

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.

A Word From The Acting Executive Minister



This summer, I've been preaching a sermon series on God's Voice in Art, and it has given me the opportunity to visit the Art Institute of Chicago a couple of times. On my most recent visit I was impressed again with the surrounding sense of stillness and depth when I entered the halls and paused to stare into works of art.

As I stared at her painting, *Cow's Skull: Red, White, and Blue*, I imagined Georgia O'Keeffe sitting before her easel in long, quiet hours, contemplating which shade of white to use for bone.

Somehow, these artists are able to shut out the demands of the busy world long enough to absorb, interpret, and create beauty. And beauty is not quickly found; it must be long-sought. Many news-cycles have to be left behind. Poets, musicians, dancers, and mystics, too, choose contemplation, precision, creation, and harmony over our societal obsession with productivity and activity.

How can we, who are preachers and teachers, administrators and directors, builders and caretakers, technicians and programmers, assistants and healers, parents and planners, living in what sometimes feels like a buffet of snippets, open a door for this sort of depth and stillness to enter into our lives?

For some of us, it is time that harasses us. We are in a perpetual hurry. For some of us, it is change-making and accomplishment that nips at our heels. Practices of stillness and listening don't seem to "do" anything in a world where so much needs to be done.

We should allow ourselves, as often as we can, the precise opposite of "multi-tasking." Our minds and hearts need times of timelessness, periods in which we are lost in the singleness of something, not because of what it will achieve, not as a means to anything, but because it is good in itself, worthwhile in itself.

In the late-90's Meg Ryan movie, *Addicted to Love*, her character, Maggie, and a man named Sam have planned a stake-out in some kind of comic love-tangle. As they unpack the duffel bag full of equipment, Maggie explains the purposes of the various spy gear. Finally, she pulls out a cactus. Sam asks her what it's for, and she looks at him as though he has come down from another planet and says, exasperated: "It's pretty, Sam!" Why should it need any purpose other than that? I think of this scene often when I need to counter the urge to *do* with the call to *be*.

Jesus made time for timelessness, on the mountain, in the wilderness, in the garden. Let us, too, give ourselves permission to take deep dives and long ways around and to rediscover the gift of total absorption.

Reverend Sarah Jay
Acting Executive Minister



Cow's Skull: Red, White, and Blue
Georgia O'Keeffe

Family Council Meeting – August 20



American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago

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Announcement of Important Agenda Item for August 20 Family Council Meeting

Dear Friends,

At the August 20th Family Council Meeting at North Shore Baptist Church we will be called upon to make a crucial decision about the future lease arrangements for Camp Grow Ministries. Pastors and church representatives, please plan to attend or send a representative in your stead.

The attached document explains the question at hand in greater detail. Should you have any follow-up questions, please feel free to contact Acting Regional Minister, Rev. Sarah Jay at 773-634-1495, ext. 7, President, Rev. David Gregg at 773-761-7538, Treasurer, T.J. Litwiler at 708-442-3418, or any of the Associate Regional Ministers or members of the Family Cabinet for clarification.

Associate Regional Ministers

- Rev. Shakespeare Osorio, 773-634-1495, ext. 4
- Rev. Dr. Chakravarthy Zadda, 773-634-1495, ext. 5
- Rev. David Watkins, 773-634-1495, ext. 6

Family Cabinet Members

Rev. David Gregg, Rev. Carol Jamieson Brown, Rev. Zina Jacque, T.J. Litwiler, William Wallin, Judy Healy, Rev. David Sagar, Rev. David VanBrakle, Rev. Craig Jenkins, Rev. Joseph Coney, Carlos Rivera

Note: The document explaining the question at hand in greater detail was emailed and sent snail mail on last week.

FAMILY COUNCIL MEETING

Saturday, August 20, 2016

North Shore Baptist Church

5244 North Lakewood Avenue • Chicago, IL 60640

AGENDA

8:00 am – Prayer Meeting

Nambu Chapel

[Hosted by Sisters in Service –
ABCMC Lay and Clergy Women Leaders]

8:30 am – Registration and Breakfast

Howell Hall

9:00 am – Family Council Meeting

10:30 am – Worship

11:00 am – Guest Presentation by RefugeeONE

refugeeONE

Special Presentation • 11:00 am
North Shore Baptist Church
following the Family Council meeting.

RefugeeOne: What We Do and How Your Church Can Join Us

ABCMC has a long history of partnership with RefugeeOne. Now they are launching a new church mentoring program.

RefugeeOne creates opportunity for refugees fleeing war, terror, and persecution to build new lives of safety, dignity, and self-reliance.

Who Are Refugees?

A refugee is someone who has fled from his or her home country and cannot return because he or she has a well-founded fear of persecution. According to the U.S. Committee for Refugees & Immigrants 2009 World Refugee survey, there are approximately 15.3 million refugees worldwide.

Every year RefugeeOne serves approximately 2,500 refugees who are brought to the United States through the U.S. State Department and sent to Chicago for resettlement.

We provide a full range of services to refugees resettled in the Chicago area. Our primary focus is to assist the refugee in becoming an independent, self-supporting member of the new community as soon as possible. We help them find housing, learn the English language, acclimate to American culture, develop computer and job readiness skills, secure employment, obtain medical and other care, apply for citizenship, and develop overall family strengthening skills.

The majority of refugees currently being resettled in the U.S. and by RefugeeOne are:

- Iraqis who helped the recent U.S. military operations and Assyrian Christian Iraqis fleeing religious persecution
- Burmese who have fled government-instilled violence and persecution
- Bhutanese who have fled ethnic "cleansing"

2016 RESOURCE INSTITUTE – Working With Clergy and Congregations: Resources for Mental Health Care and Recovery Support



The 2016 RESOURCE INSTITUTE – Working With Clergy and Congregations: Resources for Mental Health Care and Recovery Support will be held Thursday and Friday September 29 – 30, 2016, at Medinah Banquets, 550 Shriners Drive Addison, IL

(20-30 minutes from O'Hare airport. Free on-site parking available). This is a gathering for faith community and service leaders, congregational consultants, trainers and educators.

How can we build caring congregations for people who struggle with mental health? Those who are healing, family and faith leaders, pastoral counselors, chaplains, faith community nurses, and mental health providers are a rich resource for taking the initiative to build caring congregations.

We can tell our stories of illness and recovery and provide information about mental illness, brain disorders, trauma and emotional challenge. We can share what is effective and working in congregational mental health care. During this two-day institute we will work together to develop tools and resource notebooks to use in conversations, consultations and trainings with faith groups. You are invited to become part of a growing network of faith leaders, educators and consultants helping congregations to join the journey toward wholeness in body, mind, spirit and community.

The Resource Institute is designed for faith community and service leaders internal to congregations who are active in creating caring congregations, and the external congregational consultants, trainers and educators who are working to create caring congregations and sustain and deepen their work through external supports such as judicatories, pastoral counseling centers and other providers who consult, train, and support caring congregations.

At the Resource Institute we will work together in depth to:

- develop tools and resource notebooks to use in conversations, consultations and trainings with faith groups.
- plan local educational events on mental health and spirituality in our communities.
- plan to become part of a growing network of faith leaders, educators and consultants
- helping congregations to join the journey toward wholeness in body, mind, spirit and community

REGISTRATION

The registration for the Institute is available by clicking the link for the Resource Institute on the Pathways to Promise website [www.pathways2promise.org] or by calling Dawn at 314.810.2234.

Early bird registration rate for the conference is \$125 before September 8. Registration fee includes continental breakfast and lunch both days.

HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Hilton Garden Inn Addison

551 North Swift Avenue

Addison, IL 60101

Register by September 6

For reservations call 630.691.0500

[mention Mental Health and Faith Community Conference]

or

register online at

http://hiltongardeninn.hilton.com/en/gi/groups/personalized/C/CHIAHGI-MHFC-20160927/index.jhtml?WT.mc_id=POG

Conference rate of \$119 plus taxes

The hotel is adjacent to the conference facility.

McCormick
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THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY

Fall Baptist Polity Class at McCormick

**Baptist Movement:
Heritage, Values & Polity**
Instructor: David Gregg

September 6, 2016 – December 9, 2016
Mondays 6:00 PM– 9:00 PM

McCormick Theological Seminary
5460 S. University Ave
Chicago, IL 60615

To apply, contact:
admit@mccormick.edu | 773.947.6276

Northern Seminary Announces Inauguration of New President

Northern Seminary will hold the inauguration of its eleventh president, Dr. William D. Shiell, October 15, 2016 at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 1310 Shepherd Drive, Naperville, IL.

The ceremony is at 2:00 pm followed by a reception to meet President Shiell and his family. The public is invited. For more information, visit www.seminary.edu/President.

Dr. Shiell brings 20 years of experience as a local church minister to his new position at Northern. His vision is to help churches live Christ's call in their local contexts and to engage the world with hope and strength for a new day. "The local church engaged in their communities continues to be the best seminary campus today," said Shiell. Through their new interactive streaming technology called Northern Live, and training from their world-class faculty, Northern is delivering seminary education to the church and across the world.

New: Pulpit Supply List

ABCMC is creating a list of preachers available for pulpit supply when a pastor is away on vacation. If you would like your name to be on this list, please send your name, telephone number, email address, and a one-sentence description of your preaching style to Janet Jamieson at admin@abcmc.org.

If your church would like a copy of this list when it is complete, please email us to request one, and we will be happy to send it along.



Region AOL Address Being Discontinued

The ABCMC AOL email address is being discontinued effective August 31. If you are still using that address to send information, please change your records and forward all materials to admin@abcmc.org.

Lectionary Studies for Sunday, August 21, 2016 – Dr. Jay Wilcoxon

14th Sunday after Pentecost Year C

Jeremiah 1:4-10; Psalm 71:1-6; Hebrews 12:18-29; Luke 13:10-17

Prophets experience divine constraint, pilgrims pass through shaking times, and Jesus places compassion above divine law.

From now to mid-October the Lectionary readings from the Hebrew scriptures will come from **Jeremiah** (including Lamentations). Jeremiah is the largest book of the major prophets, covers a period of about forty years of the most decisive history at the end of the kingdom of Judah, and has the most personal and biographical presentations of any of the prophetic books (only Ezekiel is comparable). Some recent hyper-critical scholarship has cast doubts on any knowledge of the "historical Jeremiah," but the remarkable tradition is hard to explain without some remarkable figure as its origin.

Jeremiah 1:4-10

This week's Prophetic reading is **Jeremiah's "Call,"** or commission as a prophet.

The prophet's full commission is presented in the entire first chapter of the book, where the prophet is established as a main battle line in God's warfare with God's people. Jeremiah the prophetic warrior is drafted (verses 4-10), given two signs that explain the current campaign (visions in verses 11-16), and garrisoned as an impregnable fortress against his own people (verses 17-19).

The narrative of God's **drafting Jeremiah** is in the first person: "the word of the Lord came to me..." It is the prophet's account of how he came to be such an ominous and stubborn figure. He has

experienced a *divine constraint* so fundamental to his being that it must have been prenatal (verse 5). He portrays a dialogue with God in which resistance or excuses are useless. Youth and lack of education are beside the point. When God has drafted a person, one takes orders, goes where one is told, brings the messages one is commanded, and generally stands fearlessly on duty as assigned (verses 6-8).

The prophet's induction into God's service is not dialogue only. There is a ritual action, whether this is only in a Jeremianic vision or it is the standard action of an ordination service in the temple. God causes something (the object is unexpressed) to touch Jeremiah's mouth (as Isaiah's lips were touched with the live coal, Isaiah 6:7).

The words accompanying this action are God's speech. "Now I have put my words in your mouth" (verse 9, NRSV). The prophet is fully recruited to God's side, is burdened and authorized by the awesome and deeply disturbing power of speaking God's pronouncements to other humans.

The continuation of the divine speech says such speaking will involve pronouncing **the fates of nations** and kingdoms, mainly for judgment and destruction, but perhaps also, between the cracks, for saving and rebuilding (verse 10).

Psalm 71:1-6

The Psalm reading is exactly what a newly recruited servant of the Lord should learn. It should be part of his equipment.

It is a prayer that God be a "refuge" and "strong fortress" in the speaker's struggle with the wicked and the unjust. This speaker

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Lectionary Studies for Sunday, August 21, 2016

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shares the Jeremiah experience of divine constraint since birth. "Upon you I have leaned from my birth; / it was you who took me from my mother's womb" (verse 6, NRSV). As would turn out to be the case for Jeremiah, this speaker foresees a long life of service (verse 9) filled with dangers and trials (verse 13), but the final word of this verbal equipment is, "My praise is continually of you" (verse 6, and verse 23).

Hebrews 12:18-29

The Epistle reading continues the instructions for those who **pilgrimage toward the City of God** as followers of Jesus.

The pilgrimage has similarities with the Israelites going through the wilderness from Egypt to Sinai. The goal of the Israelites' journey was the mountain where God appeared in thunder, lightning, and fire, and where God spoke the divine commands directly to the people, terrifying them so that they made Moses the intermediary for any further such divine instruction (Exodus 19 and 20, referred to here in verses 18- 19).

The writer explains that while there are similarities to the Israelites' journey, the present pilgrimage is beyond Sinai. It goes on toward Mount Zion, the true Mount Zion, which is the heavenly city of God.

The pilgrimage toward Zion is visualized as **a pilgrimage festival to Jerusalem**. There is a large festival crowd – here "angels" in their festival suits. There is an assembly of "the firstborn," meaning those faithful ones who died in earlier times and were recorded in the book of life. The festival assembly also includes "the spirits of the righteous made perfect," who are probably those who died as martyrs, before as well as since Jesus' death.

As the pilgrims approach the holy center **they come to Jesus**, "the mediator of a new covenant." Moses was the mediator of the old covenant sealed at Sinai, but now at a new Zion that replaces Sinai there is a new covenant with its own mediator. This new covenant was sealed by the sprinkling of blood – here, as in most of Hebrews, the model is probably the Day of Atonement – a blood that forgives all human sin since the blood of Abel was shed by Cain (all this in verse 24).

The rest of our reading is an exhortation not to refuse "the one who is speaking" (verse 25). This one is the heavenly Jesus, who speaks now the new covenant as the voice of God formerly spoke the old covenant.

The warning is needed because it is still possible to fall away, to lose the heavenly "rest" (see 4:1-11) that Jesus made possible. God "shook" Sinai in the great appearance to Israel, but the prophet Haggai promised that there is yet a **second "shaking"** to come, and any of us can fall away in that second shaking (verses 26-27). The writer exhorts the hearers to persist and be able "to offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe" as the completion of their earthly pilgrimage.

Luke 13:10-17

The Gospel reading is about **binding and loosing**.

A woman who was "bound by Satan" for eighteen years (verse 16) by being physically bent over is released (untied, loosened) by Jesus from her disability. This may have been a regular healing story, like the one about the woman cured of the hemorrhage (Luke 8:42-48), but this one took place on a Sabbath and in a synagogue while Jesus was leading the service, creating a little tempest for the elders. Thus we have in fact a combination of a healing story and a controversy story. The controversy, which comes up several times, is about **what is permitted on the Sabbath**.

The President of the Congregation is discrete about the problem. He does not address Jesus directly, but says to the crowd who are present, "There are six days on which work ought to be done, come on those days and be cured, and not on the sabbath day" (verse 14, NRSV).

The fault lies with the needy, not with the healer! Don't come on the wrong day! Jesus asserts that this is quite ridiculous, even hypocritical, and appeals to an example of what IS permitted on the Sabbath. It is permitted to untie (literally "loose") a work animal to take it to water (verse 15); therefore, how much more appropriate to release a suffering human, Sabbath or no.

The early followers of Jesus labored with the issue of how much of Jewish law and tradition applied to them (how much of the law was still "binding" on them, and how much had been "loosed" by Jesus' authority). They understood most of the Ten Commandments to be required of them, but by the second century Christians (as they were then called) no longer observed the Sabbath (the fourth Commandment) but observed "the Lord's Day" (Sunday) instead.

For a couple of generations many decisions had to be made in detail about what law applied to Jesus followers and what did not. These decisions were made step by step by those who were understood to have received authority from Jesus. In Matthew Peter is given this authority. "[W]hatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:19). In time Christians too had to make decisions about what was permitted and what was not. Our story, and others like it, stood as forceful reminders that compassion for human suffering must take precedent over all religious formalities among Jesus' followers.



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.