



The Messenger



Cumberland Plateau Baptist Association

A network of churches committed to evangelizing, teaching, and ministering to our world.

August 2025

- Missionaries Speak
- Baby Comfort Station
- Conferences
- Christmas Backpacks
- Upcoming Dates

A Word from Kirk

"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the house of the LORD.'"
Psalm 122:1

I had a conversation with one of our pastors about the many people who have recently been visiting his church. This wasn't unlike several conversations I've had in recent weeks with other pastors. It seems there's an encouraging trend—churches are seeing a noticeable increase in visitors. Each pastor expressed sincere gratitude for this.

Now, you might be wondering, "Is my church experiencing more visitors than usual?" That's a great question—and an even better conversation for us to have regularly. We often talk about how to attract more visitors, but have we ever stopped to ask: Are there ways we might be turning people away?

The topic of a recent podcast I listened to was the "Top Ten Ways Churches Drive Away First-Time Guests." The list came from a survey of visitors who chose not to return after their first experience. I've summarized the list below, along with a few reflections. Can we handle some honest, constructive feedback? Do any of these resonate with your church?

1. **Stand-and-Greet Time During Worship**
While well-meaning, many guests find this uncomfortable. Interestingly, it's usually the members who enjoy it most. From my visits to churches, I've often had to initiate conversation—even though I'm not a first-time guest. Imagine how awkward it must feel for someone brand new.
2. **Unfriendly Church Members**
Most of us believe we're a friendly church—but often, we're friendly to people we already know. First-time guests can feel invisible unless someone intentionally greets them before the stand-and-greet time.
3. **Unsafe or Unclean Children's Area**
Want to reach young families? Prioritize children's ministry. Is the space clean, fresh, and inviting? Do you have a secure check-in system? Consider what you'd want if you were trusting someone else with your child for the first time.
4. **No Clear Place to Get Information**
Do you have a welcome center? Is it staffed with friendly, knowledgeable people? If not, do you have a visible and welcoming team ready to help guests find their way?
5. **Outdated or Unhelpful Website**
Your website is for visitors, not regular members. Is your service time and address easy to find on the homepage? If not, that's a missed opportunity.
6. **Poor Signage**
Guests should be able to find parking, entrances, restrooms, the children's area, and the sanctuary with ease. Good signage communicates care and intentionality.
7. **Insider Church Language**
We may understand terms like "SBC," "IMB," or "NAMB," but a first-time guest likely won't. Theological jargon and denominational shorthand can leave visitors feeling lost.
8. **Boring or Low-Energy Worship**
A powerful message in song can fall flat if the delivery is lifeless. If a song is joyful, let your face reflect it. The way we express worship matters more than we often realize.
9. **Telling Guests, They're in 'Your Seat'**
Sadly, this still happens. A visitor should never be made to feel like an intruder.
10. **Dirty or Neglected Facilities**
In my last pastorate, I once tried to throw out some dusty, decades-old fake flowers. They had sentimental value to someone, but I can only imagine what guests thought when they saw them during a sermon. A clean, cared-for space communicates welcome and respect.

These ten areas offer insight into how we might unknowingly discourage return visits. The good news? Every one of these can be addressed with intentionality and grace. Let's be churches that welcome people with the love and hospitality of Christ.

"What's one thing we could improve this Sunday?"

Kirk



**Come hear what's
happening in missions.**



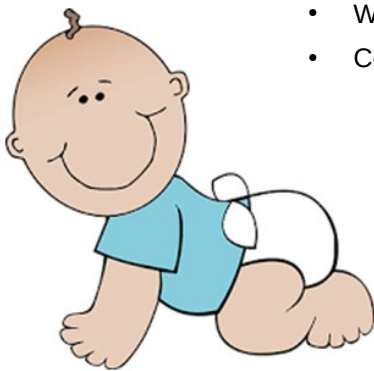
Fairfield Glade First Baptist



Baby Comfort Station

The most important thing we can do is share the Love of Christ with those we around us. The CPBA will again be hosting a Baby Comfort Station at the Cumberland County Fair. The dates for the fair at August 18-23, 2025. We still have a few shifts available.

- The Early Shift each evening is 4:30-7:00pm.
- The Late Shift each evening is 7:00-9:30pm.
- Saturday will also include an afternoon shift from 2:00-4:30pm.
- We need 2 volunteers for each shift.
- Contact Libby to sign up. 484-1858 or cpba4ma@gmail.com.



The Baby Comfort Station provides a clean and comfortable place for parents to bring their babies to change them and feed them. In addition, we also provide free water, suckers, and freezer pops. Through your donations, we are able to give away NEW English and Spanish Bibles, Christian books, movies, and CDs as well as a brochure listing our associational churches.

This is a great opportunity to serve the Lord and to plant Gospel seeds in a lot of hearts and minds. Our desire is to see many come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ!

Roane State Meals

We are booking volunteers for the Fall Semester. We will be serving lunches on Thursdays this year, and you would need to feed about 75-100 students.

Let your church office know if you'd like to participate. We will be sending a list of available dates to each church as soon as we finalize our plans.



Project Help MENTAL HEALTH

FOR 10/4 – REGISTER HERE!

ADULT Mental Health First Aid Trainings

Adult Mental Health First Aid Training is an 8-hour training for adults that teaches people how to **recognize signs of mental health or substance use challenges** in adults **ages 18 and older**, how to offer and **provide initial help**, and how to **guide a person** toward **appropriate care** if necessary. Topics covered include **anxiety, depression, psychosis, and addictions**.

Cost: \$10 (includes lunch)

Saturday, October 4, 2025

8:00am – 5:00pm

Fairfield Glade First Baptist Church

REGISTER TODAY! Registration for 10/4 training closes on September 19th.

For one of the 30 available spots, click on the button above.

The Rooted Conference is back and registration is officially open! Grab a friend (or two) and come spend an enriching morning at Cookeville First Baptist as we welcome Bible teacher and national speaker Elizabeth Woodson to Cookeville! Join in worship, study, and fellowship with other women who are committed to staying grounded in God's Word.

Register now at [Cookeville First Rooted Conference!](#)

September 6th at 9AM-12PM
\$20 per person

A limited number of scholarships will be available.
Please contact us if you have a need for this.

Read more about Elizabeth here:
<https://www.thewoodsoninstitute.org/about-elizabeth>

Please email Dawn Crabtree
at dawnoftheday7@gmail.com
for more information!

We can't wait to see you!!

Any student ministries (youth girls, college girls, etc.) from 7th grade and up are also invited and can attend free with a student ID.



COOKEVILLE FIRST BAPTIST



FINDING MY PLACE



ACP

Instructions for the Annual Reports have been sent to each church. Reports are due September 8.

If your church is sending Messengers to the meeting, please return the RSVP form due October 1.

Annual Meeting

Oct 5 at Bethlehem

TBC Summit

November 9-12
Jackson, TN



CHRISTMAS BACKPACKS

FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS

Collection Days
Oct 20-22, 2025

2025 Christmas Backpacks

(Click for more information.)

Over the last few years, we have invited your church to join us in sharing the gospel with Tennessee's impoverished children through the Christmas Backpack ministry. Many of you responded by giving backpacks. In fact, last year there were nearly 7,540 Christmas Backpacks donated by individuals from 166 Tennessee Baptist Convention churches. Thank you!

We are moving into the eighth year of receiving Christmas Backpacks. This year's goal in Tennessee is 7,000 backpacks. As so many deal with rising costs of food and gas, the need for Christmas backpacks has only increased. Around 34 churches/ministries have made application for Christmas Backpacks with almost 7,000 requested.

We need your help. Would you consider joining other Tennessee Baptists in sharing the love of Christ through giving Christmas Backpacks? Would you be willing to lead your church to do so?

As you consider joining in this ministry effort, please know the following:

- 89 of 95 counties in Tennessee have double-digit poverty rates
- 19 counties have poverty rates at more than 20%
- 14% of Tennesseans living below the poverty line
- 10% of all Tennesseans live in extreme poverty
- 15.6% of the population lives with food insecurity
- Every Christmas Backpack given this year will be given to children in Tennessee.
- Every Church/ministry that signs up to give out Christmas Backpacks is asked to do three things:
 - Have a Christmas event.
 - Present the gospel to each child and family.
 - Follow-up with each child that accepts Christ.

To assist you in shopping, please consider these possibilities:

Dollar Days- For Backpacks and Contents: Click the link.

Mark McSwain has a ministry called **The Slip Disc: The Original Gospel Tract Flying Disc**. You can purchase discs complete with an attached gospel presentation through his website: Click the link.

Dollar Days

The Slip Disc

If you haven't already done so, please let us know if you will join us by signing up to donate backpacks. When you do, we will send you copies of "The Christmas Story" to insert in each backpack. These will be mailed in mid-September. The backpacks will be collected at various sites across the state between **October 20-22, 2025**. You can find out everything you need to know about donating Christmas Backpacks at www.tnbaptist.org/backpacks. If you have questions, call Beth Moore at 423-440-6225.

Tennessee Baptist Church giving through the Cooperative Program and the Golden Offering for Tennessee Missions make TBMB ministries possible. Thank you for your willingness to consider joining us in the important work of reaching children with the gospel.

Register Here to Donate Christmas Backpacks

EXTRA Mission Trip to Love Packages



Sorting Sunday School material are Doreen Ford, Judy Wyrick, Jane Hansen, and Nancy Bouchillon.



Sam Newell breaking down boxes.



Sit down jobs being done by Safondia Tumulty and Joanne Archambault.



Love Packages director Jason Jenkins with Kirk Casey.



Our group eating at Big Bad Breakfast at the Lodge Cast Iron Skillet Factory & Museum.



Sam & Kathleen Newell, Safondia Tumulty, Nancy Bouchillon, Doreen Ford, Jane Hansen, Joanne Archambault, Judy Wyrick, Kirk Casey



Morning devotions at Love Packages.

Volunteers Needed for September

If you would like to join us for our next Love Packages mission trip September 15-16, let our office know.



RELIGION:

*"I messed up. My Dad
is gonna kill me!"*

SONSHIP:

*"I messed up. I need to
call my Dad!"*

-unknown

THE
BIBLE RECAP

August 2025 At-A-Glance

Aug 4	Pastors' Conference Speaker: Scott Johnson, Lantana Road Baptist Church
Aug 11	CCS: First Full Day of School for Students
Aug 18	Pastors' Conference Speaker: Phillip Smith, TBMB Harvest Field 5 Leader
Aug 18-24	Baby Comfort Station at Cumberland Co. Fair

DONATE

Please consider donating to support CPBA. All donations are tax deductible. Donate by mail, in person, or online at www.cpbaptists.com/donate

Looking Ahead to September 2025

Sept 1	Labor Day: OFFICE CLOSED
Sept 8	ACP Reports Due
Sept 9	Executive Council Meeting, 2pm
Sept 15-16	Love Packages mission trip

More information about many of our calendar events can be found on the **EVENTS** page of our website..

SUBSCRIBE

If you currently receive the newsletter in print but could switch to the online version, please subscribe at www.cpbaptists.com/subscription

Cumberland Plateau Baptist Association

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Mon. -Thurs.

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