

CP History

The history of CrossPoint Baptist Church cannot be separated from the history of the two churches from which it sprang – South Airline Baptist Mission and River City Baptist Church.

South Airline began as a result of Reverend T. W. Terral's vision that a Southern Baptist presence was needed at the corner of Airline Hwy and Highland Road. As the Director of Missions for what was then Judson Baptist Association, Rev. Terral was very instrumental in the establishment of South Airline Baptist Mission and he worked closely with our own Zeke Dunaway, who was the chair of the Judson Association Properties Committee and a member of Parkview Baptist Church.

Initially a mission sponsored by Parkview, South Airline Baptist Mission began on June 29, 1989, with the purchase of two contiguous parcels of land – a one acre parcel purchased by the Judson Association and 6 additional acres self-financed by the owner with a monthly note of \$2,845 for 15 years.

The first meeting of people interested in being part of the new church plant was small, only about 15, but the next week that number grew to about 25 and slow but steady growth continued. With the 7 acres of land having been acquired, the first issue for the new mission was worship space. A large tent was erected and sawdust was scattered on the ground under the tent. The first worship services took place in this tent, which was hot in summer and cold in winter. Parkview sent Rev. C. Bullard Jones, one of their Associate Pastors, to become the first pastor of South Airline.

A capital fund campaign was initiated to raise funds for permanent worship space. For about a year, while meeting in the tent, funds were raised to renovate and extend the existing building. That extension, which we currently refer to as the Fellowship Hall, served as the Sunday morning worship space for the South Airline congregation. A storage barn with 7 bays was retrofitted into the 7 classrooms CrossPoint uses today as CB1 (the strip building).

South Airline's congregation grew to average between 50 and 60 in Sunday worship. Dale Seal came on as Minister of Education and Music. Rev. Jones remained as Pastor for about 2 years and when he left, several men from Parkview filled the pulpit on Sunday mornings, taught Bible studies, and filled in on Wednesday evenings; including Ron Tyndale, Michael Paul, and Steve Dietzel.

On December 29, 1991, the Reverend Bud Goodwin preached in view of a call and became South Airline's second Pastor. Mr. Goodwin served until December 1995 and moved back to Texas after completing seminary work at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Michael Paul was asked to serve as interim pastor and he served ably from January 1996 until South Airline combined with River City Baptist Church to form CrossPoint later that year.

In the early years, South Airline operated with an Administrative Committee, chaired by Zeke Dunaway, and a Finance Committee, chaired by Rod Goff, along with the Deacon Body. By 1995, other job specific committees had been added. Names of people serving on those

committees that are current members of CrossPoint include James and Diann Thomas, Dianne Paul, Patsy Earnhart and Mary Trevillion.

Meanwhile, in another part of the city, several families began to meet in the summer of 1992 to discuss the possibility of forming a new faith community. On September 25, 1992, the first organized meeting of the various families was held in the club house of Woodstone Subdivision off Highland Rd. It was mainly a prayer and share meeting, but interest grew rapidly and more people became interested by word of mouth. Arrangements were made to hold another gathering at Southminster Baptist Church, for prayer and fellowship. The level of enthusiasm at this meeting was high and afterward, arrangements were made to rent the Tucker Building on the campus of Jimmy Swaggart Ministries for a new church plant.

The first formal worship service of the new congregation took place on October 11, 1992. Dr. Bob Anderson, former Pastor of Parkview Baptist Church, delivered the morning message with 248 people attending. The congregation soon adopted the name River City Baptist Church.

Sunday, November 8, 1992, was designated as the official founding date for the new church. Rev. T.W. Terral was the guest preacher, and that afternoon, a Founding Day ceremony and dedication service was held to formalize the organization of River City Baptist Church. A formal resolution was read during the dedication service and those present were able to sign the resolution. The opportunity to sign and join the new church remained open for 6 weeks and resulted in 247 charter members of River City Baptist Church, which also became a participating member of the Judson Baptist Association.

Dr. Charles Draper served as River City's interim pastor until July 1993 and our own Ms. Lynda Van Kerkhove was employed as the church secretary.

Two important groups were elected by the members in the early days of River City. One was called "The Management Team" which was charged with overseeing the day-to-day business of the church. The Management Team format was a departure from the traditional committee structure of many Baptist churches. The other important group elected was a "Pastor's Search Team. Their work ended when Dr. Stephen Veteto was called by the church on June 13, 1993. Pastor Steve came to River City from Southland Baptist Church in Memphis, TN.

Initially, the church occupied several different temporary worship locations including the Tucker and Trotter Buildings, both Swaggart Ministry properties, located on Bluebonnet Boulevard which provided excellent facilities including worship space, Sunday School classes, and plenty of parking. On April 29, 1995, the church moved to yet another location – the facilities at Southminster Baptist Church on Perkins Road. This move necessitated an afternoon schedule on Sundays and mid-week services on Thursdays because the space was being shared with Southminster. Six months later, the church moved again to a facility named The Glynnwood (now King Buffet) on Bluebonnet. Use of this space was more challenging because of the need to bring in everything required for Bible study and worship services each Sunday. In spite of the lack of a permanent home, God blessed River City with new members and new ministry opportunities.

The pastoral staff of River City grew and changed. In 1994 Eric Hankins began serving as Minister to Youth and Ryan Scott came on as Minister to College Students. In 1995 Chad Boudreaux was employed as Worship Leader and Dinah Courtney was hired as Preschool Coordinator.

From its beginning in the fall of 1992 through the summer of 1996, God also blessed River City financially. Members of the church gave generously and faithfully. Tithes and offerings far exceeded expenses such that when the time came to combine with the South Airline congregation, River City's financial position was very positive.

In November 1993, a Property Planning Team was selected and worked for several years investigating sites for the new church facilities. In 1996, a site on Perkins Road near Siegen Lane which was being developed by the YMCA became a foreseeable option. This, however, was not God's plan for River City.

Instead, God's plan was for South Airline Baptist Mission and River City Baptist Church to join together. The idea was initially explored in 1994 when Steve Veteto met with Zeke Dunaway and broached the subject of the two churches combining. At the time, South Airline had recently called a new pastor and there was no interest in considering the change. In January 1996, however, South Airline found itself without a pastor and Zeke remembered his previous conversations with Dr. Veteto. Zeke approached Steve about the possibility of combining churches. At that time, River City was considering the purchase of the Perkins Road property so they were not ready to consider forming a new church. But when plans to purchase this property fell through, God's timing had arrived. Discussions between and within the two churches happened quickly and each congregation voted to form one congregation in August of 1996.

After the two congregations voted to unite, a Transition Team was formed with representatives from both churches. This team was charged with identifying the necessary steps and the logistics of combining the two congregations. John Mullins and Zeke Dunaway were elected as co-moderators. The first meeting was held on August 25, 1996.

The first joint worship service occurred on Sunday, September 1, 1996, at the Glynnwood building on Bluebonnet previously used by River City. That same evening, they gathered at the South Airline location.

The Naming Team (Co-Chaired by Verna Fletcher and Jay Curry) was charged by the Transition Team to have suggested names ready for a vote on Sunday, September 8, 1996. Interestingly, there was discussion as to whether or not the word "Baptist" should be included as part of the church name.

The Naming Team recommended the newly combined congregation choose between two names. When the vote was taken, the name CrossPoint was selected.

CrossPoint – a strong name that points to the cross and to our Savior, Jesus Christ. It represents both a decision point in one's life and descriptively locates us at a crossroads in our church lives, our personal lives, and in our physical location.

Sunday, September 8, 1996, was a day of celebration. The morning worship service of the combined congregations was held at Boudreaux's Catering. The focus was on the faithfulness of God and the purpose of the new church. The service was followed by a church-sponsored fellowship meal. The number of attendees for this time of celebration was 261. It was at this event that the new church name was selected by the new congregation.

Members from each of the parent churches were given the opportunity to become charter members of CrossPoint. To become a charter member, each person was asked to sign the charter document. Letters were sent out to ensure all members of both parent churches had the opportunity to sign the charter. The charter membership roll remained open until January 15, 1997, and ultimately 220 people signed the document.

The initial CrossPoint staff was comprised of Dr. Steve Veteto, Pastor; Eric Hankins, Youth Minister, Chad Boudreaux, Worship Leader; Dinah Courtney, Preschool Coordinator; and Dale Seal, Discipleship Coordinator. Because of the limited worship space available at South Airline, the Transition Team decided to begin holding two worship services with a time of fellowship and Bible study in between.

Education space for Sunday School and the lack of sufficient restrooms on campus were challenging issues, but the people made it work. In September 1996, the Transition Team voted to initiate development of a Site Master Plan for the construction of a worship center and a youth activity center. This included the recommendation to purchase two Sprung buildings. The Team also voted to purchase a T-Building restroom facility.

A Building Team chaired by Al Jones worked feverishly to obtain the necessary permits so that concrete slabs would be ready when the two Sprung buildings arrived. They were delivered on December 2, 1996, and work to erect the two buildings began. CrossPoint members provided volunteer labor to erect both buildings.

In October 1996, the congregation approved recommendations for the new church's operating structure. The concept that CrossPoint not be organized under the traditional committee structure of many Baptist churches continued to be supported. The team, led by Ken Hornsby, recommended the church organize itself to address three critical functions: The Mission, Ministry, and Management of the church. To guide the mission of the church, a Mission/Vision/Purpose, or MVP, Team was suggested to advise the Pastor and the Ministry and Management Teams on programs and strategic initiatives. To guide Ministry, the Deacons were charged with carrying out the function of ministry to the church body. To handle business matters, a Management Team was proposed to organize the human and financial resources necessary to carry out the Mission, Vision, and Purpose of the church. The Transition Team also authorized forming a new corporation. Zeke Dunaway and John Mullins were named the incorporators with John to serve as President and Zeke to serve as Secretary-Treasurer.

On December 3, 1996, CrossPoint purchased an additional 3.18 acres of property contiguous to and at the back of the 7 acres already owned using River City church funds. This brought the total church property to the current 10-acre campus.

Sunday, April 27, 1997, was the date of the first worship service in the new Sprung buildings. It was a joyous day of celebration to God for all He had provided and orchestrated on behalf of this local church body.

The first Management Team at CrossPoint began serving in 1997. Zeke Dunaway, Richard Green, Mary Gayden Jones, Billie Middleton, I.M. Shelton, and Steve Tatom were the initial members. Charles Rea served as the first church counsel and David Woolridge as the first church Treasurer.

In September of 1997, CrossPoint began the Mother's-Day-Out Program, which was then referred to as W.E.E Learn & Play. Ms. C.J. Martin was hired as the first Director. MDO was initially housed where the church offices are currently located. There were three classes and three teachers in the beginning handling 18 children ages 6 months to pre-K. In the second year of operation, the portable classroom T-building that still exists today was brought in and the Program moved there.

By 1999, CrossPoint's pastoral staff had completely turned over except for the Senior Pastor. Dr. Veteto had secured the services of Dean Morris as Music Pastor, Tim Levert as Youth Pastor and Don Pucik as Pastor for Membership and Ministry.

The year 2001 proved to be a significant one in the life of the church. A new Building Team and a Capital Fund Team were appointed in 2000 with the goal of raising funds for and constructing a 2-story Children's Education Building (CEB). Both Teams worked very diligently and on June 3, 2001, a ground breaking ceremony for the CEB was held with Peter Lee Green Construction as the General Contractor on the project.

At the same time the congregation was raising funds for the CEB, the mortgage for the initial 6-acre parcel was paid off. The decision was made to keep paying the \$2,845 a month to the church building fund to help raise funds for the new CEB. This milestone meant the church was now debt-free. During Dr. Veteto's pastorate, a debt-free policy had been adopted by the church and at no time since the summer of 2001 has CrossPoint incurred debt.

The other significant occurrence during 2001 was that Dr. Veteto, the church's first Senior Pastor, accepted a position with Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary as the Director of their Rocky Mountain Campus in Denver. This meant that CrossPoint was without a senior pastor for the first time. As has been done on three occasions since, the church formed a Pastor's Search Team and began the process of seeking a new Senior Pastor.

The church sponsored its first Mexico Mission Trip in the summer of 2002. Guy Miller led the initial effort, and many church members participated. The church partnered with Pastor Ramon in Monterrey, Mexico. This mission effort continued for several years with God's blessing. Unfortunately, concern for the security of church members crossing the border became so high, these trips could no longer be taken. The last Mexico Mission Trip was in 2009.

With the completion of the first floor of the new CEB, the MDO Program moved to this building in 2002. By January of 2003, when C.J.'s Martin had to resign as Director, the Program had grown to about 200 children and a kindergarten class had been added. CrossPoint was

fortunate to secure the services of Ms. Gay Ann Tate to succeed C.J. Martin as Director. Gay Ann has had a long and successful tenure as Director. Under her leadership, the program has reached its maximum of about 240 children with 40 teachers and support staff. The School is well-respected and has a waiting list of parents desiring to enroll their children.

Dennis Mitchell became CrossPoint's second Senior Pastor on August 15, 2002. Dennis is a Louisiana native who came to Crosspoint from Kentwood, La. He was gifted in pastoral care, administration, relationship building and personal accountability. He stepped down on July 31, 2004, but continues to live in the area. During Dennis' tenure, plans to complete the second floor of the CEB were initiated.

Dr. Allen Jackson, a NOBTS professor, served as interim pastor beginning in September 2004 and remained in that role for a year. Dr. Jackson was followed by Landon Dowden, who became CrossPoint's third Senior Pastor in October 2005.

Landon, also a Louisiana native, exhibited strengths in preaching and teaching while emphasizing biblical literacy. During Dr. Dowden's tenure as Senior Pastor, the church building fund had again grown to a level that allowed completion of the second floor of the CEB in March of 2008.

Under his leadership, CrossPoint also embarked on international missions in Uganda. Byron Townsend was hired as Associate Pastor early in 2007 and tasked with establishing a missions focus. Byron and Landon made their first trip to Uganda in the summer of 2008 and a team from CrossPoint went on the first Uganda Mission Trip in April of 2009. Several from this team also visited Rwanda. Besides working with two local congregations in Uganda (Bugiri and currently Busembatia), CrossPoint also has supported the Uganda Baptist Seminary.

The year 2011 proved to be a year of significant change for CrossPoint. Discussions with Grace Baptist Church in mid-city Baton Rouge had been ongoing and CrossPoint was exploring ways to come alongside Grace's shrinking and aging congregation in hopes of providing revitalization with God's help. The CrossPoint Elders met with the Grace Pastor and Deacon body to explore possibilities of how revitalization might occur and ultimately, the CrossPoint and the Grace congregations approved a "replant." Approximately 65 CrossPoint members were sent out with a one-year commitment to "replant" Grace Baptist Church. CrossPoint's Associate Pastor at the time, Byron Townsend, felt called to serve as Pastor of the replant effort. CrossPoint committed, not only to send out the people who felt led to go, but also to pay Byron's full salary in 2011 and portions of it through 2013. God has greatly blessed the Grace replant. The church is shining Christ's light in mid-city Baton Rouge and many who agreed to the one-year commitment have stayed and made Grace their church home.

Also during Dr. Dowden's tenure as pastor, CrossPoint moved to an elder-led church polity in 2010 and adopted a Church Membership Covenant in 2011. Capital Hill Baptist Church, Dr. Mark Dever, and the 9Marks organization had a strong influence on CrossPoint's polity during this time. Dr. Dowden left in the summer 2011 to accept a call to pastor a relatively new church in Tupelo, MS.

Dr. Dowden's departure meant that within a six-month period CrossPoint's Senior and Associate Pastors were no longer present. But, God was gracious. Kevin Whitfield, who had been serving as Youth Pastor for a short time agreed to provide the Sunday morning messages each week. CrossPoint was blessed to have Kevin, who was not only faithful to proclaim God's Word well, but also provided valuable administrative leadership working alongside the church Elders, Deacons, and Management Team. In addition, Byron provided much needed support for CrossPoint even while concurrently working on the Grace replant. The difficult transition period helped CrossPoint realize how blessed it is to have the kind of church structure God provided at the beginning of the church's development.

CrossPoint now has its fourth Senior Pastor, Nick Taylor. Nick is from Houma and a graduate of Nicholls St. University and NOBTS. He began his pastorate in October of 2012 and also has emphasized biblical literacy and expositional preaching. He is strong in pastoral care, but he particularly stresses how the gospel impacts Christian living.

The CrossPoint campus has not changed since 2008. Following completion of the CEB second floor in 2008, members began replenishing the building fund to replace the Sprung buildings, which were believed to be near the end of their life expectancy. Early in 2014, the church entered into contract to produce a new campus Master Plan. When the new Master Plan was approved by the church members a new Capital Fund Team and a Building/Design Team were formed with the goal of raising the necessary funds to construct a permanent multi-purpose building to be used initially for worship and fellowship. The Master Plan also includes a second 2-story education classroom building. The Building Fund currently contains over \$1.2 million and according to our debt-free policy, no construction will begin until God has provided the funds.

Over the years, CrossPoint's philosophy has evolved. Its initial focus was more seeker-sensitive with a leaning toward the purpose-driven model. With changing pastoral staff and a turn-over in many of the original church members, the emphasis as time progressed has centered more on biblical literacy and expositional preaching. CrossPoint longs to see Christ's

Church grow and we believe a healthy church is measured more by spiritual growth than by numerical growth. Our goal is to encourage and exhort God's people to unite with his Church and allow the gospel to shape them. CrossPoint is a corporate body that desires to use our gifts of service for the benefit of one another and the advancement of God's Kingdom. We believe Church membership is very important, so we guard church membership carefully.

During Pastor Nick's tenure, the two Sprung buildings that had served our church family for nearly two decades began to show their age. As CP celebrated twenty years of ministry in 2016, another chapter was already being written. The Building and Capital Fund-Raising Teams had begun planning and raising funds for a permanent Worship Center. Ultimately, in 2017, working with our very own Al Jones, Kent Design Group developed the master plan that guides our campus today.

With CP's continued commitment to remaining debt-free, the church proceeded with planning and fundraising efforts. By 2019, through the faithful giving of our church family, the Building Fund had grown to \$2 million, allowing construction to begin. CrossPoint entered into a

construction contract with Salco Construction. The Youth Dome came down in January and ground was broken on May 26, 2019 for our current Worship Center. During construction, the church continued worshipping in the old Worship Dome.

As the new building neared completion, the world around us changed. In early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted our ability to worship together. For a time, sermons were preached to an empty room and streamed into our homes. We missed gathering together. We walked through uncertainty. We experienced loss. But even in this difficult season, God remained faithful.

While working as best we could with government-imposed restrictions, CrossPoint held its first service in the new Worship Center on May 17, 2020. We wore masks and observed six-foot distancing, but more importantly we worshipped and we worshipped together. Despite the significant effects the pandemic had on our congregation, our ministries and our staff during these difficult days, our members and leadership continued to serve one another and our community.

During these challenging times, CrossPoint experienced another significant transition. After seven years of ministry, Pastor Nick Taylor stepped down as Senior Pastor in 2020.

For nearly two years, our church prayed, waited, and sought the Lord's direction. In the interim, Associate Pastor Wes McKay and Worship Minister Shane Folks agreed to fill the pulpit until a new Senior Pastor was elected by the CrossPoint family.

The Pastor Search Team recommended Wes McKay to serve as CrossPoint's fifth Senior Pastor, and on February 6, 2022, the congregation unanimously voted to do just that.

Under Pastor Wes' leadership, God has continued to faithfully provide leaders to serve and minister alongside the CrossPoint family. Wes McKay, Caleb Bates, Harry Anderson, and Chance Fussell were elected to serve alongside David Morrison and Jim Shoff as Elders. Adam Pace joined the staff as Youth Minister, Rebekah Bates as Children's Minister, and Chance Fussell as Associate Pastor.

And through changing seasons and changing leadership, our mission remained the same: "to make disciples of all nations for the good of all people and for the glory of God."

After seventeen years of ministry, Gay Ann Tate turned over the reins of our Mother's Day Out program to Caitlyn Guiffreda. Under her leadership, the program has continued to flourish and thrive as CrossPoint's largest ministry to the community.

Along with the MDO ministry, CrossPoint's ESL, food pantry, Operation Christmas Child, Living Nativity and Vacation Bible School ministries continue to reach Baton Rouge and the nations with the good news of Jesus Christ.

CrossPoint's ministry extends beyond its campus walls. Our church continues to serve faithfully in Uganda through evangelism, job training, outreach, theological training, and church planting. In addition to Uganda, CrossPoint sent its first mission team to Ecuador in 2021. Since then, our members have ministered there through evangelism, equipping believers,

pastoral training, and church-planting support. If the Lord wills, CrossPoint plans to continue serving in Uganda and Ecuador for the foreseeable future.

Over the years, the Worship Center and the campus around it continued to take shape. New steps welcomed us through the front doors. Landscaping transformed the grounds. And a lighted cross was placed high above the entrance—a visible reminder of the One who has always been at the center of this church.

And now, as we celebrate thirty years, the story of our campus continues.

Plans are underway to complete the remaining areas of the Worship Center—creating more space for fellowship, ministry, and the work God has called CrossPoint to do in the years ahead.

But when we look back over these thirty years, the story of CrossPoint isn't really a story about buildings.

It's a story about God's faithfulness. Lives changed by the Gospel. Buildings that rose. Ministries that grew. People who served. Children who grew up here and families who found a church home. Mission teams sent across the world.

And through every season— through growth and transition...celebration and loss...waiting and change...God has remained faithful.

The same God who brought two congregations together in 1996 is still at work at CrossPoint today.

And the story is not finished. Until the Lord returns...there are still people to reach, disciples to make, families to serve, nations to go to, and generations yet to come.

So as we celebrate thirty years, we thank God for everything behind us...and we look forward with faith to everything still ahead. Let us press on.