



THE BAPTIST MESSAGE

March 31, 2022

Volume 137 • Issue No. 4

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TOP 5 CHURCHES

1. **Celebration Church**
New Orleans/Northshore
campuses

317

2. **Cypress Baptist Church**
Benton

286

3. **First Baptist Church**
Covington

105

4. **The Bayou Church**
Lafayette

95

5. **Journey Church**
Pineville

93

BAYOU STATE BAPTISMS

Churches shared Christ during disaster-plagued '21

By **Brian Blackwell**
Message staff writer

NEW ORLEANS, La. (LBM) – Despite a plague of weather disasters amid a worldwide pandemic, Louisiana Baptists continued to sow and reap in 2021.

According to the Annual Church Profile, Celebration Church (campuses in the New Orleans and Northshore areas) had the most baptisms of any Louisiana Baptist congregation in 2021 (317). Rounding out the top five were: Cypress Baptist Church, Benton (286); First Baptist Church, Covington (105); Bayou Church, Lafayette (95); and Journey Church, Pineville (93).

The database showed that churches of all sizes continued to reap spiritual harvests, and those listed below had the most baptisms, per capita (using average worship attendance), among congregations of similar size. (See box to the right).

See **BAPTISMS**, page 3



Submitted photo

Pastor Dennis Watson and members of Celebration Church have continued to see God reach the New Orleans and Northshore areas with the Gospel. They recorded the most baptisms of any Louisiana Baptist congregation in 2021.

NOTE: The ratios below are a good basis for comparing evangelism effectiveness across congregation sizes. The figure "6:1" means that, on average, it only took six people in the pew to reach one person for Christ (resulting in baptism). So, a lower ratio is better than a higher one. Across the Southern Baptist Convention, the average for 2020 (most recent data) was 36:1. Prior to the pandemic, the ratio was 22:1.

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE OF 251 AND MORE

	IN WORSHIP	BAPTISMS	RATIO
Cypress Baptist, Benton	1592	286	(6:1)
Journey, Pineville	562	93	(6:1)
Eastwood Baptist, Haughton	350	43	(8:1)
First Baptist, Denham Springs	605	72	(8:1)
His Church, Pineville	561	65	(9:1)
East Leesville Baptist, Leesville	450	50	(9:1)
First Baptist, Haughton	608	66	(9:1)

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE OF 76-250

	IN WORSHIP	BAPTISMS	RATIO
First Baptist, Gilbert	130	42	(3:1)
Life Point Community, Mansura	80	29	(3:1)
First Baptist, LaPlace	100	32	(3:1)
Milldale Baptist, Zachary	100	24	(4:1)
Open Road Fellowship, Haughton	85	18	(5:1)
Harmony Baptist, Delhi	150	31	(5:1)
United Outreach Baptist, Shreveport	125	25	(5:1)

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE OF 1-75

	IN WORSHIP	BAPTISMS	RATIO
Western Hills Baptist, Shreveport	75	28	(3:1)
Natalbany Baptist, Natalbany	30	9	(3:1)
New Orleans Chinese Church, N.O.	20	6	(3:1)
Bethsadia Baptist, Many	19	5	(4:1)
First Baptist, Gretna	31	8	(4:1)
Rescue, West Monroe	20	5	(4:1)
Oak Forest Baptist, Leesville	20	5	(4:1)
Turkey Creek Baptist, Gilbert	20	5	(4:1)
Calvary Baptist, Bayou Chicot	50	12	(4:1)

EASTER REFLECTIONS: Who killed Jesus?

By **Will Hall**
Message executive editor

ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM)—Perhaps there is no more controversial question than "Who killed Jesus?"

In the early 1960s there was a contentious debate among scholars about whether Jews or Gentiles had killed Jesus. There were charges of anti-Semitism on the one hand and counter

claims of bias against Italians, with neither ethnic group wanting to bear the burden of having murdered Christ.

See **REFLECTIONS**, page 9

Two associations welcome new associational ministry strategists

By Brian Blackwell
Message staff writer

DERIDDER, La. (LBM) – Two Louisiana Baptist Associations recently welcomed their new ministry and mission coordinators:

LaSalle Baptist Association, Carl Gulde; and Beauregard Baptist Association, Tom Bruce.

CARL GULDE

Gulde, long-time pastor

of Bethel Baptist Church, Colfax, became the associational ministry director with the LaSalle Baptist Association Feb. 14. He follows Buddy Willis, who retired from the position, Dec. 31, 2021.

A native of Trout, Gulde found Christ at 12 while attending a revival with Fellowship Baptist Church of Trout, La. Three years later, in 1962, he preached his first sermon, sharing a message with Hurricane Creek Baptist Church.

“At 15 I knew I would one day preach and that would be my life’s work,” Gulde told the Baptist Message. “My heart has always been to reach lost people.”

During the years that followed, Gulde served as representative for the Gideons International, coached

and taught social studies at Jena’s junior and senior high schools, and served with various congregations.

Additionally, he served 23 years in the National Guard and was part of Operation Desert Storm, the U.S.-led military action that liberated Kuwait from Iraqi occupation during the Persian Gulf War in 1991.

In January 1997, Gulde was called to his first pastorate, Pritchard Baptist Church, Jonesville. He also served as pastor with other Louisiana Baptist churches: First Baptist Church, Crowville (1999-2005), First Baptist Church, Oak Grove (2005-2010), and Bethel Baptist Church, Colfax (2010-2022). Additionally, he has been a Louisiana Baptist Convention trustee over Louisiana College (1993-1999)

and served on the LBC Executive Board (2000-2006).

He and his wife, Clara, have two children and five grandchildren.

Gulde said his vision for LaSalle association is to see the churches continue to reach the unsaved and to disciple the saints.

“I want to see the churches strengthened and reach the parish for Christ,” he said. “LaSalle Association has a wonderful mission house with a well-trained staff and volunteers. I am looking forward to serving the pastors and the churches of this association.”

TOM BRUCE

Bruce, who served on staff with First Baptist Church, Sulphur, for nearly 22 years, became associational mission strategist for Beauregard Baptist Association, March 7. He replaced Tim Patrick, who vacated the position, April 2021, to pursue other ministry opportunities.

He and wife Amy have two grown children.

Bruce told the Baptist Message that he trusted Jesus as his Savior at the age of 10 and surrendered to ministry at FBC Sulphur at 21. Since that time, he has served in two churches in Texas as youth minister until he moved back to Sulphur in May 2001. While at FBC Sulphur, Bruce served in various capacities: youth, education, administration, missions, outreach, sr. adults, family ministry and associate pastor.

Bruce said he sensed, during the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, that God was about to bring a change in his life.

See NEW, page 4

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Baptisms from page one

Louisiana Baptist Evangelism and Church Growth Team Director Keith Manuel said he is thankful for the many churches who baptize and have a zeal to shed the light of Christ in a world that faces uncertainty.

"Easter is always one of the highest attended days of worship," Manuel told the Baptist Message. "This year -- in light of the crises of health, inflation, and war -- may be one of the greatest opportunities to touch hurting people with the Gospel. This generation is ripe for revival. People need peace in a world of turmoil. They need the peace of Jesus."

CELEBRATION

Changed lives have been the norm since 1989, when Pastor Dennis Watson and a congregation of 86 members committed to impact New Orleans for Christ. Attendance grew to an average of 1,800 until Hurricane Katrina made landfall in August 2005. Afterward, participation dropped by 60 percent.

In response, Watson marshaled the staff and members, reformatted the church's ministry strategy, and began working more closely with other churches for greater collective impact of communities

within the city.

The church has since dealt with other natural disasters, and each time members have responded to see a spiritual harvest.

"When people see and hear how Jesus has transformed our people's lives, circumstances and relationships, they want to learn more about whether and how the Lord can accomplish the same life-changing works in their lives, circumstances and relationships," Watson said.

Five of Celebration Church's eight campuses and hundreds of members' homes sustained significant damage from Hurricane Ida, Aug. 29, 2021, and yet the congregation recorded 317 baptisms for the year.

In 2018, Celebration set a record for the congregation, baptizing 796 new believers (who completed new believer's training) from among 2,669 individuals who made professions of faith.

CYPRESS

Cypress Baptist's formula to baptize more than 286 new converts in 2021 (and 238 the year before) was simple.

"Everything we do is the Gospel," Pastor John Fream said. "We don't have a goal to baptize a certain number of people each year, but we

just want to introduce as many people as we can to Jesus.

"People are desperately hurting for truth and the Gospel is what we've got," he continued. "We give them the Gospel."

When Fream became pastor in 2008, worship service averaged 402 attendees each week, and the congregation recorded 14 baptisms.

Then Fream encouraged his members to share the Gospel more.

The next year average attendance increased to 737 and the church saw 76 new believers baptized.

Fream said congregants have continued to embrace their calling to reach Benton and beyond for Christ, even with the pandemic.

This year, the church has two main focuses: completion of a 60,000-sq.-ft. indoor recreational facility that will be used to host sporting events, and a three-week special outreach (that will feature former Heisman Trophy winner Tim Tebow on Palm Sunday, then a special emphasis on Easter, leading to a goal

for "high attendance day" in Sunday school the following week).

"If we can get them coming three weeks in a row then we have a better chance of getting them to come regularly to Cypress," Fream said. "God has given us so many opportunities to minister and share the Gospel and we want the community to know we are here for them."

FIRST GILBERT

FBC Gilbert has seen a wave of baptisms in 2022. So far, Pastor Bubba Ezell has baptized 18 new converts, including eight on Feb. 21. If the pace continues, the congregation will eclipse last year's high mark of 42 (the church baptized 25 in 2020).

Ezell attributes the baptisms to his congregation's presence in the community that includes its "Amazing Grace" addiction ministry.

Ministering to addicts is highly personal for Ezell, who, after hitting rock bottom, found Christ in 2014 as a patient at a treatment facility in Logansport. Ezell

said there are many in his community who are struggling with addictions and Christ is their only hope.

Since he became involved in ministering to addicts at treatment centers and jails across north Louisiana, Ezell has seen 2,000 people come to a relationship with Christ. He estimates 150 of that group have joined FBC Gilbert and followed through with baptism since 2017.

"Everywhere Jesus went He ministered to the downtrodden and broken-hearted," Ezell said. "When we see people as 'an opportunity to share the Gospel' -- and have the courage to do it and don't count the cost -- it's showing the love of God."

"The leper fell down and Jesus was willing to touch him," he continued. "Jesus' touch was enough to heal him then and Jesus' touch is still enough in people's lives. That's the heart of our ministry and church. When we move to them and are willing to touch them, we make a difference."

See BAPTISMS, page 9

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LBCH's new foster care approach engages associations

By Brian Blackwell
 Message staff writer

MONROE, La. (LBM) – The Louisiana Baptist Children's Home and Family Ministries has introduced a new model to help associations better engage churches in foster care and adoption ministry.

"While each individual church may be involved in foster care and adoption ministry independently, this model encourages a coordination of efforts to serve the foster care community as an association," Kerri Byrd, director of Connect1Child foster care and adoption services for the LBCHFM, told the Baptist Message. "The

model helps to prevent a duplication of services among member churches and provides a more streamlined approach to meet urgent needs."

Under this new approach that was introduced during a meeting at the Eastern Louisiana Baptist Association in late January, an associational

foster care and adoption ministry coordinator (trained by LBCHFM staff) will organize foster care and adoption ministry efforts throughout his or her association. Through this model, the association can establish support groups for foster parents, provide life essentials for foster children and sponsor events for foster families.

The coordinator will serve multiple roles:

- recruit a foster care and adoption ministry director in each associational church;
- work closely with Connect1Child staff to develop relationships (within both their local branch of the Department of Children and Family Services and with foster care and adoption community partners) to identify existing

See FOSTER CARE, page 6

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RAs to prep boys for combat

By Staff
 Baptist Message

WOODWORTH, La. (LBM) – First through sixth grade boys will have the opportunity to enlist in the Lord's Army during the 2022 Royal Ambassador Congress.

The event, April 8-9 at Tall Timbers Conference Center in Woodworth, will feature a military-themed obstacle course, re-enactment of biblical battles and encouraging messages by Casey Casady, a chaplain with the National Guard and college minister at Temple Baptist Church, Ruston.

"Join the Army of the Lord" is the theme, based

on 2 Timothy 2:4.

RA Congress also will include a Pinewood Derby, soap box races and presentations from missionaries.

The missions offering collected will go to the National Guard's family readiness program, which offers resources to help families navigate military life.

"I'm excited about our boys learning about some of the battles from the Bible and learning respect for those defending our country and help in times of need," RA Consultant Mike Collie said. "Hopefully some of them will have a life-changing event while they are there to be involved in some of these areas."

Visit louisianabaptists.org/RACongress (download registration form; more info).

New from page 2

As for the future, Bruce said his focus for the next year will be to build relationships with pastors and churches in the association. Afterward, he will develop an overall strategy for the coordinated work of the association.

"We are one big family," Bruce said. "Ecclesiastes says a cord of three strands is not easily broken. Well, a cord of 44 churches makes one big tug rope. Working together as an association, God can use us to pull a lot of people out of the darkness and into His marvelous light! I'm looking forward to grabbing ahold of the rope with the wonderful people in BBA."

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Parents' hope alive after son's death

By Brian Blackwell
Message staff writer

TERRY, Miss. (LBM) – Pastor Lee Faler and wife Jordan are effusive about God's faithfulness to them after losing their son to brain cancer.

Rankin was only 6 years old when he died.

Faler said despite the pain, he and Jordan were buoyed by what he described as "God's endless love" while they traveled through a dark valley.

"This has shown me how strong Jesus' love is for us," Faler, pastor of First Baptist Church, Terry, told the *Baptist Message* prior to a recent revival service at Boeuf River Baptist Church, Winnsboro. "He is not just sufficient to save. He is sufficient to sustain. It was something we knew in our heads but now we know it in our hearts be-

cause He's walked it Himself and He's walked it with us.

"Your trials can make you better or they can make you bitter," he continued. "I don't know exactly when it happened for me. But somewhere between August and right now, the Lord ignited a hunger in my heart for Him -- to the point that my prayer has been 'God if I can't be white hot and I can't have the fire, then I have too much in Heaven waiting for me. Take me home if I can't be useful.'"

CHALLENGED

The journey began in March 2021, when they returned from a family vacation. Rankin had complained about a headache and was taken to the emergency room at a hospital in Jackson, Mississippi, not far from their home in Terry.

Rankin grew weaker in the next few days and when he did not regain his strength, he underwent more medical tests. The doctors discovered he had stage 4 glioblastoma multiforme (a fast-growing and aggressive brain tumor).

The family spent the next six months in and out of the hospital with Rankin, all the while praying with scores of others from around the country for a miracle they knew might not be granted.

ENCOURAGED

Faler said his family was amazed at the love and kindness generously shared with them:

- words of encouragement arrived via Facebook, text messages, phone calls, postal mail and e-mail;
- community members rang the church bell, 6 p.m., June 28-Aug. 17, as part of



Brian Blackwell photo

Jordan and Lee Faler have remained faithful to the Lord and each other despite losing their son, Rankin, 6, to brain cancer in August 2021.

a nightly reminder to pray for the Falers;

- FBCT's deacons approved payment of salary with benefits to Faler, even though he was unable to preach; and
- members of the

congregation cleaned the Faler's home, brought meals and washed clothes (March to September).

Financial gifts also poured in.

See HOPE, page 10

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Pastors briefed on key legislative issues for 2022 session

By Brian Blackwell
Message staff writer

BATON ROUGE, La. (LBM) – Pastors and guests, on March 15 following the Governor's Prayer Breakfast, received an update on important bills that will be presented during the current Legislative Session.

During the event at First Baptist Church, Baton Rouge, that was co-sponsored by the Louisiana

Family Forum with the Louisiana Baptist Office of Public Policy, LFF President Gene Mills said 26 of the estimated 1,200 pieces of legislation are considered "bills to watch."

"To those who have ears to hear and eyes to see and a heart to understand, we know as covenant people we serve a covenant God, and He is at work in the world today," Mills said. "We have a responsibility to go to

the need, to go to the place where decisions are made and to present in the arena of ideas a truth that has fallen out of favor, a truth to a generation that is not even certain there is such a thing as truth or transcendental truths anymore."

PRAYERS NEEDED

Legislators asked the crowd for their prayers.

Rep. Rick Edmonds, a former pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Shreveport, said prayer for legislators is needed.

"This is going to be a historic session," he said. "These next two years are going to be critical (for) many of the things you believe in, many things you prayed for, many of your top issues."

Speaker of the House Clay Schexnayder thanked the crowd for their prayers, saying legislators were facing decisions of importance to the faith community.

He said in the last two

years when times were difficult, legislators proved their desire to make Louisiana better. He referenced Senate President Pro Tempore Beth Mizell's bill that was key to bringing the legislature into a special session last year. Mizell, a member of First Baptist Church, Franklin-ton, sponsored S.B. 156 that would have prevented biological males (as transgender women) from taking women's sports team spots away from biological females.

The bill earned super majority votes in the House and Senate during the regular session. But some lawmakers withdrew their support during the special override session, causing the bill to fall two votes short in the

House of the super majority needed to override Gov. Edwards's veto.

Mizell will bring up the bill for a vote again this session.

"We didn't lose that battle," Schexnayder said. "We brought awareness across the board. And I think you are going to see a newfound energy this coming session with that bill back and I know Senator Mizell is going to do a great job of getting that back to us on our side. And we are going to get that passed for everybody in the state of Louisiana to help protect women and help protect the right of young ladies in this state."

See BRIEFED, page 8

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Foster Care from page 4

resources and understand ongoing needs within the foster care community; and

-- serve as a point-of-contact for DCFS and community partners to communicate needs to associational churches.

LBCHFM President and CEO Perry Hancock hopes this new model will lead even more couples to answer the call to foster care ministry.

"We say it all the time that our churches can do more together than they can on their own," Hancock said. "That is certainly true with foster care and adoption ministries. A church with 50 mem-

bers can have as great an impact as a church with 1,000 members.

"Our vision for Connect1Child has always been to have hundreds, if not thousands, of foster children in Louisiana Baptist homes, attending church every Sunday, experiencing God's great love in Christ," he continued. "If every Louisiana Baptist Association implemented this model, we would reach that goal in a very short time and lives would be changed forever."

For more information about foster care and adoption ministry, email Kerri@LBCH.org.

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June 26-28	IMPACT Camp (7th-12th grade)
June 30-July 2	GRIT (Boys 1st-6th grade)
July 4-7	Bloom (Girls 1st-6th grade)
July 8-9	Pre-Camp (PreK-2nd Grade)
July 11-14	Kids on Mission #2 (1st-6th grade)
July 17-21	Journey Camp (7th-12th grade)

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Baucham to Louisianans: God hears, remembers, sees, knows

By Brian Blackwell
Message staff writer

BATON ROUGE, La. (LBM) – Legislators, pastors, businessmen and others started off the second day of the 2022 state legislative session with a focus on God during the Louisiana Governor's Prayer Breakfast.

Keynote speaker Voddie Baucham, a possible nominee for 2022 Southern Baptist Convention president, and Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards were among those who urged a crowd of more than 1,000 to find joy in what has been a trying time for the state.

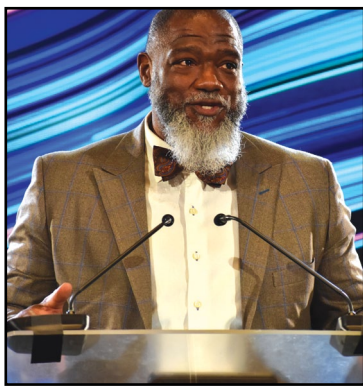
The event, March 15, at the Crowne Plaza Executive Center in Baton Rouge, also featured American Idol winner Laine Hardy (member, Bethel Baptist Church, Livingston), who provided special music, legislators such as

Rep. Gabe Firmant (member, First Baptist Church, Pollock) who read Scripture, and Louisiana Baptist leaders like Rick Brewer, president of Louisiana Christian University, who was part of a multi-person video collaboration in leading the audience in the Model Prayer to close the event.

Baucham reminded those at the prayer breakfast to rejoice in difficult circumstances.

"God is sovereign, and in His providence, He is working all things together for those that love Him and are called according to His purpose," said Baucham, who is on mission from Grace Baptist Church in Houston, Texas, serving as dean of theology at African Christian University in Zambia. "Even things that in themselves are not good, God works together for good."

Citing Exodus 2:23-24,



Voddie Baucham was the keynote speaker at the 2022 Governor's Prayer Breakfast.

Baucham said the Israelites cried out to God to deliver them from bondage and slavery, not understanding God had a plan to answer their prayers, but in His timing.

"The fact that you didn't receive what it was that you were asking for is not an indication that God didn't hear you," he said. "He is God, and nothing escapes His view."

"One of the things that makes it difficult for us

to rejoice is that we think it's only 'enough' if we get what we're asking for," he continued. "If you never get another thing that you ask for, having the Creator of the universe hear you when you pray is 'enough!'"

Baucham reminded the crowd that God hears their groaning, remembers the covenant with His people, sees what they experience and knows everything.

"God neither slumbers, nor sleeps," he said. "There is nothing at all that happens that He does not control."

In his remarks, Gov. John Bel Edwards said finding joy is necessary even though it can be difficult to experience, especially during a pandemic and hurricane.

"We do it because it is the right thing to do, because there are always things to be thankful for," he said. "There are always people

that we can pray for and should pray for."

Jay Johnston, a member of Red Bluff Baptist Church, Folsom, introduced Baucham. He told the *Baptist Message* he was thankful for the opportunity to gather with others in the state to pray.

"The Scripture readings of elected officials, focusing on the beatitudes, combined with the corporate opportunities to pray for our elected officials and the people of Louisiana encouraged me," Johnston said.

"The closing with everyone in attendance saying together the Model Prayer offered a sign of hope, unity and encouragement coming out of the pandemic."

"Dr. Voddie Baucham was on point with his message that 'God is God,'" he continued. "Likewise, Psalm 118:24 as the overall theme for breakfast seemed to resonate with attendees."



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Briefed from page 6

BILLS TO WATCH

SB 44

Mizell's bill would protect the integrity of women competing against other women in sports. She said last year churches stood firm and were engaged on the issue.

"We overrode it in the Senate," she said. "We had a conversation in the House like has never taken place before because the faith community stood firm. You all were engaged, you showed up at the capitol. I hope you saw that as an opportunity not to step away from."

"Over and over people say if I only had the power," she continued. "You are standing here with the power that God has given us. Shame on us if don't act like we've got it."

SB 388

A bill sponsored by Sen. Sharon Hewitt would classify the sale of mail order abortion pills as a felony.

"We know that is not good for the mother and we certainly know that is not good for the baby," she said. "My ask of you is to help us get that bill passed. We want physicians involved. Of

course, we want every baby to be saved and we think that is an important step to take in that journey.

SB 203

Another bill sponsored by Hewitt would create an education savings account for certain students reading below grade level. The money allocated from the state's per-student portion could then be used to cover expenses if a parent wishes to enroll their child in a private or home school.

"At the end of the day it should be about the kids," she said. "It should not be about the teachers or schools or the money. It needs to be about children."

HB 142

A bill sponsored by Rep. Laurie Schlegel would provide liability for publishers and distributors of material harmful to minors.

Schlegel, who holds a degree in marriage and family counseling from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, said she has seen the devastating effects pornography on the Internet has had on people, including children. She said the government has

a compelling interest to protect children.

"What our children are seeing, it's not your father's Playboy," she said. "It is hard-core pornography."

BE DILIGENT, VIGILENT

Voddie Baucham, dean of theology at African Christian University in Zambia and keynote speaker for the Governor's Prayer Breakfast held earlier in the day, encouraged the crowd to disciple and encourage those in government.

"No matter how big, no matter how small, there is a role you can play," he said. "Figure out what that role is, get engaged, destroy every argument that is raised against God and take every thought captive to obey Christ. And in whatever sphere the Lord places you, you be an advocate for the Kingdom of God. And do so in hopes that the Lord bless this place that we call home so it can continue to be a blessing, not just here but around the world."

BE HOPEFUL

Secretary of State Kyle Ardoin praised the residents of Louisiana for their efforts to ensure state elections are fair. He highlighted several up-

coming bills and amendments that could help ensure a fairer voting process: removing those from the rolls who have not voted in the last 10-20 years, strengthening identification for online voter registration, and creating a new voting system that will ensure all votes are counted accurately.

"Election integrity is not for sale," he said. "Election integrity is the cornerstone of our system and it will remain. Louisiana has had a checkered past, but that checkered past is no longer."

In his remarks, State Attorney General Jeff Landry encouraged the crowd to be steadfast in their fight for life.

"The way that we beat Roe is not with one stroke," he said. "It is like water on a mountain, weathering it down. It's piece by piece, brick by brick. We have to be smart, and we have to get ahead of our enemy. Make no mistake about it, the people who ply that trade [of abortion] are enemies of liberty. They are enemies of this country because they don't believe in life."

BE VIGILANT

Will Hall, director of the Louisiana Baptist Office of Public Policy and also executive editor of the *Baptist Message*, said churches were instrumental in passing the Love Life Amendment that protects common sense pro-life laws in the state, defeating an initiative for a proposed

casino in St. Tammany Parish and for calling the legislature into a special session that sought to override Gov. John Bel Edwards' veto of Mizell's bill that would have protected the integrity of women competing against other women in sports (the veto override was unsuccessful).

"It's because of the pastors and many of you in this room," Hall said. "I want to thank you for that."

Looking to the Supreme Court's decision this summer in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* that could overturn *Roe v. Wade* (whose 1973 decision legalized abortion), Hall said churches will have to step up and be an advocate for pregnant women who need assistance. He encouraged Christ followers to establish pregnancy care centers, and consider education, job training and health care opportunities for women and children.

"We need to be looking at not just the death that is happening to the innocent ones inside the womb but look at the death that is happening to the innocent ones outside of the womb," he added, noting statistics that showed Louisiana high school students led their peers, nationally, in alcohol use and the injection of illicit drugs, and were 14th across the country in smoking pot.

"Thank you very much for all the hard work that you are already doing," Hall said. "But get ready, it's going to be tough again this year."

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Reflections from page one

The matter had reached such a boiling point that in 1965 the Catholic Church (Vatican II) attempted to negotiate a neutral position, publishing a treatise of sorts on the matter, "Nostra Aetate," in which it declared that "Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ" but that such blame "cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today."

But despite the attempt to assuage Jewish umbrage, the document still asserted that "some" Jews were responsible for Jesus' death.

On the other hand, historian Mark Allan Powell wrote about the other prevailing view that Jesus was "a Jewish victim of Roman violence."

"A Gentile Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, condemned Him to death and had Him tortured by Gentile

Roman soldiers," he wrote. Moreover, Powell said the high-ranking Jewish authorities involved in Jesus' religious trials "owed their position and power to the Romans" and conspired to kill Jesus because of that influence.

Certainly, the Bible chronicles that Jews and Gentiles, alike, were agents in the death of Jesus:

-- John 18 records that Roman troops and guards and officers of the temple were dispatched together to arrest Jesus.

-- There were three Jewish trials and three Roman ones.

-- Matthew (16:67) and Mark (14:65) document that the scribes and elders in front of Caiaphas the high priest, attacked Jesus and "spat in His face and beat him" and "struck Him with the palms of their hands." Meanwhile, Matthew (27:30) and Mark (15:19) describe how the Roman soldiers "spat on Him"

and "struck Him" when they scourged Jesus.

-- Scripture reveals, too, that Jewish leaders condemned Jesus to death and that Roman officials nailed Jesus to the cross.

Thus, despite Pilate's plea of innocence of "the blood of this just Person" and the Jewish mobs' cry that "His blood be on us and on our children," both were equally culpable in the crucifixion of Christ (Matthew 27:24-25).

A MOOT DEBATE

But two important points are overshadowed in the debate about culpability for

Christ's death.

First, despite serving as agents in Jesus' death, neither Jews nor Romans murdered Jesus. For that matter, our sins are equally responsible (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Yet, Jesus was not murdered. Instead, He surren-

dered to the cross.

Indeed, He made this very point, countering Pilate's claim to "have power to crucify You" and "power to release You," by telling him, "You have no power

See REFLECTIONS, page 12



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~ The late Dr. Roy Fish, Former Director of Evangelism at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Baptisms from page 3

WESTERN HILLS BAPTIST

Pastor Joey Ketchum and his congregation are taking the Church to the streets of Shreveport.

Through this outreach, hundreds have come to Christ, including 28 converts he baptized in 2021 (an increase from nine in 2020) at the multi-cultural Western Hills Baptist Church that averages 75 attendees for Sunday worship.

"My heart is one-to-one discipleship," Ketchum said. "I don't want to be the pastor who just talks from the podium, but I want the people in my community to see me living out the Gospel in the neighborhoods."

When he became pastor of Western Hills in 2006, the makeup of the congregation was mostly Anglo in a neighborhood that was largely African American. To bridge the gap, Ketchum said he asked God how he could best reach the community. Nine years later, he began to make inroads with the neighborhood through relationships -- that still are strong today -- built at schools, ball fields and homes.

"My vision for 2022 is a Kingdom perspective," said Ketchum, who has baptized four new believers in 2022, with four more baptisms scheduled. "With all the violence happening in our city, and culture, the time calls not for a change, but a transformation."

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Vendors sought for CENLA missions and ministry fair

PINEVILLE, La. (LBM) – The Central Louisiana Baptist Association is seeking vendors for its upcoming missions and ministry fair.

Slated for May 1, 6-8 p.m., at Trinity Baptist Church, Pineville, the event schedule

includes worship, a message of encouragement and a time for participants to visit tables of various state mission organizations.

Organizer Richard Bullock, also pastor of College Drive Baptist Church,

Pineville, said the event will inform participants about the mission opportunities in the area, motivate them to pray for, give and become involved further in local missions, and champion missions in their own churches.

Bullock expects more than 20 vendors at the event.

"I encourage everyone to come hear and see what God is doing through the faithfulness of His people," Bullock told the *Baptist Message*. "I believe God will open doors

and pour out blessings upon His people as we are faithful to His call to missions and ministry."

Contact Bullock for more information, gm-bull50@yahoo.com, or 318.729.7199.

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Hope from page 5

The family received enough money to cover their medical and living expenses. Additionally, more than \$30,000 was given in Rankin's memory to establish a scholarship fund for nursing and pre-medical students attending William Carey University (Hattiesburg, Mississippi) and Mississippi College (Clinton, Mississippi).

Students at Copiah Academy, Gallham (where Jordan teaches algebra) learned about the situation and raised more than \$5,000 to purchase playground equipment.

"As a pastor you are so used to walking with people on their darkest days," he said. "Our church walked with us in our difficulties."

HOPEFUL

Jordan Faler noted that while the loss of a child can cause serious marital strife, her relationship with Terry remained strong because they prayed and kept each other focused on God.

"I wanted people to see God through our suffering," she said. "We wanted our

suffering to be a megaphone that broadcast how wonderful and good God is even in the hard times.

"It's a choice too," she continued. "You have to choose how to react in these situations. We could have very well shut down and said, 'We are not in this together,' but we didn't."

Looking to the future, Faler asked for prayer as his family continues to adjust to life after the loss of Rankin.

"We know we are going to grieve," he said. "But we want to grieve in hope."

"Our heart all along was to point people to Jesus," he continued. "We wanted to guard against pride and walk in humility; and we wanted to walk in desperation and dependence on Christ."

"Continue to pray for our marriage because we know what this could do and on our worst days what any of us are capable of doing," he said. "Pray for our kids and that we would shepherd them well, too."

Contact the scholarship fund manager: 601.292.3210.

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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:
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Students equipped to 'proclaim' at CEC

By Brian Blackwell
Message staff writer

NEW ORLEANS, La. (LBM) —Chip Luter challenged more than 400 Baptist Collegiate Ministry students and staff, who were attending the 2022 College Evangelism Conference, to be obedient to Christ even when the future is unknown.

The March 11-12 event drew students from 21 BCMs to the campus of the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

"Obedience in the unseen happens when our faith in God is based on Who He is rather than what we can do," Luter, associate pastor at Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, New Orleans, told the students.

Luter's message was part of a two-day gathering designed to equip participants to share their faith; and it included worship by song led by contemporary Christian artist Joe Reddick. His message and the focus of the various breakout seminars were centered on the

theme, "proclaim," based on 1 Chronicles 16:23.

Referencing Hebrews 11:7, Luter told the students that unconditional obedience requires the right relationship, reverence, and reality.

"Examine what barriers in your life cause you to be disobedient to God," he said. "Explore what God may be calling you into right now in regard to His vision of Revelation 7:9. If international missions are where the Lord is leading you, engage with the International Mission Board for opportunities to help fulfill the purpose God has for you."

Luter's remarks were also a part of the kickoff tour of REV7:9, an International Mission Board initiative designed to create a community of 18-25-year-olds who are committed to seeing the vision that God laid out in Revelation 7:9 realized.

"Speaking to these students was humbling and exciting," Luter told the Baptist Message. "The Lord has great plans for how these young people will impact thou-

sands of lives for the Gospel all over the world. I'm just blessed that I get to be part of the work the IMB is doing to mobilize young adults to global missions."

NOBTS President Jamie Dew, in his message based on Matthew 9:35-39, told participants that Christ was moved with compassion for the broken and lost, and that even today He instructs His followers to pray for laborers to enter the harvest.

He then offered five principles to know how to discern God's call on their life:

-- Always start with Scripture. The Bible identifies ways His followers might serve in the body.

-- Be active in service to the body of Christ. This allows His followers to see where their gifts might be and allows the body of Christ to speak into a calling.

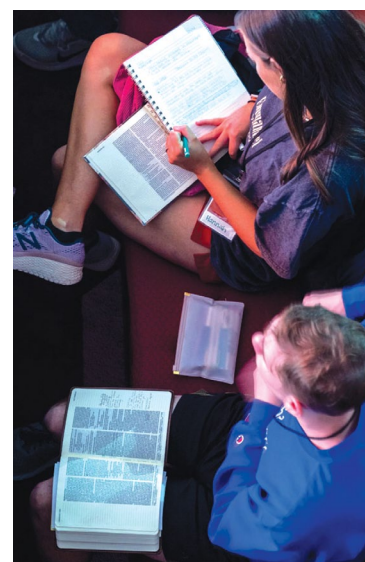
-- Walk in long-sustained seasons of submission, dependence and seeking. As His followers walk with Christ over long periods of time God re-shapes the passions of their hearts.

-- After long-sustained seasons of submission, dependence and seeking, pay attention to the burdens and passions that God has given.

-- Pay attention to the affirmation and confirmation of the body of Christ. Providentially, God uses His people to speak into a calling.

"I am particularly burdened to see the next generation of servants called out by the Church," Dew told the *Baptist Message*. "Everywhere we look in the SBC we see major pipeline issues: The IMB needs 500 new missionaries each year. NAMB needs 200 new church planters. Many of our states are seeing

See CEC, page 12



IMB photo

Chip Luter, associate pastor at Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, preached a sermon from Hebrews 11:6-7 encouraging students to follow Noah's example of "obedience in the unseen."

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Reflections from page 9

at all against Me, unless it had been given to you from above.”

It is the truth contained in that most elegant of explanations of the Gospel found in John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

You see, murder is the unauthorized taking of life. But Jesus laid down His life willingly for you and me!

It is the most excellent example of the lesson Jesus shared with His disciples during the Last Supper.

After washing His apostles’ feet and giving them “a new commandment” to love each other in the manner that He loved them (John 14:1-17; 31-35), Jesus told them the ultimate expression of love is “

to lay down one’s life for his friends,” (John 15:13).

Moreover, Jesus showed that perfect love for them, for

you and for me on the cross.

But an equally important point about the death of Jesus is this: The debate about “Who killed Jesus?” ignores the more critical truth that Jesus did not just die on the cross. He arose!

All four Gospels share wonderful details about the resurrection.

But, perhaps my favorite passage, and maybe the most overlooked, is Matthew 27:51-53.

“Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.”

You see, God raised Christ from the grave, and He resurrected many saints, too. Saints, who, being known for their belief that Jesus is the Christ, were reunited with family, friends and neighbors. Their rotted flesh was made new; yet covered still by tattered grave linens.

They gave testimony to the resurrection of Jesus, as word spread about His appearance in Jerusalem, igniting a surge in the growth of the Church which previously had few adherents.

Additionally, they were witnesses, they are the evidence, that He will raise us

from the grave, too.

Jesus’ death was necessary to pay the price for the sins of humanity. But His resurrection was needed to show we have victory over death.

Thus, the debate about “Who killed Jesus?” is irrelevant. He gave His life that we might live!

CEC from page 11

a shortage of pastors, youth pastors, worship leaders and the like, and more and more pastors are retiring or facing burnout from the difficulties of the last few years.

“The need for ministers of the Gospel is always great, but as in Jesus’ day,” he continued, “the laborers are few. I’m praying God will indeed call out more laborers for His harvest.”

Mark Robinson, state director of BCMs, said he was pleased with the student’s response to the challenge to proclaim the Gospel on their campuses, communities and beyond.

“CEC 2022 was all we

could have hoped for -- bringing Louisiana university students back together after the long pandemic break from large gatherings,” Robinson said. “We sought to challenge students to consider their call to ministry both in our state and around the world. Also, specific seminar training was provided to equip students for service. Our partnership with New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and the International Mission Board propelled that vision to a reality. We will see quite a resurgence of passion for the nations among our Louisiana collegiates.”

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SBC CP dollars hire pro-LGBTQ lawyers for EC

By Don Hinkle
The Pathway editor

NASHVILLE – Up to \$2 million of Cooperative Program funds will be paid by the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) Executive Committee (EC) to cover legal fees of its newly-retained law firm that supports the Nashville Pride festival, the LGBTQ Bar, and is praised by the Human Rights Campaign, one of the nation's largest LGBTQ organizations.

Bradley Legal was highlighted in Human Rights Campaign's material, and the firm has touted the link in several releases. "Bradley is pleased to announce that the firm scored a 90 out of 100 on the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's 2022 Corporate Equality Index (CEI), the nation's foremost benchmarking survey and report measuring corporate policies and practices related to LGBTQ+ workplace equality," the law firm reported on its web site. "I am pleased to see the firm's hard work recognized once again in the Corporate Equality Index," said Bradley Chairman of the Board and Managing Partner Jonathan M. Skeeters.

Bradley apparently meets all the criteria for HRC's "Corporate Social Responsibility," which would require written guidelines that prohibit the firm's "philanthropic support" of non-religious organizations that draw distinctions based on traditional sexual morality.

The law firm's diversity material shows that it sponsored the 2021 Nashville Pride Festival and Parade, an annual event celebrating the LGBTQ community. Bradley also supported the Human

Rights Campaign Nashville Equality Dinner. The Human Rights Campaign is a major political player in the battle over proposed legislation like The Equality Act at the federal level and the Missouri Non-Discrimination Act (MONA). Both threaten the First Amendment rights of Southern Baptists.

Bradley Legal also supports Susan G. Komen, an organization that fights breast cancer, which got into hot water in 2012 when it was learned that Komen was providing funds to Planned Parenthood, the nation's largest provider of abortions. Bradley attorneys also spoke at a 2017 Chinese Overseas Investment Legal Forum in Shanghai, despite a massive expansion that year of genocide and mass detention of Uyghurs by the communist Chinese government.

The SBC Executive Committee approved up to \$2 million in CP reserves to cover its own legal fees associated with the on-going sexual abuse investigation during a Feb. 22 plenary session. This is in addition to the \$2 million fee for GuidePost Solutions, also from the EC's reserves. Tapping reserves for the charges comports with a mandate of messengers from the 2021 SBC Annual Meeting that Cooperative Program funds cover the costs of the investigation, said Archie Mason, chair of the Committee on Convention Finances and Stewardship Development.

"If you look at the allocation of CP funds, what we have in reserves is \$12.2 million," Mason said. "What that is, is money we didn't spend, that was allocated to us out of our 2.9 (percent)

allocation (of CP) that has built up in reserve. So that's been investment income." The "investment income" was built from money given by SBC churches through the Cooperative Program.

The SBC Executive Committee has now named Bradley as "interim legal counsel," according to reporting by Baptist Press (BP). (See the BP article here: <https://www.baptiststandard.com/news/baptists/sexual-abuse-report-not-the-end-for-sbc-executive-committee/>) This means Alabama-based Bradley is stepping into the shoes of longtime Convention attorneys Jim Guenther and Jaime Jordan of Nashville.

"I cannot begin to describe the difference between our current legal counsel and all of the other ones that we have dealt with previously," said EC member Adam Wyatt, a pastor from Magee, Miss., in a Feb. 22 post on his Twitter account. "The team at @bradleylegal is professional, kind-hearted, and wants us to act with integ-

rity. They clearly understand the #sbc."

Gene Besen, a lawyer in Bradley's Texas office, appeared at the Feb. 22 meeting in Nashville. Last year, Guenther said his firm had no choice but to "withdraw ... from [its] role as general counsel to the Southern Baptist Convention and the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention."

Guenther's withdrawal came about a week after EC members voted to waive attorney-client privilege over twenty-one years of documents and emails in the independent, third-party

investigation into allegations of mishandling of sexual abuse claims by the SBC EC staff and trustees. That decision, Guenther said, "fundamentally changed the understanding that has always existed regarding communications between our firm and the Executive Committee or the Convention."

BP reports that Bradley had produced nearly 4 terabytes of data to the investigators, collected from the EC files or from Guenther, Jordan & Price, PC. Guenther's resignation letter asserted that because the

See **LAWYERS**, page 16


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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

- **Richard Gill** is the new pastor at Temple Baptist Church, DeRidder.
- **Brian Gunter** has resigned as pastor at First Baptist Church, Pollock to become the new pastor at First Baptist Church, Livingston.
- **Dwayne Irwin** has been called as the new pastor at Pine Grove Baptist Church, Ruby.
- **Eddie, wife Sabrina, Henson** is the new pastor at Briarwood Baptist Church, Franklinton. He began the first week of January.
- **Kyle, wife Gaylynn, Bryan** is the new pastor at Clark Springs Baptist Church, Eros.
- **Nathan Davis** has resigned as pastor of First Baptist Church, Coushatta.
- **Wes Faulk** has resigned as pastor of First Baptist Church, Vidalia to do ministry work overseas.
- **Brian Lassiter** is new as minister of music at New Hope Baptist Church, Choudrant.
- **Aaron Dickinson** resigned as pastor of First Baptist Church Swartz to accept the music minister position at Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Dothan, Alabama.
- **Mark, wife Jeni, Morelock** is the new DR Associate and volunteer mobilizer in charge of the Mission Builder program.
- **Brandon, wife Brandi, Penton** is the new associate director at Tall Timbers Resort and Conference Center, Woodworth.
- **Carl Gulde** has resigned as pastor of Bethel Baptist Church, Colfax to become the new associational strategist for the LaSalle Baptist Association.
- **Buddy Willis** has retired as associational strategist for the LaSalle Baptist Association, Jena.
- **Jerry Price** has retired as associational strategist for the Northeast and Morehouse Baptist Associations, Monroe.
- Tiffany Falanga was recognized for 15 years as the youth and children's minister at Airline Baptist Church, Bossier City.
- **Wayne Hunt** was recognized on his 15th anniversary as pastor at Coteau Baptist Church, Houma.

HOMECOMING

- Bethel Baptist Church, Franklinton: **115th Homecoming**, April 3, 10 a.m. Speaker: **Mike Stowell, pastor of First Baptist Keithville**. Music: **The Todd Allen Family**. Following a potluck fellowship meal, the Allen's will be performing a concert. Pastor: Joe Kelley.
- Beech Springs Baptist Church, Minden: **150th Anniversary**, May 22. 11 A.M. Speaker: **Executive Director Louisiana Baptist Convention Steve Horn**. Coffee, juice and donuts will be served at 10 a.m. followed by the Worship service at 11. A catered catfish lunch will follow the service. Pastor: Randy Brown.

REVIVAL

- Wilda Baptist Church, Boyce: **Revival**, April 3-6, Sunday 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Monday-Wednesday, 7 p.m. nightly. Evangelist: **Lyndon Longoria**. Wilda Baptist is located at 75 St. Clair Road, Boyce, La. Pastor: Joey Rudisill.
- Gray Baptist Church, Jefferson, Texas: **Revival**, April 3-6, Sunday 11 a.m. and 6 p.m., Monday-Wednesday 6:30 p.m. nightly. Evangelist: **Scotty McDowell, the chalk artist**. Pastor: Roy Davis.
- Social Springs Baptist Church, Ringgold: **Revival**, April 3-6, Sunday 11 a.m. and 6 p.m., Monday-Wednesday, 6 p.m. nightly. Evangelist: **Bill Britt**. Pastor: James Hester.
- Antioch Baptist Church, Farmerville: **Youth Revival**, April 4-6, 6:30 p.m. Speaker: **Luke Chaddick**, Outreach Ministries, Mims Baptist Church, Conroe, Texas; **Luke Hockenjos**, Give 'Em Jesus, Haughton, and **Casey Johnson**, pastor of Bonita Road Baptist Church, Bastrop. Pastor: Rubin Weaver.
- First Baptist Church, Robeline: **Revival/Crusade**, April 10-17. Sunday 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday-Saturday, 6:30 p.m. Evangelist: **Sam Moore**. Pastor Brian Ray.
- Community Baptist Church, Greensburg: **Revival**, April 10-13, Sunday, 20 a.m., Sunday-Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. nightly. Evangelist: **Brian Tyndall**, Uttermost Evangelism. Worship: **Wayne Jones**. Pastor: Larry Stewart.
- Summer Grove Baptist Church, Shreveport: **Friend Day**, April 10, 10:15 a.m. Evangelist: **Bill Britt**. Pastor: Heath Peloquin.
- Calvary Baptist Church, Many: **Revival/Resurrection weekend**, April 15-17, Evangelist: Luke Hockenjos. Pastor: Cyle Clayton.
- First Baptist Church, Castor: **Revival**, April 24-27, Evangelist: **Bill Britt**. Pastor: Preston Young.

- Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Ringgold: **Revival**, April 24-27. Evangelist: **Sam Moore**. Pastor: Danny Slack.
- Gloster Baptist Church, Gloster: **Hope Revived**, April 25-28, 6:30 p.m. Monday – Speaker: **Matt Tyson**. Music: **Ben Waites w/ Scotty Blackwell & FBC Minden Praise Team**; Tuesday - Speaker: **Steve Horn, LBC Executive Director**. Music: Summer Grove Worship team; Wednesday – Speaker: **Vince Smith**. Music: **Mike Yates & Bluegrass Team**; Thursday – Speaker: **Jeremy Shepherd**. Music: **Combined Collective, Scotty Blackwell, Trainwreck (GBC Minden Student praise band)**. Pastor: Ron McLellan.

LAGNIAPPE

- **Jay Johnston** is available for pulpit supply or interim by calling 615.260.4752.
- First Baptist Church, Ponchatoula: **Glory through Fire Women's Conference**, April 2, 9 a.-noon. Lunch immediately following the conference. Cost: \$10 per person. Speaker: **Andrea Lennon**. Worship: **Booke Robertson**. This conference is sponsored by Woodland Park Baptist of Hammond and FBC Ponchatoula Women's Ministries. You can register at this link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/fbcponchatoula-and-woodland-park-womens-ministries-35071633873?fbclid=IwAR2na3dN3t5Qgzy39M8DiLXcrdN8BfpDphCvEOxM-raMtiVEZkflJw99IM0>. Pastor: David Cranford.
- Cypress Baptist Church, West Monroe: **Louisiana Melody Boys in concert**, April 3, 10:45 a.m. Pastor: Jeff May.
- Men of Courage – Man Church, April 5, 6 p.m. The Stable, 2915 Swan Lake Road, Bossier City. Speaker **Jeremy Valledares, pastor at Heritage, McAllen, Texas**. Join us for a manly meal, manly music and a manly message.
- First Baptist Church, Pineville: **First@First Business Leader Luncheon**, April 7, noon. Speaker: **Meredith Rennier**, executive director for the LCU Center for Calling and Career. Please RSVP to <https://fbcpineville.secure2.agroup.com/events/firstatfirst/2022-01-05+11%3A50%3A00>. Pastor: Stewart Holloway.
- New Chapel Hill Baptist Church, West Monroe: **Children's Easter Egg hunt**, April 9, 10 a.m.-noon. **Easter Sunrise Services**, April 17, 7-8 a.m. **Easter service and musical by the adult choir**, 10:45 a.m. – noon. Pastor: Marty Black.
- Forest Baptist Church, Forest: **Bayou Macon International Mission Conference**, April 9, 6 p.m. There will be a fish fry before the event.
- Hill Baptist Church, Oak Grove: **Bayou Macon International Mission Conference**, April 10, 5 p.m. Come meet your IMB Missionaries from Central Asia and Uganda. Pastor: Robert Gillis.

- First Baptist Church, Oak Grove: **Bayou Macon International Mission Conference**, April 10, 6 p.m. Come meet your IMB Missionaries from Central Asia and Uganda. Pastor: Tony Campanale.
- Epps Baptist Church, Epps: **Bayou Macon International Mission Conference**, April 10, 6 p.m. Come meet your IMB Missionaries from Central Asia and Uganda. Pastor: Edwin Fuller.
- Parkview Baptist Church, Tallulah: **Madison Baptist Association International Missions Conference**, April 11, 6:30 p.m. There will be a fish fry at 6 p.m. Three missionary families from Central Asia and Uganda will be speaking. Pastor: Jason Lupo.
- New Prospect Baptist Church, Dry Prong: **Prophecy Conference**, April 10-14; Sunday 6 p.m., Monday-Wednesday 6:30 p.m. nightly. Evangelist: **Al Gist**. Pastor: Trey Lewis.
- Summer Grove Baptist Church, Shreveport: **Spring Family Festival**, April 10, Noon-2 p.m. The festival will be at Sheriff's Safety Town. Join us for games, egg hunts, food and fun. Everyone is welcome to attend. Pastor: Heath Peloquin.
- Longview Baptist Church, Deville: **Children's Easter Egg Hunt**, April 10, 11:30 a.m. All children are invited to our Easter egg hunt on Palm Sunday, April 10 following morning services! We will also have dinner on the grounds. Pastor: Robby Poole.
- First Baptist Church, New Orleans: **Easter Celebration**, April 10, 4:30-6 p.m. **Easter egg hunt**; April 15, 6-8 p.m. **Good Friday Service, and Easter Sunday**, 9:30-11 a.m. Pastor: Chad Gilbert.
- Passion Week – **An Easter Journey**, April 11-15, 11:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. Monday, Oak Grove Baptist Church, Speaker: **Bill Pruitt**, lunch (roast); Tuesday, Fellowship Church, Speaker: **Leigh Rogers**, lunch (catfish); Wednesday, Dutchtown Baptist, Speaker: **Robert Lawrence**, lunch (gumbo and salad); Thursday, Graceworks, Speaker: **John Carrigan**, lunch (pork loin); Friday, Ascension Baptist, Speaker: **Kirk Jones**, lunch (south and sandwich). BAGBR Associational Strategist: Tommy Middleton.
- Passion Week – **An Easter Journey**, April 11-15, 11:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. Monday, First Baptist Church, Central, Speaker: **Preston Nix**. Lunch (jambalaya); Tuesday, Fellowship Baptist, Speaker: **Clint New-some**. Lunch (fried chicken); Wednesday, Greenwell Springs Baptist, Speaker: **Daryl Purpera**. Lunch (spaghetti), Thursday, Zoar Baptist Church, Speaker: **Mardy Guidry**. Lunch (meat loaf). BAGBR Associational Strategist: Tommy Middleton.
- Passion Week – **An Easter Journey**, April 11-15, 11:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. Monday, Woodlawn Baptist, Speaker: **David Goza**. Lunch (baked potato bar); Tuesday, First Baptist Church, Baton Rouge. Speaker: **Wes McKay**. Lunch (seafood chowder). Wednesday, Jefferson Baptist Church. Speaker: **Oren Coner**. Lunch: (brisket); Thursday, Istrouma Baptist. Speaker: **Laramie Minga**. Lunch (jambalaya); Friday, CrossPoint Baptist. Speaker: **Tim Keith**. Lunch: (fried chicken). BAGBR Associational Strategist: Tommy Middleton.
- Men of Courage – Man Church, April 12, 6:30 p.m. at North Caddo Shooting Club, 8516 Dixie Morringsport Road, Mooringsport, La. Speaker: **Chris Plants**, Men of Courage, Webster Parish. Join us for a free chicken dinner, a manly message and manly music.
- First Baptist Church, Lafayette: **His Mercy is More – Easter Night of Worship**, April 14, 7 p.m. The First Baptist Lafayette choir, orchestra, and praise team combine to reflect on the cross and celebrate our Risen Lord. This Night of Worship will include the observance of the Lord's Supper. **Easter Sunday**, April 17, 9:30 and 11 a.m. Pastor: James Pritchard.
- Lanier Baptist Church, Baton Rouge: **His Amazing Love – An Easter Musical Production**, April 14-16, 6:30 p.m. This is a free event. Pastor: Mike Ferguson.
- First Baptist Church, Winnsboro: **Easter Egg Hunt**, April 15, 10-11 a.m. This is for children ages 10 and under. There will be games, snacks and crafts along with the Easter egg hunt. Pastor: Craig Beeman.

- South Walker Baptist Church, Denham Spring: **Breakfast with the Easter Bunny**, April 16, 9 a.m. There will be breakfast, crafts, face painting, games, egg hunt and more. Pastor: Mark Carroll.
- Esler Baptist Church, Pineville: **Easter Egg Hunt**, April 16, 10:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Everyone is invited, especially the small children, as they search for hidden eggs. Pastor: Joshua Timothy.
- First Baptist Church, Winnfield: **Easter in the Park**, April 16, 11 a.m. Join FBC Winnfield Kids' Ministry at the Earl K. Long Park in Winnfield for a fun day. There will be food, jumpers, an Easter Bunning, face painting and more. **Easter is for Jesus! Family Fun** April 16, 2-4 p.m. on the second floor. FB Kids will perform during Sunday morning at the Easter worship service, April 17, 11 a.m. Pastor: Jerry Pipes.
- Fellowship Church, Prairieville: **The Easter Egg Dash**, April 16, 9-11 a.m. The Easter egg dash is a twist on the traditional Easter egg hunt that turns a giant field and thousands of eggs into non-stop fun for everyone. This year event will be on the turf at the Dutch-town High School Stadium and we've invited Jared Greer to bring an American Ninja Warrior style obstacle course. In addition to all of the egg action there will be food, field games, a toddler zone and Easter pictures. Easter Worship Service, April 17, 9 or 10:30 a.m. Pastor: Kirk Jones.
- First Baptist Church, Haughton: **Easter at FBC Haughton**, April 17, 6:30 a.m. **Easter Sunrise Service at Hill Crest Memorial Cemetery**; back on FBC campus blended service, 9:30 a.m. and worship services at 11 a.m. Pastor: Gevan Spinney.
- Philadelphia Baptist Church, Deville: **Easter Sunday**, April 17, a.m. **Kingdom Kids Easter Party**, April 17, 9-11:30 a.m. Each preschool and children's Sunday School class will celebrate with an Easter party. Pastor: Philip Robertson.
- First Baptist Church, Pineville: **Easter services**, April 17, 10:30 a.m. Pastor: Stewart Holloway.
- Northeast Baptist School, Monroe: **Annual Golf Tournament**, April 18, 1 p.m. at Calvert Crossing, Calhoun. Cost: \$100 per golfer. Deadline to enter is April 1. For more information, contact Candi Martin, Northeast Baptist School at 318.325.2077.
- First Baptist Church, Pineville: **Chonda Pierce in concert**, April 28, 7 p.m. To get tickets go to <https://www.etix.com/ticket/p/5381346/chonda-piercelive-in-concert-pineville-first-baptist-church-pineville>. Pastor: Stewart Holloway.
- North Monroe Baptist Church, Monroe: **Michael W. Smith in concert – an evening at the piano**, April 30, 7 p.m. Cost: \$24. Pastor: Bill Dye.
- Eastside Baptist Church, Rayville: **Louisiana Melody Boys in concert**, April 30, 4 p.m. Pastor: Chris Crawford.

IN REMEMBRANCE

- **Jimmy Lee Eppinette**, age 92, passed away Feb. 27, 2022, at his home in Downsview. Jimmy was born Sept. 5, 1929, in Vicksburg, MS, to Ida and Luther Eppinette. He grew up surrounded by a large family of 6 siblings and graduated from Ouachita High School in 1946. While in school at Louisiana College, he surrendered to the ministry. He then went on to receive his Master of Religious Education from Southwestern Baptist Seminary. His dedication to the ministry spanned 68 years, and he served all of his congregations faithfully. Jimmy was preceded in death by his parents; four siblings, Charles Eppinette, James Eppinette, Juanita Clawson, and Laney Lowe; and son, Dr. James M. Eppinette. He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Jerry Odom Eppinette; sons, John Eppinette (Debbie), and Jeff Eppinette (Carolyn); daughter-in-law, Terry Eppinette; brother, Eugene Eppinette (Sharon); sister, Loretta Wink; seven grandchildren, Brad Eppinette (Sierra), Erin Eppinette Foster (Clint), Sara Eppinette Reeves (Trey), Kasia Eppinette Rainwater (Lee), Joylin Eppinette Fontenot (Davis), Alyssa Eppinette, and Abby Eppinette; seven great grandchildren, Atlee Foster, Will Reeves, Lexie Eppinette, Merritt Foster, Jonah Reeves, Hunter Eppinette, and one on the way; and numerous nieces and nephews.

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.

GP SH IMMIA CZ YZUULEH SGCW CWHH, SGOC CWZL RH

XDGHBHQ? RLC SWZ YIE SGCWWZOQ WGUMHOP PDZU

MNHIFGEX? VZR PZLD:CSZ

Clues:
R = B; H = E

Answer to February 24 Scripture Crypto:
Galations five:one



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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH in Ruston, LA is seeking part-time traditional worship leader. Great opportunity to work with the choir and lead worship in a traditional service. Please send résumés or direct questions to Brenda Martin at brenda@fbcruston.org or mail to First Baptist Church, Attn: Brenda Martin, 200 S. Trenton St., Ruston, LA 71270.

CHURCH SEEKS A LEAD PASTOR. First Baptist Church in Lake Providence is seeking a lead pastor to serve our congregation and community. Email résumés to amandab@fbclakeprovidence.com or mail to First Baptist Church, Search Committee, 304 Davis St., Lake Providence, LA 71254.

TALL TIMBERS CONFERENCE CENTER in Forest Hill, LA is hiring **part-time positions in maintenance, food service and house-keeping.** Also looking for **summer staff.** Call 318.445.6797 for details or visit [//talltimbersbcc.org/employment](http://talltimbersbcc.org/employment).

Call **Rhonda Havens** at **318.449.4351** or **877.234.3832** to place your ads.

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First Baptist Church is accepting resumes for a full-time Senior Pastor. Mail resumes to Pastor Search Committee 100 N Hickory Street Vidalia, LA 71373 or email careers@fbcvialia.com

Prayerfully seeking an
Interim Preacher

First Baptist Church is seeking an Interim Preacher. Mail resumes to Interim Preacher Search Committee 100 N Hickory Street Vidalia, LA 71373 or email careers@fbcvialia.com

SEEKING PART-TIME WORSHIP LEADER

First Baptist Church in Bernice, LA is seeking a part-time worship leader. Please mail résumés to FBC Bernice, Attn: Music Search Committee, P O Box 567, Bernice, LA 71222 or email to fbcbernice@gmail.com.

SEEKING A FULL-TIME STUDENT MINISTER

Plain Dealing Baptist Church, Plain Dealing, LA is seeking a full-time Student Minister. Please send résumés to: Search Committee Plain Dealing Baptist Church PO Box 543, Plain Dealing, LA 71064 Or email to pdbsla@gmail.com

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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.fbcsfla.com for a job description. Résumés can be sent to resume@fbcsfla.com

FULL TIME PASTOR

Cooper Baptist Church, Leesville is seeking a full time pastor. Please send résumés to 853 Cooper Church Rd. Leesville LA 71446. Call 337.537.3735 with any questions.

MUSIC MINISTER

Eola Baptist Church near Bunkie, LA is seeking a music minister. Send résumé to EOLA.Pastor@gmail.com or call Pastor Bryan Canup 318.268.9953.

PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER

Emmanuel Baptist Church located at 5850 Buncombe Rd, Shreveport, LA 71129 is seeking a part-time youth minister. Please email résumés to ronroseturner@bellsouth.net

SEEKING A PASTOR

The First Baptist Church of Napoleonville is seeking a new pastor that possesses the following qualifications:

- He must have 3 to 5 years of experience in ministry and church leadership.
- He must unapologetically preach the truth that is found in the Bible.
- He must have experience in taking a leadership role in the expansion of a small church.
- He must have experience in obtaining Church growth through an ambitious youth and children ministries.
- He and his family must be willing to relocate.

Candidates can forward a résumé, along with professional and personal references to: Attention: The Pastor Search Committee • First Baptist Church of Napoleonville 148 Homerun Parkway • Donaldsonville, Louisiana 70346

SEEKING LEAD PASTOR

First Baptist Church, Dry Prong, which is located in Dry Prong, LA is seeking a fulltime, God-filled man to serve as our Lead Pastor. If you feel called by God for this position, please send your résumé to FBCDP@bellsouth.net.

CHILDREN'S MINISTER

Maplewood First Baptist in Sulphur, LA is looking to hire a Children's Minister. We would love to talk to you. Please send us your résumé. Email: resumes@maplewoodfbc.com

CLARA SPRINGS SEEKS A MAINTENANCE & MINISTRY ASSOCIATE

Clara Springs Baptist Camp & Conference is looking for someone to join our ministry team. This job position will oversee maintenance, grounds up keep, and assist in the ministry of our camp and conference center. Applicant must have advanced skills in carpentry, electrical, and plumbing. HVAC knowledge is a plus! Housing is provided. Please send emails to: brobubba@clarasprings.com

FULL-TIME PASTOR

South Main Baptist Church, Crossett, Arkansas is seeking full-time pastor. Résumés accepted through Friday, April 15. Send to: Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 430, Crossett, AR 71635 or e-mail to: smbcsecretary@windstream.net. A full job description is available at <http://www.southmainbaptist.net/>.

Seeking a full time STUDENT MINISTER

Houston River Baptists Church in Sulphur, La. Seeks a full time student minister. Send resumes to: Email: HRBCStudentMINSC@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.

HOUSTON RIVER BAPTISTS CHURCH Sulphur, LA Seeks a Full Time Worship Minster

Applicants must be capable of leading multiple styles of worship

SEND RESUMES TO:
Email: SearchCommitteeHRBC2021@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).

SEARCHING FOR A PASTOR

Fellowship Baptist Church of Converse, LA is searching for a pastor. The ideal candidate should be humble, loving, a strong leader, and able to reach out to the community. We are a small rural church in need of the right Man of God. If you feel this is your calling, please email us at fbcp19@gmail.com

Lawyers from page 13

proved by trustees is preemptive and does not deal with specific communications, EC trustees acted "without knowing the effect" their vote would

have on the Executive Committee itself, the SBC in general and "those who have served as members or employees of the Executive Committee."

"Because the attorney-client privilege existed, these persons have on occasion shared with us sensitive information which we needed in order to competently represent the Executive Committee," it said. "Until now, a decision by the Board to waive attorney-client privilege was not reasonably foreseeable. However, going forward

we can no longer assure Executive Committee and Convention personnel with whom we work that the privacy of their communications with their lawyers will be secure."

The letter also decried attempts to portray attorney-client privilege "as an evil device" used to hide misconduct.

"That could not be further from the truth," it said, calling the practice "a pillar of this country's jurisprudence and rules of evidence" for centuries.

"There is nothing sinister about [attorney-client privilege]," the letter continued. "It does not corrupt justice; it creates the space

for justice."

The EC's willingness "to forego this universally accepted principle of confidentiality" left the firm no choice but to withdraw, it said. Guenther had served the SBC since 1966.

The waiver prompted the resignations of more than a dozen EC members, as well as several EC staff and leaders. And, in February 2022, Executive Committee CFO Jeff Pearson suddenly resigned, saying he supported the investigation, but explained that he had "no choice," "after my receiving advice and counsel from multiple attorneys."

The selection and retention of the new law firm was before Willie McLaurin was named interim president and apparently handled by SBC officers in private meetings, without disclosing the reasons for the selection or the terms of representation to the full Executive Committee. Executive Committee Chairman Roland Slade said the EC officers made

the decision to retain Bradley based on a recommendation from former SBC President and Chief Executive Officer Ronnie Floyd and that Bradley had served as legal counsel for LifeWay for a number of years.

"I know with a large firm like Bradley, that they believe in inclusion and diversity," adding they have 600 attorneys and that he is sure not all of them hold the same views. He said the firm also represents conservative organizations like the National Rifle Association. He said one of the attorneys the EC works with is Scarlett Nokes, a member of a Southern Baptist church in the Nashville area.

Slade said he is satisfied with Bradley's work. "They have been helpful," he said.

Bradley has offices in Nashville as well as Birmingham, Charlotte, Dallas, Houston, Jackson, Montgomery, Tampa and Washington, DC. Its website is <https://www.bradley.com/>.

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GOD NEVER PROMISED THIS ...

How many promises have you made in your lifetime?

I read about a couple who had been married for 45 years, raised 11 children, and were blessed with 22 grandchildren. When asked the secret for staying together the wife replied, "Many years ago we made a promise to each other...the first one to pack up and leave has to take all the kids."

The Bible is full of promises. Books listing every promise in scripture have been published over the years. One such book highlights over 800 promises from God's Word. If we're honest, most of us have combed through a book of this nature and claimed promises that we thought would help us get what we desired. I'm partial to promise number 858.

I think all of us could testify of God's faithfulness to His promises, but let me ask you this – what hasn't God promised?

One of my favorite parables is the parable of the sower. It's found in several places in the Gospels and is full of promises including:

- Some of the scattered seeds find good soil.
- The ones that do yield a return of 30, 60 or up to 100 times what was sown.
- There is a harvest directly related to the seeds that were sown.

But that's where it stops.

What is missing? What is the one thing God never promised? Laborers or, as many translations put it, workers. Instead of promising the laborers, He tells us to pray for them. Matthew records this harvest prerequisite in the ninth chapter of his gospel, " ... ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." The harvest is there. The seeds have done their job. God has done what He promised. But the laborers – no guarantee. We must pray for them.

Could God provide the laborers? Certainly. But He has chosen not to do so. Instead, God's calls us to pray for them. Why?

The short answer is God doesn't tell us why. He simply tells us to pray for those who are needed to gather what He has prepared.

I'll attempt to provide a couple of reasons why I believe this is God's desired direction.

First, when we pray for something or someone, we're assigning value. Think about it, when we value something or someone, we pray for them.

Lost people matter to God. They have value to God. The question becomes, do they have value to us? Do we value them enough to pray for the

laborers to bring them in from their fields of depression, disillusion and disappointment?

Second, when we pray for people, it keeps them in what's been called "top of mind." In other words, we pray for them because we're thinking about them. **If we're going to glean what God has grown, praying for laborers should be in the forefront or top of mind. They are the missing link, if you will, to bringing in the promised harvest.**

Promises abound in our culture. From politicians to products, almost everyone and everything promises to provide something that will make our lives better. But as Christ followers, our purpose is not to make our lives better, but lead others to experience the love, forgiveness and purpose God provides. **God promises that they, the harvest, are there waiting and watching to see if we'll send people to bring them in.**

The revival we talk about, the revival we long for, just might begin when we pray for and send laborers to bring in what God has promised.

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Learn how you can connect with this effort by visiting LouisianaBaptists.org/hereforyou and entering: luke1423.