



# Connecting Churches through Cooperation



Gateway Baptist Association Newsletter

SEPT.—OCT. 2023

"REACHING THE  
LOST THROUGH  
GOSPEL  
PRESENTATIONS"



2023 ANNUAL MEETING

## ***Preaching Conference & Annual Meeting***

*Saturday, September 30, 2023,*

*8:30 AM - 2:00 P.M.*

**Hosted at Calvary Baptist Church**

**1422 Washington Avenue, Alton, IL 62002**

**Lunch and/or Childcare Provided by RSVP  
to 618-254-3953 or [admin@gatewayba.org](mailto:admin@gatewayba.org)**

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## The Cooperative Program AND a Spirit of Cooperation

This past May marked 18 years of my calling to serve the church through the associational ministry. There have been two things that are definitive “take aways” for me during these 18 years.

The first is that we as a Southern Baptist people are proud of our Cooperative Program. And we should be! It is our missionary sending organization and it is unparalleled in the world. Our missionaries can give total focus to the ministry and not have to be concerned with raising their own funding. Their family’s welfare is provided for by you and me.

Our second marker appears to be contrary to this program in which we find such pride. We tout one of the best programs of cooperation, but we must regrettably confess we are not a people who display a visible spirit of cooperation. The Bible says the world will know we are Christ’ followers by the love we have for one another (John 13:35). Do we really love one another? Do we esteem others better than ourself (Phil 2:3)? Are we mirroring the Good Samaritan who was willing to be inconvenienced, sidetracked, and financially impacted to care for those who are hurting, beat down, and lost?

I have dear friends who have been provided for by our Cooperative Program, but I have been discouraged by those in our denomination who exude selfish individualism. We have an amazing sending program without question, but the church’s credibility and reputation in our world is deteriorating. We are not demonstrating a spirit of cooperation. We are more concerned about doing church OUR way, with OUR leadership format, and in OUR worship style. We have allowed OUR leadership and worship to trump the unity of the Body of Christ. We must remember our major calling is to reach the lost and glorify our Heavenly Father.

Let’s practice being cooperative for the good of the entire Body (so no church is left behind) and support our Cooperative Program so our missionaries can serve without fear for their family’s health and welfare. WE NEED EACH OTHER!



**2023 Pastor’s Haven of Rest, September 18-20, 2023**

After Lunch on the 18<sup>th</sup> until after breakfast on the 20<sup>th</sup>!

**This year’s focus: “Being Set Free from the Addictions of Work and the World”**

We will fellowship, share, eat, and reenergize!

Call the GBA Office to reserve your spot NOW!

No cost for double occupancy; \$35 for single



National Volunteer Appreciation Week 2023 was April 16-22, 2023, but in the local church it is fitting to appreciate our volunteers in the spring or fall. As volunteers close out the educational calendar in May, or facing the kickoff the new equipping year in the fall (August or September), we should take time to say thanks to those who serve faithfully and tirelessly in the service areas of our local churches. Therefore, be it highly resolved that we will institute a Thank You event for those who volunteer in the many roles of the church.

## AUGUST 27, 2023 is appointed as Fall Volunteer Appreciation Day!

Here are several ways to show appreciation to your church volunteers. “Churches that show appreciation for volunteers have very little difficulty recruiting volunteers.”

1. Put together a THANK YOU video with testimonies from class members young and old (mature)! Show it in the morning worship event.
2. Plan an after-church banquet for workers and their families. Spaghetti is inexpensive and yummy!
3. Have class/team members write thank you notes to the leader and present them to them during the worship time.
4. Give a small token (gift) of your appreciation.
5. Develop a certificate that is classy and wall worthy. We’ve used the ABC Award (**A**bove and **B**eyond the **C**all). Link to template below.
6. Dedicate a blog post on your Facebook or Website for members to post a thank you.
7. Have church leaders write and send handwritten thank you notes. It takes time but nothing says love like time!
8. Have coffee and donuts for the volunteers and let them go first in line on that day!
9. Give them a small potted plant to say, “Thanks for helping us Grow?”
10. Give a gift card. It doesn’t have to be big – it’s the thought that counts!
11. Give them designated parking spaces on that day with banners and greeters! Use sidewalk chalk to highlight the spaces. Let the kids help with this project.
12. Take a group picture after the worship service and have it blown up and hang it in the Welcome Center.
13. Remember to do this annually. You will likely see lots more people wanting to volunteer in the future!

*We  our volunteers!*





## Five Wise Cautions when Preparing your Church Budget for 2024

*Gently adapted from Dr. Thom Rainer*

The *following* call from a pastor was not that unusual. “Hey Thom,” the pastor asked, “Are you seeing anything about church giving declining? We thought it was a temporary pause at our church, but giving is consistently down about five percent.”

While we at Church Answers don’t have sufficient data to declare a definitive trend, we see reasons to urge church leaders to exercise caution before planning major budget increases in the months ahead. Here are five reasons:

**Economic uncertainty.** Economic experts are not in agreement about the future of the economy. The future state of the economy is uncertain. As a key indicator, inflation is still at a rate that could hold back economic growth.

**Declining attendance.** There is a direct correlation between attendance and giving. Church attendance is lower than pre-pandemic levels. Giving will *likely* follow suit.

**Disappearing assets.** *To* counter the financial effects of the pandemic, the government injected a lot of *cash stimulus* to individuals and businesses. These subsidies are nearly exhausted, and the *savings and* disposable income of *our* church members has correspondingly diminished.

**Polarization in churches.** Church unity is one of the most important factors in the health of a church. And we know for certain that unity affects the giving of a church. A unified church is a church with a purpose. A church with a purpose attracts greater generosity. Regrettably, many churches are experiencing internal division, which discourages generosity. *The church is being directly affected by our political climate.*

**Facility surprises.** *Some* churches have *postponed* maintenance issues, and churches are surprised when they’re hit with major facility repairs. *Many* congregations are in older buildings. Unfortunately, most of those congregations have not kept up with the facility maintenance *demands*. The expense for major facility *repairs/replacements* (i.e. roofing; HVAC systems) is higher than expected, *and utility costs have gone through the roof.*

One *preventative measure* a church can take right now is to prepare a contingency budget. *Ask yourself*, “What changes would we make if we knew church *donations* would come in five/ten percent under budgeted receipts?” *Work on scenarios now to have the assets needed and to ensure church health.*

# Mark Your Calendars

## UPCOMING EVENTS

August 27, 2023—Volunteer Appreciation Day



Sept. 4, 2023—Labor Day  
GBA Office Closed

Sept. 7, 2023—Ministry Luncheon  
11:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

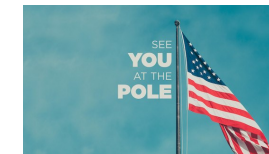


Sept. 10, 2023—Back to Church Sunday

Sept. 14, 2023—Mission Team Meeting 9:30 a.m.

Sept. 20, 2023—Admin Team Mtg. (time TBD)

Sept. 27, 2023—See You at the Pole—Youth –Led Prayer for our local Schools



Sept. 30, 2023— Gateway Baptist Association Annual Meeting  
Calvary Baptist Church  
1422 Washington Avenue  
Alton, IL 62002  
Worship: 8:30 a.m.  
Lunch: 12:00 p.m.  
Business Mtg: 1:00 p.m.

October 5, 2023—Missions Committee Mtg. 9:30 a.m.

October 5, 2023—Ministry Luncheon  
11:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m.



October 8, 2023—Clergy Appreciation Day

October 18, 2023— Admin Team Mtg.—9:30 a.m.

October 31—November 2, 2023—IBSA Annual Meeting



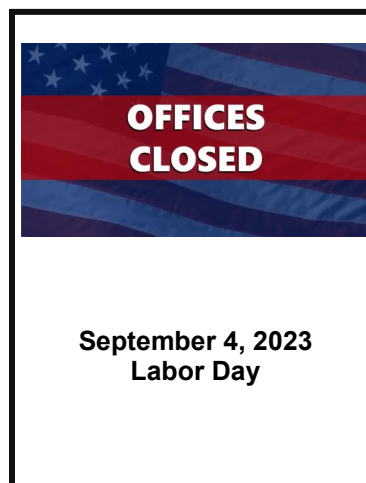
**Pray for our Pastorless churches**

First Baptist Church of Collinsville  
723 St. Louis Road  
Collinsville, IL 62234

New Douglas Baptist Church  
407 N. First Street  
New Douglas, IL 62074

Whitelaw Avenue BC  
800 Whitelaw Ave.  
Wood River, IL 62095

Pleasant Ridge BC  
195 West Country Lane  
Collinsville, IL 62234



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**Office Hours**

Mon. – Thurs. 9:00 am – 4:30 pm;

Fri. 9:00 am– 12 pm

[www.gatewayba.org](http://www.gatewayba.org)



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Would Your Church be Willing to

**HOST AN EVENT?**

For the GBC **Children's Mission Day 2024** – Scheduled for March 30, 2024

For a **GBA Annual Meeting 2024, 2025 or 2026** – normally the last week in  
September

Please contact the GBA Office if you would be willing to bless the member churches.