

Brookwood Baptist Church Profile

Brookwood Baptist Church ("Brookwood") began with 12 families as a church plant in 1968. Within a year, we had called our first pastor, Dr. Bryant Strain, and built our first building. Brookwood enjoyed a vibrant church life, missions involvement, and growth in both the church campus and the congregation during Dr. Strain's 25 years of ministry. Dr. Paul Basden was senior pastor from 1994-2002, and the church experienced significant expansion. Many of our ongoing foreign medical mission trips were developed during this period. From 2003-2008, the church was led by two pastors who had relatively brief tenures. In 2008, Dr. Jim Barnette became interim pastor and then teaching/preaching pastor and finally served as senior pastor until his unexpected passing in early 2021. While serving Brookwood in this role, Dr. Barnette remained employed as a full-time professor at Samford University. Dr. Blake Dempsey came as executive pastor in 2016, served as interim pastor for 14 months, and was called as senior pastor in December 2021.

Brookwood has a strong emphasis on missions. For example, we led the effort to establish Builders for Christ, a ministry that has constructed/renovated over 70 church buildings in more than 17 states throughout the United States. Brookwood currently has missionaries serving in South Africa, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. We provide our members the opportunity to support the missions efforts of the Southern Baptist Convention and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship; however, most of the mission initiatives are Brookwood-sponsored, working with mission partners locally, regionally, and globally. Our missions budget traditionally represents around 20% of our annual budget.

Brookwood has strong lay leadership and supports not only women leading in ministry but also the ordination of women as deacons. We currently have a single Sunday morning service with musical offerings of many diverse styles, including traditional piano and organ with a choir, acoustic instruments, and contemporary praise music using electric instruments and percussion. In the past, we have had a traditional service and a contemporary service on Sunday mornings, with a Sunday School hour in between.

Although Brookwood is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention and Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, we are a unique church that is not active in denominational matters.

Brookwood is financially secure and has an intergenerational membership who truly loves and supports each other and enjoys serving together. We also have an excellent daycare and preschool, a ministry that is available both to church families and to the community and that always has a waiting list for admission.

Brookwood's highest attendance came in 2002, averaging 644 worshippers each Sunday, but has been in decline for the last 20 years. This decline is due to a variety of factors, including several new churches being built in the area; pastor changes; an overall decline in church attendance that mirrors what is happening nationwide; and, of course, the lingering impact of Covid-19. Our current weekly in-person worship attendance average is 200 persons. The existing membership is very faithful, as giving has not declined, and our participation in local and foreign missions remains strong.

In 2020, our annual budget was set at \$1,860,000, and we ended the year with a surplus of \$265,000. This year, we are on course to meet our budget, and we are predicting a similar surplus. This has generally been our financial pattern during the life of Brookwood. Today, the age ranges of Brookwood reflect a shift in generational attendance patterns. We are an older church with 67% of our active membership over the age of 55. Despite the obvious need to grow in particular age demographics, Brookwood does not aspire to be a particular size or to grow for the sake of growth. We wish only to be large enough to continue being a vibrant, effective witness for Christ in our community and beyond, while still remaining a close-knit, intergenerational church that feels like home to us all.

We recognize that there are many unchurched families in our community, and we need to discern ways to reach out to them and encourage connections with our church. Brookwood's contiguous communities are not racially diverse, but we partner with a predominantly African American church in the city, and this relationship has led to many rich and relational opportunities to work together for evangelism, discipleship, missions, and racial relations.

Brookwood is situated between two suburban communities: Mountain Brook and Vestavia Hills. Both are 90+ percent white and consist of highly-educated professionals with a median household income well over \$100,000. Both cities have a median age around 40, with around half of residents being families with children under 18. Both school systems are award-winning and consistently rated among Alabama's best.

We are proud that Brookwood is a multi-generational community church with a deep love and heart for missions. Our congregation is politically diverse but strives for unity and values our deep relationships with each other despite our differences. We are excited to see how the Lord will strengthen our ministerial team with the addition of a new children's minister!

