

Eastern Louisiana Baptist Association

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

2012

3-4 Disaster Relief Roundtable, Camp Living Waters
4 Kaleidoscope, FBC, Pineville
6 Fellowship Meal, FBC, French Settlement, 5:45 PM
6 Executive Board Mtg., FBC, French Settlement, 6:30 PM
10-11 VOYAGE, Tall Timbers
13-19 Focus on WMU
23 Evangelism Team Meeting, ELBA Office, 3:00 PM
24-25 LBC Music/Drama Festival, Calvary,
Alexandria

MARCH

2012

4-10 Youth Week
4-11 Week of Prayer for North American Missions &
Annie Armstrong Easter Offering
5 Ministers Conference, Magnolia, 10:00 AM
17 M-JAM, FBC, Lafayette
22 Associational Scholarship Application Deadline
23 Senior Fest, NOBTS
23-24 RA Congress
23-24 WMU Missions Celebration/Annual Meeting,
Sale Street, Lake Charles
25 Start A Church Sunday
29 Deadline for Adult Reading & Writing Workshop

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION FORMS AVAILABLE

Application forms for the 2012-2013 Associational Scholarships to Louisiana College and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary are available and may be picked up from the Associational Office at 32470 Walker Rd N, Walker, LA. Forms are also available on our website.

Deadline for returning completed forms is **March 22, 2012**. The Scholarship Committee will report to the May 7, 2012 Executive Board Meeting.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING



MONDAY
FEBRUARY 6, 2012
6:30 PM

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF FRENCH SETTLEMENT

16735 LA HWY 16, French Settlement, LA 70733

Fellowship Meal at 5:45 PM



ASSOCIATIONAL VBS CLINIC

Tuesday, April 17, 2012

“Amazing Wonders Aviation”

PSALM 147:5 Encountering God’s Awesome Power

Mark your calendar with the date and be watching
for more information coming soon!

**2012 ELBA Adult
Reading & Writing Workshop**
April 19 & 20: 5:30 PM—8:30 PM
April 21: 8:00 AM—5:00 PM

ELBA Office

32470 Walker N Rd, Walker, LA 70785

Cost: \$35. Registration and payment must be
received by **March 29**.

For more information, call Anna Cook, 439-8051 or
Jenelle Brown, 664-0121 or 664-9309.



Volume 36 Issue 1

Together We Do What We Cannot Do Alone

January 26, 2012

HEART TO HEART

Churches participating in the **Awaken 2012** effort to prepare, pray, and plead with God to send a spiritual awakening across our state and nation are well into the 21 Days of praying and fasting. There is evidence that the Holy Spirit is using the emphasis to touch the lives of believers. Part of this emphasis is for us to come together in a parish wide prayer rally.

The LIVINGSTON PARISH PRAYER RALLY will be held at noon on Wednesday, April 25, at the Walker Ball Park Pavilion. Dr. David Hankins, the Executive Director of the LBC, will be present with us as a part of the statewide emphasis. Please place this event on your calendar and encourage as many as possible to participate. Brother Paul Taylor, the pastor at Pine Grove, has agreed to be our Prayer Rally Coordinator. More information will be made available in the coming weeks. However, we don't need to wait until April 25 to begin praying for a great spiritual awakening in our parish.



COUNTING SHEEP

Last month I provided a brief statistical analysis of church membership, Sunday School average attendance and baptisms in the churches in the association. I promised to follow that up with an analysis of the churches' financial receipts and missions giving. Here is part of that analysis. The following information is based on that submitted by the churches on their Annual Church Profile. Nine of the 43 churches in the association did not have information submitted for either 2010 or 2011. The following information is based on that submitted by the remaining 34 churches.

Church Undesignated Receipts: Fifteen churches reported less undesignated income in 2011 than in 2010. The combined amount of reduced income for these 15 churches was \$237,064. Two churches reported a reduction in income of 20% or more. Three churches reported a decrease in income between 15% and 20%. Three churches reported a decrease in income between 10% and 15% percent. Three churches reported a decrease in income between 5% and 10%, and four churches reported a decrease between 0% and 5%. That means 34.9% of our churches have had to continue ministry with reduced income. At the same time, 19 churches experienced an increase in income. Two churches reported increases of 20% or more. Three churches reported increases of 15% to 20%. One church reported an increase between 10% and 15%. Six churches reported increases between 5% and 10%, and seven churches reported increases between 0% and 5%.

Receipts compared to Average Sunday School Attendance: I was curious to see how church income related to average Sunday School attendance. Eleven churches experienced both a decrease in attendance and income. Six churches decreased in attendance but increased in income. Two churches showed no change in attendance but a decrease in income. Three churches reported no attendance change but an increase in income. Ten churches reported both an increase in average attendance and income while two churches showed an increase in attendance but a decrease in income. Twenty-two of the 43 churches in the association illustrate the direct correlation between average Sunday School attendance and income.

You can draw your own conclusions from the information given above, but I would suggest that the most revealing principle is that of the relationship between average Sunday School attendance and income. Factors that affect attendance and income include having Sunday School classes or Bible Study groups that are intentionally evangelistic and outreaching.

Another factor that stood out while I was researching the condition of the churches is the importance of accurate record keeping and reporting. We are extremely grateful for the churches that do a great job of sharing the information requested on the Annual Church Profiles. As you can see, that information is useful, not only for your own evaluation, but it helps in evaluating the health of the churches as a whole. Thanks for your participation. Please know that we are always ready to help whenever you have a need concerning your church record-keeping and reporting.

TOGETHER for the sake of the kingdom,

David

**CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE CHURCHES
DECEMBER 2011**

Contributions	DEC 2011	TOTAL
Agape'	\$0.00	\$683.00
Amite	\$3,575.64	\$18,234.10
Beech Ridge	\$0.00	\$1,785.36
Bethel	\$152.14	\$1,926.03
Calvary	\$192.04	\$1,613.04
Carroll	\$0.00	\$2,443.60
Central	\$118.64	\$472.98
Christ's Community	\$334.00	\$4,856.42
Colyell	\$475.54	\$6,285.03
Denham Springs	\$0.00	\$7,004.47
Don Avenue	\$415.04	\$5,821.42
Doyle	\$0.00	\$300.00
Emmanuel	\$520.00	\$6,026.04
Faith	\$259.74	\$4,303.54
French Settlement	\$277.12	\$3,447.68
Gray's Creek	\$724.49	\$8,579.63
Greater Third Zion	\$0.00	\$0.00
Head of Island	\$245.82	\$2,351.51
Hebron	\$3,904.55	\$22,180.03
Holden	\$0.00	\$2,755.72
Judson	\$1,318.70	\$19,048.92
Live Oak	\$1,178.98	\$15,187.76
Livingston	\$899.00	\$4,616.00
Macedonia	\$0.00	\$600.00
Magnolia	\$306.00	\$4,559.00
Maurepas	\$176.00	\$2,297.94
Midway	\$318.51	\$2,302.89
New Bethlehem	\$25.00	\$388.65
New Covenant	\$600.00	\$600.00
Northside	\$0.00	\$4,664.89
One Life	\$0.00	\$0.00
Pine Grove	\$463.52	\$5,331.50
Red Oak	\$0.00	\$2,200.00
River of Life	\$0.00	\$250.00
Riverside	\$221.81	\$3,133.62
Salem	\$0.00	\$0.00
Satsuma	\$319.11	\$4,325.51
South Walker	\$99.83	\$1,239.87
Southside	\$0.00	\$1,691.72
The New Beginnings	\$71.04	\$935.73
Victory	\$122.56	\$1,613.93
Walker	\$1,948.63	\$24,768.27
Watson	\$164.60	\$1,531.16
Total Contributions	\$19,428.05	\$202,356.96
Capital One M & M Center		\$10,879.59
Capital One Total		\$78,950.26
Louisiana Baptist Foundation Total		\$196,781.53
TOTAL Checking & Savings		\$275,731.79

News from the Churches . . .

You are invited to come join the **African Children's Choir** as they perform at **AMITE BAPTIST CHURCH**, Denham Springs on Sunday, February 12, 2012 at 6:00 PM. Come and experience a worship experience like none other! Admission will be free; a free-will offering will follow the Choir's concert. **Terry Booth** is pastor.

All youth are invited to a **FREE YOUTH RALLY** on Saturday, February 4 at 6:00 PM at **GRAY'S CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH**, 21039 LA HWY 16 South, Denham Springs. The rally features music and testimonies by **THE CRUSADERS MINISTRY AND SINGING QUARTET** from Magnolia, Arkansas. A meal and refreshments will be provided free of charge. Contact **Brant Clayton** for more information, (225) 978-3284. **Carl Sullivan** is pastor.

The Christian Counseling Center News



Praise God for the wonderful year we had since opening the Counseling Center in March. Between our five counselors, there were approximately 360 appointments for the year.

We want to remind you of who we are and our mission with ELBA. *We are made up of administration volunteers and licensed Christ-centered counselors providing fee-based counseling services addressing the behavioral needs of people in all areas of their life. We serve and assist anyone in need of individual and family counseling. Referrals to the Center come through any Eastern Louisiana Baptist Association church which, if needed, is arranged by one of our volunteer administrators. The counselors who contract with the Center address a wide range of personal and family issues. If you are in need of a counselor, you can contact any Baptist church in Livingston parish. Each client works with the counselor to determine costs. A sliding scale of charges is based on the client's income and other factors as deemed relevant by the counselor.*

The verse that we keep ever before us is found in Luke 4:18, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free."

Please pray for our Center and everyone involved to always be what God has called us to be. Our counselors are listed below for your information. Please feel free to contact the Center if you should have a need we can try to help meet. Our phone number for appointments is 225-588-0342. The Christian Social Services Team is also listed below. Once again, we covet your prayers and praise God together with you for all He has done and will do through the Center this year.

Counselors:

Dr. Reid Doster, DMin., LMFT, LPC
Mrs. Kelli B. Hill, Counselor Intern
Mr. Karl Lehn, Counselor Intern
Mrs. Christine Varnado, Counselor Intern
Mrs. Aline Wyles, MSW, LMSW

Team Members:

Jeanie Boyd, Calvin Brown,
Mark Carroll, Jackie Crowder,
KaRetha Kelley, Barbara
Powell, Charles Ray Smith

2011 ANNUALS (Printed Minutes) are ready and available for pickup! Each church may receive five (5) copies at no charge. Additional copies are available for \$1.00 each.

Church Growth Corner

Freddie Arnold



The Prayer Room

There are times when God's children can pray with great confidence that He will grant our request. If He has clearly revealed that it is in His will to give us the thing we are asking, we should pray with faith that we will receive our request. For example, we can pray with confidence for forgiveness (I John 1:9) and for wisdom (James 1:5). However, there are other times when we earnestly pray for something that we do not know whether it is God's will for us to receive. At such times we should follow the example of the Lord Jesus who prayed, "... not as I will, but as You will" (Matt. 26:39).

Sometimes God says "no." Let us consider an example from the life of Moses and one from the life of the Apostle Paul. Both of these were great men of God, but their request was denied.

Moses had disobeyed God, and God told him that he would not be allowed to lead his people into the Promised Land. Moses pleaded with God to be allowed into the Land, but God replied, "**Enough of that! Speak no more to Me of this matter**" (Deut. 3:26). The subject was closed. Certainly God did not refuse to forgive Moses. But we may lose privileges by disobedience that will not be restored to us when we are forgiven.

Paul suffered greatly from an affliction which he referred to as "a thorn in the flesh", evidently a physical affliction. He pleaded with the Lord three times that the affliction would leave him, but God said, "**My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness**" (II Cor. 12:9). Paul came to see that God was using affliction to make him spiritually stronger. He wrote, "**Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.**"

God loves His children even when He says "no" to our requests. Though we may be disappointed, we should always remember that even when our path seems hard, God's plans are always better than our plans. We should pray with great faith in God's love and wisdom.

Sunday School Literature

As I work with churches across our association, I continually find struggles over pros and cons regarding what literature and publisher, if any, to use and whether everybody should use the same curriculum. Other expressions have been that the literature is too expensive, is weak or, "We want to go deeper in Bible study." I can in no way address all these issues completely in this column, nor any other for that matter, but let's look at some of the issues.

First, "Why should we use literature and not just the Bible?" Literature provides another idea or several more ideas related to the biblical content. Southern Baptist published material is written by Southern Baptist writers. It is safe because it teaches Southern Baptist doctrine. It helps the leadership know what is being taught in the church. It's written on a grade level that most people can understand. It provides a guide to help pupils understand what we are studying in the Bible.

Second, "Should everybody use the same material?" I think so, because everybody is on the same track of study and can converse with one another about what we are studying. Pastors can address issues to the entire congregation that need more explanation. It keeps alien doctrines from creeping in to our congregations. Literature stimulates questions and discussion if used effectively. It never takes the place of the Bible but it enhances Bible study.

Third, "Literature is expensive and weak." It is expensive, I will admit, but Southern Baptist literature is not as expensive as any of the other types of study guides that we use. Therefore, we can provide study guides for the prospects as well as the members. An Adult Sunday School pupil's book will only cost \$4.00 for three months study material and other types of pupils' guides will cost \$8.00 to \$10.00 per guide. Every curriculum published has weak sessions in it, because we are imperfect human beings, but our Southern Baptist literature is still the best and strongest material published. It does not take the place of the Bible; it is to supplement and enlighten the Bible.

Fourth, "We want to go deeper in Bible study and the material doesn't go deep enough." Sunday School is supposed to be the evangelistic arm of the church, the group that is open to the lost and unchurched. If we teach on the level of discipleship development in our Sunday Schools, we lose the lost and unchurched because they don't understand what is being taught. Sunday School groups (classes) are supposed to be open to all. Discipleship classes are closed groups that speak to the need to gain a deeper understanding of God and our relationship with Him.

I shudder to think what our educational school system, with all its faults, would look like today if we allowed participants to pick and choose the curriculum they would study to prepare them for life. That is an extreme, you say, or that is foolish, but the principle is the same; we must teach sound doctrine and use curriculum that we can trust.

I could go on and on, but I think I communicated my thoughts and feelings about this subject, and I have years of experience in the field to substantiate my thoughts and feelings. To sum it all up, God has given us a vehicle through Sunday School that bridges all social groups in the community and provides an evangelistic message and a material that meets the needs to reach all people. We just need to use it effectively and to His glory.

Love Ya,
Freddie Arnold



**Camp Living Waters
Youth Winter Retreat
February 19-21, 2012**

Cost: \$60 (includes program, meals, lodging, & t-shirt)

For more information:
www.camplivingwaters.net or call 985-345-1831

Kaleidoscope

February 4, 2012

Fist Baptist Church Pineville

Theme: Restored

"Reaching all women at their points of knowing, living and growing in Christ"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Disaster Relief Training

February 3-4, 2012

Camp Living Waters
Loranger, LA 70446



Feeding, Chaplaincy, Chainsaw, Shower/Laundry, Water Purification, Assessment, Mudout, Communications

Tom Long: 985-345-1831; brotom@bellsouth.net