

Around the State: ETBU holds Calling Conference

November 10, 2020



Jonathan Grenz

East Texas Baptist University hosted its sixth annual Calling Conference on Nov. 4 for students who feel called to vocational ministry. The conference provided students with a deeper understanding of how to identify and pursue their callings with opportunities to learn from experienced ministry professionals. Guest speakers were **Jonathan Grenz**, dean of the School of Ministry at Palm Beach Academy, and **Phil Miller**, acting director of the Great Commission Team for the Baptist General Convention of Texas. “You are on your own path, and you are discerning the way that it works for you,” Grenz told students. “Your specific calling, the unique thing that God wants to do in your life is progressive. It is unfolding over the course of your life. Where you are now is a great place to be, and where you’re at tomorrow is a great place to be, and where you’re going to be at 20 years from now is a great place to be. Focus on now and then let that calling unfold.”



Jimmy Dorrell

Baylor University’s Truett Theological Seminary launched a 10-course, primary-level certificate program in community development and ministry. The seminary developed the program in consultation with **Jimmy Dorrell**, co-founder and president emeritus of Mission Waco/Mission World and pastor of Waco’s Church Under the Bridge. The program includes six foundation-level courses, a class and project in Christian community development, a class in Christian witness and Mission Waco’s poverty simulation as an elective option. Dorrell will teach the class on “Community Development and Ministry” next year in Waco on Jan. 5-10 and in Houston at the No Need Among You Conference on Oct. 4-8. For more information, click [here](#).



Jeff Ross

Jeff Ross was named interim senior executive director for Buckner

Children and Family Services in Southeast Texas, effective Nov. 1. Ross will oversee operations serving vulnerable children and families in Houston, Beaumont and the surrounding areas. Ross has served with Buckner since 1995, most recently serving as the transitional program director in Beaumont. Previous roles with Buckner have included counselor, clinical director, program director, associate administrator and acting executive director. “Over the course of his 25-year career with Buckner, Jeff has time and again proven his dedication to serving the most vulnerable in Southeast Texas with faith, integrity and respect,” said Buckner Children and Family Services Senior Vice President **Henry Jackson**. “He will bring those same qualities to his work as interim senior executive director, providing leadership for our teams in Beaumont and Houston.” Ross earned his undergraduate degree in psychology from the University of Manitoba, and he earned both a Master of Business Administration degree and a Master of Science degree in community-counseling psychology from Lamar University. He is a licensed professional counselor and supervisor, a licensed child placing agency administrator and a licensed child care administrator. He and his wife Christina have a son Gavin, who is enrolled in the U.S. Air Force Academy, and a daughter Erin, who is a freshman at McNeese University in Lake Charles, La.

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Scarborough College will hold an in-person commencement ceremony at 10 a.m. on Dec. 4 for both spring and fall 2020 graduates. The seminary had canceled its spring commencement ceremony last May due to COVID-19—the first such cancellation in the institution’s 112-year history. The Dec. 4 ceremony will take place in MacGorman Chapel, with only graduates, faculty, and production staff present in the room. The nearly 29,000-square-foot auditorium has a typical seating capacity of 3,367, which has been significantly reduced for social distancing purposes to less than 600. At this point, 331 graduates have indicated their intention to participate in the ceremony, along with about 80 faculty and staff. Meanwhile, the graduates’

families will view commencement via a live simulcast from various locations across the Fort Worth campus. Social distancing will be employed in each location, and all attendees will be required to wear face masks. Stations for gatherings of families to meet with graduates following the ceremony will also be available across the 200-acre campus. Spring graduates, who received their diplomas by mail, have been invited to return for the fall ceremony in order to walk across the stage alongside the fall graduates. For family members and friends unable to attend, the ceremony also will be broadcast on Facebook Live.