



THE BAPTIST MESSENGER

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DIG DEEP *and* REACH WIDE

PASTORS' CONFERENCE
OKC, SOUTHERN HILLS BAPTIST CHURCH

NOVEMBER 10, 2025
MATTHEW 28:18-20



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2025 PASTORS' CONFERENCE TO INSPIRE PASTORS TO 'DIG DEEP, REACH WIDE'

by Messenger Staff

On Monday, Nov. 10, Oklahoma City, Southern Hills will host the annual Oklahoma Baptist Pastors' Conference. The theme for this year's conference is "Dig Deep and Reach Wide," based on Matt. 28:18-20, "And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you, And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'"

"We have an exciting Pastors' Conference coming up for you," said Jeremy Freeman, pastor of Newcastle, First and president of the 2025 Pastors' Conference. "We're talking about the importance of evangelism and discipleship in the life of a pastor and the church."

Numerous speakers will be presenting at the conference this year, exploring the theme further through sermons, testimonies and focused times of reflection and prayer. Speakers this year include Danny Akin, Ed Newton, Jimmy Scroggins, Hershael York, Ken Freeman, Michael Taylor and Tyler McDowell.

"It's going to be a phenomenal day of worship, preaching, prayer, teaching — you will not want to miss it," said Freeman.

Send Network Oklahoma will host a free lunch during the event for all pastors who attend and, York will be leading that time. Additionally, a free ministry wives' luncheon will be held. Both events require registration.

Continuing from last year will be the presentation of the J.B. Rounds Award. This award will honor a bi-vocational pastor who has demonstrated exceptional faithfulness in their ministry. Named in honor of Rounds, one of the founders of Falls Creek and leader of Oklahoma Baptists, this award is meant to highlight the importance of recognizing those who labor in smaller or underserved churches while also maintaining other careers.

The Pastors' Conference will begin at 9:00 a.m. and conclude at 4:30 p.m. on Nov. 10. Immediately following the Pastors' Conference will be the 2025 Oklahoma Baptists Annual Meeting.

For more information about the Pastors' Conference, or to register for the luncheons, visit www.oklahomabaptists.org/pastors.



AT 95, GENE KINNEY STILL SERVES AT RAMONA, FIRST

by Bob Nigh

RAMONA—Gene Kinney hasn't let his approaching 95th birthday keep him from serving as a deacon and member of the leadership team at Ramona, First. Most Sundays, you will find Kinney, who will celebrate his 95th birthday on Nov. 17, attending his Sunday School class and worship services.

"Gene has been attending here about 40 years," said Pastor Lynn Nickel. "He has been one of our deacons for a long, long time. He's a great guy. He's regularly here. Things change as you get older, of course, but he's usually here. We depend on him a lot. He's a good man."

Kinney was Ramona, First's Treasurer for about 35 years and served as Sunday School director for many years. Although you will still usually find him at church on Sundays, he admits that the wheels of time have forced him to slow down.

"I'm not as active as I should be," he smiled. "When you get older you slow down a lot."

Kinney worked for Cities Service Oil Co. and Occidental Oil Co. before he retired in 1987 and moved to Ramona, which was historically an oil town and also a stop for the Santa Fe railroad. But, when the oil began to dry up, the town began to shrink. Today, Ramona's population is slightly more than 500, and only a few businesses remain.

Following World War II, Kinney returned to the United States and "went right into school." He later settled in Broken Arrow with his wife Mary, who died in 2018. The couple attended Broken Arrow, Trinity, where Kinney was ordained as a deacon and served as Royal Ambassadors leader.

Gene and Mary have three sons, nine grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren, who help to keep him young.

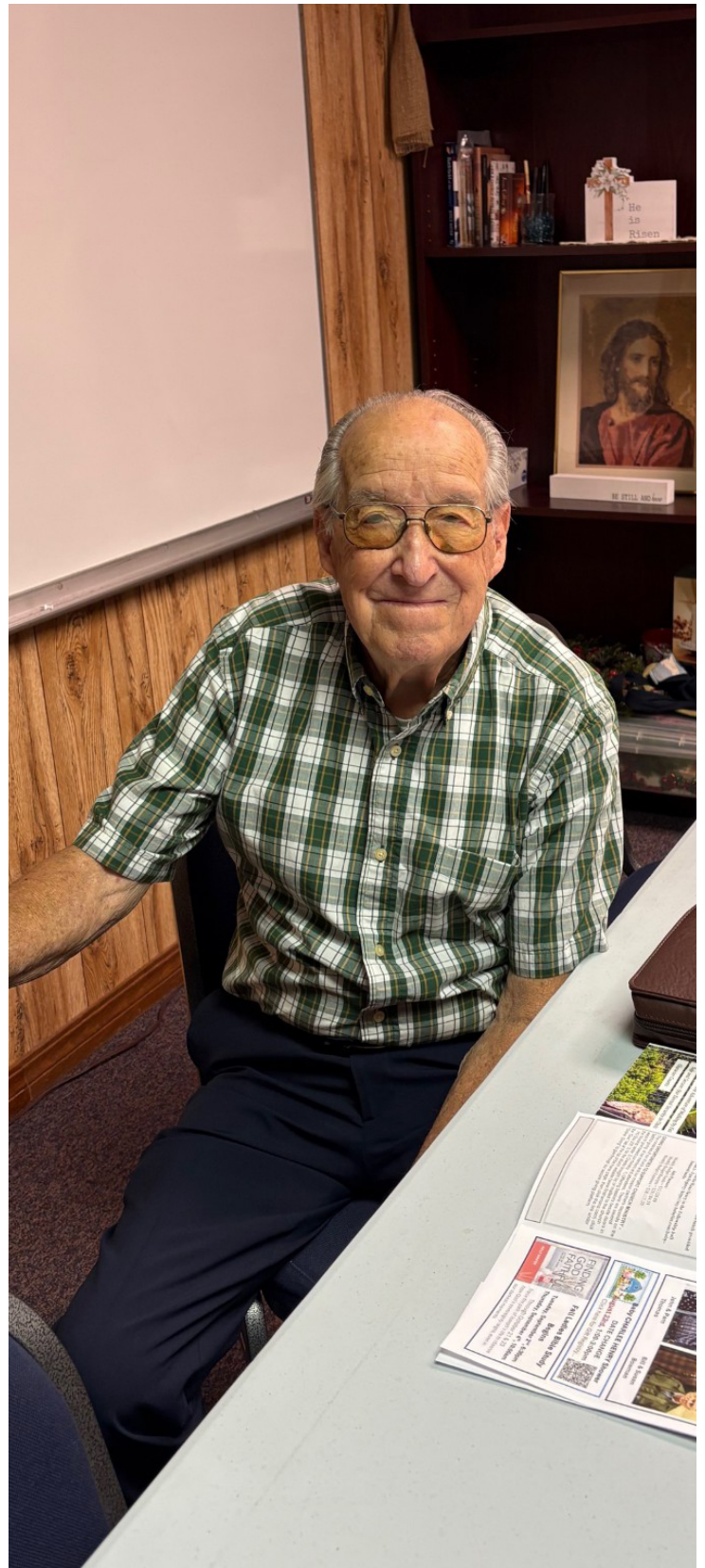
In Ramona, the Kinneys taught third and fourth grade Sunday School. Gene led the boys class and Mary, the girls.

Advances in technology precipitated Kinney's retirement from serving as church Treasurer.

"When everything went on computers, I stopped," he laughed. "I used to be very diligent with my pencil; if the account was even one penny off, I searched and searched for it until I found it."

But he didn't stop serving the church. In addition to Sundays, he continues to attend prayer meetings on Wednesday night and regularly connects with fellow member Rodney Lair, his prayer partner for more than 40 years.

"This is a nice church. We have a good pastor and nice people and leaders," he said.



2025 ANNUAL MEETING

119th Annual Meeting
Oklahoma Baptists
Southern Hills Baptist Church
November 10-11, 2025

Pastor Conference:

Monday, November 10, 2025 - 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Annual Meeting:

Monday evening, November 10, 2025 - 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Tuesday morning, November 11, 2025 - 9:00 a.m. - 11:30 p.m.

Tuesday afternoon, November 11, 2025 - 1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

[Register Here!](#)





Photo courtesy of the Alaska National Guard.

OKLAHOMA BAPTIST DISASTER RELIEF RESPONDS TO FLOODING IN ALASKA

by Messenger Staff

ANCHORAGE, Alaska—Earlier this month, the western coast of Alaska was slammed by two different typhoon events. This brought destructive winds and severe flooding to numerous Alaska Native villages along the coast. According to the state, more than 2,000 people are displaced. Some homes were moved off their foundations while others are completely covered by water.

On Thur., Oct. 16, Oklahoma Baptist Associate Disaster Relief (DR) Director Ryan Deatherage traveled to Anchorage at the request of Alaska DR director Gary Bearce to represent Oklahoma DR and help coordinate response efforts.

According to officials, there is a two-week window for transport of residents and clean-up efforts to happen before the weather shuts down travel to and from the affected villages for the winter. Due to this, the focus of the DR response is to get affected residents to safety, securing temporary food and shelter and working on long-term housing through the winter.

“Alaska DR was able to get a shower and laundry unit set up in Anchorage to provide for that need,” said Jason Yarbrough, Oklahoma Baptist DR director. “While volunteers will definitely be needed to help with the recovery efforts, that opportunity may be a few months away due to weather conditions.”

Oklahoma DR’s cooperation with Alaska DR and other DR programs within the Southern Baptist Convention is a great picture of the partnership the network provides.

“The response of state directors and Send Relief sending donations and offering volunteer teams is what the SBDR network is all about,” said Yarbrough. “For us as Oklahoma Baptists to have someone we could send to be boots on the ground and meet the specific need that Gary had is a blessing.”

Oklahoma DR stands ready to continue assistance in bringing help, hope and healing to those impacted by the floods in Alaska.

For more information about Oklahoma DR, visit www.okdisasterhelp.org. Financial donations to DR to assist in flood and other natural disaster recovery efforts can also be made on the DR website.



Inside the Alaska State Emergency Operations Center. Photo by Ryan Deatherage.



CHURCH NEWS

THOUSANDS 'UNITE' AT BRICKTOWN BALLPARK

On Sept. 28, thousands gathered at Bricktown Ballpark to worship Jesus in the open air during "Unite 25". This event was presented by City Night of Worship, Stronger Together, The Hope Gathering, Salt and Light Leadership Training and Christian Business Men's Connection. Many decisions for Christ were witnessed and a unity among different denominations, cultures and generations were represented. Thank you Oklahoma Baptists for your support!



TRIBUTES

Ted Lam died Oct. 1. He served as the Language Mission Specialist for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma (BGCO) and he helped found the Tulsa International Baptist Church (TIBC). He also served on the BGCO Board of Directors.

Phyllis Louise Droke Salamy died Oct. 10. She was retired executive assistant to Tony Kennedy, Greg McNeese and James Swain, presidents of Oklahoma Baptist Homes for Children.

Clifford Springwater died Oct. 11. He was the pastor of Ponca City, New Faith.

Jim Morrison died Oct. 9. He retired as BCM/BSU Director at Southwestern Oklahoma State University after serving for nearly four decades. He led students on mission trips to the inner city of Houston, orphanages in Mexico, Belize, the Philippines, and other destinations.

UPCOMING EVENTS/INFORMATION

119th Oklahoma Baptists' Annual Meeting November 10-11, 2025

Oklahoma City, Southern Hills
8601 S Pennsylvania Ave.

[Click here to register!](#)

Chaplain Manual/OSFA Training - March 5-6

Naomi Paget, Instructor – Cost \$60.00
Baptist Building

300 Johnny Bench Dr., Ste. 300
Oklahoma City, OK

To register, please email

pjones@oklahomabaptists.org

DR Orientation/Credentialing – March 28

DR Team Center

7180 NW Expressway

Oklahoma City, OK

Register online at okdisasterhelp.org

CISM Training - April 2-3

Greg Giltner, Instructor – Cost \$50.00

Baptist Building

300 Johnny Bench Dr., Ste. 300

Oklahoma City, OK

To register, please email

pjones@oklahomabaptists.org



Mission: Dignity

A ministry of GuideStone®

Today, many retired Southern Baptist pastors, church workers and widows are quietly struggling to afford everyday needs like food, housing and medication.

We need your help to find them.



Contact Us to Refer a Recipient

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