

Central Region Life

AUGUST 2023

4TEN MISSION TRIP TO INDIANAPOLIS

On June 11, 2023, five 4Ten students and three adult leaders set off for a week of mission work at Edna Martin Christian Center. As any trip does, we had a few hiccups along the way that turned a nine-hour trip into an eleven-hour trip. We arrived at our host church, Tuxedo Baptist Church in Indianapolis. Pastor Eddie Smith gave us a tour and rundown of the history of the church and the neighborhood that helped build it. It has a rich history of planting other American Baptist Churches in Indianapolis as well as serving the community in every way imaginable. That evening we ate dinner and briefly went over the history and work that happens at Edna Martin Christian Center.

Edna Martin Christian Center began when one woman, Edna Martin saw a need in the Martindale-Brightwood community for a faith base childcare center. In 1941 she rented a one-room apartment on Roosevelt Avenue, where she would begin an unbelievable and fruitful ministry that expands and extends throughout the city of Indianapolis. Edna Martin serves everyone in the community from 6 weeks to 106 years old. They offer daycare and preschool. They offer after-school youth programming and educational programs. They have an all-day summer program that is faith-based and educational to prepare students for school. They have services and activities for adults and senior adults. They are located in a food-insecure area and have extended their services to a community garden, and they are in the process of establishing an inner-city, urban farm to help provide fresh produce to their community,

When we arrived at Edna Martin Christian Center, we met with staff to go over some of the projects we would be working on throughout the week. We started our first day by pulling weeds around where the kids play. We pulled weeds around the playgrounds, basketball courts, and their prayer labyrinth. Each 4Ten student worked so hard to help beautify the grounds. They managed to have fun and bring joy to others even in the middle of a very tedious and unfun project. We managed to fill a whole industrial-sized dumpster with weeds and trash, all before lunch.

We spent the next few days working outside. We picked more weeds and got a little lesson on gardening and how an urban farm works. Most of us live or have lived in rural communities so we are familiar with harvest and the farm equipment that is used. However, in a smaller, urban farm the foods, techniques, and tools they use are a little different. We helped Coach Mike plant seeds and seedlings. Planting, watering, and tending to the community garden was a fun experience. We put down nets and cleaned out dead foliage. We learned about the different ways they are choosing to tend to their garden and farm without using any chemicals. There are specific patterns of planting and specific separation plants to help support new growth and healthy soil.

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4TEN MISSION TRIP TO INDIANAPOLIS (cont.)

While we all enjoyed learning about the farm and serving in that area of their ministry, the last days serving at Edna Martin were some of our favorite days because we got to work with the students who were attending their summer faith and education programs. We had a few interactions with the students beforehand. They would encourage us during our weed picking and make sure that if you weren't working as hard as someone else that they are watching, and you better get to it.

Students from kindergarten to high school participate in the summer programming. We split into groups of two or three so that we were each present with one of the age groups. While we were in these groups we got to be as fully involved as we wanted to be. We were encouraged to participate in games, stories, activities, and lessons. Some of us pretended to order food at the drive-through with kindergarteners, some of us helped with a LEGO STEM project, and some of us helped make signs for the Juneteenth Celebration Peace Walk.

We ended our time at Edna Martin by helping the staff and students prepare for their Juneteenth celebrations. We helped students make decorations and signs. We sat together and learned about the significance of Juneteenth and why we celebrate it. After a day full of stage building, decorating, and hanging out with kids we were invited to join them in their celebration. We loved getting to meet everyone in the neighborhood and watch all the amazing talent that they had on display. Some of us were even brave enough to learn how to step and some of us watched and videoed. We had such an incredible time serving at Edna Martin Christian Center, even a month later the students are still talking about their time and wanting to make plans to go back. We are all so thankful for those who prayerfully and financially supported us on our trip.



Left to Right: Emily Prater, FBC Hays
Jennifer Schneider, ABCCR Staff
Mackenzie Moore, Garden Plain Community Church,
Trent Kasson, FBC McLouth
Morgan Bandy, ABCCR Staff
Keeton Foust, Ada- Minneapolis
Elias Brocious, Meridian Ave.





4TEN IS CUTTING EDGE LEADERSHIP SKILLS TRAINING FOR YOUTH ENTERING 10-12TH GRADES DURING THE FALL. 4TEN WAS FORMED BY THE SCRIPTURE 1 PETER 4:10. IT EXISTS TO EMPOWER OUR YOUTH TO EMPLOY THEIR GIFTS TO SERVE JESUS AND SET AN EXAMPLE.

YOUTH ARE THE LEADERS OF THE FUTURE; WE NEED THEM TO STEP UP NOW IN THEIR LOCAL CHURCHES!

Students who are chosen for this program are young people who love Jesus and are willing to grow in their relationship with Christ.

Students do not need to feel a call to full-time ministry but do have the gifts and desire to be leaders in their own churches.



DO YOU KNOW YOUTH WITH A LOT OF LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL?

YOU MAY NOMINATE THEM BY SENDING THEIR NAME, CHURCH, AND PHONE NUMBER TO REV. JENNIFER SCHNEIDER OR FILL OUT AN APPLICATION ON OUR WEBSITE.

jennifer.schneider@abccr.org

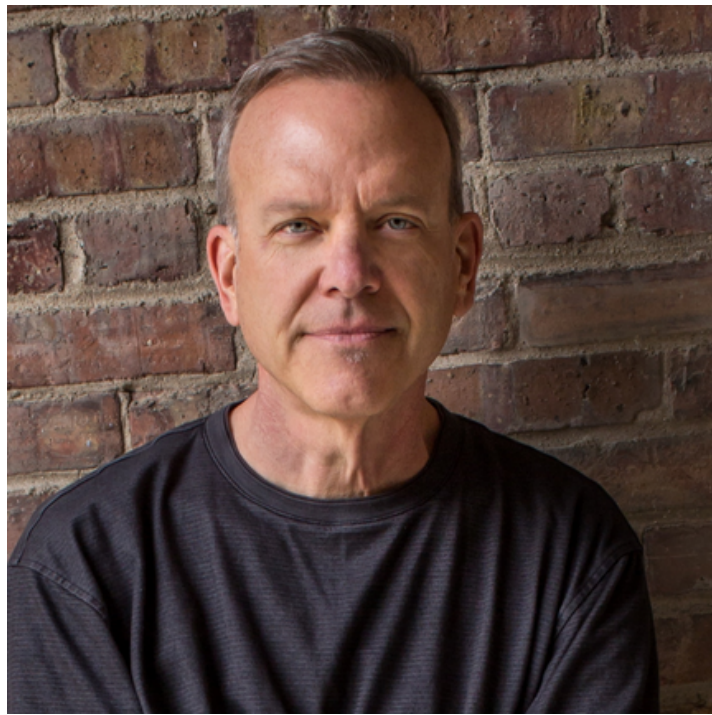
ANNUAL GATHERING 2023



First Baptist Church
Lawrence, KS
September 29-30, 2023

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of
the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have
commanded you.

"And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
Matthew 28:19-20



Please be on the lookout for more
information about Annual
Gathering between now and
September. More information can
be found at abcc.org or in your
weekly email.

Link to paper and online registration
forms can be found below.

The 2023 ABCCR Annual Gathering will be held at First Baptist Church in Lawrence, Kansas from September 29-30th. The key not speaker is Dr. David Fitch. **David Fitch** (Ph.D Northwestern University) has pastored for 30 years, been involved in 8 church plants over the course of his ministry. He is married to Rae Ann and they have one son named Max. He is an ordained pastor in the Christian and Missionary Alliance. He's coached hockey for the YMCA USA Hockey program for seven years. David teaches, speaks, and writes within the fields of Neo-Anabaptist theology, missiology, culture studies, political theory, and ethics. He writes from time to time on his own page at Missio Alliance, on his own substack, for Christianity Today, Outreach Magazine, ChurchLeaders.com, EthicsDaily, and multiple other sites, magazines and journals. He leads discussion on his facebook page ([fitchest](https://www.facebook.com/fitchest)) and on twitter at [@fitchest](https://twitter.com/fitchest). He is co-host of the [Theology of Mission](https://www.theologyofmission.com) podcast.

**Click Here for Registration and
More Information**

STAND IN THE TENSIONS

Rev. Gregg Hemmen, Executive Minister

This past June, I joined over 1,000 other American Baptists at our Biennial Mission Summit in San Juan, Puerto Rico. There were between 30-40 other Central Region attendees who came to learn, worship, and connect. One evening, we took a photo at the convention center. While this is not everyone from the Central Region, most of us who had gathered on the island were in this photo.

The last time the American Baptist family shared space in this way was in 2019 in Virginia Beach, Virginia. We were supposed to be in person in Puerto Rico in 2021, we all know that was smack dab in the middle of the most significant disruption most of us have known — COVID. So, there was anticipation and excitement about being together again for our Biennial Mission Summit. So, what did I learn from this experience in Puerto Rico? Here is something I've been thinking about over the past few weeks.



There is some beautiful scenery on the island. I had not been to Puerto Rico, so it was new territory for me. Since the biennial schedule can be quite full, there wasn't a lot of time to see much of the island, but one free morning, we took a tour of El Morro. El Morro is a fort on the northeast end of the island and was considered by many to be the strategic key to control the whole Caribbean. Construction began around 1590 and continued to for the next 200 years or so. The picture below is not one I took but does give you a sense of the strategic importance of this fortress.

It stands right at the entrance to the San Juan Harbor and any ships wanting to resupply on the island after a long sea journey, would have to pass by El Morro. The location of this fortress also exposed inhabitants to storms from several directions yet offered some of the most beautiful views of the Caribbean. I will not forget my visit to this historic location. It's often been said that the American Baptist family is among the most diverse collections of the faithful in existence. I find there to be a lot of truth to this statement, and it was on display in Puerto Rico.



My mentor said to me not long ago that one of the most important things I can do in my regional role is to stand in the tension of different perspectives and help keep the conversation going. It's not easy to stand in that tension and be pulled in different directions. Sometimes, you can receive criticism from all sides. But because so much of our world is now increasingly polarized, those who are willing to stand out on the point in this way, have become fewer in number. I don't want to over-emphasize this point, but American Baptists are a kind of El Morro in the theological world. Our different theological perspectives expose us to storms from many different sides. Many are curious about what American Baptists believe on any given topic and if you've entered one of these conversations, you are keenly aware that there is no single American Baptist perspective, despite the efforts from some to singularly identify us. But also like El Morro, American Baptist life can offer some of the most beautiful vistas that you will ever see.

I choose to heed the words of my mentor who encourages me to stand in the tensions, or out on the point, or different perspectives. I would encourage you to consider the same.

Thank you for the privilege of serving among you.



CHAT GPT

SEMINAR

DIVE INTO THE FUTURE OF PREACHING AND TEACHING
WITH ESTEEMED THEOLOGIAN, DR. JOEL SCHROEDER!

In this ground-breaking seminar, learn to navigate the innovative waters of artificial intelligence, specifically the GPT-4 model from OpenAI, to enrich your preaching, teaching, and written content in a church setting.

Explore how AI can complement human creativity, providing depth to sermons and teachings with contextual biblical and historical insights. Discover how to generate initial drafts for written content and provide personalized spiritual guidance using this cutting-edge technology.

Dr. Schroeder will also discuss the ethical implications of using AI, highlighting the importance of maintaining authenticity and sincerity. Remember, AI is a tool to assist, not replace, your pastoral mission.

7pm via Zoom
August 14th and August 28th

Register Here



**DON'T MISS OUT ON THIS ENGAGING DIALOGUE COMBINING
TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS PRACTICES AND MODERN
TECHNOLOGY, SHAPING THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH!**



Rise Up O Men of God



It is time for men in our American Baptist Churches of the Central Region to do just that, "Rise Up!" Our organization has struggled for several years and the pandemic didn't do us any favors. Rusty Boyer has faithfully and courageously led us the last several years as our President and now that mantle has been passed to me. I want to rejuvenate enthusiasm in the men of our region to serve God while serving others. I will be setting up meetings in all of the Central Region areas to launch a "20 for 20" campaign.

The campaign is to sign up 20 men for \$20 each to be a part of the AB Men ministry. The goal is to update our database, increase membership, identify projects within the churches of our region and raise finances to carry out those projects. I know some are thinking, our church is too small and we don't have that many men. Then adapt it to 10 for 10 or 5 for 5, even one man is a start! AB Men Disaster Relief will still be a large part of our ministry but I believe we have churches throughout the Central Region that could benefit from some help completing projects from painting to new roofs. It all starts with men willing to get involved and participate in our organization.

I am excited to get started with the meetings Region-wide. Stay tuned for the date, location, and time in your area. I am making the same challenge to AB Men that I made to my congregation here at First Baptist Church of Milton, "Let's dream big and watch God do something Spectacular!" I have included my contact information, project application, and Rise Up Registration below.

In Christ's Service,
Rev. Mike Justice
American Baptist Men President

Mike Justice
PO Box 136
Norwich, Ks. 67118
Cell #316-640-0894
Church#620-478-2486
miltonbaptistchurch@gmail.com

Project Application

Church name _____

Address _____

Pastor or AB Men Representative _____

Contact # _____ **email** _____

Brief description of project:

» **RISE UP REGISTRATION**

PLANNED GIVING

"Where there's a will, there's a way."

I thought I already had my mind made up about the topic for this month's planned giving article brought to you by the Kansas Baptist Convention Foundation. Then as I was riding in an Uber on the way to the airport in Puerto Rico, very, very early in the morning on the Monday after the biennial, I decided I would change my mind on the topic due to a big news story from the previous week.

History happens every day, but it always seems like something major happens when I go to an American Baptist biennial. When I took the train out to the ABC biennial in Pasadena, California, in 2009, I remember the very next day, while I was waiting in a hotel lobby for a meeting to begin, that Michael Jackson's face splashed across the TV screen and they announced that he was dead. Like everyone else, my initial reaction was shock and I couldn't believe it. During this year's biennial, the big news story was about the OceanGate submersible that had gone down into the waters of the Atlantic Ocean to take a closer look at the wreckage of the Titanic.

I am not an expert on marine life or on submersibles, but I guess I thought that the five people on board would go down into the depths of the sea, learn a lot about the Titanic and come back to report to us all about what they had discovered! However, I did just learn one interesting fact from a YouTube video, Ziroth, hosted by a gentleman named Ryan, about the pressure the submersible was under as it descended to the depths of the ocean. He said the pressure they were under would be comparable to one elephant standing on one foot on top of you, and then adding 226 more elephants on top of the first one-wow! By the time the biennial was beginning in Puerto Rico on Thursday, the news was that the rescuers had heard sounds, that there was debris on the ocean floor or in the water and the craft was nowhere to be found. So they were presumed to be dead!

I'm sure none of those five people thought they were going to die on that expedition to the wreckage of the Titanic, but that is what we believe has happened! Which brings me to the topic at hand. Did they all have a last will and testament or a will as we call them? Knowing how much money they spent on this expedition and how much money they were all worth financially, I expect that each one of them had a will, with the possible exception of the Pakistani billionaire's son? I must admit that I feel the greatest empathy for him because from what I read, he was going along on the trip just to get closer to his father!

Anyway, do you have a will? I certainly hope so, because it is the one legal document that you need in order to give and share your belongings with the people that you love including your family, friends and possibly, employees. You can also leave your financial gifts and possessions to charities, churches and organizations like the Kansas Baptist Convention Foundation, to name one example. Still, one planned giving expert, says that only about 50% of people have wills prepared!

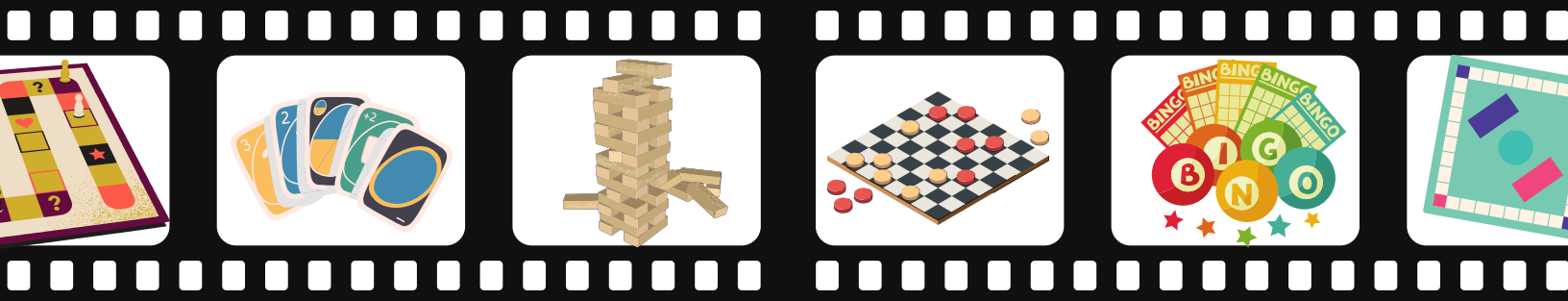
So, what are you waiting on? You've got no time to lose. We never know when our time is up here on earth and when the Lord will call us home, so like the Boy Scouts, we must be prepared. I will be supremely honest with you and tell you that I do not have a will prepared either, but it is on my list of important goals to accomplish this year! So I better kick myself in the backside and get it done as well.

One great benefit of a will is that you can leave money to charities and nonprofits, and it doesn't affect your income or your lifestyle today! If you wanted to bless or benefit the Kansas Baptist Convention Foundation or any of our mission partners, including: Central Baptist Seminary, Murrow Indian Children's Home, Ottawa University, Prairie Homestead or many others, you have at least two ways of doing this when you have your will prepared. One way is to say that you will donate x amount of dollars from your estate to this mission partner. A second way is to say, for example, I leave 2% of my estate to the One Great Hour of Sharing offering, to be distributed through the kbcf. It's simple and easy to get done with the help of your lawyer.

Since my primary focus and work centers around charitable gift annuities, I cannot assist you with a will. Even if I was a lawyer, I could not help you with a will, as that would be a conflict of interest, but I do think it is important for you to have a will and so I am encouraging all of you regarding this important matter!!

If I can be of service to you in funding a charitable gift annuity or answer other questions related to planned giving, please do not hesitate to call, text or email me. I am most happy to assist you in any way I can regarding gift annuities! Until then, enjoy the glorious month of August and continue living out your faith daily.

**HELPING YOU TO GIVE GENEROUSLY,
REV. TIM SCHWARTZ
KBCF DIRECTOR OF PLANNED GIVING
913-424-9939/ 785-272-7622
TIMMANS39@GMAIL.COM
TIM.SCHWARTZ@ABCCR.ORG**



PRAYER EMPHASIS

REV. TIM SCHWARTZ



Let us pray for the ABC Emergency Center mission project that will be going on in Sturgis, South Dakota, from August 5th through the 12th. This project is being sponsored by our sister regions, ABC Dakotas and ABC Nebraska. Let us pray that they will have enough volunteers and staff to help out during this time of the rally. Let us offer prayers of Thanksgiving for those who will serve in this capacity.

May we also pray that there will be opportunities to talk about American Baptists, serving as the hands and feet of Christ. Might we pray for opportunities to share the good news of Jesus' love and forgiveness as well! If the holy spirit moves in your heart to participate in this project, may Jesus guide and direct you as you consider serving in this way. Finally let us pray that the bikers and those who come for the rally, will see Jesus in our ABC volunteers, who provide first aid and hand out water. As the scripture says, "And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward." Matthew 10:42 (NIV)

REQUEST FOR FUNDS TO COMPLETE BETHEL NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER MULTIPURPOSE ACTIVITIES CENTER

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The last several months have been exciting and historic for Bethel as we watched our new multipurpose/activity center nearing completion. We are almost there! The building will be completed in late August. We are planning our grand opening event this fall and we welcome our churches to visit us, tour the new building, and join our celebration. We are so very excited to update you on our progress and we are grateful for your continued support!

We are excited to be so close to our financial goals, but we are not there yet. Our initial need to raise \$800,000 to complete the construction project has now gone down to \$500,000. We are seeking a loan of \$500,000 from a local bank, but as you know a loan would be quite a burden for a small nonprofit like Bethel Neighborhood Center.

We are your Mission Center and a special final contribution to see us through the completion of the new multipurpose center would make a lasting impact on the community we serve. The Bethel Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, and I cannot thank our churches enough for supporting the mission work we do in Kansas City.

With your support, we can continue to touch and transform more lives in the name of Christ and provide discipleship to live for Him. Please let me know if you have any questions about this project and our request.

Sincerely,

Rev. Mang Sonna
Executive Director
Bethel Neighborhood Center



PLAYING CARDS AND GAMES CAN BE A GREAT WAY FOR SENIORS TO STAY MENTALLY ACTIVE AND ENGAGED

Provided by Prairie Homestead Senior Living

As people age, it is important to keep their minds sharp. Playing cards and games can be a great way for seniors to stay mentally active and engaged. Seniors can benefit from playing cards and games in numerous ways.

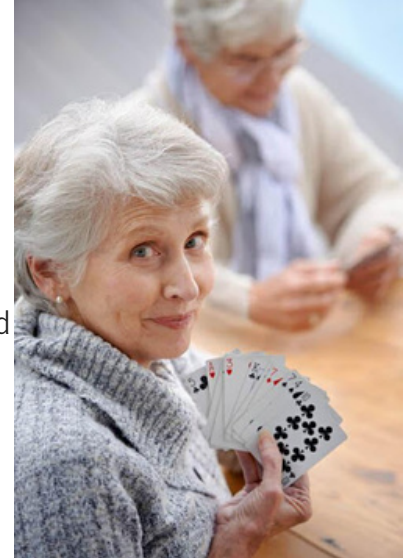
First, playing card and board games can help seniors maintain their mental acuity. Studies have shown that regularly playing card and board games can help reduce the risk of developing dementia and Alzheimer's disease. Card and board games can help seniors stay mentally sharp by stimulating their brains and promoting cognitive function.

Second, playing card and board games can help seniors stay socially engaged. Playing cards and board games can help seniors connect with other people and create relationships. These relationships can help promote emotional well-being, which is important for seniors. Playing games with family members or friends can help seniors stay connected, even if they are not able to physically be together.

Third, playing card and board games can help seniors stay physically active. Many card and board games require physical activity such as shuffling cards or moving pieces around a board. This physical activity can help seniors stay physically fit and active, which is important for overall health.

Finally, playing card and board games can help seniors stay emotionally healthy.

We love playing cards and games at Prairie Homestead Senior Living. Feel free to join us anytime or find a favorite game-playing spot in your community. Who knew having so much fun was so beneficial as we age?



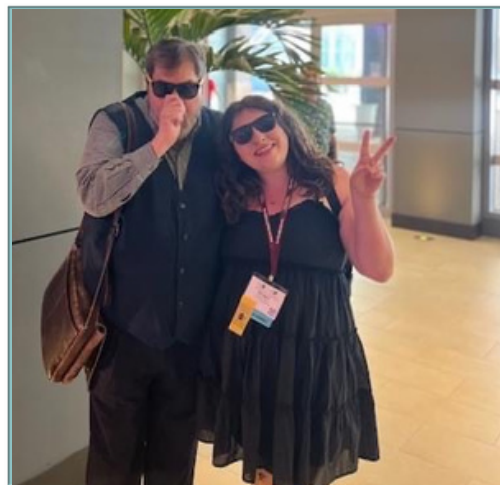
GEN-Z WORDS OF THE MONTH



"Fam"

Definition: A term to describe a close friend, who is 'like family'

Example: "I love to wear matching shirts with my fam."



"Slay"

Definition: To do well, to dominate, to kill it, to be the best.

Example: "That outfit is a slay."