



Richland Baptist Association Newsletter

January 2023

From Your Director of Missions (D.O.M.):

This Christmas season there were two special events held by several of our churches on Saturday the 17th of December Eastside Baptist and several other churches hosted “Carols at the Cross”. On Sunday the 18th of December First Baptist Rayville hosted “Christmas Extravaganza”. I want to thank both of these churches for taking the lead in coordinating and presenting the events. All of those that attended were truly blessed.

Now is the time of New Year celebrations. What is so wonderful with the new year coming in is that we can look forward to a new beginning whether it is a resolution or a life changing plan. That is what God did for us when we accepted His Son Jesus to be our Savior. He did away with the old person that we were and regenerated us or transformed us into a daughter or son. He wiped our slate clean and there was no charge to be held to our account. He still does that for us as we confess our sins and repent from them. I am so thankful that He is a God of new beginnings and restores us to a right fellowship with Him. Let me encourage you to share the Good News to people this year. Make a conscious effort to share the Gospel and invite people to attend church with you. Let’s make this the year of personal evangelism.

The Louisiana Baptist Evangelism Conference will be at First Baptist West Monroe from January 23 through January 24, 2023. I encourage you to attend and take others with you. This is a wonderful time of worship and preaching.

My prayer this coming year is that all of you in our twenty-six churches will experience a great renewal and revival in your spiritual lives. Remember, we are one body and that is the body of Christ. We are not in competition with one another but cooperation that we may see in our mission field, Richland Baptist Association, leading the lost and dying souls that are all around us to Christ.

I am excited about being a part of something great happening for Christ. Please join me as we work together. Happy New Year! I am so grateful for you all!

Johnny

Upcoming Events for the Month of January 2023

Jan	01:	New Year's Day
Jan	10:	Pastor's Conference 11 AM @ Big John's
Jan	13-14:	Youth Weekend @ Tall Timbers
Jan	22:	Sanctity of Human Life Sunday
Jan	23:	Evangelism Conference @ First West Monroe
Jan	24:	Evangelism Conference @ First West Monroe Senior Adult Luncheon @ First West Monroe

Upcoming Events for the Month of February 2023

Feb	05:	Church Planting, Evangelism and Missions Sunday
Feb	06-07:	KidMin Retreat at First Baptist Natchitoches
Feb	07:	Pastor's Conference at Big John's in Rayville
Feb	10-11:	Pastor and Wives Retreat at Tall Timbers
Feb	17-19:	Richland's Women's Retreat at Seeker Springs
Feb	19:	Focus on WMU Sunday
Feb	23-25:	Richland Men's Retreat at Seeker Springs
Feb	28:	State WMU Council Meeting at Baptist Building

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Opportunities to Serve

Pastor:	Calvary Baptist Church First Baptist Archibald First Baptist Rayville Newton Baptist
Youth Minister:	Alto Baptist First Baptist Archibald First Baptist Delhi
Pianist:	Zebedee Baptist (Volunteer)

**If you have a need in your church, please let us know and we will post it in the Monthly Newsletter.*

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Something to Think About...

Been contemplating “calling” during the holiday break (if you can call it that most of the time) and those thoughts led me down a parallel set of tracks. As I look at our association and think of other places I know of that are without those called to ministry and service as churches sit with plenty of opportunities. I think of Jesus’ words to us:

*When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “**The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.**”*

- Matthew 9:36-38

One can quickly become overwhelmed when they see the need and the lack of those to help to fill it with their ministry and service. This can be especially hard if in ministry you serve from “the second chair”. Be it age-graded ministries (children, youth, students, senior adults), ancillary ministries (administration, discipleship, education, evangelism, music), or even as an associate or assistant pastor. There can be a tendency to wonder if churches are without a pastor, what business do I have serving in a “second chair” role when the need is so great. It is at times like that I am drawn back to quotes from two different great preachers of the past:

“If God calls you to be a [minister/pastor/servant], don’t stoop to becoming a king”

- Charles H. Spurgeon

“If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as a Michaelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, “Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well.”

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

We can be tempted to think that some callings are lesser or greater than others, but in reality there is no greater calling for you personally than the call that God has placed in and on your life. We tend to make a lot of assumptions about what God wants when we should really be praying diligently and listening and do all to the glory of God where you are until God gives clear guidance that you are needed elsewhere.

I said a “parallel set of tracks” so the other had to do with thinking about the New Year and the idea of resolutions. Resolutions usually get a bad rep because of the many half-hearted commitments and quickly broken ones within the first weeks of the new year. But when I think about the word resolve and resolution there is really no bad definition to give us such an impression. Resolve as a verb can mean to find a solution, to decide firmly on a course of action, or to change form to something more clear or harmonious. The only noun form of resolve is firm determination to do something.

Instead of a true resolution built out of that root word resolve with firm will and determination, I think we are instead looking more for a settlement than a resolution. To settle can mean a lot of things that are seemingly very similar to resolve except in one important difference; “settle” can also mean to “sit or come to rest in a comfortable position”. It is when our resolve and will comes to face with hardship and difficulty that we see if we really had resolve or are ready to settle for comfort. Lord, please don’t let it be said of us that we would settle for fear of failure in resolving.

Richland Baptist Association

(318) 303-7626

102 Horn Rd,

Rayville, LA 71269, USA

