



THE BAPTIST MESSENGER

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OKLAHOMA
BAPTISTS | ADVANCING THE
GOSPEL TOGETHER

2 TIMOTHY 2:2

ENTRUST

ADVANCE CONFERENCE

MARCH 3-4, 2025
MUSTANG, CHISHOLM HEIGHTS

OKLAHOMABAPTISTS.ORG/ADVANCE

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PROGRAM



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Rally for Life**
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ADVANCE CONFERENCE TO 'ENTRUST' DISCIPLE MAKERS

by Staff

Join Oklahoma Baptists at Mustang, Chisholm Heights on Monday and Tuesday, March 3 - 4, for the Advance Conference. This year's theme is "Entrust." Paul implores Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2, *"And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others."*

To entrust is to place or set before, to feed, teach and explain, providing opportunities and putting others in charge. Disciples are entrusted with the responsibility of pointing people to Christ, to help them grow in their faith and to challenge them to take the lead with others. Jesus, in the Great Commission recorded in Matthew 28, instructs us to make disciples and share the Gospel with which we have all been "Entrusted." Advance will equip and empower those who attend with the ability and knowledge to make disciples in their community.

Great preachers from the Oklahoma Baptist family as well as leaders like Bobby Kelly from Oklahoma Baptist University and Jamie Dew, President of New Orleans Seminary anchor the guest lineup. Other guests include Shane Pruitt from the North American Mission Board (NAMB) and Chad Higgins, Lifeway Senior Manager of Church Equipping.

Affinity focus groups on Tuesday include Women's Ministry with Catherine Renfro, who serves in Women's Evangelism

with NAMB; Discipleship and Youth Ministry leaders with Chad Higgins from Lifeway; African American Fellowship with Adron Robinson, Senior Pastor at Hillcrest Baptist Church in Country Club Hills, Ill.; and more.

Through engaging preaching and training, The Advance Conference, formerly the State Evangelism Conference, exists to encourage and inspire all Oklahoma Baptists, from vocational ministers to laymen, to share the Good News of Jesus with friends and neighbors and to make disciple makers.

The event is a completely free, and no registration is required to attend. Focus group meals do require advance registration. Please visit the website for a list of available affinity focus group meals.

To view the Advance Conference schedule and more, visit oklahomabaptists.org/evangelism/advance-conference.



2025 ROSE DAY RALLY DRAWS PRO-LIFE SUPPORTS FROM ACROSS THE STATE

by Jacob King

On Wednesday, Feb. 5, hundreds of Oklahoman pro-life supporters attended the annual Rose Day event, held inside the Oklahoma State Capitol at the beginning of a new legislative session.

While attending Rose Day, participants distributed red roses to their elected officials to encourage government leaders to protect the unborn.

After presenting their roses, attendees filled the House Chamber to participate in the Rose Day Rally for Life, which began with a brief concert performed by the Light Christian Academy Choir, directed by Kerry Andrews.

Darryl E. Wooton, Superintendent of Oklahoma Assemblies of God, served as event emcee. He took a moment to thank the sponsoring groups of Rose Day and led a prayer for Oklahoma Baptists Director-Treasurer Todd Fisher, who is still recovering from a car accident he had last July. Wooton then again thanked everyone in attendance for all they do in the fight for life.

Following a prayer by Oklahoma Baptist Homes for Children President James Swain, Oklahoma Speaker of the House Rep. Kyle Hilbert recognized members of the House who attended Rose Day. Then, Sen. Lonnie Paxton gave his testimony of why he is pro-life before recognizing the attending senators.

Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt sent a video greeting to the Rose Day attendees, thanking them for their attendance and explaining the importance of Rose Day.

"By the grace of God, Oklahoma has been a national leader in protecting the unborn and passing critical legislation to end abortion in the state of Oklahoma," Stitt said. "Our laws are a testament to our people, our values and our unbreakable pro-life culture."

Mandi Parkhurst, Director of Hope Pregnancy Centers Edmond, then gave a testimony of life change and God's loving, forgiving grace.

"The Lord opened my eyes and showed me that I needed Him," Parkhurst said.

Parkhurst emphasized that abortion is horrible and the lies fed to women that it's a "reset button" are false. But she emphasized that no matter what choices are made in the past, God's forgiveness is greater and is enough.

"Abortion is not the unforgivable sin, and God's grace and forgiveness is enough," she said.

Following Parkhurst's testimony, Oklahoma Lt. Gov. Matt Pinnell greeted attendees and reminded them that the fight for life isn't just on Rose Day.

"This is my favorite day, but this is a 365-day fight," Pinnell said.

Baptist Messenger Editor Brian Hobbs introduced Rose Day's keynote speaker Rebecca Kiessling, who shared her testimony and a pro-life message.

Kiessling was adopted into a Jewish household. She said that God was not emphasized in her upbringing. Throughout her childhood, Kiessling had wanted to meet her birth mother but didn't have the means to. She had also heard of abortions but didn't fully know what the word meant; all she knew was that it is a bad thing.

"From a young age, I knew there was hatred in the world," Kiessling said.



Rebecca Kiessling gave the keynote address at Rose Day, sharing her testimony.



While she was in school, Kiessling decided that she wanted to be an activist. Many believed that because of this, Kiessling was automatically in support of abortion. She disagreed.

“What on earth does having an abortion have to do with being a strong woman?” Kiessling said. “You’re not being strong; you’re being a bully.”

A few years later, Kiessling learned that she was conceived through rape and immediately felt threatened by those who saw children conceived in rape as inferior in some perceived way.

“I felt targeted by these people who don’t even know me,” she said.

Kiessling felt lost, without purpose or identity. Soon though, Kiessling learned of the incredible, loving nature of God who sees everyone as worthy and valuable life.

“I am not worthless,” Kiessling said. “I am priceless, and I hope you all know your worth.”

Kiessling has been an international pro-life and adoption speaker since 1995. She has changed the hearts and minds of many people across the world, including the minds of former Texas Gov. Rick Perry during his presidential campaign and Newt Gingrich as well as many other legislators. Kiessling emphasizes that there can be no exceptions for abortions and that every life, no matter how it was conceived, is valuable in the eyes of God.

“When you accept that exception, you’re saying that (the child) deserves the death penalty for the crime of the rapist father,” she said. Kiessling encouraged all who attended to speak up for the unborn, even those who some would not want to defend.

Following Kiessling’s testimony, William Novak of St. John the Baptist Catholic Church concluded Rose Day in prayer and benediction.

Oklahoma Baptists have participated in Rose Day since the 1990s. For more information about Rose Day, visit roseday.life.





2025 OKLAHOMA WOMEN'S RETREAT: FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

by Staff

On April 11-12, 2025, women from across Oklahoma will gather at Falls Creek and at Host Churches for worship, fellowship, and spiritual renewal. Centered on the story of Esther, this retreat will encourage women to embrace God's purpose for their lives.

The retreat provides time away from daily life to focus on faith. Attendees will experience worship, Bible study, and meaningful connections. Whether attending in person at Falls Creek or through a Host Church, women will be equipped to live boldly in their faith.

Early registration is available until February 28, with fees set at \$75 for adults and \$50 for students aged 14-17. Standard registration runs through March 28, with prices increasing to \$100 for adults and \$75 for students. In-person attendees will receive a leather journal cover that holds up to five notebooks, along with an Esther Scripture Notebook.

Digital registration options include a Digital Pass, Host Church, or Gathering of Churches, providing flexibility for those unable to attend in person. For those attending digitally, benefits include unlimited access to all content, language options in Spanish and American Sign Language, virtual fellowship opportunities, and a special digital devotional to deepen their study of Scripture.

The retreat will feature a dynamic lineup of speakers. Kelly Minter, an author, Bible teacher, and podcaster, is passionate about making Scripture relevant. Minter will be speaking in all three sessions.

Caroline Saunders, a writer, Bible teacher, and pastor's wife, is dedicated to helping women, teens, and children grow in faith. She has authored Bible studies by Lifeway such as *Come Home* and *Good News*.

Melissa Spoelstra, a speaker and Bible teacher, is known for her works *Isaiah: Striving Less and Trusting God More* and *Acts: Awakening to God in Everyday Life*.

Sydney Dorrrough, a fellow Oklahoman and an occupational therapist and Associate Dean at Northeastern State University, owns Prosper OT Consulting and integrates her expertise with a Biblical worldview to support families.

Connie Dixon, the national WMU president since 2021 and former executive director of New Mexico WMU, brings years of mission leadership experience.

Worship will be led by Matt Roberson, the Lead Pastor of Marlow First Baptist Church and Oklahoma Baptist University Worship Coordinator. Passionate about leading worship and equipping others, he will guide attendees in a meaningful and uplifting worship experience.

Don't miss this opportunity to gather at Falls Creek or online for a special time of Bible study and worship. Visit oklahomabaptists.org/women/retreat for more details and registration.





25TH ANNUAL OKLAHOMA BAPTISTS MEN'S RETREAT POISED FOR IMPACT

by Staff

The Oklahoma Baptists' annual Men's Retreat at Falls Creek is set for April 25-26 at Falls Creek in Davis.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Men's Retreat, celebrating a quarter-century of restorations, transformations, professions of faith, accountability, maturity and brotherhood.

Bartholomew "Prophet" Bailey, who serves with Oklahoma Baptists as Men's Ministry Partner and leads the event, encouraged men across the state to take part in the event.

"Join us as we give thanks to God for what He has done and trust Him for what He will continue to do," said Bailey.

Speaking to the event theme, he said, "As men, we often hear the call to 'Man Up' as a way to promote toughness, masculinity, grit and perseverance. While there are times when this attitude is necessary. This year our theme is 'Man Down,' which serves as a reminder that men sometimes need help. Life can throw unexpected challenges our way, and the consequences of our actions can weigh heavily on us."

Bailey added, "The question is: will we have brothers to lean on when those moments arrive? 'Man Down' signifies a call for assistance. To cultivate true brotherhood, we must embrace vulnerability, accountability and responsibility."

Inspired by the theme verse of Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, "*Life is better with partners,*" and for the retreat's purpose, saying, "*Life is better with brothers.*"

Matt Roberson, a Men's Retreat staple, will lead worship. The popular "Man Talk" moments are set in our general sessions. Tarvoris Uzoigwe, the Evangelism Director for Oklahoma Baptists, also known as Coach Tee, will present Friday night's Man Talk. On Saturday morning, Sam Porter, the founding Men's Retreat Director, will share a Man Talk.

Friday night, then main session speaker will be Josh Smith, son of renowned Oklahoma Baptist pastor Bailey Smith, and author of "The Titus Ten: Foundations for Godly Manhood." His book is a product of taking hundreds of men at his church through the book of Titus—ten men at a time for ten weeks. On Saturday, Keith Burkhart, the

former director of the Oklahoma Baptists Men's Ministry, will be the main session speaker.

The annual offering that is taken up during the retreat will help churches establish a Celebrate Recovery program, which is designed to assist men and women to overcome addiction through Christ.

There will be six breakout sessions on Friday and one session on Saturday.

On Friday, Bubba Burcham, a former Men's Ministry Partner, will lead a breakout session on "Developing Godly Habits." Additionally, there will be the following breakout sessions: Andy Taylor on "Discipleship Strategies," Vern Charette on "Abstaining from Alcohol," Lawrence Kirk on "Strategies for Studying the Bible," Brian Camp on "Men and Mental Health" and Matt Holland on "Scripture Memory." On Saturday morning, Kenny Mossman will lead a breakout session on "Leading and Pastoring Men."

"We are just as excited about these breakouts as we are about any other aspect of the event," said Bailey.

In addition to the Bible teaching, there will be games, activities and competitions for everyone—from video games to board games, from the classic Dodgeball to corn hole tournament to the new two-on-two pickleball tournament.

For more information, or to register your church group, visit oklahomabaptists.org/men/retreat.



CHURCH NEWS

BERTHA HOSTETLER HONORED AT BILLINGS, FIRST

Bertha Hostetler, 98, was honored at her birthday celebration for being the Billings Baptist Church pianist & SS Teacher for over 76yrs. Presenting her award was Rev. Floyd Westfall, deacons Paul & Frank Wright & HB Evans. Her great-granddaughter Jacie, 2, helped with the presentation.



UPCOMING EVENTS/INFORMATION

DR Orientation/Credentialing

Feb 22 - Trinity, Morris
830 W. Ozark St., Morris 74445
Register online at okdisasterhelp.org

Chaplain Manual/OSFA Training

March 6-8 - Oklahoma Baptists Building
300 Johnny Bench Dr., Ste. 300, OKC, OK 73104
Naomi Paget, Instructor - Cost \$60.00
To register, please email pjones@oklahomabaptists.org

DR Orientation/Credentialing

March 29 - DR Team Center
7180 NW Expressway, Okarche, OK
Register online at okdisasterhelp.org

CISM Training

April 3-4 - Oklahoma Baptists Building
300 Johnny Bench Dr., Ste. 300, OKC, OK 73104
Greg Giltner, Instructor - Cost \$50.00
To register, please email pjones@oklahomabaptists.org

DR Orientation/Credentialing

April 10 - Online Zoom Training
Register online at okdisasterhelp.org

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