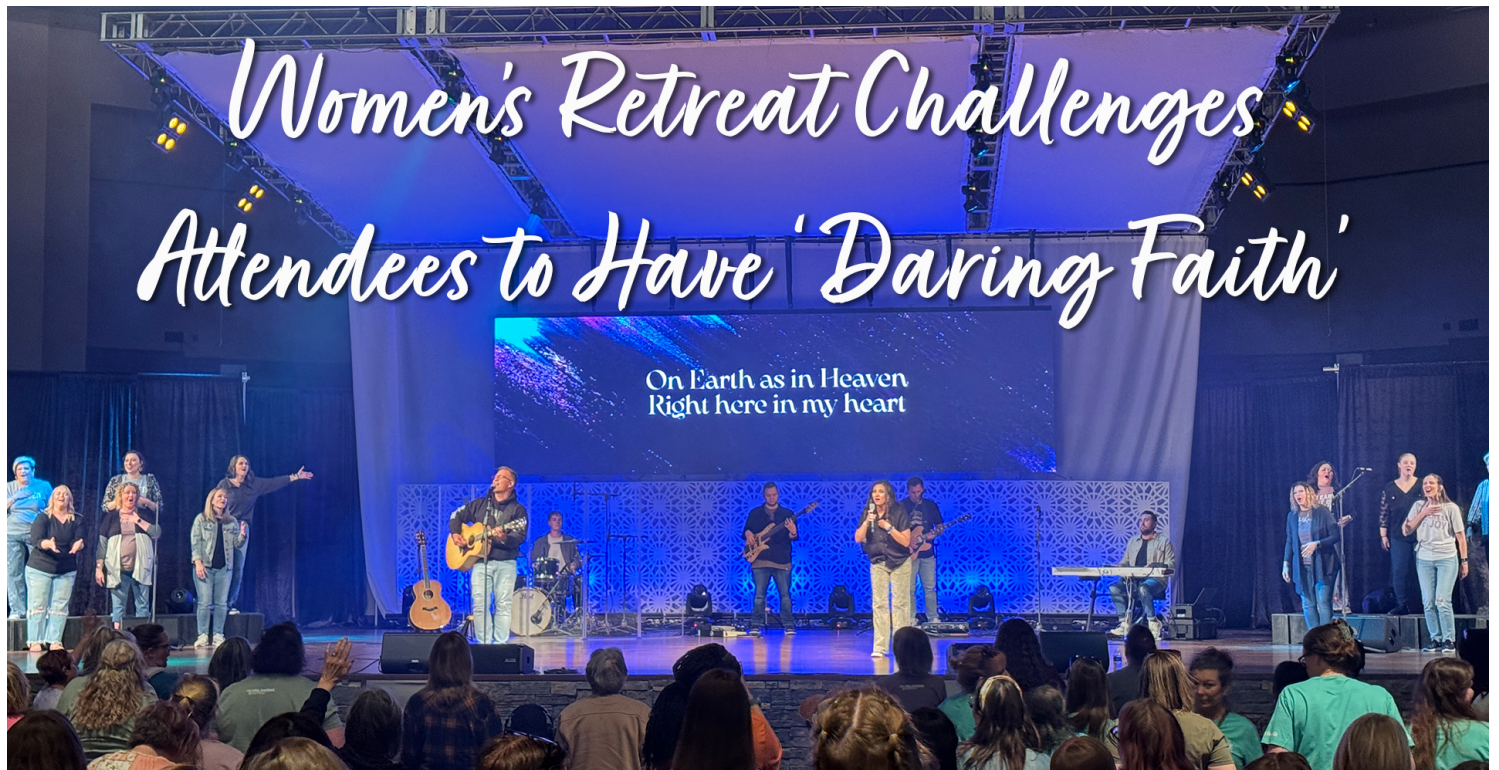




THE BAPTIST MESSENGER

DIGITAL EDITION | APRIL 23, 2025



**DR Wildfire and Tornado
Cleanup Efforts Continue**
by Messenger Staff

See Page 3



Not Just Another Week
By Todd Sanders

See Page 4



Church News

See Page 5



WOMEN'S RETREAT CHALLENGES ATTENDEES TO HAVE 'DARING FAITH'

by Oklahoma Baptists Staff

DAVIS—On the weekend of April 11 and 12, Falls Creek Conference Centers hosted the Spring Oklahoma Baptists Women's Retreat. This year's theme was "Daring Faith" and attendees walked through the entire book of Esther.

The keynote speaker for the retreat was Kelly Minter author of *Esther: Daring Faith for Such a Time as This*. Her sessions focused on the major shifts in the story of Esther, showing how Esther answered God's calling and how God did the heavy lifting to make those shifts happen. Minter also gave historical context of the time period so attendees could understand what Esther was going through. Minter emphasized that we need to listen and answer God's calling.

"God opened a door for Esther, but not before she knocked on it," Minter said. "God will accomplish His will one way or another; it's up to us if we want to be part of it."

Other speakers included Caroline Saunders, writer and Bible teacher; Melissa Spoelstra, women's conference speaker, Bible teacher and author; and Julie Busler, author of *Joyful Sorrow*. Worship was led by Matt Roberson and the Singing ChurchWomen of Oklahoma.

In line with walking through the book of Esther, attendees could also partake in an Esther Experience. This immersive, physical walk-through event brought various events from the book of Esther to life, enabling participants to visualize how life might have been for the Jews who remained in Persia after they were permitted to return to their homeland.

"I am a kinesthetic learner, and this experience really helped me to grasp the different parts of the Esther story," said one participant from Clinton, First. "I feel like I understand it much better!"

This event not only encouraged women, but it also strengthened them and challenged them to live boldly in faith.

"It was a beautiful weekend," said Jinger Bernhardt from Perkins, Immanuel. "I'm excited to see how our Oklahoma

Baptist churches will be strengthened as these women return to serve in their own communities."

At the retreat, an offering for Mission:Dignity was also received. This program gives back to pastors, ministers, church staff and their wives who have dedicated their lives to serving others. Most of those who receive assistance from this program are widows.

For more information about Oklahoma Baptists women's ministries and upcoming events, visit <https://www.oklahomabaptists.org/women/>.



WILDFIRE AND TORNADO CLEANUP EFFORTS BY OKLAHOMA BAPTIST DR CONTINUE

by Messenger Staff

Oklahoma Baptist Disaster Relief (DR) continues to work helping homeowners impacted by the March 14 wildfires and the April 2 tornadoes.

Starting on April 14, all fire-related work requests are handled through the DR response site at Stillwater, Countryside.

There are teams staying at the church and working each day. There are also teams commuting from home, making day trips to work. These teams are working in both the Stillwater and Mannford areas.

In total, DR has received more than 160 work requests and have completed almost 100 of those requests over the past three weeks. Teams are scheduled to work through Thursday, April 17, and then return on Monday, April 21 to work until jobs have been completed.

In response to the April 2 tornado damage in the Owasso area, local teams are being utilized to assist the homeowners in the area requesting assistance.

Over the last month, DR has received assistance from other disaster relief ministries from surrounding states.

“Oklahoma Baptists are grateful for the partners we have in the disaster relief ministry because many times we could not do all the recovery that needs to be done without their help,” said Jason Yarbrough, state director of Oklahoma Baptist DR.

Initially, teams from Texas traveled up to assist Oklahoma DR in the response and for the next two weeks a group of Mennonites will be assisting DR.

Oklahoma Baptist DR has served in countless disaster responses throughout the years. To request assistance from Oklahoma Baptist DR, to make a tax-deductible donation to relief efforts or for more information, visit www.okdisasterhelp.org.





NOT JUST ANOTHER WEEK

by Todd Sanders

For over a hundred years Oklahoma Baptists have shared a unique ministry opportunity that impacts the generations for eternity. Falls Creek youth camp provides a place for students to hear the gospel, come to faith, grow in Christlikeness, connect with the Body of Christ, and be challenged and equipped to live on mission.

Quintin Magruder (Ponca City, First), who was called to the ministry while a student at Falls Creek sees a full range of spiritual decisions in the students in his group, coming “to the Lord and reigniting a passion in them to go further in their walk with him.”

The goal behind programming is to keep things fresh in a way that speaks to youth where they are while maintaining a firm hold on the elements that have, year after year, marked the Falls Creek experience. Youth camp remains anchored to and true to the Word of God, Gospel proclamation and invitation.

Cole Wheeler (Pryor, Life Fellowship), who was saved and called to the ministry while at youth camp at Falls Creek, said “seeing students lives changed in a similar way is one of the most rewarding things during my time in ministry so far.”

The spiritual impact of a week at Falls Creek is generational and comes in a variety of ways. From worship, to preaching, to breakouts, to connection to other believers, to missions mobilization and more, Falls Creek youth camp remains faithful to the Gospel and focused on the church while packed with activity and opportunities.

Bret Lalli (McAlester, First), reported hundreds of spiritual decisions in their group in recent years that range from salvations and rededications to kids called to ministry and missions leaving a powerful legacy for Christ in our youth ministry.”

This summer, that legacy continues. A strong lineup of familiar, experienced worship leaders and preachers will join new faces to lead each week, but the goal remains the same: to proclaim the Gospel, lead students to Jesus, and strengthen the church. This is work only God can do.

Our hope is not in the plans we make, but in Jesus. Unless God moves our effort is in vain, and we just have another nice, fun week at camp. We want more than that. We need more than that. We need the Spirit to fall on us.

So, would you join us in the work and pray that God would move — that He would accomplish the spiritual and eternal as we join him in the task?

For more information on Falls Creek youth camp prayer, leaders, theme, and more, visit oklahomabaptists.org/youthcamp.

Todd Sanders serves as Falls Creek Program Director and Youth Ministry partner at Oklahoma Baptists.



The theme of the 2025 summer youth weeks at Falls Creek is ‘LEVEL UP.’

CHURCH NEWS

OKLAHOMA CITY, OLIVET CELEBRATES 115 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Join Oklahoma City, Olivet on Saturday, June 7 for a celebration of its 115th year anniversary. The celebration service will begin at 4 PM, beginning with a worship service and highlighting former pastors and events surrounding their tenure. As part of the celebration, OKC, Olivet will be dedicating their newly remodeled clinic space.



OLIVET BAPTIST CHURCH
Rooted in Faith
GROWING THROUGH GRACE
JOIN US FOR A CELEBRATION OF
OLIVET'S 115 YEARS
OF
MINISTRY, MUSIC, AND MEMORIES
SATURDAY, JUNE 7TH
4:00 PM
MEAL SERVED FOLLOWING THE PROGRAM
1201 NW 10TH ST. OKLAHOMA CITY, OK
"ROOTED AND BUILT IN HIM, STRENGTHENED IN THE FAITH
AS YOU WERE TAUGHT, AND OVERFLOWING WITH THANKFULNESS."
COLOSSIANS 2:7

UPCOMING EVENTS/INFORMATION

DR Orientation/Credentialing

August 23 - Location TBD

Register online at okdisasterhelp.org

Chaplain Manual/OSFA Training

September 4-6 at Tulsa, South

10310 S Sheridan Rd, Tulsa, OK 74133

Cost \$60.00

Instructor is Naomi Paget.

To register, please email

pjones@oklahomabaptists.org

DR Orientation/Credentialing

September 20 - Location TBD

Register online at okdisasterhelp.org

CISM Training

October 2-3 at Tulsa, South

10310 S Sheridan Rd, Tulsa, OK 74133

Cost \$50.00

Instructor is Greg Giltner.

To register, please email

pjones@oklahomabaptists.org

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