

LEARNING HOW TO *pivot*



ANNUAL REPORTS 2021

Michigan Baptist Convention



American Baptist
CHURCHES of MICHIGAN

2021 STAFF



Rev. Brian Johnson
Executive Minister



Jane Gunneman
Dir. of Finance



Shelly Powers
Dir. of Operations
Executive Admin



Diane Rhodes
Dir. of Missions
(Retiring Fall 2021)



Tara Dawdy
Graphic Design Lead

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2021 REGION OFFICERS

President

Rev. Dr. Robyn Moore

Vice President

Dr. Karen Walker Freeburg

Secretary

Rev. Dr. Arie VanBrenk

Treasurer

Mr. Edwin Ritzler

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EXECUTIVE MINISTER'S REPORT

Rev. Brian Johnson

As we prepare to conclude 2021, it will join the likes of 2020 as a year where we have been challenged as a world and as the people of God, to grapple with significant challenges and transitions that have left many of us weary and struggling to summon the hope that lies within them. While our call to make disciples hasn't changed, the landscape all around us feels like it's fundamentally shifted before our very eyes. I wish I could sneak a glimpse into the future and tell you that everything is not only going to get better, but it's also going to return to normal. The problem is that I'm not altogether sure that returning to "normal" is in fact, "better." Maybe, "normal" allowed us to ignore the creeping issues that now confront us at this moment.

The ministry to our ABC-MI Region continues to encourage churches to confront what is, rather than romanticizing what was. Throughout this year we have continued to invest in and mature our Ministry Leadership Groups, under the leadership of Dr. Bill Beachy. Every pastor is encouraged to leverage these cohort experiences that seek to support the whole person of the pastor and provide collegial support for their personhood and their ministry.

A movement being modeled by the younger generation of Christians seems to be afoot in the global Church of Jesus Christ – and it's important we pay attention. Event-centered Christianity that relies on an "event" on Sunday morning as the apex of what it means to be the people of God has left many searching for something deeper. While the body of Christ is called to gather and bear witness to King Jesus and His reign; limiting that witness to Sunday morning gatherings is proving to be a great disservice to the advancement of the gospel of Jesus Christ and His expectation of an ongoing multiplication of disciples. We continue to look for ways to help resource churches to lean into this movement of disciple-making through regular coaching opportunities as well as our 2022 Clergy Retreat May 1-3 where our Pastors will spend time together exploring in great detail how we can model the disciple-making methods of Jesus in our local churches.

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EXECUTIVE MINISTER'S REPORT

Continued

As we seek the renewal of our current congregations, we have partnered with other ABC Regions who are as eager as we are to leverage technology to bring the best value-added experiences to our churches so that the whole body of Christ can be built up as Paul talks about in Ephesians 4. Our next event is a webinar with Todd Bolsinger on November 18th where he will talk about how the church can and should embrace adaptive change for the sake of the gospel.

Our work within ABC-MI isn't only limited to the state of Michigan. Through your mission dollars, we have been able to send much-needed resources to a war-torn Myanmar; to help Haiti, a nation that continues to experience one disaster after another; and meet a specific need to support the work of our very own Jeni Pedzinski - a missionary in Thailand who comes from FBC Niles. Our mission and our heritage compel us to minister beyond self-made borders to every person who is an image-bearer of Almighty God.

One of the highlights of my year was a week-long trip to visit our northern churches. This pocket of churches does incredible ministry in some of the northernmost and remote parts of our great state. To worship with them, hear of their ministry impact, and fellowship with them over the course of a week continues to lift my spirits as I can affirm that God is at work in the northern part of Michigan.

On an organizational front, we anticipate our Region Offices to sell this spring, and we will relocate our offices to a yet-to-be-determined location. This will be a unique season in the life of the Region to consider where and how we establish a location to further our ministry for the next several years. Anticipated retirements of office staff and contract consultants are on the immediate horizon as well and will again, offer us the opportunity to prayerfully consider what strategic steps God is inviting us into as we seek to serve and support our churches the best way possible.



EXECUTIVE MINISTER'S REPORT

Continued

While I can't predict when or how this global pandemic will let up and allow us to establish a new rhythm for ministry, I do have confidence that the gates of hell will not overcome the Church of Jesus Christ. I also have confidence that I can cast all my cares upon Him, because He cares for me, is near to me, and gives strength to the weary. This, loved ones, is our inheritance in the good times and the bad, the easy, or the hard. May we move into this new year with a profound sense of peace as ambassadors for Jesus Christ.

Peace,
Rev. Brian Johnson
Executive Minister

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Rev. Dr. Robyn Moore

Greetings,

It is with great joy, that I report overall that ABC is doing well. In the midst of a global pandemic and challenges that we have faced, we the American Baptist Churches of Michigan continue to press forward with virtual and hybrid meetings, carrying out the business of ABC, offering resources to our churches, support groups for pastors, and mission work both locally and abroad.

I can truly say that the executive board has been committed to carrying out its duties, through administration, family life, and congregational ministries, as well as a balanced budget and the sale of our current regional office. We are thankful to our Executive Minister, Brian Johnson for his innovative leadership with ABC. He serves with passion and dedication throughout the entire state.

When we look back over the last year, diversity and inclusion, virtual yet in-person, one conference call after another, have been a norm that has kept us, sustained us, and even sometimes protected us on the journey. I believe that our divine Lord and Savior has journeyed with us as well. We see the fruits of this in regional work, women's work, and many other areas.

When I look to the future, I am reminded of these frequently spoken words by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase." We do not know what the future holds, especially during a pandemic, but we can trust that God knows, and it's in the palm of hand. All we have to do is extend our hand to the Master. All we need to do is take the first step and he will guide us through the staircase.

I want to encourage you as clergy, leaders, laypersons, and guest that you have the support and there are resources for you. American Baptist Churches of Michigan desires the best for you and your congregation. We stand by you; we stand with you and we are here for you.

May God bless you and keep, give you peace, now and evermore!

Rev. Dr. Robyn Moore

American Baptist Churches of Michigan President



ADMINISTRATIVE MINISTRIES TEAM

Mr. Russell Kirksey, Chair

Blessings and greetings to the American Baptist Churches of Michigan. Your Administrative Ministries Team has been busy this year dealing with a multitude of concerns relating to real estate matters especially the Hagadorn property, which includes the Region office and the adjacent former University Baptist Church.

We had to actively list the property again following the failure of the of the initial potential purchaser to gain needed zoning changes from the Meridian Township Board. This resulted in the withdrawal of their purchase offer.

Subsequently another developer tendered a letter of intent to purchase the property which the Region Board accepted. This set in motion a number of steps that must be completed before the sale can be finalized. These periods for study and approval could take us into the Spring of 2022.

With the sale of the Region Office imminent, decisions will be made soon about our future home. Our future office space needs require less square footage than we currently occupy and utilize. Our committee is assessing and analyzing various pros and cons regarding leasing versus purchasing our next Region Office and are evaluating several options.

Sadly, Clark Lake Community Church and the Hill Road Church have closed and both properties have reverted back to the Region for disposition. Both properties are listed with real estate agents to market. Once again special thanks goes out to Jane Gunneman, who oversees our accounting and finance activity. Last year she submitted our application for the CARES Act loan/grant. We were approved for \$58,000.00 which was forgiven in December. This year once again we received in excess of \$58,000.00. She and Ed Ritzler, our Treasurer, are in the process of getting this loan forgiven as well. These funds were a welcome addition to our budget and helped offset the reduction in income from other sources.



CONGREGATIONAL MINISTRIES AND MISSIONS TEAM

Mr. Vince Basil, Chair

This year was a challenge and disappointing. We were not able to send a team to Haiti or Puerto Rico. The Covid 19 pandemic and political strife in Haiti kept us from safely sending out teams. The CMMT met a couple times over zoom to come up with ways to still support our friends and partners.

After the earthquake that occurred in August, the CMMT held a meeting to discuss our immediate response and how our churches can help. An E-link article went out to support One Great Hour of Sharing. We then sent the bulk of our budget to One Great Hour of Sharing for their earthquake response. We voted to send \$1500 to our partner church in Haiti for distributing food and general aid with the pandemic. We started a musical instrument drive that will go on for an undetermined amount of time. Once we finish collecting, they will be sent to First Baptist of Cap-Haitien and College Pratique du Nord (the Baptist high school) to help build their orchestra/band.

I am hopeful that the CMMT will be able to send mission teams back to Puerto Rico and Haiti in 2022. 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 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.



LEADERSHIP MINISTRIES TEAM

Mr. Joaquin Tittle, Chair

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)

Two other areas previously under the LMT's purview but are no longer in existence include:

- Certificate in Christian Ministry Program
- Ministers Council

The team goals this year were a continuation of those from the previous year with some modifications, namely:

- Support development of training for lay members interested in pastoral leadership
- Strengthen relationship with MLGs
- Research and promote ways to provide clergy retreat and other workshop materials to leadership in the ABCMI churches (both lay and professional)
- Integrate MBSS into LMT (per request of Executive Minister)

The 2020-2021 team members are Steve Boyak, Melinda Hall, Joaquín Tittle, and Katie Wallen. During the reporting period, the team met virtually on November 14th in 2020, and on January 30th, March 6th, April 17th, June 25th, and August 21st in 2021.



LEADERSHIP MINISTRIES TEAM

continued

Some key accomplishments and progress include:

- Meet with Ed Owens (Transitional Ministries) to discuss need for part time pastoral leadership. Begin to develop strategies to (i) recruit and train lay pastors, (ii) identify mentors, and (iii) communicate educational opportunities to the ABC MI Region.
- Review proposed revisions to Guidelines on Equivalency drafted by COOS
- Assumed the MBSS duties; awarded two (2) scholarships for the fall 2021
- Maintain contact with MLGs and RMM

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

- Recommend process to Region for part time pastoral training
- Provide response to COOS on proposed revised Guidelines on Equivalency
- Fully integrate MBSS into LMT
- Develop relationship with MLGs through Region Consultant

Respectfully submitted,
Joaquin Tittle, Chair



TRANSITIONING MINISTRIES

Rev. Ed Owens, Contract Consultant

When a pastor announces he or she is leaving, church leaders are often perplexed with the question of “what is next?” In our Region the next step is to call for help. For nearly five years I have had the privilege of receiving those calls for help.

I am able to provide information to church boards on next steps. 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. Once the new pastor is called, I have the privilege of providing an introductory session to familiarize the pastors with our Region and the ministries we offer to pastors and churches.

As part of the effort to provide quality transition pastors to our Region, I offer an annual training event. Additionally, I hold a monthly Ministry Leadership Group for support to transition pastors and to provide additional information about specific skills and knowledge needed for this specialized ministry.

The Transition Ministry has been a team effort. While I coordinate the ministry and serve the outstate churches, Rev. Bill Walker serves the churches of the Detroit Metro Association.

Covid has interrupted and slowed the search of a number of our churches. But as things have opened up slowly in our state, several churches have been able to conclude their searches and called pastors. These include:

Lakeview Baptist Church, Battle Creek | Rev. Paul Prochazka
Ceresco Baptist Church, | Rev. Mary Fair-Matthews
The Peoples Church, East Lansing (Associate) | Rev. Dr. Devon Herrell
First Baptist Church, Grand Blanc | Rev. Raleigh Adams
Bankers Baptist Church, Hillsdale | Rev. Brandon Dengler
Christ Community Church, Lansing (Associate) | Rev. Drew Filkins
Crossroads Community Church, Stockbridge | Rev. Josh Lilly

We currently have eighteen churches searching for either a pastor or an associate pastor position. Thank you for your support of this vital ministry and please keep these churches in transition in your prayers.



TRANSITION MINISTRY

Rev. Bill Walker, Contract Consultant

I do not have a lot to report due in large part to Covid restrictions. In the past year, I met with Cherry Hill Baptist Church a few times. I finished a transitional ministry at FBC Ypsilanti. I am currently the transitional minister at the Federated Church, Grass Lake.

I am grateful for the support provided by our Executive Minister, Brian Johnson and the transitional ministry staff person, Ed Owens. I also thank the office staff, especially Shelly, for their support and their patience.

May God continue to bless the work of Christ through the local churches and the region.

Respectfully,

Bill Walker



REGION MISSION TEAMS

Ms. Lynne Punnett, Contract Consultant

We hoped 2021 would not be another year of the pandemic impacting our ability to travel, but COVID-19 has unfortunately continued to limit our ability to make short-term mission trips to Haiti and other locations in the world despite the general availability of vaccinations by mid-year. Of greater concern than the virus, however, is the civil unrest that has devastated Haiti's economy, stability and the safety of missionaries. International Ministries pulled all missionaries from the country earlier in the year and to date they have not returned. This is due primarily to gang violence and kidnappings for ransom that are rampant. In September a priest was killed in Port-au-Prince, which was especially shocking because clergy have generally been somewhat exempt and protected. Even children from the poorest families have been abducted with demands for money. The situation is worse than most remember in their lifetime.

Add to all of that, the assassination of Haiti's President July 7, 2021, which put an already unstable country into complete chaos. And then shortly thereafter a 7.2 earthquake devastated the southwestern region, which was stronger than the one in January of 2011 and killed over 2,200 people and destroyed and displaced thousands of homes and people. The area where it hit is where Michigan Servants for Christ built a "rubble house" in 2012. We have inquired how the rubble homes fared but have not heard. Based on the strong method of construction, we expect they withstood the extreme shaking and remain standing and intact.

In response to the earthquake, we have encouraged all congregations to consider special offerings directed to One Great Hour of Sharing – Haiti as they are more experienced and equipped to respond to disasters than any other ministry we partner with and support.

On a more positive note, this last year we contributed to IM's Short Terms Missions new B4M podcasts. Recordings were made with Josie Howard-Wyne of Second Missionary BC in Battle Creek who has traveled to Haiti numerous times and with Mark Gutierrez, a missionary son of Drs. Rick and Anita Gutierrez. 25 podcasts were recorded with more 1,800 downloads. More recordings will be scheduled this year; we are excited to share how God works through his short- and long-term missionaries.



REGION MISSION TEAMS

continued

We have also continued strong support for Haiti Clean Water, the strong and growing ministry of First Baptist Church of Cadillac. Numerous Haitians are employed year-round now and nearly 2,000 clean water filters are installed in northern Haiti. 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. 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.

Finally, despite being unable to travel to Haiti, we want to fulfill a promise to collect and send musical instruments and we ask everyone to join us. Check your closets and all instruments (not just brass) in good working condition are welcome. We expect to ship a container in late November or December and ask for your support.

We know God's plan is perfect even though we don't always understand why things happen. We stand ready to travel and pray God makes a way for us to safely return in 2022. In the meantime, we will collect musical instruments and offerings and send them with love.

In Christ, Lynne Punnett
Region Mission Consultant



METROPOLITAN DETROIT ASSOCIATION

Rev. Dr. Audry Turner, Chair

As the newly elected Chair of the Metropolitan Detroit Association (MDA) of the American Baptist Churches of Michigan (ABC-MI), I am grateful for the opportunity to serve in the spirit of love and unity. I look forward to serving with each of you as we continue to build up the kingdom of God here on earth, preparing for the post pandemic in faith. MDA endeavors to embrace God's will for reformation, renewal, restoration, and reunification swayed by the Holy Spirit to evangelize the world for Christ united.

MDA, this past year continued its monthly meeting virtually as prompted by Rev. Dr. Patricia Butler (my predecessor) during the COVID-19 pandemic. MDA's accomplishments are: (1) Under Dr. Butler's leadership I instituted a Good Friday Service "The Audacity of These Preaching Women - Jesus' Last Words on the Cross," virtually in memory of the late Rev. Dr. Samuel H. Bullock, Jr. pastor of Bethany Baptist Church of Detroit. (2) August 2021, MDA held an Arise Detroit Annual Block Party in the parking lot of Nehemiah Baptist Church, Detroit, - its first in-person evangelistic pandemic social distancing fellowship. (3) MDA provided an updated financial report of member churches in good standing, (4) continued to meet virtually, (5) held its annual session virtually and (6) participated in Send Me Saturday, October 2020. We united in love to build up the kingdom of God and embraced the new thing God pushed us into for His glory, fearlessly.

Currently, MDA Board is revisiting its vision and mission statements for revisions that are relevant for a post pandemic spiritual epidemic. We are praying and seeking the face of God for an authentic post pandemic prophetic preaching praxis that embraces both psychological and theological pursuits for spiritual reformation, renewal, restoration, and reunification for a greater evangelistic thrust. Let's pray for God's blessings, prosperity, protection, peace, and provision during this post pandemic era as we continue our labor in love for Christ.

Humbly submitted by: Reverend Dr. Audry L. Turner, Chair MDA-ABCMI



BOARD OF GENERAL MINISTRIES

Dr. Nancy M. Lewis

Since the last ABC-MI Annual Meeting, the Board of General Ministries has conducted two meetings (November 2020 and June 2021). Both meetings were conducted virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the ABC-USA Biennial Meeting was conducted virtually on June 24-26, 2021. The virtual biennial was a new experience for staff and volunteers, but it was presented in a well-organized, entertaining, and informative manner. The staff and volunteers who participated in the preparation of this ambitious event should be congratulated.

At the November 2020 BGM meeting, Interim General Secretary Jeff Woods announced that Rev. Dr. Marie Onwubuariri had been called to serve as the Associate General Secretary for Mission Resource Development. Her primary responsibilities include the promotion of giving to UM on behalf of the denomination and the oversight of Mission Resource Development for the Office of the General Secretary.

During the fall of 2020 ABC-USA conducted surveys regarding the impact of COVID-19 on regional activity. Results of these surveys were provided and discussed.

In early 2021 ABC-USA General Secretary Jeff Woods became aware of the political uprising in Myanmar. Since that time a group of leaders has been meeting to address the ongoing unrest in Myanmar. Letters were sent to President Biden, Vice-President Harris, National Security Advisor Sullivan, Secretary of State Blinken, the General Secretary of the UN, and the U.S. Ambassador to the UN, calling for the recognition of the democratically elected leaders and release of political detainees, as well as sanctions focused on military leaders, and humanitarian aid for the people of Myanmar. Dr. Woods also accepted an invitation from VP Harris to serve on the Community Corps to share ideas, resources, and encouragement for COVID-19 vaccinations.



BOARD OF GENERAL MINISTRIES

Continued

The board continues its work on nominating a new General Secretary. The timeline released by the board provides for the nomination of a General Secretary for a two-year term (2022-2023) to continue the transitional work of the board. During this interim period, the Board and its Executive Committee will engage in a period of prayer and discernment regarding the role of the Office of the General Secretary. The result will be an identity statement for the Office of the General Secretary, an outline of critical issues, primary duties, and a process for a General Secretary Search Committee, as well as the commission the Committee. The Search Committee will then complete its work during the two-year term of the General Secretary.

Respectfully submitted,

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



ENDOWMENT FUND

Mr. R. David Rumsey, Chair

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 2021 meeting, the trustees approved the annual 2022 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 2022 annual General Fund payout was approved at \$186,625, which is a 5.64% increase from 2021.

We have provided the Endowment Fund Summary Report for the 2021 2nd quarter from The Armillary Group of Wells Fargo Advisors for your review. The report has market commentary along with a detailed analysis of our Endowment account. A summary of the report is as follows:

- The market value of the fund is \$7,339,503 as of June 30, 2021;
- Distributions from the fund total \$1,425,315 since May 1, 2015;
- Investment change of the fund total \$3,231,940 since May 1, 2015;
- Rate of returns YTD is 7.23%, 1 year 24.72%, 3 years 9.68%, 5 years 9.73% and since inception of May 1, 2015 7.50%;

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.

During April 2021, we changed a portion of our allocation to more passive investments versus managed mutual funds. This should assist our account to be more aligned with the benchmarks. Another investment strategy over the past couple of years was to increase our allocation to US growth investments versus international investments. In regards to our fixed income portion of the portfolio, we are invested in funds that have shorter durations. Our committee and investment manager have discussed investment strategies in regard to inflation protection.

A big thank you to all the Trustees for their continued commitment to serving on the Endowment board.



HIGHER GROUND AT LAKE LOUISE

Mr. Bruce Johnson

Thank you for your generous contribution to Higher Ground at Lake Louise this year. In the midst of all the uncertainty due to the covid virus, this summer at camp was a breath of fresh air. Through you and many others, we were able to offer a season of Higher Ground for many needing a time of renewal and refreshment.

Through much prayer and deliberation, we were able to safely offer all of our summer camp sessions this year, including three family camps, six youth camps, and two specific group sessions. God uniquely and perfectly provided a wonderful summer staff of 22 individuals, as well as over 100 different volunteers to serve throughout these weeks. Although we needed to maintain a lower attendance in order to offer plenty of open space in our facilities, we still had a tremendous turnout in this season of uncertainty of over 400 campers.

Each week provided a space for God the Father to move and ensure each one of his love in a way that ministered to that specific age group. Our programming focused on knowing our identity in Christ as God our Father, incorporating our mission to help campers of all ages experience and encounter the Father heart of God through faith in Jesus Christ. Due to your generosity, almost 60% of our campers received some form of scholarship this year. We were also able to offer one-on-one mentoring to just over 100 students this summer.

A beautiful illustration of what we saw on a regular basis this summer was described by one of our Psalm68five Mentors: One camper who I worked with had the gospel and the truth of God the Father click for her this week.



HIGHER GROUND AT LAKE LOUISE

continued

Early on at camp, when we read through some of the verses in the Psalm 68 five journal, you could see that her understanding was forming. I remember her vividly saying, "So God is my Father, and I am His child?" She had the biggest smile on her face. On another day she learned how to pray and that praying is how we can communicate with God. She was quick to start praying and she told me how excited she was that she could talk to God whenever she wanted. By the next day she was praying for dinner in the Dining Hall. I watched this camper recognize her Eternal Father. She realized that all she hoped for from a parent could be found in Him. That He cared for her more than she could ever hope for from someone here on this earth. I was so blessed to work with this camper. She showed me what it truly means to have a "childlike faith."

We are not only passionate about helping both young and old understand all that God our Father has to offer while at camp, we also want to assist in providing supports for them when they return home. Much of our time is spent building connections with churches and community groups that encourage growth in their journey of faith. This has been a pivotal year in making such connections and we look forward to seeing how God will continue to move in the lives of these campers throughout the year.

Thank you for being a part of this life-changing community! We are excited to provide a place of inspired impact. Find out more about Higher Ground at Lake Louise on our website at <https://highergroundatlakelouise.com/>. We would love to talk further about how you can be involved in this life-giving ministry! Contact us at registrar@hgatell.com.



2020 ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

**2020 Joint Annual Meeting
AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF MICHIGAN (ABC-MI)
MICHIGAN BAPTIST CONVENTION (MBC)
Saturday, October 10, 2020
Zoom**

Welcome and Prayer

Rev. Brian Johnson

Rev. Johnson opened the meeting with prayer

Rules and Procedure for 2019

Mr. Michael Kingsbury

Mr. Kingsbury reviewed the "Rules of Procedure" related to delegate notification and requirements for submitting agenda items for the Annual Meeting. Mr. Kingsbury reported that no additional agenda items were received by the required deadline. Mr. Kingsbury also reminded delegates that the ABC-MI, in accordance with a 1975 decision, no longer brings resolutions or statements of concern before the Annual Meeting for action.

Minutes of 2019 Annual Meeting

Mr. Michael Kingsbury

MOTION: *Motion to approve the 2019 Annual Business Meeting was presented.* Motion was made by Lynn Punnett, Second by Rev. Robin Moore. None Opposed, MOTION CARRIED.

President Reports

Mr. Michael Kingsbury

Mr. Kingsbury reflected on how different this last year has been due to the pandemic. He spoke to his role as Vice-President, where he was instrumental in planning the retirement celebration for Rev. Dr. Michael Williams and then on his role as Region President.

Mr. Kingsbury then introduced Rev. MaryBeth Robertson who provided leadership for the nominating committee. Rev. Robertson reported on the process that led to selection of Rev. Johnson as the Region Executive Minister and thanked all who were involved in the process.

Mr. Kingsbury reported on the Zoom meeting of the Region Board in January 2020 where Rev. Johnson was unanimously approved as the new Region Executive Minister. Since he was not able to step into this role until March 1st, Mr. Kingsbury thanked the Rev. Ed Owens for overseeing the Region office. Mr. Kingsbury noted that he had conversations with Rev. Johnson on what the first 90 days of his role as Executive Minister would be like.

Mr. Kingsbury also thanked the Region staff, Region Board and Executive committee for their work during the time of transition and pandemic.

Presentation of Annual Reports

Mr. Michael Kingsbury

MOTION: *Motion to approve the 2020 Annual Reports as presented*

Motion was made by Rev Danny Langley

Second Rev Bill Smith

None opposed MOTION CARRIED.

Report of the Nominating Committee

Mr. Michael Kingsbury

MOTION: *Motion to approve the "2020 Slate of Nominees" coming from the Executive Committee.*

Motion was made by Mrs. Rene Langley

Second by Mrs. Elaine Thomas



2020 ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

continued

None opposed Motion carried.

Report of the Treasurer

Mr. Ed Ritzler

Note Financial Report in packet of information. Everyone should have received it. Mr. Ritzler took us through the budget of 2020. He noted what is coming in from the churches. Churches are having a decline in revenue which impacts what the region gets. Revenue is down about \$35,000.00. Endowment funds are fixed. Mr. Ritzler said the Region is projecting 50,000.00 from reserves will be needed. However, the amount received from PPP is not reflected in the budget. It is anticipated that this loan will be forgiven. We hope that this means no money will need to be withdrawn from reserves this year.

Ministry Teams budgets were reviewed. Pages 4-6 of the written report shows how the ministry teams will spend the budget. The budget to be voted on is on page 3.

MOTION: *Motion to accept the financial report as presented.* None opposed. Motion carried.

Motion by Phyllis Grumman

Second by Elaine Thomas

Carried

MOTION: *Motion to adopt the 2021 proposed budget as recommended by the Executive Committee (ABC-MI).*

Mr. Ritzler. made motion. No second required since it comes from the Executive Committee.

None opposed. Motion carried.

MOTION: *Motion to adopt the 2021 proposed budget as recommended by the Executive Committee (MBC).* None opposed. Motion carried.

Mr. Ritzler made the motion. No second required since it comes from the Executive Committee.

Report of the Executive Minister

Rev. Brian Johnson

Rev. Johnson stated that he was honored by the support and encouragement given to him by Dr. Michael Williams, who retired after twenty years as the Executive Minister of ABC-MI.

Rev. Johnson stated that when he started as the Executive Minister on March 1, 2020, it was at the same time when the full impact of the pandemic became known.

The question quickly became what pastors, who were impacted by the pandemic, needed. Rev. Johnson reviewed several things that were put in place to help support Pastors. These included:

Zoom meetings with clergy that focused on how pastors were doing, and enabled pastors to share with each other.

Helping churches plan live streaming services. Zoom meetings helped with this in that Pastors who were streaming could assist those for whom this was new.

There was also discussion on when to reopen churches that had closed at the outset of the pandemic.

Rev. Johnson noted that Covid had an unequal effect, having a greater impact on the churches in the Detroit-Metro area.

Rev. Johnson also stressed that Pastors are experiencing a high level of burn-out and stress. If a decision is made to remain closed, or to open, some church members will oppose the decision and will not be happy with the pastor.



2020 ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

continued

Rev. Johnson noted that the situations in churches are accelerated by the pandemic. Churches already in decline experienced sharper decline due to the pandemic. Some churches would close as a result.

Rev. Johnson noted the crisis and opportunity co-exist. He talked about what discipleship looks like when not tethered to a church building. The strategy of getting people to church and leaving the rest to clergy has not worked and has resulted in a consumer Christianity. The pandemic has created opportunities for new models of discipleship not tied to the church. These are decentralized models of discipleship.

Rev. Johnson went on to report changes in the Region. These are:

1. Use of technology. Flocknote was implemented to enhance communication to churches.
2. A redesign of the Website, which is more modern and mainstream.
3. An increase in the use of social media.
4. Partnership with Google Suite for non-profits, which gives pastors access to Google Docs, Drive, etc. and has a Zoom platform.

5. Hired Rev. Dallas Flippin as a Contract Consultant for Technology

Rev. Johnson also stated the need for a vision. His vision is to build momentum through the development of starting new churches and the renewal of existing churches. In support of this vision Rev. Johnson noted the importance of partnering with organizations that may not be a part of the ABC. He noted three areas of partnership.

1. "The Unstuck Group," which is working with 7 pastors.
2. BigLife| which works to develop decentralized models of discipleship
3. Working with ABC of Indiana and Kentucky, and Great Rivers on the Race and Justice

Forum.

Rev. Johnson also included some updates in his report:

The Region Office and University Baptist church have not sold due the buyer backing out due to zoning issues with Meridian Township.

The Ministry Leadership Groups (MLG) continue to be a priority. It is a safe place for Pastors to meet and support each other. Healthy churches need healthy pastors and church members were asked to encourage their pastors to attend an MLG.

There continues to be a concern for the renewal of churches. Rev. Johnson stated that he has resources available for renewal and these can be made available by emailing him at brianj@abc-mi.org.

On renewal Rev. Johnson said churches must resist the urge to go back to normal. He encouraged churches to partner together, to share members, using gifted people in more than one setting.

Rev. Johnson also noted that the Bi-vocational model of ministry is growing. It is becoming more difficult to find fulltime clergy. Rev. Johnson asked people to envision what it might be like if the sole task of a Bi-vocational pastor was to equip laity.

Rev. Johnson welcomed the Church of the Elohim, (Pastor DJ Derrick Knox, Jr.) into the ABC-MI family.

Rev. Johnson concluded his report by thanking members of the Region Board and Executive Committee for their hard work and welcomed Rev. Robin Moore as the new Region President and Karen Walker Freeburg as the new Region Vice President.

Presentation of ABC-MI By-Laws Change

Mr. Michael Kingsbury

Higher Ground has become their own identity, 501C3. We need to acknowledge them as an affiliated organization.

MOTION: Motion to approve by laws change was made by Kathy Feldpausch
Second by Vince Basile
Carried



2020 ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

continued

Welcome of New Churches

Rev. Brian Johnson

Church of the Elohim, (Pastor DJ Derrick Knox, Jr.)

Welcome New Pastors

Rev. Brian Johnson

Rev. Bill Dodge (Ganges Baptist, Fennville)

Rev. Michael Halliburton (FBC Davison)

Rev. David Leisman (Tower Hart)

Rev. Kim and Cindy Semran (FBC Monroe)

Rev. Kenneth Nichols (Rollin Baptist (Hudson)

Rev. Matt Taylor (FBC Sturgis)

Honor Outgoing President & Welcome New President

Rev. Robin Moore was welcomed as the new president of the Region. Mr. Kingsbury thanked all who had served on the Region Board this last year.

Adjournment

MOTION: Motion to adjourn was made by Brenda Threatt and seconded by Cheryl Zinc

Minutes Submitted by

Dr. Arie Van Brenk

Secretary





American Baptist

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