

Together

AT DAWSON

12 WAYS
YOUR LIFE
GROUP CAN
SERVE

2018
YEAR
IN REVIEW

CHAPEL
CHOIR
MISSION
TOUR
ECUADOR

INSIDE
UGANDA
REFUGEE
CAMPS

JAILHOUSE
RELIGION

A Story of Freedom
and Redemption



Life's Better Together

There's a Life Group for you!

PRESCHOOL
KIDS
STUDENTS
COLLEGE
YOUNG ADULTS
ADULTS

dawsonchurch.org/lifegroups

A Conversation on
Biblical Marriage

10

Jailhouse Religion

12

When a
Friend Calls...

16

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Dawson Student Ministries

JOIN US

Sunday Morning Life Groups:
8:25 a.m. & 9:40 a.m.

Sunday Morning Worship:
8:25 a.m., 9:40 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.
11:00 a.m. Hispanic Worship - Chapel

WATCH LIVE
dawsonchurch.org/live





From Pastor David

Dr. David Eldridge
Senior Pastor

The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Lamentations 3:22-23 (ESV)

One of the recurring themes throughout the Old Testament is God's reminder to the Israelites to remember and celebrate His past faithfulness. This reminder is not a license to bask in the "glory days" of the past. His call to look back was always for the purpose of encouraging His people to future faithfulness. Seeing how far God has brought us is intended to give us the courage and strength to take future steps.

In these pages, we want to look back in celebration of God's work in our midst, while also looking ahead to where He is leading us. As we look back, you will see that there is much to celebrate. While we thank God for His work in our midst and the tangible results that we can measure, we also admit that the work of the Spirit can never be captured by numbers alone. Numbers tell a story, but not the entire story. We also want to introduce you through these pages to lives that are being changed in our midst—God's work among our family of faith.

Moving into 2019, as we look back with gratitude, we are also reminded to remain faithful. Our prayer is that He will continue to find us faithful. To that end, you will see exciting ways that you can join our family of faith as we move forward. We move forward asking, "What does God desire to do in our midst in the days ahead?" Our God is not just a God of the past. He's a God of the present and of the future. As we look ahead, let's pray and work toward His will for our lives and our church.

We move ahead, with the great confidence that "it is God who works in us, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."

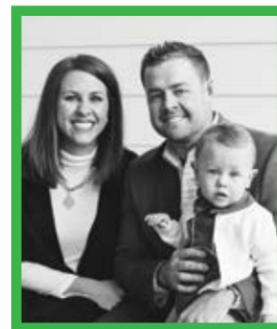
Blessings,
Pastor David

Worship With
Us On Sundays

8:25 a.m., 9:40 a.m.,
and 11:00 a.m



dawsonchurch.org/AfterTheSermon



Life Groups Stories

Patrick and Jill Taylor live in Homewood with their son, Will, and dog, Ollie. Patrick works in pharmaceutical sales, and Jill is a Realtor with RealtySouth. In their spare time, they enjoy traveling, cooking, and remodeling homes. They have lived in Birmingham since getting married in August of 2014.

My name is Jill Taylor, and my husband, Patrick, and I joined Dawson in the summer of 2015. One of the big things that drew us to Dawson was the community we experienced through the Life Group we had been attending while we were visiting the church. After joining, we became very involved with our Life Group and formed what are now some of our sweetest friendships. We had no idea how much we would need this group when we had our first son in the summer of 2017. Our son, Will, was born at 23 weeks gestation...almost 4.5 months early. It was the scariest and most uncertain time of our life, and our Life Group showed up in big ways to love on and support us during this time. The week that Will was born they brought us a care package: a pair of tiny boxing gloves with Joshua 1:9 written on them, and a set of handwritten Scripture cards, bound together with a binder clip. Each individual Scripture was hand-picked by a member of our Life Group. On really hard days in the NICU, when alarms were going off and things were almost too much for me to bear, I would sit by Will's isolette and read those

Scripture cards over and over, reminding myself of God's promises. Those

handwritten Scripture cards and the mini boxing gloves

that hung next to Will's bed were our most prized

possessions as we walked our NICU journey. I

will never forget a few weeks after Will was

born, we thought we might be losing him to

a very aggressive infection. Our Life Group

called an impromptu prayer meeting at the

church one night as things were looking bad.

They prayed and begged God for healing of

our Will. Several of them will tell you they have

never felt God's presence like that night. Shortly after the prayer meeting,

we got miraculous news that Will's stats were changing and he began to

improve. And two months later, this same group was able to throw us a baby

shower in the very room where they had begged God to heal Will. They fed

us from June to November of that year, they cut our grass, did household chores,

and literally were there for anything we needed. On Mother's Day of this past year, we

were able to dedicate Will at Dawson, declaring his life verse as Joshua 1:9, the very verse

that was on his boxing gloves. We are forever grateful for the community we have at Dawson,

and especially for our Life Group, who made sure we didn't have to walk this journey alone.



2018 Financial Information



Tithes & Offerings
\$9,574,509



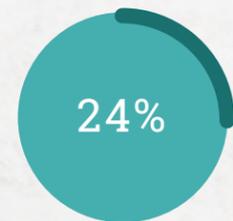
Expenses
\$9,414,045



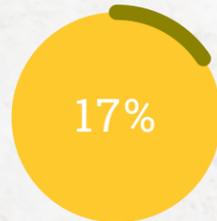
Contributions Over Expenses
\$160,464



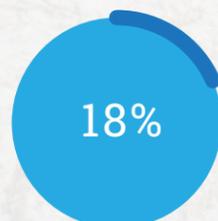
To Date Reserves
\$673,789



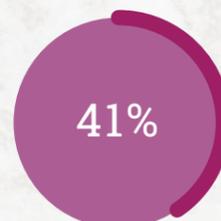
MISSIONS, MINISTRY & MUSIC



OPERATIONS



FACILITIES SUPPORT



PERSONNEL

CONTRIBUTIONS CUMULATIVE TO DATE
THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2018

\$4,941,787

ACTUAL 5 YEAR PLEDGE GOAL
\$5,603,626

GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

\$320,352

BIRMINGHAM EXPENSES

\$584,631

MAINE EXPENSES

\$961,273

NORTHEAST AFRICA EXPENSES

\$535,877

TANZANIA EXPENSES

\$436,391

SOUTHEAST ASIA EXPENSES

\$352,608

FEATURE PROJECTS

\$7,500

TOTAL EXPENSES TO DATE
THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2018

\$3,198,632

A LOOK BACK AT 2018



18% ↑
New Church Members

80
Baptisms

1,817
Weekly Average Life Group Attendance

602 Basketball Players On
75 Teams

15,000 Weekly TV Viewers

1,891 Social Media Posts

235 Trained on "The Story"

179 Weekly Live Stream Households

24% ↑
1st Time Guests

73 Kids Enrolled in "Gospel Class" and "I'm A Christian Now"

1,193 Preschoolers and Kids at KidLife

51 Kid Life Gospel Conversations

457 Kid Life Volunteers

1,560 Health Program Attendees

415 D Now Students and Volunteers

250 Homebound Ministry Visits

58,368 Cups of Coffee

12% ↑
Weekly Church Attendance

11,877 Wednesday Fellowship Meals

110 Couples Registered Together For Life

18 Stephen Ministers

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you

the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28 : 19-20

Missions 2018

Year In Review



525

New coats for kids

11

Foster family days

1751

Children served

122

Backpacks given to children in Fultondale

13

Baptisms in 2 Hispanic Congregations

140

Children attended Hispanic VBS and heard "The Story"

14

Nations represented by our Hispanic Congregation

30

DSM students served in the Dominican Republic



736

Students in Akot Schools in South Sudan

43

Ugandan women trained to share the Gospel

120

Backpacks given to students in Coy, Alabama

56

ESL students

8

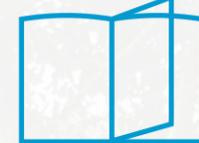
Church Plants Supported

153

Students in English classes in Southeast Asia

240

Hours Training Pastors in Northeast Africa



Hours reading to children at Washington School

2159

45

Students from The Learning Center attended weekly Bible study

17

GED sections passed at The Learning Center

29

Go Love Tell Projects in Maine

21

Go Love Tell mission projects in Birmingham

237

Volunteers

8895

Children ages 0-5 treated at hospital in Tanzania

1523

Hours volunteered at The Learning Center

2712

Books given away at Washington School

411

People heard the Gospel at The El Medical Clinic in The Horn of Africa

7

International career missionaries



123

International mission trip participants

1,022,052

Miles traveled on international mission trips

A CONVERSATION ON BIBLICAL marriage

By Andy Cartee | Minister to Young Adults

As an avid lover of comedy, it's no surprise to me that many comedians use marriage as part of their routines. The marriage relationship is so distinct and familiar that it is a natural way to connect with an audience. One joke I heard goes like this: A son once asked his father, "What's the difference between love and marriage?" The father quickly replied, "Love is blind. Marriage is an eye-opener." The intent of this statement was to be humorous but there really is much comedy and humor when it comes to marriage. In the midst of this humor, I believe there is truth in the father's response to his son about it being an "eye-opener." Marriage is not the invention of humanity, but the creation of God. Many people are eager to find that special someone to share life, explore dreams and expectations, and imagine what marriage will be like. Marriage is an eye-opener because it is part of the purpose and plan God has for those who are married.

Throughout the Bible we read about couples and their marriages. Yes, there is great joy that comes through marriage. In fact, the very first miracle Jesus performed was at a wedding. Weddings at that time, like today, were times of great celebration and rejoicing. The typical wedding lasted over a period of five to seven days. There were feasts, rituals, and processions rich with meaning that often included the entire community in which the couple lived. It was a time for everyone to come together. In John chapter 2, we find Jesus and his mother, Mary, in attendance at a wedding. Wine was an important part of the culture, so to be without wine for a wedding would be a significant concern for the family. When Mary recognizes there's a shortage, she comes to Jesus and petitions Him to help. Jesus says, "my hour has not yet come," meaning that what He would do for humanity was to be "more delightful than wine." The miracle of turning water into wine helps us see the importance of the celebration of marriage and of God's provision for this couple.

We also see many references throughout Scripture of God's redemptive plan of salvation through the lens of marriage. The Bible describes the Son of God as the Groom, and the Church (the believers in Christ) is described as His bride. The Son expresses His love for His bride through absolute self-sacrifice, self-sacrifice to the uttermost, love that knows no end, love that goes to a cross and is resurrected. The Church expresses her love to the One who gives everything for her. The bride joyfully submits to her loving Husband, acknowledging Him as her leader and following gladly where He leads. This is not done just out of duty but because she knows that she will be loved and treated respectfully, even to the point of death. This is the kind of marriage that all other marriages are to imitate.

So, what is a biblical marriage? A biblical marriage is one that honors and acknowledges that marriage is a covenant, not a contract. It is where the husband and wife come before family and friends and join with our Lord and Savior to enter into a special and mysterious union where two are now becoming one (Genesis 2:24). It is a mystery that we read about in Scripture.

Marriage is a wonderful gift from God that brings with it many joys but also harsh realities. The truth is that marriage can be challenging, difficult, and sometimes disappointing. Just because a couple has entered into this covenant and both of them love the Lord does not mean that their marriage will be free of challenges. God does not grant Christian couples immunity from the difficulties of life but instead uses them to help demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit and model the ways we are called to treat one another found in Ephesians 5.

It is through marriage challenges that couples learn about one another and about themselves. The reality of marriage is that every couple will struggle at some point. It is these times of struggle that can serve as defining moments in our lives. What do you do when you are there? How do you treat one another in those moments? When the struggle becomes too much of a burden, where do you go, who do you turn to?

You may be reading this article and are currently experiencing difficulty in your marriage. If so, these are some good questions to ask. Both husband and wife must be willing to work on the "oneness" that they are called to have as a married couple. Some of the greatest roadblocks for couples is pride and the fear of people's perception. The reality is that no marriage

has a perfectly white "picket fence" without spots and dings on it. No matter how much you try to paint over it or hide the imperfections, they are still there.

There will be times when a couple needs help, but the willingness to reach out for help is neglected because of pride. Many couples suffer because they are fearful to ask for help or see a counselor. Our emotional wellbeing is equally as important as our physical wellbeing. Psalm 147:3 says "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds." The

Psalmist is not talking about people with a physical heart condition but is referring to a person's emotional state. Time alone does not always bring healing, and change in our spouse can only be done through the work of the Holy Spirit. Our role is to be faithful to the One who created us and created marriage. God knows that we are sinful and that we bring our past, our hurts,

the way we communicate, and our struggles into our marriage. We must also bring humility, an understanding of our sinfulness, and a willingness to do the tangible and spiritual things that God wants for us so we can continue to be transformed into the husbands and wives we are called to be.

A biblical marriage is one that understands that the purpose of marriage is not to make us happy but to make us holy. The happiness comes from understanding God's purpose and delighting in our spouse. Through our marriages as husbands and wives, God will use this unique relationship to grow us and mold us. He will be with us in the turbulent times and the joyous times. No matter what marital stage you are currently in (engaged, newlywed, long-timer), remember this: Husbands, you are to love, honor, and cherish your wife as she becomes more like Jesus. Wives, you are to love, honor, and cherish your husband as he becomes more like Jesus. As we do this we will see that marriage truly is "eye-opening" to its purpose through our Lord and Savior.



ANDY CARTEE is Dawson's Minister to Young Adults and leads our Together For Life marriage ministry. He has worked with couples doing pre-marital counseling for the past 14 years. He is a certified Prepare/Enrich instructor and is training to be a Gottman Method Couples Therapist. He and his wife Keri have been married for 18 years and have two children, Caleb and Chloe. Andy is passionate about seeing couples navigate life's joys and realities and understanding God's purpose for marriage.

{For more information on pre-marital counseling, please visit dawsonchurch.org/TogetherForLife.}

JAILHOUSE RELIGION

By Keith Vinson | Director of Information Systems

My expectations were low. I had not known what to expect and had some trepidation about going. I grew up five miles from Holman Prison in south Alabama (think death row, electric chair, and maximum security) and we had a very negative view of “convicts.” When I was 12 years old, one of them had escaped from prison, headed south through our community on the way to the railroad, and murdered and car-jacked our neighbors. One was less than a mile from my home. After that, whenever an escape did happen, it was “lock and load” for every household, which meant to shoot first and ask questions later. I never visited the prison nor wanted to go near it. After I went away to college, my mom started tutoring some of the inmates in English for the GED, which surprised me. I had not known that she had a tender spot for the inmates. So, when Dawson’s Sanctuary Choir was making plans to minister at the Donaldson Correctional Facility outside of Bessemer, Alabama, it would actually be my first visit to a maximum security prison.

We had been prepared to do whatever needed to be done to get into the prison and then out safely. But little can prepare you for the first time you enter those gates, surrender your ID, pull off your belt and shoes, and undergo a total body pat-down. You get a feeling of total helplessness, claustrophobia, and of submission to unfriendly authority. You imagine what it would be like to spend your entire life inside those walls with a fence of razor wire and high voltage. Walking through that last set of bars that separates the inmates from the guards felt like a kind of finality.

On the other side of those bars, I had expected to hear cat-calls and whistles from the prisoners, but the only sound I heard walking through the buildings was the nervous chatter of the ladies in the choir. A head-count was taken at each stop. Several of us examined the “Wall of Shame” in the lobby, where pictures were posted of visitors who had attempted to circumvent the rules and smuggle contraband into the prison. Down the hallway that constituted the boundary between “outside” and “truly inside,” there were framed posters on the wall with sayings about good character traits. I wondered if they were meant for the inmates or for the guards or for all who passed by them.

The chapel was about the size of the little church in which I grew up. There were some inmates already waiting when we arrived, but before we grabbed our music folders and moved to get into place on the risers, we were told that it would be good for some of the men to meet and mingle with the inmates, so some of us did for just a minute. The men were reserved at first, and so were we.

As we took our places the first group of inmates came in. I was surprised to see that our choir outnumbered the ones seated, but it was a pretty large group, around 40 or so. The chaplain welcomed us and we started our program. As we began to sing, the men began to raise their hands, and shout praises which really got us into more of a mood of praise rather than of fear. By the time we finished, they were clapping and shouting “Hallelujah!” and all had big smiles on their faces. Some of us shook their hands as they left.

After lunch, I came back for the afternoon session knowing what to expect, but something had changed. A new head guard was now in charge. He seemed to run a tighter ship than the morning shift, and the mood of the other guards had become more reserved and distant. I saw lots of frowns among the guards and got the impression that we may have been more of a nuisance than a blessing. The metal detectors and pat-down took longer, and I actually felt a little less “welcome” than before.

Thankfully, when we got into the chapel, we saw smiling faces. About a dozen of the guys from the morning session were serving as “ushers” and stood waiting along the back wall. We were earlier than expected, so several of us went to visit with them. I met three inmates during this time.

Roosevelt was a member of the praise team for their chapel worship, and he proudly showed me the back of his prison uniform. I asked him about his role on the praise team, and he said he was a singer. He wanted to know about our group, how long we had been together, what church we represented, and what denomination. He wore a large wooden cross around his neck and carried his Bible proudly. His smile was contagious, and he thanked me several times for coming to lead in worship. He said that he wished their praise team could harmonize like us, and that he enjoyed hearing tight harmonies. He was looking forward to his release this year.

An older inmate named Finest came over and told me that he appreciated me reciting Jeremiah 29: 11-13 as part of the morning service, and that he had

come back to receive another blessing. He told me how the Lord had cured him of cancer, and he really believed in that particular Scripture verse.

About that time a stern guard came in and told the inmates to find a seat. The room became tense and silent. That is when I met Chris. I asked Chris what was going on, and he assured me that it was just a routine head count that took place every day. Chris was a young guy, and he began telling me his story about how he had grown up in the church and that his own father had been a pastor. He said he had always loved music and grew up singing solos as a boy until middle school when he became more interested in sports than church. He said he regretted that he never learned to read music or sing with a choir group like ours. He mentioned that he had served in the military, and I asked him to tell me more about his past. He hinted that it took prison to get him back on the right track. He proudly showed me one of his tatoos with the name of his daughter and a picture of a child dancing in a stream of bubbles. His daughter is 18 now, but he remembers a visit with her when she was small and she had brought her bubble jar to play with that day. Chris, too, had a contagious smile and a gentle spirit. He also told me that Roosevelt was one of his best friends. I said I would pray for both of them now that I knew their names. Then it was time to sing and I had to go.

After the second worship service, we mingled with the men as they were leaving, and I had a chance to talk with one more inmate. He was an older man, with grizzled hair, covered in tattoos, and one remaining tooth in front when he smiled. He wanted me to know his story. He said he was in prison for murder, life without parole. He had been at Donaldson for 28 years and had never seen or heard a group like our choir before. He said that right after he was incarcerated, his son and daughter-in-law had been murdered in a home invasion. Then, a year later his wife was diagnosed with cancer and died after nine months. Needless to say, he had been an angry, bitter man. But someone witnessed to him at the prison, and after a while, he accepted Christ as his Lord and Savior. Occasionally, his mother and sister would visit him, and after he became a Christian he would try to tell them about Jesus. They were very resistant, chiding him about his “jailhouse religion,” not believing him or his salvation, and wanting nothing to do with Christ. He began to pray and ask God to give him the right

words to say. When they came for the next visit, he wasn't quite sure what he had even said, but suddenly his mother began crying and exclaimed, "I want to know Jesus as my Savior." His sister started crying and said she did, too. He knelt with them on the spot and they prayed to receive Christ as their Lord and Savior. They were all hugging each other when a woman who had been standing nearby walked over, and with tears in her eyes, said, "I want to accept Christ as my Savior, too!" While he prayed with that lady, another lady who had been standing a long way off came over and asked what was going on. By the time he finished explaining about God's saving grace, she said she also wanted to accept Christ as her Savior!

After telling me this story he looked me in the eye and said, "I know God has a plan for me, because if I had never gone to prison, I would not have become a Christian, and my mother and sister may very well have never become Christians either. I found out some time after my wife's death that she had been ministered to by a church and that she had made a profession of faith before she died. Because of this, if I had to spend 10,000 years in prison, it would still be worth it. I know this life is short and is nothing compared to eternity!"

All the inmates left and we packed up to go home.

"I know God has a plan for me, because if I had never gone to prison, I would not have become a Christian, and my mother and sister may very well have never become Christians either."

Heading out of the main gate, we collected our driver's licenses, and walked out to where we were really free again. I could not believe how much the whole experience had blessed me and renewed my faith in God's power. We had prayed before we went into the prison and some of the words from that prayer time still remain with me: "God has been here long before we got here, and will be here long after we leave. Thank you, God, for letting us participate in a small way in the work you are doing here." Truly, if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. John 8:36



KEITH VINSON has been a member of Dawson since 1989, and a staff member since 2000. He is responsible for the computers, telephone system, and internal computer network at Dawson. He and his wife Miriam have two married daughters and one granddaughter.



4,000  Candlelight Attendees

900+  Songs & Hymns Sung

7,303  DMA Music Lessons

258  Sanctuary Choir Members

206  Collide Choir Kids

184  Members in Student Choirs

127  Bowties

A Year of Firsts

ORPHAN CARE MINISTRY UPDATE

By Carrie Mullis | Volunteer Leader

Our heartfelt desire when Dawson's Orphan Care Ministry was launched last fall was to establish a culture in which every person in our church family can have a role to play. We have been called to care for the orphaned and vulnerable because we have been greatly cared for by Jesus. Because of the work of Jesus in our lives, we are compelled to work on behalf of others. Whether it be fostering, adoption, or supporting the families who are caring for the children, there are many opportunities for individuals to serve.

In an effort to encourage potential foster and adoptive parents, Dawson has partnered with local agencies to provide TIPS classes that are required for all foster and adoptive parents who adopt from the State of Alabama. Last fall, six individuals completed the 10-week course and are well on their way to becoming foster or adoptive parents. A new TIPS class began in January 2019 with 45 individuals participating.

As the foster and adoption community at Dawson continues to grow, there will be an ongoing need to support these families. Dawson's WRAP ministry started in December, and more than 30 volunteers have agreed to support foster and adoptive families

by praying for them, providing meals, speaking words of encouragement, supplying diapers, wipes, and other items, and providing acts of service when needed (mowing the lawn, running errands, helping with homework, etc.). Our goal is that each foster and adoptive family will feel supported and encouraged on their journey, which can often be a difficult one.

Families can also receive support through other Dawson ministries such as Kids Connection and the Dawson Library. Many times foster children arrive at their new home with very little of their own. Kids Connection has opened their doors on special days to assist foster families who may need additional clothing. In this way, Kids Connection has been a blessing to foster families all over the city. Additionally, Dawson's Library has an adoption and foster care section with many helpful resources available to check out.

2 Corinthians 4:18 says: So we fix our eyes, not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. As the Orphan Care Ministry continues to grow, we are reminded that our eyes are fixed on Jesus and our focus is on leading others to a relationship with Him. If you would like to know more about Dawson's Orphan Care Ministry, please visit dawsonchurch.org/OrphanCare.



The Allphin Family celebrates the finalization of their adoption.

KIDS CONNECTION
• a children's resource center •
104 Foster Families with 250 Children Were Served

3 Forever Families United Through DHR Adoption

124 Free DMA Lessons

96 Gifts Were Given to Foster Children & Youth for Christmas

When a Friend Calls...

By Debbie Moss | Minister of Health and Wellness

My relationship with the people in South Sudan began in 2005 with a medical mission trip to Kajo Keji, a small village 93 miles from Juba, South Sudan's capital. Over the years my relationships grew in both depth and quantity as Dawson continued to send medical mission teams to help care for the spiritual and physical needs of the people. As a result of these projects, churches were planted, pastors were trained, and women's ministries were implemented. Some of the first people we partnered with were Pastor Edward Dima and his wife, Rose. Pastor Edward was the spiritual leader of the community who helped equip Sudanese local pastors through training and discipleship. At that time, he also served as the pastor

of the First Baptist Church of Kajo Keji. Although there have been traumatic changes in South Sudan, Pastor Edward and his wife continue to be committed people who love the Lord.

When the war between North and South Sudan spilled into the villages surrounding Kajo Keji in January 2017, many people that our Dawson teams had served and had gotten to know personally were being beaten and killed. The little village we had grown so fond of was no longer safe for the Sudanese, and the majority of those who remained were forced to quickly flee across the border into Uganda. So, when I heard that someone was trying to contact me at Dawson from inside a Ugandan refugee camp, I knew it had to be our friends from South Sudan. Pastor Edward and the others needed our help.

Project 1 | Easter 2017 Food Distribution

Food:

- 925 kg - Rice
- 3750 kg - Phoso (maize corn flour)
- 1400 kg - Beans
- 5 kg - Onions

Total Food weight = 13,376 lbs.

Additional items:

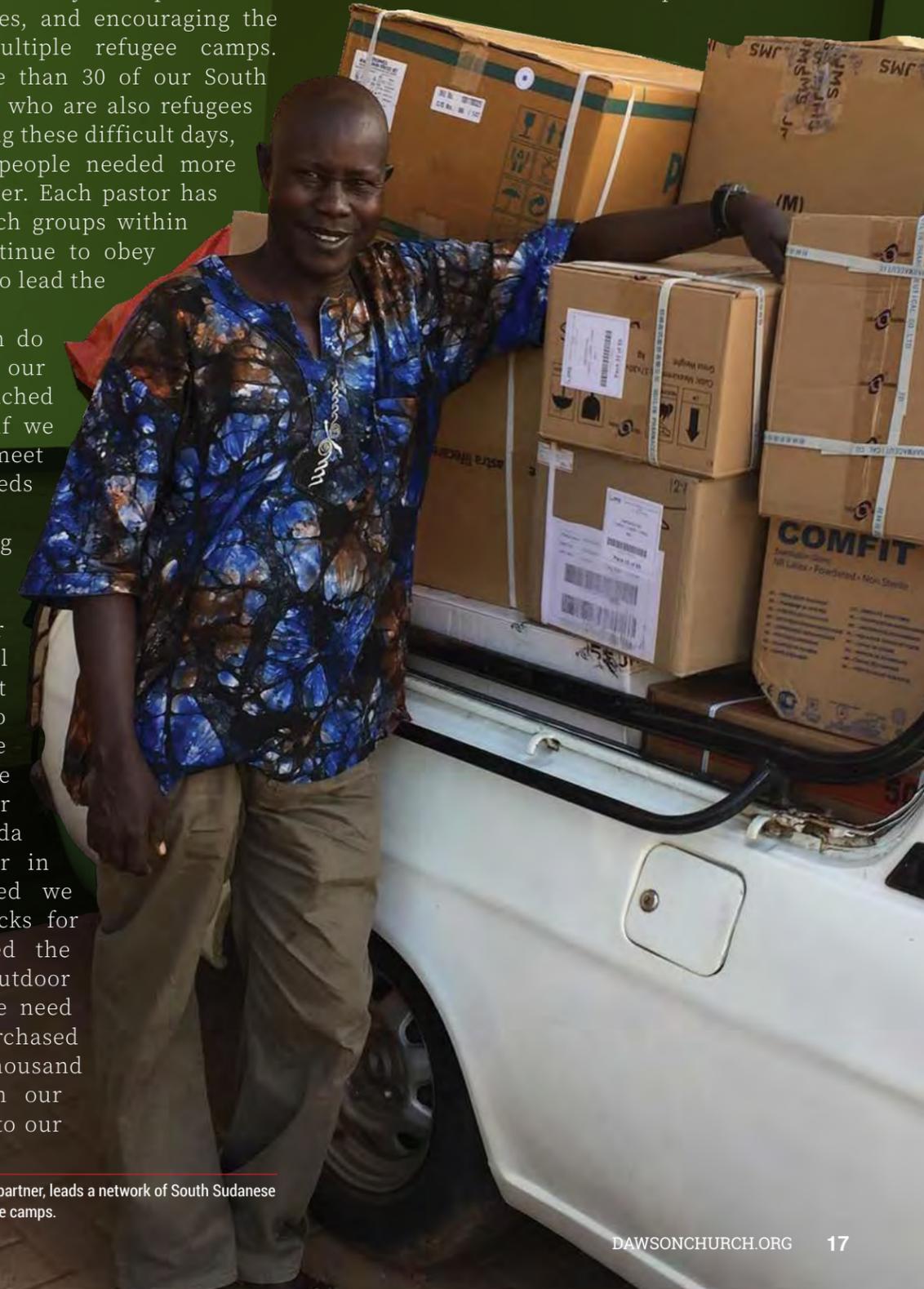
- 1500 bars of soap
- 100 Bibles for the camp churches
- 30 tarps (4 x 5 meters) for the 30 pastors starting churches in the Refugee Camps to give the churches a shade during worship.

When the residents of Kajo Keji fled their villages, they left with only what they could carry. In the confusion of the exodus, some were even separated from their families as they ran across the border. Many of them had to settle in United Nations refugee camps seven miles from the South Sudan border in Uganda. Today, Pastor Edward, a refugee himself, is still doing God's work among his people. During the day he serves as the President of the Uganda Baptist Seminary and spends time training, teaching classes, and encouraging the pastors throughout multiple refugee camps. In fact, he serves more than 30 of our South Sudanese pastor friends who are also refugees in the camps. Even during these difficult days, the pastors knew the people needed more than just food and shelter. Each pastor has been able to start church groups within the camps as they continue to obey God's call on their lives to lead the churches.

As good friends often do when times are tough, our South Sudan partners reached out to Dawson to see if we might be able to help meet some of their many needs in the refugee camps.

Initially, after speaking with Pastor Edward, we discovered the biggest immediate need was for food. The international food aid was not reaching the people, so Dawson's first refugee project was to distribute much needed food. Our team flew into Uganda the week before Easter in 2017. When we arrived we rented two lorries (trucks for hauling) and purchased the food from several outdoor markets in Uganda. The need was so great that we purchased more than thirteen thousand pounds of food, which our team delivered straight to our

30 pastor friends in the camps. These pastors knew who had the greatest need. The widowed, orphaned, and the elderly within their own camp churches were a top priority, so plans were made for fair distribution. As the emergency food was distributed, people were also fed spiritually. Our team just happened to be there on Easter Sunday, and that day became one that I will never forget. God provided translators, and every person who attended the worship services heard



Pastor Edward Dima, Dawson's ministry partner, leads a network of South Sudanese pastors and churches in Ugandan refugee camps.

Project 2 | Sept. 2017 Medical/Dental Team

718 patients seen
195 teeth pulled
90 Professions of Faith

Project 3 | Sept. 2018 Medical/Dental Team

924 patients seen
140 teeth pulled
43 women were trained at the Woman's Leadership Conference in:
"Preventive Health Care" and
"Sharing Their Faith"

[The women who attended this training made a pledge to share their lessons with others within one week. We saw them teaching the next day throughout the camps.]

129 Professions of Faith

the Gospel in their own language. There were 30 professions of faith that day in the churches and the celebration of our risen Savior was extraordinary.

During the Easter project we connected with a young pastor that a previous Dawson team had impacted. In 2012, Julius Kajawuya attended a Dawson-led Pastor's Training Conference in Kajo Keji. Following that conference, he served as a translator for other Dawson teams. When the civil war started Julius, too, was forced to leave Kajo Keji on his motorcycle to cross the border in search of safety. On the way, he was shot, robbed, and left for dead on the side of the road.

Fortunately, there were other people hiding in the bushes nearby waiting for the attackers to leave. Once they had left and saw that Julius was still alive, they picked him up and carried him across the border into Uganda to a local hospital. Julius recovered and is now living in the refugee camp. When he heard his friends from Dawson were coming to the camp, he was anxious to see us. I told him we had been praying for his recovery. He replied, "My arm doesn't work well, but I can still preach." Julius has now started a new church within the camp.



Refugee pastor praying with new believers during Easter worship service in 2017.



Cyndi Cortes, Dawson mission volunteer, provides triage at Refugee Medical Clinic.



Debbie Moss, Dawson's mission team leader for Kajo Keji, coordinates the purchase of emergency food relief in local Ugandan markets.



Christopher McCullers, Dawson mission volunteer, and others share their faith stories as a part of each medical clinic in the camps.

After the food relief project, our Kajo Keji friends desired to become self-sustaining regarding their food needs. They asked their Dawson friends for funds to purchase garden seeds, plants, tools, and supplies to plant a garden. Dawson did indeed answer the call, and with the money that was given by our church family, they were able to purchase 20 acres of land, seasonal plants and seeds, and garden tools. They were also able to purchase a used motorcycle with an attached cart to carry supplies and produce. Now everyone belonging to the camp churches — from the pastors to the children — all work in the garden and share the produce. It is a beautiful community effort.

After living as refugees in the camps for months, health issues began to arise. Dawson sent a medical and dental mission team in September 2017, and then a third team went a year later in September 2018. With each of these projects, the Dawson team set up a basecamp and went out each day to preplanned sites within the refugee camp to conduct mobile medical clinics. The refugee pastors went with us, and they shared the Gospel message in their local language with every person we treated. There are many more stories to tell about how God is working among these displaced people living in a foreign country. In the midst of

tragic circumstances, they are now able to hold their heads high and sing praises as they work in their own gardens. Their message to Dawson is "Thank you" for your years of prayers and support.

I would like to personally invite you to join the next Dawson mission team as we return in September of 2019 for a Medical/Dental Clinic. There will be opportunities to follow up last year's Women's Conference with additional training. Would you consider being a part of this team? Both medical and non-medical participants are needed. You will work hard, get dirty, and end each day with a feeling of great satisfaction, knowing you will be rewarded beyond measure. If you would like information on the 2019 project, please contact me at dmoos@dawsonchurch.org.



DEBBIE MOSS is a registered nurse and has served as Dawson's Health and Wellness Minister since 2001. She has long held a passion for helping people of all ages achieve optimal health, both physically and spiritually. With a strong clinical background in critical care, trauma, and cardiology, Debbie has been uniquely equipped to direct multiple medical mission initiatives that began in 1981. Since that time, she has traveled to more than 35 countries assisting people by providing quality healthcare while sharing the Gospel message.

AN EVERLASTING LEGACY

By Ben Hale | Evangelism & Missions Pastor

The Dawson Family of Faith is made up of a large unique and diverse group of people. Every Sunday, people from more than fourteen different countries gather on our church campus to worship in three different languages in four different venues. In a congregation this size, however, we don't always get to know each other's stories. When the word "legacy" is mentioned we often think of a gift of money or property, but the broader meaning of the word describes a valuable gift that is handed down or conveyed from one person to another. This article tells the story of Franny McLemore whose life and legacy continues to impact others today.

When Franny's life came to an unexpected end, the gift that she gave to her family, friends, and the Dawson Family of Faith was an eduring legacy for loving God and loving others.

Those who have been a part of the Dawson Family of Faith for a long time understand the impact that Dawson's Chapel Choir Ministry makes on the students who grow up participating in the various ministry activities. Franny was one of those students. While growing up at Dawson, Franny was always fully engaged in all of Dawson's ministries Dawson. Disciple Now weekends, summer camps, and KidLife were just a few activities that she and her Dawson friends shared together. One ministry that they always cherished was their time spent on choir mission tours with the Chapel Choir.



For many years, Dawson's 64-year-old Chapel Choir has been one of the greatest single contributors to the spiritual growth of Dawson students. Their annual Chapel Choir Mission Tours provide not only great fellowship for the students, but they also provide a time for them to experience serving people outside the walls of the church.

As an added benefit, every four years the Chapel Choir serves at an international locale. In June of this year, Franny's love for missions, and particularly her love for the people of Ecuador, will intersect when Dawson students travel to Ecuador to serve and sing alongside one of Dawson's long-time mission partners. It is easy to imagine that with every mission tour taken, many lifelong memories are made. James Wallace, one of Franny's fellow Chapel Choir friends, remembers his time with Franny on several mission trips to Ecuador:

"FRANNY CARED DEEPLY FOR HER FRIENDS, FAMILY, HER CHURCH, AND HER LORD AND SAVIOR. THE LIGHT AND JOY THAT COMES ONLY FROM GOD WAS CLEARLY SEEN IN HER BY THOSE SHE CAME IN CONTACT WITH." - HALLIE LAWRENCE WEAVER

I had the privilege of going on several mission trips with Franny to Ecuador. We'd been friends since before I can even remember. I actually remember calling her before I asked the first girl ever to be my "girlfriend" in the 6th grade. Franny was the one I would confide in when I was having problems in high school and college. She was just that way, always there for her friends. So going to Ecuador, I didn't always know everyone but I always had my pal Franny with me. As I think back on our mission trips to Ecuador, I have very fond memories. I remember all of us singing all of the time; me, Franny, Michael, Byron, and Caroline. The song, "Draw Me Nearer" makes me cry even now when I think of it. I remember hiking through grass taller than my head and us being incredibly itchy. I remember being chased by a monkey and Franny laughing at me. I distinctly remember going off one time and hiking up a mountain by myself. When I got back, Franny was waiting to tell me how dumb that was. Not in a condescending way, but in a very loving, warm, and humorous way. I wish I remembered specific details of when she shared the Gospel in Spanish with a little Quechua or Waroni child. As the years have gone by my memory has gotten fuzzy, but I do know she shared the Gospel with the kids in Ecuador and I also know she prayed often for our team. She walked with the Lord in high school and college when the rest of us were caught up in other things, Franny said she always felt like she had an anchor keeping her tethered in Christ's safe harbor. The song I mentioned earlier was (and I hope still is) a Chapel Choir staple. "Draw Me Nearer." The words are a plea to draw people nearer to Christ. Not just to His shining image, not just to the baby in a manger, but to His Precious Bleeding Side. It is a prayer seeking to know God, not just at face value, but in the most intimate way possible, to even be at the foot of the instrument of His death, the cross. I know Franny was always being drawn closer and closer to Christ by the way she walked and talked with Him. May we all cry out

"Draw me nearer."

- JAMES WALLACE



Dawson team on top of the mountain overlooking Camp Chacauco in Ecuador.

Franny made a lasting impact on the lives of the people she came in contact with just like her friend James. James is currently a seminary student in Jackson, Mississippi.

Franny's life was a gift to many. Her love for missions continues through others each year when Dawson students serve on short-term mission trips. The Franny McLemore Memorial Fund, managed by The Dawson Foundation, was established in her honor and enables students to participate in short-term mission projects similar to the one Franny served on in Ecuador.

This year, Dawson's Chapel Choir Mission Tour will serve in Chacaucó, Ecuador and will be hosted by veteran missionaries of more than 35 years, Steve and Carol Thompson. The goal of the tour is to share and experience the love of Christ through music and service. The choir will also be supporting churches through a preaching conference, sharing the Gospel in rural villages, and singing in worship and at outreach gatherings across the region.

No matter their age, God uses His people for His glory when they step out in obedient faith. If you or someone you know is interested in participating in a short-term mission project, please visit our Missions Opportunities webpage at dawsonchurch.org/Missions.



BEN HALE serves as Dawson's Evangelism and Missions Pastor and has led Dawson's local, national, and international missions efforts since 2000. He and his wife, Lindy, have been married for 31 years and have three children, Abbie, Sara, and Grace. They also have two grandchildren, Benjamin and Lillian Murphy. Ben is committed to leading the Dawson Family of Faith in reaching its full potential in both mission giving and mobilization.



Dawson mission team standing on the Equator in Quito, Ecuador.

06
14-23
19

CHAPEL CHOIR MISSION TOUR

ECUADOR

DAWSONCHURCH.ORG/CHAPELCHOIR



The Church at
SKYE CANYON



By Greg Spencer | Pastor of The Church at Skye Canyon

Our family is so grateful for the commitment that the Dawson Family of Faith made in 2018 to become our "Sending Church." The Church at Skye Canyon, our church plant, would likely not be possible without your family of faith. As we begin the second of a five-year partnership with Dawson, we are looking forward to serving alongside many of you over the next four years.

Kimberly and I are originally from Rolling Fork, Mississippi. We will have been married 20 years this June. We have three children: Hannah Beth (14), Alden (12) and Gabe (11). I have pastored churches in Mississippi and North Carolina over the past 20 years and Kimberly teaches middle school special education.

You may be wondering, "Why would a pastor from Mississippi move his family to Las Vegas, Nevada to plant a new church?" The story began when our church in Mississippi helped plant three churches in the Las Vegas area. Somewhere during that process God worked in our hearts and led us to understand that we were supposed to do more than just support others in Las Vegas; we were to be personally involved in what He wanted to do there. As a result, we were led to plant a church in the Northwest corner of Las Vegas in an area called Skye Canyon. Why plant a church in Skye Canyon? This massive, planned community is experiencing rapid growth due to an influx of new residents. In this area there are over 40,000 people who have had very little access to the Gospel. In the metro Las Vegas area there is only one Southern Baptist Church for every 23,000 residents.

One of our team members describes the spiritual needs of Skye Canyon well: "As our family began to survey needs within Las Vegas, the northwest part of the city really stuck out as a place that was truly in need of a local church presence. Now to clarify, there isn't a spot in Las Vegas that doesn't need more churches, but the northwest certainly is church lean. With that area being so new and so far from the center of the city, very few established churches have begun to move there."

What can you do for us now to help us with our ministry? We would like to ask you to please pray for our first public worship service that will take place on Easter Sunday this April. Dawson will be sending a team to help us that weekend. Following that service we anticipate officially launching the church later in the year or early 2020.

I'm sure as our partner you will be hearing about the many ways you can be a part of what God is doing in Skye Canyon. We would love for you to consider serving on a short-term trip, but in addition to that we would also ask that you pray about moving to Las Vegas. I know that sounds crazy, right? Really, Las Vegas? But why not? Why not you? Maybe God is calling you and your family to come and live life in a non-Christian area of the country that is searching for what only Christ can offer. We need Jesus followers to come and be a part of our core team as we look forward to planting The Church at Skye Canyon. If you are interested in talking more, please email me at greg@thechurchatskyecanyon.com.



12 WAYS YOUR LIFE GROUP CAN SERVE

Mission projects are a wonderful way to experience fellowship and minister beyond the walls of the church. However, limitations can prevent some from serving. The good news is that Life Groups can share the love of Christ, and at the same time build unity among their members. It just takes a little planning to find the right project. There are projects you can do in one day with very little cost, and there are opportunities to serve weekly in on-going ministries. Below are ways you and your Life Group can serve:

1 Kids Connection – Life Groups can do one-time special projects as a large group, or they can provide small groups (2 or 3 volunteers) to work one day a week. This is a flexible way to serve children and foster families.

2 Transportation – Be on the lookout for people who would participate in church activities if they had transportation. Are there senior adults who need transportation on Sundays? Are there children in your neighborhood who would come to church if offered a ride?

3 Hispanic Vacation Bible School – Explore ways your Life Group can minister to Hispanic children in your community, particularly during Dawson's Vacation Bible School which will be July 22-25, 2019.

4 Host Guest Missionaries – Dawson has two homes that are for missionaries to live in while they are on stateside assignment. When missionaries return home, they often feel disconnected from the local community. This is a great time for your Life Group to include, encourage, and support their families while they are literally at our back door.

5 Missionary Support – Dawson currently has seven members serving full time on the international mission field. Often these missionaries gradually lose contact with their home church as their length of service grows. Life Groups can encourage and pray for them in an intentional way.

6 Encouraging Church Planters – Dawson supports eight local and national church plants in Hoover, Alabama; Las Vegas, Nevada; and across the state of Maine. As a Life Group, consider supporting church planters, spouses, children, and church leaders with encouraging handwritten notes and uplifting emails throughout the year.

7 The Learning Center – Life Groups can volunteer at The Learning Center in many ways. Individuals may sign up to be academic instructors while others may choose to be prayer partners or teach a Bible study. As a group, you can also sign up to bring lunch or snacks for the students one day during the semester.

8 Feed the Homeless – Cooking and/or serving food as a group is a great opportunity to minister to the needs of people who are close to home. Dawson members serve regularly at the Fire House Shelter and the Brother Bryan Mission in downtown Birmingham.

9 Alabama Black Belt Mission Trips – This one-day project is a great opportunity for parents to work alongside their children. Life Groups can serve together and bring their kids along. The teams provide medical care, clothes, food, and recreation.

10 Metro Changers – Metro Changers is a ministry where volunteer groups can renovate homes in Birmingham. Your group can paint a house, build a handicap ramp, or construct a new deck. Construction materials are provided at no cost to your Life Group by Metro Changers.

11 Orphan and Widow Care – Your Life Group can participate in Orphan and Widow Care by volunteering to do helpful tasks through our W.R.A.P. Ministry for foster and adoptive families and for Dawson's widows through our Season's Ministry.

12 Special Mission Projects – Dawson's Mission Staff will work with your Life Group to design a project for your group. There are a variety of opportunities to serve throughout the city.

2019 INTERNATIONAL & NATIONAL MISSION PROJECTS

Maine - Marriage Conference	February 8– 9
Dominican Republic - DSM	March 25– 30
Las Vegas - Church at Skye Canyon	April 19– 21
Ecuador - Chapel Choir Mission Tour	June 14– 23
Eurasia	June 14– 24
Southeast Asia - English Language Center	June 19 – July 3
Northern Europe	June 30 – July 7
Southeast Asia - Medical Internship Program	July 1 – 31
Maine - Windsor Fair	August 25 – September 2
Uganda Refugee Camps - Medical	August 28 – September 8
Southeast Asia - Teacher Training Conference	September 16 – 19
Horn of Africa – Trekking	September (TBD)

For more information on these mission projects and others, please visit dawsonchurch.org/missions



Celebrate Recovery®

Celebrate Recovery is a Christian recovery ministry that began at Saddleback Church in California more than 25 years ago. After much prayer, planning, and leadership training, the Dawson Celebrate Recovery Ministry launched and held their first Open Meeting in September 2018. Each week, between 20-30 participants and leaders gather on Tuesday nights for a meal and time of worship, teaching, and sharing. God has provided a broad range of volunteers, including one member of dawson kids who has bonded with one of the participants over a love of soccer. The Dawson group has already witnessed a profession of faith during a weekly meeting! We are grateful for the opportunity God has given Dawson to provide CR in this community and are excited about its continued growth. Below are the eight recovery principles based on the Beatitudes from The Sermon On The Mount in the book of Matthew.

Celebrate Recovery's Eight Recovery Principles

The Road to Recovery Based on the Beatitudes

Realize I'm not God; I admit that I am powerless to control my tendency to do the wrong thing and that my life is unmanageable. (Step 1)

"Happy are those who know that they are spiritually poor." Matthew 5:3a TEV

Earnestly believe that God exists, that I matter to Him and that He has the power to help me recover. (Step 2)

"Happy are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Matthew 5:4 TEV, NIV

Consciously choose to commit all my life and will to Christ's care and control. (Step 3)

"Happy are the meek." Matthew 5:5a TEV

Openly examine and confess my faults to myself, to God, and to someone I trust. (Steps 4 and 5)

"Happy are the pure in heart." Matthew 5:8a TEV

Voluntarily submit to any and all changes God wants to make in my life and humbly ask Him to remove my character defects. (Steps 6 and 7)

"Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires." Matthew 5:6a TEV

Evaluate all my relationships. Offer forgiveness to those who have hurt me and make amends for harm I've done to others when possible, except when to do so would harm them or others. (Steps 8 and 9)

"Happy are the merciful." Matthew 5:7a TEV; "Happy are the peacemakers." Matthew 5:9 TEV

Reserve a daily time with God for self-examination, Bible reading, and prayer in order to know God and His will for my life and to gain the power to follow His will. (Steps 10 and 11)

Yield myself to God to be used to bring this Good News to others, both by my example and my words. (Step 12)

"Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires." Matthew 5:10 TEV

If you or someone you know is struggling with addiction, please visit dawsonchurch.org/CelebrateRecovery to learn more about the program.

MISSION 205

DSM TO LAUNCH PILOT MISSION PROGRAM

Exciting things are happening in Dawson's Student Ministry. Fresh off the heels of their annual DNOW weekend with more than 300 students and 100 volunteers participating, Dawson students are preparing for a mission project in the Dominican Republic during Spring Break later this year. This year, middle school students will also have a chance to take their own mission "trip" with a pilot program called Mission 205. During the day, our middle school students as they partner with local organizations to share the Gospel and serve the city. At night they will stay in dorms on a college campus, where they will have daily debrief groups and worship time.

Abbie Johnson, Dawson's Associate Minister to Students, Alison Matthews, Student Ministry Assistant, and Seth King, Middle School Coordinator, are leading the charge for Dawson's first Middle School only mission project. "One of the things that we really have been thinking about as

a team in the last year," Abbie said, "is how can our students learn to be more mission-focused?" When the opportunity became available to create a new mission project, the DSM team says they were challenged to think beyond the norm. A local mission project in Birmingham was a great idea, Abbie said, because "mission projects are not just international experiences but can also happen in your backyard."

Their hopes are that this project will allow our students to understand what it really means to love their city and also to step outside their comfort zone. "It's a great bubble that we live in", Abbie said, but "Jesus has called us to love everyone," noting the poverty that's as close as "a mile or two down the road from our church."

Dawson's Student Ministry believes that Mission 205 will be a stepping stone for students to share the Gospel

during more trips to the Dominican Republic or other DSM mission projects.

Students will employ 'The Story'



Alison Matthews, Seth King, and Abbie Johnson

as one method of sharing the Gospel during Mission 205. Johnson said, "We've already seen fruit from using 'The Story' in the Dominican Republic, and so we will continue to use that to share the Gospel in Birmingham."

Mission 205 will take place from May 29 to June 1 in downtown Birmingham. Registration will be available soon.



dawson kids

24
hours
4 Him



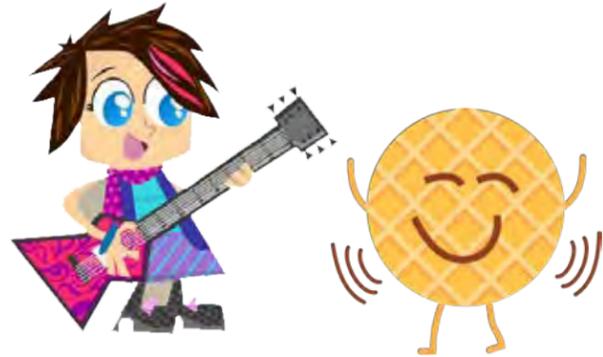
February 22-23

dawsonkids.org.

WAFFLES
& WIGGLES

PRESCHOOL PRAISE PARTY

with Yancy



Sunday, March 3
5:00 p.m.

MEN'S
NETWORK
DINNER

March 10, 2019
6 PM | FRC

dawsonchurch.org/men



FELLOWSHIP & FUN FOR WOMEN
March 12 • Flower Arranging
dawsonchurch.org/handmade

KIDLIFE CAMPOUT
JUNE 3-7

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Life's Better Together

There's a Life Group for you!

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STUDENTS
COLLEGE
YOUNG ADULTS
ADULTS

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