



THE ARK

Volume 21, No. 2 News from the Akron Area Association of American Baptist Churches Summer 2021

MODERATOR'S MESSAGE



End-of-Summer: A Time for Reflection

What have you done during this summer of 2021? Many people have embraced the opportunities that were taken away from us during the COVID summer of 2020. Perhaps you made a trip to the beach, enjoyed a weekend at the lake cottage, or took time to reconnect at the family reunion. Maybe you went to Church Camp, Scout Camp, or found yourself joying a day at Cedar Point. Don't discount the walk in the woods, the bike ride on the trail or simply sitting by the pool or enjoying the front porch swing. All these opportunities and more are what we love about Summer.

What challenged you this summer? What would you have done differently? What important lessons or takeaways will you carry with you moving forward? How did God speak to you through nature and your experiences?

Once you have spent some time doing this, begin to ask yourself what you are looking forward to in the fall? I'm hoping as a person of faith you will want to reengage with your local church family. Reconnect

It is important that we find times to embrace the things we enjoy about life. God created the world we live in and gave each of us different likes and dislikes. No two of us are exactly alike and every one of us can choose how we spend our time doing the things that renew and refresh us. Soon it will be back to school, and we will be saying good-bye to the swim-suits, suntans, and the special vacations we all enjoyed. Let me encourage you to take inventory, pause for a time of reflection, and ask the questions, what did I experience and how did it impact my life?

This summer most likely gave you the opportunity to spend more time with friends and family. It also gave you the much-needed moments to create new

memories or even reminisce about past summer experiences. For me and my family we were able to spend a few days with all three of our adult children in a location where we spent many of their childhood years. Certainly we lived a few moments of nostalgia, and it was a tremendously enjoyable time.

Personal reflection is an often overlooked and necessary component of our everyday lives. In this fast-paced lifestyle of our culture we forget to pause and ask important questions of ourselves. Questions

that will help us evaluate where our lives our headed and what changes need to be made? Ask questions

like: What challenges you this summer? What would you have done differently? What important lessons or takeaways will you carry with you moving forward? How did God speak to you through nature and your experiences?

Once you have spent some time doing this, begin to ask yourself what you are looking forward to in the fall? I'm hoping as a person of faith you will want to reengage with your local church family. Reconnect

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with your family of God who encourages you and strengthens your relationship with Christ. Allow me to challenge you to set a few goals regarding how you will grow spiritually in this next season of the year. Let us remember Ecclesiastes 3:1, "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." Let us embrace the seasons God has given us and position ourselves for what we will experience next as He guides us forward into the future!


Rev. Kevin K. Thomas,
Association Moderator

ABC-OHIO NEWS



Dear Friends,

We are pleased to announce the second American Baptist Churches of Ohio One Day Workshop of the Summer. The past year has been a challenging one that has brought many forms of grief into our communities and congregations. Rev. D. Scott Johnston, an expert on the subjects of Death and Grief, will be bringing us an opportunity to learn new ministry skills to address these topics and bring comfort, health, and relief to those in our communities who are experiencing grief. The workshop will take place on **Saturday, August 14** from 10 am to 3 pm. The event is open to pastors, church leaders, and others in your church family who serve as encouragers or ministry caregivers in your church or community. The event will be entirely virtual. The ZOOM meeting code will be sent to registrants

before the event. Rev. D. Scott Johnson is a retired pastor from the Market Street Baptist Church in Zanesville and has served more than three decades in local church ministry. Currently he serves as an Associate Regional Minister for the American Baptist Churches of Ohio, providing pastoral care to the pastors in the Zanesville Baptist Association. Scott has completed advanced studies in the field of Death and Grief and has taught college courses on these subjects. We are pleased to welcome Rev. Johnston as our presenter for the second One Day Workshop. Please complete the registration form for the event that has been sent to your church and mail it to the ABC Ohio office at 136 North Galway Drive, Granville, OH 43023 by **Wednesday, August 11**. Registration may also be made through the ABC Ohio website at abc-ohio.org. The cost of the event is \$25 for the first registrant from a church, \$20 for additional registrants from the same church, \$15 for Leadership Academy students.

Blessings!

Rev. Jane Gibbons Executive Minister for Program and Ministry Development - American Baptist Churches of Ohio.



Akron Area Association,

On behalf of the Koinonia Ministry, THANK YOU for your generous donation towards the remodeling of the Hillside building. We have achieved our target for fund raising at \$20,500 and officially named the project "Sinea Sanctuary" in honor of the largest donor. Late September/October is targeted for completion. It will initially house our new Maintenance Manager until a more permanent residence is located, and others later.

Denny McDonald, Project Manager

First Baptist Church of Akron



"God's Fingerprints"

What a difference has occurred in a year and a half at First Baptist Church of Akron! To quote a good friend of mine--whenever she witnesses a major change going into full bloom, she says "God's fingerprints are all over this!" I have learned that our job is to listen, keep our tennies on, and Thank Him for all His Blessings!

After our parking lot Worship on Wheels, First Baptist began an in-person worship services on May 2nd. We still wore masks and watched our social distancing, but we were able to worship together. Attendance was small, but steady. Slowly, different groups within the church began to meet again and before we knew it, there were plans in the making to have a Community Picnic on Father's Day following worship. Signs were planted, flyers passed out, Face book media used, plus more to invite our neighbors to worship, have lunch with us, play some games and enjoy fellowship. Attendance was a little bigger—Praise God!

The Community Garden began to fill with members and community doing more than just playing in the dirt. What a wonderful sight it is to see as tomato cages are filling up with fruit, sweet corn beginning to tassel, cabbage heads getting larger, and countless Sunflowers smiling and lifting their heads toward Heaven.

July brought our first inside the church Food Pantry Distribution. No longer do participants need to stay in their cars and have bagged food placed inside. Now they are able to come in to the air-conditioned fellowship hall, grab a shopping cart, and pick out what food can be used in their home.

This second half of the summer brings a wedding, a memorial luncheon, returning AA groups, a parking

lot movie night, Bible study groups, a special primary election, a flea market—just to name more than a few. Steady, growing, exciting, back to normal, but even better! Thank you dear Father for your strength, guidance, love, and most of all, your fingerprints!

Deb Schmidt

New Ministry at Full Devotion - FBC Canton



A friend loves at all times Proverbs 17:17

The **Mom's and Munchkins Group** was started this summer as a way to build friendships one playdate at a time. We kept a casual environment where the mom's hung out and talked while the kids played on the playground. We had a variety of activities such as chalk art, scavenger hunts, water balloons, etc. The kids invited their friends to join us and we are having a great summer. Veronica Allen leads this ministry.



Bondage Breakers, Inc.



Summer 2021

After a grueling year of sitting and standing still, due to our current pandemic, we have not ceased to find joy in serving God. As we engaged in our second Board meeting of the year, we unanimously agreed that it is time to carefully and prayerfully "role into summer." Part of that "rolling" will be a 20 year celebration of the David S. Mosely Camp at Koinonia.

Personally, I feel like at "young child" all over again. Mental reflection is a spiritual exercise that allows me to re-visit the past times and seasons of camp that has gone by. I think of the spiritual maturation of some of the children that experienced God while participating at the David S. Mosley Camp at Koinonia.

I often reflect upon the many chapel messages and evening camp fire messages and songs that we have come to know. There have been times I would see a previous camper at one of the local stores and they would briefly engage me in one of their favorite songs, like "...the milk song!" We'd hug laugh and know that the radiance and reflection of Christ had shone, at Camp!

Years come and go but our God remains the same. We are stepping out on faith with gratitude this post-pandemic season, by preparing for our 20th year of Camp. Yes, we are returning home like the prodigal, to our Camp Koinonia. We have planned for August, after camp, a book bag drive to assist children and their parents for back to school preparations.

Again, God never ceases to amaze me as to how He continues to work in us, in spite of the season of Covid-19 and other challenges. Our theme throughout this year is "Dad's Matter," with an add-on for both the Camp and the upcoming event, *and Kids do too!*

As this article is brought to a close, I want to thank the Akron Area Association of the American Baptist Churches for their support, prayers and belief in the fluidity of Bondage Breakers, Incorporated ministry. Our calling and election has been rooted in two primary scriptures, Isaiah 61:1, 2 c.f. Mt. 25:36ff. We have learned not to limit God within the contextual parameters of scripture, because HE IS BIGGER AND BETTER AND CANNOT BE CONTAINED in a box. Amen? Amen!

Blessings!

Rev. Dr. Alicia J. Malone
Founder & Executive Director

New Beginnings



August is a new beginning month at First Baptist Church of Massillon. **Wendy Blanda** retired as Director of Stewardship and Women's Ministry. She had served as the Finance Director, Administrative Director, and Women's Ministry Director throughout the years. A retirement celebration and a start of a new beginning for the Blandas was held on **August 1st**. **Cynthia Hanlin** is now the new Director of Finance.

Sarah Long, current Discipleship Director, is assuming the duties of Women's Ministries.

On **Sunday, August 8th**, Massillon First will hold a **Back to Church Blast** after the 10 am worship service. This event is for church members and friends to help them reconnect and celebrate the beginning of the Fall Season as well as the start up of many ministries.

On **Sunday, August 15th**, two blended worship services will begin at 9 and 10:30 am respectively.

Dr. Alber begins a **Bible Study** at 6:30 on **Sunday, August 25th**.

KOINONIA CAMP AND CONFERENCE CENTER



Changed Lives

I was walking through the camp kitchen the other day when I heard a song from the movie "Aladdin". I don't know the entire song... I am not much of a music person... but the lyrics to this one, or at least a phrase, caught my attention. The phrase you ask? ... "You ain't never had a friend like me."

My brain being what it is thought... this guy must have been to Koinonia Camp. I know it is a "genie" singing to Aladdin but that phrase... that phrase describes so much of what happens at Koinonia Camp.

So many life-long friendships are ignited during camp activities. Those friendships are kindled while studying God's Word. Every year young and old develop bonfire type friendships through time spent together singing praise, playing games, praying together, worshiping, riding horses, playing paintball and breaking bread together (in the form of pizza sometimes). These friendships are more than "summer" events, often these friendships are life changing and life-long. Some become best friends that lead to marriage. While others become friends that can be counted on during all seasons of life. I am reminded of Monica, a dear friend of mine. She impacted countless lives during her time as a camp counselor. While her story is all about how her life was changed, I want to tell you that she has been used to change many other lives.

Her story is just one among many. Koinonia Camp's purpose statement reads, "Changed Lives". I wish I could share the literally thousands of stories I have heard or experienced of Changed Lives that have happened through friendships beginning at Koinonia Camp.

Please continue to pray for Changed Lives at Koinonia Camp. Please send your stories, of how your life was changed at camp, to us so that we might share your joy. Help us continue to Change Lives by becoming one of our prayer and monthly financial supporters. Contact us at 440-466-1278 to find out more information

BTW – I think the genie missed the point of friendship ... I think true friendships are built through a common connection with Christ... yet another thing that happens at Koinonia Camp.

Eyes on the Prize,

Randy L. Brookes, Koinonia Camp Executive Director

BONDAGE BREAKERS DAVID S. MOSLEY SUMMER CAMP AT KOINONIA



CAMPFIRE
HORSES
CANOES
FUN SONGS
CHAPEL
FOOD
FELLOWSHIP
NATURE
HIKES
POOL
CHANGED LIVES



AN INVITATION



We are pleased to announce that Timothy and Stacy Reese will be commissioned at our church on **Sunday, September 19th at 4:00 PM** with a reception to follow in our Fellowship Hall. International Ministries is sending them to the Dominican Republic to economic development. There will be several dignitaries from International Ministries as well as ABC Ohio and I wanted to make sure that all of the Akron Area Association of American Baptists knew they were invited.

*Blessings,
Roger Alber, Senior Minister
First Baptist Church Massillon, Ohio*

TRINITY BAPTIST CHURCH NEWS



Trinity recently received an ABC Ohio Church Outreach Grant of \$2,580. The grant will be used to upgrade our live-streaming of our worship services and programs.

We had a successful Vacation Bible School from June 21 - 25. Participants were able to experience "Island Adventures" through music, Bible stories, crafts, games, and snacks. On Saturday, June 26th, we had a Family Fun Day for all those who participated in Vacation Bible School.

On Saturday, July 24th we participated in a Habitat For Humanity Build Day. We helped with siding at a home on Willet Avenue S.E. in Canton.

Pastor Steve is conducting a Wednesday Night Bible Study entitled "Christian - It's Not What You Think" by Andy Stanley. Participants will discover what does it mean to be a Christian, what one word should be descriptive of every Christian, how Jesus' followers should treat those who are outside of the faith, and why people love Jesus but can't stand His followers.

On August 9, we had our Annual Beach & Boating Day at West Branch State Park. It is always a day of relaxation of either swimming, boating or just sitting on the beach.

Carol Warner, Trinity Baptist Secretary



SPECIAL HAPPENINGS AT KOINONIA

Hillside Project ... current and ongoing ... help is needed ... contact Denny McDonald
S.W.A.T. Saturdays...3rd Saturday of each month ... 9—12:30

Koinonia Carnival ... October 9th (10am—4 pm)



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

~ Oswald Chambers



Missions Summer 2021

As we begin to return to some sense of normal, it is a great, tremendous blessing to know that our commissioned missionaries, ABC/USA, ABC/Ohio and our American Baptist associations have "contended for the faith" and "continue to do the work God has assigned to our hands.

Through prayers and gifts our missionaries, "Pete and Sarah McCurdy are sustained in Mexico City as the work in the Baptist Seminary is bearing fruit. "Peter and Sarah's hope is that through their ministries, hearts and minds will be changed and people will grow into the image of Christ."

A great entry into their hope is the American Baptist Home Mission Society and their building of a mission education program. A question that warrants critical thinking asks, "what kind of mission education will meet your needs?" As we think about

pre and post-pandemic variants on the rise, racial tensions, political, social and cultural upheaval, "what kind of mission education will meet our needs?"

During the 2021 Biennial Mission Summit the answer to the above question began to raise the consciousness of the participants. The theme of the

Summit was Imagine: Hope, Healing and Unity. It was a wonderful virtual experience. The Worship services were dynamic and the Summit Offerings were allocated to: 1) Humanitarian Aid for the people of Myanmar, 2) To Support Anti-Racism Work at the institutional levels of ABC/USA, 3) Support scholarships for the 2022 ABC/USA Women in Ministry Conference.

The offering portal is open until 9/24/21 for any one, churches, ministries etc. to participate. The

entire experience was great!

Women in Ministry celebrated the June conference at Green Lake. Their theme is Radical, Redeemed and Ready. I am sure through the different workshops and the innovative worship services this was a tremendous blessing and charged every participant, especially women to "press toward the mark." Phil. 3:14.

Baptist World Alliance held their first virtual Baptist World Congress. It provided an opportunity for Baptists worldwide to stand together at this "critical" time. Dr. C. Jeff Woods attended and said, "I always appreciate how the diversity of God's people approach worship and the scriptures." To that, I say Amen!

There is mission news around the table, region news where there has been an anniversary celebration of International Ministries; Leadership Training in ABC Central for youth will take place in the fall. The Ohio Leadership Academy is preparing

for its next academic year. Anyone interested in taking a "deep dive", especially in these unsettling times, the studies will be hybrid, in person and on-line courses. Stay connected and tuned in for education will meet your needs?" As we think about

Speaking of "deep dive" with many families having experienced death during the pandemic, on August 14, 2021 from 10-3:00pm ABC of Ohio will host a one day workshop on Death and Grief. Rev.

D. Scott Johnston will share how to bring comfort, the health and relief to those in our communities who are or have experienced grief.

Lastly, many have experienced loss in other ways as well. We remember the terrible tragic condominium collapse in Florida and the families that were affected, please pray. Remember our missionaries and brothers and sisters in Hong Kong. And above all, remember how giving in One Great Hour of Sharing blesses "far and wide!"

God Bless,

Dr. Alicia J. Malone

ABA Missions

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Summer 2021



[Association Website](#)

(aaa-abc.com)

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**Akron Area Association of
American Baptist Churches**

[Koinonia Website](#)

(christiancampohio.org)

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**GOD WILL
ENSURE MY
SUCCESS
IN ACCORDANCE
with his plan
NOT MINE**



[ELT Meeting ... August 9, 2021](#) Full Devotion –
FBC Canton at 6:30 pm

[Fall Trustees Meeting](#) at Full Devotion—FBC
Canton ... [October 10, 2021](#) at 3 pm.

[Fall Ark Articles](#) ... Due by [September 17, 2021](#)