

Connections

LAKEWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH MARCH 2024 VOL XIII: ISSUE 3 LBCPC.org



SPRING FEST

SUNDAY MARCH 24TH AFTER CHURCH

Silent Auction & Fundraiser Lunch
Proceeds benefit



A Message from Andrew Spires

LEAD PASTOR

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Rebuking Jesus?

Can you imagine telling Jesus to stop doing something and rebuking Him for His actions? Peter did this, even though he was one of Jesus' most committed followers and closest friends. Before Peter became the rock of the early New Testament Church and before he preached at Pentecost and thousands came to faith, Peter was well known for saying or doing the wrong thing at the wrong time. Peter's rebuke of Jesus is recorded for us in Matthew 16:21-23. "From that time on Jesus began to explain to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law, and that He must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, "Never, Lord! He said, "This shall never happen to you!" In essence, Peter said to Jesus; "Things are going really well right now, You just fed a ton of people with next to nothing. Everyone is talking about You. You have amazing miraculous power and authority. We've never had more followers. Now is not the time for all this doom and gloom. Sure, You've ruffled a few feathers among the religious elite, but we have the people on our side, and they are ready for an uprising. Stop talking about dying, we are awaiting the kingdom, and You are our chosen leader."

What happens next would seem to be the low point of Peter's walk with the

Lord when Jesus says; "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." Jesus, in turn, rebukes Peter for being His adversary, for wanting his own way and not the Lord's. Peter's mind was distracted with the things of this world, with success, with his place beside the Messiah, while missing the bigger picture. Jesus didn't come just to redeem Israel and remove the yoke of bondage they were under with Rome, He came to unfold God's plan of redemption for all mankind. Peter forgot Proverbs 19:21; "Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails." We all know the rest of Peter's story. This wasn't his lowest point, which came on the night before the cross when Peter denied Jesus three times. Even though Peter followed Jesus at a distance when the other disciples ran away, he eventually denied the One he had pledged his life and devotion to. Yet, God's purpose prevailed. Jesus, in His grace, tenderly restored Peter in John 21:15-19 in one of the most beautiful examples of redemption in the bible.

This reminded me of an excerpt from a Max Lucado book that one of our members recently shared with me. It talks about man's wisdom of following Jesus at a distance and uses Peter's story on the night Jesus was betrayed. It is as follows; "*Peter was sharp. He kept his distance from Jesus.*"

(continued)

"I'll stay close enough to see Him," Peter reasoned. "But not too close, or I may get caught." Good thinking Peter. Don't get too involved—it might hurt. Don't be too loyal—you might get branded. Don't show too much concern—they'll crucify you, too. We need more men like you, Peter. Men who keep religion in its place. Men who don't stir the water. Men that reek with mediocrity." That's the kind of man God needs, yes sir. One who knows how to keep his distance; "Now, I'll pay my dues and I'll come once a week, but...well...you can get carried away, you know." Yes, you can get carried away... up a hill, to a cross—and killed."

Peter learned a lesson that day—a hard lesson. It is better to have never followed Jesus than to have followed Him and denied Him. Mark these words: Follow at a distance and you'll deny the Master. Period. You won't die for a man you can't touch. Period. But stay near to Him, in His shadow...you'll die with Him, gladly."

Once restored, God used Peter in miraculous ways to advance the Kingdom. Peter stopped relying on his way and wisdom and became reliant upon the Holy Spirit and he was forever changed. Later on, just like the rest of the disciples, Peter indeed paid the ultimate price for following Jesus closely.

Most of us could never imagine rebuking Jesus, much less denying Him, but are you staying close to Him? Or, are you following Him at a distance? Are you concerned with becoming hyper-spiritual? Being branded as a religious nut. Are you afraid of the costs of truly following Him with all your heart and life? Learn from the example of Peter, an imperfect man, who became a willing vessel. God's grace can reform the deepest of sinners and forgive the darkest transgressions. God even forgave the one who attempted to rebuke and thrice denied Him. What can He do with you and me?

God bless.

drew

John 3:30

"SAVE THE DATE"



**SPRING MISSIONS
BANQUET**

**SUNDAY, APRIL 28TH
5:00PM IN F/H**

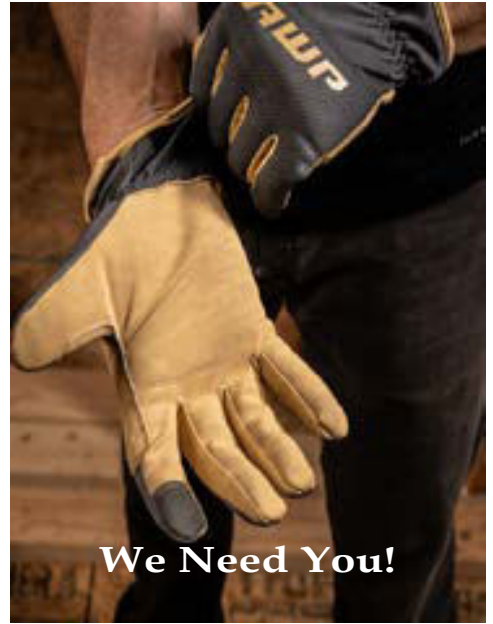
Dinner & Program

Everyone Invited!

YARD SALE

FOR MISSIONS

**WHEN : SATURDAY
MARCH 9TH
8:00 AM
WHERE: FAC**



We Need You!

**CHURCHWIDE
WORK DAYS**

*Friday, March 22nd &
Saturday, March 23rd
8:00 am - 1:00 pm*

Breakfast will be provided
in the Fellowship Hall

*Bring Work Gloves



This campaign is an effort to
Renew, Restore, and Rejuvenate
the Lakewood Baptist Church
campus with the goal of
continuing a vibrant and
inviting church for current
and future generations.

Received to Date: \$22,793.00

A Message from Israel Jane

INTERIM STUDENT & YOUNG ADULT PASTOR



Hello and blessings to all!

February brought us exciting moments with our SWO retreat in Andrews, North Carolina – an adventure filled with rain, timely messages, fellowship, and the youth talking me into an unforgettable moment with the three-man swing (which won't be attempted again anytime soon). We also enjoyed a fantastic hike to Providence Canyon and got to hear about the exciting places we'll be visiting this year at our Missions Meeting.

March is gearing up to be a whirlwind of activity. Our yard sale is just around the corner on the 9th, and we could use all the help we can get. There are also a couple of church workdays in the pipeline, along with Palm Sunday and the Springfest on the 24th. And, of course, let's not forget Easter on the 31st – so many opportunities to be involved!

As we dive into March, let's remember what we are celebrating. "He is risen" is more than some catch phrase, it's a proclamation that resonates the truth of Christ's triumph over death. 1 Corinthians 15:20-22 (NIV): *"But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ, all will be made alive."* May this truth fill our hearts with hope as we thankfully remember what Christ

did for each and every one of us.

Blessings to you all, let's make March a month filled with joy, community, and thanksgiving!



"Our LBC Group"



Three Man Swing?!

Lakewood Happenings

March 2024

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
					Worker App. Dinner F/H	
					1	2
	10:30am Amen Choir	6:15pm Alleluia Choir	10:30am VK/WMU		5:30pm Senior Game Night	8:00am Yard Sale for Missions
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Spring Forward 5:00pm Deacons Meeting	10:30am Amen Choir 6:30pm Sister to Sister	6:15pm Alleluia Choir				
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	10:30am Amen Choir	6:15pm Alleluia Choir	7:15pm Finance Team Meeting		8:00am Work Day	8:00am Work Day
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Palm Sunday 9:00am B.F. 10:30am Worship Spring Fest	10:30am Amen Choir	6:15pm Alleluia Choir		6:30pm JEG/BW	Good Friday Office Closed	11:00am Feed the homeless
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Easter						
31						

January Giving

	BUDGET	R-R-R	MISSIONS	OTHER	TOTAL
1/7	\$26,412.85	\$205.00	\$1,792.50	\$290.00	\$28,700.35
1/14	\$14,279.46	\$75.00	\$673.10	\$5,373.50	\$20,401.06
1/21	\$14,882.45	\$25.00	\$1,461.94	\$3,054.00	\$19,423.39
1/28	\$11,215.10	\$5,175.00	\$497.50	\$4,137.30	\$21,024.90

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 kind of world are our kids growing up in? I want to try to help us get a handle on what we as parents are observing and what our children are experiencing. The percentages of church membership is falling. Consistent church attendance is not like it used to be. There seems to be a disconnect between the church and the people we are trying to reach. Now, church attendance and membership does not guarantee saving faith in Jesus. But, I believe it can tell us to what degree religious values and ideas are shaping this world our children are experiencing. We all remember a time when the church was the center of our social calendar. The church was foundational in our communities. There was social benefit, even pressure to belong to a church community. Most of society agreed on the existence of God, good and evil, heaven and hell, and most issues of morality and social ethics. This is definitely not the case now. As church attendance has declined the church has moved to the periphery, and its influence has weakened. Ideas that have absolutely no biblical foundation have replaced the church as influencers for our children. We as Christians cannot assume that the next generation will accept the conclusions that seemed so obvious to older generations. When you look at entertainment, belief systems used to be presented in a way that a kid would have to consider whether or not they agree. This is not the case today. It is assumed that everyone believes in moral relativism, self-help, or nothing at all. Anything Christian is presented as restricting freedoms and openly ridiculed.

The worldview of today's secularist is expressive individualism that rejects anything external. A good way to think about the externals are all the beliefs or duties defined by the general public, religion, or the previous generations. This worldview encourages the defining of one's self internally and then expressing that self to the world. It encourages eliminating anything that restricts your freedom, and there is no external definition of right and wrong. The highest good is individual freedom, happiness, self-definition and self-expression. It says the world will inevitably improve as the scope of this individual freedom grows. It says technology will be the engine that will progress us all towards utopia. This worldview believes that humans are inherently good. It tells our children that large-scale structures and institutions are suspicious or full of evil. The primary social ethic is acceptance of everyone's self-defined exploration for their freedom and self-expression. If you deviate from this ethic you are dangerous and not to be tolerated.

The fact is we are not created to define ourselves to be the center of everything.

In this worldview "self" is worshiped. We are seeing the impact of growing up in a culture obsessed with "self" has negatively impacted mental health in a major way. Constantly creating self-definition, leads to an extreme performance lifestyle. These kids are living daily with the pressure to act out the identity they have just created. The concept of giving up your life to find it (Matthew 16:25) doesn't sound like good news to kids whose highest values are self-definition and self-expression. This message is threatening to kids whose worldview is saying happiness depends on self-fulfillment. This message is unsafe so therefore you are unsafe. Starting with sin and heaven is good for someone who believes the narrative that the meaning of life is to be good. The kids that we are trying to reach prescribe to the cultural narrative that says the meaning of life is to create your identity and express it. So, what do we do?

This is not new. Paul started with the foundations of various cultural narratives connecting each cultural belief to the message of the cross and Jesus. He customized his explanation to each explaining the true wisdom to the Greeks and the true power to the Jews. Jesus ultimately offers the only identity that isn't based on human impulses or performance. Identity in Jesus is based on His character and His work on the cross. When we recognize the waters our kids are swimming in and learn how to meet them where they are, we can create opportunities for them to feel heard, understood, and they are more receptive to the Good News. When we understand the cultural narratives our kids are growing up in we can create environments that engages kids to be seen and known, rather than a place where kids can't wait to leave. Then over time, they will ask their parents to attend more frequently ultimately getting more and more exposure to the Gospel. Our conversations with kids, via game time, lesson time, small group activities, all must point to Jesus and be made alive by the leader. This is where we start. It must start and end with Jesus.

March 24

SPRING FESTIVAL EGGSTRAVAGANZA

12PM – 2PM

Ministry Update

Last month we took our Sparks Awana club on their Senior Blessings trip.

We were able to have our volunteer appreciation event for the team to come together for some, fun, food and fellowship.

We are seeing an increase in kids inviting their friends to come to AWANA on Wednesday night. This is super exciting to see outkids exercising applications that we talk about. We are seeing new families engage with our Sunday School time, and we have a very exciting group of kids and team preparing to go to camp this summer.

In Memory of:

Steve Harris

For Belize Feed a Child
From Pat Holland

Margarita Lopez

For Belize Feed a Child
For Bereavement
From Clara Jean Watson

Wayne Allen

for Bereavement
From Stephen & Nancy Stainsby
Mr. & Mrs. J.D. Whitehead
Clara Jean Watson

Myra Runkel

For Bereavement
From Clara Jean Watson

Ralph Anderson

For Bereavement
From Clara Jean Watson



March 11th 6:30 pm

Onezima Everritt's home

1506 Melanie Lane PC, AL 36867

WELCOME

New Members

Arvin & Linda Clegg
Ed & Gypsy Cook
Chase & Abby Cook

Senior Game Night

Friday, March 8th
5:30 pm in F/H
BBQ, Brunswick
Stew, Chips &
Dessert

MINISTERIAL STAFF

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HOURS: M-TH 8:30AM-4:30PM
FRI 8:30AM-12PM