

AUGUST 2022

Together

AT DAWSON

CAN'T STOP,
WON'T STOP
AMAZING
ADELE!

SCENES OF
SUMMER
2022

**CHAPEL
CHOIR**
Mission Tour
in NOLA

meet
JACOB PIERCE
DAWSON'S NEW MINISTER
TO YOUNG ADULTS

**Basketball
+ Bible
Study**

Life's Better Together

There's a Life Group for you!

PRESCHOOL
KIDS
STUDENTS
COLLEGE
YOUNG ADULTS
ADULTS
SENIOR ADULTS

A close-up photograph of a hand pointing to a Bible on a black stand. The Bible is open, and the text is visible. The background is blurred, showing other people in a church setting.

dawsonchurch.org/lifegroups

Together

AT DAWSON



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 2 From Pastor David
- 3 Life Group Stories
Heidi & Phil Blankenship
- 4 Building Campaign
- 6 Scenes of Summer
- 8 Sanctuary Orchestra
Germany Mission Trip
Dan Mullis
- 10 Geaux & Make Disciples
Chapel Choir Mission Tour
Tina Lindsey
- 15 Dawson Foundation
Mike Hathorne
- 16 A Winning Heart
Christi Cowan
- 20 More Scenes of Summer
- 22 Meet Jacob Pierce
Jacob Pierce
- 26 Behind The Scenes:
Production Team
Alyssa Witt
- 30 Basketball + Bible Study
Kasey Hagen
- 32 Ten Minute Talk: Keith Vinson



dawsonchurch.org/AfterThoughts

WATCH LIVE
live.dawsonchurch.org



JOIN US

Sunday Morning Worship:
8:30 a.m., 9:45 a.m. & 11:00 a.m., Sanctuary
Hispanic Worship: 11:00 a.m., Chapel

From



Dr. David Eldridge
Senior Pastor

Pastor David

Dear Church Family,

Each Sunday morning as you enter into our Sanctuary, your eyes might be drawn to the central feature of our baptistery and the cross that adorns it. Above this baptistery you see our Vision Statement, "To Be Found Faithful As God's People." This statement is living language in our church that guides and unites us. These words inform and infuse the prayers and planning of each aspect of our church.

While this language is before us regularly and is familiar to us, it is important to answer these questions, "How do we exactly define faithfulness at Dawson?" "What does faithfulness look like in the worship, discipleship, and evangelism of our church?" "What role does the Bible and prayer have in informing and shaping faithfulness?" In the past, these questions have been answered at Dawson with great clarity, but each new generation of members and leaders need to understand the particulars of how this vision shapes our present and our future.

As we kick off the new church year, I will preach a sermon series entitled, "To Be Found Faithful As God's People." In these sermons, I will describe five key ways that we define and measure faithfulness in the life of our church. It is my goal that this series can be both unifying and clarifying for our church now and in the future ahead.

I realize that a five-part sermon series cannot fully describe the reach and influence of any local body of Christ. Much of what faithfulness looks like is found in the stories of the people of God seeking to live out their faith in and through their home, work, and church life. This is one of the reasons that you are holding this copy of the *Together at Dawson* magazine. It is a way to share the stories of faithfulness in our midst. It is our prayer that you will be encouraged and inspired to serve Him as we as a church seek to be found faithful as God's people.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Eldridge". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, looping "D" at the beginning and a long, sweeping tail at the end.

Pastor David

Life Group Stories

By Heidi & Phil Blankenship

Next year will mark 30 years since we first began visiting Dawson and connecting with Sunday School classes therein. We have spent the bulk of those 30 years as members of the Lawrence/Atchison Life Group. This wonderful group of people has always risen to the challenge to offer us a lifeline. That sounds dramatic, but like most other folks, we have encountered a fair share of drama in our lives. And our beautiful brothers and sisters in Christ have come alongside us and ministered to us on each occasion.

For instance, we struggled with infertility through a time when our class was baby booming. But never did we feel left out or less-than; instead, our class rallied behind our decision to adopt. Suggestions for attorneys, offers to write character letters on our behalf, and much, much encouragement flowed through our class members during our lengthy adoption process. And in His perfect timing, God blessed us with a vivacious toddler named Ashley.

A little more than 15 years later when Ashley was 17 years old, we almost lost this cherished daughter in a serious car accident. The firefighters and paramedics did not expect her to survive the life flight to UAB. UAB did not expect her to survive the night. Ashley suffered many injuries, the most serious of which were a bad traumatic brain injury, broken neck, and shattered hip. Phil, a pilot, was in Barcelona, Spain. Heidi was in shock. News spread quickly. Not only those in our Life Group, but others among our church family rallied to help us in such profound ways. The members in our Life Group coordinated it all. Our Dawson pastors prayed over Ashley mightily and attended to us spiritually. A group of ladies stayed with Heidi that first night in a special interior waiting room, while others kept vigil in the main waiting area. One heroic man stayed the night to guard over us and ensure that we were safe. Another group of men met Phil the next day at the airport to drive him to the hospital and ferry his car home. So many acts of service, so many kindnesses flowed our way throughout the next weeks, months, and years of Ashley's recovery. Meals and snacks and gift cards to feed all who gathered around us, and the PRAYERS—with each little setback, we would find ourselves stumbling for words, but our Life Group was right there and would articulate our fears and concerns so well on our behalf.



Ashley spent five weeks at UAB before we transferred to the Shepherd Center in Atlanta (where Ashley finally began emerging from her coma after week seven) for intensive medical and rehabilitative therapies. We remained in Atlanta for four and a half months. Our Life Group never wavered in its care. We received daily messages of support; we had several folks come to visit us in Atlanta, bringing care packages from the class; and many in our group aided their own kids in reaching out to Ashley with sweet cards, notes, and posters. As Ashley gained comprehension of what had happened to her and what her future might look like, depression set in. She longed to be back in

school, and back in her own church at Dawson. There were no livestreams then, no Zoom. But just like that, we received a delightful DVD (nearly 12 years ago now) wherein our Life Group had acted out that particular Sunday's lesson. We felt connected; we felt joy. We laughed, especially Ashley!

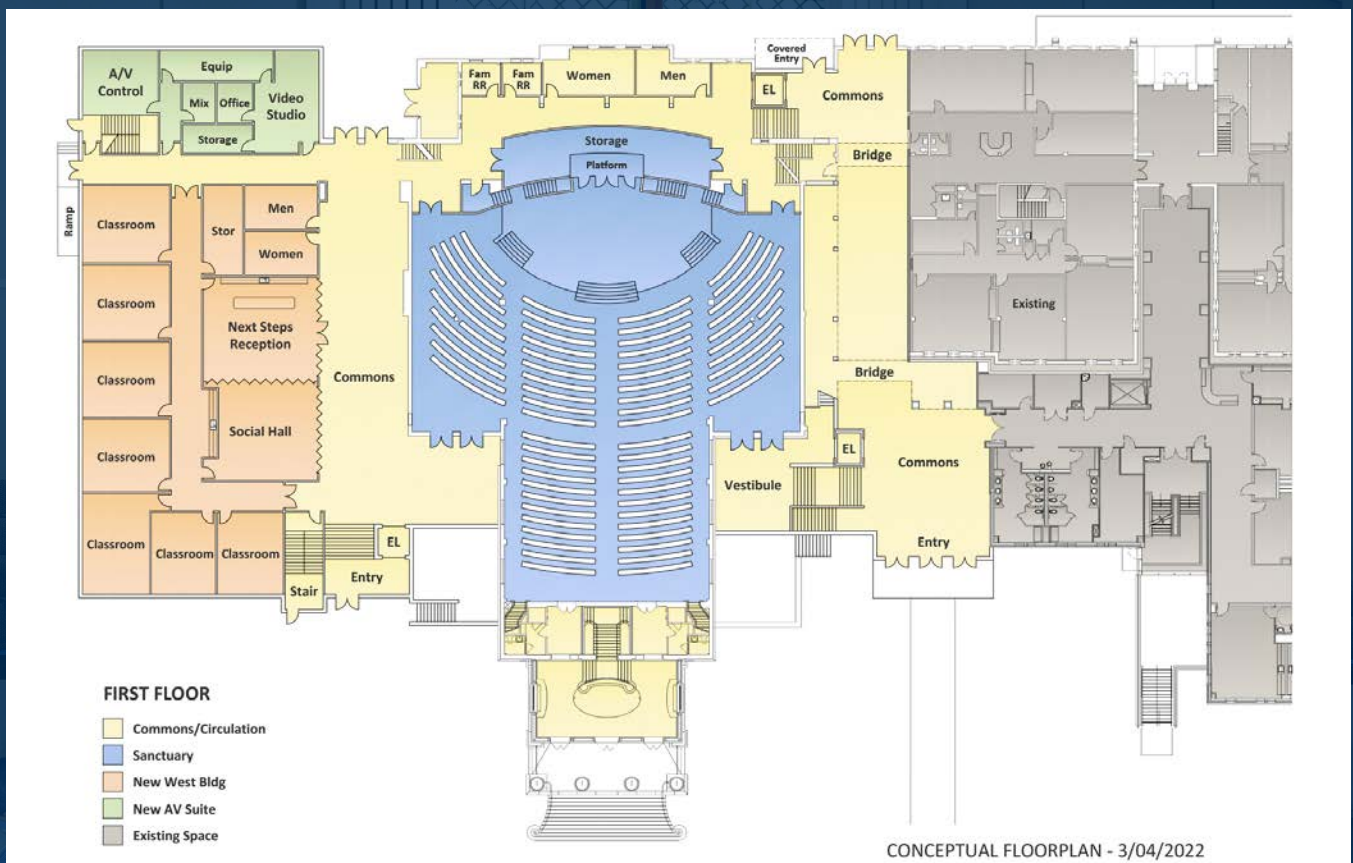
Changing our designation from being a Sunday School class to being a Life Group has been tricky for some of us "older folks," but the term "life group" is really more appropriate. We have weathered so many of life's joys and challenges together. We have enjoyed serving together through ministries such as KidLife, The Learning Center, and Kids Connection. We have enjoyed a unique intimacy in our Life Group that has been difficult to experience in other group settings. We have found a wonderful refuge of love, grace, and acceptance in our Life Group as we learn how to "do life" better through sharing, challenging with grace, and learning from each other.

It has been a tremendous blessing to be two threads who have been woven by God with so many other fine threads into a beautiful tapestry that marks our time in history. It is our sincere intention that through our worship, study, work, ministry, and fellowship, we are growing individually and communally in our relationship with the Lord.



Heidi Blankenship married her high school sweetheart, Phil, a little more than 37 years ago. They have been members of Dawson for almost 30 years, grateful to raise their daughter, Ashley (now 29), in the same beloved church Phil attended as a child. They've enjoyed serving in KidLife, Kids Connection, The Learning Center, and more. Outside of church, Phil is a captain for Delta Air Lines, Inc. Heidi is the captain of their home.

DESIGN OF SANCTUARY & ADJACENT SPACES UNDERWAY



Preliminary concept plan and renderings from March 2022.

IN 1951, THE DAWSON MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH

congregation took a bold step and built a brand new Sanctuary with a seating capacity much greater than their average attendance. From that step of faith, God has used Dawson to reach and disciple many people, and more additions were required to accommodate thousands of Dawson members and guests throughout the years. Since 1975, when the transepts were expanded, there have been only relatively minor modifications to the Sanctuary.

Just as with a 50- to 75-year-old house, Dawson's Sanctuary building needs some work. Electrical and mechanical systems are out of date. A fire suppression system is needed. Movement for people with limited mobility is extremely difficult. Many seats do not have a good line of sight to the platform. Audio, video, and lighting components need to be updated. Some of the entrances are congested during ingress and egress. The building envelope needs repairs against water intrusion. And the platform and choir loft do not have adequate space for worship leadership, instrumental music, and the choir.

Recognizing all of these needs, in October 2020, the church approved the creation of an Ad Hoc Team to address the needs of the **Sanctuary and Adjacent Spaces**. The team was asked to study the needs and make a recommendation for a master plan to address these needs. The team members are Steve McCord (chair), John Harpole, Chris Hunsberger, Melissa Kaiser, Jodi Newton, Jim Rives, and Lisa Simpson. In October 2021, the church approved hiring Myrick, Gurosky and Associates (MG&A) to work with the Ad Hoc Team and several of Dawson's staff to develop a master plan.

On May 15, 2022, that master plan was presented to and approved by the church in conference. The plan calls for a major renovation of the interior of the Sanctuary, the addition of a new Commons area on the east side of the Sanctuary, and the replacement of the West Building with a new structure with two floors plus a basement. The new West Building will be at the same level as the Sanctuary, which will help with ease of access for those with mobility issues.

MG&A provided cost estimates based on their previous experience and current projects. The total conceptual budget, including contingencies and furnishings, is \$24,350,000.

Previous debt was paid off in 2020. Since then, the amount in the budget allocated for debt service has been put into the Building Fund for future projects. That fund will be at least \$1,800,000 by the target date of construction. We will ask Dawson's members to give over and above their tithes and offerings over five years to help pay for these renovations. The goal for that campaign will be \$12,000,000. The remaining amount, approximately \$10,550,000, would be borrowed, and Dawson's Finance Team believes that we are in a good position to make the required monthly payment on that debt.

With the approval of the Master Plan by the church in May 2022, the Ad Hoc Team is now working with MG&A to develop construction drawings. MG&A's consultants are in place and have started the schematic design, which is the first step in the design process. Several meetings are taking place seeking input to continue the process. This is the discovery phase of any design and gives the designers an opportunity to investigate our existing structure more fully.

As the construction drawings are being developed, the team will seek proposals from contractors and make a recommendation to the church for consideration. The final design, contractor selection, and final price will be presented to the church in conference in early 2023.

A Capital Campaign Steering Team has been created to direct the campaign. The Chairs are Jeff and Melissa Gunnells and Michael and Karmin Lytle. The other team members are Chris Byrd, Chris Grissom, Marilyn Henry, and Landon Nast. This team has begun the planning of the campaign and if, at the early 2023 Church Conference the church approves moving forward with the project, they will be ready to implement the campaign in the spring of 2023.

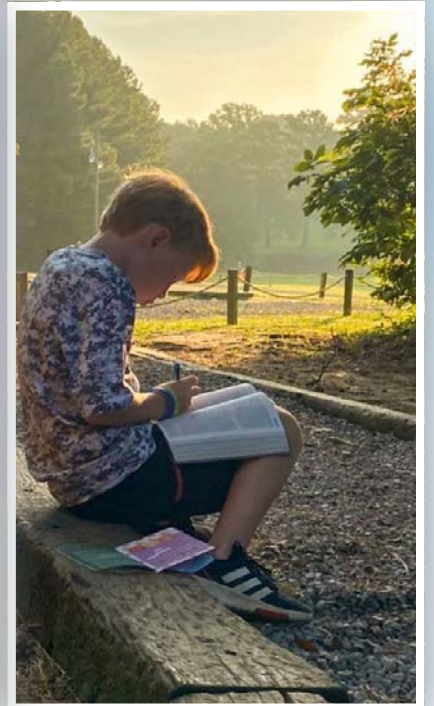
Upon successful completion of the campaign, we anticipate beginning the construction process in the summer of 2023. The current expected construction timeline is about 14 months, so completion would be targeted for the fall of 2024.

The Ad Hoc Team, Dawson's staff, and many others have diligently prayed for God's leading during the planning process. There are many important details that must be decided during this design phase. Please join with us as we continue to seek God's guidance so that we can be totally in His will.

You can view the master plan at www.dawsonchurch.org/MasterPlan.

SCENES OF SUMMER





SANCTUARY ORCHESTRA

Mission Project To Germany

By **Dan Mullis** | Associate Music & Worship Minister



The Dawson team included Alyssa Thomas, Carrie Mullis, Dan Mullis, Hannah Creel, Katherine Williams, Mary Elizabeth Curl, Robin Harrison, Laura Brasseale, and Sammy Brasseale.

In May of 2022, nine members from Dawson's Sanctuary Orchestra set off for a first ever mission trip to Germany. In partnership with **Global Missions Project**, we met up with about 20 other musicians from the US and joined 20 more musicians from Germany and Ukraine. We all came together in Fulda, Germany, for ten days of ministry concerts across various northern towns. After an assortment of plane delays and airport misadventures, we all arrived safely and immediately began to connect. Led by conductor and composer Richie Kingsmore, the orchestra quickly came together building unity in music and spirit.

In partnership with the Federation of Russian-German Churches, our mission project was to present several

concerts in different churches across northern Germany. This was to help encourage the local believers and also to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's translation of the Bible. One thing we had not expected from our trip was learning about the rich spiritual history of the Russian-German churches that had been cultivated through persecution from Soviet and Socialist Germany oppression.

As we began rehearsals and learned more about the service we were presenting, Richie shared with us that the outline of the concert follows closely to "The Story" Gospel presentation and was influenced by a concert that the Dawson Sanctuary Orchestra had presented at the Brother Bryan Mission in 2017. Richie and I were at

an Instrumental Director's Conference and talked about the concert that our orchestra had given. At that same time, Richie was beginning to prepare for the concerts in Germany. Richie really liked the idea of The Story outline (Creation, Fall, Rescue, Restoration) being told through a narrator and then being reflected upon through music. This would allow the entire Gospel to be presented in a clear narrative format.

Together with our local hosts, Eugen and Johannes, The Story was adapted to help the local culture focus in on the word Peace (Peace Created, Peace Broken, Peace Reconciled, Peace Restored). This focus came to be even more important for this region as they have welcomed Ukrainian refugees fleeing the ravages of war.

The music was central to our mission as it utilized a variety of styles that were just as diverse as the backgrounds of the many musicians. The orchestrations ranged from more traditional symphonic pieces to upbeat Celtic and Black Gospel styles. Some of them featured soloists on violin, penny whistle, flute, and trumpet. The people were also encouraged to sing along on several congregational worship songs. At the end of each concert, we invited the children and others to come up and try the instruments. It was a joy to share with them and hopefully inspire them to learn an instrument that they could use in worship.

While the concerts were indeed spiritually marked moments, it was the time off the "stage" that God used to build a team that would only exist for this specific project. Those times we traveled on buses for hours on end sharing stories, learning about each other's families, and enduring close quarters, built unity. Shared meals at restaurants made for unique shared experiences and delightful eats! Other project highlights included visits to the Kaiser Wilhelm I Monument, Open Air Living Museum, and the town of Eisenach, Germany, which was home to Martin Luther, J.S. Bach, Brahms, and other composers.

"There was such a love and genuineness about them in the way they welcomed and cared for us as visitors that I will never forget!"

— Alyssa Thomas

For our Dawson team, this marked many firsts. For some, it was the first time they had been over the Atlantic Ocean. For some, it was the first time partnering with Global Missions Project, and still others, it was the first time they were able to use their instrumental talent as the main tool for communicating the Gospel. For all of us, it was the first time that the Dawson Sanctuary Orchestra had gone on an Instrumental Music mission trip. We all saw ways to take our personal walk with the Lord deeper and grow from the experiences of this project.

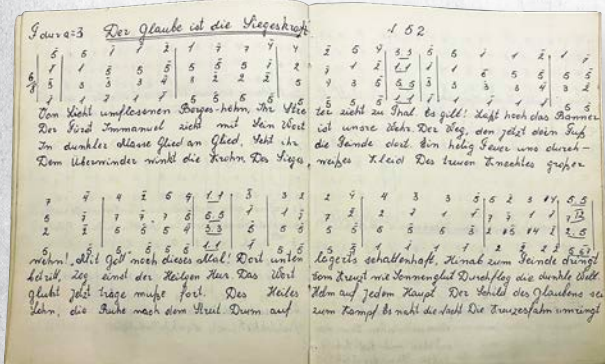


We are thankful to have had the opportunity to go to Germany, love on and be loved by incredible people and to tell them the Gospel message through instrumental music. In so many ways, this echoes the local calling we have each week as a part of our worship at Dawson. If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about how to be involved with the instrumental music ministry through Dawson's Sanctuary Orchestra, please email Dan Mullis for more information.



Dan Mullis grew up experiencing music in different environments and different cultures as his family moved often. He learned early on how God uses music to help break down barriers, communicate Gospel truth, and open doors for new relationships. He holds a Master of Worship Studies from the Robert Webber Institute for Worship Studies. He serves as the Associate Music & Worship Minister here at Dawson, directing various ensembles. He is joined in ministry by his wife Carrie, and their sons, Caleb and Ethan.

a (very) brief History



During a time of religious oppression in the late 1800's, the Russian-German believers gathered in secret. This hymnal is an example of how they would secretly write down the worship songs they sang.

In the late 1800s, many Germans went to the eastern lands of Russia to settle open land (very similar to the western expansion of the U.S.). Initially, the Germans were able to continue their cultural and spiritual practices in this new land until Soviet control took over and their land, language, cultures, and religion were stripped from them. They began meeting in secret and developed new ways of recording their worship songs in a secret hymnal.

During this time, the people were forced to learn Russian and adopt cultural policies they did not agree with. Many men and women were forced into labor camps and separated from families. After many years of oppression, they began to see better opportunity back in Germany, and as Germany re-united; they all returned to their original homeland. Currently, the generations of families in the community speak different languages and express worship in different ways. These churches are learning how to help everyone worship together and respect the traditions and developments of their culture.



"The front yard concerts were very meaningful and a great way to wrap up the service part of Chapel Choir Mission Tour." —Chase Kaiser, 9th grade.





Goaux & Make Disciples!

CHAPEL CHOIR MISSION TOUR IN NEW ORLEANS

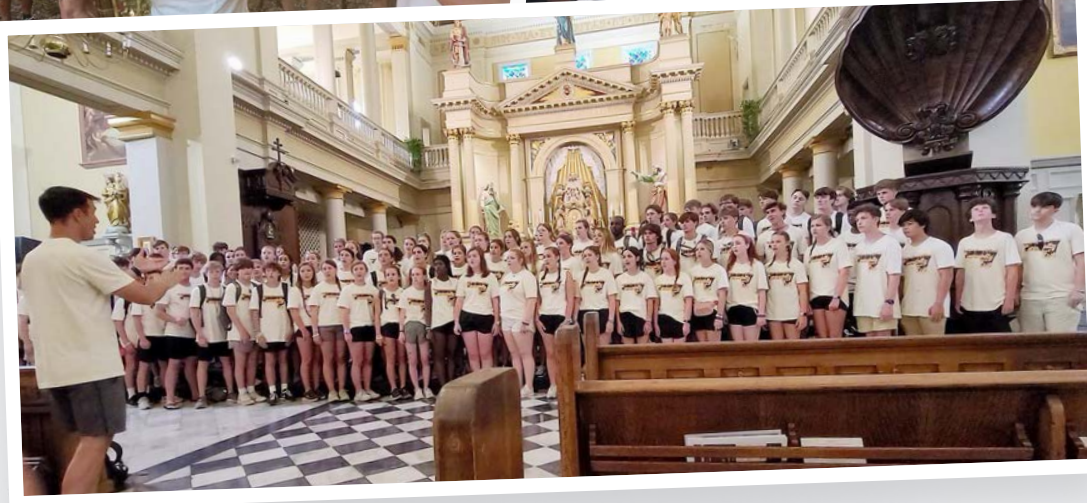
By Tina Lindsey

For our 2022 Chapel Choir Mission Tour in New Orleans, preparations started months in advance, but the actual mission work began early in the morning in a parking lot on Overton Road. An unthinkable tragedy had taken place the night before we left for New Orleans, and John Woods, our Music & Worship Pastor, was stricken by the events. Recognizing that our youth needed to understand that true mission work begins where you live, our three charter buses left Dawson, and headed straight to the Publix parking lot only a few blocks from St. Stephens Episcopal Church. Everyone came together and prayed for the families of the victims and for the community that was affected by the senseless shootings. We wrapped up our time there by singing *Let There Be Peace On Earth* and then headed straight for New Orleans.

We knew there would be challenges transporting 140 people on three charter buses, a cargo truck, and a follow car through the streets of New Orleans, but one thing we really couldn't prepare for was the unseasonable heat we experienced. For the most part, you would have never known it was so hot. We had an objective, and it was going to be met regardless of the challenges. "You don't have electricity? No problem." said Pastor Troy

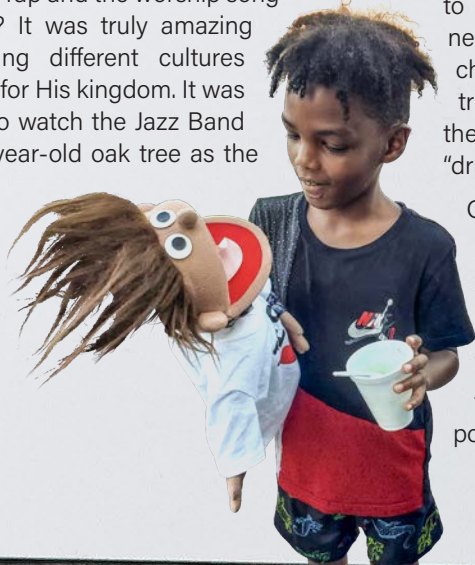
Gause from Cross Culture Community Church. He ran home and got a generator. There had been no meals nor missions in Duncan Plaza, downtown New Orleans, since before Covid, and today was the first Saturday back. And what an honor it was to be there! We were able to meet and talk with many from the homeless community in downtown New Orleans. Lots of our students came face-to-face with homelessness for the first time in their lives. They were enthralled by the stories and backgrounds of the countless people we interacted with. The choir sang, the Jazz Band played, and the pastors from Church Without Walls brought a word from God. We distributed hundreds of meals, toiletry bags, and ice-cold water, which was in high demand. From our Friday evening arrival through Sunday, we had consumed 1200 bottles of water.

New Orleans culture has a very long and rich history in art and music. Since we knew we would be cohosting three events with three different church plants, an Arts and Music Festival seemed like a great idea. John is very passionate about us as a church going in to be the scaffolding for the communities we are serving. It is important to be the support, not the focus.



Saturday evening, we were back in the 9th Ward at Cross Culture Community Church, where we were able to bring awareness in their community to the church with the Arts and Music Festival. Some of the activities for the guests included making your own sock puppet, creating art on canvas and baseballs, and games. We also had inflatables and two things New Orleans is well known for—lots of food and lots of music. The Chapel Choir was not the only entertainment for the evening. We had asked each church we were partnering with to find out if people from their church wanted to participate in the music portion of the event. We were very blessed to meet Andy Rebirth, a local musician who actually had a very storied past. We were so blessed to hear his music and his story. Who knew that you could intertwine rap and the worship song *The Power of God*? It was truly amazing to watch God bring different cultures together to do good for His kingdom. It was something special to watch the Jazz Band play under a 100+ year-old oak tree as the sun was setting.

We would soon realize that there would be many opportunities this week to experience God with all of our senses.



On Sunday, we were able to experience a different kind of worship, outdoors! We traveled to Zachary, Louisiana, about one and a half hours west of New Orleans to spend the first half of Father's Day with Life Changers Church and Pastor Sheldon Early. We went straight into a lunch and another Arts and Music Festival. While there, we noticed that puppets can really bring different generations together. Our puppet team has really worked hard to learn new material. They taught some great Bible truths through puppets and story.

Sunday evening, we were back in New Orleans partnering with Faith New Orleans for the Four Corners Arts and Music Festival. This area serves a large community that varies greatly, from those who are poverty-stricken to the wealthy. We closed the street in this uptown neighborhood and set up the festival. The physical church also needed some love. The students got to work trimming the shrubs, cleaning up garbage, and washing the church sign. The Jazz Band was also busy trying to "drum" up business with the passing cars.

Over the weekend, many great conversations took place. One that stood out to me was with a young lady who was there because her boyfriend had invited her. Another was with a young man who had been invited to church many times but never made it through the doors. I am reminded that His grace is sufficient for redemption. "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." 2 Corinthians 2:9.



One of the hardest hit areas during Hurricane Katrina was the lower 9th Ward. Even though Katrina happened years ago, the impact can still be seen and felt. One essential area for preventing the flooding of homes is maintaining clean storm drains. Unfortunately, this is one of the most neglected areas by the city and state governments. We spent several hours cleaning out drains, removing weeds, and making sure the path for the water to drain was clear. Several neighbors came out as we were cleaning and were so grateful for the work that was being done.

Baptist Friendship House was one of the hardest but most rewarding days we spent in New Orleans. There was a real dose of reality of the devastation and toll that homelessness can have on someone. We spent most of the morning in deep conversations with the people while we served lunches and gave out backpacks with toiletries, shirts, and socks. The real treat for our guests, however, was the coffee station that we all take for granted. Even though it felt like it was a million degrees, the hot coffee was still a luxury for so many. I think we went through quite a bit of the flavored creamer and whipped cream! We had a full set up for Chapel Choir

and Chapel Jazz Band to perform. We received a blessing when we found out that a couple of the men we were serving were extremely talented musicians. Geo sat in with the Jazz Band and even sang while playing. Stormy was a blues singer with a raspy voice and a heart for Jesus. He blessed us with an original song. It was evident that God was moving through our conversations, not only for the people being ministered to, but with the students as well. The students were invested in each of the conversations, hanging onto every word, truly wanting to hear the stories that each person told. I am reminded of one of the principles that Baptist Friendship House is built upon, Matthew 25.

After visiting the Baptist Friendship House, we were able to sing at the St. Louis Cathedral in Jackson Square while Dr. Brent Reeves was able to play the organ. It was such a privilege to be able to sing in such a historic site. St. Louis Cathedral is the oldest cathedral in continuous use in the United States. The first church on the site was built in 1718. The one you see today was completed in 1794. There were many visitors to the Cathedral who stayed and listened to the Chapel Choir and Ensemble as they

"One of the biggest impacts on me for the week was helping in the lower 9th ward to clean out the drains. I was born in New Orleans right before Katrina but never got to live in the city because of the flooding. I wanted to make the area better for others."

—Sophia Lindsey, 11th grade.

"I saw God when we were at the homeless shelters ministering to people, you could see the joy on their faces because we took the time to talk to them one on one."

—Kate Hurst, 9th grade.

sang a small selection from their repertoire. The students were very excited to see two of the homeless men they had visited with earlier that morning at the Cathedral. The men had come to enjoy the music and to support the students as they sang.

Mixed among the ministry projects we were able to squeeze in a little tourism and relief from the heat. We visited the Audubon Aquarium of the Americas, the Outlet Collection at the Riverwalk for a little shopping, the Creole Queen lunch river cruise, the World War II Museum, and walked around the French Quarter. One of the favorite excursions was to ride the streetcar back to Loyola. The Jazz Band added an extra little stop on their stroll around the French Quarter and were able to attend a concert at The Preservation Jazz Hall.

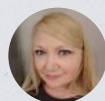
Our last full day was honestly one of the most fulfilling. We began the day with Greg Woodward of Faith New Orleans visiting members' homes that still have not been able to make it back to church following the pandemic or it is just too difficult for them to get out. We visited four different homes, Mr. Robert, Ms. Alberta, Ms. Dunbar and Ms. Cleasta. Several of their neighbors came out to enjoy the front yard concerts. Following the concert at each home, we were able to surprise them with a hot meal and offer a prayer on their behalf. After the concerts, we spent the afternoon preparing to return home the next morning and getting ready to honor our seniors who had graduated.

This evening is definitely a bittersweet one. You don't want to see them go but you want them to fly. This year, Senior Night was held at Mulate's, a true Cajun restaurant embodying the essence of the bayous in New Orleans through food. There was a healthy dose of laughter offset by a few tears as we watched the Senior Wills and were entertained by the Paper Plate Awards created by the seniors and given to all the underclassmen. We were also inspired by the words of the hymns that John had personally chosen for each of the seniors.

There was one thing that New Orleans was never short of, and that was good food. From the cafeteria at Loyola to Senior night at Mulate's, the food did not disappoint. There was no better way to begin our food journey than with a stop at Morning Call one of the oldest beignet places in the city opening in 1870. It is just down the street from First Baptist New Orleans, where we hosted the church planters "night out" the first evening we arrived. Jambalaya quickly became last year's pizza in Colorado. This year we had jambalaya at five different locations, but I believe the winner was the jambalaya on Senior Night at Mulate's with the Creole Queen coming in a close second. Mother's is another New Orleans staple that has been on Poydras Street since 1938. It was a definite stop on our food tour. They fed 140 of us in their restaurant that normally has a line out the door and down the street. No one could pass up their famous bread pudding!



We had a full house at our Home Concert, which reminded me that we had been sent as part of a larger body of Christ. We had not gone to New Orleans alone nor just for ourselves. We had gone as representatives of Dawson to share the love of our Savior, Jesus. There is no way we can go and serve the way that we do each year without the support and prayers of our church family. As I reflect on the very full and fulfilling week, I am reminded of Isaiah 6:8: And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me."



Tina Lindsey and her husband Craig, have been members at Dawson since 2013. They have two children, Jacob and Sophia. Tina enjoys being creative, spending time with her family, and volunteering with many different groups within Dawson, including Preschool, Kids, Music, Women's and Student Ministries.





The Dawson Foundation

MAKING A LASTING IMPACT



By Mike Hathorne

Chair of the Dawson Foundation Stewardship Committee.

Did you know that Dawson has a Foundation whose emphasis is to make a lasting impact for the Kingdom of God using our resources prayerfully and faithfully? One of the ways that the Foundation is able to use these resources is through Dawson's Educational Scholarship program. Because of the generosity and faithfulness of generations of Dawson members, the Foundation has been able to provide financial assistance to deserving students, affording them the opportunity to attend college and advance their education. Since 2005, the Dawson Foundation has awarded a total of \$1,583,384 in scholarships to over 1062 individual students.

These students represent a diverse population of culture and socio-economic backgrounds, however, all share a connection to our mission and ministry. In addition to the educational scholarships, other Dawson Foundation programs include supporting missionaries with a connection that's both local and global, the work of planting churches over the next decade, our BETA College program to equip students with an interest in Christian vocation, and Dawson's television ministry. If you would like to know more about the Dawson Foundation and its opportunities, please contact Randy Poe, Dawson's Business Administrator, at rpoe@dawsonchurch.org.

For the 2022-2023 school year, the Foundation awarded \$121,250 in scholarships to these 59 recipients. Congratulations!

Crestin Abawi

UAB

Rachel Bensinger

Samford University

Salvador Blanco-Perello

Beeson Divinity School

Lexa Botello-Montoya

Birmingham-Southern College

Abigail Bradford

Samford University

Erica Bradley

Samford University

Ashley Chicnes-Pizzaro

UAB

Sury Meza-Cortes

Birmingham-Southern College

Elizabeth Cuenin

New Orleans Baptist Seminary

Shania Dortch

Alabama A&M University

Elisabeth Doss

Auburn University

Jackson Doss

University Of Alabama

Alyssa Elliott

Birmingham-Southern College

Carter Engle

Auburn University

Chloe Engle

Auburn University

Emmalee Floyd

Auburn University

Avery Flynt

Samford University

Catherine Fowler

Auburn University

Hannah Gibson

Samford University

Katherine Rose Gillum

Wofford College

Jalayah Hamilton

Jacksonville State University

Emily Hanrahan

Western Theological Seminary

Emma Harrington

Auburn University

Regan Henkey

Lee University

Davis Holbert

University Of Alabama

Grayson Holbert

Beeson Divinity School

Ainsley Hulsey

University Of Alabama

Alexa Hyde

Mississippi College

Ja'Corey James

Alabama A&M University

Joshua Kaiser

Auburn University

Farrah Karimi

Asbury Theological Seminary

Thomas Blake Jenkins

Southeastern Baptist Seminary

Evan Knight

University Of Alabama

Trey Lemmon

Birmingham-Southern College

Jacob Lindsey

Samford University

Randy Marshall

Coastal Community College

Jessica Natalia Meza-Cortes

Samford University

William Morrison

University Of Alabama

Benjamin Nation

Mississippi State University

Jose Ocampo

Samford University

Carson Osborne

Samford University

Anna McKaime Patrick

Mississippi College

SaraGrace Prophitt

Auburn University

William Alex Prophitt

Auburn University

Evan Raines

University Of Mississippi

Laura Clayton Raines

Auburn University

Jacob Ray

University Of Alabama

Samuel Ray

UAB

Josué (Joshua) del Risco

Midwestern Baptist

Theological Seminary

Andrew Rohdy

Auburn University

Margaret Ann Sanders

Samford University

Madelyn Stocks

Auburn University

Caroline Thompson

Samford University

Danielle Thompson

Cleveland State University

Joshua Wallace

Auburn University

Eleanor (Ellie) Willcutt

University of Mississippi

Peyton Wolf

Samford University

Lillie Young

Auburn University

Stella Young

Auburn University



Photo by Erin Nelson, The Homewood Star/Starnes Media

A WINNING HEART

By Christi Cowan
Communications Associate

ADELE BRANDRUP DOESN'T LET ANYTHING STOP HER FROM ACHIEVING HER GOALS. AT AGE 18, SHE JUST COMPETED IN THE MOVE UNITED JUNIOR NATIONALS PARA SWIMMING COMPETITION IN COLORADO.

Alongside her teammates from the **Lakeshore Foundation**, and through four grueling days of competition, Adele swam the 50m, 100m, 200m, and 400m Freestyle, as well as, the 100m Breaststroke and Backstroke. Incredibly, Adele set a personal record in the breaststroke, which is hard to do with the high altitude in Colorado. The field was full of experienced athletes including Paralympians who competed in the 2016 Paralympics* in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and in the 2021 Tokyo games. "We had the largest cheering group in the stands," said Adele. It felt so good to be able to support each other!"

Adele learned to swim at the age of four at the Lakeshore Foundation, a Paralympic training site where she trains year-round. Adele competes as a vision impaired athlete, as she is Deafblind as a result of having CHARGE syndrome, a rare and complex disability that varies greatly from person to person.

When Adele and her family learned that the Lakeshore Foundation participates in local competitive swim meets, she was ready to jump right in. The swim events happen at the Birmingham Crossplex, and the meets include swimmers of typical ability as well as those with disabilities. "In the last year we've found that the local teams want to include people with disabilities," said her mother, Julie, "so they're learning how to accommodate, whether that's to provide a ramp, or in Adele's case, they provide a tactile start." Using a tactile start allows Adele to be tapped on her shoulder and leg to indicate when to get into place on the block and when to dive in the water, as a replacement for the buzzer sound. Sometimes she uses a strobe light as an indicator.

Julie appreciates how much the local swim teams have embraced Adele, the only vision impaired competitor at the local meets, and Adele's para teammates, the only wheelchair users. "It has been really great to see that the teams who aren't used to competing with people with disabilities becoming more aware of what their needs are, and these swimmers are just as competitive as anybody else," Julie said. "They swim their events, then they cheer on their teammates." According to Julie, swimming has definitely had a positive impact on Adele's life. "This keeps her very busy and it also gives her goals and something to look forward to and like-minded people to do it with," Julie said. "She's just much happier and healthier."

Jumping Into Junior Nationals

After competing in several local swim meets, Adele became interested in traveling to para-specific swim meets. These are national competitions in which her challengers are para swimmers of all disabilities and from all over the country. Adele began as the only traveling competitive swimmer from Lakeshore, but in the last three years, the Lakeshore swim team has grown to include eight traveling para swimmers.

This year was Adele's third time to qualify for the Junior Nationals para swimming meet. One of the instructors who taught Adele to swim is now her coach. "She is a big part of my success and our growing team's success," said Adele. Not only does Adele enjoy competing, but she also enjoys the camaraderie that meets like these provide. "I like Nationals because I get to see friends from other places and we have a lot in common."

* The Paralympics are a series of adaptive sports for people who qualify with physical disabilities, held parallel to the standard Olympics each time they occur.



MOVE UNITED JUNIOR NATIONALS

The second day of the competition was the Paratriathlon. Any athlete with visual impairments competes with a sighted guide. I was a little nervous to meet a new guide, but we quickly came up with a plan for how to communicate on the tandem bike and work together. It was a 200-yard swim, a 6-mile bike ride, and a 1-mile run. It was a hot day, but fun. I was happy to just be in the pool for the next two days.

—Adele Brandrup



Adele medaled in all of her Junior National events.

Changing Lanes

If you're already not impressed at Adele's accomplishments, get ready. Adele has recently expanded her focus into paratriathlons. Last summer, she attended a camp where she had her first taste of the event, which includes a 500-meter swim, a 12-mile bike ride, and a 5k run. This adaptive version is referred to as a sprint triathlon and is shorter than a standard triathlon. It's also one of the races she competed in while she was at the Junior Nationals.

Adele likes the open water swims because there are no restrictive walls, and she loves going fast on the bike. To ensure that the competitors are safe during the sprint triathlon, each vision impaired competitor is provided with a guide. For the swim portion of the race, Adele would be tethered to a sighted guide with about two feet of rope between them. Then, she joins the guide on a tandem bicycle where the guide's role is visual pilot in charge of steering so that Adele can focus on pedaling as fast as possible. Finally, Adele is tethered again for the 5k run. "People think that triathlons are hard, but I really enjoy pushing myself and learning new things," she said.

Together at Dawson

As with any disability, being born with CHARGE syndrome comes with many challenges. But being Deafblind has never deterred Adele or her family. Just before Adele began the 1st Grade, Julie felt it would be helpful to visit Dawson, for Adele and for her younger sister, Margo. "I just liked the idea of them being able to be in Sunday School and for both to have a place to go," Julie said. The Hearts & Hands ministry would turn out to be a wonderful resource. They visited with the Hearts & Hands coordinator at that time to get a preview of how the ministry would work. "She just made us feel so welcome and so we couldn't wait to start."

The family was familiar with Dawson already. Julie had frequented the Family Recreation Center while attending Samford University and had attended worship services regularly with friends. When Adele was born and diagnosed with CHARGE syndrome, she spent three months in the hospital.

During that time, a friend connected Julie and her husband, Jay, to Neal Schooley, who was then serving as Dawson's Executive Pastor. Neal visited them in the hospital. "He didn't know us at all, but his visits were just so nice," Julie said. "He just knew how to listen, and he knew what to say without saying much."

In the summer before her 6th Grade year, Adele attended KidLife (which had an Olympic theme that year!) and also another VBS for Deaf and hard of hearing kids. It was then that Adele accepted Christ as her Lord and Savior. Her baptism was planned for the next month and was held after morning worship. Many of Adele's friends and family members were in attendance. "Everyone stood on the stage so I could see them, and my cousins and sister led a song. Half the people knew sign language and everyone else just sang along," Adele said. "My baptism was a very special day."

A Helping Hand

When Adele isn't busy with swimming, she enjoys spending her Sunday mornings helping out in the Hearts & Hands room. She also volunteered with the ministry during KidLife this year, despite having just returned from a swim meet in the wee hours of the first morning. Adele applauds Hearts & Hands Coordinator Ruth Ann Turner for giving her a place where she can have a positive impact. Ruth Ann tries to make sure that every buddy who is assigned to a child is a good match, and Adele likes knowing exactly how she can help. "If someone is in a wheelchair, I like getting them where they need to be," she said. "If someone needs a break from loud noise, I like that I can help them take a break in the Hearts & Hands room."

Because she has her own experience with a disability, Adele is able to connect with younger disabled people in a unique and personal way. Several Hearts & Hands participants use an augmentative communication device, commonly referred to as "talkers" to communicate. This is great for Adele, because she is already familiar with that device and used one herself. Adele uses her disability to help others and wants to be a positive role model for other kids with disabilities.



Just For Fun

When she's not training, Adele doesn't have a whole lot of spare time, but just like every other teenage girl, she enjoys texting with her friends. Adele's communication needs have changed over the years. During her elementary school years, she used a talker. Currently she uses American Sign Language (ASL) at school. When chatting with friends who don't know ASL, Adele spends a lot of time texting or writing notes. She can lip read some and will occasionally speak orally to people with whom she's more familiar. At home, the family typically uses cued speech to communicate. Cued speech is a method in which the speaker uses handshapes to form phonemic codes for sounds.

When asked about other activities she enjoys, Adele said, "Adding the triathlon competitions has been fun this year and I have been running and riding a stationary bike at Lakeshore more often. This summer, I went to a camp specifically for college-bound deaf and hard-of-hearing students. It was three weeks in Huntsville, and it was good practice for independence. I also like to read books. Most of my favorites are about people overcoming challenging circumstances. I just finished reading *Haben: The Deafblind Woman Who Conquered Harvard Law*. I also like to watch funny videos on YouTube."

What's Next

Now that the Junior Nationals para swimming competition has concluded, Adele is focused on school. This fall, she will be entering her senior year at Homewood High School, where she will continue to swim with her school's swim team. She will also keep training at Lakeshore and participating in local meets with them. "There are not many vision impaired athletes competing out there and that is something I hope will change. And there are definitely not many athletes who are both deaf and vision impaired. It is hard but it is fun, and competing makes me feel like I can do anything!"

There's even more exciting news for Adele and the Lakeshore swim team for 2023. "The team is excited about next year because the Move United Junior Nationals recently announced it will be held in Birmingham next summer! Over 250 athletes usually participate in the various sporting events."

When asked about the Paralympics, Adele says she will make that call when the time is right. "For now, I'm going to concentrate on fall swim meets with

my high school and hopefully going to Para Nationals this December. Since I am a senior in high school, I have a lot of things to figure out."

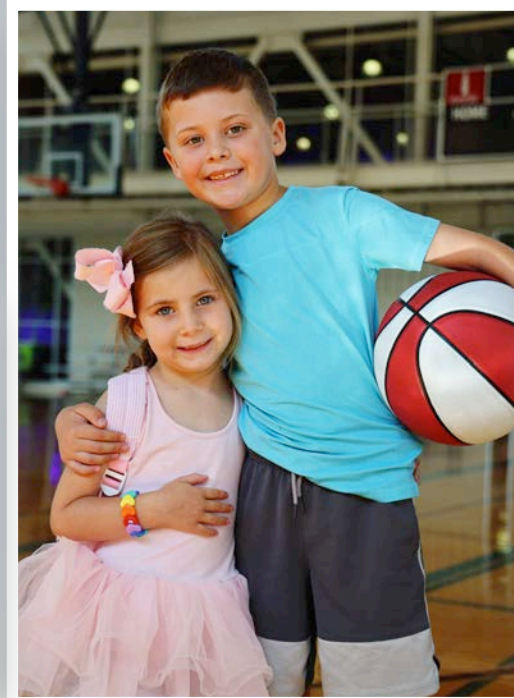
Adele has already been accepted to attend the University of Montevallo and is considering swimming competitively in college. "Many colleges are now working with adaptive athletes so that could be exciting," she said. She's also interested in a career that would let her work with people who have disabilities, perhaps in a school or sports setting. One thing is for sure: she's not letting anything get in her way. "It can be hard at times, but I am determined to go past the challenges," she said. "I don't think about my disability much. I am just a girl, a person who is Deafblind, going through life."

Adele may say that she's "just a girl going through life" but she is truly so much more. She's a fierce and strong competitor who won't let anything keep her from achieving her goals. She's a friend who's always willing to lend a helping hand. She is an inspiration to us all. In a word, Adele is extraordinary.



Christi Cowan has been on Dawson staff as a graphic designer since 2017. She holds a Master's degree from The University of Alabama with a concentration in journalism. In her free time, she likes to read, watch movies, and spend time with her cats. She loves all things Disney and will probably beat you at Disney trivia.

MORE SCENES OF SUMMER





Bye Bye
DALLAS

*Hello
Birmingham!*



It's Nice to Be Back in Birmingham.

Jacob and Caroline
tied the knot on
May 12th, 2018.



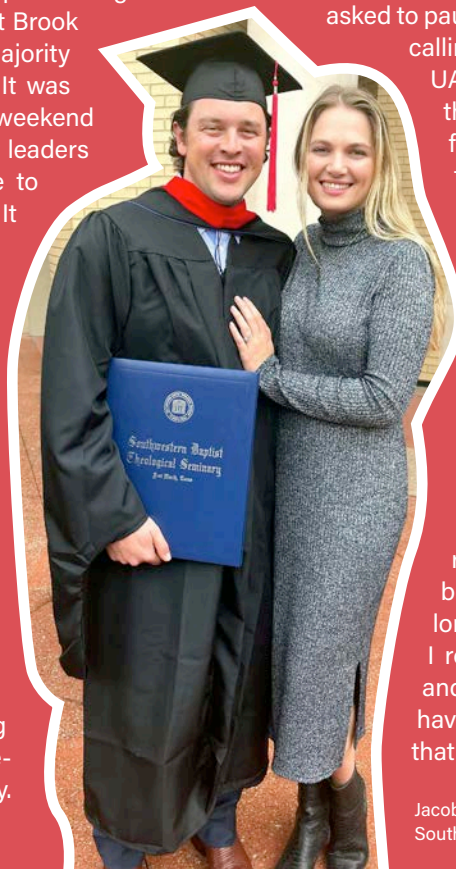
It's nice to be home—the hills, the trees, natural beauty, proximity to family, familiar places, old friends, cherished memories, new things to see and do. With the size and speed of Dallas in the rear view, being reacquainted with the charm and character of Birmingham has deepened our appreciation for the city that raised us. And we still love it here.

Joy in the present and hope for the future now occupy a place rich with nostalgia. That has been no more evident to me than recently when my mother-in-law, Sheri, held up her phone to record Caroline singing as an alum with the Chapel Choir Ensemble at the Home Concert or how both of our moms know with stopwatch precision how far it is now from their front porch to ours.

I can't tell you how nice it is to be back at Dawson. As Pastor David announced on our first Sunday back, Caroline is one of Dawson's own. People that disciplined her throughout her life come up to us and speak every Sunday now. Friends from childhood and college have welcomed us back. And people that have come here since we've been gone have been so pleasant to meet. As I reflect on the incredible inter-generational legacy of Dawson, my hope is to welcome people in with open arms in the same way that I was welcomed.

In a recent sermon, Pastor David made an illustration about Birmingham having a Baptist church on every corner. By way of moving and ministry, I had a great head start to being involved in most of them—until I found my way to Dawson.

I made a profession of faith and was baptized at age 10 at FBC Pleasant Grove. I had stints at Brook Hills and Shades, but spent the majority of my formative years at Valleydale. It was there that God used a Disciple Now weekend and incredible Student Ministry adult leaders to grow my faith and challenge me to walk in the identity I have in Christ. It was there that Galatians 2:20 started to inform my life: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me." I was also blessed with several coaches at Oak Mountain who demonstrated a Christ-like witness and prioritized our growth as young men over our development as athletes. At a World Changers trip when I was 16, I responded to a call to vocational ministry. We weren't doing anything overly spiritual, we were actually re-roofing a house in the middle of July.



It is in those mundane moments when you've been asked to pause and serve others that you discern God's calling most vividly. When I started college at UAB, my father-in-law, Bill, further cultivated that call and mentored me. It was through a future minister's round table in Bill's ministry that I met Dr. Gary Fenton. Being from the Oak Mountain area, I had very little context about Dawson as a church, but I did know that it was an incredible place to serve. I worked as a student ministry intern and then served as a church planting intern in Maine for the first year of Go Love Tell. A year after that, I joined the Recreation staff as Associate Recreation Minister. I proposed to Caroline several months into my tenure and everyone that knew her future plans read the writing on the wall that I would be following her to Dallas. Our year of long-distance engagement was a time that I relied on the community I had at Dawson and am grateful for the relationships that I still have from that season. It was during that time that Dawson truly became home to me.

Jacob graduated with a Master of Divinity from the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in December 2021.



Jacob and Caroline with their Legacy Church Plano Life Group at their goodbye BBQ.

Many have asked, "What have you and Caroline been up to the last five years?" When reflecting on our chapter as Texans, I think about our trips to the Fort Worth Stockyards Rodeo, two-stepping to Cody Johnson at Cowboys Red River, seeing King George live in concert, walking the San Antonio River Walk up to the Alamo, feeling the fury of the West Texas wind as we trekked through Amarillo, waiting in line for four hours at Franklin's BBQ in Austin, or attempting my own brisket in the subzero temps that shut down the power grid last February. Being a little over an hour from Waco, we took family and friends who visited us on the HGTV pilgrimage to Magnolia. We even took a stab at mimicking the real Chip and Joanna Gaines when I was working in K-12 General Contracting and we had just bought our first home. Turns out, there was more work than we could have ever imagined in our DIY

“Many have asked—what have you and Caroline been up to the last five years?”

fixer upper. It was totally worth it though for the lessons, memories and after photos we now cherish. Among other things, it was fun to be in a place we could unironically wear a cowboy hat and boots and get swept into the lore of Lone Star pride. But what we cherished most about Texas were the friends that we made who became like family to us. The word Texas translates to “friends,” which was evidenced to us by the culture of hospitality and the infrastructure that sprawls to welcome outsiders looking for opportunity in droves.

In the early going, the idea of starting over in a new (and in some ways overwhelming) place strengthened our faith and marriage and refined our respective callings. Over time, God provided the type of community that makes it difficult to leave a place. We had put roots down. 1 Thessalonians 2:8 encapsulated our feeling: “So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were

Roll Tide!!!



Skiing in Beaver Creek, CO.

ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.” This Scripture has permeated our heart for ministry.

Aside from our efforts to proclaim the Gospel in Dallas, we have also evangelized our friends in Texas in a few other areas—smoked pork, BBQ chicken, sauced ribs, and Alabama white sauce. Being raised on Bob Sykes, living under the steady stream of Dreamland smoke in Southside during college, and making a weekly trip to Saw’s in Avondale turned me into a BBQ fanatic. Texas did little to deter that passion, just broadened my pallet. I’ve found that most people are more than willing to tolerate my BBQ analysis so long as they are invited to sample the fare. I am primed for weekends in my 30s with the addition of a Big Green Egg to our back patio. Beyond the obsessive tinkering with flow and fire and endless experimentation, BBQ to me presents the best excuse to



The Alamo, San Antonio.

scale your dinner invite list up to max capacity and bless your guests’ tastebuds with something you labored over. It has also served me as a lasting metaphor for groups ministry and church life in general. The ordinance of potluck is a long-standing tradition, and I relish the opportunity to continue at it as I join your Life Group over a meal or a Sunday morning hallway brunch.

Similar to Dallas, Birmingham is undergoing a population influx of its own. Young adults are coming to our growing city seeking education, jobs, and opportunity. This is accompanied with the daunting need to find belonging. I am confident that our church stands ready to welcome these young adults in. As we go out and engage with them, they will find all of the new things happening at Dawson that we have discovered in our first few months back—the resonant pulpit ministry, rich doctrinal worship, generational legacy, attentive connection, incredible ministries, and service-hearted people committed to sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. To say that it is an exciting time to be back at Dawson would be a massive understatement.



Jacob Pierce is the Minister to Young Adults at Dawson. He and his wife Caroline have been married since 2018 and currently reside in Vestavia. He holds a B.S. in Business Management from UAB and a M.Div. from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Both he and Caroline have roots at Dawson and are thrilled to be back after living in Dallas.



Jacob baptized his younger brother Mitchell in 2018.



Puppy (Boulder) makes three!

BEHIND THE SCENES

By Alyssa Witt
Communications Associate



Far left: Zac Upton, Wheat Bailey, Drew Romanowski and Isaac Graham prepare for the Sunday morning worship service.

WEEK AFTER WEEK, DAWSON'S PRODUCTION TEAM MAKES SURE YOU CAN HEAR AND SEE PERFECTLY. AND THAT IS NO EASY TASK. ALL OF IT WITH GRACE.

Sunday morning worship at Dawson is a wonderful time spent together as a church family. We worship through music and prayer, and through studying God's Word. There is much that goes into a Sunday morning worship service, from Pastor David prayerfully planning his sermon, to the Music & Worship Team preparing to lead the congregation. There are countless others who spend time during the week (and even weeks prior) planning for a Sunday morning at Dawson. But there's another group whose main responsibility is to facilitate the service in real time. If you've ever wondered about what's happening behind the scenes, or even if those thoughts have never crossed your mind, you may like to know about the talented team of men and women hard at work ensuring a seamless worship experience from start to finish.

You may never actually see Dawson's Production Team in action on Sunday mornings. They are a stealthy bunch, made up of both staff members and volunteers. They're the ones controlling the lighting, sound, and microphones in the Sanctuary. They're the volunteers operating the video cameras and ProPresenter for the screens in the Sanctuary and for livestream. They also record and edit the worship services each week and create the closed captioning text shown with the broadcast the following Sunday on CBS42.

And just when you think they can take a breather, you realize that Sunday mornings and Wednesday night rehearsals aren't the only times this team is at work. They are there, behind the scenes, making sure that any and all events go off without a hitch: KidLife, Candlelight, Ballet Recitals, Collide Musicals, to name just a few. The Production Team typically arrives hours before each service or event to set the stage, test the lights and cameras, and make sure that the sound quality and volume are perfectly set. Once the event is over, the team members are usually the last to leave as they shut everything down and prepare for what's next.

Though their hard work is often unseen by others, Dawson's Production Team is not working for the recognition or praise of others; they are doing it to serve and glorify the Lord. This is affirmed by Dawson's new Production Manager, Zac Upton. Zac, who joined Dawson's staff in January of this year, graduated from The University of Montevallo in 2013 with a Bachelor of Music. He served as the Audio Director at First Baptist Church Montgomery for over eight years before coming to Dawson to lead the team.

Zac is passionate about his work and the role that the Production Team plays. "The goal of the Production Team is to provide the highest quality production support for the Sunday services, as well as helping various ministries achieve an elevated production value for their many services and events," said Zac. He believes that his work is a calling. When he and his wife, Abie, learned about the opportunity at Dawson, they were thrilled that this calling allowed them to return to Birmingham. "Serving in this capacity at such an incredible church, really felt like where the Lord was leading me." When Zac is not at the church, he and Abie enjoy going to movies and concerts and hanging out with their dog, Stevie.



Zac is not alone. Within the past 18 months, others have also felt called to be a staff member on Dawson's Production Team. Drew Romanowski, Dawson's Lead Audio Engineer, was hired in September of 2021. In his role, Drew is mainly responsible for all audio and lighting systems, but he also shares his talents in other ways. Drew helps lead and train the new production associates and interns and helps to prepare them for their next steps in their production career. Drew is originally from Nashville, Tennessee, and received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Music Technology from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. (He also officially studied trumpet.) During and after college, Drew worked at a studio in Nashville in the heart of Music Row at Parlor Productions. Drew is a member of the Audio Engineering Society and holds a Pro Tools User Certification. In his spare time, Drew plays multiple instruments with various groups in town. He is also one of three members in a local bluegrass and folk trio, Cawlings, where he sings and plays acoustic guitar. Drew is interested in all kinds of musical genres.

Isaac Graham, as a full-time production associate, assists with audio, lights, cameras, videos, and anything else that is needed. Isaac is originally from Clanton, Alabama, and recently moved to the Birmingham area after finishing his bachelor's degree in Communications from Jacksonville State University (JSU). Isaac started his career in broadcasting and production at JSU while serving as the Program Director for the campus radio station. He began attending Dawson towards the end of 2020 and was tapped as an intern for the Production Team during the summer of 2021. From there, Isaac moved to a part-time role during his final semester at JSU and became a full time Production Team member in December of 2021.

Wheat Bailey and Craig Cambron are two of Dawson's newest production associates, with Wheat joining the team earlier this year and Craig arriving in June. Wheat grew up in Knoxville, Tennessee, and is in his final year at Samford University majoring in Worship Leadership. Outside of work, Wheat enjoys photography and exploring the food culture around Birmingham. Craig grew up in Pelham, Alabama, and graduated from Jacksonville State University in 2020 with a Communications degree, focus in Broadcasting. Craig has mostly worked in Sports Radio over the past 4-5 years. Last year he jumped into production in the church setting and has had a passion for it ever since. Craig's role is to help with whatever is needed with audio, video, or lighting. He is also a big sports fanatic and will never shy away from talking football, basketball, or baseball. "I love serving God and am very excited for this new opportunity to use my passion and knowledge to work here at Dawson!"



When B.C. Romano was hired as Dawson's Director of Video Media in June of 2007, George W. Bush was the President, Apple was just days away from launching the eponymous iPhone, and gas was only \$2.08 a gallon. Born and raised in Vestavia Hills, B.C. had recently graduated from the University of Alabama with a degree in Telecommunication and Film, and he was excited to put his skills to the test each week at Dawson. Not long after coming aboard, he was hired by the Southeastern Conference (SEC) where he has been the Director of Video and Creative Services since 2009. Fifteen years later, many things may have changed, but B.C.'s steadfast dedication to working in the production booth on Sunday mornings never has. You will find him there almost every week with the exception of the first Sunday in December. Though B.C. has different responsibilities during his workweek at the SEC, his main responsibilities at Dawson include producing and editing the weekly TV broadcast for each Sunday service. B.C. is married to Ginny, and they have a daughter, Harper Anne, and a son, Benny.



When you pull back the curtain, it's easy to see how Dawson's Production Team is using their talents and gifts to serve the Lord. This goes not only for the staff, but also for our dedicated volunteers—several of whom have served faithfully for many years. "Production at Dawson is a ministry in and of itself," said Zac. "Our team's talent and dedication are apparent every Sunday and also with all that happens throughout the week. They have such an incredible servant's heart to share the Gospel within the walls of the church and also by breaking through those walls and reaching many others with our livestream and broadcast. On top of that, we have an amazing group of volunteers who are committed, week in and week out. We are truly blessed here at Dawson."



Alyssa Witt is a Mississippi native who landed in Birmingham by way of Samford University. She serves on Dawson's Communications Team as a Media Associate. Alyssa and her husband, Caleb, are expecting their first child in September 2022. She loves ice cream, Lilo & Stitch, and all things 90s. Watch out, she randomly bursts into song at any given moment.

THANK YOU

for your faithful years of service.
We couldn't do it without you!

Want to know more about these
incredible volunteers?

Look for #SundaysatDawson on
Facebook and Instagram.



Wes Gray
30 years



Philip Gwaltney
18 years



Robert Gwaltney
19 years



Steve Lloyd
20 years



Zack Monk
1 year



Caleb Mullis
6 years



Tasha Nation
24 years



Chip Treadwell
9 years



Ryan Wilhelm
1 year



Steve Wilhelm
15 years

BASKETBALL + BIBLE STUDY

By **Kasey Hagen**
Associate Recreation Minister

**ON ANY GIVEN DAY
YOU CAN WALK
INTO DAWSON'S
FAMILY RECREATION
CENTER (FRC),
AND YOU WILL
FIND SOME FORM
OF BASKETBALL
HAPPENING.**



From the morning pick-up games and basketball trainings, to the various basketball leagues, camps, and multiple games spontaneously started by a group of players, basketball is happening. On the surface it may seem like it's just another activity, I would say that the Lord is doing so much more than we could ever think, see or imagine through **Dawson's Basketball Ministry**.

When I think about basketball at Dawson, my mind always goes to Mark 4:26–29. We know how to plant seeds, but we don't know exactly how God makes the seeds grow. That's the case with our Basketball Ministry. We have members who have been playing basketball at Dawson for over 15 years. The relationships the players have built with one another and with our staff are strong. But what is next? God has continued to bring these guys and even new members to Dawson Recreation. What an opportunity to have so many lost individuals coming onto Dawson's campus each day! And we want everyone who walks through our doors to feel, sense, and see the love of Christ in this building in everything we do.

This year we began having a morning devotion before the games began. It was a short time of devotion and prayer. Not long after starting this, one of the players expressed his gratitude for this time. He shared that many of the guys playing basketball together had never heard these stories, specifically, the one we had talked about that day, the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000. What a privilege it has been to share these stories through people's love of basketball. But also, what a sobering reality that there are many who have yet to hear of the Gospel and of Jesus.

Eventually, this time of devotion and prayer grew. One of the players requested that we do a Bible study on the life of Jesus, and so our Bible study began. Every other Thursday morning we have players that will head downstairs for Bible study after they play basketball. Todd Harrington, former staff member of Dawson, helps lead this time. When you ask Todd why he is involved with basketball here and investing in the lives of these guys, he says:

"For the longest time, I viewed this time in the morning as a time for me to unwind, release stress, and have fun. I didn't think about being intentional with my relationships nor did I think about being a missionary. That all changed several years ago. I thought what if I take something that I really enjoy, like basketball, and see how I can be more intentional with the relationships I can make while playing it. Through this effort (Thursday Bible Studies), we are beginning to take the horizontal conversations more vertical. We are talking about the identity of Jesus, the work of Jesus, and what it means to be a follower of Jesus. Some of these men are learning for the first time about the Gospel—the good news that they are loved and valued, and that in Christ, they can find forgiveness. Some of these men are becoming closer friends of mine and I look forward to future fishing and camping trips together. Many are eager to learn more about Jesus, and this

is encouraging. I am grateful for the opportunity to partner with Dawson in these efforts of being missionaries in our everyday lives."

While God is using the Basketball Ministry at Dawson to reach those who may not be reached otherwise, He is also using it in the lives of His disciples. We have found that the gym is a place to learn and grow in how we can be intentional in all that we do. It is our privilege and joy as followers of Jesus to spread the seeds of the Gospel, in word and deed. We do not yet know how God will grow it. We may not see what is happening under the surface. But we are seeing the result of the Spirit at work, even after 15 years for some.

One of the players requested that we do a Bible study on the life of Jesus.

On any given week, Dawson Recreation will see roughly 1,000 individuals come through the doors, with the majority checking in to play basketball. This is only a small picture of what God is doing through our Basketball Ministry. Every fall and spring we host a men's basketball league on Tuesday and Thursday nights. Before each game, the teams and their guests all hear the Gospel. During this time we get to build relationships with all of the guys and their families. But there's more. We have multiple basketball camps every summer for kids who have completed kindergarten through the 6th grade. These campers hear the Gospel while learning some

incredible skills from our amazing basketball director, Mo Finley. Some of those kids also take private lessons with Mo. These students are not only learning how to become a better athlete, but they are also learning what it looks like to be Christ-like on the court. Basketball is opening the door for so many different relationships with people of all ages, many who may not know Jesus at all.

These stories are only a glimpse. Just as Todd saw an opportunity to be intentional in something that he enjoys, what is it that you might be able to leverage for the sake of the Gospel? We believe that God has given us all different interests and passions for a purpose. If basketball is yours, please join us on Thursday mornings for basketball and Bible study. You'll be glad you did!



Kasey Hagen serves as Dawson's Associate Minister of Recreation. She grew up in Birmingham and graduated from The University of Alabama with a degree in Social Work. She completed an MA in Discipleship from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in 2020. Kasey is passionate about seeing the Gospel multiplied as believers are encouraged and equipped to share with their neighbors and the nations.



Keith Vinson has served as Dawson's Director of Information Systems for 22 years, but did you know that he also sings tenor in the Sanctuary Choir? In his spare time, Keith loves "tinkering" in his workshop, building his own telescope, using his ham radio, and riding his motorcycle. He also loves spending time with his family, playing the banjo, and leading a Tuesday morning prayer group. Keith definitely could be called a 21st century renaissance man. Read on to learn more!

TEN MINUTE TALK

A Series of Rapid-Fire Questions With Dawson Staff Members

Where is your hometown?

Atmore, Alabama.

What brings you joy in life?

My grandchildren.

What activities do you enjoy with your grandkids?

Playing outside.

Are you outdoorsy?

No, not really. I do like the outdoors, but I like air conditioning more.

Early bird or night owl?

Night owl.

Favorite genre of music?

Classical music.

If you were a flavor what would you be?

Key Lime.

Where did you go to college?

Auburn, and University of Tennessee for graduate school.

First job?

Texas Instruments software engineer.

What did you want to be when you were a kid?

An astronaut, or at least a military pilot. If not that, a science officer or engineer on a starship (Mr. Spock or Scotty).

What was your favorite cartoon as a kid?

Johnny Quest

What was your childhood nickname?

Keith. My parents gave me a one-syllable name so I would not be called by any nicknames.

What is your life's theme song?

Blinded By The Light (Mannfred Mann version; throw in a little double-entendre with Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus. Hey, it was very popular when I was a teenager!)

Favorite superhero?

Probably Batman. He's doesn't have real superpowers. He's a genius and he's able to make things that give him an edge.

If you could have any superpower, what would it be and why?

To be able to fly; I've always wanted to fly. It would be great to do it cheaply, without the expensive airplane.

Who would play you in the movie about your life?

Kevin James; some folks call me "Kevin," so, we're halfway there, already.

Favorite movie quote?

I guess it's from Clint Eastwood from *Dirty Harry*: "A man's got to know his limitations."

If you were an actor, would you do your own stunts?

Probably not. I'd wind up hurting myself. (See answer above.)

What were you doing in the 80s?

I was going to graduate school, working as an engineer, and we were having our first child.

Hard shell or soft shell tacos?

Soft shell. Hard shells are just messy. They crumble, and everything disintegrates.

If it rained food, what would you want to fall from the sky?

Hush puppies.

When eating a brownie, do you prefer an edge piece or a center piece?

Center piece. I like them softer.

What's your biggest phobia?

Snakes; I agree with Indiana Jones: "I HATE 'em!"

What person from history would you like to meet?

Ronald Reagan.

What's the silliest way you've ever injured yourself?

I cut my leg with a chainsaw that was not running. Took a chunk out of my leg. I let it fall, and it chopped through my pants.

Do you have any hidden talents?

I do like to draw. I do cartoons and architectural drawings and CAD/CAM. Self-taught, so no good.

Where do you really want to go on vacation?

Alaska. I'd love to go back!

Do you collect anything?

Cameras and typewriters, just about any that are old.

Where are you the most relaxed?

At home.

What's the hardest thing you've ever had to fix?

Remodeling our master bathroom solo after having torn it out. Doing all of the work was one of the hardest jobs I've ever done. It took me a year.

If you were invited to ride a rocket into space, would you go?

Yes!

Can you fold a fitted sheet?

Yes, I do know how to fold a fitted sheet.

Why are round pizzas always in square boxes?

It's just easier to manufacture a square box.

Solve the great toilet paper debate: over or under?

Over, the way it was designed in the patent.

Three words you would use to describe yourself.

"I love technology" (from the end credits song in Napoleon Dynamite).



WEEKLY WORSHIP SERVICE FOR 18-29 YEAR OLDS

AUXANO

BEGINS SEPTEMBER 6, 2022
EVERY TUESDAY | 7:00 P.M.
DAWSON CHAPEL

DAWSONCHURCH.ORG/AUXANO

SONG | PRAYER | WORD



DAWSON
Family of Faith

Dawson Memorial Baptist Church
1114 Oxmoor Road
Birmingham, AL 35209
(205) 871-7324
dawsonchurch.org

Non Profit Org.
U.S. Postage

PAID

Permit No. 2963
Birmingham, AL

MIDWEEK BIBLE STUDY

THE
APOSTLES
CREED

BEGINS SEPTEMBER 7 | WEDNESDAYS AT 11:00 A.M. & 6:00 P.M.

DAWSONCHURCH.ORG/APOSTLESCREED