

# Connections

LAKWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH

September 2020

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**WE ARE OPENING SMALL GROUPS**

**Sunday , September 13th**

*Bible Fellowship Classes*

**Wednesday, September 16th**

*Prayer Meeting*

*AWANA & FLYTE*

**“Come and See”**



Ladies Bathroom



Rec Room



Class Rooms



Worship Room



# A Message from M.R. Hamilton

SENIOR PASTOR

**September is the month we have all been waiting for.** The month when all the kids go back to school. The month we hope to have all the construction work completed around the church. The month we hope to start up our small group meetings again. September is so important this year because it is full of hope. Faith, Hope and Love are the three more excellent things God challenges us to seek out and I am happy to say we have not lost hope. Your faithfulness through all that has been 2020 has been praise worthy and our love for the church and each other has never changed. Our hearts have indeed grown fonder because of the separation caused by this crisis. So as we begin to slowly open one area of the ministry after another rest assured we are keeping the safety of our members and guest as a top priority. I realize that everyone is longing for things to return to normal as soon as possible but God alone seems to know the nature and duration of this crisis. We had dreamed of a great re-opening celebration but now it seems certain that our return will be gradual as we find ways to gather while maintaining the safest environment possible. We will continue to maintain our live streaming and virtual Bible study opportunities on line for those who don't feel comfortable in group settings. Please hear my hearts cry to everyone as we attempt to open small groups again for those who wish to attend and feel comfortable doing so. We don't expect everyone to return and we fully understand that many have very real reasons to practice caution gathering in groups. We are simply making this opportunity available for those who wish to return and do feel safe doing so. As I write this note we are hoping to open Bible fellowship classes September 13th and then Prayer meeting and Awana on the 16th. We are watching the schools as they re-open to help us in our decision making as we move forward.

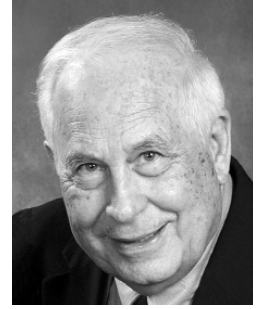
As a child September was always a wonderful month as the harvest season always started then. Watermelons and fruit of all kinds signaled the change of the season and now all these years later nothing has changed. God is a God of seasons and I am hoping and praying that God is bringing this

season in our lives to an end. One by one I hope to see our members returning as one by one we see our programs starting all over again. The facilities will be ready and fully restored enabling us to reach out and advance the kingdom in all kinds of new ways. What church will look like as we move forward is still nothing more than speculation but rest assured we have been adjusting and will continue to find ways to be effective. We would love to ask an expert what to do but there are no experts. This crisis is unique and none of us have ever gone this way before. So just like Joshua we are going to have to keep our eyes on God and be willing to follow Him if we hope to win this battle we are in. God is good and faithful so we have nothing to fear. We will succeed not because of who we are but because of who is fighting for us. September is finally here and it is just the time we have been waiting for. A time to start harvesting and a time of refreshing. A time to start all over realizing that we can and will overcome this crisis. Today I can say that my hope is not in vain because my hope is in God and not a single promise He has made to me has ever failed.





# A Message from Dr. Jerry Horner



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MINISTER OF DISCIPLESHIP & OUTREACH

The pandemic that we have been experiencing has caused a lockdown all over the world, including prohibition of or restrictions on public worship services. My fervent desire is that God will use these prohibitions and restrictions to restore a sense of the worth of true worship and the worthlessness of dry, humdrum, lackadaisical worship. I have observed over the years that many people trudge to church Sunday after Sunday like they're doing God a favor, and they sit daydreaming in church, with indifferent, inattentive, listless minds fixed on lunch, the ball game, TV, business, the golf course, or some other frivolous preoccupation, and they can hardly wait for the service to be over. Then when it is over, they congratulate themselves on having done their duty. In reality, they have engaged in a religious habit totally lacking the reality of zest and excitement. An unexcited Christian is simply a Christian who has forgotten who God is. When you really see who God is, enthusiasm is the result. In fact, the word enthusiasm comes from the Greek word *entheos*, which means "God within." A person who is not excited in worship doesn't understand who God is.

I want to show you two things, the lack of which will cause worship to be drab, and the presence of which will bring enthusiasm in worship. Both of these elements are found in Malachi 1:6, which speaks of honoring God as Father and reverencing God as Master. God is our Father, and children are to honor their father. The Hebrew word for honor literally means to attach weight to something, that is, to take it seriously. If you don't take God seriously, worship will be a bother to you. But when you really understand that by a new birth you have been brought into a family in which God is your Father and that He loves you, you will not come before Him with a casual don't care attitude. You will come with a love and devotion that honors Him.

God would rather that you not come to church at all than to come without taking Him seriously. If you don't believe that, read what God says in Revelation 3:15-16. Lukewarm, half-hearted worship is the worst form of blasphemy, worse than not even believing

in God. Why? Because lukewarmness says, "God, I believe in you, but you just don't inspire me. You don't excite me. I know you're there, but you're not worthy of my whole-hearted worship." That attitude sickens God. Are you truly, zealously honoring Him in worship?

Not only are we children of God, but we are servants of God. The word servant actually means a bond-slave, somebody who has been bought and put into the service of a master. God has bought us out of the marketplace of sin, and we are to fear, or reverence Him as our Master (see 1 Corinthians 6:19-20). The Bible tells us more than 100 times that we are to "fear" God and assures us that fearing God is the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 9:10). What kind of fear is this? Fearing God doesn't mean that we tremble at the thought of Him and are terrified every time we hear Him mentioned. It's not a cringing dread of God. It's the attitude of reverence and respect that is due to His name, the worship, the praise, the awe of the mighty God who is our Master. This is not unhealthy fear, but a healthy fear. It's not a filthy fear, but a clean fear. Exodus 20:20 says: "Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin." There are two kinds of fear—the outward fear of circumstances and the inward holy fear of almighty God. And God says, "If you have the right fear, the fear of God, you won't fear anything else." The fear of God removes all other fears. The person who can kneel before God in reverence can stand before anybody and anything. The fear of the Lord is love on its knees, and the one who fears God the most is the one loving Him the most.

So, here are two things that will put life into your worship. (1) You are God's child; honor Him as your Father. (2) You are God's servant; reverence Him as your Master. Never sit in a worship service without consciously honoring and reverencing God.



# A Message from Andrew Spires

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MINISTER OF STUDENTS & SINGLES

## Changing student ministry trends:

When I was a student in a youth ministry in the late 80's and early 90's everyone went to church. Even the students who didn't want to come to church were made to by their parents. In those days, before social media and the prevalence of cell phones, church was a place to connect with your friends outside of school. There was a community of closeness within a student ministry, and ministries across the board seemed larger, numerically. Not everyone was there because of their commitment to worship God; as I already eluded to, some were forced to be there, some were there for fun, some were there because of their girlfriend or boyfriend, some were there in hopes of finding one; and still others were there just going through the motions and playing the church game. Many were excited in those days by the idea of a student ministry becoming missional and evangelistic, not as the church of the future, but as the church of now. Even society helped protect church/worship back then. Schools didn't hold athletic practices on Wednesdays or the practices ended early. There were absolutely no ball-games on Sundays or Wednesdays, no one would've considered such! Teachers gave either light homework, or no homework at all on Wednesdays. Many teachers would not give a test on a Thursday, because they didn't want a student to miss church for the sake of studying. Restaurants opened after church on Sunday, and bars remained closed because you couldn't buy alcohol on Sunday since it was a day of worship. But, all that's gone now! Sundays and Wednesdays are just another day of the week. With the prevalence of rec ball, school ball, and travel ball it's hard to find a day of the week that doesn't have a game or practice on it. One recent student ministry poll showed there was now no season (time of year) where at least one-third of your students weren't involved in sports. How can you effectively teach, plan, and schedule events around that? Of course you can now buy alcohol on Sundays, it's just another day. Tests, homework, and studying have taken priority over midweek worship. Very few students attend Wednesday night services anymore, and still fewer get up on Sunday mornings. Even fewer are excited about service and missions, and they are afraid or ill-equipped to have a conversation with a friend about Jesus for fear of rejection or being ostracized. Many churches today have opted to forego Wednesdays because no one would come. With the rise of social media students don't feel a need to meet face to face anymore and because of social media they know exactly what's going on in everyone's life. Parents don't make their kids go to church anymore, and if we're honest, the parents don't come as much as they used to either. For those who do come there are still students coming for fun, coming because of another person, and still those who come looking for a new girlfriend or boyfriend. There are still those coming who are just going through the motions and many still playing the church game. Very few who do attend sing loudly, bring a bible, open it, pay attention, and take notes. And all that was before the virus changed

everything! Many student ministries that were built on fun, or the big show of entertainment have completely fallen apart. Others that were built on a solid foundation have still found it hard to navigate the new norm. We are not immune, though there was a time where we too were completely virtual, we returned to a regular Wednesday worship schedule many weeks ago, yet our numbers are half what they were before the virus. Students who started strong by worshipping virtually on Sundays and Wednesdays quickly lost interest and found other things that filled that time slot. Many students will go to work, go to school, go hangout with friends, go shop, go to the river/lake, go to the beach, but will not go to church because of the virus? My hope is, that as school returns, and parents feel more comfortable about sending their students out in public, that we will get to see our missing students in person once again, but I have my doubts. The truth is, it's not up to me, only God knows. You might think I'm wishing for the good ole days, that I'm anti-sports (you don't know me very well), that I'm trying to guilt trip the reader, or that I'm just bellyaching about the present, but that is not the case! Instead, it is a challenge with a warning; we allowed all this to happen! No, not the virus, but the slide within society before this present crisis. We ignored it and watched our communities slip further and further away from God. Our homes stopped prioritizing worship and were then surprised when our students didn't place priority on it either. Our school systems and society followed suit. When we were at church we just went through the motions and like sponges, our students learned to do the same. It's time for the Church to repent, to return to Christ as their first love, to fall on their faces and seek God's face. It's time for parents to forsake pride and busyness of schedule and lead their kids spiritually once again, making worship a sacred part of their family schedules once again. Whether in person or virtually, families should worship together. If we don't, the ramifications will be generational. Some say the virus has forever changed how people attend church? Other polls show a third of the Church has walked away completely during this crisis, never to return? However, consider this, if we don't pass along the Word and our walk, in a real and authentic way to the next generation, not only will they fall away, but the next generation after them will never hear as well. Bro. M.R. has been preaching about Joshua, and how awesome and godly a leader he was. However, if you know your Word, after Joshua and his generation died off, there came a generation who didn't know God (Judges 2:8-19). Why? Because their parents and grandparents didn't teach them, they didn't disciple them, they didn't live it out in front of them, they just entered the Promised Land and became apathetic! God forbid this be said of us! Repent, return, revive the next generation!

God bless,  
drew

# A Message from David Stephens

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CHILDREN'S MINISTER



## COUNSELING CORNER

### Topic: Toxic Positivity

What is toxic positivity you might ask? This is when you focus only on positive emotions and you avoid pain and deny reality. Toxic positivity pushes hurting people into isolation, and it denies the wide range of congregational emotions and needs.

How do we combat toxic positivity? We must prioritize health over growth; people over budgets and buildings. We must be OK with having 5 people who are really digging into the Word of God and each other over 100 people who struggle with committing.

God is at work in our Care and Counseling Ministry. We are finishing up a successful GriefShare class. Church members and members of the community have been using my counseling services. We will be expanding Care and Counseling ministry opportunity to further serve our community in the near future.

## KIDS CORNER

The excitement is building over what is happening in our newly renovated Children's Ministry building. The pictures on the front of this newsletter are only a taste of what we have been up to. Come and see for yourself, if I can, I'll give you a tour. We are on schedule to be able to open up our space for September 13. We are looking to get AWANA back into action September 16, although it will look very different under Covid restrictions for social distancing. We are going to plan and prepare for fall activities making adjustments as needed for Covid. Fall Festival is on our calendar for October 25, and I will have more information on what this event will look like in the future.

Everybody is excited about Sunday School getting back into action. Our teachers are excited about getting to set up new rooms. Our building and grounds team is excited about developing a kids and family ministry and check-in space in our downstairs lobby. The ability for us to now have dedicated PreSchool and Elementary Worship; dedicated teaching environments is focusing our team on coming alongside families in child discipleship. We are building the fearless future of the church. We are building Missional Ambassadors who Pray and Serve. (M.A.P.S.)

God's got us!

David



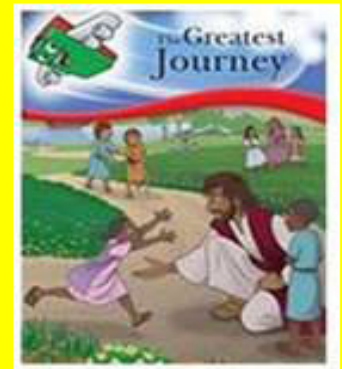


In 1993, the first 11,000 shoeboxes for Operation Christmas child were packed in the US. They were simple shoebox gifts with a booklet about Jesus.

In 1994, Samaritan's Purse intentionally took a more purposeful approach to evangelism, and by 1999 a Discipleship program was started.

The Greatest Journey is a 12 week Bible Study that every child who receives an Operation Christmas Child shoebox is invited to. Each year the program has grown and is now OCC's major effort of spreading the Gospel throughout the world.

Here are the AMAZING statistics from Samaritan's Purse:



Hip Hip HooRoy!

Hip Hip HooRoy!

Hip Hip HooRoy!



So thankful for Roy and his willingness to help out with our renovations.

# Lakewood Happenings

## September 2020

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
9:00am Worship 11:00am Worship 4:30pm Bible Study FacebookLive 6	7	8	7:00pm Youth Worship 9	10	11	12
9:00am Worship 10:00am Bible Fellowship 11:00am Worship 4:30pm Bible Study FacebookLive 13	14	15	5:45pm AWANA/FLYTE 6:00pm Prayer Meeting 7:00pm Youth Worship 16	17	18	11:00am FTH 19
9:00am Worship 10:00am Bible Fellowship 11:00am Worship 4:30pm Bible Study FacebookLive 20	21	22	5:45pm AWANA/FLYTE 6:00pm Prayer Meeting 7:00pm Youth Worship 23	24	25	26
9:00am Worship 10:00am Bible Fellowship 11:00am Worship 27	28	29	5:45pm AWANA/FLYTE 6:00pm Prayer Meeting 7:00pm Youth Worship 30			

## July Giving

	BUDGET	CTB	MISSIONS	OTHER	TOTAL
7/5	\$25,741.19	\$500.00	\$1,248.96	\$585.00	\$28,075.15
7/12	\$28,641.59	\$530.00	\$1,927.96	\$100.00	\$31,199.55
7/19	\$19,551.26	\$175.00	\$1,259.96	\$300.00	\$21,286.22
7/26	\$12,749.41	\$200.00	\$1,812.66	\$ -	\$14,762.07

### ONGOING ACTIVITIES:

#### SUNDAY

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

#### WEDNESDAY

- 5:45pm AWANA/FLYTE
- 6:00pm Prayer Meeting
- 7:00pm Youth Worship

**In Memory of:**

Lindsay Lee from Glenda Medley for Budget

George Maxwell:  
Fran Loftin for Budget  
Joyful Servants for Food Closet  
Janice and Ken Noble for Food Closet  
Pattee Carroll for Budget

Keith Pruski:  
Charlene Keeter for Student Missions  
Janice and Ken Noble for Circles of Influence  
Gail Brantley for Mercy Med  
Pattee Carroll for Budget  
Billy and Cathy Greene for Homeless Ministry

**In Honor of:**

Rick and Becky Aderhold for Food Bank from Terry and Clara Grimes

Betty Burrows for Homebound  
from Billy and Cathy Greene  
Steve and Nancy Stainsby

WELCOME  
NEW MEMBERS

DON & KATHRYN  
HUFFMAN

FOR CHURCH NEWS  
OR ?S

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