

Church Spearheads Dream House Project

Members of **First Baptist Church of Jerseyville, IL** are the core group behind building a handicapped accessible house for the Skinner family, longtime members of the church. The sons of the family, Duey and Colton are afflicted with a rare neuro-muscular disorder, Louis Barr Syndrome.

A few years ago, it became evident that both boys would be confined to wheelchairs. A Sunday School class began helping the family toward buying a van with a lift. The entire church soon became involved and a van was purchased.

The family's current home is not handicapped accessible. Church members, Tim & Kaye Buis, Kim Hawkes, Kellie Hill and Debbie Wedding began the task of trying to provide a new home for the family. They became the nucleus of the "Friends of the Skinner Family Committee" which has expanded to the whole community.

A groundbreaking ceremony was held in April. At the ceremony, **Rev. Gerald Phillips**, Interim Pastor, said, "The support that has been shown towards the Skinner family is just overwhelming and in my opinion, if you look at how quickly everything has come together, it has God's fingerprints all over it."

The church family and community continue to be involved in many fund raising projects as well as providing physical labor at the construction site.

Information provided by
Joyce Sagez - Church Secretary

Our Great Rivers Region Baptist Family Is Growing!

First Baptist Church, Benton, IL Welcomes: Phil and Jean Bailie

First Baptist Church, Mattoon, IL Welcomes: Amy Bennett, Rebecca Blanke, Miles Brown, Mayla Johanpeter, Daniel Klapp, and David Klapp

First Baptist Church, Ottawa, IL Welcomes: Ashley Dettore, Cassie Klien, Thyra Beals, Vernon Distin, and Samantha Daneile

Rolling Prairie Baptist Church, Rochester, IL Welcomes: Andrea Estes, Steve Hinds, Allison Huston, Jerry Rutherford, Terri Springer, Libby Van Dyke, and Tina Verduin

First Baptist Church, Towanda, IL Welcomes: Cory Deerwester and Aubrey Deerwester

Mainstream Contact Information

Send your stories of mission and ministry. Please also send the names of new members (the fruit of this mission and ministry) to:

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The Mainstream

News of Ministry and Mission

American Baptist Churches of the Great Rivers Region

June 2008 No.1

Email: grrabc@abc-grr.org

web: www.abc-grr.org

GRR Calendar

June

16 - 21 - Great American Baptist
Bike Ride Across IL

July

5-11: National ABY Gathering -
Estes Park, Colorado

August

8, 9 - Baptist History & Polity class
led by Dr. Adrian Lamkin.
Class hosted by East Peoria
First Baptist Church

9 - Area I Senior Adult Day

21 - Area II / III Senior Adult Day

September

5 - 7 - Area I Senior High Retreat
Blackhawk Camp

11 - Sacred Boundaries Course
Creekwood Baptist Church
Rockford, IL

19 - 21 - Area I Junior High Retreat
Blackhawk Camp

October

3 - 5 - GRR Annual Meeting at the
Holiday Inn Convention Center
Moline, IL

Flooding Overcome

The rain fell all week, day after day, filling and eventually overflowing the Kaskaskia River in several places in northern Coles County.



We (**Pleasant Grove Baptist Church**) had been planning over six months for our 150th Anniversary celebration to take place on June 7-8. The tent was coming, the ice cream was delivered, supplies were checked, church was clean and we were ready. There was to be a community ice cream social under a tent in the grove on Saturday. A clown was coming, 4-Given from **Mattoon FBC** was to sing, games were planned and there were plenty of old pictures to share with the visitors. If it would only stop raining so we could be under the tent in the grove.

Saturday brought more rain to the north, swelling the river higher than anyone, even our oldest member, could ever remember. The road to the new bridge was rapidly disappearing.

Then we had word they were going to close the bridge...the last open road north and south through the area. Those who were working to get the water and mud out of the church basement were alerted to get out of there. The tent man was contacted and urged to return home. (Continued on page 2)

The ice cream was safe. Festivities were cancelled. People left for homes.

The river soon covered the bed of the bridge road with six inches of water. Tragically, 2 families lost their homes east of the church to the rising waters.

Saturday was lost but what about Sunday? There were visitors from Alabama, Indiana, Missouri and Iowa. **Randy McNeely** was coming to share in our service. Susan Doty was coming to sing.

After one phone call to **Pastor Mike Snow**, we had a place to gather for worship and then dinner afterwards at First Baptist of Mattoon. After another phone call with Kim Hennes, we had a worship service planned and ready to go. After the final call, our dinner could be delivered to the new site.

The result was one of the most wonderful worship experiences we have ever had. The music carried us to the gates of heaven. Four visiting former pastors shared of their experiences with us. The "mother" church renewed ties to her "daughter" as old friendships were renewed and new ones formed. **Mattoon FBC** treated their



guests to the best gift anyone could give...unconditional love with open arms to come share their space.

All agreed God was there last Sunday in a very real, special and wonderful way. The weather gave us lemons and with God's help we made sweet lemonade to refresh us all.

Thanks be to God.

Rev Stephanie Johanpeter (Pastor Jo)

"Do You Believe in Miracles?"

Sports Illustrated recently broadcast a special on the "Top Ten Sports Stories of All Time." Perhaps not surprisingly, their choice for number one was the USA Hockey Team's victory over the Russian Nationals in the 1980 Olympics. Who can forget sportscaster Al Michael's "Do you believe in miracles!?! Yes!!!" as the seconds ticked down?

The members and friends of the **First Baptist Church of Oak Park, IL** witnessed their own miracle May 11. On "**Miracle Sunday**" we received \$158,000 in offerings for a new roof and air conditioning unit for the church's gymnasium/fellow-



ship hall. This figure represents more than half of what we normally receive in offerings for the year. For us, it truly was a miracle!

We are grateful to **John Grisham of the Great Rivers Region staff** who introduced the concept of "Miracle Sunday" last fall. "Miracle Sunday" is designed to raise a significant amount of cash in one special offering. When he first met with us we did not know how we would go about raising the \$150,000 needed to replace our leaky roof and temperamental a/c. We thought our best options were to take out a loan, launch a multi-year campaign, or tap our already depleted reserves. John encouraged us, however, to believe in the "Miracle Sunday" approach as it was tailor made for a project like ours.

(Continued on facing page)

The straight forward process includes soliciting a few pre-campaign commitments, announcing the "Miracle Sunday" date several months in advance, monthly reminder letters and one personal phone call. In essence, it is letting people know of the need and encouraging them to consider a special gift.

The new roof and air conditioner will certainly be a welcome improvement to our facility. As grateful as we are to "Miracle Sunday" for what it has meant for our facility needs, we are even more grateful for what it has meant to our spiritual development. It has been a tangible reminder of the greatness and graciousness of God.

Do we believe in miracles? Yes!!!

Submitted by Rev. Harry Parker

Church News

American Baptist Women's Ministries across the nation are supporting as their special project: *Slavery in the 21st Century: Break the Chains*. Approximately 800,000 to 900,000 victims annually are trafficked across international borders worldwide including as many as 20,000 in the United States.

The family of Phila Nestruck, a member of **United Baptist Church, Kinderhook, IL** set up a memorial fund and it was their wish that the funds be used to support a worthy mission. The ABWM at Kinderhook chose to give \$1,000 to the ABWM Break the Chains special project.

On Saturday, May 17, **First Baptist Benton, IL** hosted a pancake breakfast to raise funds for summer camp for the Cub Scout Pack that meets weekly in the fellowship hall.

Professional Leadership Changes

Incoming

- Jason Hladik** - FBC Plano, IL
- John Withum** - Coordinator of Children & Yth Min, FBC Aurora, IL
- Sharon Farral** - Assoc Min to Senior Care, FBC East Moline
- Barry Norris** - Pastor, Park Place Baptist Church, Montgomery, IL
- Chad Hoesman** - Pastor FBC White Hall, IL
- Kim Johnson** - Development University Baptist, Champaign, IL
- Christian Ricker** - Pastor FBC Chenoa, IL
- Karen Boucher** - Associate Pastor FBC Pontiac, IL
- Jim Jackson** - Co-Pastor Cottage Home Baptist, Carbondale, IL
- Shawn Parks** - Co-Pastor Cottage Home, Carbondale, IL
- Randy Johnson** - Pastor FBC Carbondale, IL
- Paul Sowden Sr.** - Pastor FBC Belleville, IL
- Gary Watts** - Pastor Temple of Truth, Kansas City, MO
- Brian Crippen** - Pastor FBC Rosewood Heights, East Alton, IL
- Pat Ciupek** - Interim FBC Carthage, IL
- Bob Haley** - Interim FBC Urbana, IL

Departing

- Chad Hoesman** - Interim, Aalsey Baptist Church, Aalsey, IL
- Barbara Henderson** - Pastor, Temple of Truth, Kansas City, MO
- Matt Ohley** - Pastor Godfrey Baptist Godfrey, IL