

# The Messenger

Holston Baptist Association

Vol. LXXXII

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NO. 2

## FROM THE DESK OF THE AMS

# Ministry in the Normative-Sized Church

by Dr. Troy Rust

We often find ourselves describing local churches as though they were french fries – small, medium, and large (with the occasional family size fry – the megachurch). To avoid sounding like “small” churches are less significant than “big” ones, the conversation has turned in recent years to a discussion of normative-sized churches. Yes, these churches are average in size, but we would never want to imply that they are “average” in quality.

Here’s what the numbers look like in the Southern Baptist Convention, for percentage of SBC Churches with various sizes in Worship Attendance:

<50	43%
50-99	27%
100-249	20%
250-499	6%
500+	4%

To put it simply, if your church runs less than 100 in weekly worship attendance, you are part of the normal SBC church. If your church runs more than 100, you are in the top 30%! Surprised? You probably are if you have never seen these statistics. The numbers surprise us because the large (1000+) and mega (2000+)

churches get most of the attention by producing many of the programs and keynote speakers in our denominational world. Yet the church of 10,000 is no more of a church than the church of 10.

Our upcoming HBA Spring Meeting (April 16 at Antioch) will focus on Ministry in the Normative-Sized Church and How You Can Strengthen It. We will focus on ministry within normative-sized churches and the ways that larger churches can help them. In the meantime, WE NEED YOUR HELP! What areas of normative-sized church ministry would you like to hear about? We will build the structure and content of the meeting based on your responses, so please reach out with your responses today by calling (423) 929-1196 or emailing [troy@holstonba.org](mailto:troy@holstonba.org).

Size does not determine whether your church is vanilla or vibrant. Let’s dig deeply into God’s design laid out in His Word to be the churches He has called us to be!

With hands to the plow,  
**Dr. Troy Rust**

Associational Mission Strategist  
Holston Baptist Assoc.

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## MINISTRY UPDATE

### Johnson City Baptist Center

*from Anna Huggins*

“Jesus loves me this I know,  
For the Bible tells me so,  
Little ones to him belong,  
They are weak, but he is strong.”

Most of us learned this song when we were very young. I sang this song every night, and many other times, to each of our six daughters as they were growing. Now, our grandchildren have learned from the cradle, the words sung about the love of Jesus. Singing “Jesus Loves Me” has been just one way for us to share the gospel message of Jesus in our family over the years.

At the Baptist Center, we are also called to share the gospel message of Jesus’s love with the children we reach in the community. It may be with a song, an activity or craft, but always with the Bible, we teach

about who Jesus is. There is no greater love to share than of Jesus, who gave himself as a sacrifice for our sin. We desire and pray for the children to know him and accept his love and salvation for themselves.

When Jesus was in the world, he welcomed the children to come to him and blessed them. Three of the gospels tell of the time when the disciples told the people not to bother Jesus with their children. Jesus encouraged them, though, to come to him, and said the kingdom of God belongs to them. Mark 10:16, is the only gospel that shares of Jesus taking the children in his arms, then he blesses them. What a beautiful picture of the love and acceptance of Jesus, for those who come to him. We want to be like Jesus, so that these precious children who we

have grown to know and love, would come to know him as their Saviour.

During the month of February, would you:

- \* Pray with us for the children to come to saving faith in Jesus,
- \* Consider volunteering for weekly Children’s Bible studies,
- \* Sign up to teach VBS a week this summer at the Baptist Center,
- \* Give a donation to replace playground equipment.

Thank you for supporting our ministry, and joining us in sharing with the children:

“Yes, Jesus loves me,  
Yes, Jesus loves me,  
Yes, Jesus loves me,  
The Bible tells me so.”

Share His Love

**Anna Huggins**

Director of Ministries  
Johnson City Baptist Center

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**WMU**<sup>®</sup> God’s mission.  
Our passion.

### Associational WMU Meeting

The meeting will take place Saturday, February 7, 2026, at 10:30 AM. We will meet downstairs at the HBA Office, located at 207 University Pkwy, Johnson City, TN.

Serving together in the mission of God.  
Please bring a snack to share, and a friend.

## GUEST FEATURE

# HBA Student Conference

*from Jimmy Jordan*

Many know it as “HBA,” “Ridgecrest,” or just “Student Conference,” but it does not matter what you call it, the HBA Student Conference is a weekend that many church youth groups look forward to. With a widespread assembly, both inside and outside the Holston association, churches gather for a weekend of intentional discipleship, fellowship, and evangelistic emphasis. The conference presents a facet of memorable moments that students recall and discuss years later.

“It’s encouraging to see church groups from around the association gather together and worship the Lord.”

– William Woolsey (FBC Greeneville)

This year’s 41st conference will take place on March 20-22, 2026 at the familiar Ridgecrest Conference Center in North Carolina. Youth groups will pack into church buses, vans, and cars to make their way, roughly 80 miles, to the beautiful western Carolina setting found at Ridgecrest. The facilities offer ample space, where church groups can take advantage of lodging, dining, and recreational areas. Planning for the weekend is done throughout the year by a team of youth pastors and leaders from the association. During the weekend a series of main sessions and breakouts help to focus students on

scriptural teachings and discipleship. Topics are carefully chosen to reflect relevant issues students face in their walk with the Lord. Youth are encouraged throughout the weekend to know and walk in a relationship with Jesus. Main sessions contain games, worship led by a live praise band and a series of messages brought by a guest speaker who presents the main theme. The theme is then broken down in depth during breakout sessions and time is allotted for church groups to share and discuss teachings amongst themselves.

“HBA conference is a great weekend where you can deepen your faith. I love all the breakout sessions they offer and each one helps me understand more about God’s word.”

– Andrew Sells (FBC Blountville)

The theme for this year’s conference is center around Psalm 46, “Be still, and know that I am God.” In a world of ever-present changes and distraction, the conference is aimed at having students hear the Word of Truth and recognize their need; to stop in the business of life, acknowledge God for who he is and what he has done, and surrender their lives to the Lordship of Christ Jesus, the Great I Am.

“Ridgecrest is a very fun weekend, my favorite part is the fellowship of everyone...

... being immersed within the gospel. The experience is eye-opening for my faith and spiritual growth.”

– Hannah Braddock (FBC Bluff City)

The youth ministry team asks that you remember the Holston Student Conference and students in your prayers. That lives would be eternally changed as a result of God moving throughout the weekend.

I love how we as young teens can stand up and praise the lord, without getting embarrassed. I love to hear all of the voices singing! And hanging with everybody!

– Lilly Andrews (Mt. Zion Baptist)

We look forward to ongoing efforts to reach, teach and encourage our youth to live bold transformed live for the glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

If your church or youth leader would like more information about youth ministry work in and around the Holston Baptist Association, please reach out to the Holston office at (423) 929-1196 or Jimmy Jordan ([jimmyj@fbcgreeneville.com](mailto:jimmyj@fbcgreeneville.com)).

## Jimmy Jordan

HBA Student Conference  
Coordinator

## HBA Evangelism Training

Gospel Conversations with Dr. David Evans

Mountain View Baptist Church

Thursday, February 26, 2026

Dinner to begin at 5:30pm

On February 26th, the HBA is having an Evangelism Training, to be hosted at Mountain View Baptist Church!

The speaker for the event will be Dr. David Evans, who will be speaking on Gospel Conversations.

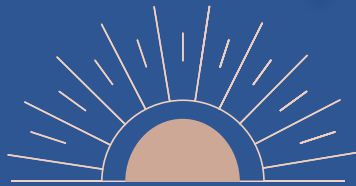
This is an incredible opportunity to be spurred on in evangelism for you and your church!

Only \$10/person to attend!

Event will be hosted by Mountain View Baptist Church at  
150 Champions Ln, Johnson City, TN 37601

Email the HBA Office at [hba@holstonba.org](mailto:hba@holstonba.org) to RSVP

Monday  
MANNA



FEBRUARY 23RD  
10:30-12:30

February Birthdays

7 -- Willie Lunsford  
13 -- Randal Morton  
13 -- Paul Garrit

21 -- Mark Newman  
25 -- Bart Richardson



Are we missing your pastor's birthday? Contact the HBA Office and let us know!

## **DISASTER RELIEF TRAINING**

SBC Disaster Relief of Tennessee will be hosting a training weekend at Boone Trail Baptist Church, March 13-14, 2026. Getting trained is a great way to prepare yourself to be ready to serve the vulnerable at any time, when disaster strikes! For more information, or to sign up, visit <https://tndisasterrelief.org/event/east-tn-disaster-relief-regional-training-east-tn/>

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## **TruthRising Documentary viewing at Antioch Baptist Church**

You Are Invited to join the Antioch Church family for a viewing of the documentary TruthRising on Feb. 4th. at 6:30 in the sanctuary. This impactful film, co-produced by Focus on the Family and The Colson Center, recognizes the growing interest in things Biblical in this troubling and chaotic world. Young people particularly have become seekers of "Spiritual truth". The film encourages believers to be active and steadfast in "contending for the truth". You are welcome to join us!

TruthRising Documentary Viewing

Antioch Baptist Church

1014 Antioch Rd, Johnson City, TN 37504

Wednesday, February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Beginning at 6:30pm

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## **PASTORS' WORKOUT FELLOWSHIP**

We all know how difficult it can be to work a full time job, steward our responsibilities well as husbands and fathers, care for a congregation, juggle meetings, and prepare a sermon each week. With all of that to do, it is easy to let physical health slip. But, as men who have been born again, we have a God-given responsibility to steward each part of our lives well, and that includes our bodies!

In light of this, the HBA will be starting a Pastors' Workout Fellowship. This will be a weekly time for pastors to gather together with one another and with a trainer, to learn more about how to get in shape, and stay in shape, while ministering well to our churches and maintaining our many other responsibilities!

If you are interested, reach out to the HBA office at [hba@holstonba.org](mailto:hba@holstonba.org).

## HBA Job Board

### **Holston Baptist Association**

#### **Summer Intern**

*Johnson City, TN | Part-Time, Temporary*

The Holston Baptist Association is hosting our second annual Summer Internship. This is a paid internship for 18-25 year old men and women who are working through a call to ministry. This is a great opportunity for us to give both practical and theological training to the next generation of ministers and missionaries! In just 8 weeks, interns will get to work with HBA churches with evangelistic events, help run the HBA Kids Camp, join our churches on domestic missions, and have the opportunity to sit under the teaching and discipleship of our AMS, Dr. Troy Rust. For more information, visit [holstonba.org/jobs](http://holstonba.org/jobs), or email [hba@holstonba.org](mailto:hba@holstonba.org).

### **Tennessee Avenue Baptist Church**

#### **Preaching Pastor**

*Bristol, TN | Full Time*

Tennessee Avenue Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking a Spirit-led Preaching Pastor to join our pastoral team. If God is leading you to apply, please send your resume and sermon video links to [mrspeggy@tabaptist.org](mailto:mrspeggy@tabaptist.org)

### **Cherokee Baptist Church**

#### **Senior Pastor**

*Jonesborough, TN | Bi-Vocational*

Please send resume, references and cover letter (experience and vision) to Cherokee Baptist Church, 143 Mayberry Rd. Jonesborough, TN 37659. ATTN: Pastor Search Committee or via email: [cherokeepastorsearch@gmail.com](mailto:cherokeepastorsearch@gmail.com).

### **University Parkway Baptist Church**

#### **Worship Leader**

*Johnson City, TN | Part-Time*

The Worship Leader will provide spiritual, musical, and organizational leadership to guide the congregation in authentic worship. This role involves planning and leading weekly worship services, fostering a Christ-centered culture of worship, and equipping musicians and volunteers to serve with excellence. More information can be found at [holstonba.org/jobs](http://holstonba.org/jobs). Candidates may apply to [office@upbaptist.org](mailto:office@upbaptist.org).

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Visit [holstonba.org/jobs](http://holstonba.org/jobs) to view more information or apply for the listed openings.

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## Pray for Churches Without Pastors

- Central Baptist Church, JC
- Cherokee, Jonesborough
- Clark Street, JC
- Muddy Creek, Piney Flats
- Southwestern, JC
- Sulphur Springs, Jonesborough
- Shallow Ford, Erwin
- Tennessee Avenue, Bristol

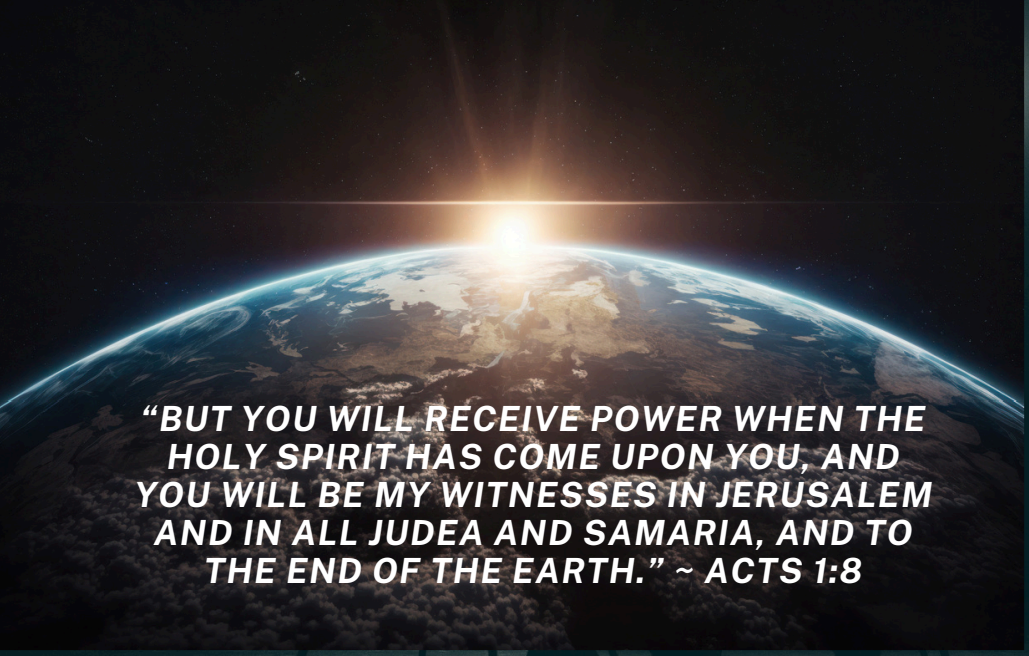


28 FEBRUARY 2026

Buffalo Trail Baptist Church  
1829 Sherwood Drive,  
Morristown

9 AM - 3 PM

PLEASE PREREGISTER BY  
FEBRUARY 14 ~ TEXT OR  
CALL: 423-312-3383 OR  
423-585-7163



**“BUT YOU WILL RECEIVE POWER WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS COME UPON YOU, AND YOU WILL BE MY WITNESSES IN JERUSALEM AND IN ALL JUDEA AND SAMARIA, AND TO THE END OF THE EARTH.” ~ ACTS 1:8**

# EAST TN MISSIONS GATHERING

8 AM

## REGISTRATION

We can't wait to see how God will move during this incredible time of connection and inspiration! Get ready for powerful worship, life-changing stories, and opportunities to be part of something bigger than yourself.

9 AM - 10 AM

## WELCOME, OPENING WORSHIP & SPEAKER

Today we gather to unite in worship, lift our voices in praise, and prepare our hearts to hear from a speaker who will inspire and challenge us with the call to missions.

10 AM - 11:30 AM

## BREAKOUT SESSIONS

These smaller gatherings are a chance to explore practical insights, hear inspiring stories, and engage in meaningful conversations about how God is at work around the world. May this time spark new vision and equip you for the mission ahead.

11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

## LUNCH BREAK & MISSION FAIR

As we pause for lunch, take this time not only to enjoy a meal together but also to explore the Mission Fair. It's a wonderful opportunity to connect with ministries and learn how you can be part of the story.

12:30 PM - 3 PM

## BREAKOUT SESSIONS, CLOSING WORSHIP & SPEAKER

As we move into our last breakout sessions of the day, this is your opportunity to join a session you may not have been able to attend earlier. It's a final chance to explore new mission topics, connect with others, and gain fresh insights before we gather again for worship and our closing speaker.