



WACO REGIONAL BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Family News

— FROM FBC WEST —

The night the fertilizer plant exploded in West my family and I were out of town. We were driving home from a track meet in College Station when we got word about the explosion. The first thing I did was get in touch my daughter who was on a school bus at the time and I assured her that no matter what we had lost at home, we were all okay and that was all that really mattered. The next thing I did was text the guys in my covenant group. I told them what had happened and asked them to pray for us. They immediately replied to let me know they were praying and were available to help. I still have those texts saved on my phone. I looked at them again recently and was reminded how blessed I really am. Because we had organized a covenant group and had spent some time really getting to know each other, I knew I could trust those guys to be there when I needed them the most. And they were. They have walked through this disaster with me; encouraging me, praying for me, listening when I needed to talk, and making sure my family and I were okay. Their friendship and support have given me strength to get through this difficult time.

As a part of the Leadership Development Team, I have had the opportunity to learn quite a bit about coaching. I have received a little training in it, and have even learned to use it to some extent in my own ministry. However, I never really took the opportunity to actually be coached, until I found myself faced with a very difficult decision. I agreed to serve on the board that was responsible for determining the best ways to distribute the funds that were donated to West for our disaster recovery. As I started working with the board, it became clear that our task was going to be a political nightmare and there was no easy way to handle it. I had to make some very important decisions about whether or not I could continue to work with the board, and, if I stayed, what my role would be. The choices I had to make could potentially affect the entire community and my future in the ministry. I needed someone to help me think things through and find the best answers. I met with an experienced coach who has been working with the WRBA, and together we were able to make sense of the chaos in my mind. I was able to make a clear and definitive decision that helped me and my community move forward.

I will always be grateful to the WRBA and the Leadership Development Team for coordinating both of these very valuable ministries in our association. I whole-heartedly encourage all of the ministers and leaders in our association to connect with a covenant group and to take advantage of the various coaching opportunities that are available to us.

-John Crowder, FBC West

— Upcoming Events —

March Pastors' Conference
12:00pm on March 5 at Truett Seminary
Cost: \$7.00

Speaker: Pastor Jesse Rincones, Executive Director of Hispanic Baptist Convention (in conjunction with Doctrinal Conference)

Please make a reservation by **February 27**.
Contact Katelyn at admin@wacobaptists.org or 753-2408.

Focus on WMU - February 10-16

Founded in 1888, WMU offers organizations, approaches and ministries that enable every member of the church to learn about missions, become involved in missions and live a missional lifestyle. While originally geared toward women, girls and preschoolers, both genders are active participants in WMU organizations today. For more information, visit www.wmu.com.

Retired Ministers and Missionaries Fellowship

February 13 at 12:00pm at Western Heights Baptist Church.
The cost is \$8.00. Music provided by LaNelle Gallant. Please make a reservation by **February 7** at admin@wacobaptists.org or 753-2408.



Annie Armstrong Easter Offering **March 2-9**

“Firmly planted...rooted in the Gospel”
2014 Goal: \$70 million

More information at www.anniearmstrong.com.

— Hunger Ministry Spotlight —

During the Fall I was granted the opportunity to come alongside Waco Regional Baptist Association as the Hunger Ministry Intern. In January, I began working with the WRBA more full time and it has been a pleasure to witness all that God is doing amongst the body of Christ!

I recently attended the Hunger Free Texans Quarterly Conference at the Houston Food Bank, and, as always, was humbled to listen to speakers discuss hunger and food insecurity issues in Texas. Within the state of Texas, 18.7% of our population is food insecure, which comes out to 4,812,760 people. When we zero in on McLennan County we find more than 40,000 people food insecure. One of the key strategies to reducing food insecurity and the number of people experiencing it is to *encourage participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)*. Your congregation can join the Community Partners Program to assist individuals in your church and community in signing up for SNAP benefits!

Churches have long been known as gathering places for community members and through the Community Partners Program, your building site can host clients with the application process. Please contact me at 753-2408 or intern@wacobaptists.org if you are interested in finding out more information about how to become a Community Partner. I look forward to working with your congregation throughout this process! -Ashley Reimer

Other February Events

Monday, February 3, 2:00pm — Preparing for Retirement Seminar. HBMC, Room 502. WRBA and Guidestone hosted.

Wednesday, February 5, 12:00pm — Pastors' Conference. Truett.

Sunday, February 9, 1:00pm — RA Pinewood Derby. Columbus Avenue Activity Center. \$2/entry.

February 10-16 — Focus on WMU. www.wmu.com.

Thursday, February 13, 12:00pm — Retired Ministers and Missionaries Fellowship. Western Heights.

Saturday, February 15 — Children's Ministry Day.

Tuesday, February 18, 4:00pm — Administrative Team. WRBA.

Wednesday, February 26 — CMJC/CWJC Day of Prayer. www.cwjcwaco.org.

Thursday, February 27, 12:00pm — Networking and Missions Team Meeting. FBC Waco.

February 28-March 1 — [un]Apologetic Conference. San Antonio. unapologetics.texasbaptists.org.

Saturday, March 1, 9:00am — Human Trafficking Workshop. Pershing Park Baptist Church, Killeen. Email wmu.bba@sbcglobal.net for information.

March 2-9 — Week of Prayer and Mission Study/North American Missions and Annie Armstrong Easter Offering.

Wednesday, March 5, 10:00am — Baylor Doctrinal Conference. Truett.

Wednesday, March 5, 12:00pm — Pastors' Conference. Truett.

- Pastors' Wives Covenant Group -

I recently read an article by Thom S. Rainer entitled "What Pastors' Wives Wish They Had Been Told," which was the result of a survey that was conducted with pastors' wives that asked, "*What do you wish you had been told before you became a minister's wife?*" The top seven things were, I wish someone had told me 1) to be myself; 2) to be prepared to deal with criticism of my husband and me; 3) my husband is human; 4) others were watching us; 5) there are some really mean people in church; 6) how much my husband needs me to build him up; and 7) that my schedule will never be normal again.

As I have visited churches, it has become clear that there are pastors' wives that need support. They need each other to help navigate the storms of ministerial life (which often include running the household and raising the kids). The young are inexperienced and want to be the best pastors' wives possible while their more experienced sisters have valuable lessons they have learned that could be shared.

Thus, I am wondering if there are WRBA pastors' wives that would like to be a part of a special covenant group – connecting on a bimonthly basis with other pastors' wives. This would be a safe place to build deep personal relationships from which to draw encouragement, inspiration, strength, and more importantly, a circle of prayer. If you are interested in forming a pastors' wives covenant group, please contact the WRBA office at 254-753-2408 and let me know.

-Evelyn Ofong, Associate Director

— Jail Ministry Spotlight —

“When did we see You in prison and go visit You? ... When you visited the least of these brothers of Mine.” Matthew 25:39-40

Sunday the Restorative Justice Ministry of WRBA served an Appreciation Dinner for the volunteers who minister faithfully to the McLennan County Jail. Some of them have been going to jail forever ... or 30 years anyways! We are very thankful for the hearts our volunteers have for those who have been incarcerated and their willingness to obey our Lord’s command to not forget those who are in prison.

Iris Freeman and Marvin Fisher have served as ministers to our county jail for 30 years. Dr. Mary Neal, Barbara Glaze, Jesse Berry and Linda Braun have served for 20+ years. George Terry has served for 15 years, and he is currently serving as our men’s chaplain at the jail. Barbara Sartin has been serving for 10 years and is currently serving as our women’s chaplain at the jail. Inger Bereal and Ted Mayo have been serving for about 10 years. In addition, we have some volunteers who served faithfully and have retired from service: James Braun (25 years), Chick Lewis (18 years), Ron Miller.

We are blessed that the Lord is adding to our numbers. We currently have about 24 active volunteers (Active meaning they have current Sunday Jail Volunteers badges). One of the interesting things about our volunteers is that they are all very busy ministering in their own local churches and in our community. It doesn’t really matter what you are doing if you’re not obeying the Lord’s commands. We are grateful that our volunteers are willing to share the gospel to those who are desperately in need of hearing it. If you are interested in sharing the goodness of the Lord to inmates at the jail, please contact WRBA Jail Ministry Coordinator Audrey Wauson at rjm@wacobaptists.org. You can also visit the community ministries’ restorative justice page at www.wacobaptists.org. Just click on the link for the jail ministry application. God bless you as you serve our precious Lord and Savior Jesus! -Audrey Wauson



**Left: Volunteer Chick Lewis (left) and WRBA Jail Ministry Coordinator Audrey Wauson at Appreciation Dinner, Jan. 26.
Bottom: Jail ministry volunteers at the Appreciation Dinner.**





— THE BODY OF BELIEVERS —

After a sad farewell to Pastor Jeremiah Payne in 2012, New Jerusalem Baptist Church had to look for a new pastor. The church has not changed much in many years and the switch of pastors was one of the biggest shifts since moving from the old church location.

Pastor KW Stephens first came to New Jerusalem in July 2013, but he wasn't installed as the pastor until October 13, 2013.

"I had been pastoring in Tyler, TX. The commute from Waco to Tyler was getting too long," he said. "Someone told me there was an opening so I sent in a resume."

He said the friendly people drew him to the church.

Ronny Jones, who has gone to New Jerusalem since 1997, expressed the same feeling about the church.

"I was invited one day, and when I got there I just enjoyed myself in the spirit," he said. "They have good singing, good preaching. I just have a good time when I go."

Stephens is excited about the opportunity to grow. He said the key is to work on "in-reach so we can outreach." He and the church just finalized their church business statement. They "have a vision of reaching the unreachable and making them feel welcome."

Stephens compared the church to a hospital when it comes to ministering to people to help them get better. He wants the church to be "a light on a hill, so people will see who we really are." He sees "equipping the saints" to be an important role as their pastor.

Stephens said, "I have a wonderful group of people and it's exciting to be able to lead them."

He has been preparing himself and the church for their ministry. He wants to "equip the believer to see him/herself the way God sees him/her as a person" and to help them become mature and ready for service.

Stephen's personal mission statement is: "To lead and guide God's people as an example of holiness, and teaching God's word thoroughly and faithfully, so that God's people may grow in the knowledge and understanding of our Lord Jesus Christ...."

In his position as pastor he desires to remain "diligent to the task of personal holiness, preaching God's word, evangelizing to the lost, discipling God's people, guiding God's people, praying for God's people, protecting God's people, loving God's people, and equipping the saints for the work of ministry."

He said, "To this task, I commit my life and heart's dedication."

The church is committed to dynamic worship and to reaching the unchurched. Please pray for New Jerusalem as the congregation grows in strength and ministers to the people of Axtell.

— Community News —

Continue to pray for WRBA churches seeking a Pastor:

Beverly Hills, Concord, Lakeview, Mart FBC, Old Time, Woodway FBC

Welcome to Charles Dixon, Interim Preaching Pastor at Western Heights!

Welcome to Mark Snowden, Pastor at Westwood Baptist Church!