



THE WISCONSIN BAPTIST

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@ABCofWI



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Stretched by the Spirit

by John Jones, Assoc. Regional Minister—Education

"Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel." *Philippians 1:12*

I was planning on writing about Graduation and Mother's Day for this May WB, days of gathering and celebration. With the "Safer at Home" order, graduation ceremonies have been cancelled or altered, and Mother's Day will look very different this year. Life is dramatically altered because of a horrible public health tragedy. Our celebrations have been stifled; but more than that, the suffering and death brought about by this pandemic will lead to more mourning than celebration. Yet God is still God, and God is still here.

Our churches are no different. Church has not been "cancelled" by any means, because WE are the church, the body of Christ, wherever we may be. But we have all altered our manner of worship and ministry in response to this adversity. Our churches have adapted, frequently stepping up in new ways to care for and serve one another and neighbor. The old adage "we've never done it that way before" is totally out the window now. We've been forced to broaden our ways of being church and our very notions of "church." The COVID-19 pandemic has forced some adaptive changes upon us, and I believe we need to take stock, even as we deal with the stressors and mourning.

In this time of anxiety and stress, **perhaps God's spirit is moving and stretching us toward something needed and new.** We probably don't know what that is right now, but I want to encourage us all to be discerning and open. Look and listen for the ways in which the Holy Spirit is bringing about something new through this challenge. Just maybe, the changes, skills, and habits that have been forced upon us will equip us for ministry in a new key and with renewed vigor. **Let's ask the question: How has the Spirit moved in this stressed expression of church?**

May God's spirit and presence comfort, keep, and inspire you in these difficult times.

NOTICE: Spring Into Camp Pivoting...



This annual volunteer weekend @ Camp Tamarack, dedicated to getting our facilities ready for the summer, originally scheduled for May 14-17, 2020, has been canceled. However, we will be tending to facility projects gradually. **There is something for every age and ability to do.** Please contact Kim Drost at 715-281-7816 or kim.drost@abcofwi.org to schedule a safe time for you & your household to come up.

REVISE YOUR DATES!

The American Baptist Women's Ministries Spring retreat scheduled for June 12-14 has been **postponed!** We will have Robyn Dykstra as our "Stronger Together" speaker at our June 2021 retreat instead.

However, **we are hoping to meet at Camp Tamarack for a "Mission, Music and Merriment" retreat Friday, Aug. 21 to Sunday, Aug. 23 2020.** More info to follow.

ABC/WI Connections: Journeying Together Through COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond

We are asking our constituency to **communicate with us**, your ABC/WI Staff and Board of Managers regarding "needs and schemes" of your faith community during these unprecedented times that might either:

- prompt a constructive response from the region staff and/or Board -or-
- edify your fellow ABC/WI brothers and sisters.

To add your considerations, fill out the online form at:

<https://bit.ly/abcwiconnect>



MINISTRY IN TIMES OF COVID-19...

Visit our COVID-19 resource page at abcofwi.org to find a collection of educational information, recent communications, ministry tools, and resources for encouragement as you continue to serve God and God's people with love and hope.

PEOPLE & CHURCH NEWS

- **Brian Butcher** completed his pastorate at **Mauston, Community** on March 22.



On the **20th of each month** in 2020, **spend 20 minutes in prayer** for ABC Wisconsin.

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF WISCONSIN

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Together Living Faithfully Through Christ Today

One Great HOUR OF SHARING

AN AMERICAN BAPTIST PLEA FOR EMERGENCY OGHs SUPPORT | COVID-19 CREATES GREAT NEED

The OGHs COVID RESPONSE is a **two-part appeal**: one part for relief across the United States and Puerto Rico (domestic); the second part for international relief. Funds raised for domestic relief will be utilized by the AB Home Mission Societies. Funds for global relief will be utilized by AB International Ministries to respond to requests by our global servants and partners for emergency grants.

Relief efforts, domestically and internationally, will cover a wide range of needs that have been impacted by COVID-19: unemployment, housing, hunger, healthcare, ministry programs, special needs of marginalized populations and communities, and more. Emerging needs will also be considered.

OGHS is typically the 2nd quarter ABC special offering. 100% of OGHs donations go to relief efforts; no dollars are retained for administrative costs.

HOW TO GIVE:

1. Give your donation to your church, indicating the appropriate designation noted below, and ask your church to send in your donation along with their monthly mission giving:
 - Domestic: "OGHS-COVID Recovery: US & PR"
 - Global: "OGHS-COVID Response International"
 - General Disaster Relief: OGHs

For more info, go to abcofwi.org; click on OGHs photo on home page slide show.

www.abcofwi.org & www.camptamarack.org