

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

December 17, 2008

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ABCMC NEWS

Celebrating Christmas in Music and Song

By Lowell Young, ABCMC Mission Support Associate

On the afternoon of Saturday, December 13, more than 100 people attended ABCMC's second annual Celebration of the Christmas Season in Music and Song at Irving Park Baptist Church in Chicago.

The afternoon featured a wide variety of music, ranging from piano and vocal solos, to rousing, up-beat sets by a couple of guitar playing vocal groups, to the sweet, innocent voices of a children's choir, to the more mature voices of a couple of adult choirs.

The participating churches were: Central Spanish Baptist Church; Community Church of Wilmette; First Baptist Church of Berwyn; First Baptist Church of Chicago; Irving Park Baptist Church; Lake Street Church, Evanston; and North Shore Spanish Baptist Church.

The 100+ attendees were not left to sit and merely observe the proceedings. For the program opened with the mass singing (in both Spanish and English) of A Medley of Songs of the Christmas Season and concluded with a mass, unrehearsed singing of Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus".

Sincerest thanks to all the participants in the program. ABCMC also thanks Irving Park Baptist Church for hosting the event. And special thanks to Virginia Prince, musical director of First Baptist Church of Chicago, who for the second year in a row flawlessly conducted the singing of the "Hallelujah Chorus", and to Aurora Ramos, musical director of North Shore Spanish Baptist Church, who duplicated last year's wonderful job as the "Hallelujah Chorus" pianist.

All in all, it was a day to cherish and remember. Surely the presence of the spirit of The Lord was felt by all in attendance. Those who were not there missed something very, very special.

For all non-attendees, however, all is not lost, since the program was recorded. Anyone wishing to hear the musical highlights of the program is asked to go to www.irvingparkbaptistchurch.org, and then go to audio sermons. See for yourself what a wonderful event it was.

Oh yes, circle Saturday, December 12, 2009 on your calendar, the date of the Third Annual ABCMC Celebration of the Christmas Season in Music and Song.

PLEASE NOTE: The event Program is attached with this issue of *eWind*. Please also read Executive Minister Larry Greenfield's welcoming remarks (below).

Welcoming Remarks

Welcome to the Second Annual Celebration of the
Advent and Christmas Seasons in Music and Song
Larry Greenfield, Executive Minister

On behalf of the American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago, I welcome you to this festival of our sharing our faith together in music and song during this season of anticipation and joy.

If you're anything like me, I need this time together. Already I'm caught in the hectic holiday routines, not all that mindful of the meaning of it all.

So I need a time to ask myself: what's this all about?

Or suppose someone were to stop me on the street and ask that question: tell me concisely, sir, what's all this about? What would I say to that person?

I hope I would respond by making four statements:

First, despite our typically thinking of God as high above, or far way, or way beyond us, the Christian truth declares that God is with us, near us, even among us, not just occasionally but always. This is the season to remind ourselves of that truth, to make us confront that truth, to celebrate that truth.

Second, despite our typically wanting to reduce our faith to just God being with me – just God and me – the Christian truth declares that God wants all of us to be together, that we are to be near to each other. This is the season to put that truth into reality – to incarnate it, as it were.

Third, despite our typically wanting to be together with those who are a lot like us, just like most other organizations, the Christian truth declares that God expects us to be different by being together with all of our differences. This is the season to break out of the patterns and habits of sameness and be re-formed into a whole and holy family of all of God's children.

Fourth, despite our typically letting ourselves get into squabbles and spats whenever we get together – as well as when we are apart – with all our differences, the Christian truth declares that God expects us to love and care for one another, even our enemies, like God loves and cares for all of us individually and together. This is the season to show, to incarnate, to make real that love and care for one another.

So we're here together to be a revelation about the truths of our faith to ourselves and to the world.

And what better way to do that than to sing the songs of the season together!

Great Fundraising Opportunity for the ABC Chicago Metro Region

The De Paul vs. Cincinnati men's college basketball game on Saturday, January 17, 2009 at 1:00 PM at the All State Arena in Rosemont, IL will be a fundraiser for the ABC Chicago Metro Region. In order to succeed, this Regional fundraiser needs the support of ABCMC churches.

More specifically, the Chicago Metro Region will purchase a bloc of tickets at \$5.00 each for the 01/17/09 De Paul vs. Cincinnati game. ABCMC churches will be asked to purchase from 5 to 10 tickets for that game from the Region at the face value price of \$20.00 each and then to sell these tickets for the same face value price. This will result in the Region securing its profit, while each participating ABCMC church will get its original investment (ranging from \$100.00 to \$200.00) back in full!

Doing this not only will help the Chicago Metro Region, it will also help each participating ABCMC church lay the groundwork for success with its own De Paul fundraising game. In other words, since they will have experienced first hand the fun and excitement of a De Paul Big East Conference men's college basketball game, the 5 to 10 individuals from a particular ABCMC church who attend the Cincinnati game will be better able to encourage others from their church to attend their own church's De Paul fundraising game and to promote the sale of tickets for that game.

ABCMC churches interested in supporting the Chicago Metro Region by purchasing 5-10 tickets for the January 17, 2009 De Paul vs. Cincinnati game are asked to call Lowell Young, ABCMC Mission Support Associate, at 773-370-2003 or to e-mail him at younglowell@aol.com.

NEWS FROM ABCMC CONGREGATIONS

How We Are Putting Our People to Work

Thank you to Keith Cerk, co-pastor of the First Baptist Church of Waukegan, for this article.

Our nation is currently going through its worst economic crisis since the Great Depression in the 1930's. Countless families across the entire country have been dealt a serious blow to their well-being as their financial stability has been lost. Many hard-working bread-winners who thought they had secure jobs are now swallowing the bitter pill of unemployment. Both women and men are finding their self-esteem and emotional health shredded by an inability to be adequate providers for their families. Those already stressed families who were of low income to begin with have been hit especially hard. Churches too are feeling the pinch, for when member income drops so too does member giving.

At First Baptist Church in Waukegan we are observing firsthand the heavy toll our nation's economic crisis is exacting on our own people; and yes, on our church budget as well. While 2007 was a comfortable surplus year for us financially, 2008 was a year of serious deficit as many of our members lost their income. What creative pastoral response can we make to facilitate financial relief, along with the dignity of self-sufficiency through work, to our struggling families?

The wheels began to turn as God began to inspire, with the result being a new ministry designed to put our people back in the workforce. As we recognized that some of our currently unemployed men and women are quite handy, possessing various maintenance skills and certifications, we have decided to go into business and provide work for them ourselves!! Our workers-for-hire have the capability to do such things as church or household cleaning, painting, drywall, plastering and miscellaneous repair work including electrical, heating and cooling. They are respected members of our church who have demonstrated impeccable character and have undergone background checks. Our promise is to provide excellent work at a reasonable price. The smile that comes with our service is free of charge.

First Baptist Waukegan pastors Keith Cerk and Jorge Zayasbazan would appreciate it greatly if our fellow pastors and their congregations would think of us when it comes time to call a maintenance person to do a job. Referrals are vital to making this new business venture successful. Contact Marvin or David at our church office (847-623-2821). Please keep us in your prayers, as we will likewise be keeping you in ours. With mutual support and God's help, we will all weather this financial crisis. Thank you.

Financial Secretary Needed

North Shore Baptist Church has an opening for the part-time position of Financial Secretary. Please contact Ron Barlow, Administrator, for further information. Tel. 773-728-4200, ext. 22; FAX 773-728-1582; e-mail: rbarlow@northshorebaptist.org.

God-Talk 101

Beginning Sunday, January 18, the Community Church of Wilmette will present "God-Talk 101: An Honest Look at Tough Questions." This five-week course will be led by Dr. Cate Wallace at noon each Sunday. Each session will take place at the church, 1020 Forest Avenue, Wilmette. The class schedule and other information are on the flier attached with this issue of *eWind*. A brief course outline is posted at 222.godtalk101.blogspot.com. You are welcome to contact Dr. Wallace directly with any questions through the contact page at her web site, www.CatherineMWWallace.com. For more information, please phone the church at 847-251-4370.

COMMUNITY NEWS

2009 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

On Sunday, January 18, 2009 at 4 p.m., the Ecumenical Millennium Committee will host the 9th Annual Chicagoland Ecumenical Prayer Service in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The service will take place at St. Paul Chong Ha Sang Korean Catholic Mission, 675 Dursey Lane, Des Plaines. The preacher will be the Rt. Rev. Victor A. Scantlebury, Assistant Bishop, the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago.

Participating presiding leaders who will participate in the service include ABCMC's Executive Minister Larry Greenfield. The service will be open to everyone.

Mission Conference at the Divinity School

You are invited to the next Border Crossing conference at the University of Chicago Divinity School, on Friday, January 23. "Resisting Mission: Redefining Engagement" will look how globalization is leading Christian churches, other religious communities, and non-religious organizations to rethink the meaning of mission. The conference will feature a keynote from Lamin Sanneh, a leading scholar of global Christianity from Yale University, with panels of scholars and mission leaders reflecting on practice. Seminary students, anthropologists of religion, theologians, and clergy will all be challenged by the discussion.

The conference will be from 10 AM to 4 PM on Friday, January 23, in Swift Hall (on 58th Street between University and Ellis Avenues in Chicago) at the University of Chicago. Registration is free; lunch is included for all who register before January 19.

You can find more information at <http://divinity.uchicago.edu/programs/mission.shtml>
You can register at lillyconference@gmail.com

Christmas Shopping

Many of us like to remember the generosity of visitors who brought gifts to the infant Jesus, and commemorate their actions with gifts to friends and loved ones. Perhaps you have finished your Christmas shopping for this year. Maybe you decided not to give gifts due to economic pressures. Maybe you're still looking for good ideas. There are many possible approaches to Christmas presents in addition to personal gifts beautifully wrapped and placed under a festive tree. Maybe you'd like to draw on a different philosophy of gift-giving.

Advent Conspiracy

Visit www.adventconspiracy.org for an outlook on celebrating Advent and Christmas in ways that will let you:

Worship Fully
Spend Less
Give More
Love All

This web site presents an organization in which congregations may participate. The Advent Conspiracy web site can lead you to other places on the internet to help enhance your celebration of the season. This issue of *eWind* offers you some ideas, too.

Give a Goat

Wouldn't someone on your gift list love to receive a goat for Christmas? Or some baby chicks? Maybe your loved ones don't have room at home to raise animals, but they'd probably love to help someone who has the space and needs the livestock.

Heifer Project International helps impoverished families worldwide become more self-reliant through the gift of livestock and training in their care. Oxfam International has a similar program. So does World Vision. One goat can provide quarts of nutritious milk each day. A hen can lay 200 protein-rich eggs a year, so the hen's owner will have plenty of eggs to eat, share or sell. Visit www.heifer.org or http://donate.worldvision.org/OA_HTML/xxwv2ibeCCTpSctDspRte.jsp?section=10389 or

<http://www.oxfam.org/en/getinvolved/unwrapped> to learn more about helping those in need by giving to your friends who already have everything they want.

The Academy for the Common Good in 2009

Seeking a place and way to make a difference?

Wondering how to bring faith to public life?

Protestants for the Common Good announces the 2009 program offerings of the Academy for the Common Good. The program provides education to help persons explore the place of Christian faith in social, economic and political life, and bring biblical and theological perspectives to the evaluation of public policy. The Academy is a faith-based approach to developing social justice leadership in both congregational and public ministry.

The winter program will be held at **Glenview Community Church**, starting in January. The Downtown program will be at The **Chicago Temple**, also starting in January. The spring program will be located at **Third Baptist Church** in Chicago beginning in April. The fall program will be in Elgin at **Epworth United Methodist Church**, beginning in September. *Enrollment is limited.* For more information and registration, go online to www.thecommongood.org and click on "Academy for the Common Good," or contact Douglas Sharp, Dean of the Academy, at douglas.sharp@thecommongood.org, (312) 223-9544, x234. Attached to this issue of eWind is a flyer suitable for use as a bulletin insert.

ABCUSA NEWS

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

HEALTH CARE NEWS

Health Care Reform

This article is from the Illinois Campaign for Better Health Care.

President-Elect Barack Obama is asking Americans to join in a national discussion on health care reform. Through their website, Change.gov, the Obama transition team has created an easy way to make your voice heard. Below you will find the principles that CBHC members have agreed are essential for any health care reform plan. We encourage you to use the online form at Change.gov and add this list of principles to your comments in the box marked "Share your thoughts".

These principles are some of the key components that need to be contained in the final health care plan. Whether at the national or state level, we will be judging proposals based on these principles.

Steps to take:

1. Copy the principles listed below
2. [Click here to go to the comment form at Change.gov](#)
3. Paste the principles into the box marked "Share your thoughts"
4. Add any additional comments that you want to make

Health Care Justice Campaign Principles for Affordable, Accessible, Guaranteed Health Care

Accessible:

1. Is accessible for all Illinois residents
2. Provides comprehensive benefits, including and not limited to benefits for mental health, in-home care, long term care, dentistry, and vision

3. Fosters a network of health care facilities, including public health, community providers and other safety net providers
4. Ensures continuity of coverage and continuity of care
5. Maximizes consumer choice of health care providers and practitioners
6. Addresses the needs of people with special care health care needs and under-served populations aim rural and urban areas

Affordable (fairness):

1. Is affordable to individuals, families, businesses and taxpayers and that removes financial barriers to needed care
2. Provides adequate and timely payments by all payers in order to guarantee access to providers

Quality:

1. Promotes fairness, quality and evidence based health outcomes
2. Promotes prevention and early intervention
3. Eliminates disparities in access to quality health care
4. Addresses the need to have adequate numbers of qualified health care caregivers, practitioners, and providers to guarantee timely access to quality care
5. Provides opportunities for consumer, business, provider, and others involvement in the oversight

Cost Containment:

1. Is as cost efficient as possible, spending the maximum amount of dollars on direct patient care
2. Is easy for patients, providers and practitioners to use and reduces paperwork

[Go to Change.gov](#) to make sure your principles are part of the national discussion on health care reform!

Coping with Mental Illness

Thank you to Wendy Morris for sharing this information.

Do you know about <http://www.mentalhealthministries.net/> - This website has a resource for people struggling with mental illness, and members of their families and communities of faith, on "Coping with the Holidays." It can be downloaded in English and Spanish. Mayra Castaneda called it to my attention.

PEACE NEWS

Support the Baptist Peace Fellowship with Christmas Music

An American Baptist pastor and her family were looking for a way to contribute to the work of the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America (BPFNA). Rev. Wendy Fambro and her husband, professional musician Miché Fambro, decided that his new Christmas CD was the perfect opportunity to share music and Spirit with those who do the work of peace through the BPFNA and to help support that work financially.

Miché's new CD, *A Christmas Mood*, includes his interpretations of several holiday favorites. He lends his rich voice and smooth jazz stylings to favorites from "I'll Be Home for Christmas" to "Christmas Time Is Here" and to more intimate selections like "For Always" and "I Remember Love".

A Christmas Mood is available for immediate download, or as a regular CD. It can be heard, purchased and downloaded at www.miche.com, and \$1 of each CD sold during December will go directly to BPFNA.

Peace Vigil

A peace vigil will take place this coming Saturday, December 21, 3-4 p.m., at the intersection of Hicks Road and Northwest Highway, Palatine. Signs will be available, or bring your own.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please pray for world peace.

Please hold the people of India in prayer.

Please pray for our state and our governmental leaders in this time of uncertainty following the arrest of the governor of Illinois on charges of corruption.

Please remember in prayer and action those who do not have adequate shelter and warm clothing in this season.

Please pray for—and contribute to—food pantries that help deal with hunger in these difficult economic times.

Please hold in prayer those who are working to reform our nation's health care system—and become one of them if you feel so led.

Please pray for ABC missionaries Jan and Larry Martin serving in rural Thailand.

Please pray for IM volunteer missionary Fred Tanner. Fred is resident of Rhode Island. For one year he is serving as a volunteer in the Dominican Republic.

Please pray for ABC missionary Judy Sutterlin in China.

Please pray for ABC medical missionaries Nancy and Steve James ministering in Haiti.

CALENDAR

December 20—Family Cabinet Meeting, Morgan Park Baptist Church, 11024 S. Bell Avenue, Chicago.

January 18-February 15—“God-Talk 101” course, Community Church of Wilmette, 1020 Forest Avenue, Wilmette, Sundays, noon.

January 18, 2009—9th Annual Chicagoland Ecumenical Prayer Service for Christian Unity, St. Paul Chong Ha Sang Korean Catholic Mission, 675 Dursey Lane, Des Plaines, 4 p.m.

January 23, 2009—Mission Conference, Divinity School, University of Chicago, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
You can find more information at <http://divinity.uchicago.edu/programs/mission.shtml>
You can register at lillyconference@gmail.com

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