

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 20 NO. 2 - APRIL/MAY/JUNE 2020



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

## For Such a Time As This

maintaining connections. Your IN/KY staff, all of us, are continuing to serve you by working from home, for the short term at least, which brings its own challenges in terms of communication and connection. Personally, some travel plans and a long-anticipated meeting with a new friend are very likely to be put on hold. There's a lot of disruption that has brought a level of stress and fatigue that feels a little unusual. The stark reality of being included in an "at risk" group simply because of my age has been a rude awakening and disruptive, albeit somewhat humorous, if I am to be completely honest.

All of us are experiencing disruption and disorientation in our lives **because what we expected life to be like this spring has been fundamentally altered.** The end is not in sight and we don't know if, and when, the restrictions being placed on us in terms of going about our formerly normal lives will be removed. Even when we are past the pandemic infection, do we really expect that life will be "normal" again?

Here are a few of my thoughts as we move through these next weeks and, quite possibly, months of life together in the midst of COVID-19

and its aftermath. These are offered in addition to the basics, such as following the necessary health protections that have been well stated elsewhere and paying attention to directives from reliable local, state, and national authorities.

As stated in my letter last week (found on the front page of our region website), **our first response as Christ followers is compassion and concern for others, supported by prayer and service** which flow from scripture and our foundation of faith. Looking out for those who need assistance and finding ways to serve and assist them should come naturally to us, whether they are part of our family, our local congregation, or our wider community. This includes senior adults and those who are medically compromised, medical professionals and emergency responders who are feeling stretched beyond their limits and children who depend on school meals for daily sustenance, to name a few. What about others, whose livelihood may be at risk due to lack of business, isolation, etc.; or those who live in fear of domestic violence and abuse? There is no shortage of people around us who need extra care and assistance during this time.

Secondly, **let's not succumb to fear and panic.** While those responses are normal for many people in a situation that feels out of control, as Christ followers, our trust is in The One who faced, endured, and conquered death on our behalf, and who has ultimately prepared us to "...endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father..." (Colossians 1:11-12).

Third, the church is the body of Christ (not a building) who, collectively, name Jesus as their Savior and Lord. Coming together for worship, instruction and study, for support and encouragement, they are then sent out as a transformed people to serve in the world. **While the gathering together is important and even, I would argue, crucial (during "normal" times), the purpose in our gathering together is to prepare us to serve in the world well beyond the buildings and spaces in which we gather.** In this very season of uncertainty and discontinuous change, we are being forced to be more creative about how we gather. Whatever that might look like for either the short or long term, the purpose for which we come together, to worship in order

**Continued on page 2**

You probably don't want to read yet another article about the COVID-19 pandemic, so I will do my best to not make it the focus of these words. I had begun an article reflecting on the Lenten season through the lens of death even as we look towards Easter, but life is quite a bit different this week than last, when I first started writing.

For me, the best word to describe my own experience is "disruptive." My general flow of ministry tasks which is always highly connected to church visits, meeting with pastors and leaders, and other travel, has all come to a screeching halt, calling for major adjustments in terms of

**For Such a Time As This - continued from page 1**

to be prepared to serve, remains. **There are many ways each of us can serve right now as the Body of Christ in the world, even when we can't move around as we typically do.** This season calls for us to step outside our comfort zones, while still maintaining appropriate social distancing, in finding ways to share the love of Christ and serve those around us who have needs, whether we know them or not.

Whether we realize it or not, we are making history every day. This situation forces each of us, especially our churches, to adapt and do things differently during this liminal season. I would dare to say that, once we are past the pandemic

infection, most of our churches will realize that the ways in which we have been responding (making our worship and Bible studies available in different ways, caring for others, etc.) should be continued. Let's take this opportunity to lean deeply into the Spirit of God, meditate on scripture and commune in prayer with the Living Christ...and not be afraid to experiment with new ways of being the Church, the Body of Christ. I am convinced that **God has prepared us for such a time as this** and we have access to all the resources we need as we serve Together on God's Abundant Journey.

Grace and Peace,  
Soozi Whitten Ford

# 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.

<https://abc-indiana.org/region-ministries/mef/>

## Browns Minister in the Dominican Republic

At the conclusion of Rev. David Brown's Interim music/worship position at Columbus FBC, he and his wife, Susan, embarked on another kind of adventure.

They spent seven weeks in the Dominican Republic working alongside Ketly and Vital Pierre, career International Ministries missionaries in what IM called an "extended short-term mission project."

They assisted with teaching English as a Second Language

(ESL) in several locations, including the Community Center and the Baptist hospital in La Romana. They also spent time with children in an after-school program and also assisted with music lessons and with local church choirs. Their goal was to be helpful to the Pierres and be flexible to do whatever seemed necessary.

By the time you read this, the Browns will have returned from the Dominican Republic. Please keep them in your prayers.



Your ABC IN/KY staff continues to serve you even as each of us are working remotely from our homes, as pictured here on March 23rd. We are meeting at least once or twice a week simply to check in and pray with one another, as well as to discuss any ministry projects or situations. In order to comply with Gov. Holcomb's executive order, we will not be traveling at all for at least a few more weeks. Feel free to call (leave a message, especially for office staff) or email us and we will respond! We've posted a few resources on the home page of the website that you might find helpful, and we invite you to follow the IN/KY Facebook page (search "American Baptist Churches of Indiana and Kentucky").

*In these unusual and unprecedented times, we find peace in the midst of the uncertainty, knowing that the One who said, "...Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age..." is the One who is ultimately in control. Grace and Peace!*



David & Susan pictured with English students at Hospital El Buen Samaritano

## Nehemiah Leaders - Equipping Ministry for Bi-Vocational Pastors



Nehemiah Leaders is a new equipping ministry designed especially for bi-vocational pastors. It has three main components: learning events, colleague groups, and personal goals. The financial commitment is affordable and the time invested will be beneficial for both the pastor and church. To learn more, contact your Region Minister.

## Irina Sorrels Attends United Nations Women's Conference

In mid-March, Irina Sorrels, of Hayden FBC and vice president of the ABC-IN/KY region board, attended the 64th session of the Commission on the Status of Women at the United Nations, representing American Baptists. She was joined by Rev. Dr.

Lauran Bethel and Rev. Dr. Patricia Hernandez.

The trip is considered to be a huge honor for Sorrels, as well as ABC IN/KY. Due to Observer deadlines, more details on her experiences with the mission will be included in our next issue.

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**ABC-IN/KY**  
**REGION GATHERING**  
**September 25-26, 2020**  
**Terre Haute FBC**

### REGION MINISTERIAL STAFF:

Rev. Sooz Whitten Ford, Executive Minister - sooziford@abc-indiana.org  
 Dan Chadwick, Region Minister - danchadwick@abc-indiana.org  
 Bruce Cochran, Region Minister - brucecochran@abc-indiana.org  
 Mark Thompson, Region Minister - markthompson@abc-indiana.org

## 2020 Camp Schedules

For complete details and info regarding camp fees go to:

**CAMP TIPPY:** [www.camptippy.org](http://www.camptippy.org)

**INDIAN CREEK:** [campindiancreek.com](http://campindiancreek.com)

*PLEASE NOTE: Online registration is now available*

### CAMP TIPPY

SESSION	DATE	GRADE
Explorer	June 7-11	1st - 2nd
Leadership	June 7-13	9th - 11th
1st Timers	June 12-13	K - 1st
Trailblazer	June 14-20	5th - 6th
DAY Camp (9am-4pm)	June 22-26	1st - 6th
Princess Girls	June 21-26	7th - 8th
Hero Boys	June 21-26	7th - 8th
Senior High	June 28 - July 4	9th - '20 grads
Challenge	July 5-11	7th - 8th
Discovery	July 12-18	3rd - 4th

### INDIAN CREEK

SESSION	DATE	GRADE
Special Persons	June 1-4	Ages 16 & up
Explorer	June 7-9	1st - 2nd
Discovery	June 10-13	3rd - 4th
Girls Camp	June 14-18	4th - 6th
First Timers	June 19-20	K - 1st
Senior High	June 21-27	10th - '20 grads
Boys Camp	June 28-July 2	4th - 6th
Focus	July 5-11	7th - 9th
Challenge	July 12-18	6th - 8th

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

## Celebrating 150 Years at Badger Grove Community BC



Badger Grove Community BC in Brookston marked their 150th birthday on January 8, 2020. Members and friends gathered to enjoy cake and ice cream, and reminisced around a newly-rediscovered, one hundred year old quilt. The quilt was skillfully embroidered with the names of grandparents, great-grandparents, aunts, uncles and friends of the folks in Badger Grove. As a result of this time of reminiscing, several people are now doing genealogical

work on their families and others among the 600 names on the quilt. They are in search of stories that can be retold the weekend of August 29-30, when plans are being made for gatherings to celebrate the sesquicentennial further. If anyone has information, stories, or pictures that would help with the celebration, please contact them at badgerchurch1@gmail.com. Mark August 29-30 on the calendar! Invitations will be sent closer to the date.

## Columbus FBC Group Receives Training In CPR

On February 22, approximately 20 people from Columbus FBC gathered at Otter Creek Country Club to learn and be certified in CPR.

Pastor Dan Cash was among those who participated, along with those ranging in age from their

twenties to folks in their eighties. Those who participated learned CPR, short for Cardiopulmonary resuscitation, a series of immediate actions to take when a person suffers a sudden heart stoppage. Everyone enjoyed the time learning and sharing.



### Time to Fill Out Annual Church Clerk Reports

It is once again time to fill out the annual reports and send them in to the region office. By doing so, churches will help us stay connected and improve the reliability of the data for our wider American Baptist family.

For complete information on ways reports can be completed and sent to the region office, go to:

<https://abc-indiana.org/annual-church-clerk-reports/>

### OBSERVER ARTICLE SUBMISSION DEADLINES

SUMMER ISSUE (July, August, September) - Fri., June 5, 2020  
 FALL ISSUE (October, November, December) - Fri., September 11, 2020  
 WINTER ISSUE (January, February, March 2021) - Wed., November 25, 2020

# ng Churches

## Unity BC Celebrates 175 Years Serving the Community

Unity BC is celebrating its 175<sup>th</sup> year in 2020, making it the oldest active church in Brown County. In 1845, a group of 72 northern Brown County residents began meeting for worship on the third Sunday of each month, rotating the location among various private homes. The church received land for a permanent building in 1849 and raised a small, 22 by 24 foot building, which remained in use until it burned down in 1860. It was replaced with a larger building in 1889, and a belfry and bell were added in 1891.

The early years of the church were overseen by Rev. John Wade Ragsdale, who served for 40 years starting in 1848. During those years, the church was affiliated with American Baptist Churches, and still is today. By 1890, the church was served by a "circuit riding" preacher. Then in 1917, they welcomed Rev. Francis H. Albritton, who preached every other week.

Through the hard years of the Great Depression, the church struggled to stay alive, often meeting only for Sunday School. A Frank Hohenberger photo from this era shows the old building, unpainted, overgrown, and looking a bit forlorn. In 1949, a nucleus of members began raising funds to

improve the facility and its programs. They added stained glass windows, modern heating, an annex for classrooms and, in 1961, indoor plumbing. A small parsonage was built on the property in 1954. A front foyer was added to the old building in 1972.

By 1984, the church acquired land across Spearsville Road with a vision for a new facility. In the 1990's, the church engaged in a capital funds drive, and with a great deal of donated labor, services, equipment and supplies, built a new, larger, modern church. The building was completed debt free. In March, 2000, the congregation "crossed the road" to take residence in the new facility.

Unity BC was built on the idea of supporting the surrounding community in spiritual, physical and social needs. Today, 175 years along, it continues that support in a myriad of ways, from its "Word of Life" youth program to hosting Boy Scout Troop 193.

While Unity has been served by a number of pastors throughout the years, the church has ordained or licensed 11 pastors who have served locally and all over the country. The church is currently served by Rev. Lee Snider.

## Learning Series at Columbus FBC

During the month of February, Columbus FBC held a Wednesday night learning series on the subject of mission in the local community.

The first speaker for the series was Rev. Mark Thompson. He explained what assets their community and church have, including structures, culture, financial, human resources, social, political, and natural. Those in attendance worked in groups identifying these assets.

During the second week, Mark shared statistics about the community, some of which were not very good. He said, if a child is hungry, we try to feed the child. However, we need to find out why the child is hungry and work on the underlying problems in the community that lead to that hunger.

The second speaker for the series was Kelly Daugherty, director of Love Chapel, a community ministry center which is supported by 25 member churches and other religious groups. Love Chapel's services include a food bank and housing for singles and families. Daugherty said one of the big problems contributing to homelessness in Columbus is housing disparity. There is very little affordable housing for those who are working bare-bones jobs. Many are working hard, but still cannot afford to pay the deposit on an apartment or house.

Love Chapel provides financial services, helping people learn budgeting and how to use their money more effectively. Many people from Columbus FBC volunteer at Love Chapel and at Brighter Days, the shelter for women and men. Two big events that raise funds for Love Chapel are the annual 5K race/walk and an offering of money to purchase food for the food bank. The amount raised at the 5K was \$12,816 and the offering for the food bank, including \$1,000 from the mission budget, was \$3,265.20.

Rev. Sooz Whitten Ford was the third speaker in the series. She encouraged those in attendance to explore what the church is doing in the community to attract people to the church or to introduce them to Christ.

She shared the variety of things churches small and large are doing to help bring people to Christ, such as inviting someone to dinner who does not attend church or is not a Christ follower and just getting to know them.

Many church council and leaders of Columbus FBC attended the sessions and hope this will translate into the church reaching out in different ways personally and in the community. All in all, the month was a very good learning experience and eye opening event for all who participated.

*Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*

**II Corinthians 5:17**

*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.*

**John 14:27**

*Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.* **Colossians 3:15**

## Clayton FBC Blessed by Visit to Nursing Center



In December, members of Clayton FBC caroled at the Sugar Grove Orchard House Memory Unit where one of their members, Bill VanNice, is a resident. For some of the choir members, this was their first time to carol in a health care

center. They received such joy from the visit, the choir plans to return soon!

They sang several Christmas songs and gave residents a Christmas ornament. Praise God for health care centers and those who care for the residents!

## Huron BC Builds Community Park



In 2019, Huron BC completed a public park for their small community. The congregation had previously purchased properties in the vicinity of the church. In 2018, the church received a Lawrence County Community Grant to start a

community park. In 2019, a grant was received to fund the building of a shelter house.

Everything was accomplished by volunteers, with money from the church building fund and grants. It is a great addition to the community!

## Memorial BC Gives “Loads of Love”

On Saturday, February 22, Memorial BC participated in “Loads of Love,” an outreach event at a local laundromat. The event provided a new and fun way to meet many of their neighbors.

Church members introduced themselves to anyone who came in and shared that they would be paying for the laundry services that day. They offered to help carry laundry in and out of the facility, along with folding laundry when requested. Customers were also

invited to enjoy free coffee, donuts and breakfast breads while they were waiting. This was a wonderful morning of sharing God’s love and meeting the neighbors!

In two hours, the group did approximately 57 loads of laundry and met at least 16 different individuals or families. They look forward to doing “Loads of Love” again in the future, as Memorial’s vision is “to be Christ-like to each other and to be Christ’s hands and feet to the world.



# g Mission

## “Jr Chefs” Learning Basic Skills with South Bend FBC



An innovative program that teaches middle-schoolers basic cooking skills is demonstrating a path to community service for South Bend FBC.

Pastor Diana Thompson said the program helps children be more self-reliant and helpful in their homes. She hopes the program will provide an example for other churches and community organizations and be embraced by local governmental entities.

It began with a conversation that Beckie Hernandez had at a PTA meeting with the principal of her son's school. He related the concerns of a student who said just before a long school break that, although there was food in the house, with both parents at work, there was no one to cook it. How could he feed his younger brothers and sisters?

She was led to begin the program titled “Junior Chefs”, which teaches cooking lessons to a small group of middle school students in

six weekly installments. At the beginning of the six week course, each child receives a complete kit for home, which includes a “hotplate” electric burner, a skillet, and a set of utensils. Each “Junior Chef” gets paired up with a “Senior Chef” for the six week period. At first, almost all were from the South Bend FBC congregation, but now over half are from the community or from other congregations. “Our hope is that other churches in the city will pick this up and start it in their middle school,” Pastor Thompson said.

Teachers select and nominate the students, who must get their parent's permission. The after-school program provides for 14 students for each six-week session. The school provides a bus, so the students can ride home afterwards.

Each week, the students are taught different recipes and learn a different skill, such as using a sharp knife, working safely with raw chicken, or general kitchen safety.

The classes are held in the old high school home-ec room. “Each week, we teach them and they actually cook it here and we all sit down and eat together,” Pastor Thompson said. “They get to take home whatever leftovers they have, but they also get to take home groceries to make that recipe again at home for their family.”

All the meals are one-pot meals that can be made at home with the equipment provided.

They learn to cook bacon and eggs with French toast; rice with veggies and chicken; fajitas, and have a chili cook-off where they sample and rate each other's

results. During the last week, they learn how to make pizza and cookies in a skillet on the stovetop. As the recipes call for certain spices, students receive a jar of that spice.

The children love it and want to do it more than one day a week. Some show a real aptitude and could be bound for careers in the culinary arts.

The congregation has funded “Junior Chefs” for the first couple of sessions, and Hernandez is applying for grants and other funding sources. “We hope that it will become a community project and not just a project of South Bend FBC,” Pastor Thompson said.



## COMING EVENTS

### APRIL

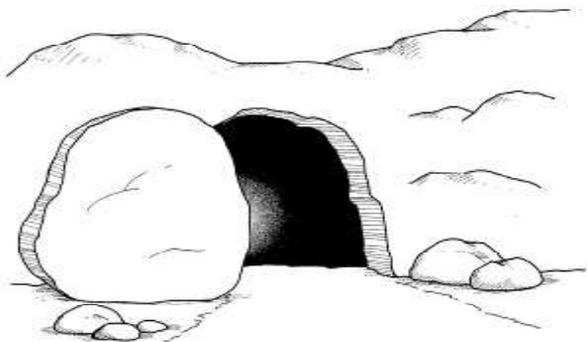
- 4 - CLI - Greenwood - Zoom
- 12 - Easter Sunday
- 14 - Region Staff Mtg
- 18 - CLI - Greenwood - Zoom
- 25 - CLI - Westport
- 25 - CLI - Greenwood - Zoom

### MAY

- 2 - CLI - Greenwood - Zoom
- 12 - Region Staff Mtg
- 16 - CLI - Greenwood - Zoom
- 16 - CLI - Westport
- 30 - CLI - Greenwood - Zoom
- 30 - CLI - Westport

### JUNE

- 6 - CLI - Greenwood - Zoom
- 9 - Region Staff Mtg
- 12-13 - ABW Summer Conference
- 13 - CLI - Westport
- 13 - CLI - Greenwood - Zoom



*He is not here; he has risen,  
just as he said. Come and see  
the place where he lay.*

**Matthew 28:6**