



THE BAPTIST MESSAGE

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730 - Revival, crusade spurs a discipleship boon

By Brian Blackwell
Message staff writer

HAMMOND, La. (LBM) – A revival and tent crusade in south Louisiana that have combined to produce 730 new believers, so far, also have resulted in 400 new converts, already, enrolling in a formal process of discipleship to become more like Christ.

According to local reports, 513 individuals surrendered their hearts and lives to Jesus during revival services, extended five

times, Oct. 17-Nov. 18, at Old Zion Hill Baptist Church, Independence; and another 217 made decisions to follow Him during the South Louisiana Awakening Tent Crusade, Hammond, Nov. 28-Dec. 9, a multi-denominational spiritual outreach. At press time, it was not announced if the tent crusade would be extended.

“The revival continues to produce good fruit,” Old Zion Hill Baptist Church Associate Pastor

See **DISCIPLESHIP**, page 3

830 - YEC 2022: 830 students made decisions for Christ

By Brian Blackwell
Message staff writer

ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM) – Organizers and participants of the recent Youth Evangelism Celebration praised God for the 830 students who made decisions for Christ, Nov. 20-21, in the Rapides Parish Coliseum, Alexandria. They also were grateful to Him for the estimated 5,300 teens who attended YEC (consistently the largest annual gathering of Louisiana Baptists).

Both numbers were significant increases compared to last year’s event, which drew a crowd of 4,500 and facilitated 719 decisions for Christ.

“It is incredibly powerful to see more than 5000 students join in worship and engage with God’s Word,” Louisiana Baptist Youth Strategist Brandon Lewis told the *Baptist Message*. “But to see them respond, whether they were accepting God’s free gift of salvation

See **YEC 2022**, page 5

THE WONDROUS *Christmas* STORY

By Will Hall, Message executive editor

ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM) -- I tend to mentally “default” to Luke 2:1-20 when anyone refers to the “Christmas Story.”

But that tendency to narrow the “Christmas Story” to this relatively short passage diminishes the eternal nature of God’s extensive plan of redemption which was in place before the foundations of the world.

Indeed, the title “Christmas Story” almost demeans both the historical truth and the prophetic

certainty that defines the account of past and future events tied to the birth of Christ.

Through Isaiah, God explained that His plan to redeem Israel as well as the entire world was the essence of the “Christmas Story” (Isaiah 49:6).

Meanwhile, Genesis 3:15 (specifically when read in conjunction with Galatians 3:16) shows that the plan of salvation, the essence of the “Christmas Story” was revealed as early as in the Garden of Eden.

See **CHRISTMAS**, page 3

Brooks ends 43 years of changed lives at Calvary Baptist

By Brian Blackwell
Message staff writer

ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM) – David Brooks has completed 43 years of ministry with Calvary Baptist Church, Alexandria, and

will retire Dec. 31.

Brooks said he is grateful for the many changed lives that he witnessed during his tenure as a youth minister and then senior pastor at Calvary, the only church where he

has served in a full-time ministerial role.

For his years of service to the congregation and community, Brooks was honored during a pre-re-

See **BROOKS**, page 2

Brooks from page one

tirement celebration, Nov. 6, that included memories shared by friends and family, gifts from the congregation, and notes of appreciation presented on behalf of Texas Gov. Greg Abbott (Brooks visits the state often with his wife, Suzy, who is a native Texan) and Blue Bell CEO

Ricky Dickson (Brooks' favorite dessert).

"When we came here, I was 23, and a lot of people took Suzy and I in like we were their kids," Brooks told the Baptist Message. "They have loved and nurtured us and been great mentors who invested in me."

"I had opportunities to go other places, but never felt like that was where God was leading me," Brooks shared. However, he added, "When I came to Calvary, I never thought I would be here 43 years."

A native of Hattiesburg, Miss., Brooks' spiritual journey began in 1965, he said, when he accepted Christ and was baptized at Westside Baptist Church, Shreveport. Later that year, Brooks (15 at the time) met several individuals who played a key role in his road to ministry: Don Willis, a fellow teenager who discipled him at Woodlawn Baptist Church, Shreveport; Gene and Glenda Young, a young married couple who led a small youth group at Woodlawn Baptist at a time when he felt the call to ministry; and Ron Harvey, who heard Brooks speak at a Fellowship of Christian Athletes meeting at Woodlawn High School, Shreveport, and subsequently told his dad, Charles, pastor of Sunset Acres Baptist Church, Shreveport, who invited Brooks to share his testimony at a service.

After graduation from Woodlawn High, Brooks and Harvey enrolled at East



Brian Blackwell photo

David Brooks will retire Dec. 31 as pastor of Calvary Baptist Church. For the last 43 years, he has served on staff at the Alexandria church.

Texas Baptist University, Marshall, Texas, Brooks said, and together they preached at youth revivals, retreats and summer camps. During one of the sessions, Kenneth Everest, pastor of Central Baptist Church, Springhill, invited Brooks to serve as a summer student minister.

While at Central Baptist, Brooks met John Alley, then pastor of Calvary Baptist, and Harry Thompson, music

minister at Calvary at the time. They later asked him to serve on staff as the minister to junior high, high school and college students, he said, a role he held June 1, 1979-Jan. 2, 2000, when he became pastor.

According to church records, during Brooks's time at Calvary, the congregation has built a new education

See **BROOKS**, page 7

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Christmas from page one

The "Christmas Story" includes God's promise to Abraham that he would be the father of a great nation and that through him "all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen. 12). A promise repeated to Abraham's son, Isaac (Gen. 26) and to His grandson, Jacob (Gen. 28).

God's sparing of Noah, bringing him and his family safely through the world-wide flood was part of the

"Christmas Story" (Genesis 7-9). He preserved humanity specifically to fulfill His plan, His purpose, His promise as represented in the birth of Jesus.

The "Christmas Story" was presented through the:

- ram in the thicket (Gen. 22);
- blood on the lintels and the doorposts of the houses of Israel in Egypt (Ex. 12);
- manna (Jesus as the

"Living Bread") and water (Jesus as the "Living Water") provided in the wilderness (Ex. 16, 17 & Nu. 20);

- sacrificial system that began with the construction of the tabernacle (Lev. 17) and continued until the destruction of the temple;
- brass serpent which healed those who looked up at it (Nu. 21); and
- kinsman redeemer, Boaz (Ruth 4).

When Malachi prophesied that an Elijah would be raised up to prepare the way

for Christ (Mal. 4), it was the last word spoken by God to Israel for 400 years -- and it was part of the "Christmas Story."

Admittedly, there is no other passage that so tenderly, so powerfully, so concisely captures the "Christmas Story" as Luke 2:1-20:

- the faithful obedience of Joseph and Mary;
- the worshipful hearts of the humble shepherds;
- the majestic voices of the angelic hosts; and
- the powerful presence

of the Savior in the form of a child in a manger.

All these elements of that royal birthday combine to present a "picture" in our minds that is "felt" in our hearts. It is an encounter with God that reveals why the Holy Spirit inspired Luke to write this portion of his Gospel as part of his "case" to convince Theophilus about the Person of Christ.

But remember ... it is only part of the whole "Christmas Story."

Discipleship from page one

Pastor Dave Ketchand told the Baptist Message. "Remarkable testimonies of salvation and changed lives abound. The need to follow up with intentional disciple making is daunting. Doing this effectively will not be accomplished by doing church as usual. We ask for the prayers of all Louisiana Baptists as we continue this work."

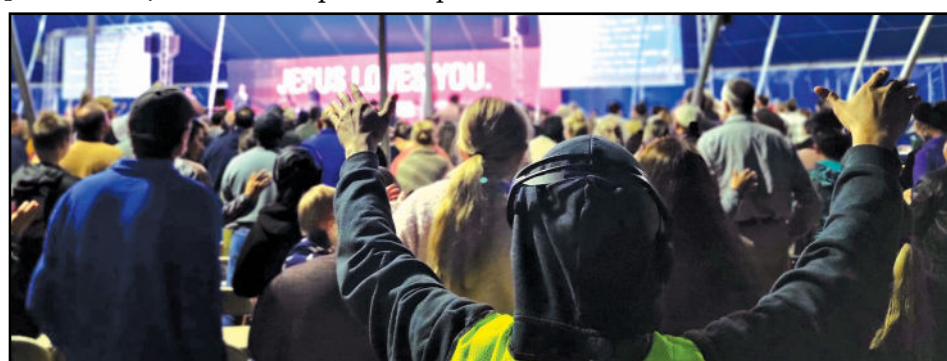
DISCIPLESHIP STRATEGY

Ketchand said area churches had formed a follow-up team that de-

veloped a strategy to connect every new believer from both spiritual events with a local congregation to begin discipleship training:

- each person who came forward received an email or text encouraging them to find a church home;
- pastors were given contact information and have pledged to reach out to everyone on the list; and
- churches were prepped to form new believer classes.

So far, Old Zion Hill Baptist Church has been blessed to receive 55 adults who declared Christ as



Submitted photo

Participants at the South Louisiana Awakening Tent Crusade lifted their hands during a time of worship.

Lord during the awakening of the lost that accompanied the revivals, and each has been enrolled into discipleship classes, including Billy

Hall.

Previously, Hall was addicted to

See DISCIPLESHIP, page 4

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Discipleship

from page 3

alcohol but ended that lifestyle after he decided to follow Christ, Oct. 25. He shared his testimony through baptism, Nov. 6, and has enjoyed growing deeper in his faith through the new believer training.

"It has opened my eyes to how your testimony opens doors for you to speak to others about Jesus," he said. "We are only in our second class but I'm hoping the rest of it will help and change my life more."

Randy Ray, tent crusade follow-up team leader and pastor of River Fellowship, a Louisiana Baptist congregation in Hammond, said Pastor Gary Dennis's congregation handled follow-up for the revival held at their church. Meanwhile, his team was responsible for contacting those who made decisions during the tent crusade.

River Fellowship is slated to begin a 10-week discipleship class in the coming weeks.

"Hopefully, with the follow-up training initiated and follow up calls being made, we will see a good number of disciple groups formed," he said. "And honestly, we are not concerned if they are connected to our church or not. We just want to see them disciplined and connected to a local body of believers that teaches the Word and will continue to nurture them."

Still Water Church, also a Louisiana Baptist congregation in Hammond, has two new converts who are about to enter discipleship training, said Pastor Elltore Austin, also a member of the crusade follow-up team. He said the new believers from both events are being engaged.

"We let them know that Christian discipleship is developing a lifelong obedient relationship with Jesus Christ in which He transforms your character into

Christlikeness, changes your worldly values into Kingdom values and involves you in His mission in home, church and world," he said. "It's been nothing short of amazing, seeing so many people being obedient to the move of God at the revival and after through discipleship."

CHANGED COMMUNITIES

Gary Dennis, pastor of Old Zion Hill Baptist Church, noted that the revival and tent crusade have brought about a spiritual renewal in schools, businesses and homes.

"It is astounding and incredibly gratifying to see God move in such a powerful way," Dennis said. "Other words that come to mind are satisfying, humbling, exciting, surreal. At a deep level there is a quiet peace knowing that God is doing this and fulfilling His promises."

"I cannot make that happen nor can anyone else," he continued. "We pray that God will bring to His

churches the deep level of brokenness and humility that will allow God's Spirit to spread revival. When Christ-followers humble themselves and pray, when we get serious about seeking the face of God and turn away from our sins, God will revive the church. When the church is revived, awakening of the lost will follow."

Louis Husser, pastor of Crossgate Church, a Louisiana Baptist congregation in Robert, said he, too, has been amazed at how God has moved.

"Many Christians live and serve the Lord all their lives and never see hundreds of believers at the altar, repenting and reconciling old offenses ... and hundreds of believers filling the altar, weeping over lost souls," he said. "We are not taking anything for granted. God's people are covering this meeting in prayer. He is doing a great work here."

BACKGROUND

From the first revival

service, which began Oct. 17, a spirit of expectancy was among the community of Independence, according to Dennis. Each night, the pews were packed out in the Old Zion Hill Baptist Church worship center and participants filled the altar as they cried out to God about their respective needs for Him.

In early November, in anticipation of the tent crusade, 355 individuals signed up to pray 30 minutes each day; and two weeks before the crusade, hundreds more gathered for prayer on site, he said. Additionally, 81 were trained as decision counselors.

Meanwhile, due to the extent of revival among believers and awakening among the lost, the initial crusade (originally scheduled through Oct. 21) was extended five additional times through Nov. 18 (with a pause in services at various times including weekend services).

Once that prolonged event ended, the tent crusade preparations began.



A festive Christmas card for Louisiana Christian University. The background is a light gray image of students walking on a campus path. On the left is a large, friendly-looking tiger mascot. In the center, the university's logo is displayed, featuring a circular seal with a building and the text "PREPARING GRADUATES • TRANSFORMING LIVES" and "1906". To the right of the seal, the words "LOUISIANA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY" are written in a serif font. Overlaid on the image is the word "Merry" in a large, elegant, red cursive script, and "CHRISTMAS" in a large, bold, blue serif font. At the bottom, the university's tagline "Preparing Graduates • Transforming Lives" is written in a red serif font. Below the tagline are social media icons for Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, followed by the address "1140 COLLEGE DRIVE, PINEVILLE, LA 71360" and the website "LCUNIVERSITY.EDU" and phone number "(800) 487-1906".

YEC 2022

from page one

or expressing a call to ministry, is evidence of their desire to know Him, to follow Him and to tell others about Him."

YEC challenged the Louisiana Baptist youth to share their story of how Christ changed their lives through messages by Shane Pruitt, National Next Gen Evangelism Director for the North American Mission Board.

During all four sessions, students were offered a chance to step forward and declare a decision for Christ.

Jocelyn Carmona, a ninth grader from Tangipahoa Baptist Church, Kentwood, was one of those who made a decision. Six students from her church also decided to receive Christ.

Carmona noted that "even when you are in the lowest darkest place ever imagined, I learned there is always a way to rise up from it."

Two students accepted Christ and two more declared a call to ministry from Grace Community Baptist Church, Iota.

Student minister T-Kev Colson said despite their church van "breaking down" after the Monday morning session, God provided a temporary van from Family of Grace Church, Alexandria. Grace Community Baptist's insurance agent was a member of Family of Grace and connected the two churches.

"If that church hadn't provided a van, our students who accepted a call to ministry in the next session may never have been in the coliseum to make that decision," Colson said. "The devil thought the van break down would keep us from getting there but God used Family of Grace to get us there. They may have been complete strangers to us from a worldly perspective, but they now feel like family. We hope they understand and know how much they blessed us."

FOLLOWERS, NOT FANS

In his messages, Pruitt challenged the students to become followers and not

fans of Jesus.

"A fan of Jesus does what fans do," Pruitt told the students. "Fans aren't really in the game. They may have a respect for Jesus but keep their distance."

"Followers are all in," he continued. "They say He is my Savior and He is my Lord. When Jesus saves you, He doesn't just become your

Savior; he becomes your Lord."

Pruitt encouraged students to accept Jesus' calling to salvation, a ministry of making Jesus known and, for some, a leadership vocational position that equips the Saints.

"You have the greatest news," Pruitt said. "It's time

for the church to stand up and be bold with the message of Jesus Christ."

By the end of the two-day spiritual encounter, more than 830 students had made some type of faith decision: 228 professions of faith, 155 responses to calls to minis-

See YEC 2022, page 7



Brian Blackwell photo

Shane Pruitt, national NextGen evangelism director for the North American Mission Board, addresses students who came forward during a time of decision at the 2022 Louisiana Baptist Youth Evangelism Celebration.

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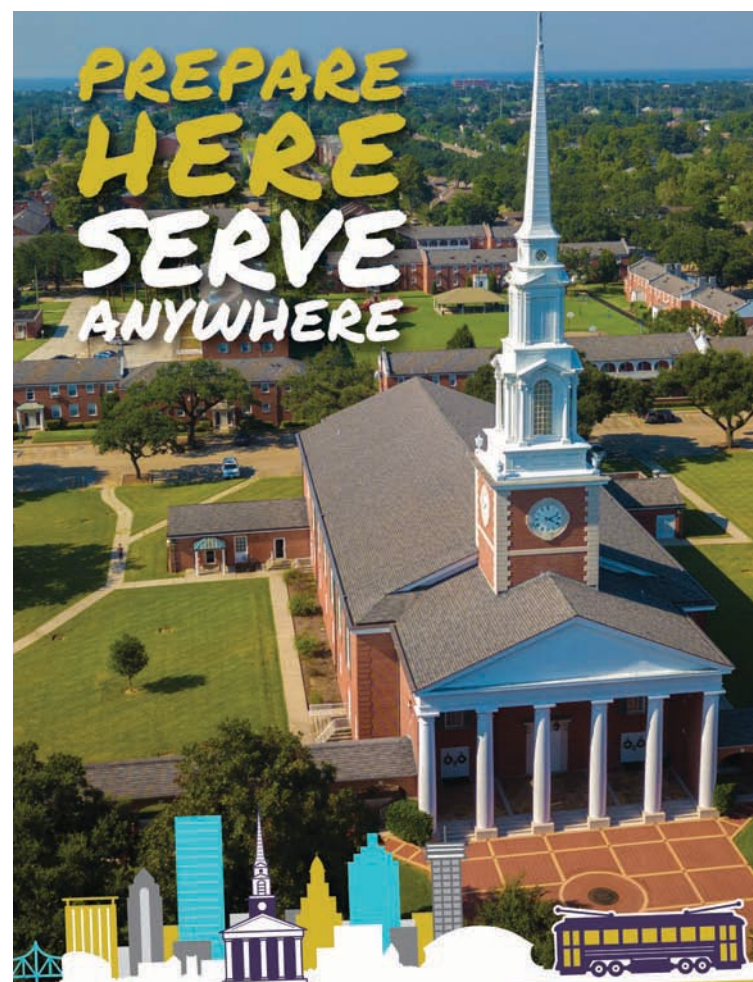
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Kentwood girl's bracelet sales go to help DR victims in Florida

By Brian Blackwell
Message staff writer

KENTWOOD, La. (LBM) – Alanna Chadwick's heart was so moved to help those impacted by Hurricane Ian that the 9-year-old girl donated money earned from her home-made bracelets raised, Oct. 15, at a farmer's market in Kentwood.

Chadwick said she hopes the \$75 will bless others impacted by the

hurricane that devastated parts of Florida, Sept. 28.

"It was pretty amazing how all these people care about disaster relief and I wanted to help out," Chadwick told the *Baptist Message*. "I hope this lets them know that Jesus loves them and can save them."

Chadwick was introduced to disaster relief in 2018 when her family attended First Baptist Church, Springfield, where former Louisiana

Baptist Disaster Relief Strategist Gibbie McMullan was interim pastor. Her interest in this special ministry subsequently grew until, in early October, she asked her grandparents, Alan and Kim Chadwick, if she could make bracelets to sell at their booth during the farmer's market.

They agreed and the youngster began to craft bracelets.

Kim Chadwick said she was touched by her granddaughter's selfless act of helping others in need.

"I have always tried to teach her about missions and the Lord blessed her that day," Chadwick said. "She may not be missionary now as far as going to another country, but she is doing missions by raising money to help others share Christ."



Brian Blackwell photo

Alanna Chadwick, 9, donated to disaster relief the \$75 she earned from her home-made bracelets raised, Oct. 15, at a farmer's market in Kentwood. A week later, she accepted Christ during a revival service at Old Zion Hill Baptist Church, Independence.

Once they returned from the market, Chadwick began asking questions about Jesus Christ and four days later, while attending a revival service at Old Zion Hill Baptist Church, Independence, Chadwick gave her life to Christ.

She was baptized with her brother, Cole (who gave his heart to Christ at a Disciple Now event earlier this year), and 15 others, Nov. 6, during a service at Old Zion Hill Baptist.

Since Oct. 17, 730 individuals have surrendered their lives to Christ during revival services that have been extended five

times and a tent crusade.

Louisiana Baptist DR Strategist Stan Statham said Chadwick's donation is a reminder of how everyone can play a part in helping share Christ love with others in need.

"This little girl raised money to help somebody she doesn't even know," Statham said. "Every gift is significant and if you are obedient, God will use you. In this case, it's not even the amount of the gift that mattered. It's just touching a little girl was moved by the Lord to make a difference. In our culture today you don't see a lot of that."



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unto us a Son
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Isaiah 9:6

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Brooks from page 2

building (1990) and Children's World and XA Student Center facilities (2002), replanted the former First Baptist Church, Woodworth, as Calvary Baptist, Woodworth (2010), and open a new 1,455-seat worship center (2015). Additionally, Calvary has baptized hundreds of new converts since 1979, including his son, Chad, daughter, Payton, granddaughter, Callie, and grandson, Jam.

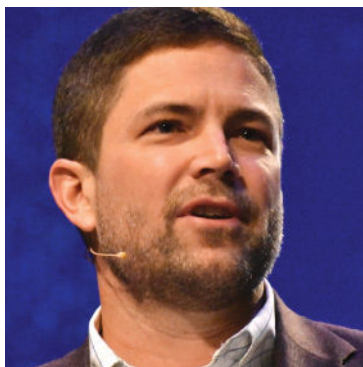
Brooks noted that while he and his wife have disciplined their children, Calvary has played a key role in helping them make decisions for Christ through constant encouragement and pouring spiritual truths into his kids' and grandkids' lives.

"It's been very emotional to have been able to baptize all of my kids and grandkids," Brooks said. "I am so grateful for the home environments they grew up in and also the many times they have been in church and in the homes of Calvary members."

Todd Strain, a pastor at Calvary who will succeed Brooks once he retires, was a student during Brooks' tenure as youth minister. He noted the constant encouragement Brooks bestowed upon him as a student and, later, as a staff member.

"Being raised in Alexandria and at Calvary, Dr. Brooks has been a part of my life for decades," Strain said. "As my youth minister, he led an incredible youth ministry that was foundational in my growth. He always impressed upon me the importance of a personal relationship with Christ through having a daily quiet time. This has had a profound impact upon my life and ministry."

"As someone who has served under him on the Calvary staff, I benefited greatly from his constant encouragement and empowerment," he continued. "His patient leadership allowed me to grow as a man and pastor. Now that I am transitioning into the role



Todd Strain will succeed David Brooks as pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Alexandria.

of senior pastor, Dr. Brooks' confidence and trust in me is invaluable as I lead the next chapter of kingdom work at Calvary."

After retirement, Brooks and his wife will spend time away from Calvary for a few months before returning as members.

"We have a very unifying church that has never had a split or major disagreement in our 101-year history," he said. "There is a culture here that we love God and we love others. I am grateful for our members and our staff, who are part of a place that is loving and caring and never afraid to be stretched or challenged in their faith."

YEC 2022 from page 5

try, 350 acts of repentance to restore fellowship with Christ and 97 other commitments. Students will be connected with a local church for follow-up, and baptism will be encouraged.

In addition to messages by Pruitt, participants enjoyed music by KB and Rush of Fools, entertainment by Jared Hall, and prayers led by students from around the state. Clint Davis, founder of Clint Davis Counseling and Integrative Wellness, Shreveport, and Maggie Bridges, licensed clinical social worker and assistant professor of social work at Louisiana Christian University, served as counselors during the event and were available for any students or adults who needed those services. Davis also spoke about mental health, the effects of phones and digital media and the importance of caring for one another.

YEC 2022 concluded with a concert by We Are Messengers, an award-winning contemporary Christian artist.

Students and adult leaders also were challenged to share their testimonies with classmates, family members, co-workers, and others. During the Monday afternoon session, Pruitt explained how the Three Circles Gospel conversation tool was an effective way to share the Gospel with others.

This was the sixth of a multi-year rotation to equip students with various tools to share Christ. Those who began the training as seventh graders during the 2016 YEC will be familiar with seven different evangelistic tools by the time they are seniors.

"It's not your job to save anybody," Pruitt said. "But it is your job to point people to the one who can save, Jesus Christ."

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Submitted photo

Prayer has been key to the success of the English as a Second Language (ESL) ministry at First Baptist Church, Covington. Each Sunday evening, 19 volunteers teach ESL classes to more than 40 students from 14 nationalities.

ESL ministry brings the world to Louisiana

By Brian Blackwell
Message staff writer

COVINGTON, La. (LBM) – The opportunity to reach the world for Christ has come to Louisiana Baptist churches through English as a Second Language classes, according to leaders of various teaching ministries. “It’s exciting to see

God use ESL ministry to reach lives for people to share the Gospel, and for students to be encouraged and helped through our churches,” Shannon Brown, a Louisiana Baptist ESL trainer, told the Baptist Message. “You don’t have to have certain qualifications to serve in this ministry. If you speak English, you can teach

ESL.” According to Brown, a member of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, New Orleans, at least 50 Louisiana Baptist churches host an ESL ministry. However, many more are needed to make a Kingdom impact on non-English speaking Louisianans, Brown added. “Churches should know they should get involved,

no matter how big or how small they are,” she said. “As long as they have the heart for others, they can make an impact in a big way through ESL.”

JEFFERSON BAPTIST CHURCH

Twice a week, more than 100 students from 12 nationalities participate in ESL classes at Jefferson

Baptist Church, Baton Rouge, church records show. But more importantly, six of those students followed through with baptism, Sept. 25. Another student is scheduled to be baptized, Nov. 20. “The students are happy to have learned English better but also to have

See **ESL**, page 9

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ESL from page 8

learned about Christ,” Jefferson Baptist Spanish Pastor Miguel Flores said. “The people from the church are very excited to see how this ministry has touched lives.”

ESL ministry holds a special place in Flores’ heart, he said. Before he was on staff, Flores was an ESL student at Jefferson Baptist in 2014.

“I see myself in those students,” he said. “Each week, our 20 volunteers are building that connection with the students who then come back each week because they feel welcome here.”

“We ask that you pray the students will continue to feel that love,” he said. “We pray for each one to know Jesus. Also, please pray that our teachers and volunteers will continue to be bold and share Christ with their students.”

FBC COVINGTON

Each Sunday evening at

First Baptist Church, Covington, 19 volunteers teach ESL classes to more than 40 students from 14 nationalities, ministry team leaders said.

“It’s so exciting to me because the world has come to us,” co-coordinator Joy Mohr offered. “God has brought them here and made us more aware. In the past, I have suggested ESL as an opportunity for those who want to be involved with international missions but are unable to go. Through this ministry, everyone has a chance to minister to internationals.”

Prayer has been key to the success of the ESL ministry, Mohr said. Each week, Mohr sends prayer letters to at least 100 people, including FBC Covington staff members.

“We continue to rely on our ESL prayer supporters for God’s direction,” Mohr said. “We have seen how God has provided teachers



Submitted photo

This year, seven ESL students have been baptized by Jefferson Baptist Church, Baton Rouge. Twice a week, more than 100 students from 12 nationalities participate in the classes.

and other volunteers right on time. He also provided many more students than we anticipated, for which we are thankful. We continue to be amazed at how God is using us to reach out to the non-English speaking community around us.”

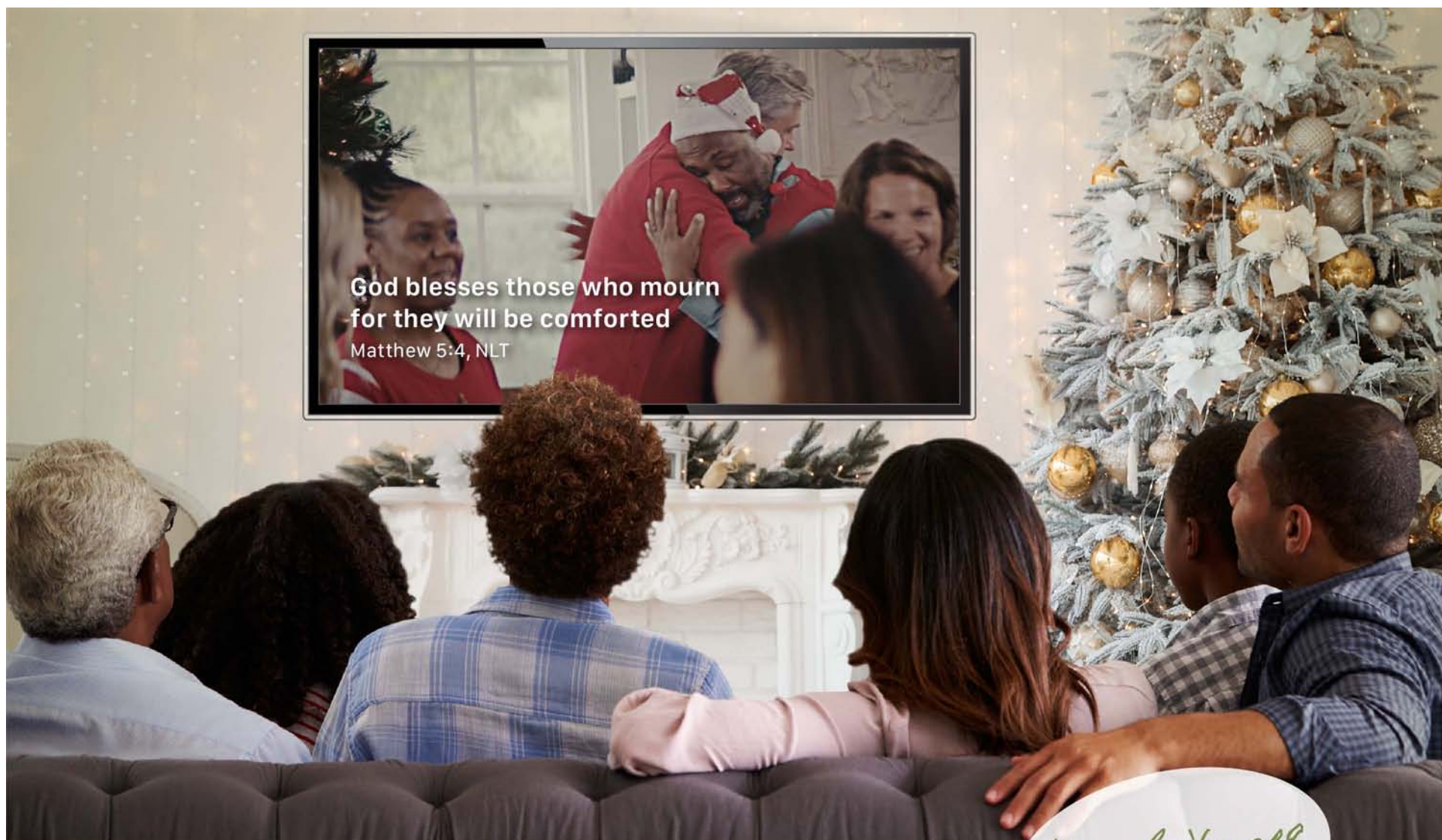
While they have not recorded any salvations,

volunteers continue to plant Gospel seeds they pray one day will reap a harvest of souls.

“We try to encourage teachers and other volunteers to be loving and to get to know them by name,” Mohr said. “Some of them will open up to us and share their prayer needs.”

“We have two Ukrainians who have been with us since September and have been overwhelmed,” she continued. “They shared with us their needs and within a few weeks they had a car, clothing, and permission to work. One Connect group class, led by

See ESL, page 10



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Judson Baptist sees revival, baptisms, ongoing renewal

By Brian Blackwell
Message staff writer

WALKER, La. (LBM) – Revival has come to Judson Baptist Church, Walker, and all signs point to the spiritual re-

newal continuing for the foreseeable future.

During revival services, Aug. 14-17, 33 people professed faith in Christ. Twenty-four of them have been baptized, so far.

“It was a great, joyous blessing,” Pastor David Lane told the *Baptist Message*. “We had prayed and asked God for revival. And what happened was a blessing of grace we didn’t deserve.”

“We will see what’s next,” he continued. “Right now, we are trying to build on a foundation of what He is doing.”

During the revival services, around 250 attended each evening, while the church averages 200 at Sunday worship.

Evangelist Bill Britt, who shared the Gospel each session, said the church embraced the effort.

“What we experienced during the revival at Judson was a result of prayer and expectation,” Britt said. “The crowds grew as the expectation grew. God’s people invited their friends because they knew God was moving.”

Lane said the ‘Change Me’ revival guide was the catalyst for spiritual renewal among the congregation. Written by Louisiana Baptist Executive Director Steve Horn, the booklet encourages participants to seek personal revival over a 28-day period and is based on Psalm 139:23-24.

After Lane and his wife, Lea Anne, and the deacons completed the guide in early December, the congregation partici-

pated in January. After completing the guide, the church met as discipleship groups and as a congregation and each time members were asked to pray by name for an individual who did not know Christ to attend the revival.

“As we were going through the prayer times, stuff would come to the surface in our lives that we had to work through and resolve,” Lane said. “I have never seen our deacon body more unified, and it brought me to tears.”

Hudson Smith, 16, who previously accepted Christ during the 2021 Youth Evangelism Celebration in Alexandria, invited his family members to the revival and saw several of them accept Christ. Smith celebrated with baptism alongside his mother, Kate, father, David, and brother, Dawson, during a Sunday morning service, Aug. 28.

Smith has continued sharing his story with others and prays they too will experience joy through Christ.

“What has taken place has opened my heart to what Jesus can do for a family and community,” Smith said. “After the revival I have noticed a tighter bond with so many others because of what Jesus did during those few days.”

“It’s given me a better view on life and it’s easy to talk with God about people,” he continued. “There always will be hard times, but it makes it a lot better to handle because I know God is there for me.”

ESL from page 9

Pastor Boren, were blessed to meet some of the material needs of this couple. It’s amazing to see how God is blessing them and others who go through our ministry.”

For information about how to begin an ESL ministry, contact Brown, (504) 380-3510.



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Former DCFS Secretary Marketa Garner Walters presented the Community Partner of the Year award to Connect1Child staff members Christy Goodwin and Melody Karamanis, and LBCHFM Executive Director of Child and Family Services Susan Nolan.

LBCHFM program awarded Community Partner of 2022

By Brian Blackwell
Message staff writer

BATON ROUGE, La. (LBM) – The Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services recently named Connect1Child its Community Partner of the Year.

During the 24th annual adoption celebration at the Governor's Mansion in Baton Rouge, Nov. 6, DCFS honored Connect1Child (Louisiana Baptist Children's Home & Family Ministries' off-campus

foster care and adoption ministry) with this special recognition and announced other award winners in a celebration of the 538 families who adopted 700 children and youth from foster care during the past year.

"To see Governor Edwards and First Lady Edwards join the other organizations and the kids to celebrate the adoptions was quite the experience," LBCHFM Foster Care

See AWARD, page 12

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Award from page 11

and Adoption Specialist Christy Goodwin told the *Baptist Message*. "We were honored to be the ones chosen for this special award."

Since its inception in 2014, ConnectiChild has helped hundreds of families impact the lives of

over a thousand children in the state foster care system.

The ministry includes a team of social workers trained in trauma-informed care who work closely with the DCFS and other foster care community partners to under-

stand the needs of foster adoptive families, and how the churches and Christian families can help.

In October, the Eastern Louisiana Baptist Association became the first participant in the LBCHFM's new model to help associations better engage churches in foster care and adoption ministry. The partnership encourages a coordination of efforts to serve the foster care community as an association and provides a more streamlined approach for meeting urgent needs.

"Part of our ministry is to inform other community partners and churches to get involved with adoption," LBCHFM Executive Director of Child and Family Services Susan Nolan said, "Christy and our other social workers provide important training and excellent support for our foster and adoptive families."

For more information about ConnectiChild, contact Susan Nolan, (318) 343-2244.

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EPHESIANS 1: God chooses us in Christ

This is the first installment of a six-part series for the January Bible study on the book of Ephesians.

By Will Hall, Baptist Message executive editor

ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM) – While a prisoner in Rome, Paul wrote a letter of freedom to the members of the church at Ephesus, reminding them that “in Christ” God had provided the means of salvation.

Indeed, it is almost a singular emphasis in the first chapter of Ephesians.

This is critical to note because many scholars agree that Paul wrote half of his letter (Chapters 1-3) to emphasize doctrine -- and Paul chose, first, to emphasize as doctrine the means by which God chooses us.

Consider how the translators of the New King James Version presented verses 1-13 (there are only slight differences in the English Standard Version). They concluded that Paul:

-- wrote to the saints who were faithful “in Christ” (v. 1);

-- offered grace and peace from God, specifically mentioning two Persons of the Godhead, “our Father” and “the Lord Jesus Christ” (Son) (v. 2);

-- described redemption as being blessed “in Christ” (v. 3);

-- declared that God had decided – before the world was made – that the means of our salvation would be “in Him” (Jesus) (v. 4);

-- defined predestination

as God’s plan that we should be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ, then repeated the point by stating we are “accepted” through “the Beloved” (Jesus) (vv. 5-6);

-- specifically stated that our redemption is “in Him” (Jesus) “through His blood” (v. 7-8);

-- explained the mystery of God’s will as “in the fullness of time” that all things in Heaven and earth will be unified “in Christ” (vv. 9-10);

-- reemphasized that predestination is God’s plan that we gain our inheritance “in Him” (Jesus) (v. 11), and that we must trust “in Christ” if we are to be “the praise of His glory” (v. 12); and

-- concluded that by our trust and belief “in Him” (Jesus) through the “word of truth” (“the Gospel of your salvation”), we are sealed by the Holy Spirit (the third Person of God) (vv. 13-14).

The remaining nine verses express thanks and prayer for the saints in Ephesus and close with a tribute to God’s mighty power, which He worked “in Christ.”

In Ephesians 1, Paul provides overwhelming doctrinal emphasis upon the means of salvation which is “in Christ.” This is the lens Paul provides to view his letter “to the saints who are in Ephesus.”

EPHESIANS 2: Redemption is a gift

This is the second installment of a six-part series for the January Bible study on the book of Ephesians.

ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM) – In Chapter 1, Paul explained redemption as a blessing from God and emphasized Christ as the means by which we receive it.

In Ephesians 2, he built on this doctrinal concept, instructing that this “blessing” is a gift, or the “grace” of God. Again, Paul emphasized that this grace is found “in Christ.” Moreover, he contrasted “grace” with “works” to help us understand the enormity of the gift.

This is important to

his refutation of the Judaizers who emphasized the “works” of the law (the legalistic lives Jews had to live, including circumcision of males). In other words, they believed that the people of Israel had to “labor” to make themselves acceptable to God.

Further, in verses 1-10, living in “trespasses and sins” is described as being “dead,” and in verses 11-22 being dead is defined as being separated from Christ. Moreover, Paul states three times that salvation is by

See **EPHESIANS**, page 13

Good Shepherd Hispanic celebrates debt retirement

By Brian Blackwell
Message staff writer

METAIRIE, La. (LBM) – Good Shepherd Hispanic Baptist Church recently celebrated the retirement of \$1,085,000 in debt on the congregation's education building.

Members rejoiced during a special note burning service, Oct. 8, and leaders said they are preparing to renovate the worship center to accommodate the growing congregation.

"I can't describe the joy," Pastor Gonzalo Rodriguez told the *Baptist Message*. "People are excited and see that God is doing many great things. We are united with God in what He is doing, and we appreciate that

He is blessing us."

Since God planted a desire in Rodriguez's heart to start a small Bible study group (five people in 1980), Good Shepherd has grown to a church that in 2022 averaged 300 in worship and baptized 26 new believers.

The growth and baptisms underscore the importance his congregation places on reaching Hispanics in the New Orleans area, and beyond, for Christ.

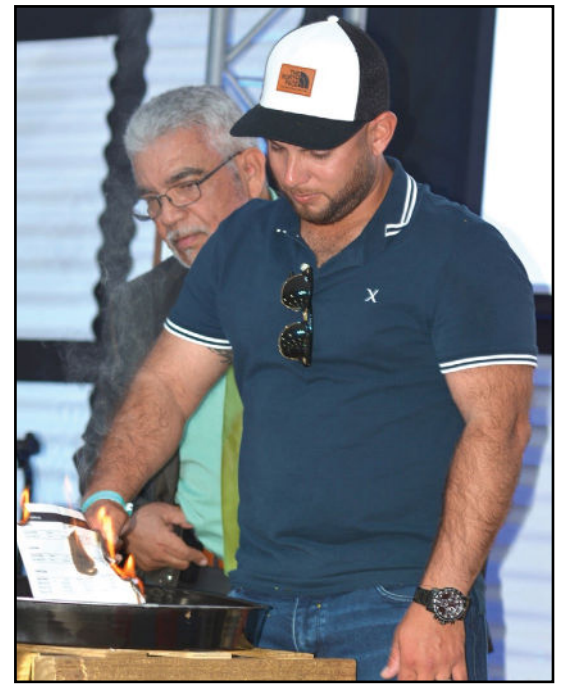
The church recently ordained a member, Fernando Vera, to the ministry; and in July, he became missions pastor at First Baptist Church, Bogalusa. Additionally, the church has sent money and supplies to help churches share Christ's love in Guatemala, Honduras and

Nicaragua.

Most recently, the church was presented the opportunity to help children of immigrants who have been displaced from their parents at the U.S.-Mexico border. Through the partnership with the National Youth Advocate Program, Good Shepherd will place the children with foster families in the U.S., and hopefully reunite them with their parents one day, Rodriguez explained.

Looking to the future, Rodriguez is excited about how God will use Good Shepherd to reach the community for Christ.

"We are very excited about what God has done here," Rodriguez said. "This is just the beginning of even bigger things."



Brian Blackwell photo

Luis Villanueva, a member of Good Shepherd Hispanic Baptist Church, Metairie, burned the former debt note for the congregation's education building.

Ephesians from page 12

"grace" (vv. 5, 7, 8) in contrast to the notion of "circumcision" (v. 11) – a reference to the legalism of the Judaizers in the passage that follows.

Importantly, Paul again emphasized that the means of receiving the gift, or "grace," is "in Christ" (vv. 6, 7, 10, 13); and he made this point through other references to Jesus, such as being "brought near by the blood of Christ" (v. 13), as opposed to being secluded behind a "wall of separation" because of our sins (v. 14).

Finally, he closed this chapter by further rejecting

the "works" of the law by taking aim at the temple, the center of the perpetuation of the works of the law. In verses 19-22, Paul described Jesus as the "chief cornerstone in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit." Paul told the Ephesians that they, too, were part of the sacred space where the Spirit of God dwells, because of the blessing of redemption, a gift, or the grace received "in Christ."

Sam Moore, Evangelistic Ministries

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<p>Lafayette March 4 First Baptist</p>	<p>Covington March 18 First Baptist</p>	<p>Ruston March 25 Temple Baptist</p>

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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

- **Rick Daniels** is the interim Pastor at Belcher Baptist Church, Belcher.
- **Kurt Zortman** is the interim Pastor at Elm Grove Baptist Church, Bossier City.
- **Zeke Toups** is the new music director at South Bossier Baptist Church, Bossier City.
- **Tonya Blanton** is the new children's minister at New Chapel Hill, West Monroe.
- **Jimmy White and Wes Coleman** were ordained to the gospel ministry at McClendon Baptist Church, West Monroe. **Jimmy** serves as music minister and **Wes** serves as college and young adult minister.
- **Chris Holloway** is the new associational mission strategist for the Gulf Coast Baptist Association.
- **Harry Brown** resigns as pastor of First Baptist Church, Ringgold to become new director of Camp Harris.
- **Aaron Coffey**, First Baptist Church, Homer, is the new director to Bienville, Webster, Claiborne (BWC) Youth Network.
- **Justin, wife Amy, Berry** is the new pastor at the Church of Marksville.
- **Mark, wife Jeni, Morelock** is the new interim pastor at First Baptist Church, Bunkie.
- **Dustin Pierce** is the new pastor at Hillcrest Baptist Church, Franklinton.
- **Josh Powell** is the new pastor at First Baptist Church, Bogalusa.
- **Eddie Wren** is the new pastor at First Baptist Church, Zachary.

LAGNIAPPE

- **Steve Bennett**, Pastor Emeritus of FBC Moss Bluff, is available for conferences, revivals, or supply. Call 337.263.7114
- **Alton Achord** is available for supply. Call 318.715.8874.
- **Singer Baptist Church** in Singer is seeking a bi-vocational Southern Baptist pastor. The position entails conducting Sunday morning, Sunday evening worship services and mid-week prayer service and other pastoral duties, i.e., funerals, weddings, etc. Salary and housing benefits will be determined. Applicants must be a leader who is prayerful, wise and steadfast; must be people oriented and possess strong pastoral skills; have good preaching and teaching and counseling skills; have the ability to assimilate with the people and the culture of First Baptist and possess strong pastoral skills and be passionate about reaching out to young people and families. Contact Jimmy Clark at 337.912.9882 or email résumé to jbc14@bellsouth.net
- **Calvary Baptist Church, Merryville:** A Night in Bethlehem – Live Walking Nativity, December 16-17, 6-8 p.m. We invite your family to wander through the old town of Bethlehem as we depict the time of the birth of Jesus Christ. The church is located at 424 HWY 111, Merryville, LA. Refreshments will be served, and Children will receive a gift bag. Pastor: Jim Miers.
- **First Baptist Church, West Monroe:** NELA Christmas, December 16-18, 6 p.m. Cost: \$5 with proceeds going to the community. Tickets are available online at www.nelachristmas.com. Pastor: Michael Wood.
- **Journey Church, Pineville:** 2nd Annual Christ-

- mas Light Show**, December 16-17, 6 – 9 p.m. The show is free and open to the public. Come enjoy thousands of lights dancing and synchronized to music. There will also be a live nativity, dancing Christmas trees, candy canes, tunnels, free hot chocolate, snow, food trucks and photo opportunities. Pastor: James Greer.
- **Judson Baptist Church, Walker:** Wreaths Across America event, December 17, 11 a.m. Judson Baptist will honor the 65 veterans buried in the church's cemetery on the that day. Pastor: David Lane.
- **Eastside Baptist Church, Rayville:** Carols at the Cross, December 17, 6-8 p.m. Eastside Baptist and several other Richland Association churches are hosting "Carols at the Cross." It will be held at the cross on Horn Road. Pastor: Chris Crawford.
- **First Baptist Church, Rayville:** Christmas Extravaganza, December 18, 6 p.m. First Baptist and several other Richland Association churches will be hosting "Christmas Extravaganza," which is based on the musical "Savior for All." It is a combination of music and drama.
- **First Baptist Church, Pineville (Lecompte campus):** Christmas in the Country, December 18, 5-7 p.m. There will be food, crafts, hot chocolate, games, live music, jumpers, a live Nativity. We hope you will join us in celebrating the true meaning of the Christmas season. Pastor: Stewart Holloway.
- **First Baptist Church, Bernice:** Mark Lanier will present a Christmas Concert with special guest Andrew Ishe, pianist for the group Shenandoah, December 18, 11 a.m. Pastor: Michael McIntosh.
- **Holden Baptist Church, Holden:** Retirement party celebration, December 18. Pastor Russell Hinson is retiring after 31 years in the ministry. There will be a reception for him and his wife, Lisa, immediately following the morning worship service. Everyone is invited to attend. For more information, please contact, Holden Baptist Church, 30130 LA Hwy 441, Holden, LA, 70744 or email sandi.stafford@gmail.com. Pastor: Russell Hinson.
- **North Shreve Baptist Church, Shreveport:** Trevor Thomas live!, December 18, 11 a.m. A love offering will be taken. Pastor: Cecil Marr.
- **Social Springs Baptist Church, Ringgold:** Mark Lanier will present a Christmas Concert with special guest Andrew Ishe, pianist for the group Shenandoah, December 18, 6 p.m. Pastor: James Hester.
- **East Ridge Baptist Church, Lake Charles:** Glorious Impossible, December 18, 5:30 p.m. You are invited to a choir presentation of "Glorious Impossible." Come listen as we focus on the birth of Christ and how glorious and impossible it is that God would send His Son to us.
- **Cypress Baptist Church, Benton:** Christmas Eve service, December 24, 6-7 p.m. Bring the whole family and enjoy a memorable time of worship, candlelight, and celebrating the Christmas season! Pastor: John Fream.
- **First Baptist Church, Haynesville:** Christmas cantata, December 18, 6 p.m.; December 24, Candlelight service and Lord's Supper, 6 p.m.; Morning Worship, 11 a.m. Pastor: Jeff Tinsley.
- **First Baptist Church, Zwolle:** It Happened in Bethlehem Christmas program, December 18, 10:30 a.m.; Church-wide Christmas Fellowship will be held Sunday evening at 5 p.m. Members should bring finger foods for the fellowship. Christmas Day, no Sunday school, regular worship service with The Lord's Supper, December 25, 10:30 a.m. Pastor: Marty Williams.
- Longview Baptist Church, Deville: Christmas Candlelight service, December 18, 6 p.m.; Christ-



Submitted photo

First Baptist Church, Independence, recently honored Pastor Mitch Williams, pictured with his wife Lily, for 30 years of service at FBC, Independence and 61 years in the ministry.

- mas Day worship service**, December 25, 10:30 a.m. Pastor: Robby Poole.
- **Mangham Baptist Church, Mangham:** Christmas cantata, December 18, 10:30 a.m.; Christmas Day services, Morning worship, 10:30, December 25. There will be no Sunda school or evening service as we set aside time for families to celebrate our Savior's birth. Pastor: Rick Aultman.
- **First Baptist Church, Winnfield:** Christmas Eve Candlelight service, December 24, 6 p.m. Pastor: Jerry Pipes.
- **Bayou Vista Baptist Church, Morgan City:** Christmas Eve candlelight service, December 24, 6 p.m.; Christmas Day service, December 25, 10 a.m. There will be no Sunday school or evening

- service.
- **First Baptist Church, New Orleans:** Breakfast in Bethlehem, December 17, 10 a.m.-noon. Come enjoy a free family Christmas celebration featuring a pancake breakfast bar, Christmas activities and the Christmas story, Christmas Eve candlelight service, December 24, 6 p.m.; Christmas Day worship service, December 25, 11 a.m.; New Year's Day worship service, January 1, 2023, 11 a.m. Pastor: Chad Gilbert.
- **Rocky Springs Baptist Church, Homer:** Christmas Eve & Day services, December 24-25, Saturday, 6 p.m. Christmas Eve service with the Lord's Supper; Sunday, 10 a.m. Worship service (Sunday School will be cancelled). Pastor: Chris Stephens.
- **Mandeville First Baptist Church, Mandeville:** Christmas Eve service, December 24, 4 p.m.; Christmas Day service, December 25, 11 a.m. Pastor: Ronny Cooksey.
- **First Baptist Church, Lafayette:** Christmas Eve service, December 24, 3:30 and 5 p.m.; Christmas Day worship service, December 25, 10 a.m. There are no other activities on December 25. Pastor: James Pritchard.
- **First Baptist Church, Covington:** Christmas Eve communion services, December 24, 1, 3 & 5 p.m.; Christmas Day Service, December 25, 10 a.m.; New Year's Day Service, January 1, 2023, 9:30 and 11 a.m. Connect groups will not meet on Saturday or Sunday. Pastor: Waylon Bailey.
- **Philadelphia Baptist Church, Deville & Horseshoe Drive:** Christmas Day Service, December 25, 10:30 a.m. There will be no small groups. New Year's Day Worship services and small groups, January 1, 2023, 9 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. in Deville; Worship Service & Small Groups (Horseshoe) | 9:15 a.m. &

- 10:30 a.m. Pastor: Philip Robertson.
- **Judson Baptist Church, Walker:** Christmas Eve Candlelight service, December 24, 6 p.m. Pastor: David Lane.
- **Trinity Baptist Church, Lake Charles:** Drive-thru Christmas Lights, December 15-31, 6-11 p.m. This is a Lake Area tradition. Cost: No charge so feel free to visit as many times as you like.; A Classical to Classic Christmas, December 18, 6-7 p.m. in the Central Venue; Christmas Eve Service - PJ's with the Pastor, December 24, 6:30 p.m. in the Central Venue.; Christmas Day service, December 25, 10:00 a.m. in the central venue. ; New Year's Day Worship service, 10 a.m. both venues. Pastor: Steve James.
- **First Baptist Church, Lake Charles:** Live Nativity drive-thru, December 14, 5:30-7:30 p.m. FBC Lake Charles will be hosting a live nativity at University Baptist, 4505 Lake Street, Lake Charles. Those attending should enter on Lake Street. Pastor: Johnny Dammon.
- **Tom Hebert Road Baptist Church, Lake Charles:** The Christmas Experience, December 16-17, 6-9 p.m. Make plans to journey with us on a live walk-through experience of the Christmas story at Red Oak Farm in Lake Charles. You will experience live animals, caroling, and drama scenes including Wisemen, angels, shepherds, nativity, St. Nicholas, etc. Parking will be at Tom Hebert Road Baptist Church, 2520 Marty Lane, Lake Charles, LA 70607. From there a trolley will be available to carry 20-25 guests at a time to the event. While you are waiting for the trolley you can enjoy some hot chocolate and cookies. Pastor: Carl Whitley.
- **First Baptist Church, Haughton:** Christmas Eve service, December 24, 5 p.m. in the Worship Center. We worship through singing, reading God's word, preaching, and participating in the Lord's Supper; Christmas Day, December 25, 11 a.m. one combined service, no Life Group; New Year's Day, January 1, 2023, 11 a.m. one combined service, no Life group on that day. Pastor: Gevan Spinney.

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.

GRV DGCMJ GRV DKLR, ALM JKRJ KU HMNMVMM,
FKCM PRAK LTC, JGOTRE, CGJAMW, QM QKPXV ALGAALKP
JLKPXVMJA VK UKW PJ QLGAJKMYMW QM JLGXX
VMJTW.
CGWS AMR: ALTWAO-UTYM

Clues:
C = M; K = O

Answer to November 24 Scripture Crypto:
Ezra six: nineteen

SENIOR ADULT LUNCHEON



FIRST WEST | WEST MONROE | 11:45AM

January 24, 2023

Followed by an afternoon of worship with:



Michael W.
SMITH

World-acclaimed
Christian Artist



Tim
DOWDY

Executive Director of
Evangelism & Leadership
North American
Mission Board

Plus, an afternoon of Breakouts offering
evangelistic-based sessions for all ages!

To Register: LouisianaBaptists.org/SAL

For additional information, contact:

Jeff Ingram, Adult Ministry & Church Administration Strategist at 318.448.3402