



THE BAPTIST MESSAGE

November 20, 2025
Volume 139 • Issue No. 12

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Philip Robertson, pastor, Philadelphia Baptist Church, Deville and Alexandria, said all Christ followers will receive a reward in the end.

Pastors Conference: Be encouraged

By Brian Blackwell
Message staff writer

ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM) – During the 2025 Louisiana Baptist Pastors Conference, Nov. 10, held in the Randolph Riverfront Center, Alexandria, speakers offered words to encourage pastors.

TODD STRAIN

Todd Strain, pastor, Calvary Baptist Church, Alexandria, spoke during the opening session from Matthew 6:16-18 and encouraged pastors to consider fasting.

“I believe for us today if we fast before the Lord as He has called us to do, I believe we will experience His power and provision,” he said.

Strain shared that fasting, which is mentioned more than 80 times in the Bible, is an expression of our longing for God, that it will be rewarded, and in-

See PASTORS, page 10



Messengers worshipped during a session of the 2025 Louisiana Baptist Convention Annual Meeting, Nov. 11, in the Randolph Riverfront Center in Alexandria.

Louisiana Baptists enjoy worship, fellowship, conduct business

By Brian Blackwell
Message staff writer

ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM) – Louisiana Baptists enjoyed fellowship and worship during the 2025 LBC Annual Meeting, Nov. 11, hosted by the Randolph Riverfront Center, Alexandria.

BUDGET APPROVED

Messengers approved the 2026 financial plan, based on Cooperative Program contributions of \$16,925,460, a decrease of \$455,348, or 2.62 percent.

Cooperative Program projections are based on actual receipts from August 2024 through July 2025. The allocation formula for distributing CP gifts between Southern Baptist entities and Louisiana Baptist causes

See BUSINESS, page 6



Louisiana Baptist Executive Director Steve Horn reminded pastors they are not alone in their suffering, and they must simply cry out to Jesus.

HORN: Stay together to reach La. for Jesus

By Brian Blackwell
Message staff writer

ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM) – During the 2025 Louisiana Baptist Convention Annual Meeting, Nov. 11, hosted by the Randolph Riverfront Center, Alexandria, Louisiana Baptist Executive Director Steve Horn urged messengers to stay on mission together to reach the 4.6 million people who live in the state.

“Let’s stay together so that the world may know that God the Father sent the Son,” he said. “Let’s stay together. This is going to require faith. And this is going to require grace. But staying together is going to result in eternal wins. Louisiana Baptists, let’s stay together.”

EVANGELISTIC OPPORTUNITIES

Horn encouraged messengers to commit to reach one person for Christ

See HORN, page 7

Former slave girl experiences freedom with ‘Louisiana Reach Haiti’

By Brian Blackwell
Message staff writer

CAP HAITIEN, Haiti (LBM) – Louisiana Reach Haiti ministry leaders recently welcomed a 12-year-old Haitian girl

who had been just freed from slavery.

The transformation of Esther from a girl held captive to one who now experiences the love and compassion of Christ has been yet another blessing for a ministry that in 2023

had to seek refuge in Cap Haitien after gang-ravaged Port-au-Prince became too dangerous as a homebase. “When I met Esther after she was brought to

See HAITI, page 6

Fred Luter announces his 2026 retirement

By Brian Blackwell
Message staff writer

NEW ORLEANS (LBM) – Fred Luter, pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, New Orleans, has announced he will retire in October 2026.

Luter, who shared about his retirement during an Oct. 19 service that celebrated his 39th anniversary with FABC, said he is grateful to the 65 members who voted to call him as pastor while he was a

young street preacher from the Lower Ninth Ward. He also expressed appreciation for being a part of a church that has persevered through four building programs, the COVID pandemic and Hurricane Katrina.

During his ministry with FABC, Luter was elected as the first African American president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and he has seen the church baptize 6,500 new believers, according to

church records.

“Just looking back on from when it started to up until now, it’s been a joy pastoring Franklin Avenue,” Luter told the Baptist Message. “To see what God has done in this church, with a guy who never pastored before, and then being a part of a church that grew to be one of the largest churches in the state has been a blessing.

“And I look at it as God rewarding my faithfulness,” he continued. “I’ve

been thankful to God, to His Word, to my wife and family, and to this church.”

Once he retires, his son, Chip Luter, will succeed him. During a specially called meeting, Nov. 3, the younger Luter, associate pastor of the congregation, was officially called to his new leadership role by a 96 percent vote.

Luter noted that his son was qualified because he was a Christ follower who was baptized by FABC and has served as high school pastor with Concord Church, Dallas (2007-2009), pastor of youth and youth adults with FABC (2010-2015), campus pastor with Idlewild Baptist Church’s Sulphur Spring campus in Tampa, Florida, (2015-2021) and now with FABC in his current role.

“When I look at Chip, I tell people he is not just my son but someone who has proven himself in ministry,” Luter said. “So, it’s exciting to see how God has raised him up as a minister of the Gospel and now he’s going to succeed me as the senior pastor.”

Looking to retirement, Luter will serve as pastor

emeritus starting in October 2026. He hopes to preach at more churches on Sunday mornings, something he has not done because Luter has remained committed to preaching at FABC most weekends.

“If God continues to give me the strength, I’ll still be preaching,” he said. “There are a lot of pastor friends of mine who want me to come on Sundays and preach for them. Since I had a commitment to preach on Sundays at my own church, I will be freer to do that.

“And then I’m still getting requests to preach at evangelism conferences, state conventions and association meetings, which I will continue to do,” he continued. “One of the older members came to me recently and said, ‘pastor, I didn’t know that preachers retire. I said, ‘no, I’m not retired. I’m retired from pastoring, but I’m not retired from preaching.’ I still will continue to be faithful to that call.”

The Baptist Message will publish an in-depth article on Luter’s ministry in a future edition.



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MONDAY, JAN. 26, 4:15PM

Discipleship Collaborative

The Impact of Intergenerational Discipling Relationships on Gen Z
Larry Hyche, Alabama Baptists

Preparing Your Congregation for Revival

James Pritchard, Pastor, First, Lafayette

Developing a Church-wide Follow-up Strategy

Scott English, Adults Pastor, First, Lafayette

Getting Ready for Company

Chris Poirrier, Minister to Median Adults/Connections, First, Lafayette

Connecting with the Community

Nick Watts, Next Gen Pastor, First, Lafayette

TUESDAY, JAN. 27, 12:00PM

Evangelism Legacy Luncheon (formerly “Senior Adult Luncheon”)

Pursuing the Presence of God

Kyle Walker, Cartersville First Baptist Church, GA

Evangelism Leadership for Pastors

Reclaiming the Evangelistic Reach

Mark Johnson, President, Louisiana Chirstian University

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Collins to retire from NSU BCM after 36 years of faithful service

By Brian Blackwell
Message staff writer

NATCHITOCHES, La. (LBM) – For nearly four decades Bill Collins has helped students on the Northwestern State University fulfill the Great Commission. Collins, who is set to retire March 31, 2026, from his role as NSU’s Baptist Collegiate Ministry director, said he is thankful for the chance to see so many students who have been a part of the ministry become warriors for Christ. “I always believe that you should take yourself out of the game before someone has to take you out of the game,” Collins told the Baptist Message. “I know I had probably a few more years left but really felt God leading me to go ahead and step down to allow a younger, more energetic person to come in and be able to do some new things. “This is a new generation of students, and somebody

younger, a little closer to their life experiences, is going to be able to help them formulate some new programming,” he continued. “I really believe this the best thing for the NSU BCM, for my wife Phyllis and myself. And of course, we’re not retiring from ministry, just retiring from the NSU BCM.” During his time at NSU, Collins has seen students come to Christ, discipled and sent on mission trips. He also led the relocation to a new BCM building in 2009 and served as chaplain of the NSU football team since 2019. Additionally, he started a Louisiana Baptist Disaster Relief team of BCM students. Through all of this, Collins has enjoyed seeing God move and change countless lives. Collins, who has served as BCM director since June 12, 1989, voiced appreciation to the students, alumni, supportive churches and his

wife. “We have enjoyed our time there working for Louisiana Baptists, representing them in the Natchitoches area and District Eight Baptist Convention; they are the real deal,” he said. “Some people in life can look back on their work and wonder, ‘what did I accomplish?’ And that’s not a hard thing for us to figure out here.” “The students have made Phyllis and I look good,” he continued. “To work with three generations of students and then to have some parents come through our BCM has been rewarding.”

WORDS OF APPRECIATION

Reflecting on his legacy, BCM State Director Mark Robinson shared: “For decades to come we will hear stories of how Bill and Phyllis Collins impacted students’ lives, showing them the way to live as disciples of Christ in action

and through teaching His Word. Bill is a foundational servant not only to BCM, but to the Northwestern campus, and has influenced ministry practices across the country. A large number of his alumni serve on campuses around Louisiana, in churches and on mission around the world. He will be greatly missed on our team.” Matt Endris, pastor with Fairview Baptist Church, Coushatta and NSU BCM Advisory Chairman with District 8 Baptist Convention, was NSU BCM worship leader and later president in the mid-1990s. He said that Collins and his wife were instrumental in his training for ministry. Collins later officiated the marriage of Endris and Jana (who attended Louisiana College). Endris’s daughter, Claire, also was active in the BCM during her time at NSU. “Bill and Phyllis Collins have had a remarkable

ministry together these past 36 years,” Endris said. “They have worked side by side, complementing each other in a way that caused this ministry to excel and continue to grow year by year. They have modeled Christ, mentored and ministered to a multitude of students across multiple generations. “There are numerous ministers, missionaries and faithful Kingdom servants who were trained and prepared for life after college through the Collins’ ministry in the NSU BSU/BCM,” he said. “The day of Christ will declare the difference and contributions this couple made in the Kingdom of God.”

POST-RETIREMENT

In retirement Collins plans to spend time with his family and continue to serve as pastor with Cypress Baptist Church, Natchitoches, where he been the past four years.

The (Sum) of the = Some

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STICKER SHOCK

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

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

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

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

OUCH!

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

This is true in all other areas of life.

On one occasion as Jesus was addressing those who gathered around him, He said, "A farmer went out to plant his seed. While he was planting, **some** seed fell by the road, and the birds came and ate it all up. **Some** seed fell on rocky ground, where there wasn't much dirt.

That seed grew very fast, because the ground was not deep. But when the sun rose, the plants dried up, because they did not have deep roots. **Some** other seed fell among thorny weeds, which grew and choked the good plants. **Some** other seed fell on good ground where it grew and produced a crop. **Some** plants made a hundred times more, **some** made sixty times more, and **some** made thirty times more." Mt 13:3-9, NCV.

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

Wherever your feet take you today, you have the opportunity to scatter seeds. **Some** will make no difference. They simply bounce off the soil and lie there unnoticed. **Some** appear to take root only to quickly die. **Some** start showing potential only to be choked by the distractions of life. But **some**, just **some**, land in good soil that has been waiting for the right seed to be scattered at the right time. These seeds sprout roots, break through the soil and become visible for all to see.

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

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

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

You can scatter this life-changing seed.

You don't need a seminary degree. You don't have to be a public speaker or an extrovert. Simply go to **HereForYou.org** and share the **Here for You** spots using your preferred social media platform.

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

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

Will you scatter **some** seeds with us? The **sum** of these efforts could change thousands of lives for eternity.

EVANGELISM 101 (Part 11): Demolishing obstacles to soul winning

By Mike Bergeron
Special to the Message

NEW ORLEANS (LBM) -- Some studies indicate that as few as 10 percent of professed Christians share the Gospel regularly (meaning about one time per month).

What is the "brick wall" that seems to stand between many professed Christians and them sharing the Gospel?

Below are summaries of the responses to a November 2025 informal survey of Southern Baptist pastors, seminary professors, directors of missions and church planters (representing Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida and Missouri) as well as related biblical passages to help tear down the brick wall.

NOTE: Scriptures are from the NKJV translation of the Bible.

Not Vibrantly Walking with Christ: Too many Christians seem content to remain spiritually shallow in their own walk. Some feel disqualified to share the Good News because of personal sin in their own lives.

2 Timothy 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

Closet Universalism: Many Christians simply forgo any evangelistic activity

whatsoever, laboring under the erroneous belief that a loving God would mercifully allow the even the uncon-verted into the Kingdom of Heaven.

John 3:16-18 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. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

1 John 2:23 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

No Sense of Urgency: This is a lack of understanding about the importance of the Gospel and not believing that countless numbers of lost people are dying daily, going to Hell, eternally separated from God. This indicates no sensitivity to the prompting of the Holy Spirit and is overt disobedience.

Mark 16:15-16 And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.'

John 5:26-29 For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is

the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

Apathy, Lack of Empathy for the Lost: Simply stated, many Christians demonstrate a failure to love as He loves, while falsely claiming to be His image bearers. Some reject opening their friendship circle to include new (lost) friends, while others refuse to interact or share the Gospel with those in their midst.

Luke 19:10 for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Matthew 22:37-40 Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment, and the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two com-

mandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Consumerism: Some local churches have morphed ministry into mere consumeristic experiences for the members rather than a Gospel-centric congregation which expects service and soul winning from the entire church family. Evangelism is reduced to an occasional, inconvenient, forced box-check event and is not the culture of the church, and personal soul winning falls off the radar.

Matthew 6:21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Revelation 2:5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.

Fear in General: By far, rejection is the most common fear that prevents sharing the Gospel. This includes fears of embarrassment (being thought of as strange or

fanatical), saying the wrong thing, leading a lost person down the wrong road, being unable to answer questions, and damaging relationships thus making future conversations awkward (which, it was suggested, is one of the reasons often people will do foreign evangelism long before they will do local evangelism).

Luke 12:8-9 Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God. But he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.

Matthew 10:19b ... do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak;

Lack of Training: Evangelism training must be intentional and outreach opportunities must be regularly scheduled. Equipping, discipling, modeling evangelism, and guided practice will produce confidence in

See EVANGELISM 101, page 12



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Business from page one

remains unchanged, 62.87 percent to support ministries in the state and 37.13 percent forwarded to fund national entities.

MOTIONS

Messengers considered two motions.

A motion by Keith Sheridan, a messenger from First Baptist Church, Franklinton, presented a motion to amend bylaw Article 3, Section 6 concerning the committee on resolutions by adding the sentence “recommended resolutions may not be amended and must be

adopted by a two-thirds vote.” The motion was referred to the Executive Board, who will report its findings during the 2026 Annual Meeting.

A motion had been made during the 2024 LBC Annual Meeting by messenger Lewis Richerson, pastor with Woodlawn Baptist Church, Baton Rouge, which asked messengers to amend Article 6, Section 5 of the Articles of Incorporation to affirm “the office of pastor to be limited to men, not only to the titles of senior pastor or lead pastor, but to any role designated by

the noun, ‘pastor.’” The motion then was referred to the Executive Board for further deliberation and consideration. During the 2025 LBC Annual Meeting Executive Board Chairman Tim Williams, pastor with Williams Boulevard Baptist Church, Kenner, said the EB declined to bring forward the motion because the Baptist Faith & Message 2000 already speaks to the theological issue and the Articles of Incorporation have a clear process with dealing with issues of cooperation or concern. The 2025 messengers subsequently supported the Executive Board’s recommendation.

RESOLUTIONS

Messengers affirmed five resolutions: expression of appreciation for all who made the 2025 Annual Meeting possible; encouragement for churches to support Louisiana Christian University; celebrating the exit of Planned Parenthood from Louisiana; support for biblical marriage by requesting the government to remove the marriage penalty from the financial safety net it provides; and equal protection for pre-born children.

LAGNIAPPE

The final messenger count for the 2025 Annual Meeting was 582, an increase from the 451 who registered for the 2024 Annual Meeting at Broadmoor Baptist Church, Shreveport.

The 2026 LBC Annual



New Louisiana Baptist Convention officers for 2026 are Kirk Jones, pastor, Fellowship Church, Gonzales, president; Ben Hackler, pastor, First Baptist Church, Sterlington, first vice president and (not available for photo) Neil Treme, pastor, Glenmora Baptist Church, second vice-president.

OFFICERS ELECTED

Meeting is scheduled for Nov. 10 and will be hosted by Trinity Baptist Church, Lake Charles. The convention sermon will be preached by Chris Craig, pastor with First Baptist Church, Ruston. The alternate preacher will be Stewart Holloway, pastor with First Baptist Church, Pineville. The worship leader will be Brian Watson, worship pastor with First Baptist Church, Lafayette.

The 2027 LBC Annual Meeting will be hosted by Temple Baptist Church, Ruston.

Kirk Jones, pastor with Fellowship Church, Prairieville, was elected president. Ben Hackler, pastor with First Baptist Church, Sterlington, was elected first vice-president, and Neil Treme, pastor with Glenmora Baptist Church was elected second-vice president.

All three men were given individual votes of acclamation by the Convention – a single ballot cast by the LBC executive director in view of no opposition to any of the candidates.

Haiti from page one

us by her rescuers, Haiti’s child protective service, she shared about her love for the other children and her new life here,” LRH President Darrin Badon told the *Baptist Message*. “We’re just loving her and sharing the Lord’s goodness with her.

“Our calling is to help

any child that we can and ultimately reunite them with family,” he continued. “While reunification won’t happen with Esther, we can show God’s love to her for the many years she will be with us and prepare her, spiritually, physically, mentally and emotionally

See HAITI, page 7

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Horn from page one

through the North American Mission Board's new 'Who's Your One in a million' initiative (a twist on the Southern Baptist Convention's entity's 'Who's Your One?' personal evangelism effort). This concept challenges one million Christ followers to commit to reach just one person with the Gospel.

If one million believers commit to this plan, Louisiana could see historical numbers of salvations and subsequent baptisms in churches, Horn said.

"It's not just a lofty goal," he said. "It's a very doable goal. It's a very doable challenge that depends on faithful obedience, one relationship at a time."

Additionally, Horn asked messengers to sign up and participate in a "God-ordained op-

portunity" at the Serve Tour, Aug. 21-22, in the Monroe-West Monroe area. Teams will have the chance to share Christ's love there through light construction, painting, landscaping, block parties and other acts of kindness.

To prepare, Louisiana Baptists can pray and plan to bring a team to serve.

"Monroe and its surrounding region are yet places in Louisiana that need the Gospel," he said. "I'm praying for hundreds of Louisiana Baptists to come together in these two days, laboring with hundreds more who will be coming from across the nation."

CP EMPHASIS

Horn said that he is planning 40 listening sessions (one in each

of 37 associations with three state-wide events for those who miss the meeting in their respective region) related to the Cooperative Program.

"My goal in these meetings is to hear from all concerned," he said. "What can we do better? What are we committed to doing moving forward? What should we be doing that we are not doing? What are we doing that Louisiana Baptists want us to stop doing? Where have we lost trust in this cooperative endeavor to do more together than we can do by ourselves?"

In 2008, Louisiana Baptists gave \$22,650,020 through the CP and in 2024, Louisiana Baptists gave just more than \$17 million. During this year's Annual Meeting, messengers approved a CP allocation budget of less than \$17 million.

"We may not be in a crisis, but we are at a crossroads, at a crossroads we must address,"

he said.

He reminded messengers that giving through this funding channel helps Louisiana Baptists make an eternal difference, together.

"Whether you are the largest contributor to the Cooperative Program or the smaller contributor, so long as you are contributing, this is your work," he said. "The Cooperative Program helps us to do all of this together to make an eternal difference."

RETIREMENT RECOGNITIONS

In addition to sharing about various initiatives

Haiti from page 6

emotionally for the future.

"I know God has placed her with us because He knows that we love our kids and that we can defend those kids against the evils of the world. Their spiritual health is

planned for next year, Horn highlighted one Louisiana Baptist strategist who recently retired and another who will retire soon.

Former Louisiana Baptist Sunday School and Discipleship Strategist Sean Keith and his wife, Pam, former director of preschool ministries with Philadelphia Baptist Church, Deville, were among 54 individuals commissioned as missionaries by the International Mission Board, Sept. 24.

Director of Communications John Kyle recently announced plans to retire at the end of the year.

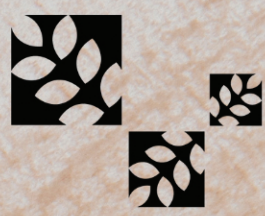
vitally important to us, and we want to expose them to the Gospel and to the church. Ultimately, little Esther's got to make her own decision about Christ, but we are praying that she

See HAITI, page 12



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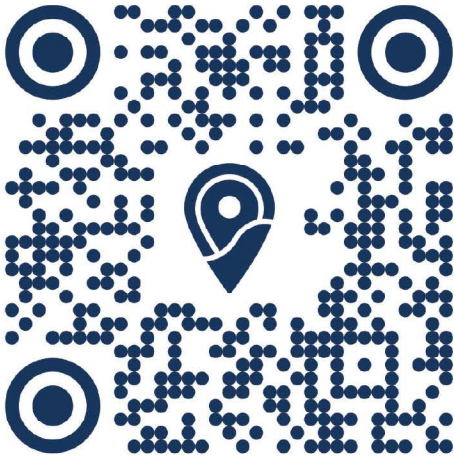


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Pastors from page one

volves a plan.

Strain said that while the reward from fasting is answered prayer, we also will receive His presence by doing so.

"More than His provision, we need His presence," he said. "The reward from fasting is we get His presence. When we have His presence, we have all we need."

Before fasting, Strain said to define a timeframe such as sunup to sundown, decide to give up something like food and find various times to pray throughout each day.

"Overall do a heart check," he said. "What is God calling you to? Are you doing it for the right motivation?"

"Pick a day, pray about it and fast," he continued. "See what the Lord will do."

PHILIP ROBERTSON

Philip Robertson, pastor, Philadelphia Baptist Church, Deville and Alexandria, told

pastors that despite what they experience, it can always be worse.

"I think one of the most powerful statements that could encourage us is this," he said. "I've read the back of the book and we win."

Preaching from Revelation 22:12-21, Robertson said pastors can be encouraged because of the coming of Jesus, the compensation from Jesus and the call to Jesus.

He reminded pastors that they are in hostile territory and in need of rescue from the Lord.

"When you got saved and accepted Jesus Christ, you were enlisted into the army of the Lord," he said. "You may feel like you too have been shot down behind enemy lines and now you've got to learn how to survive in hostile territory. This world is not my home. Don't forget it."

Robertson said God has not abandoned His soldiers and has given them a game-changing weapon.

"One of the most neglected things in the church today while we're living behind enemy lines, we are not taking advantage of our ability to communicate with command central," he said. "It's called the power of prayer."

Robertson cautioned pastors not to get too comfortable behind enemy lines, and he said all Christ followers will receive a reward in the end.

"The King is coming," he said. "Live faithful behind enemy lines. Jesus is coming quickly, and His reward is with Him."

STEVE HORN

Louisiana Baptist Executive Director Steve Horn cited John 6:1-15 to remind pastors that there is nothing too big or too small for God.

Horn said that through the feeding of the 5,000 as told in the four Gospels, Jesus reveals that He cares, is conforming His followers into the image of His Son and is confirming who He is.

"If it matters to you, it matters to God," Horn said. "The Lord cares, and He

meets your daily needs."

Horn said that God is using the struggles of today to prepare His followers.

"Does it make a difference to you that your trial may be in fact to test you?" he said. "One of the things that we discover is that when we feel like we are being tested, it actually is not our test. But in a way, in a sense, it's God's test."

He reminded pastors they are not alone in their suffering, and they must simply cry out to Jesus.

"You don't need to be dying for God to step in," he said. "One of the miracles the Holy Spirit included in this sacred text was to provide lunch for a hungry crowd. Give it to Jesus. For He Himself already knows what He is going to do."

MARK JOHNSON

Louisiana Christian University President Mark Johnson cited Matthew 14:22-36 as a reminder for pastors that if God has called them to their roles, He will get them through the difficult times.

"Stay connected to who

He is," he said. "Because there're a lot of distractions trying to distract you from who He is. But if you stay attracted to Jesus, then something happens on the inside of you and it's not that you don't care. It's that you're so locked in on who He is that you can handle everything else that comes along the side."

He said that no matter what pastors may be experiencing, they will win in the end.

"The Word of God has the ability to break any yoke that's in your community right now," he said. "The Lord has the ability to restore your marriages. The Lord has the ability to give you the vision to push you through what you're going through. But you've got to be willing to sit down, open up His Word and begin to pour out love through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Because with it, you cannot fail."

He reassured pastors that they can go into battle with confidence each day because Jesus is on their side.

See PASTORS, page 11



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Pastors from page 10

"When we go into battles every single day, the reason why you are able to stand, even with tears in your eyes, is because of Jesus Christ," he said. "Pastors, keep going. Pastors, keep pushing. Don't throw in the towel. Ministers and pastors' wives, you keep holding on, too. You keep on pushing because God has a great plan for you and your family. And as you walk with Him, you know you're never alone."

NATHAN LINO

Nathan Lino, pastor, First Baptist Church, Forney, Texas, said there is an instruction, promise and reward that leads Christ followers back to personal holiness.

"Draw near to God," said Lino, basing his message on James 4:1-10. "He will draw near to you, and He will exalt you. Jesus by His grace, Jesus by His power, Jesus by His love and mercy will supernaturally step into your life and pick you out of something."

Lino appealed to pastors to practice personal consecration daily, surrender to the Lord and establish Jesus as their chief love.

"You talk out that humility, that repentance, that surrender, that Christ above all until it's sincere and real and fresh in your heart," he said. "That pathway of prayer is the pathway home, home to the presence of the Lord. Start going down that pathway every morning."

"You will run smack dab into your heavenly Father," he continued. "He's waiting out front, staring at that horizon eager for you to come down that pathway of personal consecration."

JARED WILSON

Jared Wilson, professor with Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Missouri, closed the Pastors Conference by reminding pastors to consider Christ their High Priest and be encouraged by His presence.

Wilson, preaching from Hebrews 3:1-6, said our High Priest is the greater glory, the glorious God and the God of grace.

He reminded pastors that they have a great advocate on their side.

"When critics in your church work to undermine your ministry, when gossips in your community eat your reputation for lunch, when a voice inside your head tells you things are too hard, that your mission is impossible, when the enemy is in your ear whispering accusations and allegations, you remember that your High Priest is the glorious God," he said. "And if God is for us, who can be against us."

He assured them that no other person will be more faithful to their church than Jesus.

"When you feel lonely and forgiven and forgotten and disrespected, consider our great high priest Jesus, the God of Christ," he said. "He has made you a co-heir of heavenly glory and adopted you as his brother into the Father's home."

LANGIAPPE

Pastors Conference President Tommy Kiker, pastor of East Leesville Baptist Church, thanked the pastors for attending.

"We've been blessed by the preaching of the Word – thank you preachers – and most of all blessed by being reminded that our great High Priest is our Lord Jesus," he said. "If we want to be encouraged every single day as we walk in ministry, look onto Jesus."

The afternoon session included a time of prayer for pastors and their families.

Finally, officers were elected to lead the 2026 Pastors Conference: Joey Smith (pastor, Grayson Baptist Church) president; Garrison Griffith (pastor, First Baptist Church, Wisner) vice president; and Juri Thompson (pastor, First Baptist Church, Archibald) secretary.



Pastors Conference officers for 2026 are Joey Smith (pastor, Grayson Baptist Church) president, Garrison Griffith (pastor, First Baptist Church, Wisner) vice president, and (not available for photo) Juri Thompson (pastor, FBC Archibald) secretary.

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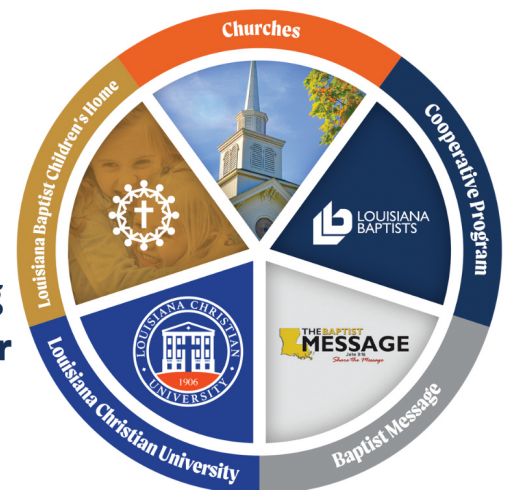
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Louisiana Christian University President Mark Johnson said that no matter what pastors may be experiencing, they will win in the end.

Haiti from page 7

one day will accept Him as her Lord and Savior.”

BACKGROUND

In 2015, a Louisiana Baptist team felt led to create a permanent presence in Haiti and partnered

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with Pastor Odvald Louis and his members at New Evangelical Baptist Church in Croix-Des-Bouquets. The Haitian congregation and Louisiana mission teams combined to complete a Children’s Village in Croix-des-Bouquets. They also teamed up to dig a well and built a church building and school in neighboring Canaan.

However, the facilities in both cities were overtaken and vandalized by gangs in early 2022, Badon said.

LRH then refocused its ministry on multiple fronts.

In February 2022, escalating gang violence forced the Children’s Village to

relocate to the Florida House, a Florida Baptist Convention-owned home for missionaries in Port-au-Prince. The facility housed 21 children and six staff members. After more than a year at the Florida House, the gangs started closing in on this area as well.

Meanwhile, God opened doors in New Orleans, allowing LRH leaders to help relocate Pastor Odvald Louis and his family from Haiti, which he fled after surviving an attempt on his life.

Additionally, LRH began partnering with Connect International Church, a congregation in New Orleans that in April 2022 formed and hosted an international church (led by Haitian American Pastor

Dawest Louis, a graduate of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary) that reaches out to Haitians and other nationalities.

Then, on the evening of July 4, 2023, Badon met the children and staff as they arrived in Cap Haitien after traveling all day to get out of Port-au-Prince, the capital city that had become too dangerous because of gang activity.

FUTURE PLANS

Now that the Children’s Village is in a more secure location, Badon is optimistic that mission trips from the United States to Haiti can resume next year. If so, this would be the first time since 2020 that the ministry has taken a mission

team there.

Badon, who visited the Children’s Village in June, plans to return in November or December. He said that gang activity is primarily confined to Port-au-Prince and its immediate environs, far away from Cap Haitien.

“The areas in the north where Cap Haitien is, are safe places to be,” he said. “A lot of people fled from Port-au-Prince to escape the atrocities of the gangs. Now there are organizations who have started sending staff back to safer areas in the city, and we are excited about one day sending teams back there, too.”

For more information, visit louisianareachhaiti.org

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Evangelims 101 from page 5

sharing the Gospel.

2 Timothy 2:2 And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify

the Lord God in your hearts and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you the reason for the hope that is in you; with meekness and fear.

Uncorrected Lies:

Some Christians believe the lie of the enemy that no one wants to hear the Gospel anymore, or that they will “get cancelled” for stating their radical beliefs. Some assume everyone already has a set faith or a set of beliefs and see no need to engage in evangelism. However, in one recent survey almost two-thirds of Americans (66 percent) reported being at least open to having a conversation about faith with a friend.

Remember that Satan is the father of all lies (John 8:44) and we are called to be sowers of the Gospel (Matthew 18:3-9; Luke 8:4-15).

Make Today Your Demo Day!

Tearing down the wall requires intentionality which means redirected

focus on prayer and communion with God as well as daily emphasis on the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) and the Great Commandments (Matthew 22:37-40; John 13:34-45).

The brick wall that prevents soul winning stands not because it is forced upon us, but because we were in fact its architect, and we must resolve to tear it down. If we are truly His own, His image bearers, His royal ambassadors, it is time to demolish the wall that exists between us and effective personal evangelism.

Mike Bergeron serves as associate pastor, First Baptist Church, Mandeville. He holds both the Bachelor of Arts and Juris Doctor from Loyola University in New Orleans. Additionally, he earned the Master in Pastoral Ministry from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, where he also has done graduate studies in church leadership.

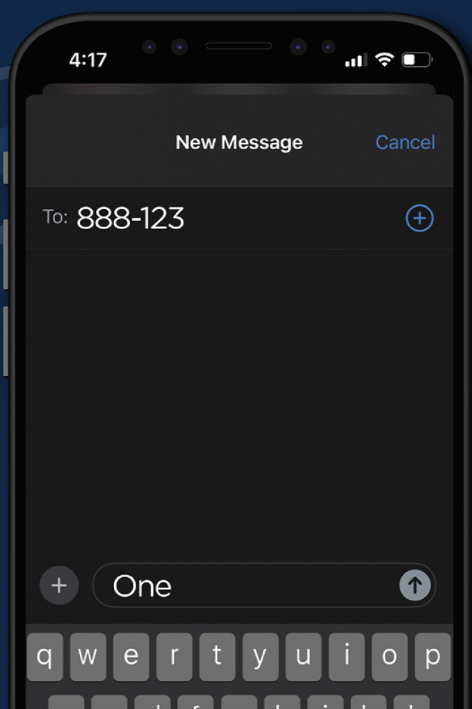
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“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ;” Ephesians 4:11-12

LBC entities report achievements, plans

ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM) – Messengers to the 2025 Louisiana Baptist Convention Annual Meeting, Nov. 11, held in the Randolph Riverfront Center, Alexandria, heard encouraging updates from their four entities.

LBCHFM

Louisiana Baptist Children's Home and Family Ministries President and CEO Perry Hancock expressed gratitude to Louisiana Baptists for their support that has impacted more than 12,800 children the last two years alone.

He updated messengers about the Bridges of Hope residential program (that offers short-term care for foster children transitioning into long-term programs), Women's Learning Center (that helps women obtain high school equivalency diplomas); Orphans Embrace (reaching Haiti through a children's home in that country); Granberry Counseling Centers; Connect1Child (foster care and adoption ministry); and Home-Place (ministry for homeless women and their children).

Hancock made special mention of the Compassion Center which opened four months ago. He said it has served more than 11,000 people and distributed 4,000 Gospel tracts, so far. The 16,000-sq.-ft. facility located on the Monroe campus provides food for 1,200 families each month.

"We are just praying that God will take those conversations and lead many people to Christ to be a part of your ministry and church," he said. "Thank you, Louisiana Baptists."

In a special presentation, Louisiana Baptist Executive Director Steve Horn recognized Hancock and his wife, Tonya, for their service and presented them with gifts on behalf of Louisiana Baptists. Hancock, who has served as leader of



In a special presentation, Louisiana Baptist Executive Director Steve Horn recognized Perry Hancock, president and CEO, Louisiana Baptist Children's Home and Family Ministries, and his wife, Tonya, for their service and also presented them with gifts on behalf of Louisiana Baptists.

the LBCHFM since July 1, 2003, recently announce plans to retire in February 2026. Tonya started the Women's Learning Center in 2010 and has served as a volunteer as its full-time executive director for 15 years.

"Thank you for a job well done," Horn said. "Through the Louisiana Baptist Children's Home and Family Ministries, they are continuing to fulfill that ministry. And we believe, by God's grace and God's providence, that as the search team searches now for that next director that they will continue to fulfill that purpose of providing love, care and hope in Christ to families and children in need."

LBF

Louisiana Baptist Foundation Executive Director Jared Price explained that the entity helps increase God's presence and prominence through financial ministry.

Price reported that \$100 million in ministry support overall has been realized since the July 2020 launch of the LBF's Vision200 (impacting the Kingdom with \$200 million through the LBF in 20 or fewer years).

"We don't want to

lose sight of the real big picture," he said. "Those are real dollars that are going to impact real lives for Christ."

Through its ChurchBiz services, the entity offers church loans, payroll services, capital campaigns, accounting services, online giving, podcasts, and conferences.

He added that the foundation continues to offer gift planning services and money management services.

"May we continue to endeavor together to advance the Kingdom one dollar at a time, one ministry at a time, one life at a time," he said.

LCU

Louisiana Christian University President Mark Johnson said the school's path forward will center on three phases -- Restore, Rebuild, Reimagine -- each averaging three years in length.

Johnson said one way he has helped make some headway on the three-prong strategy is through the P356 Tour, a planned 100 events during the first 100 days of his presidency (giving reports at associational meetings, preaching to various churches, participating in Central Louisiana Chamber of Commerce sessions, speaking with

over 25 schools, holding numerous alumni conversations, and making a few State Capitol appearances). Johnson ended the tour tallying 115 total events.

He said that the school saw a 5 percent increase in enrollment, focusing more on recruiting students within a 50-mile radius of the campus.

Johnson said LCU continues to connect with churches, including contact with all roughly 1,500 Louisiana Baptist churches. Soon, students will take part in a new Great Commission initiative called "SENDLA." The name is a phonetic play on CENLA, the common shorthand for Central Louisiana.

Through SENDLA, students will live out the Great Commission by engaging in one-day outreach events -- partnering with churches, community organizations and businesses to share the Gospel through words and deeds.

"They need the Gospel," he said. "They're not getting it. People are walking around in Central Louisiana, and we see the darkness is there. We see the challenges that're there, and the one place where they should see the life of Christ is in an institution that's within a

doorstep of their homes. We have homes all around us that're in need of the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

BAPTIST MESSAGE/ PUBLIC POLICY

Baptist Message Executive Editor Will Hall said the publication will go "digital only" in 2027. The move comes after Hall conducted a "Nehemiah Walk" to gauge a plan for moving forward.

Next year, the ministry will produce one print edition a month while helping readers transition to getting their news on *BaptistMessage.com* and related social media platforms.

Hall specifically mentioned a monthly series on the basics of evangelism that complemented the Louisiana Baptist Convention's emphasis on a creating a culture of evangelism. He said the news service will follow up in 2026 with a 12-part series on apologetics.

Hall, who also serves as the director of the Convention's Office of Public Policy, highlighted HB371, now Act 358, that ensures that churches will not face stricter regulations than the least restrictive rules applied to secular businesses. This was in response to red tape that prohibited Ridge Avenue Baptist Church, West Monroe, from opening its children's facility to outside groups for a few hours, several days a week.

Hall presented Ridge Avenue Baptist Church Pastor Jim Wolfe with the Shammah's Courage Award for taking a stand against the bureaucrats who tried to shut down these ministries in his church's facilities, resulting in legislation to protect religious liberties of congregations.

Additionally, he recognized state Rep. Beryl Amedée, who was unable to attend because of a recent health situation with her husband, with the Esther's Courage Award for championing HB317.

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New Sarepta Baptist Church in Sarepta, LA. is seeking a full-time Pastor. Please email résumés to nsbc.pastorsearch25@gmail.com or mail to NSBC Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 206, Sarepta, LA. 71071

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Mitchell Baptist Church, an independent church is searching for a bi-vocational Pastor. Send résumés to dyess.lisa@yahoo.com or Mitchell Baptist Church / Lisa 15551 Hwy174, Converse La 71419

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First Baptist Church of Hatfield, Arkansas is prayerfully seeking a full time or bi-vocational Pastor who preaches the whole counsel of God. A parsonage is provided. Please send a résumé and include a link to three recent sermons to: FBC Hatfield, P.O. Box 108, Hatfield, AR 71945 or email to: fbchhatfield@gmail.com

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Pelican Baptist Church in Pelican, LA
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Seeking full-time

SENIOR PASTOR



Calvary Baptist Church in Ruston, LA is seeking a full-time senior pastor. For more information visit <https://www.calvaryruston.org/calvary-pastor-search>. Please submit résumé to cbrustonpastorsearch@gmail.com.

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Seeking Full time Pastor for Emmanuel Baptist Church, Minden, La. Send CVs/résumé to MindenEmmanuel@gmail.com. For full job description visit www.emmanuelbcminden.org



First Baptist Church in Many is searching for a Worship Leader.

The Worship Leader's main responsibility will be selecting and leading our music for Morning Worship Service on Sundays. This is a part-time position.

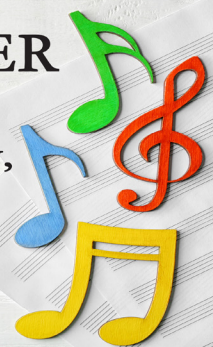
If interested, please contact the church office for an application or email resume to fbcmay@yahoo.com as soon as possible.

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The First Baptist Church of Napoleonville has an opening for a bi-vocational senior pastor. The church has been operating in this community since 1942. The job requires 22-hours/week. Please send your résumé to: Kevin Rodrigue @ krodrigue1959@gmail.com for additional information."

SEEKING A MUSIC MINISTER

First Baptist Church of DeQuincy in DeQuincy, La. is seeking a music minister. Please email résumés to music@fbcdq.org



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Central Baptist Church, North Little Rock, Arkansas, is seeking a senior pastor. Three years minimum senior pastor experience required; seminary experience preferred. Send résumé to cbcnlrpastorsearch@gmail.com. **DEADLINE TO APPLY: JANUARY 31, 2026!**

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Baptist Message provides churches an opportunity to share with other Louisiana Baptists an upcoming revival, homecoming, new pastor, new staff member, a community outreach, or a concert in Louisiana Notables. To place your event in the paper, send your information (who, what, where, when, time) to philip@baptistmessage.com or call 318.449.4345. Please submit your information four weeks prior to the event to insure placement in the Message.

ON THE MOVE

■ Alan Miller has resigned as pastor of Alto Baptist Church in Alto after thirteen years to become pastor of Downsville Baptist Church in Downsville.

■ Alton Achord is available for supply pastorate in the Central LA area. Please call Achord at 318.715.8874.

■ Dylan Jones is the new director of students at Parkview Baptist Church, Baton Rouge.

■ Chris Young, Associate Pastor at Calvary Baptist, Shreveport to First Baptist Church, Newbern, Newbern, Tennessee as pastor.

■ Danny Taylor resigned as pastor at Ida Baptist Church, Ida. Bill Lott is the interim pastor.

■ Ethan Armstrong is the new student minister at Trees Baptist Church, Vivian.

■ Bryanna Iles steps down as First Baptist Church, Mandeville's Children's Minister.

■ Emily Dhakals is the new Director of Children's Discipleship at First Baptist, Mandeville.

■ Christian Stubbs is the new discipleship pastor at Calvary Baptist Church, Alexandria.

■ Emmanuel Baptist Church has called Jimmy Pitson as interim pastor

■ Kevin Richard is the new director for the Granberry Counseling Center at the Louisiana Baptist Children's Home & Family Ministries. Kathy Eichelberger recently retired as director.

Garrick Griffin was recently ordained at Immanuel Baptist Church, Morgan City.

■ Bill Reid, Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Ruston has retired.

■ Brian Britt, youth minister of Calvary Baptist Church, Ruston has resigned to serve as pastor of a church inn South Fork, Colorado.

■ Michael Brookover was unanimously called to serve as pastor of Weldon Baptist, Bernice.

■ D. Edward Chaney was installed as the new pastor Mount Pilgrim Baptist Church, Baton Rouge.

■ Carrie Andrus will be presented in view of a call to serve as Minister to Children and Families on November 23 at Trinity Baptist Church, Lake Charles.

HOME COMING

■ Woodland Park Baptist Church, :

Reflecting His Image: Celebrating 80 years, November 30. On November 30th we will have a morning fellowship at 9 a.m., combined service at 10 a.m., and 'Dinner on the Grounds' at 11:30 a.m. There will be a photo booth, church history museum and lunch will be provided. Pastor:

REVIVAL

■ Longview Baptist Church, Deville: Revival, November 20-23, 6 p.m. prayer and 7 p.m. worship. Sunday, 9:30 a.m. Sunday school, 10:30 worship service and Children's church, 5:30 p.m. worship followed by the annual Thanksgiving Pig roast. Evangelist: Brent Smith.

■ Antioch Baptist Church, Farmer-ville: Harvest Day, December 7, 2025. Evangelist: Bill Britt. Pastor: Rubin Weaver.

■ Liberty Christian, Colfax: Harvest Sunday, December 14, 2025. Evangelist: Scotty McDowell. Pastor: Deric Cox.

LAGNIAPPE

■ First Baptist Church, Many is searching for a youth leader to guide and disciple students in grades 7-12, helping them grow in their faith and walk with Christ. This is a part-time position. If interested, please contact the church office for an application or email you résumé fbcmay@yahoo.com at your earlier convenience.

■ Colyell Baptist Church, Livingston: Community Thanksgiving meal, Nov. 22, 6 p.m., followed by a Christmas concert from the Troy Burns Family. Pastor: Jeremy Glascock.

■ Elwood Baptist Church, Forest Hill: Jonathan and Jon Gideon in concert, Nov. 22, 6 p.m. Pastor: Mike Evans.

■ Salem Baptist Church, Stonewall: Thanksgiving food basket giveaway, November 25, 2-5 p.m. If you or someone you know needs a food basket, please come pick one up. If you need a basket delivered, please call or text 318.470.9271. Pastor: Mike Hawkins.

■ First Baptist Church, Golden Meadow: Ninth annual free Traditional Thanksgiving meal, November 27, 11:30 a.m. — 2:30 p.m. This meal and open to everyone. If you have any questions, call 985.475.5490 to let us know you are coming. Pastor:

■ Calvary Baptist Church, Alexandria: Steven Curtis Chapman in concert, November 29, 7 p.m. Pastor: Todd Strain.

■ First Baptist Church, Rayville: Prepare Him Room livestream, Nov. 30, 3:30-5:30 p.m. Pastor: Justin Clark.

■ First Baptist Church, Rayville: Prepare Him Room with Kelly Minter, November 30, 3:30-5:30 p.m. Join us for Prepare Him Room, an afternoon of worship and teaching led by beloved author, speaker, and musician Kelly Minter. Pastor: Justin Clark.

■ French Corner Baptist Church, Ponchatoula: Greg Sullivan in concert, November 30, 11 a.m. Pastor: Eric

Hattaway.

■ First Baptist Church, Iota: Thanksgiving lunch, November 30, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Sharing a meal and giving thanks for angels unawares and God's blessing. Pastor: David Fultz.

■ Trinity Baptist Church, Lake Charles: Christmas Lights, Dec. 1-26, 6-11 p.m. Come join us for a Lake area tradition. Our drive-through Christmas lights run nightly. There is no charge so feel free to visit as many times as you like. Tune your radio to 88.9 FM to complete the experience. Pastor: David Rose.

■ Ridge Avenue Baptist Church, West Monroe: 5th annual Prayer Park, December 5, 5-7 8 p.m. There will be refreshments and park tour 5 p.m., Music & speakers, 6 p.m. and the Roman Road and Christmas card lane, 7 p.m.

■ First Baptist Church, Lafayette: "The Gospel According to Scrooge," Dec. 5, 7 p.m.; Dec. 6-7, 3 p.m.; Dec. 8, 7 p.m. Reserve your free seat at <https://fbclaf.org/christmas/>. Pastor: James Pritchard.

■ First Baptist Church, New Orleans: Breakfast in Bethlehem, Dec. 6, 9 a.m. Pastor: Chad Gilbert.

■ Istrouma Baptist Church, Baton Rouge: Jingle Jam children's Christmas party, Dec. 6, 9 a.m., Baton Rouge and Ascension campuses. Join us for pancakes, games, photos with Santa and crafts.

■ Start Baptist Church, Rayville: Carols and Cocoa, Dec. 7, 6 p.m. Pastor: Jeffrey Thomas.

■ Hickory Grove Baptist Church, Coushatta: The Southern Plainsmen

Quartet in concert December 7, 10:30 a.m. Pastor: Mike Fort.

■ Philadelphia Baptist Church, Deville: Gingerbread bash and the big, ugly Christmas sweater, Dec. 10, 6-7:15 p.m. Pastor: Philip Robertson.

■ Pine Grove Baptist Church, Livingston: Christmas in the Pines dinner and concert, Dec. 13, 6 p.m. Pastor: Paul Taylor.

■ Parkview Baptist Church, Baton Rouge: Once Upon A Holy Night, Dec. 14, 5 p.m. Pastor: Chris DeGeorge.

■ Jefferson Baptist Church, Baton Rouge: Christmas Together concert, Dec. 13, 3 p.m.; Dec. 14, 6 p.m. Pastor: David Goza.

■ First Baptist Church, Denham Springs: Christmasville Spectacular, December 5-7 and 12-13. To get your free tickets go to <https://www.ticketleap.events/.../christmasville-spectacular>. Pastor: Leo Miller.

■ Macedonia Baptist Church, Holden: Greg Sullivan Ministries in concert Christmas in the Pines, December 4, 6 p.m. Pastor: Shane Picou.

■ University Baptist Church, Thibodaux: Live Nativity on the first Friday and Saturday of December, times will be 6,6:30, 7:00 and 7:30 p.m. Pastor: J.P. Cox

■ First Baptist Church, Bossier City: Miss PattyCake's Christmas, December 5, 6 p.m. This special Christmas event, "A Birthday Party for Jesus," features Miss PattyCake and Mr. Stan the Handyman as they decorate the tree, tell the story of the very first Christmas, and lead us in singing "Happy Birthday to Jesus!" Cost: Adults (\$10) and Children (\$5). To get tickets go to firstbossier.com/events. Pastor: Brad

Jurkovich.

■ First Baptist Church, New Orleans: Breakfast in Bethlehem, December 6, 9- 11 a.m. Families will register for the census as they enter and will be given a small bag of coins only used in "Bethlehem". With the coins, each family can purchase one-of-a-kind breakfast and crafts to help remind them of the special gift of Jesus at Christmas. This is a free event for families of kids birth-6th grade. Pastor: Chad Gilbert.

■ Calvary Baptist Church, Merryville: Live Walk-through Nativity, December 12-13, 6-8 p.m. There will be refreshments and hot cocoa. Please bring your family to step back in time and wander through the old town of Bethlehem. Pastor: Jim Miers.

■ Airline Baptist Church, Bossier City: Celebrate Christmas, a multigenerational worship experience, December 14, 9 and 10:30 services. Pastor: Terry Young.

■ First Baptist Church, Abbeville: Greg Sullivan Ministries in concert, December 14 at 10:45 a.m. Pastor: Russell Landry.

■ Airline Baptist Church, Bossier City: Christmas Carnival, December 14, 4-7 p.m. For more information, contact Ashley@airlinebaptist.com Pastor: Terry Young.

■ Journey Church, Pineville: Christmas 2025, the Lights are Coming, Dec. 20, 3 p.m. Pastor: James Greer.

■ Plainview Baptist Church, Hornbeck: The Southern Plainsmen Quartet in concert, December 31, 6 p.m. The Southern Plainsmen will join the Watson Family in a New Year Eve concert. Pastor: Jodi Mitchell.

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.

amhuhqeuh amry ykzam amh weul; ghmewl, z

czww vkya amhh quei eqq amh qkvh eq amh

hkuam; amzy nhku amer ymkwa lzh, ghvkryh

amer mkyak akrtma uhghwwzes ktkzsya amh weul

dhuhizkm achsan-hztma:yzjahhs

Clues:
H = E; A = T

Answer to October 20, Scripture Crypto:
Acts 12:5

Dry Creek Baptist Camp celebrates 100 years of God's blessings

By Brian Blackwell
Message staff writer

DRY CREEK, La. (LBM) – A crowd of more than 400 supporters gathered to celebrate God's faithfulness -- through hurricanes, a pandemic and fire -- during Dry Creek Baptist Camp's jubilee celebration, Oct. 25.

The 100th anniversary event featured camp activities such as archery, rifles, canoeing and a ropes course along with live music, food trucks, "Ephesians" wrestling matches, a history overview, blacksmith and chainsaw carving demonstrations and a worship service.

Mona Gibbs was among the supporters who were present. She was a camper (1981-1985) and staff counselor (1990-1991), and she is the Girls in Action and Girls

Mission Camp director (1998-present).

"My summers at Dry Creek Baptist Camp, from my early years as a camper to my years as a staff counselor and later as the GA and Girls Mission Camp director, have deeply molded and shaped much of who I am in Christ today," she told the *Baptist Message*. "My favorite memories included times in the old tabernacle when there was no AC, and one would be sweating to death. But the Holy Spirit would show up during a worship service and His presence felt almost tangible. The veil seemed very thin. One couldn't differentiate between sweat drops or tears stinging our eyes -- sweet, sweet memories."

HISTORY

Since becoming a

camp in 1925, Dry Creek Baptist Camp has experienced significant physical changes, but the mission has remained the same: proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, according to camp staff.

The camp began in response to a spiritual revival that took place in the Dry Creek community. During the early 1900s, the rural areas of western Louisiana were settled by sawmills and as circuit preachers traveled and shared the Gospel in the area, folks responded to the message and a large baptism service was held nearby in Bundick Creek. Many of the people baptized in that 1921 service continue to have descendants in the Dry Creek area today.

For the first 40 years of ministry, the camp was only operated for a few weeks a year as it primar-

ily held one camp a year then slowly added one and two more camps a year.

In the late 1960s, the camp's board of trustees even considered shutting down the camp. However, during the meeting, two members pledged \$5,000 if the rest of the board voted to expand the camp to a year-round operation.

From there, the camp improved facilities through addition of new cabins and added retreats throughout the year.

During its storied history, the camp has seen God's faithful provision through significant challenges, including the Great Depression, World War Two, a pandemic, natural disasters like Hurricanes Audry, Rita, and Laura and a fire that destroyed the historic White House that was home to the camp's adult

conference center.

FUTURE

Camp Manger Todd Burnaman said he is looking forward to what the next 100 years holds in store for the camp, with plans to build a new chapel, a welcome center and farm.

"God pulled the camp through those tough times, and we have seen His faithfulness each time," Burnaman said. "Whenever it seemed like the world was falling apart and we were struggling, God came through. The Lord has been faithful, and we continue to thank Him for all the staff, volunteers, campers and others who have been a part of Dry Creek Baptist Camp. This is a special place, and we are grateful that God continues to bless this ministry."



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