



A Newsletter of the American Baptist Churches in the Rocky Mountain Region

## 10 Reasons for You to Attend the 2019 ABCRM Annual Gathering

- **Learn More About the African American Culture and Impact in Denver** – This year’s Gathering will feature time at the Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library, feature an address by former Denver Mayor Wellington Webb and include elements of historic African American Culture from its food to its music.
- **Engage in A Variety of Learning Experiences relevant to your church and ministry** – Designed with the needs of the local church in mind, we have put together some powerful workshops that impact ministry today for our Thursday Pre-Gathering Continuing Education Event
- **Rub shoulders with International Ministries Executive Director Sharon Koh** – Sharon will be making her first visit to ABCRM as a whole to share her vision and charge to lead IM in its mission of “On Earth As It Is In Heaven”
- **Hear the Latest News from ABC-USA General Secretary Lee Spitzer** – Rev. Dr. Lee Spitzer will not only preach for our Friday Worship Service but will lead a powerful workshop in one of his areas of scholarship
- **Enjoy Great Jazz Music at the Clergy Dinner** – Known for its connection to Jazz, we will be blessed by one of Denver’s top Jazz Bands, the Wil Alston Band.
- **Enjoy Powerful Worship** – From morning devotions to Friday Night Worship and Communion an important part of our coming together is coming into God’s presence together through music and the spoken Word!
- **See Old Friends, Make New Friends and Fellowship with them All at our Cluster Gatherings**
- **Visit with ABC Related Ministries in Exhibit Areas**
- **Enjoy Downtown Denver!**
- **Hear About the Latest Work, Vision and Ministry of ABCRM**

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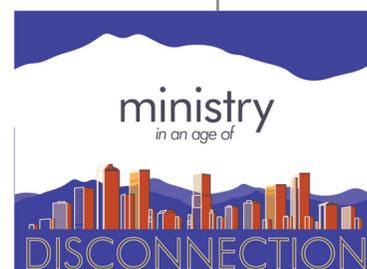
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# ABCRM 2019 Gathering



**Central Baptist Church Denver, CO  
Friday & Saturday, September 27-28**

***Save the Date for the ABCRM Family Reunion!***

**Come together for Special Guest Speakers, Dr. Lee Spitzer, General Secretary of ABCUSA and Sharon Koh, International Ministries Executive Director.**

**Join in *The Gathering University* on Thursday, September 26, 2019  
for a day of inspiring workshops.**



**Steve Cuss, author of *Managing Leadership Anxiety: Yours and Theirs* will lead a workshop on Thursday and another session, Saturday morning.**

## Registration Information

### Registration Deadline: September 13

#### Thursday Pre-Gathering Workshop

*Gathering University*

(includes lunch)

\$70

#### Clergy Appreciation Dinner

*(TICKETS REQUIRED AND MUST BE OBTAINED IN ADVANCE)*

ABCRCM Clergy & Spouse

\$0

*free with paid Gathering registration*

Non-clergy individuals

\$30

*and persons not registered for the Gathering*

#### Gathering Registration:

*(cost to attend Friday and Saturday)*

Church Delegate (voting member)

\$100\*

Church Member (non-voting member)

\$100\*

*Cancellations must be received by September 20, 2019, and are subject to a \$10 non-refundable processing fee.*

*Cancellations after September 20 are non-refundable.*

- \* Cost includes snacks and refreshments, Gathering materials, and three meals — Friday lunch & dinner & Saturday Lunch

Registration forms and brochures are available on our website at [www.abcrm.org](http://www.abcrm.org) or from our office.

Call 303.988.3900 for more information.

#### Who Should Attend

*Pastors, Lay-Leaders, Youth Leaders, and anyone wanting to learn more about the Region are welcome to attend this Annual Gathering of churches and people from around the American Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountains.*

#### Church Scholarship Funds

*Your church may qualify for church scholarship funds.*

*Information was mailed to our churches last month.*

## Clergy Appreciation Dinner

Thursday, September 26, 2019

6:00 to 8:30 p.m.

at the

### Blair-Caldwell African American

Research Library

2401 Welton St.

Denver, CO 80205

### ABCRCM Regional Clergy and Spouse

attend at no cost

*(for registered/paid Gathering participants)*

**\$30.00 per person for:**

**Non-Clergy, Non-Gathering Registered Clergy,  
and Non-Gathering Clergy Spouses  
(those not registered)**

*(TICKETS ARE REQUIRED AND MUST BE OBTAINED IN ADVANCE)*

### *ENTERTAINMENT*

## Wil Alston Jazz Band



# *Pre-Gathering*

Thursday, September 26, 2019

## Gathering University

### First Trimester:

10:00 am to 11:30 am

#### *Friendship Circles:*

*How Our Relationships  
Impact Discipleship*

Instructor: Lee Spitzer

*Connecting With God,  
Connecting With God's  
People*

Instructor:

Rodney Ragwan

*Developing Resilience  
for a Time of Radical  
Change*

Instructor: Mike Oldham

*Cultivating A Healthy  
Young Adults Ministry*

Instructors: Javon Bracy  
& Morgan Fletcher

### Second Trimester:

12:30 pm to 2:00 pm

*Managing Leadership  
Anxiety*

Instructor: Steve Cuss

*Ways to Support Your  
Pastor & Leaders*

Instructor: Steve  
Van Ostran

*Staff and Volunteer  
Development*

Instructors: Brian Gray  
& Matt Manning

*Being a Non-Anxious  
Presence Even When Your  
Spouse Is Being Attacked!*

Instructor: Lauren  
Parliament



### Third Trimester:

2:15 pm to 3:45 pm

*Cultivating A Spiritual Life  
to Avoid Burnout*

Instructor: Dave DeMott

*New Ways to "Church" for  
an Unchurched Culture*

Instructor: Mike Oldham

*Cultivating Generosity*

Instructor: Ray Schooler



## *Thoughts and Reflections:* **I've Stood There Before...**

On my recent trip to South Korea\*, we visited the DMZ Center that commemorates the thousands of family members, friends and relatives that have been separated from one another as a result of the 3-year Korean Conflict. Standing and looking from the memorial into the DMZ, I couldn't help but think that I had stood here before.

But this was my first trip to the ROK (Republic of Korea).

How could I have stood there before?

Well, I stood there when I watched the "Inner Tube" crossings of the Moei River from Burma to Thailand just outside of Mae Sot, Thailand, where thousands of Burmese Refugees had been living in a camp for "Displaced Persons" (not refugees because that gave them legal status). These "minority" tribal people were driven out of their villages by the military Junta for a variety of reasons.

I stood there in Israel as we visited the Golan Heights and drove along the fence that separates this region from Lebanon where thousands of Palestinian refugees' dwell, driven from their homeland in 1947. I stood there again on the Lebanese side of the fence when visiting some evangelistic work among Syrian refugees who had settled in Southern Lebanon.

While I did not stand there physically, I and millions of others stood there as the Berlin Wall was torn down.

And, I stand there as a citizen of the United States as we build a fence on our Southern Border\*\*.

And as I have stood at each of these places, I have lamented the separation of family, friends and neighbors that has taken place either intentionally or unintentionally. We build these walls for oh so many reasons. But these reasons all seem to boil down to fear of the other... the other person, the other religion, the other political philosophy, the others power, etc.

Walls and fences of all kinds have always separated people from one another. While these walls and fences have often been built for what seem like good reasons, they automatically create an Us vs. Them relationship, no matter how many gates and transitions you build into the wall. We feel secure behind our walls and fences because we feel we can control our environment. We feel secure behind our walls because we are a part of the "Us".

Yet this building of "walls" of separation seems not to be what Christ intended for us. Hebrews reminds us that the tearing of the temple curtain at Jesus' crucifixion created not separation but access to God. Jesus' incarnation also teaches us that we are to draw close to one another and to be present with one another—not separate.

And, yes, I know that the reality is that until Christ comes there will always be walls and fences put up... that's the "real" world we live in... but it is not the World to which we are called.



*Picture of S. Korean DMZ and destroyed RR Bridge that linked N & S Korea*

My prayer is that we would somehow begin to live as people who tear down walls and open up gates for others to come in.

And by the way, I stopped talking about physical walls and politics several paragraphs back.

The physical walls are problematic; the emotional, spiritual and relational walls are deadly. These walls can isolate people into a virtual wasteland that starves them of hope, love and self-worth. Yet these tend to be the walls that we are best at building.

May God grant you reunification with all those you have been separated from by the walls that have sprung up in your life. May God grant you the ability to tear down some of the walls you have built. May God grant us a world without the need for walls and fences.

Steve Van O

- \* *My trip to S. Korea was at the invitation of IM Global Consultant Stan Slade to join him on the teaching team of a group from ABC of New Jersey that is building a relationship the Korean Baptist Churches of the ROK.. I and the ABCRM Board consider our partnerships with IM, IM's global partners and other Regions extremely valuable and that this trip served to build on these strong relationships.*
- \*\* *This editorial is not intended to be political in nature but theological. While Christ calls us to a world without walls, we live in a world where these are necessary. Whether they are necessary in the situations I have illustrated are all subjects of great debate. I am not intending to engage these debates, rather to use them as an illustration for our personal life. Many who feel some or all of the "walls" illustrated are necessary are also saddened and frustrated by the separations they have created!*

## Cultivating a Culture of "Yes" Fresh Expressions



The disciples knew that there was something different about their community. When they looked at the teachings of the Pharisees and the synagogues, they could see that Jesus was doing things differently. They even knew there was something different about their community and that of John the Baptizer. One day they came to Jesus and asked him about fasting. (Mark 2:18-22) Jesus responded with a much broader answer about new wine and old wine skins.

In essence, Jesus says to them, "You, my followers, are new wine. If I tried to put you in those old structures, you would burst the wine skins and be spilled out on the ground. I need new wine skins to allow the Spirit to grow in you and expand who you are." Scientifically, as new wine ferments, it gives off carbon dioxide. If the skin has already stretched and expanded, it will simply burst.

As I read this parable in Mark, I hear a cautionary tale, a warning, to the church today. Jesus is constantly calling new followers into his community. The danger for many churches is that they have expanded and have no elasticity left. Physically, they have many empty pews, but emotionally they are tired and worn out. They don't have the energy or vision to be creative, so they simply repeat what they have been doing for years. When they look back in their ministry, they can identify times of risk, growth, and expansion, but today their actions speak about control, keeping the peace, and caring for the gathered flock.

A fundamental challenge for the church today is to create a culture of “yes.” The Pharisees had created a culture of boundaries and limits. Their go to response to Jesus was, “No, you can’t do that.” If we are going to reach the thousands of people who no longer want anything to do with “established religion,” we are going to have to create new communities, new ways of being church.

Some churches still have elasticity left in them. They are able to create new ministries, identify new ways of connecting with their community.

In other churches, they will need to find other ways of saying “yes.” They have allowed “no” to be their standard response. They must find ways to challenge those who want to say “no” to every idea. Though there are times when “no” is the appropriate response, often “no” is the response of fear and anxiety.

As followers of Jesus, neither of those should be our first response.

What about your church? Is there room to grow? Is there room for the Spirit to stretch you to the breaking point? Do you have a culture of “yes?”

*Mike Oldham  
Ministry and Mission Coach  
Southeast/New Mexico and  
Northern Front  
Range Clusters)*

## Prayers Needed

International Ministries Global Consultant, Juan Aragon, to Chiapas Mexico has been having significant medical issues. In August, he was diagnosed with Superior Semircular Canal Dehiscence Syndrome. Juan and Denise have made the decision to seek treatment at UCLA. They are promising a less invasive surgery than what was planned in Mexico. Juan has an appointment on September 18 at UCLA and is anticipating that the surgery will take place in October. Please pray for Juan Aragon during this very difficult time.



## Seminary Life in Three Words: Rest, New, and Excitement

First of all, I cannot believe I am going into my final year of Seminary. I feel like it was just yesterday when I packed up my Saturn Vue and moved onto the Denver Seminary Campus from Sioux Falls, SD. I left what was known and came to somewhere new to trust and feel restored. This journey has been filled with so many memories. Most, if not all, the memories I have can be summed up in three words: Rest, New, and Excitement.



Rest is probably hard for many of you to comprehend how Seminary can be restful. These past few years have been a

time for me to rest in the Lord and learn as much as I can. Many times, I have had the opportunity to go to the mountains and be in my hammock reading, resting, and relaxing in the Lord’s creation. All this learning has been restful because I have been less busy than when I was working before coming to Seminary.

Rest is very different in people’s eyes. I also find rest in adventure! I have gotten to go on many trips within the United States and abroad. I have ventured many places over the past few years. I am so thankful for the opportunities I have had to rest by traveling, hiking, and exploring. I am so thankful for this time in Seminary to explore in multiple different ways: reading, experiencing other cultures, and to resting in the Lord’s presence. These past few years have been a time for me to rejuvenate and feel restored before graduating. The picture above is just



outside of Cork, Ireland and is called Saint Colman's Cathedral.

New can describe the person I have become. I have learned a lot about myself during my time so far at Denver Seminary. In classes, I learned that I love the languages of Greek and Hebrew which was surprising and new to me. Those were the main classes I was not thrilled about taking, but in the end I grew a new love for ancient texts and languages. Through my education, I have become a new person who is more equipped and confident about who I am and what I am able to do with the Lord's guidance in my life.

New can also describe my diverse experiences at Denver Seminary. The first being a student Chaplain at Denver Health. My eyes were opened to my abilities to empathize and walk with patients and families of patients in the hospital. I know that the Lord is using my story to help those who are hurting as much as I do not love seeing others struggle the same way I did. This experience was nothing I have ever done. I worked with gangs, multiple different cultures and socio-economic statuses, addicts, and psych patients. Also, being asked to be an intern with the ABCRM last fall was new to me as well. I keep learning and growing while being blessed to be on this wonderful staff. The picture to the right is of Dr. Jan McCormack presenting me with my CPE certificate of completion!



I did something for the first time this past winter season—NEW. Sadly, in January my cousin Nadine unexpectedly lost her husband, Ben. I flew down as soon as I could before the Spring term started. When I got there, the first words out of my cousin's mouth were, "Are you ready?" This confused me but then she said, "Ready to be with me and walk with me?" Then I knew what she meant.

My first funeral that I have ever done the eulogy/

message at was this past winter for Ben's funeral. This moment in doing the eulogy/message at Ben's funeral made my family see me in a new light. I am the youngest cousin, so no one has every really taken



my words seriously besides Nadine and her family. Now, I am a new person in my family's eyes and not "too religious," whatever that means. To the left you see a picture of some of my cousins: Tonya, Nadine, me, and Andrea. This was a precious time to be altogether in one place.

Now, my family sees me as a grown woman and a loving pastor. This was a huge moment for me and my calling!

Excitement is the best word to sum up my experiences over the past few years, and what this last year holds for me. I am so blessed with this time to grow, learn, and be equipped for what is next in my ministry. I am excited for where the Lord has taken me while in Seminary, and where He will be guiding me to as I finish my last year. I am excited to be an intern with the ABCRM going into this last year of Seminary. This picture is a great representation of what my last year

of Seminary will be: a time of solitude in prayer, a time of fellowship with community, and a time of growing.



*By: Lauren Parliament  
Student at Denver Seminary  
ABCRM Camping Intern*

## Laramie First Baptist Church Celebrates Sesquicentennial

Laramie, Wyoming, was founded in 1868 by the Union Pacific Railroad in its effort to establish a transcontinental railroad. It was a wild and woolly town, filled with saloons, casinos, and brothels. The Superintendent of the American Baptist Home Mission Society came to Laramie on New Year's Day of 1870 and preached the Gospel. A week later, on January 8, 1870, a small group of Christians joined together to found the First Baptist Church of Laramie, the first Baptist church in Wyoming Territory, and start a Sunday School for the community.

The Church will be 150 years old next January. Since January is not the best time of year for travel and tourism in Wyoming, the Church decided to celebrate the weekend of July 12-14, in conjunction with Laramie's annual Jubilee Days. Members, former members, and friends were invited to join the celebration, which began on Friday evening with a dessert and time of fellowship at the church, with lots of displays of the Church's history on exhibition.

This year Laramie also celebrates the 150th anniversary of the first woman in the United States to vote legally in a general election, when Louisa Swain arose early to be the first voter in the election on September 6, 1869, the Territory of Wyoming having granted women the franchise the previous year. Much of the focus of Jubilee Days was on commemorating this milestone, and First Baptist Church joined in. Saturday morning, the Church fielded a float in the annual Jubilee Days parade. The float simulated a frontier church with its little congregation, with Pastor Jeff Lundblad preaching. Signs held by the congregants honored women's franchise.



*First Baptist float in Laramie Jubilee Days parade.*

Saturday evening, there was a potluck dinner in the Church Fellowship Hall. Rev. Jane Langdon, who grew up and was ordained in the Church and went on to serve several American Baptist churches with her husband Rev. Morley Langdon and as missionaries to China and Thailand, talked about the history of the Church and about the experiences of growing up in the Church and how it had shaped her faith and life.

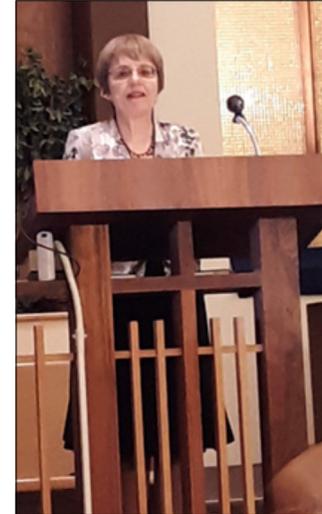


*Members and Friends gather to celebrate the Sesquicentennial.*

The Sunday morning worship service featured the Church choir singing, "Joy in the Morning," and a sermon by Rev. Mary Beth Mankin, who served from 2006 to 2012 as the first woman pastor of the Church. The celebration closed with a chicken dinner for all.



*The Choir sings "Joy in the Morning."*



*Rev. Mary Beth Mankin*

The First Baptist Church of Laramie has been a faithful witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ for 150 years and looks forward to many more years of serving the Lord.

*Submitted by Bill Mankin*

Dear Steve, Mike and all our ABCRM Friends

Thank you, thank you, thank you for your many years of support, prayers, love, and even coming to visit us during the time we were serving in Bulgaria. Your generous gifts were invaluable to us, and we are grateful for each and every one – whether given toward our support or to us personally. Your gifts of support really boosted us to our yearly PSG. Your personal gifts blessed us by allowing us to do some special family things that we would not have been able to do otherwise.



Mere words cannot express our gratitude for all you have done for us over the past 18 years. We praise God for the ABCRM, our wonderful "home" region. Thank you for walking alongside us in ministry!

*With love and gratitude  
Tom and Terry Myers*



# What's Happening

## Calendar

### September

- 2 Labor Day (Region office closed)
- 14 Wyoba Board Meeting
- 26 Pre-Gathering  
Clergy Appreciation Dinner
- 27-28 Annual Gathering  
Central Baptist Church, Denver

### October

- World Mission Offering Month
- Clergy Appreciation Month
- 11-12 MLC Meeting



## Puerto Rico & Houston Texas Rebuilding Service Trips

1. November 24 - December 1      Houston Texas
2. January 12 - January 21      Puerto Rico
3. April 19 - April 28      Puerto Rico
4. May 17 - May 27      Houston Texas

**American Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountains and All Hands and  
Hearts Smart Response**

**Deadline to signup – 60 days before trip date**

Serve your neighbors as they recover from the terrible disaster caused by  
Hurricane Maria and Hurricane Harvey

For more Information Contact Stuart Lord

[texashurricanerelief1718@gmail.com](mailto:texashurricanerelief1718@gmail.com)

### **Work may include:**

- Homes with tin roofs have been blown away and tarps are being used. Roofs will be a major focus of our rebuilding efforts.
- General construction is needed in most areas. There are thousands of homes that were totally destroyed or extremely damaged. With our partners we are mainly seeking to assist in the following ways:
  - Clean up and construction prep
  - Wall and floor construction
  - Roofing
  - Painting

**The Back Pew - Jeff Larson**

**What part of RSVP didn't  
you understand?**



.. and the world says good bye to Mr. and  
Mrs. Unicorn. **Genesis 7**

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Send submissions to  
[akeys@abcrm.org](mailto:akeys@abcrm.org)*

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