



THE BAPTIST MESSENGER

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LAWTON, FRIENDSHIP CELEBRATES 'GOD'S GREAT BLESSING' DURING NOTE BURNING



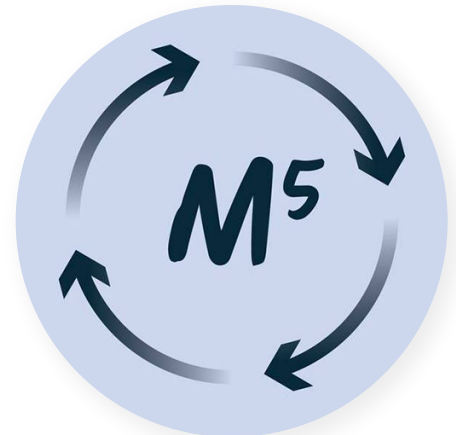
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LAWTON, FRIENDSHIP CELEBRATES ‘GOD’S GREAT BLESSING’ DURING NOTE BURNING CEREMONY

by Messenger Staff

LAWTON—On Sunday, Jan. 11, leaders and members of Lawton, Friendship held a special note burning service and ceremony. Pastor Walter Wilson and others planned the service, which was called a “Celebration of Thankfulness” for God’s Great Blessing.

The note-burning was a culminating moment of paying off the church’s building debt. Various leaders participated in the service, including Wilson and his wife Velma, Alvin Jasper, Pamuela James, Donte Gettens, Tammi Whittman.

A special recognition was presented to the church by Lawton Mayor Stan Booker. Alan Quigley, who serves as Oklahoma Baptists associate executive director, spoke at the event, which featured special music by the Friendship Church Praise Team and Pam Gettens.

Wilson, who has served in the ministry for more than 40 years, has pastored the church for more than 17 years. He expressed his “deepest gratitude to God for the individuals and other churches whose generous support made this day possible. All glory to God!”

Wilson and the church also presented a letter of appreciation at the ceremony to Todd Fisher and Oklahoma Baptists, stating their “heartfelt gratitude for your faithful support and partnership.”

Lawton, Friendship has been actively involved in the community, and Wilson, who serves as Oklahoma Baptists African American ministry partner, is a recognized leader in Oklahoma and on a national level with the National African American Fellowship.



OU PLAYER SHARES TESTIMONY OF GOD'S WORK IN HIS LIFE

by Messenger Staff

Saturdays are special for Oklahomans. It represents an end to a workweek, relaxation and putting on their favorite football team's colors to cheer them to victory. For some, those colors are black and orange, but every time Grayson Miller takes the field he is surrounded by a sea of crimson and cream.

Before his career with the University of Oklahoma (OU) Sooners began, Miller played soccer for Lubbock Christian University on a team comprised of players from all over the world. He felt though as if he was being called out of soccer and into football. Following this calling, Miller sent film of his time playing football in high school to recruiters. The University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) offered him a spot on the football team which Miller accepted and played on for two years before walking on at OU in early 2025. Since then, Miller has punted more than 2,700 yards with an average of 45.85 yards per game.

Miller didn't just use this time for his personal gain, though. While at UCO, he actively engaged his teammates with the Gospel and even led some to Christ.

"I got to see God work in a lot of my teammates' lives," he said. "I got to see five or six of them come to know God. We got to pass out Bibles in the locker room. It was really cool; we got to see God do a lot of things."

The past year has been both a time of spiritual and physical growth for Miller, but started out rough.

"We started doing spring ball, and I was doing terrible," Miller said. "In my exit interviews, (Brent) Venables pretty much told me I almost got cut. He told me, 'I didn't cut you for a reason, go prove me right.'"

Miller continued to push himself and work hard to get better, but nothing he was doing was working for him. He became frustrated and began to question why he was at OU. God told Miller to rewatch old film from his time at UCO, which he did.

"I went home and watched some UCO film and realized my technique had completely changed," Miller said. "When I was at UCO, I asked God to be my kicking coach. When I got to OU, I stopped saying that prayer. I learned that night that I should probably bring that back."

Three weeks later, Miller's skills had improved greatly. He remained faithful to the Lord, and, in return, God gave him the skills he needed to succeed.

"The Lord just took care of me, I was seeking Him every single week, and He was doing crazy things left and right," said Miller, who was named First-Team All-SEC and twice won SEC Special Teams Player of the Week during the season.

When Miller struggled during the recent OU playoff game, Miller looked to the Lord and to his family and friends for strength. Despite the challenges, he has kept his head high and focused on God. "I serve a God who is a Great Redeemer, and I still have one more season to go," Miller said.

Miller, who is an active member at OKC, Quail Springs, knows that through the ups and down of sports — and in life — Jesus is the source of his stability, hope and peace.

To listen to a full podcast interview with Miller, visit baptistmessenger.com/podcast.



Miller, left, was joined by Dylan Bone, a pastor at OKC, Quail Springs.

BROKEN ARROW, FIRST TO HOST HEART OF THE CHILD CONFERENCE

by Messenger Staff

BROKEN ARROW—Every other year, family and childhood convention leaders from Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri and Church Forward (formerly Kansas-Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists), along with Lifeway Kids Ministry leaders work together to host the Heart of the Child Conference. This training conference, designed for anyone involved in childhood ministry or church leadership, brings together speakers to equip those who attend with skills to minister to families in churches across the nation. Heart of the Child will be held at Broken Arrow, First March 13–14.

The key verse for this year's conference is Heb. 10:23-24, *"Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds."*

"We hope to encourage, inspire and equip children's ministry leaders across the region to remember the faithfulness of God as they consistently serve kids and families and point them to Jesus," said Sarah Hagar, Oklahoma Baptists Children's Camp & Childhood ministry partner.

Throughout the two-day conference, there will be a mix of general sessions and numerous breakout opportunities. The keynote speakers include Danielle Bell, Children's Minister at Murfreesboro, Tenn., Belle Aire; Jessica Peck, Pediatric Nurse Practitioner and Professor at Baylor University; and Todd Fisher, executive director-treasurer for Oklahoma Baptists. Numerous other speakers will cover topics in breakouts such as Partnering with Parents, Best Practices in Faith Formation for Kids and more. All of these will have an emphasis on preschool, children and pre-teen age groups.

"The Heart of the Child conference is a tremendous opportunity for children's workers to refuel their tank, reconnect with friends and reset their gaze on God," said Oklahoma Baptists Young Adult Discipleship & Ministry partner Prophet Bailey who spoke at the previous Heart of the Child Conference held in Oklahoma. "My heart was full having the opportunity to speak and worship with a sanctuary full of children's workers and leaders who are determined to reach the next generation at their earliest stage."

In the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), the common belief is "we can do more together than apart." That is why this conference is planned and carried out by associates from numerous states and Lifeway Kids.

Pre-conference check-in will be at 8:30 a.m., Fri., March 13. The conference will last until 6:30 p.m. and continue at

7:30 a.m., Sat., March 14, with a Family Ministry Breakfast, then concluding at 2:30 p.m. For a more detailed schedule and to register for the event, visit heartofthechild.net.



Photo from 2022 Heart of the Child Conference.



Photo from 2022 Heart of the Child Conference.

CHURCH NEWS

UPCOMING EVENTS/INFORMATION

Chaplain Manual/OSFA Training - March 5-7

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

OKLAHOMA
BAPTISTS | ADVANCING THE
GOSPEL TOGETHER



February 2, 2026 | 10:00am

FBC Moore, OK

Registration opens September 11

oklahomabaptists.org/POP

Conference is free. Register by
12/31 to receive a free book!



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PROGRAM

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- ▶ Proven leadership experience
- ▶ Commitment to person-centered healthcare
- ▶ Nursing Home Administrator license required



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BAPTISTVILLAGE.ORG

ROSE DAY

February 4, 2026

Oklahoma State Capitol

SAVE THE DATE

OKLAHOMA
BAPTISTS



2026 ADVANCE CONFERENCE
MARCH 2-3, 2026 | MOORE, FIRST



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PROGRAM