



1 Oak Ridge Road, Bldg. 3, #4A,
West Lebanon, NH 03784
*603-643-4201 888-262-3223

Rev. Dale Edwards
Region Minister

Christ says, "Behold, I make all things new." *Rev. 21:5*

THE AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF VERMONT AND NEW HAMPSHIRE

**"Mission at our Doorstep:
Renewal, Restoration, and New Beginnings"**



August 2015 Newsletter



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Food for Thought

"In the end, coming to faith remains for all a sense of homecoming, of picking up the threads of a lost life, of responding to a bell that had long been ringing, of taking a place at a table that had long been vacant."
— Malcolm Muggeridge

"Dear God, I am so afraid to open my clenched fists! Who will I be when I have nothing left to hold on to? Who will I be when I stand before you with empty hands? Please help me to gradually open my hands and to discover that I am not what I own, but what you want to give me."
— Henri J.M. Nouwen, *The Only Necessary Thing: Living a Prayerful Life*

"Man's thought is always of the punishment that will come to him if he sins. God's thought is always of the glory man will miss if he sins. God's purpose for redemption is glory, glory, glory."
— Watchman Nee, *The Normal Christian Life*

"Those in whom the Spirit comes to live are God's new Temple. They are, individually and corporately, places where heaven and earth meet."
— N.T. Wright, *Simply Christian: Why Christianity Makes Sense*

[From Our Region Minister: “My Solitary Place”](#)

(Note: Dale uses the term “poustinia” in his article. A poustinia is a small, sparsely furnished cabin or room where one goes to pray & fast alone in the presence of God. It has its origin in the Russian word for desert.)

This spring I thought I needed a new hobby, so I purchased eight chicks. I only wanted 5 or 6 and assumed a couple would die. But chicks must be stronger than when I was kid, because they all lived and now I have a coop with 8 pullets. In the coop is a plastic milk crate where I sit early in the morning when I go out to feed and water the chickens. I am getting up earlier, a little after dawn. The chickens ruffle from their roost and I sit on the milk crate and wait for them to wake up and come and greet me.



But I am now finding that my chicken coop milk crate is becoming a rather sacred spot. With the chickens milling about, and the crows crowing outside, somehow a coop becomes a poustinia; dim, hidden and simple. A plastic milk crate, pine shavings under foot, and a bird or two or three on my knees, becomes an extra-ordinary place to pray. And then as the sun is moving higher, I exit the chicken coop to be with others who do not have feathers.

We are all familiar with Mark 1, where Jesus gets up early in the morning and goes to a “solitary place” to pray. Peter and the disciples go searching for him and Jesus’ answer to them is he is now ready to go to the villages, preaching and casting out demons. Wow! I don’t really feel that ready for the world when I leave my coop, but there is this ideal rhythm of spiritual habit, to disengage so one might engage, a releasing of the world for a returning to the world. Over and over again the Christian is invited to emulate Christ in what can be a sacred life-forming rhythm; stepping back, as the first step, to stepping into once again, like warming on the beach before jumping back into the cold waters of the Atlantic.

One of the soul benefits of the disengagement/engagement rhythm is keeping the world in perspective. From the solitary place we learn to respond and not react. I wonder if the Holy Spirit forms our minds so we have a greater sense of the eternal. This sense of God’s eternal holiness gives clarity of thought and peace of mind. Jesus’ mind was set on the day, or days, ahead. He set his mind upon Jerusalem. He lived an intense life with others and an abandoned life with Father and Spirit. I wonder if Jesus ever prayed about the things he didn’t want to do that day. I wonder if “not my will but yours” was a practiced prayer before Gethsemane. Maybe the lesson is that in leaving the world and then engaging the world, that the world is less likely to consume us. One then might live with confidence and joy in the great tension between the City of God and the City of the World.

Maybe in the most hidden and simple of poustinias is the place where God forms us for acts of grace and power, of which often we are not even aware.

In Christ, Dale

[Prayer Concerns](#)

Prayers for and condolences to **Rev. Greg Vigne** (Whitefield Community Baptist Church) and family on the death of his mother, Jean Vigne, who passed into glory on July 3.

Continued prayers of healing for **Rev. Karen Mendes** (First Baptist Church, Burlington) as she continues to receive chemotherapy treatments.

[Email Update](#)

New email address for Bow Lake Free Will Baptist Church, Strafford, NH: bowlakechurch@myfairpoint.net.



American Baptist Women's Ministries VNH

American Baptist Women's Ministries is a Christ-centered ministry with a commitment to encourage and empower women and girls to serve God.

Hello from your new President. I hope to be as effective as Marsha was, but we have different personalities and ways of working and communicating. The first thing I have to report is that 30 women gathered for our annual retreat and business meeting last month. It was a good time of fellowship and learning about the missionaries that have been assigned to the VNH region and understand the Crisis at the Borders. Mary Hamblett led us in trying to understand what it is like to be an immigrant in a strange country.

In our business meeting we had reports from the officers. I told about attending the National Board meeting of the ABWM/USA in Kansas City, KS. It was an eye opening experience for me. A lot of things were discussed to help lead us into the future through programming and finding materials that we can use in our churches and gatherings. Next year we are celebrating the 65th birthday of the ABWM. There will be a party at the ABWM National Gathering in Washington, D.C., in July 2016.

We elected new officers for 2015-2016. The list will be updated in the new Directory to be completed before our Fall Gathering in October, tentatively scheduled for the 24th at the Trinity Baptist Church in Hanover, NH.

Susan Whittemore presented an excellent program on "The Crisis of the Heart". She led us in an activity to help us identify our own crisis and how we felt it helped us grow closer to God. She gave us five key indicators to help us see the Spiritual condition of our heart: 1. Emotions; 2. Moments; 3. Fun; 4. People; and 5. whispers. She gave us definitions of each one to help us find where we felt our condition was. We missed all that were unable to be there with us.

Prayers and Blessings to all, Celia Taylor, President (kaela@tds.net)

SAVE, SAVE, SAVE For Missions

ABWM VNH is continuing to collect the following items for missions:

Campbell Soup labels, General Mills BoxTops for Education, beverage can flip tops, fronts of greeting cards, eye glasses, hearing aids, cancelled stamps, S&H Green Stamp books or other stamp books. For more information or to mail your items, please contact Mrs. Josephine Clark at 938 Shelburne Rd, Apt. 2, South Burlington, VT 05403 or 802-735-3455 or Mrs. Alys Martinson at 1 Luneau Court, Northfield, NH 03276.



Ministers Council of ABCVNH

SIGN UP NOW - Fall Cruise on Lake Winnepesaukee

Come join your colleagues, spouses and families on Saturday, September 12 aboard the Mt. Washington for a buffet lunch cruise on Lake Winnepesaukee. The cruise will feature music and plenty of time for fellowship while enjoying the beauty of the lake. We will leave the dock at Weirs Beach at 12:30 sharp and return about 3:00. (It's a 2½ hour cruise, so we don't have to worry about getting stranded on some unknown island!)

This cruise is free for Ministers Council members, their spouses and their minor children. Non-members can attend for \$38. Widowed spouses of pastors are invited to attend for free. Sign up before August 15th by contacting Peter Bolster at bolster@tds.net or 603-776-1622.

If you have not yet joined the Ministers Council, you must join before August 15 in order to cruise for free. Lifetime members of the National Ministers Council must still pay local council dues of \$25.

Fall Workshops

Mark your calendars for two workshops coming your way:

“Help Your Church and You Face Conflict”

Thursday, October 8 from 9:00-4:30 p.m. at Singing Hills Christian Fellowship, Plainfield, NH.

Workshop Leader: Rev. Margaret Marcuson

Most pastors experience conflict when they want to introduce change to their congregation. This workshop will deal with how to handle church conflicts and the process of change. It is sponsored by the Region, the Ministers Council and the Center for Career Development and Ministry. Registration information and cost will be available in August.

Rev. Margaret Marcuson helps clergy make their lives easier. She speaks and writes on leadership and works with church leaders nationally as a consultant and coach. Margaret is the author of *Leaders who Last: Sustaining Yourself and Your Ministry* and *Money and Your Ministry: Balance the Books While Keeping Your Balance*. An American Baptist minister, Margaret was pastor of the First Baptist Church of Gardner, MA, for 15 years. She now lives in Portland, Oregon. Find out more at www.margaretmarcuson.com and read her two latest blogs on church conflict.

Boundaries and Ethics Workshop

Saturday, October 31 from 9:00-4:00 p.m. at Singing Hill Christian Fellowship, Plainfield, NH.

Workshop Leader: Rev. Linda Lea Snyder.

Details, registration information and cost will be available in August.

Sponsored by the Region and the Center for Career Development and Ministry.

Register now for the 7R's of Sanctuary Program

Registration for the 7Rs of Sanctuary program is now open and applications are being received for a year-long cohort to begin in Massachusetts in September 2015. Apply now by clicking [here](#).

The 7Rs of Sanctuary is a program designed to help leaders realize greater personal and professional efficacy in leadership by integrating contemplative, spiritually-grounded practices, both personal and communal, into their daily lives. Through this 12-month program, participants will engage in a variety of contemplative practices, alone and together, while learning strategies that will help them address some of the most pressing leadership challenges. The results will be transformative as leaders attain increased well-being and wholeness for themselves in community, while mastering skills that will strengthen their organizations. The program features one three-day residency to be held September 28-30, 2015 in Arlington, MA; four one-day follow-up sessions to be scheduled quarterly, supplemented by reading, reflection and peer group learning.

Time Away for Pastors

CAMP SENTINEL: Sentinel has dedicated a place of rest for pastors, missionaries and ministry leaders and their families. As you nourish others for God's purpose and glory, it is important to take time and “be still”. There is no charge for this experience. Contact Pastor Kevin at kevin@campsentinel.org to schedule your time of rest and renewal.

ALTON BAY CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE CENTER: Pastors are invited to spend up to two nights at the Conference Center on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday free of charge (subject to availability). There are no meals included, just a comfortable room, quiet time for study and reflection, and the natural beauty of the Lakes Region of New Hampshire.

FOREST HAVEN: A place of healing hospitality and spiritual refreshment for pastors and other Christian workers. 29 Hogg Hill Road, Bradford NH; 603-938-2964; Revrandy3795@sbcglobal.net. Looking for a get-away place? Forest Haven is an apartment attached to the home of Randy & Jill Thompson, who have answered God's call to provide this place for you. It is a faith-based ministry so there is no charge. Randy is Pastor at Immanuel Community Church in Concord. Visit their website at <http://foresthavennh.org>.

Check out the Ministers Council's website for online resources, information about forming a “Together in Ministry” small group, a monthly newsletter, Women in Ministry information, ministry stories and more. Go to www.ministerscouncil.com. Also check out the Ministers Council's Facebook page: [click here](#).

25 to Life

Beach Party – Thursday, August 20 at Hampton Beach, NH

Since a long-term ministry commitment involves the entire family, this event is for the whole family - spouses and children are very welcome and encouraged to come!

Beach Location: Arrive at Hampton Beach any time after 10:00 a.m. We'll be across from the Pelham Resort Motel, which is at 121 Ocean Blvd., Hampton, NH, - right near a playground and bathrooms. Ocean Blvd. is one way at this point, (north) and in order to access the best parking for the playground, you will need to take Ashworth Ave. south until you can make the sharp left onto Rt. 1A, also known as Ocean Blvd. You can pay for parking with a debit card if you don't bring quarters. Plan to bring your own picnic lunch.

Dinner Location: We'll meet at 5:00 for dinner at the 1st Baptist Church, 36 Winnacunnet Rd, Hampton NH.

More information and RSVP: Rev. Abraham Gross (802) 226-8113 or abraham.gross@abcvnh.org. Or RSVP at our Facebook Event Page www.facebook.com/events/101768510172522/. We will need to know the number attending for dinner.

25 to Life is an initiative to support and encourage long-term ministry in northern New England. Visit us online at www.25tolifeforjesus.com.



*The purpose of Sentinel is to create a welcoming environment for Christian relationship building and spiritual renewal.
Within the stillness of God's creation and through the guidance of the staff,
people are moved from discovery into authentic relationships with others and with Jesus Christ.*

We are so excited to be in the midst of our 66th summer season here at Camp Sentinel! This summer's Bible study theme is *Home Building 101*. We are diving into Matthew 7:24-29 and teaching the campers what it means to live a life built on Jesus Christ, our Rock and Firm Foundation.

God is moving at Sentinel! Sentinel has experienced its 10th straight summer of increased camper numbers; more and more campers are experiencing God's love through Sentinel's mission. May God receive all the Glory for His growth!

This past May, Ben Stiles joined the full-time team as Sentinel's Ministry Operations Director. He has been working at camp for the past five summers and has now stepped up to fill the developing needs of this God-growing Christian camp. We are daily reminded that **God > I!**

We are undergoing some major construction projects including a dining hall expansion. Over the past two months we have added a 30'x40' addition to our existing dining hall. This dining hall expansion will allow us to seat our full sleeping capacity of 200 guests. Other projects include a 4 season Wixson retreat cabin for those in ministry to find rest and renewal, a new pines camping area bathroom, and completing the upper tier of our new parking lot. We have been greatly blessed with continuing support from friends and alumni. With God ALL things are possible!

You are invited to celebrate with us on Monday, October 12th (Columbus Day) from 11am-4pm. Come and see the new dining hall and all that is happening! There will be games in the field, zip line and a BBQ lunch. RSVP to info@campsentinel.org.

"New buildings have been built and new programs added because our reason for being remains the same." The reason is taking in the stillness of these 629 acres and lifting our eyes to the hills to grow in our relationship with God.

See you on the mountaintop,
Rev. Kevin Van Brunt "Pk", Executive Director, Sentinel Ministries



Above, clockwise from top left: 1) The new addition to the Lodge. 2) Two campers join in the fun of opening up the new addition. 3) A view into the new addition from the dining room. 4) Work continues on the upper parking lot. Below, left: the new Wixson cabin rises from the foundation. Below, right: Kevin Van Brunt, pictured, & Rafe Longver are doing much of the construction.





Homebuilding 101 *Matthew 7:24-28*

2 more weeks to come to overnight camp this summer:
Jul. 26-Aug. 1 & Aug. 9-15. Sign up at www.campsentinel.org.

Senior Ventures – August 16-19

Adults 50 & over, come enjoy some time in the stillness (and enjoy a good night's sleep on our NEW Tempurpedic mattresses!) Adult camp for the "young at heart"! A relaxed schedule makes for a great three days of rest and renewal.

Campers stay in the lodge or in cabins. Great programs, food, and fellowship!

Little Adventurers – August 17-19

This is the perfect way to introduce 5-7 year-olds to Sentinel's summer camp experience. With 3 days and 2 nights of exciting camp activities, it's just right for young campers. For parents who would like to be on site, check the availability of camping in the Pines Family Camp Area.

Year Round Retreats *Rest. Renew. Reenergize.*

Sentinel is open year round and we would love to host your group at Sentinel Lodge. Retreat experiences begin at just \$60 per guest. Weekends are booking up quickly. Contact the camp office for availability. 2015 weekends still open are Oct 30th, Nov 20th, and December.

Sentinel offers over 600 acres and a mile of water frontage in which to explore God's Creation through:

- **Summer Camp:** for youth, adults and families
- Year-round **group retreats:** for churches, families, school and community groups
- **Pastor's Sanctuary:** a place for those in ministry to find rest (Psalm 46:10)
- **Community Programs:** adventure classes, school groups, youth group.
- Pines adult and family **camping:** 33 tent and RV sites

Amazon Smile. Help send a youth to camp when you shop

Help support Sentinel's scholarship fund when you make Amazon purchases. Amazon has set up a way for .5% of your purchase to go to Camp Sentinel's scholarship campaign. There is no cost to you and you still pay the same price for items on Amazon. Amazon makes the donation above and beyond your purchase. Simply click this link, <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/20-3562406>, select Sentinel as the charity and shop as usual. Thank you for your support in helping children have a life changing Christian camp experience!

Wish List

We ask for your prayers and support as we embrace the past and invest in the future! To see our most recent wish list click here: www.campsentinel.org/support.php.

Sentinel on Facebook and Instagram

Want to see what's been happening at Camp Sentinel this summer, go to Facebook or Instagram and join at www.facebook.com/campsentinel and http://instagram.com/camp_sentinel. Lots of great pictures!

Upcoming Conference and Legal Seminar

Rhythms of the Spirit: Nurturing a Transformed Life

August 3-7 at Camp Canonicus, Exeter, RI. Sponsored by ABCUSA and ABC of Rhode Island.

Speakers: Rev. Jeff Savage, Rev. Betty Wright-Riggins, Rene Colson Hudson, and Brad Berglund.

Do you struggle for balance between prayer and activity? Do you long for a quieter center; time for silence and reflection? This conference, offered in a retreat style, is a unique opportunity to explore and practice the transformed life together. Download registration from at www.rhythmsofthespirit.com or call Colleen Tolhurst at 401-294-6318 x110.

Protecting the Flock (& the Shepherds) Legal Seminar

Friday, September 25 from 8:30 to 1:00 at the Holiday Inn, Concord, NH.

Who should attend? Pastors, administrators, preschool teachers in child-care centers, children's ministry workers, Sunday school teachers, and counselors.

This seminar will cover mandatory reporting laws in New Hampshire (for child abuse, duty to warn, elder abuse, sexual misconduct, and criminal acts) and personnel risk mitigation (background checks and screen-

ing, supervision, retention, references for prior employees, and negligence). There will be a time for discussion of hot topics and questions. The seminar will end with lunch.

Participants will receive a comprehensive guide of all the mandatory reporting laws in the State of New Hampshire, written materials from the presenters on each topic covered with practical tips and considerations, and examples of proper and improper action based on reach court cases.

Speakers: Roy McCandless and Neil Nicholson, Attorneys at Law. Both are trial attorneys & legal advisors. They work along churches, religious youth camps, and nonprofits to help them fulfill their missions, navigate risks, deal with local authorities and the IRS, and avoid problems.

Registration: Early bird (rec'd by Sept. 1): \$30; Regular: \$40; group (3 or more): \$20 each.

For a copy of the brochure with registration form, go to abcvnh.org and click on Events/Event Registration or contact McCandless & Nicholson PLLC at gloria@mcnich.com.

Is God Calling You into Global Mission?

Hear the Call: Stretching Forward into Global Mission

October 9-12 at Camp Canonicus, Exeter, RI.

Wondering what's involved in cross-cultural global mission service? Not sure how to prepare or what steps to take? **Hear the Call: Stretching Forward into Global Mission** is a focused, high-intensity weekend where you'll meet with the global servants and staff of International Ministries. They'll help you evaluate your call, pray with you, answer questions and banish misconceptions of what it really means to be a global mission worker in today's world.

Worship, inspirational messages, Bible study and personal reflection time will combine to make this a powerful discernment experience. No matter where you are in the process, you'll leave with a clearer understanding of the next steps for serving God.

Speakers: Rev. Dr. Travis Collins, Director of Mission Advancement for Fresh Expressions, US; Rev. Dr. Reid Trulson, Executive Director of IM; Karen Smith, missionary in Thailand

Registration: \$80; meals & housing: \$95/day. Total cost: \$365. Limited scholarship help is available from International Ministries. Write to vocationaldevelopment@internationalministries.org or call 800 222-3872, ext. 2245.

[Click here](#) to download a registration form. All forms must be received by Tuesday, September 15th. Housing is limited, so don't delay!

Does Your Church Need a Loan?

For a limited time, until July 31, the American Baptist Extension Corporation is offering a special Mission Summit Loan Rate of 4.50% for qualifying first-time borrowers. When it's time to build, renovate, repair, upgrade your energy efficiency or improve accessibility, apply for a loan from ABEC, your financial organization with a mission. Let ABEC help you enhance your building to do even greater, more effective ministry with your community. To find out more about ABEC loans, visit myabec.org or call 800-222-3872, ext. 2232.

Holy Spirit Renewal Ministries 2015 Conference Available on Flash Drive

Didn't make it to the Holy Spirit Renewal Ministries annual conference this year? No worries. Get the entire 2015 Conference on a Flash Drive! That's right - get all 39 messages and workshops (in MP3 format) plus workshop outlines on a flash-drive for only \$50! For details, click [HERE](#).

ABCUSA News

New Executive Director of American Baptist Home Mission Societies Named

At its semiannual meeting in June, the board of directors of American Baptist Home Mission Societies voted unanimously to call the Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Haggray, interim senior pastor of Zion Missionary Baptist Church, Roswell, Ga., to the position of Executive Director. He will lead the mission agency following the retirement of Dr. Aidsand F. Wright-Riggins III in October.



An ordained American Baptist minister, Haggray has deep roots in the life of ABCUSA and the greater Baptist family. He served the District of Columbia Baptist Convention as executive director/ minister from 2001 to 2009 and currently serves as a member of the American Baptist Extension Corporation's Board of Directors. He is a member of ABCUSA's Adaptive Challenge Team and chairman of the Baptist World Alliance's Commission on Social and Environmental Justice. Haggray also serves as co-chairman of the National Planning Team of New Baptist Covenant, a movement focused on uniting Baptists in service and Christian love to promote justice and overcome racial, theological and geographic boundaries.



Interested in Global Missions & volunteer work?

International Ministries sends out a weekly email about volunteers in global missions. Each email shares a volunteer missionary's experience, volunteer opportunities, and features a snapshot of one of IM's missionaries and how you can pray for him or her and their ministry. To receive the weekly emails, email IM at volunteers@internationalministries.org.



Check out what's happening throughout the ABCUSA.

Go to www.abc-usa.org and check out "The Latest News", "In the Spotlight", Ministries, Resources, etc.

Go to www.abhms.org or "Like" ABHMS on Facebook (www.facebook.com/ABHomeMission) to find out what churches across our denomination are doing, to get information on Home missionaries and ministries, and AB Reads.

Go to www.internationalministries.org or "Like" IM on Facebook (www.facebook.com/InternationalMinistries) to find out more about our ABC missionaries and their ministries and to get updates.

New Hampshire Council of Churches and New Hampshire Bible Society

Go to the New Hampshire Council of Churches' website for information about upcoming events: <http://nhchurches.org/>. For information about the New Hampshire Bible Society, go to www.biblenh.org.

The Bible Society invites you to come by their bookstore, at 125 Airport Rd., Concord. They offer a variety of Bibles; study, large print, pew Bibles, in many different translations and languages to meet your needs. The Bibles are available at greatly reduced prices and often they are able to eliminate the cost altogether.

American Baptist Mission Support Update

VERMONT & NEW HAMPSHIRE MISSION GIVING Year-to-Date thru June 2015

| | 2015 | 2014 | Incr. (Decr.) | % Incr. (%Decr.) |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| United Mission Basics | \$ 55,719 | \$ 53,394 | \$ 2,325 | 4.4% |
| ABW Ministries Love Gift | \$ 659 | \$ 1,743 | \$ (1,084) | -62.2% |
| America for Christ Offering | \$ 14,077 | \$ 16,181 | \$ (2,104) | -13.0% |
| One Great Hour of Sharing Offering | \$ 14,231 | \$ 17,037 | \$ (2,806) | -16.5% |
| World Mission Offering | \$ 3,709 | \$ 4,985 | \$ (1,276) | -25.6% |
| Retired Ministers & Missionaries Offering | \$ 9,952 | \$ 13,193 | \$ (3,241) | -24.6% |
| Region Offering | \$ 10,116 | \$ 3,760 | \$ 6,356 | 169.0% |
| Institutional Support | \$ 396 | \$ 806 | \$ (410) | -50.9% |
| Specifics | \$ 4,063 | \$ 10,376 | \$ (6,313) | -60.8% |
| Targeted Giving | \$ 16,104 | \$ 15,300 | \$ 804 | 5.3% |
| Adjustments | - | \$ 388 | - | - |
| Total American Baptist Mission Support | \$ 129,026 | \$ 137,163 | \$ (8,137) | -5.9% |

A publication of ABC/VNH – Edited by Malcolm Hamblett

Send items for publication to malcolm.hamblett@abcvnh.org.

Deadline for submissions for the September newsletter is Monday, August 17.