

July 2025



BELONGING PEOPLE



*NT Baptist Indigenous Leaders Gathering
See pages 8&9 for this story.*



Future Directions in a Changing World

The world is changing. The global church is changing. The Australian church is changing.

The centre of Christianity is moving from the global north to the global south (in 2020 67% of Christians lived in the global south, this figure continues to grow). The world is growing increasingly urban with estimates that by 2050 70% of the world's population will live in urban centres. Australian neighbourhoods and churches are becoming more and more intercultural. **How do these, and other changes affecting our global family, impact the way we participate in God's mission locally and globally?**

For over 150 years Baptist Mission Australia has been seeking to respond to the call of God to serve the changing needs of the world with innovation, flexibility, and love. As we continue to see global and local change within nations, communities, and the church, we have embarked on an intentional discernment process. We have taken time to pray, look, review, research, and dream to consider what our Future Direction in God's mission might be.

In considering the future, we have developed four key causes to guide and broaden our mission approach.

1. **Flourishing Faith Communities:** seeing people who love Jesus, show others about Jesus.
2. **Passionate Missional Leaders:** joining with God and His followers to care for those living with injustice and need.
3. **Local Community Transformation:** supporting local leaders in the Global South
4. **Innovative Partnerships:** imagining with our partners about how God's mission is carried out creatively and innovatively.

We would love to see churches and individuals joining with and praying for us as we move into creative and innovative ways of sharing God's love with our neighbours and the world.

To learn more about Baptist Mission Australia's Future Direction for mission, visit our website:

<https://baptistmissionaustralia.org/about/future-directions/>

Future Directions video: <https://vimeo.com/1025324875>



Lisa Cornish
State Director SA/NT
Baptist Mission Australia

A Word In Season.....

Believing in Jesus requires us to trust Him to guide and lead us through the maze of life. This trust demands that we find strength in Him and not rely on the situations around us.

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.” *Proverbs 3:5-6*

Sometimes we worry about things or the timing of God’s work in our lives.

“He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.”

Acts 1:7

Many external situations influence our lives and this is different for each of us. Yet as we go through life, we are all given the same task by God, to proclaim the good news of salvation. In the Book of Acts, we are promised that through the power of the Holy Spirit in us, we will be God’s witnesses.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” *Acts 1:8*

So as Christians, the focus is the same for us all, we are to testify to the good news available to everyone as we journey through life regardless of our circumstances. The only thing that matters is our response to the message of salvation. God will use all circumstances to bring us to that point.

Do you know God and are you willing to trust in the Lord with all your heart, and not rely on your own understanding? At times, this is a challenge for me and I pray that together we can encourage one another in knowing Jesus and trusting Him for our salvation and the salvation of others regardless of the circumstances in our lives. Maybe, even because of the circumstances in our lives, we can turn to God and learn to trust Him more!

***Pastor Kevin Young
Katherine Baptist Church***



BAPTIST FAMILY GATHERING MAY 2025

At the end of May Baptists from across the Northern Territory met at Darwin Baptist for the annual NT Baptist Family Gathering. We gathered for meals, worship and sessions with guest speakers Brandon Chaplin and Sam Thomson.

On the Friday night we shared dinner, heard local stories of what God has been doing in and through our churches, worshipped together in song and had a keynote session from Brandon from Colossians chapter 1.



On Saturday we had elective workshops, and more sessions with Brandon and Sam, including a chat about their unique ministries with the challenge for each of us to be ourselves in whatever God has called us to.

On Saturday morning we also gathered for the BCSANT Assembly, held jointly in both Darwin and Adelaide. During Assembly we celebrated new member churches, a newly accredited Pastor, and other good stories of what God is up to as well as hearing reports and updates from Assembly Board and Director of Ministries, Melinda Cousins. The tech all worked smoothly thanks to a great team working behind the scenes!



It was wonderful to celebrate our unity across the distance with a genuine back and forth conversation between locations.

It was a great joy to have church leaders from our remote churches with us for both BFG and Assembly. We were blessed when our indigenous sisters and brothers led us in a prayer in language and shared a poetic reflection on their gathering that had happened in the days before BFG. We look forward to gathering again with them next year.



We are grateful to everyone who helped put the conference together, especially the team of volunteers from Darwin Baptist who hosted us so well.

Melinda Cousins, Elliot Keane and Tam Battersby were able to be with us from the Support Team at Baptist Churches of SA & NT, as well as Lisa Cornish from Baptist Mission Australia and Glen Thornley from Baptist Insurance Services.

Dr Melinda Cousins
Director of Ministries



Alice Springs Baptist Church

New Seasons for Central Australian Missionaries

New seasons are emerging for several of our ASBC family who have served long-term in indigenous Bible translation, literacy, and resource production. While never delighting in the spotlight, we had the privilege to honour these years of incredibly faithful service and also commission them into these next seasons as they honour God in new and exciting ways.

In March we celebrated the faithful work of **Jan Mountney**, who in 1990 moved to the Ngaanyatjarra lands to help people to read their own language so that they would have better access to the Scripture and related resources, and in time, develop their own.



Jan has since relocated to Mackay in Queensland where she has family, however, she still expects to help coordinate distribution of resources in the Central Australia region and to visit Alice Springs and the Ngaanyatjarra lands from time to time.

Likewise in March, we were privileged to honour the faithful service of **Gordon Thompson**, after over 30 years of ministry in typesetting, Bible production, and embrace of the "universal language" of illustration to share the love of Jesus with many people. Gordon's work has contributed to organisations including He Lives Crusades Worldwide, Wycliffe Bible Translators, AuSIL, and the Bible Society.



Outback Youth Camp 2025 Disciple Training (DT)

This year the church youth groups across Alice Springs joined together under the banner of Scripture Union to run a united **Outback Youth Camp** in early April. This was a beautiful reflection of the partnership and unity that exists between the church communities in Alice Springs, and our shared commitment to the next generation of faith rising up.

We were delighted to have 68 campers, including 47 youth participants, spanning across 6 local churches join together for what was an incredible few days of growing faith, fun and connection with each other. The generosity of sponsors ensured that there were no financial barriers to any young person attending and were also able to bless our volunteer leaders by covering their registration costs given many are taking leave from work to be present. We look forward to seeing the spiritual fruit that emerges from gathering around what matters most: the risen Jesus!

Disciple Training is a new format of collective spiritual engagement that we were excited to introduce to our 5PM space over the month of March. At its core, Disciple Training is *Hearing* and *Responding* to God in *Community* with those present in each DT session participating in a real-time discovery process - with a short time of weekly input, and extended collective engagement with a passage of Scripture, prompting revelation and response.

Each week we were excited to have 45-60 people join us as we journeyed through Paul's Letter to the Philippians. What was even more exciting was the ways that people were integrating the process into their own groups, devotions, and most importantly, putting the revelation that emerged into practice!

Gavin Brown
Lead Pastor
Alice Springs Baptist Church



Indigenous Church Leaders Gathering

We walk with courage, trusting Jesus to walk with us and to show us the way."

A wonderful gathering recently in Darwin brought together Indigenous leaders from remote communities of Lajamanu, Willowra, Murray Downs, Katherine, Kalkarindji, Dagaragu, and Yuendumu alongside Representatives from Baptist Mission Australia and BCSANT.

Those present shared times of story, naming the challenges and opportunities for their church communities and for themselves as church leaders. They prayed with and for one another and worshipped together in song in Warlpiri, Gurindji, Alyawarr and English. There were shared meals together and opportunities to encourage one another through words of welcome and support.

Melinda Cousins shared with us from the Psalms of ascent and Psalm 121. This resonated strongly with us and tied together many of the themes of conversation throughout our time together.

Everyone came excited to contribute to the gathering. From these contributions and discussions, a poetic summary was written called ***Our Journey with God***. (opposite page)



There was a sense of strengthening and deepening our connections as part of the wider Baptist family. It was a wonderful privilege to witness God at work amongst the leaders of our most remote Baptist churches. The inspiring resilient faith of women and men who love King Jesus and are living out lives of faith and hope in their communities. Alongside the challenges there were stories of hopefulness to celebrate together. People are still talking about the great time together and looking forward to meeting again sometime soon.

Outback Team & Elliot Keane (First Nations Engagement Facilitator)

See also pages 22&23

Our Journey with God.

We walk through suffering, on our journey there are floods and storms and all kinds of trouble.

As we walk, sometimes we lose our way, our feet get dirty, but Jesus washes our feet.

Ngaji, Wapirra, Ingkarte helps us on the path and guides our steps.

We walk together, family together, young and old together, Kardia and Yapa together, men and women together.

Many have walked faithfully in front of us, we want to be like that too. Some of us are just starting our journey.

We walk with courage trusting Jesus to walk with us and to show us the way.

We have a song to bring for the future.

John Mawson

Robin Mawson

M. Benson
Chris Good.

Storm Rockman

Lynette Tasman

Annette Patrick

MARY LEWIS JEANNIE PRESEY

HERBERT MOSQUITO

ANDREA TASMAN

Melinda Cousins

John Mawson

Reony Jimmy

Ellie K...
Lisa Cornish

Roger Jurnah
SUSAN BROWN

God

Matthew

Paul G...
Queenie Bernard

My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.

Psalms 121:2 ^{NIV}

The NT Baptist Indigenous Leaders' 'Statement from our Heart'

Camping with Cornerstone



Church Camp

Over the King's Birthday long weekend, we gathered together for our church camp at Goanna Park. The focus this year was around Psalm 34. Camp was a great opportunity to connect with one another and learn more about God's goodness.

Highlights from some attendees:

'It was beautiful seeing the kids all play together over the weekend. They had a great time exploring God's creation and enjoying one another's company.'

It was so wonderful hearing other's experiences of the goodness of God through testimonies around the campfire.

'I enjoyed playing basketball and listening to people share their stories. It was cool to hear the journey that others have been on and hear how God has blessed them.'

The dancing on Sunday was really fun. I liked having church outside and spending time together around the camp fire.

'My favourite thing was eating marshmallows at the camp fire. It was so nice to have the time to connect deeper with people.'

Corner Café

Neil and Bob have been working hard in the café to ensure it continues to run smoothly during the week. There is a group of volunteers continuously baking and serving to make sure the café is a welcoming space. The café is a fantastic way that we have been able to develop connections with the local schools, as well as the residents in the rural community. Please continue praying for the Corner Café to be a place where people feel welcomed, and for opportunities for volunteers to encourage and share God's love with others.



Church Camp



Upcoming 20th Celebration

This year we are excited to be celebrating our 20th Anniversary as a Church family. We will be having a dinner party on the 19th July and look forward to reflecting on the past and praying for the future of Cornerstone.

It's also a time to acknowledge and thank Pastor Neil and Pastor Matt for their commitment and dedication in leading us. Please join us in praising God for what He has done and continues to do in our church and community.

Nicole Marsh
Cornerstone Christian Fellowship

Baptist Bush Church

The Baptist Bush Church has a long tradition of hosting **Boxing tournaments**. They also have a long tradition of service to the rural community providing meals and food packages when needed.

They often manage to combine the two and Sarah is seen here cooking sausages for a recent Bush Church Boxing event. Pastor Sharon is pictured with a former Aussie heavy weight boxing champion at a recent tournament.



Dry season Movie Night and Dinners are back on at the Bush Church and very popular with the church folk and local community



The Baptist Bush has established a **Memorial Garden** with plaques to remember loved ones. This garden was set up for people who had no permanent place to visit and remember their loved ones, perhaps because they are buried interstate. . A park bench was recently donated for this area so people have somewhere to sit on those special remembrance days.

Remote Churches Celebrate Easter at Ali Curung

This year saw a joyful return to the shared Easter celebrations after a two year gap when the communities were unable to come together due to damaged roads and other events.

About 100 people from all 6 communities came to the combined Easter celebrations this year, hosted by Ali Curung . It even got promoted on Alice Springs ABC radio! Driving long distances, the people came from Kalkarindji, Lajamanu, Murray Downs, Willowra and Yuendumu.

Danny Hunt, Support Worker with BMA, was asked to bring the Easter Day message and the nights were filled with enthusiastic singing and music. As well as rejoicing in the Risen Saviour, it was a great time to meet up with family and friends again.



***A quiet moment—Beth
reads the Bible
with a Willowra Leader***



***Murray Downs has opened a
new church building, paid for by
the Central Desert Land Council.***



Inside the new Church

Mission Expo at Darwin Baptist

Following on from the Baptist Family Gathering, Darwin Baptist Church hosted a Mission Expo.

The expo brought together Baptist churches, to inspire and renew our vision for both local and global mission. The afternoon began with a short service and a stirring message from Elliot Keane, "What if Jesus asks me?", based on Mark 1:17.

"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people."

Afterwards, everyone explored the nine displays from a range of local and global mission organisations and considered their role and potential next steps. The evening finished off with a delicious shared meal. We eagerly await more Darwinites stepping out into new areas of mission as God calls them.

Susan Clunies Ross
Mission Team Member



***Australian Society for
Indigenous Languages***

Youth For Christ



Nungalinga College



PRAY FOR THIS MOB!

The Outback Team serving Jesus in Remote areas of the NT



Mal & Chris Good, Mat (Team Leader) & Shannon Anderson & kids, Beth, Peter, Caleb and Samuel, Danny and Beth Hunt.

PRAISE FOR:

Safe Travel on the outback roads
God's life transforming power
Baptisms at Lajamanu
Faithful Church Leaders
Combined Easter Celebration
Indigenous Team Leaders Gathering
Men's and Women's Bible Studies

PRAYER FOR:

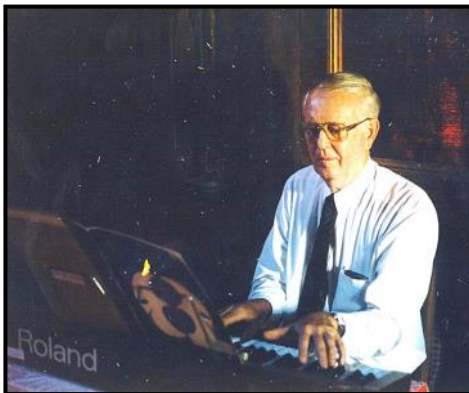
Each Team Member and their family
Continued safety on the roads
New Outback Team members
Skilled building maintenance workers
Spiritual protection
Good Health and Energy

Alwyn Horne, Darwin Baptist Organist for 23 years

Words by Jim Carlill

Alwyn Horne was a man who put Jesus first in all he did. His day always started before sunrise with an hour of prayer and bible study. One of his favourite verses was Luke 9:62 where Jesus said, "No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God". Being born on a farm and having had to put his hands literally to a plough, he knew the truth of keeping your eyes on a distant target, so the verse became a guiding principle in his service for the Kingdom of God.

Alwyn and Vivienne and their four children moved to Darwin in January 1971 from PNG where they had lived for 5 years. Alwyn started work in Darwin's Department of Works where he remained for 23 years. The family began attending the Darwin Baptist Church where Alwyn promptly offered to be the organist. In fact, he and Vivienne, who played the piano, were a beautiful team and their worship music greeted those coming into church both morning and evening services, always arriving at least half hour early. They were often joined by son Andrew on the violin.



Many church congregants were blessed by their music at weddings.

In 1972, Alwyn helped Jean Johnson set up a church music school for children which operated one afternoon a week after school with 40 children attending. This continued until Cyclone Tracy.

Beginning in the early 1970s, for 20 years, Alwyn and Vivienne and family members, were musicians at the yearly Katherine Christian Convention.

He not only used his hands to provide anointed and talented music, but he was a capable handyman and put those skills to good use when the Adelaide River Church was being built where he joined the men from Darwin Baptist on week-ends in its construction.

Our first Spiritual Home - Darwin Baptist

I came to Darwin in 1963 as a young (unsaved) Civil Engineer and actually supervised the pouring of the concrete footings for the Darwin Baptist Church building. It was the witness and prayers of the church members, especially friendship with the SIL people, that brought us slowly to the LORD.

In 1967 Yvonne, who changed back to her birth name Maxine, and I were married in the church and a little later were baptised. We were amongst the earliest to be married and baptised in the church and were very happy to come back to Darwin to celebrate our 40th wedding anniversary in the church in 2007 along with Darwin friends, children and grandchildren.

After leaving Darwin/Howard Springs in 1998 we spent most of the next 21 years volunteering in Israel. This was an amazing experience and privilege.

Jim Carlill

Jim has also penned the tribute to his good friend, Alwyn.

Alwyn Horne Cont:

Along with his ministry of music, Alwyn served with the Gideons for 45 years. After 5 ½ years in a Nursing Home where his smile and his gentle, patient spirit inspired the staff,



We are now living in Buderim Qld and attend a local Baptist Church and maintain our support and interest in Israel and the Jewish people.

Photos above:

- 1. Jim & Maxine's Baptism by Rev. Jim Kime**
- 2. Jim & Maxine at Beersheba, Israel**

Alwyn went to his eternal Home in the early hours of Saturday 10th May 2025 during the hours of his usual devotional time.

He was a quiet and faithful servant, who had touched many lives by his music and his witness.

Chaplaincy at Kalkarindji

Shannon Anderson at Kalkarindji writes;

It has been a delight to step back into my role as Chaplain at Kalkarindji Community School this year. Though I'm only able to be there one day each week. The connections I built last year are continuing to grow and the kids often seem excited to see me and have a chat.

I also continue to deliver the school's Safe4Kids Programme for the early years students and to support higher needs students. It is great working together with the team at Scripture Union to provide chaplaincy in a remote school.



Shannon and Mat Anderson are Outback Team Members at Kalkarindji.

Belonging People

Newsletter of the Baptist Churches of the NT

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Youth Alpha at Darwin Baptist



In Term 2, DBYouth, the youth group of Darwin Baptist Church, launched the new Youth Alpha series on Friday nights. Many young people have invited their non-Christian friends to explore life, faith, and purpose in a relaxed, low-key setting.

Each week, we transform the church auditorium, swapping pews for lounges, beanbags, and lamps to create an inviting atmosphere that resonates with youth.

Generous church family members have provided meals every week, and we extend heartfelt thanks to everyone who has contributed to making DBYouth Alpha a success!

Looking ahead, we aim to inspire our youth to lead Youth Alpha in their schools. Please pray for them as they consider this step and for opportunities for their schools to embrace this initiative.



Steven Miles
Associate Pastor
Youth & Young Adults

The Unexpected with Katherine Baptist

The Bible clearly tells us that God's plans are so vastly different from our plans.

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. Isaiah 55:8 (NKJV)

We should not be surprised when God brings about the unexpected.

Katherine Baptist Church is privileged to lead a Monday night Bible Study at the Venndale Rehabilitation Centre. One recent Monday night, 5 minutes before the Venndale turnoff, the unexpected happened. A car is dead stopped on the highway- still in the lane. A young lady is using the light of her mobile phone to alert us to the danger. We pull over, to see how we can help. With us, are two young people from the Perth YWAM team, Henrik and Jess. The car is undriveable, and then begins the task of pulling it off the road. Praise God, for the recovery gear in our car. What do we do now with the passengers heading to Beswick

God has a plan! As the car is being pulled off the highway, a taxi van stops on the other side of the road. No-one else has stopped to help. The driver of the taxi is on his way to Katherine and agrees to transport the passengers back to Beswick. He agrees to transport them, with the promise of payment as there is no mobile or internet reception where the car has broken down.

What about the Bible Study? Even though we were 15 minutes late, the Bible Study still took place. Henrik and Jess shared their incredible testimonies of God's faithfulness in their lives. Those travelling back to Beswick have also had an encounter with our awesome God. God is opening unexpected doors in Katherine.

What do you do when you are asked to give a Bible presentation and provide Christian music to sing along to, at an NDIS event in the Miali Brumby Community? Yes, of course! It was a joy to sing songs such as 'I have decided to follow Jesus' and to present a Gospel message, using the 'Good News' armband. NDIS participants and their carers were the audience. We have even been asked to come back to do a similar presentation- every month.

God's plan involves the Gospel going forth, into every area of Katherine. May we be ready for the unexpected!

***Pastor Kevin Young
Katherine Baptist Church***



Thank You For Your Support NT



Jagmati from Nepal once lived a life marked by gender and caste-based discrimination and poverty. It meant she never went to school, was married at just fifteen and had no opportunities to make her life better.

When her husband became an abusive alcoholic, she faced an isolated and unhappy future.

But that changed when she joined a Self Help Group and accessed our local Partner's training and support programs. Today, Jagmati is a successful pig farmer, and grows plentiful crops to support herself and her family. And with the support of her Self Help Group, she confronted her husband.

'My husband quit drinking and started helping me with pig farming and household work.' Jagmati said, 'I have been able to manage my family's livelihood through earnings from our diversified farm.'

What once seemed impossible—a happy and secure future free from poverty—became a reality through Jagmati's hard work and the support of our Baptist World Aid's local Christian Partner in Nepal.

Baptist World Aid wants to extend a warm thank you to churches in the Northern Territory for supporting our Matching Grant Appeal this year, and for generously investing in smart, resilient people like Jagmati!

You remind us that God is always at work, through his people, turning impossible situations into a world of opportunities.

***Meredith Benson
Communication Lead
Baptist World Aid***



BELONGING PEOPLE ONLINE

This issue of Belonging People can be found, with previous issues, on the BCSANT website at <https://bcsant.org.au/belonging-people/>



Living in the Territory means you are well acquainted with the need to travel for many of life's regular activities. No matter if you are heading East, South or West to major Australian destinations, or North to more exotic locations, packing up and heading off is part of the rhythm of Territory life.

Most would be aware that your Church membership with BIS includes a Corporate Travel cover that **automatically** protects every ministry related trip you take (subject to DFAT restrictions) that incorporates a flight, or travel of more than 50km from home. What you may not realise, is that this cover also protects personal / holiday travel included in the same trip. The rule is that the trip needs to be at least 60% for a ministry purpose, but up to 40% can be recreational and still enjoy cover under the Corporate Travel policy.

What even fewer may realise, is that through one of the service providers to BIS, you can receive a "family and friends" rate on Travel Cover for an entirely personal trip. This cover is **not** automatic – so you would need to ask for a no obligation quote first – but some who did have been well pleased with the result. BIS don't formally *recommend* this cover (it's not part of the BIS program in any way), so use your own judgement when comparing the quote with other options you may have available.

Let me know if you are interested in more information on either of these policies and I can fill in more details for you.

Glen Thornley

BIS State Insurance Manager SA & NT
glen.thornley@baptistinsurance.com.au

Indigenous Leaders Conference (from p8)

Attending were:

Willowra: Jeanie Presley, Suzanne Brown.

Murray Downs: Robin Moreton, Jacintha Morrison.

Yuendumu: Andrea Tasman.

Katherine Warlpiri: Sharon Rockman, Herbert Mosquito.

Lajamanu: Roger Jurrah, Annette Patrick, Lynette Tasman, Mary-Kathleen Lewis.

Dagaragu & Kalkarindji: Danny Palmer, Queenie Bernard, Reony Jimmy.



Missions Interlink NT

Transition Training for Remote Indigenous Ministries

We had over 20 people join us for **Prayer and Fellowship** at the Katherine Christian Convention. Where ever you are - You can join us online in November 2025. Please go to the Missions Interlink website and check out the Events section.



I enjoyed doing a display at the Darwin Baptist Church Expo. (photo at left)
Do you also have friends not sure where to start with missions? Check out online Missions Seek - including Northern Territory opportunities by searching Missions Interlink Northern Territory.

Are you interested or working with Indigenous people? - then you are welcome to register for **Transition Training for Remote Indigenous Ministry (T-TRIM) course**. You can register for the whole course, or choose units for Partnership Development.

Living in Two Worlds

(30 September - 1 October)

Christian Spirituality in Aboriginal Australian Context (2 - 3 October)

Rachel Borneman

MI NT Ministry Leader

**[https://missionsinterlink.org.au/
events/training/t-trim](https://missionsinterlink.org.au/events/training/t-trim)**

Continued from p22

The leaders were joined by **Baptist Mission Australia Outback Team members** Mat Anderson and Mal and Chris Good (with background support from Danny and Beth Hunt) as well as National Team Members Andrew Duncan, Lisa Cornish and Elliot Keane.

Melinda Cousins from Baptist Churches of SA & NT was also part of the gathering along with **John Whitbourn** a long retired, beloved ABMS worker who holds a special place in the hearts of those gathered.

Baptist Family Gathering— May 2025



A time of fellowship
around the table,
learning, praying
together and seeking
God's will for our
NT Baptist Family
See pages 4&5

