

# **New Braunfels church grieves 13 killed in crash**

March 31, 2017

NEW BRAUNFELS—Members of First Baptist Church in New Braunfels grieved the deaths of 13 members killed in a March 29 bus crash and prayed for the recovery of another member who was hospitalized after the wreck.

“It is with heavy hearts that we confirm that 13 of the 14 passengers in today’s bus accident were called home to Jesus,” an official statement posted at 10:40 p.m., March 29, on the church’s Facebook page stated.

The senior adults from the church were returning from a three-day retreat at Alto Frio Baptist Encampment in Leakey when their small bus was involved in a head-on collision with a pickup truck. The wreck occurred on U.S. 83 North in rural Uvalde County, near Garner State Park, about nine miles from the Baptist camp and 120 miles from the church.

The driver of the bus, retired teacher Murray Barrett, 67, of New Braunfels and 11 passengers were pronounced dead at the scene.

Another passenger, Addie Maurine Schmeltekopf, 84, of New Braunfels, died a few hours later at University Hospital in San Antonio.

The deceased included one married couple, Harold Boyd Barber, 87, and Margaret Robinson Barber, 82, of New Braunfels.

Others from New Braunfels killed in the crash were Howard Bryan Allen, 81; Rhonda Barlow Allen, 61; Murray William Barrett, 67; Mildred Goodlett Rosamond, 87; Sue Wynn Tysdal, 76; Dorothy Fern Vulliet, 84; and Martha Holcomb Walker, 84.

Also killed were Avis Scholl Banks, 83, of Austin; Cristie Clare Moore, 68, of Cibolo; and Donna Elizabeth Hawkins, 69, of Schertz.

The lone survivor from the bus, Rose Mary Harris, 64, of New Braunfels, was hospitalized at San Antonio Medical Center in San Antonio.

The driver of the pickup truck, Jack Dillon Young, 20, of Leakey, was in stable condition at University Hospital in San Antonio.

The church cancelled its mid-week prayer service and other Wednesday evening activities but called on its members and others to pray for all involved.

The next day, the church made grief counselors available for children, preteens and teenagers. A notice on the church's Facebook page also invited family members to lunch at the church.

Baptist General Convention of Texas Executive Board staff leaders issued a statement offering "deepest love, support and sympathy" to First Baptist Church of New Braunfels and all affected by the tragic accident.

"We join in earnest prayer, asking that the peace of God guard their hearts and minds in Christ Jesus," the BGCT statement said.

Gov. Greg Abbott and First Lady Cecilia Abbott released a statement expressing condolences: "We are saddened by the loss of life, and our hearts go out to all those affected. We thank the first responders working on the scene in the wake of this unimaginable tragedy and ask that all Texans join us in offering our thoughts and prayers."