

The Weekly Press

SERVING BAKER, CENTRAL, AND ZACHARY

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 23-29, 2021

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Merry Christmas and A Joyious New Year

Mayor Broome Establishes Equal Pay Commission

BATON ROUGE, La. — Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome announced today the establishment of the City-Parish Equal Pay Commission to promote pay equity amongst area employers. The commission seeks to close the pay gap for women and minorities in order to strengthen families, reduce poverty, and lessen reliance on public assistance—all to the benefit of the local economy.



Sharon Weston Broome

“Addressing these well-established pay disparities will benefit all of East Baton Rouge Parish as we continue to rebound and thrive from the pandemic,” said Mayor Broome. “We know when communities are committed to greater economic inclusion, they experience greater economic growth. Working to close the pay gap is not only the right thing to do, it will also have benefits for everyone.”

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, women who were full-time wage and salary workers had median earnings that were 82 percent of those of their male counterparts.

The commission will begin meeting in 2022 and will be charged with the following responsibilities:

- Assistance: Working with businesses and educational institutions to develop, identify, and maintain best practices for encouraging pay equity for all employees.
- Implementation: Encouraging employers to implement equal pay strategies and practices in their places of business.
- Education: Educating businesses in the City-Parish about the importance of equal pay and pay equity issues.
- Research: Studying and reporting equal pay trends, including trends from comparable cities, to identify and implement best practices in City-Parish.
- Employer Recognition: Identifying and recognizing employers who implement and pursue equal pay practices.

• Equal Pay Model: Work-

See **EQUAL PAY**, on page 3

OTHER STORIES ONLINE



WEATHER

MON. 12/27 Partly Cloudy High 65°.

TUE. 12/28 Partly Cloudy High 65°.

WED. 12/29 Partly Cloudy High 66°.

THUR. 12/30 Partly Cloudy High 68°.

INDEX

State & Local.....	3 & 4
Business.....	5
Business Directory.....	5
Classifieds.....	5
Religion.....	6
Church Ditory.....	6
Health & Wellness.....	7

Baker Chamber, Mayor hosts holiday toy giveaway and local shopping event



Mayor Waites said “It is heartwarming to serve the community like this. Everyone has had a rough time over the past few years, with the pandemic, hurricanes, and floods, so it means a lot to me that so many of our community partners jumped on board to make the kids Christmas special.

BAKER, La. — On December 18, 2021, the Baker Chamber of Commerce with the Mayor’s Office, Councilwoman Rochelle Dunn, Councilman Robert Young, and the Baker Fire and Police Departments planned Holiday Pop-Up in the Park at City Park was not deterred by the rain. The event relocated inside to the Baker Municipal Auditorium and went on as scheduled from 12:00 Noon until 7:00 PM.

There community members were able to shop with local businesses such as Pennington Biomedical Research Center, Mica Dunn Dazzling Jewelry, Greater Baton Rouge KellerWilliams, Realty & 360 Mortgage, The Art



Councilwoman Rochelle Dunn

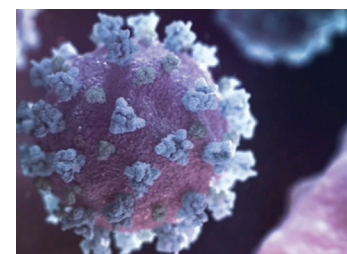
“I would like to personally thank Todd Terrell and the United Cajun Navy for their continued generosity. Their dedication to serving others is a blessing. We hope to see many more families join us next Christmas both to shop with local merchants and to participate in the event.”

of my Heart, Created (clothes), Total Life Changes Life Change (T.L.C.), and Mary Kay, while being entertained by DJ Mike-Larry playing a variety of holiday and festive music. Food and beverages were available from local

food trucks Tropical Paradise Food Truck, IC and Lemonlicious Lemonade. Throughout the day community members

See **BAKER**, on page 3

Louisiana COVID cases start edging up again with omicron



BATON ROUGE, La. — Months after emerging from a fourth surge of the coronavirus outbreak, Louisiana again is starting to see growing numbers of COVID-19 cases, with the state at risk of another spike as the omicron variant of the virus spreads.

Data released Monday by the Louisiana Department of Health shows the number of new cases of the coronavirus illness reached more than 2,300 since Friday — and more than 4,800 over the past week. That’s more than double the amount of new cases from the prior week.

And the health department warned those numbers are expected to balloon as dozens of cases of the fast-spreading omicron variant have been confirmed in Louisiana. The largest number of cases so far has been in the New Orleans area, but probable cases

See **CASES**, on page 3

Gov. Edwards extends Public Health Emergency, requires masking in most state offices

BATON ROUGE, La. - Gov. John Bel Edwards today extended Louisiana’s Public Health Emergency order related to COVID-19, including a provision allowing all state government agencies to require mask wearing, given the fast-spreading Omicron variant, which is now the dominant strain in the United States and Louisiana according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). State agencies in the Governor’s Cabinet will begin requiring masks of employees and visitors.

“While vaccines and booster doses are the strongest tools we have in the fight against COVID, public health experts also agree that masks are an important way to slow the spread of the Omicron variant now. This means you should be masking

See **MASKING**, on page 4

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ON NOV. 26, 2021, THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO) CLASSIFIED A NEW VARIANT, OMICRON, AS A VARIANT OF CONCERN.

The best thing you can do to prepare is get vaccinated or get a booster shot if you are already vaccinated.



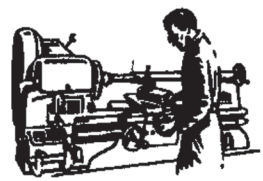
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LOCAL & STATE

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Weekly Press

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Congressman Troy Carter Centers Equity in Economic Development with Introduction of the NEW START Act of 2021

This legislation would create entrepreneurial development pilot programs for formerly incarcerated individuals

WASHINGTON, D.C. – This week, Congressman Troy A. Carter Sr. introduced the Necessary Entrepreneurship Workshops via the SBA to Transform and Assist Re-Entry Training Act of 2021, or the NEW START Act of 2021. This legislation would expand entrepreneurship opportunities for the formerly incarcerated to reduce recidivism and provide economic stability as they rejoin the economy.

An estimated 60 percent of formerly incarcerated individuals are still unemployed a year after their release, and as a group they experience an unemployment rate higher than total unemployment during the Great



Congressman Troy A. Carter Sr. introduced the Necessary Entrepreneurship Workshops via the SBA to Transform and Assist Re-Entry Training Act of 2021, or the NEW START Act of 2021.

“The formerly incarcerated already face significant barriers to re-entering the workforce and can feel utterly locked out of the labor market,” said Congressman Carter.

Depression. According to the Prison Policy Initiative, maintaining stable employment after release lowers the likelihood that individuals will return to prison, promoting public safety and saving public dollars.

“The formerly incarcerated already face significant barriers to re-entering the workforce and can feel utterly locked out of the labor market,” said Congressman Carter. “Especially as our economy continues to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, we need to jump at the chance to help get people back to work and back on their feet. Entrepreneurship should be one of the tools that returning citizens have access to as they re-enter society. Support in starting a business can help people overcome barriers and may dramatically lower recidivism rates. The NEW START Act of 2021 is a path forward for people to rejoin the greater community and for our nation to achieve a more equitable economic recovery.”

Specifically, the NEW START Act of 2021:

- Establishes a five-year pilot reentry program within the Small Business Administration (SBA) to provide entrepreneurial development training to formerly incarcerated individuals.
- Requires the SBA Administrator to award annual grants over a five-year period to at least six geographically diverse organizations or partnerships of organizations, to deliver business counseling to formerly incarcerated individuals.
- The organizations must demonstrate ties with the business and returning citizen communities.
- In addition, organizations are required to partner with lenders in the existing SBA Microloan Program who will provide microloans (up to \$50,000) to qualifying participants. This program is not intended to supplant or take away from the traditional Microloan Program and the SBA does not guarantee microloans.
- Requires several reports on the effectiveness, overall performance, and impact of the program on grant recipients.

This legislation mirrors the 2019 Senate bill from Senator Ben Cardin (D-Md.), Chairman of the Senate Small Business Committee.

FEMA Working Through the Holiday Season for Hurricane Ida Survivors

BATON ROUGE, La. – Home for the holidays has a much greater meaning for those affected by Hurricane Ida. FEMA will be working through the holiday season to continue recovery efforts, including helping eligible survivors into homes.

“We are working with a keen sense of urgency,” said FEMA Federal Coordinating Officer John Long. “We know that being in your home, albeit a temporary one, makes all the difference after a disaster—especially during the holidays.”

Each housing program is unique, and every application is evaluated individually for eligibility. FEMA determines if applicants are eligible and then survivors are matched with the best available housing solution to meet their individual needs.

FEMA is making progress. The direct, short-term, housing assistance team continues to roll out manufactured housing units and travel trailers. As of Dec. 21, 276 units have been “licensed in,” which means families have been given the keys and taken possession of their temporary home. Survivors will continue to be licensed-in throughout the holidays.

More than 550,000 Louisianians have been approved for federal assistance. To date, more than \$1 billion in FEMA grant funding has been put in the hands of survivors. In addition, FEMA’s National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) has paid more than \$585 million on 14,359 claims that have been submitted. Individuals have also been approved for more than \$1.2 billion in home loan assistance through the Small Business Administration.

FEMA is also helping survivors work through the process. Using an automated calling system, FEMA’s Individual Assistance team contacted survivors who were missing documentation, leading to the disbursement

of an additional \$6 million dollars in eligible assistance.

Additionally, survivors can meet face-to-face with mitigation experts for rebuilding and repairing advice at big box stores from Dec. 27-30 and Jan. 3. Those experts will also be available at FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) as long as they remain open.

Survivors may also call 833-FEMA-4-US or 833-336-2487 to speak to a mitigation specialist, email a specialist at FEMA-LAMit@fema.dhs.gov, or visit a mitigation web link to find repairing, retrofitting, and rebuilding information at <https://fema.connectsolutions.com/lamit>, <https://fema.connectsolutions.com/la-es-mit> for Spanish, or <https://fema.connectsolutions.com/la-vie-mit> for Vietnamese.

To learn the status of their application, residents of all parishes affected by Hurricane Ida can talk with FEMA specialists at DRCs Monday through Friday. For locations and hours of operation check the FEMA app or visit www.FEMA.gov/DRC. All centers follow COVID-19 precautions. Masks are required for employees, volunteers and survivors.

Applicants can also call the FEMA Helpline from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week at 800-621-3362. Holiday hours for the Helpline will be 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., Dec. 24-25 and Dec. 31-Jan. 1.

All DRCs will be closed from Dec. 24-26 and again the following week from Dec. 31-Jan. 2. However, survivors can check the status of their application 24/7 online at disasterassistance.gov

For the latest information on Hurricane Ida, visit fema.gov/disaster/4611. Follow the FEMA Region 6 Twitter account at twitter.com/FEMARegion6 or on Facebook at facebook.com/FEMARegion6/.

EQUAL PAY from page 1

ing to establish the City of Baton Rouge as a Model City with regard to pay equity.

- Comprehensive Strategy: Develop and submit a comprehensive

strategy to the Mayor-President on best practices regarding equal pay for employers.

- Employer Outreach: Establish and develop partnerships with public and private entities to raise equal pay awareness.

BAKER from page 1

shopped, and chatted with the Mayor and Council Members as everyone eagerly awaited Santa Claus.

Thanks to the generosity of The United Cajun Navy and donating members of the Baker Chamber of Commerce as well as toy drives conducted by the Baker Police and Fire Departments toys for the children were plentiful. As the evening progressed the children were able to visit with Santa Claus and receive multiple gifts for Christmas. The sentiment of all participating was that the joy bringing smiles to the faces of children every day is a gift beyond measure and being able to do so at Christmas time is especially meaningful.

Mayor Waites said “It is heartwarming to serve the community like this. Everyone has had a rough time over the past few years, with the pandemic, hurricanes, and floods, so it means a lot to me that so many of our community partners

jumped on board to make the kids Christmas special. I want to thank them, especially the United Cajun Navy and Senator Regina Barrow for the large donation of toys. I would also like to thank Councilwoman Rochelle Dunn, Councilman Robert Young and all of the businesses that came out. When we all work together we can achieve great things.”

Councilwoman Rochelle Dunn commented “I would like to personally thank Todd Terrell and the United Cajun Navy for their continued generosity. Their dedication to serving others is a blessing. We hope to see many more families join us next Christmas both to shop with local merchants and to participate in the event.”

The Mayor, the City Council, the City of Baker Staff, Baker Fire Department, Baker Police Department and Baker Chamber of Commerce all thank everyone who volunteered and participated! We wish everyone Happy Holidays and a safe and happy New Year!



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CASES from page 1

of the variant have been detected in every region of the state, according to the health department.

“We feel very confident in saying that omicron is now circulating throughout our state, and that the proportion of cases attributable to omicron is likely to increase dramatically over the next few weeks,” State Epidemiologist Theresa Sokol said in a statement.

Still, the number of people hospitalized in Louisiana with COVID-19 remains low so far, reported at 241

patients Monday. That continues to be among the lowest number of COVID-19 hospitalizations since March 2020 and well below the state’s peak of more than 3,000 in August.

Gov. John Bel Edwards and his public health advisers continue to urge people around Louisiana to get immunized against the coronavirus illness and booster shots if eligible, saying that’s the best way to lessen the impact of an infection. Of those currently hospitalized with COVID-19, 80% are unvaccinated, according to the state health department.

Much remains unknown about omicron, including whether it causes more or less severe illness. Scientists

say omicron spreads even easier than other coronavirus strains, including delta, and it is expected to become dominant in the U.S. by early next year. Early studies suggest the vaccinated will need a booster shot for the best chance at preventing an omicron infection but even without the extra dose, vaccination still should offer strong protection against severe illness and death.

Louisiana has one of the nation’s lowest immunization rates against the coronavirus. More than 2.3 million people in the state are fully vaccinated, according to the health department, just under half of Louisiana’s total population.

Virginia Police Officer Who Shot Donovan Lynch Will Not Be Charged

BY LAUREN VICTORIA BURKE, NNPA Newswire Contributor

A grand jury has ruled that a Virginia Beach Police Officer who shot Donovan Lynch in on March 26 will not face charges.

Lynch was shot to death by Virginia Beach Officer Solomon Simmons. Lynch is a cousin of musician and Virginia Beach native Pharrell Williams. Lynch's death has been under investigation since his shooting.

Lynch's father recently filed a \$50 million lawsuit against Officer Simmons. Simmons is Black. The wrongful death suit is likely to be in court next year if it survives a motion to dismiss filed by the city of Virginia Beach.

Lynch was armed with a gun at the time of the shooting which occurred on a night of violent activity by other individuals at Virginia Beach's oceanfront.

During a lengthy news conference on November 30, Virginia Beach prosecutors said Officer Simmons was justified in protecting himself after Lynch allegedly cocked his gun and pointed it towards a parking lot.

Officer Simmons' body camera was turned off during the moments when he shot Lynch. Media reports reveal that there are conflicting witness statements regarding how Donovan Lynch was killed.

Lynch's funeral earlier this year was attended by Rev. Dr. William Barber and many local politicians. His death re-ignited debate around the policy question of qualified immunity and how liable police officers should be for death and injury they may cause while on duty.

Over the last ten years there have been several deaths in police custody shootings that have gained national attention. Most of them have involved video footage. They include the police shootings of Eric Garner, George Floyd, Michael Brown, Breonna Taylor, Tamir Rice, Philando Castille and Walter Scott.

LOUISIANA NEWS

With fewer people boosted, Louisiana could be more vulnerable to omicron surge



Louisiana hospitals scrambling to prepare for possible fifth COVID-19 wave

BY: RACHEL MIPRO
Louisiana Illuminator

In Louisiana, where people are reluctant to get even the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, health care providers are preparing for the worst.

Louisiana still has a lower COVID-19 vaccination rate – and a lower percentage of vaccine booster uptake – than almost all other states in the country, leaving its population more vulnerable to the coronavirus omicron variant that's sweeping the world.

The variant is exponentially more transmissible and already accounts for three quarters of the new COVID-19 infections in the United States. There's concern

that health care systems, already strained, could be overwhelmed with patients.

COVID-19 vaccines have been proven less effective against omicron than previous strains. While vaccination lessens the severity of cases, omicron is making "breakthrough cases" – positive infections in people who are vaccinated – more likely. Health officials are recommending that people receive a vaccine booster shot to greatly increase their protection.

The risk of a deadly omicron surge is compounded in Louisiana, where vaccination rates are lower than the national average. Louisiana has a COVID-19 vaccination rate of just under 50

percent, compared with the national rate of 61.5 percent. Only around 15 percent of Louisiana residents have a vaccine booster shot, compared to 19 percent of people na-

See SURGE, on page 7

MASKING from page 1

indoors around people who aren't in your household," Gov. Edwards said. "While it is concerning to still see rising cases, as President Joe Biden noted earlier today – we have come a long way since March 2020. Around 50 percent of Louisianians have already been vaccinated and are much more protected against COVID than they have ever been. The more than 460,000 Louisianians who have already taken a booster dose have even stronger protection.

"Now more than ever it is important that everyone get vaccinated or, if they are eligible, take a COVID booster. The vaccines are safe, effective and widely avail-

able all across Louisiana, and we know from the most recent CDC data that unvaccinated people are ten times more likely to test positive for COVID and 20 times more likely to die from COVID than fully vaccinated people who also have gotten their booster shots," Gov. Edwards said. "Simply put, one of the riskiest things you can be in Louisiana right now is unvaccinated. You're signing up for the potential of severe illness, hospitalization or something even worse. We have seen how previous COVID surges have torn through our state and none of us wants to go back to the days of August and September, when thousands of people were hospitalized and dying."

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BUSINESS

**Bank On Baton Rouge Officially
Transitions to Capital Area United Way**



Photo Caption: (L to R) Terri Thomas, Regions Bank; George Bell, President and CEO of Capital Area United Way; Shamell Lavigne, City of Baton Rouge; Joyce James, Middleburg Institute; Blaine Grimes; Delores Hurst, Director of Income Stability, Capital Area United Way; Melanie Henderson, Pelican State Credit Union; Jacqueline Ned, Red River Bank; and Garrett Ganucheau, EFCU.

BATON ROUGE, La – Bank On Baton Rouge, a coalition consisting of the EBR Mayor-President's Office, financial institutions and community partners, officially became a part of the Capital Area United Way's family of initiatives on Tuesday, December 14th. CAUW staff and Bank On partners hosted a lunch to celebrate the move as well as to discuss the future of Bank On under CAUW.

Under Capital Area United Way, Bank On Baton Rouge will have three different focus areas: assisting underserved populations with second chance bank accounts; promoting financial literacy education; and exploring FinTech (Financial Technology) programs for the Greater Baton Rouge area.

Partners with Bank On Baton Rouge include: Pelican State Credit Union, Home Bank, EFCU Finan-

cial Credit Union, Regions Bank, B1 Bank, Red River Bank, Inve-star Bank, The Middleburg Group, The Faith Fund, EBR Main Library, Catholic Charities, Hope Ministries, and Mid-City Redevelopment Alliance.

Information on how to get involved with Bank On Baton Rouge can be found at www.cauw.org/bankon or by contacting Delores Hurst at deloresh@cauw.org.

**La. election
official says
holiday shopping
makes December
elections difficult**

Secretary of State Kyle Ardoin wants to get rid of December elections because, he said, holiday shopping causes a severe shortage of delivery trucks that can transport voting machines.

"December elections are almost becoming impossible," Ardoin told the Louisiana House and Governmental Affairs Committee Thursday. "We're competing with Amazon and FedEx to get trucks."

"We've got to find a way, and I know this is a big apple...we've got to get away from December elections," Ardoin said.

"Unless we decide to move all our elections to the spring, we're always going to be in hurricane season, and from everything I read, it's not necessarily going to get any better," Ardoin said. "It's only going to get worse. So we need to take that into consideration as we're making reforms."

"There's no words to describe to you how difficult it was for (us) to overcome the effects of Hurricane Ida," Ardoin said. "Within a few days of the election, we were still trying to find trucks to be able to deliver our voting machines."

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Agnes Andrews Allstate Insurance

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RELIGION

Receiving the Spirit of Christmas

BY CREFFLO DOLLAR

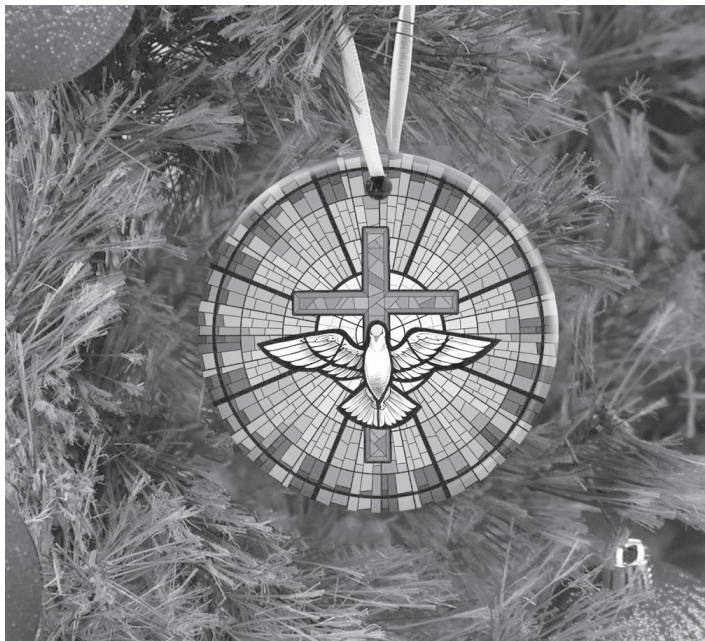
I want to show you how to have a "Mary" Christmas - as in the Virgin Mary. I am not trying to exalt Mary above Jesus or claim that she is a deity. That would be unscriptural. Rather, I want to show you how to connect to the same supernatural power that Mary connected to.



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The prophet Isaiah foretold that a virgin would conceive and give birth to a son Whose name would be called "Immanuel" or "God with us" (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:20-23).

Can you imagine what Mary had to deal with? When the angel Gabriel informed her that she would give birth to the Savior of the world, I'm sure she had to fight off doubt and fear. I'm sure she wondered, "What will people



think?"

Mary had to be strong no matter what others said. She heard from God and chose to trust Him. Conception took place resulting in a supernatural birth that still goes against human reasoning.

According to His Word

The key to Mary's supernatural conception was that she received God's Word. She said, "For with God nothing is ever impossible and no word from God

shall be without power or impossible of fulfillment" (Luke 1:37 AMP). God specializes in doing supernatural things that seem impossible (Matt. 19:26; 1 Cor. 1:27).

In Luke 1:38, we see that Mary received the spiritual truth of God's Word by saying, "...Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it unto me according to thy word..." In essence, she was saying, "Lord, I'm Your servant. Use me to fulfill Your will for my life and the world. I believe I receive Your Word and that settles it!"

That's the attitude you should have. If what God speaks to your heart or through His Word contradicts your reasoning, don't debate with it. Receive it by faith as Mary did, and allow the power of God to work in your life. When you receive the spiritual truth of the Word, you receive the true spirit of Christmas; you receive the life that Christ Jesus came to give you (John 10:10).

When it seems like you're sinking deeper into debt, or when your body is under attack, receive

See **CHRISTMAS**, on page 7

Our Prince of Peace

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. — Isaiah 9:6



Charles Stanley

BY CHARLES STANLEY

The Christmas rush is here. There are plans to make, gifts to buy, and parties to attend. Sometimes these activities leave us exhausted and cranky — instead of peace and joy, we may feel inner churning because there's too much to do. Or perhaps this time of the year brings nothing but sad memories and loneliness. Unrealistic expectations and conflicts with loved ones often leave us depressed and discouraged.

How can Jesus be our Prince of Peace when our expectations and traditions fight against the tranquility we desire? To understand why Jesus was given this title, we must first understand what it means. First of all, God's Son

did not come to do away with all conflicts — not yet, anyway. One day He will return to earth and rule as King in an environment of external harmony, but that was not the purpose of His first coming. So while we're on earth, we'll have trouble (John 16:33).

When Christ left heaven to become a human baby, His goal was to bring us peace with God by reconciling us to the Father. His death on the cross paid our sin debt in full, and our relationship with God is restored. Now He offers us divine peace — an inner serenity that fills our hearts and minds no matter what is going on in our circumstances.

See **PEACE**, on page 7

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Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. - Hebrews 10:25

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Sunday Morning Worship	10:45 AM
Lord's Supper	3rd Sundays
Sunday School	9:30 AM
Prayer Service	Wed. @ 6:00 PM
Bible Study	Wed. @ 7:00 PM

Mission Statement: New Hope Baptist Church is a family of baptized believers who worship the Lord our God in spirit and in truth, teach the saved to reach the lost and minister to the needs of others, while encouraging one another through acts of love and living in obedience to Gods Word

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Health



One Call: That's All

By Gayle Young
and Megan Anderson

If you live in Louisiana, you have heard the "One Call, That's All" commercial. I can see that commercial with no sound and repeat the slogan in perfect sync.

As a 93' LSU Law Graduate, I was still figuring out my space that I would dominate in the world. My parents were church leaders and later pastors in COGIC, so I knew that as a newly minted lawyer I had to focus on serving others.

This is where one call changed my life.

In 2021, The slogan "One Call, That's All" became my reality and no longer familiar words that I heard on television or the radio.

It was July 23, 2021, after 4:00pm. I made a call to the Mayor's Office of Homeland Security. I was assisting a friend who had recently lost his wife and daughter, just a mere 11 months apart, wrap up some loose ends.

I was just serving another, like I had been taught. At least that is what I thought I was just doing, until Megan answered the phone.

The phone was answered promptly and the voice I heard said, "Mayor's Office of Homeland Security, how can I help?" In that moment I was so confused, I looked at my cellphone to make sure I had dialed, EBR and sure enough I had. The voice was like a radio station personality, on the late-night shift, soothing, engaging, and reassuring that life is going to be alright for me, for my friend. Who sounds like that on a government line? Megan does! ... and then life was alright for all of us.

The person I called for was gone for the day. Megan took a message.

For her it was a somber day; her mother and sister had both passed a year before and her truest friend passed in mid-March 2021.

Her mood was reflective, blended with a little bit of missing loved ones, trying to figure out her next step, and seeking solid ground to launch the rest of her life. All of that was happening in the very moment, the very hour that I called.

Later she said I had an equally positive voice and that to her my voice was powerful, knowledgeable, and strong. She felt that I could be a mentor, a guide, a friend.

It was obvious, that in our lives, our conversations with God were getting real. She says that she knew that God had answered her prayers and I knew God had answered mine too.

Mine was to be of service and to be able to love, nurture, support women as they find their "Great" spot in life.

She had been telling God to send her someone who could do just that. And, she needed woman that woman in her life, right now. But she added, "an older person like me." (I think that is a compliment).

We scheduled an "intention connect." And, it is true, "One Call: That's All"



Dr. Gayle Young

SURGE from page 4

nationwide, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, though there are questions about how accurate the booster data is.

Dr. Katherine Baumgarten, medical director of infection control and prevention at Ochsner Health, wants people to get boosted before visiting family members during the holidays.

"We want to make sure that families, when they're getting together, are boosted," Baumgarten said during a Tuesday press conference. "We want to be sure that they're giving the gift of a booster, they're telling their family members, 'Hey, let's go get a booster shot before we're getting together for the holidays.'"

PEACE from page 6

Is your life characterized by a quiet assurance that guards your heart and mind all day long (Phil. 4:6-7), or have stressful circumstances left you feeling depressed

Ochsner, Louisiana's largest healthcare system, is proactively trying to find more spaces for patients in their hospitals. While COVID-19 hospitalization numbers aren't as bad now as they were during the fourth surge, hospitals in the system are already fairly full, said Dawn Pevey, chief executive officer for the Centers of Excellence and Service Lines at Ochsner.

Pevey said she is worried about staffing shortages like many other healthcare systems, including Our Lady of the Lake Hospital.

"The challenges have continued to increase since the fourth wave. Like many across the country, people have chosen to go travel, and we've seen people who really exit healthcare in general. So the staffing challenges are real and continue to get worse the second part of the year," Pevey said.

or agitated? Try setting aside time each day to fix your eyes upon Jesus. Then let Him heal your heart and calm your spirit.

For more biblical teaching and resources from Dr. Charles Stanley, please visit www.intouch.org.

CHRISTMAS from page 6

the truth of God's Word. It says that you have been redeemed from the curse of poverty, sickness and spiritual death (Gal. 3:13).

The facts may show that you're broke and sick; however, that's not the truth. God's Word is truth (John 17:17). You are what it says you are. You can have what it says you can have. And you can do what it says you can do!

Receiving the truth of God's Word is vital. First Thessalonians 2:13 in The Amplified Bible says,

When you received the message of God... you welcomed it not as the word of [mere] men, but as it truly is, the Word of God, which is effectually at work in you who believe [exercising its superhuman power in those who adhere to and trust in and rely on it].

The Only Way To Victory

Like Mary, you must make God's Word the final authority in your life. Conduct your finances, health, marriage and the raising of

your children by the Word. That's the only way you're going to experience His supernatural power.

The Word of God is "seed" (Luke 8:11; 1 Peter 1:23) and it produces a harvest. Just as it only takes one sperm out of millions to cause conception to take place in a woman's womb, it only takes one word from God to be implanted in your spirit to cause conception. One word from God will change your entire life!

Perhaps there are things that you have been praying about for quite some time, but have not seen any results. Don't give up, cave in or quit! Don't abort by confessing that the Word isn't working or that you don't deserve the goodness of God.

Righteous people don't talk that way. They speak faith and patiently await the birth (manifestation) of God's Word in their lives.

The Word of God has a due season of manifestation (Titus 1:3; 1 Peter 5:6), so wait patiently for it. Due season always comes! This holiday season is a good time to receive God's goodness!

School of Nursing named Nursing School of the Year for graduate degree program

BATON ROUGE, La. —The Southern University School of Nursing was recently honored as the "2021 Nursing School of the Year, Graduate Degree Program," by the Louisiana Nurses Foundation. The honor was bestowed upon the School during the annual Nightingale Awards Gala held on Oct. 22. The gala was held virtually this year due to COVID-19.

"Receiving this award amid a global pandemic makes it extra special," said Sandra Brown, dean of the College of Nursing and Allied Health at Southern. "It illuminates the talents, the commitment, and the sacrifices that our faculty and staff make to provide a quality education for our students."

The award recognizes a school of nursing offering formal education for registered nurses seeking a graduate degree for advanced clinical practice roles as well as nursing administration, nursing education and research.

Established in 1986, the School of Nursing at Southern currently offers four degrees: the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN); the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) with a specialty in family health; the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) with a major in nursing; and the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP).

The BSN program has produced more than 2,355 RNs since its inception. The MSN program, which began in 1992, has produced more than 489 graduates, many of whom are from disadvantaged backgrounds, with an average pass rate of 95 percent on the national certification exam (exceeding the national average).

The School of Nursing is the largest producer of Black MSN graduates, accounting for nearly three-fourths of all Black family nurse practitioners residing in the state of Louisiana, thereby fulfilling a significant role in building a diverse nursing workforce that is representative of the population of care. Of the 328 accredited MSN



(FNP) programs nationwide, the School of Nursing was selected as one of the two best value programs in the state of Louisiana for 2019-2020. Programs were selected based on their affordability, quality, and value.

The graduate nursing program expanded in 2012 to fulfill its promise to build a stronger and more diverse advanced practiced registered nurse (APRN) workforce in Louisiana and has produced 30 DNP graduates since its inception. This practice-focused doctoral nursing program is designed for nurses seeking careers in advanced clinical nursing practice at the nurse executive leadership rank.

The Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) program, a research-ori-

ented doctorate, focuses on global issues and public policy associated with the health of vulnerable women and children. The program prepares nurse scientists whose research trajectories expand the substantive knowledge base that informs nursing education, practice and research. Since its establishment in 2001, the Ph.D. program has produced 45 graduates.

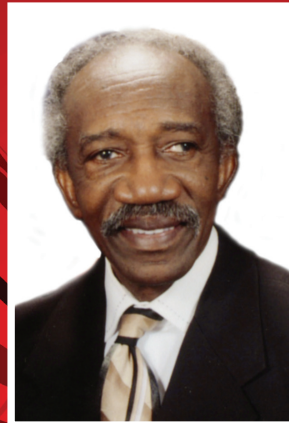
Graduate faculty consists of nationally recognized educators, researchers and expert clinicians who are transforming health care and influencing policy. Graduate faculty are involved in various professional entities, including the National League for Nursing, Certified Nurse Educators, American Academy of Nursing, American

Academy of Nurse Educators, American Association of Nurse Practitioners, National Gerontological Nursing Association, and the National Hartford Center of Gerontological Nursing Excellence. These faculty maintain specialty certifications, and hold leadership positions in local, state, and national professional nursing organizations. Additionally, faculty hold board positions in nursing and healthcare organizations. This is the fifth time that the School of Nursing has been chosen as Nursing School/Program of the Year in 2010, 2012, 2015, and 2017. Anissa Leachman Stover is the interim chairperson of the graduate nursing program.

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