



GOOD NEWS! February, 2024

January Highlights

On January 14, we were blessed with a visit from George Henry of Gideons International. George provided us with an inspirational overview of the ministry and work of the Gideons to provide Bibles for people across the globe. If you missed George's talk, stop by the Welcome Center to pick up an informational brochure.



Winter Break at Mt. Washington Baptist Day Care

Day Care kids enjoyed a trip to Entertainment Junction during the school-agers' Winter Break!



Endlessly Fascinating

I've found an interesting pattern through the years concerning my study of God's Word. I'll be reading through some part of Scripture, for my personal devotions or to prepare for a sermon. As I begin, I wonder if there's anything new to learn. Then, when I take a closer look, and when I allow God to be involved with me in the study, it turns out that there is so much more to see than I originally thought. Gold waiting to be refined. Lessons there for the taking. Interesting contemplation on new subjects.

We see from a unique perspective at each stage in our life. And the Bible can speak to us in every stage and in all of our viewpoints. That's why there's always something there for us in reading and studying the Bible, even if we come to the Word thinking we've read it all. At some points in life we are more (or less) teachable. At times we listen closely to hear words about love, or comfort, or challenge, or leadership...whatever we need at that moment.

God actually does speak to us. And our hearts hunger for that word from God. We hear His voice in the words of the Bible, in the process of prayer and listening, and as we fellowship with Christians. Isn't that exciting, to know there is a word from God for each of us? I have come to love those moments in my studies when I find that God is there, waiting in the text for me to notice.

I hope you are joining us on our 90-day journey through the New Testament. If you have, you are noticing God, right? If you have not, perhaps it would be a great Lenten practice to jump into the schedule and read from now to Easter.

Coming at this from a different angle, do you have any favorite authors or favorite books? I have read *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* by Richard Bach a dozen times. *The Practice of the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence (a monk in the 17th century) gets a good reread every few years. Both short books that point out ideas that encourage me onward. So if Jesus is one of our favorite people, wouldn't it be good to read and reread the book about him, and the early church? It has the possibility to encourage, push us forward in our faith, and put us in the presence of the Almighty.



Be encouraged this lent,

Draw closer to Jesus,

Savor his love for you,

Pastor Karen Johnson,
Interim Pastor

Weekly Schedule

Sundays

9:00 a.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal
10:00 a.m. Worship Service & Children's Church
(in-person and streaming live on Facebook)

Wednesdays

6:00 p.m. Virtual Bible Study & Prayer Meeting
(streaming live on Facebook)

Coming Up in February . . .

- * 90-Day New Testament Challenge – We invite you to join your church family in reading through the New Testament in the first 90 days of the New Year. A schedule of readings may be found at the Welcome Center and posted on our Facebook page. If you follow the schedule, you will be finishing your final reading in Revelation just in time for the celebration of Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday, which falls on March 31, 2024. Feel free to jump in now, even if you've missed the first few weeks' reading!

. . . and Later

- * Saturday, March 23 – Easter Egg Hunt
- * Thursday, March 28 – Maundy Thursday Service
- * Sunday, March 31 – Easter Sunday

A Caring Place Needs Winter Clothing

A Caring Place, a pregnancy care center located at 4446 Mt. Carmel Tobasco Road, Cincinnati, OH 45245, has a great need for the following sizes in children's winter clothing: Boys – 12 months, 3T, and 10/12; and Girls – 12 months and 3T. They are accepting new OR gently used and clean clothing. In 2023 A Caring Place had over 5,000 visits for material assistance. Many families are in need. If you can help, contact Shawna Dunn by email (shawna@acaringplace.org) or by phone (513-753-4357).

ABCUSA Announces New Mission-Oriented Enewsletter

Check out the first edition of *United Mission Matters*, a new quarterly enewsletter that will include a wealth of resources, inspiring stories, and insights into how churches throughout the United States are dedicated to instructing and engaging with their communities to align with Jesus' mission. You may find it by going to abc-usa.org then clicking on the United Mission Toolkit link - or ask Darby to forward you the link by email.



Thanks, Barb!

On Sunday, January 28, we showed our gratitude to Barb Wagner for her many years of service to our church. Through her work as Administrative Assistant and through her compassionate, joyful heart, Barb has been a blessing to all of us!



Music

February, besides being the month of love for Valentine's Day, is this year the start of the season of Lent, that Christian time of the year when we focus on the journey of Jesus Christ to the cross at Calvary. We reflect on His sacrifice which ultimately led to the betrayal, the trial, and then His death during these weeks. The music tends to be more reflective and somber too, until Resurrection Sunday when we break out in joy to celebrate His resurrection. On Maundy Thursday we will remember that supper with a service which will include a drama. During this season of Lent we will focus on prayer as we have done in the past, but this year we will visit the Wailing Wall in our focus.

The Wailing Wall is in the old city part of Jerusalem and is really known as the Western Wall. It takes its name of Wailing Wall from the people as they gather at the base of it and cry or wail. There is also a tradition or thought that the wall itself weeps



or has a flow of fluid like tears from the blocks of stones that make up the Wall. Supposedly the last time this occurred was in 1940. The Western Wall is considered the holiest of places in the Jewish religion. The Old City of

Jerusalem has been destroyed or rebuilt nine times over the centuries. The Wall is the only physical structure that has survived all this destruction. Here is where our prayers come in. For centuries people have written their prayer requests on pieces of paper and inserted them into the cracks between the stones of the Wall and reflect on them as they insert the paper. In Jerusalem, two times a year the papers are removed and then buried on the Mount of Olives which is nearby. So as we prepare and reflect on the love Christ had for us that led Him to become the sacrifice for our sins, we will write our prayers down and insert them between the cracks of the wall which is being built in the sanctuary for us. My prayer is that we each use these weeks of prayer and reflection to focus and grow closer to God and our Savior.

Blessings!

Rev. Jim Cagle, Minister of Music

Missions

An Update from the Osterbrocks

The new semester begins at Sabah Theological Seminary this coming week. Aaron will be teaching a class on The Life and Teachings of Jesus as well as an Old and New Testament survey class for the short-term mission program at STS. He's looking forward to both opportunities and has been working hard to prepare his lectures. . . . Aaron has also taken up invitations to serve the ABC Ohio community through teaching an OT Survey course for the Ohio Leadership Academy and an OT Survey: Genesis through Esther course for the Urban Leadership Academy. Both focus on training and equipping church leaders and keen laypeople within ABC Ohio churches. Please pray for him as he prepares for and teaches these courses, that God would use him to encourage and strengthen the church both here and in Malaysia and the SE Asian region.

Aaron also heard back from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary last week that he has moved through to the next stage of the application process for his Ph.D. in Biblical Theology (aiming to start in the fall semester 2024). He will take three two-hour exams, on Biblical Theology, Greek, and Hebrew, on February 23, as well as have an online interview that afternoon. Please pray for his study and prep for these exams.

Meanwhile, on the home front, we have exciting news to share. We praise and thank God for the safe birth of Elijah Zeng Wei Asher Osterbrock, born on January 11, 2024. Elijah means "Yahweh is my God," Zeng Wei means "adds comfort," and Asher means "happy/blessed."

Grace and peace,

*Aaron, Valerie,
Theophilus,
Anastasia,
Azariah, Micah,
Josiah & Elijah
Osterbrock*



A Family in Ministry

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ABCUSA Ministries Combine to Support Women, Girls

Introducing **Hope for Her**, a new collaborative initiative forged between International Ministries (IM) and American Baptist Women's Ministries (ABWM). This effort aims to bolster support for women and girls through the various ministries of IM and ABWM. Launched at the beginning of 2024, this initiative will unite efforts to uplift and empower women across the globe.



Hope for Her seeks to illuminate the reality of God's promise in Jeremiah 29:11 of "a hope and a future" for women and girls in the United States, Puerto Rico, and abroad. All contributions made through the **Hope for Her** initiative will directly support ministries for women and girls through IM and ABWM.

"We are excited about the possibilities for our combined efforts and even more we are filled with Christian hope and optimism about the witness of our collaboration and fellowship," says Rev. Dr. Reid Trulson, Acting Executive Director of IM. "We look forward to a bright future of collaboration through this initiative and the impact it will have on women and girls across the globe through the work God is already doing in the ministries of IM and ABWM."

"We are pleased that ABWM and IM are aligned in this initiative," Rev. Dr. Gina Jacobs-Strain, executive director of ABWM, adds. "Together we will continue to engage and empower women and girls. Hope for Her provides a new ministry opportunity for advocacy and justice and invites us to live into Romans 15:13, trusting that we will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

Please visit abwomensministries.org/HopeForHer or internationalministries.org/HopeForHer to learn more about how you can make a difference in the lives of women and girls through hope-filled ministries. *(Excerpted from abc-usa.org.)*

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Our Staff and Leaders

Rev. Dr. Karen Johnson, Interim Pastor | Rev. Dr. Ken Atchison, Pastor Emeritus
Rev. Jim Cagle, Minister of Music | Dr. Jih-Ting Chen, Accompanist
Darby Atchison, Administrative Assistant
Todd Racer, Praise Band Leader | Tim Rechel, Tower Bells Director
Tammy Caldwell & Cody Taylor, Day Care Co-Directors
Luke Tiettmeyer, Maintenance