



## October 2024

The Lord's church is just the most fantastic establishment Earth has ever seen, and we find ourselves blessed to be a small part of the church and her desire to glorify God today! I am in the midst of a busy month, where I will deliver almost 25 sermons. Last week, I attended the Southside Lectures in Lubbock, where I spoke on "Provoking One Another To Love and Good Works." The lectureship theme this year was "Love." Throughout the week, I was reminded of numerous times I was told in Bible Departments at Parkersburg, WV, and Nashville, TN when I was in college that conservative brethren never preach on love. Here I sat at a very conservative congregation listening to a couple dozen lessons on the significant love sections of Scripture. I was blessed to attend.

Today, I am in Hope, Arkansas, in the middle of a Gospel Meeting, dealing with almost twenty questions they gave me to answer. From Hope, I will travel to Village Creek near Beaumont, Texas, for another Gospel Meeting. I will then drive directly from there to Sedalia, Missouri, for another lectureship, and my topic is "Congregations Training Preachers." I am keeping quite busy with all of these speaking events and teaching "Jeremiah and Lamentations" for four hours each week.

Our student body is in the 5th week of our Fall Quarter. I am teaching "Jeremiah and Lamentations," and the more I teach the book, the more I am impressed with Jeremiah's dedication to God's cause amid all the trials he suffered. Though he occasionally wavered and lamented about his lot in life, he never failed to speak for God in a land that had forsaken truth. What a great reminder and example he

is for us living in a land that has forsaken good for evil as well.

Our student body will travel to Gun Barrel City, Texas, for a door-knocking campaign this weekend. For the last few years, they have traveled there, just south of Dallas, to help the church evangelize. We pray that seeds will be planted, souls saved, and God will be glorified.



Displays at Lubbock

L-R - Spanish and English Programs

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### **Student Update** **Davan Whatley**

We want to congratulate Davan Whatley, a second-year student at Brown Trail who has just been hired to serve as an Evangelist for the North Jefferson congregation in Mount Pleasant, Texas. This is a beautiful congregation dedicated to truth and increasing the fold. Though he will be their third preacher on staff, he will be blessed to join his father, Jeff Whatley, who serves as an Associate Minister there. So, Davan will continue to have some good mentoring. We are grateful that his primary role will be to reach the lost in an area with a population of nearly 20,000 people. Brother Davan will graduate in early June next year and start his ministry then.

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Davan Whatley

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**Incoming Student  
JJ Aguayo**

I have been training preachers since 1996, and it is always a blessing to find young men who want to dedicate their lives to Christ, especially when there is a considerable preacher shortage in the land.

Meet JJ Aguayo. JJ is 21 years old and was raised in the Lord's church at the Northwest congregation in Lake Worth, Texas (just north of Fort Worth). I have known JJ since he was a teenager and always knew of his desire to preach. He was planning on attending after graduating High School. However, he obtained some significant scholarships to attend North Texas University in Denton, Texas, so he went there and will graduate with a BDA in Risk Management In Insurance in December. After that, he will help serve the Northwest congregation as a Youth Minister and attend Brown Trail for two years.

He comes from a family devoted to Christ. From birth, he attended with his parents until 2014 when they left Northwest to establish a Spanish-speaking congregation in Decatur, Texas, called the Diamond Hill Iglesia de Cristo. Though they started that congregation, his father continued preaching for them, and due to having older siblings, they continued to worship at Northwest.

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Please keep JJ in your prayers as he begins this new part of his life. We are grateful for him, his family, and his desire. I am also thankful he remained true to his desire to preach while attending college. He will find his degree very useful. With many of our congregations shrinking in size, it is challenging for most congregations to pay a living wage anymore, and most young preachers will have to be bi-vocational during their lives. We are grateful he will have a way to financially support himself if need be, while he labors with a congregation when the time comes.



JJ Aguayo

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### **Graduate Update Ernie Christie**

Brother Ernie Christie and his wife Judith graduated from BTSOP in 1974. He was part of a graduating class of 10 young men who went out to preach the gospel, and two from that class are still preaching full-time 50 years later. Since then, he and his wife have faithfully served the church in several places throughout Texas. Recently, Brother Christie decided to retire from full-time ministry. Age has a way of catching up with us. We are very grateful for his service since he graduated 50 years ago. Below is something he posted on his Facebook page to announce their retirement.

"My tenure with Lake Shore Drive church of Christ concluded harmoniously and without regrets on August 31, after I had the honor of serving as the pulpit

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preacher for 28 years, followed by a supportive role as the associate preacher and a volunteer chaplain at local hospitals for 11 years. My 39 years of unwavering service at Lake Shore account for nearly half of my life and most of the life I've shared with my wife, Judith. We are immensely grateful for the blessings and the kinship of the Lake Shore family. We pray that grace and peace will be bestowed upon Judith and me in our forthcoming years, and we continue to pray for Lake Shore's continued growth in grace and peace, to the glory of God the Father and Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord, and Savior.

Additionally, this year signifies a milestone of 52 years dedicated to preaching, having served only three congregations during this time."

The Christie family is a wonderful, loving family, and I am grateful to have known them over the last few years. I know he is taking a step back, but preachers never really retire like most of us; we find other ways to serve our living God and His community! Please keep them in your prayers as they transition to normal in their lives.



Ernie and Judith Christie

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## Conclusion

Please keep the school in your prayers. As the new year is coming, we must raise additional financial support for the school's operation. Unfortunately, this time of the year, as some congregations consider their next year's budget due to

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unforeseen circumstances, some will inevitably have to cut their support for programs like Brown Trail. Please join us in training and mentoring young men and their families for ministry. And feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Brotherly,  
heath w stapleton

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