



Connected in Ministry

Jesus said, ***“Abide in me as I abide in you...because apart from me you can do nothing.”*** - John 15: 4-5

The American Baptist Churches of Indiana and Kentucky Region (ABC-IN/KY) is made up of about 300 congregations who independently provide great ministries. The above verse reminds us that we are *connected* to Jesus; yet, as a Region, we also have chosen to be *connected* to one another to do the ministry and mission Christ calls us to do in our communities and the world. Apart from Christ we can do nothing that is lasting and true!

All that is provided through Region ministry *increases the capacity* to connect our churches to Christ, to one another, and to others beyond our church walls. Our shared ministry is empowered --blessed and multiplied-- when we continue to work *“TOGETHER on God’s Abundant Journey.”*

Region educational offerings like Nehemiah Leadership, Church Leadership Institute (CLI) and the Teaching Church Initiative *supply* bi-vocational pastors and lay leaders with greater tools and resources for service and mission. Pastor gatherings, retreats and regularly-scheduled Zoom calls encourage ministers to approach church work and community outreach in new ways. Region staff members working with churches during times of pastoral transition *energize* congregations to further embody God’s call. Our camps and retreats help *boost* multiple generations to live as disciples of Jesus. Region Biennial gatherings (this year, October 7-8 at Terre Haute First Baptist) bring us together for fellowship, worship, recognitions and continued learning. ***The Observer*** quarterly magazine, ***Observations*** semi-monthly e-newsletter, and Region Facebook page cover events which *transform* lives.

These events, and other ministries, are possible with (and for) *all* our IN/KY churches because of your financial support. Many of our churches financially support this important work throughout the year—and we thank you who do!

If your congregation does *not* financially support Region ministries in an ongoing way, we encourage you to consider taking up a Region Offering (annually), perhaps during July/August.

Whichever way it is that you decide to support Region ministries, the enclosed materials will help you tell the story of the many ways the Region *connects* us with one another.

Consider this letter and information also *an invitation* for your church’s pastor/s and laypersons to get “plugged in” in additional ways as part of ABC-IN/KY in 2022!

TOGETHER in Christ,

Rev. Mark Thompson, Executive Minister



Connected: Supply. Energize. Boost. Transform!

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Promotion for American Baptist Churches of IN/KY Region Ministries

Please use the suggestions below in any way that would be helpful to your congregation as you promote ABC-IN/KY Region ministries. Each congregation is unique, and you will know what will work best for your church. Several resources have been developed to help you share the story of the ministries of the Region. If you have questions, contact the Region office at abcin@abc-indiana.org or call 317-635-3552.

Whatever you choose to do, be sure to take some time over *several* Sundays to share about Region ministries. You may utilize the testimonies, sermon starters and other resources included here to help tell the story. Or perhaps there are those in your congregation who have participated in Church Leadership Institute (CLI), a camp/retreat, youth ministry or some other aspect of Region life-- these persons could share testimonies of how Region ministry has impacted their lives!

So that the Region Offering doesn't conflict with other major offerings, we suggest you consider receiving it during the months of July/August. Of course, you may choose to receive it in the time that works best for your congregation.

Resources included are the following:

- ♦ A flyer of the various Region ministries (use as a bulletin insert or poster)
- ♦ Personal testimonies (use as bulletin inserts, copy and cut)
- ♦ Sermon starters (for pastor if helpful)
- ♦ Clip art (use in newsletters and for projected announcements)
- ♦ PowerPoint timed slides about the Region and Region Offering.



Get Plugged In!

Suggestions for promoting the Region Offering:

1. After several weeks of telling the story of Region ministries, dedicate a time to receive the offering. You may choose to have a specified (*one-time*) offering, or you may wish to use "Special Offering" envelopes that your church purchases through a third-party supplier.
2. During the weeks that you are telling the story of Region ministries, you could place the envelopes in the pews so that persons could give at any time during the promotion period.
3. Envelopes could also be included in any church newsletters that you mail out.
4. Another option is to include the Region Offering as a line item in your church's budget.
5. If your church offers online giving, you may need to instruct persons how to designate their offering for the Region (or individuals may go directly to www.abc-indiana.org to "Support Us").
6. Invite your Region minister to speak on the Sunday that you will receive the Region Offering. (Be sure to schedule in advance since each Region minister covers nearly 100 churches).
7. Hold a special fundraising event such as an ice cream social or cookout dedicating the proceeds to the Region Offering. You might use this event to reach out in your community and connect with new persons! Take pictures, and we will try to share them through Region communications.

Whatever you do, we would love to hear about it! Share with us your stories of the impact that the Region and Region Offering have had on your congregation.



Sermon Starters

I Jn 1:1-9 Title: *A Community for the Message*

Thesis: People are connected in their need for grace

Objective: To challenge people to see their common connection in Christ

Introduction: People come in all shapes and sizes.

Like people, churches come in all shapes and sizes.

But in spite of the differences, we have fellowship with one another. What is the basis of this connection?

I. Scripture connects us to one another

A. This is illustrated all through the Bible

Old Testament: personalities are identified by their connections (father, family, tribe...)

New Testament: "We" is a common phrase in 1 John

B. The text speaks of *the things we have in common*

-common revelation...what God has shown, revealed to us...what we've discovered about Him

-common joy: that which anchors our soul...guides us and gives us meaning

-common abode: in the light, as opposed to darkness

II. Our need connects us to one another

A. The passage points out we ALL have a sinful nature

B. The passage calls upon ALL of us to confess

III. God's response to our need connects us to one another

A. The faithfulness of God binds us together

B. The justice of God binds us together

C. The gospel of Jesus Christ binds us together

-we don't grovel together in our sin, we revel together in the grace of God

Conclusion: Fellowship exists between believers because of Jesus. The same can be said for churches. Just as there are no "Lone Ranger Christians," so there are no "Lone Ranger churches." As a member church in the American Baptist Churches of Indiana and Kentucky, our fellowship and ministry involve a heritage that connects us with our sister churches.

Mk 1:1-8 Title: *A Different Difference*

Thesis: God uses us to connect to the world

Objective: To challenge congregation to reach out to others

Introduction: What difference do we make?

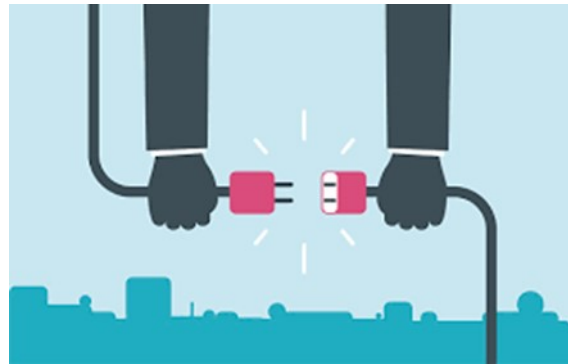
Consider John the Baptist. He was an odd sort of guy, but he made a difference.

- I. Living in the wilderness is a common Biblical theme
 - A. Biblical examples of wilderness living
 - Israel wandered in the wilderness 40 years
 - Jesus went into the wilderness to be tempted
 - B. John cries out like a voice in the wilderness
 - It was his calling
 - His calling was to pave the way and then get out of the way
- II. The wilderness calls us to connect, not to isolate
 - A. God's plan for Israel was to be a light to the nations
 - B. John's calling was a precursor of life and mission of Jesus
 - C. The same calling extends to the Church

Conclusion: The calling of those who follow Jesus is always to connect with the world.

That connection happens in all sorts of ways, but the main point is to engage our calling to be an instrument of God to connect others with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Our association with the churches of ABC-IN/KY, our Region, is an effective way to respond to the call to be connected.



Mt 6:19-33 Title: *Reflections of a Test*

Thesis: Giving reflects our love

Objective: To challenge congregation to generous stewardship

Introduction: How we spend our money reflects what we love

Likewise, how we give reflects our love.

Jesus understood that how we handle our treasure indicates what we love.

I. Giving reveals what we care about.

A. Hallmark ad campaign: *When you care enough to give the best.* (Three assumptions)

1. Our product is the best, so use our product.
2. People tend to take the extra time and effort to send cards to those they care about.
3. People who care about others want to give their best to them and don't mind paying a little extra.

B. Jesus challenges us to consider our love from the perspective of this one action: giving.

II. Giving reveals our priorities

A. This differs from point I. Priorities are not the same thing as cares.

1. We can give priority to something and not care about it.
2. Not everyone loves their job, but they still make it a priority.

B. Priorities reveal what we deem is crucial and important.

C. In this context, our priorities determine what we do with life's limited commodities, like wealth.

1. The greatest priorities we have are eternal.
2. Jesus indicates that how we treat temporal things reflects our grasp of the priority of eternal things.

III. Giving reveals our willingness to make sacrifices.

A. We are willing to make sacrifices for our family, so we give to them.

B. We are willing to make sacrifices for our country, so we give to it.

C. We are willing to make sacrifices for our hobbies and interests, so we give.

D. What does our giving to Kingdom work say about our cares and priorities?

1. Giving to the church.
2. Giving to your community.
3. Giving to your family of churches, ABC-IN/KY.

Conclusion: The title of the sermon addresses giving from the perspective of a test

By "test" we mean a measure. What does our giving measure and say about our heart condition?



II Cor 9:6-7 Title: *The Counterintuitive Giver*

Thesis: Generosity is aimed at pleasing God

Objective: To challenge congregation to transform their stewardship

Introduction: "What's in it for me?" is a common question

Often, people do good things, but the motivation is self-centered.

I. Common reasons people give

A. Our church needs to meet the budget

1. First of all, this is a true statement in that every church has expenses.
2. Second, meeting the budget happens when people in the church give.

B. I am blessed when I give.

1. Giving makes us feel good. It touches something deep within and we feel we've fulfilled an obligation.
2. There are verses that support this notion (Lk 6:37-38, Mt 10:42, Pro 19:17)

C. What's wrong with these reasons?

1. We don't meet a budget; we do kingdom ministry. Giving is not an end in itself, but a means to an end.
2. Second, how does seeking a blessing for ourselves line up with the model of Christ's love?

II. The Counterintuitive Principles of Giving

A. God is Owner

1. Materially-speaking, as Creator, God owns all
 - a. Whatever we have is only ours so long as we possess it in life
 - b. It all belonged to someone before us, and will belong to someone after us

B. We are managers.

1. We are responsible for all we have/possess/own. It is entrusted to us.
-illustration: like a school bus driver with a load of children; same with parent and children.
2. If God is owner of all, and God is omnipresent, then everything is holy.
 - a. We are in constant contact with holy things.
 - b. All we handle, health, possessions, relationships, and wealth is a spiritual responsibility.

Conclusion: The concept is to expand our giving to the most impact. Supporting our Region (ABC-IN/KY), is a concrete way for us to act responsibly with that which has been entrusted to us.



Acts 2:41-47 Title: *Together is Who We Are*

Thesis: Our mission is communal

Objective: To challenge congregation to a corporate approach to ministry and stewardship

Introduction: People are never united until there is a cause.

The book of Acts contains the seminal events of the Church.

This story guides our mission and ministry today.

I. The continued steadfastly...

A. ...in doctrine.

1. Christ had taught the apostles.
2. The apostles passed it on
3. Essentially, the church was a learning community

B. ...in fellowship

1. Their common doctrine and faith brought them together. Their unity is not so much a goal, but a result.
2. What did their fellowship look like?
 - a. The breaking of bread
-Communion/the Lord's Supper
 - b. Also, they simply spent time together eating.
 - c. Prayer

II. They embarked on ministry together

- A. Their learning and fellowship laid a foundation for reaching out
- B. They pooled their resources to fulfill their ministry
- C. Their communal ministry produced substantial fruit

III. The story of American Baptists reflects this same pattern

- A. We come together in local congregations to do the ministry to which God calls us.
 1. Each congregation is unique.
 2. Each congregation joins together.
- B. We come together to fellowship
- C. We come together to do mission.
 1. American Baptists are part of mission movement first (in contrast to a denomination).
 2. We pool our resources to do mission beyond our local and national boundaries.
 3. The connection each congregation has to the region makes this possible.

Conclusion: Three directions a church can take with respect to community

1) Ignore it.

-we are all too busy doing our own thing

-no reason to get uptight about the purposes of God for His church because we are pursuing our own agendas.

2) Establish and maintain an unhealthy community

-we are together, but gather around and focus upon the wrong things...

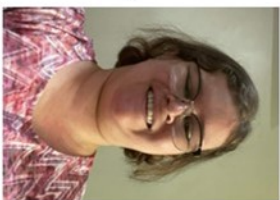
-such as our money...our past...our reputation...competition with other churches

3) A healthy, Christ honoring, kingdom-focused community.

TESTIMONIAL

How the ABC-IN/KY Region and Camp Tippy Have Impacted a Family

"I started going to Camp Tippy in middle school. I went to Music, Art and Drama (MAD) Camp. I felt so accepted and loved. It was the highlight of my summer for many years! Then as I got older I went to Sr. High Camp for a couple of years. But most of my years at camp were spent on staff--like a lot of years, over 10, I think.



My husband has gone to Camp Tippy and served even longer! He has been a lifeguard, a worship leader, and has helped do whatever else is needed.

My family and I love Camp Tippy so much that every time we are in the states we visit/volunteer as much as we can. We first felt called to work with kids while at camp and later went into missions. We met at Camp Tippy. Our son in his younger years spent his summers there.

I could go on and on. We love Camp Tippy and we always will! We hope to serve there again when we get back to the states someday."

Brittany Barr

Missionary
Faith International Academy (FLA)
—Wycliffe Bible Translators



TESTIMONIAL

ABC-IN/KY Region Connections: Professional, Personal, and Generational

"I am proud to say I am part of American Baptist Churches of Indiana and Kentucky. I have spent my entire ministry career as part of ABC-IN/KY, but my connection to the Region is more than simply professional. My family has connected with the Region on a personal level.



Our connection to ABC-IN/KY is generational. There is no greater example of this connection than in our Region's camp ministry. Four generations of Johanningsmeiers have invested time and energy into our camps through repairing and constructing buildings, as well as serving as cabin leaders. We choose to continue supporting the camps because at one time we were campers who experienced life change through this ministry. Now as a parent, I see the life changing experience of camp in my children.

What also really impress me are the ways ABC-IN/KY invests in local congregations. I have been fortunate to participate in our Church Leadership Institute (CLI). This is not a program geared for pastors only! CLI provides a deeper education for *all* levels of ministry. Anyone from Sunday school volunteers to deacons can grow in their ministry through these efficient and effective classes. The local churches have greatly benefited through CLI's investment in church leaders.

I recently graduated from Northern Seminary as part of the ABC-IN/KY Teaching Church Initiative (TCI). This was an incredible experience as our Region partnered with my church and the seminary to invest in me as a pastor and person! Many of my fellow Northern students were impressed with the Region's willingness to connect with pastors on this level. I am proud to have been a part of the initial group of TCI students, and I'm very happy to see *new* students from our Region participate in this program!

The reason I choose to remain connected with ABC-IN/KY is because our Region supports and invests in our local churches, pastors and people. I know whenever I or my church needs anything, we can reach out to ABC-IN/KY for help and support. You can participate in supporting quality ministry in IN/KY when you give to the Region Offering."

Scott Johanningsmeier, Pastor, Elizabeth Baptist Church (Nabb, IN)



TESTIMONIAL

A Wonderful Journey with the ABC-IN/KY Region

"For a long time, having a Spanish-speaking church in southern Indiana was a dream in the minds and hearts of different people. In April 2017, my family and I came to the land of Hoosiers after being contacted by ABC-IN/KY to plant a Hispanic ministry here. After the initial contact, we started to pray seeking God's will. Then I felt the greatest conviction in my life about this calling!



We engaged in this wonderful journey to do God's will, *not* ours. I always remember the passage from Scripture, "*Go from your country, your people and your father's household...*" (Genesis 12:1). I call it "a journey" because, at that moment, I did not know where my family and I were moving. We came to live in a completely English-speaking Christian community that has embraced us as brothers and sisters. Back then (2017), I met many ABC people who I now consider not only brothers and sisters in Christ but *friends*. It has been a blessing and game-changing experience!

During the first visit with ABC-IN/KY, and even a year after our arrival, I went to Flat Rock Association churches to share the vision and mission of this Hispanic ministry. The Region, ministers and parishioners were supporting me and my family in every way you can possibly imagine! This journey continued as my connection with God, our Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit grew stronger and deeper every day. Even though we were immersed in a different context and community, I never felt alone because the Lord provided the right people to believe in this ministry, the need to bring Spanish-speaking people to Christ here in southern Indiana.

What was once a dream is a reality today! I thank God, the Region, Memorial BC and all members of Flat Rock Association for being there when my family and I needed them the most. We express our gratitude because now Logos is sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ with many Spanish-speaking brothers and sisters in Columbus. We wish to thank our IB Logos congregation as well!"

—**Edwin Montañez-Melecio**, Pastor, Iglesia Bautista Logos

American Baptist Churches of IN & KY
TOGETHER
on God's Abundant
Journey

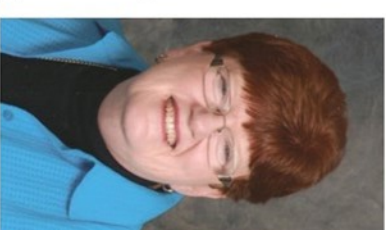
equipping leaders
empowering churches
expanding mission

TESTIMONIAL

ABC-IN/KY Achieving So Much More TOGETHER!

"Thank you for being the hands, feet, and eyes of Christ by supporting the ABC-IN/KY Region Offering!

We connect churches to pastors, and we connect with churches who would like to become part of the Region. In our partnerships, we also connect churches to missionaries including, but not limited to Carlos Bonilla and Mayra Giovanetti, and Dwight and Barbara Bolick. We connect campers to camp managers, and students to campus ministries. Traditionally, AB Senior Adults, Men, Women's Ministries, and Youth have been connected to missions within the local community, region, state, nation and world.



The Region board has enabled me to serve locally through First Baptist Church of Seymour, where my husband Larry is assistant pastor. He connected with them through the Region when Rev. Dr. Bruce Cochran was senior pastor. The Region connected with Bruce by calling him as a Region minister after he left Seymour. The Rev. Dr. Jeremy Myers became lead pastor of FBC Seymour by also connecting through the Region.

We can do so much more as churches serving **TOGETHER** through our Region than separately. I encourage you to give generously to share the Light of Christ through our Region Offering!"

—**Connie Tingle**, Layperson, First Baptist Church (Seymour, IN)

American Baptist Churches of IN & KY
TOGETHER
on God's Abundant
Journey

equipping leaders
empowering churches
expanding mission

Connected in Ministry

The vision of the American Baptist Churches of Indiana and Kentucky (ABC-IN/KY) is to help each church to be healthy, each Christian to be growing, and each person to be reached with the Gospel. This vision takes shape as local congregations connect with each other for mutual support, outreach and mission.

The ministry of the Region is possible when local congregations give financial support through United Mission,¹ the America for Christ offering,² the Region Mission Offering,³ or designated giving to specific ABC-IN/KY ministries.⁴ Your prayers, participation and generosity are essential to the health of the Region. Thank you for all you do in the ministry of Jesus Christ!

Equipping Leaders

- Pastor support/consultation
- Pastor/Staff Zoom Calls
- Monthly pastor gatherings (by areas or associations)
- Young pastor gatherings
- Healthy Boundaries training
- Transitional ministry training
- Bi-vocational minister support/training including, but not limited to, Nehemiah Leaders
- Church Leadership Institute (CLI)
- Ordination coordination
- Campus ministry relationships/resource info
- Seminary relationships/resource info including, but not limited to, Teaching Church Initiative (TCI), a partnership with Northern Seminary
- Ministerial Excellence Fund

(continued)

Empowering Churches

- Pastoral/staff transition consultation
- Church support/consultation
- Small church consultation
- New church development and partnerships
- Hispanic ministries/consultation including, but not limited to, Latino Anglo Bridge Builders (LAB)
- Intercultural relationships/resource info
- Church boards consultation/training
- Communication consultation/seminars
- Evangelism training
- Mission education/interpretation
- Stewardship consultation/training
- Stewardship resources
- Church treasurer/tax consultation
- Church budget preparation assistance
- Estate planning/planned giving resources
- Capital funds consultation
- Building consultation resources



Expanding Mission

- Camps and youth events
- Senior Adult Days
- Partnership with American Baptist Men
- Partnership with American Baptist Women and Girls
- Partnership with Neighborhood Action Programs
- such as Edna Martin Christian Center
- Partnerships with ABC Global Servants/Mission Centers such as Chilean Baptist Churches, the Bolicks, Bonilla-Giovanettis, Longkumers and Withners
- Missionary speaker resources (national and international)

Other

- *The Baptist Observer* magazine, *Observations* e-news, Facebook, website and other communications
- The IN Baptist Collection—historic records preservation and care
- Certificates for ordinations/significant church anniversaries
- Region Board support
- Region Biennial and other special events

¹ Approximately two-thirds of United Mission giving comes to the Region.

² Approximately one-third of America for Christ giving comes to the Region.

³ 100% of the Region Offering stays in ABC-IN/KY.

⁴ 100% of such gifts support the designated ABC-IN/KY agency or ministry.

Clip art for your use.

