

Metro Chicago *EWIND*

Seeking Justice • Loving Mercy • Walking Humbly

A weekly electronic newsletter from and for the American Baptists of the Windy City and its environs, covering matters as diverse as our region.

Church Highlight . . . Community Baptist Church of Warrenville

Love God. Love Neighbor. Love Yourself.
Living God's Love for ALL God's Children.



Located at the intersection of Main and Warren Avenues is Community Baptist Church (CBC); the first church in Warrenville. For over 180 years this faith community has been united in deepening our love for God, others and one another. Our community enjoys an atmosphere of joy and celebration; yet we take our call for mission seriously.

Celebrating its 40th Anniversary this year, our Agape preschool for 3 and 4 year olds

seeks to express God's love by recognizing and nurturing each child's unique talents, learning styles, and personality, while respecting and honoring the wide variety of faith traditions of our children and their families. Creativity and play are used to form the children's educational foundation.

Across from the education building ESSE (Ecumenical Support Services for the Elderly), provides day care services for socially isolated, moderately handicapped, or frail older adults.

Our call to mission includes support for Dresses for Haiti, a program where members of the church make dresses from pillow cases for girls in Haiti. These colorful dresses provide greatly needed clothing – for girls a dress may be the first article of clothing they have ever had.

The dresses are sewn throughout the year but the church meets one Saturday to finish the last batches of dresses. It is truly a full church effort – from our youngest members to our oldest, men and women sew, sort buttons and materials for trim, iron the dresses, add a small stuffed animal and a card signed by members of the congregation into the dress pockets. The mix of music, machines humming, and laughter and conversation echo throughout the building. Serving others and having a fun time doing it – can it get any better?

Whether serving others through mission projects, gathering in worshipping God or in fellowship with one another, CBC is committed to living God's love for all of God's people.

Reverend Sandra Kolar
Interim Pastor

For Your Calendar

American Baptist Churches
of Metro Chicago
invite you to
A Space for Prayer, Lament,
Music, and Conversation
about the Way Forward
in light of the recent shootings,
indiscriminate use of force, hate
crimes, and violent retaliation

When:
Thursday, July 21
6:30 - 8:30 pm

Where:
St. John Church - Baptist, 4821 S.
Michigan Ave.

Pastors, please share this invitation
with your churches through email and
on Sunday morning. All are welcome.
Please invite friends, community
members, and colleagues.

You Are Invited



American Baptist Churches
of Metro Chicago

**Our August Family Council
Meeting has been rescheduled
for August 20th
at 9 am
(registration and
breakfast at 8:30 am).**

Location:
**Community Church
of Barrington**

\$1,000 Matthew 25 Grant Gets Garden-Fresh Vegetables to Tables of the Needy in Illinois

A \$1,000 Matthew 25 Grant from the American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA) to The South Church in Mount Prospect, Ill., played a significant role in getting fresh vegetables onto the tables of people in need last year.

The South Church Garden yielded 2,150 pounds of vegetables in 2015, the third time in seven years that more than a ton of vegetables was harvested.

"The grant gave us the opportunity to pay for having the garden (on the church property) tilled this spring," says Pastor Rick Kesler of the 2015 growing season. "It had not been done in three years. The grant also helped us purchase a raised bed, so that people who can no longer get down on their needs to garden can be part of the growing process." The church also used the grant to purchase a cold frame assembled late in the growing season and to be used for the first time in 2016.

"Using the cold frame we should be able to plant some seeds or plants early in the growing season and perhaps extend the season into the fall," Kesler says.

Members of an associated Burmese congregation helped with the garden, and students from a Montessori School that meets in the church also participated.



Kesler says the weather was unique in 2015. "We had a cold start, too much rain and then not enough rain," he says. "Our rain collection and solar powered pumping system came through for us again and kept everything sufficiently watered during the dry spells."

The church divided the produce between two agencies – Northwest Compass and the Village of Mount Prospect, the pastor says. "Both organizations distribute food to the needy in our community," he says.

"We're so grateful for the Matthew 25 Grant," Kesler concludes. "Without it we could not have achieved our gardening goals."

The Matthew 25 Grant initiative, sponsored by American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA) and the Board of General Ministries, is funded by a generous, anonymous donor whose goal is to help meet the needs of "housing, feeding, education and health with regard to the less fortunate." In Fall 2015, a total of 69 applicants received funding ranging from \$500 to \$5,000 with a total awarded of \$169,140. Grant applications are welcomed once annually by September 1 with the only requirement being an ABCUSA connection.

The application process for a Matthew 25 Grant is structured to help small ministries with limited staff time. For more information on the grant and application process visit: <http://www.abc-usa.org/matthew25/>.



If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.
2 Chronicles 7:14 (KJV)

**Everyone is Invited Tuesday Night @ 7:00 Pm
(7/19/16)**



School Backpack Group Order Opportunity

As young people from your congregation prepare to return to school this Fall, perhaps you are planning to provide backpacks for them. Here's a group order opportunity designed to provide cost savings by combining the orders of ABC Metro Chicago churches.

There are two backpack options shown below. A minimum of 35 backpacks must be ordered per location to be included in this offer. Please note that there are two prices listed -- one for a combined total order of 200 backpacks and one for a combined total order of 500 backpacks. Once all orders are in, you will be contacted so that you know the final costs. Order forms and any questions that you may have should be emailed to Janet Jamieson at abcmetrochicago@gmail.com. Please note that all orders must be placed by July 29, 2016. Hope that you find this offer helpful.



BACK PACK GROUP ORDER FORM

Product Name: _____
 Quantity (minimum 35) _____ Accent Color: _____
Ship/Bill To:
 Name: _____
 Church: _____
 Address: _____
 City/State/Zip: _____
 Phone Number: _____
 Email: _____

ISAIAH 40:31

³¹ BUT THEY THAT WAIT UPON THE LORD SHALL RENEW THEIR STRENGTH; THEY SHALL MOUNT UP WITH WINGS AS EAGLES; THEY SHALL RUN, AND NOT BE WEARY; AND THEY SHALL WALK, AND NOT FAINT. KJV



EWIND is the official publication of the American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago. Published each Monday, the deadline for submission of materials is Thursday of each week.

We welcome information on events that occur within ABCMC member churches. All articles/information for publication should be submitted electronically to abcmetrochicago@gmail.com.

Lectionary Studies for Sunday, July 24, 2016 – Dr. Jay Wilcoxon

10th Sunday after Pentecost Year C

Hosea 1:2-10; Psalm 85; Colossians 2:6-15, (16-19); Luke 11:1-13.

Fathers and children may symbolize God's disciplining and love, with prayers freeing the children from fears and want.

Hosea 1:2-10 (Alternate reading, Genesis 18:20-32.)

After two weeks on the prophet Amos, the Lectionary continues its survey of Israel's prophetic books by turning to the **book of Hosea**.

The books of Amos and Hosea differ significantly in style and basic theme: Amos gives us the Justice of God determining Israel's life; Hosea gives us the Love of God determining Israel's life.

Background. Hosea was a contemporary of Amos, but, uniquely among the Biblical prophets, Hosea was a native of the northern kingdom of Israel. His prophetic messages are passionate condemnations of Israel's turning away from the Lord Yahweh. Israelites were attributing the cyclical works of nature to the baals, Hosea insists, instead of to the one God in Israel's life, Yahweh. (Hosea 2:5, 8; 11:2; 13:1.)

What is going on here, and had been going on before Hosea's time, is a **great demythologizing** of the millennia-long essence of **Canaanite religion**.

As we see Canaanite mythology in its Ugaritic epics (from the 14th century BCE), the cosmic world was shaped by the interplay of the gods Ba'al (lord or master), Yamm (cosmic Sea), Mot (Death), and Anath (virgin-sister-consort who avenges Ba'al's death by slaughtering Mot). In this mythic cycle Ba'al fights intensely against the lord of chaos, Yamm, and having defeated him establishes a great temple for himself with the consent of the high god 'El. The power of Death (Mot), however, overcomes Ba'al, who dies as the season of drought and barrenness prevails in the world. Anath pursues Mot, threshes him into small pieces (like grain) which are sown over the fields, and makes possible the gospel of the new season: Ba'al lives! (See, among many discussions, John Day, "Baal (Deity)," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Doubleday 1992, Vol. I, pp. 545-49.)

The daring thing about Hosea is the way the language of Canaan has been taken into the Israelite tradition. *The language of love between gods has become the language of love between Yahweh and Yahweh's people.* (In the poetry of Hosea 2, Yahweh divorces and then re-marries his straying wife, obviously a goddess. In that chapter she is never called "Israel.")

Our reading. In our passage, we have a report of Hosea being told by God to enact in the social life of his city **a parable of this love of God**. Go find a woman who has the qualities and perhaps the established practice of a professional whore. (See the details of such a life when Tamar temporarily adopts the life of a

zōnāh in Genesis 38:12-23.) Such a woman, by the nature of her social status, does not maintain a single relationship in her sexual activities. She lives by the payments of many lovers. Hosea is to take such a woman, marry her – thus setting up a single relationship for her – and have children by her.

The real point of the enacted prophecy is not the woman; the point is the **names** given to the three children. *The names announce progressive devastation for the northern kingdom.* The first child, "Jezreel," means defeat in war: "I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel" (verse 5, NRSV). The second child, "Lo-ruhamah" [not-compassioned], means lack of compassion in a time of distress (verse 6). And the third child, "Lo-ammi" [not-my-people], means a complete denial of the covenant relationship, "for you are not my people and I am not your God" (verse 9). The parable demonstrates that up to this point the love of God is only disappointed and defeated. God's partner is a whore, and the children's names symbolize the alienation between them.

However, as in the old Canaanite ethos, death and alienation are not the last word. It is clear that some words of hope were inserted by later Judeans who preserved the Hosea tradition (so verse 7), but elsewhere in this book Hosea experiences God as disciplining, not totally destroying, Israel. We will see this especially in next week's reading, but here (verse 10), the transmitters of Hosea's words were compelled to look beyond total alienation between God and Israel. *The reversal will come.* "Not my people" will again be called "Children of the living God."

Psalm 85

The Psalm reading is *a liturgy for those waiting for the great reversal* – the reversal that Hosea's followers added to his enacted prophecy (Hosea 1:10).

The first word of the liturgy recalls the past reversals from God's anger to God's graciousness, when God "restored the fortunes of Jacob" (verses 1-3). Thus there is precedent from the past for God's gracious restoration of the people.

The second word is a prayer in the present calling upon God to "Restore us again! ... Will you be angry with us forever?" (verses 4-7).

Then we hear a speaker in the first person concentrating full attention on the divine word of salvation which is about to be uttered from the sanctuary (verses 8-9).

At its climax, the liturgy culminates in the glowing prospect of what can be expected when God does speak the word of salvation (verses 10-13).

In this final exuberant dance, the covenant qualities are personified. "Steadfast love" (*hesed*), "faithfulness" (or "truth," *'emeth*), and "righteousness" (*sedeq*) interact like independent powers, meeting, kissing, growing from the ground,

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Lectionary Studies for Sunday, July 24, 2016

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descending from heaven. Their blessings are summarized, “the Lord will give what is good,” and all will know that God’s people are restored.

Colossians 2:6-15, (16-19)

If Hosea shows the love of a supreme God who displaces all former local powers, the Epistle reading carries a similar message about the heavenly reign of the risen Christ. The all-encompassing Christ sung of in the hymn in Colossians 1:15-20 is here presented as the overlord or ruler of all powers, visible or invisible, that might compete for lordship over the lives and conduct of the Baptized ones.

Beginning at 2:8, the writer of Colossians is opposing some **superstitious teachings and practices** that are growing among Christians in the cities of the Lycus valley a hundred miles east of Ephesus (Colossae, Laodicea, Hierapolis). Much scholarly ink has flowed attempting to describe this misguided teaching, but here is one brief summary of the “philosophy” and “vain deceit” that were tempting these early Christians.

God’s fullness [technical term] is distributed throughout a series of emanations from the divine, stretching from heaven to earth. These “aeons” or offshoots of deity must be venerated and homage paid to them as ‘elemental spirits’ or angels or gods inhabiting the stars. They rule men’s destiny and control human life, and hold the entrance into the divine realm in their keeping. Christ is one of them, but only one among many. (Ralph P. Martin, *Colossians and Philemon*, New Century Bible Commentary [W. B. Eerdmans, 1992, original 1973], p. 9.)

In addition to the ideas, there were **religious practices**, some from Jewish sources, some from other sources (see particularly verses 16-22). These practices were intended to help believers achieve ecstasy or visions and raptures. “These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-imposed piety, humility, and severe treatment of the body, but they are of no value in checking self-indulgence.” This is the judgment at the end of the passage from which our reading is taken (2:23, NRSV).

These early Christians were tempted to include horoscopes, astrological readings, and various hallucinatory rituals in their religious life to enhance what Christ did for them. The writer insists that the Christ who was the fullness of divine reality (verse 9), who took on the flesh of circumcision and death, this Christ who died and rose again, now reigns over all such superstitious powers.

All the believer needs is the baptism that is a dying to the worldly powers and the rising to a new life in God’s power, free from all the demons and spirits of a misguided universe. “He [Christ]

disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in [his triumphal procession]” (verse 15).

Luke 11:1-13

The Gospel reading offers **the life of prayer** as the answer to the ongoing needs of the Lord’s disciples. The whole passage is about prayer, with the Lord’s Prayer in Luke’s version at its head.

The whole is bracketed by expressions describing **God’s fatherly character**, the Father addressed in the model prayer (verse 2) and the human father who knows how to give good gifts to his children (verses 11-13; verse 11 reads literally, “what father among you...”). Most of what is between the brackets is about persistence in asking the father for what is needed, especially bread or other food.

God is not often called father in the Gospels, outside of the Gospel According to John. Yet it appears that Jesus used that term, especially at times of personal crisis. For example, in Mark 14:36, “Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me...” Scholars have concluded that the Aramaic, Abba, would have been a rather intimate word between child and father, verging on “Daddy.”

The prayer taught to the disciples, then, asks

- that this family head be honored and esteemed at his true worth by all others (hallowed be his name),
- that his plan for everyone’s welfare may succeed (his kingdom come),
- that his children, who accompany him on his campaign (daily bread = daily rations), may have food as needed,
- that they be forgiven their misdemeanors, and
- that the trials they encounter not be excessive.

The following teaching **about asking and receiving** builds on examples of common human expectations. The “friend” asked for bread in the middle of the night cannot be expected to respond simply out of friendship, but will respond to a neighbor in need (the previous chapter just told about the Good Samaritan).

Furthermore, doors were made not only to keep people out, but for knocking on. Keep on knocking, is the wisdom here.

And in the business of giving, trust the giver, perhaps a fatherly type, to know what to give. It won’t be a snake instead of a fish. This theme suggests that WE may not know what we most need, but can trust the fatherly giver to provide it, allowing us to then recognize what our need truly is.

Finally, the supreme gift that the heavenly Father knows we need is the gift of the Holy Spirit (verse 13). That will be provided for those who continue the “journey” of the Christ right on to Jerusalem – and beyond.