



# The Impression

“Equip the People of God to Impact the World for Christ”

Better  
Together

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## “God’s Faithfulness Fuels Our Confidence!”

“being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus,” (Philippians 1:6).

This became my “life verse” several years ago as I struggled with my responsibilities as a local pastor, husband, and father. I wasn’t the man that I hoped to be as a follower of Christ.

Yes, the old bad habits of my pre-Christ years had become something of the past, but I still struggled at times with a less than Christ-like attitude. There were too many lean days when it came to the fruit of the Spirit. At times, the tree seemed pretty barren.

God was graciously blessing the ministry, but sometimes I found myself so busy doing the work of the Lord, that I didn’t find time to spend with the Lord, which always leads to spiritual barrenness and a bad attitude.

But, then the Holy Spirit pointed me in the direction of this verse of encouragement. God wasn’t done with me, He wouldn’t abandon me, and He would complete His work in me. Well, I’m still a work in progress ... just ask my wife Kathy! She has graciously walked in life and ministry with me for 32 years. I’ve apologized to her and the kids so many times over the years.

We live and minister in challenging times. The world and church have changed so much in the nearly 40 years that I’ve been in ministry. When I started in ministry, the church was at the center of community, clergy were admired and respected, and the majority of people, at least said they went to church. Today, the majority of Americans, do not attend worship and participate in a local church.

Fewer people are going to church. Fewer people are accepting the call into pastoral ministry. Many churches are struggling. Christian universities are struggling. Seminaries are struggling, but GOD IS NOT DONE WITH US YET! God’s mission to a lost and dying world hasn’t changed, but our strategies must change and we must relearn how to work together toward the common goals of reaching the lost and making disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). May the Holy Spirit blow upon us with a fresh wind from God. Don’t give up, because God hasn’t abandoned you or His church.

We are Better Together!

Blessings,  
Mark Click

# Northwest Area

Greetings to All from the Northwest Region. It is because of God's grace and Mercy that He has allowed us to continue on in His name. Our theme from Philippians 1:6 states that "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." We are working from the theme "God's Faithfulness Fuels our Confidence" and we are fulfilling our charge of building healthy Churches to impact the world for Christ. ~ Rev. Dr. James Willis Sr.



From the Mohican Association, our hearts are still saddened by the Lord calling our faithful servant ARM Rev. David Sedziol home. The Association is still functioning well with Rev. Marvin Haught being the appointed ARM for this area.



Marion Association hosted the ABC-OHIO Leadership Conference on April 26, 2025 at the Fairpark Baptist Church under the Leadership of Rev. David Rush as Moderator and Pastor. The Marion Association ordained Eric Leday on March 30, 2025 at the First Baptist Church under the Leadership of Rev. Dr. Roger Morris. The Marion Association has Rev. Dr. Dennis Scholtz as the ARM for Pastoral Care.



The Northwestern Association is still working hard to pull other Churches that belong to the Association but, have not been participating. Rev. Andrew Shields serves as the ARM for the Association. We are still praising God for the Miricale Child, Sister Stephanie Shields, wife of our ARM, Rev. Andrew Shields.



The Northcentral Association has been meeting on a Quarterly Basis, and we show the last meeting on February 21st 2025, with Retired Executive Minister Rev. Jane Gibbons in attendance, along with Retired Pastor Chris Thomas and wife of the Diamond Hills Baptist Church of Mansfield. Rev. Dr. Dean Davidson is the ARM for this Association.



Toledo Area American Baptist Association has had a lot going on this quarter. I experienced the death of my wife's aunt, Mildred Norman which she was care giver over, my mother, Loree Willis in Mississippi, who was 98 years old, along with my brother-in-law, Luther Odoms in Richmond Virginia, all in two months. Rev. Ruby Radford's (ARM for TAABA) sister was called home to be with the Lord in February. Rev. Benjiman Green suffered with a stroke near the end of the year 2024 and is now back in his pulpit at the Church of the New Covenant. From The Church of the New Covenant, Officer Earl Barry was honored as a retired police officer for his work on SAFETY CITY with our youth. TAABA now has a new Moderator, Sister Danna Clifford, the daughter of Rev. Ruby Radford. St. Paul Baptist Church held their Annual Men's Day on Sunday March 9th, 2025 and it was a great celebration.



# Northwest Area - Continued



Picture of Rev. Mark Click being at the Celebration of Life of my mother, Loree Willis, in Grenada Miss

## Regional Office



With heavy hearts we want to share that Core Services Administrator Leslie Hoskinson's husband Steve lost his battle with cancer on 4/6/2025. Our love and prayers of peace go out to our dear Leslie.

# Northeast Area



A great day of celebrating the ministry of Rev. Burl Jernigan. After 35 years in total and 14 at First Baptist Church of Girard, he has retired from full-time pastoral ministry. ABC-Ohio thanks you Pastor Burl. Enjoy and embrace the next chapter of your life.

## SOARING TOGETHER A Church Fellowship Event

Sunday, September 7 - 8-11am  
at MAPS Air Museum  
2260 International Parkway  
North Canton, OH 44720

Join the Akron Area Association of American Baptist Churches (AAA/ABC) in a time of worship, singing and learning as we come together to share about our individual ministries and learn about ABC ministries in our area.

Rev. Mark Click, Executive Minister of ABC/Ohio will share a message.

8-8:30am - each church set-up a table to share their ministries  
8:30-10am - Continental breakfast, view tables, meet friends  
10-11am - Worship Service  
11-11:30am - take down tables

We look forward to having all AAA/ABC churches participate.

### MORE INFORMATION :

330-494-7171

[WWW.AAA-ABC.COM](http://WWW.AAA-ABC.COM)



Rev. Mark Click and Rev. Kevin Thomas conducted a memorial service for Rev. Arthur (Art) Wells who faithfully served the Mount Moriah Baptist Church of the Zoar Association. Our deepest condolences to his family and the church. Even though there are no words to ease your pain, know that you are in our prayers.

# Southwest Area

## The Dynamic Growth of the Southwest Region: A Community in Motion

The Southwest Region continues to demonstrate resilience, growth, and dedication to leadership development. Through pastoral transitions, leadership training, and community engagement, churches and associations are actively fostering vibrant and diverse environments. This article highlights key updates within the region, showcasing the ongoing commitment to leadership and community building.

### Pastoral Transitions: New Leaders Taking the Helm

In recent months, several churches in the Southwest Region have embarked on pastoral searches, aiming to find visionary leaders to guide their congregations. First Baptist Hillsboro in Hillsboro and Spinning Road Baptist Church in Dayton are actively seeking pastors who can inspire growth and spiritual renewal. The process of selecting new pastoral leaders reflects the commitment of these churches to maintain strong, guiding leadership. Simultaneously, the region has welcomed new pastors to several congregations. Dr. Kevin Dudley has been installed at Shiloh Baptist Church in Columbus, Rev. Chris Beecher at First Baptist Hamilton, and Rev. Dale West at Crossway Community Church in Harrison. These new leaders bring fresh energy and insight, fostering both continuity and innovation in their respective ministries.

### Leadership Development: Ohio Leadership Academy (OLA)

The Ohio Leadership Academy (OLA) continues to play a vital role in equipping leaders with the skills needed for effective ministry. As classes conclude on May 10th, the academy celebrates the progress of its seven enrolled students. A significant upcoming event is the summer seminar on August 9th at Brandon Baptist Church, where thought-provoking sessions will inspire ongoing leadership growth. Dr. Fallon is also working diligently to develop new promotional material, ensuring the academy's continued impact on emerging leaders.

### Association News: Collaboration and Community Engagement

Across the region, associations are actively fostering community spirit and leadership development. A noteworthy event was the workshop conducted by Rev. Mark Eaton and Dr. Kevin Hairston on Leadership Transition & Succession Planning in Marion, Ohio. As the workshop resonated with local leaders, plans for similar sessions in Marietta and St. Paris, Ohio, are underway, reflecting the region's commitment to practical ministry training. The Western Baptist Association remains active, with the American Baptist Women (ABW) hosting a successful spring rally and planning another gathering in July. In Columbus, the Columbus Baptist Association celebrated the installation of Pastor Lawrence Harper as president and hosted the Seven Last Words service at Trinity Baptist Church. Moreover, Shiloh Baptist Church has made strides in community development by opening new condominium-style apartments for tenants.

The Southwest Region's continued focus on leadership, pastoral care, and community outreach is a testament to its commitment to growth and inclusion. As churches welcome new leaders and associations expand educational opportunities, the region is well-positioned to face future challenges with faith and unity. Through collaborative efforts and an unwavering commitment to community, the Southwest Region remains a beacon of progress and spiritual vitality.



# Southeast Area

“Southeast Ohio Pastor & Church spotlight”  
Article by Rev. Mark Eaton SE Region Minister

As American Baptist Churches of Ohio approach our 200th anniversary, I want to shine a spotlight in this and future newsletter articles on some of the many faithful pastors and congregations that have shared the Gospel of Jesus Christ in some of our more rural communities.

The spotlight in this edition shines on Rev. David Michael and the currently yoked congregations of Center Valley Baptist Church and Gravel Hill Baptist Church which he serves. These churches are located just off the Ohio River Scenic Byway which runs parallel to the beautiful river that forms the border between Ohio and West Virginia.



Center Valley Baptist Church was started in 1871 as a church plant of Matamoras Baptist to bring together the nearby communities of Matamoras and Newport and provide a more convenient central meeting location. After holding meetings in the Leith Run area throughout the 1870s, the present Center Valley Church (so named because it was centrally located between Newport and Matamoras) was constructed in the early 1880s and was dedicated in 1884.

Gravel Hill Baptist Church was started in 1893 as a church plant from a Baptist church across the river in Sistersville, WV.

Rev. Michael began serving as the pastor of Center Valley in 2009 and Gravel Hill in 2013. He travels between the churches, faithfully preaching and teaching the Word of God for weekly services and being involved in their ministry programs and outreach activities.



Like many of our churches in Southeast Ohio, both Gravel Hill and Center Valley carry with them a rich history and legacy of Christian faith that forms the fabric of our culture along the river. Center Valley doesn't have a baptistry, so they still use the Ohio River for baptisms when appropriate. When Gravel Hill held a baptism last year in their church, the baptismal heater failed. Though the water was frigid, the baptism still occurred and through that, a visitor who came to witness the event was blessed and moved to donate seven hundred dollars to purchase a new baptistry heater!

As both churches share a community area service overlap, they face similar evangelistic challenges. However, each church has different gift and resource mixes in addition to unique administrative and operational cultures. This leads to a difference in solutions to similar challenges. Each church is blessed to be financially solvent, which is a testimony to God's faithful provision over 100 years in both churches.

Prior to the pandemic, both congregations were active with various evangelistic and community outreach programs. They combined their efforts to do outreach events such as providing meals to underprivileged community members at Thanksgiving as well as worldwide outreach through the Operation Christmas Child Shoebox ministry with Samaritan's Purse.

Unfortunately, during the pandemic, both churches experienced heavy losses with each congregation having members age out and several succumbing to the virus. Their communities also changed dramatically, with greater resistance to the historical methods of evangelism used by both churches. The loss of members necessitated a change in methodologies since key providers/workers were no longer available in the congregations.

Rev. Michael says that from a pastoral perspective, while evangelism remains a high priority, spiritual maturity has become the principal focus of his preaching and teaching. In the past, church members tended to rely more on an evangelistic "event" or "program". The goal now is to prepare people who are spiritually mature and confident to evangelize personally in the new environment of the communities. Pastor David comments, "One of our largest concerns is that people in our local communities aren't as willing to risk being disappointed. Invitations to attend a worship service or program event have been met with increasing skepticism and apathy."

# Southeast Area- Continued

Pastor Michael is also currently involved in exploring online opportunities that will make it easier for those in the community to get to know the people of each congregation and hopefully willing to participate. New steps are being taken to utilize technology that provides interaction with people in the community. Like many churches, they are exploring online services and the use of RightNow Media which ABC Ohio has partnered with to expand our Christian Education and Evangelism ministry through our associations.

We are grateful for the many years and ongoing service that Rev. Michael and his wife Dawn have given for Christ's Kingdom Work through ABC Ohio!

## Revitalization in unexpected places! Ark Spring Baptist Church – Angie Stillion

In a little secluded stretch of state route 284 in the far southeastern corner of Muskingum County, sits a majestic white country church where a miracle is happening. Ark Spring Baptist church was built in 1891 and over the years has had its share of joys, as well as hardship.



This church is near and dear to my heart, as many of my ancestors have passed through its doors and are buried in the surrounding cemetery. A flourishing congregation was once nearly wiped out by nearby strip mining, taking many members of the township far away from this country citadel. But yet, through the years it has survived. Some years have been plush, but many over the past two decades have been very lean.

Last fall my husband Don and I felt God was directing us to return to Ark Spring. We found a congregation of roughly 15 people give or take each Sunday. The pastor who had been there for several years had turned in his notice and it was his last Sunday to preach. I felt a little deflated. Why did God bring us to a church with what seemed like a very bleak future? Several guest pastors, including my husband, were scheduled during the interim. However, the next week I walked a new lovely couple with a 10 year old son. They sat in the back and were fairly quiet. They didn't stay quiet for long. After a few weeks and a big move of God, this was to be our new Pastor. This was as much a surprise to him as it was the congregation, I think!

Over the past year this church has gone from barely being able to keep the place heated in the winter, to actually making structural and cosmetic improvements. We have the beginnings of a praise team and youth group. We have roughly 15 children each week, where that was the entire congregation just last year. The sermon is posted weekly on our Facebook page and the videos have roughly 400 views on each one! God is moving!

Not to say there have not been bumps in the road, but for the most part, everyone has been able to work together and seek direction from our creator instead of leaning on our own understanding. We have young couples willing to put in the work to make this church home, as well as sage members willing to divulge their great wisdom to these newcomers. And I think we are all growing in our faith.

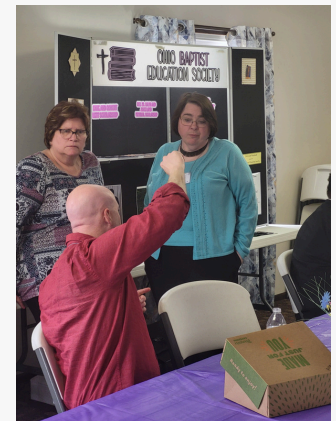
With obedient servants on board, God has breathed new life into these old oak walls and is restoring some very dry bones. Where we were once contemplating what this church would be when no one was left, now we are truly building an Ark! from the ground up and the inside out, we are building a refuge for the weary, a hospital for the broken, and a safety net for the fallen. After all, that is what we are called to do. Love one another, and they will come...no matter if it is all the way out to a little country church.

Blessings from the Ark!



THANK YOU TO THE MARION ASSOCIATION AND  
FAIRPARK BAPTIST CHURCH  
FOR HOSTING OHIO LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE  
FOR THE NORTHWEST REGION

Our Next Leadership Conference in the Southwest Area August 23rd  
more information to come on our website: [www.abc-ohio.org](http://www.abc-ohio.org)



# Education Updates:

**Summer Workshop**  
**Being a Healing Presence in a Broken World**

Amid the overwhelming challenges of mental health struggles, trauma, stress, and loss, our world is longing for the healing presence of Jesus. This seminar is an opportunity to equip yourself, and your church, with the knowledge, self-awareness, and practical skills needed to listen deeply and convey Jesus' healing love. Together, we will lay a powerful foundation to become the vessels of hope and healing, effectively sharing the life-changing gospel of Jesus to a world filled with pain, hurt, and darkness.



**Jeremy Spence**  
Pastor, FBC St. Paris and  
Licensed Counselor

**Date**  
09 August 2025

**Start At**  
9:30AM-3pm

**Brandon Baptist Church**  
13513 Sycamore Rd. Mt.  
Vernon, OH 43050

Registration Fee: \$25 (audit) or \$100 (OLA Credit)

**LEARN MORE**

740-587-0804  
abc-ohio.org

Special Thanks to ABC-Ohio Mohican Association for helping to sponsor this event!



## The Ohio Baptist Education Society announces a new endowed scholarship for 2025-2026.

The Bruce A. Luthanen Scholarship is designed to support students who are passionate about their faith and pursuing a career which incorporates STEM into a ministry setting.

This could include any STEM component in a local church, camp, or missions related field. The mission is to empower the next generation of leaders in the church to use aspects of STEM to share the gospel message and advance the Kingdom of God.

Inquiries regarding the application process for a Bruce A. Luthanen Scholarship should be directed to:

OHIO BAPTIST EDUCATION SOCIETY  
136 North Galway Dr,  
Granville, OH 43023-9577

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