

CONNECTIONS

LAKWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH APRIL 2024 VOL XIII: ISSUE 4 LBCPC.org



A Message from Andrew Spires

LEAD PASTOR



I am writing this article to you having just returned from the South American country of Ecuador. First, a little background about the missionaries, Gary and Dena Pate and Pate Ministries. The Pates weren't called to the mission field until later in life. They were just regular members of North Jacksonville Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Florida. They were blue-collar, working-class folks. Though Gary never graduated high school he was a hard worker who started and owned his own small business alongside his wife Dena, who is a nurse, they also had a couple of children. They had a comfortable life, and a nice family, and were financially secure when God gave them a passion for missions. They answered that call by going on numerous short-term mission trips around the world. They were faithful to attend church and were a part of a small group they loved. However, God called them to something more. With the guidance of his pastor, Dr. Harold Reavis Jr., the Pates sold what they owned and decided to move to Ecuador to become full-time missionaries. They spoke little Spanish, but that didn't dissuade them, they enrolled in language school, followed the Lord's lead, and moved out of their comfort zone, literally leaving America for Ecuador. North Jacksonville became their sending church and by God's grace, they have been faithfully serving the Lord in Ecuador for more

than a decade. They are not spring chickens, they have adult children and grandkids, but they make great tag-team missionaries, even though they are Florida Gator fans.

Fast forward to how our paths crossed. Many of you know that near the end of 2023 myself and a couple of our church members took a trip to Togo, West Africa to explore a potential mission partnership. There we met Dr. Reavis' son, Jonathan, who is also a pastor at Schindler Road Baptist Church in the Jacksonville area. He told me of a hard-working, high-energy, blue-collar guy named Gary Pate who I just had to meet. I initially thought little about it. However, it turned out that Jonathan and I had another connection through Snowbird in North Carolina. Jonathan, like myself, had been a student pastor for many years before becoming a lead pastor, and had taken his students to Snowbird for various camps and retreats. In fact, Jonathan now serves on Snowbird's board of directors. I thought it strange that God took me to a country on another continent to meet a brother in Christ and fellow pastor that I could've met at Snowbird many times. Still, I didn't give Gary or Pate Ministries much thought. When I returned from Togo, the first day I was back in the office, I looked down at my phone and there was a text from Gary Pate. Apparently, Jonathan had told Gary that he just had to meet this guy from Georgia who pastored a church named

Lakewood in Alabama even though he was a Dawg fan. Late last year, Gary and Dena were planning a return trip to the States and were going to be in Dothan at another church and asked if we could meet. They drove up from Dothan and we went to lunch at Mike & Ed's. We talked about missions and the work they did in Ecuador to advance the kingdom. We ended our time with Gary asking me to come and see what God was doing there in Ecuador.



So, last week I had the chance to travel with around fifteen others to Ecuador. It was hot and muggy, though it was technically the beginning of Fall there. We went out daily to do ministry. We made school backpacks with supplies for kids who were about to return to school. We organized donations and supplies for the ministry. Daily we traveled into communities and villages to perform "bible clubs" where children and adults would come for worship and to hear the Word of God. We had church on Sunday in a cinder block building with no air conditioning. We had a movie night in the same building on Tuesday night where 300 people just walked up to see a movie and hear the Gospel. We gave away bread, coffee, hot chocolate, juice, and cookies, meeting the physical needs of the people. We showed the children the love of Christ as we played with them and made crafts, and we had Gospel conversations with the adults.

None of the buildings we used were traditional church buildings. The buildings were ones built by the missionary, some were community buildings, and in one instance even an outdoor open air pavilion was utilized, but there the Gospel was preached. Like most of Latin America, the nicest building in town is the Catholic church which is usually quite ornate compared to its surroundings. Many of these people "grew up Catholic" but were only so by tradition and not by practice. Many don't own a bible or know how to pray. Many didn't know that you and I can have a personal relationship with Jesus as our Savior and Lord. Most were just scraping by, day by day, existing on less than \$500 a month per household, and not knowing the grace God offers them. There's great opportunity for the Gospel to spread in Ecuador as in other countries we currently serve. My prayer is that all of us will answer the missional call, just as the Pates did. Maybe you won't be called to be a full-time missionary, but all our people can be a part of a short-term team. All of our people can serve here locally and within this country for the sake of the Gospel. Just answer the call. Listen to His voice. See the desperate need all around us. And leave the results up to God. After all, someone's eternity is at stake.

God bless,
drew

Romans 10:12-15





SPRING MISSIONS BANQUET



Dinner and Program

Sunday, April 28, 2024 5pm

Deadline to RSVP: April 7th

Everyone is invited!



A Message from Israel Jane

INTERIM STUDENT & YOUNG ADULT PASTOR

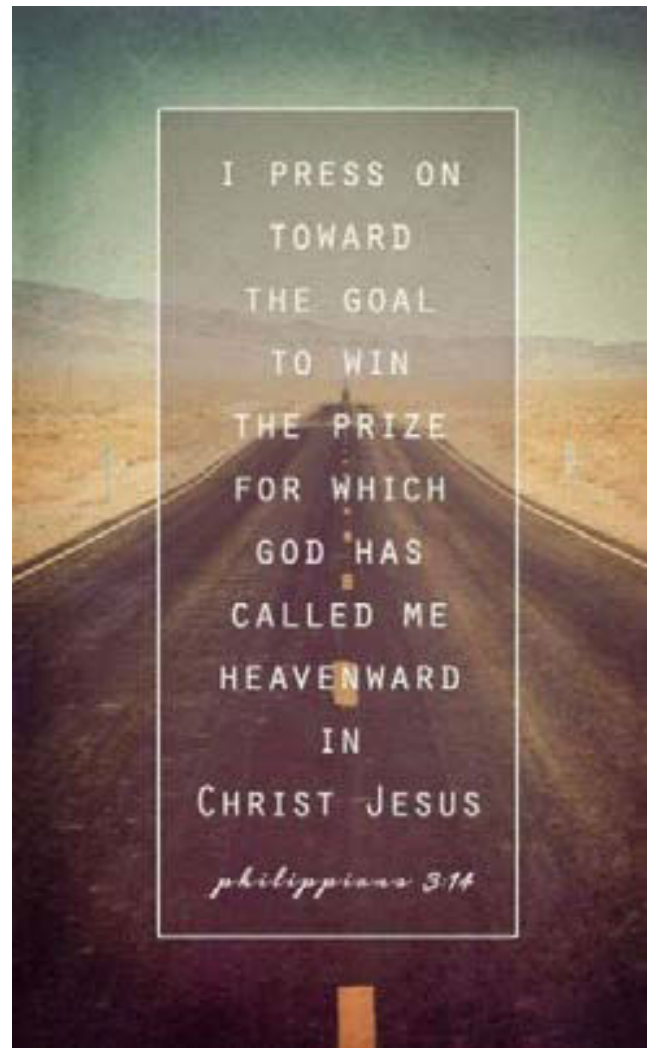
March was a busy month filled with exciting events and meaningful activities! From our successful mission's yard sale to our Wednesday night discussions about dating and friendships God's way, we've been on a journey of growth and connection. Over spring break we took some of our youth to see the Christian movie "Ordinary Angels" and we joined up with other youth groups for the youth revival/concert at Smith Station Baptist. Additionally, we actively reached out to our community by distributing invites for our Easter service and joined in on the work days and Springfest activities.

Feeling a bit exhausted? You're not alone! But amidst the busyness, let's take a moment to reflect on our purpose: to know Jesus Christ and to make Him known. In all that we do, let's keep this central theme in mind, seeking to deepen our relationship with Christ and share His love with others.

Scripture reminds us in Philippians 3:10 (NIV), "*I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of His resurrection and participation in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death.*" May we strive to know Jesus more intimately each day, allowing His transformative power to work in our lives. And as we grow in our knowledge of Him, let's boldly proclaim His truth and love to those around us, fulfilling the great

commission found in Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV), "*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.*"

Let's continue to press on in our journey of faith, knowing that our efforts are not in vain when they are grounded in Christ.



Lakewood Happenings

April 2024

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
	10:30am Amen Choir 1	2	10:30am VK/WMU 3	4	5	6
Lord's Supper 7	10:30am Amen Choir 6:30pm Sister to Sister FAC 8	6:15pm Alleluia Choir 9	10	11	5:30pm Senior Game Night Pizza 12	13
5:00pm Deacons Meeting 14	10:30am Amen Choir 15	6:15pm Alleluia Choir 16	7:15pm Finance Team Meets 17	10:30am Choir Festival 18	19	20
6:00pm Member's Meeting 21	10:30am Amen Choir 22	6:15pm Alleluia Choir 23	24	6:30pm JEG/BW F/H 25	26	11:00am Feed the homeless 27
5:00pm Missions Banquet FAC 28	10:30am Amen Choir 29	6:15pm Alleluia Choir 30				

February Giving

	BUDGET	R-R-R	MISSIONS	OTHER	TOTAL
2/04	\$21,482.85	\$1,180.00	\$1,191.41	\$2,419.00	\$26,273.26
2/11	\$19,102.10	\$15,327.00	\$1,415.50	\$2,086.00	\$37,930.60
2/18	\$21,685.13	\$495.00	\$2,079.14	\$2,054.78	\$26,314.05
2/25	\$13,671.20	\$711.00	\$2,791.35	\$2,521.00	\$19,694.55

Ongoing Activities:

SUNDAY	
8:45am	Worship
10:00am	Bible Fellowship
11:00am	Worship
WEDNESDAY	
6:00pm	AWANA
6:00pm	Bible Study
6:30pm	Youth Worship

A Message from David Stephens

CHILDREN'S PASTOR



What's the saying "April showers bring May flowers." So, the season is changing and I pray that we are together changing to be more and more like Jesus. What is it about seasons that change us? I'm not talking about seasons on the calendar, but life seasons. I'm writing this during the Christian Holy week. As I reflect on what actually happened to Jesus during this week, I am in AWE of how much this man suffered on my behalf. There are all kinds of churchy phrases out there that capture this week, and they are great. I use them. But, for me and my home, I try to keep it simple. Maybe it's because I work with children. The simple set of words that I'm reflecting on during this Holy week is this. "Calvary is enough". It is enough for ALL things that will ever come against you or me. It is enough to be able to endure whatever trial I must face. It is enough on the mountain top. It is enough in the valley. As I reflect on what Calvary represents for the Christ follower, I am overwhelmed with gratitude. The blood that flowed on Calvary covers ALL sin. I've recently celebrated 20 years of marriage. My wife has put up with my mess for a very long time, and she'll tell you I'm a mess, for sure! But, we'll be a mess together for as long as we have breath on this earth because, Calvary is enough. The sacrificial love that is lived out by Jesus for you and me on Calvary must be our foundation. We are nothing and He is everything, and you know what's so awesome? He wants to be our everything. We just have to let Him. We have to let him be our everything in everything. Keep it simple. Is Calvary enough in everything for you? Do you lay everything at the foot of the cross daily? Why do we take it upon ourselves and try to control with our own power? There is a part of me that would take the CSF leak that is in my wife's head out and place it into my head to ease her suffering. I would do it in a heartbeat, but I can't. All I can do is love her in my imperfection as Jesus exemplified for us because Calvary is enough. There is a part of me that has always wondered why there is seemingly less and less structured church emphasis on Good Friday. You can't have a Resurrection Sunday without Calvary. In my experience across all dynamics of life, personally lived or observed. Growth happens as a result of suffering. I'm not saying that you don't grow if you're not suffering, all those truly seeking after the Father will grow. I'm saying all people who I've observed who do incredible works for the kingdom have experienced and endured suffering. Something that is important to understand about suffering is that it's not about you. It must ALWAYS be about HIM.

If Calvary is enough, and it is, Jesus is in your suffering. When we are truly able to see, feel, and witness the Glory of God in the middle of the suffering, that's a story to tell. The most remarkable people I've been privileged to know are those who have endured suffering and tell the story. We don't tell stories like we used to. We need to get back to being able to tell stories, because people are moved to understand that Calvary is enough by hearing our story. When our stories are wrapped around our gratitude for what happened at Calvary, people with ears to hear will hear and respond. If there is anything that I can impress on you during this season, be able to tell your story about suffering with humility and grace. These stories being told across kitchen tables; coffee shop counters; break room vending machines encounters; or wherever you find yourself will bring people into our fellowship like nothing else. It is my pleasure to serve you. Let this season be filled with Joy, and don't let anything steal that from you because Calvary is Enough.

Your Children's Pastor
David Stephens

Our Spring Fest was fantastic. I truly was great seeing our church in fellowship with our community.





In Memory of:

Judy Loughry

For LOAF

From Gail Brantley

Kellie Perkins

Diana Bone

Jemma Imwalle

Susan Herrick

Harriot Corner

Senior Game Night

Friday, April 12th

5:30 pm in F/H

Pizza & Dessert

MINISTERIAL STAFF

ANDREW SPIRES

LEAD PASTOR

ANDREW@LBCPC.ORG

Charles Keown

WORSHIP & SENIOR

ADULT PASTOR

CHARLES@LBCPC.ORG

Israel Jane

INTERIM STUDENT &

YOUNG ADULT PASTOR

ISRAELDJANE@GMAIL.COM

David Stephens

CHILDREN'S PASTOR

DAVID@LBCPC.ORG

OFFICE STAFF

Melissa Costello

FINANCIAL ASSISTANT

MELISSA@LBCPC.ORG

Carol Breault

OFFICE & PASTORAL

CARE ASSISTANT

CAROL@LBCPC.ORG

Linda Keown

WORSHIP & MEDIA

ASSISTANT

LINDA@LBCPC.ORG

• LAKEWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH

• 4011 LAKEWOOD DRIVE

• PHENIX CITY, ALABAMA 36867

• O: 334.298.6433

• LBCPC.org

• HOURS: M-TH 8:30AM-4:30PM

• FRI 8:30AM-12PM



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