



THE BAPTIST MESSENGER

DIGITAL EDITION | OCT. 23, 2024

Invested

1700+ Churches 40 Associations 1 Kingdom

1 THESSALONIANS 2:7-9



2024 ANNUAL MEETING

NOVEMBER 11-12 | FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF MOORE



'Shape the Future' Campaign Launch

by Bryan Painter



Update from Oklahoma Baptist Disaster Relief

by Messenger Staff



Church News

2024 ANNUAL MEETING

NOVEMBER 11-12 | FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF MOORE

MOORE—The 118th Annual Meeting of Oklahoma Baptists is set for Nov. 11-12 at Moore, First.

The Annual Meeting brings together messengers from Baptist churches across the state and features times for key business, worship through music, prayer, fellowship events and more.

The theme for the Annual Meeting is "Invested," based on 1 Thessalonians 2:7-9: *"But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us. For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the Gospel of God."*

Scheduled speakers include Brent Prentice, lead pastor of Stillwater, Eagle Heights; Oklahoma Baptists President Michael Butler, pastor of Chickasha, First; and Oklahoma Baptists' Executive Director-Treasurer Todd Fisher.

Fisher, who was involved in an extremely serious automobile accident in late July, has been involved in a lengthy recovery process. He is expected to address Oklahoma Baptists at the Annual Meeting, sharing what the Lord has put on his heart.

The event, which features ministry reports, will also offer extensive ministry exhibits for all those in attendance. Numerous auxiliary events will take place during the 2024 Annual Meeting.

2024 Oklahoma Baptist Pastors' Conference

Prior to the Annual Meeting, the annual Oklahoma Baptists Pastors' Conference (OKBPC) is scheduled to take place on Nov. 11 at the same venue. Oklahoma Pastors' Conference President Luke Holmes emphasized the importance of this conference.

"The OKBPC serves as a much-needed time of renewal, connection, and inspiration for those who lead churches across the state," Holmes said. "The 2024 conference, set for Monday, Nov. 11 at Moore, First, has the goal of encouraging pastors to stay strong in ministry with the theme of 'Well Done,' drawn from the words of Jesus in Matthew 25:23. *"You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!"*

This year's Pastors' Conference will highlight the concept of faithfulness into five key areas: family, preaching, leadership, longevity in ministry and personal life. These themes will be explored in depth through sermons, testimonies, and focused times of reflection and prayer.

This year's conference brings together respected voices from within Baptist life. Mark Clifton, known for his passion for church revitalization and replanting and heart for small church pastors, will bring a wealth of experience to the conversation on leadership and longevity in ministry. Jared Wilson, a leading author and advocate for Gospel-driven ministry, will also take the stage.

The OKBPC will also have time for pastors to worship together, pray for one another, and enjoy fellowship with those who share their calling.

For a full schedule of events, including messenger pre-registration and other information, visit www.oklahomabaptists.org/annualmeeting.





OBU PRESIDENT ANNOUNCES ‘SHAPE THE FUTURE’ CAMPAIGN LAUNCH

by Bryan Painter

Oklahoma Baptist University (OBU) officially launched the ambitious “Shape the Future” campaign during a well-attended public kickoff event at The Weekend celebration, marking a pivotal moment in the university’s storied history.

The “Shape the Future” campaign is a three-year initiative grounded in prayer, partnership and participation. It aims to transform the university’s academic offerings, facilities and campus life, ensuring OBU remains a place where students are equipped to impact the world. OBU President Heath Thomas described the campaign as “more than a campaign—it is a call to action.”

At the heart of the campaign are three strategic priorities:

ACADEMIC INVESTMENT

OBU will expand academic programs in key areas such as Health Sciences, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and Business. Notably, the university plans to launch its first doctoral programs, including the Doctor of Physical Therapy and the Doctor of Occupational Therapy plus two new master’s programs in speech-language pathology and physician associate studies. Thomas emphasized that these programs are designed to meet the needs of today’s workforce while staying true to OBU’s Christian values.

“Education opens opportunities to empower lives,” he said. “We will prepare students for the market’s needs while remaining true to our faith.”

FACILITY TRANSFORMATION

Over the next 36 months, iconic buildings such as Shawnee Hall, Thurmond Hall, Raley Chapel and Wood Science Building will undergo extensive renovation. These facilities will be reimaged to provide world-class learning and spiritual experiences.

“We are not repristinating the past; we are reimaging spaces,” Thomas said. “Investing in facilities is not just about brick and mortar—it’s about investing in the future.

ENHANCING CAMPUS LIFE

Recognizing that a vibrant campus experience extends beyond the classroom, the campaign will enhance residence halls, dining services, outdoor spaces and athletic facilities. The goal is to create a Christ-centered community where students can grow holistically.

“Every aspect of campus matters to our students and their experience of belonging,” Thomas said. “We want to create spaces where students can gather, reflect and thrive.”

Throughout the event, Thomas underscored that the campaign is ultimately about people—the students, faculty and staff who make OBU a unique and life-changing institution.

“Shape the Future is about our students, our alumni and the impact they will have on the world,” he said.

Thomas closed his speech by inviting the OBU community — faculty, alumni, donors and friends — to join in shaping the university’s future.

“Make no mistake, we can’t do this alone,” he said. “This is an inflection point in the history of Oklahoma Baptist University. We only get one opportunity to shape the future in the way we will over the next 36 months. Together, we will create a future where OBU stands as the pinnacle of Christ-centered, world-class education.”

Thomas said that as the “Shape the Future” campaign moves forward, OBU is calling on all who are connected to the university to participate in the transformative work ahead.

“Our actions for OBU over the next 36 months will echo in the lives of every student who walks through our doors for eternity,” Thomas concluded. “Together, let’s inspire and equip the next generations of future shapers to impact our world—all of life, all for Jesus.”

For more information or to be a part of the Shape the Future campaign, go to okbu.edu/shape.

OKLAHOMA BAPTIST DISASTER RELIEF CONTINUES HURRICANE HELENE RESPONSE

by Messenger Staff

Oklahoma Baptist Disaster Relief (DR) continues to provide support in response to Hurricane Helene in both North Carolina and Georgia. According to DR Director Jason Yarbrough, DR has received a total of 165 work requests with more arriving each day. There are currently 45 volunteers serving through Swannanoa, N.C., First. Volunteers have provided 1,750 meals, 450 showers and done 175 loads of laundry.

In Georgia, chainsaw teams are still being sent to help with clean-up efforts. As of this week, there are 15 volunteers in the field in Ga. Over the upcoming 2 weeks, six additional teams consisting of about 75 volunteers will go and serve.

Since arriving on site in both states on Oct. 7, Oklahoma DR volunteers have been hard at work alongside other volunteers from the Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (SBDR) network responding to the damage caused by recent hurricanes. As of Oct. 24, the network continues to operate 40 sites across North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Georgia and Florida in response to Hurricane Helene and Hurricane Milton.

In total, volunteers from the SBDR network have prepared 943,453 meals, given 203,322 volunteer hours, completed 2,493 jobs and have seen 192 professions of faith since Oct. 7. In that same time span, Oklahoma volunteers have made over 400 ministry and chaplain contacts, had 13 gospel conversations and have been a part of two people making professions of faith.

Yarbrough emphasized the vast number of needs produced by the hurricanes and the importance of the SBDR network's cooperation to meet those needs.

"Serving with our sister conventions and their DR ministries to bring help, hope and healing to those impacted by disasters is a great picture of the power of working together," he said. "There is no way that one state DR ministry could address the vast need that these hurricanes produced, but together we are getting the physical work done and advancing the Gospel one job at a time."

Work for Oklahoma DR began in mid-September after Hurricane Francine caused massive damage in Louisiana. DR set up site at Morgan City, La., First and immediately began serving storm victims. Mud-out teams cleared debris and mud, meals were prepared for victims and volunteers, showers were offered, laundry services were provided and more.

Through their efforts in La., Oklahoma DR teams completed nearly 410 work orders. Teams included assessor/chaplain teams, feeding teams, chainsaw teams and first response teams. For volunteers, 3,013 meals were made, 523 loads of laundry were done and 891 showers were provided.

Alongside the physical needs being met, teams worked hard to meet the spiritual needs of storm victims. There were 72 Gospel conversations, eight professions of faith, 823 contacts made and 45 Bibles distributed in La.

Yarbrough is thankful to those who have been supporting DR through prayer and requests for those prayers to continue as DR continues to serve those affected by recent hurricanes.

"The prayers that we receive give us strength to know that we can handle this," he said. "Oklahomans have been busy this year. Pray that they're rested, ready and able to go meet the needs because it's vast."

For more information, or to make a tax-deductible donation to Oklahoma Baptist DR, visit www.okdisasterhelp.org.

**The below statistics are based on numbers from Oct. 15 and reflect the efforts of Oklahoma Baptist DR only.*



CHURCH NEWS

VOLUNTEER MISSIONS OPPORTUNITIES

Tulakogee Conference Center

Wagoner, OK
918-462-3212

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, OK

Mychaela Burris -918-947-4679

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

www.httulsa.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 go into the jails and share the Gospel each week.

For more information call 405-917-2242 or email:

ojpm@ojpm.org

UPCOMING DR EVENTS/INFORMATION

1st Annual Inaugural Oklahoma DR Roundtable

Nov. 16 | 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Oklahoma Baptist University

Register at www.okdisasterhelp.org

Orientation and Credentialing

Feb. 22/Mar. 29/April 11-12 (2025)

Location TBD

Register online - okdisasterhelp.org

UPCOMING MISSIONS EVENTS

Let's Go Sending Conference

Nov. 9 | 8:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Enid, Emmanuel

Register online [here](#).



Missions Dinner

