



THE BAPTIST MESSAGE

August 26, 2021

Volume 136 • Issue No. 9

John 3:16

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Countdown to September's state missions offering

By Brian Blackwell

Message staff writer

ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM) – Louisiana Baptists are passionate about missions in North America and around the world, but this fall they will be encouraged to look closer to home for ways to advance the Gospel, according to state leaders.

Taken from Mark 1:38, which records Jesus reminding his followers,

"We must go to the nearby towns, so that I can tell the good news to those people," this year's giving theme is "Nearby – the needs next door."

Louisiana Baptist Executive Director Steve Horn noted this is an important focus.

"One of the commitments I made to Louisiana Baptists when I accepted this position was that Louisiana will be evangelized," Horn said.

"Our participation in the Georgia Barnette State Missions Offering plays a critical role in seeing this become a reality."

Some of the missions and ministries dependent upon the Georgia Barnette Offering are church planting; compassion ministries; prison outreach; ministry to victims of sex trafficking; Disaster Relief efforts;

See GBO, page 5



Bridges to be LBC president nominee

By Will Hall

Message executive editor

ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM) – Reggie Bridges, pastor of the Temple Baptist Church in Ruston, will be nominated for president of the Louisiana Baptist Convention during the



Bridges

2021 annual meeting.

Eddie Wren, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Rayville and a past LBC president, alerted the *Baptist Message*, August 18, of his intentions to make the nomination, specifically highlighting Bridges's "heart for evangelism."

The LBC annual meeting is scheduled to be held Nov. 16 in the North Monroe Baptist Church.

See BRIDGES, page 18



Submitted photo

A student group spent the week working on homes in June as part of World Changers in the Lake Charles area. Carey Baptist Association's Associational Ministry Strategist Bruce Baker estimates more than 5,000 volunteers worked in the area in the months following Hurricane Laura's landfall.

One year later, SWLA Baptists battle back

By Brian Blackwell

Message staff writer

LAKE CHARLES, La. (LBM) – Three hurricanes dealt Louisiana a vicious blow in 2020, but despite

the destruction and emotional toll the storms left behind, Louisiana Baptists showed their resiliency in fighting back from historic weather events, Carey Baptist Association associational ministry strategist Bruce Baker said.

"Churches are committed to their Gospel mission. They want to do Kingdom work. That's been very, very positive in this whole rebuilding process" Baker told the *Baptist Message*.

"There's a strong communi-

ty aspect among the people impacted by the storm," he continued. "They want to be together. They want to be with one another in what has been a shared hardship. They are there to encourage one another in what has been a difficult time but also a time in which we have come together to move forward and build a better Louisiana."

Laura made landfall Aug. 27 as a Category 4 hurricane (150 mph winds)

in Cameron. Then, on Oct. 9, Delta crashed ashore as a Category 2 storm (100 mph winds) in Creole, nearly 13 miles east of Cameron. And on Oct. 28, Zeta made landfall near Cocodrie as a Category 3 hurricane (110 mph winds).

Louisiana Insurance Commissioner Jim Donelon reported in a news release that 175,610 claims totaling \$10 billion were filed from Laura, 86,043 claims totaling \$870 million were

See STORM, page 14

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LORI ARDOIN & PAUL D. STEWART

GBO helps Bethel Metropolitan to reach others one meal at a time

By Brian Blackwell
Message staff writer

LAKE CHARLES, La. (LBM) – Each Saturday morning, Bethel Metropolitan Baptist Fellowship Church's parking lot is transformed into a massive feeding operation where up to 150 Lake Charles area

motorists line up to receive a boxed meal, some as early as three hours before the official start.

Since opening the parking lot ministry in September to serve individuals impacted by Hurricane Laura, the church whose worship attendance averages 15 members, has seen God

move mightily, according to church pastor. Their efforts to show Christ's love has encouraged many food recipients and even has led to 20 professions of faith.

"The church is in worship on Sunday but on Saturday the church is working," Pastor Clyde Lewis told the *Baptist Message*. "You see the cars line up around the building and block and it just fires me up."

"The thing I keep pushing to my members is this is our assignment," he continued. "We are called to the people's business. People matter to God so people have to matter to us. You can't do it unless they are your passion. When you talk about people, it's all people. Jesus has called us to love all people. You get a chance to minister to people not just by telling them about Christ but through your actions."

Lewis, who has been pastor of Bethel Metropolitan Baptist for 10 years, said his members have embraced a call to reach others with the Gospel. They distribute food to the homeless each month, host gatherings for the

See BETHEL, page 19



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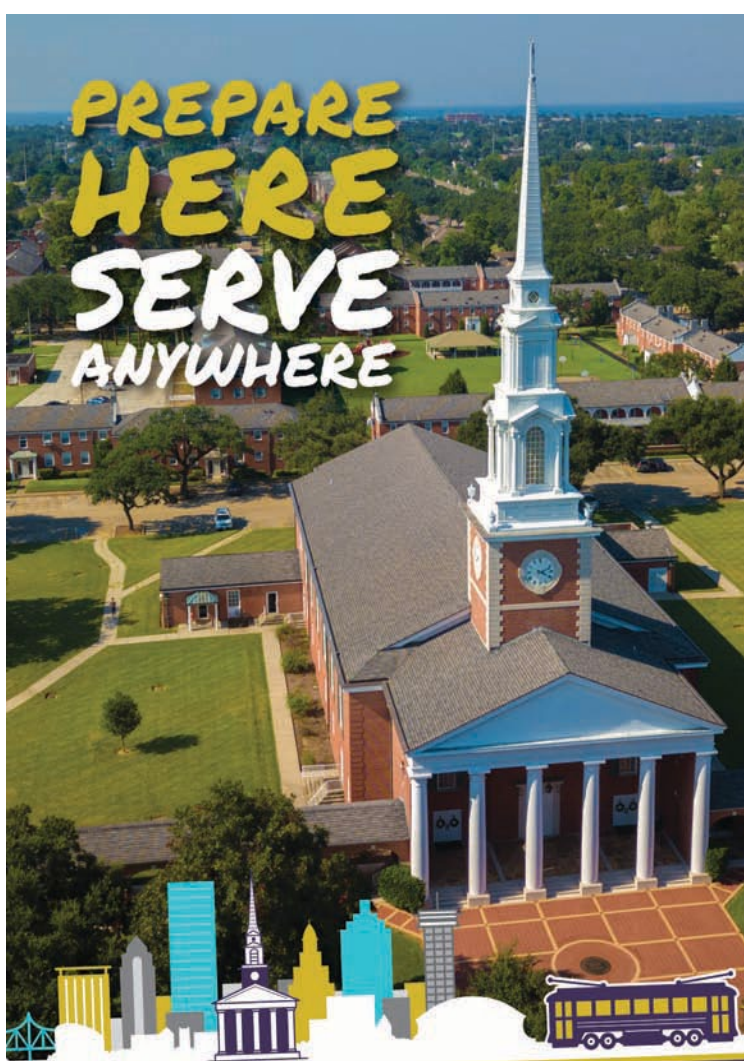



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(USPS 042-860) (ISSN 0740-2104)

Published biweekly Thursdays by the Louisiana Baptist Message, 1250 MacArthur Drive, Alexandria, Louisiana 71303.

Volume 136 August 26, 2021 Number 9

McMillan 'healed in Heaven'

Former LBC DR head passes after COVID-19 battle

By Brian Blackwell
Message staff writer

ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM) – Gibbie McMillan, who served at the forefront of Louisiana Baptists' disaster relief responses and men's ministries for 15 years, died Tuesday, Aug. 17. He was 68.

McMillan, who retired April 30 as a strategist in these two areas with the Louisiana Baptist Convention, was remembered by those closest to him as a warrior in the faith who had a passion to see others come to Christ and grow deeper in their spiritual walks.

In a joint statement

on McMillan's Facebook page, his wife, Katera, and two children, Rachel and Rebekah, expressed appreciation for the prayers and support they had received during McMillan's extended hospitalization with COVID-19:

"To God be the glory! On August 17, 2021, at 1:49 p.m. Gibbie McMillan went to be with the Lord! We do not grieve without hope knowing that because of his salvation through Jesus Christ he will spend eternity in heaven.

"Many of you have been so faithful to pray for healing and comfort. We so appreciate those prayers and know they have been answered! The Lord saw fit in His perfect will to heal Gibbie in Heaven rather than here on earth."

'WELL DONE'

Louisiana Baptist Exec-

utive Director Steve Horn echoed the thought.

"Our hearts are broken at the passing of our brother in Christ, Gibbie McMillan," Horn told the *Baptist Message*. "We were talking in the office this morning of how Gibbie never 'got over' being saved. He rejoiced daily in his salvation the way all of us should. We mourn his passing, we are heartbroken for his wife, Katera, and his other family members, but rejoice that God saved Gibbie and that he now spends all of eternity worshipping at the feet of Jesus.

Louisiana Baptist missions and ministries team director John Hebert said McMillan had a pastor's heart who cared about others, especially those in a disaster.

"He was not just a co-worker, but he was a real friend to me and to all of the missions team person-



Submitted photo

Gibbie McMillan, who retired April 30 as Louisiana Baptist men's ministry and disaster relief strategist, was remembered by those closest to him as a warrior in the faith who had a passion to see others come to Christ and grow deeper in their spiritual walk.

nel," Hebert said. "Gibbie loved the Lord Jesus and had a tremendous testimony of what the Lord did in His life. He loved to see people have that same expe-

rience. I'm not only going to miss him as a co-worker and a friend but as a fellow servant in the Gospel."

See MCMILLAN, page 8



**LOUISIANA
BAPTIST
FOUNDATION**

The Louisiana Baptist Foundation is pleased to publish its Summary of Financial Position for the year 2020. The Foundation presents this statement annually in the *Louisiana Baptist Message* for public review.

The financial statement presented was prepared from the books and records of the Louisiana Baptist Foundation. A copy of the audit report for the calendar year that ended December 31, 2020, issued by independent certified public accountants can be reviewed upon request and is available at the office of the Louisiana Baptist Foundation.

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"In our opinion, the financial statements... present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Louisiana Baptist Foundation as of December 31, 2020..., and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America."

from the 2020 Independent Auditor's Report dated July 21, 2021, prepared by Payne, Moore and Herrington, LLP, Certified Public Accountants; presented to the Louisiana Baptist Foundation Trustees, July 27, 2021.

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Summary of Financial Position - December 31, 2020

Endowments - Agent:
\$88,174,447

Endowments - Trusts:
\$35,399,837

Donor Advised Funds:
\$2,081,630

Other Assets:
\$1,852,061

Short Term Fund:
\$60,427,048

Due to Endowments - Agent:
\$88,174,447

Due to Short Term Fund:
\$59,279,792

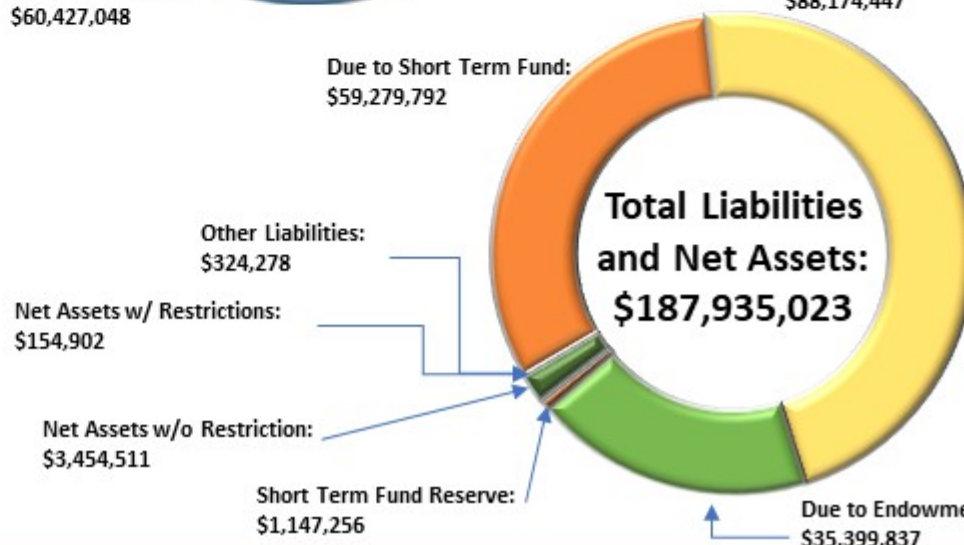
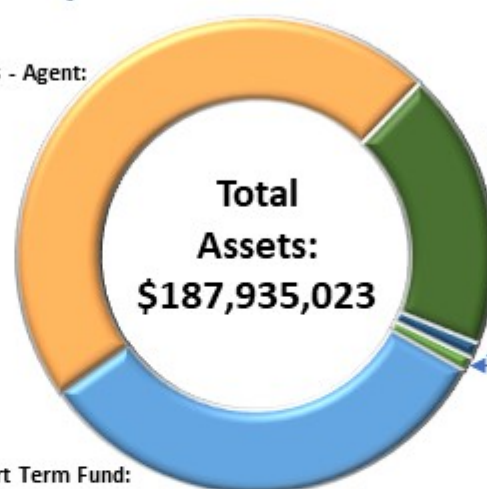
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\$3,454,511

Short Term Fund Reserve:
\$1,147,256

Due to Endowments - Trust:
\$35,399,837



LC welcomes largest freshman class in school history

By Staff

Baptist Message

PINEVILLE, La. (LBM) – Louisiana College rolled out the welcome mat Aug. 12 for the largest incoming class in the institution's 115-year history, 350 freshmen.

Upperclassmen and faculty members assisted the freshmen as they moved into various dormitories on campus.

Local churches and businesses also were on hand for a block party on the campus lawn during Move-in Day.

"I am so grateful for the favor of the Lord on Louisiana College," LC President Rick Brewer said. "All our faculty, staff and I enjoyed helping our freshman get on campus and meet our new Wildcats and welcome back our returning ones. It's going to be a



Students filed into an on-campus dormitory during Louisiana College's Move-in Day, Aug. 12. The event drew the largest incoming freshman class in the school's 115-year history.

blessed year."

Brewer also said he was excited to welcome 41 international students among the large freshman class who arrived on campus.

"The most important

thing is that families, parents, pastors and others are realizing the value of Christian education as a college that looks and interprets culture through the lens of scripture instead of interpreting the



Submitted photo

Louisiana College students enthusiastically waited at the entrance of campus to greet students who moved in for the 2021 fall semester. School officials reported 350 freshmen were registered for classes.

scripture through the lens of culture," Brewer told the *Baptist Message*.

Michelle Iroh, a freshman from Saskatchewan, Canada, was excited about suiting up for the school's volleyball team and getting

accustomed to life in the United States.

"I can't wait to meet all the new people and experience Louisiana's culture," Iroh said. "Everyone seems so welcoming and ready to

See **FRESHMAN**, page 5



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President, Gateway Seminary





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GBO from page one

Louisiana Baptists' multi-media outreach strategy, "Here for You"; and Woman's Missionary Union Scholarships to Louisiana College.

"It can be easy to overlook local issues like homelessness and poverty, and that our home churches need encouragement," explained Louisiana Baptist Women's Missions and Ministry Strategist Janie Wise. "We thought

it was important to emphasize compassion to those who live near us who have physical and spiritual needs."

Sept. 12-19 has been set aside as the Week of Prayer for state missions and ministries. Resources, including videos demonstrating the scope and impact of the Georgia Barnette Offering have been mailed to churches across the state. Additional re-

sources are available online at www.GeorgiaBarnette.org. This year's offering goal is \$1.7 million.

"We know we can reach this goal, and even exceed it" Wise said. "The Week of Prayer helps to spread awareness and calls us to the need to give as part of Christ's mission. We believe it's a worthy challenge and we believe our churches can do that through praying, giving, and going to share Christ with others throughout Louisiana. The more we do

together, the stronger we are to reach this state for Christ."

Wise noted that Louisiana Baptists have a biblical responsibility to these local missions and ministries around Louisiana.

"It ought to overwhelm us half our state is not reached for Christ," Wise added.

Even though the week

of prayer for the Georgia Barnette State Missions Offering is a month away, churches are encouraged to begin promoting it now. Online promotional pieces can be accessed at www.GeorgiaBarnette.org. Once there, users can access videos of churches and ministries featured for each

See GBO, page 19

Freshman from page 4

start what we hope will be a great year."

Brewer said Move-in Day was particularly special for Gage Dowling, the new director of residence life and student engagement at the school.

"With this being one of the largest classes in LC's history; that means it will be more fun than ever," Dowling said. "You can see how excited students are as they arrived on campus."

Ariel Webster, a senior from Lafayette, is starting her second year as a Wildcat Navigator.

"When I first came to LC, I didn't know anyone and on Move-In Day my parents were in a rush to get back home so I was left alone in a completely new place, and scared," Webster said. "The reason I love being a Navigator and being able to be there for them for anything that they need is so that no one has to feel that way, and I want them to know that from the very beginning of their new journey that I am there for them."

"I got the joy of meeting a lot of new faces here on campus and making their transition from home to college as smooth as possible in any way that I can. From guiding them around campus, answering and helping them with any questions they may have, to making friends and having fun teaching them about LC."

She said Move-in Day was fun but Welcome Weekend will be a blast – but it is just a beginning for the incoming freshmen.

Move-in Day kicked off Welcome Week, which

was a time of orientation and numerous activities that included a service project and "The Awak-

ening" revival featuring evangelist Curtis Zackery. Classes for the fall semester, which began Aug. 16.

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NLBA offers temporary shelter for those seeking a permanent home

By Brian Blackwell
Message staff writer

SHREVEPORT, La. (LBM) – David Shelton was left homeless after a fire destroyed his Shreveport condominium, April 21, but within a few hours God provided new accommodations at the recently opened Northwest Louisiana Baptist Association temporary living facility.

Since then, Shelton has felt the love of Christ at his one-bedroom apartment and been reminded of a hope for the future.

“I am now in the midst of Matthew 25:40, which says ‘and the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me,’” Shelton said. “I praise God for the love and compassion shown to me during this time.”

Shelton’s story is like so many other residents who are grateful for the opportunity to stay at the center.

The vision for Masada Transitional Living Center was cast in 2016 after Western Hills Baptist Church Pastor Joey Ketchum indicated an interest in opening the facility on his church property. After discussions with associational leadership, renovations to the building were begun a year later.

Much of the \$350,000 needed to renovate the facility was funded through the sale of Hosston Baptist Church, whose members in 2017 donated the property to the association after deciding to close their doors because of the death of their pastor and declining attendance. A section of the facility, Hosston Hall, is designated to remember the gesture of the members.

“We had just \$50,000 to

complete such a big project and we prayed God would provide the rest,” associational compassion ministry strategist John Anderson told the Baptist Message.

“Sure enough, Hosston Baptist Church’s members contacted us with an interest to make the best use of their property and once an Assemblies of God church in Vivian purchased the facility, we were able to use that money to complete the project. It was a God thing, and we are so thankful those members from Hosston had the foresight to do look to the future.”

The facility opened in January and hired area resident Faith Washington to serve as house manager. She helped welcome the residents from Fairfield, Shelton’s former residence, after the condominium complex’s manager contacted the association to



Submitted photo

Northwest Louisiana Baptist Association’s Masada Transitional Living Center in Shreveport opened its doors in January.

See TEMPORARY, page 7



Mission: Dignity



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First Houma credits prayer for wave of baptisms

By **Brian Blackwell**
Message staff writer

HOUMA, La. (LBM) – Pastor Steve Folmar baptized at least one new convert during Sunday morning worship services from March 7-June 6 at the First Baptist Church, Houma, and 76 collectively since January. If that pace continues the church will record the most baptisms in a year since Folmar became pastor in 1999, when he baptized 89 new believers.

“This was unexpected, and we had no clue this was coming,” Folmar told the Baptist Message. “After five to six weeks we began to sense God was up to

something unique.

“Our people are loving what God is doing every Sunday with the baptisms,” he continued. “They are excited and come ready to applaud every time someone is baptized.”

Ashley Golmon is among those who has shared her testimony through baptism. Golmon first attended worship services at First Baptist Houma in 2014 with her husband, Shane, and for the next seven years many at the church poured into her spiritual truths and on April 18 she finally surren-

dered her life to Christ.

Two weeks later, she stirred the baptismary waters.

“Over the years I have felt like I needed to do more, and it was an inner struggle because I was raised in the Catholic Church,” she said. “I finally broke down and said I needed to stop being so stubborn by putting up this wall. I gave it to God and experienced the most amazing peace.”

Folmar attributes the baptisms to a dedicated prayer effort.

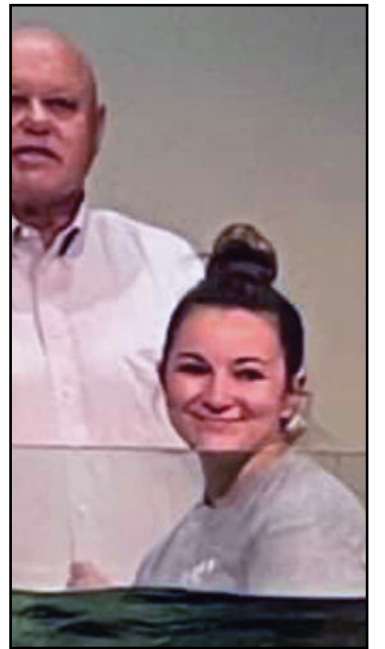
The church resumed in-person services in June

2020 following 14-weeks without gathering inside the facility because of COVID-19 restrictions. At that time, the staff met and entered into a season of prayer that has continued into 2021.

Meanwhile, Folmar has challenged the members since January to surrender themselves to God and has encouraged them to allow Christ to mold each of them in the way He desires.

“We are seeing a movement of God among our people,” he said. “I can’t

See **WAVE**, page 8



Submitted photo

Pastor Steve Folmar baptized Ashley Golmon during a May worship service at First Baptist Church in Houma.

Temporary

from page 6

share about the need to house some of the displaced residents.

Anderson said three people from Fairfield, and eight others, have lived at MTLA since late April. The residence has 19 rooms (eight for single men, eight for single women and three for families), a dining room and a gathering area; and rent is just \$80 a week to help residents save money for a future beyond their temporary stay.

Area churches have delivered some meals to the residents, who are unable to cook because the center is not equipped with a full-service kitchen. Bible studies also are held inside the facility.

NWLBA Director of Missions Lane Moore added that the association's churches have responded well to the ongoing needs of this special ministry.

“Occasionally, the association office will receive a call from a pastor looking for a place to help a church member who needs a short-term place to live,” he said. “They’re not destitute and may have a job. They’ve probably made a few bad decisions and Masada is safe and affordable place to land for a few weeks or months.”

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McMillan from page 3

Stan Statham, who replaced McMillan as Louisiana Baptist men's ministry and disaster relief strategist, May 1, said McMillan was a mentor who helped prepare him for assuming these roles.

"Gibbie cared greatly for people who were suffering," Statham said. "One of his gifts was mentoring younger DR volunteers and seeing them grow. I wouldn't be where I am today with-

out Gibbie. He invested in me for many years and not just in DR work. He loved the Lord, loved the Church and loved to see people served. He literally touched thousands of people, including a lot of DR people."

GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT

A native of Kentwood, McMillan became a Christian when he was 20 years old and, shortly afterward felt a call to ministry. He pastored churches in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas during the next 28 years, and he also served for three years as a prison chaplain with the Louisiana Department of Corrections.

Before joining the Louisiana Baptist missions and ministry team, McMillan served with the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention in minister-church relations and led that state convention's hurricane recovery ministry to churches and pastors after Hurricane Rita devastated portions of southeast Texas in 2005.

While in Louisiana, McMillan coordinated 48 responses in the state during his 15-year tenure with Louisiana Baptists. Those responses included twin flooding disasters in 2016 that left north Louisiana under more than 3 feet of rain (March) and 31 inches of rain over a two-day period in south Louisiana (August); Hurricanes Delta, Laura and Zeta (2020); and multiple tornadoes throughout the years.

Outside the state, McMillan was involved with multiple disaster recovery efforts, such as rebuilding St. Matthews Baptist Church in the Bahamas that was flattened by Hurricane Dorian in 2019.

McMillan, in 2018, reorganized LBDR into seven zones to allow for a more organized disaster response.

McMillan also supervised the state's Royal Ambassadors program, a Southern Baptist mission education organization for boys in grades 1-6. In the year prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Louisiana Baptists formed 21 new RA chapters, placing it among the fastest growing state RA programs in the SBC.

Most recently, McMillan was pastor of Taylor Creek Baptist Church in Kentwood.

Family and friends remembered McMillan's Kingdom impact at a service Saturday, Aug. 21, at New Zion Baptist Church in Kentwood.

In lieu of flowers, McMillan's family requested donations be sent to the Louisiana Baptist Disaster Relief at <https://louisianabaptists.org/mis.../disaster-relief/donate/>.

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Wave from page 7

explain it other than this is just a God thing.

"The spirit of our church is incredibly sweet," he continued. "Our

prayer each week as a staff and congregation has been 'Lord do what it is you desire to do.' I believe He is honoring that."

Folmar said his congregation has rediscovered their love for Christ and each other since the onset of the pandemic. He said giving has remained at a high level and attendance has approached the pre-March 2020 levels of 1,200, as they drew 1,174 for their June 6 service.

"I was reading the blogs and following the so-called gurus who predicted doom and gloom for churches when the shutdowns first happened and you couldn't help but get depressed," Folmar said. "However, we have not seen any of those predictions come true here. Our people realized during the shutdown how important their church family was to them."





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LBC seeks resolutions, nominees for committees, boards

By Staff
Baptist Message

ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM) — Louisiana Baptists are invited to recommend candidates to serve on state convention boards and committees, and, are asked to submit resolutions for possible consideration by messengers at the 2021 Louisiana Baptist Convention.

COMMITTEES

The Louisiana Baptist Committee on Committees will be conducting its work early this fall to fill 17 openings on five state convention committees: Credentials; Moral and Social Concerns; Nominations; Order of Business; and Resolutions.

Nominations should be sent not later than Aug. 17 to Jake Roudkowski, a member of First Baptist Church, Mandeville, who is the Committee on Committees chair. Please forward your recommendations via email, jaker@nobts.edu, or the U.S. Mail, Dr. Jake Roudkowski, 78689 Hwy. 25, Folsom, LA 70437.

BOARDS

The Louisiana Baptist Committee on Nominations will begin its work, also in early fall, to fill 22 vacancies on the LBC Executive Board as well as the trustee bodies of the Louisiana College, Louisiana Baptist Children's Home and Family Ministries, *Baptist Message*, and Baptist Foundation.

Nominations should be sent not later than Aug. 17 to Philip Robertson, the pastor of Philadelphia Baptist Church, Deville, with a second campus in Alexandria, who is the Committee on Nominations chair. Please forward your recommendations via email, pastor@pbcmistry.com, or the U.S. Mail, Dr. Philip Robertson, P.O. Box 4540, Pineville, LA 71361.

BOTH

Please submit the candidate's name and identify the committee or board for which you are nominating him or her; and include information about the nominee's church membership and current employment.

Not more than the pastor and two members from any church may serve on all boards and committees, combined, at any one time. Likewise, not more than one member of the same church may serve on the same board or committee, at any one time.

RESOLUTIONS

The first Committee on Resolutions meeting is scheduled for Sept. 7 and submissions are requested to be sent as early as possible for consideration. Resolutions may be submitted for review and consideration not more than 90 days and not fewer than 15 days prior to the LBC annual meeting, Nov. 16, providing a window of opportunity from Aug. 18 through Nov. 1.

All statements should be typewritten, titled, and dated, and, accompanied by a letter — from a church qualified to send a messenger to the annual meeting of the Louisiana Baptist Convention — certifying that the person submitting the resolution is a member in good standing. The letter should include complete contact information for both the person submitting it and his or her church.

No person may submit more than three resolutions per year.

Johnny Hoychick, a mem-

ber of First Baptist Church, Rayville, is the Committee on Resolutions chair. You may send proposed resolutions to the committee via fax, 318.449.4287, email, policy@

LouisianaBaptists.org, or U.S. Mail, ATTN: Resolutions Committee, LBC Office of Public Policy, P. O. Box 311, Alexandria, LA 71309.

If you desire assistance

with wording or formatting, please contact LBC Public Policy Director Will Hall by phone, 318.448.3402, or email, Policy@LouisianaBaptists.org.



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Bethel Metropolitan Baptist, Lake Charles

We must go to the nearby towns, so that I can tell the good news to those people.

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH in Choudrant, LA is seeking a **full-time pastor**. Please send resumes to Pastor Search Committee, P O Box 217, Choudrant, LA 71227 or email fbcchoudrant@gmail.com.

SEEKING A PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER
Goodwill Baptist Church in Oak Grove, LA is seeking a part-time youth minister. Please mail résumés to Goodwill Baptist Church, 1393 Hwy 2, Oak Grove, LA 71263. For more information call 318.428.2146.

Sandy Creek Baptist Church is seeking a **WORSHIP MINISTER**
REQUIREMENTS:
-Has a personal and growing relationship with Jesus Christ
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Email your résumé to sandycreekinfo@gmail.com

Seeking a full time STUDENT MINISTER

Houston River Baptists Church in Sulphur, La. Seeks a full time student minister
Send resumes to:
Email: HRBCStudentMINS@gmail.com
Mail: 110 W. Houston River Rd. Sulphur, La 70663

Description: Be an advocate for youth and young adults and educate the youth about the hopes, concerns and the needs of the youth in the church.

FULL-TIME PASTOR
Leesville First Baptist, Leesville, LA is seeking a full-time pastor. Please send résumés to: Roger Rolon 399 Liberty Creek Road, Leesville, LA 71446 or First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1568 Leesville, LA 71496

SEEKING LEAD PASTOR
Satsuma Baptist Church is seeking a lead pastor. Please send résumé to Satsuma Baptist Church Attn: Pastor Search Committee 29880 S. Satsuma Rd Livingston, LA 70754 or email psc@satsumabaptist.org

FULL-TIME PASTOR
First Baptist Church in Kilbourne is searching for a full-time pastor to shepherd its loving congregation in this rural village in Northeast Louisiana. He should possess the Biblical requirements (1 Timothy 3) of a pastor and lead our church as we strive to serve our community as a beacon for our God and our faith. Résumés should be sent to Brandon Smith, P O Box 126, Kilbourne, LA 71253 or can be emailed to brandonsmith@wcpsb.com.

SEEKING A FULL-TIME OR BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR
First Baptist Church in New Iberia, LA is seeking a bi-vocational or full-time pastor. Please mail résumés to Pastor Search Committee, 210 East St. Peter St., New Iberia, LA 70560 or email to atrainer@cox.net.

SEEKING A FULL-TIME OR BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR
Trinity Baptist Church in Oakdale, LA is seeking a bi-vocational or full-time pastor. Please send résumés to: Pastor Search Committee, P O Box 748, Oakdale, LA 71463.

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PASTOR OF YOUTH & FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP
First Baptist Church in St. Francisville, LA is seeking a full-time pastor of youth and family discipleship. Visit our website at www.fbcsla.com for a job description. Résumés can be sent to resume@fbcsla.com

SENIOR PASTOR
Eastwood Baptist Church in Houghton, LA is a growing congregation with a strong unified staff. We are looking for a full-time senior pastor. Our address is 2810 Hwy. 80, Houghton, LA 71037. Please email résumés to eastwoodsearch@outlook.com.

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Philadelphia Baptist Church, a growing church in central Louisiana with a proud past and a promising future, one church in two locations is currently searching for:

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- A fulltime Preschool/Children Ministry Director at our Alexandria campus. We are looking for a God called energetic person to lead our growing ministry with a heart for children and their parents.

We offer a competitive salary and excellent benefits. Interested applicants can check us out at pbcministry.com. If you wish to be considered, please email your résumé to Sissy Franks, Administrator, at sissy@pbcministry.com. Come join us as we seek to Love God, Love Each Other, and Show Others God's Love.

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Seeks a Full Time Worship Minister
Applicants must be capable of leading multiple styles of worship
SEND RESUMES TO:
Email: Search CommitteeHRBC2021@gmail.com
Mail: 110 W. Houston River Rd. Sulphur, LA 70663
Description: Work closely with the pastor in creating worship services and teams that help with the congregation (Planning weekly worship service, and recruiting musicians).

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATOR
Immanuel Baptist Church in Hammond, LA is seeking a part-time financial administrator. Position is for 25-30 hours per week. Ministry bookkeeping experience required. Knowledge of ACS is preferred. For further information about this position, please call 985.542.4057.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Do you have a Revival, Homecoming, a new pastor, a community outreach or a concert? The Baptist Message would love to share your church news with the rest of the state. It is very easy to do, just send in your information (who, what, where and when) to philip@baptistmessage.com or call 318.449.4345. To get your event in the paper, please submit your information three weeks prior to the event.

ON THE MOVE

- **Chris Stephens** is the new pastor at Rocky Springs Baptist Church, Lisbon.
- **Thomas Worsham** resigns as Louisiana College Baptist Collegiate Ministry campus director to become pastor of First Baptist Church Festus/Crystal City, Missouri.
- **Tony Carter** is installed as the new pastor of Unity 1 Baptist Church, Franklin.
- **Rusty Shuler** resigned to become pastor at Camden Baptist Church, South Carolina.
- **Michael Burkes** is the new pastor of Unity Baptist Church, DeRidder.
- **Jonathan Weldon** resigns from Ellerbe Baptist Church, Shreveport to become the youth minister at Georgetown Baptist Church, Texas.
- **Gary Sumrall** retires as chaplain after 30 years with the Louisiana Department of Corrections.
- **Eric Zimmer** is the interim pastor at South Bossier Baptist Church, Bossier City.
- **Peyton Speers** is the new youth minister at Unity Baptist Church, Deville.

REVIVAL

- Little Pass Baptist Church, Charenton: **Unity Revival**, August 29, 6 p.m. Speaker: **Steve Spurlin**, Pastor of First Baptist Church, Berwick. There will be

food and fellowship after the meeting. Pastor: Chris Holloway.

- First Baptist Church, Dubach: **Revival**, August 30-September 1. Worship: **Mackey Willis Family**. Pastor: Cory Bruce.

- Martin Baptist Church, Coushatta: Revival, September 5-8, Sunday 11 a.m. and 6 p.m., Monday-Wednesday 6:30 nightly. Evangelist: **David Hanna**. Music: **WeRcalled**. Pastor: Richard Kaufman.

- First Baptist Church, Blanchard: **Revival**, September 11-12. Evangelist: **Bill Britt**. Pastor: Clay Fuqua.

- First Baptist Church, West Monroe: **Senior Adult Progressive Revival**, September 13, 10 a.m. Speaker: **Steve Horn, Executive Director of Louisiana Baptist Convention**. Worship: **The Foto Sisters**. Pastor: Michael Wood.

- Bethany Camp and Conference Center: **39th Annual Men's Fish Fry**, September 13, 5:30 p.m. Cost: \$10. Speaker: **Randy Harper, pastor Bellaire Baptist Church**. Music: **Drew Ley, Bellaire Baptist Church**. To register, call Bethany Camp and Conference Center at 318.938.1221.

- First Baptist Church, Swartz: **Senior Adult Progressive Revival**, September 14, 10 a.m. Speaker: **Steve Horn, Executive Director of Louisiana Baptist Convention**. Worship: **The Foto Sisters**. Pastor: Aaron Dickinson.

- Highland Baptist Church, West Monroe: **Senior Adult Progressive Revival**, September 15, 10 a.m. Speaker: **Steve Horn, Executive Director of Louisiana Baptist Convention**. Worship: **The Foto Sisters**. Pastor: Gordon Dean.

- Sweetwater Baptist Church, Quitman: **Fall Revival**, September 19-22. Evangelist: **Bob Pitman**. Pastor: Wilton Wall.

- Outreach Baptist Church, Columbia: Revival. September 19-22. Evangelist:

Bill Britt. Pastor: C.R. Martin.

HOMECOMING

- Bethel Baptist Church, Colfax: **Homecoming**, August 29, 10:30 a.m. Speaker: **Lloyd Whitman**. Music: **Bethel Choir**. Homecoming Dinner will be in the gym following worship service. Please bring a covered dish or dessert. The meat will be provided by the church. Pastor: Carl Gulde.

- Beech Springs Baptist Church, Minden: **150th Anniversary**, September 26, 2021. 9-11 a.m. Meet and greet in fellowship hall; 11 a.m. worship service followed by a fish fry in the fellowship hall and tent. Guest Speaker: **Steve Horn, executive director of the Louisiana Baptist Convention**. Pastor: Randy Brown.

LAGNIAPPE

- Gray Baptist Church, Jefferson, Texas: **Note-burning worship service and fellowship feast**, August 29, 4 p.m. Speaker: **Lane Moore, DOM for Northwest Louisiana Baptist Association**. Pastor: Roy Davis.

- Creston Baptist Church, Creston: **The Southern Plainsmen in concert**, August 29, 10:30 a.m. Pastor: Truman Leach.

- East Jena Baptist Church, Jena: **Mark Lanier Ministries in concert**, August 29, 11 a.m. Pastor: Mike Wilkinson.

- First Baptist Church, Pineville: **First@First Business Leader Luncheon**, September 2, noon. Speaker: **John Valenzuela, executive chef, owner of Quebedeaux's Cajun Cafe**. Cost: \$10 (lunch catered by Southern Creations) and open to the business community. Please RSVP to

<https://fbcpineville.secure2.agroup.com/events/firstatfirst/2021-09-02+11%3A50%3A00>. Pastor: Stewart Holloway.

- Airline Baptist Church, Bossier City: **The Browders in concert**, September 4, 5 p.m. Pastor: Terry Young.

- Harmony Baptist Church, Deville: **Mark Lanier Ministries in concert**, September 5, 10:30 a.m. Pastor: Grady Dodge.

- Social Springs Baptist Church, Ringgold: **Mark Lanier Ministries in concert**, September 5, 6 p.m. Pastor: James Hester.

- The Stable, Bossier City: September 7, 6:15-7:30 a.m. (Breakfast will be provided). Evangelist: **Bill Britt**. The Stable is located at 2195 Swan Lake Rd, Bossier City, LA. Leader: Mark Rodie.

- Sweetwater Baptist Church, Quitman: **WeRcalled Out of the Darkness Tour**, September 8, 6 p.m. Pastor: Wilton Wall.
- Colyell Baptist Church, Livingston: **WeRcalled Out of the Darkness Tour**, September 10, 6 p.m. Pastor: Jeremy Glasscock.

- Sibley First Baptist Church, Sibley: **Mark Lanier Ministries in concert**, September 12, 11 a.m. Pastor: Brock Childers.

- First Baptist Church, West Monroe: **The Foto Sisters in concert**, Septem-

ber 12, 10:30 p.m. Pastor: Michael Wood. Tall Timbers Conference Center, Woodworth: **Pastor and Wife Couples Retreat**, September 17-18. Worship: **Mackey Willis Family**.

■ First Baptist Church, Denham Springs: **Second annual Rumbly for a Cause Car Show**, September 18, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. This year's cause is Camp Living Waters youth camp. For more information contact Len Hodges at 985-662-6910 or jbh@bellsouth.net.

■ First Baptist Church, Covington: **Young at Heart**, September 21, 10:30 a.m. Music: **The Foto Sisters**. Cost: \$10. Pastor: Waylon Bailey.

■ First Baptist Church, West Monroe: **Impact**, September 22, 5-8 p.m. Speaker: **Jarrett Fix**. Worship: **Luke Touch**. Pastor: Michael Wood.

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IMMEDIATE JOB OPENINGS On Monroe Campus

COTTAGE PARENTS:

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Please send resume to: Susan Nolan at snolan@lbch.org or LBCH, PO Box 4196, Monroe, LA 71211.

COTTAGE CARE MANAGERS:

Full-Time and Part-Time Positions Available: Christian women needed to serve in HomePlace, a transitional living ministry for homeless children and their mothers. Must have a sense of call and commitment to a ministry of service to children and families.

Please send resume to: Jonann Byargeon at jonann@lbch.org or LBCH, PO Box 4196, Monroe, LA 71211.



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.

JDT PML FJWL BXMD MJT MZF OJZWLDP XA KJWLC'F MJZO,

JDT J CLJPMLD UZOTCL JSXYP MZF CXZDF; JDT MZF WLJP QJF

CXKYFPF JDT QZCT MXDLR.

WJPPMLQ PMOLL:AXYO

Clues:
C = L; L = E

Answer to July 29 Scripture Crypto:
Leviticus nine: three

Storm-battered from page one

filed from Delta and 55,676 claims totaling \$600 million were filed from Zeta.

The 2020 storm season was the most active ever in the state, with three

hurricanes plus tropical storms Cristobal and Marco making landfall. Last year's storm season was also the second most expensive for Louisiana behind the 2005

storm season, Donelon said.

Baker estimates more than 5,000 volunteers have worked in the area in the months following the landfall of Laura. He said teams from 23 states have come into the area and worked on more than 1,000 homes damaged by Laura and Delta in a restoration effort that likely will take years to complete.

"The recovery has been hard and it's been really tough on a lot of families here," Baker said. "We are thankful for the volunteer groups who have come in and for our Louisiana Baptist partners who I have nothing but praise for. They have all been exceedingly helpful and that's been a real blessing."

Baker said that despite the challenges, the churches and various communities remain strong and will move forward united and stronger than before the storms. A community-wide service to remember the one-year anniversary of Laura is scheduled for Aug. 27 at 6 p.m. at the Lake

Charles Civic Center Amphitheater.

"When we've had so many heartbreaking stories, that's been one very positive aspect," Baker said. "They want to be together and be there for one another in this shared hardship. We as the body of Christ are here to shine Christ's light and show them there is hope."

DR WARRIORS

Shortly after Laura and Delta made landfall, Southern Baptist Disaster Relief workers sprung into action.

Stan Statham, Louisiana Baptist Disaster Relief state coordinator, said 1,911 people heard a Gospel presentation from disaster relief chaplains during the two storms, 456 turned to Christ (statistics were not available for Zeta). Disaster Relief volunteers also distributed 2,860 Bibles.

Workers prepared 430,669 meals, and completed 2,390 chainsaw jobs, 259 temporary roofing jobs and 202 debris removal jobs

and offered 14,073 showers offered.

Statham said he is thankful for the spiritual fruit planted by Disaster Relief volunteers.

"Whether it was a chaplain encouraging someone at the feeding line or a chainsaw crew cutting down a tree, each of our disaster relief team members had an important role and that was to share the hope of Christ at a time of desperate need," Statham said. "The stress that came with multiple storms hitting within less than two months took a real toll on people and our teams were able to minister and encourage so many people."

TRINITY BAPTIST LAKE CHARLES

Trinity Baptist Church in Lake Charles became a hub of ministry for hurricane survivors, disaster relief workers and law enforcement personnel after Laura and Delta devastated their community.

See **STORM-BATTERED**, page 15



LABOR DAY FAMILY CONFERENCE

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September 3-6, 2021

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE			
FRIDAY (dinner) 5 p.m.	FRIDAY (Worship) 6:30 & 7:30 p.m.	SATURDAY & SUNDAY 9:00 & 10:00 a.m. 3:00, 4:00, 6:30 & 7:30 p.m.	MONDAY 9:00 & 10:00 a.m.



Dennis Terry



Bill Britt



Bob Pittman



Phil Hoskins



Ben Waites



Bruce Hedrick



Lynette Johnson

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OCT. 18 Northwest Louisiana Baptist Association Shreveport 9:30am	OCT. 19 Morehouse and Northeast Baptist Associations Monroe 9:30am	OCT. 19 CenLa Baptist Association Alexandria 5:30pm	OCT. 21 NOBTS, Providence Learning Center New Orleans 9:30am
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LOUISIANABAPTISTS.ORG/JBSPREVIEW



Storm-battered from page 14

Southern Baptist and other disaster relief organizations joined with up to 50 Trinity Baptist members each day to use the church as a launching pad for ministry. Moreover, local law enforcement utilized the campus as a staging area, creating even greater visibility among the community.

"Lake Charles dealt with COVID like everyone else did, then when you added two hurricanes, then had the freeze in February and then the floods in May, you have the makeup for a very challenging year," Pastor Steve James said. "Our folks were up to the challenge. We have got a core of people

at Trinity who helped us carry on despite any difficulties we faced.

"We were a flagship during Delta and Laura," he continued. "What we did in the hurricanes spoke volumes for the community, saying this wasn't a church just talking about helping, but they were doing it. It's been a great opportunity for us to be a shining light."

James expressed appreciation for the constant stream of supplies and monetary gifts from across the state and country that seemed to come at just the right time.

"The story that stands out to me was when somebody walked in with a box of Fix-a-Flat," he said. "I wondered what we would do with that. It wasn't five minutes later some guy walked in saying he needed Fix-a-Flat. That story was just one of many examples where every time someone would walk in with a need just minutes before someone else dropped off the donation to us. God knew



Submitted photo

Jerry Parmentier, children's minister at Trinity Baptist Church in Lake Charles, hugs Gregory White after a donated generator was loaded in the back of White's vehicle.

what we would need at just the right time.

"Louisiana Baptists as a whole, too, were so helpful," he continued. "I don't know how many calls we had from churches and personal visits from pastors who showed up and met so many needs."

FIRST BAPTIST LAKE CHARLES

Pastor Johnny Dammon knew God was on the

verge of moving mightily at First Baptist Church in Lake Charles when the members entered into a season of prayer and fasting in late 2019.

But Dammon could not for see how God would move a year later through COVID-19 and a series of extreme weather events that would significantly damage their facilities and

See STORM-BATTERED, page 16



Submitted photo

Amy Langley, a member at Trinity Baptist Church in Lake Charles, carries in baby supplies that were later distributed to residents of southwest Louisiana impacted by two hurricanes.

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Storm-battered from page 15

recast their vision from one of relocation to that of replanting.

"After Hurricanes Laura and Delta swept through our city and over our lives, I determined to humble myself before the Lord and seek Him earnestly," Dammon said. "Catastrophes and natural disasters have a way of bringing us to our knees and on our faces before almighty God."

"The present reality is this – we have decided to replant our church, not simply relocate the meeting place," he continued. "We are starting over. Our property is still for sale, we are still seeking the Lord for a new location, but we are actively taking steps to change our culture, our mindset, and lay a foundation for the future. I have encouraged our folks to plant a tree, whose shade we may not get to enjoy. I am asking our folks to think ahead to the future, 20 years out, 50 years out. We need to take steps now

to position our church for a great future, but more than anything we need to seek the Lord in genuine humility and child-like faith."

The congregation, which averages 120 for worship services, has met at East Ridge Baptist Church in Lake Charles on Sunday afternoons since late September.

Laura caused extensive damage to the roof and to the exterior of the church building, and six weeks later Delta came and unleashed another blast of fury, leaving the building unusable.

Dammon said the assistance from East Ridge Baptist is just one way churches and individuals from across the nation have offered encouraged through prayers, monetary donations and partnerships. He said continued support will be key as they move forward to replant their church and build for the future.



Submitted photo

Members of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette Baptist Collegiate Ministry traveled to Lake Charles to help refurbish the McNeese State University BCM building that was damaged by hurricanes in the fall.

A special partnership has developed with Cross Church in northwest Arkansas, who has come alongside First Baptist Lake Charles to help equip and train them in the replanting process. Dammon said that partnership has already been a blessing as steps are now being taken to lay the groundwork for

a bright future.

FIRST BAPTIST CAMERON

First Baptist Church in Cameron was left a shell of its former self after Laura and Delta made landfall and destroyed the worship center, fellowship hall and education space.

But the church, which

lost its roof and took in more than 6 feet of water, has refused to focus on its losses and instead is anticipating a bright future.

After meeting online for five months, the members in January regathered for worship services at the Cameron Parish Police Jury

See **STORM-BATTERED**, page 17

TIMOTHY + BARNABAS

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NAMB

LOUISIANA BAPTISTS

Storm-battered from page 16

building. Most Sundays they have average 15-20, though on Aug. 1 28 people attended, the highest since before Laura made landfall.

Pastor Charles Hugonin said his members have remained faithful throughout COVID-19 and the hurricanes, despite some having to tune into services on a Facebook Live message.

"I have seen the perseverance of people who have lost everything, but they have an attitude of how can they build it better this time," Hugonin said. "The church has been there 81 years and has been destroyed by a fire and multiple hurricanes. We rebuilt then and we will rebuild this time.

"Our best days are definitely ahead," he said. "No matter what comes, I want it to be said that First Baptist was faithful, faithful to the call. We're excited to go and see what happens."

WESTVIEW BAPTIST CHURCH, DERIDDER

Emotions ran high for Jason Hoychick as he shared a message of encouragement June 6, the first time the congregation met in their renovated worship center since attendance restrictions forced them to meet in the Westview Baptist Church gym May 17, 2020. While they had planned to regather in the worship center in late August, those aspirations were put on hold when Laura made landfall and caused significant damage to the facility's roof, ceiling, and electrical the nursery and seven classrooms.

When they met again in June, Hoychick said he was reminded of God's faithfulness through Laura, a pandemic, ice storm in February and vandalism to one of the church buildings.

"I was very emotional



Submitted photo

Numerous Louisiana Baptist churches in September helped members of First Baptist Church in Cameron distribute supplies and food to residents impacted by hurricanes that made landfall in the area.

that Sunday we were back in our building because it seemed like forever since we were last in there," he said. "We celebrated and gave thanks for how God brought us through."

Hoychick said he was encouraged by his members' attitude and faithful service despite the difficult circumstances they faced. He noted that they have seen spiritual fruit

sown since Laura, including 12 children among 128 who professed Christ as their Savior during Vacation Bible School in June and multiple opportunities to share the Gospel while they cleaned up yards, distributed food and supplies at their church and tarped and repaired roofs for nine weeks from August through October.


"We can't wait to see

what's next because after all that God has brought us through and all He done for us," he said. "He has made it abundantly clear that He is not done yet."

FIRST BAPTIST GOLDEN MEADOW

Despite sustaining damage to its roof and losing a

See STORM-BATTERED, page 20



UNSHAKABLE

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FEATURING: Worship, Kid-friendly Breakout rotations, IMB Missionaries

Please note: All current COVID directives will be followed including the wearing of masks and social distancing. Hand sanitizer will also be available.

Bridges from page one

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

Wren said he met Bridges in 2014 “on a vision trip to Los Angeles as we journeyed out west to consider supporting a church plant in Burbank, California,” adding that Bridges is “active in evangelism at home, too.”

“Reggie has proven himself to be a servant leader of Louisiana Baptists as he has served our state well at all levels of Southern Baptist Life,” Wren also emphasized.

In support of his statement, Wren listed Bridges’s denominational service with the Committee on Committees for the Southern Baptist Convention, as well as his 2007-2013 term on the LBC Executive Board (Bridges also is serving a term now, that runs through 2022).

Wren also noted Bridges served on the Georgia Barnette State

Missions Offering Committee (2010), as a trustee for Louisiana College (2014-2017) and on various committees with the Baptist Associations of Southeast Louisiana and Concord-Union Baptist Association.

BY THE NUMBERS

The database of the Annual Church Profile shows that the Temple Baptist Church in Ruston has increased its support for cooperative missions and ministries from 5.0 percent of undesignated gifts forwarded through the Cooperative Program in 2014 (Bridges’s first full year) to 8.9 percent in 2020 (latest reporting year).

During 2020, those contributions amounted to \$290,000 through CP and \$30,016 to the C-UBA from undesignated receipts amounting to \$3,267,760.



Submitted photo

Pastor Reggie Bridges and his wife Leslie are surrounded by their children (R-L), Abigail (18), Rhett (12), Ainsley (9) and Hayes (15).

The congregation also supported the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, \$160,089, the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, \$80,066, and the Georgia Barnette State Missions Offering, \$36,310.

Additionally, TBC averaged 1,120 in Sunday worship service and baptized 45 new believers in 2020. The congregation has witnessed 297 bap-

tisms combined during Bridges’s tenure, 2014-2020.

CANDIDATE’S RESPONSE

Bridges told the *Baptist Message* that he was born in Tupelo, Mississippi, and served as pastor of two congregations in Mississippi.

“I wasn’t born here, but I got here as soon as


I could,” he said, noting that he came to the First Baptist Church in Zachary in 2005 and served there through most of 2013.

Bridges described First Zachary as “a wonderful, growing congregation,” and likewise complimented Temple Baptist as a “truth-saturated, people-loving, mission-oriented church.”

“I am humbled and overwhelmed about Ed-die’s intention to nominate me, and excited for the opportunity God might give me,” Bridges said.

“I pray that I will continue the effort to unite Louisiana Baptists around the truth of the Gospel,” he said. “It is sufficient and inerrant. And I hope to move us forward in our commitment to reach our communities, this state and the world with His Hope. There is so much opportunity to make a difference, now, more than ever before.”

See BRIDGES, page 20



Unshakeable


F A I T H

MINISTERS' WIVES' RETREAT 2021

Matthew 11:29




Speaker:
Rachel Lovingood
Cleveland, TN



Music/Worship Leader:
Rebecca Holloway
First, Pineville

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LOUISIANABAPTISTS.ORG/MWR



Submitted photo

Members of Bethel Metropolitan Baptist Church in Lake Charles greet a motorist during a weekly food distribution out of its parking lot.

Bethel from page 2

community at a nearby civic center, serve meals to pastors several times a year, assemble care packages for inmates and perform acts of kindness to law enforcement and firefighters.

"The Lord blesses you when you are blessing and being a light to the community," Lewis said. "He will never let a church fail that will serve others. Churches that die are churches that aren't reaching people but churches that are committed to reach people and the Great Commission tend to be around for a long time."

Lewis expressed gratitude for the prayers and support of others, including Louisiana Baptists and the Georgia Barnette State Missions Offering. He said funds given through the annual offering help equip his church to further impact their community for Christ.

GBO from page 5

day of the week of prayer, drama and sketch ideas, sermon outlines, teaching guides, promotional tools, clip art, a list of speakers and worship ideas.

"Matthew 22: 37-39 tells us to 'love the lord our God with all our heart soul and mind.... And our neighbor as ourselves,'" said John Hebert, Louisiana Baptist missions and ministries team director. "What a delightful focus to consider that every believer should care about our neighbors in that way. What's even better is that we care about their spiritual condition in a way that motivates us to meet the needs of those next door. The generosity of Louisiana Baptist through the Georgia Barnette State Missions

"I appreciate Louisiana Baptists for their commitment to helping us reach others," Lewis said. "The Georgia Barnette Offering has been a great help in helping our churches and helping this city of Lake Charles during this difficult time. We are so appreciative and thankful for your support and partnership with us."

Sept. 12-19 has been set aside as the Week of Prayer for state missions and ministries. Resources, including videos demonstrating the scope and impact of the Georgia Barnette Offering have been mailed to churches across the state. Additional resources are available online at www.GeorgiaBarnette.org. This year's offering goal is \$1.7 million.

Offering fuels the efforts that helps us go to those all around us in meeting needs and sharing Christ."

The offering is named after Georgia Barnette, the first elected and paid WMU executive director/treasurer in the state (1915-1929). She would travel by boat, pirogue, horse and buggy, and train from her home in New Orleans to visit state missionaries who were planting churches throughout the state.

Because of generous giving, Louisiana Baptists are able to continue the vision of Georgia Barnette more than 114 years after she first led women to begin taking up an offering for state missionaries in 1907. The offering was named after her in 1937.

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Bridges from page 18

PERSONAL DATA

Bridges holds a Bachelor of Arts in Bible and English from Blue Mountain College in Mississippi. He earned the Master of Divinity in Biblical Languages, the Master of Theology, and the Doctor of Philosophy (major in preaching, minor in theology) from the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Message trustees to meet Oct. 19

ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM) -- Trustees of the Baptist Message will gather for the regular fall meeting on Oct. 19 in the Louisiana Baptist Building, Alexandria.

Committees will meet in the morning, and the general session will begin at 1 p.m.

He shared that he was nurtured in his faith in "a Timothy-like experience" which included surrendering his life to Jesus at 12 years old and leading music for a small SBC church at the age of 14. Shortly afterward, he was formally named minister of music and youth by that Mississippi congregation, Blue Springs Baptist Church. Later, at age 16 he was ordained to the ministry by his home congregation, Birmingham Ridge Baptist Church in Saltillo, Mississippi.

Bridges served as a teaching assistant and graduate fellow while pursuing his seminary studies. Also, he has served as an adjunct professor at various NOBTS extension centers.

His focus on theological education led him to form a partnership with NOBTS to establish the Temple School of Ministry

and Missions "to equip ministers, missionaries and lay leaders with the theological foundation and the practical experience to be servant leaders in their families and their local churches as they live out their calling in Christ, he said.

He and his wife Leslie (Neaves) have four children: Abigail (18), Hayes (15), Rhett (12) and Ainsley (9).

FINAL THOUGHTS

Wren said he is excited about the future for the LBC and that includes his hope that Bridges will be elected because "his evangelistic focus is contagious."

"Reggie is not a man who simply talks about evangelism, he participates in evangelism and leads the church to support evangelism with resources and time," Wren underscored. "I am excited about Reggie Bridges leading Louisiana Baptists as president of the Convention."



Members of First Baptist Church in Golden Meadow unloaded cases of bottled water for distribution to the community after Hurricane Zeta.

Storm-battered from page 17

large tree on campus, First Baptist Church in Golden Meadow members rallied to minister in their community shortly after Zeta made landfall.

The south Louisiana congregation fed 600-1000 meals twice a week for a month, used a Louisiana Baptist Disaster Relief trailer to provide hot showers and a washing machine/dryer and distributed tarps and cleaning supplies.

Pastor Matthew Chouset

said many Gospel seeds were planted and doors open to share Christ with their neighbors.

"People I run into at the store still tell me thank you for what we did," Chouset said. "They saw how we stepped up and helped so many who lost much of what they had. The church was being the church. I'm convinced this community will remember the witness of our church for a long time."



See a Light – Sow a Seed

I fly on a regular basis. For you non-fliers, when you fly to most of the cities in our state, the planes transporting you are called "regional jets." Sounds exclusive, but spoiler alert, "regional" does not mean "spacious." Overhead space is even more limited. If you have anything larger than your favorite study Bible, it probably won't fit!

One of my favorite times to fly over Louisiana is at night. Since the goal of our multi-media evangelistic outreach, Here for You, is to seed God's truth inside every heart and every home almost every day, I've tried to make it a practice to pray over Louisiana as I fly over it. One thing I've noticed is it's not just mile after mile of darkness. Look closely and you'll notice light after light. As I was praying one evening, God brought this thought to mind "where there's a light, there's a life."

Let that sink in for a moment.

Light is usually an indicator of life. Someone lives there, has been there, or is going there. It's easy to fly over our major cities and see lights everywhere. We need to pray over and strategize how we can reach those areas. But don't believe Satan's lie that there is no one to reach in rural Louisiana! The light, the evidence of life, dots the dark landscape of our state. There are people there. There is opportunity there.

Light, no matter where it resides, always has the upper hand. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that." The Apostle John put it this way, "And the light shines in darkness; and the darkness cannot overcome it." (John 1:5)

Consider this, maybe God will light the fires of revival in our rural areas and allow them to surround and spread into our cities.

Jesus often withdrew to isolated places for times of prayer. Mark notes that following one such time, Jesus' disciples were looking for him. When they finally found Him, they proclaimed, "Everyone is looking for you." (Mark 1:37). Jesus' response reflects His desire to reach everyone, regardless of their location. "I must go to the nearby towns so I can tell the good news to those people ..." (Mark 1:38, CEV). Notice, He didn't make a beeline for Jerusalem or another major population center. He would get there soon enough. He went to those closest to where He was. He reminded his followers, "this is why I have come" (Mark 1:38).

If we're going to follow Jesus' example, we need to bring the light to nearby villages and towns, whether it's a home in the middle of a field, back in the woods, or in the center of a small town or village. According to our

Missions and Ministries team, there are over 30 villages, towns and cities in Louisiana with no evangelical church. The people in those areas matter as much to God as those living in our largest urban areas and they should matter to us as well.

As you travel the highways and byways of Louisiana, here's a challenge - "for every light you see – sow a seed."

That seed may be a prayer. It may be an opportunity to speak a word of witness or encouragement if you stop to refuel or grab a snack. It could be an act of kindness if you see someone who needs assistance.

To learn how you can sow the seed of God's truth wherever you reside, visit LouisianaBaptists.org/hereforyou and enter: luke1423.

Where there is a light, there's a life - a person who needs to know Jesus. So, for every light you see, sow a seed and let the seed of God's truth do what only it can do.

HereforYou.org
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