

Northeast Baptist
Association
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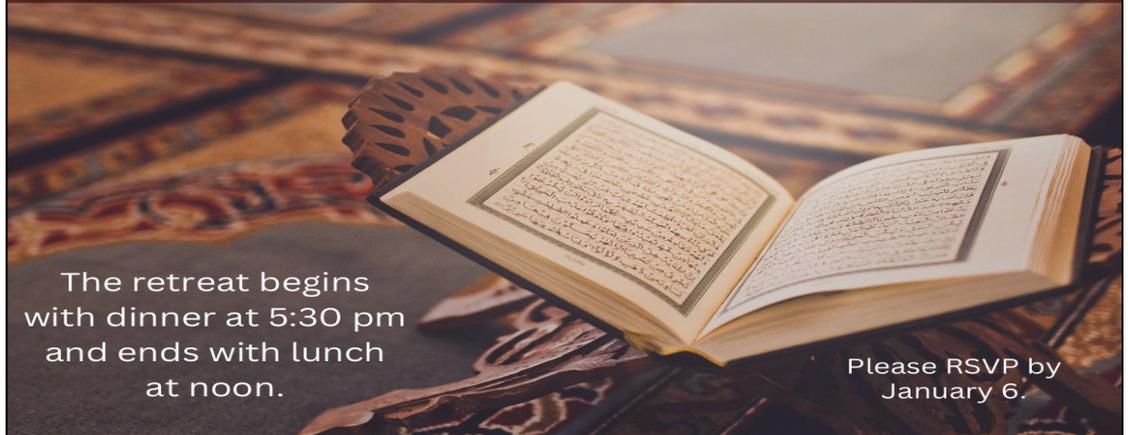
January 2026

The Connection



NELBA Senior Pastors' Retreat

January 9 - 10, 2026
Seeker Springs Camp
1280 Okaloosa Rd., Eros, LA



The retreat begins
with dinner at 5:30 pm
and ends with lunch
at noon.

Please RSVP by
January 6.

NELBA

**Pastor/Staff Lunch
Fellowship & Executive
Board Meeting**

First Baptist, Bastrop
620 East Madison

January 20th | 11:30 a.m.

**This will be the first official meeting of our new
combined association. We would love to see you there!**

From the Associational Mission Strategist



As you look at this newsletter you will notice that things have changed. Our new logo is on the cover. Our name is now the Northeast Louisiana Baptist Association for the two Parish area we serve. Our activities are not separated anymore on the calendar. Financially, it is not in the newsletter, but we begin operating under one budget on the 1st of January.

This move was introduced at the beginning of 2025, discussed over the course of many months, approved at the annual meetings in the fall, and effective beginning with the start of the new calendar year.

What does this mean for you, your church, and our ministry? Practically speaking, not much will change. Administratively, everything will be streamlined and more efficient. The hope is that efficiency leads to greater effectiveness. Also, with the elimination of artificial borders that separate us at the Parish line, it is my hope that the churches of Ouachita Parish will have a greater concern for the ministries in Morehouse Parish, and vice versa.

I lived much of the first half of my life in the Greater New Orleans area. There was a definite east bank-west bank mindset. They might as well have been two different countries. When I pastored near Shreveport, there was a mental divide between Shreveport and Bossier City because of the Red River. During my time serving in deep south Louisiana, I vividly saw psychological and emotional barriers between the east side and west side of the Atchafalaya River. In our area, it is not a secret that historically the Ouachita River has also served to produce a similar separator in the minds of people.

As I read the Gospels and view the life of Jesus, he was in the business of tearing down two significant road-blocks – the wall of separation between God & man because of sin, and the divisions between people (male-female, Jew-Gentile, etc.) because of cultural obstacles.

I pray that this new chapter in the ministry of our associational area will cause us to better develop partnerships and eliminate walls of preference and prejudice. Simply said, may the churches of Ouachita and Morehouse not just form a single Association, but more so, may we “associate” with each other. We have churches that send teams thousands of miles across the planet to minister to the “uttermost part of the world” but simultaneously are physically and emotionally disengaged from communities that can be reached by a 30 minute drive. Can we do both?

In closing, notice the new logo -- Two parishes bridged by a cross. Let’s strive to make that image a reality.

Steven L. Kelly
Associational Mission Strategist

ECON
EVANGELISM CONFERENCE

INSPIRING SPEAKERS | EXCITING WORSHIP | EQUIPPING SEMINARS | AND MORE!

JAN. 26-27, 2026
FIRST BAPTIST | LAFAYETTE

LouisianaBaptists.org/ECON

SEND RELIEF
SERVE TOUR
MONROE

**JOIN US TO
SERVE OUR CITY!**

August 21-22, 2026 Learn more at [ServeTour.org](https://www.ServeTour.org)

Congratulations on your January Anniversary!

- ✝ **Brent Avara**, music minister ~ 9 years ~ Cheniere, West Monroe
- ✝ **Chad Ballard**, pastor ~ 3 years ~ Mt. Vernon, West Monroe
- ✝ **McKenzie Buchanan**, senior adult/Counseling Center ministry assistant ~ 4 years ~ First, West Monroe
- ✝ **Blake Davis**, contemporary worship pastor ~ **20 years** ~ North Monroe
- ✝ **Derek Dozier**, associate pastor ~ 1 year ~ Lakeshore, Monroe
- ✝ **Jay George**, associate pastor ~ **5 years** ~ First, Swartz
- ✝ **Katie Gordy**, Children’s Minister ~ 2 years ~ North Monroe, Bastrop Campus
- ✝ **Dennis Hackler**, pastor ~ 9 years ~ Cherry Ridge, Bastrop
- ✝ **Jarrod Hawthorne**, pastor ~ 12 years ~ The Crossing, Monroe
- ✝ **Tiffany Hollis**, ministry assistant ~ **5 years** ~ New Chapel Hill, West Monroe
- ✝ **Mike Holloway**, pastor ~ **10 years** ~ Ouachita, West Monroe
- ✝ **Hunter Johnson**, music minister ~ 3 years ~ Bonita Road, Bastrop
- ✝ **Peggy Moffett**, Family Services administrative assistant ~ 18 years ~ Louisiana Baptist Children’s Home and Family Ministries, Monroe
- ✝ **Susan Nuner**, secretary ~ **20 years** ~ Highland Park, Monroe
- ✝ **Greg Oden**, worship leader ~ **5 years** ~ New Chapel Hill, West Monroe
- ✝ **Anna Pitts**, preschool minister ~ 10 years ~ North Monroe
- ✝ **Marian Riles**, office manager ~ 9 years ~ First, Bastrop
- ✝ **Lindle Stewart**, pastor ~ 22 years ~ New Light, Monroe
- ✝ **Chanan Van de Brake**, children’s ministry associate ~ 3 years ~ North Monroe
- ✝ **Lynn Wilson**, administrative pastor ~ 13 years ~ Cedar Crest, West Monroe
- ✝ **Joey Young**, international missions pastor ~2 years ~ North Monroe

Churches Connecting

Positions Available:

Pastor – Cheniere, Emmanuel, Oak Hill

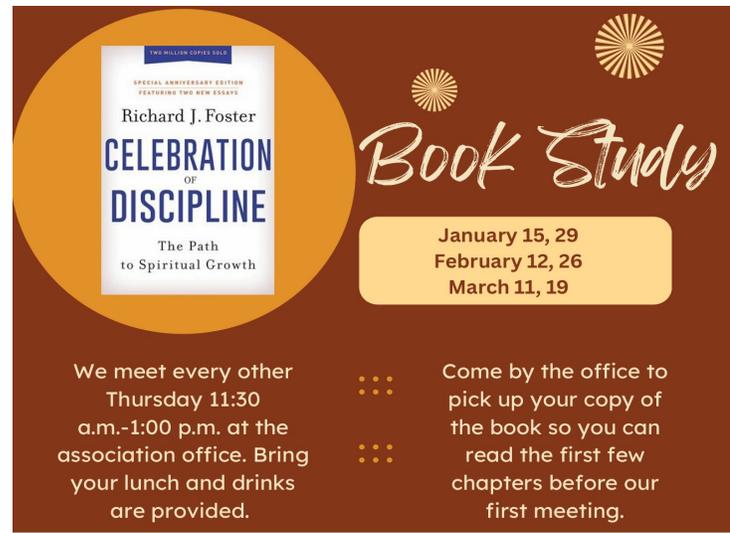
Worship Leader – Highland, Watson

Students/Youth – Cypress

Children's Minister – New Chapel Hill

Musician – Pine Grove, (pianist or guitarist) If interested call 318.669.4790.

Connection Deadline: January 15.



Richard J. Foster
CELEBRATION OF DISCIPLINE
The Path to Spiritual Growth

Book Study

January 15, 29
February 12, 26
March 11, 19

We meet every other Thursday 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. at the association office. Bring your lunch and drinks are provided.

Come by the office to pick up your copy of the book so you can read the first few chapters before our first meeting.

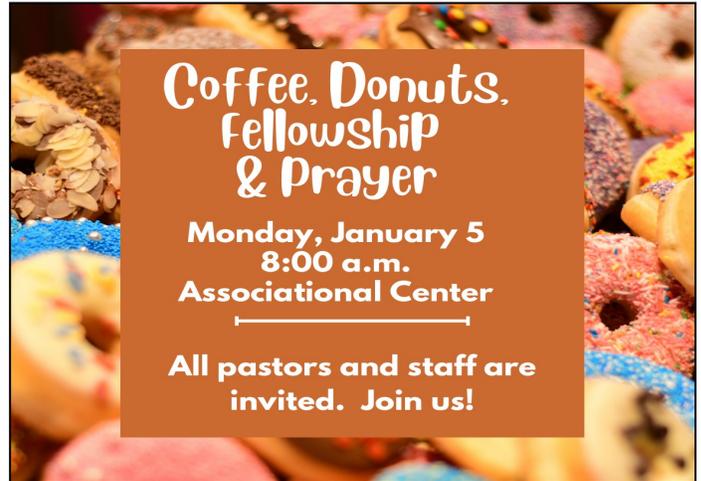


Northeast
LIFE MARCH
IN MONROE-WEST MONROE

LOVE THEM BOTH

JANUARY 25, 2026 | 2 PM

LALIFEMARCH.COM



Coffee, Donuts, Fellowship & Prayer

Monday, January 5
8:00 a.m.
Associational Center

All pastors and staff are invited. Join us!



Our annual NELBA Christmas party on Dec. 9 was a great time of fellowship. Jimmy & Mendy White from McClendon BC were our entertainment for the evening. Thanks to the ULM BCM for hosting!



An associational WMU brunch was held Dec. 2 with an emphasis on Lottie Moon. Their speaker was Joy Regan.

Calendar of Events

Northeast Louisiana Baptist Association

January 2026

- 1 **New Year's Day**
- 5 **Coffee, Donuts, Fellowship & Prayer** at 8:00 A.M. at the Associational Center. All pastors and staff are invited.
- 9-10 **Senior Pastors Retreat** at Seeker Springs
- 15 **Book Study Begins**, 11:30 A.M. at Associational Center
- 20 **Pastor/Staff Fellowship and Executive Board**, 11:30 A.M., First, Bastrop
- 29 **Book Study continues**

February 2026

- 2 **Coffee, Donuts, Fellowship & Prayer**, 8:00 A.M. at Associational Center. All pastors & staff are invited.
- 12 **Book Study continues**
- 14 **Valentine's Day**
- 19 **Steve Horn's Listening Tour**, 9:30 A.M., at Associational Center
- 26 **Book Study continues**



Louisiana Baptists

January 2026

- 26-27 **ECON** (Louisiana Baptists Evangelism Conference), First Baptist, Lafayette
- 27 **Senior Adult Luncheon** at ECON, First Baptist, Lafayette

February 2026

- 15 **Focus on WMU Sunday**
- 6-7 **Pause Retreat: A Weekend for Pastors & Wives**, Tall Timbers, Woodworth

TOGETHER

2026

A Cooperative Listening Tour
February 19 at 9:30 A.M.

NELBA office

Dr. Steve Horn will be here to listen to you and discuss our commitment to the Cooperative Program. He is having