



THE BAPTIST MESSENGER

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Faith & Family Flourish at 2025 Indian Falls Creek



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FAITH & FAMILY FLOURISH AT 2025 INDIAN FALLS CREEK

by Messenger Staff

DAVIS—More than 2,400 campers took part in the annual Indian Falls Creek (IFC) assembly at Falls Creek on July 27-31.

IFC has been called the largest gathering of Native American Christian believers in North America. Attendees of the 2025 IFC Assembly experienced times of fellowship, fun activities, worship, prayer, training opportunities, as well as worship services where campers responded to God's Word.

IFC began in 1947 and the storied camp assembly has been hosting campers from more than 50 tribal Nations from across North America and more than 250 churches each year. IFC is unique in that it is family camp so people of all ages can participate.

The camp pastor for IFC 2025 was Oklahoma Baptists Executive Director-Treasurer Todd Fisher. Exactly one year prior, Fisher was involved in a serious automobile accident while traveling to IFC. Although he has recovered from the accident, his rehabilitation has been extensive and due to the severity of the injuries he received his right leg had to be amputated. Now utilizing a prosthetic leg, Fisher is able to walk and serve as this year's camp pastor at IFC.

"This is a special joy to be here with the IFC family this year," said Fisher. "I am always honored to be able to share from God's Word and preach the Gospel. Yet there is something special this year at IFC. The people have just been amazing to me. When I'm out and about in camp, many people ask for a hug, instead of just shaking hands. The Lord has given us a great time of connection. I'm grateful for each and every one of the IFC leaders and all those in this camp."

Total attendance for IFC was 2,462, according to Victor Cope, who serves as executive director of Indian Falls Creek. As part of IFC, a children's church/Vacation Bible School takes place, which had an average attendance of 297.

During the evening services and throughout the week, campers have been responding to the Gospel. There were 137 spiritual decisions at IFC, with 54 professions of faith and five calls to ministry.

Cope said, "Dr. Todd Fisher did an outstanding job all week. Our churches did a great job participating at IFC. We praise God for these decisions!"

Emerson Falls, who serves as Native American Ministry Partner for Oklahoma Baptists, also emphasized how the Lord was moving in the hearts of campers at IFC.

"Every summer, God moves in people's hearts in powerful ways at IFC. This year was no different. We are grateful Brother Todd (Fisher) was able to serve as camp pastor this year, and the Lord used him powerfully to communicate the Gospel," said Falls.

During the morning worship services, the Sons of Thunder of Salina, All Nations Church led in worship through music. During the evening worship services, the worship team from Oklahoma City, Glorieta Church led.



FAITH & FAMILY FLOURISH AT 2025 INDIAN FALLS CREEK (CONT.)

The theme for IFC 2025 was “Come Before the Lord... Do Justice,” based on Micah 6:8, “He has told you, o man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

Native American history and culture is integrated and celebrated with each IFC assembly. The world-renowned singing group Native Praise, which sings spiritual songs in Native languages and English, led in worship on July 30 of the camp. Each evening service also features a time in which each Tribe represented at IFC sings a Gospel hymn in their native Tribal language, which allows attendees to worship the Lord in their Native tongues. In addition, activities including arts and crafts, meal preparation, and more displays of Native American culture.

Each day, various equipping and discipleship classes were held. These include Bible Study and Skills conferences for all adults, women, young adults and youth. The youth went through a four-part series in the book of Mark. The young adults went through sessions on trusting God’s direction, leading and obedience in waiting. And the adults had several topical Bible studies as well as contextual skills sessions to choose from.

VBS was held for the Pre-K children that was led by a group of volunteers from the Native churches. VBS was also held for K-6th grade children led by long-term volunteers from Alabama and other areas. Combined total attendance was 350 children with the approximate same number in children’s church.

IFC has a strong legacy of community involvement. On July 28 and 29, IFC held the annual blood drive, now named the Joyce Hansen Legacy Blood Drive. The blood drives led to 161 units of blood donated, which exceeded the IFC’s goal.

This year’s blood drive was held in honor of Joyce Hansen, one of the original organizers of the annual IFC blood drive, who passed away on May 12.

The “Challenge” is an incentive for churches to participate in the success of IFC through various volunteer opportunities to serve across camp during the week. Points are accumulated by the church through each act of volunteering, with the chance to win various prizes such as TV’s, printers, and supplies. Prizes are donated by businesses, ministries, churches and individuals.

The 2025 IFC was a blessed time for all who took part. The 2026 IFC is set to take place July 26-July 30. For more information about IFC, visit indianfalls creek.org.





CAREPORTAL PROVIDES SUPPORT FOR FOSTERING PARENTS

by Jeremy Smith, Pastor, Midwest City, Eastwood; Oklahoma Baptists' ERLC Committee Member

When my wife and I began fostering our two boys, things happened quickly. Some of the changes we were anticipating, but many, for first time parents, blindsided us. In those early days, we were so thankful for our community. Many people, from our friends, co-workers and church family, provided clothing and furniture and prayer.

These challenging days were made easier because of this support. Because of the teaching of Scripture and my own experiences, I have a heart for foster and adoptive care.

Not everyone is able to open up their homes or families to foster or adopt, but all are able to help. In our church, we accomplish this through our partnership with CarePortal.

For those unfamiliar, CarePortal is a means to connect kids in crisis with churches who can help. It's a simple process. A caseworker or concerned individual submits a need to CarePortal. That need is then evaluated. If the need is legitimate, an email goes out to churches and organizations in the vicinity where they can respond to meet the need.

I personally receive multiple emails everyday with different opportunities. When one comes through that meets our church's vision for loving the community, I reply that we can meet that need. From there, I send out a text to our CarePortal team, a group within our church that has agreed to help when possible.

For instance, recently I received an email where a family had received two new foster placements and they needed toddler beds. After I spoke to the caseworker, I sent out a text asking twelve people to give twenty-five dollars each. This allows us to "share the burden and share the blessing." I then purchased the two bed frames and two mattresses. When they came in, I made contact with the family and arranged a date and time to deliver.

I was able to take a couple from our church to make the delivery so others could minister to this family as well. When we arrived, we met the parents and the kids,

encouraged them and prayed with them. We also left them some information about our church before we left.

CarePortal allows members from our church to both see and meet needs in our community while, simultaneously, allowing our community to see the love of Jesus demonstrated through the church.

When that child lays down on that mattress, he can be reminded that Jesus loves them.

When that mom straps her child into that car seat we provided, she can be reminded that there is a church that cares.

And when that little girl puts on her basketball shoes, she knows that she has value in the eyes of God.

CarePortal has allowed us to pass along these beautiful truths by meeting tangible needs.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Through the Edna McMillan Oklahoma State Missions Offering, Oklahoma Baptists provide grants to churches to help meet local CarePortal requests. For more information, www.oklahomabaptists.org/smo

A banner image for the Edna McMillan State Missions Offering. It features a young girl in a white dress swinging happily on a swing set in a grassy field with trees in the background. The text 'EDNA MCMILLAN State Missions Offering' is overlaid in white. At the bottom, there is a dark blue bar containing the Oklahoma Baptists logo, the text 'See the impact of your giving oklahomabaptists.org/smo', and a QR code.

EDNA MCMILLAN
**State Missions
Offering**

OKLAHOMA BAPTISTS

See the impact of your giving
oklahomabaptists.org/smo

OKLAHOMA BAPTIST WORSHIP & MUSIC MINISTRY PREPARES FOR ANOTHER ENCOURAGING SEASON

by Randy Lind, Oklahoma Baptists Worship and Music Ministry Partner

It happens every August and September – no, we are not talking about a new school year. Each year at that time the Singing Churchmen of Oklahoma, Singing ChurchWomen of Oklahoma, Oklahoma Baptist Symphony, Oklahoma Student Worship Choir and Oklahoma Baptist Children's Chorus begin a new season of ministry.

These groups involve Pastors, Ministers of Music and other staff members – both full time and multi-vocational, Directors of Missions, educators, stay at home moms and dads, medical doctors, nurses, band and choral directors, directors, law enforcement, FBI agents, bus drivers, insurance professionals and more! Basically, they are members of Oklahoma Baptist churches from across the state of Oklahoma who love to serve God and use their music to advance the Gospel and be an encouragement to people wherever they go. They are nearly 900 men, women, students and children from Oklahoma Baptist Churches that sing and play to the glory of God.

Coming soon to a church or venue near you! Each month from September through April or May, these ministry groups travel and join with congregations for a concert and night of worship. Almost always the concerts are in Oklahoma, and usually at one of our 1800 Oklahoma Baptist Churches.

Occasionally, one of the groups will be asked to play or sing at a school, university, or other venue. In the past few years, they have been asked to sing in Bricktown for the Comets, city parks, city athletic arenas and even a city-wide concert with a United States Air Force fighter jet center stage.

In addition to the Oklahoma based concerts, one of the groups will occasionally travel outside Oklahoma or go on mission trips across the world. The message of the Gospel is carried on a song as each member of these ministry groups seeks to live the words we sing or play, "wherever He leads, I'll go."

Come and worship with us! A list of the 2025-26 concert schedule can be found at www.oklahomabaptists.org/worship-music and concerts are also published on the Oklahoma Baptist Worship page on Facebook and okbaptistworship on Instagram.

Interested in joining us for the 2025-26 season? For information about each group, just go to: oklahomabaptists.org/worship-music or send an email to: rlind@oklahomabaptists.org.



CHURCH NEWS

UPCOMING EVENTS/INFORMATION

DR Orientation/Credentialing – August 23

Location TBD

Register online at 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

DR Orientation/Credentialing – September 20

Location TBD

Register online at 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



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For more information and to register, visit

heartlandworship.live

HOSTED BY



CHURCH NEWS

TRIBUTES



Jimmy Lehew died July 31. He served as BSU/BCM director at Cameron University in Lawton for 25 years. He also worked security at Falls Creek and served at Elgin, Locust Grove and with Comanche-Cotton Association. He was the uncle of Jim Lehew, VP of Ministries for OBHC, and Mike Lehew, pastor of Sapulpa Church Inside Out.

Will J Roberts died July 7. A 1957 graduate of OBU, he and his wife Marie (Morgan) were appointed as missionaries by the IMB and served in eastern Africa for 38 years. He earned an M.Div. in 1960 from Southwestern Seminary and a D.Min. in 1987 from Golden Gate Seminary. After retirement in 2000, he served as pastor at Willow from 2003-2016.

'HOPEFUL SORROW' BY JULIE BUSLER RELEASES SEPT. 23

In *Hopeful Sorrow*, Julie Busler shares her journey through childhood trauma, emotional neglect, and grief, showing that turning from childhood wounds to God in hope begins with turning toward them in sorrow. Through the biblical practice of lament – bringing honest pain and questions to God – she demonstrates how acknowledging sorrow can lead to hope, resilience, and renewed faith. For more information, visit <https://www.bhpublishinggroup.com/hopeful-sorrow/>.

Faith Comes By Hearing
Bible Conference
"So then, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God" Romans 10:17

Bill Britt David Allen Fred Luter Bob Pitman Robert Smith, Jr. Music By: Joey Johnson

October 5 10:30am & 6:00pm **October 6-8** 6:30pm each night

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2025 UNITE
GENESIS 13:14-15
CITY NIGHT OF WORSHIP

WE WANT TO SEE A MIGHTY MOVE OF GOD IN OKLAHOMA!
Come join us in UNITING together as the Body of Christ and bringing our neighbors to celebrate God on all He has done. Join the move of God at the Ballpark!

Sunday
SEPTEMBER 28TH
5:30 - 8:00PM
at the **CHICKASAW BRICKTOWN BALLPARK**

Let's see Harvested Fields and God Dreams for Oklahoma!

For more information, event details, partnership opportunities or ticket purchases, scan the QR code



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