

SOUTHERN BAPTIST  
**TEXAN**

OCTOBER 2024 | VOL. 23 | NO. 10

SBTC ANNUAL MEETING  
SPECIAL INSERT • PAGES 6-11

**CARING FOR THOSE WHO  
CARE FOR  
THE FLOCK**



October is Pastor Appreciation Month.  
How can you honor your shepherd? **PAGE 22**

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IS LEARNING THE ROPES AS A  
FIRST-TIME PASTOR—AT AGE 70

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



# THANK YOU, PASTOR

**T HIS TIME OF YEAR IS MY FAVORITE.** The weather begins cooling off and the leaves start changing colors. I also love this time of year because it's football season. There is nothing like high school football on Friday nights and college football on Saturdays.

However, of all the things we can highlight this time of year, one that often goes unmentioned is the time churches can set aside for pastor appreciation. Many churches designate October as Pastor Appreciation Month. It is a time when church families can express their thankfulness for their pastor and his family.

It is extremely important as a church to let your pastor know you love and appreciate him. I pastored two churches and know firsthand the challenges pastors face. Allow me to give you three reasons your church should set aside time to show appreciation to your pastor:

### **Pastors work hard**

There is an old joke that pastors only work on Sundays and Wednesdays. There is absolutely no truth in that statement. Pastors are some of the hardest working people there are. Every week, a pastor must seek the Lord for what he should share out of God's Word for the congregation. He spends hours studying and crafting that message. On top of that, he is leading an organization. A church has many administrative duties that require leadership. He also must shepherd the people the Lord has called him to. Sometimes that requires counseling people. Sometimes that means early morning or late night visits to the hospital. Sometimes that means fixing things around the church. Your pastor works hard.

### **Pastors can feel isolated**

Pastoring can be a lonely calling. It's one of the only positions in the world that has a constant revolving door of relationships. A pastor will see people come into the church and see people leave the church. People get engaged in the ministry and then they may move to another city. This makes it difficult for a pastor to establish deep relationships and can lead to feeling isolated. Make sure your pastor knows you love him and are here to support him. See him as a friend and a pastor.

### **Pastors need time away**

I often encourage churches to give their pastors time away. The nature of being a pastor means you are always on call. It's not a job you can leave at the office. At any moment, a pastor's time with his family could be interrupted for various reasons. There is rarely any time to unplug and recharge. I encourage your church to find time when your pastor can be away and be refreshed. I promise you, he will be a better pastor when his heart has been refreshed with rest and family time.

I have always believed being a pastor is the greatest calling one can have. But it can be physically, emotionally, and spiritually draining. However, your pastor does it with joy day in and day out because he loves the calling the Lord has given to him. I encourage you to take time as a church to show appreciation to your pastor. When your pastor feels loved and appreciated, he will love and lead you well.

I love you and am humbled to serve you!



Dr. Nathan Lorick  
SBTC Executive Director



Engage.  
Encourage.  
Equip.

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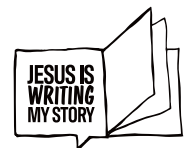
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# YOU CAN LEARN A LOT FROM THE LORD ON THE RUN

**I GET OUT AND RUN A FEW TIMES A WEEK**, but hot summer days give me a very small window for running. If I don't get out before the sun comes up, it's probably not happening that day.

Rain—rare as it can be in my area this time of year—adds to the challenge. But as I ran on a misty, dark morning recently, the Lord reminded me of a few truths that are just as good for the road of life as they are on the run:

## Know the terrain

I have two to three loops I'm familiar with depending on how many miles I want to run. When you repeatedly travel the same paths, it gets easy to remember where the trouble spots are. There's a sidewalk on one of my streets, for example, where a soil shift has caused the concrete to break and ramp upward. I'm always thankful when I remember to step over—rather than stumble on—that little piece of pavement.

Applied personally, knowing the terrain means knowing my tendencies in different seasons of life and adjusting accordingly. There are times on my schedule when I'm going to be a little more uptight because I'm a little busier than usual. Twenty years ago, I was sure the way to navigate times like that would be to press in and work even harder. Now I know hectic seasons are times, at least for me, when I need to apply more self care and slow down in as many areas as possible to conserve energy for the most demanding tasks at hand.

## Mind your posture

As I tire during a run, my posture begins to sag. My chin drops, which makes breathing more difficult. That lowering chin starts to put pressure on the middle of my spine, which, in turn, puts more stress on my lower back and hips. This eventually changes my stride, causing unnatural movement in my knees and feet. The result? Increased soreness and a need to take extra days off to give my body a chance to heal.

It's easy to get out of whack—physically and mentally. I've suffered from many a mental sag, which is why it's so important for me to remember God's command to set my mind on things above (Colossians 3:2) and to be renewed in my mind by truth (Romans 12:1-2). Just as it takes discipline and stamina to maintain proper posture while running, it takes effort to keep your mind focused on what the Lord has promised and what He is doing rather than on what's going wrong or what you don't have.

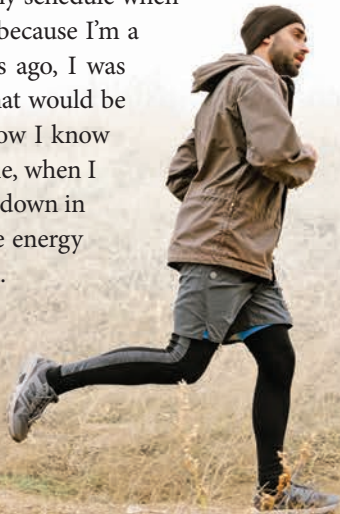
## Puddles are unavoidable

I hate wet socks and shoes, but when you're running in the rain and in the dark, you're going to step right in the middle of several puddles. It's unavoidable. And when you're a couple of miles from home, you can either pout about your soggy footwear or focus on something better and finish the run strong.

Sometimes I live as if it's possible to avoid puddles, and when I step into one, I get nonplussed, as if something unusual is happening to me. Life's got puddles—lots of them. Better to embrace that reality and spend my mental energy seeking the Lord's comfort and wisdom rather than lamenting wet socks.

"I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace," Jesus said in John 16:33. "You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world."

Jesus wasn't running when He said that ... but that shoe sure does fit.



# Annual Church Profile



One of the tools that allows the SBTC to mobilize churches more effectively is the Annual Church Profile (ACP).

## Why ACP Matters

- ACP is used to share and celebrate how God is moving in SBTC churches.
- ACP determines each church's SBC messenger eligibility.
- ACP determines the Texas representation on SBC boards.

## How to Participate

Submit your church's ACP for the 2024 reporting year (October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024).  
ACP'S are due Feb. 7, 2025.

Learn how to submit your ACP at [sbtexas.com/acp](https://sbtexas.com/acp)

**Join Us in Sharing How God is Moving!**



# STRONGER TOGETHER

**I** AM GRATEFUL TO GOD FOR OUR NETWORK of churches known as the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention. God has been so gracious to us since our inception in 1998. We have 2,780 churches in the SBTC, and we are blessed to be guided by our executive director, Nathan Lorick.

Having served on the executive board and now as president of the SBTC, I have had a front row seat to view the many ways God continues to show His favor upon us. Take a moment and lift up a prayer of thanksgiving to God for allowing you to be a part of a dynamic partnership with brothers and sisters in Christ committed to proclaiming Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The theme for our annual meeting, scheduled for Nov. 11-12 at Sagemont Church in Houston, is “Side by Side.” Nathan and I, along with all the men and women serving in the SBTC, want our churches—especially pastors and staff—to know they are not alone. The devil likes us to feel isolated and removed from other believers. There is much strength and joy for ministry when we realize we are not alone.

## GOD HAS BLESSED US WITH MANY FELLOW MINISTERS OF CHRIST WHO ARE PASSIONATELY PURSUING JESUS AND HIS GOSPEL.

Being a Lone Ranger pastor removed from contact and encouragement from others is no way to serve the Lord. God has blessed us with many fellow ministers of Christ who are passionately pursuing Jesus and His gospel. We need each other. We are so much stronger when we are together.

Our focal biblical text for the annual meeting is Philippians 1:27, where Paul writes, “Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.” The verb translated “striving together” in Greek is *synathleo* (notice the root structure for the English word “athlete” in this Greek word). This connotes toughness and tenacity. We are to exert the energy of a wrestler in his match for the sake of unity in the body of Christ. There will be many temptations to separate us. Let us determine to do all we can to stand fast, be of one mind, and strive together.

I look forward to sharing a message based on this biblical text during the Monday evening session. Also on Monday evening, we will have a prayer and praise service that is going to be powerful.

Be sure and join us in Houston as we celebrate what God has done and is doing through the churches of the SBTC. Each session will have uplifting messages and worship. Meals and gatherings will allow you opportunities to connect with others from around the state. I am excited to host the President’s Lunch on Tuesday, where we will look at some practical ways we can walk side by side with others for the gospel.

I am praying now for God to pour out His favor and anointing on every one of our 2,780 churches in the SBTC. You are loved and appreciated. Keep going strong for Jesus.



# NEVER TOO YOUNG TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Harper Sparks is a pretty typical sixth grader. She loves football, her friends, and swimming. She also reigns as Young Miss DeKalb over in Bowie County. Her dad, James, is pastor of First Baptist Church in DeKalb, where Harper is an enthusiastic participant in church ministries and events.

But Harper also has an unusual item on her growing resume—she’s the youngest columnist for the Bowie County Citizens Tribune newspaper.

Starting a year ago, the 12-year-old middle schooler writes a weekly devotional in the lifestyle section of the paper. Her July 24 column spoke of her participation in a project for Fearfully and Wonderfully Made, a ministry that serves families who have a baby in intensive care.

“This ministry helps these families and mothers

know that they are not alone, and the love of God is with them,” she wrote.

The column went on to encourage readers to find ways to let their own lights shine in the lives of those around them. She concluded with an invitation to attend her church.

James says Harper’s relatable style has made her articles popular. “[Her writing] is easy for anybody of any age to grasp ... a lot of people in this community have been touched by how down to earth it is,” he said.

Her connection to the paper came about unexpectedly. Her mom, Mindy, posted an anecdote involving Harper to their church’s Facebook page after a 2023 mission trip. The editor of the paper saw the post and ended up inviting Harper to write a weekly devotion.

Taking on a weekly column is indicative of Harper’s confidence and maturity. She is bold to invite her teachers to attend First Baptist with her. Some of them have started attending, and one even credits Harper’s persistence with strengthening her own spiritual life and that of her family.

“I told [Harper], ‘No matter what else you do with your life, this is the real stuff,’” Mindy said. “You’re making a real difference in people’s lives.”



(From left)  
Mindy, Harper,  
James, Presley,  
and Whitt Sparks.  
SUBMITTED PHOTO

ANNUAL 2024 MEETING

# SIDE **BY** SIDE

PHILIPPIANS 1:27

SAGEMONT CHURCH, HOUSTON

## ‘JESUS IS WORKING AND USING THE SBTC’



Forshee prepares to preside over first annual meeting as convention president

The Southern Baptists of Texas Convention’s 2024 Annual Meeting is scheduled for Nov. 11-12 at Sagemont Church in Houston. Danny Forshee, lead pastor of Great Hills Baptist Church in Austin, will preside over the meeting—his first as SBTC president. Forshee recently spoke with the *Texan* about the meeting’s theme, “Side by Side,” the importance of prayer, and what makes him most hopeful about the convention’s future.

**LIKE MANY OF YOUR PREDECESSORS WHO HAVE SERVED AS SBTC PRESIDENT, YOU HAVE USED YOUR PUBLIC PLATFORM TO TALK ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER. HOW HAVE YOU SPECIFICALLY BEEN PRAYING FOR OUR CONVENTION OVER THE PAST YEAR?**

**DANNY FORSHEE:** As part of my daily prayer time, I pray for the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention and its people, pastors, churches, and leaders. I pray specifically for Nathan [Lorick, SBTC’s executive director] every day. Nathan and I are discussing the prayer service on Monday night at the annual meeting on Nov. 11 and we are excited about this.

**THE THEME OF THIS YEAR’S ANNUAL MEETING IS “SIDE BY SIDE.” HOW HAVE YOU SEEN GOD USE OUR CHURCHES WORKING ALONGSIDE ONE ANOTHER TO ADVANCE THE MISSION FOR HIS KINGDOM?**

**DF:** Having served on the executive board and now as SBTC president, I have a front row seat to see the work of the SBTC—and it is truly remarkable. We are a large state convention of 2,780 churches with resources to help plant churches, support missions, and help pastors be healthy. One example is when Jeff Lynn [SBTC’s Church Health & Leadership senior strategist] and his team came to our church earlier this year and led an excellent training for about 20 pastors.



**NEXT YEAR, SOUTHERN BAPTISTS WILL CELEBRATE THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM. WHY IS GREAT HILLS SO FAITHFUL TO GIVE THROUGH CP?**

**DF:** We give because of the kingdom impact the CP makes. I am grateful that God gave our ancestors this golden idea in 1925, and it is unparalleled among denominations. We can help reach our state, North America, and the world. We join with others in supporting disaster relief, our six seminaries, and numerous other initiatives of the SBC.

**WHAT ARE SOME OF THE VICTORIES WE WILL BE ABLE TO CELEBRATE AT THIS YEAR'S MEETING, AS WELL AS SOME OF THE CHALLENGES THAT LIE AHEAD?**

**DF:** I am looking forward to the annual meeting. Our theme, "Side by Side," is so needed as we seek to build one another up and help pastors and staff not go it alone, but be in harmonious fellowship and relationship with others on the same team. There will be many victories to celebrate, such as the planting of new churches, the ongoing work that the SBTC does in areas like pastoral help and training, disaster relief, and the overall unity God has given us. As for challenges, we will have to keep focused on unity and what unites us and not let the enemy divide us. We should pursue unity amid diversity but stay centered on our core convictions. We should fight against any kind of arrogance or intolerance toward those who disagree with whatever position we take.

**IT SEEMS OUR WORLD AND OUR CULTURE CONTINUE TO MOVE FURTHER AWAY FROM GOD'S TRUTH EVERY DAY. WHAT ARE SOME THINGS GREAT HILLS HAS BEEN DOING TO REACH PEOPLE WITH THE GOSPEL IN THE AUSTIN AREA THAT MIGHT SERVE AS AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO OTHER PASTORS WORKING TO REACH THEIR COMMUNITIES?**

**DF:** Pastors and churches are unique and should exegete their culture well and ask the Lord to lead them in reaching the lost. We started another campus 2.5 years ago, and while that has been costly and hard work, God has blessed us and we are reaching new people. Also, we try to follow the BLESS strategy: Begin with prayer; Listen with care; Eat with and fellowship; Serve others; and Share Jesus with them. We have quarterly community impact days where our church

comes together to go out and do various service and evangelism projects in and for our city. We also have a robust ESL ministry that allows for many opportunities to share Jesus with people from literally all over the world. And finally, we are big on short term missions, sending our people all over the world.

**AS YOU LOOK TO THE FUTURE, WHAT ARE SOME THINGS YOU ARE MOST HOPEFUL ABOUT AMONG OUR NETWORK OF CHURCHES?**

**DF:** I am very optimistic and hopeful! Jesus is working and using the SBTC along with numerous other churches and denominations to reach people. I am hopeful also because of the excellent leadership we have at the SBTC, beginning with Nathan Lorick and the other men and women who serve us. And finally, I am hopeful because of the continued emphasis on the Cooperative Program, an ingenious plan to help reach the world.

**“ONLY LET YOUR MANNER OF LIFE BE WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST, SO THAT WHETHER I COME AND SEE YOU OR AM ABSENT, I MAY HEAR OF YOU THAT YOU ARE STANDING FIRM IN ONE SPIRIT, WITH ONE MIND STRIVING SIDE BY SIDE FOR THE FAITH OF THE GOSPEL.”**

PHILIPPIANS 1:27

# SIDE **BY** SIDE

PHILIPPIANS 1:27

## MESSENGERS TO CELEBRATE 'SIDE BY SIDE' MINISTRY AT THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL MEETING

In Philippians 1:27, Paul wrote, "Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel."

That verse is the foundation for the theme at this year's Southern Baptists of Texas Convention Annual Meeting, where messengers will gather "Side by Side" at Sagemont Church in Houston on Nov. 11-12.

Each session will include inspirational messages and worship, while meals and gatherings will allow messengers to connect with others from around the state. Each year's meeting is also an opportunity to celebrate the advancement of the gospel through cooperative work—a timely recognition on the eve of the 100th anniversary of the Cooperative Program happening next year.

"As devoted followers of Jesus, we strive—as Scripture commands—to live a life worthy of our calling," SBTC Executive Director Nathan Lorick said. "We do that by furthering the gospel. We do that by mobilizing churches to multiply disciple-making movements. We do that by cooperatively giving and sending to advance the mission. And we do all of this together. This is how we stand firm in one spirit, speaking in one accord, and contending for the faith of the gospel. We do this standing side by side."

This year's meeting will once again feature a powerful prayer gathering on Monday night, led this year by SBTC President Danny Forshee. A church planter commissioning service is also scheduled, as well as an in-person report delivered by Jeff Iorg, president and CEO of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee.

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### EL MENSAJE DE MIRANDA, SERVIRÁ COMO UNO DE LOS MOMENTOS MÁS DESTACADOS DE LA SESIÓN EN ESPAÑOL DE LA REUNIÓN ANUAL '24

Congregaciones de habla hispana de todo Texas se reunirán en la Iglesia Sagemont en Houston en noviembre para la sesión en español de la Reunión Anual 2024 de la Convención de los Bautistas del Sur de Texas.

El tema de la reunión de este año, programada para los días 11 y 12 de noviembre, es «Lado a lado», basado en Filipenses 1:27 (RV-2015): «Solamente procuren que su conducta como ciudadanos sea digna del evangelio de Cristo, de manera que, sea que yo vaya a verlos o que esté ausente, oiga acerca de ustedes que están firmes en un mismo espíritu, combatiendo juntos y unánimes por la fe del evangelio...».

La sesión en español comenzará el domingo, 10 de noviembre a las 4:30 p.m. con un concierto dirigido por Job González, pastor de adoración de Champion Forest en Español. González es un cantante, productor y compositor de McAllen apasionado por impactar a las generaciones con excelencia musical.

# SBTC OFFICER NOMINATIONS ANNOUNCED

## Forshee (president), Johnson (VP), Hinote (secretary) to be presented as candidates

Byron McWilliams, senior pastor of First Odessa, has announced his intention to nominate Danny Forshee to serve a second term as president of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention at its annual meeting in November.

Forshee has served as lead pastor of Great Hills Baptist Church in Austin since June 13, 2010. He has been president of the Danny Forshee Evangelistic Association since it was formed in May 2004.

"I would be honored to serve a second term as president of the SBTC," Forshee said. "God is working in powerful ways in and through our convention. I am excited about what the Lord will do in the future."

McWilliams said he is honored to nominate Forshee for a second term, noting he has led Great Hills with "pastoral integrity and exceptional wisdom."

"He has led the SBTC well this past year, and I'm confident he will lead us well in his next term as president," McWilliams said. "I am also confident Danny will continue the theme of his life and ministry—to lift high the name of Jesus and make His name known wherever he goes."

Great Hills gave \$211,175.62 through the Cooperative Program in 2023 and \$233,730.08 in 2022.

Forshee holds a doctoral degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, where he

has served as a professor. He and his wife, Ashley, have three grown children, four granddaughters, two grandsons, and another grandchild on the way.

Ed Johnson III, lead pastor of Harvest Fellowship Baptist Church in DeSoto, will be nominated to serve as SBTC vice president. Johnson, a bivocational pastor who also serves on the convention's executive board, will be nominated by Caleb Turner, senior pastor of Mesquite Friendship Baptist Church. The convention vice president fulfills the duties of the president in the president's absence or when requested by the president to do so.

Amy Hinote, a member of First Baptist Church Justin and the wife of its pastor, Beau Hinote, will be nominated to serve as convention secretary. She will be nominated by Matt Kendrick, lead pastor of Redemption City Church in Fort Worth. Mrs. Hinote previously served on the SBTC resolutions committee. The convention secretary's duties include receiving copies of motions offered for consideration at the SBTC Annual Meeting.

The secretary and vice president also serve on the credentials committee, as outlined in Article III of the convention's constitution and bylaws.



FORSHEE



JOHNSON III



HINOTE

Tony Miranda, pastor y orador internacional que capacita a pastores y líderes en América Latina y los EE.UU., servirá como orador principal. Él ha enseñado en varios seminarios bautistas y es autor de varios libros en español.

Los talleres se ofrecerán el lunes desde las 10 a.m. hasta el mediodía con Lázaro Riesgo, pastor de Sagemont Encuentro y Livan Quintana, pastor de la Iglesia Bautista Vida en Cristo en Nassau Bay. Además, Amparo Medina y Karina Vázquez, quienes ministran a mujeres en Champion Forest en Español,

dirigirán los talleres para mujeres.

El lunes a mediodía también se celebrará un almuerzo en el que Julio Arriola, director de Send Network SBTC y del departamento en Español de la Convención, entrevistará a Ramón Medina, pastor principal de Champion Forest en Español.

Para más información, visite [sbtexas.com/am24](http://sbtexas.com/am24).



MIRANDA



# SIDE **BY** SIDE

PHILIPPIANS 1:27

## ANNUAL MEETING HOTELS

### Fairfield Inn & Suites NASA/Webster

401 W Texas Ave.  
Webster, Texas  
832-932-3633  
King/Double \$104  
Cut-off: 10/11

### Holiday Inn Express Space Center

900 Rogers Court  
Webster, Texas  
281-316-9750  
Double \$102  
Cut-off: 10/11

### Tru by Hilton

901 Rogers Court  
Webster, Texas  
281-672-7025  
King \$94, Double \$104  
Cut-off: 10/21

### Group Rates

Specify SBTC for group rates  
when making any hotel reservations.

### QUESTIONS?

Email [aminfo@sbtxexas.com](mailto:aminfo@sbtxexas.com)  
or call 817-552-2500.

## HANDOUTS & MATERIALS

Only SBTC ministries and  
approved exhibitors may hand  
out material to the messenger  
body on the premises of the  
annual meeting.

### CHILDCARE

Available to those who  
pre-register.  
[sbtxexas.com/am24childcare](http://sbtxexas.com/am24childcare)

### HOUSING ASSISTANCE

Hotel cost assistance  
available to senior pastors  
with financial need.  
[sbtxexas.com/am24housing](http://sbtxexas.com/am24housing)

### SCAN CODE

For more  
information on the  
annual meeting,  
including how to  
register, scan  
the QR code.



+ [SBTEXAS.COM/AM24](http://SBTEXAS.COM/AM24)

## AT A GLANCE

Messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention Annual Meeting will gather for a powerful time of prayer, worship, and fellowship at Sagemont Church in Houston on Nov. 11-12.

### Sagemont Church, Houston

11300 S. Sam Houston Pkwy E  
Houston, TX 77089

### Main Sessions

Monday Evening 6:30-9:00 p.m.

Tuesday Morning 9:00-11:40 a.m.

Tuesday Afternoon 1:30-4:10 p.m.

### Spanish Session

Sagemont Church, Houston

### Sunday

4:30-6:00 p.m. Spanish Session Concert

6:00-6:45 p.m. Spanish Session Fellowship

6:45-8:30 p.m. Spanish Session

### Monday

10:00- 11:45 a.m. Spanish Session Breakouts

12:00- 2:00 p.m. Spanish Session Lunch

## ANNUAL MEETING MEALS

### Monday

- Chinese Pastors Network Lunch | 12:00 p.m.

- Exec. Pastors and Administrators Network Lunch | 12:00 p.m.

- Advancing Mission Dinner | 4:45 p.m.

- Resourcing Churches Dinner | 4:45 p.m.

- Young Pastors Network Dinner | 4:45 p.m.

- Women's Ministry Dinner | 4:45 p.m.

### Tuesday

- SBTC Disaster Relief Taco Truck | 7:30 a.m.

- Seminary Breakfasts Southern & Southwestern | 7:30 a.m.

- President's Lunch | Panel Discussion | 12:00 p.m.

## RESOLUTIONS

A resolution allows convention messengers to express consensus on a current issue. While resolutions are non-binding on convention churches, they add substance to current conversations in Baptist life and the culture at large. Any member of an SBTC church may submit a resolution to the resolutions committee for consideration. The resolutions committee considers these proposed resolutions when preparing resolutions to present to messengers at the annual meeting.

The 2024 resolutions committee will receive proposed resolutions from Wednesday, Sept. 18, until Wednesday, Oct. 16. A proposed resolution must include your name, church membership, phone number, and email address.

Please review the format of previous SBTC resolutions at [sbtexas.com/resolutions](https://sbtexas.com/resolutions).

All proposed resolutions should be emailed to Jenna Griffis at [jgriffis@sbtexas.com](mailto:jgriffis@sbtexas.com).



◀ Main Street Baptist Church Pastor David Crain

Attendance the first four Sundays Crain preached at Main Street Baptist signaled something may have been up. The first Sunday, they had 85 people in worship. The second Sunday they had 112, the third Sunday they had 144, and the fourth Sunday they had 180, Crain said.

Now attendance has surpassed 360, and the church has moved to two services. “It’s kind of just skyrocketed for a little town in East Texas,” Crain said.

They baptize most every week, and many new people have joined, including couples with young children and students. The church has hired two associate pastors, and preregistration for a fall Awana program is nearing 70 children.

“All I can tell you is God is in the middle of something here, and I didn’t want to miss out,” Crain said. “The conventional wisdom says, ‘Get a younger guy,’ and we would have done that had we been able to find one.”

One way being 70 years old helps at this particular church, Crain said, is that he already had connections with the congregation.

“I wasn’t the new guy on the block,” he said. “I knew everybody here. ... I knew their heart, and I could just start ministering right away.” That includes being with a family when a loved one dies, cheering on the local team at football games, and visiting people at hospitals.

“In a church this size and a town this size, there’s a whole lot more going on than you would think,” Crain said. “We’ve had two suicides here in the last month or two—kids from our school. There’s a lot of need, and there’s a lot of pressure on folks in this day and time, so to be able to be a part of that and help them through it is kind of a wonderful thing.”

David Martin, who grew up in the church five years ahead of Crain and now serves as a deacon and trustee, said, “He doesn’t let anybody in the church go to a surgery or anything like that unless he’s standing there with them when they go in.”

And since Grand Saline doesn’t have a major hospital, that means a 45-minute drive to Tyler or a 55-minute drive to Dallas.

“You can’t speak about his age because his age doesn’t show,” Martin said. “I’ve never seen a young pastor that was able to keep a schedule like that.”

Having recorded several studio albums, Crain is a world-class musician, Martin said.

Tomlin wrote about Crain in an Instagram post in 2017: “David was a traveling musician out of our little

# ‘God is in the middle of something here’

## 70-YEAR-OLD FIRST-TIME PASTOR SAYS HE HAS NO OTHER WAY TO EXPLAIN EAST TEXAS CHURCH’S FRUITFULNESS

By Erin Roach | Texan Correspondent

### GRAND SALINE

**T**HE MAN WHO GAVE CHRISTIAN RECORDING ARTIST CHRIS TOMLIN his first opportunity to lead worship at a concert has been called to pastor his first church at age 70. In fact, it’s the church both he and Tomlin grew up in, years apart.

Main Street Baptist Church in Grand Saline had “been kind of dormant” after years of successful ministry, said David Crain, the church’s pastor who, after 45 years as a traveling evangelist, was hesitant to think he had what it took to lead the congregation back to vibrancy.

The pastor search team had secured a younger candidate just over a year ago. “He was coming, 29 years of age,” Crain said. “I chuckle when I think about it.” The church asked Crain to fill in for four weeks until the new pastor arrived, but the pastor went to another church and Crain’s time was extended.

“They asked me if I would consider being their pastor, and I said, ‘No. I have never pastored. I have no idea what that means,’” Crain recounted. After turning them down repeatedly, he agreed to pray about it and realized God was leading.



church. I thought he was the coolest guy ever. I couldn't believe that someone could travel around to churches and sing for a living (ha).

"I'll never forget this one particular afternoon when I was in high school. David stopped by my house and asked if I would like to go help him set up his gear and sell 'tapes' in the back for the concert that he had that night," Tomlin wrote.

"... In the middle of his concert, he said he had a friend in the back named Chris that was helping him for the night, and he thought it would be a good idea if I took the stage and played a couple songs. Then, to my surprise, he just walked off the stage and everyone was staring at me! All I can remember was that I was pretty awful. But that one opportunity turned into another and then another and then another."

Martin said Tomlin is one of countless young men Crain has nudged into the ministry and even mentored. His decades of preaching at youth camps between revivals demonstrated his love for youth.

"Kids just flock to him," Martin said. "They sit on the front row. The front row is loaded down with kids. God has worked through David in many, many ways that we don't even know about."

As for how long he plans to continue pastoring now that he has gotten started, Crain said he doesn't see an end in sight.

"I know the Levitical priests actually got to retire after a certain amount of time, but since I'm not of that tribe, apparently there's no retirement for me," he joked. "I just want to be purposeful. I just want to be useful."



In about a year's time, Main Street Baptist Church in Grand Saline has gone from 85 worshipers to more than 360, and now with two services they still need more room. **SUBMITTED PHOTO**

To everyone around him, he said, he's 70, but "to me, I'm still like in my mid-40s. I look in the mirror and I don't know the guy."

His schedule had been full of 30 to 40 revivals a year, as well as concerts and camps when he was asked to pastor, so "it wasn't like I was running out of anything to do."

"Right now, it's kind of just full steam ahead."

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# 'THERE'S HOPE FOR ANY CHURCH'

By Erin Roach | Texan Correspondent

SNYDER CHURCH EXPERIENCES TURNAROUND BY BECOMING MORE 'GOSPEL-CENTRIC'

## SNYDER

**I**N JUST OVER A YEAR, Avenue D Baptist Church went from about 30 people on Sundays and no one remembering the last baptism to seeing 80 to 90 on Sundays and more than 20 baptisms.

In his initial meeting with the church's pastor search committee, Charles Lowery, a former church planter, said something he knew could be hard to hear.

"Whether you call me or not, somebody needs to tell you this," Lowery remembers telling committee members. "Unless you have some significant changes, you're probably looking at maybe not even being here in the next decade."

The committee "could have been negative about that," Lowery said, "but they were so very encouraging."

Evangelism and discipleship have been the keys, Lowery said, adding, "It's not rocket science."

"If you think about it, we haven't done anything that's been crazy or has cost a lot of money," he said. "None of it has been that. I think we have just had a confidence that if you just follow God's plan and you share the gospel and be gospel-centric, God will take care of everything."

When Lowery arrived as pastor in May 2023, he asked if the church had ever had a formal discipleship ministry. No one could remember, so he began to form one. He also knew the church would need a missional mentality, so he encouraged outreach events.

"It's easy to adopt the idea that people are just going to walk through our doors," Lowery said. "We love it when that happens, but that rarely happens."

Last October, rather than a trunk or treat, Avenue D hosted a "Dine and Dash" where parents could take their children for a quick meal at the church before heading out together for a night of candy gathering. "It was a huge success," the pastor said.



**“It’s easy to adopt the idea that people are just going to walk through our doors. We love it when that happens, but that rarely happens.”**

—CHARLES LOWERY

During a Snyder festival called White Buffalo Days, Lowery headed out with a backpack full of gospel tracts and found lines of people waiting at food trucks. He projected his voice to share a quick gospel presentation and then passed out tracts with a few church members.

“We led a family to Christ that day,” Lowery said, noting that probably 70% of the people who sit in one section at the church are related to that family in some way.

Another thing the church started doing to create a culture of evangelism was to give a brief gospel presentation every Sunday during the worship service around announcement time. “They hear me say that every single Sunday. I think it helps keep everything gospel-centric,” Lowery said.

The pastor also coaches Sunday school teachers to open each class with an opportunity for someone to articulate the gospel, no matter what lesson they’re studying.

Regarding intentional discipleship, Lowery chose a curriculum which has three sections: found, following, and fishing. In 16 lessons, the curriculum covers such topics as salvation, baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and prayer.

“Discipleship is a lifelong process. We’re lifelong disciples, but we want to make sure, especially in the beginning, that people get a good foundation,” he said.

Last year, Avenue D had three discipleship classes meeting each week. One met during the Sunday school hour in the pastor’s office, another met on Tuesday mornings, and another on Tuesday evenings.

In May, about 30 people graduated from the first round of formal discipleship ministry. They received a certificate in a worship service, and the church commissioned them to go out and disciple others.

Before launching the discipleship ministry, Lowery taught the congregation about the biblical mandate for discipleship.

“Discipleship is simply the Great Commission,” he said. “It’s not something separate from the Great Commission. ... So many of us think the Great Commission is just getting people saved. That’s wonderful. We love that, but until we’re involved in discipleship, we haven’t fully



▲ Charles Lowery, a former church planter, recognized the potential at Avenue D Baptist Church when he accepted the pastorate last year.

▼ Just over a year ago, no one could remember the last time someone was baptized at the church. Since then, the baptism number has surpassed 20.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS



embraced the Great Commission.”

Lowery, 51, may have been the youngest person at Avenue D when he arrived, he said, but the church has seen growth in the 30-45-year-old age group. “We recently started a young adult class that our church hasn’t had in decades,” he said, adding that the church recently marked its 75th anniversary.

This summer, they sent a group to student camp, something else no one could quite remember doing recently.

Looking at what has happened this past year, Lowery said he saw the potential when he first considered accepting the pastorate. He knew it would be a revitalization ministry.

“The people had a heart for the Lord,” he said. “I could sense that.” If a church is not resistant to outreach and evangelism, Lowery added, “I think there’s hope for any church.”





# ‘WE HAVE GROWN TOGETHER’

**GOD HAS USED A SERIES OF RELATIONSHIPS TO MOLD SAGEMONT CHURCH’S HISPANIC MINISTRY—AND ITS PASTOR**

By **Arlene Sanabria** | Texan Correspondent

HOUSTON

**L**AZARO RIESGO, PASTOR OF SAGEMONT ENCUENTRO, is a product of the people God has brought in and out of his life.

Riesgo was three when his father left Cuba promising to find a better life for the family in the U.S. The father never returned, however, leaving the family struggling to overcome the trauma and suffering that comes with abandonment.

“I remember [hearing] a knock on the door and wanting to believe it was my father who was home,” Riesgo remembered, “but it wasn’t.”

Riesgo acknowledges the heavy burden his mother, Cary, took on as she raised her family while also caring for her own mother.

He remembers an aunt, Obdulia Peña, visiting from Miami one year and leading his mother to faith in Christ. The aunt, who died in 2023 at age 96, encouraged Cary to find a faith community that could support her as she endured life’s hardships.

Cary did just that and began attending Iglesia Bautista Libre, one of the few churches in town still standing after the Cuban revolution. It was the presence of the Lord and the fellowship of brothers and sisters at the church that sustained the broken family.

Riesgo was nine when he gave his life to Christ during an altar call. Several Christian men who had been investing in him since he was younger continued to speak biblical wisdom into his life, encouraging him to not hate the father who abandoned him, but to have love and mercy for him.

“These men taught me to love the heavenly Father and to fill the absence of my earthly father with the sufficiency of the God of heaven,” Riesgo said.



(Left) Lazaro is pictured with his mother, Cary, in 1980. (Right) Iglesia Bautista Libre is where Cary attended church after giving her life to Jesus. **SUBMITTED PHOTOS**



When Riesgo was 17, another important man came into his life—Rolando Delgado, a new pastor called to serve the church. It was Delgado whom God used to lead Riesgo to answer the Lord’s call to attend seminary and prepare for ministry.

“Lázaro,” Riesgo remembers Delgado challenging him, “you need to find your place in the body of Christ.”

Riesgo never wanted to be a pastor or be involved in ministry. “I just wanted to be a good believer, get married, and have a successful career in sports,” Riesgo said.

But God began to change his heart during one of Delgado’s sermons, during which he warned that fame and success are often stumbling blocks to serving God. Before long, Riesgo enrolled in seminary in his hometown to prepare for the ministry.

### Open doors

Riesgo met his wife, Ariadna, before entering seminary. She understood and accepted God’s call on their lives and never doubted that call, he said—even when she had to make the difficult decision to leave her medical career in Cuba to serve in ministry with him.

After graduating with a bachelor’s degree in theology in 2003, Riesgo was sent to pastor his first church. A few years later, in 2007, God opened a door for his wife and him to expand their ministry through the National Youth Leadership Network, an association of three Baptist conventions in Cuba. This led to a full-time job for the Riesgos to travel throughout the island to help disciple Cuban youth until 2010.

The Riesgos began to envision expanding the ministry they were doing in Cuba to a larger area. In 2011, they left Cuba to fulfill a missionary call in Panama at a Bible institute, preparing future leaders for the pastorate and for missions. In 2015, that larger vision came more into focus when they received an invitation from a Baptist mission agency in Nashville to expand the work they were doing in Panama throughout Latin America. They accepted and spent four years training leaders in many Latin America countries, including Uruguay, Peru, Ecuador, and El Salvador.

(Left) Connections and relationships are strongly encouraged among those who participate in Sagemont’s Hispanic ministry. (Right) Pastor Lazaro Riesgo (seen preaching on the opposite page) is pictured with his aunt, Obdulia Peña, who led his mother to Christ many years ago. **SUBMITTED PHOTOS**

### ‘God is not finished with you’

By 2019, however, Riesgo sensed something was missing. Because of his frequent travels training church leaders, he missed the connections associated with serving in the local church. Before long, he learned of an opportunity to pastor a church in Miami. While it seemed like an answer to prayer, many difficulties lay ahead.

Prior to the pandemic, he and Ariadna’s passports and residency documents were stolen during a burglary of their home. Pastoring during the pandemic proved physically and emotionally exhausting, leading Riesgo to make the difficult decision to take a break from ministry in 2020 to take care of his health.

“We were left alone in Miami with virtually nothing,” Riesgo said.

They spent six months, from June to December, walking through that desert season. Though it was a time of discouragement for Riesgo, he remembers Ariadna’s constant encouragement.

“I saw myself without a future at that time,” Riesgo said, “but my wife faithfully reminded me that this was temporary ... [that I needed to] remember what and by whom we were called.”

“God is not finished with you,” Ariadna would tell him.

Though he admits it was hard to believe at the time, he has since seen God move in a powerful way through a new ministry assignment.

### A new start, a new story

After spending half a year away from ministry, Riesgo received a call from an American pastor, John Carswell, who had gone to Cuba to teach other pastors. Carswell learned that Sagemont Church in Houston was looking for a pastor for its Hispanic ministry and encouraged Riesgo to submit his resume.



Despite his trepidation, Riesgo did and was called for an interview. About a week after he returned to Miami, leaders at Sagemont sent him a letter extending the call for him to pastor Sagemont Encuentro. Riesgo and Ariadna packed the few possessions they had left and arrived at Sagemont Encuentro to preach on Easter Sunday 2021.

From that moment on, a new story began for the Riesgos and for the church.

Relationships—with God, each other, and even sister churches—are one of the focal points at Sagemont Encuentro. Riesgo was greatly impacted by the relationships he formed with the men who invested in him when he was younger, and now he wants to connect others so that they may grow and learn to serve others.

Riesgo also focuses on encouraging people to deepen their experience with the Lord and have an identity rooted in Christ. He recently wrote a book, *Contrasts: The Value of Being Different*, to challenge believers to live authentic lives while making decisions that align with God's kingdom values.

As a result of their focus on Jesus and one another, Riesgo—who also works with new church planters through his collaboration with Send Network SBTC—said God is allowing the ministry to experience growth numerically, spiritually, and relationally.

Said Riesgo: “We have grown together.”



# “HEMOS CRECIDO JUNTOS”

## DIOS HA USADO UNA SERIE DE RELACIONES PARA MOLDEAR A SAGEMONT ENCUENTRO, MINISTERIO HISPANO DE SAGEMONT CHURCH—Y A SU PASTOR

Por Arlene Sanabria | Corresponsal del Texan

### HOUSTON

**L**ÁZARO RIESGO, PASTOR DE SAGEMONT ENCUENTRO, es producto de las personas que Dios ha traído y sacado de su vida.

Riesgo tenía tres años cuando su padre salió de Cuba buscando encontrar una vida mejor para la familia en EE.UU. Sin embargo, el padre no regresó, dejando a la familia luchando por superar el trauma y el sufrimiento que conlleva el abandono.

“Recuerdo [oír] llamar a la puerta y querer creer que era mi padre el que estaba en casa”, recuerda Riesgo, “pero no era así”.

Riesgo reconoce la pesada carga que su madre, Cary, asumió al criar a su familia y al mismo tiempo cuidar de su propia madre.

Él recuerda a una tía, Obdulia Peña, que un año vino de visita desde Miami y llevó a su madre a la fe en Cristo. La tía, que murió en el 2023 a la edad de 96 años, animó a Cary a encontrar una comunidad de fe que pudiera apoyarla mientras enfrentaba las dificultades de la vida.



Cary lo hizo y empezó a asistir a la Iglesia Bautista Libre, una de las pocas iglesias de la ciudad que seguía en pie después de la revolución cubana. Fue la presencia del Señor y la comunión entre los hermanos y hermanas de la iglesia lo que sostuvo a esta familia quebrantada.

Riesgo tenía nueve años cuando entregó su vida a Cristo durante un llamado al altar. Varios hombres cristianos que habían estado invirtiendo en él desde que era más joven continuaron impartiendo sabiduría bíblica en su vida, enseñándole a no odiar al padre que le abandonó, sino a tener amor y misericordia por él.

“Estos hombres me enseñaron a amar al Padre celestial y a llenar la ausencia de mi padre terrenal con la suficiencia del Dios del cielo”, dice Riesgo.

A los 17 años, otro hombre importante llegó a la vida de Riesgo: Rolando Delgado, un nuevo pastor que llegó a la iglesia. Fue a través de Delgado que Dios llevó a Riesgo a responder a al llamado del Señor para asistir al seminario y prepararse para el ministerio.

“Lázaro”, recuerda Riesgo que le dijo Delgado, “necesitas encontrar tu lugar en el cuerpo de Cristo”.

Riesgo nunca quiso ser pastor ni dedicarse al ministerio. “Sólo quería ser un buen creyente, casarme y tener una carrera exitosa en el deporte”, dice Riesgo.

Pero Dios empezó a cambiar su corazón durante uno de los mensajes de Delgado, en el que advertía que la fama y el éxito son a menudo piedras de tropiezo para servir a Dios. Al poco tiempo, Riesgo se matriculó en el seminario de su ciudad natal para prepararse para el ministerio.

### **Puertas abiertas**

Riesgo conoció a su esposa, Ariadna, antes de entrar en el seminario. Ella comprendió y aceptó el llamado de Dios a sus vidas y nunca dudó de ese llamado, dice él, ni siquiera cuando tuvo que tomar la difícil decisión de dejar su carrera de medicina en Cuba para servir en el ministerio con él.

Tras licenciarse en Teología en el 2003, Riesgo fue enviado a pastorear su primera iglesia. Unos años más tarde, en el 2007, Dios abrió una puerta para que él y su esposa ampliaran su ministerio a través de la Red Nacional de Liderazgo Juvenil, una asociación de tres convenciones bautistas de Cuba. Esto condujo a un trabajo a tiempo completo para que ellos viajaran por toda la isla para ayudar a discipular a la juventud cubana hasta el 2010.

Los Riesgo comenzaron a visualizar la expansión del ministerio que estaban haciendo en Cuba a un área más grande. En el 2011, salieron de Cuba para



El ministerio hispano de la Iglesia Sagemont considera que las relaciones y conexiones son fundamentales para cumplir la misión de difundir el evangelio. Lázaro Riesgo, quien dirige el ministerio hispano, tiene como objetivo ayudar a los miembros a crecer en su fe y acercarse unos a otros. **FOTO COMPARTIDA**

cumplir un llamado misionero en Panamá en un instituto bíblico, preparando futuros líderes para el pastorado y las misiones. En el 2015, esa visión más amplia se hizo más evidente cuando recibieron una invitación de una agencia misionera bautista en Nashville para expandir el trabajo que estaban haciendo en Panamá por toda América Latina. Aceptaron y pasaron cuatro años capacitando líderes en muchos países de América Latina, incluyendo Uruguay, Perú, Ecuador y el Salvador.

### **Dios no ha terminado contigo**

En el 2019, sin embargo, Riesgo sintió que algo faltaba. Él echaba de menos las conexiones asociadas con servir en la iglesia local debido a sus frecuentes viajes para capacitar líderes de las iglesias. Él supo de una oportunidad para pastorear una iglesia en Miami y aunque parecía una respuesta a sus oraciones, le esperaban muchas dificultades.

Antes de la pandemia, les robaron a él y a Ariadna sus pasaportes y documentos de residencia durante un robo en su casa. Ser pastor durante la pandemia resultó física y emocionalmente agotador, lo que llevó a Riesgo a tomar la difícil decisión de dejar de ser pastor en 2020 para cuidar de su salud.

“Nos quedamos solos en Miami, prácticamente sin nada”, cuenta Riesgo.

Pasaron seis meses, de junio a diciembre, caminando por esa etapa de desierto. Aunque fue una época de desánimo para Riesgo, Él recuerda los constantes ánimos de Ariadna.

“En aquel momento me veía sin futuro”, dice Riesgo, “pero mi esposa me recordaba fielmente que esto era temporal... [que necesitaba] recordar a qué y por quién habíamos sido llamados.”

“Dios no ha terminado contigo”, le decía Ariadna. Él admite que en aquel momento le costaba creerlo, pero que desde entonces ha visto a Dios actuar de una manera poderosa a través de una nueva asignación ministerial.

### Un nuevo comienzo, una nueva historia

Después de pasar medio año alejado del ministerio, Riesgo recibió una llamada de un pastor estadounidense, John Carswell, que había ido a Cuba a enseñar a otros pastores y allí se conocieron. Carswell se enteró de que la iglesia Sagemont de Houston buscaba un pastor para su ministerio hispano y animó a Riesgo a presentar su currículum.

A pesar de su inquietud, Riesgo lo envió y le llamaron para una entrevista. Aproximadamente una semana después de regresar a Miami, los líderes de Sagemont le enviaron una carta en la que le hacían extensivo el llamamiento para pastorear Sagemont Encuentro. Riesgo y Ariadna empacaron las pocas pertenencias que les quedaban y llegaron a Sagemont Encuentro para predicar el Domingo de Resurrección del 2021.

A partir de ese momento, comenzó a escribirse una nueva historia para los Riesgo y para la iglesia.

Las relaciones—con Dios, entre ellos e incluso con iglesias hermanas—son uno de los puntos centrales de Sagemont Encuentro. A Riesgo le impactaron mucho las relaciones que estableció con aquellos hombres que invirtieron en él cuando era más joven, y ahora quiere conectar a otros para que crezcan y aprendan a servir a los demás.

Riesgo también se centra en animar a la gente a profundizar en su experiencia con el Señor y a tener una identidad arraigada en Cristo. Él escribió recientemente un libro, *Contrastes: El valor de ser diferente*, para desafiar a los creyentes a vivir vidas genuinas mientras toman decisiones que se alinean con los valores del reino de Dios.

Como resultado de este enfoque en Jesús y en los demás, Riesgo—quien también trabaja con nuevos plantadores de iglesias a través de su colaboración con Send Network SBTC—dijo que Dios está permitiendo que el ministerio experimente un crecimiento numérico, espiritual y relacional.

Dijo Riesgo: “Hemos crecido juntos”.



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DAMON HALLIDAY



Damon Halliday founded Keystone Fellowship Church, recently rebranded as The Key Church, in 2012 in North Fort Worth. The 1,200-member congregation is engaged in a vibrant youth sports outreach, among other ministries. In addition to his tenure at The Key, Halliday served as an associate pastor of evangelism and missions at a prior church and formerly conducted corporate Bible studies for a major airline in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. He is a member of the executive board of the SBTC. Halliday and his wife, Antoinette, have been married for 34 years and are the parents of two adult daughters.

**What is something you've been able to celebrate at The Key Church recently?**

Our outreach ministry, Huddle Touch, is going well. Through Huddle Touch we provide pregame meals for area high school football teams. Last year we provided pregame meals for L.D. Bell and Chisholm Trail high schools every game. There are 10 games in a season. We feed them. We pay for the meals. The celebration is last year, we led 31 football players to Christ. Sports is an easy avenue to reach kids for the Lord. We give them what they like so we can introduce them to the One they need.

**What are some of the biggest challenges you've faced in your ministry lately?**

We are already outgrowing our brand new four-year-old building. Our children's and nursery spaces are jam-packed. It's a great challenge to have.

**What's a lesson you've learned to this point of your ministry you know you'll never forget?**

Prayer and integrity are most important, and if you prioritize those two things, God will bless the rest. So many times we focus on practical things. We need to do that. But we must focus on prayer. Take care of the simple things and He will bless everything else. God has done exceedingly abundantly above all we can ask or think. We never thought we'd be where we are today.

**What's one thing you'd like to see God do specifically at your church this year?**

Fill up our second service, which is half full. That's our 11 o'clock service. The 9 o'clock service is completely full. We have a 600-seat worship center. We've had a good crowd through the summer. Once we fill the 11 o'clock, we can start our third service.

**How can other SBTC churches be praying for you?**

Pray for God to provide directions and resources to build our new sanctuary. Our current sanctuary is our future gymnasium. When we reach three services, we will really have to start planning on building. There's nowhere to go. We think, "Here we go again." It seems so impossible with everything so expensive. Building can be overwhelming, but thank God for growth.



# HOW CAN WE HONOR OUR PASTORS?

LET'S ASK THEM ...

Many churches observe Pastor Appreciation Month in October. How or when your church chooses to show love to your pastors is up to you. But just in case you're needing a few ideas, we reached out to a number of Southern Baptists of Texas Convention pastors recently to ask them how churches might best show them appreciation. Here's a sampling of their responses:



**1** "Last year, our church threw a fish fry supper for pastor appreciation and collected gift cards for a 'shower' for us. Our family ate at different restaurants for over six months, bought groceries for a few months off that ... it was such a blessing."

**2** "My church provided me with the time and the funds to take a sabbatical. It was an amazing time that they 'made us' take. It was a truly refreshing time I didn't realize I/we really needed after nearly 30 years of ministry."

**3** "In the past, members have signed up to do something nice for our family every day for a month. It was everything from mowing my yard to washing my car to giving me a gift card to my favorite restaurant."

**4** "Our church recognized my family during a Sunday service. They gave flowers to my wife and gave me a card signed by all the kids in the kids ministry."

**5** "One church where I served was very creative—they paid to have my master bathroom remodeled and also gave my family a weekend at a resort."

**6** "My church filled an entire calendar with people in the church to pray for me and my family. We were covered for 365 days straight, and we used the calendar to pray each day for those who were praying for us."

**7** "One way my church could show me appreciation would be to share the gospel with someone and then tell me about it via text or email or a phone call."

GUIDESTONE'S MARK DANCE ON FOUR SIMPLE WAYS YOU CAN HONOR YOUR PASTOR • PAGE 28



**8** "I received a public acknowledgment of appreciation from the deacons and the personnel committee. I hated it at first and did not want it, but after it was done, it was really meaningful."

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**9** "Last year, our church blessed us with a cruise. I know that's not possible for everybody, but it was helpful for us to get to go on vacation."

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**10** "I love me a good handwritten note of specific ways God has used me in someone's life. I also love when people give my wife and I date nights—gift cards to our favorite restaurants as well as babysitters."

**11** "Last year, our church held a lunch in my honor and invited people to share some meaningful parts of my ministry."

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**12** "Our church had people write anonymous notes of encouragement and drop them in a basket along with gift cards. Some people have watched our kids so my wife and I could go on a date night."

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**13** "I think the most meaningful ways the church has encouraged me are the times when they make a point to include my family in the gift or recognition. My work is extremely visible ... but the ways my family serves and sacrifices are typically not seen."



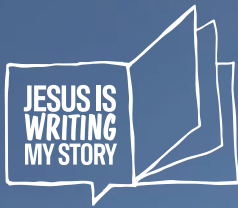
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1

# Preview Day

Get the answers you need to live your calling.

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By Al Manigsaca  
(as told to Gary Ledbetter)

# I HAVE TO DEPEND ON GOD TO DO THIS



I became a pastor when I was 40 years old. So, it was a 20-year training process, not through seminary, but through different pastors and churches. I can tell you more than a dozen churches and more than a dozen pastors who disciplined me and mentored me.

My spiritual journey began when I was 16. I lived in the Philippines and a college student from Campus Crusade came to my campus—he was the first person to share the gospel with me. A Southern Baptist pastor disciplined me when I was in college. He was a campus minister, and he really spent time with me. That was a turning point in my Christian life.

God really spoke to me through this preacher. We would meet every day because his ministry center was close to my dorm. I would hang out at his house, and we would be talking until sometimes three in the morning. We talked about the Word, discipleship, prayer, confession—all basic responsibilities of Christians.

After college, I was on fire. I wanted to share what I learned with my own church back home. So, I went back and started a ministry among the youth, and that was fruitful—some of the youth that came out of that are leaders in our church now here in Austin.

I started working in Manila and met my wife, Rela, there. We later helped plant a church in Cavite. That was my first time to be involved in church planting, just assisting the pastor, a worship leader,



(Left) Al Manigsaca and his wife, Rela, in Israel on an SBTC pastors' trip.  
(Above) Pastor Manigsaca (right) baptizes his nephew, Ethan, at Riverlife Church in Austin. **SUBMITTED PHOTOS**





**“IT’S ALL PART OF GOD SHOWING ME THAT I HAVE TO DEPEND ON HIM.”**

**—AL MANIGSACA, SHOWN ABOVE WITH MEMBERS OF HIS CHURCH**

musician—all kinds of other roles, except being a pastor. My landlady was our first member. That church continues today.

I did want to attend seminary after that time in college because I was interested in being a pastor, but God closed those doors repeatedly, so I ended up being mentored by all kinds of pastors from different churches.

I know many pastors would say, “God called me to plant a church,” but in the case of our church, it’s different because it was not a single person who was called. It was my entire family. I had moved to Idaho where I was working as a semiconductor engineer. My brother moved to Memphis and my sister moved to Nebraska. Because we wanted to live close to one another, I think it was in 2007, we agreed to find a city where we could all be together. We all moved to Austin and joined different churches. My wife and I started a Bible study with my sister’s family and my brother’s family, and we met in South Austin. That small Bible study was just us at first.

There were two other families that started attending our group as well, so we ended up having five Filipino families. Then neighbors started attending. I called Dr. Kim [Asian ministries consultant] at the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention and told him we needed a place to rent. He connected me with Gilbert Chavez. Pastor Gilbert was very encouraging and accommodating. He let us use his youth room for our Bible study. The first night we had 64 people. He said, “I don’t think this is a Bible study. Why don’t you plant a church?” I said “no” since none of us was in the ministry. My brother and I worked in the tech industry and my sister was a nurse. Pastor Gilbert still encouraged me, and that led me to begin training through the SBTC.

But in our Bible study, we had three different pastors who were connected with us. Every time a pastor came in, we would all agree that we would defer to him: “OK, you might be the pastor of this church.” Three times we tried that and none of them worked out. It was just as if God was giving me this basketball, then every time a pastor came to our group, I would pass this ball to him. And each time, the ball was back in my court. The third time the ball came back to me, my brother said, “Al, I guess you’re the one.” I agreed. When I surrendered to that, things moved very, very fast. A year later, I was ordained as a pastor. Now, 12 years later, I’m the pastor of Riverlife Baptist Church.

On this long journey, I believe the biggest thing I’ve learned is full dependence upon Him. Just think about the struggle that I am going through every week. I don’t have any seminary training on which to base my sermons or my judgment whether I’m doing a good job or not. So basically, the thing is when we started, I really don’t know how to pastor. I was praying to the Lord, “Lord, I don’t know how to do this.” And I know that’s still my mindset even up to this point in time.

It’s all part of God showing me that I have to depend on Him.

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OF WHAT GOD IS DOING IN  
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your story.



**JESUS IS WRITING MY STORY**

# Church Positions

For the latest listings, visit [texan.digital/church-positions](http://texan.digital/church-positions)

## PASTOR

**Tye Baptist Church**, located in a bedroom community of Abilene, is seeking a FT pastor for a congregation averaging 75 in attendance on Sunday mornings. Strong preaching/teaching skills and a shepherd's heart toward pastoral ministry is sought. Parsonage is provided. Mail resume to P.O. Box 235, Tye, Texas 79563.

**Cherokee Baptist Church** is seeking a FT pastor to shepherd our congregation through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ and lead in carrying out the Great Commission. Submit resume to [cbchurchpastorsearch@gmail.com](mailto:cbchurchpastorsearch@gmail.com) or mail to Cherokee Baptist Church, Attention Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 117, Cherokee, Texas 76832.

**Trinity Pines Baptist** in Trinity is seeking a FT pastor who is passionately devoted to expository preaching, outreach visitation, relationship building, disciple-making, and who has a servant's heart. Worship style is contemporary. Salary range: \$42,000 to \$48,200. Parsonage & utilities provided. Submit resumes to [tpbcsearch@gmail.com](mailto:tpbcsearch@gmail.com) until Nov. 15.

**Rock Hill Baptist Church** is seeking a FT pastor. RHBC, the oldest SBC church in Henderson County with 2,300 members, is located between Brownsboro and Chandler. It is associated with the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention. Preaching and pastoral experience are required. Email resume to [kevin@rockhillbc.com](mailto:kevin@rockhillbc.com).

**Timber Crest Baptist Church** is seeking a FT pastor for an SBTC affiliated church. Located at 1625 Crow Drive, Waco, Texas 76705. Our church secretary is in her office Tuesday-Thursday, 8 a.m. until noon and 1-3 p.m. Call 254-799-5551 to receive information about the position.

**FBC Merkel** is seeking a FT pastor with a vision of growing the church and who loves serving God's people and the community. We adhere to the Baptist Faith and Message 2000. Housing provided. Email resume to [lri@fbcmerkel.com](mailto:lri@fbcmerkel.com), or mail to P.O. Box 399, Merkel, Texas 79536. Resumes accepted through Oct. 31.

**United Baptist Church** in Laredo is seeking a FT senior pastor who is a servant leader with vision and passion for people and for God's work. Needs strong bilingual communication skills in English and Spanish, at the pulpit, and interpersonally. Call 956-727-7729 for more information. Email resume to [ubcinalaredo@gmail.com](mailto:ubcinalaredo@gmail.com).

**Galveston County Church** in Hitchcock is seeking a FT shepherd with a vision and leadership skills, as defined in God's Word, to guide us to reach our world for Christ. Please email resume to [gccsearchteam24@gmail.com](mailto:gccsearchteam24@gmail.com).

**FBC Hemphill** is seeking a FT pastor. The role of the pastor is to place God first, love Jesus, and be a born-again believer. He should be a strong leader, personable, approachable, and have a compassionate heart to counsel those in need and provide spiritual guidance. Email resume to [home@fbchemphill.org](mailto:home@fbchemphill.org).

**Lone Camp Baptist Church** in Palo Pinto County is seeking a FT pastor. Salary and benefits are flexible and competitive, with a newly remodeled parsonage available for housing. Call Mike Shelton at 817-937-8645 or email your resume to [LCBC24Search@gmail.com](mailto:LCBC24Search@gmail.com).

**Bannockburn Baptist Church** in Austin is seeking a FT senior pastor. Please send inquiries to [pastorsearch@bbcfamily.com](mailto:pastorsearch@bbcfamily.com).

**Maplecrest Baptist Church** in Vidor is seeking a FT senior pastor for a congregation that averages 70-90 people on Sunday mornings. Parsonage provided. MBC

is looking for a man with strong preaching/pastoral skills and who is a skilled disciple-maker. Please send your resume to the attention of MBC Pastor Search at [maplecrestbc@outlook.com](mailto:maplecrestbc@outlook.com).

**FBC Winnsboro** is seeking a FT lead pastor. Send resume to [search@fbcwinnsboro.org](mailto:search@fbcwinnsboro.org).

**Graceview Baptist Church** (an elder led church) in Burleson is searching for a FT lead pastor. All applicants may submit their resume to [apply@graceviewbc.org](mailto:apply@graceviewbc.org).

**FBC Lovelady** is seeking a FT or PT senior pastor. Email resume to [FBCLovelady@gmail.com](mailto:FBCLovelady@gmail.com). For more information, call the church office at 936-636-7869, or call the search committee chairman at 936-222-3202.

**College Baptist Church** in Big Spring is seeking an immediate FT senior pastor. Interested candidates, please submit your resume to [cbcsearch23@gmail.com](mailto:cbcsearch23@gmail.com). Review of resumes began on Aug. 11, 2024.

**Wildwood Baptist Church** is seeking a bivocational pastor with preaching experience, leadership ability, and a servant's heart for the Lord. Wildwood is located in an HOA with 24/7 security gate and many amenities. Send resume to P.O. Box 729, Village Mills, Texas 77663. Attn: Pulpit Committee.

**Brazos Bend Baptist Church** in rural southern Fort Bend County seeks a bivocational pastor who desires to build into a full-time position. We are a small church in an exploding area near the Austin Point development. If interested, send a resume to [bbbchurchpastorsearch@gmail.com](mailto:bbbchurchpastorsearch@gmail.com).

**FBC Fruitvale** is seeking a bivocational lead pastor for our mid-size church located in a rural East Texas town approximately 65 miles east of Dallas. Our active programs for children and youth each have part-time staff. We also have an active senior adult group. Email resume to [fbcfruitvale@gmail.com](mailto:fbcfruitvale@gmail.com).

**Rehoboth Baptist Church** in Mansfield is seeking a bivocational or FT pastor to grow with us. We are a small KJV church. Our pastor recently retired. If interested, please send a resume to [wksanders@att.net](mailto:wksanders@att.net).

**Freedom Fellowship** in Roanoke is seeking a lead pastor to guide our church into the future. Located in a rapidly growing area, our church is in excellent position to expand evangelistically in the coming years. Please submit cover letter with resume and links to [resumes@fforinfo.com](mailto:resumes@fforinfo.com). For more information on the position, visit [fforinfo.com/lead-pastor-job-description](http://fforinfo.com/lead-pastor-job-description).

## MUSIC

**FBC Henderson** is seeking a FT minister of music. Worship service attendance of 500. Music style is a contemporary blend with praise team, praise band, orchestra, and choir. Send resumes to [musicministersearchcommittee@thefbc.org](mailto:musicministersearchcommittee@thefbc.org).

**Wedgwood Baptist Church** is accepting resumes for a FT worship minister. Wedgwood is located at 5522 Whitman Ave., Fort Worth, Texas 76133. 817-292-1400. Please send resume to [worshipsearch@wedgwoodbc.org](mailto:worshipsearch@wedgwoodbc.org).

**Crossroads Church** in Canton is seeking a FT senior worship minister who is a highly skilled leader with a servant's heart to shepherd and lead in worship. Must have experience leading other leaders and proficiency in leading multiple bands, praise teams, and choirs. Looking for 10+ years experience. Send resume to [pastortaylor@crossroadscanton.com](mailto:pastortaylor@crossroadscanton.com).

**The Well Baptist Church** in Greenville is seeking a PT worship leader in our new season of growth and

opportunity. Entering year four of our church plant, the Lord is doing amazing things in and through our church. Contact [paul@thewellbaptistchurch.org](mailto:paul@thewellbaptistchurch.org).

**FBC Somerville** is seeking a PT worship leader/music director. Apply online at [fbcsomerville.org/page/resources](http://fbcsomerville.org/page/resources).

**Grace Temple Baptist Church** in San Angelo is seeking a PT worship pastor. The ability to play an instrument is a plus. Send resume to [pastorchris@gtministries.com](mailto:pastorchris@gtministries.com).

**Inglewood Baptist Church** in Grand Prairie is seeking a PT or bivocational minister of music. Send resume to [jobs@inglewoodbaptist.com](mailto:jobs@inglewoodbaptist.com).

**FBC Sabinal** is seeking a PT worship leader. Blended worship style. Email [pastorfbcsabinal@gmail.com](mailto:pastorfbcsabinal@gmail.com) if interested.

**LifePoint Church** in Lufkin, a growing church, is seeking a PT worship leader for blended music. We have services Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights. We have a praise team and numerous musical instruments. We are currently averaging in the 80s on Sunday morning. Email [pastor@lifepointch.org](mailto:pastor@lifepointch.org).

**New Faith Baptist Church** in Aledo is seeking a PT worship leader with required availability for Sunday and Wednesday. Must have the ability to plan, coordinate, and lead worship music for services. Strong performance voice and ability to play a musical instrument is preferred. Contact Donna Boone: [boonedonna1820@gmail.com](mailto:boonedonna1820@gmail.com).

**Fellowship Church** in Royse City is seeking a PT worship leader to grow into a FT position. We are located in a fast growing community 30 miles east of Dallas. All interested applicants should send resume and videos to Jeff Hays at [jhays@fbrcc.org](mailto:jhays@fbrcc.org).

**Clay Road Baptist Church** in Houston seeks a PT worship minister to lead our worship ministry. Our worship services are a blend between contemporary music and traditional hymns. Compensation will be based on experience and ability. Please submit your resume and salvation testimony to [rex@clayroad.org](mailto:rex@clayroad.org).

**Western Hills Baptist Church** in Wichita Falls is seeking a bivocational worship pastor to provide spiritual leadership for worship services through a blended worship on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings. This could be a FT position if you feel called to youth ministry also. Please send your resume to [whbcwfrresume@gmail.com](mailto:whbcwfrresume@gmail.com).

**Siloam Baptist Church** in Simms is seeking a bivocational worship leader to serve a growing, multi-generational church that is focused on reaching the community for Christ. For additional information go to our website at [siloambaptistsimms.com](http://siloambaptistsimms.com) or email [pastorjustinking@gmail.com](mailto:pastorjustinking@gmail.com).

## STUDENTS

**Calvary Baptist Church** in San Marcos is seeking a FT student minister. Salary is based on experience and personal finance requirements, such as family size. Applicants may send their resume to [dennis@calvarysanmarcos.com](mailto:dennis@calvarysanmarcos.com). A subsequent interview with pastor and staff may be scheduled via phone or in person.

**Fellowship Church** in Liberty Hill is seeking a FT youth pastor. Email resume to Tim McIlhoney at [tim@fellowship1h.com](mailto:tim@fellowship1h.com).

**FBC Brownsville** is seeking a FT student and children's minister who is a committed follower of Christ, a strong leader, and who is passionate about sharing Jesus and making disciples. Contact Steve Dorman at

stevedorman57@hotmail.com We are a conservative, cross-cultural ministry on the Texas/Mexico border.

**Meadowbrook Baptist Church** in Rockdale is seeking a FT youth minister. Please send resume to youthsearch@meadowbrookrockdale.org.

**Calvary Baptist Church** in Weatherford is seeking a FT youth pastor who is an energetic and passionate leader and who will oversee our student ministry (grades 6-12). Contact Pastor Nathan Kozel at nathankozel@gmail.com.

**South Side Baptist Church** (ssbaptist.org) in Abilene is seeking a FT youth minister. SSBaptist is committed to expositional preaching, elder-led congregationalism, regenerate church membership, and a culture of discipleship—all fueled by Christocentric theology. Please send resume to blake@ssbaptist.org.

**Hillcrest Baptist Church** in Jasper is seeking a FT youth pastor to lead our youth and children's programs. Salary range is \$55K-\$65K, depending on education and experience. If interested, please email your resume to bettywilliams@hbcjasper.com.

**East Side Baptist Church** is seeking a PT or interim youth minister. Mail resume to East Side Baptist Church, 600 N. 1st, Haskell, Texas 79521. Call 940-864-2738 or visit the church website at esbhaskell.org.

**Central Baptist Church** in Crockett is seeking a PT or bivocational youth minister. Church webpage is CBCCrockett.org. Send resume to centralbaptistcrockett@gmail.com.

**Western Hills Baptist Church** in Wichita Falls is seeking a bivocational youth pastor to provide spiritual leadership for our 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students and for our outreach to local schools. This could be a FT position if you feel called to music ministry also. Please send your resume to whbcwfresume@gmail.com.

#### CHILDREN

**West Conroe Baptist** in Conroe is seeking a FT children's minister. Find job description at vanderbloemen.com/job/west-conroe-baptist-childrens-minister. Send resumes to resumes@vanderbloemen.com.

**FBC Henderson** is accepting applications for a FT children's minister. Generous salary plus benefits. FBC has a very active children's ministry, plus a new three-story children's building. Send resume to dhiggs@thefbc.org.

**Parkway Church** in Pearland is seeking a FT children's minister to pour into parents and children by building,

training, and investing in volunteers who know the value they can add to the equation that supports parents and children. Candidates should email their resume to pwcsearch@parkwaychurch.com.

**FBC Dayton** seeks PT children's ministry coordinator.

Send submissions and inquiries to info@fbcdayton.com.

**FBC Wichita Falls** is seeking a FT children's pastor.

Apply at vanderbloemen.com/job/first-baptist-church-wichita-falls-childrens-pastor.

#### COMBINATION

**Galloway Avenue Baptist Church** in Mesquite is seeking a director of youth/worship associate to assist in worship and lead our youth ministry. If you have a heart for youth and evangelism, the fields are white unto harvest. Email resume to gary@gallowayavenue.com.

**FBC Brownsville** is seeking a FT student and children's minister who is a committed follower of Christ and strong leader passionate about sharing Jesus and making disciples. We are a conservative, cross-cultural ministry on the Texas/Mexico border. Contact Steve Dorman at stevedorman57@hotmail.com.

**FBC Hewitt** is seeking a FT minister of youth and families to lead parents, families, and youth to become fully devoted followers of Christ. Responsible for developing a comprehensive ministry plan that will provide creative ways to reach, engage, equip, and disciple parents, families, and students. Send resume to fbcchewityouthandfamily@gmail.com.

#### OTHER

**Grace Life Baptist** in NW Houston is seeking a FT director of discipleship and worship ministries. Position will oversee adult ministries, midweek small groups, and weekly worship. Grace Life is a multi-ethnic, Christ-centered, gospel-driven church that practices meaningful membership and consecutive expository preaching. Weekly attendance: 300+. Send resume to jmosier@gracelifebaptist.org.

**FBC Brownsville** is seeking a Christian school director for our mission-minded, conservative Baptist church serving on the Texas/Mexico border. This person will oversee our K3-12th fully accredited Christian school. Contact Steve Dorman for further details at 956 266-2982.

**Parkway Church** in Pearland is seeking a FT associate pastor of discipleship to help adults and families grow

as disciples of Jesus Christ with a heart for the city and the nations. Candidate will seek to empower adults and families to impact the world with the gospel. Email resume to pwcsearch@parkwaychurch.com.

**FBC Paris** is seeking an interim experienced director of administration to oversee church operations and lead office staff. Schedule is 32 hours weekly, Monday through Thursday. Interim administrator would be eligible for director role when created. Send resume to john.darst@gmail.com.

**Christ Central Baptist Church** in Corpus Christi is seeking a FT associate pastor. Salary package TBD; website is christcentralbc.com. Email resume including references to Pastor Ralph Green at rgreen.ccbc@gmail.com.

## Paid Classifieds

For the latest listings,  
visit [texan.digital/church-positions](http://texan.digital/church-positions)

#### PASTOR

**FBC Erick** in Oklahoma seeks a bivocational pastor with a heart for God who is willing to reach out & interact with others. Friendly & some business knowledge helpful. Parsonage provided. Small farming community. Send resume & sermon links to mdurham@dobsonteleco or mail to Pastor Search, Box 664, Erick, Okla. 73645.

#### STUDENTS

**FBC Pineville** in Louisiana seeks a FT student minister to lead our growing ministry to junior high, high school, and college students. With reach into 15 local junior high and high schools attended by our students, two local college campuses, and a nearby vo-tech campus, the potential is great for a thriving ministry. Learn more at [fbcpineville.net/news/student-minister-position-description](http://fbcpineville.net/news/student-minister-position-description).



**OCTOBER  
20-22, 2024**

CHAMPION FOREST  
BAPTIST CHURCH,  
HOUSTON



**Church Leaders and Staff,  
come be encouraged and equipped  
to lead your church in prayer!**

Speakers include Bill Elliff, Nathan Lorick, Todd Kaunitz, Nathan Lino, Jarrett Stephens and more.

Connect with others, share your experiences, and receive practical training tools for leading your church in prayer. Large group sessions and breakout sessions available.

Questions? [aludwig@nbbctx.org](mailto:aludwig@nbbctx.org)



# 4 SIMPLE WAYS TO HONOR YOUR PASTOR

**S**CRIPTURE IS CRYSTAL CLEAR about the importance of honoring our pastors, yet the pastor is often the one left to initiate it. I have three decades of first-hand pastoral experience with this awkwardness since Focus on the Family initiated Pastor Appreciation Month in 1994.

I am writing directly to church leaders to help you take full advantage of this opportunity to create a culture of double-honor in your church this month. Here are four ideas to help prime the pastor appreciation pump in your church:

## 1. Own the initiative

What good are ideas without someone to implement them? Will you take the initiative to step up and lead out? If you do, I believe your church will follow your lead and your pastor will appreciate your efforts tremendously.

Aaron and Hur stepped up by lifting up Moses' hands during a crucial battle: "When Moses' hands grew heavy ... Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other so that his hands remained steady until the sun went down" (Exodus 17:12).

Your pastor needs an Aaron or Hur to do for him what he cannot do for himself.

## 2. Recognize your pastor publicly

"Now we ask you, brothers, to give recognition to those who labor among you and lead you in the Lord and admonish you" (1 Thessalonians 5:12).

A pastor appreciation day or month can help your church members translate private sentiments into public expressions of love, respect, and appreciation. A public blessing on Sunday morning increases the positive impact

exponentially—for your pastor, your church, and your Lord. Pick a Sunday early in October to have a lay leader speak on behalf of the church and pray for your staff and their families by name. Sharing pictures on the screen makes it even more fun, especially if they are throwback pictures.

## 3. Encourage your pastor personally

"Regard them very highly in love because of their work" (1 Thessalonians 5:13).

If your pastor is doing his best to manage his life, family, and ministry, give him the gift of personally acknowledging him. Don't complicate it—simply write a note (and add a gift card) and/or take him to lunch to clarify that he is a beloved member of your church family and not just an employee.

## 4. Bless your pastor tangibly

The pastor's job is to take care of his church, and it is the church's job to tangibly take care of their pastors. Your pastor's job and joy is to keep watch over you (Hebrews 13:17), but sometimes he needs you to watch over him—and his wife—as well.

My favorite idea for Pastor Appreciation Month is to leave a blessing basket in the worship lobby on Sundays in October for people to leave notes, gift cards, and personal gifts for their ministry staff.

"The elders who are good leaders should be considered worthy of an ample honorarium (double-honor), especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching" (1 Timothy 5:17).

October is a great opportunity for church members to honor and bless your pastors, but if your church calendar won't cooperate, do it any time of the year, such as during a key anniversary or birthday.

God bless you for blessing your pastor!



Mark Dance is director of pastoral wellness for Guidestone Financial Resources.

# WHAT'S UP NEXT?

2024 CALENDAR

For more information about SBTC events, visit [sbtexas.com/events](https://sbtexas.com/events) or scan the QR code



**OCT. 6**

**Cooperative Program Sunday**

## OCTOBER

- 3** Pastor Wives Connection Night, Longview
- 4-5** She Stands Women's Conference, Longview
- 8** Pastors Masters Golf Tournament, Flower Mound
- 8** Evangelism Connections (online)
- 12** Intro to DR & Phase 1 Training, Flint
- 17** Pastor Wives Connection Night, Odessa
- 18-19** Conferencia Mujeres Firmes, Odessa
- 18-19** She Stands Women's Conference, Odessa
- 21** Bivo Pastors Network Regional Gathering, San Angelo
- 22** NAMB Evangelism Toolkit Training - Crossover 2025, Plano
- 23** NAMB Evangelism Toolkit Training - Crossover 2025, Cedar Hill



**DEC. 1-8**

**Lottie Moon Christmas Offering  
Week of Prayer**

## DECEMBER

- 5-8** Student Ministers Getaway, Austin



**NOV. 11-12**

**Annual Meeting, Houston**

## NOVEMBER

- 4** Bivo Pastors Network Remote Gathering
- 9** Crossover Evangelism, Houston
- 10-11** Sesión en Español, de la Reunión Anual, Houston
- 11** Interim Pastor Equipping, Houston

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ANNUAL 2024 MEETING

# SIDE BY SIDE

PHILIPPIANS 1:27

**NOVEMBER**  
**11-12**  
**HOUSTON**  
SAGEMONT CHURCH

AM24 SPEAKERS

Danny Forshee



Humberto Gonzalez



Chuck Lawless



Averri LeMalle



Nathan Lorick



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Questions? Email [aminfo@sbtexas.com](mailto:aminfo@sbtexas.com) or call 817-552-2500