



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

BECKY SEPTOSKI & JEFF TRYON, EDITORS - VOL 21 NO. 2 - APRIL/MAY/JUNE 2021

A WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE SEARCH COMMITTEE CHAIR

The current ABC-IN/KY Executive Minister, Rev. Sooz Whitten Ford, will retire as of September 1, 2021. She, and the leadership that she has provided for this great region will be missed.

Now begins the task of discerning who will be called as the next Executive Minister. The Executive Minister Search Committee began its work on February 21, 2021. The committee consists of eight members with the assistance of Dr. C. Jeff Woods, Interim General Secretary ABCUSA. The input of the region is a vital part of the selection

process. Through surveys, listening sessions, regional staff input and other forums the committee are listening and thankful for participation of the region.

Please pray for the committee as they seek God's will in this choice. Please pray for the next Executive Minister who is even now being prepared to take up this role of leadership. The committee can feel the prayers of support and they are thankful for them.

Karen Wells Horsman
Chair, Executive
Search Committee

"CAMP IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER"

"Camp is just around the corner!" – You've heard that phrase from our camp ministries for almost a century. Beginning in August of 2019, that "corner" has been our longest journey ever.

We are thrilled to announce our ABC-IN/KY camp ministries at Camp Tippy and Camp Indian Creek will be offering in-person camping this season. With hopeful expectation, campers and volunteers may return to their "second home" this summer, as our camps hope to navigate our way beyond the pandemic season.

Tippy will be offering three opportunities for family retreat weekends during the month of June. Junior and senior high camp sessions are planned for July. Tippy will also open the beach area to the public throughout the month of June. (Full schedule at camptippy.org)

Indian Creek will offer abbreviated camp sessions for 2nd grade – 2021 graduates throughout the month of July. Each session will last 3-4 days and will have limited spots available. Retreat packages of 3 to 4 days each are being

offered throughout the month of June to provide additional options for churches or youth groups. (Full schedule at campindiancreek.com)

God continues to use camp ministries as a way for people of all ages to encounter Jesus Christ within the beauty of nature, often far removed from their home settings. In order to provide those facilities and opportunities, the two IN/KY camps, as well as Southeastern Baptist Camp in Westport, need assistance as they prepare for yet another unusual season. Each camp will be taking additional steps to provide a safe environment for all who participate. Churches, leaders, camp families, and camp alumni are encouraged to donate supplies, time, or financial gifts, for what is anticipated to be a higher cost season.

Please take a moment to reach out to each camp director to offer a word of encouragement and prayer. Social media and websites for each camp provide the latest needs, news and events taking place. Check back often as, "Camp is just around the corner!"



imagine

American Baptist Churches USA
BIENNIAL MISSION SUMMIT

An Online Experience | June 24-26, 2021

For complete details regarding the Biennial
Mission Summit and registration and go to:
www.americanbaptists2021.com



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

GO!

We have probably all laughed when someone reminds us of the famous seven last words of the church, "We've never done it that way before!" It's humorous because we recognize the reality that churches, including our own, resist change. We are also aware that without change and transformation organizations and organisms cease to exist. During this pandemic season, I have marveled at and been encouraged by the ways pastors and church leaders have led their congregations. They have adapted and changed with remarkable focus, even in the midst of ever-changing realities.

I don't believe for a moment that God caused the worldwide outbreak of COVID-19. I do believe that this season has presented believers with incredible opportunities to

respond to rapid, discontinuous change. I also believe that God is using what we have learned, preparing us for the journey ahead.

More recently, I have become convinced that the four deadliest words of the church for now are, "Getting back to normal." Like you, I have a strong desire to gather with other believers in a familiar place and go about our life tasks unhindered by the threat of disease. I long for the day when we can be together without the barriers of masks and physical space, serving side by side even as we offer praise to our amazing Creator in all the ways in which we are accustomed. Even as I long for familiar spaces and routines, I am convinced that things will not be the same. We may only cautiously share space with others for some time to come, aware that our mere proximity might still be dangerous. We will miss people. Some have passed from this life in the time since we last were able to be together. Others will remain too frightened to venture into common places and yet others may choose to never return for any number of reasons.

While we have been coping with unprecedented change and struggling mightily with feelings of fear, loss, anxiety, depression, grief and uncertainty (to name just a few), God has remained steadfastly present with us every step of the way, drawing us ever

closer. The Psalmist reminds us of God's care and presence, "You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle" (Psalm 56:8) and "For you have been a fortress for me and a refuge in the day of my distress" (Psalm 59:16b). Perhaps like me, you are aware that God's presence is often strongly experienced in the midst of the most tumultuous times of our lives. It is precisely in such troublesome seasons in which God has usually called me to something new. While the warm coziness of "getting back to normal" does indeed tempt me, I am aware that the experience of the abnormal in my life is God's preparation for moving me into a new normal, and often with one word, "Go!"

No one goes back to normal following an encounter with The Divine. Abram and company traveled from Ur towards Canaan with his father, but they settled in Haran – until God spoke to Abram. "Go from your country...to the land I will show you...So Abram went, as the Lord had told him, ..." and so begins the unfolding story in Genesis 12. Later, the writer of Hebrews summarized Abraham's journey, "By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called...and he set out, not knowing where he was going" (Hebrews 11:8).

Centuries later, Isaiah encountered the Lord, "...I saw the Lord...Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying,

'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I; send me!'" (Isaiah 6:1-8) The very next word that Isaiah hears is, "Go!" (6:9).

Luke records an amazing encounter between two disciples and the Resurrected Christ (24:13-35). "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking with us on the road...?" Luke continues, "That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem..."

Scripture bears the testimonies of our forebearers in faith, who were moved by God from familiar (i.e. "normal") places and spaces into unfamiliar territory and experiences. The end result is always that they were moved (or called to go) to a new place as changed people with a new task or vision before them. God's people on mission.

How have we experienced the peace and presence of God during the most recent 14 months? Quoting a well-known hymn, how has God provided, "strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow?" How is God calling our churches and region forward, using the learnings and insights from our pandemic experiences, into the new reality before us? My hope and prayer is that we are discovering renewed motivation to serve our communities, towns, cities, counties and our world in the name of Jesus, as we are Together On God's Abundant Journey.

2021 OBSERVER ARTICLE SUBMISSION DEADLINES

SUMMER ISSUE (July, Aug., Sept.) - Friday, June 11
FALL ISSUE (Oct., Nov., Dec.) - Friday, September 10
WINTER ISSUE (Jan., Feb., Mar. 2022) - Fri., December 3

Resource Leadership Conference

May 20-21, 2021

First Baptist Church at Savoy

Savoy, IL

Conference Fee: \$40.00

To register, call: 217-726-7366

BECKY SEPTOSKI RETIRING

The Region of Indiana & Kentucky has been supremely blessed to have Becky Septoski serving in the Region office for fourteen years. Her servant's heart has been a great source of blessing to the Lord, the Region staff, area regional pastors and the many churches she has served wholeheartedly.

If you have had the pleasure of visiting our Region Office, it is likely Becky's smile and warm greeting that welcomed you into the office.

Becky plans to retire this summer at the end of July!

While we will miss her terribly, we celebrate with her, her husband Pete and her family during this very special time in her life. Becky plans to spend more time with her family. In addition to that precious family time, she will spend time doing some of the things she enjoys: gardening (both in her vegetable garden and her flower gardens), painting & drawing, and volunteering (hopefully at one of our local hospitals). Please join us



in thanking and celebrating Becky's service to the Lord by helping us to shower her with cards as she steps out on this exciting journey!

You may send your cards to the Region office at:

Becky Septoski
65 Airport Pkwy Suite 120
Greenwood, IN 46143

*Please begin sending your cards at your earliest convenience so that Becky is sure to receive your well wishes.

All greetings should be at the Region office before July 15 to assure Becky receives your congratulatory messages of celebration.

DISCOVER MINISTRY WITH MAYRA GIOVANETTI & CARLOS BONILLA

The short-term mission office at International Ministries is extending an invitation to a virtual visit with Mayra Giovanetti and Carlos Bonilla.

This is a one day, 75-minute virtual mission trip to Colombia to experience and learn about the mission work taking place with two of IM's Global Servants.

This particular Virtual Visit will be offered in English and in Spanish on Wednesday March 31st (English) and Wednesday April 14th (Spanish), from 11am -12:15pm ET.

If you or anyone you know is interested, please go to the link below for more information and steps to register for this event.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Find more information: <https://www.internationalministries.org/discover-ministry-with-mayra-giovanetti-carlos-bonilla/>

2021 SUMMER CAMP SCHEDULES

Camp Tippy Schedule

Open Beach 1pm - 4pm
COST: \$5.00 per person per day
June 7 - 10 June 14 - 17
June 21 - 24 July 11 - 17
July 26 - 29

Family Camps 7 pm Thursday - 11 am Sunday

COST: 2 & under: free
3-4 year olds: \$20 per day
5-adults - \$45 per day
June 10 - 13 June 17 - 20 June 24 - 27

Sr High Camp

July 4 - 10 Grades 9 - 12 COST: \$275.00

Challenge Camp

July 18 - 24 Grades 6- 8 Cost: \$275.00



Indian Creek Schedule

Discovery July 4 - 7
COST: \$160.00
Grades 2 - 4

Girls Camp July 8 - 11
COST: \$175.00
Grades 5 - 6

Boys Camp July 12 - 15
COST: \$175
Grades 5 - 6

Senior High July 16 - 21
COST: \$270
Grades 10 - 2021 grads

Focus Camp July 22 - 25
COST: \$250
Grades 7 - 9

Challenge Camp July 26 - 29
COST: \$250
Grades 6 - 8

EQUIPPING LEADERS

A CLI TESTIMONY OF GOD'S PROMISE TO PREPARE THE WAY

An intentional effort in the Fall of 2019 went into using Zoom to expand options students would have to participate in the CLI experience. The advantages of adding the option to participate virtually were obvious...most importantly, it would eliminate geographic & mobility barriers, opening the CLI experience to a wider number of Christians who otherwise would not be able to participate. Those involved in implementing the Zoom option of participation never imagined how God was preparing CLI for what was coming in 2020!

The effort began with asking Phyllis Goodyear, a veteran CLI Instructor and retired Region Minister, to create references to prepare and assist instructors in working with students participating with Zoom, along with references for students who would choose to participate virtually. As individuals responded to registering for the "Zoom option of participation", two types of brief orientation sessions carried out

In the beginning, 3 students new to CLI participated individually via Zoom and a small group of 4 participated from their church via a Zoom connection. God had prepared a way for CLI to keep program students on track by working in the details and through many people for a rather abrupt transition from classes primarily meeting in person with a few students participating by Zoom, to a completely virtual class experience. Thankfully, 100% of those program students on track to complete a program in 2020 and 2021 have had access to classes they

were scheduled to experience...a testimony of God's promise in Deuteronomy 31:8..."And the Lord, He is the one who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed."

For those who are not familiar with "CLI" (Church Leadership Institute), the program is one of the many initiatives made possible by our family of ABC churches supporting ABC mission through gifts to United Missions, America for Christ, Region Offerings and to CLI directly.

Of those who choose to earn credit for classes they participate in, most choose to complete their credentials in both Christian Leadership and Ministry Studies after getting a taste of the knowledge, resources, fellowship and support the CLI experience brings. It is not required for participants to commit to a specific program nor to earn credit. There are individuals who participate in CLI for enrichment, and yet, others who audit class sessions for a lesser fee and choosing not to earn credit. CLI also welcomes participants from any Christian denomination as well. Instructors are individuals from our American Baptist family who are committed to an active relationship with ABC ministries in our Region. CLI instructors are very qualified to teach, many of them holding doctorate degrees, and each is committed to helping students grow. For more information about CLI, please contact Jennifer Greene (317-635-3552 x 221; jennifergreene@abc-indiana.org) or visit our website (abc-indiana.org) and type "Church Leadership Institute" in the search box.



"A ministry of American Baptist Churches of Indiana & Kentucky, in cooperation with ABC-Greater Indianapolis, growing, equipping and enriching Christians for ministry in their home churches, communities and associations."

CLI GRADS HONORED 2020 STYLE!



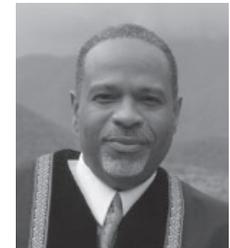
Irina Sorrels - CCL/DPS



Doug Krieger - CCL



Rod Asher- CCL/DPS



Doug Gray- CCL/DPS



John Hart- CCL/DPS

On December 12, 2020, a first-time ever virtual event was held to celebrate the accomplishments of the latest group of CLI students completing programs.

A collection of ABC-IN/KY Staff, CLI instructors, alumni, classmates, along with pastors, family and friends enjoyed the privilege of coming together, using Zoom to provide a tribute the 2020 graduates will remember.

The tribute included prayer, pre-recorded messages of

each graduate sharing scripture and reflecting on their CLI experience. a litany written by a CLI student during one of the CLI Introduction to Worship classes, ministry of music provided by LeShon Gray singing, "Oceans (Where Feet May Fail)," and Rev. Mark Sorrels singing, "People Need the Lord".

There were also very brief pre-recorded messages from more than 20 of those instructors and staff that have invested into those honored.

EMPOWERING CHURCHES

PLAINFIELD FBC CALLS JOHN MARSHALL AS SENIOR PASTOR



L-R: Rev. Soozie Ford, Luanne & Rev. John Marshall, Rev. Mark Thompson

Plainfield FBC welcomed Rev. John Marshall as the new senior pastor on Sunday, March 14, 2021. Rev. Soozie Ford and Rev. Mark Thompson were present for the installation of Pastor John. Rev. Ford challenged the congregation to new ideas and ministries, while Rev. Thompson provided prayers of encouragement for the Marshalls and the church. The Marshalls were welcomed with an overflowing box of welcome notes and cards.

For the past 15 years, Marshall served as senior pastor of City Park Church in Casper, Wyoming. With over 30 years of ministry experience, John comes with a diverse background, having served as a hospital chaplain, youth pastor, and as a missionary to Brazil, South America, where he was

actively involved in recruiting, training, and mobilizing core leadership for a church plant there. Pastor John, and his wife Luanne, are excited about moving to Plainfield, getting acquainted with the Hendricks County area, and beginning their ministry here. The Marshalls have family in the Midwest and are grateful to be closer to them.

On March 7, 2021, the church showed its love and appreciation for interim pastor Dr. David Hinson who served for 15 months. Dr. Hinson led the church through its pandemic response and provided excellent guidance during the interim period.

Plainfield FBC is grateful for God's leading over the interim period and very excited for their new season with the Marshalls.

COLUMBUS FBC SUPPORTS LOCAL FOOD PANTRY

Each January, Columbus FBC collects an offering for Love Chapel, the local food pantry. The mission team, led by Cliff Putterill, arranges with the food pantry and the local Aldi to go in February and purchase food that has been requested. Even though the church was not meeting in person for worship, the congregation gave over \$6,000, which enabled the team to purchase 7,000 pounds of food including spaghetti and sauce, mac and cheese, canned fruit and vegetables. On a very cold Saturday in February, a group of approximately 25 volunteers helped transport the food from Aldi to Love Chapel. There were seven trucks, several SUV's and cars to transport the food. When the trucks and other vehicles arrived at the Love Chapel warehouse, additional volunteers from the church were there to help unload the food and stack it. Cliff, the team leader, shoveled snow so those assisting could reach the loading dock easier. It took a little less than two hours



to load, transport and unload the food.

Love Chapel is an umbrella center that includes the food pantry. Volunteers assist the clients in the store to obtain what is needed for their families. Love Chapel also provides an overnight homeless shelter for single men and women, as well as, transitional housing for families with children. Love Chapel is supported by the Ecumenical assembly made of member churches. Columbus FBC has approximately 20 folks who volunteer in a variety of areas for Love Chapel. They also have another 20-30 volunteers who assist with particular tasks such as, making and serving hot meals for clients, the event of stocking the pantry, the 5K race/walk in the fall, and packing Christmas boxes.

A DREAM IS REALIZED FOR SALEM FBC



Salem FBC is well on its way toward the completion of a 70-year-old dream. The Fellowship Hall/Community Center is designed for concerts, meetings, conventions, weddings, and more. The center

seat 300 at round tables or 600 theatre style with professional lighting and sound. Salem FBC is excited to see how God will touch the community with this incredible outreach resource!

REGION MINISTERIAL STAFF

Rev. Soozie Whitten Ford, Executive Minister - sooziford@abc-indiana.org
 Bruce Cochran, Region Minister - brucecochran@abc-indiana.org
 Dan Chadwick, Region Minister - danchadwick@abc-indiana.org
 Jaime Flores, Latino Ministries Strategist - jaimeflores@abc-indiana.org
 Mark Thompson, Region Minister - markthompson@abc-indiana.org

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

BLOOMFIELD FBC SERVES AS VACCINE SITE



In early January 2021, when the Greene County Health Department (GCHD) needed a facility to administer a significantly larger volume of inoculations beyond what their facility was capable of handling, Bloomfield FBC saw it as an opportunity to serve the Greene County community to help save lives and help end the pandemic.

The FBC Fellowship Hall, adjacent rooms, and parking were well suited to the volume of doses that GCHD needed to deliver. The clinic became operational in late January, delivering up to 150 doses daily, six days a week.

Greene County is a small rural community with limited health department staffing, so a team of 20+ volunteers, including doctors, pharmacists, and nurses from the community came together to serve Greene County and surrounding communities.

It is a blessing for Bloomfield FBC to serve and bring hope to the community. It was a humbling experience to hear the comments of those receiving their vaccinations and to see the joy and relief of people, hearing comments such as "Thank you so much, I can live again! I can see my grandkids again!".

APRIL

**17 - CLI - via Zoom
24 - CLI - via Zoom**

MAY

**1 - CLI - via Zoom
8 - CLI - via Zoom
15 - CLI - via Zoom
20-21 - Resource Leadership
Conference**

JUNE

**5 - CLI - via Zoom
12 - CLI - via Zoom
19 - CLI - via Zoom**