

The Alabama Baptist



LORD — OF THE — *Harvest*

*Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few.
Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”*

MATTHEW 9:37-38

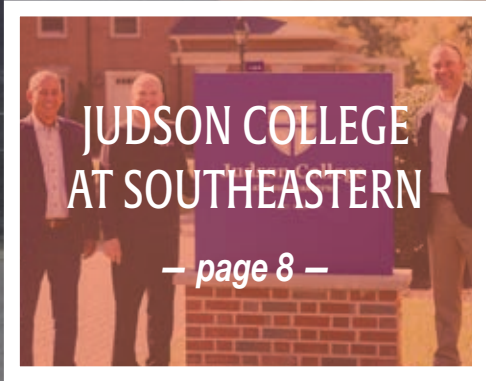


Photo by Trennis Henderson

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Meetings set to coincide with upcoming state convention

► **Alabama Church Planter Network** — The Alabama Church Planter Network will hold a dinner Nov. 10 at 3Circle Church in Fairhope, 5–8 p.m. For more information, visit plantalabama.org/events.

► **Alabama Baptist Conference of Associational Leaders meeting** — ABCAL members will meet Nov. 11 in the Student Center at First Baptist Church Fairhope, 8–12:30 a.m. Rick Curtis from the North American Mission Board will speak. For more information, visit abcal.online.

► **Church and Community Ministries Meeting** — This group will gather Nov. 11 at 3Circle Church in Fairhope, 10 a.m.–3 p.m. Contact Kristy Kennedy at 334-613-2311 or kkennedy@alsbom.org to reserve a spot.

► **Unite: A Gathering of Alabama Baptist College Ministry Leaders** — The Unite event is free and will be held Nov. 11 at the Youth Center of Eastern Shore Baptist Church in Daphne, 4–8 p.m. The theme will be The Value of the Sabbath. Guest speaker will be Cory Barnes, dean of graduate studies and assistant professor of Old Testament at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. For more information or to register visit bcmlink.org/event/unite-2024.

► **Hispanic pastors and leaders** — This group will meet Nov. 11 at 6 p.m. at East Pointe Baptist Church in Spanish Fort.

► **Alabama Singing Men/Women** — Alabama Singing Men and Women will hold a fellowship banquet Nov. 11 at Jubilee Baptist Church in Daphne at 7 p.m. after a joint rehearsal at 5:15 p.m.

► **Southern Baptist Theological Seminary** — Southern Seminary will hold an alumni luncheon Nov. 12 in the chapel at Eastern Shore Baptist Church in Daphne, 12 p.m. To register, visit tabonline.org/sbtsluncheon.

► **ALCAP** — Alabama Citizens Action Program will hold a lunch for pastors and their wives Nov. 12 at Eastern Shore Baptist Church in Daphne, 12–1:15 p.m., with State Auditor Andrew Sorrell as guest speaker. Register at tabonline.org/alcaplunch2024.

► **Disciple-Making Leaders** — This group will meet for lunch Nov. 12 at 12 p.m. at The Original Oyster House in Spanish Fort. To sign up, visit tabonline.org/disciplelunch.

► **Alabama Baptist Children's Homes Pastor's Dinner** — ABCH is hosting a dinner for pastors Nov. 12, 4:30–6 p.m. at Boudreaux's Ca-

jun Grill. Register at alabamachild.org/events/signup.

► **Alabama Baptist Young Pastors' Cohort Dinner** — This group of young pastors and friends who are "40ish and under" will meet Nov. 12 at Solomon's Porch at Eastern Shore Baptist Church in Daphne, 4:45–6 p.m. Register at alsbom.org/young-pastors.

► **New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary** — New Orleans Seminary will hold an alumni dinner Nov. 12 in the chapel at Eastern Shore Baptist Church in Daphne, 5 p.m. Jody Dean, professor of Christian education, will share reports and testimonies. For more information or to register, visit <https://brushfire.com/nobts/alabamaalumni/586547>.

► **Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary** — SWBTS will hold an alumni and friends luncheon Nov. 12 in the gym at Eastern Shore Baptist Church in Daphne, room 13, 12 p.m. For reservations or information email Larry Layne at larry.d.layne@gmail.com.

► **Youth Minister Luncheon** — Youth ministers are invited to a free lunch at The Waterfront in Daphne on Nov. 12, 11:45 a.m.–1 p.m. To register, visit ymlink.org/calendar/youth-ministers-lunch-2.

The Alabama Baptist

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

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JENNIFER DAVIS RASH
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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The crossword puzzle
can be found on page 13.

Rashional Thoughts

By Jennifer Davis Rash
President and Editor-in-Chief

 jrash@thealabamabaptist.org

 @RashionalThts

Sidelined moments offer perspective, opportunities for growth

Perspective sometimes brings with it a more intense dose of, well, perspective, and my current angle on viewing life matches what you see in the photo below.

Indeed, the left ankle is broken, but being the overachiever that I am, the break turned out to be a trimalleolar ankle fracture (three places), which requires a bit longer recovery period.

You know I would love to share an elaborate story of how it all happened, but it's really quite boring — the stairs won.

Still, even with continually running through all the “what ifs” of how I could have avoided the situation and the ability to recall the seriously extreme pain when it happened, perspective is making all the difference.

Grateful for so much

The injury could have easily included my wrists, which would have precluded me from fully participating in my work as an editor. I'm grateful no part of my upper body was affected. I'm also grateful for laptops and internet access, so I can easily work from home.

My gratefulness extends to our team at TAB Media Group. They handle unexpected situations well, and everyone jumped into action immediately to deal with every detail of what needed to be reworked, adapted and communicated.

They also did it with pinpoint crisis management precision where everyone took a specific responsibility and did it well. They were organized, clear in their communication and trusted each other. And the effort continues.

Additionally, family and friends nearby jumped into action, and those from across the state and nation have served to keep me encouraged and supported in a variety of creative ways.

It's hard to be restricted on movement, and it's difficult to need others to help with simple daily routines.

But the experience has helped provide perspective and a deep dose of appreciation related to what is possible each day.

Rather than focusing on what I can't do, I'm working hard to be a good steward of the time.

While I won't be able to lift furniture from the truck when my

friend moves to her new apartment next week, I can help recruit others to assist and organize the flow of the move.

Embracing what I can do

The injury is preventing me from participating in several activities at our churches right now, but I'm able to assist with encouragement and communication efforts.

I'm also finding more time to read Scripture, pray and hear from the Lord as well as read some of the books stacked up near me.

Time with family and friends is more rich and less rushed. Some of the little things swirling around us each day aren't nearly as urgent and vital as they once seemed.

Oh, and you know we receive a lot of email messages each day, so I'm currently helping the team chip away at them — and those pending are numbering in the thousands.

I'm determined not to waste one second of this sidelined moment, and I'm expecting God to show up each day. So far, He's been faithful beyond what I could have truly imagined.

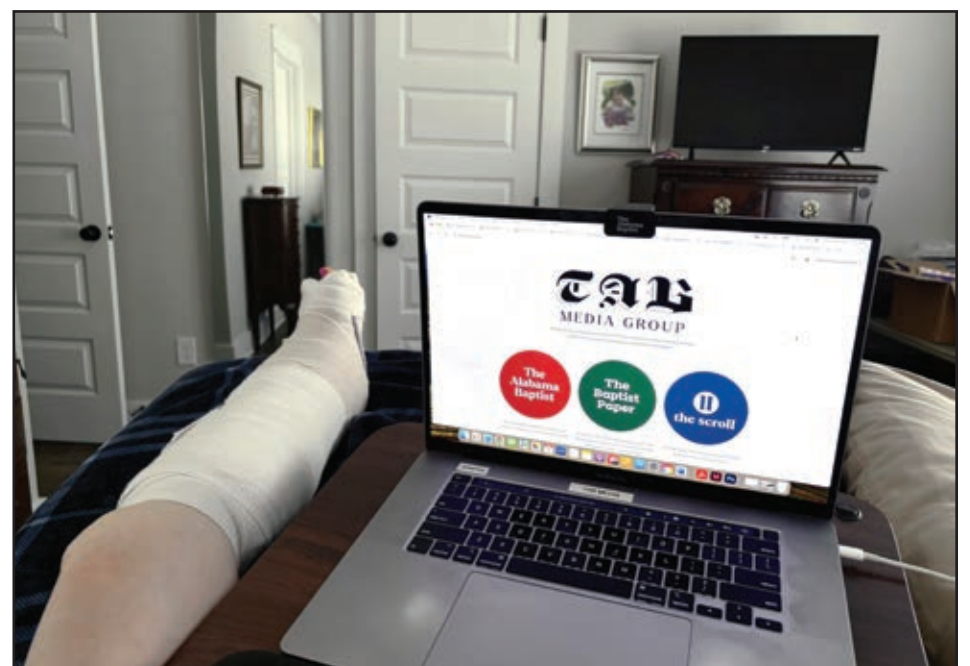


Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash/The Alabama Baptist

Your Voice



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

Letters to the Editor

During Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief work in late September following Hurricane Helene, there was no electricity initially at FBC Alma, Georgia, for those of us who worked during the first week of deployment. We navigated by flashlights at night with no hot water and no air conditioning in the church. To then see Alabama Power trucks with linemen working to restore the church's power was an answer to prayer. We were proud of these linemen and felt blessed.

Amelia Pearson
Alexander City

Your Sept. 19 edition article on hymns in worship was right on target. Every person who sits in a pew, especially our children and youth, should leave church having heard theologically sound, Bible-based preaching, supported by the great theology of hymns that have stood the test of time. Songs of praise and worship, great hymns of the faith and anointed preaching should be part of every worship service. Our brains learn and remember text set to music to a much greater degree than words only. Singing of the hymns promotes this learning.

Randall Reeves
Anniston

In response to your Aug. 8 Rashional Thoughts — "Taking others at their word, choosing candor removes loads of stress" — openness runs the risk of misunderstanding and attack.

After all, not many are so comfortable with themselves that a defensive posture is unnecessary. You clearly touched several components of communication which reduce suspicion and awaken meaningful interactions with others. Yes — on it all.

Morris Murray Jr.
Jasper

This request is not political. It is in regard to the condition of our country. We must have a call to prayer. God will not show mercy to our

country unless we have a call to prayer.

I know most churches pray over this awful condition as do individuals. I feel we must promote prayer in all our churches as well as in group gatherings such as revivals or crusades. If we do not take action quickly, will God still show us His mercy?

William Alexander
Florence

We are writing this letter to request that everyone reading takes the time to vote in the 2024 election. The beauty of casting your ballot is only possible when everyone votes for the candidate of their choice so that the majority's voice is heard.

As we have cast our votes consistently over the past six decades in each election, we have witnessed the results, whether we agree or disagree. When constituents do not take the time to go to the poll, they are often dissatisfied with the results. It is imperative to the life of our republic that we take the time to cast our ballot and let our voices be heard.

Should you choose not to vote, you should not harbor ill feelings if you believe the election was swayed in a way that you do not approve. If you are voting and undecided in your choices, we ask that you seek God's help in the decision-making process. Whatever your choice, we ask that it is a choice to take time to vote in this election.

John and Roberta Walgren
Phoenix, Arizona

I am Neil Dodson currently working in Judson Baptist Association's two ministry centers — Love in Action and Overflowing Thrift Stores.

JBA can be proud of this effort begun several decades ago to meet the needs of so many in our Henry County communities. These centers serve the ministry of salvation to the lost, the least and the last of our society and are a good measure of how the churches in Henry County are caring for those Christ Jesus called us to minister.

I want to bring some important information to

all church staffs and congregants about the hour, the season and the overall climate facing in our communities and nation. I am by training an educator/administrator, ordained minister with theological training and experience and a certified counselor. ...

It is obvious to many how the darkness of evil is advancing, while those in the light are being criticized, marginalized and attacked by the darkness.

My purpose in writing you and all followers of Christ is to call the body to the spiritual warfare Paul writes about in Ephesians 6, calling us to put on the Armor of God with which to fight the good fight of faith in preservation of our faith, our families, our communities and our nation.

Specifically, there are things we need to be doing to fight the growing evil which particularly targets Christ's body, the church. ... Acknowledging that these perils exist is crucial to understanding how they operate. On one hand the light extends blessings and benefits, and on the other hand sin and death are the end. ... We know that Christ has won the victory over death and the grave, but the evil has not met its final death until all has been put under the feet of Jesus. ...

Ministers must play a pivotal role in informing, teaching, encouraging and keeping the American dream alive which was founded on the twin supports of biblical justice and righteousness. We don't have to tell our people who to vote for — they are smart enough to figure that out — but we must teach how light and darkness affects every aspect of our lives, families, society and nation.

Neil Dodson
Henry County

Regarding the upcoming election ... there are times when patience is a virtue and discretion is the better part of valor. This is one of those times.

Hugh Johnston
Bluefield, Virginia

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

ROMANS 15:13

Growing in WISDOM looks like:
W: Word of God — Wisdom begins with the Bible, our foundation for truth.

I: Insight — Represents insights and understanding from the Holy Spirit and God's people, the Church.

S: Spiritual Maturity — Growth in faith and character through God's guidance and prayer.

D: Discernment — The ability to make wise decisions, distinguishing right from wrong through a cultivated conscience.

O: Obedience — Following God's commands as a demonstration of wisdom.

M: Mind of Christ — Adopting Jesus' attitude and Kingdom perspective in our thinking and actions.

Chris Crain

Birmingham Metro Association

“If your church doesn't stand out from others, people won't notice. They'll be aware of 'all the churches' ... and often ignoring all of them,” said **Mark MacDonald**, church branding expert.

“You know, the Bible talks about in Revelation that every nation, every tribe, every tongue gathered at the throne will worship the Lord. It's one of those things where I feel like it's just a taste of heaven because heaven's going to be just this beautiful sound,” said singer **Danny Gokey**, about his fifth album.

Some like their pastors in suits and some don't care.

I was radical recently when I wore a blue button-down instead of a white pinpoint shirt. The roof didn't fall in, and someone noticed and pronounced it a nice change. So, I went and bought another blue shirt.

Whatever our divisions, we must seek to live in harmony with others.

A song from the 70s “Jesus Movement” reminds us, “They'll know we are Christians by our love.”

Michael J. Brooks

Alabaster

Our choices and decisions will follow us — “See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, understand what the will of the Lord is” Ephesians 5:15–17.

Scott Peters

Northport

“I was humbled when I was elected as president last year. I'm even more humbled now that I have seen so much that I get to serve Alabama Baptists,” said Alabama Baptist State Convention president **Craig Carlisle**, who plans to be nominated for a second one-year term in the role if elected by messengers to the upcoming annual meeting in November. “The conclusion I've drawn is ... Alabama Baptists are the best. We are unified and on mission.”

Do you need to take a break from the world? It seems that the whole planet is in chaos.

Nations are at war, natural disasters are on the rise, neighbors are divided against neighbors, and no one can afford the high cost of groceries or gasoline. In addition to all this, we are in the middle of an election season. Peace and rest are not words that many would associate with their current lives.

However, there is a rest that comes from God. It's a rest that rises above all circumstances and surpasses all understanding. It's a rest that only comes by real faith in God. When true believers enter God's rest, it's a testimony to a lost world.

Think about Jesus. He was in a

boat with disciples on the Sea of Galilee. When a violent storm blew in, the disciples — who were experienced fishermen — began to panic. However, Jesus rested calmly in the bow of the boat (Matt. 8:23–24). Wouldn't you like to rest like this even when storms are raging around you? We know from the writer of Hebrews that real rest only comes by real faith in God.

Bill Wilks

Trussville

Despite our country's over-attentiveness to federal issues and presidential candidates, our system is comprised of three branches that provide the necessary checks and balances for the decisions that affect our families, communities, state and nation.

Believers should be just as diligent to vote for representatives, local officials, judges and school board members that are likeminded and honorable.

It is up to us to know the issues and understand who will promote the values we hold dear.

Alabama Policy Institute

Excerpt from API newsletter

Something on my mind and heart is the condition and serious needs within our community, an increased number of people who have reached a point of helpless and hopeless. The number of people who are seeking to harm themselves — and tragically, some have ended their lives.

Truly, we are living in desperate times. ... The answer to these desperate and dark days is not our politics or self-help remedies. It's simply the gospel. We have to do better with the mission, the Great Commission.

Rusty Sowell

Beauregard (near Opelika)

Voting: 'A privilege and a responsibility'

As Election Day approaches, let's not sit on the sidelines. Voting is both a privilege and a responsibility, a way for us to contribute meaningfully to our communities. But let's do so prayerfully, with discernment and trust in God's sovereignty. No candidate or platform can substitute for the hope we have in Jesus.

It's easy to place too much hope in political outcomes, thinking that the “right” candidate will save

the day or that a defeat spells disaster. But here's the truth: God is sovereign, regardless of who wins or loses. Proverbs 21:1 reminds us, “The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will.”

This verse is a powerful reminder that God's purposes prevail, even when earthly leaders falter. As believers, we don't tie our hope to any political figure. We anchor our hope in Christ, knowing that God is working all things together for good (Rom. 8:28).

Results don't define us

Engaging in the political process is important, but the results don't define us. Whether our candidate wins or loses, our mission remains the same: to love God, love others and reflect His light in a world that desperately needs it.

So, let's vote with open eyes and faithful hearts, knowing that the real King of Kings is already on His throne. Regardless of the outcome, He is in control. And that, my friends, is good news.

Tony Martin

Jackson, Mississippi
youcanhavehope.com



MARTIN

Share online or email news@thealabamabaptist.org

Someone You Should Know

JACKIE MASTERS

By Leigh Pritchett
The Alabama Baptist

Jackie Masters of York is the quintessential church secretary. “That was my mission, my calling,” says the 87-year-old. With the exception of seven years of retirement in the early 2000s, she has been her church’s secretary since 1972. She has taught many, many children in Sunday School and Mission Friends.

In addition, she previously was a lay renewal team member and served two terms as a trustee of the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. She is a former president of what is now the Alabama Association of Baptist Ministry Assistants, whose annual conference she has attended for 49 years. She is also involved in Women on Mission.

Q: Describe where you focus your greatest ministry efforts.

A: Trying to instill in children a knowledge of and love for the Bible; taking care of some administrative duties of the church while also helping the church minister to the members and the community.

Q: Who was or is one of the most influential people in your faith life?

A: Joseph Reed was my Sunday School teacher at the Christian Valley Baptist Church in Coatopa, Alabama. He taught me (from ages) 13 to 15. I married at 16. He was a wonderful man. He or his daddy came to pick up us three girls (sisters) every Sunday.

DO YOU KNOW A PERSON WHO SHOULD BE FEATURED AS
Someone You Should Know?

Send his or her name, a contact number and the reason you think he or she should be featured to Someone You Should Know, c/o The Alabama Baptist, 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209, or to news@thealabamabaptist.org.

MINISTRY:
Church secretary

CHURCH NAME:
York Baptist Church, York, in Bigbee Baptist Association



LIFE VERSE:
“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths” (Prov. 3:5–6).

Q: What has God been teaching you lately?

A: Patience. And the needs of others — putting others first.

Q: If there were one thing you could tell your younger self about faith, what would it be?

A: To trust in the Lord. I’ve tried to outrun Him a couple of times, but I have had to come back to Proverbs 3:5–6.

I wished I had turned my life completely over to the Lord earlier in life than I did. Maybe I wouldn’t have had some of the heartaches I had if I had let the Lord have complete control of my life earlier.

Some of the choices I made as a young person were not the best choices. I didn’t always ask God, “Is this right for me?” When I ... learned to ask God first, life was a lot better. I tried to instill that in my children ... (and) the children I taught (in Sunday School).

Q: Have you ever read a book or heard a song that changed the way you think about God and faith? What was it and what did you learn from it?

A: “Through It All” — when I first heard that song ... it was my testimony. It just spoke to me. It just spoke to my soul.

You Gotta’ Hear This!



Glimpses of God in the everyday moments

Lessons from the city pool

Before the days of water parks and splash pads, the coolest place for summer fun in my town was the city pool.

All your friends gathered there. Teenage girls sunbathed for hours on thin beach towels that were lying directly on hot concrete. Transistor radios blasted the latest songs and chimed the bell to let sunbathers know it was time to turn.

It was into that scene that one of my most embarrassing moments happened. My friend Ronald Howard had been trying to teach me to dive.

I had managed to fall headfirst into the water off the pool deck a couple of times and had even successfully made it headfirst from the low diving board at least once. Ronald declared that I was then ready for the high dive. Believing him was a huge mistake.

High dive

I climbed the long ladder to the top, walked about four steps while holding onto the bars and then froze. Ronald followed behind me. All my friends around the pool were cheering for me to do it. I drew what I was sure was my last breath and stepped forward to the end of the board. Suddenly I was off the board and in the air!

My body was in the perfect diving pose, but my brain said no to that idea. I straightened out my body and fell about 15 feet as horizontal as a plank. I hit the water horizontally at about a million miles per hour.

Every inch of the front of my body felt the pain at the same second. Even my eyes hurt. Exiting the water, I looked like I had landed in a pool of paint. I was red from head to toe.

Confession is good

My body and my pride hurt for days after that incident. In fact, it hurts when I think about it even today.

Over the past 50 years I have retold that story, many times in Ronald Howard’s presence. He has always laughed with everyone hearing it.

Recently I told the story again, but this time Ronald confessed that he had PUSHED me off that diving board. I guess that hidden truth had burned inside him for over 50 years.

James 5:16 says, “Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another that ye may be healed.”

I’ve always heard that confession is good for the soul. The Bible seems to agree with that. I guess Ronald Howard does too.

MEET THE AUTHOR

Debbie Childers is a speaker, humorist and author based in Moody. She finds great humor in the fact that all through her school years, she got in trouble for talking and now she gets invited to do it!



Alabama news

AUTAUGA

► **David Kelley** is the new pastor of **Billingsley Baptist Church**. He previously served as pastor of Liberty Baptist Church, Tallassee, and Calvary Baptist Church, Fayette. Kelley works for the Alabama Department of Labor. He holds a bachelor of arts degree in biblical studies and finance from the University of Mobile and a master of divinity degree from Midwestern Seminary. Kelley and his wife, Mary, have two children.

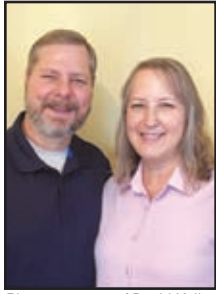


Photo courtesy of David Kelley

BIGBEE

► **Brady Gaither** is the new associate pastor for students at **Christian Valley Baptist Church, Livingston**. He moved to Livingston in 2016 to pursue a bachelor's degree at the University



cvbc-coatopa.org

of West Alabama and began serving in college ministry, music ministry and men's ministry. Gaither holds a master of divinity degree and is pursuing a doctor of ministry degree from Southern Bible College & Seminary, Lenoir City, Tennessee. He is married to Stephanie. Wayne Smith is pastor.

BIRMINGHAM METRO

► **Jason Leight** is the new discipleship pastor for **Grace Life Baptist Church, McCalla**. He previously served as pastor of Eastern Valley Baptist Church, Bessemer, and as executive director of The Grace Place, a food and clothing ministry in Bessemer. Leight holds a bachelor of arts degree in Christian ministry from Luther Rice University, Lithonia, Georgia; a master of divinity degree from New Orleans Seminary; and is pursuing a doctor of philosophy degree in biblical studies from Midwestern Seminary.



LEIGHT

Leight and his wife, Crystal, have three sons. Joel Frederick is pastor.

COOSA RIVER

► **Wesley Johnson** is the new director of missions for **Coosa River Baptist Association**. He began his ministry as a youth pastor in northern Alabama and pastor in Georgia. Johnson returned to Alabama and became pastor of Talladega Creek Baptist Church for more than 12 years and Odena Baptist Church, Sylacauga, for the last four years, both in Coosa River Association. He also served the association twice as moderator, twice as president of the pastors conference and 10 years on the finance committee. Johnson and his wife, Paula, have four children and six grandchildren.



Photo courtesy of Linda Cotton

COVINGTON

► **Babbie Baptist Church, Andalusia**, celebrated its 75th anniversary Sept. 8. The service began

with a baptism. Special music included the children's choir and a duet sung by Nancy Cole and her daughter Katie Machen. Nine members also shared their testimonies. Jim Lambert (right), a commissioner with the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission, presented a plaque to the church with key leaders accepting the honor including Pastor Dwayne Seay (left). Gary Miller, a former pastor in Covington Association, brought the message. At the close of the service, everyone came to the altar and prayed for the pastor and his wife, Elizabeth. The celebration concluded with lunch in the fellowship hall.



Photo courtesy of Anne Lambert

ELMORE

► **Dallas Godshall** is the new associate pastor of students for **Crossroads Community Church, Elmore**. He previously served as a student intern for First Baptist Church Prattville and youth and college pastor for FBC Crestview, Florida. Goodall holds a bachelor



Photo courtesy of Dallas Godshall

of arts degree in communication from Auburn University and a master of arts degree in Christian studies from Southeastern Seminary. He is married to Alex. Brandon Wilemon is pastor.

FRIENDSHIP

► **Union Hill Baptist**

Church, Oneonta, will host Blount County Sav-a-Life's annual fundraising dinner Nov. 7, 6 p.m. The event will feature Dennis "The Swan" Swanberg, America's minister of encouragement, with the theme "Celebrating Life with a Night of Laughter." Dinner will be catered by Whiskers Catfish. Event and table sponsorships are available. Call for tickets: 205-625-5416. Paul Richey is pastor.

PINE BARREN

► **Bear Creek Baptist Church**, an historic church in Wilcox County, will hold an early Christmas celebration of praise and worship Nov. 2, 2 p.m. Steve Dunn, associational missionary for Bethlehem and Pine Barren associations, will speak, followed by a time of fellowship and refreshments.

SULPHUR SPRINGS

► **Jarret Smith** is the new pastor of **New Canaan Baptist Church, Empire**. He grew up in Dora and attended Good Hope Baptist Church, where his grandfather, Bob Fields, was pastor.



Photo courtesy of Jarret Smith

While serving as the youth minister for Good Hope, Smith discovered his calling to preach and was recently ordained by the church. Kerry Turner, pastor of Good Hope, led the service, and Rodney Puryear, director of missions for Sulphur Springs Baptist Association, participated in the service. A reception followed at New Canaan Baptist. Smith and his wife, Jenifer, have three children.



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Southeastern Seminary's undergraduate school renamed Judson College

By Carrie Brown McWhorter
The Alabama Baptist

Alabama Baptists will feel an immediate tie to Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary now that its undergraduate college has been officially renamed Judson College.

The College at Southeastern has been rebranded in honor of the pioneering Baptist missionary Adoniram Judson. Southeastern trustees formalized the decision during their Oct. 14–15 meeting on the seminary's campus in Wake Forest, North Carolina.

Danny Akin, president of Southeastern Seminary and its undergraduate division, said the renaming fits the seminary's vision and mission.

"There is no one better to represent our mission and culture than the Baptist missionary Adoniram Judson, who gave his life for the cause of Christ in the church, among the nations and in every aspect of society," Akin said.

Chad Burchett, associate director

of marketing and communications at Southeastern Seminary, said seminary leaders had often discussed the Judson name and returned to those discussions when Judson College in Marion closed in 2021.

Honoring missions legacy

“Our administration contacted the leadership of the Alabama Baptist State Convention and received their support and affirmation to preserve the Judson’s legacy on our campus,” Burchett said.

Historian and Judson College alumna Elizabeth Wells said Alabama's Judson College was actually named in honor of Ann Hasseltine Judson, Adoniram Judson's wife and one of the first female American international missionaries. The college was founded in 1838 by Alabama Baptist leaders who wanted to offer educational opportunities for women. The college closed in 2021 due to financial pressures.

Daphne Robinson, president of Judson College in Marion, told



SFRTS photo

Carlos Goodrich (left), chair of the board of trustees; Danny Akin (center), president of Southeastern Seminary and Judson College; and Seth Bible, dean of Judson College, unveil a new sign in front of Appleby Hall — the primary academic building for undergraduate studies.

The Alabama Baptist she had not been in contact with Southeastern Seminary officials regarding the name change of The College at Southeastern but said “it’s an honor to the Judsons that people continue to acknowledge their sacrifice and commitment to missions.”

Akin echoed those sentiments, calling the Judsons “Baptist royalty.”

“Southern Baptists and their missions work are heirs to what [the Judsons] did in the country of Burma (modern-day Myanmar),” Akin said. “The name Judson has been rightly honored at Judson College in Marion, Alabama, since 1838. Now Southeastern has the honor of carrying on that name and the missional spirit it represents.”

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Acts 4:13

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TUESDAY EVENING

Jason Allen, president,
Midwestern Baptist
Theological Seminary

RamCorps, University
of Mobile

Jason Allen

RamCorps

WEDNESDAY MORNING

Albert Williams, DifferenceMakers
Through Disciple Making

Ben Bowden, Convention Sermon

Albert Williams

Ben Bowden

TUESDAY MORNING

Craig Carlisle, President's Address

Rob Jackson, DifferenceMakers
Through Evangelism

Craig Carlisle

Rob Jackson

Joe McKeever

Cartoonist **Joe McKeever** will be in the exhibit
hall to draw sketches of those who stop by.

Visit alsbom.org/convention for more
information. To download the State
Convention Annual Meeting App, scan this
QR code or visit my.yapp.us/ABSC2024.

University of Mobile enhancing health care in state

The first graduating class of nurse anesthetists from the University of Mobile's new Doctor of Nurse Anesthesia Practice program achieved a perfect 100% first-time pass rate on the National Certification Exam, the highest pass rate in Alabama for 2024.

That's far above the national average of 83% and is "an exceptional accomplishment" for a new program, said Todd Hicks, executive dean of UM's College of Health Professions and professor of nurse anesthesiology. "When we developed the School of Nurse Anesthesia and the ... DNAP

program in 2021, we had hopes of providing students with educational opportunities in both the classroom and clinic that would maximize their ability to pass the NCE on the first attempt," said Hicks, DNAP program

director and founding dean.

By passing the NCE, all 12 graduates are now Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists in a high-demand career where salaries start at \$190,000 and up.

Among top 'best jobs'

Even before they completed the program, every member of the class had received job offers in a field U.S. News & World Report ranks #5 on its 2024 Best Jobs List.

Pamela Buchanan Miller, vice president for academic affairs, said the program's success is "a huge win not just for the University of Mobile and our students, but for the entire Mobile area. ... This

means better local health care for all of us."

Of the dozen graduates, 11 are now working in Mobile-area hospitals while the 12th returned home and is practicing at a north Alabama hospital.



Photo courtesy of the University of Mobile

Buchanan Miller said it is "a profound blessing to see the Lord honoring our DNAP students' hard work. They have shown true sacrificial commitment over the past three years, and we could not be more proud.

"They have worked year-round since 2021 mastering an incredibly complex

body of information, not to mention the intricate skill necessary to become nurse anesthetists."

Exclusive program

The University of Mobile DNAP program is the first and only Doctor of Nurse Anesthesia Practice program in the four-state region

of Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Georgia.

It is accredited and offered in a blended format, combining on-site and on-line learning. Applicants must have a bachelor's degree and more than one full year of critical care nursing experience. (University of Mobile)

Current state convention vice presidents to be nominated for second term in roles

The Alabama Baptist has confirmed that state

convention first vice president Jarman Leatherwood plans to be nominated for a second term



LEATHERWOOD

by Selma pastor Theron Hawkins. And Pell City



WHITLEY

pastor John Thweatt will nominate second vice president Ryan Whitley for a second term. (TAB)

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Lass WORDS

BY KEN LASS

The Alabama Baptist



DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS

Falling into fame

Several years ago there was a point in my church's worship service when we observed the offertory, the traditional passing of the donation baskets. We don't do that anymore. Now members are encouraged to simply drop their offerings into one of several receptacles located around the campus.

Offertory prayer

This change also eliminated the need for an offertory prayer. In my large church the deacons would take turns coming to the lectern to lead the congregation in a prayer of gratitude and reverence. One time when it was my turn to do the prayer, I dutifully sat in the front pew awaiting the moment. The offertory prayer usually came right after the preacher's message and the accompanying altar call. Being admittedly vain and self-conscious, I wanted to look my best so I had bought a new pair of black dress shoes. I had been having a few issues with my feet so I bought shoes a half size larger than usual to avoid rubbing and irritation.

When the choir ended its song the sanctuary fell silent, and it was time for me to ascend the few steps leading up to the dais. Unfortunately, the tip of one of my oversized shoes caught the top step, and I lost my balance and fell flat on my face beneath

the podium. I wasn't hurt, but I could hear the collective gasp of the congregation as I pulled myself up. Incredibly embarrassed, my mind was racing, trying to decide what to say or do. I wound up bending over and throwing my arms out to the side while hollering "Safe!" the way a baseball umpire would do when somebody dives into a base.

The sanctuary burst out in loud laughter and the tension disappeared. I proceeded with the prayer, and afterward several people remarked how clever and funny that was, and some wondered if I had planned the whole thing all along. Of course, I told them I had. Just wanted to lighten things up, you know.

Rescuing me

Forgive me, Lord, for lying. And thank you, Lord, for rescuing me even in my most awkward and humiliating moments. Oh, and let's just keep the truth between You and me, OK?

MEET THE AUTHOR

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

Christian Women's Job Corps grads charting new life course

By Grace Thornton

The Alabama Baptist

Marie Beam says she's always liked working on cars. She found out early on that she didn't like being stranded — she'd rather be able to do something about it when her car had problems.

"I started learning how to do it myself," she said.

Then she started helping the women in her apartment complex who frequently had car trouble.

"It's something I love to do," Beam said. "So I started thinking maybe I could do it as a career too."

Through Christian Women's Job Corps of Tyler, Texas, she's had the support to enroll in college and start making that happen.

"I've got six classes left," she said.

And thanks to the Faye Dove Scholarship, a gift provided by the WMU Foundation to help a CWJC graduate further her education, Beam now has money to buy the tools to finish her associate's degree in automotive mechanics at Northeast Texas Community College.

The scholarship will also help her continue to provide support for her four children, who range in age from 2 to 12.

"Everything I learn, I get out there

and show my kids what I learn," she said. "Hopefully it's the gift that keeps on giving."

Beam was one of two recipients of the Faye Dove Scholarship this year. Evelyn Ribeiro, a graduate of Begin Anew Nashville, also received funds to put toward tuition at Middle Tennessee State University.

Fulfilling their purpose

Ribeiro got connected with Begin Anew after coming to the U.S. from Brazil just as the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

Through the program there, she earned her GED and began pursuing a career in nursing.

"Every opportunity that comes my way, I can see that God is behind it," Ribeiro said.

Two other CWJC graduates — Laurien Assis of Begin Anew Nashville and Jacklyn Powell of Heart & Hands of East Texas in Lindale, Texas — also received a CWJC Academic Scholarship.

Peggy Darby, president of the WMU Foundation, said the gifts that fund the scholarships for Powell and the three other recipients make a difference.

Whether a one-time gift or a regular contribution, "gifts to the endowment (that funds the scholarships and grants) ... will help to change lives forever," Darby said.

For more information, visit wmufoundation.com.



Photo courtesy of CWJC of Tyler, Texas

Marie Beam (right) says she is passing everything she learns about automotive mechanics on to her children. A recent scholarship from the WMU Foundation helped with the purchase of her tools.



UPCOMING EVENTS

sponsored by the State Board of Missions

Annual Meeting app available for download

An app has been developed to give messengers to the 2024 Alabama Baptist State Convention Annual Meeting convenient access to a variety of useful meeting-related resources.

Available in the app will be the convention schedule, resources like the Book of Reports and the Daily Bulletin, information about featured convention speakers, a link to the live stream of convention sessions, a list of entities and ministries in the Exhibit Hall and more.

To download the app, visit

To register, visit my.yapp.us/ABSC2024 or scan the code below with your smartphone's camera.



my.yapp.us/ABSC2024 or scan the provided QR code. The Annual Meeting will be held Nov. 12–13 at Eastern Shore Baptist Church in Daphne.

Responding to the call of pastoral ministry

The median age of pastors continues to increase as bivocational and full-time pastors retire and fewer respond to the call of pastoral ministry. One of the main reasons for this is the church has focused on surviving and has lost focus on identifying and preparing those within their congregations who sense the call to ministry.

That's why the Calling Out the Called initiative exists.

The initiative will be presented Nov. 12 during the Tuesday afternoon session of the Alabama Baptist State Convention

annual meeting in Daphne.

The goal is to increase the number of ministers statewide by assisting churches in recognizing biblically qualified people to help respond and prepare to accept their call to ministry. The initiative is an effort to provide resources to churches and people of all ages and stages who might be feeling a call to ministry, with special attention to bivocational ministry and those who might be called later in life.

Look for more details in The Alabama Baptist after Nov. 12.

TAB CLASSIFIEDS

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

CHURCH POSITIONS

PASTOR

FBC Shawmut, located in Valley, Alabama, is a traditional church seeking a pastor who is a servant leader with vision, and passion for people, God's work and Word. The pastor should have a heart for evangelism and seek to grow and guide a small congregation needing revitalization. Send resumé to: sfbc.psc@yahoo.com.

PASTOR

Seventh St. Baptist Church Cullman, Alabama, seeking full-time pastor at our traditional church. Services Sunday and Wednesday. Cullman is a growing town with excellent schools, parks, shopping. Resumés to: pastorsearch7thst@gmail.com. seventhstbaptist.com

PASTOR

Pineview Baptist Church, Brent, Alabama, is seeking a full-time pastor. Send resumé to: Pineview Baptist Church, 10291 Highway 5, Brent, AL or email: pineviewbaptist@yahoo.com.

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.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

Wilton Baptist Church, located in Shelby County, Alabama, is prayerfully seeking a senior bivocational pastor to shepherd the flock and lead us forward. The membership consists of all ages — from children to senior adults. We voluntarily band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ and are personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation to lost mankind. If you believe God may be calling you to serve at a church like ours, please submit a resumé and short cover letter to: wiltonbaptistal@gmail.com.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR

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

PART-TIME ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Buhl Baptist is prayerfully seeking a part-time associate pastor. Please contact us for more information by emailing dmhicks630@gmail.com or BuhlBaptistChurch@gmail.com.

BIVOCATIONAL WORSHIP LEADER/DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

New Market Baptist Church, NE Madison County, Alabama, is seeking a bivocational worship leader/director of music. Request all interested candidates submit resumé to: newmarketbaptistchurch@gmail.com.

MINISTER OF MUSIC

Taylorville Baptist Church (Tuscaloosa, Alabama), full-time or part-time position based on candidate, competitive salary. Interested applicants should email Krista Collins (kcollins@taylorvillebaptist.org) for a copy of the position description. To be considered, please email a cover letter, resumé and three references by Nov. 30. Also, if available, please provide links from YouTube or other sites of your music.

MUSIC MINISTER

Bell Lane Baptist Church, Clanton, Alabama, seeking music minister for blended services. For more information or to submit a resumé, email: sheila.bolton@att.net.

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.

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.

OTHER POSITIONS

DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS/ASSOCIATIONAL MISSION STRATEGIST

Franklin County Baptist Association is currently accepting resumé for a full-time director of missions/associational mission strategist. Please submit resumé to: Franklindomsearch@gmail.com. Resumés will be accepted through Nov. 19.

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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 joe@joemckeeper.com, Venmo @Joe-McKeever-7 or send a check and your mailing address to: 3310 Independence Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209.

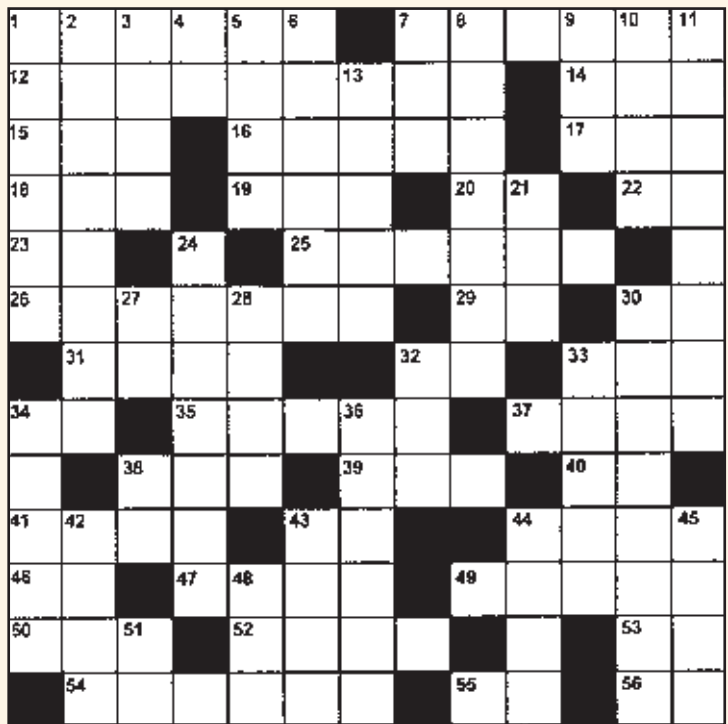
CHRISTIAN Crossword



UPCOMING EVENTS
sponsored by the State Board of Missions

ACROSS

- 1. Forces.
- 7. The sword of ____.
(Judg. 7:14)
- 12. A horn of ____ for us.
(Luke 1:69)
- 14. But ____ mightier than I cometh. (Luke 3:16)
- 15. Consumed.
- 16. Nor hear your ____.
(Matt. 10:14)
- 17. He is cast into a ____.
(Job 18:8)
- 18. International Cooperative Alliance. (abbr.)
- 19. Standing room only. (abbr.)
- 20. A disease of the lungs. (abbr.)
- 22. Wind direction.
- 23. Exclamation of satisfaction.
- 25. To impose a necessary accompaniment or result.
- 26. Batters.
- 29. Negative.
- 30. Either/____.
- 31. Lamech ... begat ____.
(Gen. 5:30)
- 32. Saint. (abbr.)
- 33. A large, long-haired Asian animal.
- 34. The kingdom of ____ in Bashan.
(Josh. 13:31)
- 35. To take ____.
- 37. Oriental cooking pans.
- 38. Very wet dirt.
- 39. I ____ no pleasant bread. (Dan. 10:3)
- 40. Left tackle. (abbr.)
- 41. Shalt thou find no ____.
(Deut. 28:65)
- 43. ____, I come to do thy will. (Heb. 10:7)
- 44. Small, green Southern vegetable.
- 46. Roman numeral for 550.
- 47. Lest any of them should ____ out.
(Acts 27:42)



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- 49. For I trust ____ you. (Rom. 15:24)
- 50. Lay not this ____ to their charge. (Acts 7:60)
- 52. In the middle of.
- 53. Emergency Room. (abbr.)
- 54. Throws.
- 55. Made ... the sea, and all that in them ____.
(Acts 4:24)
- 56. ____ Abram departed.
(Gen. 12:4)

DOWN

- 1. A prophet.
- 2. Identical.
- 3. Request.
- 4. Electron volt. (abbr.)
- 5. Abraham ... kept ... my statutes, and my ____.
(Gen. 26:5)
- 6. A person who saves things.
- 7. They were both righteous before ____.
(Luke 1:6)
- 8. Continuing ____ in prayer. (Rom. 12:12)
- 9. Long period of time.
- 10. I have commanded my sanctified ____.
(Isa. 13:3)
- 11. NBC, CBS, ABC.

- 13. Fill his skin with barbed ____.
(Job 41:7)
- 21. Having to do with a natural science (prefix).
- 24. Idols.
- 27. Christ went up ____ Jerusalem.
- 28. The son of Gera.
(Judg. 3:15)
- 30. Strong wood. (2 words.)
- 32. Supersonic Transport. (abbr.)
- 33. Part of an egg (plural).
- 34. Belonging to the son of Ephlal.
(1 Chron. 2:37)
- 36. Belonging to Ruth's mother-in-law.
(Ruth 1:2)
- 38. Used instead of "Miss" today.
- 42. ____ lamp.
- 43. Citrus fruit.
- 44. Expression of regret after a mistake.
- 45. Having to do with airplanes or space.
- 48. God ____ with the lad.
(Gen. 21:20)
- 51. Yes or ____.

All Bible verses are KJV unless otherwise specified.

Ministry assistants conference

The Alabama Association of Baptist Ministry Assistants — formerly known as the Alabama Association of Baptist Secretaries — will hold its annual conference March 2–5, 2025, at Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega.

The conference theme will be ‘Tis the Season based on Ecclesiastes 3:1.

During the event:

- ▶ Lee King will be the conference speaker.
- ▶ Chevas Phillips will lead worship for the conference.
- ▶ Cade and Jennifer Farris will lead worship for the banquet.

Registration opens Nov. 1. For more information or to register, visit alsbom.org/AABMA.



KING



PHILLIPS



THE FARRISES

Early Bird Tax Conference: Dec. 3

What IRS forms are required to be filed by the church? What should the pastor's W-2 look like? How are ministers and churches treated differently than other businesses? How should we acknowledge charitable contributions to the church?

These and other topics will be covered at this year's Early Bird Tax Conference.

The conference will be held Dec. 3 at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions in Prattville from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The cost of this event is \$15, which includes

lunch and materials.

To register, visit alsbom.org/event/early-bird-tax-conference. For questions, call Lee Wright at 334-613-2263 or email lwright@alsbom.org.

To register, visit alsbom.org/event/early-bird-tax-conference or scan the code below with your smartphone's camera.



EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Sunday School Lessons

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



For November 3

COMMIT Acts 20:18–32

Truth Proclaimed (18–21)

As Paul headed back to Jerusalem, he met with the Ephesian elders to tell them farewell. In his address, he clearly communicated how he had lived his life in Ephesus and how he had preached the gospel clearly while there.

The fact that Paul mentions how he lived while with the Ephesians is important because it shows that those who love the Lord will live in ways that honor God. When we live as Jesus lived, it gives credence to our preaching of the gospel. John states that “the one who says he remains in Him should walk just as He walked” (1 John 2:6). Historically, Christians caring and having compassion for those around them has led to people accepting the gospel because they know it is not just empty words.

When Paul preached the gospel, he says he preached that people must turn to God in repentance and have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul was not concerned about gaining friends or hurting feelings; he preached the gospel without fear.

We need to allow the Holy Spirit to work through the gospel, which is why we have to preach the true gospel and not worry about what others may think.

Testimony of Grace (22–27)

In his address Paul states how he is never going to see them again and that prison and chains await him. Paul was set on preaching the gospel regardless of the cost. We also need to think about the cost of following Jesus. We are living in a time when it is not culturally acceptable to be

a Christian in many areas of our society. It is easy to go along with the crowd and avoid ostracization, but Paul’s example shows us that it is more important to be obedient to God than to try to fit in with the world. As John says, “And the world with its lust is passing away, but the one who does the will of God remains forever” (1 John 2:17). Paul was set to do what God called him to do, and we need to do so as well. Whatever God calls us to do, we need to be diligent in carrying it out.

Be on Guard (28–32)

Paul finishes his address with a warning against false teachers. In the early church false teachers abounded, and it is no different today. It is important that we know what we believe so that we can be on guard against false teachings. With the easy access to the internet there are many false teachings available, but there are also many resources to combat bad doctrine.

From the teaching that if you have enough faith you won’t get sick to the belief that God will bless Christians with physical wealth, the number of heretical teachings seems to multiply each year. This shows us that we cannot leave the thinking and doctrine to our pastors, but each Christian ought to learn what he can to know when false teaching is being promulgated and to know how to respond.

The best way to be on guard is to know what the Scriptures say. False teachers will twist the Bible to suit their own needs, but if we are familiar with the entire Bible we can see when Scripture is being twisted.

It is easy to take one verse out of context, but it is difficult to do that with the entire Bible.

“But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus ...”

Acts 20:24

For November 10

WITNESS Acts 22:6–21

An Encounter (6–9)

While back in Jerusalem, Paul was recognized by some Jews from Asia, and they stirred up trouble against him. Soldiers were called in to remove Paul from the situation and figure out what the ruckus was all about. As Paul was being led away, he took advantage of the situation to explain to the Jews his conversion experience.

Paul used his conversion experience to explain how he turned from a Pharisee to a Christian. Since the Jews had shared Paul’s beliefs, they already had common ground with him. The question in their eyes was how he went from being a good Jew to an “apostate.”

This shows us that we should not underestimate our own testimony. We should not downplay the work of God in our own lives. When we share the gospel with people who know us, it is important for us to help them understand how we came to know Christ because God can use this to open their eyes to the gospel.

Sight Restored (10–16)

Paul told how he had seen the bright light on the road to Damascus, blinding him. Paul was told to go to Damascus and find Ananias, who healed Paul’s blindness and told him that he would be God’s witness.

In Paul’s case, God clearly told him what was in store for him and that he was going to be a witness for Him. It is not typical for God to deal with us in ways like this today, but this does not mean we are left in the dark.

God has given us His Word, and in it God reveals His will for us. God’s will is for us to believe in the One He has sent (John 6:29) and to live in a way that is pleasing to Him (Rom. 12:1–2). If we read God’s

Word, pray and listen to godly wisdom, we can live our lives fulfilling God’s will and glorifying Him in our choices.

The Task (17–21)

Paul finished his testimony, mentioning how in the past he had persecuted Christians and even approved the stoning of Stephen. Finally, he mentioned that God sent him to the Gentiles, which enraged the Jews.

Paul did not hold back in detailing how God had dealt with him, and we should also be willing to tell others our testimonies.

Our testimonies are important because it shows that God saves us in different ways. Each believer is going to have a different perspective of how God has worked in his or her life. We should never begrudge the way God has chosen to save us.

I know some Christians who consider their testimony to be “bland” and would rather have one more like Paul’s. Interestingly, the people who have the more notable testimonies often wish they did not have those things as part of their past because they often made many bad decisions with lasting impacts.

We need to be content with how God saves us, and we need to be honest in our testimony because God can use it to reach other people who have similar pasts as ourselves.

Paul’s testimony shows us that it is important to remember that God is capable of saving even the greatest of sinners. Instead of doubting that God can change their hearts, we need to preach the gospel knowing that God saves people who are at odds with Him. This should give us confidence that God can change the hearts of those who may seem to us to be beyond hope.

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

“And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’”

Acts 9:4

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 November 3

JACOB AND ESAU: FAMILY RIVALRY Genesis 27:35–37, 41; 33:1–4, 8–11

Sibling rivalries are fairly common. While we love our brothers and sisters, many find themselves competing for attention and recognition. Jacob's and Esau's different personalities and interests intensified this competitiveness as they grew to adulthood. The favoritism displayed by Isaac and Rebekah only made the whole situation worse.

The twins' relationship was strained to a breaking point with the selling of the birthright and the giving of the blessing. Esau treated the birthright with contempt when he traded it away for a bowl of stew. He then regretted his hastiness when Jacob also received the blessing. Relationships are often damaged when we seek our own gain or personal agendas. Selfishness has caused the breakup of many relationships. Likewise, humility and selflessness can be critical to restoring and maintaining healthy relationships.

Rivalry and self-centeredness can destroy relationships. (27:35–37, 41)

In biblical times, the firstborn received a double portion of the inheritance. The blessing often included prophetic proclamations about the nature of the recipient and included asking God to provide benefits for their future. This formal birthright blessing was a special one-time event that was tied to the inheritance.

Esau is distraught when he realizes that Isaac cannot give him the same blessing he had given Jacob. The blessing affirms the prophecy given to Rebekah before the twins were born that the older son would serve the younger. Jacob would become the patriarch of the family. Jacob would be blessed with the land and provisions from God.

Esau begs for his father to bless him too. The blessing propheti-

cally describes who Esau is and what his future will hold. He will serve his brother and live by the sword. Esau will dwell away from the land and live as a wanderer. Esau, hurt and angry over the loss of the blessing, determines to hold his brother responsible. He plans to murder his brother after his father's death. The two brothers destroy their relationship because of their selfishness and possessions.

Displaying humility is necessary for rebuilding relationships. (33:1–4)

After living 20 years in exile because of the rift between him and his brother, Jacob finally returns home to the land God promised. He is worried over how his brother will respond to him. This fear is only intensified when he hears that his brother is approaching with 400 men.

Jacob sends a large gift of cattle ahead to his brother and then leads his family to meet Esau. Jacob bows down seven times before his brother as he approaches. Bowing once would be a sign of humility; bowing seven times demonstrates the completeness of that humility. Esau runs to meet Jacob and greets him with a hug. Both men weep. With humility, the brothers are able to tear down the barriers that selfishness and deceit had built between them.

Humbly accept efforts by others to restore a relationship. (8–11)

Esau meets Jacob's family and then inquires about the gift Jacob had sent. Esau refuses the gift as unnecessary, but Jacob insists that he take it and Esau finally relents.

Jacob concludes, "For indeed, I have seen your face, and it is like seeing God's face, since you have accepted me."

This reminds us that we never look more like our Heavenly Father than when we humble ourselves and forgive others. As believers may we become the peacemakers and reconcilers that God has called His children to be.

For November 10

JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS: FAMILY JEALOUSY Genesis 37:1–4, 18–24, 31–34

Family dynamics are always difficult even in the best of circumstances. Jacob's family included 13 children from four different mothers. Jealousy and favoritism in such a large, blended family inevitably led to conflict.

Many of us have been hurt by someone close to us, but how we respond to that pain will impact the entire family. Dealing with hurt feelings with communication, mercy and forgiveness are vital to maintaining healthy family relationships.

Avoid any behavior that encourages jealousy or ill feelings from others. (1–4)

Jacob and his family are dwelling in the promised land. Joseph, the beloved son of Jacob and his wife Rachel, is now 17 years old. Rachel had been barren for many years but was blessed late in life with Joseph.

This led Jacob to adore Joseph and show him preferential treatment compared to his brothers. Jacob did not learn from the problems that arose because of his parents' favoritism. Instead he falls into the same trap and causes animosity between Joseph and his brothers.

Three events intensify the resentment of Joseph's brothers. First, Joseph tattles on his brothers' bad behavior to his father. Second, Jacob gives Joseph an ornate robe made of varying colors of fine cloth, which was a clear indication of Jacob's preferential treatment of Joseph. His brothers hated Joseph because he received his father's undivided attention and affection. Finally, Joseph's dreams and his interpretation of them indicating that Joseph would one day rule over his family fueled his brothers' jealousy and hatred. This appears to be the last straw,

leading his brothers to act on their animosity.

Animosity and jealousy can lead to betrayal. (18–24)

Joseph is sent again to check on his brothers while they are grazing the flocks. He finds them down around Dothan. They see him coming from far away, recognizing the special coat their father had made for him. The brothers conspire to kill him. Reuben talks them into just throwing him into an empty cistern. A cistern is a pit dug into the ground to catch water. Evidently Reuben, the oldest brother, planned to come back to rescue Joseph. The brothers capture Joseph, strip off his coat and throw him into the cistern.

Our actions can either benefit or cause great harm to others in the family. (31–34)

While Reuben is absent a group of Midianite traders, also known as Ishmaelites, travel through the area on their way to Egypt. Judah and the brothers decide to sell Joseph to them instead of killing him. They receive 20 pieces of silver, the normal rate for a slave. The Midianites in turn sell Joseph when they get to Egypt. Reuben returns and finds Joseph gone. The brothers decide to hide their sin by lying to their father.

They slaughter a goat and dip Joseph's coat into the goat's blood. In his younger years Jacob had slain a goat to deceive his father, and now his sons deceive him with the blood of a goat. Upon examining the coat Jacob determines that Joseph was killed in an animal attack, and he immediately goes into deep mourning. Animosity and deception cause grief not only for those involved in the conflict but for the whole family. The church family is not immune from these same issues. We must not allow immaturity and slights to fester into bitterness.

"But when [Joseph's] brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him..."

Genesis 37:4

Steadfast presence

Parkway Baptist librarian recognized for 50 years of faithful service

By **Tucker Massey**
The Alabama Baptist

In July 1974, Parkway Baptist Church, Auburn, established their church library with the help of funds from a man named Charles Isbell. With the creation of the library, a need for a librarian arose and charter member Virginia Taylor was voted in to fill the post.

Fifty years later, 94-year-old Taylor is still the librarian, and the facility was named in her honor in 2003.

“We started off with about 300 books,” she recalled. “As people used them, we ordered more, and at this point, we have about 5,800 items catalogued. ... We check out about 25 to 35 items every Sunday, so I think people still enjoy books! I do. I was an English teacher for 30-something years, and I’ve always appreciated reading, and I hope to inspire others to read.”

Seeing growth

During her 50-year tenure, the library has added new volumes, moved into a bigger area and been utilized as a record-keeping space.

Though many changes have happened over the years, Taylor’s presence has remained steadfast.

Jeff Redmond, Parkway senior pastor, has known Taylor and her husband of 73 years, Jim, since he first joined the staff as education and youth minister in 1989. Redmond described Taylor as a “Southern, godly lady who cares about the Lord Jesus, cares about the gospel, cares about her church.

“[The Taylors] have always been involved in church, Sunday School, worked on committees and ministry teams or as ministry volunteers in countless ways,”



VIRGINIA TAYLOR

Photo by Tucker Massey/The Alabama Baptist

Redmond noted. “I’d imagine one or both of them has probably been on every committee or team this church has had at one time or another.”

While Taylor likes to keep a low profile, the congregation surprised her with a special 50th anniversary recognition during a summer worship service.

Marcelyn Price, who has known Taylor for 32 years, participated in the recognition in which Taylor was presented with plaques from the church and the Alabama Baptist Historical Commission.

Serving with dignity

“You have served in the church library with dignity and are the epitome of a true Southern, Christian woman,” Price told Taylor during the presentation. “You greet everyone who comes in the library with a sweet and beautiful smile, and you help each person by directing them to the book they want to check out or even suggest books

they want to read if they ask. You have never hesitated to help someone.”

A framed letter from the ABHC was written by executive director Wendy Westerhouse.

“We are grateful for the leadership, influence, commitment and care given to your church library and the development of its role in the life of the church,” she wrote.

“God has used you to impact people for the Kingdom, and we are thankful for you, your influence, devoted work and for your continued dedication to the cause of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.”

Endowment

During the worship service, Price said an endowment had been established in Taylor’s name — The Virginia Rutledge Taylor Endowed Scholarship for Deserving Students/Members of Parkway Baptist Church — a partnership between Parkway and The Baptist Foundation of Alabama.

The church gave an initial gift of \$20,000 and Parkway members contributed \$16,000, so the scholarship launched with an initial base of \$36,000, Redmond said. “And it’s still rising.”

Price said Taylor was surprised, humbled and truly overwhelmed with all the attention and honors.

“She’s 94 years old ... and to know that she’s served 50 years in our church is just phenomenal. It just shows you her character and her love for Jesus and her love for her church — and she does it so behind-the-scenes, so willingly.”

Endowed scholarships help many college students pay for school. They also establish a lasting legacy for the donors who contribute the seed funds.

Setting up a **memorial endowment fund** to help students or to fuel Great Commission work for generations to come is easier than most people think and can be part of a Kingdom-minded estate plan. The Baptist Foundation of Alabama helps individuals plan for generous giving in the short and long term. **Visit tabonline.org/endowments or scan the code with your smartphone’s camera to learn more.**



By the numbers

By Samford University

Samford University celebrates 16th straight year of growth

Fueled by another record-breaking class of first-year students and a historic student retention rate, Samford University announced its largest-ever total enrollment with 6,101 students for fall semester 2024.

This marks the 16th consecutive year of record enrollment for Samford, a period of sustained and strategic growth that has raised the university's national profile.

"We are elated to once again report our largest total enrollment in university history — a remarkable 16-year trend that's increasingly unique in higher education," said Jason Black, Samford's vice president for enrollment management. "Our academic programs continue to attract students, and those students continue to stay engaged by the rewards derived from a Christ-centered Samford education."

The 92.87% freshmen-to-sophomore retention rate represents an all-time high for Samford and far exceeds the latest nationwide retention average of 76%, according to the National Student Clearinghouse.

Undergraduate record

Samford's 4,210 undergraduate students also marked an all-time high. The university welcomed 1,087 first-year full-time students, building upon the previous benchmark of 1,080 from 2023.

"Never before has Samford been positioned as well as it is today, and we're thrilled to see the members of the class of 2028 begin their Samford journey," said Samford President Beck A. Taylor. "These students are passionate, they are driven, and they're going to put their stamp on Samford."



Photo courtesy of Samford University

More than 6,100 students enrolled with Samford University this fall marking 16 years of record enrollment for the historic Baptist campus. Leaders are working to improve the fitness center as well as housing availability.

A snapshot of Samford's enrollment for 2024:

- ▶ 45 states plus Puerto Rico are represented in the overall enrollment, along with 16 countries
- ▶ 3,668 students come from outside Alabama (60.1% of total enrollment)
- ▶ 833 first-year students come from outside Alabama (76.6% of class)

Samford is welcoming 245 transfer students, including 151 from Birmingham-Southern College, which closed in May.

The updated enrollment figures come days after Samford announced three top 10 national rankings from The Wall Street Journal's 2025 list of the best U.S. colleges. Samford ranked No. 2 nationally for student character development, No. 8 for quality of career preparation and No. 10 among top recommended colleges.

The trajectory of historic enrollment growth demands ambitious infrastructure commitments, which are being addressed through the Samford Horizons strategic plan. Central among the early phase construction projects is a 165,000-square-foot Campus Recreation, Wellness & Athletic Complex. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held Sept. 20. Taking shape nearby are new residence halls for first-year students and Greek life that will add more than 650 beds upon opening in Fall 2025. Projects also include a 550-space parking deck on the north side of campus.

Tackling initiatives

"These vital projects are needed to serve a growing campus, and I'm thankful for our board of trustees having the courage, foresight and vision to prioritize tackling these initiatives," Taylor said. "The fu-

ture of Samford University has never been brighter. Our best days are ahead."

The \$85 million project that combines world-class fitness amenities with communal spaces for students and faculty.

"This proudly stands among the best such facilities in the nation," said Samford President Beck A. Taylor during the Sept. 20 ribbon cutting. "It's a game-changer for Samford."

The massive four-story complex features basketball, racquetball and pickleball courts, along with studios for spin classes, yoga, pilates, Zumba and barre core. There are tonal strength stations, free weights, cardio and circuit training, turf areas, billiards, an elevated jogging track, a coffeehouse and 24-hour market. There's also an esports lounge designed to launch the university's new video gaming program.

The complex will soon employ 100 student workers, Madsen said, doubling the student staff from the previous recreation center.

One emphasis was constructing studios large enough to accommodate Step Sing groups that previously staged some of their practices off-campus," said Nick Madsen, executive director of campus recreation. "We wanted to give everyone the opportunity to find that little pocket area where they feel comfortable."

Madsen was part of a leadership team that evaluated recreational facilities at more than 20 major universities to inform Samford's design.

EDITOR'S NOTE — This story was written and originally published by Samford University.

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After the storm

By Grace Thornton
The Alabama Baptist

Alabama Baptist DR volunteers ‘humbled’ by responses to gospel

Thelma Goolsby said now that she’s back in Alabama, she wants to keep the feeling she had while serving in Texas. She saw God at work in Huffman, Texas, earlier this year as Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief teams helped clean up trees and limbs after Hurricane Beryl.

“It’s been glorious and humbling,” said Goolsby, who serves as an ABDR chaplain.

Alabama teams started arriving in Huffman on July 11, and they’ve seen more than a dozen people make a decision to follow Christ.

Goolsby got to talk with five of those individuals, and the movement of the Holy Spirit in their lives was on display, she said.

One woman arrived at the ABDR command center at First Baptist Church Huffman with tears in her eyes, saying the weight she was carrying was too much.

After talking with Goolsby and telling her she wanted to know the truth about Jesus, she prayed to receive Christ and said the weight on her shoulders was gone.

“He had already pierced her heart; she came ready to talk,” Goolsby said.

‘More than I came for’

Another man came to ask for help with a fallen tree at his house, and as Goolsby talked with him, she asked him a question.

“I said, ‘If your life ended the same day that tree’s life came to an end, where would you be?’ He thought for a minute and said, ‘Well, that’s a good question,’” Goolsby said.

They talked, and he accepted Christ. As he left, he held up his new Bible and said to the volun-



Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers work to remove a tree from a house in Huffman, Texas. Teams from Alabama have been working there to help with Hurricane Beryl cleanup since July 11.

teers outside, “I got more than I came for.”

Goolsby said she and other disaster relief volunteers have the privilege of reaching others “because God so loved” and sends them to share His message of love.

“We go to serve because we love,” she said. “We give ourselves



ABDR crews work to remove a tree in Huffman, Texas.



Photo courtesy of Thelma Goolsby
Chaplains Becky Noland (left) and Thelma Goolsby (right) with Brenda, one of the individuals who prayed to receive Christ.

One of those responses came as a team from Madison Baptist Association traveled back to Alabama. After their tractor trailer had a blowout on the interstate, the rest of the team tried to help and also look for food, and they hit delay after delay.

Purposeful delays

Eventually Chaplain Al Rudd ended up at a gas station getting coffee from the coffee machine.

“Unfortunately it was very complicated to use,” Rudd said. “Fortunately an elderly gentleman named Joseph was there and offered his assistance.”

As they fixed their coffee, Rudd shared his faith with him, and Joseph said he wanted to know Jesus. Rudd prayed with him.

“As he stirred his coffee, he accepted Christ,” Rudd said. “I’m not sure he even stopped stirring as he prayed. If we had not had all those delays, I would not have met Joseph. Maybe some of your delays are so you can meet your Joseph.”

so others see Jesus in us to bring glory to God while we help others.”

Hundreds of requests

John Thomas, the white hat leader on site, said ABDR teams received more than 300 requests for chain saw help and had completed 72 of those requests.

“We will probably be here another week and a half, two at the most,” he said.

Thomas said chaplains have done “a great job” of offering a listening ear to people in the community. He asked for Alabama Baptists to “keep praying, because people are responding.”

“We go to serve because we love. We give ourselves so others see Jesus in us to bring glory to God ...”

Thelma Goolsby, ABDR chaplain

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MAKE DISCIPLES

Praying for the persecuted church

Videos show clergy in Nigeria plea for ransom for their lives

Recent videos show two abducted clergymen — one a captive for the past 16 months — pleading for ransom to be paid to save their lives.

A 15-second video shows Paul Musa kneeling near a Boko Haram flag while a masked man points a weapon at him.

The jihadist group Boko Haram reportedly has demanded between \$39,180 and \$130,221 for the release of Musa, who is pastor of Church of Christ in Nations in Gamboru Ngala in Borno state, and his wife. The couple were kidnapped in March 2023.

In another abduction case, Micah Suleiman, a Catholic priest, is seen in a 51-second video pleading for ransom to be paid to save his life. The news services say assailants kidnapped Suleiman on June 22 from St. Raymond Catholic Church property in Gusau in Zamfara state.

Nigeria is No. 6 on Open Doors' 2024 World Watch List of places most difficult to be a Christian. Nigeria has led the world in the number of Christians killed for their faith or kidnapped. (TAB)

Catholic man in Pakistan slain for trying to protect Christian women

A Catholic man was killed in Pakistan reportedly for taking action against the persecution of Christians in the area.

The sister of Marshall Masih, a 29-year-old father of four, said four Muslims entered Masih's home in Lahore before dawn July 10 and held him and his family at gunpoint. The sister said Masih was shot 16 times in front of his wife and young children, report the news services Christian Daily International and Morning Star News.

Masih died at a hospital from blood loss and injuries to organs, his sister said.

About 10 weeks prior, Masih had filed a police complaint against Muhammad Shani for harassing Christian women and for firing repeatedly and indiscriminately into the air.

Police arrested Shani at the time and recovered illegal weapons but quickly released him. Masih's sister told the news services that police then pressured Masih to let the matter rest.

Shani was one of the four armed Muslims who attacked Masih and his family, stated Masih's sister. Pakistan is No. 7 on Open Doors' 2024 World Watch List of places most difficult to be a Christian. (TAB)



MASIH

Three suicide bombings kill Christians, Muslims in Nigeria

Three suicide bombings killed more than 30 people as relentless persecution of Christians continues in Nigeria.

The news services Christian Daily International and Morning Star News reported that three suicide bombings occurred June 29 in Gwoza in Borno state. More than 30 Christians and Muslims were killed.



Unsplash.com

Many others were injured, an official said. No group has claimed responsibility for the bombings.

Additionally, six Christians and two children were slain June 21, 23 and 26 when assailants attacked three villages. (TAB)

Turkey's 'bureaucratic maze' thwarts church's plan for worship center

In a show of government hostility toward Christians, a Protestant church foundation has been denied permission to acquire land for a worship center, a legal expert said.

Diyarbakir Protestant Church Foundation wants to establish a worship center in Diyarbakir for a congregation numbering more than 100.

In 2023 the foundation requested to purchase land zoned for religious buildings, but the application was denied. The foundation legally challenged the denial, but a court upheld the rejection in 2024, Alliance Defending Freedom International said.

ADF International is supporting an appeal.

"As is frequently the case in Turkey, the applicants were met with a bureaucratic maze in which state institutions passed their applications back and forth, claiming to lack the authority to grant the land usage request," explained an ADF International statement. (TBP)

Renowned Christian kidnapped; two others slain, including officer

A renowned Nigerian Christian woman was abducted from a Bible study July 30 in an incident that left two people dead.

Gunmen stormed a Bible study at King Jesus and I Church in Asaba in Nigeria's Delta state, kidnapping Joan Onyemaechi, sources told media outlets Christian Daily International and Morning Star News.

Onyemaechi is the wife of Peter Mrakpor,

state attorney general and state commissioner of justice.

Until resigning this year, she had been a federal House of Representatives member and technical education commissioner.

The news agencies state that her driver and a police officer were killed in the attack and that a civilian and another police officer were injured.

A motive for the abduction is unknown. As of Aug. 1, her family had not received a ransom demand, the news outlets report. (TBP)

Police save Christian mom from mob, charge her with blasphemy

Police saved a Christian mother from a mob ready to lynch her, but then they succumbed to mob pressure and charged her with blasphemy.

On Aug. 7, police rescued Saima Masih, 32, from a Muslim mob seeking to kill her in Kathore village of Pakistan's Punjab province, report media outlets Christian Daily International and Morning Star News.

She had been accused of desecrating pages of the Quran, said attorney Akmal Bhatti of Minorities Alliance Pakistan.

The accusation against Saima came from Muslim neighbors with a vendetta, Bhatti said. As news spread of the blasphemy accusation, nearly 300 Muslims gathered on the main highway and blocked passage.

Bhatti told the news outlets that sources also indicated some Muslims had beaten Christians. This caused fear of unrest in the community, and some Christians fled for their lives.

Pressured by the mob, police charged Saima under Section 295-B of Pakistan's blasphemy laws. Such a charge could result in a life sentence, Bhatti said. (TBP)



A note on Turkey

Turkey is No. 50 on Open Doors' 2024 World Watch List of places most difficult to be a Christian; 99% of Turkey's population is Muslim. An estimated 185 Protestant ministers — foreigners who were living in Turkey — have been deported or banned from re-entering the country.