

Steeple Stories

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The newsletter of North Shore Baptist Church

5244 N. Lakewood
Chicago, IL 60640

A Summer of Service Leadership

As is usually the case at NSBC, many of members went out over the summer to represent the church at a variety of events all over the world. In this edition of Steeple Stories, we offer reflections from participants of some of these trips and service projects. Many thanks to **Dawn Noldan** for all her hard work collecting reflections and photos and putting this newsletter together.

Blessings to all the hands that performed the church's ministry beyond its walls. May we continue on into this new program year.

~ In Christ, Pastor Kathryn



Missionaries and delegates commissioned at joint worship in May.

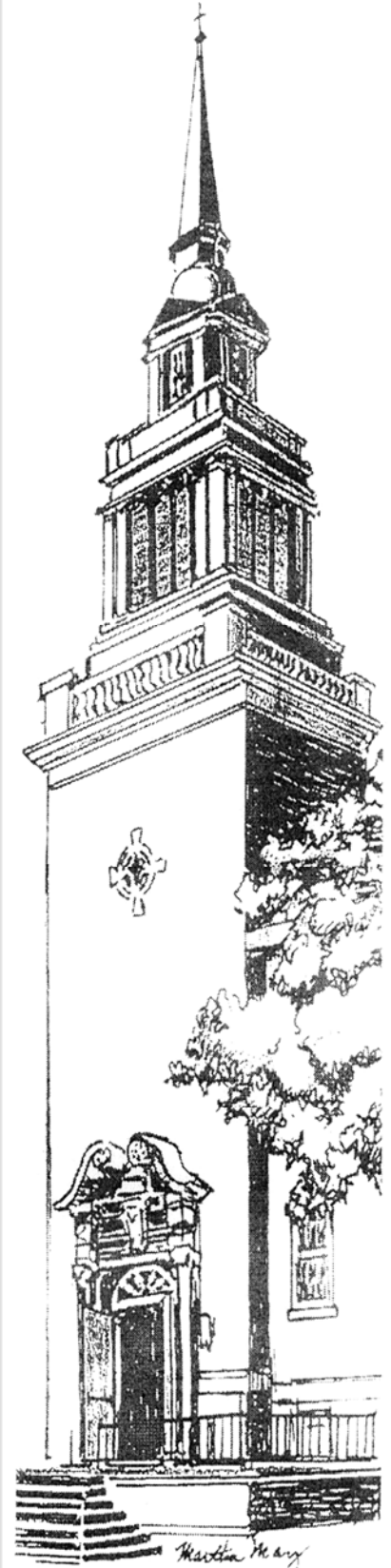
ABC-USA Biennial Mission Summit Virginia Beach, Virginia

In the aftermath of the May shootings, the city of Virginia Beach welcomed over 1,000 American Baptists from all over the world with their Southern hospitality. We, in turn, offered our prayers of love and support to their sorrowful hearts. This Biennial was like attending a family reunion, getting to see friends and family that you have waited a long time to see again or a chance to meet and make new friends. All sent their warmest greetings back home to their North Shore family. Saying goodbye after such an inspirational weekend made us grateful that we could look forward to July 2021 when we could meet again in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Won't you join us?

Rev. Michael Ware: My time at Biennial is always one of reconnecting with old friends and getting updated on ABCUSA life. There were many old connections made and even some new ones begun. This year was special because I had the opportunity to experience the Biennial with church members in attendance.

Ashley and Jeff Whitaker, along with myself attended a morning session together on Mass Incarceration. When the session was over, we just looked at each other afterwards and said, we must get involved in this work! So, North Shore get ready, we will be talking about ways in which we can get involved around mass incarceration. We plan to bring our learning back to NSBC in the hopes the same fire we felt will be a spark for ministry work in Chicago.

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Yanira Silva: This being the first time attending, the Biennial was a very exciting and learning experience for me. Being surrounded by so many people from all over the world that are trying to carry on the work of God here on this world was very fulfilling. I really enjoyed being able to praise together in so many languages made me think that we are in this together in one spirit. It was great to see old members from North Shore during this time. Seeing and hearing of how others are working hard re-ignited the need in me to work harder not only in our church, but also outside the church. We need to light the fire of working together through our congregations, hand in hand young and old.

Madison McClendon: While we had many opportunities at the Biennial Mission Summit to worship, fellowship, learn, and grow, the holy moment I witnessed wasn't on the program. For many years, the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists, a small group dedicated to welcoming LGBTQ+ Christians in our denomination and creating a space for them, has had to hold their meetings off-site. But we were there this year, holding a small members meeting for celebration and prayer and sharing in a room in the Virginia Beach Convention Center. There, we heard from Aidsand Wright-Riggins, the former Director of the American Baptist Home Mission Society. He has long supported AWAB, even in the hardest days when no one wanted to be associated with LGBTQ+ Christians for fear of ostracism and exclusion.

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From August 3-8, an intergenerational team performed mission & service projects in Dubuque, IA.

Upcoming Mission Conferences

Radical. Redeemed. Ready. Celebrating Ministering Women will take place June 16-19, 2020 at the Green Lake Conference Center in Green Lake, Wisconsin. www.RadicalRedeemedReady.com

Baptist World Alliance Celebration will take place July 22-26, 2020 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. bwa2020.org

BPFNA/Bautistas por la Paz Summer Conference "Peace Camp" will take place in July 2020 in San Diego, California. www.bpfna.org

American Baptist Home Mission Societies' Space for Grace will take place September 21-25, 2020 in Kansas City, Missouri. www.abhms.org

ABCUSA Biennial Mission Summit will take place June 25-27, 2021 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. www.abc-usa.org

Service Project: The Chicago Period Project

Peggy Griffin said: “It’s great that we are doing this for women and girls around the world, but what about those here in Chicago?”

So here we are, collecting sanitary supplies in the blue bins that you will find in the Warner Welcome Center and Howel Hall. Each time the bins are filled, the contents will be delivered to The Chicago Period Project which delivers these monthly staples to local pantries, shelters, and women’s prisons.

These are the items which are most requested: TAMPONS; MENSTRUAL PADS; PANTY LINERS; WIPES; MINI HAND SANITIZER; WOMEN’S UNDERWEAR



You may also donate: individually wrapped chocolate bars, 12 ounce bottles of water and toilet paper. For more information, please see **Peggy Griffin, Yanira Silva or Dawn Noldan.**

Service Project: Chicago Days for Girls

Since November 2018, several women have begun active participation in sewing sanitary kits for girls and young women. Days for Girls began in 2008 when Founder and CEO Celeste Mergens was working with a family foundation in the outskirts of Nairobi, Kenya where she began assisting an orphanage.

Celeste learned that girls were sitting on cardboard for several days each month, often going without food unless someone would bring it to them. This set in motion her first intervention - disposable pads. But Celeste and her team quickly discovered a major problem - without any place to dispose of the pads, this was neither a viable nor a sustainable solution. It was time for Plan B: a washable, long-lasting pad.

The first Days for Girls Kits were quite different from the design in use today. Each of the 28 iterations that followed would be informed by extensive feedback and designed to meet unique cultural and environmental conditions in communities throughout the world. What would eventually become clear in the years following Days for Girls’ beginning was just how much of a difference hygiene solutions would make in assisting women and girls to break the cycle of poverty and live lives of dignity. Today, Days for Girls has reached more than **one million** women and girls in **125+ countries** with [DfG Kits](#) and [menstrual health education](#). This translates into over 115 million days of dignity, health, and opportunity!

—Days for Girls website

For more information, please speak to **Peggy Griffin, Margaret Whitenhill, Yanira Silva or Dawn Noldan.** Your time, talents and donations are very welcome; members donations are matched through the Wilber Warner Grant. Dates of upcoming Sew-ins are listed below, times and locations will be announced as available.

September 12, 2019 (*Saint Theresa of Avila Church*) October 3, 2019
November 32, 2019 January 20th, 2020
February 20, 202 March - fund raiser - TBD
April 23, 2020 May - Pack party - TBD

BPFNA/Bautistas Por la Paz/Global Peace Conference, Cali, Colombia

This is the first time that these two conferences have been held jointly. Next year, the BPFNA conference will be held in San Diego, California with a side mission trip to Tijuana, Mexico. Consider joining those representing NSBC.

Jim Fong: The GLOBAL BAPTIST PEACE CONFERENCE in Cali, Columbia was a joint conference of several peace organizations from around the world. It was organized with daily devotional, plenary, and smaller group workshop sessions. We learned of the peace process in Colombia, where there was a peace agreement to end the civil war 2 years ago, yet there is still violence and difficulty to implement peace. We learned about wars in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and elsewhere. There are many similarities of unfair development of resources and political power. The concerns of peace also involve religious and ethnic differences, gender, and environmental issues. We looked at the causes of violence, and their Biblical contexts. We struggled with ways to make peace.



Nicholas Fong: This year, my family and I went to Cali, Columbia to partake in the various activities this Peace Conference had to offer. Many of the workshops dealt with Peace, issues of Racism, and also peace making overall. I was apart of the Children's section, which was lead by a group called World Vision, which looked at peace in general. The first few days, the other children and teens in my class talked about the meaning of peace, and how peace could be found. We also got to know each other, and also play a few games that build teamwork. It was a fun experience! I got to meet some old friends, make some new ones, and created 3 different pieces of art and a few bracelets for people to remember me by.

Viola Mayol: The Global Peace Conference brought together about 400 people representing more than 30 countries. What an amazing gathering! What moved me the most were the songs we learned and sang. African rhythms, Taize music, Afro-Caribbean beats, Hip-Hop, Waltz, Korean praise, Spanish songs, and some familiar hymns sung by indigenous people of Colombia. A joyful noise it was! Music can draw us together, which happens for me when I am not well versed with a particular language. Sometimes I will sing sometimes not. Not singing allows me to truly listen. It also gives me the freedom of participating in it with my whole body as I sway, dance, or clap and wave my hands. After the conference, from time to time, a tune would pop up in my head and then I remember how I mispronounced the words, how I skipped a beat, or how I sang out of tune but it did not matter. The cacophony of our voices was beautiful and we were together.

Rev. Kathryn Ray: One of the salient themes at the Conference was forgiveness. Individuals who had suffered violence and lost family members shared that forgiveness was an essential component of what peace meant to them. They taught me that forgiveness is not a fixed point, but rather an ongoing process,. I also learned that knowing the truth and being able to tell their story was an essential part of forgiveness, even more important than retribution. I had not previously considered forgiveness as a part of peacemaking. These reflections were eye-opening for me.

Rev. Michael Ware: What an amazing and exhausting experience. As part of the programming team, I had daily meetings and duties, and had the pleasure of hearing wonderful compliments from so many attendees. It is a great feeling to know so many were blessed by the leaders and presenters of the conference. Secondly, it was truly an honor to preach at the conference. My message ,entitled "Living in a World with Violence" was a moment which made me proud to be a voice for God and a pastor of NSBC. This was the highlight for me to address nearly four hundred peacemakers from around the world and know our hearts were in one accord. The warmth and affirmation I received before and after my message carried me the rest of the week.

(Biennial reflections, concluded from page 2)

Through tears, he spoke of his uncle, a man who mentored him and was like a brother to him, who died of AIDS during the AIDS crisis of the 80s and 90s. His family refused to even talk about how he died. When Aidsand came to put flowers on his uncle's grave a few years later, learned that his family had not chosen to mark where his beloved uncle lay. Aidsand spoke the names of people he knew who were unable to be true to who they are—first names only, because their secret selves cannot be revealed to the world just yet. Suddenly, the meaning of his support for AWAB over many years became clear. It mattered because he knew us—he knew LGBTQ+ Christians, and he loved them, and his heart was pierced with care and love for the suffering they had faced. He knew something of the sufferings of Christ, because he had faced and experienced sorrow alongside his brothers and sisters and siblings on this side of heaven.



Pastor Michael pauses for a photo with Pastors Carol McVetty and Doug Harris

Dawn Noldan: Attending the Biennial was truly a gift: a soul-reenergizing, faith-affirming gift. From seeing old North Shore friends and meeting new friends, I was able to plug into a larger American Baptist family of diverse, enthusiastic and powerful witness to the love and power of our God in this hurting society and world. My most precious moment was when a worship leader sang "Jesus loves me this I know because my mother told me so," yes, I shed a tear or two. The AB Women in Ministry, AB Women's and Girls Ministries are vibrant ways of channeling our energies and resources into motivating all women and girls to take an active part in the life and leadership of our church. I encourage everyone to consider attending the next Biennial in San Juan.



Pastor Kathryn, Rev. Veronica Johnson, Rev. David Gregg, and Madison McClendon at the biennial

Ashley Whitaker: Since my first time attending biennial in 2011, it's become a highlight of my life every other year. Gathering with our American Baptist siblings in Christ is indeed like a family reunion, albeit with religion and faith as the centerpiece, rather than a dangerous topic of conversation to be avoided at all costs! My eye is toward the mission of the Young Adult Caucus, a group dedicated to promoting the full inclusion of young adults at all levels of our denomination. The fellowship and fun that inevitably grows out of this official/unofficial cohort during these three days is always a highlight of the weekend for me, and also provided an important forum when we found ourselves in disagreement with some of the messages and topics proclaimed over the weekend. Even though our responses to such painful experiences varied

within our gathering, our time of deep and prayerful reflection together remains one of the most powerful memories I have taken home with me from this Mission Summit. It is also a great encouragement to me that many issues of justice (such as the presentation on ending Mass Incarceration), inclusion (the AWAB annual meeting), and diversity .

Jeff Whitaker: "We can do more together than any one of us can do alone" My pastor back in Denver, Rev. Brian Henderson would often say this, and it is a great summary of what the Biennial Mission Summits are all about. It was great to reconnect with Brian and many of our other Baptist friends, but the best part of the Summit for me was to share ideas with other churches about how we can better be the hands and feet of Christ in the world. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s home church, Ebenezer Baptist, came to share about the great recent work they have done to help the victims of our criminal injustice system. They shared about how they not only helped bail out those who had not yet been convicted of a crime, yet couldn't afford bail. They shared about their Expungements Day at the church, where they brought in legal experts who helped people seal their past criminal records that were keeping them from getting a job and housing. These are real practical things that we could look to do to help our neighbors right here in Chicago.



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North Shore Baptist Church

"Serving All God's People
From This Corner"

We're on the Web:

www.northshorebaptist.org



LBRC Yard Sale and Craft/Vendor Fair Fundraiser Saturday, September 7, 2019, 9:00am–2:30pm

For over 20 years, North Shore Baptist Church has participated in the Lakewood-Balmoral Residents' Council Yard Sale by providing a place to refresh our visitors with a cup of cool water and some wonderful home-made food (including pupusas from El Salvador, noodles from Burma/Thailand, hot dogs/pulled pork/Sloppy Joes from the US and home-baked goods from all over). Please join us in the fun!

Volunteers are needed to:

- set-up booths, tables and chairs (8:00-10:00am)
- prepare and serve food during the day (10:00-2:00pm)
- take down and clean-up following close (2:00-3:00pm)

Crafters (handmade/homemade ceramic, crocheted, self-published, sewn, designed items) and Vendors (for example: Tupperware, Pampered Chef, Avon, etc.) are invited to complete an application for a table which can be found on the church website. Please note that these are new and original items, not used, nor a flea market. Any questions can be addressed to Dawn Noldan, dlnoldan@gmail.com. Proceeds from the food sales and table fees benefit Missions projects of North Shore Baptist Church including denominational conferences, mission trips and White Cross projects.

If you would like to receive *Steeple Stories* by e-mail (in color!), contact us at office@northshorebaptist.org