

The Alabama Baptist

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Informing. Inspiring. Connecting.



Honor & integrity

(Left): (L to r) Nanny Hobdy is pictured with her daughters Linda, Laura and Leta. (Right, top): Nanny and her husband, Jim. (Right, bottom): Nanny earned her nursing degree at Jefferson State.

Family's story shows value of medical history accuracy for future generations

By Linnie Russell
The Alabama Baptist

Leta Head was shocked when she saw “Alzheimer’s disease” listed as her mother’s cause of death.

Frances “Nanny” Hobdy lived with chronic lung infections for more than 30 years. Despite this fact, she worked as a nurse at the University of Alabama at Birmingham

and led a vibrant and independent life, handling her own finances and dedicating herself to her family and faith.

In the testimony she penned before her death, Nanny wrote that she “always wanted to be a soul winner.” She shared the gospel with everyone, including her patients.

During her final year of life, Nanny battled bronchiectasis, a chronic lung disease.

She persevered through hospitalization, home health care and hospice care until her death on Jan. 29, 2023, at age 89.

Never been diagnosed

Nanny had never been diagnosed with Alzheimer’s by any physician, nor had any health care professional ever suggested the possibility of Alzheimer’s to Head or her family. However, Nanny was suffering

from delirium — a sudden-onset, fluctuating cognitive disorder likely caused by the infection that raged in her lungs.

How was Nanny’s cause of death determined to be Alzheimer’s? The answer lies partly in today’s era of digital recordkeeping and accessible patient portals — a system that simultaneously makes errors easier to make and easier to catch.

(See ‘Family,’ page 9)

WELCOME, ORLANDO HEALTH

Princeton, Brookwood, Shelby, Walker and Citizens (Talladega) hospitals have gained new management under Orlando Health effective Oct. 1. The hospitals also will maintain their faith-based Baptist identity with the continued partnership with Baptist Health System.

SPACE NEEDED

Love Packages seeks warehouse for sending Christian materials overseas

By Hannah Whitman
The Alabama Baptist

Love Packages needs some help — this time with space to store biblical materials before they are loaded and shipped across the world.

Jason Jenkins, manager of the Decatur branch of Love Packages, said the organization runs on faith in the Lord to deliver what they need, and this time is no different.

Love Packages collects donations of Bibles and biblical literature from individuals and publishers and ships them to people in need around the world.

Jenkins said right now they are in a space of about 6,000 square feet, which is on the small side for what they really need. They didn't have much choice when the rent tripled on the side of the warehouse where they had 10,000 to 15,000 square feet to work with.

That is the size they really need, he noted, but right now they are in a month-to-month lease and are looking for land to build on or a warehouse to buy for use as a permanent location.

They are looking for a warehouse that has a loading dock and is big enough to use part of it for the biblical literature waiting to be shipped. They'd like to see the other half made into men's and women's dorm rooms, bathrooms and a kitchen for the volunteers who stay overnight to help with packaging and sending off the containers.

"Right now the volunteers come for a week and have to pay for hotel rooms, which can get expensive," Jenkins noted. "This way they don't have to worry about that cost if we have a place for them on site."

If they can find about 2 to 5 acres of land, he noted, they could build



Photo by Jessica Ingram/The Alabama Baptist

The Alabama Baptist has partnered with Love Packages for five years and serves as a drop-off location for individuals and churches sharing their used curriculum and other Christian literature with believers in developing countries.

what they need because Love Packages would supply all of the material, and Carpenters for Christ or Campers on Mission would come help build it. He said he is grateful for the good relationship he has with those two volunteer organizations.

Every week Love Packages receives 8 tons of materials dropped off from semitrucks or U-Hauls. After it's dropped off, Jenkins goes through every piece of it so people overseas will receive books that are in good condition.

The materials go to countries where 25% of the

population speaks English, which is mostly India along with several countries in Africa. Those areas get a lot of the materials because all of the books are in English, and they will be able to use them right away, Jenkins said.

Love Packages ships 20-ton containers out each week directly

to groups like Samaritan's Purse and Youth With A Mission that can receive them and get them distributed. The materials include Bibles, Sunday School packets, books by renowned Christian authors and materials donated by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and other churches and organizations.

Importance of volunteers

Jenkins noted the 400 to 500 volunteers who come every year help with repairing books, cleaning them, strapping them in sets and packing them up to put in the containers. He stressed it is not really possible to do

this work well without volunteers giving their time during the summer and at other times when they are able to come, but if the

volunteers have to keep paying for hotels it affects how long and how often they can come.

More warehouse space would allow this organization to continue putting the Word of God into the hands of people in nations that don't have access to it.



Facebook photo

A load of Christian materials from Love Packages prepares to make its way to Tanzania.

To learn more, visit lovepackages.org.

The Alabama Baptist

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

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JENNIFER DAVIS RASH EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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The newspapers, online content and other media offerings produced by TAB Media Group continue to be honored among the top in the nation in the Christian market and in the state's general market. Best in Class, Awards of Excellence and other top awards have been earned by team members every year for nearly 30 years.



The crossword puzzle can be found on page 11.



GUEST EDITORIAL

for this week's issue of The Alabama Baptist

By Carrie Brown McWhorter, special assignments editor

How can churches combat the epidemic of loneliness?

In 2018, Tracey Crouch was named the United Kingdom's first Minister for Loneliness. The appointment got its share of jokes, but mental health experts pointed out that loneliness is a serious issue in many countries, including the United States.

Loneliness has been defined as the perceived sense of isolation. The word "perceived" is important.

Loneliness is not just "being alone." A homebound member of your church might feel lonely, but so might a young mother who teaches Sunday School and sits in your congregation with her family each week.

'Hungry for connection'

The feeling of loneliness is hard to describe, but a lonely person often feels disconnected, unloved or purposeless.

One blogger described his feelings this way: "I was starving for attention. I was hungry for connection."

King David wrote: "Look and see, there is no one at my right hand; no one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one cares for my life" (Ps. 142:4).

Much research has been done on loneliness. A 2018 Cigna survey found that nearly half (46%) of Americans reported

feeling lonely, left out or misunderstood. That number rose to 58% in a 2021 follow-up survey.

Seniors (those 65 and older) are vulnerable, but young adults ages 18 to 34 are most likely to report feeling "left out" despite being more connected than ever through digital platforms like social media.

Our culture has shifted. Fewer people attend church, join civic or social groups, shop in stores and eat at restaurants. We don't interact in person with neighbors and community helpers as much as we used to.

Something is missing. We feel the isolation, and it's taking a toll.

Loneliness is closely linked to depression, anxiety and stress, as well as a higher risk of cognitive decline and dementia as we age. Some turn to substances to cope. Our communities suffer because fewer people are volunteering and participating in organizations that support the vulnerable among us.

The tech world offers a few options. Apps like the Creative Lunch Club, the Breakfast and

Timeleft facilitate sharing meals with strangers seeking non-romantic connections.

"For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps."

1 Peter 2:21

But it seems to me the church is commissioned for such a time as this.

Baked into the culture of a biblical church community is spending time together, which should include welcoming others into our groups.

Our ministries should be entry points for connecting lonely people to others and introducing them to Jesus.

We are people guided by purpose: to follow in the footsteps of Christ (1 Pet. 2:21) and to make disciples that do the same (Matt. 28:19–20).

How can you help?

The cure for loneliness is connection. Consider the individuals in your congregation or community who may feel isolated or unneeded. How can you include them this week?

If you are feeling lonely, consider trying a new small group. Sit in a different spot at church. Volunteer for an upcoming event.

What if we were all ministers for loneliness right where Jesus has put us?



Photo by jcomp on Freepik

Your Voice



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

Notary service providers that come to you

In our busy lives, finding the time to get important tasks done can be a challenge. One such task is getting documents notarized, which is when a notary verifies that the person signing a document is who they say they are. Usually, this means going to a retail location or church during business hours. However, what if the notary could come to you?

A mobile notary service provides all the same services, sometimes more than most traditional notaries, but instead of you going to them, they come to you.

Whether you're at home, in your office or even at a hospital, a mobile notary will meet you where it's most convenient.

An additional perk is that after-hours, weekend and holiday appointments are often available. Many also provide printing, faxing and shipping services for their notary customers, saving them valuable time.

Mobile notaries are especially helpful for people who might have a hard time getting out and

about. The elderly, people with disabilities, the sick or those living far from a city can really benefit from this service. This is especially important for those who are homebound, immobile or in a facility.

For example, if someone needs to update a will or sign a power of attorney, which can involve several people, the notary can provide this service at a convenient time for all involved.

Notaries will often provide witnesses if needed. By bringing notarization to the customer, mobile notaries make sure everyone in the community has equal access to the services they need.

Helping local businesses

These services are also a huge help to local businesses. Companies like real estate agencies, law firms and mortgage lenders often need documents notarized quickly.

A mobile notary can come directly to their offices or to their customer, saving time and helping things run more smoothly.

In fact, many notaries are certified to conduct real estate closings,

purchases and refinances, for example, making closing at an attorney's office during business hours unnecessary. Providing this service to other businesses means they can get back to serving their customers faster.

Alabama law

A few things to keep in mind before you call a notary is that Alabama law requires the notary to verify certain information before a notarization.

The first is that the signer must have a state- or federal-issued photo ID such as a driver's license, passport or military ID. This can also be photo ID from another country. These requirements are an important reminder to keep ID current and available, especially for those without the ability to renew their ID in person.

Another requirement is that the signer must be mentally aware and able to communicate with the notary. If you or someone you know is delaying important legal decisions, this could be very costly.

If a notary determines the signer isn't of sound mind, the notarization cannot be completed.

By being mindful of these requirements, you can save yourself and your family financially as well as emotionally during hard times.

Mobile notary services are a great resource for everyone in the community. They bring important services directly to those who need them, making life easier and more convenient.

Kelly Correll

Owner, Sonata Notary Services
sonatanotary.com

Part of learning to see beautiful again is recognizing that a hard season doesn't have to be full of only hard days. There's still beauty to be found. There's still joy to be found. There's still peace to be found. There are still so many reasons to treasure life and thank God.

Lysa TerKeurst

@LysaTerKeurst on X

The power of the idols of our day is they don't demand our gold or worship at some temple. They demand our time, attention and love. We'll expose our idolatry when we're aware of what we scroll through, what we dwell on and how we orient our day.

Daniel Ritchie

@DanielRitchie on X

Waiting involves the confident expectation that something special is going to happen at God's appointed time. Waiting involves trusting God's timing.

David L. Chancey

Fayetteville, Georgia

Don't let people you disagree with hijack your mood! Life is too short to allow people you don't care for to determine your joy!

Richard Blackaby

@richardblackaby on X

Letters to the Editor

Thank you for your article in the Sept. 19 edition on the value of hymns in our worship service. It is stirring to be reminded of those precious words and tunes that have been with us for so long.

It is deeply saddening to know that they have been replaced by

such shallow theology in much of our current music. A generation is being robbed of the imagery projected while singing "The Old Rugged Cross," "I Surrender All" and "Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior."

Lloyd Borden

Lookout Mountain Association

“Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.”

P S A L M 27:14

What is the Bible really about? If you had to summarize the entirety of the Scriptures, how would you do it? To some that seems impossible, or at least very difficult. My colleague, Scott Guffin, and I were discussing this very question today. We have found that most Christians know the “stories” of the Bible, but sometimes miss the larger “story” of the meta-narrative. We must read all of the Scriptures as one big unfolding eternal narrative so we see God’s greater redemptive purpose.

Tim Keller perfectly summarizes this thought:

“Because the Bible’s basic plot-line is the tension between God’s justice and his grace and because it is all resolved in the person and work of Jesus Christ, Jesus could tell his followers after the resurrection that the OT — “the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms” (Luke 24:44) — is really all about him (Luke 24:27, 45). Paul says that all God’s promises throughout the Scripture find their fulfillment only in Christ (2 Cor. 1:20). So everything in the Bible — all its themes and patterns, main images and major figures — points to Jesus.”

If we miss the big story of Scripture, we have simply missed the whole point. Jesus IS the big story, the unfolding plot and the central figure of the victorious future glory.

Kevin Blackwell

Samford University

“When we leave worship (after singing hymns in church together), we carry these hymns in our hearts. We are transformed by singing and hearing the solid theology that has endured for generations,” said **Tanner Vines**, pastor of worship and social media, Gardendale FBC.

“Singing the hymns throughout the week solidifies our life in Christ. If we continue to do this, we ex-

perience spiritual growth that will endure. We hold the words in our hearts,” said **Ken Patterson**, minister of music at First Baptist Church Guntersville.

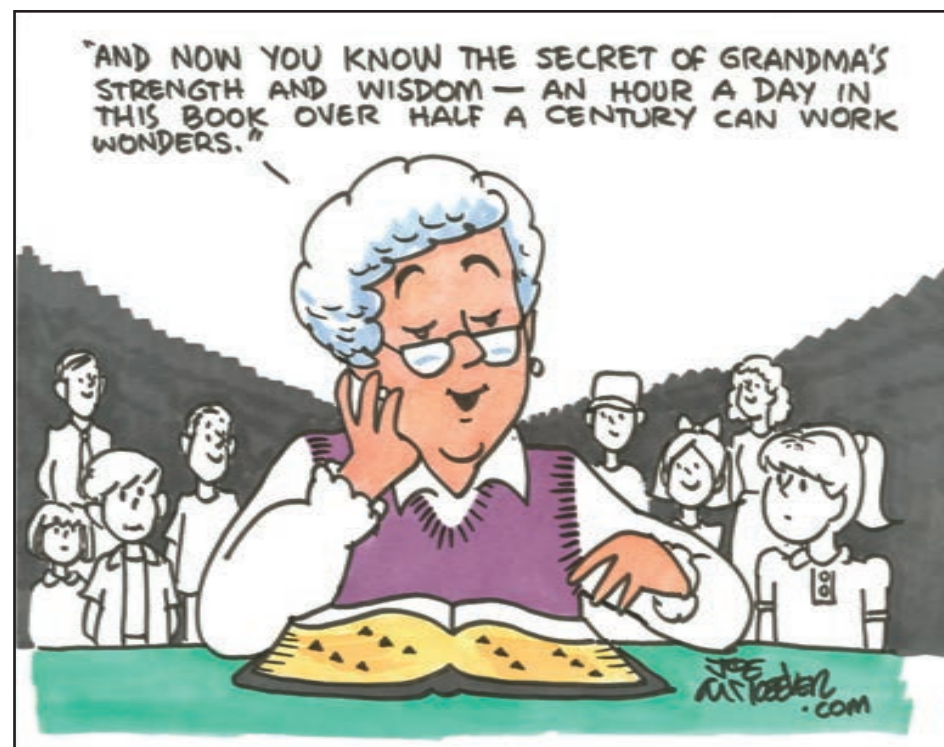
“There are 6,000 (foster) kids across the state. Odds are that you know some of these kids. These are kids in your neighborhoods, in your schools, that you’re seeing at the grocery store,” said **Jeff Hurn**, Alabama Baptist Children’s Homes & Family Ministries engagement specialist. “The difference we want to make is, we are a faith-filled Christian organization. Our foster parents are Bible-believing Christians. We want to place kids in a situation where they can hear about Jesus and experience the love of Christ.”

“What if you only had one month to live? ... What would you do to make the rest of your life really matter?” **Pastor Bobby Mullins** posted these words on Facebook on Aug. 27, about a week before he and his wife, Wanda, would lose

their lives in a car accident. In the days since, that Facebook post — which includes a link to a video of one of his sermons from 2008 called “Living Like You’re Dying” — has more than 94,000 views. Mullins was pastor of Kirk Baptist Church in Piperton, Tennessee.

“I never set out to do any of this because I thought I could win an award,” said **Luke Smallbone** about the successes of the band For King & Country. “Hopefully any ... success that the world wants to point to us instead sees the souls and hearts behind it. That’s my motivation.”

“[Planetshakers Church] quickly grew with the emphasis on presenting the gospel of Jesus, stirring a generation of people from all ethnic backgrounds to lay their lives down for Jesus and serve Him unreservedly,” said **Sam Evans**, worship leader and singer-songwriter. “It really was the most incredible year where we saw God do the impossible in so many people’s ... situations.”



McCain shares with SBC EC trustees

By **Jennifer Davis Rash**
The Alabama Baptist

I’m so grateful,” Dana McCain, SBC Executive Committee board of trustees member from Dothan, shared Sept. 17 during the group’s two-day meeting in Nashville.

McCain opened the second plenary session of the EC meeting with Scripture reading (Rom. 12:6–8) and prayer.

“When I look across this room, one of the things I’m most grateful for and most in awe of is how the Lord has brought so many of His servants from all walks of life, different areas of vocational ministry service, professions, areas of lived experience and wisdom all for the good of the SBC and for the good of the Kingdom,” she shared.

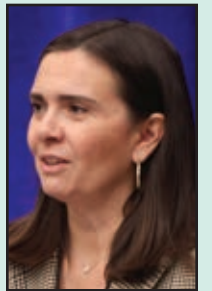
“I’m so grateful to be able to work alongside each and every one of you,” she said. “I learn something every time I get in this room. ... Let’s pray for the Lord to continue to work in us and through us for the good of the SBC and the good of His Kingdom.”

Romans 12:6–8

“We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.”

Other news

Trustees also heard from EC president Jeff Iorg and SBC president Clint Pressley and handled 30-plus business items.



McCain

Share online or email news@thealabamabaptist.org

3 stories you should know



Photo courtesy of Samford University

Samford University board of trustees chair Karon Bowdre (center), flanked by president Beck Taylor (left) and former board chair Bill Stevens (right) are joined by other Samford officials and community business leaders to debut the new \$85-million Campus Recreation, Wellness & Athletic Complex with a ceremonial ribbon-cutting event Sept. 20. The four-story complex opened for service Sept. 30 and features state-of-the-art equipment as well as a variety of studios and courts and an esports lounge. (TAB)

Univ. of Mobile named safest college campus

The University of Mobile leads the state as the #1 Safest College Campus in Alabama with the #1 Best Dorms in the state in the new 2025 Niche Best Colleges ranking.

This is the fourth consecutive year UM has held the #1 Best Dorms in Alabama title.

In addition, UM consistently has been ranked at or near the top college in Alabama for safety by Niche, a ranking site that combines student reviews with national data.

Niche also named UM among the top five college campuses in Alabama for 2025.

Niche's Best Colleges 2025 rankings are based on a blend of student feedback from more than 500,000 student reviews along with key statistics from the U.S. Department of Education and other official sources. (University of Mobile)

More illegal gambling sites in state shut down

Illegal gambling operations in Alabama — specifically in Lipscomb, Selma and Gadsden — were the focus of law enforcement recently.

► Lipscomb — Aug. 26

On Aug. 26, agents from the Alabama Attorney General's office raided Jay's Charity Bingo in Lipscomb, recovering dozens of illegal gambling machines stolen from state evidence and more than 100 other machines deemed to be illegal.

► Selma — Aug. 19

Dallas County Sheriff's Office and the AG's office served restraining orders on five places in Selma: Joker 777, Mini Bingo, Selma Charity Bingo, Selma Bing and Lucky Duck.

► Gadsden — July 30

Gadsden Police Street Crime Unit raided several locations and seized 88 gambling devices and more than \$20,000 in cash. (TAB)

Persecuted church

Woman kidnapped, sold, then dies; family pressured to drop charges

LAHORE, Pakistan — The family of a Christian woman who was kidnapped and raped and then died from her injuries has been pressured to stop their quest to prosecute the culprit.

Salma Munir, 20, was kidnapped in February by a Muslim resident in their village of Ajnialwala in Pakistan's Punjab province. All Pakistan Minorities Alliance Movement told the media outlets Christian Daily International and Morning Star News that Salma was rescued from captivity in June.

After the abductor repeatedly raped the mentally handicapped woman, he sold her first to a brothel owner in Gujranwala and then to a brothel in Hafizabad.

While working in Hafizabad in June, Salma's

older brother spotted her and rescued her. Two days afterward, she died of injuries sustained during captivity. Twenty days later, the abductor attempted to kidnap Salma's younger sister.

The suspected perpetrator was arrested July 27 on multiple charges, including murder. His friends and relatives have pressured the family to drop the case.

Because of threats, Salma's family has relocated, a source told the news outlets.

Christian slain for telling Muslims about Jesus

KAMPALA, Uganda — A Christian man was fatally attacked with swords in Uganda for telling Muslims how to put their faith in Jesus Christ, Morning Star News reported.

Attackers struck Yowabu Sebakaki, 52, with swords around his neck and head Aug. 19 as he returned home to Nyanza village in Uganda's Budaka District. Sebakaki was returning home from teaching a discipleship class for new believers.

Morning Star News reports that David Nkomba, who was transporting Sebakaki, escaped. Nkomba identified one of the assailants as "a well-known radical Muslim youth from Mbale."

Sebakaki died enroute to a hospital in Mbale.

The news service says Sebakaki, who is trained in apologetics, was known for his involvement in evangelistic outreach events and was previously beaten following a debate with Islamic scholars.



commons.wikimedia.org

Alabama news

BARBOUR ASSOCIATION

► **Luke Westbrook** is the new pastor of **Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Eufaula**. He previously served as pastor of New Hope Free Will Baptist Church, Midland City, and Union



WESTBROOK

Baptist Church, Clayton. He also served as a youth minister and with Baptist Campus Ministries. Westbrook works for the Henry County board of education as a school bus driver and shop assistant and has experience as a sheriff's department dispatcher and chaplain. He holds an associate's degree in criminal justice from Wallace Community College and a bachelor of arts degree in Christian ministry from Leavell College, New Orleans. Westbrook has two daughters.

BETHLEHEM ASSOCIATION

► **Micah Gandy** celebrated 15 years as pastor of **First Baptist Church Monroeville** in August. He and his wife, Cheryl, have four children and one grandchild.



GANDY

CHILTON ASSOCIATION

► **Mark Lovett** is the new pastor of **Mulberry Baptist Church, Maplesville**. He previously

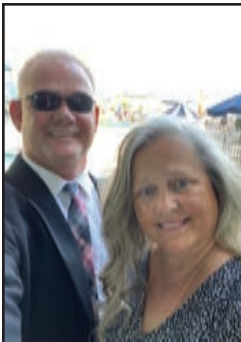


Photo courtesy of Mark Lovett

served as pastor of Pineview Baptist Church, Brent; Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, Georgiana; Refuge Baptist Church, Clanton; and Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Jemison. He drives a school bus for the Bibb County school system and holds a ministry certificate from New Orleans Seminary. Lovett and his wife, Lisa, have two children and seven grandchildren.

CLEBURNE ASSOCIATION

► **Clark Garner** is the new discipleship pastor for **Macedonia Baptist Church, Ranburne**. Garner previously worked in real estate and the poultry industry. He was ordained Sept. 15. Garner and his wife, Janice, have two sons. Kris Henderson is pastor.



GARNER

COOSA RIVER ASSOCIATION

► **Wes Johnson** is the new director of missions for **Coosa River Baptist Association**. He previously served as a pastor in the association at Odena Baptist Church, Sylacauga, for four



Photo courtesy of Wes Johnson

years and Talladega Creek Baptist Church, Talladega, for more than 12 years. Johnson holds a bachelor's degree from Leavell College of New Orleans Seminary. He and his wife, Paula, who is a teacher at Winterboro High School, Alpine, have four children and six grandchildren.

ESCAMBIA ASSOCIATION

► **Arnold Hendrix** is the new pastor of **Presley Street Baptist Church, Atmore**. He previously served in the pastorates of South Mobile Baptist Church, Theodore; First Baptist Church Atmore; and Corinth Baptist Church, Cordova, in Alabama and FBC Valparaiso in Florida. Hendrix did graduate-level work at New Orleans Seminary and has degrees from Northwest Florida State College and the University of West Florida. He spent 23 years as a commercial banker before following the call to ministry. Hendrix and his wife, Marilyn, have one daughter and one grandson.



HENDRIX



ssbcathens.org

LIMESTONE ASSOCIATION

► **Jeff Oates** is the new pastor of **Sardis Springs Baptist Church, Athens**. He previously served as minister to students in several churches in Mississippi and Louisiana, then led a revitalization effort as pastor of Palmerdale Cross

Baptist Church, Pinson. He and his wife, Katie, have two sons.

MARSHALL ASSOCIATION

► **Tim Chatman** is the new pastor of **Mount Vernon Baptist Church, Albertville**. He grew up in Uruguay and Peru as an International Mission Board missionary kid before returning to the United States for college. He previously served in several ministry positions in Texas and Arkansas. Chatman holds a bachelor of science degree in business administration from Williams Baptist University, Walnut Ridge, Arkansas; a master of divinity degree from Southwestern Seminary; and is currently pursuing a doctor of ministry degree from



mountvernonbc.org

Gateway Seminary. He and his wife, Beth, have three children.

SARDIS ASSOCIATION

► **Bethel Baptist Church, Opp**, celebrated its 100th anniversary Aug. 25. The choir sang a special to begin the service, and other special music was provided by Eddie Marczewski and his daughter, Kenna, and the pastor's three daughters, Maddie, Allyx and Maci. Historical highlights and testimonies were shared by Ken Reeves, Marczewski, Robbie Martin and the pastor, Heath Williamson (right). During the service, Williamson recognized all deacons, both past and present, with an appreciation plaque on behalf of the church. A special presentation to the church was made by Jim Lambert (left), a commissioner of the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission.



Photo courtesy of Rachel Williamson

WALKER ASSOCIATION

► **Grace Baptist Church, Sumiton**, marked its 50th anniversary with an afternoon reception in the fellowship hall, which was the original sanctuary. In May 1974, founding pastor Douglas Tate and 65 charter members began holding services under a tent until the original building was completed that fall. Tate served for more than 40 years as pastor. Members recalled that at the conclusion of every service, Tate would say,



Submitted photo

"To God be the glory." Display tables lined the walls with photos and church directories from the past. David Nelson, a commissioner for the Alabama Baptist Historical Com-

mission, presented a plaque. Pictured with the plaque are (l to r) James Scurlock, whose family donated land for the original church building; Carolyn Tate, daughter of the founding pastor; Kevin Bowman, current pastor; Angela Hunt, music director; and Jaime Bowman, the pastor's wife.

WINSTON ASSOCIATION

► **New Prospect Baptist Church, Haleyville**, will hold a bicentennial celebration Oct. 6. The special service will feature dignitaries, former pastors and church members, followed by a meal. Living history will be staged throughout the afternoon; all are invited to dress in period style clothing and join the fun. The church will dedicate a special historical marker honoring its place as the oldest Baptist church in Winston County and one of the oldest in the state. Ron Horton has been the church's pastor for 30 years.

DifferenceMakers

201st ANNUAL MEETING of the Alabama Baptist State Convention

NOVEMBER 12-13, 2024
EASTERN SHORE BAPTIST CHURCH, DAPHNE

Make plans now to attend The Gathering,

our annual family reunion of Alabama Baptists! This year's theme will be DifferenceMakers, based on Acts 4:13. Highlighting our time together will be a message Tuesday evening from **Jason Allen**, president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., and a native of Mobile. Preceding Allen's message will be the music of **RamCorps**, a Christ-centered high impact visual brass and percussion ensemble from the University of Mobile.

Other speakers include **Craig Carlisle** and **Rob Jackson** on Tuesday morning and **Albert Williams** and **Ben Bowden** on Wednesday morning. Also, the exhibit hall will provide opportunities to visit with state missionaries, along with state and SBC entity leaders, and see firsthand how your Cooperative Program giving is making a difference around the world. In addition, cartoonist **Joe McKeever** will be on hand to draw sketches of those who stop by.

For more information about the State Convention Annual Meeting, including hotel options and a complete schedule as it becomes available, visit alsbom.org/convention. Messenger information will be mailed to each church by October 1.



Jason Allen
Tuesday Evening



RamCorps
Tuesday Evening



Craig Carlisle
Tuesday Morning



Rob Jackson
Tuesday Morning



Albert Williams
Wednesday Morning



Ben Bowden
Wednesday Morning



Joe McKeever
Exhibit Hall



SCAN QR CODE
FOR MORE INFO

alsbom.org/convention

Family motivated to honor mother's legacy

(continued from page 1)
The prevalence of errors in modern medical records is well documented by publications like JAMA, The Journal of the American Medical Association.
In Head's case, she requested physical copies of Nanny's health records and made a key discovery. Months into her mother's course of treatment — late in September 2022 — a visiting home health nurse notated Alzheimer's as an underlying condition.
Then during the insurance billing process, the home health agency switched Nanny's primary diagnosis of "bronchiectasis with acute

lower respiratory infection" with the unverified Alzheimer's diagnosis.
This issue seemed simple enough to correct. But Head was met with months of resistance from the home health agency. It took almost a year for Head to reach a resolution.
Seeking the truth
Head's primary motivation was to honor her mother's legacy.
"My goal in all this is that no one should ever have to go through this when they're grieving the loss of a loved one," Head said.
Family health history was also on Head's mind. She

didn't want her mother's death certificate to mislead future family members who might seek medical answers through genetic genealogy.
Nanny's records needed to reflect an accurate cause of death — for her loved ones in the present and for generations to come.
Head shares her story so others will know the value of ensuring their medical history is correct.
Based on her experience, she shares these two tips:
1. Always ask for records.
Medical providers keep extensive files and notes on their patients. As a patient, you may never see more than a summary, but

you have a right to inspect, review and receive a copy of your medical and billing records.
When it comes to home health care, caregivers are often handed a tablet at the end of each visit and asked to sign, mostly as evidence of services rendered. Visit notes may not be displayed on the device at all.
Keep copies
"There's nothing above [your signature] or below it," Head recalled. "You don't really know what you're signing."
Home health agencies must provide records upon request. Ask for digital or physical copies of notes from each visit in a timely man-

ner. Good record-keeping is the best way to avoid mistakes and make sure you and your health care provider are on the same page.
Taking that extra step will help protect you and the agency you're working with from future disputes.
"Trust but verify," Head said.
2. Be an advocate.
In seeking to honor her mother's legacy, Head faced significant challenges. Her decision to stay the course was deeply rooted in her love for Nanny and for God's Word.
"That's the only one of the Ten Commandments that has a promise: 'Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon in the land.'"
Head hopes that by sharing Nanny's story, she might help others get better care for their loved ones and be more aware of the accuracy of their medical records.
"If my mother's story can make a difference in just one person's life, it will have all been worth it," Head said.



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UPCOMING EVENTS

sponsored by the State Board of Missions

Abundant Living event to provide encouragement for senior adults

Senior adults in Alabama Baptist churches are such an important part of the fabric of each congregation. In these churches, senior adults, for the most part, continue to give leadership in all aspects of church life.

It is my goal as senior adult strategist for the State Board of Missions to encourage senior adults across the state to continue to be active and productive in different ministries throughout the local church.

Our office is ready to assist any church needing information and guidance concerning any level of senior adult ministry in our churches.

Senior adults are encouraged to attend ABUNDANT LIVING at Meadow Brook Baptist Church, 4894 Meadow Brook Road in Birmingham on Thursday, Oct. 24. Featured speakers will be Daniel Wilson, pastor of Jemison First Baptist, and Danny Wood, pastor emeritus of Shades Mountain Baptist Church. Special music will be presented by New Ground, a gospel trio based out of Scottsboro, with congrega-

To register, visit alsbom.org/abundantliving or scan the code below with your smartphone's camera.



tional music led by Frank Jones.

It all begins at 9:15 a.m. and will conclude around 3 p.m. There will be a two-hour lunch break at 11 for you to enjoy lunch on your own in the area.

Admission is free but group and individual registration is requested by going to alsbom.org/abundantliving. For more information, contact me at fjones@alsbom.org or call 334-613-2221. Hope to see you there!

Frank Jones
State Missionary
Office of Sunday School & Discipleship
Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions



WOOD



WILSON



NEW GROUND

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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

Lakeview Baptist Church, Montgomery, is seeking a full-time pastor. Please send resumé to: amanda@lakeviewbaptist.cc or 9225 Atlanta Hwy, Montgomery, AL 36117.

PASTOR

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

PASTOR

Indian Grave Baptist Church is seeking a full-time/bivocational pastor. Please send a resumé to: IGPastorSearch@gmail.com or mail to: 2398 County Rd. 19 N, Prattville, AL 36067.

PASTOR

Stowers Hill Baptist Church, Attalla, Alabama, is seeking a pastor. Please send resumé to: stowershillbaptist@gmail.com.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Paden Baptist Church, Gadsden, Alabama, is prayerfully seeking a bivocational pastor. Mail resumé to: Paden Baptist Church, 900 Padenreich Ave., Gadsden, AL 35903 or Bruce Ragland, Chairman, Search Committee at Padenbaptistchurch@yahoo.com.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Montgomery, Alabama, is seeking a bivocational pastor. Please email resumé to: rbsearch23@gmail.com.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

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

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Fairview Baptist in Samson, Alabama, is seeking a bivocational pastor. Please email resumé to: fairviewbaptist.samson.al@outlook.com or via USPS to: 3159 N State Highway 87, Samson, AL 36477.

PART-TIME ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Buhl Baptist is prayerfully seeking a part-time associate pastor. Please contact us for

more information by emailing dnhicks630@gmail.com or BuhlBaptistChurch@gmail.com.

BIVOCATIONAL MUSIC MINISTER

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

PART-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC

South Luverne Baptist Church, Luverne, AL 36049. southluvernebc.com. Provides overall direction and vision of the worship and music program and provides spiritual leadership to the music staff and volunteers. Submit resumé to: jnorsworthy1141@gmail.com. Call 334-335-6885 for detailed job description.

BIVOCATIONAL ASSOCIATE PASTOR/YOUTH MINISTER

Moon Lake Baptist Church in Mentone, Alabama, is seeking a bivocational associate pastor/youth minister. Seminary students are welcome to apply. Direct resumé/questions to: beverly.haynes@yahoo.com.

NEXT GENERATION PASTOR

Calvary Baptist Church, Tusculumbia is seeking a full-time next generation pastor to lead our youth and children. Please send a resumé to: youth@calvarybaptisttuscumbia.com.

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.reliablesigns.com

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RESOURCES

"HELP I'M A PASTOR!"

This new book by veteran Baptist pastor and cartoonist Joe McKeever is a resource pastors will want to keep on their shelf. And for those new to the pastorate, McKeever's insights will be a true gift. Order your copy straight from the author today for \$24.95. Email him at joe@joemckeeper.com, Venmo him at @Joe-McKeever-7 or send a check and your mailing address to: 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209.

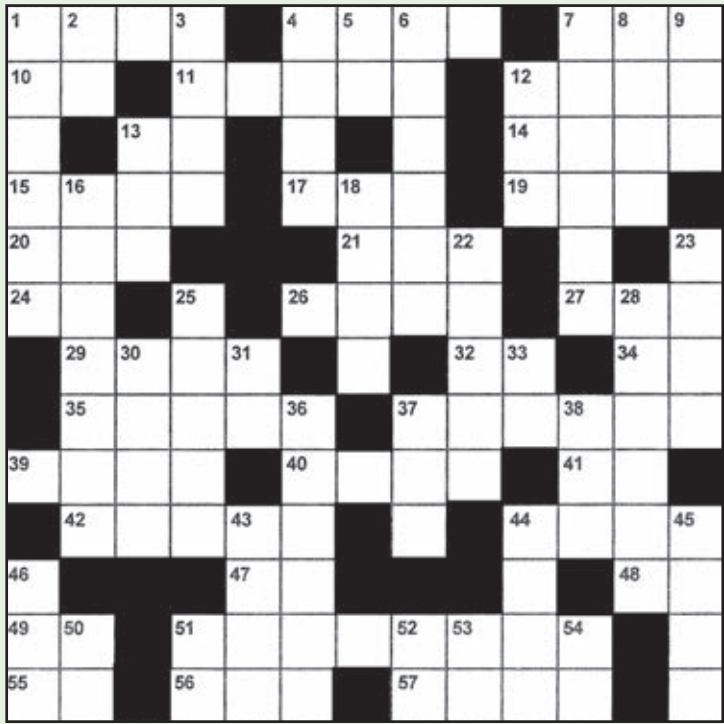
DISCIPLE-MAKING BOOT CAMP SET FOR OCT. 19

What if you could build a true disciple-making culture in your ministry? This is the purpose of D-Life. D-Life exists to equip common people to be Christ-like disciple makers. It's a proven plan for making disciples who make disciples — anytime and anywhere. As a result, ministries all over the world are using D-Life as a tool to equip and empower their people for a lifestyle of disciple-making. In a D-Life Boot Camp, we don't just talk about discipleship, but believers will learn how to make disciples who make disciples as a way of life. We will role play, share exciting stories and equip believers with a proven disciple-making process modeled after Jesus. Plan to attend the Central Alabama D-Life Boot Camp on Oct. 19 at NorthPark Baptist Church in Trussville. Register now at nponline.org/events.

CHRISTIAN Crossword

ACROSS

- 1. _____, I pray you. (Gen. 37:6)
- 4. King of _____, and Tidal. (Gen. 14:1)
- 7. _____ shall judge. (Gen. 49:16)
- 10. _____ of the Chaldees. (Gen. 15:7)
- 11. The king of _____. (Gen. 40:5)
- 12. Plane surface having bounds.
- 13. Alcoholics Anonymous. (abbr.)
- 14. _____ light.
- 15. Who shall _____ thee. (Gen. 49:25)
- 17. A _____ of money. (Ex. 21:30)
- 19. _____, and Naphtali. (Ex. 1:4)
- 20. The hole of the _____. (Isa. 11:8)
- 21. Prepaid. (abbr.)
- 24. Intensive care.
- 26. _____ of the house. (Gen. 43:19)
- 27. My _____ shall not go down. (Gen. 42:38)
- 29. Called their name _____. (Gen. 5:2)
- 32. Oklahoma. (abbr.)
- 34. Red Cross. (abbr.)
- 35. Gone six _____. (2 Sam. 6:13)
- 37. _____ wept. (Gen. 50:17)
- 39. Chief male character in story.
- 40. On top of.
- 41. _____ sinful nation. (Isa. 1:4)
- 42. Nickname of Deborah.
- 44. Outer covering of grain separated when making flour.
- 46. Roman numeral for 50.
- 47. East Indies. (abbr.)
- 48. There was _____ water in it. (Gen. 37:24)
- 49. Potipherah, priest of _____. (Gen. 41:45)



By Mrs. Chester Vance Jr. Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.

- 51. But _____ of a foot.
- 55. What he saith to you, _____ (Gen. 41:55)
- 56. English. (abbr.)
- 57. These _____ words. (Gen. 44:6)
- 25. Joseph's father. (Gen. 46:19)
- 28. Child that has lost his parents.
- 30. _____ stir him up. (Job 41:10)
- 31. Dealt ye so ill with _____. (Gen. 43:6)
- 33. Kansas. (abbr.)
- 36. Judah spake unto him, _____ ... (Gen. 43:3)
- 37. Patience of _____. (James 5:11)
- 38. Give _____ to His commandments. (Ex. 15:26)
- 43. Place where his tent had _____. (Gen. 13:3)
- 44. _____ of the water. (Josh. 3:15)
- 45. There is _____ that can interpret it. (Gen. 41:15)
- 46. Ono, and _____. (1 Chron. 8:12)
- 50. Thy son's coat or _____. (Gen. 37:32)
- 51. Upon me _____ thy curse. (Gen. 27:13)
- 52. _____ one of us. (Gen. 3:22)
- 53. _____ and Pa.
- 54. Northeast.
- 1. _____ the Archite. (2 Sam. 15:32)
- 2. Descendant of Judah. (1 Chron. 4:21)
- 3. They do _____. (Ruth 2:9)
- 4. _____ were dim. (Gen. 27:1)
- 5. Low pressure. (abbr.)
- 6. Music term.
- 7. What will become of his _____. (Gen. 37:20)
- 8. Thousands and thousands of years. (English spelling.)
- 9. Girl's name.
- 12. _____ it shall come to pass. (1 Sam. 2:36)
- 13. Swiss mountain.
- 16. The servant which is _____ from his master. (Deut. 23:15)
- 18. Put sackcloth _____ his loins. (Gen. 37:34)
- 22. Sink or drop down.
- 23. Measure equal to 1/12

All Bible verses are KJV unless otherwise specified.



UPCOMING EVENTS
sponsored by the State Board of Missions

Bivocational Minister & Spouse Retreat: Nov. 1-2

The Bivocational Minister & Spouse Retreat is set for Nov. 1 at 4 p.m.–Nov. 2 at noon. This overnight retreat at Camp Baldwin in Elberta is designed to promote fellowship, provide guidance and give encouragement and inspiration.

Speakers for the ministers' sessions will be Sammy Gilbreath, Rob Jackson and Ken Allen. Leading sessions for the wives will be pastor's wife and speaker Page Hughes. The retreat will also include sessions for ministers and wives together. Cost is \$40 per couple or

To register, visit alsbom.org/bivoretreat or scan the code below with your smartphone's camera.



\$30 per single. This event is sponsored by the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. To register, visit alsbom.org/bivoretreat.

Christmas backpacks

In 2023, Alabama Baptists gave 15,023 backpacks to the Christmas backpacks ministry. And now it's time to do it again! You and your church can make Christmas brighter for children living along the Mississippi River Delta who are among some of the poorest in the nation. Generation after generation

in the region live without basic human necessities. Collection week is Oct. 21–27. For instructions on how to pack backpacks, collection points and times and other information about how you and your church can be involved in this effort, visit alabamawmu.org/christmasbackpacks.



Photo courtesy of Paulette Wilcutt

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Sunday School Lessons

By Robert Olsen, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Christian Studies, University of Mobile



For October 6

EVERY OPPORTUNITY Acts 16:11–15, 29–40

Witness at the River (11–15)

Paul and company traveled to Philippi in Macedonia and on the Sabbath, they went to the nearby river to pray. (There was likely no synagogue in Philippi; otherwise, they would have gone there).

At the river they encountered some women, and Paul and his companions spoke with them, sharing the gospel. One of the women was Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth, who loved God and responded to the gospel.

Paul took advantage of the circumstances he was in to share the gospel. This is a clear model for us to follow as well. We need to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit to recognize divine appointments.

What is encouraging to see is that the Lord had opened Lydia's heart to respond to the gospel. God is the One who saves, and this takes all the pressure off of us. We are merely messengers. It is our job to share the gospel and God does the rest.

Witness in Jail (29–34)

Paul and Silas healed a girl who had a demonic spirit, and the owners of the slave girl lost the income they had from the demon's fortune telling.

Paul and Silas were beaten and jailed basically for causing a disturbance and as Jews were assumed not to be Roman citizens. Luke and Timothy were not jailed with them likely because as Gentiles, it was assumed they were Roman citizens.

Instead of protesting, Paul and Silas went to jail and while there sang hymns and praised God. What a wonderful way to approach the situation!

If we understand that God is in control and that He works all things for good for Christians then no matter our circumstance, we can praise God. All of the

prisoners were listening to them, and when God caused an earthquake that broke the chains on all the prisoners, none of the prisoners left.

We don't know if Paul convinced them to remain or if they were so captivated they stayed put.

This was so impactful that the jailer, who thought the prisoners had escaped, asked to be saved. We are not certain what led to this man's understanding that he needed to be saved — the earthquake, the hymns being sung or the attitudes of Paul and Silas — but he understood that they believed something that he needed.

Paul and Silas were taken to the jailer's house for food and treatment, and the man's entire family embraced the gospel.

Paul and Silas lived lives that showed their belief in God, and they were willing and able to share this belief with a simple, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved!"

Witness upon Release (35–40)

News of Paul being a Roman citizen disturbed the magistrates because this meant they had beaten a Roman citizen without a fair trial.

They pleaded with Paul and Silas to leave, but Paul wanted an official escort out of the city, probably to show everyone that they had done nothing wrong. This would allow other believers to realize that Christianity is not a disruptive religion.

Before Paul left he made sure to visit and encourage Lydia and the new believers there in Philippi. It is important for Christians to support and encourage other Christians, especially in areas where Christianity is sparse.

Short-term missions trips can accomplish this, as can being involved in prison and college ministries. We can all look for ways to minister to those who need encouragement.

For October 13

BELIEVE Acts 17:22–34

Recognize God's Sovereignty (22–26)

Paul was sent ahead of his companions to Athens where he was to wait for them. While there, Paul observed the behavior of the locals and noticed that the Athenians loved to discuss the latest ideas. Because Paul was telling people the gospel in Athens, he was invited to go speak at the Areopagus, a location where discussions, councils and trials took place.

Paul took advantage of his circumstances to recognize that the Athenians were a spiritual people. They had idols to many gods, including one idol to an unknown god in an attempt to not offend one they may have forgotten. Paul used this particular idol to explain to his audience who this "unknown god" is — the One true God of the universe.

Paul shows us a great example of the importance of understanding different cultures. When we share the gospel we need to take stock of the beliefs of the audience. What areas in their lives can we use as tools to point them to Christ?

Know Him (27–29)

In his explanation, Paul showed how the God of the Hebrews created all people. He doesn't need an idol made by the hands of people because He is the one who created people, and this God has made Himself known! Paul begins to explain to the Athenians how this God is evident because He created people and marked out their appointed times. Kingdoms rise and kingdoms fall according to God's plan. Paul even cites two Greek poets who refer to Zeus and uses them to point to the Christian God.

Paul points out that just by looking at evidence from creation, we can deduce that there is a God. No-

tice how Paul uses general revelation instead of the Bible in his discussion because these philosophers do not know the Hebrew Scriptures. When Paul reasons with Jews, he always uses Scripture because they believe the Scriptures already.

This is a great lesson for us as we share the gospel with others. For some who already believe the Bible but may not be saved, we use the Bible to explain the gospel. However, if we encounter someone who does not believe the Bible, we have to first argue that there is a God before moving to how we know this God from Scripture. This is seen throughout history in missions work.

Repent and Believe (30–34)

By knowing his audience and understanding his circumstances, Paul was able to tell these philosophers that this God of the universe who created all things calls on everyone to repent because judgment is coming, and we know this because of the resurrection of Jesus. Some Athenians rejected the message, but others wanted to hear more and eventually became believers.

We see from this interaction that when the gospel is preached, there will likely be some who mock it and refuse to believe it, but we should not lose heart. In spite of some opposition, several became Christians. Even in periods when the mockery turns to persecution, as in the case of Stephen, the gospel still spreads.

Christians have always been willing to preach the gospel in difficult circumstances. Jim Elliot lost his life trying to get the gospel to the Waorani tribe in South America and even though he and his friends lost their lives, many in that tribe eventually became Christians. Christ sacrificed Himself for us, and we need to be willing to be persecuted on His behalf.

*"Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said:
'Men of Athens, I perceive that you are very religious.'"*

Acts 17:22

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Sunday School Lessons

Adjunct Professor of Old Testament and Hebrew, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

By Teman Knight, Ph.D.



For October 6

PURPOSE EXEMPLIFIED Philippians 1:1-11

We have discovered that God created us for a purpose. Sin has not only separated us from God but also derailed our ability to fulfill God's purpose.

We learned that through faith we are saved from our sin and enabled to rediscover our purpose. The Holy Spirit guides us and empowers us to fulfill God's purpose in our lives. When we live the Spirit-filled life with Christ-centered purpose, we will bring glory to God.

Thank God for what He has done in the past. (1-5)

Prayer is a key component of living the Spirit-filled life. Thankfulness should be the starting point of any prayer. Paul is thankful for his partnership with Timothy and the privilege of being a servant of Jesus Christ.

Paul is thankful for undeserved and unearned grace and peace through a restored relationship with God. Paul is thankful for the church in Philippi and all they have done for him. In Paul's darkest hours they had been there to support and encourage him. They were partners with Him in the gospel, and they defended him when he was in jail.

When was the last time you thanked God for all your church has done for you?

Our church is where we learn about God and where we go when we are hurting. Our church is where we find forgiveness when we mess up, where we grow in faith and where we are discipled.

Our church is filled with people who love us and pray for us. Many times, I am called on to minister to a family that has no relationship with a church. Watching them go through the storms of life without a family of faith to surround them and love them is heartbreaking. Celebrate the blessing of being part of God's family and what God

has done in your life through His Church.

Praise God for what He continues to do in the present. (6-8)

We celebrate what God has already done for us, but we are also aware that He is still at work in us. God always finishes what He starts. I am sure of this. We are confident that He will continue to develop us and use us.

He has given us a new life and continues to change us to be more like Jesus and become what He created us to be. Paul indicates that as we serve God and partner together to fulfill His purpose, our love for each other will continue to grow. Thank God for what He continues to do for us and through us.

Glorify God through your continued growth and living for Him in the future. (9-11)

God has blessed us, is blessing us and will continue to work in our lives. If we are going to fulfill God's purpose and become the people God intends for us to be then we must not neglect prayer. We must pray that our love will keep growing.

Sometimes we focus on attendance and budgets, but what we really need to be concerned with is our love. I often pray that our church will be characterized by our love for God, our love for each other and demonstrating that love to the world.

We must pray for God's guidance. Being discerning means that we not only judge between good and evil but between better and best. We must pray that we may be pure and blameless.

"Pure" means there is nothing fake about us. "Blameless" means nothing in us causes others to stumble. Paul emphasizes that the evidence of Jesus living in us is the production of righteousness. As we continue to grow and mature, we will do the right thing and thus bring glory and praise to God in all we do.

For October 13

CAIN AND ABEL: FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY Genesis 4:1-12

The Bible begins with the wonderful account of creation. While everything was created by God, the Book of Genesis paints a beautiful picture of God's personal involvement in the creation of mankind. God created man and woman to have a relationship with Him and then placed them in a garden.

He gave them dominion over what He had created and gave them the task of tending the garden. But Adam and Eve rebelled and sinned against God. Sin not only impacts our relationship with God but also our relationships with each other. The impact of sin often manifests itself inside the family.

We are to contribute to our family's well-being. (1-2)

After Adam and Eve were removed from the garden because of their sin, Eve conceived and gave birth to two sons.

We see even in this biological act of birth that God is the Creator when Eve says, "I have had a male child with the Lord's help." Cain's name means "I have gotten," which shows that they had received him as a gift from God. Abel's name means "breath," referring to God breathing His breath of life into him.

Cain and Abel were very different. Cain was a farmer of the ground whereas Abel tended the flocks, but both had to work hard to produce food for their existence.

In whatever we do, we are to give our best to God as an act of worship. (3-7)

Even if someone is part of a family of faith, it is important that each member has a personal relationship with God. Both Cain and Abel brought an offering for God from

what each produced. Cain brought some of the land's produce, while Abel brought some of the firstborn and best portions of his flock. This may reflect Cain's attitude if he did not bring God his best. In whatever we do, we are to give our best to God as an act of worship.

The real difference is seen in their behaviors. God was pleased not only with Abel's offering, but He was also pleased with Abel.

Cain and his offering were found to be lacking. The indication that the problem was with Cain and not his offering is seen in God's response: "If you do what is right, won't you be accepted?" Our obedience is what pleases God.

We should seek to do good and not harm those in our family. (8-12)

God warned Cain to deal with the sin that was "crouching at the door." Cain ignored the warning and acted on his jealousy. He plotted to lure Abel to the field and kill him. God confronted Cain and punished him for his sin.

We must deal with sin when it first presents itself. Cain allowed one sin to drive him to multiple sins and ultimately to attacking and killing his brother.

God expects us to take care of each other, whether it is our biological family or our church family. God is all about relationships — our relationship with Him and our relationships with each other. Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other command greater than these" (Mark 12:30-31).

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

"And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him."

Genesis 4:8

WORD search

- ANTIOXIDANTS
BALANCE
BIRDWATCHING
BOATING
BONES
COMMUNITY
CYCLING
DANCE
DIET
ENDURANCE
EXERCISE
- FLEXIBILITY
FRESH AIR
FRUITS
GARDENING
HEART
HIKING
HYDRATION
JOINTS
LOW IMPACT
MOBILITY
NATURE
- NUTRITION
PORTIONS
PRAYER
PROTEIN
READING
RELAXING
SLEEP
STRETCH
SWIM
VEGGIES
WALKING

C K E X E R C I S E X N R Y F
G G N I N E D R A G O N T R C
N M O B I L I T Y I R R U H W
I H B I R D W A T C H I N G T
K J P E E L S I O S T H W C M
I R X R Q E R M T S M R A D D
H R T M I T M R Z T E P A W P
B N M G U U E R B C M N L E L
Z J G N N T E M N I O F L T H
Y E M I C A Y A W I S R B L G
V B T H D K R O T R T E O N N
F Y O I E U L A P G N S N B I
K L N A D C R F E L A H E S K
N G E N T D N C Q R D A S N L
P T E X Y I N A E C I I P O A
R E P H I A N L D E X R R I W
O I F R L B A G R J O I N T S
T D C A A X I U P Z I W J R V
E R B M I Y T L H D T M N O Q
I N N N N A E B I Y N C I P K
N F G D N N J R P T A T H W R
Y P M K M G N I L C Y C R X S

“Don’t you know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body.”

1 CORINTHIANS 6:19 – 20



You Gotta’ Hear This!

Glimpses of God in the everyday moments

Pridefully humble

We arrived at our first pastorate after seminary. On our first Saturday on the field, worn-out from the move and settling in, we looked forward to sleeping in and enjoying my husband’s designated day off.

The phone rang at about 7 a.m. “You up and ready to go?” asked the cheery voice. “I go every Saturday and take food to the homeless under the interstate bridge and just knew our new pastor would want to join me in this ministry.”

This continued with the deacon inviting my husband to other ministries, always on Saturday morning. What was my husband, a young minister at his first full-time church to do but to go?

Difficult decisions

He knew he would be judged by this deacon if he refused, and news would spread throughout the congregation that the new pastor was lazy and not interested in service. So my husband continued to go.

One Saturday, the deacon took him deep into the woods to a small lean-to. The man said, “This guy is a hermit and won’t come out, so I just leave this bag of food, and he gets it later.”

The deacon’s quest of ministry sounds noble; he thought so too, so he shared what he and my husband had done at deacon meetings. He then upbraided the others for not doing likewise.

He told the other deacons and

my husband that they would meet in one of the Sunday School rooms every Sunday to pray for the preacher.

When his turn came, he prayed briefly for the pastor, recounted the good deeds he had been responsible for that week, prayed for a closer spiritual walk for the other deacons and always closed his prayer by saying, “Lord, help these other men be as humble as I am.”

Pleasing the Lord

I’d say this man was filled with prideful humility. It brings to mind Jesus’ words in Matthew 6:6 to “enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.”

I’m also reminded that while pride and humility don’t go together, a humble spirit pleases the Lord.

“By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honor and life” (Prov. 22:4).

MEET THE AUTHOR

Barbara Eubanks of Albertville is an author, conference speaker, Christian humorist and retired English teacher. She is the widow of Baptist pastor Steve Eubanks.



Child back in school 8 days after near drowning

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

When 5-year-old Charlie Guisinger was found face-down in a swimming pool Aug. 4, no one knew how long he'd been there.

Later, they saw it on the security video — it was more than two minutes. Two minutes followed by panic, CPR and a helicopter ride to Birmingham.

"To see this happen, it was just unreal," said Charlie's grandfather, Donny Richards, a member of Ariton Baptist Church.

Just a year and a half before, Richards had lost his daughter, Jane — Charlie's mom — after her lifelong battle with cystic fibrosis.

And then Charlie came out of the pool with no pulse.

"He was officially dead, just like Lazarus was dead," Richards said.

At Children's of Ala-

bama, the doctor told him that if his grandson made it through the night, it would take two months to see how much damage had been done or for him to show any signs of healing. The saltwater pool had done extensive damage to Charlie's lungs, and the doctor felt like brain damage was inevitable.

At that point, Richards said, "All I had was my God — and that's enough." He prayed for a miracle, for God to heal Charlie completely.

The next morning when the doctor came in, Charlie was breathing on his own. An MRI of his brain came back perfectly normal.

Answered prayer

Richards said he realized God had answered his prayer. As they lifted the sedation, Charlie began speaking, then got up and walked with no problems.



Photo courtesy of Donny Richards

Charlie Guisinger, 5, and his grandfather, Donny Richards, reunite with the helicopter team that transported him on Aug. 4 to Children's of Alabama in Birmingham.

"God was showing all these doctors and nurses what He could do," Richards said.

On Aug. 9, Charlie was moved from ICU to a step-down room, and the next day he went home. Two days later, he went back to kindergarten.

"God does miracles every

day," Richards said. "By any indication, this should not have happened."

He said the medical team was amazed by how Charlie recovered, and he prays what they saw pushes them closer to God.

"We have no way of knowing how this has affected the lives of people

— we'll never know," he said.

But he does know it's impacted one of the nurses, a woman named Faith. She and Richards had many conversations around Charlie's bed, and she told Richards that the things he said to her and the way she saw God at work would strengthen her for years to come.

Richards said he hopes Charlie's story will spark revival, and he looks forward to the day when Charlie will understand the full story of what happened to him and be able to share that with others.

"One day I'm going to sit him down and tell him everything, because he is a miracle child," Richards said.

To hear Richards' testimony at Ariton Baptist on Aug. 11, go to tabonline.org/charlie.

Faith Moments

Meaningful ways to observe Pastor Appreciation Month

October is Pastor Appreciation Month. Your pastor and other ministers are a gift from God to your church.

The Apostle Paul shares that the pastor is worth double honor (see 1 Timothy 5:17). Here are 10 meaningful ways you and your church can honor and show love and appreciation during Pastor Appreciation Month:

1. Shower your pastor with notes and letters: Write heartfelt letters of gratitude, sharing personal stories about how the pastor or staff has impacted your spiritual journey.

2. Share a prayer verse: Give your pastor a Bible verse you're praying over for him and his family, committing to pray it throughout the year as a sign of ongoing support.

3. Treat them to meals: Organize a weekly meal train, with church members signing up to deliver home-cooked meals to the pastor's family, providing them with practical care and nourishment. FBC Tillman's Corner delivered meals to their pastor every night for several months. Wow!

4. Host a workday at the pastor's home: Gather volunteers to handle household chores, maintenance or yard work. While the team serves, send the pastor and their family out for a relaxing day or a date.

5. Give a getaway: Offer a retreat or weekend getaway at a cabin or lake house for the pastor and family to rest and recharge, showing appreciation for their dedication.

6. Organize a special service: Plan a Sunday service to honor the

pastoral staff, featuring testimonies, a leadership message and a prayer of blessing. Follow it up with a fellowship meal or celebration.

7. Give extra time off: Provide additional vacation days or a sabbatical, allowing the pastor time to rest and rejuvenate, supporting their mental and emotional well-being.

8. Gift the pastor's family: Show love to the pastor's spouse and children with thoughtful gifts, recognizing their sacrifices and their vital role in supporting the pastor's ministry.

9. Give financial gifts: Collect a love offering or provide a financial gift to help ease any financial burdens and bless the pastor and their family.

10. Launch a prayer campaign: Organize a prayer calendar and encourage the congregation to pray

for the pastor and staff throughout the month, lifting them in prayer daily.

These expressions of appreciation uplift your pastor and foster a deeper sense of community and mutual care within the church.

Your thoughtfulness makes a difference

Remember, our motivation should always be love, not obligation.

Yet, it's essential to recognize that pastors often have unspoken needs, even if they may not be immediately visible.

Your thoughtful gestures can make a profound difference in their well-being and ministry.

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



MEDIA REVIEWS

By Leann Callaway and Steve Potts

The Alabama Baptist

Book reviews: Confronting cultural attitudes, anticipating Jesus' return

Straight to the Heart

By Mike Blackaby
and Daniel Blackaby

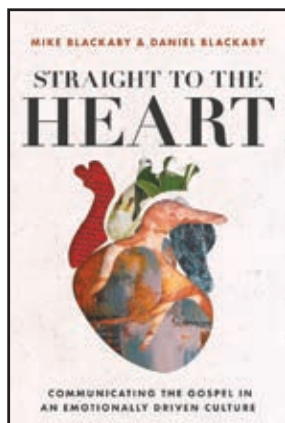
David C Cook, 2024

With their new book "Straight to the Heart," brothers Daniel and Mike Blackaby hope to help believers effectively communicate the gospel in a culturally relevant and impactful way, taking an introspective look at the challenges of engaging in faith-based conversations.

"Ultimately, our prayer is always that the book will guide people into

a deeper and more holistic relationship with God," Daniel Blackaby said. "The book was written in response to a growing uncertainty and frustration within the Church toward the state of today's emotionally driven culture."

"Straight to the Heart" is filled with practical advice and insights to help readers engage in faith-based conversations.



"We also want to encourage Christians that perhaps the emotionally driven culture all around us is not an insurmountable problem but an exciting possibility," Blackaby noted.

"It's always easy to focus on and become discouraged by the shocking news stories and internet posts that showcase negative examples of emotional excess," he noted, "but a culture driven by the heart is actually primed to receive the gospel in many unique and powerful ways if we can learn to speak the language of the heart." (Leann Callaway)

Bright Hope for Tomorrow: How Anticipating Jesus' Return Gives Strength for Today

By Chris Davis

Zondervan, 2022

Many books written about the end times from a Christian perspective are either sensationalistic attempts to connect contemporary events with biblical prophecy or ones that strongly argue for a specific eschatological scenario.

Whether they promote premillennial, amillennial or postmillennial viewpoints or debate the timing of the rapture, these books can lead the average Christian reader into a complicated consideration of different theories of biblical interpretation and application.

In his book "Bright Hope for Tomorrow," pastor and author Chris Davis takes another approach. Davis serves as senior pastor of Groveton Baptist Church in Alexandria, Virginia. He is a graduate of Samford University in Birmingham and Phoenix Seminary in Scottsdale, Arizona.

His book looks at the broader biblical instructions about serving and

waiting in light of the Second Coming without focusing on the many debates about exact timing and end times scenarios. He examines the vital role of hope that grounds Christian faith as we look to the future.

Davis leads the reader through biblical teaching such as Paul's encouragement to grieving Christians at Thessalonica and the glorious promise of reunion at the return of Jesus.

He shows that the Day of the Lord was a common theme that emphasized both the good news of God's victory and the bad news of certain judgment upon the lost. He notes that when Paul and John encountered the resurrected Christ, they were overwhelmed by His glorious majesty.

The final chapters focus on the importance of gathering together as believers, purifying our lives and serving as we wait for Christ's return. I found this book to be one of the most helpful and encouraging books about the end times I have ever encountered. (Steve Potts)



Life in the Negative World: Confronting Challenges in an Anti-Christian Culture

By Aaron Renn

Zondervan, 2024

How do Christians navigate the dramatic changes in Western culture that have shifted into a much more aggressive secularism?

In his new book, "Life in the Negative World," Aaron M. Renn explores those changes and suggests ways Christians might respond.

Renn is co-founder of and senior fellow at American Reformer and a former senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research.

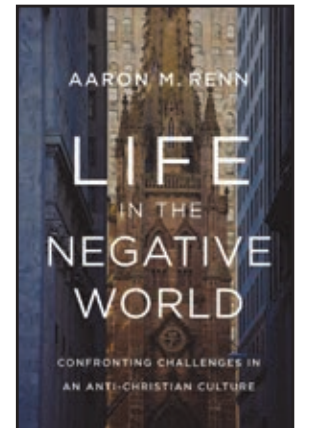
He begins with the idea that American evangelical Christianity was generally accepted with respect until the mid 1990s. He suggests that attitudes about Christians have shifted from positive to neutral to negative since then.

Renn explores various ways Christians should understand living as a "moral minority."

"One of the things I love about the Bible is its realism, how it's true to life," Renn writes. "Christians today should not ignore our cultural reality but rather be realistic about the negative world environment we live in. ... We can do many things to start adapting. ... There are ways for us to create churches that can thrive in this world."

Renn recommends living lives of personal excellence, being communities of faithful compassion and developing strategies for being resilient in hard times.

This is a thoughtful and intriguing book. Not everyone will be convinced on every level, but Aaron Renn helps believers consider new ways to serve Christ in an adversarial culture. (Steve Potts)



EDITOR'S NOTE

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

Aging Well

October 3, 2024



MAKING A PLAN

A pastor's story:
The daring
decision to retire



EARLY DETECTION

Newborn
screenings offer
opportunities
for intervention,
better outcomes

*Resources that encompass all aspects
of growing older, including basic
tips for staying healthy, coping with
challenges and preparing for the future.*



contents



05



10



14



07



13

- 03** Are your medical records accurate? Tips for reviewing, correcting errors
- 04** News briefs related to dementia, Alzheimer's disease and Medicare
- 05** Communication tips for people living with dementia and their caregivers
- 07** 93-year-old Merle Kyles continues to teach children, lead them to the Lord
- 09** A pastor's story: The life-impacting decision to retire requires intentionality
- 10** Do you have a will? Here are 5 reasons why you should make the effort

- 11** What is the difference between a will and a trust?
- 12** Financial fraud and identity theft: Who is being targeted most?
- 13** Nutritional health: Eating disorders can affect every age
- 14** Mobile maternity clinic set to launch in Alabama next fall
- 15** Newborn screenings offer opportunities for intervention, better outcomes

The Alabama Baptist

FROM THE EDITOR

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Common mistakes

BY CARRIE BROWN McWHORTER • THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

Are your medical records accurate? Tips for reviewing, correcting errors

Health care providers use a variety of methods to keep their records up to date. Paper forms, kiosks, tablets and online portals are all commonly used.

Though the potential for medical records errors has always existed, the increased use of technology combined with fewer personal interactions between patients and office staff may contribute to inaccuracies in patient records.

Some of the most common medical records mistakes involve:

- ▶ **Data entry errors:** Information may be entered incorrectly into electronic health records (EHRs) or paper records during the registration process.
- ▶ **Miscommunication:** Details provided by patients or health care providers during consultations or visits may be misunderstood or recorded inaccurately.
- ▶ **Identity mix-ups:** Similar names or identifiers could lead to confusion, resulting in medical information being attributed to the wrong individual. If a child or spouse is completing a form for someone else, they might accidentally put their own information.
- ▶ **Outdated information:** Changes in personal information, such as address, phone number or insurance details, may not always be updated promptly in medical records.
- ▶ **Incomplete records:** Certain information may be omitted unintentionally, affecting the completeness and accuracy of the medical history.

Take responsibility

Patients and their families can take more responsibility for the accuracy of their records, and mistakes can be corrected.

Keep in mind: it's better to catch and correct errors quickly to ensure accurate diagnosis, treatment and billing.

If you suspect that there is incorrect in-

formation in your medical records, here are some steps you can take to address them:

Review and follow up

▶ **Review your records:** Obtain a copy of your medical records from your health care provider or hospital, and review them carefully. If possible, have someone you trust go over the records with you.

▶ **Identify errors:** Look for inaccuracies in personal information (e.g., name, date of birth), medical history, medications, allergies, test results or treatment plans.

▶ **Contact your health care provider:** Inform your health care provider or the facility where the error occurred about the inaccuracies. They may have a specific process for correcting errors in medical records.

▶ **Provide documentation:** If possible, provide documentation (such as identification cards or official documents) to support the correction of personal information.

▶ **Follow up:** Follow up with your health care provider to ensure corrections are made and updated records are accurate.

▶ **Request amendments:** Under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), you have the right to request amendments to your medical records if inaccuracies are not resolved satisfactorily.

Ensuring the accuracy of your medical records takes some extra time and effort, but it is essential for receiving appropriate health care treatment and avoiding potential complications that may arise from incorrect information.



New cap

Medicare drug plan enrollees could see savings in 2025

An estimated 61,000 Alabamians on Medicare prescription drug plans will see savings thanks to a new out-of-pocket cap that starts Jan. 1, 2025.

The savings are made possible by a provision in the 2022 prescription drug law which caps out-of-pocket prescription drug costs every year, beginning at \$2,000 next year, for America's 56 million Medicare drug plan enrollees.

A recent AARP report analyzed the number of enrollees who will benefit from the cap by state, age, gender and race between 2025 and 2029. The findings indicate that Medicare drug plan enrollees nationwide who reach the new out-of-pocket

cap will see average savings of roughly \$1,500, or 56%, in 2025 for their prescription drugs.

Other findings from the report include:

► Between 3 and 4 million Part D plan enrollees nationwide are estimated to benefit from the new out-of-pocket cap every year between 2025 and 2029, including more than 61,000 individuals in Alabama.

► By 2029, the share of enrollees benefiting from the new out-of-pocket cap is estimated to be 10% or higher in 19 states, including

Alabama, plus the District of Columbia.

► More than three-quarters of Medicare drug plan enrollees who will benefit in 2025 are between the ages of 65 and 84.



Unsplash.com

“Limiting how much seniors on Medicare drug plans pay for prescription drugs every year builds on other new and important cost-saving measures, such as capping insulin co-pays at \$35 a month

and making many vaccines, such as shingles and pneumonia, free,” said Candi Williams, state director of AARP Alabama. (AARP)

FDA approves new drug for treatment of early symptoms of Alzheimer's

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration in July approved a new medication for adults with early symptoms of Alzheimer's disease.

Kisunla can help the body remove the excessive buildup of amyloid plaques. Amyloid is a protein produced naturally in the body that can clump together.

The excessive buildup of amyloid plaques in the brain may lead to memory and thinking issues associated with the early stages of Alzheimer's disease, including diminished ability to remember new information, plan, organize and otherwise carry on the routines of daily life.

In trials, participants treated with Kisunla experienced slower advancement of clinical

symptoms and less risk of disease progression, according to its maker, Eli Lilly and Company.

In July, the FDA approved Kisunla for patients with mild cognitive impairment or in the mild dementia stage of disease, the population studied in the clinical trials.

'Invaluable time'

Dr. Howard Fillit, co-founder and chief science officer at the Alzheimer's Drug Discovery Foundation, noted that “diagnosing and treating Alzheimer's sooner than we do today has the potential to meaningfully slow disease progression, giving patients invaluable time to maintain their independence for longer.” (TAB Media)

New blood test could help doctors diagnose Alzheimer's sooner

A new blood test could help doctors diagnose Alzheimer's disease more accurately in a primary care setting, leading to crucial early interventions in treatment.

Researchers at Lund University in Sweden conducted a trial of the new blood test on 1,213 individuals experiencing mild memory loss symptoms. The test measures levels of Plasma Phospho-Tau21, a specific blood biomarker for Alzheimer's disease.

The blood test showed about 90% accuracy in diagnosing Alzheimer's disease. Currently, doctors rely on physical and cognitive tests, brain scans and/or cerebro-

spinal fluid tests to make a diagnosis. The Swedish researchers noted that primary care doctors' accuracy in identifying Alzheimer's disease is around 61%, while specialist physicians are correct about 73% of the time.

The simplicity and reliability of the blood tests could signal a significant advancement in diagnosis, as memory loss can also stem from other treatable conditions such as depression or chronic fatigue.

The test is already available at some specialty clinics in the U.S. The next steps include establishing clear clinical guidelines for the blood test's use in health care. (Lund University)

Preparedness is key to aging well



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Be prepared

BY WILLIE BRUNETTI • SPECIAL TO THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

Communication tips for people living with dementia and their caregivers

Caregivers of those with Alzheimer's disease or dementia find that communication is one area that is greatly affected.

The communication skills of a person with Alzheimer's disease or dementia will gradually decline, hindering the person's ability to communicate and maintain a sense of reality in their lives. Eventually they will have more difficulty expressing their thoughts and emotions.

The challenges associated with communicating can lead to frustration for both the patient and the caregiver. However, understanding what may occur can help prepare you, the caregiver, make adjustments and know how to respond, helping to improve communication.

For individuals living with Alzheimer's, changes in communication vary and are based on how far along they have progressed in the disease. Issues you can expect to see throughout the disease progression include:

- ▶ Difficulty finding the right words.
- ▶ Using familiar words repeatedly.
- ▶ Describing familiar objects rather than calling them by name.
- ▶ Difficulty organizing words logically.
- ▶ Reverting to speaking a native language.
- ▶ Speaking less often.
- ▶ Relying on gestures more than speaking.

Try various methods

The caregiver can begin early, working with the individual to see what methods might help them communicate their needs and wants in an appropriate way.

One of the statements that best fits this environment is that the Alzheimer's patient is not giving you



Photo by freepik

a hard time, they are having a hard time. We need to step back and help them deal with the frustrations.

One primary goal of the caregiver is to help maintain the dignity of their loved one. This is done through learning the stages of the disease and how to deal with the effects of the changes.

In the early stages of the disease an individual is still able to participate in meaningful conversation and engage in social activities. However, they may repeat stories, feel overwhelmed in crowds or have difficulty finding the right words.

It is a painful process when a person must accept the inability to stand alone, the loss of independence or worse, the need to depend on someone else to do important tasks. People living with dementia may become further frustrated when they can't communicate their thoughts and concerns.

The caregiver also becomes frustrated in trying to deal with the effects of the disease on themselves and the family. But it is time to

come to terms with the diagnosis and the emotions and to spend time learning and creating strategies to keep the lines of communication open despite the changes in their ability to communicate in a normal way.

Middle stages

The middle stages of the disease are typically the longest and can last for many years. As the disease progresses, the person will have greater difficulty communicating and require more direct care. The patient also needs more understanding and acceptance from the caregiver.

In many cases, people in this phase lose track of reality and who they are talking with. As a caregiver, identify yourself and help them deal with the trauma they are experiencing of not knowing who they are talking with, even if you are a family member.

Don't contradict or correct the conversation that is taking place. Don't argue. Even if you are correct, you both lose. You will never win an argument with someone

living with dementia because he or she can no longer be reasoned into agreeing with you. It can be frustrating for the caregiver to deal with the repeated questions from the patient. Repetition comes with Alzheimer's.

Listen to each story as if it were the first time you've heard it and respond to each question as if you've never answered it before. Respond to them in a loving and caring way and get to the root of their problems.

Late stages

The late stages of the disease may last from several weeks to several years. As the disease progresses they will become nonverbal and rely on facial expressions or vocal sounds. Around-the-clock care is usually required in this stage.

As the disease progresses, the individual may seem to live in the past and rely on the comfort of memories from long ago. This results in sometimes not recognizing familiar faces or their environment.

As a caregiver, put yourself in the shoes of your loved one and acknowledge how frightening it would be to not recognize your surroundings and have family members appear as strangers. Help them feel they are indeed in a safe place.

The trauma created by the day-to-day life of dealing with a dementia patient is devastating, in part because the well-being of the person who has dementia depends directly on the caregiver's well-being. Find ways to care for yourself so that you will not exhaust your own emotional and physical resources.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Willie Brunetti has a long history of being a family caregiver and leads seminars on the topic. Find more resources on dementia at ALZ.org or talk with someone 24/7 at 800-272-3900.



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Legacy of faith

BY DONNA BAIN • SPECIAL TO THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

93-year-old Merle Kyles continues to teach children, lead them to the Lord

Merle Kyles has been teaching Sunday School and Vacation Bible School to children for 48 years at New Salem Baptist Church out-

side of Reform in Pickens County. Now 93, she remains faithful to her church and to her family, who speak of the immense impact she has had on their lives.

Kyles has taught three generations of her family

in Sunday School — her children, grandchildren and now great-grandchildren, as well as many others who have come through the doors of her classroom at New Salem.

She and her husband, George, who died in 2020, joined New Salem in 1978. She began teaching Sunday School in 1985. Her Sunday School class was once called the Lighthouse and is made up of small preschool children who thoroughly enjoy Kyles' Bible stories and crafts.

Over her 48 years, she has taught children young and old. Kyles taught in Vacation Bible School this year, and she had perfect attendance — even on her birthday, July 10.

Led to serve

Kyles began teaching because there was a need for volunteers in the Sunday School department, and she felt led to serve. She had always wanted to be a 2nd grade teacher but instead had to work to help her parents. She believes God had plans for her to teach His Word to children at church.

"It was something I just wanted to do, and the church needed volunteers," she said. "Teaching the Word is very important, especially nowadays."

The impact Kyles has had on children is immeasurable. Her family spoke of children who had been in her class that had terrible home lives. They spoke of one student who died as a teenager, but



Submitted photo

93-year-old Merle Kyles has been faithfully teaching Sunday School and Vacation Bible School to children for 48 years at New Salem Baptist Church outside of Reform in Pickens County.

they were so comforted to know that he had been taught the lifesaving Word of Jesus Christ by Kyles.

Kyles said she reads her Bible every morning and prays for the children in her class, her family and the needs of others.

When asked what keeps her getting up and going to church every Sunday and teaching, Kyles said, "It is very important to me. It is a habit for one thing. ... [But] I love coming to church. I look forward to it."

Community impact

Kyles also loves when children come up to her in the community and remember that she taught them.

"It thrills me that they would remember that I did do something to encourage them and help them," said Kyles.

Mike Hall, pastor of New Salem Baptist Church for

almost 50 years, said Kyles' "love for her Lord, her church, her children and her pastor have been an inspiration to me for my nearly 50 years of ministry."

"Children that she has taught are grown now and are teaching their children and grandchildren about the love for Jesus that she instilled in them."

"Her perfect attendance and leadership in our Vacation Bible School is a very natural demonstration of her dedication and love for her church and her Lord. Even after the loss of her husband of more than 60 years, she faithfully serves every Sunday. God bless her example to us all."

EDITOR'S NOTE — This article originally appeared in the Pickens County Herald. It is reprinted with permission and edited for space.

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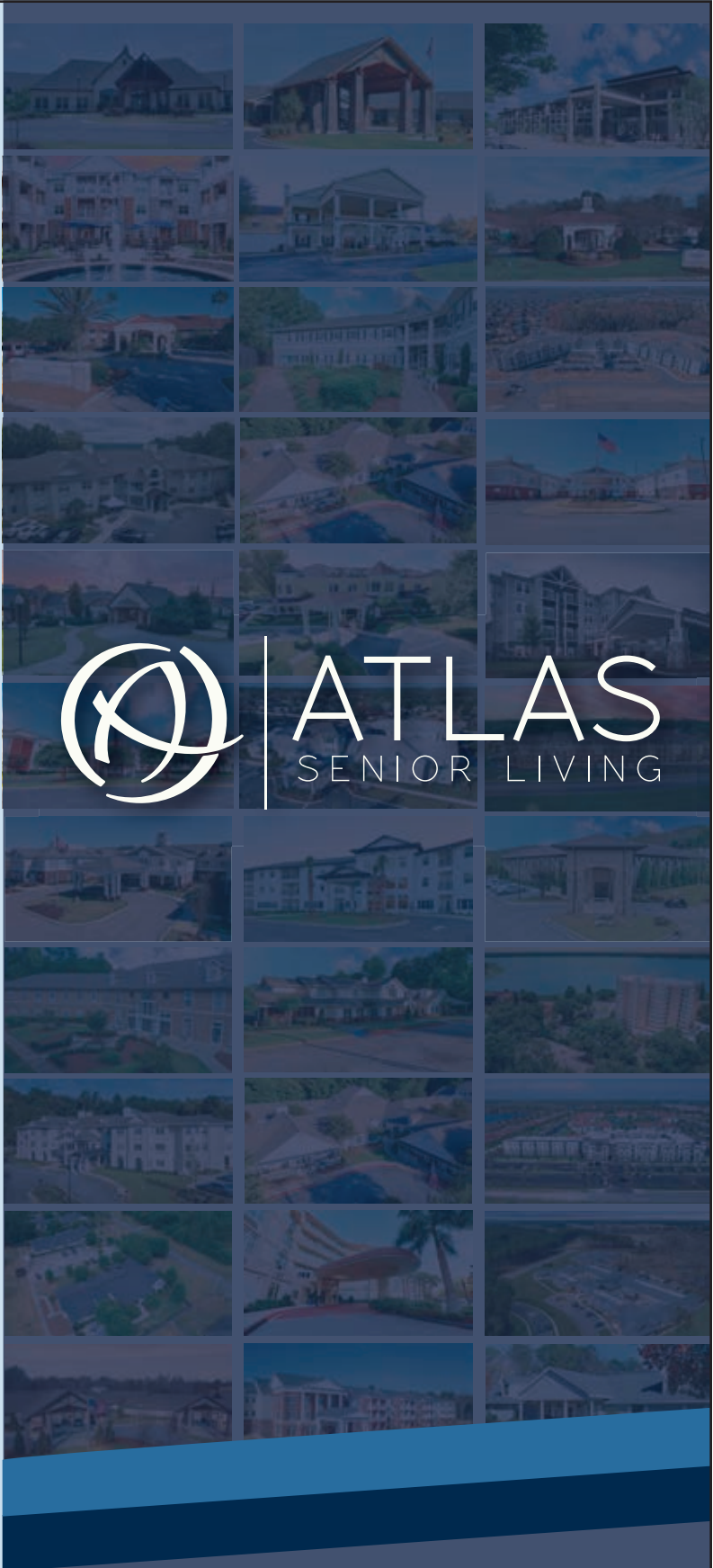
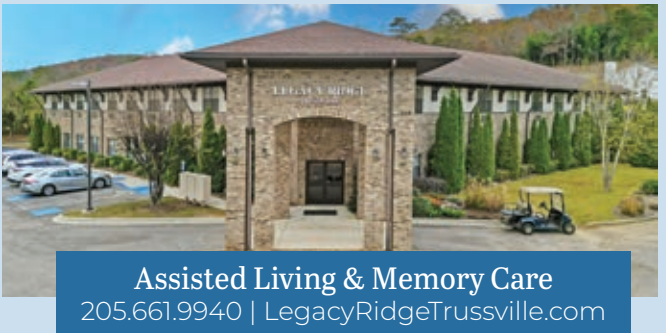




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Making a plan

BY DAVID L. CHANCEY • SPECIAL TO THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

A pastor's story: The life-impacting decision to retire requires intentionality

In March 2024, I joined the wave of baby boomer ministers moving into retirement. After months of praying and years of putting the foundation into place, I stepped by faith into a new season, walking where I'd never walked before.

I struggled mightily with the decision because like many pastors, much of my identity connects to my vocational calling. Would I be able to leave the church family I had served for over 24 years and loved deeply? Would I adjust from “the flow of the week” that included sermon prep peaking with sermon delivery? Could I walk away from being “the pastor”?

After much prayer and discussion with my wife, family and trusted friends, I began to look ahead.

Family considerations

I had a target window. November 2024 marked my 25th anniversary with this church family. A tragedy experienced in 1993 also influenced my thinking. My dad died of colon cancer at age 67.

As the years went by, I eventually thought, “God, if I can, I'd like to shoot for around 67 and retire while I'm still young enough and healthy



DAVID L. CHANCEY

Photo by Lisa Fountain

enough to travel, visit my grandchildren and visit my aging mother more often.”

Off and on throughout 2023, I sought counsel, talked with financial people and tossed around possibilities with my wife.

As I sought God's will, I sensed that God confirmed my full-time pastoral ministry was coming to a close, and it was time to begin a new chapter. I pictured stepping away sometime between March (when I

turned 67) and November 2024. I chose March.

Several items weighed heavily as I grew more serious about this life-impacting decision:

First, I made sure I had prepared personally, emotionally and otherwise. What was I retiring from? I was retiring from the rigors of church life and from the myriad responsibilities of being a pastor, yes, but I also was retiring from a full-time job and all the obligations that came with it.

Second, I had to decide how to prepare my leadership. Once I established my target day, I met with our three deacon officers. I stressed confidentiality, saying “This is MY announcement to make” when the time came. I gave a tentative timeline and recommended we lead the church family to call a transitional pastor rather than a traditional interim because of my long tenure.

Third, I had to decide how and when to announce to the congregation. There is no good time to announce because something important is always coming up in church life. Sixty days seemed reasonable

in my context, so a mid-March retirement necessitated a mid-January announcement.

Fourth, I desired to provide leadership at the time of the announcement and in the days to follow. I knew I would catch the congregation by surprise, so I tried to answer as many questions as possible in the announcement.

Fifth, I desired to have a strong finish. I assured our congregation I had no intention of coasting but would serve them right up to the end of my tenure.

Sixth, I had to decide what my role was after my departure. We remain members of our church and continue to serve, but I purposely keep a very low profile so as not to give any appearance of interfering.

What does retirement look like for me? I'm still figuring that out, but I've asked God to expand my writing ministry and to open doors to preach. Both prayers have been answered.

New stage of life

We've visited my 96-year-old mother, our children and our grandchildren, and we've traveled to some places on our “wish list.” Plenty of people told me we would be “so busy you'll wonder how you ever had time to work.” We've experienced that reality already.

Every minister's circumstances are different. Some desire to serve full-time into their 70s. Others are forced to retire earlier than they planned due to health or other concerns. My deacon chair, retired from corporate life, told me I was very fortunate to go out on my own terms and timetable.

Things are different in this new stage of life, but our desire to serve, our friendships and our fellowship continues. For those things, we are grateful.

Questions to consider while praying about retirement

- ▶ Does the thought of retirement scare you or excite you?
- ▶ How do you feel about walking away from the routine of full-time employment?
- ▶ How does your health or the health of your spouse factor into your timetable?
- ▶ Is your work getting harder

and more stressful as you get older?

- ▶ What do you picture yourself doing if you aren't working?
- ▶ What's on your bucket list that you can't do until you retire?
- ▶ What are your ministry plans during retirement?

Take action

BY JOEY HOCUTT • THE BAPTIST FOUNDATION OF ALABAMA

Do you have a will? Here are 5 reasons why you should make the effort

For any person 18 years or older — even if all you own is a tennis racquet and a pair of sneakers — you need a will.

Why? It is a responsible act for a person to put all of their final wishes into a document that meets the standards of the law in the state of their residence.

In simple terms: Every person who is of age and owns any assets at all needs a legal will.

The hard truth is that all states have written a will for you in the event you fail to do so. All states have laws that prescribe what happens to your belongings after your death. There might be an instance where the state-written will leaves everything just like you want it, but I have yet to see that in my more than 20 years of practice in the legal field.

In response to this truth, I want to encourage you to keep the state out of your affairs. Take the time to consider this most important task that more than 65% of people neglect.

5 solid reasons

Here are 5 solid reasons, though certainly not all the reasons, why every person of age should make drafting a will a top priority.

1. To appoint a guardian for your children.

If you have minor children, this is the most basic reason that you need a will. If both parents pass away at the same time and there is no will, minor children become, for all practical purposes, the responsibility of the state. As a parent, you want to avoid allowing the state to decide who should care for them.

This decision could be one of the easiest decisions you have to make, or it could be one of the main reasons why you might never get your planning completed. Some people



Photo by freepik

know very quickly that there is only one real option for them to consider when selecting a guardian. Others may have seemingly no options or multiple equal options. Pray through the decision first. Ask the potential guardian(s) whether they agree to accept the responsibility.

Make this decision a priority to avoid major issues, possibly even years after the need arises.

2. To protect your business.

Making a will is a good way to pass your company to your heirs or the co-owners of your business. Statistics show that 70% of family-owned businesses do not make it past the first generation, and the main cause is failure to plan. An estate plan gives you the power to choose what will happen when you can no longer run your business.

Many questions arise when a small business owner is suddenly not around to carry on the operations of the business. For example, will your heirs continue the business, or do you want it sold? Would you rather non-family co-workers take over the business? Have tax implica-

tions been considered and planned properly? There are many decisions to be made in business succession and many documents that need to be drafted. A will is vitally important for the protection of a business.

3. To decide who receives your assets.

Remember what I said earlier about the tennis racquet and the sneakers? You may have someone specific in mind to receive these items after your passing, but unless you plan properly with a will, the chances are very slim that this will happen.

Your belongings

Most of us have much more than this as part of our estate. We have personal property items, but we also have real property, life insurance, retirement, investment accounts and cash. Whether it's a family generational heirloom, a classic car or your savings, you should decide who receives your belongings after you die, not generic guidelines established by your state.

The state-determined rules might

not meet your wishes and will never include provisions for those not related to you, like close friends. Make sure your loved ones get the assets you want them to receive.

4. To provide for a favorite charity.

Wills don't have to be just for friends and family. Including a charity in your will is a great way to give back and make sure your assets are used for a good cause. This is at the very heart of our work at The Baptist Foundation of Alabama.

You can be assured that if you fail to prepare a will, no charity will get a gift from you, even if that is your desire. There are some really powerful tools that can be used to benefit charities and minimize taxes at the same time, and proper planning is essential to accomplish this.

5. To prevent unnecessary difficulties when times are difficult enough.

The final reason everyone should have a will is a more general but still important one. Having practiced law privately for 14 years and worked in the area of estate planning for more than 20 years, I can assure you that issues arise after someone dies that no one saw coming.

Losing someone is incredibly hard, and none of us want to spend those hard times arguing with lawyers and family members. Making a will keeps your loved ones from having to deal with extra burdens in a time of sadness.

Most people cannot think clearly in the midst of losing someone. When you are grieving, it's harder to make major decisions, but somebody has to be in charge. This could cause problems if more than one person feels the responsibility lies with them.

Take action and take care of your responsibility, for your own sake and for those who depend on you.



Photo by Drazen Zigic on Freepik

Manage assets

What is the difference between a will and a trust?

BY JOEY HOCUTT • THE BAPTIST FOUNDATION OF ALABAMA

Estate planning is a vital process that enables individuals to secure their assets and ensure the smooth distribution of their wealth to beneficiaries after their passing.

Wills and trusts are two primary tools in estate planning, each serving distinct purposes.

Understanding the differences between a will and a trust can help you make informed decisions about how to best manage your assets

and provide for your loved ones.

Wills

A will, often referred to as a “last will and testament,” is a legal document that outlines your wishes for the distribution of your assets and the handling of your affairs after your death. It is a foundational part of estate planning and serves as a declaration of your intentions.

A will dictates how your assets will be distributed after your death. It can cover a wide range of properties, in-

cluding real estate, personal belongings and financial accounts.

A will allows you to designate guardians for your minor children. It allows you to specify who will be responsible for their care and upbringing in the event of your passing.

Wills typically go through a legal process known as probate after your death. This process involves validating the will, identifying assets, paying debts and distributing assets to beneficiaries. Probate can be time-

consuming and may involve court proceedings.

Wills become part of the public record upon entering the probate process.

Trusts

A trust is a legal entity that holds and manages assets for the benefit of specified individuals or entities, known as beneficiaries. Trusts are versatile tools that offer various advantages beyond what a will can provide.

Trusts allow you to transfer ownership of assets to the trust, which is managed by a trustee (often yourself during your lifetime). You can specify how and when the assets are distributed to beneficiaries, which can extend beyond your lifetime.

One of the key advantages of trusts is that they can help bypass the probate process. Assets held in a trust generally do not go through probate, leading to faster and more private asset distribution.

Unlike wills, trusts offer a greater degree of privacy. Trusts are not usually made public, meaning the terms, assets and beneficiaries remain confidential.

Trusts provide more control and flexibility in asset distribution. You can create revocable or irrevocable trusts, specify conditions for distributions (such as age milestones) and even include instructions for managing

assets if you become incapacitated.

Trusts can be more complex to set up and manage compared to wills. They often involve legal and administrative costs associated with creation, management and potential amendments.

Both wills and trusts play crucial roles in estate planning, but they serve different purposes and come with distinct benefits.

Wills are fundamental documents that guide asset distribution and other wishes, while trusts provide more control, privacy and the ability to avoid probate.

Professional advice

The choice between a will and a trust depends on your individual circumstances, goals and the level of control you wish to maintain over your assets both during your lifetime and after your passing. Consulting with legal and financial professionals can help you make an informed decision that aligns with your estate planning objectives.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Joey Hocutt serves as a ministry engagement officer with The Baptist Foundation of Alabama. Alabama Baptists who need help with their estate plans or churches considering a legacy ministry for their members can get more information at tbfa.org.



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Financial fraud and identity theft: Who is being targeted most?

BY LINNIE RUSSELL • THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

Earlier this year, the Federal Trade Commission released its 2023 Consumer Sentinel Network Data Book, aggregated from millions of consumer reports. These statistics cast light on a grim yet important reality — financial fraud and identity theft can happen to anyone at any age.

Working-age adults

Adults in their 30s are the most likely targets for identity theft. But consumers ages 20–69 all report similar levels of fraud and similar financial losses.

“Just last year in the U.S., there were more than 20,000 reported cases of identity theft victimizing children and teenagers.”

Whether you’re just starting your career or counting down the days until retirement, it’s always important to monitor and secure your finances. Be sure to check your credit reports and bank statements, keeping an eye out for discrepancies.

Senior adults

While seniors age 70 and up are less likely to report incidents of fraud, they are susceptible to much greater financial losses — two to three times higher than the average for younger adults. These numbers illustrate the importance of senior advocacy. Intervention, education and support are



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vital for older adults and their caregivers to combat fraud and financial exploitation. Learn more and access a wealth of resources by visiting the Alabama Department of Senior Services website at alabamaageline.gov.

Children and teens

Minors have become frequent targets of identity theft, since they rarely begin monitoring their credit reports prior to graduating high

school. Just last year in the U.S., there were more than 20,000 reported cases of identity theft victimizing children and teenagers. That’s why the FTC recommends checking a child’s credit report once he or she turns 16. This will allow families time to report the fraud and correct their child’s financial history “before he or she applies for a job, a college loan, a car loan or a credit card or tries to rent a place to live.”

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Body image

BY TRACY RIGGS FRONTZ • THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

Nutritional health, awareness of eating disorders important at all ages

Being healthy is often associated with being an ideal body weight, no matter what it takes to get there. Sometimes there is a disregard for proper nutrition in order to meet this goal.

However, proper nutrition is extremely important at every age and every phase of life. One of the systems it affects most is the nervous system, including the brain, said Rebecca Taylor, an assistant professor of counseling at Colorado Christian University who specializes in eating disorders and body image.

“An adolescent’s brain is not fully developed yet, so malnourishment and dieting can have grave impacts on the brain developing normally. As an individual moves into young adulthood and adulthood, we may see that their body is responding poorly to past nutrition maltreatment,” she said.

“Similarly to adolescents, when we consider nutrition in seniors, we know that it greatly promotes or inhibits brain functioning depending on if we use food to nourish our bodies and brains or deprive the body and brain from what they need to function well.”

She added, “As seniors are often presented with cognitive decline, memory loss, muscle atrophy and other medical complications, it is important to continue to nourish the brain through food and rest and body movement.”

Not all weight loss is good

One of the results of the idea of weight loss at all costs is the spectrum of eating disorders.

When the term “eating disorder” is mentioned, a person’s first thought is often anorexia or bulimia — lifestyles that either greatly restrict eating or involve throwing up



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after eating in order to lose weight. The term is most often associated with young adult women, but eating disorders affect older people too.

“Eating disorders are absolutely a concern in the geriatric population,” Taylor said. “Individuals can go their entire lives with a subclinical eating disorder or an undiagnosed clinical eating disorder. However, when they reach an age where their body is declining and they do begin seeing weight loss, they may feel like they are ‘finally succeeding.’”

This perceived success can cause many age-related issues such as a focus on body image and calories, loss of enjoyment in activities, memory problems and other symptoms often attributed to getting older.

The National Institute of Mental Health writes in “Eating Disorders: About More Than Food” that eating disorders affect people of all ages, sizes, races and genders.

“Even people who appear healthy,

such as athletes, can have eating disorders and be extremely ill.

People with eating disorders can be underweight, normal weight or overweight. In other words, you can’t tell if someone has an eating disorder by looking at them, the article says. Knowing the signs of an eating disorder is the first step to getting someone with this condition the help needed.

According to Taylor, the main signs to watch for are:

- ▶ Rigid behaviors around food.
- ▶ Counting calories.
- ▶ Obsession with food.
- ▶ Overexercising or compensatory behavior after eating.
- ▶ Shame around food.
- ▶ Rapid weight loss or frequent fluctuations in weight.
- ▶ Body image preoccupation.

Malnutrition can lead to anxiety, depression and social isolation, all of which are factors in suicidal thoughts and impulses. In addition, the malnutrition of eating disorders

often leads to issues within relationships because it “isolates the individual into themselves and creates secrecy and mistrust,” Taylor said.

Treatment

Treatment options range from support groups to hospitalizations. Dealing with family systems and attitudes about food are an important part of recovery. It’s also important to fight the isolation the one with an eating disorder faces by providing meal support.

For teens and young adults, Taylor suggests a calm, private setting where concerns can be shared. A good conversation starter is, “Hey, I notice you are pretty anxious around food and don’t see yourself physically the way I see you. Would you be open to talk about that?”

For those worried about aging parents or grandparents, Taylor said to “ask curious, compassionate questions about their relationship with food and their body.”

She recalled an individual whose 85-year-old mother had always been overweight and lived in a very diet-focused world. She is now very thin but still makes comments about the number of calories a food has and how she shouldn’t eat this or that. The daughter was very worried about her mother not getting enough nutrition.

Taylor’s advice to the daughter was to have a conversation with her mother and talk about her views on diet and weight. Other ways to help might include listening before giving an opinion on a particular diet fad, collaborating with medical teams and sharing a meal together.

Nutrition is more important than staying on a “diet,” Taylor emphasized. “There are many who are suffering who want support but do not know how to ask for it.”



TAYLOR



Alabama's first Mom and Baby Mobile Health Center will be funded by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama in partnership with the March of Dimes.

Photo courtesy of BCBS of Alabama

Mobile maternity clinic set to launch in Alabama next fall

Alabama hopes to launch the state's first Mom and Baby Mobile Health Center next fall as part of the effort to improve maternal and infant health outcomes in the state, particularly in rural areas.

The mobile clinic will be funded by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama in partnership with the March of Dimes. There are currently five Mom and Baby Mobile Health Centers in operation nationally.

The mobile clinics provide education, support and health care access to women and children from pre-conception through pregnancy, postpartum and newborn stages of life. Services include primary care, wellness and preventative care, delivered to residents in underserved communities who are uninsured or underinsured.

The March of Dimes recently released their report "Nowhere to Go: Maternity Care Deserts Across the U.S." Maternity care deserts are counties where there's no access to birthing hospitals, birth centers offering obstetric care or obstetric providers.

Staggering stats

According to March of Dimes data for Alabama counties:

- ▶ 58% have low or no access to maternal care.
- ▶ 37.3% do not have an obstetric clinician.
- ▶ 14.9% have only one obstetric clinician.

- ▶ 7,300 babies are living in maternity care deserts.
- ▶ 12.2% of childbearing aged women live in no access areas.

"Improving maternal and infant health outcomes across our state is a top priority," said Sophie Martin, director of corporate

communications and community relations for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama. "We care about giving moms access to the care they need at all stages of their pregnancy."

Alabama's mobile unit

aims to launch in the fall of 2025 and plans to serve the following cities and their surrounding counties: Florence, Selma, Tuscaloosa, Gadsden, Anniston and Montgomery.

Ashley Toms, executive director of March of Dimes,

noted the mobile health center will support existing partnerships in local communities to help with nutrition, mental health, housing and other needs in hopes of "minimizing barriers to accessing care." (TAB Media)

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Early detection

BY CARRIE BROWN McWHORTER • THE ALABAMA BAPTIST

Newborn screenings offer opportunities for intervention, better outcomes

Each year, the Alabama Newborn Screening Program identifies approximately 200 babies with a metabolic, endocrine, hematological or other congenital disorder.

These babies usually look and act healthy at birth, but many of these conditions can cause serious health problems if undetected and untreated.

Thirty-eight conditions are included in the national Recommended Uniform Screening Panel, which is coordinated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Alabama's screening program is overseen by the Alabama Department of Public Health.

This year Alabama added two disorders to its state screening panel, bringing the total to 35 of 38 conditions listed in the national RUSP.

Included conditions

Conditions included in the screen panel are listed below:

► **Phenylketonuria (PKU):** A genetic disorder where the body cannot break down the amino acid phenylalanine, leading to brain damage if untreated.

► **Cystic Fibrosis:** A genetic disorder that affects the lungs and digestive system.

► **Sickle Cell Disease:** A group of inherited red blood cell disorders.

► **Congenital Hypothyroidism:** A condition where the thyroid gland does not produce enough thyroid hormone, affecting growth and brain development.

Newborns are also screened for hearing loss and critical congenital heart defects.

An out-of-range newborn screening result does not necessarily mean that a baby has a condition but that further diagnostic or confirmatory testing may be needed, according to information provided by ADPH.

Partners in treatment

If a screening test result is out-of-range or presumptive positive, the Alabama Newborn Screening Follow-up Program will notify the baby's doctor right away. The child's community pediatrician, often in partnership with physicians at Children's Hospital of Alabama, will help parents understand the condition and treatment or therapy options.

For example, congenital hypothyroidism (CH) is caused by abnormal thyroid gland development or function. Because thyroid hormone

is essential for normal growth and brain development, CH must be diagnosed and treated as soon as possible after birth. Fortunately, with early intervention, CH can be easily treated with oral doses of thyroid hormone.

The Children's of Alabama Pediatric Endocrine Department specializes in the follow-up care of infants who are diagnosed with CH. Working with the infant's community pediatrician, Children's of Alabama specialists help children get treatment and therapy as quickly as possible.

Children's of Alabama's

Cystic Fibrosis Center works in partnership with the University of Alabama at Birmingham and the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation to provide care for approximately

290 children living with CF in Alabama and surrounding areas.

There is no cure for CF, but the earlier a child is diagnosed and treatment is begun, the healthier the child will be.

Early detection of these and other congenital conditions combined with early treatment can slow or even prevent long-term physical and mental development problems associated with a diagnosis.

For more information about programs at Children's of Alabama related to newborn screenings, visit tinyurl.com/AL-newborn-screening.

For more information about the Alabama Newborn Screening Program, visit alabamapublichealth.gov/newbornscreening/parents.html.



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