



THE ARK

Volume 19, No. 3 News from the Akron Area Association of American Baptist Churches Fall 2019

MODERATOR'S MESSAGE



This coming October we have a unique opportunity in Association life. Each fall our churches are invited to come together for a Sunday afternoon under the biblical principle of being "One." In Romans the apostle Paul writes that although there are many of us, each of us are a part of the body of Christ, as well as a part of one another" Romans 12:5(CEV).

Certainly, every church within the Akron Area Association has their own individual location from which to impact the Kingdom of God. We have our own buildings, people, resources and much more that identify us within our own local community. We also believe and hold true to the association principle within our American Baptist denomination. As churches we can connect with each other, find encouragement, network our resources and when God provides the opportunity, accomplish things, we could not be able to do on our own. We work together to see people reached for Christ and His Kingdom. Camp Koinonia is evidence of one of these opportunities we have. Why? Because as Paul stated we are "part of the body of Christ and one another."

I would like to personally invite you and your church to come together as "One" as we encourage each other at Springfield Baptist Church on Sunday afternoon ... October 13th. Springfield will provide a dinner at 4:30 and let me invite you to please make a reservation. At 5:30 we will gather in the Sanctuary

to worship our God. In Hebrews 12:28-29 we read, "Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our "God is a consuming fire."

In that spirit of reverence and awe, let us come together to worship a God whose holiness is the reason for His being a consuming fire. The holiness of God is that part of His nature that most separates Him from sinful man. But we as sinners saved by grace can come together as one to worship. Let us be thankful, let us worship and let us as an association live in the principle of what it means to be "ONE!"

Reverend Kevin Thomas, Moderator

P.S. If you have musicians, praise team or a choir that would like to share in worship, please contact Pastor Benjamin Payne by **October 3rd**.

Contact Info: benjamin_payne@me.com or 330-309-7040

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Dear Friends,

It is with profound sadness that we share with you the unexpected passing of Rev. Dr. Larry Swain. He and Linda were visiting family in Kansas City.

Dr. Swain served as an Area Minister and later Executive Minister of the American Baptist Churches of Ohio until his retirement in December 2015. He returned last year to serve as ABC Ohio's Interim Executive Minister after the death of Dr. Ernest Jones. He was serving as Executive Staff Coach for the Region at the time of his passing.

Dr. Swain was a beloved husband, father, grandfather, friend, outstanding leader, and man of God.

The celebration of Dr. Swain's life took place at the First Baptist Church of Newark, 1000 Granville Road, Newark, OH, on Saturday, September 28, 2019. Visitation with Linda Swain and family was at 10 a.m. The Memorial Service was held at 11:30 a.m. A luncheon at the church, for the family and all guests, followed the service.

Linda Swain has asked that in lieu of flowers,

memorial contributions be made to the ABC Ohio Executive Minister's Emergency Fund, a mercy fund for pastors experiencing financial need. This is in keeping with Dr. Swain's love for pastors and determination to help them in times of need or crisis. Checks may be made to ABC Ohio, with Emergency Fund-Swain noted in the memo.

Many of you have also asked if you might express your love and care to Linda Swain in this difficult time. You are welcome to send cards to Linda in care of ABC Ohio, 136 North Galway Drive, Granville, OH 43023.

We join with the region board to invite you to give a Love Offering for Linda. Checks may be written to Linda Swain and sent to the ABC Ohio office at the address above. We will be sure she receives all cards and gifts sent to our office.

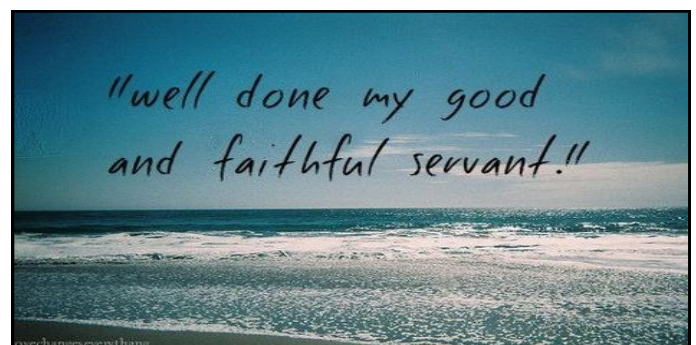
As the American Baptist Churches of Ohio family, we join together to pray for each other and support one another in difficult times. We commit ourselves to pray for you as you grieve this loss, and we are grateful for your prayers for the Swain family and our staff. We encourage you to share this announcement with your congregations, retired pastors in your area, and others who may be waiting for this news.

In Christ,

Rev. Mark Click

Rev. Jane Gibbons

Executive Ministers



Church News



First Baptist Akron

By Jo Claire Knott

In March, we noted a change to the current season with the words, "Spring forward." Soon, we will be hearing the words, "Fall back." However, we as God's children, continually "fall forward!" We look forward to each new day to do the work He has created for each of us to fulfill His purpose for our lives and for His glory.

Fall is the beginning and/or the continuing of happenings and/or events at FBC Akron:

- . Bible studies for both men and women have resumed.
- . Women's ABW Fellowship will have a "Getting-to-Know-You" Luncheon October 23.
- . White Cross projects have resumed under the capable direction of Janet Kuczkowski
- . ABW women are planning a trip to Amish Country in October.
- . Friday night basketball for teenagers has resumed. Our church secretary and her husband are the cooks who provide delicious "treats" after an evening of teenage camaraderie!
- . Security cameras are being installed in appropriate places in and around the building.
- . Our Community Garden was a great success! It was enjoyed and appreciated by many in the area who donated their extra produce to FBC for distribution from our food pantry the last two Wednesdays of each month.
- . Nine members volunteered at the Akron-Canton Food Bank to repack food for distribution at various pantries around the city. Those and more look forward to participating in the same program, Operation Impact, on October 12. Please join us and others to prepare food for God's hungry children in

this area. Call 330-535-6900 to schedule a day and time. You will be blest!

. A special highlight of early fall: Two senior members were united in marriage in a beautiful ceremony followed by a delicious dinner! Congratulations to Larry and Beverly Praher!

Often, we are aptly advised: "Don't look backward. You're not going that way!"

Therefore, the "marching tune" for every day is "Onward Christian Soldiers" as we follow God's lead!



The ladies of the Akron Area ABW had a good meeting at Akron First for our Day of Spiritual Renewal. Rev. Jill Smith was ill that day (she is feeling better) and Susan Nicholson, one of our recent graduates of the Leadership Academy, filled in aptly as our Bible Study Leader on very short notice! We enjoyed music, Bible Study and fellowship. Thank you to Akron First for hosting us.

Next up is the ABW Fall Rally. It will take place on October 24 at Trinity Baptist in N. Canton. It is a day meeting. Registration begins at 9:30 am with the program at 10 am. We plan to have you on your way by noon. Tim and Stacy Reese will be our speakers for the morning. The offering that day will go to the Reeses. We will also be taking a separate offering for the ABW scholarship fund. Please come and bring others with you to support the Reeses.

Our State Project this year is raising funds for a minibus for Dayton Christian Center. All of the churches should have that information. Give me a call if you do not have it.

Janet Southerland
Akron Area ABW President
rsoutherland@neo.rr.com
330-644-4823



The 193rd Annual Gathering of the American Baptist Churches of Ohio will be held **October 8th and 9th, 2019**. All events will take place over **two days** (Tuesday and Wednesday only) at **Crowne Plaza, Columbus North, 6500 Doubletree Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43229**. (Please note that there are no one day registrations.) Election of officers and reports will take place on Tuesday morning.

We will live stream several events throughout the Gathering. Our live stream will be available on our YouTube channel. Subscribe to receive updates. You can tune in anytime during the Annual Gathering ... <https://www.youtube.com/user/ABChurchesofOhio/> for instant coverage.

For Downloads of the Registration Form and Hotel Information visit [www. abc-ohio.org](http://www.abc-ohio.org)

"So the next generation might know them ~ even the children not yet born ~ and they in turn will teach their own children. So each generation should set its hope anew on God, not forgetting his glorious miracles and obeying his commands" ~ Psalm 78:6-7|



News from Goodyear Heights Baptist Church



Goodyear Heights Baptist Church is located at 1767 Goodyear Blvd. Akron Ohio 44305. The Pastor is Rev. Edward Witchey.



An annex parking lot is located across the street from the church. Church members Julio Berrios and Monica Ortiz have painted a mural on the fence.



This mural was drawn and painted by Julio Berrios in the newly organized Teen wing at the church. Julio was assisted by Monica Ortiz.

Goodyear Heights Baptist Church will be celebrating 100 years of ministry on October 19-20, 2019



I spent the last weekend with three college buddies. Two of them I had not seen in thirty years. It was an amazing weekend as we laughed and shared stories and memories. Other than my missing hair and a few wrinkle lines it was like we had never been separated. Like the years apart, time flew by and too soon it was time to return to our homes (each in a different state).

That weekend brought up so many great memories and caused me to smile and laugh harder than I have in years. It also makes me wonder if it isn't time for a "Reunion Camp". I think it is time to open the camp up to previous campers, counselors, directors and staff for a chance to share memories and stories. It is time for a rekindling of our lives and a fanning of the flame of the Holy Spirit with in us. It is time for us to share a campfire together as we praise the Rock of Ages with songs from throughout the years.

With the idea of: many years separated, reunion, laughter, memories, singing, Rock of ages – I invite you to come and be a part of "BATTLE OF THE AGES". **November 23, 2019** we will be having a **Camp Reunion** for anyone who has ever been involved in any way at Koinonia Camp. Registration opens at 9AM and closing campfire will begin 6PM. In between, we will be hearing stories, spending time playing and praying together and renewing and building friendships.

At the end of the evening, a decade of campers will be crowned winner of "Battle of the Ages" and a picture will be mounted in the Lodge of all those in attendance. It is your chance to relive some of your camp memories. Keep your eyes open for more

information on the competition.

Spouses and families will be welcome to join in the fun throughout the day.

Please mark your calendars and plan to attend. It is looking to be a fantastic event.

Eyes on The Prize

Randy

2019

Koinonia Carnival!

Wood fired pizza, cotton candy, hiking, photo booth, fishing, canoeing, pumpkin picking, horseback riding, fresh cider, petting zoo, tomohawk throwing, hay rides, face painting, carnival games and more! Come join us for this awesome FREE family event!



October 5th
10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

FREE*FREE*FREE
FOR THE WHOLE
FAMILY!!!



Tickets Available at:
www.christiancampohio.org
or call
440-466-1278

Koinonia Camp
6810 Cork Cold Springs Rd. Geneva, OH 44041

Association Scholarship Recipients



Dear Rev. Thomas and the AAA/ABC,

I would like to thank everyone for choosing me to receive the Leadership Academy scholarship. This is a great honor! I will use the funds wisely towards my education in the Leadership Academy. I can't wait to get started! Thank you again for such a blessing!

*Sincerely, Jeff Kilgore
Newman Baptist Church*

Dear Akron Association,

I wanted to send a letter of gratitude to your association for the scholarship I was given. I am eternally grateful for your support of my education.

Please See Scholarship Recipients, Pg. 7

BONDAGE BREAKERS, INC.



Recreation, Education and fun...*"in the sun!"*

Children are such a precious gift to humanity, in our honest opinion! Their laughter and the element of adventure and surprise always results in a smile upon our faces as we watch with a nurturing and responsible eye. That was the aura of the day during the one-day 18th Annual David S. Mosley Camp. The day began as the result of the support from the Akron Bar Foundation and Peterman Bus Company providing the transportation. In addition, we were blessed to meet at the St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church, where we gathered awaiting everyone's arrival.

The children were excited to learn the "order" of the day and that every hour would be filled with excitement and opportunities to learn in the midst of nature. After a short instructional time and brief devotion, we catapulted into our theme: "Transformation," and began our day.

First time experiences are always illuminating for first timers. As the children took the long and winding road to the horse stables, there was laughter and a spirit of exploration. The Junior Camp Counselors and Counselor Stephany Johnson used the opportunity for a teaching moment along the way. For example, "leaves of three, leave be," most know that as poison ivy; differentiating oak leaves, acorn leaves, and such. Since we had a much younger crowd who had not had a previous camp experience, it was all so alluring.

To see the smiles and "no fear" upon their faces as they were directed and taught "how to befriend" the horses, prior to mounting and riding, was special. Most inner city children never get this real life experience as was the case with ours, so it was extremely beneficial. Some children have had life

experiences that keep them on the "outskirts" of interaction, and as such we call them marginalized, in which, our expectation is to one day "abate" that word and condition!

After that experience, we had lunch and engaged in a workshop filled with questions, "aha" and "wonderment" moments. The children were exposed to canoe riding and frolicking in the yard with team building games. Overall, camp was a great experience for all. Yes, it was short but qualitative and we are grateful to our entire group of supporters.

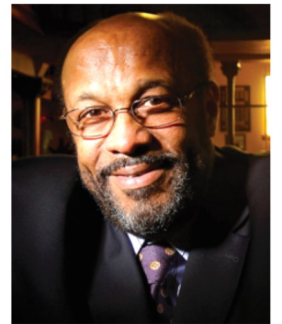
In closing, Bondage Breakers, Incorporated will celebrate over 30 years of ministerial service to the incarcerated and their children in the greater Akron area and throughout the State of Ohio. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. with the program to begin at 6:00 p.m. on Friday, November 15, 2019. The event will be held at St. George's Fellowship Centre located at 3204 Ridgewood Road in Fairlawn. Our theme for the evening is: *"Break Every Chain."* Our guest speaker is Rev. Dr. Marvin McMickle, PhD who recently retired from Colgate Rochester Crozer, Theological Seminary.

Come join us for a time of celebration, wards and community engagement.

Visit our website at www.bondagebreakersinc.com where tickets can be purchased. We are looking forward to seeing you at this very special event.

Respectfully,

Dr. Alicia J. Malone, Founder and Executive Director
Contact #330-701-0576



Mission Alive!

Where did summer go? As we move into the “fall season” it is still quite pleasant weather wise here in Akron as well as other parts of the country. Our American Baptists in various parts of the country has been “on the move!” We are standing in solidarity with Puerto Rico regarding a recent statement that addressed political upheaval caused by harmful comments made by their former governor.

There is good news that always counter “punches” the negative or bad news. The American Baptist Home Missions society hosted a graduation ceremony for students of the Children’s Defense Fund Freedom School of Philadelphia’s Somerset Academy Early Learning Center, which is a partner of ABHMS Rizpha’s Children Ministry. When we think of the many horrid things that have and are happening to children across the continent, we are reminded of two biblical passages, one Psalm 127:1-3 and the other found in Matthew 19:14. God is certainly with and for the children. Jesus rebukes his disciples regarding attempting to disregard the children.

We praise God for the American Baptist leaders who sent letters in support of safety of two Baptist Kachin leaders as they returned to Myanmar. I am certain that we in the Akron Association of American Baptist Churches are continuing our prayers and support for the Karen First Baptist and its congregation.

We are grateful for Pastor Kevin Thomas and his leadership of the Monthly Minister’s meetings through his tenure. In my glory days, I ran track. The 440 relay was my specialty. It has come time for him to “pass the baton!” Job, well done Kevin.

The Summit by the Seaside in Virginia Beach was a great gathering and the mission theme of cultivating leaders, equipping disciples and healing communities was at the top of the agenda. I think we can all agree, “we need a healing in this land.”

I want to end this news article on a somber yet blessed note regarding the passing of Rev. Dr. Larry Swain. First, to Rev. Mark Click and Rev. Jane

Gibbons, as an empath, I feel your grief. Dr. Swain through the many years that I have been blessed to sit in his presence, the years that he advocated for me, as well as others, I am certain, he will be dearly missed.

Over 30 years ago, Dr. Swain walked with me through my call to ministry and from the American Baptist Polity manual quietly prepared me for ministry. In the African American Church, opposition was, and is still, first hand, up front and painful. Dr. Swain helped me through that process. He truly was a servant-pastor. We all will miss him and this surprise did not take God by surprise, right before the Annual Gathering where he was slated to be one of the presenters. It most definitely has taken us by surprise. A great soldier has gone home! Well done thou good and faithful servant!

Rev. Dr. Alicia J. Malone - ABA Missions

Scholarship Recipients, Continued

Spring Arbor University is such a Christ-centered campus with the best atmosphere I could have ever asked for as I study my undergrad in social work. Without your financial support and prayer, I would not be where I am today. You make it possible for me to succeed in my education. I am a junior this year and I am taking a lot more social work courses. As I study further into this field, I see more into the hurting populations and why I, as a Christian, want to help people. This field is where I am meant to be and I thank you for being alongside of me through this journey.

Sincerely, Kensington Thomas
FBC Canton

Akron Association,

Thank you so much for granting me a scholarship. It has helped make college so much more affordable. Your generosity is very much appreciated!

Thanks Again! Kyle Thomas
FBC Canton



If there is such a thing as a "typical" baptism, this wasn't it. One woman came forward on a Sunday morning during a church service in a senior living facility where she worked. The other "came forward" privately the next week and confessed her desire to also be baptized. They both agreed that the baptism needed to be at the facility surrounded by their patients that they love so much.

The problem was, there was no baptistry, no pond, no river, not even a bath tub! Fortunately, God is not bound by convention. So a 5-foot by 8-foot rectangular inflatable swimming pool was ordered. It arrived in plenty of time and was dropped to be inflated the morning of the baptism, the last Sunday in August. But as we're told in scripture "our struggle is not against flesh and blood." This time the struggle was against a 5 x 8 pool that would not inflate, or as scripture also says, "the spiritual forces of evil."

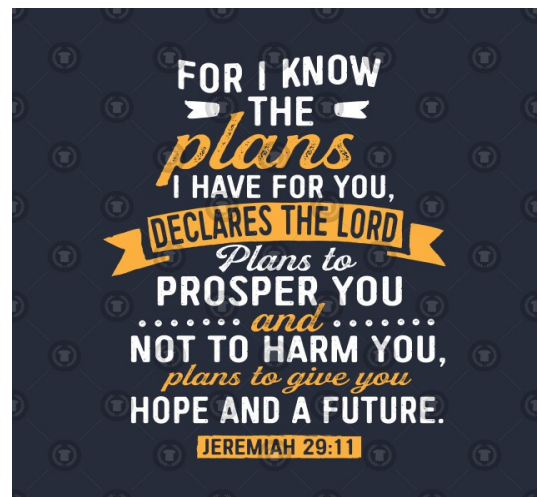
This would not stop a determined pastor from accomplishing what God had already put into work. A call was made to store #1. "Do you have any inflatable swimming pools left? Or even one of the hard plastic ones? We're desperate." "The season for buying swimming pools is over." "I don't need a lecture. I need a pool."

The call was placed to store #2. "Let me just cut to the chase, I have a baptism in an hour at church and I need a kid's swimming pool to do it in, preferably inflatable, but I'll take anything." "I don't think so but let me call back and check." Then it happened. The faint sound of a voice over a walkie-talkie in the background, "There's one left. It's marked down to \$13." "I'LL TAKE IT! I'LL BE THERE IN 10 MINUTES!" God bless Target!

And after church that Sunday, two more followed

Jesus through the waters of baptism... very shallow waters, but under they went, surrounded by their Faith Fellowship Baptist Church family.

Reverend Jill Smith



THE REESES JOURNEY CONTINUES ...



Stacy and Tim Reese are endorsed to serve in discipleship and community development with IM partner in Haiti ... the Christian Association for Spreading the Gospel and Economic and Health Development. They are both passionate about discipleship through artistic expression. Stacy will serve alongside women cooperatives in building relationships, retail management, mentoring and education. Tim has a background in marketing and will collaborate with church and local business leaders to help maximize their potential by encouraging innovation, business development and fellowship.

The Reeses' journey together stretches back to their childhood. "We were genuine high school sweethearts," Stacy Reese said. "Our story began in kindergarten, where we were enrolled at the same Christian school. We began dating at age 15, attended college together and married the day after we finished our final semester. Now—16 years, three kids and a Labrador later—we're overjoyed knowing that God's shared calling on our lives has brought us to this place."

The couple is inspired by this Scripture from John 14:15: "Christ says that if we love him, we will keep his commandments. And what are his commandments? To love, serve and minister to all peoples, especially the 'least of these.'"

The Reese children, Liam, age seven, Samantha, age four, and Garrett, age two, are IM's newest missionary kids and will be living with their parents in Haiti.



As endorsed global servants, Stacy and Tim will be working in the months ahead to build their Mission Partnership Network. They will be inviting individuals, groups and churches to partner with them by committing to share the spiritual, relational and financial support needed to begin their ministry in Haiti.

Please join IM and the Akron Association in celebrating this endorsement and praying for the Reese family as they invite others to join them.

The Reeses Contact Info

Email: reese@internationalministries.org

Phone: 330-313-4112 (Texts are welcome) (if we are unable to answer when you call, please leave a voicemail)

Website: www.internationalministries.org/author/reese

Social Media: [www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/journeywiththereeses)

[journeywiththereeses](https://www.facebook.com/journeywiththereeses) (Facebook Messenger-friendly)

Support Short Link: bit.ly/ReeseGive

Editor's Note: Please consider helping the Reeses on their journey!

Elaine M. Jarvis
The Ark Editor
2212 Royer St., NE
Hartville, OH 44632

Fall 2019



Association Website

(aaa-abc.com)

Facebook

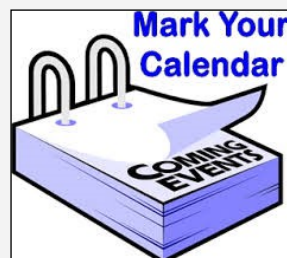
**Akron Area Association of
American Baptist Churches**

Koinonia Website

(christiancampohio.org)

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**October 13, 2019 - Fall Trustees Meeting and
Fall Rally at Springfield Baptist Church**

Trustees Meeting - 3 pm

Dinner - 4:30 pm

Program - 5:30 pm

**November 11, 2019 - Executive Leadership
Team Meeting ... 5:30 pm - Canton First Baptist**

Winter 2020 Ark Articles are due by January 24.

AAA/ABC 2020 Theme



1 Corinthians 12:12

**There is one body but it has many parts. But all
its many parts make up one body.**