

May 2026



The Connection

Steven L. Kelly - Associational Mission Strategist
Alise Wyant - Ministry Assistant

PASTOR/STAFF FELLOWSHIP AND EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

Join us for lunch,
fellowship and business.

May 19
11:30 a.m.
Lakeshore Baptist

SEND RELIEF
SERVE TOUR
MONROE

JOIN US TO

SERVE OUR CITY!

Mark your
calendar for
this amazing
mission
opportunity!

August 21-22, 2026

Learn more at [ServeTour.org](https://www.ServeTour.org)

📞 318.537.9548

📍 7103 DeSiard Street
Monroe LA 71203

✉️ office@nela-morehouse.org
steve@nela-morehouse.org

🌐 www.nela-morehouse.org

2026 SUMMER CAMPS

DAY CAMPS

Day Camp 1: June 1-5
 Day Camp 2: June 8-12
 Day Camp 3: June 15-19
 Day Camp 4: June 22-26
 Day Camp 5: July 20-24

For campers ages 6-12
 Time: 8:00am-5:00 pm
 Cost: \$210
 *Bus Transportation Available

Seeker Springs Ministry
 1280 Okaloosa Rd
 Eros, LA
 (318)249-4495
 seekersprings.com



GIRLS CAMP

Girls Camp 1: June 8-12
 Girls Camp 2: June 15-19

For Girls Ages 8-12
 Cost: \$285

BOYS CAMP

June 22-26

For Boys Ages 8-12
 Cost: \$285

SLAM CAMP

June 29-July 4

For Campers Grades 6-12
 Cost: \$325

Congratulations on your April/May Anniversary!

April

- **Wes Coleman**, young adult minister * 4 years * McClendon
- **Alex Toms**, student minister * 4 years * McClendon

May

- **Christian Charrier**, student minister * 1 year * Parkview
- **Elaine Clark**, financial assistant * 3 years * Parkview
- **Warren Eckhardt**, pastoral care and administrative pastor * 34 years * North Monroe
- **Seth Forque**, student minister * 3 years * Highland
- **Casey Johnson**, pastor * 12 years * Bonita Road
- **Waylon McCormick**, administrative pastor * 32 years * Ouachita
- **John McKenzie**, pastor * 1 year * Pine Grove
- **Sharon Moore**, administrative assistant * 18 years * North Monroe
- **David Willoughby**, pastor * 18 years * Calvary
- **Bobby Wilson**, pastor * 27 years * Pine Hills
- **Michael Wood**, lead pastor * 12 years * First West Monroe

NELBA
 Coffee/Donuts/Prayer & Fellowship
MONDAY, MAY 4
 8:00 a.m. Associational Center
 Begin your day with us!

PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR CHURCH'S ... VBS ... Information
 We need church name, dates, times and VBS theme sent to the office for publication in our June issue.
 Call: 318.537.9548 or
 Email: office@nela-morehouse.org

NELBA Block Party Trailer

Our block party trailer is available for your church's VBS and other summer events!

It has the following for you to use:
 3 jumpers, popcorn machine, snow cone machine, large ice chest, a long table and a small sound system.

The cost is only \$150 and then \$50 a day for each additional day.

Call or email the NELBA office to reserve it!



CONGRATULATIONS



NORTHEAST BAPTIST SCHOOL *Graduates*



CLASS OF
2026



Chloe Bass	Ella Norris
Caleb Calhoun	Jacob Poulin
Aly Johnson	Logan Spears
Lila-Anne Johnson	Lizzy Williamson
Becca McDaniel	

Email us about your church events by the 15th of the month to be included in the next newsletter.

Positions Available

- Pastor** - Emmanuel, Oak Hill, New Hope (Jones), Rescue
- Worship Leader** - Highland, Watson
- Students/Youth** - Cypress
- Students/Music** - Ouachita
- Children's Minister** - New Chapel Hill, Mt. Vernon
- Musician** - Pine Grove - pianist or guitarist
Greenacres - pianist (Call 318-282-2870 if interested.)
Grace - pianist



From the Associational Mission Strategist



The NELBA office building was completed in 2011. At that time, the AMS chose to display in the small conference room every existing SBC church in Ouachita and Morehouse Parishes. There are 74 church sanctuary building photos displayed in four large frames on either side of this room. I use these photos as a historical marker to reflect where we have been and where we are headed.

Fast forward to 2026, and you will see that 24 of these have gone through a significant change. Thirteen of these have closed. Nine have gone through a name change, new location, or have transitioned into a new or different type of SBC church. Two even petitioned to leave the SBC and our association.

The point I want to make is that in a relatively short period of time, one-third of our churches have made historic changes that have resulted in the ministry moving in a different direction. Some of these changes have been good. Many have resulted in congregations disbanding.

As I look at the remainder of these photos, some have grown substantially and others have declined dramatically. Economic development in some area, business downturns in others, demographic changes, and other factors have caused congregations to move up or down. Many have remained about the same.

Change is inevitable. The world will change around the church without permission from the church. Lots of church folks think that somehow the walls of the church building will serve as a barrier to a changing world around them and allow them to keep reliving a preferred season in history that is long gone.

Both as a pastor & AMS, I have learned that the most peaceful course in the short run as a ministry leader is to maintain the status quo. The most damaging decision for the long run is to mark time and hope to just get through it. Avoided change eventually becomes imposed upon you.

If we could interview the 13 churches that closed in the last 15 years I believe we would hear a similar story – they disliked change, resisted it, but ultimately were forced to face it. Instead of approaching change under their own terms, they had to confront multiple changes they had no control over. Some decided that they would close rather than change.

I read a book a few years ago that made this statement – “Most organizations would rather undergo slow death than deep change.”

I write this in the context of studying “Autopsy of a Deceased Church” with many of our church leaders. It is far better to learn from those who were unwilling to change and died than to be the subject of the study.

Changes are coming. Are you changing?

Steven L. Kelly
Associational Mission Strategist

NELBA Events

May 2026

- 4 **Coffee, Donuts, Fellowship, & Prayer,**
8:00 a.m. at Associational Center
- 7 **National Day of Prayer**
- 10 **Mother's Day**
- 14 **Book Study Concludes**
- 19 **Executive Board** and Pastor/Staff
Fellowship, 11:30 a.m., Lakeshore
- 25 **Memorial Day** (Associational Center closed)

June 2026

- 7-8 **Pastors' Conference,** Orlando FL
- 9-10 **Southern Baptist Convention,** Orlando FL
- 21 **Father's Day**
- 30 **Pastor/Staff and Spouses Fish Fry,**
6:00 p.m., Associational Center

Louisiana Baptist Events

May 2026

- 3 **Seminary Sunday**
- 17 **Children's Ministry Sunday**
- 31 **Disaster Relief Sunday**

June 2026

- 1-5 **Breakaway Camp 1**
- 7-8 **Pastors' Conference,** Orlando FL
- 9-10 **Southern Baptist Convention,** Orlando FL
- 8-12 **Breakaway Camp 2**
- 15-19 **Breakaway Camp 3**
- 25-27 **Breakaway Camp 4**
- 29-7/2 **Kid's Camp 1**



National Day of Prayer
MAY 7, 2026
West Monroe
2026 Mayor's Prayer Breakfast
7:30 am
West Monroe Sports & Events Center
Tickets available for purchase online for \$25
Monroe
(At the time of publication, the city of Monroe had no advertised event)