

Connections

LAKWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH

MARCH 2017

VOL VIII: ISSUE 3

LBCPC.ORG



Welcome
Spring



Welcome Home.



A Message from **M.R. Hamilton**

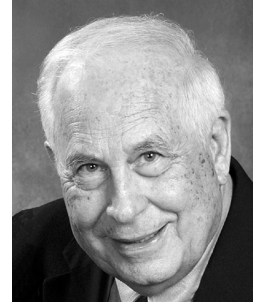
SENIOR PASTOR, LBC

As I begin to write this month's Connections letter I am taken aback by the fact that this month marks my 4th year as the pastor here at Lakewood.

Katie and I led the joint revival with Central and Lakewood on my birthday, March 10, 2013. I smile when I realize that I still introduce myself as the new pastor at Lakewood as the days have passed like moments and the weeks like short days. Each month seems to only take a week or so and plans six months ahead feel like they are just around the corner. In my mind the long summer days were just a few days ago yet spring is in the air and winter has come and gone without me realizing it was here. Time sure does fly when you are having fun. It is my heart's desire that as you read this you feel much the same way. I do realize that during that time I had two heart cauterizations and Katie had cancer but each of those storms passed us by as though they were not really happening. Certainly God has been so good to us through it all and it is amazing how far we have come. When I was guiding in the mountains I would always tell my clients to never look ahead at what stood before them but to look all around at the beauty that can only be seen by looking down from a mountain. They would always ask me how far is it to the top as though knowing the truth of the struggle ahead would somehow make it easier. I would never give them the answer they wanted but would direct their attention back down the trail or to the valley below. How far we have to go is not nearly as important as how far we have come when we start to grow weary. Look at how far you have already come I would say as I directed their attention away from the mountain ahead. You must have thought climbing this far this fast was beyond you but look and see just how far you have come. At this pace we will soon only have one view of this mountain and that will be down. For anyone who has ever looked down from a mountain knows that you just can't see a mountain from below. Romans reminds us of the great truth that God's invisible qualities and divine nature are clearly seen in what He has made, and I feel certain God made mountains to be climbed, because you can't see and understand it from below. So if all the activity of the past few years here at Lakewood have caused you to grow weary and ask just how much farther do we have to go before we finally see this crazy building finished. Let me ask you to look back four years to March the 10th 2013. Wow, we never dreamed we could get this much done in such a short time. At this pace we will be having our first church wide fellowship in that building before you know it. God has chosen to give us the ability to look back but not ahead for a lot of really good reasons. So look back and ask yourself an honest question. Just how far have we come in such a short time? Now dare to dream of where we will be in four more years if we just keep climbing.

A Message from **Dr. Jerry Horner**

MINISTER OF DISCIPLESHIP & OUTREACH



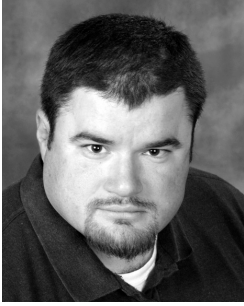
It's that time of the year again, when we spring forward with the change to DST. Why does it have to be on Sunday? Why lose an hour before the church service? Why not on Saturday, when we have a day to adjust? Why not on Monday, when everyone has to get up anyway? Why not just keep the same time the whole year? Most people don't know what time it is anyway.

But the more I think about it, I see a lesson here. It's time for churches to spring forward, especially if they have fallen asleep in the stale atmosphere of powerless traditionalism that hasn't felt the fresh breeze of the Holy Spirit in ages. We waste the present when we live in the past. The statement, "We've always done it this way," is an excuse for staying where we are, and a sure sign that remembering the past is a substitute for making progress. Most churches plateaued years ago, because they got stuck in the rut of the routine and lost the consciousness of God's presence. When was the last time you attended a worship service with an excited expectation that you would have a genuine encounter with Christ, and that you would experience the glory of God filling the place, and that miracles would take place? For that matter, when was the last time you experienced any excitement in worship? It might be right for a church service to be reverent, but it's down-right unforgivable for it to be dull.

Our churches also need to fall back. We need to fall back in love with the Lord Jesus. We may love the music, the fellowship, the special events, but first and foremost do we have a passion for the glory of Christ? We need to fall back into the sound and solid exposition of the Bible, with an appetite for meat and not just for milk. Jesus taught the necessity of the Word of God for survival, but where is the hunger and thirst for a knowledge of that Word? More than ever in this day of moral confusion and relative thinking, when we allow public opinion rather than the Bible to determine our belief and behavior, we need a strong word from the Lord.

We need to fall back to the fundamentals of the faith. The bloated and overweight, but under-nourished and unhealthy version of modern Christianity bears little resemblance to the New Testament description of a believer. Many church members know more about relationships with others than about a relationship with God. They know about prayer, but don't know how to pray. They know what the Bible is, but not how to study it. They know about baptism and the Lord's Supper, but can't explain what they mean. They say that Jesus is Lord, but don't know what submission to that Lordship involves. They know what tithing is, but don't practice it. They profess to know what salvation is, but don't know how to share it. They have a vague knowledge of the Holy Spirit as the Third Person of the Trinity, but have never experienced the power of His fullness. They know more about the benefits of the gospel than about the demands of the gospel.

I challenge you not only to spring forward clockwise on March 12, but to spring forward spiritually, and at the same time to fall back to the basics of Christianity.



A Message from Andrew Spires

STUDENTS & SINGLES, LBC

This month I'd like to share with you a glaring problem within the church in America today.

I decided to write about this because of an article that is making its way through social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram that's getting a lot of attention within Christian leadership circles. I have sited some of that article's research and a few of its points in my article. My hope is that this should be a startling call to action for the church in America today and for us here at Lakewood. In my more than twenty years of working with students and young adults, I've heard many reasons why younger people aren't as interested in church today as the older generation. Instead of just dismissing their words, or just blaming the "sinfulness" of the generation, we actually need to show the Millennial generation what the love of Christ really is by showing how it has affected our lives! Studies on the importance of church attendance and the overall view of the church reveal staggering low numbers, and the most drastic drop in these numbers is among Millennials described as 20-35-year olds.

- Only 2 in 10 Americans under 30 believe attending a church is important or worthwhile (an all-time low).
- 59 percent of Millennials raised in a church have dropped out.
- 35 percent of Millennials have an *anti-church* stance, believing the church does more harm than good.
- Millennials are the least likely age group of anyone to attend church (by far).

To further exacerbate the problem, in the steep drop-off Millennials, is that it has been somewhat ignored and most churches seem to be continuing on with business as usual. Sure, there are young adult ministries but very few that are effective, and even fewer seem to be reacting with any level of concern that matches these staggeringly low statistics. In my experience, most Millennials will place importance on almost anything else above church. So, if it's sleep, they sleep, if it's going to the lake, they go to the lake, beach...the beach, etc. Whatever comes up in their lives, it is placed above church attendance and involvement. Sundays and Wednesdays are no longer worship days, they are just another day in the week. How can an entire generation of people who, for the most part, were so often active in student ministry programs throughout their teenage years suddenly abandon and even look negatively on the church as a whole? The obvious answer is that every person needs Jesus and with that relationship with Christ comes new desires towards service and Christian fellowship. However, I believe there are practical reasons why they have left the church, and there are practical ways those within the church can reach out and recover this generation before it's too late. The list below is not perfect or all encompassing but it is filled with years of observations and conversations with adults from college age to young married couples:

- **THEY DON'T FEEL LISTENED TO!** There's the perception that they are too young (unwise) to help direct the path of the church or be involved in church leadership. Look around

most churches and you'll see the vast number of leaders (staff, deacons, teachers, elders, etc.) in the church are above age 40, with many above 60. The Millennial generation doesn't feel accurately represented in church staff and leadership and is rarely challenged to set up and get involved. No one likes to be looked down upon, whether intentional or not, and the easiest recourse is *apathy* or *absence*.

- **THEY DON'T LIKE CHURCH POLITICS!** Hopefully your reaction is; **WHO DOES?!?** We've all attended a church business meeting, ever notice how few young adults come, if at all? Why...well it's not because they don't care, but because they don't like infighting in the church. They may have sat with their parents through many a business meeting that were boring and contentious with people pushing their agendas instead of pushing unity. Even the un-churched world has a negative view of how the church handles its business, and the idea of "playing" church politics isn't found anywhere in the Bible. In fact, the very opposite is commanded, that it is the role of every true believer to protect the unity of believers. Millennials want good financial stewardship, they want accountability, but they, for the most part, aren't going to fight over it.

- **THEY SEE FAR TOO LITTLE ACTUAL MINISTRY GOING ON OUTSIDE THE CHURCH!** Millennials love a cause, almost any cause. Let one of their friends get sick and they mobilize the world for a 5k fundraiser, or collect donations to help support their medical bills. They want many, and different opportunities to serve others, and many times they are finding these opportunities outside the church. We know that you don't have to be a believer to be a decent person and serve others, but the church should be a place where they find many service opportunities devoted to a higher purpose. Instead, they have noticed that much of the church activities and budget are centered around the people within its walls instead of reaching those outside.

- **THEY ARE BUSY!** More than any previous generation the Millennial is a multi-tasking one. With the assistance of technology, this generation is often doing ten things at once. They are balancing work, kids practices, home-life, etc. They are pulled in so many directions that many choose down time over church functions when the option is available. This is not so much of a problem that the church needs to address within itself, but instead provide teaching and leadership on how to prioritize schedules and still place importance and preeminence on worship.

- **THEY NEED VISION!** The Millennial generation wants to see proof, they want to see what a true Christ follower looks like. They don't need more hypocrisy, they don't need haughty and judgmental glances, they need real, genuine vision and leadership lived out in front of them. I believe this is why relational ministry/evangelism is so effective with this group of people. They can watch countless numbers of excellent and dynamic preachers on YouTube, and download and listen to powerful worship performed by some of the best bands out there, but they need something real they can connect with that models out what a follower of Jesus truly is. This is an out-of-the-box generation, church as usual will no longer suffice.

CONTINUED ON LAKEWOOD MEDLEY PAGE

• **STOP BLAMING THEIR GENERATION!** This isn't an us versus them situation. All things in life change, and we all change for better or worse along with it. When one faction within the church believes it has the only and correct way to go, and demands everyone else follow, it often undermines unity and leaves someone else behind. God is an amazing God, He can be God to so many different types of people with different personalities, traits, and backgrounds. He loves all equally, whatever way He chooses to reach each person is the only and correct way. We must learn to follow Christ's command to love our neighbor as ourselves and put others needs before our own, especially when it comes to the church body. Churches should never have cliques of old versus young, or traditional versus new, there should equal accommodation to all in Christian love and unity.

• **PREACH ON BIG ISSUES!** While theology and exhaustive Scripture series have their place in all believers lives, this generation needs preaching that will help them thrive in everyday life. I'm not saying easy, feel good lessons, but challenging teaching series that tackle big topics. This generation, more than those before, are living in this culture where anything goes. They go to school, college, play on teams with, or work alongside someone who is gay, transgender, agnostic, atheist, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Mormon, etc. and they need the tools to defend their faith with the goal of evangelizing that person. I have found in working with students that they will stay silent if they are not absolutely confident in what to say, and the same is true of adults. Teaching and preaching doesn't always have to be topical but should always lead to practical application.

To close, let's look at some solutions. How do we reach this missing generation? How do we help pull them from apathy or absence? This generation will most likely be reached by real people, people who love Christ authentically. Put people

out front, in key leadership roles who are authentic disciples of Christ, as they will have already accepted the call to go and make more disciples. Look for places within church leadership where Millennials can be placed in key roles, and listen to them by implementing their ideas. Stop all infighting, politicking, and cliques, develop a true body of believers all working together, young, middle aged, and older who are all pulling in the same direction. Develop new service projects within the community and challenge all ages to be a part, and open more stateside and foreign mission opportunities as these can be truly life changing events for believers. Church attendance doesn't need to be another box to check on their schedule checklist of life, it must be something of value and worth, by creating a family atmosphere, and loving environment. Cast that vision (notice I didn't say form a committee to discuss it), promote that vision, follow the pastor's leadership, and challenge all others to follow. Look for ways that the generational divide can be erased, not one group come serve us, but how can we all serve each other. Open lines of communication between all age groups and see what new ideas can come from it. Finally, we work to change the public perception. Don't just add another bible study attended by the same people within the church, instead look for ways that all can rally around a cause, a service project, and the community. Wouldn't it be great if everywhere you went in Phenix City & Columbus people were excited and curious when they found out you attend Lakewood? Not because we're a big church, not because of our music, have a new building, or because of our pastor, but because we have served our community so well (and therefore represented Christ so well) that people have heard of the impact of all the ministries (empowered by the Holy Spirit) at this church. Now, that's a great testimony of a church, that's a great perception, and that's how we'll reach those Millennials inside and outside these walls. Let's be intentional.

CHICK-FIL-A SPIRIT NIGHT FOR BELIZE ON THE 8TH FROM 5:00-8:00PM

LUNCH FUNDRAISER FOR BELIZE ON MARCH 12TH.

Lakewood Medley

IN MEMORY OF:

Bobby Cook:

Rex Carter's Sunday School Class for Amen Choir

Dot Beck for Food Closet

J. D. & Diane Whitehead for Challenge to Build

Sam Loftin:

Brenda Evans for Bus Fund

Montise Waldrep for Youth Missions

Pat & Tracie Loftin for Youth Missions

Clerks of Municipal Court for Youth Missions

J.D. & Diane Whitehead for Challenge to Build

Deborah Hanks for Youth Missions

Melvin & Sherry Scroggins for Circle of Influence

Harris Henderson:

J.D. & Diane Whitehead for Challenge to Build

Bill & Mildred Benton for Youth Ministry

Jimmy & Susan Graham for Youth Ministry

Melvin & Sherry Scroggins for Challenge to Build

Chuck Roberts:

St. Mark United Methodist for Challenge to Build

Mr. & Mrs. Michael May for Budget

Melvin & Sherry Scroggins for Challenge to Build

Rev. Alton Harp for Annie Armstrong from Glenda

Medley and Gabriel Medley

Linda Cawthorne for Circles of Influence

from J. P. and Esther Benton

Harris Henderson for Circles of Influence

from J. P. and Esther Benton

Sam Loftin for Youth Missions from Nancy Hallmark

IN HONOR OF:

Fran Loftin for Youth Ministry from Malinda Wilkes

A Message from **Gina Fusillo**



CHILDREN, LBC

Did you feel “loved on” during February? I know the Kidz put a lot of love out with their Valentine scripture book marks. Such things become big treasures as we hold small gifts dear to our hearts.

Kidz Choir is a blessing of praises to God through music. Kindergarten – 6th grade meet with Debbie Parks and Katie Hamilton on Sunday nights at 6:00 pm in the Choir Room. Preschool Kidz Choir, an introduction to music and song, prepares the younger children for musical praise. Ages 3 and 4 meet with Shawndra Rhodes and Fran Loftin on Sunday nights at 6:00 pm in the Children’s Church room. Please help us grow our attendance. All children Preschool age 3 through 6th grade are invited to be a part of the musical praise at LBC. Remember Ms. Fran Loftin in prayer as she heals from her surgery. We will miss her in the preschool choir on Sunday nights during her recovery. Again, another place to serve is needed for several weeks to help Ms. Shawndra with the Preschool choir on Sunday nights.

The Annual Lock In for the Awana/Flyte Kidz will be this month. Look for more information regarding date and times in the upcoming Church bulletins. With the number of events upcoming and the record high attendance in Awana/Flyte, there is the need to increase our volunteers. What a blessing! We continue to pray that God will provide the servants to serve Him as they work with this vital ministry. Anyone who feels led to serve in the children’s ministry in an area, should contact Gina Fusillo (321) 759-6065 or send email to gina@lbcpc.org.

A Spring day in April is a perfect time to gather on the Church front lawn for our Annual Easter Egg Hunt. Bring a chair so you can relax and enjoy food and fellowship while children buzz around looking for special Grand Prize Eggs. Festivities will begin at 11:00 am on Saturday, April 8th. As we prepare for this fun event, please drop off any offerings you wish to make of plastic eggs and Easter candy in the Church Office. As Easter approaches, the Children’s Ministry has a special treat for us on Palm Sunday during the 11:00 worship service.

Part of our Children’s Ministry is providing a safe and happy place for preschool children. Care and guidance is provided during both the 9:00 and 11:00 worship services on Sundays. Amanda Owens is our Extended Session Coordinator. She has been successful with a rotating schedule for volunteers who are able to serve during the 11:00 worship service, preventing the need for the same people to serve each week. With some recent changes, we need to add a few more volunteers to the schedule. If you are able to serve once or twice per quarter during the 11:00 worship service, please contact Amanda so she can place you on the schedule. Be an answer to someone’s prayer. We are praying that God will deliver to our ministry needs. We are very thankful for all who serve in this vital ministry who lead and teach our children about our Lord and Savior, as our children are the future of our church.

Lakewood Happenings

March 2017

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
			10:30am VK/WMU @ in Rex Carter's Class			10:30am Women's Combined Final Bible Study & Brunch
			1	2	3	4
	10:30am Amen Choir 6:30pm Dr. Horner's Class	6:30pm Alleluia Choir	7:00pm Deacon Meeting 5-8pm Chick Fil A Spirit Night for Belize		5:30pm Game Night	10:45am Young Married's Feed The Homeless
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
TIME CHANGE Belize Fundraiser Luncheon	10:30am Amen Choir 6:30pm Dr. Horner's Class	6:30pm Alleluia Choir	7:00pm Finance Meeting			
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	10:30am Amen Choir 6:30pm Dr. Horner's Class	No Alleluia Choir		7:00pm JEG/BW		10:45am Single & Young Adult Feed The Homeless
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
1:00pm Orchestra Rehearsal & Lunch 4-5:30pm God With Us Rehearsal	10:30am Amen Choir 6:30pm Dr. Horner's Class	6:30pm Alleluia Choir	6-8pm Students Scavenger Hunt			
26	27	28	29	30	31	

January Giving

	BUDGET	CTB	MISSIONS	OTHER	TOTAL
1/1	\$14,869.17	\$610.00	\$ 570.00	\$ 397.00	\$16,446.17
1/8	\$14,063.54	\$90.00	\$1,464.00	\$762.59	\$16,380.13
1/15	\$15,647.01	\$210.00	\$515.00	\$95.00	\$16,467.01
1/22	\$10,335.54	\$175.00	\$380.00	\$1,568.00	\$12,458.54
1/29	\$9,542.13	\$250.00	\$4,004.00	\$3,048.00	\$16,844.13

ONGOING ACTIVITIES:

SUNDAY

- 9:00am Contemporary Worship
- 10:00am Bible Fellowship
- 11:00am Blended Worship
- 11:15am Kidz Worship
- 6:00pm Evening Worship
- Kidz Choir

WEDNESDAY

- 5:00pm Family Night Supper
- 5:45pm AWANA, FLYTE, R.E.A.L.
- 6:00pm Orchestra Rehearsal
- Adult Prayer & Bible Study
- 7:00pm Praise Team Rehearsal

Only \$5 per adult meal,
\$2.50 per child meal with a
maximum \$15 per family!

Let's Eat!

Dinner is
served from
5:00-5:45pm.

MARCH WEDNESDAY NIGHT SUPPER

3/1

SMOTHERED
PORK CHOP
RICE & GRAVY
GREEN BEANS
ROLLS
SALAD
DESSERT

3/8

FRIED CHICKEN
MACARONI &
CHEESE
LIMA BEANS
BISCUITS
SALAD
DESSERT

3/15

HAM
SWEET POTATO
CASSEROLE
GREEN BEANS
ROLLS
SALAD
DESSERT

3/22

CHICKEN &
DUMPLINGS
BLACK-EYED PEAS
CORN
CORNBREAD
SALAD
DESSERT

3/29

TACO SALAD
SPANISH RICE
REFRIED BEANS
DESSERT

To make dinner reservations, email Carol at carol@lbcpc.org or call 334.298.6433.

Welcome new members!

SAM & RACHEL SNEED
MARLA CORDONA
CHRISTIAN CORDONA
DEZTANEE WOODS
TAD & RONI BRAUN

MINISTERIAL STAFF

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FRI 8:30AM-12PM

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