

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)

WENDY SHULER, EDITOR - VOL. 24 NO. 3 - JUL/AUG/SEP 2024

### A CALLING AND SHARED JOURNEY

For several years, Pleasant View BC and New Life UMC have each served a free, monthly, drive-thru meal to their southeast Indianapolis community. Answering God's call to be His hands and feet has proven to be a blessing to the community but also to the Community Meal teams.

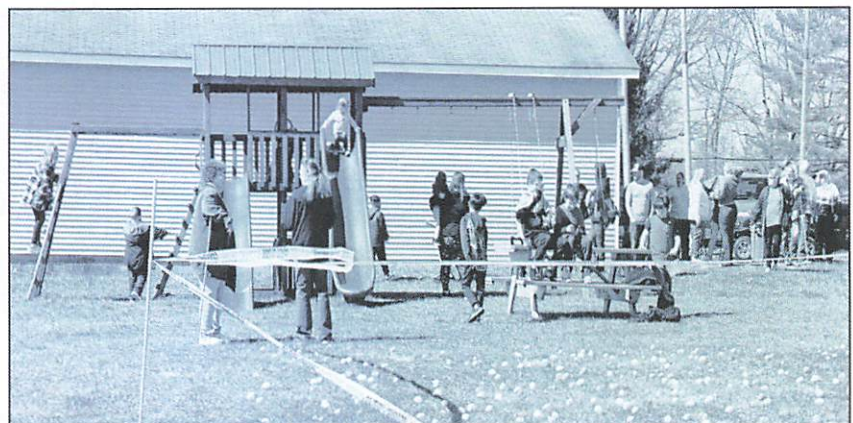
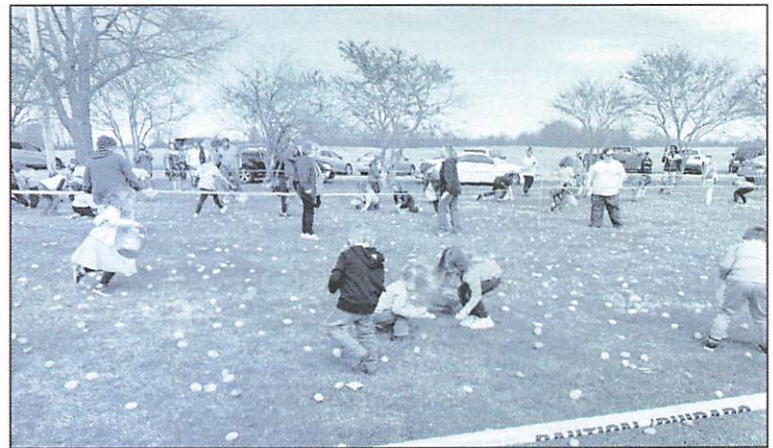
Feeling led by the Holy Spirit to expand their meal distributions to a nearby mobile home neighborhood, the two churches discussed the idea together while at a community picnic and it was well received. The two churches started partnering and delivering 70 meals to the Creekside Community twice a month. When Pleasant View preps the meals, New Life delivers, and vice versa.

With cooperation from the Creekside owners, many volunteers, and a grant from Lowe's Home Improvement Stores, a garage has since been converted to a food storage area and community center for Creekside residents. A weekly food pantry is manned by both churches each Sunday afternoon and stocked thanks also to the generosity of additional partners.

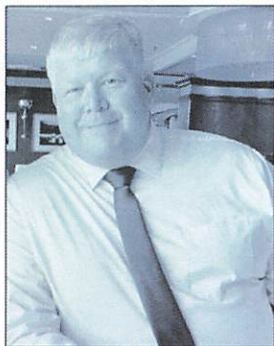
The Creekside Volunteer Team hosted a huge Christmas celebration complete with Santa and Christmas goodies. Each family in attendance was sent home with games and a well-stocked food basket.

The two churches also decided to combine their respective Easter Egg Hunts into one bigger event at Creekside. Over a thousand eggs filled with candy and surprises were placed throughout the community center's yard. Easter baskets and stuffed animals were shared with over 60 kids, along with all those eggs! (See photos at right)

"God is so awesome! His love, grace, and mercy fill our lives in abundance in so many ways," Pastor Mark Kern reports. He says Pleasant View has stepped out in mission to its community in multiple other ways as well, but the Creekside mission field has become extra special to them, partly because of the great folks they have been called to serve but also due to the partnership shared by two like-minded missional churches.







Rev. Mark Thompson  
Executive Minister  
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## LIFTING UP THE GOSPEL, CHRIST AND EACH OTHER!

The Apostle Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15 that the Gospel is "of first importance." He is very clear in outlining the Gospel specifics within this passage, and it would be worth one's time to review the verses.

The church exists to proclaim this Gospel. The proclamation of it leads to other great works of the church, and the Gospel also unites us. Jesus described His ministry in John 12 by saying He would be lifted up and draw all people to Himself. In a time of church history where we find much division, I believe we need to return to the basics of our faith. At times, we can become distracted by the good works that often accompany the proclamation of the Gospel and we might even fall short of placing the salvific work of Christ in its top position of importance.

The church reflects the ministry of Jesus when we keep the redemptive work of Christ as our primary focus, and then, as this work happens, we meet additional needs as they emerge.

At our IN/KY Biennial this fall, we will have an opportunity to join together and lift up Christ. We will be led by *Fresh Expressions*, which is a ministry that will lead us to new ways of thinking about evangelism and discipleship. We often make evangelism more difficult than it is meant to be. What if we integrated the Gospel into our daily lives and specifically into the habits and hobbies that we enjoy? Sharing the Gospel is not meant to be a burden to our lives or a difficult action.

*Fresh Expressions* derives its name from the intent to teach us "fresh expressions" of the Gospel. We will learn strategies to share the Gospel as we live our lives for Christ. The Gospel is too good to keep to ourselves! May we be united as one body and find joy in our salvation that will lead us to share this good news with others.

Several of our pastors participated in a retreat earlier this year where *Fresh Expressions* led our time together. We had a great appreciation for their work and many expressed that it needs to be shared with our churches. We hope our Region Biennial Gathering provides an opportunity for this work to inspire all of us so that we can better inspire others. Join us on September 27 and 28 at First Baptist Church of Muncie as we walk "TOGETHER on God's Abundant Journey."

Rev. Mark Thompson  
Executive Minister



### REGION MINISTERIAL STAFF

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

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

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

### Observer submissions final deadline for 2024

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

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



## EQUIPPING LEADERS

TUESDAY | AUGUST 6 | 7:00PM

### YOUTH LEADER ZOOM

Youth Leaders from ABC-IN/KY Region churches are invited to attend the next Youth Leader Zoom. Please also pay attention to the below info about **Youth Ministry University** resources available to all youth leaders of your church. **Sign up for access before April 2025!** Once you are added, you will have access *forever*, normally a \$250 value but brought to you for FREE by the Region! Interested in either opportunity? Email Kristi Jones, [kristijones@abc-indiana.org](mailto:kristijones@abc-indiana.org). Lastly, we hope you have the Fusion Conference for students grades 6-12 on your calendars (see p. 4)!



### ONGOING ADMISSION FOR M28 STUDENTS

Why not take a Late Summer/Early Fall Bible course through M28?

It's past the season of the year when colleges and universities hold their graduation ceremonies and many are currently enjoying Summer break, but some students enroll in Late Summer/Early Fall sessions of learning not long after the Spring Semester ends. Why? For various reasons: to get ahead, make up a class, or learn something in an intensive way.

M28, the Region's partner in theological education certification and continuing education, provides you with this same opportunity. Why not enroll for an intensive session soon and work through a Biblical Studies class? These classes are for pastors and lay persons alike.

M28 offers a variety of elective classes on books of the Bible, as well as some shorter classes with topics like Culture of the Bible, Bible Interpretation, and History of the Bible (a review of how the Bible came to be in its present form). Taking a class like this might be a great way to try out the M28 program to see if it's for you! For more info or to enroll, email Dr. Dan Cash, Dean of M28 for ABC-IN/KY, [dancash@abc-indiana.org](mailto:dancash@abc-indiana.org).

### FREE training YOUTH MINISTRY UNIVERSITY

We are happy to share Youth Ministry University - online video training for your Youth Leaders and church. Once signed up, you will have instant access (with no expiration dates) to resources from veteran Youth Workers on numerous topics related to Youth Ministry!

#### YOUTH MINISTRY COURSES OFFERED 101, 201, 301 & 401

- Pastoral Care with Teenagers
- Five Discipleship Essentials
- How to Be a Good Youth Leader on Social Media
- Understanding Mental Health
- Leader First, Friend Second
- ...and more!



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#### TOPIC SPECIFIC COURSES AVAILABLE

- Developing Student Leaders
- Suicide Detection & Prevention
- Purpose Driven Youth Ministry
- ...to name a few!

We know training is important to your ministry and how it may seem inaccessible.

ABC-IN/KY desires to get these **FREE** resources into your hands **TODAY** & to see your ministry flourish!

#### REGISTER NOW

- To gain access, email Kristi Jones, [kristijones@abc-indiana.org](mailto:kristijones@abc-indiana.org), your church name & the names and email addresses of *all* your leaders who would find these resources helpful.



## EXPANDING MISSION

## ABWM WOMEN'S DAY

American Baptist

Women's  
MINISTRIESSaturday, October 12,  
from 9am – 3pm (EST)**Be Strong!  
Stand on The Promises!***"He has given us His very great and precious promises..."*  
2 Peter 1:4**Hosted by:****Greenwood First Baptist Church**  
1589 Averitt Rd, Greenwood, IN 46143  
(New building at the Intersection of  
Averitt Rd. & Stop 18)**Hotels nearby at I-65 & Exit 99:**  
Best Western, 317.865.0100, or  
Red Roof Inn, 317.759.5733**Speakers:**

--LaThelma Yenn-Batah, ABWMinistries Interim Executive Director, who has strong administration, communication and program coordination skill sets. Come get to know LaThelma!

--Barb Bolick, International Ministries Regional Consultant for Iberoamerica and the Caribbean, whose ministry focuses on girls' discipleship and education. Barb also manages the Talita Cumi Girls' Clubs with our partners in several Latin America locations, providing training, materials and ongoing support.

**There also will be an Upscale Craft Bazaar to benefit Edna Martin Christian Center!**

Items will include stained glass, jewelry, pottery, candles, lotions, & others too numerous to mention... Registration (\$25) covers lunch, craft & speakers' travel.

Download the registration form from the ABC-IN/KY Region Website at  
[www.abc-indiana.org/event/ABWM-events](http://www.abc-indiana.org/event/ABWM-events).

**Deadline to register is September 10**, send to Treasurer DuRhonda Pinegar as stated on the form.

## FUSION YOUTH CONFERENCE

**FRESH BREWED LIFE  
WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP  
& A MISSION FOR MUNCIE FBC**

Women at Muncie FBC are in their third year of sponsoring "Fresh Brewed Life," semi-annual women's events usually attended by 80% of women from the congregation and another 20-25% of guests from other churches.

The typical format is that guests are welcomed at their table by a team leader who has

created a table theme and decorations and is the person to stimulate conversation and get the attendees feeling warmly welcomed and loved. A full breakfast is provided, prepared and served by men in the church. A speaker makes a short presentation. For example, a former lay leader of the church presented, "Navigating Life's Transitions with Grace and Humor," the topic last October.

The April 2024 event was an afternoon crafting event led by the daughter of a Muncie FBC family. She led devotions, and the ladies created a wall hanging containing a scripture verse from Psalms (see above photo). There was not a meal served at this slightly altered event, but the ladies enjoyed afternoon snacks.

Julie Davis, team leader of Fresh Brewed Life, said, "In feedback surveys, our events get high marks. People love the fellowship, the food and the speakers."





## EMPOWERING CHURCHES

### "SALTY & LIT" IN PETERSBURG

Jordyn Graham, young adult member of Petersburg FBC, always felt like her church should start a worship night, not just for the younger generation but for older people as well, to help break down generational barriers and bring them together as the Body of Christ, and, most importantly, to worship Him intimately together.

"Salty & Lit" events were her idea and are based on Matthew 5:14-16 where Jesus calls us to be the salt and light of the world. "Salty & Lit" are once-a-month special events held for FBC Petersburg folks and open to their wider community. They are for anyone who wishes to attend and are entirely FREE! "Salty" symbolizes food served & "Lit" stands for the uplifting worship which glorifies God. Normally the food is provided by volunteers outside the church or by friends of Jordyn.

She shares, "It's always a 'sweet night' when we do it! Attendees are encouraged to come worship God however is comfortable to them."

The events are promoted through Facebook & Instagram and spread by word of mouth. Jordyn attends two Bible studies with friends outside of First Baptist, and they also help her spread the word.

People are beginning to open up and share their testimonies during the worship services. Anytime someone feels led or wants to share, they are given free reign to do so. In fact, during one recent "Salty & Lit," 4-5 people shared. There have been 40-50 people coming on average, and the monthly events seem to be growing even beyond those numbers as of late!

### GREENDALE FBC CELEBRATES TWO ANNIVERSARIES

On March 10, 2024, Greendale FBC (also known as Lawrenceburg-Greendale FBC) met for a special service and luncheon to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the main sanctuary (1973) and 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church's life center (2004). The church was originally organized in 1807 and pre-dates Indiana statehood by nine years!

Special music for the service included "The Church Triumphant" and "Find Us Faithful," which were performed by the sanctuary choir with long-time Music Minister Mark Tanner (41 years with the church) accompanying on piano and former Music Minister Dennis Akers directing. The sermon focused on Isaiah 26:1-4, and the title was, "Soli Deo Gloria," which translates as "Glory to God Alone."

Prior to the anniversaries celebration, Senior Pastor Alex D'Amico presented a month-long sermon series focused on the topic of *Generosity: Time, Talent, and Treasure*. The purpose was to remember God's promises and faithfulness to His people. The series also reminded the church of the legacy of faith and generosity left behind by previous generations. The congregation looks forward to sharing God's love and message of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ now and in the years to come. (Info also shared in the Laughery Association newsletter by Pastor D'Amico)

### ARE YOU 50 YEARS ORDAINED?

At our Biennials, the Region always makes an effort to recognize pastors celebrating the 50th anniversary of their ordination.

ABC-IN/KY Pastors, if ordained in 1973 or 1974, please contact Wendy Shuler, Executive Administrator at the Region Office, by phone or email, [wendyshuler@abc-indiana.org](mailto:wendyshuler@abc-indiana.org), confirming your mailing address so that we can get information to you in the coming weeks about this year's Biennial recognition.

Churches, if you are not aware of the date of your pastor's ordination, where applicable, it might be a good time to ask so that you can join in the celebration of this milestone at the appropriate year's Region Biennial and/or plan a celebration of your pastor's ordination anniversary at another time convenient to your church!

### SPRING COMMUNITY WORSHIP WEEK HOSTED BY MARTINSVILLE FBC

Each evening during the week of May 13-17, Martinsville FBC hosted a gathering of several area churches. There were five congregations represented. Each night the music was led by a different church. The pastor from that same church also brought the message. The Rock of Ages BBQ provided a meal for all at the Family Life Center at 6:00 pm. Then the services began each night at 7:00 pm. About 50 people from the area attended each evening. There was great food and fellowship for all during this special week!



(Above) Pastors at Martinsville area spring revival events.



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## Important Region Staffing Updates - Please Read!

The Personnel Committee and Region Board have approved the following staffing changes for covering the vast northern area of our Region, which spans nearly all of the state of Indiana north of I-70. We have approximately 80 churches in that area.

Rev. Dr. Bruce Cochran will continue to cover some of the churches and associations in the north central part of the state and will still serve as Region Minister, but has asked to do so in a reduced capacity. We have, therefore, called Rev. Rusty Strickler to cover the northeast and Rev. Dr. Mark Spencer to cover the northwest as what we are now calling, "Associate Region Ministers" (also working *part-time*). Rev. Kristi Jones continues to serve full-time as Region Minister for the southwest, and Rev. Steve Allen, full-time as Region Minister for the southeast. Rev. Jaime Flores remains our Latino Ministries Strategist.

Each of the northern churches should have already received a letter of clarification about the Minister of the Region working with them, effective the beginning of June. With questions, feel free to reach out to any ABC-IN/KY Region staff member.

We are trying many new things and will want to hear from you over the next few years to help us gauge whether these experiments have helped us to better reach our goals as we work to serve Christ "TOGETHER on God's Abundant Journey!"

*Please give generously to the 2024 Region Offering!*

