

Metro Chicago
eWind

*Suddenly there was...a strong wind blowing, and...
they were all filled with the Holy Spirit... (Acts 2:2-3, TEV)*

A weekly electronic newsletter of the American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago
A patchwork of varied news and announcements
from our churches, communities, denomination and other organizations,
covering a wide variety of interests reflecting the diversity of our region



November 23, 2005

In our prayers this Thanksgiving, may we be mindful of those who have lost much this year.
May our prayers lead us to active blessing of those for whom we pray.

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Upcoming Events

December 1—World AIDS Day Service, 7:30 p.m., Grace Baptist Church, 5253 N. Kenmore Avenue, Chicago. Phone church at 773-334-9003 for more information.

December 3—Organ Recital, First Baptist Church, 21 N. Catherine, La Grange. For more information, phone 703-352-2740.

December 4—Service of Remembrance, Grace Baptist Church, 5253 N. Kenmore Avenue, Chicago, 6 p.m. Phone church at 773-334-9003 for more information.

December 4—Grief and the Holidays Seminar, 7:30 p.m., Grace Baptist Church, 5253 N. Kenmore Avenue, Chicago. Phone church at 773-334-9003 for more information.

December 17—ABCMC Family Cabinet Meeting, ABCMC office, 8765 W. Higgins Road, Suite 240; 9:30 a.m.

December 26-30—ABCMC office closed. Staff will monitor voice mail and email.

December 30, 31—Youth Encounter, First Baptist Church, 935 E. 50th Street, Chicago. Noon to 5 p.m. Thursday; 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday.

January 6—Registration deadline for online class “Connecting Faith and Health in the Congregation” (February 6-May 19) from North Park Theological Seminary. For information, phone 773-244-6201.

January 6—Registration deadline for online class “Experiences of the Body in Pastoral Ministry” (February 6-May 19) from North Park Theological Seminary. For information, phone 773-244-6201.

January 11—9 a.m. to 4 p.m., “What Religious Organizations Need to Know about the Law,” North Park University, 3225 West Foster Avenue, Chicago. For more information, go to http://www.northpark.edu/axelson/religiousorg_law.cfm.

January 18-25—Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Resources for the 2006 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity are available electronically at the World Council of Churches web site, <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/faith/wop2006contents.html>.

January 22—6th Annual Ecumenical Prayer Service, sponsored by the Ecumenical Millennium Committee (of which ABCMC is a part), Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Luke, 1500 W. Belmont Avenue, Chicago; 4 p.m.

February 6-May 19—Online class “Connecting Faith and Health in the Congregation” from North Park Theological Seminary. For information, phone 773-244-6201. Register by January 6.

February 6-May 19—Online class “Experiences of the Body in Pastoral Ministry” from North Park Theological Seminary. For information, phone 773-244-6201. Register by January 6.

February 14-23—World Council of Churches 9th Assembly, "God, In Your Grace, Transform the World," Porto Alegre, Brazil. Visitors can register through the Mutirao Program. Information on the 9th Assembly is available at www.wcc-assembly.info.

March 21-24—SCUPE's biennial congress on urban ministry, Chicago. For more information and registration, visit www.scupe.com/Programs/Congress/cngrs_homepage.htm.

April 17-20—Ministers Council's "Wait on the Lord" conference.

May 10-24—ABCMC Mission Partnership Trip to Ghana

Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering 2005



The Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO) is promoted and received in American Baptist congregations during November and December each year. Prayerfully decide how you can support the vital ministries supported by this offering. Please give when your congregation receives the offering. Since 1935, American Baptists have contributed to special offerings received in their churches for retired ABC ministers and missionaries, or their widowed spouses. The Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO) was established in 1977.

Through this annual offering, American Baptist congregations say **thank you** in a tangible way to the denomination's retired ministers and missionaries or their widowed spouses.

The offering provides them with:

- Emergency and other financial assistance, based on financial need.
- Thank You checks, based on 15 or more years of ABC service.

Receipts from the 2004 RMMO totaled \$1,764,749, a 1.1% increase over the 2003 receipts of \$1,744,801. Of this amount, \$774,564 was made available to meet immediate emergency and special financial needs. The balance of the receipts was distributed by The Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board (MMBB) on behalf of American Baptists in the form of Thank You checks: 3,252 checks were distributed in 2004, ranging from \$53.50 to \$428. The average check was \$304.49.

The RMMO will be taken by most ABC congregations on Sunday, December 4, 2005.

Baptist Statement on Iraq



Out of concern for our nation's continuing involvement in Iraq, a group of American Baptist ministers from several different regions gathered to develop a statement. Noting the widening chasm between the gospel and U. S. policies on war, they wrote "A Baptist Declaration in Opposition to Present U.S. Policies in Iraq". Our own Executive Minister, Larry Greenfield, was among the writers. The document is attached.

The authors wish to give everyone the opportunity to review the statement and to determine whether or not to sign it. The document is posted on the web site of the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America. You may view and endorse the document at [Baptist Statement on Iraq](#).

Thinking Theologically

Larry Greenfield, our Executive Minister, authors a fortnightly column for Protestants for the Common Good. His most recent column is attached to this issue of *eWind*.

CWS and Partners Unveil Africa Peacebuilding Program



(Church World Service) - A partnership of three faith-based organizations from the United States and Africa unveiled an ambitious program to settle active conflicts in Africa in a peacebuilding effort that has roots in the African tradition of elders. The launch of the Eminent Persons Ecumenical Program for Africa (EPEPA) was on Friday, November 18 in Accra, Ghana.

The initiative is led by an international partnership of religious leaders including the heads of global humanitarian agency Church World Service, the All Africa Conference of Churches, and the World Council of Churches. The program grew out of the recognition that the faith community -- because it carries such weight and moral authority -- must be more aggressive about intervening as a reconciling presence to stop the widespread violence on the continent.

In cultures throughout Africa, village elders traditionally are respected and trusted for the wisdom and experience they have accumulated over the years. People turn to them for guidance in the resolution of conflicts that threaten to destroy the harmony of their communities. Because the tradition is so deeply rooted in the culture of all African nations, EPEPA has decided to employ it as a model for the peacebuilding initiative. Ten to fifteen respected African leaders—"Eminent Persons"—will have the role of elders in leading the program.

The Rev. John McCullough, executive director and CEO of Church World Service (CWS), said the program relies on "the incredible resource embodied in the elders and distinguished individuals already in our midst" for the purpose of resolving conflicts and building a peaceful community on the continent.

"It is the moral authority," said McCullough, of these kinds of wise and renowned eminent Africans from the continent and the diaspora that will "help to bring people to the table to negotiate peace."

According to World Council of Churches General Secretary Dr. Sam Kobia, the timeliness of the program adds to its significance. "This ecumenical instrument comes at a time when the role of religion in public life is gaining greater currency and acceptance in society. It comes at a time when the need and desire for peacemaking, reconciliation, and healing is embraced by the parties to the conflict. It comes at a time when the concept of regional solutions to regional problems is being translated into practical projects in Africa, with a reasonable degree of success," said Dr. Kobia.

The ten to fifteen "elders" have been chosen on the basis of their experience and expertise and will receive further training in conflict resolution. They will be available for short notice deployment to trouble spots, where they will use their training, experience, and status as "Eminent Persons" to engage the parties involved in active or potential conflicts in talks aimed at achieving peaceful solutions.

The "Eminent Persons" also will be charged with making recommendations for action by governmental bodies and ecumenical agencies. Peacebuilding efforts will center on national and political conflicts as well as local resource-driven conflicts.

Church World Service, the relief, development, and refugee assistance agency supported by 36 Protestant, Orthodox, and Anglican denominations in the United States, has a decades-long history of working in partnership with indigenous organizations on the continent around development, peacebuilding, and advocacy issues. The agency has intensified its work in Africa with the Church World Service **Africa Initiative**. CWS partners with civic, business, and governmental groups throughout the continent to identify problems and develop solutions in critical areas of concern, such as displaced people, hunger and poverty, water, HIV/AIDS, and peacebuilding. In September, as part of the Africa Initiative, CWS officially **dedicated several wells** to be managed by Maasai villagers in Kenya. The new wells provide a reliable local source of clean water and also served to end a local conflict over allocation of limited water resources.

Contributions to support the Church World Service "Africa Initiative" can be made **online** and by phone at (800)-297-1516. Checks can be written to Church World Service and mailed to Church World Service, 28606 Phillips Street, P.O. Box 968, Elkhart, IN 46515

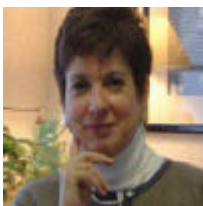
Xtreme Team 2006

International Ministries is accepting applications now for the 2006 Xtreme Team. They are seeking young adults who wish to join in a mission trip to Bolivia and Brazil. Encourage young people in your church to consider this mission opportunity. Have them visit www.discoveryteams.org.

What Religious Organizations Need to Know about the Law

On January 11, 2006, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., North Park University, 3225 West Foster Avenue, Chicago, will offer a course that will be beneficial to lay and professional church leaders, "What Religious Organizations Need to Know about the Law." This course will review the constitutional protections of churches and religious organizations, as well as the corporate structures under which churches operate. Participants will leave the class understanding how the law relates to special issues churches face including minister compensation and housing allowances, property transfers, church-based private schools, child care programs. Class time will also be spent discussing risk management topics.

The fee for the class will be \$150. This includes lunch and course materials.



The instructor will be Kathryn Vanden Berk, who has been providing advice to nonprofit organizations since 1979. Her legal career began in Madison, Wisconsin, where she was legal counsel to a number of health care providers and trade associations. She became President of a residential treatment center for children in 1988, and worked in that field as an executive for the next 10 years.

Kathryn returned to the practice of law in 1999 and now focuses her legal work on not-for-profit, tax-exempt organizations. Since 1999, she has successfully taken a wide variety of organizations through the start-up process, and she has advised both large and small organizations on issues of governance, leadership, management, corporate re-structure, taxation, and employment administration. Her clients are nationwide.

For more information about the course and registration, please go to this web site:

http://www.northpark.edu/axelson/religiousorg_law.cfm.

Roger Williams Fellowship

The Roger Williams Fellowship of American Baptists (RWF) invites you to become a member. The Roger Williams Fellowship was founded in 1935 out of a need for a forum within the American Baptist Convention (at that time) where a variety of social and faith issues could be discussed with respect for diverse theological perspectives. The Fellowship welcomes laity and clergy of diverse backgrounds and perspectives who seek to discuss, study, and struggle with questions of conscience.

The RWF meets annually for a theological conference and at Biennial meetings of the ABCUSA. RWF maintains strong relational ties with the Baptist Joint Committee on Religious Liberty, the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, and the Alliance of Baptists.

For more information about joining RWF, visit the web site, www.rogerwilliamsfellowship.org.

Web Ministry Stories

The Ministers Council is working to accumulate exciting ministry stories from ABC congregations and other ministry contexts to share the good news of how God is at work in our common life. Please visit www.ministerscouncil.com for story and photos about the Tabernacle Baptist Church in Utica, NY. "This represents an example of how we might put forth such stories," says Ministers Council Executive Director Kate Harvey. "We welcome stories that you and any of the colleagues may wish to share." Please contact Kate at Kate.Harvey@abc-usa.org.

New Resource on Baptist Principles

An Introduction to Baptist Principles is a new 24-page booklet that the Baptist History and Heritage Society will release on December 1, 2005. Written by Bill Leonard, dean and professor of church history at the Wake Forest University Divinity School, this booklet provides fresh thought on a key Baptist topic. (Judson Press published Leonard's important book *Baptist Ways: A History* in 2003.)

Place your order by November 30, 2005, for 10 or more copies, and you will get a pre-publication discount. You can secure copies at the following rates: 1-9 copies (\$2.50 each, regular price); 10-99 copies (\$2.00 each); 100-299 copies (\$1.85 each); 300-499 copies (\$1.75 each); 500+ copies (\$1.65 each).

To order, contact Charles W. Deweese, Executive Director of the Baptist History and Heritage Society, at cdeweese@tnbaptist.org. Indicate how many copies you would like, and provide your name, shipping address, and telephone number. Copies will be shipped in early December. An invoice (including shipping costs) will be included.

World AIDS Day Service



“Hearts for Healing, Hearts for Justice” will be the theme of this year’s World AIDS Day service held by Grace Baptist Church on Thursday, December 1 at 7:30pm. Join others in a worship experience of meditation, story-telling and communion. Together, we’ll lift hearts by honoring the lives of those impacted by HIV/AIDS, and worship through truth-telling about the world’s suffering and hope. Grace Baptist Church is at 5253 N. Kenmore in Chicago (773.334.9003). Parking 1/2 block north.

Service of Remembrance Seminar of Hope



Grace Baptist Church invites you to a Service of Remembrance at 6 p.m. on Sunday, December 4 for all those grieving or supporting the grieving in seasons of loss. This candle lighting service will provide the opportunity to honor the memory of loved ones through music, scripture, and reflections that will offer comfort and hope.

Following the service, from 7:30 - 8:45, you are invited to remain at the church for the Grief and the Holidays Seminar, co-led by Grace’s pastor, Jacki Belile, and Judy Healy, L.C.S.W. The holidays can be an especially difficult time when grieving a loss or the death of a loved one. This seminar will offer a time of sharing as well as suggestions for coping with grief and loss with an emphasis on self care.

Grace Baptist Church is located in the building of Epworth United Methodist Church, 5253 N. Kenmore Avenue, Chicago. Free parking is available in a lot ½ block north of the church, on the opposite side of Kenmore Avenue. For more information about the service and/or seminar, call the church office at 773-334-9003.

Youth Encounter

The First Baptist Church of Chicago, 935 E. 50th Street, will have a Youth Encounter for high school age youth on December 30 from noon to 5 p.m. and December 31 from 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. The event will include youth-oriented workshops, Praise Dance Teams dancing, food and fun.

The cost will be \$6.00 per young person. For registration or more information, please contact Rev. Jesse M. Brown at 773-536-3430/3431 or fbcpreacher@earthlink.net.

Clergy Spiritual Growth

Check out the Ministers Council web site, and learn about the upcoming "Wait on the Lord" event, to take place in April 2006 in Orlando, Florida. For information, go to <http://www.ministerscouncil.com/WaitontheLordInformation.aspx>. For registration, see <http://www.ministerscouncil.com/Wait%20on%20the%20Lord/WOTLRegistrationInfo.aspx>

Prayer Requests

Please give thanks to God for the many blessings of this year.

Please hold in prayer those who are suffering from their final illness, as well as their friends, family and caregivers.

Please remember in prayer and action missionaries and pastors who are observing the holidays this year while separated from their families.

Please pray for congregations seeking new leadership.

The Metro Chicago *eWind* is an electronic communication intended for the people of the American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago. The events publicized herein do not necessary express the opinions of the American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago. We welcome your news, prayer requests and comments. Please email your communications to abcmchi@aol.com. We will email the newsletter each Wednesday.
If you spot a typographical error in *eWind*, please let us know at the ABCMC office, 773-695-9791 or abcmchi@aol.com.