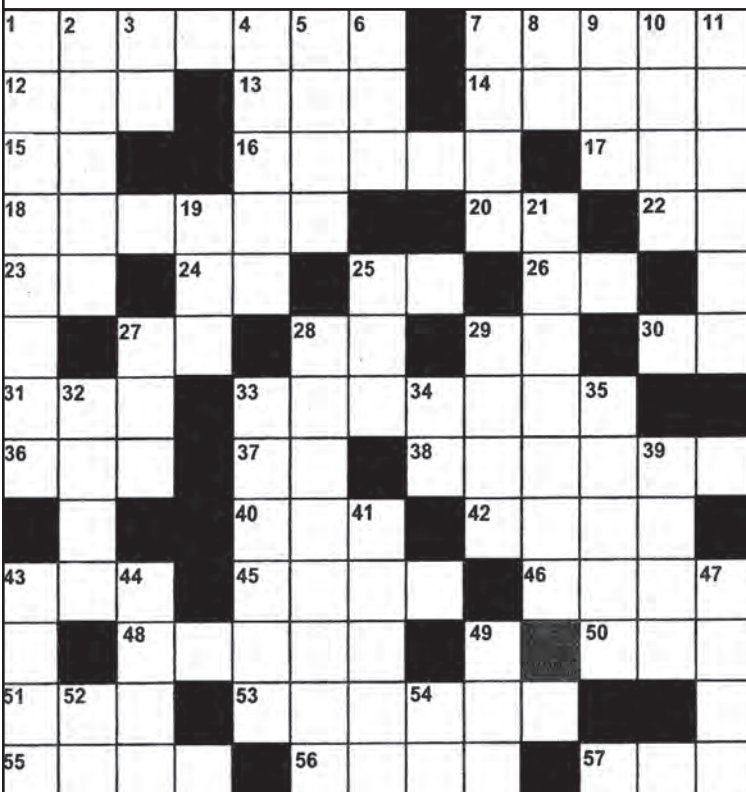
“For those looking for a party town during spring break Orange Beach is not it,” Kinnon said in a widely circulated statement. “There will be no warnings, no mulligans, pour-outs or do-overs. If you are drinking under age, if you are using illegal drugs, misbehaving or are publicly intoxicated you will go to jail.

“We will not compromise our family-friendly brand for a buck.”

Looking for the answers to this week’s crossword? Those are now on page 2 so we can make the puzzle clues larger and easier to read. Happy puzzling!

Christian Crossword

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Across

1. Daniel the _____. (Matt. 24:15)
7. ____ stilled the people. (Num. 13:30)
12. Lord, ____ long? (Isa. 6:11)
13. Iron ____.
14. Not live by bread _____. (Matt. 4:4)
15. ____ I my brother’s keeper? (Gen. 4:9)
16. The family of _____. (1 Sam. 10:21)
17. Measure of weight.
18. A pharaoh.
20. Middle Atlantic state. (abbr.)
22. ____ will we sing. (Ps. 21:13)
23. I am ____ the Father. (John 14:10)
24. How ____ it that ye have no faith. (Mark 4:40)
25. Go up ____ Jerusalem. (Acts 25:9)
26. Old Testament. (abbr.)
27. Saint. (abbr.)
28. That it shall _____. (Acts 27:25)
29. Social Security. (abbr.)
30. Yes. (Spanish)
31. Samuel ran to _____. (1 Sam. 3:5)
33. He looked on the _____. (Num. 24:21)
36. Variation of aeon.

37. And the Lord shut him _____. (Gen. 7:16)

38. To scheme. (2 words)
40. Disc jockeys. (abbr.)
42. ____ he is come. (John 4:25)
43. Long ____.
45. To the slaughter, like _____. (Jer. 51:40)
46. Christ ____ me. (1 Cor. 1:17)
48. Elimelech’s wife. (Ruth 1:2)
50. Standard in golf.
51. Long, narrow fish.
53. Type of acid.
55. Nos.
56. Orderly.
57. Mine enemy and my _____. (sing.) (Ps. 27:2)

Down

1. A certain ____ besought him. (Luke 11:37)
2. Art thou a ____? (Acts 22:27)
3. Exclamation of pain.
4. Houses.
5. Periods of time.
6. Asian holiday.
7. ____ and Abel.
8. American League. (abbr.)
9. ____ sat in the gate of Sodom. (Gen. 19:1)
10. Seth called his son’s name _____. (Gen. 4:26)

11. Name Rachel called Benjamin. (Gen. 35:18)
19. ____ thou on my right hand. (Matt. 22:44)
21. ____ coat of many colors.
25. Number of lepers. (Luke 17:21)
27. All manner of _____. (Matt. 12:31)
28. The sons of Rachel: Joseph and _____. (Gen. 35:24)
29. Put away (on a boat).
32. ____ ago.
33. Cross over the brook _____. (1 Kings. 2:37)
34. Consider ____ in thine heart. (Deut. 4:39)
35. Let us not ____ as do others. (1 Thess. 5:6)
39. Was one ____ a prophetess. (Luke 2:36)
41. I will ____ all thy borders with frogs. (Ex. 8:2)
43. So be it.
44. The ____ true God. (John 17:3)
47. The ____ of life. (Rev. 22:2)
49. The ____ wherein Ishmael had cast ... the dead. (Jer. 41:9)
52. Each. (abbr.)
54. Egyptian god.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For June 2

Explore the Bible

By Jay T. Robertson, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



ENTRUSTED 1 Timothy 1:3-17

As a Christian you have been entrusted with the gospel of Jesus Christ. In 1 Timothy we are charged to be faithful to the gospel that saves. In order to remain faithful we must know what we believe and why we believe it and be able to explain what we believe to others. May God equip us this quarter to preserve and proclaim the gospel and to persevere in suffering for the gospel.

Accountable (3-7)

The Apostle Paul wrote this urgent letter to Timothy, his true child in the faith, because the church in Ephesus was struggling. Paul wrote this letter to encourage Timothy and to urge him to remain in Ephesus. Paul wanted Timothy to remain faithful to his calling. If churches are going to remain faithful, pastors of churches must remain faithful. Faithful pastors work diligently to equip the saints to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ so they will remain faithful.

Ephesus was a city filled with paganism and rampant immorality and idolatry. Paul charged Timothy first and foremost to guard the gospel. He was to address everything that pulled people away from the gospel.

False teachers had infiltrated the church in Ephesus and were teaching things contrary to the gospel. Evidently Timothy was experiencing a “Monday morning pastor’s pity party.” He wanted to leave Ephesus. Paul told him to stay and hold his ground. Fight for the truth. Timothy was young (probably mid-30s), outnumbered and outgunned.

Many people today, even in churches, are irritated by doctrine and allergic to theology. Many wonder, “Can’t we just believe whatever we want?” No. There is false doctrine and there is sound doctrine. Pastors and teachers do not have the authority to add to or take away from God’s word. We must rightly handle the word God revealed to us.

Timothy was charged to command the false teachers to stop peddling man-made supplements to the word of God. Our goal is love — love for God and love for people. We are to rebuke false teachers because we love Jesus and people. If you major on the minors and minor on the majors you are not qualified to teach the Bible. The key to being a good teacher is to be a good Christian. Pray, read the Bible, worship and humbly learn from other believers.

In Light of the Gospel (8-11)

The law is good if you use it properly. The false teachers were obviously not using it properly. The false teachers wasted their time on all sorts of fanciful tales regarding their ancestors because they had never learned to identify themselves as sinners before God. They were both arrogant and ignorant. They lacked humility and consciousness of guilt. Instead of being convicted by the law they read the law and were unmoved. But when they came to a proper name or a ceremonial detail they became all enthused. Then they would shine with their stories and spiritualizing.

God’s law used properly helps us recognize the boundaries between good and evil so we might avoid sin. The law also reveals our innate sinfulness and our absolute need for righteousness from God that we do not possess and can never earn for ourselves. We are to proclaim the law in order to open the door for the gospel.

In Response to His Grace (12-17)

Although the false teachers were not convicted by the law Paul had been crushed by it. And from under the weight of the law God granted him mercy and grace and new life in Christ. Jesus saves sinners. Paul was acknowledging he is the poster child for hope. He was bad but God was good and gracious. No one ever meets Jesus and stays the same.✠

Bible Studies for Life

By Roy E. Ciampa, Ph.D., S. Louis and Ann W. Armstrong

Professor of Religion, Samford University



RAHAB: COURAGEOUS FAITH Joshua 2:1-14

This week we begin a series of studies of women who are powerful examples of faith. We start with Rahab.

Fear of God can fuel our courage. (1-7)

Jericho was of particular interest due to its proximity to trade routes and thus its military and economic value. Joshua’s spies found a place to stay in Jericho with a prostitute who also served as an innkeeper. Somehow word spread not only of their presence but of their secret mission as well. The king’s knowledge that the spies were staying with Rahab turned their situation into a life-or-death predicament for her and for them.

To give them up would probably cost them their lives. To help them escape would probably cost Rahab her life. How would she respond?

One would normally expect a stranger to be more loyal to her own people than to two people she had just met. Amazingly Rahab hid the spies and came up with a story that saved their lives and her own: an ancient version of the well-known “They went that-a-way” ruse.

This part of the story has an almost comedic effect as those searching for the spies take her at her word instead of carefully searching her premises. If she had been caught in her lie it undoubtedly would have cost her life and theirs. Although the text does not comment on the issue it is understood the spies were not merely “lucky” but God had providentially prepared the way for them.

The following verses make it clear Rahab’s extraordinary courage had an extraordinary basis: knowledge of the unmatched power of Israel’s God and to defy Him would be a more self-destructive move than to defy local authorities.

Fear of God is grounded in the confidence of who God is and what He does. (8-11)

Only after covering for the spies and sending the search party on a wild goose chase does Rahab reveal why she had taken such extraordinary steps to save these strangers. Her explanation is given in the form of inverted parallelism (also known as chiasmic structure) which stresses the repeated points and the central point around which they pivot:

A: A theological conclusion: God has given Israel this land (v. 9a)

B: A reference to the fear that has fallen on the people (v. 9b)

C: The basis for the fear and the theological conclusion: Hearing of what God did for Israel in the exodus and with the Amorites (v. 10)

B': A reference to the fear that had fallen on the people (v. 11a)

A': A theological conclusion: Israel’s God is God of heaven and earth (v. 11b).

God’s reputation had gone before Him (and before Israel) to Jericho. God’s powerful way of dealing with the Egyptians and Amorites had led to tremendous fear and for Rahab tremendous insight into the nature of Israel’s God and boldness to act in light of what God had revealed about Himself and His commitment to Israel.

Rahab realized Israel’s God was not some inferior Israelite god with only local and limited powers but instead He reigned in heaven and over earth.

Fear of God leads us to trust. (12-14)

Rahab’s life-saving and life-risking act of protecting Israel’s spies was grounded in her newfound faith in Israel’s God. And faith in Israel’s God resulted in a willingness to trust in His people as well.

Rahab knew they would come back and capture Jericho and was prepared to trust them (and God) with the salvation of her family as they had trusted her (and God) with their own lives. She is an example to all of us of courageous faith.✠



Media reviews

MUSIC

Phil Wickham

Singalong 4 (LIVE)

Fair Trade

It's the fourth "Singalong" worship album from Wickham and was recorded live in




front of an audience alongside Matt Redman and Brian and Jenn Johnson (Bethel

Music). It features 12 songs, including "Living Hope" (my favorite), "Till I Found You" and "Forever (We Sing Hallelujah)." Live worship albums possess a unique sound and quality. It's as if the very act of corporate worship is grounded in Scripture and tied to the heart of God. Of course, it is (Heb. 10:24–25). "Singalong 4" is marvelous.

Ledger

Ledger

Atlantic

It's the debut solo project from Jen Ledger, the talented drummer from the rock band Skillet who is just as impressive as a vocalist. In "Not Dead Yet," she sings about a low point in her life when she had panic attacks. In "Foreigner" (my favorite), she borrows a theme from Philip-

 pian 3:20 to contrast her earthly home with her heavenly home.

In "Warrior" (another good one), she sings about her battle against sin and Satan. "Ledger" is for those who enjoy 80s-type female-fronted rock with a faith element. An EP, it includes six songs.✝



For more information, visit Anthony-Evans.com

Anthony Evans

Photo courtesy of Anthony Evans

Anthony Evans' 'Altared' has deep, personal meaning

By Michael Foust

Correspondent, The Alabama Baptist

When singer Anthony Evans went into the studio to record his ninth album he didn't know his mother would be battling cancer when it was released.

But for Evans it simply means the album's message now has a deeper meaning.

Evans' new full-length worship album "Altared" released May 17, barely a month after his mother learned her rare gallbladder cancer had returned. Well-known pastor and author Tony Evans — Anthony's father — made the announcement about Lois Evans health in early April.

Anthony Evans calls it "one of the biggest trials our family has faced."

"God has altered the circumstances of my family's life," he said. "But within that there is beauty, and we are experiencing Him in a different way."

"Altared" is a collection of originals tunes ("Hope Is Alive" and

"Fighting For Us") mixed with re-creations of the most popular worship songs in the church today.

The album gets its name by combining two words: "altar," as in a traditional place of worship, and "altered," as a reference to the way God changes the Christian's life for the better.

'New vantage point'

"I believe God uses circumstances — unexpected circumstances a lot of the time — for us to get a new vantage point of His grace and His mercy," Evans said, describing the message behind the album. "And sometimes those circumstances are hard. ... 'Altared' is about that. We can all have a divine encounter with our God who wants to continually kind of metamorphosize the way we view His grace so that we see all aspects of it."

It's been a busy year for Evans. Earlier this year he was featured in a movie documentary, "Kingdom Men Rising," spotlighting biblical manhood. Starting in May he will

tour with his sister, speaker and author Priscilla Shirer.

Of course some Christians know him as the always-smiling Christian contestant in the second season of NBC's "The Voice" (2012). Evans says the appearance changed his career and gave him a unique opportunity to be a witness for Christ.

"I was in front of people that I never would have been in front of in a church," he said. "It broadened my scope and it reminded me that my faith is not made for just the inside of four walls. It helped me understand that I'm the salt of the earth, not the salt of the shaker."✝

Meet the reviewer

Michael Foust covers the intersection of faith and entertainment as a media reviewer for The Alabama Baptist. He also is the husband of an amazing wife and the father of four young children.

‘Lightbulb’ moments

Children, student summer camp: A ‘milestone’ for spiritual growth

When Meghan Dukes first visited a LifeWay summer camp as an elementary-aged child, she returned home telling her mom she wanted to work there one day.

Several years later Dukes made good on her intentions becoming

a LifeWay camp staffer. This July she’ll come full circle — chap-eroning 18 kids from Redeemer Church, Hendersonville, Tennessee, to a CentriKid camp in Linden, Tennessee.

“I’m so thankful for how the Lord has used LifeWay camps in my life from childhood to the present,” Dukes said. “I’ve been influenced by the gospel-focused intentionality of camp as a fourth grade student, as a staffer and now as a children’s ministry director.”

Dukes’ journey illustrates how Christian summer camps and mis-sions projects can often link gen-erations of Christ-followers.

A 2018 LifeWay Research study on predictors of spiritual health in young adults found 44% of Protes-tant churchgoing parents of 18- to 30-year-olds sent their children to church camps and retreats.



Photos courtesy of LifeWay

A LifeWay CentriKid camp staff member helps young campers connect their outdoor activity with a devotion from Scripture.

“Lots of people think of summer camp as a milestone experience,” said Logan Meek, team leader of Student Life For Kids. “Many times summer camp is the place where God causes children and stu-dents to have ‘lightbulb’ moments. ... These spiritual moments can be-come faith markers we look back to for the rest of our lives.”

‘Love and trust’

As Dukes prepares to take her kids to CentriKid this July, she says she appreciates the care and intentionality LifeWay camps put into communicating the good news about Jesus.

“They connect everything back to the gospel,” she says, “and provide a setting in which friendships are formed and built on the trust and love of Jesus.”

Several other summer camp op-tions hosted by Alabama Baptist entities exist for students and chil-dren including those at WorldSong Missions Place in Cook Springs (www.alabamawmu.org/mac) and Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega (www.mixmu-siccamp.org).

For more information about Life-Way summer camps and missions projects visit www.LifeWay.com/Events. (BP, TAB)

How to pray:

▶ Pray summer camps hosted by LifeWay, WorldSong, Shocco Springs and others will bring the gospel to students and children of all ages.

▶ Pray those attending camps and retreats this summer will stay safe, have fun and build new friendships. (TAB)



Students join in worship at a Student Life Beach Camp in Daytona Beach, Florida.