

**Philadelphia Baptist Association**  
**Annual Meeting**  
**Celebrating 310 Years**

**THE BAPTIST PRINCIPLE OF ASSOCIATION**

Romans 12:5

*“So in Christ we who are many form one body,  
and each member belongs to all the others.”*

**Saturday, May 6, 2017**

**Executive Minister's Report**

**Rev. Dr. James E. McJunkin, Jr.**

# 310<sup>TH</sup> EXECUTIVE MINISTER'S REPORT TO THE PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION (PBA)

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **The services that were provided for PBA congregations in program year 2016/17**

- Search Committee Support
- Support for Candidates for Ordination
- Support for clergy seeking placement through ABCUSA
- Support for clergy and congregations in times of crisis
- Referral for legal support (with discounted charge per hour)
- Space to host a retreat for church leadership at PBA office
- Scholarships for clergy continuing education (small grants)
- Connections to mission and support services via American Baptist Home Mission Societies, Board of International Ministries, Ministers & Missionaries Benefit Board and American Baptist Foundation
- Connections with American Baptist Extension Corporation for church buildings and renovation projects
- Communicating the concerns of local congregations with ABCUSA
- Supports for Pastors via training and collegial fellowship
- Support for churches in addressing poverty, the epidemic of domestic violence, diversity management, and leader development
- The provision of mission promotion and interpretation materials
- Support in building missional congregations
- Fellowship opportunities for member congregations

### **PBA has 120 member congregations and the following is an overview of the participation levels in the program year 2016/17**

- a quantitative analysis indicates that 75% of the PBA congregations are engaged in PBA mission objectives
- 94 congregations participated in the life of the Association through volunteer and/or financial support in 2016/17
- 26 congregations do not participate in the life of the Association in volunteer or financial support
- These 26 congregations are inactive and receive periodic promotional material and invitations to participate

### **The training events sponsored for congregations in program year 2016/17**

- Ministers Council - Quarterly Topics and Collegial Support
- Mission Café - Poverty in Our Midst- and levels of helping
- Leader Development
- Diversity Management
- Prevention of Domestic Violence
- American Baptist Women's Ministry workshop(s)
- American Baptist Men's Fellowship workshop
- Annual Meeting Poverty - in Metropolitan Philadelphia, PA, and DE - The Church Response

**The following communication vehicles were provided to interpret PBA mission efforts and those of member congregations**

- PBA Website - Links to ABCUSA resources (778 quarterly recipients)
- PBA Facebook - (200 Likes - regular usage)
- United Mission Brochures sent to all congregations

**The major themes for the Work of the Association in program year 2016/17**

- Building community, belonging, and networks of mutual support among our congregations
- 310<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and the Reaffirmation of the historic Baptist Principle of Association

**The major gatherings for worship, fellowship, and education in 2016/17**

- Annual Meeting - The Church Response to Poverty in Our Midst, panel presentation with community and civic leaders, workshops demonstrations of church response and keynote speaker
- Mission Banquet - United Mission/Christian Charity/celebrating clergy outreach
- Mission Café - Poverty and the levels of Care Giving
- Prayer Breakfast - Ministers Council

## THE BAPTIST PRINCIPLE OF ASSOCIATION

Romans 12:5

**“So in Christ we who are many form one body,  
and each member belongs to all the others.”**

**B**eing led by the Spirit, we create together, that which we cannot achieve alone.

**B**aptist Associational life is understood as autonomous member congregations building connections for a common mission in Christ Jesus.

**B**eing mindful of our diversity, we acknowledge our need for being connected as autonomous congregations and we will create and maintain safe spaces of mutuality, respect, support, and learning.

**W**e will make quality relationships among our congregations our highest priority, so that we may experience the aliveness of our kindred spirit in Christ Jesus.

**O**ur appreciation of Christian hospitality drives our commitment to being supportive of and fully present with one another.

**W**e hold ourselves accountable for listening to member churches not currently active in associational life and for seeking to engage them in our work as their gifts are critical to our well-being.

**W**ith regularity and through a variety of methodologies, we seek to discern the leading of the Spirit as our congregations strive to make a difference in the world today.

**W**e are mindful that people will become invested in and committed to that which they have a hand in creating.

**W**e will pay attention to the ways that we gather (settings), and ensure to the best of our ability that members in every sector of the Association feel invited and represented in our life together.

**W**e will intentionally focus our conversations on possibility, generosity, and restoration of community.

**W**e will inspire and equip the congregations of the Philadelphia Baptist Association to support and strengthen American Baptist witness and mission for our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ through dynamic, multi-cultural, and diverse relationships.

Document approved by Reverend Dr. James E. McJunkin, Jr. Executive Minister, and Board of Directors of the Philadelphia Baptist Association March 28, 2017.

# THE 310<sup>TH</sup> EXECUTIVE MINISTERS REPORT

## INTRODUCTION

Today, the PBA is three hundred and ten years old. Our organization is older than the United States of America. We are a strong, resilient, and generous body of believers.

The Philadelphia Baptist Association (PBA) is the birthplace of American Baptist Churches USA and all Baptist denominations in the USA. The PBA remains one of the strongest regions within ABCUSA that is based in an urban and/or metropolitan area. We serve a five county area in Metropolitan Philadelphia and Delaware. Our 120 congregations have over 50 thousand members. We live out our heritage of Soul Freedom and Local Church Autonomy. We are bound together by our choice to be in "Association."

Our vision statement reads: "We inspire and equip the congregations of the Philadelphia Baptist Association to support and strengthen American Baptist witness and mission for our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ through dynamic, multi-cultural, and diverse relationships."

One of the conversations that we have not held as an Association is the impact of our nation's economic trends on the life of the Association, our congregations, and our families. Historically, the Philadelphia Baptist Association tends not to offer a critic of capitalism and the distribution of wealth in this nation. Yet, the diminution of the middle class could very well be a major driver of the decline of mainline denominations in this country. The ability of our congregations to support historic American Baptist missions and to design new mission objectives is directly tied to stagnant wages, job loss, shifts in manufacturing, aging housing stock, population shifts, and suburban sprawl, etc.

Our congregations tend to form around homogeneous units (socio-economic sameness), much like the historic patterns of populating the neighborhoods in Metro-Philadelphia and Delaware. Today, in the main, our neighborhoods have shifted from a base in cultural/racial/ethnic homogeneity to a base of same or similar economic status (cost of housing). This phenomenon has increased the diversity demographic in most of our neighborhoods. Many of our congregations, regardless of ethnicity, have not adjusted to these socio-economic shifts. They choose to turn inwardly, away from their new neighbors and neighborhoods, thereby initiating a process of slow and certain decline. Unchecked fear of differences has been a major drag on our Association life. Over the last 30 years we have made attempts to address/discuss issues related to our differences (e.g. class, race, gender, sexual orientation, family composition, and the diverse theological perspectives held by our member congregations, etc.).

We are a people who delight in our relationships and we have learned how to agree to disagree. Yet, in the main, we lack community efficacy. We do not determine the quality of our lives together. We are more reactive than proactive as it relates to addressing our common concerns. The harsh realities in our life together remain largely unexamined. This results in the most vulnerable among us living in isolated in pockets of poverty. We all suffer from the impact of community/regional neglect. The disconnect from one another, city and suburb (Metro-Philadelphia and Delaware) is well documented. As a region in the Delaware Valley, we often fail to realize our commonality and interconnectedness.

The call to our historic Baptist Principle of Association is a call to community across the ways we divide ourselves for the sake of our Christ, our own well-being, and the future of our children. "We the people" of deeply held beliefs, far too often, have a faith that is tacitly held, largely unexamined, and emotionally charged. Sometimes we fail to see one another and withhold support from each other.

We are not a broken people. We are not strangers to one another. However, we are in need of deeper levels of connection. Our conversations need to be about possibility and purpose rather than “us vs. them, or city vs suburb.” The PBA is not the staff at the office on Ridge Ave. The pastors and congregants of the member churches make up the community that is the PBA.

Through a five year process of discernment the PBA Board of Directors has identified the fact that maintaining our historic sense of belonging and being a community of Baptist believers in a time of rapid and constant demographic shifts is the primary adaptive challenge for our Association today.

It is clear to us that a sense of belonging to one another is a prerequisite for sustaining a common mission for Christ. We are working to discern the leading of the Spirit and the “structuring of belonging” for this 310 year old body of believers so that we might welcome the bright future that Christ has for us.

In our polity, the center of mission, and the impetus for creative service comes from the local church. Here are just a few of the trends and challenges that we hold in common in local church ministry today:

- declining church membership
- understanding the development and maturation of faith process with the millennial generation
- developing ministries with and for single adults (now 50% of the adult population)
- Addressing the spiritual and physical needs of our aging membership
- developing and maintaining a balance in multigenerational congregation life
- responding to the impact of ever increasing numbers of people living at deep levels of poverty in our communities (highest in major cities in the USA)
- responding to the highest incarceration rate of any major city in the USA and the need for reentry support for people leaving the system
- understanding addiction as a public health issue and the role of the church in healing
- curbing the epidemic of domestic violence
- defining and developing multicultural congregations with respect to the shifts in neighborhood demographics and emerging family structures (racial, cultural, theological, sociological, and/or economic diversity)
- responding to the challenges and necessity for developing interfaith ministries to support community efficacy in our neighborhoods
- responding to the stressors of aging buildings with smaller congregations
- encouraging the baby boomer generation to fund endowments for the future ministry needs of the church

No congregation can address these and other concerns in isolation. We need one another to assure excellence in ministry in the days ahead.

Again, we are 310 years old. We are a strong resilient and generous body of believers. Challenge is not new to us! The good news is that we have amazing talent and resources within our congregations. We have the spiritual gifts resident in this body of believers to revitalize and renew our life and witness for Christ.

At this moment in time, it would be wise to recommit ourselves to the Baptist Principle of Association. When we work together on the things we cannot do alone... the possibilities are as limitless as the power of our Christ. If you don't believe me, just read the history of what Christ has done through our member congregations of the Philadelphia Baptist Association!!!!!!!!!!!!



# EXECUTIVE MINISTER'S REPORT A REGIONAL ADAPTIVE CHANGE PLAN FOR BUILDING COMMUNITY

## The Work of the Board of Directors

The Board continues the journey of our adaptive change process. Our adaptive change process began in 2012. In 2016, an updated version of the manual compiling all of the activities in the adaptive change process was developed. We have a record of the journey of the Board in this reiterative process.

The Board has been engaged in reading the work of Peter Block, *“Community: The Structure of Belonging”*, and identifying the implications for our work. The Baptist Principle of Association document cites this work as foundational to its development. Here are a few highlights of the shifts in board life, community building strategies and our adaptive change experiments:



- We have restructured our meeting space to enhance communication. Each board meeting begins with a fellowship meal followed by the practice of the Lectio Divina. Board members have reported an appreciation of the depth of our devotions and spiritual life as members.
- Our orientation process for new members has been enhanced by sharing the manual that records our progress in the adaptive change process.
- The Board has been divided into sub-committees (small groups) to enhance our work and Board life. The small groups are:
  - a. Board members participate in sub-committees which visits with church leaders to show appreciation for their committed support to the Association.
  - b. Another group of board members meet with congregations for whom the meaning or membership support has shifted since they joined the organization. And, we seek ways to learn from them, and in some cases, find a way back into community.

The particular genius (unique attributes) of these experiments (a & b above), are the engagement of the leaders of our congregations with board members. These conversations help in building a sense of community. As a result of this process, board members become familiar with our constituent congregations through regular dialogue. Our deliberations as a Board of Directors become grounded in a working knowledge of the needs and concerns of our constituents. The evaluation instrument used in these meetings indicate that these efforts are effective and appreciated by our congregations and board members. Board membership is no longer a passive experience. Active participation has brought new life to the Board of Directors.

- c. The sub-committee on communication recommended the development of the PBA Facebook page. This strategy to enhance communication has been developed. Currently 200 persons regularly read our Facebook page (likes). Our website receives regular updates. The quarterly publication of our email newsletter “Metrolines” is received by 778 persons. We purchased

phone tree equipment and we reach out to our congregations with updates and invitations to gatherings with increased regularity.

- A standing committee of the board, for the purpose of maintaining vibrant relationships with our member congregations, was adopted by the Association in 2016. This action will ensure that regular meetings with church leaders are conducted in a systematic effort to build a stronger sense of community among the congregations.
- Revisiting the Baptist Principle of Association – In 2016, the Association approved the restatement of the historic Baptist Principle of Association (printed in the program book).
- As a result of the board of directors retreat in June 2016, a strategy and process for recommitment to our historic Baptist Principle of Association was implemented in celebration of the PBA's 310<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The Board divided the work of planning and implementation into four committees: Group #1 – Bible Studies – Sermon Outlines – Resources; Group #2 – Social Media; Group #3 – Covenants of Action; Group #4 – Signing of the Document.
- In 2015, the “Our Common Mission” Interpretation document was designed with input from other ABCUSA Regions and National Boards. This document has been shared at each of our annual gatherings in an effort to help our membership understand the work of the Association and ABCUSA.
- Board Fiscal Responsibility – The following issues are being addressed:
  - a. Given the continued decreases in mission giving, the Board selected a new vendor to continue the excellent accounting support that was provided for us. We appreciate the support of the office of the Associate General Secretary Treasurer in providing this support.
  - b. We view the process of deepening a sense of community as foundational to increased levels of commitment in volunteer and financial support.
  - c. The Finance Committee of the Board meets annually with representatives of PNC Bank and Janney Montgomery Scott to review and evaluate the endowments. The Treasurer and Finance Committee gives quarterly reports to the Board.
  - d. We conduct a quarterly internal audit of the financial reports and financial management processes/systems. That report is sent to the Finance & Executive Committee.
  - e. We conduct the annual audit and the Board of Directors reviews the report.
- Evaluation of the Executive Minister: Every four years, an evaluation of the Executive Minister is conducted with the support of the Office of the General Secretary. Regional staff person, Dr. Jeff Woods, supported the Board of Directors in conducting the evaluation. The evaluation document was designed and compiled by Dr. Woods, Associate General Secretary. The document was distributed, read, and discussed by the Board members. The vast majority of the Board members rated the Executive Minister's performance as “very satisfied”, or “extremely satisfied”, in every category. Dr. Woods will work with the Executive Minister in areas marked as growth areas.

2016-2017 Board Members: Rev. Dr. Marcia B. Bailey (Calvary-Norristown), Mrs. Darla Beasley (Wayland Temple), Mrs. Violet Brown (Lansdowne), Rev. Benjamin Chan (Chinese Christian), Rev. Dr. Jacob L. Chatman (Pinn Memorial), Mrs. Vivian Drayton (Bethany), Rev. Brenda L. Egolf-Fox (Pt. Pleasant), Rev. Rashad D. Grove (First-Wayne), Mrs. Virginia Hammond (Zion-Ardmore), Rev. Dr. Ronald K. Hill (Corinthian), Rev. Tamika A. Holder (Grace-Germantown), Rev. Rebecca Irwin-Diehl (Second-Germantown), Mr. Elmore W. Johnson (Mt. Carmel), Rev. Cedric H. Jones (Mt. Zion-Phila), Rev. Dr. Suzanne H. Walls-Kershaw (Grace-Germantown), Rev. Maria L.H. Lewis (Enon Tabernacle), Mr. Eric Lindbloom (First-Lansdale), Rev. Barbara Montague (Society For Helping Church), Mr. Dean A. Parker (Canaan), Mr. Emanwel Pulley (New Horizon), Rev. Rodney Ragwan (Mayfair Conwell



Memorial), Ms. Lourdes Rivera (Second Spanish), Mrs. Nancy L. Russell (Bethlehem), Rev. Robert L. Solomon (Pinn Memorial), Rev. Darren Umble (Mt. Zion-Holmesburg).

### **Building Community through the conversations that we hold with one another**

In the work of “structuring of belonging” we should be intentional in the ways we speak to one another. We utilize “Guiding Conversations”, which are conversations that need to be held between leaders and members of our congregations. These “Guiding Conversations” build a stronger sense of community (adapted from the work of Peter Block.). The responses in **bold** indicates where we currently conduct these vital “Guiding Conversations.”

1. Building Community – Conversations we hold – the invitation to Association life **(310<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Recommitment Process )**
2. Possibility – Conversations we hold – What new thing is Christ calling us to do?
  - a. **Finding ways to address the high percentage of people living at deep levels of poverty in our metropolitan area**
  - b. **Diversity Management**
  - c. **Leader Development**
  - d. **Addressing Domestic Violence**
  - e. **American Baptist Mission Support**
3. Ownership - Conversations we hold – How participative do you plan to be as a congregation? **(via Board visits with individual congregations)**
4. Dissent - Conversations we hold – making room for doubt and dissent to be expressed is a way that insures that diversity is valued **(via Board visits with individual congregations)**
5. Gifts - Conversations we hold – What are the gifts that your congregation brings to the table that you are glad to give for the benefit of the whole? **(via Annual Meeting/Passion for Mission Café/Mission Banquet)**

### **Building Community by Developing and Strengthening Missional Congregations**

The Passion for Mission Café has been developed as a PBA wide annual gathering to provide opportunities for local church mission boards, mission committees, outreach workers, and clergy to gather and share strategies for keeping the work of mission in the forefront of the life of our congregations. The particular genius (unique attributes) of this adaptive change experiment is the building of networks of persons with a passion for mission in our congregations. A mission focus is selected and the participants share their expertise and challenges with one another. The attendance has doubled in the two years of implementation. Sixty-five persons from 15 congregations attended our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Mission Café. The discussion topics for the café were as follows:

1. *Caring that assists the individual in making the life changes that they need to escape the grip of poverty.*
2. *Caring that addresses the systemic breakdown of the supports that promote health and wholeness.*
3. *Caring that addresses the major systems in society that foster (drive) poverty.*

The following congregations attended the café: Bethany, Canaan, Enon Tabernacle, First Spanish, Grace-Germantown, Green Church, Lower Merion, Pinn Memorial, Providence, Salem, Second Macedonia, Shiloh-Wilmington, Tenth Memorial, Green Church, Zion-Ambler, Zion-Ardmore.

### **Building Community through a new Emphasis on Immigration**

Plans are being developed to engage our congregations with a high percentage of persons/families who are immigrants and refugees. We are very concerned about the levels of fear currently experienced in these faith communities given the lack of a clear immigration policy in our nation and the escalation of strategies for deportation. We will work with leaders from these congregations to discover mutual concerns, resources, and gifts they can share with one another. We want to discern the ways that the Association's ministry can be enhanced by increased participation and input from these congregations. We recognize that these congregations hold



critical links to a promising future of our Association. We will host the first gathering in June of 2017. The particular genius (unique attributes) of this adaptive change experiment is a shift toward the emerging communities in PBA life and building support by Euro-American and African American congregations.

### **Building Community through Mission Support and Promotion**

While we note that Mission Giving continues to decrease, it is important to state that the PBA is among the top giving Regions located in a Metropolitan Area. Congregational support for the work of the Association in 2016 was approximately \$2,000 less than in 2015. That is the smallest decrease that we have seen in several years. Our total giving (ABMS) was \$50,000 less than the previous year. Our congregations remain committed to the financial support of our common mission (see the mission giving trends at the end of the report).

The following strategies were implemented in 2016 for the work of mission promotion:

- Implementation of the 310<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration and the recommitment process with the Baptist Principle of Association. The particular genius (unique attributes) of this adaptive change experiment is the notion that building a sense of belonging and connection is understood as prerequisite to congregations becoming engaged in possibility thinking and thereby developing new funding streams.
- Dr. Jeffrey Haggray – ABHMS Annual Meeting Speaker, ABCUSA, mission interpretation. Many ABHMS staff provided workshops to interpret the work of the board with our congregations. This was a deliberate process of building relationship with our congregations and the National Board.
- In cooperation with the Office of the General Secretary (ABCUSA) we engaged in the promotion of the United Mission Offering at Annual Meeting 2016 and the Mission Banquet. Mailings promoting support of United Mission were sent to all PBA congregations.
- Updating the contact information by PBA staff - In the summer of 2016, the staff gave many hours to contacting church offices to get current contact information for church leaders and entering them into our database. We increased our ability to connect with key church leaders.
- Quarterly contacts were made with congregations that were below the year to date giving reports of the previous year.
- Year End Mission giving letters were sent to all congregations that tend to send in the annual gift in December. The letters were sent in September and November of 2016.

### **Building Community through Regional Gatherings and Worship**

The particular genius (unique attributes) of this adaptive change experiment is that we highlight the work of our member congregations so that they learn from one another.

- We continue to have outstanding attendance at our regional events.
- We average 350 persons in attendance at the Annual Meeting.
- We average 400+ persons in attendance at the Mission Banquet.
- We held our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Passion for Mission Café, with over 60 people in attendance. The focus was on methods and levels of helping for people trapped in the cycle of poverty.

- The Board of Directors gave extraordinary efforts to reach our congregations asking them to participate in our 310<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration.

### **Building Community through PBA Learning Communities**

These gatherings are in their third year of operation. They are focused on the areas of diversity management, leader development, and domestic violence prevention/victim support. The particular genius (unique attributes) of these adaptive change experiments is that they bring together members from our congregations for a time of sharing and mutual support in a small group setting with persons sharing similar interests and expertise.

The leader of the learning communities is a part-time consultant of the PBA with skills in small group process and training in spiritual direction. The participants in the learning community provide and experience mutual support with committed colleagues. The work of their own congregations is enhanced as well as that of other churches through programs that they develop and implement. Discerning the leading of the Spirit is a focus at each gathering. Here is a brief progress report from each learning committee:

- The **Diversity Learning Community (DLC)** is comprised of pastors and laity who meet monthly to discern and to discuss the importance of diversity for their congregations. The goal of the DLC is to gain understanding and knowledge about diversity. The confidential space allows for open and honest sharing of perceptions, beliefs, and to broaden sensitivities and perspectives. It helps members to come to grips with conflict, which diversity brings and to develop the programs necessary to bring diverse congregations into unity.



Presently the group is preparing a program of Diversity Sensitizing Exercises for presentation. They are also gathering training resources with the intent of becoming facilitators for ongoing support for churches who wish to become more sensitive and engaging with diversity. The group is also utilizing the book, Welcoming Community: Diversity That Works, by Douglas Avilesbernal (a PBA pastor), as a resource.

The ongoing challenge is to accept and discern the broader expressions of diversity that are reflected in our churches. This includes areas such as worship, music, outreach ministry (who and what) and theological perspectives, both Baptist and non-Baptist.

- The **Leadership Learning Community (LLC)** is comprised of pastors from six churches, most of whom follow pastors of long tenure. They meet monthly. The objective of the community is to provide a safe place for them to share their struggles adjusting to and attempting to guide their respective churches in new directions.

Time is spent in two areas. First, each session includes fostering a closer relationship with God using the spiritual practice of Lectio Divina; there is quiet time for personal reflection and sharing if they choose; there are encouraging testimonies offered and group prayer support given. Second, there are book readings on leadership specifically geared toward pastors. Presently, they include, The Leadership Triangle, by Kevin Ford & Ken Tucker and Alligators in the Swamp: Power, Ministry and Leadership, ed. by George B. Thompson, Jr.

- The **Domestic Violence Learning Community (DVLC)** continues the work of determining ways of raising awareness and addressing the epidemic of Domestic Violence. As a community of faith the DVLC team, which consists of trained and certified persons, avails itself to PBA churches interested



support program is called “*Dawning of a New Day*”.

in starting Domestic Violence Ministries. It also serves as a support agent to those already established. They meet monthly.

After conducting several awareness initiatives, the DVLC is excited to announce that Canaan Baptist Church began its initiative, “*Breaking Free: A Domestic Violence Program*.” Canaan joins Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church, whose domestic violence

The primary challenge faced by this learning community is encouraging and helping the PBA churches to move into action, with the implementation of strategies to minister to their membership, their families and acquaintances trapped in Domestic Violence. However, undaunted by the challenges, the DVLC is now planning a Forum and Prayer Vigil to be held in October, Domestic Violence Awareness month.

Congregations participating in the Learning Communities or a program designed by a Learning Community Group are: Abington, Bethlehem, Canaan, Central, Church of the Redeemer Baptist, Enon Tabernacle, Eternal Life Missionary, First-Wayne, Greater Life Christian Center, Greater St. Matthew, Green Church, Lansdowne, Mt. Carmel, Mt. Zion-Germantown, Mt. Zion-Holmesburg, Oxford Circle, Pinn Memorial, Providence, Salem, Second-Germantown, Second Macedonia, Society For Helping Church, Vine Memorial, Zion-Ambler.

### Building Community through the PBA Minister Council

The Rev. Robert Soloman is the President of the Minister Council. There are a total of 24 clergy members.



This remains one of the largest regional ministers councils in ABCUSA. On average, the attendance at the quarterly meetings is 21 ministers. The particular genius (unique attributes) of this adaptive change experiment is that the clergy have elected to focus on spiritual development, collegiality, and continuing education in each program year. Each meeting ends with a fellowship meal. The program year ends with a fellowship opportunity for clergy and spouses. Here are the topics discussed in program year 2016:

- Lovest Though Me More Than These...Feed My Sheep - Caring for the Total Well Being of God's Flock – John 21:15 – Rev. Valerie Andrews, Facilitator – St. Paul's-West Chester
- The Church & Ministry Outreach to Our Communities – Rev. Dr. Donald D. Moore, Facilitator – Pastor, Mt. Carmel
- Annual Prayer Breakfast – The Call to Deeper Prayer – Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch – Luke 5:4b – Rev. Julia Bruton-Sheppard, Prayer Guide – Mt. Carmel
- The 310<sup>th</sup> Year Recommitment to The Baptist Principle of Association – Rev. Dr. James E. McJunkin, Jr., Facilitator – Executive Minister, PBA
- Annual Fellowship – Barbeque, music, and fellowship – Pinn Memorial Baptist Church May 10<sup>th</sup>



### Building Community through Area Ministry

Thirty-five (35) congregations received staff support during times of conflict, crisis, pastoral searches, and congregational gatherings of celebration. In addition, staff provide Preaching/Worship Leading upon request. Some of the congregations listed below may have received support in more than one category.



The participating congregations in 2016/17 are: Bethlehem, Calvary-Norristown, Church of the Redeemer Baptist, First-Huntingdon Valley, First-Lansdale, First-Levittown/Fairless Hills, First-Phila, First Spanish, Goodwill Tabernacle, Grace-Germantown, Great Valley, Green Church, Lansdowne, Lower Merion, Mt. Carmel, Mt. Zion-Germantown, Mt. Zion-Holmesburg, New Horizon, North Wales, People's, Phila Burmese, Pinn Memorial, Providence, Roxborough, Second-Germantown, Second Macedonia, Second Spanish, Society For Helping Church, St. Paul's-Phila, St. Paul's-West Chester, Vine Memorial, Wayland Temple, Zion-Ambler, Zion-Phila.

### **Building Community through the Commission on the Ministry**

The particular genius (unique attributes) of this experiment is the intentional selection of clergy and laity of diverse theological perspectives who are challenged to support the candidates for ordination from our member congregations. The members of the commission include new pastors, seasoned pastors, lay leadership, recently ordained persons and clergy whose ordination was recently recognized by ABCUSA. Once the application process is completed and the candidate has completed the counselling process at one of the approved ministry evaluation/support programs they meet with the Commission for review of the ordination paper. The commission also attends the ordination council of the candidate at their local church. The commission members are present at the actual ordination ceremony as their schedule allows.

The Commission served 3 candidates from 3 congregations by providing support for ordination recognition, candidate assessment, ordination councils, and ordination worship services. They are: Vickson Krah (Mayfair Conwell Memorial), Armondo Sedo (Grace-Blue Bell), and Sarah Strosahl-Kagi (Central).

Regional Membership: The Commission recommended two congregations for membership:

- Dare To Imagine Church; Rev. Kevin R. Johnson, Pastor
- Second Pilgrim Baptist Church; Rev. Isaiah M. Banks, Pastor

Commission Members: Rev. Darrell Bradsberry (Second-Frankford), Ms. Gladys Gray Lawrence (Second-Germantown), Rev. Beverly Hudson (First African-Sharon Hill), Rev. Mark McDowell (Abington), Pastor David McIlwaine (Holy Trinity), Rev. Gloria Moore (St. Paul's-Phila), Dr. James Pollard (Zion-Ardmore), Rev. Michael Robinson (Greater Enon Missionary), Rev. Uldis Ukstins (First Latvian), Dr. Jeri Williams (Green Church).

### **Building Community through American Baptist Women's Ministry (ABWM)**



The Philadelphia Baptist Association invested in leadership training for ABWM. We provided office space and financial support for the President. She has completed her D. Min. studies. Dr. Walls-Kershaw brings her research to the process of renewal for this organization. ABWM of Philadelphia has separated from the American Baptist Women's Ministry of ABC of Pennsylvania and Delaware. Here is their report for 2016/17 program year.

The American Baptist Women's Ministries of the Philadelphia Baptist Association (ABWM-PBA) is almost three (3) years old and we are grateful that you have supported and participated in this ministry as we seek to minister to the women and girls of our PBA congregations and their communities.

Through your generous offerings and donations, we have impacted Dignity House in Philadelphia and Jitokeze Wamama Wafrika in West Pokot, Kenya in a loving and positive way.

During this past year, through **Overland – White Cross** our support of missions expanded to include **Calvary Baptist Church in Lowell, MA** which ministers to immigrants and refugees. Within the next month, our White Cross Coordinators will send **each** PBA congregation White Cross program materials for **2017-2018** which will include a request to support the Philadelphia Park under the Chaplaincy of Rev. Rick Bunker and the special interest missionaries.

Throughout the past year, we have come together in fellowship seeking to know one another as Sisters in Christ and more importantly seeking to know God and His will for our lives with “*New Eyes*”.

On April 9, 2016, we gathered at Mt. Zion Baptist Church –Holmesburg: with **over fifty (50)** women embracing the theme of “*Praying God’s Word*” : A Morning of Prayer and Fasting with prayer stations centering us on Communities: Our City, County (including Elections), Finances/Jobs, Healing (Mind/Body/Spirit), Homeless (including Displaced Persons Around the World Due to War and Spiritual Unrest), Loss, Grief, Mourning and Lost Souls, Ministries (Individual, Church, Organizational and ABWM-PBA) and One On One (Personal Prayer). On October 8, 2016, the women of ABWM-PBA attended the Domestic Violence play written by Rev. Dr. Helena Fontes which was a powerful message for all in attendance.

On October 1, 2016, we gathered at Bethlehem Baptist Church centered around the theme “*Sister to Sister...Reflection, Reconciliation and Renewal*” with over 100 (one hundred) women and girls engaged in conversation with one another through an “Intergenerational Conversation Café” exploring such topics as Reaching Girls, Listening to Young Adult Women, Domestic Violence, Valuing Diversity, Community Outreach, Vision for ABWM-PBA, Human/Sex Trafficking, Immigration and Technology in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. **Attendance 100 persons**

On **Saturday, April 08, 2017**, the **Chinese Christian Church and Center** served as the host church for our Spring ABWM-PBA Regional Gathering. The theme for our Spring ABWM-PBA Regional Gathering was “*I See My Sister...I See a Reflection of Myself*” and the supporting Scripture is Luke 10:27.with over eighty (80) women and girls in attendance. Mrs. Virginia Holmstrom, Executive Director of the American Baptist Women’s Ministries, installed our officers and was the Guest Speaker. **Attendance 90- persons**



### **Building Community through American Baptist Men’s Ministry Network of the PBA**

On Saturday, May 21, 2016 at Corinthian Baptist Church, a breakfast & workshop was held. The theme was: “The Important Work of Character Development in Men’s Fellowship Ministries.” Dr. Clifford L. Stanley, Major General, U.S. Marine Corps (Retired) was the speaker.

Small Group Discussions:

- Personal Balance & Character Building
- Character Building – Goal Setting & Action Planning
- How might our men’s fellowships foster an environment of compassion in our churches

There were 18 persons were in attendance representing 7 of the following churches: Baptist Worship Center, Bethlehem, Corinthian, Enon Tabernacle, Grace-Germantown, Holy Trinity, Shiloh-Wilmington