

# ANNUAL REPORT

2022



**American Baptist**  
CHURCHES *of* MICHIGAN

*Lord I've heard of your fame. I stand in awe of your deeds, Lord.  
Repeat them in our day, In our time make them known.  
In wrath remember mercy*

Habakkuk 3:2

# REGION STAFF AND OFFICERS



Rev. Brian Johnson  
Executive Minister  
March 2020

## Office Support Staff



Danielle Doyle  
Director of Missions Support  
October 2021



Shelly Powers  
Director of Operations and  
Executive Administration  
May 2020



Jane Gunneman  
Director of Finance  
May 2012

## Region Officers

President - Rev. Dr. Karen Walker Freeburg  
Vice President - Rev. Roger Dahlen  
Treasurer - Robin McFerrin  
Secretary - Rev. Arie Van Brenk



# CONTRACT CONSULTANTS



## **Rev. Tom Case, Contract Consultant to Churches**

Rev. Case retired from pastoral ministry after serving the Ganges, Fennville congregation for 27 years. His father, Delmar Case also served as a Pastor in our Region. Combined, the Case family has blessed us with leadership for more than 55 years! His desire is to be an encourager to churches and pastors. To that end, he has contracted with the ABC-MI to visit congregations to strengthen the "associational principal" and extend care to churches and pastors.

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## **Rev. Dallas Flippin, Contract Consultant for Technology**

Rev. Dallas Flippin helps churches think through issues of technology so they can more effectively communicate the Good News of Jesus Christ. He provides assistance to the Michigan Region, churches, and pastors through the use of guides, webinars and other various forms of support.

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## **Rev. Dr. Ross Lucas, Contract Consultant for Conflict Transformation**

Rev. Dr. Lucas provides assistance to congregations in transition. He has had extensive training in conflict management and mediation and has guided numerous churches through a process of redemptive conflict that can lead to healing. He currently serves as the Transitional Pastor of Lakeview Baptist Church in Battle Creek, MI.

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## **Rev. Nikita McCalister, Contract Consultant for Transitioning Ministries**

Rev. McCalister is serving as our lead Consultant for Transitioning Ministries. She has extensive experience in encouraging and equipping congregations as they welcome their next pastoral leader. Her acumen in finances, church conflict, spiritual discernment aid congregations in emerging healthier during this transitional period. In this role, she will assist pastoral search committees to organize their work and provide profiles for their consideration; and secure transitional pastors for congregations with whom she is consulting. Finally, she is a world-renowned preacher, teacher, scholar, and servant leader who loves Jesus Christ.

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## **Lynne Punnett, Contract Consultant for Region Mission Teams**

Mrs. Punnett began serving as our coordinator of Region Missions Teams in April of 2013. She has organized and served on multiple Haiti Mission Teams since 2011. She is a valuable resource to individuals and congregations interested in participating in the ABC-MI Mission effort. Mrs. Punnett is a member of First Baptist Church of Ypsilanti.

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## **Rev. Bill Walker, Contract Consultant to Churches**

Rev. Bill Walker serves as a Good Will Ambassador on behalf of the Region. In this role, he visits a couple of congregations per month on behalf of the Executive Minister and the ABC-MI Region family. These visits affirm the local pastor and congregation's ministry and are a reminder of our work together in missions. He also serves as one of our Consultants for Transitioning Ministries.

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## **Dr. William Beachy, Contract Consultant to Peer Group Leaders**

Dr. Beachy serves as the Consultant to our Peer Group Leaders. He believes Christian leaders must have a clear understanding of who they are in relationship to God (along with their individual strengths, gifts, and talents) and must learn to care for their own souls. When one begins to understand the work of God in one's own life, only then can that person effectively serve, teach, lead, guide, mentor, and counsel those in their care. He is currently on staff at Ashland Theological Seminary.

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# PEER GROUP LEADERS



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**Rev. Danny Langley**  
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Building momentum for the Kingdom of God  
through new churches and renewed churches  
on mission with Jesus Christ.

Together.



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In reading 2 Corinthians, I was struck by the words of the Apostle Paul and how it speaks to us in 2022. In chapter 7, we read, “Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.” Towards the end of chapter 6, we see some of the contexts that help us understand chapter 7’s opening words. Paul is warning against idolatry. Idolatry is wanting something more than you want God, as He is revealed in Scripture. All around us, we see people striving after their “wants.” While we can see this much more easily outside of the Church, we would do well to heed Paul’s admonition to examine ourselves and see if we “want” anything more than we want God, as He is revealed in Scripture.

Much lament has been expressed because of how Covid seems to have changed the Church. Many “want” to go back to the way things used to be. Many “want” their church to stay just the same to be a sanctuary, of sorts, for them in the sea of tidal waves of changes in the world. Others may “want” their church to grow and become a vibrant place of activity. Many Christians have spent much of their time devoted to “wanting” their political persuasion to be the dominant power in culture.

The Church of Jesus Christ in America is being invited to “want” for nothing more than the presence and power of God at work through their ongoing transformation into the likeness of Jesus Christ. We live in a post-Christian nation. I don’t like it, but that doesn’t change it from being true. People aren’t chasing after the things of God... they are too busy satisfying their “wants.” Gone are the days when a cool program, exciting music, or super relevant teaching will bring people to your church. As we begin to shift our focus from trying to woo people into an event that meets on Sunday morning, as the totality of our Christian witness, into something much deeper, we can see God move in and through our churches once more.

One way we seek to facilitate this more transformative work in our churches is through our ongoing commitment to our Ministry Leadership Groups. Healthy churches are led by healthy pastors. As we continue to resource our pastors through our MLG program, we serve them at their point of need. In addition, we are excited to expand our MLG program to include retired pastors. I am excited at the opportunity before us to continue to serve and support our retired pastors. Another way I hope to see God move in and through our churches is a new initiative that seeks to increase prayer in our churches and invites people throughout our Region to join in prayer. Lastly, a select group of churches and pastors are working through a spiritual formation experience where resources are being poured into the pastors in preparation for a broader spiritual formation experience for the church leadership. Lastly, we have been and continue to provide church health assessments for our churches to provide clarity and unity towards God’s preferred future for their church.

The challenges of ministry are not going away, but neither are the promises of God. He is faithful, and our call to be fully formed disciples who make disciples is accompanied by the promise of Jesus to be right there with us in the midst. Together, we will bear witness to Jesus Christ as an association of churches whose want for more of Him in our lives and churches exceeds our want for anything else. May it be so today.

Rev. Brian Johnson, Executive Minister



Within the context of a global pandemic, the ministry of the American Baptist Churches of Michigan has revealed both leaders, and congregations, capable of creative response to the two year trial-by-fire caused by CoVid. ABC-MI leadership has consistently encouraged us to lean into the opportunities afforded to us - and recognize the rich potential for advancement - rather than retreat. We have learned to “pivot with purpose” and have seen churches and leaders capable of “canoeing the mountains.”

Executive Minister, Rev. Brian Johnson has modeled the practice of pivoting from day one in his tenure! From the marketing of the Hagadorn Property to the development of accessible technological tools for our ministries, he has encouraged us to be a people of great faith and courage. Rev. Johnson has inspired the Board in the pursuit of restructuring board ministry teams, and board work, in order to develop an effective, nimble, and less cumbersome system for organizing our ministries and operations. The Executive Board deeply appreciates his vision and skilled acquisition of resources for the work of the region.

The Executive Board has studied best practices for structuring our work in order to achieve the mission, purpose, and responsibilities of the region. The Board’s Ministry Teams have identified areas where they would benefit from clarity in regard to their ministry roles. (One of these goals being to avoid duplication of tasks, or the assignment of responsibilities without authority.) Teams have, also, begun to meet outside of regularly scheduled region meetings. This has enabled Ministry Teams to set their own schedules and broaden the scope of their work. The Administrative Staff has provided tremendous support, without which these transitions would have been difficult.

The Region Board has been researching the potential for the region to develop a competency-based ministry preparation program. The purpose would be to enable lay leaders the opportunity to “provide indicators” of their acquisition of the behaviors, attributes, dispositions, skills, and knowledge necessary for good ministry, rather than degree credentials or completion of specific ministry training curriculum. The shift would be away from the “content of courses” toward the “competency of the learner”: does the learner exhibit the indicators we have established for a good minister?” The hope of the Ministry Leadership Team is for learners to be offered multiple options for achieving ministry competency goals. Competency-based programs have proven highly effective in many professional fields and seminary training programs. The benefits include keeping lay leaders within their own church contexts, empowering local congregations, decreasing the costs for learning, and providing reasonable timelines for the completion of ordination requirements. The potential for partnership with seminaries who are already delivering competency-based education programs is high and these relationships are already being nurtured.

As we look toward this 2022 Annual Gathering, our prayer for region member churches is that you experience an enriching retreat-like event via the ministry of renowned spiritual formation author and church leader, Dr. Ruth Haley Barton. We hope members leave the weekend filled with a sense of direction for their own faith journey and their congregations. Please bring a group from your own congregation! You will be blessed.

Thank you to each and every person serving the Region. I am constantly encouraged by your faith and faithfulness.

Rev. Dr. Karen Walker Freeburg, Board President



Last October I was elected to serve as Vice-president of the Region Board. It has turned out to be the easiest job I've ever had. Aside from filling in for the President when needed, my main responsibility, as defined in our Region's Rules of Procedure, is to "chair the Region's Annual Gathering Committee." However, because last year we did not have a face-to-face gathering, and the main presenter was available to come this year, my work was basically done when I took office. All I did was keep in touch with our Region staff members to make sure things were moving along.

My time was essentially used to attend meetings of the Region Executive Committee and Region Board. That kept me aware of what was going on in the life of the Region. It also gave me a chance to observe how our Board President, Rev. Karen Walker Freeburg, provided excellent leadership for our meetings. I also got a sense of what other responsibilities her role called for.

At this point, if the Lord wills, I will be assuming the role of Board President for the coming year. I've served in a similar role with different organizations in the past, so I'm confident I can handle the basic job. Among other things, I plan to build on what's been done this past year to continue providing support for our retired pastors in Michigan. On a personal level I'll be working to improve my Zoom skills. And I'll do my best to figure out how "Flocknote" actually works.

Thank you for the trust you've placed in me. I'm humbled and honored to have this new opportunity to serve Christ and His church.

Roger Dahlen, Board Vice-president



The mission of the Consultant to Congregations of our ABCMI Region is to make personal visits (upon invitation) to our member church families, briefly sharing a presentation of Greetings from our Region Leadership, an overview of current Region activity and initiatives, and a reiteration of the power of association, which helps us to understand that we can do more together for the Kingdom of God, than we can do on our own.

During the year since our last Annual Meeting, I have been involved with presentations to the First Baptist Church of Kalamazoo, commemorating their 185th Anniversary, First Baptist of Elsie and their 100th Anniversary, and the Bethesda Baptist Church of Muskegon, and the ordination service of Pastor Frank Cox, Associate Pastor to Rev. Dr. Charles Poole.

My hope is to increase the number of churches visited over the next several months as we put the limitations of the recent pandemic behind us.

Rev. Thomas S. Case, Contract Consultant



Many of our churches have continued to focus on improving their technology to contribute to their mission efforts. In the last year, churches have reached out about improving displays for worship spaces, upgrading cameras for streaming, improving websites and social media presence, and more. Beyond technological recommendations, my role continues to be a support for helping churches ask questions about who they're trying to reach and what goals they have for the technology they are using to support those efforts.

The Region offices also went through major technology improvements this year. The conference room was upgraded to improve the video conferencing experience both online and for those in person. Two large TVs were installed so that presentation materials can be displayed on one screen while conference participants can be viewed on the accompanying screen. The video camera equipment installed in the room also automates the camera process so that the camera zooms in on speaking participants in the room. Similar equipment was also installed in Rev. Brian Johnson's office to facilitate his frequent virtual meetings as well.

If your church is interested in how technology can better support your ministries, please reach out. We look forward to seeing how God will help us use technology of the future to reach people like we've never been able to reach them before.

Rev. Dallas Flippin, Contract Consultant



It's a waste of space to talk about conflict in the church. After all, churches are holy places that never have any conflict. To even hint that there is conflict makes some people believe there is something wrong with the church, the pastor, or the church leadership.

Regardless, in all my years in ministry, I've never seen a church where there wasn't a conflict of some sort. I have seen many churches over the last 50+ years where the conflict has gone underground, resulting in continued hurt and difficulty in doing the work of Christ.

Several years ago, I took a picture that I have used on the cover of a workbook on conflict resolution. I use it to illustrate a point about conflict. The general reaction is that the picture shows a lot of turbulence that would best be avoided.

However, the picture was taken from the back of a ship. It is the chaos caused by the props turning to move the ship forward. Without the turbulence, the ship wouldn't move. It's the conflict between the ship's screws and the water that moves the ship forward.

There is a second part to the picture. The ship was at a pier and there was a very strong wind blowing the ship tight against the dock. For several minutes, over half an hour the captain tried, unsuccessfully, to get the ship away from the dock. What was finally necessary was for two tugboats to pull the bow of the ship away from the dock. Once set free from the restraints of being pressed against the dock, the engines and the rudder were more than enough for the ship to continue its voyage.

Churches sometimes have conflicts, and they need help in getting going. The captain (pastoral staff) and crew (members) of the church are all very competent, it's just that the winds of the time, the conflicts of the moment, are keeping the church from moving. It is helpful to call in an outside source to help get the ship away from the dock so it can (once freed of the restraints) do what it is very capable of and continue the voyage.

Peace, health, and bon voyage,

Rev. Dr. Ross Lucas, Contract Consultant



I start this report by thanking and acknowledging the work and ministry of my predecessor, Rev. Ed Owens, who retired last December 2021. I am indebted to him for his leadership, mentorship and the good works of his ministry shared throughout the state of Michigan on behalf of the American Baptist Churches of Michigan.

Since December 2021, I have taken on this position as the consultant for Transitional Ministries. I work with congregations perplexed with the question of “what is next?” after a pastor announces s/he is leaving. I am privileged to answer this question and the call when your church needs help. My task is to provide information to church boards on next steps.

My focus during this transitional period is to aid churches in celebrating an ending while preparing for a new beginning. My work includes training transition pastors, connecting them to churches in transition, providing training and resources for church search committees, and helping them through the process. When a new pastor is called, I have the privilege of providing an introductory session to familiarize the pastor(s) with our Region and the ministries we offer to pastors and churches.

I hold a monthly Ministry Leadership Group for support to Transition Pastors and those interested in transition ministry placement. I will host an annual training event for Pastors interested in this specialized ministry (Monday, November 14, 2022). Additionally, I am working with the Leadership Ministries Team (LMT) to identify cost-effective Christian educational options for those pursuing pastoral leadership and increase of applicant pool of quality Transition Pastors in our Region.

The following churches have concluded their search and call process. We congratulate the churches listed below and welcome their chosen pastors. May God continue to bless pastors and people alike as we seek to grow healthy churches and pastors.

First Baptist Church, Manistique	Rev. Nathaniel Erickson
Chilson Hills, Brighton	Rev. Angela Miller
FBC Coldwater	Rev. Dan Harrison
Crosspointe Meadows Church, Novi	Rev. Mark Hovermale
Renaissance Vineyard, Ferndale	Rev. Drew and Laurie Fralick (Co-Pastors)

We currently have fifteen churches searching for either a Pastor or Transitional Pastor position. Thus, I close by asking that you continue to pray for our congregations, Pastors, and Region as we discern God’s will for His people. I thank you in advance for your support of me and this vital ministry.

Rev. Nikita McCalister, Contract Consultant



I begin with the best news we can share from 2022 and that is the return of our Michigan Servants for Christ mission team to the mission field in Puerto Rico. In July, 18 servants from 8 different churches came together to Rebuild, Renew and Restore Puerto Rico. The team worked on people's homes to make them safe and livable as well as paint the entire exterior of a school that had been vacant for years. The outpouring of generosity from our Michigan churches was unprecedented. Despite doubling the cost of airfare from the time planning began to the time tickets were purchased, God provided everything needed and more. The team was able to leave \$1,857 in cash donations to cover materials for projects for teams that will follow, \$715 in Home Depot gift cards, and \$925 in Walmart gift cards. Testimonies from team members upon return were powerful and moving and technology in place now even allowed us to participate in those moments from afar. We intend for another team to return to Puerto Rico in the summer of 2023 so please let me know if you or your church are interested. We will begin planning soon after the first of the year.

Unfortunately, civil unrest has continued and even escalated in Haiti making it impossible to safely serve there. In fact, missionaries have left been removed from the country and out of concern for their safety, even those who have served there for more than 20 years. This is due primarily to the absence of any effective government or law enforcement, to violent protesting, gang violence, and kidnappings for ransom. A young man who translates for us called this week to say he ventured out for desperately needed work and food just this week and was shot in the leg. Of course, medical care requires payment in advance, which he did not have so he went to his shabby home and is tending the wound himself. As I said in my report last year, the situation is worse than most remember in their lifetime. At least I am not reporting yet another earthquake.

On a positive note, we have continued support for Haiti Clean Water, the strong and growing ministry of First Baptist Church of Cadillac. Even more, Haitians are now employed year-round and nearly 2,000 clean water filters are installed in northern Haiti. Maneuvering safely in the country is a concern and precautions including extra security are taken very seriously. The lives changed and saved through the ministry are truly amazing. Anyone interested in sponsoring a bio-sand water filter may do so by donating just \$150 and through the month of October, a matching donor will turn one filter into two. One water filter supports a family of 10 for 10 years and a common practice we see is how a family shares their clean water with others who live nearby.

Although we are unable to travel, in support of Haiti we also collected and shipped more musical instruments than ever and a ministry of the First Baptist Church in Cap-Haitien has emerged that we did not see when we carried down those first few brass instruments for the local high school marching band some years ago. Thanks to your donations and God's amazing ways of working through His people, the church now has a full youth orchestra and our ever-present goal of job creation has happened as well through the employment of music teachers with extra funds that we collect and send. At this time, we have another shipment of instruments planned before Christmas and welcome additional instruments of any and all kinds. Donations are also welcome to cover the cost of shipping, repairs, extra strings, oil, grease, and more.

We stand ready to travel and pray God makes a way for us to safely return there one day. In the meantime, we support Haiti Clean Water and send musical instruments and other offerings with love.

In Christ,

Lynne Punnett, Region Mission Consultant



Following 40 years of ministry and retiring from the local church, I have had the privilege of continuing in ministry in the region as the consultant for the pastors who lead the Ministry Leader Groups. The focus of the MLG is to provide a safe space for pastors to have open, honest conversations about what is taking place in life. Pastors are encouraged to look beyond the responsibilities of their position and consider their presence to self, family & community. Often, congregations do not know if their pastor is in the middle of navigating difficult life experiences. As such, I would encourage laity to be sensitive to the needs of their pastor as she/he seeks to provide spiritual care and nurture to a broken world.

The last several years have been particularly difficult for pastors given the pandemic, political polarization, racial inequities, violence, church decline, global warming, inflation, and numerous other factors. This is not in any way to diminish the cases of depression, burn-out, and fragmentation experienced by the general population, but my focus is on the spiritual well-being of pastors. The most recent statistics from the Barna Group with regard to pastoral burnout are revealing as well as disturbing: 38% of pastors are thinking of quitting the ministry, 51% from mainline denominations. (November 29, 2021) Of the 38%, almost half (46%) are under age 45. 50% of pastors are age 56 and above.

I believe these statistics can very easily be applied to the pastors of the ABC-MI region and I want to encourage pastors to seek out community with other pastors and become a participant in one of the MLG opportunities. I believe the MLG is a potential safe haven for pastors to find prayer partners, listening for wisdom and community. In addition, I would like to encourage every pastor to take the following survey to gauge their level of spiritual well-being.

After taking the survey, take a minute to fully absorb the meaning of your total score. If you have a score of forty or less, burnout is not really a factor in your life and ministry. If your stress and strain scores are of concern to you, you may want to focus more on the self-care strategies that deal with stress. If you have a score of fifty or more, I recommend that you take seriously the impact that burnout is having on your ministry and primary relationships. The following reflection questions may help you focus:

1. Because burnout usually creeps up on us unaware, recall the times when you were not experiencing this condition. What changes took place in your life and/or work to help bring this about?
2. What are some options that could help to alleviate the symptoms of burnout?
3. Who are the individuals or resources you can turn to help you reverse the burn-out trends in your life?

For each question, select the number (from 1 to 6) that best describes you. I would also encourage each pastor have several trusted individuals (spouse, other clergy, close friend) fill out the survey based upon their perception of your experience and then compare their results with your survey.

This material is from the Alban institute and was adapted from the Clergy burnout Inventory developed by Roy M. Oswald.

Dr. Bill Beachy, Contract Consultant  
(survey on the following 2 pages)



1. The extent to which I am feeling negative or cynical about the people with whom I work (despairing of their ability to change and grow).

<b>1 - Optimistic about church attenders</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6 - Cynical about church attenders</b>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. The extent to which I have enthusiasm for my work (I enjoy my work and look forward to it regularly).

<b>1 - High internal energy for my work</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6 - Loss of enthusiasm for my job</b>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. The extent to which I invest myself emotionally in my work in the church.

<b>1 - Highly invested emotionally</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6 - Withdrawn and detached</b>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. The extent to which fatigue and irritation are part of my daily experience.

<b>1 - Cheerfulness, high energy much of the time</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6 - Tired and irritated much of the time</b>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. The extent to which my humor has a cynical, biting tone.

<b>1 - Humor reflects a positive, joyful attitude</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6 - Humor is cynical and sarcastic</b>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. The extent to which I find myself spending less and less time with my church attenders.

<b>1 - Eager to be involved with attenders</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6 - Increasing withdrawal from attenders</b>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



7. The extent to which I am becoming less flexible in my dealings with church attenders.

<b>1 - Remaining open and flexible with church attenders' needs and wants</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6 - Becoming more fixed and rigid in dealing with church attenders</b>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. The extent to which I feel supported in my work.

<b>1 - Feeling fully supported</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6 - Feeling Alone and isolated</b>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. The extent to which I find myself frustrated in my attempts to accomplish tasks important to me.

<b>1 - Reasonably successful in accomplishing tasks</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6 - Mainly frustrated in accomplishing tasks.</b>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. The extent to which I am invaded by sadness I can't explain.

<b>1 - Generally optimistic</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6 - Sad much of the time</b>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. The extent to which I am suffering from physical complaints.  
(e.g., aches, pains, headaches, lingering colds, etc.)

<b>1 - Feeling healthy most of the time</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6 - Constantly irritated by physical ailments</b>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. The extent to which building relationships seems more trouble than it is worth.

<b>1 - Very fulfilling</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6 - Relationships are just another responsibility</b>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



The 2021-2022 team members were Steve Boyak, Melinda Hall, Ryan Madis, Dan Miller, Joaquín Tittle, and Katie Wallen. During the reporting period, the team met virtually on November 11th in 2021, and on January 19th, February 22nd, and August 31st in 2022.

The primary purpose for the Leadership Ministries Team (LMT) is to support and foster leadership development in the region. Specific areas of connection include:

- Ministry Leadership Groups (MLGs)
- Pastoral health and support
- Commission on Ordination and Standing (COOS)
- Leadership development and training
- Retired Ministers and Missionaries (RMM)
- Michigan Baptist Scholarship Society (MBSS)

The team goals this year were a continuation of those from the previous year:

- Develop recommendations for training lay members interested in pastoral leadership
- Strengthen relationship with MLGs, COOS, and RMM
- Complete integration of MBSS into LMT

Some key accomplishments and progress include:

- Developed recommendations for equipping part-time pastoral candidates; discussed next steps
- Continued MBSS duties, including award of three (3) scholarships for the 2021-2022 calendar year and one (1) scholarship for fall 2022
- Maintained contact with MLGs and RMM

Looking ahead, the LMT will be focused on the following activities:

- Begin implementing recommendations made for training of lay/part-time pastoral candidates. These include:
  - Support candidate participation in the ABC-Indiana/Kentucky Church Leadership Institute (CLI) program. In concert with this, candidates would work with a mentoring team from the ABC-MI Region.
  - Communicate the CLI program to churches and church leaders and encourage church leadership to be engaged in identifying people in their congregations
  - Investigate and identify funding available from MBSS
  - Work with COOS to investigate certification/ordination options
- Review and revise MBSS award criteria. Fewer individuals are able to relocate and attend seminary full-time. Many students are required to work full-time jobs and are not able to relocate. Consequently, part-time study and online study are current realities. Funding from the region needs to reflect this.
- Engage COOS to discuss licensing options for recognizing part-time and lay pastoral leaders. The reality of lay and part-time pastoral leadership will continue to be realized. In many and more frequent cases, these are 2nd career individuals who are already experienced leaders. Certification and licensing need to both recognize non-traditionally trained pastoral leaders while also requiring the accountability needed to protect congregations.
- Continue to develop relationships with MLGs through Region Consultant and maintain the relationship with RMM

Respectfully submitted,

Joaquin Tittle, LMT Chairperson



The CMMT met a couple times this year over zoom to come up with ways to support our friends and partners. The musical instruments that were collected last year made their way to First Baptist of Cap-Haitien. There were 2 pallets consisting of over 30 instruments and supplies. They were very thankful, and Pastor Voltaire sent the following note:

*We are opening a music class for the youth group, especially the members of the Destiny's girl group, initiated by Doris. With the money left, we ordered 30 flutes. The teachers say that is the good, basic instruments for the beginners. We are all fine and safe by the grace of God. May He bless you all.*

We were unable to send a team to Haiti, so we continued the musical instrument drive. There will be a shipment by the end of the year. Haiti Clean Water has continued to support their team in Haiti, to provide jobs and clean, drinkable water. Pray for our brothers and sisters in Haiti. The gang and political violence can be disheartening for those of us who care so deeply for our friends there. We aren't sure when a return to such a beautiful country and people will be possible.

I am very happy to report that a team was sent to Puerto Rico. We worked with our partners, ABC-Puerto Rico and American Baptist Home Mission Societies, to send the team down. There were 18 servants from 8 different congregations. Dolly Tittle from First Baptist of Ypsilanti lead the team. They worked through a local church and served the people near San Juan. An accounting of the trip, by the team, can be found at <https://michiganservantsforchrist.blogspot.com/>.

An idea that Rev. Johnson had during some of his earlier meetings with the Region Board has begun to take shape. He wanted to bring our churches together in prayer. I presented this idea to the CMMT, and a team was formed to explore how we might do this. The Regional Prayer Initiative will be kicking off in January 2023. We will be encouraging people to sign up through the Region website and get a devotional and email updates for when we can come together to pray for the Region, our churches and ourselves. The vision for the Initiative is to establish a vibrant prayer ministry among the churches within our Region. There should be a brochure in the packet with an easy way to connect with us.

I am hopeful that the CMMT will be able to send mission teams back to Puerto Rico and Haiti in 2023. We will continue to look for diverse teams, in age, race, ethnicity, and experience. It is great having new people and introducing them to the mission experience. But it is also important to send team members back to foster trust and grow relationships. My vision is to keep the Haiti mission teams strong while fostering the growth of the Puerto Rico team.

Vince Basile, CMMT Chairperson



Family Ministries Team Members include:

Christina Sawnsset

Pastor Kenny Beesleey

Rev. Moses Bingham

Jeanna Madej

Dr. Michael T. Scott, Sr., Chair

Meetings for the Family Ministries Team were held on November 13, 2021 and April 5, 2022.

The FMT sponsored the 2022 Martin Luther King, Jr. Virtual Student Spoken Word Contest. Overall, the initiative was a success even though there was a decrease in the number of participants. There were no entries from the “Middle School” category. There were two winners from the “High School” category: Angel Gardner, a Junior at Kalamazoo Central High School in Kalamazoo and Chance Mitchell, a Sophomore at Lakeview High School in Battle Creek. Both young ladies hail from the West Area and received (1) Apple iPad and a certificate of achievement. A brief video highlighting the winner’s presentations was produced by Ms. Shelly Powers and the regional Communications Team. Dr. Scott gave kudos to Shelly and her team for a job well done.

Next is now: “Equipping our churches with tools and resources to effectively disciple Generation Z.” Many of our churches are challenged in the area of youth and children ministry. We are planning to host a webinar that will assist churches with ministering to a new generation in this present age while engaging the youth that we have in worship or mission. The free webinar will take place on Saturday, November 19, 2022 from 10AM-11:30AM EST with guest presenter, Dr. Jolene Erlacher of North Carolina.

The FMT will continue promoting the camps and encouraging families and churches to take advantage of the resources available to throughout the region as it relates to the two camps within our state (Higher Ground and Camp Lael).

The FMT will continue to undergird the Executive Minister’s vision of region-wide prayer ministry and spiritual formation for children, youth, and families.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Michael T. Scott, Sr., FMT Chairperson



Grace and peace to all the churches in our Region! As this is my first annual report submission, I would like to acknowledge and appreciate the work of my predecessor, Mr. Russell Kirksey. He led with fidelity and served faithfully, which has allowed me to transition into this leadership role relatively seamlessly.

The primary concerns of the AMT in the past year have been in the area of property disposition. It has been a difficult year in that regard, but we press forward! Last year at this time we thought we had a viable buyer for the Region Office/University Baptist Church property. Unfortunately, the buyer terminated the sales contract in November 2021. We negotiated to retain a portion of the earnest money to cover our legal fees, etc., and the property has been relisted. All plans to relocate the Region office have been tabled.

In late April 2022, we received an offer on the Clarklake property and entered into a sales contract. This sale was also later terminated by the buyers. The property was immediately relisted. The Hill Road property has been under contract since February of 2022. We believed we had an imminent closing date, but on August 1st, these buyers also terminated their contract. We received per diem funds for a contract extension we had awarded them, and the property was relisted.

On the good news front, Rev. Johnson brought a proposal to use Endowment funds to upgrade the technology in the Region Office. We supported his proposal, and it was brought to the Region Board, which approved the project enthusiastically. These upgrades will provide more functionality for virtual/hybrid meetings, along with other improvements. Rev. Dallas Flippin, our Technology Consultant, helped ensure the successful upgrades were up and running smoothly.

We were also able to reallocate some temporary staffing funds in our budget to enhance the compensation of our office staff. Market pressure and the termination of the sale of the Region Office required that we increase wages and implement a more flexible hybrid in-person/remote work schedule. The office staff have been reporting to the Region Office three days a week and working remotely for two days. Jane Gunneman continues to work 100% remotely. Our capable staff serves us faithfully regardless of their physical location!

Lori Mosher, AMT Chairperson



In 2022, the Central Area held its annual meeting via Zoom, with a special message from Rev. Brian Johnson, missions talks by several ministries from the Central Area including Debra Dawes of Judson Memorial about the Love Clothing Center and Logan Dodge of the First Baptist Church of Jackson about their dinner ministry Café Connection, and an update from Erik Barrows about Higher Ground at Lake Louise.

The annual meeting also included an accompanying business meeting which allowed us to approve our 2022 budget. The generosity of our area churches has continued to enable us to offer camp scholarships, joint mission grants, and technology grants for Central Area. In 2021, churches increased their interests in upgrading technology to further their ministry. Our technology grants were awarded to five churches for a total of \$2316. Our 2022 Technology Grants for Central Area churches are accepting applications until November 11. We hope that these grants helped enable our churches to better reach their communities for Christ.

We are grateful for the work that has been done by Central Area leadership, especially Sue Ellen Glover (Secretary) and Rev. Tony Moore (Treasurer) whose leadership service to the area will conclude this year. They have served our area faithfully for several years and helped support our area churches greatly.

We are grateful for our new leaders who are stepping up to support the Central Area in its leadership for 2023. In 2023, we will have Rochella Smith (Treasurer) and Lynne Punnett (Secretary) stepping into their new leadership roles.

We look forward to seeing how Central Area churches continue their efforts to refocus their mission efforts to faithfully follow Christ in this new day. May this year be one where we set our eyes on the goals God has for us and the bravery to step out into new paths.

Blessings,  
Rev. Dallas Flippin, Chairperson



Metropolitan Detroit Association of American Baptist Churches (MDA-ABC) carries out its ministry mission of Jesus Christ as it is written in Luke 4:18-19 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for He has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the Lord’s favor has come.” As the MDA Chair, I reached out via email to MDA-ABC churches twice this year to reconnect with us in the metropolitan district to build up the body of Christ together through the pandemic. The MDA Administrative Assistant Carolyn Ashford resigned in March due to new employment we commend her for the awesome services she rendered down through the years. Rev. Efia Carr is the Administrative Assistant as of September 2022. In our current financial status report submitted by our Treasurer, Bobby Burch MDA-ABC overall is in a good financial position. There are no outstanding bills to be paid. The WEM account has one pending bill from Camp Lel. Currently, MDA-ABC has two events pending which are the youth and women ministries (budgeted for this year). Also, one outstanding item is to finalize storage at First Baptist of Detroit. We give God the praise.

Secondly, our ministry mission commenced on Good Friday, April 15, 2022, with the Last Seven ‘Words of Jesus on the Cross...the Audacity of These Preaching Women’ via Zoom. On August 6, the Nehemiah Baptist Church hosted its 11th Annual Arise Detroit Community Collaborative Connection in the parking lot. The Collaborative partners included MDA-ABC, Buffalo Soldiers Motorcycle Club of Michigan (BSMC-MI), and Arise Detroit.

Channel 4 News recognized our event via footage on the same day. Minister Joshua Smith, (the grandson of Rev. Dr. Benjamin Baker and Dr. Robert Smith) preached the Good News. The Detroit Fire Department Fire provided a tour of the engine, Gospel DJ, food vendors, bouncers, Chamberlin Pony Rides, and 300 Photo Booth. It was a wonderful event that many families, friends, and neighbors joined.

Thirdly, MDA Mental Health Committee Chair, Rev. Carnell Richardson proposes to make available to the MDA-ABC churches a Suicide Prevention webinar in November and a Sickle Cell Anemia webinar in December (2022). The goal is to provide Mental Health webinars monthly. Youth Ministry Committee Chair, Rev. Jonathan Betts-Fields hosted a Christmas Carnival on December 18, 2021, along with Co-Chair Tonia Bailey (new MDA board member) 40 youth and 20 adults participated, and the Ministers’ Round Table and Graduation Party for High Schoolers were postponed. The Women’s Committee Chair, Rev. Nikita McCalister reported and gave a review of the Advent Prayer Walk in Cass Corridor organized by Rev. D. Irene Key and Deacon Carolyn Hayes on November 13, 2021 (a video highlight is available on YouTube).

Finally, as MDA Chair I will email letters monthly to keep the MDA churches updated on our movements for Christ. Prayerfully, I will contact each pastor personally to meet in person or virtually to see how we can move this ship to fellowship again.

Rev. Dr. Audry L. Turner, Chairperson



The West Area of the American Baptist Churches of Michigan is pleased to report that we are building momentum for the Kingdom of God through new churches and renewed churches on mission with Jesus Christ, together, in the following ways:

Regular Quarterly Meetings have reconvened in the hybrid format (Virtual and In-Person). Meetings were held on January 11, 2022 at Galilee Baptist Church of Kalamazoo (Hybrid), May 10, 2022 (Annual Meeting) also at Galilee Baptist Church of Kalamazoo (Hybrid), and August 27, 2022 at Second Missionary Baptist Church of Battle Creek (In-person).

Annual Palm Sunday Worship was held virtually on Sunday, April 10, 2022 on the West Area's social media platforms (Facebook and YouTube Channel) and Second Missionary Baptist Church's social media platforms. Various churches and clergy throughout the West Area participated through shared Scriptures, Songs, and Sacrificial offerings. Over \$1,000.00 was raised for Regional Mission Support.

Financially supported the Kanpalet CDM (Civil Disobedience Movement) by sending \$2,000.00 in mission support for food, clothing, toiletries for children and families suffering in Burma. This was facilitated by First Baptist Church of Battle Creek.

Voted and approved the recommendation of an additional Burmese congregation from Wyoming, Michigan to become a member of the American Baptist Churches of Michigan through the West Area. We are thankful for the Pastor and Members of the First Baptist Church of Tekonsha for assisting as a "mentor" congregation for our newest church.

Elected and reaffirmed new officers for 2022-23 Fiscal Year to include: Dr. Michael T. Scott, Sr. (Chair), Rev. Bill Dodge (Vice-Chair), and Rev. Richard Schlee (Secretary-Treasurer).

Assembled an Ordination Council at the request of Second Missionary Baptist Church to catechize and set-apart three candidates for ordination on Saturday, August 27, 2022. Congratulations to the Reverend Kristena Drain-Howard, Reverend Jason Meadows, and Reverend Mary J. Fair-Matthews who successfully passed the catechism and were ordained in the tradition of the American Baptist Churches of Michigan.

All pastors and churches within the West Area are encouraged to fellowship with us on a quarterly basis. Lunch is usually served in-person and our meetings are no more than one hour and a half in length. Annual Dues are \$100.00 to assist with the collective work that we do together throughout the West Area of the region and to offset our expenses of ministry. Feel free to submit dues for 2022-23 to: "West Area of ABC-MI" C/O Rev. Richard Schlee, Treasurer 374 Garrison Road Battle Creek, Michigan 49017. For more information about the work of the West Area, do not hesitate to contact us at: 269-349-5597.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Michael T. Scott, Sr., Chairperson



Our Endowment Fund Trustees continue to meet twice a year in January and July. Each of the last two meetings were held virtually by a Zoom meeting. The investment committee, a subcommittee of the Endowment Trustees, meets quarterly with John Granzow of The Armillary Group of Wells Fargo Advisors. These meetings focus on review of the investment returns and discussion of investment strategies.

In our July 2022 meeting, the trustees approved the annual 2023 payouts. The annual payouts continue to be calculated at a 4.50% payout of the average of the past five years market value as of June 30th. The 2023 annual General Fund payout was approved at \$186,849, which is a \$224 increase from 2021. Even with the market's downturn, we have been able to maintain the payout.

The Armillary Group of Wells Fargo Advisors has provided the Foundation's trustees an Endowment Fund Summary Report for the 2022 2nd quarter. We can provide any board member with a copy of the investment report upon request. A summary of the report is as follows:

- The market value of the fund is \$6,191,403 as of June 30, 2022;
- Distributions from the fund total \$1,690,517 since May 1, 2015;
- Investment change of the fund total \$2,349,043 since May 1, 2015;
- Rate of returns YTD is -15.78%, 1 year -12.89%, 3 years 3.05%, 5 years 4.26% and since inception of May 1, 2015 4.39%;
- The rate of return since inception has fallen short of the combined benchmarks. The investment committee, along with our investment manager, has maintained a defensive investment posture. We hold more cash in the account to provide for the monthly distributions.
- The following investment changes or strategies were implemented since the last annual meeting:
- October 2021, the international developed markets position was reduced and introduced two commodity funds;
- January 2021, the international bond fund was liquidated;
- March 2022, the T Rowe Price Blue Chip Growth fund was eliminated and was invested into a passive investment of Vanguard Growth Index Fund. Also, the international equities were trimmed, while increasing our commodity positions;
- April 2022, reduced the US Large Cap Growth and Vanguard Developed Markets and increased the US Large Cap Value. Reduced the Western Asset Core Bond to increased our cash positions and the BlackRock Strategic Income Opportunities. This shortens our duration of the fixed income portfolio;
- Bruce Johnson has joined the Foundation as a new trustee. A big thank you to all the Trustees for their continued commitment in serving on the Endowment board.

R. David Rumsey, Chairperson



The commission has met only once this year. There are people inquiring about ordination, but not stepping forward to begin the process or complete the process. I have been in discussion with several people about the possibility of changing our standards to meet the need for pastors in the century to come.

We see many of our churches being led by men and women, filled with the Holy Spirit, who do not qualify for ordination under our current rules. Many of these are entering ministry as a second career, much like Peter, Paul and the other disciples. It is imperative we find a way to honor their skills without compromising our integrity. In the past, the sign of giftedness and preparedness was an MDiv degree. Later we expanded that to include those with an education and some religious preparation. Is it time to reconsider these standards in the light of how God is moving through our churches currently?

Ohio has an online set of classes that are taken by people already in the ministry that counts toward education requirements for their ordination that is free for ministers in their region. The classes are not burdensome and only count for this purpose so that they will have some education required to serve God as a leader in his church. These include humanities courses as well as those that might be taken towards an MDiv, because many of their people, like our own, are coming without any formal degrees.

Going down that path requires much prayer and discussion, but this is to let you know that we are trying to see what God is doing and getting behind him as we move into the future and try to serve our churches as best we can.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Paul Langford  
Bethel Baptist Church  
Southgate, Michigan



The Historical Committee of the ABC-Mi is charged with the honorable duty of maintaining current historical documents and undertaking other initiatives to upgrade and supplement telling the story of our ABC-Mi Family.

Processes are underway to convert much of our “hard copy” documentation to a digital format that will preserve our history for perpetuity. Hard copy documents deemed essential to remain as is will also be preserved for future research as well.

A video interview project is also being designed to capture eye-witness accounts of some of our older ABC-Mi Family members, to relate their experiences and memories of significant periods of our past. These interviews will also be preserved digitally for generations to come.

The Historical Committee is exploring the creation of an informational brochure for new pastors coming into the state, and for other ministers seeking recognition of ordination credentials in the ABC-MI and the ABCUSA. This brochure would give a brief history of the origins of our denomination, and other pertinent historical information deemed helpful.

I would like to offer special recognition to Rev. Danny Langley, Linda Montei, and our Executive Minister, Rev. Brian Johnson for their devoted time and work on this committee. We need more members to help us with this work. If you love history and your regional family, we need you! Please contact me at [pastortomcase@gmail.com](mailto:pastortomcase@gmail.com).

Rev. Tom Case, Chairperson



Since the last ABC Michigan Annual Meeting, the Board of General Ministries has conducted two meetings (November 2021 and June 2022). Both meetings were conducted in person, due to the easing of COVID-19 related concerns.

During the November 2021 meeting, the Board elected Dr. C. Jeff Woods as General Secretary for a 2022-2023 term. A General Secretary Search Committee was also formalized at the November meeting to implement a process to identify a new General Secretary to begin in 2024.

Also at the November 2021 BGM meeting, an “Interpreting the Impact of COVID-19 on Congregations” Task Force was established to formally take up the cause of understanding how COVID-19 affected churches and communities and the ways in which ministry has and can continue to change.

The Board also passed a proposal to establish a Commission to continue the work of the Anti-Racism Task Force. The Task Force concluded their assignment culminating in the hosting of “The Prophetic Rhythm of Anti-Racism: A Virtual Symposium” and providing a list of resources.

At the June 2022 Board meeting Dr. Woods gave a report highlighting the focus of the American Baptist Churches USA Office of the General Secretary on gathering the denomination; supporting congregations, regions and national organizations; and creating space for local and global issues.

Dr. Woods also introduced the newest staff member, Rev. Soozie Whitten Ford, Interim Associate General Secretary for Regional Ministries, who has begun serving regions as a part of our emphasis on supporting churches, regional and national entities. In addition, Dr. Woods provided updates on the recent efforts to create space for local and global issues, including the work of the Task Force on Interpreting the Impact of COVID-19 on Congregations; the virtual forums Everyday ABC Conversations (held around the topics of homelessness and the housing crisis and creation justice); and International Women’s Day, as well as the continued work around the establishment of an Anti-Racism Convening Table.

Planning for the 2023 Biennial Mission Summit was highlighted by Tina Kiernan, Biennial Mission Summit program coordinator, that will be held June 23-25, 2023 at the Puerto Rico Convention Center in San Juan, Puerto Rico. More information will be available on the ABCUSA website and at [www.americanbaptists2023.com](http://www.americanbaptists2023.com). Registration is expected to open in mid- to late fall.

Respectfully submitted: Nancy M Lewis, Ph.D., Michigan Director, Board of General Ministries



This year, Camp Lael, formerly the Detroit Baptist Camp, celebrates 75 years of ministry. The camp opened in 1947 with the first season dedicated to work camps. Every year since, the camp has sponsored a summer camping program. Even during the summer of 2020, we held family camp weekends and day camps. On August 13, 2022, over 160 people attended a celebration service in the dining hall at the camp. You can watch the service in its entirety on our website at [camplael.com](http://camplael.com). It was a great day to visit friends and celebrate the camp. The past few years have certainly been a journey for us. All the uncertainty of 2020 and the recovery efforts in 2021 have been challenging. This summer we were able to offer our full program once again. We experienced growth in numbers compared to 2019. Our family camp weekends have greatly expanded. Staffing all our positions was a challenge, but God delivered the help we needed. We always have, and continue to be, greatly blessed!

We are extremely grateful for all the people who help make things happen for the camp. Our board of directors, camp staff, volunteer workers and cabin leaders are all so very important to the ministry. We also want to thank those churches and individuals who support us financially. Camp Lael would have never survived the past three years without your dedicated support and prayers. This continued financial support is still much needed to maintain the program and campsite. You can find out more about giving to Camp Lael on our website. Your prayers, of course, are always needed more.

Summer camp may be over, but there are still events coming up. By the time you are reading this, we will have held our 5K Walk/Run on September 17th and the Fall Family Camp weekend on October 14-16. We will host a Fall Youth Gathering for 7-12 graders on November 4-6 and our annual Christmas Camp for special needs campers on December 3-4. Information about these two weekend events are available on our website. Posters can be found with the camp display at the annual gathering at Chilson Hills on October 22nd. Please look at our website at [www.camplael.com](http://www.camplael.com) for information concerning our 2023 Winter Weekends and to see the 2023 summer schedule.

Camp Lael is available for weekend rental during the school year on most weekends. Summer weekends are also available but may be limited. All cabins and meeting buildings are heated. We offer three winter weekends in February for youth and families. Scholarship assistance is available for all our camp programs. Make plans to visit Camp Lael soon, especially if you have never been here or it's been a while.

James Davis, Camp Lael Director



Greetings from beautiful Northern Michigan!

Come with me for a moment to remember...the dining hall with home cooked meals, the beautiful beach with fun waterfront activities, the vesper steps where God's Word was given. Remember the campfire at night with the silly songs, the worship, and the testimonies of God's grace and goodness. All of these taking place each day as the summer of 2022 unfolded. As we look back on this summer, we see first-hand the many ways in which the Father Heart of God was revealed...through His Word and through His promises, forming over and over our identity in Him. Through the love, care, and compassion of those called to serve this summer.

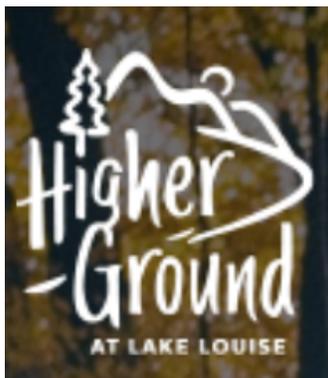
I recall the story of Linda, who with two small sons attended one of our three family camps for single moms and their children. After going on a hike on the beautiful surrounding trails with her children, she pulled me aside to simply say, "I want to thank all of you here at Lake Louise and those who provide scholarships for us to come. I have never been to a place where I feel so much that we belong!" This was music to our ears and a message that we hear over and over again. Higher Ground is a safe place from all the "winds of life" that make up our days. A place providing space to share our burdens with others, to receive encouragement, to enter into our "stories" of life and circumstances. We all have a longing to be part of a community, a family to which we belong. Higher Ground at Lake Louise truly is a place of "Beautiful Belonging."

We are so grateful for those within our region who have provided generously for scholarships for single moms, kids growing up without a father present in their lives, and families with financial hardships. We are also praying for you, American Baptist Churches, that you would continue to grow in your awareness of the need of so many in our midst, in our communities, who would desire to be a part of a faith community, but can't seem to make that connection. Over 50% of our campers come from an "unchurched" background. We believe with all of our hearts that the Church is God's very best plan for growing families. The camp is an amazing catalyst for planting great seed in great soil but that seed needs to be nurtured, watered and cared for in order for it to grow. We have a vision to see every fatherless child in the state of Michigan receive one fair chance to know God as Father. Would you prayerfully consider how your church might play a part in fulfilling this deep desire within God's Father heart? (James 1:27).

May the Lord bless your time together at the 2022 ABC-MI Annual Gathering. May He continue to unite us in His purposes which He has prepared beforehand that we should walk in them, together.

We who make up the community of Higher Ground at Lake Louise, wish you all the very best!

Bruce Johnson and the Higher Ground at Lake Louise team



No report submitted



2022 was a very good year for American Baptist Women's Ministries. We were able to hold our annual retreat/conference in person the first weekend in June at the St. Francis Retreat Center in Dewitt. Everyone was so happy to see each other and enjoy in-person fellowship. Our guest speaker for the weekend was the Rev. Christine Smith. Rev. Smith is the Pastor of Restoration Ministries of Greater Cleveland, Inc. Pastor Chris is also the National President of American Baptist Women's Ministries. During our weekend we honored our Woman of the Year. The Woman of the Year for 2020 is Dr. Vanessa Ghant; 2021 is Delia De La Fuente-Durham, and for 2022 Lynne Punnet. Congratulations to these well-deserved women. Everyone had a wonderful time. We are already planning the 2023 conference/retreat. We hope to see a greater attendance in 2023. Unfortunately, however, our Fall Fling for 2022 was canceled. The plan is to have the Fall Fling in September 2023 in person with the West Area as host.

We continue to focus on our missions and goals. We are raising money for scholarships, region support, national support, leadership development and special projects. Our Special Mission Project is to support the Rev. John and Amanda Good family in their missionary efforts.

We have openings on the Region Executive Committee for Coordinator of AB Girls, Coordinator of Young Adult Women, Coordinator of Women & Girls Mission Fund, and Coordinator of Operation Planting Hope (formerly White Cross). President positions for open for the North, Flint River Cluster and Central Areas. Please let me know if you are interested in any of these positions.

I look forward to what the future holds for ABWM-MI. I know it will be filled with excitement, expectations, and joy. I also know that with God all things are possible.

May God richly bless you.

Brenda Threatt, ABWM-MI Region President

American Baptist  

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Women's  
MINISTRIES





**Building momentum for the Kingdom of God through new churches and renewed churches on mission with Jesus Christ. Together.**

**American Baptist Churches of MI and the Michigan Baptist Convention  
Annual Meeting  
Oct 30, 2021**

**Welcome and Prayer**

Rev. Johnson opened the meeting in prayer.

**Rev. Brian Johnson**

**Rules and Procedures for 2021**

Delegate registration info was mailed in August. No additional agenda items were received prior to this meeting. At the 1975 annual meeting the delegates voted to not bring up items of concern at the annual meeting itself. This decision has never been rescinded.

**Rev. Dr. Robyn Moore**

**Minutes of the 2020 Annual Meeting**

Approval of the minutes

Motion approved by electronic vote of delegates

**Rev. Dr. Robyn Moore**

**Presentation of Annual Reports**

Approval of annual reports

*Motion approved by electronic vote of delegates*

**Rev. Dr. Robyn Moore**

**Report of the Nominating Committee**

Approval of slate of nominees coming from the Executive Committee. Mr. Michael Kingsbury read the slate of nominees.

**Mr. Michael Kingsbury**

*Motion approved by electronic vote of delegates*

**Report of the Treasurer**

Acceptance of the financial report

Mr. Ed Ritzler gave a comparative budget report. Through August, giving from churches is up. There has been an increase in professional staff salaries. We are \$7000.00 behind income over expenses, which is an improvement over last year. We will end with a surplus this year.

**Mr. Ed Ritzler**

*Motion approved by electronic vote of delegates*

Adoption of the 2022 proposed budget as recommended by the Executive Committee (ABC-MI)

*Motion approved by visual "thumbs up" vote of delegates*

Adoption of the 2022 proposed budget as recommended by the Executive Committee (MBC)

*Motion approved by electronic vote of delegates*

**Welcome New President**

Brian Johnson's report is both written and in a video presentation.

**Rev. Dr. Robyn Moore**

Rev. Moore introduced Karen Walker Freeburg as the incoming President. Karen thanked all those who took part in making this year's annual meeting events happen. Karen is looking forward to the challenges of the year ahead.

**Adjournment.**

Mr. Michael Kingsbury closed the meeting with prayer.

Submitted by Arie VanBrenk, Treasurer



Regarding the adoption of resolutions and statements of concern, I simply wish to remind delegates that delegates to the 1975 Annual Meeting, by consensus, determined not to present resolutions and statements of concern for action at subsequent Annual Meetings. This decision was made after several years of painful debate on a variety of issues that only served to shed more heat than light. A review of Annual Meeting minutes from 1975 to date reveals this decision has never been rescinded and this body has not considered resolutions or statements of concern during Annual Meetings. Such resolutions and statements of concern have been left to local congregations to consider.

