

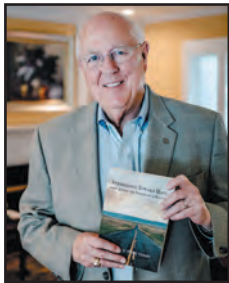
# The Alabama Baptist

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November 4, 2021

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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

## INSIDE



**Bob Terry shares personal journey, practical help in new book on grief**  
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**Author and farmer seeks better way for family**  
◆ Pages 10–11



**Church personnel teams should advocate for staff**  
◆ Page 13

**Main photo:** Meghan and TC Brown (Fairhope Campus High School Ministry) celebrate with a student after her baptism in the lagoon at Gulf State Park. **Small photo:** Lead Pastor Chris Bell baptizes Braden Bradley.



## ‘Historic moments’

### Fairhope’s 3Circle Church baptizes 84 people in lagoon at the Gulf

Chris Bell said the “pandemic season” has been a tough one. But he knows God has done and is still doing great things with it.

“Two years ago before the pandemic most Americans thought we were bulletproof in a way,” said Bell, lead pastor of 3Circle Church in Fairhope. “The world was stunned we could be brought to our knees so fast. I think that was a really big deal for people to experience, to realize that if everything I’ve already depended on could pull out from under me so quickly, there has to be something else.”

That’s where followers of

Christ are able to come in with the truth of the gospel, Bell said.

#### Opportunities

“I think we’re living in one of the greatest opportunities for the gospel in human history, one of the historic moments for the Church of all time.”

Bell’s church saw that reflected on a recent Sunday evening when they baptized 84 people in the lagoon at

Gulf State Park. They typically have a large beach baptism a couple of times a year — at Easter they baptized around 50 — but this is possibly their largest, Bell said.

The Sept. 12 baptism service coincided with baptisms all over the state and Southern Baptist Convention, as churches celebrated the SBC’s Baptism Sunday.

For more information, visit [namb.net/evangelism/baptism-sunday](http://namb.net/evangelism/baptism-sunday). (Grace Thornton)

## HIGHLIGHTS



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The crossword puzzle can be found on page 15.

# The Alabama Baptist: old friend, new resource

*We hear from readers across the state and Southeast on a weekly basis about the impact of the ministry of The Alabama Baptist newspaper and its variety of digital platforms. We'd love to share your photos and comments as well.*



Photo by Ted Traylor

Alabama native and Pensacola pastor Ted Traylor shared how much his mother (shown here) loves reading The Alabama Baptist.



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

Daven Watkins (right) of FBC Pelham is the newly elected moderator for Shelby Baptist Association where Lisa and Ric Camp serve in ministry. Ric is the associational mission strategist.



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

Jennifer Davis Rash (left) and Lonette Berg (right) participate in West Central Baptist Association's annual meeting. John Goings (center) serves as co-vice moderator for the association.



Photo by Amy Hacker

Jan Martin of Liberty Home Baptist Church in Andalusia looks forward to her weekly copy.



Photo courtesy of Debbie Campbell/The Alabama Baptist

Director of Missions Dwight Everett warned Debbie Campbell, director of communications for TAB Media, he would tie a rope around her and pull her off the stage if she spoke too long. Well it finally happened at Tennessee River Baptist Association's annual meeting.

## The Alabama Baptist

"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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# RASHIONAL THOUGHTS

**By Jennifer Davis Rash**

President and Editor-in-Chief



[jrash@thealabamabaptist.org](mailto:jrash@thealabamabaptist.org)  
@RashionalThts

## Working through painful, difficult parts of life requires facing them

**W**hat is the hardest part of your day right now? How about the hardest part of this year?

What would you say is your greatest fear? How long have you had that fear?

What is running smoothly?

What's something you are anticipating that gets you excited? What's a long-term goal that keeps you motivated?

Who has hurt you most recently? How do you feel about that person right now?

How often are you sad? Or lonely? Or discouraged?

Do you find yourself angry more often than not? Are you able to target what draws the anger out of you?

Where do you sense a loss of control? How much time do you spend thinking about it?

### Pinpointing helpful tips

Maybe you are in a really good place right now. What are the factors contributing to how well things are going and how you are handling life?

Can you tell a difference in your energy level and your

outlook on life as compared to what it might be if you were discouraged or overwhelmed?

Maybe life itself isn't going great right now but you are still able to juggle all the craziness and not let it get you down.

What makes that possible for you? How are you able to start fresh every morning and push through the rough spots without letting them defeat you?

And no matter where you fall on the spectrum, how does gratitude fit in your daily thoughts and prayer life?

Are you able to pinpoint those precious moments, people and gifts God gives you each day?

Or are you missing them because of all the other stuff crowding your heart and mind?

Are you spending quality time with God each day — reading the Bible, praying, meditating and quietly listening?

What aspect of your life needs some attention? During your time with God, what is He surfacing for you to address?

Are you able to calm your spirit enough to hear from Him and sense the conviction, the nudge from within.

Do you have someone to talk to who is trained to help you

process your emotions in a healthy manner?

Sometimes we need someone who will listen, ask questions and help us work through issues who isn't emotionally involved in the situation.

### Healthy processing

It's also important not to attach ourselves too tightly to an echo chamber, where we are all saying the same thing back and forth to each other, which basically gets everyone riled up.

Venting to a family member or friend is certainly part of everyday life, but if we can't move past the frustration after a reasonable period of venting, then we must realize the issue needs an unbiased third party to help us deal with whatever it is.

If you aren't sure where to find help, then reach out to a minister at your church or your medical doctor for suggestions.

Your associational missions office also can help. And for ministry leaders, the office of church health and office of LeaderCare at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions are available to walk alongside you.

Pathways Professional Counseling, a sister ministry of the Alabama Baptist Children's

Homes & Family Ministries, also offers counseling sites across the state.

However, waiting until you are in crisis to seek out a counselor could mean you have to wait to get an appointment because of the sheer volume of people needing help — and that could make the issue more difficult.

On page 4, Lisa Keane, clinical director for Pathways, shares some tips on what to do while waiting. Three of the areas she addressed caught my attention for all of us, all the time.

**1. Sleep** — Are you getting enough sleep? Are you sleeping too much?

**2. Food** — How are you fueling your body? Are you using sugar and caffeine to keep you plowing through each day instead of making sure you have a proper amount of lean protein and nutrients from fruits and vegetables.

**3. Movement** — Are you finding a way to move around at some level each day? The amount and to what degree depends on each person, but finding opportunities to move around daily always helps.

And, of course, we know giving our burdens to the Lord to carry is the greatest help. I wonder why it's so hard for us to actually do this sometimes.

# Your Voice



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

## What to do while you wait for counseling

By **Lisa Keane, MAMFC, LPC-S**  
Pathways Professional Counseling

When our Pathways offices have a waiting list, it is hard because we know people are hurting, and we know they would not be calling us if they did not need help right now.

Current trends in mental health, even on a national level, are showing there are not enough mental health providers for the number of people seeking counseling.

In addition, the rates of anxiety

and depression, likely linked to the pandemic, are increasing. More hurting people are out there than the number of professionals to meet their needs.

At Pathways, we know the waiting is hard. We know it is not ideal for you, for your family or for your children.

In light of these realities, we want to provide you with some tips and ideas that may help, if you are in a waiting season.

1. Add your name to multiple waiting lists.

2. Think about and write down your goal for counseling, symptoms you are experiencing and how you are currently coping with the situation. Not only does this help you organize your thoughts, it makes your first counseling appointment more efficient.

3. Focus on your eating, sleeping and movement. Begin to look at how well you are feeding your body, keep a log of or monitor your sleep patterns, and maintain or begin activity to move your body. Don't feel that you need to overhaul these areas, rather you can start to observe and examine how your physical habits are affecting your mood.

4. Seek out trusted friends, clergy or family to be your support as you wait. Ask them to pray for you and with you about what is going on in your life. Ask them to check on you and share with them what you need while you wait.

5. Start a journal. Begin by simply writing how you are feeling that day or tracking your mood/activities. Also include things you are grateful for in your life. It is helpful to focus on what is going right or is good when a great deal around you seems to be going wrong.

6. Be willing to see a therapist via Telehealth (over video).

7. Look for articles (at pathway-professional.org) addressing the area in which you are struggling.

Instead of walking up to a single mom and patting her on the back and telling her, "You can do this," why not teach her how to biblically?

**Shea Lowery, longtime Alabama Baptist who created a single mothers ministry recently at FBC Dallas called Strong & Courageous**

Your coverage of persecuted Christians has really touched my heart over the last months and years. Very instructive that you are hitting on that issue in the paper, and I think that's a good thing. Thank you!

**Bob Cosby  
Birmingham, Ala.**

Suffering in life is actually "street cred" for the gospel, because everybody understands what it means to hurt on some level.

**Ed Litton, SBC president  
Redemption Church  
Saraland, Ala.**

Because we are made in His image, we have value in and of being His creation. We felt like that was a message God wanted us to share.

**Pastor Davey Lyon  
Imago Dei Church at the 45  
Haynesville, Ala.**

## Evangelical Press Association Best in Class — 3rd place

The Alabama Baptist recently placed third across the nation in the religious newspapers category of the Evangelical Press Association's mid-year competition.

One judge noted: "Clean crisp cover. Images are good. Best one on the cover. Clean horizontal lines. Good headline sizes with subheads for clarity. Like the look of the yellow shirt army. Writing and coverage of the tornado outbreak was interesting and thorough. Getting the weather man profile



on the event was an unexpected but good addition ... wonderful coverage of the tornado outbreak, preparing for the next, what happened, the weather man and all. Very comprehensive and well done. You also met your goal of covering need-to-know news items. Great balance."

A second judge said: "I love the separation on the cover. The typefaces and color were fantastic. The image of ... the hurricane effect was really informative."

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“It is only with gratitude that life becomes rich.”

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

*German theologian, author of “The Cost of Discipleship”*

As followers of Christ, we desire to live obediently and pursue righteousness above all else, trusting in the Father for all our needs and wants. An eternal perspective changes our desires.

Trust solely in Christ. He reunites us to the Father.

God is sufficient enough for every other longing in our life. The presence of Christ is the power and wisdom of God.

**Ryan Christmas**  
Minister of missions  
NorthPark Baptist Church  
Trussville

This world is not a very happy place right now, but when you open the pages of the Bible you find a different world. It's not a make-believe

or pretend world. It isn't a world that is trying to get an escape for us from the realities of this world.

He recognizes this world is a mess. It's a mess because of our own evil, but God has given us promises for every contingency and that's the great message here. The promises are greater than the problems. The promises outlast the problems.

**Pastor/author Robert Morgan**

I was reminded of what the Church is called to do. Let's be reminded to stop going to church and start being the Church.

**Pastor Brent Rawson**  
FBC Satsuma, Ala.

Alabama Baptists have done a great job staying focused on the

Great Commission, evangelism and making disciples. Hopefully we can maintain that culture.

**Pastor Buddy Champion**  
FBC Trussville, Ala.

In the refugee camps, I saw a lot of children. I decided to teach them Bible stories using sports.

**Hector Cabrera, a global missionary partner with IMB who serves Sudanese refugees living in Uganda**

Hear me, Church: we can never go and find “who's our one?” if He is not our first one.

**Pastor Ted Traylor**  
Olive Baptist Church  
Pensacola, Fla.

## From the *Twitterverse*

### @haines\_matt

Pastor friends, today we have one of the greatest of all honors — to stand before the people of God and proclaim the word of God in the power of the Spirit of God to the glory of God. Focus on faithfulness and clarity, not perfection and performance.

### @dandarling

The worst decisions are made when leaders are isolated and emotional.

### @brocraige

“Churches have to die to self, or they will die.” —Mark Clifton

### @ricklance

Often we pray for unity in our homes, in our churches and in our country. Perhaps we need to pray for stability, which can bring about unity. Without stability, there is no unity.

### @BillWilks

The greatest sin of omission in the church today can be defined by two words. It's our personal failure to “make disciples.” To make disciples is not a good suggestion, it's our Great Commission.

### @LysaTerKeurst

The more alone we get with lies, the more confused we become. Let's call or text a trusted friend & invite them to speak truth into our heartache and confusion. Let's invite the Holy Spirit to speak truth to us through God's word. Let's invite Jesus into our deepest pain.

### @shane\_pruitt78

If you win people with gimmicks, you have to keep them with gimmicks. Eventually, you run out of gimmicks. If you win people with the gospel, you keep them with the gospel, and you never run out of the gospel.

### @ethicist

Sometimes restlessness in the heart of a believer is not caused by sinful discontentment, but by a righteous longing for heaven.

### @JackieHillPerry

If you don't transform your pain, you will always transmit it. Someone else has to suffer because I don't know how to suffer; that is what it comes down to. —Richard Rohr

### @DanielDickard

I'm convinced that we need less spotlights, leadership manuals and self-help formulas in the church and more humility and dependence on the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

### @pastorjgkell

If you do not want to fall off a cliff, do not walk along its edge. Don't flirt with sin ... Flee to Jesus; He will keep you safe.

## Sacrifice of Jesus 'once for all'

Once for all.

This phrase is used often in the book of Hebrews to describe the sacrifice of Christ. He is the Great High Priest. He is also the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world.

Simultaneously, Jesus is both the One offering the sacrifice and the sacrifice itself. His priestly work was better than anyone before or after. His blood that was shed is different from any sacrifice ever made.

Over and over again, year after year, sacrifice after sacrifice was made on behalf of people who could never have their guilt completely removed by the blood that had been shed. That is, until Jesus came along and made the perfect sacrifice.

“Once for all” means the sacrifice for our sins will never have to be made again, ever!

If animal sacrifices could have accomplished the work of saving people from their sins, there would have been no need for Jesus to be our sacrifice. These insufficient sacrifices (and the priests who offered them) were but a shadow of Jesus and His perfect sacrifice.

Thanks be to God for sending His Son, our Sacrificial Lamb! Believers can have confidence that all of their sins are forgiven, not just some of them.

John Owen said, “God was completely pleased, satisfied and highly glorified in and through Christ's offering; for had this not been so, Christ's human nature would not have been immediately exalted to the highest glory possible.”

Now, King Jesus sits on His throne, having accomplished the will of the Father to rescue people from their sins. One day a multitude in heaven will be singing “Worthy is the Lamb!” to the One who made the sacrifice, once for all.

**Pastor Andy Frazier**  
Grace Baptist Church  
Sumiton

# 3 stories you should know



AP Photo/Jeff Chiu, File

In this Sept. 27, 2015, file photo, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi (left) speaks to Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg. Leaked documents provided to U.S. regulators show Facebook's own researchers say the company has been slow to address issues such as inflammatory posts, hate speech and misinformation in languages other than English, potentially making users in some of the most politically unstable countries more vulnerable to real-world violence. (AP)

## TAB Media releases 3rd annual 'Fruitful'

The third annual issue of *Fruitful*, a special publication of TAB Media produced in partnership with the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, is now out.

The 56-page full-color magazine includes ministry updates from the past year from the SBOM and Alabama Baptist entities. Copies of *Fruitful* will be available at the Nov. 16–17 Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting at Whitesburg Baptist Church in Huntsville.

Subscribers to The Alabama Baptist and other SBOM partners will receive complimentary copies of the magazine in their mailboxes prior to the annual meeting.

TAB Media Editor-in-Chief Jennifer Davis Rash called it an honor to gather the stories of Alabama Baptist work together in the magazine. (TAB Media)

## Southwestern academic chair to honor Stanley

Trustees of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary have approved a new academic chair in honor of Charles Stanley, longtime pastor of First Baptist Church Atlanta and a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The Charles F. Stanley Chair for the Advancement of Global Christianity was approved unanimously during the trustees' Oct. 19 fall meeting.

The endowed chair is fully funded by a \$2 million gift to Southwestern by In Touch Foundation, the charitable subsidiary of In Touch Ministries, the global broadcasting ministry founded by Stanley in 1977.

A 1957 graduate of Southwestern, Stanley served FBC Atlanta as senior pastor from 1971 until his retirement in September 2020. (SWBTS)

## Persecuted church

### New film part of Nov. 7 Day of Prayer for Persecuted Church resources

When persecuted believers are asked how the American church can help, the common answer is "pray for us!" The global church is urged to do just that Nov. 7, the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church.

According to Open Doors' 2021 World Watch List, more than 340 million Christians live in places where they experience high levels of persecution and discrimination.

Persecution occurs most often in countries with authoritarian regimes and those where the predominantly Islamic and Hindu religious cultures are hostile toward religious minorities generally and Christians specifically.

Resources to observe the day of prayer are available from several organizations, including

International Christian Concern and Voice of the Martyrs.

This year, VOM also is releasing a feature film, "Sabina," which tells the story of Sabina Wurmbbrand and her husband, Richard, VOM co-founders.

Set during World War II and spanning the years between 1938 to 1944, the film will take viewers on a journey through Romania to discover why Sabina, a Jewish Christian, would risk her life to offer a kind hand to German soldiers — enemies who killed her entire family. "Sabina" conveys the realities of religious persecution and the cost of following Christ when faith is forbidden, said Todd Nettleton, chief of media relations and message integration for VOM and host of VOM Radio.

"Richard and Sabina were exemplary biblical disciples. Their story pushes each of us to rethink our concept of forgiveness and what it looks like to love our enemies as Jesus instructed," he said. "Sabina's life is ultimately a testament of how God's love can transcend pain and struggle — and even transform the lives of those around us. This story is truly inspiring. It will encourage every viewer to be transformed from the inside out by the power of God."

"Sabina" will show in theaters Nov. 8–10. More information on the film is available at [sabinamovie.com](http://sabinamovie.com).

Resources for churches observing the annual day of prayer are available at [idop2021.com](http://idop2021.com) and [persecution.org/idop](http://persecution.org/idop). (TAB Media)



Sabinamovie.com photo

# Alabama news

## BIRMINGHAM METRO ASSOCIATION

► **First Baptist Church Roebuck Plaza, Birmingham**, has enjoyed a gospel presence in its community for 125 years. Its members gathered Sept. 5 to celebrate that milestone.

The church has been on its current site since 1948, when Willie Spencer — considered the church's matriarch — organized the women of the congregation to carry boards there from the original building, which was a half mile down the road.



Photo by Debbie Campbell/The Alabama Baptist

As part of the special service, Glenn Wilson sang a solo, Debbie Campbell presented a certificate to the church on behalf of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission and Pastor Jim Auchmuty preached. Auchmuty served there 20 years.

## EAST CULLMAN ASSOCIATION

► **East Cullman Baptist Association** — led by director of missions Randy Makemson — celebrated its 75th anniversary during its annual meeting Oct. 12.

Mary Ellen Holmes, associational historian, presented the history of East Cullman Association, and David Stancil, pastor of Enon Baptist Church, Vinemont, brought the message. Old photos scrolled on screens at East Side Baptist Church, Cullman, where the meeting was held, and posters showing key events in the association were on display.



Photo courtesy of Debbie Keaton

An anniversary open house was held in May to show the newly renovated ECBA Resource Center. Renovation work

was completed by volunteers. A plaque from the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission commemorating the anniversary is on permanent display there.

## ELMORE ASSOCIATION

► On Oct. 3, members and friends of **First Baptist Church Wetumpka** gathered to celebrate the 200th anniversary of when the “scattered Baptists of the Coosa River Valley” came together to start a new congregation.

Pastor Clint Landry (right) said the day was a “really sweet and special day in the life of our church.”

“It’s a rare thing for a church to have this many years of history to celebrate, and to be able to look back and give thanks for all the Lord has done was a joy,” he said.

“Also, it was a day to look ahead and celebrate all that the Lord has in store for us, and we are excited for what He holds in our future.”

A video presentation during the celebration featured members describing in three words what the church means to them. A program told the story of those “scattered Baptists” who came together to form FBC Wetumpka. Church memorabilia was on display, including the old church bell that was damaged in a recent tornado. Ralph Foster (left) presented the church with a certificate on behalf of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, and Mel Johnson presented them with one on behalf of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.



Photo courtesy of Ralph Foster

## FAYETTE COUNTY ASSOCIATION

► **Caines Ridge Missionary Baptist Church, Fayette**, celebrated its 125th anniversary Oct.



Photo courtesy of David Nelson

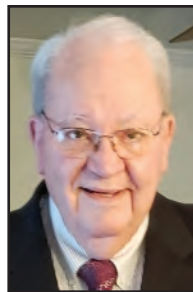
3. During the special service, members shared testimonies of church memories, and a recording was played of the last sermon preached by former pastor Rosco Holliman, who is now deceased. Pastor Mark Otts (right) also preached.

David Nelson of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission presented a certificate to the church, and Mark Brown presented a plaque on behalf of Fayette County Baptist Association.

“We enjoyed the day,” said Sharon Holliman, church secretary/treasurer.

## JUDSON ASSOCIATION

► **Ron Hendrickson** said it’s been a “joy” to serve the Lord in a variety of pastoral and church staff roles for more than 60 years. Hendrickson recently retired from his position as minister of music and associate pastor of **Old Zion Baptist Church, Abbeville**, where he served eight years. Before that, he served other churches in Alabama, Georgia and Florida, including two stints at Pathway Baptist Church, Dothan.



HENDRICKSON

## LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN ASSOCIATION

► The annual **Lookout Mountain Baptist Association Children’s Home Benefit Concert** is planned Nov. 6, 6 p.m. New Bethel Baptist Church, Collinsville, will host, and the music will be provided by “Two Blessed” and “Ivy Station.”

## SHELBY ASSOCIATION

► **Liberty Baptist Church, Chelsea**, cel-

brates its 175th anniversary Nov. 7 during its morning worship services at 9:15 (main worship center and East Venue) and 11 a.m. (main worship center). Pastor Tim Cox will preach. Each service will include a short video from a former pastor and guest presentations from Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, and Lonette Berg, executive director of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission.

## ST. CLAIR ASSOCIATION

► **Evening Star Baptist Church, Cropwell**, will host a nightly revival Nov. 8–12, 7 p.m. Evangelist Shad Smith will be preaching. Smith is pastor of Northside Baptist Church, Dallas, Georgia. Shon Phillips is pastor.

## TUSKEGEE LEE ASSOCIATION

► **Parkway Baptist Church, Auburn**, started its Sept. 19 service with the same hymn the congregation sang at the church’s dedication ser-



Facebook screenshot

vice in 1970 — “The Church’s One Foundation.” The church turned 50 in 2020 but because of COVID-19, the church kicked off a year of celebration in September 2020 and chose to hold its big

event this year, Pastor Jeff Redmond said.

A plaque was presented to the church from the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, and the congregation watched a video featuring historical highlights. There was a note burning for the church debt, and a time capsule was announced that will be opened at the church’s centennial.

## WEST CULLMAN ASSOCIATION

► **Justin Olvey** has been called as director of missions for **West Cullman Baptist Association**.

He was voted in Oct. 19 during the association’s annual meeting. He is a graduate of the University of Alabama with an accounting degree. He also finished master of divinity and master of theology degrees at New Orleans Seminary. He was pastor of Spring Bank Baptist Church, Silas, for 12 years and has been serving as a Samford University Ministry Training Institute instructor and adjunct faculty at Coastal Alabama Community College, Gilberttown campus. He was licensed to preach (1998) and ordained (2002) by East McFarland Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, where he was youth minister (1998–2003). He served churches in the role of equipping pastor and business administrator minister. He and his wife, Brooke, have two children.



Photo courtesy of Lonette Berg

# Headline news

## from around the Southeast

### ARKANSAS

Five Arkansas Baptist women were involved in an English-teaching ministry through the Brooklyn, New York, Arab American Friendship Center, in mid-October. Prayer walking, visiting in homes for coffee and prayer, encouraging missions partners and carrying out ministry for women and girls in a local park were all a part of the week's schedule, Arkansas Baptist News reported. This year marks the 10th year of involvement for Arkansas Baptist women with Arab women in New York. This year's team experienced opportunities to share Jesus and pray with women who have become good friends



Photo courtesy of Arkansas Baptist News

during the past 10 years. Natalie Burk from First Baptist Church Russellville, said, "This was my favorite trip so far. I am praying for R's salvation and for the Friendship Center to be

a light in the darkness." Burk and two other Arkansas Baptist women have been teaching English classes virtually for the Friendship Center over the past year as in-person classes were closed due to the pandemic.

### FLORIDA

Danny Lundy recalls when men and women sat on separate sides of the sanctuary on Sunday mornings and when the only air conditioning was natural as windows were opened wide. For the past 50 years, Lundy has led Oakland Baptist Church in Perry, the Florida Baptist Witness reported. The church meets once each month, but its doors are always open to the public. Visitors can sit on church benches, play the piano, sing and pray. "A lot of people go down there to get some solace, just to have a little bit of peace between themselves and the hurries of the world and be able to sit there and talk to the Lord," Lundy said. After 50 years, the pastor has no plans to retire from Oakland Baptist or for the church to close its doors. The church, he said, is



Photo courtesy of Florida Baptist Witness

"a lighthouse and the light is there. There may be no human activity around it but when folks

drive in there, the light is there, and it is shining, and it sends a message."

### KENTUCKY

As a group of six people stood on his front porch, praying with his wife for his salvation, Greg Knapper hid in the bedroom, peering through the blinds, Kentucky Today reported. Fast forward to today, and the man who hid in his bedroom is the bivocational pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Mount Eden, which is the



Photo courtesy of Kentucky Today

same church that sent the outreach team with then-pastor Greg Taylor to pray for his salvation. "Right now, we're in like a church plant or reinvention phase," said Knapper, who also works full time in the IT department for Norton Healthcare. "We're looking at what we're doing and why we're doing it. Anything we do, we want to do well." The church averages about 40 people in worship, and three young people have been baptized since Oct. 3. "I look forward to everything God has for us," Knapper said.

### LOUISIANA

David Sneed, 65, saw the disabilities that plagued his life as a pathway to ministry. Sneed's life was described as a living sermon, reported New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, where he earned associate's and bachelor's degrees before entering the seminary's doctorate program. Sneed died Sept. 3 in his downtown New Orleans apartment. Sneed prayed by name for about 2,000 people daily. Before getting a smartphone, Sneed carried a briefcase filled with pages and pages of people he lifted up in prayer. Feeling called to preach as a young man, Sneed had to overcome the obstacles his disability presented, constantly surpassing limitations others put on him. "He was the most humble man I've ever met," said Jacob Crawford, director of City Life NOLA, a ministry to serve the homeless. "He was a man who had very few material possessions — very few — but he was the richest man I've ever met."



Photo courtesy of NOBTS

### MISSISSIPPI

Derrick Martin is more than a campus dining employee at Mississippi College. He's a daily friend, mentor and encourager to students, MC reported. Student Samuel Corson, a junior from Wedowee, Alabama, said Martin's faith-based guidance and encouragement have helped him successfully navigate personal challenges. "He (Martin) is kind, considerate, energetic, intentional, humble, hard-working, friendly, patient and loving," Corson said. Martin has worked in food service at MC for more than 25 years, moving from the "back-of-the-house" kitchen area into a new frontline role two years ago. He was recognized recently for his Christ-like spirit, receiving an MVP award from the school. "Derrick has 'lived the gospel' by taking interest in the lives of those he serves by offering a listening ear and always giving a last word of encouragement with his trademark phrase, 'Have a blessed day,'" said Mike Prince, MC director of food service.



Photo courtesy of Mississippi College

### TENNESSEE

What does riding a motorcycle have to do with raising money for missions? Just ask Frank Webb, F.A.I.T.H. Rider and pastor of Mount Pleasant Baptist Church. He recently logged more than 1,000 miles riding his motorcycle across Tennessee, the Baptist and Reflector reported. Several church members pledged an amount per mile to be given to the Tennessee Baptist missions offering. About \$1,600 was pledged. F.A.I.T.H. Riders is a national ministry developed in 2002 at First Baptist Church at the Mall in Lakeland, Florida. According to the F.A.I.T.H. Riders website, what began "as a four-person step of faith has grown into a team of many dedicated believers committed to the cause of Christ and to share the gospel of Jesus Christ on and with their motorcycles to anyone who will listen." The ministry has expanded to more than 350 churches in 29 states, including Tennessee.



Photo courtesy of Baptist and Reflector

# FINDING HOPE

## Bob Terry shares personal journey, practical help in new book on grief

By Carrie B. McWhorter  
TAB Media

**W**hen Bob Terry's wife, Eleanor, died in 1998 following a car accident in South Africa, he began a journey with grief he never expected and certainly never wanted.

His new book, "Struggling Toward Hope: Life After the Death of a Spouse," shares not only the personal lessons he learned along that journey, but also practical tips for survivors as they learn to live after a loved one dies.

### Filling a need

"When the funeral is over, you go home, and people surround you with love and care for a month or so," said Terry, editor emeritus of The Alabama Baptist.

"But that begins to ebb as normalcy returns to their lives. Other crises arise within the community, the church.

"But what about all the practical changes the surviving loved one faces? I didn't find a book that helped with that, and I hope my book stands in that gap."

"Struggling Toward Hope" tells Terry's story and provides meaningful help to grieving spouses and others who desire to encourage someone after the death of a loved one.

He also examines practical changes that happen following a death, including situations those on the outside probably never think about — questions about how and when to clean out your loved one's closet, whether it's OK to redecorate or when to explore new relationships.

"I wanted to point out the learning events in my story," Terry explained. "I wanted readers to know there are some issues you're going to face at home and here are some ways to address them."

Lisa Harrison, administrative director for Birmingham's Community Grief Support, a nonprofit providing free counseling, support groups and community education for those grieving loved ones, called the book "an invaluable resource for anyone who is grieving after the loss of a spouse."

"This book is truly a guidebook on how to cope with traumatic grief," Harrison said. "Bob shares the most intimate details of his loss experience, but he also goes on to address the tools any grieving widow can use to get through the journey moving forward without a spouse."

For readers of The Alabama Baptist, some parts of the book, especially those that deal with death, faith and understanding, may



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist

"Struggling Toward Hope" by Bob Terry, editor emeritus of The Alabama Baptist, aims to help those coping with grief and those who wish to be better informed on the grieving process.

sound familiar. At the time of Eleanor's death, Terry had been the editor of the paper for a little more than two years.

As Terry opened up about his struggles, including questions about God that Eleanor's death forced him to ask, he and the paper's readers forged a bond.

### Encouragement

The prayers and financial gifts of Alabama Baptists at the time of Eleanor's death and later the reactions to his editorials and articles encouraged Terry to put his experiences together in a book.

"The fact that there is a book is a direct result of Alabama Baptists because they had made themselves part of my story," he said.

"For the rest of my time as editor, there were very few churches I went into or associational meetings where I spoke that someone did not tell me they prayed for me

or referenced reading the things I wrote over the next few years.

"They gave me the confidence to deal with the issues and to share them with readers of the paper."

Terry hopes his book helps readers learn more about God through his story and the questions with which he grappled along the way.

"It is important for people to realize that faith questions surface in grief," Terry said. "God is not put off by our wrestling with those issues or asking those questions. When we do that, it makes our faith more personal. We end up with a much deeper commitment to our conclusions about God."

Eventually Terry remar-

ried, and "Struggling Toward Hope" ends with how even that was an important part of the grief journey.

### Ministering well

Though the book is for those grieving the death of a spouse, readers who want to minister well to the grieving also will benefit.

Gary Fenton, retired pastor of Dawson Memorial Baptist Church in Birmingham and senior advancement officer at Samford University, said the book belongs in every pastor's library.

"Often those who are ministering to the grieving are in a hurry to get people through the process, and their impatience often shows," Fenton said. "Having read this book will help me to be a better listener, to ask fewer but more helpful questions, and to be a source of authentic hope to people who are grieving."

Terry hopes readers will better understand the grief journey is not a straight path.

"Sometimes you walk in a circle, sometimes you take a wrong direction, and sometimes you fall," he admitted. "I want people to

know that, and if they end up at a dead end, it's OK to start again."

And for those who struggle to find hope in the midst of grief, Terry has a singular message: "Hold on to God in the midst of the struggles.

"If you can't feel His presence, trust His heart. Hold on until you begin to sense His presence again."

*"Struggling Toward Hope: Life After the Death of a Spouse" is published by Soncoast Publishing and is available in ebook and print from most major booksellers.*

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# 'FAMILY-CENTERED economies'

By Hamilton Richardson  
TAB Media



Rory Groves and his children gather tomatoes on their farm in southern Minnesota. The Groves family works together to garden and raise livestock to provide food and income for their family.



Becca and Rory Groves call their enterprise a "learning farm" because they share their experiences in building family economies, homesteading and farm life with others through their website and programs.

## Author and farmer seeks better way for his family in southern Minnesota

**S**hifting gears and changing the course of life can be daunting, but for one Minnesota farmer the change became a blessing to his family, as well as spawning a larger mission, ministry and book.

In a recent episode of the TAB Media podcast "Amplify: Conversations about Life and Faith," host Maggie Evans spoke with author, computer programmer and farmer Rory Groves about his experience with what he calls "family-centered economies."

Evans asked Groves what motivated him to look away from his full-time job and move toward a different lifestyle, eventually getting into farming.

"I was trained as a computer scientist," he said. "I basically grew up around technology and loved it, and I had always wanted to be in that field. I spent the first 20 years of my career as a computer programmer and building software."

But Groves said he realized the things he was creating would be-

come obsolete within a few years, and if he didn't continue to train as a professional, he'd be obsolete as well.

### Involving the family

"I wasn't really building anything that I could pass onto my children," he explained. "Any skills that I had learned would certainly be obsolete by the time they could use them in the world."

"I didn't want to just pursue a paycheck. I wanted to find if there was a profession I could work in that would involve my family."

In his research, Groves came across the concept of family-centered economy, which he described as fulfilling and long-lasting. It also led to his book, "Durable Trades: Family-Centered Economies That Have Stood the Test of Time."

Groves said he found a lot of options available to families who seek this kind of lifestyle.

"There are many options for families to work together. Not only that. It's really the best way to pass on

one's faith, values, culture and to build lasting relationships with your family.

"There are many viable family economies that ... have been around for centuries," Groves said. "A lot of times families engaged in multiple vocations. They had maybe three or four or five different revenue streams that made up the family economy."

But Groves made it clear he hasn't got it all figured out, and he and his family are still experimenting.

### Ramping up events

"I'm still a computer consultant part-time but we're also in the process of ramping up a lot of events on our farm that center around this whole concept of building family economies, homesteading skills, getting people introduced to the concepts of farm life."

Groves, his wife, Becca, and their children live on what they call a

"learning farm" in southern Minnesota. Among many other things, they raise livestock and food for their family.

"We love sharing everything we're learning out here," he said. "There's so much richness in this life."

Groves noted the changes they've made along the way have been small.

"I didn't just quit my job and move out to a farm somewhere and see what happened. It was definitely small steps," he explained.

"This concept of families working together is ... pretty foreign in our modern day," Groves acknowledged. "Ever since the Industrial Revolution, we have been continuing to separate out instead of working together. That's a relatively new phenomenon in history. [G]oing back thousands of years, that was unthinkable. The family had to work

together in order to survive."

Groves believes his concept is a normal and sustainable model God intended for the family.

"Go back to Genesis. Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel. God created them in the garden to share a common vision, to work the land together," Groves explained.

"The mind-shift comes when you can see how God uniquely put your family together to accomplish something no other family on Earth could do, and to begin thinking as one unit."

Passing on his faith and a strong work ethic to his kids is a priority for Groves.

"Trying to go through 16 years of education and come out and be equipped to endure in a working environment ... that's a very hard thing to pass on," he said.

"You have to nurture a work ethic from a really young age. On the farm, I get to teach my kids about

what God is doing in the garden. We get to talk about things going on in the world.

"There's so many ways in which we get to pass on our faith through the context of work."

Of his book Groves said, "I started looking at all the possible historic trades and I decided to narrow it on the most recent time period ... that would still be relevant today," in the process identifying 61 durable trades that survived the Industrial Revolution.

### Benefiting others

Groves said what he intended was to benefit his family, but he realized how much it could benefit others.

"What are some ways we can pick and choose from different types of trades out there ... that we can do together?"

For more information visit [thegrovestead.com](http://thegrovestead.com). To hear the entire interview visit [tabonline.org/podcasts](http://tabonline.org/podcasts).

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# CHRIST CENTERED

Colossians 1:17-18



## ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ALABAMA BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION NOVEMBER 16-17, 2021

WHITESBURG BAPTIST CHURCH • HUNTSVILLE

### FEATURING MESSAGES BY:

**TUESDAY MORNING**  
Tim Cox • Pastor, Liberty Baptist Church, Chelsea

**TUESDAY EVENING**  
Jamie Dew • President, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

**WEDNESDAY MORNING**  
Jeff Meyers • Pastor, First Baptist Church, Opelika



Tim Cox



Jamie Dew



Jeff Meyers

### CHRIST CENTERED testimonies by

Colossians 1:17-18

**Joshua del Risco**  
Hispanic Pastor, Dawson Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham

**Dewayne Rembert**  
Pastor, Flatline Church, Montgomery

**Zachary Beasley**  
Campus Minister, Alabama State University and Tuskegee University



Joshua del Risco

Dewayne Rembert



Zachary Beasley



MINI-CONCERT, Tuesday Evening  
by Contemporary Christian Singer Christy Nockels,



## Events Surrounding the Annual Meeting

**CHURCH PLANTER NETWORK DINNER**

**November 14, 4 p.m.** • House of Hope and Restoration Church, Huntsville  
Register at [PlantAlabama.org/events](http://PlantAlabama.org/events)

**ALABAMA BAPTIST PASTORS CONFERENCE**

**November 15, 10 a.m.** • First Baptist Church, Decatur  
More info at [albaptistpc.com](http://albaptistpc.com)

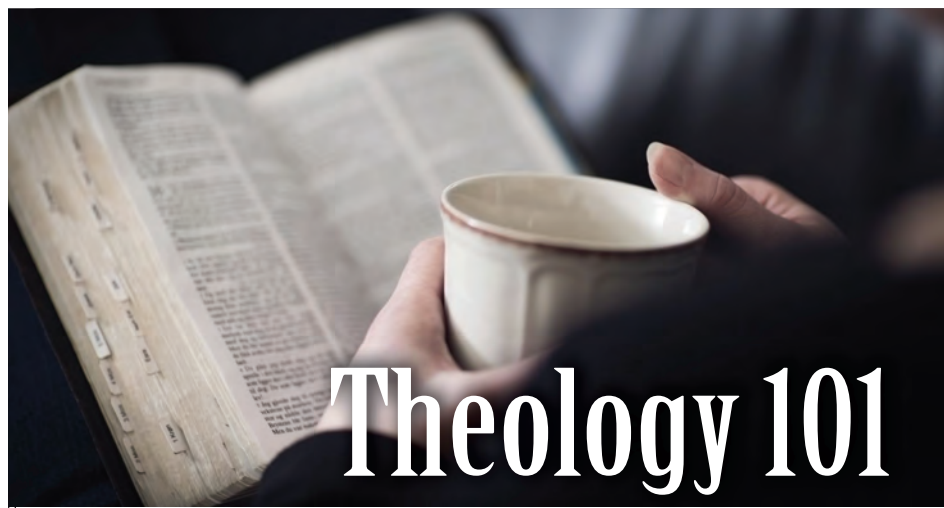
**UNITE, A GATHERING OF ALABAMA BAPTIST COLLEGE MINISTRY LEADERS**

**November 15, 4 p.m.** • The Well Church, Huntsville  
Register at [BCMLink.org/events](http://BCMLink.org/events)

**CONVERSATIONS WITH IMB**

**November 16 and 17 during the convention** • Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville  
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Visit [alsbom.org/convention](http://alsbom.org/convention) for complete schedule and hotel information or contact Amy Nelson, [anelson@alsbom.org](mailto:anelson@alsbom.org), (334) 613-2231.



# Theology 101

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY FOR PEOPLE IN THE PEW

## Giving Thanks

# A Biblical Thing to Do

By Jerry Batson, Th.D.  
TAB Media

November brings us once again to Thanksgiving Day, and puts the matter of giving thanks in the forefront of our minds. Although historically this special day does not have origin in the Christian calendar as do Christmas and Easter, Christians have multiple reasons for making Thanksgiving a time with deep and meaningful religious significance. After all, the practice of giving thanks is very biblical.

Multiple Bible passages point out the responsibility and value of being grateful. For example, 1 Thessalonians 5:18 admonishes believers, “In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

Ephesians 5:20 speaks about giving thanks continually for everything when it says, “Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

In like manner, Philippians 4:6 calls for petitionary prayer to be mingled with giving thanks: “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.”

Along with such New Testament passages are numerous examples in the Old Testament, especially in the Psalms. We read of the psalmist’s resolve: “I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord” (116:17). In the beloved 100th psalm we read, “Enter into His gates with

thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him and bless His name” (v. 4). In a similar call to give thanks, Psalm 95:2 says, “Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms.”

While our annual Thanksgiving Day has its roots in the example of the pilgrim colony at Plymouth in 1621, the practice of giving thanks indeed has deep biblical roots. Undergirding the biblical admonition about giving thanks is the truth expressed in James 1:17 with its reminder, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.”

## Recipients of grace

Christians and non-Christians alike are recipients of God’s common grace, experienced in such material benefits as food, clothing, shelter, friends and family. In addition, that common grace prompts giving thanks for such shared blessings as love, friendship, prosperity and peace.

For what blessings will this Thanksgiving month find us repeatedly giving thanks to God?

*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.*



# Church personnel teams should advocate for staff

By Michael J. Brooks  
TAB Media

The goal of every church personnel team should be to become more effective and to be an advocate for church staff.

That’s the message Lee Wright, coordinator of church compensation services for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, emphasized at a recent personnel conference held in Prattville.

“Who else is charged to advocate for the staff?” Wright asked. “It’s your job, and I’m glad you’re here to learn how to do this better,” Wright told those gathered Sept. 30.

Coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic is a good time to make decisions about the future of churches and their staffing, Wright said.

## Compensation

“We’ve found the average church budget devotes about 50% to personnel expenses,” he said, “so this area is a major investment and concern for the churches.”

The median family income in Alabama is \$66,700, he reported, and that should be the lowest amount most churches consider for a full-time pastor’s salary.

Wright noted that ordained ministers have dual tax status according to the IRS, which can be confusing.

“The minister is an employee for federal income purposes, but self-employed for Social Security taxes,”

he explained. “Ministers weren’t included originally when Social Security legislation was enacted, but later they were. Congress was wary of taxing churches, so they invented this status so the church can’t match the FICA taxes for ordained ministers as any other employer would for employees.”

Such dual status, Wright said, allows the minister to declare a portion of his salary as housing allowance, for which there is no federal income tax, although the full self-employed Social Security tax is levied.

“A proper compensation and reimbursement plan doesn’t cost the church anything,” he asserted, “but if not done correctly, can cost the minister a great amount.”

Wright noted churches also need to provide life and disability insurance and be sure the minister is enrolled in a retirement plan.

He further recommended churches provide workman’s compensation coverage.

“This insurance is required if you have more than five employees, but we recommend all churches provide it,” Wright said.

Helpful documents and downloadable resources for churches are available at [alsbom.org/ccs](http://alsbom.org/ccs). Video presentations are available at [pinnaclealabama.org](http://pinnaclealabama.org). Wright can be reached at 800-264-1225, ext. 2241, or [lwright@alsbom.org](mailto:lwright@alsbom.org).



Photo by Michael J. Brooks

Lee Wright, coordinator of church compensation services for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, shares with participants at a recent conference on church personnel issues, including salaries, taxes and insurance.

# Scriptural foundation

## Donated Torah scroll to help University of Mobile students in their studies

A 19th century Hebrew Torah scroll that survived the Holocaust has been donated to the University of Mobile Center for Christian Calling.

The scroll is one of four donated to Christian institutions in 2021 by Ken and Barbara Larson, founders of the nonprofit God's Ancient Library.

The couple has donated 94 scrolls in the last eight years to seminaries, museums and other organizations for teaching, research and public engagement.

The scrolls remind ob-

servers of the preciousness of God's word, the painstaking process of copying each Torah and the benefits of studying the biblical languages, said Doug Wilson, dean of the Center for Christian Calling and professor of biblical studies.

Wilson said the Torah scroll will be used for Old Testament and Hebrew courses and graduate research projects

in the Center for Christian Calling, UM's ministry training center.

The parchment scroll contains the biblical books of Genesis through Deuteronomy and was handwritten



Photo courtesy of the University of Mobile  
Doug Wilson, dean of the Center for Christian Calling at the University of Mobile, and members of UM's Hebrew Reading Club examine a Torah scroll recently given to the college.

by a scribe according to the Ashkenazi Jewish tradition.

The scroll is an unpointed consonantal text, meaning it is written with consonants only — no vowels.

"This Torah scroll, like

others donated by the Larsons, has been deemed to be 'pasul' — no longer kosher — and was no longer in use by the synagogue that commissioned it," Wilson said.

The scroll was likely

stored in a genizah, a temporary repository in a synagogue for worn-out Hebrew language books and papers on religious topics.

"We are grateful to the Larsons for their generous donation and the worldwide Jewish community for the careful preservation of the inspired Torah through their scribal tradition," Wilson said.

Scheduled lectures and displays on the UM campus will be held for teaching institutions, churches and synagogues, home-school groups, senior citizen groups and others interested in learning more about Judeo-Christian heritage and the scriptural foundation for Christian faith. (UM)

**For information about available campus visits and lecture topics, contact Doug Wilson at 251-442-2267 or [dwilson@umobile.edu](mailto:dwilson@umobile.edu).**

### NEW CONFERENCE FORMAT



## 2021 ALABAMA BAPTIST PASTORS CONFERENCE

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**LOCATION:** FBC Decatur

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## GUEST SPEAKERS



**KEVIN EZELL**

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North American Mission Board  
Alpharetta, Ga.



**TYSHAWN GARDNER**

Senior pastor  
Plum Grove Baptist Church  
Tuscaloosa, Ala.



**JUNIOR HILL**

Pastor, evangelist  
Hartselle, Ala.



**DEAN INSERRA**

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## CHURCH POSITIONS

### SENIOR PASTOR

East Heights Baptist Church, Tupelo, Miss., (a Southern Baptist church that adheres to the Baptist Faith & Message) is seeking a senior pastor who will provide leadership for the church and pastoral staff. Send resumé to: [ehbtupelopastorsearch@gmail.com](mailto:ehbtupelopastorsearch@gmail.com) or mail to: Randy D. McCoy, 290 Tyler Willis Lane, Tupelo, MS 38804.

### SENIOR PASTOR

First Baptist Church of Jemison is seeking a full-time senior pastor. He should possess a conviction to preach from the Holy Bible, teaching biblical truths and doctrine of Christianity, as stated in the Baptist Faith & Message 2000. Must provide pastoral care and counseling; be engaged to all age groups; mentor and supervise church staff; and provide visionary leadership for the future of our church. He will shepherd our congregation in worship, Christian spiritual growth and community outreach as we strive to carry out The Great Commission. Mail resúmes to: Jemison First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 760, Jemison, AL 35085 or [resumes@jemisonfirstbaptist.com](mailto:resumes@jemisonfirstbaptist.com).

### PASTOR

Prayerfully, Hillview Baptist Church is seeking a part-time pastor. Resúmes may be sent to: Pastor Search Committee, 800 Heflin Avenue E, Birmingham, AL 35214.

### PASTOR

First Baptist Church of Grand Bay, Ala., is accepting resúmes for a full-time pastor. Please remit to: ATTN: Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 326, Grand Bay, AL 36541.

### FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC

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to: Fern Creek Baptist Church, ATTN: Personnel Committee, 5920 Bardstown Road, Louisville, KY 40291 or email to: [linda@ferncreekbaptist.org](mailto:linda@ferncreekbaptist.org). Resúmes will be received through Nov. 15. Questions? Call 502-239-0316 ext. 103 (Linda Barnes Popham).

### MUSIC DIRECTOR

Ezra Baptist Church (Bessemer, Ala.) is seeking a part-time music director. This position is tasked with leading the music ministry of the church. Please email your resumé and cover letter to: [ezrabcoffice@gmail.com](mailto:ezrabcoffice@gmail.com).

### MINISTER OF CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP

FBC Huntsville, A Church in the Heart of the City ... is seeking a full-time minister of contemporary worship. For more information, please visit [fbchsv.org/employment](http://fbchsv.org/employment). Resúmes and examples of your worship leading may be sent to: [search@fbchsv.org](mailto:search@fbchsv.org).

### STUDENT DIRECTOR

Ezra Baptist Church (Bessemer, Ala.) is seeking a part-time student director. This position is tasked with leading the student ministry (6th-12th grade) of the church. Please email your resumé and cover letter to: [ezrabcoffice@gmail.com](mailto:ezrabcoffice@gmail.com).

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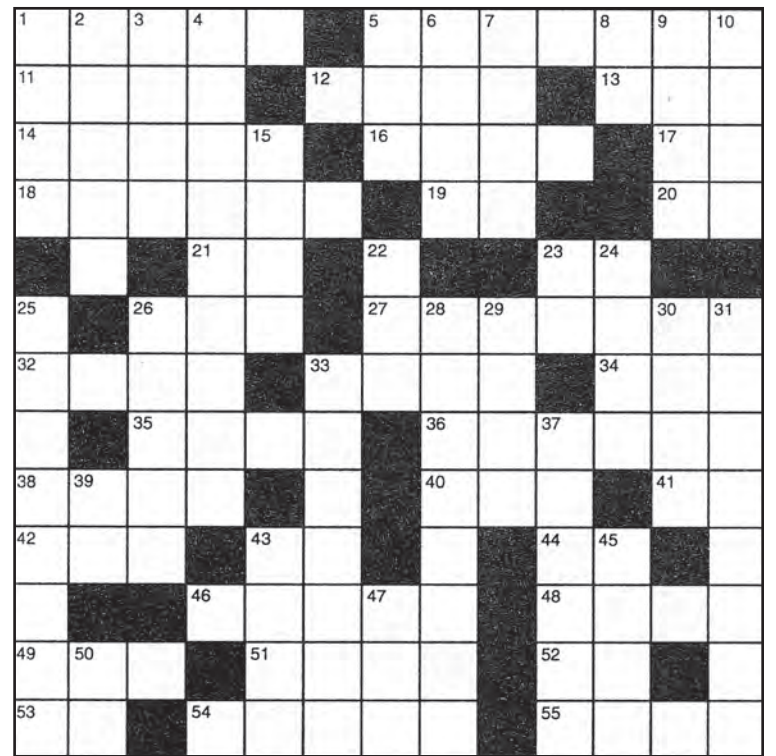
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# CHRISTIAN crossword

## ACROSS

1. Musical instrument. (Dan. 3:5)
5. Large water bird. (Lev. 11:18)
11. A stroke with a whip.
12. A son of Cush. (Gen. 10:7)
13. In my Father's house \_\_\_ many mansions. (John 14:2)
14. Straight across a ship; abreast.
16. Wild animals or birds hunted.
17. Arkansas. (Zip code abbr.)
18. \_\_\_ of Eden.
19. Pound. (abbr.)
20. Ancient Thebes and capital of upper Egypt. (Nah. 3:8)
21. Delaware. (Zip code abbr.)
23. Senior. (abbr.)
26. Species of ox.
27. Moses' ark was made of this. (Ex. 2:3)
32. Double reed woodwind instrument.
33. God is \_\_\_ present.
34. The pure in heart ... shall \_\_\_ God. (Matt. 5:8)
35. Musical composition for two.
36. Set the table with these.
38. Certain days in the Roman calendar.
40. Yes.
41. Prefix meaning "two" or "double."
42. A close friend.
43. Tennessee. (Zip code abbr.)
44. Right Reverend. (abbr.)
46. I \_\_\_ unto the Lord with my voice. (Ps. 3:4)



By Debra Michaels Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.

48. Jot.
49. To meet the Lord in the \_\_\_. (1 Thess. 4:17)
51. Form of the word *air*.
52. There \_\_\_ I in the midst of them. (Matt. 18:20)
53. Right. (abbr.)
54. Poet Thomas.
55. To wash.
15. The \_\_\_ ... shall inherit the earth. (Matt. 5:5)
22. International Business Machines Corporation. (abbr.)
23. Sister. (abbr.)
24. Where moth and \_\_\_ doth corrupt. (Matt. 6:19)
25. Captain of Pharaoh's guard. (Gen. 37:36)
26. To sing with sudden changes in voice.
28. \_\_\_able; not forgivable.
29. Easter flower.
30. To Abraham and his \_\_\_ were the promises made. (Gal. 3:16)
31. To feel or sow indecision.
33. Son of Kenaz. (Josh. 15:17)
37. In the air.
39. Irish father.
43. Waiter's necessity.
45. Pear-shaped tomato.
47. A period of time.
50. And God saw the light, that \_\_\_ was good. (Gen. 1:4)



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## HERE ARE THE NEXT THREE OPPORTUNITIES:

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, CENTRE

**Monday, November 8, 6-8 p.m.**

CARROLLTON BAPTIST CHURCH, CARROLLTON

**Sunday, December 5, 5-7 p.m.**

WEST END BAPTIST CHURCH, VALLEY

These events are **FREE** and require **no registration**. To learn more, **visit** [EvangelizeAL.org/events](http://EvangelizeAL.org/events) or contact Lori McGough, [lmcgough@alsbom.org](mailto:lmcgough@alsbom.org), (334) 613-2245.

These events are made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program.



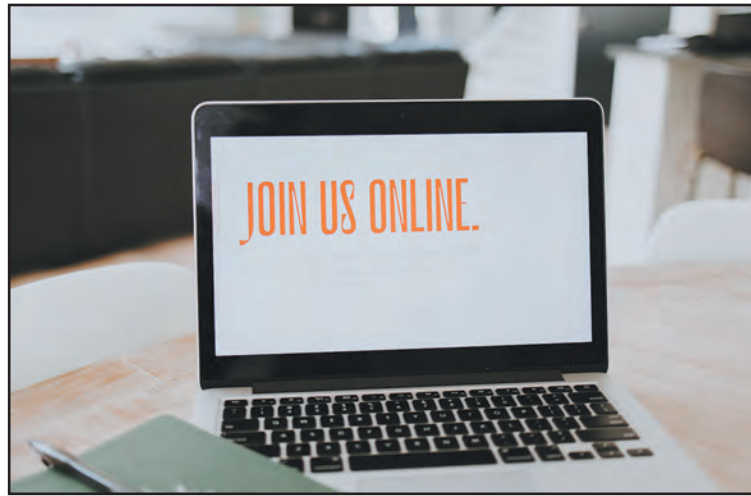
# Online services expand reach of churches

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, online worship services were a novel concept for many churches. In the almost two years since, however, churches have adapted and reached new people through digital streaming.

According to a new study from Lifeway Research, 45% of Americans say they have watched a Christian church service online during the COVID-19 pandemic, including some who say they don't normally physically attend.

"The distance to one's nearest church has changed almost overnight," said Scott McConnell, executive director of Lifeway Research. "A form of communication that was not even used by most churches before the pandemic has now reached almost half of Americans."

In a Lifeway Research study conducted prior to



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the spread of COVID-19, 41% of Protestant pastors said they didn't regularly livestream any portion of their church service or post the sermon online later. Around 1 in 4 said they livestreamed either the entire service or just the sermon.

## Adapting the format

As the coronavirus began to spread and social distancing guidelines emerged, the

vast majority of churches quickly provided digital options. By March 2020, Lifeway Research found 92% of Protestant pastors said they provided some type of video sermons or worship services online. That climbed to 97% in April 2020.

In a Lifeway Research study from early 2021, 85% of Protestant churchgoers said their congregation offered livestreamed worship

services, and 76% said their church posted a video of the worship service to watch later. Additionally, 53% of churchgoers said they watched online worship services at their church more in 2020 than in 2019, while 21% said they watched more online services at a different church in 2020.

Throughout the pandemic, Lifeway Research found pastors reporting that new people who had previously not attended their church in the past attended or connected online. The latest study seems to bear that out.

When asked, "Have you watched a Christian church service online during the COVID pandemic?" 45% say they have, including 30% who normally attend church in person and 15% who normally do not attend in person.

"It's not surprising to see churchgoers using online

options to view a church service, but there are also those who have not been church attendees who have at least checked out a church service during the pandemic," said McConnell.

## New audiences

Some of those most likely to say they watched church services online during the pandemic but don't normally attend church in person include young adults ages 18-34 (18%) and African Americans (22%).

"Church participation is in flux," said McConnell. "Some who were regular, in-person churchgoers before COVID-19 only view online services today, others have never tuned in online despite the pandemic, and still others use both at different times. This shift has created both challenges and opportunities for pastors and church leaders." (Lifeway Research)

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# SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For November 7

## Explore the Bible

By Robert Olsen, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



### THE GOSPEL'S FREEDOM Colossians 2:16–23

#### Freedom in Worship (16–17)

Many of us use lists to keep us on track. We take them to the grocery store, and they're at home and work.

When we do everything on the list, we can be at rest.

This applies to the Christian realm as well. We may also look for lists of things to be good Christians or “make God happy.” Instead of focusing on God, we are focusing on what we are supposed to do, greatly hindering our freedom in Christ.

Paul had to confront such thinking in the church at Colossae. Apparently some were teaching that in order to be a true Christian, a believer needed to observe various aspects of worship and religious festivals.

However, Paul points out the festivals of the Old Testament are foreshadowing Christ. Since Christ has come, it is no longer necessary to observe them.

This is part of the freedom all believers possess in Christ, who has fulfilled the law. Because we are saved by grace through faith and not by observance of the law, there is nothing we can do to make God love us more.

As a parent's love for a child is not dependent on a list of dos and don'ts, so also God's love is shown through Christ's death on our behalf (Rom. 5:8) — not because we do anything to please God.

This is what Martin Luther discovered that caused the Reformation. Instead of trying to earn God's love, we can rest in knowing He already has demonstrated

His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

#### Freedom from Falsehoods (18–19)

With freedom in Christ, Paul tells the Colossians not to let others look down on them for their behavior. Many judge us according to their own standards.

Those who have created a standard of holiness based upon human wisdom struggle with putting this yoke on others, which is evident in many denominations today, where the focus is on external behavior rather than an internal change.

Biblically, this is most evident in the Pharisees, who, according to Jesus, were like whitewashed tombs, which looked beautiful from the outside but on the inside were full of dead men's bones (Matt. 23:27–28).

We can fool others by our external actions, but we cannot fool God, who looks at our heart.

This is not an excuse to avoid loving our neighbor. The Bible offers clear instructions for how we should live — loving God and loving neighbor.

In living our Christian lives, we need to remain grounded, not becoming haughty or prideful in what we have done, remembering our salvation is dependent upon God and not ourselves.

#### Freedom to Live (20–23)

Many Christians throughout history have focused on denying themselves worldly pleasure, and while this is not innately bad, it is not the way to achieve some sort of higher spiritual level.

Luther said a person could be an idolater in a room with four bare walls because it is what goes on inside that makes him an idolater. This does not mean we are to be foolish and expose ourselves to things that may cause us to stumble. But to believe self-denial is a way to spiritual enlightenment or maturity is not Christian. The fullness of God dwells within us.

## Bible Studies for Life

By James Riley Strange, Ph.D.

Professor of New Testament, Samford University



### CONFIDENCE IN SEASONS OF UNCERTAINTY Genesis 15:1–6, 13–16

Today's passage skips chapter 14, a diverting story in which Abram is presented as a warrior chieftain who defeats armies of city states. Lot, who separated from Abram, must be rescued. After Abram's victory, he receives a blessing from Melchizedek (“righteous king”), a Canaanite king of Salem (probably Jerusalem) and priest of El Elyon (“God Most High”), of the Canaanite pantheon. Abram knows El Elyon as Yahweh, who called him in Mesopotamia (“the Lord”; 14:22). Neither Melchizedek nor Salem will be mentioned again in the Pentateuch, but the brief encounter establishes that Abraham was blessed in the future holy city, home of the Davidic kings and Yahweh's temple.

Read all of chapters 14 and 15.

#### Trust God even when the way is not clear. (1–5)

As the narrative returns to the thread of the main story, God reminds Abram of His assurance of protection and wealth. By now, Abram's response does not surprise us, for despite having heard God's promise at least three times (12:2, 7; 13:15–16), he and Sarai continue to age well past the possibility of conceiving a child.

In Egypt, Abram gave Sarai to Pharaoh as a concubine, surely causing Sarai dreadful shame and anguish, and endangering the divine promise besides.

Now we learn that, as the couple remains childless, Abram has chosen a man named Eliezer to be his heir (ironically, Eliezer means “God is my help”), possibly adding to Sarai's shame. In verse 3, Abram finally voices the doubt his behavior betrays: he accuses God of failing to do what He said He would do. We know to add the word “yet.” Abram and Sarai can only see the years pass them by, but we know the end of the story.

God responds with neither chastisement nor punishment, nor by moving the miraculous pregnancy earlier, but by repeating His prom-

ise: “Your own child will be your heir, but I am not promising one child, for your descendants will be innumerable, just as you cannot count the stars.”

#### Trust in God results in righteousness. (6)

In Romans 4, Paul will draw from this verse to talk about faith versus works of the law, but the passage also draws meaning from its context. I prefer to translate it, “And Abraham trusted the Lord, and He accounted it to him as righteousness.”

“Believed” in most English Bibles translates a Hebrew verb that means to place one's trust in a person (the root of the word “amen”). The implication is that Abram is not merely believing words — he is trusting the One who speaks them. Trust is what God credits to Abram's account as righteousness.

#### Trust God to work in His time. (13–16)

In verses 7–12 and 17–21 we see the elements of the first covenant between God and Abram. It is important to note Abram asks for assurance (v. 8), and in response God again promises, as if to say, “You will not receive the assurance you want. You must continue to trust.”

Our lesson focuses on God's forewarning, which is striking in light of the promises of protection. Although Abram's and Sarai's descendants will be “a great nation” and a “blessing” for all nations, they will endure their own trials. The language is about slavery in Egypt and the exodus, but centuries later, surely the remnant of Judah exiled in Babylon found in these words the hope of restoration and return.

We have seen Abram's and Sarai's trust wane before, and so it will again as soon as we turn to chapter 16. It is good to remind ourselves this story is about a steadfast, divine faithfulness that contrasts with an inconstant human devotion. We might say that is the story of all Scripture. The human actors are not villains; they are merely like us. God is the hero.

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# MEDIA REVIEWS

## Christmas short stories, biography, devotional for teens

### Coffee and Cookies with God, Volume 2

Authored by Members of Word Weavers North Alabama  
Keryso Press, 2021

Six experienced authors — Becky Alexander, June Foster, Bonita Y. McCoy, Suzanne

D. Nichols, Ginger Solomon and Lisa Worthey Smith — have combined their writing talents to offer readers short, well-crafted stories that bring the

meaning of Christmas back from the busyness of December. These 31 devotions for each day of the month are structured for consistency and efficiency. Their length won't overwhelm women on the go but will provide a daily guide for spending prayerful moments reflecting on the reason for the season.

The pieces recall sweet memories ranging from Christmas celebrations in early days of marriage to tender moments brought back by handmade decorations several decades old. They offer more recent reflections as well, including a December 2020 recollection: "Without all the usual holiday activities, I was able to draw near to the One who really matters, the One whose birth is the reason we celebrate." Readers



will receive practical tips on dealing with the stresses of holiday gatherings even as the writers apply ancient biblical stories to life today.

The devotions begin with verses of Scripture, move into a tightly written story of application, offer prayer at the end and provide a place of reflection for the reader's own thoughts. For an added treat, most of the pieces also point to a cookie recipe that is part of the 18 recipes the authors included at the end. (Minnie Lamberth)

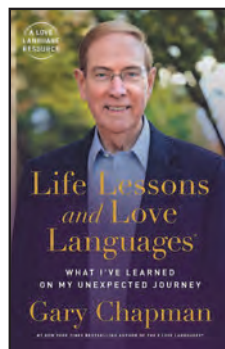
### Life Lessons and Love Languages: What I've Learned on My Unexpected Journey

By Gary Chapman  
Moody Publishers, 2021

Several years ago, my husband and I led a small group study of "The 5 Love Languages of Children." As I was reading one evening during my daughter's gymnastics practice, another mother saw the book cover. She immediately shared her love language and those of her husband and children, which sparked other parents in the group to share their love languages, too.

The humorous stories and thoughtful reflections shared spontaneously that night illustrate the far-reaching influence of Gary Chapman. His simple concept of five love languages and how to "speak" them has helped countless people improve relationships with their spouses, children and others in their lives.

In "Life Lessons and Love Languages: What I've Learned on my Unexpected Journey," Chapman takes a look back, from growing up in a small town, going to college



and seminary, marrying his wife Karolyn, parenting his two children (and now grandparenting two grandchildren) and serving the Lord as a minister, counselor and author. Ever the teacher, Chapman summarizes the things he's learned at the end of each section.

Chapman doesn't elaborate too much on any one story, but it's clear that at each stage of his life, he has trusted God's leadership for the next step. As he writes, "I'm glad I did not see the entire journey from the beginning. I think I would have been overwhelmed. It was one step at a time." Chapman's fans will enjoy reading his personal story, but all readers will benefit from the nuggets of wisdom he shares. (Carrie Brown McWhorter)

### In the Name of God: The Colliding Lives, Legends, and Legacies of J. Frank Norris and George W. Truett

By O.S. Hawkins  
B&H Academic, 2021

One can only imagine how J. Frank Norris would be speaking to the broader culture today if he had a Twitter account. Norris' pugnacious personality when leading First Baptist Church Fort Worth in the early 20th century has historically been viewed unfavorably compared to his rival from that era at FBC Dallas, George W. Truett.

O.S. Hawkins takes another look at the men's reputations, revisiting the glow around Truett while connecting Norris' efforts to challenge the status quo as an outsider to unintended consequences that influence the Southern Baptist Convention today.

While leading their respective pulpits for nearly five decades, Hawkins writes, "These men passed the years in almost constant competition and conflict with each other, while at the same time endearing

themselves to thousands of followers at home and across the entire United States as radio broadcasts and their printed sermons propagated their ministries."

Hawkins brings personal knowledge to the project, having served as pastor of FBC Dallas and also as a close friend to Truett's successor, W.A. Criswell, who, Hawkins writes, "grew up in a home where his father was a devout follower of



Norris and his mother a passionate devotee of Truett."

Anyone who wants to learn more about these men who figure so prominently in Southern Baptist history will

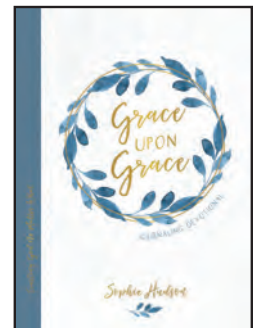
find this book of interest. (Minnie Lamberth)

### Grace Upon Grace Journaling Devotional

By Sophie Hudson  
B&H Kids, 2021

Having worked as director of student activities at Briarwood Christian School in Birmingham, Sophie Hudson has a heart for teenage girls. A byproduct of that passion is the "Grace Upon Grace Journaling Devotional," an undated, 100-day devotional directed toward women and teens.

Patterned after Chuck Swindoll's, "Growing Strong Through the Seasons of Life," the book explores thought-provoking issues ranging from broken hearts to thoughts about racism, presented in an encouraging and inviting way. (Tracy Riggs)



### EDITOR'S NOTE

Reviews of films, books, music or other media that appear in TAB are intended to help readers evaluate current media for themselves, their children and grandchildren in order to decide whether to watch, read or listen. Reviews are not an endorsement by the writer or TAB Media.

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