

American Baptist Churches of IN & KY

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on God's Abundant
Journey

equipping leaders
empowering churches
expanding mission

The Baptist Observer Magazine

HIGHLIGHTING THE MINISTRIES
OF AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES
IN INDIANA & KENTUCKY

www.abc-indiana.org

BECKY SEPTOSKI & JEFF TRYON, EDITORS - VOL 19 NO. 3 - JULY/AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2019

ABC-IN/KY Calls Mark Thompson as Region Minister

After a five-month search and discernment process, the ABC-IN/KY Region Board has accepted the recommendation of the Region Minister Search Team to call the Reverend Mark Thompson to serve as one of our three Region Ministers. Mark and his wife, Stacey, have been married for 23 years and are the parents of two teenagers. A West Virginia native, Mark has served three of our Indiana congregations since 1998: Vincennes FBC, Sanborn BC and Brazil FBC, where he has been the Pastor since 2005. He has served on the ABC-IN/KY Region Board as a member and as the Region President. He currently is the interim Board Vice President. Mark is a graduate of Marshall University (BA) and Oakland City University (MDiv) and has been part of the Wabash Pastoral Leadership Program.

Reverend Thompson has a deep understanding of and commitment

to the Priorities and Pathways of our Region, and a passion for the work of a Region Minister. He will connect easily with our Region churches and leaders and mesh well with our existing Region Staff. Mark will have primary responsibilities in our Region's central area. He and Stacey plan to continue to live in the Brazil area. Mark's anticipated beginning date is early August 2019.

Region staff are assigned geographically and may be deployed regionally, based on gifts, experience and availability. Our executive minister continues to give leadership and direction to the ministry and mission emphases of our entire region. When Rev. Thompson begins his tenure with ABC-IN/KY, the region staff will share responsibilities roughly outlined along geographic and association lines – northern, central, and southern (including Kentucky).

This plan was adopted by the ABC-IN/KY region board earlier this year. To that end, the assignments are as follows:

Northern (Bruce Cochran) – Freedom, Harmony, Judson, Logansport, Monticello, Northeastern, Northwestern, Salamonie and Tippecanoe.

Central (Mark Thompson) – Bedford, Curry's Prairie, Decatur County, East Central, Flat Rock, Friendship, Johnson County, Mt. Zion, Laughery, Sand Creek, Tri-County and White Lick.

Southern and Kentucky (Dan Chadwick) – Bethel, Brownstown, Crawford County, Coffee Creek, Evansville, Long Run, Madison, Orleans and Union.

We are grateful to the Region Minister Search Team: Wade Allen, Muncie FBC; Dan Cash, Columbus FBC; Mark Spencer, Rochester FBC; Shelly Zook, Amo FBC.



Rev. Mark Thompson

I served as the chairperson, and our executive minister provided staff support to the process.

Together on God's Abundant Journey, Darrell James, Chairperson of Region Minister Search Team and Chairperson of Region Personnel Committee.



Pastors From ABC Regions Gather for Transition Ministry Training Event

In early June, pastors considering the possibility of interim ministry gathered for several days of intensive training co-sponsored by ABC-IN/KY and Transition Ministries ABCUSA. Eleven Indiana clergy participated, joining colleagues from five other regions. Dr. Larry Swain facilitated the sessions while Dr. Patricia Hernandez (director of Transition Ministries ABCUSA) and Rev. Soozie Whitten Ford provided staff leadership. Columbus FBC served as hosts. (Not pictured: Dr. David Hinson, MMBB).

Count It All Joy!



Rev. Soozie Whitten Ford
Executive Minister
sooziford@abc-indiana.org

"I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now." (Philippians 1:3-5 NRSV)

I feel such joy as I hear about the ministry of our churches! I am touched by the ways in which our congregations stretch themselves to impact the lives of others, sharing the gospel of Jesus in word and deed. I am overwhelmed by the creativity of pastors and leaders as they faithfully seek to do the work of the Kingdom in a rapidly changing context. Paul's words to the church at Philippi, which he loved so much, resonate deeply within my own spirit. When I remember you in prayer, it is with much joy and thanksgiving!

It is with great joy and humility that we have responded to requests from two newer Burmese diaspora churches in Indiana. These two churches have expressed a desire to unite with American Baptist Churches and are part of a larger group of eight congregations in the U.S. The Chin people are one of the ethnic groups from Burma and these churches are part of the Zo tribe. They came to the U.S. as refugees several years ago and are establishing themselves – finding jobs, learning English, etc. Their desire to unite with American Baptists comes because their ancestors were first introduced to Jesus Christ by American Baptist missionary Adoniram Judson (1788-1850), the first Protestant (and later, Baptist) missionary to Burma. The challenges faced by the Zo Chin people are enormous, and we have much to learn from them about faithfully responding to the call of Jesus Christ upon our lives. We will update you as the discussions with these congregations progress, and I invite you to join me in praying for them.

It is with joy that I witnessed the outpouring of support from pastors and leaders as our ABC General Secretary,

Dr. Lee Spitzer, along with IN/KY staff, held several informal conversations in northern and central Indiana in early June. Having experienced a similar format in southeastern Indiana in June 2018, Dr. Spitzer eagerly accepted our invitation to return, relishing the opportunity to hear about ministry among our various churches, respond to questions and to share his heart and passion for ministry.

One of my great joys each summer is to spend time at Camp Tippy and Indian Creek as kids come from all over to experience the love of Jesus through the beauty of creation, through fun group activities, discussions, Bible study and worship. Our camping ministry would not be possible without our passionate camp directors Rebecca Scott, and Jordan and Mindy Morris, along with a strong cadre of volunteers. Please pray for their strength and endurance as they serve tirelessly with these precious young people, sharing the Good News with them, and challenging them to love Jesus as they return home.



Dr. Lee Spitzer shares his heart & passion for ministry.



Attendees at the LAB event held on June 15 exchange ideas and conversation

I continue to experience great joy in what I see happening through LAB (Latino Anglo Bridgebuilders), an initiative to construct healthy, open relationships between Latino and Anglo congregations. The goal of this transformational effort is to instill intercultural competence skills within the life of our congregations. The next event will be held on July 27 at Franklin College. Contact Bruce Cochran (brucecochran@abc-indiana.org) or Jaime Flores (jaimeflores@abc-indiana.org) if you would like to participate.

It is with great joy that I look forward to having Rev. Mark Thompson join the IN/KY ministry staff as Region Minister for the central part of Indiana. I first met Pastor Mark in about 2010 through the Missional Church Learning Experience (MCLE) and have appreciated the depth of passion he has for his faith; his family; the local church as it impacts its community; and the ministry of this region. I am excited to experience the ways he will stretch all of us as we seek to faithfully live and serve in the rapidly changing environment of the 21st century. I am grateful to the Region Ministry Search Team that conducted a national search, sharing of their time, expertise, and experience, and to the IN/KY region board who extended a unanimous call, based on the Search Team's recommendation.

and I am privileged to often have a close up view of what is God is doing in this small part of the Kingdom. I consider it one of my greatest joys to have the opportunity to serve with you, and among you, in ABC of Indiana & Kentucky. I am amazed at all that is happening with our churches,

Paul's words continue to be my prayer:

"And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God." (Philippians 1:9-11 NRSV)

Together on God's Abundant Journey,
Soozi Whitten Ford, Executive Minister

American Baptist Women's MINISTRIES

Summer Conference Report

There were one hundred and two in attendance at the 83rd ABW Summer Conference held at Franklin College. Sixteen of the attendees were sisters from our Hispanic churches. Our prayer is that we will be able to obtain headsets for future translation purposes.

The featured missionaries were the Witmer family, who blessed those in attendance by sharing about their ministry in Thailand. We are always excited to learn how the

Lord has used our financial and prayer support for our missionaries, both near and far.

The State Project this year is going towards the camps. Our goal is to collect \$27,000.00 to be given to the camps.

New this year, was the option to stay off campus at a nearby hotel. Ten registrants chose that option and we are awaiting their evaluations regarding their experience.

Make plans now to attend the 84th summer conference!

**2019 AB Women's Day
October 12**

9:00 am - 2:30 pm

**Crooked Creek Baptist Church
5540 N Michigan Rd
Indianapolis, IN**

**Make plans now and mark your calendars
for the 2019 ABWomen's Day!**

**Theme: Feel the Compassion
Gal. 5:22-23**

There will be a time for workshops!

**For complete information and a registration form, go to the
ABW page on the ABC-IN/KY website and scroll
down to the link to the brochure and registration form.**

<http://abc-indiana.org/region-ministries/american-baptist-women/>

Farewell Reception Held for Elna West

Elna West, wife of the late Dr. Dallas West, executive minister of The Indiana Baptist Convention from 1955 - 1985, is pictured here with Rev. Soozie Whitten Ford. Mrs. West was the guest of honor at a farewell reception hosted by Indianapolis FBC on May 5, 2019. Mrs. West has relocated to Florida in order to be closer to family. Her mailing address is available from the IN/KY office for those who might wish to be in touch.



Entrepreneur Program at EMCC

Edna Martin Christian Center is launching a new Community Solutions and Entrepreneurship Center that will help budding entrepreneurs get new businesses off the ground. The Entrepreneurship Center kicked off with a Business Growth Forum in April, hosted by well-known former broadcast journalist Angela Cain. An entrepreneurial workshop series will follow throughout the year.

The center joins EMCC's Career Education and Training Center, which offers certificate-based training in fields such as logistics (forklift operation), the culinary industry, and construction. Healthcare and IT certification programs are due to be added in 2020.



Immanuel Ivey has been named Micro Enterprise Director for the new Entrepreneurship Center. "It's important to have an Entrepreneurship Center because individuals who are work-ready may come here, but may have a criminal history, or lack experience, so having the opportunity to form their own business presents the chance to be

innovative, to be creative, to work within their passion, and earn income while doing that," said Ivey.

The Community Solutions portion of the center will encourage people of all ages to help solve neighborhood problems by creating and deploying solutions within 90 days of problem identification. It's our Faith in Action! EMCC is committed to ensuring that the people who live, work, play and grow in Martindale-Brightwood are able to help shape their community.

The new program is funded, in part, by a three-year, \$170,000 Citi Foundation grant as part of LISC's Bridges to Career Opportunities Initiative. Also, the Clowes Fund Family Foundation, in conjunction with LISC, has awarded a separate \$105,000 over three years to fund the new Community Solutions and Entrepreneurship Center which houses EMCC's Micro-Enterprise programming. LISC has also committed an additional \$15,000 of HUD-Section-4 capacity-building funds to support the program's launch.

The Entrepreneurship Center is currently headquartered at 37 Place, EMCC's main location at 2605 E. 25th Street. Plans are in place to move the center to EMCC's newly renovated Leadership & Legacy Center at 2259 Ralston Avenue. Phase II of the multi-million-dollar renovation will create a permanent home for the Entrepreneurship Center. For more information or to get involved, contact Immanuel Ivey at 317-637-3776.

News From Columbus FBC

Creative Easter Event at Columbus FBC



The folks at Columbus FBC didn't let rainy weather and cold temperatures dampen spirits at their annual Easter Egg Hunt. They brought the fun inside! Those hiding the eggs had to be very creative as to how they "hid" them. For instance, they placed the eggs on a table, creating a cross in front of the tables.

Before the children began the egg hunt, Pastor Dan Cash and his wife, Lori, told the Easter story using props given to the children. The children were invited to make a craft and have snacks. Approximately one hundred children, parents and grandparents attended and everyone had a great time in spite of the weather!

"Mini-Missions" Help Community

The Columbus FBC mission team, under the leadership of Cliff Putterill, has been providing opportunities for "mini missions" in their community. In April, a group adopted a stretch of both sides of Marr Road from 25th Street to US

31. We had a good group to come out to work. In approximately two hours, the group cleaned the area collecting 7 large bags of trash. One person found a \$1.00 bill which they donated to the Sunday School offering the next day!



In early May, a group helped at New Song Ministries. New Song is a ministry for children. It consists of several group homes staffed by house parents who live with the children in a family setting. The group from Columbus FBC helped

with spring clean-up, increased storage in the garage and planted flowers. The next "mini mission", scheduled for some time in June, will be painting at the newly formed drug taskforce building.

Empowering

Clayton FBC Blessed by Scott & Tan Coats Visit

On May 5, 2019, Clayton FBC was blessed by having Scott and Tan (Aphiwan) visit their congregation. During Sunday School and the worship service, Scott shared some of their experiences and customs in the mission field of Thailand. Clayton FBC looks forward to the next time Scott and Tan are in Indiana and can reconnect! May God continue to use them and bless their ministry.



"Singspiration" Brings Two Ministries Together

On May 19th, the Coffee Creek Association came together for their 20th annual Spring Singspiration. It was a wonderful evening of worship as each church presented music. With this annual event, two ministries were also served. Don and Sarah Snyder gave an update on the camping season and the great things happening at South-eastern Baptist Youth Camp. They received items that had been collected for them, as well as, an offering of over \$2,000 given that evening.

The Association also presented scholarships at their event. The executive board received and reviewed all the applications and the association awarded ten \$500 scholarships to those entering or currently pursuing higher education. As an Association, these ministries keep the churches connected and give them a common goal and purpose in serving the Kingdom.



ing Churches

First Gathering of ABWM - Indiana Hispanic Churches

BY: Pastor Millie Cordero,
Hispanic leader of ABW Indiana

Thirty-one ladies from five Hispanic churches gathered in May for the first ABW meeting held at Iglesia Bautista Betesda.

"Feel the Strength of God" was the theme for a meeting full of joy and excitement as the women gathered together for a great time of Christian fellowship. There was an excellent blend of ages and nationalities with much in common: a strong desire to follow Jesus and serve others.

The afternoon began with a welcome by Pastor Millie Cordero and the Rev. Jaime Flores, pastor of Iglesia Betesda. Myriam Castro led those in attendance in a very active icebreaker time, and Pastor Leticia Moreno gave an inspiring devotional. A special time of reflection was led by Pastor Milagros Pérez to help find God's strength while coping with life challenges. Sita Vidals, Lichita Alvarado, Martha Rodríguez and Carmen Pagan performed short skits representing different life situations that were the



base for the reflection.

Special thanks was given to Iglesia Bautista Vino Nuevo for providing lovely favors. Rev. Andrea Flores closed the activity by giving thanks to all of those that helped with the program. She also led the group in a beautiful closing prayer. Following the activity, those in attendance spent time together enjoying delicious food provided by the ladies of Iglesia Bautista Betesda.

To God be the glory! He answers the prayers of many. Please pray as the Hispanic women continue to grow as an American Baptist Women Ministry of the Hispanic Baptist churches of Indiana.

Iglesia Bautista La Esperanza Holds New Church Launch



On Saturday, May 18, the Iglesia Bautista La Esperanza held a beautiful launch service. Pastors Milagro and Sergio Troyano were

presented with certificates of license to preach the gospel. Pastors from ABC-GI and ABC-IN/KY were present to offer support for this new ministry in Logansport.

Versailles BC Hosts Scholarship Celebration



*Scholarship recipients pictured left to right:
Brandon Ickenroth, Sparta BC; Nathan Cantrell, Versailles BC;
Trent Linville, Versailles BC; Autumn Secrest, Aurora BC
Elyse Hunger, Osgood BC*

On Monday, June 3, Versailles BC hosted the 2019 Scholarship Celebration for the Laughery Association Men's Brotherhood. Five scholarships of \$500 were awarded. The scholarship program began in 1993 initiated by a donation from the Jess Todd family. This year marked the 110th scholarship, for a total amount of \$53,500 awarded over the last 26 years.



Next LAB (Latino Anglo Bridgebuilders) Event
July 27 - Franklin College

OBSERVER ARTICLE SUBMISSION DEADLINES

FALL ISSUE (October-November-December) - Fri., September 13
WINTER ISSUE (January-February-March 2020) - Wed., November 27

If you would like more information about churches or events described in this issue, contact Becky Septoski at beckyseptoski@abc-indiana.org or (317) 635 3552 X222.

Equipping Leaders

Transitions at Indian-Kentuck BC

Rev. Roberts Retires

At the end of 2018, Rev. Ed Roberts and his wife, Bonnie, retired from nearly 18 years of ministry at Indian-Kentuck Baptist Church in Madison. Ed earned his Bachelor's of Arts from Clemson University (1969) and a Masters of Divinity in Christian Education from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (1997). Bonnie is a retired Jennings County school teacher who specialized in Special Education.



Indian-Kentuck Baptist acknowledges their years of faithful service and expresses appreciation and is excited by their decision to continue to serve the church as members of the congregation. The couple plans to continue to reside in Jefferson County which has become their home.

Rod Asher Called - Madison Association Ordains



Rodney Thomas Asher was officially called as the Pastor at Indian-Kentuck Baptist Church on March 6, 2019. He had been serving as the Interim Minister since the retirement of longtime pastor, Ed Roberts. Over the last several years, the church has been sponsoring Rod to complete the leadership & ministry program provided by ABC-IN/KY through CLI (Church Leadership Institute), and

he is close to completion. During this time, Pastor Ed mentored Rod in hopes he would carry the baton of pastoral ministry when he retired.

On May 5, 2019, a service was held and the Madison Association of ABC-IN/KY, in cooperation with Indian-Kentuck BC, ordained Rod for Pastoral Gospel Ministry. The report from the Ordination Council was presented; Bern Kiser, (Pastor at Lick Branch Baptist) gave the charge to the candidate; Dan Chadwick (Region Minister with ABC-IN/KY) gave the charge to the congregation; Rod and Jenny were covered with prayer; and a reception followed.

Rod & Jenny have called Indian-Kentuck BC their church home approximately fifteen years. Indian-Kentuck is where Jenny gave her life to Jesus and was baptized; where they married; and where both have served in various ways with people they call family.

Ministerial Excellence Fund

2 Corinthians 9:8

"Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

Hebrews 4:16

Countless times throughout the year, you minister to people in difficult circumstances who need a touch of God's grace. What joy there is when you see folks draw near to God and receive that mercy.

When your time of need comes, due to health or financial crises, MEF stands ready to minister to you through grants to alleviate the financial burdens you and your family carry. What joy there is when these weights are thrown off, freeing you to be an even more effective minister of God's grace and mercy. With confidence, take that step today to apply.

Go to: <http://abc-indiana.org/region-ministries/mef/> for more information.

COMING EVENTS AT CAMP TIPPY

Fish Fry at Tippy!
Saturday, August 3, 2019
4:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Ladies Getaway Weekend
October 18 - 20, 2019
Ages 18 - Adult

Young at Heart Camp
October 25 - 27, 2019
Ages 55+

Go to the Camp Tippy website for more information on all events.
www.camptippy.org

Expanding Mission

South Bend FBC Mission Team Travels to Rainbow Acres

From March 29 to April 5, six members of South Bend FBC were joined by one person from Gary and two from New Carlisle as they traveled to Camp Verde, AZ on a mission trip to Rainbow Acres, one of ABC's Home Missions.

Rainbow Acres houses 93 ranchers who are adults with developmental disabilities, in 12 homes, each housing up to 10 ranchers and a staff member in private rooms. Their program is focused on providing each Rancher with opportunities to develop spiritually, emotionally, cognitively, vocationally, physically, and socially.

Each mission participant had the opportunity to see various aspects of their many programs, including weaving, stepping stones and their wonderful choir in rehearsal. It was marvelous to see the input the ranchers have in the various activities they are engaged in and the interaction between staff and ranchers. For instance, there are ranchers with wonderful voices who are free to make suggestions as to how best to present the music.

In addition to forming relationships with the ranchers, the group worked on tasks that needed to be completed. They cleaned Patrick

House from stem to stern: dusting; washing dishes and windows; cleaning the kitchen, each of the 11 bedrooms and the 5 bathrooms. After cleaning Patrick House, the group cleaned Baldwin House as well. Marvin Phelps, who was in charge of assigning us our chores, told us Thursday we had worked faster than he expected and had completed all the items on his list, but he did have other things to be completed. Much of Thursday was spent painting a wooden fence surrounding a new garden plot close to the greenhouse that had been demolished by a tornado last summer.

The times shared with the ranchers were especially meaningful, including sharing in the morning Prayer Circle, lunches in the Palmer Center and observing them at their various "work stations". Pairs of team members were assigned to each house for evening meals. It was a special time to get better acquainted with those living in that house.

The most difficult part of the trip was saying goodbye. As the group was preparing to leave, they were asked if they would like to reserve the same week for return trip in 2020. The response was an enthusiastic, unanimous "Yes!" by all participants.

Bethany BC, Crothersville Reaches Out with "Dinner Church"

The congregation of Bethany BC in Crothersville is taking a cue from the early church described in the book of Acts, by going outside the church to break bread in "table fellowship". Pastor Troy Burns said the concept of "Dinner Church" is to reach out to people in a familiar, comfortable setting, and the key is to listen. There are people that have never been introduced to the church, because their parents had a bad experience. They weren't raised in the church and so they have no idea what church is like. Burns said, "It's left a lot of people on the outside, on the fringes." "Dinner Church" grew out of a desire to be relevant and to reach out to the community. To live into the text of Acts 2:42; "They devoted themselves to the Apostle's teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."

Rev. Burns said he was inspired by the book "Faithful Presence" by David Fitch, which emphasizes the need to build community and to understand that God is with us, what

he calls "Incarnational living". The idea emerged to invite people to a meal, with an intentionality of hearing people's stories. Rev. Burns said, "Everybody is going to eat supper anyway. Let's just do it together. If we're going to love someone else, we have to be willing to hear their story and ask God and ourselves to be willing to step into that story and make a difference." The results have been encouraging. In the few months since the church started a "table fellowship" outreach program, Wednesday night participation has gone from approximately three people to between 18 and 21 at two table fellowships.

At the government-subsidized apartment complex in Crothersville, table fellowship comes in the form of cake and ice cream, served on the patio area. The church has established a good reputation there by helping folks. For example, they have helped with moving in and out of the apartment complex.



"Last night we had nine people here in my home, Rev. Burns said. It's amazing how we have grown. People feel very comfortable coming to our table and sharing their story." He said some of the people who have been coming to his table will establish table fellowship outreaches in their own homes, or wherever people break bread and talk in a comfortable setting. They listen intently to others, and if they have troubles or issues, offer to pray

with them about the situation. "And inevitably, they say 'Yes!'," he said. "I've never had anyone say, 'No, you can't pray for me.'"

Rev. Burns said the outreach is producing some really big breakthroughs. "This is hands-on living the scripture," he said. "We're seeking to live the Bible, not just showing up to check a box so that we can go home and feel good about ourselves." "We're trying to build that community."

COMING EVENTS

JULY

- 10 - CORMS
- 13 - CLI: Region Office
- 16 - Region Staff Mtg
- 20 - CLI: Westport
- 27 - LAB - 2 (Latino/Anglo Bridge)

AUGUST

- 3 - CLI: Region Office
- 3 - CLI: Westport
- 17 - CLI: Westport
- 20 - Region Staff Mtg
- 24 - CLI: Region Office

SEPTEMBER

- 7 - CLI: Westport
- 10 - Region Staff Mtg
- 14 - CLI: Region Office
- 21 - CLI: Westport
- 22 - Decatur County Assoc. Mtg

OCTOBER

- 5 - CLI: Westport
- 8 - Region Staff Mtg
- 12 - AB Women's & Girl's Day
- 14-17 - ABW Fall Conferences Week 1
- 19 - CLI: Westport
- 21-24 - ABW Fall Conferences Week 1
- 26 - CLI: Region Office

NOVEMBER

- 2 - CLI: Westport
- 4 - CORMS
- 9 - CLI: Region Office
- 12 - Region Staff Mtg
- 15 - Region Board Mtg
- 23 - CLI: Region Office

DECEMBER

- 7 - CLI: Region Office
- 10 - Region Staff Mtg