



TRUE LIGHT

WHY THE CHURCH IS LOSING ITS YOUTH - AND HOW TO KEEP THEM

July 26, 2026

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SUNDAY

Sunday School :
9:30 a.m.
Worship:
10:15 a.m.
5:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study.....7:00PM

MINISTER

Stan Dauck
573-293-5620

ELDERS

David Burleson
573-820-0329
David Carson
573-281-6686
Stan Dauck
573-293-5594

DEACONS

Wayne Reams
Rodney Williams

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Bernie church of Christ

*"This is the day the Lord
has made. Let us rejoice
and be glad in it."*

Psalms 118:24

***We Welcome You
To All Of Our
Services***

I'll be up front with you - the title of this piece is a bit misleading in the sense that it supposes a single, simple answer to the question of why so many young people are leaving the church. In reality, there are a lot of factors that go into each individual young person's decision to walk away from Christianity while still in their home of origin or after leaving it.

Some of them, it is true, fall genuinely in love with a sinful lifestyle and/or simply do not want to put in the work that is involved in being a Christian as an independent adult, but that description does not apply to all of them. Some of them are consumed with guilt over sins committed in their youth that they do not see any hope of overcoming and leave as a means of coping with their "tainted" reality. Some of them struggle with mental and emotional health issues that make them wonder why they miss out on the mental and emotional benefits that religion affords their relatives and peers. Some of them are struggling with questions of identity that have gone unanswered by a faith tradition that (intentionally or not) has made Christianity about exercising a set of behaviors rather than obtaining a transformed identity in Christ. Some of them have experienced pain and even abuse at the hands of religious leaders, mentors, or structures, and more of these than we'd like to admit have struggled with the aftermath of these experiences alone.

In reality, most young people who leave the church do so as a result of a combination of these and many other factors. Being raised as a Christian is, in some ways, a more difficult thing than we often like to admit. Often, we expect our children to accept realities that are difficult for most adults to understand, and to submit themselves to a way of thinking and living that requires a complex and convincing justification. For all of these reasons, I would submit that there is one common denominator behind the majority of cases in which young people leave the church in their teenage years or early adulthood.

We don't talk with them about any of this.

We hit sinful lifestyles and the burden of Christianity hard, but most of the other factors previously listed are not handled the same way, if they're handled at all. We struggle to balance addressing and alleviating youthful guilt against the tendency to justify sin, so we lean into guilt instead and hope that it becomes corrective. We are underprepared for discussions of identity (and often assume that those discussions are leading somewhere they may not be), so we avoid them or address them very bluntly and without room for an actual discussion. We know that revelations of abuse at the hands of religious figures will have public fallout, so we protect abusers at the cost of the abused.

The church should be a safe place for questions, for conversations, for healing that is messy and nonlinear, for protection of the oppressed and victimized. The church can be a safe place in all of these ways without sacrificing its identity as a place of holiness and righteousness - in fact, its holiness and righteousness is dependent upon its safety.

If your home could improve its fostering of collective openness and trust, start today. (Fathers, as those tasked with spiritual leadership in the home, this starts with you.) If your congregation could improve its fostering of collective openness and trust, start today. (Elders and preachers, as those tasked with shepherding the flock and delivering the Word to them, this starts with you.) If and when your children have questions about their faith or concerns about how it is affecting them in their developmental years, listen to them with an open heart and mind, and respond with the compassionate guidance of Christ.

We talk often about how reaching someone with the Gospel for the first time can make a difference in someone's eternity. Demonstrating the openhanded love and redeeming power of the Gospel to a young person might make the same difference, too.

(P.S. - This is all applicable to young Christians, too.)

Luke Tatum, via A Legacy of Faith blog post

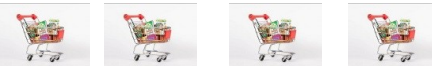
BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES

July 27 - Rick Beard
Amy Thomason



CHILDREN'S HOMES NEEDS

Country Gravy Mix * Brown Gravy
Mix * BBQ Sauce * Diced Tomatoes *
Black Olives * Pickles
Pick up date: August 3rd



WILLING TO SERVE

July 26, 2026

Morning Worship:

Song Leader.....Rodney Williams
Opening Prayer.....Jon Neely
Scripture.....Jordan Ross
Prayer.....Jason Karnes
Closing Prayer.....Jess LeCroy

Evening Worship:

Song Leader.....David Carson
Prayer.....Ron Garner
Scripture.....Darrin Shipman
Dismissal.....Jerry Burleson

July 29, 2026

Song Leader.....Jacob Clayton
Prayer.....Sam Garner
Dismissal.....Jerry McCoy

August 2, 2026

Morning Worship:

Song Leader.....Chase Burch
Opening Prayer.....Jason Karnes
Scripture.....Darrin Shipman
Prayer.....Zack Tanner
Closing Prayer.....Matt Ward

Evening Worship:

Song Leader.....Rodney Williams
Prayer.....Justin Allen
Scripture.....Sam Garner
Dismissal.....David Burleson

ANCHORED IN GOD

It's morning, so my husband opens his phone to select his favorite gospel song, "My Soul is Anchored." The lyrics express hope in God in turbulent times. Dan sings along, the words warning of billows rolling and breakers dashing. But we don't sway, the song says, because God holds us fast.

The words perfectly describe the work of a ship's anchor. An anchor steadies a vessel by sinking its "arms" into the seabed, keeping the ship from drifting or getting tossed about during a violent squall.

The anchor has become a classic symbol of the Christian faith - reflecting our hope in Christ, to whom we hold tightly, even in life's chaos. As the writer of Hebrews said, *We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure* (Hebrews 6:19). This hope is Jesus, whose *unchanging nature* (v 17) is a trusted holding ground for those who believe in Him. Moreover, what God promised He confirmed with an oath, and in these *two unchangeable things... it's impossible for God to lie* (v 17-18). That's why we who hold on to His promises *may be greatly encouraged* (v 18).

Some may anchor in unreliable things - their own ambition, unhealthy friends, or negative habits. How much better to anchor in the one whom we know we can trust and depend on. When the waves crash around us, we'll be held fast. Our soul is anchored in God.

Patricia Raybon

Attendance July 19: 103

Contribution July 19: \$3825

REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Sue Jester was treated for low sodium and dehydration Thursday and is doing some better * **Beth Gresham** dealing with a shingles outbreak * **Robbie Buck** continuing to improve following a stent removal * **David Carson** doing better * **Tim Flowers** is expecting to begin treatments for MDS, a blood cancer. He has also had some issues with low blood pressure * **Cindy Williams** continuing with radiation treatments which will be followed by chemo and immunotherapy * **David Burleson** as he continues with chemo treatments for his leukemia and will begin radiation treatments * **Joseph Dauck** (Stan's nephew) has started treatments for lung cancer * **Janet and Woody Woods** still dealing with health issues. Woody will meet with his surgeon August 5.

Continue praying for these members of our church family: Cody Boyt * Jerry Burleson * David Burleson * David Carson * Faye Dockins * Mike Duley * Karen Forkum * Patsy (Hardy) Gregg * Helen McGowan * Jeff McGowan * Donna McKuin * June Mothersbaugh * Woody and Janet Wood

Those dealing with cancer/other illness (non congregational) :

Melinda Akers * Chastity Beard * Terry Bean family * Cathy Bennett * Rodney Britt * Jerry Bullock * Scott Burleson * Roxanne Carson * Sherry Chambers * Randy Cravens * Barbara Denson * Bill Fitzpatrick * Audrey Galloway * Emily Garner * Patricia Greninger * Stan Goodman * Renee Goodman * Christy Heskett * Nolan Hollowell * LeAnn Jacques * Tommy Jacques * Pam Jeralds * Kristin Meadows * Jerry Mickey * Connie Lemmons * Ponna Mahan * Cindy Miller * Betty Nicholson * Nikki Reif * Joe Richardson * Dewayne Stidham * Anthony Tate * Bobby Thornton * Mindy Tomah * Joyce Walker * Christina Whitaker * Alan Woodward

LOOKING AHEAD:

- TODAY: Johnny Hester will be our guest speaker for morning and evening worship.
- July 27: Summer Youth Series at Green Forest at 7 p.m.
- July 29: Keith Olbricht will be our Summer Speaker Series guest.
- August 2: First Sunday potluck and early evening service. We will have a potluck meal following morning worship, followed by an early evening service. Everyone is encouraged to stay for both the potluck and afternoon service.
- August 3: Grocery Run for the Children's Home. Let's get the cart filled up.
- August 3: Sumer Youth Series at Shady Acres at 7 p.m.
- August 7-8: Youth Rally at Arnold church of Christ with guest speaker Chase Green. More information is posted on the bulletin board by the nursery.
- August 10: Summer Youth Series at Dexter at 7 p.m.
- August 11: Ladis Lunch Out at 11:30 at Huddle House in Dexter. There's a sign up sheet on the table in the foyer if you'd like to attend.
- August 19: BYOB (Bring Your Own Bag) supper in the fellowship room at 6 p.m. Bring food for your family and come eat with us. Drinks will be provided.

It's a GIRL! Congratulations to Zack and Beckie Tanner on the birth of their second grandchild, Aspen Ann Tanner, who was born July 18. Proud parents are Zachary and Bailee Tanner.