

# 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 . . . Iglesia Bautista Central

***"We want a Baptist church on the north side of Chicago where we can worship God in Spanish."*** Those were the words spoken by a group of immigrants from Puerto Rico in a conversation on November 15, 1955. What began as a dream of eager pioneers to spread the gospel among the Spanish speaking community on Chicago's north side became a reality four years later – when the Iglesia Bautista Central was founded on June 15, 1959 with 44 members.

Fifty-seven years have passed since that day of celebration, during which the congregation has worshiped in five different venues, has been blessed with the ministry of seven pastors and has had teams of tireless and committed leaders who have accepted the challenge of God to build His Kingdom – by placing their God-given gifts, talents, skills and resources at the disposal of both God and the community. Today, the Iglesia Bautista Central continues to proclaim the message of salvation, not only to immigrants from a particular geographical area, but for anyone who wants to learn more about God and his offer of love, forgiveness and salvation for all humanity. The congregation now has a membership comprised of believers from 12 different countries of Latin America and Europe.

Since October 2011, the Iglesia Bautista Central has shared the facilities and ministry with Irving Park Baptist Church. This arrangement has not only extended and enriched the ministry, fostering growth in different areas of the congregation, but it also strengthens their commitment to support our denomination – both regionally and nationally – through human, financial and spiritual resources.

Under the motto ***"A COMPLETE MESSAGE FOR TODAY'S FAMILY"***, members and friends of Iglesia Bautista Central live and serve from their places of work, study and through family relationships, while as a church we collaborate with groups that allow us to widen our field of influence on issues that directly touch members of the Chicago community such as violence, access to health care, quality education and immigration among others. ¡¡¡Que Dios les bendiga!!!



## A Call For Prayer

A Call to Prayer has been issued to American Baptists by the ABC National Executive Council, including: Susan Gillies, interim general secretary of American Baptist Churches USA, Jeffrey Haggray, executive director of American Baptist Home Mission Societies, Virginia Holmstrom, executive director of American Baptist Women's Ministries, Reid Trulson, executive director of International Ministries, and Louis Barbarin, chief executive officer of MMBB Financial Services.

In this painful summer, we call American Baptists to a season of prayer for those who have been affected by senseless acts of violence in cities here and across the world, as well as impacted by natural disasters. While we grieve the loss of life and livelihood for those directly affected, all brothers and sisters in Christ share the burden of helping, healing, and finding hope.

We encourage American Baptists to set aside time to pray for God's mercy to prevail and for each of us to have courage to respond as we are able.

### Special Prayer Request



Please continue to pray for Pastor Thomas Aldworth (Morgan Park Baptist Church) and his wife, Beth as she recovers from surgery.

*"The prayers of the righteous availeth much."*

**FAITH**  
is like Wi-Fi,  
it's invisible but  
it has the power  
to connect you to  
what you need.

## For Your Calendars:

**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**

## refugeeONE Back-to-School Drive

Having the right school supplies is the first step in doing well in school for any child – for children newly relocated to Chicago as refugees, the need is even greater. You can help RefugeeOne ensure that the youth in their program are equipped to do well in their studies next fall by donating school supplies or making a \$25 gift to cover the cost of a backpack filled with a student's needed supplies!

The RefugeeOne office will be open for donation drop-off on July 25-26, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm and July 27-28, 8:30 am - 6:30 pm.

### Items Needed:

- Pens, pencils, crayons, markers,
- Backpacks colored pencils, highlighters
- Scissors, glue sticks, rulers
- Spiral notebooks, folders, lined loose-leaf paper

See the full list of needed supplies and additional information on the donations calendar. ([www.refugeeone.org](http://www.refugeeone.org))



**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](mailto:abcmetrochicago@gmail.com).

## Missional Church Convocation – Chicago area July 21-23, 2016



### Connecting the work of your hands with the fruit of your faith

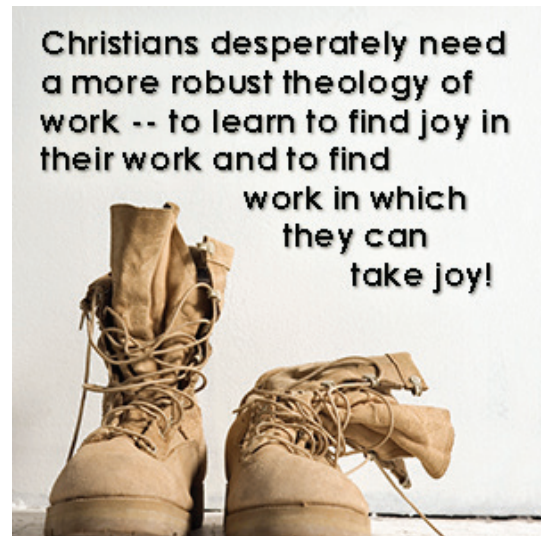
This year's convocation will explore the nature and meaning of *human* work as participation in *God's* work in the world.

Philip D. Kenneson, the Convocation keynote speaker, combines theologically grounded reflection on Christian life and practice with insightful cultural analysis. The result is practical guidance for congregational discipleship in today's world.

"God has called (the church) to embody visibly before the world the reconciliation that God desires for all of creation. Part of that vocation to the world is to bear the fruit of the Spirit as a testimony to God's continued presence and work in the world" (from *Life on the Vine*).

Learn more at [missionalchurch.org](http://missionalchurch.org)

- Keynote presenter Phil Kenneson
- Schedule and topics
- Registration and housing



Join the conversation now on the Center blog:

<http://missionalchurch.org/resources/center-blog/>

the Center  
for Parish  
Development

## Lectionary Studies for Sunday, July 17, 2016 – Dr. Jay Wilcoxon

### 9th Sunday after Pentecost Year C

Amos 8:1-12; Psalm 52; Colossians 1:15-28; Luke 10:38-42.

*For some people prophets have words of doom; for others a word of Wisdom that may radically change priorities.*

#### Amos 8:1-12

Our second reading from the prophet Amos is part of a series of brief visions he received from the Lord. There are five visions altogether:

- 7:1-3, the locust plague;
- 7:4-6, the fire storm;
- 7:7-9, the plumb line;
- 8:1-3, summer fruit; and
- 9:1, destruction of the temple.

(Last week's reading included the third of these.)

There was a **definite strategy** in the first three visions, all of which threatened disaster for poor, small Jacob. When God showed the prophet an explicit disaster, like a locust plague or the outbreak of great fire, the prophet jumped in and begged God to relent. "O Lord, forgive, I beg you! How can Jacob stand? He is so small!" (7:2 and 5, NRSV). For the third vision, however, God changed tactics and showed the prophet something that wasn't a disaster already in progress. It was only an ominous sign of some kind.

In that third vision God shows the prophet a **plumb line**, the device for determining when crooked walls have to be torn down. Then God said, "Amos, what do you see?" Now the prophet has to answer the question – instead of immediately pleading for Jacob. When he reports what he sees, it is God's turn to speak, and God then explains the judgment on Israel that the plumb line represents. God has circumvented the prophet's determination to intercede for poor little Jacob!

That was the divine strategy with the plumb line, and it is the strategy here in this Sunday's reading with the vision of the basket of summer fruit (verses 1-3). As the translators' footnotes in NRSV explain, there is a wordplay. You see a basket of summer fruit, a qaitz? That sounds like a qetz – an End. For you Amos there is a message in this, for "the end has come upon my people Israel; I will never again pass them by [= exclude them from disaster]." The rest of the divine judgment elaborates on the dead bodies lying in the streets, and concludes with an awesome command for silence, in Hebrew hās! The total silence of complete desolation and emptiness.

And why is Israel coming to its End? The reasons are given in verses 4-6, once again selling the poor for silver, trampling the needy, and in general ruining the poor. The culmination of punishment will be the elimination of any hope for divine relief. There will be a *famine* of the words of the Lord; there will be no

divine guidance that might reverse the disasters (verses 11-12). Israel is doomed.

We have the book of Amos, not because Israel survived the judgment, but because Judah did. After the northern kingdom was destroyed by Assyria, Judah attempted to reform its own religious and social order, particularly under King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah. At that time the example of the northern kingdom was mulled over extensively, and the stories of Elijah-Elisha and the prophetic books of Amos and Hosea (in early versions) were preserved as parts of a new vision of Judah's place in history. In this new vision Judah would continue to be the holy city God had chosen and would continue to have a king descended from David the great anointed king, but it would also adhere firmly to the lessons of Yahweh's exclusiveness learned from the prophets and the disastrous history of the northern kingdom.

This deliberate adoption of northern traditions about Yahweh's work in history was the beginning of the prophetic books as part of a larger complex of God's Word. These were prophecies that had been fulfilled; their messages had been verified by God's own actions. Israel had died because it was unfaithful to Yahweh – and Yahweh's justice.

Perhaps Judah still had a chance!

#### Psalm 52

The Psalm reading is probably one of the least familiar of the psalms. It doesn't fit the usual categories for the psalms: hymn, lament, thanksgiving, etc. It is more like a reproach speech from a prophet, like Isaiah's pronouncement against Shebna, the mayor of Jerusalem (Isaiah 22:15-25).

The heading of the psalm, added later, relates it to an incident in the time of David and Saul when Doeg the Edomite was a competitor and betrayer of David, an outlaw at the time (1 Samuel 21:1-8; 22:6-19). In the post-Exilic period, the Judeans greatly resented the Edomites, who had taken advantage of Judah's defeat and depopulation, and a prominent warrior (gibbor, the term translated "mighty one" in verse 1 of our psalm) of Edom was viewed as a tyrant epitomizing evil conduct. In the psalm the righteous ones will view with awe the punishment and destruction of this bully, who trusts in his wealth, his power to buy his way to whatever he wants.

In contrast to this Edomite gangland boss, the speaker compares himself to the evergreen, long-lived olive tree in the precincts of the Temple. Tyrants come and go; the strength of the Lord endures.

#### Colossians 1:15-28.

The Epistle reading presents a passage that scholars have long recognized contains an **early Christian hymn** in praise of Christ.

*[Continued on page5]*

## Lectionary Studies for Sunday, July 17, 2016

[Continued from page 4]

The hymn is quoted by the letter writer as part of the thanksgiving section of the letter. Originally, the hymn was about the work of Wisdom as God's agent in the cosmos. Where Wisdom was the original subject (feminine), some early Christian liturgists have read it as applying to Christ.

Andrew T. Lincoln gives a full discussion and description of the hymn and how it is used in the letter (The New Interpreter's Bible, vol. XI, [Abingdon, 2000] pp. 597- 607). He reconstructs the hymn as having three strophes. (The bracketed phrases were additions to the hymn by the letter writer.)

Strophe 1 (1:15-16a)  
 who is the image of the invisible God  
 the firstborn of all creation,  
 for in him were created all things  
 in heaven and on earth  
 things visible and invisible  
 [whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers]

Strophe 2 (1:16b-18a)  
 all things were created through him and for him  
 and he himself is before all things  
 and all things hold together in him  
 and he himself is the head of the body [the church]

Strophe 3 (1:18b-20)  
 who is the beginning  
 the firstborn from the dead  
 [so that he himself might have preeminence in all things]  
 for in him all the fullness was pleased to dwell  
 and through him to reconcile all things for him,  
 making peace through him  
 [through the blood of his cross]  
 whether things on earth or things in heaven.

Lincoln makes the following comments on the background and adaptation of the hymn.

It looks very much, then, as if the Hellenistic Jewish composer of the hymn has taken the various attributes of Wisdom or the Logos and applied them to Christ in his relation to the cosmos. The hymn in its original form presupposes some major disruption in cosmic harmony and, therefore, sees Christ not only, like Wisdom or the Logos, as the divine agent in creation but also now as the divine agent in reconciliation, restoring harmony to the cosmos (p. 605).

The adapted Christian hymn views the divine agent of creation as visiting the world in which humans were left after creation. There this Wisdom / Logos / Anointed One passed through death

and assumed a supreme reign over all the anti-creation powers that had taken the cosmos captive.

This Anointed One became the head of the assembly of the saved ones – known to the hearers of this letter as the *ekklesia*, the church, the “body” of this divine visitor.

(Somewhere in the early Christian movement, those inspired by the Wisdom of Jewish piety heard the Logos of a new revelation speaking to a new elect people.)

### Luke 10:38-42

Compared to the previous readings, the Gospel text is remarkably straightforward – though not necessarily easier to live with.

As Jesus' journey continues, he is hosted by a householder named Martha. (The story is told mainly from her viewpoint.) Martha has a sister Mary who becomes absorbed in Jesus' teaching and “sits at his feet” (a phrase used of disciples, see Luke 8:35) rather than helping with the hostessing. Martha resents this, and resents it enough to go into the seminar room and make a major case of it (verse 40)!

Jesus' response seems to commiserate with Martha's many worries and management tasks (verse 41), but as usual he recasts things by radically altering the priorities. Too many distractions are not good; “there is need of only one thing” (verse 42, NRSV; there are several variant readings in this verse.) And he adds, somewhat cruelly it seems to us, that Mary (rather than Martha) has chosen that one thing (verse 42).

We seem to have a classic conflict between the doers and the dreamers! We are tempted to work at this text until we can get a more comfortable result, something other than Jesus siding unequivocally with the dreamers. But the background of apocalyptic urgency that informs Jesus' requirements of those who would follow him (9:57-62) seems to shape the response to Martha also. The imminence of a whole new order for the world upsets routine agendas for ordinary household duties!

We want to say, “The world must also be managed on a day-to-day basis! Give us more Marthas!” Then there could be more hosting of traveling sages, and the members of the devotional seminar could have something to eat at their break times. And so it goes.

To us advocates of the Marthas of the world, the Reign of God seems too far off to allow its visiting representatives to seriously