



THE BAPTIST MESSENGER

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Rite of Passage: Old country church

>> WALKER MOORE



HEALTHY CHURCH CONFERENCE

MARCH 24-25
ST. JOHN BAPTIST CHURCH, OKC, OK

Healthy Church Conference covers multiple topics, March 24-25

>> CHRIS DOYLE



Priority of Preaching covers the importance of preaching

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Disaster Relief faithfully responds after Feb. 26 tornadoes

>> by Chris Doyle
MANAGING EDITOR

Oklahoma Baptist Disaster Relief (DR) served in many areas of the state that were affected by tornadic activity, Sunday, Feb. 26.

DR trained volunteers served in Cheyenne, in western Oklahoma, Shawnee and Meeker areas and have an incident command center set up at Norman, Bethel.

Jason Yarbrough, DR state director, said more than 150 volunteers helped in the clean-up. Not only are they in Oklahoma but volunteers are also finishing up work in Austin, Texas, helping that community recover from an ice storm last month.

Yarbrough is pleased with how quickly and efficiently DR responded and worked to help. Most of the work was completed within a week of the storms.

"We have been working in Cheyenne," Yarbrough said. "They started there on Monday (Feb. 28) and finished yesterday (Wed., March 1), working on eight different homes."

A chainsaw team served in the Shawnee-Meeker area, helping many homes, and were finishing up work in this area earlier this week.

Three teams have been serving in Norman, including a chainsaw team from Texas, and Yarbrough said DR may be stationed there for up to another week.

"Work orders continue to come in," Yarbrough said, "and our volunteers are hard at work, cleaning up trees and debris from damaged homes."

Yarbrough said he was impressed with how communities and churches have been serving, too.

"I saw 20-30 students out cleaning up debris in Cheyenne as well as probably a hundred community members," he said. "It was a massive sea of people helping."

In Shawnee, churches were already beginning the process of helping people. "It's encouraging to me to see churches out there doing what they can do," Yarbrough said.


DR chaplains also were walking streets while DR assessors were checking out homes that were damaged. Many spiritual conversations were made by the chaplains with people in affected areas.

"We've been well received at the homes where we are working," Yarbrough said. "They are very appreciative and would ask why we are helping people, which always gives us the opportunity to share the Gospel with them."

Yarbrough is beginning his third month on the job as DR state director. He is pleased with how the DR ministry with the many trained volunteers are on the ground serving those who need help.

"From this position you look at things differently," Yarbrough said. "In the way this unfolded beginning Sunday night when the storms hit, by daylight the next day, we were at three locations already assessing damage. By the time Monday evening comes, we've completed jobs in Cheyenne; we have a plan of attack in Shawnee, and the command center is set up in Norman."

"There are so many details that were taken care of in just hours," Yarbrough continued, "and the way that volunteers began to respond and were at the locations ready to help—it's just joy from my standpoint of seeing the desire in our volunteers to be able to come serve in a time of need."

To donate to Oklahoma Baptist Disaster Relief or for more information, visit okdisasterhelp.org. 



Rite of passage: Old country church



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And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?" (Luke 2:49, NASB).

I was reared in a good ole country church called Six Mile Baptist. You have seen churches just like it: gravel driveway and parking lot, white wooden frame building, cemetery out back, and a preacher who uses farming lingo to explain the Bible. Our church was so small that there was no such thing as a "secret sin." The call to worship each Sunday was: "Y'all come in," and the benediction was "Y'all come back, y'hear." I enjoy preaching at churches like this. They have the best carry-in suppers you have ever tasted. Nothing on the table comes out of a can or a box.

You know you belong to a country church when: 1) They have a special fundraiser for a new church septic tank. 2) The discussion about Jesus feeding the 5,000 turns into a debate over whether the two fish were bass or catfish. 3) The choir is known as the OK Chorale. 4) Finding lost sheep is not just a parable. 5) People only lock their cars during the summer—to make sure their neighbors can't leave them a bag of squash. 6) The entire church directory contains only three last names. 7) Peo-



ple think "rapture" is what you get when you lift something too heavy. 8) The pastor says, "I would like to ask Bubba to close in prayer," and five men stand up. 9) Opening day of deer season is an official church holiday. 10) People grumble about Noah letting coyotes on the Ark.

At Six Mile Baptist Church we only had one paid staff member, the preacher—and I would hardly call what he got "pay." Frequently, farmers would bring crop offerings to supplement his salary. I remember one time when a deacon brought him a gunnysack of popcorn kernels. The possibility of a lifetime supply of snack food like this might be the one thing God used to bring me into the ministry.

In our church, one person held many responsibilities. My dad was

a deacon, a Sunday school teacher, and a mission group leader; and my mother filled the rest of the jobs in the church. Sometimes, my brother or I played piano for the service, and we always had to clean the church on Saturdays. But what taught me the most was something my church called "parts." Every Sunday night, each of the youth was assigned a "part"—a section of the lesson we had to study, then stand and teach to our peers.

Churches have come a long way since those days, but along that way, we seem to have lost our "parts." Maybe one reason our children drop out of church at such an early age today is because they do not have a... part. God bless country churches and PARTS! [m](#)

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Coming events

MARCH 18. Lindsay, Payne, 13412 Western Avenue, is celebrating its 100th anniversary. Service will begin at 2 p.m. with a reception to follow. For more information call Maria Mantooth at 405/590-9512. [m](#)

MARCH 23. Bethany, Tulakes is promoting Gerald Wolfe Hymn Sing at Fine Arts Auditorium in Yukon, 850 Yukon Ave., at 7 p.m. The congregational singing of church hymns features musical groups Greater Vision, Whisnants, Mark Trammell, Mylon Hayes and Jim and Melissa Brady. Duane Garren will serve as emcee. A love offering will be accepted. Visit ougma.org for more information. [m](#)



OSU BCM WINS BCM BASKETBALL TOURNEYS. Oklahoma State University Baptist Collegiate Ministry (BCM) were the champions in both the men's and women's BCM basketball tournaments, Feb. 24-25 at Oklahoma Baptist University. A total of eight women's teams and 18 men's teams from 16 campuses participated. Paul Lewis is the OSU BCM director. Staff members and siblings Bailey (women) and Ian Robinson (men) coached the two teams to victory. [m](#)

VOLUNTEER MISSIONS OPPORTUNITIES

OKLAHOMA

On-going opportunities for volunteers:

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—918/247-4679.

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.

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

DISASTER RELIEF

Training:

March 16-18—Chaplain Manual and Operational Stress First Aid—\$60 Baptist Building, 3800 N. May Ave.

To register, email pjones@oklahomabaptists.org

March 25—Disaster Relief Orientation & Credentialing—8:30 a.m.–12 noon; Pryor, First, 601 E. Graham Ave.

April 1—First Aid/CPR Class – 9 a.m.-3 p.m.—\$20 DR Team Center, 7180 NW Expressway, Okarche

To register, email Darrell Knapp, dknapp711@gmail.com

April 15—Disaster Relief Orientation & Credentialing—8:30 a.m. – 12 noon; Stillwater, Countryside, 2124 S. Western

April 22—First Aid/CPR Class – 9 a.m.-3 p.m.—\$20 DR Team Center, 7180 NW Expressway, Okarche

To register, email Darrell Knapp, dknapp711@gmail.com

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Healthy Church Conference covers multiple topics, March 24-25

>> by Chris Doyle
MANAGING EDITOR

Oklahoma City, St. John is the place for the upcoming Healthy Church Conference, hosted by Oklahoma Baptists African American Ministries.

Speakers include Robert Smith, Jr., Billie J. Rodgers, Charles Grant and Leroy Fountain. The two-day event will benefit not only African-American church but all churches.

"The Oklahoma Baptists African American Ministry is preparing to sponsor the first of two planned Healthy Church Conferences at Oklahoma City, St. John," said Walter Wilson, African American ministry partner for Oklahoma Baptists.




Grant, who serves as executive director of African American relations and mobilization at the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee, will open the conference Friday evening, speaking on the topic "Navigating the SBC."

Breakout sessions follow Grant's address with Smith speaking on the topic "Doctrine That Dances," based

on his book of the same title, and Rodgers talking on "Prayer: In His Presence Daily."

Saturday morning will open the meeting with a time of praise and worship. Attendees will then have the option of breakout sessions, including the topics that Smith and Rodgers are addressing, as well as Fountain covering the topic "Disciple Making."

After lunch, the final breakout sessions will be offered by all three speakers. Smith will conclude the conference, preaching a Gospel message.

Registration is \$10. To register and for more information, visit oklahoma-baptists.org/african-american. 

Priority of Preaching covers the importance of preaching

>> by Chris Doyle
MANAGING EDITOR

EDMOND—The Priority of Preaching Conference welcomed 187 pastors and church leaders on Monday, Feb. 28 at Edmond, Henderson Hills. Having as its theme "Preaching? Simple Teaching on Simply Preaching," the event specifically addressed the importance and the definition of preaching.

Jim Shaddix, professor of preaching at Southeastern Seminary, opened the conference quoting many well-known preachers and theologians, including V.L. Stanfield who said "Preaching is giving the Bible a voice."

Preaching in biblical times, Shaddix said, involved revelation, explanation and exhortation. Preaching today involves explanation and exhortation but not revelation because we now have the Word of God.

"We have been called not to reveal new stuff but to simply take what has already been revealed and explain it to people and to exhort it," Shaddix said.

Dwayne Milioni, assistant professor of preaching at Southeastern Seminary, made an emphasis on why many pastors are needed to preach the Word.

"You are absolutely the best person to be preaching to (your church)," Milioni said. "You are the most able person to proclaim God's Word because you are a 'shepherd,' and you know your 'sheep.' That's why we need so many of you. It's not just the preaching; it's the shepherding."

Shaddix opened the afternoon session, speaking on the role of the Holy Spirit in preaching. Todd Fisher, executive director-treasurer of Oklahoma



>> PHOTO: CHRIS DOYLE
From left, Todd Fisher, Jim Shaddix, Dwayne Milioni and Stephen Rummage participate in a panel discussion at the Priority of Preaching Conference.

Baptists, moderated a panel discussion, which featured Shaddix, Milioni and Stephen Rummage, pastor of Oklahoma City, Quail Springs. Milioni concluded the conference with a sermon.

"I have only been a lead pastor for a couple of years," said Grant Findley, pastor of El Reno, First, "so I have found the Priority of Preaching Conference very helpful in refocusing on the essentials and continuing to develop as a communicator. I am thankful for the theological and practical tools I was able to take away from the day!" 