



THE BAPTIST MESSENGER

Informing and Inspiring Oklahoma Baptists Since 1912
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>> by Chris Doyle
MANAGING EDITOR

A look back at 2022 recalls newsworthy stories among Oklahoma Baptists, including these stories covered by the *Baptist Messenger*.

Roe v. Wade overturned in historic ruling

On June 24, the announcement was made of the U.S. Supreme Court effectively overruling the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision that resulted in the deaths of more than 60 million preborn children. Many Southern Baptist leaders, including Oklahoma Baptist leaders, applauded the high court's opinion.

"Christians have been praying and working for 50 years to see this day in our nation," said Todd Fisher, Oklahoma Baptists' executive director-treasurer.

Fisher and others emphasized that, though the high-court ruling demonstrates progress in supporting the Sanctity of Human Life, much work should continue among the states to end abortion and care for expectant mothers and their preborn children.

Church building destruction

On March 21, Kingston, Texoma Southern took a direct and devastat-

ing hit from a tornado. Weatherford, Trinity lost its building to a fire on Nov. 1. The church building of Idabel, Trinity was destroyed by a tornado on Nov. 4.

Other churches such as Seminole, First and Wayne, First saw tornadic activity have a major effect on their communities in 2022.

Oklahoma Baptists were quick to respond when these disasters occurred, providing financial support and other provisions.

Falls Creek & CrossTimbers see campers come to Christ, focus on missions

The summer youth weeks at Falls Creek Baptist Conference Center and CrossTimbers Children's Mission Adventure Camps were a highlight for Oklahoma Baptists in 2022. Falls Creek experienced nearly 2,500 campers made professions of faith in Christ, and CrossTimbers provided a fun environment for nearly 4,500 children to learn about sharing the hope of the Gospel with the world.

These annual camps remain a major source of evangelism and mission work training for Oklahoma Baptists.

Momentous SBC Annual Meeting

More than 8,000 messengers gathered in Anaheim, Calif., June 14-15, for

the 2022 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Annual Meeting. The meeting was highlighted by recommendations from the Sexual Abuse Task Force and the formation of an Abuse Reform Implementation Task Force, as well as developing a "Ministry Check" website. The website was established to help Southern Baptist churches properly vet ministry staff members and to minister to the vulnerable.

Also, Mike Keahbone, pastor of Lawton, First, presented a resolution that included opposition of forced conversion in the past at federal Indian boarding schools.

DR turns 50, has active year

Oklahoma Baptist Disaster Relief (DR) celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2022. A special recognition banquet was observed of this monumental achievement at Oklahoma Baptists' Annual Meeting in November at Mustang, First.

DR team members kept busy throughout the year, not only serving in Oklahoma but also other areas of the country, including Daytona Beach, Fla., where DR helped communities recover from Hurricane Ian.

Visit www.baptistmessenger.com for more stories. 

Rite of passage: Does Caesar pay taxes?



Walker Moore

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I have begun the process of preparing my tax return. I know that the Scriptures say “give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s” (Luke 20:25). Since Caesar died on March 15, 44 BC, why do I need to keep on paying him? I understand giving to God—He is still alive. It seems that after one Caesar dies, another always takes his place. I guess that means there will always be a Caesar around to collect our money.

Since my children are grown, I can no longer claim them as a tax deduction. I wonder: is there any place that you can go and rent a child? After you receive your tax refund, you could simply return your rental. Oh, that’s right! I don’t get a tax refund; therefore, I wouldn’t be able to return the child.

In earlier years, I have considered sending a letter like the following:

Dear Mr. IRS,

I am writing to question the amount of deductions you allow me for my two sons. I don’t know if you have children or not, but the upkeep and maintenance is much more than you have allotted. If it would help, I can send you an itemized expense sheet on each boy. I have in-



cluded the cost to replace the window they broke while hosting the Neighborhood World Baseball tournament in our front yard. Our living room window was the official backstop. Also included is the price of repainting our living room. It seems our youngest son thought those white walls existed for the sole purpose of expressing his individuality.

Mr. IRS, if you do have children, I pray that they don’t ever get “Hooked on Phonics.” Do you know how expensive it is to teach a child to read these days? Then, you must add in school activities, sports programs, church camps, trips to Six Flags (after seeing the admission prices, I refer to it as “Sick” Flags.) After that, you throw in the doctor and dental visits, along with all that candy we had to buy (our boys were supposed to sell it to help pay for the new school playground). Of course, you must include computers. These days, you can’t even attend kindergarten without having the most updated computer, internet connection and software.

Putting all this together, you get a total equivalent to the budget of a small third-world country. So, would you mind reconsidering? Please give me a \$10,000 deduction for each child. Even then, it will take a whole lot of praying to make it through the year.

If you can’t do that . . . don’t be surprised when you hear your doorbell ring and see two boys standing on your front porch. Please take good care of them. They are a lot more expensive than you thought.

Sincerely,
Walker Moore

It is hard to believe that America was, in large part, founded to avoid unfair taxation.

Still, I am personally glad that God has given me the ability to work and earn enough that I have to pay taxes.

Our country is far from perfect, but I have lived in countries where most people’s salaries went to the government. They had no money left to cover basic living expenses.

Paying taxes, therefore, could be considered an honor. We also can teach our children to love their country, and, above all, to love the God who has given them life. [m](#)



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Coming events

JAN. 15-16. Many churches will be attending the Youth Evangelism Conference (YEC) at Falls Creek Baptist Conference Center. Featured speaker will be Shane Pruitt, who serves as national next gen director for the North American Mission Board. YEC equips teens to clearly understand what the Gospel is, inspires them to share it, and trains them with effective tools for Gospel conversations. [m](#)

JAN. 22. Many churches across the country will be observing Sanctity of Human Life Sunday. Oklahoma Baptists have provided pastors in our state a preaching guide to help prepare sermons that honor this observance, as well as videos, prayer points and more. For more information visit oklahomabaptists.org/life. [m](#)

FEB 8. The Rose Day Indoor Pro-Life Rally will meet at the Oklahoma State Capitol. Registration opens at 9 a.m., and rose distribution begins at 9:30 a.m., as attendees will distribute red roses to their representative, senator, Lieutenant Governor and Governor. The indoor rally will begin at 11:30 a.m. and will feature award-winning actress Ashley Bratcher as keynote speaker, who played the leading role in the movie "Unplanned." Visit roseday.life for more. [m](#)



MARCH 9. Del City, First Southern is hosting Oklahoma Hymn Sing, 7-8:30 p.m. The event will include Singing Churchmen, Singing ChurchWomen, Oklahoma Baptist Symphony, Oklahoma Student Worship Choir, and Oklahoma Baptist Children's Chorus. [m](#)

VOLUNTEER MISSIONS OPPORTUNITIES

OKLAHOMA

On-going opportunities for volunteers:

Tulakogee Conference Center, Wagoner—918/462-3212 or info@tulakogee.com.

The Spring, a faith-based shelter for women who are victims of domestic violence or human sexual trafficking and their children, Sand Springs—Mychaela Burris—918/245-4075.

Hospitality House of Tulsa provides family centered lodging, emotional and spiritual support for family members of patients traveling to Tulsa for medical care. 918/794-0088 or hhtulsa.org.

Hospitality House of Oklahoma provides for the physical, spiritual needs of families with loved ones incarcerated in McAlester. Lodging available—918/429-0142.

OK Jail & Prison Ministry needs volunteers to share the Gospel—405-917-2242 or ojpm@ojpm.org.

DISASTER RELIEF

Training:

Feb. 11—Disaster Relief Orientation & Credentialing—8:30 a.m.–Noon; McAlester, Frink, 1830 S. George Nigh Expressway

March 16-18—Chaplain Manual and Operational Stress First Aid—\$60, Baptist Building, 3800 N. May, OKC
To register, email pjones@oklahomabaptists.org

March 25—Disaster Relief Orientation & Credentialing—8:30a.m.-Noon—Pryor, First, 601 E. Graham Ave.

For more information on upcoming training, visit okdisasterhelp.org

Elk City, First to host NAMB Revive Summit, Feb. 2-3

ELK CITY—The North American Mission Board (NAMB) is having a Revive Summit at Elk City, First, Feb. 2-3.

This event will include "in-depth Bible study and prayer, practical instructions to improve Biblical preaching, proven steps to move a church toward following Jesus' plan for their church and meaningful restorative worship for those in attendance."

"This Revive Summit coming to western Oklahoma just doesn't happen," said Danny Ringer, director of missions

in Great Plains Association. "This is an event that NAMB usually does in big cities, and to come to this area of our state is a tremendous blessing."

Ringer also said the Revive Summit is not just for pastors and church staff, but it is also open for church members.

Mark Clifton, NAMB Replant senior director, and Richard Blackaby, president of Blackaby Ministries International, are two of many speakers coming to Elk City, First.

To register or for more information, visit namb.net/church-replanting. [m](#)



Just Joe: My resolutions for 2023



Joe Ligon

Senior Associate Executive
Director of Oklahoma Baptists
[@marlowpreacher](#)

A New Year always seems to bring new opportunities. In fact, a lot of folks see a New Year as a great opportunity for a do-over, a time to change some things, a recalibration. All of that often comes in the form of resolutions.

Over the years, I have avoided making resolutions. The main reason for that is most of the resolutions I made on Jan. 1 were broken before the day was over, and the rest of them were busted before the end of the month. I just didn't need any more of that kind of self-induced failure. But this year was different. With the motivation of my darling wife, who has a way of prodding me into doing things she thinks I should do, I relented and made a few resolutions.

I decided if I made those public, some of you who are prodders in your own right might help me stay on the straight and narrow and keep at least some of my resolutions for 2023. So, here's my short list of resolutions.

Resolution 1: I resolve to eat more bacon. Now that is a resolution I can get my teeth into. It is not one of those soft ball resolutions that just anybody could manage. This one has some meat to it. The only thing that could make this resolution any better would be to remember that the only thing that can make bacon better is more bacon. Obviously, this is not a resolution that Gayla prodded me into making. I did this one completely on my own and I am proud of it.

Resolution 2: I resolve to quit yelling at the television when I am watching OU play football. I actually think I have a pretty good shot at keeping this one for several months—like maybe until this coming fall. By then all my resolutions except the one



about eating more bacon will hopefully be forgotten, and I can yell at the television with a clear conscience.

Resolution 4: I resolve to lose some weight. Unlike Resolution 1, this is one that Gayla prodded me into. I thought my naturally plump self just gave her more of me to love. But she had a different opinion of plumpness and said I should lose some weight.

So, I started nosing around for a diet that I might have some success with. I was disappointed to learn that diets cut out all of the food that I like to eat. But, I was determined to find some diet that might work. Then I discovered the Keto diet. Amazingly, I would eat bacon on this diet. In fact, if I understood the rules right, I could eat bacon three or four or five times a day which would help me accomplish Resolution 1 (see above).

I really thought I was onto something, until I discovered that the Keto diet meant you couldn't eat carbohydrates. I honestly hadn't given too much thought about carbohydrates until this point. So, you can imagine how disappointed I was to learn that except for bacon, carbohydrates are what mysteriously cause all other foods to taste good.

In fact, what I learned is that if you cut out carbohydrates, you might as well start eating those Styrofoam peanuts that Amazon puts in all those boxes they send you. The problem with those Styrofoam peanuts is they taste

horrible. You can't put enough Ranch Dressing on them to change that. The other problem is when you bite down on one of those Styrofoam peanuts, it makes a little squeaky noise not unlike the noise that happens when you bite down on a snail or escargot as the music ministers like to say.

I haven't eaten many snails in my life. But the one time I did, it made that squeaky noise when I bit down on it, so it spit it out. Since I was not familiar with snail noises, I thought maybe the thing was still alive and I spit it out quite forcefully. Now I am not against eating snails. But it probably ain't fair to the little guys to eat them when they are alive. After all, they are not fast enough to get away. In the future, if snail eating is presented as an option, I think I will have mine dunked in buttermilk, rolled in a mixture of cornmeal and flour, and fried to a crispy doneness. Of course that mixture of cornmeal and flour is a big no-no on the Keto Diet.

And somehow I have completely digressed from my resolutions, particularly the one about the diet. Yet God is good all the time.

If you have made some resolutions, good for you. Hang in there. Stay strong. Don't quit. We all have room to improve. We all need to be better at who we are. And if you are reduced to eating Styrofoam peanuts like me, just remember Ranch Dressing... lots of Ranch Dressing. [m](#)

Advance Conference to focus on evangelism & discipleship 'Together'

>> by Chris Doyle
MANAGING EDITOR

A coin has two sides. One side is commonly called "heads," and the other side is called "tails." Neither side is in view of the other, but together they create the identity of a coin.

In today's churches, a discussion may occur about the comparison of evangelism and discipleship. For Alan Quigley, Oklahoma Baptists' associate executive director for church resources, evangelism and discipleship come together like two sides of the same coin.

"Every coin is only valuable if it has both sides," said Quigley. "The Great Commission is fulfilled by having discipleship that leads to evangelism and evangelism that leads to discipleship."

The relationship of evangelism and discipleship will be the focus of the theme "Together" at the upcoming Advance Conference, previously known as the Oklahoma State Evangelism Conference, Jan. 30-31, at Oklahoma City, Quail Springs.

Oklahoma Baptists will hear speakers who are Oklahoma pastors and leaders as well as national leaders. Andy Taylor, Oklahoma Baptists regional ministry partner; Stephen Rummage, pastor of Oklahoma City, Quail Springs; Vern Charette, pastor of Coweta, First; Mike Murray, pastor of Tahlequah, First; Danny Gandara, pastor of Del City, Sunnyside; Rick Frie, pastor of Jenks, First; and Mark Custalow, pastor of Oklahoma City, Glorieta are among the state pastors and leaders. Emmitt McKenzie, an Oklahoma vocational evangelist, also will be speaking as well as longtime Oklahoma Baptist leader Robert Haskins.

"One of Oklahoma Baptists' most beloved leaders Bob Haskins will be step-

ping into the pulpit to share his heart on discipleship and evangelism," Quigley said. "You may know the name, but here is your opportunity to get to know the man."


Shane Pruitt, national next gen director for North American Mission Board, and Kevin Williams, pastor of Villa Rica, Ga., First, are the two national speakers. Pruitt is well-known among Oklahoma Baptists for speaking during the Falls Creek youth summer weeks. Quigley said Williams pastors one of the fastest growing churches in the southeast.

Geron Davis will be leading worship through music during the main services. He and his group Kindred Souls led worship times during last year's Advance Conference.

"Geron has written many of the songs we love to sing in worship" Quigley said. "We're going to have groups from Oklahoma Baptist University and

student worship team lead us during the Monday night service, and Geron will invest time and will disciple these young worship leaders."

Tuesday morning, Jan. 31, will offer breakout sessions for the many ministry focus groups. The conference will feature some of the best teachers on evangelism and discipleship in various areas of ministry.

For more information including a full schedule of the two-day event, visit oklahomabaptists.org/advance. 



ADVANCE CONFERENCE
TOGETHER SPEAKERS:

MON	 Mike Murray	 Vern Charette	 Emmitt McKenzie	 Andy Taylor
	 Bob Haskins	 Danny Gandara	 Rick Frie	 Kevin Williams
TUES	 Mark Custalow	 Shane Pruitt	 Stephen Rummage	