

Connections

LAKWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH AUGUST 2024 VOL XIII: ISSUE 8 LBCPC.org

Students
Back to
School Bash
8/3 @ 4:00pm
Central BC
Leave FAC @ 3:30pm

KIDS
Promotion
Sunday
8/4



Back to
SCHOOL

Students
LAUNCH NIGHT
8/7 @ 6pm
FAC

KIDS
WET WEDNESDAY
Back to School Bash
AWANA Registration/
Parent Night
8/28 @ 6pm



A Message from Andrew Spires

LEAD PASTOR



We live in a day and time where the American Church seems to be shrinking. We notice that many bodies of believers are aging and not reaching the current generation. In response, some of the American Church has attempted to change and mold itself to the whims of culture. We see many churches now affirming what the Scriptures clearly call sin. We also see many churches ordaining ministers whom the bible clearly declares unqualified. Many church services resemble self-help gatherings and concerts more closely than worship services. Many eloquent preachers opine about “Ten steps to finding your happiness” or “Five ways to be a better you” than actually opening the Word of God and preaching its tenets. Furthermore, we see many famous pastors and churches completely failing, splitting, and filled with chaos, leaving many members and partitioners scarred and disillusioned with the idea of the church as a whole. Many will say they don’t attend church because someone hurt them at church. Even those younger people who have some form of faith and believe in Christ are not quick to join the church. Many didn’t learn the reasons for becoming a member of the church. A few may shy away from commitment. Some may even wrongly believe they don’t need to be a part of a local church. I’d like to take these “reasons” and objections and dissect them for a moment.

• *Why should I join a local church?* A local body of believers can help you practice your faith more boldly, efficiently, and effectively than you ever could alone. We simply need other believers in our lives. Our faith was never meant to be practiced alone, as we aren’t made for isolation but for relationship. It’s really tough to love others as ourselves when we are isolated from the others we are called to love. We can be a faith family of God’s choosing, imperfect yet submitted to Christ’s Lordship of our lives and the church. Through our worship, service, and acts of love, we can become a physical manifestation of Christ on this earth. When combined with other believers in the local church we can reach further for God’s kingdom than we ever could alone. Unsaved people should look at the church and see Jesus, as we emulate Him. Jesus even prayed for the protection, unity, and sanctification of His disciples and those who would believe because of their witness (the church) in John 17. We will be more protected, more unified, and dare I say, more sanctified when a part of the local church. These are just a few of the reasons why you should join the local church.

• *Why shouldn't I be afraid of commitment?* Some people actually “date” the church. They attend, they are loosely committed, but they never commit to becoming a member of a local body of believers. It is as if they are

leaving their options open for a better church to come by. Let’s be honest, there are numerous churches out there and various denominations with differing doctrinal beliefs. People aren’t afraid of commitment because of the lack of options. I believe many don’t commit because of fear of what it may cost them. If they join the church that brings with it accountability. It brings with it a call to give. A call to serve. A call to go, missionally. I have heard many people today say; “I attend such and such church because I can go to worship and leave and nothing else is asked of me.” Folks, that is an extremely selfish view of church and the Gospel. That’s tantamount to saying as long as I’m saved I don’t really care what happens to anyone else. We also live in a time where believers have adopted a consumer mentality towards the church. We “shop” for the church with the most eloquent and talented preacher, the best facilities, the greatest ministries, and for the church that serves our needs best. I also believe this is a flawed mentality. A famous preacher once said; “Stop waiting to find the perfect church, it doesn’t exist! And even if it did, once you got there, it wouldn’t be perfect anymore!” We are not called to “shop” for the perfect church, or the one that serves us best, but to unite with a local imperfect body of Christ and serve Christ together for His Kingdom’s sake. There will always be bigger, better, newer (etc.) but there is immense value in commitment to a local church and sticking with it no matter what comes. Please, stop “dating” the local church.

• *Do I have to be a church member to be a Christian?* No, we must be careful to never turn church participation or membership into some form of works-based righteousness. However, you should want to be part of what Christ created to help you thrive and what He created to reach the world with the truth of the Gospel. If you have no desire to be part of a church something is seriously flawed with your faith, or you may not have an authentic faith at all. God’s people should have the desire to be around God’s people. After all, you will not be worshipping God in heaven alone but with crowds that cannot be numbered. Now, some will say that when they came to Christ they became part of the universal church, and therefore they don’t need to be tied to a local church. Yes, all of God’s people make up the Church universal, but God clearly founded individual churches through the ministry of the apostles and first-century evangelists and then used those churches to massively expand His Kingdom. From humble roots, those small regional churches evangelized their cities, and their countries, and soon the whole world was turned upside down by those church member’s faithfulness to Christ. Those churches replicated themselves to the present day. We get

to be a part of the Church that has been marching on for millennia and who eagerly awaits the return of the King of kings.

• *What is God's view of the Church?* Christ's view of the church is that the church is His bride. God uses the relationship and intimacy between a husband and a wife to illustrate the relationship He has with His people, the church. A marriage relationship is also used because it symbolizes commitment, faithfulness, and trust. Just as a husband loves his wife so Christ loves the Church and gave Himself up for it. Christ's love for the church is not passive or indifferent, it is sure, solid, and everlasting. He calls the church part of His body, what is closer and more intimate than that illustration? We are to love what He loves and God loves the church! The church is where His people gather for the practice of their faith and the ordinances He instituted. God uses the practices of baptism, the Lord's Supper, and even church discipline to show the outside world the significance of what being a new creation in Christ really means. When we are infrequent attendees or indifferent spectators of the church we harm the morale and momentum of the local church. The church only functions at its best when ALL its member are pulling in the same direction and exercising their spiritual gifts in a unified fashion. This is God's view of the church; essential, unified, loving, gracious, serving, and effectual.

• *What if someone hurt me at church?* This may be the most common objection you hear to joining a local church. There's no doubt many people have been harmed at times in the local church. From simple offenses to something more sinister, people can and will make poor choices because we are all fallen and sinful human beings. When I hear this objection I always ask two questions; First, how does this change God? What I mean is that God didn't hurt you. He didn't say the wrong thing. He didn't hurt your feelings. Some people who claimed to believe in the same God you do, did or said the wrong thing. Would you blame the President of the United States for an offense by a private in one of the armed forces just because he is Commander and Chief? No, of course not, we are all responsible for our own attitudes and actions. Stop blaming God for what someone did to you while claiming His name. Trust God to be the Righteous Judge.

Second, who did you go to church for? If the answer is a preacher, remember that man is a flawed and imperfect individual just like you, and one day he will either fail, retire, or pass away. His ministry has an expiration date. If the answer is a person (family member, or friends) then we all realize people can and will let you down. If the answer is a program, then realize all programs eventually come to an end or are replaced. But if the answer is Christ, then just because another of His servants sinned towards you, don't throw the baby out with the bath water. Since Christ forgives us shouldn't we in turn forgive others? We all know there are numerous examples of church leaders and church people who grossly misrepresent Christ in their personal lives and by their actions towards others, but that does not change God and we should never join a church for a preacher, a person, or a program anyway.

I pray that this has brought some clarity to some of these issues. I believe that the local church is still just as important today as it was two thousand years ago when it was founded by the Spirit of God. I know the church is still God's plan to spread the Gospel to the nations. I am thankful for the faithful members of Lakewood Baptist Church who don't have to be goaded to practice their faith and don't need to be entertained to be excited about Christ. Let's all remember and practice Hebrews 10:19-25; *"Therefore, brothers (and sisters), since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and Living Way opened for us through the curtain, that is, His body, and since we have a Great High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."*

God bless,
drew

CONCERT
FIRST BAPTIST OPELIKA

~
Thursday, August 8th @ 7:00 pm EST
Leave church @ 5:30

~
Featuring the Sons of Jubal & Alabama Singing Men

~
Celebrating Dr. Tom Smith's Retirement

EVENTS **2024** AUGUST SCHEDULE

**THU
1**

BULLOCH HOUSE

Meet at LBC @ 9:00am

SISTER TO SISTER @6:30PM

Home of Debbie Parks

**MON
12**

**FRI
16**

SENIOR GAME NIGHT @ 5:30PM

Menu: BBQ & Dessert

BUILDERS FOR CHRIST TRIP

**FRI
16**



MORE INFO:

LBCPC.ORG

A Message from **Josh Elliott**

STUDENT & YOUNG ADULT PASTOR



Hey Church!

It's hard to believe, but we are in the last days of summer. The break is almost over and the new school year is just around the corner. I hope, as we reflect on this summer, we can all say that this was a summer of growth in our relationships with Jesus. With a new school year comes a new plan. Students plan new ways that they will tackle the tasks of a new year and do better than they did the year before, or at least I am sure they think about it and have the best of intentions. Teachers plan new ways to reach their students to help them succeed in life and the classroom. If there is anything that this summer has taught me is that though we make plans, God's plan is better!

As you all know by now, we had planned to attend Ruidoso, NM to do a sports camp for our domestic mission trip this summer. Due to events out of our control, we had to pivot to serving in the El Paso, TX area. I do not think any one would ever purposefully plan to pick 7,199 pounds of onions, but that is part of what God had planned for us to do during our week in the El Paso area. Jardin de Milagros (Garden of Miracles) is a non-profit in Anthony, NM that is just a short drive from El Paso. They were at the end of their onion crop and weren't sure exactly how they were going to get all of these onions out of the ground before they ruined and new crops planted in their place. Insert God's plan. He allowed our plans to be redirected to be a blessing to Jardin de Milagros. I am so proud of how hard the team worked during this trip and grateful for the opportunity to serve by gathering these onions. These onions were sorted and loaded on to trucks to be taken to a local food bank where hundreds of people were being provided with much needed food. We will never know the eternal impact of those onions, but we do know that God had a plan. And His plan is always better than our own.

In Christ,
Josh



A Message from **David Stephens**

CHILDREN'S PASTOR

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It has been a very eventful summer! We are now preparing ourselves for our children to go back to school and back into a more normalized schedule. We had a great summer camp. Gospel conversations turned into four kids making decision to follow Jesus, and two of our campers were baptized. What an incredible testimony of what God is doing in our Children. Here are some pics of our kids adventures these past few weeks.

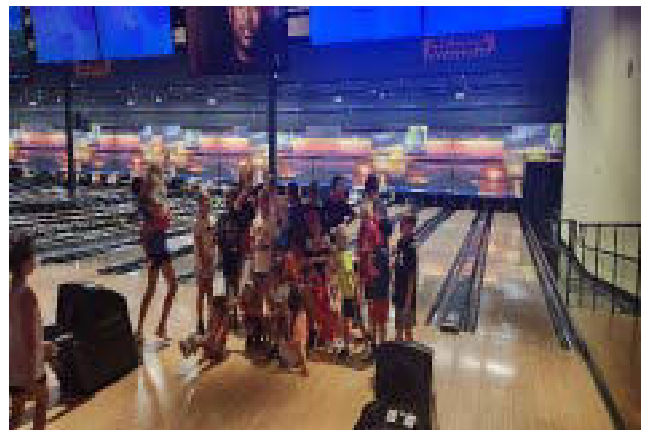
Merge Camp July 8 – 11



New Mexico July 14 – 21



Stars & Strikes July 24



Sunday August 4; Promotion Sunday

Wednesday August 28; Wet Wednesday Back to School Bash & Awana Registration/Parent Night from 6-7:30 PM

September 4; AWANA club start date 6-7:30 PM.

We follow the Phenix City School Calendar for cancellation and closure schedule.

Lakewood Happenings

August 2024

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
				10:00am Bulloch House	10:00am Table Talk Chick-Fil-A	3:30pm Back to School Bash @CBC
				1	2	3
6:00pm Member's Meeting	10:30am Amen Choir	6:00pm Alleluia Choir	10:30am VK/WMU Launch Night Students	7:00pm Sons of Jubal ASM FBC - Opelika	7:00pm Jublaheirs in concert Edgewood BC Cols, GA	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Deacons Meet 5:00pm Lakewood Games	10:30am Amen Choir 6:30pm Sister to Sister Debbie Parks	6:00pm Alleluia Choir	7:15pm Finance Team Meets		5:30pm Senior Game Night - BBQ & Dessert Builders for Christ Team Leaves for Vermont	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	9:00am Amen Choir 11:00am Concert @ Oaks at Grove Park	6:00pm Alleluia Choir		Amen Choir Concert - FBC - Dothan		10:00am Christmas Reh. @ Phil. Builders for Christ Team returns
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	10:30am Amen Choir	6:00pm Alleluia Choir	6:00pm Wet Wednesday 6:30pm Parent Night S&YA	6:30pm JEG/BW		11:00am Feed the Homeless
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

June Giving

DATE	BUDGET	R-R-R	MISSIONS	OTHER	TOTAL
06/02/24	\$24,848.32	\$682.00	\$2,485.45	\$600.00	\$28,615.77
06/09/24	\$15,327.95	\$10,235.00	\$2,805.30	\$1,150.00	\$29,518.25
06/16/24	\$18,415.12	\$502.61	\$4,160.48	\$980.00	\$24,058.21
06/23/24	\$7,368.95	\$1,175.00	\$1,651.60	\$751.00	\$10,946.55
06/30/24	\$17,277.77	\$595.00	\$5,138.82	\$262.00	\$23,273.59

Ongoing Activities:

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

