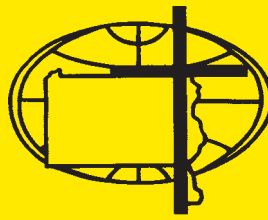


NOTES & NEWS, THOUGHTS & VIEWS



FOR ABCOPAD PASTORS FROM
EXECUTIVE MINISTER REV. FRANK FRISCHKORN

VOLUME 19, NUMBER 4

APRIL 2008

GREETINGS IN THE LORD!

The call was unexpected ... my niece from Virginia asked me to officiate at her wedding this month. As you can guess, officiating at weddings is no longer one of those joys in ministry that I get to do very often, so I'm looking forward to the opportunity. As I spoke with Tiffany on the phone though, I could hear the trepidation in her voice. When I handed the phone over to Carolyn (who also was 'tapped' to provide the music for the ceremony), she later shared with me that Tiffany at one point said to her, "Aunt Carolyn, I could just sit down and cry."

Now, if you didn't know better, you might scratch your head and wonder, why would this young woman be sounding so fearful in anticipation of this big day? Why would she feel like she wanted to cry, when you would think she would be jumping for JOY at the anticipation of what was to come?! One simple word — REALITY!

Suddenly, Tiffany was starting to see her wedding in a way that was very different from the pictures in *Modern Bride* magazine. This wasn't about some fairy tale to be acted out, but it was rather a huge, scary, unknown reality that was staring her in the face — she was going to be marrying Billy on April 19, and her life would never be the same again.

And she's right ... weddings are a "big deal." Commitment is serious

business. Partnership is "life-changing." And that's as it should be, isn't it? Partnership should matter — it should make a difference. Just like a wedding isn't just about having a party and dressing up, so a Partnership is more than just a 'word' ... it should make a difference in us, and in the world around us.

As a regional family, we have chosen, "The Power of Partnership" as the theme for our Biennial next October. The key focus of the Biennial will be how our ministry together in mission can make a difference for the cause of the Kingdom as we gather together in Altoona. One of the key mission outreach events that we believe God has called us to is a partnership with *Habitat for Humanity*® of Blair County in the construction of a house. This past week we took one more step to making that vision a reality as we shared the dream with the pastors of the Laurel Association, and then later held a joint meeting with all the churches of the Centre Baptist Association at FBC, Hollidaysburg. Joining us in the meetings were representatives from Habitat for Humanity of Blair County, and as we overviewed some of the timelines for the project (we hope to break ground in July), the costs (the projected home cost is \$80,000) as well as viewed pictures of the property on which the house will be built (see the Web site for the photos), all of us knew that this partnership was going to change our

lives, individually and corporately. As we closed the meeting in prayer, our project coordinator, Art Munson, encouraged us all to gather in a circle, holding hands to signify our unity in accepting the Lord's call to the partnership. Habitat for Humanity reps mingled with brothers and sisters from ABCOPAD, and all (and I mean ALL!) of us sought God's wisdom and strength, prayed for His Spirit to protect us as we worked together, and asked God to use us to extend the Kingdom into Blair County through our efforts in His Name. We closed the time of prayer by singing, "He Is LORD" ... and He is.

In 22 days, Tiffany will walk down the aisle and enter into a new life of partnership with Billy, when she says, "I do." My hope and prayer for you and your church family is that you, too, will say "I do", as we enter into partnership not only around the building of a home in Altoona, but also the building of His Kingdom throughout our Region. As I said before, weddings are a "big deal." Commitment is serious business. Partnership is "life-changing."

And that's as it should be, isn't it?

Anxious to see God move,

Frank

**REV. RICHARD
MCINTYRE –
NORTHEAST
AREA MINISTER
570-704-9301**



Anita J. Ambrose (*First Welsh, Plymouth*) shares this wonderful tale: “Two little girls that are in my congregation attended the Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service. The 6-year-old listened intently to the scripture readings, and at the end of the service turned to her mother and said, ‘I have a tear in my eye, do you? That was so sad.’ Her 4-year-old sister replied, ‘I know what they are talking about, except they used a lot of big words!’ Then on Easter Sunday the 6-year-old got up at 7 a.m. and ran into her parents’ room. Expecting her to ask if the Easter Bunny had come, she starts yelling ‘HE’S ALIVE! HE’S ALIVE! HE HAS RISEN!!!’ Kids sure are amazing!”

Margie McCarty (*South Montrose Methodist*) relates: “[Easter] was a wonderful day of praise and worship at South Montrose. Our Sunday School kids are always in charge of the Sunrise service. It is a great way to begin our celebration. Our Senior Choir and Drama ensemble presented the cantata, ‘The Passion of His Love’ during morning worship. We are all quite tired out, but still aglow from the celebration!”

The **East Smithfield Federated Church** (*Stan Gill*) held their Invite-A-Friend Day on Palm Sunday. Special things were planned for that service: the choir sang “I am not Ashamed” and three members performed a skit called “Who Wants to be a Billionaire” which led in to Pastor Stan’s sermon about seven “I am” declarations of Jesus in the gospel of John. Attendance was double that day and they rejoiced that so many folks responded to the invitations that were given. A fellowship meal was shared after the service. Finally, while children watched a video, the youth group hid Easter eggs for a hunt at 2 p.m. in which anyone from the community was invited to participate.

**REV. DALE R.
MILLER –
SOUTHEAST
AREA MINISTER
610-866-9710**



The Church Leadership Institute of the Southeast (CLI SE) is pleased to announce that they are receiving student enrollment for classes beginning Sept. 6, 2008! The first two courses offered will be Biblical Interpretation (Bob Stradling/FBC, Malvern, instructor) and Old Testament (Christopher Heisey-Terrell/Upland, instructor). Contact CLI SE at 610-256-4807, or CLISE@gmail.com, or Southeast Area Minister Dale Miller at 610-866-9710, or dmiller@abcopad.org. Please see the enclosed flyer for more information and look for additional materials about CLI at the regional Web site www.abcopad.org.

CLI is recognized by American Baptists regionally as an accepted model of study for persons desiring to be certified as lay ministers. After certification, you may pastor a church, be an associate youth or interim pastor, do supply preaching and/or generally work in your own church in a more experienced way. Graduates may register with American Baptist Personnel Services. This can facilitate the possibility of being called to a church ministry position. If called as a pastor, you will have the necessary recognition to perform weddings, and with the affirmation of the local church, may dedicate children, baptize, officiate at the Lord’s Supper, and conduct funerals. A Certified Lay Minister usually has the opportunity to do whatever an ordained person can do and should be well equipped to conduct quality ministry in the name of Christ. Is God calling you to grow? CLI has study opportunities for you to take individual courses, equip yourself for a specific ministry in your local church, or pursue ministry recognition!

Don’t Forget the Children and Poverty Network! Visit www.abcopad.org. Interested teachers and educators are encouraged to become a part of this significant ministry opportunity to care for and develop ministry with children who are at risk.

Pughtown Baptist (*Tim Schwartz*) in partnership with **Hatboro Baptist** (*Doug Stratton*) is looking forward to a joint mission trip to Ocean Springs, Miss., to continue in its Hurricane Katrina Relief Mission. The team has assembled a group of 33 people, representing 11 different churches (and some non-Christians) to finish working on the house they started building in Dec. 2007. The hope is to get the house as close to completion as possible, in order that the family can move in by June — 33 months after the storm. In order to raise money for the trip the team will hold a Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser on Saturday, April 12, at 5 p.m. at Pughtown. All proceeds will go towards the rebuilding efforts on the Gulf Coast. Pughtown is also looking forward to its upcoming Mother’s Day Community Outreach. They had established a tradition of giving a geranium to each woman of the congregation on Mother’s Day. A couple of years ago, they changed that tradition. On Saturday, May 10, the members of Pughtown will go door to door in the community, passing out more than 250 flowers to women and mothers and to the local nursing home. They have found it a great way to lay groundwork for relationship building between the church and the community and also to bless the women of the community.

Middletown, Media (*Jeff Evans*) would like to share another testimony of healing through their outreach ministry, The Healing Rooms of Delaware County: “A gentleman came in with ongoing tendonitis of the left elbow that had persisted for several months. Within two days of being prayed over, the pain and inflammation completely left his elbow and arm ... two months later the tendonitis has not returned. Praise the Lord.”

Springfield Baptist (*Wylie Johnson*) is pleased to share that they extended a call to Mr. Bob Devalt to serve as their youth pastor, effective March. Springfield has had a highly effective youth ministry program and after an extensive search are pleased to welcome Bob and his wife, Dena, to their church family. Springfield has been an active part of the ABCOPAD Student Ministry Network. Please extend your welcome and prayers to Bob and Dena as they begin their ministry in Springfield.

Upland Baptist (*Brenda Shaw*) is pleased to celebrate the 100th birthday of one its long time and faithful members, Mrs. Dorothy E. Crooks. Mrs. Crooks celebrated her 100th birthday on Friday, March 28. The church family honored her with a "card shower" recognizing this centennial birthday. A special birthday party was held on Saturday, March 29, with family and friends. Mrs. Crooks has been an active member of the Upland congregation and other ministries like ABW since 1925. Happy 100th Birthday Dorothy! The church also celebrates with six people who were baptized on Sunday, March 30. Praise the Lord!

REV. MARK MAHSEKIAN-SMITH – CENTRAL AREA MINISTER 570-435-2001



Here's what students and adults are saying about Reunion 2008:

Tim from Bethlehem: "REUNION IS AWESOME!"

Robert from Johnsonburg: "First time here! My hope is to bring more youth here next time!"

Mark from Bethlehem: "GO ABCOPAD!! WOO HOO!! ... GO JESUS!!"

Joy from Linesville: "I had a great time and I want to come back next year."

Laura from Springfield: "This was the best day I had because of you."

No doubt many of you have watched Ty Pennington and his team on Extreme Home Makeovers® transform a dilapidated old house into an incredible new home. Every Sunday night, viewers get to watch a renovation project move at lightning speed as a home is demolished and rebuilt in under a week. The theme of Reunion 2008 was Renovation. Students and adult leaders from all over the Region gathered at FBC, Milton to be challenged by Darrell Pearson, youth ministries director at Eastern University. Pearson began the weekend by comparing our lives to a house. Like a house that has suffered decay, each of us has areas of our lives that are damaged or rotten due to sin that need to be renovated. Through the

weekend, Darrell shared how Jesus wants to help us rebuild our lives to make them healthy and vital. Darrell did an excellent job challenging everyone to begin the renovation process in our own lives.

Along with Dr. Pearson, the Student Drama Team from Royersford Baptist Church provided an excellent parallel message that helped make the overall theme of the weekend even more real.

If you felt ground tremors between March 7 and 9, it might have been caused by the nearly 300 students rocking the church gym to the sounds of *Detour 180* and *Rapture Ruckus*. *Detour 180*, a Christian band from New Zealand provided both praise and worship music throughout the weekend along with an incredible concert Saturday night. Joining *Detour 180* was *Rapture Ruckus* (a.k.a. Brad) who had a powerful message shared via rap.

ABCOPAD Student Ministries Coordinator Rev. Eric Kraihanzel and his team did an outstanding job not only providing a dynamic speaker and incredible music, but also offering students opportunities for learning and fun. Breakout study groups looked at a varied of topics on Saturday morning and students had Saturday afternoon to bowl, swim and participate in numerous activities available in the area.

Clearly the event was a great success. Special thanks go out to the many churches that donated the equipment, facility, leadership, time and other resources that helped make the event possible. With over 17 churches participating in the event, and from the comments made by students, Reunion 2008 was a great gathering of ABCOPAD students for 2008. Be on the watch for the next Reunion event scheduled for 2009!

Stan Johnson (*Liberty Baptist*) shares: "On February 17 we were blessed by baptizing eight individuals during our morning service. There were a total of 12 individuals who received the Right Hand of Fellowship to join Liberty Baptist Church that day. In our Maundy Thursday service, we presented a skit with me playing Caiaphas the Chief Priest. The skit was patterned after a Lenten series entitled Christ On Trial. Caiaphas presented his case against Jesus to the jury (the congregation). Before and after the

skit, our choir sang pieces from an Easter Cantata centering around the crucifixion.

"On Easter morning, a moving drama was presented entitled "Everything." In short, this drama began with a girl excited about her walk with Christ. But after four demonic attacks through "friends," she felt lost and distant from Jesus. Then Satan himself nearly convinces her she is worthless and tries to get her to end it all. Realizing her situation she struggles to get back to Jesus, but the demons wrestle to keep her away. In the end the Risen Christ is triumphant. The girl is rescued and brought back from the brink of disaster. It was a powerful drama choreographed after the song "Everything" by *Lifehouse*."

On Sunday, March 16, **White Hall Baptist** voted to extend a call to *Rev. Bob Ayars* to be the pastor of their church. This comes following the retirement of Pastor Don Miller at the beginning of the New Year. Bob accepted the call and will begin on Thursday, May 1.

Rev. Cory Hartman (*FBC, Hollidaysburg*) writes: "FBC, Hollidaysburg baptized six people into Christ and into His church on Easter Sunday. When [I] then invited people to come forward to repent and believe in Christ, a father and son accepted. Then, on an invitation to come forward to commit to allow Jesus to be Lord of *all* of their lives and not just parts of them, about a dozen more people came forward. According to some long-time members of First Baptist, a response of that magnitude to an invitation hasn't been seen in this church for many years. How thrilling it is to see God work!"

On Sunday, March 16, the **Hughesville Baptist Church** (Tom Brokaw) held their annual "Easter" dinner and egg hunt. After the worship service, the people gathered in the Family Activity Center for a delicious potluck dinner, with the ham provided by the Social Committee. Then the children, from birth through grade 6, gathered downstairs for their own Easter egg hunt. The children were joined by the Easter Bunny himself!

The **Centre Association** will hold its annual spring meeting on Sunday, May 4, at the First Regular Baptist Church in Huntingdon. The gathering will begin at 4 p.m. Everyone from the Centre

Association is welcome. Central Area Minister Rev. Mark Mahserjian-Smith will be bringing a message. There will also be an opportunity for questions and answers regarding the ABCOPAD Biennial and Habitat For Humanity Mission Project — both taking place within the Association. The meeting promises to be exciting as we look at upcoming ministry opportunities.

The **Northumberland Baptist Association** will gather on Tuesday, April 29, at the Clinton Baptist Church in Montgomery for its spring business meeting. The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. Included on the agenda will be an opportunity to discuss the recent gift given to the association by the Jersey Shore Baptist Church. A restricted fund of \$51,500 has been given to the Northumberland Association to benefit youth and camping as well as music programming and scholarships. Association clergy and delegates from Association churches are encouraged to attend.

Rev. Larry Waltz and Rev. Gwen Bernstine (*FBC, Williamsport*) have announced their intent to retire from pastoral leadership by the end of 2008. They are celebrating with the congregation the stabilization and growth of the church over the last seven years as 48 new members have been added, spiritual maturity is the norm as they model their lives after Jesus, communication has been facilitated, financial stability has increased, and their public witness and mission outreach has increased. Larry and Gwen have enjoyed helping the congregation get back on their feet and renew their American Baptist witness in the community. They believe it is now time for First Baptist to look to new pastoral leadership to take them to an even brighter future.

FBC, York (*Tim Munson*) will be holding church revival meetings, April 9 – 13. In addition, the view from the pulpit is looking a bit different recently. Now, as Pastor Tim looks over the church family, Youth Leader Vera Krall's hair sends a "mixed message" ... it's pink, teal, orange, blue and purple — on purpose! Vera challenged the youth at the church by saying if all of the active members of the group attended the recent Renovation Youth event held at Milton, that she

would have her hair professionally colored with the color scheme of their choice. Vera lost, but the ministry of the church certainly WON as the youth had a tremendous time at Milton with other youth from around the region! The church also had a special time of "Hymn Caroling," (going to visit their shut-ins, as well as other folks in the community). Their feeling was, why is it that we think we can only Carol at Christmastime?!

FBC, Lancaster (*Rick Hill*) remembered the agony of the Cross on Good Friday by participating in a community Cross Walk, where participants meditated on the last words of Christ as they walked through the community of Lancaster.

The members and friends of **West Shore, Camp Hill** (*Gary Bruland*) experienced a deeply moving Maundy Thursday service. Entitled, "I was There When They Crucified my Lord," the service featured the ministry of the church's Drama Team and Senior Choir, with the service being marked by reflections of those who saw Jesus die that day on Calvary, along with accompanying special music to emphasize the theme. Each participant received a cut nail upon entering the church for worship. This nail was used to represent their sin that nailed Christ to the Cross. At the conclusion of the service, the worshippers were invited to come to the "foot of the Cross" and leave their sin before sharing in a time around the Lord's Table.

REV. DONALD GIRDWOOD – NORTHWEST AREA MINISTER 814-398-8393



Forty-three church leaders, both lay and clergy, participated in a stewardship seminar sponsored by the **Oil Creek Association** Christian Education committee. The event was held at FBC, Meadville so that all churches in the NW Area could participate. Rev. Frank Frischkorn was the seminar instructor. The biblical and theological understanding of stewardship was reviewed and the critical task of growing healthy disciples was underscored. Many resources on the subject were shared,

and the Saturday morning event was a good model for sharing resources across association boundaries.

The **immigration office of Erie County** was notified that several Karen families escaping the brutality of the nation of Burma would be arriving in Erie at the beginning of April. The Oil Creek Association churches have been preparing for such an eventuality, but did not expect that it would happen so soon. The expectation is that other congregations throughout the NW Area will want to participate in this critical ministry to provide hospitality to our Baptist cousins of Burma.

Rev. George Hall (*Franklin Union, Worthington*) concluded his ministry there on March 31. He and Ruth are looking forward to visiting their son and daughter overseas, both of whom are in missionary service, and then will remain in the Worthington area. Well done, George! Enjoy good health and may you know of God's blessing on your many years of pastoral ministry.

Northwest Area Minister Don Girdwood is pleased to welcome a new 1-year-old grandson this month. Jameson was adopted by Brian and Courtney Girdwood and has joined his new siblings in Port Saint Lucie, Fla. There was quite a scene at the Orlando airport on March 28, when he arrived, complete with kisses and tears of joy among family and curious onlookers in the airport terminal.

REV. JIM OLDHAM – PITTSBURGH AND SOUTHWEST INTERIM AREA MINISTER 412-687-3940



It was a pleasure to share parts of Holy Week with three different churches. I received my Palm Sunday palms from **West Newton** (*Glenn Richardson*); I attended a very moving Tenebrae Service on Maundy Thursday at **First Coraopolis** (*Mark Egli*); and I helped carry the cross as part of the Good Friday midday service at **First Pittsburgh**, (*Gary Denning*). I pray that every congregation's experience of Resurrection Sunday was a meaningful and joyous

one. As has been widely noted, this year we observed the earliest Easter (March 23) that any of us, or our children, or even our grandchildren yet unborn will ever experience. Beyond the anomalies of the dating of Easter Sunday, I hope that we will all experience lots of “early Easter experiences” this year when the spiritual reality of victory over sin and death, and new life in Christ allow us to face, persevere and ultimately overcome the Gethsemane and Calvary times and circumstances of our lives.

We have lots of **important events coming up in the month of April**. Let me call your attention to just a few:

1. *Tuesday, April 8* – The PBA Board of Directors will hold one of its two scheduled meetings for the year at Mt. Lebanon Baptist Church at 7 p.m. This is a vital “connecting point” in our common life, as we check in on the progress of our various activities and also take a first look at the proposed revised PBA By-Laws.
2. *Thursday, April 10* – The second of our bi-monthly PBA Pastors Gatherings will be held at Penn Hills Baptist Church at 7 p.m. We will have some light refreshments, a short agenda, and a time of fellowship and conversation about our common ministries. All PBA clergy are welcome to this gathering which has been scheduled in the evening to provide for the special circumstances of those pastors among us who cannot attend daytime clergy meetings.
3. *Sunday, April 13* – Laurel Association Certification Council for Brad Hogue at the Blairsville Baptist Church at 3 p.m.
4. *Sunday, April 20* – The Installation Service for Rev. David McFarlane at McKees Rock Baptist Church. This is a great opportunity to welcome a new pastor into our midst and to support this historic church as it enters into a new phase of its life and ministry.
5. We also look forward to welcoming ABC International Missionary Virgil Nelson to visit in our area and speak

in a number of the churches this month.

I want to highlight some great **Continuing Education opportunities** available to us in the immediate future:

1. *Disaster Chaplain/Spiritual Leadership Training* will be offered as a one-day event on Tuesday, April 15 at Seven Springs Resort, Champion, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Individuals who complete the full training and receive Act 33 and Act 34 clearances will be certified to respond in the event of a disaster. Best of all this training is FREE! To register contact Kim Hall at 412-224-1249.
2. *“A New Look at Old Calvin”* will be offered as a four-week Monday morning course offering beginning April 7 and continuing through April 28 at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. This course is led by Dr. Charles B. Partee, costs \$60, and offers .8 CEUs. “No name in church history has been so much loved and hated, admired and abhorred, praised and blamed, blessed and cursed, as that of John Calvin.” It’s a great time to refresh our insights into this Reformation theologian as we prepare for the observance of the 500th Anniversary of his birth in 2009. Call 412-441-3304, ext. 2196 to register.
3. *“Fanning the Flame” National Pastors Conference* will be offered April 22 through April 25 at the Green Lake Conference Center, Green Lake, Wis. This event is being co-sponsored by ABCOPAD and 12 other ABC regions and includes three days of renewal, encouragement and practical help for pastors in the areas of congregational health, vitality and mission fruitfulness. The cost, which includes program, meals and lodging, is \$279 for double occupancy, \$399 for single occupancy. If you’ve been waiting until the last minute to decide if you are going to participate, let me encourage you to do so. Having been part of the planning process, I believe I can assure you that this event will truly be worth the time, funds and effort that you will devote to it. CEUs will be provided and

special \$300 “Cultivating New Life” continuing education grants are available from ABC National Ministries to help facilitate your participation. If you’d rather not fly or drive on your own, ABCOPAD even has a chartered bus to whisk you to and from Green Lake in complete comfort. Check out the ABCOPAD Web site for the complete details on registering for the conference and the bus. It’s not too late but the time to act is now! I look forward to meeting lots of you at FTF and sharing a great time of fellowship and inspiration together.

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

Don’t forget to check out our Web site often at www.abcopad.org!

WHAT IS LOVE?

Love is like a little old woman and a little old man who are still friends even after they know each other so well.

—Tommy, age 6

MAY 2008 DEADLINE

Items to be included in the May issue of Notes & News need to arrive by **Friday, May 9**.

Please send all material to Carol Bicking.

Regular mail:

ABCOPAD
106 Revere Lane
Coatesville, PA 19320-1036

E-mail:

CAB2644@aol.com

Phone:

800-358-6999

Fax:

610-466-2013

Thank you!

Donna L. Schneff
Designer/Editor
dtp2go@aol.com