

GRR American Baptist Youth Gathering

BRINGIN' JESUS BACK

John 14:19

November 7-9, 2008
First Baptist Church D
Decatur, IL

Speakers: Rev Steve Mechem
J. P. Parrish

Concert by: The Virginia Go

Mission Opportunities & Workshops

Cost: \$50.00 Youth
\$40.00 Youth Leaders

Open to: Youth Grades 8-12 &
College Freshmen & Sophomores

Mainstream Contact Information

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

Linda Ricks
232 Devron Circle
East Peoria, IL 61611
E-Mail: Ricks4Lr@comcast.net

Dates To Remember

2009 GRR Missions Conference

April 24-25, 2009

Cherry Hills Baptist Church
2125 Woodside Road
Springfield, IL

ABC - USA 2009 Biennial Meeting

June 26-28, 2009

Pasadena, California

2009 GRR Annual Gathering

Thursday, October 29 -
Saturday, October 31, 2009

Holiday Inn City Centre
Peoria, IL

The compiled reports of the work of the GRR Board of Ministries and Staff, the compiled authorized budget for 2009, and the churches' representatives to the GRR and ABCUSA Boards - as published and distributed at the Moline Gathering of October 3 - 5 - are available on the GRR web site:

www.abcgrr.org/grrboard/index.htm



The Mainstream

News of Ministry and Mission

American Baptist Churches of the Great Rivers Region

October 2008 No.1

Email: grrabc@abc-grr.org

web: www.abc-grr.org

GRR Calendar

November

7 - 9 - **ABY Gathering**, Decatur, IL

2009 Theme - Plant the Harvest

January

16 - 19 - SKWIM at Green Lake

March

14 - Area V Annual Meeting,
FBC Edwardsville IL

15 - Area II Annual Meeting
Jacksonville FBC

21 - Area IV Annual Meeting
First Baptist Church, Benton IL

22 - Area I Annual Meeting
First Baptist Church, Ottawa IL

22 - Area III Annual Meeting
North Bridge Baptist Church
Normal, IL

April

17 - 18 - Clergy Spouse Retreat
Lake Springfield Camp

24 - 25 - GRR Missions Conference
Cherry Hills Baptist
Church, Springfield, IL

Karen Refugees Become A Part of First Baptist Church, Moline, IL

Beginning in June, 2007, Karen refugees from the Thai-Burma border began arriving in the Quad Cities area of Illinois. Soon, First Baptist Moline interim co-pastors, John and Ruth Peterson agreed to sponsor a family. The Petersons rejoiced that the family was from an area of the world that they had become familiar with during their 2 trips to Burma. Careful not to violate the commitment to not proselytize, they did not talk about religion. Within two weeks, however, the Karen family members asked what John and Ruth did for work. When the Karen family learned the Petersons were Baptist pastors, numbers of Karen began to excitedly ask about attending their church.

Within the next year the community of Karen refugees grew rapidly. Several new families arrived each month. Large numbers were Baptist and eagerly joined the first small group that came and sat through the English service. The Petersons invit-



ed them to read (continued on p. 2)

scripture and pray in their language in most of the services. They also provided Karen words for hymns.

The Karen blessed worship as they sang solos, duets, and choir numbers in Karen and several times even in English. One young man who had been a teacher in Bible Schools in three border camps emerged as a pastoral leader.

Soon a steering committee was formed to plan a Karen language worship service. In early spring, 2008, the Karen language service began. Soon, a children's Sunday School class in the Karen language formed using the curriculum available from International Ministries' Karen Konnection website. The children, rapidly learning English, participate in the children's choir - singing in English - and in the children's church



session. Over a dozen Karen children enriched the summer Vacation Bible School experience. Three attended Blackhawk Baptist Camp.

In September, 33 Karens joined the church upon confession of faith and one after baptism. More are desiring to join.

Families continue to come. They are witnessing to their fellow Karen and are an invigorating presence in the life of First Baptist Church Moline. 50 to 60 are in attendance each Sunday even though a goodly number have employment that keeps them away on Sunday morning.

Numbers of long-time members of the church have said, "We have

been praying for more children and young couples to come to our church. Little did we dream that God would answer our prayer with people from the Thai-Burma border!" What a surprising, wonderful God we serve!"

Submitted by: Ruth Peterson



FBC Urbana Celebrates 170 Years



First Baptist Church of Urbana celebrated its 170th anniversary as an organized Baptist church on September 22, 2008. The

church was founded on September 22, 1838. The church is few in number but still doing the Lord's will in Champaign county. God Bless!

Bob Haley, Interim Pastor



New Look and Features of GRR Web Site



Charles Klassen (above right) is joined by Randy McNeely of the GRR Ministerial Staff as they record a session for the GRR web site. Charles is the Pastor of **Benton First Baptist Church**. In this clip he tells about the work that members of the church are doing to provide meals for children.

This feature of the web site is called "**Celebrate Churches' Ministries.**" You can find this on the front (home) page of the GRR site. Previous clips can be found by following a link to an archive. Churches who have participated in this - so far - are **Rock Island FBC, Faith Baptist at Mill Creek, Carthage FBC, and FBC of Macomb**. Themes have included other ministries with children, small group ministry, and dynamics of discerning and initiating leaving an old church and building a new one.

You will also find audio and audio/video recordings of each of the 4 workshops from the 41st Annual Assembly of the ABC Churches of the GRR. View **Dr. Yvonne Thorne's** 4 - part seminar on Clergy Self-Care. Pastors and members of Pastoral Relations Committees would benefit from Dr. Thorne's teaching. Surveys tell us that nearly half of

Americans access the web through cable, dsl, and other "fast/broadband" connections; 1/3 of Americans have no connection to the internet. 10% of these have made a conscious decision not to - no matter what the speed and availability. This leaves 17 % of Americans using dial-up modems for e-mail and "browsing" the web. These numbers are similar in the GRR.

What does this mean for churches?

We need to use both web and mail! We also need to be aware of the needs of those who want to use our churches' and GRR web sites, but who have - by choice, lack of availability, or financial realities - dialup connections. One example of serving these needs is to provide web experiences that can function adequately using a dialup connection.



The GRR web site is constantly being "tweaked" to make it more useful as a tool of ministry. Be part of making it an ever better tool. Ideas? Needs? Glitches? Send an e-mail to Richard Ricks: revrick4@comcast.net

Please give to the



www.worldmissionoffering.org