

# The Weekly Press

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10-16, 2022

A PEOPLE'S PUBLICATION

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NEWS PAGE 3

YEOMAN KIMBERLY WILSON HONORED FOR 24 YEARS OF SERVICE

BUSINESS PAGE 5

BR BUSINESSES HOST AFRICAN AMERICAN BOOK FESTIVAL 'CHILDREN FIRST'

## City of Baker Fire Department Partners with Louisiana Fire Marshal on "Operation Save A Life"

BAKER, La. - Assistant Fire Chief Keith Pease announced that the City of Baker Fire Department has partnered with the Louisiana Fire Marshal on "Operation Save A Life" which offers free smoke detectors to area residents.



Any community members who are interested in obtaining free smoke detectors should complete the form found below and submit it to the Baker Fire Department located at 3701 Groom Road, Baker, LA 70714 - phone (225) 775-3712.

Please note that smoke detectors will be arriving in approximately two (2) weeks at which time the Baker Fire Department will coordinate the installation of these devices with each person interested.

Please contact the Baker Fire Department at (225) 775-3712 in order to schedule your installation.



## LSU ending mask mandate

BATON ROUGE, La. - LSU is dropping its mask mandate for students and staff at the university starting Monday, Feb. 14.

Officials said due to the drop in COVID cases on campus and around the region, they are scaling back some of the COVID protocols.

Starting Monday, masks will no longer be required but they are still encouraged.

The university added that classes can resume in person if they were virtual due to COVID.

# Louisiana Redistricting Map keeps minority seats at status quo

### Impacted lawmaker calls proposal 'voter suppression at its greatest'

BY: GREG LAROSE  
LOUISIANA ILLUMINATOR

A redistricting proposal from Republican leaders in the Louisiana House of Representatives keeps the number of majority-minority districts in the



Gov. John Bel Edwards

Gov. John Bel Edwards, a Democrat, has the right to veto maps that are advanced to him.

chamber at 29 out of 105, despite calls from voting rights advocates to add more representation for the state's increasing Black population.

The House and Governmental Affairs Committee debated a map Monday that breaks up House District 23 in northwest Louisiana and moves its voters into five neighboring House seats. In its place, a new majority-minority district was created in New Orleans.

"It's like you threw a land mine into my district and blew it into pieces," said Rep. Kenny Cox, D-Natchitoches, who has represented District 23 since 2011.

Committee chairman Rep. John Stefanski, R-Crowley, crafted the map in House Bill 14, which lists House Speaker Clay Schexnayder, R-Gonzales, as author. The speaker's sponsorship gives it the best chance of advancing from the Republican-dominated Legislature. Gov. John Bel Edwards, a Democrat, has the right to veto maps that are advanced to him.

Stefanski's map also makes House District 62, which Rep. Roy Daryl Adams of East Feliciana



A map Rep. John Stefanski, R-Crowley, submitted for new district lines in the Louisiana House of Representatives proposes 29 majority-minority seats, the same number currently in the chamber. (Greg LaRose/Louisiana Illuminator)

Carpenter and Jordan are both Black Democrats. The new majority-Black district, currently held by Adams, would make up for the loss of a majority-Black district in New Orleans. District 91, held by New Orleans Rep. Mandie Landry, is no longer by majority-minority under Stefanski's proposal.



Rep. Barbara Carpenter

Parish represents, a majority-Black district by moving parts of District 63, held by Baton Rouge Rep. Barbara Carpenter, and District 29, held by West Baton Rouge Rep. Edmond Jordan, into its territory.

Adams is an independent. Carpenter and Jordan are both Black Democrats. The new majority-Black district, currently held by Adams, would make up for the loss of a majority-Black district in New Orleans. District 91, held by New Orleans Rep. Mandie Landry, is no longer by majority-minority under Stefanski's proposal.

Stefanski said input from fellow House members was a pri-

mary influence when it came to creating the new House districts. It led him to prioritize term-limited incumbents when looking for a district to move from northwest Louisiana, portions of which saw some of the state's largest population decreases based on Census figures, he explained to committee members.

Representatives who retained their districts in his map also had a say when it came to drawing the new lines, he said.

"At the end of the day, I believe the (House) members know

their districts the best," Stefanski said. The boundaries of District 23 roughly follow a path along Interstate 49, from Cane River heading northwest into DeSoto Parish. Cox, who is a Black military veteran, said he was told the loss of his district was a "done deal" by GOP House leaders last Wednesday.

According to Cox, District 23 needed a "couple thousand" residents added to keep it intact. He questioned the accuracy of the Census, saying some people in his district "were afraid" to take part in the process. He said there was no support to bolster its popula-

tion from fellow lawmakers in northwest Louisiana or the House leadership. Instead, the minority population of District 23 was split into smaller fractions among five other districts.

"When you divide our people up like that, and now you give me 20% here or 25% there, there's no representation. You don't have any rights," Cox said. "There's no representation ... Our people don't have anything to stand up to go vote for. This is voter sup-



Rep. Kenny Cox

See REDISTRICTING, on page 2

### WEATHER

MON. 02/14  
Mostly Cloudy  
High 32°.

TUE. 02/15  
Partly Cloudy  
High 32°.

WED. 02/16  
Sunny  
High 36°.

THUR. 02/17  
Partly Cloudy  
High 37°.

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## Louisiana Senate candidate Gary Chambers burns Confederate flag in new campaign ad

NEW ORLEANS — A Louisiana candidate for the U.S. Senate burns a Confederate flag in his latest video ad, released Wednesday.

Gary Chambers, a Baton Rouge community activist and Democrat, is seen hanging a large Confederate battle flag on a line with clothespins before dousing it with fuel and setting it ablaze.

"We must burn what remains of the Confederacy down," Chambers says in a voiceover as he condemns a system that is "producing measurable inequity" for Black people, including high rates of poverty and low access

to health insurance.

The ad comes three weeks after Chambers' last major ad, which showed him smoking marijuana. In that ad, Chambers, who is Black, decries racial disparities in arrests for the drug.

The new ad appeared a day after the state Senate rejected a move to create a second majority-Black congressional district in Louisiana. Supporters of a second Black-majority district say two of the state's six Congressional dis-

See CHAMBERS, on page 3



A Baton Rouge activist and Louisiana Senate candidate has released a new campaign advertisement where he is seen burning a Confederate flag



# LOCAL & STATE

## Weekly Press

Newspaper is published weekly in Baton Rouge and distributed every Thursday with a circulation of 7,500. Subscription rates are \$65.00 per year for Louisiana residents; \$72.00 for one year for out-of-state residents; half price for six months subscription; and \$1.00 per single copy.

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## Yeoman Kimberly Wilson for her 24 years of service in the US Navy by City of Baton Rouge

Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome and The Metro Council recognized Yeoman Kimberly Wilson for her 24 years of service in the US Navy. During her service she was hand-picked for her orders to the Defense Intelligence Agency, she has earned countless promotions and accolades, including multiple recognitions as Sailor of the Year.

Kimberly Porter Wilson is a native of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, born to Willie and Pearl Porter. She is a proud graduate of Istrouma Magnet High School in 1995. After completing two years of college, she joined the US Navy in April 1998. She completed Basic Training in Great Lakes, IL. She went on to attend Yeoman "A" School in Meridian, Mississippi and graduated first in her class on June 16, 1998 gaining her Yeoman Third Class Petty Officer promotion.

In August 1998, she was hand-picked for her orders to Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), Washington, DC. Her tour at DIA was marked by a myriad of superlative achievements, to include, Selected



Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome and Yeoman Kimberly P. Wilson

Junior Enlisted Person of the Quarter, CY98; USO Mother's Day Essay Competition Award recipient, CY99, selected Sailor of the Quarter, FY00,

and advancement to Yeoman Second Class, CY02 just prior to her change of station.

In August 2002, YN1 Wilson

was given orders to the Commander APSPRON 4, Military Sealift Command, Diego Garcia as the sole administrator for Eight Merchant Marine Prepositioning vessels which provided command and control throughout CENTCOM and PACOM AORs. This one year tour marked the completion of her active duty contract and YN1 Wilson headed home to join the reserves in Baton Rouge, LA.

In September 2005, she began her active duty career once again as Full Time Support (FTS) at Navy Operational Support Center, Baton Rouge. As Assistant Leading Petty Officer, her professional knowledge and performance set her apart as a

dependable, steadfast leader, earning her the Unit of Excellence Award in 2003 and Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal.

YN1 Wilson joined the Commander, Navy Reserve Forces Command staff, New Orleans, LA in September 2006 continuing her dedication to SELRES and hard work for her fellow FTS staff. While there, she was promoted to Yeoman First Class May 2007.

She reported to Fourth Navy Expeditionary Logistics Regiment, Jacksonville, FL in June 2009 as the Administrative Department Head for Active duty and Full Time Support

See WILSON, on page 3

## Gov. John Bel Edwards issues statement on the Formation of the Legislative Select Committee to Investigate Ronald Greene Incident

Gov. John Bel Edwards issued the following statement on the formation of the Select Committee to Investigate Ronald Greene Incident in the Louisiana House of Representatives.

Gov. Edwards said: "I welcome any and all legislative oversight and hope that this will be a productive, nonpartisan discussion of how to continue the ongoing reforms at Louisiana State Police so that what happened the night of Ronald Greene's death never happens again.

Like so many others, I am anxiously awaiting the outcome of the federal civil rights investigation into Mr. Greene's death. I am hopeful that the outcome of this investigation, which has been pending for more than two years, will provide answers and justice for the Greene family.

I agree wholeheartedly with

the Speaker that transparency is necessary in any investigation into this matter, whether that investigation is conducted by the USDOJ, the Senate Committee on State Police Oversight that has been conducting hearings on this matter, or this newly created House Select Committee. I am certain that any fair and impartial investigation will conclude that I made no attempt to impede or interfere with any investigation into Mr. Greene's death. Any allegation to the contrary is simply not true.

I continue to pray for Mr. Greene's family and it is my sincere hope the study by this committee into the events surrounding his death is an earnest investigation into the truth of what has happened since the early morning hours of May 10, 2019. They deserve no less."

### REDISTRICTING from page 1

pression at its greatest."

Cox and Black lawmakers on the House and Governmental Affairs Committee criticized Stefanski for not adding more majority-minority districts to his map. With 29 seats, minority districts account for 27% of House representation. The latest Census shows Blacks make up 33% of Louisiana population, and minorities account for 40%.

Cox asked his colleagues to reconsider splitting up his district, recounting his experience in the military when he led soldiers into battle.

"In this case, I ain't got no soldiers," Cox said. "It's just me, and I've been chosen as the sacrificial lamb to be quartered, divided, chewed on - and I actually feel spit on."

Rep. Royce Duplessis, D-New Orleans, has introduced an alternative House map that identifies where more majority-minority districts could be created. But as Stefanski repeatedly noted, it contains in its present form the same number of minority seats, 29.

Duplessis, who has deferred consideration of his bill, took issue with claims from Stefanski

and House Speaker Pro Tempore Tanner Magee, R-Houma, that the competing bills had reached the same conclusion on the number of majority-minority districts.

In District 62, Stefanski said he "unpacked" the higher minority population and moved it into District 63 and increased its share of Black voting age population to 78%. To do so, the large section of West Feliciana Parish was pulled from District 62 along with the rural northeast corner of East Baton Rouge.

Adams was elected to represent District 62 in 2019. He told the committee he opposes splitting the Felcianas into two districts, noting each parish is home to state mental and correctional facilities.

"Even after the Census, my district was good. But we're going to divide it up and move everybody around ... that's my beef."

The House committee is expected to vote on Stefanski's map Tuesday. An alternative from Rep. Sam Jenkins, D-Shreveport, is on the same agenda but was not discussed Monday. It proposes more majority-minority districts in the House though it doesn't specifically define where they will be.

At Monday's meeting, Ste-

See REDISTRICTING, on page 5

# FIRST WARD VOTERS ASSOCIATION

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- Otis Johnson
- William Davis
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- Daisy Ellison
- Davis Rankins
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- Fannie Godwin
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- Clarence M. Collier
- Clay Williams
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- Annie Smart
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## Representative C. Denise Marcelle and Community Leaders Join Forces to Help Combat the Virus



Louisiana State Representative C. Denise Marcelle held a community-led event to fight the spread of COVID-19. The Living Faith Christian Center held the event on Saturday, January 29, 2022.

There, Rep. Marcelle and other community leaders provided the vaccine to the community. There were 2870 COVID-19 test kits (5740 total tests) given away and 165 COVID-19 vaccinations given.

For Rep. Marcelle, this was a necessary need for the community.

"A lot of people addressed their concerns on not being able to receive the vaccine," she said. "I wanted to fulfill that need."

Rep. Marcelle wanted to unite other community leaders to help. She said it was important for the city to see other representatives and leaders fight a common problem in the

communities.

"It's important to collaborate with others for such an event as this," she said.

Numerous leaders and organizations supported the event. The Baton Rouge Chapter of the NACCP, District 10 Councilwoman Carolyn Coleman, Interim-District 5 Councilman Darryl Hurst, President of the United Cajun Navy Todd Terrell, and Regional Administrator/Regional Medical Director for Region 2 of Louisiana Department of Health, Dr. Paulette Riveria. Also, numerous organizations volunteered for the event. Those volunteers included the Southern University Home Chapter Alumni, District 61 Volunteers, Baton Rouge Student Learning Center, and Delta Sigma Theta Volunteers.

Councilman Hurst was excited for the families in District 5 to receive

a need in the community.

"The giveaway at Living Faith was nothing short of a testament to God's Glory," he said. "The city was unified to ensure that we were able to lead by example."

This event is one of many that Rep. Marcelle wishes to do for the community to keep the citizens healthy and safe. Rep. Marcelle also held a drive-thru giveaway at her home for the community of Villa Del Rey. People were able to pick up COVID-19 home tests, which could not sign up for theirs online.

"It was important for me to address this need in my community and for the people who need it most," Rep. Marcelle said.

Rep. Marcelle and other community leaders will be hosting the Gus Young Mardi Gras parade on February 12, 2022. The community

### WILSON from page 2

Staff assigned to Navy Cargo Handling Battalions Jacksonville, Bessemer, and Gulfport. Her exemplary support earned her the Expeditionary Warfare pin, Sailor of the Year, and the Navy Commendation Medal.

In July 2009, YN1 Wilson reported to Information Dominance Corps Region Southeast as the Leading Petty Officer for Active Duty and Full Time Support Staff assigned to Joint Reserve Intelligence Center Jacksonville, New Orleans, and Fort Worth and the more than 1,900 supported customers throughout the Southeast Region to include the United Kingdom, Puerto Rico and Africa. She earned the Information Warfare pin, Sailor of the Year and another Navy Commendation Medal for her exemplary work there.

YN1 Wilson was selected for special duty as Instructor at Navy Reserve Professional Development Center, New Orleans, LA in August 2016. She amassed 50.5 hours instructing the Reserve Pay and Personnel Management Course where she spent over 80 hours revising the course for FY20 and earned the coveted Master Training Specialist qualification.

Ironically her instructor assignment perfectly prepared her for duty at the Navy Operational Support Center (NOSC), New Orleans Oc-

tober 2019, because her course is the one taught to all Reserve Pay Clerks going to any NOSC. Her expertise was immediately effective as she was key to helping pass the Triannual Command Assessment gaining the command Medium NOSC of the Year and her Sailor of the Year for the model programs she established and revitalized.

YN1 Wilson resides on base at Navy Air Station, Joint Reserve Base, Belle Chasse, with her husband Derrick, U.S. Marine Corps

Veteran. They have three kids, Destiny (25yrs), Kimani (11yrs) and Derrick II (9yrs). Her 24 year career has garnered her many personal awards to include the Joint Service Commendation Medal, Joint Service Achievement Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (5 awards), Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (4 awards), Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal (2 awards), Humanitarian Service Medal (2 awards) and other various personal and unit commendations.

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### CHAMBERS from page 1

tricts should have Black majorities, noting about a third of the state's people are Black.

Chambers says in the ad that gerrymandered election districts keeping Black voters underrepresented are "a byproduct of the Confederacy."

Chambers is one of two Democrats who have announced plans to challenge incumbent Republican Sen. John Kennedy this year. The other is former Navy pilot Luke Mixon.

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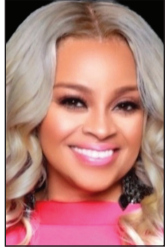
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# RELIGION

## Motown Gospel Signs Karen Clark Sheard in Partnership With Karew Records

Clark Sheard will release a new album later this year, her first since the 2015 live album *Destined to Win* (released via Karew Records and Entertainment One Music).



Clark Sheard

"I am honored and excited to partner with Motown Gospel," said Clark Sheard in a statement. "I'm passionate about encouraging, inspiring and uplifting people through my music, and I can't wait to share it with my long-time supporters and with the world."

"No other female vocalist in gospel music has had as broad an influence as the legendary Karen Clark Sheard," said Monica Coates and EJ Gaines, co-executive directors of Motown Gospel. "She uniquely brings generations of gospel and R&B music-lovers together with the power of her voice and the purity of her spirit. We are so honored to work with her and the Karew team."

Clark Sheard first gained success as the youngest sibling of The Clark Sisters, which earned a crossover hit with "You Brought the Sunshine" in 1981. The group is also known for such hits as "Is My Living in Vain," "Blessed & Highly Favored" (which earned Clark Sheard a Grammy for best gospel song), "Livin'," "Victory" and more.

A division of Capitol CMG/Universal Music Group, Motown Gospel's roster includes Tasha Cobbs Leonard, Merry Clayton, Tye Tribbett and Evvie McKinney.

## Communicating With God



BY CREFLO DOLLAR

One guarantee we have in life is that it will never be completely trouble-free. Dealing with its challenges would quickly become overwhelming if we didn't have the ability to communicate with others and ask for assistance. When difficult situations present themselves and we have no clue how to handle them, we can either devise our own strategy and rely on our own perceived cleverness, or acknowledge that we need divine help. When we're in trouble, prayer is the only real solution.

Prayer is direct communication with God; however, praying is something many people haven't learned how to do properly. As children, we were taught to say our prayers at bedtime, but it usually involved memorizing words and repeating them back on cue. Religion teaches us to pray only at certain times and only about certain topics; by contrast, God wants us to talk with Him constantly, share what's in our hearts and on our minds, and keep those lines of communication open. His will for us is to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Some people feel like they have to fit their prayers into a pre-specified formula before they're accepted. Others want to put on a show with their loud, public prayers. God wants

to free us from all those expectations, which are simply religious trappings.

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him (Matthew 6:5-8).

Whether we're struggling or everything is fine, what's important to God is our attitude while we're praying. Thinking about everything He's done for us, including sending His Son to give us authority over trouble and to empower us to live

victorious lives, leads us into gratitude and thankfulness. He wants us to come to Him with our needs while at the same time thanking Him for having already made provisions to meet those needs before we even knew we would have them. "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:4, 6, NKJV).

God loves us and wants to hear from us anytime, anyplace, anywhere. Whenever something is troubling us, He wants us to come straight to Him. There are no forbidden topics, and nothing is off-limits. Even when things are going great in our lives, God still loves to hear from us.

If we've accepted Jesus, then we're God's children and He's our heavenly Father. The bottom line is that God wants to grant us what we request, in the same way an earthly father wants to give his children what they ask for. When we trust Him enough to believe His Word, He'll honor our prayers. "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you" (John 15:7, NIV). This is a solemn promise from God.



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## BOLD, BRAVE, AND BETTER

Come on in here, get your Bible, bring your faith, believe you are healed, let's do it! You have 4 tasks today: (LSDS) 1) Get some laughter in your belly, 2) Sing a song, 3) Holy Dance like God is watching, 4) Smile all day long! I really mean for you to get up and do these four steps.

It's 2022 and your greatest health success will happen this year! Believe that and say it. We are in this together. We are family. Call me, email me, text me for support. Don't fail.

My love for my Daddy is the reason, I am helping others. I want his life and legacy to impact yours. He died of heart disease. I was not a practitioner when he was ill. God said that what I couldn't do for him, I will do for you.

In 2022 we have 101 healing scriptures to learn. We are using Pastor Keith's Moore list of "101 Things God Said About Healing." Email me or text me and I will send you the entire list. (E) gayle@laughterinyourbelly.com and (T) 225-443-WELL (9355).

We studied Exodus 15:26, our second scripture for the year is Genesis 6:3. "And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be a hundred and twenty years." This scripture is a decree. So, decree daily that you will have a long disease-free life.

Nutrition is nature's health care system. We are not our genes; we are the sum of what we eat. And, yes, supplements are appropriate, but they supplement a diet, not replace a diet. DIET simply means "Did I Eat Today".

Nutritious foods for us are nuts, seeds, vegetables, fruits,

gluten-free (wheat-free) grains, beans/legumes. Buy organic if you can.



Dr. Gayle Young

The above food groups must be combined correctly. So, don't eat starches and meat together (rice and meat, bread, and meat - they don't digest together). Starches and proteins eaten in the same meal cause inflammation. Never combine vegetables and fruit in the same meal. So, don't add fruit to a vegetable salad. Make sure your salad dressing doesn't have soy oil, corn oil, or canola oil. Those oils cause inflammation.

Set measurable Goals: Drink 1/2 of your body weight in spring or filtered water daily. Hold each swallow in your mouth for 15 seconds so you can hydrate well.

Drink your water before your meal, not during it.

Avoid drinking beverages (sodas, fruit juices, punch) during or after a meal.

Write your success story: You know who you want to be in the future and the quality of health that you want. Write that story, let's get you there. I will share your success here in this space.

I have reserved time to give each of you a 30-minute reboot for the new year. Contact me, mention that you follow the column and want your free virtual appointment, zoom, or phone. Gayle Young, HHP, MA, JD, gayle@laughterinyourbelly.com 225-443-9355.

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Rev. Kermit Curtis "KC" Roberson, M.Div., MPA Senior Pastor

Sunday School	9:30 a.m.
Worship Service	1st, 3rd, & 4th Sundays 10:55 a.m.
Contemporary Worship	2nd & 5th Sunday 8:00 a.m. (And any Sunday that falls on a Holiday)
Bible Study	Wednesday, Men's Mid-Day Study 12:00 p.m.
Disciple Bible Study	Wednesday 5:30 p.m.
Prayer Ministry	Tuesday 6:00 p.m.

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- Youth ministry every Sunday and Wednesday
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'THE NEW LIFE' Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. — 2 Corinthians 5:17

SUNDAY WORSHIP	Every Sunday at 11:30 A.M.
SUNDAY SCHOOL	Every Sunday at 9:30 A.M.
HOLY COMMUNION	Every 3rd Sunday at 11:30 A.M.
HOUR OF POWER	Every Friday at 12 NOON

Radio Broadcast 1st and 3rd Sunday WXOK at 8:00am

**ST. JOHN BAPTIST CHURCH**  
Dr. Donald R. Ruth, Pastor  
820 New Rafe Mayer Road  
Baton Rouge, LA 70807  
Phone: 225-775-9756  
Web Address: saintjohnbc.org

Dr. Donald Ruth, Pastor

**Worship Times:**  
CrossWalk Classes: Sundays 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM  
Sunday Worship Experience: 11:00 AM  
Uplift Training: Thursdays 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

**NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH**  
5856 Greenwell Springs Road • Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70806  
Telephone: (225) 926-0246 • Facsimile: (225) 925-8022  
Toll Free: 888-700-6174  
Websites: www.newhopebr.com

Rev. Leo Cyrus Sr., Pastor  
CHURCH SCHEDULE

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

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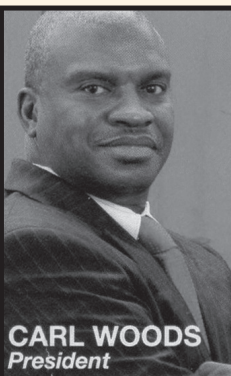
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# BUSINESS

## Changes to tax benefits could boost refunds for many families

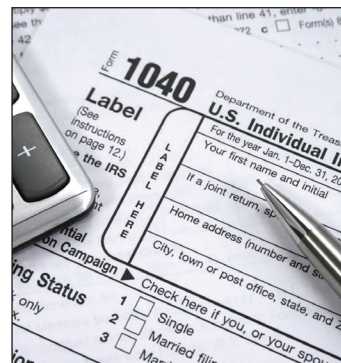
(Gray News) – People who don't normally need to file a tax return should consider doing so this year.

There are several expanded tax benefits available to Americans, even if they have little or no income from a job. The IRS emphasized these are only available to those who file a 2021 federal income tax return.

The Child Tax Credit is among the most talked about benefits from 2021. In 2021 the credit was worth up to \$3,000 per child for dependents 6-17, and \$3,600 for children 5 and under.

Eligible families must file a return, even if they received monthly payments. In addition, the IRS said everyone must attach Schedule 8812 to their return.

Families who added a dependent in 2021 may be eligible to receive a 2021 Recovery Rebate Credit of up to \$1,400. These families are also encouraged to claim the Child Tax Credit.



Families who pay for daycare can get a tax credit worth up to \$4,000 for one qualifying person and \$8,000 for two or more qualifying persons through the Child and Dependent Care Credit.

The American Rescue Plan also boosted the Earned Income Tax Credit for childless workers. It can be claimed by eligible workers who are at least 19 years old. This is a refundable tax credit for low to moderate-income workers.

When filing for 2021, taxpayers can choose to figure the Earned Income Tax Credit using their 2019 income, as long as it was higher than their income in 2021. In some instances, the IRS said this option will offer a larger credit.

Anyone who missed out on the third round of stimulus payments could be eligible to claim the Recovery Rebate Credit.

A temporary law change is allowing taxpayers who made cash donations to qualifying charities in 2021 to easily deduct up to \$600 on their returns, even using the standard deduction. The deduction is claimed on Forms 1040 and 1040-SR, Line 12b.

The IRS is understaffed, like much of the country, so filing early could mean a quicker refund. Also, choosing to receive a refund through direct deposit will speed up the process.

### JUMP from page 2

fanski and Rep. Barry Ivey, R-Baton Rouge, were critical of groups that have submitted maps that suggest more majority-minority districts but do not provide specific boundaries. Representatives

of the ACLU of Louisiana and the Power Coalition for Equity and Justice went on record to oppose Stefanski's map.

Both organizations have said lawsuits are likely if Louisiana fails to add more minority representation in the Legislature, Congress and other seats being redrawn. In a similar case from

Alabama, the U.S. Supreme Court on Monday set aside a lower court ruling that would require lawmakers there to redraw their maps.

Duplessis asked Stefanski if he believed minorities are "adequately represented" in the House Speaker's bill, and Stefanski said he feels they are based on a "regional perspective."

## Baton Rouge local businesses partner to host African American Book Festival 'Children First'



BATON ROUGE, La. — In Celebration of Black History Month, Jasper, LLC and community partners Andrews Allstate Insurance, In Loving Arms Pediatric Day Care Center, Lacy Baaheth & Associates Real Estate, and The Baton Rouge Weekly Press are hosting an African American Book Festival "Children First" which will culminate on Monday, February 28, 2022. Donations of Preschool Age Books including coloring and interactive books are needed. All books collected will be placed with local EBRP Head Start Centers. Please consider being a Donors, Sponsors, and/or Drop-Off Site. Current Drop-Off Sites are Andrews Allstate Insurance, In Loving Arms Pediatric Day Care Center, Lacy Baaheth & Associates Real Estate and The Baton Rouge Weekly Press. For additional information, please contact Gloria Whiten @ 225-955-4853 or email at missgloria1986@yahoo.com.

# CHILDREN FIRST

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225-359-9777

**Lacy Baaheth & Associates Real Estate**  
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### ADDITIONAL INFO

If you are interested in being a Donor, Sponsor, and/or Drop-off Site please contact

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# WE HAVE THE TOOLS TO FIGHT OMICRON

**As the Omicron variant continues to spread, we must remember that we have more tools than ever to slow the spread of COVID-19.**

**If you are not yet vaccinated, you are unprotected.** Vaccines protect you against severe outcomes from COVID-19, like hospitalization and death. According to data from the CDC, unvaccinated people are 10 times more likely to be infected and 20 times more likely to die due to COVID compared to a fully vaccinated person with a booster shot.

- ✓ **Get vaccinated** and, if eligible, get boosted.
- ✓ **Wear a mask** in all public indoor settings, all indoor private spaces with people who are not in your immediate household, and outdoors when not able to social distance.
- ✓ **Limit exposure** to those outside your household.
- ✓ Practice **social distancing**.
- ✓ **Stay home** if you are not feeling well.
- ✓ **Wash your hands** with soap and water.
- ✓ **Get tested** if you're experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or if you have been recently exposed to someone with COVID-19.

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