Ministry in a New Key
Fred Oaks, President, ABC WI Board of Managers

Last May on this page Rev. Dr. John Jones acknowledged how coping with the pandemic had disrupted our cherished routines. Then he suggested that the Holy Spirit might be stretching us toward something needed and new: “Just maybe the changes, skills, and habits that have been forced upon us will equip us for ministry in a new key…”

I grew up listening to pop music so I’m familiar with key changes. If you’re not, listen to Whitney Houston go up a key for the final chorus of “I Will Always Love You.” You can’t miss it!

Now the ABC WI Board of Managers is working with Dr. Jones to bring “ministry in a new key” to full expression in our region. Last fall we led the region in bidding a fond farewell to Dr. Marie Onwubuariri after six exemplary years of service as our Regional Executive Minister (REM). Then we called Dr. Jones, who had served for four years as Associate REM for Education, to serve as Interim REM. That decision reflects how much we value the focus and direction he brought to ABC WI over the past six years. With Dr. Jones, the board will provide leadership to preserve and extend recent advances in multicultural ministry and innovative approaches to mission fulfillment. For us, ministry in a new key means:

**Building Relationships across Difference.** The Board is diverse by design. We have been learning the vital importance of relationships across difference – relationships marked by authenticity, trust, and mutuality. The lists of greetings in Paul’s letters remind me that diverse relationships of care and respect fueled his apostolic work. Without them we don’t have multicultural **ministry,** we simply have multicultural **ideas.**

**Considering Fresh Approaches to Mission Fulfillment.** “Every organization is now a start-up,” says Andy Crouch, Praxis Labs’ partner for theology and culture. We have a 176-year heritage. Our mission is as urgent as ever, and it still has eternal significance. But old assumptions about how we pursue our mission have been stripped away. David didn’t need or want Saul’s armor (1 Sam 17:39), but with God’s help he got the job done. He also became a gifted composer: “Sing to the Lord a new song!” (Ps. 149:1) Do you hear the key?

PEOPLE & CHURCH NEWS

- Our sympathies go to Milw, Evangelical, Mrs. Ann Davila (wife) and extended family of Rev. Jaime Eliud Davila, who passed away on Nov. 26th at 89. Davila was pastor of Evangelica for thirty years and was recognized as Pastor Emeritus at his retirement. He also served on the ABCWI Board of Managers and in other ministries in both ABCWI and ABCUSA.
- Welcome to John Jones, who has been called to serve as Interim Regional Executive Minister for the American Baptist Churches of Wisconsin. He begins his service Jan. 1, 2021.
- Jason Mack was installed as Pastor of Wauwatosa, Underwood Memorial on Dec. 6.
- Sympathies for ABC/WI Board Member, Cathy Muro (Brookfield, Immanuel), and her family on the passing of her brother-in-law, Doug Fleckenstein, on Dec. 8.

Join Madison, First for Racial Justice Event
“Complicity in the Making of Race-Based Slavery: From Roger Williams to the Cotton Kingdom” will be the focus of an online event held Sunday, January 10, 2021 from 2-3:30 p.m. CT by Madison, First.

The event will feature Dr. Christy Clark-Pujara, an Associate Professor of History in the Department Afro-American Studies and Department of History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Learn more and register at: [www.firstbaptistmadison.org/complicity-in-the-making/](http://www.firstbaptistmadison.org/complicity-in-the-making/)

REGION OFFICE HOLIDAY HOURS:
Closed Thurs 12/24/20—Sun 1/3/21

Under the theme “Hope for Today, Hope for Tomorrow,” this quarter’s American Baptist special offering supports and honors ministers, missionaries and their widowed spouses who have devoted 15 years or more to ABCUSA.

Ask your church office for offering info and you can learn more at www.abcusa.org/rmmo.