

## April Wahl joins the Women's Connection Leadership Team

April Wahl is a familiar face and voice in the lives of the middle schoolers of Century Baptist Church in Bismarck, North Dakota where she serves as the Middle School Director. She has also become a voice for these same young men and women through serving on various NAB teams. We welcome April to the Women's Connection Leadership Team and look forward to the impact she will make not only in the lives of the team members, but in the lives of many young women of the next generation NAB leadership.

### Meet April...

I so believe in the young women in the NAB. I truly believe that there are so many young girls in our ministries and our churches looking for someone to notice them and say "come along with me; follow me as I follow Jesus." We have future leaders in our midst and they need women a few steps of head of them to partner with them and give them spaces to lead and learn. It truly will be an honor and privilege to be a part of a Women's Connection Leadership Team.

### Share about your North Dakota connection

I was born and raised in North Dakota. I grew up in a small, rural town, Linton, smack dab in the middle of south central North Dakota. I currently live in Bismarck, North Dakota. I had every

intention and dream of leaving the state as soon as I was done with high school. Nearly twenty years later, I'm still here. I attend and serve full-time on staff at Century Baptist Church as the Middle School Youth Ministry Director. I grew up at First Baptist Church in Linton, North Dakota and started attending Century Bap1st when I moved to Bismarck, ND for college.

### Tell us about your family

I am a gal surrounded by boys; I'm married to Jordan, and we have two boys, Archer (7 years old) and Aksel (1 year old). We have a blast together making memories at home and traveling to our 'second home', Disney World.

### How did you come to faith in Jesus?

I grew up in a family of faith with my grandma, my mom, and my dad all teaching me in Sunday School at some point. At a VBS one summer, our pastor asked if any of us wanted to be Jesus' friend forever and ask him 'into our hearts.' I said 'sure!' and went to chat with him and prayed with him. I'll never forget that later that week, he sent a letter in the mail to my parents congratulating me on becoming a part of God's family. My faith did not become my own journey until I was a freshman in college; it wasn't until then that I felt like I understood what it meant to be a follower of Jesus.



### How do you stay connected to Him—grow to be more like Him?

I have discovered that through silence and solitude, I become more connected to Jesus and learn to walk in his ways. This daily practice of silence and solitude—whether it be 5 minutes or 25 minutes—is one that consists of reading Scripture, reading a liturgy, journaling, or simply sitting in silence with my eyes closed. It looks different everyday and that has been very helpful for me

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## From the Atlantic Association Women's Missionary Fellowship holds a fall retreat

**Danielle Bango**

MSN, RN, CNML, CBC, IBCLC  
NAB Atlantic Association Women's  
Missionary Fellowship President

In October, the Atlantic Association's Women's Missionary Fellowship held its annual Fall retreat. The Lord truly blessed us with over 110 women across cultures in attendance from various churches in our region and guests! The retreat was held at Harvey Cedars Bible Conference Center in Harvey Cedars, New Jersey.

The theme of the retreat, *Dancing in the Rain*, was derived from John 16:33: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." The purpose of the retreat was to help and prepare women to navigate discouraging and difficult times with more spiritually focused and positive attitudes.

**God has designed and equipped us to overcome through Him! Jesus wants us to remember this so that in Him we have peace.**

Throughout the weekend, there were breakout sessions, fellowship activities, and worship experiences that were encouraging and enriching. Saturday night ended with a wonderful bonfire, singing, and s'mores. The relationships and sisterhood fellowships that occurred over the weekend bring women back year after year. Mothers were welcomed to bring their teenage daughters so that



Executive team at fall retreat

they could experience the retreat. There were over 30 new attendees this year and many have already informed us they plan to come back next year!

The Atlantic Association WMF executive committee consisting of Bunetta Coates, Treasurer, Donna Geinosky, Secretary, Sherrell Slaffey, Vice President, and First Lady Danielle Bango, President, also honored the memory of one of the retreat's greatest supporters by creating the First Lady Betty Slaffey Encourager Award. First Lady Slaffey of Christian Compassion Baptist Church of South Philadelphia was loved by many. She embodied the spirit of the retreat by always encouraging women. She touched so many lives. This award will be presented annually to the woman who brings the most women to the retreat to continue her legacy. This year's winner brought 18 women.

This year was the first retreat under

the new President First Lady Danielle Bango from Abounding Faith Christian Fellowship, Sicklerville, NJ, who was also the Sunday Keynote Speaker presenting from John 16:33. There were three keynote speakers in total. First Lady Valencia Outley Grier from Embracing Truth Ministries, Philadelphia, PA who taught from Phillippians 4:4 and First Lady Kim Brown from New Beginnings Fellowship of Downingtown who spoke from Isaiah 43:2.

The retreat's theme was timely. We should all be reminded from time to time that we are Overcomers. God has designed and equipped us to overcome through Him! Jesus wants us to remember this so that in Him we have peace.

We are looking forward to 2023. On April 29th we will host our Spring luncheon which will be a Women's Tea. At our luncheon we will reveal our theme for the 2023 Fall Retreat. The WMF has also created a social media page to keep women informed and connected about future events within the Atlantic Association so that women can share Christ with others. It can be found on Facebook: North American Baptist Atlantic Association Women's Missionary Fellowship. Keep the Atlantic Association Women's Missionary Fellowship in your prayers as we continue to encourage women.



# The Leadership Together Adventure



*My heart sang with expectation as I clicked 'send'. The email of invitation would land in the inbox of 20 women on staff in the North American Baptist NorCal regional churches. Who would say yes to the challenge of helping the Women's Connection Leadership Team prepare a three module leadership experience for women on staff in our NAB churches?*

August, 2022

Hi Dottie,

I hope that this email finds you enjoying summer and at the same time becoming excited about the fresh start that fall often brings to the ministries we lead or are involved in.

I am writing to you on behalf of the North American Baptist Conference Women's Connection Leadership Team whose guiding purpose statement is:

**Women's Connection exists to connect women of the North American Baptist Conference, encouraging them in their desire to serve God. Our team is committed to providing resources to help women deepen their faith and equip them for ministry wherever God places them.**

Whether at home, work or ministry, women face unique leadership challenges and often tackle these on their own with minimal resources, training and encouragement. Women's Connection sees the need to support women in leadership in our NAB family. We are introducing an initiative we are calling Leadership Together. Women and influencers throughout the NAB family will be invited to join cohorts of women regionally to share their experience, wisdom, passion and struggles while learning and growing together in their leadership roles.

Our vision is to invite women in leadership to a retreat setting where

over Friday evening, all day Saturday and Sunday morning you will be encouraged and challenged in your leadership. We would like to pilot this initiative in the NorCal region, and we would be excited if you would accept our invitation to be a part of this pilot cohort.

**We have reserved an Airbnb in Loomis, California for October 14 (arrival by (6:00pm), Saturday, October 15 (all day) and Sunday, October 16 (until noon) to learn and experience from the leaders of the sessions and each other.**

**Women's Connection will provide meals, the guiding teaching by Caryn Young, the 2 books in preparation for discussion — 7 Deadly Sins of Women in Leadership and Making Room for Leadership. We ask that you provide transportation to the retreat site.**

Our desire would be to have the women who attend provide feedback as to the effectiveness of the topics covered and share what would be valuable to include in future cohorts. We feel that the support from other women in leadership roles will be of value to each who attends.

On behalf of the Women's Connection Leadership Team  
Jean Ewing



Sitting from left: Caryn Young, Fabiola Campos. Standing from left: Jean Ewing, Karen Stoneburner, Robin Gordon, Dottie Henry, Sharon Richards, Allie Gillet

God hand picked 5 women who are of a variety of ages, who are ethnically diverse, and who are called to different ministry assignments.

Allie Gillet - Women's Ministry  
Robin Gordon - Adult Ministries  
Dottie Henry - Children Ministry  
Karen Stoneburner - Missions  
Sharon Richards - Elder

All responded with enthusiasm!

Fabiola Campos and Jean Ewing represented the Women's Connection Leadership Team.

**Reflection:** What was most helpful to you about the weekend? *Sharing meals, casual conversations, intentional time in the Word, the book discussion, Saturday afternoon*

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## Purpose Statement

Women's Connection exists to connect women of the North American Baptist Conference, encouraging them in their desire to serve God. Our team is committed to providing resources to help women deepen their faith and equip them for ministry wherever God places them.

## Our Core Values

### CALLING AND WORTH

We value the essential role women play in ministry.

### QUALITY RESOURCES

We value God's Word and seek resources that are Biblically sound, applicable and accessible.

### BROADER CONNECTION

We value supporting the broader vision of the North American Baptist Conference and developing a connection among North American Baptist Conference women.

### LEGACY AND THE FUTURE

We value the legacy of women who have gone before us and are committed to engaging the next generation.



Leadership Together... from page 3

*walk, the heartfelt tears, and joint effort in cleaning and packing up to leave were all rich in joining our heart and minds as sisters in Christ. Women need women! To spend a weekend sharing, caring, growing and learning is invaluable. Thank you for the opportunity.* – Robin

The beautiful, spacious Airbnb allowed us to experience fellowship on many levels. There was a comfortable fluidity of topics and activities led by Caryn Young, founder of CreatePace: Know Your Talents-Develop Your Strengths. Caryn provided information about the NAB to show we were approaching this weekend with an NAB background. We shared our stories, engaged with scripture, had personal time to reflect and prepare a lament. Our desire was that these women would be encouraged, equipped with personal growth activities and would network with those who came.

**Reflection:** *Leadership Together cohort was an answer to prayer for me! I have been desiring to connect with other women in ministry to share with, grow with, and learn from. The pilot cohort weekend was indeed the start of beautiful and encouraging relationships.* – Allie

This group of NorCal women will be a part of a team that will reflect

and perfect a program to be offered to other cohorts of NAB women. This pilot group will experience 3 modules: #1 Essentials of Leadership-coming alongside women as they develop their leadership potential; #2 Soul Care-incorporating spiritual formation habits in their personal life and ministry; #3 Leading Others-including how to engage with the contemporary culture as a leaders in a ministry context.

**Reflection:** *For me, the opportunity to share with women-particularly leaders- is something that rarely happens. The small group allowed for honest conversation and the group dynamics and Caryn's leading (and prompting) did not allow for hiding. Further, I think we women are still learning how to lead in ministry, with many challenges of being a woman in an area that has long sense been dominated by men. And, as leaders, it was a forum to share some of the challenges that women face, that women in leadership face, and for some, the intersection of the roles of mom, wife and leader face.* – Sharon

May God continue to provide and guide us on this journey!

Jean Ewing  
Heather Senges  
Fabiola Campos  
April Wahl



# Jen Wilkin Book Studies

## About Jen Wilkin

Jen Wilkin is an author and Bible teacher from Dallas, Texas. She has organized and led studies for women in home, church, and parachurch contexts. Her passion is to see others become articulate and committed followers of Christ, with a clear understanding of why they believe what they believe, grounded in the Word of God.

Jen is the author of *Ten Words to Live By: Delighting in and Doing What God Commands*, *Women of the Word*,

*None Like Him*, *In His Image* and Bible Studies exploring the Sermon on the Mount and the books of Genesis, Exodus, Hebrews and 1 Peter. Jen and her husband have 4 children.

*This Bible Study will take you deeply into the book of Hebrews – in fact it is suggested that you read the entire book over many times! Jen Wilkin’s 40 minute teaching videos are crammed full of good content, going through Hebrews verse by verse. This is not an “easy” study, but one that challenges you to learn what the text actually says, but more importantly (and harder!), how it applies to your life. The book is highly recommended for anyone who wants to learn about Hebrews – it will be good for you!*

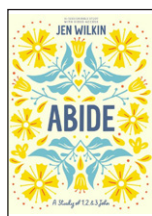
Testimony from the women of Bethany Baptist Vancouver B.C.



## BETTER: A STUDY OF HEBREWS ABOUT THE BOOK

Jesus is better. In this 10-session, verse-by-verse study of the Book of Hebrews, Jen Wilkin explores how God “provided something better for us” in the person of Jesus Christ (Heb. 11:40).

Through stories of Old Testament heroes and practices, the author of Hebrews demonstrates how the new covenant is superior to the old and how Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of every promise. Explore familiar verses in context of the entire Bible, learning how to place your hope and faith in Christ alone.



## ABIDE: A STUDY OF 1, 2, & 3 JOHN ABOUT THE BOOK

*Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. – 1 John 2:24*

How can we hold onto assurance of our faith? How can we discern the truth from a lie? How can we know God loves us?

In these three short letters, the apostle John reminds an early church facing division, deception, and doubt to hold fast to what they know and to live like they believe it. And he reminds us, as well.

In this 10-session Bible study on the letters of 1, 2, and 3, John, Jen Wilkin helps you see how two thousand years later, his words call to Christians in similar challenges to recall a great salvation and to abide in the truth.

April Wahl... continued from page 1

to learn that it doesn't have to look the same everyday, that Jesus doesn't love me any less if it's not the same exact routine each day. I also stay connected to Jesus by leaning into friends and family that know and love him, too. They keep me grounded and remind me of who I am.

### Share the experiences you have had working with/leading women?

I started in youth ministry working with middle school and high school girls. It was my passion to help them see the incredible gifts that God had given them to be contributors in his Kingdom. I started as a basketball coach, moved into youth ministry full-time, and then in 2019 led a women's conference at our church. For a number of years, I led our girls' discipleship strategy, Beauty Set Apart.

### What other ministries have you been a part of during your life?

I have served in elementary ministry as a Sunday School teacher as well as volunteering as a counselor at camp for elementary children prior to becoming a full-time minister. For a few years, our church had a Foster Care/Adoption ministry that I served with in offering support to families as well as raising awareness for foster care needs in North Dakota. In addition to that ministry, I worked with local ministry partners to bring awareness for human trafficking.

### Are there other gifts and areas of interest you have that would enrich NAB Women's Connection?

What led me into youth ministry was empowering, equipping, and encouraging young teenage girls to live into the

calling God had set for them, to build his Kingdom here on earth. That same desire still lives inside of me today that I believe can help contribute in a small way to the NAB Women's Connection. Along with desire and passion, I have been able to be a part of national youth ministry organizations as a content creator for curriculum, writer, and editor. One of the other areas my current role as a Middle School Director has led me into is playing around with graphic design.

### What books can you recommend that have impacted your life?

From Burned Out to Beloved by Bethany Dearborn Hiser and Try Softer by Aundi Kolber helped me grow in my understanding of knowing my identity in Jesus and not attached to what I produce or accomplish, even as someone in 'ministry'



# LENT



## FRUIT of the CROSS

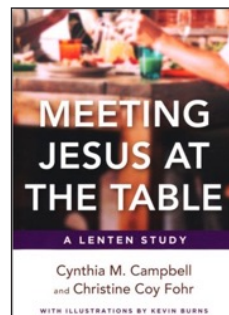
Join the North American Baptist Conference family by receiving a daily challenge to search our hearts and repent in anticipation of Christ's victory over the darkness of sin and death.

The Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. (Galatians 5:22–25 NLT)

In an ongoing effort to become more and more like Christ, in this Lenten season, let's take some time to more closely examine the characteristics of a Spirit-filled life through the lens of this list of spiritual fruit found in Galatians 5. Starting on Ash Wednesday, February 22, and going through Easter, April 9, we'll investigate each of these characteristics in detail – looking at what they are, what Jesus says about them in the Sermon on the Mount, where they are visible in his life the week of his death and resurrection, and what all of it means for us today.

Sign up at [nabconference.org](http://nabconference.org)

## Meeting Jesus at the Table– A Lenten Study



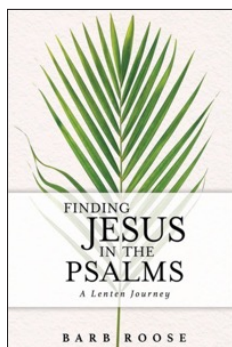
by Cynthia M. Campbell  
and Christine Coy Fohr

The Gospels are full of stories of Jesus sharing meals with disciples, friends, even tax collectors and Pharisees.

Whether multiplying bread to feed a whole crowd, relaxing with his inner circle, or telling curious elites stories about even greater banquets, Jesus imparts wisdom as he shares the wine and grants forgiveness as he distributes the fish. This eight-chapter resource provides biblical insights along with thought-provoking queries regarding our own time, such as whom should we invite to Sunday dinner and who is left out and left behind in our culture today.

Illustrations by artist Kevin Burns complement each chapter and invite further meditation on the Gospel story and its meaning for our lives.

Each chapter includes questions for small group discussion or personal reflection. A guide for church leaders offers suggestions for preaching this book as a sermon series and incorporating food-related outreach and hospitality efforts.



## Finding Jesus in the Psalms by Barb Roose

A meaningful encounter with Jesus and the Psalms through the season of Lent.

Author Barb Roose guides the reader through a meaningful encounter with the Psalms through the season of Lent. Combining an interpretation of the Psalms with real life stories, the study moves through the familiar words of Psalm 23 toward the painful cries of Psalm 22 uttered by

Jesus on the cross. The study includes reflections on the life of King David and the original context of the writings, along with connections between the psalms and the life and death of Jesus the Messiah.

Additional components to use the book as a six-week small group study include a leader guide and DVD/Video Sessions featuring the author.

*"The Psalms provide a perfect framework for experiencing Lent through the verses that were Jesus's own scriptures, offering both him and us strength and wisdom in a painful and redemptive season. The Book of Psalms hums with the heartbeat of our humanity with divinely inspired words that find purchase in the tenderest places in our hearts when our human words or wisdom fails us."*

– Barb Roose

CONNECT  
WITH US



North American  
Baptist Conference

1219 Pleasant Grove Blvd.  
Roseville, CA 95678



[wm.nabc@gmail.com](mailto:wm.nabc@gmail.com)  
[www.nabconference.org](http://www.nabconference.org)