

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
covering a wide variety of interests reflecting the diversity of our region.

December 6, 2006

"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden." (Matthew 5:14)



This Sunday, December 10, is the second Sunday of Advent this year.

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Torture Is a Moral Issue

Many Americans and others are concerned about torture being used against prisoners and others. The National Religious Campaign Against Torture (<http://www.nrcat.org/>) invites us as individuals and congregations to endorse their statement "Torture Is a Moral Issue." Over 10,000 persons have endorsed the statement to date. The hope is to reach 50,000 endorsers by January 15, 2007. Here is the text of the statement:

Torture Is A Moral Issue

A Statement of Conscience of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture

Please join the over 10,000 people who have already endorsed this statement.

Torture violates the basic dignity of the human person that all religions hold dear. It degrades everyone involved -- policy-makers, perpetrators and victims. It contradicts our nation's most cherished ideals. Any policies that permit torture and inhumane treatment are shocking and morally intolerable.

Nothing less is at stake in the torture abuse crisis than the soul of our nation. What does it signify if torture is condemned in word but allowed in deed? Let America abolish torture now -- without exceptions.

If you wish to take the petition version of the statement to your congregation or other organization to which you belong, please go to http://www.nrcat.org/documents/petition_style_form.doc. You can print out the statement and sheets for signatures. If you wish to share this statement with family, friends, and members of your congregation, please give them a copy of the statement and ask them to endorse it. They—and you—can do so online at www.nrcat.org/statement.aspx.

Wayne Brown

Wayne Brown, Executive Minister of the ABC of Oregon, recently was hospitalized with health problems. He is now home, and is doing well, but is tired. On his physician's advice, he is taking the month of December of as a time to let the stresses of the year go, and begin 2007 afresh. Since it is important for Wayne to rest, he is not receiving calls, but greatly appreciates cards and messages. Well wishes may be sent to him at ABCO, 0245 SW Bancroft, Portland, OR 97239. Please hold Wayne and his wife Yvonne in prayer during his time of recovery.

Abounding in Love

Attached to this issue of *eWind* is Larry Greenfield's sermon "Abounding," which he preached at The South Church in Mount Prospect on Sunday, December 3. Even if you don't usually read attachments, please open and read this one.

Christmas Concerts

Advent and Christmas are seasons full of music. Many churches are having special concerts and cantatas, both in their worship services and at other times. Check the listing of concerts below, and enjoy the music.

This past weekend held several concerts in celebration of the Christmas season. Among them were the concerts at the First Baptist Church of La Grange on Saturday. Kevin Robbins played a number of traditional and non-traditional pieces on the pipe organ. He also directed the hand bell choir. A quartet of vocalists sang several carols *a cappella* in four-part harmony. This church is blessed with much musical talent. It was an excellent concert.

The Seventh Church of Christ Scientist hosted a concert on Sunday. The program—and audience—included folks from a number of different churches. The host church's own organist and vocalists shared several beautiful numbers.

Also at the Christian Science Church on Sunday, the Inspired Youth Singers, a children's choir directed by Beth Palmer, provided a collection of songs that had peace as a theme. One of the highlights was "The Lion and the Lamb" by Natalie Sleeth. The group danced as they sang (in English) "Neath Vine and Fig Tree," a traditional Yiddish song about living in peace.

Beth Palmer was also the accompanist for the Grace Baptist Church Ensemble, which sang some less traditional songs about the nativity, and Christian living. The highlight of that group of songs was a solo by Mark Parks, who sang "Joseph's Song" by Michael Card. If you missed this concert, you might want to hear Mark sing a solo at the First Baptist Church of La Grange on December 17.

Those in attendance on Sunday enjoyed a carol sing after the concert. It was a delightful afternoon of music.

If your church is having a program you would like us to list, just send the information to abcmchi@aol.com.

World AIDS Day News from Church World Service

WORLD AIDS Awareness in Darfur

December 1, 2006--To mark World AIDS Day (December 1), the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC), a local partner of CWS and others in the global alliance Action by Churches Together (ACT), organized three days of events in Nyala town, the capital of South Darfur state. Read the full story at: <http://www.churchworldservice.org/news/archives/2006/12/598.html>.

McCullough of CWS Rallies People to the Cause at World AIDS Day Event

December 1, 2006--At a Capitol Hill gathering to celebrate World AIDS Day, the head of CWS told the audience assembled in the Russell Senate Office that "faith communities are called to keep our promises and respond to the needs people living with HIV." Read the full story at: <http://www.churchworldservice.org/news/archives/2006/12/600.html>.

WORLD AIDS Education for Street Children in Indonesia

As the world observed World AIDS Day on December 1, one of Indonesia's most vulnerable populations, street children, played soccer--and learned more about HIV/AIDS. A collaboration of Church World Service, the Indonesian Ministry of Health, and the Global Fund, SCORE-- Soccer 4 Children on Road 2 Empowerment--is a program for street children, designed to increase their knowledge of HIV and AIDS, using the game as an entry point.

Maurice Bloem, CWS Indonesia director, says that CWS and partners are "focusing on mobilizing, educating, and empowering this particularly vulnerable population--street children and their communities--to enable them to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS."

A CWS-sponsored AIDS Day soccer tournament in Jakarta, the capital, was just one of a series of AIDS Day awareness events CWS held aimed at children and women, along with art competitions, information sessions, and memorial ceremonies. HIV/AIDS programs also took place in other areas in Indonesia--for example, on Kuta Beach, in Bali, where many local service workers become vulnerable to HIV infection through their work providing manicures, pedicures, and massage.

In February 2007, CWS-Indonesia will host with the World Food Program workshops on HIV and Nutrition; the SCORE youth soccer program; Internet advocacy; and interfaith work. For more on this story, visit www.churchworldservice.org.

Seasonal Concerts



SATURDAY! *Berwyn Ecumenical Christmas Concert*

Sandy Cervenka from First Baptist of Berwyn will be one of the soloists in the Third Annual Ecumenical Christmas Concert held on December 9 at 7 p.m. at Berwyn United Lutheran Church, 2400 S. Harvey in Berwyn. Admission is free, but you are encouraged to bring nonperishable items for the local food pantry. For more information, email scervenka@hotmail.com or pjspjs4113@sbcglobal.net.

SUNDAY! *First Baptist Church of Chicago*

The First Baptist Church of Chicago's Annual Christmas Cantata will be Sunday, December 10th at 11:00 a.m. All are welcome. The church is at 935 E. 50th Street, Chicago.

SUNDAY! *North Shore Second Sunday Series*

North Shore Baptist Church, 5244 N. Lakewood Avenue, Chicago. Will offer a "Second Sunday Series" of free concerts in their sanctuary during each of the next several months. Each concert will be at 2 p.m. The Christmas concert will be on Sunday, December 10. The Chancel Choir will perform Saint Saëns' "Christmas Oratorio." The afternoon's program will include cookies, cocoa, and a carol sing, too!

Jazz Christmas Concert at Hyde Park Union Church

Hyde Park Union Church, 5600 S. Woodlawn Avenue, Chicago, will present the 12th annual Jazz Christmas Concert on Friday, December 15 at 8 p.m. Featured musicians will be the Willie Pickens Trio with guest artists Donald Harrison and Yvonne Gage.

Tickets are \$25. They may be purchased through several routes. They may be purchased by credit card online at <http://www.hpuc.org/Other/Jazz%20Christmas06.htm>. They may be purchased by sending a check to the church. They may be purchased with check or cash at the church office, which is open 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday through Friday. The phone number for the church office is 773-363-6063. Tickets may be purchased with cash or check at the door on the evening of the event.

Please Note: Tickets purchased before December 7 will be sent via US mail. Tickets purchased after December 7 will be available at Will Call. All proceeds benefit [Centers for New Horizons](#).

First Baptist Church of Maywood

The First Baptist Church of Maywood, 401 S. 5th Avenue, Maywood, will have two special Christmas programs. On December 17 there will be a Children's Program during the worship service. On December 24 the choir will present a Christmas Cantata during the 11:00 am worship service.

FRIDAY! *Kids Hope United to Honor Jimmie Smith*

This invitation is from Kids Hope United (formerly Central Baptist Children's Home and Family Services).

Join us for a celebration of Jimmie H. Smith, recognizing his 30 years of dedicated service to Kids Hope United. Jimmie is retiring from the Executive Director position—but the agency hopes to continue harnessing his expertise and energy for many years to come! Bring memories about Jimmie to share during an afternoon of food, fun and fellowship with friends. The celebration will take place Friday, December 8, 3-5 p.m. at Bridgeport Child Development Center, 3053 S. Normal Avenue, Chicago.

The Gift of You

Everyone is invited to come on Saturday, December 9 to "The Gift of You," an advent mini retreat sponsored by Grace Baptist Church and hosted by Community Church of Wilmette, 9:30 am-4:00pm, at 1020 Forest Ave. in Wilmette. On this day supporting individual discernment, we'll explore personally the spiritual gifts of expressing, enabling, equipping, and encouraging. In what arena is God inviting you to celebrate and dedicate your call more fully for 2007? Suggested donation: \$12 (includes lunch and materials). Please register by December 6 **TODAY!** to pastor@gracebaptistchicago.com or 773-334-9003.

LaMon and Pat Brown, ABC Missionaries in Thailand

LaMon Brown teaches Bible, doctrine and other courses at Payap University in Chiang Mai, Thailand. While "foreign missionaries" can be effective in evangelism and starting new churches,

Christians from Thailand have much more success. Therefore, training Thai Christians to impact their nation or people group for Christ is vital. In addition to Thai students, others come to the school from tribal groups in Thailand and Myanmar (Burma), so the impact of Payap University extends even beyond Thai society. LaMon writes:

One of the nice things about this time of the year is that we have graduation programs for students who completed their studies earlier this year. (Unlike in the States, there is a delay between the end of school and graduation of almost 7 months.)

We had a total of 29 students to graduate from McGilvary this year; 4 M.Div., 9 B.Th., and 16 B.A. students. Most of our work with these students was with those who graduated with the B.A. in Christian Studies. Of those 16, 15 are currently involved in full time Christian ministry. Three of them are actually serving as pastors. We are very proud of all of them.

- *Please pray for these 16 students.*
- *Pray that God will give them wisdom, courage, patience and compassion that they might be faithful and fruitful in their ministries.*
- *Pray that God would bless their work so that more and more people in this beautiful country will come to know and believe the Good News of Jesus Christ.*

Green Lake Conference Center Land Contract

Green Lake, WI - The Green Lake Conference Center (GLCC) Board of Directors, during their December 1-3, 2006 meeting, voted to enter into a land contract with Lindenwood Development LLC (www.lindenwooddevelopment.com) of Neenah, WI to create the Estates of Lawsonia located on the grounds of Green Lake Conference Center. Comprising approximately 35 acres, the Estates of Lawsonia-Phase One includes 48 lots. Two additional phases could be approved by the Board of Directors at a later date creating a total of 179 lots in the Estates of Lawsonia. The 35 acres (48 lots) in Phase One are located on the east side of the 1,000 plus acre property, nestled within the Woodlands Course of Lawsonia. The Estates of Lawsonia will not affect the core conference center property. Teska Associates of Evanston, Illinois, known for their environmentally sensitive communities, has worked closely with the Board of Directors in the development of a land-utilization plan.

Proceeds from the sale of the property to Lindenwood Development LLC will be used to: (1) address existing debt; (2) provide operating reserves; and (3) form a permanent endowment fund. The Board of Directors, in forming the permanent endowment fund, is committed to ensuring these funds remain in perpetuity for supporting ongoing Kingdom ministry.

In part, earnings from the permanent endowment fund will allow GLCC to award scholarships to professional church leaders, congregational lay leaders, and youth to attend cutting-edge equipping/training conferences held at the GLCC. The conference center is committed to partnering with congregations as they seek to be vital, vibrant, healthy missional churches engaging their communities with the Good News of Jesus Christ in the new millennium. GLCC has historic ties to the American Baptist Churches USA and enjoys the involvement of the wider Christian church regardless of denominational affiliation.

GLCC Board Chair, the Reverend Dr. Michael Williams states, "Our passion and purpose is to do our part in building the Kingdom of God. We want to do whatever it takes to partner with existing churches in order to help them maximize their God-inspired Kingdom potential. We also want to assist in assessing and equipping church planters for new church planting across the US."

First Baptist Church of Sioux Falls, SD

to Receive 2006 RMMO Award

VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 12/05/06)—The Advisory Council of the Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO) selected the First Baptist Church of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, to receive the 2006 Widow's Mite Award in recognition of the congregation's consistent and outstanding level of giving. Since the RMMO began in 1977, the church has been among the 50 highest-giving ABC congregations, and since 1987 it has been among the top five. The Rev. Dr. Lee McGlone is the church's senior pastor.

The Rev. James Cook, regional representative for The Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board (MMBB) will present the award to the congregation on Sunday, December 10, 2006. MMBB promotes and administers the offering.

The RMMO is a means by which American Baptist congregations express their gratitude to the denomination's retired ministers and missionaries as well as their widowed spouses. The offering provides Thank You checks to over 3,000 recipients, based on 15 or more years of ABC service, and emergency and other financial assistance, based on financial need.

The Widow's Mite Award commemorates the anonymous gift in 1981 of a Vietnamese refugee woman worshipping with the First Chinese Baptist Church of Fresno, CA. Not knowing the full intent of the offering, but understanding the words "thank you" printed on the offering envelope, she slipped off her wristwatch, her only possession of value, and placed it in the envelope. Most congregations receive the RMMO during the month of December. Contact Judson Press at 800.458.3766 for free 2006 offering materials, or visit www.abc-usa.org/missions for online resources. A brief profile of the First Baptist Church of Sioux Falls appears in the 2006 issue of *ABC People* magazine, published by MMBB. Contact MMBB at 800.986.6222 for a free copy.

2007 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The Ecumenical Millennium Committee, of which ABCMC is a part, will sponsor their 7th Annual Ecumenical Prayer Service during the 2007 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The service will take place at 4 p.m. on Sunday, January 21 at Fourth Presbyterian Church, 126 E. Chestnut Street, Chicago. Parking will be available at the John Hancock Center, 875 N. Michigan Avenue. (Access is from Chestnut Street.) The preacher will be Bishop Hee-Soo Jung from the Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church. All are welcome. Please print out and distribute the attached flyer.

Second Annual ABCMC Disciples' Dinner

Save the date for the Second Annual ABCMC Disciples' Dinner on Saturday, April 21, 2007. Our late afternoon keynote speaker will be **Tony Campolo**, professor emeritus of sociology at Eastern College. More information will appear in future editions of *eWind*.

Biennial 2007

ABCUSA's Biennial Meeting will be June 29-July 2, 2007 in Washington, D.C. This will be the centennial celebration of the founding of the denomination. Attached to this issue of *eWind* is a bulletin insert with details. Please print out and share it in your church's worship bulletin and posted on bulletin boards to encourage folks to attend. This will be a special time to celebrate our American Baptist history and heritage.

Come to the Edge!

The National Women's Conference will take place at Green Lake Conference Center July 21-28, 2007. Women are invited to "Come to the Edge!" and be challenged by the words of Deuteronomy 31:6, "Be strong and courageous ... for the Lord your God goes with you." Participants will hear great speakers, sing powerful songs of praise and take time to connect with each other every day. Tuesday will be set aside as a Spiritual Retreat Day with refreshing quiet time.

Among the guest leaders at the conference will be Rev. Dr. Lauran Bethell, keynote speaker. Lauran is a global consultant for International Ministries, and is based in Prague, Czech Republic. Her task is to encourage and facilitate Christ-based ministries that address the exploitation and abuse of women and children.

Lauran, daughter of an ABC pastor, was a teacher at an international school in Hong Kong when she experienced God's call to missionary service. After graduating from seminary in the U.S., she was commissioned by International Ministries for service in Thailand. She helped to establish the New Life Center in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in 1987. The New Live Center offers freedom and hope in Jesus Christ to young women and girls who have been sold, tricked, or willingly drawn into prostitution. The New Life Center, now with branches in Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai, provides Christian education, literacy, and vocational training; rehabilitates former prostitutes; and works to reduce risk factors among other women.

Throughout the 1990's Lauran shared her knowledge and experiences in international venues. She continued to direct the New Live Center until 2000 when she moved to the Czech Republic and became a global consultant. Lauran's work has been recognized throughout the world. She received the Human Rights Award of the Baptist World Alliance in 2005. She was a featured speaker at the Living Hope International Consultation on Prostitution held at the Green Lake Conference Center in April 2006.

Lauran is an inspiring speaker who will bring the challenge of "Break the Chains: Slavery in the 21st Century" in a way that will help women hear God's call to ministry in their own areas.

Prayer Requests

Please pray for world peace.

Please pray for Wayne Brown, Executive Minister of the ABC of Ohio, as he recovers from health problems.

Please join in prayers of thanks for the First Baptist Church of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. This church is a faithful supporter of American Baptist missions. This church has also produced outstanding church leaders, including ABCMC's Executive Minister Larry Greenfield.

Please pray for missionaries LaMon and Pat Brown, and for those with whom they minister in Thailand.

Please pray for Millie Myren and Morgan Park Baptist Church, where Millie is acting interim.

Please pray for the Community Church of Barrington during their interim period between pastors.

Please hold in prayer The South Church as they anticipate the arrival of an interim pastor.

Please pray for students and faculty finishing academic terms.

Calendar

December 9—"The Gift of You," Community Church of Wilmette, 1020 Forest Avenue, Wilmette, 9:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Mini retreat by Grace Baptist Church. Suggested donation: \$12 (includes lunch and materials). Please register by December 6 to pastor@gracebaptistchicago.com or 773-334-9003.

December 9—Ecumenical Christmas Concert, 7 p.m., Berwyn United Lutheran Church, 2400 S. Harvey, Berwyn. Admission is free, but you are encouraged to bring nonperishable items for the local food pantry.

December 10—Christmas Cantata, First Baptist Church, 935 E. 50th Street, Chicago, 11 a.m.

December 10—Saint Saëns' "Christmas Oratorio" by North Shore Baptist Church Chancel Choir, 2 p.m., North Shore Baptist Church, 5244 N. Lakewood Avenue, Chicago. Cookies, cocoa, and a carol sing, too!

December 15—Jazz Christmas, Hyde Park Union Church, 5600 S. Woodlawn Avenue, Chicago, 8 p.m. Tickets are \$25. See the article above for information about getting tickets.

December 16—ABCMC Family Cabinet meeting, 9:30 a.m., ABCMC office.

December 17—Children's Christmas program, First Baptist Church, 401 S. 5th Avenue, Maywood, 11 a.m.

December 24—Christmas Cantata, First Baptist Church, 401 S. 5th Avenue, Maywood, 11 a.m.

January 21, 2007—7th Annual Ecumenical Prayer Service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, 4 p.m., Fourth Presbyterian Church, 126 E. Chestnut Street, Chicago.

February 16-17, 2007—"Revive Us Again! Revival of our Spirit, Revival of our Baptist Principles," Andover Newton Theological School, Newton Centre, MA. This will be a gathering of progressive Baptists from around the country.

April 19-21, 2007—ABC Central Sectional Black Church Education Conference, Midwest Hotel and Conference Center, Columbus, Ohio.

April 21—Second Annual ABCMC Disciples' Dinner.

June 29, 2007—"Ministry in Such a Time as This" pre-Biennial event, 9 a.m.-noon, Washington Convention Center, Washington, DC.

June 29-July 2, 2007—ABCUSA Biennial Meeting and Centennial Celebration in Washington, DC. The theme will be "Arise and Shine."

July 21-28, 2007—National Gathering for Girls, Green Lake Conference Center. The conference fee is \$485 per person, and includes conference registration fee, housing, and meals; scholarships are available. Further information may be found on the American Baptist Women's Ministries' website at www.abwministries.org.

February 21-23, 2008—Gathering of Baptist Bodies from across the U.S. for a celebration of a new Baptist covenant, Dallas, TX.

April 14-17, 2008—National Workshop on Christian Unity

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 email the newsletter each Wednesday.

If you spot a typographical error or other mistake in *eWind*, please let us know at the ABCMC office, 773-695-9791 or abcmchi@aol.com.