



May 4, 2026

Dear Friends,

It is with humility and great sorrow that I write to inform you of a tragic recent event. Baptist Homes & Healthcare Ministries is committed to being transparent with our neighbors, staff, donors, prayer partners, and friends, and this instance is no different. This may be one of the hardest letters I have ever had to write, but we need to be able to be open and honest with you, and we humbly ask for your grace and prayers throughout this time. Please know that Baptist Homes remains more committed to our mission, vision, and values than ever, and this event does not change that.

On Thursday, April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026, the executive team of Baptist Homes & Healthcare Ministries (BHHM), including Dr. Rodney Harrison, President, Dr. Andy Braams, Vice President of Operations, Troy Culbertson, Vice President of Finance, Dr. Ron Mackey, Vice President of Community Engagement, and Spencer Hutson, Church Relations Specialist, were in southwest Oklahoma for an executive planning retreat. The executive team of BHHM was joined by Dr. Juston Gates, President of the Missouri Baptist Children's Home. In addition to the planning sessions, the group was participating in a turkey hunt on private land. Mid-morning on April 16<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Harrison was involved in a tragic hunting accident which resulted in significant and life-threatening injuries to Dr. Juston Gates. Dr. Gates was flown to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma via air ambulance. A few days later, Dr. Gates succumbed to his injuries and passed away. The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation's initial investigation has found the shooting incident to be accidental. Other regulatory entities are now involved in their own investigations.

As a result, the Baptist Homes & Healthcare Ministries Board of Trustees has taken the following actions:

- Dr. Rodney Harrison has been granted a period of personal leave through October 1, 2026. October 1, 2026, was Dr. Harrison's announced retirement date. This leave is intended to provide Dr. Harrison and his wife and family with a quiet time for healing and reflection.
- Dr. Ronald Mackey has been named the Acting President of Baptist Homes & Healthcare Ministries.

We humbly ask for your prayers for the Gates family, the Harrison family, the Missouri Baptist Children's Home and BHHM. Our prayer is that God will protect, heal, and guide during this significant season of loss and grief. We know that we serve the "God of all comfort" (2 Corinthians 1:3) and "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds" (Psalm 147:3). Though it may be difficult to see right now, we are choosing to believe the promise written by Paul in Romans 8:28, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

In His Grace,

Dr. Ronald D. Mackey, PhD.  
Acting President, Baptist Homes & Healthcare Ministries