



BIBLICAL RECORDER

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Providence Baptist sends budget surplus to church plants

By LIZ TABLAZON | *BR* Assistant Editor

Over the last month, Providence Baptist Church in Raleigh, N.C., has donated \$225,000 to church plants across the globe. When the spread of COVID-19 shut down travel in March and forced the church to cancel mission trips scheduled for the summer, elders met to discuss how to spend a budget surplus. In addition to paying off debt, they decided to reach out to partner international church planters about any needs.

“We’ve seen God bless Providence through this pandemic,” said Phil Medlin, missions pastor at Providence. “We were sitting in a good position, so we felt like as a church we needed to give back to the community and to the nations in the way God has blessed us.”

The funds went to teachers at an underground Christian preschool in East Asia who weren’t receiving pay since schools were closed. A \$24,000 donation covered construction and renovation costs for two church buildings in Serbia; another amount completed a camp cabin and a playground for two orphan houses in Moldova. Funds helped finish a seminary building in the Czech Republic, while another donation provided motorcycles for three church planters in Indonesia, as well as library resources and computers for a seminary.

In Peru, the donation went toward purchasing cameras for children’s computers to aid in virtual education, and paying off debt the school

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Board president appoints team to find the next BSC exec



Melanie Wallace leads the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina’s Board of Directors during a meeting July 16 at Caraway Conference Center. (*BR* photo by Seth Brown)

Biblical Recorder

Melanie Wallace released the names of nine individuals who will serve on the committee tasked with finding the next executive director-treasurer for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC).

Wallace is president of the state convention’s board of directors. She made the announcement July 16 during a board meeting at Caraway Conference Center in Sophia, N.C.

- Noah Crowe, interim pastor at Peachtree Memorial Baptist Church in Peachtree

- Quintell Hill, pastor of Multiply Church in Monroe
- Michael Sowers, pastor of First Baptist Church in Buies Creek
- Jarrod Scott, pastor of Green Pines Baptist Church in Knightdale
- Don Warren, member of Parkwood Baptist Church in Gastonia
- Beth Wooten, member of Beulaville Baptist Church in Beulaville

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Ministers’ wives take precautions, remain ‘focused’

By DIANNA L. CAGLE | *BR* Assistant Editor

The recent coronavirus pandemic failed to keep North Carolina Baptist Ministers’ Wives from its annual retreat July 13-15 at Caraway Conference Center in Sophia, N.C.

“We have always done ministry together,” said Janice Drum, who tackled the theme “A Focused Vision” based on 2 Corinthians 4:12 during the

three-day, two-night retreat.

Drum is the wife of senior pastor Hampton Drum of Tri-City Baptist Church in Conover. “I am all in. I am married to the sweetest, purest, godliest pastor.”

A July 14 morning session had Drum leading the minister’s wives through listing a top quality of their husbands.

See Wives page 12

Thankful for gospel partnerships in Baptist life

BSC Communications

I have always been thankful for the many cooperative ministry partnerships that we enjoy in Baptist life. These partnerships include local churches working together, Baptist associations, state conventions, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and its entities like the International Mission Board (IMB) and the North American Mission Board (NAMB).

Cooperation and personal involvement in missions is the heartbeat of who we are as Southern Baptists.

While ministry and missions may look different in these days of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, COVID-19 has made it clear that people are looking for hope and we can offer it to them in Jesus' name.

COVID-19 has brought with it unprecedented challenges, but it also has brought unique opportunities. Two upcoming online events that I want to call to your attention highlight the benefits of cooperative missions and ministry work that we enjoy as Southern Baptists.

First is the "Go2 Collegiate Challenge" webinar scheduled for July 23 at 7:30 p.m. "Go2" is a joint initiative of NAMB and the IMB that has been spearheaded by SBC President J.D. Greear, pastor of The Summit Church in Raleigh-Durham. "Go2"

challenges college students to live on mission by encouraging them to dedicate their first two years after graduation to serve with a church plant in the United States or as a missionary overseas.

Greear and Dhati Lewis, vice president of NAMB's Send Network will host the webcast, which will feature a number of breakout sessions facilitated by a variety of missionaries and ministry leaders. You can learn more about the "Go2 Challenge" and register for the webinar by visiting go2years.net.

Even as COVID-19 has forced alterations and adjustments to what campus life will look like this fall, now is the perfect time for college students to take time to consider what the Lord may have to say to them and how He may be directing them in these days.

Another opportunity that I wanted to call to your attention is the "Resourcing Worship" virtual conference scheduled for Aug. 1. This online event offers online training from some of the today's most influential worship leaders including Keith Getty, Matt Redman, Shelly Johnson, Mark Harland, Matt Boswell and others.

Kenny Lamm, senior consultant for worship and music here at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, has been one of the key organizers of the conference, which is a joint effort of at least 17 state conventions and other Baptist entities. The



MILTON A. HOLLIFIELD JR.
BSC executive
director-treasurer

IN FOCUS


A WORD FROM OUR LEADER

event is believed to be one of the first large-scale partnership training events between so many state conventions and other Baptist ministries.

The virtual conference grew out of conversations between worship ministry consultants from across the country at the outset of COVID-19 as a way to offer worship resources and training to churches dealing with the pandemic. You can learn more and register for the conference by visiting resourcingworship.com.

Those who register for the conference will have access to the training resources for 90 days following the conclusion of the event.

The "Go2 Challenge" and "Resourcing Worship" virtual conference are just two of many opportunities that we have as Southern Baptists to partner together for the sake of the gospel. The adage we often hear and say as Southern Baptists is as true today as it's ever been – we can accomplish far more together than we ever could apart.

"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from this day until now" – Philippians 1:3-5 (NKJV). 

Board

Continued from page 1

- Allan Blume, interim pastor at Pittsboro Baptist Church in Pittsboro
- Jennifer Thoppil, member of Salem Baptist Church in Dobson
- Andrew Hopper, pastor of Mercy Hill Church in Greensboro

Crowe will serve as chair of the committee.

"I hope that you will pray for these people," Wallace said. "They have a difficult task."

The responsibility for appointing the search team fell to Wallace when Milton Hollifield, the current BSC executive director-treasurer, announced

in May that he plans to retire Feb. 28, 2021.

The board of directors will nominate an individual to serve as executive director-treasurer, who must be elected by messengers to the annual meeting or a special called meeting, according to the convention's bylaws. Additional nominations may come from messengers at the annual meeting.

The 2020 BSC annual meeting is scheduled for Nov. 9-10 at Koury Convention Center in Greensboro, N.C.

Visit ncannualmeeting.org. 

Ashford resigns as SEBTS provost, returns to teaching

Baptist Press

In an email July 6, faculty and staff of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS) were informed that Bruce Ashford had resigned as provost.


Ashford will remain with the seminary, "returning fulltime to the classroom," according to the email, as professor of theology and culture. Keith Whitfield, SEBTS dean of graduate studies, will serve as acting provost.

"I am thankful for Dr. Ashford's

love for SEBTS and his eight years serving in the role of provost," SEBTS President Danny Akin said in the email.

"He has served us well and I know that service will continue in the days ahead."

Whitfield previously served as acting provost in 2019, while Ashford was on a sabbatical.

Whitfield's wife Amy is associate vice president for convention communications with the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee. 



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(919) 847-2127; Fax (919) 467-6180

BRnow.org

Seth Brown, Executive Editor
editor@brnow.org

Dianna L. Cagle, Assistant Editor
(919) 459-5698; dianna@brnow.org

Liz Tablazon, Assistant Editor
(919) 459-5697; liz@brnow.org

Alison McKinney, Business and Advertising Manager
(919) 459-5691; alison@brnow.org

Carly Conley, Freelance Graphic Designer

News Journal of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina
Founded 1833 by Thomas Meredith

Dee Dee Vogt
Editorial Aide
Grace Stallings
Administrative Assistant

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Chowan University renames Helms Center

By **SETH BROWN** | *BR* Executive Editor

The board of trustees at Chowan University in Murfreesboro, N.C., announced July 2 that a facility named after former U.S. Senator Jesse Helms has been renamed the Hawks Athletic Center.


A statement by trustees said the change was due to the “perception of many that positions taken by Senator Helms were not in keeping with the current mission of Chowan University.”

Helms, a North Carolina native who died in 2008, served in the U.S. Senate from 1973-2003, where he was known as a key leader among conservatives.

Some of Helms’ political positions were controversial. He opposed racial integration, the Civil Rights Act and the creation of a federal holiday named after civil rights icon Martin Luther King Jr. The 2,000-seat facility was named after Helms Center in 1979. The building sits on a campus with more than 70% non-white enrollment among 1,500 students, according to 2018 data from the National Center for Education Statistics.

Chowan was affiliated with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina until 2009, when five colleges and universities participated in an agreement to end formal ties to the state convention.

Wingate University, also formerly affiliated with the state convention, works in partnership with the Jesse Helms Center, a repository of Helms’ papers and archival materials.

Helms was a N.C. Baptist and student at Wingate University and Wake Forest College (now Wake Forest University). A spokesperson said Chowan is in the process of updating signage on the athletic center, as well as maps and other resources on campus that reference the facility. 

Southeastern partners with Fruitland to offer pastoral ministry degree

SEBTS


Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS) and Fruitland Baptist Bible College are partnering in an effort to more effectively train the next generation of leaders.

Beginning in the fall of 2020, Fruitland graduates can also earn 46 hours toward a bachelor of arts in pastoral ministry from the College at Southeastern. Fruitland is a college in Hendersonville, N.C., affiliated with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

Nearly half of western North Carolina’s pastors have graduated with an associate’s from Fruitland, making this partnership invaluable by providing

more extensive theological training to those called to pastoral ministry.

“Southeastern Seminary has enjoyed a long and blessed relationship with Fruitland Baptist Bible College,” SEBTS President Danny Akin said. “Almost all of their administration are graduates of SEBTS, as are a number of faculty. Further, we share common commitments to the inerrancy of the Bible, expository preaching, personal evangelism and the Great Commission.

“We each love our Baptist heritage and are excited about what God is doing now and will do in the future. This partnership is the natural outcome of all these common commitments and convictions. Great days, I believe, are ahead of us.” 

Bellevue Baptist faces civil suit stemming from sexual battery by former employee

By **DIANA CHANDLER** | Baptist Press

Parents of a teenage girl who was sexually abused by a former part-time employee of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., are suing the church. The suit alleges negligence in allowing James Hook “complete discretion and freedom to have personal and private encounters with volunteers and minors.”

Hook, who was employed on Sunday mornings as the church’s preschool wing coordinator from January 2017-March 2019, pleaded guilty in January to sexual assault by an authority figure. He had been arrested in May 2019 after police found him and the girl, 16, underneath a blanket in the back of his car in a local park. He was sentenced to six months in jail and 4½ years probation.

The teenager’s parents allege “Hook groomed Janet Doe and fomented his incredibly inappropriate relationship with her at Bellevue Baptist Church,” and also allege some of the “extended horrific acts of sexual abuse” took place on the Bellevue campus.

Bellevue, which has denied all of the allegations and filed a motion to dismiss the lawsuit, confirmed in a statement to Baptist Press (BP) that Hook resigned his position at the church two months before the arrest. “Moreover, during his tenure, no allegations of illegal conduct were brought to our attention,” the church said in the statement, which was released July 13.

The church said it has conducted mandatory annual training for childcare employees since 2007, and conducts multiple strategic trainings throughout the year for all childcare employees. Bellevue volunteers also attend annual child abuse prevention training.

“It pains us greatly that anyone anywhere is the victim of abuse,” the church said in a statement. “It is our desire to put an end to abuse and to care

for the victims in any manner they need. We are greatly concerned by the abuse that occurs in churches throughout the world and are working here at home to provide education/training and to ensure all immoral and/or illegal behavior is brought forward.”

In the statement, the church also acknowledged, “training and procedures alone are not enough to deal with this issue. We endeavor to support the victims first and encourage people with any knowledge of abuse to come forward. ... We desire to build a culture that deals with abuse directly and honestly.”

The victim’s parents base their lawsuit on actions they say occurred before Hook’s arrest. Hook has not been charged for any other alleged actions.

Filing as John and Jane Doe on behalf of their daughter, who is referred to as Janet Doe, the parents accuse Bellevue of improperly putting Hook in a position that allowed contact with minors, of ignoring a warning by the parents about Hook, of not having policies in place to prevent Hook from being alone with minors on church property, and not training staff to recognize and report suspicious behavior.

In a court response June 3, Bellevue denied all of the allegations. The church filed a motion to dismiss June 5. Hook had a previous relationship with the Does. In 2011, he was involved in an extramarital affair with Jane Doe. The complaint alleges that both couples participated in counseling with a Bellevue staff member.

John and Jane Doe both joined Bellevue in 2017, where Hook was already a member. The Does filed for divorce in 2018, according to the lawsuit. The lawsuit alleges that John Doe warned Bellevue staff that Hook should not be trusted around children, and that he specifically didn’t want his children around Hook.

See Suit page 11

Have an opinion?

Share your thoughts about current
issues in 350 words.

Email editor@BRnow.org.

Youth weeks press ‘pause’ to deliver virtual camp experience

By CHAD AUSTIN | BSC Communications

While thousands of youth from churches across the state were busy making arrangements to attend summer youth weeks like they normally do each year, COVID-19 had other plans.

The coronavirus pandemic may have prevented churches from attending camp in the traditional way, but it hasn't stopped Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) staff members from bringing camp to N.C. Baptist churches.

Thanks to a virtual camp experience, youth groups can still receive the same programming they've come to expect from summer youth weeks at Fort Caswell, which draws nearly 7,000 attendees to the North Carolina coast for weeklong camps each year.

"We wanted to deliver a camp experience that mimics what they would receive at Caswell as much as possible," said Merrie Johnson, senior consultant for BSC's youth evangelism and discipleship ministry, also known as BeDoTell.

Utilizing a series of prerecorded videos and an accompanying curriculum, Johnson and her BeDoTell staff have provided churches with a customizable camp resource that's the next best thing to being together.

"Even though the virtual camp experience was a lot different than what we are used to doing, I feel like the BeDoTell team did a great job of making it feel like we were there with them," said Ella Simonds, an 11th grader who attends Catawba Heights Baptist Church in Belmont, N.C.

Catawba Heights is one of about 70 churches that have utilized the virtual camp option to date. The virtual camp content provides four days of camp programming for churches and can be accessed remotely. The recordings include skits, devotionals, games, testimonies, worship, preaching and more.

When COVID-19 forced state convention and Caswell officials to adjust operations that prevented summer youth weeks from taking place in the traditional way, Johnson and her team quickly sought to find an alternative way to deliver camp. The result is the virtual camp experience. But pulling it all together wasn't easy.

First, Johnson discovered a camp curriculum aptly titled "Pause." Johnson and her team adjusted months of planned activities and services



BeDoTell offered a virtual camp experience for those who wanted to participate in Youth Weeks. (BSC photos)



to align with the new theme. Then, Johnson and her staff of 25 college students spent three weeks at Caswell in June recording and editing sessions from Hatch Auditorium, the forts and other iconic Caswell locations. Veteran youth weeks' proclaimer Eddie Briery, lead pastor of the Church at Red River in Shreveport, La., came in the final week to record his messages. In less than a month, a summer's worth of camp was ready for churches to access through the virtual camp experience.

"We have all been forced to pause from what we would call our normal life," Johnson said in the camp's introductory video. "BeDoTell is focused on the biblical message of redemption in Christ. This message can be encountered wherever you find yourself this summer."

Some churches have opted to keep their reservations at Caswell and utilize the virtual camp content or create their own camp experience. Brian Hemphill, who serves as director of Fort Caswell, said nearly 1,500 attendees from 65 churches that had previously registered for summer youth weeks still plan to come to Caswell.

"Many are doing the virtual camp experience while others are doing their own program content," Hemphill said. "Church groups are pleased

to know that we are open and that they still have a chance to retreat and just get away."

Changes to this year's youth weeks' schedule has resulted in occupancy that Caswell normally doesn't have during a typical summer, Hemphill said. Caswell officials are still accepting new reservations for the summer. Interested church groups should contact Caswell's reservations department at (910) 278-9501 for information about space that is still available. While some churches have opted to still come to Caswell and utilize the virtual camp experience, others have used the material in an alternate retreat setting or even as a Wednesday night series.

"One of the great things about the content is that it can be adapted to fit your church's needs," Johnson said.

This year's virtual camp experience focuses on developing one's spiritual life through Bible study, prayer, scripture memory and more.

Justin Shultz, student pastor at Catawba Heights, said he knew a virtual camp experience would be different and had questions about how well students might stay engaged through a virtual camp. His questions were quickly answered, however.

"BeDoTell hit the mark on producing a virtual camp experience where students stay engaged," Shultz said. "From the very beginning, our students stood and sang with the music, took notes with Eddie's preaching and intently listened to testimonies and skits."

The message resonated with Shultz's youth group members, as well. "With people stuck at home and not much to do, stopping and reflecting on God is the best way to cope with what is going on in our world," said 10th grader Brianna Cope. "Overall the camp experience virtually was amazing, even though it wasn't quite the same. It was still a time I will never forget."

Added eighth grader Ryan Cope, "This camp experience was very different, but I still enjoyed it very much."

Johnson said churches can still order the virtual camp experience to use with their youth group. A one-time \$100 fee covers production and licensing costs. Churches can order and utilize the material between now and the end of the year. More information is available at bedotell.com.

"We didn't really know what to expect, but the virtual camp experience has been well received," Johnson said. "We had no idea if we could pull this off, but God had a plan even when we couldn't see the way. We are humbled that He would use this, and we give Him all the praise."

"As I often like to say, 'Go God!'" 

COMMITTEE ON RESOLUTIONS

BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION OF NORTH CAROLINA

All resolutions should be submitted in writing for consideration by the committee no later than **Sept. 10, 2020.**

Send by mail to Committee on Memorials/Resolutions

Baptist State Convention of North Carolina
PO Box 1107, Cary, NC 27512

Send by email to Penny Cozadd

Business Services, Executive Leaders Assistant
pcozadd@ncbaptist.org

Coats for the City canceled, funds to be sent to NYC partners

By LIZ TABLAZON | BR Assistant Editor

The Great Commission Partnerships (GCP) office of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) announced July 8 that this fall's Coats for the City is canceled because of concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

They are instead asking for funds that would have been spent on coats, travel and supplies for the event be donated to partner planters, churches and missionaries in New York City.

"When the church in Antioch learned of an impending famine in Judea, *'the disciples determined, everyone according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers'* (Acts 13:29)," said Zac Lyons, GCP senior consultant, in a statement to the *Biblical Recorder*. "I pray that N.C. Baptists will take this same posture toward our brothers and sisters on the front lines of this pandemic in New York City. May we all, each according to our ability, send relief to the brothers."

Coats for the City is an annual outreach event organized by the GCP in partnership with the Metropolitan New York Baptist Association (MNYBA).

In recent years, North Carolina Baptists have collected new and slightly used jackets to send to New York City for participating churches to distribute in their neighborhoods. N.C. volunteers have joined them in the community outreach and in starting gospel conversations with recipients.

"While this was not an easy decision, our God was not caught off guard by the current conditions of our world, and we firmly believe that He intends to leverage even tumultuous times like these for the spread of

His glory among the nations throughout New York City and beyond," Lyons and George Russ, MNYBA executive director, said in an email to participating BSC churches.

Event organizers considered several factors in deciding to cancel, including the possibility of another COVID-19 surge in New York City; travel restrictions and quarantine requirements; the risk of volunteers transmitting the virus; and the additional challenges of disinfecting coats before and during distribution.

Lyons and Russ also said they realized "the greatest needs for partner planters, missionaries and churches in New York City may not be a coat distribution, but some other form of relief efforts."

MNYBA churches face an uncertain future, Russ said. Some may not reopen; others that met in schools and theaters might not have a place to meet even when gathering is allowed. There have been at least 24 COVID-19 cases and one death among MNYBA pastors.

A Brooklyn church held 30 funerals in one month, having lost members because of the virus.

"Right now all of our churches are facing two major matters: the economic impact of the pandemic, including the loss of jobs and business closings, and the best way to resume in-person gatherings. ... It is quite stressful for pastors and leaders. And yet in the midst of this, the opportunities for ministry and witness are everywhere," Russ told the *Recorder*.

MNYBA will distribute donated funds to planters, missionaries and churches that have partnered through Coats for the City within the last three years, and particularly to those that have been most affected by the



New York City residents line up for a Coats for the City distribution in December 2018. (BSC photo)

coronavirus.

To donate, go to mnyba.org/give,

and designate gifts toward Coats for the City. **BR**

Surplus Continued from page 1

had because of low tuition revenue. Providence also sent donations to partners in India, London, Thailand and Brooklyn.

They supported other mission efforts with the excess funds, including \$50,000 to the International Mission Board through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, \$30,000 to Radical and another amount to a ministry that trains Iranian pastors. They also purchased newer vans for missionaries to use in the U.S. when they come home.

At home, Providence elders wanted to use domestic budget funds to "mobilize our life groups to be on mission during this COVID time" by supporting local businesses affected by restrictions brought on by the pandemic.

The vision was multifaceted.

More than 25 life groups ordered takeout from and met for socially distanced meals in the parking lots of businesses that were near or tied to the church. In addition to the meals they purchased, the groups bought 30 \$25 gift cards from the businesses and brought them to nursing homes, hospitals and other places to help front line workers.

Members also followed up with employees who may have needed specific help. Providence set aside funds to help pay for bills, provide food baskets or assist individuals who may have lost jobs or had financial needs.

Medlin said that while they have been able to serve the community, "our people [and our partners] have been really encouraged." **BR**

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Compelled by
LOVE

2020 NCMO THEME: 'COMPELLED BY LOVE'

by Chad Austin, BSCNC Communications

[nc]connect
Baptist State Convention of North Carolina

Why do people choose to serve others? Why do they choose to give of their time, their resources and their energy?

Perhaps it's because they are compelled by love.

"Compelled by Love" is the theme for this year's North Carolina Missions Offering (NCMO), the annual offering that supports vital ministries that offer physical help and eternal hope in the name of Jesus Christ.

The theme is based upon 2 Corinthians 5:14, which says "For Christ's love compels us, since we have reached this conclusion: If One died for all, then all died" (HCSB).

Being compelled by Christ's love involves showing and sharing the love of Jesus with those in our communities and around the world. This year's offering goal is \$2.1 million and is allocated by percentage to Baptists on Mission (41%), church planting (28%), mission camps (15%), associational projects (10%) and mobilization ministry projects (6%).

Following is a brief overview of the different ministries the NCMO supports.

Baptists on Mission

Baptists on Mission, also known as N.C. Baptist Men (NCBM), helps churches involve their members in missions and ministry in Jesus' name. NCBM has 19 different ministries, which include disaster relief, medical missions and more.

Disaster relief is one of Baptists on Mission's most visible ministries, and volunteers have continued to work to rebuild homes and rebuild lives from the record-setting levels of devastation that

Hurricane Florence brought to the state two years ago in the fall of 2018.

Earlier this year when the COVID-19 pandemic struck, the Baptists on Mission team and volunteers responded in the same way they would during a hurricane, tornado, flood or other natural disaster. Thanks to a \$1.6 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Baptists on Mission is working with 185 churches and community centers across the state to distribute about 8,000 boxes of food to needy families each week.

LEARN MORE

What: North Carolina Missions Offering

Goal: \$2.1 million

Info: ncmissionsoffering.org

Church planting

The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSCNC) works with churches, associations and church-planting networks to facilitate the launch of new churches. Church planting consultants provide training, coaching and additional support to church planters, equipping them to reach their communities for Christ.

The NCMO is vital to the convention's church planting efforts and provides approximately one-third of the church planting team's annual budget. The Church Planting team's desire is to

catalyze a church planting movement in cities and towns from the mountains to the coast. The goal isn't just to plant churches. The goal is to plant churches that plant churches.

Mission camps

Two mission camps located in Red Springs and Shelby help churches get involved in missions. The camps host churches, youth groups and others to coordinate short-term mission projects in the local community. Volunteers engage in a variety of projects, which include construction, painting, home repair, yard work, Bible schools, sports camps and more.

Missions mobilization

Through a variety of national and international missions partnerships, NCMO helps mobilize men, women and students to use their God-given gifts, talents and abilities by serving in a number of short-term missions projects.

In 2019, more than 2,100 volunteers served on 153 different missions teams across North America. Additionally, more than 850 others served on one of 93 different teams around the world.

Associational projects

Each year, a portion of the NCMO's receipts are distributed to the state's 77 Baptist associations from which they came. Associations use these funds in a variety of missions and ministry projects in their communities.

NCMO is typically emphasized in September, although contributions are received throughout the year. A week of prayer for the offering is designated

from Aug. 30 to Sept. 6. For more information about NCMO, or to download or request promotional materials, visit ncmissionsoffering.org.

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HOPE

GOD'S GREAT HOPE

ANNUAL MEETING TO FOCUS ON 'GOD'S GREAT HOPE'

by Chad Austin, BSCNC Communications

In a year marked by a global pandemic, racial tensions, political unrest and more, people are searching for hope, restoration and redemption. Against the backdrop of current world events, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's (BSCNC) annual meeting this November will focus on "God's Great Hope" based upon Romans 15:13.

This year's annual meeting is scheduled for Monday and Tuesday, Nov. 9-10, at the Joseph S. Koury Convention Center in Greensboro, N.C. Highlights of this year's meeting include messages by longtime missionary Sam James, BSCNC President Steve Scoggins and BSCNC Executive Director-Treasurer Milton A. Hollifield Jr.

James, who served more than 50 years as a missionary with the International Mission Board, will deliver the annual convention sermon on Tuesday evening, Nov. 10. Along with wife,

Rachel, and their children, James served in Vietnam from the early 1960s until the fall of Saigon in 1975. He also served extensively in Vietnam from 1991-2017.

Scoggins, pastor of First Baptist Church of Hendersonville, will deliver the annual president's address on Tuesday morning, Nov. 10. Scoggins plans to share a message of hope from Romans 15:13, which is the meeting's theme verse.

Hollifield will deliver his final address and report as executive director-treasurer of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina on Monday evening, Nov. 9. Earlier this year, Hollifield announced his plans to retire effective Feb. 28, 2021. He has served as the state convention's top executive since 2006.

The meeting will also include business sessions, officer elections, exhibits, breakout sessions and more. Learn more about this year's annual meeting and reserve a room at the host hotel at a special convention rate by visiting ncannualmeeting.org.

Resourcing Worship Virtual Conference
Aug. 1: Online
resourcingworship.com

Breaking Down the Walls of Hostility
Aug. 6: Webinar
ncbaptist.org/breaking-hostility

Ride to Clyde
Aug. 28-29: Clyde, N.C.
ncbaptist.org/ridetoclyde

Fanning the Flames Prayer Summit
Sept. 12: Hayesville, N.C.
ncbaptist.org/fanningtheflames

Youth Ministry Fall Retreats
Oct. 23-25: Black Mountain, N.C.
Nov. 13-15: Oak Island, N.C.
bedotell.com/fall-retreat

N.C. Baptist Pastors' Conference
Nov. 8-9: Greensboro, N.C.
ncpastorsconference.org

N.C. Baptist Annual Meeting
Nov. 9-10: Greensboro, N.C.
ncannualmeeting.org

***Note:** Please check event websites for any potential changes to live event schedules.*

UPCOMING EVENTS



Executive Director-Treasurer search updates

The search process is underway for the next executive director-treasurer of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSCNC) following Milton A. Hollifield Jr.'s announcement that he plans to retire effective Feb. 28, 2021. The executive director-treasurer serves as the chief executive officer of the convention, the chief professional adviser of the convention, the board of directors and its committees, and one of the denomination's spiritual leaders providing statewide guidance and inspiration.

Hollifield has served as the BSCNC's executive director-treasurer since April 2006. He has led the state convention for 14 years and has served for a total of 27 years. A special webpage has been created to provide updates to N.C. Baptists on the search process. Learn more at ncbaptist.org/edtsearch.

ncbaptist.org/edtsearch



Join 'Pray for 30 Days' emphasis

Every year, North Carolina Baptists join together during the month of October to focus on praying for revival and spiritual awakening across our state, nation and world. The "Pray for 30 Days" prayer emphasis in October paves the way for our annual meeting in November. Devotional prayer guides and other resources will be available later this fall. The prayer guide will include daily Scripture passages, devotionals and prayer points around the theme of "God's Great

Hope." The guides will be available as a free download and available for purchase. Additionally, individuals may sign up to receive daily devotionals by email and prayer points through text messaging each day in October. Text the phrase "Pray30Days" to 313131 to register to receive prayer prompts. To sign up for the daily emails, visit prayfor30days.org.

prayfor30days.org



NC Baptist Pastors' Conference

Pastors face challenges from every angle. Whether caring for their family, their soul, their staff or their congregation, their role can feel like a lonely endeavor. This year's N.C. Baptist Pastors' Conference, scheduled Nov. 8-9 at the Joseph S. Koury Convention Center in Greensboro, will provide encouragement, resources and practical help for a pastor's life and ministry. Speakers will include: William "Duce" Branch, assistant professor of preaching and Bible at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary; Matt Capps, senior pastor of Fairview Baptist Church in Apex;

Paul Chitwood, president of the International Mission Board; Clint Pressley, lead pastor of Hickory Grove Baptist Church in Charlotte; Jimmy Scroggins, lead pastor of Family Church in West Palm Beach, Fla.; Steven Wade, lead pastor of Faith Baptist Church in Youngsville; James White, lead pastor of Christ Our King Community Church in Raleigh; and K. Marshall Williams, senior pastor of Nazarene Baptist Church in Nicetown, Pa.

ncpastorsconference.org

Board hears budget proposal, financial update

By CHAD AUSTIN | BSC Communications

As churches and ministries continue to grapple with the financial impact of COVID-19, Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) officials have proposed a Cooperative Program (CP) budget for 2021 totaling \$27 million.

The proposed budget reflects an overall decrease of nearly 11.5% from the current 2020 budget, which amounts to a reduction of \$3.5 million.

Rick Speas, chairman of the convention's Budget Special Committee, presented the budget proposal to members of the BSC's board of directors during a meeting held July 16 at Caraway Conference Center near Asheboro.

Members of the state convention's executive committee received the proposal during a video conference call the day before.

The 2021 proposal calls for reductions to all state convention ministries and no cost-of-living adjustments for convention staff.

The proposal also calls for reductions in allocations to the institutions and agencies, which include the Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina, the *Biblical Recorder*, N.C. Baptist Hospital and the N.C. Baptist Foundation.

"The numbers you see are a drastic change," Speas said.

"But it's our best effort to try to be responsible in light of the times, in light of the circumstances and in light of trends as we see them."

Based on current trends, Speas said convention officials anticipate receiving somewhere between \$27 million and \$27.5 million in financial gifts toward the current 2020 budget of \$30.5 million by the end of the year. Speas said the committee sought to develop a budget proposal for 2021 that was "in that range."

Under the proposal, the state's allocation to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) would remain at 42% of the overall budget, which is the same level as the current budget.

If approved as recommended, the 2021 budget would end an unprecedented streak of 14 consecutive years of increasing the percentage allocation to SBC missions and ministry causes in the North Carolina Cooperative Program budget.

"This was painful for us as a budget committee," Speas said.

"But in light of the fact that we are

having to make such a decrease in the overall budget, we felt like that (percentage) should stay the same."

Neither the executive committee nor the full board took any action on the proposal, but were given opportunities to ask questions and share feedback with Speas and the budget committee.

Both the executive committee and the board must approve a budget proposal before it goes to messengers for a vote at the BSC's annual meeting, which is scheduled Nov. 9-10 in Greensboro.

Financial update

Through the end of June, total giving to the state's 2020 CP budget totaled more than \$12.8 million, which was about 15.8% or \$2.4 million below budget.

The total amount given was down about 7.8% or nearly \$1.1 million less than the same time period as last year. However, overall giving from May to June reflected an overall increase.

"We don't know what to expect going forward, but God has been faithful, our churches have been faithful and members of those churches have been faithful in their giving," said John Butler, executive leader for the BSC's Business Services Group. "We are thankful and appreciative of their faithfulness."

Butler said most other state conventions are operating anywhere from 10% to 25% below their year-to-date budgets, so trends in North Carolina correspond with national trends.

Butler also reported that giving to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering was down nearly 30% from the same time period as last year, while giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and the North Carolina Missions Offering (NCMO) were down by 10% and 11%, respectively.

Giving to the Annie Armstrong offering has been significantly impacted because the coronavirus pandemic hit North Carolina just prior to Easter, which is the time when the offering is typically promoted and received. Butler said he wasn't sure how much giving to the Annie Armstrong offering would increase before the end of the year. Butler said he was optimistic, however, that the Lottie Moon and

NCMO offerings would see increases because their promotional seasons and primary giving periods are yet to come.

BSC officials also announced that due to faithful Cooperative Program giving through the pandemic that it resumed funding new church plants (effective July 17.)

As a cost savings measure at the outset of COVID-19, the convention temporarily suspended funding of new church plants that were not already in the funding cycle, but still provided coaching, training and other resources.

Chuck Register, BSC associate executive director-treasurer and executive leader for the Church Planting and Missions Partnership Group, told members of the executive committee that approximately 20 new church plants are in various stages of the funding pipeline.

PPP loan update

Butler also said that he expects funds that the convention received through the federal government's Paycheck Protection Program offered through the U.S. Small Business Administration to be fully forgiven based on parameters of the loan. The convention can apply for loan forgiveness beginning in September.

Butler said funds received through the Paycheck Protection Program enabled the convention to avoid any employee layoffs.

The program, along with other cost-saving measures enacted at the outset of COVID-19, has also enabled the convention to operate about \$1.4 million in the black through the first half of 2020.

EDT search team named

Board President Melanie Wallace also named a nine-member search committee that is charged with recommending a successor to Milton A. Hollifield Jr., the BSC's current executive director-treasurer, who had previously announced his plans to retire at the end of February 2021. (See story, page 1.)

Wallace called upon N.C. Baptists to pray for the committee members as they begin their work. "I plead for you to pray for these people," Wallace said. "They have a difficult task."

In his first remarks to the full board since announcing his retirement plans, Hollifield thanked board members in particular and North Carolina Baptists in general for their support of his stated vision for the state convention when he first became executive director-treasurer.

"By God's grace, we are becoming the strongest force in the history of this convention for reaching people with the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ," Hollifield said. "Thank you, and I say, 'To God be the glory for all He has done, is doing and is going to do.'"

Study committee approved

The board approved a motion recommended by the Budget Special Committee to appoint a study committee to be named by the board president and vice president that would examine the "relationships and funding models" between the convention and the institutions and agencies that currently receive Cooperative Program support. The study committee would begin its work in 2021 and report their findings to the board in January 2022.

Other business


The board also approved two motions from the Business Services Special Committee. The first motion approved and affirmed the convention's 2019 annual audit as presented by external auditors. The second motion authorized the transfer of 20% of 2019's net operating income to the convention's contingency fund. The transfer will total \$12,563.

Committee appointments

Wallace named three individuals to serve remaining terms on the convention's Christian Life and Public Affairs committee. They were: Shirley Sells, a member of Crosspointe Baptist Church in Concord; Joe Sinclair, student pastor at Aversboro Road Baptist Church in Garner; and Rit Varriale, pastor of Elizabeth Baptist Church in Shelby.

Next meetings

The next meeting of the executive committee is scheduled for Tues., Aug. 25 at the Baptist Building in Cary.

The next scheduled meeting of the full board of directors is scheduled for Monday and Tuesday, Sept. 28-29, at Caraway Conference Center. 

"We don't know what to expect going forward, but God has been faithful." – John Butler

NEWS BRIEFS

NAMB suit dismissal reversed, sent to lower court

(Baptist Press) A lawsuit against the North American Mission Board (NAMB) was remanded back to a district court by a federal appeals court July 16, reversing a dismissal decision from April 2019 which stated the court could not consider Will McRaney's claims because of the ecclesiastical abstention doctrine.

The ruling in the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals comes more than five months after oral arguments were heard in the case. The lawsuit, originally filed in 2017, involves Will McRaney, the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware's (BCMD) former executive director, and allegations that NAMB had intentionally defamed him and wrongfully influenced his 2015 termination by the BCMD after a dispute over collaborative missions efforts in the region.

In April 2019, Senior Judge Glen Davidson of the U.S. District Court Northern District of Mississippi dismissed the lawsuit, ruling the court could not consider McRaney's claims because of the ecclesiastical abstention doctrine, which prevents the government from interfering in church or religious matters. McRaney's counsel argued in the appeal that the ecclesiastical abstention doctrine did not apply. The three-judge panel did not make a determination as to whether or not the ecclesiastical abstention doctrine applied, but instead pointed to the uncertainty of the facts surrounding the case.

Dates and court schedules for the possible continuation of the case in the U.S. District Court Northern District of Mississippi have not been set.

Liberty University sues N.Y. paper for defamation

On July 15, Liberty University filed suit against *The New York Times*, its reporter Elizabeth Williamson and a photographer, alleging defamation and other claims arising from a controversial news report.

Liberty claims the news outlet misrepresented that (a) Liberty University suffered a COVID-19 outbreak when it "re-open[ed]" its campus after spring break; (b) it had "nearly a dozen" students sick with COVID symptoms; and (c) it had ignored government guidelines in reopening.

The claims, which Liberty describes as intentionally false and defamatory, were reflected in *The New York Times'* headlines, including "Liberty Brings Back its Students, and Coronavirus, Too" and "A University Reopened, and Students Got Sick."

The school said reporters were told there were no known cases of COVID-19 at the university and there were not "nearly a dozen" students with COVID-19 symptoms. Liberty also claims reporters knew the university was in full compliance with government directives, as evidenced by two publicly disclosed inspections. A press release said, "even by the close of the school year, not a single resident student had contracted COVID-19, and Liberty University's response to the pandemic stands as a model for other institutions to follow in balancing the needs of protecting and educating their student bodies."

Apostasy decriminalized in Sudan

(Baptist Press) Persecuted Christians in Sudan are safer after the nation decriminalized apostasy, ended flogging and made other reforms through the new Fundamental Rights and Freedoms Act.

Renouncing Islam had been punishable by flogging, imprisonment and death in the country where Christians comprise only 3% of the population.

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) applauded Sudan's transitional government for establishing the new law.

According to reports, the apostasy law was replaced by an article prohibiting hate speech. Sudan has had a blasphemy law making it illegal to insult another's religious beliefs, with possible punishment including imprisonment, fines and up to 40 lashes, according to Georgetown University's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs. USCIRF said the status of Sudan's blasphemy law remains unclear.

Background checks remain essential part of reopening kids' ministries

By AARON EARLS | LifeWay Christian Resources

As churches begin to regather and eventually restart their children's ministry during COVID-19, leaders should keep other unseen dangers in mind – like sex abuse.

A LifeWay Research study found more than 1 in 10 Protestant pastors say someone on church staff has sexually harassed a congregation member at some point in the church's life.

An additional LifeWay Research study revealed around 3 in 10 Protestant churchgoers believe there are many more incidents of Protestant pastors sexually abusing children or teens than has been exposed (32%), as well as many more incidents of pastors sexually assaulting adults (29%).

As these concerns have come to the forefront, more churches are using background checks as one of the means to help keep children and other congregants safe through LifeWay Christian Resources' OneSource program relationship with *backgroundchecks.com*.

From 2009 to 2019, more than 20,000 customers have conducted more than 416,000 screenings through the program, according to Jennie Morris of LifeWay.

"On average, we add 150 customers a month," she said.

Morris attributes the continued growth to the \$10 price point for a search that includes nationwide sex offender registry, various terrorist watch lists, over 650 million felony, misdemeanor and traffic records, as well as Social Security number validation.

She said around half of the searches return some type of offense. While most of those are only minor incidents, historically, close to 1 in 5 discover a misdemeanor or more serious crime.

This rise in background checks has coincided with more churchgoers believing their church is safer today than a decade ago.

Seven in 10 Protestant churchgoers (69%) believe their church is more prepared to protect children from sexual abuse than 10 years ago, according to LifeWay Research.

Stacy Hatcher, special events coordinator at Hopewell Baptist Church in Gainesville, Ga., said conducting

background checks was the "first step in protecting our children inside the church."

She said using the *backgroundchecks.com* service "gives parents a peace of mind that we are doing our due diligence in checking the volunteers."

Timothy Sanford, pastor of First Baptist Church of El Monte, Ca., agrees that the background checks offer peace of mind and said he cannot say how much his congregation appreciates the service.

"Our staff, leadership, and most importantly our parents are all very pleased to know that those who are going to be with their children are all background check cleared," he said.

"It's quick and easy, and for us being a small church, very much cost effective," Sanford said.

"We especially appreciate that in a matter of minutes we can have a completed background check, and if we needed it, we can have a more detailed check for only a few dollars more."


As a staff member of the St. Louis Metro Baptist Association, Jen Maxedon has seen the benefit of LifeWay's relationship with *backgroundchecks.com* beyond the local church.

"We have a ministry called Good Neighbor Initiative that matches American families with refugee families to form friendships and be helpful neighbors," she said. "We thought it was best to have a background check done on every head of home that would be involved in the ministry before pairing them with a refugee family."

Maxedon said she has no complaints about *backgroundchecks.com*. "I would absolutely recommend it," she said.

"It is convenient, inexpensive, the customer service is wonderful, and the search and details are thorough and exactly what we need for our ministry."

For more information on background checks, visit LifeWay.com/backgroundchecks or call (800) 464-2799.

For additional resources to help churches prevent sexual abuse or other criminal issues by staff members or volunteers, visit SBCLife.net/pdf/ProtectingOurChildren.pdf or SBC.net/churchresources/sexabuseprevention.asp. 

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

We Pray for One Another

August 2

Focal passage: Ephesians 3:14-21

My husband is a morning person. The alarm goes off, and he's up to pour his coffee and read his Bible while the house is quiet and the sun still sleeps. I, on the other hand, am not a morning person. In college, I would schedule classes later in the afternoon so I could study and write when my roommates were asleep or the library was nearly empty.

Even now, I tend to enjoy solo work best once everyone else has gone to bed. During the day, I'm entertaining my daughter and catching up on reports for work or laundry for home. But at night, everything is quiet. Some nights I'll put in my headphones, light a candle and begin putting away toys or washing dishes. I love knowing that when my husband wakes up, it'll be to a clean and calm environment. It's an act of love

that both helps me de-stress and helps make his morning easier.

There are just as many other nights, however, when I unapologetically crawl into bed early after a long day, leaving toys scattered around and dishes piled, and wake up to find my husband had thought of me and cleaned so I could enjoy a morning with no domestic to-do list.

In these quiet hours, we work to love and hold one another up in ways that aren't always seen.

When we pray, as the body of Christ, we also work to love and hold one another up in ways that aren't always seen. The quiet hours we spend communing with our Father and interceding for one another are sacred and necessary. They're commanded and modeled in scripture.



LINDSEY HARRIS
member, Mount Carmel Baptist Church, Asheville

We Support One Another

August 9

Focal Passage: Ephesians 4:1-7; 11-16

There is nothing quite like family. I have one older sister, Kristen, and in some ways we couldn't be more opposite. She's the blonde to my brunette, the Type A to my Type B, and the medical mind to my humanities heart. As different as we are, we share a number of family quirks – inside jokes, shameless sarcasm and scars from unfortunate brow piercings we got together in high school.

We could tell you our dad's favorite dad jokes and our mom's favorite movies. For better or worse, we're family. We've seen each other at our best and our weirdest. To this day, Kristen is one of my best friends, and I'm so thankful God made us sisters

because I don't know that we would have become friends on our own. God knew I would need her and that she would need me, too.

When we come to Christ, we also join a family – the church. It's a big, fun, hard and sometimes weird family, but a family nonetheless. And we need one another. We weren't created to walk alone, and when we try we don't get very far.

The Holy Spirit gifts us for the unity of the church and draws us together for the glory of God. The humbling, but beautiful thing about the gifts of the Holy Spirit is, well, they're gifts. We didn't choose them or earn them, so we don't get to compare them. We don't get to pit them against each other, because we need them all. We simply receive what God has given us for His gospel and His mission, not our own platform, and get to work together.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Staying Sober

August 2

Focal passage: Proverbs 23:17-21, 29-35

Becoming a parent has opened up a whole new world of experiences that I simply did not anticipate. Perhaps among the most unexpected is the sheer volume of hilarious things that kids do over the course of a day.

Among the funniest moments are those when it becomes obvious just how limited their control is over their bodies: the zombie walk to the potty after they've fallen asleep; the slurred and inappropriately loud speech that no one can make sense of; the poor hand-eye coordination and lack of spatial awareness. These have all given us a good laugh when we've witnessed them in our very young children, but they are far less amusing when the source is an inebriated adult.

Proverbs wisely warns us of the dangers of losing control over our minds and bodies, specifically referencing both alcohol abuse and gluttony. In a culture where such excesses are not just tolerated but celebrated, Christians must be vigilant. There is a temptation for believers to believe the marketing lie that the way the world is living is somehow more desirable.

We are warned against such folly, and called to recognize the fear of the Lord as the prerequisite for a blessed future and a hope that that is not dashed. We can make idols of anything and they make vicious gods. By contrast, submitting our lives to the Creator leads us down unpopular yet vibrant paths of life.



MANNY PRIETO
lay pastor, Imago Dei Church, Raleigh

Accepting Discipline

August 9

Focal passage: Proverbs 29:1-3; 12-20

I suspect many of us have memories of sitting in a classroom with a classmate who was always eager to raise their hand and display their knowledge, only to open their mouth and publicly display just how much understanding they lacked. The most painful part of the whole affair being the fact that you knew this particular instance wasn't the first and likely would not be the last time it happened.

There's something unsettling about a lesson that repeatedly remains unlearned. It's one thing to fail because the lesson has not been heard, it's something entirely different to fail due to negligence. Sadly, many reject discipline and instruction and thereby

doom themselves to folly and failure. As Proverbs passionately stresses to its readers repeatedly, the path of wisdom is God's, and the path away from wisdom leads to destruction.

To persevere in foolhardy disobedience to wise instruction makes the fool brittle, not stronger. By contrast, the one who is teachable brings joy to their family and teachers. There is a requisite humility in being taught and receiving rebuke when we are wrong. It forces us to admit that we are wrong and do not know all that we need.

In receiving correction, allowing wise teachers to help us grow, we model the gospel by which we who were completely lacking righteousness receive it from the overflowing generosity of a loving God who condescends to our condition. In God's loving kindness, wisdom is available to all, but not on any path.

Suit

Continued from page 3

In the fall of 2018, Hook initiated what he described to law enforcement as a “father-daughter relationship” with Janet Doe, who was then 15. He gave her a ring to wear until she wed and began initiating intimate contact that both the victim and Hook told police never progressed to intercourse.

The plaintiffs allege that while employed by Bellevue, Hook began “grooming” Janet Doe to have a relationship with him, showering her with gifts, and placing himself in close proximity to her while she volunteered in children’s classes on Sundays and Wednesdays.

The lawsuit further alleges “Bellevue Baptist Church allowed James Hook unsupervised and unrestricted access to the volunteers and specifically Janet Doe,” and that “Bellevue Baptist Church further allowed Hook to leave the church with Janet Doe.”

In its response to the lawsuit, Bellevue denied knowledge of Hook’s alleged behavior.

“Bellevue cannot be liable for Mr. Hook’s independent, unauthorized criminal behavior,” the church said in its response, adding, “It is simply not enough to allege that childhood sexual abuse was a reasonably foreseeable risk based on ambiguous, vague allegations.”

In a statement released July 10, Bellevue said it would provide additional information to the church family as the case advances. “The wellbeing of our church family is of the utmost importance to us,” Bellevue said in the initial statement. “We pray for and will continue to support anyone who has been a victim of abuse.”


In its subsequent statement to BP, the church said, “We are praying for all involved in the pending lawsuit and the family affected by this situation.”

The plaintiffs are seeking an unspecified amount of monetary damages, according to court documents.

Messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention 2019 Annual Meeting addressed the issue of sex abuse, approving two constitutional amendments and bylaw changes, establishing sex abuse as grounds to disfellowship a church from the convention, and repurposing the SBC Credentials Committee to make inquiries and recommendations for possible disfellowship of churches if sex abuse is mishandled.

The constitutional amendments require a second vote of messengers to become effective, but the vote has been delayed until 2021 due to the cancellation of the 2020 SBC Annual Meeting. Following a church investigation in 2007 related to assistant pastor Paul Williams’ abuse of his adolescent son 17 years earlier, an internal investigative committee concluded the church was “ill-prepared on several fronts for handling the Paul Williams matter,” and that the church’s procedures and protocols “were and are inadequate.”

The committee recommended a complete review and overhaul of the church’s policies and procedures and additional staff training, and provided counseling for those who felt harmed by Williams’ behavior.

Steve Gaines, who served as president of the SBC 2016-’18, has been Bellevue’s senior pastor since 2005. 

OPPORTUNITY CORNER

The Who’s Your One tour stops in Youngsville Aug. 2-3. A rally will be held Aug. 2 at 6 p.m. at Faith Baptist Church in Youngsville. Join Johnny Hunt for a time of teaching, worship and prayer as we ignite you and your church’s passion for evangelism. Aug. 3 starting at 8 a.m., there

will be a Who’s Your One evangelism workshop, which will consist of practical training sessions designed to equip and mobilize your local church in evangelism. The rally and workshop are free to attend, but a reservation is required for the workshop. Visit whosyourone.com.

Baptists on Mission will host regional mission rallies in August. These 10 rallies will highlight the variety of opportunities N.C. Baptists have to be involved in missions. Featured will be worship, testimony, mission video, and a prayer time for missions. These rallies are for men, women and youth. A main focus of these rallies will be state, national and international partnerships and projects (including Disaster Relief) and the N.C. Missions Offering. Due to COVID-19, we will practice social distancing, wear masks (we will provide masks if you don’t have one), and follow CDC protocols when eating and during the rally. A meal is provided for the rallies at no charge, but reservations are required. The cut off date for reserving a meal for each rally is one week prior to the event. Visit Baptistsonmission.org; click on the “Details/Register” button at the bottom of this page under “Regional Rallies Projects.” You can also call Melanie Crawford at (919) 459-5596.

The meal will begin at 5:45 p.m., followed by the program from 6:50 p.m.-8:30 p.m. Mon., Aug. 17, region 2 will meet at First Baptist Church, 239 Middle St., New Bern, region 8 will meet at South River Baptist Church, 2659 S. Chipley Ford Road, Statesville and region 10 will meet at First Baptist Church, 69 Lotla St., Franklin. Tues., Aug. 18, region 1 will meet at Colerain Baptist Church, 202 N. Main St., Colerain, region 4’s meeting place has not been determined as of press time but will meet in the Raleigh area, region 6 will meet at Prospect Baptist Church, 502 Prospect Church Road, Albemarle, and region 9 will meet at First Baptist Church, 94 Gaston St., Brevard. Thurs., Aug. 20, region 3 will meet at West Lumberton Baptist Church, 2320 W. 5th St., Lumberton, region 5 will meet at Southside Baptist Church, 1001 Greenhaven Drive, Greensboro, and region 7 will meet at Mt. Vernon Baptist Church, 3505 Bamboo Road, Boone.

The International Mission Board (IMB) plans to host a virtual conference Aug. 7-8 for healthcare professionals, students, church leaders

and state and associational leaders to learn how they can partner with IMB healthcare workers. Visit imb.org/2020/04/30/medadvance-2020/.

CLASSIFIEDS

Pastor
Goldston Baptist Church, Goldston, NC, is prayerfully seeking a **bi-vocational Pastor**. Please send résumés and sermon links to goldstonbaptistchurch@yahoo.com by August 31, 2020.

Miscellaneous
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For more information, call the office at (919) 459-5691. Cost for Baptist churches/organizations is \$1.25 per word, number and stand-alone initial (\$1.45 for commercial and non-Baptist entities) with a minimum charge of \$35. Classifieds also are carried online.

Wives

Continued from page 1

"I want to be careful ... but at the same time, I need to say it has always been a union – a oneness – in ministry with my husband," she said.

Through Ephesians 5:22-33, wives can learn about the picture of Christ and His love affair with the church.

"I still believe in the truth that God wrote about marriage," Drum said.

"Because if you see Ephesians 5 like Paul wrote it in your covenant relationship with the Lord, you'll see your marriage not only as a covenant relationship with the Lord but you'll also see your husband's relationship with the church."

Scripture describes the husband as the head of the wife, "*even as Christ is the head of the church.*" It's beautiful if you allow yourself to see it."

Drum talked about the love her husband has for the people he serves in the church.

She described their relationship as stronger when she remembers "what the Lord has done for me."

Drum said her husband pushes her in her walk with God, keeping her accountable.

"Husbands should love their wives as Christ loved the church, unconditionally and sacrificially," she said, quoting Ephesians.

"A husband who fails to properly love his wife makes it hard ... to submit to him."

As a couple, they have wept together on their knees, done Bible study together, set goals and worshipped together.

Scripture sayss husbands and wives have unique roles, she said.

"We are equal in the sight of the Lord in salvation in repentance," she said.

"But God has called him to be the authority ... and I am to submit to him as my pastor."

The annual retreat offers the ladies time together to support and pray for one another.



Cheryl Reeves, minister's wife to Jerry Reeves, pastor of Piney Grove Baptist Church in Lenoir, has been coming to this retreat almost every year since 2001, when the couple started serving at Piney Grove.

Another minister's wife invited Reeves to a breakfast on a February morning.

Because of the "icy, horrible conditions," Reeves and the woman who invited her were the only wives who attended. "She and I probably spent three hours together that day," said Reeves.

"We connected," and she said, "you're coming with me to the retreat."

Reeves said the retreat is a blessing.

While she sees many familiar faces each time, there are younger women who attend as well.

She said individuals in the group offer encouraging texts or calls.

The group took temperatures each day and offered space for appropriate social distancing.

A color-coded option was given to participants so they could choose the kind of interaction they wanted during the retreat: green = OK with hugs and high fives; yellow = OK with talking not touching; and red = I am keeping my distance.

Many chose to wear green and did not wear masks. There were only three chairs at each table in the din-



At left, temperatures were taken to ensure the safety of participants to the North Carolina Baptist Ministers' Wives retreat July 13-15 at Caraway Conference Center near Asheboro. Above, worship time was led by Deborah Lockey of First Baptist Church of Morehead City while Janice Drum, below, served as the main speaker. She is from Tri-City Baptist Church in Conover. (BR photos by Dianna L. Cagle)




ing room during meal time, and tables in the conference center were spaced out with roommates being asked to sit with one another at tables set up for two.

Music was led by Deborah Lockey, worship leader and director of youth and senior adult ministries for First Baptist Church in Morehead City.

Its next meeting is scheduled Nov. 9, just before the Baptist State Convention of N.C. annual meeting in Greensboro.

The group meets during a morning session of the N.C. Pastor's Conference.

Visit ncbminwives.wixsite.com/ncbmw. 

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