



# The Wisconsin Baptist

Published by the American Baptist Churches of Wisconsin

April Edition

Tuesday,  
March 21,  
2023

Rev. Dr. John Jones IV, Associate Regional Minister of Education

*“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him.” ~ 1 Corinthians 2:9*

I’ve had a difficult relationship with Easter all my adult life. On April 7, 1996, I was scheduled to give my first Easter sermon as pastor of a small church in Virginia. My mother, who was battling stage 4 metastatic breast cancer, was determined to be there for that service, so she traveled with my father and brother from Georgia to Virginia, arriving when I was at a noontime Good Friday ecumenical service.

She did not rest well on Friday night, so we ended up going to the ER Saturday morning. Her condition deteriorated throughout the day, and she passed right as the sun rose on Easter Sunday. I’m so grateful to have been given the gift of being present at her passing. But that day altered my perspective on Easter.

Easter, the highest, holiest, most important day of the Christian calendar has been bittersweet for me for more than 25 years now. The day that Christians celebrate as the promise of new life has been linked to my greatest sense of loss.

But on some level, that’s the case for almost everyone. If we’ve suffered a great loss – and we all either have or will suffer loss at some point – then even the happiest of days has within it a seed of pain.

Deep in the mystery of our faith in Jesus Christ, there is a truth that ties together death and hope. It’s hard to talk about and even harder to live out. Psychologists sometimes use the term “shadow-side” to describe the difficult and dark elements of life and our experiences and personalities that we’d rather not think about. But only through facing and integrating the shadow-side can we know integrity and real joy.

I’m not recommending that we wallow in death, despair, or sorrow. That’s a path away from truth. What I am suggesting is that we learn to accept our grief or sorrow as part and parcel of this gift of life that God has given us. The glory and mystery of Easter draws us forward, inspiring the cry of “Alleluia” whereby we proclaim God’s victory over sin and death. But if we bypass Good Friday in a rush to Easter, we can easily distort that Alleluia message into an assurance that the status quo is OK for now.

*(continued on reverse)*

<b>Important Dates</b> ABC-WI Region	<b>Office Hours</b> Regional Office	<b>Important Dates</b> Camp Tamarack
April 18: Teaching Pastor’s Forum Oct. 13-15: Annual Gathering	Monday - Thursday 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM	May 17-20 & June 1-4: Renew Retreat

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*(continued from front)*

We can’t get to an authentic Easter without going through Good Friday. And we can’t understand Easter without the experience of Good Friday. We can’t know the hope of resurrection without the suffering and death of crucifixion. Knowing Christ’s resurrection requires that we know the horrors of his torture and death.

So on this coming Easter Sunday when we call and respond, “Christ is risen! ... He is risen, indeed!” may we do so with the full awareness and confidence of a faith that can handle the worst.



Thanks to America for Christ offering, ABHMS supported families who lost homes to floods, wildfires, storms, children living on the edge because of poverty, and seminarians preparing to devote their lives to sharing the Good News. Please help us continue to bring healing and hope in 2023 by supporting this year’s America for Christ Offering.



A memorial service for Rev. Karen Sundland will be held at First Baptist Church – West Allis on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> April at 11:00 AM.



The American Baptist Churches – USA are collecting funds for humanitarian relief following the massive earthquake that hit Turkey and Syria through One Great Hour of Sharing. If you feel called to assist in helping those impacted, please visit the ABC-USA website to donate.



**Summer at Camp Tamarack –Theme: EMPOWER**

Summer camp information and registration can be found on the Camp Tamarack website starting March 12<sup>th</sup>.

Together Living Faithfully Through Christ Today



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