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Wednesday, February 11, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

Dr. Ryan Bonfiglio chosen as Guest Speaker at TWU Heritage Day



Tennessee Wesleyan University will host Dr. Ryan Bonfiglio as this year's Heritage Day speaker.

Bonfiglio serves at Emory's Candler School of Theology as an Associate Professor in the Practice of Old Testament. He also serves as the Executive Director of The Candler Foundry, an initiative that seeks to make the best of theological learning accessible to the broader public and beyond Candler's formal degree programs.

He holds degrees from Princeton University (BA Chemistry), Princeton Theological Seminary (MDiv), and Emory University (PhD, Old Testament). His research and teaching interests include biblical metaphors, the Ten Commandments, the Bible and poverty, ancient Near Eastern iconography, and various topics in Old Testament theology.

He is the author of Reading Images, Seeing Texts: Towards a Visual Hermeneutics for Biblical Studies and is currently working on a book that explores the biblical theology of Sabbath. Bonfiglio was born and raised in Philadelphia and still suffers from a lifelong love of Philly sports team.

Bonfiglio will speak on Monday, February 16, at 7:00 p.m. in the Johnson Event Center located in Colloms Campus Center on the topic "Embracing Rest in a Restless World." He will speak again during Convocation time on February 17 at 11:00 a.m. in Townsend Auditorium on "Made in the Image of Three Mile-an-Hour God." Both events are free and open to the public.

Source: Chrisi Jackson, TWU

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Athens, Tennessee

Community News You Can Use

- SETHRA, in partnership with the Chattanooga Area Food Bank, will distribute USDA food commodities to eligible Meigs County residents on Wednesday, Feb. 11, starting at 11 a.m. at the Meigs County City & County Building in Decatur. Residents may sign up the day of the event or register in advance by calling 423-334-3305. Proof of income or eligibility is required.
- The Athens Area Council for the Arts will welcome back **Our Three Tenors: Seasons of Love** on **Friday and Saturday, Feb. 13-14, 2026**, as part of AACA's 2025-26 House Blend Concert Series. Directed by **Kay Simmons** and **Pam Thigpen**, the concert marks the trio's first full-length performance in more than five years and celebrates love through a mix of audience favorites, Great American Songbook classics, show tunes and contemporary pop. Performers **Tim Frazier**, **Rusty Patterson** and **Mike Simmons** will headline the program. Friday's show includes light hors d'oeuvres with tickets priced at **\$25**, while Saturday's Valentine's Day performance features a full meal with tickets at **\$40**; ticket sales for Saturday ended **Tuesday, Feb. 10** due to catering. Advance ticket purchase is strongly recommended, as performances often sell out.

Blount County Probation Officer Arrested Following TBI Investigation



A Blount County probation officer has been arrested following an investigation by special agents with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation into allegations of official misconduct.

According to the TBI, agents began investigating James Glenn Dale, 42, in January at the request of 5th Judicial District Attorney General Ryan Desmond. Dale was employed as a probation officer with the East Tennessee Human Resource Agency at the time of the alleged incidents.

During the investigation, agents determined that Dale engaged in sexual contact with a female probationer who was under his supervision.

The Blount County Grand Jury returned indictments last week charging Dale with one count of official misconduct, one count of official oppression, and one count of sexual contact with a probationer. On Tuesday, with assistance from the Blount County Sheriff's Office, Dale was arrested and booked into the Blount County Detention Facility, where bond was set at \$250,000.

The charges and allegations are accusations only. Dale is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law. *Source: [TBI Newsroom.com](https://www.tbi.tn.gov/Newsroom)*

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Athens, Tennessee

McMinn County Arrest Reports

February 08, 2026

Brittany Phoebe, 36 of Niota, charged with failure to appear for driving on a suspended license, state violation of probation for two counts of identity theft, bringing contraband into a penal facility, tampering with evidence, and drug paraphernalia. Bond \$18,000.

Akeem Smith, 26 of Chattanooga, charged with aggravated burglary, non-domestic assault, schedule II resale, drug paraphernalia, and armed and dangerous felonies, Bond \$120,000.

Taurus Moore, 27 of Chattanooga, charged with felony evading arrest, reckless endangerment, resisting stop, simple possession casual exchange of schedule 6, Bond \$60,000.

Lindsay Newland, 23 of Decatur, charged with failure to appear for drug paraphernalia, Bond \$4,000.

Charles Sherlin, 42 of Cleveland, charged with state violation of probation for theft of property, \$2,500 to \$10,000, Bond \$2,700.

David Hensley, 45 of Etowah, charged with domestic assault, Bond \$1,000.

Isaiah Linder, 22 of Athens, charged with felony aggravated domestic assault, Bond \$15,000.

Autumn Cox, 39 of Decatur, charged with casual exchange, and possession of meth, Bond \$6,000.

Justin McCrary, 42 of Riceville, charged with driving on a suspended license, Bond \$1,000.

February 09, 2026

Gabriel Porter, 34 of Athens, charged with child abuse and neglect, non-violent, aggravated burglary, Bond \$50,000.

Bradley Bessie, 42 of Athens, charged with DUI and driving on a revoked license.

Addie Thomas, 36 of Athens, charged with driving on a revoked license, and speeding, Bond \$2,000.

Jake Kubota, 35 of Athens, charged with driving on a revoked license, Bond \$2,000.

Mandy Whitaker, 39 of Athens, charged with violation of probation for falsification of a drug test, Bond \$911.45.

Raquan Stapleton, 30 of Knoxville, charged with evading arrest, reckless driving, reckless endangerment, and driving on a suspended license, Bond \$14,000.

Those accused are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. Information gathered using Public Sources.

FEB. 15, 2026

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Wednesday, Feb. 11, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

Missing Athens Woman Found Safe, Police Say



Athens police have confirmed that **Karen Martinez**, the 26-year-old woman reported missing earlier this week, has been **found safe**.

Martinez was the subject of a missing person alert issued Monday after family members reported they had not had contact with her since

late July 2025. She was last known to have been in the Athens area, and police noted at the time that Martinez is blind in one eye and has mental health challenges.

The Athens Police Department posted an [update](#) Monday afternoon on the [City of Athens Facebook page](#), indicating that Martinez had been located and was safe. No additional details regarding where she was found or the circumstances surrounding her recovery were released.

Authorities thanked the public for their assistance in sharing the alert and helping spread awareness.

Arts Center Seeking Entries for "EXPOSURE"



Athens Area Council for the Arts (AACA) is pleased to present its annual photography exhibit, EXPOSURE, for amateur and professional photographers. The entry deadline is Wednesday, March 18, 2026.

The exhibit has two divisions: digital and film. Digital entries are \$10 per photo, while film entries are \$5 per photo. Information about how to enter, including detailed prospectus and exhibit

timeline, is available at athensartscouncil.org/exposure-prospectus.

This year's judge is Wayne Stetser. "Wayne has been a contributor to our Exposure exhibit for years and has consistently been awarded our top prizes for his photography," says Holly Doucette, AACA Program Director. "Apart from allowing him the space to show more of his work, our Visual Arts Committee thought it was only natural to have him judge this year's competition."

EXPOSURE will be on display in the Willson Exhibit Room and Hallway Gallery at The Arts Center, April 20 through May 22, 2026. The Opening Reception and Awards Ceremony is Friday, May 8, at 5:00 PM. Viewing hours are Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM, and during special events.

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