

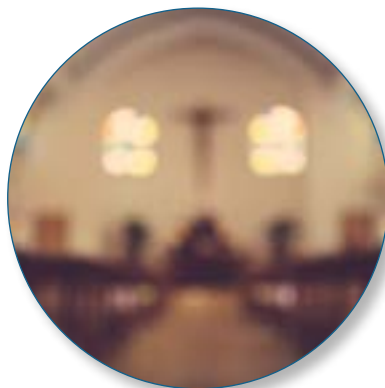


THE BAPTIST MESSENGER

DIGITAL EDITION | MAY 22, 2024



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FRIENDSHIPS WILL 'SOAR' AT 2024 CAMP PERFECT WINGS

by Jacob King | Baptist Messenger Staff Writer



DAVIS-- From May 23 - 25, CrossTimbers will host Camp Perfect Wings 2024. This amazing camp is held once per year and is designed especially for special needs children and adults ages 8 and up. Campers will get to experience morning and evening worship, guided activities such as music, crafts, target sports, motorcycle rides, carriage rides, a cookout and more.

"Camp Perfect Wings gives these kids and adults a place to come and have fun," said CrossTimbers Program Director Sarah Hagar. "They get to spend time with friends doing things they enjoy."

This year, Camp Perfect Wings welcomes Pastor David Anderson, Louisiana Baptists Children's Ministry Strategist, as the speaker.



Sarah Hagar



David Anderson

"Our friends and family members that have special needs, all they want to do is experience life like everyone else does," Anderson said. "Camp Perfect Wings gives them that time every year to help them focus on God and for us to focus on them. It gives them a setting that is accepting of them."

At the camp, there are two types of attendees: Campers and Buddies. Campers are children and adults 8 years and older who have intellectual or developmental disabilities.

Campers will enjoy games, activities and Bible time designed with their special needs in mind. A responsible adult or teen, designated as a Buddy, may accompany up to three campers. In some cases, the friendships forged at Camp Perfect Wings can last long after the camp ended.

One year, a camper named Peter formed a special bond with his Buddy, Tyler. Tyler was a student and football player from Deer Creek High School. Tyler's teacher had requested some of the football players attend the camp as Buddies and he was paired with Peter.

The two went everywhere together and connected so well that Tyler ended up visiting Peter even after the camp had ended. Unfortunately, a few years later Peter passed away from a disease, and Tyler spoke at Peter's funeral, showing how strong their friendship was.

"Peter was just so full of life and loved everyone," Anderson said. "They formed a true friendship that lasted long after the camp. Because of that, we now have a Superman Award named after Peter and Tyler for those who go above and beyond."

This year's theme for Camp Perfect Wings is "Made New", based on 2 Corinthians 5:17. Anderson will be speaking about who the campers really are and how they are not defined by their special needs.

"They aren't defined by their special needs," Anderson said. "Who they are in Christ is what defines them and what Christ has designed them to be."

Camp Perfect Wings is supported by gifts through the Cooperative Program. For more information, visit oklahomabaptists.org/childhood/camp-perfect-wings.





FALLS CREEK YOUTH CAMP: A SUMMER OF GIVING HOPE

by Todd Sanders | Falls Creek Program Director

Oklahoma Baptists are familiar with the hope that we can share with those in need through a summer at Falls Creek Youth Camp through Gospel proclamation, invitation, discipleship, spiritual growth, Christian community, sending and worship.

This summer, campers will have another way to introduce Hope in places where it is needed most. For the first time, churches will have the opportunity to engage in a summer-long, hands-on mission project at Falls Creek Youth Camp called Giving Hope.

“Adding this new ‘Giving Hope’ piece to our response ministry will definitely fill a void we have identified in our desire to best provide help, hope and healing to those impacted by disasters.” Oklahoma Disaster Director Relief (DR) Director Jason Yarborough said of this new opportunity. “I’m excited about the new opportunity our volunteers will have to connect with homeowners to meet a physical need that opens the door for us to speak into their spiritual need.”

The Giving Hope project consists of two parts. “Messages of Hope” will allow students to write prayers and encouraging messages for Oklahoma Baptist DR volunteers to deliver to homeowners affected by a disaster. Student may also assemble “First Contact” bags that DR volunteer crews provide to families in crisis.

All of us have been affected by natural disaster whether directly or indirectly. This is a reality that we live up close and personally all the time. We also all have need others to carry our burdens. It is a beautiful and powerful thing when those two realities mix.

The Giving Hope project is a great example of the cooperation inherent to Oklahoma Baptists. It is also a practical example of the service the Lord intends his children to engage in. It is a great vehicle to share the Gospel to meet spiritual needs in the face of physical needs.

Giving Hope provides an exciting opportunity for the large number of campers at Falls Creek to engage with the project, educate students about Disaster Relief and connect them to relief opportunities beyond camp, giving hope to those in need.

To participate, Falls Creek groups may reserve a time to participate or send students in the afternoons Wednesday through Friday to the Mission Outpost each week at camp.

Pray that the Giving Hope project would inspire students, unite groups and open doors to advance the Gospel this summer and beyond.





HOW THE NEW FEDERAL OVERTIME RULES MAY AFFECT YOUR CHURCH STAFF

by Thomas Jordan | HR & Legal Resources Director, Oklahoma Baptists

From time to time, government rules and regulations come along that can directly impact church staff and employees.

In coming months, there is a new United States Department of Labor rule that may impact whether some church employees are required to be paid overtime.

It is important to note that this new rule does not change the law that ministers are exempt from the overtime rules under the Fair Labor Standards Act. The ministerial exception to the overtime rules includes individuals in ministerial roles, even when the individual is not ordained or licensed.

Under the Fair Labor Standards Act, certain classifications of employees must meet certain qualifications to be exempt from overtime pay when working more than 40 hours in the workweek. Although there are several qualifications, two of those qualifications are that the employee must be (1) paid on a salary basis and (2) that salary must exceed a minimum threshold. The Department of Labor has announced a two-phase increase in the minimum salary threshold.

The first of the two-part change goes into effect July 1, 2024. On that date, the minimum salary threshold increases from an annual salary of \$35,568 to \$43,888. The second increase occurs just six months later on January 1, 2025, when the minimum salary threshold will increase to \$58,656.

There were more rule changes that were announced by the Department of Labor, although the other changes will impact very few churches. You can find more about these changes by speaking with a qualified professional or you can also find more helpful information on this topic for churches online by clicking [here](#).

It is important for churches to be good stewards of all that God has entrusted us with, and we wanted to share this important information with you.

If you have further questions, WatersEdge also can be a source of assistance in this area online at www.watersedge.com/tax-financial-and-legal-guidance. You can email questions to WatersEdge at taxhelp@WatersEdge.com.

GREAT DAY SUNDAY

HIGH ATTENDANCE DAY IN SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday, September 29, 2024

STATEWIDE HIGH ATTENDANCE CAMPAIGN 'GREAT DAY SUNDAY' TO TAKE PLACE ON SEPT. 29

By Philip Jones | MVP Consultant, Oklahoma Baptists

Oklahoma Baptists' Multi-vocational Ministry (MVP) has announced that the second annual attendance campaign will take place on Sept. 29.

The campaign, dubbed "Great Day Sunday," had 48 participating churches in 2023. Big Creek Church, in the mountains of southeastern Oklahoma, kickstarted the campaign in 2022 and experienced a surge in attendance during the trial run. The church witnessed a significant increase in attendance from the usual 85 attendees to 140 people on the designated day. Big Creek has seen a steady increase in attendance across all age groups and classes since the first Great Day Sunday.

Reflecting on the impact of the campaign, Jim Brunk, pastor of Cookson Church, situated on the shores of Lake Tenkiller, shared that their church experienced a historic milestone during the 2023 campaign.

Brunk said, "Our little church is 43 years old, and to the best of our knowledge we have never had 100 in Sunday school. Our attendance exceeded that with 122."

Pastor Tom Gragg of Little Axe, First said, "We downloaded all the materials from the website and found everything very useful. I encouraged our members to invite and bring a visitor for Great Day Sunday. On Great Day Sunday, we had several visitors. This past Mother's Day, I baptized two men whose first Sunday to attend Little Axe was on Great Day Sunday."

The success of Great Day Sunday lies in its simplicity. The campaign typically spans six weeks, during which participating churches select a specific date for Great Day Sunday and then the

pastor and Sunday School teachers encourage members to fervently pray for unchurched people and begin inviting them to join Sunday School and worship services on the special day.

Unlike traditional campaigns, there is no rigid attendance goal set; instead, the focus is on creating an environment of fellowship and worship celebration. It does not matter whether a church has a small or large attendance increase, there will be many reasons to celebrate what God is doing on Great Day Sunday.

Big Creek Church marked Great Day Sunday by having its children sing in the morning worship service followed by an old-fashioned potluck dinner. Jones said the dinner provided an opportunity for people to sit down and visit with their neighbors. Cookson Church opted for a fish fry to bring people together after their worship service.

The enduring significance of Sunday School remains evident across most Oklahoma Baptist churches. In churches small and large, Sunday School continues to serve as a powerful vehicle for congregations to rally together in pursuit of a common goal: reaching out to others with Christ's love and compassion.

As the countdown to Sept. 29 begins, anticipation builds among churches statewide for another Great Day Sunday; filled with fellowship, worship and the unchurched coming to Christ.

Oklahoma Baptists have made resources available for churches. Visit oklahomabaptists.org/pastors/multi-vocational-pastors/. For more information or assistance, contact Philip Jones or Cathy Price at 405-942-3800.

CHURCH NEWS

Oklahomans earn degrees at Southern Seminary

Five students from Oklahoma earned degrees at Southern Seminary and Boyce College for the Spring of 2024. Graduates included Anna Kate Acklin, Bachelor of Science; Trevin Daniel Bender, Master of Divinity; Ty Bart Kerley, Doctor of Ministry; Aaron C.R. Miller, Master of Divinity; and Thomas Jackson Yates, Master of Arts in Theological Studies.

Ministry Safe Event at the SBC

A special session on "Overcoming Obstacles to Reporting Abuse" will be held from Noon-1:30 p.m., Tues., June 11 during the Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting in Indianapolis. The session, to be presented by MinistrySafe founders Gregory Love and Kimberlee Norris in Rooms 143-145 at the Indiana Convention Center, is sponsored by Oklahoma Baptists, Mississippi Baptists and the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. For more information or to register, visit www.ministrysafe.com/sbc2024.

IFC Golf Tournament June 7 in Shawnee

The Sixth Annual Kyle Gipp Memorial Indian Falls Creek Golf Tournament will be held Fri., June 7 at the Citizen Potawatomie Nation Firelake Golf Course, 1901 S. Gordon Cooper Dr., in Shawnee. All proceeds go toward expenses of the camp, the nation's largest Native American family camp. Registration begins at 8 a.m., with a shotgun start at 9 a.m. and lunch at Noon. For more information, email ndnrev@aol.com, or call Victor Cope at 405-388-1568.



2024 State Bible Drill on May 24

These two groups (pictured above) participated in the State Bible Drill on May 4 at the Baptist Building. Pictured left are participants from Cherokee, First. Pictured right are participants from Oklahoma City, Quail Springs. From learning books of the Bible to memorizing Scripture, the Bible Drill helps children grow in their Bible knowledge and skills.

DISASTER RELIEF

Community Response Training

June 18-21, 2024

South Tulsa Baptist Church

Register online at

oklahomabaptists.org/chaplaincy

Orientation/Credentialing

August 23-24, 2024

Kiamichi Baptist Assembly, Talihina, OK

Register online at

okdisasterhelp.org

Chaplain Manual/OSFA Training

Naomi Paget, Instructor

September 12-14, 2024

South Tulsa Baptist Church

Cost is \$60.00

To register, please email

pjones@oklahomabaptists.org

Orientation/Credentialing

September 20-21, 2024

Southwest Baptist Assembly,

Lone Wolf, OK

Register online at

okdisasterhelp.org

Assisting Individuals in Crisis (CISM)

October 24-25, 2024

9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

South Tulsa Baptist Church, 10310

S. Sheridan, Tulsa, OK 74133

Cost \$50.00**

To register, please email

pjones@oklahomabaptists.org

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