

ABN Digest

Stories of interest
to Arkansas Baptists

City of Springdale declares it is 'pro-life'

SPRINGDALE - The Springdale City Council unanimously approved a statement August 13 declaring the city to be pro-life.

The city took the action in an attempt to head off the possible location of a Planned Parenthood office in Springdale, according to published reports. Council member Colby Fulfer introduced the measure to the council.

According to its website, Planned Parenthood stopped providing services at its location in Fayetteville July 25, saying it will announce a new location soon.

Fulfer said the council's vote, which is not legally binding according to the city's attorney, sends a message to Planned Parenthood, "respectfully asking the abortion provider to find another city," the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* reported.

Springdale is the fourth-largest city in Arkansas, with a population of about 80,000 residents. It is located in Washington and Benton counties in the northwest corner of the state at the foothills of the Ozark Mountains.



Fulfer

Nominate the 2019 Baptist Business Leader of the Year

LITTLE ROCK - Do you know a Southern Baptist businessman or businesswoman who is making a huge impact for Jesus Christ through his or her marketplace influence?

Nominations for the fourth annual *Arkansas Baptist News* (ABN) Baptist Business Leader of the Year are now open and due Nov. 1.

For more information, contact sarah@arkansasbaptist.org.

For more ABN Digest, go to arkansasbaptist.org/abn-digest

Executive Board hires three new ABSC staff, discusses statewide missions partnerships

Caleb Yarbrough
Arkansas Baptist News

LITTLE ROCK - Three new Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) team members were recognized, and potential missions partnerships were discussed during the Aug. 13 ABSC Executive Board meeting.

Recently hired ABSC staff members recognized during the meeting included Sam Roberts, missions team assistant team leader; Tyler Hoffpauir, Arkansas State University (ASU) Baptist Collegiate Ministry campus minister; and Laramie LeQuieu, leadership specialist for the church health team.

Roberts is a former president of the ABSC and most recently served as senior pastor of First Baptist Church, Stuttgart. Hoffpauir, a graduate of ASU, most recently served as Baptist Student Union director at Southwest Mississippi Community College in Summit, Miss. LeQuieu most recently served as pastor of First Baptist Church, Rector.

Ken Shaddox, senior pastor of Park Hill Baptist Church, North Little Rock, and chairman of the ABSC Program Committee, presented a recommendation for the 2020 ABSC team goals. The goals were based around "3 Essential Intentions": 1) "strengthening our churches," 2) "impacting the next generation with the gospel and reaching students



Twelve of the 18 Arkansas Baptist State Convention Executive Board members who completed their board service as of the Aug. 13 meeting were in attendance and were recognized by ABSC Executive Director J.D. "Sonny" Tucker. Photo by Caleb Yarbrough

before losing another generation," and 3) "reaching the unengaged, unreached, and underserved with the gospel ... (with a focus on) peoples who do not have access to the gospel."

Cathy Brandt, member of First Baptist Church, Harrison, and chairman of the ABSC Finance Committee, presented a recommendation to approve the 2020 ABSC budget. The recommended unified Cooperative Program (CP) budget for 2020 was once again \$21 million - equal to the 2019 budget.

"It is a wonderful budget, continuing toward reducing the amount of money that we keep out of the Cooperative Program and sharing more with the Southern Baptist

Convention," said Brandt.

ABSC Executive Director J.D. "Sonny" Tucker spoke on behalf of the budget recommendation.

"I tend to give too much information but ... what bothers me is when somebody walks away and thinks, 'They're hiding things,' or 'They don't want us to know,' and I just didn't say anything," said Tucker. "I want you to feel like this is your budget, and I want you to understand that we operate with both hands on top of the table."

Team goals and budget for 2020 were both approved unanimously.

Tucker noted a procedural change making all of the ABSC's teams eligible to receive Dixie Jackson State

Missions Offering funds. In the past only the ABSC's missions team had access to these funds.

"I changed it because all of our teams do missions in some form or fashion," said Tucker. "If it's really in the gut and it's red meat, then they ought to get some Dixie Jackson money."

In response to a question, Greg Addison, associate executive director of the ABSC, said that the executive and administrative team is currently funding safety training programs and is carrying out safety training in cooperation with other ABSC teams.

Tucker shared about the agencies and institutions of

See **EB** page 7

Ark. Right to Life to bring post-abortion play, 'Viable,' to state

LITTLE ROCK - "Viable," a play dramatizing the impact of abortion, is coming to Arkansas in September.

"I saw it live in South Carolina at our national convention this summer, and I feel it is so important that it be seen and help those suffering from a secret abortion to get help, healing and reconciliation," said Rose Mimms, executive director of Arkansas Right to Life.

Mimms plans to present the play across the state in the following cities, and is still looking for host/sponsor churches

at some locations. Current cities set to present the play include St. Raphael Catholic Church in Springdale, Sept. 27; Jonesboro (location to be determined), Sept. 28; Covenant Presbyterian Church, Little Rock, Sept. 29, and Texarkana (location to be determined), Sept. 30. The play is free and open to the public. She said the event is "not a fundraiser," but a love offering will be taken after each performance to defray expenses.

"So many women and men suffer in silence from a

secret abortion that affects so many areas and relationships in their lives, most importantly their spiritual relationship with God. Our churches are full of these men and women," said Mimms. "'Viable' exposes the secret, the trauma and the brokenness of abortion while offering hope, forgiveness, renewal and healing."

She added, "'Viable' tells the truth in a one-act play and offers the love, mercy and grace that only Jesus Christ can give to lift women out of the pit of self-condemnation they feel

every day of their lives, not by the pro-life movement, but the natural guilt and shame felt by a mother who has abandoned her child to death. Many do so, not because they choose it, but because they feel they have no other choice. It is a terrible choice to live with."

To contact Mimms about how a church can participate, email artl4237@att.net or call Arkansas Right to Life at 501-663-4237.

Highlights of the play and audience reaction may be viewed at vimeo.com/350880708.

'Amazing journey,' a platform to share Christ

Margaret Colson
Arkansas Baptist News

RUSSELLVILLE – You might find him photographing bison and moose in the Grand Tetons ... or working with a team to save a life in an emergency room ... or preaching at the Soul Food Café in Conway ... or deciphering and transcribing ancient texts.

For Gerald Nash, these experiences have offered him “some amazing adventures. But the most amazing is my journey with the Lord,” he said.

Bible commentary writer for the *Arkansas Baptist News* (ABN), Nash attributes his many diverse interests “to the fact that I am a bookworm. I will read something that piques my interest, and it will stimulate me to read more, take a course and plan a trip.” Often by his side on his adventures is his wife, Mary Ann, who led him to make a profession of faith many years ago. “She is my companion in life and ministry,” Nash said.

A lifelong learner

Educational opportunities through the years have honed his inquisitive spirit. “I have taken courses all over the world, but I always explain that I am a product of Southern Baptist education,” he said. His Southern Baptist education began with the Missouri Baptist Convention training him to be a Royal Ambassador (RA) counselor and director, and it continued with him taking Bible and missions courses through the Home Mission Board (now North American Mission Board).

While Nash was in college at Southeast Missouri State University, Thomas Messer, director of the Baptist Student Union there, became his mentor and convinced Nash to pursue a Bible degree and transfer to Southern Baptist College (now Williams Baptist University). From there, Nash enrolled at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (SWBTS). Through SWBTS Nash visited a Dead Sea Scroll exhibition, which “propelled my further manuscript work,” he said.

“All my Southern Baptist education prepared me to communicate the gospel to

people of many different cultures ... and help me to be on a mission for Jesus, wherever I am and whatever I am doing,” Nash said.

For Nash, education is an ongoing process. “As a lifelong learner, I am always taking a course,” adding, with a smile, “I have reached the age where I can now be a Senior Razor-back.”

'Shooting' wildlife

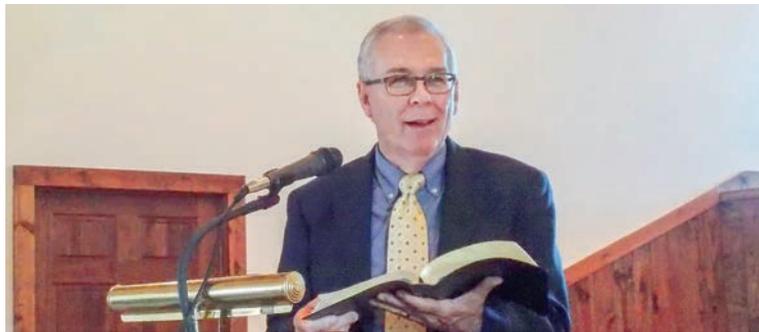
Nash and his wife have developed an appreciation for nature and wildlife; together they enjoy photographing animals in the wild. “My wife is always trying to get the best pictures of wildlife,” he said, which, on one trip to the Grand Tetons, led her to inch dangerously close, in Nash’s opinion, to a huge bison. “After she took several pictures, she motioned for me to come to her. All I could think about was that 3,000-pound creature was going to charge and crush me,” he said. Yet, Nash wouldn’t mind taking a few risks of his own. “On my bucket list is to go down in a cage and feed sharks,” he admitted.

Working in medical field

Since 1975 Nash has worked in the medical field, where he said, “The most rewarding aspect of my work is saving lives and improving the quality of life of people. It sounds cliché, but it is true.” Nash works on an advanced life support and trauma team that responds when people are brought “clinically dead” to the emergency room. “It is amazing to watch as advanced life support methods are used, and a person’s heart starts beating again, and that person starts breathing again,” he said.

Hungry and homeless ministry

The Soul Food Café in Conway is a mission that ministers to the hungry and homeless. Each Tuesday, about 55 volunteers at the mission distribute food boxes, health and beauty aids and clothing to individu-



Gerald Nash, a lifelong learner, has a heart for ministry as well as interests in varied fields such as biblical archeology and languages, theology, travel and healthcare.

als. The mission also provides hot meals and haircuts. Nash preaches a short, encouraging sermon to volunteers before the community individuals begin to stream in. He also meets those who come into the mission and gives the plan of salvation. At the mission’s noon service, Nash rotates preaching duties with other pastors. “I have the privilege of leading people to Christ and baptizing them,” he said. Nash’s home church, Second Baptist Church, Conway, financially supports the mission, and the church’s men’s ministry collects food for the mission.

Deciphering, transcribing

Nash’s mentor, Messer, first piqued his interest in manuscript studies when Nash was a young man. Messer brought a n c i e n t manuscripts to the classroom and read to students in the original language. The Cairo Geniza is a collection



Nash explores Native American ruins at Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado.

of more than 350,000 Jewish manuscript fragments found stored in a synagogue Geniza in Old Cairo, Egypt. These tenth-13th-century documents were forgotten for almost a millennium. Written in various languages, particularly Hebrew and Aramaic, the fragments have now been digitized, and Nash meticulously helps decipher and transcribe them. “The survival of these documents is important today because of what they will teach us about the everyday medieval days of Jews, Christians and Muslims and their relationships. ... Like the Dead Sea

Scrolls, these documents have the potential to change history as we know and understand it,” Nash said.

Nash “thoroughly enjoys” the challenge of writing Bible commentaries for the ABN.

“Writing the lessons,” he said, “affords me the opportunity to use my skills as a theologian to help others understand the text and show its application for the Christian life. My goal is to align the commentary with the lesson theme, stay true to the text and for it to be useful for the teacher and class.”

He and his wife might also be found wielding chainsaws as they serve through disaster relief (DR). On one DR trip, Nash used his chainsaw to sculpt a chair out of a fallen tree for the homeowner. They also serve in vacation Bible school (VBS). In one VBS, Nash taught children how to do solar viewing through seven of his telescopes, outfitted with homemade solar filters. Nash also has been known to climb cliffs to photograph and study prehistoric rock carvings. The couple also serves on mission trips, including one medical mission trip to Armenia.

Such experiences reflect Nash’s servant spirit, believes Josh King, pastor of Second Baptist Church, Conway. “He (Nash) is a kind, godly man with a servant’s spirit. He is ready and willing to serve in behind-the-scenes ways and is a blessing to his church and pastor,” King said.

Nash’s is a life with varied interests and experiences, all with a common goal. “No matter what I get involved in, I try to use it as a platform to share about Christ,” Nash said.

Nash and his wife have two children, seven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Contact Margaret Colson at margaret@arkansasbaptist.org.

ABN Digest

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Moore named ABSC 'prayer ambassador'

LITTLE ROCK – Don Moore, retired executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC), has been named the convention’s new prayer ambassador.

“(Don’s) heart beats for prayer and awakening across our state and the world,” said Jimmie Sheffield, ABSC assistant to the executive director. “We are really excited about his ministry as our prayer ambassador. We believe God will use him to stir the hearts of people all across the state.”

Moore expressed excitement to be working for the convention again, emphasizing the potential for “real awakening” in our society right now.

“The critical nature of the times makes it imperative that God’s people really commit themselves to praying,” Moore wrote in a recent ABSC Inspire prayer newsletter.

“Only a special work of God in our churches and society can reverse the trends that are so alarming today. The word most fitting for most situations is ‘desperation,’ ... That is a good biblical term. Most often, effective prayer in the Bible was described as ‘crying out to God.’”

Sheffield said Moore’s position will include pursuing prayer opportunities at ABSC events and acting as an internal resource on prayer for Executive Board staff. He will also be in charge of a new Appeals Team, which will engage in focused prayer and be made up of retired pastors, missionaries and church staff.

For more information, or to sign up, email donmoore@absc.org.

For more ABN Digest, go to
arkansasbaptist.org/abn-digest

Editorial & Opinion

"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have..."

1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

'If this wall could talk, the stories it could tell'

At a time when celebrating history seems to have fallen on hard times, a visitor to the offices of the *Arkansas Baptist News* (ABN) is immediately reminded upon entering our suite of the history of Baptists in the Natural State.

It's hard to miss the photos on a large wall of past editors who have served Arkansas Baptists faithfully for more than 118 years. Below the photos of editors are representative front pages, beginning with the immediate predecessor of the ABN – alongside one of the first-year editions of *The Baptist Advance* (before a name change to *Arkansas Baptist*).

It is sometimes said, "If these walls could talk, the stories they would tell." In the case of our Baptist newspaper – or news service as I like to refer to it because of today's ever-changing technology and delivery methods – our wall actually does talk ... sort of.

You can read past stories about Arkansas Baptists anytime you choose by visiting arkansasbaptist.org/archives, where a link is provided to ABN archives. Through a partnership ABN has with Ouachita Baptist University, past editions of the ABN are being digitized. While more are being added every month, there are now a great number of past editions ready to be viewed online and downloaded (free of charge).

We live in a time when social pundits can't get enough of pointing out and dragging out every past blemish and sin in our country's history – and

for that matter our Southern Baptist denomination.

I guess it supports and fits the progressive narrative that the founders of our country, or our denomination, were bad and ill-intentioned, so therefore we are somehow as a people illegitimate. Therefore, we must repent, and repent

often, and what's more, consider making reparations.

It is well-documented that

the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) was founded in 1845 when Baptists in southern states split with northern Baptists over the issue of slavery.

In the case of our Southern Baptist denomination, the men and women, the country and society in which they lived in 1845 was a very different place – and included the prejudices of that time. They were prejudices that existed for many years after the founding of the convention that carried into pulpits and pews well into the 20th century and – some say – still exist in areas of the country today.

Thankfully, since the 1940s and especially beginning in the late 20th century until present day, Southern Baptists have sought new members among minority groups and have become much more diverse – in fact, are one of the most diverse evangelical denominations.

While the SBC is still predominantly Anglo, the racial and ethnic diversity of Southern Baptists today is broad.

According to sbc.net, Southern Baptist "cooperating" congregations (churches

and church-type missions) include: Anglo, 40,400; African American, 3,929; Hispanic, 3,506; Korean, 907; Haitian, 529; Native American, 435; Chinese, 269; Filipino, 188; multi-ethnic, 299, and 20-plus other ethnic and language groups, 1,460.

Baptist Press reported in 2013 that the number of non-Anglo congregations in the SBC had increased by more than 60 percent since 1999.

God continues to work in the SBC in spite of our flaws, resulting in the denomination becoming one of the largest – if not the largest – missionary-sending organizations ever known to man. Millions upon millions of people of all ethnicities have been reached for Jesus through efforts of Southern Baptists.



If you want proof in Arkansas, a quick review of archived copies of the ABN reveals vividly God's mighty and unyielding hand on Baptists in the state over the years. We should consider ourselves a very blessed people!

My prayer is that God will

continue to bless the efforts of Southern Baptists – in spite of our human flaws – and use the denomination for His glory in ways unseen and yet unimagined.

Tim Yarbrough is editor/executive director of the Arkansas Baptist News.



Pressing On

Tim Yarbrough

Phil. 3:14

ABN Cartoon

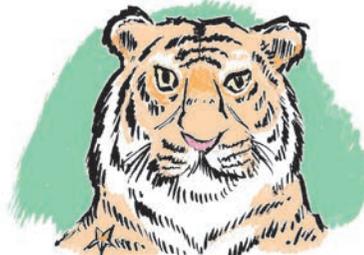
The Endangered



THE BALD EAGLE



THE PANDA BEAR



THE TIGER



THE BIBLICAL FAMILY

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Tim Yarbrough, editor/exec. director
Caleb Yarbrough, associate editor
Margaret Colson, writer/copy editor
Sarah Davis, staff writer
Barbara Vick, circulation coordinator
G. Gee, advertising sales rep
Advertising: ads@arkansasbaptist.org
Phone 501-376-4791, ext. 5161

Toll-free 800-838-2272, ext. 5161
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As a new pastor, how should I lead my church through some necessary changes?

Whenever a pastor relocates to another church, it is easy to find several items that do not make sense. Whether it's the order of worship, the personality of church staff, or an old piano in an abandoned Sunday school room, a church can be quite confusing for any new minister to navigate.

While congregations expect some change to take place with new leadership, it is not often in the same areas that the new leader has in mind! If done carelessly, the pastor's decisions can lead to anxiety, criticism, cynicism or even termination. In order to avoid any of these congregational



Baptists Ask

Ken Gore

reactions, a good minister can employ changes in several steps.

A minister should bring change carefully. The first

few months within a new church situation should be for observation. During this time, the pastor can ask members of the staff and the church about the procedures, events and objects within the church. The minister can then reflect upon each item and evaluate each possible change.

A minister should bring change methodically. The pastor should have a reasonable explanation for any change within the church. Peter Steinke provides a simple but valuable method for creating change. First, he says, the leader should guide with a sense of calm. Second, the minister should provide focus, often by using the church's mission statement. Third, the pastor can challenge the congregation to employ the change. When the minister creates calm, focus and challenge, the congregation is more willing to accept the change.

A minister should bring change corporately. When a church perceives that a pastor makes decisions alone, anxiety often follows. If the entire congregation has an opportunity to participate in the changes the pastor has shared, most likely it will welcome them.

A minister should bring change gradually. When changes occur, good or bad, something is always lost. However, the more gradual the change, the less of a negative reaction there will be. Slow changes will also reduce the possibility of "change fatigue," in which church members become apathetic or withdraw from the congregation. A wise leader will allow the changes to permeate as quietly and effortlessly as possible.

A minister should bring change reverently. A wise pastor will acknowledge that procedures, events and objects are often kept in place out of tradition or respect, and they have sentimental value. When changes are necessary, it is good and proper to bring closure to them in the best way possible.

Change in a church is never easy, for the pastor or for the congregation. However, it can be less of an anxious time if the minister will learn about the congregation, assess the situation, and act in kindness, respect, and love. Doing so will allow the minister and the congregation to have a long and fruitful ministry.

Ken Gore is professor of biblical studies at Dallas Baptist University. Email your questions to tim@arkansasbaptist.org.

Church & culture: Challenges abound

Cultural conditions that churches and people of faith find themselves in are far different from what they were in the not-too-distant past. Christians and their organizations and businesses are being marginalized with ever-increasing frequency and intensity. There is a growing intolerance for and hostility toward our faith. Sometimes, that hostility is acted out – and that should get our attention.



Faith & Ethics

Larry Page

law enforcement agencies and insurance companies are good sources for that help.

The principle of "separation of church and state" has been misconstrued, and its meaning has been contorted to prod the government to adopt an adversarial position against religion. Too often, the courts seem to go

out of their way to accommodate that objective. As if that weren't

enough, audacious

attempts are being made to revise history to cast doubts on our nation's Christian heritage. Be certain of this: America is a republic founded on Judeo-Christian principles, and the founders never intended for government to be hostile to or punitive toward people and institutions of faith. We need to unapologetically defend those truths in loving and Christlike ways.

Our nation grows more secular by the day. Even our numbers in the U.S. are shrinking. The number of people who claim no religion has risen 266 percent in the past three decades.

According to a General Social Survey conducted last year, 23.1 percent of the U.S.

population claimed no religion compared to 23 percent who were Catholics and 22.5 percent who were Evangelicals. Are your members up to the task of defending the faith and responding to the criticisms of contrarians? Our mandate is clear: "Always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you" (1 Pet. 3:15, HCSB). The efficacy of the gospel message is largely dependent on this duty.

The radical proponents of the SO/GI (sexual orientation and gender identity) agendas are not shy about trying to force churches and Christians and their businesses and organizations to surrender their deeply held biblical beliefs and standards and adopt the more "enlightened" notions of human sexuality, marriage and gender-related matters. They are using the legal system to try and exert their will on us. If it hasn't yet, your church should take precautions by adopting policies and statements of faith that could serve to thwart attempts to strip us of our religious liberties.

Larry Page is executive director of the Arkansas Faith and Ethics Council.

'Know. And be known.'

There's a paradox in choosing a university.

Many students have a strong desire to attend a university where they can meet

and get to know lots of people – and be known by lots of people. So

they choose to attend a large university, not understanding this paradox: To know more people, and to be known by more people, choose a smaller university like Ouachita.

At the end of four years of college, chances are strong that a Ouachita graduate will know more people well – and be well-known by more people – than students who attend universities with thousands or tens-of-thousands of students.

Why? When a student spends four years on a residential campus with about 1,500 other students – living

and learning and sharing the challenges and joys of college life together – he or she has opportunities to develop lifelong relationships at a deeper,



Ouachita Baptist University

Keldon Henley

more meaningful level. A student who attends a university with many

thousands will likely live on campus only one year, often will recognize few if any of his or her classmates and will rarely find himself or herself in a professor's home for dinner, much less in possession of that professor's cell number when it's time to ask for the all-important grad school or employment recommendations.

There are many reasons to choose Ouachita. Add to the list the desire to "Know. And Be Known."

Here's how some of our students expressed this dur-

ing their first semester on campus:

"Ouachita provides the friends and professors who become our constant accountability partners, encouragers and teachers. Here, we are taught how to be a disciple in our world today, combining both our love for Christ and our love for academics. As I sit here, exactly one month into my life as a Ouachita student, I am overwhelmed with how much I learn every single day, how much I thought I knew but didn't, and how much Ouachita has done for me that exceeded all my needs and expectations." – Addy

"The first attribute of Ouachita that drew me to the school was its size. I wanted a school where I could feel connected to my classmates and would know most of the people I see around campus. I

Letters to the Editor welcomed

The *Arkansas Baptist News (ABN)* welcomes Letters to the Editor regarding issues of concern to Southern Baptists in Arkansas. Send Letters to the Editor to tim@arkansasbaptist.org or to our mailing address. Letters must be typed, double-spaced and 300 words or less (fewer words, the better). Letters must be signed



and marked "for publication" and may be edited to fit space requirements.

Planned Parenthood forfeits family planning funds for abortion

WASHINGTON (BP) – One of Planned Parenthood's government revenue streams has officially dried up for now.

The Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) confirmed Aug. 19 it would not abide by the Trump administration's new rule that prohibits federal family planning funds for organizations

that perform, promote or refer for abortions. The decision – which had been expected for weeks and was announced at the deadline set by the administration – means PPFA will forfeit \$50 to \$60 million a year in order to conduct business as usual as the country's No. 1 abortion provider.

The loss of funding through

Title X, the federal government's family planning program, will result in about a 10 percent decrease in government money for Planned Parenthood – at least while a court challenge is underway. PPFA and its affiliates collected \$563.8 million in government grants and reimbursements in its latest finan-

cial year. The abortion giant performed more than 332,757 abortions during the most recent year for which statistics are available.

Three days before PPFA's announcement, an Arizona jury awarded a former Planned Parenthood employee \$3 million for wrongful termination after she had shared health and safety warnings with supervisors.

Federal defunding of PPFA – which reported \$1.88 billion in net assets in its latest report – has long been a goal of pro-life organizations, and leaders of the movement applauded news of Planned Parenthood's withdrawal from Title X.

Withdrawal from Title X “shows what is truly important to [Planned Parenthood]: Care for women is expendable, but abortion is not,” said Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC).

“At the same time, this new rule from the Department of Health and Human Services is a welcome move not only because it reveals Planned Parenthood's sad business model but also because it is an important step in separating taxpayer dollars from the abortion industry,” Moore said in written comments.

“Since its announcement, we have worked to make sure the rule remained strong as we continued to call upon Congress to take legislative action,” he said. “We will continue to be tireless in our witness for life, praying for the day when we as a country repent of ever propping up this storefront of death.”

Planned Parenthood “showed its true colors by prioritizing abortion over family planning,” said Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the Susan B. Anthony List, in a written release. “This is a huge win for women's health.”

CASINO

continued from page one

being done in an open, public forum. Our community is being split into some ugly factions,” said Sykes.

“The county remains in limbo, and the application process is a three-ring circus,” he said.

In June, the Arkansas Racing Commission rejected five casino applicants and voted to reopen the application window for 90 days. On Aug. 13, the Pope County Quorum Court issued a letter of approval to the Cherokee Nation Businesses to build a casino and hotel complex, beating out four rivals. Two days later, Ben Cross, county judge, signed the letter and submitted it to the Arkansas Racing Commission. On Monday, Aug. 19, four days after a Mississippi company filed a lawsuit against the Arkansas Racing Commission, the commission took no action on the letter but instead opened another 90-day window for accepting new applications for a casino license in Pope County.

“As simply as I can put it, even the racing commission is aware that the Quorum Court action was filled with legal hurdles,” Sykes said.

Allegations are being reviewed, he said, “that the Quorum Court negotiated the contract with the Cherokees in illegal, closed-door meetings, that they threatened several justices of the peace with potential lawsuit liability if they did not approve the contract and that they ignored a law that requires a local option before such a contract is entered into.”

The question of illegal meetings has been sent to the Office of the Prosecutor Coordinator in Little Rock for assignment to a special prosecu-

tor, according to the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*.

Some argue that the state law, Issue 4, trumps the local ordinance and, thus, no local option is required before a casino is built. If such a special election was held to gain approval of Pope County voters, the earliest date would likely be March 3, 2020, the *Democrat-Gazette* reported.

The Pope County issues “would not exist if the state voters had not mandated that Pope County enter the casino gaming business. We didn't want it. We voted heavily against it. But it was imposed upon us.

“Everyone should be able to watch and see the chaos and backdoor influencing, hear the threats, read the legal bluffs, and realize this is the kind of business groups the state invited into our backyards by soliciting casino gaming as a form of entertainment,” Sykes said.

As ABSC president, Sykes calls on all Arkansas Baptists to pray and take action to oppose the proposed casino in Pope County. “I believe the prayers of Arkansas Baptists make a difference. I know, personally, I have been solidified in my determination to fight this battle because of phone calls and emails of encouragement from Arkansas Baptists.

“And I personally believe this is a worthwhile fight to protect the lowest socio-economic groups in our county who will be devastated by this casino, but it's also a test case for other such predatory industries that could be lurking around the corner in our state. We need to make this hard. We need to fight until the last option is gone. We need to love what's right and true and good just as much as the other side loves the almighty dollar. If we do not, we're going to look around in a few years and owe future generations an apology for how we refused to protect them and allowed

our state's morality to disappear with hardly a word said,” Sykes said.

Citizens For A Better Pope County, led by Jim Knight, is doing its part to oppose the casino. An Aug. 13 Facebook post by the group said, “We have stated from the beginning that the decision regarding a casino in Pope County should be in the hands of Pope County voters. Press reports have emerged of decisions having already been made, and illegal meetings and discussion by Quorum Court members, while no public consideration or discussion of the casino applicants by the Quorum Court has taken place. Whether you're for or against a casino, you should demand transparency in the business of our elected officials.”

Judge Cross and members of the Quorum Court have been sued by Citizens For A Better Pope County. The suit asked that no casino be endorsed without first holding an election as required by the local ordinance.

In early summer, a grassroots pro-casino group, Pope County Majority, led by Kelly Jett, was launched. Some believe the tide of support for a casino in Pope County is beginning to turn in favor of the casino.

“A month ago, the only people we were hearing from were people opposing the casino. It really looked like a one-sided issue,” Pope County Justice of the Peace Ray Black told the *Democrat-Gazette*. “Now we're receiving multiple, multiple emails and letters from people wanting the casino here in Pope County.

“The biggest thing we're doing is trying to find out what the majority of Pope County wants to do when it comes to this subject. And we're not any closer to that answer than when we started.”

Contact Margaret Colson at margaret@arkansasbaptist.org.



FIGHTING FOR LIFE – Paula Williams, Hannah Pregnancy Resource Center (HPRC) executive director, and Ernest DeSoto, associational missionary for Liberty Baptist Association, pose Aug. 17 in El Dorado with the ultrasound machine donated to HPRC by the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

KNOWN

continued from page 5

wanted a school where I could make relationships with my teachers that would last for a lifetime. I wanted a school where class would not just be a teacher lecturing for an hour but we could have meaningful classroom discussion that best fits my learning style.

I wanted a school where I can have opportunities to practice my skills and build my resume starting in my freshman year. I wanted a school where I am not just a number, but I mean something to both the school and to the professors. Ouachita is a school which offers all those things.” – Caleb

Keldon Henley is vice president for institutional advancement at Ouachita Baptist University.

WHATLEY

continued from page one

play began when Whatley, at age 22, and her husband, Alan, moved to El Dorado. They were invited to a newcomers' banquet at First Baptist. Staff member Joe Santo suggested, "Since you're coming to the banquet, would you mind playing the piano?" Whatley graciously agreed. When he invited her to accompany the junior and senior high choirs, she once again agreed. As they were attending Wednesday nights, Santo again requested that Whatley accompany during prayer meeting. Whatley headed toward the upright.

While the sanctuary underwent extensive renovations, Whatley practiced at a nearby Presbyterian church, with her 2-year-old daughter, Kim, in tow.

Santo also persuaded Whatley to serve as associate organist, playing weddings, funerals, revivals and special meetings. The choir was going to perform Mendelssohn's oratorio "Elijah," and Linda would need more practice time than could be managed toting a preschooler to a sanctuary. But the young married couple couldn't afford a piano. Bensberg Music Company in Camden rented and delivered one to the Whatley home for three months at a cost of \$60. Whatley's fingers kept pace.

Soon, former First Baptist pastor Mark Coppenger asked Whatley to serve as the organist. At the time, Whatley felt called to piano accompaniment and had no personal vision for playing the organ. She agreed to serve a three-month term while the official organist was away. Once again, at the end of this period, Whatley felt led to assume this position and has held it ever since. Along the way, Whatley was asked to serve as director of the Child Learning Center. She faithfully served there for 35 years. She earned an associate degree in early childhood education at South Arkansas Community College to strengthen her leadership.

Whatley's dedication to say-

ing yes through the years took a physical toll. She has undergone four surgeries on her hands. At times, Whatley wondered if she'd ever play again.

As she prepared mentally and spiritually for these procedures, she became sensitive to the many references to the hand in the Bible. Whatley experienced healing, and while she feels it's not the same now, who can tell? What the congregation hears is the love of God pouring through her fingers.

When current First Baptist minister of worship Dusten Melear asked Whatley about her favorite arranger, she responded that she "lucked into really enjoying a variety of music, as long as it's tasteful."

Her favorites tend toward classical showstoppers like Chopin, Bach, and Liszt's "Liebestraum."

First Baptist will celebrate Whatley's 50-year milestone Sunday, Oct. 6. Dove Award-winning producer, arranger and Sandi Patty accompanist Jay Rouse will lead morning worship at 10:15 a.m. Rouse's commissioned composition for Whatley will be performed at a community service at 5:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. A reception will follow at 6:30 p.m. in the church's 2fifty2 building. The public is invited. First Baptist is located at 200 W. Main St., in El Dorado.

Sarah Shell Teague is a member of First Baptist Church, El Dorado.

EB

continued from page 2

the ABSC and the financial support and accountability that they receive from the convention.

"The convention is either their (agencies and institutions') sole member or functions as their sole member. Our state convention picks their trustees. They are ac-

countable back to the convention. Do you understand that they have to get their budget approved, the CP portion, by the convention? Do you understand that if they change anything in their by-laws, it has to be brought before the group? If they change 'a' to 'an,' it has to be voted on. That's real tight connection. That's real tight accountability. They don't have to sign the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message ... (but) agencies and institutions have to function within

the framework of the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message," said Tucker. "It's a real tight accountability, and you give them a very small portion of their budget for that accountability.

"We owe them (agencies and institutions) love and support and encouragement. Their burdens are our burdens. Because they are accountable to us, it's not just about, 'We are going to hold you accountable,' we are accountable to love them and

support them and to be connected to them. Their needs are our needs. Their hurts are our hurts. Their focus is our focus. Their celebrations are our celebrations. And Arkansas Baptists have got to buy into this system and affirm this in a big way."

Representatives from Arkansas Baptist agencies and institutions shared about their current initiatives they are excited about and how Arkansas Baptists can best support them.

Executive Board members broke into small groups and discussed potential missions opportunities locally by annually targeting, as a convention, the top five most challenging places in Arkansas to serve, nationally between the ABSC and other state conventions including Kansas-Nebraska and Hawaii, and internationally in Europe in partnership with the International Mission Board.

"Do we do something as a state? That's what we are re-



Arkansas Baptist State Convention (ABSC) Executive Director J.D. "Sonny" Tucker speaks during the Aug. 13 ABSC Executive Board meeting in Little Rock.

ally looking at," said Tucker. "So far we've really kind of let churches do their individual thing, and the missions team tries to support that."

Numerous comments were given on the various missions opportunities presented. Board members were generally excited about the opportunity for new statewide missions partnerships. The need for a significant follow-up process following missions projects, identifying strategies for improving missions engagement within churches, making missions opportunities affordable and making sure that missions efforts are effective - in part by working and collaborating with existing field missionaries - were some of the topics addressed during discussion.

Eighteen Executive Board members completed their service and were recognized during the meeting.

Contact Caleb Yarbrough at caleb@arkansasbaptist.org.



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ABN Board member profiles: Mike Vinson and Mike Sheets

CORNING – Mike Vinson, a certified public accountant (CPA) from Corning, represents district three for the *Arkansas Baptist News* Board of Directors, and he has served since 2014. Vinson owns his own accounting practice in Corning.



Vinson

Vinson is a member of First Baptist Church, Corning, where he serves as a men's Sunday school teacher, deacon and member of the praise team.

He is a trained disaster relief team member for Current-Gaines Baptist Association's feeding unit and has served on deployments to New York, Houston and across Arkansas.

Over the years, he has made six mission trips to Mexico and has participated in nine trips to Haiti since 2010. The last five trips to Haiti were

to Hope Rising Children's Home. For the last three years, he has served on their board and is currently the president of the board.

"Any time I have been asked to serve, I view it as an opportunity to make a difference for the Lord," said Vinson. "God has blessed me with certain gifts, skills and talents, and whenever I can use them for His glory, I find satisfaction in that. Hopefully, I am doing that for the ABN."

In his spare time, Vinson enjoys playing golf, exercising and helping coach his granddaughter's summer softball team. He loves spending time with his family and is looking forward to his second grandchild coming in December.

"I think the *Arkansas Baptist News* is a vital link in keeping Arkansas Baptists connected and informed," said Vinson. "Small churches in particular need to hear and learn from others, and the paper is a great resource."

TEXARKANA – Mike Sheets, a professor of chemistry at Texarkana College, has served as district seven representative for the ABN Board of Directors since 2015.



Sheets

Sheets is a member of Cornerstone Baptist Church, Texarkana, where he previously served as the Sunday school director and minister of music. He

currently serves as a deacon at Cornerstone.

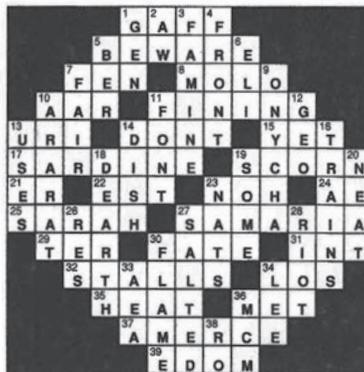
In his spare time, Sheets enjoys collecting old cameras, listening to old-time radio and working on chemical demos.

"I have always enjoyed reading the ABN to keep up with what Baptists in Arkansas and around the world are doing, and I wanted to be able to give something back to ABN," said Sheets.

"It is more important than ever that we have a reliable

source of information about what is going on. ABN is not just a cheerleader for Baptists, but a trustworthy voice," continued Sheets. "Many years ago when Tim (Yarbrough, editor) first came to the ABN, I sent a note congratulating him and asking him not to be just a cheerleader but also a critic if needed. Through the years, he has ably fulfilled his promise and guided the ABN to be the best publication of its kind."

See the ABN crossword, page 9



Sam Moore Evangelistic Ministries

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Gospel Games

"An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules."

2 Timothy 2:5 (CSB)

Whose child is it?

"THEN THE OTHER WOMAN SAID, 'NO! BUT THE LIVING ONE IS MY SON, AND THE DEAD ONE IS YOUR SON.' AND THE FIRST WOMAN SAID, 'NO! BUT THE DEAD ONE IS YOUR SON, AND THE LIVING ONE IS MY SON.' THUS THEY SPOKE BEFORE THE KING." 1 KINGS 3:22

King Solomon needed wisdom to determine which woman was telling the truth. Color the picture and read 2 Kings 4:16-27 to discover Solomon's solution.

SPENKA



Across

1. Hook on a pole
5. "___ of the leaven of the Pharisees" (Mark 8:15)
7. Marsh
8. Hawaiian isle (abbr.)
10. Swiss river
11. "The ___ pot is for silver" (Proverbs 17:3)
13. Father of Bezaleel (Exodus 35:30)
14. Common contraction
15. "___ I will bring one plague more" (Exodus 11:1)
17. "he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a ___ stone" (Revelation 4:3)
19. "they laughed them to ___ and mocked them" (2 Chronicles 30:10)
21. Judah's firstborn (Genesis 38)
22. Superlative ending

Down

23. Japanese drama
24. One (Scot.)
25. Mother of Isaac
27. Country between Israel and Judah
29. Not yet a state (abbr.)
30. Final outcome
31. Football theft (abbr.)
32. "And Solomon had forty thousand ___ of horses" (1 Kings 4:26)
34. ___ Alamos
35. "They should ___ the furnace" (Daniel 3:19)
36. Opera company, informally
37. "And they shall ___ him in an hundred shekels of silver" (Deuteronomy 22:19)
39. Another name for Esau (Genesis 25)

Down

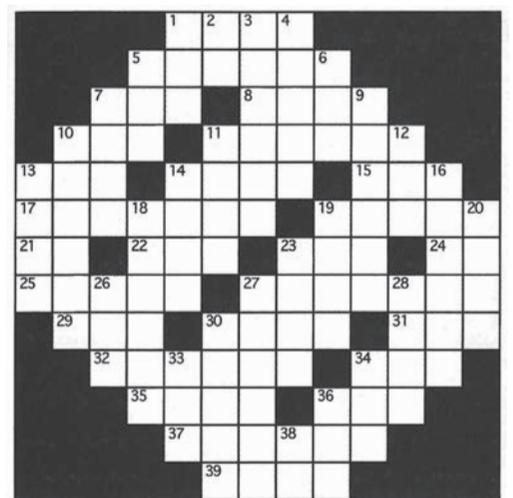
1. Bible bk. with 50 chapters
2. Word of disgust
3. "not a ___ of bread...but of hearing the words of the Lord" (Amos 8:11)
4. Where the battle rages
5. Atlantic isle (abbr.)
6. He took Samuel under his wing
7. "she was a woman of a ___ countenance" (2 Samuel 14:27)
9. A sweet spice mentioned in Exodus 30
10. Mountain in E. Turkey
11. Baptismal basin
12. Earth (comb. form)
13. "learn to maintain good works for necessary ___" (Titus 3:14)
14. "Bring a ___ to share" (church supper request?)

Down

16. Teachers
18. "there should be great ___ throughout all the world" (Acts 11:28)
19. A few
20. Tidy
23. Acrobats from India
26. Grad student's task
27. "For every one shall be ___ with fire" (Mark 9:49)
28. "faithful children not accused of ___ or unruly" (Titus 1:6)
30. "the angel of the Lord ascended in the ___ of the altar" (Judges 13:20)
33. Candelnut tree fiber
34. Actress Merriwether
36. 1900, to Tiberias
38. Artificial language

Crossword by
Barbour Publishing, Inc.

ABN Crossword puzzle



Crossword answer, page 8



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Editor's Note: The Arkansas Baptist News would love to share your church news with the state. Send your information to sarah@arkansasbaptist.org or call 1-800-838-2272, ext. 5153. Please submit information three weeks prior to the event.

Obituaries

Joe B. Collins, 76, of Jacksonville, died Aug. 1.

An Air Force veteran, Collins was an ordained minister and pastored several churches in Arkansas. Collins also ran a successful optometrist practice in Jacksonville for 54 years.

He was preceded in death by his parents and a daughter.

Collins is survived by his wife, a brother, a daughter and four grandchildren.

The funeral was Aug. 9 at Roller-Owens Funeral Home in North Little Rock, followed by burial at Arkansas State Veterans Cemetery in North Little Rock.

Jack B. Carter, 90, of Little Rock, died Aug. 6.

Carter was a member of Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock and served as a deacon, trustee and Sunday school teacher. Carter also served the state of Arkansas with Nail Benders and Church in a Day.

A memorial service was held Aug. 9 at Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock.

Milestones

Fred Oaks retired as pastor of Faith Baptist Church, Quitman.

First Baptist Church, Marked Tree, will celebrate its 110th anniversary on Sunday, Sept. 15. J.D. "Sonny" Tucker,

executive director of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, will be the guest speaker. Lunch will follow the worship service.

On the move

Danny Johnson is serving as interim pastor at Ebenezer Baptist Church, El Dorado.

Walt Rogers is serving as pastor at Lakeside Baptist Church, Rogers.

Matthew Wilson is serving as pastor at Union Baptist Church, El Dorado.

Church life

East Mount Zion Trinity Baptist Church, Clarksville, will host The Diplomats at 7 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 31.

First Baptist Church, Pine Bluff, will host the 10th annual Hymn Fest at 5 p.m., Sunday, Sept. 29.

Baptist life

West Baptist Church, Batesville, will be the drop off spot for the Acts 1:8 One Day Mission Trip No Sale Yard

Sale. Items can be dropped off from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday-Friday, from now until the mission event. The mission day will be in Independence Baptist Association Saturday, Oct. 5.

LifeWay will host a Pastor Date Night at **Second Baptist Church, Conway**, starting at 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 3. The night will feature a panel of ministry couples to answer questions about life and ministry. For more information, visit lifeway.com.

Forrest City Baptist Church, Forrest City, will host a disaster relief training event starting at 8 a.m., Saturday, Sept. 14.

Caroline Baptist Association will host a Women's Celebration conference at Lonoke Baptist Church starting at 10 a.m., Saturday, Sept. 14.

Victory Car Show Sept. 15 at Immanuel

LITTLE ROCK – The seventh annual Victory Car Show presented by the men's ministry of Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock will be held from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 15.

Admission is free. For more information about registering a car or motorcycle, visit ibcl.org/events.

Immanuel Baptist Church is located at 501 N. Shackelford in Little Rock.

Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock, will host a disaster relief training event starting at 8 a.m., Saturday, Oct. 12.

Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock, will host a disaster relief training event starting at 8 a.m., Saturday, Oct. 12.

Heart to Heart Women's Ministry of Family

Church, White Hall, will host Relentless Women's Conference Friday-Saturday, Nov. 1-2. For more information, visit www.heart2heartfc.ws.



ABN Podcast 101 - ABN Podcast host Bill Bumpas discusses federal defunding of Planned Parenthood and speaks with Rose Mimms, executive director of Arkansas Right to Life, about bringing the pro-life play, "Viable," to Arkansas. Bumpas also interviews "Viable" play producer John Hoover.

Listen at arkansasbaptist.org/podcast

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Classifieds

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In search of a **full-time** or **bi-vocational pastor** for Shepherd Hill Baptist Church located south of Pine Bluff, AR. Send resumes to CBrown@next-wire.com.

First Baptist Church, Dumas, AR, in search for a **pastor**. Send resume to PSC, 200 East Waterman, Dumas, Arkansas 71639.

Belview Baptist in Melbourne, AR, is seeking a **full-time pastor**. Send resumes to mybelview@gmail.com.

Portland Baptist Church, Portland, Arkansas, is seeking a **full-time pastor**. Letter/resume to ronlmiller47@gmail.com or Ron Miller, 251

Keller Bend Rd., Wilmot, AR 71676.

Seeking **bi-vocational pastor** resumes for rural churches in north central Arkansas. Submit to rbaa@centurytel.net or Rocky Bayou Baptist Association, P.O. Box 59, Franklin, AR 72536.

Rector First Baptist Church seeks **full-time senior pastor**. Send resume to rectorfirst@gmail.com or PO Box 197, Rector, AR 72461.

FBC, Pangburn, is seeking a **pastor**. Please email resumes to Pangburnfbcpastorsearch@gmail.com or mail to First Baptist Church, Attn: Pastor Search Team, PO Box 250, Pangburn, AR, 72121.

Archview Baptist Church is seeking a **bi-**

vocational pastor. Mail resume to 12610 Arch St., Little Rock, AR 72206.

First Baptist Church of Gillham is seeking a **pastor**. Please send resume to First Baptist Church of Gillham, PO Box 150, Gillham, AR 71841.

OTHER STAFF POSITIONS

Harlan Park Baptist Church, Conway, is seeking a **part-time worship leader** with ability to coordinate and plan worship, lead praise team and overall music ministry. Great spot for young worship leader to gain experience. Please submit resume with references to garynmitchell@hotmail.com or call 501-269-5536.

FBC, Lepanto, seeking a **full-time youth pastor**. Salary and parsonage provided. Please send your resume to kyle@fbclepanto.com.

First Baptist Church, Calico Rock, is seeking a **full-time youth/children's minister**. Send resume to fbccr@fbccr.org.

FBC, Flippin, is seeking a **full-time student minister**. Send resumes to fbclippin@hotmail.com. For more information: www.fbc-flippin.com.

First Baptist Church, Haysville, Kansas, is seeking a **full-time student pastor**. Send resumes to firstbaptisthaysville@gmail.com.

First Baptist Church, Big Spring, Texas, is seeking a **full-time student minister**.

Resumes will be accepted through September 8, 2019. A full job description may be viewed at www.fbcbigspring.org. Please submit resumes to fbcstudentminister@gmail.com.

MISCELLANEOUS

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SEPTEMBER 1, 2019

Ephesians 1:3-14 is one continuous sentence of 202 words in the Greek text. Biblical scholars agree that this text is the most cumbersome sentence in the Greek language. The Apostle Paul offered phrase after phrase of God-centered praise. The reason for Paul's rejoicing and praise is that God has saved us and has "blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens" (Eph. 1:3).

Imagine the cartoon that describes a gathering of a very rich deceased man's greedy family who are waiting for the attorney to read the will. While family members are on the edge of their seats, the attorney begins to read the will, "I, John Doe, being of sound mind and body, spent it all!" Jesus didn't spend it all; He paid it all! Jesus' death on the cross and His resurrection made possible our salvation. Warren Wiersbe said, "When you were born again into God's family, you were born rich."

Paul said Christ has "blessed us with every spiritual blessing" (Eph. 1:3). The

word "bless" is the Greek word *eulogeo*, which literally means "to speak well of." It signifies "to praise, to celebrate, to bless, and to rejoice." We can rejoice and praise God because "in Christ" we are spiritually rich. We have every spiritual enrichment needed for the spiritual life.

Writing from prison, Paul explained that our spiritual blessings come from three sources. God the Father chose to

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Rejoice

EPHESIANS 1:3-14 (HCSB)

save us even "before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4). Christ, by His grace, forgave us, redeemed us, and made us His inheritance (Eph. 1:7-11). Our salvation in Christ is "sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. He is the down payment of our inheritance" (Eph. 1:13-14).

The purpose of giving us all these spiritual blessings is "to the praise of His glory" (Eph. 1:14). We should join Paul in this God-centered praise. We should give God praise for all that He has done for us, all that He is doing for us, and all that He will do for us.

Psychologists tell us that most people worry from time to time. Most will realize it was ineffective and learn from it. Sadly, there are those who are chronic worriers. Chronic worrying is about the need to worry. It is a common characteristic of almost all anxiety disorders. It is the cardinal diagnostic feature of Generalized Anxiety Disorder.

Three times in this text Jesus said, "Don't worry" (Matt. 6:25, 31, 34).

Worry results when we focus too much on self. A centered life is a life that is focused on Jesus Christ as Lord. When you have Jesus, you have everything you need. The statement, "This is why I tell you," (Matt. 6:25) connects this passage with Matthew 6:19-24, which is focused on unreserved devotion to God. Unreserved devotion to God requires us to trust God for every provision. When we do, there is no reason for anxiety or worrying.

Jesus confronted our worries about food. We need to take a lesson from the birds. "They don't sow or reap or gather into barns" (Matt. 6:26). God takes care

of them. Jesus said we are more valuable than the birds (Matt. 6:26). Jesus also confronted our worries about clothes. The wildflowers grow and adorn the fields (Matt. 6:28). Jesus said Solomon in all his splendor was not adorned like one of these (Matt. 6:29). Jesus told us that God will do much more for us (Matt. 6:30).

We all have needs, but worrying about them will not do any good (Matt. 6:27). God knows what you need (Matt. 6:32). Jesus calls us to seek His kingdom and His righteousness and then everything else will fall into place (Matt. 6:33).

Many people worry about things that might happen tomorrow. Jesus said, "Don't worry about tomorrow ... Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matt. 6:34). We really only have today. God will provide for whatever the future brings. "His mercies never end. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness!" (Lam. 3:22-23).

When our life is centered on Christ, we need not worry about food, clothes and the future.

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

A centered life

MATTHEW 6:25-34 (HCSB)

SEPTEMBER 8, 2019

I learned about the relationship of cause and effect in elementary school. Our teacher used an egg to demonstrate Sir Isaac Newton's theory of gravity. She held it up and released it. The mess on the floor revealed the cause. The reality of cause and effect can easily be seen in the Christian life. It was Paul's desire and passion to help believers understand the effect their salvation had in their daily lives.

Paul received a report about the Ephesians' faith and love (Eph. 1:15). He didn't just evangelize them and forget

them; he remembered them. It moved him to thanksgiving and prayer.

He constantly gave thanks in prayer for the work of God's grace in their lives (Eph. 1:16). Paul specifically prayed that that God "would give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him" (Eph. 1:17). He wanted them to know God more. The spirit of wisdom and revelation is a reference to the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13-14). Revelation refers to the knowledge, and wisdom refers to the

ability to use that knowledge to influence and affect the course of one's life.

Paul also prayed that the "the eyes of your heart may be enlightened" (Eph. 1:18). He wanted the Holy Spirit to enlighten them to "the hope of His calling" (Eph. 1:18). This speaks to their conversion experience in the past that has a present and future impact. He wanted them to be enlightened to the "riches of His inheritance" (Eph. 1:18). This speaks to the rich spiritual blessings we have as heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17).

Paul also wanted them to be enlightened to "the immeasurable greatness of His power" (Eph. 1:19). This was the same power that raised Jesus from the dead, seated Him at the right hand of God with all authority on earth and in heaven, and appointed Him as the head of the Church (Eph. 1:20-23).

Paul remembered those he evangelized in Ephesus, and he was moved to pray for them. We should follow his example.

The theme of Philippians is joy. The word "rejoice" is found nine times; the word "joy," four times, and the expression "rejoice with," two times. Although Paul was writing from prison, he was filled with joy, and he wanted the Philippians to be filled with joy. Christians should be known as joyful people. The one thing that can rob us of our joy is worry. We can't do what Bobby McFerrin suggests in his tune "Don't Worry, Be Happy." Worry is not something we just turn off. Paul's instruction was, "Don't worry. Pray."

I have wrestled through seasons of doubt, dryness, despair and discouragement. My joy was gone because I had drifted away from my time alone with God. Our joy comes from the Lord. If we don't spend time with Him, our joy is replaced with anxiety. Paul said, "Rejoice in the Lord always" (Phil. 4:4). Our joy and rejoicing emerge from our relationship with the Lord. The key is prayer.

Paul used three different words for prayer. The word "prayer" was the gener-

al word for making requests of God, but it also has a worship element. It carries the idea of adoration, devotion and worship. We often forget that our time alone with God is a worship experience. The second word is "petition," and it means to voice our need or problem. The last word is "thanksgiving," which means to voice our gratitude and appreciation to God. The result of this praying is that God will give us a peace that "surpasses every thought" and will abide with us (Phil. 4:7, 9). This peace will guard our hearts and minds (Phil. 4:7).

Like that guard that was chained to Paul, peace stands guard over our hearts and minds, guarding us from wrong feelings and wrong thinking.

Spending time alone with God will help us to dwell on whatever is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, things of moral excellence, and things worthy of praise (Phil. 4:8).

Deepen your relationship with God by spending time with Him every day. It will bring joy to your life.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Remembered

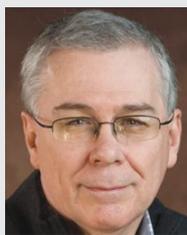
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Featured commentary writer



Gerald Nash

Gerald Nash is a registered respiratory therapist and EEG technician at Saint Mary's Regional Medical Center in Russellville. Nash is involved in medical research and is a preaching pastor at Soul Food Cafe Mission. He is involved in missions and also leads a small group and the decision room ministry at Second Baptist Church, Conway. Nash has attended several universities and seminaries, including Williams Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He holds multiple educational degrees, including a bachelor of arts in Christian ministries, a master of arts and doctor of ministry in pastoral studies and a master of arts in theological studies. Nash volunteers on the Cairo Geniza Project deciphering and transcribing ancient Greek and Arabic documents. He loves to read, bass fish, and spend time with his family. He and his wife, Mary Ann, love to travel, explore ancient ruins and go on wild animal safaris.



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- 13 saved at Sports Crusaders camp in NLR
- 3 state pro-life laws blocked indefinitely
- CP 'one sacred effort' to advance gospel
- ABN to publish Minn.-Wisc. Baptist newspaper
- 100th ABN Podcast features Stephen Kendrick

Cooperative Program section

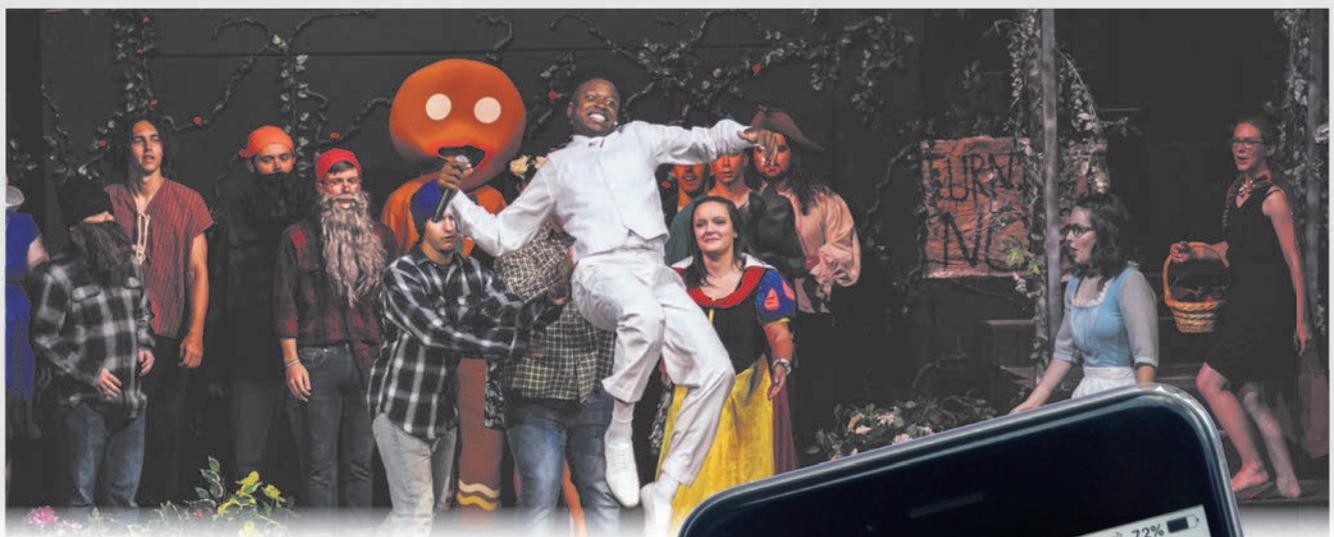
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See CP section



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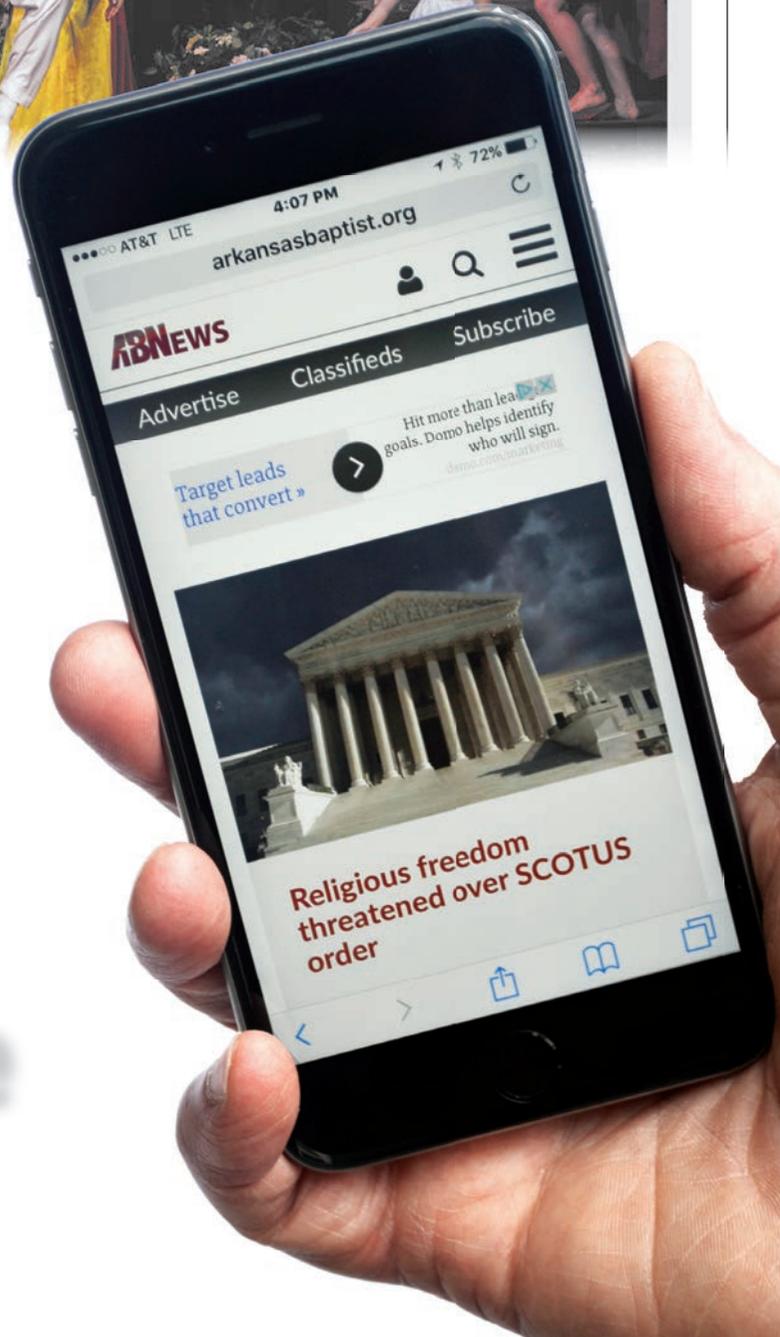
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