

## **BRO. DAVID LEFLORE**

As I was going through my long list of emails the other day, I came across the following blog: *10 Characteristics of a Dying Church*. While I'm not suggesting in any way that HBBC is a dying church, I do think it's good to be reminded of those things that could lead to a church's deathbed. So, I think it would be great for all of us to read this:

Can you recognize the characteristics of dying churches? I have the awesome privilege of serving a church that has been around for over 80 years. In those 80 years, the church has only had four senior pastors. While our congregation has had its share of struggles over the years, we are pleased that we have survived!

Considering the staggering statistics on church mortality in America, we are grateful to God for still standing strong. Some researchers suggest that between 3,500-4,500 churches close their doors (or die) each year. That means that in the time since our congregation was founded over 80 years ago, over 300,000 churches have died! I suspect that most church "deaths" occur for a few simple (and oftentimes avoidable) reasons.

Recently, one of the senior members of our congregation—who has been there for all 80 plus years—handed me a church newsletter that was written in 1959. As I delicately flipped through the tattered pages of this precious document, one article in the newsletter pricked my attention. The title, which I have borrowed for this blog post, was simply "10 Ways to Kill a Church." The thing that interested me the most is how this list of "church killers" written in 1959 looks so much like the usual suspects in many church deaths today. Here is my slightly paraphrased version of the 1959 list of "10 Ways to Kill a Church". Today's characteristics of dying churches are:

### **#1. Don't come.**

One of the biggest characteristics of dying churches is waning attendance. Many people simply can't find the time to spend an hour or two in the Lord's house. We find excuse after excuse as to why we can't come to church. I wonder what our lives would look like if God only showed up at our house as often as we showed up at His. The Bible is clear about the importance of assembling or coming together (Hebrews 10:25). I believe in the importance of going to church, which is why I do a weekly Twitter hashtag called #Go2Church. If we don't go to church, we just might be playing a part in these characteristics of dying churches.

### **#2. If you do come, make sure it's late.**

So many of today's worshipers (and apparently those of 1959) have a lackadaisical attitude toward worship. We have an "I'll get there when I get there" attitude when it comes to church attendance. I wonder, however, if we showed up to our job the way we show up to our church, how many of us would still be employed? We say that God is an "on time" God, but can He say the same about us? A lack of punctuality when it comes to worship is a microcosm of our overall view of God. It says that whatever else we are doing is more important, and God can just wait until we get there. This type of attitude is a major church killer.

Stay tuned for the next newsletter for more characteristics of a dying church.

*Bro. David*

## **BRO. ROBBY HARGRAVE**

Donald S. Whitney, known for his book *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, gives a clear and practical definition of spiritual disciplines. He describes them as practices found in Scripture that promote spiritual growth among believers in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In other words, spiritual disciplines are not just any habits that feel meaningful or calming—they are specific activities modeled or commanded in the Bible that help a person grow in godliness. Whitney emphasizes that these practices are means of grace, not ends in themselves. They are ways of placing ourselves before God so that He can work within us.

Examples he highlights include prayer, Bible intake (reading, studying, memorizing), worship, evangelism, serving, fasting, silence, and journaling. What makes them “disciplines” is their intentional and regular practice, even when motivation is low.

Whitney also stresses an important balance: while effort is required, spiritual growth is ultimately God’s work. The disciplines simply position us to receive that growth. As he often summarizes the idea, they are practices that help believers pursue holiness in a focused, biblical, and consistent way

Over the next several newsletter articles, we will look at spiritual disciplines and how to practice them in our daily lives.

In Christ,

*Robby*

## **TORI LADNER**

Church, praise God that Lydia and I got to pray the prayer of salvation with four kids at Beach Club yesterday! It was our final meeting for the school year at Big Sandy, and I ask that you would pray for the meetings that I will be having with them and their parents. None of them attend our church, so followup will be key! Thank you for your support in this wonderful ministry that gets me in Hawkins and Big Sandy Elementary schools throughout the year!

For the past year, we have been trying to earn a Pizza & Movie Night during Sunday School by getting 90% of the kids to bring their Bibles. We have finally achieved that last Sunday, and as a reward, we will be watching the new David animated movie in the CLC this Sunday after church at 12:15. Pizza, drinks, and dessert will be provided!!! Parents, family members, and siblings are welcome to join us. Feel free to bring beanbags, pillows, blankets, etc.

Pre-Teen Camp season is among us and we are excited to see how God will move in the hearts and minds of our pre-teens! I am in desperate need of an adult male sponsor, as many of our men are going on the mission trip during the same dates. If you are brave enough and available to help me with this super important role, would you please reach out to me? The dates are July 27-30 and it’s at Lakeview Baptist Assembly in Lonestar, TX. It’s an AMAZING week and I look forward to seeing who will be my male sidekick this year!

Lastly, thank you to the amazing Women’s Ministry Team that put on a fabulous Ladies Spring Gathering. For those of you who couldn’t make it, you missed out on a real treat! I hope you will make plans to attend our next one. It’s always a refreshing time and we want to see more young faces!!! Brylee even said about the speaker, “That was just what I needed to hear!”

Thank you church for your continued faithfulness!

In Christ,

*Tori Ladner*

**The Choir Room is Almost Complete — and What a Journey It's Been**

We are so close. The shelving is in, the music library has a new home, and the finish line is in sight — we just have a few more things to accomplish, like getting all the boxes placed on the shelving. What progress we've made, and I couldn't be more grateful.

On Thursday, April 23, we made the trip to Stephenville to pick up the donated shelving — along with a music library and music storage boxes — from FBC Stephenville, who have generously donated their entire anthem collection to us since they no longer have a choir that sings anthems in worship. What a blessing that gift is.

The road trip crew deserves a proper thank-you: Jim and Judy Bieroth, Jim and Valerie Little, Maxey Osborn, Bruce Slaven, Sid Stroud, and Janet Yoas. You gave your day, your energy, and — let's be honest — you made it fun. We even got to stop for lunch at Hard Eight Barbeque. When we returned, Stace McEwen and David and Susan Ledkins met us at the church to help unload. That kind of teamwork is what makes this church family so special. Thank you all.

**Now, a new opportunity:** Judy Bieroth is looking for volunteers to help input the donated anthems and books into Excel. If you have some time and are willing to help, please reach out to Judy directly. Every entry brings that music library one step closer to being useful for worship.

The children will soon begin having their Sunday morning assembly in the choir room, and in preparation we have hung a television in the room. A special thank-you to Jim Bieroth, Tucker Hoeft, Jim Little, Bruce Slaven, and Sid Stroud for getting it mounted and ready to go.

**Greeter Position Filled!**

A few weeks ago, we put out a call for someone to greet choir members on Monday evenings from 4:30 to 5:10 PM. We are thrilled to announce that Jill Stroud has stepped up and volunteered to serve in that role. Jill, thank you for saying yes — your willingness to be the first warm face people see on Monday evenings means more than you know.

**Still Looking: Drummer for the Blended Service**

Our 9:30 AM Blended Service is still searching for someone who plays drums. If you know of anyone in our church family or the surrounding area who might be interested in joining our worship team, please let us know. It's a wonderful opportunity to use a God-given talent for His glory.

**Trinity Concert: A Night to Remember**

The SAM-sponsored Trinity concert on April 26 was a wonderful evening — and a historic one. It was the first time in 15 years that Trinity had performed a full concert at our church. A special thank-you to the SAM team for providing punch and homemade cookies for the fellowship that followed. What a perfect way to close out a beautiful night.

**Coming Up:** The next SAM event will be a trip to Lake Fork Fish House on Friday, May 15. We hope you'll make plans to join us!

*Worship Choir rehearses Mondays at 5:00 PM, Worship Band at 6:00 PM, both in the Worship Center. We've been saving a spot for you. For drums, choir, band, or any other way to get involved, call me at 254-592-2172.*

I look forward to worshipping with you this Sunday.

*Michael*

Monday

Choir  
Practice - 5p

Tuesday

Men's Bible  
Study-8a

Wednesday

AWANA  
Youth Group  
The Nest  
The Den  
5:30p -  
Dinner  
6p - Class  
Starts

Thursday

Men's Bible  
Study- 7:30a

Game Night -  
5p

Friday

Pickleball - 2p

**RYAN JONSE**

Hey Church! Youth camp sign ups are open. I am so excited to take our students to Fuge Camp at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Youth camp is one of my favorite events throughout the whole year because our students get to spend a whole week surrounded by likeminded believers who want to worship and serve the Lord. We have parent meetings for camp information on May 6th and May 20th. In these meetings we will discuss rules, what the camp will look like, daily schedule at the camp and I will be able to answer any questions parents have regarding camp. We also have our Summer Kick off at the Slavens house on May 27th from 3pm-6pm. We will be swimming, playing games, and enjoying a meal together. To any students about to finish 5th or 6th grade, they will be able to move up to Youth Sunday School and Wednesday night activities starting June 7th. I am so excited for all that the youth will be doing during the summer. Your continued support means so much to me and to our students.

*Ryan*

You're invited to VBS at HBBC!

SHINING A LIGHT ON WHO JESUS REALLY IS

**ILLUMINATION STATION** JOHN 8:12

Check out the details and register here!

**JUNE 1-5**

HBBC  
Holly Brook Baptist Church  
Hawkins, TX

# Happy BIRTHDAY

- Caleb McNeil 1
- Tori Searcy 2
- Murphy Eubank 2
- Warren Blesh 3
- Madyson Nix 4
- Desiree Crombie 5
- Jane Darland 8
- Mary Frances Hall 9
- Davenity Clowers 9
- Roy Petitjean 13
- Bro. David LeFlore 13
- Jimmy Johnson 13
- Leilani Bustillos 14
- Richard Trice 15
- Jocelyn Torres-Ball 15



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

SENIOR ADULT MINISTRY

# MAY 15TH



Leaving the church at 2:45pm  
Sign up in the Welcome Center

# MAY 31ST

ONE SERVICE - 10:30AM

-NO SUNDAY SCHOOL-

BABY DEDICATION

BUSINESS MEETING

POTLUCK TO FOLLOW



# CPR, AED & FIRST AID TRAINING

**JUNE 13TH**

**\$43 EACH**

8AM-12:30 PM

HBBC CLC

LIMITED SPACE - SIGN UP  
IN THE WELCOME CENTER



May 2nd  
Nest Gathering  
9:30am - 12pm

May 3rd  
Children's Movie &  
Pizza Party - 12pm

May 4th  
VBS Workday - 9am

May 5th  
Holly Stitches  
9am

May 10th  
Mother's Day

May 11th  
VBS Workday - 1pm

May 12th  
GriefShare Dinner  
4pm

May 14th  
Widows Banquet  
5:30pm

May 15th  
S.A.M. - Out to Eat  
2:45pm

## ANNOUNCEMENTS



# GAME NIGHT

If you enjoy playing 42, Mexican Train, SkipBo, etc, come join us for Game Night on Thursdays from 5pm-7pm in the Parlor. Even if you can't remember if it's your turn or not, that's okay, we'll try to help you remember!

Bring a snack to share  
Eat, laugh &  
fellowship with us!

**THURSDAYS**  
**5 PM - 7PM**



Questions:  
Call or text Roy Petitjean 903-497-6248  
Call Mary Ann Kutschke 903-769-0629



*Free*

# GARAGE SALE

THE MISSION TEAM IS HOSTING A FREE GARAGE SALE ON SATURDAY, 5/23/26, 8:00 TO 11:00 A.M. THIS EVENT IS DESIGNED TO REACH OUR COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO COULD USE IT MOST.

WE ARE ASKING FOR YOUR HELP! WE NEED:

GENTLY USED CLOTHING (CLEAN)

FURNITURE

TOYS/GAMES THAT ARE NOT BROKEN OR MISSING PIECES

BABY PRODUCTS

YARD TOOLS

HOUSEWARES (POTS, PANS, DISHES, SHEETS, TOWELS, ETC.

WE WILL ALSO ACCEPT NEW, SEALED PRODUCTS SUCH AS: SOAP, TOILET PAPER, DIAPERS, WIPES, CLEANING PRODUCTS.).

YOU MAY DROP OFF YOUR DONATED ITEMS IN THE FLC BETWEEN MAY 21ST AND MAY 22ND.

THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!