

 Life Action

# ignite

Fall 2024 | A Life Action Newsletter

**Hi, friends,**

As we embark on our 54th season of church events and prepare the camp to welcome guests for our fall retreats, we want to take a moment to celebrate the remarkable ways God is using Life Action to impact churches, families, and leaders across North America.

Inside you'll read highlights that reflect our ministry's core purpose. From a transformative church event in Georgia to a meaningful week at Family Camp and a rejuvenating Pastors' Retreat, each story illustrates the profound impact of seeking and responding to God's guidance.

In a world where so many feel weary and isolated, the church is more essential than ever—a community where people can experience deep connection, healing, and spiritual renewal. We view our work as coming alongside the local church to support its mission, equip its leaders, and strengthen its members.

Through our church events, family camps, retreats, and programs for ministry leaders, we are creating spaces for individuals and families to seek and respond to God in ways that are not only biblical but also practical and transformative. Our events and programs

provide opportunities for people to experience spiritual and relational renewal, gain fresh strength and hope, and return to their churches with a renewed passion for a life on mission with Jesus.

These stories underscore the vital role of our ministry and remind us of the ongoing need for community support. We hope these accounts of revival, vitality, and mission inspire and encourage you.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us.

**Mike Lee**  
CEO, Life Action



# CHURCHES

## Transformation in Warrenton, Georgia

When Pastor Brandon Furr of First Baptist Church in Warrenton, Georgia, felt God's nudge to host a revival event, he recalled Life Action's impact on his sister's church years before. Though intrigued, he hesitated, concerned about the logistical components of hosting such an event. But the desire to offer something extraordinary to his congregation—something that would truly stir their hearts and set the stage for future ministry—pushed him to explore Life Action.

### Overcoming Hesitations

Pastor Furr's initial concerns were understandable. Finding host homes for the college-aged team members and providing loaner vehicles for the team seemed daunting. Additionally, he worried about how this event might stretch his congregation, particularly his leadership capital. But God had big plans.

"Between the flexibility of Life Action and some creative problem solving on our part, we were able to make it work,"

Pastor Furr shared. By placing team members in local neighborhoods and utilizing the church bus, the logistical hurdles were overcome, and the church was able to focus on the event.

### A Week of Transformation

Pastor Furr was apprehensive about how his congregation, particularly the senior adults, would respond to the more contemporary worship style. But his fears were quickly dispelled. The older members of the church embraced the change, deeply moved by the messages and worship. "The way the invitations were done—so personal and effective—really resonated with everyone," he said.

The impact on the youth was particularly profound. Pastor Furr's own son experienced deep, personal revival. "The Lord broke him every night," he shared, recounting how his son, a typically reserved young athlete, was convicted of internal pride and transformed by the Spirit's work.



"I've never seen my son so sensitive to the Spirit. He's been a believer for a while. It was a really sweet time for our family."

The revival also sparked a wave of personal testimonies, with congregants sharing stories of forgiveness and restoration. "God moved in such amazing ways. Even after a service was over, people would stay in their seats because God was still dealing with them."



## The Pastor's Perspective

For Pastor Furr, the conference was not just an event for his congregation; it was a personal journey. Once he released himself from the responsibility of the technical details, he found the experience transformative, noting how the unconventional approach to invitations—personal and in the pew without the usual altar calls—allowed for a more intimate encounter with God.

“The feedback from our congregation was overwhelmingly positive,” he said. “It was a real challenge for our people, creating a desire for more excellence and flow in worship. I often heard, ‘When are we going to do this again?’” This enthusiasm was reflected in the numbers, with a typical Sunday service drawing 140 members and an impressive average of 120 returning night after night throughout the event.

## A Lasting Impact

The event at First Baptist Church has had a lasting impact. The congregation’s



unity and love have grown, and there is a newfound closeness that stems from serving together throughout the week. The church’s food team, which provided meals for the Life Action team and the congregation, found the experience particularly rewarding.

Families, too, were deeply impacted. The children, who often had to choose

between church and extracurricular activities, were so engaged that they preferred attending church. “The kids had such a good time, and that enthusiasm carried over to their parents,” Pastor Furr said. And the families hosting the team members grew quite attached to them. As they bid farewell to the team, they remarked, “The house is going to feel empty now that they’re gone.”

## A Word to Other Churches

To churches considering hosting a Life Action event, Pastor Furr offers this advice: “It will impact your staff, leadership, and congregation, getting them excited and motivated. But be prepared for what comes next. You need a plan to sustain the momentum Life Action will bring, because your congregation will expect more.”

In the end, Pastor Furr believes the experience was nothing short of divine. “The Spirit really moved this week, and God did a great work through Life Action. If you’re on the fence, don’t hesitate. You won’t be disappointed.”

[Learn more](#) about how a **church event** can help support your mission.



# FAMILIES

## Transformation Ministries at Family Camp

In the heart of South Bend, Indiana, Transformation Ministries has been a beacon of hope for urban youth and their families, offering leadership development, mentorship, and after-school programs. For Karen West, Director of Family Empowerment, the vision is clear: that their entire Transformation community will know God, value their lives, and experience hope and abundant life. This summer, that vision took on new life as 37 families (over 200 people) from Transformation Ministries

attended Life Action's Family Camp, a week fully funded by the Living/Giving Scholarship fund.

### A Week of Genuine Care and Connection

Having partnered with Life Action before, Karen and the rest of the staff at Transformation Ministries knew this week would provide an opportunity for families to bond, reflect, and experience Jesus in a unique and impactful way. "Our families trust us because we've built relationships," Karen explained. "We knew this would be a big commitment for them—not just a vacation, but a time to work on themselves and their families, and to hear from God."

And God did move mightily. From the moment families arrived, they were met with genuine love and care—from the welcoming smiles at check-in to the warmth and hospitality of the staff. "We could feel the love from the workers in the kitchen. We could feel the love for our kids from the

people who helped take care of them and from the people who ran the games and the escape room. Everybody was welcoming," Karen said. "It didn't start at the evening service. It started when we first got there and signed in. People greeted us with smiles and said they were so glad to have us there. It was a buildup from beginning to end."

### Transformative Experiences and Lasting Change

For many of the families, this was their first time in a camp environment, and the impact was profound. Karen described how the services, led by speakers John and Donna Avant, were particularly impactful. "They were the right speakers for our families. You could tell they cared. They had the backstory and experience of dealing with families from diverse backgrounds. They just went right in. I saw families weeping





and being restored. I saw families dealing with issues and being able to pour that out in a safe space.” The transformation was evident as parents found practical ways to improve their parenting, drawing strength and wisdom from the teaching they received.

For Karen, seeing the families she knew so well experience this kind of transformation was deeply personal. “In my role with Transformation, I get to know our families a little deeper—their stories and their struggles. I get more of the backstory and the heart of what’s going on with families from a relational place. So to see these families out there on that beach laughing, playing, and just being

able to be a child was something special. Simple things like a mom being able to know her baby was safe out there in the water or playing in the sand. Because it’s not always that way at home—they don’t always know what they’re coming home to. Some of them live in neighborhoods that are not peaceful.”

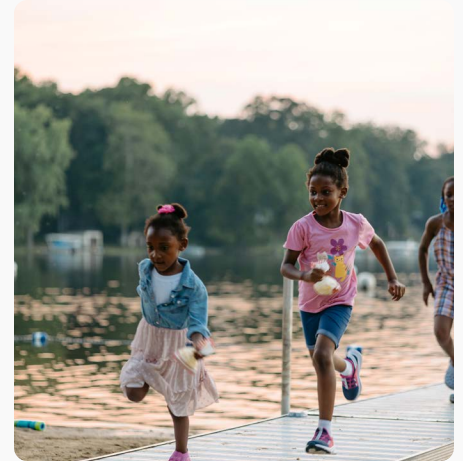
### Generational Influence and Future Hope

The impact was not just immediate; it was generational. Karen spoke of families who brought their grandchildren, and even one family who was able to bring a child grappling with the recent loss of his mother. “This was life-changing,” she emphasized. “It’s not just fun in the sun. You’re giving families a place to heal—to be whole, full, and free. And that’s what we’re all about. The body of Christ has many parts, but we all have different functions. If you can give a gift that can change a life, you’re impacting generations.”

For Karen, the week at Family Camp was not just about providing a getaway for the families she serves; it was about offering them hope and a chance to experience God’s love in a new way. “I had parents reach out to me afterward, saying, ‘Put my name down for next

year because I loved it and it made a difference in my family.’ That’s what happened in just one week.”

The experience at Life Action’s Family Camp was a testament to the power of community, the importance of rest, and



the amazing impact that a week away can have on families often faced with difficult challenges at home. Through the generosity of donors and the dedication of Transformation Ministries, these families grew closer to each other and to God, leaving the camp with renewed spirits and a strengthened sense of purpose.



[Learn more](#) about how you can help make a difference with the **Living/Giving Scholarship** fund.

# LEADERS

## Finding Renewal at a Pastors' Retreat

After 24 years in full-time ministry, Pastor Ben Markum found himself at a crossroads. Despite being surrounded by a vibrant congregation and a supportive staff at Discovery Church in Orlando, Ben began to sense a deep weariness in his soul. "I'd been aware of the practice of taking a sabbatical and the necessity of rest, but I'd never taken an extended period off like this," he shared. "When I was praying about what my sabbatical should include, I felt I needed some guidance, and that I should go somewhere I'd be specifically invested in versus just resting. This retreat has been that for us."



### Facing Weariness

At the encouragement of his church leaders, Ben decided to attend a Life Action Pastors' Retreat with his wife, April—a decision that, while challenging to make, was ultimately transformative. "It's difficult for pastors to step away, because they view themselves primarily as investors. We invest in others. And

there can even come with that a sense of failure if we admit we need to be invested in," Ben explained. "Yet it's not a failure at all. It's truth; it's humility to say that I need someone to help me as I'm helping others. I was in a place of weariness and tiredness, and I didn't know if I could fully get out of it on my own. That's where Life Action came in."

The week at Life Action exceeded Ben and April's expectations. From the authenticity and wisdom of the facilitators to the unexpected depth of connection with other pastoral couples, every aspect of the retreat offered renewal. "I didn't anticipate the community aspect of being with other pastors. I assumed there would be some kindred



spirit because we're all in ministry, but I wasn't expecting it to be as meaningful as it was. I definitely feel a sense of renewal. I felt more joy this morning when I woke up than I have in a while. I wouldn't say joy has been a consistent theme for me in this season of life. And it felt good. That's the result of being able to rest, be with my wife, and be around people who truly want to invest in us."

### Returning with Purpose

As Ben returns home, he's carrying more than just memories. He's leaving with a renewed spirit and a deeper connection to God's wisdom. "I came with an agenda of seeking God for direction and truly wanting to hear His voice. What I received here has been more than that.



The guided tour we've been on with the facilitators has touched on very important areas of my life I wouldn't have naturally thought to check in on."

Ben is eager to share the impact of this experience with others. "I'm going to tell my pastor friends that this is a must. It would be a gift to themselves and their wives if they came to Life Action and allowed the team to minister to them. It will help them, in the marathon that is ministry, to be healthy for the long term."

For Ben, the Life Action Pastors' Retreat was more than just a break from the routine—it was a lifeline.



[Learn more](#) about Life Action **Pastors' Retreats** and how to utilize them as part of a sabbatical.

# Support Life Action and Fuel Transformation



As we celebrate 53 years of Life Action's ministry—dedicated to serving churches, families, and leaders across North America—the stories of transformation shared in this issue of Ignite remind us of the powerful impact of this mission.

But none of this happens without the generosity of people like you. Your support ensures that churches, families, and leaders can continue to encounter God in profound ways, bringing about spiritual revival, personal healing, and strengthened relationships.

## Will you partner with us today?

Your gift will help us continue these vital programs, from church events to family camps to retreats, ensuring that the hope and healing of Christ reaches those in need.

**Give today and be part of a story that will impact generations.**

**Support Life Action today.**

