



# THE WISCONSIN BAPTIST

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## Blessed Surprises

John Jones IV, Associate Regional Minister of Education

“Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us.”

~Ephesians 3:20 NASB

Have you ever surprised yourself?

I’m frequently surprised by my daughters, whether its their wit, their silliness, or their beauty. They are a great gift and a surprise to my life, encouraging me to recognize the ways that God blesses me, “far more abundantly,” than I could even imagine.

But there have also been moments - much less frequent - wherein I am surprised at what happens in my life - through my life. On more than one occasion, while teaching, I’ve been asked a very interesting question and begun answering as best I could, only to find the words coming together in subtle and beautiful ways that I’d never actually considered before. Those surprises are also gifts.

When we recognize God’s work within us, it can be a blessed surprise. It could also be a temptation to pride - but that’s not what I’m talking about. I’m talking about how we cooperate with God’s work in our lives to accomplish something beautiful and surprising and, “beyond all that we ask.” And I am coming to appreciate the importance of recognizing and acknowledging those moments more and more.

This year is the 175th Anniversary of the American Baptist Churches in Wisconsin. As we look forward to our Annual Gathering and Celebration in October, I want to encourage you to reflect on the ways that God has surprised you - even and especially in yourself and your church. What are the ways that God has done something beautiful and surprising through you?

It is important that we acknowledge and recognize those gifts. And at moments of celebration, I believe it is even more important that we share those stories with one another. Even though our circumstances and stories will be very different, we will be able to appreciate those surprises, celebrating the shared, “power that works within us.”

**Camp Tamarack**  
Waupaca, WI  
**WINTER YOUTH RETREAT**  
**Feb. 15-17, 2019**



This is a time for youth currently in grades 7-12 to gather at Camp Tamarack for fellowship, learning, worship and fun! Full details and a downloadable brochure are available at [www.camptamarack.org](http://www.camptamarack.org)

*Experiencing Christ, Sharing Faith, Strengthening Community*

### FINAL DEADLINE

Any questions or recommended alterations to the Proposed Changes to the ABC/WI Bylaws must be submitted to the Governance Task Force via the Regional Executive Minister via email to [marie.o@abcofwi.org](mailto:marie.o@abcofwi.org) by 2/1/19

### CHURCH AND PEOPLE NEWS

With deepest sympathy to the family of Rev. John Wade Davey, who passed away Sunday January 13 at the age of 94 years . He is survived by his wife Eleanor, 2 daughters, grand & great-grandchildren.

Wisconsin Council of Churches

Winter Forum at First Baptist Madison



Saturday March 9 from 9:30-5:30

As part of the WCC’s commitment to racial justice, we’re excited to partner with First Baptist Church for **Austin Channing Brown** (a leading new voice on racial justice) in **Madison**, this year’s Winter Forum. The day includes a keynote, local panel, a time for searching our spirits, and a book signing with reception. She is committed to exploring the intersections of racial justice, faith and black womanhood. We will have a chance to listen, ask questions, and hear from women and men working for racial justice right here in Wisconsin.

Registration fee – \$35, \$10 for Students.

For details & Registration form, go to <https://www.wichurches.org/calendar/event-list/winter-forum/>

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