

# Refugio church dedicates building two years after hurricane

September 5, 2019

REFUGIO—Two years after Hurricane Harvey severely damaged the First Baptist Church in Refugio building, church members and community leaders gathered to celebrate the dedication of the remodeled facility.

On Aug. 25, 2017, the Category 4 hurricane hit the Texas Gulf Coast, causing widespread damage and destruction. Wind ripped off most of the sanctuary roof at First Baptist in Refugio, soaking its contents and rendering the [building unusable](#). The church's education building also sustained significant damage and had to be gutted.

Initially, the church met several weeks in a funeral home chapel. For most of the time the last two years, the congregation has gathered for Bible study and worship at a local elementary school.

## Dedicating the renovated facility

On the two-year anniversary of the day Harvey hit Refugio, the renovated church building was filled to capacity, as 275 gathered to dedicate the facility to God.

Pastor T. Wayne Price opened the worship service by reading an Old Testament passage from Nehemiah, describing how the Israelites dedicated the rebuilt temple.



First Baptist Church in Refugio rededicated its building two years after the structure was severely damaged by Hurricane Harvey. (Photo / Brandi Jones / Texas Baptist Communications)

Price encouraged the congregation to join in “earnestly thanking God for how far he has brought us and all he has done.”

“As long as we have breath, we will honor him,” Price said.

## Support from others

Program participants in the dedication service included ministers and leaders who provided support for the church during the two-year recovery process.

Roy Joe Ham, minister of administration at First Baptist Church in Norman, Okla., led a prayer of praise. Ham brought four [volunteer teams](#) from First Baptist in Norman to serve in Refugio over the past two years, with a fifth team planning another trip in October.

Dan Miller, small-group pastor at Clear Lake Baptist Church in Houston, and Jimmy Arnold, retired pastor of First Baptist Church of Woodsboro, also prayed. Ruby McGuill, a musician and friend of the community, led a praise song.



Chris Liebrum (right), director of Texas Baptists' Cooperative Program Ministries, presented Pastor T. Wayne Price with a

plaque commemorating the rededication of First Baptist Church in Refugio. (Photo / Brandi Jones / Texas Baptist Communications)

Steve Vernon, associate executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, and Chris Liebrum, director of Texas Baptists' Cooperative Program Ministries presented a plaque to the church, commemorating the dedication.

## **Encouragement in difficult days**

Texas Baptist Area Representative Fred Ater preached the dedication sermon from Acts 2.

“Churches across Texas have been praying for this church,” Ater said. “God was going to do some great things just because of prayer—how powerful that is.”

Price observed God’s hand in [the recovery process](#) and expressed heartfelt gratitude for the support of the churches and partners who helped carry the burden along the way.

Like Aaron and Hur carried Moses’ arms when he was tired and weary in Exodus 17, Price said, he felt the encouragement of his church members at times when he was weary and worn.

## **‘A new day’**

One of the greatest blessings of the remodeled buildings is the ability to provide new ministry opportunities, he noted.

Beginning Sept. 18, First Baptist will offer a full slate of Wednesday evening activities at the church, with a meal followed by small-group Bible studies for all ages. The church will expand its Wednesday schedule to include activities for children and young adults. Price looks forward to the new ministry opportunities as young adults in the church have volunteered to lead discipleship and mission classes for children.

The church also has seen several professions of faith, Price noted, adding he was scheduled to baptize four new believers in early September.

“We think it’s a new day for our church,” he said.