



# LINCOLN ASSOCIATION OF BAPTISTS Newsletter

[svabaptist.org](http://svabaptist.org) • 270-765-4023 • [office.lincolnab@gmail.com](mailto:office.lincolnab@gmail.com)



## To the point--a word from our AMS

by: Mitch Whidden

I'd like to get right to the point so let's talk about why we exist and what's next. First, why we exist:

***“The Lincoln association of Baptist exist for the purpose of supporting the fellowship, missional engagement, equipping, and strengthening of local churches.”***

If we are not actively engaged in all these areas, we lose our right to exist as an organized association. Our whole purpose is wrapped up in the collaborative missional engagement of and with our churches. As we are organizing around these 4 main areas of focus, I want to highlight a few things that are coming up next. Obviously, this is not all we are doing but it is indicative of steps we are taking to ensure we are healthy and mission minded as an association of churches.

- Fellowship-We will be having 4 prayer gatherings this summer in 4 locations around our association. These gatherings will serve the purpose of praying for each region within our association and establishing prayer partnerships among our pastors in these areas. They will also serve as a time to listen to the unique ideas and concerns of the churches in that area. Stay tuned for times and locations.
- Missional engagement- Mission scholarships are now available to all our participating churches. Whether your trips are national or international we want to help fund your missions. Just let me or Jessi know in the office and we will get a brief application form to you.



### UPCOMING DATES:

<b>JUNE</b> <b>1</b>	Fuel for the Faithful Association Office 10am-12pm
<b>JUNE</b> <b>7-10</b>	SBC Convention Orlando
<b>JUNE</b> <b>29</b>	Church Website Clinic Association Office
<b>JULY</b> <b>6</b>	Fuel for the Faithful Association Office 10am-12pm
<b>JULY</b> <b>14</b>	Executive Board Meeting Association Office 6:30pm
<b>AUG</b> <b>3</b>	Fuel for the Faithful Association Office 10am-12pm

- Equipping-We have recognized a need to raise up leaders within our churches. We need more pastors, teachers, and leaders in general. Therefore, we are starting the Advance Bible Institute in partnership with Gateway Seminary this September. This will provide a Bible college level experience of learning for our local practitioners. So, whether you have no formal education or would just like to brush up on the Bible, this will help to equip our churches and local leaders.
- Strengthening churches- All the above-mentioned help to strengthen our churches. However, we want to ensure that we are also helping to strengthen and support our pastors. Since healthy pastors and healthy churches go hand in hand, we have started a monthly gathering called, Fuel for the Faithful, in which we generally meet on the first Monday of every month for a time of fellowship and encouragement. These gatherings include a lunch to let our pastors know we appreciate them and a time of fellowship with an encouraging speaker to give them a little more fuel to keep going.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support! Look forward to seeing you soon.

Mitch Whidden AMS

# CHILD EVANGELISM FELLOWSHIP REACHING MILLIONS OF CHILDREN WORLDWIDE

Founded in 1937, Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) has spent decades sharing the Gospel with children around the world. Today, the ministry continues to expand its outreach, even after facing challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. While many churches and ministries struggled during 2020, CEF discovered new opportunities through technology. Online platforms such as Zoom opened doors for the organization to reach children in countries where missionaries are often difficult to send. “God used something bad that affected us all for good at CEF,” said Terry Spencer, local director of the Heartland Chapter.

In 2025 alone, CEF reached 35 million children worldwide. With an estimated 4 billion children across the globe, the organization has set a goal of reaching 100 million children by 2032. “There’s still a lot of work to be done,” Spencer said.

According to the organization’s website, the closest chapter, the Heartland Chapter, serves ten counties in Kentucky, including Breckinridge, Meade, Grayson, Hardin, Hart, Green, LaRue, Taylor, Marion, and Nelson counties. “We reach out to local churches and communities to see how we can serve them and help grow children’s ministries within their churches,” Spencer explained.

CEF’s mission focuses on evangelizing children, discipling them, and connecting them with Bible-believing churches. “Our job is to evangelize to kids, disciple them, and then enroll them in Bible-believing churches,” Spencer said.



Since 1937

One of CEF’s most recognized ministries is the Good News Club, an after-school program that equips volunteers with training and provides free digital resources for churches and clubs. The program operates in nearly every country around the world. “This really is an amazing ministry,” Spencer said. “After 80 years, we’re still teaching the same things.” Another outreach program is the 5-Day Bible Club, a backyard-style Bible club that brings ministry directly into neighborhoods and communities. Local churches partner with CEF to host these clubs where children already gather. CEF also hosts Christmas Party Clubs, a 1-1.5 hour program designed to teach children the true meaning of Christmas.

In addition to its local outreach programs, CEF offers several ministry and training opportunities. The organization operates a digital ministry called U-Nite and sponsors Christian Youth in Action, a program that trains young people to teach Bible lessons, lead songs, and conduct 5-Day Bible Clubs.



“We need more local directors, children’s ministry directors, and prayer,” Spencer said. “Prayer is everything.” She emphasized that one of the organization’s greatest needs is support from local pastors and churches. “If your church hosts a Good News Club, you are allowed to invite those children to your church,” she said.

According to Spencer, 90% of donations remain within the local chapter to help cover supplies, rent, ministry expenses, and outreach efforts. She also volunteers her own time to serve the organization. Churches and community members can support CEF through sponsorships, donations, prayer, and volunteer opportunities.

Spencer said seeing life change in children continues to motivate her ministry work. “I’ve seen the difference it makes in children’s lives,” she said. “When you see those little changes after they’ve accepted Jesus into their lives, it means the world to me.”

In April, the Executive Board Meeting, we approved to allow CEF to rent space within our association building. If you want to set up a meeting to see what she can do for your Children’s ministry or come meet her, contact her at:

Terry Spencer  
Child Evangelism Fellowship – Heartland Chapter  
Elizabethtown, KY 42702  
270-735-2856  
heartland@cefkentucky.com

# Equipping Leaders, Strengthening Churches: Seminary-Level Training Comes to the Association

What if seminary-level education was available locally, affordably, and designed specifically for everyday ministry leaders? Beginning this fall, the Association will launch a new partnership with Advance Institute to provide accessible theological education right from the association office. This initiative is designed to equip pastors, teachers, deacons, and church leaders with practical, ministry-focused training that will strengthen churches and advance the Gospel.

Advance Bible Institute through Gateway Seminary offers the benefit of seminary-quality education through both local and distance-learning opportunities. As one of six seminaries, Advance Institute has built its mission around making theological education accessible to those actively serving in ministry. Courses are taught by experienced local pastors, and programs are currently offered throughout the country and around the world. The Institute will provide guidance, resources, and ongoing support throughout the entire process.

This ministry initiative will be led by Ed Scott, who brings more than 17 years of experience as a professor and administrator at The Baptist University of Florida.

**“It’s like  
a  
seminary  
in your  
backyard”  
-Ed Scott**

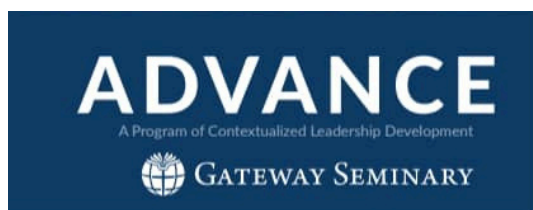
During his time there, he taught preaching, graduate writing, pastoral ministry, and several other ministry-related courses. Halfway through his tenure, he also became involved in accreditation work for the university. In addition to his academic experience, Scott served for many years as a bivocational pastor and spent the last decade serving as senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Geneva.

“We have many goals but one of the first goals is to make sure we provide seminary quality education for anyone who is a ministry leader or church leader. If they have a passion, we want to equip that passion. If we equip people, that will strengthen churches, then that will strengthen the Association, and ultimately will spread the gospel.”

Two classes will be offered during the fall semester and will meet on Sunday and Tuesday evenings at the association office. Tuition is \$50 per credit hour, averaging approximately \$150 per course. These classes are designed to benefit a wide range of ministry leaders, including Sunday school teachers, pastors, deacons, and others serving within the local church.

For more information or to register for classes, contact Ed Scott by phone, text, or email.

Ed Scott  
edscott206@gmail.com  
(334) 258-0723





# Text LAB to:

1-833- 326 6603

for texts regarding  
upcoming info!



# FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH

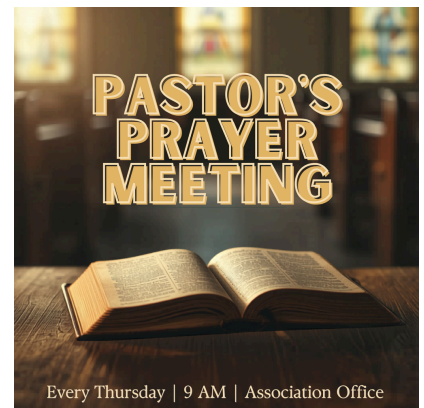
@ the Association Office

**10AM-12PM**

# PASTOR PRAYER MEETING

@ the Association Office

**9AM | THURSDAY**



LINCOLN  
ASSOCIATION  
OF BAPTISTS

# ADD OUR OUR NEW FACEBOOK PAGE!

**YOU MAY BE UNSUBSCRIBED!**

Need something?  
Updated office hours for the  
Ministry Assistant:

Monday: 9am-2pm  
Thursday: 9am-2pm



## Serving at Camp Crossway in Pawnee, Oklahoma

From July 18–25, Ovesen Heights will travel to Pawnee, Oklahoma, to serve alongside Camp Crossway. This mission trip has become a meaningful annual ministry opportunity, bringing together several churches with one shared purpose: showing the love of Christ to children and families that are apart of this camp. Each year, three to five churches travel with them to help lead the camp, some from the Association, and many volunteers from the surrounding Oklahoma area also join in. For smaller churches like Ovesen Heights, partnering together makes mission work like this possible. As Pastor Merrill Kurtz explains, “Most of the churches are too small, like Ovesen Heights, to do a mission trip alone.”

The ministry takes place at Camp Crossway, a faith-based summer camp located on a 60 acre farm in Pawnee County, Oklahoma. The camp was started more than 20 years ago by Pastor Jimmy Kenner, who wanted to create a safe and stable environment where children could gather during the summer months. Over the years, Ovesen has developed a strong relationship with Pastor Jimmy and the ministry at Camp Crossway. The need for this outreach is great. In many of the communities we serve, struggles such as alcoholism, neglect, and abuse are common. Through this camp, children are given a place where they can experience encouragement, stability, and the love of Jesus Christ.

During the week, our team hosts an all day Vacation Bible School camp. “We bring the same VBS program and materials that we use at our home church and adapt it into a full day camp experience for the children in Oklahoma”, states Pastor Kurtz. Activities typically run from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and include Bible lessons, games, crafts, music, meals, and fellowship. After the day’s camp activities end, volunteers continue serving through construction and improvement projects around the campgrounds and facilities. Donations toward these projects are always appreciated and help improve the ministry’s ability to serve children year after year.

Pastor Merrill Kurtz has been leading the trip for the past 11 years, while Ovesen Heights has participated for 13 years overall. Reflecting on the ministry, Pastor Kurtz shared, “I love the ministry and what they support and it’s also the most peaceful place we’ve been to. I also love the joy on the children’s faces we meet while we’re there.”

We invite anyone interested to join us on this mission trip. It is an affordable opportunity to serve, grow in faith, and make a difference in the lives of children who need hope and encouragement. If you would like more information about traveling with the team or donating toward construction projects, please contact Merrill Kurtz.

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We invite anyone interested to join us on this mission trip. It is an affordable opportunity to serve, grow in faith, and make a difference in the lives of children who need hope and encouragement. If you would like more information about traveling with the team or donating toward construction projects, please contact Pastor Merrill Kurtz. Most importantly, we ask for your prayers. Pray that the Lord will prepare the hearts of the children attending camp and surround them with His love throughout the week. Pray also for the volunteers, leaders, and churches involved as they work together to share the Gospel and serve the community in Pawnee.

Merril Kurtz  
502-536-3390  
merrillkurtz@gmail.com

## Oklahoma



# WIDOWS' MINISTRY

BY DONNA COFFEY



Becoming a widow is much more than the sadness of losing a spouse. After the death, every aspect of their life changes. No longer being part of a couple alters former relationships; cooking/eating alone is difficult daily; sleeping habits are affected; the loneliness can be overwhelming even in a crowd; making decisions alone no matter how small become challenges; and even how they spend their free time is changed.

A startling statistic states that 50% of widows will stop attending the church where they went with their husbands in the first year after the death. Several factors contribute to this: agony of going and sitting alone, seeing other couples sitting together, feeling like the church has forgotten about them soon after the initial shock of the death & funeral is over. The truth is widows need ministering on varied levels for at least 2 years, some longer.

There is no timeline for grief and ministry to widows is not “one size fits all” – they come in all ages, different backgrounds, varied abilities, different needs – but they all desire to know someone cares, understands, and supports them in their difficult journey. It is mandated

in the Bible for churches to care for widows: James 1:27, Acts 6:1-7.

Is your church effectively reaching the widows in your congregation and community? You may reach Donna Coffey at [dcoffeynana5@outlook.com](mailto:dcoffeynana5@outlook.com) for more information.

Donna Coffey is an author and speaker who has been involved in Women's Ministry for over 20 years and Widows' Ministry for the past 9 years. She has written several books including a Bible study for widows and a handbook for church leaders to better minister to widows.

Her ministry focus is two-fold:

1. helping widows find their way from grief to living well despite their circumstances and
2. aiding churches to reach out and effectively minister to the widows in their care.

Donna Coffey  
[dcoffeynana5@outlook.com](mailto:dcoffeynana5@outlook.com)

## Our Faith is a Protective Factor Against Death by Suicide

by: Rev/Dr. Silas J. Session Sr.

According to research conducted by Dr. Julie Cerel, a Licensed Psychologist from the University of Kentucky, 135 people are affected by every death by suicide. [:https://doi.org/10.1111/sltb.12450](https://doi.org/10.1111/sltb.12450) Though all methods of death by suicide are lethal, fire arms deaths, sometimes called lethal means, are the most common way people die by suicide. Fret not, research shows, Just as Jesus said in John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came so that they would have life, and fnhave it abundantly. In other words, our faith is a protective factor, meaning something that decreases the possibility of suicide ideation and death by suicide. According to Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), A few risk factors or things that increase the possibility of suicide and death by suicide are a lack of connection, homelessness, substance use, un and underemployment, some mental health disorders, and having a loved one that died by suicide, just to name a few. Some people have co-occurring conditions which usually could mean mental health and substance disorder, but it could be expanded to any combination of possible risk factors.

The life of a Christian has ups and downs which can include suicide ideation. Prayer, study and application of God's word, and faithful church attendance and participation are the leading actions of faith as protective factors. David said this in Psalm 23:4 way "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. Paul admonished Christians to put on the whole armor of God, in Ephesians 6:10. From the Lord being with us and providing protective armor for us, believers have adequate protection. Paul also told the jailer who was responsible for his unfair and unjust imprisonment, not to harm or kill himself in Acts 16. Paul went on to ultimately baptize this entire family which connects them to the greatest protective factor-a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Believers also know that sin will find moments of weakness which may expose the strongest saints like struggles both Jonah and Elijah endured. Believers are not exempt from crisis and risk factors that lead to suicide ideation or death by suicide. This is why other protective factors that God gave man the wisdom to develop, provide additional protection as needed. This is important for practical assistance, but we must understand there will always be people who may need crisis help but not be willing to discuss or accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Here are some resources believers must know about to help someone in weakness or crisis:

- The 988 hotline is for veterans and non-veterans and for any emergency. <https://988.ky.gov/>
- Hardin county has a crisis response team. <https://www.hardincountyky.gov/471/Quick-Response-Team>
- Communicare is the local mental health community center. <https://www.communicare.org/>
- TAPS or the tragedy assistance program for survivors help families in many ways lost a loved one to suicide. <https://www.taps.org/>
- Psycharmor is a resource to access free training on various subjects. <https://psycharmor.org/>
- The US Veterans Administration and most federal agencies has a center for faith. <https://department.va.gov/programs-and-initiatives/faith-based-and-neighborhood-partnerships/>
- There are many types of suicide prevention training like: SAVE, Mental Health first aid, Assist, CALM, Code red, and QPR. An internet search can connect you to these trainings and some are at no cost and are provided online.
- There is a website called findhelpnowky where you can get a listing of mental health facilities and recovery houses. <https://findhelpnow.org/ky>.
- The KY Governors challenge is a collective body of organizations that work together to increase suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention. Contact me for more information. My contact information is below.
- NAMI <https://namiky.org> and Volunteers of America <https://www.voamid.org/locations/supportive-services-for-veterans-and-families-program-kentucky/> provide training and assistance in suicide prevention.
- Specialty Courts including teen court, drug court, veterans treatment court, and mental health court assist eligible Kentuckians. <https://www.kycourts.gov/Court-Programs/Specialty-Courts/Pages/default.aspx>
- The Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs provide suicide prevention programming and awareness along with faith based initiatives. <https://veterans.ky.gov/Veterans-Programs/Pages/Wounded-and-Disabled.aspx>
- Dr. Julie Cerel, a Licensed Psychologist from the University of Kentucky provides training on the importance of postvention and safety planning
- Dr Melinda Moore, a Licensed Psychologist from Eastern Kentucky University provides faith-based training on suicide prevention.
- The state suicide prevention coordinator is in the Cabinet for Health and Family services. Beck Whipple. <https://www.chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dbhdid/Pages/sp.aspx>
- Sonya Session, Master of Addiction, Targeted Case Manager and a Temporary Certification Alcohol Drug Counselor, helps families and individuals dealing with life struggles.

I am the Pastor of Truth Baptist Church, an executive director of the office of Kentucky Veterans Services, at the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs, and one of the co chairs of the Kentucky Governor's challenge and can assist any pastor and church in finding programming and information. Here is all of my contact information: [silas.session@ky.gov](mailto:silas.session@ky.gov), [sjsession@yahoo.com](mailto:sjsession@yahoo.com), 254-319-2050, 502-229-5354

Silas J. Session Sr. D.Ed.Min  
 Pastor, Truth Baptist Church  
 Executive Director, Office of Kentucky Veterans Services, KDVA