

*“Blessed are those
whose help is the
God of Jacob,
whose hope is in
the LORD their
God. ...”*

– Psalm 146:5 (NIV)

BAPTIST Message

Newsjournal for Louisiana Baptists

Helping Louisiana Baptists impact the world for Christ



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January 25, 2018



Eleven students from Parkview Baptist School were baptized during a weekly chapel service in October. They took that step of obedience after a teacher at the school emphasized the importance of baptism for a Christ follower.

School makes history with baptisms

BY BRIAN BLACKWELL

Message Staff Writer

BATON ROUGE – Revival is sweeping through the halls of Parkview Baptist School.

Until this year, the high school and middle school rarely recorded a baptism. But history was made in October, when 11 high school students stirred the baptistery waters during a weekly chapel service.

“Every time a student was baptized, the entire room full of 500 students erupted with cheers,” Bible department

See BAPTISMS on 11



Parkview Baptist students gather at the altar to worship alongside classmates who have just dedicated their life to Christ.

IMB ends 2017 with more money, fewer missionaries

BY WILL HALL

Message Editor

RICHMOND, Va. (LBM) – Donations through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for the first quarter of the new fiscal year, Oct.-Dec. 2017, were \$600,027 ahead of receipts for the same time period last year, a 4.1 percent increase, the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention reported Jan. 16 via press release.

Meanwhile, the overseas missionary force declined in 2017, dropping from 3,596 to 3,562, according to data collected from the IMB website Fast Facts page and a limited release Field Personnel Count summary.

MIXED RESULTS

The IMB reported a total of \$15,221,629 had been collected from all sources “so far for the 2017-2018 campaign,”

MISSIONARY COUNTS

Aug. 2015 (before mass departures)	4,800
Apr. 2016 (end of VRI, HRO benefits offers)	3,817
Dec. 2016 (losses continued)	3,596
Dec. 2017 (134 actually short of goal)	3,562

VRI = Voluntary Retirement Incentives
HRO = Hand Raising Opportunities

which runs October through September. Previous campaigns were based on a June through May calendar.

IMB also reported it has received \$23,304,153 in Co-operative Program funding for the 2017-18 fiscal year, which likewise started Oct. 1. This amount is \$225,349 ahead of last year at this time, about one percent more.

The combined increases

See IMB on 8

Louisianans prepare to march for life

BY BRIAN BLACKWELL

Message Staff Writer

ALEXANDRIA (LBM) – Thousands of Louisianans are expected to pack downtown areas across the state the next several weekends for pro-life marches and rallies:

- Shreveport/Bossier City, Jan. 27
- Alexandria/Pineville, Feb. 3.

The Louisiana Life Marches are a chance for different denominations, ages and ethnic and racial backgrounds to march together and pray to declare their opposition to the Supreme Court’s Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortion in 1973.

See LIFE MARCH on 8



Doug Collier photo

Thousands walk across the Texas Street bridge into Shreveport during the Louisiana Life March North in 2017. This year, the march is one of three planned throughout the state.

Voices of Louisiana College Benefit Concert

Supporting the construction of the LA Reach Haiti Children's Village



Thursday, February 1st
7:00 PM
First Baptist Church, Pineville

'Voices' concert to raise gifts for orphanage project in Haiti

BY STAFF

Baptist Message

PINEVILLE – The Voices of Louisiana College are preparing to host a benefit concert next month that organizers hope will raise thousands of dollars for construction of a children's village in Haiti.

Scheduled 7 p.m., Feb. 1, the "Concert for the Children's Village" is sponsored by the Louisiana Baptist Convention, Louisiana College and Louisiana Baptist Children's Home. While no admission will be charged, a free-will offering will be taken for a cause dear to the hearts of many Louisiana Baptists, including event organ- izer Clark Palmer.

nizer Clark Palmer.

"Often I have seen when an institution is established to train young people in the ways of the Lord and the Gospel, that institution will have a powerful impact on the surrounding area for possibly decades to come," said Palmer, pastor of Faith Baptist Church, Tioga. "It seems to me if we will change the nation of Haiti, it starts by changing some small area. That small area is changed by changing the children growing in that area."

"It's like a community of believers producing another generation of God-loving, Bible-loving, Bible-believing Christians who can strengthen

churches and strengthen families," the continued. "By just going to hear some great music and fellowshiping together at this concert, we can do something small to be a part of something big."

Haiti was devastated by the 2010 earthquake that killed more than 250,000 people and left hundreds of thousands homeless. Louisiana Baptists were among the first to provide disaster relief, and since then have maintained a ministry presence through mission trips that includes construction projects, pastor training, medical clinics, food, water and clothing distributions, evangelism, children's Bible clubs and Vacation Bible School.

In the intervening years, a vision developed for a permanent presence in Haiti through the project Louisiana Reach Haiti.

Louisiana Baptists acquired land in September 2016, and soon afterward volunteers completed a 200-foot-deep well that provides water for residents of the community. The well will support a planned children's village and pastor training center as well.

Additionally, church planting will be a pivotal part of Louisiana Baptists work in the country, and the ministry center will be the base from which Louisiana Baptists partner with Haitian believers to reach all of Haiti by starting churches. Since 2012, teams from Louisiana have taken several mission trips annually to work on the center and plant seeds in outlying communities. The Louisiana Baptist Children's Home sponsors two trips each year, which are planned for June 2-8 and Oct. 13-19.

The hope is to build addi-

See **CONCERT** on 7

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- ♦ Mackinac Island / Tulips – May 8-15
- ♦ Grand Canyon – May 21-31
- ♦ Washington / Oregon – June 2-18
- ♦ New York City – June 20-28
- ♦ Big Bend Nat'l Park – June 20-28
- ♦ Canadian Rockies – June 25-July 10
- ♦ Yellowstone – July 1-10

AIR AND OTHERS

- ♦ Great River Road – July 12-21
- ♦ Tennessee – July 23-29
- ♦ Niagara Falls – Aug. 6-12
- ♦ Nova Scotia – Aug. 19-Sept. 4
- ♦ Cape Cod – Sept. 13-23
- ♦ Colorado Foliage & Trains – Sept. 18-28
- ♦ Canada Fall Foliage – Sept. 30 – Oct. 9
- ♦ New England Fall Foliage – Oct. 1-13
- ♦ Arkansas Fall Foliage – Oct. 15 – 21
- ♦ Santa Fe – Oct. 22-29
- ♦ Branson – Oct. 31-Nov. 3
- ♦ Nashville Christmas – Nov. 15-18
- ♦ Greenbrier Christmas – Nov. 27 – Dec. 1

AIR AND OTHERS

- ♦ Yellowstone in Winter – Jan. 27-Feb. 1
- ♦ Costa Rica – Mar. 13-20
- ♦ Holy Land – Apr. 2-13
- ♦ Spain / Portugal – Apr. 20-30
- ♦ China Highlights – May 18-29
- ♦ Alps of Europe – June 5-16
- ♦ Chicago by Train – July 16-20
- ♦ South Africa Safari – July 23-Aug. 6
- ♦ Alaska Land – Aug. 15-24
- ♦ Ireland – Aug. 27-Sept. 5
- ♦ Ireland / Scotland – Aug. 27-Sept. 10
- ♦ Scotland – Sept. 4-10
- ♦ San Francisco – Sept. 6-11
- ♦ Brazil / Argentina / Chile – Oct. 22-Nov. 1

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Zenoria rebuilds from flood, builds again from growth

BY BRIAN BLACKWELL
Message Staff Writer

ZENORIA – Twenty-one months after a historic flood destroyed the facilities of Zenoria Baptist Church, a new day has come for the congregation.

Nine feet of water from the Little River submerged the campus, March 11, 2016, and members dedicated a new worship center and education space exactly one year later.

Now they have to build again, this time to expand because of growth, primarily from baptisms.

The congregation has baptized four new believers – in 2017 – growing to 41 persons who faithfully take part in Sunday morning service, and they sense more are on the way.

Pastor Joel Johnson told the *Baptist Message* expanded facilities are needed to expand the congregation's ministries.

Two Sunday school classrooms are being built, and the fellowship hall is being "up-sized," with plans to build a cooking shed as well.

Johnson said despite the tragedy of the flood, many good things have resulted, especially with regard to the love expressed to this small community of believers, just 10 miles outside of Jena.

When the congregation decided not to "close the doors"

after the flood, the Jena Band of Choctaws offered them a temporary meeting place.

Others in the community, including the churches of the LaSalle Baptist Association, pitched in and were joined in the rebuilding project by individuals and groups as far away as California and Michigan – donating labor, money and supplies.

"It's just been a blessing for the last year-and-a-half to see all of what God can do with

things that most of us think are impossible," Johnson said. "God can take a situation where it seems there's no way for something to be built and allow for it to be built -- if you just have the faith to let God do it.

"I would call it a giant miracle," he continued. "I think it's one of God's miracles that He is able to take people's hearts and change their point of view from looking at the mate-

See ZENORIA on 11

CEC to focus on 'Next' things in life

ALEXANDRIA – Collegians and high school juniors and seniors are invited to the annual Collegiate Evangelism Conference, set for Feb. 2-3 at Calvary Baptist Church in Alexandria.

The theme for the conference is "Next."

"The focus is to challenge students as emerging church leaders to live for Christ every day as fervently as possible in the business and life marketplace while they are attending and after they move on from college," said Mark Robinson, Baptist Collegiate Ministry director for Louisiana Baptists. "We are featuring seminar leaders, worship leaders and speakers that were active in Baptist Collegiate Ministry that have gone on to have thriving lives of Christian ser-

vice in the secular workplace and serving on church staff."

Rahul Agarwal, the director of men and married couples at Gwinnett Church, a campus of the non-denominational North Point Community Church in Atlanta, Ga., will be the main speaker.

He was a former intern at the Florida State University BCM from 1997 to 2001 at the time Robinson served as director.

Agarwal later attended New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and became Tampa Bay area collegiate mobilizer for the Florida Baptist Convention.

Leading music will be the House Band, a group comprised of former BCM members from around the state.

Registration for CEC

begins Feb. 2 at 6:30 pm, with the main session starting at 8 pm. The conference concludes at 5 p.m. Feb. 3.

The conference fee is \$35 for each attendee. One adult leader per group may attend for free.

High school junior and seniors receive a special reduced rate of \$15.

Visit www.louisianabaptists.org/CEC for additional information about the conference and registration.

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Abortion is a national tragedy that we must end

BY RALPH ABRAHAM
U.S. Representative, M.D.

WASHINGTON (LBM) — Thousands of Americans across the country will band together in solidarity in the coming days to protest abortion. The pro-life movement is one that I'm proud to support, and one with Central Louisiana roots.

This year's March for Life events will be the first since

the death of pro-life advocate Norma McCorvey, who was born in Simmesport in Avoyelles Parish. You might know her better as Jane Roe, as in the Roe of Roe v. Wade.

Norma wasn't always on our side. She sued the state of Texas for abortion rights and, unfortunately, the Supreme Court ruled in her favor, granting abortion protections nationwide. But the effects of that decision changed Norma

as she eventually came to see what we already know: Abortion violates the sanctity of life and has damaging effects on the women involved in the procedure.

While speaking in Alexandria in 2003, Norma described her experience working in an abortion clinic as "horrible" and said, "I saw the looks in the eyes of those girls. They weren't the same as when they first came in. There was no life in those eyes. They were angry, but didn't know why. They were angry with themselves."

Since the Roe v. Wade ruling, more than 59 million Americans have died from abortions, according to the National Right to Life Committee. This is nothing short of an ongoing national tragedy, a tragedy that we must end.

As a Southern Baptist, I believe that life is a precious gift from God, a gift that be-

gins at conception. As a doctor, I'm sworn to defend life at all stages. As an American, I believe that abortion violates the core tenant of our Constitution that says every American — no matter how old — has the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.



U.S. Congressman
Ralph Abraham, M.D.

The Bible teaches us that redemption and forgiveness come to those who

ask for it. Norma McCorvey found that redemption and spent the later years of her life working to undo her mistake. Her story gives me hope because if the very woman who led the charge for abortion access learned the error of her ways, then surely America can do the same, and I pledge to do my part to see that it happens.

I am an original cosponsor on three important bills aimed at defending life.

The Life at Conception Act (HR 681) states that Constitutional rights extend to all Americans at all phases of life, including the moment of conception. The Prenatal Nondiscrimination Act (HR 4660) prevents discrimination of the unborn by banning abortions based on the baby's sex. The Born Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act (HR 4712) states that babies

who survive abortions must be granted medical care, and medical practitioners who fail to deliver this care will be subject to criminal penalties.

I have also cosponsored the Heartbeat Protection Act (HR 490) that prevents abortion if a baby's heartbeat can be heard; the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act (HR 36) that bans abortion after 20 weeks when babies can feel pain; and the Conscience Protection Act (HR 644) that prohibits medical professionals from being forced to participate in abortions.

We don't have to accept that abortion will continue in this country.

Know that as you march, I will march with you — both in the streets and in the halls of Congress — to bring the change we need to wipe the stain of abortion from American society.

Ralph Abraham, M.D., has served Louisiana's 5th District since December 2014 after spending most of his life as a practicing physician, veterinarian, business owner, farmer, pilot and veteran. He and his wife of 40 years, Dianne, have three grown children and nine grandchildren. They grew up in rural Richland Parish where they reside today and are active members of Alto Baptist Church.

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Dawn Smith Jordan is a Christ-follower, Christian speaker, singer/songwriter, charting recording artist and published author. In 1986, Jordan received a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance, and then became Miss South Carolina and 2nd runner-up to Miss America.

She is passionate about sharing a word of hope to the hopeless from her own journeys and considers it a great privilege to share her music and ministry out of the story God is weaving into her life.


Dawn Smith Jordan

To register for the Women's Retreat go to abccamp.com

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Patrick: Of unity and foregone conclusions

SYLACAUGA, Ala. (LBM) — As I challenge the prevailing narrative arising from the 2016 Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, my remarks, though sincere and well-intentioned, will likely be misunderstood.

This is regrettable and unavoidable.

Just because something is difficult to say does not mean it should not be said.

Perhaps my timing will be challenged. Could this not wait for another day? Yes, it could, but Barney Fife's "nip it in the bud" philosophy is practically a core value of mine. Why allow a questionable notion to grow unchallenged for an extended period of time?

Most accounts of the convention describe the beautiful feelings of unity and peace elicited by the withdrawal of J.D. Greear from the presidential race just prior to the second runoff ballot on that Wednesday morning in 2016. The election result was thus determined, not by the expressed will of the electorate, but by one candidate yielding to another.

Candidates are free to run and free to withdraw, but in the aftermath of Greear's resignation, I must have read a half dozen times that Greear is almost certain to become the

SBC president in 2018. The theory is that his 2016 forfeiture was such a sign of grace and humility that Southern Baptists practically owe Greear the SBC presidency in the next contested election, presumably the one in Dallas in 2018.

Several aspects of this suggestion are worthy of more thoughtful reflection.

Let me say at the start that my aim here is not to offer any sort of personal attack against J.D. Greear. I am thankful that he withdrew his candidacy.

I believe it was a gracious gesture, albeit an unnecessary one. He was under absolutely no compulsion to do so. I would not have thought any less of him had he remained in the race, allowing the will of the electorate to determine the outcome of the election on that Wednesday morning. Instead, through his forfeiture, he created a beautiful moment on the platform by endorsing Steve Gaines for president in a very public display of humility and grace.

Let me also add that, in terms of his personality and Christian service, I actually like J.D. Greear. He is my brother in Christ and a fellow pastor in our Southern Baptist Convention.

While I do not know him personally, he strikes me as a

very nice man and a fine Christian leader.

I have no personal vendetta against him. I simply disagree with his ministry direction and philosophy. In other words, I oppose some of the things he stands for in SBC life, such as a certain approach to the financial support of missions, and a certain willingness to partner with non-Southern Baptist networks that actually engage in discrimination against Southern Baptists like me.

'UNITED' IN ST. LOUIS?

I am more than willing to grant there was a definite sense of relief when Greear resigned, for the tension of a closely contested election had been resolved, but relief is not the same thing as unity.

I am also willing to grant that this was an "outward display of grace" that offered messengers a sort of "public relations kind of unity" in which we "put on a good face" and, for a brief moment at least, chose to mask our differences by pre-

tending they did not exist.

Frankly, these approaches to conflict management provide almost textbook cases of denial and dysfunction. This is the couple in marriage counseling that says with plastic smiles, "Everything is fine, really," when in fact, below the surface, there are numerous issues that remain unresolved.

If we are being completely honest, Southern Baptists left St. Louis with just as many unresolved issues as we had when we arrived. The fault lines were never erased. That beautiful public moment on Wednesday morning did not usher in an Age of Aquarius promoting harmony

and understanding, and the reason is that all of the issues dividing us remain:

- wavering between societal and cooperative missions support
- embracing or resisting our state conventions and associations
- balancing our two theologies of Calvinism and Traditionalism
- evaluating the effectiveness of our church planting strategy
- rethinking our embrace of non-Southern Baptist partnerships

See **PATRICK** on 6



Rick Patrick



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Patrick from page 5

-- promoting both the harvest and the frontier missions mandates

-- addressing the lack of transparency coming from our leadership

-- investigating charges of national level strong arming at NAMB

-- exploring the role of the ERLC regarding U.S. presidential candidates

-- examining the operational overspending crisis at the IMB

AGE DIVIDE OR THEOLOGY SPLIT?

Some have suggested our differences are nothing more than a generational divide, but I find that assessment lacking. Yes, most of the Calvinists in the convention are younger, but not all of the younger people in the SBC are Calvinists.

I do not believe we are so much divided by age as we are divided by ministry approaches driven by theological orientation. In other words, there are substantive differences creating the disunity in SBC life. This is not merely a personality conflict

or a generation gap. It is a clash of ideas.

We did not leave St. Louis having resolved the issues that continue to divide us. An outward spirit of unity is a nice charade, a happy moment in the sun, a gloriously pleasant escape from reality. But it is not the real thing. It is not true unity, for it is rooted merely in the fiction of conflict avoidance and not in the reality of conflict resolution.

SPARED A DISASTER?

Some have insinuated that by his withdrawal Greear saved the Southern Baptist Convention from an apocalyptic event that would have left us paralyzed, divided, angry and uncooperative. One imagines catastrophic scenes of Southern Baptists rioting in the streets of St. Louis, throwing television sets through shop windows and smashing cars with baseball bats because our preferred candidate for SBC president lost a simple election.

The narrative being spun is that Greear saved us from a cataclysmic upheaval the likes of which Southern Baptists have

never known. Rubbish, nonsense and poppycock!

We were told by Greear that he wanted to spare us from an election in which one candidate received 51% of the vote and the other received 49% of the vote, but no one ever explained why such a close vote would necessarily be a bad thing. If such a vote truly expressed the will of the messengers and if honesty is still the best policy, why not leave St. Louis with a crystal clear understanding that we do indeed have work to do in resolving our conflicts?

Why pretend we are not divided when in fact we so obviously are? And why run in fear of electing a president by such a narrow margin of victory?

Question: "When was the last time Southern Baptists elected a president with only 51% of the vote?"

Answer: "The last time we elected a president."

That's right. In 2014, Ronnie Floyd was elected with exactly 51.62% of the vote.

Following the election, there was no hand wringing. I saw neither sack cloth nor ashes in Baltimore. There were no riots. Southern Baptists did not leave the convention hall throwing their ballot cards at one another

or spilling each other's purchases to the floor in the LifeWay bookstore.

Instead, we acted like mature adults – with both sides smiling and shaking hands just like I do at the net after every tennis match, win or lose. I refuse to believe that Southern Baptists would have thrown temper tantrums had our side lost the presidential election. Despite overblown claims to the contrary, J.D. Greear's forfeiture merely spared the Teller's Committee a few hours of their time.

WHAT DID HE CONCEDE?

Bear in mind that at the time Greear withdrew from the race, Gaines had received 2,410 votes and Greear had received 2,306. Of the votes properly cast using correct and legible ballots, Gaines received 51.1% of the vote while Greear received 48.9% of the vote. However, by a rule that deserves further examination, 108 "spoiled" ballots were counted among the total votes cast while not attributed to either candidate. Thus, by considering illegal ballots too spoiled for either numerator but not too spoiled for the denominator, the number of votes needed to reach a majority


was 2,413.

Greear was 107 votes away from winning but only 3 votes away from losing. By withdrawing from the race, he essentially conceded those three votes. Was this gracious? Indeed. Was it a sacrifice of monumental proportions? Hardly. Does it mean that Southern Baptists practically owe Greear the SBC presidency in 2018? Not at all. If the concerns with Greear's ministry philosophy and vision continue to be relevant in 2018, I hope he will not run unopposed—a status some have suggested Greear has earned by his three vote concession in St. Louis.

It has even been suggested that Gaines might nominate Greear in 2018 as a gesture of unity in the convention.

Personally, I hope this is not the case, for I believe their candidacies are actually larger than either of these two men individually. I believe they each represent certain ideologies, beliefs and ministry practices, and that voters deserve the right to vote for the candidate whose platform most closely aligns with their own, in order to influence the convention in the direction they believe it needs to go.

See PATRICK on 9




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Johnson Bayou Baptist maintains Christ's presence 'high & lifted up'

BY BRIAN BLACKWELL
Message Staff Writer

JOHNSON BAYOU – After having to meet in temporary facilities off and on since 2005 when the first of two hurricanes destroyed its facilities,

Concert

from page 2

tional housing in the complex, followed with the development of micro businesses and trade schools.

As the project expands, there is a vision for constructing a hotel, operated by Haitians, and a school.

For information on promotional materials for the concert, contact Palmer at clark956@hotmail.com or visit the event Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/events/2003318656617842/>.

ties, Johnson Bayou Baptist Church members received an early Christmas gift – a new building reinforced against the types of natural disasters that have hit it before.

The newly constructed 3,200-sq.ft.-structure sits on beams elevated 10 feet off the ground which Hurricanes Rita and Ike both flooded to a height of about 5 feet. The winds from both storms were powerful, too, reaching 120 mph and 110 mph, respectively, with Rita's gusts ripping the roof off the main structure.

YEARS IN TRANSITION

Following Hurricane Rita's landfall, Sept. 24, 2005, and the waters reaching 5 feet within the facilities and the roof being ripped apart, months passed before electricity was restored. Then Pastor Les Fogleman made do by living in a donated camper on the

church grounds while coordinating renovations and repairs by volunteer groups from Louisiana and other states.

By Thanksgiving the first group of his members returned to the church and neighbors more slowly trickled into Johnson Bayou throughout the next few months; and, renovations to the worship center and some classrooms were completed by April 2006, allowing church members to hold services once again inside the sanctuary.

Only two years later Hurricane Ike made landfall in Galveston, Texas, Sept. 13, 2008, causing considerable damage also to Cameron Parish, Louisiana, including the destruction of most of Johnson Bayou's businesses and city buildings. Indeed, the damages to the Johnson Bayou Baptist Church facilities resulted in the congregation meeting for the past nine years at a community center, and briefly in the



Submitted photo

Dedicated Dec. 10, 2017, Johnson Bayou Baptist Church's new facility is reinforced against the types of natural disasters, such as hurricanes and flooding, that have hit it before. It includes an auditorium with seating for 100, classrooms, a kitchen with a small fellowship area, restrooms and an elevator.

church parsonage, while working to return to a permanent presence in the community on its original campus.

COMMUNITY ANCHOR

The congregation's persistence paid off with an official groundbreaking ceremony marked by the joining of the first boards of a new church building on June 22, 2016, and then the Dec. 10, 2017, dedication of the new facilities during a special worship service.

Pastor Jack Gandy, who

became pastor of Johnson Bayou Baptist Church in 2007, said now that the church has a permanent presence in the community, he believes the best days are ahead for Johnson Bayou Baptist Church.

The elevated facilities include an auditorium with seating for 100, classrooms, a kitchen with a small fellowship area, restrooms and an elevator. Moreover, in addition to being raised well above former flood levels, the structure was built according to codes to endure sustained high winds.

THE NORM

I wonder how much money I'll have when I turn 67 ½?

What if I don't have enough money to retire in Florida?

Will the stock market crash this year?

How soon can I get to a million?

NOT THE NORM

How can I bless the work of our church and missionaries all over the world with the resources I have?

I can't wait to see what God does in our family as we continue to increase our generosity.

How can I give God the most glory with my income?

When I think about eternity, how can I make my mark?

WWW.NOTTHENORM.LA

Life March from page one

The theme for this year's marches is "Every Life Deserves A Lifetime."

According to the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, preliminary numbers for 2016 show 8,972 abortions took place, an average of 25 per day. The total represents a decrease from the 9,362 abortions reported in 2015 and 10,211 abortions reported in 2014.

"We are excited about spreading the good news of

the pro-life message at the 2018 Louisiana Life March events across Louisiana," said Louisiana Right to Life Executive Director Ben Clapper. "We believe that every human life deserves a lifetime, and no matter a person's condition, age, or location, they deserve our protection. If we, as the people of God, do not stand up and protect the great gift of life that God has blessed us with, who will? Together, we can take one step closer to an

abortion-free Louisiana this January at the Louisiana Life March events."

All the marches are scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. and last until noon.

The march in Baton Rouge has already taken place Jan. 20 but there are still two more.

Further north, the Shreveport/Bossier City march will start at the Boardwalk area in Bossier City, crossing over a bridge before ending in Shreveport's Festival Plaza.

The final march will begin at Louisiana College in Pineville and end at the amphitheater in downtown Alexandria.

The Louisiana Life Marches will feature pro-life supporters from various denominations and organizations, reflecting the diversity of support from sponsors: Louisiana Baptist Convention, Louisiana College, Northwest Louisiana Baptist Association, Louisiana Right to Life, Louisiana Family Forum, Ark-La-Tex Crisis Pregnancy Center, Louisiana Conference of Catholic Bishops, United Pentecostal Church of Louisiana, Heart of Hope Ministries, the Knights of Columbus, Baton Rouge Right to Life, the Susan B. Anthony List, Caring



Doug Collier photo

More than 5,000 walk down Main Street in Pineville before ending their journey in Alexandria during the 2017 Louisiana Life March Central.

to Love Ministries and Louisiana's Concerned Women for America.

For more information

on how to attend one of the marches or to download promotional material, visit prolifelouisiana.org.

IMB from page one

total \$825,376 more for the work of the IMB.

In contrast to the financial blessings it is receiving, the IMB continues to lose more missionaries than it appoints annually.

The net loss of 34 field personnel for the year actually represents a shortage of 134 overseas missionaries based on the published budget plan.

According to statements posted on the Frequently Asked Questions page on IMB.org, the budget provided for "a net gain (from Dec. 2016 to Dec. 2017) of 100 field missionaries, which is approximately 3 percent [more]."

The end of year report means Southern Baptists have lost an additional 255 missionaries, net, from the field since 2016, when 983 departed early after IMB officials announced the need for personnel reduc-

tions and offered incentives to induce voluntary terminations (another 149 stateside staff left in 2016, too).

Speaking June 12 to a select crowd in Phoenix, Arizona, during the SBC Annual Meeting, IMB President David Platt said a turnaround was imminent.

"For years now, we have declined in the number of Southern Baptist missionaries serving around the world," he said. "But this year, the stage is set for that trend to be reversed. The stage is set for Southern Baptists to send more missionaries, through a multiplicity of pathways."

The Baptist Message contacted the mission agency with questions and to allow comment on the continuing personnel losses in light of the entity's financial improvements, but IMB officials did not respond.

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JANUARY

- 16, Sr. Adult "Joy Group" Parkview BC, Monroe
- 21, FBC Ponchatoula w/Voices
- 24, Calvary Baptist School
Evangel Academy
Trinity Heights BC, Shreveport
- 25, Future Business Leaders
of America Conference, LC Campus
- 27, Smith Scholarship Competition, LC Campus

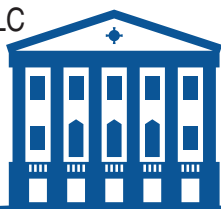
FEBRUARY

- 4, New Hope BC, DeQuincy
- 6, Senior Adult Group, FBC Swartz
- 7, John Curtis Christian, NOLA
- 18, Bayou Vista BC w/Voices of LC
Morgan City
- 25, FBC Houma w/Voices of LC



MARCH

- 5, Spring Creek BC w/Voices of LC
Kentwood
- 13, Alexandria Rotary Club
- 19-20, God in the Workplace
Conference, LC Campus



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Agricultural Missions Fellowship seeking harvest of new members

BY STAFF

Baptist Message

WEST MONROE – Jeff Palmer, executive director of Baptist Global Response, a non-profit Southern Baptist organization that provides hunger and disaster relief and assists in development projects worldwide, will headline

the 2018 Louisiana Baptist Agricultural Missions Fellowship annual meeting.

Scheduled to kick off 9:30 a.m., Jan. 27, at Bethel Baptist Church, West Monroe, the meeting also will include a discussion by Guilherme Prezotti, a program officer for Heifer International in Little Rock, Ark.

Other planned activities include worship and a luncheon.

The Agricultural Development Foundation will hold its winter meeting that afternoon.

The fellowship is the parent organization of the Louisiana Baptist Agricultural Missions Fellowship.

“We are looking forward to gathering with other agriculturally mission-minded colleagues and friends for this annual event,” David Morrison, president of the Louisiana Baptist Agricultural Missions Fellowship, said in a statement via email to the *Baptist Message*. “The two excellent

speakers we are blessed to have will enhance everyone’s interest in helping those who are chronically poor and hungry. The highlight of every annual meeting is being able to consider project proposals from agricultural missionaries and to approve funds for the most worthy projects. In the past two years, our group has provided over \$28,000 for projects to help needy people through IMB missionaries in foreign countries.”

Affiliated with the Louisiana Baptist Convention, the Louisiana Baptist Agricultural Missions Fellowship currently

supports agricultural mission efforts with the Zapotec Indians of southern Mexico and with people groups in Eastern Europe. The organization also raises funds to support water quality and storage in Haiti.

Membership is \$25 annually for individuals or families and \$100 each year for churches or other groups. All proceeds go toward agricultural missions efforts on the field. Membership questions and other inquiries should be mailed to: Agricultural Missions Fellowship, P.O. Box 120, Homer, LA 71040.

Patrick from page 6

CONCLUSION

The narrative being spun is that Southern Baptists left St. Louis completely united, that J.D. Greear’s withdrawal from the race spared us from certain disaster, and that his humble and monumental concession practically purchased for him the SBC presidency in 2018.

At the risk of bursting our bubble -- and however unpopular this sentiment may be -- I am compelled to challenge that narrative. Southern Baptists are not completely united. Greear’s withdrawal did not spare us from any real catastrophe. And no concession of three votes entitles anyone to a future SBC presidency.

One other aspect of this event deserves consideration—the impact of Greear’s withdrawal upon the democratic processes of our congregational polity. By removing himself from the race, Greear actually short circuited our democratic process, removing the decision from the electorate and taking it upon himself to decide the outcome. While it may rightly be deemed a personally gracious gesture, it does nothing at all to

help us more clearly discern the will of a closely divided SBC electorate.

In the final analysis, a lot can happen between now and 2018. The issues dividing us today may be completely resolved. New issues may arise. Greear may not even run for president. We may be raptured by then. But as matters stand right now, as we come out of the convention in St. Louis, this popular narrative deserves to be challenged. No candidate conceding three votes in one election should automatically win the next election as a consolation prize.

Rick Patrick is pastor of First Baptist church, Sylacauga, Ala., publisher of SBC Today (news and discussion regarding Southern Baptist issues of the day), and executive director of Connect 316 (a network which promotes a countering view to neo-Calvinism).



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Baptisms from page one

chairman Yancy Wilmot told the *Baptist Message*. "And the cool thing is so many family members came. God is doing something special here, one student at a time."

The catalyst for the baptisms was a September chapel service and a message by longtime teacher Dickie Collier centered on 2 Timothy 3:16 which he expanded to focus on what Scripture says about the importance of joining a local church and being obedient through baptism after salvation.

One by one, 20 students, who already had professed Christ as Lord and committed to live for Him, stepped out from their seats seeking to be baptized.

Wilmot counseled the students, met with their parents, and sought guidance from Parkview Baptist Pastor Michael Hardaway. In the end, nine of the students chose to be baptized at their respective local churches, and the remaining 11 asked to be baptized at the school.

Senior Alycia Boucher, one of the students baptized during the special Oct. 18 service, had been saved in 2014 but had not followed through with baptism. Collier's message touched her heart, and she jumped at the opportunity.

"This solidified my faith and gave me confidence and reassurance in furthering my everyday relationship with God," Boucher said. "On top of that, being able to share this experience with some of my closest friends and having the support of my family, friends and the people of Parkview Baptist School made this day a memory I will cherish forever."

Another senior, Connor Joffrion, was convicted, too.

"I realized baptism was a

very important step in my walk with Christ," Joffrion said. "Baptism is a step of obedience that every Christian should take in their walk with Christ. Baptism itself does not save you or give you salvation. The only way one can receive salvation is by believing in what the Lord sent His son Jesus Christ to do on the cross for every one of our sins."

"This is why this act is called believer's baptism," he continued. "It is the next step you take of obedience after you are one with Christ. It means a lot to me because it symbolizes me dying with Christ and raising up from the dead with Him and becoming a new and righteous creation."

CHURCH-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

Don Mayes, superintendent of the Parkview Baptist elementary, middle and high schools, said the church staff is supportive with equipping the school staff and students with tools to grow closer with Christ, and he credited the church for setting the stage for the 20 baptisms that resulted.

"Stability between the church and school is important," said Mayes, also a graduate of the school. "There are so many people who have a heart for the Lord at the church and see that we have a job that matters. When you are promoting Christ you have a reason to get up every morning. With the partnership between the church and our school, we truly share a special bond and passion for reaching this generation for Christ."

ON-MISSION STUDENTS

A commitment to sharing the Gospel is not just limited to the weekly chapel services.

The students take several mission trips each year, including Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica and Nicaragua.

Recently, three students indicated a desire to enter a career in full-time missions, sharing their decisions during senior night at a football game.

Wilmot said the staff has fostered a love for missions among the students and that this heart change is starting to pay off beyond the halls of Parkview Baptist School.

"We are proud of them," Wilmot said. "The love for missions is instilled starting with our elementary chapel services and is carried on throughout their time here. Over the last several years we have invested in younger students and prepping them to be strong all the way through. Now they have gotten through high school and are making a difference for Christ, in their community and the world."

ON THE MOVE

■ **Charles (wife Sue) Malone** is the new pastor at Bethlehem Baptist Church, Winnfield.

■ **Reid Terry** resigns as pastor of Searcy Baptist Church, Trout.

■ **David Logan** is the new minister of music at First Baptist Church, Covington.

■ **Jake (wife Karen) Roudkovski** is the interim senior pastor at First Baptist Church, Mandeville

HOMEcoming

■ First Baptist Church, Minden: **Homecoming**, February 4, 10:30 a.m., building dedication. Guests: **Chuck Kelly, president of New Orleans Baptists Theological Seminary and his wife Rhonda Kelly**. Pastor: Leland Crawford.

REVIVAL

■ Crockett Point Baptist Church, Crowville: **Revival**, February 4-7, Evangelist: **Bill Britt**. Pastor: Curtis Owens.

LAGNIAPPE

■ Calvary Baptist Church, Forest Hill is **seeking committed musicians to form a praise team**.

Positions needed are: lead guitar, rhythm guitar, bass player, drummer, and keyboard/piano player. Singers are also encouraged to reply. Anyone interested (serious inquires only) in filling any of these positions can contact Aaron Dunn at 337.655.0237 or Wayne Dunn at 318.733.0248. Pastor:

■ New Life Baptist Church, DeRidder: **"Soup for the Soul - Sowing Seeds of Hope"**, January 26, 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Entertainment: **Peanut Butter & Jelly**, comedians. There will be a gumbo luncheon, silent auction and door prizes. Cost: \$10 and tickets can be purchased at the door. Proceeds will assist Beauregard Christian Women's Job Corps

in providing women in need with life and job skills. Pastor: Jerry Key.

■ **Man-Up Men's Conference**, Ruston: January 26, 6 p.m., Ruston Civic Center. Guest Speaker: **Hank Hough of Kingdom Dog Ministries**. Cost: \$15 (Includes dinner) at the door.

■ Georgetown Baptist Church, Georgetown: **Josh Blakesley in concert**, January 26, 7 p.m. Pastor: Carl Griffith.

■ First Baptist Church, Bogalusa: **Chili Cook Off**, January 28, 6 p.m. Categories include bean chili, no bean chili and not a chili. Pastor: Greg Whaley.

■ First Baptist Church, Lafayette: **Couples Conference**, February 2 - 3. Speaker: **Dudley Bienvenu**, Founder and Director of Bienvenu Counseling Services. This conference is designed to help couples to connect, reconnect and stay connected through challenges. Seasons of Life is designed for married, dating, engaged, and separated couples, 18 and over, who have a sincere desire to improve and strengthen their relationship. Both partners must pre-register and attend all four sessions. The event is free and open to the public and there is no charge for materials. Please arrange for your own childcare, as childcare will not be provided at the church. Pastor: Steve Horn.

■ Bonita Road Baptist Church, Bastrop: **Wild Game Supper**, February 2, 6 p.m. Guest Speaker: **Mark Newell of Tecomate**. There will be lots of door prizes, great food, hunting items auction, drawing for a giveaway and more. All proceeds go toward sponsoring a child with cancer or terminal illness. Pastor: Casey Johnson.

■ First Baptist Church, Pineville: **First@First Business Leader Luncheon**, February 5, noon. Speaker: **Michael Laidler with the John Maxwell Leadership Group**. Cost: \$10 and you may pay at the door. Please RSVP to Stewart Holloway (sholloway@fbcpineville.net.) Pastor: Stewart Holloway.

■ Judson Baptist Retreat Center, St. Francisville: **Adult Fish Fry**, February 6, 9:30 a.m.-noon. Special Guest: **Hunter Erwin**. Cost: \$10. Registration:

9:30 -10 a.m. Music: 10 a.m. Lunch: 11 a.m. Please call 225.634.7225 by February 1, 2018 to reserve your place.

■ Camp Living Waters, Loranger: **Youth Winter Retreat**, February 11-12, starting at 4 p.m. on February 11 and ending at 4 p.m. on February 12. Speaker: David Odom, NOBTS. Music: First Ponchatoula Praise Band. Take some time off with your youth this winter for a quick get away. Cost: \$75 (includes 1 night lodging, 3 meals) (\$10/person deposit). Registration closes February 4. To register go to clw@camplivingwaters.net or call 985.345.1831 for more information.

IN REMEMBRANCE

■ **Almos "Calvin" Cantrell, Sr.**, 85, a trailblazing giant in evangelism passed away January 13. Called to preach at Louisiana Baptist Encampment in Mandeville at the age of 16, he served as Associate Evangelism Director with the Louisiana Baptist Convention for 22 years (September 1, 1973 until his retirement on August 31, 1994). He was named "Outstanding Pastor" by the Louisiana Baptist Convention in 1971. He was listed in "Who's Who in Religion" in 1977 and 1991 and in "Who's Who in the South" in 1999. He received his Doctor of Divinity Degree in 1980. He served as President of the State Evangelism Directors in 1982. He directed 14 overseas crusades (Africa, Australia, South Korea, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and in Hong Kong) for the Louisiana Baptist Convention. Most recently, he served as the pastor of Hudson Creek Baptist Church in the Big Creek Baptist Association. He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Dorothy (Adcock), three children, Beth Whittington (Buster), Calvin Cantrell, Jr. (Brenda), and Paul Cantrell (Rhonda); six grandchildren; thirteen great grandchildren and sister, Jewel C. Parker. He was preceded in death by his parents, David and Clara Brewer Cantrell; brothers, David Cantrell and Leroy Cantrell and sister, Neater D. Batten. He was buried in St. Clair Cemetery, located in Boyce, Jan. 15.

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.

zpkjwip dhezp hobjp bhkh pqkbqod kqgqecqv

bzkqtizp zj gjtqgecq bqqv, htv shb vqoecqkqv jd h

gpeov spqt bpq shb nhbz hiq, yqghwbq bpq

xwviqv pef dhezpdwo spj phv nkjfebqv.

pqykqsb qoqcqt:qoqcqt

Clues:
H = A; G = C

Answer to January 11 Scripture Crypto:
Second Samuel nine:eight

Zenoria from page 3

rial possessions to looking what God can do with your material possessions."

Johnson said his congregation has responded to God's favor and the support from the community by engaging in ministry, such as hosting 58 hunters for a wild game supper and hosting a fall festival for the families in the area.

"What we're trying to do is attract people who are on the margin, who are not regular church goers and have a need for salvation, and, a need for fellowship and are open to Christians," Johnson said. "These additions to our facility will really enhance everything we do as a church and as the family of God in the Zenoria community."



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