

“But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles ...”

— Isaiah 40:31 (KJV)

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February 23, 2017

Texas congregation escrows CP over concerns about direction of SBC

BY WILL HALL

Message Editor

PLANO, Texas (LBM) — Prestonwood Baptist Church has announced its decision to escrow gifts previously forwarded to support Southern Baptist cooperative missions and ministries while the congregation discusses concerns about the direction of the Southern Baptist Convention.

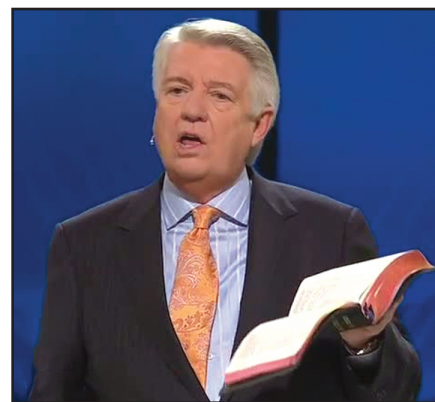
Mike Buster, executive pas-

tor for the Plano, Texas, church, provided a statement to the *Baptist Message* explaining that the action had been taken because of “various significant positions taken by the leadership of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission that do not reflect the beliefs and values of many in the Southern Baptist Convention” and that it is a temporary move “until a decision can be made on current and future funding.”

The decision impacts \$1 million the 41,000-member congregation would otherwise contribute through the Cooperative Program, Southern Baptists’ primary funding channel for support of state and national causes.

Russell Moore, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, has created tensions among Southern Baptists by sign-

See PRESTONWOOD on 10



Jack Graham, senior pastor at Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, Texas is concerned about direction of SBC.

Floodwaters lead to wave of baptisms

BY BRIAN BLACKWELL

Message Staff Writer

WELSH — The waters may have receded in Welsh six months ago but the excitement built since then at First Baptist Church has anything but subsided.

First came the rain — nearly 24 inches in a 24-hour period.

Soon after, the congregation began ministering to those hurting in its own area, paving the way for a spiritual harvest. Not only have they seen 13 baptisms since after the flood of August 2016 but

See WAVE on 4

Special evening enables attendees to shine



Five state churches host ‘Night to Shine’ proms

BY BRIAN BLACKWELL

Message Staff Writer

ALEXANDRIA — Tim Tebow helped give hundreds of special needs individuals in Louisiana Baptist churches the red carpet treatment Friday, Feb. 10.

Dressed in their formal attire, these special guests enjoyed a variety of activities to make them feel like kings and

queens in God’s eyes at the third annual Night to Shine prom.

Five Louisiana Baptist churches were among the 375 churches in 50 states and 11 countries that hosted the event, sponsored by the Tim Tebow Foundation. The former Heisman Trophy and NFL quarterback started the event three years ago for people who have special needs.

From the beginning, the evening was magical for the guests, who were transported by limousine, trolley or classic car to a red carpet. Once there, they were greeted by an enthusiastic group of volunteers armed with cameras and cheers

from the crowd.

Guests received the royal treatment, including hair and makeup stations, shoe shining areas, corsages and boutonnieres, a catered dinner, karaoke, prom favors and a dance floor.

All of this led up to the moment when each guest was crowned king or queen of the prom.

“This night is about you,” Tebow told the guests in a pre-recorded message before the big moment. “It is a night for you to shine.”

See SHINE on 9

Ellis: Find God & you'll find 'solid footing' in this world

BY HOLLY JO LINZAY
Regional Reporter

"For who is God besides the Lord? And who is a rock? Only our God."

II Samuel 22:32

PINEVILLE – Jesus is the "solid rock" that offers hope to those sinking in worldly quicksand, the keynote speaker told the women at the Kaleidoscope conference.

Captive to her own emptiness and pain fueled by a perpetual cycle of promiscuity and alcohol, Marian Jordan Ellis, the keynote speaker, told the attendees she knew what it felt like to have a God-shaped hole

in your soul.

"I was living in the world, and it was a total pit of destruction," Ellis recalled the time in her life when she lived a "sex-in-the-city" lifestyle.

Sitting in a bar at the age of 25, Ellis stared at an empty martini glass, and knew she was a desperate woman.

"In that bar, I cried out to Jesus. He is our rock. God is our hope," she said, adding that she had grown up in church without the knowledge that Jesus was the only one who could fill the "hole" in her soul.

"I grew up in church, and knew religion. But I didn't know Jesus," Ellis said to the 240 women present Feb. 4 at First Baptist Church in Pineville.

During the day-long conference, Ellis, the founder of Redeemed Girl Ministries based in San Antonio, Texas shared her testimony of how her brokenness turned to redemption through Christ. She went on to say how when attending Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, she went through some personal trials.



Doug Collier photos

Keynote speaker Marian Jordan Ellis (left) and Christian recording artist Octavia Williams (right) inspired participants at 2017 Kaleidoscope with their testimony and music.

"I transferred my hope from Jesus to another person. This man consumed me," Ellis recalled, adding that her boyfriend "broke up" with her after a year. It was during that time, she said, the "devil attacked" her spiritually, and she had to find her footing again on the "solid rock."

"God is the rock. He is a shield," Ellis said, adding that just like the old hymn, "Our hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood."

With the "forceful grace" of Christ, Ellis said she felt complete restoration, and that God brought some major changes to her life. At 38 years old, she

met and married a man who had two sons.

Last March, Ellis was traveling to one of her speaking engagements and feeling exhausted.

"I went to Web MD looking up flu or mono symptoms," she said, but ended up finding out at 42 years old, she was expecting her first baby.

Her baby girl, Sydney Jordan Ellis, was born Nov. 9, and the new edition to her family is such a blessing, Ellis said. "She's our little miracle."

Jan Russell, a member of Hill Baptist Church in Oak Grove, said hearing the testimony of Ellis confirms to her what God has been telling her.

"I'm a control freak, but I want to do everything God's way. I can't mess up what God's doing in my life if I give Him control. I realize my hope is not how organized I am. My hope is in Jesus, the solid rock," she said.

Octavia Williams, a Christian recording artist and worship leader at River Outreach Center in Pineville, shared how she went through a rough time after her mother passed away. To keep grief at a distance, she was saying "yes" to every ministry and board when asked to serve or to participate.

"I had lost my mind. I was taking prescriptions drugs from the doctor," Octavia said. She said she would take a Xanax, sleep three hours, and then take another prescription pill.

"I lost it one morning, sweaty palms, heart palpitations and confusing thoughts. This was a spiritual attack," recalled Octavia.

She took a stand, and with the Word of God fought back. "I didn't take Xanax. Instead I read the scripture. I did this Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, and then for three more

See FOOTING on 10

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True Love Waits — It still holds true today

“True love waits for what, dad?”

That was the question my son, who was a third grader at the time, asked after a True Love Waits event.

When my husband, Glen, was the National True Love Waits consultant for Lifeway he often led rallies and conferences as a part of his job. We traveled with him whenever possible.

It should have been no surprise, but my son’s question still caught us off guard.

Christian parents want to help their children to understand sexuality within the parameters of a Christian marriage and to teach their children about abstinence prior to marriage as the best choice.

The difficulty comes in deciding upon the best time to bring up the subject. At what age are children ready and able to understand the concept of sexual purity? How do we best equip parents and the ministers to students to effectively teach the biblical concept of abstinence to our teenagers?

I asked Richard Ross, one of the cofounders of the True Love Waits movement, for any insights that he could offer to better equip Louisiana Baptists to prepare our children and teenagers for success in pursuing a life of that honors God in the area of sexuality.

Ross said, “One shift since the earliest days of the [True Love Waits] campaign is a stronger emphasis on lifetime purity. We say less about ‘wait until your wedding night and more about purity in every season of life.’”

In our current culture,

children and teenagers are bombarded with ever increasing temptations in the form of internet websites, social media outlets, and easier access to sexually explicit materials of all kinds.

Ross says, “With sex robots, sex through VR headsets, transitioning genders in PE showers, and honor students in jail because of lewd selfies—I cannot really fathom youth leaders who would not plan a Jesus-focused, grace drenched, biblically sound focus on moral purity once a year.”

In the past the church has been reluctant to talk about sexual purity and the implications related to our teenagers, but culture has not left us the option of ignoring the issue and hoping it will go away.

Ross also stated that, “Most churches now have one or more teenagers confused about their gender or about their affections. Church leaders are scrambling to know how that impacts the True Love Waits message.

Without question, most of those confused teenagers will need biblical counseling for some time.

But even during that process, the message to them is the same as to other teenagers: For the glory of the King, do not lust in your mind.

Regardless of the gender you are tempted to think about, the command is the same — keep your mind pure. Similarly, for

the glory of the King, do not do anything with anyone’s body sexually outside a biblical marriage. Anyone.”

This is a difficult but much needed message for the church to communicate to teenagers.

What are some of the ways we can help prepare our kids for a lifetime of purity?

First, do not assume that children are too young. Questions can occur at different ages for different children and is a part of the normal process of growing up. Being ready is a factor of development, not necessarily a factor of a child’s chronological age.

Do not overwhelm them with more information than they can easily handle, but if they are asking questions or making comments related to sexual intimacy their questions need to be answered honestly in an age appropriate fashion.

Next, do not be afraid to bring up the subject and do not be shocked by their questions.

If our children or teenagers feel they are wrong or should be ashamed for asking these questions, they may stop asking us and turn to other sources outside the church for answers.

We want to be the source of information for our children, the one to give them the biblical perspective on physical intimacy.

Our goal is to equip our children to become healthy, well-adjusted adults who are

pursuing purity in Christ in all areas of life and who view human sexuality as something God created for the context of Christian marriage.

Above all, pray for specific guidance with your children. Children develop at different rates.

Though seeking godly counsel can be helpful, you must seek God’s counsel on how to handle the questions your children have.

We can teach our children about a lifetime of purity. We can teach them that true love is worth the wait.

Along with Jimmy Hester, Richard Ross often is referred

to as a co-cofounder of TLW. But according to Ross, both men believe TLW is “God’s idea and they only serve as messengers.”

Richard Ross is professor of student ministry at Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth.

Tylitha Whatley is a professor of Christian Education with Louisiana College. Her column is part of a series of commentaries provided by Louisiana College relating to the Southern Baptist Convention’s calendar of Special Emphasis Sundays. February is True Love Waits emphasis month.

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North American Mission Board

Conference speakers change messages, Holy Spirit moves

BY BRIAN BLACKWELL

Message Staff Writer

BOSSIER CITY – Many of us are living a life of “but I.”

Instead, we should be living a life of “but God,” Marty Collier, pastor of Church on Rush Creek in Grand Prairie, Texas, said during the recent Fuego Frio student conference.

By the end of the two-day conference Feb. 10-11, 81 of the roughly 1,500 students from six states in attendance decided to commit their lives to Christ and live a life of “but God.”

“From the start, the students were engaged with the speakers and music,” said Jeff Luce, coordinator for Fuego Frio. “Three of the speakers ended up changing up their message on short-notice and the Holy Spirit moved. There’s no way anyone could take credit for what happened but God.”

Held at First Baptist Bossier City, Fuego Frio featured eight pastors from throughout the U.S., each speaking for 12 minutes on a variety of topics. Other highlights of the weekend included illusionist Danny Ray of Yucaipa, Calif., comedians 321 Improv of Boca Raton, Fla., and musical guests the Hardcastles of Austin, Texas.

In his message Brad Jurkovich, pastor of First Bossier, told students God is calling some of them to salvation and they must be ready to follow Him.

“You need to know that God loves you so much that He gave His only Son Jesus to



Doug Collier photo

Marty Collier of Church on Rush Creek in Dallas, Texas challenged 1,500 students attending the two-day Fuego Frio student conference Feb. 11 at First Baptist Bossier City to live for God.

die on the cross for your sins,” he said. “And He is going to call your name tonight and this weekend. He’s going to call you by name to turn from your sins and trust in Jesus. Some of you have never done this. I encourage you to follow Jesus this weekend and never look back.”

UNEXPECTED HOLY SPIRIT MOMENT

Kenny Dean, pastor of the Bridge Fellowship’s Palladium campus in Richmond, Texas, and one of the speakers, felt led to change his message less than a day before he spoke. When the time of invitation took place, dozens of students came forward to accept Christ.

“Driving to the event on Friday, I knew He wanted me to change the message to the simple invitation of Jesus found in Matthew 11:28, ‘Come to me all who are weary and burdened,’” he told the *Baptist Message*. “Our peer-pressured, over-sexed,



Ryan Guard of Willow Creek Church in Chicago (left) and Mo Isom, former all-American LSU goalkeeper and Homecoming queen, speaks to the students at the Fuego Frio student conference at First Baptist Bossier City.

media-liked and family-torn culture can leave a student’s soul empty and broken. So I believe God wanted to extend a beautiful promise to anyone who would come to Him, ‘I will give you rest for your soul.’

“Many students responded to God’s invitation that night,”

he said. “I’m so thankful I could serve at Fuego Frio. I’m more thankful we serve a Savior who loves doing the unexpected.”

Fuego Frio and First Bossier staff are conducting immediate follow-up with those who made decisions at the conference. They will be



Doug Collier photos

connected to a student pastor for long-term follow-up and discipleship.

“Seeing lives changed for eternity is what Fuego Frio is all about,” said Jerry Pipes, executive pastor at First Bossier. “Watching God move during the invitation was the most amazing part of the weekend.”

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Wave from page one

attendance has not waned, reaching 100 on an average Sunday morning for worship services.

Tommy Chaisson, a member of First Baptist Welsh, was among those who received help from the congregation after his personal property was damaged from floodwaters. Chaisson, who was baptized in 2016, said that Christ-like attitude is what made him first want to attend First Welsh in 2015.

See WAVE on 9

CEC 2017 encourages Christian service 'Together'



Doug Collier photo

Austin Wadlow, university pastor of First Baptist in Denton, Texas.

BY TAMMY SHARP

Regional Reporter

ALEXANDRIA – Austin Wadlow challenged students attending the recent Collegiate Evangelism Conference with a question – were they fully-committed to Christ or just going through the motions of following Him.

“Are you all in?” asked the university pastor of First Baptist Church in Denton, Texas. “Is your ‘yes’ on the table, or are you straddling, halfway there, where are you? If we’re going to realize the impact that ‘together’ has on the mission of God, we, together, have to go all in.”

Wadlow’s message was part of a two-day conference that included seminars designed to equip students with sharing their faith, worship by Digital Age and a late-night time of fellowship. Held Feb. 3-4 at Calvary Baptist Church in Alexandria, the conference drew 621 students from 16 churches and 15 BCMs.

Wadlow’s messages and the various seminars were centered around the theme of CEC – Together.

“This is the only time of year where we get all of our students from the BCMs and our church college ministers together in one place,” said conference

coordinator Chad McClurg, who also serves as director of the BCM at University of Louisiana-Monroe.

“Since our theme was Together, we had a focus on relationships, what biblical community looks like, how to deal with dating relationships and how use relationships for evangelism.

“For a college student, relationships in their life are a primary concern,” he said. “We wanted them to understand God wants them to develop relationships with others and Himself so they can share the Gospel at home and overseas.”

Mark Robinson, state BCM director, said he was pleased with the student response to the challenge to reach the world for Christ “Together” at CEC.

“Austin Wadlow delivered an incredible challenge of evangelism and discipleship,” Robinson said. “I have been receiving glowing responses from church and BCM leaders.”

The conference, as a whole, focused on leading students to recognize ways to serve.

“It was more of a call to ministry than a call to an evangelism event,” said Robinson.

After the morning session, students were invited to attend one of many

seminars led by a variety of ministers, teachers and professionals that focused on leadership, community, evangelism, ministry, managing conflict, missions, developing relationships and adulthood.

More than 70 students were involved in the ministerial training seminar which took place in the seminar led by Wadlow after Saturday’s morning session and every other seminar was also packed out.

“We had good attendance and had our largest representation of African Americans, with Southern University at Shreveport and Southern University at Baton Rouge in attendance for the first time,” Robinson added. “It was good to see a mix of campus-based and church-based ministry gathered together. I know the Lord will do great things through the students of Louisiana.”

Daniel Salter, an intern with the BCM at Louisiana Tech University in Ruston, said the students learned as believers, they are called to be stewards of what God has given each person.

“The purpose of your body is not for your own glory,” Salter said. “It’s for His glory, it’s so that you are able, you are willing and able to go help people build a house, or help people move, to go help people do whatever. It’s about doing ministry ‘Together.’”

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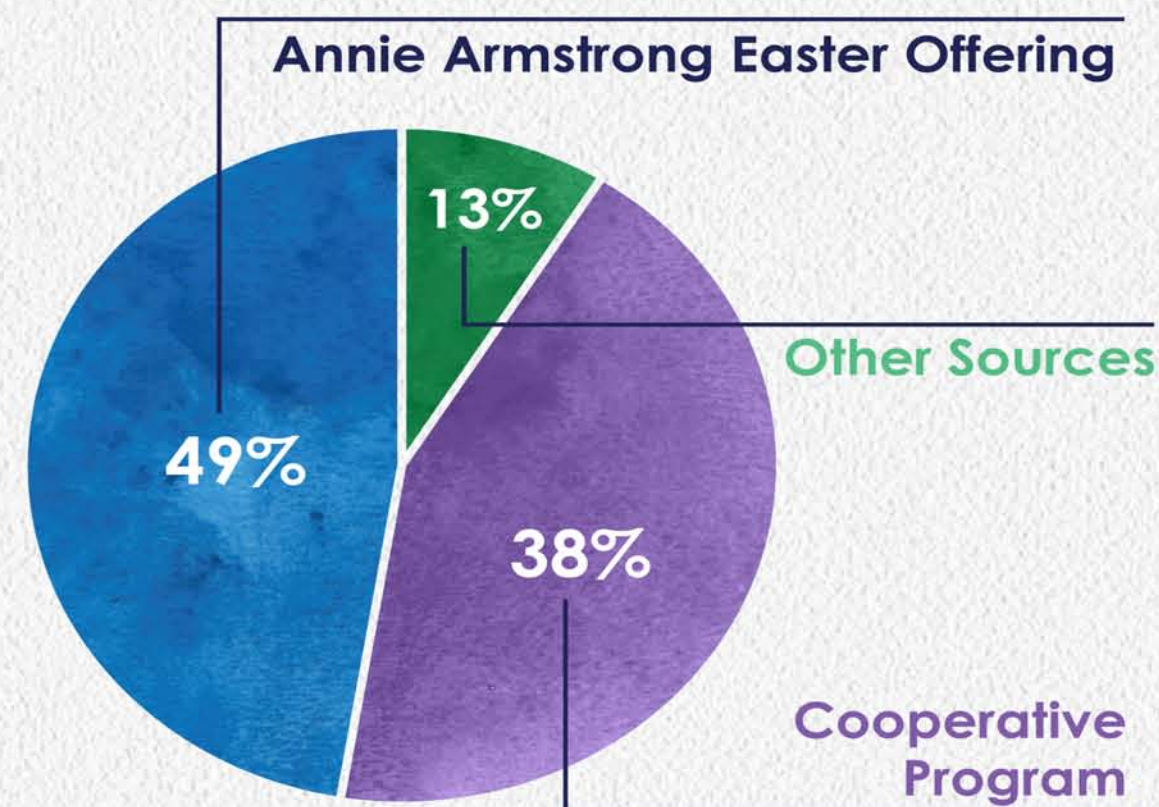
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Investments updates, gifts for LBC ministries highlight LBF meeting

By JERRY LOVE

Director of Planned Giving

ALEXANDRIA – The welcoming of new members, updates on investments and the approval of a motion to upgrade software highlighted the first quarterly meeting of the Louisiana Baptist Foundation Board of Trustees meeting Feb. 7.

INVESTMENT UPDATES

Deville's E.L. Paulk, chairman of the investment committee, began the morning session by having LBF Executive Director Wayne Taylor discuss his work with the Graystone Consulting to reallocate a portion of the Large Cap portfolio from active management to passive management, a move approved in October.

Lee Morris, Investment Consultant with Graystone, reviewed the investment holdings and performance for the final quarter of 2016 and reported the US Domestic Equities as a whole ended the year strong after a rocky start to the year.

In January, domestic equities were down by approxi-

mately 12%, then rallied to the point of being positive by a modest 2% before the election, and finished the year with a 12% gain. Portfolios that were actively managed, in general, were positioned for a presidential win by Clinton and lagged their benchmarks after the Trump victory.

He said active management will likely continue to underperform passive management due to the fact it takes time adjust and realign portfolios after unexpected news impacts the market.

Morris reported fixed income securities were mostly positive for the year but struggled after the election in an environment of rising interest rates. Morris also expects the Federal Reserve to raise rates 2 to 3 times by the end of the year which will make it difficult for fixed income portfolios.

Morris did not recommend any changes in management or new asset allocation. He said the Foundation should continue the gradual reallocation from active management to passive for the domestic equity portfolio.

Barbara Bell, CPA and controller for the Foundation, reviewing the account holdings for the year ending 2016.

She reported assets under management as of Dec. 31, 2016 were \$165,188,580, an increase of approximately \$850,000 over year end 2015. She also noted there are 2,005 individual accounts managed on behalf of Louisiana Baptist churches and organizations and since the founding of the Foundation in 1944, more than \$125 million has been distributed to Baptist churches and ministries.

The investment returns for the major components of the LBF portfolio for the year end 2016 were as follows:

- Short Term Fund: 0.59% Annualized Yield
- Group Investment Fund, comprised of various market sectors: 4.44% total return.
- Diversified Income Fund, conservative income-oriented fund: 2.27% total return.

OPERATIONS REPORT

Later in the morning, Taylor updated the operating committee on the strategic plan for

promotion in 2017. The plan is based on hosting lunch or dinner meetings with pastors in targeted associations, then making presentations in churches to encourage giving to support Baptist ministry.

Taylor also reported the LBF will continue to use "Give A Gift" to illustrate how the Foundation assists Baptists with gifts supporting Baptist churches and causes. There will be a slight change in the Give A Gift promotion as it will be awarded on a quarterly basis in the amount of \$1500 per quarter. For details and rules go to www.baptistmessage.com/give-a-gift-2/.

An in-depth discussion, led by Taylor, regarding upgrading the LBF accounting software also took place. An opportunity presented itself to have the Pooled Accounting System (PAS) software, which is the Foundation's proprietary system developed in 1999, upgraded to a current platform and fully supported by a development/support company.

After weighing their options regarding PAS and a different system that has been under

consideration, trustee Gray Kitchens, Bossier City, made the motion to authorize Taylor and board attorney Jay Bolen to navigate the transition process. The motion passed.

Jerry Love reported total new gifts received by the LBF during 2016 were \$1,667,600. It was somewhat lower than average which can most likely be attributed to the last year's two severe flooding events.

GENERAL SESSION

During the afternoon, Board President Waymond Warren, West Monroe, led a review of the information presented by the Investment and Operating Committees in earlier sessions, and the board approved the single motion from the operating committee regarding the accounting software contracts. No other business was on the agenda.

The board welcomed three new members: Pat Lacour, Pineville, Brian Wells, Jennings and James "Buddy" Hampton, Greenwood.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 25, 2017.



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Shine from page one

"It is my honor right now to name every single one of you the queen or king of the prom," he continued. "More importantly than that, that's how God looks at you every single day of your life. That's how important you are. That's how special you are. And that is how much you are loved."

Logan Singletary was among 115 guests attending the Night to Shine at Calvary Baptist Church in Alexandria. Singletary was nearly speechless as his buddy crowned him king of the prom.

"This made me feel like a king for the night," he said. "I also loved getting to ride in the limo and come in on the red carpet like a big celebrity. It's a night that I will never forget."

His mom, Melissa, enjoyed a separate time of fellowship with parents of the guests.

"I enjoyed mingling with the other parents who all were blown away by this night that meant so much to our children and us parents," she said. "I'm so thankful Calvary was able to put this on for our special

children."

The excitement was evident for Jeremy Rhame, who showed up with his parents 45 minutes before the start of Night to Shine. His mom, Mandy, said Jeremy had been preparing for the event since late January.

"You can just feel all of the love here," Mandy Rhame said. "Just the outpouring of support and people coming together to make this happen is amazing."

David Brooks, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, said the evening was a celebration and encouragement for individuals with special needs, their parents and the 375 volunteers.

"It was a ministry opportunity for Calvary to come alongside some remarkable people and reinforce that God loves them very much and so does our church," Brooks said.

"In addition to a high energy environment, families and care givers learned about the many opportunities Calvary offers weekly and year-round to assist in the relational, emotional, physical, and spiritual develop-

ment of all groups of people.

"The crowning of participants as Kings and Queens was a moment everyone in attendance will never forget," he continued. "The Calvary church family was honored to be selected to partner with the Tim Tebow Foundation for this high impact event for all who shared in the experience. I am so proud of our leadership team, volunteers, and church for a full buy in for a Night to Shine."

BEING HANDS AND FEET OF JESUS

For the more than 700 volunteers at Cypress Baptist Church in Benton, Night to Shine was the most powerful display of the church being the hands and feet of Christ that Pastor John Fream has seen, proclaiming "our church will never be the same."

Sean Walker, executive pastor at the Bayou Church in Lafayette, said the evening allowed his congregation to give a gift to the community. More than 300 volunteers served around 200 guests at their Night to Shine prom.

"We were honored to host



Brian Blackwell photo

The Night to Shine prom at Calvary Baptist Church in Alexandria brought out the smiles of this special guest, who walks across a red carpet.

this unforgettable prom night experience for people with special needs," Walker said. "We've been blessed with space and large facilities that make these events possible, and we want to use them to serve our community. We believe life is better together, and Night to

Shine was a chance to do life together."

Wave from page 4

"In this world we live in that is so cruel, it's heart-warming to know people like my church care enough to go out of their way for you," Chaisson said. "They don't just answer the phone when you call and say they want to help but they genuinely want to be there for you. I still don't understand a lot of things but I'm growing in my relationship with Christ, thanks to them. Being a part of this church is hard to describe in words."

Pastor Pat Deshotel attributes the trend to his church showing the love of Christ to a community in desperate need of the love and hope found in Jesus.

"As a pastor, I am so proud of my church," Deshotel said. "My congregation has been willing to step outside the doors and assist anyone in our community, and even as far away as Lake Charles. They have been willing not to just talk about their faith but actually live it."

In the four weeks following mid-August flooding that sent water surrounding homes in the southern Louisiana community, First Welsh became a safe haven for those affected.

Members cooked for nearly 70 disaster relief volunteers for 15 consecutive days, helped teams mud-out - clean out - flooded homes and distributed donated supplies and money to needy individuals. Deshotel estimates between 35 and 40 of his members were helping with the effort in some manner.

Teams wrapped up their relief efforts Sept. 1, having completed work on 52 homes and ministry to hundreds of people.

He said the effort rallied a spirit of true community in Welsh. Everyone, regardless of religion or race, came together and ministered to one another.

Deshotel said when the disaster struck, people no longer were

asking one another's religious preference but instead were asking about the need. The church has started new ministries since, including collecting clothes to distribute to needy individuals and a class for new Christians.

"We are working together so closely now," Deshotel said. "The flood left a lot of destruction behind but also opened our eyes to the needs of one another. Sometimes you become callous in your everyday world. But a disaster comes and breaks down that callousness."

See WAVE on 11

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Please send all résumés to **Jim Winegeart @ 3509 Hwy 524 Pollock, La 71467.**

First Baptist Church Boyce seeks a BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR

Please send résumés to: First Baptist Boyce Pastor Search Committee P.O. Box 278 Boyce, LA 71409

CHURCH POSITION

Hillcrest Baptist Church, Jasper, Texas, is seeking a fulltime Youth Minister.

Send résumés to: Bro. David Nugent, Hillcrest Baptist Church, 3196 U.S. Hwy. 190W. • Jasper, Tx. 75951 or email rhondahsm02@yahoo.com.

For more information, call Bro. David Nugent at 409.384.3371.

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Prestonwood from page one

ing a friend of the court brief in support of the construction of a mosque, and, for making strident insults against evangelical supporters of then-presidential candidate Donald Trump during the 2016 election process.

In such publications as the *Washington Post*, he condemned those who disagreed with him as “the old-school political Religious Right,” caricaturing them as “doctrinally vacuous.” He also broadly asserted that self-identified evangelical Trump voters “may well be drunk right now, and haven’t been into a church since someone invited them to Vacation Bible School sometime back when Seinfeld was in first-run episodes.”

But Jack Graham, who is the senior pastor of Prestonwood and a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention,

subsequently explained to the *Baptist Message* that his congregation’s concerns are broader than just one personality.

Instead, he described an “uneasiness” among church leaders about the “disconnect between some of our denominational leaders and our churches.”

“I’m not angry at the SBC, and neither are our people,” Graham said, “and I’m not working to start a movement to fire anyone.”

“This is a difficult decision for me, personally,” he added. “I love Southern Baptists, and still want to be a cooperating partner as we have been for many years.”

“We’re just concerned about the direction of the Southern Baptist Convention, and feel the need to make some changes in the way we give.”

Verda Baptist Church in Verda, LA., is seeking a **Bi-Vocational Pastor**

Please send résumés to: Matt Tullos mtullos@gmail.com

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Bethel Baptist Church is seeking a bi-vocational minister of music for leading traditional worship and directing choir.

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SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR

First Baptist Church of Delcambre, LA is seeking a bi-vocational pastor.

Please send résumés to: First Baptist Church P.O. Box 295 Delcambre, LA 70528

Footling from page 2

weeks. God delivered me. It’s the Word of God that will give you life,” Octavia affirmed.

JoAnn Forbes, from Christian Family Worship in Hessmer, said both Ellis’ and Octavia’s testimonies spoke to her heart.

“I felt so inspired and renewed that God is for us. We need to hear God is our solid rock. We get so busy with life, we often forget that. The worship was so uplifting, and the message was so encouraging,” Forbes said, adding that she plans to return to the Kaleidoscope conference next year.

Brandi Browning, from Trinity Baptist Church in Sulphur, echoed her sentiments. “As women we try to control everything. But hearing Marian Jordan Ellis reminds us to put our hope in the Lord, and not in the world. We need to

look to Jesus like our father, like our dad.”

Shannon Brown, a member from Franklin Ave. Baptist Church in New Orleans, came to the conference saying, “I expected to hear from the Lord. I think God used the speaker to speak to me. I came with an open heart and open ears, and I received,” she said.

Bettye Wiltz, a member of First Baptist Church of Krotz Springs, agreed there were so many things in Ellis’ testimony that touched her. “Her story was truly inspirational.”

Tabby LaBorde, a member of the Church of Marksville, came with a group of five women. She said it had been a long time since she attended a women’s conference. “I needed a renewing, a refreshing,” she said. “We are all so glad we came!”

YOUTH MINISTER

Indian Mound Baptist Church in Greenwell Springs, LA needs a dedicated and faithful servant for our youth ministry. Salary is negotiable. Must be available for all Sundays and monthly activities. Prefer some experience with youth.

Résumé with references required.

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Parkview Baptist Church in Metairie, LA is searching for an Early Learning Center Director.

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For information or to send a résumé, email pastorsearch@fbcslidell.org.

First Baptist Church Arcadia is seeking a permanent **MINISTER OF MUSIC**

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Submitted photo

Pat Deshotel (top center) baptized church members such as these four in late 2016. Deshotel, pastor of First Baptist Welsh, has seen 13 baptized since two feet of water flooded areas near the church in August 2016.

Wave from page one

FIELDS SOWN FOR SPIRITUAL HARVEST

Even before the baptism of 13 people, the fields were being sown for the harvest. In the past four years, around 100 children have attended the church's Vacation Bible School each year. During the most recent VBS, nine children made a profession of faith. All of those children were awaiting baptism when the floods hit, with even more close to a decision when the historic rainfall came. Once the congregation began to minister to its community after the flood, even more people made a decision to follow Christ. But following through with believer's baptism is not the end of their spiritual journey at First Baptist Welsh. Church leaders make intentional efforts for discipleship of every new Christian. Recently, those baptized participate in a class on Sunday mornings based off the book "What Every Christian Ought to Know." "It's very safe to say when a person walks the Christian walk by him or herself is when Satan hits people the hardest," Deshotel said. "You can't just say go off and be a Christian by

yourself. "Paul talks about giving Christians the milk of the Word and bringing them along to give them meat," he continued. "And we are doing that. We feel like this will lead and show them this is what Christians should do – about the Bible, witnessing, eternal life. You educate them and that's where the work begins." Margie Benoit, the director of the VBS, said seeing children making a decision and following through with believer's baptism makes the hard work worth it. "It's such a rewarding thing to see these young minds absorbing what God's word has for them and see them realize they haven't invited Jesus in their heart," she said. "It's just a marvelous opportunity, especially after all we went through after last August. "To be able to work hand in hand with disaster relief was an amazing experience and seeing some of them baptized was extra special," she said. "Just being able to work and help people out in times of need has its own great rewards. God's not done with us yet. He shows us different opportunities each day and we just have to be open to His leading."

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LOUISIANA NOTABLES

ON THE MOVE

- **Lee James** has resigned as music director at Homewood Baptist Church, Alexandria.
- **Curtis (wife Kristy) Owens** is the new pastor at Crockett Point Baptist Church, Crowville.
- **Mickey Bounds** resigned as pastor of Delhi First Baptist Church; now serving as interim pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, Oak Grove.

HOMECOMING

- Fair Park Baptist Church, West Monroe: **Anniversary Sunday**, March 5. Pastor: Waymond Warren.

REVIVAL

- New Hope Baptist Church, DeQuincy: **Revival**, February 26 – March 1. Service times: Sunday, 10:30 a.m., nightly, 6:30 p.m. Evangelist: **Jason Townley**, Music: **Mackey Willis Family**, Pastor: Roland Hebert.
- Vatican Baptist Church, Carencro: Harvest Sunday, Feb. 26, 11 a.m. Evangelist: **Joe Aulds**. Pastor: Chad Thibodeaux.
- Pine Grove Baptist Church, Pineville: **Revival**, Feb. 26– March 1, Evangelist: **Lyndon Longoria**. Special Music: **Kerry Longoria**. Pastor: Ken Gilmore.
- Bonita Road Baptist Church, Bas-trop: **Revival**, March 5–8, Sunday 6 p.m.; Monday–Wednesday 7 p.m.

Evangelist: **Casey Johnson (Sun-day), Rubin Weaver (Monday), Craig Franklin (Tuesday), Gevan Spinney (Wednesday)**. Music: **Tory DarDar Family**. Pastor: Casey Johnson.

■ Antioch Baptist Church, Farmer-ville: **Remember, Rejoice & Reload 100 More Bible Conference**, March 10–12, Friday and Saturday, 6:30 p.m.; Sunday 10:30 p.m. Speakers: **Jerry Chaddick, Sonny Simpson, Casey Johnson, Jeremy Pruitt, and Jeff Flenniken**. Special Music: **11th Hour**. Pastor: Rubin Weaver.

LAGNIAPPE

- Riverview Baptist Church, Alexan-dria: **The Jim Brady Trio**, Feb. 23, 7 p.m. Cost: free (a love offering will be taken). Pastor: David Newton.
- Louisiana Church, Abita Springs: **Dove Award winners The Isaacs in concert**, March 3, 7 p.m. Admission is free. A love offering will be taken. For more information, call Amy Keene at 985.373.7387. Pastor: Jerel Keene.
- Hebron Baptist Church, Denham Springs: **Skeet Shoot sponsored by HBC men's ministry**, March 4, 9 a.m. – noon. Cost: \$60 (includes meals, drinks and 100-shot course.) Shells not provided. For more infor-mation contact Dan Robichaux at 225.953.5084.
- Coteau Baptist Church, Houma: **Celebration of Wayne Hunt's 10th anniversary as the church's senior**

pastor, March 5, 9 a.m. There will be a dinner on the grounds immediately following Sunday school at noon. Pas-tor: Wayne Hunt.

■ First Baptist Church, Pineville: **First@First Business Leader Lun-cheon**, March 6, noon. Speaker: **Rick Brewer, Louisiana College President**. Cost: \$10 and you may pay at the door. Please RSVP to Me-linda Langford (mlangford@fbcpin-eville.net). **Free concert featuring the Southwestern Singers from Southwestern Baptist Theologi-cal Seminary**, March 9, p.m., in the sanctuary Pastor: Stewart Holloway.

■ Crossroads Baptist Church, Farmer-ville: **The Sanctuary Quartet in concert**, March 12, 10:45 a.m., Pas-tor: Jeff Freeman.

■ Cotile Baptist Church, Boyce: **11th Hour in concert**, March 12, 1:30 p.m. Pastor: Johnny Miller.

■ First Baptist Church, Thibodaux: **Kellie and Kristen in concert**, March 17, Pastor: Kevin Celestin.

■ First Baptist Church, Zachary: **Ag-ricultural Missions Fellowship Annual Meeting**, March 18, 9 a.m. Speaker: Jeff Palmer, executive direc-tor of Baptist Global Response. Lunch will be provided. Anyone interested in this kind of mission's activity is wel-come to attend.

■ Ouachita Baptist Church, West Monroe: **Sportsman banquet and silent auction**, March 18, 5 p.m. Speaker: Ray Mears. Pastor: Mike Hol-loway.

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.

upzjrpi, upzyprp wjv prpqk gnyqyv, ubv vqk

vep gnyqyvg mepvepq vepk hqp jx tji: uplhbqp

shwk xhzgp nqjnevpg hqp tjwp jbv ywvj vep

mjqzi.

xyqgv ojew xjbq:jwp

Clues:
J = O; N = P

Answer to February 9 Scripture Crypto:
Isaiah fifty-six:ten

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