

Great Rivers Regional Scholarship Programs

Scholarship programs exist in the Great Rivers Region to assist young people who are members in Great Rivers Region American Baptist Churches to secure a college and/or seminary education. Scholarships for any college student (regardless of major) or seminary student from the Gernenz-Shurtleff / Wilcoxon Scholarship are available. Ministerial students attending ABC-related schools and seminaries in preparation for ministry can also apply for the Harold O. Long Scholarship. All applications must be received in the GRR office by April 1, 2010.

To receive an application for these scholarships, write to: Scholarship Committee, Att: Sharon Downs, PO Box 3786, Springfield, IL 62708, phone: 217-726-7366; fax: 888-922-2477, email: Sharon@abcgrr.org



Recordings of speakers and workshop leaders from the 42nd Annual Assembly of ABCGRR are available. Contact Debbie Naugle: debbie@abcgrr.org.

Mainstream Contact Information

Send your stories of mission and ministry. Please also send the names of new members (fruit of this mission and ministry) to:

Linda Ricks
232 Devron Circle
East Peoria, IL 61611
E-Mail: Ricks4Lr@comcast.net

Our Great Rivers Region Family Is Growing!

First Baptist Church, Aurora, IL

Welcomes: Joe Griffin, Payton Griffin, Joe Lundberg, Megan Leguillon, Ben Sickler, Ashley Walker, and Jesse Walker

First Baptist Church, Champaign at Savoy, IL

Welcomes: Doug Buchanan, Jenny Buchanan, Moreland Herrin, Nancy Herrin, Amber Aaland, Sergio Sanchez, Bryan Krall, Sarah Krall, and Rev. Sandy Haas

First Baptist Church, Jerseyville, IL

Welcomes: Brianna Meredith

First Baptist Church of Mahomet

Welcomes: Brittan Boles

First Baptist Church, Mattoon, IL

Welcomes: Tresa Russell, Chris Bartlett, Pam Bartlett, Sharon Vance, Bill Lovekamp, Jacob Uphoff, Jennifer Bartels, Kaleb Johanpeter, John Anderson, Brock Smith, Braden Smith, Trey Leasher, Craig Henness, and Chase Branson

First Baptist Church, Peoria, IL

Welcomes: Kim Napier, Misty Napier, Jyinessa Mott, and Jonathan Tiessen

First Baptist Church, Sullivan, IL

Welcomes: Barry Featheringill and Judy Featheringill



The Mainstream

News of Ministry and Mission

American Baptist Churches of the Great Rivers Region

December 2009 Email: grrabc@abcgrr.org web: www.abcgrr.org

GRR Calendar

2010 Theme: Thy Kingdom Come

January 15 - 18 - SKWIM 2010

February 20 - Trivia Night
Lightbody Conference Center
Lake Springfield Camp

March 6 - Area III Annual Meeting
and Seminar: Less
Clutter Less Noise
with Kem Meyer
FBC Champaign
Savoy, IL

March 13 - Area V Annual
Meeting
Second Baptist Church
Kansas City, MO

March 14 - Area II Annual Meeting
Central Baptist Church
Springfield, IL

March 20 - Area IV Annual
Meeting
FBC Centralia, IL

March 21 - Area I Annual Meeting
FBC Sterling, IL

April 16 - 17 - Clergy Spouse
Retreat,
Lake Springfield Camp

April 23 - 24 - GRR Missions
Conference
Cherry Hills Baptist Church



Merry Christmas

From the

Great Rivers Region Staff

Dwight Stinnett

John Grisham

Cheryl Henson

Richard Ricks

Muriel Johnson

Candy Stivers

Sharon Downs

Debbie Naugle

Roland Sundberg

Mike Henson

Linda Ricks

Carl Cottingham

Wayne Roger

News From Our Executive Minister

Recently I stopped at my regular gas station and something caught my eye. A banner over the building proclaimed in bold letters "Waves of Change." It was part of the advertising campaign for "new and improved" gasoline. I suspect it had been up for some time, but I noticed it only now because I had just used the image of extreme kayaking to illustrate the current state of regional ministry during the meeting of our Board.



The waves of change we face right now are daunting. They seem like one tsunami after the other – each one bigger than the last. While it may seem so, this did not happen overnight and did not come unexpectedly. For 13 years we have been systematically and intentionally adapting to and anticipating change. While I did not foresee a worldwide economic collapse at the close of 2008, it has been clear for at least 4 years that approaching waves of financial shortfalls had the potential of swamping the regional "boat."

Two years ago, during our annual ministerial staff retreat, we discussed the future of regional ministry as finances grew more acute. The Region had absorbed all the cuts we could without making staff changes. Now the need for dramatic staff reduction was clear. We outlined an idea, and passed it on to the Regional Ministry Board. The Ministry of Planning & Review spent 2009 sharpening a plan that would reduce staff through anticipated retirements expected to begin after 2012.

The unexpected, unrelated, and coincidental departures of Randy McNeely and Cheryl Henson have accelerated the plan. Churches have already been notified that Areas I and III will be served by Richard Ricks, while Areas II and IV will be served by John Grisham. Muriel Johnson will continue to serve Area V. While the number of churches served will not be the same, the geography will be comparable – large!

Obviously, this staffing arrangement will bring its own waves of change. At our ministerial staff retreat in a few weeks a strategy will be formulated. We will be more rushed than I had hoped. But we remain focused on congregations; our vision continues to be "healthy churches engaged in effective Christian ministry locally and globally;" and our purpose is still to "challenge, assist, represent, and empower churches."

In these churning waters, some things will be swept overboard. Some of those things will be near and dear to our hearts. But I am persuaded that God is using this tempest to bring renewed focus on what is essential. It is appropriate that our theme for 2010 be "Thy Kingdom Come," for we will be challenged to seek first the Kingdom of God.

Dr. J. Dwight Stinnett

Costa Rica Update.

Five GRR Pastors visited Costa Rica November 2-6, 2009 for face to face meetings with Costa Rica Baptist Association leaders Rev Johnny Sabario and Nidia Rodriguez and with American Baptist Missionaries Mylinda and Gary Baits and Ruth Mooney. (continued on p. 3)

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Pastors Jim Wolfe (Pontiac FBC), Jim Harper (Jacksonville FBC), Quinton Runton (Centralia FBC), Ivan Greuter (Central BC, Quincy), and Ryan Donoho (Central BC, Quincy) were joined by GRR Resource Minister **John Grisham**. Grisham is now the coor-



dinator of the GRR/ Costa Rica Partnership.

Jim Wolfe and Jim Harper had previously visited Costa Rica and participated in a 1996 partnership project to paint and remodel a portion of the Association building.

Itinerary included visits to the Baptist Camp located near Cartago, the Baptist Association offices, the Graduate Seminary where Ruth Mooney is on the faculty and to the now 70% completed Alajuelita Church. 17 GRR groups have joined in the construction work in Alajuelita church since May of 2003.

Participants were challenged by the faithful service and ministry of two congregations they visited. At the Mansion of Light Church they learned of ministry to children and families made possible in part by a "**Break The Chains**" grant from the **American Baptist Women**. At the Door of The Holy Spirit Church they observed a church construction project to create a safe space where the church

can feed children in a very poor neighborhood. The feeding program is currently made possible by a **Baptist World Alliance grant**.

Plans are now under way for groups to join in interior work on the Alajuelita Church in 2010. In addition to the cost of airfare, food and travel while in Costa Rica, each group also provides funds in advance to purchase construction materials and to hire local craftsmen to join in the work. There is also the possibility of partnership groups to join in projects at the Baptist Camp or with one of the 33 churches and 11 missions that are a part of the Association. For more information contact john@abcgrr.org

Rev. Timothy Baltz Honored for 15 Years of Service

On Sunday, November 15, 2009, the congregation at the **First Baptist Church of Aurora** celebrated fifteen years of service by their pastor, **Rev. Timothy Baltz**. Rev. Cheryl Henson



presented Pastor Tim Baltz a certificate of appreciation and celebration from the ABC/GRR for his 15 years of ministry at the FBC of Aurora during the worship service. The congregation celebrated with Pastor Tim and his wife, Shelley Baltz, after the worship service with a luncheon.