Friendly reminder-ABCCR Open Forums are reoccurring weekly via ZOOM.

Links to join can be found on Facebook: facebook.com/ABCCRegion

These open forum town-hall discussions give us the opportunity to share ideas, pray, and discuss how we can be the people of God in the midst of our current challenges.

Each of these discussions will be 1-hour in length. Stay for the whole thing or part of it. Join us!
FOCUS is a newsletter published for professional church leaders in the Central Region, and it is distributed monthly. It is on the Region website, https://abccr.org/.

The deadline for FOCUS is the first of the month of publication.

A variation in content and format is required for copy to be printed in two or more successive issues.

American Baptist Churches of the Central Region
5833 S.W. 29th St., Ste. A
Topeka, KS 66614-5505
katherine.cunningham@abccr.org
785/272-7622
https://abccr.org/

Follow your Region staff on the ABC Central Region Facebook page as they provide information on resources and services, as well as events and happenings across our Region — https://www.facebook.com/ABC-CRegion/

Check our ABC Central Region Twitter link — https://twitter.com/ABCCRegion

Please like and share the posts made on these Central Region social media accounts to help us spread the news!

2020 Is A Year We Will Not Soon Forget!

What an unusual year this has been! Weather has not fit the normal pattern and for the most part we have been isolated to only our own families for a couple months! Thousands are unemployed because businesses have been closed temporarily – or in some cases it will be permanently.

This Corona Virus is no respecter of persons – it has affected the young, old and in-between as well as the rich and poor! It’s an excellent reminder that we are not in control of our lives – or our money!

Because money is temporary, life must be about more than money and what it can buy. Jesus challenged the people of His generation – rich and poor alike – to a recalibrated value system. In Luke 12:15 Jesus said, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.” Hopefully during this time, we have begun to learn to share what we have with those who have nothing – because they have lost their jobs through no fault of their own.

Hopefully, we have also learned the value of time together as families and a greater appreciation for our teachers as many are faced with trying to help their children with online school. We also realize the extreme sacrifice that first responders make for us every day – not just during this pandemic.

May we learn to be content with simple necessities and share the blessings that God gives us with those who are really struggling to even have food or a place to live.

There are many ways you can share. I’d love to discuss them with you and find a way that fits your individual situation. There is no charge for my services. I’d love to come visit with you at your convenience.

Rev. Wilma E. Engle, Director of Planned Giving
e-mail: wilmaengle@juno.com
6745 Interurban, Wichita, KS 67204-1323 cell: 316-644-2069
American Baptist Churches of the Central Region

United Mission Giving - April 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Apr-20</th>
<th>Apr-19</th>
<th>Increase (Decrease)</th>
<th>% Increase (% Decrease)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Mission Basics</td>
<td>$41,312.65</td>
<td>$56,069.23</td>
<td>($14,756.58)</td>
<td>-26.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABW Ministries Love Gift</td>
<td>$1,901.50</td>
<td>$2,904.63</td>
<td>($1,003.13)</td>
<td>-34.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total United Mission for KS Plan %</strong></td>
<td>$43,214.15</td>
<td>$58,973.86</td>
<td>($15,759.71)</td>
<td>-26.72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mission Giving - 2020 YTD vs 2019 YTD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2020 YTD</th>
<th>2019 YTD</th>
<th>Increase (Decrease)</th>
<th>% Increase (% Decrease)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Mission</td>
<td>$203,611.95</td>
<td>$212,519.81</td>
<td>($8,907.86)</td>
<td>-4.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABW Ministries Love Gift</td>
<td>$10,573.91</td>
<td>$12,372.25</td>
<td>($1,798.34)</td>
<td>-14.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>America For Christ Offering</td>
<td>$30,268.47</td>
<td>$33,435.82</td>
<td>($3,167.35)</td>
<td>-9.47%</td>
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<tr>
<td>World Mission Offering</td>
<td>$12,658.13</td>
<td>$19,485.37</td>
<td>($6,827.24)</td>
<td>-35.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired Min/Min Miss Offering</td>
<td>$26,395.33</td>
<td>$27,498.60</td>
<td>($1,103.27)</td>
<td>-4.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Great Hour of Sharing Offering</td>
<td>$6,041.66</td>
<td>$15,621.63</td>
<td>($9,579.97)</td>
<td>-61.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region Offering</td>
<td>$30,572.31</td>
<td>$27,228.10</td>
<td>$3,344.21</td>
<td>12.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Support</td>
<td>$7,393.74</td>
<td>$17,859.75</td>
<td>($10,466.01)</td>
<td>-58.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specifics</td>
<td>$23,996.76</td>
<td>$39,243.31</td>
<td>($15,246.55)</td>
<td>-38.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeted Giving</td>
<td>$18,714.53</td>
<td>$22,873.53</td>
<td>($4,159.00)</td>
<td>-18.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total American Baptist Mission Support</strong></td>
<td>$370,226.79</td>
<td>$428,138.17</td>
<td>($57,911.38)</td>
<td>-13.53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our Church’s Giving - April 2020

United Mission
Retired Min/Min Miss Offering
Church’s Total American Baptist Mission Support

Opportunity Scholarship Recipients:
Cale Budke (Emporia FBC) - Jennifer Schneider presented
Jauni Reeves (Atchison FBC) - Gregg Hemmen presented
In Memory of Joe Kutter

Our condolences go out to the Kutter family. Joe Kutter passed away on May 8th, 2020. Joe was a faithful servant and leader in the American Baptist Family for decades. Please keep his wife, Peggy, and their family in your prayers. There will be more information shared in the future as it becomes available.

Memorials can also be sent to Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Freedom, American Baptist Churches of the Central Region, The Topeka Center for Peace and Justice, and Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School.

Donations for Joe Kutter Memorial to ABCCR: https://www.123formbuilder.com/form-5439118/form

Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Freedom https://give.bjconline.org/campaign/general-giving/c270699

Topeka Center for Peace Justice http://www.topekacpj.org/donate/

Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School https://www.crcds.edu/give-to-crcds/make-a-gift/
Region camping directors and staff have been planning for camp since last fall. Unfortunately, after looking at the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the need to ensure the health and safety of our students and camp staff, the Camp and Assembly Council has agreed we will not hold in person Region camps at Camp Christy or at Cross Wind this summer. While we are disappointed, we believe this is the right decision.

However, camp is not canceled! Look for information soon about our 2020 Virtual Camping Season on the Region website and in future Region emails. There will be no cost for virtual camp.

Any individual or church which would like to donate budgeted 2020 camping funds to support future camping are encouraged to send monies to the Region office to the attention of the Camping Registrar or submit monies with their church’s Mission Support Form through the church treasurer. Monies can be designated to the Region camping program or either of our camp facilities, Cross Wind or Camp Christy, or designated for camping scholarships for either Region General Camp Scholarships, Cross Wind Scholarships or Camp Christy Scholarships. Individuals or churches may also go online to make a donation at https://www.123formbuilder.com/form-5427955/cr-camp-donation

Central Region is also offering anyone the ability to pre-pay for 2021 camps by designating monies for a specific camper. This can be done at the above link or by mailing a check to ABCCR, Camp Registrar, 5833 SW 29th St, Ste A, Topeka KS 66614.

During this time of physical distancing, God has been working in unexpectedly wonderful ways. As we look forward to being together again in 2021, may God continue to show us how to be the Church.
ABCCR 2020 VIRTUAL CAMPING

Virtual Cabin Leaders
WANTED

Camp Christy & Cross Wind will be holding camp virtually for Summer 2020. Voluntary Virtual Cabin Leaders would be greatly appreciated!

We are looking for people who love kids, love Jesus and would be willing to be virtual cabin leaders this summer for the ABCCR Virtual Camping Season.

Cabin leaders need:

- Access to a computer or tablet and internet access.
- We need cabin leaders who 21 years or older. (or 18 and older who will be paired with an older cabin leader)
- **We need men and women.**
- Must be available to meet with campers once a week four times during the month of June. The sessions will last approximately 1 hour for primary and junior camp and 1 1/2 hours for middle and high school each. We are hoping to have most of our camp zoom meetings during the day time but we could have some evening groups.
- Cabin leaders will lead games via zoom, lead discussions about camp messages, talk about family service projects and craft ideas. Leaders will be provided ideas and lessons for the virtual meetings.
- Junior leaders are welcome for primary and junior camp.

Don’t worry! Cabin leaders will be trained before camp starts. Also, each virtual cabin will have two adults, so if you are overwhelmed by the technology and don’t feel comfortable leading the group, we do need adults who are willing to be a second pair of eyes for each cabin.

If you are interested in helping please email Jennifer Schneider at jennifer.schneider@abccr.org or give her a call at 913-488-1313.
On Tuesday, May 6, I spoke with a member of Kansas Governor Kelly's staff about the Ad Astra phase 1 guidelines and how they apply to churches. I had specific questions about the mass gathering numbers (10 people or less) and how they apply to churches.

This staffer said that the social distancing (6 feet) and wipe down procedures are the emphases to focus on right now. If churches do choose to re-open, we don't have to limit sizes to 10 people or less, but we should definitely maintain the social distancing and cleanliness practices which are a significant challenge.

We are certainly learning through all of this that the Church is so much more than simply gathering for worship. I will continue to emphasize caution and care for our faith communities. Since we are still in phase 1 and will remain here until May 18th, I wouldn't recommend being in a rush to resume face-to-face gatherings, but respect the autonomy of local congregations to make decisions that are right for them.
We would like to put together a list of churches that are offering ministry experiences on the internet for kids. If your church has virtual mid-week lessons or classes, please send your streaming information to jennifer.schneider@abccr.org and we will make this information available for all through our email list.

"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth." 3 John 1:4
ABW Women's Conference - POSTPONED until Summer 2021.

Camping 2020 - No in-person camping in 2020. We will be working on a virtual camping alternative with information announced in the coming weeks.

American Baptist Women in Ministry, June 16-19, 2020, at Green Lake Conference Center - CANCELED

International Ministries Missions Conference, July 14-17, 2020, at Green Lake Conference Center - CANCELED

Camp Christy Work Weekend, July 17-19, 2020

ABCCR Board of Directors / Executive Committee, September 11-12, 2020

Space For Grace, September 21-25, 2020 - CANCELED

Annual Gathering 2020 - October 2-3, 2020- Decisions will be made mid-May about any adjustments to our plans imposed upon us by COVID-19.
The Admin-Finance Vision Team, a subset of the ABCCR Board of Directors, made a decision in early April to look for available resources to help churches pay their staff members. Some ABCCR churches are doing well while others are beginning to feel the weight of wondering how they’re going to pay the people. We are hoping the Region can be part of helping them find their way through this difficult time.

We have set up the Region COVID-19 Pastor Relief Fund for Central Region churches who are finding it difficult to pay their church staff. The ABCCR Board of Directors decided our Board Offering would go toward this cause. We’ve also identified some budgeted funding that can be diverted toward supporting this effort during this challenging time.

Make A Donation
American Baptist Historical Society Transcription:

The American Baptist Historical Society has launched a pilot project to transcribe original church records and they need your help.

Transcribing these handwritten records will allow us to make them searchable in an online database. For our pilot project, we are transcribing the records of the First Baptist Church of Christ, Chautauqua (later Stockton), NY. The pages of the record book have been digitized and uploaded to Zooniverse where you can see them and transcribe them.

You do not have to be a scholar to help us, though you do need to be able to read cursive handwriting. All of the instructions are on the website at the link below. So check it out and find out what happened when the “Church met according to appointment and found a great division.”


ABHS is applying for a grant to fund setting up a more extensive crowd-sourced transcription project than this pilot project. It might help our funding chances to be able to point to interest shown for the pilot project.

Take a break from your usual and join the ABHS transcription community!
One Great Hour of Sharing Grants
Through ABHMS

Effective May 4, 2020 the American Baptist Home Mission Societies is launching the process to apply for COVID 19 related One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) grants.

Our goal for the next 12 months, is to raise and disburse OGHS funds totaling one million dollars to American Baptists in the United States and Puerto Rico to provide emergency assistance relating to the Coronavirus pandemic.

We anticipate that these grants will be awarded on a quarterly basis in amounts of one to five thousand dollars per recipient.

All American Baptist national and regional partners including regions, churches, American Baptist Related Organizations such as ABMen and AB Women, ABC related colleges, universities, seminaries, Community Outreach Ministries partners and the American Baptist national network of chaplains, pastoral counselors, spiritual counselors and specialized ministers’ are eligible to apply for these grants.

Organizations may apply for a OGHS COVID 19 related grant in one or more of the quarterly cycles. However, priority for awarding grants will be given to organizations who are first-time applicants.

In compliance with our accountability to coordinate US and Puerto Rico OGHS efforts on behalf of American Baptists, all OGHS COVID 19 grants will be processed by ABHMS.

In keeping with all OGHS efforts, one hundred percent of the funds collected through the appeal will be disbursed to applicants who are awarded grants.

You may submit the application online on our website at this link:

The passcode is: COVID1920
In times of crisis, leadership is needed.

Our 4TEN leadership program is looking for youth who are called to lead.

Visit abccr.org/4TEN to apply.
COLLEGE BIBLE STUDY

CONTACT
Morgan Luttrell
785-241-9820
morgan.luttrell@abccr.org

ALL ARE WELCOME

WHEN
Thursday Nights
6pm

WHERE
ZOOM—Wherever you have access to the internet and a computer, smartphone, or tablet

Joshua 1:9

We want this group to be a time of encouragement and fellowship during a strange time of transition from college to home.