



WINTER

Vol. 74 No.4

Central Connection

Connecting with American Baptist Women's Ministries of the Central Region

He is the reason for this season

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flock at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you: he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Luke 2:1-20

Mona Huggins

Giving us the latest tea in AB Women's Ministries



"I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all people...." Luke 2:10

Merry Christmas Dear Sisters-in-Christ! November has been a rather quiet month, but here are a few highlights.

- Annual Popcorn sales went well, raising over \$18,000 in 4 days for National support. I raised my goal from \$600 to \$1,000 before starting, and that goal was surpassed with your help: \$1,076!! Thank you!
- The World Day of Prayer program at FBC Paola was very nice. It's always wonderful to see AB Women's Ministries friends, but also meet new faces!
- Kami Minor and I met to discuss AB G.I.R.L.S. ministries. She's always a delight!
- Many churches are packing Christmas shoeboxes for children around the world. Good for you!
- Dr. Gina Jacobs-Strain, Executive Director of American Baptist Women's Ministries has been called to serve as the next General Secretary of ABC-USA. She will be leaving her position with AB Women's Ministries in February. Please wish her well and be in prayer for her replacement.
- The Rev. Dr. Chris Smith has stepped down as President of ABWM and appointed me Lovena Van Haaften as President. Her reason is confidential. I ask that you keep her in prayers as she moves forward.

As we move into the Christmas season, my prayer for each of you is to take extra time to meet with the Lord. Notice the 5 minutes here and there throughout your day when you could spend a few minutes praising, singing, meditating, relaxing, breathing! You can do it because you are learning to "... be strong and courageous!"



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National News

Domestic Violence Awareness Workshop for Clergy

Clergy are invited to join us on Monday, January 29, 2024, 1:00 PM–4:30 PM EDT, for a virtual Domestic Violence Awareness Workshop.

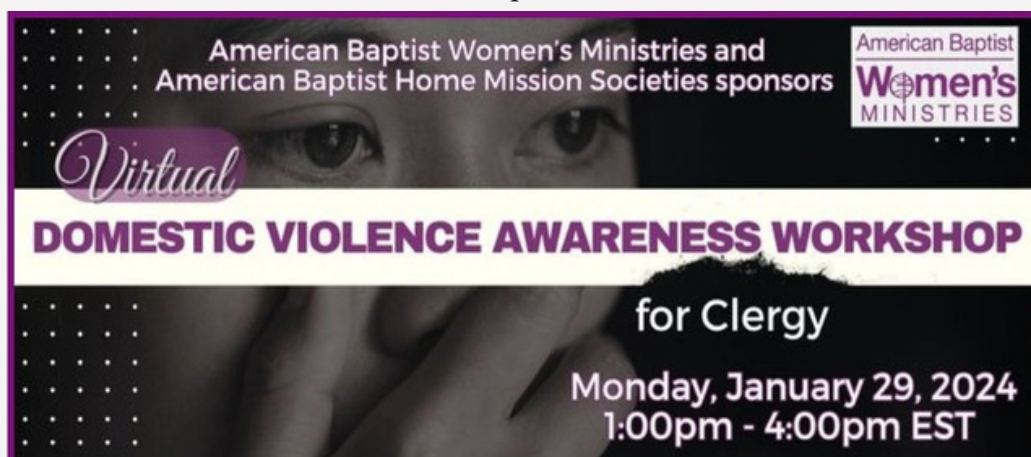
American Baptist Women's Ministries is partnering with American Baptist Home Mission Societies for a Domestic Violence Awareness Workshop for Clergy. This workshop will enable clergy to come together in a safe and intentional manner to learn ways to support and aid those in their communities who are suffering from Domestic Violence. The Bible study will take familiar scripture text and look at it through the lens of domestic violence. Together, we will reflect and see how our actions and inactions may impact a survivor in our families, churches, and communities. Clergy will receive Continuing Education Units (CEU) for this workshop.

Topics Covered

- Biblical Exploration of Violence
- Domestic violence behaviors
- Supporting victims & survivors
- Issues of faith & domestic violence
- Safety planning for victims & the church
- Referring & issues of confidentiality
- Responding to & supporting abusers

Bible Study Leader

Rev. Dr. Gina Jacobs–Strain is the Executive Director for American Baptist Women's Ministries (ABWM) and is a member of the National Executive Council for American Baptist Churches, USA. Rev. Dr. Gina served as the Transitional Pastor for First Baptist Church of New Market in Piscataway, New Jersey; Interim Pastor of St. Paul Baptist Church, Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey; Associate Regional Pastor for Women in Ministry for American Baptist Churches of New Jersey (ABCNJ); and is an Associate Minister of Christian Education at St. Paul Baptist Church in Montclair, New Jersey



Crawford/Grace Hill

Fall Rally Report

Crawford/Grace Hill held their Fall Rally on October 20 at the First Baptist Church in Fort Scott. Their guest speaker was Rev Janet Crowl, the former editor of the Central Connection. Janet spoke on “Flurry of Fall” and stressed on “Finding the Calm in the Flurry” around us and keeping the Bible nearby. Music of the day was led by Pastor Norman Tillotson, Jan Tillotson, Ryan Goodbody, and Rhonda Allen. Breakfast snacks were provided by Cherry Grove Baptist Church. Division reports were given in the afternoon led by president Magada Craven. She announced Crawford/Grace Hill Spring ABW Rally will be April 19, 2024 at Cherry Grove Baptist Church in Garland and the annual Summer Conference will be June 6-8, 2024 in Topeka First Baptist Church.

Sincerely,

Magada Craven, President



Tri-River Association

Fall Rally Report

Tri-River Association held the Fall Rally on October 2nd at Lebo Baptist Church. All 28 present were greeted by the ladies and treated to a wonderful spread of morning goodies! Following singing, devotions, and our business meeting, we welcomed our past Central Region president Melissa Newberry as our speaker. Melissa spoke on the passage in Joshua to “be strong and of great courage”. Each lady received two pipe cleaners where we had to create a shape that depicted situations where we needed to be strong and where we exhibited courage.

This activity really makes a person dig down to find their creativity! I have one of them I made attached to my refrigerator—it is in the letters ABW. When I volunteered to be president of Tri-River, it took a great amount of courage for me to do this—I’m not one that likes being in charge or in front of people. God has been with me every step of the way and has given me the strength and courage I need to lead Tri-River. So many of you pray for me—I have been so blessed by you! Take a moment now and think about a time where you can see God working in your life to give you the courage you needed to either face a difficult situation or accomplish something you didn’t think you could do.

Our mini project for the Fall Rally was the Lebo community Food pantry, and we thank Leanna Thomas for letting us know the specific needs for the Food Pantry. The tables where we placed our contributions were full. A big thank you to all for participating!

Following the Rally, we were all again treated to a wonderful luncheon provided by the ladies of Lebo Baptist Church! Thank you, Lebo, for your gracious hospitality and fellowship. (Next time I’ll try my best to remember to take pictures!) Our Spring Rally will be held at First Baptist Church Topeka on April 22, 2024.

Sincerely,

Gayle Smith, President



SAVE THE DATE!!!

2024 ABWCR Summer Conference
Location- First Baptist Church, Topeka, KS
Date- June 7-8, 2024
Keynote Speaker- Mary Shannon

Since it is almost Christmas and the New Year, that means that Summer Conference will be here before we know it! Days are flying by and you won't want to miss this event on June 7-8, 2024. Be sure to put this on your calendar now for First Baptist Church Topeka.

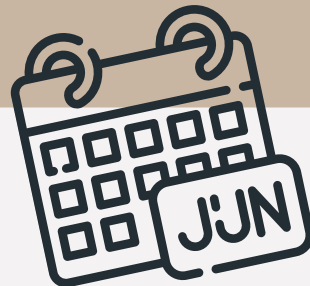
The Summer Conference Committee has been busy working on all the details for a crazy fun and spirit-filled adventure. We will have some Bible studies, Bible learning, personal care information, learning about courageous women with fearless faith, project information, fun crafts, choir and much much, more. I can hardly wait to share all that is planned with you!!

If you would like to be part of the fun, put this on your calendar or contact me and I will get you more information as it becomes available.

Watch our website

www.abwcr.org and the Central Connection for future information.

Lois Chiles, Conference Associate
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(913)-727-2232 or (913)-683-8680



2023–24 Project Article

Cordova Baptist Church, Cordova, AK

The mission of the Cordova Community Christian Center is to enable Cordovans to increase in “wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man.” We do this through a variety of programs and outreach activities which includes our preschool, after school kids groups, holiday activities as well as partnership with the Cordova Community Baptist Church in Vacation Bible School and other outreach activities. We have our annual Bazaar which invites the community into the Center and gives us ample opportunities to witness to them through the many gifts we receive which are for sale. We also have a variety of summer activities which brings the community into the Center and gives them times of interaction with the leaders. We are supported by not only the church but by American Baptists across the Lower 48 which is an ongoing mission experience we share with them.

The Cordova Community Christian Center was first begun in 1955 when the need for the ministry became apparent. Utilizing primarily the lower part of the church, which has several classrooms, a kitchen, and a large gymnasium-size room, the CCCC has operated a Christian pre-school, hosted numerous community programs (including Girls and Boy Scout meetings,) and offered programming for all ages. Over the years, the CCCC has been the site of many outreaches, including Home Port (currently a Saturday night coffee house). National Ministries partners with the Center through White Cross to continue to provide for supply needs and often sends volunteers to help with ministry needs.

Of the \$30,000 raised, \$15,000 will be given to the Cordova Community Christian Center in Alaska. Please consider giving to the ABWMCR 2023–24 Project!

- Make checks payable to: “ABWMCR PROJECT”
- Mail to: Janet Kincaid ABWMCR Treasurer 13103 S. Widmer, Olathe KS 66062

MELISSA NEWBERRY
PROJECT ASSOCIATE
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2024 Mid Winter Missions Conference

YOU CAN FIND THE REGISTRATION ATTACHED TO
YOUR EMAIL, IN YOUR PACKET, OR AT
WWW.ABCCR.ORG.



TIME FOR... GOOD NEWS!

2024 MIDWINTER MISSION & EVANGELISM CONFERENCE

GUEST SPEAKERS
AMANDA & JON
GOOD

19-20 JANUARY 2024

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF EMPORIA
807 Constitution St, Emporia, KS 66801



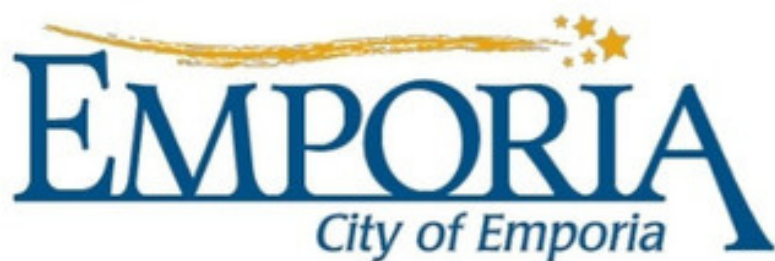
(785) 272-7622

REGISTER TODAY

Are you Hung(a)ry for Good News?
Contact us today to learn more about
this exciting event.
www.abccr.org



2024 Mid Winter Missions Conference



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
807 Constitution
Emporia, KS 66801
(620) 343-3112
www.emporiafbc.com

HOTELS

***Lodging options* - Attendees will need to make a reservation and pay for their hotel or lodging. The ABCCR Mission and Evangelism Vision Team does not endorse, recommend, or sponsor any hospitality establishment.**

America's Best, 3181 W. Hwy 50, Emporia, KS 66801	620-342-7820
Best Western, 2836 W. 18th Ave., Emporia, KS 66801	620-342-9700
Comfort Inn, 2921 W. 18th Ave., Emporia, KS 66801	620-412-2535
Econo Lodge, 2511 W. 18th Ave., Emporia, KS 66801	620-343-7750
Emporia Inn, 2630 W. 18th Ave., Emporia, KS 66801	620-343-1240
Hampton Inn, 2900 Eaglecrest Dr., Emporia, KS 66801	620-412-9040
Holiday Inn Express, 3007 W. 18th Ave., Emporia, KS 66801	620-343-1111
La Quinta, 2930 Eaglecrest Dr., Emporia, KS 66801	620-412-2763
Main Stay Suites, 2602 Candlewood Dr, Emporia, KS 66801	620-343-7756
Super 8 by Wyndham, 2913 US-50, Emporia, KS 66801	620-342-7567

DEADLINE: Registration form and fee are due no later than January 5, 2024.

5 EASY WAYS TO BE A MISSION ADVOCATE



1. DECIDE

Say "YES" to God's work in the world! Being informed and engaged in God's work is one of the hallmarks of our Baptist faith. Decide now to come to the Midwinter Mission & Evangelism Conference.



4. GIVE

Prayerfully and financially support God's global servants by partnering with them each month. A free-will offering will be received.



REGISTER NOW

2. LEARN

Learn about God's global mission work by registering online or completing a paper registration and mailing it TODAY

3. WELCOME

Be friends with God's global servants! Invite them into your home, hearts, and churches. Get to know the servants God is using to spread the Good News.



5. PRAY

Ask God to release His supernatural blessing, so persons receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and churches are strengthened and grow.



**TRAVEL SAFELY TO THE
MidWinter Mission &
Evangelism Conference**

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT & LOVE GIFT

According to the October, 2023 financial information from American Baptist Churches of the Central Region, the YTD total for 2023 Central Region Love Gift giving is \$24,564.53. The 2023 goal is \$30,000.

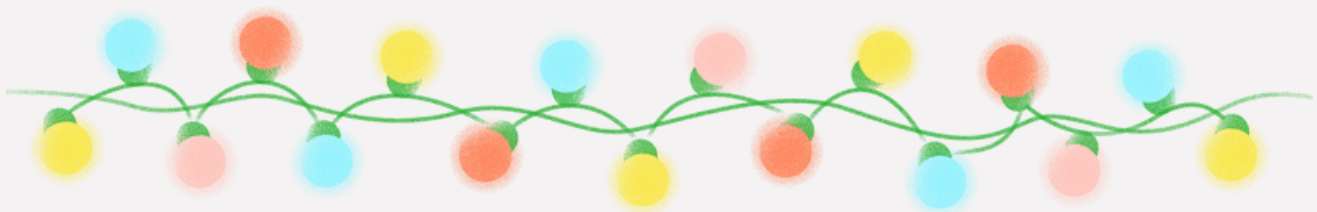
As a reminder, Love Gift offerings are collected by local churches and sent to American Baptist Churches of the Central Region (ABCCR), 5889 SW 29th St., Topeka, Kansas 66614 by the ABWM Treasurer or church treasurer each month along with other mission monies. Love Gift monies must arrive before the 8th of January to be counted for the year.

As we approach the end of our giving year deadline, we are close to our goal! Thank you for your support of this important funding for ministry.



Jo Templin, Coordinator of
Personal Development

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PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT & LOVE GIFT

The Book of the Month

The Bible Book of the Month of December is Isaiah

The Book of Isaiah is one of the major prophetic books in the Old Testament of the Bible. Different sections of the book may have different emphases, but the following is an attempt to provide a foundation for understanding its message.

Prophecy of the Messiah: Isaiah contains several significant prophecies about the coming Messiah. One of the most well-known is in Isaiah 7:14, where a virgin is foretold to conceive and bear a son, and he will be called Immanuel.

Call to Repentance: Isaiah emphasizes the importance of repentance and turning back to God. The people are warned about the consequences of their disobedience but are also given hope if they turn back to God.

God's Sovereignty: The book underscores the sovereignty of God over all nations and events. God is portrayed as the ultimate authority and ruler, controlling the course of history.

Social Justice and Righteousness: Isaiah condemns the mistreatment of the poor and oppressed and calls for a society based on justice and fairness.

Suffering Servant: Isaiah introduces the "Suffering Servant" in chapters 52 and 53. This Servant is seen as one who will bear the sins of the people and bring about redemption through his suffering.

Promises of Restoration: With the warnings of judgment, Isaiah also contains promises of restoration and renewal. God assures the people that, despite their current difficulties, there is hope for a future restoration.

Covenant Relationship: Isaiah emphasizes the covenant relationship between God and His people. Despite their unfaithfulness, God remains faithful to His covenant promises, and there is always the possibility of restoration through repentance.

Holiness of God: The prophet Isaiah has a profound vision of God's holiness. In Isaiah 6, he has a vision of God's glory in the temple.

The New heaven and the New Earth: Isaiah 40-66 looks forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where God's righteousness will dwell, and there will be everlasting peace.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT & LOVE GIFT

The Book of the Month

The Bible Book of the Month of January is Romans

The Book of Romans, written by the Apostle Paul, provides insights into Christian doctrine.

Justification by Faith: One of the central themes of Romans is the concept of justification by faith. Paul emphasizes that people are justified not by their works or adherence to the law but by faith in Jesus Christ.

Sin and Redemption: Romans highlights the universal problem with sin and the need for redemption. It underscores the idea that all people, both Jews and Gentiles, fall short of God's standard, and salvation is made possible through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus.

Righteousness through Faith: Paul emphasizes that righteousness is not earned but is a gift of God through faith, and it comes through believing in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Law and Grace: The relationship between law and grace is explored in Romans. While the law reveals sin and sets a standard, it cannot justify or save. Salvation comes through God's grace and is received by faith.

Universal Need for Salvation: Romans makes it clear that both Jews and Gentiles are in need of salvation. It breaks down the barriers between these groups and stresses that God's offer of salvation is available for all who believe.

Freedom of Sin: Romans teaches that through faith in Christ, believers are freed from the power of sin. This freedom allows them to live righteous and transformed lives through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Suffering and Glory: Paul discusses the relationship between suffering and glory, emphasizing that present sufferings are not comparable to the future glory that will be revealed. This encourages believers to endure trials with hope.

Ethical and Moral exhortations: Romans contains practical exhortations for Christian living. It addresses issues such as love, humility, obedience to authority, and the importance of unity within the Christian community.

Missionary Zeal: Toward the end of Romans, Paul expresses his desire to spread the gospel to new regions and encourages believers to actively participate in the mission of sharing the good news.