

American Baptist Churches of IN & KY

# TOGETHER

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](http://www.abc-indiana.org)

BECKY SEPTOSKI & JEFF TRYON, EDITORS - VOL 19 NO. 4 - October/November/December 2019

## Churches in ABC-IN/KY Assist With "Back to School"

A number of churches in the ABC-IN/KY region have participated in back-to-school outreach events this year. Here are just a few examples of the variety of ways churches helped ease the transition "Back to School".

At Forest Hills BC in Evansville, over 600 children received new backpacks, school supplies, new socks and underwear, and even a fresh haircut as they prepared to begin a new school year. Volunteers, some from other local churches, escorted the children through the process. About 15 stylists from a local beauty school academy made sure that every child who desired a haircut, received one. The event is open to any child in the tri-state area regardless of income. It is supported, in part, through grants from companies like Toyota and Vectren. The program started 16 years ago at the church, and has since moved to a larger facility. The first event served 90 children; a few years ago, over 900 were served! "We feel very blessed that we are able to carry on this ministry every year," said Kathy, project coordinator. "It's very important to us. We feel like we're helping to ease the burden that many parents face when it's time to go back to school."



In Northeastern Indiana, Warren FBC calls their back-to-school event "Backpack-palooza". They began in 2017 by giving away 150 backpacks, and anticipated gifting 300 this year.

They provide approximately 400 packs to students from 27 different schools.

With the backpacks and school supply lists for all area schools, "ambassadors" helped children choose school supplies, including headphones, which are now standard school

equipment. One of the churches provided lunch and another supplied a craft the children could participate in while there. The Lions Club offered free vision screening. Children received socks, and a coupon for a free haircut before they went back to school. "It has been an amazing outreach."

Bicknell FBC has a long history of providing brand new clothes, backpacks, haircuts, etc. to returning students. The church holds a back-to-school clothing drive in which parents register their children so the church is aware of what size clothing the children need. Each child that registers is guaranteed two new pairs of pants and three new shirts. The church does all the shopping and they provide a "store" where children can choose their clothes

and try them on. A volunteer from church works as a "personal shopper" with them. One hundred twenty six children were served this year. After Bicknell FBC began the program, other churches in the local ministerial association got together to sponsor a backpack and school supply give-away right across the street.

In August, Bluffton FBC renewed community connections with their annual "Good News Shoes" event. This year, the church provided 214 pairs of new shoes to returning students. "Two long lines formed prior to the start of our shoe distribution," said



Pastor Les Cantrell. Interested teachers suggested that remaining pairs of shoes could be distributed directly to students. As a result, each local school also received a tub of new shoes to

distribute.

Columbus FBC is directly across the street from W.D. Richards Elementary School, and the church holds events throughout the year to be a "good neighbor". The church hosts a hospitality table during the night of Open House,



when the students come to meet their teachers. At the start of each school year, they deliver teacher gift bags with classroom supplies teachers might otherwise buy out of their own pockets.

"We've done that for several years now, and I think this year there were 80 different bags that we supplied," said Senior Pastor Dan Cash. "We just try to maintain contact with them. We have a number of volunteers that serve as "Book Buddies" throughout the year, and during Teacher Appreciation Week, we take goodies over."

This year the church added the "Operation Undercover" challenge to help the school nurse resupply her clothing closet with T-shirts, socks and underwear for kids. They delivered over 700 items.



**Rev. Soozie Whitten Ford**  
Executive Minister  
[soozieford@abc-indiana.org](mailto:soozieford@abc-indiana.org)

It's no secret that in our home, we love the early mornings. For most of our 37+ years together, I have joked that my husband "gets up before God does," although he is quick to quip back, "No, God is always there to meet me!" The reality is that I am frequently up not too long afterwards, depending on the day's plans. We both love the quiet, especially in warmer seasons, as the birds gradually awaken to join the serenade of crickets and cicadas, as the coolness of the evening lingers for a few moments longer and the promise of the new day is before us.

I cherish the mornings when I encounter the Master Artist gradually painting the canvas of the day with an ever-changing palette of golds, pinks, purples, grays, and blues – all before the sun breaks over the horizon. It is as though the unfolding beauty is mine alone to witness, for no one else is (usually) with me. From my vantage point the trees, shrubs, and varying landscape combine with all manner of human constructs (buildings, roads, machinery and utility poles), creating a silhouetted foreground in contrast to the emerging brilliance. Someone watching the same exact moments of daybreak from another location would experience a different picture altogether. Each sunrise I experience is an

ever-present reminder of God's faithfulness and grace for the new day and all the moments before me. Out of gratitude, the words of great hymns often burst forth... "When morning gilds the skies my heart awakening, cries, 'may Jesus Christ be praised!'" or "Morning by morning new mercies I see...great is thy faithfulness!" Even as my heart is filled with praise at the emerging magnificence of the sky before me, it is as though God's words, through the prophet Isaiah, resound across the centuries, "See, I am doing a new thing!" They beg me to pay attention.

I had a similar, but different, experience today as I was traveling for an early meeting. The sunrise was amazing, so much so that I had to stop along the county road upon which I was traveling to try to capture it\* in a photo (As if it is even possible to "catch" something so amazing). Several verses of "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" croaked from my not-yet-warmed-up voice as I resumed driving. Then a seemingly awkward, at first, mash up emerged: "Morning by morning new mercies I see...See, I am doing a new thing!" As I repeated that a few times, allowing it to roll around in the mind of my heart, the rest of God's words through Isaiah, memorized long ago from the NRSV, emerged: "Do you not perceive it?" In other words, "Do you see what's right before you? Are you paying attention?"

Good question, God. I always want to be faithful and to pay attention to what you are doing in and around me, but I confess that I don't always. I suspect I am not alone. Are we really paying attention to what God is doing, around us or right in front of us? When we do get a glimpse of at least part of what God is up to in our midst, are we willing to set aside our own preconceived ideas and step fully into Kingdom ministry, which surely will involve change? These are challenging questions, at least they are for me.

One of the new things that God is doing, that I did not expect when I



*Logansport Association Pastors*  
**Front Row:** Phil Pratt, Bethlehem BC; Mang Hau, Zo Chin Christian; Jim Franklin, Baptist Temple; Milagro Perez, La Esperanza; **Middle Row:** Bruce Cochran, Region Minister; Linda Hosek, FBC Denham; Julie Walker, Chili BC; Carol Weaver, Miami BC; Soozie Whitten Ford, Executive Minister; **Back Row:** Tyler Murphy, Metea BC; Jerry Long, Denver BC; Daisok Panmei, Miami BC; Jose Sergio Troyano, La Esperanza; Mark Foreman, Metea BC.

began this chapter of my journey with you, is leading us to start churches among populations newer to Indiana. We now have three new Latino churches, representing five countries, all with capable pastoral leadership. We are grateful for our Latino Ministries Strategist, Rev. Jaime Flores, who continues to encourage us even as he provides support to these new congregations.

You can read elsewhere in this issue about the celebration held recently by the Logansport Association as they welcomed two new churches, one of which is Latino. La Esperanza, meeting at Baptist Temple in Logansport and led by Pastor Jose Sergio Troyano y Pastora Milagro Perez. The other is Zo Chin Christian, hosted by another church in Logansport, with Mang Hao serving as their pastor. The people associated with this congregation can trace their faith

heritage to the work of American Baptist missionary, Adoniram Judson, in the early 1800s.

Outside of the former Indianapolis Association (now ABC Greater Indianapolis), I think Logansport is the most ethnically diverse ABC association in the state of Indiana. This is a new thing God is doing among us and I am so very proud of the ways the pastors and churches of Logansport Association have extended Christian hospitality and welcome to these congregations. There are other locations within our region where God has brought groups of people through a variety of circumstances, who are new to us and to the U.S. Are we willing to see what God is up to, even in our own community? Are we willing to join God in what God is doing as we serve Together on God's Abundant Journey?

*\*Posted on my Facebook and Instagram accounts.*

## *Ministerial Excellence Fund*

*2 Corinthians 9:8*

Planning for our own financial stability is tricky in these complex times. Sometimes, strategies we used in the past are not adequate for meeting today's needs. Did you know that free financial counseling services are available to professional church

leaders? Yes, you can contact MEF and talk with Marc Kirchoff ([mlkirchoff@yahoo.com](mailto:mlkirchoff@yahoo.com)) to obtain the services of a financial coach to help you with a variety of needs. Our financial coaches are well-qualified and have helped many grant recipients achieve economic stability and even profitability in their family budgets. You just might be a tweak or two away from a good financial foundation. Give it some thought. Then contact Marc—a good first step toward healthy budgeting.

## American Baptist Women's MINISTRIES

On October 12, 2019, AB Women's Ministries will hold their annual Women's Day at Crooked Creek BC. Attendees will include members of Grace Tabernacle, the Congolese Congregation that worships at the Crooked Creek facility. Also present will be the ABWM of the Hispanic churches.

This event is the annual business meeting and elections will confirm the calling of several officers. Praise to the Lord for the many new faces who will be present as those in attendance "worship and work" together. New members of various committees, too numerous to list, are also confirmed. Newly elected officers who will serve include: Valerie Cole, President; Jan Jackson, Personal Development; Patty Short, Church and Community; Janice Mott, White Cross.

ABW is particularly excited to introduce to you the new President,

Valerie Cole, who will serve through October 2022. Valerie brings many gifts and life experiences that make her a perfect fit for this office. She excels in the ability to work with people, both from professional experience, and as a pastor's wife. Her positive "can do" attitude is inspirational, and she can make a computer do anything that she wants! Her creative flair was much enjoyed at the Spring Retreat. Her love for the Lord and her sweet spirit will make her dear to all our hearts during her term of service. Please make an opportunity to get to know her by inviting her to your churches. Pray for her as she leads AB Women's Ministries of Indiana into greater effectiveness for our Lord.

Pray that the Lord will continue to bring many new faces to ABWM as we "worship and work" together.

### 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 AB Women'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/>

## ABW FALL CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

### WEEK 1

#### Monday, Oct 14

ASSOCIATION	CHURCH/CITY	TIME
White Lick	Bethel Missionary BC, Fillmore	9:30 am
Madison	Wirt BC	4:30 pm
Curry's Prairie	Hymera FBC	3:00 pm

#### Tuesday, Oct 15

ASSOCIATION	CHURCH/CITY	TIME
Long Run	New Liberty BC	10:00 am
Judson	Liberty BC, Tipton	4:30 pm
Friendship	Zions Hill BC	9:30 am
Union	Second Mt Olive BC	5:30 pm
Sand Creek	Otter Creek BC	5:45 pm

#### Wednesday, Oct 16

ASSOCIATION	CHURCH/CITY	TIME
Bedford	Bedford FBC	9:00 am
Evansville	Tell City FBC	9:30 am

#### Thursday, Oct 17

ASSOCIATION	CHURCH/CITY	TIME
Salamonie	FBC Decatur	9:30 am

### WEEK 2

#### Monday, Oct 21

ASSOCIATION	CHURCH/CITY	TIME
Coffee Creek	First Marion BC	9:30 am
Northwestern	Cornerstone BC	10:00 am
Brownstown	Hayden BC	5:30 pm

#### Tuesday, Oct 22

ASSOCIATION	CHURCH/CITY	TIME
Laughery	Lawrenceburg FBC	10:00 am
Logansport	Metea BC	5:30 pm
Freedom	Freedom BC	10:45 am
Decatur	Star BC	4:15 pm

#### Wednesday, Oct 23

ASSOCIATION	CHURCH/CITY	TIME
Flat Rock	Little Blue River BC	9:30 am

#### Thursday, Oct 24

ASSOCIATION	CHURCH/CITY	TIME
Orleans	Mill Creek BC, Salem	4:45 pm

## Southeastern Youth Camp - The RACE

On August 17, 2019, the Southeastern Baptist Youth Camp held their third annual "RACE for SBY Camp". This event consists of a fun day of team competitions, good food, and fellowship. The teams raise funds from sponsors and then compete to win!

This year seven teams competed, with Sweet Tea Creek team winning first place for the second year in a row. Their photo has gone up on the "Race Wall of Fame"! Many people competed and

were present to cheer on the teams.

Thanks to the teams and wonderful sponsors; Brewer Livestock, Letts Hardware and Equipment, Ponsler Family Farms, Ryker's Ridge BC, Texas Roadhouse of Columbus, Union BC and Versailles BC.

The event raised \$7,834, which will go towards SBYCamp. For more information about The RACE go to [www.westportcamp.com/race](http://www.westportcamp.com/race).

## La Esperanza BC Holds First VBS!

## Empowering



BAPTIST CHURCH LA ESPERANZA



SMILE, JESUS LOVE YOU



In August, "La Esperanza" BC in Logansport held its first Summer Bible School with the support of the Baptist Temple congregation in Logansport.

Using the theme "Smile Jesus Loves You", children participated in an interactive program with songs, games, a Bible story, and time to color and work with crafts.

Also in August, the children joined

their parents and pastors at the annual camp of the Indianapolis Bethesda BC.

They enjoyed an enriching experience at Indian Creek Baptist Camp, where they sang, learned Bible stories, played in the natural setting and met other Hispanic girls and boys who live similar situations to theirs.

To God be the Glory!

Enjoying the Summer Camp

## INDIAN CREEK BAPTIST CAMP



During the Annual Camp of the Bethesda Baptist Church to Indianapolis August, 9 and 10, 2019



## "Building Bridges" in Logansport



On July 27, 2019, "Building Bridges", the final meeting of the first stage of the Latino-Anglo Bridge project of ABC-affiliated churches in the Indiana was held. The main objective of the project is to define the points that differentiate and unite the Anglo-Saxon and Latin communities and to explore ways that will lead to improved relations and understanding between both cultures.

On Sunday, July 28, the worship service was based on Matthew 18:19 with the title: "What to do to agree? Through this scripture, leaders shared the teaching received at the conclusion of the LAB project. This included two leaders from the Baptist Temple congregation sharing about their solidarity with the Baptist Church "La Esperanza" in Logansport.

August marked the beginning of classes in Logansport and when

schools ask for materials and school supplies children need.

A family with several children and few resources could be at a disadvantage, but with pastors and leaders of "La Esperanza" BC, they know very well that "...without faith, it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11: 6). Also from I Corinthians 10:24, they have learned together that: "None seek their own good, but that of the other". The brothers and sisters of the Baptist Temple congregation sought the resources needed to buy each child the materials necessary to begin the school year.

To Rev. Jaime Flores, Rev. Sooz Ford, Rev. Dr. Bruce Cochran, Rev. Mark Sorrels, the Anglo congregation of Logansport, and to all those who have supported in prayer and action, "Thank you so much. To God be the Glory!"

The ABC-IN/KY Staff would like to extend wishes to each of you for a blessed holiday season!

October is Pastor Appreciation Month  
...thank your pastor!

# g Churches

## Bloomfield FBC Celebrates 150th



Banner designed by the Frye family and crafted by Virginia Hendrix

Bloomfield FBC is celebrating 150 years of ministry in 2019. The church is also celebrating 40 years of ministry at their current location, which opened in July of 1979. In June, the congregation held a special worship service to commemorate the completion of 40 years in the building.

They began by worshipping alongside an audio recording of the first service in the facility, joining in with the congregation from 1979 as they sang "Surely the Presence of the Lord Is in This Place." A resolution written by Rev. Wayne Brown, the pastor at that time, was read.

During the service, members who

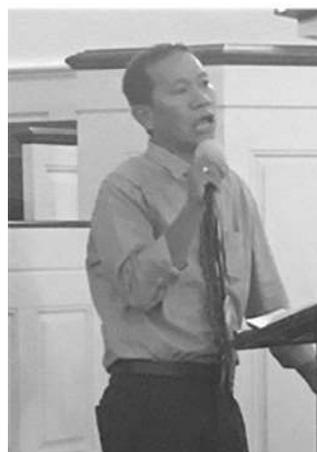
were present on that opening day in 1979 were recognized. A banner recognizing 150 years of ministry was unveiled. At the close of the service, the congregation gathered outside around the bell tower, rang the bell 40 times, and sang together, "Great Is Thy Faithfulness."

The church celebrated 150 years of ministry on September 22, 2019. A number of commemorative items were gathered including; an updated church history book, a compilation of more than 4,000 photos from FBC history, several audio and video clips from the past, and T-shirts to mark this festive year.

God's great faithfulness is celebrated at Bloomfield FBC!

## Logansport Association Welcomes Two New Churches

The Logansport Association met in September for worship and a fellowship dinner to welcome two new churches; La Esperanza (Latino), and Zo Chin (Burmese). "This is - to my knowledge - an historic event for this association, or ANY of our associations!" said Rev. Soozie Whitten Ford, Executive Minister ABC-IN/KY.



Pastor Mang shares his story

Several months ago, one of the pastors from the Association, Daisok Panmei from Miami BC, made an acquaintance with Pastor Mang from the Zo Chin congregation in Logansport. In the course of their conversation, Pastor Mang indicated they would like to find a place to

associate with other churches. Rev. Panmei invited him to join the Logansport Association. They met with Rev. Ford and Rev. Dr. Bruce Cochran and determined that this would be a good relationship. The Logansport Association had a meeting and they agreed.

At a meeting of the Logansport Pastors association a few months ago, it was decided to have a formal ceremony to celebrate the inclusion of these new congregations.

Jose S. Troyano and Milagro Perez, the co-pastors of the La Esperanza church, told their story of how they came to Logansport and the La Esperanza church shared special music. The Baptist Temple of Logansport is the host church for the new Latino church, La Esperanza.

Pastor Mang shared his story as to how they came to this point, and some of the Zo Chin people presented special music.

Rev. Dr. Cochran gave a charge to the Association and Rev. Panmei gave the Association an opportunity to respond. Rev. Ford gave a "Welcome to the New Logansport Association", with some welcoming comments to both of the congregations. Rev. Jaime Flores closed with a prayer of dedication.



Jose S. Troyano & Milagro Perez, Co-Pastors of the La Esperanza BC

## Mobile Food Bank at Denver BC

Denver BC was the site for a recent Food Finders Food Bank, Mobile Pantry. Approximately 132 families were given assistance at the July 31st event, which was sponsored by Northern Miami County Churches. More than twenty volunteers helped during the event.



## Expanding Mission

### International Ministries Servants Visit Sullivan FBC

On June 15, 2019, the congregation welcomed Scott and Tan Coates. During a brunch meeting those in attendance learned about their experiences serving in Thailand and Myanmar. It was a wonderful opportunity to meet and learn.

Global Servants in Hungary, Becky and Larry Stanton, visited Sullivan FBC on July 24, 2019. The congregation learned much about the work they do in Hungary and also about daily life in that part of Europe.

"It was a pleasure to meet folks who are serving through International Ministries representing our American Baptist Family and to be able to call them friends," said Mike Miller, associate pastor at Sullivan FBC.



*Scott and Tan Coates*



*Pictured L-R: Mike Miller, Associate Pastor at Sullivan FBC, Larry and Becky Stanton and Marc Kirchoff, Donor Advisor for International Ministries*

### Seymour FBC Focuses on Outreach

Community outreach has been the theme at Seymour FBC recently. As close as right next door and as far away as the next state, or another continent.

The church began hosting the Alley Ministry's dinner kitchen in July, as the ministry transitions to a new facility.

Since the church is across the street from the Seymour High School football field, they have been hosting tailgate get-togethers at all the home football games.

The youth group also participated in a mission trip to Illinois.

In October, Rev. Dr. Jeremy Myers and Pastor Mike Lyon will travel to India for a conference.

### Columbus FBC Serves Love Chapel in a Variety of Ways



Throughout the summer master, gardeners at Columbus FBC have raised and donated over 1,000 pounds of produce in support of the food bank and community center, Love Chapel.



The annual 5K race/walk in September included a collection of canned goods and an offering for Love Chapel. Last year, the church raised \$12,000 in monetary aid and over 700 pounds of canned goods and non-perishable food.

### Witmers Visit Clayton FBC

On September 15, 2019, Clayton FBC hosted International Ministries missionaries Kyle and Debby Witmer for a dinner while they are in the United States on Home Assignment.

Kyle, Debby, Julia and Emma Witmer attended the dinner. Hannah and Brennan are attending Campbellsville University and were not able to join in the visit. It really was a "family affair" as each family member present shared some of their challenges, joys, praises and funny stories.

What a joy to hear about the Witmer's work and ministry in Thailand! Thank you, Kyle, Debby, Julia and Emma for including Clayton FBC on your Home Assignment journey!

The congregation at Clayton FBC praises God for you and your witness!



*The Witmers are pictured here with Pastor Bob and Rita Sampson*

## Equipping Leaders

### Joyce Crowder Retires From Columbus FBC

After serving for 31 years, Joyce Crowder retired as the Minister of Music at Columbus FBC in January 2019. With all of her family there to support her, a celebration of her ministry was held during a Sunday service where she was honored with a reception following worship that day.

Before becoming minister of music, Crowder served as the pianist. Joyce added much to worship in her choice of music, and planning the worship with senior pastor, Rev. Dr. Dan Cash. She will be greatly missed.



### Culbertson BC Calls Rev. Dr. Danny Russell as Pastor



On September 8, 2019, Culbertson BC welcomed Rev. Dr. Danny W. Russell as pastor. A native of Connersville, IN, Russell earned a B.A. in philosophy and religion at Georgetown College in Georgetown, Kentucky; a Master of Divinity degree at Baptist Seminary of Kentucky in Georgetown; and a Doctor of Ministry degree from

Portland Seminary at George Fox University in Portland, Oregon.

He has served as youth minister at Immanuel BC in Frankfort, Kentucky; as Associate Pastor at First Baptist Church in Sylva, North Carolina; and most recently, as Pastor at Chadbourn BC in Chadbourn, North Carolina.

He and his wife, Tammy, have two sons; Cayden, 11 and Colton, 9.

### Greencastle FBC Welcomes New Associate Pastor of Youth and Families

The congregation of Greencastle FBC is excited to welcome Pastor Tom Blodgett as their Associate Pastor of Youth and Families. Tom and his wife, Brianne, along with their three children, Jameson, Cayden and Madison, are moving from Janesville, Wisconsin.

As Associate Pastor of Youth and Families, Tom will serve and coordinate various areas of children, youth and family ministries. His prior experience includes serving all age groups from preschool to senior citizens.

After serving in the U.S. Marine corps, Tom earned his BA in Christian Ministry and is currently working to complete his Master of Divinity degree.

Senior Pastor Paul Wiseheart said he and the church family of Greencastle FBC feel very blessed to have Tom and his family join and serve the church.



### Martinsville FBC Welcomes Brice Giesbrecht as Pastor

In May of this year, Martinsville FBC welcomed their new Pastor, Brice Giesbrecht, his wife Sallie and family.

Pastor Giesbrecht comes to the church as a bi-vocational pastor. He is studying for his Master of Divinity Degree at Indianapolis Theological Seminary. The family lives near Martinsville.



## COMING EVENTS

### OCTOBER

- 5 - CLI: Westport
- 8 - Region Staff Mtg
- 10 - Senior Adult Day
- 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 & Westport
- 12 - Region Staff Mtg
- 15 - Region Board Mtg
- 23 - CLI: Region Office

### DECEMBER

- 7 - CLI: Region Office
- 10 - Region Staff Mtg
- Dec 24 - Jan 1 - Region Staff  
Winter Break (Office closed)