

Missouri Free Will Baptist

GEM Magazine

Volume 97 / Number 1 / January-February, 2026

the GEM Magazine

Volume 97, Number 1
January-February, 2026

The Official Publication of the Missouri State Association of Free Will Baptists

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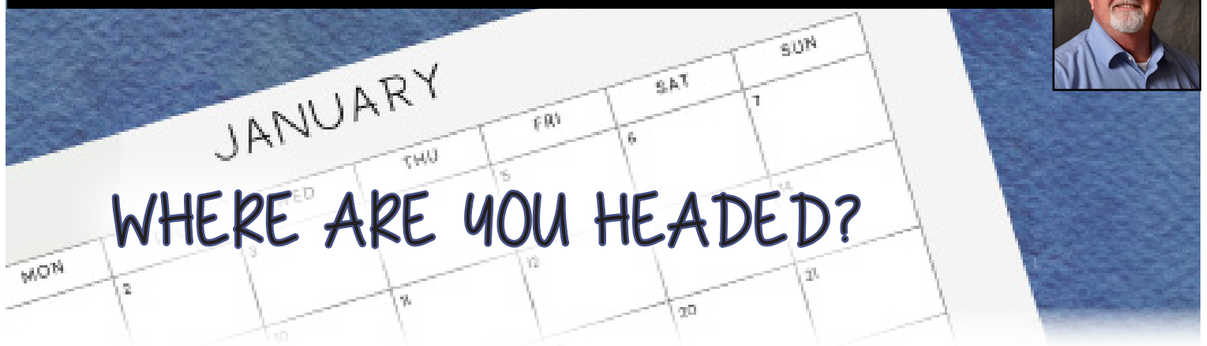
Editor - Stanley Bunch
Layout & Design - Carrie Myers

Missouri Free Will Baptist GEM Magazine

The Free Will Baptist GEM (1929-present), published by the MO State Association, grew to widespread regional, even national distribution across the denomination. The longest-running Free Will Baptist periodical, the GEM continues to be published today. The Historical Commission invites you to enjoy reading nearly a century of amazing history in the GEM Magazine.

from the Editor, Stan Bunch





"Where ye headed" is a common greeting in rural America. When asking or being asked, we know this is a simple way to inquire about one's activities for the immediate future. It is not usually about being nosy, but more of a friendly gesture to strike up a conversation.

I envy people who are planners. A few days ago, my wife asked me if we could talk about Christmas gifts for the family. My thought, NOT my response, was "it's not Christmas Eve yet, what's the rush!" We got the gifts planned out, and we are both happy. Now, that part of the family's Christmas celebration is pretty much taken care of. I'm looking for a new wood lathe for Brenda, but that's another topic altogether.

Brenda helped me get through a process that, quite honestly, is very easy for me to put off too long. Throughout this new year, there will be several more conversations like this one. Again, I will need to make myself do what is not all that natural for me. I prefer to be more spontaneous, but that seldom works well. Planning ahead decreases our stress, and our plans work out better. I should have learned this several decades ago, but with some things, I'm a slow learner.

Consider planning ahead for 2026. Churches do well to establish an annual calendar. Pastors do well to have an annual preaching calendar. What is happening and when? When is the MOFWB State Meeting? When is the National Convention, and where? Having these on your church calendar and website makes it easier for members to stay informed. If you will be preaching a series of sermons on the Gospel of Mark in April, members can begin reading ahead before the series begins. Planning Sunday School lessons, children's lessons, and sermons in advance makes what we share more engaging and takes a great deal of stress off us.

Obviously, there will be times when we need to adjust our schedules. No problem. We adjust and move forward. That ten-lesson series on Song of Solomon just became nine. Planning sermons ahead, especially for co-vocational pastors, is a lifesaver for many reasons. It helps us prepare better and prevents us from coming back to our favorite hobby-horse topic. It also allows us to use our limited study time more effectively. We know where God has led us to share, therefore, we avoid getting distracted by other topics or hot current events that ring our preacher bell. We will also spend weeks or months praying and thinking on the sermon or lesson prior to sharing. The message will have penetrated our heart and soul prior to impacting our listeners or class.

Well, brother Stan, you just planned the Holy Spirit right out of church ministry, preaching, and teaching. Let's think about that.

Luke 14:28 ... "*For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?"* That speaks of planning ahead before you build.

We say, "Lord willing, I will do thus and so…." Indicating that we have planned ahead, but are aware of the need to change our plans if God leads us in another direction.

Christmas is just behind us. Galatians 4:4 ..."*But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law..."* Obviously, God thought and planned the perfect time to send our Redeemer.

Ephesians 5:16 ... *"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."* Colossians 4:5 ... *"Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time."* These verses encourage us to make the most of our time.

The Apostle Paul twice mentioned that he had plans to go to Spain. As far as we know, he never arrived. God is perfectly capable of redirecting our well-intended miscues in planning.

After I preached in my home church early on in my ministry, a dear older brother laid his hand on my shoulder and said, "Son, that was good, just remember that God can give you things to say the month or week before you preach as well as He can on Saturday night." The same is true of church plans, Sunday School lessons, events, & especially sermons.

As a church, apart from the power and leadership of God, we won't accomplish anything for His glory. As we prayerfully seek Him and his leadership and anointing for us as we plan for 2026, I'm sure we will see great things happen, and live with a little less stress. Blessings to you!



from the Missions Director, Steve Reeves

Mercers

REACHING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI COLUMBIA



Being asked to write an article about “the good things happening with Axis Ministries” is a bit of an overwhelming task, not because of the lack of “good things” happening, but because of all the many “good things” God has been doing here in Columbia.

Right now, Axis Ministries has a deeper connection with the University of Missouri than it ever has, as its offered programs have been given public recognition by international student-affiliated organizations (International Student Affairs, Asian Affairs, various student orgs). The connections that have been made with these organizations have allowed us to connect with new students from around the world every single week at our English conversational program, Let’s Speak English. This is where meaningful, gospel-centered relationships begin to form!

“What does it take to be saved?” It is a question that Bradley was asked by his English conversation partner, Sangchan (Chan) Choi from South Korea, two weeks ago at his weekly Bible study. Chan has become a great friend of ours over the past few months and has always been so intrigued and invested in Truth. In studying through the book of Romans, Chan came to that crucial moment, where the decision to follow Jesus becomes so urgent that it cannot be shaken. Two weeks ago, in The Grind Coffee House, Chan accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior.

We celebrate the life transformation of our friend Sangchan! But the celebration does not stop there. So far this year, Axis Ministries has been a part of 4 students coming to know Jesus as Lord of their lives. Aishitha (India), Chaitali (India), Jarim Shin (South Korea), and now our dear friend Sangchan Choi (South Korea) are brothers and sisters in Christ! Continue to pray for these names specifically, as the decision to follow Jesus comes with a cost higher than most can understand.

The gospel is powerful, and it never fails! If you are reading this, do not forget this undying truth. It has the power to transform and redeem lives, and perhaps one of its best qualities, it comes without borders! International students from all over the world are coming to know Jesus or, at the very least, realizing that Jesus is impossible to ignore here in Columbia. Thank you for your continued support and prayers!

~ Bradley Mercer
IM Missionary



Director’s Note:
Congratulations to Bradley and Madison on the birth of their son, Barrett, on October 1, 2025





MMB SHOW ME plan Updates

- STATE -

Paxton - Grace Fellowship (Cape Girardeau): Cape Girardeau: Over 500 people from the community came for a ‘Trunk or Treat’ night at the church. Ray and Carley and the members of Grace have also partnered with a local recovery center. They are able to share the Gospel through this partnership and have already seen new faces in their church as a result .

Thebeau/Chapman - Mosaic (Rolla): The church continues to grow and reach new people. They regularly average 135 in their Sunday services. They hope to close on 3.5 acres of land sometime in January. Pray that they can begin building in 2026. Pray also for the needed funds to be raised.

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 continues to do well. They recently baptized two people. They have purchased 2 acres of land and will begin the building process soon. Pray for the needed funds to be raised and for the continued growth of the church.

Brazil (Hawaii): Dylan and Katie will be moving to Hilo, Hawaii in January. Please pray for them as they make this adjustment to their new field of service. Pray for God to go before them and prepare the way.

- 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’s daughter, Tracey, had surgery on Dec. 15. Please pray for a swift recovery. Praise for the KCC Church and the holiday services they had that they will see people come to Christ as a result.

Speer (Japan): Daniel, Kate, and the New Life Church recently held a marriage seminar, and it went extremely well. Pray for lasting fruit from this time. Pray for Kate’s mother, Ruth McDonald, as she begins chemotherapy.

Turnbough (Spain): The Villalba Church was able to share the Gospel with several non-believers during the Christmas Holidays. Pray that these efforts will bear spiritual fruit.

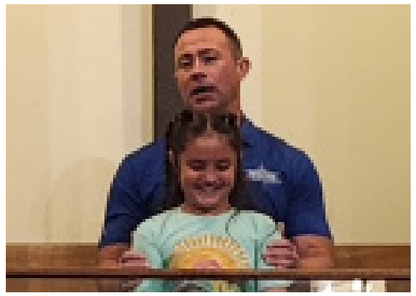
Duncan (Ecuador): Moriah will be studying at St. Louis University in the fall. Please pray for her as she prepares for college and pray for Adam and Carol as they adjust to both their children being in the USA. Praise God for a good Hanna Project team (with many from Missouri) that was in Ecuador in November.

Provow (Bulgaria): Due to family health needs stateside, Dennis and Mary heath have had to take a medical leave of absence. Please pray for them and for Josh and Bea as they will have more ministry responsibility until the Heaths return.

First FWB

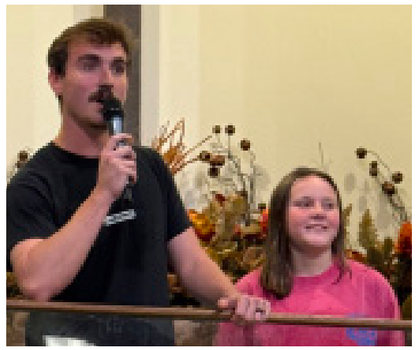
On October 19th Pastor Andy Rains baptized Johanna Edde and Layton Smith baptized Ranelle Hawkins.

On November 16 Pastor Andy had the honor of baptizing his daughter Anniston Rains. Children's Pastor Zach Jamieson baptized Emmy Rogers.

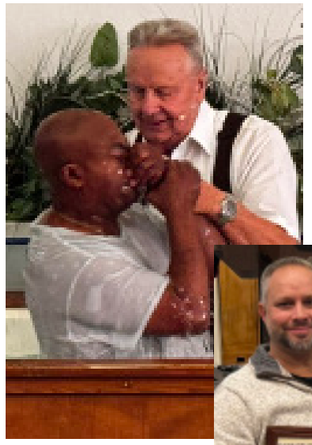








Farmington



On November 9, Pastor Roger Hogan baptized Kevin Thomas at the church in Farmington.

Recently ordained Deacon Mike Dement in Farmington.



Calvary Fellowship

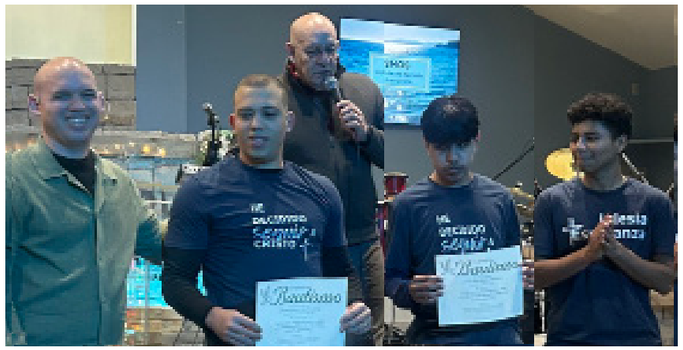
Pastor Ken Simpson baptized Mary Murrary. Rick and Cecilia Gray along with Luke and Destiny Weaver on October 5.
The church is located in Fenton.





Esperanza

On December 7th Pastor Victor Sanchez baptized Francisco Sanchez (Dominican Republic) and Jerson Aguilar (Mexico)



Victory

Seth Huddleston, pastor of the church in Alton, baptized Hattie Orr, Paisley Stubbs, Scout Stubbs, Cinch Orr, and Lily Shields on September 14th.



The church ordained 2 new deacons on August 10th

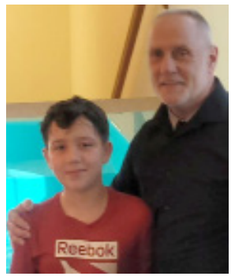


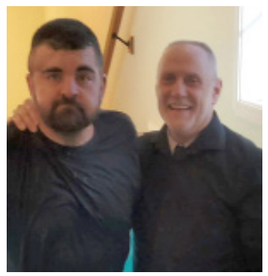
Christ Chapel

Pastor Duke West had the privilege of baptizing Peyton Hauther (right) on October 19 at the church in St Clair.

The church then celebrated the baptisms of (l-r) Alex Hauther, Jason Blankenship and Autumn Blankenship on November 30th.







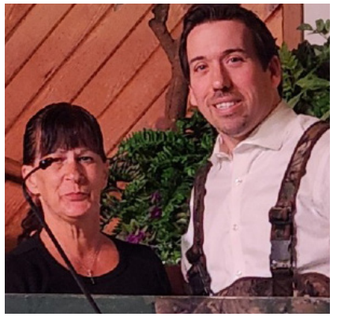




On November 24th the church honored Nancy Brown for her support of missions. Pictured left to right Steve and Linda Reeves, Duke and Crickett West, Nancy, VeAnn and Jay Tilson.

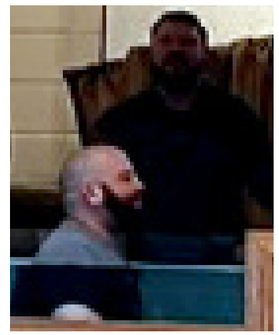
Grace

Gina Scharfenberg was baptized at Grace Church in Arnold on October 5 by pastor Jackson Watts.



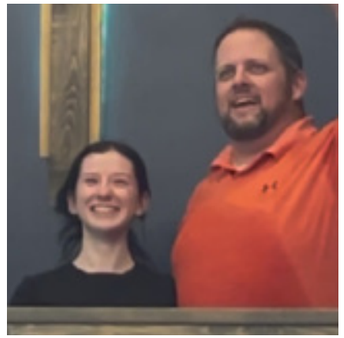
Nevada

Pastor Jacob Jones baptized Josh Underwood on December 14.

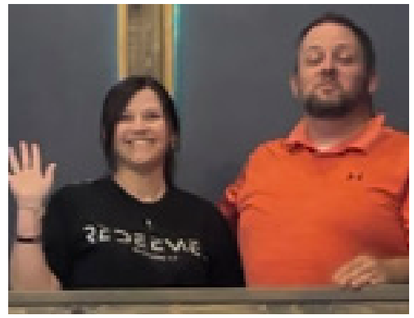


Hazel Creek

Pastor Tim Hodges baptized Ireland Gordon, Kyle Cregeen, Amy Bushnell, Broderick Lile, and Quinley Williams on November 16th at the church in Kirksville.











Freedom Point

On October 12, Pastor Matt Fleming baptized two new believers at the church in Florissant, then on December 7th, Pastor Matt had the honor of baptizing five more.

Editor's note: Freedom Point church has celebrated 18 baptisms in 2025 and has a vision for more in 2026.







Teaching Bible Teachers How to Teach the Bible

Those entrusted with the mysteries of the gospel have a great responsibility to present the good news accurately. Scripture reveals the details of God's plan for the redemption of believers. It is essential, then, to correctly interpret the Bible to rightly understand the message of the gospel.

It is no exaggeration to claim that this is a life and death mission, more important than any military operation or engagement, any war or political machination, of any time, past, present, or future. What we do truly matters; it has eternal impact. While nations rise and fall, empires are built and they crumble, "*the word of our God will stand forever*" (Isaiah 40:8, ESV). The only thing of any actual importance is that which affects eternity, and the only thing that affects eternity is the gospel of Jesus Christ. With these things in mind, this information will assist the Bible preacher and teacher to rightly handle the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15).

Essential Questions for Interpretation, Explanation, and Application

1. When approaching any biblical text, the first question one should ask is, "What does this mean?" Or, "What did the author intend for it to mean?" The answer to this question is always "the text means what the author intended for it to mean." It is essential to **avoid subjectivity** at this point in interpretation; application is where that will come into play. To avoid subjectivity, **don't ask**, when in class, or worse yet, when preaching, "**What does this mean to you?**" because that does not matter and that is not what you want to know. What matters is what it means. The preacher or teacher is to **seek objectivity**, the author's intended, singular, historically concrete meaning. These questions will help to clarify the meaning of the text: Who is the author? What can we know about him? To whom did the author address? Who is the original audience? What did the author mean to convey? What gives this text meaning? What is the context? What circumstances form the setting? What is the genre? What forms or styles define or limit that genre? Poetry, history, narrative, etc.

2. The second questions go beyond what the words say and mean to grasp the intention of the author. "What is the point?" Or, "What is the significance of this text?" Bridge the gap between the original and contemporary audiences by extracting the text's timeless principle. What is the applicable truth for today.

3. Third are the questions, "How can this text be applied faithfully?" Or, "What should someone do in response?" The preacher or teacher is responsible for helping his audience apply the principle taught in the text to their contemporary setting by calling on them to think or act biblically. There are limitless potential applications of a biblical principle, but only one correct meaning in any text.

Jacob Jones
Nevada FWB Church



About the Writer

Jacob and his wife Kylie have two daughters and pastor the Nevada Free Will Baptist Church. Jacob serves on the Niangua Camp Board and recently completed his Doctoral studies from Liberty University.

Missouri Free Will Baptist
2026 State Calendar

January 25	Show-Me Plan Commitment Sunday
February 21	Shine! Simulcast - First FWB, Lebanon, MO or Generations FWB, Joplin
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

2026 MOFWB CALENDAR



shine!
KNOW YOUR WORTH

INSTAGRAM

What Conference Simulcast
Live Stream Location: The Donelson Fellowship

Where First FWB Church, Lebanon
280 Van Buren Street, Lebanon, MO 65536
Generations FWB Church
2301 Connecticut Ave, Joplin, MO 64804

Who Teen girls ages 12-18

When February 21, 2025

REGISTER →

MISSOURI MISSIONS

SHOW ME plan Sunday

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

TOGETHER
WE REACH OUT FURTHER!



SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

For more information on our scholarships and to download an application visit our website
MOFWB.COM/RESOURCES



From Our Boards

C.E Board

MINISTERS' RETREAT

It's good to be with family and friends!

As we come out of the holiday season, I hope that each of you had wonderful times to slow down and connect with loved ones. We are created to be in relationship - first and foremost with our Creator, and then with the people around us. The Bible tells us that as believers we are called to do life together. There are so many New Testament exhortations such as greet one another, accept one another, honor one another, and encourage one another. The concept we get in regards to our relationship to one another as believers is one of family - "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the **household** of God" (Ephesians 2:19 ESV). Each Spring, our Missouri Free Will Baptist Pastors and Leaders get a special chance to be together with some of our other brothers in Christ at our Annual MOFWB Minister's Retreat. It is a great time to relax, reconnect, and be encouraged. We are very excited for Dr. Eddie Moody, our National Free Will Baptist Executive Director, to be our speaker. He will be sharing with us a vision of how we can be Better Together. We really hope you can join us March 2-4, 2026 at Cross Pointe Retreat Center in Rocky Mount, MO for these sessions. Registration cost is $125 and is due January 31st. After that date there will be a $10 late fee. You can register online at mofwb.com or by contacting the State Office. I pray this time will remind us of how good it is to be together!

~ Mark Elliott
C.E. Board Chairman
Calvary Chapel, pastor

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

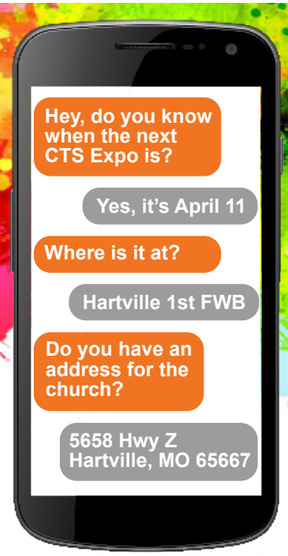
Register Here →

FORM & MORE INFORMATION FOUND AT MOFWB.COM

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

2026 CTS EXPO

For questions contact: Ryan Akers - 636-484-0277
ryan@cfcfenton.org



Two ways to register:

- Go to mofwb.com under the calendar/events tab you will find a PDF document that you can download and print.
- Registration form located in the back of the Competition Guidelines booklet.

→ Remember, a registration form has to be completed for each entry a student participates in.

Mail your completed entry forms to: **Calvary Fellowship**
C/O Ryan Akers
1811 Smizer Station Rd.
Fenton, MO 63026

Forms must be postmarked by: → March 1 ←

NOTE: An up-to-date copy of the Competition Guidelines is available at Randall House Publications. (800) 877-7030 or use this QR Code →





2025 Retiree Conference

Dr. Eddie Moody was the speaker for the Retiree Retreat held at the Lodge of the Ozarks in Branson. Approximately 140 attendees were challenged by Dr. Moody's sessions. We were encouraged to lead, serve, and realize the impact that retirees can have in our churches and communities. Dr. Douglas Earls' presented a seminar on "Dealing with Grief," which is a very real part of life for retirees. Steve Reeves thanked the group for their consistent and faithful support of missions. Doug Little, area representative for the Free Will Baptist Foundation shared excellent information about the importance of preparing legal and personal documents in our latter years. Doug emphasized the importance of preparing a "Family Trust" which avoids the probate aspect of the legal system and makes difficult decisions for our family much easier.

Everyone enjoyed the Lester Family Singers who are celebrating 100 years of gospel music ministry. The Lesters will be returning for the 2026 retreat.

We thank the Retiree Ministry Board for their hard work of organizing the retreat and to the great FWB churches in Missouri for supporting COOP and making it possible for attendees to enjoy the time away at a greatly reduced cost. Plan now to attend the 2026 retreat. Watch the Gem for more information.

In Loving Memory





Diana Crawford

Diana Sue Crawford, daughter of Oren and Margaret Robinson, was born October 2, 1941 in Marshfield, MO. She passed away Friday, November 21, 2025

Diana worked alongside her husband James establishing many Free Will Baptist Church's in Webster County and the surrounding area.

Diana is preceded in death by her parents; her husband Rev. James Crawford in 2010; and three sisters.

Survivors include her daughter, Terri (Brian) Stull, Galena; sons, Steve (Shelly) Crawford, Buffalo, Scott (Jurahee) Crawford, Marshfield; 6 grandchildren; 7 great-grandchildren; sister, Nancy DeRose, Elk City, CA

Funeral services were held November 25, 2025 in Fraker Funeral Home, Marshfield. Interment followed in Prospect Methodist Cemetery.

Read the full obituary at mofwb.com Click on the GEM Magazine tab, then the links & articles tab.

Ministry Gems

News Tidbits from Around the State

The Association Question, Why Should a Local Church Join An Association? Joshua Colson authored this short booklet which answers a lot of questions that some may ask about their church belonging to an association.

Four Ways to Grow a Church
- Conversion Growth - salvation decisions.
- Biological Growth - babies, foster or adopted children.
- Demographical Growth - people moving to an area.
- Transfer Growth - people coming from another church.

The median church size in 2000 was 137 weekly attendees while the median church size in 2025 is 65.

Studies indicate that people are open to someone sharing the gospel but believers think they are not, therefore we tend to avoid gospel conversations with unbelievers. "Sam Rainer"

Two Keys to a Unified Multigenerational Church
- The younger generation must be willing to learn from the older generation and absorb wisdom.
- The older generation must sacrifice comfort and preferences for the younger generation.

80% of your neighbors are receptive to an invitation to visit your church.

Let's celebrate the invitations our church members make and not just the attendance.

Three couples from the Bethel FWB Church in Marshfield recently spent 3 weeks visiting Panama. They attended the Panamanian National Convention and partnered with the Good News Church in Chitre on a work project.

Thirteen men from the Calvary Chapel FWB Church in Buffalo, led by Associate Pastor Brandon Mankey along with the Bethel group and local believers did reconstruction work at a local prison where the Good News Church holds weekly evangelistic meetings.

Bradley and Madison Mercer, IM Missionaries to the University of Missouri, held "Let's Speak English" conversations with students from 29 different countries in 2025. Seven men are attending a Bible Study with two accepting Jesus. Bradley and Madison's "Axis Ministry" helped 30 international students enjoy an American Thanksgiving in 6 different host family homes.

Missions Conferences - For the last several years we have challenged all of our local MOFWB Associations to host an annual Missions Conference. This year, Greater KC, Liberty, Mission, Indian Creek, & St. Francois have raised well over $60,000 for missions through their conferences.

Are you interested in the future of small churches? Use this QR code to listen to a recent podcast on this topic. Very encouraging and helpful.



Approximately 250 FWB pastors and leaders participated in the recent **NAFWB Leadership Conference** held in Nashville, Tn. Dr. Sam Rainer spoke very effectively on the theme of "The Neighborhood Church." This conference is always very informative and helpful for local pastors and leaders.

Pastoral Care is a great need. The NAFWB Executive Department provides confidential counseling for pastors and their immediate family members without cost to the family. This is available through the giving of COOP, state associations, churches, and individuals who understand that helping pastors through a rough time is one valuable way to retain ministers in the pastorate. Your donation helps provide counseling care for pastors who might otherwise choose to leave the ministry. Thank you for giving.

Are you looking for a cost-free app to help with your Bible study? Check out E-Sword. Bible versions, dictionaries, commentaries & other helps. (See page 9 for why this app can be useful without buying several books) Available for PC free of charge, and for Mac at a nominal cost.



PASTORAL FAILURE

Recently, I heard that another pastor of a large church left their congregation due to sexual misconduct. Several days later, a friend who is a member of a smaller church informed me that their pastor had resigned due to allegations of sexual misconduct. What made my friend's call even sadder was that I was his former pastor when I had my own such failure. The details of these cases are not unique. Sexual misconduct always has consequences, but when leaders are involved, the impact is greater. The moral failure of a pastor affects not only his family and friends but also a congregation that looked to him for guidance and leadership, and it fuels growing skepticism among those who are not followers of Jesus. Those most affected by his failure face wounds that may take years to heal, if ever. When a pastor leaves due to a moral failure, questions arise: Why did this happen? Are all pastors faking it? Why didn't God prevent this? Was it avoidable? These questions are natural, and simplistic explanations will not suffice. Even the wisest among us struggle with these issues. The following are observations based on my experience.

There is no link between the size of a church and pastoral failure. Larger churches receive more attention when these incidents occur because they are more visible and affect more people. Pastoral failures also occur in smaller churches but receive less publicity. No matter the church's size, such failures leave the same painful consequences. I suggest that smaller churches may feel the hurts even deeper. Often, smaller congregations simply do not have the means to seek wise counsel to help the congregation process the emotional wreckage of hurt, grief, anger, and mistrust. The church's leadership might not have the resources or availability to minister to any direct victim(s), care for the pastor and his family, and simultaneously prepare the congregation for the new pastor. All churches, no matter the size, must deal with the effects of a pastor's failure, and it is never easy.

No matter what happens, grace is the character trait that we all must exhibit. Don't let a pastor's failure create an open door for your own sin. Gossip, bitterness, and an unforgiving spirit are just a few of the sins that Satan will seek to tempt us with when a pastor's sin has hurt us. We all have the potential to sin morally. We must each be continually on our guard. Examining ourselves (Galatians 6). And removing the plank from our own eyes before we can help others (Matthew 18). Each time we hear of a person's sin it should be a warning for all of us. We would like to think we are above it, but we are not. Genesis 4:7b (CSB) says to Cain, and to us all, ". . . sin is crouching at the door." Yes, pastors must meet higher standards. The witness of the church demands it. Pastors should exemplify kindness, dedication, and integrity through their words and actions (1 Timothy 4:12). Pastors are people through whom we hear the words of the apostle Paul, "Be imitators of me, as I also am of Christ." (1 Corinthians 11:1-CSB) My aim is not to minimize the high standards set for pastors, but to maximize the grace and truth given to us all, pastors, and congregants a like.

Pastors do not have a secret power that protects them from failure. Like all followers of Jesus, they must surrender themselves to Jesus by faith, walk in Jesus' transforming grace and be humbly accountable to the community of Jesus' Church. A pastor may find it challenging to submit to the congregation, but it is essential for his growth and protection. Pastors oversee many of the church's activities. This puts them in a position where they can easily find it difficult to be submissive to others. The familiar quote of John Dalberg-Action, "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely" serves as a warning to all pastors. The danger of unchecked authority and influence may come from a personality type or a lack of wisdom or just pride. Whatever the reason, it is reality. Since churches of any size can experience pastoral failure and because pastors do not have any secret safeguard from sin, I believe it wise for churches to create structural ways to evaluate the moral and spiritual health of those who pastor the church. Pastors need people who care enough about them to display grace, truth, and correction especially when it comes to out-of-balance work habits, self-centered behaviors, or weak relational boundaries. These can be hard and uncomfortable issues to tackle. But they must be dealt with! The only thing more uncomfortable than lovingly holding your pastor accountable is hearing about his failure on the news after it is too late.

For now, what can you do? First, you should pray for your pastor and his family (1 Timothy 2:1-3). That they may know the Lord's presence, protection, and power. No matter how together your pastor may appear, he and his family need your prayers. Second, the church's leadership should have a leadership accountability plan in place. Sin remains unoriginal. It has happened before and will happen again. As church leaders you should work with your pastor to develop an accountability plan that helps all church leaders fight temptations, experience grace in times of failure, and know hope and healing through a Biblical recovery process. Third, the congregation should practice grace and truth in all relationships. These steps will not solve all pastoral failures, but they can help us fulfill our mission of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:16-21).

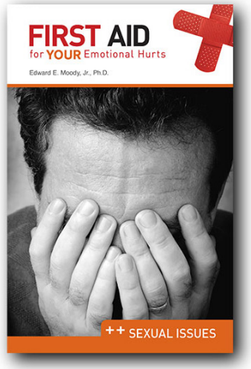
~ Robert Posner

About the Writer - Robert Posner pastored two churches for 26 years before a moral failure brought his world crashing down around him. After years of recovery and reconciliation, he and his wife Judy became Certified Professional MentorsTM and founders of 2416 Ministries, helping men build and maintain a life that is pursuing Biblical sexual integrity and helping wives find healing from the trauma of betrayal. Members of First Free Will Baptist Church, Duncanville TX. Parents of three and grandparents of five. www.2416ministries.org

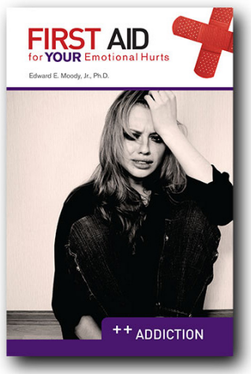
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Financial Report

Please note: The amounts listed are for two months, October-November, 2025

COOP Disbursements

19%	MO Missions	$30,141.04
21.5%	Gen/Exec	$34,106.97
8.5%	Youth Camp	$13,484.15
2%	Youth Ministry	$3,172.74
2%	Christian Education	$3,172.74
2%	Retiree Ministry	$3,172.74
9%	State Retirement	$14,277.34
3%	Show-Me	$4,759.11
33%	Nat'l Ministries	$46,481.77
	Randall U (.1121)	$5,868.46
	Total Disbursed	**$158,637.07**

RECEIPTS

COOP

Alton	$200.00
Amity	$177.60
Bailey	$1,329.00
Bailey Chapel	$256.70
Belton	$658.60
Bethel- Marshfield	$2,239.00
Black Oak	$2,338.79
Byrd	$723.00
Calvary Chapel	$10,112.32
Calvary Fellowship	$7,336.86
Christ Chapel	$1,100.00
Copper Mines	$2,359.85
Cornerstone	$1,000.00
Cuba	$1,648.00
De Soto 1st	$2,906.00
Esperanza FWB	$441.07
Faith - Fair Grove	$638.50
Faith Chapel	$2,145.10
Farmington 1st	$6,983.66
Fellowship	$3,915.00
First Day	$1,908.29
Fredericktown 1st	$550.00
Freedom Point	$762.42
Freeman Chapel	$899.00
Friendship	$1,537.00
Generations	$1,009.05
Good News	$730.20
Gospel Light	$800.00
Grace	$3,747.54
Grace Fellowship	$925.00
Grace Pointe	$400.00
Grant Avenue	$1,238.24
Hannon	$1,065.00
Hartville	$4,280.00
Hazel Creek	$3,979.66
Hopewell	$1,460.00
Houston 1st	$989.54
Hurryville	$817.00
Koshkonong	$448.17
Leadington	$2,278.00
Lebanon 1st	$5,135.79
Lebanon Green Hills	$300.00
Marshfield	$422.22
Mill Creek	$348.61
Mine La Motte	$76.79
Monett 1st	$609.03
Mosaic	$1,797.40
Mountain Grove 1st	$1,719.20
Mt. Pisgah	$1,125.00
Neosho 1st	$1,309.00
Nevada	$1,259.08
New Hope	$560.00
New Life- Licking	$1,121.23
Number One	$100.00
Oak Grove- Mtn. Grove	$247.23
Oak Hill	$618.73
O'Fallon 1st	$3,585.27
One Accord	$911.50
Ozark 1st - Heritage	$565.10
Ozark Family Church	$10,034.59
Park Hills 1st	$2,179.38
Parkview	$457.00
Pleasant Home	$391.60
Pleasant Ridge- Urbana	$477.00
Purdy 1st	$2,000.00
Rejoice	$5,837.00
Republic	$1,165.33
Resolve	$200.00
Richwoods 1st	$725.00
Rock Chapel	$1,653.51
Safe Harbor	$150.00
Seymour	$2,603.00
Smyrna	$271.00
Springfield 1st	$2,114.00
Stockton	$307.30
Stonebridge	$710.50
Thayer	$3,268.00
Trinity	$1,586.20
Twin Oak	$1,907.26
Union	$60.00
Union Light	$451.50
United	$4,542.87
Unity	$1,740.00
Verdella	$1,007.29
Viburnum	$419.00
Victory- Alton	$3,415.30
Waynesville 1st	$1,771.17
West Plains 1st	$2,861.34
Wilderness	$1,087.84
Willow Springs	$1,708.75
Wolf Creek	$1,390.00
Total	**$158,637.07**

Show-Me Plan

Alan Kinder	$200.00
Belton	$350.00
Bill Ragsdale	$150.00
Black Oak	$360.00
Brent Emmerson	$50.00
Byrd	$50.00
Calvary Chapel	$90.00
Cleo Reeder	$30.00
Copper Mines	$300.00
Cuba	$227.20
D6 Family Commission	$71.11
De Soto 1st	$4,116.00
Esperanza FWB	$60.00
Farmington 1st	$1,045.00
Farmington 1st- WAC	$100.00
Fellowship	$720.00
First Day	$954.00
Frank Webster	$60.00
Fredericktown 1st	$200.00
Freeman Chapel	$1,440.00
Gary Tune	$96.64
Generations	$186.25
Generations Women	$326.00
Gospel Light	$1,800.00
Grace	$1,024.00
Grace Pointe	$580.00
Hannon	$500.00
Hartville	$350.00
Hopewell WAC	$50.00
Jerry Rader	$40.00
Joshua Provow	$50.00
Kevin Williford	$40.00
La Tonya Ruth	$23.64
Leadington	$550.00
Leadington Women's Aux	$300.00
Lebanon 1st	$450.26
Macedonia - Purdy	$3,000.00
Mill Creek	$70.00
Mine La Motte	$150.00
Mosaic	$340.00
Mountain Grove 1st	$120.00
Mt. Pisgah	$1,350.00
Mt. Pisgah Women	$65.00
Neosho 1st	$500.00
New Hope	$400.00
New Life- Licking	$295.00
Number One	$240.00
Oak Grove- Mtn. Grove	$160.00
Oak Hill	$84.00
O'Fallon 1st	$3,518.57
Ozark 1st - Heritage	$425.00
Ozark Family Church	$450.00
Park Hills 1st	$349.00
Pleasant Home	$400.00
Pleasant Ridge- Urbana	$140.00
Purdy 1st	$400.00
Rejoice	$250.00
Republic	$80.00
Resolve	$200.00
Richwoods 1st	$367.25
Rock Chapel	$1,200.00
Southeast Association	$120.00
Springfield 1st	$600.00
Stockton	$120.00
Stockton Auxiliary	$120.00
Thayer	$1,350.00
Trinity	$120.00
Trisa Johnson	$23.79
Twin Oak Auxiliary	$110.00
Union	$45.00
Union Light	$650.00
United	$950.00
Unity	$490.00
Verdella	$1,730.82
Viburnum	$45.00
Walnut Grove	$106.00
Waynesville 1st	$1,076.75
Willow Springs	$332.00
Wolf Creek	$200.00
MO COOP	$4,759.11
Total	**$44,442.39**

Missouri Missions

Bailey	$200.00
Calvary Fellowship	$966.68
Cave Springs Association	$250.00
Cuba	$85.20
D6 Family Commission	$450.36
De Soto 1st	$5,055.00
Farmington 1st	$5.00
Fellowship	$50.00
Grace Fellowship	$3,000.00
Hopewell WAC	$1,714.00
Leadington	$300.00
Loretta Minney	$25.00
Mosaic	$9,000.00
Mt. Pisgah	$1,000.00
Mt. Pisgah Women	$60.00
O'Fallon 1st	$1,500.00
Oliver Adamson	$110.00
Ozark 1st - Heritage	$200.00
Ozark Family Church	$20.00
Pleasant Ridge- Urbana	$50.00
Republic	$50.00
Rock Chapel	$202.00
Ryan Akers	$50.00
Scott Keith	$50.00
Thayer	**$80.00**
William Moore	$25.00
Total	**$24,498.24**

North American Ministries

Bailey	$100.00
Belton	$253.86
Cuba	$85.20
De Soto 1st	$3,290.00
Friendship	$150.00
Grace	$40.00
Hannon	$50.00
Hartville	$100.00
Hopewell WAC	$50.00
Indian Creek Assoc	$18,897.29
Lebanon 1st	$2,853.00
Mountain Grove 1st	$115.00
New Hope	$100.00
New Testament	$60.00
Ozark 1st - Herita	$400.00
Ozark Family Church	$80.00
Park Hills 1st	$100.00
Rock Chapel	$100.00
Southeast Association	$50.00
Stockton	$60.00
Trinity	$20.00
Twin Oak Auxiliary	$70.00
Union Light	$50.00
Waynesville 1st	$70.00
Total	**$27,144.35**

International Missions

Alvin Hook	$50.00
Black Oak	$200.00
Christ Chapel	$50.00
Copper Mines	$2,200.00
Cuba	$170.40
De Soto 1st	$783.00
Farmington 1st	$700.00
Fellowship	$1,585.00
Fredericktown 1st	$400.00
Freida Hays	$25.00
Friendship	$150.00
Generations	$106.25
Gospel Light	$1,490.00
Grace	$904.00
Hannon	$150.00
Hartville	$3,260.00
Houston 1st	$990.67
Indian Creek Assoc	$18,897.30
Jones Chapel	$900.00
Leadington	$1,200.00
Lebanon 1st	$625.00
Loretta Minney	$25.00
Mill Creek	$100.00
Mill Creek- Young Adult	$25.00
MOFWB Mission Board	$2,200.00
Neosho 1st	$100.00
New Hope	$400.00
Oak Hill	$168.00
O'Fallon 1st	$2,125.00
One Accord	$180.00
Ozark Family Church	$878.44
Park Hills 1st	$400.00
Pleasant Ridge- Urbana	$100.00
Rejoice	$3,345.00
Rock Chapel	$75.00
Southeast Association	$100.00
Stockton	$150.00
Thayer	$190.00
Trinity	$40.00
Twin Oak Auxiliary	$30.00
Union Light	$150.00
Verdella	$2,646.16
Waynesville 1st	$415.00
Total	**$48,679.22**

ACM

Bailey	$180.00
Total	**$180.00**

Berea Ministries

Bailey	$210.00
Total	**$210.00**

Ch-TN

Bailey	$600.00
Belton	$20.00
De Soto 1st	$160.00
Derik Frederiksen	$96.64
Grace	$102.00
Hartville	$100.00
Mill Creek	$25.00
Purdy 1st	$971.00
Union Light	$100.00
Unity	$300.00
Total	**$2,474.64**

Harvest Childrens Ministry

Fredericktown 1st	$50.00
Twin Oak Auxiliary	$50.00
Total	**$100.00**

MO CE

D6 Family Commission	$47.41
Total	**$47.41**

MO Retiree

D6 Family Commission	$47.41
Total	**$47.41**

MO Youth Ministry

D6 Family Commission	$47.41
Total	**$47.41**

Getsemani

Stockton	$30.00
Total	**$30.00**

Rainbow Ministries

Union Light	$300.00
Total	**$300.00**

Randall U

Farmington 1st	$200.00
Fellowship	$60.00
Thayer	$200.00
Total	**$460.00**

Welch College

De Soto 1st	$120.00
Thayer	$200.00
Total	**$320.00**

WNAC

Stockton Auxiliary	$10.00
Twin Oak Auxiliary	$20.00
Total	**$30.00**

Youth Camp

Cuba	$100.00
D6 Family Commission	$189.62
De Soto 1st	$160.00
Hartville	$100.00
Mt. Pisgah	$65.00
Oak Hill	$84.00
Ozark Family Church	$20.00
Stockton Auxiliary	$30.00
Thayer	$200.00
Trinity	$80.00
Union	$30.00
Walnut Grove	$50.00
West Plains 1st	$50.00
Willow Springs	$100.00
Total	**$1,258.62**

Young Children's Home

Thayer	$78.00
Total	**$78.00**

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

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

Justin Ruble
Lebanon, MO
417-718-4539

Jason Williams
Ozark, MO
417-260-7078

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That's why this NEW book, Walking With Jesus, was created, to give kids a clear understanding of their new faith and to equip you to lead them with confidence.

Inside, you'll find:

- Kid-friendly explanations of core truths like salvation, prayer, giving, and following Jesus.
- Simple discussion questions & activities making learning intentional, memorable, and fun.
- Foundational habits that help your child learn to pray, read their Bible, engage in church, and share their faith.
- A trusted tool for parents and grandparents who want to invest spiritually in the next generation.

Walking With Jesus is a guide your family can return to again and again as your child grows in Christ. When a child says "yes" to Jesus, we don't just celebrate the moment; we invest in the journey.

Give your child the strong start they deserve. Help them understand their faith and live it.

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