



THE BAPTIST MESSAGE

April 11, 2019

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John 3:16

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Angola inmates support CP with special gift

By Staff

Louisiana Baptist Message

ANGOLA – Inmates who are members of the first church within a prison approved for membership in a Baptist association have made a generous Cooperative Program gift.

The prison congregation of Grace Baptist, located on the grounds of the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola, did

not have money to contribute through the Cooperative Program, so they used their construction skills to build a cooker as a gift for the Louisiana Baptist Disaster Relief ministry.

LBDR Director Gibbie McMillian said he is “humbled by the donation,” valued at \$8,000, and said the commercial-grade cooker is a welcome addition to the equipment used for emergency responses in the state and

around the country.

David Goza, pastor of the Jefferson Baptist Church in Baton Rouge, first learned of the effort by the inmates when he was at Angola to teach a New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary class.

He said the men really wanted to show Louisiana Baptists their commitment to be part of



See GIFT, page 2



Submitted photo

Trey Johnson baptized Johnny Aucoin during a worship service November 2018 at Celebration Church in Metairie. Ministering from 11 campuses, the multi-site congregation collectively baptized 796 new converts and saw 2,669 people commit their lives to Christ in 2018, both single-year records for the 30-year-old multi-site church.

Celebration blessed with record baptisms

By Brian Blackwell

Message Staff Writer

NEW ORLEANS (LBM) – Alfonso and Cynthia Campos were on the brink of divorce when they spontaneously chose to attend the River Parishes campus of Celebration Church for Mother’s Day services last year.

But instead of ending their marriage they surrendered to Christ, committing to follow Him as a couple and as individuals. About a month later, they followed their spiritual rebirth with being baptized -- Cynthia first and Alfonso three weeks after her.

“Our life on the weekend was going out, drinking, you name it,” Alfonso said. “I knew about the Lord but wasn’t committed to Him. We went from nearly getting a divorce to now having the family we always wished

we had.

“We don’t have ‘big’ problems anymore,” he continued. “We are happy and stronger. For couples who are thinking of divorce, it’s never too late. If you really want to change your life you have to leave it up to God and He will change it.”

FAITH, REPENTANCE, BAPTISM

The Campos were among a record number 796 new believers baptized by Celebration in 2018.

The congregation recorded 2,669 acts of repentance last year, and is still working to complete new believer’s training for this group.

Through April 1, the congregation has celebrated 95 baptisms and an annual mass baptism celebration service is scheduled June 8-9 on each of its 11 campuses

See CELEBRATION, page 2

Ronnie Floyd elected president of SBC EC

By Staff

Louisiana Baptist Message

DALLAS — Ronnie Floyd was elected president and CEO of the Southern Baptist Conven-

tion’s Executive Committee by a ballot vote of 68-1 during a called meeting in Dallas, April 2.

Floyd, who served as SBC president from 2014-2016, will resign April 7

from his 33-year pastorate of Cross Church in northwest Arkansas. He had alerted his congregation March 31 to the possibility

See FLOYD, page 4

Celebration from page one

throughout New Orleans and the Northshore area. Combined, the multi-site ministries average 6,925 worshipers in weekly services.

Changed lives have been the norm since 1989 when Pastor Dennis Watson and a congregation of 86 members committed to impact New

Orleans for Christ. Attendance grew to an average of 1,800 until Hurricane Katrina made landfall in August 2005. Afterward, participation dropped by 60 percent.

In response, Watson marshaled the staff and members, reformatted the

church's ministry strategy, and began working more closely with other churches for greater collective impact of communities within the city, and the results have been astounding.

Since Katrina, the church has baptized 4,530 new converts.

"We believe baptism is such an important step of following Christ, especially in the culture of New Orleans where it can take several years for someone to come from faith in Christ to baptism," he said. "We share with our people that baptism is so important for a relationship with the Lord and we keep that in front of our people in hopes they take that next step after accepting Christ. To see people baptized every week at all of our campuses really encourages our people and reminds them the Lord is transforming us through our ministry."

The success of their

outreach is simple: Celebration Church created a culture that trains and triggers members and regular attenders to invite their friends, family, neighbors, co-workers and others they contact each day to come to weekend worship services and other activities.

"We can't plan for salvations because salvation is a result of God's Spirit touching hearts and transforming lives, but we can plan to present the Gospel in powerful ways," he said. "We set

goals for baptisms. We really challenge our staff and leaders to develop action plans. We follow up with first time guests right away – and many of the professions of faith and baptisms we witness are by first time guests."

GROWING DISCIPLES

New believers are encouraged to immediately attend an "I Want to Know" class where they learn about

See **CELEBRATION**, page 4

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LORI ARDOIN & PAUL D. STEWART

Gift from page one

the Convention's cooperative missions and ministries.

"Giving this grill to the LBC reflects what is in the heart of these men," Goza told the *Baptist Message*. "This is a group of Christian men whose hearts have been changed by the Gospel and they are true

disciples of Christ, committed to following Him.

"They wanted to give to the work of building God's Kingdom, and they gave the only way they could under the circumstances," he added. "This was a sacrificial gift on their part, and it is their prayer that others will come to know Christ because of it."

In 1995 former Warden Burl Cain invited New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary to teach inmates at Angola, and the program is credited in turning around what was once-known as "the bloodiest prison in the United States" and making it a model correctional facility. More than 375 inmates have graduated from the seminary's four-year degree program, and at the request of other prisons around the country some of those graduates have transferred to those facilities as "missionaries" to help start similar initiatives.

NOBTS reports that at least 100 inmates are baptized inside the prison every year, and one former prison official estimates that 4,000 of the 6,000 inmates at Angola have repented for salvation.



M-JAM 2019

John 8:36

MAY 4

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Easter ministry a passion for Lanier Baptist

By Holly Jo Linzay
Regional Reporter

BATON ROUGE – For the past 13 years, Lanier Baptist Church in Baton Rouge has presented a musical production chronicling the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, and church members are passionate about the message that unfolds.

“The production is very dramatic with heart-throbbing moments. You can’t help but be moved. Our prayer is that we can reach out to the lost with the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ,” said Rev. Mike Ferguson, the pastor of Lanier Baptist Church.

The Easter musical drama, “His Amazing Love,” will be presented April 18-20, 6:30 p.m., at Lanier Baptist Church. The passion play is free and open to the public. Each year, new songs and new scenes are added as the Lord leads, the pastor said.

“We prayed about it, and we felt the Lord wanted us to do this production again,” Ferguson said.

Virtually all of the 120 church members are engaged in the Easter musical with more than 90 adults and children from the



Submitted photo

Members of Lanier Baptist Church portrayed Jesus’ crucifixion during the church’s 2018 Easter musical drama, “His Amazing Love.” The drama will be presented April 18-20, 6:30 p.m., at Lanier Baptist Church in Baton Rouge.

church composing the cast and crew. The drama will feature live animals, stunning scenery and a powerful message of hope, the pastor said.

The play, which is divided into three acts with 12 scenes, lasts about an hour and 15 minutes. A Gospel invitation is made and the program closes with a ma-

jestic “Heaven” scene. Although not a large

congregation, church members make a big im-

pact in their state capital community through the Easter play.

“Last year, over the three nights, we had about 1,500 people attend. More than 70 people repented to receive Christ, and another 100 people repented to restore their lives with Him,” Ferguson said.

The pastor said the church, through the ministry of the Easter production, reaches out to a “really broken” community, but that many now “are serving the Lord the best they can.” About 30 members serving in the drama surrendered to Christ during a prior Easter performance.

With the Easter drama, the pastor said he has witnessed changes in his church body through the years.

“I see growth and change in our people’s

See EASTER, page 8

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A Ministry of the Cooperative Program

Floyd from page one

of this ministry change.

He has been active in Southern Baptist life, having chaired the SBC EC from 1995-1997 and led the SBC Great Commission Task Force from 2009-2010.

Moreover, he has 43 years of pastoral experience dating back to First Baptist Church in Cherokee, Texas, in 1976 and subsequently including congregations in Milford, Palacios and Nederland, Texas. He began leading Cross Church in 1986 when the congregation

was known as First Baptist Church of Springdale, Ark., and expanded the ministry to include campuses in Pinnacle Hills, Rogers and Fayetteville as well as a campus in Neosho, Mo.

Weekly Sunday attendance encompasses more than 9,000 people in 11 worship services across the various Cross Church campuses, according to the SBC Annual Church Profile.

Floyd and his wife Jeana have been married 42 years,

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary Chancellor Chuck Kelley joined a number of Southern Baptist leaders in praising Floyd.

"Vision, skill, passion, and a relentless focus on the Great Commission -- Dr. Ronnie Floyd is all this and so much more," he told the Baptist Press. "As Southern Baptists face many challenges, including the greatest evangelistic crisis in their history, they will be well served with an outstanding leader at the helm of the Executive Committee."

Adapted from a Baptist Press report.



Adam Covington photo

During a specially called meeting April 2 in Dallas, Ronnie Floyd was elected president of the SBC Executive committee by a 68-1 vote.

DHS to offer church security grants

ALEXANDRIA (LBM) – The Department of Homeland Security will begin accepting requests either April 12 or April 16 for grants to be used to upgrade the security of church facilities to deal with terrorism and other threats of violence.

There will be a limited time to apply (only two-three weeks according to state sources) and limited funds (Louisiana is expected to receive about \$200,000 to \$300,000). Last year, the state approved four grant requests, a state official

told the Baptist Message.

There are some first steps that can be taken now while waiting for the official announcement of the details of the program.

To learn more, visit BaptistMessage.com or LouisianaBaptists.org.

Celebration from page 2

Celebration's vision, values, beliefs and how to grow in their faith. They also are encouraged to get involved in one of 325 small groups for discipleship training.

"There are no successful 'Lone Ranger Christians', Watson said. "We must have mature and growing Christians in our lives constantly encouraging us to love the Lord and live for Him. Without a support network of other Christians around you, you are

destined to fail."

Looking to the future, church leaders are praying and planning to start more small groups that will turn into churches in southeast Louisiana.

"The ultimate goal would be to see the culture of the New Orleans region changed to become one of the godliest, safest and strongest regions in our nation," Watson said. "That's a big task, but it can be accomplished because we serve a big God."



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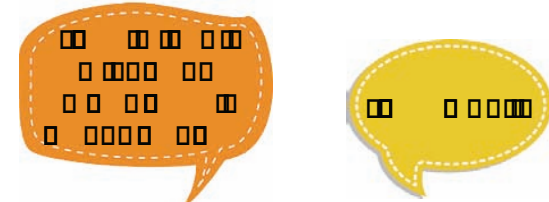
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COOPERATIVE PROGRAM: Making cooperation great again

ALEXANDRIA (LBM) -- I recently met with a group of our Louisiana associational mission strategists (formerly called directors of missions). As I stood before these friends and partners in ministry, knowing it would be the last time I addressed them as a group in my current position, I said, "I believe in the way we Baptists do our work."

I stand by those words.

During my ministry, which spans 50 years, I've studied and observed many models of leadership and organization. While there are strengths in various approaches, none compares to our cooperative model -- when we work it, when we actually cooperate.

I am concerned whenever any of us devalue the cooperative model we felt led of the Lord to establish decades ago. I believe this has a ripple effect through almost every area of Baptist life -- including baptisms, missions enterprises, Cooperative Program giving, and more. Whenever we minimize our denominational partnerships, sadly, every measurement we use to gauge our progress in fulfilling the Great Commission will trend down-

ward.

So, here is my prayer as I prepare to move into the next season of life and ministry: May Southern Baptists make cooperation great again!

Why do I believe we need to make cooperation great again?

Our cooperative model of missions and ministries is coherent. It makes sense. Cooperation touches every level of Baptist life -- the local church, Baptist associations,

state conventions, national entities. We believe and we teach we can do more together. God reminds us that "two are better than one." However, somewhere along the way the weeds of independence have popped up and swayed us to believe we'll get more done by ourselves. Don't be misled by this impulse and neglect cooperation.

Another reason for

making cooperation great again is consistency. I've lived and ministered long enough to observe and understand the cycles of life. Economies fluctuate. Church membership rises and falls. There are seasons when giving is strong and there are seasons when we're simply trying to keep the lights on and the doors open. Yet somehow cooperation survives, and even thrives, during these cycles. It is consistent.

Eight months after I became the executive director of the Louisiana Baptist Convention I was introduced to an unwelcomed guest -- Hurricane Katrina. I'll never forget flying over New Orleans with Fred Luter, pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans, and then-SBC President Bobby Welch.

The devastation was breathtaking and heart-breaking. Yet, even though this was the worst natural disaster to hit our shores,

not one missionary had to be recalled from the international fields. Even though literally hundreds of our congregations were affected in Louisiana and across the Gulf Coast, the consistency of cooperation enabled Southern Baptists to stay on mission while picking up the pieces at home.

One final reason why I believe it's time to make cooperation great again is because it's comprehensive in nature. Even the arms of our largest congregations can only reach so far. They can only cover so many bases. However, together, our arms reach around the world and, at same time, into the places where we live and work.

We can undergird the ministries of state conventions who work tirelessly to engage the lost within their borders. We can train and equip those called to

ministry through state Baptist universities and SBC seminaries. We can voice our collective concerns to our state and national leaders as we stand for religious liberty. No person, no part of America, and no part of the planet is unreachable when we cooperate.

We need to make cooperation great again because we don't want to cede more ground. Southern Baptists have had differences to debate. We've had issues that needed to be aired. But the crumbling of our culture calls for a new wave of cooperation to push back the powers of darkness and advance God's Kingdom of love and light.

I believed it 50 years ago and I believe it today: We are better together. As we emphasize Cooperative Program Sunday this month, join me in making cooperation great again!



DAVID E. HANKINS
Executive Director
Louisiana Baptist
Convention

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Rom. 1:16

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State “Love Life” constitutional amendment announced

By Will Hall
Message Editor

BATON ROUGE (LBM) – A coalition of pro-life groups and individuals has launched a public campaign to support an amendment to the Louisiana Constitution that would prevent state courts from establishing a “right to abortion” or requiring state funds be used for abortion.

The initiative comes as radical late-term abortion

legislation, described by critics as allowing “up to the moment of birth” abortion, was passed in New York and defeated in Virginia, with other state legislatures lining up to pursue similar measures.

Ben Clapper, executive director of Louisiana Right to Life, told the *Baptist Message* the amendment simply will read “Nothing in this constitution shall be construed to secure or protect a right to abortion or require the funding of



Katrina Jackson Beth Mizell

abortion.”

He said that the amendment “is silent on exceptions” such as rape and incest “because these issues are addressed in state law.”

“The supreme courts of a dozen states have found a right to abortion in their constitutions,” he said. “We can’t let this happen in Louisiana.”

Two lawmakers are leading the state house effort for the amendment, which is aimed at preventing state court judges from overturning pro-life laws, for instance, that provide for informed con-

sent, parental consent, as well as an ultrasound at least 24 hours prior to an abortion.

Rep. Katrina Jackson (D-Monroe) and Sen. Beth Mizell (R-Franklinton) are the lead authors of the proposed legislation that will need two-thirds approval in both the House and the Senate in order to place the amendment on the fall ballot for approval by a simple majority of Louisiana voters.

Mizell is a Louisiana Baptist and a member of the First Baptist Church in Franklinton.

David Hankins, executive director of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, said he plans to urge Louisiana Baptists to put their full support behind the constitutional amendment as it makes its way through the legislature

and becomes a ballot measure.

“We must continue to make every effort to protect the life of the unborn in our state,” Hankins said. “It is fundamental to our biblical understanding of the preciousness of life from the womb through natural death.”

Hankins added that the LBC effort will be headed by Will Hall, director of the LBC Office of Public Policy, and a member of the coalition supporting the amendment.

“We will reach out to pastors to help them inform their congregations about the issues and to urge them to engage their respective legislators and be energized about the vote in the fall,” Hall said.

Pro-Life Day is scheduled for April 23 at the Louisiana Capitol.

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Christian leaders oppose 'Equality Act' as unfair

By Will Hall
Message Editor

ALEXANDRIA (LBM) - Congress is considering legislation known as the Equality Act that Christian leaders say contains provisions which would marginalize the religious rights of people of faith in favor of those who identify as LGBT.

Filed as H.R. 5, the bill would force business owners such as bakers and florists in the wedding industry to provide services that celebrate gay marriage, they said. Likewise, Christian hospitals would be mandated to perform sex reassignment surgery, and religious schools would have to abandon conduct codes and hiring standards that support their spiritual missions. Meanwhile, women athletes would have to compete against biological men who wish to identify as females. The bill would even regulate what pronouns have to be used when addressing someone who does not want to be identified with his or her biological sex.

Importantly, parents could be compelled to allow children to undergo sex reassignments or face losing custody rights.

In a letter, a coalition of 84 religious leaders urged Democrat and Republican leaders of the House Committee on the Judiciary to oppose the bill.

The group assured the lawmakers that "people of faith ... believe that all people should be treated with equal dignity and respect."

But they took issue with H.R. 5, declaring that the legislation is misguided and would cause "new problems and hurt more people that its sponsors

want to help."

"Americans highly value our First Amendment freedoms of speech, association, and free exercise of religion," they wrote, adding that "H.R. 5 puts these cherished religious liberties at risk."

Wisconsin voters reject attacks on Christian Supreme Court candidate

In a stunning upset victory, a Christian candidate for the Wisconsin Supreme Court won his election despite being outspent and vilified in the media as a "bigot" because of his religious convictions, which include support for traditional marriage, National Review reported.

Conservative Brian Hagedorn still faces a recount because of his narrow 6,000-vote victory among 1.2 million votes cast, but experts say statistically it is unlikely the election will be overturned barring any major error in reporting by precincts.

Just a year ago his liberal opponent, Lisa Neubauer, led by 12 percentage points and appeared unstoppable. But she and

CULTURAL NEWS

outside liberal groups viciously attacked Hagedorn for his Christian beliefs, with the help of the secular media, accusing him of supporting hate groups because he founded a Christian school and spoke to Christian and conservative groups that support traditional marriage.

But voters apparently rejected the anti-Christian bigotry at the grass roots level in the state which ranks in the bottom half of states in terms of church attendance by the population.

By state law Neubauer can still request and pay for a recount because the vote margin was less than one percentage point but above the 0.25 point threshold that triggers an automatic recount.

Housing allowance for pastors upheld

The ministerial housing allowance allowed by the IRS has been upheld by the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Chicago after being struck down for the second time by the

same federal jurist for the Western District of Wisconsin.

U.S. District Court Judge Barbara Crabb, appointed in 1979 by President Jimmy Carter, had ruled in 2017 and before that in 2013, that the housing allowance was a violation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment in the U.S. Constitution.

In the first case, the 7th Circuit Court ruled that the Freedom from Religion Foundation, an atheist group which brought the suit, did not have standing because they could not show harm from the benefit being extended to clergy. But the court did not rule on the constitutionality of the housing allowance.

This time, FFRF execu-

tives applied for the housing allowance and were denied the benefit that permits "ministers of the gospel" to deduct housing-related expenses from their taxable income when filing with the IRS.

But a three-judge panel, all Republican appointees, was not sympathetic to the FFRF's claim that the Internal Revenue Code 107(2) tax break for religious leaders effectively "renders unto God that which is Caesar's."

"[T]his tax provision falls into the play between the joints of the Free Exercise Clause and the Establishment Clause: neither commanded by the former, nor proscribed by the latter. We conclude § 107(2) is constitutional. The judgment of the district court is REVERSED."

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Easter from page 3

lives through the years. Hardness has melted away, and they have joy inside,” Ferguson said.

Robert Reames, the minister of music and co-director of the Easter drama, echoed the sentiment.

“We’ve witnessed people in the play be saved. The Easter production has a very powerful message. Word for word, it is straight out of the Bible. You can’t watch this without making a decision for

Christ or wanting a closer relationship with Him,” Reames said.

“Greater love has no one than this; to lay down one’s life for one’s friend,” (John 15:13) is the central theme of each of the annual Easter productions, Reames said, and His love is displayed throughout each scene.

“You will see Jesus bloodied. You will hear the clanging sound of hammers as nails are driven through His hands and feet. You will see the spear pierce His side and see Him suffering. And you will see Jesus take His last breath,” he said. “It’s very powerful. It really grabs you.”

After the invitation, the final scene in the drama depicts Heaven, as described in the book of Revelation.

Joseph Ferguson portrays Jesus in the production, and is the co-director of the play.

“The Heaven scene is the most majestic mo-



Submitted photo

Joseph Ferguson, the co-director of the play, is seen in his 2018 portrayal of Jesus.

ment. The angels come in wearing white robes. Jesus enters wearing a 100-foot cloak. Crowns are laid at his feet. Jesus sits on His throne. The presence of the Lord is there,” Joseph noted.

Throughout the many months of preparation for the drama, Joseph said the entire cast and crew pray for the Lord to show them areas in their lives that are in bondage.

“We do not want anything in our lives to hinder the Holy Spirit. We all are so passionate about this play. We know the Lord wants to get His message out. We are engaging in acts of worship with this production. We are carrying out the Great Commission,” Joseph added.

Prayer also is needed to overcome obstacles that sometimes hinder this ministry to the community.

The historic flood of August 2016 caused extensive devastation to Lanier Baptist. Every building on campus was deluged and all the background sets and other materials for the drama were destroyed. Consequently, no Easter play was staged in 2017.

The church did not have flood insurance, but last year when church members rebuilt the sets and backdrops donations poured in to replace everything.

“God gave us beauty for ashes. During this play last year, the Holy Spirit was so thick. People were standing, raising their hands and worshipping the Lord. We pack the Bible in every moment in the play. It’s powerful and a blessing,” Joseph said.

Months of extended rehearsals and long practices help prepare the cast, the preparations all around are sometimes exhausting, Reames told the *Baptist Message*.

“It’s challenging but worth it. We are looking at the end results – a closer relationship with the Lord and seeing new relationships begin with Christ,” Reames said.

“The devil doesn’t want us to succeed,” he added. “But we all know in the end there’s victory in Jesus!”

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ON THE MOVE

- **Ronnie Burke** is the transitional pastor at Olivet Baptist Church, Sulphur.
- **Johnnie Wagner** is the new pastor at Colfax Baptist Church.
- **Eric Harkins** is the new pastor of Pisgah Baptist Church, Bernice.
- **Timmy Burns** has resigned as pastor of Mt. Tabor Baptist Church, Farmerville.
- **James Miller** has announced his retirement as of April 15 at First Baptist Church, Spearsville.
- **Israel Montejo** resigned at Bethel Hispanic Church, Bernice.
- **Luis Garcia** is the new pastor at Bethel Hispanic Church, Bernice.
- **Connie Smith** is the interim pastor at Fellowship Baptist Church, Dubach.
- **Michael Robinson** has resigned from Summer Grove to become new children's minister at Church at the Mall, Lakeland, FL.
- **Barry (wife Carol) Headrick** is the new interim music minister at Gray Baptist Church, Jefferson, Texas.
- **Mrs. Dawn Backs** is the new piano player at Gray Baptist Church, Jefferson, Texas.
- **Alvin Mason** has resigned as pastor at Calumet Baptist Church.
- **Brent Romero** is the new pastor at Pine Grove Baptist Church, Ruby. He resigned as pastor of First Baptist Church, Morgan City.

- **Wayne DuBose** is the new interim Pastor at First Baptist Church, Blanchard.
- **Rob Sharp** has resigned as music minister at Ellerbe Road Baptist Church to take the same position at First Baptist Church, West Monroe.
- **Randy Bowman** resigned as pastor of New Horizon Baptist Church in Church Point, and is the new pastor at Lakefront Community Church in Catahoula.

REVIVAL

- Bethel Baptist Church, Colfax: **Revival**, April 14-17. Evangelist: **Scotty McDowell, chalk artist.** Pastor: Carl Gulde.
- Welcome Home Baptist Church, Columbia: **Revival**, April 14-19, Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Monday-Friday, 7 p.m. Evangelist: **Craig Franklin.** Worship Music: **Rick & Jennifer Duckett.** Pastor: Jim McKeithen.
- Mineral Springs Baptist Church, Dubach: **Revival**, April 14-17, Sunday, 10:45 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Monday-Wednesday, 7 p.m. nightly. Speaker: **Jeff Hurst.** Pastor: Greg Tipton.

LAGNIAPPE

- **Eastern Louisiana Baptist Association annual community wide Easter Egg Hunts**, April 13, 2-5 p.m. Live Oak High School, Watson; Sidney Hutchinson Ball Park, Walker, April 14, 3-6 p.m. Bring a basket and a friend to collect eggs and enjoy a day of celebration. The event is free and will have games, prizes, food and fun. Contact 225.664.9309 or email info atelbmissions.org for more information. Director of Missions:

- Richard Blue.
- Pine Grove Baptist Church, Ruby: **Community Easter egg hunt**, April 13, 10 a.m.-noon. This event is open for children of all ages. Pastor: Brent Romero.
- Judson Baptist Retreat Center, St. Francisville: **Family Day**, April 13, 10 a.m.- 3 p.m. Come spend the day at Judson Baptist Retreat Center and enjoy activities, games, horseback riding, food, fellowship. Cost: \$5 per person, \$20 max per family. You can even register your children for camp while having fun. The center will provide lunch and share about its future vision. Register at www.judsonretreat.org under upcoming events.
- Mineral Springs Baptist Church, Dubach: **Wild Game Supper**, April 13, 6:30 p.m. Speaker: **Jeff Hurst.** Pastor: Greg Tipton.
- First Baptist Church, Many: **Easter Egg Hunt**, April 13, 10 a.m.-noon for children 12 & under. **Easter Sunday**, April 21, Sunday school 9:45 a.m.; Morning worship 11 a.m. There will be no evening activities. Pastor: Johnathan Bost.
- North Monroe Baptist Church, Monroe: **Easter EGGstravaganza**, April 13, 10 a.m.-noon. Bring your baskets for some egg hunting fun with pony rides, a petting zoo, jumpers, puppet shows and much more. Pastor: Bill Dye.
- Life Point Community Church, Mansura: **Easter Extravaganza and Grilling for God – BBQ Cook Off**, April 13, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. There will be arts and craft, car show, music, games, BBQ and an Easter egg hunt at noon. Pastor: Jacob Crawford.
- Longview Baptist Church, Deville: **It Is Finished – Adult Choir Easter Musical**, April 14, 10:30 a.m. **Easter egg hunt**, 11:30-1:30 p.m. The children will hunt Easter eggs following worship services and dinner on the grounds. Pastor: Robby Poole.
- New Sarepta Baptist Church, Sarepta: **Jordan Family Band in concert**, April 14, 10:30 a.m. Pastor: Marty Wright.
- First Baptist Church, New Orleans: **Easter Egg Hunt**, April 14, 4-5:30 p.m. The afternoon includes crafts, the Easter story, age-graded Easter egg hunts, and snacks! Kids can bring their baskets to gather eggs or use bags from the egg hunt.
- First Baptist Church, Mandeville: **Easter Egg Hunt**, April 14, 4:30 p.m. The event is for preschool to sixth grade. Presentation “The Historical, Scientific and Medical Evidence for the Easter Story,” April 17, 6:30 p.m. in the worship center. Guest Speaker: Vern Palmisan. Pastor: Jake Roudkovski.
- First Baptist Church, Minden: **Easter Night of Praise**, April 14, 6 p.m. Pastor: Leland Crawford.
- First Baptist Church, Bogalusa: **Celebrate Easter**, April 14-21; Palm Sunday, April 14, 10:30 a.m.; Good Friday, April 19, 10:30 a.m. and Easter Sunday, April 21, 10:30 a.m. Pastor: Greg Whaley.
- First Baptist Church, Lafayette: **The Reason-Easter Week**, April 14-April 21. Palm Sunday, April 14, a worship celebration presented by choir and orchestra; Maundy Thursday, April 18, 7 p.m., observance of the Lord’s Supper; Tenebrae Service, April 19, 7 p.m., Reflections on the Cross; Easter Sunday, April 21, 8:15 & 10:45 a.m., services with choir and orchestra. Pastor: Steve Horn.
- **Baptist Association of Greater Baton Rouge: Passion Week** – An Easter Journey, April 15-19, 11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m. Lunch will be provided. **ASCENSION PARISH**, Monday- Oak Grove Baptist Church; Tuesday, Graceworks Church, Wednesday - Fellowship Church, Ascension, Thursday - Dutchtown Baptist Church, Friday -Ascension Baptist Church; **CENTRAL** - Monday-Zoar Baptist Church, Tuesday-Greenwell Springs Baptist Church, Wednesday-First Baptist Church of Central, Thursday -Fellowship Baptist Church Friday - Comite Baptist Church; **BATON ROUGE** - Monday-Living Hope Fellowship in Sherwood, Tuesday - Wood-

- lawn Baptist Church, Wednesday -Jefferson Baptist Church Thursday - First Baptist Church of Baton Rouge, Friday - Florida Boulevard Baptist Church. Director of Missions: Tommy Middleton.
- Calvary Baptist Church, Slidell: **Church-wide Easter Egg Hunt**, April 17, 6 p.m. There will be lots of candy and filled eggs for the children. Easter Service, April 21, 10 a.m. Pastor: Casey Stark.
- Lanier Baptist Church, Baton Rouge: **The Life of Christ – An Easter Musical Production**, April 18-20, 6:30 p.m. Cost: Free. For more information, call 225.355.5605 or go online to www.lanierbc.com. Pastor: Mike Ferguson.
- First Baptist Church, Winnsboro: **Easter Egg Hunt and Easter Story**, April 19, 10 a.m. Children 11 years of age and younger are welcome to come hunt Easter Eggs. Pastor: Craig Beeman.
- Watson Baptist Church, Watson: **Good Friday Services, fish fry and Children's Easter Egg Hunt**, April 19, 6 p.m. WBC Choir will be performing followed by the Lord’s Supper. So, invite a friend and come enjoy some wonderful Easter Music followed by the Lord’s Supper, then feast on fried fish with all the fixings. Easter Services, April 21, 10:15 a.m. Pastor: John Pemberton.
- Fair Park Baptist Church, West Monroe: **Service of Darkness**, April 19, 6 p.m. in the worship center. Join us for an inspirational depiction of the events leading to the cross. **Easter at Fair Park**, April 21, 10 a.m. Pastor: Waymond Warren.
- First Baptist Church, Tioga: **Wild Easter Egg Hunt**, April 19, 10 a.m. Free food, fun, games and the Hunt. That evening there will be service and communion, 6 p.m. April 21, **One Day musical** presented by the Sanctuary Choir, 10 a.m. Sunday school, 9 a.m. Pastor: Tim Hisaw.
- First Baptist Church, West Monroe: **Easter at First West**, April 20-21, West Monroe Campus on Saturday at 6 p.m. or Sunday at 9:30 or 11 a.m. Easter at the First West - Fairbanks Campus on Sunday, April 21 at 9 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Easter at the First West - Calhoun Campus on Sunday, April 21st at 10:30 a.m. Pastor: Michael Woods.
- Haughton Baptist Church, Haughton: Community Easter egg hunt, April 20, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. at the Lawson Bo Brandon Sports Complex. There will be inflatables, face painting, ice cream and 10,000 filled eggs. The egg hunt will begin

- at 11:00am. Sunrise services at Hillcrest Memorial, April 21, 6:30 a.m. (Hillcrest), Easter morning services, 8 and 10:30 a.m. Invite your friends and neighbors to join us. Pastor: Gevan Spinney.
- HIS Church, Pineville: **Easter Services**, April 20-21, Saturday, 6 p.m.; Sunday, Sunrise service, 6:30 a.m.; Southern Gospel Celebration, 8 a.m.; Contemporary Celebration, 9:30 a.m. and Contemporary Celebration 11 a.m. Pastor: Steve Speer.
- First Baptist Church, Winnfield: **Easter Egg Hunt**, April 20, 10 a.m. **Easter Sunrise Service**, April 21, 7 a.m. Both community events will be held at Earl K. Long Park sponsored by Winn Ministerial Alliance. Pastor: Steven Smithson.
- Bellevue Road Baptist Church, Haughton: **Easter Sunday**, April 21. Come worship with us in spirit and truth as we celebrate the Lord’s Passover as in Exodus 12:11. Pastor: McKinley Bascoe.
- Alto Baptist Church, Alto: **Easter Sunrise Service**, April 21, 7 a.m. Breakfast fellowship, April 21, 7:30 a.m. and Easter Cantata, April 21, 10:30 a.m. Music Minister: Jay Ellerman. Pastor: Alan Miller.
- New Hope Baptist Church, Athens: **Special Easter Services**, April 21, 11 a.m. dinner on the grounds, will follow morning services. There will be an Easter Egg hunt and plenty of events to follow. Pastor: Eddie Balance.
- Olivet Baptist Church, Sulphur: **Francis LaRocque in concert**, April 21, 10 a.m. Pastor: Ronnie Burke.
- **East St. Mary Ministerial Alliance, Morgan City: Easter Sunrise Service**, April 21, 7 a.m., at Lawrence Park, Morgan City. Please bring your own lawn chair.
- Bayou Vista Baptist Church, Morgan City: **Easter Service**, April 21, 7 a.m. (sunrise service) and 11 a.m. (morning worship). Pastor: Steven Kelly.
- First Baptist Church, Ruston: Easter Egg hunt, April 20, 10 a.m.- 1 p.m. The Easter Egg hunt will take place at Greenwood Park in Ruston; Easter services, April 21, 9 and 11 a.m. with no Connection Groups. Pastor: Chris Craig.
- First Baptist Church, Hornbeck: **Easter services**, April 21, 11 a.m. Pastor: Jack Bell.
- Family of Grace, Alexandria: **Easter services**, April 21, 10 a.m. (North Campus); 11 a.m. (South Campus). Pastor: Brad Webb.

- First Baptist Church, Zwolle: **Easter Sunrise Service**, April 21, 6:45 a.m.; Worship service, 10:30 a.m. Pastor: Marty Williams.
- Calvary Baptist Church, Slidell: Easter service, April 21, 11 a.m. Pastor: Aaron McGuffee.
- Rocky Springs Baptist Church, Homer: **Easter Services**, April 21, 8 a.m. Easter Services will begin with an early morning Worship Service and Children’s Church. Children need to bring their Easter baskets to Children’s Church. After services, there will be a fellowship breakfast. Bring your favorite breakfast finger-food. Morning Bible studies will begin at 9:30 a.m. with dismissal thereafter. Pastor: Larry Sellers.
- **Northeast Baptist School 9th Annual Golf Tournament**, April 22 at Calvert Crossing. It will be 4-man scramble. Cost: \$100 per person. Registration, 7:30 a.m.; shotgun start, 8 a.m., or registration /lunch at noon with shotgun start at 1 p.m. Registration forms available at the Northeast Louisiana Baptist Association Center, the School, or online at www.nelba.net. For more information call the school at 318.325.2077 or log onto www.nbs.school
- First Baptist Church, Haughton: **Praise Jesus Outdoors two man team bass tournament**, April 26-27, Friday, registration banquet, 6:30 p.m. in the Family Life Center. Guest Speaker: Pro Fisherman Nick LeBrun. Winning team will receive \$500 and big bass will win \$250. Pastor: Gevan Spinney.

IN REMEMBRANCE

- **B. Gray Allison**, 94, of Arlington, Tennessee went to be with the Lord on February 12, 2019. Born in Ida, Louisiana on May 7, 1924, Allison made a profession of faith at age 11 at First Baptist Church in Ida, his hometown. Seven years later, he sensed a call to preach at age 18. Nine years later, during World War II, he served as a B-24 bomber pilot in in the Pacific. He married his wife Voncille in 1946, earned an undergraduate degree at Louisiana Tech and initially was an insurance salesman until entering New Orleans Seminary, where he earned a divinity degree in

See NOTABLES, page 11

Scripture Crypto

The Scripture Crypto is a Bible verse in which one letter has been substituted for another, thus encoding the verse. To find out what the verse is, you must determine what each letter is a substitute for. An “a,” for example, may stand for a “t” in this week’s issue of the ScriptureCrypto. Next week, “a” could stand for a “d.” Each week, each letter is different. Solve by trial and error. The answer will be given next week. Note: All numerals, such as those in the scripture reference after the verse, are spelled out.

zorb t eosx eras ck gdsri, rxi ck qresd, rxi ck

mbszo eore t orps atbbsi myd ck zosrdsdz, rxi ntps te

fxey csx, qoyc t axyq xye qosxhs eosk gs?

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Clues:
Z = S; T = I

Answer to March 28 Scripture Crypto:
Obadiah twenty-one



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should be mailed to Fellowship Baptist Church, 487
Fellowship Rd., Trout, LA 71371, C/O Mrs. Joy Bond.



Minister of Worship and Families

Ebenezer Baptist Church of Jonesboro, LA is currently seeking God's person to serve
in the role of full time Minister of Worship and Families. The ideal person would have
proficiency in music as well as experience directing a choir, including special events,
leading worship, teaching/ministering to families, and other ministry experience.
Some Theological education is preferred but not required.


Email résumés to: office@ebcchurch.com
Mail-in résumés to: Ebenezer Baptist Church
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Sign up now for the annual Brazil mission trip

By Brian Blackwell
Message Staff Writer

MONTES CLAROS, Brazil – David Denton is urging Louisiana Baptists to join the annual summer mission trip to Brazil for a chance to experience a life-changing opportunity and the ability to impact an area that is open and receptive to the Gospel, Denton told the *Baptist Message*.

Last year, 120 participants led thousands to the Lord.

Denton, senior pastor of Highland Baptist Church in New Iberia, served as co-director last year with his father-in-law and retired Louisiana Baptist evangelism and church growth director Wayne Jenkins, who passed away Nov. 13 after leading 34

trips there.

“Wayne Jenkins had a heart for the Brazilian people and led others to see how important volunteer missions are to the Great Commission,” Denton said. “The trip this year will honor his legacy as well as fulfill our divine mandate to make disciples. This one trip that is ready made for those who want to be involved in going to the furthest corners of the earth.”

The team will leave for Brazil July 5 and return July 16 -- or July 18 if volunteers elect to stay two more days for an excursion.

Most of the team's work will take place in Montes Claros, a city of 394,000 people in the northern part of the state of Minas Gerais.

The team will evangelize on the streets and through sports clinics, church revivals, Vacation Bible Schools, medical/dental clinics and drama performances, as well as construct churches.

Denton said there are pressing needs for a physician, construction workers and youth to be part of a drama team.

He also invited pastors to sign up.

The cost of the trip is \$2,350, or \$2,650 for the extended stay, and covers housing, meals, airfare, daily transportation, airport transfers, insurance, tips and team t-shirts.

Visas no longer are needed.

“We are looking forward to working with our friends in Brazilian Baptist churches to help them reach their communities,” Denton said. “Without fail these trips are always showcases for God to put his miraculous grace and



Members of a Louisiana Baptist-led mission team to Brazil, shared encouraging words to children in 2018. The team will return in mid-July for the annual trip.

mercy on display. This year will be no exception.”

For more information on serving in Brazil, call 337-359-7689, or email den-

ton@hbcni.org. The deadline for sign up is April 15, and a \$300 non-refundable deposit is due as soon as possible.

Notables from page 9

1952 and a doctorate in theology in 1954. After three-plus years in church ministry, serving congregations in Hilly, Sharon and Ruston, La., he joined the NOBTS faculty, where he taught until 1966 when he was named associate director of the Home Mission Board's evangelism division, with a special focus on reaching college students. He had an evangelistic ministry from 1960-1966 and 1967-1972, leading evangelistic meetings in Latin America, Asia, Africa, Europe, Australia and New Zealand, until he began Mid-America Seminary. In August, 1972, Gray founded Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Memphis. The seminary's focus was, and continues to be, personal evangelism and worldwide missions. Gray retired as President of Mid-America in 1997. However, he continued to serve as a Professor of Evangelism there through the fall of 2017, when he was 93 years old. Allison is survived by his wife Voncille of 72 ½ years; three children, daughter, Suzanne Grigsby (Charlie), of Arlington, TN; daughter, Charlotte Miller (Rama), of Maumelle, AR; son, Gray M. Allison (Anita), of Collierville, TN; 6 grandchildren and their spouses; 12 great-grandchildren and another on the way; brother, James Allison; sister-in-law Margaret Allison; very special nieces and nephews; and a large host of extended family members and friends.

■ **Nicky Rese Peters**, 71, passed away March 22, 2019 at his residence in Lafayette. Nicky and his twin brother Rick were born December 16, 1947 in DeFuniak, FL to John Carter Peters and the former Lois Davis. He was an Air Force veteran, having joined with his brother Rick on the buddy system. They served during the Vietnam War, stationed in different locations. Licensed to preach in December of 1978, he served as pastor of First Baptist Church, Carencro for 32 years. He served on Executive Board of Louisiana Baptist Convention in 1992. He was employed as a welder/steel erector in the Oil and Gas industry, and worked with Ron Randolph Oilfield Valve Service and Supply for 20 years. Survivors include his devoted wife of 48 years, Glyndia Ann Trahan Peters of Lafayette; one son, Toby Tyler Peters of Broussard; one daughter, Lois Angelina Peters Goff and husband, Michael Shane, of Crowley; five grandchildren, Christana Dane Goff, Rese Cassidy Goff, William Casey Goff, Alicia Tayler Peters and Christian Tyler Peters; two brothers, twin Ricky John “Rick” Peters and wife, Marilyn, of Carryville, FL, Preacher Mark Kimbel Peters of Goodlettsville, TN; and two sisters, Sharon Desiree Peters and Lisa Angela Peters Holcomb, both of Crestview, FL. He was preceded in death by his parents, John Carter Peters and Lois Jeanette Davis Peters; and one grandson, Michael Alexander Goff.

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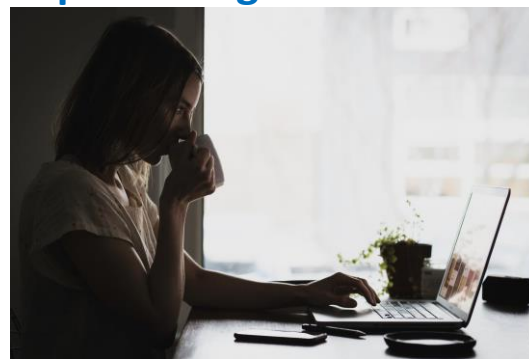
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Roughneck's heart softened by encounter with God

By Brian Blackwell
Message Staff Writer

WATERPROOF – Larry Walters ran from God most of his young adult life, until an encounter with God during a revival service at Hill Ridge Baptist Church in Crowville brought the 35-year-old “roughneck” under conviction for repentance, and planted the seed for a call to ministry.

“The week of revival at Hill Ridge Baptist Church I had completed a 12-hour shift as a worker in the oil field and came home to find the pastor and the evangelist praying with my daughter, Melanie, moments after she accepted Christ,” said Walters, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Waterproof since 2012.

The home visit made a

profound impact on him, he shared, explaining that he attended the revival the following night and “fell under conviction to ask Jesus into my heart.”

“At the last night of revival the pastor asked if there was anyone who wanted to say anything,” said Walters, who was honored during the 2018 Louisiana Baptist Convention Annual Meeting as an Exemplary Bi-vocational Pastor of the Year. “I couldn’t not proclaim to everyone what God had done. I knew He changed my life and I surrendered to whatever He wanted.”

When Walters returned to the oil field, he boldly proclaimed Christ as his Savior despite the ridicule of co-workers, and the Holy Spirit eventually convicted some of

them to follow Christ.

Within a year, Walters began teaching a Bible study on the same drilling rig.

He also sensed the call to ministry during a revival at Crockett Point Baptist Church in Crowville.

Pastor Joe Senn, who died in May 2016, helped connect Walters with churches that needed a pastor to fill in periodically on Sundays.

One of those congregations, Faith Temple in Delhi, asked him to serve as their pastor.

Walters initially declined because the church was not Southern Baptist, but the congregation insisted he come on board and changed its denominational affiliation and chose a new name, Unity Baptist Church.

Six years later, after

a brief move back to Crockett Point Baptist to teach a Sunday school class, Walters learned First Baptist Waterproof needed someone to teach a six-week Bible study on solemn assembly.

At the end of the 2012 study, the church asked if he would serve as their pastor.

“We prayed about it and they voted me in,” Walters said. “That church has been a blessing to us. They show God’s love to my family and to others. I’m thankful to have a church like them to pastor.”

The church, which averages 40-50 people for Sunday morning worship services, is a predominantly rural congregation.

Most members do not live in Waterproof and drive 10-25 miles to at-

tend and to take part in ministry efforts like Vacation Bible School and to volunteer at the Ferri-day Storefront Mission, a ministry of Delta Baptist Association.

Walters also has a new line of work outside of ministry, serving as branch manager for a building inspection company with responsibilities in 14 jurisdictions in Louisiana.

“It’s a busy life for sure,” he said. “There are a lot of times you spend all night in the emergency room and then get up with just a small amount of sleep to go to your secular job. Sometimes that gets overwhelming, but God is always faithful to give us grace to do that. It’s about Him, and not about us, and our service to Him. That’s reward enough.”

THE SUM OF THE SOME

Sticker shock

I’m sure you’ve experienced it on many occasions:

You need just a few things from the store. You grab a cart and mysteriously you find yourself with lots of stuff that you didn’t have on the list and your bill equals a car payment!

You buy that new truck and the reality of the payment sets in. You’ve got another mortgage for the next 5-8 years!

You lower your thermostat in July, then the bill arrives in the early part of August.

Ouch!

There is a thread of truth in the old adage, “**It all adds up!**”

On one occasion as Jesus was addressing those who gathered around him, He said, “A farmer went out to plant his seed. While he was planting, **some** seed fell

by the road, and the birds came and ate it all up. **Some** seed fell on rocky ground, where there wasn’t much dirt.

That seed grew very fast, because the ground was not deep. But when the sun rose, the plants dried up, because they did not have deep roots. **Some** other seed fell among thorny weeds, which grew and choked the good plants. **Some** other seed fell on good ground where it grew and produced a crop. **Some** plants made a hundred times more, **some** made sixty times more, and **some** made thirty times more.”

Mt 13:3-8, NCV.

The truth of this parable remains. **Little things, over time, produce big results.** I call this the “**sum**” of the “**some**.”

Wherever your feet take you today, you have the opportunity to scatter seeds. **Some** will make no difference. They simply bounce off the soil and lie there unnoticed. **Some** appear to take root only to quickly die. **Some** start showing potential only to be choked by the distractions of life. But **some**, just **some**, land in good soil that has been



Nothing happens until the seed is planted:
“A man scatters seed on the ground”

waiting for the right seed to be scattered at just the right time. These seeds spout roots, break through the soil and become visible for all to see.

The “**sum**” of the “**some**” has great potential – even up to a hundred times more than what was scattered.

Louisiana Baptists are scattering seeds through our multi-media evangelism strategy, **Here For You**. These are not church seeds (“Come to our building.”) They are not moral seeds (“You need to be a better person.”). These are seeds of God’s truth that have the potential to change lives here and hereafter.

They are seeds that lead to true freedom (John 8:32).

You can scatter this life-changing seed.

You don’t need a seminary degree. You don’t have

to be a public speaker or an extrovert. Simply go to **HereForYou.org** and share the **Here For You** spots using your preferred social media platform.

Every time you do, you are scattering “**some**” seeds of God’s truth with those who view your posts.

It all begins when “**some**” people take a moment to scatter “**some**” seeds of truth.

Will you scatter **some** seeds with us? It could change thousands of lives for eternity.



Goals of **HERE FOR YOU**

- Infiltrate and influence the culture
- Create opportunities for spiritual discussions
- Motivate those receiving the message to check out the Gospel and local Louisiana Baptist churches

For more information on how you can connect with **Here For You**, visit **LouisianaBaptists.org/h4u** and enter the password: **luke1423**