

Lake Shore Baptist Church

CHURCH PROFILE



Overview

Lake Shore Baptist is a medium-sized church located in the quiet Mountainview neighborhood of Waco, Texas. Waco is a city of about 140,000 people in a metropolitan area of about 235,000. It is the home of Baylor University, McLennan Community College, and Texas State Technical College, and has gained attention in recent years as the home of the Magnolia broadcasts and enterprises of Chip and Joanna Gaines.

Membership, Attendance, Giving Units, Demographics

Members/Congregants/Attendance

- Average attendance: about 125

Age Composition (based on a Transition Team survey)

- 65+ 56%
- 55-64 21%
- 45-54 8%
- 35-44 10%
- < 35 5%

Race/Ethnicity (based on a Transition Team survey)

- White/Caucasian 88%
- Black/African American 3%
- Hispanic/Latino 3%
- All Other 3%
- No Answer 3%

Shared Values

Our church Bylaws open with the strong affirmation that the church adopted in 2016:

Lake Shore Baptist Church is a welcoming and affirming community of Christians attempting to discover, articulate, and embody the meaning of the Gospel in the world today. We affirm each individual as a child of God and as created in God's image. Our welcome holds no bounds; we welcome all persons into membership and full participation in the life and ministry of our congregation.

In their survey, our Transition Team asked the congregation what values they feel define Lake Shore Baptist "at its best." Based on the results, they generated a "word cloud" that suggests a strong set of shared values:

service priesthood believer Christian openness acceptance caring one another changes
progressive based affirming balance members thoughtful best diversity issues listen
kindness make faith respect need life Inclusion thought openness

Compassion mission community world church Inclusiveness

social justice Supports community s love

understanding welcoming family caring everyone people

welcoming affirming Open challenging values involvement worship open-minded

acceptance willingness questions define accepting commitment Others Freedom

justice gospel living year pastors persons Lake Shore Friendly ways afraid concern
open minded belief

The three values that emerged most consistently were Social Justice, Welcoming Community, and Love/Caring. The importance of Social Justice was amplified in another survey question in which the Transition Team asked respondents to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with several statements. The key findings were:

- 91% completely or somewhat agreed it was important for LSBC be seen as a leader on social justice issues.
- 91% completely or somewhat agreed there's a clear connection between social justice issues and Christian values.
- 84% completely or somewhat agreed it is not enough to believe in social justice; we must act publicly on our beliefs.

Church Staff

The church currently (July 2024) employs a full-time Pastor (Nick Mumejian), a full-time Minister of Faith Formation for Children and Youth (Jessica MacFarlan), a part-time Director of Music (Brently Bartlett), a full-time Writer in Residence (Sharlande Sledge, who will retire at the end of 2024), a part-time Organist/Pianist (Ping-Ting Lan), a part-time Custodian (Louis Garcia), and a part-time Office Manager (Petra Williams). Tom Hanks serves as College Minister on a voluntary basis. Photos and bios of staff members are [available here on the web site](#).



Congregational Polity

Guided by a set of [bylaws that are available here](#), Lake Shore is a largely committee-run church with many shared responsibilities that create opportunities for ongoing ministries. The 15-member Diaconate, which is intentionally gender-balanced, has “general responsibility for achieving and maintaining a high spiritual level of commitment and concern in the church,” and its members “minister to the people of the church as spiritual leaders under the guidance of the pastor.” The 7-member Administrative Council oversees the financial, legal, and other administrative responsibilities of the church. Selected by the Committee Coordinating Council the church has several Committees with rotating memberships (Finance, Personnel, Family Education, Worship, etc.) and Teams that do not necessarily rotate (Ushers, Fellowship, Food, etc.).

Style of Worship

Lake Shore’s style of worship is more liturgical than that of many Baptist churches, but there’s also a lot of room for creativity. We follow the seasons of the church year, and sermons are frequently based on readings from the lectionary. About 60% of members come from Baptist backgrounds, but a significant group also comes from other denominations including Methodist, Presbyterian, Catholic, Episcopalian, and Lutheran. In congregational surveys, our members have expressed a preference for variety in music, ranging from medieval and classical to gospel and some contemporary music, but there’s little appreciation for praise choruses. [Recordings of our streamed services can be seen here.](#)

Missions and Ministries

Lake Shore supports a variety of other mission partners. Locally, these have included Meals on Wheels, Mission Waco, Caritas, World Hunger Relief, Family Self-Sufficiency, Family Abuse Center, Carver Park Food Pantry, and others. Globally, we have supported the Shalom Children’s Center in Ghana, CBF China, Christian Mission to Gaza, the Lebanese Society for Education and Social Development, Doctors Without Borders, and others.

Affiliations

Lake Shore is affiliated with the Alliance of Baptists, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, and the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists. We also support the Baptist World Alliance, the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty, and Baptist Women in Ministry.

Church History

Note: This is a heavily-abridged and slightly-updated version of the fuller history of Lake Shore that can be found [here](#) on the church web site.

Lake Shore Baptist Church was established in 1959 at the initiative of an older Waco church - Columbus Avenue Baptist - that recognized a need for a new ministry in the growing northwest neighborhoods of Waco and its suburbs. At its founding, Lake Shore had 225



Waco News Tribune, March 25, 1961

charter members. Through the years, our membership numbers have trended upward and downward, but Lake Shore continues to have an active membership in the 200-range today.

During its first few years, Lake Shore was a fairly traditional Southern Baptist Church. That orientation started shifting in 1962 when Dr. H. Rhea Gray became pastor. Trained in pastoral counseling and critical theology, Gray was willing to challenge SBC orthodoxy and he supported Lake Shore's first steps toward racial inclusion. In January 1965, the church voted to ignore race "as to seating in our sanctuary or acceptance of membership into this Christian body of baptized believers;" and on Race Relations Sunday in 1966, Gray exchanged pulpits with the pastor of New Hope Baptist Church.

Lake Shore took steps toward gender equality in the mid-1970s when Dr. Richard Groves was pastor. In 1975, the church voted that "sex shall not be a test in determining the qualifications of church members for serving in the office of deacon," and the first female deacons were added to the board in 1977. In 1983, Terri Rose became the first female chair of the deacon board. For many years, we have elected roughly equal numbers of women and men to the board, and the chair position usually rotates annually between genders.

In 1985, the church expanded its Wednesday evening program to include a community meal, concerns and celebrations, adult seminars, programs for children and youth, and choir practice. Also in 1985, the church hired Sharlande Sledge as Associate Minister to Children. With the church's encouragement, Sharlande was later ordained to ministry (at a time when ordination of women was quite uncommon among Texas Baptists), and her responsibilities in the church evolved and expanded, eventually leading to her role as Associate Pastor. Since that time, many other women have been licensed and/or ordained at Lake Shore, and two women – Dorisanne Cooper and Kyndall Rothaus – have served as our pastors. In 2018, Sharlande was recognized by Baptist Women in Ministry with the Frankie Huff Granger Distinguished Mentor Award.

In the late 1980s, as divisions in the Southern Baptist Convention grew more evident, Lake Shore was consistently on the progressive side of the balance. In 1987 Lake Shore was one of the first churches to join the Southern Baptist Alliance (later renamed the Alliance of Baptists), and in 1991 it was among the founders of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Church members served as representatives to both organizations, and Lake Shore's Libby Bellinger served as one of the first presidents of Baptist Women in Ministry. In 2000, when the SBC took an ever-stronger stance against women in ministry, Lake Shore voted almost unanimously to amend its bylaws, cutting all ties with the SBC (but not, at that time, with the Waco Regional Baptist Association or the Baptist General Convention of Texas).



For many years, Lake Shore has attempted to work for peace, progress, social justice, and the cause of Christ at the local, national, and international levels. In 1968, the church established a Children's Center to serve the needs of young families in the community, and its activities have continued unabated. For many years, the church maintained a large vegetable garden that continued to Caritas. In 1992, working with the Waco Housing Authority, Lake Shore started

hosting a Family Self-Sufficiency program, providing financial and educational assistance to struggling families. In 1993 the church began to serve as a “delivery point” for Meals on Wheels. In 2003, the church started working with Christiana Owusu to open Shalom Children’s Centre in Ghana – a center that is still supported by Lake Shore members and many others today. Lake Shore has also held a series of Soup Suppers, food drives, fund-raising dances, and other events to support organizations involved in community and disaster assistance, hunger and refugee relief, and other causes. These and many other programs of the church received an unexpected boost in 2019 when we received a bequest of more than \$800,000 from the estate of Deborah Harris, a beloved member of Lake Shore and gifted lyricist, poet, and singer.

Also in 2003, after several years of discussion and debate, the church unanimously amended its by-laws, replacing the designations of “member” and “associate member” with a single membership category. Equal membership was extended to all members, those baptized by immersion and members baptized and raised in other Christian traditions, providing all members with an equal voice and eligibility to serve as deacons.

Periodically, Lake Shore has taken stock of its core values and programs in light of its vision. In 1998, a four-week program on “Dreaming the Church” led to a reaffirmation that Lake Shore should continue its efforts to be “a diverse, open, and accepting” body. In 2008, in preparation for the 50th anniversary of the church, an Appreciative Inquiry process led to the drafting of a set of Aspiration Statements, including a section on Inclusion, Diversity and Ecumenicalism, declaring “There is room for all in God’s loving and unimaginably wide embrace.”

In 2015, when the possibility arose that the U.S. Supreme Court would soon legalize same-sex marriages, the Lake Shore deacons started discussing the process that should be followed to consider our response. In the meanwhile, the church also called Kyndall Rothaus as pastor and engaged in a series of Wednesday-evening “Compassionate Conversations,” leading to a vote on November 30, 2016, to adopt the following declaration and to incorporate it into the church bylaws:

Lake Shore Baptist Church is a welcoming and affirming community of Christians attempting to discover, articulate, and embody the meaning of the gospel in the world today. We affirm each individual as a child of God and as created in God’s image. Our welcome holds no bounds, we welcome all persons into membership and full participation in the life and ministry of our congregation.

In 2017, in response to our welcoming and affirming stance, the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT) declared that Lake Shore and two other churches (Wilshire Baptist of Dallas and First Baptist of Austin) were “outside of harmonious cooperation,” and we were also ejected from the Waco Regional Baptist Association. However, we have continued to work harmoniously with many other churches in Waco (Baptists and others) and with other churches in the Alliance of Baptists, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, and the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists. We also support the Baptist World Alliance, the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty, and Baptist Women in Ministry.

 **BAPTIST STANDARD**
Lake Shore Baptist among 3 churches removed by BGCT board

By KEN CAMP The Baptist Standard Feb 21, 2017

Lake Shore entered a long period of transition in May 2019 when Kyndall Rothaus resigned as pastor. For several months, a series of church members and guest ministers provided sermons, but the church decided not to move immediately to search for a new pastor. Instead, an Interim Search Committee contacted the Center for Congregational Health, which assisted in the decision to seek an “intentional interim minister.”

At the same time, the church was searching for new leadership in the areas of children’s and youth ministry, following the departure in November 2018, of Zach and Claire Helton who had served, respectively, as part-time Minister of Youth and Minister to Children. The Children’s and Youth Education Committees recommended that the part time positions be combined into a single full-time position for Minister to Children, Youth, and Families. Megan Grant (now Milo Grant) began service in that position in June 2019 and continued until November 2021 when she joined the staff of University Baptist in Austin.

In November 2019, Dr. Charlie Fuller began his service as Transition Pastor and led a Transition Team that started working on organizational and interpersonal issues that should be addressed while we were preparing for a new pastor search. Of course, the transition grew far more complicated a few months later when the Covid-19 pandemic forced the church into lockdown and virtual meetings.

In July 2020, in the wake of the national reckoning on racial injustice, Lake Shore adopted a public statement, saying, in small part, “We, the Lake Shore Baptist Church congregation, stand with those seeking racial justice. We ask that all Christians remember Christ declared his stance on this issue when asked, ‘Who is my neighbor?’”

In August 2020, Charlie Fuller completed his time as Transition Pastor, and Dr. Richard Groves delivered sermons via Zoom from his home in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. In October 2020, the Transition Team issued a report, based on the results of a congregational survey. On January 24, 2021, the membership approved initiation of a search for a new Senior Pastor and established three Task Groups to address issues identified by the Transition Committee: Polity, Structures, and Procedures; Staffing; and Reconciliation. That led to our calling Reverend Nick Mumejian as our new Senior Pastor in January 2022. Jessica MacFarlan joined the staff as Minister of Faith Formation for Children and Youth in November 2022 and the church adopted a new set of Bylaws with a new governance structure (including an Administrative Council) in November 2023. In January 2024, Sharlande Sledge transitioned from her long-time service as Associate Pastor to a new role as Writer in Residence. Most recently in 2024, Brently Bartlett joined the staff as our Director of Music and Dr. Ping-Ting Lan joined as our Organist/Pianist. Under new leadership, Lake Shore continues to serve its unique and historic role as a voice of love and social justice in Central Texas and beyond.