



The
ENCOURAGER
NEWSLETTER OF THE HOLMES BAPTIST ASSOCIATION
Encourage - Equip - Engage

FEBRUARY 2026



PARADIGM SHIFT

— Encourage • Equip • Engage —
HOLMES BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

PARADIGM SHIFT

Holmes Baptist Association

The **Holmes Baptist Association** is embracing a **paradigm shift in ministry**—moving from primarily event-driven and program-centered efforts to a **relational strategy of encouragement** focused on walking alongside pastors and pastoral leaders.

At the heart of this shift is a renewed commitment to **pastoral care, trust, and long-term partnership**. We recognize that healthy churches are most often led by **healthy, supported, and encouraged pastors**. Therefore, our ministry posture prioritizes presence over

performance, relationships over requirements, and shared journey over isolated leadership.

Through intentional relationships, cohorts, triads, and ongoing connection, HBA seeks to:

- **Encourage pastors spiritually, emotionally, and relationally**
- **Create safe spaces** for prayer, honesty, and mutual support
- **Strengthen pastoral leadership** through shared wisdom and accountability

Walk with churches in seasons of faithfulness, challenge, transition, and renewal

This paradigm shift does not abandon our heritage or mission. Instead, it **builds upon it**, recognizing that sustainable ministry impact flows from **deep relationships and shared trust**.

Our role as an association is not to direct from a distance, but to **journey together**—supporting pastors as they shepherd their congregations, discern God's leading, and faithfully engage in the work of ministry.

In addition to online ministry connections such as the ***Pastor's Compass E-News***, which will feature articles of interest, announcements and words of encouragement specifically written and curated for the pastors of our association, this paradigm shift in ministry will reveal itself through three primary elements;

- **Barnabas Groups**
- **Pastor Cohorts**
- **Weekly Pastor Breakfasts**

In addition to an intentional effort to encourage our pastoral leadership of the association, special care and attention will also be made to encourage the wives and families of those serving in pastoral ministry through special events, initiatives and connections.

Special care will be in place to provide encouragement and insight for all in ministerial leadership within the churches of the Holmes Baptist Association. Such effort will be made in the area of summit gatherings, forums, book studies and other associational events.



The Barnabas Group is a small, confidential gathering of pastors committed to walking together in **encouragement, accountability, and prayer**. Rooted in the example of Barnabas—“the son of encouragement”—this ministry provides a trusted circle where pastors can speak honestly, pray faithfully, and support one another through the joys and challenges of ministry. The Barnabas Group exists to strengthen pastors personally and spiritually so they can lead their churches with resilience, clarity, and hope.

Rather than functioning as a formal meeting or program, each group emphasizes **ongoing relational touchpoints**—such as brief check-ins by phone, text, or message—combined with **occasional in-person gatherings** when schedules allow. These gatherings are intentionally simple and centered on **prayer, personal encouragement, and pastoral care**.

The rhythm and format remain **pastor-driven and flexible**, allowing each group to adapt naturally to ministry demands while staying connected without adding unnecessary structure or obligation. Associational leadership supports the Barnabas Group strategy by casting vision, providing alignment, pathways of discussion, scripture, prayer points and resources, and protecting confidentiality—while allowing groups to remain pastor-owned and relationally driven.



A **Pastor Cohort** is a small, relational gathering of pastors who commit to walk together for a defined season in order to **encourage one another, grow together in wisdom and leadership, and collaborate more effectively in mission**. Through trusted relationships, prayer, shared learning, and honest conversation, pastors are strengthened personally and professionally so they can lead healthy churches with clarity and confidence. *A Pastor Cohort creates a trusted circle where pastors are encouraged, equipped, and connected for the work of ministry—together.*

While pastor cohorts are not content driven, they will be semi-structured based on the selected books by Mark Hallock of the North American Mission Board. Each session will be self-contained with the subject of discussion preplanned so that participating pastors can prepare for times of discussion, encouragement and enlightenment. Monthly themes will

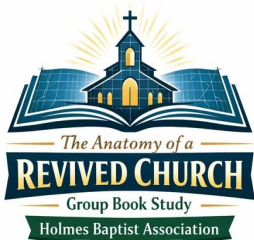
include; *The Posture of a Godly Leader, The Priorities of a Shepherd Pastor and The Perseverance of a Faithful Minister. The priority of these pastor cohorts will be to provide **safe space**, not solutions, to listen before leading and to normalize the struggles and celebrate faithfulness of pastoral ministry.*



The Associational Pastor Breakfasts exist to foster meaningful relationships among pastors by creating space for encouragement, shared conversation, and alignment around God’s work in our association, helping pastors walk together with greater clarity, support, and unity in ministry.

These weekly breakfasts serve as a relational gathering designed to encourage pastors, strengthen trust, and cultivate unity across our churches, providing a natural on-ramp into deeper relationships, collaboration, and shared mission within the association.

(TUESDAY MORNINGS AT 8AM – HOLIDAY RESTAURANT – BONIFAY)



The Holmes Baptist Association invites pastors and church leaders to join a Group Book Study of 'The Anatomy of a Revived Church' by Thom Rainer.

This study will explore the biblical and leadership marks often found in churches experiencing genuine renewal—focusing on prayer, humility, and spiritual health rather than quick fixes or programs.

If you’re longing to see God bring fresh life and clarity to your church, we invite you to learn and reflect alongside fellow leaders in an encouraging, relational setting.

Discussion facilitated by Gary Watson and the Associational Church Renewal Team. Books are not required, but will be available for purchase. Sunday Afternoons @ 4 pm @ New Hope Baptist Church for the Month of February (may continue into the first of March if needed).



RANDYm THOUGHTS....

Randy Torrance, Mission Strategist - Holmes Baptist Association

“Loving Our Communities with the Gospel”

February 2026

Project 3.16: Loving Our Communities with the Gospel

Project 3.16 is more than a name—it is a reminder of why the church exists. Rooted in the truth of John 3:16, this associational initiative calls the churches of the Holmes Baptist Association to intentionally love people, share the gospel, and serve our communities in visible, practical ways.

Project 3.16 is not just a two-week evangelistic emphasis; it is an ongoing evangelistic strategy that effects our churches and community twelve months of the year. This year’s strategy is to encourage our churches to be intentional in pursuing opportunities to share the gospel message of **John 3:16** with their community. Plans are being made for activities and events that will provide opportunities to engage our communities with the love of Christ.

At its heart, Project 3.16 is about **presence**. It challenges us to step beyond the walls of our buildings and meet people where they are—neighbors, families, schools, first responders, and communities—demonstrating the love of Christ through both words and actions. Whether through local mission projects, simple acts of compassion, or intentional gospel conversations, Project 3.16 reminds us that every church can make an eternal impact right where God has planted them.

One of the strengths of Project 3.16 is its **flexibility**. Churches are encouraged to participate in ways that fit their context, capacity, and calling. Some may focus on community service projects such as neighborhood cleanups, helping families in need, or serving local schools and first responders. Others may emphasize prayer initiatives, acts of kindness paired with gospel conversations, or outreach efforts that intentionally point people to Christ.

What unites us is not identical activity—but a **shared purpose**: lifting up Jesus and pointing people to the hope found in Him.

Project 3.16 also reflects our associational commitment to **Encourage • Equip • Engage**. As an association, we come alongside churches by sharing ideas, celebrating stories of faithfulness, and supporting one another as we live out the Great Commission together. When churches work in unity, the gospel witness is strengthened across our entire county.

As we move forward, we encourage every church to:

- **Pray intentionally** for your community
- **Serve visibly** in ways that meet real needs
- **Share boldly** the message of Jesus Christ

This is not about doing the same project—it is about sharing the same mission.

I pray that Project 3.16 will be both a challenge and an encouragement, reminding us that God still so loves the world—and He chooses to demonstrate that love through His people.

How will your church live out John 3:16 this season?

Together, let us love boldly, serve faithfully, and share the good news of Jesus Christ.

-Randy Torrance

Mission Strategist



It's almost that time again.... Project 3.16 is our annual evangelistic emphasis that occurs the first 16 days of the third month (3.16).

We will be sharing some ideas that may work for you and your church to complete in your community. If you have a project that you think will work in your community that the HBA might could help with, please contact us.

But we hope you and your church to see Project 3:16 as an ongoing project, not just a one and done for the year. . We hope that our churches will see this as an ongoing opportunity to reach out to their community throughout the year.



The Executive Committee Board will not meet as there is nothing that will require a vote.

However, the Administrative Team will meet instead at 4:30 pm on Tuesday, February 17, 2026. The Administrative Team consists of Randy Torrance, Dale Paul, Chris Nelson, Greg Alford, Stacy Stafford, Donna Pate and Tanya Rushing.

OVERVIEW OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Click the event for more information or the Facebook icon

FEBRUARY

- ◆ [14th: New Beginnings Ladies Event. HBA conference room 12pm](#)
- ◆ [14th: Pleasant Grove Annual Steak Dinner/Cake Auction 5pm](#)
- ◆ [15th: New Hope Valentine's Lunch 11:30 am](#)
- ◆ [21st: Gully Springs Ladies Brunch 9:30am](#)



MARCH

- ◆ [14th: West Pittman Wild Game Supper . Events begin at 2pm](#)

ASSOCIATION PRAYER CALENDAR:

- ◆ **February 1** Week of Prayer: New Beginnings Counseling and Support Center
- ◆ **February 8** Beulah Anna Baptist Church, Westville (Pastor: Danny Gill)
- ◆ **February 15** Bridge Creek Baptist Church, Ponce de Leon (Pastor: Terry Smith)
- ◆ **February 22** Spanish ministry – Primera Bautista De Bonifay (Pastor: Oswaldo Saavedra)
- ◆ **February 29** Special Prayer: Project 3.16



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