



# THE BAPTIST MESSENGER

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**Historic OKC Church  
Celebrates Legacy, Future  
at 115th Anniversary**

*by Dana Williamson*

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**Church News**

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## 'HALFTIME' HALLELUJAH! FALLS CREEK SEES ABUNDANCE OF SPIRITUAL DECISIONS MIDWAY THROUGH SUMMER

by Jacob King

DAVIS — Summer at the Falls Creek Conference Center has started off strong with more than 20,000 registered attendees at Falls Creek. As of June 30, there have been a total of 2,447 decisions made. This includes 1,046 professions of faith, 76 salvation assurances, 644 recommitments, 208 calls to ministry and 473 other decisions made.

Falls Creek is structured into eight one-week sessions, with the fourth week having just concluded. The first session was held from June 2-6, with Garret Wagoner as the Camp Pastor; session two, from June 9-13, featured



Jeff DeGiacomo as the Camp Pastor; session three, from June 16-20, featured Daniel Ritchie; and session four, from June 23-27, featured Garry McNeill. Each pastor has shown campers the gift that the Gospel brings and what it means to humbly submit to Christ.

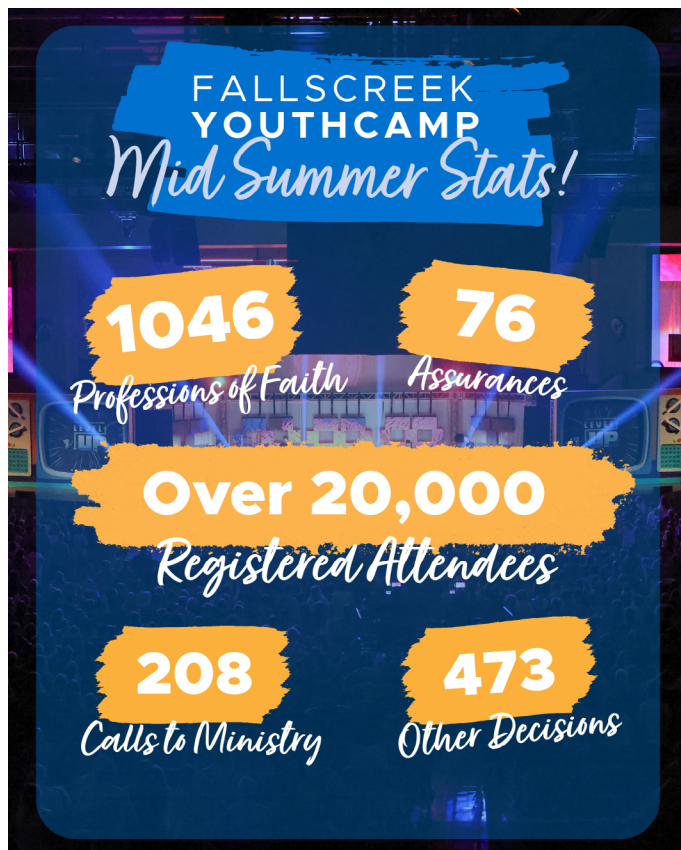
"(The Gospel) is the most life changing truth in created order," said Ritchie. "You have a golden opportunity here in the state of Oklahoma right in your backyard. Pray for the kids that need the Gospel, that are hungry for the Gospel and just to find ways to reach them."

Themes operate on a three-year rotation for what the focus is. This year, the focus is spiritual disciplines. James 4 takes a different approach to spiritual decisions than what is usually taken. It focuses more on placing ourselves in attitudes, postures or perspectives

that allow God to work. This leads to or feeds spiritual disciplines we can walk in.

The theme for Falls Creek 2025 is "Level Up," based on James 4:10, "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up." This focuses campers on how growth in the Christian life is more dependent on God's work than our own effort. This theme challenged campers to take the posture of sacrifice, submission, selflessness and surrender to God.

"Leveling up in our faith is a paradox," said Falls Creek Conference program director Todd Sanders. "In order for us to grow to be more like Christ we need to humble ourselves in submission, sacrificing to find contentment in Jesus, seeking unity with others through selflessness and completely surrendering to the Lord."





## 'HALFTIME' HALLELUJAH! (CONT.)

There are also numerous breakout sessions offered at Falls Creek so campers can enrich their faith. Staff also encourages campers to participate more in global missions, which has resulted in more than 6,500 mission conversations. One of the breakout sessions focuses on apologetics and is led by Oklahoma Baptists ministry partner Tarvoris "Coach Tee" Uzoigwe. Through this breakout, around 500 campers have been trained in apologetics.

During a recent breakout session, Coach Tee asked those in attendance "How confident are you, from zero percent to 100 percent, that you would be going to heaven?" Coach Tee ministered to two students who replied to that question that they "were somewhere in between." He used an analogy of a judge forgiving those who killed his nephew by sending his own son to be executed in their place, with God being the Judge and Christ being the Son who was sent to die in the place of the killers. Through that interaction, Tee was able to lead the two students to Christ.

This is only one example of the work God is doing at Falls Creek, and with four more weeks, to go there are sure to be even more. For more information about the theme this year at Falls Creek, visit [oklahomabaptists.org/youth/falls-creek](http://oklahomabaptists.org/youth/falls-creek).



Daniel Ritchie, Session 3 Camp Pastor







## HISTORIC OKC CHURCH CELEBRATES LEGACY, FUTURE AT 115TH ANNIVERSARY

by Dana Williamson

When Oklahoma City, Olivet was established in 1910, the church was on the edge of a boom town with the population of Oklahoma City growing by 1,500 percent between 1910-17. By the early 1950s, the church had grown from 25 charter members to an attendance of more than 2,500, and was one of the leading churches in the state, with two worship services and in the top tier of most church statistics.

Olivet, which now has an attendance of 75-100, celebrated its 115th anniversary June 7, and its ministry continues to be strong.

From the beginning, Olivet boasted of members who were leaders in Southern Baptist life. Both J.B. Rounds and W. D. Moorner, founders of Falls Creek, were members of Olivet. Education was led by Robert Bazzell, who later became the state's Sunday School and Training Union director, and Joe Davis Heacock, who went on to head the School of Religious Education at Southwestern Seminary.

But by the late 1950s, Olivet found itself in the midst of the inner city, with neighborhood dynamics changing into an economically and culturally diverse area.

From the "glory days," the area around the church gradually became a depressed neighborhood where many of the large, older homes on the outskirts of Oklahoma City when Olivet was founded, were turned into multi-family dwellings or boarded up. As the area continued to decline, Olivet in 1978 was offered a 10-acre mission site in north Oklahoma City. Olivet did not accept the land and thereby established its mission—to the neighborhood where it is located. Many times when a church's community becomes challenged, the church moves, but Olivet said, "We are here to meet needs and will not leave this community because it is worth investing in."

Since that time, Olivet has become a foundation of faith for the inner city, showing the love of God in practical terms. Over the years, members have begun an Even Start program, ministering to mothers and preschool

children, hosted Angel Tree, Whiz Kids and a Big A program for children, started a mentoring program at a local elementary school, led GED and ESL classes and established a Hispanic ministry.

The church has operated a free medical ministry for the last 32 years, initiated block parties, sponsored back to school health fairs, and a clothing and food pantry.

In 1997, Olivet established Heart and Hand, a non-profit ministry which bought and remodeled houses in the area to provide for homeless women and children, alcoholics and troubled teens. To help support the endeavor and provide employment for women, the ministry operates a thrift center.

City, state and Southern Baptist leaders have praised Olivet for staying and working in its community with a practical application of the Gospel.

Former Oklahoma Gov. Frank Keating thanked the church for its inner city ministry: "As an inner city church, Olivet could be excused for limiting programs and budgets, for pulling within instead of reaching out; instead Olivet is a living, thriving example of a close connection between church and its community. Olivet's love in action has made Oklahoma City a better place."

Pastor Steve Kern (1996-2020) said he hopes anyone who looks at Olivet's ministry will be able to say "That's what Christianity is supposed to be. It's not about resources; it's about heart."

In closing the anniversary celebration, interim pastor Jim Gerlt said, "The inner city needs strong, viable churches. With open hearts, we look forward to the future He is preparing for us."

*Photos courtesy of Dave Prentice.*



# CHURCH NEWS

## LONGTIME BCM LEADER RECOGNIZED AT RETIREMENT RECEPTION

On Thursday, June 26, longtime Baptist Collegiate Ministries (BCM) Director Danny Toombs of Cameron University was recognized at a retirement reception at the new Baptist Building in Oklahoma City. Among those speaking at the reception were retired BSU/BCM state directors Bob Lee and Cris Lowery, as well as current BCM state director Chad Coleman. Also speaking was James Swain, president of Oklahoma Baptist Homes for Children. Swain said, "I am honored to participate in (this) retirement reception for my friend Danny Toombs from Oklahoma Baptists. He served 42 years at the Cameron BCM. I am thankful for his influence and example in my life!"



## ELDORADO, FIRST CELEBRATES 135TH ANNIVERSARY

On Sunday, June 8, Danny Ringer presented Diana and Buddy Thompson a certificate from Oklahoma Baptists for the longest continuous membership at Eldorado, First (50 years). Certificates were given to Jimmie Goodin as the oldest member and a 135th Anniversary Certificate to Interim Pastor Jimmie Williams for the Church. Great Plains Baptist Association presented Certificates as well.



**125 YEARS**

**2025 DPA GALA**  
FOR THE LOVE OF ADOPTION

**AUGUST 28 | 7:00PM**  
NATIONAL COWBOY & WESTERN  
HERITAGE MUSEUM

FEATURING SHANE & SHANE LEADING  
A TIME OF WORSHIP & CELEBRATION



**NURSE AND SONOGRAPHER OPENINGS**

**STAFF AND VOLUNTEER POSITIONS**



[obhc.org/employment](https://obhc.org/employment)

 **Hope Pregnancy Center**  
OBHC



# UPCOMING EVENTS/INFORMATION

## PASTOR RETIREMENT FELLOWSHIP

A pastor retirement fellowship will be held on July 13 for Dan Doak, pastor of Tulsa, Ranch Acres, who has served at the church for 11 years. The service will begin at 10:45 am with a retirement fellowship being held afterwards from 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm. The event is western-themed and BBQ will be served for lunch. It will be held at 3143 S Jamestown Ave., Tulsa, OK 74135. For more information, call 918-833-1073.

### DR Orientation/Credentialing – August 23

Location TBD

Register online at [okdisasterhelp.org](http://okdisasterhelp.org)

### Chaplain Manual/OSFA Training – September 4-6

Naomi Paget, Instructor – Cost \$60.00

South Tulsa Baptist Church

10310 S Sheridan Rd, Tulsa, OK 74133

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

### DR Orientation/Credentialing – September 20

Location TBD

Register online at [okdisasterhelp.org](http://okdisasterhelp.org)

### CISM Training - October 2-3

Greg Giltner, Instructor – Cost \$50.00

South Tulsa Baptist Church

10310 S Sheridan Rd, Tulsa, OK 74133

To register, please email

[pjones@oklahomabaptists.org](mailto:pjones@oklahomabaptists.org)

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

### Tulakogee Conference Center

Wagoner, OK - 918-462-3212

[info@tulakogee.com](mailto:info@tulakogee.com)

### The Spring

Sand Springs, OK - 918-947-4679

A faith-based shelter for women who are victims of domestic violence or human trafficking and their children.

### Hospitality House of Tulsa

Tulsa, OK - 918-794-0088

Provides family centered lodging, emotional and spiritual support for family members of patients traveling to Tulsa for medical care.

[www.hhtulsa.org](http://www.hhtulsa.org)

### Hospitality House of Oklahoma

918-429-0142

Provides for the physical, spiritual needs of families with loved ones incarcerated in McAlester. Lodging is available.

### 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](mailto:ojpm@ojpm.org)



RECOMMENDATIONS SOUGHT FOR

## Boards and Committees

The Nominating Committee of the convention of Oklahoma Baptists 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 of Oklahoma Baptists to be held Nov. 10-11.

RECOMMENDATIONS CAN  
BE SENT USING THE QR  
CODE OR LINK BELOW



[oklahomabaptists.org/  
recommendations](http://oklahomabaptists.org/recommendations)