

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

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

Our Great Rivers Region Family Is Growing!

First Baptist Church, Greenville, IL Welcomes: Tyler Sharp, Robert (Tom) Leihser, Brenda Leihser, and Kimberly Bone

Central Baptist Church, Quincy, IL Welcomes: Vision Ayalew, Mary Dees, Ryanna Kelle, Britni Miller/Skirvin, Zachary Rideout, Gregory Spohr, Alexandra Spohr, and Sarah Wilson

Area 4 Youth (continued)

Lunch was a "gourmet hamburger buffet" with all the trimmings plus cold slaw, chips and baked beans. It was great! Each person had the opportunity to select what items would make the perfect hamburger sandwich. Quinton Runyon will let us know who won that competition.

Winston Bennett challenged everyone present to make God the most important focus in each individual's life.

For those who took the time to be here this weekend their lives were both blessed and enriched.

Due to technical issues the GRR website address is changed to:
www.abcgrr.org

(no dash between abc and grr)



The Mainstream

News of Ministry and Mission

American Baptist Churches of the Great Rivers Region

November 2008 No.2

Email: grrabc@abcgrr.org

web: www.abcgrr.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

Meet The New GRR President; Joel Lohr

If it were possible to be born American Baptist, that would have been my story. I grew up attending the First Baptist Church of



Hillsboro, Illinois. I came to Christ there at the age of 10. Later, as a layperson, I worked with youth. I also taught a Jr. High Sunday School class after my grandmother "retired" from teaching that class that she had taught for many years. I also served the Hillsboro church at various times as Deacon, Moderator, and in various other capacities as there was need.

After I graduated from high school, camping became a central passion for me. Through most of the 1980s and 90s I was involved in camping. I counseled, directed and - during one summer - even served on staff at Lake Springfield Baptist Camp. I attended Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville where I received my Bachelor of Science in Social Work. I was active in the Shurtleff Baptist Campus Ministry throughout my (continued on p. 2)

time at SIUE. The time was rather lengthy as I worked hard to squeeze a 4 year degree into 9 years.

My journey took me to Chicago where I attended Northern Baptist Theological Seminary and served as Associate Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Park Forest, Illinois.

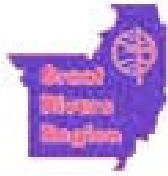
Following graduation from Northern with my M. Div., I was thrilled to have the opportunity to come home to the Great Rivers Region where I served the Old Stonington Baptist Church as pastor for over 11 years. I much appreciated the opportunity to work alongside the wonderful people at the church and in the larger Stonington and Christian County area. I went to Stonington as a bachelor. While I was at the Old Stonington Baptist Church I met and married my wife Jennifer (Maurizio) who grew up in the First Baptist Church of Decatur.

In July of 2007, we accepted a call to come to our present setting of ministry at the First Baptist Church of Wood River, Illinois. We have served the church since September of 2007.

We have two children, Josephine (Joey) age 3 ½ and Ian age 18 months.

Having been a member of Great Rivers Region Churches my entire life, I am thrilled to serve as president for 2009. It gives me great pleasure to know that perhaps I will be able to offer something back to a Region that I have cared for deeply for many years and has served as such a wonderful home to me throughout my life and ministry.

Rev. Joel Lohr



Officers Elected at the GRR Annual Meeting

The following officers were elected on October 4, 2008 at the GRR Annual Meeting in Moline, IL.

Rev. Joel Lohr - President,

Rev. Sharon Farral - First Vice-President

Dr. Benjamin Manso - Second Vice-President

P. J. Patterson - Vice-President for Finance

Rev. Wally Holt - Vice-President for Planning

Nominees to the General Board of ABC/USA include:

Dr. Kenneth Board (Area 1)

Rev. Wally Holt (Area 3)

Dr. Robert Scott (Area 5).

2008 GRR Reports Available

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

Ruth Mooney Speaks at GRR Churches

Ruth Mooney, missionary to Costa Rica spoke to several churches in the Great Rivers Region this past week. In the picture below, she is speaking to youth and adults in Sunday School at **First Baptist Church, Peoria, IL.**



Ruth has served in several countries in Latin America since she was commissioned as a missionary in August of 1986. She has served in El Salvador, Cuba, and Costa Rica. As a Christian educator, she has written curriculum and trained Christians to write Bible study materials that help churches identify God's call and activity in their midst.

Ruth is now on home assignment, living in St. Paul, Minnesota. When she returns to Costa Rica next June she will have a new ministry. She will serve as a professor at the Latin American Biblical University in San Jose, Costa Rica. She will be teaching Christian Education, working in the publications department and participating in the lay leadership training program. She has maintained an ongoing relationship with this seminary since her years in El Salvador, and she is looking forward to the opportunity to help train leaders from several countries in Latin America.

Ruth will also be participating in the GRR Missions Conference in April.

SKWIM 2009

January 16-19, 2009

What is SKWIM?

SKWIM is a ski retreat, held at Green Lake, WI. It is designed to give high school and middle school students a time to be spiritually recharged at the school year's midpoint through having a great time with friends and adults skiing, swimming and joining in worship.

Speaker and Worship:

This year we are blessed to have **Ray Fritz** from Andover, MN. He will be sharing truth with us while **Evan Posey** and **Davis Harwell** from Covington, GA lead us in worship. We will also have breakout times for church groups to meet together following the main sessions.

Cost: \$130 (covers rooming, food, programming) plus skiing, snowboarding and water park costs. For more information and a registration form go to www.skwim.org. This can also be accessed through the GRR website at www.abcgrr.org.

Area 4 Youth Rock Holiday Inn!

Area 4 youth converged on the Mount Vernon Holiday Inn for the first annual **X-Conference**. This conference was held September 5-6, 2008. Friday night featured "Two Empty Chairs" leading in worship and Jason McLeod from Facing the Giants bringing the message to area youth anxious to hear.

Saturday included more fantastic music and Jason continuing share with those present the need for God in their lives. (Continued on page 4)