

FBC Decatur Music Camp

"It's All About the ARTS!" was the theme for First Baptist Church, Decatur, IL MUSICAMP this year. Nearly 60 children attended the five day event the week of June 8. Classes in music, choir, digital photography, watercolor painting, clay pottery and choreography were offered by special guests throughout the week.

Pastor Steve Mechem led the worship time each morning and taught recreation. **Youth Pastor Kelsey Parrish** worked with the oldest group and was Camp Photographer. "There are lots of great arts programs in our community," says **Mike Waltenberger, FBC's Minister of Music**, "but most of them come with a tuition fee.

Offering a free, quality program enriches the lives of our community children and it is a great ministry opportunity for our church." Many volunteers, including many junior and senior high youth, worked throughout the week. The church received a grant from the Decatur Area Arts Council and the Illinois Arts Council, who have financially supported the program for several years. MUSICAMP began in 1991 and focuses upon music and related arts activities within a Christian setting. **This year marked the 19th MUSICAMP in First Baptist Church's ministry.**



Our Great Rivers Region Family Is Growing!

First Baptist Church, Kansas City, MO Welcomes: Dennis Gunderson, Socorro Cinni, Frederick Allen Hall, and Jisha Hall

Antioch Baptist Church, Reynolds, IL Welcomes: Richard Schmidt, and Carol Schmidt

First Baptist Church, Sullivan IL Welcomes: Bill Holland

Mainstream Contact Information

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

Note on pictures:

Please send us pictures of your events. For pictures to be published:

- Send in digital format.
- Please have the permission of the adult(s) and/or minor's parent or custodial guardian. No picture of an individual minor will be published. If permission is given, pictures of groups may be published.

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The Mainstream

News of Ministry and Mission

American Baptist Churches of the Great Rivers Region

June 2009 No. 2 Email: grrabc@abcgrr.org web: www.abcgrr.org

GRR Calendar

A Message From Our Executive Minister

2009 Theme - Plant the Harvest

June

25 - 29 - **Biennial Meeting of ABC-USA**, Pasadena CA

July

8-9 - **National ABM Council**
IL Wesleyan University
Bloomington, IL

10-11 - **GRR Men's & Boys Conference** - IL Wesleyan University, Bloomington, IL

25 -31 - **National ABWM and ABGirls Conference**
Lake Williamson
Carlinville, IL

August

7 - 8: **American Baptist History and Polity Course**
FBC Edwardsville, IL

8 - **The Big Dig: Teen Apologetics Conference** hosted by FBC Mattoon

What a difference a year makes. Our country has a new president. Gargantuan banks have gone out of business. Broadcast TV



is now fully digital. General Motors is in bankruptcy. Investors have lost 25 -35% of the value of their retirement savings. California is on the brink of financial disaster. There are massive demonstrations for freedom in Iran. And even ABCUSA is on the verge of organizational changes that many do not understand and consequences almost no one can see.

The speed of change has been written and talked about for many years. But few seem prepared for the blistering speed of change we now witness, the extreme swings of change, or the particular points of change as they emerge. There is a new category of business leadership books that deal with leadership and management in chaotic times.

These turbulent times impact not only businesses and secular institutions, but also churches, denominations, and parachurch organizations. Some have been affected more than others. Some have been affected in ways that no one saw coming. Some

are beginning to feel the first rumblings of a seismic shift. Others are living in a shattered land still pulsed with aftershocks. It is tiring and disorienting.

While no individual church (or church-related organization) is promised eternal life, we serve the Ruler of Eternity and a Christ who is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Christ has brought us through fire and flood before. With that grounding and hope, we can live and work - **even in turbulent times.**

Speaking only of the Great Rivers Region, **I am encouraged by the ways that God has evidently led us to do things in preparation for these days.** No one was given an unambiguous vision of "seven lean years," but the things we have done for the last 10 years have put us in a better position.

Ten years ago we began the reorganization of our Board structure, the elimination of 13 departments, and streamlining our budget process. We committed to full use of electronic communication and digital resources. We redefined and refocused the work of regional ministerial staff. All this was premised on a vision of "healthy congregations engaged in effective Christian ministry locally and globally," and on our purpose to C-A-R-E ("challenge, assist, represent and empower" those congregations).

Our congregational focus continues to inform and guide regional responses through this very turbulent time. Our initiatives have included (1) a move to smaller, "just in time" conferences and workshops, (2) intern grants to encourage churches to try something new and to invite persons to consider a ministerial vocation, (3) matching grants (like the "Harvest Grants") to encourage and empower

churches to experiment with new ministries, and (4) using the annual meeting theme to launch a year of focus and challenge.

Regional staff functions have lagged behind our organizational changes, although we redefined and redesigned "area ministry" years ago. We understand that our number one task is to assure that GRR churches have competent and qualified pastoral leadership. That includes not only consultation with Search Committees, but also training, consultation, coaching and networking.

Three years ago we began serious assessments and honest projections of staff work. As financial reality began forcing staff reductions, this work became more urgent. The Board, through the Ministry of Planning & Review, is formulating a ministerial staff structure with three field ministers ("area ministers"), one "specialist" (no decisions about this have been made, but it might be a person with experience in congregational transformation), and one executive minister.

It is our hope that these staff changes will happen in an orderly and compassionate way as retirements take their course. While finances place important limits on what we can do, I refuse to allow these changes to be driven by finances alone. We will continue to be guided by our vision of "healthy congregations" and our purpose to C-A-R-E. At the same time, we understand that our vision and purpose will almost certainly be "incarnated" in a very different way six years from now than it was six years ago.

These turbulent times are uncomfortable and almost always leave us with a sense of loss. But I agree with those business gurus who say this

is a time to rediscover focus and to be creative. There is good theology there! Let us keep our eyes on Christ, and understand at the same time that every new day brings something new from God.

Dwight Stinnett

ABMen-USA & ABMen-GRR Mens Conference

July 9 - 11, 2009

American Baptist Men from the Great Rivers Region and the ABC-USA, join together at Illinois Wesleyan University Bloomington, Illinois, for fun, fellowship, and inspiration!

Activities begin Thursday, July 9, with a meeting of the ABMen-USA National Board. All ABMen in the USA are invited to attend and learn what is going on around the country as regional representatives give their reports. The Board will also be voting on changes to the ABMen constitution.

On Friday, July 10, ABMen Past President Manuel Luquin will conduct the "Leadership Development Training Summit". **This training is a must for all ABMen who will serve in Disaster Relief and other areas of mens mission work.**

On Friday at 4:00 p.m., we will gather with the GRR men for pizza and fellowship. The evening program will start at 5:30 p.m. with a review of the Disaster Relief activities this year. There will also be a dedication of the new trailer followed by the Man of the Year award, devotions, and communion.

On Saturday, following a session on Missions and Outreach, we will depart in small groups to work projects in the the community (Home Sweet Home Mission, ISU Campus Religious

Center and Habitat for Humanity).

After lunch on your project site, we will reconvene at IWU for open swim time followed by our closing session, "Take your Mission Experience Home".

We are excited about the opportunity to meet with the National Board and do some Mission work in our community. We look forward to seeing all of you.

For registration forms or additional information:

Call Earl Troyer 309-965-2342 or
E-mail etroyer@juno.com.

GRR ABMen Workgroup

ABMen-GRR work group takes a break from their labors in Baloxi, Miss, where they worked with Habitat for Humanity to rebuild the Gulf. Our group worked from May 5 to 9, 2009, finishing the exterior of one house and the interior of another.



Shown in the picture above starting in the back row: Zack (an Americor Volunteer), George Meyer, and Jessie Short; middle row: David Harmon, Gary Short, and Les Sorenson; front row: Earl Troyer.