

## The Christmas Truce



This memorial commemorates a spontaneous truce that took place on Christmas Eve 1914. The truce erupted along the Western Front. German, Belgian, French and British troops came together in No-Man's Land in the spirit of Christmas to fraternize and even kick a ball about.

## EDITORIAL: 'On earth peace, goodwill toward men!'

By Will Hall

Message executive editor

ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM) – World War I was a gruesome conflict, introducing horrific combat weapons that had not been imagined before: flamethrowers which burned men alive where they stood; machine guns that fired 500 rounds per minute at a distance of 2,000 yards (indiscriminately cutting down infantrymen as they charged enemy positions); and

See TRUCE, page 4



On Christmas Eve 1914 in the cold trenches of World War I, something miraculous happened. A lone soldier stepped into no man's land, lifted his voice in song and troops from both sides laid down their weapons for an extraordinary holiday celebration of music, feasting, and camaraderie.

## Church self-insurance coop receives \$1.45 million from La.

By Will Hall

Message executive editor

ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM) – On Nov. 17, the Fellowship of Louisiana Churches and Nonprofit Religious Organizations received a \$1.45 million check from the Louisiana Department of the Treasury to support the launch of a church self-insurance program.

The program was authorized by legislation in 2023 and a total of \$2.9 million was appropriated in 2025, half of which is represented by the check that was received.

With the receipt of these funds, the goal is to open enrollment to churches and religious nonprofits sometime in the second quarter of 2026.



Steve Horn  
LBC Executive Director

### FINANCIAL BOOST

Steve Horn, president of the FLCN-RO board of directors and executive director of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, told the *Baptist Message* that receiving the grant "is an incredible blessing."

See \$1.45 MILLION, page 13

## ECON 2025: Reach Louisiana for Jesus

By Brian Blackwell

Message staff writer

LAFAYETTE, La. (LBM) – During the upcoming state Evangelism Conference, Jan. 26-27, hosted by First Baptist Church, Lafayette, speakers will urge Louisiana Baptists to reach their friends and family for Christ.

"ECON continues to be a valuable time of equipping and encouragement for pastors and church members," Louisiana Baptist Evangelism and Church Growth Director Keith Manuel told the *Baptist Message*. "I hope everyone will make plans now to attend. It will help you

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# ECON from page one

begin the new year with a clear focus and a renewed commitment to reaching the lost and strengthening a culture of evangelism in your church."

## SCHEDULES

ECON kicks off at 1:30 p.m. on Monday afternoon with featured messages by Leroy Fountain, church planting catalyst, Louisiana Baptists, and David Burton, founder, David Burton Ministries, Middleburg, Florida,

and worship led by David Logan and Adam Watson from First Baptist Church, Covington.

Breakout sessions are scheduled during the dinner hour with free meals available (please register) during the presentations:

-- The Discipleship Collaborative will feature Larry Hyche, global missions associate, Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, who will speak on "The Impact of Intergenerational Discipling Relationships on Gen Z."

-- The Evangeline Baptist Association and FBC Lafayette will offer sessions including "Preparing Your Congregation for Revival" (James Pritchard, pastor, FBC Lafayette), "Developing a Church-wide Strategy for Follow-up" (Scott English, adults pastor, FBC Lafayette), "Getting Ready for Company" (Chris Poirrier, minister to median adults/connections, FBC Lafayette), and "Connecting with the Community" (Nick Watts, next generation pastor, FBC Lafayette). These sessions will serve as a "revival preparation micro-conference."

Session two will begin



Waylon Bailey, pastor, First Baptist Church, Covington, encouraged the crowd at the 2025 state Evangelism Conference to proclaim the hope they have in Christ.

after dinner with a worship celebration by the FBC Lafayette choir and orchestra followed by a message from Roc Collins, strategic objectives director, Tennessee Baptist Mission Board.

ECON resumes at 9 a.m. on Tuesday morning with worship led by Logan and Watson and messages by Reggie Bridges, pastor, Temple Baptist Church, Ruston, and Mark Johnson, president, Louisiana Christian University.

Then two luncheon breakout sessions will be offered (with meals served, please register):

-- The "Evangelism Legacy Luncheon" (formerly the "Senior Adult Luncheon") will focus on "Pursuing the

Presence of God" with Kyle Walker, pastor, First Baptist Church, Cartersville, Georgia.

-- Mark Johnson will lead a pastor-oriented breakout, "Reclaim the Reach: Pastors Leading Churches to Reclaim the Evangelistic Mission."

The conference's final session will begin after lunch with a time of worship, followed by a message from Herb Reavis, pastor, North Jacksonville Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Florida. A special concert by , award-winning Gospel artist Jason Crabb will conclude the conference.

**All breakout meal sessions are free, but registration is required at LouisianaBaptists.org/ECON.**

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# Louisiana Baptist Emerson: U.S. Senate run a matter of faith

By Will Hall

Message executive editor

LAFAYETTE, La. (LBM) — State Rep. Julie Emerson, a member of First Baptist Church, Lafayette, announced her candidacy for U.S. Senate on Oct. 27, after a “tremendous amount of time in prayer,” she told the *Baptist Message*.

“I’m running for the United States Senate because Louisiana deserves a senator who can lead, deliver, and help rebuild America’s confidence,” Emerson said when she declared her entry into the race. “For the first time in years, the future feels brighter than the past.”

Emerson will challenge Bill Cassidy, who she said is “the most vulnerable incumbent in the Senate” after he voted to convict President Donald Trump on impeachment charges.

“Voters want a strong

conservative senator who can get things done — someone focused on results, not rhetoric,” Emerson said. “I’m running to bring home real outcomes for Louisiana: infrastructure investment, new jobs and a seat at the table where decisions get made.”

Emerson, R-Carencro, serves as the chair of the House Committee on Ways and Means, and was the first woman to chair a finance committee in the state’s legislative history. Moreover, she has sponsored consequential legislation, including bills to cut state income taxes, provide school choice and to end abortion. She also was a key figure in shepherding a \$2.9 million appropriation through the 2025 legislative process to help launch a church self-insurance cooperative in the state.

Importantly, she is a woman of faith and openly discussed the importance



On June 2, 2022, Rep. Julie Emerson, co-sponsor of Senate Bill 342, successfully defended this key pro-life measure for nearly two hours on the House floor against repeated attacks by pro-abortion lawmakers who attempted to weaken its protections for the unborn. Screen grab, LA Legislature broadcast archives.

of her spiritual life in an exclusive interview with the *Baptist Message*.

## FAITH

Emerson said that she only entered the race after

seeking God’s will and experiencing a series of affirmations from the Lord, some just days before she announced her decision.

She said that she prayed intensely before announcing her candidacy “because

this is a huge decision.”

“Certainly, going from the statehouse to run for the U.S. Senate is a really, really big step,” Emerson acknowledged. “But you

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# THEM



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I was eating with a friend and the subject of *Here for You* came up. We talked about the creativity and quality of the commercials and the way we were using the campaign to reach people who have never set foot in a Louisiana Baptist Church. My friend said, “I hope it goes well because I know how important *Here for You* is to you.” Their sentiments and wishes were greatly appreciated — but as I pondered that comment over the next several days, I thought, “*Here for You* is not about me. It’s not for me. I know where I’m going. I have a relationship with Jesus. *Here for You* is about **them**.”

**Them.** Let that sink in for a few seconds ... *Here for You* is about **them**...

In his book, *The Purpose Driven Life*, Rick Warren begins with this statement, “It’s not about you.”

In our self-focused, narcissistic culture, this truth often gets lost. It’s not about us, it’s about **them**.

On one occasion when the Pharisees were trying to trap Jesus, they asked him, “What is the greatest commandment?” Without hesitation, Jesus responded, “to love the Lord your God with all of your heart, soul, mind and

strength” and before the Pharisee could insert his cleverly-devised follow-up question, Jesus continued, “and the second one is like it — love your neighbor (them) as you love yourself” (Matt. 22:34-39).

Jesus always kept the focus on **THEM!**

- He came to seek and to save that which was lost — **them**.
- When He saw **them**, (the crowds) He had compassion on **them**.
- Go into all of the world and make disciples of all nations — **them**.

Even as He was dying on a cruel Roman cross, He thought about **them**— “Father forgive **them** for they do not realize what they are doing.”

Over the course of time, have we subtly, but consistently, transitioned our focus from **them** to **us**?

Don’t misunderstand, we know about **them**. **Them** is a topic of frequent dialogue within the walls of the church.

- We talk about **them**.
- We’ll occasionally pray for **them**.
- We’ll even give money every now and then to help reach **them**.

But we rarely go get **them** — even though Jesus said the fields are full of **them**.

**Them** is so important that in one of his parables, Jesus instructed us three different times to go into the highways and hedges and compel **them** to come in (Luke 14).

Understand this, **them** is one the reasons why we’re still here. As long as Jesus delays His return, we have the opportunity, the responsibility, and the assignment to reach **them**.

You can begin reaching **them** by regularly praying for those you pass every day, going to *HereforYou.org* and sharing your favorite *Here for You* commercial via social media, or by identifying your “one in a million.”

Paul asked the believers in Rome this question and I believe it’s still applicable today, “How can they hear unless someone tells **them**?” (Romans 10:14).

No matter your age, health, experience, vocation or location, there is something you can do to reach **them** — and **them** is counting on us!



# TRUCE from page one

mustard gas (as well as chlorine, bromine and phosgene variants) that killed and permanently disabled troops with such lethality that chemical weapons were subsequently banned by international treaty.

Six months into the grueling battle along

the Western Front (the nearly 440 miles of dueling trench lines that stretched from the border of Switzerland through Belgium to the North Sea) Christmas came (after an estimated one million deaths in that brief time of war), and with it a miracle of sorts.

On the eve of Christmas, in the mud and muck amid the misery of war, soldiers on both sides of “no man’s land” (the territory between the opposing armies, marked by barbed wires and pocked with craters from exploded artillery shells) began to blend their voices to the tune of the carols that in times past they would have been singing with family in front of the hearths in their homes. Then there were calls from both sides to meet in the middle of what only hours earlier was a death zone. Before long, mortal enemies all along the Western Front shook hands instead of exchanging fire, and some even engaged in friendly soccer matches on Christmas day.

However, the truce was brief, lasting only hours for most, perhaps a couple of days for others. Meanwhile, world peace,

at least the end of this global conflict, would not come for another four years and after another 16 million or so deaths.

What is called “The Christmas Truce” proves the truth of God’s Word that any cessation of conflict on earth is only temporary, and that lasting peace is possible only through the Person of Jesus.

Indeed, Christ declared, “My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you” (John 14:27). Later, Paul put it this way, saying that those who believe “have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1). He further explained to the congregation at Colossae that this “peace” is man’s reconciliation with God through the blood of Jesus on the cross (Colossians 1:20).

I am truly amazed that President Trump has

been able to end eight wars in eight months and is on the verge of brokering an end of hostilities between Russia and Ukraine. However, World War I was declared to be “the war to end all wars,” and yet major conflicts have continued to break out wherever men covet power and wealth at any cost to others.

Still, we who believe can spread Peace through the world -- a lasting peace, an eternal peace -- by helping the lost to be reconciled with the Father through His Son.

This Christmas give someone the present of Peace. He truly is the reason for the season.

“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder, and His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).

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For CP gifts to be recorded for 2025, they must be postmarked by December 31, 2025. Any gifts postmarked after that date will be recorded for 2026.

On behalf of Dr. Horn and the staff of Louisiana Baptists,

*Merry Christmas*



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# 2026 tax changes will impact charitable giving

By **Jared Price**  
Special to the Message

ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM) -- Louisiana Baptists need to anticipate upcoming tax changes and consider using strategies that will increase the impact of their charitable giving while reducing their overall tax burden.

## Current 2025 Rules

For 2025, only taxpayers who itemize deductions on their tax return can benefit from a charitable deduction. Generally, cash gifts to qualified charitable organizations are deductible up to 60% of the taxpayer's adjusted gross income (AGI) and non-cash gifts (such as real estate or stock) are deductible up to 30% of AGI.

## Upcoming 2026 Changes

General thresholds for charitable deductions remain

the same in 2026. However, there are some key changes that affect both non-itemizers and itemizers.

## Non-Itemizers

In the past, individuals who claimed the standard deduction could not deduct charitable gifts. Beginning in 2026, non-itemizers can claim a charitable deduction of up to \$1,000 above the standard deduction (\$2,000 for married couples filing jointly). However, some donations are ineligible such as non-cash gifts (e.g. real estate and stocks) and those to donor-advised funds.

## Itemizers

New Charitable Deduction "Floor"

Starting in 2026, itemizers can only claim a charitable deduction for the portion of gifts that exceeds 0.5% of AGI. For example, a couple with \$200,000 AGI cannot

deduct the first \$1,000 they donate, but only the qualifying amount above that first \$1,000 in charitable giving.

## New Charitable Deduction "Cap"

For taxpayers in the highest tax bracket (37% marginal rate), the value of itemized deductions (including charitable deductions) is capped at 35% of the deduction's value. Previously, each \$1 donated would save \$0.37 in taxes for those donors in the 37% tax bracket. However, starting in 2026, only \$0.35 of tax savings is available for each dollar donated by these high-income donors.

## Important Considerations

For high tax bracket donors, it may be wise to consider accelerating charitable gifts in 2025 to avoid the new rules that take effect in 2026.

## Bunching Gifts

By "bunching" in 2025 (making multiple years' worth of charitable gifts in 2025 to exceed the standard deduction threshold, then taking the standard deduction in those other years) high tax bracket donors may receive a greater tax benefit before the new "floor" and "cap" are imposed.

## Gifts to Donor Advised Funds

If unsure about which charitable organizations you want to support, consider establishing a donor-advised fund (DAF). For instance, by establishing a DAF with the Louisiana Baptist Foundation, you can make larger gifts now and decide later which churches and other ministries you would like to support.

## Non-Cash Gifts

With the markets near

record highs, it is also an excellent opportunity for some individuals to consider making a non-cash gift. Donating appreciated assets (stocks, mutual funds, or real estate held at least one year) can avoid capital gains taxes and provide a charitable deduction for the full fair market value of the donated assets. This means you can give more to your church or other ministries while reducing your tax burden.

## IRA Distributions

For individuals 70½ or older, a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) of up to \$108,000 in 2025 (\$111,000 in 2026) can be made to a qualified charitable organization directly from an IRA, and it is not considered taxable income. Additionally, QCDs count toward an IRA's annual required minimum distribution.

See TAXES, page 8

**Merry Christmas**

From **COMPEL OUTREACH**

As we find ourselves in the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season, may we stop to consider the wonder of the gift of Salvation that comes through our Savior, Jesus Christ.

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# ABC celebrates 50 years of drawing campers to Christ

By Brian Blackwell  
Message staff writer

EUNICE, La. (LBM) – David Guillot came to Acadian Baptist Center in the summer of 1977 just hoping to have a fun time, but he also gained a personal relationship with Jesus, he said.

Now a physician and member of Calvary Baptist Church, Alexandria, Guillot still recalls the eternal impact the camp made on him.

“I believe that a believer in Christ’s spiritual eternity begins at the moment of salvation,” Guillot told the Baptist Message. “And for years when I shared my testimony I’ve said, ‘As an eight-year-old boy I asked Christ to be my Savior at ABC in Eunice.’ So, Acadian Baptist Center is very special to me.”

Guillot was among many who reminisced about the life-changing impact Acadian

Baptist Center had on them during ABC’s 50th year anniversary celebration, Nov. 9.

Held on the grounds of the Eunice camp, the event featured music led by a band of former ABC staffers, testimonies and a challenge by Oren Conner, former staffer and now pastor, Greenwell Springs Baptist Church. There also was a ground-breaking ceremony for the James and Diana Robinson worship center in appreciation of the couple’s stellar commitment to the camp. James is an alum of ABC and his dad, Nathan, served as pastor of Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church, Eunice.

## LASTING LEGACY

For 50 years, ABC has seen the Holy Spirit move in the hearts of campers, with nearly 16,000 who have made dramatic decisions: 8,551 professed Christ as Lord, 6,546



Submitted photo

Staff and supporters of Acadian Baptist Center held a ground breaking for a new worship center, named for James and Diana Robinson, during the camp’s 50th anniversary celebration. James is an alum of ABC and his dad, Nathan, served as pastor of Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church, Eunice.

restored fellowship with the Lord and 698 surrendered to vocational ministry.

Originally a school, from 1917 to 1973, ABC was formed after local leaders received permission to lease the facilities for what became the camp in 1975.

During the first year of operations, about 3,000 people attended events at the camp. Today, attendance has swelled to over 20,000 per year and the staff includes eight full-time workers, approximately 30 part-timers

and numerous volunteers.

Through the years, ABC has worked hard to improve and grow its facilities. Not limited to tents or bunk rooms, Acadian Baptist Center can comfortably host 650 campers at a time in a motel facility, cabins and dormitories. They have built a worship center, swimming pool, lake and dining hall, and have expanded meeting areas, outdoor courses and recreational facilities.

James Newsom, who began as a summer camp staff member, and met his wife Shannon here before becoming director in 1989, has enjoyed seeing the children of staff members take part, as well as witnessing so many campers encounter the Lord through the ministries hosted by ABC.

“It’s always a great time when people return to our camp where they first may have met Jesus, or grown in their walk with Him,” Newsom said. “They look at ABC as a spiritual marker

where they became close to God and encountered him in a special way, maybe for the first time.

“Knowing that people make a decision for Jesus ultimately is why we are here,” he continued. “It’s exciting to see the tangible result of lives being changed. It makes all the work, sweat and prayers worthwhile.”

## FORWARD FOCUS

Looking to the future, ABC continues to make progress on a its “Further With Him” capital campaign, Newsom said, having surpassed the initial goal of \$1.8 million, topping \$2.8 million to date. The money has funded wastewater treatment plant upgrades and will help add 80 beds in the new dorms as well as expand the worship center with 20 Bible study rooms.

“It’s all to reach the new generation,” Newsom said. “We want to touch lives for Christ with our camp and retreat ministry.”

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# YEC 2025: 571 students say 'Yes' to Jesus

By Brian Blackwell  
Message staff writer

ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM) – Organizers and participants of the 2025 Youth Evangelism Celebration praised God for the 571 students who made decisions for Christ, Nov. 23-24, in the Laborde Earles Coliseum in Alexandria. They also were grateful to Him for the more than 5,300 teens and adult sponsors who attended YEC (the largest annual gathering of Louisiana Baptists).

"I'm always amazed at how many people come together to make this annual event happen," Louisiana Baptist Youth Ministry Strategist Lee Myers told the *Baptist Message* after the conclusion of YEC. "It truly is a cooperative effort, from LBC staff, production teams and an army of volunteers, who all play a part. But the biggest impact comes from our youth leaders and local churches who make sure this weekend becomes a reality. Louisiana is blessed with incredible

adults who love students, support student ministry and help create moments where teenagers can encounter Christ."

## BE CHANGED

Anthony Vargas, student pastor at Together We Church, a Southern Baptist congregation in Yukon, Oklahoma, told students to admit their need for change and to cry out to Jesus for mercy.

Referencing Luke 18, Vargas said Jesus hears, heals and sees individuals in their brokenness.

He explained that a blind man approached Jesus and asked to be healed, and in the end, he was changed.

Vargas told the students to respond to Jesus' call just as the blind man did, emphasizing that the Lord can change anyone.

"I don't believe you're here by accident," he told the crowd. "I believe you're here because God wants to do something crazy in your life because Jesus doesn't just fix

lives. He transforms lives."

Vargas reminded the students that no one is too broken for Jesus to restore. He alluded to Mark 5:1-20, where Jesus healed a demon-possessed man who was transformed from a life of isolation to one that makes a difference for the Lord.

Ultimately, he encouraged the students to reject negative labels and become emissaries for Christ.

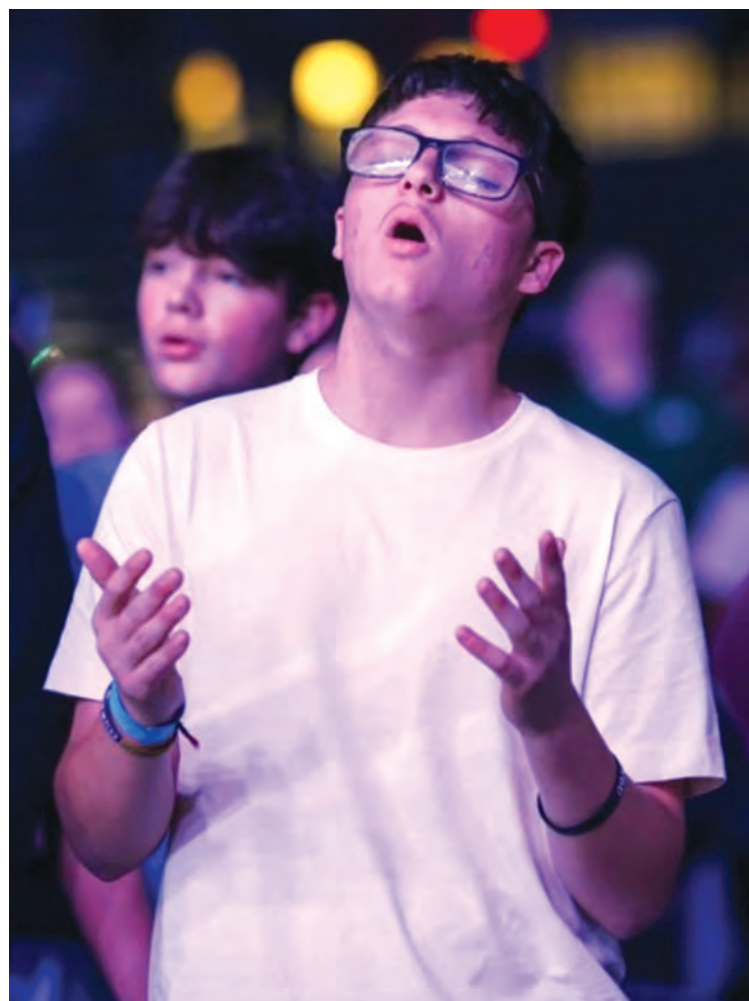
"Jesus didn't save you to sit in silence," he said. "I know silence may feel safe, but it costs souls."

"Student, you're a Christian who happens to go to school," he continued. "You are an ambassador who plays on a team and God wants to use you."

## BE THE LIGHT

Louisiana Baptist Evangelism Strategist Kevin Ulmer encouraged the crowd to commit to reach one person for Christ through the North

See YEC, page 8



The annual Youth Evangelism Celebration yielded a Gospel harvest: 108 students stepped forward to accept Christ, 319 restored fellowship with God, 87 pursued a call to ministry and 57 made other decisions.

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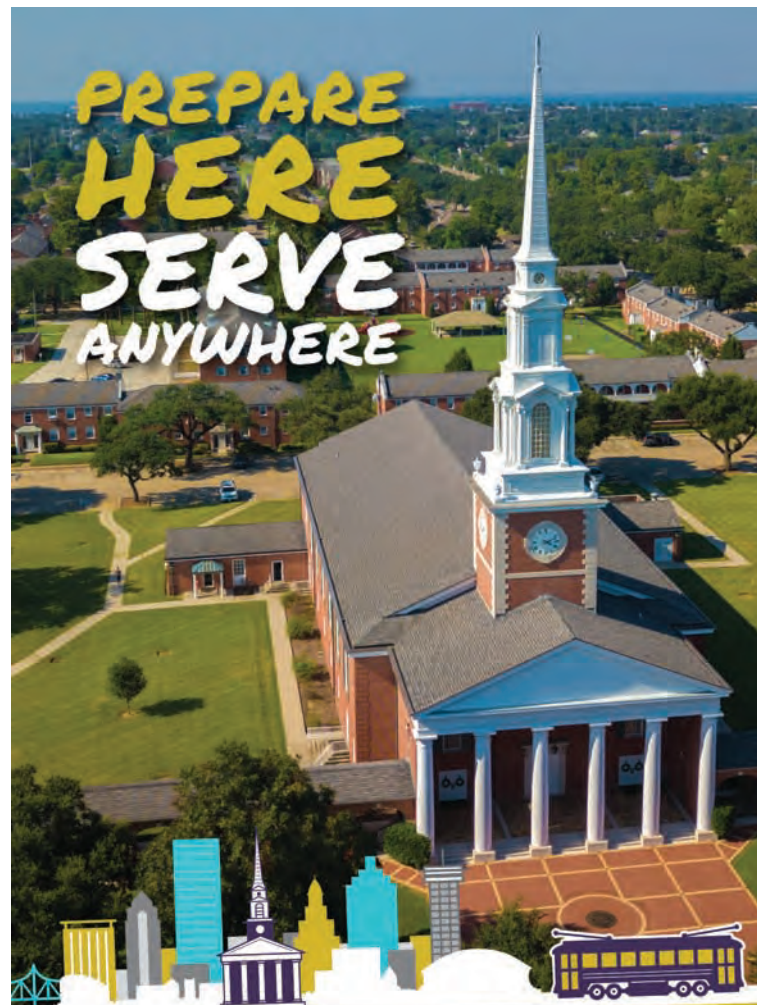
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# YEC from page 7

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.

"Would you help me light up Louisiana with prayers for lost people so that then we can share the Good News of the Gospel with those people across the state of Louisiana," he said. "We'll join in with people all across North America to share the Good News of the Gospel. Wouldn't that be a wonderful movement to see 1 million people come to Jesus in North America?"

Ulmer encouraged students to sign up by texting 'one' to 888123.

## BE TRANSFORMED

By the end of the two-day



Brian Blackwell photo

Oklahoma student pastor Anthony Vargas and Christian hip hop artist KB engaged in a structured conversation during a session of the Youth Evangelism Celebration. Topics ranged from sharing one's faith, dealing with loneliness and spending less time on social media.

spiritual encounter, several hundred students had made decisions for Christ: 108 students stepped forward to accept Christ, 319 restored fellowship with God, 87 pursued a call to ministry and 57 made other decisions.

Participants also enjoyed high-energy music by Crescent City Worship, a worship band with New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, and concerts by artist Allison Eide and nationally known Dove award winning

recording artist KB.

Bryan Drake, an illusionist from Mobile, Alabama, served as the host/emcee.

Registration for next year's YEC opens Jan. 5, 2026: [labaptistyouth.com](http://labaptistyouth.com).

# TAXES from page 5

bution. Even for itemizers, QCDs avoid the impact of the new charitable deduction floor and cap.

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# EVANGELISM 101 (Part 12): How to organize to win souls

**By Will Hall**

Message executive editor

ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM) – Soul winning is not a spontaneous behavior, but a deliberate act of obedience. It is something that must be a matter of intentional prayer (John 17:20), preparation (1 Peter 3:15) and pursuit (Luke 19:10). Indeed, intentionality – under the guidance of the Lord -- is a spiritual concept (Prov. 16:3; Luke 14:28; 1 Cor. 9:22-23; Col. 3:23-24).

## BIBLE BASICS

Do not misunderstand. The Holy Spirit is either at work in the hearts of the lost (John 16:8; 2 Cor. 7:10), or He is not. Likewise, He is either working in the hearts of soul winners (John 15:26-27; Acts 1:8; 24:25; 26:25), or He is not. But throughout the Word, God is explicit that He is not the author of confusion or chaos but of orderliness:

### Old Testament

-- Jethro helped Moses create an organization of administrators (rulers of tens, fifties, hundreds and thousands) to judge minor disputes, freeing Moses to address the difficult issues (Ex. 18:13-26).

-- King David (who was prohibited from building the temple) organized everything needed for the construction, operation and administration of the temple: the plans, workers, gold, silver, cedar, priests, musicians, military, officials and judges ... as well as the collection of nails (1 Chron. 22, 25-29). He even instructed Solomon to seek wisdom (1 Chron. 22:12) when given the chance to ask for anything from God (1 Kings 3:5-9).

-- Meanwhile, Nehemiah effectively organized the families in Jerusalem to rebuild the city's 1.5-mile-long wall, which varied in height from 20-40 feet and width from 6.5-26 feet thick, in only 52 days (while fending off attackers).

### New Testament

-- Jesus gave order within His band of disciples, assembling a cohort of 12 apostles to learn to lead directly from Him (Luke 6:12-16). He also developed a close-knit inner circle of three among these (Mark 9:2-3; Luke 8:49-56; Matthew 26:36-38):

-- Importantly, He was purposeful during His three-year ministry in His approach to training His apostles: establishing His authority in Word (Matthew 5-7) and deed (Matthew 8-9); delegating authority to them and sending them out briefly to grow on their own (Matthew 10); completing His ministry in Galilee (Matthew 11-16); preparing for His death (Matthew 17-18); traveling to Jerusalem (Matthew 19-20); and giving last lessons during Passion Week (Matthew 21-25) before His trials, torture, crucifixion (Matthew 26-27) and resurrection (Matthew 28).

-- Of course, Paul was inspired by the Holy Spirit to instruct the church to be orderly in worship matters, too (1 Cor. 14:26-40).

## TRIED, TRUE MODELS

So, how do you organize to win souls?

### South-wide Centennial Crusades (1945)

Although he is most known for leading the creation of the Cooperative Program, Southern Baptists' primary channel for funding cooperative missions and ministries, M.E. Dodd, the renowned pastor of the First Baptist Church in Shreveport, was a prolific soul winner, baptizing 7,000 new believers during the 50-year span of his ministry. Additionally, during his ministry among troops during WWI (he volunteered as an Army chaplain but was detoured to serve with the YMCA overseas as a religious worker) he went on a year-long speaking tour (at the war's end) to all overseas

camps and recorded 5,000 professions of faith as well as 500 commitments to Christian service.

Indeed, it is no stretch to suggest that his focus in creating the Cooperative Program was to facilitate the winning of souls across the Southern Baptist Convention.

As a matter of fact, as part of the 1945 SBC centennial celebration Dodd served as chairman of "an all-out south-wide evangelistic crusade," with "a conservative estimate, that the organized hosts of Southern Baptists won in the neighborhood of a half-million souls in 1945" [1944, 1945 SBC Annuals].

Moreover, in his report to the SBC, Dodd outlined a model for organizing to win souls using "existing organizations" to form a "very simple general organization" of volunteers.

The (then) Home Mission Board was tasked to pay for the promotion of these coordinated crusades (city-wide simultaneous crusades, crusades in one-church towns and communities, and rural crusades) across the South. Meanwhile, Dodd sought input from state convention leaders and subsequently held a meeting in Ridgecrest, North Carolina, with 300 leaders to develop a plan from these suggestions and recommendations.

Essentially, Dodd

formed a triad of coordinators at the state and associational levels, and within the local church he used the pastor to guide a crusade committee's work and to identify and enlist "personal soul-winners as prayer partners" and "working partners to go two-by-two" to do outreach in the community.

Importantly, Dodd set up a calendar, too.

January and February were dedicated to conduct

See EVANGELISM 101, page 10


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# Evangelism 101 from page 9

an area-wide religious census for each crusade, hold all-church evangelism training, and to engage in “special seasons of contrition, confession, consecration and prayer.” March through September were set aside for conducting each of the three crusade contexts (large cities, small towns and rural areas) with October and November set aside to hold “a second meeting in at least 10,000 churches and for meetings in churches which had not found it convenient to hold a special crusade previously” with an objective of 50,000 total evangelistic crusades for the year. Meanwhile, December was designated as a time to reach out to old and new members to engage them “in support of all the work of the church and denomination.”

## Church or Local Area Crusades

The biggest difference between a one-church crusade and an area-wide effort (with

multiple congregations, sometimes among cooperating denominations) is the location (a worship center versus a neutral place such as a school ballfield). Likewise, area-wide crusades tend to be large multi-night events. Otherwise, the preparation, execution and follow up are similar in design and effort.

Teams are key to organizing any soul-winning event, and they should be formed with the focus of providing the lost an opportunity to make a commitment to Christ and to connect with a congregation who will nurture them in living for Christ.

**Prayer:** Organizes prayer warriors to pray daily for revival among church members and an awakening among the lost. They will pray for every team and all events, and will prayer walk the neighborhoods where the Outreach Team makes doorstep visits. The Prayer Team might even

work with local broadcasters to have a 90-second daily prayer time just for the needs of the community. The Prayer Team also works to engage every congregation in prayer for the crusade.

**Decision Counseling:** Is trained to talk with individuals who come forward during the crusade, with the focus of helping them understand what the Holy Spirit might be saying to them. A good resource is Billy Graham’s “My Commitment” trifold counseling guide.

**Outreach and Follow Up:** Is heavily involved on the front end and back end of the crusade. They will organize events to engage with the community through door-knocking, compassion ministry, flyer distribution and other personal contact efforts. This team also will make calls and visits after the crusade to connect new believers with a church. They need to be trained in how to share the Gospel (“Roman Road,” etc.) as well as Decision Counseling (“My Commitment”).

**Youth:** Sets up events to reach church youth groups as well as unchurched teens (typically, a pre-crusade rally, a youth night during the crusade and a follow up rally within 90 days after the crusade).

**Publicity:** Needs to reach both internal and external constituents. They need to engage church members to be part of the crusade and to invite the public to attend the crusade.

**Arrangements:** “Many hands” are needed to make light work of such things as setting up chairs. Will obtain a stage, generator, and other equipment to support different events related to the crusade.

**Usher & Security:** The face of the crusade (parking, offerings). Also trained to identify potential problems and to diffuse situations. Will coordinate on-site security by law enforcement and a First Aid Station. Key to communications (radios or walkie talkies) among team leaders and key personnel during crusade services.

**Finance:** Works with local congregations and businesses, as well as local, state and national denominational groups to fund the local effort.

**Music:** Form a mass choir to kick off the opening night of the crusade.

**Hospitality:** Will arrange housing and meals for crusade personnel who might be visiting from out of town.

**Banquet:** For a large area-wide crusade, a banquet will help to inform and enlist congregations to participate. Also, it is an opportunity to raise financial pledges to meet the budget for the crusade.

Typically, six to nine months are needed to launch a large crusade event, and not less than 90 days. Also, prior to the crusade, new believer classes (six weeks followed by six months) need to be formed with prepared teachers. Likewise, ministry leaders need to be ready to put new believers to work right away (hospital visits, food pantry, clothes closet, Habitat for Humanity, etc.)

Fortunately, evangelists such as Rick Gage (gotellministries.com), Bill Britt (compeloi.org) and Sammy Tippit (sammytippit.org) have developed manuals and other materials to help plan and hold one-church, area-wide and international crusades. Additionally, the Louisiana Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists (lacosbe.org) can provide names of evangelists to help lead soul-winning events.

## WIN SOULS

“Never in my forty years of denominational interest and activity have I seen Southern Baptists more united, more hearty, more enthusiastic or more cooperative,” Dodd wrote in his wrap-up report. “This indicates that Southern Baptists are, as they always have been, evangelical in faith and evangelistic in fidelity.”

He observed an experiential truth: soul winning promotes spiritual health and growth among believers.

More importantly, he was obedient to the biblical truth: soul winning defines a believer as Christ’s disciple.

Jesus described Himself as a soul winner, declaring, “The Son of Man has come to seek and save that which is lost,” (Luke 19:10, NKJV). Consequently, if we desire to be like Him, we must seek to win souls, too.



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James 1:17

“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.” (NIV)

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# McCurry returning 'home' to NSU BCM

By Brian Blackwell  
Message staff writer

NATCHITOCHES, La. (LBM) – Austin McCurry, director of the Louisiana State University of Alexandria Baptist Collegiate Ministry, has been named to the same role with the Northwestern State University.

McCurry, who will start on April 1, is a former member of the NSU BCM and follows Bill Collins, who is retiring March 31 after 36 years of faithful service to students on the campus.

"My time at the NSU BCM changed the course of my life," McCurry told the *Baptist Message*. "I wouldn't be the follower of Jesus, husband, father and campus minister I am without Brother Bill and (his wife) Mrs. Phyllis, along with their faithful work through the NSU BCM.

"I'm excited to serve at a university that I love in a city that I love," he continued. "It's going to be special for my daughter to grow up around a ministry where her parents and her grandparents met. It's an honor to shepherd a ministry with the legacy of the NSU BCM."

McCurry first became involved with the NSU BCM during his sophomore year (August 2013) and a year later joined the leadership team while Collins was director. After graduating from NSU, McCurry remained at the BCM as an intern until May 2018, when he left to attend New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

He also has served as a campus missionary (intern) with the New Orleans Metro BCM with the University of New Orleans (August 2018-May 2021), and dually as director, Amarillo College Baptist

Student Ministry, Amarillo, Texas, and associate director, West Texas A&M BSM, Canyon, Texas (July 2021-June 2023).

McCurry and his wife, Lindsay, have one daughter, Ashton.

Once he arrives on the NSU campus, McCurry hopes to continue the strong legacy of helping students be lifelong followers of Jesus.

"I want to emphasize personal evangelism, strong student discipleship and the cultivation of a missional mindset among students on campus and beyond," he said.

Louisiana Baptist Collegiate Ministry State Director Mark Robinson said McCurry's heart for discipleship, student leadership and Gospel-centered ministry makes him the perfect fit to carry forward the NSU BCM legacy.

"Succession done well



Austin McCurry, a former member of the Northwestern State University Baptist Collegiate Ministry, recently was named director of the BCM. He follows Bill Collins, who is retiring March 31 after 36 years of faithful service to students on the campus. McCurry, who currently is BCM director at Louisiana State University of Alexandria, and his wife, Lindsay, have one daughter, Ashton.

is the culmination of discipleship," Robinson said. "A humble handoff is a holy

act. What we're witnessing with Northwestern State is more than a transition — it's the fruit of faithful disciple-making.

"Bill Collins has modeled what it means to lead with integrity and finish with grace, and Austin McCurry is stepping into this role with the same heart for students and the Gospel," he continued. "This is a legacy worth celebrating."

See FUTURE, page 13

# FBC Lake Charles breaks ground for the future

By Brian Blackwell  
Message staff writer

LAKE CHARLES, La. (LBM) – Five years after Hurricanes Laura and Delta destroyed the congregation's facilities, sending First Baptist Church, Lake Charles to multiple temporary locations, the church held a Nov. 2 groundbreaking to celebrate the future by starting the construction of a new multi-purpose facility.

During the special ceremony, 191 members and guests gathered on their new

23-acre property located in the growing Morganfield subdivision of Lake Charles. Once completed, the 21,000-sq.-ft. facility will feature a 325-seat worship center (with 1,200 seats planned for phase two sometime in the future); children's and youth education spaces; modular buildings for adult education space, hospitality area; and coffee space. The facility will include special features to protect against future storms such as impact-resistance glass panes that can withstand 140 mph

winds, a higher foundation and space to install a temporary generator.

## FAITHFUL

The first Sunday after Hurricane Laura made landfall, Aug. 27, 2020, Pastor Johnny Dammon gathered with six Samaritan's Purse volunteers to worship in the FBCLC Family Life Center and begin the clean-up. Over the next five years, the church met in five different locations in Lake Charles: the children's minister's

driveway, Open Gate Cowboy Church, East Ridge Baptist Church, University Baptist Church and, currently, in a building that one day will house a restaurant and apartments.

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# EMERSON from page 3

know, God has always sent people into my life and answered prayers for those people to really speak into my life.

"I kept getting affirmations that I should do this, and then, over the course of three days I sensed God confirmed for me, twice, that I was to take this step of faith," she continued. "You know, God doesn't promise that we're going to be victorious. He doesn't promise that we're going to get what we want, but I felt like it was the right step for me to get in the race."

## FAMILY

Emerson told the Baptist Message that her journey to this point in her life has been shaped by her faith.

"I was born in north Louisiana, the Bible Belt of Louisiana, and grew up in the Baptist church. I had amazing parents, and they brought me up in the Word," Emerson said in describing her childhood.

"Then when I was eight years old [and living in the Lafayette area], I remember listening to my pastor talk about how your parents' faith can't save you.

"When you grow up in the church, and you hear stuff like that, you tend to think, 'Well, I love the Lord. I've always been in church. I've always been in Sunday school.'" she shared. "But that morning it just really hit me -- I thought, 'I've always known about God and I've known about Jesus my whole life, but I have to make that personal decision.' And so, I did. I made that personal decision when I was eight years old."

## FRIENDS

Emerson praised the "so many amazing people in my life who helped strengthen me," including her home congregation of First Baptist Church, Lafayette, mentioning by name her pastors there (Perry Sanders (deceased), Steve Horn, now

the current executive director of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, and James Pritchard, currently serving) and describing them as "awesome" leaders.

She also mentioned "the people that I'm around" in the legislature -- people of faith "who have uplifted me."

Emerson cited the example of Representative Philip Devillier, who was her seat-mate [desks in the Louisiana House chamber are arranged in pairs] during her freshman year in the legislature, about 10 years ago.

"We were just randomly assigned to each other, and he is just a very, very strong man of faith," she said. "He goes to a Catholic church, and I go to the Baptist church, but we serve the same Lord. And he's been very encouraging to me in my faith walk as well."

Devillier is now the state Speaker of the House.

"I've really been blessed that God has put so many amazing people in my path to keep me on the straight and narrow," she said.

"Hopefully, I've been able to

speak into their lives as well.

In between her childhood and her time in the legislature, Emerson said her adventures in missions strongly shaped her faith, too.

While she was a student in a Christian school system, she said, "we did mission trips and stuff on spring break and things like that." Then, in college, she completed some summer assignments in Alaska with the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

"I had not ever thought about going there, but I had a tremendous time," she offered. "I really grew in my faith, while leading high school young ladies in Bible studies and Sunday school lessons. Also, I learned to be unashamed of the Gospel and of sharing it with others. I would say that my time in Alaska was a really defining moment for me in terms of learning to live out my faith proudly.

## FUTURE

Emerson's primary goal, if elected to the Senate, would be to champion better stewardship of taxpayers' dollars.

"I really feel like in Louisiana and in the U.S. right now, we're headed in a much better direction for brighter days and a brighter future," she said. "Just from a policy standpoint, I would offer the same leadership in D.C. as I have in Baton Rouge during my time as chair of the state's House Ways and Means Committee and my work on cutting taxes and keeping our books balanced.

"You know, in the state we are required to balance the budget. Unfortunately, they're not required to do that in Washington," she clarified. "We can't continue to operate in deficits and just pile up debt -- that's an injustice to our taxpayers and imperils the future of our country. So, I would very much like to get involved in fiscal policy matters at that level and see what we can do to get that ship of state on a better track."

## FOREMOST

In closing out the in-

terview, Emerson told the *Baptist Message* that whatever the outcome of the campaign she wants to live so that people see that she is led by her faith.

"God is always going to be a part of our government as long as we send Christians there, and that is going to be a guiding light for me," she said. "Frankly, the choices that are made affect a lot of people and we really need to be in constant prayer.

For herself, Emerson asked Louisiana Baptists to pray for calmness as she runs her campaign and His reassurance as she follows His path.

"You have to run your own race with endurance and that's what I pray for, focus and peace, and to just do the Lord's will," she said. "At the end of the day, we get in these things because we want to win. But sometimes God has other plans or other purposes for you being in certain places at certain times.

"I certainly would not have gotten in this race if I didn't feel like there was a very clear path to victory for me, and I do believe there is," she added. "But, you know, whatever God's will for me is, that's what I want to do. I'm supposed to be in this, and I'm in it, and so now I just trust the Lord to send me wherever He would want me to go."

## LAGNIAPPE

Emerson is a graduate of Westminster Christian Academy in Opelousas, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (Bachelor of Science) and the University of South Carolina (Master of Business Administration). She is a leader in the state (10 years in the legislature), the local community (small business owner, Lagniappe Communications Group) and her faith community (13 years as a trustee overseeing Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky).

She joins a field of announced candidates that includes state Treasurer John Fleming, state Sen. Blake Miguez, Public Service Commissioner Eric Skrmetta and St. Tammany Parish Councilwoman Kathy Seiden.

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## \$1.45 Million from page one

"I received a first call about church insurance companies not renewing our churches in February 2023. Almost immediately, Will Hall, Dale Lingenfelter, and I started working on solutions," Horn explained. "We are not at the finish line, but receiving this grant is the result of hours of meetings and phone calls. All along the way, God provided us with people who showed us incredible kind-

ness and expertise to navigate multiple hurdles."

### MANY CHAMPIONS

Former state Sen. Robert Mills, a member of First Baptist Church, Bossier City, with co-sponsor Sen. Katrina Jackson (now Jackson-Andrews), championed Senate Bill 147, which was signed into law as Act 259 in 2023. That legislation authorized

## Future from page 11

Along the way, the congregation lived by two slogans: "We are the church without a church that's still a church" and "We are a church on the move."

Dammon said despite difficult moments, the members never gave up and now will be blessed with a new campus in a growing area.

"While it was kind of catastrophic that we lost our building and we bounced around in these different locations, it actually served to strengthen our faith in Him because we never felt that God had abandoned us or turned away from us," Dammon said. "We felt like He was guiding us every step of the way, even when it was hard. So, we just stuck together, tried to remember to humble ourselves before Him and to seek His face, and simply trusted Him to provide."

Jim Shamburger, a deacon and retired engineer, said it has been an honor to be part of a church that has remained committed through uncertainties and multiple relocations.

"There has been a lot of kneeling and praying," he said. "As a group, we said, 'We don't know where to go, we don't know the future, but we will follow You where You go.'"

Shamburger noted that he and other church leaders visited 15 different facilities to help form their vision about how to position the church to reach multitudes for generations to come.

"People need the Lord badly and we have sought His wisdom and direction as we plan for the future," he said. "We're preparing for a bright future in a growing area. Now that we are situated on a new campus, we're ready to get focused on reaching out to our community."

Karen Spencer, leader of

the women's ministry, cited Romans 8:32 as a verse that describes God's provision for the church: "He Who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all—how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things" (NIV).

"God has provided for our church (His Church) every step of the way," she said. "Along many bumpy roads, and even a few canyons, God has continued to provide, just as He promised. We've moved from place to place and one time to another time. Now He has transplanted us right across the street where we can watch as our new building grows! He's even given us a second-floor balcony where we can have a better vantage point."

Josh Britt, an eight-year-member of the congregation, echoed the thought.

"It's incredibly special and humbling to see God's plan in action, and to be a part of the people working to follow His plan," he said. "I would describe it as a faith building experience to witness the indirect yet designed path that He has had for this church. It's just a constant reminder to rely on Him and His provision will never waiver."

### REWARDED

With a new permanent home in sight, FBCLC is excited about how God will use them to reach Lake Charles and beyond.

Currently, the church's outreach efforts include Vacation Bible School, mission trips across the globe, giving to missions causes, hosting International Supper Club, local community groups, discipling groups, Embrace Grace (a ministry to single mothers) and other various kinds of outreach.

the formation of a faith-based self-insurance cooperative.

In 2025, several Louisiana Baptist lawmakers were critical to securing the \$2.9 million appropriation to fund the church self-insurance start up: Rep. Julie Emerson (member, First Lafayette), chair, House Ways and Means Committee; Gabe Firmant (deacon, First Baptist Church, Pollock), chair, House Insurance Committee; and Jack McFarland (member, Caney Lake Baptist Church, Chatham), chair, House Appropriations Committee and author of HB460, which Gov. Landry signed into law as Act 461.

Meanwhile, since 2023, Gallagher Risk Management of Monroe has been helping to guide efforts to bring the program online, with a projected start-up date in the second quarter of 2026.

### OPEN ENROLLMENT

The Fellowship of Louisiana Churches and Nonprofit Religious Organizations is recognized as a nonprofit by the Louisiana secretary of state and the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, and its board of directors includes leaders in six state faith communities (Assemblies of God; Church of God in Christ; Home and Foreign Missions Baptist; Louisiana Baptist; Missionary Baptist; United Pentecostal).

Serving alongside Horn as FLCNRO officers are Scott Holmes, superintendent, Louisiana District, Assemblies of God, as vice president, and James Proctor, jurisdictional prelate, Historical Louisiana First Jurisdiction, Church of God in Christ, as secretary/treasurer.

There are no doctrinal

components to the program and churches will not be tied to each other religiously. Each will be an individual member of the self-insurance trust, like a customer of any insurance company. So, when the insurance program is launched it will be open to congregations of any Louisiana denomination as well as religious nonprofits.

### 2026 LAUNCH

"This grant should expedite the remaining foundational work that must be done to establish a church and faith-based shared pool for property insurance coverage," Horn told the *Baptist Message*. "We are still working toward holding informational meetings in the first quarter of 2026 with a launch of receiving members in the second quarter of 2026."

## SAM MOORE, Evangelistic Ministries

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Sam is a full-time vocational evangelist. He has the gift and calling of an evangelist. He served as a pastor for 22 years before going into evangelism in 2009. He is available for Crusades, Revivals, Harvest Days, Wild Game Supper Events and evangelism training. Call or email to schedule your 2026 event.

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**SEEKING A PASTOR**  
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,  
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email to: fbchatfield@gmail.com

**AVAILABLE**  
Greg Thomson,  
experienced church  
pianist, available  
in the Central  
Louisiana area.  
Please call  
318.452.3088.

**SEEKING PASTOR**  
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

Seeking full-time  
**SENIOR PASTOR**  
Calvary Baptist Church  
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 cbcrustonpastorsearch@gmail.com.

**SEEKING A SENIOR PASTOR**  
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!**

Seeking a  
**Full Time/Bi-Vocational pastor**  
Old Bethel Baptist Church, Clarks  
Louisiana is seeking a Full Time  
(or bi-vocational) Pastor. A parsonage  
is provided. Please send a résumé to:  
Old Bethel, PO Box 95, Clarks, LA 71415  
or email to: obbc1831@gmail.com.

Sandy Bayou Baptist Church  
Columbia, LA 71418  
is seeking a bi-vocational  
Pastor. Parsonage available  
as part of compensation. Send  
résumés to SBBC, 4803 Hwy 559  
Columbia, LA 71418 or e-mail  
delaneab@yahoo.com

**SEEKING A MUSIC MINISTER**  
First Baptist Church  
of DeQuincy in DeQuincy,  
La. is seeking a  
music minister.  
Please email résumés  
to [music@fbcdq.org](mailto:music@fbcdq.org)

Seeking a Full time  
**PASTOR**  
Seeking Full time Pastor for Emmanuel Baptist  
Church, Minden, La. Send CVs/résumé to  
[MindenEmmanuel@gmail.com](mailto:MindenEmmanuel@gmail.com). For full job  
description visit [www.emmanuelbcminden.org](http://www.emmanuelbcminden.org)

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, MANY, LA.,**  
*is seeking a*  
**YOUTH leader**  
First Baptist Church, Many, La.,  
is seeking 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 your résumé to  
[fbcmay@yahoo.com](mailto:fbcmay@yahoo.com) at  
your earliest convenience.

**magnolia**  
BAPTIST CHURCH  
SEEKING FULL-TIME  
/BI-VOCATIONAL  
**PASTOR**  
Magnolia Baptist Church in Holden, Louisiana  
is seeking a full-time/bi-vocational Pastor. A  
parsonage is included. Please send résumés  
to: [dewayneh1965@gmail.com](mailto:dewayneh1965@gmail.com)

**Youth Minister Needed**  
McDonald Memorial Baptist Church in Jonesboro, LA is  
seeking a Christ-centered, energetic youth minister to guide  
middle and high school students through Wednesday night  
classes, Bible studies, and multiple youth events and  
conferences. Applicants must have a strong walk with  
Christ, a clear call to youth ministry, and good leadership  
skills. Please send your résumé to [mmbcchurch318@gmail.com](mailto:mmbcchurch318@gmail.com).

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SEEKING A FULL-TIME/BI-VOCATIONAL  
**PASTOR**  
New Bethlehem Baptist Church, Denham Springs, LA is  
seeking a full-time/bi-vocational Pastor. Small church established 1953  
with 50 -100 members for Sunday service. Send résumé with links for  
three most recent sermons to [NBBCPastorSearchCommittee25@gmail.com](mailto:NBBCPastorSearchCommittee25@gmail.com)  
or mail to 37818 Reininger Rd, Denham Springs, LA 70706.  
Résumés accepted through 02/20/2025.



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](mailto: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
- Scotty Blackwell resigns as music minister at First Baptist Church, Minden to go be Pastor of Worship Ministries at Kingsland Baptist Church, Katy, Texas.
  - Wade, wife Rebecca, Penefield is the new pastor at First Baptist Church, Many. There will be a Pastor Installation Service on Sunday, December 21st.
  - Russell Hinson is the interim/transitional pastor at First Baptist Church, Livingston.
  - Zach Anderson is the new pastor at West-side Baptist Church, Natchitoches.

- REVIVAL
- Liberty Christian, Colfax: Harvest Sunday, December 14, 2025. Evangelist: Scotty McDowell. Pastor: Deric Cox.
  - Mt. Moriah Baptist Church, Hinston: Revival, January 18-21. Evangelist: Scotty McDowell. Pastor: Eugene Williams.
  - Eastvue Baptist Church, Jena: Revival, January 25-28, Evangelist: Scotty McDowell. Pastor: Dustin Robertson.

- LAGNIAPPE
- First Baptist Church, Many: Searching for a worship leader. The worship leader's main responsibility will be selecting and leading our music for morning worship on Sundays. This is a part-position. If interested, please contact the church office for an application or email resume to [fbcmany@yahoo.com](mailto:fbcmany@yahoo.com) as soon as possible.
  - Cedar Crest Baptist Church, West Monroe: Christmas worship, Dec. 21, 8:30 and 10:15 a.m. Nursery and kids' church provided, Pastor: Gregory Clark.
  - Wilda Baptist Church, Boyce: Community Christmas service, Dec. 21, 6 p.m., with dinner before at 5 p.m. The Drewett Family will be in concert. Pastor: Joey Rudisill.
  - Ferry Lake Baptist Church, Oil City: Christmas Eve candlelight service, Dec. 24, 5:30 p.m. Pastor: John McCatherty.
  - First Baptist Church, Baton Rouge: Christmas Eve service, Dec. 24, 5 p.m. Pastor: Andrew Ogea.
  - First Baptist Church, Covington: Christmas Eve services, Dec. 24, 11 a.m., 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. Pastor: Waylon Bailey.
  - First Baptist Church, Winnsboro: Christmas Eve service, 6 p.m. Pastor: Craig Beeman.
  - First Baptist Church, Converse: Candlelight service, Dec. 21, 6 p.m. Pastor: Brian Rankin.
  - Fair Park Baptist Church, West Monroe: Carols and cocoa in atrium, Dec. 21, 9:30 a.m., followed by its Light of the World Christmas worship time and church-wide reception. On Dec. 25, the church will hold its Christmas Day service, 10 a.m. Pastor: Waymond Warren.
  - First Baptist Church, West Monroe: 2025 Northeast Louisiana Christmas Celebration,

- Dec. 19-21, 6 p.m. To purchase tickets visit [nelachristmas.com](http://nelachristmas.com). Pastor: Michael Wood.
- Airline Baptist Church, Bossier City: Christmas Eve candlelight service, Dec. 24, 5:30 p.m. We will sing Christmas carols by candlelight, take the Lord's Supper and have special children's message. Pastor: Terry Young.
- First Baptist Church, Pineville: Christmas Eve service, 5 p.m. Pastor: Stewart Holloway.
- Siloam Baptist Church, Many: Christmas play, Dec. 21, 11 a.m. Pastor: Charles Lusk.
- Fellowship Church, Prairieville: Christmas Eve services, Dec. 24, 11 a.m., 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. Childcare for ages 3 and under, 4 years and up will attend service with their families. The 2 p.m. service will be live streamed on all of our online platforms. Pastor: Kirk Jones.
- First Baptist Church, Vidalia: Candlelight service, Dec. 21. 5 p.m. Pastor: Brad Watson.
- Temple Baptist Church, Ruston: Candlelight service, Dec. 24, 4 p.m. Pastor: Reggie Bridges.
- Calvary Baptist Church, Alexandria: Christmas Eve services, Dec. 24, 2 and 4 p.m. Pastor: Todd Strain.
- Istrouma Baptist Church, Baton Rouge: Candlelight Christmas Eve services, Dec. 24, 2 and 4 p.m. at both the Ascension and Baton Rouge campuses.
- First Baptist Church, Denham Springs: Christmas Eve services, Dec. 24, 2, 3:30 and 5 p.m. Pastor: Leo Miller.
- Ouachita Baptist Church, West Monroe: Christmas Eve candlelight service and Lord's Supper, Dec. 24, 5 p.m. Pastor: Mike Holloway.
- First Baptist Church, Winnsboro: More about Jesus, Dec. 20, 5:30 p.m., and Christmas Eve service, Dec. 24, 6 p.m. Pastor: Craig Beeman.
- Fellowship Baptist Church, Trout: Community Christmas, Dec. 20, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Pastor: Shad Tibbs.
- North Monroe Baptist Church, Monroe: Christmas Eve services, Dec. 24, 4 and 5:30 p.m. Pastor: Bill Dye.
- First Baptist Church, Eunice: Candlelight, carols and communion, Dec. 24, 6 p.m. Pastor: Andrew Bates.
- Hunter Magnolia Baptist Church, Mansfield: Christmas cantata, Dec. 21, 10:15 a.m. Pastor: Amador Santos.
- Siloam Baptist Church, Many: Youth and children's Christmas program, Dec. 21, 11 a.m. Pastor: Chuck Lusk.
- Eastwood Baptist Church, Haughton: Christmas Eve service, Dec. 24, 5 p.m. Pastor: None.
- Woodridge Baptist Church, Shreveport: Christmas service, Dec. 21, 9:45 a.m. Pastor: Paul Walker.
- First Baptist Church, Lafayette: Christmas Eve services, Dec. 24, 3:30 and 5 p.m. Pastor: James Pritchard.
- Old Zion Hill Baptist Church, Independence: "It All Happened in the Country" Christmas musical, Dec. 20, 5 p.m., and Dec 21, 10am. The church also will hold its Christmas Eve Candlelight service and Lord's supper on Dec. 24, 4 p.m. Pastor: Gary Dennis.
- Trinty Baptist Church, Lake Charles: The Lights at Trinity, December 7-31, 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.
- Homewood Baptist Church, Alexandria: Ivan Parker in concert, December 13, 6 p.m. The church is located at 3111 Rapides Avenue,

- Alexandria. Pastor: Jimmy Koonce.
- Airline Baptist Church, Bossier City: Celebrate Christmas, a multigenerational worship experience, December 14, 9 and 10:30 services. That afternoon come enjoy a Christmas Carnival from 4-7 p.m. For more information, contact [Ashley@airlinebaptist.com](mailto:Ashley@airlinebaptist.com) Pastor: Terry Young.
- First Baptist Church, Abbeville: Greg Sullivan Ministries in concert, December 14 at 10:45 a.m. Pastor: Russell Landry.
- Journey Church, Pineville: Christmas 2025, the Lights are Coming, Dec. 20, 3 p.m. Pastor: James Greer.
- First Baptist Church, Livingston: Christmas singing, December 14, 6 p.m. A special evening of beautiful music and the joy of the Christmas season. After the program, attendees are invited to stay and enjoy a bowl of gumbo. Pastor: None.
- First Baptist Church, DeRidder: Ben Waites in concert, December 14, 10:30 and 6 p.m. Pastor: Nelson Santa Ana.
- Summer Grove Baptist Church, Shreveport: From Glory to Glory, presented by the worship ministry of Summer Grove Baptist Church, December 14, 3 p.m. From Glory to Glory, is a powerful celebration of the Savior who came here, who transforms hearts, and who is still moving among His people today. Pastor: None
- Oil City Baptist Church, Oil City: Follow That Star, December 20, 5:30-7:30 p.m. This is a community-wide, drive-through Live Nativity. Community churches will represent scenes from that first Christmas. Everyone is invited to attend this live event. Pastor: Jesse Colston.
- East Ridge Baptist Church, Lake Charles: Hope in a Manger – Choir Cantata, December 21, 5:30 p.m. Pastor: Scott Beardsley.
- Midway Baptist Church, Ponchatoula: Chronicle in concert, December 21, 10:30 a.m. Pastor: Jimmy Wall.
- Plainview Baptist Church, Hornbeck: The Southern Plainsmen Quartet in concert, December 31, 6 p.m. The Southern Plainsmen



Members of the Woman's Missionary Union with Bentley Baptist Church raised money for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering through sales from homemade angel ornaments. After making them on Nov. 18, the WMU members spent the month of December selling them with the goal of raising \$1,500 for the annual offering of the International Mission Board. Through Dec. 9, sales from the ornaments, hanging inside the church worship center, totaled \$680. "This gives a great visual reminder and motivation to the congregation to give an offering for the missionaries when they see the tree in the sanctuary," Church Clerk Samantha Nugent told the *Baptist Message*. "The children love the opportunity to go and place an angel on the tree as well."

- will join the Watson Family in a New Year Eve concert. Pastor: Jodi Mitchell.
- Oak Forest Baptist Church, Leesville: Jonathanandjongideoncausey in concert, January 10, 5 p.m. For more information, please call W.L. Bynog at 337-353-4507 Pastor: Joe Call.
- Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, DeRidder: Jonathanandjongideoncausey in concert, January 11, 11 a.m. For more information, please call Paul Moore at 707-761-5981. Pastor: Paul Moore.
- First Baptist Church, Many: The Southern Plainsmen Quartet in concert January 11, 2026, 10:30 a.m. Pastor: Wade Penefield.
- First Baptist Church, Folsom: Ladies Conference, January 17, 8 a.m.-Noon. Reclaim your passion for Jesus and get practical tools to share your faith with others. Speaker: Dianne Nix, national speaker and author. Tiffany Smith, NAMB Strategist, national author and speaker Pastor: Will Robbins.
- First Baptist Church, Central: The Southern Plainsmen Quartet in concert, January 24, 2026, 4:30 p.m. Pastor: Daryl Purpera.
- Gray' Creek Baptist Church, Denham Springs: The Southern Plainsmen Quartet in concert, January 25, 2026, 10:30 p.m. Pastor: Derek Wall.

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.

kl cbg adq gzjsw sizjwsgdipj, dq gzj cbwv

pbrdivjv kl gzj zdiv bu rbqjq, ubw gzj isij gwsjkj,

div ubw gzj zdcu gwskj.

obqzxd ubxwgjji:gab

Clues:  
D = A; Z = H

Answer to November 20, Scripture Crypto:  
Jeremiah 28:16



# ECON

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# JAN. 26-27, 2026

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BRIDGES



Herb  
REAVIS



David  
BURTON



Jason  
CRABB



David  
LOGAN



Adam  
WATSON

## Equipping Breakout Sessions

**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 Christian University

## Sign Up for the Breakout Session Meals

All sessions are **FREE**, but  
require pre-registration.  
Seating is limited.

All breakout meals will be free thanks to  
the help of our sponsors: Baptist Message,  
Children's Home, Baptist Foundation



[LouisianaBaptists.org/ECON26](https://LouisianaBaptists.org/ECON26)

