

Central Region Life

FEBRUARY 2023

SERVICE TO GOD AND SERVICE TO OTHERS

In the past, the Martin Luther, King, Jr. Sunday evening service was sponsored by the Topeka Baptist Ministry Union. However, the Living the Dream (LTD) committee was looking for other options. As the ABBCR NE Area Moderator, I asked the executive team to allow us to sponsor the Sunday evening service. Pastor Delmar White and I started planning the service. In planning the service, we were thinking of all the people in our community who serve faithfully. Our plan was to recognize them at the service.

Although it came as a surprise to him, it was no surprise to others that we honored Executive Minister, Dr. Gregg Hemmen with the MLK Community Service award. We wanted to recognize all the work that Gregg does behind the scenes and never takes credit for. Dr. Hemmen helped support churches and pastors during the COVID-19 pandemic ensuring that they had all the resources they needed to continue to do ministry in the presence of such uncertainty. He frequently checks in to see how he can support pastors in prayer and service. He supports and helps provide resources for those who work toward social justice, caring for the less fortunate, providing basic needs to the community, and spreading the Gospel.

The evening was a blessing for all who attended with a dynamic message by Pastor T.D. Hicks, music by the Parker Sisters, and other individuals on the program.

Monday evening the Topeka Center for Peace and Justice and New Life Baptist Church hosted another service. Val Bauman with KTWU was mistress of ceremonies, Topeka Mayor Michael Padilla gave the welcome, Ms. LaQuanda Jacobs of the Innocence Project sang and shared her experience about her false imprisonment. Dr. Beryl New, Director of Certified Personnel and Equity Council, Topeka Public Schools was the keynote speaker.

Written by: Carl Frazier and Morgan Bandy



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Top Right: Pastor Carl Frazier and Executive Minister, Gregg Hemmen
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Bottom Right: Topeka Area Clergy

GAZE AND GLANCE

REV DR. GREGG HEMMEN, EXECUTIVE MINISTER

When Diane and I got married, she was just finishing her first year of graduate school at Duke Divinity School. I found a position of service at Cane Creek Baptist Church, in Hillsborough, North Carolina, while Diane worked for the President of Duke University. While she was going to seminary, her job was to take care of the small household tasks the President didn't have time for. She picked up the President's dry cleaning, did the grocery shopping, and helped take care of the details when dignitaries came to the University. Part of Diane's compensation was a place for us to live at the President's House. While it may sound impressive, we basically had about 250 square feet of living space in two small rooms and a bathroom. That first year of marriage, we folded our bed into our couch every morning (one of those not-so-comfortable Hide-a-Beds) but had some wonderful experiences with people we met.

If you are a college basketball fan, you know that part of North Carolina is at the epicenter of one of college basketball's greatest rivalries – Duke University and the University of North Carolina. Diane's job with the Duke President offered us a chance to see some Duke games. My job at Cane Creek Baptist Church gave us an inside track to season ticket holders at UNC, whenever someone couldn't use their tickets. It was a fascinating experience to live in an area where people took their college basketball so seriously. Now that we're living in Kansas, we're once again reminded of a similar passion because people take their college basketball seriously here as well.

Last March, Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski was coaching his last home game before retiring. I don't believe it was a coincidence that this last regular season game was against their fierce rival, UNC. It would have been the ultimate sendoff for Coach K – beating UNC one last time. But no one told UNC and rookie coach Hubert Davis how this was supposed to play out. UNC came into Cameron Indoor Stadium and took the game right to Duke beating the Duke Blue Devils on their home floor and leaving a very sour taste in the mouths of the Duke faithful.

During the post-game press conference, I listened to Hubert Davis speak about this unexpected victory. I was also surprised to hear him speak openly about his faith in God. I just didn't know Davis and became more intrigued as he spoke at length about his faith.

Davis quoted Proverbs 4:25 in his postgame press conference, "Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you." This verse was a constant reminder for his team during the 2021-2022 season. It worked out pretty well for UNC until the national championship game where the Kansas Jayhawks beat the Tarheels 72-69.

In the early stages of this New Year, there are two words I constantly keep in my mind – gaze and glance. A gaze is a prolonged look at something or someone with focus. A glance is a momentary visual awareness. As Jesus followers, our gaze is to be on Jesus. We are only to glance at our problems and distractions. When I keep my gaze on Jesus and my glance on the non-Jesus challenges, I'm where I need to be. When my gaze settles on my problems and I only glance at Jesus, I'm in for a struggle. Jesus is always out ahead of us helping us to know how to follow. Today, spend a few moments being honest with yourself about where your gaze and glance is focused. "Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you."

–Gregg L.J. Hemmen

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF THE CENTRAL REGION

"OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP"

This "Opportunity Scholarship" is awarded by the American Baptist Churches of the Central Region to encourage lifelong learning. It was established by the ABCCR Board of Directors in 2005. Two \$1000 scholarships are awarded each spring. This is a general scholarship to encourage higher education (beyond high school). It is a one-year award and students who wish to be considered for an additional year must reapply.

Deadline for applications is
March 15, 2023

[Apply Here](#)



WHY I'M AN AMERICAN BAPTIST

BILL POLAND, ABCCR PRESIDENT

My affiliation as an American Baptist is due, in no small part, to the fact that I was born into an American Baptist family and eventually married a girl born and raised in an American Baptist family. Why was I American Baptist? That's just who I was. Eventually, I became aware of church polity and had to decide if that was who I really am. Similar to other denominations, the American Baptist Churches of the USA (ABCUSA) has a structure, somewhat of a hierarchy from the local congregation to the national board. Unlike most other denominations with a hierarchy, the ABCUSA affiliate churches have autonomy; the hierarchy doesn't dictate how the local congregation operates. I like the idea of being in control of our own destiny, nobody telling us what we must believe or do. The local church affiliates with an "area" which is part of a "region" which is a part of the ABCUSA, some areas breaking down even farther to "associations" and "clusters". Local congregations choose to associate, for the betterment of all.

Baptists have been associating with each other since 1707 when 5 congregations in New Jersey and Philadelphia came together to form the Philadelphia Baptist Association. By 1790 there were 35 Baptist associations with approximately 560 ministers, 750 churches and 60,000 members in the U.S. (Per ABCUSA "Our History"). In the decades that followed, the Baptists continued to sort out our associations and eventually the ABCUSA became a denomination. Throughout this process we have maintained church autonomy while providing local congregations with support in a variety of areas, from ordination and pastoral search to mission opportunities. Since 1962 the American Baptist Churches Mission Center has been involved in ongoing planning of domestic and overseas mission work. Today, hundreds of American Baptist missionaries serve in the U.S. and more than 20 other countries. It is unlikely that a small local congregation would be able to financially support a full-time missionary serving overseas; only when we pool our resources are we able to impact those outside our own community. Again, by associating with others, we are able to accomplish more for the Kingdom of God.

Beyond traditional mission work, the ABCUSA is also involved with influencing political action decisions. Recently the work of the Burma Advocacy Group, the Burma Refugee Commission, American Baptist International Ministries (IM), American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS), the Regional Executive Ministers Council (REMC) and MMBB Financial Services (MMBB) and the General Secretary helped to gain the passage of the Burma Act Bill in the U.S. Senate. With the work of these organizations as well as churches writing letters and making phone calls, legislation was passed, and our hope is that action will be taken quickly to bring freedom to Burma (Myanmar).

So, why am I an American Baptist? I have discovered that American Baptists from around the country are an incredibly diverse group of people who love Jesus and want to fulfill the great commission to go and make disciples. Together we can do more. AND the local church is still autonomous.

Tips for Finding Services and Assistance

Prairie Homestead Senior Living

Anyone feel overwhelmed when looking for the best option when you are in need of some type of service or assistance? Whether looking for tire repair, best restaurant, or even a senior living care community.....finding the best choice is sometimes difficult with the overwhelming information now available.

Here at Prairie Homestead Senior Living, we encourage our residents to spend time doing their research and maximize technology for their benefit. Many find the tips below helpful:

1. Understanding Google search results: When you complete a Google search, be aware that the top choices listed often are paid advertising listings (Identified by the word "Ad" in bold to the left). The service provider listed first is not necessarily the most popular or best, so feel free to scroll down a bit to make an informed decision.
2. Read the reviews: After doing a Google search, check out the reviews given of a potential provider. Customers and supporters often share their experience and give both positive and negative insight. Read through multiple reviews to get a comprehensive evaluation. (Many have star ratings that average of all reviews based on a 5-star system.)
3. Look for recognition or industry awards: Often, providers will be recognized for additional certifications, training, or accomplishments. For instance, Prairie Homestead Senior Living was recently voted the Silver Award recipient for Best Assisted Living campus in Wichita! These special recognitions can confirm that you'll receive quality services.
4. Check out the company's Facebook page: Facebook is a way for companies to share about the culture of their services rather than just sharing a sales or marketing message. Looking through posts can help you decide if the culture of the business matches your own beliefs and desires.
5. Talk with friends and family who may have similar needs or experiences: There is nothing better than a firsthand account shared by a trusted friend or family members. Ask around and see if others have had personal interactions or experiences. Here at Prairie Homestead, over 75% of seniors interested in moving have known someone that lived or currently lives on campus!

Regardless of what service or assistance you may be searching for, technology can be helpful in narrowing your search. With these tips, you can gather valuable information right from the comfort of your own home that will help you make an informed decision.

PLANNED GIVING

THANK YOU

During African American history month and the month that we honor two of our presidents with one national holiday, I thought it would be fitting to share some history on the beginning of charitable gift annuities in the USA.

According to Wayne Olson, who wrote the book, "Big Gifts—Small Effort" the first charitable gift annuity was funded in 1831. He tells the story this way, saying that the American Bible Society approached a donor named John Frey of Palatine, New York. Mr. Frey wanted to give the Bible Society some money for its mission, but he could not give as much as he wanted because he was encumbered by a commitment to take care of a family member. He was responsible for the care of his sister and needed to fulfill that responsibility, so he agreed to give the Bible Society \$1,000 if it would pay his sister \$70 each year for the rest of her life, no matter how long she lived. Both parties reached an agreement, and the money was donated to The American Bible Society, with the provision of taking care of his sister each year until her death. They have been issuing charitable gift annuities ever since and many, many other charitable organizations have been doing the same thing for almost 200 years now!

How about you? Would you be interested in funding a charitable gift annuity that would benefit you, your spouse, both of you, or another family member? Also, it could benefit your local church, fund grants & offerings and support a multitude of mission partners throughout the years to come. It would also provide you with a fine tax deduction too. If you are interested, please don't hesitate to call me or email me and I will be there to answer any questions or help you in this process. Thanks for your consideration of such an important matter as this!

**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**



**The youth of FBC Gardner
enjoyed a night of ice
skating at Crown Center**

Click Here to Register Today

Feb 2,9,23 and 26

7:00pm

LEARN...

- What binds us?
- Develop your church's brand
- Plan for growth

For more information,
please contact
Bill Hendricks
bill.hendricks@abccr.org

WHAT'S AN AMERICAN BAPTIST?

Our Fragile Freedoms

WHAT'S AN AMERICAN BAPTIST?

DR. BILL HENDRICKS, DIRECTOR OF INTERIM MINISTRY

What causes new people to walk through the doors of your church? While the list of things that might attract a new Church Member seems endless, the harsh reality is that they are not walking through the door, at least not in great hordes! The following article is a sneak preview of a four-week study Titled 'The ABCs of the ABC that I will lead every Thursday during the month of February, 7:00pm – 8:15pm. We will talk about who we are as a Region and as a Nation-wide Denomination.

Most people have a predetermined idea of who we are as a church. And they have decided concerning their involvement with the building (your building) they drive by on a regular basis. But facts remain, while church attendance is down, the rate of depression and loneliness are on the rise. Here's a simple church assessment:

| Key Questions... | | Yes | No |
|------------------|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. | It is easy to know what time worship begins? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | Our building is easy to navigate with an armful of kids and winter coats? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. | People can easily identify our church? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. | When people arrive at the front door of our church they are welcomed: | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. | They are greeted and introduced to church members? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. | They're seated near people who do more than greet them? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. | They are more than invited to attend Sunday School? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. | We have 'Consumer friendly' materials that explain our church? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. | Visitors are reminded that we are proud of our identity? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. | We have a follow-up strategy in place for every new visitor? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. | Are we a place that has real answers to loneliness and depression? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

This time of year, in the corporate world the answer to sagging performance is always 'Let's re-brand ourselves.' A coat of paint, a new sign, or logo. Can we find some way to say: 'We are unique, we care,' anything that causes people to change their preconceived ideas and thoughts about us'?

I am proud to be an American Baptist. I believe we 'Do Church' in an attractive way; a way that appeals to the 'New Generation. A way that exalts Christ and the ministry our churches are called to perform. Christ in us, the hope of glory!

In this upcoming series (Mark your calendar for Feb 2, 9, 16 and 23) Branding is a key part of church growth, but many of our churches struggle to create a consistent and attractive brand. In many cases a simple logo is all that's needed, but in most cases, we need to answer the question 'What is an American Baptist?'

Your brand is a combination of the elements that define your Church. These include your mission, logo, Christian ethos. The first step in defining any Church's brand is to refocus on Jesus Christ. Possibly these questions can assist:

WHAT'S AN AMERICAN BAPTIST?

DR. BILL HENDRICKS, DIRECTOR OF INTERIM MINISTRY

1. What has He called your Church to do? Could being a proud American Baptist give you a lift? We'll answer this question in Session One.
2. Have we taken advantage of the powerful and positive messages of the ABC and the ABCCR?
3. Have you brainstormed a shortlist of church activities you could do collaboratively to build a brand and get your church reengaged? If you're feeling uninspired, Session Three (Feb.16)
4. And possibly you are just a little worried about stepping on a landmine. There certainly are some issues that can turn a church inside out. The Fourth and final session is about 'Triggers and Responses.'

Your brand identity is on the line. This includes your understanding of what an American Baptist is! A new brand means considering new visual elements (possibly an American Baptist logo in every church member's car, on the rear window?)

The strongest brands speak in a voice that matches their audience. Are you appealing to younger or older people? Men or women? Individuals or families? Answering these questions will help you define your brand voice. Will we make every session in February, specifically about the voice of Christ? As your church grows, your brand evolves to keep pace with your developing of young Christians. Rebranding can help you stay in touch.

PRAYER EMPHASIS

REV. TIM SCHWARTZ



This month let us pray that God will strengthen and empower the youth in the Central Region. Let us pray for all those involved in 4Ten, that the Holy Spirit would give them discernment and wisdom and help them to grow as young leaders in their churches and communities. May the spirit also guide them as they possibly consider ministry as their calling and vocation.

Let us also pray for all of our youth who might be going through emotional, mental, physical or spiritual distress, that Jesus would wrap them in his loving arms and carry them through into the light of a new day! Still, let us do our part, as the people of God, to help one of these youth by sharing compassion, empathy, concern and a listening ear.

Let us pray for our Associate Executive Minister, Jennifer Schneider, who not only oversees our region youth programs, but has a deep heart for youth and youth ministry and is continuing to study and grow in this important area of ministry. Let us also pray for Morgan Bandy and our other region staff who are involved in youth ministry. May they and all of us remind our youth of how unique, valuable, wonderful, and important they are as they become our future leaders in the church. As the scripture says, "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity."

I Timothy 4:12 (NIV)

Upcoming Events

"No Turning Back"

PHILIPPIANS 3:13-15 MSG

APRIL 26-27, 2023

WEST SIDE BAPTIST CHURCH
304 S SENECA
WICHITA, KS



DR. JERRY CAIN, KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Registrations are due by April 10, 2023 in order to prevent the assessed late fee. Housing is not provided but there are many reasonably priced hotels/motels in the Wichita area.

Many fun activities have been planned by the Sr. Adult Retreat Committee.

These will include:

Bible Study led by Dr. John Clark

Bells led by Jan Smith

Virtual Tours of 7 churches led by James Callaway

Chair Exercises led by Morgan Bandy

Region Moving Forward led by Rev. Dr. Gregg Hemmen

Getting on Down the Tracks Interest Group led by Janet Crowl

"All Aboard" craft led by Lois Chiles

Choir led by Bob Artz

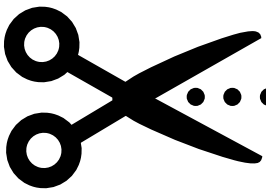
Fun coloring contest, puzzles, more fun, and fellowship.

Hope to see you there!



REGISTRATION MATERIALS ARE AVAILABLE AT WWW.ABCCR.ORG OR THROUGH YOUR LOCAL CHURCH OFFICE.

JOIN THE FUN!



ABCCR SENIOR ADULT RETREAT

April 26-27, 2023

West Side Baptist Church

304 S. Seneca

Wichita, KS 67213

"No Turning Back"

Philippians 3:13-15 (msg)

Guest Speaker, Dr. Jerry Cain

Registration Deadline - April 10, 2023

*** \$10 Late Fee Assessed if Postmarked After April 10, 2023

Cancellation Policy: A full refund will be given if cancelled by April 19, 2023

\$25 non-refundable cancellation fee per individual after April 19, 2023

Name: _____ Phone: _____

(If registering as a couple, please write spouse's name below)

Spouse: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ Home Church: _____

& City: _____

City / State / Zip: _____

• Full Retreat (includes program and meals) per person _____ @ \$85.00 per person

• One Day only (Wednesday or Thursday) per person _____ @ \$60.00 per person

Total Amount Due _____

Please make checks payable to **Senior Adult Retreat** and mail payment and completed registration form to:

Senior Adult Retreat

% ABCCR

5889 SW 29th St.

Topeka, KS 66614

If you are interested in finding a roommate to share motel expenses, please indicate by checking the appropriate boxes:
 Please help me find a roommate Male Female

Housing is NOT provided. Those attending the Senior Adult Retreat will need to make their own housing arrangements. Your internet search will reveal many reasonably priced motels in the Wichita area.

Dietary Requirements: Sugar Free Gluten Free

First Time to Attend the ABCCR Senior Adult Retreat? Yes No

Registration Begins Wednesday at 11:00 am **Retreat Begins with Lunch at 12:00 noon**

(Cut here and retain this stub for your records and information.)

ABCCR Senior Adult Retreat – West Side Baptist Church, 304 S. Seneca St., Wichita, KS – April 26-27, 2023
Registration begins at 11:00 am on Wednesday the 26th Retreat begins with lunch at 12:00 noon.

The Sr. Adult Retreat will end mid-afternoon on Thursday, the 27th

Amount paid to Registrar: _____ Check number: _____ Date paid: _____



PRAIRIE PASTORS

CONFERENCE

When: March 27-29, 2023

Where: Sunset Hills Baptist Church

9416 Pacific St. Omaha, NE 68114



To register you can scan the
QR Code or [CLICK HERE](#)

Speakers



Barbara and Dwight Bolick: They are on a special assignment, based currently in College Station, Texas. Barb is completing a PhD in Youth Development, in order to make the Talita Cumi Girls' Clubs Project both evidence based and effective. She is introducing the Girls' Clubs in Bolivia, and continues supporting the program in Chile, as she provides mentor training and contextualized written materials. Dwight is training partners in Central America in rainwater harvesting, installing model systems, and encouraging the use of this water-collection method in addressing the severe water crises throughout the region.



Toya Richards: She is endorsed to serve in Cape Town, South Africa as a teacher and professor at the Cape Town Baptist Seminary - a ministry of IM partner the Baptist Union of Southern Africa. Drawing upon her extensive career and experience in print journalism and communications, Toya will teach intermediate to advanced English language skills and research methodology, preparing students to meet the demands and requirements needed for advanced seminary studies. She will also be involved in emerging community initiatives through the CTBS Center for Biblical Justice. Toya is currently building her Mission Partnership Team and raising the funds needed to begin her ministry in South Africa.



Debbie and Keith Myers: They serve in Central Mexico. They partner with the Council of Rural Indigenous Evangelicals of Mexico, AR, to provide pastoral accompaniment to the indigenous churches. This consists of training pastors, church leaders, youth leaders, and teachers for the children. Debbie and Keith serve in four states in Mexico and work with 34 churches within these states to empower the people.

Schedule

Monday March 28

1:30 pm Pre-Conference Orientation to ABC Life

Monday March 28, 2023

3:30 pm Registration

5:15 pm Welcome

5:30 pm Dinner – Provided by MMBB

6:45 pm Worship

7:00 pm Presentation by Dwight and Barbara Bolick

Fellowship time

Tuesday March 28, 2023

9:30 am Worship

10:00 am Session #1 Missionary Panel/MMBB

10:50 am Break

11:00 am Session #2 Missional Panel/MMBB

11:50 am Lunch – hosted by individual regions

1:30 pm Free Time – MMBB and speakers available for discussions

American Baptist Foundation presentation at 1:30

Dinner on your own

6:45 pm Worship

7:00 pm Presentation by Keith and Debbie Myers

8:30 pm Group Photo and Fellowship Time

Wednesday March 29, 2023

9:15 am Worship

9:30 am Presentation by Toya Richards

10:30 am Break

10:45 am Closing Worship and Communion

WINTER JAM

**FRIDAY NIGHT
CONCERT
WHEN: FEBRUARY
17TH**

WHERE: WITCHITA KS
AT THE INTRUST BANK
ARENA
DOORS WILL OPEN AT
6PM
CONCERT STARTS AT
7PM
WHO: ANNE WILSON,
JEREMY CAMP, WE
THE KINGDOM & SO
MUCH MORE!



Information

Price: \$15 donation at the door

I will share permission slips for students who need a ride if a parent or volunteer can't go. You can find more information on the website or Facebook.

Please contact Cindy Fritz if you have any questions or need more information.

AB GIRLS



ROOTED

Women's Ministry

Invites you to...



Tuesdays @ 6:30pm

Feb. 28th - Apr. 4th

Online via Zoom, hosted by Jessica Henks & Jan Sipe

Join us for conversation as we read Heather Holleman's study in Ephesians that helps us fight the urge to compare ourselves to others, and instead see ourselves seated with Christ.

REGISTER

rootedwmn.org/studies



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE CENTRAL REGION?

Churches in Action



4Ten Students gathered together at FBC Hutchinson for their second event. Pastor Rishawn Austin taught them some new archery skills. Throughout the weekend they learned about their strengths and gifts and how to use them in their schools and churches.



Cherry Grove Baptist Church youth learn verse memorization by competing in a relay race