

OHIO BAPTIST MESSENGER

DECEMBER 2020 | VOLUME 68 NO. 6

Steve Long Announces Retirement as Church Planting Catalyst in Northwest Ohio

Steve Long accepted a retirement offer from the North American Mission Board effective mid-November, 2020. After serving as pastor of Oregon First Baptist Church, Steve began as Associational Missionary for Northwest Ohio Baptist Association in 2002. That position was a joint position of the association, the state convention, and the North American Mission Board. A few years ago the position transitioned to a church planting catalyst position with the North American Mission Board.

Steve and April have built great relationships with church leaders in the area. Regarding the ministry, Steve said his "favorite part has truly been the people." He said that the pastor network and the collegiate/H2O network have been favorites.

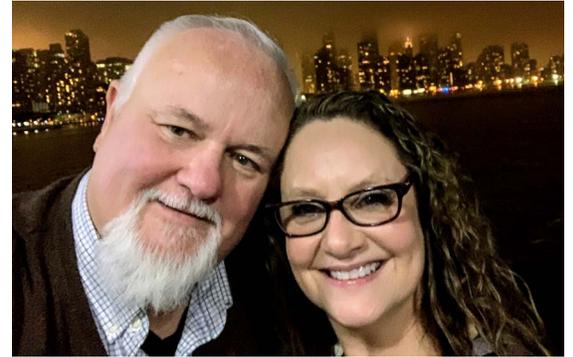
Over the past two years, Steve Long has led the association to prepare for a transition to a strategy team with local leaders taking associational responsibilities in ministry. Eleven leaders from local churches will take specific responsibilities with Northwest Ohio Baptist Association. In an agreement between the two associations, Mark Jones,

Associational Missionary for Northcoast Baptist Association

will assume a part time role to consult, encouragement and support local leaders in Northwest Ohio Baptist Association.

As a fun side note, Steve is co-author of a practical book: *Two Regular Guys Cookbook: Menus and Tidbits for the Football Season*. It did not make the New York Times top 10 reading list, but it can make fellowship time around sports events more enjoyable.

Steve said "Thank you to Ohio Baptists for giving me the opportunity to serve." He also said, "We want to be in the next place of service that the Lord would have us, continuing to serve the Lord wherever that will be." Ohio Baptists who know the Longs say "Thank you, Steve and April!" along with expressing a hope that the transition of this retirement allows opportunity for more great ministry with Ohio Baptists.



Officers Elected at 2020 Annual Celebration

The messengers of the 2020 Annual Celebration elected the following officers of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio:

President- Reginald Hayes, *Pastor United Faith International, Columbus*

1st Vice President- Ray Umphrey, *Pastor Briggs Road Baptist Church, Columbus*

2nd Vice President- J.D. Davis, *Pastor Dublin Baptist Church, Dublin*

Historian- Darin Avery, *Associational Mission Strategist Cleveland Hope Association, Pastor Bridge Church, Perry*

Recording Secretary- Faye Rodgers, *Northside Baptist Church, Newark*

Assistant Recording Secretary- Mary Leigh Snowden, *Mission Council Member, Clough Pike Baptist Church, Cincinnati*



Annual Celebration RESOLUTIONS

Messengers Adopt Resolutions of Appreciation and Stance on Critical Race Theory

The Messengers of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio, meeting at Dublin Baptist Church on November 16, adopted four resolutions. Three resolutions of appreciation included appreciation for convention leadership, for Jack Kwok and his 24 years of leadership in Ohio, and for the Disaster Relief leadership of Nick Freeman. A fourth resolution On Critical Race Theory and the Sufficiency of Scripture views Critical Race Theory as contrary to scripture and encourages a scriptural stance toward racial and ethnic reconciliation.

Members of the resolutions committee included Tim Cline, Reginald Hayes, Jonathan Newman, and Jason Walters. The full text of the resolutions follows:

1. In Appreciation of Officers, State Staff, and Host Church

WHEREAS, Our convention president, Ryan Strother, has faithfully and sacrificially served for the past two years and has led the convention to pray for God's guidance, to plan for future strategy in reaching Ohio with the Gospel, and to celebrate what has been done; and
WHEREAS, Our first vice-president Reginald Hayes, second vice-president Jeff Woolum, and historian Jack Kwok have also served Ohio Baptists through a challenging year and in preparation for this gathering; and
WHEREAS, Recording Secretary Faye Rodgers has faithfully served this convention since 1999 and Assistant Recording Secretary Annette Dessecker has served her office since 2002; and
WHEREAS, Jack Kwok and the staff of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio have led us during the changes and challenges of the past year and have made key preparations for this annual celebration; and
WHEREAS, The pastor, staff, and members of Dublin Baptist Church have graciously prepared to host this Annual Celebration; therefore, be it
RESOLVED, That we the messengers of the 67th Annual Celebration of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio express our gratitude and appreciation for the service and leadership of these to prepare for this annual meeting

characterized by celebration, prayer, and worship.

2. In Appreciation of Jack Kwok, Ph.D.

WHEREAS, Jack Kwok, Ph.D., has faithfully served as Executive Director of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio since November 1996 and has announced his retirement effective the end of this month; and
WHEREAS, He has kept in the forefront a strategy of prayer and spiritual renewal; more and better disciples; more healthy congregations; discovering, developing, and deploying leaders; and working from associational mission plans to help move Mission Ohio forward; and
WHEREAS, 607 new churches have been planted during his tenure; and
WHEREAS We experienced a net gain of more than 200 churches the past 24 years; therefore, be it
RESOLVED, That we the messengers of the 67th Annual Celebration of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio express our sincere gratitude for his twenty-four years of faithful ministry and leadership to Mission Ohio.

3. On Critical Race Theory and the Sufficiency of Scripture

WHEREAS, The Baptist Faith and Message 2000 states, "[A]ll Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the



Annual Celebration RESOLUTIONS

supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried" (Article I); and WHEREAS, Humanity is identified in Scripture as image bearers of God, which establishes all individuals with value that transcends gender [male and female by birth], race, and ethnicity (Genesis 1:26); and WHEREAS, The New Covenant further unites image bearers from every nation, tribe, tongue, and people, through the gospel of Jesus Christ, in whom we find our true identity; and WHEREAS, Scripture alone contains the principles and commands that are sufficient to confront and correct the racially motivated sins of hatred, bigotry, prejudice, injustice, and abuse; and WHEREAS, Christian unity is not created by the anti-biblical ideologies of intersectionality or Critical Race Theory, but instead is generated by our common salvation in Christ Jesus; and WHEREAS, The State Convention of Baptists in Ohio is committed to the sufficiency of Scripture and is committed to seeking biblical literacy through biblical teaching; now, therefore, be it RESOLVED, That the messengers to the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio affirm Scripture as the first, last, and sufficient authority regarding how our churches seek to address social ills and sinful actions, and that we reject Critical Race Theory and any other philosophy or practice which contradicts Scripture; and be it further RESOLVED, That the gospel of Jesus Christ alone grants the power to change people's hearts and to transform practices in society, because "he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6, ESV); and be it further RESOLVED, That the churches of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio surrender our hearts to the authority of Scripture alone, and commit ourselves to teaching our members the biblical truth regarding the nature of man, the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit as the remedy for all bigotry, hatred,

prejudice, and unjust actions; and be it further RESOLVED, That we commit ourselves to eradicating any practices of ethnic and racial bigotry and prejudice from Southern Baptist life and ministry, while pursuing racial and ethnic reconciliation in all our relationships as stated by the June 1, 1995 Southern Baptist Convention; and be it finally RESOLVED, That the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio exhibits the promise that distinctions created by God and gifted by God give Him absolute glory in our churches.

4. In Recognition of the Disaster Relief Ministry of Nick Freeman

WHEREAS, Nick Freeman has faithfully served as a Disaster Relief volunteer for 21 years; and WHEREAS, Nick accepted the challenge "Do your best" in 2001 from a letter from a first grader in Silex, Missouri, sent to disaster volunteers at Ground Zero following 9/11; and WHEREAS, Nick Freeman has responded to more than 50 events including floods, hurricanes, training, blood drives, and conferences; and WHEREAS, He has served in the areas of child care, chainsaw, assessments, training events, incident command, food service, flood recovery, and most recently in chaplaincy as coordinator of the 34 Ohio Disaster Relief chaplains; and WHEREAS Nick and his wife Judy, also a Disaster Relief volunteer, leave their home in Hamilton to serve with Disaster Relief as much as possible; be it RESOLVED, That the messengers of the 67th Annual Celebration of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio meeting at Dublin Baptist Church express our gratitude to Nick Freeman for his service and leadership in Disaster Relief of Ohio Baptists.

2020
By Prayer and Fasting

Bruce Smith named Interim Executive Director-Treasurer



The Mission Council has elected Bruce Smith as the Interim Executive Director-Treasurer beginning December 1, 2020. Since coming to Ohio Bruce has served as the pastor of First Baptist Church, Woodsfield, Associational Missionary for the Steel Valley Association and, for the past 16 years, Associate Executive Director for the State Convention. Bruce was unable to attend the Annual Celebration due to COVID-19 quarantine but was able to share a video message. Please pray for Bruce and his family as he takes on this new role.

SOMETHING YOU MAY NOT KNOW

Intermission [in-ter-mish-uhn] (from dictionary.com)

1. a short interval between the acts of a play or parts of a public performance, usually a period of approximately 10 or 15 minutes, allowing the performers and audience a rest.
2. a period during which action temporarily ceases; an interval between periods of action or activity.

Some people may think of an interim position as an intermission. But the definition of intermission is missing some important elements of what is happening behind the scenes.

Something you may not know about me is that I was a bi-vocational school teacher and minister for 10 years in a small farming community in West Texas. One part of my work included directing high school plays. I directed contest one-act plays which had scene changes that were always made in less than 10 seconds. Plays prepared for the community might have a 10 to 15-minute intermission, or in a few cases, time for a full dinner for the audience. While intermission may have appeared from the outside as break or a stop in action or a time for actors to briefly rest, for the director and stage crew it was crunch time. The stage would be re-set; the props would be in place; lighting and effects were made ready for the what was to follow.

Serving as interim Executive Director is similar. An Executive Director Search Committee will be at work behind the scenes. We are blessed with a great state staff and strong Denominee Future Team that will continue to prepare for what God wants to do next through Ohio Baptists.

The interim period will also give time for finances to meet the needs. Funding from some of our national partners reduced or ended in 2020. That is alright because we should end dependence on those outside sources. The challenge: With 50% of receipts of Ohio churches going to missions beyond Ohio, a \$100,000 cut in outside income requires

\$200,000 new income to replace the loss because half of what comes in is sent to worldwide missions. That's not a bad thing. We want to continue to be partners in worldwide missions. We just have to plan to stay good partners in our Cooperative Program gifts.

God continues to work among Ohio Baptists. Pray for church planters who, like other leaders across the state, have faced the challenges of 2020 and continued to move forward with sharing the hope of Christ. "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:1-2).

It is not time to stop. It is time to fervently pray for your Denominee Future Team and the plans the unfold for raising up more leaders in Ohio. It is not time to stop. It is time to pray for locations across Ohio that need a strong witness for Christ (<https://scbo.org/article/adopt-zip-church-planting>). It is not time to stop. It is time to celebrate the 16 new churches in Ohio over the past 12 months and pray for more than twice that many in each of the coming years. It is not time to stop. It is time to continue to move forward looking to what God has next as churches train new leaders to strengthen local ministries and start more churches to help reach the millions in Ohio who do not have a personal relationship with Christ. It is not time to stop. It is time to begin dreaming of stronger partnerships of Ohio Baptists with one another and with points around the world. It is not time to stop. God has provided a brief intermission for us to prepare for the exciting next act for Ohio Baptists.



Bruce Smith
Interim Executive Director-Treasurer
State Convention of Baptists in Ohio

WMU®

God's mission.
Our passion.

Ohio WMU November 2020

November 17, 2020 Ohio WMU Leadership team joined with Frank and Sandy Wisdom-Martin, National WMU® Executive Director, to honor Dr. Jack and CC Kwok. Teresa Bailey, Ohio Mission Friends Consultant, and Ginny Howell, Ohio G.A. Consultant, presented an Ohio block O wall hanging. It was designed by Anna Andes to replicate a horse's winner's wreath and to represent Ohio R.A.'s, G.A.'s, Children In Action, and Mission Friends from every association. Boys and girls added ribbons with their name and church name to bless the Kwok's.

V.J. Sanchez, Ohio Christian Women's Job Corps Consultant, presented CC with a beautiful horse tapestry sharing the Scripture Psalm 119:32, "I run to the path of Your commands for they set my heart free." Horses symbolize courage and freedom and CC exemplifies those qualities, thank you, CC.



Barb Delorme and Dr. Jack Kwok

Ohio's "Back Pack Lady," Barb Delorme, stepped in for Joanne Hopkins and Marisol Fernandez, to represent Ohio Pastors' wives and Ohio church planters' wives. These wives may be the most grateful of all Ohio Baptists because of Dr. Kwok's compassion, care, and concern for all women, especially, pastors' wives. If you are a pastor's wife or church planter's wife you may remember your "Welcome to SCBO" and the pep talk to, like Abraham's Sarai, drive the 'gift' tent peg deep into Ohio soil. Ohio is home, now.

Ohio WMU President, Jean DiFilippo, presented Dr. Kwok with a video with personal messages from members of the Ohio WMU Leadership Team. The gathering was very warm, encouraging, and tearful as your Ohio WMU Leaders shared from their hearts.



CC Kwok



Ginny Howell, Dr. Jack Kwok, Teresa Bailey



Jean DiFilippo and Dr. Jack Kwok



2020 Annual Celebration Prayer Guide Available

Our 2020 Annual Celebration theme was Prayer and Fasting. At last year's meeting, President Ryan Strother challenged Ohio Baptists to First Friday Fasts in 2020:

"We should never discount the power of prayer. As much as we strategize and prepare our work for God's mission, we cannot forget that apart from Christ, we can do nothing (John 15:5). If we want to bear much fruit throughout Ohio, we must commit to praying. Think about all of the efforts right now in our state: the Denominee process starting in January to bring clarity to our convention's ministry, increased church planting and revitalization efforts, and the every-day work of our church's carrying out the Great Commission. We must pray!

*As I think about our work in 2020, I want to challenge our churches to a prayer effort that will be low burden and high impact. So, let me introduce you to the **First Friday Fast** effort, where I trust our churches will commit to fasting (if physically able) and praying on the first Friday of every month in 2020. We are providing five prayer points to consider as you pray and fast. Imagine what the Lord might do as we seek and depend on Him as we carry out His mission!"*

That challenge came long before we knew what 2020 would hurl at us. COVID-19 was not in our vocabulary. We anticipated 2020 to be a divisive year because of the election, still an issue,

but now just one of many.

The initiative has been embraced by Ohio Baptists this year in a variety of ways. Resources were gathered and shared in a Dropbox Showcase (<https://shwca.se/FirstFridayFast2020>). The months of January through March saw in-person prayer meetings across the state. March 5 brought a great momentum as we gathered at Cuyahoga Valley Church for a prayer summit with Daniel Henderson. Then, the coronavirus caused churches to suspend gatherings, and the First Friday Fast initiative went digital. Zoom was the word for April through June. Beginning in July, we created prayer guides each month that small groups could use.

As we gathered for the 2020 Annual Celebration at Dublin Baptist, President Ryan Strother again called us to prayer. A special prayer guide was created using *Dangerous Prayers: Because Following Jesus Was Never Meant to Be Safe* by Craig Groeschel. Three prayer times focused on **Search Me** (Psalm 139:23-24); **Break Me** (Mark 14:3-9; 14:22-26) and **Send Me** (Isaiah 6:1-8) Jason Buss (FBC South Lebanon); Amanda LaRue (FBC Miamisburg) and VJ Sanchez (Briggs Road Baptist) each led prayer times.

The prayer guide is available at the Dropbox Showcase, on our website, or by contacting Steve Hopkins at SteveHopkins@sco.org or 614.601.6820. The guide is available in digital format, or you can request printed copies.



THE UNINTERRUPTED GOSPEL: Dr. Paul Chitwood Challenges Ohio Baptists to ***“attempt still larger things.”***

Dr. Paul Chitwood, president of our International Mission Board brought the closing challenge to Ohio Baptists attending the 67th annual celebration at Dublin Baptist Church November 16. Dr. Chitwood opened by presenting a plaque of appreciation for retiring Executive Director Dr. Jack Kwok. The two developed a friendship when Chitwood served as Executive Director in Kentucky.

Dr. Chitwood then thanked Ohio Baptists for their support of the International Mission Board through the Cooperative Program and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. “Thank you for sending 3,600 missionaries and their 2,880 kids to the ends of the earth!” Chitwood shared. He then noted this is a special year for the IMB as we celebrate 175 years of ***uninterrupted*** gospel witness among the nations, a witness that continues today even in a pandemic. That adjective is huge – ***uninterrupted*** for 175 years!

Taking several passages from 1 Chronicles 16, Chitwood posed, “A very simple question to guide us: What is my obligation to my neighbors and to the nations?” The challenge is to make God’s salvation and His judgment known to our neighbors and the nations.

Chitwood closed with a great example from history. From the years 1918-1920, a global pandemic, known as the Spanish Flu, infected an estimated 500 million people worldwide (about 1/3 of the world’s population at the time), killing at least 50 million.

In his annual report in 1919, the Foreign Mission Board president, J.F. Love, penned these words to the SBC constituents:

“Never in the seventy-four years of this Convention’s history has the Foreign Mission Board offered a report

of its work for a year which was more eventful than that which has just closed. The public mind has rarely, if ever, been more distracted, the work of the churches more interrupted, the demands upon the benevolent more numerous or insistent than during the Convention year 1918-19.”

Sound familiar? He went on to say:

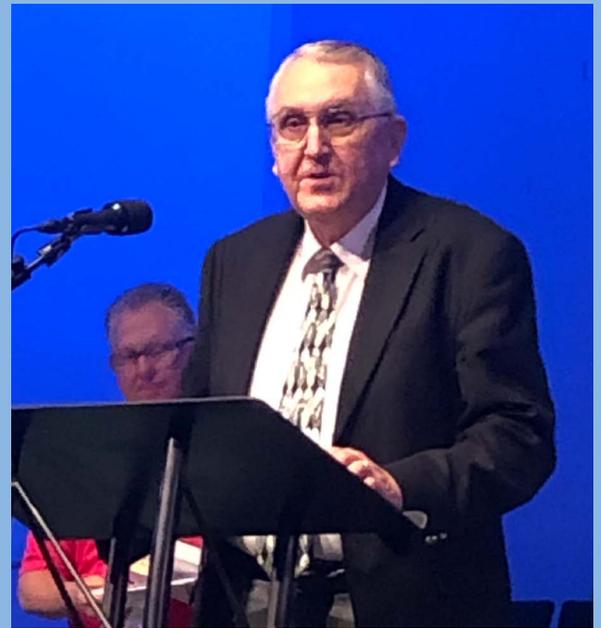
*“That Southern Baptists have under the conditions responded so nobly to the needs of those whom they have never seen is an encouraging sign of a growing conscience among Southern Baptists for Foreign Missions; AND that amidst all the unwelcome circumstances of the year, with inadequate forces and equipment, the missionaries report a truly successful year’s work accomplished is a token of God’s will that we should, with expectation, **attempt still larger things.**”*

Chitwood reminded us, “Every single day, 154,937 people die having given no indication that they have the Son.”

As evidence of the commitment to continue the uninterrupted gospel witness, Wednesday evening seventy-nine new missionaries were commissioned. You can see that service here: imb.org/send



Ron Hock Receives 2020 Darty & Dot Stowe Award: "A long obedience in the same direction."



Pastor Ron Hock, pastor Eastland Heights Baptist Church Newark, received the 2020 Darty and Dot Stowe Award at the 67th annual meeting of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio November 16. Dwayne Lee presented this 26th presentation of the award.

Ron was born in Zanesville in 1935 and born again in 1958. He attended Tennessee Temple in Chattanooga, graduating in 1963 with a Graduate of Theology degree. Upon graduation, Ron co-founded and served as assistant pastor of the Bible Center Baptist Church in East Ridge, TN. Ron and his young family moved to Rome, Georgia, in 1966, where he served as a youth leader and Bible teacher and got his introduction to Southern Baptists.

Ron's secular employer moved him to Newark, OH, in 1968, where he began serving at Eastland Heights Baptist Church. He was asked to fill the pulpit occasionally in 1969 and then became interim pastor. January 1970, the church called him as their pastor and ordained him in May 1971. You read that correctly; Pastor Hock has served the same church, Eastland Heights Baptist Church, for over 50 years! Lord willing, January 2021, he will complete his 51st year at Eastland Heights.

Ron's wife Betty has served faithful at his side. He earned a Christian Development Diploma and Pastoral Ministry Diploma in 1988 through the SBC Church Study Courses. Pastor Ron began nursing home and retirement center ministries, where he still serves. He has served on the board of the Center for Alternative Resources, a crisis center and information and referral service in Newark. He has also served on the Mission Council for the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio.

Pastor Ron and Betty Hock have served faithfully, as Eugene Peterson put it, 'a long obedience in the same direction,' which serves as an encouragement to us all.

Darty and Dot Stowe began their ministry with Mission Ohio in 1954 as director of missions for the greater Cincinnati area. A year later, he became state director of missions and then became the associate executive secretary, working closely with state executive secretary Ray Roberts. Darty and Dot loved their work in Ohio and served until his home going in 1981. Dot accepted a position as director of a women's residence hall at Georgetown College in 1983, where she influenced many young women. She moved back to Ohio in 1989 and stayed in close contact with friends in the ministry until joining Darty with our Lord in 2000.

Darty Stowe led well from the 'second chair,' with a servant's heart, leaving a great legacy in Ohio. Every year, the award is given to a pastor or minister who has served faithfully, perhaps never recognized like those in the larger, more visible churches, but leaving a legacy and serving in the spirit of 1 Thessalonians 2:3-12. Annual gifts to Georgetown College from the Stowe family provide the Darty and Dot Stowe Award.

Candidates for the Stowe Award must be currently serving Mission Ohio and have at least five years of service. Nominations are submitted to the state convention staff by October 1 each year. The award is announced during the annual meeting of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio. A recognition plaque and a financial award for the purchase of books and/ or continuing education are presented to the recipient.



SO THAT **REV. 7 9-10**

First Friday Fast 2020 December 4: So That... Two Words That Will Revolutionize Your Praying

As we come to our final First Friday Fast of 2020, a fair question: Why have we been fasting and praying in 2020? We know by now **what**, our five prayer prompts for the year:

Denominee Process and Future Team

Seeking His future for Ohio Baptists

Church Revitalization

Seeking His plan for the church

Church Planting

Seeking His places for church plants

Pastors and Leaders

Seeking His favor for pastors, leaders, & their families

Awakening

Seeking supernatural gospel impact in Ohio & beyond

December 4, we remind ourselves of the **why**. In his longest recorded prayer (**John 17**) Jesus uses “so that” or variations of it at least nine times. You can find the phrase frequently in Paul’s prayers. **So that** causes us to ask, why am I asking for this in prayer? We pause to examine the desires and motivations for our requests. Phil Miglioratti states, “The “so that” of prayer must eventually get to bring God glory, or I have no right to ask for it in prayer.”

Does that mean that any personal prayer request is selfish and shouldn’t be asked? Certainly not, we are taught to ask, “for our daily bread.” However, **so that** praying expresses our motivation.

When you ask that you, your child, or grandchild do well, is it **so that** everything I/he/she does will glorify Jesus... so that however it goes, well or poorly in my sight, I/he/she may become all He made me/him/her to be?

When you ask for a person to be healed, is it **so that** he/she might continue to walk with Jesus, **so that** he/she might

continue to share the gospel for His name’s sake, **so that** the doctors, nurses, and caregivers would see Jesus’ hand at work, **so that** He will receive all the glory?

So that is not a trick to get Jesus to answer our prayer, but a desire to see Jesus move in such a way that His kingdom, power, and glory are made known, from our neighbors to the nations. It is a Biblical way to make my prayer and focus on Jesus and His purposes. As you pray Friday, December 4, try adding **so that** to every request and see how it revolutionizes your prayer!

You can find the prayer guide for First Friday Fast 2020 in our Dropbox Showcase (<https://shwca.se/FirstFridayFast2020>). The prayer guide is based on **Revelation 7:9-10**, we pray **so that** there will be:

... a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, which no one could number, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. ... And they cried out in a loud voice: Salvation belongs to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb.

Please note, all the resources available in the Showcase will be available for download until January 31, 2021. For further study in **so that** praying see these resources:

Phil Miglioratti speaks on prayer from John 17 to a pastor’s conference: <https://archive.org/details/PhilMigliorattiSpeaksAtPastorsConferenceNov2009>

Help from So That Prayers by David Butts: <https://www.harvestprayer.com/prayer-faq/help-from-so-that-prayers/>

Two Words That’ll Revolutionize Your Prayer Life by Amy Groeschel: <https://finds.life.church/two-words-thatll-revolutionize-prayers/>



Join IMB's 175 Days of Prayer

175 Days of Prayer

We have celebrated 175 years of continuous ministry by joining in 175 Days of Prayer. Each day will feature one request and can be sent to you as a push notification from the IMB Pray app, accessed at imb.org/pray or the Pray Daily newsletter, or seen through IMB social media (Facebook, Twitter or Instagram). Rejoice over what God has done and continues to do as we INTERCEDE for missionaries and for the nations.

DAY 164 of 175
Days of Prayer

Here is the post from day 164:
The IMB's vision statement, from Revelation 7:9-10, describes a multitude from all nations, tribes, peoples, and languages, exuberantly worshipping God together. This is God's call for His church and the missionaries they send. The Cooperative Program is a wonderful way in which churches financially support their state

convention and Southern Baptist ministries. Much can be done when churches pool their resources. The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering (LMCO), started in 1918, is unique in that 100% of it goes to support IMB missionaries and their work, not to administrative support. Because of the faithful giving of individuals and churches, missionaries can focus on reaching the lost, ministering to physical needs, discipling young believers, and helping to plant

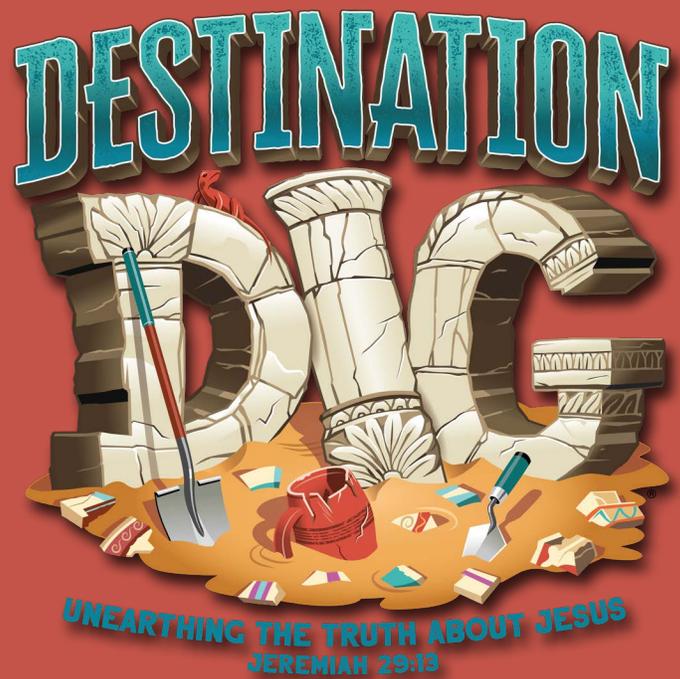
healthy churches. Daily expenses like housing, transportation, and schooling resources are all provided through abundant giving. We are grateful to you for your faithful participation in this vision. Please pray for God's provision and for His wisdom as every dollar given to LMCO is carefully allocated and used in spreading His Word and love. Ask God to inspire churches to engage in God's call through praying, giving, going, and sending.



The show must go on! VBS Director Preview in Person!

Rhonda VanCleve of LifeWay Publishing was our special guest for the 2020 VBS Directors Preview. She began the day by surveying the different ways that the churches conducted their VBS for 2020. Some churches had their VBS in person, some went totally digital, some incorporated it into their Sunday School time, and some did a combo of all of the above. Rhonda let us know that our small sample of churches almost exactly reflected the percentage of what churches did throughout the year around the United States. What we discovered among all of us, was that the children needed to hear the Good News of the Gospel and as has been the motto for 2020: be flexible and that is how the churches got it accomplished.

With so many events cancelled, postponed and gone digital it was very refreshing to have an actual in person event. We had a great time looking at decoration ideas. There was a fun dig site set up to find treasures. We had refreshments served at the Jerusalem MarketPlace. We played a fun game at each table of digging for treasure and the winner was given some fun tools. Rhonda shared the Bible stories for each day and how they brought



the theme in by traveling to Israel. We were taught the choreography for the theme song. We even did a FaceBook live video so that we could allow those unable to come to still attend. Check out our FaceBook page at VBS Ohio.

Make plans to bring your entire team to our Vacation Bible School Institute this April 17, 2021.



The Ohio Baptist Foundation and the Louisiana Baptist Foundation offer a **Short Term Fund** to help churches and other ministries maximize their income on cash reserves and designated funds. The annualized payout rate is **1.40%** (as of 10/31/2020). Based upon our information, *this is one of the highest cash-type rates offered in Ohio to churches and other ministries at this time.*

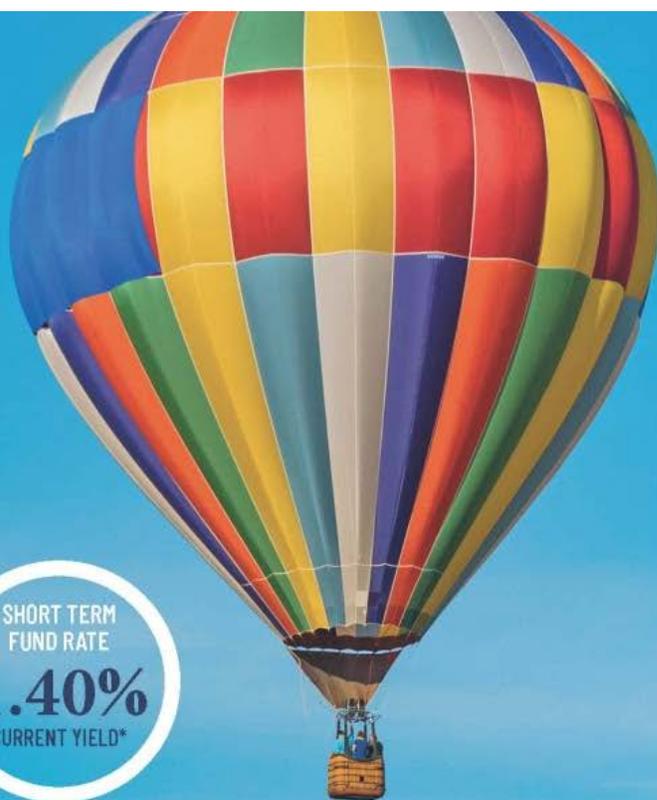
If this would be helpful for your ministry, we would be honored to partner in ministry with you. We can be reached by replying to my email, jhelton@scbo.org or by phone at toll-free (614) 601-6881. Thank you.

-- Jack Helton, Executive Director

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How to submit Church News

Send all church news and information to Amanda Mishne at amishne@scbo.org

Bruce Smith,
State Convention Interim Executive Director-Treasurer, Editor
Amanda Mishne, Publication Layout

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WHEN THE LORD TELLS US TO PRAY



By: Pastor Ron Branch, Hope Baptist Church in Middleport, OH, August 21, 2020

I have been ill the last several weeks. During my most recent stay in the hospital, I had an incredible experience. Not long after being admitted to a room, I got out of the bed to sit in the chair by the window. In that moment of movement, my heart stopped and I collapsed to the floor. Evidently, I was headed for a meeting with the Lord.

In the moments that followed, a couple of dynamics took place. One, as I understand it, was that a duo of nursing staffers found me passed out on the floor. They immediately employed CPR.

In the exact meantime, a friend of ours who lives about five miles away in New Haven, WV, Jenny Young, sat along the shores of Virginia Beach enjoying vacation time. She said she suddenly felt distinctly led of the Lord to pray for Pastor Ron. And, for the next two hours, though hundreds of miles away, and not knowing what was going on with me, she prayed for Pastor Ron because the Lord said she should pray for Pastor Ron.

In the meantime, I was placed on the ventilator in intensive care. Terry was called and told that she should quickly get to the hospital. Once there, she was informed about my situation: they were not expecting me to live.

But, on the shores of Virginia Beach during a stretch of two important hours, Jenny Young kept praying for Pastor Ron because the Lord distinctly led her that she should continue to pray for Pastor Ron.

This amounts to a compelling account that confirms an important spiritual truth. I understand clearly that the nursing staffers found me on the floor passed out and revived me by applying CPR. I am very grateful for that. But, I also believe that I regained life from the Lord and became sustained with life from the Lord because someone was compelled to pray for me simply because the

Lord led them to pray for me. I am particularly grateful for that.

The driving lesson for all us is this: **WHEN THE LORD SAYS WE SHOULD PRAY, WE SHOULD PRAY.** We may not know why. We may not know what is happening. On the other hand, we may know all the facts. Regardless, **WHEN THE LORD SAYS WE SHOULD PRAY, WE SHOULD PRAY,** for He has a reason that we should pray for someone or a particular circumstance in important moments.

This experience of mine and the factors of it still amaze me. But, above all, I am compelled to emphasize the importance of intercessory prayer above what happened to me. Intercessory prayer is prayer on behalf of others or circumstances. It is an activity in which Christians should be involved faithfully. For example, sometimes, God wants us to pray for others, for as someone said, "Prayer moves the hand of God."

Intercessory prayer is the one power on earth that commands the response of God from Heaven on behalf of others or circumstances. As a matter of fact, we live in a world with needs entirely dependent upon and waiting to be helped by Christians willing to offer up intercessory prayer.

The Apostle Paul is an example praying with intercession for the church in Colosse: "I do not cease to pray for you..." God continually looks for those willing to engage in intercessory prayer. Are you one? Are you willing to be one?

Now, I am thankful to Miss Jenny for praying on my behalf. And, I am grateful for those who worked the CPR on me. The only problem was that the CPR made me so sore in the chest and ribs area that it was a long time before I could do much.

But, I am most thankful to the Lord for granting me more days of life. After all, I am sure my family would miss me.



Getting Ready for the Next Guy: Transitional Pastor Training at Springboro Baptist

Springboro Baptist Church hosted, **Getting Ready for the Next Guy: Transitional Pastor Training** October 22. Chuck Deglow facilitated the training from his experience in leading over twenty churches during the transition of pastors. Fifteen participants attended from all over Ohio and left the day with a booklet full of notes, books for further study, and a better understanding of the transitional pastor's role.

Chuck shared with the group that a transitional pastor is an intentional way of leading a church family to navigate the whitewater of a pastor transition. The church without an under-shepherd (1 Peter 5:4) can be very vulnerable. The average time between pastors is between 9 and 18 months. Much can happen during that time to affect the church either positively or negatively. *"The one purpose for this ministry is the glory of God,"* Deglow emphasized.

Topics included:

- The stages through which each church will progress during the interim period — grieving, regrouping, and going forward
- Guiding the congregation through a review of their

ministry effectiveness based upon historical trends in attendance, giving, baptisms, etc.

- Introducing the congregation to relevant current demographics and trends that indicate ministry opportunity
- Selecting and training a pastor search team

Often the church sees the time between pastors as a *"hold things together, keep things going"* period. Some people approach the time as a *"wait and see"* period. However, with effective leadership, the time can be productive — a time of growth spiritually, sending roots deep into His word and presence. Consistency in the pulpit will help steady the congregation during the uncertain days without a pastor. The transitional pastor's primary task is to prepare the people for the next pastor and the changes that will inevitably come with him.

To connect with Chuck Deglow about transitional pastor questions, or for a list of those trained that may be available to help, please contact Steve Hopkins at SteveHopkins@scbo.org or 614.601.6280.



Cedarville University and the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio present

Worship 4:24 Conference

A One-day, Virtual Event on January 23, 2021

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Join us online for the virtual Worship 4:24 Conference on January 23, 2021.

Co-sponsored by the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio and Cedarville University Department of Music and Worship, this

conference is designed to equip and encourage worship leaders, musicians, bands, praise teams, and tech crews to be effective worship leaders. This year's conference will include worship from previous years and general sessions.

Cost

This virtual conference will be free, as we desire to continue to equip the church.

Registration

Online: worship424.com

Phone: 937-766-4444

REGISTRATION IS FREE and includes:

- Website links to join us online for main sessions and worship sessions.
- Access to recorded archives of this year's sessions.
- Access to ALL PAST WORSHIP 4:24 conference recordings AT NO CHARGE for 3 months.

Meet Dwayne Moore and Rory Noland



Dwayne Moore is the founder and president of NLW International, Inc., a ministry committed to providing quality worship discipleship resources to believers and churches. He is also the author of numerous books, including the award-winning *Pure Praise: A Heart-focused Bible Study on Worship*.



Rory Noland is the director of Heart of the Artist Ministries, an organization dedicated to serving artists in the church. He mentors worship leaders; speaks at churches, workshops, and conferences; leads retreats for artists; and consults with churches in the areas of worship and the arts. He is also a published songwriter and has authored four books.



WORSHIP 4:24
SPIRIT + TRUTH



H2O C H U R C H

At the beginning of the fall we shared with the church our theme verse for the year... I Corinthians 15:58, *"Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."*

During this pandemic, our prayer for H2O has been that as a people we would be STEADFAST & ABOUNDING in the work of the Lord. We began this journey with a renewed commitment to fight for our spiritual connection with Jesus and with one another.

We kicked off with a six week series called "One Another", where we reacquainted ourselves with what scripture teaches us about being the church, getting a fresh vision for the importance of authentic community. Despite the individual challenges that the pandemic has brought, and the difficulty in safely meeting together, our campus and city teams have decided to aggressively and creatively find ways to be present with one another. With masks and distanced, in backyards and parks, and on many zoom calls, the men and women of H2O have not forsaken walking with one another and carry one another's burdens in this unprecedented time.

And we continue to be on mission! This fall we decided not to be satisfied with "surviving" the pandemic, but began praying for opportunities to serve and love our community. Many of our campus and city "teams" have redoubled their efforts to orient around service projects in Columbus, as the need for a helping hand is as great as it has ever been. Rather than shying away from the debates in today's culture, we have been engaging in candid conversations about race, justice, public health, and politics, with the hope of bringing Jesus and His Word into the discussion. In 2020, loving our neighbor is as challenging and rewarding a mission as it has ever been, and in many small ways, God has used our teams to reflect His love to our campus and our city.

Here are a few highlights....

As we were trying to find ways to love and serve the students at OSU, some administrators at the university asked us to consider how we might reach out to the students who were isolated in "quarantine" housing on campus because

of infection or exposure to Covid. In an effort to bring them some joy and remind them they are not forgotten - we were able to make and give out 350 gift bags. Not only did this bring a smile to the students - it further strengthened our relationship with the university.

A few treats and an amazon gift card helped make the 2 week quarantine slightly more tolerable :)



In the midst of all of the disagreement and discord surrounding our election - we decided to host a live/virtual prayer time on election day - as a way to pray for healing, unity and justice in our nation. It was also a fantastic time to also reflect on scripture and recommit ourselves to our role as followers of Christ in this season - living out His Kingdom values in our world today.



We had almost 100 folks joining together in prayer (either live or virtually) on election night.

Students are still coming to Christ and being baptized!

Despite the pandemic, we have been able to have nine new students get baptized in the last few weeks. What a joy to see men & women be transformed by the love of Christ, and take the step of faith to publicly declare their faith!

Here is the slice of life of one student named Bertina:

Hi everyone! My name is Bertina Xue and I am so excited to share my slice with you on this special day. I am from the Boston area of Massachusetts, raised with zero spiritual background. When I arrived at college, I got caught up in the stereotypical college social scene and although it was fun, that fun was always temporary, and I found no long-lasting sense of fulfillment.

I went to my first church service ever back in December with my current boyfriend. And after winter break, I sort of kept going to service and I felt moved, but not convinced. That's when I decided I really wanted to figure out what I really believed in.

Things sort of worked out perfectly for me because the Well was just starting so I signed right up. My 1:12 partners, Karey and Alexa are here today to baptize me. I had such a great time with these ladies. All the hours we spent in Panera mostly with me asking tons and tons of questions. But even then, I still felt moved, but not convinced.

In March, I went on the Smokies trip with H2O and read many many chapters of the Old Testament. After the trip,

I just kept thinking about the verses [Mark 8:11-12] The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him. 12 And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, "Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation." I felt I was asking for more signs from God, but God had given me so many already. Did I really need more signs to believe? The answer was no. Finally, I felt moved AND convinced, so sometime in late March I consciously said yes to Christ and put my faith in the Lord.

Since then, I have experienced a lot of change internally. Although, I go about my day with classes and working out and seeing friends just like normal, I feel like a new person with this new heart that loves and believes in Christ. This semester, I've been serving as a small group leader apprentice and tutoring through the bridge program and that has brought me so much joy, to engage with the church community and praying with my sisters in Christ. God has also played a huge role in my relationships and it has been amazing doing my best to have these relationships be glorifying to Him. Months ago, we talked about life transformation at the Well and I was like "life transformation what? No way! Could never imagine that." But now, I realize life transformation is exactly what has happened to me.



We appreciate SO MUCH all of your support and encouragement in this season of life. Your partnership means the world to us. Here are a couple needs that you could keep in prayer for us....

- For our students, many of whom will be going home starting in Thanksgiving. Please pray for their spiritual health & continued steadfastness in the Lord!
- For our church to stay connected with Jesus and one another as we move back to virtual services over the next 4 weeks. (Columbus has issued a 'stay at home' advisory for the next 28 days and to honor that, and do our part to ensure the health of our community - we are having our worship services and sm grp mtgs move to virtual in that time period)
- For our church members to continue to be others-oriented in this season of life. As the world around us continues to struggle with depression, anxiety, financial stress, health concerns.....(the list goes on) , the need to love our neighbors and introduce them to the hope of Christ is as great as ever!



Challenge '21: Praying 21 Minutes More Daily in 2021

"It was the rarest of privileges...

'Every day, my children, I will meet you here,' the Creator said. 'We'll walk and talk together. There is nothing I will not tell you; nothing I will not provide for you.'

...The richest moments of the day—the hours that filled their hearts until they felt they would burst in their chests—happened in the cool of the day when they would walk together with the Majestic One.

...These daily conversations breathed life into their souls.

...Everything they needed; every moment of each day was provided through their union with Him.

...After the Enemy's deception and their unbelief, the conversations radically changed.

...Their greatest loss was their lack of communion with Him.

But God's plan was not thwarted by Satan's work and man's sin. A promised One would come. ... He would make a way for all to come into the Father's presence and know Him once again. To walk with Him; to hear His voice; to regain what once was lost.

This glorious walk with God is now open for us with all its riches. ... For all who long for Him, He invites us now to come.

And the doorway through which we enter is simply prayer."

—Excerpts from *Simply Prayer: Joining God for the Rest of Your Life* by Bill Elliff

The privilege of prayer was purchased for every follower of Jesus by His death, burial, and resurrection. His invitation

still stands. **Challenge '21** is a challenge for Ohio Baptists to pray 21 minutes more daily in 2021. If you are not daily praying, 21 minutes is a great place to start. If you are already praying, consider adding 21 more minutes a day.

National and state leaders declare a "state of emergency" when the threat is imminent. Is it time we declare a "state of spiritual emergency?" Leaders throughout the ages have called followers of Jesus to "extraordinary" prayer. Desperate times call for desperate prayer. Twenty-one more minutes a day may not be extraordinary, but it is a step in the right direction. It is a step toward the goal that the time and intensity of our prayer life increase each year.

"Prayer is warfare. It is a fiercely contested conflict. The enemy yields only what he must. He yields only what is taken. Therefore, the ground must be taken step by step. Prayer must be definite. He yields only when he must.

Therefore, prayer must be persistent. He continually renews his attacks; therefore, the ground must be held against him in the Savior's name." —S.D. Gordon, *Quiet Talks on Prayer*

Watch scbo.org/pray for more information and resources for **Challenge '21: Praying 21 minutes more daily in 2021**. We will invite you to say, "count me in!" for 21 more minutes of prayer every day in 2021.

For all who long for Him, He invites us now to come.

And the doorway through which we enter is simply prayer.

State Convention of Baptists in Ohio Recognizes Jack Kwok Ph. D. Time as Executive Director-Treasurer



Ryan Strother presenting Jack Kwok with plaque.



Ryan Strother & Reginald Hayes presenting Jack Kwok picture for Wall of Past Directors at the State Convention office.

How to Become a Christian

If you are not a Christian, have never surrendered your will to the Lord Jesus, let me share briefly how you can make this life changing decision. GOD WANTS YOU SAVED.

FIRST, you must believe that God loves you and wants you to have peace in your heart and an everlasting life (John 3:16).

SECOND, you must recognize that you are a sinner, that you have done things which have displeased God and that you have separated yourself from Him (Romans 3:23; 6:23).

THIRD, you must believe that Jesus came to this earth, was actually God in the flesh, lived a perfect life, and yet went to a cruel cross, dying for your sins, paying once and for all the penalty of sin (1 Peter 2:24). However, it's not enough just to

know these three things. Many of us knew them for years before we ever gave Jesus our lives.

FOURTH, you must personally ask Jesus to come into your life and forgive you of your sins (Revelation 3:20).

You can pray this prayer now and if you mean it with all of your heart, Jesus will come in just like He said. He cannot lie.

Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner. I'm really sorry for my sins, Lord. I ask you now, Lord Jesus, to come into my heart, forgive me of my sins, take control of my life, and make me the kind of person You want me to be. I now receive You into my heart. Thank You for coming in. I will follow You all the days of my life. In Your name I pray, Amen.

Merry Christmas
& Happy New Year

STATE CONVENTION OF BAPTISTS IN OHIO STAFF