

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

Staff Updates

Pastor Anniversaries

Billy Sutton	2008	Redeemer Community
Raymond Wilkinson	2014	Open Road
Steve Petty	2014	Pinecroft
Doug Graham	2017	New Bethel
Bill Stewart	2017	Caddo Prairie
Randy Zeigler	2021	South Bossier

Staff Changes

Eastwood: Brian Watson, Music, to First Baptist Lafayette, LA
Haynes Avenue: Eric Zimmer, Pastor, from Interim
Pilgrim Home: Gary Johnson, Interim Pastor
Red River: Stephen Craver, Interim Pastor

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E-mail: carlene@nwlba.org
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[www.Facebook.com/NWLBA](https://www.facebook.com/NWLBA)
Hours: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm/Mon-Thur.
8:30 am - 12:00 noon/Friday
Lane Moore, Director of Missions

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A Resolution of Pastoral Prayer Support



was presented to Pam Gras, from Congressman Mike Johnson's office. All pastors present at the November Executive Board meeting signed the pledge to pray for the new Speaker of the House. The document was sent to his Washington office.



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PER PERSON

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2024
JANUARY 19-21

WINTER CAMP FOR STUDENTS FROM GRADES 6TH -12TH

MERRY CHRISTMAS
from the Staff at Northwest Louisiana Baptist Association



**JANUARY 26-28
2024**



KIDS WINTER CAMP
FOR GRADES
2ND - 6TH

REGISTER YOUR GROUP @
WWW.BETHANYC3.COM
318-938-1221

\$85
PER PERSON

Staff Opportunities

PASTOR	MUSIC	YOUTH	CHILDREN	OTHER
Ford Park - Bi-Vo Pilgrim Home - Bi-Vo Red River - Bi-Vo Shreve City - Bi-Vo Westlake - Bi-Vo	Ferry Lake - PT Greenwood - PT Lakeview - PT Westwood - PT	Belle Park - PT North Keithville - PT Plain Dealing - PT/FT Princeton FBC - PT Westwood - PT Vivian FBC - FT	Belcher - PT Ferry Lake - PT	FBC Blanchard - Hourly Nursery Workers New Birth - Children's Church - Volunteer

Northwest Louisiana Baptist Association

Baptist News

Churches, Missions &
Ministries Working
Together To Be
More Effective

VOLUME 53, NUMBER 12
DECEMBER 2023



This Christmas Season
Help People Find What They Really Need

You've probably thought it, if not said it out loud, "America seems to be coming apart at the seams! Why is everyone so unhappy and angry about everything?"

A few weeks ago, Gerald Baker, a Wall Street Journal writer, who I doubt is a follower of Christ, summarized our reality by stating, "If we are losing, it's because we are losing our soul, our sense of purpose as a society, our identity as a civilization. We in the West are in the grip of an ideology that disowns our genius, denounces our success, disdains merit, elevates victimhood, embraces societal self-loathing and enforces it all in a web of exclusionary and authoritarian rules, large and small." Even at Christmas time, this is our America when millions of people tell God He is not needed any longer! Secular Humanism rules the day.

If people are dissatisfied with their lives and want things to change, how do they respond? Would they even know the first step? People must sense a great need for change in their lives for real spiritual transformation to happen. That's where the Church comes in. Normally people have already tried several times to change themselves, but have been powerless to do so.

At the end of this month, millions of people will make New Year's resolutions and promise themselves and others they're going to "turn over a new leaf" in some area of their lives. They desire to stop some type of addiction, a bad or destructive habit, or any number of lifestyle issues they need to change. This can involve several areas:

1. Problems with self-image. This issue is destroying young people today, and much of it is driven from social media. The self imposed power to change your body or gender is the latest in a long line of identity issues. In the old days, the only bully you had to concern yourself with was the kid bigger than you at school. For today's young person, the bully could come from hundreds of online conversations. After the emotional damage is done, the question is, "Why would God want me? I'm worthless and no good."

2. Problems with uncontrolled behavior. People may have habits, reactions, addictions, or compulsions that they are unable to control. This behavior has so clouded their ability to see that freedom can come through Christ, they remain imprisoned and shackled to burdensome lifestyles.

3. Problems with relationships. These are interpersonal problems that arise from damaged or flawed relationships perhaps years or decades old: Friendship issues; Family issues; Workplace issues; and others. Unless God intervenes, these burdens will be carried for years. The Bible is full of examples of God supernaturally resolving issues like these, like the remarkable story of how God reunited an outcast named Joseph with his brothers who tried to kill him (Genesis 37-50).

4. Problems with their spiritual destiny. If trouble with the first three are happening, this one is sure to follow. Millions of people don't know their purpose in life and why they've been put on this planet. Survey after survey reveals this gnawing question, "Why was I born?" People crave to know their purpose in life, and where their destiny lies.

The local church, your church, is the hope of world,
because we carry the gospel message that will answer that question.

Invite someone to your church this month during the Christmas season. They could be going through one of these crises mentioned above and are waiting for you to help them find the healing answer that will bring them true joy and purpose, that is only found in the Great Physician!

You might be the reason someone has a genuinely Merry Christmas this year!

Lane

An editorial from your Association Director

“Go pick up a Bible and read it!”

The day after our Congressman Mike Johnson became Speaker of the House of Representatives, he gave his first official national interview to Sean Hannity of Fox News. Hannity probed the new Speaker on a variety of subjects attempting to answer the question Americans were asking, “Who is Mike Johnson?” Residents of northwest Louisiana already knew the answer!

When asked what does Mike Johnson believe, his answer to Hannity was, “I’m a Bible-believing Christian, go pick up a Bible off your shelf and read it. That’s my world view. That’s what I believe.” Mike further explained this was his “personal world view” as opposed to a “professional or political world view.” He added that not every personal world view transforms itself into the law of the land.

From a biblical world view perspective, the criticisms and denunciations of Mike are predictable. We live in highly partisan times, and the reality was that whoever was elevated to serve as Speaker of the House would be portrayed in the worst possible light. Charlie Kirk, founder of Turning Point, in describing the media’s reaction said, “Mike Johnson believes what nearly every Founding Father believed. This is not radical, fringe, or scary. His world view is the basis of our entire civilization, which is exactly why the media is trying to discredit and destroy it.” That would put Mike Johnson’s beliefs in the category of previous extremists like George Washington and John Adams.

During the twenty-two days in October when the House of Representatives saw candidate after candidate fall by the wayside, I kept thinking, “I’ve heard this story before.” My thoughts took me to I Samuel 16. As Saul was to be replaced as King of Israel, the prophet Samuel visited the house of Jesse in Bethlehem. All of Jesse’s sons were paraded in front of Samuel. Son after son after son went by the wayside. None were anointed. Samuel asked Jesse if that was all? Had he seen all of his sons? Jesse said his youngest was out in the field tending sheep. That of course was the future King David. I’m in no way suggesting we need to anoint Mike Johnson king of anything. The point is, how many times have we seen the plans of man be sidelined by God’s plan? But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as a man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” I Samuel 16:7

According to Neilson ratings, 3 million viewers watched the Hannity interview the night it aired. Since then, millions more have watched the interview online. It’s unknown what legislative accomplishments under Mike Johnson’s leadership will be achieved in the next 13 months of the 118th Congress. But what if thousands of curious Americans actually did decide to find out what Mike Johnson believes and *picked up a Bible and read it*? If that happens, the next 13 months could make an eternal difference in thousands of lives!

That may be far better for America than any bill Congress could pass.



Source: Hannity on Fox News



Source: The Guardian

LOTTIE MOON CHRISTMAS OFFERING DECEMBER 3-10, 2023

Even though lostness is not seasonal, during this Christmas season we turn our focus to supporting over 3,500 missionaries and their families to help push back the darkness in the world. Do your part in giving through your church to the annual Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. 100% of this offering goes to the funding of your missionaries.



THE BAPTIST FAITH & MESSAGE

What We Believe
as Southern Baptists

Following is another in our series on the Baptist Faith & Message 2000, with this month’s column.

Article IV-D: Our Glorified Bodies

“Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.”

As we learned in last month’s column, glorification is the means by which God fully reverses the effects of the Fall, purging sin its stain from the created order. It involves the return of Jesus, the future resurrection and judgement of people, and the creation of new heavens and a new earth.

The glory we experience now as Christ lives in us, and the glory we experience in death as our souls/spirits ascend into heaven, are partial works of glorification. But full glorification for followers of Jesus takes place when he calls our bodies from the grave and gives us incorruptible bodies similar to the body he displayed when he rose from the dead.

At the return of Christ, all who have died in the Lord are resurrected. Their souls/spirits, which are in heaven with Jesus, are reunited with their bodies, resulting in complete personal glorification. The body, soul, and spirit are fully conformed to the image of Christ and thus free of any effects of the Fall. Christians alive on earth at the return of Christ are instantly transformed as they are given glorified bodies, and at the same time, their souls/spirits are perfected as well.

While several New Testament passages describe the transformation to which all Christians may look forward, Paul gives us the most complete picture in I Corinthians 15. In verses 35-41, he uses three analogies from nature: seeds, flesh, and celestial bodies, to explain how God takes the bodies of deceased believers and prepares them for everlasting glory.

Our glorification in resurrection is not a lengthy process. Rather, Paul reveals to us a mystery: “We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.” (vv. 51-52) Whether we are raised from the dead or transformed as living Christians on earth into glorified believers, the promise of Christ’s return should cause us to rejoice, as Paul does. “But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!” (v.57)

CULTURE WATCH & SBC News

IMB Trustees Approve 72 New Missionaries

This Fall the International Mission Board approved the appointment of 72 full-time, fully-funded missionaries. IMB President, Paul Chitwood, highlighted \$194 million in gifts to the 2022-23 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, exceeding the \$190 million goal. Southern Baptists support gospel work in 122 countries and assist more than 3,500 missionaries and their families. *Source: IMB*



Wisconsin Town Bans Christmas Decorations

The town of Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, just west of Milwaukee, has said NO to an old fashion Christmas. City Hall officials have banned the colors of red and green along with any connotations of the religious holiday. Instead, City Hall recommended inclusive decorations like snowflakes, greenery and festive colors like blue and purple. “Snowmen” are banned as well, preferring the gender neutral “Snow people.” City Hall says this time of the year is about fostering respect and inclusivity and the only way to make that possible is to crack down on candy canes, yule logs and, of course, baby Jesus. *Source: Daily Mail. Com*



SBC Executive Committee Adopts Budget.

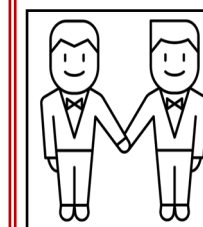
Discusses Financial Situation

During the third quarter of the fiscal year, Cooperative Budget Allocation receipts decreased by 3.48 percent compared to the same period last year, which amounted to a \$1,669,165 decrease in revenue. During the Fall meeting, interim president Jonathan Howe shared “roughly \$10 million of the EC’s investment funds had been used during the last two years.” This leaves the EC with a little more than \$4 million in investments. Previous reports indicate these funds have primarily been used for legal fees related to the handling of sexual abuse issues and concerns in Southern Baptist churches and organizations from the past 20 plus years. *Source: Baptist Press*



Pope: Church May Be Able To Bless Same-Sex Unions

Pope Francis said there “may be a way for the Church to bless same-sex unions” as he answered the questions of five conservative Cardinals who had urged the Pope to remain true to the Church’s historic views on



homosexuality. The Pope’s softened stance on the issue has given fuel to the debate between liberal and conservative leaders in the Roman Catholic church. Southern Baptist Theological Seminary President, Al Mohler, responding to the Pope’s statement said, “There is no way to bless same-sex unions or marriages without abandoning the Scripture, without abandoning the Christian tradition and without betraying the gospel of Jesus Christ.” *Source: WORLD News*