

Our Team



Dan Hall | Plenary Speaker

Dan Hall served as senior pastor in three churches for more than 25 years, from a church plant right out of college to a multiethnic fellowship of 5000 with over 40 nationalities. Over the last 10 years, he has served as a coach and consultant to senior pastors and executive teams in the areas of generosity, strategic alignment and leadership development. He has also helped numerous churches in “turnaround” situations while serving as Transitional Senior Pastor of three such churches. After an accident left him a quadriplegic in 2016, Dan has expanded his ministry to include “Emerging from the Shadow,” sharing his journey from near death to a new beginning. Dan and his wife Hazel have six children and four grandchildren and live near Jackson, MS.

Jason Allen

Jason has been Lead Pastor of Woodlawn since April 2020. Pastor Jason has a deep passion for the Word of God, the gospel of Jesus, and empowering the church to reach the world for Christ. His greatest prayer for the church is that they would know Christ intimately, grow in their walk with him, and go forward with the message of Christ to the world. He serves alongside his wife Heather and three children: Caleb, Gabrielle, and Micah.



Brian Bates

Brian has been Music Worship Pastor of Woodlawn since August 2010. He has been leading worship since he was 18 and has been in full-time ministry since 2007. He and his wife, Kristen, have three children: Katy, Samuel, and Caroline. In addition to enjoying all sorts of music, Brian enjoys good coffee, hiking, and watching movies with his family.

Dr. Michael Beates

Is the husband of Mary and father of seven children, one of whom lives with profound disabilities and two others who face disabling challenges. Author of *Disability and the Gospel: How God uses our brokenness to display His grace*. He has served on the International Board of Directors at [Joni and Friends](#) since 2000. Involved in Christian ministry for more than 40 years. Presently, Chaplain and Bible Teacher at The Geneva School in Casselberry, Florida. Mike has written more than 50 articles and has contributed chapters to several books focusing on disabilities and hope.



Heather Allen

Heather earned her MA in Marriage and Family Therapy from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. She is the owner of Ascent Christian Counseling, LLC and is currently pursuing her PhD in counseling education and supervision, and has specialized training in ADHD, autism, and anxiety disorders. Heather is married to Jason Allen and together they have three children: Caleb, Gabby, and Micah.



Jared Owens

Jared and Tamara have been married for 15 years, they have 3 children: Breonna, Silas, and Elsie. Jared and Tamara are NAMB/ Send Network Church Planters in Milton FL. Jared Pastors Replicate Church in Milton. Jared and Tamara have also been impacted by disabilities as their son Silas has Cerebral Palsy. Jared and Tamara know what it's like to be a caregiver but have also been involved greatly with ministering to families with disabilities. They have experience developing buddy and respite ministries within the local church.

Martie Kwasny

Is the Regional Operations Director of [Joni and Friends](#) covering the states of Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana and Florida. Previously, she served as Facilitator for the PCA Special Needs Ministries as well as the Disability Ministry Director at her church, Pear Orchard Presbyterian Church in Ridgeland, MS (13yrs). Martie has a B.S. in Special Education (Severe and Profound) from Louisiana State University and an M.A. in Counseling from Regent University. Martie has taught in various Special Education classrooms in Texas, Virginia, Louisiana, 26 years Homeschooling. She regularly counsels women in the church, in the community, and individuals or families touched by disability. Martie and her husband John have 8 children, four sons-in-law, and seven grandchildren. Her heart is for Christ, His Church, and the Kingdom.



Amy Schipper

Amy "gets" disability ministry personally. Her sister has multiple sclerosis, and her husband is a disabled Navy Veteran. Certified and trained at Crummer Graduate School in non-profit management, fundraising and development, and board governance, Amy brings over 20 years of local, national, and international experience to her leadership role with [Joni and Friends](#). She is committed to carrying out her calling; to see people of all ages in Florida—especially those with disabilities—reached with the Gospel. Amy and her husband have four children and live in Orlando.



Mary Aninos

Mary serves as the special needs ministry leader (STARS- Seeking to Always Reflect the Savior) at Immanuel Baptist Church. She is an Occupational Therapist with over 30 years of experience. She has a master's degree in healthcare administration. She has recently recovered from Stage 3 breast cancer which prompted her desire to establish a special needs program at Immanuel Baptist Church. She is certified through [Joni and Friends](#) to be a special needs provider, and is continuing to research, complete bible studies, and meet with fellow special needs providers in the southeast region. Mary has been married to her husband, Matthew, for 29 years and has 2 children, Sarah and Michael. She has 1 granddaughter, Esther.

