

Senior Pastor Nominee

CHAD ELLIS

July 5, 2026

Calvary Baptist Church · Knoxville, Tennessee



*After the completion of a thorough review of potential candidates,
the Pastor Selection Committee of Calvary Baptist Church
prayerfully, respectfully and unanimously recommends*

Chad Ellis

for the position of Senior Pastor



Chad and his wife Sheri will be available Saturday, July 18, 2026 at 5:30pm
for a congregational meet and greet dinner.

Chad will be preaching Sunday morning, July 19, 2026 10:45am in view of a
call from Calvary Baptist Church.

A vote will be taken following the worship service on July 19, 2026.

Information is also available on the Calvary website.

www.knoxcalvary.com

FIND CHAD ONLINE

Sermon Catalog: [YouTube.com/GillionvilleChurch](https://www.youtube.com/GillionvilleChurch)

Instagram: [@pastorchadellis](https://www.instagram.com/pastorchadellis)

ABOUT CHAD

Hometown Florence, Alabama

Wife Married to Sheri

Children Daughter and Son-in-law Madeline & Kirk (Maryville, TN) & new grandson Son/Timothy (Mississippi State University)

Enjoys Distance running, hiking, reading history & biographies

Chad and Sheri have been married since September 1997. Sheri is a registered nurse and active in preschool ministry and women's ministry. Their daughter Madeline (UT-Knoxville graduate) lives in Maryville, TN. Their son Timothy is completing his engineering degree at Mississippi State. Both are active in their local churches and BCMS.

A CALVARY CONNECTION



"My daughter attended Calvary and lived in your college house while a student at UT. My family gathered on your campus for her wedding. Your church has already been a blessing to my family, and we are thankful!"



EDUCATION

Doctorate of Ministry

Midwestern Baptist Seminary (In Progress)

Master of Divinity

Southwestern Baptist Seminary (2002)

Bachelor of Science

Auburn University (1997)

HIS CALLING

Chad's passion in ministry is discipleship- helping people grow deep in their spiritual maturity, particularly through reaching college students, strengthening families, and expository preaching. He is prayerfully eager to invest in a church community where the next generation can be discipled, equipped, and sent.

1 Peter 5:2-4

"Shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not with greed but with eagerness; nor yet as domineering over those assigned to your care, but by proving to be examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory."

PROFESSIONAL MINISTRY EXPERIENCE

Senior Pastor

Gillionville Baptist Church, Albany, GA · 2015–Present

Led a multi-generational congregation of 250–300 in Sunday worship. Directed a staff of four associate pastors, three ministry directors, and administrative assistants through steady growth, community crises, and significant capital campaigns.

- Retired debt; raised funds for campus renovations
- Mobilized church for disaster relief through two tornadoes & Hurricane Michael
- Led congregation-wide Summit retreats every five years to seek God's direction
- Deepened discipleship ministry to men, families, and the Next Generation

BCM Campus Minister

Georgia Baptist Mission Board · 2009–2015

State missionary leading Baptist Collegiate Ministries at Clayton State University and Georgia Perimeter College discipling students, developing leaders, and partnering with local churches.

- Launched BCM on the Georgia Perimeter Newton Campus
- Led collegiate summer mission teams to East Asia, Haiti, and the upper Midwest

Minister of Youth & Education

First Baptist Church of Forest Park, GA · 2001–2009

Ordained First Baptist Church, Forest Park, GA (2007)

Led all youth ministries, directed missions, and assisted in pastoral care in an ethnically diverse community –at times as the only full-time minister on staff, serving under three senior pastors.

- Directed Ohio church planting and Puerto Rico construction mission trips
- Adjunct Faculty, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (2005)
- Chaplain of the Day, Georgia State Senate (February 25, 2005)

BCM Minister (Part-Time)

Baptist General Convention of Texas · 1998–2001

Youth Ministry Intern

First Baptist Church of Lakeside, TX · 1998–1999



CHAD'S STORY — FAITH, CALLING & A LIFE GIVEN TO DISCIPLESHIP

Chad grew up at Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church in Lexington, Alabama, a small, faithful SBC congregation passionate about missions and weekly altar calls. At 13, he stepped out of a pew one Sunday night, tears in his eyes, and asked to pray to receive Jesus. He was baptized the following week. The years that followed were dutiful but, as Chad reflects honestly, rooted in the wrong habits. His Bible traveled safely tucked under the car seat each Sunday. But one image stayed with him: his grandfather every morning at the kitchen table — coffee in hand, reading glasses on his nose, hunched over his Bible, always smiling. That image planted a single idea: there is more to this than I am experiencing.

He left for Auburn in 1994. Having promised his grandmother he'd visit the Baptist Collegiate Ministry, he showed up once — and found a community of peers who took the Bible seriously as a guide for daily life. Under BCM director Clete Sipes, bad church habits were slowly unlearned, and Chad began a walk with Jesus that would shape both his marriage and his calling.

The turning point came in the BCM foyer. Waiting on an appointment, Chad reached onto the bookshelf and picked up a seminary catalog — and found himself weeping as he read through the course listings. He could not explain it. His campus minister helped him explore the call. His next stop was Rockford Baptist Church, where he preached his first sermon, led his first Bible studies, and watched a youth group grow from three students to over twenty. He and Sheri married in 1997 and headed together to Fort Worth, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Chad never looked back.

*“God used local churches committed to ministry among college students in the most transformative ways in my life
— not only my discipleship, but my calling into vocational ministry.”*
— Chad Ellis



PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY — TEN CONVICTIONS ROOTED IN SCRIPTURE

Each conviction reflects both a pastoral commitment and a biblical anchor for how Chad leads and shepherds a congregation.

1 Prioritize the Gospel Mission

2 Corinthians 5:18-20 *All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation... Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ. God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.*

We are God's ambassadors, visibly and verbally. Chad desires every church member to have the tools and confidence to share their faith whenever God opens the door.

2 Help Church Members Embody Kingdom Ethics

Matthew 5:13-14 *You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.*

Faith in Jesus should transform a person's whole life. Jesus changes how we see and interact with the people in our lives. The Christian walk is just that—a daily walk. Christianity is a way of being, decision-making, and living under the kingship of Jesus.

3 Help Church Members Become Spiritually Mature Disciples

Colossians 1:28-29 *...we proclaim Christ, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.*

Discipleship is the metric for every ministry decision: "Are we investing our time, energy, and resources in things that help people grow more in love with and more like Jesus?"

4 Exemplify Contextually Rich, Expository Preaching

Matthew 28:19-20 *Go therefore and make disciples... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.*

Chad spends significant time on the context of Scripture—not to entertain, but to give the congregation tools to understand the Bible for themselves and to teach others.

5 Mobilize the Next Generation for Ministry

2 Timothy 2:2 *...what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.*

A disciple uses two hands: one reaching up to learn, one reaching back to train younger believers.

6 Discover What Your Church Can Do Better Than 10,000 Others

Ephesians 4:11-12 *He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry.*

Every church should identify the unique mission God has wired it for.

7 Help the Church Have a Revelation 5:9 Vision

Revelation 5:9 *And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."*

Even when focusing on the unique calling and mission of the local church, I hope we have a vision of how our story ends! On any given Sunday morning we gather alongside churches in countries we will never visit, singing in languages we've never heard spoken, in cultures we cannot imagine. I pray that this picture of heaven is a goal we strive for here on earth!

8 Be Unashamedly Baptist in Doctrine and Partnership

Philippians 4:14-16 *Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble... no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only.*

I appreciate and have been blessed by our IMB, NAMB, and seminaries. Chad believes deeply in healthy cooperative partnerships.

9 Exemplify Authenticity in Pastoral Ministry

Philippians 4:10-13 *I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned, in whatever situation I am, to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.*

I have always tried to be a disciple first, before being a pastor, in the eyes of my church. Transparency in my own discipleship journey does come easy, but I believe it is a vital part of my ministry. It is why I attached a personal testimony to this packet! I want to encourage church members to share their struggles and help carry each other's burdens. This has to be modeled by leadership. I believe honesty and openness in our walk with Jesus is the greatest weapon the church has in its fight against the sin of hypocrisy.

10 Make This Ministry Count: We Are All Interim

Philippians 2:17 *Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.*

All pastors are interim. Chad wants every church he serves to be stronger when he departs than when he began and he wants each year to count.

“Calvary Baptist Church is uniquely positioned, both geographically and by the decisions of successive generations of church leadership, to have a real, eternal impact on the university community in Knoxville.”

— Chad Ellis, March 2026

WHY CALVARY BAPTIST?

Chad's connection to Calvary Baptist is already personal. His daughter Madeline attended Calvary and lived in the college house during her years at UT. His family gathered on Calvary's campus for her wedding. Long before he submitted this packet, Calvary had already been a blessing to his family.

It is Calvary's unique commitment to the university community, its geography, its generations of faithful leadership, and Pastor Dan's years of ministry, that moved Chad to reach out. He sees in Calvary Baptist a rare and God-given opportunity to make a real, eternal impact on the next generation in Knoxville.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Chad is passionate about investing in college students and young families, equipping them to live on mission and lead in the church. His D.Min. project at Midwestern Seminary focuses on equipping laymen to publicly teach and preach God's Word.

“For nearly three decades God has allowed me to learn, serve, and lead. I hope this next chapter focuses on sharing what I have learned with faithful people who will be able to teach others also.” (2 Timothy 2:2)

He is prayerfully open to God's direction and deeply eager to serve in a local church where he can fulfill that calling, investing in the next generation and mobilizing a congregation around its own unique, God-given mission. As a pastor- building relationships, listening to the congregation, and identifying small changes to move the church toward a unifying mission. Chad stressed the importance of learning from the existing leadership- who have deep relationships with the congregation, and highlighted the need for a pastor to care deeply about the community by actively listening to its members.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Chad's faith rests within the Protestant, Baptist, and Evangelical tradition. He affirms and ministers within the frameworks of the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, the Baptist Faith & Message (2000), and the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978).

Scripture & God

- Full authority and inerrancy of the Bible
- Trinitarianism- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- The Five Solas of the Reformation

Salvation

- Penal substitutionary atonement "The cross saves" (J.I. Packer)
- Exclusivist view: salvation through Christ alone
- Believer's baptism by immersion
- Memorial view of the Lord's Supper

Church Life & Mission

- Congregationalist governance; autonomy of the local church
- Personal evangelism and global missions
- Healthy Baptist partnerships — IMB, NAMB, SBC seminaries



We invite you to join us in praying for Chad, Sheri, their family and Calvary Baptist Church as God leads this next chapter.

Pastor Selection Committee

Mike Pappas, Chairman
John Williams, Vice Chairman
Maurice Guinn, Secretary
Debbie Fenn
Stephanie Enger
Tina Doty
Trey Brown