

Metro Chicago

eWind

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

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

October 15, 2008

But now thus says the LORD,...who created you,...
Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.
(Isaiah 43:1-2)

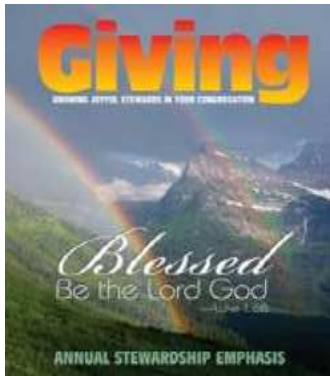
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ABCMC NEWS

Stewardship



Judson Press has some exciting resources that your church may wish to use for a season of emphasis on stewardship. "Blessed Be the Lord God" invites congregations to meditate on the biblical songs of Advent as they discern their individual and household giving for the following year. The program restores the focus of Advent songs to blessing God for the gift of Jesus Christ. It also focuses on restoring our response to that great gift. This four-week stewardship emphasis is based on four Scriptures that are songs of blessing. Included in this Giving magazine insert are a planning schedule, sample letter of invitation, reminder card, and a theme song written by Ken Medema, all of which may be photocopied. While this resource would be particularly useful during Advent, it is designed to be used at any time of the year. Theme materials including letterhead, bulletin covers, bookmarks, envelopes and commitment cards, are available to

coordinate with the program. Items may be ordered by phoning 1-800-4JUDSON. These items are not available through on line ordering. For more information, please go to <http://www.abc-usa.org/Resources/Stewardship/Blessed.pdf> or call Judson Press.

ABCMC Annual Meeting

2008 Annual Meeting of the American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago
 Disparity and Difference
 New Testament Perspectives and Imperatives
 November 8
 Morgan Park Baptist Church
 11024 S. Bell Avenue, Chicago
 Registration opens at 8:30 a.m.; lunch at noon; adjournment by 3 p.m.
 Email office@abcmc.org or phone 7730804-1655 with your attendance plans.

30th Year Anniversary Celebration of Cook County Jail Ministry

We are all invited to celebrate the 30th year of Cook County Jail Ministry in Fellowship Hall, First Baptist Church of Oak Park, 820 Ontario Street, Oak Park on Saturday, November 8 at 6 p.m.

The featured speaker will be Dr. William Goddard, who was instrumental in helping Rev. Andy Gonzalez begin the jail ministry. One of the fruits of this ministry, "Rocky" Vasquez, will share his testimony. The evening's program will also include the premier showing of the DVD telling the story of the Cook County Jail Ministry.

Tickets will be available at the door, and will cost \$15 for adults, \$5 for children under 12, and \$100 for a table of 8. Plan now for a super evening that will substantially feed your soul.

World Mission Offering 2008

The fall is the season when most American Baptist congregations collect the World Mission Offering. This is the offering to support American Baptist mission work around the world. Your gifts to the World Mission Offering go **100 percent** to support the work of 2,500 short- and long-term missionaries doing work with local partners in 76 countries around the world. LIVE GENEROUSLY!

Thinking Theologically

ABCMC's Executive writes a semi-monthly column for *The Common Good Network*, the electronic newsletter of Protestants for the Common Good. Larry's most recent column, "Yoked" appears at the end of this issue of *eWind*. Be sure to read it.

Kids Hope United Annual Dinner

Kids Hope United invites you to their Annual Dinner. Join them to commemorate 113 years of providing innovative services to protect children and strengthen families.

Jennifer Witherspoon will be the main speaker. She grew up in the Robert Taylor Homes on Chicago's South Side and is now the chief of corrections at Lake County Jail, the first African American and first woman ever to be named to that position. She has worked as a substance abuse counselor and law enforcement patrol sergeant in California, and as a legal advocate for victims of domestic violence in the YWCA ALIVE Program in Washington. She is a founding member of the North Shore Bronzeville Association in Chicago, which assists young men and women from underprivileged families by providing experiences and skills that participants would not ordinarily receive in schools. She earned her bachelor's degree in criminal justice from the City University in Bellevue, Washington, and her law degree from the John Marshall Law School in Chicago. She lives in Waukegan with her husband of 24 years, Michael, and their two children, Megan and Tyler.

The dinner will be held Wednesday, November 12, 6:00 p.m. at Drinker Biddle, 191 N. Wacker Drive, Suite 3700. There is no charge for the event, but reservations are due October 31. Please contact Kristy Cechini at kcechini@kidshopeunited.org or 847-245-6505.

Kids Hope United is an American Baptist related organization. Linda Requilez, Clarke Robinson, Edward Santiago, and William Wallin serve on the Northern Region Board. Larry Greenfield serves on the Federation Board. Come join us.

Save the Date

It's time to tune up your voice and your musical instruments, and prepare seasonal music for the 2nd Annual ABCMC Christmas/Advent Season Music Festival, Irving Park Baptist Church, 4401 W. Irving Park Road, Chicago, 3:30 p.m. Everyone is invited to be a part of the celebration. More information will follow.

NEWS FROM ABCMC CONGREGATIONS

Please Help

The roof of the First Latin American Baptist Church - the Hispanic Church with the longest association with ABCMC and a faithful contributor to our ministries together - has suffered some significant damage that needs immediate attention.

The lowest estimate for repair is just over \$10,000. But work can only start with a down payment of \$3,500.

Would you and/or your church be willing to contribute funds to help with this project?

Checks should be made payable to ABCMC and should specify "First Latin ABC Roof."

Send gifts collected to the ABCMC office at 7035 W. Grand Avenue Suite 102, Chicago, IL 60707 and ABCMC will get the money to the church. (Your church will receive credit for the giving with ABCUSA.)

Four Concerts for a Cause

In the coming months, Woodside Church, ABCMC's congregation in Flint, Michigan, will present concerts on four specific Fridays, at 7 p.m. at the church, 1509 E. Court Street, Flint. Each concert will benefit a particular cause.

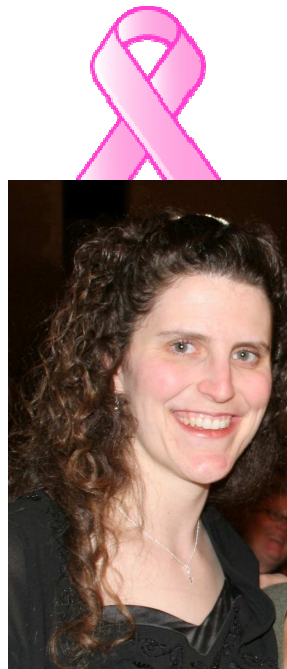


October 24, 2008 is Breast Cancer Awareness

featuring Dr. Alyssa Smith, percussionist from Flint Institute of Music.

Alyssa G. Smith holds a Doctorate of Musical Arts from The Ohio State University, Master of Music from Northwestern University, and a Bachelor of Music from DePaul University. She has studied percussion with members of the Chicago Symphony and international performing artists including Michael Burritt, Susan Powell, Ted Atkatz, Jim Ross and Michael Green. Dr. Smith is currently on faculty at the Flint School of Performing Arts in Flint, Michigan where she teaches private lessons to all ages, group beginning classes and the adult World Percussion class. In addition, she coaches the Flint Youth Symphony and Youth Wind Ensemble percussion sections and accompanies the Advanced Modern Dance class. Dr. Smith is a member of the French-American Chamber Orchestra, rotating yearly performances between Michigan and Lyon, France. Smith has also performed in several states in the Mid-West as well as in Ireland.

Dr. Smith's breast cancer activism began in May of 2007, when she signed up and began training for The Breast Cancer 3-Day. The 60-mile walk raises funds to benefit Susan G. Komen for the Cure and the National Philanthropic Trust Breast Cancer Fund. Smith was inspired to walk after previous research had helped her mother become a survivor in 2005 and she wanted to give something back. She trained over a hundred miles that summer and completed The 3-Day in Chicago in 2007 and again in 2008. In addition to raising a combined total of over \$6900, Smith has worked to raise awareness through personal contact and by presenting two annual recitals at the Flint School of Performing Arts. More information is available at www.smithmarimba.com.



Donations are welcome for all concerts, and are at 7 p.m. at Woodside Church, 1509 E. Court St. For reservations contact Dr. Quincy Dobbs at 810-767-4911.

Other Concert Dates for the Season:

January 16, 2009 benefits **Organ Donation Awareness**; March 13, 2009 benefits Awareness of the **Americans with Disabilities Act**; May 1, 2009 benefits **Heart Health Awareness**, including Blood Pressure and Cholesterol, which also benefits Stroke Awareness.

Elijah

The Community Church of Wilmette, 1020 Forest Avenue, Wilmette, will present a performance of Mendelssohn's oratorio *Elijah* on Friday, October 24, at 8:00 p.m. There is no admission charge. *Elijah* will be sung in the original English. The Choir is under the direction of Winifred Brown. It will be a great evening. Call the church for additional information. 847-256-4592.

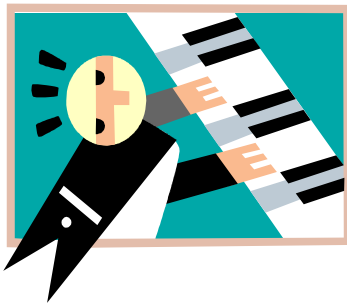
Pastor's Birthday

Saint John Church-Baptist will celebrate the 50th birthday of their pastor, Ricky Freeman, on Sunday, October 26, following the morning worship service. Happy birthday to Ricky from the entire ABCMC family.

Morgan Park to Install New Pastor

On Sunday, October 26th, at 3 p.m., the Rev. Dr. Thomas Aldworth will be installed as Pastor of Morgan Park Baptist Church. The speaker for the afternoon will be Dr. Larry Greenfield. All are invited. A reception will follow the service.

Concert in Flint



At The Good Beans Café, downtown Flint, on Grand Traverse at First Avenue, hear the mellow notes of Dr. Quincy Dobbs on piano and the sultry tones of Annie Oper on vocals.

You'll enjoy a selection of the Classic '40s-style' music that has been rediscovered by such greats as Linda Ronstadt, Rod Stewart, and Aaron Neville.

Absolutely free

(Tips are not required, but encouraged – In fact we may beg you for them)

Friday, November 7, from 7 to 9 p.m.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Children's Sabbath

Children's Sabbath this year will be observed on the weekend of October 17-19. ABCMC congregations are encouraged to observe Children's Sabbath in their worship services on Sunday, October 19.

Excellent resources are available for use in observing Children's Sabbath. "When Will We Hear Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Call to End Poverty in America?" is the title of the manual with educational and worship sources for this year. It can be obtained by calling 865-457-6466 or by visiting childrensdefensefund.org >Programs >Religious Action Program.

College Scholarship Fair

On Saturday, November 3, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., 100 Black Men of Chicago, Inc. will host its 2007 College Scholarship Fair. Students, parents, teachers and counselors are encouraged to attend. Over 125 colleges and universities will be participating. Students should bring 5-10 copies of each of the following: school transcript(s) or GED certificate; 2 different letters of reference; college entrance examination scores (ACT/SAT); an essay; their resume. For more information, please call 312-205-3340, or see your high school guidance counselor. To register on line, please visit the web site at www.100bmc.org.

ABCUSA NEWS

For additional articles from the American Baptist News Service, please visit <http://www.abc-usa.org/whoweare/newsservice.aspx>.

Puerto Rico Executive Minister Diaz-Montañez Retires

VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 10/03/08) — Rev. Dr. Cristino Diaz-Montañez retired September 30 as Executive Minister of the Iglesias Bautistas de Puerto Rico, the American Baptist region comprising approximately 100 churches and 25,000 resident members throughout Puerto Rico. Rev. Miriam Gutiérrez began serving as Interim Executive Minister on October 1.

Diaz-Montañez is from Gurabo, Puerto Rico, and was raised in the First Baptist Church of Gurabo. He has a Bachelor of Arts in Humanities from the University of Puerto Rico, a Master of Divinity from the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico, and a Doctorate of Ministry from McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago. He served as pastor in Santurce, Hato Nuevo de Gurabo, and Rio Piedras.

Diaz-Montañez presided over the Commission for Pastoral Relations and Ordination of the Baptist Churches of Puerto Rico, the alumni association of the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico where he was also a visiting professor, the Evangelical Council of Puerto Rico, and the Baptist Ministers Council of Puerto Rico.

While he served as pastor of the First Baptist Church of Rio Piedras, he was integral in planting a new church, the Égida Nave Alejandrina, and facilitated numerous other ministries. He traveled extensively to the United States for church matters, and to various countries in Central and South America, to Mexico, to several islands in the Caribbean, and to Israel.

Diaz-Montañez served as Vice-President of the Executive Committee of the Ministerial Council of the American Baptist Churches, and as the regional representative from Puerto Rico to the Hispanic Caucus when it was first established in Green Lake.

Outside of Baptist life, Diaz-Montañez worked for the Department of Public Education for eight years, and served as a member of various boards and committees of governmental agencies and of the medical science campus of the University of Puerto Rico.

Diaz-Montañez is married to Sara L. (Miriam) López, and has two sons, two daughters, five grandsons, and four granddaughters. He has served as the Executive Minister of the Iglesias Bautistas de Puerto Rico since November 1, 2001.

In commenting on his retirement, American Baptist General Secretary Dr. A. Roy Medley said, "The task of Executive Minister is not easy anywhere, and Puerto Rico offers its own unique challenges. However, through the tenure of Dr. Diaz-Montañez, many new missionaries have been sent out to other countries, the churches in Puerto Rico have remained strong in baptisms, the generosity of people in giving has continued and they have purchased a beautiful new facility for the churches. These are impressive achievements regardless of the context! It has been a wonderful personal joy to work with Cristino as he

has served Puerto Rico and ABC. I have loved his gentle ways and his Christ-like demeanor. I wish him all of God's blessings in retirement."

Rev. Miriam Gutiérrez will serve as interim Executive Minister. Gutiérrez has an Associate's Degree in Secretarial Sciences from Puerto Rico Junior College, a Bachelor of Arts in Political Sciences from the University of Puerto Rico, and a Master of Divinity from Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico. She has served as pastor of First Baptist Church of Humacao, Puerto Rico, and provided interim pastorates at Second Baptist Church of Loíza, Puerto Rico, and the Baptist Church of Celada, Puerto Rico.

Gutiérrez has a long and rich history in American Baptist life. She served the American Baptist General Board from 1978-1981, was a member of the ABCUSA General Secretary Search Committee from 1987-88, is the past President of the Baptist Churches of Puerto Rico, and served three terms as the President of the Puerto Rico Baptist Women. She was the editor for Judson Press and the Executive Secretary for the Evangelical Council of Churches of Puerto Rico, as well as having served as the Puerto Rico representative to—and treasurer for—the ABC Hispanic Caucus.

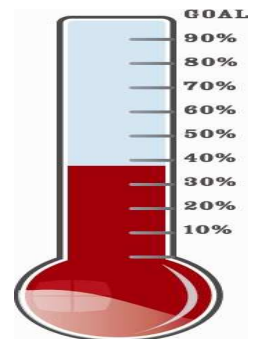
Gutiérrez has also been the Assistant to the President, and later adjunct professor of Baptist History, Principles and Practices, at the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico. She has been a workshop leader and facilitator for the Church Transformation Institute (Baptist Churches of Puerto Rico) and the Church Planting Institute (ABCUSA and Baptist Churches of Puerto Rico).

As she began her interim term, Dr. Medley reflected, "Rev. Gutiérrez will serve the churches of Puerto Rico well. Her call to this ministry reflects the deep respect and affection the churches have for her, and her long involvement with ABC means that she is no stranger to the larger American Baptist family and to the matters that lie before us. I look forward to working with Rev. Gutiérrez and pray that God will bless her ministry and our work together, for the sake of His kingdom."

Donate Now to the Center for Religious Liberty, DOUBLE your Money

Double your money in this economy? Where else can you get such a great return on your investment?! Only here.

The Baptist Joint Committee is at a critical juncture in its capital campaign to establish a Center for Religious Liberty on Capitol Hill. Thanks to a matching challenge by Patsy Ayres, we have the chance to double new **pledges or gifts** to the campaign made through October 31st. So far we have added **\$111,493** unmatched to the campaign fund as a result of this challenge. **But we need to raise more!**



Donate (<https://app.etapestry.com/hosted/BaptistJointCommitteeonPub/OnlineGiving.html>) or pledge (<http://www.bjconline.org/support/capitalcampaign/docs/Capital%20Campaign%20Matching%20Challenge%20Pledge%20Form.pdf>) to the campaign.

Currently, the BJC carries out its mission to defend and extend religious liberty from rented space on the third floor of a Washington, D.C., office building. The BJC is already a leading voice for religious liberty and church-state separation. A Center for Religious Liberty on Capitol Hill will help take the BJC to the next level.

Fund raising for the Center has been steady over the life of the campaign, with more than half of the needed \$5 million already pledged or given. Now is the time to respond to the challenge if you haven't already. Pledge your support for the BJC's Center for Religious Liberty on Capitol Hill. You have up to three years to pay off your pledge.

It is imperative that we all fortify ourselves for the fight for religious liberty. No matter the outcome of the

elections in November, threats to religious liberty will continue. The BJC must be there, standing strong for the First Amendment, for our children and grandchildren.

All contributions to the BJC are tax-deductible. Thanks for your support!

If you have questions, please contact Kristin Clifton by e-mail (kclifton@bjconline.org) or by phone at 202-544-4226.

New Life Center Featured on PBS Television Program

This article is from the International Ministries web site.

by Marlon Millner

September 30, 2008--Nationally acclaimed PBS television program, *Religion & Ethics Newsweekly*, recently featured the ministry of the New Life Center Foundation in Northern Thailand. This is not the first time the media has highlighted the more than 20 years of work by New Life, which works to rescue women and girls from the bondage of forced labor, slavery and prostitution.



American Baptist International Ministries missionaries Karen Smith and Kit Ripley work for the New Life Center Foundation. They both expressed hope that the television coverage in August would continue to raise awareness about the critical work New Life does among tribal girls and women in Thailand.

"My faith calls me, motivates me, and inspires me to work to create social and economic justice for all people," said Karen, who serves as program director at New Life. She has worked with the ministry since 1999. "The work of [New Life] is just a part of that call, that response to God's love. The story is a tribute to the incredible things that God is doing, and has done, over the past 20 years at the New Life Center."

New Life has received news coverage from print and television media in Thailand, Europe and the United States, since it was founded in 1987 by former American Baptist missionaries Paul and Elaine Lewis. Elaine recently passed away in May of this year, at age 86.

Lauran Bethell, a global consultant for abolishing human slavery based now in The Netherlands, also worked for several years at the New Life Center and was there at its beginnings. It was through Bethell that *Religion & Ethics Newsweekly* found out about New Life.





Karen said "The show's producer Nikki See had met Luran about 10 years ago. She followed up on this lead, which brought her to me and New Life." Nikki and her crew filmed the story back in June. The segment aired on the PBS program on Aug. 22, 2008.

Kit, who has served at New Life since 2002, said it was a major step for the tribal women to speak up and speak out.

"It took great courage for the young woman interviewed for this piece to tell her story publicly," Kit said. "But she was glad to have a chance to give

back to the New Life Center by sharing her story, and she hopes that by doing so, she will help prevent other girls from being exploited in the ways she was."

Kit, Karen and New Life also hope others will join in the struggle to make these stories of not just tribulation, but also of triumph.

"I hope that this story will increase viewers' understanding of the plight of tribal people in Northern Thailand," said Kit, "and will inspire them to actively participate in the struggle to oppose the exploitation of women and children globally."

View the program at the following link: <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/week1151/feature.html>

American Baptist International Ministries, organized in 1814, is the oldest Baptist mission agency formed in North America. We serve more than 2,500 short-term and long-term missionaries annually, bringing U.S. and Puerto Rico churches together with partners in 76 countries in cutting-edge ministries that tell the good news of Jesus Christ while meeting human needs.

Violence Against Christians Spreads Outside of Orissa State In India.



Ben Chan, International Ministries' (IM) Area Director for East Asia, India, Hong Kong and China writes: "The violence against Christians and Christian churches has spread outside Orissa State, India. Christian organizations including our partners BOBBCA (Bengal-Bihar-Orissa Baptist Churches' Association), NBCC (Nagaland Baptist Church Council) and CBCNEI (Council of Baptist Churches in North East India) have issued statements appealing to the Indian Government for its intervention. Our partners and IM are also providing relief to the victims. Pray for God to intervene in this escalating persecution of our Christian brothers and sisters in India.

HEALTH CARE NEWS

Send a Clear Message to Your State Legislator

The Illinois Health Care Justice Campaign invites you and your congregation to participate in their statewide postcard campaign. Tens of thousands of Illinoisans this fall will be sending a clear message to their state legislators.

The excuse that many legislators use is "I'm not hearing from my constituents. Let's put that to rest once and for all. It's time to raise our voices to demand accessible, affordable and guaranteed health care for everyone. Members of the Illinois General Assembly must step up to the plate and pass comprehensive health care reform next year, to encourage the federal government to take action on the national level.

The Illinois Campaign for Better Health Care has postcards that you can order and use to contact your state legislators, and urge them to work for better health care. Each post card is already addressed to the state capitol; you need only add your return address and state legislator's name to the address side of the card. The message on each post card reads:

Dear State Legislator _____

Our healthcare system is broken. We're all paying more while the insurance companies are making record profits and denying coverage at historic levels. Every year means more Illinois families and businesses can't afford to pay for health care.

Illinois deserves better. We believe in shared opportunities and Shared responsibilities. We're in this together and we need to fix our healthcare system. We want a healthcare system that's accessible, affordable, and guaranteed for all of us. We need action NOW!

Sincerely,

You can order post cards by email at cbhc-cu@cbhconline.org, or by regular mail at Campaign for Better Health Care, 44 E. Main Street, Suite 414, Champaign, IL 61820. Specify how many post cards you would like. The organization requests a donation of \$5 to cover the cost of each 100 post cards.

Health Care Sabbath Is this Weekend

It is impossible to quantify the amount of suffering, frustration, and disparities in communities across the state of Illinois when it comes to health care. With so many other burning issues demanding our utmost attention these days, access to affordable and quality health care seems to be relegated a lesser priority. The reality of the situation, though, is that communities and families across the state are struggling with the rising costs of health care.

The tough question that we need to ask ourselves is: "Can we, in good conscience, continue down this broken path that leaves families and individuals without adequate coverage?" It is time to acknowledge that our health care system is broken. We cannot afford to do nothing. The rising cost of health care in this state is causing economic hardships for hard-working families all over the state. The rising cost of health care is having an adverse effect not only on families and communities, but on the state budget as well. Something must be done. Illinois can do so much better. Wouldn't it be great to see Illinois take strong leadership on health care reform?

You and your congregation are encouraged to participate in this year's Health Care Sabbath. You can determine to what extent you wish to get involved. Each congregation will approach the Sabbath differently, and according to their own values. This is an opportunity for the faith community to raise awareness on health care justice, and a way for congregations to get involved to help make a difference.

To find out more about how to get involved, please download the free online faith-based advocacy tool kit now at www.cbhconline.org

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please pray for World peace.

Please hold in prayer the people in India, who are in the midst of a season of sectarian danger and violence. Please pray also for those from International Ministries giving them support at this time.

Please pray for ABC missionaries Annie and Jeff Dieselberg in Thailand. Annie works with NightLight Design Co. Ltd., a business-as-mission, which employs and empowers women affected by the sex trade in Bangkok. Jeff teaches urban ministry with a team of Thai pastors at three Bangkok seminaries and is a chaplain at NightLight.

Please lift up in prayer the children and women who are being ministered with at the House of Love and House of Blessing in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

Please pray for those who are dealing with the aftermath of flooding in our area.

CALENDAR

October 16—Faith and Health Summit, DePaul Center, 333 S. State Street, Chicago, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Register at www.advocatehealth.com/seminars or 1-800-3ADVOCATE.

October 17-19—Children's Sabbath. Please observe Children's Sabbath in your congregation on Sunday, October 19. For resources and additional information, please visit childrensdefensefund.org >Programs >Religious Action Program.

October 17-19--Health Care Sabbath. Please observe Health Care Sabbath in your congregation on Sunday, October 19. Please contact Eric Quamme (equamme@ilmaternal.org) or Jonathan VanderBrug (jvanderbrug@cbhconline.org) for more information. For a toolkit, please go to <http://www.cbhconline.org/index.html>.

October 18—Program on the Israel lobby, Oak Park Public Library, 834 Lake Street, Oak Park, 2:30 p.m.

October 18—Peace Vigil, Northwest Highway and Hicks Road, Palatine, 3-4 p.m.

October 21--Finance and Property Committee meeting, Wunderlich Securities office, 200 W. Madison, Suite 2950, Chicago, 3 p.m.

October 21-22—Conference of Baptist Leaders from Burma, October 21-22, at the Chin Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas.

October 24—Concert for Breast Care Awareness Month, Woodside Church, 1509 E. Court Street, Flint, Michigan, 7 p.m.

October 24— Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Church of Wilmette, 1020 Forest Avenue, Wilmette, 8 p.m.

October 25—Benefit concert for Iraqi Refugees, 7 p.m. at St. Gertrude Social Hall, 1401 W. Granville Avenue, Chicago.

October 26—Installation of Thomas Aldworth as pastor of Morgan Park Baptist Church, 11025 S. Bell Avenue, Chicago, 3 p.m.

October 27-28—McCormick Days 2008 program on the Emerging Church. For more information, please visit www.mccormick.edu

November 1—Workshop with Ken Medema, Rockford. For more information, please contact Mark Vincent by e-mail: marklv@DesignForMinistry.com or marklv@DesignForBusinessIntl.com or phone: 877-771-3330 or 888-463-9995.

November 7—Concert by Quincy Dobbs and Annie Oper of Woodside Church, The Good Beans Café, downtown Flint, Grand Traverse at First Ave, 7-9 p.m.

November 8—ABCMC Annual Meeting, Morgan Park Baptist Church, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. (registration begins at 8:30 a.m.). This year's theme will be "Disparity and Difference: New Testament Perspectives and Imperatives."

November 8—Cook County Jail Ministry 30th Anniversary Celebration, First Baptist Church of Oak Park, 820 Ontario Street, Oak Park, 6 p.m.

November 12—Kids Hope United Annual Dinner, law firm of Drinker Biddle, 191 North Wacker Drive, Suite 3700, Chicago (in the Loop), 6 p.m.

November 18--Finance and Property Committee meeting, Wunderlich Securities office, 200 W. Madison, Suite 2950, Chicago, 3 p.m.

November 25—Annual Meeting, Illinois Campaign for Better Health Care, Holiday Inn Mart Plaza, 350 West Mart Center Drive, Chicago, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Please contact Kathleen Duffy at 312-913-9449 or kduffy@cbhconline.org for more information.

December 13—2nd Annual ABCMC Christmas/Advent Season Music Festival, Irving Park Baptist Church, 4401 W. Irving Park Road, Chicago, 3:30 p.m.

December 20--Finance and Property Committee meeting, Wunderlich Securities office, 200 W. Madison, Suite 2950, Chicago, 3 p.m.

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 email the newsletter each Wednesday. We welcome your news, prayer requests and comments. Please email your communications to the editor, Lynne Kelley, at lynne@abcmc.org. If you spot a typographical error or other mistake in *eWind*, please let us know at the ABCMC office, 773-804-1655. The ABCMC office is at 7035 W. Grand Avenue, Suite 102, Chicago, Illinois 60707

Thinking Theologically



Reflections

Vol VII no. 22, October 10, 2008

Thinking Theologically About the Common Good

*Reflections on theology, scripture, and public life
from the Rev. Larry Greenfield.*

"Yoked"

Today, looking out the window to the north of my lifelong friend's apartment, I see the roof of the Baptist church where, as a child, I was nurtured in the Christian faith. (I'm back in my hometown for a reunion weekend.)

My parents, some six-five years ago, had decided they needed to leave the East Side Presbyterian Church in Sioux Falls (South Dakota) because its Christian education program wasn't up to snuff for their only and much-delayed child. They shopped around, not for great preachers, but for an outstanding Sunday school program.

The First Baptist Church of Sioux Falls met the bill.

In addition to the classes for kids that met on Sunday morning and programs for them on Wednesday night, while the adults were attending prayer meeting, the church offered an array of programs at other times of the week that mixed fun and spiritual formation.

One of those programs that now comes back to mind provided the young members with a silver ring with the initials "IAH" – for "I Am His" – which the leaders hoped would be a regular reminder at home, at school, and at play that something extra would be expected of those of us who belonged to Jesus. The curriculum for the program's Saturday morning meetings made it plain, among other things, that those of us enrolled ought to help each other maintain the religious commitments we were making. We had, that is, a responsibility not just to Jesus but also to each other and to others who might need our help.

One of the Bible verses we were required to memorize came from Paul's letter to the Philippians:

Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. (4:8-9)

Part of every session on those Saturday mornings was to "think about these things." A few years later that same church became a part of a national program, founded by theologian and philosopher Elton Trueblood of Earlham College, called the Yokefellow movement, based on his meditation on Matthew 11: 28-30.

Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give

you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

The idea wasn't all that different from what we kids had experienced in IAH. It was to establish a Christian discipline for life that included daily Bible reading and prayer, weekly worship, generous giving, rigorous study, unapologetic witnessing, and active engagement in service to and with others.

And it also included a piece of jewelry. Not a ring but a lapel pin – not surprisingly, the replica of a yoke – the wooden kind you associate with a team of oxen.

Again, this obviously wasn't a kind of spiritual discipline that was limited to one's self; by name and symbol and practice, this was something one did by being "yoked" with others – "yokefellows" – and for others.

And, as it happens, Paul uses that term "yokefellows" in that same section of his letter to the Philippians (the one that we had memorized in IAH) to urge that they overcome their differences and to work together – yoked – in the cause of the Gospel. (4: 3)

I've long since lost my IAH ring and my Yokefellow lapel pin, but what they represented about the Christian faith has stuck over the decades: the Christian life is something we do together, with others and for others.

* * * * *

Today, whenever we think about "whatever is just" we can't escape thinking about the *injustice* of the millions upon millions of our fellow human beings in this country and around the world who are being denied something as basic as health care – at a time when advances in the health care could produce astounding results for those who now lack it, if only it were accessible and affordable.

Do we really need a ring or a lapel pin to remind of us of what is required of those who confess that we belong to Jesus?

Shouldn't it be increasingly clear that we need to find ways of overcoming our differences over – and our indifferences to – health care reform?

Shouldn't it be clear that we need to be looking for that yoke that Jesus promised? If and when we find it, we could then figure out how to put that yoke on. And maybe then we could start pulling together – yoked – so the burden of suffering would be eased.

My guess it that all of that searching, and figuring, and pulling together is most likely to happen in churches, similar to the one I'm looking out at now, where kids and adults learn together to "think about these things."

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