



THE BAPTIST MESSENGER

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CarePortal

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Oklahoma Baptists continue to support foster, adoptive families through CarePortal

>> by Chris Doyle
MANAGING EDITOR

The number of participating counties has grown since the last time *Baptist Messenger* reported on the CarePortal. More Oklahoma Baptist churches also are involved in supporting foster and adoptive families through the web-based sharing platform.

A [Jan. 26, 2021](#) article introduced *Messenger* readers to the CarePortal, which is coordinated by 111Project. At that time, CarePortal was available in 23 Oklahoma counties. Currently, 56 of the state's 77 counties have connections to CarePortal, and two more counties will launch access to CarePortal later this month.

More than 200 Oklahoma Baptist churches are now participating in the CarePortal, and stories abound of how these churches are impacting families and communities.

Many churches have been building bunk beds for families. Tulsa, Battle Creek has a bunk bed ministry, and more than 60 percent of the connections through this ministry have led to people getting further involved at the church.

Jeremy Smith, pastor of Midwest City, Eastwood, said his church recently got involved with doing ministry through the CarePortal.

"We, as a church, continue to take a pro-life stance, which means walking with those who choose life, supporting those involved in foster and adoptive care," Smith said.

As an adoptive parent himself, Smith knows the value of CarePortal's assistance. One of the first ministry opportunities Eastwood experienced was with a foster mom who was looking for shoes for a five-year-old boy. Smith asked for four



>> PHOTO: PROVIDED

Members of the University of Oklahoma football team worked with Oklahoma Baptist churches to build bunk beds to help meet needs of foster and adoptive families. This project was made possible through the CarePortal.

members to give \$25 each for the shoes. He said someone responded willing to pay the whole \$100, and he was not surprised with the response because "We are a generous church."

However, Smith wanted to make this opportunity for others to be involved in giving too.

"The idea is 'share the burden, share the blessing,'" Smith said. "If we all come together, we can do more. We want to give people the opportunity to be blessed in meeting needs."

Amy Cordova, missions and women's ministry partner for Oklahoma Baptists, is encouraged by the number of Oklahoma Baptist churches serving through the CarePortal and believes this is an effective way for church members to grow in their own spiritual lives.

"I think it's one of the greatest discipleship tools for the church," Cordova said about the CarePortal. "For example, a small group could take on a project, and together they could provide that need for that family. It's a hands-on opportunity to teach people in your small group or in your church how to do ministry within their community."


Chris Campbell, executive director of 111Project shared a life-changing

story as a result of churches being involved with the CarePortal.

"Just recently, Durant, First was involved in meeting a need for a young man (in the DHS system) who recently had his parental rights terminated," Campbell said. "This happened the day before his birthday. CarePortal connected the young man to Durant, First whose members were able to do something special to celebrate his birthday. Ultimately, this led not only to a great birthday but an 'eternal birthday' as the young man gave his life to Christ."

Campbell reported that the young man eventually was baptized at a church in another community where he lives. 111Project has seen the number of children in care move from 11,300 children in 2015 to 6,074 children in care at the beginning of 2024.

"This reduction of children in care is greatly due to the quantifiable impact of the local church," Campbell said.

For churches interested in getting involved with CarePortal, visit 111project.org/oklahoma and see how to impact communities and support foster and adoptive families. For more information about foster care and adoption, visit obhc.org, the website of Oklahoma Baptist Homes for Children. 

Pastors learn preaching insights from Charles, Rummage at 'Priority of Preaching'

>> by Chris Doyle
MANAGING EDITOR

The Priority of Preaching Conference has been a practical help for Oklahoma Baptist pastors for 12 years. On Feb. 5, Oklahoma City, Quail Springs hosted 260 pastors and church leaders for this year's Priority of Preaching, as H.B. Charles and Stephen Rummage were the speakers.

Brett Selby, regional ministry partner for Oklahoma Baptists, has been the organizer of every Priority of Preaching Conference and believes the event reflects Paul's instructions to Timothy to continue improving in his skills as a preacher.

"(Priority of Preaching) is for the preacher who, regardless of whatever progress he has already made in his preaching ministry (1 Tim. 4:15), knows that he can make even more improvement in this most important task," Selby wrote in an article before the event.

Rummage is pastor of Oklahoma City, Quail Springs and opened the preaching conference with instructions on the "Value and Use of Illustrations in Expository Preaching."

"One value of illustrations is they help us understand the unknown by connecting to the familiar," Rummage said.

Illustrations can be important in keeping the attention of the listeners,



>> PHOTOS: CHRIS DOYLE
1) H.B. Charles speaks to 260 attendees during the Priority of Preaching Conference at OKC, Quail Springs; 2) Stephen Rummage shares the value and use of illustrations during expository preaching.

and Rummage said they help prevent listeners from "clock watching."

"The clock is speaking louder than the preacher," Rummage said, explaining the clock watching level that pastors should avoid. "And listeners have given up hope that he will have anything meaningful to say. One way to keep listeners away from clock watching and on high alert is to use illustrations skillfully."

Charles, pastor of Jacksonville, Fla., Shiloh Missionary, spoke on the "Process of Effective Preaching" and gave a sheet of 50 Practical Preaching Tips to every attendee.

"It should be a crime to bore people with the Gospel," Charles said. "You should preach passion. When I talk about passion in preaching, I am not talking about volume or emotion or theatrics. When I speak on passion in preaching, I mean you should preach as a satisfied customer not a paid advertiser."


In the afternoon session, both Rummage and Charles gave a "behind the

curtain" aspect of how they both go through a week of preparing a sermon to preach on Sunday.

"Study prepares the sermon; prayer prepares the preacher," Rummage said.

Charles and Rummage concluded the event, fielding questions from pastors. Many complimented this year's Priority of Preaching Conference on social media.

Vern Charette, pastor of Coweta, First, shared on Facebook this conference "may be the best preaching conference (Oklahoma Baptists) have put on. The content was so good and practical for all levels."

Dany Daniel, pastor of Bartlesville, Southern, thanked Oklahoma Baptists leadership for the conference. He said Priority of Preaching "was very insightful. I loved being at the tables with guys and being able to write notes during the gathering." 

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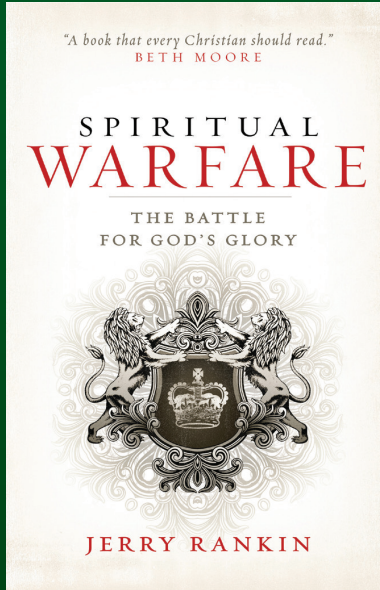
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Special guest
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on Spiritual Warfare.

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BAPTISTS

 COOPERATIVE
PROGRAM

Longtime Oklahoma Baptist leader Larry Adams dies

>> by Bob Nigh

CONTRIBUTING WRITER

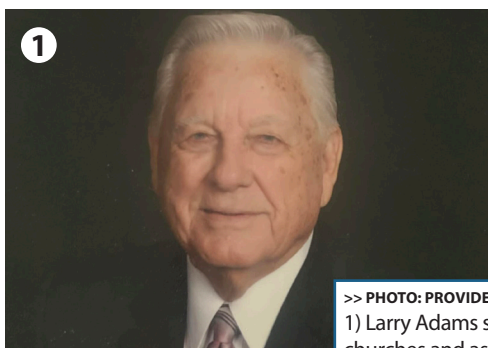
Longtime Oklahoma Baptist pastor and denominational leader Larry Adams passed away Feb. 5. His death was noted by Oklahoma Baptists' Executive Director-Treasurer Todd Fisher, who commented, "Larry Adams, a giant in Oklahoma Baptist life and history, has passed away. Larry was the pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Shawnee for much of the 1970s," Fisher said. "Under his leadership, the Lord grew the church exponentially. When I went to be the pastor of Immanuel in 2003, I lost count of the number of members there who told me Larry was the one who led them to the Lord. He was a constant encourager to me the 19 years I pastored Immanuel.

"Larry served Oklahoma Baptists in various capacities, and at the national level of the Southern Baptist Convention as well. He was a larger-than-life personality who made a huge impact. I am grateful for Kingdom men such as Larry, on whose shoulders I, and many others, stand."

Adams served as pastor at numerous Oklahoma churches, including Eufaula, First; Shawnee, Immanuel and Piedmont, First. He also faithfully served Baptist Village Communities (BVC) for many years as campus director at Baptist Village of Oklahoma City and as BVC's vice-president—development. As a talented and experienced fundraiser, he led a capital campaign that far exceeded BVC's goals.

He also planned and organized an annual fund effort, which is now carried out on a yearly basis. He was instrumental in developing numerous friends of the BVC ministry. For his and Edwine's influence and efforts, the Larry and Edwine Adams Assistance Fund was established by BVC in their honor.

In 2012, Larry and Edwine were presented the Will and Nora Baskett Legacy of Love Award—the highest recognition given by BVC—during the Feb. 12 BVC board meeting. The award is



>> PHOTO: PROVIDED

1) Larry Adams served as pastor of many Oklahoma Baptist churches and as a faithful leader of Baptist Village Communities; 2) Hance Dilbeck, left, presents Larry and Edwine Adams a keepsake that reflects the naming of the Adams Lodge at Falls Creek.

named after Will and Nora Baskett, pioneers in the aging services profession. The Adamses were only the third recipients of the prestigious honor. They joined previous recipients Robert and Faye Griffin and Bud and Joyce Evans.

Upon learning of Adams' passing, BVC President Bill Pierce said, "Larry Adams was our longtime co-laborer and friend for many, many years. He lived at the village in Oklahoma City and shared Christ with many, taught God's word and led worship over many years. Everyone loved Dr. Adams.

"Larry and Edwine were such gentle, loving and kind friends. They were always looking for needs to meet in Christian love. We were so happy to begin the Larry and Edwine Adams Resident Assistance Fund in their honor. They had been helping residents who experienced financial challenges on the campuses for many years.

"Larry leaves a powerful legacy in BVC. Many members of our friends team currently serving have been wonderfully blessed by his leadership and ministry. He had a special ministry to those of us who serve in BVC. He prayed for us and knew the names of our children and asked about them.

"I think about the residents and team members who will spend eternity in Heaven because Larry shared Christ with them.

"The Larry and Edwine Adams Resident Assistance Fund is a powerful ministry in itself. Larry worked tirelessly to build up the fund so that residents who

are financially challenged can continue to live in the village. That work will continue, and many will be blessed.

"Larry had a huge impact on BVC and many of us personally. We praise the Lord for his friendship and ministry."

The Adamses also were longtime supporters of Falls Creek Baptist Conference Center, which they began attending in the late 1960s.

In 2018, one property was completely renovated and now bears their family name. The building formerly known as Lodge Two was renovated and now features improved rooms and furnishings, offering sleeping quarters for guests on campus.

Oklahoma Baptists leaders received a major gift from Larry and Edwine's son, Pat Adams, a businessman and member of Oklahoma City, Quail Springs. Lodge Two, now known as Adams Lodge, will host guests throughout the year.

At that time, former Oklahoma Baptists' Executive Director-Treasurer Hance Dilbeck, noted the family's spiritual influence: "Larry and Edwine are the epitome of a Christian couple who have served faithfully," Dilbeck said. "We are grateful to Pat and the entire Adams family for making this strategic investment at Falls Creek, where we believe the Lord will continue to transform many lives."

Plans for a funeral/memorial service for Larry Adams will be announced soon. [m](#)

People in the news



HEAVENER, FIRST OBSERVES SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE SUNDAY WITH LIFE CHAIN. Members of Heavener, First joined many other Southern Baptist churches across the country in observing Sanctity of Human Life Sunday on Jan. 19. Heavener, First chose to demonstrate its support through forming a life chain, as members stood on a major street holding sign that offered messages of hope and support of pro-life causes. [m](#)



KIDS AT RED OAK, FIRST SUPPORT OBHC. Oklahoma Baptist Homes for Children President James Swain celebrates \$950 donation from the Red Oak First Baptist Church ILLUMIN8 KIDS MINISTRY mission project. Boys and girls had a friendly competition to see who could collect the most money. Illumin8 raised \$449.98. The boys won the competition. Members of the church voted to match the donation. A check was presented to Swain for \$950. [m](#)

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VOLUNTEER MISSIONS OPPORTUNITIES

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On-going opportunities for volunteers:

Campers on Mission – If you are interested in helping with church building projects, sewing and evangelizing, please contact Paul Day at 405/509-0396 or paul.l.day@att.net.

Camp Gibson, Hardesty —Tom Freeman 580/338-6259 or pbaok221@gmail.com

Families Feeding Families Meal Center, Durant—580/230-9142 or visit familiesfeedingfamilies.org

Hope Pregnancy Centers - South OKC 405/688-8700, North OKC 405/755-5433, Edmond 405/330-0200, Ardmore 580/223-7232, Tulsa 918/622-3325

Oklahoma Baptist Homes for Children Campuses

Oklahoma City – 405/691-7781

Edmond – 405/341-3606

Madill – 580/564-2218

Owasso – 918/272-2233

DISASTER RELIEF

Training:

Feb. 16-17—Orientation/Credentialing, Falls Creek Conference Center; register at okdisasterhelp.org.

Feb. 29- March 2—Chaplain Manual and Operational Stress First Aid, \$60, Baptist Building, 3800 N. May, OKC. To register email pjones@oklahomabaptists.org.

March 8-9—Orientation/Credentialing, Baptist Village of Owasso; register at okdisasterhelp.org.

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