



Missouri Free Will Baptist

GEM Magazine





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from the Editor, Stan Bunch



ON DEEDS AND LEGALITIES

A church in Kansas City, Kansas, closed. As is the normal process, the pastor (a FWB of convenience who 'promised' to teach nothing contrary to FWB doctrine) and leaders had ceased attending meetings of their association. As the pastor began to show his true doctrinal colors, any committed members of long standing began to attend elsewhere. Fast-forward a few years. Attendance drops to a handful who are mostly relatives of the pastor. The vote is taken to close the church, and eventually to sell the property. Where are the proceeds of the sale? Only those who signed the sale contract know. Neither the Kansas nor the Missouri FWB Associations received anything.

More frequently than I care to acknowledge, legal issues with church properties, cemeteries, and outright takeovers are something we attempt to deal with.

One angry member of a defunct FWB church in Missouri stated to me that they planned to sell the property and divide the proceeds among the remaining members. Such a move is not only unethical, demonstrating a heart of greed, but it also exposes those who accept the proceeds to illegalities for violating non-profit and IRS laws. Once enlightened regarding the illegality of their proposed scheme, they reneged on their intent.

Seventy years ago, a rural Missouri FWB church was doing well. Time passed, the church closed, and was eventually destroyed by fire. The

property was to be reverted to the FWB Association. There was no record of this in the State FWB Archives. Decades later, an adjoining landowner would like to take possession of the abandoned church property. A quit-claim deed is signed, the recipient makes a donation to missions and the transaction is made. An uninformed distant relative of the original owner becomes angry and upset because of the transaction.

These, and others, are actual events that we have dealt with as the MOFWB Executive Director, along with the MOFWB Missions Director. This ought not to happen and can be prevented.

Every congregation should incorporate with the Missouri Secretary of State and include in their incorporation documents a "Dissolution Clause." This clause clearly states what will happen with the property and proceeds of the church in the event of closure. By taking these steps, we're not necessarily thinking about what might happen three years from now. We're thinking about what could potentially take place when we are no longer here. We have good intentions and great leaders currently, but we have no assurance that this will be the case in 40 years. Wisdom from Proverbs teaches us to consider the future.

Another step is to include the dissolution clause in the church bylaws. The wording of a dissolution clause is something that a Christian law firm, such as the National Center for Life

and Liberty (NCLL.org), of which the MOFWB is a partner, can provide guidance on.

How can we work together in these situations? When we are approached to give guidance in these cases, most of the time we are working from a position of ignorance. That is, we do not have a copy of the church bylaws, nor the local association bylaws. Some churches do not have bylaws, are unincorporated, and do not know where their deed is located.

When the Central and Beacon FWB churches in the KC area closed to be reopened as the Esperanza and Church of Faith churches, the legal transactions were relatively seamless because both congregations had previously prepared dissolution clauses, and the MOFWB Executive Office and the Missouri Mission Board were aware of the documentation. These churches worked closely together with the state boards, and we were able to avoid large legal fees and paperwork.

How can we prepare ahead and work together? Review your bylaws and legal documents for a dissolution clause, keep them up to date, and properly archived. Please provide your local association and the MOFWB State Office with a copy of these documents as a matter of information.

Let's work together and avoid the situations mentioned at the beginning of this editorial. Let us help you, which will eventually help us. Contact us anytime we can be of service to you.



from the Missions Director, Steve Reeves



A Reason To Celebrate



In my opinion, the greatest football player of all time is Patrick Mahomes. The greatest baseball player of all time is Stan Musial. You can tell from my first two choices I am a Missouri guy. The greatest basketball player of all time? Michael Jordan. The problem with my choices is that a lot of people will disagree with me. That's ok, you have the right to be wrong. Just kidding.

We may disagree on the greatest of all time in many different areas, but there is one we can all agree on: THE greatest missionary of all time...Jesus.

I love the Christmas Season. I love remembering how the Gospel Story began. I have fond memories as a kid of dressing up in my dad's bathrobe so I could be a shepherd or a wise man in the church's Christmas program. I still love hearing how Jesus left His home in heaven to come to our world to save us from our sin.

Jesus never asks us to do something He hasn't already done. This is true with missions. Jesus left His home to move to a strange, wicked place, to reach people who really weren't excited that He came. He came on a search and rescue mission. Luke 19:10 says He came to 'seek and save the lost.' Jesus came with unconditional love. 1 John 4:19 says, 'we love Him because He first loved us.' We would not even know what love is, were it not for the God who so loved the world that He gave his only Son.

A missionary attempts to adapt to the culture in which they are working. He will learn a new language, eat different food, and adapt to strange customs to reach the people God has sent him to reach. Why does a missionary do this? He does it for the joy of seeing a person moved from darkness to light. He goes to give hope to the hopeless, to bring Good News to those who desperately need it.

That is exactly what Jesus did. John 1:14 says 'And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.' What a wonderful verse! Jesus became flesh, He became one of us, He entered our cesspool of a world so He could be near us, so we could see His glory. The word 'dwelt' in this passage literally means to pitch a tent. I believe John is referring to the tabernacle in Exodus when the presence of God dwelt with His people.

Hebrews 4:15 tells us, "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin." Jesus wanted us to see how life was meant to be lived, so He came to give us a living example. Even more, He knew we were sinners and needed mercy and grace, so He paid for our sins Himself on the cross. He took your place on your cross. That is why He is the greatest missionary of all time.

Shouldn't that cause us to give Him our lives? Knowing all Jesus has done for us, shouldn't we stand beside Isaiah and say, "Here am I, send me"? Christmas should remind us to "Go tell it on the mountain and everywhere" the greatest message of all time. That message is that Jesus came to save sinners.

We may not be the greatest missionaries, but we can still do our best to tell our families, our friends, our neighbors, our town, our nation, our world that Jesus has come. This Good News is too good to keep to ourselves.

Jesus is the greatest of all time, the greatest to ever walk on this planet. The Greatest One has come to show us the way home. Now **THAT** is a reason to celebrate!



A Message from Steve and Linda

We want to wish you all a Happy Thanksgiving!
A Merry Christmas! And a Joyful 2026!



- STATE -

Paxton - Grace Fellowship (Cape Girardeau): Grace Fellowship continues to progress. They regularly have outreach events to try and reach their neighbors.

Thebeau/Chapman - Mosaic (Rolla): Mosaic Church had a record day on September 14 with 164 in worship. They are still in the process of purchasing land on which to build a new facility.

Fleming - Freedom Point (Florissant): The church had a 'Back To Church' Sunday on September 21 with 138 in attendance and one person praying to accept Jesus as Savior.

Sanchez - Esperanza (Grandview): The church celebrated their first anniversary on September 14. They set a new record with 138 in attendance and 7 people were baptized.

- NORTH AMERICAN -

Webster - Connect (Florida): Connect Church, with the help of the Florida Mission Board was able to purchase 2+ acres of land. They will begin the building process soon.

- INTERNATIONAL -

Mercer (University of Missouri): Bradley and Madison have seen 5 people come to know the Lord through

the international student ministry this past year. Pray for these new believers.

Bailey (Japan): Ken and Judy have now served 42 years in Japan with International Missions. They continue to serve faithfully in Tokyo.

Speer (Japan): Analeigh, one of Daniel and Kate's daughters, accepted Christ and was baptized in September. Daniel was also in Arkansas for the funeral of his grandmother.

Turnbough (Spain): Brooke and Matthew continue to serve in the Villalba Church. Brooke also serves each day at Evangelical Christian Academy where many missionary kids are schooled.

Duncan (Ecuador): Adam and Carol are going through a new phase as Caleb is now living in the USA and studying at the University of Missouri. Please pray for the family as they adjust to this new life.

Provow (Bulgaria): Team Shumen is alive and well as Dennis and Mary Heath has joined the team. Silas Houser will be joining the team soon. Also, Bea, Josh's wife is now a part of the team as well.

- CHAPLAINS -

Hospital Chaplain Cody Alley: Pray for Cody as he is involved in training and equipping other chaplains across Missouri.

First FWB

On Sunday, August 24, Pastor Andy Rains had the joy of baptizing Vivian Hutson, while Student Pastor Zach Jamieson held the honor of baptizing Miles Starnes and Piper Nisbett.



Stonebridge

On July 19th Stonebridge, in Troy celebrated the profession of faith of three young people from the church as well as a baptism.



Cornerstone

Bro. Justin Lawson baptized Michael Blackmon at the church in Mountain Grove on August 3rd.



Wolf Creek

A baptism service was held on Sunday, September 7.

Bella Paulson, Karren Spargo, and Dakota Cain were baptized by Pastor Charles Felker.



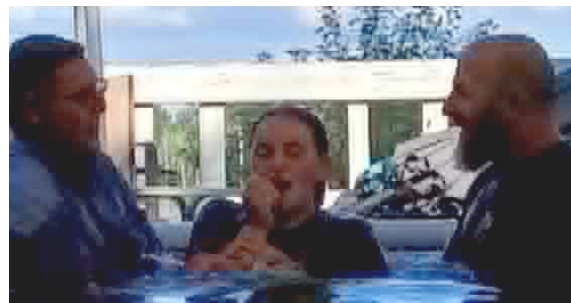
Ozark Family

Pastor Gary Mitchener baptized Joy Gay on September 7th.



Verdella

On September 20. Pastor Randy Sprenkle baptized sisters, Eve and Kirsyn White. Pictured with their father, Luke White.



Christ Chapel

Christ Chapel in St. Clair, reports fourteen were baptized on September 14.



Back row left to right: Pastor Duke West, Josh Thurman, Danny Vermillion, Garrett Conway, Robert Burggraaf, Joe Tharp, Darren Bone.

Middle row: Alex Hauther, Kaitlyn Hauther, Abby Tharp, Gina Tharp, Carla Bone, Emily Wilson, Patty Bratton, Rev. Leroy Bryant, Rev. Jay Tilson.

Front row: Ayrabella Pitts, Sophia Ratcliff, Asher Jasper, Amelia Hutchins

Esperanza

The Esperanza FWB Church in Grandview celebrated their first anniversary on September 14. During the service six were baptized.

Left to right: xxx, Allison Martlit Urbina Lovo, Bella Camille Pasillas, Liam Alexander Velázquez, Dixon Jr. Álvarez, Owe Alfonso Rocha Ordóñez, Maycon A. Pacheco Vargas, Pastor Victor Sanchez, and Steve Reeves.



Second FWB



Austin Hendrix & Matteo Murphy were baptized by pastor David Douglas on September 7th.

New Home



On August 24, Pastor Scott Myers had the special honor of baptizing his grandson, Quinton Blandford.

Nevada

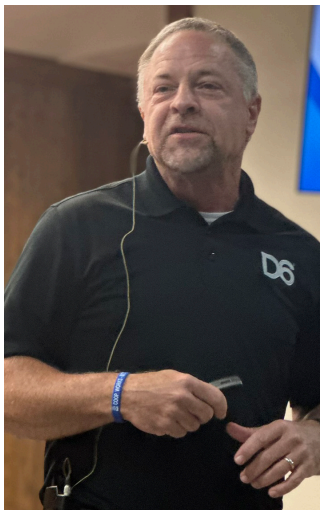
Judy Heckadon was baptized by Pastor Jacob Jones on September 28.





evangelism —2025— conference

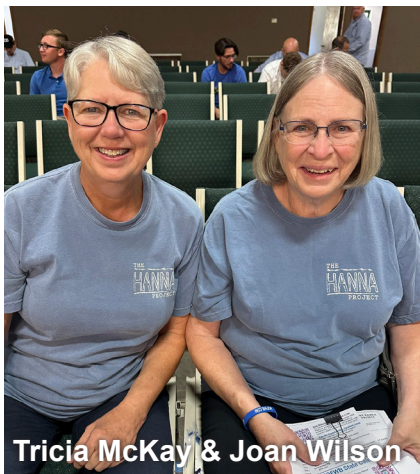
The 4th annual Missouri Evangelism Conference was held at Camp Niangua August 22-23. The 125 attendees were blessed to hear Brother David Crowe, Director of North American Ministries, inspire and challenge them to think about those around them that need the Lord. Brother Kevin Barnett, from Sutton FWB Church in Pocahontas, AR presented the need for Discipleship in the local church. He gave a very well thought out plan for setting up a discipleship program for any congregation.



Joan Wilson and Tricia McKay gave a powerful presentation on the value of participating in the Hannah Project. They shared from personal experiences from the various mission trips they have done. Finally, Stan Bunch and Steve Reeves presented a breakout session on very practical ways to share the Gospel with people around us every day. Luke Tyler from Rejoice Church in Columbia and Curt and Becky Gwartney from Fellowship Church, Park Hills, MO, led the group in worship. Steve Greenwood taught on effective ministry to children.

The dates for our 5th annual conference are August 21-22. There will be a few changes. There will only be two sessions on Friday evening and there will be only one breakout session. Our speakers will be Ron Hunter, Director of D6 and Josh Bush, Pastor of Crosspoint Church in Wichita, KS. The theme for the conference will be *"The Importance of Discipleship."* Faron Thebeau and Josh Chapman will lead us in the breakout session with very practical steps for developing an effective discipleship program in your church. Make plans now to attend our 2026 conference.





Tricia McKay & Joan Wilson



Steve Greenwood



evangelism 2026 conference AUG 21&22

From Our Boards

C.E Board

What is the thing you cannot stop talking about?

I am not a big talker. My wife and I talk about how some people have lots of words and others don't. I'm a "don't"... except when certain topics come up. *Farm animals and gardening. Strategic board games. Theology and the Church.*

When topics like these come up, I seem to do most of the talking. **Our passions fuel our sharing.** One of the basic principles of following Jesus is that we are to share Jesus with others. Jesus himself said: **"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."** (Mark 16:15). That's not just for pastors or people with lots of words; we are all supposed to be sharing Jesus. *Does anyone else find that hard?* I've tended to think if I'm nice enough, available enough, serve others enough; that someone will eventually ask me to share Jesus with them. It usually doesn't work that way. We say we believe that hell is real and the only answer to that being our eternal destination is a saving faith in the person of Jesus Christ. If that's true, we can't be content to just say of those far from God: *"Wow. That's terrible. I hope someone helps them."* **Improving our sharing starts with gaining the right passion.** The Apostle Paul was always a zealous person. When we first meet him in the

book of Acts, he is called Saul and he is a persecutor of those following Jesus. He was a rabid defender of the purity of the ancient Jewish way of life. His passionate pursuit led him to see the first Jesus followers as deviant enemies of that way of life. His passion for the Jewish way of life moved him to strong belief and action. But then resurrected Jesus met him on the road, stopped him in his tracks, challenged the focus of his zeal...and it changed everything. From that point forward, Paul's zeal turned to telling others about the Good News of Jesus, the Son of God, the Savior of the world! In his second letter to the Corinthians we find that Paul's passion is fueled by love. **"For the love of Christ compels us"** (2 Cor 5:14a). Paul was even willing to give up freedom so others might find the truth. The Gospel's irresistible effect is why Paul took risky mission trips, suffered prison stays, lived in constant conflict, loved the unlovable, and gave up his preferences. Paul says if Christ has saved you from your sins, you are now an ambassador to your neighborhood, workplace, school, club, gym, family. **Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ's behalf, "Be reconciled to God."** -- 2 Corinthians 5:16-20 (CSB)

Sharing the Gospel is motivated by love. When we come to know the great love of Christ; we will be compelled to share it with others. We won't be able to stop talking about it.

~Mark Elliott, CE Board Chairman



**Seek
Surrender
Serve**
LUKE 11:9-10

MISSION NORTH AMERICA OFFERING
**ACCEPT THE MISSION.
SHARE THE GOSPEL.**

**Mission North
America Offering
November 23, 2025**

The Mission North America Offering is about far more than dollars and cents – it's about transformation. Your generous giving empowers church planters, revitalization pastors, chaplains, and ministry leaders to share the hope of the Gospel across North America and around the world.

WOMEN'S MINISTRY MOST EXCELLENT WAY → LOVE



**I CORINTHIANS
12:31**

The Missouri FWB Women's Ministry met for the annual retreat at Branson Westgate in Branson, MO. Over one hundred ladies met to have fun, be filled by the Word and build friendships. Gayle Haas brought herself plus the bonus of her character Granny Carter to share the Most Excellent Way: Love, 1 Corinthians 12:31. We took a road trip around the property for the afternoon, got to know one another with a fun ice breaker and ended Friday evening with a Jenga tournament. The competition was steep but the laughs were overflowing. The women of Missouri really show what it means to be Better Together. Our music this year was led by the talented students from Randall University. We are so thankful that Carol Thompson takes the time to bring these students to retreat. Carol also shared about the mission of Randall University with our women and how they can help with the future of our children. As always Steve Reeves was able to update us on all the amazing missions ministries. Our work, prayers, and fund raising continue to help these ministries. If your church is wanting to be more involved with MO Women's Ministry please contact Jeri Morgan (carrie@mofwb.org.) Our board is always willing to share ways to grow your women's group to be Better Together. ~Jeri Morgan



shine simulcast
FREE IN THE
Light

shine!
KNOW YOUR WORTH



What Conference Simulcast
Live Stream Location: The Donelson Fellowship

Where First FWB Church, Lebanon
280 Van Buren Street, Lebanon, MO 65536

Who Teen girls ages 12-18

When February 21, 2025



REGISTER



Missouri Free Will Baptist 2026 State Calendar

January 25	Show-Me Plan Commitment Sunday
February 21	Shine! Simulcast - First FWB, Lebanon, MO
March 2-4	Ministers' Retreat - Cross Pointe Camp & Retreat Center, Rocky Mount, MO
March 6-8	Pastors' Wives' Retreat - Child Evangelism Fellowship, Warrenton, MO
April 11	CTS Ministry EXPO - First FWB - Hartville, MO
June 1-3	MOFWB State Meeting - Oasis Hotel & Convention Center, Springfield, MO
June 2	Missions Celebration and CE Board Seminars
June 8-12	Teen Camp - Camp Niangua
June 22-26	Pre-Teen Camp - Session 1, Camp Niangua
July 6-10	Pre-Teen Camp - Session 2, Camp Niangua
July 19-22	NAFWB Convention & National Youth Conference, Columbus, OH
August 21-22	Evangelism Conference - Camp Niangua
September (TBA)	MOFWB Women's Ministry Retreat - location to be determined
October (TBA)	Retiree Retreat - location to be determined
November (TBA)	E3 Conference - location to be determined
November 2	General Board Meeting - State Office, Lebanon, MO

**All events & additional information, as it becomes available,
can be found at mofwb.com**



Sunday

Help support MO Missions by
committing to a SMP share the
LAST SUNDAY IN JANUARY

**TOGETHER
WE REACH OUT FURTHER!**

		Shares
Name _____ purchased a		
Show-Me share on _____ Date _____ for 20_____.		
Sold by _____ Certificate # _____		

MARRIAGE MATTERS 2026

January 16-17, 2026

Cost: \$275 Includes dinner Friday, room, conference & breakfast Saturday.

Lodge of the Four Seasons
Lake Ozark, MO

Sign
Up
Here



MINISTERS' RETREAT

March
2-4,
2026

Cross Pointe Retreat Center
Rocky Mount, MO

Cost: \$125

Register **BEFORE**
January 31
to avoid a \$10
late fee.

Speaker: Dr. Eddie Moody



Dr. Moody oversees the operation of the National Offices Building and promotes the entire denominational family along with all agencies and programs. He serves as denominational liaison with government agencies, is editor-in-chief of ONE Magazine, arranges for the annual national convention and leadership conference, and champions stewardship through The Together Way Plan and other methods of proportionate giving.

Register online at www.mofwb.com



PASTORS' WIVES' RETREAT WE'RE MAKING CHANGES!

NEW NAME ■ NEW DATES ■ NEW LOCATION

MARCH 6-8 at Child Evangelism Fellowship
Warrenton, MO 63383

Speaker: Kristi Johnson former Missionary to Spain



Joy in the
Journey

Register
Here →



FORM & MORE INFORMATION FOUND AT MOFWB.COM

Cost: \$125 (Friday evening - Sunday noon) or \$90 (Friday evening - Saturday afternoon)

Forty Years at One Church: An Interview with Rick Dement

W. Jackson Watts



By any human measure, forty years is a long time. It's also a recurring number in Scripture. Moses spent forty years in the Pharaoh's palace, followed by forty years in Midian, then forty years leading the Israelites from Egypt toward Canaan. David's reign as king lasted around forty years, as did Solomon's. "Forty" persists in spiritual significance.

Several months ago, another notable forty-year period passed in Missouri: Rick Dement and his wife Jamie completed forty years of service at the First Free Will Baptist Church of O'Fallon ("O'Fallon First"), where Rick has been Senior Pastor since 1985. Rick has served in multiple leadership roles in the Mid-Rivers District Association, the Missouri State Association, and for many years served on the Richland Ave Financial Board. He and his wife have three children, and 10 grandchildren.

I asked Rick the following questions about his tenure with the aim of providing some wisdom and insight to those just beginning, near the end, or somewhere in-between.

Rick, let's start with a cliché of a question. If I had told 22-year-old Rick Dement that he would remain at one church for 40 years, what do you think that version of yourself would have said?

Impossible, overwhelming. I didn't know how I was going to make it through three months! I didn't even consider that I would be here 40 years.

Enough time has passed where we can publicly acknowledge that things were difficult when you first began your tenure. Can you share a little bit about some of the troubles the church were experiencing when you arrived?

In 1980, O'Fallon First lost a beloved pastor of 10 years in a plane crash. In 1982, the church split, which resulted in another church forming. In March of 1985 the church experienced another split.

When I became the Pastor in June 1985, the church was financially broke. Its spirit was broken. Its reputation was broken. Most of the leadership was gone and not many attenders were left.

How long did it take for things to "settle down" and for you to feel that the church had healed?

We started an almost instant turn-around in the church itself. Our attendance tripled in the first six months, but then for the next two years everything went downhill. After struggling for two years, we started a slow, consistent increase.

What was the most helpful advice that you received from someone during the first half of your ministry?

If people know you love them, they will appreciate what you say.

And when we feel tension with someone, our normal response is to pull away, but we should pull closer.

What aspect of pastoral ministry have you found most difficult: shepherding, teaching, or leading? How have you

tried to grow in that area?

Leading has been my biggest struggle, particularly when it came to direction. This has been a consistent challenge to the present. I'm trying to learn to lean on "big picture people" in our congregation to be better together.

What's one aspect of your ministry that you feel you could commend to others, regardless of their own ministry context?

The genuineness of our congregation. We are a down-to-earth group who are willing to admit our faults and our need of the Savior.

What's one area where you would approach your work differently? Why?

I would be more intentional about involving others in the process of leadership and ministry. Carrying a lot by yourself gets overwhelming and discouraging. It also makes others feel unappreciated.

What's something about your congregation that especially encourages you and makes you smile as you think back through the years?

Our people are pursuing the Word of GOD. Many are striving to read the Bible through. Some have done it for the first time in their life, even though they have been a believer for many years.

You have been very active in your local association and state association. How have these relationships/partnerships influenced your ministry? What have you found their value to be?

Without these relationships I probably would not be in ministry today.

During my most difficult times of ministry, it was the regular fellowship with other pastors that revealed I was not the only one

dealing with problems. Their fellowship provided me with direction and encouragement to move forward from my challenges.

National, state, & local meetings have and continue to inspire me in the LORD's work.

At 62, you're reasonably young to reach the 40-year mark.

How do you think about the future of your ministry, all things considered (tenure, health, vision, etc.)?

I believe O'Fallon First has a bright future. We are beginning to discuss a transition plan with a goal of seeing the church continue to mature and be fruitful for years to come.



Ministry Gems

News Tidbits from Around the State



Gallatin, TN—Welch College enrolled 440 students for its fall 2025 semester, the highest overall enrollment in 42 years, according to Provost Matthew McAfee. The number represents a 10% jump from last fall's headcount of 399.

Ladies, did you know that the WNAC website has monthly Bible studies that you can download?



North American Ministries has launched a new website, making it easier than ever to stay connected. fwbnam.com

Who is my neighbor? That's a good question. Use "The Bless App" to know who your neighbors are and as a guide to pray for them. blesseveryhome.com



PASTOR - Take 3 minutes right now and register for the Ministers' Retreat, March 2-4. Dr. Eddie Moody will be the speaker. ALSO, encourage your wife to attend the Pastors' Wives' Retreat.

Dalton & Chelsea Boyer, members of the **Bethel FWB Church** in Marshfield are doing a unique winter break. Their work schedule slows considerably from November to February so they are spending a couple of months volunteering on the mission field of Panama. This is a great way to expose their children to missions, another culture, language, and the ministries that Free Will Baptists are a part of.

Variety is good. It is refreshing and encouraging when local associations take a short departure from the norm and invite a guest speaker to share on teacher training, ministry to children, issues of sexual identity in teens, grand-parenting roles, or bible study methods. Plan a special meeting well in advance, promote it, and watch people respond. Contact the MOFWB Executive Office for more information.

Sunday School is booooooring! Have you ever heard that from your adolescent, teen, or even an adult friend? It shouldn't be and doesn't have to be. These two excellent books would be great gifts for Sunday School Teachers. "*The Seven Laws of the Learner*" by Bruce Wilkinson, and "*The Seven Laws of the Teacher*" by Howard Hendricks.

Support the Refresh Counseling Program

Long ago, Jesus said, "The laborer is worthy of his hire." We like to say, "The laborer is worthy of help." Jesus informed His followers that it was important to provide for those who ministered to them, and Paul reiterated that principle. As we consider our pastors, may we look for ways to support them in the often-stressful work they do. Though extremely rewarding, pastoring can be difficult, which has led to a national crisis in the number of men answering the call to the ministry. Free Will Baptists are not immune to this crisis.

One way we can support pastors is through the Refresh Counseling Program. Since the 2022 National Convention, the NAFWB has conducted more than 2,400 sessions with pastors, their wives, and in rare cases their children. In a recent survey of current participants from over 25 states, 100% indicated the program has been helpful, and 37% reported learning about the program from another pastor. Further, many indicated that were it not for the program, they probably would not be in the ministry today. Use the QR code for more information about the NAFWB Counseling Program.

Will you support the Refresh Counseling Program? As of September 8, 2025, \$188,853.75 had been spent on the program. On average, it costs \$1,000 from start to finish per pastor. Please help us continue this program by giving at nafwb.org/refreshcounseling ↓ or consider sponsoring a pastor.

NAFWB Executive Office
PO Box 5002
Antioch, TN 37011
Toll Free: 877-767-7659





Do you know the name of Santa Claus's wife? In Slavic folklore, her name is Snezhanka. The problem is that this is the same word that we use for Snow White from the fairytale. And while this seems to be merely a coincidence of translation, it has created a comical situation where in our city of Shumen we have a large statue of Santa Claus holding hands with the Disney version of Snow White!

This silly example shows the cultural and religious confusion surrounding Christmas in Bulgaria. While Bulgarians also celebrate Christmas on December 25th, for most people, the similarities begin and end there. While in Christian circles we do have a name for this holiday that literally means "Birth of Christ", most Bulgarians refer to Christmas as "Koleda", a name with likely pagan origins that has no connection with the coming of the Savior into the world.

This cultural confusion is made even greater in our region, where a significant portion of the population is Muslim. Under the guise of creating unity between nominal Christians and nominal Muslims, Christmas was transformed in a generic, meaningless holiday celebrating wintertime. As strange as it may seem, a large percentage of Muslim families in the city of Shumen put up Christmas trees alongside their Orthodox neighbors.

If you ever come to visit our family during the month of December, your first observation will probably be how serious people take Christmas. There are decorations all

throughout downtown Shumen, including a popular photo op with Santa Claus and his young bride Snow White! There is Christmas music playing in stores and almost every Bulgarian has memorized the words to Jingle Bells (in English!). Bulgarian families will almost certainly gather around the table, especially on Christmas Eve. On this evening, there are a variety of traditions (most of which are of pagan origin), but the most prominent is that on every dining room table there should be either 7, 9, or 11 dishes, all of which are meat-free. Through the years I have asked many English students and friends why this is, and no one has ever given me an answer other than, "That is just the way it is!"

In essence, Bulgaria is a country that loves Christmas, but has forgotten almost entirely why we celebrate it. And yet, the Christmas season gives us amazing opportunities to share the gospel with hundreds and hundreds of people every year. Our three churches partner with Operation Christmas Child and The Hanna Project, going to over a dozen villages and small towns around Shumen. In each place, we sing Christmas songs and play games and give out amazing gifts wrapped in shoeboxes. But most importantly, we introduce them to the Reason for the season. Not just about Bethlehem, but also about Calvary and the empty tomb. We tell them not only that Jesus was our best Christmas present, but also that He came to conquer death so that we could be saved by grace through faith.

That is the greatest gift!

About the Writer: Josh Provow, originally from Fredericktown, MO, has been a missionary in Bulgaria since July 2015. Josh and his wife Bea, together with his five children, are serving in the city of Shumen and the surrounding villages.



Jumping for Joy!

Each year, Faith Chapel Free Will Baptist Church, West Plains, looks forward to packing shoeboxes for the Operation Christmas Child ministry of Samaritan's Purse. This ministry involves sending gift-filled shoeboxes to children around the world, along with opportunities to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ through discipleship programs. The church starts early each year, collecting items and conducting fundraisers for the ministry, which culminates in packing the shoeboxes and preparing them for drop-off at collection centers in November. The church is on target to reach a goal of 300 shoeboxes this year.

As you might imagine, it takes a tremendous amount of time, effort, and money to coordinate and accomplish the packing and delivery of these shoeboxes. However, these presents may be the very first gifts and very first exposure to the gospel that these children have ever received! That makes it all worth it!

At Faith Chapel, one project that has become popular with those involved in this ministry has been the making of jump ropes out of old t-shirts to include in the shoeboxes. By simply following the pattern of cutting, stretching, braiding, and tying the pieces together, jump ropes can be made for children to enjoy. Many at Faith Chapel have joined in on the fun of creating the jump ropes. This year one lady in particular has taken the jump rope making to a whole new level. Church member Joyce Piper, alone, has made nearly 150 jump ropes so far this year! Considering each rope takes about an hour to create, that's a lot of time braiding and tying old t-shirt pieces! For Joyce, the past year has been a year for surgeries, as she has had hip replacement and two knee replacements. Recov-



ery has called for lots of "down time", so Joyce chose to make "lemonade out of lemons" (technically, jump ropes out of t-shirts) during this time.

At 81 years old, Joyce was unable to cut the t-shirts, but had lots of help from others, especially one of our teens, Kenadie Nordyke, who kept her supplied in pieces. With 3 t-shirts needed to make a single jump rope, Kenadie literally cut up hundreds of t-shirts for Joyce.

If your church is looking for a great ministry to support, try Operation Christmas Child! If you are looking for a fun little project, give the jump ropes a swing.

~ Jason Roberts, pastor Faith Chapel

Financial Report

Please note: The amounts listed are for two months,
August-September, 2025

COOP Disbursements

19% MO Missions.....	\$31,318.08
21.5% Gen/Exec.....	\$35,438.88
8.5% Youth Camp.....	\$14,010.72
2% Youth Ministry.....	\$3,296.64
2% Christian Education.....	\$3,296.64
2% Retiree Ministry.....	\$3,296.64
9% State Retirement.....	\$14,834.88
3% Show-Me.....	\$4,944.96
33% Nat'l Ministries.....	\$48,296.93
Randall U (.1121).....	\$6,097.63
Total Disbursed.....	\$164,832.01

RECEIPTS

COOP

Amity.....	\$178.80
Bailey.....	\$449.00
Bailey Chapel.....	\$283.50
Belton.....	\$1,031.29
Berean.....	\$526.00
Black Oak.....	\$1,628.00
Byrd.....	\$991.00
Calvary Chapel.....	\$14,012.18
Carthage.....	\$5,904.00
Christ Chapel.....	\$4,067.00
Copper Mines.....	\$2,417.42
Cornerstone.....	\$530.00
Cross Roads- Lebanon.....	\$382.50
Cuba.....	\$1,207.00
De Soto 1st.....	\$3,316.00
Esperanza FWB.....	\$525.22
Faith - Fair Grove.....	\$526.00
Faith Chapel.....	\$1,748.00
Farmington 1st.....	\$7,553.86
Fellowship.....	\$3,915.00
First Day.....	\$1,113.16
Fredericktown 1st.....	\$1,410.00
Freedom Point.....	\$1,167.38
Freeman Chapel.....	\$1,150.00
Friendship.....	\$607.00
Generations.....	\$942.13
Good News.....	\$808.50
Gospel Light.....	\$800.00
Grace.....	\$5,012.88
Grace Fellowship.....	\$5,007.00
Grace Pointe.....	\$410.00
Grant Avenue.....	\$1,148.52
Hannon.....	\$1,165.00
Hartville.....	\$5,715.00
Hopewell.....	\$886.00
Houston 1st.....	\$1,219.36
Hurryville.....	\$650.00
Koshkonong.....	\$513.00
Leadington.....	\$1,200.00
Lebanon 1st.....	\$7,703.69
Liberty - Gatewood.....	\$373.80
Marshfield.....	\$522.18
Mill Creek.....	\$832.96
Mine La Motte.....	\$89.13
Monett 1st.....	\$225.88
Mosaic.....	\$4,560.91
Mountain Grove 1st.....	\$2,806.33
Mt. Pisgah.....	\$1,181.00
Neosho 1st.....	\$1,420.00
Nevada.....	\$1,765.50
New Home- Lebanon.....	\$1,510.00
New Hope.....	\$1,305.00
New Hope - Rogersville.....	\$2,628.15
New Life- Licking.....	\$1,294.69
Oak Grove- Mtn. Grove.....	\$583.55
Oak Hill.....	\$842.70
O'Fallon 1st.....	\$4,134.44

Ozark 1st - Heritage.....	\$809.50
Ozark Family Church.....	\$6,922.45
Park Hills 1st.....	\$1,624.07
Parkview.....	\$545.00
Pleasant Home.....	\$322.80
Pleasant Ridge- Urbana.....	\$524.00
Rejoice.....	\$1,710.00
Republic.....	\$295.01
Resolve.....	\$200.00
Richwoods 1st.....	\$867.00
Rock Chapel.....	\$389.00
Safe Harbor.....	\$75.00
Seymour.....	\$2,056.00
Smyrna.....	\$329.00
Springfield 1st.....	\$2,138.00
Stockton.....	\$475.10
Stonebridge.....	\$1,366.80
Thayer.....	\$3,649.00
Trinity.....	\$2,677.20
Union.....	\$60.00
Union Light.....	\$461.50
United.....	\$4,540.88
Unity.....	\$1,500.00
Verdella.....	\$2,109.34
Victory- Alton.....	\$3,489.62
Waynesville 1st.....	\$1,906.30
West Plains 1st.....	\$3,359.18
Willow Springs.....	\$1,683.65
Wolf Creek.....	\$2,850.00
Total.....	\$164,832.01

Show-Me Plan

Alan Kinder.....	\$200.00
Belton.....	\$350.00
Black Oak.....	\$360.00
Brent Emmerson.....	\$100.00
Byrd.....	\$50.00
Calvary Chapel.....	\$90.00
Cleo Reeder.....	\$60.00
Coon Creek.....	\$500.00
Copper Mines.....	\$300.00
Cross Roads- Lebanon.....	\$382.50
Cuba.....	\$221.60
D6 Family Commission.....	\$69.33
De Soto 1st.....	\$1,670.00
Esperanza FWB.....	\$60.00
Farmington 1st.....	\$1,275.00
Farmington 1st- WAC.....	\$150.00
Fellowship.....	\$465.00
First Day.....	\$556.43
Frank Webster.....	\$120.00
Fredericktown 1st.....	\$400.00
Freeman Chapel.....	\$1,440.00
Gary Tune.....	\$96.64
Generations.....	\$179.46
Gospel Light.....	\$1,800.00
Grace.....	\$1,201.00
Grace Pointe.....	\$1,000.00
Grant Avenue.....	\$120.00
Hannon.....	\$500.00
Hartville.....	\$350.00
Hopewell WAC.....	\$50.00
Jerry Rader.....	\$40.00
Joshua Provow.....	\$100.00
Kevin Williford.....	\$40.00
Leadington.....	\$250.00
Lebanon 1st.....	\$698.36
Macedonia - Purdy.....	\$10,000.00
Melissa Kiser.....	\$46.26
Mill Creek.....	\$140.00
Mine La Motte.....	\$300.00
Mission Association.....	\$2,132.59
Mosaic.....	\$350.00
Mountain Grove 1st.....	\$320.00
Mt. Pisgah.....	\$950.00

Mt. Pisgah Women.....	\$200.00
Myrtle.....	\$575.00
Neosho 1st.....	\$500.00
New Hope.....	\$400.00
New Life- Licking.....	\$428.91
Oak Grove- Mtn. Grove.....	\$440.00
Oak Hill.....	\$84.00
O'Fallon 1st.....	\$3,859.90
Ozark 1st - Heritage.....	\$575.00
Ozark Family Church.....	\$450.00
Park Hills 1st.....	\$190.00
Pleasant Home.....	\$400.00
Pleasant Ridge- Urbana.....	\$140.00
Rejoice.....	\$120.00
Republic.....	\$40.00
Resolve.....	\$200.00
Richwoods 1st.....	\$361.67
Rock Chapel.....	\$400.00
Springfield 1st.....	\$600.00
Springfield 1st WAC.....	\$210.00
Stockton.....	\$120.00
Stockton Auxiliary.....	\$120.00
Thayer.....	\$1,350.00
Trinity.....	\$150.00
Trinity- Cabool.....	\$2,500.00
Trisa Johnson.....	\$47.58
Twin Oak Auxiliary.....	\$165.00
Union.....	\$45.00
Union Light.....	\$650.00
United.....	\$950.00
Unity.....	\$490.00
Verdella.....	\$2,109.34
Waynesville 1st.....	\$1,033.00
West Plains 1st WNAC.....	\$75.00
Willow Springs.....	\$251.00
Wolf Creek.....	\$400.00
MOFWB COOP.....	\$4,944.96
Total.....	\$55,059.53

Total..... \$46,177.31

Missouri Missions

Bailey.....	\$100.00
Calvary Fellowship.....	\$966.66
Cuba.....	\$83.10
D6 Family Commission.....	\$439.11
De Soto 1st.....	\$105.00
Farmington 1st.....	\$5.00
Grace Fellowship.....	\$11,500.00
Lebanon 1st.....	\$49.42
Loretta Minney.....	\$50.00
Mission Association.....	\$3,000.00
Mosaic.....	\$9,000.00
O'Fallon 1st.....	\$1,500.00
Oliver Adamson.....	\$220.00
Ozark 1st - Heritage.....	\$200.00
Ozark Family Church.....	\$20.00
Pleasant Ridge- Urbana.....	\$50.00
Republic.....	\$25.00
Republic.....	\$25.00
Rock Chapel.....	\$91.00
Ryan Akers.....	\$100.00
Scott Keith.....	\$100.00
Thayer.....	\$85.00
William Moore.....	\$50.00
Total.....	\$27,764.29

North American Ministries

Belton.....	\$298.06
Carthage.....	\$150.00
Cuba.....	\$83.10
De Soto 1st.....	\$1,040.00
Friendship.....	\$95.00
Grace.....	\$40.00
Hartville.....	\$100.00
Lebanon 1st.....	\$600.00
Mountain Grove 1st.....	\$90.00

New Beginning - Odessa.....	\$100.00
New Hope.....	\$100.00
New Testament.....	\$60.00
Ozark Family Church.....	\$1,371.00
Park Hills 1st.....	\$1,403.00
Springfield 1st WAC.....	\$150.00
Stockton.....	\$60.00
Trinity.....	\$40.00
Twin Oak Auxiliary.....	\$105.00
Union Light.....	\$50.00
Venola Bennet.....	\$25.00
Waynesville 1st.....	\$145.00
Total.....	\$6,105.16

International Missions

Alvin Hook.....	\$50.00
Belton.....	\$125.00
Black Oak.....	\$200.00
Carthage.....	\$660.00
Christ Chapel.....	\$555.00
Copper Mines.....	\$1,100.00
Cuba.....	\$166.20
De Soto 1st.....	\$990.00
Farmington 1st.....	\$200.00
Fellowship.....	\$1,585.00
Fredericktown 1st.....	\$740.00
Freida Hays.....	\$50.00
Friendship.....	\$125.00
Generations.....	\$1,559.16
Gospel Light.....	\$1,490.00
Grace.....	\$749.00
Hannon.....	\$150.00
Hartville.....	\$440.00
Hopewell WAC.....	\$50.00
Houston 1st.....	\$892.00
Leadington.....	\$300.00
Lebanon 1st.....	\$800.00
Loretta Minney.....	\$50.00
Mill Creek.....	\$200.00
Mill Creek- Young Adult.....	\$50.00
Mission Association.....	\$7,060.00
Mission Board.....	\$2,200.00
Mountain Grove 1st.....	\$6,250.00
Neosho 1st.....	\$100.00
New Hope.....	\$50.00
New Hope.....	\$150.00
Oak Hill.....	\$333.00
O'Fallon 1st.....	\$2,325.00
One Accord.....	\$180.00
Ozark Family Church.....	\$902.00
Park Hills 1st.....	\$490.00
Pleasant Ridge- Urbana.....	\$100.00
Rejoice.....	\$1,045.00
Rock Chapel.....	\$25.00
Stockton.....	\$150.00
Thayer.....	\$245.00
Trinity.....	\$40.00
Twin Oak Auxiliary.....	\$45.00
Union Light.....	\$150.00
Verdella.....	\$1,771.86
Waynesville 1st.....	\$615.00
Total.....	\$37,503.22

ACM

Bailey.....	\$60.00
Total.....	\$60.00

Berea Ministries

Bailey.....	\$70.00
Total.....	\$70.00

Ch-TN

Bailey.....	\$200.00
Belton.....	\$20.00
De Soto 1st.....	\$160.00
Derik Frederiksen.....	\$96.64

Grace	\$83.00
Hartville	\$100.00
Mill Creek	\$50.00
Myrtle	\$425.00
Union Light	\$100.00
Unity	\$300.00
Total	\$1,534.64

Harvest Childrens Ministry

Fredericktown 1st	\$50.00
Twin Oak Auxiliary	\$25.00
Twin Oak Auxiliary	\$50.00
West Plains 1st	\$40.00
Total	\$165.00

MO CE

D6 Family Ministry	\$46.22
Total	\$46.22

MO Retiree

RHP Commission	\$46.22
Total	\$46.22

MO Youth Ministry

RHP Commission	\$46.22
Total	\$46.22

Getsemani

Stockton	\$30.00
Total	\$30.00

Rainbow Ministries

Hannon	\$50.00
Mountain Grove 1st	\$100.00
Union Light	\$300.00
Total	\$150.00

Randall U

Farmington 1st	\$100.00
Fellowship	\$30.00
Thayer	\$100.00
Farmington 1st	\$100.00
Fellowship	\$30.00
Thayer	\$100.00
Total	\$460.00

Welch College

De Soto 1st	\$60.00
De Soto 1st	\$60.00
Thayer	\$100.00
Thayer	\$100.00
West Plains 1st	\$405.00
Total	\$725.00

WNAC

Stockton Auxiliary	\$10.00
Twin Oak Auxiliary	\$30.00
Total	\$40.00

Youth Camp

Cuba	\$100.00
D6 Family Commission	\$184.89
De Soto 1st	\$160.00
Hartville	\$50.00
Hartville	\$50.00
Mt. Pisgah	\$30.00
Myrtle	\$150.00
Oak Hill	\$84.00
Ozark Family Church	\$20.00
Stockton Auxiliary	\$30.00
Thayer	\$200.00
Trinity	\$80.00
Union	\$30.00
West Plains 1st	\$50.00
Willow Springs	\$100.00
Total	\$1,318.89

Youth Camp Development

Indian Creek Assoc	\$387.00
Total	\$387.00

Young Children's Home

Thayer	\$94.00
Total	\$94.00

Available Churches

Cuba FWB

Cuba, MO
Contact: Pam Weber
314-393-9654
Ed Fields
573-368-0746

Grant Avenue

Springfield, MO
Contact: Mike Comstock
417-350-9543

Oak Hill

Union, MO
Contact: Richard Webb
636-744-2402

Pleasant Home

Mtn. Grove, MO
Contact: Shirley Reed
417-948-2365

Stonebridge

Troy, MO
Contact: Milt Nettles
636-856-7568

Available for Fill-In

Cody Alley

Lebanon, MO
573-664-6945

Rich Barker

Park Hills, MO
573-664-6947

Lynn Beck

Springfield, MO
417-812-3823

Jack Brown

Kansas City, MO
816-267-0550

J.D. Chadwell

Mansfield, MO
417-224-5894

Izaak Davis

Fordland, MO
417-876-7689

Jimmy Harrison

Cuba, MO
573-885-4422

Jonathan Hoodenpyle

Aurora, MO
479 236-1488

Gene Howell

Ozark, MO
618-926-5000

Dan Minkler

St. Robert, MO
559-977-2299

Lindell Richardson

Desloge, MO
573-366-1850

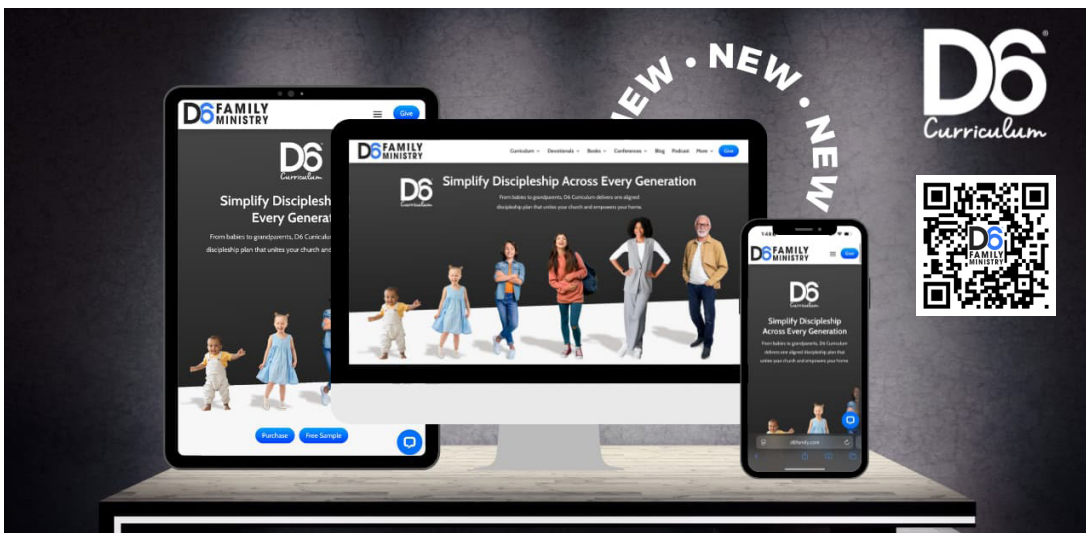
Justin Ruble

Lebanon, MO
417-718-4539

Jason Williams

Ozark, MO
417-260-7078

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Wishing you a very merry and blessed Christmas!
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