



# BEECH HAVEN

## BAPTIST CHURCH

MAGNIFY CHRIST,  
BUILD GREAT COMMISSIONARIES

Volume 43, Number 7

Newsletter of Beech Haven Baptist Church

July 2021

## Worship Center Project Update

We finally had a good bit of activity this past week—most of it we wanted! This activity included demolition of front windows and outdated wall heaters and filling those in, security upgrades, and reframing certain portions of the balcony to allow for more seating. Seeing action was encouraging!

An update on gifts and pledges will come out later this week.

We did get a big surprise with the windows: discovered a lateral beam behind the transom! This discovery definitely is a monkey wrench. Our architect, general contractor, and Pella windows are conferring to identify the best workarounds. Please seriously pray for their creativity and continued progress overall!

Thank you for your faithful and generous support of this project as your investments of prayer and financial resources are preparing a wonderful place for the worship of God and the proclamation of the gospel.



## Retired Senior Adult Ministry Events

### Summer Luncheon with Guest Speaker

**Tuesday, August 3**

Fellowship Hall

Lunch catered by Master's Table

Guest Speaker:

**Jerrell Beatty**, Pastor Tate's Creek Baptist Church (Toccoa) and master storyteller

Cost: \$10

Reservations required. **Deadline is July 20.**

[Use this form](#) for reservations or call the church office at 706.548.2246 or [email Pam](#).

### Jubal Chorus Concert

(combined Jubals and Jubalheirs)

First Baptist Church Snellville

**Thursday, August 5**

Transportation, via church bus, is available. Bus leaves Beech Haven at 3:00 pm, with a dinner stop in Bethlehem, and returns about 10:00 pm.

To reserve a place on the bus, call the church office at 706.548.2246 or email Pam or [use this form](#).

The concert is free and a non-ticketed event.

A free will offering will be take to support the mission endeavors of the Jubal Chorus.

## Ladies Night Out

**Tuesday, July 13**

**Friends Jefferson Grill**

30 Sycamore Street, Jefferson 30549

6:00 pm

Dessert & devotion at the home of  
Elana Worth

### Ladies Fall Bible Study

Tuesdays, September 7 - November 9

9:30 - 11:30 am/Fellowship Hall

**Better: A Study of Hebrews**

by Jen Wilkin

Cost: \$16 for study book

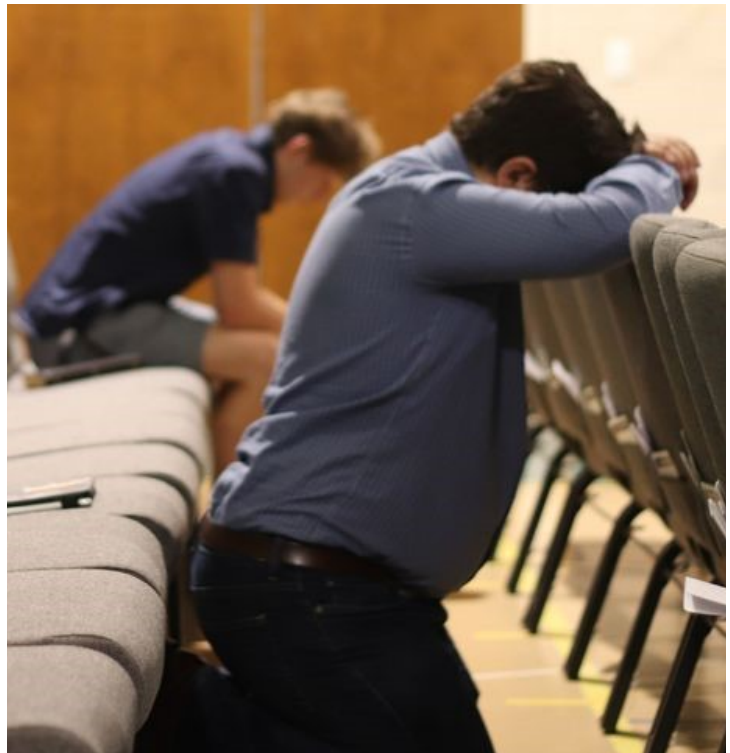
Register online at [BeechHaven.org](http://BeechHaven.org) or

email [Pam here](#) or [Jean here](#)

or call the office at 706.548.2246.

Childcare available by reservation only:

[heather@beechhaven.net](mailto:heather@beechhaven.net)



## Prayer Night

Wednesdays @ 6:30 pm in the Gym

(Children of all ages will attend the Prayer Night with their families).

[Submit a prayer request here.](#)



Online giving available [www.BeechHaven.org/give](http://www.BeechHaven.org/give)

Use your banks bill pay which ensures 100% of your online gift is received by the church.



**Give by Text**  
**706-550-9534**

### The Money Side of Adulthood

An evening conversation for young adult women

**Thursday, July 15**

6:30 - 8:00 pm

Fellowship Hall

Presenters Leslie Sinyard and Sherrie Campbell will share information on budgeting and investing. There will be plenty of time for Q&A.

Ladies, do you have questions about how to manage your financial independence as you move into and through adulthood? This conversation is for you!

### Student Ministry on Mission in June



Middle School Students on Mission  
June 14-17

Middle School students served with **City of Hope** organizing their warehouse and distributing meals to families in need. They also worked with **Chosen for Life Ministries** creating 60 gift bags for Athens Department of Family & Children's Services. Each student wrote letters of encouragement including scripture with the notes. High School students served as leaders in Vacation Bible School.

### Student Ministry July Calendar

♦ Wednesday, July 7 - trip to Gwinnett Braves Game. Leave church at 5:30 pm. Cost: \$15 plus money for food. **Spots are limited to 30.**

[Register here.](#)

♦ Wednesday, July 28 - trip to Stone Mountain Laser Show. Leave church at 6:00 pm. Cost: \$5 plus money for food. **Spots are limited to 30.** [Register here.](#)

*With Sympathy*

**Robert & Leslie Sinyard**  
on the death of her father  
**Thomas Smith**

**Pam Grimard**  
on the death of her husband  
**Joseph**

### Wednesday Night Supper

[Reservations Required](#) (by Noon on Tuesday)

5:30 - 6:15 p.m. - Fellowship Hall

Cost: Adults - \$4.50

Children (under 10) - \$2.00

Family Maximum - \$16.00

**July 7**

Hot Dogs, Tater Tots, Salad  
Ice Cream Sandwich

**July 14**

Ham, Turkey, Roast Beef Subs  
Chips, Brownie

**July 21**

Spaghetti Bake, Caesar Salad  
Garlic Bread, Cookie

**July 28**

Pizza and Salad

### Supper Reservations

- Complete the Sunday morning Worship Guide Insert, and place it in the offering box, or
- Call the church office at 706.548.2246 by **noon on Tuesday**,
- Email [atolbert@beechhaven.net](mailto:atolbert@beechhaven.net) by **noon on Tuesday**, or
- Submit a digital reservation at [BeechHaven.org/events](http://BeechHaven.org/events)
- Request **Permanent Reservation** status using any of the above methods.
- If you have made reservations and do not cancel, we still need you to pay for your meal. Thanks!

Save the dates!

# upcoming events



<b>Family Night Supper</b>	Wednesdays	5:30 in the Fellowship Hall <a href="http://BeechHaven.org/events">BeechHaven.org/events</a> for reservations
<b>Prayer Night</b>	Wednesdays	6:30 pm in the Gym
<b>Students to Gwinnet Braves Game</b>	Wednesday, July 7	Leave church at 5:30. Cost: \$15 plus money for food. <a href="http://BeechHaven.org/events">Register at BeechHaven.org/events</a>
<b>Ladies Night Out</b>	Tuesday, July 14	6:00 pm @ Friends Jefferson Grill Dessert and devotion at home of Elana Worth
<b>Church Conference</b>	Wednesday, July 15	After Prayer Night
<b>Discover Beech Haven Lunch</b>	Sunday, July 18	Immediately after 11:15 am Worship @ the home of Pastor Mills. Register by Tuesday, July 14 <a href="#">here</a> .
<b>High School to Indiantown, FL</b>	July 18 - 24	Leadership/Mission Trip. Assisting with VBS & Youth Ministry at Iglesias de Bautista de Indiantown
<b>Children CentriKid Camp</b>	July 19 - 23	Registration closed.
<b>Students to Stone Mountain</b>	Wednesday, July 28	Leave church at 6. Cost: \$5 plus money for food; register <a href="http://BeechHaven.org/events">BeechHaven.org/events</a>
<b>Mommies &amp; Preschoolers Play Date</b>	Friday, July 30	12:00 noon - Children's Worship Room

## Ministry Staff

David Mills..... Pastor..... dmills@beechhaven.net  
 John Walker..... Executive Pastor of Pastoral Care & Operations..... jwalker@beechhaven.net  
 Chris Orr..... Executive Pastor of Worship & Ministries..... corr@beechhaven.net  
 Shondarius Williams..... College Minister..... shond@beechhaven.net  
 Nathan Evans..... Student & Connections Minister..... nevans@beechhaven.net  
 Jennifer Adolphson..... Children's Ministry Director..... jennifer@beechhaven.net  
 Heather Harris..... Preschool Ministry Associate..... heather@beechhaven.net  
 Lizzie Charlton..... Children's Associate..... lizzie@beechhaven.net  
 Jonathan Tolbert..... Young Adult Associate..... jtolbert@beechhaven.net  
 Stewart Simms..... Pastor Emeritus..... ssimms@beechhaven.net

## Support Staff

Glenda DiGanci..... Business Manager..... office@beechhaven.net  
 Pam Ratti..... Communications Coordinator..... publisher@beechhaven.net  
 Amy Tolbert..... Administrative Assistant..... atolbert@beechhaven.net  
 Bill Dickerson..... Property Manager..... maintenance@beechhaven.net

## Follow Beech Haven

[www.BeechHaven.org](http://www.BeechHaven.org)

Beech Haven  
Baptist Church



Beech Haven Baptist Church

TheBeechAthens



# From the Pastor's Pen

As promised on January 24, I want to share with you a rationale for abbreviating our church name to Beech Haven Church on the road sign, social media accounts and website. Since sharing this in January, staff, deacons, and I have had some very productive conversations and have received some helpful questions. Thanks to those of you who provided feedback.

Before explaining why a name abbreviation is necessary, I'll share pieces of two conversations I've had recently. The first . . . is from my pastor Larry Wynn. A number of years ago, Larry Wynn began the process of dropping Baptist from Hebron's name. I asked Larry Wynn what his reasoning was for dropping Baptist from Hebron's name. He said, "We wanted to reach people for Jesus and the name 'Baptist' was in the way. We still gave to Baptist missions. Our doctrine and baptism were Baptist. But the name 'Baptist' was getting in the way."

The other conversation involved Sherri Michelle. I sought her feedback on the material below and here is how the conversation went.

Me: "So what do you think of the name abbreviation?"

Her: "When you first mentioned it, I thought it was the craziest and dumbest thing I'd ever heard.<sup>1</sup> But I see now that it is necessary. We cannot hang on to what makes us feel good, but we need to focus on doing whatever it takes to bring the lost to Christ and Beech Haven, even if that means me being uncomfortable."

Me: Ok.

Sherri Michelle has the spirit of a Great Commissionary. If she runs up against something she does not like, but it positions us to reach more people, she abandons what makes her feel good and comfortable to reach more lost people. I've watched her do this for more than thirty years.

Before reading any further, brace yourself. What follows involves some pain and sorrow. Some of these items are hard to read. Some of our members and ministries have suffered recently because of Baptist's name, and I fear more is coming.

1. One of our members told us that she supports the name abbreviation. She is radiant and conservative. She wrote saying, "we 'Baptists' have a reputation, and it is not a good one; in brief, we are judgmental and non-acceptant. Some of my colleagues at work have already labelled me as such."
2. A few weeks ago, one of our students was able to get a middle school girl to church. She received Christ, but when Nathan spoke to her mother about baptism and she learned we were Baptist, she pulled her daughter out of our church.
3. Scripture teaches "A good name is to be chosen more than riches" (Prov 22:1) and "A good name is better than precious ointment" (Eccl 7:1). God wants our church to have a good name in the community. Scripture also says, "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight" (Heb 12:1).

"Beech Haven" is a good name. It is a positive and trustworthy name in our community. It means Bible, missions, love, and service. We must guard it so that nothing dilutes or weighs it down.

4. Baptist pastors and Baptist churches have spoiled the name "Baptist." Surveys and research show that to many people Baptist means fighting, formal, legalistic, outdated, boring, fundamentalist, suits and ties, rigid, old-fashioned, decline, critical, divisive, tired, slow, and inward.

<https://churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-articles/302587-keep-baptist-church-name-brandon-park.html>

*continued on next page*

If you paid attention to the SBC annual meeting in Nashville June 14—15, 2021 you noticed that some of the proceedings left a poor impression on the nation. A dear member texted me saying “we have egg on our face.” I replied, “The whole chicken farm is on our face.” There is a battle between two sides, and because of SBC bylaw

and processes, I expect this battle will last at least a decade (it is complicated). In the view of some, a group of pastors and leaders are pulling the SBC to the left. Some believe that while they are theologically conservative, their narrative, assumptions, and methods align with the left. On the other hand, the other side is attempting to resist these narratives, assumptions, and methods. They have been accused by the other group of racism and cover-ups of sexual abuse. (Charges of sex abuse cover up in Southern Baptist churches first appeared in a six-part Houston Chronicle investigation in 2019. This exposé clinched the issue for me). An investigation is moving forward, and we anticipate the results within the year.<sup>2</sup> As a result of the media coverage, the name “Baptist” is in an impossible place in the national conversation, and the local one, too.

How is this relevant to Beech Haven? People in Athens are well read and consume media. Some in our community will consume media that says Baptists are liberal, and others in our community will consume media that says Baptists are racist, corrupt sex abusers. Besides the already negative perception of Baptists (see #4 above) others will add *liberal, abusive, deceptive, and racist*. See the following articles.

<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/local/investigations/abuse-of-faith/> (a 6-part series on sex abuse and sex abuse coverup in Southern Baptist churches).

<https://www.onlineathens.com/story/news/religion/2021/06/15/southern-baptist-convention-georgia-pastor-leaders-failed-act-sexual-abuse/7698103002/>

<https://www.foxnews.com/us/hundreds-of-southern-baptist-church-leaders-volunteers-accused-sexual-misconduct>

<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/06/russell-moore-sbc/619122/>

<https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2019/february/southern-baptist-abuse-investigation-houston-chronicle-sbc.html>

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-sbc-has-a-sex-abuse-problem-11577400072>

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/our-lord-isnt-woke-southern-baptists-clash-over-their-future-11623439486>

<https://www.yahoo.com/now/southern-baptist-convention-still-cracking-192159243.html>

<https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2021-06-15/southern-baptist-convention-nashville>

Young people, lost people, mature people, and many Baptists are sick of the Baptist controversy, drama, missteps, and self-inflicted wounds, and they are fleeing to non-denominational churches.

5. Obviously, we do not want anything to get in the way of reaching people for Christ. Most churches in Georgia and the USA that are effective and the fastest growing do not have a denominational name in their church name. See these articles:

<https://christianindex.org/top-200-churches-baptisms-2016/> (Since this article was published in 2017, Cascade Hills in Columbus, and Blackshear Place in Oakwood have all dropped Baptist from their names. Blackshear Place has changed its name entirely to Christ Place Church).

<https://outreach100.com/fastest-growing-churches-in-america>

<https://churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-articles/302587-keep-baptist-church-name-brandon-park.html/3>

<https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/fastest-growing-largest-churches-who-made-the-list/>

<https://outreach100.com/largest-churches-in-america/2020>

6. Most new churches started by the Georgia Baptist Mission Board, the North American Mission Board, and International Mission Board do not have Baptist in their name. For decades the majority, now the vast majority, of new church starts do not have Baptist in their name.
7. The most famous Baptist church in history did not have Baptist in its name—the Metropolitan Tabernacle where Charles Spurgeon pastored in the nineteenth century. Spurgeon hoped for the day when all around the world believers would give themselves to the doctrines and practices of Baptists so that there would be no need for the Baptist name; all would be known simply as Christian. About the name “Baptist,” Spurgeon said, “I say of the Baptist name, let it perish but let Christ’s name last forever.”<sup>3</sup> Keeping the Baptist name will keep many people away from Baptist doctrines and practices. It is in the way. Spurgeon avoided this problem by keeping Baptist out of his church name.
8. Finally, Beech Haven Baptist Church is a mouthful to pronounce. I haven’t said it in years. Many of our members have pointed out to me that our members have already abbreviated our church name to “Beech Haven.” In that case, “Beech Haven Church” would be an expansion and not an abbreviation. Lol.

The Baptist name is spoiled in our nation and community. Already it is hurting our ministry. There is too much pain associated with it to keep it. For the short- and long-term strength of Beech Haven, a name abbreviation is necessary.

### Questions

1. What will change?

The road sign, social media accounts, and the website. Our faith statement, baptism, membership in the Georgia Baptist Mission Board and Southern Baptist Convention, and commitments to the Scripture will not change.

2. Are we leaving the Baptist Convention?

*continued on next page*



No. In fact, I (David) have just accepted appointment as a trustee to the North American Mission Board. Terms are for 5 years, and I am eligible for 2 terms.

### 3. Won't people think we are engaging in bait and switch?

This used to be the primary reason I was against dropping "Baptist" from Baptist church names. I held to that view until I listened to those who have dropped Baptist from their name and found that this simply is not a problem. It was only a problem that I had invented in my head. Of course, anyone looking for an opportunity to criticize us may find one or may invent one.

Why is the accusation of "bait and switch" not a likely problem? What others have explained to me, and what I have witnessed myself, is that most people take several months to join a church. In those months, they hear us speak of Baptist missions, they hear guest speakers who are Baptist, and they see Baptist curriculum. If they want to join, they go through new member training where they learn our doctrinal statement is the "Baptist Faith & Message" and our mission partners are the mission boards of the Southern Baptist Convention, the Georgia Baptist Convention, and the Sarepta Baptist Association. They know we are Baptist before they formally join. Abbreviating our name to Beech Haven Church will remove a barrier to them discovering what this Baptist church is all about without the negative stereotypes surfacing on our website, social media accounts and sign.

### 4. What about people who move to town looking for a Baptist church?

When I pastored in South Carolina, the Baptist College of Charleston experienced a surge of growth under new president Jairy Hunter. Early in his administration, he changed the name of the university to Charleston Southern University. He addressed this change in the annual meeting of the South Carolina Baptist Convention saying, "Since we have changed our name, Baptist enrollment has gone up and not down." Dropping the name Baptist resulted in the enrollment of more Baptists not fewer. Many Baptists are looking for a Baptist church that is not weighed down with stereotypical Baptist problems. When Baptist churches update themselves and tool themselves to reach today's people, that proves to be attractive to Baptists.

In addition, the people who come to town looking for a Baptist church are few and far between. While a name abbreviation may attract those who do, the research shows few actually look for a Baptist church. For thirty years, research and surveys have shown that denominational loyalty has been on the decline. In fact, some of the first research on the decline of denominational loyalty appeared in 1973. We have used our connection cards to ask people why they came to Beech Haven and "Because this was a Baptist church" may have appeared on some but I do not recall any. Today, when new people look for a church, they do not look for a denomination. They look for an engaging, updated worship style, friends, children's programming, small groups, and preaching.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/1384887>

<https://news.gallup.com/poll/214208/protestants-no-specific-denominational-identity.aspx>

<https://news.gallup.com/poll/248837/church-membership-down-sharply-past-two-decades.aspx>

<https://news.gallup.com/poll/16459/Tracking-US-Religious-Preferences-Over-Decades.aspx>



I compare this to fishing in different bodies of water.

- Pond Fishing for Baptists. To “fish” for Baptists is to fish in a *pond* that is not being restocked. Southern Baptists have declined in 20 years from 16 million members to 14 million. Since 2000, Southern Baptists have gone from 8% of the US population to 3%. Baptists are not restocking their Baptist pond.
- Lake Fishing for Christians. To “fish” for other Christians is to fish in a *lake* that is in decline, and many of those in that lake do not trust Baptists.
- Deep Sea Fishing for Non-Christians. To “fish” for non-Christians is to fish in an *ocean* that is burgeoning and teeming with fish.

A key to any fishing expedition—fish where the fish are.

Before God, we are obligated to reach lost people, and to do so, we must remove all man-made barriers to reach them. We do not change the gospel, the Scripture, baptism, holiness, the Great Commission, or anything biblical. Those are non-negotiables. We can and must change any human made barrier to reaching lost people. Maintaining the Baptist name is not nearly as important as reaching lost people. Our priority is reaching lost people for Christ.

### 5. May I use the name “Baptist” when I invite people to church?

We urge you to use the church name that will best get your friends to Christ and to Beech Haven. Please do not place a human barrier in their way. Let the gospel of Christ be the only stumbling block. Some of the friends you invite are likely to be turned off by the name “Baptist.” Put their eternal and spiritual needs first. You make the call, but the name “Baptist” is likely to turn some away from Christ and Beech Haven Church. Please be careful with this issue.

Beech Haven Church, we are a Great Commission people. We build Great Commissionaries everywhere. We clutch fiercely to God’s word, but we know the difference between man-made negotiables and the non-negotiables of God’s word. Over the last ten years, we have changed the man-made elements of ministry (music, worship style) and reinforced and celebrated the non-negotiables of God’s word.

In our recent history, you have gotten the “change issue” right when it offered us the opportunity to reach more people. As long as we did not compromise God’s word, and we have not, you have been supportive. I am proud of you for this. You are geared towards the times but anchored to the Rock. One day, former lost people will rise and bless you. I believe Jesus will join their number.

Now is the time for change. We need you to rally and support the name abbreviation. Our staff and deacons have endorsed the name abbreviation. These are great and worthy leaders who deserve our support, and Beech Haven Church deserves everyone’s support of this name abbreviation. Let us unify behind this and position our church to do what the most effective churches in Georgia and the nation are doing to reach people for Jesus.

Here is my promise to you. I will always, always, always lead us to do whatever it takes to reach people for Christ. I am so happy in Jesus. I cannot believe He saved me. I am forever grateful to the middle school kids who first introduced me to him. They are my heroes. Consequently, I will not rest until we have done everything we can to position ourselves for maximum impact. I will lead us to embrace any change we need to make, and I promise not to end my pursuit until they are implemented. Friends, there are not many fish in the Baptist pond or Christian lake, but there are teeming millions in the ocean. I am ready to fish there, and I think you are, too.

<sup>1</sup>See what I have to put up with? LOL.

<sup>2</sup>Some may ask, “Why don’t we leave the Baptist convention?” Personally, I have no interest in leaving the Baptist conventions to which we give. No matter how this battle shakes down, the Sarepta Baptist Association, the Georgia Baptist Mission Board, and most of the entities of the Southern Baptist Convention are worthy of our support. Where an entity of the SBC is struggling, I believe change is on the way. This battle really is not a battle of denominational entities. It is a battle between pastors and churches, and they are noisy. Really noisy. For the most part, they are the problem, not the seminaries and mission boards. I

do not believe it is wise to punish the Georgia Baptist Mission Board or the Southern Baptist Convention because of some misguided preachers and churches. Baptist pastors and churches have spoiled the Baptist name, but they have not spoiled the mission boards, colleges, and seminaries.

<sup>3</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, "The Eternal Name," in *The New Park Street Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 1 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1855), 212.