



THE ARK

Volume 21, No. 1 News from the Akron Area Association of American Baptist Churches Spring 2021

MODERATOR'S MESSAGE



Greetings to the Akron Association,

During this past year we have lived through a period like none other in our lifetime. We have been forced out of our comfort zone and we have had to adjust in many areas of our lives. It has been a time of disappointment, discouragement, and frustration, and a time for reflection, innovation, and creativity. It appears that the horizon is rich with opportunities for our churches to build upon the adjustments we have made during Covid-19.

One of the lessons from the past year most significant in my mind is the understanding that the church building was never meant to be the focal point of ministry. Covid has given us a chance to hit the reset button and truly understand the goal of the "Great Commission." The church is the people distributing the grace, forgiveness, and love of Jesus into the community and world around us. The church is the people being the hands and feet of Jesus as we meet the needs of those who are hurting, hungry, tired, and poor. It is a time to be reminded of the words of Jesus who said, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters

of mine, you did for me." Matt. 25:40.

As we move forward, let us once again ask the question, "What does God desire for His church? Let us ask how we can best lead the change to bring people into His eternal Kingdom? Let us embrace these new possibilities.

In the days ahead, there are new opportunities for our children to attend a week of summer camp at Koinonia. There are opportunities for graduating high school students to submit a scholarship application to the Akron Association (via the website) to receive financial assistance for college. There will be times for us to come together once again as churches in the association such as our upcoming trustee's meeting in May. And there will continue to be opportunities for our churches to rethink how they do ministry. I recall the words of our first Baptist missionary Adoniram Judson who said, "the future is as

(Please See Moderator, Pg. 2)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Moderator, Continued.....	2
ABC-Ohio News—Rev. Jane Gibbons.....	2
Akron First Baptist	3
Bondage Breakers, Inc.—Dr. Alicia Malone	4
Goodyear Heights Baptist News.....	4
Koinonia Camp	5
Koinonia Camp, Continued.....	6
Trinity Baptist Church News	6
Missions	7
Contact Info, & AAA/ABC Calendar	8

(Moderator Continued)

bright as the promises of God." I encourage you to read through this newsletter and discover all kinds of exciting news and information. Together, we can come back united and stronger as together we fulfill God's call upon the American Baptist Churches of our Akron Area Association and beyond!

Kevin

*Rev. Kevin K. Thomas,
Association Moderator*

ABC-OHIO NEWS



Summer One-Day Workshop: Planning for Post-COVID Ministry

Tuesday, June 8, 2021

Speaker: Rev. Joe Seese, Pastor from Clendenin, WV and former ABC Ohio president. It will be presented virtually as a Zoom meeting and posted on the ABC Ohio Website for additional viewing. The workshop will combine discussion and presentation of up-to-date information about the Post-Covid Church. Registration Fee: \$20 per person, or \$15 per person for three or more from the same church.

Grants Available:

Evangelism and Outreach Grants are available from ABC Ohio for development of new ministries in local congregations. Grants are considered twice each year, April 1 and August 15. Information about the grant requirements and application forms is available at abc-ohio.org under "New Ministry

Endowment". Please contact me at jgibbonsohio@aol.com if you need assistance or have questions about the grants. I'm happy to help.

Congregational Assistance Fund

Last fall, ABC Ohio invited congregations from around the region to share their abundance with ABC Ohio churches that were struggling financially because of COVID. Congregations have given generously, so far more than \$20,000. **Grants** have been awarded to six congregations, but funds are still available to churches in need of assistance. Letters and applications have been sent to every congregation. If you need an application, please contact Leslie in the region office at 740-587-0804 or email her at lhoskinson@abc-ohio.org. Contributions are also still being accepted for the **Congregational Assistance Fund** ... if your church or Association would like to help.

COVID Relief Grants

The American Baptist Home Mission Society is awarding **COVID Relief Grants** to churches that are providing ministries to help their communities during the COVID pandemic through *One Great Hour of Sharing* funds. Some of the grants they have considered are food ministries, child care assistance ministries, diaper ministries, and other means of supporting families in crisis because of COVID. If you are interested in applying for one of these grants, please contact me at jgibbonsohio@aol.com and I will send you the link and password to the on-line application for ABHMS.



"A Tale of a Lost Church Parking Lot"



By Deb Schmidt

Last year at this time, the parking lot at First Baptist Church of Akron was as empty as empty could be. One could even say that it appeared lonely and deserted. Everyone had left and forgot to tell this large, well-paved, essential part of this church that no one was going to be around. Even when events would begin to resume, they would just fade away. So, for weeks, that lot sat empty and sad. During early winter, snow just piled up. Why clear it--there wasn't much activity. Besides, it costs money to plow that snow! Please Lord, Revive Us!

God listens and "Reviving" began. Summit County Health Department is located directly behind the church. A gated fence and a set of train tracks is the only thing that separates us. They began giving vaccinations in their parking lot and found the workers/caregivers had no place to park their own vehicles. Could we open our parking lot to their cars? Of course--what a privilege to help in their mission to serve the community! Suddenly, there were at least fifty cars each day in the church lot Monday through Friday. Add the monthly Drive-Thru Food Distribution, the new weekly member walking group, and the weekly meeting of the Boy Scout's Troop 1 conducting their drills; you can almost hear that parking lot humming! Just when you think it can't get any better, Easter was here--people wanted to Praise God because that Tomb was found empty. Jesus is Risen! An in-person worship service brought so many together that wonderful Sunday and, just to be inclusive to all, W.O.W. has resumed. You ask what is **W.O.W.? Worship on Wheels**--First Baptist's parking lot worship service each Sunday morning at 10:30 a.m. What took place in the fall

has resumed for all to attend in the present.

Who knew a church parking lot could be so useful? No longer is it sitting empty and on-hold, but there is more! Soon this lot will be smiling at the season's new community gardeners coming to tend their garden plots! God Revives Us, Again.

Another smile that has occurred at First Baptist Akron is from Laura Cosentino who oversees the Church's Food Pantry. There are many volunteers who help with the distributions. As Laura puts it, "we have had many church members, friends, and boy scouts put in many hours of hard work!" With that, a **"Volunteer of the Month"** program has been established and the first recipient is Quore Jackson.

Laura stated that April's honored volunteer "is always available at a moment's notice to help in any way." He has unloaded thousands of pounds of food, cleaned the pantry area, sorted donations, taken out trash, packed boxes, set up cones for directing traffic, filled carts, loaded cars and much more! Quore has a heart for service and a wonderful attitude. Thank you to my right-hand man. I could not do this without you." Quore is a newly fifteen year-old young man whose parents just happen to be Pastor Paul and Jacque Jackson. In some cases, there are children of ministers that "have to" do stuff at a church, but Quore does NOT fit that mold. Quore volunteers with the pantry because he **truly** loves the work, the people and the mission. Thank you Quore!



First Baptist Akron Parking Lot

Bondage Breakers, Inc.



"And What a Good Friday"

This time of the year brings special recognition and great delight to my soul. Of a certainty, it probably brings delight to "many a soul." This year was even more special than years gone by. No, it was not because of Covid-19, but rather, in-spite of Covid-19. And the Lord Jesus Christ gets all of the glory. Throughout the scriptures there are two passages that serve as a constant reminder of why we as Christians do what we do.

The first scripture is one of the founding passages of that undergirds or supports the mission of Bondage Breakers, Incorporated. In the New International Version Matthew 25:36ff "... *I was in prison and you came to visit me.*" The other passage from the NIV is Hebrews 13:3a "*Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners...*" And on the beautiful Good Friday 2021, that is what we were able to do.

On that bright sunny day, a crew of four of us headed down the road to Marysville Correctional Institution. For those who don't know, Marysville is one of two women's correctional facilities in the state. We were excited, as always to work, and represent the Lord in our service. This time it was different. Due to the State still being shut down, and due to Covid-19, we were only allowed to "deliver" the pre-Easter/Resurrection goodies.

It was an exciting time. As sad as this may sound, expecting mothers who are institutionalized are permitted, by the state, to carry, deliver and keep their children, on-sight, for three years. Initially the thought horrified me. Then instead of looking at the glass ½ full, I changed my perspective. In three years, the babe would certainly know "her/his mother." Her heartbeat, smile, temperament and so much more. Well, to make a long story short, BBI and

our collaborate partner delivered, on *Good Friday*, over 1200 infant to 3 years of age, baby items: from diapers, wipes, bottles, (pens, pencils and journals for the adults), socks, sandals and shoes.

It was indeed a *Good Friday*, and today, we are all the better blessed because of the Resurrection.



God Bless You All,

*Rev. Dr. Alicia Malone, Executive Director
Bondage Breakers, Inc.*

Goodyear Heights Baptist Church



Greetings! We are slowly having people coming back into church. We also have been seeing a number of visitors. It's all been very encouraging, after this rough year that we have all endured.

We have been without a music director since the passing of our wonderful organist this past November. Our audio-visual person has done a wonderful job of pulling music from the internet but it's just not the same! We are looking for someone to play the organ or piano on Sunday mornings. This can be a paid or voluntary position. If anyone is interested or knows of someone who may be interested, please call the church at **330-784-5497** or email us at goodyear.baptist@outlook.com.

Sandy Lewis, Secretary

KOINONIA CAMP AND CONFERENCE CENTER



John 13:34–35 (NIV) — 34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. **35** By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

It seems like forever since I sat down to write about all that is happening at Koinonia Camp. It has been long enough that I could probably write ten pages and still not cover everything that has and is happening at camp. I am going to try and give you the highlights... and of course invite you to come see things for yourself.

Summer is just around the corner. A very close corner... much closer than seems possible. We are still accepting registrations but some individual camps are filling up fast. All of the new (last year) guidelines, regarding our allowed room occupancy, are lower than we like and therefore, camp sizes are limited. Hurry and register your camper(s) today.

Along the lines of summer camp, it is always good to put our theme out there for all to read. This year our theme is "**REVOLUTION**" and comes from the scripture reference listed above. You see when Jesus talked or taught it always turned the way people looked at things upside down and backward. If you look closely the word revolution has **U LOVE** right in the middle... if you read it from right to left. It is when we love one another that we show that we are disciples of Christ. We will be challenging campers this summer to show love to everyone.

In the fall of 2020, we were able to start a new ministry. Sounds crazy to begin a ministry in the middle of a pandemic, but I was losing my mind without campers. The ministry is named, **YAMs and Potatoes**. It is a time for young adults (18-30

years old) to come together. Thanks to ABC Ohio, and some other financial supporters, we have been able to have some wonderful activities. We have gone trap shooting, played pickle ball, had bonfires, colored Easter eggs and had Nerf wars. Every week we enjoy a meal together that includes some form of potato dish. We use the potatoes that were grown in the camp's garden last summer. We meet at 5:30 PM on Wednesdays. If you have questions on how to get involved, please call the office **440-466-1278**.

Speaking of potatoes and camp garden, we have begun planting this year's crop. Of course the first thing to go in the ground was potatoes. It was a group of high school students from Conneaut High School who helped plant. As we look to the next few weeks and planting, we hope to have beans, tomatoes, squash and peppers. But our biggest planting will be pumpkins!

Pumpkins are what began the **Koinonia Carnival** several years ago. And with a year off last year, I am anxious to put together an even bigger and better event in 2021. Mark your calendars for **October 9, 2021**. It will be a blowout event and if we are blessed with The Great Pumpkin harvest we hope for, we will be sending pumpkins home with everyone who attends. If you are sitting and thinking, how can I help make this happen ... GREAT... call the office and let us hook you up. We are going to need volunteers.

Did someone say volunteers? **S.W.A.T.** Saturdays are still happening the 3rd Saturday of every month. In April , we had thirty-five servants show up to work together to beautify the camp. There is never a time at the camp when there isn't something that needs to be done. We have projects at every skill level and age group. We need your help making the ministry happen. We meet at 9AM to begin work, then we have lunch at 12:30pm. In between, we serve together so that camp is ready for Changed Lives.

"**Changed Lives**" is our purpose at Koinonia Camp. And I have to admit that I am one of those changed lives. It has been over eighteen years since

(Please See Koinonia, Pg. 6)

(Koinonia, Continued)

I first walked into the office at the Lodge as the Interim Executive Director.

Remodeling has become a catch phase at the camp the last few years. We are seeing buildings getting much needed facelifts and new ministries happening in them. The chapel, Kolthoff, Tabin Bathrooms, and Athletic Field Bathrooms (now called Trotty Potty because of its impact on the horse ministry) have all experienced new life because of volunteers and donations.

It is now time for us to look at Hillside. This building has been an office building, infirmary, snack shack and cabin area for campers – now it is time for it to receive new life and purpose. We desperately need to hire a fulltime maintenance person this year. The bottom of Hillside is going to become a place for our Maintenance Person to land while we look to build a new residence home on the grounds. After we build the new residence, Hillside will become a pastor getaway, director cabin and Air BNB. I am telling you this because we need more volunteers and donations to make this happen. If you would like to help in any way, please call the office (I bet you didn't see that coming – LOL). Seriously, I told you I have been at camp 18 years, I love what I do and cannot imagine doing anything else, but I am no spring chicken. Please, help make this happen so we can bring in younger help to keep the ministry happening.

Folks, I covet your prayers. As we enter the summer season, I simply ask for you to pray for the campers who are going to attend. Pray that they will experience Jesus. Pray for the Counselors, Directors and Staff who will be serving those campers. Pray that they would have the wisdom and energy to show Jesus to each camper. And thank each of you for helping make the ministry happen.

*Eyes on the Prize,
Randy L. Brookes, Koinonia Camp Executive Director*

TRINITY BAPTIST CHURCH NEWS



On April 17th, nine members went to Camp Koinonia for their monthly S.W.A.T. to help prepare the camp for the Summer Camping Season. Among the items that were done were wood cutting, outside grounds cleaning and weed whacking, flower bed clean up, and window washing. Camp Koinonia is planning a full summer schedule of camps this year. Just a reminder, the third Saturday is their work day. Just contact the camp to let them know how many are coming and they will have projects for you to do. In addition, the camp provides lunch.

Adult Bible Study - Trinity is having a weekly Wednesday Bible Study at 6:30 p.m. Pastor Bill Kerr is leading us in a study "Growing to be Like Christ." Among the topics that will be discussed are: Prayer, Bible Study, The Holy Spirit, Accountability and Journaling. The study ends on May 19th.

May will be Camp Month at Trinity. Each Sunday we will be having someone speak about their experiences of either being a camper or a staff member at the camp. Camp Director Randy Brookes will be speaking on May 23rd. We will be collecting for our Camp Scholarship Funds. We hope to provide 1/2 Scholarships for those who wish to attend camp.

Planning is under way for our Vacation Bible School which will be held from June 21-25 from 9:00 a.m. –12 noon. We will be having fun on "Adventure Island". On Saturday, June 26th there will be a Family Fun Day. *Carol Warner*





"Ever Encouraged"

There has been so much going on all over the world, not to mention the country, that it has been difficult to keep up. I don't know about you, but I remain "*ever encouraged*," in the midst of everything that is going on. In this article, the Lord is leading me to give you all "snap shots," of the wealth of mission activity that continues to span the globe. Are you ready? Let's get set. Let's go:

- Registration is open for the American Baptist Churches Biennial Mission Summit. The Biennial will take place beginning Thursday, June 24 to Saturday, June 26th. We received a sneak preview on Tuesday's Zoom Conference Meeting, and those who plan to register and attend are in for a real spiritual treat.
- Across the American Baptist family there is a call to prayer for Myanmar. As of April, 2500 persons have been arrested and detained for political reasons as well as 800 persons who have been displaced from their homes. We are "*ever encouraged*," that each of us will lift Myanmar, the detainees and displaced persons up to the Lord in prayer.
- American Baptist Women's Ministries are planning a virtual weekend on June eleventh and twelfth. There is going to be a Gala Night on Friday and three speakers on Saturday. It is a good time to get our ABC Girls together for fun, family and "*ever encouraging* faith." Check with your AB Women's Leader and stay "*ever encouraged*."
- There is a slogan going around due to the many maladies, killings and negative situations, namely, "We are better together." I think as believers, we especially embrace this thought

and do whole heartedly agree, "We are better together." The genesis of the thought identifies racism and anti-racism. Praise God for ABC/USA and the establishment of the Anti-Racism Task force. This is another reason to be *"ever encouraged"*.

- As we remember all of our missionaries who live in an "*ever encouraged*" lifestyle on the front lines, we want to remember Peter & Sarah McCurdy as they continue their adjustment in Mexico. We continue our prayers for Tim Reese and family and pray that we will continue to give in an effort for them to meet the quota and begin their missionary journey.
- Pray for the Karen local and abroad.
- Pray for all those in Texas, Oklahoma and Louisiana who were affected by "winter storms."
- Pray that Ohio reaches "Herd Immunity" so that normality from Covid can be reached and many of our church doors can once again be opened.
- Pray for the AB Women's Ministries partnering with Safe Haven Ministries Domestic Violence virtual certification program held on April seventeenth and the 24th. Churches, institutions, families, and educators can and will gain knowledge, insight and skills useful in addressing and preventing domestic violence. The information was certainly valuable and well worth the investment. This too keeps me "*ever encouraged*" that the church would dare step outside the box and address something that has been in no in certain terms "a silent killer." Churches, individual and collective, "*let's stay ever encouraged*."

God Bless,
Dr. Alicia J. Malone, AAA/ABC Missions Chair

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

GANDHI

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Spring 2021



[Association Website](#)

(aaa-abc.com)

[Facebook](#)

**Akron Area Association of
American Baptist Churches**

[Koinonia Website](#)

(christiancampohio.org)

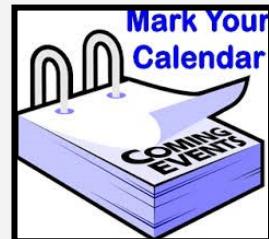
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1 Corinthians 12:12

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



**Spring Trustees Meeting at Goodyear Heights
Baptist Church ... May 16, 2021 at 3 pm.**

Summer Ark Articles due by July 16, 2021

ELT Meeting ... August 9, 2021 (Place TBA)

**Fall Trustees Meeting at Full Devotion—FBC
Canton ... October 10, 2021 at 3 pm.**