



THE ARK

Volume 18, No. 1 News from the Akron Area Association of American Baptist Churches Spring 2018

MODERATOR'S MESSAGE



Good Bye Winter – Hello Spring!

Perhaps we all have short memories of years past or perhaps we did have an extra-long winter this year? I'm wondering if we shouldn't take up litigation with that little critter Punxsutawney Phil who predicted six more weeks of winter when it was more like ten. I believe this year was an epic groundhog fail. It seemed like the cold snowy days would never end. But as the calendar turns to May and you unfold the pages of this spring newsletter, rest assured that warmer, sunshine filled days are on the horizon.

Open the scriptures to Song of Solomon 2:11-12 and you will read, "For behold, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land." I have already seen the daffodil's bloom and dance in the sunshine. Perhaps some tulips will soon show their colors as well. During the mornings, I hear the birds singing outside my bedroom window. A beautiful spring has dawned upon us and banished the chill of winter and all its discomfort.

Writers will sometimes use winter as a description of our spiritual state or condition before coming to Christ. Before our conversion we exist in a time of darkness, coldness, and unfruitfulness. Often our

hearts are frozen cold, and we look like trees in the winter. When spring arrives, the light and love of Christ breaks through and melts our hearts for God. We become trees that can bear fruit. John 15:5 says, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

Allow me to encourage you to take inventory of this season in your life. If you have spiritually felt like it was winter, don't get stuck there. Allow the light of Christ to break through once again. Nourish your soul with His living water and discover how Christ is calling you to bear fruit. As Jesus goes on to say in John 15:8, "This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples." Say goodbye to the winter of your soul and hello to spring!



Pastor Kevin K. Thomas

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CHURCHES IN THE NEWS

Spring 2018



By Joyce Crislip

Trinity in North Canton held a movie night on January 20 featuring the movie "The Case for Christ". Refreshments were available.

Canton First children, with a desire to be artists, have an opportunity to learn from a retired elementary school art teacher. The "Faithful Young Artists" group meets the second and fourth Thursdays at the church. Various kinds of media are being used ---paint, clay, cloth, etc.

In January a group of members from **Massillon First** flew to Punta Cana, Dominican Republic where they worked with members of the Iglesia Bautista Aguas De Siloe church. They helped move 20 tons of rocks and dirt to level the floor of a multipurpose room which will be used for worship, athletics, classes and many other activities. Later in the week, the group toured a sugar plantation, observing the great poverty in which the workers' families of the plantation existed. And, near the end of the trip, they had a Vacation Bible School program that hosted over 650 people!

In February, **Trinity** held a Super Bowl Watching Party. A group of friends and church family "hung out" and enjoyed the game on two big screen TVs. Wonder if they all rooted for the same team. There was also the 19th annual Flag Football game in the afternoon.

In 2017, the Kingdom Krafters at **Massillon First** made and delivered 560 hats, 304 lap robes, 18 baby blankets and 200 dish cloths to Pregnancy Choices, Salvation Army, Faith in Action and nursing homes and chemo centers in the Massillon area.

The Children's Ministry Leadership Team at **Canton First** sponsored a special seminar called "Keeping Up with Kids Today" for all Children's

Ministry staff and volunteers. Parents, grandparents and friends were welcome to attend, too. The purpose was to learn the terminology and methods currently being used in providing assistance for special needs children.

The annual Chili Cook Off was held Saturday, February 24th at **Trinity**. Eight cooks volunteered to bring their favorite pot of chili. Participants included Shari Probst, Lisa Rodgers, Marcie Pots, Stefanie Spicer, Bill Kerr, Ellen Stauffer, Mark Stauffer and Steve Cope. Winners were: 1st-Mark Stauffer, 2nd-Darryl Saxby, 3rd-Ellen Stauffer, 4th-Shari Probst.

Massillon First is searching for van drivers for their Van Ministry which provides transportation for attendees who don't have their own transportation.

A free movie night was held on March 4 at **Canton First**. The movie was titled "A Case for Christ". This popular movie tells about an investigative reporter, Lee Strobel, who tries to disprove the claims of Christianity.

Youth at **Trinity** attended the "Love Is Red" Youth Conference Tour at Faith Family Church in March. The three-day event was designed for junior high, high school, college-age ministry and worship leaders. It hoped to inspire students and develop leaders to know Christ and make Him known.

Canton First held Wednesday Night Meal Fellowships in February. The meals were followed by adult Bible studies.

A free one-day seminar was held in the Carriage House of **Massillon First** on Saturday, April 21 from 9am to 3pm. Attendees learned helpful information and training to be Stephen Ministers.

The **Canton First** members held an Easter Egg Hunt for children 12 and under on Saturday, March 31. There were games, snacks and prizes as well as eggs!

Trinity held Sunrise Service, Easter Breakfast and Morning worship which included hymns, praise music, Easter meditation and the Lord's Supper. *Joyce*

American Baptist Churches of Ohio



Dear ABC/Ohio Pastors, ARMS, and Member Congregations:

I am writing a letter I never imagined I would be writing, yet the premature passing of our Executive Minister, Rev. Dr. Ernest H. Jones, has left the Region without an Executive Minister. It was truly a blessing to know Dr. Jones as both a colleague and friend. I, along with the entire ABC/Ohio family, grieve this loss, and will pray for Denise and the entire Jones family in their grief. We pray for God's comfort and strength as they discover what lies ahead in their new chapter of life. Dr. Jones and Denise will always be a part of the ABC/Ohio family.

As I begin this ministry as your Interim Executive Minister, I want you to know that I do so knowing that the Region is in a season of transition, and my role as an Interim is to guide the Region through the transition as you seek God's direction towards calling a new Executive Minister. While the position of Interim Executive Minister is temporary, there are specific things that I plan to focus on.

First, and foremost, due to the nature of this transition, with the passing of Dr. Jones, I will provide leadership and pastoral care to the Region Staff, Board of Region Ministries, ABC/Ohio clergy, and congregations. The Region needs a time of God's grace to walk through the season of grief and experience God's healing. It will take time and include opportunities to express our grief and discover God's new direction for our life together. This pastoral care will receive my top attention.

My first three months call for two days per week. I

plan to have one set day per week to be in the ABC/Ohio Office in Granville. This will be Monday. The second day will be a flexible day to accommodate the Region calendar and opportunities to connect with pastor's fellowship groups, and other gatherings. I hope to connect with as many of you as possible in this transition season. You are always welcome to call me at the Region office, 740-587-0804, or contact me at <http://abc-ohio.org>. I plan to communicate with you regularly to keep you up to date with the Region's progress.

I also will be working with the Region Staff, Board, and Executive Committee to address the most pressing needs as the Region moves forward. I appreciate the confidence expressed by Rev. James Willis, Region President, and the ABC/Ohio Board in extending the call to be your Interim Executive Minister. I look forward to sharing ministry with the Region Staff, Rev. Jane Gibbons, Rev. Mark Click, and Mrs. Leslie Hoskinson. They have carried a heavy load the many months of Dr. Jones' illness. Together we will serve the Lord and the Region. We will walk by faith in serving Christ and you.

I close by asking that you covenant to pray for me, and this beloved Region in your prayers as ABC/Ohio is "Discovering God's Plan." Remember God's promise in Jeremiah 29:11, which says, "I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Let us prayerfully discover the future together.

In Christ,
Rev. Dr. Lawrence
Interim Executive Minister



KOINONIA CAMP AND CONFERENCE CENTER



Randy and Lori

1 Corinthians 11:1 - "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ."

Over the years I have had the privilege of working with some amazing camp counselors. Some of them have been short others very tall. Some of them could sing like angels and others couldn't tune a radio. One guy could tell stories that kept children on the edge of their seats, while another was so shy she barely spoke. A few of them so enjoyed mud games that they were the first in and the last out of the mud pit. Still some of them every year developed illnesses or injuries just moments before mud game. Some were athletic and others had two left feet. Some of them have been young and others a lot more seasoned.

Fantastic counselors come in all shapes and sizes. Each of those men and women who were such amazing counselors had different gifts and talents. Some of them loved working with horses, others loved spending time with Jr. High Campers. It has never ceased to amaze me how God uses such a wide variety of people to fill the needs of campers.

It seems the requirements to be an outstanding counselor has little to do with looks, or abilities or even physical stature. As I survey those counselors who have filled the roll of being "Life Changers," they all had only one thing in common. Every outstanding, fantastic, amazing counselor has been following Jesus and wanted the campers to do the same thing.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church that they should follow his example as he followed the example of Christ. To be an extraordinary

summer camp counselor, it takes following Christ with all of your life. I am inviting you to come and allow God to use all of the gifts and talents that he has given you to help change lives with Christ.

As an ending, I want to tell you about a counselor named Fonty. Fonty was a well-seasoned counselor. He no longer had the physical ability to run or play games. He didn't play guitar or have an amazing singing voice. He wasn't all that artistic. But what Fonty was able to do was pray. And pray Fonty did. He carried a notebook and he talked to campers and he spent time listening to everyone. And then Fonty prayed and prayed and prayed. The moral of the story: Don't ever count yourself out. Fonty's example has encouraged me since I was a camper in high school and someday I hope to have the impact on another that Fonty had on so many others.

Eyes on the Prize

Randy

SWAT SATURDAYS

**Third Saturday of every month
at Koinonia Camp**



**Servants Working All Together!
Contact the camp for more info**

Phone: (440) 466-1278 Fax: (440) 466-6453

Bondage Breaker's, Inc.



The Wonderment of Servant Ministry

We began our traveling ministry in March this year. While visiting, exhorting and encouraging the brothers in Mansfield, our hearts burned (Acts 24 *Emmaus Road*) with joy and excitement. As the Lord would have it, during the rain-storm on Sunday, April 5, 2018, there we were right smack dab in the middle of it, and yet the Lord kept us, blessed us and delivered us home, without incident. Oh, by the way, the brothers at London Correctional were a blessing to us, as we were also to them ... *in their new Chapel*! The glory of the Lord filled the Chapel. We are preparing for future visits, camp with the children and continued *wonderment in this servant ministry!*

Bless you all!

Rev. Dr. Alicia J. Malone

Bondage Breakers, Inc.

501 c3 Non-profit organization

Send donations to: 1365 Peckham Street

Akron, Ohio 44320



The Akron Area American Baptist Women have survived the winter! We last met in December for the Winter Rally, which was a family affair. It was an evening of music, scripture and prose. It was a wonderful way to start to prepare our hearts to celebrate the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

The ladies met on the evening of April 26 at 7

p.m. at Springfield Church. They learned about Broken Chains Ministry (an Akron-Canton area ministry) and what they are doing through Lydia's Home for recently incarcerated women. All were welcome to come.

June 8 and 9 is the State ABW conference in the Zanesville area. Our own Pastor Jill Smith (Faith Fellowship) will be the Bible Study Leader for the conference. Registration forms should be with your local ABW, if not, please contact Janet Southerland for a form. (rsoutherland@neo.rr.com or 330-644-4823)

2018 Akron Area Association Calendar



Executive Leadership Team Meetings

The April 9th, **June 11th**, August 13th, and November 12th ELT meetings will be held at Canton First Baptist Church at 5:30 pm.

Trustees' Meeting

The **Spring 2018 Trustees' Meeting** will be held on Sunday, **April 29th** at Springfield Baptist at **3 pm**.

The **Fall 2018 Trustees' Meeting** will be held on **October 21st** beginning at **3 pm**... prior to the Fall **Akron Area Association Dinner and Rally** at First Baptist Church of Canton ... 4110 38th St. NW, Canton, OH ... (330-493-3222).

2018 Ark Article Deadlines

Summer - **July 20th**; Fall - September 21st

**THE BEST WAY TO FIND YOURSELF
IS TO LOSE YOURSELF
IN THE SERVICE OF OTHERS.**

GANDHI

Spring Pastor's Column



"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." 1 Peter 5:8

When my parents took us to the zoo, they said, "Don't stick your fingers in the cages." When I took my children to the zoo, I said, "Don't stick your fingers in the cages." When my children take their children to the zoo, I'm sure they tell them the same thing. Wild animals may look pretty and "pettable", but they are unpredictable. That's why they are kept in cages. Still, some people ignore the warning signs and end up getting hurt.

I heard a story about a missionary in Africa on his way to a remote village, being guided by a native tribesman. When they stopped for the night and built a fire, they heard a lion softly roar. The guide asked, "How far away do you think that lion is?" The missionary said, "Maybe a mile?" The guide picked a burning stick from the fire and held it up to cast the light beyond the circle. There in the tall grass, about ten feet away, they saw two glowing yellow eyes! The lion had fooled them into thinking it was further away and less threatening than it really was.

The Apostle Paul addresses the issue of forgiveness in 2 Corinthians 2; he says in verse 11, "...in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes." As I think about our theme verse this month, it is clear that "prowling" and "roaring" don't fit together. To prowl effectively, you need to be quiet. So that story of the missionary and the lion seem to me to really fit this picture.

If the lion was running around roaring loudly, we would indeed hear it coming a mile away. But we are called to be self-controlled and alert, because if we let our guard down, we may miss the warning

signs. Paul also says, "Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness (2 Corinthians 11:14-15)."

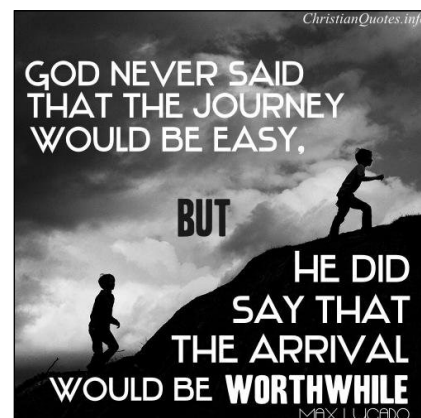
For quite some time, the word "evil" was not considered to be politically correct. But it has made its way back into the conversation in describing mass shooters, pedophiles and drug dealers. No one starts out to be victims of any of those things, but a teenage boy withdraws from social contact, appears dark and moody, and we miss the warning signs that lead to a shooting rampage. A teenage girl strikes up an online friendship with a "peer" who turns out to be a sexual predator. Drug dealers never say, "Take this. It'll ruin your life." They say, "This will make you feel good, take away your pain and solve your problems."

When Satan, as a serpent, approached Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, Genesis 3:1 says, "Now the serpent was more crafty (KJV: "subtle") than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made." Temptation that is not attractive isn't really tempting, is it?

Paul also tells us, "Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against ... the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 6:12)." Whether or not you believe in a personal devil, temptations are real. Evil is real.

We are alert to keep our children and grandchildren from approaching the lions in the pen; are we equally as alert to keep them, and ourselves, from approaching the lions on the prowl?

Ever vigilant,
Pastor Malcolm Hall



Association Mission News



AB Mission 2018

Wow! The Lord has visited “these United States of America” in many and strange ways over the last year. As American Baptists, we are urged to continue in prayer for the many who have been affected by devastating hurricanes. Please remember Texas, Louisiana and Puerto Rico in your prayers, and with your gifts by participating in One Hour of Sharing, (remember Puerto Rico Missionaries still need \$160,000 to fill the gap). I am certain that all who have the “heart of Christ,” will continue to give. Our prayers continue to support this “just cause.”

The American Baptist Home Missions has been gathering under the theme: *Connect, Cultivate, Change*. This theme allowed those from the South-west and Hawaii to gather together to renew their historic partnership. Renewal is always good and necessary. Case in point, the ABHMS strongly denounced and condemned the recent white supremacist demonstration that claimed the lives of three people and injured more than two dozen others in Charlottesville, Virginia. Our heart grieves for the families of those who lost loved ones under such circumstance and more, we believe that God’s heart breaks as well (John 13:34,35)!

As believers, we have all embellished the prayer mentioned in the gospel of Matthew, Chapter 6. There are many entities to that prayer that stand out as a requisite, tool, and guide for daily living and our interaction with God and man. Coming in November in Philadelphia, ABHMS will sponsor the “Space for Grace” event. This event provides opportunities to connect with speakers, workshop leaders, and colleagues to discuss critical issues surrounding Christians today. In addition, Walter Bruggeman will be there and I have personally read, studied and

followed his missional theology regarding the “Social Gospel.” This should be an exciting and rewarding event.

Speaking of missions, as American Baptists, we urge everyone to join in solidarity and speak out on the behalf of all refugees. There is a website that offers a tool kit at #WhereRtheRefugees. Until the entire world hears the gospel, we still have much work to do (Matthew 28:19, 20).

We must not forget about the generation behind us. Children are special in God’s sight (Mt. 19:14) and as such it is incumbent upon us to continue to provide opportunities for discipleship and global missions. International Ministries has expanded their Vacation Bible School Project. Let’s keep our children “revved up and engaged!” The American Baptist Women’s ministries are presenting a free-webinar on April 26, 2018 for the purposing of sharing the new director’s vision. You don’t want to miss this! I am certain this will prod all the AB Women on to continue their “good works.” Until next time, let’s continue, in whatever “state” we are in (Phil 4:10-13), to be faithful and grateful! *We are praying for all the sick, those recovering for surgeries and illness.*

Rev. Dr. Alicia J. Malone – ABA Missions

Serve To Glorify God

¹¹ If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. **If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.** To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Elaine M. Jarvis
The Ark Editor
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Spring 2018



Association Website
(aaa-abc.com)

Facebook

**Akron Area Association of
American Baptist Churches**

Koinonia Website
(christiancampohio.org)

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*"We have to pray
with our eyes on
God, not on the
difficulties."*

~ Oswald Chambers

"THE ARK"



Articles and info for the **Summer 2018** AAA/ABC Quarterly newsletter are **due on or before July 20, 2018.**

The newsletter will be emailed or mailed to churches in the association, trustees, and others. Thanks to everyone who provides information for "The Ark" and to those of you who have indicated your support of the Akron Area Association and this newsletter.

Please don't hesitate to contact Joyce Crislip or Elaine Jarvis to publicize upcoming events at your church and/or specific events in the ministries of your church, the association and of the Region. If you would like to receive a copy of The Ark, or know of someone who would like to be added to the mailing list, or if you wish to discontinue receiving this newsletter, please let us know.