

The Mainstream

News of Ministry and Mission

*Be a vessel that God can pour His love through.
Let it Flow!*

April 2022

Email: Sally@abcgrr.org or Nancy@abcgrr.org

Our Vision: *Healthy congregations engaged in effective Christian ministry locally and globally*

Our Purpose: To challenge, assist, represent and empower American Baptist congregations in Illinois & Missouri



A Word from the Acting Executive Minister, Rev. Patty Bilyeu

As I write this article, it is Holy Week. This is the week that begins with celebration of Christ's triumphal entry to the passion and death of the Savior and ends with the most amazing miracle of the resurrection. No matter where I worship on Sunday mornings, I am reminded that the one thing that unites me with all the other attendees is Jesus Christ. In Jesus Christ, we are all family, be it in the Great Rivers Region of Illinois and Missouri, or Ohio, or Kentucky, or California, or anywhere God leads.

God is leading me and two other clergy to Hungary right after Easter. In 2019, I was blessed to travel and work with our global servants there. The GRR pledged to explore the possibility of partnering with the Baptists in Hungary and to work with them on evangelism and church planting. While it was my prayer to visit again in 2020 or 2021, it was not possible due to COVID-19. Now with the blessing of International Ministries, this second trip is coming to fruition. Even though I know the global servants, I do not know the pastors or the churches they represent. One thing I do know is that those whom I will encounter will be family because, in Jesus Christ, we are all family. It is Jesus that unites us all.

I imagine you may question the timing of this trip. It will be okay since God is leading this charge. While my colleagues and I will be busy working with the pastors, we know the pastors and the global servants are knee-deep in disaster relief. Whatever they need will be of priority. I covet your prayers as God continues to guide the partnership of the GRR and Hungarian Baptists.

Rev. Patty Bilyeu



Rev. Patty Bilyeu and with Rev. John and Rosalin Herndon. Rev. John was installed as the new pastor of First Baptist Church in Canton.

†

Pastors, mark your calendars for "Coming Out of the Rabbit Hole 2" clergy webinar with Dr. Kristina Gutierrez. This will take place on Thursday, May 5th, via Zoom. Two times will be offered. Kristina will be with us, in person, for "Coming Out of the Rabbit Hole 3" in August and she will be our speaker at the Ministers' Conference in October. More details will be in next month's Mainstream.

†



**International Ministries World Mission
Conference** July 4-9, 2022, Green Lake Conference
Center, Green Lake, Wisconsin



The American Baptist Churches of Los Angeles, Southwest & Hawaii (ABCFLASH) announced that **Rev. Paul Gibson** will be serving as part-time Resource person for the Arizona Association as of April 1st. Paul says, "I was blessed to have such great examples for this type of position as our five area assistants in ABCGRR."

†

On behalf of the GRR Executive Search Committee

Dear GRR Churches, Pastors, and Partners in Ministry:

The Executive Minister Search Committee is grateful for your prayers and your input as we seek God's next leader for our Region. We have included here an updated Profile of the American Baptist Churches of The Great Rivers Region as well as the Position Description, which includes information for submitting nominations and applications.

Please consider, pray, distribute information, nominate candidates, and/or apply for the opportunity to serve as our next Executive Minister.

Prayerfully submitted,
GRR Executive Minister Search Committee

†

To all Region Churches: Please see the Great Rivers Region **2022 Intern Grant** application on our website. Completed applications with required documentation can be sent by mail to PO Box 13457 Springfield IL 62791 or via email to nancy@abcgrr.org. Applications are due by April 30th, 2022. American Baptist Churches of the Great Rivers Region (217) 726-7366

†

For updates on GRR activities and work with refugees, check our Facebook posts.

CRI March Update

The month of March was an incredible month where once again God showed up in a big way. First of all, God is continuing to bless pastors and churches who are a part of the Church Revitalization Initiative. This month we added two more churches to CRI. We presented CRI to the congregation of Pate Chapel Baptist Church in Murphysboro under the leadership of Pastor Bob Spangler. After a positive time of Q/A, the church made a commitment to become a part of CRI. I presented CRI to pastor David Love and his leadership team at Belvidere. After positive time of discussion, they made a commitment to join CRI. I am excited to see what God is going to do for both the Pate Baptist and First Baptist of Belvidere congregations. There is a lot of hard work ahead but when God is in charge, great things happen. **Psalm 118:24 (NASB)** reminds us ²⁴ **This is the day which the LORD has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it.** The following is a summary of Nate Rush's involvement with the revitalization initiative at the Carlinville Federated Church." *I was one of a three-member team who was recruited by outgoing pastor Rev. Meg Biddle to serve on a revitalization leadership effort with the guidance of American Baptist revitalization consultant Rev. Wally Holt. The team members met regularly with Wally and Interim Pastor Susan Sawers via Zoom to read/study the book For a New Generation by Lee Kricher. Following the study, I led the effort to set up small groups in our congregation, which would also study the book. Our first small group study was with our church's leadership board, followed by meetings with five additional small groups. The membership of the groups numbered between 8 and 4 with a total of 26 participants. We kept notes in all the group meetings and from the notes gleaned what people felt were priority areas needing to be changed if our church were to revitalize. I wrote the summary report of the group's concerns and ideas, which was presented to the full congregation so that all the ideas were shared with everyone.*

Our revitalization team then came up with a "to-do" list of actions it felt our board needed to address to move the church forward in the revitalization process and presented that list to the board members for action. Although a few changes have occurred (e.g.: changing church's worship time and agreeing to move away from alternating denominational pastors between ABC and PC(USA), much of the additional work to be done has stalled. The impact of the pandemic on the church and not having a full-time, permanent pastor helping lead the effort have contributed to a lack of forward movement with the revitalization effort.

Please continue to pray for Carlinville and for all the pastors and congregations of the Great Rivers Region as we continue to travel through the year 2022.

Wally Holt, CRI Coordinator