

LifeWay to close all remaining stores this year

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NASHVILLE, Tenn.—As part of a transition to digital service, LifeWay will close its 170 brick-and-mortar stores in 2019.

The organization will continue to offer resources through LifeWay.com and the LifeWay Customer Service Center.



Brad Waggoner

“LifeWay is fortunate to have a robust publishing, events and church services business. Our retail strategy for the future will be a greater focus on digital channels, which are experiencing strong growth,” said acting President and CEO Brad Waggoner.

“LifeWay is moving into a new era with a strategic digital focus that will prepare us for the future and allow us to better serve our customers.”

In January, LifeWay announced it would reduce the number of its retail locations due to declining customer traffic and sales.

“While we had hoped to keep some stores open, current market projections show this is no longer a viable option,” Waggoner said.

“The decision to close our local stores is a difficult one. LifeWay has developed close connections with the communities where our stores are located, and we have been honored to serve those communities. We will continue serving local congregations as they meet the spiritual needs of their neighbors.”

The timing of store closings will vary depending on local circumstances. LifeWay expects all brick-and-mortar stores to close by the end of the year.

LifeWay has been in operation since 1891, when Southern Baptists  formed the Baptist Sunday School Board. LifeWay offers a comprehensive selection of Bibles, books, Scripture reference tools, Bible studies, children's products, Christian music and movies, gifts and church supplies.

Additional items including church signs, furnishings and buses, as well as background checks, electronic giving and other services are available through LifeWay's OneSource program at LifeWay.com/OneSource. LifeWay also hosts a number of camps and events throughout the year for all age groups.

As part of the organization's strategy, LifeWay has introduced multiple digital resources including online Bible studies, worship planning, live streaming of events and online training opportunities.

"LifeWay has been serving the church for 128 years, and we will continue to grow our ministry to churches and individuals into the future," Waggoner said. "As the market continues to change, primarily through shifts in brick-and-mortar retail, we are taking steps to meet customer demand for digital shopping experiences and to expand our reach globally."

LifeWay distributes resources in 164 nations and licenses resources in more than 60 languages.

Like other retailers, over the last decade the organization has seen commerce increasingly move online, while experiencing overall growth in digital sales.

In one month, LifeWay interacts with five times as many people through its digital environments as it does through LifeWay stores, agency officials

reported.

“Our world and our customers are increasingly online,” Waggoner said, “Investing in a dynamic digital strategy allows LifeWay to better serve the Church in its mission and only enhances our ability to provide biblical solutions for life.”

More information about store closings is available [here](#).

Carol Pipes is director of corporate communications for LifeWay Christian Resources.