



MERIDIAN CHURCH

December 2025 Meridian Life Letter

by Josh King

Brothers and sisters in Christ,

As I reflect on the past year and anticipate the next, I am filled with gratitude and hope. I am thankful for what God has done in us and am hopeful that He who began this good work will see it through to the day of Jesus Christ. So let us offer up thanksgiving to our God and let us raise up petitions to our benevolent Father that He would make us faithful and fruitful by His Spirit for the glory of His Son in the year ahead.

Membership

With mixed emotions, we are preparing a letter of recommendation for Yember and Leah Fajardo. We are sad to see them go, but we send them away with our love and our blessing, praying that God will use them to bless another church as profoundly as He has used them to bless ours.

Additionally, the elders make the following recommendations concerning membership:

The elders recommend that John and Leeza Frye be welcomed into full fellowship with this body by statement.

The elders recommend that Jonathan Hill be welcomed into full fellowship with this body by baptism.

In addition to this, there is an instance of church discipline that the elders wish to bring before the body. If you want any more information, please do speak with an elder.

Financial

The 2026 proposed budget has been made available separately along with a giving guide. We ask that all members prayerfully work through the giving guide and budget proposal. Please do let the elders know if you have any questions. We do make the following recommendation with an emendation:

The elders recommend that we adopt the 2026 Proposed Budget with this one emendation, that “Security” be increased from \$400 annually to \$450.

We have partnered with Brandon and Brittney Lingle to reach the Thai people with the gospel since 2014. We began our support at \$6,000 annually. In 2021 we raised this to \$7,200. They have never asked for more money and when we ask how they are, they always tell us they are fine. There are many churches that support them at small amounts, which means they have less time for rest and for family when they do come home on furlough, because they do try to visit as many of these churches as they can. To honor their faithfulness, to lighten this load, and simply because we want to bless the Lingles, we have proposed that we increase their annual support to \$8,400.

When we had to significantly trim the budget some years ago, we cut support to Ligonier. They were generous and continued to offer us all of the perks of partnership that we had enjoyed. This year we are glad to propose that we resume support at \$1,200 annually.

The elders have been kind to propose a 6% increase towards the preaching pastor’s salary this year (such increases are always figured as part of the entire package including insurance, disability, and retirement). The music pastor salary has been increased to \$24,000. Staff substitution is increased to \$1,500 to pay a flat honorarium of \$300 for visiting preachers.

This year David Burks, John Hargrave, Sean Hushbeck, and I plan on attending the Coram Deo Pastor’s Conference. This is the reason for the increase in both “Lead Pastor Continuing Education” and “Elder Continuing Education.” We offered to pay early registration for any elders from Great Plains Reformed Baptist Church that wanted to go. They will be responsible for all other expenses.

The Book Nook allocation has significantly increased to build up the selection in two ways. First, approximately \$1,000 will be invested to expand the number of Bibles we offer. Second, a number of our favorite publishers offer major discounts at the end of the year when our funds are largely diminished. Approximately \$1000 dollars will be set aside to buy titles in bulk at the end of the year. In order to make an initial investment *this year*, we are making the following recommendation:

The elders recommend that we immediately move an additional \$1,000 to the Book Nook fund to purchased significantly discounted titles for 2025.

“Building, Grounds, and Equipment” has been increased to pay for a storm shelter and some type of shed for the parsonage. All other increases reflect general inflation rates.

Deacons

The elders have prayerfully reviewed the deacon nominations and are not making any deacon recommendations to the body at this time. This is not the answer we wanted, but it was not altogether unanticipated, and is still a gracious answer. We believe God has been good to us through this process.

Among the many names we received, there was only one name that received over half the nominations. The next name had half the nominations of the first. We spoke with the person who received the most nominations and they and we both agreed that it is best that they not serve as a deacon *at this time*. When the elders bring deacon recommendations to the body, it gives us great confidence to know that more than half the body saw that individual as qualified. With that being lacking, it is our conviction that we should not proceed further at this time. When we do bring a recommendation, we want it to be with a great consensus so that we go forward in harmony.

We believe the elders need to lead in modeling, teaching, and celebrating service in our church. Let's all spend the next year growing in serving and appreciating service. Let us do this prayerfully asking God to make us a serving people and a serving church. The elders truly believe that God has providentially led us not to install any deacons at this time, so that we may all grow in service.

Also, the elders know we need to do a better job of reminding our people of the deaconal care that is available. Often, life groups, their leaders, and individuals within our body take care of those in need. Yet, we understand that everyone cannot always be fully plugged into a group. We want you to know that *anyone* may always approach a deacon with *any* material problems they might have. If you are in need, we want you to know that you should speak with a deacon. If you sense that someone in need is hesitant to do so, encourage them to speak with a deacon. Also, we want to teach and remind life group leaders, that while it is admirable to take care of one another, when the needs are great, they should speak with a deacon.

Core Courses

On January 11th the elders will begin teaching Meridian 101 for any guests who are interested in membership. Members are always welcome to join us for this course as well. On February 22nd Roy Rochell will begin the course "Old Testament Introduction." Both courses will meet on Sunday Mornings at 9:15 AM.

On behalf of the elders,

Grace and peace,

Josh

John Frye's Testimony

Early Life (Acts 26:4-11)

My father did not follow any particular religion. While he may have had personal beliefs, he never expressed them. However, he allowed my mother, who was born and raised in Okinawa, Japan, to practice her Buddhist traditions and superstitions. Our home was filled with spiritual symbols, like shi-shi dogs (foo dogs or Kaimanu), believed to ward off evil spirits. My mother took superstitions seriously—she would even make my dad turn the car around if a black cat crossed our path. We also have probably 100 years of bad luck for all the mirrors we accidentally broke.

I had a typical childhood, staying out of trouble and not thinking much about life's deeper questions. With my father often away in the military, I lacked strong guidance. Religion wasn't a topic of discussion, and I didn't have any friends who openly identified as Christians or otherwise.

Coming to Christ (Acts 26:12-18)

The first time I attended church was in May 1978 while visiting my dad and stepmother in Montgomery, Alabama, two years after my parents divorced. They took me to a Southern Baptist Church, and for a couple of months, I actually listened to the pastor's sermons. Each week, his messages resonated with me, and during the invitation time, it felt as if he were speaking directly to me. I knew I was a sinner and needed to make a decision.

I was shy and introverted, but I could feel God calling me to step forward. One Sunday, as everyone bowed their heads in prayer listening to "Just As I Am", I finally stepped forward leaving my fingernail marks in the back of the pew. My dad and stepmother stepped aside, and I walked to the front. The pastor led me through the Roman Road, asking me questions after each verse. In front of the entire congregation, he asked if I placed my trust in Jesus as my Lord and Savior. I said yes, and the church erupted in applause. The following week, I was baptized—my first act of obedience as a believer. From that moment on, I was accountable to the church body.

Growing in Faith (Acts 26:19-23)

After my salvation, my dad gifted me an engraved, red leather, red-letter, onion skin KJV Bible and I couldn't put it down. Instead of watching cartoons, I spent my time reading Scripture. We continued attending church until I returned home to Fort Worth. There, alone, at age 14, I sought out a neighborhood baptist church and started attending regularly.

At that time, my mom and I lived with my sister, her husband, and his brother—none of whom were churchgoers. Eventually, because my brother-in-law's parents started attending church, we began attending a fundamental independent Baptist church in Keller, Texas, where I met Leeza. My mother later married our landlord, and we moved across town, attending a Baptist church sporadically. However, it was enough for my mom to come to faith in Christ also! Over the next three decades, I moved frequently (24+ times), joined various churches, and served in numerous roles. In 2014, Leeza and I read *Crazy Love: Overwhelmed by a Relentless God*, and it radically transformed our lives. The book challenged us with powerful truths about God's love, the dangers of lukewarm Christianity, total surrender, radical generosity, and living by faith rather than comfort. We said in retirement that we would seek to serve Him by loving others and to live a life "on mission" daily and by His grace we will continue until we are called home.

Leeza Frye's Testimony

My Dad was a Vietnam Veteran a combat hardened man. In my first four to five years my family went to church faithfully. After that Mike (my brother) and I attended First Baptist alone. One Sunday morning my big brother went forward to tell Pastor Riddle that he wanted to be saved. He took me with him. So I was dunked. Cold and wet. At the age of seven I had no idea what I had just consented to do because Mike asked me to do this with him. I knew the words, at least the idea of them but the actual meaning was lost to me. Even after this “watering” I still dwelt in my own little world, easily angered, and always fist-fighting boys and girls and decking anyone that angered me. There were so many tormented days and nights when I felt unloved and unwanted and I would sit in a tree in the back field feeling sorry for myself knowing and believing in my heart that it wouldn’t matter if I lived or died, no one would notice, no one would care. So I went on stealing bikes or crayons, whatever suited me, and socking every kid that cussed at me or said anything ugly about me or to me. It was all about me, every thought and every concern existed with me at the center of my thoughts. I was angry almost all the time. I suppose that is why I had nightmares that were horrid. Someone I could never see was always chasing me trying to destroy me and no one was ever around to rescue me or fight with me or for me. I would wake up in a sweating, heart pounding moment, dry mouthed and sick to my stomach and still breathing hard like I had really been racing for my life with hot tears of anger that I could not control this, not even this.

By the time I was 12 knew I was going to hell, I knew I was lost. I fully understood that and it made me angry. I had come to that realization more than once, but who cared? I mean “fire when I die” sure, but that is a long way away from now. Some time later I believed I saw my expected end. Jesus had come to take people home with Him but I was left standing in the cold wet grass one early autumn morning. I woke up with tears streaming down my face, my heart pounding in my chest and in my ears as I ran to mama’s bedroom at 4am and I quietly cried to her to please help me.

She lovingly woke up and asked me what was the matter, and if it could wait until morning, but I was too afraid and I told her through sobs quietly but dramatically, I didn’t know if I would make it to tomorrow. I had to know Him now, Today! At this she lovingly took her Bible and sat up with me and slowly walked me through several places in her Bible and explained to me what it means to be “lost” and how God was perfect and holy and I was not (something I knew all too well). She explained how according to the Bible I would be completely separated from God and all of the goodness I had never known. She explained what being “saved” meant—that Jesus would make me right with God and I would belong to Him. Well, I was already beyond all that! I was ready to be made right with God *now* I just didn’t know how I was supposed to do that! Then she pray with me and I prayed too, asking the Lord to forgive me of my sins and teach me to love Him.

This is how my search for the LORD began. As I read more, I began to know Him better, I began to wonder what His face looked like, I was starved for all that He would show me and really wondered why He just didn’t give it all to me at once even if I exploded! My junior high years were filled with Bible reading and praying every second I had the chance. It did become more and more difficult, first people stopped talking to me, later, in the halls they grew quiet as I walked by and then began saying things like, “there she goes, the little preacher girl.” I was alone but it was so very different than before. Now it was He who consoled me. Before there was no one and nothing.

Early on my faith was put to a very hard test. When two years later my big brother Michael was killed in a motor cycle accident, he was sixteen. I watched my big strong daddy cry in huge sobs, something I had never seen or heard before. I watched my mama in silence as tears ran down her face nonstop and I listened to my little nine year old brother ask me why—and too many questions about what was happening. And I was hurting too much to help anybody. Mike and I were Peat and Re-peat. He had practically raised me all of those years our parents worked and went to school. He made sure our chores were done everyday. He made certain our homework was complete. We went every where together and shared the same group of friends and played rough and jumped bikes like Evel Knievel. We fought and played with all the neighborhood kids even on King Kong mountain! We crawdad fished in every creek in town, and played and road his bike from sun up to sun down. And now he was gone. Worse, I didn’t even know my own parents. I mean except for whippings and corrections required to keep head strong kids like me straight.

Even here three months of crying out to Him led to a complete covering. He surrounded me with His perfect love as He alone consoled me and reassured me with His words, “I will always be with you, I will never leave you,” and I knew this was the truth given to me, just for a time such as this. To be reminded of His everlasting love brought the peace that my broken spirit needed and still does.

Jonathan Hill's Testimony

About a year and a half ago I confessed that I was in need of a Savior. I confessed my sins, asked for forgiveness for my sins, and gave my life to Christ. I've always known God was there, and since I went to church I understood what sin is and that man is fallen. I learned that there is a mighty Creator (God) that sent his Son (Jesus) to die on a cross for our sins and I understood the Trinity. At an early stage of my life, I didn't really get the gospel. I knew that God existed (I talked to Him) and that sin was evil, but I didn't quite know him the way I know Him now. For instance, I used to get bored at church because I didn't understand very much and I realized that as I learned more, and as the Lord kept teaching me, the Lord kept bringing me closer to Him and my relationship with Him grew stronger. It is wonderful the way God knew me before I knew Him.