

SOUTHERN BAPTIST

TEXAN

SEPTEMBER 2024 | VOL. 23 | NO. 9



ADVANCING **THE MISSION** TOGETHER,

REACH TEXAS STATE MISSIONS OFFERING SPECIAL SECTION INSIDE



FORT WORTH CHURCH
uses unique skill set to bless
community, other churches



SHE STANDS CONFERENCE
reaches beyond Texas
to a different continent



BUILDING BRIDGES
between the next generation
and church leadership

A QUESTION FOR US ALL TO CONSIDER



I LOVE TRAVELING. There is something about meeting new people and experiencing new cultures that I get excited about. Often, when I travel for work, there is not much time to get out and explore different cities. However, I was able to get away and visit a couple of new places this summer.

One morning my wife and I decided to go visit a museum. This one was fascinating, as it held some of the oldest archives I have ever seen. As we walked through the exhibits, my wife made a statement that stuck with me. She said, “I wonder what kinds of things our generation will be known for in a hundred years?” For some reason that question lingered in my mind.

The more I thought about it, the more I began to think about our network of churches. I began to wonder what future generations will remember our generation for as it pertains to gospel advancement across Texas. Currently, there are almost 31 million people who call Texas home. Our best estimates point to at least 19 million of them being lost. This is today, in our generation.

When I think about the challenge of that reality, I feel a huge sense of responsibility while simultaneously feeling blessed the Lord has placed us here. Think about it: there have never been more people in our state and we have never had more tools for advancing the gospel.

As I continued to ponder that question, I began to hope we would be known in future generations for the following intentional kingdom-advancing things:

- First, I hope we will always be known as a network of churches that stands firm on the inerrant and infallible Word of God. One of our core values is that we are

biblically based. We want future generations to know we believe the Word of God and unashamedly stand for its truths.

- Second, I pray we are always known as a network of churches that is serious about seeing people come to Christ and making disciples. The need is urgent and Jesus is the answer.

- Third, I hope we are known for being a network that helps strengthen churches and encourage pastors. I am praying God continues to bless the SBTC to walk closely with churches and pastors so they know they are not alone.

- Fourth, I hope we will be known as a network of churches that did everything it could to plant as many new churches in our state as possible. God is bringing the world here and we must plant new churches across Texas. This is a unique time, and we have an unparalleled opportunity.

This is not an exhaustive list of what I pray future generations know about the SBTC. They are just a few things that will create massive kingdom impact as we continue moving forward together.

I am so grateful my wife asked that question. It once again refreshed my heart to seek these things together through this incredible network of churches known as the SBTC. I love you and am honored to serve you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nathan Lorick".

Dr. Nathan Lorick
SBTC Executive Director



Engage.
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Nathan Lorick, Executive Director
Joe Lightner, Associate Executive Director
Mitch Tidwell, DMC Senior Strategist
Jayson Larson, Editor
Lightner Creative, Design/Layout

Correspondents:

Mark Dance
Danny Forshee
Gary Ledbetter
Erin Roach
Jane Rodgers
Arlene Sanabria
Dusty Thompson

The Southern Baptist Texan is the official magazine of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, P.O. Box 1988, Grapevine, Texas 76099-1988. Toll-free 877-953-7282. Phone 817-552-2500, Fax 817-552-2520. Email: jlarson@sbtexas.com

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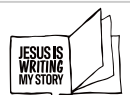
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Reach Texas OFFERING

The Reach Texas Week of Prayer is Sept. 22-29.

See pages 7-11, which highlight some of the ministries made possible by giving to this offering.



JUST KEEP PLANTING

ONE OF MY FAVORITE FEATURES in each issue of the *Texan* is our monthly “Jesus Is Writing My Story” article. This article highlights the personal testimonies of faithful brothers and sisters in our Southern Baptists of Texas Convention churches who have learned a lesson about walking with God that they graciously agree to share with our readers.

I must admit, I’m a little biased about this month’s article featuring Nancy Simon. When I was a middle schooler growing up in East Texas, Nancy and her husband, Brian, played a huge part in my spiritual development. Brian was the youth pastor at a small rural church, and I was a kid looking for something to do and, let’s be honest, a girlfriend. Surely I could find one or both at the Baptist church down the street.

But as I got more involved in the youth group, God began to use Brian and Nancy to turn my attention to matters of faith as much as fun and games. They would invite me and other kids from the youth group over to their house to watch movies, or Brian would ask me to ride along with him as he picked up and then dropped off kids in the church van. We had lots of conversations in that van—some of them silly, many of them spiritual.

Ultimately, I strayed away from the church as high school approached. It wasn’t until after high school that all those spiritual conversations took root and, in my 20s, I gave my life to Christ. I’ve often wondered how—or if—that would have happened without Brian and Nancy planting seeds in me that took a long time to grow.

God calls us to be seed-planters. Scripture is clear that only He can draw people to salvation. It’s equally as clear that His followers have a role to play, as well: “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth” (1 Corinthians 3:6).

TO YOU WHO HAVE PLANTED AND WATERED UNTIL IT HURTS, WHO HAVE TILLED AND TURNED WITH NOT EVEN THE HINT OF A SPROUT TO CELEBRATE ... JUST KEEP PLANTING. GOD IS ABSOLUTELY AT WORK, AND YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT HE IS GOING TO DO.

There are at least a couple of challenging things about planting seeds: it requires us to get our hands dirty, and once we’ve planted and watered, the final result is ultimately not up to us. Oh, that there were a Miracle-Gro for growing disciples of Christ! But there isn’t. All we can do is offer our emotions, invest our time, and wait to see what God will do with the ones to which we minister.

That’s often a deal-breaker for those of us raised in a results-driven, have it your way and have it now culture. We demand immediate outcomes. We want to know that whatever we’ve invested in will take root and become fruitful. The reality is, sometimes seeds don’t grow as fast as we’d hoped. Sometimes they don’t grow at all.

And yet our calling is the same.

I’m so grateful for people like Brian and Nancy who invested in me even when it may have appeared I was as clueless as a question mark. Though I claim to be nothing great today, I am saved, secured, and striving to pour out my life for Jesus.

To you who have planted and watered until it hurts, who have tilled and turned with not even the hint of a sprout to celebrate ... just keep planting. God is absolutely at work, and you never know what He is going to do.



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PRAYER: A GREAT TIME-SAVER



THE FIRST THING I DO when I get up in the morning is get a cup of coffee in my hand and the Word of God in my soul. I pray over many requests in my prayer journal and several missionary pictures. I also keep a journal of my life.

I remember two distinct challenges from a couple of seminary professors at Southwestern Seminary. Roy Fish said, “Every great man of God kept a journal.” Bruce Leafblad challenged our class to spend one hour a day in prayer to God.

Sad to say, but at the time I was praying like five minutes a day. To spend an hour a day with God in prayer was the best decision I ever made to help me grow in my relationship with the Lord. Praise God for the privilege of close communion and intimacy with Him. Through prayer, God speaks to my heart, gets my focus off me and on Him, and off my problems and on His sufficiency.

The 27th life principle in Charles Stanley’s series of messages, “30 Life Principles,” is entitled “Prayer—Our Time Saver.” In his typical way, Stanley preached a powerful message on how we must spend time alone with God, talking to Him and listening to what He says to us in His Word. He said he hears people say, “I just do not have time. Where has the day gone?”

We all have problems with time management. James 4:14 reminds us time is fleeting and our days are numbered. “Whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.” God has given us all a segment of time, but we do not know how long it will last.

I think of President Donald Trump’s near-death experience during the assassination attempt on July 13

WE WILL NEVER REGRET THE TIMES WE SPEND WITH GOD IN PRAYER AND BIBLE INTAKE. IT IS OUR LIFELINE IN A CRAZY AND TROUBLED WORLD.

in Butler, Pa. It was not his time. Trump admits it was a miracle from the Lord that he was not killed. However, for Corey Comperatore, it was his time. He lost his life as he shielded his daughter from the bullets. From what I have read about him, he was a good and godly man who was ready to meet God in eternity.

The best way to spend our time on earth is prayer. Oswald Chambers famously said, “Prayer does not equip us for greater works; prayer is the greater work.” There are many things we can do after we pray, but there is nothing we can do of eternal significance until we have prayed.

Stanley was right: When we spend time with God in prayer, He empowers us to get so much more done. When you are so busy and feel you do not have time to pray, that is when you need to pray the most. We will never regret the times we spend with God in prayer and Bible intake. It is our lifeline in a crazy and troubled world.

I am looking forward to the prayer meeting we will have on Nov. 11 at Sagemont Church as we meet for our Southern Baptists of Texas Convention Annual Meeting. It is truly amazing how God blesses us when we pray and ask for His favor upon us. Make plans to join us for a great time of fellowship and encouragement.

100 YEARS OF MINISTRY, IMPACT BEYOND MEASURE

AMARILLO

It would be impossible to quantify the impact San Jacinto Baptist Church, which has been known as The Church at Quail Creek since 2004, has had throughout its 100-year history.

But as it prepares to celebrate a century of ministry on Sept. 21-22, it's clear the church—which began through the vision and heart of a Sunday school class that saw a need to reach the lost in Amarillo—has left its mark on the kingdom of God and on Southern Baptists in Texas.

Stan Coffey, who served as the church's pastor for more than three decades, faithfully led the church to reach the lost not only in Amarillo but around the world. During his years of service, he helped lead the charge to form the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, serving as its first president from 1998 to 2000.

In 2010, the church's leadership, along with several other churches, launched the creation of the SBTC's M3 Camp, which

continues to serve churches in reaching students with the gospel of Jesus and commissioning them to live on mission.

After Coffey's death in 2013, Kyle Clayton was called to serve as the church's new pastor. Clayton has continued to advance the church's mission to reach Amarillo through partnerships with local schools and parachurch organizations.

Even in difficult circumstances, the church persevered. It not only survived the Dust Bowl of the 1930s, but thrived, building a new worship facility to house its growing congregation. In June 1960, after losing part of its building to a fire, church members rallied, prayed, and washed the salvageable parts of the facility by hand so they could have a place to worship that Sunday.

Through it all, The Church at Quail Creek has stayed true to its mission of "Loving Jesus and Loving People" by launching countless ministries and seeing thousands come to know Jesus as Lord and Savior.



STAN COFFEY CALLED AS PASTOR



Church Begins Fire Cleanup





DONALD SCHMIDT



Donald Schmidt is the senior pastor of Lakeland Baptist Church in Lewisville, where he has served since 2014. He holds a Master of Divinity and Ph.D. in New Testament Studies from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. The author of the book *Prophetic Patterns in the Passion of Jesus: Typological Uses of Davidic Psalms by John and Luke*, Schmidt also serves on the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention Executive Board. He has been married to Melody for almost 12 years, and they have three children—Titus, Truett, and Kinsley.

What is something you're grateful to God for about your church?

I'm grateful our church engages our community monthly in some type of evangelistic outreach. Over the past seven years, God has empowered us to share the gospel with thousands of people through door-to-door evangelism, apartment block parties, local mission trips, and city partnerships, among various outreaches. Encouragingly, we've seen our corporate evangelism lead to personal evangelism in the lives of many of our members. At Lakeland, I'm so thankful our people not only believe in praying missionally and giving missionally, but also living missionally.

What do you appreciate most about your current ministry team?

God has privileged me to work with a stellar team of men and women who love Jesus supremely and who are very gifted at what they do. They are such a joy to serve with and advance the gospel alongside. One quality I truly appreciate about our staff is that they do not erect barriers or walls around their ministries. Instead, they willingly and joyfully cross over into each other's ministries to do whatever is needed to help accomplish the greater mission of the church—to make disciples who make disciples.

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

When I came to Lakeland 10 years ago, I knew God desired our church to be a praying church, but I really didn't know what it looked like to lead the church to prioritize prayer. As the late Paul Powell [quoting Oswald Chambers] once said, "Prayer does not fit us for greater works; prayer is the greater work." Through steps we've taken to grow in the ministry of prayer, I've learned that when we pray, we experience God's power, presence, and blessings upon our worship, our ministry, and our missional efforts that we would not experience otherwise. It's imperative, therefore, that lead pastors devote themselves to the ministry of corporate prayer.

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

One of our church's most impactful ministries is Lakeland Christian Academy, our church's private Christian school. We'd love to see God connect many of the unchurched families who are a part of our school with our church this year.

How can other SBTC churches be praying for you?

Pray that God will keep our staff close and clean in our walk that we might finish our races well for Jesus, and pray that God will keep our church committed to doing whatever it takes to reach our neighbors and the nations with the gospel.

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‘They know who we are and why we were there’

Gilbert Chavez Fairview Baptist Church

Gilbert Chavez, pastor of Fairview Baptist Church in Austin, was delighted when a church member expressed a strong desire to reach women for Jesus in her apartment community. That led to ladies from Fairview knocking on doors one Sunday afternoon last fall, striking up conversations in the complex. As a result, several women accepted an invitation to attend a Sunday afternoon Bible study in the church member’s apartment.

“Even though she had already begun the work, we wanted to get some training for her and the rest of our church in evangelism,” Chavez said. The pastor turned to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention’s People Groups department, which provided cross-cultural evangelism training and taught church members to use the 3 Circles method to win others to Christ.

“We were encouraged to go out as a church and teams. The training helped us understand the different pockets of people we would meet,” Chavez said. “We learned to be aware and not be afraid.”

The Fairview women continued to invite ladies to the Bible study and the group grew. Several women attended Bible study and two made professions of faith. One now attends Fairview regularly. A men’s Bible study also began at the apartment complex. Two of the men came to Fairview and one rededicated his life to Jesus, Chavez said. Eventually, that apartment Bible study transitioned to the church, although Fairview still conducts some activities at the apartments.

The church’s focus shifted in late fall 2023 to a nearby mobile home park, where Fairview members began knocking on doors and sharing the gospel. Several people came to faith in Christ, including a mother and her teenage son.

“Last Christmas, we followed up with Christmas caroling and treat bags for the kids,” Chavez said. “Large groups of families from the mobile home park joined us and sang with us. ... We served hot chocolate and cookies. They know who we are and why we were there. This is the beginning of our reaching out to our community.”

Faithful giving, far-reaching impact

Scottie Stice SBTC Disaster Relief

It’s a progression with which Southeast Texans are all too familiar. But because of Reach Texas giving, they are familiar with another accompanying sight: volunteers in yellow Southern Baptists of Texas Convention Disaster Relief shirts showing up in droves and ministering to the hurting.

Heavy storms led to another deluge in early April, leading officials across the region—including in Jasper, Newton, and Hardin counties—to enact disaster declarations. The city of Kirbyville was among those hard hit. Three churches there were flooded, including Central Baptist Church.

The call for help went out and SBTC Disaster Relief responded. A shower unit was sent to support Texas Task Force 1 in Kirbyville, then a second shower unit was sent there while a Quick Response Unit (QRU) was deployed to Port Arthur. QRUs are mobile kitchens that can quickly mobilize to feed hundreds of meals in a short time. A second QRU was later stationed at First Baptist Church in Kirbyville.

Such call-outs can also include requests for SBTC DR volunteers to assist in the exhausting task of mudding out flooded homes and buildings. Chaplains are mobilized to pray and share the gospel with people who are hurting, vulnerable, and in many cases, more receptive to the saving message of Christ than they have ever been.

When it comes to disaster relief, the practical impact of giving through the Reach Texas offering can’t be underestimated.

“The faithful giving of SBTC churches to Reach Texas is what funds our disaster relief ministry,” Stice said. “It is what pays for food that is prepared and served on the quick response feeding units. It covers the expenses of transporting and setting up shower units that support shelters, first responders, and disaster relief volunteers. Reach Texas helps with tools, safety equipment, and fuel for the cleanup teams that mud out flooded homes.”

Quiet—but powerful—moments at M3 Camp

David Baysinger First Baptist Corinth

Student pastor David Baysinger has been bringing students from First Baptist Corinth to M3 Camp in Glorieta, N.M., every summer since 2015. At M3, lives can be changed in all kinds of circumstances.

Many students feel the pull to a relationship with Christ during the camp's main worship times through songs and the preaching of God's Word. But Baysinger has also seen students trust Christ in what seemed—at least in the moment—to be the quiet, ordinary times.

Take Jayden, who, with his family, had long been involved at First Baptist Corinth. He gave his life to Jesus in the quietness of his dorm at camp one summer and was baptized at the church last fall.

And there's Braylon, a sophomore whose parents have also served at M3 Camp. Two summers ago, as the Corinth youth group prepared to load the bus at camp's end, Baysinger noticed Braylon and an older student praying together in the parking lot as Braylon asked Jesus to be his Savior.

One summer, Baysinger urged students, including Izzy, during church group time not to wait for the next invitation in a worship service to place their trust in Jesus if they felt "that tug from the Lord."

A short time later, just as he sat down at lunch, Baysinger felt a tap on his shoulder. Izzy wanted to trust Jesus. Baysinger, Izzy, and a female leader found a quiet place in the kitchen, and Izzy prayed to receive Christ.

Baysinger praised the "clear gospel invitations" given by M3 speakers but also commended the camp structure, where church group time is a priority.

"A number of our students have come to know Christ," Baysinger said. "M3 has been part of that thread."

**The Reach Texas
Week of Prayer is Sept. 22-29.**

For more information or to give,
scan the QR code.



Working together to reach a growing Asian population

Michael Wang New Life Gospel Church

New Life Gospel Church sees the possibilities, but the struggles are real.

The church, founded 17 years ago by its senior pastor, Thomas Wang, focuses on preaching the gospel to Asian people flowing into Texas in massive numbers, including those from China and Taiwan. When they arrive, Wang says they know little about the gospel because they were indoctrinated with atheism by the Chinese government.

One of the church's tried and true methods of sharing the gospel with Asian people when they come to the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex is connecting with them as friends through personal relationships. In this sense, the biblical words of Jesus have been a daunting reality—the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.

One area the church has found to enlist workers is Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Through its Chinese student fellowship, New Life learned about the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention's FIRE Initiative. The initiative—which stands

for Forging Integrated Relationships in Evangelism—connects the SBTC's academic partners such as SWBTS with its affiliated churches to increase gospel collaboration.

Through the initiative, a SWBTS student began serving as a FIRE intern in September 2023. The student serves the church in a number of ways, helping with evangelistic efforts and giving New Life another voice to effectively communicate with a younger generation that can feel difficult to reach.

"As a Christian of her age, she can help us approach more people who are similar to her age—especially young adults," said Michael Wang, who serves New Life as an associate pastor. "Hopefully she can help them know who Jesus Christ is."

He noted that God is, indeed, using the collaboration for kingdom purposes, as the church baptized three people who made professions of faith earlier this year.

"We believe God's promise," he added. "God is using this partnership to help us learn more about the SBTC. We work together and leave the results in God's hands."

Empowered to share the gospel with the next generation

Chawn Cummings North Garland Baptist Fellowship

As Chawn Cummings pours his life into the next generation as youth director at North Garland Baptist Fellowship and at the school where he teaches and coaches, he loves to tell the stories of what God is doing through his students.

He loves to talk about a student in his youth group who has answered the call to serve with a missions organization and recently returned from an outreach in South Africa. Now she's praying about going back to serve a two-year commitment there.

Another student was recognized for his boldness on Bring Your Bible to School Day—so much so that someone from the school emailed the student's mother to tell her how encouraged he was watching the young man read his Bible during lunch.

There's a culture Cummings wants to create among everyone with whom God has given him influence, and he credits the Empower Conference with fueling that fire.

Cummings attended Empower—an evangelistic conference hosted annually by the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention

and funded through state missions giving—and came away equipped and inspired. He heard Shane Pruitt, next gen director for the North American Mission Board, talk about calling out the called—which, in turn, inspired Cummings to work hard to develop young Christian leaders. Cummings said he was particularly challenged by Nik Ripken, a longtime missionary and author of *The Insanity of God* who frequently speaks about the persecuted church.

"I was personally challenged to be more intentional about my own personal evangelism and about inspiring the youth of my church to evangelize and become more missions minded," Cummings said.

Other sessions motivated the youth director to be more intentional about encouraging his colleagues at school to be more evangelistic—"to be a light within the law."

"We have encouraged these youth and others as we have been equipped by the Empower Conference," Cummings said, "and we are so grateful for the experience."

Church planting and church partnership at its best

Willer Montesinos La Carpa del Valle of McAllen

La Carpa del Valle of McAllen celebrated its first birthday in March 2024. The Rio Grande Valley church plant now has 60-70 in attendance each Sunday and is seeing multiple baptisms.

"We are seeing God's blessings," planter/pastor Willer Montesinos said. "God is moving us to train and equip our people to share the gospel with their families and friends. More and more people are coming to Jesus through our members."

While the church often met in hotel rooms in its earliest days, La Carpa del Valle now gathers in a building belonging to First McAllen, which also supports the church plant. First McAllen Lead Pastor Steven Gaither said his church had been praying for vacant space on its campus to be used.

"We were thrilled to see people in that building again," Gaither said, adding that La Carpa quickly expanded from using 3,500 to 7,000 square feet of space.

As La Carpa grew numerically and completed Send Network

SBTC's assessment process, First McAllen became La Carpa's official sending church. Church planting is one of the many ministry efforts funded through Reach Texas giving.

"Our church joyfully embraced this opportunity," Gaither said. "A relationship that started because a church plant needed some space to meet has become a friendship, a ministry partnership, and a wonderful kingdom-heart connection."

The vision of La Carpa del Valle extends across the border, as well. In early 2024, the church started a home church in Reynosa, Mexico, on Wednesday evenings "to reach our neighbors there," Montesinos said.

La Carpa del Valle, translated in English, means "the tent in the valley." The church name is derived from Exodus 33, the account of Moses pitching the "tent of meeting" outside the Israelite camp. Here, "the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend" (Exodus 33:11).

"We want to be a place where people in the Valley can receive encouragement from God face to face," Montesinos said.

Inspired, equipped & ready to reach

Nick Apperson First Baptist Church of Malakoff

First Baptist Church of Malakoff student minister Nick Apperson knew he wanted to reach out to student-athletes at the community college in a neighboring East Texas town. He just wasn't sure how to start. Until he attended Roundup.

Roundup, an annual event hosted by the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention and funded through Reach Texas giving, aims to encourage, equip, and network collegiate leaders across the state. Apperson attended Roundup for the first time in 2023.

Through information provided during several breakout sessions and with the encouragement of other collegiate leaders, Apperson said he gained the confidence to jump headfirst into making the campus ministry God had planted in his heart a reality.

"Being able to connect with other people doing college ministry, being able to ask questions and to hear from guys in the trenches, was incredibly eye-opening for me," Apperson said. "Roundup allowed me to connect with people who are in

my corner and willing to help me reach college students with the gospel and help them grow as disciples of Jesus Christ."

Motivated by his Roundup experience, Apperson and his wife began to regularly set up a table at the community college and offer giveaways to connect with students. They also had a pickleball night and, before long, invited some of the student-athletes they met into their home for a Bible study.

Each week, students from a variety of backgrounds from around the country are having conversations about the Bible and who Jesus is—some for the first time in their lives. Not only that, but the gospel is proclaimed weekly, followed by an invitation for the student-athletes to trust Jesus.

"I can see the Lord working and stirring in the lives of these young men, and I am simply trusting Him with the outcome," Apperson said. "I rejoice that these guys can come into our home, connect with me and my family, and hopefully leave with a better understanding of who Jesus really is and who they are called to be."

For SBTC DR, crisis opens doors to gospel opportunities

Scottie Stice SBTC Disaster Relief

Sometimes people need a hand after disaster strikes, as occurred when winter storms wrought havoc in Austin, prompting Southern Baptists of Texas Convention Disaster Relief volunteers to deploy in early February.

Multiple SBTC DR chainsaw teams rotated in and out, completing nearly 70 jobs in Pflugerville, Hutto, Round Rock, and Northwest Austin, according to Scottie Stice, SBTC DR director.

But that wasn't the whole story.

Among the survivors assisted by SBTC DR was Larry, an elderly military veteran whose refrigerator broke during the storm.

"We removed tree damage from his home," SBTC DR volunteer Mike Jansen said. Food shared by DR volunteers was the man's first meal in two days.

Finding Larry was a divine appointment, said Debby Nichols, SBTC DR chaplain from DeKalb. Nichols and fellow chaplain/assessor Linda Mitter of Rockwall had completed

their daily assignments and were driving around Round Rock neighborhoods to see if they had missed anything.

An enormous tree, split in half, caught their attention and they drove down the adjacent cul de sac.

"That tree was God's sign to us," Nichols said. "We found Larry's house, with branches above his front door."

The ladies knocked, explained who they were, and asked if Larry needed help.

"I am not worthy," he replied. Nichols and Mitter visited with him and learned he had quit a college teaching job to care for his wife, who later died of cancer.

"He had been stuck," Nichols said of Larry's despair. The Vietnam veteran was entitled to some assistance, they realized. SBTC DR volunteer Ted Boswell, a retired pastor who teaches adult Sunday school at First Baptist Pflugerville, connected Larry with a VA advocate in his class.

But best of all, Larry accepted Christ as his Savior after the chaplain told him about Jesus.



GOING GLOBAL

SBTC SHE STANDS CONFERENCE LANDS IN AFRICA TO ENCOURAGE, EQUIP WOMEN FOR MINISTRY

By Jane Rodgers | Texan Correspondent

WHEN LAURA TAYLOR MET CHAO TSUMA at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, neither expected that their fast friendship would lead to significant ministry opportunities on another continent.

This summer, Taylor—women’s associate at the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention—joined Tsuma in Kenya to lead a women’s leadership conference in Navasha and a She Stands conference in Malindi, a community that is 90% Muslim.

Tsuma first experienced She Stands when she volunteered at a conference held at First Baptist Mansfield in 2021. She Stands conferences, held regionally throughout the year, aim to encourage and train women in their lives and ministries.

Tsuma felt an immediate connection with Taylor.

“Laura’s vibrant personality and genuine ability to make everyone feel seen and valued left a lasting impression on me,” Tsuma said. “She invited me into the ministry work, emphasizing that it was the Lord’s work and required collective effort.”



Upon the recommendation of Terri Stovall, Southwestern’s dean of women and Tsuma’s mentor, Chao applied for and was accepted to serve as an SBTC women’s ministry intern under Taylor’s direction in 2023. Her role would be threefold: to help amplify the vision for women in the region, to encourage leadership development among women, and to support Taylor and the SBTC women’s ministry through prayer.

Those duties would include helping Taylor expand the scope of SBTC women’s ministry materials into larger conference formats. On one occasion, Tsuma helped Taylor expand written materials used for a pastor-wife conference into a leadership conference.

In August 2023, the SBTC offered a leadership conference in Arlington for some 40 women’s ministry leaders from the Dallas-Fort Worth area. This past March, 50 women attended a similar leadership summit in Beaumont.

(Top) Chao Tsuma and Laura Taylor’s friendship led to international ministry. (Bottom) Chao is pictured with Joyce Karisa and some of the women Karisa disciples in Kenya.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

“Chao and her Christian friends and network in Kenya have been praying for years for this kind of opportunity. The fact that the SBTC gets to be involved is phenomenal.”

—LAURA TAYLOR

Guests at the Beaumont conference included four women from Nairobi, Kenya—part of Chao’s network of friends—who flew in to attend.

“One is a doctor; two are in economic development,” Taylor said of the Kenyans. “They are successful, professional women who came to the states to experience this conference.”

As plans were being made for two more leadership summits the next year, one in the Metroplex and one in the Houston area, an intriguing question arose: Why not also in Kenya?

Why not Kenya?

Encouraged by the attendance of the four Kenyan women, and with the assurance that there were many Christian women in Kenya hungry for similar instruction, Taylor and Tsuma ramped up their efforts. Tsuma returned to Kenya early this summer to lay the groundwork.

“We worked on both ends,” Taylor said. She and her husband, Wade, pastor of First Baptist Alvarado, left for Kenya at the end of July with a small team from Texas.

Two women’s conferences were held in early August: a leadership summit in Naivasha, and She Stands Kenya in Malindi. Topics included developing a personal walk with the Lord, loving others, and leading other women—all scripturally based.

“In my culture, titles are highly regarded. A woman who leads ... is highly regarded. She is a woman of influence. ... She has a big platform to influence other women. This is the woman we target,” Tsuma said. “If [that woman] stands in Christ, others will follow. ... As

she grows, she helps other women. Our vision is to equip this woman with biblical principles for daily living.

“We focus on four pillars for her growth: her relationship and growth in Christ, her relationship with others in her home, her economic growth, and her impact on her community.”

Early response in Kenya has been overwhelmingly positive, Tsuma said.

In addition to the conferences, Taylor, Tsuma, and a crew of Texas and Kenyan helpers attended local worship services, engaged in outreaches including providing potable water to villages, and met with the president of the Kenya Baptist Convention.

Besides the two women’s events, Wade Taylor and Tsuma’s husband, James, taught a pastors’ conference, and Wade—an SBTC Disaster Relief chaplain—also offered basic chaplaincy training. A planned outreach to school girls on the trip was disrupted due to massive flooding in Kenya.

“People are displaced and distressed because of the flooding,” Laura Taylor said of the need for indigenous chaplains to minister in disasters.

Now that the vision has expanded to Kenya, Tsuma and Taylor hope this is just the beginning of women’s ministry training for that country.

“Chao and her Christian friends and network in Kenya have been praying for years for this kind of opportunity,” Taylor said. “The fact that the SBTC gets to be involved is phenomenal.”

For more information on She Stands conferences in Texas and beyond, scan the QR code or email ltaylor@sbtexas.com.



(Top) Chao, pictured second from left, introduces some of the Kenyan leadership team to Terri Stovall of Southwestern Seminary, pictured second from right, when they visited Stovall’s office in April. (Bottom) She Stands Kenya held conferences in Navaisha and Malindi, Kenya, this summer. **SUBMITTED PHOTOS**



She Stands Kenya delegates take a selfie with Kim Coker, who spoke at the She Stands Beaumont conference. **SUBMITTED PHOTOS**

TAKING THE PLUNGE

SBTC churches reap plentiful harvest after summer of ministry investment

She couldn't help but smile—big.

With several hundred people watching, Hannah VanSchaik was lowered into the water at the Whitesboro city swimming pool in early August and then raised to walk in newness of life—one of 25 people baptized that day by First Baptist Whitesboro, located about 20 miles from the Oklahoma border between Gainesville and Sherman. The public baptism was held at the conclusion of a fruitful summer for the church, which saw people make decisions for Christ at youth camp, kids camp, and vacation Bible school.

First Baptist Whitesboro pastor Mike Flanagan said the baptisms also included several young people who made professions of faith last summer but had not yet followed up with baptism. In another instance, a father was baptized, who then helped baptize his wife and his daughter. A large crowd from the church came to the pool to witness the baptisms, and Flanagan said a few members from the public even stopped to watch.

"All from the goodness of God," Flanagan said. "This is just the culmination of sharing Jesus and loving people."

It was a summer worth celebrating across the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention landscape. Thousands of students' lives were touched by the Lord through their participation in M3 camps. According to the SBTC Student Ministry department, more than 4,300 students representing 114 churches attended one of four M3 camps. Of those, 846 made decisions, either professing faith in Christ, committing to be baptized, or answering a call to serve Jesus.



First Baptist Whitesboro pastor Mike Flanagan (right) and Curtis Barrett, the church's minister of families, baptizes Chris Sandmann and Hannah VanSchaik during a public baptism celebration in August. The baptisms were held at the city pool in Whitesboro.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

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TRANSFORMING HOMES & HEARTS

UNIQUE SKILL SET HELPS FORT WORTH CHURCH SERVE COMMUNITY, LEAD OTHER CHURCHES TO DO THE SAME

By **Arlene Sanabria** | Texan Correspondent

FORT WORTH

David Escalona, pastor of Iglesia Bautista Fe, has a core conviction that has the potential to impact his congregation as much as it does the members of his community:

“When we serve, our hearts are softened.”

Sometimes that looks like painting, repairing, and remodeling homes. On other occasions, it may be an opportunity to work alongside sister churches to meet needs. Regardless, IBF members look for any ways they can to reach families for Christ and bring Him glory.

Call it a ministry of transformation—of homes, but also of hearts.

“We are a church where everyone is accepted and welcomed to be transformed by God,” Escalona said, “because God does not leave us as He finds us.”

IBF’s ministry philosophy was born out of practicality—Escalona simply recognized there were many members of his church who were skilled in construction. Why not put those talents and experience to use for the kingdom? So, the pastor began leading his people to work together to help widows, single mothers, the elderly, and the sick in their community who do not have the resources to have construction and repairs done.

Little did they know their ministry would expand to include helping other congregations that also didn’t have the resources or manpower.

“There are other churches that are smaller than us that are in need, and we have stepped up to serve them,” Escalona said.

Serving beyond the church walls

The ministry has impacted the church in ways Escalona and his members never imagined. Not only has it helped IBF meet needs in Fort Worth and beyond, but it has inspired other churches to start doing the same to point others to Christ. One instance happened last year when a Hispanic church in West Texas called asking for help.

At the West Texas church's request, the IBF men's group helped repair the homes of two families. During their visit, Escalona took time to encourage the church that it, too, could use even the most simple gifts, talents, and resources God had given its members to impact their community.

A month later, the West Texas church invited IBF to work alongside its members on a service project. IBF was unable to attend because of a previously scheduled mission trip, but once that trip was over, Escalona reached back out to the West Texas church to see if it still needed help.

No, the pastor of the church replied, they had already stepped out in faith and done the work themselves—recruiting both men from the church and a few others who did not attend church to help restore the home of a non-believing family. A few months later, the West Texas church reported that some of those they made contact with on the project, both the workers and the family that was served, had come to faith in Christ or started attending church.

Escalona said IBF has a women's group that is also active in reaching others through service. Members of the women's group learned to make winter hats to take to cancer centers where patients are being treated. While there, they share spiritual literature, hope, and offer prayer for those they visit.

IBF also uses block parties to do community outreach, hosting events every three months at locations around the city. The parties include games and activities for children and adults, but the main purpose of the events is to share the gospel with those

“It is my prayer that God will continue to give the wisdom to lead the church and continue to open doors to impact the world.”

—DAVID ESCALONA



(TOP) Members of Iglesia Bautista Fe help repair a home as an act of service. (BOTTOM) Church members serve food during a community outreach event. **SUBMITTED PHOTOS**

who attend. Block parties have been very helpful in helping IBF meet people, invite them to church, and lead them to Christ.

Getting outside the walls of the church became part of IBF's core identity early on. The church started in March 2019 with about 10 to 12 people, but not long after, it found itself unable to meet in its building due to COVID-19. That's when Escalona prayerfully led IBF to meet in parks around the city.

Before long, the number of those attending doubled. Now, about 60 to 80 people come each week, and the church is already praying God will provide a larger place to meet as it outgrows its current space.

“It is my prayer that God will continue to give the wisdom to lead the church and continue to open doors to impact the world,” Escalona said, “remembering that if we are the body of Christ, [we must move out beyond our church's] four walls.”



TRANSFORMANDO HOGARES Y CORAZONES

UN CONJUNTO ÚNICO DE HABILIDADES AYUDA A IGLESIA DE FORT WORTH A SERVIR A LA COMUNIDAD Y A GUIAR A OTRAS IGLESIAS A HACER LO MISMO

Por Arlene Sanabria | Corresponsal del Texan



FORT WORTH

David Escalona, pastor de la Iglesia Bautista Fe (IBF), tiene una convicción fundamental con el potencial de impactar tanto a su congregación como a los miembros de su comunidad:

“Cuando servimos, nuestros corazones se ablandan”.

A veces eso se traduce en pintar, reparar y remodelar casas. En otras ocasiones, puede ser una oportunidad de trabajar junto a iglesias hermanas para suplir necesidades. Cualquiera sea el caso, los miembros de la IBF buscan la forma de alcanzar a las familias para Cristo y darle gloria.

Se trata de un ministerio para transformar hogares—pero también corazones.

“Somos una iglesia donde todos son aceptados y bienvenidos para ser transformados por Dios”, dijo Escalona, “porque Dios no nos deja como nos

encuentra”.

La filosofía del ministerio de la IBF nació de algo práctico: Escalona simplemente reconoció que había muchos miembros de su iglesia que eran hábiles en la construcción. ¿Por qué no poner esos talentos y esa experiencia al servicio del Reino? Así, el pastor comenzó a guiar a su gente a trabajar juntos para ayudar a las viudas, madres solteras, ancianos y enfermos en su comunidad que no tienen los recursos para tener la construcción y las reparaciones hechas.

No se imaginaban que su ministerio se ampliaría para incluir la ayuda a otras congregaciones que no tenían recursos ni la mano de obra.

«Hay otras iglesias más pequeñas que la nuestra que lo necesitan, y nosotros hemos dado un paso adelante para servirles», dijo Escalona.

Servir más allá de las paredes de la iglesia

Este ministerio ha tenido un impacto en la iglesia que Escalona y sus miembros nunca imaginaron. No sólo ha ayudado a la IBF a satisfacer necesidades en Fort Worth y más allá, sino que ha inspirado a otras iglesias a empezar a hacer lo mismo para llevar a otros a Cristo. Uno de estos casos ocurrió el año pasado cuando una iglesia hispana del oeste de Texas llamó preguntando por ayuda.

A petición de la iglesia, el grupo de hombres de la IBF ayudó a reparar las casas de dos familias. Durante su visita, Escalona dedicó tiempo a animar a la iglesia para que vieran que ellos también podían utilizar incluso los dones, talentos y recursos más sencillos que Dios les había dado a sus miembros para ser de impacto en su comunidad.

Un mes después, la iglesia del oeste de Texas invitó a la IBF a trabajar con ellos en un proyecto de servicio. La IBF no pudo asistir debido a un viaje misionero programado con anterioridad, pero una vez que el viaje terminó, Escalona volvió a comunicarse con la iglesia del oeste de Texas para ver si todavía necesitaban ayuda.

“No”, el pastor de la iglesia respondió, ya que habían dado un paso adelante en la fe y habían hecho el trabajo ellos mismos, reclutando a hombres de la iglesia y a otros que no asistían para ayudar a restaurar la casa de una familia no creyente. Unos meses más tarde, la iglesia del oeste de Texas informó de que algunas de las personas con las que se habían puesto en contacto en el proyecto, tanto los trabajadores como la familia a la que se había servido habían llegado a la fe en Cristo o habían empezado a asistir a la iglesia.

Escalona dijo que la IBF tiene un grupo de mujeres que también están activas en alcanzar a otros a través del servicio. Los miembros del grupo de mujeres aprendieron a preparar gorros de invierno para llevarlos a los centros oncológicos donde se trata a los pacientes. Mientras están allí, comparten literatura espiritual, esperanza y oran por ellos.

La IBF también utiliza las fiestas en la cuadra para llegar a la comunidad, organizando eventos cada tres meses en distintos lugares de la ciudad. Las fiestas incluyen juegos y actividades para niños y adultos, pero su principal objetivo es compartir el Evangelio con los asistentes. Las fiestas de la cuadra han ayudado mucho a la IBF a conocer gente, invitarla a la iglesia y llevarla a Cristo.

Salir de las paredes de la iglesia se convirtió en parte de la identidad central de la IBF desde el principio. La



“Es mi oración que Dios continúe dándome la sabiduría para dirigir la iglesia y seguir abriendo puertas para impactar al mundo.”

—DAVID ESCALONA

iglesia comenzó en marzo de 2019 con alrededor de 10 a 12 personas, pero no mucho después, se encontró incapaz de reunirse en su edificio debido a COVID-19. Fue entonces cuando Escalona guió en oración a la IBF a reunirse en diferentes parques de la ciudad.

En poco tiempo, el número de asistentes se duplicó. Ahora, entre 60 y 80 personas acuden cada semana, y la iglesia ya está orando para que Dios les proporcione un lugar más grande donde reunirse, ya que su espacio actual se ha quedado pequeño.

“Es mi oración que Dios continúe dándome la sabiduría para dirigir la iglesia y seguir abriendo puertas para impactar al mundo”, dijo Escalona, “recordando que, si somos el cuerpo de Cristo, debemos ir más allá de las cuatro paredes de nuestra iglesia”.



SALVATIONS,

EAST TEXAS CHURCH USES ANY MEANS

SQUIRRELS

NECESSARY TO REACH ITS COMMUNITY FOR CHRIST

& STABILITY



By Erin Roach | Texan Correspondent

TIMPSON

A SQUIRREL WAS LOOSE IN THE BUILDING at First Baptist Church in Timpson, so the pastor sent out a notice that he needed a trap to catch it. By the end of the day, a squirrel trap was set and a man he had been praying for was a new brother in Christ.

W. Dee Daniel, the pastor, had led a woman to Jesus last year, and when he asked if she would like to be baptized and join the church, she said she wanted to wait for her husband. Daniel told her he would be praying for her husband's salvation.

It turns out her husband is a squirrel hunter—the man

who showed up to set a trap in response to the pastor's plea. Before he left, the pastor asked if he'd thought about his spiritual condition. When the man said he had, Daniel asked about his salvation experience.

"I've never been saved," the man replied.

The two sat down to talk, and the pastor asked the man what was keeping him from accepting Christ as Savior.

"I guess I just didn't know how," he said.

Daniel led the man to the Lord, and the next week the couple's teenage son went forward during the invitation and was saved, too. Their daughter followed two weeks later. Earlier this summer, the family of four was baptized in a church member's swimming pool along with 13 other people.

“THEY NEED TO FEEL A PERSONAL CONNECTION, AND BY DISCIPLING THEM RELATIONALLY, IT ALLOWS THEM TO FEEL A PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER THAN THEM.”

—W. DEE DANIEL, pastor of First Baptist Church in Timpson, speaking of younger families joining the church

“From what I can tell by looking back, it’s probably double any other baptismal service they’ve had at the church in the 100-plus years the church has existed,” Daniel said. After the hourlong service, the church family had a picnic and played games to celebrate the baptisms.

Finding momentum

First Baptist Timpson had dwindled to around 65 people on Sunday mornings when Daniel arrived as pastor eight years ago. Most of the congregation was over the age of 65, he said, and the church was in need of revitalization.

“COVID kind of knocked the legs out from under the progress we’d made,” Daniel said.

Timpson is a rural East Texas town of about 1,000 people, and the church is well-known in the area, the pastor said. During his tenure, they’ve tried to focus on reaching younger families, knowing that’s necessary for survival.

Debra Smith, Timpson’s mayor, is a longtime member of First Baptist, having married there in 1977.

“It’s like everything else [in] a community. You have ups and downs and growth spells and spells where it seems like things are slowing down, but we have definitely been in a very upbeat, positive swing at the church,” Smith said.

On Wednesday nights, First Baptist offers a meal followed by Bible studies for children, students, and adults. For a low-to-moderate income community, “it’s a helpful thing to get their kids fed and churched,” Smith said.

About 50 children and students attend on Wednesday nights, the pastor said, compared to a sprinkling of children in years past. On Sundays, total attendance has doubled, averaging 120 to 130. “A lot of our growth has come in younger families,” Daniel said.

It’s about relationships

One of the greatest breakdowns churches experience in passing faith from one generation to the next comes from a lack of relational discipleship, the pastor said.



A surge of young families has breathed new life into First Baptist Church in Timpson, giving older members hope for the continuation of the church’s ministry. **SUBMITTED PHOTO**



First Baptist Church in Timpson baptized 17 people in a church member’s swimming pool this summer, marking perhaps twice the number ever baptized at one time in the church’s century-long history. **SUBMITTED PHOTO**

“What I mean by that is more than programs, more than meeting times, but true discipleship of following Christ, which leads to more than Sunday morning or Wednesday [engagement],” Daniel said. “I think that’s one of the things we see in reaching these younger families. They haven’t been used to that. They haven’t seen it.”

Relational discipleship helps people connect with specific church members, not just to the church as a whole, the pastor said. Younger generations value such belonging, he added.

“They want to feel like what they’re doing is making a difference. The older generation financially was strong. They would put a lot of money into programs. But for the younger generation, it’s more than money,” Daniel said.

“They need to feel a personal connection, and by discipling them relationally, it allows them to feel a part of something bigger than them.”

Such relational discipleship needs to extend to involving children in ways that could keep them involved during the post-high school years when they typically stray from church, Daniel said.

“If we connect them, they have the stronger connection while they’re in church and while they’re younger so when they graduate or go to college, they still have a strong connection that draws them back,” he said. “They’re not gone for 10 to 12 years.”

One way First Baptist involves younger people is through a food bank ministry that began at the church and has since grown to its own community nonprofit housed across the parking lot from the main building.

“We generally give boxes to about 120 families on the third Friday each month, and I don’t know what I’d do without the volunteers from the church coming and helping get the boxes out,” Smith said. “Our church is very involved in the community.”

First Baptist also sends mission teams to Belize, giving church members an opportunity to be personally invested in taking the gospel to the ends of the earth.



Vacation Bible school was a notable success at First Baptist Church in Timpson, drawing many families to hear the good news of the gospel in a congregation that had become older and smaller in recent years. **SUBMITTED PHOTO**

“If you don’t have young families with kids coming to your church, your church is going to be on a decline,” Smith said. “... If we’re getting older and not having that kind of fruit, having children, eventually the pews will get emptier and emptier.”



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Investing to ensure the gospel goes forward long after we're gone

Since we planted Redeemer in 2008, we have reached many young people—which means we have had lots of young leaders. Roughly half our Sunday attendance is in college or just out of college.

We try to keep things as simple as we can. We have pretty straightforward services with worship, expository preaching, and weekly communion. Then, we have small groups during the week. Here are three principles I've observed along the way while we've engaged younger people in our church:

Young leaders need relationships

When I was a 22-year-old youth minister, an older church member took me out to lunch regularly. I valued those lunches more than he probably realized. Right before that, I worked as an associate in youth ministry while I was in college and the youth minister and his wife had us in their home regularly. I never turned down a chance to talk in the church office or come over to their house.

Pastors, don't miss an opportunity to engage relationally with younger staff members. It doesn't necessarily have to be a formal mentoring relationship or another meeting to add to your calendar. Working with an open office door and walking around the office and talking briefly can go a long way when it comes to building relationships with younger leaders. When I was on staff at the church that planted us (Southcrest Baptist Church in Lubbock), we had a weekly lunch after our staff meetings. That was a great idea.

Young leaders are drawn to opportunity

From the start, we had young people leading because they were our only people. If all you have are college students and young adults, you have to develop college students to lead other college students in groups and discipleship. It's the same thing with young adults.

If you are at a place in your church life where you are trying to reach families and younger people in your community, the young people in your church will be your greatest asset to reach their peers. Call them to it and help them develop the character and competencies to not only share their faith and invite friends to church, but make disciples and grow as leaders.

Plant churches and be open-handed with your best leaders

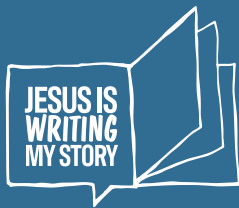
When Southcrest planted us, we started reaching a younger, different crowd that was new to church and served as a good complement to the reach Southcrest already had in Lubbock. A strategic way to reach younger, unreached people is to plant new churches. For the sake of the unreached, we have to engage young leaders. Every church plant needs not only a lead guy, but a core team of members who will make disciples and engage people with the gospel.

Often, they are some of your strongest and most faithful leaders. You've likely invested in them deeply, and sending them out leaves you with some gaps in your church's leadership. In fact, their best and most fruitful years of leadership and ministry might not directly impact your local church. I'll be honest, it can hurt to send them out.

But it is also a reminder why we need to engage and empower young leaders—we want the gospel to go forward long after we are gone.



Dusty Thompson is lead pastor/elder at Redeemer Church in Lubbock.



By Nancy Simon
(as told to Gary Ledbetter)

IN MY SICKNESS, I HAVE FOUND HIS STRENGTH



Things can change in an instant. When that happens, we tend to think we're forgotten about. We're not. God is so faithful, and no matter what happens—no matter what we've been dealt—He is there and we're not alone.

I went for a wellness check [in 2018] and they found a mass on my thyroid. It was benign, but then it started growing and the doctor said, "Well, we're going to take it out because when they start growing, there could be issues." During the operation, they found a four-centimeter mass hidden on the other side of the thyroid. That one was malignant. They got out what they could, but it was kind of large.

I went in the hospital and swallowed radiation and stayed four days. And then when I came out, I had to stay six feet away from my family for two weeks and balance my thyroid with medicine.

In 2020, I was sick again right before the COVID shutdown. They thought I had pneumonia, but I wasn't getting well. My doctors decided they would check my heart and lungs to make sure they weren't missing anything. I was actually in heart failure and had three tumors in my lung.

During my lung biopsy, they ended up collapsing my lung and I was in the hospital for eight days. The cardiologist was able to stabilize my heart with meds. It was really kind of crazy because both cancers were found while treating something else. I felt like that was God's way of letting them find what they needed to find so

I could get the treatment I needed.

They saw the tumors in March and then in May [after the shut-down], they did the biopsy. That was hard because, after my collapsed lung, only one person could see me a day. But if Brian [Nancy's husband, pastor of FBC Merkel] came and left, he couldn't come back. We also have a 10-year-old that we adopted, so he was young and all he knew was Mom disappeared for a week.

When we got that first cancer diagnosis, I really had to just lean on the Lord. I didn't know what that meant. I lost my mom to cancer, Brian lost his mom to leukemia—and I had all that in my head. But I didn't ever panic. God just gave me this peace and He just kept drawing me closer to Himself.

People would say, "Well, aren't you worried about this?" or, "Aren't you worried about that?" I was like, "I can't live waiting for the other shoe to drop. God has me on my feet, and He has me in a position where, yes, I'm sick, but I can still serve." It has made my faith in Him stronger—relying totally on Him daily for my physical strength, for my spiritual strength. He's just really drawn me in.

It's weird, but when I was told about the thyroid cancer, I was more worried about the surgeon because he

(Top left) Nancy Simon, seen at far left, has been blessed with great friends and family, including her husband, Brian (pictured with her at top right), and her children and grandchildren (bottom).

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

knew the mass he planned to take out was benign. So, when he came into the office with the lab results, he was panicking and he was like, “You’re OK. Well, you’re not OK, but you’re going to be OK.”

And I said, “Whoa, breathe. It’s OK. I’m the one who has it. You need to relax.” Brian and I, we went to the car, and we just looked at each other and we were like, “OK, let’s just hit this head on.” The lung cancer threw me a little bit, though.

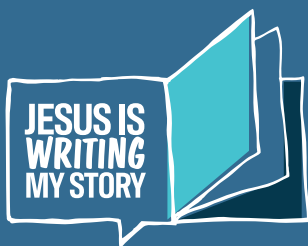
When I was in the hospital during lockdown, I took some time and I just sat. Maybe it was a good thing that my lung collapsed and I had to be in the hospital primarily by myself, because I got to sit and pray and be by myself without having to tell my kids at that point or having to be strong in front of them, not knowing then what I was facing. God gave me a peace over it. I haven’t panicked. It’s been kind of a part of life. You just hit it and go.

When you see what others have gone through, you see those who handle it well and those who have a harder time, maybe this gave me a little more encouragement on how to deal with it without totally panicking. In an earlier church, one of the sweet ladies had gone through colon cancer a year before and I would go and sit with her. We built a relationship and then she turned around and loved on me. I don’t know how people do it without their church family.

I’ve also learned that God is faithful. You’re never alone. He is so faithful to walk through it with you.

**“In an earlier church,
one of the sweet
ladies had gone
through colon cancer
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I would go and sit
with her. We built a
relationship and then
she turned around
and loved on me.
I don’t know how
people do it without
their church family.”**

—NANCY SIMON



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Church Positions

For the latest listings, visit texan.digital/church-positions

PASTOR

Maplecrest Baptist Church in Vidor is seeking a FT senior pastor for a congregation that averages 70-90 people on Sunday morning. Parsonage provided. MBC is looking for a man with strong preaching/pastoral skills who is a skilled disciple-maker. Please send your resume to the attention of MBC Pastor Search at maplecrestbc@hotmail.com.

FBC Winnsboro is seeking a FT lead pastor. Send resume to search@fbcwinnsboro.org.

Graceview Baptist Church (an elder-led church) in Burlison is searching for a FT lead pastor. All applicants may submit their resume to apply@graceviewbc.org.

FBC Lovelady is seeking a FT or PT senior pastor. Email resume to 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. Review of resumes began in August.

FBC Munday is seeking a FT pastor who is devoted, enthusiastic, and who will guide our congregation in spiritual growth, revival, missions, and service. While experience and education are preferred, they are not necessary for someone who feels called by God. Email resume to david.dcalldwell@gmail.com.

Lifeway Fellowship Baptist in Amarillo is seeking a FT senior pastor. We are a congregation of about 100-150. Please email applications/resumes to Jennifer Merriss at benhur80@yahoo.com.

Harvest Acres Baptist Church of Mineola is in search of a FT pastor. Our pastor of 16 years retired. Mineola is a growing area with a steady increase in population. We seek a pastor who loves the Lord and loves the flock under his pastoral care. Contact habcsearch@peoplesnet.com.

Cedar Grove Baptist Church in Carthage is looking for a FT senior pastor. For more information, please visit cedargrovecarthage.org/pastoral-selection.

FBC Paducah is seeking a FT or bivocational pastor. Email resume to firstbaptistchurchpaducahtx@gmail.com.

FBC Rule is searching for a FT or bivocational pastor. Send resume to FBC Rule, P.O. Box 146, Rule, Texas 79547. For more information, call Larry at 940-200-0246.

Winfree Baptist Church in Orange is seeking FT pastor. The church's foundation is based on the Baptist Faith and Message 2000. Send resume to pastorsearch@winfreebaptist.org.

Anderson Mill Baptist Church is seeking a FT lead pastor. We will be accepting resumes until Sept. 15, 2024. Please send resumes to ambcpastorresume24@gmail.com.

FBC Lake Jackson is seeking a FT senior pastor. Send resumes to Pastor Search Team, First Baptist Church, 401 Yaupon, Lake Jackson, Texas 77566, or email your resume to pastorsearch@fbclj.org. For more information, visit fbclj.org.

Tarpley Baptist Church in Tarpley is seeking a FT pastor. Mail resume to Tarpley Baptist Church, P.O. Box 84, Tarpley, Texas 78883, or email tarpleybaptistchurch@gmail.com.

Trinity Pines Baptist Church in Trinity is seeking a FT pastor. TPBC is seeking someone wanting to reach people for Christ and make a kingdom impact. Our worship is contemporary. We are affiliated with the SBTC and have a parsonage. Email resume, salvation story, call to ministry, and any helpful information to TOBCsearchteam@windstream.net.

First Southern Baptist Church in Fritch is searching for a bivocational pastor who would have the potential to become a full-time position with spiritual & numerical growth. Email resumes to pastorsearch@fbsbcfritch.com.

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

Calvary Baptist Church in Cleveland is seeking a FT senior pastor. Please send resume to calvarypastorsearchteam@gmail.com. Include links to past sermons.

Reliance Baptist Church in rural eastern Brazos County near Bryan is seeking a FT pastor to preach and minister to and visit members, and minister to and visit with visitors and the community. We are a small country church. Our present pastor retired in May. If interested, send a resume to jjoldfolks@gmail.com.

FBC Bastrap is asking for recommendations (only) for our next lead pastor. Check out our church, area, and pastor profiles, and/or recommend yourself or another man, by visiting fbcbastrap.org/profiles.

Ridgecrest Baptist Church in Commerce is seeking a bivocational pastor. Email resume to rbccchurch711@gmail.com.

FBC Coolidge is seeking a senior/lead bivocational pastor for an ethnically diverse community. Submit resume to fbccoolidgepsc@gmail.com.

Faith Baptist Church in Hamilton is seeking a bivocational preacher. Contact deacon Jerry Cutler at 817-313-5429.

Mission Dorado Baptist Church in Odessa is seeking a senior pastor. Anyone wishing to be considered can email his resume to mdbcpscsearch@gmail.com.

North Oaks Baptist Church is seeking a PT/ bivocational Spanish speaking pastor. Two years experience, two years theological education or pursuing theological degree. Email resume to flores0605@icloud.com.

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. For more information on the position, visit fforinfo.com/lead-pastor-job-description.

Northside Baptist Church is seeking a FT or bivocational pastor. NSBC is a small congregation that is financially secure. We are looking for a pastor committed to the Bible's authority who is dedicated to prayer and a text-driven expositor. Send resume by mail to Northside Baptist Church, 406 N. 12th, Lamesa, Texas 79331. If you prefer, you may email resume to northsidebaptistchurchlamesa@gmail.com.

Northwest Baptist Church in Arlington is seeking a bivocational pastor to grow with us. Contact the church at 817-299-0105 or email northwestbap@gmail.com. Mailing address is P.O. Box 120454, Arlington, Texas 76012. Website is northwestarlington.org.

MUSIC

Crossroads Church in Canton is seeking a FT senior worship minister, 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.

Wylie Baptist Church in Abilene is seeking a FT worship pastor to provide spiritual leadership for worship services and ministries through blended worship. For a full job description, email lwest@wyliebaptist.org. Send cover letter and resume to Wylie Baptist Church, 6097 Buffalo Gap Road, Abilene, Texas 79606, or email to lwest@wyliebaptist.org.

Paramount Baptist Church in Amarillo is eager to welcome a new FT worship pastor. Responsibilities include leading worship services and managing the music ministry budget. Full job description and application instructions can be found at paramount.org/employment or by calling 806-355-3396.

His Place Fellowship in Paris is seeking a FT worship pastor to lead in mostly contemporary music, with assistance from a talented praise band & worship team. For information or to send resume, email Pastor Mike Fortenberry at mikefortenberry@hotmail.com, or mail to His Place Fellowship, P.O. Box 128, Paris, Texas 75460.

Deer Park First Baptist in Deer Park is seeking a PT worship pastor to lead worship. If interested, please send a resume to Dpfbsearch@gmail.com.

Inglewood Baptist Church in Grand Prairie is seeking a PT or bivocational minister of music. Send resume to jobs@inglewoodbaptist.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.

FBC Somerville is seeking a PT worship leader/ music director. Apply online at 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 pastorchrist@gministries.com.

STUDENTS

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 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 expository 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.

Southmont Baptist Church in Denton is seeking a FT minister to students, overseeing students in grades 6-12. Prefer experience working with middle school and high school students. Bachelor's degree required. Prefer seminary or in the process of completing degree. Please send resume to jdooley@southmont.org.

Oak Grove Baptist Church in Burleson is currently taking resumes for a FT youth pastor. You can email resumes to brady@oakgrove.church.

Kingsland Baptist North Campus in Katy is seeking a FT student pastor. Email resume to resumes@vanderbloemen.com.

Bay Area Church in League City is seeking a FT student pastor. Learn more and apply at bayarea.church/employment/.

FBC Sinton (north of Corpus Christi) is seeking a PT youth minister. Please send resume to youth@firstbaptistsinton.com.

New Hebron Baptist Church in Waskom is seeking a PT student pastor. Please call the church office at 903-633-2645 for more information.

Northeast Houston Baptist Church in Humble, located at 18000 West Lake Houston Pkwy., is seeking a student ministry girls associate. Please send resume to mscott@houstonnortheast.org.

East Side Baptist Church in Haskell 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 esbchaskell.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.

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.

Crossroads in Rowlett is hiring a FT kids minister to lead children's ministries. Responsibilities include spiritual guidance, event planning, and volunteer management. Applicants can contact jdlowrie@crossroadsrowlett.org.

Great Hills Baptist Church in Austin is seeking a FT children's ministry director to primarily lead 1st-5th grade children's ministry. Will partner with and report to the family pastor and the family ministry team to create/implement holistic discipleship in the home. Salary and full benefits. Email resume to chatch@ghbc.org.

FBC Forney seeks qualified candidate for FT director of preschool ministries. To apply, email jjordan@fbcforney.org.

Rock Hill Baptist Church in Brownsboro is seeking a FT early childhood ministry associate. Email resume to kevin@rockhillbc.com.

Rock Hill Baptist Church in Brownsboro is seeking a PT grade school ministry associate. Email resume to kevin@rockhillbc.com.

FBC May is seeking a PT kids director to help coordinate and lead a ministry of connection, evangelism, and spiritual growth for our 40-60 children during Wednesday evening activities. Pay will be determined by experience and education. Please submit a resume and references to Bruce Landes at ministersearch@mayfbc.org.

FBC Keller is seeking a PT childcare teacher. Contact Amy Bearden, First Baptist Church, 225 Keller Parkway, Keller, Texas 76248, or email HR at abearden@fbckeller.org.

FBC Dayton seeks PT children's ministry coordinator. Send submissions and inquiries to info@fbcd Dayton.com.

FBC Wichita Falls is seeking a FT children's pastor. Apply at vanderbloemen.com/job/first-baptist-church-wichita-falls-childrens-pastor.

COMBINATION

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 fbchewittouthandfamily@gmail.com.

Central Baptist in Hillsboro is seeking a FT youth and young families minister. Contact Darrel Beggs at pastord.beggs@gmail.com.

FBC Liberty is looking for a FT pastor of worship and outreach to lead our congregation for gospel growth through the worship of God in music. If interested, please contact Pastor Glenn Leatherman at 936-228-8106 or email pastor@fbcliberty.org, or contact Lindsey Vara 936-336-6881 or email info@fbcliberty.org.

FBC Jasper is seeking a FT youth and discipleship minister. Email resume to fbcjasperyouthsearch@gmail.com.

FBC Terrell is seeking a FT minister of youth and recreation. Send your resume to john@fbcterrell.org or mail to 403 N. Catherine, Terrell, Texas 75160.

FBC Gladewater is seeking a FT worship and next generation minister. Send questions or resume to fbc@fbcgadewater.org.

Little Cypress Baptist in Orange is accepting resumes for a FT or PT position which is worship ministry focused, but also includes ministry with the preschool and children's area. Worship style is blended. Please send resumes to turnerddd@live.com.

OTHER

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.

Coastal Oaks Church in beautiful Rockport is prayerfully seeking a FT associate pastor to partner with us in the gospel ministry as we cultivate deeply rooted missionaries. Please send resume to cirving@coastalokschurch.org.

FBC Forney Christian School is seeking FT qualified classical Christian school teachers as it expands for the 2024-2025 school year. Apply online at fbcforney.org.

Church at the Cross in Grapevine is seeking PT ministry interns for 1-2 yrs, 20-25 hours per week. Email Lindsey at lindseyk@catc.church.

Paid Classifieds

For the latest listings,
visit texan.digital/church-positions

PASTOR

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

WORSHIP

First Baptist Church Natchitoches (La.) is seeking a FT minister of worship/music. Email jendris@fbcnatchitoches.com with a resume and cover letter. The chairman of the search committee, Chuck Herrington, can be reached at 318-663-7400.

THE 3 Cs OF CASTING A COMPELLING VISION



D OES YOUR MINISTRY VISION ROB YOU OF SLEEP? Quicken your pulse? Change your community and world? Why is vision so important for a pastor and a church?

Vision determines your direction and prioritizes your limited time and resources. Let's explore what can make a vision so compelling that it will inspire and mobilize your church members.

It must be a **CONVICTION**

Your vision will only burn as bright as you do. When this passion comes from deep within you, people will sense it and follow it. A vision is something you not only see in your mind, but also burns in your heart.

Will Mancini once said, "An opinion is something you'll argue about; a conviction is something you'll die for." People will not be more dedicated than you are to the vision. The outcome is a willingness to sacrifice. This sacrifice can be seen in time, energy, and financial resources. If this is not something you are willing to personally risk your reputation and resources on, it's not worth pursuing. It's merely an idea, not a vision.

Does your vision inspire you to the point of personal commitment? Southern Baptist pastors may use different vision statements, but they should all be variations of the Great Commission and Great Commandment.

It must be **COURAGEOUS**

You will draw courage from the convictions from which a compelling vision is born—especially when others try to steal your dream, or worse, ignore it.

My last church relocated to a 50-acre campus next to a university with 13,000 students while repurposing our former downtown five-acre campus into a regional

ministry center. Most of our members immediately embraced that vision. Some only understood it after it had become a reality. The toughest ones were those who never saw the vision and either ignored or opposed it. Those are the ones I asked Jesus to give me extra courage and patience for.

1 Chronicles 28:20 says, "Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Don't be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He won't leave you or forsake you until all the work for the service of the Lord's house is finished."

It must be **CLEAR**

Vision serves as a ministry road map, giving both direction and efficiency. I don't know how many times I have started driving in the general direction of my destination before consulting a GPS. In ministry, it is best to get good ministry directions before you lead people somewhere new.

People can't follow a vision they can't clearly see. "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18). Vance Havner once said, "If there is a mist in the pulpit, there is a fog in the pew."

I have learned so much over the years about vision from Thom Rainer, Eric Geiger, and Mancini when I served with them at Lifeway. Much of what I write about here I learned from them, as well as from field testing these ideas for 30 years as a lead pastor.

My prayer is that you and your church will benefit from the collective experience of those of us who came before you so you can cast a compelling vision and fulfill it for the glory of God and the advancement of the gospel.



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 or scan the QR code



SEPT. 22-29

Reach Texas State Missions Offering
WEEK OF PRAYER

SEPTEMBER

- 5** 55+ Adults Ministry Training, Flint
- 5** Pastor Wives Connection Night, Houston
- 6-7** She Stands Women's Conference, Houston
- 9** Bivo Pastors Network Remote Gathering
- 13-14** Florece Retiro de Mujeres, Glen Rose
- 23** Disciple-Making Leader Workshop, Longview
- 24** Disciple-Making Leader Workshop, Houston
- 26** Family Ministry Luncheon, Fort Worth
- 27-28** Hombres de Impacto, Glen Rose
- 30** Evangelism Connections (online)



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
- 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



NOV. 11-12

Annual Meeting, Houston

NOVEMBER

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

ANNUAL MEETING RESOLUTIONS & EXHIBITOR INFORMATION

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. All proposed resolutions should be emailed to Jenna Griffis at jgriffis@sbtexas.com.

Additionally, only SBTC ministries and approved exhibitors may hand out material to the messenger body on the premises hosting the annual meeting.



SOUTHERN BAPTISTS OF TEXAS CONVENTION

ANNUAL 2024 MEETING

SIDE BY SIDE

PHILIPPIANS 1:27

NOVEMBER 11-12

HOUSTON
SAGEMONT CHURCH

HOTELS

**Fairfield Inn & Suites
NASA/Webster**

401 W Texas Ave.
Webster, Texas
832-932-3633
King/Double \$104
Cut-off: 9/11

**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.

Housing Assistance

Hotel cost assistance available to senior pastors with financial need.

Childcare

Available to those that pre-register.

Questions? Email aminfo@sbtexas.com or call 817-552-2500

sbtexas.com/am24

