

Around the State: Nacogdoches church worships at coliseum

April 12, 2023



When First Baptist Church in Nacogdoches invited the entire community to its Easter Sunday morning worship service at Stephen F. Austin State University's William R. Johnson Coliseum, the event drew about 1,700 worshippers, including more than 900 guests. (Facebook Photo FBC Nacogdoches)

When First Baptist Church in Nacogdoches invited the entire community to its Easter Sunday morning worship service at Stephen F. Austin State University's William R. Johnson Coliseum, the event drew about 1,700 worshippers, including more than 900 guests. An 85-voice choir, 35-piece orchestra and large contemporary band led musical worship. Pastor **Noel Dear** preached on "[Jesus and the Olive Press](#)," based on the experience of Jesus in Gethsemane. The church provided Spanish translation accessible

via smartphones. Worship Pastor **Tom Webster** noted the church received significant support from faculty, staff and administration at the university. Church members who were involved in logistics and preparation for the service particularly had opportunities to “get to know and befriend” members of the support services, campus security, plant operations and custodial staff, he said. “Three members of the custodial staff who were scheduled to work the event showed up Sunday, dressed in their Easter clothes to worship along with their families. Then they cleaned up after the service, still dressed up in their Easter clothes, with their children helping,” Webster said. During the worship service, more than 50 church members served as section leaders to identify and greet guests, who were encouraged to provide contact information by completing “connect cards” or using a QR code that allowed them to text their information. “For us, now the work of Easter really begins. We made so many new friends and met so many prospects,” Webster said. “Now, the real excitement of Easter begins as we go out to contact them.”



“Come Home” was the theme of the 24th annual spring revival at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor. (UMHB Photo)

“Come Home” was the theme of the 24th annual spring revival at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor. **Dale Wallace** of Waco, college

community director at Harris Creek Baptist Church in Waco, was the featured speaker. The Worship Initiative, featuring Davy Flowers, John Marc Kohl and Aaron Williams, led worship for the event March 27 to 29. “Revival 2023 presented our campus community with a focused opportunity to engage with the gospel message in a fresh way,” said **Jason Palmer**, dean of spiritual life and university chaplain. “Many students demonstrated a hunger for truth and responded with confession and repentance. We are already seeing spiritual fruit from our time together.”



Madison Lewis, a senior at Hardin-Simmons University, is the recipient of the 2023 Altom Christian Service Award. She is the daughter of Greg and Jill Lewis. (HSU Photo)

Madison Lewis, a senior at Hardin-Simmons University, is the recipient of the 2023 Altom Christian Service Award. She is the daughter of Greg and Jill Lewis. Her father is pastor of First Baptist Church of Goldthwaite, and her mother is a third-grade math teacher. Madison is a student worker in visual media and university marketing and serves in a variety of roles on campus, including as a Baptist Student Ministry ministry team leader. She is a T.B. Maston Scholar pursuing a double major in strategic communication and Christian studies. Upon graduation in December, she

hopes to work in photography or videography with a nonprofit organization.



East Texas Baptist University honored Jason Bell and his family April 1 with the dedication of Jason Bell Park at Taylor Field, home to the ETBU Tiger softball team. (ETBU Photo)

East Texas Baptist University honored Jason Bell and his family April 1 with the dedication of Jason Bell Park at Taylor Field, home to the ETBU Tiger softball team. **Jason Bell** is the owner of Symmetry Sports Construction and has been “a valuable partner in building athletic facilities at ETBU,” President **J. Blair Blackburn** said. “We are grateful to celebrate the generosity and leadership of Jason Bell, Becca Bell and their children. ETBU has been blessed to have Jason as a part of our board of trustees, where he has also served on the executive leadership committee.”

Wayland Baptist University marked 25 years of offering online classes. Wayland was a pioneer in online education when it began offering computer-based instruction in 1998. “Our commitment to providing a flexible and convenient education to our students remains as strong as ever, as demonstrated by our new online degree programs, and we look

forward to continuing to serve our community for many years to come,” said **David Bishop**, vice president of external campuses.

Literacy Connexus will offer free online English-as-a-Second-Language training for churches from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on April 22 in partnership with Literacy Texas. Topics will include training for new volunteers, as well as immigration and student placement. Since the COVID pandemic, Literacy Connexus has developed hybrid training for volunteers, which include both online and in-person instruction. The April 22 event provides a first step for new teachers, as well as updates for experienced teachers. For more information, [click here](#).

Anniversary



DBU Chancellor
Gary Cook

35 years for **Gary Cook** at Dallas Baptist University. He was president of the university 28 years, and he continues to serve as chancellor. DBU awarded him an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree at its spring convocation April 5.