



THE BAPTIST MESSAGE

June 25, 2026
Volume 141 • Issue No. 6

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John 3:16

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Van Payne/The Baptist Paper photo

Sandra Wisdom-Martin (left), executive director-treasurer of national Woman's Missionary Union, and Carolyn Fountain (right), president of national WMU, gave the entity's report at the June 8 business report.

Carolyn Fountain elected president of WMU, SBC

By Julie Waters
WMU, SBC

ORLANDO, Fla. (WMU, SBC) – Carolyn Fountain, past president of the Louisiana Woman's Missionary Union, was elected the 25th president of WMU, SBC during the WMU Missions Celebration and Annual Meeting, June 7, in Orlando.

She is the first African-American woman to serve in this role, and succeeds Connie Dixon of Elida, New Mexico, who has served as president since 2021.

Carolyn leads with excellence, serves with humility, and approaches every calling with steadfast devotion and remarkable care.

Sandra Wisdom-Martin
Executive Director-Treasurer
of SBC Women's Missionary Union

"We welcome Carolyn Fountain into this sacred season of

leadership," said Sandy Wisdom-Martin, executive director of WMU, SBC. "She comes to the presidency carrying a lifetime of faithful service and leadership experiences woven through every facet of WMU and Southern Baptist life. Across our denomination, she is admired not only for her wisdom and grace, but for the Christlike example she consistently lives before others.

"Carolyn leads with excel-

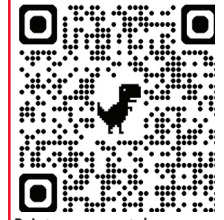
See FOUNTAIN, page 2

Al Mohler amendment moves ahead

By Staff
Baptist Message

ORLANDO, Fla. (LBM) – Messengers voted to move forward an amend-

Read the motions and resolutions from the SBC Annual Meeting on BaptistMessage.com.



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ment that addresses the office and function of pastor.

If approved next year, the amendment

would amend the SBC constitution to "add an enumerated 6th item, under Article 3, Paragraph

See MOHLER, page 5



MARC IRA HOOKS/THE BAPTIST PAPER photo

In Orlando, Florida, Southern Seminary President Al Mohler spoke about his motion during June 10 business session of the 2026 Annual Meeting of Southern Baptist.

Louisiana Baptists score wins in SBC Pinewood Derby races

By Brian Blackwell
Message staff writer

ORLANDO, Fla. (LBM) – Louisiana Baptists placed first in multiple nation-

al Royal Ambassador Pinewood Derby races, held June 8-9 prior to the Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting.

Winning their respective race categories were Campbell Hodge, a fourth grader with Temple Baptist Church in Ruston, RA division; Louisiana Baptist Women's Missions and Ministry Strategist Christine Gill, state Baptist WMU director division; and Rob Richardson, an RA leader with First Baptist Church, Lafayette, RA

leader division.

Hodge, whose win marked the third year in a row for a Louisiana Baptist RA to be named SBC champion, expressed excitement about the threepeat.

"It felt great to win the national race," Hodge told the Baptist Message. "I was happy to represent my church, Temple Baptist, and the state of Louisiana. I'm thankful for our RA program for teaching me

See PINWOOD, page 5

Five LA Baptists say 'yes' to Great Commission call

By Brian Blackwell
Message staff writer

ORLANDO, Fla. (LBM) – The International Mission Board appointed 63 new missionaries, including five from Louisiana, during a sending celebration in Orlando, Florida.

Among those were Justin and Meredith Sassard, whose sending church is Harvest Church, New Orleans. The names of three others from Louisiana could not be published because of secu-

See MISSIONARIES, page 7



Campbell Hodge, a fourth grader with Temple Baptist Church, Ruston, won the national Pinewood Derby for Royal Ambassadors in Orlando, Florida., June 8, 2026.

Fountain from page one

lence, serves with humility, and approaches every calling with steadfast devotion and remarkable care,” Wisdom-Martin continued. “Her influence has long been a source of encouragement and strength, and her leadership will inspire generations to come. We go forward with deep confidence and great joy, knowing she will guide WMU with vision, integrity, and unwavering faithfulness.”

A native of Tallulah, Fountain earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and journalism with Grambling

State University, Grambling, Louisiana, before attending a writing and publishing program with Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Fountain and her husband of 48 years, Leroy, were appointed as church planters by the Home Mission Board (now North American Mission Board), serving two terms (1983–1996, 2006–2013). Over the years, Fountain organized and facilitated WMU, taught Sunday School, co-directed youth ministry, led Acteens, sang in

the church choir and was a pastor’s wife for 11 years.

She has served as New Orleans Baptist Association Women’s Missions and Ministry director (2014–2021); member of the Louisiana Baptist Women’s Missions and Ministry Task Force (2017); Louisiana WMU secretary (2016–2018), vice president (2018–2020) and president (2020–2023); SBC, WMU vice president (2020–2023); Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee member (2020–present); and

Southern Baptist Convention Executive Board (2023–2025).

She served as president of Louisiana WMU (2020–2023) and served on the SBC committee on order of business. Additionally, she served as campus minister with Alabama State University and led students on missions trips to Detroit, Michigan, Nashville, Tennessee, and Atlanta, Georgia.

Fountain also was an educator for 15 years, initially as an ESL fourth grade teacher in Dallas, Texas.

“I got my teacher certification in linguistics because I wanted to make a difference in the lives and education of the Spanish speaking students,” she explained. “As we left Dallas and returned to active missionary status with NAMB, I continued in the classroom in Conyers, Georgia. I was in a general education, fourth grade classroom, but second language learners coming from the International School were placed in my class. I still used my ESL certification and had opportunities to minister to families.”

Presently, Fountain works with the Women’s Learning Center, a ministry of the Louisiana Baptist Children’s

Home and Family Services in Monroe.

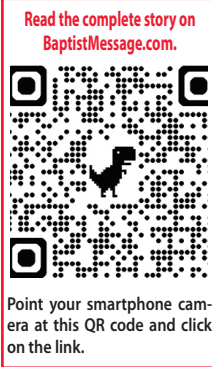
“I find that tutoring women in reading and writing as they strive to achieve their HiSet (GED) diploma is about the most fulfilling ministry of my career,” Fountain stated. “I have the opportunity to pour into the lives of women who have had setbacks of the worse kind and who are striving to find their way to a closer walk with God and out of low-income jobs.”

As Fountain teaches, she said she also shares life skills, impressing the importance of walking with God and serving Him as they serve others.

“It is such a blessing to me to be able to assure the ladies of God’s love for them and to demonstrate His love through my love for them as we pray with them, cry with them, and rejoice with them,” she reflected.

Through the years, Fountain said she has experienced God’s faithfulness.

“As we stepped out in faith to serve, He led us to reach people and plant churches,” she said. “Now He leads us as we serve as consultants and mentors for church planters and their families. He has taken this shy country girl who loves family and roots and helped me grow into a servant who is willing to go where He leads.”



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Number 6

APOLOGETICS 101 (Part 6): Evidence of the Exodus

By Will Hall

Message executive editor

ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM) – Jericho is significant to the trustworthiness of Scripture because its existence is tied to key historical events documented in both the Old and New Testaments.

BIBLICAL CORNERSTONE

In Jericho Jesus continued his mission to “seek and save that which is lost” (Luke 19:10) with his encounter with Zacchaeus. During the same visit to the city, He healed two blind beggars, including Bartimaeus, on His way to Jerusalem and the cross.

Meanwhile, Jesus cited the Jericho Road as the setting for His “Parable of the Good Samaritan.”

Moreover, Jericho is mentioned in what is known as the “Roll Call of Faith” because “By faith the walls of Jericho fell” (Hebrews 11:30).

Jericho also was a key location for events in the Old Testament such as Elijah’s miraculous whisking up to Heaven in a chariot of fire and the first miracle by Elisha, upon succeeding Elijah, when he healed the city’s “bad water” (II Kings 2).

But perhaps the city is most well-known for the victory God wrought there, not through military might but through faith and obedience.

Joshua 6 records that on the seventh day of Israel circling the heavily fortified city, when the priests blew the trumpets and the people made a great shout, “the wall fell flat” (v. 20). Then after rescuing Rahab and her family because of her act of faith, Israel “burned the city and all that was in it” (v. 24). Importantly, the redeemed pagan prostitute became a revered matriarch

in the lineage of Jesus Christ, and a key example of salvation for those who trust in the Lord (Joshua 2:9-13, cf. Genesis 15:6, Romans 4:3), and specifically “to the Gentiles” and “to the ends of the earth” (Isaiah 49:6).

Moreover, the defeat of Jericho launched the conquest of Canaan, which undergirds the fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham (Genesis 15:18-21) and the establishment of the Davidic line, which leads to Jesus.

SCIENTIFIC BATTLE

The first excavations of Jericho took place in 1868 under the direction of Sir Charles Warren, a British Royal Engineer. However, he found nothing of interest to him.

Then in 1930, John Garstang, a preeminent

British archaeologist who pioneered many of the rigorous standards for fieldwork, including extensive high-quality photographic documentation, began a seven-year investigation of the city. Using his mastery of the science of stratigraphy (understanding layers in the earth in terms of human activity) and his wife Marie’s expertise in dating ancient pottery, he unearthed Jericho’s massive collapsed walls as well as evidence that the city had been heavily burned in its destruction. Moreover, he dated the destruction to about 1400 B.C. and concluded that the charred ruins were associated with the biblical account about Israel’s conquest of Jericho.

However, in 1952, Kathleen Kenyon, a member of the British School of Archaeology, challenged Garstang’s dating of Jericho’s ruin, claiming the double-walled fortification had been destroyed 150 years before Israel entered the promised

land. Although her conclusions were published in 1957, details of her analysis were not made available until 1982. But by then Bible critics had jumped on the bandwagon. Now the Book of Joshua is panned by them as “more like an adventure story than history” and with the claim that “Joshua destroyed a city that wasn’t even there!”

Unfortunately, her conclusions were largely unchallenged until 1990.

Then Bryant G. Wood, an American archaeologist with a mechanical engineering background who is a specialist in Canaanite pottery of the Late Bronze Age, challenged Kenyon, not for her field work or her methodology but for her conclusion about the materials she had unearthed. Specifically, he criticized Kenyon for having not “published an analysis of her pottery to support her claims” and lamented that “her impromptu dating has

See APOLOGETICS, page 11

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SBC messengers adopt 11 resolutions

By Staff
Baptist Message

ORLANDO, Fla. (LBM)
– Messengers to the

Southern Baptist Convention adopted 11 resolutions during the first day of the 2026 SBC Annual Meeting, June 9-10:

– **On the 250th Anniversary of the United States and the Baptist Contribution to Religious Liberty** honors “the legacy of Baptist forebears who courageously contended for religious liberty and helped secure the freedoms enshrined in the First Amendment.”

– **On Appreciation for the City of Orlando** who “has warmly welcomed Southern Baptists with hospitality, professionalism, and a spirit of service.”

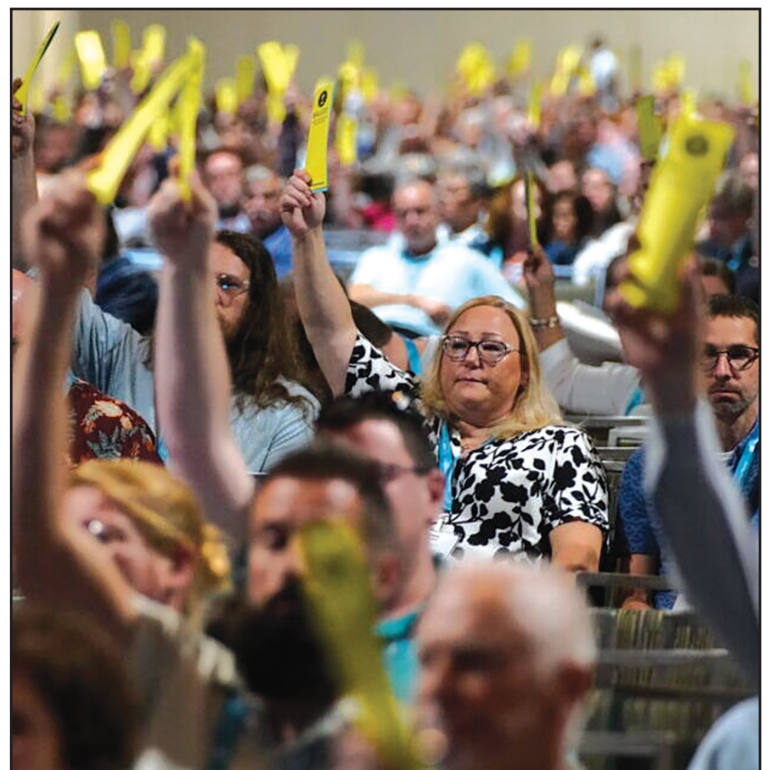
– **On Appreciation for Bivocational and Volunteer Pastors** gives thanks for their “enduring

See RESOLUTIONS, page 12

SBC messengers present 30 motions

By Staff
Baptist Message

ORLANDO, Fla. (LBM)
– Messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention offered 30 motions during



MARC IRA HOOKS/THE BAPTIST PAPER photo

Messengers raised ballots to vote during the June 10 business session of the 2026 SBC Annual Meeting in Orlando.

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the 2026 SBC Annual Meeting, June 9-10:

ADOPTED
-- Al Mohler, Kentucky: amend Article 3, paragraph 1 of the SBC Constitution

OUT OF ORDER
-- Josh Abbotoy, Tennessee: publish a report on messengers with institutional relationships
-- Jeremiah Hayes, Arizona: establish standards for worship music used at the SBC Annual Meeting
-- Jim Cummins, Tennessee: create pathways for virtual participation in the annual meeting
-- Brance Long, North Carolina: expand deaf min-

istry discipleship efforts
-- Juan-Jose Cavallo, Florida: condemn the rise of Kinism
-- Dean Scoular, Missouri: reframe future annual meeting schedules
-- John Piwetz, Kentucky: fuller reports by Executive Committee and seminaries about expenses and operating assets

REFERRALS
ENTITIES
-- Jared Long, Georgia: entities' alcohol policies
-- Michael Schneider, Missouri: IMB's vaccine policy

See MOTIONS, page 13

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Campbell Hodge (photographed with trophy) won first place in the national Royal Ambassador Pinewood Derby, June 8, 2026. Also photographed (L-R) were Louisiana RA Consultant Steve Ancelet, Hodge's father, Samuel, mother, Kelly, sister, Harmon Kate, Louisiana Baptist Men's Ministry and Disaster Relief/Compassion Relief Strategist Stan Statham, and National RA Consultant Keith Gates.

Mohler from page one

1, defining composition. This new language would make clear that a cooperating Southern Baptist church: '6. Does not act to affirm, appoint, or endorse a woman serving in the office or function of a pastor/elder/overseer, specifically preaching to the assembled congregation.'"

Al Mohler, a messenger and president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, proposed the amendment.

The June 10 affirmative vote for Mohler's motion cuts one year from the approval process, bringing

it to the floor during next year's SBC Annual Meeting in Indianapolis for a second and final vote. The vote was 6,028 to 2,026 – 74.66% to 25.09% – in favor of the amendment.

Mohler said by adopting this amendment Southern Baptists can move forward on this issue "in unity and in truth."

"This amendment makes very clear that a church in friendly cooperation with the Southern Baptist Convention doesn't

have anyone other than a man as pastor in the office of pastor and specifies on the functions of the pastor, that the key central function of preaching the Word of God to the gathered assembly is limited to men, by Scripture," he said. "Now this means that this amendment speaks directly, and we know what we're talking about. We're talking about the pastor of

See MOHLER, page 7

Pinewood from page one

more about Jesus and how it gives me extra time to spend with my dad (Sam)."

Gill, who won her race for the second year in a row, said she was grateful to have defended her title.

"Winning the RA Derby car race for the second year in a row was a lot of fun, but what made it most meaningful was the attention it brought to Royal Ambassadors and the mission of developing boys into godly men who follow Christ," she said. "Racing alongside fellow WMU state leaders made for great fellowship and friendly competition. I am grateful to the WMU Foundation for sponsoring the race and helping create an opportunity to highlight the importance of RAs and their impact on the next generation."

Richardson, who has served as an RA leader

with FBC Lafayette for five years, said the race brought back memories of when he raced in the Pinewood Derby as an FBCL RA.

"I love the ministry," he said. "I am happy to be a part of a program that wants to help point boys toward Christ to grow into strong Christian men."

RA Consultant Keith Gates, also a member of First Baptist Church, Winnfield, coordinated the event and Goldonna Baptist Church's RA ministry provided the track.

"We are so proud of the boys who raced in the National Championship and also for Christine," Gates said.

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Janet T. Hoffman, national WMU president emerita, dies at 90

By Staff
WMU

(BIRMINGHAM, Ala.) – Janet Thompson Hoffman, who served as president of WMU, SBC (2000- 2005) passed away June 15, 2026, at the age of 90. She was born July 12, 1935, in Tulsa, Okla. to Mildred Siler Thompson and James Scott Thompson. At age 11, she trusted Jesus as Savior, a faith from which she never departed.

She earned a Bachelor of Arts from Baylor University in 1956 and a Master of Arts in Christian Education from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in 1993. She served as a secondary school teacher (English, Speech, Spanish) in Texas.

She was married to her beloved husband, Harvey W. Hoffman, Jr., for 63 years, walking beside him with grace, resilience, and unwavering commitment as he attended seminary and pastored 10 Southern Baptist churches in Texas and Louisiana.

Hoffman gave generously of her time and energy to be a pastor's wife while raising three children, creating a home where faith was not merely taught – it was lived. She treasured every moment spent with her children and later, her grandchildren.

Hoffman wrote articles and books with the latest, *ChristLight: Reflecting the Image of Christ in the Real World*, published in 2004 by Woman's Missionary Union (WMU). She held multiple roles within the Southern Baptist Convention through associations as well as state conventions. She served on the board of both WMU of Texas and Louisiana WMU.



Janet Thompson Hoffman

Hoffman's years of service on the executive board of WMU SBC, coincided with that of Wanda Lee, executive director emerita and president emerita of national WMU. They were members of the executive board – Hoffman representing Louisiana and Lee representing Georgia – before serving as national officers.

From 1996 until 2000, Hoffman served as recording secretary and Lee as president of WMU, SBC. Then from 2000 until 2005, Hoffman served as president and Lee as executive director-treasurer, a role Lee held until her retirement in 2016.

"Janet's profound wisdom and grace were instrumental during many years of great change as she led with passion and a steadfast commitment to engaging the church in missions," Lee reflected. "Janet was a tremendous blessing to me personally and to WMU. She provided the wise and seasoned leadership that WMU needed at that precise time. Hers is a life truly well-lived, a life that reflected a love for the Lord and for others."

Hoffman inspired Christ followers to live missionally, challenged churches to prioritize the Great Commission, and helped shape strategic conversations about the future of WMU ministry.

"My first encounter with Janet was a leadership lesson I've never forgotten," reflected Sandy Wisdom-Martin, executive director-treasurer of WMU, SBC. "It was the summer of 1991 at WMU Week at Glorieta, New Mexico. During an evening session, participants were invited to visit with one another. Janet could have conversed with honored dignitaries nearby. She chose to invest her time in me. You can't imagine how that made a brand-new state WMU staffer feel. Janet interacted with everyone without regard to position, prestige or platform. She had a gift for finding the one in need of her encouragement."

Known for her thoughtful leadership and sincere love for people, Hoffman reminded others that following Christ begins with intimacy with Him through prayer and His Word and overflows into faithful service to others.

Reflecting upon her life, Hoffman once wrote: "God has blessed me with prayers and missions mentors all my life; and I have come to understand that He wants to use the gifts He has given me to bless others. He has used every experience in my

See HOFFMAN, page 11



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Mohler from page 7

churches, and we're talking about the preaching of the Word of God, when it comes to the office, comprehensive, when it comes to the function, specified. I have carefully crafted this language."

"I want us to say, I think we want to say, truths consistent with what Baptists have believed going all the way back to the 17th century," he continued. "But it's because we believe those Baptists got it right according to Scripture. This is one of those moments when the Southern Baptist Convention can get it right, state it clearly, we adopt this amendment, we come back next year and happily, cooperatively, do it together, and we stand upon the authority of God's Word. We stand for truth. Yes, and that truth produces the unity of our Convention."

"The words are simple," he said. "They are straight-

forward. I believe this is where Southern Baptists stand, and we have come to Orlando by the providence of God to stand here."

OPPOSITION

Doug Mize, messenger and pastor with First Baptist Church, Greer, South Carolina, spoke against the amendment, noting the position of the SBC already was clear. He emphasized that he remains opposed to the SBC churches employing female lead pastors, co-pastors or preachers.

"Let me remind you that we've got zero lead (women) pastors, co-pastors in the Southern Baptist Convention at this moment," he said. "We're going to keep voting them out if they do, but this is over and beyond the reach that we need to have."

"We're going to be consistent," he said. "That's why this keeps getting

voted down year after year. We've already said it's in our Baptist Faith and Message.

"You know, Jesus mentioned that for the leaders of the spiritual Pharisees of that day, that they were tithing their spices, their cumin, but they were neglecting other issues like mercy and justice and faithfulness," he said. "So, let's not do that, let's be consistent, let's not strain out the gnat, swallow a camel."

SUPPORT

Colin Smothers, a messenger and pastor with First Baptist Church, Maize, Kansas, spoke in favor of the amendment.

"This amendment is not complicated," he said. "The need for it is not complicated. We need to for the SBC Constitution to specify that cooperating churches do not act to affirm, appoint or endorse a woman serving in the office or function of a pastor, elder, overseer, specifically

preaching to the assembled congregation.

"That is faithful to Scripture," he continued. "It is also faithful to the BF&M, which is the doctrinal foundation for our cooperation."

"The culture is attacking gender on all fronts,"

Missionaries from page one

rity concerns.

During a time of testimony, the Sassards shared that they met while serving as journeymen with the IMB three years ago. Then they moved to New Orleans (for Justin Sassard to attend New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary) and joined Harvest Church.

"Our call to missions comes out of biblical preaching and discipleship within the churches we grew up in," Meredith Sassard said. "Our love for the church grew overseas and while in New Orleans for seminary, our church in New Orleans, Harvest Church, is sending us out, and they are here with us today."

he said. "We can hardly turn to the right or the left without finding confusion about gender. What better way to express our countercultural commitment to the goodness of God's Word than to affirm God's creation order related to the office of pastor."

Justin Sassard added, "We desire to go to Spain to plant and strengthen churches in a place where there are so few biblical churches. Please pray for us as we make this transition."

Andrew Hanna, pastor with Harvest Church, expressed his appreciation for the Sassards.

During their time with the New Orleans church plant, Justin Sassard served as a small group leader and completed the Shepherd's Institute, the church's leadership track for those who desire to serve as a pastor or be sent out as a missionary, Hanna shared.

See MISSIONARIESS, page 14

Since 2019, Louisiana Baptists have followed this Biblical template and practical truth:

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS LIKE THIS...

A MAN SCATTERS SEED
ON THE GROUND...

"... he sends for the sickle because the harvest has come."

Mark 4:29, HCSB

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2026 Crossover Orlando yields 1,077 decisions for Christ

By Staff
Baptist Message

ORLANDO, Fla. (LBM) – Evangelistic efforts that preceded the Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting resulted in 1,077 new believers, topping 2025 Crossover Dallas, where 711 first-time salvation decisions were recorded.

It was the first time that

Crossover salvation numbers exceeded a thousand since 2018, when 1,015 salvation decisions were documented (another 3,214 salvation decisions were recorded in 2018 during a related Harvest America Crusade by Greg Laurie).

CROSSOVER TALLIES

2024 – 185 (Indianapolis)
2023 – 336 (New Orleans)

2022 – 574 (Anaheim)
2021 – 176 (Nashville)
2020 – pandemic
2019 – 364 (Birmingham)

LOCAL OUTREACH

According to the North American Mission Board, 554 churches participated in 2026 Crossover Orlando, June 1-7, with 3,940 volunteers who shared the Gospel with 19,905 people.



Preston Nix photo

Ninth grade students in Orlando, Florida, prayed with New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary/Leavell College students, who led them to Jesus.

Evangelistic efforts included sports tournaments, prison outreaches, student rallies, block parties, door-to-door witnessing, compassion projects and more.

LOUISIANA PRESENCE

Seventy students and professors from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (including undergraduates with Leavell College), Southeastern

Baptist Theological Seminary (including Judson College undergraduates), and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (including Texas College undergraduates) participated in evangelism classes each morning and in the afternoon shared the Gospel door-to-door around the city.

The NOBTS combined contingent had 17 students

See CROSSOVER, page 16

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2026 SBC Annual Meeting highlights

By Staff
Baptist Message

ORLANDO, Fla. (LBM) -- Southern Baptist Convention messengers and guests gathered June 9-10 in Orlando, Florida, to conduct business, elect officers, enjoy times of fellowship, receive updates on mission work done by Southern Baptists across the world and hear inspirational messages.

NOLA NAMED 2034 SITE

Messengers learned that

New Orleans was chosen as the host site for the 2034 SBC Annual Meeting, June 13-14. Other future sites named include Houston, Texas, 2030; Anaheim, Calif., 2032 and 2037; and Indianapolis, Ind., 2035.

Next year's annual meeting will be held in Indianapolis, June 15-16.

ELECTIONS

Registration secretary Don Currence reported this year's meeting made history with nine votes, including

the Pastors Conference, representing "52,794 ballots that the team of 55 people counted the last three days."

-- Willy Rice (pastor, Calvary Baptist Church, Clearwater, Florida), was elected SBC president after defeating Josh Powell (pastor, Taylors First Baptist Church, South Carolina) received 5,217 votes (57.56 percent) to Powell's 3,821 votes (42.16 percent).

-- Craig Carlisle (director of missions, Etowah Baptist Association, Gadsden, Alabama) was elected first vice-president in a runoff vote, defeating Paul Purvis (pastor, Mission Hill Church, Temple Terrace, Florida). Carlisle received 3,338 votes (65.92 percent) to Purvis' 1,719 votes (33.95 percent). The other candidate in the earlier election was Larry Helms (pastor with Fort Lawn Baptist Church, Fort Lawn, South Carolina).

-- Allen Murray (pas-

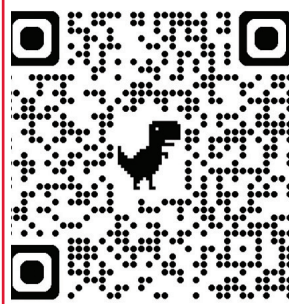


VAN PAYNE/THE BAPTIST PAPER photo

Southern Baptist Convention officers elected during the 2026 Annual Meeting in Orlando, Florida, are Don Currence, registration secretary; Allen Murray, 2nd vice president; Willy Rice, president; Craig Carlisle, 1st vice president; and Travis Kerns, recording secretary.

Firment, Edmonds, Johnson carry key legislation for Louisiana churches

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See HIGHLIGHTS, page 16

Once Upon a Time ...

What comes to mind when you hear those words?

It usually means it's story time! It may be familiar or it may take you someplace you've never imagined.

Jesus told many parables, or "heart stories", intended not for entertainment but for enlightenment. Many of these parables dealt with issues related to the conditions of our hearts that often dealt with the stewardship, or management of our time, talents, and treasure.

In many ways, your life is a story of stewardship that unfolds day by day. Your schedule, your priorities, your language, your budget all tell a story that provides a window to your heart – to what's important to you. Your story is tied to your heart, and your heart is tied to your treasure (See Matthew 6:21).

This summer, invite God into your story. Ask Him to show you how to include others in the story He's telling in your life. Ask how He can include you in the story of His blessings in another person's life. When we share

our possessions, we become a conduit and partner in God's generosity to bless others.

TO LEARN MORE

about **Biblical stewardship and financial discipleship**, visit LouisianaBaptists.org/stewardship or contact Rhea Fix at rhea@compassfinancialministry.org.



Rhea Fix is the Executive Director for Compass Financial Ministry serving Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and West Tennessee.



Louisiana Baptist Convention seeks resolutions, nominees

By Staff
Baptist Message

ALEXANDRIA, La. (LBM) — Louisiana Baptists are invited to recommend candidates to serve on state convention boards and committees and are asked to submit resolutions for possible

consideration by messengers during the 2026 Louisiana Baptist Convention.

COMMITTEES

The Louisiana Baptist Committee on Committees is beginning its work to fill 17 openings on five committees: Credentials; Moral and

Social Concerns; Nominations; Order of Business; and Resolutions. Nominations should be sent no later than Aug. 10 to Joseph Fowler, pastor, Cook Baptist Church, Ruston, who is the committee chair (email: joseph@cookbc.org; U.S. Mail: Dr. Joseph Fowler, Cook Baptist Church, 2000 Cooktown

Road, Ruston, LA 71270).

BOARDS

The Louisiana Baptist Committee on Nominations also is beginning its work to fill 24 vacancies on the LBC Executive Board as well as the trustee bodies of the Louisiana Christian University, Louisiana Baptist Children's Home and Family Ministries, Baptist Message, and Baptist Foundation.

Nominations should be sent no later than Aug. 10 to Scott McKenzie, associate pastor, First Baptist Church, Zachary, who is the committee chair (email: smcKenzie@fbcz.org; U.S. Mail: Rev. Scott McKenzie, First Baptist Church, 4200 Main, Zachary, LA 70791).

scheduled for October 20, and submissions are requested to be sent as early as possible for consideration. Resolutions may be submitted for review and consideration, no more than 90 days and no fewer than 15 days prior to the LBC annual meeting, Nov. 10, providing a window of opportunity from Aug. 12 through Oct. 26.

All statements should be typewritten, titled, and dated, and accompanied by a letter — from a church qualified to send a messenger to the annual meeting of the Louisiana Baptist Convention — certifying that the person submitting the resolution is a member in good standing. The letter should include complete contact information for both the person submitting it and his or her church.

BOTH

Please submit the candidate's name and identify the committee or board for which you are nominating him or her and include information about the nominee's church membership and current employment.

No more than the pastor and two members from any church may serve on all boards and committees, combined, at any one time. Likewise, no more than one member of the same church may serve on the same board or committee at any one time.

RESOLUTIONS

The first Committee on Resolutions meeting is

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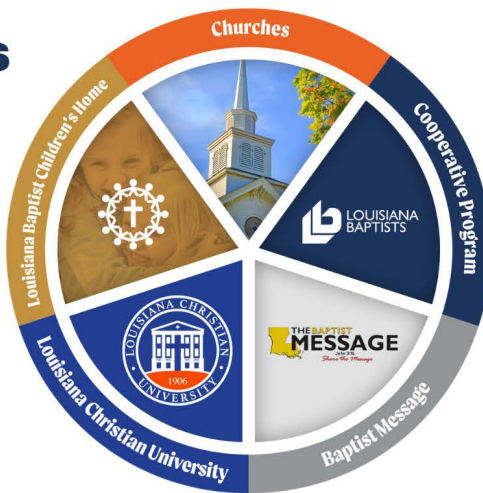
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Pastor Johnny Morgan
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johnny@obedience2death.com
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Where tradition meets faith.





In Orlando, Florida, International Mission Board President Paul Chitwood joined the stage with some of the new missionaries being sent by Southern Baptists to the nations. Others could not be photographed due to security concerns.

Hoffman from page 6

life to prepare me for some kind of ministry opportunity which came later. His faithfulness through the valleys as well as the mountain tops has been constant. He uses my many weaknesses to reveal His might and power. I am just one willing vessel who is privileged to be a missions advocate and hopefully a relational bridge builder within WMU and beyond. As the beneficiary of prayers of our WMU family, I am blessed with the Lord's incredible presence, peace and joy!

She enjoyed writing, painting, public speaking,

drama, reading, counted cross-stitch, sewing, fishing and golf.

Left to cherish her memory are her children: Shelda Hoffman Reeves (Dennis), Bullard, Texas; Rev. Bill Hoffman (Terri), St. Joe, Ark.; and Rev. Jeffrey Hoffman (Angela), Hornbeck, La.; grandchildren: Darla Hoffman O'Brien, Shreveport, La.; James Cooke (Monica), Austin, Texas; Lauren Hoffman Jennings (Aaron), St. Joe, Ark.; and Dr. Madison Hoffman Thrower (Chase), Mobile, Ala.; four great-grandsons: Joseph Cooke, Noah Cooke,

Benjamin Cooke, and Charlie Cooke, Austin, Texas; and great-granddaughter Haddie Jennings, St. Joe, Ark.

A service honoring Hoffman's life was held by Evergreen Baptist Church, Bernice with Rev. Roger Johnson officiating. Burial followed in Evergreen Baptist Church Cemetery under the direction of Owens Memorial Chapel Funeral Homes of Ruston, La.

Memorials may be made to the Wanda Lee Joy Fund, c/o WMU Foundation, 100 Missionary Ridge, Birmingham, AL 35242.

Apologetics from page 3

been blindly accepted without question", especially because she based her conclusion largely on the absence of some pottery instead of the presence of what she and Garstang both had found.

NOTE: Kenyon did not find any imported Cypriot Bichrome ware, a distinctive red-and-black painted pottery that in the region is a diagnostic marker for the Late Bronze I period (the timeframe when Israel conquered the city). Based on the lack of this one pottery type, she concluded the site was abandoned before the biblical timeline for the Israelite conquest – even though all the other evidence (collapsed walls, widespread charred ruins, etc.) fit the Bible's account about Jericho's fall.

Wood, who also has degrees in nuclear engineering (M.S.) and Syro-Palestinian Archaeology (Ph.D.), based his assessment on the pottery Garstang and Kenyon recovered in each layer of earth and concluded

ed that "the hard evidence" from both "favors a model in which the Bible should be treated as a valid historical source for this time period."

CHOOSE TRUTH

Paul wrote the Thessalonians about the lawlessness that "is already at work," and described how the unrighteous prefer a lie rather than receive the truth and be saved. Unfortunately, such "pleasure in unrighteousness" continues today, especially among those who even pervert science to attack the truth because that truth is stated in God's Word (2 Thessalonians 2:5-12).

Moreover, Jesus declared "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" (John 14:6), and that "the truth shall set you free" (John 8:32).

So, regardless of the controversy or attack, rest assured you can stand firm in the Person and the Word of Truth. And in this matter, you can believe that Jericho's walls came tumbling down just as the Bible says!

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Resolutions from page 4

ministry” and that they have “labored faithfully in churches to advance the gospel across the generations.”

— **On the Church’s Opportunity for Evangelism, Discipleship, and Care for Persons with Disabilities and Their Families** urges churches to “develop or expand plans for inclusion of children, youth, and adults with disabilities.”

— **On Assisted Suicide and the Sanctity of Life** calls upon pastors, churches and families to provide “compassionate, faithful presence to those who are suffering both physically and mentally, offering emotional, spiritual, and practical care that reflects the love of Christ and affirms the value of every life, even in its most fragile stages.”

— **On Political Violence and Speech** asks Southern Baptists to commit to “live as ambassadors for Christ and peacemakers in a divided world, proclaiming the [G]ospel of reconciliation as the only true hope for individuals, churches, and nations until Christ returns as the Prince of Peace.”

— **On Immigration, Human Dignity, and the Rule of Law** encourages Southern Baptists to “strengthen faithful [G]ospel ministry among immigrants and refugees, and seek one another’s good through shared civic values, practical service, and

Christ-centered community as we proclaim the [G]ospel to people from every tribe, tongue, and nation.”

— **On Finishing Well in Life and Ministry** encourages pastors and ministry leaders to persevere in “faithful endurance.”

— **On the Office and Function of Pastor/Elder/Overseer** calls pastors to “teach and uphold the biblical pattern of church leadership, which includes exemplifying the qualifications of godly character and conduct prescribed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.”

— **On Antisemitism** calls on Southern Baptists to “combat antisemitism in our churches and communities through biblical teaching, personal friendship with Jewish neighbors, courageous public witness, and prayer for the peace of Jerusalem and the salvation of Israel.”

— **On the Nature and Importance of the Physically Gathered Church in a Digital Age** affirms responsible use of digital technology and platforms as an aid to ministry and recognizes that these tools “cannot fulfill the biblical functions of the gathered church, cannot replace the personal ministry of pastors and members, and should be used to support and encourage connection to the embodied life of a faithful local church.”



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Motions from page 4

- Jonathan Helvoigt, Colorado: NAMB's 10 largest payments to independent contractors
- Wade Thomas, Kentucky: NAMB's 2020-2025 legal costs
- John Jones, Missouri: IMB's vaccine policies
- Malcolm Yarnell, Texas: report on theological errors (LifeWay and seminaries)

SBC PRESIDENT

- Brandon Watkins, Michigan: task force about conversions to Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- Joseph Dugger, Tennessee: future annual SBC Pastors' Conference contracts
- Robbie Gibson, North Carolina: amend Article 3, Paragraph 1 of the SBC Constitution
- Jacob Eaton, Missouri: task force on SBC trust, accountability and transparency
- Jonathan Greer, Mississippi: amend SBC bylaw 8, section C, subsection 3
- Rhett Burns, South

- Carolina: amend SBC Business & Financial Plan (other financial contributions)
- Gregory Mathis, Kentucky: amend SBC Bylaw 8, Section A
- Michael Clary, Kentucky: amend SBC Bylaw 15

POSTPONED

- Tiffany Helms, South Carolina: pastor's wives ministry task force
- Garrison Griffith, Louisiana: seminary students' vocational intent task force
- Jared Long, Georgia: study committee on women in ministry leadership
- Ed Willoughby, Missouri: biblical arbitration and reconciliation task force
- Casey Williams, South Carolina: Baptist Faith & Message 2000 task force
- John Knudsen, Missouri: messenger engagement task force
- Matt Dunn, Missouri: messenger support of Israel task force
- Jarry Watts, Mississippi: task force on responsibilities, functions and requirements of entity trustees

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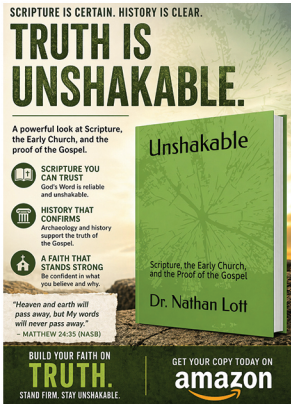
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Missionaries

from page 7

Meanwhile, Meredith Sassard has been a teacher in the Phoebe Track, the church's leadership development track for women, he explained.

"We couldn't be happier to send Justin and Meredith Sassard," Hanna told the Baptist Message. "We've prayed that God would give us the opportunity to send our best and the Sassards are some of the best, most faithful members of Harvest. They love the church, they love the lost and most importantly they love Jesus."

IMB President Paul Chitwood said now is the time for more Southern Baptists to answer God's call to the nations.

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SEEKING A FULL OR BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR
Little Pass Baptist Church, Charenton, La. is seeking a full-time or bi-vocational pastor. Send résumés to: Little Pass Baptist Church, Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 326, Charenton, La. 70523 or email to: sherri@lpbc.brcoxmail.com (Attention: Warren Guidry)

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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

- Sophie, husband Caleb, Turner is the new assistant BCM Director at LSUA.
- Meagan Shedman Adkins is the new BCM Director For the uptown schools in New Orleans, which includes Tulane, Loyola, and Xavier.
- Whit (wife Lauren) Mcgee is the new youth minister at Bonita Road Baptist Church, Bastrop.
- Michael, wife Carlota, resigned from Kingston Baptist Church, Kingston to become pastor at Belle Park Baptist Church, Haughton.
- Marvin Cooper resigned from Bethany Baptist Church, Bethany to become pastor at Longstreet Baptist Church, Longstreet.
- Doug Merrick is the interim pastor at New Bethel Baptist Church, Plain Dealing.
- Darrell Robertson has retired as music minister at Trinity Heights Baptist Church, Shreveport.
- On page 15 of the May 28th Louisiana Baptist Message, it states Kevin Woodson was the new worship pastor at Judson Baptist Church, Walker. He is NOT! Judson has not hired a new worship pastor. The Message apologizes for the confusion.

HOMECOMING

- Antioch Baptist Church, Farmerville: 127th Homecoming, June 28, Antioch will celebrate its 127th Homecoming as a church and the 250th anniversary of our great nation's independence. Pastor: Rubin Weaver.
- Thompson Road Baptist Church, Slidell: 19th Anniversary, July 5, 11 a.m. Dinner on the grounds will follow the worship service at noon. The church will provide the meat. Please sign up for sides and desserts. Pastor: Randy Boyett.
- Centerville Baptist Church, St. Landry: 100th Anniversary Celebration, July 26, Sunday School, 9:30 a.m., Worship service 10:30 a.m. with dinner on the grounds to follow. Pastor: Jacob Guillory.
- Trinity Baptist Church, Lake Charles: 100th Anniversary Celebration, August 2026. Pastor: David Rose.
- Macedonia Baptist Church, Effie: 125th Homecoming, September 20, 10 a.m. Dinner on the grounds will follow worship services. Pastor: Adam Thornton.

REVIVAL

- Richey Baptist Church, Deville: Revival, June 21-24, Sunday 6 p.m., Monday-Wednesday 7 p.m. Evange-

- list Scotty McDowell. Pastor: Grady Dodge.
- Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Winnfield: Harvest Sunday, July 5. Evangelist Scotty McDowell.
- Bogalusa Unity Revival, July 5, 12, 19, 26, 6 p.m. Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, Speaker: Josh Powell. July 5. Monroe Street Baptist Church, Speaker: Scott Breland. Westside Emmanuel Baptist Church, Jul 19, Speaker Clay Norwood. Lee's Creek Baptist Church, July 26 (Evangelistic night with James Pritchard, FBC Lafayette.
- Madison Baptist Association: Revival and Worship, July 12-15, 7 p.m. Sunday evening fish fry at 5:30 p.m. and each night service starts at 7 p.m. Sunday-Monday, First Baptist Church, Tallulah Tuesday-Wednesday, Wavery Baptist Church, Delhi. Evangelist: Rubin Weaver. Worship: Tim Post.
- Crossroads Baptist Church, Tullos: Revival, July 12-15. Evangelist Scotty McDowell.
- Indian Mound Baptist Church, Greenwell Springs: Revival, July 12-15. Evangelist: Bill Britt. Pastor: Dwayne Rogers.
- First Baptist Church, Keithville: Harvest Sunday, July 19. Evangelist: Bill Britt. Pastor: Mike Stowell.
- Palestine Baptist Church, Grant: Revival July 19-22. Evangelist Scotty McDowell. Worship: The Mackey Willis Family. Pastor: Hardy Estes.
- First Baptist Church, Princeton: Harvest Sunday. July 26. Evangelist: Bill Britt. Pastor: Darrell Cooper.
- Victory Baptist Church, Hammond: Next Generation Sunday, July 26, 6 p.m. There will be food afterward. Speakers Camdyn Divincent, Logan Watts. Worship Bailey Watts, Kendyk Ortego and Isabel Fitch and Victory Ensemble. An offering will be received to go towards Arise 2027., astor: Jonathan Watts.
- Welcome Home Baptist Church, Columbia: Revival, July 26-29. Evangelist Scotty McDowell. Pastor: Charles Wesley.
- First Baptist Church, Marion: Revival, August 2-5. Evangelist Scotty McDowell. Pastor: Bubba Hoggatt.

LAGNIAPPE

- DaySpring Baptist Church, Ruston: Seeking a song leader/pianist. Please send your resumes to 3191 S Vienna St., Ruston LA 71270-9605. Call 318.255.2119 for more information. Pastor: Ken Weaver.
- Riverview Baptist Church, Alexandria: Karen Peck and New River in concert, June 27, 7 p.m. Pastor: David Newton.
- First Baptist Church, Anacoco: Faith, Family and Freedom Festival, June 27, 11 a.m. Special Guests: Cochran and Co., The Isaacs, Pastor: Chad King.
- Blood River Baptist Church, Albany: Independence Day Celebration, June 27, 7 p.m. There will be food, homemade ice cream, water slide

- and games. Fireworks will takeplace at 9 p.m. Pastor: Scott Cooksey.
- First Baptist Church, Converse: The Southern Plainsmen in concert, June 28, 10:45 a.m. Pastor: Brian Rankin.
- Pioneer Baptist Church, Pioneer: Fourth of July Celebration, June 28, directly following morning worship. There will be food and fellowship in honor of America's 250th anniversary. Pastor: None
- Calvary Baptist Church, Springhill: Celebrate America's 250th Birthday, June 28, 10:45 a.m. morning patriotic service, 5 p.m. Evening Service will begin at 5 p.m. with a fish fry, homemade ice cream, waterslide and games. Pastor: John David Franklin.
- First Baptist Church, Covington: Celebrate Freedom, July 1, 7-9 p.m. FBC Covington is celebrating 250 years of America with worship, prayer, fireworks, and ice cream! For more information, visit fbccov.org/events. Pastor: Waylon Bailey.
- Ridge Avenue Baptist Church, West Monroe: America Bless God Rally. 250th Birthday Celebration, July 2, 6-8 p.m. Join them for a time of prayer, praise, purpose and passion. Pastor: Jim Wolfe.
- Goldonna Baptist Church. Goldonna: Fourth of July Celebration, July 3. There will be fireworks and ice cream. Pastor: Ben Dupree.
- Trinity Baptist Church, Lake Charles: Fireworks at the Family Place, July 3, 6-9 p.m. Come celebrate the Fourth a day early with free fireworks, food, and fun for the whole family. No tickets, no cost - just bring your people. Pastor: David Rose.
- South Winnfield Baptist Church,

- Winnfield: Fourth of July Celebration, July 4, 4 p.m.-9 p.m. There will be food, games, Bouncey Obstacle, Snowcone truck, and supper will follow at 5 p.m. followed by bingo.
- Cedarcrest Baptist Church, Baton Rouge: Greg Sullivan Ministries in concert, July 5, 10:30 p.m. Pastor: Bruce Worrell.
- Elwood Baptist Church, Forest Hill: VBS - Let's illuminate Jesus, July 6-9, 8:30 a.m. - noon. Family Night, July 10, 6:30 p.m. Contact Michael Evans at 318.308.3596. Pastor: Michael Evans.
- Jerusalem Baptist Church, Hammond: Youth Garage Sale, July 9 - 11, 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sale will close at 2 p.m. on the 11th. Pastor: J.P. Handy
- Sweetwater Baptist Church, Quitman: Joseph Haberdank, July 11, 6 p.m. Pastor: Wilton Wall.
- Macedonia Baptist Church, Oak Grove: Jason Runnels in concert, July 12, 10:30 a.m. Pastor: Jon Cox.
- Wilda Baptist Church, Boyce: Jason Runnels in concert, July 12, 6 p.m. Pastor: Joey Rudisill.
- Laurel Hill Baptist Church, Leesville: Jonathanandjongideoncausey

- in concert. July 18, 5 p.m. Pastor: Dustin Wilson.
- Calvary Baptist Church, Springhill: The Southern Plainsmen in concert, July 19, 10:45 a.m. Pastor: John Franklin.
- Liberty Baptist Church, Marion: The Southern Plainsmen in concert, July 26, 10 a.m. A love offering will be received. Pastor: Jay McCallum.
- Riverview Baptist Church, Alexandria: An evening with Legacy Five, August 1, 6 p.m. Pastor: David Newton.
- Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Pollock: The Southern Plainsmen Quartet in concert, August 2, 11 a.m. Pastor: Jack Powell.
- French Corner Baptist Church, Ponchatoula: Fifth Sunday Revival, August 2, 11 a.m. Worship: The Southern Plainsmen Quartet. Pastor: Eric Hattaway.
- Hargis Baptist Church, Montgomery: The Hootens in concert. August 8, 6 p.m. Pastor: Doug James.
- Crews New Salem Baptist Church, Montgomery: The Hootens in concert, August 9, 1 p.m. Pastor: Alton Cooper. p.m. Pastor: Reggie Bridges.

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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 mkya akrtma uhghwwzes ktkzsya amh weul.

dhuhizkm achsan-hztma:yzjahhs

Clues:
H = E; A = T

Answer to May 28, Scripture Crypto:
Numbers twenty-two:twenty-eight

CROSSOVER from page 8

along with evangelism professors Preston Nix and Jeff Farmer. By the end of the week, the NOBTS team knocked on 1,366 doors and had 161 Gospel conversations that resulted in 28 decisions to follow Christ.

“For me as an evange-

lism professor, it is a thrill because our students are applying what they have been taught and some have either never led someone to Christ or not done it in a long time,” Nix told the Baptist Message. “They catch it and want to take it back to their

churches.”

Among the most memorable moments for Nix was when a NOBTS group led six people to Christ as they were making their way from a “drop off” spot to the neighborhood where they were assigned to visit door to door.

“The students kept sharing with people, and seeing a number of those people

accept Christ,” Nix said. “I tell students to be aware of people around them who are outside when they are doing door-to-door evangelism. What a joy it was to see our students apply what they learned from my class and having some of them overcome their fear of sharing the Gospel. They are answers to my prayers because they are laborers for the harvest.”

For his part, Mike Mitchell, associate pastor, New Life Church, DeRidder, worked with seven other NLCD members to help canvass 1,000 homes in Alturas, Florida, where Calvary Baptist Church, Winter Haven, Florida, is planning to launch a congregation in the next year. The following day Mitchell and his team

served at a block party, and Mitchell preached to the CBCWH congregation, whose pastor is Mitchell’s brother, Shane.

“From a personal note, being able to see my brother have a successful event and be able to bless and support him in a time when there is so much work going on was a lot of fun,” he said. “This local church that was overwhelmed three years ago is now excited about reaching this massive group of people moving into an area that is rapidly growing.”

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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. Now scheduling for 2026-27. Call or email to schedule your event

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Highlights from page 9

tor, Mount Pisgah Baptist Church, Supply, North Carolina) was elected second vice-president in a run-off vote, defeating Ethan Jago (pastor, 5 Bridges Church, Panama City Beach, Florida. He received 2,342 votes (55.38 percent) to Jago’s 1,876 votes (44.36 percent). The other candidate in the earlier election was Austin Rouse (pastor of families and students, Southern Heights Baptist Church, Russellville, Kentucky).

-- Travis Kerns (associational mission strategist, Three Rivers Baptist Association, Taylors, South Carolina) was elected recording secretary in a run-off vote, defeating George Schroeder (pastor, First Baptist Church, Fairfield, Texas). He received 2,966 votes (51.76 percent) to Schroeder’s 2,758 votes (48.14 percent). The other candidate in the earlier election was Jonathan Greer (pastor, Franklin Creek Baptist Church, Moss Point, Mississippi).

-- Currence (administrative pastor, First Baptist Church, Ozark, Mo.), was unopposed and re-elected as registration secretary.

MESSENGER COUNT

The Annual Meeting drew 11,692 messengers, including 440 from Louisiana. Recent messengers counts:

- 2025 (Dallas, Texas), 10,599
- 2024 (Indianapolis, Indiana), 10,946
- 2023 (New Orleans), 12,737
- 2022 (Anaheim, California), 8,133
- 2021 (Nashville, Tennessee), 15,726

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