

## GEORGE COUNTY BAPTIST CHURCH LUCEDALE, MISSISSIPPI

### **Stewards of the Mysteries of God: A Year-End Accounting**

Dear Friends and Beloved Co-Laborers in Christ,

Grace to you and peace from our Lord Jesus Christ.

We write to you at the close of 2025 as stewards who must account for the mysteries of God committed to our care. Paul's words to the Corinthians establish our posture: "*Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God*" (1 **Corinthians 4:1**). We are accountable to the God who has entrusted us with His Gospel.

What follows is an honest report of what the Lord has accomplished through this small ministry in 2025, a year that taught us more about faithfulness than any year before it.

#### **Gospel Distribution And Outreach**

Let us begin with what we have actually done.

We have placed approximately 29,000 Gospel tracts and Church invitations into the hands of people in George County over the past two years. The population of this county is 26,000. We have saturated the region with the Gospel. This was through deliberate, sustained effort.

I have published two books this year: *The Lamb of God: The Progressive Revelation of Eternal Redemption* and *The Gospel of Jesus Christ: From Birth to Resurrection*. One hundred seventy-nine copies exist in the world, bearing witness to Christ. We do not know where they rest or who will read them. But they exist. They will speak truth long after we are silent.

Our website, created in 2025, has received 12,600 visitors in a single year. Sixty-two articles on doctrine and Christian living have been published there. These are read by people we will never meet, in places we will never know about.

On SermonAudio.com, 17,070 people listened to our sermons in 2025 alone. It's hard to imagine that tens of thousands of human beings heard a pastor in Mississippi preach the word of God. Some listened from around the world, others from around America. Some listened in circumstances we cannot imagine. But they listened. The word of God went forth.

Every week, faithfully, Mrs. Pat and Mrs. Phillis gather in our home. We address envelopes by hand. We insert personalized Church invitations. We mail them out. This is laborious. It is costly. It is also, by far, the most effective evangelistic tool we have discovered in George County. When people visit our Church, they tell us: I got your letter. Someone took time to write my name. Someone cared.

Beginning in October, I began sending emails three times per week to approximately 400 subscribers. In three months, 12,000 emails have been sent. The response has been remarkable. Men write asking for counsel. Families report sharing the content with relatives. This is the word of God moving through the world in ways we did not anticipate.

We stood in the cold rain at Christmas parades and distributed 3,500 tracts. We prepared 48 gift bags for law enforcement: books, tracts, tokens of appreciation, because these men and women deserve to know that Christ is interested in them, and that we see their service.

We labored alongside Heritage Baptist Church in Picayune for *The Gift*, a live Gospel presentation in the woods outdoors. Hundreds came despite the cold. They heard Christ proclaimed directly. They had opportunity to respond immediately. This was not our event, but we were privileged to stand with a church faithfully preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This is not small work. This is not the work of a failed ministry. This is the work of a ministry reaching people through every possible channel available.

### **About Our Season**

Here is what is true, and we will not soften it: our local Sunday gathering remains small. When I arrived in November 2023, we had eighteen people. By 2024, we had grown to 23–25 on Sunday mornings. In 2025, that growth reversed. Many

Sundays, I preach to my wife, Mrs. Phillis, and Mrs. Pat. There is a new young couple that have been coming, and there seems to be great potential, time will tell.

This is the reality of ministry in George County in 2025.

The people of this region have heard the Gospel. They have encountered it repeatedly. They have been given literature, invitations, opportunity. And they have, by and large, chosen not to gather with us in our building on Sunday morning. They are content with their cultural Christianity. They have no appetite for conviction or serious discipleship. This is not a failure of technique or strategy. This is the condition of the soil. And the soil in George County is hard.

But here is what must be said clearly: the absence of growth in our Sunday gathering does not constitute the absence of God's work. It simply means His work is happening through different channels than we anticipated, at the moment. Our end goal is a Bible Believing local Church, all other labors are means to that hopeful end.

But, seventeen thousand people listened to our sermons. How many of those seventeen thousand will never sit in a Church building? How many will encounter Christ through those sermons in a moment of personal crisis years from now? We do not know. We will not know. That is God's work, not ours.

The Gospel has been sown in George County. The seed is in the ground. Some of it will bear fruit in God's time. Some will not. That is not our responsibility to determine. Our responsibility was to sow faithfully. We have done that.

### **Stewardship And Sacrifice**

When I arrived in George County, this Church carried a debt of \$62,000. As of December 2025, that debt stands at \$33,642.73. We have halved it in two years. This was accomplished through a people who give sacrificially, supporting Churches who believed in the work, and my family bearing costs from our personal resources when the Church's capacity proved delicate.

Our financial accounts are as modest as our congregation. It is also sufficient. We operate in a narrow band which requires daily dependence on God. We do not live lavishly. We live carefully. And we live believing that if the Lord wants a Church in George County, He will sustain it, and thus He has done just that thus far.

In 2026, we will not make minimum payments on the remaining debt. We will work to eliminate it as quickly as possible. This will require sacrifice. We will determine

the amount together, and we will do it. Some things will be said no to. Some dreams will be deferred. But the thorn in our side will be removed.

My family and I have made a decision: this work is worth the cost. I work 45 hours per week at secular employment to support my family and ensure the Church is not responsible for our financial needs. I study, prepare, and write 20–30 hours per week. I stand on the street corner for an hour every Friday with a sign and Gospel tracts. I preach an average of six sermons per week. I answer calls from people who have listened online and need counsel.

This is not offered for recognition or sympathy. It is offered as explanation. When you wonder why a small Church continues to exist and minister, understand that it is because someone has decided this is worth the cost. And more than that, it is worth the joy of doing it.

### **The Doctrine We Live By**

Jesus tells us plainly in the Parable of the Sower that three out of four will reject the Gospel. Only one bears fruit and remains fruitful. This is not a recipe for numerical success. It is a recipe for realistic, biblical faithfulness.

*"Be thou faithful unto death,"* the Lord tells the Church at Smyrna, *"and I will give thee a crown of life"* (**Revelation 2:10**). Not be successful. Not be impressive. Be faithful.

The sower does not succeed or fail based on the seed that falls on hard ground or among thorns. The sower succeeds by sowing faithfully in any soil and trusting God with the rest. *"Neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase,"* (**1 Corinthians 3:7**).

We have planted in George County. We have planted online. We have planted through tracts, invitations, books, articles, emails and sermons. The harvest is God's concern. Our concern is fidelity. And we are determined to remain faithful.

This is not resignation. This is clarity about what belongs to us and what belongs to God. We are responsible for the sowing. God is responsible for the harvest. And we trust Him to do what He has promised: *"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it"* (**Isaiah 55:11**).

### **Strategic Clarity For 2026**

We have sown widely in George County. We will continue that sowing. But we have also recognized that the Lord has opened a door we cannot ignore.

Fifteen minutes from our location, Wilmer, Alabama is home to a population of over 12,000, nearly four times larger than Lucedale. This population is growing, younger, economically robust, and shaped by recent job-driven migration. These are not people locked into existing churches by generational habit. They are potentially spiritually searching newcomers. Open soil, waiting for seed.

Beginning in January 2026, we will place significant emphasis on reaching Wilmer through targeted digital advertising, strategic mailers, and direct evangelism. We will establish a Second Saturday downtown ministry in Lucedale to maintain our faithful presence in George County. But we will also deploy our evangelistic resources toward a field where new soil awaits.

This is not retreat, but rather an expansion of our current ministries. The soil in Wilmer may possibly be more receptive. The harvest may possibly come more quickly. But the seeds sown in George County do not die. They wait for God's timing, and we trust that timing completely. Furthermore, what we have accomplished the past two years, we will do again, Lord willing, in the next two years as well.

### **To Our Faithful Brethren**

To Mrs. Pat and Mrs. Phillis: You gather with us every Thursday. You address envelopes by hand. You labor with joy. You have shown us what faithful service looks like. Thank you.

To Brother Brant Zeller: You stood with us in the rain. You are planting a church near New Orleans while running Banners Unfurled. Yet you stood with us. That kind of solidarity means everything. Thank you.

To the supporting Churches across state lines: You encourage us in our work through prayer and partnership. You have said, through your giving, "*We believe in what God is doing in George County.*" That affirmation sustains us. Thank you.

To my wife: You care for our family with excellence so that I might labor in study, writing, and ministry. Thank you.

Your faithfulness has sustained ours. When this work feels lonely, you remind us that we are not alone. When the outcome is uncertain, you remind us that God is faithful. When our hearts grow weary, you remind us that we are part of something

larger than ourselves.

## Finally, My Brethren

We are stewards. Not owners. Not architects of our own kingdoms. Stewards. We hold in trust what belongs entirely to the Lord. We account for that trust before Him and before you.

In 2025, we sowed the Gospel seed through every means available to us. We reduced debt. We established digital ministry. We stood on streets. We addressed envelopes. We preached to small gatherings with the same conviction we would preach to thousands. We did our work.

The harvest belongs to God. And we are content with that arrangement.

*"Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:8–10).*

We will sow in 2026. We will labor. We will trust. And we invite you to labor with us, to pray for us, and to watch what the Lord does next.

In Christ's service,

*Pastor Thomas Irvin  
George County Baptist Church  
Lucedale, Mississippi*



**George County Baptist Church**

Pastor Thomas Irvin

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