

Connections

LAKWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH

JANUARY 2021

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Baby Bottle Boomerang
SAVE YOUR CHANGE. SAVE A LIFE!

Take a bottle, fill it &
return it January 17
Sanctity of Life
Sunday



Welcome Home.



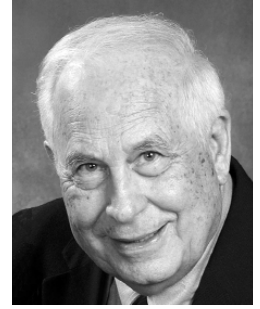
A Message from M.R. Hamilton

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SENIOR PASTOR

2020 is finally over and thank God He walked us through it! I have had 2020 Vision posters all around the church and they stand as a stark reminder of the fact that we didn't see this coming. To say we were caught off guard would be the understatement of a lifetime. March 13th marked my 7th year and I preached on the year of Jubilee and my deliberate attempt to start all over canceling all debts and regrets and beginning brand new. Well I certainly had the concept of what God was telling me as well as the exact timing but little else. I had no idea that on March 15th we would actually shut down the church and then week by week try to start all over. 2021 has arrived and we still have not returned to normal and some of our ministries such as the CDC are gone. One would have thought that we might be struggling physically and spiritually but neither of those things are true. Because of the challenges we were forced to develop programs and technologies to maintain contact with our church family that should have been done before. While the world is becoming more and more divided, angry and violent the church has united and become tighter than ever before. Changes that would have caused division and great debate a year ago can be made now with the support of everyone because of the realization that we can't stay as we were and run the race laid out for us in the reality of this new day. The struggle to find a way to continue to move forward while at the same time offering adequate safety for all those who chose to attend has certainly been a balancing act. Remaining flexible has become the battle cry and new norm as we put events on the calendar one day and remove them the next. I have discovered that I can live without a planned and calculated long term plan. God has forced us to be ready for anything and He has helped us to become a great deal more flexible and capable to make changes as we go. I have preached and taught on the value of being proactive and not reactive all my ministry life only to find myself totally dependent on my ability to be decisive and rely on my ability to react in the right way to each new crisis. I have discovered through it all that

common sense is not really all that common as frightened people rarely respond logically. How to respond quickly yet reasonably has been the lesson for all of us to learn to remain relevant in the new normal of living with COVID. 2021 holds a lot more promise than almost any year in recent history because of the lessons we learned the hard way in 2020. We now know how to respond quickly and maintain contact with our church family as never before. We now know how to move forward safely and remain effective in spite of the presence of COVID. We now know what we have here is worth fighting for as even we didn't realize what we had until we nearly lost it. We also know for certain that through it all God was with us and 2021 will be no different. I have no idea what to expect in 2021 but I know we are ready and willing to adjust to take full advantage of it. After all when you can't change the direction of the wind you simply have to adjust your sails. I like to believe that my experience is unique to me but that isn't true as Habakkuk had a year much like 2020 over 2,000 years ago. You see he complained to God about how unfair it was only to be told to "Look among the nations and watch and be utterly astounded! For I will do a work in your days which you would not believe though it were told to you." Trust me I would have never believed this last year would turn out as it did even if you had told me. Like Habakkuk I am astounded and I can't believe it went like God wanted it to but it sure did. God has put the church through a time of testing and He has shown His power at work in those who hearts were in the right place. Lakewood is stronger and better equipped than ever before. During the crisis we added to our bus fleet, payed off all existing debt, remodeled both education wings, expanded our television ministry two fold, upgraded and developed a highly successful virtual church through our Facebook live feeds. We became much better at staying in touch with our church family while learning to not only survive but thrive in an ever changing new day. Thank God for 2020 with all its difficulty as they have taught us so much about ourselves and the God we serve.

A Message from Dr. Jerry Horner



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MINISTER OF DISCIPLESHIP & OUTREACH

I don't need to remind you that the year 2020 was unprecedented in our lifetime, with a worldwide plague that has caused hundreds of thousands of deaths and has affected every area of our lives. We have witnessed lawlessness and political upheaval in this country that we never thought could happen. Combine all that with natural disasters, unemployment, financial pressures, and we have to acknowledge that 2020 wasn't a very good year. Jesus said that in the last days people's hearts will fail them for fear of what they see coming upon the earth (Luke 21:26). We may not be in those days yet, but we do see the birth pains and the signs increasing, and it's a proven fact that there is a direct correlation between fear and what you are focused on. So what do we need as we enter a New Year?

We need a steadfast hope. We need eyes that are unwaveringly fixed on the Lord, and we need to dwell on the things that bring faith and hope. Therefore, I encourage you to focus on two of the most wonderful and powerful words in the Bible. They are the words "but God." Those words overflow with hope, grace, and love, and they change everything. One moment, there is despondency and despair. All hope is lost, and the worst case scenario is about to unfold. But God has other plans. But God intervenes. But God turns the tables. But God! Those exact words are found 31 times in the Bible, not to mention similar phrases, such as "when God" or "then God." Search the "but God" passages, and you will find that good news always follow after "but God," so you can see how the impossible becomes possible. For us, it is impossible, but for God nothing is impossible.

No matter how desperate and hopeless and discouraging the situation may seem, we can revel in these two priceless words. Because of the simple but powerful phrase "but God," we can praise God in all things and be confident that He who has begun a good work in us will perform it until the Day of Jesus Christ. There may seem to be no way, but God makes a way. He is in control, and we need to remember that He not only has a purpose in allowing storms, but that He is the One who can calm them. Let's look at only a few of the glorious "but God" moments in the Bible.

Take the story of Noah, for example. As he and his family bobbed around in that ark with all those animals, he saw the devastation of the earth and all the destruction that the judgment brought. All looked lost. "But God remembered Noah" (Gen. 8:1), and He sent a strong wind to roll the

waters back, and a new world appeared. The sun shone again over dry land, and the thought of a new life once again rose in the heart of Noah.

The brothers of Joseph sold him into slavery, and supposed him to be dead. Yet God not only preserved him, but elevated him to a position of great power in Egypt. When a great famine struck, the brothers appeared before Joseph begging for food, not recognizing his identity. Joseph revealed himself and said, "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good" (Gen. 50:20). In Acts 7:9, Stephen recounts the treachery of the jealous brothers, and then says, "but God" was with Joseph.

The psalmist declared, "My flesh and my heart fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."

When they crucified Jesus, it seemed that evil had won. The story was over and the dream had died, "but God raised Him up on the third day" (Acts 10:40; 13:30; 2:24).

Ephesians 2:1-4 graphically describes our lost and miserable condition as spiritually dead and under the domination of evil powers, "but God," because of His love and mercy toward us even when we were dead in our sins, "made us alive together with Christ," and more than that, He "made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." We were stuck in sin, but God. We were held captive by Satan, but God. We were despairing, but God. We wondered if life was worthwhile, but God. Our lives were empty of meaning, but God. We felt unlovable, but God. No matter what you're facing in your life today, no matter how overwhelming it may seem as you begin this year, hear again the good news for you—"But God!" You can be sure that if you're in a place where the only way out is God, He is bigger than your problem. Remember that our God is a redeemer and a reverser. When all seems lost, He enters in and says, "but."

All obstacles you face, multiplied endlessly, are no match for God. Not even close, and God will always have the last word. Your circumstances don't have the last word. Satan doesn't have the last word. Death and disease don't have the last word. When things look their very worst, remember these two words: "But God!"



A Message from Andrew Spires

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MINISTER OF STUDENTS & SINGLES

As you know, we just completed our largest missions fundraiser of the year; the **Christmas Tree Lot for Missions**. Every year, once the majority of the nicer trees have been sold, we have a few trees leftover, which some folks like to call “Charlie Brown trees”. They aren’t shaped as well, may have fewer branches, and don’t have the eye appeal of a full tree. This year was no different, by the end of our second week of business our lot had shrunk to less than 20 trees, down from nearly 200. It is at this point each year, where I ask our church members to sponsor a tree for a needy family, and to your credit, you always do! I thought I’d share one such story of a family that you helped to sponsor. Usually, we place the trees through our food pantry, and to anyone who pulls up and truly shows a need for a tree without the means to pay for it. While we placed quite a few trees this year, this story I’m about to share with you is a little different. In the afternoon, on the day before the tree lot closed, I received a call from a person at another church asking could we help with food for a needy family. Our food pantry had just closed hours before and no one else was here, besides those students and myself working the tree lot. I told them we’d love to help but didn’t know what we still had available over there. Then they asked if there was any way we could also give the family a Christmas tree? That question I knew the answer to; I said yes, come and get one. They came promptly and picked a tree, out of the few we had left, for the needy family. We loaded it, and also gave them a tree stand as we thought it possible that they wouldn’t have one. I walked over to the back of the fellowship hall and found two bags of food, already packed up, leftover from the ministry earlier in the day. From the earlier conversation, I knew the family was a single parent home, with several kids, so I grabbed both bags (sorry Richard ☺) and took them out to the car as well. The man from the other church pulled away and I figured that would be the last I heard about it and I went back to work at the tree lot. About an hour

or so later I received a phone call from the same man who was relaying a message from the family. He told me they were overjoyed at the food they received as they didn’t know where the next meal was coming from. Then he said that the mom had already told her kids they wouldn’t have a tree for Christmas because they couldn’t afford one. She went on to tell the man that they had never had a real live Christmas tree. The kids were exuberant at the sight and smell of the live tree and the mom was brought to tears. That could be the end of the story, but it’s not. The man who delivered the food and tree was so moved by the family’s need, that he organized some people at his church and they are providing presents for the kids this Christmas. What a beautiful example of how the Church should work together as one body! In truth, this is what we are called to be all year long, not just at Christmastime. Matthew 7:9-12 speaks of this; “Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him! So, in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.” We are blessed to be a blessing! I guarantee you we are all walking past numerous daily opportunities to be a blessing! Never forget, you never know when a service opportunity will become an open door for the Gospel message to be delivered, and someone’s eternal destination will be forever changed. So, invest your life in 2021, by investing in others, and do unto others, as Christ has done for you! God bless,
drew

A Message from David Stephens

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CHILDREN'S MINISTER



As I reflect back on this past year, I am amazed by what God has done in our church and children's ministry. Lakewood has received me and my family with open arms, and I cannot help but be overwhelmed. It truly is a testimony of God at work among our entire Lakewood Community. Thank you for helping my children and my 'significantly better half' in their adjustment to this new community that God brought us to. My wife and children have been able to thrive in things that they have a passion for, and that does my heart good. This year has been crazy in many ways, but within all the chaotic unknown that we have all endured there is a very real sense of excitement for what's next. I pray that you feel the same. God has much in store for us here this next year. My heart is to serve this community. There is work to be done, and God is preparing men and women all across our church to serve families and children as we move into God's plan for the new year. We all must continue to learn with a heart to serve one another, giving of ourselves, using our gifts, caring for needs, walking humbly together with God in the center of our fellowship, growing in worship, and helping the next generation see that Jesus is alive and desires to know us deeper until we can see him in his full splendor.

We will be kicking off AWANA on January 6 at the new time. 6PM – 7:30PM. The AWANA program is thriving with around 55 kids every Wednesday night. We are excited for the future of our Wednesday night activities on campus. Let's get families on our campus on Wednesday for 6PM – 8PM.

AWANA 6PM – 7:30PM
YOUTH 6:30PM – 8PM

The opportunities for counseling has also been increasing this year and will continue. I will be facilitating a new GriefShare class starting January 11 from 6PM – 8PM meeting in our new conference room. Individual and family counseling has been developing and there will be much more to come moving into 2021.

I am building a new Kids Worship team that will serve Sunday morning throughout the year. Please reach out to me if you are interested. There are no lessons to plan, songs to sing, activities to plan. I have a very good program that is super simple to implement. I want to get as many people across our entire church exposed to what the new Kids Worship service is like, and build a strong team that serves 2 weeks for 2 months out of the year.

Thank you all for praying and supporting your children's ministry here at Lakewood.

Blessing in this new year.

David

GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

Help and encouragement after the death of a spouse, child, family member, or friend



"Your Journey from Mourning to Joy"

Session starts January 11th from 6:00pm - 8:00pm

Lakewood Baptist Church

Enter through lobby in back of church

Enroll at GriefShare.org

- put in zip code -pick Lakewood & fill out form or

Just show up and David can get you enrolled if needed.

Lakewood Happenings

January 2021

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
					Office Closed	
					1	2
3	4	5	6:00pm AWANA 6:30pm Youth	7	8	9
10	11	12	7:00pm Deacons meet	6:30pm Women's Ministry	14	15
16						
Sanctity of Life Sunday 6:00pm Church Conference			7:00pm Finance Team Meets			
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
				6:30pm JEG/BW		
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

November Giving

	BUDGET	CTB	MISSIONS	OTHER	TOTAL
11/1	\$18,426.82	\$50.00	\$6,537.26	\$200.95	\$25,215.03
11/8	\$19,013.96	\$65.00	\$2,114.96	\$1,101.00	\$22,294.92
11/15	\$17,300.20	-	\$1,314.96	\$302.69	\$18,917.85
11/22	\$10,255.66	\$125.00	\$1,161.57	\$ 650.00	\$12,192.23
11/29	\$21,350.70	-	\$1,324.96	\$1,439.55	\$24,115.21

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

Jean Russell:

Amen Choir:
Charlene Keeter
Jerry and Sheila Barbaree
Sharon P. Spear
Carol Ray
For Budget from Fran Loftin
For Food Bank from Malinda Wilkes

Bobby Walls for Budget from Fran Loftin

J. P. and Esther Benton for Belize/Kenya from Billy and Cathy Greene

Larry Hightower for Children's Ministry from Frank & Diane Neel

Vincent Currier for Lottie Moon from Myra Currier

Loretta Montgomery for Food Bank from Joyful Servants Bible Fellowship Class

Max Wilkes for Budget from Malinda Wilkes

Ruth Campbell for Amen Choir from Patsy Richardson

Thomas Jeffrey Tice for Food Bank, Amen Choir, Challenge to Build, Circles of Influence from his mother, Nell Holder

John Evans:

Amen Choir:

J. D. and Diane Whitehead
Janice and Ken Noble
Myra Currier
Malinda Wilkes
Patsy Richardson
Nancy Boyd
Ronnie and June Rice
Faye Lisle
W. Doug Corley
Margie Jackson
John and Amy Wilks

For Food Bank from Gail Brantley

**HAPPY
NEW
YEAR**

**FOR CHURCH NEWS
OR ?S**

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