



University Baptist Church
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Children's Center*
Director: Kelly Carey
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We are a welcoming and affirming congregation. We celebrate our diversity in religious background, sexual orientation, race, age and abilities.



July 29, 2004

Dear sisters and brothers of the Judson Association:

We received your letter and are grateful for your prayers. Since you are praying for us, we thought we might send along some specific requests: for our more than twenty year program to feed homeless folks in our Saturday Kitchen; for our transitional housing program that provides homes for women with young children on their way out of shelters to permanent housing; and for our children's center that provides safe and affordable childcare for families from a wide variety of circumstances. And while you are praying for these, we would commend to you the Scripture from Galatians 2.10 in which Paul reports on his meeting with the leaders of the early church regarding his ministry to the Gentiles: "They asked only one thing, that we remember the poor, which was actually what I was eager to do."

We understand from other American Baptist brothers and sisters that there has been disagreement with our own call to ministry. We do not take this disagreement lightly and have, with you, studied the Scriptures. Alongside the texts you cite, we would offer Leviticus 19.18, Genesis 6.11, Romans 8.1ff, I Corinthians 13, Jude 24-25, and Matthew 5.1-16. We understand these to provide a context for the texts you have suggested. We pray with you for God's reign of salt and light, healing and sight, grace and peace as it has been promised by Jesus Christ.

Finally, we celebrate that our denominational life is deeply rooted in a connection not based on creed, conformity, ritual, or resolution but on our common life in Christ through prayer, the study of Scripture, and common mission. Every year we have increased our giving to American Baptist ministries at home and around the world. We do this not because all other American Baptists agree with us but because we understand our responsibility to work together for the cause of God's love and justice. We also understand that our American Baptist commitment to voluntary association means that local American Baptist congregations choose to identify themselves in diverse ways. Some local churches choose to identify themselves as unaffiliated with the National Council of Churches, of which the American Baptist Churches is a denominational member. Some local churches are dually affiliated with other denominations, including the United Church of Christ which has a long and public history of supporting justice for people regardless of sexual orientation. Some African-American churches choose to belong both to the ABC and historic African-American Baptist bodies for fellowship and resources. We understand that some local churches identify as members of American Baptist Evangelicals to make clear their confessional life and character. We believe these voluntary associations strengthen our life together as American Baptists and call us to live up to the variety of gifts in God's Spirit and the wideness in God's mercy.

We trust that you will pray with us that the vitality of our life together will be strengthened so that – together – we can be a blessing to the world for the glory of Living God.

For grace and peace,
Rev. Timothy Phillips and the members of the Stewardship Council