

June 2022

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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

The American Baptist Churches of the GRR presents  
“**Climbing Out of the Rabbit Hole**” A Clergy Health Seminar  
with Dr. Kristina Gutierrez Thursday, August 11, 2022, 9:30 am  
to 3:30 pm, snacks and lunch provided. First Baptist Church of  
Bloomington, IL RSVP to the GRR Office 217-726-7366.



### A WORD FROM THE ACTING EXECUTIVE MINISTER, REV. PATTY BILYEU

Wow! It is hard to believe that we are halfway through 2022! Where has the time gone? I was blessed last month to travel to Green Lake Conference Center to attend a week of National Leadership Committee meetings for the ABC-USA. Regional Executives, International Ministries staff, ABC Home Mission Societies staff, Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board staff, and the Office of the General Secretary staff all met together.

It was exciting for the entire group to be together since they had not met in three years. It was exciting for me to see everyone assembled together and to be reminded of what it is to be a part of such a wonderful denomination. I have been ABC my entire life, went to an ABC seminary, and am ordained ABC, but the time together was a great reminder of the wonderful resources we have as a denomination and that no region or church is an island unto itself. There are lots of brilliant people out there who want to help our churches be successful in ministry. If your church is seeking help in any way from programs to ideas to assistance, do not hesitate to contact our office.

As a part of that event, a dinner was held one evening to celebrate retirees in the ABC. Our former exec, Rev. Paul Gibson, was recognized for his six-year, faithful service to our region. It was so nice to see Paul and Melissa and to hear our denomination sing his praises (see two pictures on the right). I will be traveling again to Green Lake for the Women in Ministry conference and the World Mission Conference. I hope to see some of you there.

*Rev. Patty Bilyeu*



Pastor Roger Barnes' installation at Greenfield FBC with Patty and Rob



**Missionary Sue Hegarty**, pictured with Nancy, was in town and stopped by the Region Office.

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**Missionary Taku Longkumer** was also in town and stopped by the Region Office. And he got to see all the bells and music we were sending to North East Christian University in India. Pictured are Taku, Sally and Nancy.

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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.

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

## Church Revitalization Initiative May Update

In his book, *Great Attitudes*, Chuck Swindoll says: “I believe the single most significant decision I can make on a daily basis is my choice of attitude. The secret of a great attitude is choice. A boy was playing baseball alone and was heard saying, ‘I’m the greatest hitter in the world.’ He tossed the ball into the air, swung, and missed. ‘Strike one!’ Undaunted, he picked up the ball, threw it into the air and said to himself, ‘I’m the greatest hitter ever,’ and he swung at the ball again. And again, he missed. ‘Strike two!’ He paused a moment to examine his bat and ball carefully. Then, a third time, he threw the ball into the air. ‘I’m the greatest hitter who ever lived,’ he said. He swung the bat hard again, missed a third time. He cried out, ‘Wow! Strike three – what a pitcher! I’m the greatest pitcher in the world!’ Like the little boy in the story, our attitude can keep us going or it can cripple our progress. Do not be like the man that left some limburger cheese on his upper lip, and thought the whole world smelled. Let your life generate a sweet, charming tune that this old world needs to hear. Your attitude is a choice you make each day.” What kind of an attitude will you choose today?

Here is what is happening at the First Baptist Church of Rantoul.

### Baby Steps Towards Revitalization

The First Baptist Church of Rantoul has been taking “baby steps” towards revitalization. After working through the book, *For a New Generation* with Wally Holt, we formed a “vision team” which put together a new vision statement for the church. Since then, we have been looking for ways to help implement that vision with God’s help. The “vision team” has also been meeting for an hour each week for prayer, asking God to show us ways to help us become more fully devoted to Him and to help our neighbors to experience His mercy (which is basically our vision). God has been answering our prayers and has been sending people to us who are hungering and thirsting for him.

On second thought, these are not “baby steps” at all. These are huge steps which demonstrate the breath of life God is breathing into our congregation! We **are** experiencing revitalization. To God be the glory!

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

Wally Holt  
CRI Coordinator

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The GRR Region Office will be closed Monday, June 20<sup>th</sup>, in celebration of Juneteenth.

