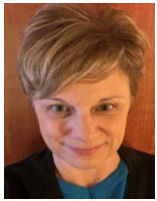


May 2022

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

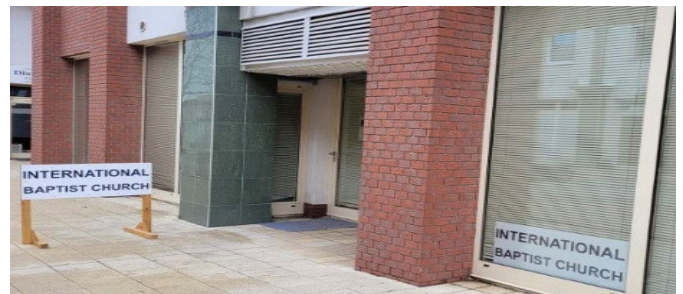
Thank you very much for your prayerful support as I traveled last month with Brian Hastings and Rob Kirbach to Hungary. We were so blessed to meet and work alongside our global servants, Jon and Amanda Good and Larry and Becky Stanton. All four were able to share the wonderful things God is doing in their midst. The plan was to also show how the Great Rivers Region could come alongside them in their ministries. One day, the GRR will send someone to travel with Larry to the border. Another time a youth group may do a Vacation Bible School. We also met with the leaders of the “mother church” in Debrecen to see how we can partner with them as well. They shared we can send pastors to partner and train together on new ministries. The Region can also send groups to work with the English-speaking classes at schools and to the orphanage the church sponsors. God continued to reveal new ways to connect.

Jon and Amanda showed us their new building for the International Baptist Church. This is a new English-speaking church that opened its doors this past January. They said this new building was made possible by funds sent from the **Great Rivers Region**. That was fantastic to see face-to-face and to be able to worship there was an amazing experience. The lapel microphones for the sound system were donated by First Baptist Church of Decatur.

A big thank you goes out to the First Baptist Church of El Paso, Illinois. People in the church made beautiful quilts that we were able to take to Hungary. Prayer and love went into each blanket. The blankets are being used to help refugees that are being sent to Hungary. Please continue to pray as the war wages on. There is much fear in Hungary as it continues. Your One Great Hour of Sharing dollars are

continuing to bless our servants and they seek to help people from Ukraine as they are being displaced.

Rev. Patty Bilyeu



Exterior of the International Baptist Church



Jon and Amanda Good in Hungary with the quilts



Patty & Rob with Becky & Larry and Jon & Amanda

Lake Springfield Baptist Camp

Please help us get ready for camp! Call Andrew at 217-441-1813 to schedule your group for a workday now through June 3 or choose your day and time through SignUpGenius:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050F4EAEAD2CA1F85-weeks> There's lots to do and we need many hands to do it. Camp starts on June 10th!

†



Great news from Manila! Our partners in ministry were able to open a New Spiritual Formation and Leadership Training Center. As a thank you for the resources and prayers from the Great Rivers Region, a room was dedicated in our honor. Region Leadership will soon be “naming” the room whatever we feel is best. It is so nice to see this labor of love come to completion. Another example of your mission dollars at work.

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

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The Parish Paper will cease publication after the June 2022 edition. The editors cited the dominance of social media making print information obsolete.

†

The ABC History & Polity course will be held August 19th - August 20th at Central Baptist Church Springfield, IL. Check the GRR website for more information.

Church Revitalization Initiative April Update

One of the most important pieces in church Revitalization is how we travel through the storms of ministry. I found this article written by Jimmy Page about the storms of life and I thought this might be helpful to you.

“Storms in Colorado can be unpredictable given the terrain of the mountain range, and cows and buffalo roam near one another. While similar in many ways, how they react to storms is different.

The cows see the storm coming and scatter. They run away in fear believing they can avoid the storm, but in the end, it always overtakes them. All their running really does is keep them in the storm longer, extending their pain and discomfort. Their fear and attempt to avoid the storm separate them as they all run in different directions.

The buffaloes see the storm and run into it. They come together as a herd and run straight into the storm. By moving toward the storm, they shorten the time spent in it and reduce the negative impact. By staying together, they defeat the fear and remain encouraged that they can and will overcome it together.

Life is full of storms. Sometimes we'll anticipate them and other times we'll be surprised by them.

Let me encourage you to run Into the Storm. Each of us has a choice. Will we confidently face the storm with faith in the God of the universe? Or will we run away in fear? Will we come together in unity as a team and stay together or will we scatter? Will we weather the storm and emerge on the other side better? Or will we be beaten up, worn out and bitter?

As you run into the storm, stay tight to Jesus, knowing that He will never leave or forsake you. Don't be afraid of the storms of life.

Use the storm to become better. Run Into the Storm.”

Here are some thoughts from one our new CRI church's pastor, Pastor Carmen Jordan, FBC Cordova: *We are in the beginning stages of the CRI. We have identified a core team of five individuals who have committed to the book study and are having real conversations on what it means to prepare for a new generation. We have been blessed to welcome a new family into the congregation. While I was recovering from a stomach bug, the mother of four very happy, engaging, and energetic children sent me a video that she had taken of her daughter. This six-year-old ray of light was singing a song that she created for her father who was at work. She belted out “I like going to church.... for the next time is Easter Sunday and I love going to church...” What a precious gift to our community and church family. I am excited to see what God does next!*

Please continue to pray for our pastors and churches in the Church Revitalization Initiative, that they will follow the lead of the Holy Spirit in their lives and the life of their churches.

Wally Holt, CRI Coordinator