

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

WENDY SHULER, EDITOR - VOL. 23 NO. 1 - JAN/FEB/MAR 2023

OCTOBER 2022 BIENNIAL GATHERING PARTICIPANTS CELEBRATE BEING TOGETHER



It was a great joy to be together during the October 7-8, 2022, ABC-IN/KY Biennial Gathering at Terre Haute FBC! Following the theme "Pentecost NOW" and the biblical texts of Acts 1 & 2, approximately 140 pastors and laypersons of our Region churches from multiple cultures and ethnicities (some bringing greetings or leading aspects of the weekend's worship in languages other than English) mirrored the diversity of the Church of Acts throughout the weekend while demonstrating what it truly means to be in unity with the Holy Spirit and one another.

Diversity & Unity: How Do We Share and Live Out Christ's Message?

Rev. Steve Allen, Region Minister, reminded us that to be in that unity was both "miraculous and efficient" as he reflected on the conversions of Jews and Gentiles numbering "in the tens of thousands" during the Apostles' early days of spreading

the message of Jesus' sacrifice "so that all people could be forgiven." Pastor Allen challenged 2022 Biennial participants to think about the gaps that exist between us and others who know Christ and to reflect on how we share the message of Christ with others who don't know Him.

A Woven Tapestry: Space for All at the Table

Josiah Black, pastor of Peru FBC, preached Saturday about that same unity emphasizing it was "unity the world had never seen before." Pastor Black acknowledged unity "has not come cheaply" in our history; it has sometimes come "with tears and anger."

He reminded us that in a time when division is popular, when the impulse is to "push out and to put up walls" versus coming together --or staying together-- at the table as Christ encourages us to do, we need to remember that the church doesn't belong to one culture. We are to be in "real unity" with one another. Our work is not to be "a melting pot." We are not to lose our identity. Our identity is not to be "distilled down-- with no uniqueness left."

We are called to be "a woven tapestry" in order that we might become "a picture of Jesus" once we have "done the work of The Weaver (Christ)" and created space for others. Josiah challenged attendees to go back to our respective churches and take a good long look at what it means to do the work and to create that "tapestry."

(Region Biennial recap continues on p. 3)



MOVEMENT FROM GOD - A CALL TO KNOW HIM MORE DEEPLY



Rev. Mark Thompson
Executive Minister

markthompson@abc-indiana.org

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**Watch for a
NEW Region website
in 2023!**

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Look no further than Genesis 1:1 and you see the creativity of God. As far as I am aware, God was doing something He had not done before. God created something from nothing. We will continue to read throughout the scriptures many times where God creates something new, He creates much from what seems to be little, and sometimes He removes something that seemed impossible to move. In all of this, God is good and we must trust in Him. This movement of God is a call to know Him deeper and for our faith to grow.

The year 2022 was better for most than the previous few years, but it was still difficult in many ways. We are just now beginning to understand the long-term impact and transformation caused by a global pandemic. We will never be the same as we were before March of 2020, and this statement is not meant to be full of sorrow but an exciting reality that God is doing something new! The church was long thought to be a late adopter of change, but our churches were leading the way in accepting new technology and finding creative ways to engage their communities. God was working and is still working among us today.

As I look at what God is doing in 2023, I first pause and give Him praise for His faithfulness in 2022. I have completed a full year as your Executive Minister. I have met with many of you and look forward to furthering conversations in the coming year. In the coming months, you will begin to hear about and see changes in how we function and serve you. Some of the changes will be minor and some may cause you to take notice. Please know that I am available to discuss anything that you may see or hear concerning the changes that are coming to our Region. I recognize there is a speed at which people can accept change, but sometimes we have to accelerate what we are becoming to match the climate. We look forward to the days ahead when we can enjoy the fruit of this labor, but we are in the season of cultivation. The cultivating work is not often fun and it is always the hardest part of the process, but without cultivation the yield is not as great. Many of you are in this same place and that is why I take comfort in knowing we never work alone. We are called to this great and glorious work and we are called to do it "TOGETHER on God's Abundant Journey."

Rev. Mark Thompson
Executive Minister



REGION MINISTER DAN CHADWICK ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

It has been a privilege and joy to serve in ministry with you these last five-plus years. The last couple of years have been challenging to our churches and pastors. The pandemic has pushed the church into a period of change and uncertainty. My prayer is that we will continue to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead us into a new vision of what the church is to become.

I will retire as region minister of ABC-Indiana/Kentucky at some (as yet) undetermined date in the early part of 2023. I will then be moving to Kansas City to be with my girls. I had planned to retire in a few years. However, my daughter's disability and the birth of my granddaughter, and other incidents have resulted in advancing this event.

Therefore, I thank you for allowing me to be a part of your ministry the last few years. May God's peace and love be with you all.

Dan Chadwick, Region Minister

2023 OBSERVER SUBMISSION DEADLINES

SPRING ISSUE (April, May, June 2023) - Friday, March 3

SUMMER ISSUE (July, August, September 2023) - Friday, June 2

FALL ISSUE (October, November, December 2023) - Friday, September 8

If you would like more information about churches or events described in this issue, contact Wendy Shuler at wendyshuler@abc-indiana.org or (317) 635-3552 x222.

EMPOWERING CHURCHES

Region Biennial recap continuing from p. 1

Ministry Together Generationally Creates Belonging

The weekend gave attendees time to worship God, enjoy fellowship and learn from one another. Comparisons and contrasts in ministry generationally were discussed citing specific examples from throughout the decades. Rev. Dr. Dan Cash, then still sr. pastor at Columbus FBC, formerly part of our ABC-IN/KY staff, and recently called to be Executive Minister of the ABC of the Dakotas, pointed out, "The church is one of the few places that brings generations together. Society likes to emphasize differences while the church asks us to live together generationally."

Topics such as ministry with youth, young adults, older adults, the grieving and dying, people from urban settings and bedroom communities, and those with "an edifice complex" (defined by or confined by their church buildings) were reviewed by Rev. Dr. Bill Griffith, retired pastor/chaplain and author, who spoke from his experiences. He reminded us that ministry is often specific to a local church and culture, and that's important.

Mikayla Myers, the youngest presenter of the weekend and a sophomore at Grace College, shared her thoughts that "the church has to become expansive in its approach" and challenged congregations to open their doors, expand and grow, and to be sure to do ministry outside of the church. She reminded us that people today will not likely turn to the church; the church has to go to them.



Lack of Engagement and Adaptation –or Being Judgmental Can Cause Departures

Mikayla said that some of her friends who have stopped going to church have found it "too restrictive, too many rules. They feel like they're being judged and don't belong. Where they feel a sense of belonging, they will stick," and she further shared about her generation, saying, "...we want engagement. If not engaging us, we'll move on to somewhere else."

Dan Cash expanded those thoughts emphasizing that ministry is about building relationships and sharing Jesus with one another. "Tools such as worship, prayer, [etc.], don't change, but the methods change. And our context changes. We as leaders change as well, and I see the need to adapt."

Timely concerns such as struggles with pastoral authority, pastoral mental health, and pastoral loneliness were mentioned by other presenters. Also highlighted were necessities such as evolving worship technologies, supporting new church planting and being lifelong learners.

In the session, "Rediscovering Your Purpose in Today's Mission Field," staff from Mt. Pisgah BC in Shelbyville talked about their congregation's assimilation, discipleship and community outreach efforts in a rural setting, everything from needing to offer childcare to practicing biblical ecclesiology.

If We No Longer Existed, Would Our Community Miss Us?

Pastors Seth and Lauren Alexander of Bicknell FBC talked about their church's new definition and approach to "revival," sharing that their congregation has had to ask the poignant question, "Would our community miss us if our church no longer existed?" The Alexanders are from an area where drug addiction and poverty deeply impact local families. Therefore, their church has uncovered the need to start clothes-for-kids drives, they've championed foster care (the Alexanders put fostering children into practice in their own home in fact), and other nearby churches now collect school supplies for children of their North Knox School District.

Rev. Dr. Jeremy Myers, lead pastor of Seymour FBC, brought to light how his Southern Indiana congregation has offered various kinds of ministries for displaced persons whether during WWII or during the more recent reconstruction of several different local school buildings. They also now host, support, share meals and worship with adults celebrating recovery. These were but a few of the examples shared about how we might keep ministry relevant to the needs existing beyond our church buildings.

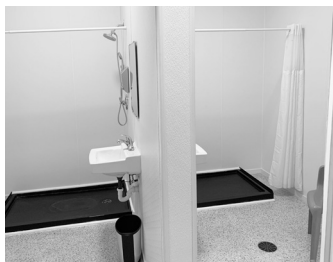
(Region Biennial recap ends on p. 6)



EXPANDING MISSION

WEST MAPLE BC HOMELESS MINISTRY CONTINUES TO EXPAND

West Maple BC (Jeffersonville, IN) and Jesus Cares at Exit 0 (off I-65), a faith-based outreach organization, began a partnership eight years ago. The church opened its doors to Exit 0 to use its



facilities as a permanent locale for homeless ministry.

Funded by a local grant, the church updated its facilities—kitchen, fellowship hall, bathrooms, and converted a classroom into two showers with changing areas and two nearby stackable washer and dryers. The church can now serve as a warming station in winter, cooling station in summer, and provide emergency shelter when needed.



In 2022, Exit 0's ministry has grown to include the following (also staffed by volunteers of other churches): Sunday afternoon worship service/meal; a Wednesday evening for showers, laundry, meal and supplies; and a Friday Bible study/

meal. About 200 persons are served weekly with the goal of assisting them with case management and transitioning into housing.

Jimmy Rowland is pastor of West Maple and Paul Stensrud is director of Jesus Cares at Exit 0 if your church has questions about establishing a similar partnership using resources from your area.

A MESSAGE FROM JEAN LANGDON, NEWLY ELECTED ABWM IN/KY PRESIDENT

Since November 1, 2022, I have been serving as ABWM IN/KY President. I am excited to serve alongside many women who have ABWM hearts. I look forward to meeting you in person, learning from you and growing together with you as we serve our Lord and Savior. AB Women's Ministries is a vital, MUST HAVE organization in all churches!



I am sure some of you are wondering who in the world is Jean Langdon?

My husband, Bob, and I live in Columbus, IN. We have two grown children, five grandchildren, and one great-granddaughter who will be five in January. We are fortunate to have our entire family living within two miles of each other. My husband is a retired minister, and I am a retired elementary school teacher. We were teenage sweethearts and never dated anyone else. I knew a good man (boy) when I saw one and kept him. Hopefully, he thought the same of me!

Bob and I have had the privilege of going on several mission trips including to China, Tibet, the Republic of Georgia, Chile and Brazil. The trips have opened our eyes and given us a glimpse into the work done by our missionaries in other countries while some are also balancing their families' needs. My challenge for you is to pray for our missionaries by name and for the American Baptist Women's Ministries organization in your local church. If you do not have one, I pray that you will seriously consider starting this vital ministry organization.

If your church would like to form an ABWM circle, please email me at jangdon3231@comcast.net for information. I look forward to hearing from you! -- "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others..." 1 Peter 4:10a

Eric Lembke & L'il Harper



FT. WAYNE FBC BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING



Ft. Wayne FBC's 200th anniversary celebration continues with an emphasis on missions and outreach. Close to 350 neighborhood children participated in the church's annual Trunk or Treat providing a point of interaction with families. The 45th annual chili supper and craft auction was a fun evening of enjoying a chili "pour-in" and bidding on

crafts and baked goods. Nearly \$1,500 was raised for local, state, national and international mission projects.

Just two days after the auction, packing week for Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Ministry began. The packing week was six days, but preparing to pack the boxes is a yearlong effort. This year's total of 1,271 boxes was 69 more than last year! Each box represents a child whose life will be touched with a box of gifts and the story of God's love for them.

During this period, the congregation also met and provided support for International Ministries (IM) Global Servants to Thailand, Eric and Yuree Lembke. God has richly blessed the congregation so that it may be a blessing to others. Ft. Wayne FBC is grateful for His guidance and abundance in the church's bicentennial year!



COLUMBUS FBC HONORS REV. DR. DAN CASH

The last few months Columbus FBC has been experiencing transitions. In July, their Administrative Assistant retired after 17 years of service. In September, Reilly (Jones) Jessup left her staff position for a job in the non-profit sector.

In October, they said goodbye to Rev. Dr. Dan Cash, their senior pastor. They "dispatched him" (their words) to the Dakotas, where he has been called as Executive Minister to the American Baptist Churches of the Dakotas. On his last Sunday, cards were handed out as members and visitors entered the sanctuary. They were instructed to keep them hidden until Dan gave his benediction. The picture above shows Dan's surprise as the cards were held up. After the service, the Cash family and church enjoyed a soup and sandwich luncheon together.

NORTHWESTERN ASSN. WOMEN BLESSED BY FIRST CONFERENCE SINCE 2019

American Baptist Women's MINISTRIES

Thanks to Gary FBC for hosting over 30 women and providing door prizes--journals, manicure kits and more. The day began with a scrumptious breakfast. Deacon Beryl Aguilera led prayer. Denise Brumfield greeted everyone. The theme was, "Bee Yourself and Make Your Day Beeautiful." Devotions were given by Dr. Shelley Fisher and the group praised the Lord with singing, "No, Not One," which was accompanied by Becky Davenport. Valorie Cole, still ABWM IN/KY President then, spoke about Coordinated Assistance Ministries ("C.A.M." - Kokomo, IN), an organization which helps people struggling with homelessness get back on their feet. This can take months or even years, but C.A.M. never gives up! Rebecca Scott, camp director, shared how Tippy has provided opportunities for young people to make life-changing decisions. Mayra Giovanetti, International Ministries (IM) missionary serving with husband Carlos in Chile, Nicaragua and Spain, reminded the ladies that no matter where we are in the world, we can all look up and see the same moon at the same time, reinforcing how connected we truly are. A tasty lunch and then business followed with two offerings collected. It was wonderful Christian fellowship! The women look forward to their next conference together.

KENTUCKY RELIEF EFFORTS CONTINUE

ABC-IN/KY congregations collected winter coats as part of ongoing efforts to support Hazard, KY residents following July 2022 flooding there. Forty women, men and children will be warmer this winter because of the coats kindly donated and delivered on November 14.

This fall, a group of Coffee Creek Association (CCA) women had sewn throws, quilts, afghans, pot holders and other items, which were taken to Bremen, KY a week later to support western KY residents following tornadoes there in December 2021. "Sewing Seeds of Love," the name of the ladies' group, resumes meeting in January to make similar items for Hazard residents (in eastern KY) to be delivered in June.

The 2023 Mission trip to Bremen will be March 26-29. Registration opens in early 2023. The Hazard trip will occur June 21-24. Please mark your calendars and plan to join these efforts!

It's likely several building trade professionals will need to be hired to work alongside the group and/or additional building supplies will need to be purchased. If your church would like to organize a fundraiser toward these needs, please do so! If I may help you in any way with your endeavors, let me know.

You may mail donations to (either) Hazard or Bremen 2023 Mission Trip, c/o Grace Flynn, 139 N. Sharon Drive, Scottsburg, IN 47170, checks payable to: "CCA ABWM." Please also specify which location you wish to receive your funds (either Bremen or Hazard) using the memo line on your checks. Thanks for your continued generosity!

Patty Short, Disaster Relief Coordinator, cell: (812) 595-1082, email: ppshort@frontier.com.

MARK KERN CALLED AS PASTOR OF PLEASANT VIEW BC



On Sunday, Aug. 7, Pleasant View BC (PVBC) completed a period of transition by calling Mark Kern as pastor. He most recently served as the interim 18 months, following nearly four years as associate pastor at the church.

Mark and Pat have worshiped together at PVBC for forty-plus years serving in various roles during that time. Their two adult children, Ryan and Brittany, were raised as part of PVBC and now are married and active in their own churches. Mark and Pat are blessed with six grandchildren: two in fourth grade, two in second grade, a kindergartener, and a soon-to-be preschooler.

Pastor Mark is one of several ABC-IN/KY church leaders participating in the Teaching Church Initiative (TCI), a joint partnership with the ABC-IN/KY Region, local churches and Northern Seminary. He will graduate from Northern in May 2023 with a Master of Arts degree in Theology and Missions.

RANDY CRUTCHFIELD HONORED FOR 30 YEARS AT MADISON FBC

The average tenure for a senior pastor serving at one church is reportedly four to five years. Youth pastors average even fewer.

Rev. Randy Crutchfield accepted the call of youth/associate pastor at Madison FBC in November 1992. At that time, he was a Master's of Divinity candidate at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (Louisville, Ky.). Fast forward to August 2018 when Randy was named senior pastor.

A celebration of Randy, wife Lisa and daughter Ansley was held on October 2 as the church marked Randy's 30th year at Madison FBC. Rev. Steve Mechem, a former pastor, returned to deliver the sermon to a congregation of 200+ people. Steve was pastor when Randy started his ministry there. A video-taped message from Rev. Dr. Jeff Woods, ABC-USA General Secretary and a predecessor to Randy as youth/associate pastor, was shown during the worship service.

A catered lunch followed where former pastors, youth members and others spoke of their time serving with Randy, Lisa and Ansley.

The City of Madison and FBC congratulate Randy and family for 30 wonderful years!



EMPOWERING CHURCHES

Region Biennial recap continuing from p. 3

We Are Commissioned: The Meaning of "Co-Mission"



Rev. Mark Thompson was celebrated as our Region Executive Minister on the Friday evening of the Biennial, Oct. 7, 2022. During his installation, John Campbell, pastor of Terre Haute FBC (the Biennial host church) and our newly elected Region president, proclaimed, "Jesus comes into the mess that is our world often times, and He brings all of that work and all of God's movement into focus... we find ourselves still in the midst of that same movement, still swept up in the current and flow of what God is doing."

In closing the weekend, Mark inspired us to remember that a long time ago our churches said we cannot do this [God's work] by ourselves. We can only do this if we work together. Mark encouraged IN/KY churches to let God speak to us and to listen intently. "Yours is a church and world that needs you at your best." He urged us to turn to one another, to our Brothers and Sisters in Christ here in our Region, also to the Region staff, and to not go it alone. We need to remember, "God sent them out in pairs."

If you missed the 2022 ABC-IN/KY Biennial Gathering, you may view the sessions (via YouTube) at thfbc.org/abcgathering.

More 2022 Biennial Pics

Thanks to 2022 Region President Irina Sorrels, Archives Committee Member Tim Mohon, Region Minister Jaime Flores, and Volunteer Registrar Becky Rhea for sharing their event photos with us!



If you would like more information about churches or events described in this issue, contact Wendy Shuler at wendyshuler@abc-indiana.org or (317) 635-3552 x222.

EQUIPPING LEADERS



Conference for Smaller Churches

**FREE REGISTRATION for
ABC-IN/KY Pastors & Their Spouses!
May 18-19, 2023**

**First Baptist Church at Savoy
1602 S. Prospect Ave., Savoy, IL**

Spend time with other pastors and leaders from smaller churches and be inspired by teaching from gifted Christian leaders and teachers. Choose from workshops highlighting innovative ministry strategies on topics such as essentials and redefining success in ministry, capitalizing with online possibilities in smaller churches, leading the presence-driven church and communication improvement.

ABC of IN/KY pastors and their spouses who wish to register for the conference, please email Conference Registrar Nancy of the American Baptist Churches of the Great Rivers Region (where the conference will take place), **nancy@abcgrr.org**, or phone her at 217.726.7366.

IMPORTANT: Nancy needs to enter your registration manually in order for you to receive the FREE registration that our Region is offering you! Any travel or hotel costs, however, will need to be covered by you or your local church. Visit **ResourceLC.org** to learn more about the conference schedule and how to book *discounted* hotel accommodations.

This event is co-sponsored by the ABC-IN/KY Region, ABC of Great Rivers Region and other ABC organizations. **Churches, please help encourage your pastor/s to attend!**

CONGRATULATIONS 2022 CLI GRADUATES



Several Church Leadership Institute (CLI) graduates completed the program at different times during the last year (2022); therefore, the celebrations of their accomplishments happened at their respective local churches instead of in a shared location as had been done in past years. Their full program consisted of 14 courses and two required workshops, and it took at least three years to complete.

The graduates and the dates of when they finished CLI were as follows:

- **Milagros "Millie" Cordero**, lay person, IB Betesda of ABCGI (12/1/2021)
- **Tucker Woodburn**, lay person, Bicknell FBC (3/5/2022)
- **Dan Morgan**, Associate Pastor, Union BC-Vevay (3/9/2022)
- **Courtney Kindler**, Youth Director, Olive Branch BC-Dillsboro (5/7/2022)
- **Brian Ball, Pastor**, Summitville FBC (12/7/2022)

Congratulations, 2022 Graduates!

Upcoming Sessions

**Suggested for
Professional Church Leaders
& Lay Leaders As Well!**

Church & ABC History/Polity

**Mar. 18, Apr. 1, 15 & 29
(4 sessions total via Zoom)**

Healthy Boundaries

May 2 & 9 (2 sessions total via Zoom)

Watch website & e-news for more info!

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**The 2023 ABWM Scholarship Application
for Undergraduate Students Is NOW Available!**

Application deadline is February 15, 2023.

**For more info and an application, contact a member of
your church's American Baptist Women's Ministries (ABWM)**

or

**Janie Barnett, ABWM of IN/KY Church & Community Coordinator
Email: jlbbarnett@yahoo.com
Phone: (812) 719-1725**