

# Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist

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## Minnesota-Wisconsin welcomes new leaders

Rochester, Minn. — As some long time leaders of Baptist work in Minnesota-Wisconsin entered retirement recently, new leaders stepped up to fill their roles.

Ben and Kayla Seamans began June 1 serving as co-directors of disaster relief for the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention.

Aaron Satchwill on June 6 accepted the call of Northwoods Baptist Association to serve as their bivocational director of missions.

Seamans is resigning as associate pastor of Trinity Baptist in Reedsburg, Wis., where he has served for 16 years. Satchwill continues to serve as pastor of Immanuel Baptist in Roseau, Minn.

Satchwill succeeds Bob Stockland who retired May 1 as North-



From left, Northwoods Baptist Association moderator David Myers, Faye and Bob Stockland congratulate Aaron Satchwill as he accepts the call to serve as bivocational director of missions of the association, succeeding Stockland.

woods' director of missions. Bob and Faye Stockland have been involved in churches and associations in the MWBC for many years. They will continue to help with prayer and

fundraising for Northwoods Baptist Association.

The Seamans couple succeed Dave and Jeanne Wedekind

See **WELCOME** page 2

## MWBC executive board meets virtually during COVID-19

**David Williams**  
Editor

Rochester, Minn. — Unable to gather in person because of the coronavirus pandemic, the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention executive board experienced a new first as they conducted their Apr. 17 meeting online, using the popular Zoom meeting platform.

The meeting focused on responding to financial uncertainty caused by loss of funding from partners

and possible decline in Cooperative Program giving from MWBC churches because of COVID-19.

In his report to the board, Leo Endel, MWBC executive director, said the convention's annual income is down 24 percent (\$213,700) this year because of recent reductions from the North American Mission Board and Life-Way Christian Resources. In addition, MWBC anticipates

See **BOARD** page 2

## State paper goes digital

Rochester, Minn. — With this issue, the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist says goodbye to paper and ink, becoming a digital only publication.

The state paper and official publication of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention for 35 years is now being produced as a PDF file which is emailed free to all who subscribe and can be downloaded from the MWBC website.

**Click here to subscribe.**

The digital version takes advantage of hyperlinks to help readers navigate through the state paper. Clicking on an item in the page 1 table of contents will take the reader instantly to the headline of the story or column. For stories that are continued onto another page, a click will take the reader to the rest of the story and another click at the end will take the reader back to the beginning of the story.

The new format was designed to have the look of the print version with a five-column layout but shrunk from the former tabloid size to fit onto letter size paper for those who want a printed copy. The text font size was increased to make it more readable whether online

See **DIGITAL** page 2

## 18 churches get MWBC grants

Rochester, Minn. — Julie Sundeen, executive/financial assistant of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention, reports that the convention disbursed a total of \$22,500 in COVID-19 relief grants to churches.

The grant process was put into place Apr. 17 by the MWBC executive board with an application deadline of June

15. The board set aside \$100,000 from reserves for the program.

Of the 20 applications received, 18 were approved by the grant committee, she said. Each approved grant received the maximum allowed amount of \$1,250. To qualify for the grant, churches must

See **GRANTS** page 2

## BOARD

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that churches may be facing their own financial challenges because of decreased offerings during their shutdowns due to the coronavirus. If so, their giving to the state convention through the Cooperative Program may be decreased.

Endel also shared some positive financial news that the convention ended 2019 with a \$45,000 surplus and began 2020 with the best

first quarter of CP giving in history, \$162,218 which was more than \$15,000 over budget requirements for the quarter. The convention has a positive checking account balance of \$293,834 and about \$1 million in reserves.

Despite the positive balances, Endel said that the loss of current income requires some decisions to be made. He then presented a recommendation from the administrative committee of “seven decisions

to make us financially sustainable.”

The seven decisions involved keeping core staff positions; dealing with the loss of funding for contract workers by either phasing them out or paying them out of budget funds at reduced rates; using the 2019 surplus to offset those unbudgeted expenses for contract workers of about \$20,000 and any future giving shortages; applying for a forgivable loan through the Pay-check Protection Plan

of the Small Business Administration; and setting aside \$100,000 from reserves to help MWBC churches in crisis (see related story, “*18 churches get MWBC grants*”).

The executive board approved all of the recommendations. Since then, MWBC has applied for and received a PPP loan of about \$44,000, all of which is expected to be forgiven according to SBA guidelines.

Core staff positions approved to be kept are three full-time positions (executive director, leadership catalyst, and intercultural catalyst/team facilitator) and three part-time positions (executive/financial assistant, prayer and partnership catalyst, and disaster relief catalyst). In addition the church planting field director will continue to be fully funded by NAMB.

Youth evangelism and children’s evangelism contract workers, no longer funded by LifeWay, will be phased out

Aug. 31. The student ministries catalyst position, no longer funded by LifeWay, will be reduced by 50 percent effective Aug. 31. Four contract positions impacted by a Mar. 31 NAMB funding freeze will be paid at 75 percent through Sept. 30, after which they will be eliminated unless NAMB reinstates funding. Those positions are spouse care advocate, Black church development, Hmong church development, and peer learning.

Endel concluded his presentation by encouraging churches to give to the annual state missions offering, noting that only 17 percent of churches did so in 2019. Increased gifts to the offering could help fund programs such as African American ministries, the Hmong Baptist National Association, the South East Asia Project, disaster relief, pastoral emergency, and children and youth ministries.

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## GRANTS

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have given a minimum of \$250 to the Cooperative Program and/or the MWBC state missions offering in 2018, 2019, or the first quarter of 2020.

Grant guidelines that accompanied the application provided to all MWBC churches noted that “partnership works both ways” and acknowledged the “generous help in funding mission efforts through our

convention to the ends of the earth” that has come from local churches for more than 60 years.

“Today, your church may need some help to make it through these days of challenge . . . through the financial crisis caused by the COVID-19 virus,” the guidelines continued.

Grant requests could be made for needs anticipated during April-June of 2020 in the following areas:

- Salary support for pastors who had lost

income due to either a decrease in church offerings or loss of other employment;

- Pastor annuity contributions to GuideStone (minimum contributions of \$105 per month for those already with GuideStone accounts to maintain the term life insurance provided by GuideStone and MWBC);

- Mortgage payments on church facilities;

- Utility bills and insurance for the church.

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## WELCOME

*continued from page one*

who began directing MWBC’s disaster relief efforts in 2005, becoming full-time in 2008. The Wedekinds actually retired Dec. 31, 2018, but agreed to continue part-time until their successor could be selected.

“I am both honored, excited and a bit scared to be your next MWBC disaster relief director,” Seamans said. “Kayla and I desire your prayers as we transition to this

new ministry.”

He has been active in the MWBC disaster relief ministry, serving during two floods in Reedsburg, as well as on international disaster relief efforts, the training for which he developed. They will continue to live in Reedsburg and will be raising funds for their program and personal support in their new role.

MWBC currently provides \$13,000 of support for the position and the rest is Mission Service Corps support to be

raised by the Seamans. Leo Endel, MWBC executive director, said that because of the need for additional funds for disaster relief personnel and program expenses, some churches are considering supporting the ministry over and above their current Cooperative Program and associational missions giving. Others may choose to provide support specifically for Seamans through Mission Service Corps.

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## DIGITAL

*continued from page one*

or printed. For reading on a computer, set the “view” to “actual size” or “fit width.” To best read on your phone or tablet, turn the device sideways to rotate the screen.

“We are saving thousands of dollars in print and mailing costs, but the main advantage we have in this new approach is being able to get the news to our readership more quickly,” said David Williams, editor. “The time between our submissions deadline and getting the news to our readers has

decreased from more than a month to just one week.” Also, Williams said, the minimal production costs enable the convention to increase frequency of publication from quarterly to bi-monthly.

“The paper was originally monthly, but we had to cut back to quarterly in 2009 to cut costs,” he said. “Now with the cost per issue greatly reduced we are immediately increasing to every other month and considering going back to monthly.”

**Back to the beginning**



# Some observations about racism

In the summer of 1965, right before I started kindergarten, my family and I were living on a small Air Force base just south of Kansas City.

It was hot, so my mom took my brother and me regularly to the public swimming pool to cool off. She was an avid reader, and there were



**Perspectives**  
**Leo Endel**

life-guards present, so I am sure she watched me out of one eye and

read out of the other.

I came home talking about my English friend that I had met at the pool.

A couple of days later we were

back at the pool and my mom discovered that my "English friend" was black. I have no idea why I thought he was English, but my mom got a big kick out of it!

I have often thought about this experience, not because I remember it (I don't), but because it has revealed to me several things later in life:

1) Little kids largely,

naturally connect. They do not see differences; they see a friend.

2) Kids do differentiate. Kids are not blind. They see skin color, hair color, size, weight, sex, culture, etc., clearly. They see variety with interest.

3) Kids learn to discriminate through watching or listening to others. Kids will begin to reflect the attitudes of their parents and other influencers around them. Unfortunately, some of these voices will be poisonous.

4) Often these kids have their attitudes hardened through conflict. Conflict is a regular part of life. In conflict we often look for allies and begin to exclude the "other side." The result is that there are gangs even where there are no gangs.



*"I have a dream that little black boys and little black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and girls and walk together as brothers and sisters." — Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., I Have a Dream Speech, August 28, 1963*

5) Instead, all of us need to see conflict as a means to resolution. Conflict can harden us, or conflict can be the first step to tearing down the "walls of hostility" around us (Eph. 2:14). These last weeks of national conflict can destroy us or they can be the door through which healing begins. I am praying for healing!

6) Racism is a sin against the Creator God, who made us all who we are, and a sin against our brothers and sisters. Jesus came to destroy the power of all sin. He alone can set us free from sin; that is why He came.

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

## 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.

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## What are you worried about?

The world gives us plenty to worry about.

Many worry about COVID-19. Following efforts to re-open, more than half of the states report increased coronavirus

cases. Last week my wife and I ventured back to a restaurant wearing our masks and sat in an isolated booth. We attend-

ed our first church service since March, again wearing a mask and sitting apart from our friends. The U.S. continues to lead the world in number of cases and deaths.

Students worry about their educations. Colleges, universities and schools remain undecided about whether they can open their campuses, and to what

degree. Many are preparing to continue online-education in the fall.

Some worry about their jobs. Stimulus checks have been spent and more than 20 million Americans remain unemployed. While job opportunities are improving, millions worry about their income after unemployment benefits run out.

Some worry about the stock market. Although it has made a dramatic recovery since its collapse in mid-March, the econ-

omy remains uncertain and a second wave of COVID-19 could trigger another dramatic downturn.

Some worry about the social upheaval and unrest that has swept across our country with demonstrations for racial equality in cities large and small. Racial icons of the past are being pulled down. The Confederate flag has been banned from NASCAR. The commissioner of the NFL has apologized



**Reflections**  
**Bill Tinsley**

## Southeast Asia Summit rescheduled

Due to ongoing COVID-19 travel restrictions, the International Mission Board informed us that they would not be able to bring their field personnel here for the Southeast Asia Summit on July 25.

Therefore, the summit has been rescheduled to May 21, 2021. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend this summit to expand your view of



**Intercultural**  
*Na Herr*

missions. IMB will be sharing specifically about current, realistic opportunities for going, praying, and giving in Southeast Asia for churches of all sizes.

I am currently in the beginning stages of organizing a team to go to Thailand for a short-term mission trip from July 9-23, 2021. This trip will consist of training national leaders in Bible and

theology, leading a Vacation Bible School for children, and possibly providing medical care to remote tribes and villages. We will be partnering with the IMB and the Hmong Baptist National Association to serve on the mission field.

If you are interested in participating in this mission trip, please send me an email to [herr@mwbc.org](mailto:herr@mwbc.org), or sign up at [www.mwbc.org/sea-harvest](http://www.mwbc.org/sea-harvest).

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

## Launch a community ministry this fall

Ministry leaders have been inundated with perspectives for handling change during the COVID-19 pandemic. Transitioning to online worship and preparing for a return to public worship have been daunting. Some pastors say they feel “depleted” or “paralyzed.” Other pastors insist this is the best time to re-invent themselves or their churches. I suspect the leader’s personality accounts for various reactions to these challenging times.

Church members are challenged at this time

too. Many of them are actively considering why they attend their church.



**Leadership**  
*Clint Calvert*

The chaos in our world can be a ladder to some productive changes the church has been postponing for one reason or another.

Short of a complete re-invention of ourselves and our churches could be the introduction of a community ministry. Unemployment, hunger, housing insecurity, disenfranchised grief, and anxiety are rising in our two states. We could mobilize our churches to meet one or more of these needs.

Two ideas to con-

sider are “Churches that Heal” and “Career Coaching.”

“Churches That Heal” is a mental health resource for churches and church staff. Dr. Henry Cloud integrates biblical teaching and psychology to address mental health issues. The resource includes video training for a sermon series, small group, and in depth training for church staff. The resources are available for purchase at [churchesthatheal.com](http://churchesthatheal.com).

“Career Coaching” is a free resource from the PEACE Plan at <https://thepeaceplan.com/covid-19/career-budget/>. It contains “step-by-step instructions for planning and implementing a six-session workshop to help those in your

## What history looks like

It was 40 years ago (on June 15, 1980) that God led my wife, family and me to start a church in Marshall, Minn. It was an exciting and challenging time, but we did not consider it a history-making event.



**Partnership and Prayer**  
*Steve Melvin*

However, looking over the ensuing four decades we can see how God led and blessed through highs and lows, great and small, high profile events

and common happenings, day in and day out, sometimes subtle, sometimes dramatic life-changing transformation. Ministry has happened over the years that now have become the history of the congregation.

Pastors during those 40 years include myself, David Sundeen, Jeff Morrison, Miles Rhode, John Groeneweg and current pastor Rob Heinz. More than 2,000 Sunday morning sermons have been preached, thousands of Sunday School lessons have been taught, countless ministry opportunities have taken place, innumerable contacts have been made, and an immeasurable number of prayers have been articulated.

In it all, God has been at work to accomplish His plan and purpose. It has not always been according to the plans of man, but God has been lifted up over the years.

When a seemingly small and insignificant group of people, called a “church” faithfully follow God’s leading, it makes history.

What does history look like? It looks like me living an ordinary life obediently over the years that God has given me. What does your church history look like?

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

community who are unemployed, underemployed, or seeking to advance their career.” The materials provide the information, coaching and support people need to succeed. The free kit includes a manual, teaching slides, teaching notes,

and participant handbook.

Consider launching a community ministry with your church this fall.

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



## MWBC Disaster Relief

Kayla and I stepped down from our ministry at Trinity Baptist Church, Reedsburg, Wis., on June 1, in order to serve the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention



### Disaster Relief

Ben Seamans

as your disaster relief catalysts (directors).

We are so grateful to have served with Dave and Jeanne Wedekind in various ways and locations and are excited to follow in their

shoes. We ask your continued prayers and patience as we work through this transition. We will be officing from our home in Reedsburg and are in the process of moving files, equipment and all that we need to function from there. There are many things that we need to learn and only a short time, it seems, in which to learn them.

During the riots in downtown Minneapolis, Dave and Jeanne established an incident command in Rochester and coordinated two chaplains from MWBC to serve as crisis counselors for law enforcement personnel and National Guard troops for one week. In that time they were able to work with more than 100 people to help them process out and decompress during the situation. Our prayers continue to go out for those who are ministering all over the country with the many communities affected.



Ben and Kayla Seamans

This month we will be working on the painting and maintenance of the older shower trailer that was vandalized last year, arranging and publicizing training events, and dispersing 300 gallons of hand sanitizer and 12,500 face masks. For details on receiving sanitizer or face masks, contact me or you church planting catalyst or director of missions.

Thanks so much to our churches and friends who support MWBC Disaster Relief and its many needs. Thank you to my home

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## Evangelism: the soul of church planting

Evangelism is the soul of church planting because evangelism is the soul of the church. God's mission is to spread His glory throughout His globe, but are the people you shepherd really evangelizing?



### Church Planting

Joshua Whetstine

connected to at some level: family, work, and community. We are all

born into family. We all work or hope to work, and we all live somewhere in community.

#### Family

Adam and Eve were supposed

to come together to have tiny little Adams and Eves to spread His glory throughout the world. That is still God's plan today. God plans to bless the world through the family. This rhythm is so critical that Paul said you couldn't lead the church if you can't lead well in this area.

#### Work

If you work fulltime, you spend half of your awake life at work. After God created the first family, He told them to

go to work.

#### Community

We all live somewhere, around someone.

How should you begin to equip your people to confess Christ in these rhythms?

#### Evaluate

When you have somewhere to be, you need to know where you're starting. Determine what you want to see and evaluate your congregation via individually completed surveys.

#### Equip

After you've evaluated, you'll quickly see the deficits you need to equip your people to reach.

#### Encourage

As you're equipping them, continue to celebrate and encourage the habits you want to see.

Start the process over and over . . .

*Joshua Whetstine is church planting field director for the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention.*

## Post-secondary education in Minnesota-Wisconsin

According to the North American Mission Board (NAMB) there are 22 million young adults studying in universities and colleges across the U.S. and Canada.

NAMB has identified them as one of the largest unreached people groups in North America.

Minnesota and Wisconsin together have more than 750,000 students. The University of Minnesota-Twin Cities (UM-TC) is the largest with more than 52,000, making it the sixth



### Student Ministries

Bob Smith

largest university in America. Wisconsin School of Professional Psychology in Milwaukee with 75 students is

the smallest in our two states.

Young adults between the ages of 18-25 will be confronted with more life changing decisions than at any other time in their life. The questions, "Who is Jesus and how will I respond to his call to follow him?" are questions that everyone and especially those in such a pivotal demographic should have the opportunity to consider.

When I came to the UM-TC in 1983 there

See EDUCATION page 8

# Good news from the associations

## BAY LAKES

Guy Fredrick, associational missions strategist, reports that church planting efforts are beginning to get back on track following the COVID-19 pause. One language pastor assessment is scheduled and existing works are gaining momentum.

Tom Stark has been approved as a church planter and is planting a church in Mequon, Wis. The new plant, Westlake Church, will be reaching people in the communities of Cedarburg and Mequon.

Six cars have been donated by the members of Freedom Road Biker Church in Belton, Texas, to help Wilkie Richmond, pastor of Eagles Wings Fellowship, reaching Native Americans on the Bad River Reservation and the Red Cliff Reservation. Both reservations are located near Ashland, Wis., at the very geographical top of Wisconsin. The Bell Baptist Association is also planning an August mission trip to the area. In addition, a four-wheel drive truck has been donated to Eagle Wings Fellowship by the West Central Baptist Association of Missouri.

## NORTHWOODS

Eagles Nest Baptist Church in Breezy Point reports attendance has doubled and May's offering of \$10,000 set an all-time record in the history of the church.

## SOUTHERN WISCONSIN

Jose Baker of Casa de Oracion Church in Janesville reports that two of their church plants in Mexico are watching their daily devotionals and their Sunday services. Their churches in Mexico are located in Jimenez and Tampico.

Many churches in the SWBA have been able to keep their giving at the same level and some have seen increases during the COVID-19 crisis.

While almost all mission trips to SWBA churches have been canceled for this summer, all of our partners continue to give financially to our churches and are making future plans to continue the partnership.

Ugorji Johnson Onwuka has been approved as a church planter and is starting Shalom Christian Assembly in Madison. This work is reaching both African immigrants and African Americans on the south side of Madison.

The partnership of the Southside Baptist Network has provided substantial funding to help Jairo Martinez who is planting a Spanish speaking church in Waterloo.

City on a Hill Church in Madison saw 18 people come to Christ on Easter Sunday through their Gospel invitation with online services.

Doxa Church of Madison has moved into their new building on Novation Parkway.

## TWIN CITIES

Brett and Kelina Toney, church planters in the Plymouth/New Hope area of the Twin Cities, report that God is answering prayers as they prepare to launch in the fall. At this point, 13 people from their partner church, Cities Church, have committed to be a part of their new work.

## LAKELAND

The church plant of Arabic Church of Milwaukee is averaging more than 400 views per week on their Facebook page. Issa Safadi says many Arabic speaking people in the local area and in the Middle East are watching his videos.

Don Bennett of Ephesians Missionary Baptist Church in Milwaukee is being sent out as a church planter in Racine, Wis. He and his wife Catherine will be going through our first ever virtual assessment on Sept. 23-24.

## SOUTHERN MINNESOTA

Redemption City Church in Rochester resumed in person meetings in a hotel rather than in the school where they had been meeting before the COVID-19 pandemic began. Pastor Adam Pohlman reports that during the shutdown, two people came to Christ and are now wanting to be baptized.

## 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.

## 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 for International Missions/Lottie Moon Christmas Offering

## DECEMBER

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

## WORRY

*continued from page three*

to those who took a knee to protest police brutality.

The list goes on. There are lots of things to worry about. Some big. Some small.

Worry can be a good thing. Like physical pain, worry can serve as a signal that we need to take action for ourselves and the welfare of others. But worry can also debilitate. All of us experience circumstances beyond our control. In such cases, worry can rob us of sleep, steal our energy and cripple our creativity.

Jesus clearly wanted us to live our lives free from debilitating worry. "Do not worry

about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear," He said, adding that "your heavenly Father knows that you need" those things. The secret, He said, is to "seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matt. 6:25-34).

*Bill Tinsley is a former executive director of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention. Appearing in various local newspapers around the country, his column "reflects" on current events and life experiences from a faith perspective.*

**Back to the beginning**



# People and places

**Jeff McBeth**, long-time pastor of First Baptist Church of Pewaukee, Wis.,



passed away Apr. 10 at the Avanti Rehabilitation and

Care Facility in Arbor Vitae, Wis., his home for the past three and a half years. He was 88.

He was born in Rotan, Texas, Dec. 6, 1932, beginning his life as one of eight sons in a farm family during the Great Depression. He graduated with honors from Plainview High School, then Wayland Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

His 51-year ministry career as a pastor began in Texas, then moved to Colorado and Canada before ending in Minnesota-Wisconsin. After his pastorate in Pewaukee, he served as interim pastor of Brown Deer (Wis.) Baptist Church. Throughout his time in Wisconsin he was an active participant in the work of both Lakeland Baptist Association and the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention.

He is survived by his wife of 66 years, Jane McBeth; two of his seven brothers; his daughter Vicki Fleming; two grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

**Steve Dyess**, assistant to the executive director of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention, will lead an online suicide prevention training event at 7 p.m., Tuesday, July 21. The Zoom meeting, hosted by MWBC, is titled "The Preventable Tragedy of Suicide."

Dyess is a former U.S. Army chaplain who was a master trainer for ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training). He has led training events across the U.S. to help combat the alarming rise of suicide among soldiers.

In anticipation of the training event, Dyess has been writing a series of articles on the prevention of suicide. For copies of those articles or to get login information for the Zoom training event, contact him at [dyess@mwbc.org](mailto:dyess@mwbc.org).



*Immanuel Baptist in Roseau, Wis., reports 53 enrolled in their June Vacation Bible School and they had great weather for the event.*



*On May 30 about 65 people joined virtually for an 8 a.m. Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention Zoom Prayer Meeting to lift up the city of Minneapolis and the nation. The 8 a.m. "Healing of the Nations" event used as its theme Revelation 22:3, "No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him."*

## How God is at work in the crisis

As we see the increasing numbers of COVID-19 cases and the deaths around the world, there are many reasons to be grieving and to have a healthy fear of the



**First Person**  
**Mark Millman**

virus. Yet we know that God is at work and that He often sees us grow in the valleys rather than on the mountain tops. So with

that in mind, we want to encourage you with how God is at work in the midst of the crisis.

• Many churches are now using Facebook, YouTube, Vimeo, and many other social media outlets for the first time.

• The Gospel has been preached through our own churches to many people around the world who would have never been watching before this event.

• Churches are seeing record numbers of people visiting their web sites and social media outlets

in our association and around the United States.

• Online giving has been increasing in many of our churches.

• Our churches have utilized many forms of technology to stay in touch with their congregations through Zoom, Google Hangout, and many other interactive venues.

• Families are spending more quality time together than they have had in years.

We could probably go on with other ways that God is using this time to get our attention to help us focus on Him as our ultimate source of life. We pray that your heart and mind are encouraged through God's Word and the evidences of His grace in our lives.

*Mark Millman is director of missions/church planting catalyst for Southern Wisconsin Baptist Association.*

# Ruling against New York worship orders praised

WASHINGTON (BP) – Defenders of religious freedom inside and outside the federal government praised a court decision to block enforcement of New York orders on the size of worship meetings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic that are more restrictive than those imposed on other gatherings.

Federal Judge Gary Sharpe ruled June 26 officials in the state and New York City could not enforce limits on outdoor religious gatherings or restrict indoor worship gatherings to 25 percent of capacity while permitting businesses to operate at 50 percent of capacity. In both contexts, however, participants must practice social distancing, Sharpe said.

Southern Baptist religious liberty leader Russell Moore said Sharpe “was right to rule that, while the state is well within its rightful authority to maintain public health, a state cannot single out religious bodies in order to treat them the way that it does not treat non-religious gatherings or institutions of the same kind.”

“The First Amendment guarantees religious liberty and equal treatment,” said Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, who added he is pleased Sharpe “maintained that crucial truth for our civic order.

“All of us must bear the burden and

accountability for protecting our neighbors and our families in this trying time. We can do that without compromising either public health or our First Amendment.”

The U.S. Department of Justice welcomed Sharpe’s opinion.

Assistant Attorney General Eric Dreiband called it “a win for religious freedom and the civil liberties of New Yorkers. Government cannot discriminate by protecting free speech and the right to assemble while threatening or limiting religious exercise – it must protect all rights guaranteed under the First Amendment.”

In granting a preliminary injunction, Sharpe said orders by Gov. Andrew Cuomo and New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio to combat the spread of the coronavirus were not “generally applicable.” They burdened the free exercise of religion guaranteed by the First Amendment to the two Catholic priests and three Orthodox Jews who brought the lawsuit.

Sharpe cited the support by Cuomo and de Blasio for large outdoor protests against racism as a demonstration of the discriminatory enforcement of their orders. Crowds gathered in early June in response to the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis that was captured on video.

Cuomo and de Blasio “could have just as easily discouraged

protests” for public health reasons without “condemning their message” and “exercised discretion to suspend enforcement for public safety reasons instead of encouraging what they knew was a flagrant disregard of the outdoor limits and social distancing rules,” Sharpe wrote. “They could have also been silent.

“But by acting as they did, Governor Cuomo and Mayor de Blasio sent a clear message that mass protests are deserving of preferential treatment.”

Sharpe also pointed to an exemption that “seems even more obvious” – the state authorization of outdoor graduation events limited to 150 people. “[T]here is nothing materially different about a graduation ceremony and a religious gathering such that defendants’ justifications for a difference in treatment can be found compelling,” he wrote.

Those regions in Phase 2 of New York state’s reopening are limited to 10 people for outdoor gatherings, while those in Phase 3 are restricted to 25.

The Thomas More Society, which represented the religious adherents who brought the suit, applauded Sharpe’s opinion.

Christopher Ferrara, special counsel for the Thomas More Society, said Cuomo’s coronavirus protocol “went right out the window as



*Thanks to a federal court decision, New York churches will be treated the same as other organizations when it comes to COVID-19-related restrictions. File photo by Taylor Field*

soon as he and Mayor de Blasio saw a mass protest movement they favored taking to the streets by the thousands. Suddenly, the limit on ‘mass gath-

erings’ was no longer necessary to ‘save lives.’”

De Blasio has been at the center of some

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## EDUCATION

*continued from page five*

were only a handful of Christian ministries and very few churches within commuting distance of the campus. Para-church groups and churches were reaching fewer than 3 percent of the campus population. Today student-focused networks like Grapepoint and The Salt Company are successfully reaching many in the UM-TC community and other campuses.

There are more than 9,800 international students in Minnesota and almost that many in Wisconsin. UM-TC and

the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW-M) have the most, but virtually every regional campus is home to students who come from as many as 130 countries.

Many international students come from countries where traditional mission opportunities are few or non-existent. Reaching the nations may be as easy as connecting with a college or university in your community. If you live in or near a college or university campus you can be on mission and you don’t even need a passport.

**Back to the beginning**



# High court affirms religious access to state programs

WASHINGTON (BP) — On June 30, the U.S. Supreme Court narrowly upheld a state tax credit scholarship program that includes religious schools, thereby maintaining its recent support of the right of faith groups to participate in government programs.

The high court voted 5-4 to overturn a Montana Supreme Court decision that invalidated a state program that provides a tax credit of up to \$150 for a donation to a Student Scholarship

Organization (SSO). Contributions to SSOs finance scholarships given to families for student tuition at private schools of their choosing. The program approved by the state legislature includes Christian and other religious schools.

The Montana high court invalidated the entire program in a 2018 opinion because the law includes religious schools. In overturning a lower court decision, the Montana justices said the plan violates the state

constitution's "no-aid provision" regarding religious schools.

That prohibition is one of many Blaine Amendments enacted in the 19th Century that discriminated against Catholics and have been used against school-choice programs, according to the Institute for Justice, which argued in behalf of the program before the federal high court. Blaine Amendments — named after a U.S. senator who introduced a similar federal

amendment — exist in 37 states, according to the institute.

Religious freedom advocates widely applauded the court's ruling.

Describing it as "the right decision," Russell Moore — president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) — said the scholarships in Montana's program "were not a funding of religion, nor an entanglement of the state with the church. The issue here is whether a

state-established scholarship program for private schools could discriminate against parents who chose to send their children to private schools that happen to be religious."

The opinion "is consistent with long-held American principles" that have been reaffirmed recently by the justices, Moore said. "Blaine Amendments have not advanced the cause of keeping distinc-

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# FREEWILL



**Do you have an up-to-date will?**

**Everyone needs a will!**

**Wills are the best way to take care of your family. Many people use their will to make their last tithe to their church.**

**this online service is**  
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# Mission Gifts from the Churches

## MINNESOTA WISCONSIN BAPTIST CONVENTION COOPERATIVE PROGRAM GIVING

January - June 2020

2020 CP Budget	\$295,000.00
2020 CP Receipts	\$317,188.78
OVER Budget YTD	\$22,188.78

NAME	CP	2019 LM*	2020 AA*
<b>BAY LAKES BAPTIST ASSOCIATION</b>			
Amherst, Amherst Bible Church	\$300.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Appleton, Fox Valley Hmong	\$180.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Appleton, Hmong Baptist Mission	\$338.45	\$145.00	\$0.00
Appleton, Valley	\$29,274.97	\$34,671.00	\$14,101.00
Black Creek, Community Bible	\$3,668.00	\$2,035.00	\$0.00
Clintonville, First Baptist Church	\$1,074.15	\$440.00	\$370.00
Green Bay, Graceway Fellowship	\$250.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Green Bay, Highland Crest	\$4,030.48	\$1,798.21	\$45.92
Neenah, Living Vine Church	\$30,344.84	\$1,405.00	\$350.00
Sheboygan, Mapledale Baptist	\$224.57	\$1,839.11	\$540.00
Stevens Point, Tapestry	\$1,684.60	\$528.00	\$0.00
Tilleda, Bethany Baptist Church	\$848.20	\$0.00	\$0.00
Waupaca, Fellowship Baptist	\$1,550.44	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>BLBA TOTAL</b>	<b>\$73,768.70</b>	<b>\$42,861.32</b>	<b>\$15,406.92</b>

## SOUTHERN WI BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Boscobel, Blue River Valley	\$657.10	\$150.00	\$150.00
Ft. Atkinson, Casa de Oracion	\$30.00	\$10.00	\$10.00
Janesville, Resonate Church	\$2,089.60	\$0.00	\$0.00
La Crosse, Crossway Church	\$0.00	\$758.00	\$0.00
La Crosse, New Hope	\$100.00	\$500.00	\$0.00
Madison, Campus Community	\$1,050.00	\$200.00	\$0.00
Madison, City on a Hill	\$3,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Madison, Doxa Church	\$14,145.81	\$0.00	\$0.00
Madison, East Madison Baptist	\$3,476.00	\$2,520.00	\$300.00
Madison, Hope In Christ Assembly	\$1,235.48	\$0.00	\$0.00

Madison, Livingstone Baptist	\$1,292.63	\$437.00	\$297.00
Madison, Midvale Baptist Church	\$8,403.23	\$4,016.00	\$200.21
Madison, Red Village	\$5,000.00	\$3,241.60	\$0.00
Madison, Sovereign Joy Baptist	\$1,321.21	\$0.00	\$0.00
Platteville, Rolling Hills	\$1,509.57	\$0.00	\$0.00
Portage, River of Life	\$1,499.56	\$298.97	\$0.00
Reedsburg, Trinity Baptist	\$8,625.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Sparta, Gospel Baptist Church	\$2,427.65	\$602.88	\$602.88
Sun Prairie, Transformation	\$0.00	\$2,528.23	\$0.00
Sun Prairie, United Hmong	\$3,014.23	\$0.00	\$0.00
Waterloo, Centro Biblico La Roca	\$30.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Waterloo, Cornerstone Church	\$600.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
WI Dells, Rock of Hope	\$1,200.00	\$1,825.00	\$0.00
WI Rapids, Church at Wazeecha	\$2,313.00	\$0.00	\$745.70
WI Rapids, First Baptist Church	\$300.00	\$80.00	\$100.00
<b>SWBA TOTAL</b>	<b>\$63,820.07</b>	<b>\$17,167.68</b>	<b>\$2,405.79</b>

## LAKELAND BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Bassett, Westosha Baptist Church	\$891.00	\$850.00	\$800.00
Brown Deer, Brown Deer Baptist	\$600.00	\$1,500.00	\$0.00
Franklin, Emmaus Fellowship	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$260.00
Kenosha, Fellowship Baptist	\$9,352.98	\$6,106.00	\$5,714.00
Kenosha, Missio Dei Fellowship	\$4,447.00	\$12,643.00	\$11,505.00
Kenosha, Parkside Baptist Church	\$2,542.46	\$1,321.00	\$0.00
Mequon, Westlake Church	\$300.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Ephesians Baptist	\$2,400.00	\$126.00	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Grace Point Church	\$333.56	\$0.00	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Greater Impact	\$0.00	\$18.25	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Hmong First Baptist	\$150.00	\$250.25	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Layton Avenue	\$9,708.16	\$3,930.56	\$3,214.77
Milwaukee, Mercy Memorial	\$450.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Milwaukee Arabic	\$34.28	\$0.00	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Monumental Baptist	\$284.00	\$540.00	\$400.00
Milwaukee, Mt Horeb Baptist	\$250.00	\$156.00	\$0.00
Milwaukee, Mt Pilgrim Miss.	\$600.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Mount Pleasant, Immanuel	\$4,110.89	\$1,255.00	\$100.00
Pewaukee, Crossroads Church	\$2,069.88	\$2,500.00	\$0.00
Pleasant Prairie, Pleasant Prairie	\$4,424.00	\$1,337.00	\$827.00
Racine, Hope Community Church	\$2,887.73	\$1,337.00	\$2,131.00
<b>LBA TOTAL</b>	<b>\$45,835.94</b>	<b>\$33,870.06</b>	<b>\$24,951.77</b>

## NEW YORK

*continued from page eight*

disputes over religious freedom during the pandemic. In late March, he warned that buildings of churches and other religious groups might be closed permanently if they continue to gather for corporate worship. The mayor oversaw in late April the scattering of reportedly hundreds of people gathered for the funeral of a Jewish rabbi, then threatened

to have people arrested in the future.

New York is not the only state in which churches and other religious groups have expressed concerns about policies during the pandemic that appeared biased against their meetings. Religious freedom organizations also have expressed concerns or worked to loosen restrictive policies in such states as California, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky,

Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nevada, North Carolina and Tennessee.

Southern Baptist leaders commended guidelines issued May 22 by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for restoring in-person worship gatherings. The guidance reminded state and local officials to take the First Amendment right of religious liberty into account when they institute

re-opening policies. No church or other religious group should be called on to enact “mitigation strategies” stricter than those requested of “similarly situated entities or activities,” according to the CDC.

The overwhelming majority of churches and other religious bodies have abided by government policies during the pandemic. This has resulted in such alternatives to in-person, corporate

worship as online and drive-in services.

Many Southern Baptist and other churches in some states have resumed in-person worship in recent weeks while following government guidelines. Some in Houston, however, returned to online services June 28 at the request of Harris County officials, who were responding to a spike in coronavirus cases.

**Back to the beginning**



# Mission Gifts from the Churches

## SOUTHERN MN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Austin, Austin Baptist Church	\$1,670.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Austin, Primera Iglesia Bautista	\$483.52	\$0.00	\$0.00
Chester, Chester Woods	\$1,311.20	\$1,145.00	\$30.00
Eyota, Hmong Baptist Church	\$513.90	\$919.00	\$0.00
Mankato, Hope Baptist Church	\$1,459.20	\$265.34	\$0.00
Marshall, Radiant Life Church	\$1,539.85	\$335.00	\$150.00
Red Wing, Hiawatha Valley	\$0.00	\$2,840.00	\$0.00
Rochester, Emmanuel Baptist	\$8,191.64	\$2,660.00	\$696.00
Rochester, Joyful Hope Baptist	\$50.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Rochester, Redemption City	\$11,459.06	\$0.00	\$0.00
Sartell, Park Fellowship	\$2,014.92	\$0.00	\$0.00
Viola, Viola Bible Church	\$1,603.22	\$815.00	\$200.00
Waseca, Faith Baptist Church	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$150.00
Willmar, Grace Baptist Church	\$50.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Winona, Cornerstone Community	\$1,843.94	\$2,125.93	\$1,590.00
<b>SMNBA TOTAL</b>	<b>\$32,190.45</b>	<b>\$11,105.27</b>	<b>\$2,816.00</b>

## TWIN CITIES METRO BAPTIST ASSN.

Amery, Journey Church	\$3,750.00	\$2,100.00	\$2,300.00
Bloomington, MN Kangnam Korean	\$600.00	\$485.00	\$952.00
Bloomington, Southtown Baptist	\$13,142.58	\$0.00	\$4,808.00
Bloomington, True Light Chinese	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Brooklyn Park, Ebenezer Community	\$1,200.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Brooklyn Park, North Center	\$4,343.49	\$396.00	\$240.00
Burnsville, Berean Baptist Church	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Coon Rapids, First Hmong	\$750.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Maple Grove, Northwood Community	\$1,166.69	\$0.00	\$0.00
Maple Grove, Unlock Church	\$3,878.62	\$0.00	\$0.00
Minneapolis, All Peoples Church	\$3,240.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Minneapolis, Gracepoint	\$600.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Minneapolis, Hope of Nations Fellow.	\$321.06	\$0.00	\$0.00
Minneapolis, Hope of Nations Gospel	\$207.54	\$0.00	\$0.00
Minneapolis, New Hope Baptist	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Minneapolis, Shalom Community	\$733.40	\$0.00	\$0.00
Minnetonka, Zion House of Prayer	\$250.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Monticello, First Baptist Church	\$500.06	\$50.00	\$370.00
New Prague, Calvary Church	\$12,562.29	\$0.00	\$0.00
Oakdale, Eternal Life Hmong	\$1,008.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Ramsey, Bethlehem Worship	\$325.00	\$0.00	\$200.00
Roseville, Roseville Baptist	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

St. Louis Park, First Ukrainian	\$250.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
St. Paul, Cities Church	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
St. Paul, Followers Of Christ Hmong	\$4,052.59	\$115.00	\$0.00
St. Paul, Iglesia Hispana Betel	\$675.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
St. Paul, Living Water Baptist	\$54.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
St. Paul, Salt City Church	\$9,800.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
St. Paul, Twin City Hmong	\$1,225.00	\$751.89	\$600.00
Sunfish Lake, Bethel Baptist	\$3,000.00	\$1,266.00	\$0.00
Sunfish Lake, Vietnamese	\$240.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>TCMBA TOTAL</b>	<b>\$80,175.32</b>	<b>\$5,163.89</b>	<b>\$9,470.00</b>

## NORTHWOODS BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Bemidji, Ridgewood Baptist	\$466.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Brainerd, Church on the Wise Rd	\$0.00	\$60.00	\$0.00
Cambridge, Cross Pointe Church	\$1,250.00	\$1,595.00	\$385.00
Crookston, Prairie Community	\$2,881.10	\$42.18	\$57.27
Ely, Berean Baptist	\$420.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Grand Rapids, Calvary Pines	\$1,304.75	\$0.00	\$120.00
Hill City, Hill City Baptist Church	\$400.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Pequot Lakes, Eagles Nest	\$2,888.88	\$60.00	\$0.00
Rice Lake, Hope Baptist Church	\$2,340.00	\$2,350.00	\$2,020.00
Roseau, Immanuel Baptist	\$2,130.12	\$280.00	\$850.00
Thief River Falls, Cornerstone	\$816.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Wadena, Grace Connection	\$380.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>NWBA TOTAL</b>	<b>\$15,276.85</b>	<b>\$4,387.18</b>	<b>\$3,432.27</b>

## OTHER

Eau Claire, Jacob's Well	\$5,100.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Eau Claire, One in Christ Church	\$1,021.45	\$659.00	\$20.00
Grantsburg, Living Hope Church	\$0.00	\$300.00	\$575.00
<b>OTHER TOTAL</b>	<b>\$6,121.45</b>	<b>\$959.00</b>	<b>\$595.00</b>

**MWBC TOTAL RECEIVED** **\$317,188.78** **\$115,514.40** **\$59,077.75**

\* LM: Lottie Moon Christmas Offering Giving 5/1/19 to 4/30/20

\* AA: Annie Armstrong Easter Offering Giving 7/1/19 to 6/30/20

NOTE: No giving received by MWBC-affiliated churches not listed above during stated giving periods

## DR

*continued from page five*

church of Trinity, Reedsburg, for putting MWBC disaster relief in their annual budget.

As the COVID crisis continues, we pray for your safety and for your ministries.

*Ben Seamans is co-director of disaster relief for the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention.*

**Back to the beginning**

## ACCESS

*continued from page nine*

tion between the church and the state, but instead have resulted in often arbitrary and incoherent policies that are needlessly discriminatory.

“As a Baptist committed to a free church in a free state and to the separation of church and state, I believe this ruling maintains those right freedoms and boundaries,” he said.

The high court’s

decision is “as much of a certain death blow [to Blaine Amendments] as we could have asked for,” said Diana Verm, senior counsel at Becket, a religious liberty organization.

“Our Constitution requires equal treatment for religious people and institutions,” she said. “The Court recognized the bigoted history of the Blaines, and that history makes them unconstitutional to the extent that they are used to discrim-

inate against religion. It was high time for the Blaine Amendments to bite the dust.”

Writing for the majority, Chief Justice John Roberts said the Montana high court’s decision violated the First Amendment clause that guarantees the free exercise of religion.

“The Free Exercise Clause protects against even ‘indirect coercion,’ and a State ‘punishe[s] the free exercise of religion’ by disqualifying

the religious from government aid as Montana did here,” Roberts wrote. “The no-aid provisions of the 19th century hardly evince a tradition that should inform our understanding of the Free Exercise Clause.

“A State need not subsidize private education. But once a State decides to do so, it cannot disqualify some private schools solely because they are religious.”

**Back to the beginning**



**Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention**

# **State Missions Offering**

**Support ministries in our state convention that have a direct impact on the communities and people we love**

<b>25%</b>	<b>Disaster Relief</b>
<b>15%</b>	<b>Urban Ministry</b>
<b>15%</b>	<b>Cross-cultural Missions</b>
<b>10%</b>	<b>Hands of Hope</b>
<b>5%</b>	<b>Children Ministries</b>
<b>5%</b>	<b>Called Out Youth Camp</b>
<b>5%</b>	<b>WMU</b>
<b>10%</b>	<b>Internships</b>
<b>10%</b>	<b>Pastoral Emergencies</b>

**Convention Goal:**  
**\$60,000**

[www.mwbc.org/smo](http://www.mwbc.org/smo)