



THE WISCONSIN BAPTIST

Published by the American Baptist Churches of Wisconsin



November 2018

Full Partners

A word from Rev. Dr. Jim Carlson, Hispanic Community Liaison

For over two years I have had the privilege of serving as the region's Hispanic Community Liaison, supporting and consulting with the Hispanic congregations in our region. There are many similarities between most ABC congregations and the Hispanic congregations: they take offerings, sing some traditional hymns, collect mission offerings, and celebrate communion. In other ways these congregations face issues that most others do not. One of the issues they face is the fact that the Hispanic population in the US is much more diverse than most of us realize. While they all speak Spanish, they come from very different countries. Mexican Baptists are immigrants who arrive here in many different ways, usually seeking to gain US citizenship. Puerto Rican Baptists come not as immigrants, but as citizens with full rights.

There are great cultural differences between people from the different Latin American countries. They eat different foods, have varied histories, and speak with very different accents. These differences are very obvious to everyone who attends these congregations, but most others wouldn't know it. So each of their worship services is a multi-cultural experience. Leading such diverse congregations is a real challenge for our Hispanic pastors. They must serve all the people, despite the fact that they also come from a particular Latin American background. They must be sensitive to all these differences and honor the many cultures represented in their congregations. One practice these congregations have implemented to bridge these differences is to hold an annual anniversary service for each congregation, but unlike many other ABC churches, that celebration is joined by members from all the Hispanic churches in the region. In other words, they come together once a year to support one another in the experience of being in a very different place from their country of origin. This common experience helps them feel a sense of unity in their experience of displacement. Every time I'm with these Hispanic Baptists I'm reminded of the commandments God gave to Moses regarding immigrants. The Israelites were prevented by law from mistreating or discriminating against people in their land who come from a different place. God reminds them that their ancestors were a displaced people too. The Old Testament prophets frequently called the Israelites to account because the practice of isolating those considered "foreigners" was always taking place in Israelite society.

Today we have an opportunity to renew the practice of welcoming those we consider foreigners as full brothers and sisters. My experience has taught me that they are our equals in every way. They deal with most of the same problems that everyone else has to deal with as they look for God's guidance for the future. They play an important role in our region. They remind us that God created, loves, and affirms differences. Those differences are not a problem to be solved but an opportunity to experience humanity in forms that surprise and amaze us. I hope we will continue to make these congregations feel like full partners in our region's life—for that is what they are.

NEWS

Well wishes to the following pastors and our gratitude for their contributions to ABC/WI:

- ◆ **Brian Hastings** who has ended his pastorate at *Fond du Lac, Memorial* in Oct. He will be serving as Pastor of Bloomington, First (IL).
- ◆ **Mark Clinger** who will retire from *Madison, First* in Nov. We also keep the above churches in prayer during their transition.

Welcome to new pastors:

- ◆ **James Garnett**, Neenah, Whiting Community, begun Oct. 7
- ◆ **Thomas Dewitt**, Janesville, First, beginning Nov. 4

Congratulations:

- ◆ **Carmen Porco**, CEO of Housing Ministries, on being recognized by the University of Oxford (England) for his development of model low-income communities by naming an endowed faculty chair in his honor: The Carmen Porco Chair in Sustainable Business at Center on Business and Poverty. John Hoffmire, resident professor at Oxford has been named to this chair.
- ◆ **Milw, Progressive** celebrating 30th church anniversary on Nov. 18.
- ◆ **Jacqueline Colbert** who joined Sentara Leigh Hospital (VA) team as Staff Chaplain in Oct.



Sympathies: Llewellyn S. Walker, former pastor Delavan, First & member

Missed the 174th Annual Gathering of ABC Wisconsin?

—We missed you...as we...

- ◆ explored friendships among people of faiths and immersed in and learned about partner ministries, regional and national, and their communities and resources
- ◆ deliberated about ministries and fellowshiped as women, men, youth, and ministers
- ◆ exposed ourselves to the hard, yet rewarding, work of collaboration and how this can take shape in many contexts, among varying populations
- ◆ made commitments to collaborative volunteerism and common mission
- ◆ tended to worshipful work that gives shapes and direction to ABC/WI
- ◆ worshipped in dance, joint song, story-sharing, heartfelt prayers, bare brokenness and healing words, weaving disparate journeys and joining spirits together...two by two!

Learn more: www.abcofwi.org

- ◆ 2018 Program Booklet
- ◆ 2018 State of the Region Report
- ◆ Learnings about collaboration
- ◆ New ABC/WI volunteer leadership (available after 11/1)

SAVE THE DATE: 175th Anniversary and Annual Gathering of ABC/WI October 11-12, 2019, Green Lake, WI

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF WISCONSIN

www.abcofwi.org & www.camptamarack.org

15330 Watertown Plank Road, Elm Grove, WI 53122-2340

Phone: 262-782-3140 or Toll Free: 1-800-311-3140; Fax: 262-782-7573

Together Living Faithfully Through Christ Today