

# Connections

LAKWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH

February 2021

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*Ephesians 4:32*



*Welcome Home.*



# A Message from M.R. Hamilton

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SENIOR PASTOR

**As I begin to write this note I find myself dealing with the reality that 2021 is starting out right where 2020 ended.**

COVID is not slowing down and the frustration level of the entire nation has us all on edge and starting to wonder for the first time if America as we know it is going to survive.

Being an old Marine I am passionate about the ideals that have always defined and united us as a nation. It is my prayer and goal for our church family that regardless of circumstances that we remain united by the knowledge that our Kingdom is being governed by the greatest King. His government is not divided and His kingdom will stand so we have nothing to fear.

I was once in the military service of the United States of America but today I serve another kingdom. I belong to another Kingdom and that Kingdom is united around truth and held together by love and is willing to sacrifice for one another.

I was once lost and I ran from one place to another always believing that what my soul longed for was just over the horizon. Then I realized one day that what I longed for was not to be found in this world because I was created for eternity in another place. Nothing in this world can ever define me because I was never made for this world.

I once believed I was a mountain man but when I went to the mountains to discover what I could not find below I soon discovered the mountains had their own way and though I could visit and even live there I could never find there what I was looking for.

I once thought I was a United States Marine but even though I stood in their ranks and wore their uniform I remained the same lost soul searching for my true identity.

I once thought I was an American and the death of this nation would be the death of me but I was mistaken. I am the child of the one true God the creator of the Heavens and Earth. I have been born again a new creation

in Christ Jesus and discovered for the first time where I belong. I am still longing but now I know the truth of who I am and where I am going. My citizenship is in an eternal kingdom that will never be divided.

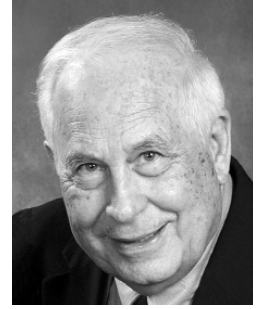
Each time I see the political struggles I am reminded of God's promise that any house divided will fall and my heart breaks for this country. Then I remind myself that God does not need America but America desperately needs God, right here right now if it is to stand. Certainly we are being hard pressed on every side but we are not crushed, perplexed for sure but not without hope.

I continue to pray for 2021 to be a year of refreshing and I continue to pray that we as God's people will shine like a bright light in this present darkness to give hope to all those around us. Our Kingdom, our homes that are in Christ Jesus remain unchanged regardless of what happens to this nation. So please join with me in praying for this nation and making a promise to do and be everything you can be to make this a better place. We as Christians are called to hold out hope in the truth that Love is greater than evil. United we will stand until we see Jesus face to face.

God Bless,  
Brother M.R.



# A Message from Dr. Jerry Horner



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MINISTER OF DISCIPLESHIP & OUTREACH

**The Ark of the Covenant was a rectangular chest 3¾ feet long and 2¼ feet wide and high. It was gold-plated inside and out.** It held the Ten Commandments, two quarts of manna in a jar, and Aaron's rod that had budded. It had a solid gold lid on it that was called the "Mercy Seat." It was the central focal point of Israelite worship, the place where God would meet with man. Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest sprinkled the mercy seat with the blood of a bull and a goat to make a sin offering. This pictured the blood Jesus would shed for our sins on the cross. The ark looked back to what God had done, reminded the people of what God wanted to do for them in the present, and pointed forward to the salvation through Jesus Christ.

In the days of the judge Eli, believing that the presence of the Ark would guarantee them victory, the Israelites had taken it into battle and had lost it to the Philistines (1 Sam. 4). However, when the Philistines took it home with them, they knew only grief and pain, so they decided to send the Ark back to Israel. They put it on a cart pulled by two cows and gladly sent it on its way to Beth Shemesh, the nearest Israelite city (1 Sam. 6:7-12). The people of Beth Shemesh were a curious sort, and when some of them peeked into the Ark, a plague broke out and 50,000 people were killed. They wanted nothing more to do with it, so they sent the Ark on to the next city, Kirjath Jearim, where it stayed, mostly forgotten for the next 70 years.

Then David became king over the entire nation of Israel, and his first move was not a political one, but a spiritual one. He wanted his city not only to be the political capital of the nation, but the spiritual one as well. David wanted to be close to God, and he wanted the nation to be close to God. So one of his first decisions was to bring the Ark of the Covenant home with him to his new capital in Jerusalem (1 Chron. 13). His heart was right, and there was no question that this was God's will. But there was a problem. David transported the Ark on a cart, not by the way God had prescribed.

God declared that the Ark was to be carried by Levites on poles that went through the rings on the Ark (Num. 4:15; 7:6-9; Deut. 31:9; Josh. 3:3, 6; 1 Chron. 15:14-15). Where did David get the idea of a cart? That's the way the Philistines had done it years before.

Everything seemed to go fine for a while. Uzzah drove the cart. The Levites played and sang. David rejoiced and danced. And the people were delighted, thinking all was well. They were doing God's will. Surely He was pleased. But He wasn't. David's caravan came to Nachon's threshing floor, when suddenly and shockingly, an ox stumbled and the cart shook (2 Sam. 6:6). Uzzah reached out to steady the Ark and touched it, something God's Word solemnly forbade. Uzzah fell dead. The people were stunned, silent, still. Their misdirected parade halted. And David was angry with God and left the Ark at the house of Obed-Edom.

Several months later God spoke to David, explaining what had happened. And David informed the people that they had attempted to do God's work in man's ways. They had used earthly methods for a heavenly work. He said, "Because we sought him not IN THE PROPER WAY" (1 Chron. 15:13). What did they do then? They tried again, but this time by God's way. The Levites carried the Ark on the gilded poles, as God had directed, and He blessed them. The Ark arrived safely in Jerusalem, and all was well. Why? His will was done His way.

What's the point of this story? It's not just important to do the right thing, but it's also important that we do it God's way. I am terribly disappointed at recent events that have happened in our nation, particularly the way things turned out in the national election and in the Georgia election, and I have been questioning why things happened as they did. David was angry with God for what happened when things didn't go right. Now, with the last conservative president's administration destroyed, and the rankest neo-pagans in complete power, many of us [continued on page 5](#)

### Continued from Andrew's Article

Suddenly, after hours of walking, in the shade of a barren mountain, he spotted a deserted shack near what must've been an old mine. His heart now racing he ambled his way up the slope and opened the crumbling door. The floor was dusty and littered with trash, there was nothing of use in here, not even a bed to lay his head upon. Disheartened, he walked around back and couldn't believe his eyes; there was an old hand crank well pipe sticking out of the ground. He frantically began to pump the handle on the old well but nothing but air and dust came out. Now angry, he kicked a can that was next to the pump when suddenly a note fell out. It read; "Dear stranger, this pump is working well as of June, 1932. I just put in a new sucker washer, and it'll last for many years. However, the washer will dry out over time and the pump will need to be primed for use. If you have water, slowly pour a small amount into the shaft to wet the washer and then wait about a minute and quickly pour in a larger amount to prime the pump. Then, pump like crazy, and the water should flow. But, if you have no water, under the big white rock, next to the pump, I have buried a jar with exactly enough water to accomplish the task. Don't drink any! You need all of it to make the pump work. Have faith, you'll get water, this well has never run dry! When you get all you need, refill the jar, put it back under the rock, and make sure the note is back inside the can for the next guy."

**Would you have enough faith to pour the jar of water into the well as the note instructed? Or would you think, 1932 is a really long time ago, it'd be a foolish to follow these instructions now. Who knows if that old timer even knew what he was talking about? I'll drink the water and survive a little longer. John 7:37-38; "On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice; "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."The old timer proclaimed; "this well has never run dry!" Jesus, is the only source of life, of purpose, of eternity that will never run dry. Jesus gave this grand invitation to the Jews that day and the responses varied. Some called Him the **Great Prophet** (Deut. 18:15-19), some said He was the **Christ** (Messiah), some **wondered and questioned** how He could be, and some **got angry and wanted to seize Him**. The response is still the same today. Some have faith only in themselves, others think Jesus was a Great Man/Prophet, some accept Him as Christ, others are agnostic and questioning, and others violently refuse Him. **Which are you?****

### Continued from Dr. Horner's Article

are wondering, as David did when Uzzah suddenly fell dead, "What's going on, God? Why have You allowed this?" Could it be that we haven't exactly done things God's way? For at least the past fifty years, when the Moral Majority and Christian Coalition movements arose, we've been trying to use a Philistine cart, aggressive political activism, to change the spiritual and moral culture of our nation. This was a good idea, but was it God's idea? We wanted to please God, but did we go about it in a way He could not bless?

For decades, it all seemed to go so well. We successfully elected leaders, changed laws, and improved policy. But did we lose our primary focus in this method? Our motive was God's will, that our nation be converted, but was it God's way? I'm not saying that it wasn't, but I'm just wondering. Jesus never preached a political message nor strove for political power. Nor did His apostles. Nor did the early church. Nor did any of the great Spirit-empowered revivalists down the centuries. Why? Did they recognize that God's way, the only way to convince cold-hearted unbelievers and transform them into warm-hearted sold-out disciples of Christ was through fervent intercession and the preaching of the gospel by the power of the Holy Spirit, followed by compassionate signs and wonders? Could it be that "not by [human] might, nor by [human] power, but by my Spirit" is still God's way to change the direction of our nation? Could it be that God's method is to spread His kingdom through uncompromising Bible-believing and Bible-preaching churches seeking to fulfill Christ's Great Commission, not by political control? When the gospel is preached and received, and hearts and lives are changed by the power of the Holy Spirit, THEN political changes follow naturally. It's never the other way around. Spiritual renewal always precedes righteous political change. Dark hearts always vote for dark agendas, but changed hearts change their politics and policies. I truly believe that when we seek the Kingdom of God first, then we will see a change in the earthly kingdom.

Please understand that I strongly believe that Christians should be politically involved, and that we should do all we can to elect committed disciples of the Lord who will govern by biblical principles. I'm simply saying that the catastrophe we have just witnessed should awaken all true Christians to renew our focus to the old ways, the Bible way, the Spirit-led, God-dependent, Christlike way--the way the apostles and early church changed their world. And this time, the Ark will get to Jerusalem!



# A Message from Andrew Spires

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MINISTER OF STUDENTS & SINGLES

## Thirsty in the desert

There once was a young man who loved the outdoors. He was fit and strong and liked to challenge himself in extreme conditions. One day, he decided to hike in a desert area far from civilization. He thought to himself; "I'm in the best shape of my life, I can run a marathon, I have extreme endurance, there's no place on earth that could beat me." He knew this was an arid place, where most folks would never venture, but he was no ordinary man. Yet, he was not stupid, he prepared his backpack with a flashlight, matches, water, snacks, even a compass, and went for the planned day-long hike.

It was hot that day, hotter than normal, but he was prepared with lightweight-breathable clothes, he wore the best shoes, and even applied ample sunscreen. He left nothing to chance, as he fully charged his cell phone, and even packed an emergency tarp that could be used as shade or shelter. Traveling light and fast he hit the trail. The area was sparse with vegetation, only small cactus and bushes dotted the landscape. Soon, he came across several streambeds, but found them all dry. He rationed his water, stopping from time to time to give his body a break. He loved the landscape, though it was void of trees and shade it had a spacious beauty, as mountains skirted the horizon.

After traveling for miles, hours had passed and his feet began to hurt. It was the hottest part of the day, and so he decided it would be a good time to stop for lunch. He set up his tarp for shade, ate his food while leaning against a rock, and for a few moments he even closed his eyes for a short nap. Awake and refreshed, he hit the trail again, figuring he could go a few more miles before he would need to turn around and head back. Soon, his time had expired, and he began the trip back to his truck. It was midafternoon now, the sun was still high in the sky and his body was feeling the weight of his daytrip. However, still feeling capable and strong, he walked and even jogged, taking a break from time to time to rest his now sore feet.

Somewhere along the way he followed the wrong path, and even with the use of his compass, he soon realized that his return trip was taking far too long. Now late afternoon the sun was dropping towards the horizon. It would soon be dark and the desert temperatures would plummet.

He thought about calling for help, but how embarrassing would that be? He had faith in his own abilities, and he decided that he was strong enough to make it back without help. Not risking getting further lost in the dark, he made camp for the night. He used his tarp for a shelter, and gathered a few small dry branches for a fire. It was a long cold night, and he frequently awoke to sounds of animals and the creeping cold and he hoped the light of day would reveal his way home. As the morning light dawned he ate the last of his snacks, drank the last few sips of his water and began to search for the right trail. But everything looked the same, and by afternoon he was still hopelessly lost. Now thirsty, and tired, angry and frustrated with himself, he thought I must call for help. To his shock, he pulled out his phone and he had no signal. He had checked several times before and the signal was strong, but now, nothing. His mind raced, as he began to question himself; "Should I try and retrace my steps to where I had signal?" The thoughts of another long cold night, this time without food and water, were daunting. He eventually resigned to that fact, started a fire and put up his shelter again.

That night was even worse, his body now depleted and feeling the effects of the travel and lack of sleep, he shivered through most of the night. He now knew his situation was desperate, if he didn't find water in the morning things could get really bad. He watched the sunrise and struggled to his feet, he had a headache, and his body was aching from laying on the ground. He began to walk, checking every ravine, and crevice for water but there was none to be found.

[continued on page 5](#)

# A Message from David Stephens

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CHILDREN'S MINISTER



**I pray that you are thriving in your relationship with your Lord and Savior during this time of minimal fellowship opportunities.** I pray for those who have endured or are currently enduring Covid and for those who have lost loved ones in any capacity during this season. I pray that people would rise up in situations where brothers and sisters are struggling and be the encouragement that is needed. I pray that as we look at the future near and far that we will look to see where God is and boldly go there responsibly. I pray that we will not be tossed back and forth by any new trend, but we will stand firm and dig into the word of God. It is alive! Let's keep it very simple. Jesus + Nothing = Everything. I'm sure this is not a new concept. I follow it up with; 'Jesus plus what he provided for us in his word is sufficient for us to make Godly choices. Let's be people of the word.

This February month I want to talk very briefly about marriage. As we figure out our future calendar and when we are able to meet and open back up our facilities, I am planning on developing a marriage ministry platform here at Lakewood. What is the Biblical premise of a hallmark marriage? What is a 'Hallmark'? What are the pressing questions facing us today? What are marriage pitfalls? How does one build trust? What is the heart of the matter? So many questions to explore when it comes to marriage, so stay tuned. But for now I will leave you with this truth.

Friendship in the context of marriage is defined as a trust relationship between two people who are mutually drawn to each other. Their unselfish concern, respect, and tenderness influence them to draw closer to each other and to God in whom real meaning is found.

As we celebrate Valentine's day this month those that are married let's remember that we married our best friend. Let's all live out 'I will be there for you' in our relationships.

The family and the marriage is under attack in our culture, and we must fight to keep our homes guarded by the word of God and it's truth that does not change.

## Announcements:

We are going week by week for when we are going to start back Awana and Sunday School. Stay tuned. I hope to be back the 1st week of February.

I have been posting a digital alternative for Pre School and Elementary Worship Sunday, alongside an elementary Bible Story recap on Wednesday. Please like and share this to friends and family.

**GriefShare** has started back up from 6-8PM on Monday nights.



# Lakewood Happenings

## February 2021

| SUN             | MON | TUES | WED   | THURS | FRI | SAT |
|-----------------|-----|------|---|-------|-----|-----|
|                 |     |      | 6:00pm AWANA<br>6:30pm Youth                              |       |     |     |
|                 | 1   | 2    | 3   | 4     | 5   | 6   |
| 7               | 8   | 9    | 10  | 11    | 12  | 13  |
| Valentine's Day |     |      | 6:00pm AWANA<br>6:30pm Youth<br>7:00pm Deacons meet       |       |     |     |
| 14              | 16  | 13   | 14  | 15    | 16  | 17  |
|                 |     |      | 6:00pm AWANA<br>6:30pm Youth<br>7:00pm Finance Team Meets |       |     |     |
| 18              | 19  | 20   | 21  | 22    | 23  | 24  |
|                 |     |      |   |       |     |     |
| 25              | 26  | 27   | 28  |       |     |     |

## December Giving

|       | BUDGET      | CTB      | MISSIONS    | OTHER      | TOTAL       |
|-------|-------------|----------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| 12/6  | \$30,602.54 | \$150.00 | \$7,141.39  | \$293.00   | \$38,186.93 |
| 12/13 | \$14,774.90 | \$275.00 | \$12,093.46 | \$1,570.00 | \$28,713.36 |
| 12/20 | \$16,838.82 | \$100.06 | \$14,292.96 | \$1,866.55 | \$33,098.39 |
| 12/27 | \$15,552.87 | -        | \$4,568.96  | \$582.48   | \$20,704.31 |
|       |             |          |             |            |             |

### ONGOING ACTIVITIES:

#### SUNDAY

- 9:00am Contemporary Worship
- 10:00am Bible Fellowship
- 11:00am Blended Worship

#### WEDNESDAY

- 6:00pm AWANA/FLYTE
- 6:00pm Prayer Meeting
- 6:30pm Youth Worship

In Memory of:

**John Evans** for Amen Choir:  
Becky and Dwight Langston  
Cecil and Dorothy Robinson  
Jerry and Sheila Barbaree  
Merri Evans  
John Wilks

David and Debbie Newsome for Benevolence  
Todd & Reba Newberry

**Jean Russell** for Amen Choir:  
Bill and Judy McCarley

Linda Chappel for James and Edna Chappel  
Melinda McCoy  
David and Debbie Newsome for Benevolence

**Ann Allen** for Budget from J.D. and Diane Whitehead

**Keith Pruski** for Amen Choir from Melinda McCoy

**Montie and Clide Miller** for Lottie Moon from  
Clara Jean Watson

**Memory of all of those we have lost in 2020** for  
Budget from Clara Jean Watson

**J. P. and Esther Benton:**

for Lottie Moon from Billy and Cathy Greene  
John and Linda Wink for Lottie Moon

**Bette Jameson** for Budget from Glenda Medley

**Ray Bush:**

for Sound Choices from Billy and Cathy Greene  
for Amen Choir from Billy and Cathy Greene

In Honor of:

Joyful Servants Bible Fellowship Class for Lottie  
Moon from Billy and Cathy Greene

Cathy Greene for Missions from the Joyful  
Servants Bible Fellowship Class

**WELCOME**

**NEW MEMBER**

**RILEY VALFRE**

**HAPPY 100TH  
BIRTHDAY**

**TO**

**MARGARET  
WEAVER**

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