



FROM YOUR DIRECTOR

For many years I have loved the little song that includes the phrase, ***“The joy of the Lord is my strength.”*** The words come from Neh. 8:10. What is the context of these words? The people of Israel gathered for an all-day teaching/preaching festival. ***Abounding joy*** in the hearts of the people of Israel was a result of ***hearing God’s word.***



Maybe the occasion was similar to the old Association annual meetings that lasted up to three days. One of those days was scheduled from sun up to after dark with preaching by different pastors from the area. Back to back preaching. Imagine that! And for the Israelites in this passage, it first produced weeping and mourning. I suppose because it became apparent to all how far they had drifted from their covenant agreement with God.

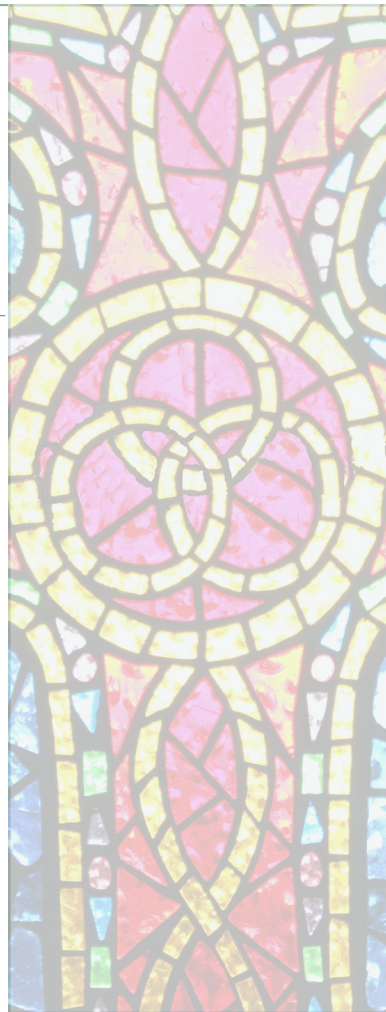
But Ezra, the leader, encouraged them saying, ***“This day is holy to the Lord your God. Do not mourn or weep.... Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”***

The ***joy*** was a product of a ***renewed fellowship with the Almighty.*** There was a new awareness of His blessing and closeness and His goodness as a result of their recommitment to their covenant relationship.

Is there a spirit of ***joy*** oozing from your pores today because you have the awesome high privilege of serving the magnificent God of creation? Even in all the little, seemingly mundane things of everyday life, we can bow in adoration and thanksgiving to God.

Sometimes the ***joy of a relationship*** needs just a little bit of fertilizing or watering to flourish and grow. I hope that today you will take a few moments to ***hear the word of God in a fresh way,*** and ***renew that joy*** that comes from walking hand in hand with him through whatever the day may bring your way.

In His Service,
Tim



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UPCOMING EVENTS



For more information, visit www.texasbaptists.org/events/african-american-leadership-workshop.

“Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.”
Hebrews 12:14

MINISTRY GUIDANCE CONFERENCE

March 1, 10:00am-1:00pm
Truett Seminary

Topic: Faith that “Sticks”
Speaker: Jane Wilson,
BGCT & Baylor University

This conference will explore how churches and families can work together to facilitate lifelong faith in the lives of teenagers.

RSVP by **February 24** at Louine.Adams@baylor.edu or 254-710-3739.

March Ministers Round Table
12:00pm on March 1 at Truett Seminary
(Part of the Ministry Guidance Conference)

Topic: Faith that “Sticks”
Speaker: Jane Wilson, BGCT & Baylor University

RSVP by **February 22** to Louine.Adams@baylor.edu or 254-710-3739.



COLLEGIATE MINISTRY UPDATE

The Spring school year is officially on its way in McLennan Community College (MCC) and incredible things are happening on campus. At the end of January, we had an outreach with games and pizza and asked other students to come join us. Around 30 students attended and 20 signed up to come to our Bible Studies and events. Many of these students had a fundamental knowledge about God's salvific plan but lacked community, a church home, and felt disconnected.



In a recent study by Lifeway, approximately 70 percent of students leave the church after high school. These students need a way to be connected to Christ and His Church.

The aim of Waco Regional Baptist Association (WRBA) is to engage college students through the Baptist Student Ministry. For those who are already involved in their local church we want to give them the opportunity to organize and lead weekly Bible Studies, free lunches and outreaches. Church members pair up with students and guide them in their service. Through this experience, they are able to teach the word of God, form community, and help connect others with the local churches.

To make this possible we need your help. First of all, we need your prayers. If you know a student currently attending MCC or Texas State Technical College who is interested in joining us, have them contact us. We are also in need of volunteers that have a heart for college students and would like to come to our events to connect with them. Your church is also able to help us provide one of the weekly free lunches. Please feel free to contact me either by email or by calling to the WRBA office if you have any questions or would like more information.

Stephen Galarza
MCC Collegiate Ministry Coordinator
mcc@wacobaptists.org



Student gather and play games at a BSM outreach event at MCC.

FEBRUARY EVENTS

February 1, 12:00pm
Ministers Roundtable
Great Hall, Truett Seminary
Topic: Trends in Discipleship
RSVP by January 25

February 12, 1:00pm
RA Derby Car Races
The Center, Columbus Ave.
Register with Brad at
254-640-0219.

February 13-19
Focus on WMU

February 15, 12:15pm
Networking & Missions
Team Meeting
Waco FBC, Conference Rm

February 18
Children's Ministry Day

February 21, 4:00pm
Board Meeting
WRBA

February 23, 3:30pm
Evangelism Ministry Team
Meeting
WRBA

February 24, 11:00am
Church Member Health
Ministry Team Meeting
Hillcrest Hospital

March 1, 10:00am
Ministry Guidance
Conference
Truett Seminary
RSVP by February 24 to
Louine at 710-3739.

March 1, 12:00pm
Ministers Roundtable
Great Hall, Truett Seminary
Topic: Sticky Faith
RSVP by February 22 to
Louine at 710-3739.

March 3-4
African American
Leadership Workshop
Truett Seminary

COMMUNITY NEWS

**Please continue to pray
for WRBA churches
seeking a Pastor:**

Calvary
Hewitt FBC

CHURCH SPOTLIGHT: LIBERTY HILL BAPTIST

After pastoring for a little more than a year, Marc Lambert is proud of his "church family" at Liberty Hill Baptist Church.

"That term isn't just a cliché there. It's just a close, loving group of folks that care for each other, are together outside of church and are just a family."

The move to Liberty Hill brought the Lamberts closer to family and to a changing church.

"They're not really set in entrenched traditions. They're willing to do new things"

Some examples are the updates to the children's area and ministry on Wednesday nights. It also includes the quarterly "Question & Answer" gatherings Lambert brought to the church. Having seen their success in a youth

group setting, he invited Liberty Hill's youth and adults to join together for a time where all questions about Bible, religion, church and life can be answered in a safe setting. It's going well.

Lambert said, "The adults are happy to see the youth engaged and asking questions. Sometimes I have to prod the adults."

He said it was good for the youth to see the adults working through questions as well.

His prayer request for the church is "That we can actually be the church that I'm picturing we are as far as being a welcoming and safe place for people to bring their questions and doubts. And that we can faithfully answer those questions and doubts."

E-mail: admin@wacobaptists.org
Fax: 254-755-6365
Phone: 254-753-2408

P.O. Box 1848
Waco, TX 76703

Waco Regional Baptist Association

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