



# The Wisconsin Baptist

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

## Listening to the Holy Spirit

“It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us ...”

~ Acts 15:28

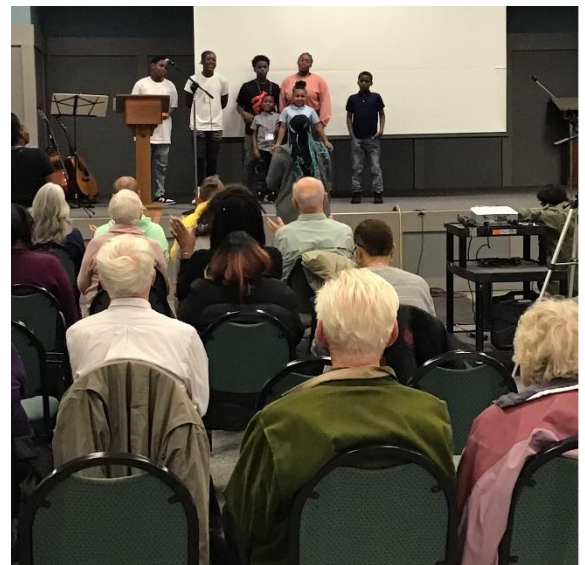
“My cup runneth over” with gratitude. It is the day after Annual Gathering 2023. I’m kind of tired from excitement, activity, and travel, but I’m grateful beyond measure because our event that focused on “Next Generation Ministries” went about as well as it could have - other than the nasty weather on Friday night.

The program offerings, workshops and preaching all went very well, with the exception of a couple of tech. hiccups. We have not compiled the Feedback Forms yet (if you’d like to share any evaluation, please let us know so we can send you the link), but anecdotal evidence suggests that people were generally pleased with the program offerings. I’m very grateful for that. However, the thing for which I’m most grateful is the spirit in which these worship services, workshops, and other program offerings were received and engaged.

Our focus on “Next Generation Ministries” means that we were and are leaning into the uncertainty of the future. We are calling on everyone to think about what God is calling us all to be in the “Next Generation.” We also called on young people to step up and play a role in this Annual Gathering and in the life of the Church going forward - and they responded!

All of this is to say that I believe we are seeking to follow the leading of God the Holy Spirit, which can be a challenging and even scary prospect. Everyone is willing to give at least lip service to the Holy Spirit, but in truth, we can all be a little apprehensive about it, because the Holy Spirit can challenge and surprise us. Things might not go the way we think they should, we might think we know better than the Holy Spirit about how things should develop, or we might even be suspicious to know if it is indeed the Holy Spirit that is present and doing the leading.

In my theology class, I say that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is the guarantee that the God that we know in Jesus will always be able to surprise us. We can’t control what God is doing in our midst; that’s the activity of God the Holy Spirit. And I’m grateful for the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit through our Region fellowship at the Annual Gathering. By definition, we can’t control the Holy Spirit, but we can participate with the Spirit in mission and ministry, we can try to tap into the work that God is doing in our midst. That requires openness and flexibility and a generosity that embraces imperfection. I’m grateful to have seen that again and again through our fellowship at Green Lake. May the great Spirit continue to challenge us and to guide us.



### Important Dates ABC-WI Region

Nov. 9: Commission on Congregational  
Mission Meeting  
Nov. 11: Board of Managers Meeting

### Office Hours Regional Office

Monday - Thursday  
9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

### Important Dates Camp Tamarack

Nov. 30 - Dec. 2: Jólábókaflóðið  
(Yule Book Flood) Camp

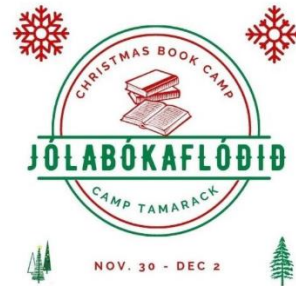
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## Thank You!

Thank you to everyone who made the 179th ABC-WI Annual Gathering a special event for the whole Region!

If you have any pictures of the Gathering, please e-mail them to [sean.cornell@abcofwi.org](mailto:sean.cornell@abcofwi.org).



In Iceland, Jólabókaflóðið is a holiday celebrated on Christmas Eve which translates literally as "Christmas Book Flood." We are having our own Jólabókaflóðið festivities at Book Camp November 30-December 2 (Thursday through Saturday) at Camp Tamarack!

Bring books to read, books to give away, wear your Christmas pajamas and Ugly Christmas Sweater and join us for a fun-filled time for all book lovers preparing for the Advent/Christmas season!

We will have book-themed games, puzzles (feel free to bring your own), time to make bookmarks, contests involving Christmas Pajamas and Ugly Christmas Sweaters/Shirts, a White Elephant Book Exchange, and of course, time to just be cozy and read! Get ready for Advent and Christmas with this fun retreat for all!



Diverse Members, United in Christ