

Pastor & His Family

Family

Pastor Michael Dewayne Payne was born July 16, 1955 in Warren, Arkansas to the late Rev. Levi Payne and Mary Rainey-Payne. During childbirth his mother encountered complications and did not survive. His Uncle and Aunt, Frank and Angeline McClain, who were 73 and 65 years old respectively, joyously took him at three days old and raised him as their own. He grew up in Columbia, Louisiana in a home where Christian values and the love of Christ was foremost and without compromise. He accepted Christ as his personal Savior in August 1962 at the age of seven. During most of his childhood, he served as Sunday School Secretary and Junior Superintendent at the Locust Grove Baptist Church.

He was raised in the Sandy Bayou Community where he attended Union Central Elementary School and Caldwell Parish High School in Columbia, Louisiana. He excelled in academics, maintaining Honor Roll status through graduation. From a child he was taught valuable work ethics. His fore parents were the owner of hundreds of acres of land and were the first family to own a Cotton Gin and Sugar Cane Mill in the area. Family values and sharing was a major part of his life. Because his Aunt and Uncle were older when they began raising him, he developed a tender heart and patience for elderly citizens.

Pastor Payne is a very down to earth man, with a commitment to God first, followed secondly by an endearing love of his family. Though serious about the Gospel, he loves to laugh and enjoys fellowship with all members in the congregation. He loves opportunities to break bread together, however, though from Louisiana, he has a strong disdain for okra!!!

In 1973, after graduating from Caldwell Parish High School, where he excelled in football, basket ball, and track, he moved to Little Rock, Arkansas to attend Shorter Junior College on a basket ball scholarship. While there, he met and dated Mary Louise Stanley, a native of Wilmot, Arkansas. Mary was born May 5, 1956 in Wilmot, Arkansas to the late Percy Stanley Jr. and the late Rosie Lee Gayles-Stanley. She attended Slack Le Grande Elementary School, along with her seven brothers and sisters. She graduated from Wilmot High School in 1973 as an Honor Roll Student.

Michael and Mary fell in love and married the following year on July 27, 1974. They have been happily married for the past 38 years. Sis. Payne works outside the home, though she is a steadfast and dedicated help mate to Pastor Payne. She is highly respected and honored among the congregation and valued as royalty among the members. As noble as her stand for Christ, the same as her husband and family, she remains a grounded, down-to-earth person. No “pomp and circumstance” for Sister Payne. She has such a depth of inner beauty that it radiates outwardly, naturally. She is not given to “make-up & cosmetics.” Neither does she prefer to wear hats – that’s a BIG no-no!!! Mrs. Payne serves as Director Vacation Bible School, Administrator of Membership Data Base, Instructor of Minister’s & Deacon’s Wives Class, Project Give Back After School Tutorial Program Co-Facilitator, Library Curator, as well as numerous other capacities in the church.

Pastor Payne has great energy for the ministry & preaching, and has garnered the nickname of Pastor Michael “Hurricane” Payne. He has a strong foundation in Christian Education and equipping the saints of God. He has an established Teaching Ministry and has always demonstrated a consistent commitment toward sharing and learning more about the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Pastor and Sis. Payne are the proud parents of four beautiful daughters: Katisha, Cindy, Debbie & Marsha. They have grown from a family of six, to a family of 15 over the past few years (four son-in-laws and five grandchildren). God has blessed their children to be rooted ‘Women of God’, and all the grandchildren are ingrained with a deep understanding and value of faithfully attending church. Additionally, God has blessed all of the grandchildren to be high academic achievers!

Leadership

Pastor Payne felt a call to preach the Gospel at a very young age. In 1981, he answered to the call of God while attending the Longley Baptist Church in Little Rock, Arkansas under the leadership of Pastor Mitchell L. Moore, Sr. In 1984, he was selected Pastor of the Cherry Hill Baptist Church in England, Arkansas. In January 1985, he was invited to preach at First Baptist Church Higgins, and a few months later, in March 1985, he was installed as the 11th Pastor in our 100-Year History. First Baptist Church Higgins has been blessed under Pastor Payne’s leadership for the past 28 years. Pastor Payne and his family have made a significant impact in the Higgins Community, the City of Little Rock, and throughout the state and country. He served as the Director General of the Union District Congress of Christian Education for four years. In the early 1990’s, he led a group of men from our church on a mission trip to Tegucigalpa, Honduras in Central America.

During his tenure at First Baptist Church Higgins, over a dozen young men have accepted their call to the ministry, and several of them have gone on to pastor for numerous years. Ever since their call to pastoral duties, they have affectionately been named ‘The Sons of Thunder’ (in reference to Pastor Hurricane Payne).

Under Pastor Payne’s ministry, he along with the men of our congregation built a two-story, multi-purpose & educational building which was completed in 1984. This building is equipped with industrial strength kitchen facilities and serves as a Food Pantry throughout the year. This educational building hosts after school tutorial programs and summer enrichment activities for the surrounding community. In 2002, we were blessed to build and dedicate a new sanctuary, equipped with state of the art technology. First Baptist Church Higgins has purchased additional property for future expansion and to meet specific needs of the community, as well as have acquired rental property.

Vision

Pastor Payne is committed to teaching and preaching the Word of God, as well as equipping the saints with the necessary skills to independently & collectively effectively study the Word of God. He

established our church motto as *"The Church Operating in Unity*, as taught in Ephesians 4:11-12. He also established the overall Church Vision:

To Know God;

To Understand the Bible as the Foundation for All Christian Living; and

To See the Establishment of the Multi-Ministry.

He is a man of God who believes in studying the Word of God, and is dedicated to preaching, teaching, and sharing God's Word through teaching during Sunday School, Wednesday Night Bible Study, and Sunday Evening Bible Training. His mission and goal is to provide vision and overall direction and administration of all church ministries, operations, programs and services; and for using his spiritual gifts and skills in proclamation and ministerial care in meeting the needs of persons in the church and community. But most of all, he is known by his Lifestyle Evangelism.