



# American Baptist Churches of the Great Rivers Region

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January 28, 2018,

Greetings to the Area V Family and Friends,

I am back from sabbatical and excited about re-connecting to see what God has in store for us this year! It will come as no surprise to you that our Annual Area Gathering is right around the corner because the second Saturday in March has been the Area V standing date for more than 4 decades!

This year marks the 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Gathering and we will meet at Grace Baptist Church in Kansas City Missouri on March 10, 2018. The Area Theme this year is "Sharing Our Faith" and Acts 1:8 is our scriptural focus. Our very special guest is Dr. Jeff Johnson, whose nick name could be Mr. EVANGELISM! He is a gifted preacher and teacher and a fountain of knowledge related to congregational life and church leadership. Jeff's passion for inviting people into relationship with Jesus Christ is infectious and inspiring; and we are delighted to have him come and share his gifts with us.

I do not need to sugar coat the deep divides and polarization that seem to be ingrained in the very fabric of our day to day lives. To stick our head in the sand and try and avoid seeing or acknowledging the seemingly unending -evil and ugly sides of life, politics and human nature and then ignore the hard challenges that come hand and hand with confronting such evil systems and action is undeniably unfaithful. Like those in previous generations, we are called in turbulent times such as these to still share our faith.

Even closer to home we also have wounded church folks, in our lives who want us to prove repeatedly that God really loves them. There are struggling churches who want to be reassured that God hasn't forgotten about them, unchurched people in our lives who want to know who God is and is God real? ... And in every one of these instances, one can't help but conclude that the act of sharing our faith in word and deed is the path that Disciples of Christ must walk. Shared faith and shared testimony of that faith are essential parts of our witness that must be poured into every relationship and situation that we encounter if we are to make Disciples from home to the ends of the earth.

At the gathering, there will be opportunities to get updates about regional initiatives, missionary support, as well as information and sharing about area and regional ministry groups and volunteer efforts. So, get out the church van or bus and meet me at Grace Baptist Church in Kansas City. We will take care of a little business, worship and fellowship together all the while encouraging one another to continue in the ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

Shalom, Your Sister in Christ

Rev. Muriel L Johnson, M.Div.  
Regional Associate Minister  
ABC of the Great Rivers Region

You can register via FAX 888-658-3803 or US Mail at PO Box 30698, Columbia, MO 65205 – 3698  
Pre-Registration Deadline March 5, 2018