

Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist

Volume 35, Number 1

Spring 2020

Table of Contents

- 1 Empower Canceled
- 1 CDC needs help from churches
- 1 M-W goes digital
- 3 Leo Endel: Perspectives
- 3 Bill Tinsley: Reflections
- 4 Clint Calvert: Leadership
- 4 Na Herr: Intercultural
- 4 Autumn Wall: Fresh Ideas
- 5 Dave Wedekind: Disaster Relief
- 5 Steve Melvin: Partnership and Prayer
- 5 David Williams: Editorial
- 6 Good news from the associations
- 6 Calendar of events
- 7 NAMB spending changes
- 7 GuideStone statement
- 7 Southern Baptists organize
- 8 Pastors and Wives Retreat
- 9 Midwest Leadership Summit
- 10 Mission gifts from the churches
- 11 Mission gifts from the churches
- 12 Sign up for M-WB digital version

Coronavirus cancels Empower

David Williams
Editor

GREEN BAY, Wis. – It was a shock to me as it was to you to learn that Empower had been canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic.

I opened my phone and found the bulk email from Clint Calvert that was sent after my flight left Houston: “I am sorry to announce our decision to cancel Empower on the guidance of the state of Wisconsin Department of Health Services.”

The email explained that the decision to cancel came after Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers held an 11:30 a.m. press conference recommending that non-essential gatherings of 250 or more be canceled or postponed.

See **CANCELED** page 2



Rooms usually filled with people worshipping, learning, laughing, eating, and enjoying fellowship with one another were left empty this year as the COVID-19 pandemic forced the cancellation of MWBC's Empower conference.

CDC asks DR to solicit help from churches

ROCHESTER, Minn. – In a Mar. 13 conference call, officials at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) asked state convention disaster relief directors to solicit help from the churches in responding to the coronavirus pandemic.

“We have been asked to provide ‘wrap around services’ to those exposed

who are sheltering in place,” said Dave Wedekind, co-director of disaster relief for Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention.

Services churches could provide to persons in self-isolation at home include:

* Meal preparation from

See **CDC** page 2

M-W Baptist to stop print edition, go digital

ROCHESTER, Minn. – The Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist, quarterly news journal of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention, will cease printing with this edition.

The state paper will continue to publish but will be distributed by email and as a download from the MWBC website. Those who download or receive the PDF file of the paper will be able to view it on their computer, tablet or phone. They may also print out a paper copy if they desire.

All subscribers are urged to quickly sign up for the digital version at www.mwbc.org/news-paper. All that is needed is the subscriber's name and email address.

This final print edition is being published by the Arkansas Baptist, which is also printing its last edition this month.

“The Kentucky Western Recorder published our paper as a partnership edition for 24 years but ceased publication at the end of 2018,” said David Williams, MWBC editor. “We were excited that the Arkansas

Baptist was willing to take over the production and mailing of our paper beginning with our first edition in 2019. But now, after five quarterly issues, we are losing them as a partner also.

“As we considered options, the one that seemed most appealing was to move to a digital format, potentially saving thousands of dollars each year while speeding up delivery of the paper to our subscribers,” Williams said.

Leo Endel, MWBC

See **DIGITAL** page 2

CANCELED

continued from page one

There were 300 registered for Empower.

Since the governor's statement came as a recommendation rather than a mandate, it had to be considered carefully. Calvert conferred with Leo Endel, MWBC executive director, and other staff. Calls were made to Green Lake to determine financial obligation. Staff checked with MWBC's insurance company to determine

CDC

continued from page one

your church kitchen (food supplies to be determined)

* Delivery of meals to homes (drop and go)

* Food boxes (from food banks) which includes food staples (drop and go)

* Emotional/spiritual care support

"Coordination and logistics are being arranged, but we have been asked to get a contact list of those willing to participate in these needs," Wedekind said. "Each church will probably be working through a local health department who will be providing all the logistics."

Wedekind asked that churches wanting to help contact him immediately to let him know in what areas they are willing and able to volunteer.

"This is a great opportunity for hands-on ministry right in your community," he said.

See related story, page 7: Southern Baptists organize to help amid COVID-19 crisis.

Back to the beginning

liability issues.

"Never in our wildest dreams could we have expected to cancel Empower for health reasons," Endel said.

He and the staff had begun monitoring the COVID-19 crisis carefully on the Monday before Empower and things seemed to be moving slowly.

"We had no idea how quickly things would change," he said.

"Thursday morning, March 12 we had the van loaded and Clint was on the north side of town ready to go," he said. "Some people had already called the office asking us if the event was going to be held. We assured them that the event was on."

Then came the governor's press conference, which Endel and the rest of the staff watched live at the office.

"We were stunned when he asked that all gatherings of 250 or more be cancelled," Endel said. "We had to call Clint back to the office to talk about what

to do."

There were many factors to consider.

"We spoke about the financial loss of canceling the event and having to still pay our full contract on the Green Lake facilities," he said. "We hoped that Green Lake would not hold our people responsible for rooms they couldn't occupy. We anticipated we would still have to pay for the food which could not be returned to a vendor."

But more than money was at stake.

"We talked freely about the consequences of going and having someone infected," he said. "We talked with our insurance agent to discuss possible liabilities if we continued."

It came down to a matter of good citizenship.

"In the end, it was the request from the governor that sealed our decision," Endel said. "We felt like we needed to obey the governing authorities who were looking at the health and welfare of 5 million res-

idents."

Within two hours the decision was made to cancel.

Staff scrambled to get the word out to all on the MWBC master email list and also posted the news on all their associated Facebook pages. Most did get the word, although several leaders and speakers were already in route and had to return home.

Calvert traveled to the conference center to be there to apologize to any registered conferees who showed up. In the end, only three couples and their children made it all the way to Green Lake; they had learned of the cancellation while they were in Wisconsin Dells and decided to continue on to Green Lake to spend the night.

It was easy to second-guess from the sidelines, but the decision to cancel was affirmed as events progressed. Before the day was over, major sports organizations paused their seasons, March Madness college basketball championship was canceled, Disneyland closed, and the stock market Dow plunged more than 2,300 points, the biggest drop since the Black Monday crash of 1987. The next day the Masters golf tournament and Boston Marathon were indefinitely postponed and schools began to announce closures. President Trump declared a national emergency and limited the size of gatherings to 50 people. By Monday he dropped the limit to 10 people.

We have added new terms to our everyday

language, such as "social distancing" to "flatten the curve" so that we will not "overwhelm our health care system," and "drive-through testing" to see whether or not we need to "self-quarantine."

Even though the decision has been justified by the continuing spread of the virus, Endel regrets that the decision has been costly to those who registered and paid room deposits. He said he is very sorry that many people lost a significant amount of money due to Green Lake's cancellation policy but he also acknowledged the impact of COVID-19 on the conference center.

"Like all ministries, Green Lake is going to struggle with the loss of income this virus has caused," he said. "This crisis will be very difficult for a conference center. We ask you to be understanding regarding this loss. Most of us lost less than \$150, because MWBC budgets a significant amount of money to provide the facilities and program at no cost to attendees." He encouraged families to consider counting their loss as "a donation to a Christian partner that will be hit very hard by this crisis."

As for churches that lost deposits on a block of rooms they reserved, Endel encouraged them to feel free to contact MWBC which "will do our best to offset some of your loss."

David Williams is editor of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist.

Back to the beginning

DIGITAL

continued from page one

executive director, first proposed the change, seeing it as a move forward.

"Doing the paper this way will give us the opportunity for churches to provide a link within their newsletter and increase dramatically the numbers of people who are able to view the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist," he said. "This option will also allow us to time the paper in

a more effective and efficient way than we've been able to in the past because of strict publishing time frames administered by our printing partners. In all, we see this is an expansion of our current ministry and outreach."

Endel also said the change to digital will make it possible for MWBC to consider the possibility of going from four editions a year to six.

Back to the beginning

Nothing new under the sun

The stock market has tanked; we are hiding from a virus in our homes; people are afraid, and people are dying. Schools and restaurants have been closed, events have been canceled. We are glued to our TVs to hear about the latest statistics or the newest guidelines. We can't shake hands, and we must keep six feet between us.

The fear and uncertainty of today take me back to that morning in 2001 when terrorists killed 2,977 Americans and injured more than 6,000 others. There are thousands of painful stories within these numbers that continue to bring pain to the lives of

the victim's friends and families. For them, the pain never completely goes away. For most of us, 9/11 changed the world in small ways, and we have adjusted. We sense COVID-19 will lead to similar societal shifts and changes, but

again, I'm confident we'll adjust.

I found myself initially thinking that these are unprecedented days. But are they really?

The writer of Ecclesiastes grounds us to reality:

"History merely repeats itself. It has all been done before. Nothing under the sun is truly new. Sometimes people say, 'Here is something new!' But

actually, it is old; nothing is ever truly new. We don't remember what happened in the past, and in future generations, no one will remember what we are doing now" (Eccl. 1:9-11, NLT).

Unprecedented? I don't want to discourage you with a listing of the epidemics, tsunamis, hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, wars, and famines of human history. You can look them up in Wikipedia. The numbers are staggering. The days we now live in are not unprecedented, nor will they continue forever.

So, what can we learn and do while we're hunkered down in our living rooms?

1. Remember God is in control (Job 42:2, Isa. 46:10).

2. Know that God will use these troubles to your ultimate good (Rom. 8:28).

3. Know He will take care of you (Isa. 41:10, Matt. 6:25-27).

4. Know we can have peace even in the crisis (Philip. 4:6-7).

5. Enjoy the time with your family.

6. Look for safe ways to help others. Do others have needs you have the means to meet? Maybe you could drop off a sack of canned goods or toilet paper for a neighbor or church member in need.

7. Reach out to your church family, especially to those who are alone.

8. Let your church help you if you have a need.

9. Take advantage of extra time to pray and read Scripture.

10. Participate in your church's Facebook Live feeds or broadcast worship services and leave a "like" or a comment to let the rest of the congregation know

you are with them.

11. Keep giving to your local church. Your church's expenses won't decrease much; they might even increase as they try to help church members whose employment may be curtailed due to business closures. Consider digging deeper and give extra in gratitude to the Lord that you still have a job.

In a time of great trouble Jeremiah wrote these words:

"Because of the LORD's faithful love we do not perish, for his mercies never end. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness! I say, 'The LORD is my portion, therefore I will put my hope in him'" (Lam. 3:22-24).

Leo Endel is executive director of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention.

Perspectives

Leo Endel



The Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist:

- The state paper and official publication of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention.

- A Christian newsjournal with a focus on Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptists – their interests, churches, and partners.

- A digital only publication, the PDF emailed free to all who subscribe and posted on MWBC's website and Facebook page.

- Formatted for letter size paper for those who want to print a copy.

Getting to know our neighbors during the pandemic

Last Saturday afternoon, March 21, my wife and I invited a group of our neighbors to bring their lawn chairs and meet in our driveway.

Ten of us showed up and positioned our chairs 6 feet apart. (If more had come, we were prepared with a second driveway across the street).

A few had met, but most did not know each other. Our neighborhood has been typical of most

suburbs. We pass each other coming and going to work, then disappear into

our garages. We occasionally see each other walking our dogs, but we rarely speak. Faces may become familiar, but we don't know each other's names.

But this Saturday was different. Under the ominous cloud of the coronavirus, our neighbors were hungry to meet each other, to talk and to share.

The group included a

widow in her 70s, two young couples in their 20s, a couple in their 30s recently moved from Philadelphia and a couple in their late 40s, recently married and adjusting to a blended family. My wife and I married over 50 years ago.

The gathering was not somber. There was much laughter. One couple brought gifts of toilet paper with a card: "Just a little something to show that we got your back."

But there was a serious undercurrent, not knowing what comes next. We each introduced ourselves and shared how the COVID crisis is affecting us and

our families. At the end, I led the group in prayer.

We are praying for the people of the world. We are all in this together. The pain and suffering includes Asia, Africa, Europe, North and South America. All the nations of the earth are being affected.

We are concerned for first responders, for our medical professionals, for the elderly and the weak.

We pray for students whose studies have been disrupted, whose classes have been cancelled.

We are burdened for those who are suffering

See **NEIGHBORS** page 8



Reflections

Bill Tinsley

Behind the difficult decision to cancel Empower

On Thursday March 12th, in consultation with the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention staff, I made the difficult decision to cancel Empower. Two hours before the decision,

the van was loaded and ready to go. Speakers, musicians, and volunteers across the Midwest were on their way.

All of those plans changed after Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers held a press conference at 11:30 a.m. that morning, recommending that non-essential gatherings of 250 or more people be cancelled or postponed statewide to help protect Wisconsin-

ites from the spread of COVID-19, particularly those who are the most vulnerable to infection and severe disease.

Reflecting on our desire to protect the people of the MWBC and our responsibility to be good

citizens, we made the difficult decision to cancel the event. Once the decision was made, consequences occurred. Some people in route had to turn around after driving several hours. Some people got the word in time and were spared an unnecessary trip.

I decided to go to Green Lake and be personally available to apologize to people

who did not get the word of the cancellation. I sat in Kraft Center Thursday evening and Friday morning. I did speak with three couples who got the word late and decided to come anyway. I was able to hear the front desk field many cancellation calls.

Green Lake Conference Center took the position that since the MWBC canceled the conference they would be unable to refund lodging deposits made for Empower registrants. In some cases individual families lost between \$87 and \$102 depending on whether they had booked a room or a suite.

I apologize for the turmoil the decision to cancel the meeting has caused. If you booked

See **EMPOWER** page 11



Leadership
Clint Calvert

Southeast Asia Harvest update

Over the past few months, I have been talking to our mission partners about ways we can make the greatest gospel impact in Southeast Asia. One area of need that comes up again and again is the lack of discipleship training and material.

I am working with a mission partner who has extensive experience training pastors in Southeast Asia. We are

talking about translating discipleship books and offering classes for pastors locally.

What I appreciate most about this mission partner is that they already have a relationship with governing authorities in the region.

This means that local pastors who graduate from the discipleship program will receive government-approved completion certificates. The certificates are legal

documents that protect pastors from persecution. When they are stopped on the road by the police, the certificate can be the difference between them getting arrested or going home.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to unfold, I am hearing stories of people opening their hearts to the gospel in droves. The hunger for the gospel is great in Southeast Asia. Please continue to pray for our mission partners in Southeast Asia and the masses who are turning to Christ as their only hope.

See **HARVEST** page 11



Intercultural
Na Herr

Build a stellar greeting team

It's your first time to visit a church. As you walk into the building, someone holds open the door for you. Or maybe they don't. Someone smiles as you walk in and excitedly welcomes you. Or maybe they don't. Someone hands you a bulletin and directs you towards the sanctuary...or maybe they don't. Either way, you've mostly made up your mind before you even cross the threshold of the sanctuary doors as to if you plan to visit

again sometime.

Does your church have an effective greeting team that actively welcomes visitors and makes them feel at home? Here are a few fresh ideas to spruce up this critical team in your church.

Cast a Great Vision

The people on this team are the first interaction a visitor will have physically with your church. Do they understand the importance of this role? A visitor will typically decide if they will come back again within the first few minutes of being at your church. That means their minds are often made up before your service even begins! Cast a vision to your greeting team to help them see that they are not just passing out a bulletin or holding open a door, they are instrumental in people coming to know Jesus!

Train a Great Team

Have a training process for people on the team. Can they answer questions about the vision, values and practical ministries of the church? Do they know about upcoming events and who is encouraged to attend? Can they direct a visitor to the kid's area, a youth class, or a staff member? They are likely to get lots of questions on a Sunday morning. Make sure they are well prepared with the info they need and have a central place to send someone if they don't know an answer to their question. If church has already started, train your team to walk visitors to open seats.

Make Personal Connections

Train your team to look people in the eye when they arrive and smile big as if greeting a long lost friend. Ask their name and jot it down to remember it for when they come back next week. Be alert to any special needs they may have and help find accommodations to make their visit easier. Do your best to connect them to someone else in the church—

See **GREETING** page 6



Fresh Ideas
Autumn Wall

A bright future, new leaders

As we are all being tested as believers during this pandemic, called COVID-19, let me assure you that your disaster relief team



Disaster Relief

Dave Wedekind

is here to walk with you and to see us through it.

We have provided several documents to help you minister to others during this crisis that I hope have been helpful. However this unfolds, as Chris-

tians we have a bright future.

An exciting bit of information about our disaster relief ministry is that God has provided a leader to step into Jeanne's and my shoes. Ben and Kayla Seamans have accepted and will be leading this ministry beginning June 1, 2020. Seamans has been associate pastor at Trinity Baptist Church in Reedsburg, Wis., since 2003.

"I am both honored, excited and a bit scared to be your next MWBC disaster relief director (catalyst)," Seamans said. "Kayla and I desire your prayers as we transition to this new ministry. I grew up on a Wisconsin farm where I learned to operate, maintain and repair all kinds of equipment. I also wrenched my way through college."

"That being said, I know our team leaders and members are our greatest resource and am very excited to be able to serve you. We are so grateful to have served under Dave and Jeanne both here for two floods and abroad. We are excited to continue to work with them moving forward. No such thing as retirement! Please pray for God's leading and provision for this awesome ministry!"

Welcome aboard Ben and Kayla. We are passing the leadership baton to you...for such a time as this!

May 15 and 16 Ben and Kayla will be leading their first training event at Trinity Baptist Church in Reedsburg, Wis. We will be preparing our volunteers by teaching the basics of Southern Baptist Disaster Relief Ministry, Disaster Relief Chaplaincy, Assessment, Mud-Out, Chainsaw, Shower/Laundry, and Feeding. I want to encourage you to register quickly for the classes you would like to attend so we'll have space for you.

Dave Wedekind is co-director of disaster relief for the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention.

Being on a worship team

Since my retirement I have been able to play a more active role

on the worship team at my church. This has included playing the piano and the guitar, and on occasion lead vocal.

Here are a few of the things that I have learned:

Preparation is necessary. More than just showing up to practice or to perform, my heart and my mind need to be ready to engage both the music and the message of the words in a personally meaningful way.

Practice is doing the right thing in the right way, sensing the mood, tempo and meaning of the worship music. Perfection is not the point, but leading others to have a worship experience is.

Performance and presentation are the cul-

mination of the practice and preparation for the worship experience. For



Partnership and Prayer

Steve Melvin

the worship leaders at Emmanuel Baptist Church, it is a team of six, leading a congregation of 75 for an audience of one. God should be the focus.

Perspective is important. If "worship" equals only the music portion of the service, then it is a misnomer. Worship should include every aspect of what is done in the service, including the music, prayer, offering, sermon, testimony, drama, video, and even announcements.

A worship team may be the up-front leaders during the music part of the worship service, but their purpose is to make much of God, leading the congregation to have a life changing worship

experience.

For the congregation that is not on the worship team, preparation is also necessary. Authentic worship is more than just sitting through the service but is engaging all the elements of worship to experience the heart of God.

Perspective is also important for the worship participants. There are so many demands and distractions, so much stress and pressure in our daily lives, that we often miss the opportunity for a connection with a personal God through worship. Allowing the worship team to lead the congregation to the throne of God can be a momentous encounter with the creator and sustainer of our lives.

I enjoy being a part of the worship team. But I really take pleasure in being a part of a worshipping congregation.

Steve Melvin is partnership and prayer catalyst for the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention.

Discovering opportunities within the COVID-19 crisis

David Williams
Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist

PRESIDENT John F. Kennedy once said, "The Chinese use two brush strokes to write the word 'crisis.' One brush stroke stands for danger; the other for opportunity. In a crisis, be aware of the danger – but recognize the opportunity."

In the current crisis let's seize the opportunities before us:

The opportunity to re-

spond biblically; submitting to and praying for those in authority; living in faith rather than fear; acknowledging God's sovereignty even in the bad times.

The opportunity to spend more time in individual and family Bible study and prayer.

The opportunity to enjoy an unexpected change of pace, to be at home with family, to rest, to relax, to read a book, to think and plan, to be creative, to get some long-neglected projects finished.

The opportunity to remember that the church is not a building nor a weekly meeting, but people.

The opportunity for church members to increase their daily contact with one another through phone calls, emails, texts, cards, and letters.

The opportunity to minister to others in our church who are impacted by the crisis more than we are.

The opportunity for our churches to take advantage

See **DISCOVER** page 11

Good news from the associations

BAY LAKES

BLBA is trying 5th Sunday Gatherings during 2020, encouraging all the churches of the association to gather for an evening service when a month has five Sundays. The location and preacher will rotate.

SOUTHERN WISCONSIN

Mark Millman, SWBA church planting catalyst, noted the growth in churches during the past 15 years, from 15 churches in 2005 to more than 30 churches today. "The Lord has clearly been at work raising up laborers for the harvest and sending people to Wisconsin. Our church planters and churches have been able to thrive because of the generosity of our many partners across North America and the world."

Pastor Rob Warren reports exciting happenings at Doxa Church in Madison, Wis.: purchase of a building and beginning renovation; collecting and distribut-

ing 316 toys to families; adoption of a nearby elementary school; public declarations of faith by nine persons in one weekend.

SWBA has a new copier contract that allows them to make unlimited copies. "We can now help serve our churches by making either color or black and white copies for you," said Mark Millman, church planting catalyst.

NORTHWOODS

Matthew Johnson is planting a church in Duluth. They had their first service Feb. 23.

In December, a team of six volunteers worked two days to clean out and paint the interior of the International Falls church building.

Grace Connection Church in Wadena is making good progress in their building project for the summer of 2020. They have purchased the land and paid for it, and they are now raising funds to put the foundation in place.

The local bank has agreed to a \$250,000 loan. Volunteer Christian Builders will be providing the labor for the project.

TWIN CITIES

Cities Church in Minneapolis has purchased a building for worship and ministry and celebrated their fifth anniversary as a church. In addition, the church's third church plant is being planned for September in the New Hope area. Jonathan Parnell is pastor.

LAKELAND

Ephesians Missionary Baptist Church opened their learning center as an "overnight warming center" for homeless and displaced persons from Dec. 2 through Mar. 1. Pastor Raymond Monk said plans were to provide a sermon each evening. He also invited other churches to schedule times to come "to share the gospel in song or word."

GREETING

continued from page four

someone in their age group, someone who has kids the same age as theirs, etc.

Parking Lot Crew

Have people designated to your parking lot. This team can pick up trash before people arrive, direct cars into available parking spots, even have large umbrellas to walk people inside from their cars if it's raining outside. Even if all they do is stand visibly in the parking lot with a huge

smile on their face pointing people towards the church doors, this person can make a huge difference to an insecure first time visitor unsure of where to park or where to enter the building.

Details Matter

Does the floor need a quick vacuum? Does a counter top need to be wiped down? Is there an overflowing trash can? Did someone leave an old coffee cup on a table? Your greeting team should watch for these things and keep the entryway of the church

picked up and presentable. This is God's house after all, and the way you take care of the little things shows a visitor how well you will take care of them and their family.

Team Recruiters

Train every team member to be a team recruiter! In our church, we say that if a person has visited two times then they should be given the opportunity to serve on our greeting team (which we call the First Impressions Team). It's a great way to get people

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MWBC events are in bold print.

BLBA: Bay Lakes Baptist Association

SWBA: Southern Wisconsin Baptist Association

LBA: Lakeland Baptist Association

NBA: Northwoods Baptist Association

SMBA: Southern Minnesota Baptist Association

TCMBA: Twin Cities Metro Baptist Association

To have your events included, email them to davidwilliams@compuserve.com.

APRIL

10 Good Friday – MWBC Office Closed

30 MWBC Lottie Moon Offering Cutoff

MAY

25 Memorial Day Observed – MWBC Office Closed

JUNE

JULY

3 Independence Day Holiday – MWBC Office Closed

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

1-30 Season of Prayer for State Missions

7 Labor Day – MWBC Office Closed

18-19 MWBC Executive Board, Rochester, Minn.

OCTOBER

2-3 Pastors' Conference, Rochester, Minn.

9-11 Called Out Youth Conference – tentative

23-24 MWBC Annual Meeting, Ebenezer Community Church, Brooklyn Park, Minn.

NOVEMBER

26-27 Thanksgiving Holiday - MWBC Office Closed

29-12/6 Week of Prayer and Mission Study of International Missions/Lottie Moon Christmas Offering

DECEMBER

24-1/1 Christmas/New Year's Holiday - MWBC Office Closed

involved in a low commitment way that gives them great visibility into the life of the church and helps them feel a part of things quickly. Train your team to watch for return visitors and recruit them to join the team.

It's easy to just let the same person be stationed at a certain door for years on end who never engages with anyone. If you want a stellar greeting team then

train them well to know their purpose and to be excited about welcoming church members and visitors into the very place where they will encounter the presence of God in a life changing way!

Autumn Wall is an author, speaker, worship leader, pastor's wife and mother of three, living in Indianapolis, Ind.

Back to the beginning

COVID-19: NAMB spending changes aimed at keeping missionaries on field

Mike Ebert
NAMB

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) – The North American Mission Board (NAMB) is implementing a series of budgetary freezes and cutbacks designed to keep missionaries on the field during the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

NAMB president Kevin Ezell shared information Mar. 19 with staff and missionaries on a video conference call and in emails to state convention leaders and other mission partners.

“We hope these pro-

active steps will allow our missionaries to continue ministering throughout the crisis, however long it lasts,” Ezell said. “At this point we just don’t know how severe the financial impact will be on our churches, but we want to do everything we can to keep serving them and keep supporting our missionaries.”

The freeze covers all discretionary spending at NAMB’s Alpharetta building and for NAMB missionaries and staff serving throughout North America. NAMB resources will be fo-

cused exclusively on mission-critical ministry needs and supporting church planters and ministry personnel. In addition, NAMB events have been postponed until May 31.

“These are not ‘business as usual’ times and we will not be conducting business as usual,” Ezell said. “We are all praying that things will bounce back quickly, but we are not taking anything for granted.”

NAMB will stay focused on the church planting process by helping existing church plants stay strong and healthy in the current

environment. In-person planter assessments are postponed until fall, but those wishing to plant a church can still register, apply and complete NAMB’s online pre-assessment tool.

“Now is the time to ensure the survivability and sustainability of the churches we have planted over the last

few years,” Ezell said.

“I am incredibly grateful for the faithful giving of Southern Baptists throughout the years,” Ezell said. “That is what makes supporting our missionaries possible.”

Mike Ebert serves as executive director of public relations for the North American Mission Board.

Southern Baptists organize to help amid COVID-19 crisis

Brandon Elrod
NAMB

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) – Anxiety in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis continues to mount, but Southern Baptists across the United States are determined to respond and meet needs.

On March 12, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reached out to Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (SBDR) leadership to discuss engaging Southern Baptist volunteers in response efforts on a nationwide scale.

“This is an opportunity for Southern Baptists to be the hands and feet of Jesus, to be the Church,” said Sam Porter, national director for SBDR with the North American Mission Board (NAMB) and Send Relief. “Local state emergency management agencies will reach out to our national SBDR staff, and we will connect those agencies to the appropriate contacts in their state.”

Taylor Field, a pastor and Send Relief mission-

ary in New York City, has seen concern build over the last couple of months. Send Relief is Southern Baptists’ compassion ministry arm.

“We are in a densely populated area. I was amazed at the level of concern and anxiety with those who are most vulnerable, those who don’t have access to medical care and those who don’t have a place to stay,” Field said.

“It dominated the conversation weeks ago, and it’s exacerbated now with the restrictions that have been put in place.”

One example of those changes is transitioning from organized sit-down meals to grab-and-go meals for those in need. They also set up different tables around their city block where people can receive Bibles, have spiritual conversations and see social distancing exemplified by volunteers.

“Social distancing does not mean disengaging,”

GuideStone issues COVID-19 statement

Roy Hayhurst
GuideStone

DALLAS (BP) – GuideStone Financial Resources continues to monitor the developments around the new coronavirus, officially known as COVID-19.

For participants in GuideStone’s health plans, including both HSA-qualified High Deductible Health Plans and Secure Health, GuideStone will waive costs for physician-ordered diagnostic testing for the novel coronavirus. Additionally, a COVID-19 diagnosis that required a participant to miss work would be covered if a participant has short- or long-term disability coverage from GuideStone through Unum.

“We know these are uncertain days, which

can breed anxiety for even the most committed believers,” GuideStone President O.S. Hawkins said. “GuideStone is committed always to honoring the Lord by being a lifelong partner with our participants in enhancing their financial security. As it relates to our health plans and other insurance coverage, we will be a trusted advocate for the churches, ministries, pastors and staff we serve.”

GuideStone has created a resource page on its website with links to trusted resources on the coronavirus. Additionally, GuideStone has provided information related to the market volatility that has resulted in part due to the uncertainty around the coronavirus.

“We cannot be sure of the near-term ramifi-

cations of these events on the stock market and whether we will experience a quick bounce back (as we have seen during other corrections since 2008) or a longer-term downturn,” GuideStone chief strategic investment officer David Spika said. “Two things we will be watching closely are corporate earnings growth and global economic activity, as we believe these are the most important factors in determining how stocks trade from this point forward. If the coronavirus, oil weakness or some other unforeseen catalyst puts significant downward pressure on corporate profits, there are likely to be continued sell-offs in the market.”

Roy Hayhurst is director of denominational and public relations services for GuideStone.

Pastors and Wives Retreat, Feb. 6-8, 2020, at Green Lake Conference Center



Ben Bolin, pastor of Calvary Church in New Prague, Minn., leads worship from the piano.



Pastor Jacob Christy and his family wait for a sample at the cheese factory in Berlin, Wis., during the retreat's Friday afternoon free time.



Mark and Janet Dance lead pastors and their wives in times of personal and spiritual development during their annual retreat.



Along with her husband Mark, Earl Ann Bumpers, president of Woman's Missionary Union of Texas, takes part in a session during the retreat. Texas WMU promotes the Mary Hill Davis Offering for Texas State Missions that helps to fund MWBC's annual Pastors and Wives Retreat.

NEIGHBORS

continued from page three

economic disaster, for hourly workers, minimum wage employees, those who live week to week, who cannot pay their rent next month or afford food for their children.

We are discovering in this crisis that the place to which we can turn is to God and to one another. We are discovering that more than big government, more than money, we need people. We need our families and we need our neighbors and we need God.

Instead of seeing a society implode in anger

and frustration and chaos, we are watching people step up to stand in the gap. We are looking for ways to encourage one another, to support each other. We want to help.

Jesus taught us this amazing truth about human nature centuries ago when an arrogant young lawyer asked him, "Who is my neighbor?" He replied by telling the story of the Good Samaritan. Across the ages in every culture where the message of Christ has been told, that story has enabled people to overcome and withstand the most severe catastrophes. Instead of "passing by on the other

side," instead of just thinking about ourselves and our own concerns, we must stop and help just one, somebody for whom we can make a difference.

One of my neighbors reminded me that often Jesus stopped to help just one. That's what we need to do. That is what we each can do, like the Good Samaritan. (Luke 10:25-37).

Bill Tinsley is a former executive director of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention. Appearing in various local newspapers around the country, his column "reflects."

Back to the beginning



More than 100 gather for times of worship, fellowship and encouragement during the 2020 MWBC Pastors and Wives Retreat.

Midwest ministry leaders embrace missional resurgence

Meredith Flynn
Illinois Baptist

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (BP) — Secular pundits say the evangelical church is on its way out, Southern Baptist Convention President J.D. Greear said at the Midwest Leadership Summit in Springfield, Ill.

Things are changing, Greear admitted, but proposed that God might be reviving His church.

“We’re dealing with a significant loss of influence. We’re watching our culture come unraveled all around us. What was unthinkable to our

parents is going to become standard fare for our kids,” Greear said. “We know that and we lament it and we worry about it.”



Greear

What if God, Greear asked at the summit held Jan. 21-23, is returning His church to simple convictions that compelled the earliest Christians? What if

by removing some of the things we’re accustomed to, He’s setting up something Baptists have longed for over the past century: a transformative missional resurgence?

More than 1,000 leaders from the Mid-

west gathered to learn from local and national leaders in large-group sessions and 98 breakout sessions. The event, held every other year, is facilitated by Midwest state conventions and national SBC entities.

Greear wasn’t the only speaker to call churches to embrace Christ’s clear calling to make disciples. Leaders in church planting, evangelism, and discipleship urged churches to return to essentials.

Scholars say there were about 7,500 believers at the end of the first century, Greear said at the Summit.

Three centuries later, half the Roman empire identified as Christian because each believer and each church saw a



More than 1,000 leaders from the Midwest gathered to worship and to learn from local and national leaders in large-group sessions and 98 breakout conferences. The event, held every other year, is facilitated by Midwest state conventions and national SBC entities. Illinois Baptist photo

responsibility to multiply, Greear said.

“That is the strategy,” Greear said, “that grows the church in every generation.”

Midwest mission field

Charlie Robinson

spent the first years of his ministry in a small Kansas town in an unusual seat: the passenger side of a tractor.

That’s how Robinson, pastor of Northridge Church in Sabetha, Kan., built the relationships he says are essential for church leaders in a small town.

“There is no better program than one-on-one time,” Robinson told leaders attending his breakout session on leadership principles for small-town church development. The pastor echoed Greear’s words about church members being the ones in full-time ministry.

It's all about the gospel

Matt Miller

Issa Safadi

Jose Baker

Jesse Beernink

Rob Warren

Ronnie Goble

Jairo Martinez

Andrew Park

Paul Reichman

Drew Stevenson

Tom Stark

Wilkie Richmond

Peter Jung Teag Ko

Grayson Gilbert

Danny D'Acquisto

Gerardo Tony Antivero

Jacob Hatfield

Scot Mendenhall

Victor Ordonez

Tom Boyer

Jacob Christy

Brian Kite

W. Seth Martin

Philip Nache

Christopher Asmus

Sam Choi

Kevin Chen

Matthew David

Brett Toney

Johnny Russell

Dan Nichols

Jake Tonak

Joshua Whetstine

Jonathan Parnell

Aaron Downs

Mark Millman

ANNIE ARMSTRONG
EASTER OFFERING
FOR NORTH AMERICAN MISSIONS

Mission Gifts from the Churches

MINNESOTA WISCONSIN BAPTIST CONVENTION COOPERATIVE PROGRAM GIVING

January - December 2019

2019 CP Budget	\$550,000.00
2019 CP Receipts	\$677,486.09
OVER Budget YTD	\$127,486.09

NAME	CP	SMO*
BAY LAKES BAPTIST ASSOCIATION		
Amherst, Amherst Bible Church	\$500.00	\$0.00
Appleton, Fox Valley Hmong	\$90.00	\$0.00
Appleton, Hmong Baptist Mission	\$1,023.13	\$0.00
Appleton, Valley	\$53,677.56	\$5,574.00
Black Creek, Community Bible	\$6,919.00	\$0.00
Clintonville, First Baptist Church	\$1,922.50	\$333.10
Green Bay, Graceway Fellowship	\$5,859.83	\$690.00
Green Bay, Highland Crest	\$86,012.29	\$0.00
Manitowoc, New Beginnings	\$691.58	\$0.00
Marinette, Cornerstone Fellowship	\$381.97	\$0.00
Neenah, Living Vine Church	\$1,687.13	\$0.00
Sheboygan, Mapledale Baptist	\$3,409.81	\$340.00
Stevens Point, Tapestry	\$900.00	\$0.00
Tilleda, Bethany Baptist Church	\$2,375.30	\$0.00
Waupaca, Fellowship Baptist	\$2,407.42	\$0.00
BLBA TOTAL	\$167,858.02	\$6,937.10

SOUTHERN WI BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Boscobel, Blue River Valley	\$1,320.05	\$0.00
Ft. Atkinson, Casa de Oracion	\$20.00	\$20.00
Janesville, Resonate Church	\$3,294.04	\$0.00
La Crosse, New Hope	\$400.00	\$0.00
Madison, Antioch Fellowship	\$300.00	\$0.00
Madison, Campus Community	\$1,700.00	\$0.00
Madison, Casa De Oracion	\$21.48	\$0.00
Madison, Doxa Church	\$19,242.56	\$0.00
Madison, East Madison Baptist	\$7,800.00	\$458.00
Madison, Hope In Christ Assembly	\$2,293.04	\$172.00

Madison, Livingstone Baptist	\$1,410.00	\$100.00
Madison, Midvale Baptist Church	\$15,680.04	\$1,483.00
Madison, Red Village	\$10,000.00	\$0.00
Madison, Sovereign Joy Baptist	\$4,810.84	\$0.00
Platteville, Rolling Hills	\$4,191.17	\$0.00
Portage, River of Life	\$2,794.59	\$0.00
Reedsburg, Trinity Baptist	\$17,250.00	\$1,972.00
Sparta, Gospel Baptist Church	\$4,873.49	\$0.00
Sun Prairie, United Hmong	\$1,084.49	\$0.00
Waterloo, Centro Biblico La Roca	\$340.00	\$0.00
Whitehall, Mision Bautista Hispana	\$388.68	\$0.00
WI Dells, Rock of Hope	\$2,400.00	\$0.00
WI Rapids, Church at Wazeecha	\$4,135.70	\$935.00
WI Rapids, First Baptist Church	\$600.00	\$0.00
SWBA TOTAL	\$106,351.52	\$22,121.47

LAKELAND BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Bassett, Westosha Baptist Church	\$1,623.20	\$0.00
Brown Deer, Brown Deer Baptist	\$0.00	\$2,500.00
Franklin, Emmaus Fellowship	\$600.00	\$0.00
Kenosha, Fellowship Baptist	\$23,236.32	\$2,626.00
Kenosha, Missio Dei Fellowship	\$9,410.00	\$0.00
Kenosha, Parkside Baptist Church	\$7,246.18	\$960.00
Mequon, Westlake Church	\$50.00	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Arabic Mission	\$5.76	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Ephesians Baptist	\$3,719.50	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Grace Point Church	\$437.35	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Hmong First Baptist	\$600.00	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Iglesia Bautista Nuevo	\$361.00	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Korean Baptist Church	\$900.00	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Layton Avenue	\$14,444.33	\$2,240.00
Milwaukee, Mercy Memorial	\$1,800.00	\$125.00
Milwaukee, Monumental Baptist	\$1,608.00	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Mt Horeb Baptist	\$1,000.00	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Mt Pilgrim Miss.	\$2,700.00	\$0.00
Mount Pleasant, Immanuel	\$11,753.83	\$1,750.00
Pewaukee, Crossroads Church	\$4,645.43	\$0.00
Pleasant Prairie, Pleasant Prairie	\$11,697.00	\$0.00
Racine, Hope Community Church	\$6,253.09	\$0.00
Wauwatosa, Northwest Baptist	\$9,530.29	\$0.00
Wauwatosa, Redemption Church	\$1,200.00	\$0.00
LBA TOTAL	\$114,821.28	\$10,201.00

ORGANIZE

continued from page seven

Field said. "We have an opportunity as a church. Let's make those connections and engage with people. We've had events canceled. So, we have more time to make connections and engage with those who have needs."

The Send Relief ministry center in Kentucky has sent out supplies to assist other ministry centers across the nation, including 6,000 meals to New

York City to provide for those under quarantine or are restricted to confinement in some way.

In Pittsburgh, the Send Relief ministry center has made similar changes to its practice of distributing meals, transitioning its every-other-week Sunday night meals into drive through or walk through distribution.

"We're going to get strategic and make sure big crowds aren't gathering in our building at one

time, to make sure we're responsible while at the same time distributing food to people in need," said Rob Wilton, the North American Mission Board's (NAMB) Send City Missionary who provides oversight to Send Relief's ministry activity in the city.

Through its connection with Pittsburgh's food bank, the Send Relief ministry center is also working to deliver groceries to the homes of people who are in need and can-

not leave their homes.

Adam Sewell, the Send Relief missionary who oversees the daily operations of the Pittsburgh ministry center, is also connecting

with churches that can provide household supplies to pair with the groceries from the food bank.

"The nature of this crisis means that our response as Southern Baptists is going to be localized to the needs of specific communities," said Bryant Wright, pres-

ident of Send Relief. "We are looking to lead people to love their neighbors well by staying inside current health guidelines while they are meeting needs."

Porter said the CDC would be contacting state emergency management agencies in states where local SBDR directors have the capacity to help feed those in need.

Some state SBDR teams have already start-

Back to the beginning

Mission Gifts from the Churches

SOUTHERN MN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Austin, Austin Baptist Church	\$960.00	\$0.00
Austin, Primera Iglesia Bautista	\$2,260.88	\$0.00
Chester, Chester Woods	\$2,330.71	\$20.00
Eyota, Hmong Baptist Church	\$2,376.90	\$1,225.00
Mankato, Hope Baptist Church	\$1,458.20	\$0.00
Marshall, Radiant Life Church	\$4,147.54	\$150.00
Red Wing, Hiawatha Valley	\$0.00	\$215.00
Rochester, Emmanuel Baptist	\$16,892.06	\$2,963.00
Rochester, Joyful Hope Baptist	\$300.00	\$0.00
Rochester, Redemption City	\$5,785.93	\$0.00
Sartell, Park Fellowship	\$4,376.72	\$0.00
Viola, Viola Bible Church	\$3,434.30	\$1,570.00
Willmar, Grace Baptist Church	\$100.00	\$0.00
Winona, Cornerstone Community	\$4,374.47	\$0.00
SMNBA TOTAL	\$48,797.71	\$6,143.00

TWIN CITIES METRO BAPTIST ASSN.

Albertville, Northwest Bible	\$2,000.00	\$0.00
Amery, Journey Church	\$7,500.00	\$1,500.00
Bloomington, Kangnam Korean	\$1,150.00	\$0.00
Bloomington, Southtown Baptist	\$20,618.00	\$1,455.00
Brooklyn Park, Ebenezer Community	\$2,100.00	\$0.00
Brooklyn Park, North Center Lao	\$200.00	\$180.00
Brooklyn Park, North Center Baptist	\$10,366.59	\$195.00
Burnsville, Crystal Lake Road	\$1,509.00	\$0.00
Burnsville, Richfield Bible	\$480.00	\$0.00
Coon Rapids, First Hmong Baptist	\$2,750.00	\$0.00
Fridley, Good News Hmong	\$500.00	\$0.00
Maple Grove, Northwood Community	\$1,823.69	\$0.00
Maple Grove, Unlock Church	\$7,929.57	\$0.00
Minneapolis, All Peoples Church	\$5,040.00	\$0.00
Minneapolis, Gracepoint Minnea	\$1,200.00	\$0.00
Minneapolis, Hope of Nations	\$412.42	\$0.00
Minneapolis, Hope of Nations Fellowship	\$530.04	\$0.00
Minneapolis, Jacob's Well	\$2,577.20	\$0.00
Minneapolis, Jubilee	\$4,000.00	\$0.00
Minneapolis, Risen Church	\$1,823.69	\$0.00
Minnetonka, Slavic Baptist	\$600.00	\$0.00
Monticello, First Baptist Church	\$897.38	\$0.00
New Prague, Calvary Church	\$24,251.88	\$0.00
Northfield, Northfield Community	\$13,580.34	\$0.00

Oakdale, Eternal Life Hmong	\$1,848.69	\$0.00
Ramsey, Bethlehem Worship	\$700.00	\$125.00
Roseville, Gospel Hmong	\$607.72	\$0.00
Roseville, Roseville Baptist	\$11,000.00	\$100.00
Shakopee, River South Bible	\$496.16	\$0.00
Spring Lake Park, Hmong Hope	\$0.00	\$333.00
St. Louis Park, First Ukrainian	\$0.00	\$200.00
St. Paul, Cities Church	\$5,000.00	\$0.00
St. Paul, Followers Of Christ Hmong	\$8,699.33	\$780.00
St. Paul, Iglesia Hispana Betel	\$1,100.00	\$417.00
St. Paul, Salt City	\$40,502.00	\$0.00
St. Paul, Twin City Hmong	\$2,100.00	\$711.25
Sunfish Lake, Bethel Baptist	\$7,800.00	\$0.00
Sunfish Lake, Vietnamese Baptist	\$720.00	\$0.00
TCMBA TOTAL	\$194,422.69	\$5,996.25

NORTHWOODS BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Badger, Badger Baptist	\$1,329.67	\$0.00
Bemidji, Ridgewood Baptist	\$652.42	\$0.00
Brainerd, Church on the Wise Road	\$2,508.00	\$0.00
Cambridge, Cross Pointe Church	\$3,000.00	\$0.00
Crookston, Prairie Community	\$5,030.66	\$51.88
Ely, Berean Baptist	\$840.00	\$0.00
Grand Rapids, Calvary Pines	\$2,721.65	\$0.00
Grand Rapids, Grand Rapids	\$69.79	\$0.00
Pequot Lakes, Eagles Nest	\$4,195.57	\$0.00
Rice Lake, Hope Baptist Church	\$5,418.00	\$1,530.00
Roseau, Immanuel Baptist Church	\$3,421.50	\$0.00
Thief River Falls, Cornerstone	\$1,661.38	\$0.00
Wadena, Grace Connection	\$1,392.00	\$0.00
Warroad, Westside Baptist	\$70.00	\$0.00
NWBA TOTAL	\$32,310.64	\$1,581.88

OTHER

Eau Claire, Jacob's Well	\$9,650.00	\$0.00
Eau Claire, One in Christ Church	\$1,774.23	\$820.00
Grantsburg, Living Hope Church	\$1,500.00	\$200.00
OTHER TOTAL	\$12,924.23	\$1,020.00

MWBC TOTAL RECEIVED	\$677,486.09	\$37,020.03
----------------------------	---------------------	--------------------

EMPOWER

continued from page four

several rooms on behalf of your church, please contact me at calvert@mwbc.org or 507-254-0237. We will do what we can on a case by case basis to alleviate this financial burden for people who reserved multiple rooms.

Some people have asked me how it feels to lose all the work that went into planning and promoting Empower.

As I reflected on this, the work we do in planning and promoting Empower is done with and through our relationships. If the work is in relationships and the relationships are strengthened by the work, is it really lost?

Dr. Richard Blackaby has already committed to join us for Empower next year. While it is too soon to know much about this coming event, it is gratifying to continue to serve in the

relationships we share.

Clint Calvert is church leadership catalyst for the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention.

Back to the beginning

HARVEST

continued from page four

In these uncertain times, I am reminded of Jeremiah 29:11. We trust in a God who has "plans for your well-being, not for disaster, to give you a future and a

hope."

Na Herr is intercultural catalyst/team facilitator for the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention.

Back to the beginning

DISCOVER

continued from page five

of technological advances such as livestreaming our services and Bible studies, video conferencing committee meetings, and providing online giving options.

The opportunity to share the good news of Jesus with many people who suddenly find themselves desperately searching for hope and peace.

I am praying for each of our churches and all of our members that we may be "wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:16, NIV).

David Williams is editor of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist.

Back to the beginning

We are going digital! Please sign up at the link below to receive future issues delivered to your email inbox.

<https://www.mwbc.org/newspaper>

