



 **THE BAYOU**
C H U R C H



Annual Report
2018



Dear Team Bayou,

If I were to choose a phrase that sums up what the Lord has done for and through The Bayou Church in 2018, it would surely be, “infinitely more than we might ask or think,” from Ephesians 3:20. We began the year in January with what was one of the most powerful seasons of prayer ever in our church. Our *40 Days of Prayer* campaign set the course for spiritual growth in the lives of individuals, small groups and in our ministries to Acadiana and beyond. Many of you experienced that firsthand with us, and gave sacrificially of your time, talent and finances throughout the year.

Here at The Bayou we believe that *rescued people reach people* and your obedience to the Lord’s calling is an important part of what we celebrate in this report. Undoubtedly, it has been an exciting year in terms of numbers, but an extraordinary year in terms of transformed lives.

Here is a preview:

- 8.7% increase of weekly attendance
- 1261 first-time guests
- 74% Small Group Growth
- 73 Confirmed Salvations
- 79 Baptisms
- 228 people participated in First Steps with 123 graduating
- Over \$271,000 collected for the Make A Difference Fund

Thank you for being generous and faithful. You are bearing fruit and investing in work that is of eternal value. As we close out the year and begin 2019, let’s be on our knees again acknowledging that prayer is the place where transformed lives begin and that *The Best is Ahead.*

Shalom,

Mike Walker



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KNOW GOD

My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Galatians 2:20 (NLT)

On a weekly basis, we gathered for corporate worship to be reminded about the greatness of God and the power of His grace toward us demonstrated in the life and message of Jesus.

We started the year with *40 Days of Prayer* which has been our most successful spiritual growth campaign in the history of The Bayou Church. We also saw hundreds of breakthrough prayers answered by God. We continued to grow on Sunday mornings with series such as *Resonate*, *Living Like No Other* and *The Daniel Dilemma*. Worship attendance was up by 8.7% over this year. In the past year, we've averaged approximately 1,954 people every weekend in our worship environments.

We also gathered on Saturdays in January and July to spend focused time in prayer seeking God for His direction and favor in our lives, families, church and community.



AUDITORIUM
929



PRESCHOOL
186



CARE MINISTRIES
111



CAFÉ
255



KIDS
243



CELEBRATE RECOVERY
85



COMMONS
72



MIDDLE SCHOOL
88



BAPTISMS
79



WEB
127



HIGH SCHOOL
49



FIND COMMUNITY

Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of His return is drawing near.
Hebrews 10:24-25 (NLT)

Our lives are transformed as we connect with Christ and others in all sorts of smaller environments, engaging relationships of mutual encouragement and support. This past year, hundreds connected in these small groups.

We started the year with 40 Days of Prayer small group studies, and we had a total of 835 people in small groups with 37 of those as new small groups, a 55% increase. This study has been our most successful spiritual growth campaign in the history of The Bayou Church.



“I was extremely nervous to start a new women’s small group, but I felt God pulling me to branch out. It has been wonderful to witness women coming together to learn more about Jesus.” – Katie Bush

At our 4th and 5th grade overnight retreat, K-WOW, kids from Acadiana engaged in worship, laughed and learned from our skit team, heard from inspiring key speakers and impacted other kids through a service project. Eleven kids accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior and 13 wanted to talk about getting baptized!



First Steps is an environment where people can move beyond the weekend service to learn about The Bayou, discover more of what it means to follow Jesus and get connected. We had more than 228 people take at least one step and over 123 graduates in 2018.

Our Men’s Ministry has continued to help men grow in their relationship with God, connect in Christ-centered relationships and help men make a difference in the community. On the first Wednesday of each month, an average of 88 men gathered for Men’s Night. Additionally, a group of men met to make a difference through projects such as moving Love INC into their new location, general plumbing/electrical repairs for single mothers and elderly, sorting food for Food Net and more.

Our Women’s Ministry helped women connect at The Bayou through socials, the Adore Women’s Conference, Tuesday Bible studies and other groups that meet throughout the week.

Celebrate Recovery is a place to experience Jesus and heal from the challenges that keep us from living well with others. An average of 85 people joined us Monday nights each week.

This summer we had the privilege of discipling nearly 800 preschool through high school age kids through five unique camp experiences. Our NextGen Ministry is dedicated to resourcing and empowering parents as primary faith trainers of their family. Summer camps are a great starting point for year-long family faith discussions and fostering deeper connections between parents and kids.





“Celebrate Recovery has taught me obedience to God. As I walk with my new obedience, I find the Lord not only blesses what I do, but He also raises up people to do the things I’ve had to decline.” – Juanita Hebert



“My first visit to Men’s Night was a few weeks after my dad passed away. It turned out to be exactly what I needed. I’ve always dealt with my feelings and problems on my own or with my dad’s help. Men’s Night is important to me because I now have a brotherhood again after military life and a secure and knowledgeable group of guys to help me through anything. Thank you for this incredible ministry!” – Joseph Harp



“I volunteer to teach self-leadership to 33 Legacy interns. Through these sessions, I encourage students to lead themselves well, so they will have maximum impact for the Kingdom in their schools, homes, activities and at The Bayou. Serving as Legacy Intern Director was a leap of faith for me, but the Lord gives me fresh energy and compassion to coach students with excellence while working full-time. It is a privilege and a calling to equip the next generation to stand firm in their faith.” – Sara Donohue



“First Steps offers opportunities to grow relationships with fellow Christians and to learn about serving the church and one another with our unique God-given gifts.” – Sandra Domingue



“I serve on the Worship team because I wanted to do more than just come on Sundays. It is a way for me to be closer to the church and feel more connected.” – Jacob Ambriz



“I was nervous at first to be baptized. My biggest fear was being in front of all of the people. Somehow I managed to put it in the back of my mind and focus on what Pastor Linton was saying. When all was said and done, I realized how big of a family I have at The Bayou.” – Morris Boudreaux



MAKE A DIFFERENCE

We believe God equips each of us with spiritual gifts to use for His glory, to bless others and to bring us joy. And for that reason, we love to celebrate the many ways our people have stepped up and out to make a difference within the walls of The Bayou and beyond.

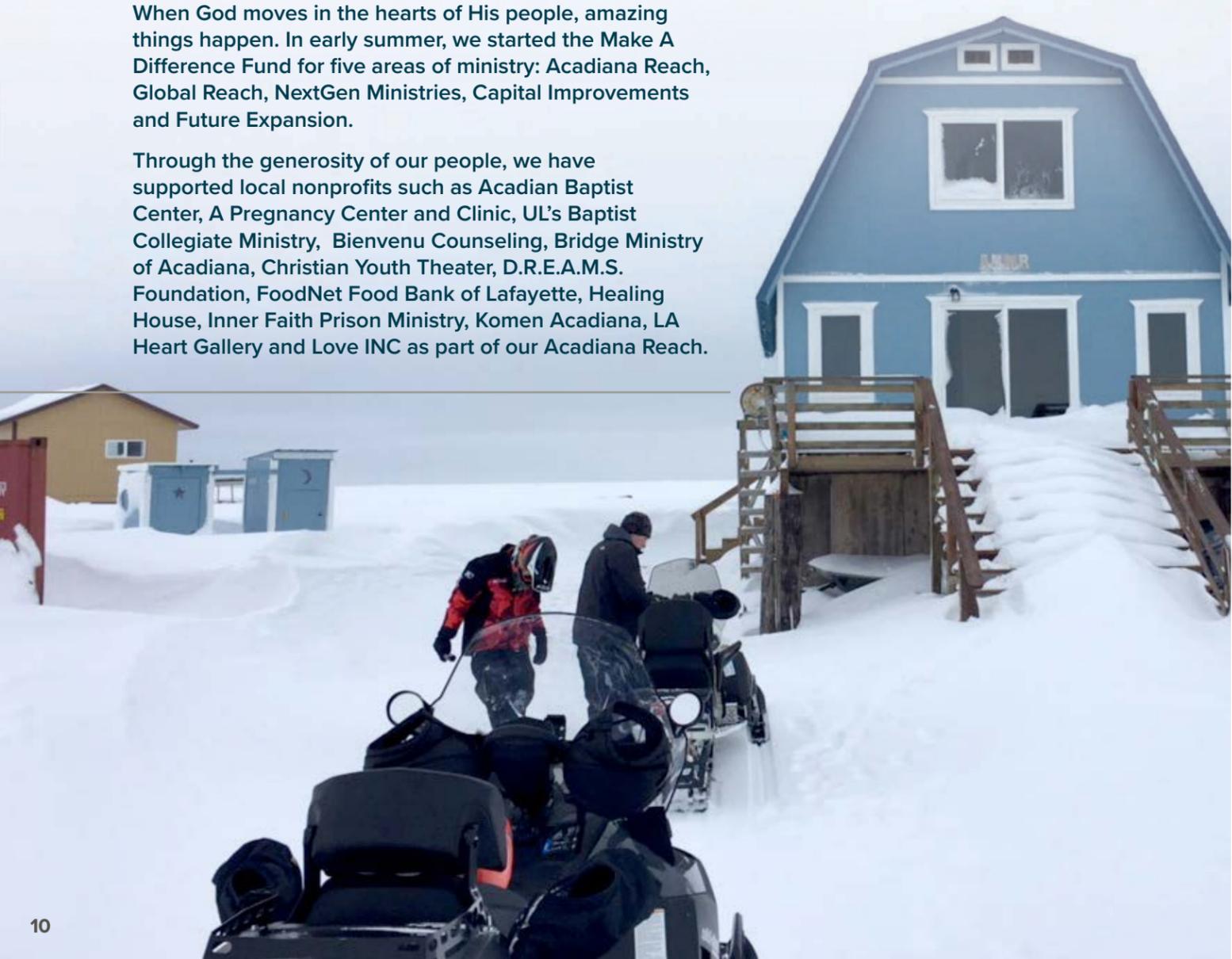
With the help of volunteers, we took the church to the city during Mardi Gras and Festival International to connect with thousands of people. We shared the love of Jesus and showed our community that rescued people reach people.

When God moves in the hearts of His people, amazing things happen. In early summer, we started the Make A Difference Fund for five areas of ministry: Acadiana Reach, Global Reach, NextGen Ministries, Capital Improvements and Future Expansion.

Through the generosity of our people, we have supported local nonprofits such as Acadian Baptist Center, A Pregnancy Center and Clinic, UL's Baptist Collegiate Ministry, Bienvenu Counseling, Bridge Ministry of Acadiana, Christian Youth Theater, D.R.E.A.M.S. Foundation, FoodNet Food Bank of Lafayette, Healing House, Inner Faith Prison Ministry, Komen Acadiana, LA Heart Gallery and Love INC as part of our Acadiana Reach.

*For we are God's masterpiece.
He has created us anew in
Christ Jesus, so we can do the
good things he planned for us
long ago.*

- Ephesians 2:10 (NLT)



Additionally, in August, we honored and celebrated Acadiana educators through a breakfast, gifts, and inspirational songs and videos. We were excited to bless these educators as they pour their lives into the next generation. Sixty-five educators joined us, and several were first-time visitors. We gave away 125 gift bags and honored them with a special service.

Our Global Reach efforts have included funds to rebuild Petit Trou Baptist Church in Haiti, generators for Alaska Missions, supplies to build homes in Guatemala, and we are supplementing funds so that all children in our Hope For Kidz sister church have a hot meal each school day. Additionally, we've sent teams to Haiti, Guatemala and Alaska, and our senior pastor has continued his impact on young pastors and church leaders in Dominican Republic.

Through generous donations in the spring to our *Make a Difference Fund: NextGen*, we were able to assist every family who demonstrated a financial need in sending their kid to camp.

We have also made several capital improvements by upgrading our sound/video systems, painting Café and Beanery, and refreshing the Kids Ministry Check-in area.

STORIES OF LIFE CHANGE

The Bayou Church exists to transform lives in Acadiana through Christ-centered relationships.



“I was stuck in a stage of darkness that was affecting everyone around me. I was living life for myself and content doing everything on my own. Thankfully, I had a ‘wake-up’ call one day, and I decided to go to church at The Bayou. I felt a range of emotions from the time I arrived to the time I left the parking lot. The friendly staff and volunteers made me feel welcome. The love and attention put toward the children blew me away. And the message I received was amazing, extremely easy to understand and related to my own life struggles. The Bayou Church has given me a new perspective on family, friendship, attitude and LIFE! I now know that I cannot travel this path on my own, and the best way is through Christ-centered relationships. I am proud to call The Bayou Church ‘my church.’” – Jonathan Goudeau



“In March, my family began falling apart. In my desperation, I came to The Bayou for help. I found a connection to God and truly accepted Christ as my Lord and Savior. The Bayou Church is like home, and my journey recently culminated with my baptism. Although my family struggles are still ongoing, I have faith that The Bayou Church has helped me to get on a path that leads to the greatest reward.” – Richard Nodd



“I have felt alone and in a rut connecting with other Christ-centered people, and the Adore Women’s Conference helped me to see that no matter how damaged I am, I can belong to a group and find peace through God’s Word.” – Charmaine Bahlawan



“I joined a small group one year ago. Shortly after that, I was saved. Since then I have attended a few different churches but The Bayou Church feels like home to my family. At the end of 2017, I was in a very dark place, mentally. But God never abandoned me. He picked me up and gave me strength. I recommitted my life to following and trusting in Him. Since then, my faith and love for Him is stronger than ever! I was baptized on Easter to show my family and the world I am a new woman, walking with Christ.” – Laura Mercer



GIVING & FINANCES

We want to be courageously generous with the resources God has given us.

Thanks for your generosity!

Generosity originates with the generous love of God. It moves us from ownership to stewardship and changes our hearts in a way that makes a difference in our world. We believe that giving is an opportunity to experience the joy in God's plan for our lives, and once again in 2018, the legacy of courageous generosity has fueled ministry and life change.



TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS
(OCTOBER 30, 2018)
\$2,830,071



Of the total contributions given, **\$271,500** was given to the Make a Difference Fund for 2018.



VOLUNTEERS

Rescued People Reach People





THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who is a part of The Bayou Church!
Your commitment to help people connect in Christ-centered relationships makes it possible for us to continue to see God transform lives in Acadiana and beyond.



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