

# Evangelism Conference celebrates return, rekindles friendships

*By Tony Martin*  
*Associate Editor*

More than 1,400 people attended the 2022 Mississippi Baptist State Evangelism Conference January 30-31 at Northcrest Church, Meridian, a welcome return after the COVID-19 pandemic caused the 2021 conference to be postponed.

“This gives Mississippi Baptists a chance to get together for nothing but worship and fellowship,” said Don Lum, director of evangelism at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB). The annual event is sponsored by the MBCB Evangelism Department.

“Everyone got to see friends, eat together, hear speakers that God will use to challenge them, and have their lives refreshed,” Lum said. Conference speakers included:

- Fred Luter, pastor of Franklin Avenue Church in New Orleans and former two-time president of the Southern Baptist Convention.
- Mac Brunson, pastor of Valleydale Church in Birmingham, Ala.
- Tom Richter, pastor of First Church in Cullman, Ala.
- David Burton, founder of David Burton Ministries in Middleburg, Fla.
- Kenny Digby, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission in Jackson.
- Jeff Laborg, pastor of Fairview Knox Church in Corryton,

Tenn.

Northcrest Church Worship Pastor Paul Davis led worship for the event along with the church's praise team. They were joined for the last session by the choir and orchestra from Baptist-affiliated William Carey University in Hattiesburg.

"This was once considered a 'pastors' event,'" said Lum. "It still is to some extent, but really it is for all Mississippi Baptists. We love for pastors to bring their church members with them. It helps the church and the pastors as people are revived.

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"Some of our folks haven't had the opportunity to do that since the last Evangelism Conference in 2020. At the dinner Northcrest Church provided on Monday evening, even the round shape of the tables gave the opportunity for people to talk and fellowship," Lum said.

Lum noted that Northcrest proved to be an excellent host, "as always."

"It starts with their senior pastor, Dan Lanier, and flows down to the ministerial staff who understand what they're to do – and their goal is to be the very best they can be. The whole church goes the extra mile. They do a phenomenal job;

the church becomes the ministers.”

The 2023 Evangelism Conference will be held January 29-30 at Brandon Church, Brandon. The Evangelism Conference is supported annually by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program. For more information on evangelism opportunities, contact Lum at [dlum@mbcb.org](mailto:dlum@mbcb.org). Telephone: (601) 292-3278.



HOLY PRAISE – The choir and orchestra of Baptist-affiliated William Carey University in Hattiesburg perform during the final session of the 2022 Mississippi Baptist State Evangelism Conference held January 30-31 at Northcrest Church, Meridian. (Photo credit: Tony Martin)