



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. 3 - JULY/AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2021

**THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY
 OF THE REVEREND DR. WILLIAM J. HELM,
 EDITOR OF THE BAPTIST OBSERVER, 1963-1991**



The Rev. Dr. William J. Helm made the final transition from this life into the presence of his Savior, on March 31, 2021. Born in Maplewood, Missouri, Bill studied at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago and at Dubuque University, Iowa and began serving his first church in Cuba City, Wisconsin while attending school. He later served Cannelton First Baptist

while pursuing the M.Div. degree at Southern Seminary. He then planted Church of the Master on the west side of Indianapolis while earning a second master's degree from Butler University. Franklin College later awarded him an honorary doctorate degree.

While serving Church of the Master, Bill became the

associate editor of The Baptist Observer, oldest continually published religious newspaper in Indiana. In 1963, he joined the staff of The Indiana Baptist Convention as an area minister, director of New Church Development, and served as Associate Executive Minister before his retirement in 1991.

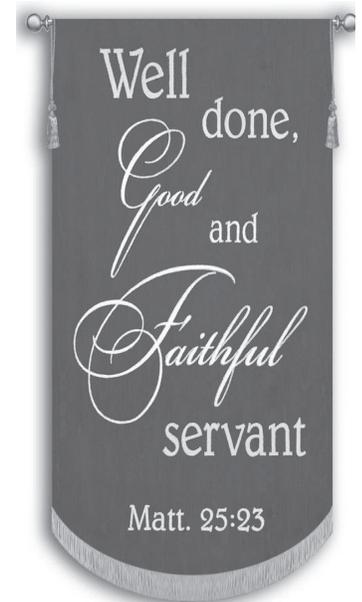
Bill was a uniquely gifted Christ-like servant leader, known for his scholarly intellect, inquisitive mind and his kind and gentle spirit. Pastors in the region experienced him as a deeply caring and compassionate mentor and a strong encourager.

Bill is survived by Kathy, his loving wife and ministry partner of 72 years. Together they raised three children: Claudia, David and Daniel, and celebrated the gift of five grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren, all of whom are profoundly grateful for his love and the example of his faithful, well-lived life.

Leppert Mortuaries (Nora, IN) is in charge of arrangements. A memorial service

will be held at a later date.

The Indiana Baptist Convention is pleased to dedicate this issue of The Baptist Observer to the memory of Bill Helm, with gratitude for his lifelong commitment to Jesus Christ and his faithful service to this region and as The Baptist Observer editor for almost 30 years.





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

FINAL REFLECTIONS

The date of my retirement (September 1) is quickly drawing near and some of you have asked about my/our plans. We will remain in Johnson County for the foreseeable future as Homer continues to serve the congregation of Franklin FBC. I have several hobbies and projects towards which I anticipate turning my attention and, as soon as we are able, I look forward to spending some extended time with family and friends. In October, we are planning to combine a trip to Sedona and the Grand Canyon with Homer's fall board meeting at Rainbow Acres and, in November, I will conclude my service as Vice Chair of the Board of Directors of Green Lake Conference Center. Finally, I have been given the opportunity to consider serving among a couple of our American Baptist partner ministries and, for now, have agreed to one such position which will be announced at some point this fall.

Approaching retirement as a significant milestone is both exciting and challenging! These two things I know: 1) I will have plenty to keep me occupied, and 2) I am retiring from a position but not from ministry. I am excited to see what God has in store for both of us in this next chapter of our lives and I remain challenged to keep my eyes open for the opportunities to serve those whom God places right in front of me every single day.

I am keenly aware that these are the final words I will offer to you via The Observer. Paul's words to the church at Philippi provide a framework for a few of my thoughts.

"I thank my God every time I remember you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now." (1:3) One of the best things about regional ministry is the opportunity to see what God is doing in many places, through the significant ways churches are sharing the gospel and serving those in need – whether locally or in some far-flung place across the globe. I have been stretched to use and develop my gifts and I have been challenged to continually draw closer to God because you have invited me to share with you in many of these experiences. I have had the privilege of serving alongside amazing staff colleagues, all of whom have brought and continue to bring their best selves to our ministry together.

"I am confident of this, that the one who began a

good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ." (1:6). These have not necessarily been easy years. Even before 2020, most of us were well aware that the rapidly changing context(s) of each of our ministry settings demanded new approaches, new skills and new networks in order to faithfully communicate the gospel and engage with those who were (and are) far from God. Among other things, the pandemic forced all of us to rapidly pivot and adapt to new realities and, in some cases doing what we knew we should have been doing all along. The strength and resilience of our leaders and churches has been gratifying to watch. Through all of this, God is not surprised. I am convinced that these experiences and the ways in which we experiment, large and small, will continue to shape and form us as individual believers and as local communities of faith. God's unfolding work in our lives as we engage in mission and ministry and encourage the leaders and churches in our region has been gratifying to observe.

"Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus..." (2:3-5) In our fractured, sinful, divisive North American world, we sometimes succumb to the notion that

our thoughts, experiences and realities are right or, even worse, that we speak and act on behalf of God. While I hope that we have dwelt in scripture and in the presence of the Creator enough that our thoughts and actions do reflect the sacrificial love of our Savior, I am under no illusions that this is always the case. My hope is that we will lean into the Spirit so deeply that the ways we speak and act as individuals and as communities of faith will, without question, embody and reflect The One who calls us by name and has given us amazing gifts for serving the world.

Finally, as an American Baptist minister, I have always tried to align my life with our Code of Ethics which (the proposed new wording) states, in part: "I will, upon my resignation or retirement discontinue my ministerial and leadership roles with my former constituents..." Beginning September 2, you will not see me or hear from me in any official capacity. It does not mean, however, that I will not be paying attention, and that I cherish the relationships we have developed. I will continue to pray for you and to care deeply as you move forward in ministry and mission. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to feel welcomed in your midst in this season of my life. I am overwhelmed with gratitude to God for the privilege of serving with you and among you these last 9+ years as we have been **Together on God's Abundant Journey**,

2021 OBSERVER ARTICLE SUBMISSION DEADLINES

FALL ISSUE (Oct., Nov., Dec.) - Friday, September 10
WINTER ISSUE (Jan., Feb., Mar. 2022) - Fri., December 3

WELCOME TO WENDY



Executive Minister, Soozie Ford, recently announced that Wendy J. Shuler will serve as Administrative Manager to the Executive Minister, beginning August 1. Shuler served in various capacities with both Franklin College and Baptist Homes of Indiana, Inc. (now BHI, Inc.) for close to 25 years. These roles provided her the opportunity to work with most every group associated with ABC-IN/KY regional ministry, including, CLI, ABW Ministries and AB Girls, Senior Adults, AB Youth, and Ministers Council. In these capacities she developed knowledge of, and relationships with, churches, pastors, and leaders across the region

that will serve her well in the new position. As an active American Baptist, Shuler has participated in numerous trips to ABC-related mission sites and is a past member of the board for American Baptist Homes and Caring Ministries and for the American Baptist Home Mission Societies. "Wendy Shuler is well known and respected across ABC-IN/KY and the wider ABCUSA family," stated Rev. Soozie Ford. "Her vast knowledge of ABC structure, life and ministry in regional and national contexts will be a wonderful asset to the region and our staff, especially in the upcoming transitional period as ABC-IN/KY looks forward to welcoming a new executive minister. I have known Wendy for many years and am convinced she is the right person, bringing incredible gifts to us for "such a time as this."

Shuler attends Greenwood FBC. In her spare time, she enjoys weaving, hiking, pickle ball and wallyball. She may be reached by phone at the region office, 317-635-3552 (ext. 222) and wendyshuler@abc-indiana.org.

BECKY'S THOUGHTS

As I contemplate my rapidly approaching retirement, I am thinking about the 14+ years I have spent serving with the ABC-IN/KY churches and staff.

I have had the blessing of getting to know and serve with many wonderful people. I won't attempt to name them all, as I'm sure I would miss someone. Suffice it to say, it has been a season of growth, change and love. I appreciate the faithfulness of the churches, leaders and the staff with whom I have had the pleasure of serving.

I am looking forward to this new chapter beginning on July 30; however, I will deeply miss the teamwork and laughter I have shared with the staff over the years. Beautiful friendships have developed and I will continue to treasure those relationships.



I am truly thankful for the support and love I have received from the churches and staff at ABC-IN/KY. It has been an honor to serve this region and I thank you for the opportunity that was given to me back in June of 2007. "Time flies when you're having fun!"

I will continue to pray that God will bless this region and use it for His glory.

In His Love,
Becky Septoski

Camp Tippy 100th Anniversary Celebration Saturday, September 11

1:00 - 4:00 Activities
4:00 - 7:00 DAN'S Fish Fry

CABINS FOR KIDS \$100 CHALLENGE
It's more than a cabin, it's building for the future!
Please consider giving a gift of \$100
for the construction of new cabins!

6 EMS Lane T52A
North Webster, IN 46555
(574) 834 4184
Rebecca Scott, Camp Director

Young at Heart Camp

Ages 55+

October 22-24

Camp Tippy

Cost: \$80.00



For registration info: (574) 834 4184
or visit website: camptippy.org

EMPOWERING CHURCHES

NEWS FROM VERSAILLES BC

Graduate Recognition

On May 23, 2021, Versailles BC celebrated their high school and college graduates. Pictured below (left to right) are:

Dylan Bowman, Rising Sun HS
Elsa LePotier, Jac-Cen-Del HS
Lindsey Linville, Jac-Cen-Del HS
Carly Zoller, South Ripley HS
Leta Bassett, University of Evanville



ABWM Mission Work

On June 7, the Versailles ABWM made layettes to send to missionaries in Africa. The layettes consisted of a receiving blanket, onesie, gown, hat, booties and mittens. Thirteen layettes were completed. Thanks to all for the donations. Pictured below (left to right) are: Nancy Durham, Cheryl Welch, Shirley Pavey, Lynn Baugh and Brenda Cantrell.



NEW SEASON AT UNIONTOWN BC

Members of Uniontown BC in Jackson County are very excited to begin a "New Season" as things begin to open up in the wake of the pandemic last year. Our Pastor Irvin Bengé and his wife Jill will be celebrating their 12th year shepherding the church. Uniontown BC was established in 1859 and has weathered many storms, like so many other of God's Churches, and God has always guided them through. Over the past 12 years, several members have gone on to be with the Lord and they are greatly missed. The congregation holds true to the same Christian values, Christian character and Christian integrity they believe in. The Lord's faithfulness has given them the ability to make many facility upgrades, including purchasing an acre of ground for more parking, and for future plans. Being financially stable, the church is able to contribute monthly

to a wonderful missionary family in Tanzania along with other outreach ministries. God has kept everyone safe and healthy since the church resumed services in March of this year, and the faith of the congregation in our Heavenly Father has not wavered! With the vaccination being made available, plans are to resume some gospel sings, special fellowship times and ministry outreaches soon.

"We continue to stand on Our Lord's promises and the truth of His Holy Bible. Be encouraged, everyone! Jesus loves you! His love is keeping us all strong and rooted in our trust in Him. Jesus is still saving souls, setting the captives free and binding the brokenhearted. Unless the Lord builds the house they who build it labor in vain. We have all come too far to turn back now and great things are ahead for all of God's Houses of Worship."

PENTECOST AT COLUMBUS FBC

Columbus FBC celebrated Pentecost with a sea of red and an outdoor service. Larry Calfee shared a children's moment with a story from Galatians 5:22-23 referring to the fruit of the spirit. He then led the children and congregation in a



song accompanying with the autoharp. For the first time since March of 2020, the choir led worship with an anthem directed by Pastor Daniel Kane. Dr. Dan Cash brought the message on the Galatians passage. Many people came and sat in their chairs or their cars. It was a meaningful experience.

EXPANDING MISSION

BLUFFTON FBC SUPPORTS EMCC



In March, Bluffton FBC collected food for the Edna Martin Christian Center (EMCC) in Indianapolis. Judy Grove (pictured) initiated this mission effort in her church. For many years Judy has participated and served in leadership with the White Cross ministry of the ABC-IN/KY region. EMCC representatives gladly received these non-perishable food items to restock their food pantry and to use in cooking hot meals for local residents.

THE FOUND IS RECOGNIZED

Members of "The Found," an outreach of the Baptist Student Foundation at Purdue University, were recently recognized for their work with students during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Found and its Found staff received a Good Samaritan Award for the work they have done.

In a January letter, State Representative Chris Campbell praised the students and staff as "Covid Heroes."

"The Covid 19 pandemic has tried to get the best of us, but, in reality, it has brought the best out of people like you," Campbell wrote. "The essential work you offer requires a lot of sacrifice and I will be forever grateful for your daily perseverance. It has not been easy to navigate



during these unprecedented times, but you have showed us all that it is possible with a little bit of faith and compassion."

He thanked students for their bravery, patience and devotion in putting their health on the line and risking their lives for the benefit of the community. Along with the letter, the staff were presented with thank-you cards, and a floral arrangement as a token of appreciation.

SEWING PROJECT ASSISTS AFRICA & SAUDI ARABIA



Brooke Richison, a senior at Huntington University, is leading a sewing initiative to make reusable feminine hygiene products to send to Africa and Saudi Arabia. With the support of Warren FBC and Huntington University, her project is off to an outstanding start.

Brooke holds weekly meetings at Peggy Bush's sewing shed, where many members from Warren FBC, Huntington University and Huntington North High School students meet for fellowship, sewing and, of course, food.

During these meetings this phenomenal group of people is cutting, sewing, trimming

and packaging kits of reusable feminine products, bars of soap and other necessities to send to the young women of Africa and Saudi Arabia who cannot afford to purchase these products.

If you are interested in getting involved, they are always looking for sewing volunteers, donations of fabric, individually wrapped bars of soap or monetary donations. If you feel led to donate, please send items to:

Warren First Baptist Church
727 N. Wayne St.
Warren, IN 46792
Phone: (260) 375 2811
Office Hours: M-F 8am-1pm

WORK DAY AT SOUTHEASTERN

Fifteen Columbus FBC volunteers, led by Cliff Putturrill, did a variety of projects at Southeastern Youth Camp, including pressure washing of showers and putt-putt course, logsplitting, stacking firewood, landscaping and cabin cleaning in preparation for summer camps.



EQUIPPING LEADERS

EDWARDSPORT CALLS NEW PASTOR

On March 1, 2021, Edwardsport FBC welcomed Brady New as the senior pastor. Brady and wife Kristen have two children, Eli and Evangeline. Brady is studying toward his Master's of Divinity degree from Indianapolis Theological Seminary. He is scheduled to graduate in the Spring of 2022.

Brady is excited to begin his first pastorate and is grateful that God would consider him for such a noble task. He brings with him experience from the mission field, as he has led trips to Ghana through Praying Pelican Missions. He also has experience in youth ministry, as he served as youth pastor at Bedford FBC for three years.



INVITATION TO VISIT COLLEGE

Franklin College was founded in 1834 by American Baptist pioneers and continues a voluntary relationship with the denomination. From its earliest days, Franklin has offered excellent education and allows students to thrive through intimate class sizes, individual mentorship and focused attention. Students are challenged to be self-motivated, lifelong learners

who serve and lead in the community. Franklin has a strong religious life program that encourages discipleship and spiritual growth through service and learning.

Students and parents, as well as senior high youth groups, are welcome for campus visits. To learn more, please contact Rev. Rebecca H. May, RHorstman-May@franklincollege.edu.

REGION MINISTERIAL STAFF

Rev. Sooz 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

BREAD FOR THE WORLD

Bread for the World is a collective Christian voice urging our nation's decision makers to end hunger at home and abroad. According to their latest data, there are over 270 million people worldwide without adequate food. One in four children in the United States is at risk of food insecurity. One important way that you can make a difference is through participation in the Bread for the World offering of letters to the US Congress. To learn more about the work of Bread, please visit www.bread.org/ol.

For a direct link to write a letter to your congress person, visit www.bread.org/go. To use this form, you will need your nine-digit zip code.



breadfortheworld
HAVE FAITH. END HUNGER.

It is recommended that you customize the form letter in order for it to get the attention of your congressional office.

If you would like to participate but have questions, feel free to email RebeccaHorstmanMay@gmail.com.

Your participation in this effort can make a difference.

CONTINUING ED OPPORTUNITY FOR CHURCHES

The ABC-IN/KY region is pleased to sponsor a special discount of 25-40% off a church subscription to *Seminary Now*. Don't miss this special opportunity!

Developed by Northern Seminary and other partners, *Seminary Now* is a streaming video platform that brings the best of seminary to your church with a library of short courses on relevant topics.

Learn from teachers like Scot McKnight, David Fitch, Ruth Haley Barton, Derwin Gray, and many more! Visit SeminaryNow.com for a preview of any course.

We think it's a great resource to train your leaders and disciple your church. A church subscription to *Seminary Now* provides:

- continuing education for you
- login for your church's staff and lay leaders to complete certificate tracks
- engaging, relevant content for small groups and Sunday school classes

For more information about the program, contact: info@seminarynow.com.

SEMINARY NOW

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.

UPCOMING PASTOR/STAFF ZOOM CALLS



July 5/6 - Chris Waddle
Caring for Yourself when They are Coming at You!

July 19/20 - Tom Wiles
Ministry as Improvisation

August 2/3 - Tom Wiles 2
Ministry as Improvisation

August 16/17 - Jerry Ingalls
Spiritual Formation and Developing a Rule of Life

August 30/31 - Jerry Ingalls 2
Spiritual Formation and Developing a Rule of Life

UPCOMING SENIOR ADULT DAY AT BEDFORD FBC

Date to be determined
Details to follow

MYANMAR (BURMA) UPDATE

On February 1, military leaders took over the country of Myanmar (Burma) in a coup, declaring that the country was under a one-year state of emergency. Because the recently elected democratic government in Myanmar was not acknowledged, large numbers of people immediately began resisting the military in consistent, peaceful, nonviolent protests all over the country led by the CDM (Civil Disobedience Movement). The effort includes also prayer vigils and staying home from work. Because of the pressure to go back to work, many civil servants have had to go into hiding, including doctors, medical workers, teachers, engineers, and others. Even as they have been in hiding, many have continued their work online to provide free services to their fellow citizens. The result is that many in Myanmar have no income, need assistance and urgent support. Protests have also complicated the fight against the spread of COVID-19 infections.

The Myanmar Baptist Convention (MBC) began in 1813 with the arrival of Ann and Adoniram Judson, the first missionaries to land in Myanmar where they introduced Christianity to the Burmese. Over the centuries, American Baptist Churches has maintained a close relationship and has had over 300 missionaries serving with the MBC in Myanmar in education, theological education, health and wellness, discipleship and evangelism. Due to the political situation in 1962, all the missionaries were expelled; but, in 2011, the country opened up again and our rich relationship continues. The MBC today continues to be a vibrant denomination with over 1.6 million members across 28 language groups spread throughout Myanmar.

ABC-IN/KY is home to eight Myanmar Diaspora (former refugee communities) churches.

The Burma Refugee Commission (BRC), formed by ABC leaders, is meeting often with the Myanmar Diaspora leaders living in the United States. The BRC, including International Ministries leaders, are in frequent contact with leaders of the MBC to learn their needs and hear about the situation on the ground. The BRC continues to advocate with our top political leaders to ask them to intervene and provide humanitarian aid. They hold a time of prayer one time each month with Diaspora leaders in the US and abroad and have collaborated to produce a "Call to Prayer" page on the ABCUSA website. It can be accessed here: <https://www.abc-usa.org/burma-refugee-commission/>.

Your gifts to the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering (OGHS – Myanmar Relief) will allow International Ministries to assist those directly affected by the coup. Funds raised will go to assist those who are in need in Myanmar because of the political turmoil, to assist civil servants and their families who are engaged in the CDM, to assist people who are suffering due to their jobless status, and to help those who cannot afford to pay for medical care, tests, supplies, vitamins, and vaccines related to COVID-19.

Please continue to pray for the people of Myanmar and our brothers and sisters who are part of the Myanmar Baptist Convention. Pray for safety, peace, justice and a positive outcome for what is happening now. Continue to learn more about this unique situation and what you might be able to do in advocacy. Give generously so that we can greatly assist those in need.

JULY

9-10 - ABW Officer Retreat/Summer Conf.
31 - CLI via Zoom

AUGUST

9 or 14 - Nehemiah Leaders Event
11 - Region Staff Meeting
14 - CLI - via Zoom
28 - CLI - via Zoom
29 - Soozie Ford Retirement Party

RETIREMENT CELEBRATION

REV. SOOZI FORD

SUNDAY, AUGUST 29 3-5 PM EST

COLUMBUS FBC - 3300 FAIRLAWN DR COLUMBUS, IN 47203

Light buffet will be served at 3 pm Program will begin at 4 pm

Please RSVP by August 23 to abcin@abc-indiana.org