

THE NAFWB NEWS

2017 FREE WILL BAPTIST NATIONAL CONVENTION

WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 2017 | LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY | WWW.NAFWB.ORG

Next Up: The Natural State 2018 Convention Returns to the “Heart of Arkansas”

A decade has passed since Free Will Baptists last met in Little Rock for the 71st national convention in 2007. At that meeting, the numbers told a story of positive turnarounds for Randall House, growing enrollment at Welch College, and a wave of church plants and missionary candidates. The theme “Helping One Another” ended with the exhortation in the Wednesday night missions service to “help reach the world.” With dozens of new missionaries added to the field since 2007, Free Will Baptists have risen to the challenge of helping to reach the world. And, as we look toward next year’s convention in Little Rock, Arkansas, we continue to seek ever-improving ways to further the Kingdom.

At the 82nd session of the national convention, July 22-25, 2018, in Little Rock, Arkansas, you can expect a familiar scene. As online pre-registration, online streaming of worship services, and the development of the NAFWB mobile app have been streamlined over the last couple years, 2018 will be more up-to-date than ever. The recent addition of a text-to-give option gives tech-savvy Free Will Baptists a new way to donate, while Facebook check in campaigns and social media hashtags like #NAFWB help Free Will Baptists connect and share digitally.

Little Rock location is also a familiar destination to Free Will Baptists, who convened here in 2007, 1994, 1984, and 1966.

Though its name is “little,” there’s nothing little about the activities awaiting you and your family during the 2018 convention. As you travel through Arkansas, you may want to stop for a picnic or hike amid the Natural State’s beautiful scenery.

Once in Little Rock, there’s no shortage of museums, with the Clinton Presidential Library and the Arkansas Old State House within walking distance of the convention center, as well as the Museum of Discovery for the kids and even a museum of purses. During the convention, be sure to wander through the River Market, an indoor shop that boasts plenty of stalls and vendors, where you’ll find lunch, live music, and maybe a souvenir. Only a few blocks from the convention center, it’s an ideal lunch spot.

While the business of the denomination is conducted, the Vertical Three Conference will focus on the theme “Unseen” based on the Hebrews 11:1 definition of faith. Between CTS Expo events, Engage seminars, and worship, our youth are sure to grow in faith as they apply what they learn at the 2018 conference.

About the writer: Emily Faison graduated in 2016 from Florida State University with a M.A. in Literature. She is a member of the convention press team.

Home Run in Louisville

Highlights That Shaped the 2017 Convention

When the National Association met in Louisville in 2005, the post-convention report described the meeting as the “Grand Slam in Louisville.” In 2017, the convention hit yet another home run. Enjoy a few of the exciting elements that made the highlight reel:

- + **The numbers are up.** After hearing a number of bleak financial reports at the Kansas City meeting a year ago, departments (as a whole) shared a much brighter picture this year. Randall House and North American Ministries, in particular, enjoyed complete financial turnarounds.
- + In addition to **great worship services**, the **more than 4,500 attendees** in Louisville enjoyed **83 well-attended seminars**, workshops, and panel discussions covering a wide range of topics. Vertical Three Director Brandon Roysden noted, “The sessions add a great element to the convention for those not involved in business or CTS Expo activities. They help create a well-rounded and practical meeting.”
- + **Fifty-five workers** from **ten churches** and **five states** arrived at the convention a day early for **Impact Louisville**. They gathered at First Free Will Baptist Church, 15 minutes from downtown, and the work they accomplished was nothing short of amazing. In just under four hours, they pressure washed the brick, eaves, gutters, steeple, and sidewalks; trimmed the shrubs and refreshed the landscaping; cleaned church pews and walls in the sanctuary; removed years of storage from the attic; caulked around crown molding in the fellowship hall; and prepared the interior of the church for

painting. After freshening up the church facilities, the group helped the church host a neighborhood fun day, with inflatable games, a cookout, and more.

- + For the second year, attendees participated in **Check in for a Cause**. This year, Facebook check ins will **provide funding for the church revitalization in Louisville**. A special thanks goes to both Free Will Baptist Foundation and International Missions for their role in this new campaign.
- + The atmosphere was triumphant on Tuesday night, as a stage full of **Welch College alumni led Free Will Baptists in worship** as the College marked the 75th anniversary of its inception. A celebration of history and heritage, the service included a Welch College alumni choir, video tour of the new Gallatin campus, a documentary-style look at the history of Welch College, and a sermon from Welch President Dr. Matthew Pinson.
- + Free Will Baptist women were thrilled to meet **President Madame Solange** and **Counselor Madame Deborah**, representing Cote d’Ivoire’s own women’s organization, *Femmes de la Bonne Nouvelle*, or Women of the Good News. Everyone enjoyed their impromptu *a capella* rendition of “What a Friend We Have in Jesus” in French (joined by Alice Smith) at Monday evening’s Laughter & Latte event. When asked if they could take any one thing from the States back with them to Africa, Madame Deborah promptly responded in English, “Fast food!”

Convention Welcomes Medal of Honor Recipient

On March 25, 2017, Molly Hudgens, a middle school counselor from Cheatham County, Tennessee, received the 2017 Citizen Honors Award from the Congressional Medal of Honor Society at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia. She was selected for her quick thinking and courageous actions on September 28, 2016, when she coaxed a 14-year-old student to surrender a loaded gun at the school. Molly spoke with the student for 45 minutes until he agreed to surrender.

“To say I am honored to receive this award is an understatement,” Molly shared. “No words can express how humbled I was to visit Arlington National Cemetery and receive this award from the men and women of the United States military who have received the Congressional Medal of Honor. They represent the bravest of the American people, and I will be forever grateful to have the opportunity to meet them and hear their stories.”

The Convention welcomes Molly, a member of Friendship FWB Church in Ashland City, Tennessee, and a graduate of Pleasant View Christian School, a Free Will Baptist ministry. She and her family are here this week, taking part in the CTS Expo. Read the entire story in the October-November issue of **ONE Magazine**.

Molly, on behalf of the convention and Free Will Baptists in general, thank you for your bravery and faithfulness.

Meet the Speaker

Originally from North Carolina, International Missions General Director Clint Morgan currently calls Nashville home. In addition to his B.A. in Missions and Bible from Welch College, Morgan also holds a French-language diploma from University de Nantes, France, and a M.A. in Intercultural Studies from Columbia International University. Before taking on his current role at IM, Morgan and his wife Lynette served as missionaries to Côte d'Ivoire from 1976-2005. A prolific author, Morgan's most recent text was published by Randall House in 2015: *African Proverbs: Wisdom Without Borders*. Clint and Lynette have four children (Trey, Adam, Aaron, and Autumn) and six grandchildren.

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Elected During the 2017 Business Sessions

Board of Home Missions – 2023

Bob Lewis (TN)
Josh Baer (NC)
David Sexton (VA)

Board of Retirement – 2023

Danny Baer (NC)
James Beasley (SC)
Jack Daniel (GA)

FWB Foundation – 2021

Scott Coghill (NC)

2023

Bobby Edwards (TN)
Melissa Harralson (AR)
Bob Thompson (OK)

Theological Integrity - 2022

Kevin Hester (TN)

Historical Commission - 2022

Willie Martin (GA)

Music Commission - 2022

Doug Little (TN)

Media Commission

2020 Jeremy Smith (NC)
2022 Marc Neppel (VA)

General Board - 2017

Daniel Edwards (IN)
David Inman (IA)
Josh Bush (KS)
Ashley Kidd (KY)

Bud Bivens (MX)

Jim Lawson (MI)
Wayne Hale (MID-ATL)
Larry Reynolds (MS)
Stan Bunch (MO)
Mark Shores (NM)

Executive Committee - 2017

Stan Bunch (MO)
Wayne Hale (MID-ATL)
Daniel Edwards (IN)

General Officers

Moderator - Tim York (TN)
Asst. Moderator - William Smith (GA)
Clerk - Randy Bryant (FL)
Asst. Clerk - Ernie Lewis (IL)

News, Updates & Announcements

Picture This

Pictures from the convention are available online. Visit www.nafwb.yerbyphotography.com.

Registration Statistics

At 3:30 p.m., the 2017 convention had individual registrations of 4,563—3,760 for the national convention and 3,457 for Vertical Three. (Many individuals register for both conferences.)

Lost something?

Visit registration immediately following the serve to claim the following items: High Sierra backpack; trucker hat; Paw Patrol water bottle; turquoise folder (Cassidy); phone charger; blue bag; pink NIV Bible; gold journal.

Served the City

Thanks to 168 volunteers who worked many hours in service projects around the city, including: soup kitchen, homeless shelters, helping disabled seniors, street ministry, and the annual Red Cross blood drive.

Shine! Conferences Announced

During her convention report, WNAC Director Elizabeth Hodges announced two *Shine!* Conferences coming in the fall of 2017, for girls ages 12 to 18. The first will be held at Randall University (OK), October 28, and the second will be held at Seffner Christian Academy (FL), November 18. For more information, visit www.ShineFWB.com.