

God Stuff Happening In Our Churches – October 2015

In a watershed vote that both affirmed the historical strengths of **American Baptist International Ministries** (IM) and propelled the global ministry into its 3rd century, IM's board of directors unanimously approved a fresh statement of vision and priorities, entitled **Responding to the Call (RTC)**. The vote took place on June 25, 2015, at the IM board meeting in Overland Park, Kansas.

In a solid vote of confidence and commitment, IM's Board of Directors resoundingly and decisively reaffirmed the core purpose that has guided IM for more than 200 years and that is stated in a fresh way in **RTC**:

IM works cross-culturally to invite people to become disciples of Jesus Christ, and to proclaim-through both word and deed-God's reign of justice, peace and abundant life.

"IM has been overwhelmingly commissioned to remain faithful to our primary calling and to strengthen that mission by going further and deeper in several dimensions of work," explained the Rev. Dr. Reid Trulson, IM executive director. "Today we begin addressing specific areas with renewed energy and creativity as we stretch toward the vision Christ offered in Matthew 6:10, 'On earth as in heaven.'"

The four areas identified for focused growth in the coming years are:

- **Inviting People to Be Disciples of Jesus.** IM will continue to engage in ministries of evangelism, discipleship and theological education, while also pursuing new opportunities in these areas.
- **Proclaiming God's Reign of Justice, Peace and Abundant Life.** IM will minister to immigrants and refugees, work for peace and justice, pursue the abolition of trafficking in persons and of global slavery, engage in education and economic development and focus on health and wellness.
- **Equipping the Body of Christ to Engage in God's Mission.** IM will promote mission "from everywhere to everyone," provide opportunities for short-term mission engagement, inspire youth and young adults to grow as disciples of Jesus and offer training and capacity-building to partners around the world.
- **Pursuing Organizational Excellence.** IM will attend to its financial health, ensure appropriate accountability, strive for technological advancement and improve its communication.

The vote of IM's governing board came as a crucial step in its 18-month spiritual discernment process. The decision built upon the fruit of an extensive and intensive listening process, during which IM interviewed 1,800 people all around the world. Interviewees were invited to share both their experiences of God at work in the world and their hopes and dreams for the future of their own ministries and for the future of IM.

"This highly participatory process," commented Trulson, "reinforced IM's unwavering mission of inviting people to know and follow Jesus Christ as Lord, embodied in a wide range of holistic service and carried out in partnership with fellow servants of Christ everywhere. I am so thankful to God for all those who have contributed to this special bicentennial effort of spiritual discernment."

A diverse 26-person Discernment Team was supported by a global prayer network as the team members studied, discussed and prayed together for God to speak to IM through the testimonies and vision of the larger body of Christ. The fruit of their efforts was captured in the **RTC** statement of vision, purpose, context, core values and focused growth areas.

The action of IM's Board of Directors launches the 2nd phase of the discernment process, during which **RTC** will be translated into an operational plan with specific objectives and tools for both measuring and enhancing progress on the ministry strategies identified in the discernment process's first phase. This crucial work of phase two will be carried out over the next nine months.

For additional information on Responding to the Call, contact karen.smith@internationalministries.org or visit [Responding to the Call](#) online.

To join the prayer network for Phase 2 of Responding to the Call, contact Courtney.DavisOlds@internationalministries.org.

IM invites comments on [IM's Facebook page](#).

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MISSIONS

- **Newmarket Community Church**, in conjunction with St. Mary Church, a Roman Catholic church, began the Alpha Program on September 15. Also, the church hosts and is a member of The Newmarket Substance Abuse Coalition (NASC), a collaborative effort between business owners, community leaders and law enforcement in Newmarket to create and implement a strategic plan to reduce the use and misuse of substances.
- **The Community Church of Sandwich** held a potluck supper on May 29th to honor the Sandwich Fire Dept. and Emergency Medical Services Volunteers. It was attended by 60+ members and friends. Chief Louis Brunelle said the recognition was a first ever for the department and they were very appreciative.
- **The Congregational Baptist Church, Chester, NH** has been collecting pennies for *The Penny Project*. They have collected the equivalent of almost 20,000 pennies, which have been donated to the Greater Rockingham County chapter of Family Promise.
- This summer, **First Baptist Church, Hudson**, participated in Hudson Old Home Days by giving out Bibles, books, First Baptist Church brochures, bottles of water and candy to the public.
- **First Baptist Church, Plaistow**, has resumed collecting items for the Timberlane Backpack Program, which provides food for Timberlane Regional High School students who don't have enough food at home.

Additionally, their special monthly service, "Prayers For Addicts and Their Families," has been well received. The service content has been different each month, but always contains forms of prayer, scripture, music and a reminder that we can never be too bad for God. The picture at right is from one of their services. Participants were reminded that even when we are broken we can be used by God. Everyone was given a glow stick and after a time of prayer, they were invited to activate it (breaking it) and form a cross in the front of the sanctuary. Many of the almost 100 recovery Bibles that our church has donated have been given away at these services.

Here is what some participants have said: *"We're so grateful to the church for their care."* *"This is always such a time of comfort."* *"It's so nice to know that we are not alone."* *"The more the community understands, the better we all are."* *"It's good to know that God isn't done with me yet."*

- On August 19, the deacons at **First Baptist Church, Bradford**, provided a take home summer supper for families who came to the church's food pantry that day.
- For the past several years, **Third Baptist Church, Strafford, NH**, has been collecting socks to donate to the South Providence (RI) Neighborhood Watch Mission. Each year 1,500 pairs are given out as Christmas gifts to residents of a multi-ethnic community. Third Baptist has averaged 274 pairs each year, but they have a challenge goal this year of donating 350 pairs.
- The Outreach Committee at **Gilford Community Church** assembled backpacks filled with school supplies. They will be given to each of the children enrolled in the Gilford Got Lunch Program.



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CHURCH NEWS

- Congratulations to **Rev. Daniel Ward** (at right center), pastor of **Holderness Community Church**, who was ordained to the Christian ministry on Sunday, June 28. Revs. Linda Bolton and Everett Palmer led the service. A reception followed the service.
- **First Baptist Church, Bradford**, had two floats in their town's Fourth of July parade. The youth showed their musical skills on their float and their VBS Adventure Week theme of "Mt. Everest" (held later in July) was an inspiring float.
- **The Madison Church** celebrated pastor **Sean Dunker-Bendigo's** 20th anniversary with them on August 16th by honoring him during the service and holding a special coffee hour afterwards.
- On August 16, six churches in Berlin, NH, including **First Baptist Church**, gathered at the Northern Forest Heritage Park for Unity Worship. Approximately 350 people attended. Using Ephesians 4:1-6 for their text, three of the pastors shared a sermon on restoration and hope. Said FBC pastor **Dean Stiles**, "We are not about denominations or the name that is outside our buildings. We are the Church of Jesus Christ of the North Country of New Hampshire. This past Sunday we gathered as The Church to worship Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior."
- On Saturday August 22, about 100 friends, family and members of **First Baptist Church, Bradford** went to a Faith & Family night at the Fisher Cats game. The evening began with some time with the Fisher Cats chaplain and 4 players who gave testimonies about their faith. One question asked was how the players kept from making baseball the most important thing in their lives? One of the players replied that because a baseball player usually only plays ball to about age 37, you are in trouble if baseball is your entire life. Christ is forever and that needs to be the priority. Just before the game began the church choir sang the "Revelation Song" on the field.
- The congregation of **Antrim Baptist Church** witnessed the baptism of 6 people on August 23. Congratulations to Hayli-Marie and Landon Aubrey, Rick Lombard, Nita Monette, Damion Smith, and Susan Steeves.
- Congratulations to **Pastor Andy Barnes** and **First Baptist Church, Belmont, NH** who installed him as their pastor on Sunday, August 30. Rev. Dr. Louis George, Executive Minister Emeritus and grandfather-in-law of Andy, gave the charge to the pastor. Rev. Malcolm Hamblett, Assistant to the Region Minister, gave the charge to the congregation, and Rev. James Smith, former pastor of the church, gave the sermon. A reception followed the service.



- Congratulations to **Pastor Rubin Jennings** and **Plainfield Community Baptist Church** who installed him as their pastor on Sunday, September 13. Rev. Dale Edwards gave the installation sermon and the charges to the pastor and the congregation. A reception followed the service.
- **First Baptist Church, Plaistow**, held an ice-cream social each Wednesday evening throughout the summer.
- **United Church of Hinesburg** is seeking innovative ways to experience God. Part of that experience will be to have a

special music Sundays each month. September's special music will be:

"A Sweet, Sweet Faith," featuring guitarist and cultural anthropologist Marcus Schreckhaas.

October's will be "Faith like Jazz," featuring Jazz music with George Volland and Andrea Haulenbeek.

November's will be "A Quiet Center," featuring the sacred and contemplative music of Arvo Pärt.

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- Welcome to the following pastors have recently been called to serve as interim ministers:
Rev. Gerard Birney, First Baptist Church, Manchester Center, VT
Rev. Wayne Santos, Community Church of Milton, NH
Rev. James R. Smith, Newton Junction (NH) Baptist Church
Pastor Lynn Wickberg, United Church of Strafford, VT
- On September 12, 70 pastors and spouses, plus a few family members and friends, enjoyed a lunch cruise on the Mt. Washington, sailing from Weirs Beach to Wolfeboro and back. It was a beautiful day, the food was delicious and the company great. The event was sponsored by the Ministers Council.

