

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. 24 NO. 2 - APR/MAY/JUN 2024

ABC-IN/KY REGION YOUTH ACTIVITIES ABOUND & ONE REBOUNDS...

Winter FUSE Focused on Worship

On January 21, students and leaders from 10 different ABC-IN/KY churches gathered at Columbus FBC for another FUSE. The focus of the afternoon was worship. Students got to solve several puzzles to escape a room in which they encountered scripture and truths about God. Then they gathered to play some games and worshipped God together. The students were encouraged in practical ways to think about worship, both at church and in their daily lives.

When asked why we worship, one student simply and honestly raised his hand and said, "It's what we were made to do."

FUSE happens quarterly, so far most often in the southeastern part of the ABC-IN/KY Region.

We are hoping to bring FUSE to other areas as well. If you are interested in helping to bring the event to your area, please reach out to Kristi Jones, kristijones@abc-indiana.org or (317) 635-3552, ext. 107. You may also find more info on Instagram [@FUSE.studentgathering](https://www.instagram.com/FUSE.studentgathering).

ABY Convention - Save the dates!
Nov. 8 & 9, 2024, 6th-12th graders
hosted by New Castle FBC



Photo from Jan. 2024 FUSE at Columbus FBC

Networking & Idea-Sharing Meetings OPEN TO ALL Church Youth Leaders!

Youth leaders from throughout the ABC-IN/KY Region hold regularly-scheduled meetings. If you work or volunteer with your church youth, you are invited to join on the following **Tuesdays at 7 PM (EST) via Zoom:**

June 4 August 6 October 1 December 3

Youth Leaders will gather in person on **Friday & Saturday, May 3-4, at Indian Creek Baptist Camp (ICBC)**. If planning to attend any or all of these activities or you have other questions, again, please contact Kristi Jones.

ICBC youth summer camp opportunities & the next FUSE details (April 14 event) are listed on pp. 4 & 5!



Rev. Mark Thompson
Executive Minister
markthompson@abc-indiana.org

ARTS CONNECT CHURCH, COMMUNITY & CHRIST

In early February, I attended a reunion for past participants of the Wabash Pastoral Leadership Program. While at Wabash College, I heard an interesting presentation on the value of the arts in our churches and how the creativity of the arts may help us bridge a connection between the church and the community. I admit I am not one for an art exhibit unless you count antique tractor and classic car shows as "art," then I am all in! It took me a few minutes to establish a more holy perspective of how the arts have influenced the history of the church. Throughout history, art has been used to draw people into a relationship with God and inspired countless followers of Christ. I even considered how the simple fish drawing comprised of two half circles was a simple work of art signifying a fisher of men.

Our presenters recognized that the arts have been used for unholy purposes and warned us of this danger in our churches today. We must remember that the arts are not meant to be objects of worship, but an inspiration of worship to our Creator. Of

course, there are famous works of art like Michelangelo's statue of *David* and Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper*, but I often feel just as inspired as I walk through a Christian bookstore and find a connection with the artwork hanging on their walls and the voices coming from the speakers lifting praise to our Lord, who is worthy of worship.

The presenters mentioned some of their work around Indianapolis, and initially I was limiting the idea to our larger cities such as Columbus, IN. If you look up the city of Columbus, you will find it's famous for its architecture, and one of the first sites on the list is the First Baptist Church. The architecture of the church itself is an invitation (as an example, see their sanctuary in the photo collage on p. 1). After this consideration, I was reminded that a small-town church I pastored was known throughout the town for its stained-glass windows. Occasionally, people would ask to come inside the church for pictures. The use of art to draw others to Christ can be found in various settings.

In a time when the church is looking for ways to connect, the arts may be a tool for ministry often overlooked. Throughout church history, the arts have drawn others to Jesus and inspired many in their walk with Him. I invite you to think creatively about how your church may use the arts in new ways that are Holy and pleasing unto God.

If you would like to dialogue about this or the Wabash Pastoral Leadership Program for Early Career Pastors, I would love to hear from you as we walk TOGETHER on God's Abundant Journey!

Rev. Mark Thompson
Executive Minister



REGION MINISTERIAL STAFF

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ABC-IN/KY Region Biennial
Friday & Saturday, Sept. 27-28, 2024
hosted by First Baptist Church, Muncie, IN

Open to all pastors and laypersons of the Region --
SAVE THE DATES and plan to join us!

Fresh Expressions will lead the keynote presentations.
Additional program and registration details to follow
in the months ahead.

Observer submission deadlines for 2024

SUMMER ISSUE (July, August, September) - Friday, May 31
FALL ISSUE (October, November, December) - Friday, September 6
Please send submissions to Wendy at the below email address!

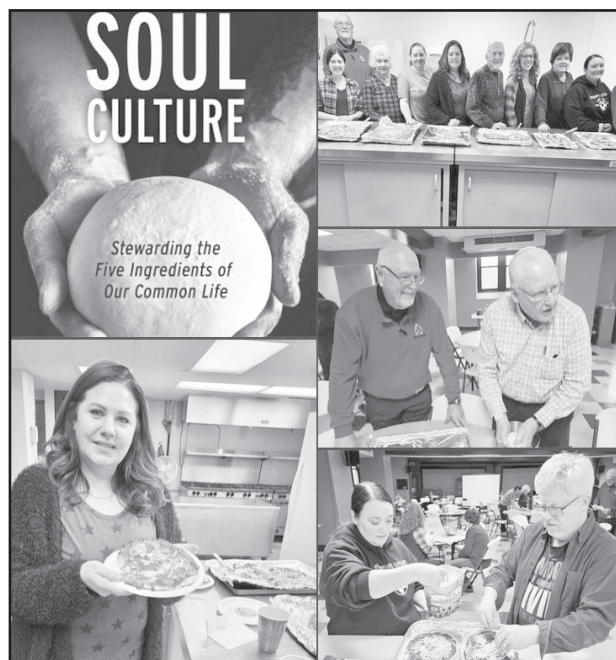
If you would like more information about churches or events described in this issue, contact Wendy Shuler at wendyshuler@abc-indiana.org or (317) 635-3552 - press 3.

EQUIPPING LEADERS

WORKING THE DOUGH: MUNCIE FBC REFLECTS ON CHURCH'S SOUL CULTURE

At FBC Muncie, the start of a new year brings together a newly-elected Church Coordination Team (CCT). Instead of the team diving straight into their "to-do" lists, this year Co-Pastors Jonathan Balmer and Kendall Ellis hosted a two-part retreat for CCT members on Saturday, February 10 and March 2.

Based on the book *Soul Culture: Stewarding the Five Ingredients of Our Common Life* by Matt Snowden and Joshua Hays, CCT members considered how a church's beliefs, values, attitudes, goals, and practices make the ingredients of a church's "soul culture." The team reflected and dreamed about who God has called their congregation to be in this next season of ministry, and they discerned a congregational watchword based on Mark 10:45: "Not to be served, but to serve." They concluded their retreat with a pie making exercise and a pizza dough prayer practice, enjoyed homemade pizzas, and were inspired for a new year of ministry focused on service to their neighbors.



Church moderator Emily Anderson (bottom left) was among the Church Coordination Team members who participated in the Soul Culture retreat.

ORDINATION, 2023 HIGHLIGHT FOR CHURCH

In November, Pastor Kendall Ellis, co-pastor of Muncie FBC, was ordained and the ordination of her husband Pastor Jonathan Balmer was recognized. Region Ministers were on hand to conduct the ordination, and a close friend and Presbyterian pastor, Sara Jane Nixon, preached the morning's sermon.

A choir singing a composition by Worship Arts Pastor Dr. Clif Davis provided special music. Before Rev. Ellis led the congregation in communion, members of the church family came forward to lay hands on her and express their prayers for her ministry.

Prayers for Kendall Ellis are offered by her father Derrick Ellis, Region Minister Rev. Bruce Cochran, Rev. Jonathan Balmer, and Rev. Sarah Jane Nixon.

Rev. Mark Thompson, Region Executive Minister, is at the podium.



WHO IS A TYPICAL M28 STUDENT?

The above question gets raised in a desire to understand for whom the M28 Certificate in Theological Education program is designed. The reality is there is not one "typical" M28 student.



We have students who are bi- or co-vocational pastors of rural, suburban and urban churches. We have students who are being trained to become pastors of congregations. We have others who are lay leaders in their churches or church staff seeking to become better equipped for their voluntary or paid position.

M28 students, in other words, come from *all* types of backgrounds. Some have no higher education beyond a high school diploma or its equivalent. Others bring Bachelor's or Master's level education from another field into the program. Currently, we have 17 students from ABC-IN/KY taking M28 classes in various subject areas. Each is working with a mentor and reporting personal growth and application to their ministry context.

We hope this snapshot about M28 might encourage you to see yourself as a potential student! If you would like more information or have specific questions about the program, please email Dr. Dan Cash, M28 Dean, danchash@abc-indiana.org.

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 - press 3.

EXPANDING MISSION



INDIAN CREEK BAPTIST CAMP

f @INDIANCREEKBAPTISTCAMP

Grades	Sessions <small>Dates and prices subject to change</small>	Dates
Kindergarten- 1st	FIRST TIMERS	June 2nd - 3rd
1st - 2nd	EXPLORER	June - 9th - 11th
2nd - 3rd	DISCOVERY	June 12th - 15th
10th - 2024 Grads	SENIOR HIGH	June 16th - 22nd
4th-6th Girls Only	GIRLS CAMP	June 22nd - 26th
4th-6th Boys Only	BOYS CAMP	June 26th - 30th
6th-8th	CHALLENGE	July 14th - 20th
7th-9th	FOCUS	July 20th - 26th
16yrs + <small>(mild to moderate special needs)</small>	SPECIAL PERSONS	July 28th - 31st

Register Online at campindiancreek.com



ALWAYS

HEBREWS 13:8
PSALM 24:1

INDIAN CREEK BAPTIST CAMP

CONNECT - REFRESH - GROW WITH JESUS AND OTHERS

Indian Creek Baptist Camp 1770 Avoca Eureka Road Bedford, IN 47421

The links for assistance are the same for everyone without regard to race, color, sex, age, handicap, or national origin. Persons who believe they have been discriminated against for any USDA-related activity should write to: Secretary of Agriculture, Washington DC 20250

RECENTLY CLOSED CHURCH ASSISTS CAMP

Sandborn BC was walking through the process of closing its doors. Having been long-time members of the Indian Creek Baptist Camp (ICBC) family, the congregation chose to leave a legacy gift to the camp.

Much like an acorn must be planted for an oak tree to grow, the thoughtful financial support Sandborn provided planted seeds, enabling Indian Creek to be able to expand its physical facilities in the form of a new Dining Hall, which in turn is expected to grow ICBC's ministry now and in the years to come!

The Sandborn BC gift, along with significant financial undergirding from the ABC-IN/KY Region, and gifts made by many of our congregations and other individuals as well, made the beautiful new facility possible.

We invite anyone interested to schedule a tour of the new Dining Hall or join us at an upcoming event to see what God is up to at Indian Creek. Summer Schedule is at left, but you're invited to schedule meetings, retreats, and more *all year!* --Jordan Morris, Camp Manager, ICBC

COFFEE CREEK ASSN. RETURNS TO EMCC

Again this year, the 20 churches of the Coffee Creek Baptist Association (CCBA) joined together to fill the pantry at Edna Martin Christian Center (EMCC). On Saturday, February 10, a group met at Aldi's in Seymour, IN, to purchase over \$8,000 worth of food and paper products. After shopping at Aldi's, they caravanned to Edna Martin to deliver that load and additional donations. In total, they were able to donate over \$10,800 worth of food! According to EMCC staff, these donations will likely last in the Center's pantry through June. CCBA is grateful for the opportunity as an Association to support this vital ministry. As sister churches, they say they can accomplish so much more by working together!



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 - press 3.

EMPOWERING CHURCHES

ANOTHER YOUTH EVENT!



Please email Kristi Jones, kristijones@abc-indiana.org, by April 7 to confirm how many of your church youth & adult leaders will be attending FUSE (above). Students or churches, we ask you to bring work gloves if able.

ABWM CONFERENCE OPEN TO ALL WOMEN WHO ARE AMERICAN BAPTIST

Summer Conference will be Friday & Saturday, June 28-29 at Franklin College (Franklin, IN). Come hear Kristy Engel, the keynote speaker. She is a global consultant with a health care focus. Kristy has had many experiences while serving as the hands and feet of Jesus in various parts of the world. She has served in Haiti, Liberia, and Ukraine, to name just a few areas.

Kristy is also our 2024 State Project! See a real LIVE "State Project" at the podium and hear what life-changing ways your monetary contributions will be put to use. A wonderful conference has been planned just for you! The registration forms will be sent to ABWM Association Presidents in May.

Feel free to email me, jlangdon3231@comcast.net if you have any questions.

American Baptist
Women's
MINISTRIES

Blessings,
Jean Langdon
President of ABWM of IN/KY

HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

Register for this course by April 19!

Healthy Boundaries Fundamentals is an introduction to the concepts of boundaries in pastoral and teaching relationships. **This course is required for all persons pursuing the M28 certificate and/or ordination through the ABC-IN/KY (CORMS) process.** Pastoral leaders should repeat it every five years. Recommended for lay leaders--deacons, Sunday school teachers, small group leaders and visitation teams as well!

- Taught by Bruce Cochran & Phyllis Goodyear

Monday and Tuesday, April 29 & 30, 2024

(Must attend both!)

7:00 - 9:00 pm (EST) via Zoom

Cost: \$25 per person; register at www.abc-indiana.org.

COLUMBUS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL OPENING A SITE IN SHELBYVILLE FBC BUILDING

First Baptist (Shelbyville, IN) will undergo renovations to prepare for incoming students. They are working with the fire marshal and health department to determine what changes need to be made.

Superintendent Kendall Wildey shared, "We have a vision of Christian education, a biblical worldview education in communities that might not have a school already established, where families don't have access to a Christian-based school."

Wildey said work on this project began after the school opened a location in North Vernon two years ago. Enrollment is now open. It will house grades K-5.

Columbus Christian is accredited through the DOE and a member of Christian Schools International.

"Most people don't understand how affordable private school can be with [those] scholarships," he said, while mentioning in a recent news interview about some scholarships available to students.

Columbus Christian has posted the position for principal. Once that position is filled, the school will begin hiring teachers, additional administrators and other staff. Anyone interested in applying may contact Wildey at kwildey@columbus-christian.org.

For more information, go to visitcolumbuschristian.com.
(Excerpts from *The Shelbyville News* used with permission)

Indiana Baptist Convention
AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES
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ABC-IN/KY Church Pastors, we want to...
“Take you out to the ballgame!”



Pastors, as a way to relax and fellowship together, join your Region Staff for part of a day enjoying “America’s Favorite Pastime!”

Wednesday, May 1

Gates open at 10 AM

Game begins at 11:05 AM (EST)

All concessions are now “cashless”.
Only credit cards or cash apps accepted for food/drink purchases.

Cost of parking will be on your own so perhaps carpool!

Indianapolis Indians vs. the Buffalo Bisons
Victory Field

501 West Maryland St. • Indianapolis, IN

A limited number of FREE game tickets are available to our Region’s pastors.

Email Rev. Mark Thompson, Executive Minister, *by Friday, April 19*, if you would like to join this fun event. Please include your cell number in case Mark has any last-minute updates to communicate by text such as delay or cancellation due to weather.
