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Our South Carolina Baptist Convention uses a term "At Risk Church". How is an "At Risk Church" defined? From Hope for Churches SCBC: A congregation whose current status is vulnerable to imminent decline or closure. From plateaued or nearing closure, they are at risk of declining gospel influence in their community.

Here are a couple key questions to help determine if your church is at risk. Has your church seen active attendance decline for more than three years? Are you unable to attract young people and young families to become members and be involved in the life of your church? Do you feel your church is somehow disengaged from the surrounding neighborhood? If your current trend continues in both attendance and giving, do you fear your church will have to close within the next five years?

Unfortunately, some of our FBA churches fall into the "At Risk Church" category. Covid, while accelerating the process, can't be blamed for what has been happening for years. Right here in the FBA we have a success story of how friendship between pastors and prayer among the congregation led to a vibrant congregation at Oakdale, now HRBC Oakdale. There are options for revitalization, restart, and even rein-

vest. There are opportunities for mergers, adoptions and some combination of the two.

Each FBA church has a history, a story, vision and reason for it being started. Situations change as do neighborhoods and demographics. Churches that don't continue to make adjustments don't continue to be a gospel witness in their surrounding neighborhoods. There is hope for churches that are in decline. Your FBA Director can help you in the process of evaluating where you are and the direction that needs to be taken to make the most of the resources available. During the month of April, this process of evaluation and diagnosis, will be presented to one of our FBA churches. Others may consider following their lead.

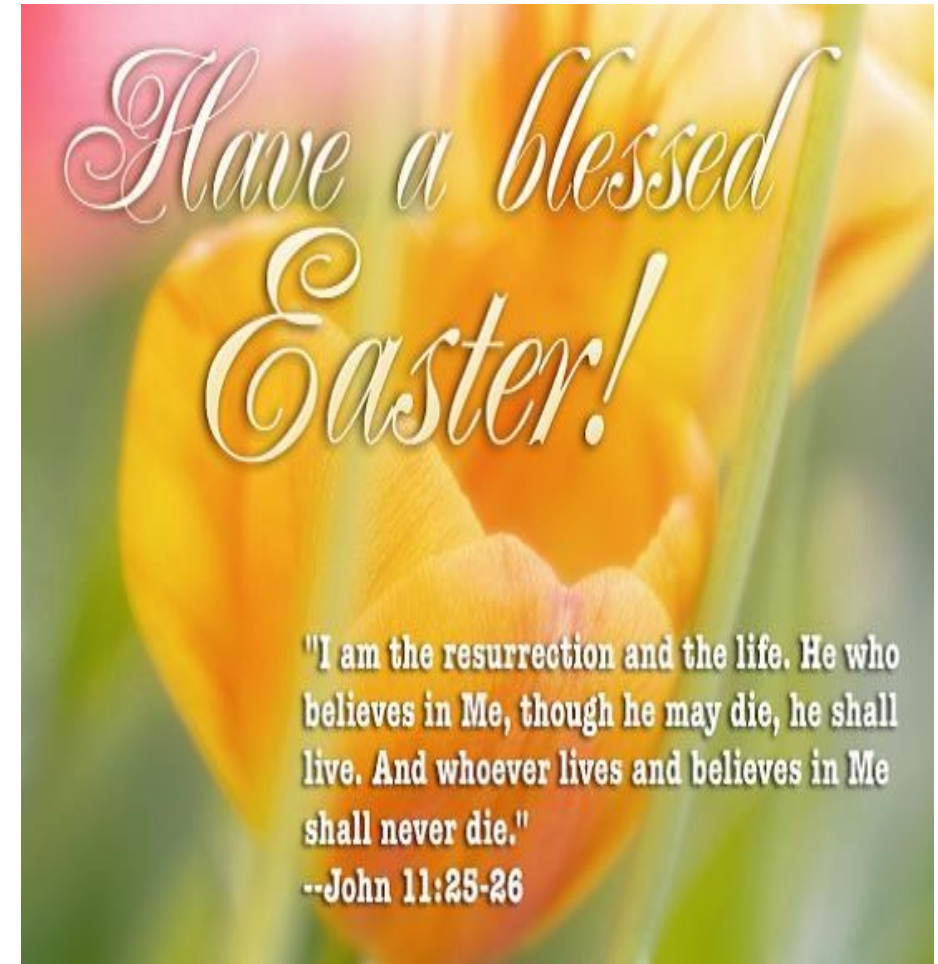
Looking forward,

Chris

# Cooperative



*Florence Baptist Association, April, 2023*



**Love Packages Collection:** We will be collecting old SS material, Bibles (any version and in any shape) and other Christian material **April 2-6, 2023**. Remember the FBA Office is closed on Fridays. **Material will not be taken after this week until our next collection time because of storage.** Please box "like material" together and place in boxes NO BIGGER than a box of a ream of paper. Bigger boxes are really hard to lift and the sorters struggle if the boxes are too big. If you need a complete list of what can be brought for Love Packages, please contact Louanne at the FBA office.

**Registration for LifeChangers June 18-23 is due Monday, April 17<sup>th</sup>.** We have already heard that some churches who normally come will not be participating this year, so we REALLY need to have all registrations in by April 17<sup>th</sup> so we can see if we have enough students to have LifeChangers this year.



**Clay Shoot Benefit for Good News Clubs**

Saturday, May 13, 2023  
8 am – 2 pm  
Shooting begins at 9 am  
Moree's Sportsman Preserve  
1217 Moree Road, Society Hill, SC  
\$100 donation per shooter or \$300 per team of 3  
Each shooter gets 1 round sporting clays, lunch and a chance at door prizes.  
There will also be a Silent Auction.

Sponsors are also needed for the Clay Shoot.  
There are three levels:

- Bronze - \$300 (1 free shooter and name on one station sign)
- Silver - \$500 (2 free shooters; name on 2 station signs)
- Gold - \$1000 (3 free shooters; name on 3 station signs and a banner)

There will be a drawing for 2 Beretta A300 Outlander Shotguns  
Tickets are \$20. Contact Louanne if interested

If you are interested in sponsoring the benefit or registering to shoot, go to [www.heartofthepalmetto.org](http://www.heartofthepalmetto.org) for more information.

**Operation Christmas Child  
2023 Vision & Celebration Event**

Saturday, April 22 at 9 am  
First Baptist Church, Florence  
300 S. Irby Street

Questions contact Deborah Crawford  
[deborahdcrawford@yahoo.com](mailto:deborahdcrawford@yahoo.com) / 843-992-4280

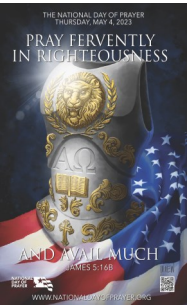
**Financial Information  
February 2023**

Monthly Budget Needs:	\$19,775.00
Monthly Received:	\$18,374.32
Monthly Expenses:	\$16,819.32
Year to Date Received:	\$42,351.97
Year to Date Expenses:	\$33,381.37

**National Day of Prayer  
Events**

**Thursday, May 4, 2023  
12 noon**

Florence First Baptist  
Church Courtyard  
300 N. Irby Street, Florence  
7 pm - NewSpring Church  
110 N. Cashua Drive, Florence



**South Carolina Baptist  
Ministry Assistants  
Conference**

May 5, 2023  
Camden First Baptist Church  
Cost: \$50

*"My Grace is Sufficient For You,  
For My Power is Made Perfect  
In Weakness."  
2 Corinthians 12:9 NIV*

This is an opportunity for our Ministry Assistants to be strengthened and encouraged.

*April Birthdays*

- 6 Rev. Gerald McKay, retired
- 6 Rev. Jerry Aiken, retired
- 9 Rev. Greg Batchelor (P), Hoffmeyer Road
- 10 Rev. Hunter Harmon (P), Sparrow Swamp
- 19 Rev. Ed Self, retired

**Pastors and Staff Outing  
Top Golf in Myrtle Beach  
April 24, 2023**

The pastors and staff are invited to attend an outing to Top Golf in Myrtle Beach. This is not just for golfers. It can be enjoyed by non-golfers and hackers too. We will plan to leave at 9:00 AM and return around 3:00 PM. Lunch will be enjoyed while playing at Top Golf. Cost for golf time and food will be around \$35, depending on lunch order. As we know how many will plan to go, we will make travel plans. If you intend to go, please respond to the office or Chris by Monday April 17<sup>th</sup>.



**Save the Dates:**

- BLISS Ball (Prom for children and adults with special needs)  
Saturday, October 14
- Fair Ministry Oct. 26-Nov. 5

**Christian Sympathy** is expressed to Rev. Mike Mills, Calvary, in the death of his mother.  
**Christian Sympathy** is also expressed to Rev. David Cromer, Willow Creek, in the death of his wife, Nancy.