

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 PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD STEPHEN JONES

The Great Rivers Region is Covenanting Together!!

God said, "I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant... I will be their God and they will be my people." Ezekiel 37:26, 27b

The Board of the Great Rivers Region has launched a region-wide process of writing a new Regional Covenant. A covenant states our reason for being as a Region and what God expects of us and what we hope from one another. Our current covenant dates to the early 1980's and does not reflect our current and emerging regional realities.

One part of re-covenanting together is to draw input from the widest parts of our region: youth, pastors, retired pastors, areas, clusters, regional ministry groups, and local church leaders.

Toward that end, you will be invited to participate in an upcoming Zoom meeting to consider these questions:

- What are the most important things that engage us as members of the Great Rivers Region?
- Why has God drawn us together in the GRR?
- What does God expect of us as a region, faithful to the life of Jesus Christ?
- What do we hope for each other to be effective as a region?
- How can a covenant address our emerging regional mission statement: "We are building healthy congregations, in partnership with Jesus Christ, to transform the world."

Any who wants to answer these questions in writing and submit this to the regional office are welcome to do so!* However, we also recognize the importance of dialogue and listening to each other as we respond to these prayerful questions.

Thus, you are invited to participate in one of these zoom meetings. You will need to RSVP to the Region Office **by Thursday, November 9** to participate in one of these zooms to Nancy@ABCGR.org

1. Thursday, November 16, 6:30 pm moderated by Regional VP Charles Nilon
2. Thursday, November 30, 10:00 am moderated by Rev. Brian Hastings
3. Thursday, December 7, 6:30 pm moderated by Rev. Carmen Jordan

We look forward to entering into dialogue with you as we shape a new Regional Covenant!

- *Stephen Jones, Region President; Charles Nilon, Region Vice President; Carmen Jordan, Brian Hastings, and Patty King Bilyeu (GRR Covenant Leadership Team)*

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Pictures from Patty's Installation

October 14 at Central Baptist in Saint Louis



Here is a link if you want to watch it. https://www.youtube.com/live/fpG_LGUu8?si=m6MTyJJCmZyXCw

Church Revitalization Initiative

Here is an example of a church in true Revitalization mode.

Growth at First Baptist Church of Rantoul from Pastor Dan Dewitt

The FBC of Rantoul is experiencing spiritual growth and revitalization. It has been a blessing. Let me tell you how it has happened.

We spent quite a bit of time focusing on the vision God has for our church and its ministry. We spent quite a bit of time focusing on what it means to reach out in love in an attempt to accomplish God's vision for us. We spent a lot of time trying to learn what it means to truly be a welcoming church in this modern age. And we have spent a lot of time in prayer.

We have, for the past 18 months or so, had a weekly prayer time at church. A relatively small group of people spend about an hour in prayer. We pray for the needs of our church members. We pray for the needs of the community. We pray that God will help us accomplish His vision for our church. We pray God will give us a passion for the lost. We pray that God will help us be a welcoming church. We pray that God will bring young families to us. We pray that God will bring to us those who are "hungering and thirsting" for God and His love. We pray that God will help us lovingly lead those people to experience the mercy of God and then become mature in their faith. And God has been answering our prayers. It has been a great blessing. We have not had an explosion of growth or revival. But God has slowly, week by week, been answering our prayers by bringing people to us. Some have been a result of loving outreach by members of the church – being a loving friend or neighbor to someone in need.

I had the opportunity of baptizing a man who was brought to the Lord by a member of the church who has invested a lot of time showing him compassion. That is a great blessing.

Some of those God has brought to us have simply walked in off the street. One day, a young mom with her two small children were at the city park across the street from the church. The mom saw our Vacation Bible School banner and decided to come to VBS with her children. She liked what she found and started coming to church. She made a commitment to Jesus, and I was able to baptize her. Now she is a member and a regular attender. She has been bringing her sister and two small children to church with her. That is a great blessing.

One week, a 30+ year old man was fishing at one of the lakes across from the church. He had come to town as part of a work crew which was working in the area for a few months. He looked up and saw the church and decided to come check us out. He faithfully attended worship for several months while his job lasted here. He was a great blessing.

And God has brought other people to us. He has honored our prayers and our commitment to be used of God and has brought His spiritual life into our congregation. We had done some of the "hard work" to make ourselves usable by God, and God has brought us revitalization. Our new life may be on a small scale, but it is new life all the same. And that is a great blessing.

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 lives of their churches.

Wally Holt

Church Revitalization Coordinator



Congratulations to First Baptist, Jerseyville on Celebrating the First Anniversary of Dinner Church!!!



Love Packages!

Do you or your church have excess/unused items that may be useful to others? Love Packages collects bible donations—as well as donations of Christian books, Sunday School materials, and more—from people and publishers across the U.S. and ship to their network of distributors all over the world. Contact Love Packages at <https://lovepackages.org/> or 220 Union St., Butler IL 62015.



UPCOMING EVENTS!



ABW Area III Fall Rally will be held on October 21st at First Baptist Church of Bloomington at 9:00 a.m. Guest speakers Jon & Amanda Good, Global Servants serving in Hungary.

Costa Rica Mission Trip October 18-24!

LSBC Banquet Fundraiser Nov 4!!! Chatham Baptist Church. Dinner and Silent Auction. Speaker Ricky Horton, Cardinals commentator and former MLB pitcher.

ABY The Gathering will be Nov. 10-12th! At Second Baptist Church in Peoria!!!

SKWIM 2024!!! Save the Date! January 12-15, Green Lake Wisconsin!