

The Alabama Baptist

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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.

Trends

Survey on worship practices finds strong engagement, aging leaders in Alabama Baptist churches

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
The Alabama Baptist

When it comes to worship in Alabama Baptist churches, good things are happening, Jonathan Rodgers said — and he has research to prove it.

Over the past year or so, Rodgers, assistant professor of music and worship at Samford University, has surveyed and interviewed hundreds of worship leaders across the state.

The goal of the project was to gain a clearer picture of worship practices within Southern Baptist churches in Alabama, from who is leading the service to the instrumentation, song selection and other elements incorporated into the service. Overall, the results point to a lot of positives, he said.

“In general, healthy worship is taking place in Alabama Baptist churches,” Rodgers said. “Leaders are seeing engagement and participation in worship, and churches are trying to encourage younger worship leaders.”

The vast majority of churches

surveyed (88%) reported having one style of service, and most could be described as a blended style, Rodgers said. Defining terms like “traditional” and “contemporary” is very subjective, he added, but those surveyed said they try to choose a mix of old and new songs, utilizing choirs and worship teams

accompanied by a range of instruments but primarily piano and guitar.

Those surveyed said their services typically run 60 to 75 minutes long, but Rodgers noted that prayer, Scripture reading and ordinances like the Lord’s Supper are not incorporated as often as he expected.

“I’d suggest there’s some room for improvement there,” Rodgers said. “I was really surprised at how few said Scripture reading outside of the sermon text was part of the service.”

Aging leaders

More than two thirds of surveyed worship leaders (65%) are over 50, he said, indicating a troubling trend that others have noted.

“Worship leaders are aging,”

“I would encourage churches to do what they can to bring up the next generation of leaders.”

Jonathan Rodgers, assistant professor of music and worship, Samford University



Students worship during the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions Called conference.

Photo by Travis Frontz/The Alabama Baptist

Rodgers said. “I was encouraged to see that there are some younger leaders in the pipeline, but I would encourage churches to do what they can to bring up the next generation of leaders.”

Rodgers said the results of this study will help him and others at Samford better prepare students for future roles in the local church. He also hopes the research will help current worship leaders and other ministers evaluate their services and consider how the incorporated

elements are fostering congregational participation.

More participation

“We know that people want to sing,” Rodgers said. “Leaders would do well to make sure they’re picking songs that encourage people to sing, as well as to incorporate Scripture reading and other elements that allow more participation in worship.”

Read the full results of the worship practices survey at tabonline.org/worship-practices.

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Alabama photographer releases new book including 17 Baptist churches, UM

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

A year after releasing a coffee table book featuring stained glass windows, Alabama photographer David Graves has released a second book — Alabama Hope, which highlights the architectural beauty of churches in the state.

Seventeen Alabama Baptist churches are featured among the 60 photographed spaces:

- ▶ Forest Lake Baptist in Tuscaloosa
- ▶ First Baptist Troy
- ▶ Linden Baptist
- ▶ Calvary Baptist in Butler
- ▶ Frankville Baptist
- ▶ First Baptist Grant
- ▶ Oyster Bay Baptist in Gulf Shores
- ▶ Mount Sterling Baptist in Butler
- ▶ First Baptist Greenville
- ▶ First Baptist Jackson
- ▶ First Baptist Jasper
- ▶ First Baptist Leeds
- ▶ First Baptist Auburn
- ▶ First Baptist Dothan
- ▶ Lakeview Baptist in Oxford
- ▶ Dauphin Way Baptist in Mobile
- ▶ The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham

The book also showcases stained



Photo by David Graves

Oyster Bay Baptist Church in Gulf Shores is one of 17 churches featured in photographer David Graves' new book, Alabama Hope.

glass in the music building of the University of Mobile.

Sacred spaces

“With Alabama Hope, my goal is to remind readers that hope is still offered to each individual and encourage each of us to share our own faith story,” said Graves, a member of The Church at Brook Hills. “These sacred spaces — whether modest or grand — hold genera-

tions of prayers, songs and stories that continue to shape our state and its people.”

He said the colors, the light and the presence of community that you can feel in these church buildings “remind us that hope is not just history — it is alive and offered to us today.”

Alabama Hope is available on Amazon.

TAB Media Group's new Kids Edition offers faith-based, low-tech fun for young readers

The Kids Edition of The Baptist Paper debuted in the Oct. 9 edition.

Complete with puzzles, coloring pages, jokes, recipe, creature feature, contest, Scripture memorization and highlighting a hero of the faith, the Kids Edition seeks to educate your child and share biblical truths with features such as Ms. Julie's Clubhouse.

“Our prayer is that kids will love this edition created just for them and that parents, grandparents, older siblings and church leaders will share in the fun,” said Carrie Brown McWhorter, managing editor.

To find out how you can get a copy of the Kids Edition, visit thebaptistpaper.org/kids-edition. Subscribers to The Alabama Baptist can get a special discount to add The Baptist Paper. (TAB)



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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JENNIFER DAVIS RASH
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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The crossword puzzle can be found on page 15.



GUEST EDITORIAL

for this week's edition of **The Alabama Baptist**

By Doug Rogers, Director of Communications & Technology Services, State Board of Missions

Peanuts 75th anniversary stirs lifelong memories

On Oct. 2, 1950, Charles M. Schulz's first Peanuts comic strip was published. Over the next nearly 50 years, he would go on to produce 17,897 strips, hand drawing and lettering each strip personally. From seven newspapers on that first day, Peanuts grew to be published daily in 2,600 papers, read by 355 million people in 21 languages across 75 countries. Schulz took only one vacation, a five-week break in late 1997 to celebrate his 75th birthday.

A Christian who came to faith as a young adult following his wartime military experience, Schulz felt a keen responsibility to express his faith through his comic strip. In "A Charlie Brown Religion," author Stephen J. Lind quotes Schulz as saying, "If we are all members of the priesthood, why cannot a cartoonist preach in the same manner as a minister, or anyone else?"

In a 1981 letter to his daughter Amy, Schulz wrote, "Little things we say and do in Christ's name are like pebbles thrown into water. The ripples spread out in circles, and influence people we may know only slightly and sometimes not at all."

Following a 1963 article about his faith in Billy Graham's *Decision* magazine, Schulz wrote,

"I will never get over the feelings of guilt being lauded publicly when so many others who appear to be 'least in the Kingdom' are really the 'greatest in the Kingdom'... I tremble with fear for being built up too much. People don't need me, they need to 'see Jesus only.'"

Thinking back

I've been a Peanuts fan as far back as I have memories. My childhood room was decorated with a Peanuts bedspread, drapes and posters. I bought every Peanuts paperback that came out. My brother and I both owned Snoopy astronaut toys (especially appropriate for two boys growing up in Titusville, Florida, during the height of the Apollo space program) and of course, there were the other stuffed animals and games and collectibles that filled my room.

I never missed a Peanuts special when it aired on TV. I wrote two letters to Schulz as a child, receiving responses to both. As I grew older, if I only had time to read one comic strip in the newspaper, it was Peanuts.

I loved Snoopy, of course (who doesn't!), but as a child, I think I related to Linus the most — not because of his security blanket or belief in the Great Pumpkin, but because he was typically the one who brought up religious topics. As a churchgoing kid myself, I was

fascinated to read a comic strip which quoted the Bible and incorporated spiritual perspectives into everyday conversations.

Those who have done way more research than me have determined that of Schulz's nearly 18,000 strips, around 560 contain a religious, spiritual or theological reference. And while that might not seem like a lot, consider that there were only 415 strips in which Snoopy references himself as a World War I flying ace, and only 61 have Lucy pulling the football away. Over the course of 50 years, those 560 strips average out to around two weeks a year.

Several years ago while on a trip to San Francisco, my wife, Lori, and daughter, Emilee, and I took a side trip to Santa Rosa, where Schulz lived and worked from 1969 until his death in 2000, to visit the Charles M. Schulz Museum, a truly amazing place. There you can see thousands of original strips, a recreation of his office, the ice rink he built for the community and much more. If you're ever in that area, don't miss it!

Use your platform

Very few of us will have the opportunity to reach an audience of millions through what we do for a living. But I'm reminded by Schulz's legacy that each of us who claim the name

of Jesus Christ have the responsibility to use whatever platform He entrusts us with to proclaim the gospel and point people to Jesus.

True meaning of Christmas

A final thought, with Christmas right around the corner. In 1965, when presented with the opportunity to create a Christmas special (which ultimately became the beloved "A Charlie Brown Christmas"), Schulz's first response was, "If we're going to do it, I think we should talk about the true meaning of Christmas — at least what it means to me." When he received some pushback from his animation partner who believed the religious content would be too risky, Schulz responded, "If we don't do it, who will?" (from "A Charlie Brown Religion," by Stephen J. Lind, p. 65). Schulz knew God had put him in that place at that time for that purpose, and he was determined not to squander the opportunity.

Sixty years later, his commitment to that decision continues to have ripples, as each new generation experiences that wonderful moment when Linus says, "That's what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown." Not a bad reminder for each of us when God gives us the opportunity to do or say something for His glory — "If we don't do it, who will?" With that, happy 75th anniversary to Peanuts!

Your Voice



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

First person: Pastor Appreciation Month is upon us

By David L. Chancey
davidchancey.com

The late Ron Lewis, pastor and church growth consultant, often said, “Churches are two pastors behind in their appreciation.”

He was stating that churches often don’t fully understand the blessing they have until they lose their pastor and then wish they’d done a better job of showing appreciation.

“Pastor Appreciation Month,” started in 1994 by Focus on the Family, encourages churches to express year-round affirmation, but designates October as a specific time of expressing appreciation to pastor and staff.

Recently, I thought about several ministers whom God used to help me discern my call to ministry.

My early childhood pastor was Roy W. Hinchey, who served Jefferson Avenue Baptist Church in East Point, Georgia, for 17 years. He helped me with my decision to receive Christ and baptized me.

When I was about 5 years old, our church had a Sunday evening social after worship. For some reason, I made my way to the fellowship hall stage, stood behind the podium, opened my children’s Bible and preached up a storm.

Ruth Hinchey spotted me, poked her husband in the ribs, pointed my way and said, “Roy, that’s exactly what you look like in the pulpit!”

From that moment on, Hinchey started calling me “my little preacher boy.”

I had no idea I’d end up in ministry, much less in the pastorate, but Hinchey planted seeds that one day would contribute to a call to ministry. He later preached in my ordination service.

My dad’s job moved us to Milledgeville, Georgia, and we eventually joined First Baptist Church, where Dewey Norton was pastor. I was youth week preacher one year, and Norton allowed me to preach my first sermon.

Later, he led First Baptist to ordain me and followed my progress with great interest and encouragement.

While studying at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, I had the privilege of working as a grader for Malcom McDow, who taught evangelism. This professor was a great encourager who often took time to visit and encourage

this seminary student who was trying to balance a young family, two jobs and demanding courses. Later, in my second pastorate, he traveled to north Georgia and preached a revival for my church.

My first pastorate after seminary was a tremendous learning experience. I followed the founding pastor of a new church that turned 10

years old while I was there. The interim pastor was a church member who hoped the church would make him their pastor. I served a church full of mid-level managers filled with ambition and ego who often clashed with each other. Not everyone rejoiced when God added new members to the church. They didn’t teach us how to manage this kind of drama in seminary.



CHANCEY

At just the right time, God sent two missionaries to our city to launch an evangelism project, and this gracious couple, Cloyd and Cecilia Sullins, wrapped their arms around this young, struggling pastor and wife. Cloyd’s listening ear, encouragement and wisdom were timely blessings, and God used them to love on us and lift us up.

Finally, Doyle Middlebrooks, our area’s associational missionary, lived around the corner from us in Milledgeville. He took an interest in my life.

I’m thankful for the way God used these pastors in my life. As I look back and reflect on their contributions, I appreciate them even more.

EDITOR’S NOTE — David L. Chancey lives in Fayetteville, Georgia, and serves as transitional pastor at Eagles Landing at Griffin, Georgia. He enjoys preaching, writing and time with family. He has authored three books, which can be found at davidchancey.com.

Our neighbors are watching. Our communities are searching. When the world sees chaos, the church must point to the Prince of Peace. When the world sees death, we must declare the hope of resurrection. When the world is drowning in despair, we must proclaim the living hope of Jesus Christ.

Ed Emmerling

Executive director
Baptist State Convention
of Michigan

“God often leads His people into the desert in order to free them from their ties to idols and broken wells, and to betroth them to Himself in faithfulness.”

Lauren Chandler
in “Steadfast Love”

The obedience of Christ is the primary objective of every Christian in thought, in word and in deed. It is impossible to overestimate the importance of your thought life. (2 Cor. 10:1–6, Phil. 4:8)

Franklin L. Kirksey
Robertsdale

You never know when an opportunity will be your last opportunity. Make the effort to appreciate the moments you’re in while you have them.

Hector Miray
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“Train up a child in the way he should go, but be sure you go that way yourself.”

CHARLES SPURGEON

“Here’s the hard truth wrapped in mercy: unforgiveness is not an option for followers of Jesus,” said **Tony Martin**, editor of Mississippi’s *The Baptist Record*. “Our Lord taught us to pray, ‘Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors’ (Matt. 6:12). Then He added this sting: ‘If you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses’ (Matt. 6:15).”

I think we’re all prone to make snap judgments based on initial impressions. We think someone lazy who may be weary after days of work. We think someone insensitive who may be anxious for a loved one or numb following a diagnosis. We think someone self-centered for not greeting us, though they may not have known we were nearby.

One wit suggested the only physical exercise many of us get is jumping to conclusions and running to bear tales. Jesus warned not to judge others, lest we be judged in the same manner.

Of course we judge rightly in certain situations, such as electing political leaders or church leaders. But Jesus’ admonition has to do with harsh and merciless condemnation.

We should consider the circum-

stances in which others find themselves and refrain from condemning them for things we might do as well in their circumstance.

Our world needs a dose of compassion.

A little bit of kindness on our part can make a big difference in the lives of others.

Michael J. Brooks, pastor
Siluria Baptist Church, Alabaster

“When you feel hopeless, when you need an unbiased confidant, when it’s hard to see which direction to go, when you need someone to help you meet your goals, when diagnoses are stacking up or maybe they haven’t been diagnosed yet at all, when you need a professional hard-road-walker, that’s when you call a licensed therapist,” said **Erin Goodman**, a licensed clinical social worker at The Papillion Center in Paducah, Kentucky. Quoting Philipians 1:6, she said, “And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.” She added, “You can do this, Christian, but you do not have to do it alone. Call a therapist if you think maybe I’m talking about you — because I am.”

LASS WORDS

BY **KEN LASS**
The Alabama Baptist



DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS

A dashboard for life

Your Bible is your dashboard to life. You know, like the dashboard in your car.

That panel just behind the steering wheel makes you aware of pretty much every looming problem with your vehicle. Got a tire losing pressure? An icon lights up to bring it to your attention. Seatbelt unfastened? Door ajar? Fuel running low? Engine temperature running high? Due for an oil change? Most modern cars have indicators to warn you of any impending danger. Some even tell you if you’re driving too fast or wandering out of your lane. Your dashboard is designed to keep you safe.

Warning light

The Bible does the same thing. It is your warning light for avoiding sin. Are you feeling as though no one understands your problems? First Corinthians pops up on your spiritual display and tells you, “No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind.”

Having trouble resisting sin? Feel like giving up?

Here comes another 1 Corinthians light flashing: “... when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”

Starting to get too obsessed with money and worldly possessions? First Timothy confronts you with a caution: “Those who want to get rich fall into tempta-

tion and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.”

Are troubles taking you to the verge of depression and despair? Here comes an icon from James to adjust your perspective: “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds.”

Getting a bit too self-centered? A verse from Luke can help nip it in the bud: “For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

Do you tend to resent the success and achievement of others? Before it detours you off the spiritual highway, the Bible lets you know, “You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly?”

And there are many more. You would be foolish to ignore a warning light on your car dashboard. It would be equally foolish to ignore the cautions in the Word of God. So put on your turn signal and head into your Bible every day.

It will always get you safely to your destination.

MEET THE AUTHOR

Ken Lass, an award-winning columnist for numerous publications and websites, is a retired Birmingham television news and sports anchor.



Alabama news

ALABAMA WMU

► **Pat Ingram** recently retired from **Alabama WMU** after serving more than 30 years in various roles, most recently as missions and ministry consultant for more than 18 years. Her areas of responsibility included Women on Mission, women's ministry, WMU training, Christian Women's Job Corps, Christian Men's Job Corps, Baptist Nursing Fellowship, Christmas Backpack ministry and more. She organized and promoted two annual statewide events, Renew and Connect. Ingram will continue to spearhead the Christmas backpack ministry. Ingram's husband, Mike, is pastor of Millbrook Baptist Church.



INGRAM

AUTAUGA ASSOCIATION

► **Ben Wilemon** (center) was licensed to the gospel ministry Sept. 14 by Crossroads Community Church, Elmore, and Marbury Baptist Church, where he serves as the worship pastor, and Jeff Hardy (left) is senior pastor. His father, Brandon Wilemon (right), is pastor of Crossroads Community. The two churches met for a combined worship and commitment service.



Photo courtesy of Brandon Wilemon

BALDWIN ASSOCIATION

► **First Baptist Church Silverhill** where Jay Kimbro is pastor recently announced the addition of several new staff members.

Harrison Hood, worship minister, previously served various churches in Alabama. He and his wife, McKenzie, are expecting their first child.



MCCOY

Andrew McCoy, student minister, most recently served as the college and student ministry intern at Spring Hill Baptist Church, Mobile.

Sarah Ferrill, an active member of and leader in the church, is now director of children's ministries. She and her husband, Colin, have one child.

Tina Dearborn, an active member of and leader in the



HOOD



FERRILL

church for more than 30 years, is the new ministry assistant. She and her husband, Danny, have five children and seven grandchildren.

BLOUNT ASSOCIATION

► **Pleasant View Missionary Baptist Church, Holly Pond**, will have its annual homecoming service Oct. 19 at 10:30 a.m. Lunch will be served following the service with afternoon singing at 1:30 p.m., featuring Point of Honor. Former pastors and members are invited. There will be no Sunday School or evening service. For more information, call 256-339-1862 or 256-590-1501. Earl Harper is pastor.

CHEROKEE ASSOCIATION

► **Shiloh Baptist Church, Leesburg**, celebrated its 125th anniversary Sept. 14. Special music was provided by the adult and children's choirs. Music director Deborah Naugher recounted the church's history and members, representing different generations, shared memories along with a slideshow presentation. Wendell Dutton, director of missions for Cherokee Baptist Association and a commissioner of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, presented a plaque to the church. Pictured are (from left) deacon Paul Sewell, Dutton, pastor Danny Farley and deacon chair Tom Wolf.



Photo by Beth Sewell

CHILTON ASSOCIATION

► **Bell Lane Baptist Church, Clanton**, will



DEARBORN

host the Goodman Revival Concert on Oct. 18, 6 p.m. Everyone is welcome. Chris Ferguson is pastor.

CLARKE ASSOCIATION

► **Horeb Baptist Church, Whatley**, celebrated its bicentennial anniversary Sept. 14. Special music for the service was provided by Lauren Robinson, Carol Baugh, Peggy Gates, Jean Ricketts and Tonya Baugh. Pastor Warren Shewmake brought the message. The church received a commemorative plaque from Susan Walker (left), a commissioner for the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, with Shewmake (right) accepting on behalf of the church. A fellowship lunch was served, followed by music featuring Glory Road.



Photo by Dixie Reeves

COLBERT LAUDERDALE ASSOCIATION

► **Leighton Baptist Church, Leighton**, is hosting a free community fall festival Oct. 29, 5:30–7 p.m. The family-friendly event will include trunk-or-treat, hayrides, chili cook off, games, pie bake-off, cake walk and more. Mark Mayfield is pastor.

PINE BARREN ASSOCIATION

► **Friendship Baptist Church, Pine Apple**, will celebrate its 200th anniversary and homecoming Oct. 19, 11 a.m. The celebration will include a special worship service featuring music, history and reflections. Following the service, guests are invited to lunch. Meal reservations are requested. Call 251-362-6420 or 251-564-8938. Mitch Stuckey is serving as interim lay preacher.

James Long presented with leader award

James Long recently was honored with the Andrew Smith Legacy Leader Award, which is given annually by the office of Sunday School and discipleship of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

"He has had a great impact on me, and he's had a great impact on almost everyone in this room," Spencer Knight, who Long mentored in ministry years ago, said Oct. 2 to those present at the Discipleship Network of Alabama gathering at The Church at Brook Hills. Knight now serves as minister of discipleship at Hunter Street Baptist Church in Hoover.

Long currently serves as minister of home-

bound care at First Baptist Church Trussville. He served FBC for nearly 20 years as its minister of education, then served two other churches before coming back to serve in his current role.

Smith, the namesake of the award Long received, served as a pastor of churches in Florida and Alabama, and as the first pastor of Heritage Baptist Church in Montgomery. He began serving with the SBOM's Sunday School office in 1986 and became director in 1996.

Along the way, Smith mentored many, including Daniel Edmonds, who currently directs that office. (Grace Thornton)



LONG

STATE CONVENTION PREVIEW

State convention annual meeting set for Nov. 11-12

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Alabama Baptists are only a few weeks away from their annual “family reunion” and a chance to stop and celebrate the ways that God is working through their ministries.

Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, said he’s “expecting a time of joy and fellowship” as Baptists from across the state gather at the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting Nov. 11-12 in Huntsville.

The meeting will focus on the theme “Compelled” based on 2 Cor. 5:14, where Paul says, “The love of Christ compels us.”

“This is what Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, was articulating about the love of Christ,” Lance

said. “Paul declared that we’re compelled by the love of Christ — to live as new creations and to be ministers of reconciliation, ambassadors for Christ and workers together for Christ.”

The annual meeting — which will be held at Whitesburg Baptist Church — will celebrate the ways state Baptists are already accomplishing this task and encourage them to keep going, Lance said.

On Tuesday evening, Nov. 11:

▶ Alabama Baptists will experience a celebration of

missions featuring testimonies, stories and music by Whitesburg Baptist’s worship ministry.

▶ They will also hear a message from Jeff Iorg, president of the Southern Baptist Convention Execu-



TAB file photo

Messengers to the state convention annual meeting will vote on next year’s budget, proposed resolutions and officer nominees.

tive Committee, during the Tuesday night celebration.

“He will share about how gifts through the Cooperative Program are truly making a difference for countless people in our own state as well as throughout North America and around the world,” Lance said.

During the daytime sessions Nov. 11-12:

▶ Craig Carlisle, director

of missions for Etowah Baptist Association, will deliver his address as outgoing convention president.

▶ Andy John King, pastor of Lindsay Lane Baptist Church in Athens, will preach the Convention Sermon.

▶ Matt Daniels, Baptist campus minister for the University of North Alabama; Dewayne Rembert,

pastor of Flatline Church at Chisholm in Montgomery; and Spencer Bell, pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church in Hartselle, will all share messages on this year’s theme.

▶ Ministries from around the state will share about ways they’ve seen God at work over the past year.

“There will be times of inspiration that include testimonies and biblical messages — a vital part of our time together,” Lance said.

Messengers to the convention will also vote on the budget for 2026.

“Through our Great Commission Ministries budget, which will be recommended to messengers, we can continue to make a difference together as this message of salvation is proclaimed far and wide,” Lance said. “I hope many messengers and guests will join us for this annual meeting.”

For more information, visit alsbom.org/convention.

Faith Moments

A turning point for our nation

I am convinced our nation has reached a decisive turning point. Tertullian, the second-century Church Father, once declared, “The blood of Christians is seed.” Augustine later affirmed this, noting, “From that seed have sprung the crops of the Church.”

Unite scattered flames

It is no accident that Charlie Kirk was assassinated on a college campus. God is working in all things for His glory (Rom. 8:28). What the enemy intends for evil, God will use for good. I believe this tragedy will serve as an accelerant to the sparks of revival already igniting on campuses across our land. My prayer is that the Spirit of God will unite these scattered flames

until they blaze into a mighty wildfire of awakening. If we are indeed standing on the edge of another great move of God, how should we prepare?

1. Recommit to personal prayer. Revival begins in the secret place. I was recently convicted of my own shallow prayers when longtime Alabama Baptist minister Edwin Jenkins shared how God has been reshaping his life through multiple seasons of prayer each day.

2. Lead your church to pray. Corporate prayer multiplies the power of personal prayer. Pastors and leaders must guide their congregations into persistent, united intercession.

3. Cultivate holy expectancy. Share testimonies of what God is doing across our state and nation.

Jonathan Edwards wisely observed, “Revival spreads on the wings of testimony.”

4. See the darkness through the eyes of Christ. When times are darkest, God’s light shines brightest. Our world is broken and longing for stability — what an exciting moment to be bearers of His light.

5. Recognize God’s activity. From campuses to churches, God is moving in extraordinary ways. A pastor recently testified that where his preaching once drew little response, altars are now filled. He told me that his sermons are the same, but the difference is God’s Spirit blowing upon these words.

6. Prepare your church for harvest. When you pray for rain, bring an umbrella. We have prayed, and God is answering. Be ready for baptisms, discipleship and follow-

up. Launch small groups and life-on-life mentoring now.

7. Embrace a prayer-driven evangelism strategy. Pair fervent prayer with an intentional evangelistic strategy. Get into your community in the love of Christ!

Defining moment

We stand at a defining moment in our nation’s history; what the enemy meant for evil, God is turning for good. May we be found faithful in prayer, bold in witness and ready to welcome God’s move among us. Who knows, this could be the beginning of another Great Awakening. To God alone receive the glory!

By Rob Jackson
Director of evangelism and church revitalization, Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions



*The Gathering***ORDER OF BUSINESS****NOVEMBER 11-12, 2025 • WHITESBURG BAPTIST CHURCH, HUNTSVILLE • THEME: COMPELLED • SCRIPTURE: 2 CORINTHIANS 5:14****TUESDAY MORNING**

8:15	Special music.....Alabama Singing Men & Women
8:35	Prayer..... Josh Smith
8:40	Call to order..... Craig Carlisle
	Greetings
	Madison Baptist Association..... Robert Mullins
	Whitesburg Baptist Church..... Darryl Craft
	congregational singing..... Roger Walworth
8:50	Enrollment of messengers..... Debbie Oliver
8:55	Committee on Order of Business..... Rusty Sowell
9:00	Committee appointments..... Craig Carlisle
9:05	Memorial service..... Rex Kent
9:15	Introduction of resolutions..... Mat Alexander
9:20	Special music.....Alabama Singing Men & Women
9:30	Compelled to live as new creations Matt Daniels
9:55	Entity discussion
	<i>The Alabama Baptist, Jennifer Davis Rash;</i>
	<i>Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, Wendy Westerhouse</i>
	Committee reports
10:10	Committee on Committees..... Jim Graham
10:20	Committee on Boards and Commissions..... Tim Cox
	Recognitions
10:30	Recognition of former convention presidents.... Rick Lance
10:40	Recognition of new pastors and new church staff members.....Mike Jackson
10:45	Celebrating the Cooperative Program.....Jay Stewart
10:55	Entity discussion
	<i>The Baptist Foundation of Alabama, John Ashworth;</i>
	<i>Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center, Russell Klinner;</i>
	<i>Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries, Rod Marshall</i>
11:15	Miscellaneous business
11:20	Presentation of convention president.....Rick Lance
11:25	Special music.....FBC Gadsden Choir, Nathan Edwards, director
11:30	President's address.....Craig Carlisle
12:00	Benediction..... Kyle Sullivan

TUESDAY AFTERNOON

	Worship
1:30	Congregational singing..... Rick Stone
1:40	Prayer..... Scott Peters
1:45	Executive director report:
	Living a compelled lifeRick Lance
2:00	State Board of Missions report

2:45	Congregational singing.....Corey Bonds
2:50	Compelled to be ministers of reconciliationDewayne Rembert
3:15	Entity discussion
	<i>Alabama Woman's Missionary Union, Candace McIntosh;</i>
	<i>Alabama Citizens Action Program, Greg Davis;</i>
	<i>Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers, Ken Schroeder</i>
3:35	Miscellaneous business
	Committee reports
3:40	Resolutions Committee..... Mat Alexander
3:55	Committee on Time, Place and Preacher..... Jay Wolf
4:00	Audit and insurance committees.....Mike Jackson
4:05	Benediction.....Kim Andrews

TUESDAY EVENING

6:15	Special music.....Frank Jones
6:30	Welcome, prayer and recognitions.....Rick Lance
6:35	A celebration of missions, featuring testimonies, stories, and music of the Whitesburg Worship Ministry
7:20	Message: Compelled to live as ambassadors for Christ Jeff Iorg
8:00	Benediction.....Rick Lance

WEDNESDAY MORNING

	Worship
8:30	Congregational singing..... Chuck Hobbs
8:35	Prayer..... John Roland
8:40	Compelled to be laborers together for ChristSpencer Bell
9:05	Election of officers
9:15	Previously scheduled business
9:45	Resolutions Committee report..... Mat Alexander
10:00	Entity discussion
	<i>University of Mobile, Charles Smith;</i>
	<i>Samford University, Beck Taylor</i>
10:15	Election of officers
10:25	Congregational singing..... Brad Johnson
10:30	Introduction of convention preacher and alternate preacher..... Craig Carlisle
	Special music..... Daniel Green
	Scripture..... Steven Fraser
10:40	Convention sermon..... Andy John King
11:10	Introduction of convention officers..... Rick Lance
11:15	Benediction and adjournment..... Parker Allen

STATE CONVENTION PREVIEW

State convention president, other nominees announced; elections to take place at annual meeting in November

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

Jarman Leatherwood, pastor of House of Hope and Restoration Church in Huntsville, will be nominated as president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention during the upcoming annual meeting in Huntsville.

He previously served two one-year terms as first vice president (currently finishing up his second year) and two one-year terms as second vice president.

He also preached the convention sermon in 2023.

Robert Mullins, executive director of Madison Baptist Association, announced Oct. 7 he will be nominating Leatherwood. House of Hope and Restoration Church is part of Madison Association.

“Here are the reasons I am honored to nominate Jarman Leatherwood for president of the Alabama Baptist Convention,” Mullins shared with The Alabama Baptist.

1. “Jarman is a faithful brother in Christ who deeply loves the Lord, his family and his church. His life reflects a genuine commitment to following Jesus.

2. “Jarman is a true fisher of people — men, women, boys and girls. Through the work of his church, House of Hope and Restoration, he

has shown that making disciples and impacting the community are central to his ministry,” Mullins said.

3. “Jarman is a friend to many and an encouragement to all. He is unwavering in his dedication to the

“Jarman faithfully uses his God-given gifts to serve.”

Robert Mullins executive director, Madison Baptist Association



JARMAN LEATHERWOOD

Photo by Tracy Riggs Frontz/The Alabama Baptist

mission of Christ and passionate about helping others grow in their relationship with the Lord.

4. “Jarman faithfully uses his God-given gifts to serve. He is a powerful preacher and teacher of God’s Word who lives what he proclaims.

“He empowers others to follow Jesus and lead others to do the same. His support

has equipped and encouraged numerous church plants and church planters,” Mullins continued.

5. “Above all, Jarman is a disciple of Jesus. His love for the Lord is evident in everything he does, and he seeks to shine the light of Christ everywhere he goes.”

Leatherwood has served in various leadership roles across the state convention and in Madison Association as well as Etowah Baptist Association.

Leatherwood also has served with Samford University’s Ministry Training Institute.

Nominees for vice presidents

Ryan Whitley, founding pastor of the 20-year-old CrossPoint Church in Trussville, will be nominated for first vice president. He previously served two

one-year terms as second vice president and is known for his support and love for missions.

Whitley will be nominated by Daven Watkins, pastor of First Baptist Church Pelham.



WHITLEY

Mat Alexander, pastor of First Baptist Church Gadsden, will be nominated for second vice president.

He has served in various positions at the association and state convention level.

Currently, Alexander serves as chair of the state convention resolutions committee.

He will be nominated by Daniel Atkins, pastor of Taylor Road Baptist Church in Montgomery.

At press time, no other nominees had been announced for officer positions.

The officers are elected by messengers to the state convention each year and can serve two back-to-back terms.

Elections will take place during the Nov. 11–12 annual meeting at Whitesburg Baptist Church in Huntsville.



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STATE CONVENTION PREVIEW

COMPELLED
2 CORINTHIANS 5:14

Make plans to attend the
**202nd Annual Meeting of the
Alabama Baptist State Convention**

NOVEMBER 11-12, 2025

Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville

*Our family reunion of
Alabama Baptists!*



TUESDAY EVENING MISSIONS CELEBRATION

Jeff Iorg
President, SBC Executive Committee

*and featuring the Whitesburg
Worship Ministry*



For a complete schedule, hotel guide, registration information and more, visit alsbom.org/convention. To download the State Convention Annual Meeting App, scan this QR code or visit my.yapp.us/ABSC2025.



This event is made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program.

TUESDAY MORNING



Craig Carlisle
President's Message



Matt Daniels
"Compelled"
Theme Interpretation

TUESDAY AFTERNOON



Dewayne Rembert
"Compelled"
Theme Interpretation

WEDNESDAY MORNING



Andy John King
Convention Sermon



Spencer Bell
"Compelled"
Theme Interpretation

*Our Annual Family Reunion
Is the Place For:*

- ~ Great fellowship
- ~ Encouraging testimonies
- ~ Inspirational music and worship
- ~ Uplifting reports
- ~ Important information
- ~ Connecting with ministry partners in the Exhibit Hall
- ~ Seeing old friends and making new ones!

**A WORD FROM OUR
CONVENTION PRESIDENT**

Greetings, Alabama Baptists!

Can you believe it is time for our Alabama Baptist Family Gathering? I am excited about our meeting at Whitesburg Baptist Church in Huntsville on November 11-12, 2025. This year our theme is COMPELLED. We will have the opportunity to celebrate all that God has done through Alabama Baptists this past year and look forward to what we are hoping to accomplish in the days to come. We will be electing a new president this year. We will hear about our continued emphasis on Calling Out the Called. Our Young Pastors Network will meet again. It is our one time a year to all come together and enjoy sweet fellowship from all across our state. Don't miss this opportunity! I will look forward to seeing you in Huntsville on November 11-12.

Craig Carlisle
President
Alabama Baptist State Convention



ALSOM.ORG/CONVENTION

Related meetings

Other events set to coincide with upcoming state convention in Huntsville

▶ **Alabama Church Planter Network** — The Alabama Church Planter Network will hold a dinner Nov. 9 at Essential Church in Huntsville, 5–9 p.m. For more information, visit plantalabama.org/events.

▶ **Alabama Baptist Conference of Associational Leaders meeting** — ABCAL members will meet Nov. 10 at Whitesburg Baptist Church South Campus in Huntsville, 8 a.m.–1 p.m. Richard Blackaby will speak. For more information, visit abcal.online.

▶ **Church and Community Ministries Meeting** — This group will gather Nov. 10 at Lincoln Village Ministry in Huntsville, 11:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m. Contact Kristy Kennedy at 334-

613-2311 or kkennedy@alsbom.org to reserve a spot.

▶ **Unite: A Gathering of Alabama Baptist College Ministry Leaders** — The Unite event will be held Nov. 10 at the Baptist Campus Ministries of the University of Alabama in Huntsville, 4–8 p.m.

▶ **Hispanic pastors and leaders** — This group will meet Nov. 10 at 6 p.m. at Lakewood Baptist Church in Huntsville.

▶ **Alabama Singing Men/Women** — Alabama Singing Men and Women will hold a fellowship banquet Nov. 10 at Mount Zion Baptist Church in Madison at 6 p.m. after a joint rehearsal at 5:15 p.m.

▶ **Southwestern Seminary** — Southwestern Seminary will hold a lunch Nov. 11 at Whitesburg Baptist Church South Campus, Grooms Room, in Huntsville, noon.

▶ **Southern Seminary** — Southern Seminary will hold an alumni luncheon Nov. 11 at Whitesburg Baptist Church South Campus in Huntsville, 12–1:30 p.m. To register, visit tabonline.org/sbtsluncheon2025.

▶ **ALCAP** — Alabama Citizens Action Program will hold a lunch for pastors and their wives Nov. 11 at Whitesburg Baptist Church in Huntsville, 12–1:15 p.m. Register at tabonline.org/alcapluncheon2025.

▶ **Disciple-Making Leaders** — This group will meet Nov. 11 for lunch at Whitesburg Baptist Church South Campus in Huntsville, 12–1 p.m. To sign up, visit tabonline.org/disciplemakingleaders2025.

▶ **Alabama Baptist Children's Homes Pastor's Dinner** — ABCH is hosting a lunch for pastors Nov. 11, 12–1:30 p.m. in the Hearthside Room at Whitesburg Baptist Church South Campus. Craig Carlisle will speak. Register at alabama-child.org/events/signup.

▶ **Alabama Baptist Young Pastors' Cohort Dinner** — This group of young pastors and friends who are "40ish and under" will meet Nov. 11 at

Whitesburg Baptist Church in Huntsville, 4:45–6 p.m. Charles Smith, president of the University of Mobile, will speak. Register at alsbom.org/young-pastors.

▶ **New Orleans Seminary** — New Orleans Seminary will hold an alumni dinner Nov. 11 at Whitesburg Baptist Church in Huntsville, 5 p.m. For more information or to register, visit brushfire.com/nobts/alabamaalumni/612240/details.

▶ **Youth Minister Luncheon** — Youth ministers are invited to a free Taco Mama lunch at the Baptist Campus Ministries at UAH on Nov. 11, 11:45 a.m.–1 p.m. To register, visit tabonline.org/youthministerlunch2025.



ALABAMA BAPTIST PASTORS CONFERENCE

THE PREMINENCE OF CHRIST

November 10, 2025
Whitesburg Baptist Church
Huntsville, Alabama



Richard Blackaby



Fred "Chip" Luter, III



Dowand Malone



Ed Newton



Zane Pratt



Kyle Reno



Jay Wolf

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• Scott Underwood,
Timmy Ray and
Dusty Medlock
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CHURCH POSITIONS

PASTOR

Cypress Shores Baptist Church in Mobile, Alabama, is prayerfully seeking a full-time senior pastor. Please email resumé to: cypress9631@comcast.net or mail to: 4327 Higgins Road, Mobile, AL 36619.

PASTOR

Shell Banks Baptist Church on Fort Morgan Road is seeking a pastor. Please Send resumé to: shellbanks7136@yahoo.com.

PASTOR

Pintlala Baptist Church is seeking a full-time pastor. The candidate should be a self-starter, enthusiastic about the Word of God, and excited for opportunity to bring new members to the church. Pintlala Baptist Church, which is located in the southwestern portion of Montgomery County, has a loving church family that is here to share the good news of Jesus Christ to serve our community (and beyond) in His love. We are genuine in our atmosphere and enjoy supporting one another. For more information, please go to: <https://pintlalabaptist.com/ministry-position-open>.

PASTOR

Bell Lane Baptist, Clanton, Alabama, is prayerfully seeking our next full-time pastor. The successful candidate will assume a range of responsibilities. You can view the full job description by visiting the link: www.belllanebaptist.org/about.

PASTOR OR BIVOCATIONAL

Snow Road First Baptist Church, Semmes, Alabama, seeking experienced, seminary trained man. Contact Douglas Kaul: 251-591-5525, or church office: 251-649-7722. Send resumé to: drkaul7100@gmail.com.

BIVOCATIONAL MUSIC MINISTER

New Center Baptist, Hartselle, Alabama, (newcenterbaptist.org) seeking bivocational music minister for blended services, leading choir and coordinating volunteer musicians. Email resumé to: raykballew@gmail.com or contact pastor at 256-221-6880 for more information.

PASTOR OF WORSHIP AND EQUIPPING MINISTRIES

First Baptist Church of Tallassee, Alabama, is searching for a full-time pastor of worship and equipping ministries. For more information and to send a resumé, please see fbctallassee.com/jobs.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY DIRECTOR

New Market Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking a children's ministry director. This is a part-time position that will consist of 10-20 hours per week. We are praying for a candidate who loves the Lord and has a heart for children and their families. Please email resúmes to Brother Jeff at newmarketbaptistchurch@gmail.com.

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Pastor: Revival impacting Devco Baptist following 'divine vision'

By Rachel Seale
The Alabama Baptist

Devco Baptist Church in Geneva experienced what some are describing as revival and renewal after the church's pastor shared how God gave him a divine vision.

Pastor Truman Scarborough said God spoke to him during his regular time of prayer and meditation Aug. 10, which was 21 days prior to the date God revealed (Aug. 31) He would bring revival and renewal in the Devco Baptist congregation.

He was lying on his bed when he sensed what God wanted him to do about the upcoming revival.

"It just came to me that this was going to be something to glorify God's name," Scarborough said. "That's all I wanted it to be."

Perfect timing

The pastor said revival would take place before the new church year started in September, which is why he chose Aug. 31.

He said God revealed that between one and 31 baptisms would take place during this service as well.

"God revealed to me that that's one thing we wanted to do to glorify His name and have a great, big day for Him," Scarborough said.

"We had a very good day,



Photo courtesy of Alabama Baptist Historical Commission

and the word got out everywhere."

Elaine Scarborough, Truman's wife, said she and her husband shared this revelation with their church. The Aug. 31 service, Elaine explained, was a day to glorify God with nine rededications, four people joining the church and three baptisms.

All 26 people in attendance, she noted, participated in taking the Lord's Supper. There were two other candidates for baptism; however, they were unable to attend the service.

"When [Truman] gave the invitation for rededication, all nine of them came it seemed like at one time," Elaine said. "They all got up at the same time. They didn't look around to see who was coming or who wasn't coming; they just came."

The couple said the church faced several stumbling blocks leading up to the promised date of revival. However, they said they chose to reflect on Scripture as they trusted in God's provision and plans. These hurdles included a singer having to cancel due to a death in his family, a preparation meeting that fell apart and a car show that the couple feared would draw people away from attending the special service.

'Cloud nine'

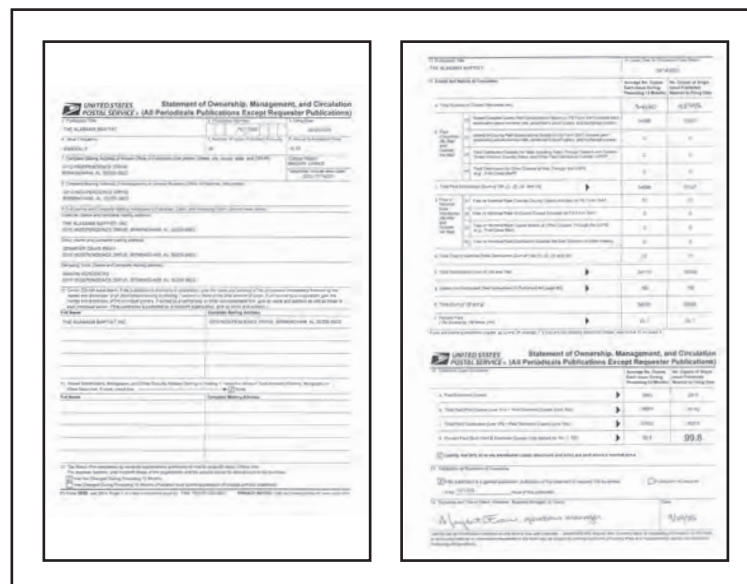
"We quoted Jeremiah 33:3, and we wound up with a beautiful Lord's Day," the pastor said.

Since then, Elaine said, everyone has been very inspired — and she has witnessed growth within her church and community. Some individuals in the community said they want to start coming back to the church.

"They seem so positive, and it changed the outlook of the church," the pastor's wife noted. "The entire church was just on cloud nine."

The Scarboroughs said they hope the church will grow by at least 10% as a result of how the Holy Spirit is moving within their town.

"That's our goal. To work and do what the Lord is leading us to do," Elaine said.




UPCOMING EVENTS

sponsored by the State Board of Missions

Learn about ESL ministries at upcoming workshop

Kristy Kennedy says many of the internationals who live in Alabama have never had their own Bible or heard of Jesus specifically. “For me personally and my experience, ESL ministries are one of the best ways to reach internationals with the gospel,” said Kennedy, who leads in the area of community ministries at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. “There’s a huge opportunity here.” A first step toward getting involved is to attend the

To register, scan the code below with your smartphone’s camera.



upcoming ESL workshop set for Nov. 7–8 at Lindsay Lane Baptist Church in Athens. You’ll learn how to get started, recruit students and

teachers, teach and share your faith with your students. The workshop is free and includes materials, dinner Friday and lunch Saturday. “Through ESL, you’re able to make that connection with internationals and help meet their needs,” Kennedy said. “It’s an amazing ministry to get to be a part of. You get to see lives change because of the gospel.” To register, visit alsbom.org/event/english-as-a-second-language-workshop-athens.

SPEAK Tour at Flomaton High

Want to build up the students in your church and reach their friends with the gospel? Plan to bring them all to SPEAK Tour at Flomaton High School on Nov. 2 from 6–8 p.m. “It’s a night of worship, but it’s more geared toward students bringing their friends so that they can hear the gospel and have an opportunity to respond to the gospel,” said Josh Meadows, student ministry strategist for the Alabama Baptist

State Board of Missions. “We also will challenge our followers of Jesus to take the next step and identify the person that they want to begin praying for and ultimately reach with the gospel message.” Bryan Drake will be the speaker, and Theikos Exchange will provide music. SPEAK Tour will also have fun outdoor games for students to play. For more information, visit ymlink.org/calendar/speak-tour-flomaton.

For more information, visit ymlink.org/calendar/speak-tour-flomaton or scan the code below with your smartphone’s camera.



There’s still time to give to the Myers-Mallory Offering

Thank you for your participation in the 2025 Week of Prayer for State Missions. Remember it’s not too late to give to the Myers-

Mallory State Missions Offering. Gifts are received until the end of the year and help support Alabama Woman’s Missionary Union, disas-

ter relief, church planting, church revitalization and partnership missions. For more information and resources, visit Myers-Mallory.org.

WORD search

- | | |
|--------------|-----------|
| ANGER | JUDGMENT |
| CALEB | MERCY |
| COMMAND | MOSES |
| COMPLAIN | MURMUR |
| CONSEQUENCES | OBEY |
| DISCIPLINE | PLAGUE |
| DISOBEDIENCE | PROMISE |
| DOUBT | PUNISH |
| FAITH | REBELLION |
| FORGIVENESS | REJECT |
| GIANTS | REPENT |
| GOLDEN | RESTORE |
| GRUMBLE | STUBBORN |
| HARDHEARTED | UNBELIEF |
| IDOLS | VOICE |
| JOSHUA | WANDER |

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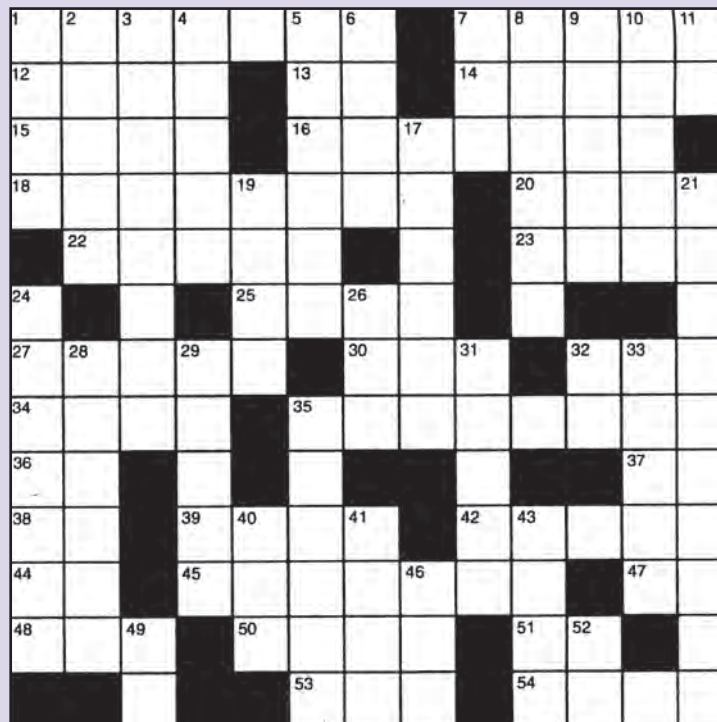
“The Lord is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression ...”
 NUMBERS 14:18A

CHRISTIAN Crossword



ACROSS

1. First book of New Testament.
7. In like manner also, that women ___ themselves in modest apparel. (1 Tim. 2:9)
12. Solomon's son was Rehoboam, ___ his son. (1 Chron. 3:10)
13. Alcoholics Anonymous. (abbr.)
14. Train station.
15. Ice skating arena.
16. Unto ___, my own son in the faith. (1 Tim. 1:2)
18. Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the ___. (Num. 32:12)
20. And Zanoah, and Engannim, Tappuah and ___.
22. He left the ___ cloth, and fled from them naked. (Mark 14:52)
23. Grain storage place.
25. That the ___ men be sober. (Titus 2:2)
27. Artist's stand.
30. Upon the great ___ of his right foot. (Lev. 8:23)
32. Anger.
34. Facts.
35. For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our ___. (Isa. 33:22)
36. Doctor. (abbr.)
37. Iowa. (abbr.)
38. Executive order. (abbr.)
39. A ___ without blemish. (1 Pet. 1:19)
42. Sow the fields, and ___ vineyards. (Ps. 107:37)
44. Tin symbol.
45. Imitate.
47. Yes. (Spanish)
48. Teaspoon. (abbr.)
50. Hammer.
51. Direction.
53. Latter-day Saints. (abbr.)
54. Whereby the world that ___ was ... perished. (2 Pet. 3:6)



By Jody Ellis Copyright 1994 Barbour Publishing Inc.

DOWN

1. Follows 1 across.
2. ___ the Arbathite. (1 Chron. 11:32)
3. Tasting the most of tin.
4. When Joseph had ___ the body. (Matt. 27:59)
5. For John the Baptist came neither ___ bread nor drinking wine. (Luke 7:33)
6. Or ministry, let us ___ on our ministering. (Rom. 12:7)
7. Why make ye this ___, and weep? (Mark 5:39)
8. But thou shalt utterly ___ it. (Deut. 7:26)
9. And Chepharhaammonai, and ___, and Gaba; 12 cities with their villages.
10. If ye fulfill the ___ law according to the Scripture. (James 2:8)
11. New Testament. (abbr.)
17. Even out of the ___s of Gibeah. (Judg. 20:33)
19. Concerning ___, persecuting the church. (Phil. 3:6)
21. Let your ___ be known unto all men. (Phil. 4:5)
24. Thou ___ thy people like a flock. (Ps. 77:20)
26. Estimated time of arrival. (abbr.)
28. Eleazar ___ son. (Ex. 6:25)
29. Though thou exalt thyself as the ___. (Obad. 4)
31. Princes shall come out of ___. (Ps. 68:31)
32. Four. (Roman numeral)
33. He hath caused the arrows of his quiver to enter into my ___. (Lam. 3:13)
35. It is not for kings, O ___. (Prov. 31:4)
40. Ampere. (abbr.)
41. Emitted blood.
43. Therefore also I have ___ him to the Lord. (1 Sam. 1:28)
46. Opposite of question. (abbr.)
49. Ma and ___.
52. Inquiry. (slang)

All Bible verses are KJV unless otherwise specified.

Christmas Backpacks

You and your church can make Christmas brighter for children living along the Mississippi River who are among some of the poorest in the U.S. Generation after generation in the region live without basic human necessities through Christmas Backpacks.

Christmas Backpacks is a joint ministry of Alabama WMU and the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. Everyone is welcome to join the effort by purchasing and filling a backpack to help take the gospel to someone who may have never heard.

Each backpack is filled with toys, hygiene items, art supplies, etc., along with a gospel message presented through the Christmas story. Opportunities are also available to assist with backpack distribution, as well as to partner on an ongoing basis with ministry sites.

For more information, visit AlabamaWMU.org/christmasbackpacks or scan the code below with your smartphone's camera.



Alabama Baptists gave 15,038 backpacks in 2024. Let's top that amount this year!

The 2025 Collection week is Oct. 25–31. For packing instructions and more information, visit AlabamaWMU.org/christmasbackpacks. Further questions? Contact Pat Ingram at pigram@alsbom.org or 334-613-2334.

AABMA Workshop

The Alabama Association of Baptist Ministry Assistants will hold its annual conference March 8–10, 2026, at Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega. The conference will center around the theme "God Did It with a Nail," based on Colossians 2:14, and will offer times of corporate worship and fellowship as well as breakout sessions

offering professional development, training and spiritual renewal.

The featured conference leader will be Melanie Hill, an author and member of FBC Dothan, where she serves as a Bible study and Sunday School leader. Buddy Scales, worship pastor at FBC Replap, will lead worship for the conference.

For more information, visit myaabma.org.

'OPEN DOOR'

Mobile Baptist Network shines with 1st international women's banquet

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Mary Morton says it still gives her chills when she thinks about a new event Mobile Baptist Network held recently — a banquet for international women.

"It came across my mind last fall, and I was just so excited to see how the Lord blessed it," she said.

About 150 women attended the event Sept. 14 at Spring Hill Baptist Church, with representatives from different people groups decorating their tables to showcase their culture.

A number of churches were involved, including Laos Baptist Church; two Vietnamese congregations, New Life International and

Vietnamese Obedience Baptist Church; a Korean congregation called International Baptist Church; and several Spanish-speaking congregations, Conectados con Jesus, Friendship Hispanic, 3 Circle Hispanic and 1-10 Church.

Carolyn Battle, disaster relief coordinator for MBN, spoke on the topic of "Joy in my Journey" based on Nehemiah 8:10.

Incredible opportunity

Before her message, two volunteers shared their testimonies.

"One from Vietnam, and she was absolutely wonderful," Morton said. "Everyone was mesmerized by her story."

Morton — whose husband, Bobby,



Photo by Katelyn Maten/The Alabama Baptist

About 150 women gathered for Mobile Baptist Network's first international women's banquet Sept. 14 at Spring Hill Baptist Church in Mobile.

works with language congregations for MBN — said the 85 countries and 45 language groups represented in the Mobile area offer an incredible opportunity for the gospel to be shared.

"It really is an open door — it's just taking the time to see what's open," she said.

Women from Laos Baptist Church dance at the MBN international women's banquet Sept. 14.



Photo by Katelyn Maten/The Alabama Baptist

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BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Sunday School Lessons

By Adam Winn, Ph.D.

Chair and Professor, Department of Biblical and Religious Studies at Samford University



For October 19

WHEN GOD INTERRUPTS YOUR LIFE Hebrews 11:8–19

When God interrupts our plans, we can trust what He's doing. (8–12)

Here we pick up in the middle of what is often referred to as the “hall of faith.” By offering great examples of faith from Israel’s past, the author of Hebrews is seeking to illustrate the way his audience is called to live.

After describing the faith of Abel, Enoch and Noah, the author turns to the faith of Abraham. Verse 8 begins by describing Abraham’s first act of faith, namely obeying God by leaving his home for distant land — a land that God promised as an inheritance.

The author then notes that Abraham stayed in that land as a foreigner and tent dweller, never actually securing the land but trusting that one day God would grant it to his descendants.

We are told that he looked forward to a city whose architect and builder is God, a reference to God’s new or renewed creation.

The author then shifts to the miraculous birth of Isaac, connecting this birth to Abraham’s trust in God’s promise of a son. It is not mentioned that Abraham was not always faithful in this regard, and we should take comfort in the fact that even our failures in faith do not hinder God’s faithfulness to His promise.

Because of Abraham’s faithfulness, the great nation of God’s chosen people was birthed.

Faith in God helps us to understand there is a greater purpose and benefit behind God’s plan for our lives. (13–16)

The text then broadens its focus to all the faithful mentioned thus far. It notes how these people died without receiving

what they were promised but did see it from a distance.

How they “saw” these promises is unclear. It could be a figurative reference to their great faith in the certainty of what was to come or a reference to a vision from God.

On this we can only speculate. As a result of their faith, they recognized that they were foreigners on earth seeking a greater homeland, a heavenly country.

Because of their faith and hope in such a future, God is not ashamed to be called their God, and He has prepared a city for them.

This “city” is a reference to a new or restored creation that is “heavenly” in quality and unlike the current fallen and broken creation.

When our faith is tested, we can still trust God’s plan for us. (17–19)

The text returns to Abraham and his willingness to offer up Isaac. In God’s instruction to sacrifice Isaac, a tension is created between that specific command and God’s promise that through Isaac God’s promises would be fulfilled.

The author reveals how Abraham resolves this tension, namely through his trust that God can raise the dead. In other words, Abraham understands that because of God’s promise regarding the significance of Isaac, His command for Abraham to sacrifice Isaac cannot ultimately end in Isaac’s death but in Isaac being raised from the dead.

These verses offer us models to follow. May we trust God even when we can’t see what is next. May we trust God even when the only visible outcomes make no sense.

And may we live as strangers in this world, with complete faith that our true home is waiting for us beyond this life and this world.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Sunday School Lessons

By Robert Olsen, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



For October 19

INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN Numbers 33:50–56; 34:13–15

The Land (33:50–53)

God had told Moses in Numbers 14 that all of the Israelites 20 years of age and older — except for Joshua and Caleb — would die in the wilderness and not be able to enter the promised land because of their lack of faith. The spies who went into the land of Canaan turned against God by not trusting Him to give them the land. They trusted with their eyes, not their hearts.

For those left, God tells Moses what needs to be done upon entering the land. The Israelites are commanded to chase out all of the inhabitants and destroy all idols and high places, which is where the false gods were worshipped.

God knew that the people of Canaan and their idols would lead His people astray. Similarly, we need to be vigilant in protecting ourselves from idols in our lives.

I don’t know of any Christians who have idols made of stone and wood that they worship, but an idol is anything in our lives that takes the place of God. It can be money, success, peace or comfort.

If we struggle with placing our hope in things other than God, we need to reorient our priorities so that we can get back to trusting in God and His promises.

The Task (54–56)

God told the Israelites to drive out the people of the land. They needed to obey God so that the Canaanites would not be a stumbling block for them. This would not be easy, and there would be many temptations for the Israelites to not obey God in this matter. The fact that they failed to remove all of the Canaanites would cause problems for years for the Israelites.

As Christians, we need to remove sin from our midst. We cannot

wink at sin and think that there will be no consequences. Sin is disobedience to God, and since God wants what is best for us, turning away from Him causes problems for us and those around us.

There are times when you may need to stop spending time with former friends because they cause you to sin. You may need to stop watching sports or working so much in order to spend more time with family or at church. We need to guard our minds and hearts so we can focus on God’s desires and not our own.

The Plan (34:13–15)

The tribes were to receive their land by lot. They trusted God to set them where He wanted them. They did not complain about where God placed them.

It is easy for us to complain to God about our circumstances. Some Christians are born into stable, wealthy families and end up having stable, well-paying jobs. Some of us are born into poor families or unstable families and end up with lower-paying jobs.

All of us face challenges of varying kinds — health, money, relationships — but we are not to complain about where we are placed by God and what our circumstances are. If we ground our trust in God and not in our circumstances, He gives us power to have joy in the midst of our circumstances.

Instead of worrying or complaining about these things, think about how God has placed you in this place or position for a reason and make the best of the opportunities God gives us, focusing on how we can honor God instead of looking at our circumstances.

EDITOR’S NOTE — The Sunday School lesson outlines are provided by Lifeway.

“And you shall take possession of the land and settle in it, for I have given the land to you to possess it.”

Numbers 33:53

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Sunday School Lessons

By Robert Olsen, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



For October 26

REMEMBER Deuteronomy 4:1–9, 15–20

Obedience (1–4)

The Book of Deuteronomy is Moses' address to the Israelites as they prepare to go into the promised land. God had forbidden Moses from entering, so it was important for Moses to leave a final admonition for the Israelites. He focuses on the need to obey God's commands — neither to take away from them nor to add to them. Moses reminds the people that those who disobeyed God and worshipped foreign idols were destroyed by God.

There are consequences to disobedience. While God may not strike us dead immediately, all disobedience is sin and sin has a cost. Sin shows a lack of trust that God's ways are best. It puts our own interests over those of God and suggests that in pride, we think we know better than God and assert our own will over that of God.

Sin also ruins relationships. Of course, the ultimate cost of sin is separation from God for eternity. It is for this reason that Christ died on the cross on our behalf — to bear God's wrath against sin so that all who believe in Christ do not have to.

Wisdom (5–9)

By following God's decrees, God's wisdom would be on display to the nations. Following God's laws would lead to a functional, just and gracious society because God's laws are given by a just and gracious lawgiver.

Instead of arbitrary or even demonic laws from the pagan societies around them that are built on man's corrupted wisdom, Israel's society would function justly. This was to be one way Israel would fulfill its job as a priestly

nation — presenting God to the nations so that they may also turn from their wicked ways and follow the one, true God.

It is similar in today's world. If Christians obey the teachings of God given to us in the Bible, our lives look different from those around us. Our attitudes should be filled with grace toward those around us as opposed to the typical judgmentalism, complaining and narcissism that is seen in daily life.

Our godly lives should be a breath of fresh air to those around us, and in living this way we are affirming the laws of God as beneficial for human flourishing.

Worship (15–20)

Moses reminds the people to avoid

idols, which will sadly end up being a thorn in the side of Israel until the Babylonian exile.

A problem that can hinder Christian witness is when we become idolaters. Choosing to do what we want instead of what God wants and focusing too much on things that distract from God — work, finances, sports and hobbies — is often how idolatry takes hold. It would be strange to find anyone who claims to be a Christian in the U.S. who also has a shrine to a foreign god that they bow down to.

Instead, when we do not obey God, we are placing ourselves in the place of God, making us our own idol. When we become isolated or socialize only with people who do not share our values, it is easy for Satan to lead us away from godly ideas and attitudes.

This is why we need to be a faithful part of a local church with other strong Christians. They can be used by God to help us recognize our own sinful attitudes and behaviors and encourage us to live godly lives.

“But the LORD has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be a people of his own...”

Deuteronomy 4:20

For November 2

LOVE Deuteronomy 6:1–9, 20–25

Fear of the Lord (1–3)

In order to prepare the Israelites to go into the promised land, Moses gave them God's instructions so that they could prosper. The land they were going to was “flowing with milk and honey,” good for livestock and for crops — a land of abundance.

This section is not guaranteeing that bad things won't happen. Sin is pervasive and until Christ returns, it will always be a struggle. Earthquakes, disaster, disease and more could still befall the Israelites, but if they would follow God's commands they would set themselves up for prosperity because God's ways are best. Every time the Israelites obeyed, God blessed them, but when they turned away from God, disaster struck.

We can see this today. If we obey God's laws and commands, we prosper. Marriages flourish when we don't commit adultery, families flourish when we put God first and not our jobs, society functions well when people work hard and are not busy getting drunk or doing drugs, etc.

Devoted (4–9)

This section of Deuteronomy is called the Shema, which means “hear” or “listen.” In fact “listen” is the first word of verse 4. This is the foundation for what it means to be a follower of God. It begins with, “Listen, Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.” This affirms the uniqueness of God and His unity — there is only one God. This is to distinguish the God of Israel from all other gods of the nations around them. The rest of the verses immediately following this demonstrate that God should be foremost in all that His followers do — how they think, who they worship and how they act.

Of course, this still applies to us today. Jesus reiterates this command in Mark 12:29. This means that we need to apply our belief to every area of life; we are to have a Christian worldview. If we do not know God's laws, we will easily fall prey to the teachings of the culture just as the Israelites turned from God toward Baal worship.

Righteous (20–25)

The Israelites were commanded to teach these decrees to their children. This was to be a reminder to them of what God had done — how He had brought them out of Egypt and sustained the Israelites in the wilderness.

It is important for older generations of Christians to teach the younger generation so they see how God has been faithful in the past. Christianity is not an empty faith. It is a living faith, and children need to see mature Christians believing the gospel and see how it impacts their lives.

Just a few generations ago in the United States, many people claimed to be Christians, but there was no weight behind it. Children saw older Christians living according to the ways of the world, and when they were told to be obedient to God, they recognized the hypocrisy in their elders, which hurt the witness of the Church. However, now that the culture is against Christianity, being a Christian means counting the cost of following Jesus because there is no cultural benefit to being a Christian.

Being a Christian may cost you social clout or a promotion, or it may mean disobeying an order from an employer who wants you to do something unethical. Younger Christians need to see the faith being lived out among older Christians and see that this is a real, legitimate and working faith.

“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”

Deuteronomy 6:5

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Sunday School Lessons

Chair and Professor, Department of Biblical and Religious Studies at Samford University

By Adam Winn, Ph.D.



For October 26

WHEN LIFE GOES TERRIBLY WRONG
Genesis 39:21–23;
40:5–8; 41:10–14

Despite major setbacks we may experience, God can still show His favor to us. (39:21–23)

Joseph's life involves a series of dramatic rises and falls. He was in Potiphar's house because his brothers had sold him into slavery, yet as a slave in the house of Potiphar, the Lord favored Joseph, and Potiphar put Joseph in charge of his entire house.

It is from this height that, because of a false accusation, Joseph falls to the low point of being indefinitely imprisoned. We can feel how utterly devastating such an experience would be. However, we see that despite this terrible circumstance, the Lord was with Joseph and showed him His love.

It is noteworthy that neither Joseph nor the text blame God for Joseph's misfortunes. Instead, they emphasize the love of God and the work of God in the midst of misfortune and, as we will see in the following verses, that God can use our misfortunes to accomplish His purposes. God again gives Joseph favor — this time in the sight of the jailer — and the jailer places Joseph in charge of the entire prison.

God can use us in any situation. (40:5–8)

Here, Joseph is in prison and becomes an instrument through which God interprets the dreams of two men who had worked for Pharaoh but are now imprisoned. Despite Joseph's circumstances, God still uses him and gives Joseph opportunities to serve Him.

These opportunities will be the instrument that God uses to bring Joseph out of his situation and elevate him to the second-highest place in all of Egypt.

When we face difficult circumstances such as those faced by

Joseph, we often become angry at God and fail to see both the ways He might be wanting to use us in those circumstances and also the ways He might be using those circumstances to bring about His will in our lives.

The story of Joseph is thus a reminder to us to be faithful despite our circumstances and trust God to use them for His purposes and for our good.

Faithfulness to God, even in trying circumstances, can lead to greater opportunities. (41:10–14)

After interpreting both dreams, Joseph asks the chief cupbearer of Pharaoh, whose dream reveals he will be restored to his position, not to forget him when he returns to Pharaoh. But the cupbearer forgets about Joseph — at least until Pharaoh has dreams for which he seeks an interpretation.

The cupbearer finally remembers Joseph, and Pharaoh seeks him out to interpret his dreams. As a result of Joseph interpreting the dreams, Pharaoh asks Joseph what to do about the coming famine, to which Joseph provides a wise strategy of accumulating food during the time of plenty to sustain Egypt during the time of famine.

Pharaoh responds by putting Joseph in charge of this plan and making him second to Pharaoh alone in all of Egypt. It is this plan that will ultimately save the lives of Jacob and his family. Thus, these circumstances in the life of Joseph are used by God to save the people of God's promise, the future people of Israel and all who will one day be saved through the Messiah of Israel.

The story of Joseph is a powerful reminder to us that when it may appear to us through our circumstances that God is not working, the truth is that He is always working and may even be using our difficult circumstances to bring about His greater purposes.

For November 2

WHEN YOUR ACTIONS CAUSE AN INTERRUPTION
Exodus 2:11–22; 3:5–10

Our actions can lead to unintended consequences. (2:11–15)

No motive is given for Moses killing the Egyptian. Was he simply filled with anger over seeing a fellow Hebrew beaten, or is there something we are missing? Some Jewish interpretations support a reading in which Moses' actions are understood as an initial attempt at liberation. The killing of the Egyptian is a first act meant to inspire the Hebrew slaves to follow him as their liberator.

The text offers some clues to support such a reading. First, verse 11 twice references the Hebrews as Moses' people or kinsfolk, emphasizing their connection. Second, the response of the Hebrew slaves to Moses is a bit unusual. Given Moses' status as a prince of Egypt, he would most certainly be a ruler and judge over them. The question then suggests that Moses is perceived as trying to be a ruler over them in a different sort of way, perhaps as a ruler and deliverer. Their response communicates a rejection by the people. Finally, the fact that Pharaoh is seeking to kill Moses for his execution of an Egyptian seems a bit extreme given Moses' apparent position as a prince of Egypt. Could a prince of Egypt not get away with the killing of a low-status Egyptian? That Moses is perceived as being politically subversive through the murder would explain Pharaoh's reaction well.

God can use unintended consequences to prepare us for the future. (16–22)

Moses flees to the wilderness of Midian (likely the northwestern part of modern-day Saudi Arabia). Here Moses marries the daughter of a Midian priest, has children and works as shepherd for 40 years. The

overall narrative allows us to draw some conclusions from Moses' time in the wilderness.

It can be seen as a time of divinely ordained preparation for Moses, who will eventually spend another 40 years shepherding the sheep of Israel through the wilderness. This preparation likely includes the humbling of this former prince of Egypt and a lesson in trusting God's timing rather than one's own, particularly if we take the Jewish interpretation mentioned above. Thus, before Israel learns their lessons in the wilderness, Moses must learn his own.

God can use unintended consequences to enhance others' lives. (3:5–10)

Moses witnesses a bush on Mount Sinai (also Mount Horeb) that was burning yet not consumed by the fire. After responding to God's calling from the bush, Moses is told to take off his sandals because the place he is standing is holy ground. God identifies himself as the God of Moses' ancestors and tells him that He has seen the misery of His people and heard their cries. He tells Moses of His plan to deliver them from Egypt and give them a land flowing with milk and honey.

Our text concludes with God telling Moses that He is sending Moses to bring His people out of Egypt. If the reading offered above is correct, then this story takes on greater significance. God's plan all along was to use Moses as a deliverer of His people. Thus, a young Moses had in one sense understood his calling correctly, but he sought to achieve that calling according to his own timing and by his own strength.

At that time, Moses was not ready to be the leader God would eventually call him to be. He needed humility and an utter dependence on God. Then and only then was Moses ready to do what God had planned for him to do.

“Then [the LORD] said, ‘I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt...’”

Exodus 3:7

MEDIA REVIEWS

By Tracy Riggs Frontz and Steve Potts

The Alabama Baptist

Readers can sing, study Scripture, make friends and display love

The Sing! Hymnal

By Keith and Kristyn Getty

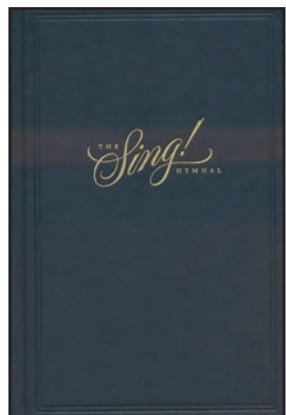
Crossway 2025

Prolific song writers Keith and Kristyn Getty have produced The Sing! Hymnal in collaboration with a team of musicians and Christian leaders.

The Gettys are probably best known for their song, “In Christ Alone,” and their Sing! Conferences. This new hymnal, published by Crossway, is an excellent resource for churches and individuals who love both classic hymns and newer Christian songs that have beauty and theological depth.

Nearly 500 songs are included, along with numerous Scripture passages and congregational readings.

I have used this hymnal along with my Bible each day since I received it. It’s a treasure-trove of wonderful songs, and is available in several formats including digital. (Steve Potts)



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.

You’ll Always Have a Friend: What to Do When the Lonelies Come

By Emily Ley

Tommy Nelson, 2024

Meeting a new teacher, learning new routines and making friends in the beginning of a new school year are all hard.

Emily Ley, bestselling author and mother of three, has recently published a beautiful children’s

book about one of those challenging issues: making friends.

“You’ll Always Have a Friend: What To Do When the Lonelies Come” identifies some of the key concepts of loneliness that everyone deals with.

Geared toward children ages 4 through 8, it combines encouragement for those who feel left out at times with practical tips children can use.

The book doesn’t simply focus on building peer relationships. It also discusses other ways to drive away the “lonelies,” incorporating pets, adults and books.

It ends with the reassurance that everyone feels nervous when making new friends, that “you were made without mistakes” and to “just keep on being you.”

The illustrations by Romina Galotta feature representatives of children of all races and include a boy with a cochlear implant and a girl in a wheelchair. Her whimsical artwork portrays the various emotions felt in the situations described in the text.



“We all know what it’s like to feel left out, overlooked and unseen,” Ley said.

To learn more about Ley, go to emilyleybooks.com. This book can be bought on Amazon or through other popular booksellers. (Tracy Riggs Frontz)

Doing Love! It Can Change Your Life!

Ed Jordan

Xulon Press, 2025

In thousands of sermons, lessons, books and discussions, Christians have heard that love is the essential quality of the Christian life.

But Ed Jordan’s book, “Doing Love! It Can Change Your Life!” seeks to be more than a study of biblical truths about love. He has written a practical guide for developing, deepening and displaying love more effectively.

Jordan is pastor of Gwynn’s Island Baptist Church in Virginia. He received MDiv. and DMin. degrees from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary (now Gateway) and has served churches in Nevada, Texas and Idaho. He also was an International Mission Board missionary in Hungary (1991–2002).

Jordan takes the reader through an overview of biblical teaching and helpful guidance about implementing love in simple and effective ways. His goal is that “you will find doing loving things becoming a natural expression of who you are.”



The book is very understandable even for those with little background in the Bible. I believe an individual, small group or Sunday School class would benefit by studying the teaching in this volume. (Steve Potts)

Forever Matters: How the Return of Jesus Completes You

By Katy Shelton

Iron Stream, 2024

Alabama author Katy Shelton continues her devotional series with “Forever Matters: How the Return of Jesus Completes You.”

“Do you ever feel like you know where you’ve been, but you’re unsure where you’re going? I sure do. Our world today is unpredictable and challenging, leaving most of us feeling this way at times.”

“Forever Matters” was written because Shelton wanted to personally gain understanding of the final book of the Bible. Her desire was

to focus on how the lessons of Revelation can be used to help believers now, not just in the future.

Each chapter corresponds to one in Revelation, which Shelton urges readers to read first.

“[Revelation is] about His glorious victory and our glorious destiny. And spoiler alert: Because of Him, in the end we as believers will win,” Shelton said.

Learn about Shelton and her books at katyshelton.com. (Tracy Riggs Frontz)

