

American Baptist Churches of New York State
Board of Mission Meeting
December 8, 2023

Present

Officers

Lecia Rodriguez - President
Leon Runner – Vice-Pres.
Bruce Aikin – Secretary
Jim Harriff – Treasurer

Howard Maxson
Jonathan Staples
George Stefani
Delma West (& Comm. on Ministry)

Association Reps

David Harris IR
Michael Dickinson LW
William Stoklosa MA

Staff:

James Kelsey - Exec. Min.
Jerrod Hugenot, Assoc. Exec. Min.
Mary Schwarz - Admin. Asst.
Stephanie Schneider, AB Youth

At-Large

Elizabeth Fell-Dewalt
Claudia Little
Patricia Ludwig (& Min. Council)

ABCUSA Board of Gen. Ministries

Merle McJunkin

- 1.0 The meeting was called to order at 10:05 AM, by the President, Lecia Rodriguez.
There were fifteen Board members and four Staff members present.
- 2.0 Devotions and Opening Prayer – Jim Kelsey gave a Devotion based on Genesis 2:1, about “Taking Sabbath.” He spoke about how pastors too often do not take time to rest. He then opened the meeting with prayer.
- 3.0 Approval of Agenda (Document #1)
The Agenda was approved as submitted.
- 4.0 The Minutes of the September 9, 2023, meeting were approved as submitted. (Document #2).

Reports

- 5.0 AB Youth Convention – Stephanie Schneider
The Convention was held on the weekend of November 10th.
There were 142 participants.
The main speaker was Rev. Lauren Parliament, Minister to Future Leaders and Discipleship with American Baptist Churches in the Rocky Mountains.
The band for the Convention was “Undeclared.”
The project for this year was to raise money for The Center in Utica, which supports refugees being resettled in the area. The goal was \$9,000.00. The amount raised was \$11,768.50, a new record amount. This year's winning congregation was Tabernacle Baptist Church of Utica, raising another record-breaking amount (over \$7,000). They got to take home the Keith H. Griffin Memorial Bear. Second Place: Village Baptist Church, Fort Edward; Third Place: First Baptist Church, Manchester.
Over 65% of this year's youth came from five Karen congregations in Utica, Buffalo and Syracuse. There were a few new churches.

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Scholarships will be available next year.

The new venue, the Crown Plaza Hotel in downtown Syracuse was good, except that the number of attendees was at the fire code capacity. A new venue may need to be found for next year.

The Safe Region Policy was implemented smoothly.

In response to a question, it was noted that the Convention could not be recorded due to juveniles being present.

6.0 Executive Minister - Jim Kelsey (Document #3)

A Hispanic congregation is showing some interest in purchasing the Wappingers Falls Church.

The sale of the Athens Federated Church is moving along. We will receive 50% of the proceeds.

One of the lawsuits under the NYS Child Victims Act is still in litigation.

Staff Transitions:

Mary Schwarz will retire as the Administrative Assistant in August of 2024. A job description will be written by January of 2024. The position should be filled one month before her retirement to give her replacement time to adjust to the duties of the new position.

Jim Kelsey is planning to retire in May of 2025. This will be announced in January 2024. The announcement will be made early to keep the situation under control. As part of the transition, the President appoints a Search Committee. What steps should be taken? The Executive Minister position may be modified.

7.0 Associate Executive Minister's Report – Jerrod Huguenot (Document #4)

His Sabbatical project was about part-time ministers. He also looked at churches which share a pastor. We currently have twelve churches in the Region which share a pastor. There will be more in the future.

He was present for the entire AB Youth Convention. He gave a workshop.

8.0 Treasurer – Jim Harriff discussed the financial reports.

8.1 January through November 2023 General Fund Profit and Loss Snapshot (Document #5)

At the end of November all categories should be at 91.7%. The United Mission giving is significantly under expectation. The America for Christ Offering is doing well. Line 41100, the Multi-Region Distribution, has one more distribution. The AB Foundation will be over for the year. The expenses are on target. The Balance Sheet from the Executive Committee meeting shows that the General Fund Checking account is down to \$11,927.71. The funds under line 11535 show funds available for church ministry projects. It was noted that line 11535 – Tuscarora Mission has \$3,279.65, because a bill was never received from Niagara County Community College for accommodations from the Mission Trip. The participants will be asked if they would like a refund or to donate the money to the Region. Some money from line 11560-0635, the Reserve Fund, could be sent to the AB Foundation. The AB Foundation investments are doing well. Line 15250 is \$860,424.47 because of the proceeds from the Wappingers Falls parsonage sale. Our assets are currently

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\$2,406,694.48. Our current expenditures are not sustainable over a five to ten year period.

8.2 January through November 2023 General Fund Profit and Loss Detail (Document #6)
This report shows details from Document #5.

8.3 January through November 2023 Total Ministry Profit and Loss (Document #7)
This report shows more details from Document #5.

Reports

9.0 Biennial 2024 Planning Committee – Leon Runner (Document #8)
The committee had its first meeting on Zoom to begin planning for the 2024 Biennial.

10.0 AB Men – No report.

11.0 AB Women’s Ministries – Colleen Charsky (Document #9)
Colleen Charsky submitted a written report.

12.0 Ministers Council – Patricia Ludwig
The two events held this year were successful.
They will be having a membership drive. A letter will be sent out after January 1st.
On April 15, 2024, Jim Stone will give a presentation on Life Coaching in Ministry. He will give the same presentation at a later date.
They will be looking at some changes to the Code of Ethics.

13.0 ABCUSA Board of General Ministries – Merle McJunkin (Document #12)
The Board has elected a new General Secretary, the Rev. Dr. Gina Jacobs-Strain. She will begin her term of office on February 1, 2024.
The Board is working together very well.

14.0 Lay Study Program
There are currently 21 students. Many want to be Certified Lay Pastors.
The leaders are working very hard on the courses.

15.0 Committee on Ministry – Delma West (Document #13)
There are currently five candidates for recognition of ordination.

16.0 Vick/Pathfinder Camping and Conference Ministries – (Document #10) - Claudia Little
The Board approved their budget.
Camp Vick needs a lot of repairs.

Old Business:

17.0 The following motion is from the Executive Committee:
Whereas First Baptist Church of Syracuse has sold all their property, has

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distributed all their assets, has no expressed intention of meeting for worship or doing ministry or engaging in regular fellowship, and has no plans to legally dissolve themselves but to remain as an unincorporated Baptist Church in New York State, it is moved that the ABCNYS Board of Mission dismiss this church as a member congregation pursuant to Rule 1, Section 1.1 of the Rules of Procedures American Baptist Churches of New York State. This action shall be communicated to the Board of General Ministries ABCUSA, indicating that FBC Syracuse fulfills none of the Common Criteria for Cooperating Churches as found in Rule 5 of the Standing Rules of American Baptist Churches in the USA. Motion carried.

- 18.0 Strengthening Your Financial Future program – Five people are needed for this committee. Jim Harriff volunteered. It was moved by Patricia Ludwig and seconded by Howard Maxson that the Board empowers Jim Kelsey to find members for this committee. Motion carried.

New Business:

- 19.0 2024 Budget – Jim Harriff (Document #11)

The Executive Committee presents the Budget for 2024 to the Board of Mission.

The Budget holds the line on salaries. The projected shortfall for the year is \$40,719.70.

It is recommended by the Executive Committee to the Board of Mission that in lieu of a cost-of-living increase in salary for 2024, all Region staff will receive a bonus week of vacation over what is provided for in the Personnel Manual.

It was moved by Claudia Little and seconded by Delma West that the 2024 Budget be adopted. Motion carried.

- 20.0 Reflections:

Jim Kelsey said that he appreciates the members of the Board of Mission.

The Board thanked Jim Kelsey for all of his work.

One member was grateful for the Devotion.

It is good to have Jerrod back from his Sabbatical.

- 21.0 Future Meeting Dates:

Executive Committee meetings will be held by Zoom. Executive Committee.

Fri., Feb. 9; Fri., May 17; Sat., August 17; Fri., Nov. 15. Meetings will be on Zoom.

Board of Mission meetings will be hybrid. Saturday, March 9; Friday, June 7; Saturday, September 14; Friday, December 13

All meetings will begin at 10:00 A.M.

- 22.0 The meeting was adjourned at 12:06 P.M.

Minutes taken by
Bruce D. Aikin, ABCNYS Secretary

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