



# THE WISCONSIN BAPTIST

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@ABCofWI



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## Reflections from the 2017 Annual Gathering

Marie Onwubuariri, Regional Executive Minister

There was something surfacing from deep down, perhaps from the roots  
As if we brought into this shared space all that had been weighing us down  
things that have stirred our soul, kept us up at night, fueled our fear to speak—even if  
just to ask a question,

stuff that has kept us in awe, or anger, or anguish

We brought it all, it seems, and much of it spilled out as song, exhortation, testimony,  
tears, hand shakes, hugs, commitments, probing...

vulnerable and curious

humble and courageous

cautious yet engaging

as I listened and watched I noticed it all; I saw...Spirit

...and spirits surrendering...to divine and to fellow humanity

It was ... well ... what I understand what many who have been around lately would  
have hoped for: a coming together for Spirit to speak, move within, and move toward  
outward—outside of our own selves.

It was

quite beautiful.

It was *ecclesia*. rooted. blossoming.

But perhaps not for all and not at all times — which is to be expected

We never meet all needs, never answer all questions, especially the ones not asked

Not all people greet one another; we are still human, after all — with fragile egos and  
embedded unspoken self-serving norms

Yet even dissonance is important as it reminds us of what we may not yet know,  
where we may still need to go

how God is pruning us for growth

it anticipates resolution.

This, too, is *ecclesia*. rooted. surfacing.

Yes, surfacing—the calling forth of real talk — real stories of healing, faith, friendship;  
attention to inequalities, fabricated divisions, false witness;

honoring of ancestral sacrifices and prophetic boldness;

responsibility and covenant; celebration, appreciation, joy; service to God and  
alongside one another....Empower Us, the gathered sang...Empower Us...

Our hands are getting dirty...and it is quite beautiful.

Information about our recent **173rd Annual Gathering** is now available on our website at [www.abcofwi.org](http://www.abcofwi.org):

- 2017 Annual Gathering Program Booklet
- 2017 State of the Region Report
- “Tweets” and hashtags from the Mission Table Conversations
- Photos and draft minutes (available following 11/4/17 Board meeting)

### News About People, Churches, & Partners

- **Berlin, Federated Church** has made a congregational decision to close the church. Through a worship service, they celebrated their ministry and retirement of Pastor **JoAnn Schlobaski** on September 17.
- Congratulations to the **Milwaukee Christian Center** for receiving a Palmer Grant in this current cycle, which will support their Youth Leadership Internship Program.
- We extend our sympathies to the family of **Sam Brink**, recently retired Missions Coordinator, on the death of his mother-in-law on October 20th, Sam’s birthday.

### The POST

The POST is a group that meets online to edify their faith and fellowship during different seasons of life. It is a group for those looking for a spiritual home or looking to add to their daily walk.

If you or someone you know fits this description, please consider joining us for our first Advent devotion series. An orientation meeting will be held on Nov 20th at 8pm CT. If you are interested in joining or would like more information please contact Rev. Marie or Rev. Carolyn.

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### New Curriculum

Classes start January 2018

If you know of someone who has been contemplating starting seminary, please contact **Site Coordinator John Jones**,

[john.jones@abcofwi.org](mailto:john.jones@abcofwi.org), and/or

**Student Recruiter Ericka Davis**

[ericka.davis@abcofwi.org](mailto:ericka.davis@abcofwi.org).

On-site and online courses available.

[apply.cbts.edu](http://apply.cbts.edu)

### Palmer Grant Award

ABC/WI (Camp Tamarack) and sister-region ABC of Metro-Chicago have been awarded a Palmer Grant to update the vision of and programming for outdoor ministry, particularly for churches and communities currently not engaged with camping ministry. The three-phase project entails deep listening to the needs and ideas expressed by church leaders and possible connection points, offering an immersion experience for further exploration of outdoor programming serving faith, discipleship, and mission, and lastly, to collaboratively create a vision and plan of action in our regions with missional relevance. We are excited for the work before us as we delve into God's creation in new and relevant ways. Stay tuned for more info.

The Region Office  
will be closed on  
Thursday,



[www.abcofwi.org](http://www.abcofwi.org) & [www.camptamarack.org](http://www.camptamarack.org)

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