

Area I Annual Meeting

Please save the date on your calendar. On **Saturday April 28th**, the **Area 1 Annual Meeting** will be held at **BlackHawk Baptist Camp** with the theme **“Working, Not Weary.”** **Rev. Muriel Johnson, Area Minister for Area V**, will be our guest speaker. Registration will begin at 9:30 with program beginning at 10:00 AM. More information will become available as the day gets closer.

Church News

First Baptist Church, Highland, IL burned their mortgage on Sunday, January 21, 2018. This mortgage came about when the previous church building was destroyed by fire. This year will be the 20th anniversary of the new building. The following is a portion of a note of reflection by **Pastor Rob Kirbach**. *“Today’s mortgage burning symbolizes more to me than a financial milestone. As I lit that paper, watching it become consumed by fire in the same manner as the church building that preceded it, I saw the culmination of a determined and resilient people whose faith was strengthened by adversity. The warmth of those little flames this morning remind me of the warm generosity and compassion this congregation has become known for. And seeing the charred remains of that promissory note make me think of a future yet to be written. Today’s mortgage burning marks the beginning of a new era for FBC Highland. The future of this congregation looks exciting, indeed.*

The Mainstream is a twice-monthly publication of the American Baptist Churches of the Great Rivers Region, 3940 Pintail Drive, Springfield IL 62711 Phone: (217) 726-7366 Email: debbie@abcgrr.org Web: www.abcgrr.org To subscribe or unsubscribe to The Mainstream or to change contact information, please send an e-mail to Debbie Naugle with your request: debbie@abcgrr.org.

New Members of the Churches of the Great Rivers Region

First Baptist Church, Canton, IL Welcomes: David & Sheila Bell, Joe & Jamie Davison, Nicole Booth-Griffith, Amber Downing, Brian Henderson, Tony & Julie Henderson, Jim & Tracy Holliday, Kamie Holliday, Kyle & Jessica Jansen, Christine Jenkins, Dante Swanson, Shawn Larkin, Amanda List, Tom & Kim Malone, Holly Miller, Danielle Minton, Andrew Pitzer, Zoey Pitzer, Robert Smith, and Anna Whitehurst

First Baptist Church, Greenville, IL Welcomes: Elizabeth Bays and Brenda Coster

GRR Website

E-mail GRR Webmaster, Richard Ricks: revrick4@comcast.net

Mainstream Contact Information

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

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The Mainstream

News of Ministry and Mission

Be a vessel that God can pour his love through.
Let It Flow

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2018 Calendar

March:

- 2 - 3: **ABWM Regional Board**
- 10: **Area V Annual Gathering**
Grace Baptist Church
Kansas City, MO
- 11: **Area II Annual Meeting**
FBC Moweaqua, IL

April:

- 14: **Area III Annual Meeting**
- 15: **Area IV Annual Meeting**
FBC Murphysboro, IL
- 20 - 21: **Face To Face**
- 27 - 28: **Clergy Spouse Retreat**
Lake Springfield Camp
- 28: **Area I Annual Meeting**
Blackhawk Baptist Camp

June:

- 8 - 10: **ABWM GRR Annual Conference**, Northfield Inn & Suites and Conference Center, Springfield, IL

September:

- 27: **GRR Ministers Conference**
- 28 - 29: **GRR Annual Assembly**
The Chateau
Bloomington, IL

Area II Annual Meeting

First Baptist Church of Moweaqua

Sunday, March 11, 2018

Registration will begin at 2:00 p.m. and dinner will be at 5:45 p.m. The cost will be \$15.00 including dinner.



Dr. Saul Ebema will be sharing his testimony with us. He was born in war-torn South Sudan and earned a Masters of Divinity and a Doctorate of Ministry from Northern Seminary. Today, he serves as the senior pastor of the Lombard Bible Church in Lombard, Illinois. He also serves as president of the Saul Ebema Foundation, which helps children affected by South Sudan's civil war.

Rev. Patty Bilyeu will be delivering the message during worship.



Dr. Ryan Follis and the Nokomis Praise Team will be leading us in praise and worship throughout the afternoon.



A Word From Paul Gibson, ABCGRR Executive Minister

DON'T TELL ANYONE

What do you think of when someone says that to you? Do you wonder why they want to keep it a secret? Do you wish they never would have told you? That was part of Tommy Simons' great sermon at Third Baptist in St. Louis last Sunday. He was preaching on the verses from Mark 8 and he had us thinking about who we would say Jesus is in our lives. He also got me thinking about why someone would be told not to tell anyone about Jesus. Here's what I came up with. Even if we can't tell people about Jesus through words, the way we live should tell people a whole lot about who Jesus is. They should be able to find out a whole lot about Jesus just by being around us. In the days that we live in, people need to experience the love of Jesus much more by our actions than our words. So don't worry much about telling people about Jesus through words, just make sure that your life is demonstrating His love, mercy, joy, hope, faithfulness, kindness, forgiveness...you get the picture, and so will others.

CRI – CHURCH REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE

I'm like a kid before Christmas, I can't wait to open the presents. So it is with this. It is a good project involving so many good people and I want to roll it out right now, BUT. We still have a few crucial parts to work on

before we can share anymore news about it. We should have things in place by the end of March, so it's coming, but don't tell anyone.

MISSIONS

Two important items for prayer and possible action. The Stantons have been informed that their financial support has dropped a bit and they need to raise more support. Pray and respond as God leads you. Paul Rollet headed back to the Philippines this past week to get back to the mission that God had laid on his heart. Be praying for him as he settles in again and as he continues some rehab.

SKWIM

What a great event! Skiing, swimming, Green Lake, cool speakers, great music, and wonderful kids and sponsors. You missed it this year but pray about being involved next year during the MLK weekend. Special thanks to Josh Sabo and the Rollet family for working so hard to make this youth event special.

PUERTO RICO SISTER CHURCH PROGRAM.

As I write this, there is a group of people from ABCUSA meeting with leaders in Puerto Rico to develop this plan. Be praying about the possibility of your church, or group of churches, becoming a sister church to one of the churches affected by hurricanes.

FAMILY GATHERINGS

They are coming up soon, in all five of our areas. They are also called area meetings, but in effect they are times for us to come together to connect, share in fellowship and inspiration, and share a table. Hope to see you there.

And now the rest of the story. Be rightly related to God and find your joy there, and out of you will flow rivers of living water. Be a vessel that God can pour His love through.

Paul



**International Ministries
Costa Rica
Young Adult Experience**

June 19 - July 8, 2018

**Transform Your World Through
Creation Care**

Join IM staff, missionaries, and Costa Rican brothers and sisters in sustainable farming and construction practices, learn about the state of a country pioneering creation care, and dialogue cross-culturally about how love of nature is an expression of love for God and neighbor. Return with your peers to Green Lake, Wisconsin, where you will examine your experiences in a retreat format and present at the 2018 World Mission Conference.

Leaders: Emily Ferrin, IM Assistant Director of Short-Term Missions
Ruth Mooney, IM Missionary to Costa Rica

Partners: Latin American Biblical University
The Federation of Baptist Associations of Costa Rica
Association of Development through Education

(continued in next column)

\$2,000 TOTAL INCLUDES: AIRFARE*, ROOM & BOARD, GROUND TRANSPORTATION, INSURANCE, LEADERSHIP *HOUSTON, TX – SAN JOSÉ, CR – APPLETON, WI

(Other expenses include passport, travel to Houston, TX and from Appleton, WI)

Limited to 6 Person Team

Final Payment Due May 1, 2018



The Great Rivers Region has been in partnership with the **Baptist Federation of Costa Rica** since 1985. One or more GRR partnership groups have traveled to Costa Rica each year since 1985. Pictured above is **Dr. John Grisham** being presented a sign by **Rev. Johnny Saborio Conejo**, the Pastor of Iglesia Bautista De Cinco Esquinas in San Jose, Costa Rica and **Rev. Nidia Rodriguez Jimenez**, President of Federacion DeAsociaciones Baptistas De Costa Rica. (FABCR) .and retired Pastor Minister of FABCR. The sign is displayed by many of the member Churches of the Baptist Federation of Costa Rica.