

Pine Grove Students STS CONFERENCE January 17-19, 2026





STS 2026

ABOUT STS CONFERENCE

Hi friend! You made a great choice in allowing your youth to attend The "Strength to Stand" conference by the Scott Dawson Evangelistic Association. It is my favorite winter student conference due to the quality of the communicators, bands/artists, and the LeConte Center venue.

I've been leading groups between 15 to 100 in size to the Pigeon Forge/Gatlinburg area for nearly 30 years. Due to my extensive experience (and love for the area), I am able to maneuver the area safely and efficiently using what we in the South call "back roads." Your youth will be in good hands.

As the STS website says: "This year's conference theme, 'At the Altar,' speaks directly to the challenges students face today—a culture that often promotes self-interest, personal success, and instant gratification. In contrast, the altar represents a place of surrender, where we lay down our sins, distractions, and personal ambitions to pursue something greater: God's purpose for our lives."

As we travel, we will stop to eat AND see a couple sights. If your youth plan to shop then send extra money with them in addition to the meal money listed in the "Packing List."

We will be staying at the Holiday Inn Express & Suites in Pigeon Forge, a property in a great location with modern rooms, interior hallways, and a delicious breakfast. The property is a 5-minute ride from the LeConte Center without the need for getting into traffic on the parkway. All conference sessions are located next to The Island at the very nice LeConte Center. CeCe Winans, Chandler Moore, Hulvey, and STS Worship will be in concert. The excellent lineup of theologically solid preachers includes Scott Dawson, Tim Timberlake, Preston Perry, and Shane Pruitt.

*Reach out to me with questions about anything. I am here to serve you.
Bro. Eric*



Standards & Expectations

THE “BIG THREE” BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS:

- **Respect God.**
- **Respect others.**
- **Respect property.**

HOTEL EXPECTATIONS

- **Live by the “Big Three” listed above.**
- **Stay out of any hotel room that is not your own.**
- **Pajamas are NOT acceptable outside your room.**
- **Do not touch the property of anyone else.**
- **Stay out of the personal space of others.**
- **“Lights Out” means turn off the lights and rest. Earbuds and personal electronics are fine, as long as you do not disturb your roommates.**
- **For your safety, the ice/vending machines & anything else outside your room is off-limits after “Lights Out.”**
- **Do not give our hotel name/location to anyone you meet on this trip.**

TRAVEL/FREE TIME/CONFERENCE EXPECTATIONS

- **Live by the “Big Three.”**
- **Don’t wander off alone - stay with your assigned group.**
- **Focus on the music and messages during the conference so you can grow in your faith - that’s the main reason we are here.**

HIGH SCHOOLER/MIDDLE SCHOOLER SUPERVISION

- **HS Grades 9-12 must stay in groups of 3 or more - no adult needed (unless requested by a parent)**
- **MS Grades 7-8 must be with an adult any time you are outside your hotel room (except in public restrooms, of course).**



PACKING LIST & MORE

LUGGAGE LIMIT: 1 suitcase, 1 small carry-on bag

THINGS TO BRING:

- Bible, notebook, & pen (note: using your phone for sermon notes is totally fine)
- Your prescription & over-the-counter meds
- Personal hygiene items (deodorant, soap, shampoo...)
- Personal beauty/grooming items
- **\$75 cash for travel meals (Bring EXTRA cash for snacks & merch)**
- Comfortable shoes
- Cold weather gear - coat, gloves, beanie, earmuffs, thermals...
- **THREE** outfits suitable for cold mountain weather
- plenty of underclothes (at least one extra of each type)
- modest sleeping attire
- wet weather gear (poncho, raincoat, cap)
- 1 kitchen-sized trash bag (to put back in your suitcase filled with your dirty clothes that must travel home inside your bag)
- Phone charger & accessories

OPTIONAL, BUT STRONGLY RECOMMENDED:

- extra money for conference merch & souvenirs
- Chapstick/lotion for windburn/cold or dry air

COMFORT TIP:

Dress in layers each day. A shirt under a sweater/hoodie allows you to stay warmer outside and remove a layer inside if you get hot. Mountain temperatures can change drastically throughout the day and the weekend.

WARNING:

No weapons, fireworks, tobacco, vaping products, or illegal substances are permitted. Bringing any of these items will result in expulsion from the trip at your family's expense.

A FINAL NOTE:

Any personal electronics or other items you bring are at your own risk. PGBC is not responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen items.



STS 2026 ITINERARY

SATURDAY, JANUARY 17, 2026

- 7:15AM** Load & Depart (eat breakfast before you arrive!)
- 11:15AM** (EASTERN TIME) Lunch
- 3:00PM** Check-in at Holiday Inn Express & Suites Sevierville
- 4:00PM** Depart for STS Alpha Session One
- 5:00PM** STS Alpha Session One
(featuring worship band STS Worship, artist Chandler Moore, and speaker Shane Pruitt)
- 7:30PM** Session One Ends - dinner & free time
- 9:30PM** Depart for the hotel
- 10:00PM** Church Group Time at the hotel (approx. 30 minutes)
- 11:30PM** Lights out!

SUNDAY, JANUARY 18, 2026

- 7:15AM** Breakfast & Personal devotions at the hotel
- 8:00AM** Depart for the LeConte Center
- 8:30AM** STS Alpha Session Two
(featuring worship band STS Worship and speaker Preston Perry)
- 10:00AM** Free Time (lunch & explore Gatlinburg until 3:00PM)
- 4:30PM** Depart hotel for LeConte Center
- 5:00PM** STS Alpha Session Three
(featuring STS Worship, speaker Scott Dawson, artist CeCe Winans, & artist Hulvey)
- 7:30PM** Session Three ends - dinner & free time
- 10:30PM** Church Group Time at the hotel
- 11:30AM** Lights out!

MONDAY, JANUARY 19, 2026

- 6:45AM** Breakfast & Personal devotions @ hotel
- 7:15AM** Check Out/Load Luggage
- 7:45M** Depart for the LeConte Center
- 8:30AM** STS Alpha Session Four
(featuring STS Worship and speaker Tim Timberlake)
- 10:00AM** Depart for home
- 11:30AM** Lunch in Maryville
- 4:00PM** (CENTRAL TIME) Approximate time back at church



Food & Free Time

To me, food is a very important part of trips. The places we will eat offer good quality, good variety, and the opportunity to eat at restaurants we don't have in Cherokee County.

- Bro. Eric

Saturday

BREAKFAST: Eat before you arrive at the church.

LUNCH: SIDE-BY-SIDE RESTAURANT GROUP SO YOU PICK FROM Freddy's Frozen Custard & Steakhburgers, Firehouse Subs, or Salsaritas Fresh Mexican Grill

DINNER: SIDE-BY-SIDE RESTAURANTS SO YOU PICK EITHER Big Daddy's Pizzeria OR IHOP

Sunday

BREAKFAST: FREE at our hotel: waffles, omelets, biscuits, cereal, fruit, bagels, yogurt...

LUNCH: SIDE-BY-SIDE RESTAURANTS SO YOU PICK EITHER J.O.E. & Pop's Sub Shop (JOEandpops.com) OR Mama's Chicken Kitchen (mamaschickenkitchen.com) in Gatlinburg

AFTERNOON FREE TIME: Downtown Gatlinburg

DINNER: Fuddruckers

Monday

BREAKFAST: FREE at our hotel: waffles, omelets, biscuits, cereal, fruit, bagels, yogurt...

LUNCH: WE WILL VOTE ON EITHER:

Option One - Chic-Fil-A (in Maryville, TN)

Option Two - SIDE-BY-SIDE TRIO (in Maryville, TN) SO YOU PICK Dairy Queen, Blue Dragon Chinese & Wings, or Bella Roma Pizza

THREE IMPORTANT THINGS TO NOTE:

- Eat breakfast before you come to the church to load and leave Saturday.
- We will be home before dinner on Monday.
- Any time we stop where there are multiple choices, 7-8 graders must have an adult with them and 9-12 graders must be in groups of at least 3 with no adult needed.



ADULT ATTENDEE DETAILS & EXPECTATIONS

Remember, this is a church ministry trip, not a vacation. Adults attending are expected come to serve Jesus in whatever capacities Eric needs them. They are also required be PGBC church members with regular attendance habits. The intent/purpose of this trip is to see young lives know and grow closer to Jesus as they grow closer together in Christian community.

- **COST:** The cost for adults at a 1:4 adult to student ratio is simply money for 5 meals. Conference, lodging, and transportation is covered (a \$200 value) because of your hard work and commitment to ministry on this trip.
- **TRAVEL:** We will use vans/buses. Per church minor safety standards, 2 un-related adults must be in each vehicle in which students ride without exception.
- **TRAVEL SAFETY:** Each adult will be assigned up to 4 students to be responsible for the entire trip. At every stop, adults will give Eric a “thumbs up” when all of their students are on the vehicle, in the hotel meeting room, or in our reserved conference seating.
- **OVERNIGHT SAFETY:** Each adult will ensure her/his assigned students are in their rooms during lights out. Ice machine/vending machine trips are not permitted after lights out. The Holiday Inn Express has interior hallways for easy supervision. Know that you do not have to stay up all night, just until the students are in their rooms.
- **ROOMING SAFETY:** Adults will room with other adults. No adults are permitted in the rooms of students. Students are not permitted in the rooms of adults. Students are only permitted in their own rooms and not other student or adult rooms.
- **TWO-ADULT RULE:** An adult should never be alone in a private space with a student. Two un-related adults must be present.
- **SPIRITUAL DIRECTION:** If a student comes to you for spiritual guidance, please allow the Holy Spirit to utilize you to minister to them. Feel free to bring the student to Eric if you feel the need is beyond what you are comfortable helping them with.
- **DISCIPLINARY DIRECTION:** Know the trip rules (found in the trip packet). If a student breaks a trip rule, report it to Eric immediately. Bring the student with you if possible, and inform the student that I expect you to bring her/him to me to talk about it.
- **FUN:** Adults on youth trips should be internally focused about safety and spiritual growth and externally friendly, caring, present (not doom-scrolling), and ready to have a great time. Youth trips demand that adults love teens, and love being around teens.

SEE YOURSELF AS A MENTOR, NOT JUST A CHAPERONE.