



Photo submitted by CLAYTON COATES

The Rev. Clayton Coates (right) stands with his wife, Allison, and their five children. Coates has been the pastor at First Baptist Church of Coppell since September 2008.

Tragedy a 'turning point' in Baptist pastor's life

By LINDSEY BEVER
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The Rev. Clayton Coates, 36, is the lead pastor of the First Baptist Church of Coppell.

He's also a husband and father of five.

"It's a busy house," he said.

But, he said, his goal is to do what God has called him to do.

Where did you grow up?

I grew up, originally, in Mesquite. But I went to a private school in downtown Dallas, and my dad was on staff at a church down there — First Baptist Church of Dallas.

I've been here since September of '08 when I was called to be pastor here. I was at Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Calif. I was the singles pastor.

How did you get into the ministry?

I surrendered to the ministry in 1994. It's what I believed God was calling me to do. I began in

youth ministry. Did that for about six years. Then I was in singles ministry. Did that for about eight years. Then I came on as lead pastor [at First Baptist Church of Coppell].

How did you know the ministry was right for you?

I'm a fourth-generation Baptist pastor. I have a lineage of that, a legacy. With my dad being in ministry, it's really all I've ever known.

I tried the psychology route, I tried art route, I tried insurance sales. I just knew that God was calling me to the ministry. I knew by trying other things, and they just weren't the right fit. I knew in the fifth grade that God had been calling me to the ministry. ... I really rebelled against organized religion.

The turning point was through the suicide of a buddy of mine — my drinking buddy. That was really kind of a catalytic event, New Year's Eve of 1994. It caused me to see what was right and that I was living wrong.

What are your goals for the future?

It's constantly moving forward. I'm trying to create an environment where people understand that perfect people aren't allowed here. Church is a place where we come together authentically. We're trying to strip down all the superficiality here in Dallas. Everything we do is about connecting, growing, serving, sharing and honoring.

This church was about 185 people on the weekends. Now, we're running over 400 people on the weekends. We are building an indoor playground that will have the largest indoor slides in North America as well as a new student center in our retail adjacent property. Both of these facilities will be open to the community.

My goal, individually ... I want to help people see that there can be true purpose and meaning in life through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. I will live my life and would give up my life for that cause.

Brownies cross over to next Scouting stage

By ROSEMARY MARTINEZ
Contributor

MORE INFO

Mary Immaculate Catholic School, 14031 Dennis Lane in Farmers Branch, is a kindergarten through eighth-grade elementary school within the Roman Catholic Diocese of Dallas. For more information, visit mischool.org.

Crossing over into Junior Girl Scouts is an exciting time for a Brownie troop: The uniforms change, the activities are more complex and the girls assume more responsibility in planning.

To celebrate such a distinctive time in their lives, the ceremony that takes place when the girls "bridge" over needs to be special.

For Brownie Troop 490, its event was special with thanks to Junior Girl Scout Troop 788. The eight members of Troop 788 welcomed the Brownies into the next stage of their journey through scouting at their Bridging Ceremony at Jaycee Park in Farmers Branch.

One by one, the Brownies were called by name and invited by a Junior Girl Scout to cross the bridge. Meeting halfway across the bridge, the Junior Girl Scout presented the Brownie with a new Girl Scout sash, a rose

and a homemade greeting card containing a copy of the Girl Scout Law.

The Junior Girl Scout then challenged the Brownie to "do your best to be honest and fair" before crossing the bridge together to join the cheering group of scouts and parents.

Members of both Troop 788 and Troop 490 attend Mary Immaculate Catholic School in Farmers Branch and live in Farmers Branch, Carrollton, Addison, Irving, Coppell, North Dallas, Lewisville, Highland Village and The Colony.

Rosemary Martinez contributes to neighborsgo.com on behalf of Mary Immaculate Catholic School.



Submitted photo by ROSEMARY MARTINEZ
Coppell Junior Girl Scout Hannah Ryan (left) escorts Zoe Bolivar of Farmers Branch across the bridge during Brownie Troop 490's Bridging Ceremony.

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