



THE BAPTIST MESSENGER

DIGITAL EDITION | FEB. 4, 2025



PRIORITY OF PREACHING CONFERENCE 2026



Fisher Speaks at First 'Called to Ministry' Conference

*by Messenger Staff
and Carissa Jones*

See Page 4



Church News

See Page 5

PASTORS ENCOURAGED WITH 'PREACHING THAT GIVES LIFE' AT PRIORITY OF PREACHING CONFERENCE 2026

by Messenger Staff

MOORE—Pastors and church leaders from across Oklahoma attended the 2026 Priority of Preaching Conference hosted on Feb. 2 by Moore, First. This annual event is hosted by Oklahoma Baptists and is focused on helping pastors make progress in their preaching ministries. The theme for this year's conference was "Preaching That Gives Life," focusing on the type of preaching that renews and revitalizes the spiritual life of a church.

The conference began with worship by the Moore, First worship team followed by a welcome by Oklahoma Baptists Executive Director-Treasurer Todd Fisher.

Greg Gilbert, senior pastor of Louisville, Ky., Third Avenue, was the first speaker of the conference. His talk pulled from Rom. 1:16-17 and focused on the importance of preaching with confidence in the Gospel.

"We can have unshakable confidence in the Gospel of Jesus because it is powered by the God of the Universe," Gilbert said.

He focused on the three things that make the Gospel so impactful: the Word's massive power, the Word as an awesome gift and the Word's wide invitation. Gilbert also emphasized the need to "be on the offense" when reaching out to the lost.

After an introduction from Brett Selby, Oklahoma Baptists Central Regional Ministry partner, Ben Panner, Director of Workshops for the Charles Simeon Trust, used numerous verses from 2 Corinthians and 2 Peter to highlight the importance of preaching from Scripture as it is. He said sometimes pastors have the tendency to alter or manipulate what Scripture says by adding or subtracting from it in their sermons. Something that Scripture teaches against.

"When a preacher adds or subtracts from Scripture, there can be disastrous consequences," Panner said.

Pastors have been given a duty by God to proclaim the Word, as it is written in the Bible. Panner reminded those in attendance that tampering with the Word is dangerous because the stakes are eternal life or eternal separation from God.

Following a brief lunch break, attendees returned to hear Panner for the third keynote speech. Staying on topic with his first speech, Panner instructed pastors on how to "stay on the line" and keep the Gospel message true to how it's written while also connecting the message of the text to today.



PRIORITY OF PREACHING CONFERENCE 2026 (CONT.)

Using what Peter teaches about Christ in Acts, Panner emphasized that all of Scripture points to Christ. The Old Testament points to, predicts and anticipates Jesus while the New Testament applies and shows the Gospel Jesus taught.

"The person and saving work of Jesus is the unifying interpretive center of the Scriptures according to the Scriptures," Panner said.

Following that, both Gilbert and Panner held a brief Q&A session, allowing those in attendance to ask them questions about the previous talks or general questions related to preaching.

Gilbert concluded the conference by looking at 1 & 2 Timothy and how those books can be used for a sermon. In his letters to Timothy, Paul requested that those who accompanied him on mission trips in the past would take time to visit him in prison, even those he had a falling out with. Gilbert used this as an example to show that even with someone as well regarded as Paul, there will be those who will fall away from each other.

"Paul had crystal clear clarity that people will not be with him until the end, but the Lord will," Gilbert said.

He wrapped up the final session with an encouragement to pastors to always look to God for encouragement even in the lowest of lows.

For more information on upcoming pastor events, visit oklahomabaptists.org/pastors.



FISHER SPEAKS AT FIRST 'CALLED TO MINISTRY' CONFERENCE AT OU BCM

by Messenger Staff and Carissa Jones

NORMAN—On Friday Jan. 30 and Saturday, Jan. 31, Oklahoma Baptist Collegiate Ministries (BCM) hosted the first Called to Ministry Conference (CTM) at the BCM building on the campus of the University of Oklahoma. This conference provides an opportunity for college students who are interested in ministry to explore that potential calling and learn more about various avenues for ministry.

"From a vision a year ago to our first Called to Ministry Conference, this weekend marked the beginning of helping BCM students explore where God is leading them," said Chad Coleman, State Director for Baptist Collegiate Ministries. "The level of student interest and involvement confirmed the need for opportunities like this."

More than 120 people attended this inaugural event.

"I really enjoyed the weekend," commented Southwestern Oklahoma State University student Kylie Nunnelly. "I learned a lot and got to have great fellowship!" Fellow SWOSU student Loryn Rose agreed, adding, "I enjoyed meeting new people while being there and also seeing familiar faces! It was a great way to spend my weekend!"

Oklahoma Baptists Executive Director-Treasurer Todd Fisher was the keynote speaker for Friday night. Saturday's line-up featured numerous breakouts over topics like preaching/teaching, exploring missions, multivocational ministry and more. Those sessions were led by Bryan Wooten (International Mission Board), Todd Sanders and Philip Jones (Oklahoma Baptists), Cody Dunbar (Yukon, Together We Church), and numerous BCM staff members from across the state.

"The directors I've spoken to all expressed excitement about this weekend and the Kingdom impact a conference like this can have on their students, campuses and beyond," said Carissa Jones, Oklahoma Baptist Collegiate Assistant. "As great as this weekend was, I believe this event will be even better in years to come."

CTM is free to attend and open to collegiate students who are interested in ministry. For more information about the event, visit oklahomabaptists.org/event/called-to-ministry-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

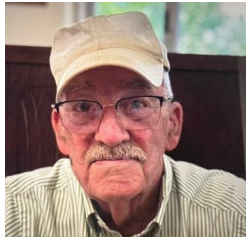
To register, please email

pjones@oklahomabaptists.org



TRIBUTES

Louie Speck, member of Mounds, First and pastor at churches in Blackburn, Drumright, Milfay, Sand Springs, Duncan, Owasso, OKC, Terilton and Sapulpa, passed away on Jan.10, 2026.



Sunny B. Stuart died Dec. 28. He pastored Oklahoma churches for 60 years, retiring at age 80 after pastoring Little Axe, First more than 30 yrs.

