

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 30, 2005

As we prepare for the advent of the Christ child,
may we keep our efforts on an appropriate level,
that we may enjoy the peace of the season as well as the preparations.

In this Issue

Prayer Vigil on December 1 **TOMORROW!!**
Christmas Open House—Live Music **SATURDAY!**
Original Providence Baptist Church Christmas Concert
General Secretary
Camp Director
ABCW Name Change
Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering 2005
World AIDS Day **TOMORROW!!**
Service of Remembrance/Seminar of Hope
NCC on No Child Left Behind Act
NCC on Legal Aid to Poor
Ministry Opportunity in Business
Lilly Endowment National Clergy Renewal Program
Convocation on the Missional Church
Youth Encounter
Clergy Spiritual Growth
Prayer Requests
Book Nook

Upcoming Events

December 1—Prayer Vigil at the office of Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert, 27 N River Street, Batavia, 10:30 a.m.

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—Christmas Open House and Organ Recital, First Baptist Church, 21 N. Catherine, La Grange. Continuous holiday music 5-9 p.m. 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 18—Original Providence Baptist Church Christmas Concert, 515 N. Pine Avenue, Chicago. For more information, please contact the church at 773-378-5678.

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.

May 15—Deadline for submitting a proposal for a Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal grant.

July 27-29—Missional Church Conference.

Prayer Vigil on December 1 **TOMORROW!!**

On behalf of the Let Justice Roll Coalition, Rev. Jennifer Kottler, Deputy Director of Protestants for the Common Good (PCG) invites you to be a part of a prayer vigil at the office of Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert on Thursday morning, December 1 at 10:30 at the Speaker's office (27 N River Street) in Batavia. Please let Jen know if you or a member of your church will be available to attend.

The Let Justice Roll Coalition is a faithbased coalition of Protestants, Catholics and Evangelicals who are committed to eliminating poverty. They believe that the federal budget, particularly the version passed out of the House of Representatives, hurts poor people by making cuts to Medicaid that will cause a significant number of poor **working** families to be without health insurance. It will also make it more difficult for poor families to escape poverty through education and job training.

Attached to this issue of *eWind* is a *Boston Globe* editorial describing Dennis Hastert's view of the matter. Unfortunately, the Speaker sees this as just the first round of a championship in which the knock-out blow will come in the way of tax cuts for those making more than \$200,000 per year. On top of looming budget deficits, these budget cuts and tax cuts appear both unsustainable and immoral. We need the Speaker to know that the faith community both in his district and throughout our state is paying attention to what is happening in Washington.

Please let Jennifer know if you or others from your church will be able to come. You may email her at jennifer@thecommongood.org, or call her at (312)223-9544 x 223, or on her cell phone, 773-960-8960.

Christmas Open House—Live Music

Are you tired from shopping, decorating and otherwise preparing for the holidays? You deserve a break! This Saturday, December 3, the First Baptist Church of LaGrange will be participating in the LaGrange "Hometown Holiday" Christmas walk. The church will host a Christmas Open House. Free hot cider and hot chocolate will be offered at the main entrance.

In lieu of the church's annual Christmas Concert, organist Kevin C. Robbins will present almost continuous holiday music from 5 to 9 p.m. Please stop in for as long as you like. Volunteers will be available to give you a tour of one of the most beautifully decorated churches in LaGrange. Kevin also invites you to come to the console so he may greet you personally.

Original Providence Baptist Church Christmas Concert

The Original Providence Baptist Church will present its Annual Christmas Concert, "**Christmas Joy**" on Sunday, December 18, 2005. Directed by the Minister of Music, Mr. Julius H. White, the concert will feature the Original Providence Mass choir, accompanied by an instrumental ensemble. The choir will sing songs of praise that celebrate the joys of the season.

The holiday concert will feature Grammy nominated Special guest artist **Kim McFarland**.

Devotees of the modern gospel sound, particularly those from Chicago, will recognize Kim McFarland as the gutsy, young former lead vocalist with the West Side's Thompson Community Singers. Her fame with the Tommies led her to a successful solo career. On her second solo project for CGI Records, "Amazing," Kim reaffirms that Chicago is the one and only home of gospel blues with "Jesus That's My King."

Complete with bluesy electric guitar and smoky feel, "Jesus That's My King" recalls the great female gospel vocalists of the 1960s -- people like Marion Williams and Dorothy Love Coates -- whose interpretation of gospel shadowed the blues. Perhaps what is most significant about Kim's rendition of "Jesus" is her hair-raising gospel shouts that are as easily at home in church as in Muscle Shoals.

In a day when gospel music is becoming more and more musically complex -- blending jazz, R'n'B, hip hop, funk and Christian -- it is refreshing to hear such a simple yet heartfelt tribute to the blues that beget gospel music a la Thomas A. Dorsey. Kim has the vocal chords for gospel blues and she uses every inch of them in "Jesus That's My King."

The concert will begin promptly at 3:42 p.m. with joyous pageantry. The community is invited to come and share this joyous occasion at Original Providence Baptist Church, 515 N. Pine Avenue in Chicago's Austin Community. For more information contact the church at 773-378-5678.

General Secretary

This week ABCUSA's General Secretary Roy Medley underwent a lithotripsy to treat some very painful kidney stones. His assistant reports that he is doing well, and spent most of the day Tuesday in the office. She adds that "the lithotripsy procedure seems to have been a success; however, he has a doctor's appointment on Thursday, including an x-ray, to be sure he is 'in the clear.' Don't stop praying now!"

Camp Director

Paul Ethington, Camp Director for Camp Grow Ministries, fell out of his tree stand while deer hunting Monday afternoon. He suffered a back injury. He is at Theda Clark Hospital, and was scheduled for surgery this afternoon. The surgery is to repair damaged vertebrae. We understand that Paul will need a lengthy time for recovery. Get well cards may be sent to: Paul Ethington, Theda Clark Medical Center, 130 2nd Street, Neenah, WI 54956. Since Paul may go home as early as Saturday, you may prefer to send well-wishes to him there: Paul Ethington, W2580 Oakwood Beach Rd., Markesan, WI 53946. Please keep Paul in your prayers.

ABCW Name Change

The Board of the American Baptist Churches of the West has decided that beginning January 1, 2006 the American Baptist Churches of the West will conduct its ministries and business under the name "Growing Healthy Churches," or "GHC." In a letter to pastors and congregations, Executive Minister Paul Borden explained that the change will coordinate the whole region under the name that the region has been using for their church planting initiative, the "GHC Network."

Paul added, "There are a number of American Baptist congregations in the region who have been proud to be identified with both the denomination and the region. However, recent events within the denomination where the General Board and our national leaders have failed to exercise Biblical leadership are causing some of these congregations to find it difficult to be identified with

a denomination that will not affirm Biblical standards. We believe this move will help such congregations claim identity with a region that took a stand in 1996 and help them achieve their mission in their communities. Obviously any regional congregation can claim identity with the denomination or not. However for those choosing not to, we hope the name change helps them as we all wait to see how significant developments within the denomination will be played out within the next year.”

ABCW has not changed their name on any official documents. The new name is a “DBA” (“doing business as”) designation.

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.

World AIDS Day, December 1

The National Council of Churches reminds us that HIV/AIDS is the greatest humanitarian crisis of our age. Six thousand children are orphaned everyday. Nearly 38 million people are now living with HIV/AIDS, and more than 15 million children younger under age 15 have already lost one or both parents to AIDS — 12.3 million of them live in sub-Saharan Africa. On this World AIDS Day 2005, an international day of reflection and action, take time to get involved. [Download the Church World Service worship resource on AIDS.](#)



"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.

NCC on No Child Left Behind Act

A National Council of Churches committee has warned that the "No Child Left Behind Act" is leaving more children behind than it is saving, especially children of color and poor children. Instead of treating children "as unique human beings to be nurtured and educated," the statement says, the act has encouraged school districts to regard children as "products to be tested and managed."

Declaring that "Christian faith demands, as a matter of justice and compassion, that we be concerned about our public schools," the NCC Committee for Public Education has issued ten

“moral concerns” about the implementation of the act. The ten critiques examine the effects of the law on students, teachers, schools and their communities. The committee also faults Congress for appropriating less federal funding than the law originally authorized for every year since its passage. Today’s statement decries the business-management assumptions that are the foundation of many of the law’s purported reforms.

“The No Child Left Behind Act approaches the education of America’s children through an inside-the-school management strategy of increased productivity rather than providing resources and support for the individuals who will shape children’s lives,” the statement declares. “As people of faith we do not view our children as products to be tested and managed but instead as unique human beings to be nurtured and educated. We call on our political leaders to invest in developing the capacity of all schools.”

The statement criticizes the federal education law in the context of a 1999 NCC General Assembly policy statement that affirmed: “... criticism of the public schools often ignores an essential truth: we cannot believe that we can improve the public schools by concentrating on the schools alone.”

Since the signing of the No Child Left Behind Act in January 2002, the members of the NCC’s Public Education Committee have met on several occasions with members of Congress and policy experts on this law. Among 65 national organizations the NCC has endorsed a “Joint Organizational Statement on the No Child Left Behind Act.”

“Overall,” the statement says, “the law’s emphasis needs to shift from applying sanctions for failing to raise test scores to holding states and localities accountable for making the systemic changes that improve student achievement.”

NCC on Legal Aid to Poor

The National Council of Churches USA and 29 other faith-based groups are urging Congress to end a law they say hurts poor families who need legal advice. “Our faith calls us to advocate for the ‘least of these’ within our society, and to seek the common good,” said the Rev. Dr. Eileen Lindner, the NCC’s Deputy General Secretary for Research and Planning. “The protection of the access to legal counsel for rich and poor alike stands at the heart of the commonweal and is consistent with our moral precepts.”

The NCC and other faith groups want Congress to end a law that prohibits federally supported legal aid organizations from spending state, local or private funds to provide legal assistance to low-income families. Every day, the groups say, thousands of low-income individuals and families, including some of the most vulnerable members of our society, cannot obtain the critically important legal help they need to cope with a range of civil legal problems that have destabilized their lives. A recent study reveals that at least four in five low-income Americans are unable to obtain legal help when they need it.

The so-called “private money restriction” interferes with the ability of legal services lawyers to help low-income individuals and families in a wide array of cases, including unlawful evictions, prisoner reentry, religious asylum, domestic violence, predatory lending, disaster relief, and many others.

In the letter to Congressmen Frank Wolf (R-VA) and Alan Mollohan (D-WV), respectively the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee that allocates funds to federal Legal Services Corporation (LSC) that funds legal aid groups, the groups call for an end to the private money restriction. Federal law prohibits the use of LSC grant money for certain

types of legal representation. Legal aid organizations may spend their own funds on these restricted categories of advocacy only if they first establish a physically separate office with separate staff, office space, and equipment.

The NCC and other faith-based groups say this compulsory physical separation imposes unnecessary expenses on cash-strapped legal aid programs and creates costly obstacles to private philanthropy. As a result, legal aid organizations are unable to help low-income people in a number of important types of cases even with non-federal funds.

In addition to being troubled by the harm this law inflicts on low-income people, faith-based service providers are concerned that if the physical separation model were to be imported into faith-based settings (as may occur if the government continues to defend this model in litigation and policy debates), the result – equivalent physical separation of secular and faith-based activities – would undermine the public-private partnership model that delivers important social services to low-income communities.

A parallel effort to fix the private money restriction is ongoing in the courts. Represented by the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law, three New York legal aid programs have challenged the constitutionality of the physical separation requirement. A federal District Court judge ruled last year that the application of the restriction to the three programs violated their First Amendment rights to advocate for their clients. But the government appealed the District Court ruling in the case – *Velazquez v. LSC* – so the future of legal services for the poor remains in jeopardy.

Ministry Opportunity in Business

The American Baptist Extension Corporation (ABEC) is seeking a representative for the middle and western states. The ABEC representative is responsible for promoting ABEC's loan, investment and building planning programs, and providing counsel on building planning and financing. The ABEC representative is responsible for generating loan, investment and building planning business in assigned service area as well as following churches during the repayment period. The ABEC representative processes loan applications, represents ABEC at ABC and other related events, visits churches and building sites, follows delinquencies and participates in team meetings and events.

Candidates for the position should have a Bachelor's degree in business administration, communications, marketing, architecture or engineering, or equivalent experience. It is desired that they have a minimum of 3 years experience in facilities planning, financing, capital fund raising, sales, marketing, and/or group facilitation.

ABEC asks that interested persons provide a letter of application, resume, and the names, address and phone numbers of at least three professional references by December 31 to

Laura Miraz, Human Resources Officer

PO Box 851

Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851

Email: Laura.Miraz@abc-usa.org

Phone: 610-768-2051 FAX 610-768-2409

Lilly Endowment National Clergy Renewal Program

Lilly Endowment Inc. has announced that its popular National Clergy Renewal Program will continue for a seventh year. The Indianapolis-based Endowment offers grants of up to \$45,000 to congregations across the country to allow their pastors to spend some time away from the daily demands of parish ministry. "Pastors and congregations both benefit from this period of renewal,"

said Craig Dykstra, Endowment senior vice president for religion. "The pastors are given a rare opportunity to dig deep into what 'makes their hearts sing.' The renewal and refreshment of a pastor's heart is key to the spiritual vitality of a congregation's life. That is why we suggest that, before they move too quickly to figure out the details of their renewal proposal, pastors reflect carefully about what kinds of experiences will touch them most deeply."

Most pastors who receive the grant end up spending three to four months away from their churches. Their experiences both open their minds to new possibilities and connect them more deeply with what really matters to them. They travel the world, study things they really care about, and reconnect with family and friends from years past.

"As they explore the roots of their religious traditions, write poetry, practice contemplative prayer, and spend weeks or months in significantly different cultural contexts," Dykstra said, "they come to see their ministries with fresh eyes. At the same time, the congregations often come to see their pastors and themselves in a new way as well. The planning process itself gives them a better understanding of what their pastors do, and their appreciation for them grows. Sometimes congregations decide to undertake a spiritual journey of their own alongside the pastor; they may read some of the same books the pastor is reading or form discussion groups around the sabbatical theme. Comments from former recipients prove to us that both pastors and congregations find the whole experience empowering and exciting."

As many as 120 congregations will be selected for the 2006 program. They will join the more than 600 that have received grants since 2000. While each grant proposal may request up to \$45,000, up to \$15,000 of that may be used for congregational activities during the pastor's absence.

The brochure/application is available on the Endowment's Web site, www.lillyendowment.org. Interested persons may call 317/916-7350, e-mail clergyrenewal@yahoo.com or write Lilly Endowment, 2801 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, Ind. 46208.

Completing the application requires a joint effort of the pastor and congregation; applicants are encouraged not to put off applying until the last minute. "The process takes some time," cautions Dykstra. "It involves intentional and purposeful discussion between the congregation and the pastor. It is not just a form that can be filled out overnight. We have found, however, that - even among congregations that did not receive grants - the application process itself helped them focus on issues such as effective leadership, the future directions of the congregation, and the like."

Also on the Endowment's Web site are two documents that applicants may find helpful: "What Makes a High-Quality Proposal?" and "Grace Notes." Both the brochure and the Web site also suggest possible reading materials for interested persons. To be eligible, ministers must have earned at least a master of divinity degree. The program is open to all Christian congregations in 49 states and the District of Columbia. The deadline for proposals is May 15, 2006.

Convocation on the Missional Church

The Center for Parish Development has announced its annual Convocation on the Missional Church, to take place Thrsda- Saturday, July 27-29. The featured speaker will be Dr. Darrell Guder of Princeton Theological Seminary. The conference theme will be "Incarnational Witness: Proclaiming the Gospel with Our Lives." It will take place in Chicago. For more information, please visit www.missionalchurch.org.

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 hold in prayer Roy Medley, our General Secretary, following his lithotripsy.

Please pray for Paul Ethington, Camp Director for Camp Grow Ministries, as he recovers from back surgery.

Please keep Larry Waltz, former Executive Minister of the Philadelphia Baptist Association, in your prayers. Larry is recovering from surgery that he had before Thanksgiving.

Please remember in your prayers Annie and Jeff Dieselberg, missionaries in Thailand. Jeff's father passed away Saturday.

Please join ABCUSA missionaries Debbie and Jim Kelsey in prayers of thanksgiving and for God's continuing blessing and guidance of the Pilgrim International Baptist Church in Oostende, Belgium. Jim is pastor of the church, which celebrated its ninth anniversary on November 13.

Please pray for ABCUSA missionaries Jill and Mike Lowery, and their ministry at the Pastor's Institute at Kikongo, Democratic Republic of Congo. This year the institute, which offers a three-year educational program for pastors, is delighted to have a full enrollment.

Please pray for the ministries of ABCUSA missionaries Drs. David and Laura Parajon. They use their medical skills to serve rural communities through PROVADENIC, a health program sponsored by the Baptist Convention of Nicaragua. PROVADENIC provides a ministry to 25 isolated communities by training and supporting local health care providers.

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 necessarily 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.