



# THE BAPTIST MESSENGER

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## 2023 CAMP SEASON COMMENCES: CAMP PERFECT WINGS & ACC KICK OFF OKLAHOMA BAPTISTS SUMMER CAMPS



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Jesus loves me?**  
>> WALKER MOORE



**Bethany, Council Road  
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# 2023 'Camp Perfect Wings' focuses campers on Jesus



>> PHOTOS: BRIAN HOBBS

1) David Anderson shares a Gospel message at Camp Perfect Wings; 2) Allie Arnold, left, has been a 'buddy' for several years; 3) Campers participate in worship; 4)

>> by Brian Hobbs  
**MANAGING EDITOR**

DAVIS—Camp Perfect Wings, a program sponsored by Oklahoma Baptists that offers camp ministry for children and adults with special needs, is attended by various Baptist church members and others across the state.

The 2023 Camp Perfect Wings took place at CrossTimbers Mission Adventure Camp in Davis on May 25-27. According to Sarah Hagar, CrossTimbers program director for Oklahoma Baptists, 130 campers, buddies, volunteers and others were in attendance, a number that exceeds last year's attendance.

With plenty of times for worship and teaching, campers also enjoyed a wide range of activities, games and experiences. This year's camp pastor was David Anderson, who serves as children's ministry strategist for Louisiana Baptists. Anderson, who had previously spoken at Camp Perfect Wings, shared a Gospel message and shared from Philippians 4 about thinking on "good and godly things" (Phil. 4:8-9).

To enhance each camper's experience, Camp Perfect Wings offers a buddy system in place. A buddy is "a trained and responsible adult who has the desire to serve with those with special needs. Buddies often help campers who require assistance with mobility, behavior management, or skills, will

require one-on-one staffing during the duration of the camp."

One buddy who participates in Camp Perfect Wings is Allie Arnold, a schoolteacher from the Oklahoma City area. She has been a buddy with her camper Doug for many years.

"Camp Perfect Wings is such a blessing," Arnold said. "I have served as a buddy for multiple years, and it is the most rewarding experience. These campers have the joy of the Lord."

Everyone who took part in this year's Camp Perfect Wings encampment walked away inspired and with their minds focused on Jesus.

Camp Perfect Wings is supported by the Cooperative Program, to accompany camp registration fees. For more information, go to [oklahomabaptists.org/childhood/camp-perfect-wings](http://oklahomabaptists.org/childhood/camp-perfect-wings).



The Tom Elliff Center for Missions is pleased to invite ALL Pastors to a "Smokin' Joe's Dinner" Tuesday evenings in June and July at Falls Creek.

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# Children learn to 'Thrive' at ACC

>> by Chris Doyle  
MANAGING EDITOR

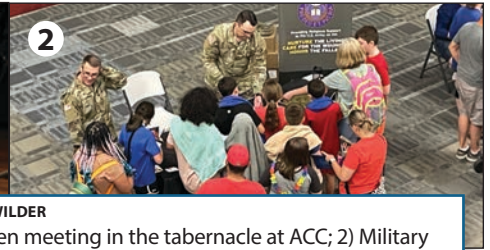
DAVIS—Associational Children's Camp (ACC) continues to be a standard for reaching children for Christ. More than 5,000 participants, campers and sponsors, were registered for the two sessions at Falls Creek Conference Center, May 28-31 for session one and May 31-June 3 for session two.

More than 450 spiritual decisions were made at ACC, including 286 professions of faith in Christ, from the two sessions combined.

ACC is in partnership with 15 Oklahoma Baptists associations, and there were 156 churches represented at ACC this year. The theme at ACC this year was "Thrive," based on Gal. 5:22-23. Camp program director James Wilder explained the purpose behind the camp's theme.

"The byproduct of a relationship with Jesus Christ is the fruit of the Spirit," said Wilder who serves as director of missions in Pottawatomie-Lincoln Association. "We wanted to highlight that in the children's lives this year, so they can celebrate not only the receiving of Christ in their lives but the work of the Holy Spirit administering in their lives."

Mark Jones, children's minister at Oklahoma City, Quail Springs, served as camp pastor of both sessions and emphasized "Thrive" throughout his sermons. "God has incredible plans for your life," Jones preached. "If you trust Him, you can accomplish great things."



>> PHOTOS: 1) CHRIS DOYLE; 2) JAMES WILDER  
1) Campers do fun contests when meeting in the tabernacle at ACC; 2) Military chaplaincy is one of the ministries campers learn about at Missionfest.

Wilder said he could tell children were receptive to Jones' sermons.

"A highlight was (Jones) talking about God carrying them through those times when they need Him the most," Wilder said. "Some of our children are facing serious problems, and this message reaches them where they are."

"Pastor Mark Jones and the praise team from Cashion, First have done a wonderful job, making the worship and messages 'child-friendly' while at the same time not 'childish.'"

Pastor Kenny Mossman of Carnegie, First also witnessed encouraging responses from children at ACC.


"During one of our worship times, I saw one of our 6th grade boys walk up to one of our sponsors and hug her," Mossman said. "This sponsor has poured into this child for years, and what we were seeing was his recognition of the important spiritual role she is playing in his life. That's the kind of raw emotion that we sometimes see at (ACC). It is one of the most important events on our church calendar, not only for the immediate responses we see,

but for the long-term seeds I know we are planting."

Missionfest is also a main feature of ACC. Campers connect with different mission work and ministries of Oklahoma Baptists.

"Children want to learn about different avenues to share the Gospel," Wilder said. "At Missionfest, they learn about the International Mission Board, North American Mission Board, military chaplaincy, church planting and partnership missions."

Completing its 43rd year, ACC remains an effective camp event in helping children grow spiritually and providing them opportunities to learn and to participate in missions and ministry.

"As a pastor, I am so appreciative of ACC," Mossman said. "Our children get the full Falls Creek experience, and because the environment is so well structured, the churches can really concentrate on the kids and the Gospel message. From our oldest sponsor to the youngest camper, it's a wonderful experience." 

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# Rite of passage: Jesus loves me?



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“Jesus Loves Me” is one of the first songs that I can remember learning as a kid. You should have seen me—standing there in the front row of the preschool choir, my parents looking on with great anticipation.

I was one of those little boys who wasn’t afraid to lean back on his heels and let the music rip from the bottom of his tiny heart. I sang as though I was the guest soloist for the church cantata and the rest of the children were there only as my backup singers.

When I got to the chorus, I sang with all the gusto that a four-year-old could muster, “Yes, Jesus loves me, Yes, Jesus loves me, Yes, Jesus loves me, The Bible teeellls-meee-soooo.” My flair for the dramatic led me to hold out the last few words for emphasis every time.

The problem was, I could sing it, but I couldn’t believe it. “Jesus loves me” must be one of the hardest theological concepts for anyone to understand.

Another song reminded me of that one, but it sounded a little different. This was the one about “Jesus Loves the Little Children of The World.” Again, I sang boldly, “Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in His sight.”

Now this song, I could sing and believe. I believed that God loved the children starving in Ethiopia and the children running through the jungles of Panama. He loved the orphaned children in faraway China and the city kids on the busy streets of Manhattan.

In fact, I believed that He loved all the children of the world—except one. I also believe that many of you who read this know who that one is. You see that person every day in the mirror.



The children who sing those songs grow up to be adults who serve in the church. We greet each other in the hallways and say, “God Bless You.” Now, I can hand out “God Bless You’s” all day long and come home feeling good about myself. But to take it literally that God wants to bless me? I am not so sure about that. After all, if I am not even convinced that Jesus loves me, how can I be sure He wants to bless me?

When I was a child, I needed a real Jesus, not the Jesus in a song. I needed a Jesus with arms that could hold me tightly when I was afraid—a Jesus who could run His fingers through my hair and whisper that it was going to be all right.

I needed a Jesus who wasn’t stuck in a stained-glass window or fixed to a cross hanging on a wall. I needed a Jesus who would play baseball with me when nobody else would. I needed a Jesus who would laugh at my childish jokes and join me in a game of Hide ‘n Seek.

I needed a Jesus who would lay beside me at night when I went to sleep, and who would already be awake when I got up in the morning. I needed a Jesus who would join me in burping contests and, with laughter in His voice, let me win. I needed a Jesus who would let me crawl up into His lap, looking deep

and long into His eyes to find only—acceptance. I needed a real Jesus.

How could Jesus do all these things for me? Through His body—the church. Jesus put special people in His church to interact with me as a child. These parts of His body helped me begin to understand the real Jesus.

One was the mission leader who put up a tent in the church backyard and taught us about Native Americans. We learned how Jesus loved them, and when I took off those face markings, the leader who loved me with paint on my face would still love the person who was just—me.

Another part of Jesus’ body was my favorite Sunday School teacher. Every time he saw me, he reminded me that he knew I would become someone special. When I looked into his eyes, I believed him. Still another was my pastor “Bro. Harry” who took us boys each week after Bible study to Dairy Queen, handing us a dime to buy anything on the menu that we wanted.

Jesus did love me! One person was His arm, another His hand, and another His heart. When I put them all together, I saw—Jesus. This week, what part of Jesus will a child see in you? [m](#)



# Church news

## VOLUNTEER MISSIONS OPPORTUNITIES



### OKLAHOMA

On-going opportunities for volunteers:

Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma, OKC and Community Food Bank of Eastern OK, Tulsa—both locations, call 405/972-1111 (Not a Baptist ministry, but many Oklahoma Baptist churches receive food from them for local food pantries.)

Arms Around Broken Arrow—food pantry, clothes closet—918/258-7714 or [bryan@armsaroundba.org](mailto:bryan@armsaroundba.org)

Lake Texoma Baptist Resort Ministry—Monty & Tammy Wood, Directors, 580/916-2181 2034 Max Rd, Mead 73449 email: [thehelm2034@gmail.com](mailto:thehelm2034@gmail.com)

Cherokee Baptist Assembly, Cherokee—918/506-5482 or [cba\\_tahlequah@yahoo.com](mailto:cba_tahlequah@yahoo.com)

### DISASTER RELIEF

Training:

**June 15-16—Assisting Individuals in Crisis**—9 a.m.-4 p.m.

—\$50 Baptist Building, 3800 N. May Ave.,

To register, email [pjones@oklahomabaptists.org](mailto:pjones@oklahomabaptists.org)

(Continuing education for those who have completed Chaplain Manual and OSFA)

**Sept. 16—Disaster Relief Orientation & Credentialing** –

8:30 a.m. – 12 noon, Weatherford, First, 1510 E. Davis Ave.,

Register at [okdisasterhelp.org/volunteer-training](http://okdisasterhelp.org/volunteer-training)

**Sept. 21-23—Chaplain Manual and Operational Stress**

**First Aid**—\$60 Baptist Building, 3800 N. May Ave.,

To register, email [pjones@oklahomabaptists.org](mailto:pjones@oklahomabaptists.org)

**BETHANY, COUNCIL ROAD CELEBRATES 60 YEARS.** A crowd of 1,400 gathered at Bethany, Council Road May 28 to celebrate the church's 60th anniversary. Featured above is group who met in the Cube community center on the Council Road campus for the celebration. Pastor Rick Thompson preached, and a video was shown featuring former pastors and charter members. Participants also toured a display of church history photos and enjoyed other activities. [m](#)



**OKLAHOMA BAPTISTS HOSTS PASTORS FELLOWSHIPS AT FALLS CREEK.** Every Tuesday at 2 p.m. during the summer youth weeks at Falls Creek Baptist Conference Center, near Davis, pastors attending Falls Creek with their students are invited to a Pastors Fellowship. Attending the fellowship during Week 1 were, from left, Brian Spade of Mooreland, First; Tyler Turner of Cleveland, First; and Brooks Deatherage, Chadd Pendergraft and Clay Pendergraft of Tahlequah, Crescent Valley. [m](#)

**OKLAHOMA**  
BAPTISTS

## RECOMMENDATIONS SOUGHT FOR BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

The Oklahoma Baptists' Nominating Committee invites Oklahoma Baptists from across the state to recommend persons to serve on the various boards and committees. The committee's nominations will be presented to messengers at the Annual Meeting on November 13-14. For more information, visit [www.oklahomabaptists.org](http://www.oklahomabaptists.org)