



WEST LAKE BAPTIST CHURCH

45th Anniversary

February 19, 2023

10:50a Church Service

12:00p Lunch Fellowship

1:30p Anniversary Service

“Bridging the Decades for God’s Glory”

Lee Evans

Pastor

Keith Davis

Worship/Education

Daniel Garcia

Youth Minister

Kaci Nichols

Children’s Director



History of West Lake Baptist church

“TO GOD BE THE GLORY”

On February 20, 1976, seventeen people living in the Lake Palestine area met at the Knight Welch Grist Mill office. They had a vision of starting a church to reach people within the West Lake/Lake Palestine area. Since most of them had been affiliated with Tyler churches, they contacted the Smith County Baptist Association for assistance even though the church would be in Henderson County. Under the guidance of Rev. Kirby McGuire, Director of Missions for Smith County Baptist Association, the first meeting was scheduled for February 22, 1976. Rev. Bill Eades, pastor of Sylvania Baptist Church, spent many hours guiding from the beginning.

Howard Kraft, found three acres of property which was purchased for the sum of \$5,000; this would locate the proposed church on FM 315, 5.9 miles South of Chandler. Meetings were held in the Grist Mill until a large tent could be purchased. The first service in the “big blue tent” was on March 16, 1976 with 56 people in attendance. The church chose the name: West Lake Baptist Mission.

Financial assistance was requested from and approved by the Baptist General Convention of Texas. Rev. Bennie Portwood was called as pastor on July 18, 1976. Ground was broken for a building on August 8, 1976, and the foundation was poured on August 12, 1976. The first meeting in the new building, still under construction, was October 3, 1976. The first baptismal service was November 21, 1976.

On April 3, 1977 Larry McClellan was called as part-time Minister of Music. The membership at that time was 154. On February 19, 1978 the West Lake Baptist Mission was constituted into a self-supporting church fully affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention. Mark Moore was called as the first Youth Minister April 25, 1979.

Rev. Paul "Chuck" Biscoe was called as pastor January 14, 1979. The first building extension, the north side annex, was added in September 1979. July, 1981 Mike Harris was called as part-time Music Director. Under his leadership, a fully graded choir program was begun.

Further remodeling to the church auditorium was done to increase the seating capacity to around 290. Records show the membership at that time was 340. In 1982 the van ministry was started, as was the children's church. Two temporary buildings were





set up for Sunday school classrooms in 1982 and two more in 1984 to accommodate the growing enrollment.

In 1987 Rev. Trey Roberson was called as pastor. Final payment on the indebtedness note was paid; and on February 21, 1988, at the 10th anniversary services, the note was happily burned.

October 19, 1988 seven Baptist women began a ministry at Chandler Nursing Home with a birthday party for those having birthdays each month.

In 1991, Rev. Robert “Bob” Sexton was called as pastor. February 21, 1993, the church observed its 15th anniversary. To provide additional parking space, the property located on the north side of the building was purchased at the cost of \$12,000 in 1993.

On July 17, 1995, ground was broken for construction of a 15,000 square foot educational building that would house Sunday School classrooms, a fellowship hall, and kitchen facilities. This building was completed and occupied February 4, 1996, and dedication services were held March 3, 1996.

In January 1996, Kenneth E. Bartholomew was called as Minister of Music/Education.

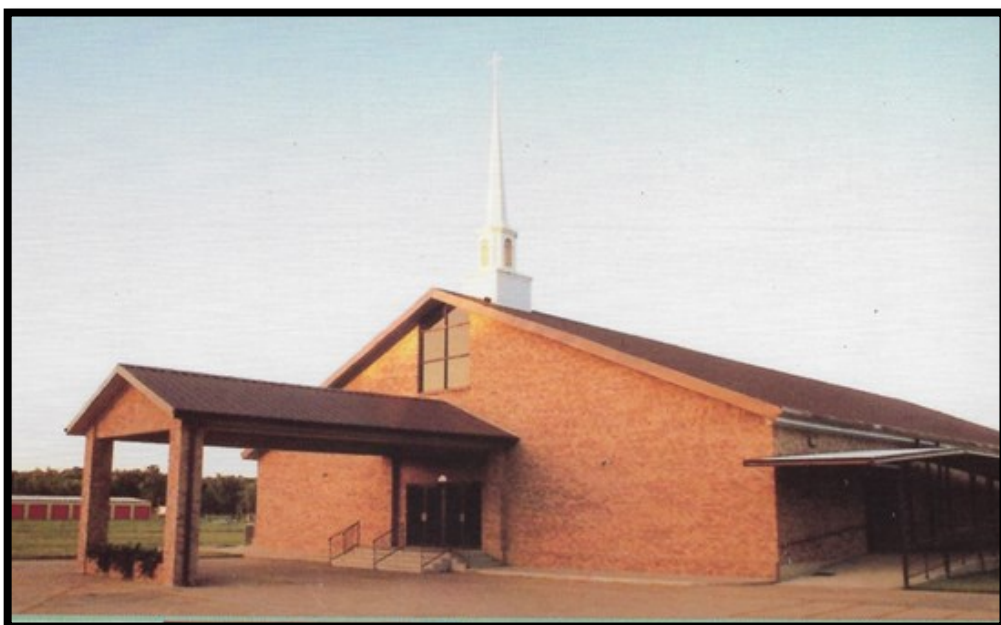
October 1996, ground was broken for an 11,000 square foot sanctuary building; construction began in November. In April 1997, the Texas Baptist Men Retired Builders arrived to assist in building the new sanctuary. The steeple was set in place on May 28, 1997. The finished sanctuary held 560 seats. September 14, 1997 dedication services were held in the finished sanctuary.

February 22, 1998, "TO GOD BE THE GLORY," West Lake Baptist Church celebrated it's 20th anniversary.

With the retirement of Rev. Bob Sexton in September of 2002, Rev. Eric R. Peyton was called on November 24, 2002; he began his pastorate on January 1, 2003.

Ken Bartholomew resigned as minister of music and education in January 2004 and Allan Cox was called as interim music director. Keith Davis was called as Worship and Education Minister in 2005. Dr. Lee Evans was called as pastor October 2009.

Luke Bilberry was called as youth director. The youth building, "The Well", was started in June, 2009, completed in March, and dedicated on April 11, 2010.





Members made a mission trip to Newfoundland in 2009 and again in 2010. They shared that the trip made a pronounced influence on their lives.

December 2010 members exchanged cards at the Lottie Moon Post Office donating postage saved to the Lottie Moon foreign missions offering.

The Singin' Saintz went to the State Senior Adult Choir Festival every year for about 10 years.

September 9, 2012 Bryan Hawkins was welcomed as Youth Pastor.

Night in Bethlehem began in December 2013 with the first building projects, borrowed costumes, and advertising on TV and local newspapers.

In April/May 2014 numerous church members volunteered for Baptist Disaster relief and were trained for specific tasks and deployed when and where needed.

In 2015 a new roof was put on the Administration building.

In 2016 Rick Arndt was called as our Family and Children's Minister.

Carolyn Lance started Gal Pals for young adults to play games; then the men joined them.

In 2017 a very successful cake auction was held as a fundraiser for the youth to attend summer camp.

The Sanctuary choir joined Faith Baptist Church's choir to perform Christmas music at both churches.

In March 2019 an appreciation dinner was held for Keith Davis and Jim Worrell recognizing their time and talents devoted to maintenance and repairs for our West Lake church.

April 4-5 the church offices were closed for re-painting and repairs. The library became a conference room, and work room space was expanded as was space for the Food Pantry.

August 17 The Women's Ministry Tea, "Daughters of the King," had over 150 attendees from multiple churches.

August 28, 2019 Kaci McLarry started EPIC Midweek, a children's program on Wednesday nights.





October 27, 2019, the church celebrated Brother Lee and Cindy Evan's 10th anniversary calling it a "Decade of Joy." His family was invited as a big surprise for Brother Lee!

On February 16 & 23, 2020, the 44th Anniversary of West Lake was celebrated with a lobby display and PowerPoint screen presentations.

March 8 a Dessert Auction was held as a Fundraiser for the Youth.

March 22, 2020 Sunday School and Worship services were streamed online because of the coronavirus lockdown and continued through May.

In 2021 many church members caught Covid 19. Innovations included "Drive-In" Services and an outdoor baptism.

The Food bank continued with controlled drive-through access to receive sacks of food.

In March, 2021 Sunday school lessons were again taught online for a time. When worship services resumed, with the addition of online streaming for those still at home, worshippers wore masks and were mindful of social distancing.



April 18, 2021, a video introduced Fathers in the Field. On June 20, the ministry to boys and single moms was launched.

July 25 Kaci Nichols was called as Children's Ministry Director.

August 15, 2021, Night of Remembrance observed the loss of 26 members in the last 18 months.

January 9, 2022 Daniel Garcia was called as our new Youth Minister.

February 27, 2022 a Surprise Soup and Dessert Luncheon recognizing Keith Davis' 17th Anniversary at West Lake as Minister of Worship was celebrated.

June 5 Guest Speaker Melissa Kauk, Missionary to Papua, New Guinea spoke.

June 29, 2022 West Lake's Birthday parties at Chandler Nursing Home started again after Covid.

July 3, 2022 A Freedom Fellowship and Ice Cream Contest was held.

In October the church sanctuary and foyer were painted and new blinds ordered. October also included a Family Gathering-Business Meeting and the Fall Festival.

November 20, members enjoyed a church-wide Mexican Feast and a time of Thanksgiving.

December 9, 10 & 11, Night in Bethlehem was presented with over 1000 attending.

December 24 a Carols & Candlelight Service was observed.

West Lake Pastors

Bennie Portwood-July 18,1976 -1978
Olin Cantrell-(Interim)
Chuck Biscoe-1979-86
Trey Roberson-January, 1987-91
Leroy Pattilo (Interim)
Bob Sexton 1991–Sept. 1, 2002
Paul Saylor–Interim pastor
Eric Peyton-2003 -2009
Olin Boles (Interim)
Lee Evans -Oct. 2009 - present

West Lake Music Directors

Larry McClellan-April 3, 1977 –
July,1981
Michael (Mike) Harris-July, 1981-Oct.
1987
David Riddle (Interim)
Wayne Spoons-1990
Billy McLean (Interim)
Cecil Garner-1993 (Feb. 28 view of
call)
Ken Bartholomew-Jan. 1997 to 2003
Allan Cox (Interim)-2004- March,
2005
Keith Davis-March, 2005 – present



Deacons with Brother Bob Sexton

Ministers of Youth

Mark Moore April 25, 1979

Mike Young

Kyle Hargrove

Rick Longcrier 1984

Rick Dunklin (Dunkin in church directory 1987)

Wayne Spoons 1990

Joe Cooper (1993)

1997 Billy McLean

Shannon Namken August 1997-March 28 1999

Paul Maynard (called Nov. 20-21, 1999) 2000 – Jan 12, 03

B. J. McCurdy called Oct 26, 2003

Robert G. Bristow, Aug. 29, 2004

Marc Nicolson

Luke Bilberry March 9, 2008 – 2011

Cody Fitzgerald

Bryan Hawkins, called 2012

Rick Arndt, called 2016

Daniel Garcia, called 2022

Preschool Children's Director

Sharon Crowl

Children's Ministry Director

Kaci Nichols, called 2021





West Lake Missionary Activities

Sunday school classes and services, Vacation Bible School, Adult VBBS, and Youth Ministry are regularly held. The Prayergram ministry began in 1997.

Faith Training Course for Witnessing, Cottage prayer meetings, Community Thanksgiving meals, Singin' Saintz, and other Adult events have been regular activities. Children's activities transitioned from GA's & RA's to Awanas to Epic Kids.

Through the years, members have been involved in ministries in Brownsville, Texas, Australia and Newfoundland.

For many years, the WMU, (later WOM), led the church serving annual meals for Christian Women's Job Corp in Tyler, The Baptist Student Missions at U.T. Tyler and the Breckenridge Village Residents. A monthly birthday party has been held at Chandler Nursing Home since 1978.

For three years West Lake members presented Judgment House in October. It was a dramatic tour of "Your Final Destination."

In December 2013 Night in Bethlehem began. It is a dramatic presentation of the town of Bethlehem on the night Jesus was born. It has grown every year and is a ministry to our community as well as many who come from far away. For many, this is their first time to hear the gospel.

During the Covid lock-down, Sunday school classes and church services were streamed online. When church services resumed, the online services have continued

On-going projects include Mission West Lake Food Pantry, working at East Texas Food Bank, a Clothes Closet, October Sweater and Coat Drive, Samaritan's Purse, Angel Tree, and Fathers in the Field.

We remain grateful for a richly blessed past and look forward to the future with great anticipation of reaching people with the unchanging truths of Christ – all for His glory!

