



THE WISCONSIN BAPTIST

Published by the American Baptist Churches of Wisconsin



March 2022

Giving Up
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Executive Minister

Lent begins on March 2nd, Ash Wednesday. Lent is a liturgical season not everyone is familiar with. Lent is the 40 days (not counting Sundays) between Ash Wednesday and Easter, mirroring Jesus' time in the wilderness where he faced temptation. The practice of giving up something serves as a reminder to draw closer to God, and Lent prepares us for the joy of the resurrection.

This month marks two years of the pandemic, and we are all weary of it. In a way, it has been two years of Lent: giving up in-person contact, travel, graduation ceremonies, weddings, funerals, and the list goes on. Senior citizens have continued to be isolated, and children are missing social-emotional learning. We have given up so much. We've had to adjust to new ways of doing everything: school, work, and of course, church. Pastors have had to learn everything: technology, online giving, how to do online worship and later hybrid worship, and also be responsible for pastoral care when so many are in crisis.

Several articles I've read recently show that overall volunteering is still down, but especially for churches. This means more fall to the shoulders of leaders, and even more upon the pastors. Burnout is palpable. We're all exhausted and tired from becoming digital learners, workers, and balancing everything happening at once. Even with time off from work now and then, there is no time off from the pandemic. There is no break yet from the global crisis.

Perhaps, being in an extended Lenten period, it's time for us to take upon the Lenten practice in a way that reminds us to draw close to God. I invite us to give up the expectations placed on us, burdens that weigh on us and do not help us on our journey of faith. We can't be the best teachers, grandparents, parents, caregivers, or leaders during an extended global crisis, so maybe we can let go of the idea of being best and instead strive to do what we can, letting go of the rest. Pastors, I especially invite you to give up the expectation that the success of the church rides on your shoulders. You have worked so hard, but the burden should not be on your shoulders. One of my friends uses the term, "World's Okayest Mom," and it's okay to strive to be the "okayest" pastors, church leaders, and members.

Jesus said, "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). Be gentle and listen to your hearts, care for yourselves. Tend to your relationship with God. God will not let what is important fail. We are part of something greater than ourselves, and we are in this together. Lent reminds us that spring always follows winter, and Easter always follows Good Friday. May we anticipate the resurrection hope with even more fervor this season.

AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING 2022

This annual special offering (collected thru March) impacts and transforms lives across America and Puerto Rico thru the efforts of the American Baptist Home Mission Societies and ABC/WI. Visit www.abhms.org/afc for more info.

ANNUAL REPORTS:

Please submit your Annual Report to the Region office by **March 31**. The Annual Report is one of the five criteria of cooperating churches for the Region. Additionally, the information provided helps the Region and ABC-USA in the broad pursuit of our common mission.

SAVE THE DATE

178th Anniversary and Annual Gathering of ABC/WI
October 7-8, 2022, Location: TBD



Camp Tamarack

SAVE THE DATE:

"Spring in to Camp" will be held
May 19-21

We will make sure the cabins, waterfront, trails and more are ready for campers (+ other small projects as time allows).

Let Carolyn or Kim know by Tues May 17th if you plan to join us.

More information can be found on the website, Facebook and Instagram as the time gets closer.

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 Mt.g
- **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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