

CONVENTION REPORT

The Alabama Baptist

Toll free 800-803-5201
www.thealabamabaptist.org

November 23, 2023

Vol. 188, No. 46
Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.



Photo by Bethany Franklin/The Alabama Baptist

SPOTLIGHT SPONSOR ...

The Bus Center
Celebrating 50 plus years of excellence



New officers

By Carrie Brown McWhorter | The Alabama Baptist

Carlisle elected president of Alabama Baptist State Convention

Craig Carlisle, director of missions for Etowah Baptist Association, was elected president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention during the Nov. 15 morning session of the 2023 annual meeting.

Carlisle is the first director of missions/associational mission strategist to serve as convention president. Carlisle has served Etowah Association since November 2017.

He holds a doctorate of ministry in evangelism and church growth from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville; a master of divinity from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas; and a bachelor's degree in religion and history from Samford University in Birmingham.

Derek Allen, senior pastor of First Baptist Church Tillman's Corner in Mobile, nominated Carlisle, noting his many areas of service in Alabama Baptist and SBC life. But Carlisle's past was not what compelled his nomination, Allen said.

'Holy discontent' for needs

Carlisle has passion and vision for the future of Alabama Baptists, Allen said, and a "holy discontent" for the needs in our churches. Carlisle will lead us to encourage pastors and develop leaders, he said.

"The reason I can be confident that Dr. Craig Carlisle will do these things is because he is already doing these things," he added.



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist

Newly elected convention president Craig Carlisle is known for his laugh and Buddy Gray, a previous convention president, brings it out after Carlisle and fellow new officers Ryan Whitley (left) and Jarman Leatherwood (right) were introduced to messengers at the conclusion of the 200th annual meeting of Alabama Baptists.

Carlisle was ordained to the ministry by Twelfth Street Baptist Church in Gadsden in 1987 and later served as pastor there from 2008 to 2017.

He was pastor of Central Park Baptist Church in Decatur from 1991 to 2008 and pastor of Munford Baptist Church from 1987 to 1991.

He has served in a number of denominational positions, including as chair of the Alabama Baptist State Convention's Sexual Abuse Advisory Task Force (originally the Sexual Abuse Task Force), moderator of the Etowah Baptist Association (2014–2016), and as a trustee for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (2013 to present) and Lifeway (2008–2016).

In 2023, he was elected to serve as a member of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee. Carlisle and his wife, Tammy, have one daughter, Jordan.

Jarman Leatherwood, pastor of House of Hope and Restoration Church in Huntsville, was elected first vice president. Among other leadership roles, Leatherwood has served two one-year terms as the convention's second vice president and is part of the SBOM church planting team.

He was nominated by Tim Cox, past convention president and pastor of Liberty Baptist Church in Chelsea.

Only contested election

Ryan Whitley, pastor of Crosspoint Church in Trussville, was elected second vice president. Whitley was nominated by Buddy Gray, pastor of Hunter Street Baptist Church in Hoover.

Whitley was elected 172–148 in the only contested election of the convention. Greg Corbin, pastor of Lakeside Baptist Church in Birmingham, also was nominated for the second vice president position.

Debbie Oliver was reelected recording secretary, and Mike Jackson was reelected statistical secretary and registration secretary.



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist

The Alabama Baptist

"If ye continue in My word, then ... ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make ye free." John 8:31–32

(ISSN 0738-7741; USPS 011-080)
© The Alabama Baptist, Inc.
is published weekly except for one week in July and December by The Alabama Baptist, Inc., at 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209. Phone: 205-870-4720. Statewide phone: 800-803-5201.
Website: www.thealabamabaptist.org
Email: news@thealabamabaptist.org or subscribe@thealabamabaptist.org
Periodicals postage paid at Hattiesburg, Miss.

ANNUAL TAB SUBSCRIPTION RATES
Includes print, digital, app and full web access
Group Rate per subscriber per year — \$16.25
Individual — \$34.95 per year

JENNIFER DAVIS RASH
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Carrie Brown McWhorter
Content Editor

NEWS SERVICES
Baptist Press (BP)
Religion News Service (RNS)
Morning Star News (MS)

POSTMASTER
Send address changes to:
The Alabama Baptist
3310 Independence Drive
Birmingham, AL 35209

ADDRESS CHANGE
Send old and new addresses, and name of church to:
Subscription Department
3310 Independence Drive
Birmingham, AL 35209
Allow two weeks.

To the best of our knowledge, all of the ads in *The Alabama Baptist* represent legitimate companies and offerings. However, one should always exercise normal business caution in responding to ads.

Full member of Alabama Press Association

Accredited member of Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability



'Nation's Top Regional Christian Newspaper'
1999, 2004, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022 as judged by Associated Church Press, Baptist Communicators Association, Evangelical Press Association or Religion Communicators Council



The crossword puzzle can be found on page 25.

Convention entities

PHOTOS BY SAM EVANS/THE ALABAMA BAPTIST



1: Wendy Westerhouse (center) joins Lonette Berg (right) for the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission report as Jennifer Davis Rash of The Alabama Baptist, looks on. **2:** Candace McIntosh (right) and Greg Davis give reports on Alabama WMU and ALCAP, respectively. **3:** Rick Lance prays with Beck Taylor (center) of Samford University and Lonnie Burnett (left) of the University of Mobile following their entity reports. **4:** Ken Schroeder (left) and Rod Marshall give reports on the Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers and the Alabama Baptist Children's Homes, respectively. **5:** Russell Klinner (left) and John Ashworth give reports for Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center and The Baptist Foundation of Alabama, respectively.



TO VIEW A GALLERY OF PHOTOS, VISIT TABONLINE.ORG/CONVENTION-ENTITIES.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Your Voice

Champion urges convention to continue Kingdom work with humility

By Grace Thornton

The Alabama Baptist

Buddy Champion said Moses had a lot of interesting chapters in his story. He was orphaned, anger-filled and struggled at times to speak well — but God still used him in a mighty way.

And Moses ended up with an interesting descriptor in Numbers 12:3, said Champion, president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention.

“It says, ‘There was no one on the face of the earth more humble than Moses,’” he said during his president’s address at the convention’s annual meeting Nov. 14. “What Moses was able to do wasn’t about who Moses was — it was about who God was.”

Used by God

Champion said he believes this is the key for why God was able to use Moses.

“God found someone who was more humble than anyone else on the earth, and He said, ‘I believe I can use that life,’” he said. “Could it be that that same truth applies to our lives today?”

Champion said he wondered what could happen if Alabama Baptists were the “most humble people in America” and depended completely on the work of God.

“Could it be God could take us in our homes and our fellowships and make a Moses?”

“Could God take not us but our humility be-

fore Him and do something extraordinary?”

He said some may think, “Well, that was a one-time thing,” but Champion pointed those who were listening to 1 Peter 5:5–7, which includes the truth that “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

Continue together

He said Alabama Baptists have been a family of God with a common focus — the Great Commission.

“We have a community who cares for one another — we’re not in competition with one another,” Champion said. “We’re in this Kingdom work together. We are for each other, and we care about what God is doing in each other’s lives.”

He challenged them to continue to work toward their Kingdom goal with humility, not with selfish agendas.

After reading from Philippians 2 about Christ taking on the form of a servant, Champion brought out a bowl and a towel and knelt on the stage as a visual representation of Jesus’ humility in washing the feet of His disciples.

“The King of Kings and Lord of Lords humbled Himself and moved around the floor from dirty foot to dirty foot,” he said. “Your attitude should be the very same as Christ Jesus, who humbled Himself even to the point of death on a cross. ... When was the last time you humbled yourself and got dirty for the cause of Christ?”

To view a gallery of photos, visit tabonline.org/2023-Presidents-Address.



Outgoing convention president Buddy Champion gives a visual example of Jesus' humility as He washed His disciples' feet.

Photo by Dianna Cagle/The Alabama Baptist



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist

Bailey completes convention service

Morgan Bailey completed his second one-year term as first vice president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention this year but said he did not feel led to be nominated for the role of president.

“It’s been my great privilege to serve Alabama Baptists consecutively now for nine years in some office,” said Bailey, pastor of Macedonia Baptist Church in Ranburne.

“But when the Lord speaks, you listen,” he said.

In an emotional moment during the Nov. 15 session, convention president Buddy Champion thanked Bailey for his service and called him “a great friend.”

“We appreciate you and pray for you daily, for your [physical] restoration and healing,” Champion said. (The Alabama Baptist)

Persevere in purpose, Leatherwood encourages in convention sermon

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

If you check the sky, it's likely you'll see some clouds, Jarman Leatherwood noted.

"The Word is very clear that while we are saved by grace and we love the Lord, we are not exempt from dealing with stormy days," said Leatherwood, pastor of House of Hope and Restoration Church in Huntsville, as he preached the convention sermon during the closing session of the annual meeting.

He said Jesus told His followers in John 16:33 that those "clouds" would be there, and that truth is written in other places too.

But there's also a call to persevere, Leatherwood said, noting Paul is an example.

"The Apostle Paul picks up his pen to parchment and he writes for us this beautiful novella," he said, pointing to the 2023 convention theme Scripture, Philippians 3:13–14, which highlights pressing on toward the prize of the upward call of God in Jesus Christ. "[But] he doesn't write it in the palace, in the suburbs or on the beach. He writes this text from prison."

Joy despite circumstances

Paul still has joy — he references joy 16 times in his letter to the Philippians, Leatherwood said.

When we're dealing with life's trials, God still reigns, Leatherwood said. "Nations are going crazy, wars are raging, situations are bad, but God is still on the throne."

Leatherwood shared three things

2024 convention preacher announced

Ben Bowden, pastor of First Baptist Church Enterprise, will be the convention preacher for the 2024 Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting, which will be held at Eastern Shore Baptist Church in Daphne on Nov. 12–13.

The alternate preacher is Peyton Hill, pastor of First Baptist Church Prattville. (TAB)



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist

Jarman Leatherwood, pastor of House of Hope and Restoration Church in Huntsville, preaches on Philippians 3:13–14 as he delivers the convention sermon at the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting Nov. 15.

from the theme passage that he believes are necessary for Alabama Baptists to joyfully continue doing as God has called them.

1. *Forget the past but not our purpose.*

"There are times when it's good to look back and pull a memory from your Rolodex and celebrate the goodness of what God has done," Leatherwood said.

For example, when David fought Goliath, he recalled how God had given him strength to defeat a lion and a bear and knew that God could give him that strength again.

But there are other times when we recall the painful memories of the past and they cripple us, Leatherwood said. Let those memories go and be faithful with the present opportunity, he urged.

2. *Faithfully strive to make forward progress.*

Striving means to want something bad enough, to yearn for it, Leatherwood said. "It means to literally give yourself away."

He told the story of a runner who dove over the finish line because he wanted to make it so badly.

He said one of the things those who have been in ministry for a while may ask themselves is, "Do

you even want it anymore? Are we trying to make forward progress?"

He said he prays God "would shake us up and give us such a passion that we would yearn for the lost again, that we would yearn for the broken and the hungry."

3. *Focus on the prize.*

Leatherwood said passion for the lost brings a laser-like focus on what is most important in the life of the believer.

"I want to know Christ, I want to know Him, I want to know the fellowship of His suffering. I believe it's possible for us to spend our whole life in church and never know Him."

The ultimate prize is knowing Jesus Christ in His fullness, Leatherwood said.

"You know what makes me afraid? Succeeding at something God never told me to do," he said.

Paul says to press toward the mark, and that mark is knowing Jesus and taking Him to a dying world, Leatherwood said.

"If we don't finish the work He called us to, it's possible some others won't finish theirs. ... It's important and it's necessary for God to set your soul on fire to make sure you do the best you can to go and finish the work He started."

Testimonies: God's work continues

In 2018, Ken and Sandra Allen's lives were "suddenly and abruptly" changed when their daughter, Abby, sustained multiple serious injuries in a car accident.

The Allens shared a testimony about that difficult time as part of an Unfinished theme interpretation at the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting Nov. 14.

Sandra Allen said that even though it was tough, as Abby went through surgeries, ICU stays and time on a ventilator and then slowly recovered in rehab, they saw God do "so much good."

Ken Allen said Abby talked about God constantly with everyone who was around and asked if she could pray for them. "Our son said that when Abby was squeezed (by this tough situation), Jesus came out," he said.

God is good

Ken Allen said that even though Abby was healed, they knew from day one that God was good and faithful whether He chose to heal her or not.

Nathan and Lindsay Lyon also emphasized that truth by sharing the story of losing their conjoined twins just hours after they were born in 2021.

"To understand God's grace and faithfulness and goodness in that time, we can't overstate the pain and suffering, the grief that happens when you have two kids die in your arms," Nathan Lyon said.

God used that time in their life to adjust their expectations and beliefs about hardships, he said. "Our difficult seasons were the ones God used the most to mold, shape and grow us to be more like Him.

"Our lives have been changed forever for the better — far richer, more abundant, closer to Christ and closer to each other." (Grace Thornton)

To view a gallery of photos, visit tabonline.org/2023-Convention-Sermon.

'Press on'

By Grace Thornton | The Alabama Baptist

'God's not through with you yet': Hughes presses convention to keep going

Neal Hughes said one of the churches in his association — Pike Road Baptist — was in despair a while back. It was hard for them to see a vision for the future when, after a rich 133-year history, their congregation had declined from 300 to 15.

But Hughes said God began to work and sent a neighboring church, Thorington Road Baptist, to foster them. Thorington Road eventually commissioned three men to help lead at Pike Road.

"In March, they were averaging 10 to 15, and now they're averaging 60," said Hughes, director of missions for Montgomery Baptist Association.

Hughes brought an "Unfinished" theme interpretation message to

those gathered Nov. 14 for the 2023 Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting at First Baptist Church Montgomery.

One of those now attending the newly revitalized Pike Road Church, Hughes noted, is a young woman named Brittainiee who worked at a local restaurant.

"She began to fall in love with Jesus as people from the church began to share their faith with her," Hughes said. "The Holy

Spirit broke her heart, and she gave her life to Christ."

And Oct. 15, she was the first person to be baptized under the new leadership at Pike Road.

"God's up to something, y'all, and it's good," Hughes said.

The story illustrates the theme of "God isn't through with you yet"

To view a gallery of photos, visit tabonline.org/Neal-Hughes.



Photo by Dianna Cagle/The Alabama Baptist
NEAL HUGHES

that he was challenged to preach as part of the convention's bicentennial celebration.

"Don't miss out on the action," Hughes said. "God's not through with you yet. Press on."

In Philippians 3:10-14, that's

what the Apostle Paul challenged the church to do, he said. Many people today have "quit in their spirit" and "think their church is a goner," Hughes explained. But God can breathe life back into a church like He did with the dry bones in the Book of Ezekiel.

"God invites us to a sense of submission," he said. "When you see a period, God sees a comma. Don't quit; don't give up."

On the opposite end of the spectrum, Hughes also challenged churches to press on when they feel like they've arrived. It's possible to focus so much on the good of the past that churches don't realize that God has so much more for them in the future.

"We need to be simple servants in the hands of a lustrous Master, and we need to press on, because the best is yet to come," Hughes said.

Bicentennial Task Force completes four years of service

The Nov. 14-15 bicentennial commemoration and celebration event came together through the teamwork of the Bicentennial Task Force.

The task force was appointed at the 2019 state convention annual meeting and worked together to pull off a "historic occasion" that brought "honor and glory to our Lord," said Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions and an ex-officio member of the task force.

Lance said Alabama Baptists "can be proud and grateful for the excellent work of their Bicentennial Task Force," which was chaired by Greg Corbin, pastor of Lakeside

Baptist Church in Birmingham, and divided into three subgroups.

"These individuals [used] their gifts and their own experiences in Alabama Baptist life to prepare for an appropriate commemoration of our 200th anniversary," Lance said.

Corbin said being a part of the task force was "a joy."

He said from the beginning, the team agreed on two broad goals — to remember and

give thanks to the Lord for His work among Alabama Baptists for 200 years, and to look forward and challenge Alabama Baptists to keep their focus on fulfilling the Great Commission.

Out of those broad goals emerged themes for the 2022 and 2023 conventions — "Celebrate" and "Unfinished," Corbin said.

The diverse team worked together "in a wonderful way," he said. "Each member of the team loves Christ, the local church and Alabama Baptists."

Serving alongside Corbin and Lance were:

Ex-officio:

► Mike Jackson, SBOM associate executive director.

► Tim Cox, past convention president (2019-2021) and pastor of Liberty Baptist Church in Chelsea.

► Buddy Champion, immediate past convention

president (2022-2023) and pastor of FBC Trussville.

History Team:

► Lonette Berg (chair), executive director of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission.

► Chip Colee, chief administrative officer of Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries.

► Neal Hughes, director of missions for Montgomery Baptist Association.

► Candace McIntosh, executive director of Alabama Woman's Missionary Union.

Storytelling Team:

► Jennifer Rash (chair), president and editor-in-chief of TAB Media Group.

► Matt Haines, pastor of Central Park Baptist Church in Decatur.

► Jarman Leatherwood,

pastor of House of Hope and Restoration in Huntsville and immediate past convention second vice president (now first vice president).

► Dewayne Rembert, church planting strategist and pastor of Flatline Church at Chisholm in Montgomery.

► Annel Robayna, former intercultural ministries strategist for SBOM.

Program Team:

► Doug Rogers (chair), SBOM director of communications/technology.

► Brittney Gardner, Alabama WMU communications specialist.

► Karen Gosselin, SBOM coordinator of worship resources. (The Alabama Baptist)



CORBIN

'Marvel at God's faithfulness'

By Grace Thornton | The Alabama Baptist

Alabama Baptists experience evening commemorating 200 years of working together

Tuesday night at the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting was a time to “marvel at God’s faithfulness among us” over the past 200 years, said Billy Irvin, director of ministry relations for Faith Radio, who emceed the evening at First Baptist Church Montgomery.

Those present at the Nov. 14 service celebrated the convention’s bicentennial by hearing historical accounts and present-day testimonies.

Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey offered a greeting to start the evening, and a mass choir and orchestra led worship.

Irvin also recognized Alabama Senator Gerald Allen, great-great-grandson of the convention’s first president, Charles Crow.

Allen’s son, Wes — Alabama’s

Secretary of State — was also present and shared why the evening was meaningful for his family.

Lonette Berg, executive director of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, presented convention president Buddy Champion with a framed certificate to commemorate the occasion — her last presentation before her retirement.

‘Exceptional worship’

Rick Lance, executive director of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, said the celebration “was one of the most exceptional worship experiences I’ve had in my more than 25 years in this position, and I think we did a good job of being able to reflect on our history and anticipate our future.”

“We praise the Lord for it,” he said.



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist

Karen Gosselin, coordinator of worship resources for the State Board of Missions, leads worship during the Tuesday night session of the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting Nov. 14 at First Baptist Church Montgomery.



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist

Billy Irvin, director of ministry relations for Faith Radio, emceeds the evening event at First Baptist Church Montgomery.



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist

Alabama Governor Kay Ivey offers a greeting to start the evening and commends Alabama Baptists on their years of faithfulness.



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist

Lonette Berg, executive director of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, presents the convention with a framed certificate commemorating the 200th anniversary.

ALABAMA
BAPTIST
STATE
CONVENTION

TUESDAY

Right: A multigenerational choir and orchestra leads worship throughout the evening.



Photo by Bethany Franklin/The Alabama Baptist

Above: Church planter Ramón Vielza brings a missions testimony in Spanish (translated by Brian Harper).



Photo by Bethany Franklin/The Alabama Baptist

Above: Twenty-five people from across Alabama Baptist life, including Lyle and Claren Dease, share brief testimonies of what it means to be an Alabama Baptist. The Deases served as missionaries to Uruguay before returning to Alabama to minister in Pickens Association.



Photo by Bethany Franklin/The Alabama Baptist



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist

Above: Hands raise in worship as the congregation joins the choir in singing “Amazing Grace,” “O God Our Help in Ages Past” and “Facing a Task Unfinished.”

TO VIEW A GALLERY OF PHOTOS,
VISIT TABONLINE.ORG/2023-ABSC-TUESDAY-EVENING

EVENING

200th anniversary & 200th annual meeting

Below: A bicentennial commemoration service was held Nov. 14 in Montgomery to celebrate 200 years of the Alabama Baptist State Convention.

Right: Dawson Zhang shares what it means to be an Alabama Baptist. He is a church planter in Montgomery, planting the first Chinese Southern Baptist church in Alabama.



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist



Photo by Bethany Franklin/The Alabama Baptist

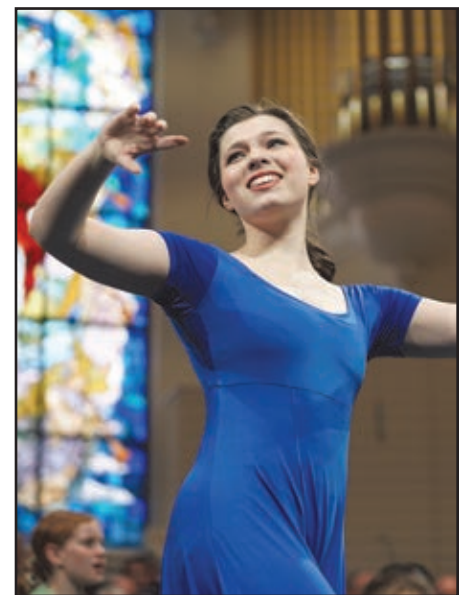


Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist

Above: Emma Grace Hyche performs interpretive movement to the choir's rendition of "Behold Our God." **Below:** An orchestra accompanies the multigenerational choir as they share songs such as "Hymn of Heaven" and "Hope for the Ages."



Photo by Bekah Gordon/Dogwood Media Solutions

Above: Campus minister Chase Williams (at mic) and SBOM's Ben Edfeldt share about collegiate work. **Right:** Matt Thomas of Coosada Baptist Church interprets through sign language the choir's version of "Forevermore."

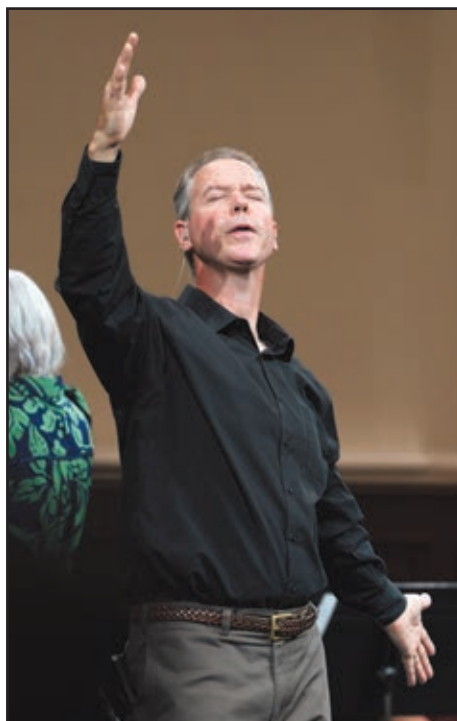


Photo by Bethany Franklin/The Alabama Baptist



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist

Past

1823–2022

presidents

of the Alabama Baptist
State Convention

1823 Charles Crow	1841 Thomas Chilton	1867–1872 S. Henderson	1919–1920 William H. Smith	1937–1938 Henry L. Anderton <i>(includes special session)</i>
1824 Daniel P. Brown	1842–1845 Jesse Hartwell	1873–1891 Jonathan Haralson	1921–1923 L.O. Dawson	1939–1941 J.C. Stivender <i>(includes three special sessions)</i>
1826–1827 L.C. Davis	1846–1850 Thomas Chilton	1892–1898 W.C. Cleveland	1924–1925 W.A. Davis	1941–1942 W.B. Bowling
1829 Lee Compere	1851 W.P. Chilton	1899–1903 H.S.D. Mallory	1926 James R. Hobbs	1943–1944 A. Hamilton Reid
1830 J. Ryan	1852–1854 H. Talbird	1904–1905 C.L. Comer	1927 D.C. Cooper	1945–1947 Frank Tripp <i>(includes special session)</i>
1832 Charles Crow	1855–1858 A.G. McCraw	1906–1909 N.D. Denson	1928 John W. Phillips	1947–1948 John L. Slaughter
1833–1834 Hosea Holcombe	1859–1860 H. Talbird	1910–1911 R.E. Pettus	1929–1930 D.F. Green	1949–1950 Brady R. Justice
1835 Jesse Hartwell	1861–1862 J.L.M. Curry	1912–1915 W.W. Campbell	1931–1932 F.M. Barnes	1951–1952 John H. Buchanan
1836–1837 Hosea Holcombe <i>(includes adjourned session)</i>	1863 W.H. McIntosh	1916 Henry B. Foster	1933–1934 J.E. Dillard	1953–1954 Oscar A. Davis
1838–1840 Jesse Hartwell	1864–1866 J.L.M. Curry	1917–1918 W.B. Crumpton	1935–1936 L.L. Gwaltney	



Photo by Dianna Cagle/The Alabama Baptist

Former presidents of the Alabama Baptist State Convention are recognized by Rick Lance, SBOM executive director, during the Nov. 14 opening session of the 2023 annual meeting at First Baptist Church Montgomery. Those present were (from left) Tim Cox, Travis Coleman, John Thweatt, Roger Willmore, Henry Cox, Joe Godfrey, Leon Ballard, Harrell Cushing and Jerry Gunnells.

1955–1956 Henry L. Lyon <i>(includes special session)</i>	1971 Lambert Mims	1986 Lewis Marler	2001–2002 Mike McLemore	2017–2018 John Thweatt
1957–1958 Harold W. Seever	1972–1973 Walter G. Nunn	1987–1988 Steve Tondera	2003–2004 Joe Godfrey	2019–2021* Tim Cox
1959–1960 B. Locke Davis	1974–1975 Dotson M. Nelson	1989–1990 Charles T. Carter	2005–2006 Henry Cox	2022–2023 Buddy Champion
1961–1962 Harold M. Reeves	1976–1977 Dan Ireland	1991–1992 Rick Lance	2007–2008 Roger Willmore	*No meeting in 2020 due to pandemic
1963–1964 Leon Macon	1978–1979 Harper Shannon	1993–1994 Dewey Corder	2009–2010 Jimmy Jackson	<i>EDITOR’S NOTE — The annuals for the Alabama Baptist State Convention are missing for the years 1825, 1828 and 1831.</i>
1965–1966 J.R. White	1980–1981 Drew “Jerry” Gunnells	1995–1996 Fred G. Lackey	2011–2012 Mike Shaw	
1967–1968 Herman Cobb	1982–1983 Harrell Cushing	1997–1998 Leon Ballard	2013–2014 John Killian	
1969–1970 John Bob Riddle	1984–1985 Wallace Henley	1999–2000 Buddy Gray	2015–2016 Travis Coleman	<i>Source: Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions</i>

200 years and older

**Celebrating the
longevity of churches
and associations
across Alabama**

in alphabetical order _____

Aliceville First Baptist Church

Athens First Baptist Church

Bassett Creek Baptist Church, Grove Hill

Belleville Baptist Church, Evergreen

Bethel Baptist Association

Bethel Baptist Church, Brent

Bethlehem Baptist Association

Brooklyn Baptist Church, Brooklyn

Cahaba Baptist Assoc. (now part of West Central)

Cahaba Valley Baptist Church, Brierfield

Canaan Baptist Church, Bessemer

Catawba Springs Baptist Church, Brewton

Chestnut Creek Baptist Church, Verbena

Ebenezer Baptist Church, Stanton

Enon Baptist Church, Centreville

Enon Baptist Church, Danville

Fairmount Baptist Church, Red Level

First Baptist Church Springville

First Baptist Church Trussville

Friendship Baptist Church, Danville

Friendship Baptist Church, Thomasville

Hopewell Baptist Church, Marion

Huntsville First Baptist Church

Hurricane Baptist Church, Gilbertown

Jefferson Baptist Church, Demopolis



Submitted photo

Shiloh Baptist Church, Sardis, in Selma Baptist Association,
celebrated 200 years of ministry May 20, 2018.

Linden Baptist Church

Little River Baptist Church, Uriah

Mount Hebron Baptist Church, Leeds

Mount Tabor Baptist Church, Blountsville

Mulberry Baptist Church, Maplesville

Muscle Shoals Baptist Association

New Salem Baptist Church, Somerville

Nicholsville Baptist Church, Thomasville

Oak Hill Baptist Church, Heflin

Ocmulgee Baptist Church, Selma

Old Salem Baptist Church, Frisco City

Old Town Creek Baptist Church, Moulton

Olive Branch Baptist Church, Evergreen

Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Millport

Rehobeth Baptist Church, Lawley

Rock Creek Baptist Church, Bessemer

Round Island Baptist Church, Athens

Shiloh Baptist Church, Sardis

Shiloh Baptist Church, Somerville

Siloam Baptist Church, Marion

Sister Springs Baptist Church, Tyler

Spring Bank Baptist Church, Chatom

Tuscaloosa First Baptist Church

Tuscumbia First Baptist Church

Ulcanush Baptist Church, Coffeerville

Valley Community Church, Coker

Wetumpka First Baptist Church

Williamsburg Baptist Church, Adamsville



Photo courtesy of Lonette Berg

Ebenezer Baptist Church, Stanton, in Chilton Baptist Association, celebrated its bicentennial anniversary July 28, 2019.



Photo courtesy of Cleveland Brown

More than 175 people gathered at Belleville Baptist Church, Repton, in Conecuh Baptist Association, on Oct. 28, 2018, to celebrate the church's bicentennial anniversary.



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash/The Alabama Baptist

On Feb. 13, 2022, historic Siloam Baptist Church, Marion, in West Central Baptist Association, marked the beginning of the celebration of 200 years of faithfulness. It was members of Siloam who saw the need for a unifying communication tool for Alabama Baptists in 1843 and started The Alabama Baptist newspaper.

Life at convention



Photo by Grace Thornton/The Alabama Baptist



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist



Photo by Dianna Cagle/The Alabama Baptist



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist



Photo by Dianna Cagle/The Alabama Baptist



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash/The Alabama Baptist



Photo by Dianna Cagle/The Alabama Baptist



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist

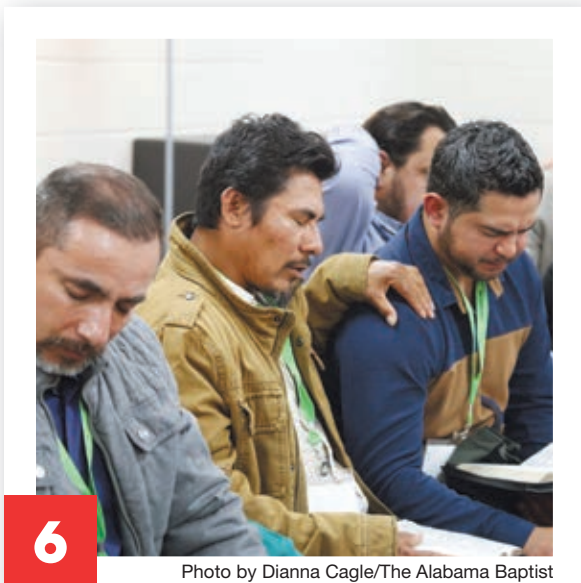


Photo by Dianna Cagle/The Alabama Baptist



Photo by Dianna Cagle/The Alabama Baptist

1: D'Linell Finley Sr., pastor of Southlawn Baptist and adjunct professor at Alabama State University, speaks at the National African American Fellowship dinner at FBC Montgomery on Nov. 13. 2: Hispanic pastors and their families gather for a banquet Nov. 13 at Vaughn Forest Baptist Church in Montgomery. 3: Samford University hosts a dinner Nov. 14 at FBC Montgomery. 4: The Alabama Baptist Conference of Associational Leaders meets for breakfast Nov. 13. 5: Messengers to the state convention annual meeting worship during the opening session Nov. 14. 6: Alabama Baptist church planters pray for one another during a breakout session of the church planter dinner hosted by the State Board of Missions. 7: Alabama Singing Men and Alabama Singing Women (shown here) provide special music during the Tuesday morning session. 8: Joe McKeever sketches people at The Alabama Baptist booth in the exhibit hall. 9: Sisters Regina Washburn (left) and Frances Smith from Greensboro Baptist Church were excited to attend the annual meeting because Greensboro is the city where the state convention was founded in 1823. 10: Unite, a gathering for Alabama Baptist collegiate leaders, meets Nov. 13 at Auburn University at Montgomery's BCM. 11: Pastor Derek Allen shows his children, Sawyer, 10, and Meredith, 12, how to cast their ballots. All three were messengers from FBC Tillman's Corner in Mobile this year.

More detailed reports on several of the related meetings will be featured in a future issue.

PASTORS CONFERENCE

God's grace

By Grace Thornton and Carrie McWhorter
The Alabama Baptist



Litton called those in attendance to prayer at the end of his sermon, encouraging his fellow pastors to "lay it all" at the feet of Jesus.

Photo by Travis Frontz/The Alabama Baptist

Sustained: Pastors Conference spotlights Christ's power over trouble

Alabama Baptists gathered for the 2023 Pastors Conference on Monday, Nov. 13 at Taylor Road Baptist Church in Montgomery.

Daniel Atkins said conference leadership wanted it to be a "full day of Christ-centered preaching, prayer and worship."

He also prayed those attending "would be reminded of God's sustaining grace, power, faithfulness and peace, and find rest in the gospel."

With a focus on the theme "Sus-



WILSON

tained," Jared Wilson spoke in the opening session on the sustaining grace of God.

Wilson is an author and director of the Pastoral Training Center at Liberty Baptist Church in Missouri. He also serves as assistant professor of pastoral ministry at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Sharing from 2 Corinthians 4:16-18, Wilson challenged pastors to cling to God's grace in the midst of tough times. God's grace sustains us in life, suffering and death, he said. "His grace is the one steady, unchanging current you can rely on."

Speaking in the second session, Ed Litton, pastor of Redemption Church in Saraland and former

Southern Baptist Convention president, focused on the sustaining faithfulness of God. Litton said the work of God is "never an easy life."

Speaking on Psalm 46, Litton invited those gathered to pray through "anxious hearts and minds ... that God will sustain you in His faithfulness."

In the third session, Matt Mason, pastor of The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, spoke on Psalm 2.

"You work at the most dangerous intersection on the planet — where the truth of what God has revealed collides with what fallen man worships. Psalm 2 says

to you, brothers, 'Do you feel the resistance? Then you're in the right place.'"

Speaking on the peace of God, H.B. Charles closed out the day by sharing how Philippians 4:6-7 instructs followers of Christ to pray about everything.

"Take everything off of your worry list tonight and put it all on your prayer list," said Charles, pastor at Shiloh Metropolitan Baptist Church

of Jacksonville, Florida. "Every time you are tempted to worry, stop and take that matter to God in prayer. ... You really can pray your worries away."

Prayer and worry are as opposed to one another as water and fire are, he noted. "The way to be anxious about nothing is to be prayerful in everything."

Nothing is too large for God, he said.

"No matter how overwhelming it may seem to you, that thing that you're worried about that you left back home, there is nothing too big for God to handle ... and there's nothing too small for God to care about."

Prayer is a privilege, but it takes practice and discipline, he said. "Prayer begins with a heart that seeks to spend time with God."

"Do not let the pressures and the busyness and the activities of ministry squeeze out your personal time of communion with the living God."

Sponsors for this year's conference were Wycliffe Bible Translators, Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, GuideStone Financial Resources, University of Mobile and TAB Media Group/The Alabama Baptist.

The 2024 Pastors Conference will be Nov. 11 at Eastern Shore Baptist Church in Daphne. Learn more at albaptistpc.com.



ATKINS



MASON



CHARLES

To view a gallery of photos, visit tabonline.org/PC-2023.



Photo by Travis Frontz/The Alabama Baptist

What is revival?

A panel discussion Nov. 13 explored the concept of revival. Daniel Atkins (left), 2023 Pastors Conference president, said the idea for the panel was born as "we began to see a move of God among our college campuses in America and in a lot of our churches" earlier this year.

Panelists were (l to r): Bobby Gatlin, campus pastor at Samford University; Allen Atkins, pastor at The Fellowship Church in Albertville; Kevin Blackwell, executive director of the Ministry Training Institute at Samford; and Rob Jackson, director of the office of church health at the State Board of Missions.

Look for articles on the sermons in a future issue.

For God's glory

By Grace Thornton | The Alabama Baptist

Herb Thomas honored with Fred Wolfe Lifetime Pastoral Ministry Award

Jeremy Burrage said he remembers his first thoughts when he heard that Herb Thomas was going to be preaching verse by verse through the minor prophets at Circlewood Baptist Church in Tuscaloosa.

"I remember thinking, 'He's trying to kill this church, why's he preaching verse by verse through the minor prophets?' But he saw more people come to faith in Christ in that season than any other season," said Burrage, who at the time was "a 24-year-old student minister that thought he knew more about Church than the guy that had been doing it longer than I had been alive."

"I just saw how He was faithful to preach the gospel from every single page of the Scriptures, faithful to point people to Christ in everything."

A legacy

Burrage, who now serves as lead pastor of Capstone Church in Tuscaloosa, said Thomas has supported him, mentored him and set an example for him and so many others over the nearly 45 years as he's served as Circlewood's pastor.

Because of that legacy, Thomas was presented with the third annual Fred Wolfe Lifetime Pastoral Ministry Award on Nov. 13 during the evening session of the Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference.

The award is named in honor of Wolfe, a longtime Alabama Baptist pastor and SBC leader who died in 2021. It is given annually to a pastor who has invested through mentoring, discipling and encouraging other men of God.

Third annual award

Last year, the award was given to Charles T. Carter, pastor emeritus of Shades Mountain Baptist Church in Birmingham, and in 2021 to beloved Alabama Baptist evangelist Junior Hill.

Rob Cain, Circlewood's associate pastor, said Thomas took a chance on him when he was a 21-year-old student leader and offered him a job. He shared his thoughts on Thomas' ministry through a video presentation at the conference along with Burrage and others.

"We're now beginning our 20th year together in two different stints, and I'm so appreciative to him for giving me that opportunity," said Cain, noting that he's seen Thomas live a life full of character and love for people.

Winton Patterson, who has served as music minister at Circlewood the



Photo by Travis Frontz/The Alabama Baptist

Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference president Daniel Atkins (right) presents Herb Thomas (center), longtime pastor of Circlewood Baptist in Tuscaloosa, with the lifetime pastoral ministry award Nov. 13 during the evening session of the conference.

entire time Thomas has been there, shared that he remembers a time when revival "just broke out" and 18 were saved. He said Thomas has always used every opportunity, leading people to Christ at many funerals over the years.

Steve Gaines, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Cordova, Tennessee, said he was grateful for Thomas' "legacy of discipleship, your commitment to the gospel and to pastoring and shepherding your church."

Allen Atkins, pastor of The Fellowship in Albertville, said Thomas' "faithful ministry" has spanned 58 years total. Before serving at Circlewood, Thomas was pastor of First Baptist Church Sayre and Lookout Valley Baptist Church in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

"Bro. Herb, you have been and you are to hundreds of people an encourager, a friend, a counselor, a prayer partner, a mentor and a spiritual father," Atkins said, noting that Thomas was his pastor when he was

a college student. "One of the many things I learned from him that he modeled ... in our 40-plus years of friendship, I don't think there was a single time that I would go by and see him at Circlewood that we didn't pray."

He said Thomas would pray on his knees, pouring his heart out to God, and that made an impression on Atkins. "Your love for God, your love for others, your passion to reach the lost for Christ has never waned over the years," Atkins

said. "Your joyful, positive spirit is infectious to everyone who's been around you."

Thomas said he praised the Lord for "all He is doing."

"He's been so good to us, to our family and to all of our church people we've been with," he said. "What counts more than anything is that God in His mercy called and saved and is using me, and I praise Him right now in my life ... to God be the glory for all He has done."

Herb Thomas has served nearly 45 years as pastor of Circlewood Baptist in Tuscaloosa. During that time, he has supported, mentored and set an example for others.



Photo by Travis Frontz/The Alabama Baptist

To view a gallery of photos, visit tabonline.org/Herb-Thomas.

'Unfinished' work to do

By Carrie Brown McWhorter | The Alabama Baptist

Messengers approve 2024 CP budget and offering goals, act on other business

Messengers to the 2023 Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting adopted the 2024 Cooperative Program budget and heard a variety of reports during the Nov. 14 afternoon session.

Mel Johnson, chair of the board of trustees for the State Board of Missions, presented the budget, which mirrors the previous year's budget of \$37 million. Alabama Baptists

will continue a 50–50 allocation, with 50% of Cooperative Program gifts allocated to Southern Baptist Convention Great Commission ministries and 50% focused on state convention-related Great Commission missions and ministries.

Special offering goals

Messengers also approved the following 2024 special offering goals:

- ▶ Lottie Moon Christmas Offering: \$12 million.
- ▶ Annie Armstrong Easter Offering: \$6 million.

▶ Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries: \$3 million.

▶ Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering: \$1.2 million.

▶ World Hunger Offering: \$800,000.

In other financial updates, Rick Lance, SBOM executive director, said Alabama Baptists have now given more than \$1.5 billion, \$1,566,947,377.50 to be exact, through the Cooperative Program since its inception in May 1925.

Lance noted that Alabama Baptists will continue to give Mission:Dignity recipients in Alabama two extra checks in 2024.

Mission:Dignity honors retirement-age Southern Baptist ministers, workers and widows who are struggling to meet basic needs of housing, food and medications.

Lance said the extra funds, known as 13th and 14th checks, are funded by interest income and amount to approximately \$110,000.

Lance also noted the convention's support for the Psalm 139 Project, a ministry of the SBC Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission that helps provide ultrasound machines for pregnancy resource centers and training for employees and volunteers who will use them to help women in crisis.

During the SBOM report, ERLC president Brent Leatherwood presented Lance the Partner for Life award and thanked Alabama Baptists for their support.

Personal stories

Lance had four individuals share about Great Commission ministries and their "unfinished work" as part of his executive director's report.

▶ Steve Dunn, associational missionary for Bethlehem and Pine Barren associations, spoke about church revitalization and church health. He recommended the resources available at churchhealthal.org and empower.churchhealthal.org to all churches seeking to grow.

To view a gallery of photos, visit tabonline.org/2023-ABSC-SBOM-Report.



Photo by Dianna Cagle/The Alabama Baptist

Messengers to the 2023 Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting adopt the 2024 Cooperative Program budget and hear a variety of reports during the Nov. 14 afternoon session.

“Our unfinished business is to take the gospel to the ends of the earth.”

Jae McKee

director of missions and church planting, Alaska Baptist Resource Network

► Harold F. Tisdale, church planter and pastor of Free Spirit Church in Florence, spoke about ministering to youth in a detention center in Colbert County.

“We give them Jesus, and their lives are changing,” Tisdale said. “They’re coming out [of detention], and our unfinished business is keeping these kids connected to Jesus.”

► Jae McKee, an Alabama native who serves as director of missions and church planting for the Alaska Baptist Resource Network, spoke about Alabama Baptists’ partnership with Alaska, where 97% of residents are unchurched.

“One hundred villages in our state have no gospel opportunity week in and week out,” McKee said. “Our unfinished business is to take the gospel to the ends of the earth, and in Alaska we are the ends of the earth.”

► Matt Daniels, BCM campus minister at the University of North Alabama in Florence, spoke about the work happening in collegiate ministries throughout the state.

“God is at work on the college campuses,” Daniels said, as campus ministry leaders seek to see “lost students saved, saved students disciplined and disciplined students sent.”

Awards

Two awards were given during the Nov. 14 afternoon session.

Mark Wakefield, SBOM disaster relief strategist, presented the Tommy Puckett Award for Excellence to disaster relief chaplain Ben Hayes, pastor of First Baptist Church Dadeville. Hayes was recognized for his role in ministering to his community following a shooting

at a birthday party where four young people were killed and several others injured.

“We are grateful that the Lord put you there and thankful for the job you did,” Wakefield said.

Scotty Goldman, director of the SBOM office of global missions, presented the Outstanding Missions Volunteer of the Year Award to Greg

Vick, a member of Hillcrest Baptist Church in Enterprise.

Vick leads the church’s missions committee and has served in a number of local, national and global missions projects. Quoting Vick’s nominator, Aaron Rascoe, Goldman said Vick “exemplifies what it looks like to serve unselfishly.”

In further convention business, the 2022 auditor’s report for SBOM was

approved by messengers, and Mike Jackson, SBOM associate executive director, shared reports from the audit and insurance committees. These committees review the financial statements and insurance policies of the SBOM and cooperating entities.

Disaffiliated church report

Johnson reported that Crosscreek Baptist Church in Pelham has been deemed “no longer in likeminded fellowship and friendly cooperation” with the state convention following the church’s decision to call a woman as senior pastor earlier this year.

Johnson said Shelby Baptist Association had voted likewise following discussions between church and Alabama Baptist leaders.

The church had withdrawn from fellowship with the SBC in 1999 but had remained affiliated with Shelby Association and ABSC.



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist
Mel Johnson, chair of the State Board of Missions, presents the 2024 budget during the SBOM report Tuesday afternoon at FBC Montgomery.



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist
ERLC President Brent Leatherwood (left) presents Rick Lance and Alabama Baptists with the Partner for Life award in thanks of their support.



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist
Mark Wakefield (center), SBOM disaster relief strategist, presents the Tommy Puckett Award for Excellence to DR chaplain Ben Hayes, pastor of First Baptist Church Dadeville. Alongside his wife, Sonya (pictured) and other volunteers, Hayes ministered to Dadeville following a deadly shooting at a birthday party.



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist
Scotty Goldman (right), director of the SBOM office of global missions, presents the Outstanding Missions Volunteer of the Year Award to Greg Vick. Vick is a member of Hillcrest Baptist Church in Enterprise, where he leads the missions committee and has served in a number of local, national and global missions projects.

Melissa Bowen (at podium) served as chair of the resolutions committee and noted in a follow-up interview that all resolutions submitted were reported out.

All in favor

By Carrie Brown McWhorter | The Alabama Baptist



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist

Resolutions address care for vulnerable children, prayer for Israel, recognitions

Messengers to the 2023 Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting adopted six resolutions during the Nov. 14 afternoon session.

All six came through the resolutions committee, and all passed without discussion or amendment.

Two resolutions honored Alabama Baptist leaders who are retiring in the coming year.

Retiring leaders

No. 2 recognized Lonette Berg, executive director of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, who will retire Dec. 31 after more

than 20 years of service to Alabama Baptists.

No. 3 recognized Lonnie Burnett, president of the University of Mobile, who will retire in May 2024 after 45 years in education, 20 of those spent in various roles at UM.

Two resolutions addressed current issues.

No. 5, On Alabama Baptist Churches' Engagement in Foster Care, Adoption and Supportive Ministries, called on Alabama Baptists to support and encourage care for children in difficult places.

No. 6, On Prayer and Support for Israel, called for prayer for the

conflict between Israel and Gaza and for the gospel to go forth in the region.

Two resolutions were related to this year's bicentennial annual meeting.

No. 4, On Commemoration of the Alabama Baptist State Convention Bicentennial, honored the history of Alabama Baptists and called on all believers to continue the "unfinished task of sharing the gospel of Jesus with those who do not know Him."

No. 1, On Appreciation, acknowledged the work of convention officers and all who had a part in orga-

nizing and implementing the annual meeting. It included the River Region associations and First Baptist Church Montgomery for hosting.

Committee members

Those serving on this year's Resolutions Committee were:

Melissa Bowen, chair, First Baptist Church Prattville; Ben Bowden, First Baptist Church Enterprise; Kaye Farrow, First Baptist Church Columbiana; Brittney Gardner, First Baptist Church Montgomery; Chris Jones, Meadow Brook Baptist Church, Birmingham; Roosevelt Morris Sr., Sixth Avenue Baptist Church, Birmingham; and Jesse Reeder, Moulton Baptist Church.

To view a gallery of photos, visit tabonline.org/2023-Tuesday-Resolutions.

Resolution of Recognition of the Bicentennial Celebration of the Alabama Baptist Convention by Samford University

WHEREAS the Alabama Baptist State Convention was formed at the Salem Baptist Church in October of 1823 by fifteen visionary Baptists from seven missionary societies.

WHEREAS since its founding the Alabama Baptist State Convention has been used by God to proclaim the gospel, plant churches, establish colleges, minister to the hurting and resource local congregations.

WHEREAS Samford University was estab-

lished as Howard College by Alabama Baptists and affirmed by the messengers of the 1841 state convention held in Talladega.

WHEREAS since its founding, the university has enjoyed a meaningful and historic relationship with the Alabama Baptist State Convention and its member churches, educating many of the ministers that serve the convention both past and present.

Therefore, be it RESOLVED that the Samford

University Board of Trustees express our congratulations to the Alabama Baptist State Convention on the occasion of the bicentennial meeting, November 14–15, 2023, at the First Baptist Church of Montgomery.

Be it further RESOLVED that Samford University honors and prays for the ongoing work of the Alabama Baptist Convention through its leadership, missionaries, ministries and member churches as they share the love of Jesus Christ to our state and beyond.

To read the full text of all six ABSC resolutions, visit tabonline.org/2023-resolutions.

'Do not let up'

By Carrie Brown McWhorter | The Alabama Baptist

Sexual Abuse Advisory Task Force introduces new website, resources

The Sexual Abuse Advisory Task Force of the Alabama Baptist State Convention gave its final report Nov. 14, announcing a new website with resources churches can utilize to help prevent abuse within their congregations.

"This assignment was a monumental task, perhaps bigger than any of us realized when we accepted the invitation," said task force chair Craig Carlisle, director of missions for Etowah Baptist Association. "We are grateful for all of your prayers, encouragement and acceptance of all that we have shared with you."

'Our work was needed'

Carlisle said he has received numerous calls over the past two years from churches seeking advice on how to best address abuse allegations and help victims and survivors. Three calls came within the weeks leading up to the convention meeting, he said.

"All of the calls we have received have served as confirmation that

our work was needed and not in vain," Carlisle said.

Reporting abuse allegations to civil authorities is mandated in Alabama when the survivor is a minor or vulnerable adult, Carlisle noted, and churches must be on the front lines of helping victims and preventing abusers from acting again.

Task force members

Serving with Carlisle on the task force were pastors Daniel Atkins, D'Linell Finley Sr., Blake Kersey and Daven Watkins; attorney Melissa Bowen; retired marriage and family therapist Kaye Farrow; and layperson Abigail Jackson.

Carlisle focused on two tools produced by the task force:

► The Local Sexual Abuse Prevention Symposium, a meeting that can be convened in any county utilizing local leaders such as law enforcement, counselors, district attorneys, etc., to talk about specific action steps to take at the local level when suspicions of sexual abuse are reported. Several associations have already hosted symposiums, Carlisle said.



Screenshot

The Sexual Abuse Advisory Task Force of the Alabama Baptist State Convention announced a new website with resources churches can use to help prevent abuse within their congregations.



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist

► A new website, safe.alsbom.org, which includes a number of prevention steps churches can take during the hiring process for new employees or while training new volunteers, along with information and action plans to help churches respond if and when allegations of abuse occur.

Though the task force's official work is complete, Carlisle urged Alabama Baptists, "Please do not let up. The goal of the church's response to abuse is to care for the survivors and ultimately to integrate them into the church body

for continued healing and growth."

Messengers to the 2021 state convention annual meeting approved the establishment of the Alabama Baptist Sexual Abuse Task Force.

The eight members of the task force were appointed by Buddy Champion, convention president at the time.

The task force delivered its first report to messengers during the 2022 state convention annual meeting following a year of

research and interviews with Cooperative Program-funded entities and auxiliaries in Alabama.

In January 2023, Champion announced his appointment of the same group to a new Sexual Abuse Advisory Task Force, whose purpose was to put together resources to educate churches in awareness and prevention of sexual abuse and caring for sexual abuse survivors.

To visit the new Sexual Abuse Advisory Task Force website, go to safe.alsbom.org.

"This assignment was a monumental task, perhaps bigger than any of us realized when we accepted the invitation," said task force chair Craig Carlisle, director of missions for Etowah Baptist Association, in his report to messengers.

Boards and commissions

Trustees, board members elected to serve State Board, other entities

Report of Committee on Boards and Commissions

EDITOR'S NOTE —
Messengers voted to elect or reelect the following during the 2023 Alabama Baptist State Convention. An asterisk (*) before the name indicates a layperson. The executive committee and State Board of Missions members are grouped by associations. Board members of convention entities are designated by church membership.

Executive Committee

Chair 2023–2024: Craig Carlisle (state convention president)

Derek Staples, Jeff Redmond, John Thweatt

State Board of Missions

Terms to Expire 2026:
James Jackson, Autauga; Josh Raybon, Baldwin; Wayne Smith, Bigbee; Jim Cooley and Bill McCall, Birmingham Metro; *Carlton Amason, Carey; James Watkins, Chilton; Eddie Nation, Cherokee; Ty Parten, Clarke; *Allison Robley, Coffee; Chad Hess, Colbert-Lauderdale; William P. Brent, Dale; *Debra Early, DeKalb; *Jeanie Balding, Franklin; Stacy Stafford, Geneva; Randall Terry, Hale; Cecil Sanders, Judson; James Maples, Lookout Mountain; Jeremy Sorrells, Marion; Jonathan Lancaster, Marshall; Charles Brown, Mobile; Matt Haines, Morgan; Zac Reno and Steve Loggins, North Jefferson; David Hairston, Sand Mountain;

*Rebekah Parr, Shelby; Allen Singley, Southeast Alabama; Ryan Whitley, St. Clair; *Colleen Latham, Sulphur Springs; Ben Hayes, Tallapoosa; Donnie Payne, Tuscaloosa; David Byrd, Walker; Jerry Roberson, Washington

— Convention entities —

The Alabama Baptist

Terms to Expire 2027:
*Randy Pittman, Shades Mountain, Birmingham; *Teresa Noell, Golden

Springs, Anniston; *Barbara Davis, Spring Hill, Mobile; Chris Roberts, North River, Tuscaloosa

Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers

Terms to Expire 2026:
*Regina Washburn, Greensboro

Terms to Expire 2027:
Dwight Crigger, FBC Andalusia; Jim Griffin, Tallasahatchie FBC, Alpine; Jim Tate, Memphis, Dothan; Ed Cleveland, FBC Montgomery; *Lloyd “Skip” Teaster, FBC Opelika

Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries

Terms to Expire 2027:
*Kim DeShazo, FBC Trussville

University of Mobile

Terms to Expire 2027:
Kenny Hoomes, FBC Montgomery; James W. Pruett, Gilliam Springs, Arab; *Tommy Robinson, FBC Gulf Shores; *Kathy Litton, Redemption, Sara-

LEEDS STAINED GLASS & CHURCH FURNITURE
SINCE 1995

Toll-free: 888.699.9679
AL local: 205.699.9679
Call for **FREE** on-site consultation
Ask for Terry Barnes, Owner
information@LeedsStainedGlass.com
Visit www.LeadsStainedGlass.com
for an online gallery of windows and church furniture!



DESIGN | FABRICATION | INSTALLATION | SERVICE

Reliable SIGN SERVICES
Since 1994

CHURCH SIGNS

Whether your church needs a completely new sign or would like to update your existing sign, Reliable Signs can help! We handle everything from the design to manufacturing and installation. We have worked with hundreds of churches all over the state.




www.reliablesigns.com • 1.800.729.6844 • 205.664.0955

land; *Matt Busbee, Spring Hill, Mobile

Board of Aid

Terms to Expire 2027:
Charles Teague, Sardis, Boaz; Randy Johnson, Chappell Hill, Gilbertown; Jeff Stith, FBC Birmingham

The Baptist Foundation of Alabama

Terms to Expire 2027:
Michael Hardin, Dawson, Birmingham; *Katherine Webb, FBC Montgomery; Chuck Ashley, FBC Montgomery; Michael Langston, Hunter Street, Hoover

Alabama Baptist Historical Commission

Terms to Expire 2027:
*Jim Lambert, Mexia; *Jane Hughes, FBC Eufaula; *Anna Speir, FBC Selma; Ken Blackwood, Lebanon, Falkville

Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center

Terms to Expire 2025:
Larry Ferguson, FBC Childersburg
Terms to Expire 2027:
Randy Hagan, Eastaboga; *Scott Bell, FBC Pelham; *John Hubbard, Shades Mountain, Birmingham; *Robert L. Minor, FBC Pell City

Christian Life Commission

Terms to Expire 2025:
Philip Morris, Chulafinnee, Heflin; James Taylor, Camellia, Prattville
Terms to Expire 2026:
Keith Ray, Carrville, Tallassee
Terms to Expire 2027:
*Cathy Cospers, Church at McAdory, McCalla; *Marcille Dutton, Slackland,

Leesburg; Danny Courson, Cropwell, Pell City; Joe Godfrey, Shades Mountain, Birmingham; Dave Burns, Calvary, Prattville

Education Commission

Terms to Expire 2027:
Barry Cospers, Church at McAdory, McCalla; Dale Huff, FBC Montgomery; *Latrell Fussell, FBC Prattville

Report of Committee on Committees

Committee on Boards and Commissions

Chair 2023–2024: Mat Alexander, FBC Gadsden
Terms to Expire 2024:
Renee Chambers, Fairview FBC, Cullman; Kevin Wilburn, FBC Andalusia
Terms to Expire 2025:
Kevin Moore, Mount Zion, Huntsville; *Marcille Dutton, Slackland, Leesburg; Cody Hale, Iron City, Anniston; *Jean King, Lanier, Lanett; Allen Singley, Pilgrim Home, Newton; *Valerie Nelson, Camden; *Karen Phipps, FBC Gulf Shores; Nicholas Gandy, Elkdale, Selma; David Byrd, Northside, Jasper; *Michelle Reeder, Moulton; Tim Cox, Liberty, Chelsea; Daniel Atkins, Taylor Road, Montgomery

Committee on Resolutions

Chair 2023–2024: Teman Knight, Heritage, Montgomery
Terms to Expire 2024:
Teman Knight, Heritage, Montgomery; *Dawn Cox, Liberty, Chelsea; Joe Teal, West Highland, Athens; Ron Madison, Mount Zion, Huntsville; Rich Hutchens, FBC Birmingham; Ben

Stubblefield, Spring Hill, Mobile; Derry Johnson, Integrity, Hueytown

Audit Committee

*Chair 2023–2024: *Rick Gibson, FBC Tuscaloosa*
Terms to Expire 2026:
*Jay Knight, Shades Mountain, Birmingham; Nathan Edwards, FBC Gadsden

Insurance Committee

Chair 2023–2024: W. Robert DuBois, Heritage, Montgomery
Terms to Expire 2026:
*Ken Stephens, FBC Montgomery; Philip Hall, Twelfth Street, Gadsden

Committee on Time, Place and Preacher

Chair 2023–2024: John Nicholson, Siloam, Marion
Terms to Expire 2024:
Will Spivey, FBC Opelika; John Nicholson, Siloam, Marion; Heath Haney, Lindsay Lane, Athens; Ryan Whitley, CrossPoint, Trussville; James Taylor, Camellia, Prattville; Kyle Sullivan, Pleasant Ridge, Hueytown; Justin McAlpin, Westmeade, Decatur

Memorials Committee

Chair 2023–2024: Hugh Richardson, New Temple, Dora
Terms to Expire 2024:
Hugh Richardson, New Temple, Dora; *Joanne Farmer, Coosada; Dave Burns, Calvary, Prattville; *Brenda Carr, FBC Alabaster; Ed Cleveland, FBC Montgomery

Committee on Order of Business

Chair 2023–2024: Rusty Sowell, Providence, Opelika
Terms to Expire 2026:
Ric Camp, Liberty, Chelsea; Frank Bowling, Eastmont, Montgomery

Credentials, Tellers, other items approved

Two committees, the Credentials Committee and the Tellers Committee, were appointed during the state convention's opening session Nov. 14. New members to the Committee on Committees and the 2027 meeting date and location also were approved during the opening day.

State Convention President Buddy Champion announced the Credentials and Tellers committee appointments 30 days prior to the annual meeting in accordance with bylaw requirements, but messengers had to ratify the appointments.

► The **Credentials Committee** helps with problems regarding registration and seating of messengers. Serving were Charles Teague (chair), Sardis, Boaz; Jeff Gardner, Daphne; Morris Johnson, Integrity, Hueytown; Chad Middlebrooks, Mount Zion, Alexander City; Philip

Morris, Chulafinnee, Heflin; George Smith, Pleasant Hill, Eclectic; and Brent Thompson, FBC Heflin.

► **Tellers Committee** members help convention officers tabulate convention votes. Serving were Roby Joplin (chair), Macedonia, Gadsden; Colt Hudson, Bellevue, Gadsden; Ryan Morris, FBC Hokes Bluff; Josh Noojin, College Heights, Glencoe; Ricky Self, Pineview, Harvest; Jeff Smith, Hillwood, Huntsville; and Bob Wilson, FBC Meridianville.

► Elected to serve on the **Committee on Committees** until 2026 were Donnie Payne, Forest Lake, Tuscaloosa, chair in 2026; Mark Bethea, FBC Montgomery; *Karen Watkins, West End, Clanton.

► In other business, messengers voted for the **2027 annual meeting** to take place Nov. 16–17 at Eastmont Baptist Church in Montgomery. (TAB)

732 messengers from
346 Alabama Baptist churches
plus **150** guests for a total of
882 people

at the 2023 state convention
annual meeting in Montgomery.

For more coverage online,
visit tabonline.org/absc-23.

Alabama news

OBITUARIES

► **William Odis Epps**, a longtime Alabama Baptist pastor, died Nov. 7. He was 87. Over his years of ministry, he served as pastor of six churches, including Park Avenue Baptist in Oneonta. He is survived by his wife of 66 years, Gloria; daughter, Pam; son, Kim; four grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren.



EPPS

SULPHUR SPRINGS ASSOCIATION

► **Rodney Puryear** is the new director of missions for **Sulphur Springs Baptist Association**. In October Puryear celebrated his retirement after 25 years as pastor of Woods New Hope Baptist Church, Tenaha, Texas. He began work in ministry positions over 50 years ago in Texas, then served at Wylam Baptist Church, Birmingham; Hunter Street Baptist Church, Hoover; First



PURYEAR

Baptist Church Monroeville and Central Baptist Church, Tarrant. Puryear returned to Texas in 1995. He and his wife, Mary, plan to move to Warrior, and he will begin serving as the DOM January 2024.

WALKER ASSOCIATION

► **Andy Frazier** is the new senior pastor of **First Baptist Church Jasper**. Before taking on the role of transitional pastor at FBC, Frazier was the lead pastor of Grace Baptist Church, Sumiton. He is vice president of Incite Ministries, cohosts Church Leadership Podcast and serves on the lead team for Alabama's Disciple-Making Ministries. Intentionally bivocational, Frazier also owns and operates a small business. Since his call to ministry over 20 years ago, he has been passionate about making disciples. Andy and his wife, Kristie, have three sons.

Kara Kinnaird, a ministry assistant at FBC Jasper, is the new music and publications assistant.



FRAZIER

ALABAMA NEWS ITEMS COMPILED BY KRISTI ENT AND DEBBIE CAMPBELL

Experience the Dazzling Display that has become a Gulf Coast tradition...

Magic Christmas in Lights



bellingerath.org 251.973.2217

TAB CLASSIFIEDS

Place a classified ad below for \$1 per word. For more information call 205-870-4720, ext. 200, or email ads@thealabamabaptist.org. To place an online classified ad for \$9.99/month, visit thealabamabaptist.org/classifieds.

CHURCH POSITIONS

PASTOR
Hepzibah Baptist Church in Talladega, Alabama, is seeking a pastor to fill a full-time position. We are an active, conservative rural church which believes and lives in the Lordship of Jesus Christ and follows God's Word. We are looking for a pastor who will lead and teach prayerfully and compassionately, meeting the spiritual needs of our community and surrounding area. See more about us on Facebook. Send two-page resumé and cover letter to: hepzibahpastorsearch@gmail.com. All resúmes will be held in confidence.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR
Mitts Chapel Baptist Church searching for a bivocational pastor. Please send resumé to: Mitts Chapel Baptist Church, 935 Cold Springs Rd., Deatsville, AL 36022.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR
New Beginnings Baptist Church, a small congregation in Hayden, Alabama, is seeking a bivocational pastor. Send inquiries/resúmes to: sonyahumber@gmail.com.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR
New Life Baptist Church located in Bay Minette, Alabama, is seeking a bivocational pastor who unashamedly preaches the Word of God. Please email resumé/profile to: newlifebaptistbmal@gmail.com or mail to: Pastor Search Committee, 15011 Glasgow Lane, Bay Minette, AL 36507.

WORSHIP LEADER/ MINISTER OF EDUCATION
First Baptist Red Bay, Alabama, seeking full-time worship leader/minister of education. Apply by resumé to: 602 4th St. SE, Red Bay, AL 35582.

MINISTER OF WORSHIP
Fairhaven Baptist Church, Demopolis, Alabama, seeks a called, gifted believer for leading and engaging members in worship services. Interested candidates may forward

resúmes to: FBC, 1504 Cardinal Avenue, Demopolis, AL 36732 (ATTN: Worship Search Committee).

MUSIC MINISTER
Siluria Baptist Church seeks a part-time music director for traditional worship. Job description posted at siluriabaptist.com. Send resúmes to: siluriabaptist@gmail.com or 10696 Highway 119 South, Alabaster, AL 35007.

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRY
Oak Bowery, Ohatchee, Alabama, is in search of a director of children's ministry. Part time. Contact Pastor Sam Fordham: DrSamFordham@gmail.com.

TRAVEL/VACATION

LOG CABIN RENTAL
Lake Guntersville area, beautiful view and fully furnished. Discounts to ministers. Log on to www.paradisevista.net to see pictures. Call for reservations at 205-540-3600.

BUSINESS

FOR SALE NEW & USED STAIR LIFTS
Lift chairs, power wheelchairs, car lifts, scooters and walk-in tubs. We service Alabama. 1-800-682-0658

SIGNS

CHURCH SIGN
Signs are your first impression. What kind of impression is your church sign making? Call us to replace/update yours with either digital or traditional. Statewide since 1994. 1-800-729-6844 or 205-664-0955. www.reliable signs.com

FOR RENT

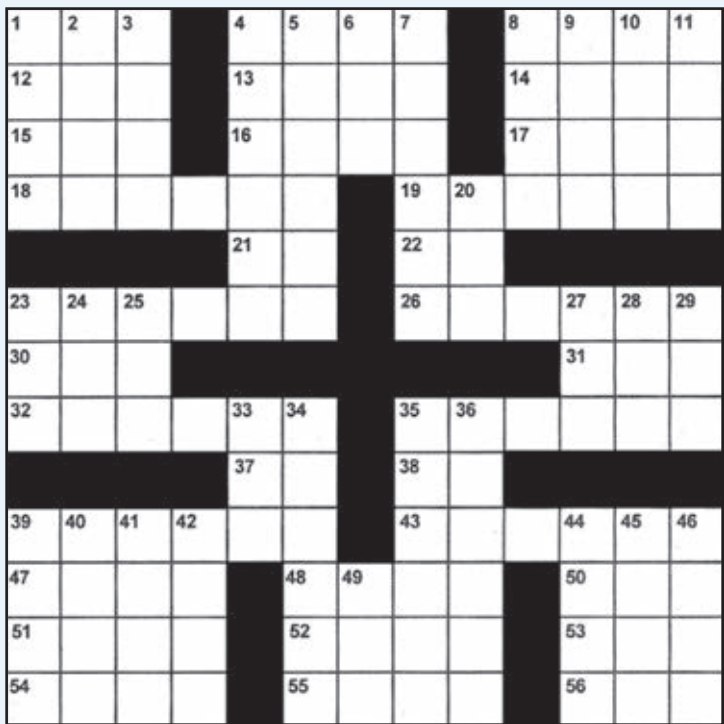
DUPLEX
2501 Hawksbury Lane, Hoover. Duplex for rent. \$2,000 per month. 3 BRs, 2 BAs. Hoover schools. One-year lease. Credit and income verification. Contact Wayne Wheeler: 205-322-0627.

CHRISTIAN crossword

WORD search

ACROSS

- 1. Brought him to an _____. (Luke 10:34)
- 4. The house was filled with the ____ of the ointment. (John 12:3, American spelling)
- 8. Clip.
- 12. Deliver thyself as a _____ from the hunter. (Prov. 6:5)
- 13. This is now _____ of my bones. (Gen. 2:23)
- 14. Greek letter.
- 15. Of birds. (prefix)
- 16. Very. (French)
- 17. Went by plane.
- 18. Lunatic.
- 19. Again he ____ the same sacrifices. (Heb. 10:11, NIV)
- 21. Iowa. (abbr.)
- 22. Rhode Island. (abbr.)
- 23. We remember the leeks, and the _____. (Num. 11:5)
- 26. Leah was _____ eyed. (Gen. 29:17)
- 30. Teachers organization.
- 31. And Bezaleel the son of _____. (Ex. 38:22)
- 32. God shall send them _____ delusion. (2 Thess. 2:11)
- 35. And John bare _____, saying, I saw the Spirit. (John 1:32)
- 37. Each. (abbr.)
- 38. And she [Shuah] conceived, and bore a son; and he called his name _____. (Gen. 38:3)
- 39. I will not be an _____. (Isa. 3:7)
- 43. The disciples asked him again of the same _____. (Mark 10:10)
- 47. Naum, which was the son of _____. (Luke 3:25)
- 48. God. (Spanish)
- 50. Then enquired he of them the hour he began to _____nd. (John 4:52)
- 51. The blind receive



By Janet W. Adkins Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.

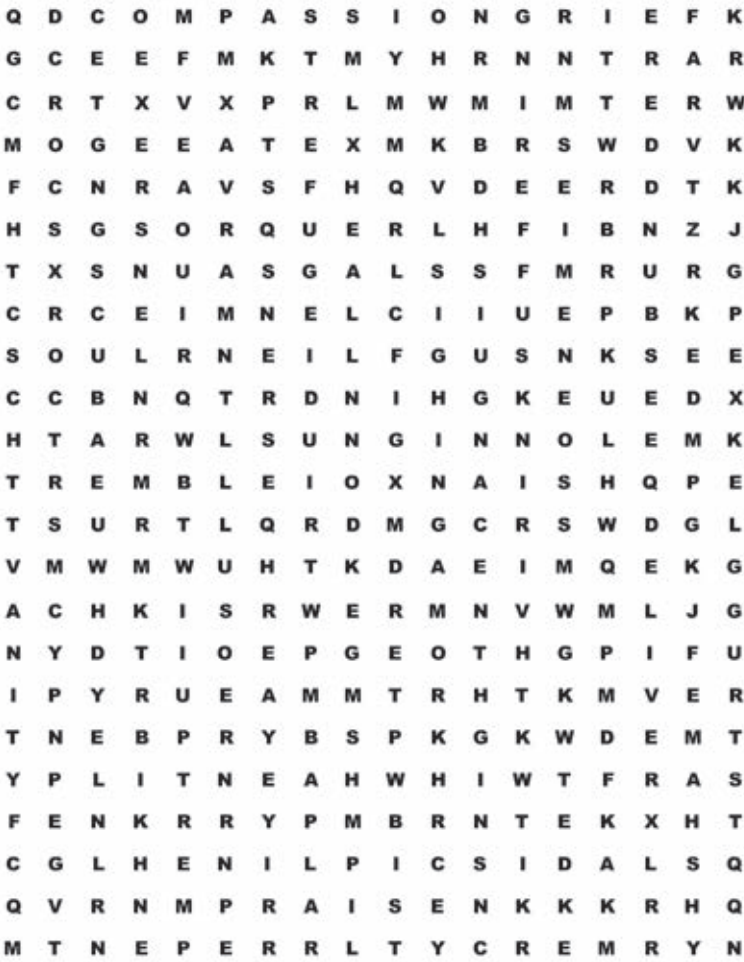
- 24. Let his _____ that he hath hid catch himself. (Ps. 35:8)
- 25. Adjective suffix.
- 27. A pair.
- 28. If any of you do _____ from the truth. (James 5:19)
- 29. I will _____ evil beasts out of the land. (Lev. 26:6)
- 33. Born.
- 34. The Lord God planted a _____ eastward in Eden. (Gen. 2:8)
- 35. Distant.
- 36. Deletes.
- 39. My _____ cometh from the Lord. (Ps. 121:2)
- 40. Jacob's twin.
- 41. Woman's name.
- 42. Or if he finds lost property and _____ about it. (Lev. 6:3 NIV)
- 44. But the tongue can no man _____. (James 3:8)
- 45. Man's name.
- 46. Because thou didst _____ on the Lord. (2 Chron. 16:8)
- 49. For I am _____ strait betwixt two. (Phil. 1:23; 2 words)

DOWN

- 1. A duke of Edom. (Gen. 36:43)
- 2. Suddenly bright star.
- 3. No. (German)
- 4. For whoso findeth me ... shall _____ favour of the Lord. (Prov. 8:35)
- 5. Also called Tabitha. (Acts 9:36)
- 6. First number.
- 7. My strong habitation whereunto I may continually _____. (Ps. 71:3)
- 8. Spat.
- 9. Part in a play.
- 10. To do again and again: _____ate.
- 11. They shall give unto the priest the shoulder ... and the _____(pl.). (Deut. 18:3)
- 20. Response of disgust. (archaic)
- 23. Belonging to a son of Peleth. (Num. 16:1)

All Bible verses are KJV unless otherwise specified.

- ANGUISH
- ASTONISHED
- COMPASSION
- CONSUMED
- DELIVER
- DEPART
- DISCIPLINE
- DISTRESS
- ENEMIES
- GRACIOUS
- GRIEF
- GROANING
- HEAL
- INIQUITY
- MERCY
- MOURNING
- NIGHT
- PERISH
- PRAISE
- REBUKE
- REFUGE
- REMEMBER
- REPENT
- SAVE
- SHAME
- SIGHING
- SLEEP
- SOUL
- STRUGGLE
- SUFFERING
- TEARS
- TREMBLE
- TROUBLE
- TRUST
- VANITY
- VEXED
- WEAK
- WEARY
- WEeping
- WRATH



"The Lord has heard my plea for help; the Lord accepts my prayer. All my enemies will be ashamed and shake with terror; they will turn back and suddenly be disgraced."

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For November 26

Explore the Bible

By Robert Olsen, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



ALIVE Mark 16:1–14

Sought (1–4)

Mark 16 begins with Mary Magdalene, Salome and Mary the mother of James going to Jesus' tomb to anoint His body. One of the main problems the women were going to face was removing the stone from the tomb. Stones for this purpose could weigh up to 4,000 pounds and often would have to be moved up an incline. However, when they arrived at the tomb, the stone was already rolled away.

These women were willing to do what they needed to do to show their love for the Lord, even if it meant overcoming some physical deterrent. They did not worry about this, though, because they were being obedient. How often do we look at circumstances and decide that they are too great for us and for God to overcome? As Christians, our job is to honor God and be obedient to Him, no matter the cost.

Risen (5–8)

Upon entering the tomb, the women saw an angel sitting there, and of course they were alarmed. Instead of finding the body of their Lord, they found an empty tomb. He had risen from the dead! Death could not hold down the perfect Son of God. The angel instructed the women to go tell the disciples, a task that they originally neglected out of fear.

The resurrection demands a response from every person who hears the gospel. In fact, the gospel is no gospel at all without the resurrection. (See 1 Cor. 15:17–19.) This is why we need to defend the resurrection as historical fact. Jesus actually physically rose from the dead and defeated death.

When it comes to the resurrection, there are two possibilities. First, some claim that Jesus' disciples stole

the body so they could claim Jesus had risen from the dead.

The problem with this view is that there is no evidence of this, and the disciples had nothing to gain from it. What good would it be to follow a dead "savior" whose form of discipleship leads to hardship and poverty? Why would the disciples invent this story?

The second idea is that Jesus actually rose from the dead. This not only is supported by every biblical text but also makes the most sense. The fact that the disciples preached this message throughout the known world is beyond historical dispute. Furthermore, the disciples of Jesus met every sort of hardship — imprisonment, physical abuse, economic hardship and in many cases, death.

This again is beyond historical dispute. Why would these Christians preach a lie only to get beaten for their troubles when all they had to do was deny the resurrection and live normal lives again? It makes no sense on any level. When it comes to the veracity of the resurrection, we can be confident that we have evidence on our side.

Seen (9–14)

After the episode at the tomb, Jesus appeared to many others over time. Some did not believe at first and needed to see the risen Jesus. Their skepticism is something that we see even today when we present the gospel.

However, just because we do not see conversions immediately does not mean we lose hope. God is the one who changes hearts; it is our job to be obedient in telling others the good news about Jesus and to pray for them. Even the hearts of the most ardent skeptics can be softened by the Holy Spirit.

"Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; He is not here. See the place where they laid Him."

Mark 16:6

Bible Studies for Life

By Jeffery M. Leonard, Ph.D.

Professor of Biblical & Religious Studies, Samford University



GOD DESERVES OUR THANKS Psalm 65:1–13

As I looked around the meeting hall, a sight caught my eye that stopped me in my tracks. It was the morning of my younger son's rehearsal dinner, and I had been running hither and yon to make sure this item here was done and that task there was taken care of. And then I looked up and saw that every member of my family was doing exactly the same thing. I was struck in that moment by how blessed I was to have such an incredible family.

Truthfully, my family — my mom's side of the family, at least — is enormous. My maternal grandfather's branch of the family has gathered for a Christmas party for more than 75 years now, with more than 80 people at times. My maternal grandmother's side of the family is nearly as large. For them, Thanksgiving has been the traditional get-together for more than a half-century.

One particular part of our Thanksgiving tradition is both torture and blessing all rolled into one. Before we light upon the delicacies in the kitchen, my Uncle Milton makes sure that we all gather together to share a word about what we are thankful for.

Waiting to eat is worth enduring for the blessing of getting to hear what everyone has to say. Shared joys and shared tears in those moments of thankfulness have drawn our family closer together than turkey and dressing alone ever could. I wouldn't trade it for anything.

We can be thankful for God's forgiveness. (1–4)

Psalm 65 is a Psalm consumed with thankfulness. As is often the case in Scripture, it is a thankfulness that is born from a moment of forgiveness. The psalmist recalls, "When we were overwhelmed by sins, you forgave our transgressions," and he expresses confidence that this same forgiveness is avail-

able to all who ask for it.

There is an interesting corporate dynamic at work in this Psalm's expression of thankfulness. Note that the psalmist speaks of a moment when "we were overwhelmed" and God forgave "our transgressions."

Certainly, we should be thankful as individuals, but there is also a sense in which our collective expression of thanks is important. Moments like celebrating Thanksgiving together can be especially powerful as they draw us all into a spirit of thankfulness even when we are not feeling especially thankful.

We can be thankful for God's greatness and power. (5–8)

An oft-repeated expression at my family's Thanksgiving gathering is something along the lines of, "I don't know how other people make it without a family of faith like ours." At the heart of this statement is a shared belief that we serve a powerful God who walks beside us through even the most difficult of life's experiences. Without the love and care of the God who "formed the mountains"

and "stilled the roaring of the seas," where would we be?

We can be thankful for God's provision. (9–13)

In a country as wealthy as ours, it is easy to forget to be thankful for the everyday blessings of God's provision. We rarely have to say the words, "Give us this day our daily bread," with the same sort of day-to-day dependence that Jesus' original audience would have experienced.

The psalmist reminds us that all blessings ultimately flow from God. Even the flocks that cover the meadows and the grain that mantles the valleys are the work of God's hands. Creation sings out words of praise to its Creator and calls on us to join in its chorus.

***"Blessed is the
one you choose
and bring near,
to dwell in your
courts!"***

Psalm 65:4

Friends of TAB

By Jennifer Davis Rash | The Alabama Baptist

Third annual dinner celebrates strength of, vision for the 180-year-old media outlet

More than 30 dedicated supporters from various roles across the state gathered Nov. 13 to celebrate how the Lord continues to use The Alabama Baptist newspaper and broader work of TAB Media Group.

Guests came to the third annual Friends of The Alabama Baptist dinner event from as far north as Huntsville and as far south as Gulf Shores.

Held this year at Taylor Road Baptist Church in Montgomery, the meal and program took place during the dinner break of the Alabama Baptist Pastors Conference.

Gary Fenton, outgoing chair of the board for The Alabama Baptist, shared his belief in the strong future for the 180-year-old media outlet and challenged sup-

porters to continue helping spread the word about what TAB Media Group has to offer.

Fenton, who remains a member of the board for another year, also honored the two members of the board who rotated off:

► Don McMillan, a member of Siloam Baptist Church in Marion, serves his community as circuit judge for the Fourth Judicial Circuit (Bibb, Dallas, Perry, Hale and Wilcox counties).

► Arthur Williams, a member of Dawson Memorial Baptist Church in Homewood, served as chair of the board during the transition from Bob Terry to Jennifer Davis Rash as TAB's president

and editor-in-chief in 2018–2019 and most recently chaired the finance subcommittee.



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist

Gary Fenton oversees the evening program as his final act as chair of the board for The Alabama Baptist.



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist

Jennifer Rash welcomes longtime friends David and Pat Musselwhite of Shades Mountain Baptist Church in Birmingham and representatives of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission to the Friends of The Alabama Baptist dinner Nov. 13.

Fenton also introduced incoming board members:

► Barbara Davis, a member of Spring Hill Baptist Church in Mobile, has served in a variety of roles through the years and is an artist with two Christmas books soon to be published.

► Randy Pittman, a member of Shades Mountain Baptist Church in

Birmingham, recently retired as vice president of university advancement at Samford University.

The new officers of the board stepped into their roles Nov. 14. They are: chair, Scott Swedenburg, Dawson; vice chair, John Brock, Highland Baptist Church in Florence; and secretary, Chris Roberts, North River Church in Tuscaloosa.



Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist

Various church, associational, entity and other leaders from across the state participate alongside TAB board and staff members, including (l to r) Homewood pastor Michael Ent and Samford University's Kevin Blackwell and Scott Guffin.



Neal Hughes (standing), director of missions for Montgomery Baptist Association, visits with the Crowe family (Dennis, Robin and Ann Marie) at the Friends of TAB dinner Nov. 13 at Taylor Road Baptist Church in Montgomery.

Photo by Sam Evans/The Alabama Baptist

UNFINISHED

"Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

PHILIPPIANS 3:13-14



200th anniversary

ALABAMA BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION

5 tips



Unsplash.com

Establish your morning routine

By Christen Hayes
Living Well Counseling

I am not really an “up with the birds” type person but I am not really a “night owl” either. Recently I noticed that I was like some kind of “perpetually tired pigeon.” I realized that I needed to make some changes to my morning routine to take care of my body, increase productivity and start my day off right.

Here are five tips to get your day started in the right direction.

1. Preparing for a strong morning routine, starts the night before. Gather the items needed in the morning such as clothes, backpacks and coffee supplies and put them in their places.

This is now one less thing that must be done after waking up.

Go to bed at the same time every night. If you have identified how

many hours of sleep you need (probably between 7 and 8 hours), subtract that from the time you need to get up and that is your bedtime. **EVERY NIGHT.** Sleep in the dark with no electronics.

We don’t want to get too “science” here, but we know that the light from your screens is sending signals to your brain that are NOT conducive to going to sleep. Read a book, listen to some music, do light stretching or meditation. Turn off the phone, computer, TV an hour or two before bedtime.

In the morning

2. Get up at the same time EVERY day. Once you figure out how much time you need to accomplish your morning routine tasks, subtract that from the time you need to leave home and that is your wake-

up time. Getting up at the same time every day helps your body set a rhythm.

3. Do NOT press the snooze button. This is just asking for torture. You probably aren’t going back to sleep and if you do, it is not going to be “good” sleep. I know it might feel warm and cozy in bed, but just get up when the alarm goes off. Trust me.

4. Have a breakfast routine you look forward to. Fix your favorite coffee or tea to enjoy or eat your favorite bagel or oatmeal. Pick something that you are excited about to enjoy during the next step.

5. Spend time in the Word and prayer. Pick a book of the Bible or a Bible reading plan and dig in.

Chew on it. Reflect on it. Pray about it. Start your day with God’s True Word in your heart and filling your cup so that as you go through your day, it is His love and truth that you are pouring out on others.

A few more tips that might help: get outside for some fresh air during the day; move your body daily (it doesn’t have to be intense cardio, just start with movement); expose yourself to sunlight or light when you wake up; and avoid too much caffeine.

And remember, “From the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, the name of the Lord is to be praised!” (Psalm 113:3)

EDITOR’S NOTE — This story was originally published by Arkansas Baptist News.

“SATISFY US IN THE MORNING WITH YOUR STEADFAST LOVE, THAT WE MAY REJOICE AND BE GLAD ALL OUR DAYS.”

PSALM 90:14

UPCOMING SPECIAL EDITION



NOVEMBER 30 ISSUE

Aging Well

Resources that encompass aspects of growing older, including fitness and wellness tips, estate planning, housing and health care, and ways to mentor the next generation.

— The Alabama Baptist —

TO SUBSCRIBE

Visit: tabonline.org/subscribe

Call: 1-800-803-5201

TO ADVERTISE

Email: ads@thealabamabaptist.org

Call: 205-873-0505

Worth the effort

By Tharran Gaines
The Pathway

Disaster Relief internship gives MO students ‘eye-opening’ experience

Having grown up in Puerto Rico before moving to Pennsylvania, Joyce Fernandez had never witnessed the aftereffects of a tornado. Granted, the damage from hurricanes in her native country can be pretty devastating; but there’s often advanced warning, allowing people to prepare.

That wasn’t the case in Perryton, Texas, where a tornado killed three people, injured at least 75 more and destroyed as many as 200 houses. In many cases, the only thing volunteers were able to do was remove debris and help homeowners salvage and box up any belongings they could find.

As one of six members of the Missouri Baptist Collegiate Disaster Relief team and one of those volunteers, Fernandez not only saw the effects of a tornado at their worst, but was able to help some of the homeowners clean up afterward.

“The summer internship has been a really good experience for me,” she said. “It’s exposed me to a lot of different aspects of disaster relief. We’ve been involved in rebuilding projects in Missouri, helped with the cleanup in Texas and worked on renovations in St. Louis, so it’s been a well-balanced experience.” The team also received training in mass feeding and chainsaw operations, she noted.

‘Faith into action’

Ironically, Fernandez said that her involvement with MODR has not only helped her spiritually, but professionally, since she is due to graduate in December with a degree in homeland security and emergency management at the Pennsylvania College of Technology.

“The people in Texas were very grateful for the help, and it was wonderful being able to help them



Photo courtesy of The Pathway

Missouri Disaster Relief collegiate intern Joyce Fernandez (left) translates for Reymundo (center), who lost his home when a tornado hit Perryton, Texas, and killed three people, injured at least 75 more and destroyed as many as 200 homes.

and put our faith into action at the same time,” she added. “The whole experience really made an impression on me. There were people who lost everything, yet they were making sure we had water, Gatorade, ice and that sort of thing.”

Fernandez noted, “Since the tornado hit some of the poorest areas the hardest, and I was the only one on the team who spoke Spanish, I was blessed to be able to translate and assist in that way as well.”

Brian Kinney, another collegiate intern and a student at Lincoln University, said he also gained a lot of emotional strength from the experience and connected with survivors.

Kinney, who came at the urging of his college ministry pastor, admitted that working in the mid-90-degree temperatures involved a

lot of labor, helping people pack, moving things, cleaning things up and moving a lot of debris, but insists it has been worth the effort.

“My pastor wanted me to sign up because he thought it would be a good fit for me to learn more about my faith and help me spread the gospel. That’s why I’m here,” he said.

“From talking to storm victims, I found strength in them. I know what it’s like to lose everything overnight. I was homeless at one time, too.”

One of those storm victims was Monica Ramirez, who was on the top floor of her small two-story home altering a wedding dress when the hail started. She said she stopped working and picked up her phone to record a video. However, as she looked out the window — expecting to record the hailstorm

— she instead saw a deadly tornado fill the screen.

The rest of the video revealed a moment of terror and destruction as the tornado shook the home. At that point, the video went black. Although she survived the ordeal, the tornado swept away a greenhouse and her garage and stripped siding from her home.

Bethany Waggoner, another Missouri intern from Willow Springs, recalled how she discovered the program, which gave her a new perspective on life.

“I was kind of familiar with Missouri Baptist Disaster Relief through my church,” she said. “But I didn’t know they had a summer internship program until my grandma showed me an article in The Pathway. So I looked into it and decided it was something I would like to do.”

Like Fernandez, Waggoner was impressed with the way the Perryton, Texas, tornado victims responded to their help ... caring for the team as much as the team cared for them.

There at the right time

“I had been involved in cleaning up limbs and debris after storms,” Fernandez said, “but I had never been in an area where there were so many houses totally destroyed. Yet whether the people lost their home or not, they were constantly making sure we had enough water and food. So it was very eye-opening.”

Waggoner recalled a homeowner whose home was scheduled to be demolished.

“They had until the end of the day to get everything that could be salvaged out of the house,” she said. “Fortunately, we were able to go in and help box up everything that could be saved. Had we not been there to help, they might have lost even more than they did.”

TO READ MORE
STORIES LIKE THIS
ABOUT MISSOURI
BAPTISTS, VISIT
MBCPATHWAY.COM.

PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION OF **SERVANTS** TOGETHER



WHY NOBTS?
LEARN MORE: NOBTS.EDU

Churches have to be ‘very creative’ when reaching community, Connecticut pastor shows

By Dan Nicholas
Baptist Churches of New England

Maner Tyson, a country boy from rural North Carolina who could not speak or pray in front of others, remembers himself as the “least likely person to be chosen to be a pastor or to live in a city.”

God, it seems, had a different opinion. Tyson has been the pastor for 33 years of Waterbury Baptist Ministries in Connecticut.

He helped start an urban ministry effort in Waterbury during the summer of 1991 by organizing two weeks of

Vacation Bible School in a vacant lot. Visiting missions teams from the Carolinas served with him, and the following year Tyson returned to the same lot on Saturdays for a children’s ministry he called “The Son Fun Club.”

The small group of children eventually became “the core group” from which Tyson, who was at that time 31, launched Waterbury Baptist.

“After 33 years I’m still loving what I do. I have such a great God who has empowered me to do the ministry that I do,” he said. He serves the people of a working-



Photo courtesy of Baptist Churches of New England

A crowd gathers during Waterbury Baptist's Juneteenth celebration.

class city of 114,000 residents that is midway between Boston and New York.

When someone meets Tyson on the street, they soon discover that community engagement is the secret to

his method of church health, and hospitality is central to his style of evangelism.

This summer they have hosted outdoor “Terrific Tuesday” concerts featuring local musicians, where they

distribute Bibles and serve hot dogs.

Since their facility is on a busy downtown street, women from the church take turns, two at a time, to sit in rocking chairs out on the sidewalk.

When people walk by, they are invited to sit in a third rocking chair, tell their stories and, if they are willing, pray together and listen to the church members’ life stories and faith journeys. A sign nearby says, “Welcome to our front porch!”

“I think churches have to be very creative in the way they present the gospel and show that Christians are real people who need Christ.”

He added, “We use whatever means God gives us.”

TOGETHER WE
with the local Church



We are committed to ministry preparation in partnership with the local church — because fulfilling the Great Commission is best done together.



sebts.edu/churchleaders