



# THE WISCONSIN BAPTIST

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## The Light of All People

John Jones

Interim Regional Executive Minister

*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. John 1:5*

As we begin 2022, we are leaving the darkest time of the year. Winter solstice, the longest night of the year, has just passed. We are all familiar with this pattern, looking forward to increasing light with spring on the horizon. But the darkness can feel oppressive sometimes. Humans naturally need more light.

This past year has been dark. There have been glimmers of light, but the darkness has often felt oppressive. The pandemic continues to be a presence in our collective life, long after we had hoped to be moving in a new direction. The widespread distribution of vaccines and the development of new treatments have offered hope of a reprieve from the impact this virus has on our lives. Yet, the pandemic rages on, partially because of natural mutations and variants and partially due to both understandable fears and unfathomable falsehoods. There's been some light, but the darkness seems to be winning.

Additionally, the nation continues in fits and starts on the path of dealing with the consequences of its original sin of race-based chattel slavery. The most basic standards of justice have prevailed in trials for the murders of George Floyd and Ahmaud Arbery. But the influence of white supremacy on US culture and institutions seems to be growing rather than diminishing. Some light, but lots of darkness.

Both physical and spiritual darkness can be oppressive to the human soul. But as people of faith, we know that the "true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world" (John 1:9). As we just celebrated the birth of Jesus in the Christmas season, we know in our bones the reality of "Emmanuel" - God with us. Even in these darkest of times, we know the light of the world. We know not only the Christ event in the humble Christmas story. We also know the cosmic terms of the incarnation. Jesus was born as a babe in a manger, but the Christ is with all creation, even "In the beginning." Even in dark times, we know the light is here - with us, and the darkness will not overcome it.

Light disperses darkness. It reveals the truth. True light reveals the world for what it is. Then we can see the truth and engage in the hard work of reflecting that light to the world.

As we *reflect* upon a dark year, may we all *reflect* the true light that we know is in the world. May we share the light with everyone we encounter. Be encouraged that the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.

# Retired Ministers & Missionaries Offering 2021

This quarter's mission emphasis is the Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO) which acknowledges and appreciates the extraordinary commitment of church leaders, congregants, and missionaries.

The chosen theme "Transformed by Generosity" lifts up the true strength and perseverance of ministers in unprecedented times. RMMO supports ministers, missionaries and their widowed spouses who have devoted 15 or more years of service to the American Baptist family.

Ask your church office for offering info and you can learn more at [www.abc-usa.org/rmmo](http://www.abc-usa.org/rmmo).

## ABC Churches and People News:

Congratulations to **Mark Weisser**, Pastor of West Allis, First on his retirement at the end of 2021 after 35 years in ministry.

## SAVE THE DATE

178th Anniversary and Annual Gathering of ABC/WI

October 7-8, 2022, Location: TBD

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF WISCONSIN

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

Phone: 262-782-3140; Fax: 262-782-7573



# Camp Tamarack

Writer Youth Retreat

Fri-Sat: Jan 21-22, 2022

"Creativity"

Youth in grades 7th-12th are invited to join together as we hear from past campers/leaders/staff about how they share and show their creativity in the world. Get ready for worship, activities and games using Romans 12:6 - "We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us."

Early bird registration closes Jan 10th. Go to [camptamarack.org](http://camptamarack.org) for full details.



## IMPORTANT DATES FOR 2022

- 3/1: Rev. Mindi Welton-Mitchell begins as Regional Executive Minister 
- 3/5: ABC/WI Board of Mgrs Mtg
- June-July: Camp Tamarack—stay tuned for specific dates
- 6/15-18: American Baptist Women in Ministry—Green Lake
- 8/6: ABC/WI Board of Mgrs Mtg
- **October 7-8, 2022 ABC/WI 178th Annual Gathering**
- 11/5: ABC/WI Board of Mgrs Mtg.

Subscribe to the ABC/WI Google Public Calendar. Go to the following link for info: <http://www.abcofwi.org/calendar-of-events/>

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