

CONNECTIONS

LAKEWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH JULY 2025 VOL XV: ISSUE 7 LBCPC.org



A Message from **Andrew Spires**

LEAD PASTOR

• • • • •

As many of you know, Zach White, our chairman of deacons, and I traveled to Dallas, Texas, for the Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting in mid-June. You may have heard about our travel difficulties in getting there and back, but here's a recap. On the Sunday we were to leave out of Columbus, Delta canceled our flight, which caused us to pivot to a different flight out of Atlanta. This also caused the first of our rental car cancellations. Rebooked, Chad Keeter drove us to Atlanta and dropped us off for our flight. The flight was delayed about an hour and a half due to weather. Finally aboard, we headed to Dallas for what was supposed to be a two-hour flight. Nearing Dallas, we encountered a storm front which caused us to circle the airport for over an hour. Eventually, with the weather not clearing and the airport temporarily closed for weather, we were diverted to Houston, ostensibly to refuel, change pilots, and proceed to Dallas. After landing in Houston, we sat on the plane on the tarmac. We lost our second rental car because it was now too late (past 11 pm CST), and the rental car counters had closed for the night. I began to think about our hotel and was concerned we might lose it as well. I called the hotel from the plane, and they said as long as you're here by 3 am, you're fine, we'll hold your room. Little did I know that we would sit on the plane for 3 hours, past 2:30 am. You guessed it, we lost the hotel too. After all that, Delta decided it was too late (or early) to go to Dallas. They would empty the plane and put us up in a hotel for the night. At this point, we had to hail an Uber, and Zack and I were sent to separate hotels for the night. Exhausted, I took off for the worst hotel I have ever stayed in in the continental United States. It was being remodeled (I guess). The roofing shingles were all over the ground, ladders were everywhere, it was half painted, and entire wings of the hotel were off limits. It smelled like mold with a distinct musty smell, along with being hot and stuffy. Though Zack was at a different hotel, his experience was similar. We slept for a minute or two and met back at the airport in the morning. With no guaranteed flight to Dallas, we decided to rent a car (this is now the third car)

and drive the roughly four hours to Dallas.

We arrived mid-afternoon at our rebooked (yet far away from the convention center) hotel in Dallas. Despite our deep desire to crash and sleep till morning, we weren't going to miss the final session of the pastor's conference, which is my favorite part. In case you are not aware, the Pastor's Conference is meant as a respite for pastors to hear challenging words of encouragement from other SBC pastors and to worship the Lord together. Having missed most of the first two days, we weren't going to miss the last part. We arrived and checked in, received our credentials, and proceeded to the main hall where we enjoyed a concert with the Christian recording artist group Shane & Shane. These men love to sing old hymns to newer music and then write their own songs, often directly from the Psalms. It was a powerful and awesome time of singing praises to the Lord, followed by a time of group corporate prayer. Soon afterwards, we heard a great message from Dr. Robert Smith. I am thankful that we were able to make the final session. The overall theme of this year's Pastor's Conference was "Worth Following", that we as pastors would live and lead in ways that reflect the character of Christ. That as we follow Christ's worthy example, we set an example worth following.

All our travel drama now behind us (or so we thought), we settled into the business meeting portion of the annual meeting. Two days of meetings and reports from the various entities, seminaries, and ministries of the Southern Baptist Convention. The best part of every SBC annual meeting is the sending portion, where we commission new overseas missionaries for the foreign mission field. This year, the cooperating churches of the SBC, through the International Mission Board, were able to send 58 new missionaries to the field. As always, many of their faces had to be shielded since they are going to parts of the world where the Gospel has not been preached or is openly opposed to the truth about Jesus. Join me in praying for these men and women who have answered the missional call to serve the

Lord. One day, I'd love for Lakewood to have someone standing on that stage, ready to take that next step of faith. This year was also the 100th anniversary of both the Cooperative Program and the Baptist Faith and Message. For those who don't know, the Cooperative Program is the funding arm of the SBC, where cooperating churches willingly give a portion of their tithes and offerings to help fund missionaries, seminaries, and the overall work and function of the SBC. There was a reminder given of what has been accomplished for the kingdom of God through cooperative giving and a challenge for SBC churches to consider increasing their percentage of giving. LBC has been faithfully giving to the Cooperative Program for generations. The Baptist Faith and Message is our statement of faith. Some would call it our Baptist confession. Revised several times since its inception, most recently in the year 2000, the BF&M is the guiding doctrine of the SBC and its churches. It outlines who we are and what we believe, and helps us to govern ourselves as individual churches. We send a copy of the BF&M to each new member of LBC so they can familiarize themselves with who we are as an SBC church.

There was much talk about unity at this year's meeting, which always reminds you that there have been times of disunity. We were reminded that there is much more that unites us than divides us. However, there are always calls at the annual meeting for revisions, for changes, and there are always those with agendas. Overall, this annual meeting was uneventful and did not garner the national attention that the last couple of years did. That's not to say there weren't motions brought to the floor. There were three issues/motions of interest.

First, a vote to abolish the ERLC. The ERLC is short for the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission; they are the lobbying arm of the SBC before those who make the laws of our country. From their website: "The ERLC exists to assist your church by helping you understand the moral demands of the gospel, apply Christian principles to moral and social problems and questions of public policy, and to promote religious liberty in cooperation with churches and other Southern Baptist entities." They try to influence public policy before lawmakers, equip the local church with resources to inform them about what is going on in the culture, and provide research on such policy matters. Many are in agreement that we need something like this in SBC life. However, the abolishment vote was called because of repeated public missteps, social media

posts, concerns regarding leadership, spending, and their full commitment to the Gospel. The buzz in the room that day was that the ERLC might be in trouble and the vote might be affirmative. However, when the final votes were tallied, the nays held the margin by around 700-ish votes to keep the ERLC in place. The main objection to abolishment seemed to stem from the thought that this wouldn't be the best time to have a hard restart while having a sympathetic administration in the federal government. I'm not sure how much that swayed the room. However, the closeness of that vote, I'm sure, garnered the attention of those in charge at the ERLC.

The second big issue was again the office of the pastor being reserved for males as outlined in scripture. While there was much less arguing about this issue this year, an amendment was introduced that was previously known as the "Law Amendment". Last year's amendment (narrowly) did not reach the two-thirds majority needed (in the second year) to make the change to the SBC Constitution. This year's amendment became known as the "Law/Sanchez Amendment," introduced by a pastor named Juan Sanchez from Austin, Texas. Again, this amendment received over 60% of the vote but fell short of the two-thirds majority needed to send it to next year's convention for the final approval vote. The amendment read as follows: a church is only in friendly cooperation with the SBC if it "affirms, appoints, or employs only men as any kind of pastor or elder as qualified by Scripture." The concern was in the language, that a church who employs a female in a director (non-pastoral) role, could, in the future, be found not to be in friendly cooperation with the SBC and therefore, could be removed from SBC fellowship. The other main objection seems to be that many feel our statement on complementarianism in the BF&M 2000 is clear enough and doesn't need revision. Another thought was introduced that we could open ourselves to further lawsuits against the SBC by changing our language in this area. I'm not sure that argument swayed much opinion in the room either.

The third issue, which also did not garner enough support, was a motion for more transparency on the finances of the SBC. The motion said the following: for SBC entities to either complete an IRS Form 990 or provide all the equivalent information typically included in that form. There has been an increasing call for transparency. Some SBC churches have either lessened their Cooperative Program giving or ceased to give because of this issue. We heard much about the current state of transparency,(cont.)

about the need for trusting the current entities and their leaders, and also about the job of the trustees who oversee these individual programs. At the same time, the generosity of Southern Baptists was celebrated as we continue to break giving records year over year.

In my opinion, none of these issues are going to go away anytime soon. I will say the overall spirit of this year's annual meeting felt more unified and less divisive than in previous years. However, that doesn't mean everyone agrees on all things. Oh yeah, there were other issues for Zack and I to deal with. At lunch one day, the power went out at a restaurant

after we had sat down and ordered our food, so we had to leave and come back later for a meal. Then, as we prepared to come home, Delta again canceled our flight, and we had to scramble to find another flight home. God had a plan, it was different than our plans, but He provided and saw us through. It was our honor to represent Lakewood Baptist Church again this year. Next year's meeting will take place in Orlando, Florida, and no, we're not going to Disney :).

God bless,
drew
John 3:30

2-27

JULY

2025

UPCOMING EVENTS

LAKEWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH

JULY 2 - NO WEDNESDAY EVENTS

JUNE 28 -
JULY 5 ECUADOR MISSION TRIP

JULY 7 - 10 - KIDS MERGE CAMP

JULY 11 - SENIOR GAME NIGHT @ 5:30PM

JULY 11-14 STUDENTS MERGE CAMP

JULY 26 - FEED THE HOMELESS @ 11:00AM

JULY 27 - CHURCH WIDE SOFTBALL GAME
@ 6:00PM

A Message from **Josh Elliott**

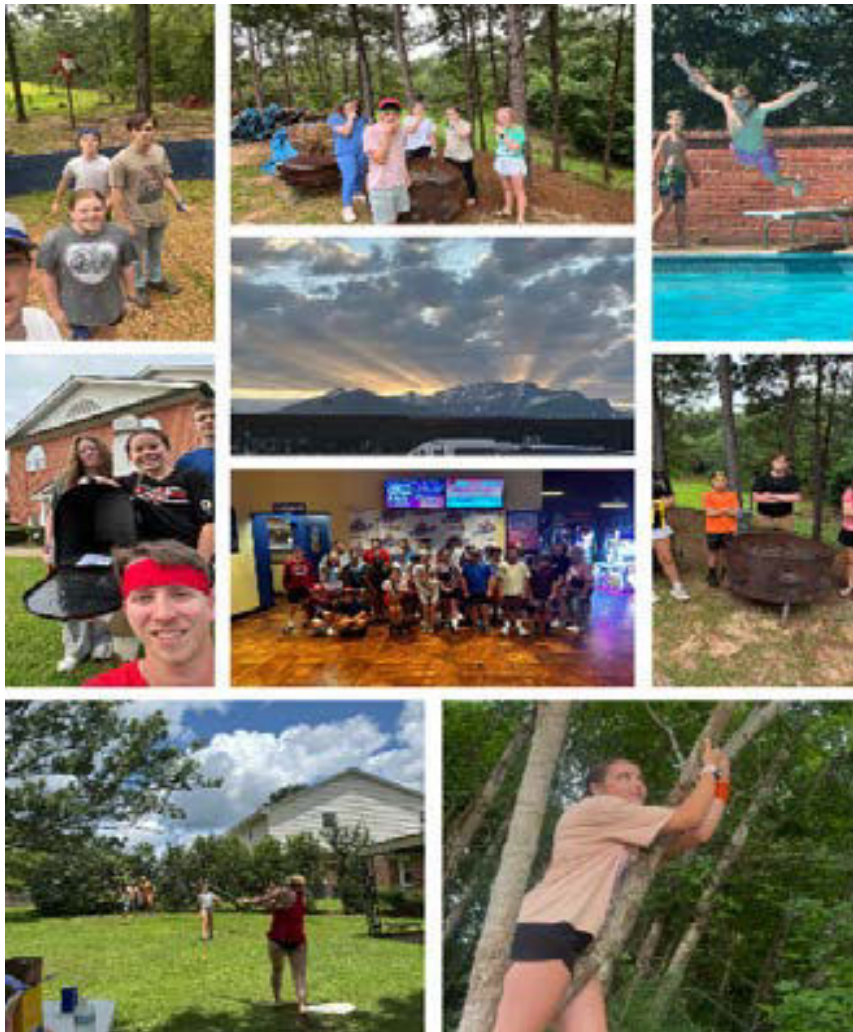
STUDENT & YOUNG ADULT PASTOR

.....

Hey Church!

The summer is off to a great start! Our Middle School Mondays have been off to a great start so far. We have averaged 20 Middle Schoolers, and it has been a great way to get some of our younger students integrated into our ministry. We have also started our Table Talk series for the summer where we have been discussing the purpose and importance of Church membership and how we can live those principles out in our Church and student ministry. We were so blessed to serve in Wyoming this past week, but I am so glad to be back with our Church family. We are looking forward to continuing our

Survivor Mode challenges on Wednesday nights. Be sure to bring your kids and grandkids! We will kick back off on July 9th and will meet every Wednesday for the rest of the summer. Be in prayer for our students that will be headed to MERGE Students Camp July 11th-14th. Pray that they would grow in their relationship with Christ and with each other. Also be in prayer that those who have not surrendered their life to Christ would do so. Looking forward to the rest of the summer!
In Christ,
Josh



A Message from the

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEAM

.....

When Mr. Kendall and I moved to Alabama from Germany ten years ago, we found a *family* at Lakewood Baptist Church. Navigating the thick southern accents sometimes caused a misstep in comprehension. I remember hearing our Bible Fellowship class talk about *Merge Camp* for our LBC kids and I was baffled. I asked Mr. Kendall, "Why are these children going to a 'marriage camp'?" *Merge* and *Marriage* said with a southern accent sounded the same to me.

Now I understand the meaning of Merge Camp and the spiritual impact that week at Shocco Springs, Alabama has on so many of our children. This year our children will be going to Merge Camp from July 7-10. And lives will be changed! The theme of this year's camp is: *The Climb, 1 John 4:4 "You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world."*

Please pray that our children will believe in Jesus and accept Him as their Savior, pray for life changing experiences that draw them closer to Christ, and pray for our adult chaperones who will be used by God to teach, guide, love, nurture, and protect our precious ones during this fun week of Christian Summer Camp.

Our Merge Adult Team

Mike Murry
Jacob Baker
Josh Henderson
Stuart Brown

Case Rasmus
Ethan Henderson
Jorja Loftin
Courtney Cooper

Cassie Culligan
Amanda Owens

Debbie Parks
Children's Ministry Team Member

P.S. Thank you for giving to Operation Christmas Child during our VBS week. We collected \$2,350 to purchase items like soccer balls, dolls, mini tool bags, fishing kits, stuffed animals, harmonicas, flutes, combs, etc. for the AWANA shoebox packing party in November!

Lakewood Happenings

July 2025

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
		Ecuador 1	No on campus events Ecuador 2	Ecuador 3	Independence Day Office Closed Ecuador 4	Ecuador 5
6	10:30am Amen Choir Kids Merge Camp 7	6:00pm Alleluia Choir Kids Merge Camp 8	Kids Merge Camp 9	Kids Merge Camp 10	5:30pm Senior Game Night Students Merge Camp 11	Students Merge Camp 12
Lord's Supper 2:30pm Bonus Reh. 5:00pm Deacons Meet Students Merge Camp 13	10:30am Amen Choir Students Merge Camp 14	6:00pm Alleluia Choir 15	7:15pm Finanace Team Meeting Wet Wednesday 16	17	10:00am Table Talk Jack's SS 18	19
4:00pm RRR team meeting 20	10:30am Amen Choir 11:00am Middle School Monday Water Slides 21	6:00pm Alleluia Choir 22	23	10:00am Kids Day Event @ Launch 24	10:00am Table Talk - CFA 25	11:00am Feed the Homeless 26
6:00pm Adults vs. Students Softball Game 27	10:30am Amen Choir 11:00am Middle School Monday Lake Day @ OJ's 28	6:00pm Alleluia Choir 29	30	31		

May Giving

Week	Tithe	RRR	Missions	Other Des.	Totals
05/04/25	\$33,619.74	\$355.00	\$3,269.99	\$416.64	\$37,661.37
05/11/25	\$19,251.34	\$340.00	\$2,830.00	\$910.00	\$23,331.34
05/18/25	\$15,085.46	\$310.00	\$2,105.07	\$673.77	\$18,174.30
05/25/25	\$15,381.71	\$155.00	\$3,347.64	\$433.25	\$19,317.60



DOES THE BIBLE REALLY SAY?

New Wednesday Night Series beginning July 16

In Honor of:

**Brian Benton
&
Bill Norris
for RRR
from
Terry Grimes**

Senior Game Night

**Friday,
July 13th @ 5:30pm
Fellowship Hall**

**Hot Dogs &
Watermelon**

MINISTERIAL STAFF

ANDREW SPIRES
LEAD PASTOR
ANDREW@LBCPC.ORG

Charles Keown
WORSHIP & SENIOR
ADULT PASTOR
CHARLES@LBCPC.ORG

Josh Elliott
STUDENT & YOUNG ADULT
PASTOR
JOSHUA@LBCPC.ORG

OFFICE STAFF

Melissa Costello
FINANCIAL ASSISTANT
MELISSA@LBCPC.ORG

Carol Breault
OFFICE & PASTORAL
CARE ASSISTANT
CAROL@LBCPC.ORG

Linda Keown
WORSHIP
ASSISTANT
LINDA@LBCPC.ORG

Jessica White
MEDIA ASSISTANT
JESSICA@LBCPC.ORG

LAKEWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH
4011 LAKEWOOD DRIVE
PHENIX CITY, ALABAMA 36867
O: 334.298.6433
LBCPC.org
HOURS: M-TH 8:30AM-4:30PM
FRI 8:30AM-12PM

