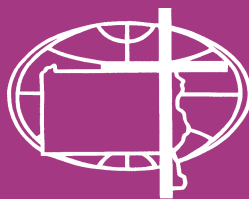


Notes & News, Thoughts & Views



For ABCOPAD Churches from Rev. Mark Mahserjian-Smith
Regional Executive Pastor; Regional Pastor for Mission and
Communication — 570-435-2001 — msmsmail@abcopad.com

Volume 34, Number 5

May, 2024

Luke 7:18-23 Then the disciples of John reported to him concerning all these things. And John, calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to [a]Jesus, saying, “Are You the Coming One, or [b]do we look for another?” When the men had come to Him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, ‘Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?’ ” And that very hour He cured many of [c]infirmities, afflictions, and evil spirits; and to many blind He gave sight. Jesus answered and said to them, “Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not [d]offended because of Me.”

There is a “Golden Oldie” song by the Shirelles titled “Mama Said.” The song’s refrain is “*Mama said there’d be days like this, there’d be days like this Mama said.*” Recently, I experienced a week or two of “Days like this” with multiple Regional Ministry challenges.

The Pandemic has been hard on many small congregations who are coming to the realization it is time to end their churches ministry. In just the first four months of 2024, I’ve had seven congregations in ABCOPAD contact me regarding the possibility of closing their church. ABCOPAD, a pillar of support, is working with three congregations currently in the process of closing. With over a decade of experience, ABCOPAD is well-equipped to help congregations through the legal, financial and emotional struggles of closure. Rev. Dr. Jeff Johnson, former Acting Co-Executive Regional Pastor and former Regional Pastor for Congregations serves as our Consultant for Churches in Transition seeking to merge with another congregation or close their doors. ABCOPAD has a

dedicated team including myself, Treasurer Caryl Casey, Administrator Denise Veselicky and our Vice President Lori Jennings to resource churches who recognize the need to bring their current ministry to a close. These are emotional conversations with no easy answers as people who have been committed to the church ministry experience the loss and grief of their church closure. In my mind, the song is playing, “Mama said there’d be days like this.”

There have also been congregations in our Region that have decided to end their partnership with ABCOPAD. Due to changes in our denomination, these congregations feel they no longer align with the values they see in the denomination. Some have said that while they appreciate ABCOPAD’s values and ministries, they can no longer remain a member of the ABC. Other pastors and congregational leaders have asked our ABCOPAD staff and me to attend business meetings to discuss trends in our denomination. More moments when I hear the song playing, “Mama said there’d be days like this.”

There have been moments recently when I think to myself, “Jesus, did I hear you correctly? I thought we were going to do Regional Ministry together. I thought there would be mission trips, discipleship and evangelism. I thought we would see the Kingdom of God expand and grow. When you called me to Regional Ministry, did I get this wrong?”

Perhaps John the Baptizer, sitting in jail, was asking himself similar questions. John may have been asking himself, “Did I get this right? Is Jesus really the Messiah? Maybe I was wrong about him.” John’s questions eventually forced him to send messengers to ask Jesus the questions plaguing his mind.

continued on Page 2

Jesus does not answer John's Messengers directly. Instead, he continues to do the ministry he has been doing all along. Jesus allows John's Messengers to witness firsthand the power of God at work. The Messengers see broken people healed and lives transformed. He tells John's Messengers to bring back that report to encourage John.

Over the past several weeks, seeing so many exciting Social Media posts surrounding Holy Week and Easter has encouraged me. It has been a joy to see vibrant worship services that often included baptisms as people make public professions of faith in Jesus. I have witnessed people walk the aisle as they express their desire to become followers of Jesus for the very first time. Seeing community outreach programs, including Cross Walks, Holy Thursday, and Good Friday Services, has been a joy. There have been recent ordinations and certifications demonstrating God is still calling pastoral leaders to service and people are saying yes to the call.

I have been encouraging our GPS to watch the social media posts of the churches they serve, find celebratory posts like baptisms, and share them on our regional Facebook page. Jesus wanted John's Messengers to stop looking at the challenges of ministry and to focus on the incredible things God was doing. I believe Jesus wants us to do the same thing. Yes, there will be "Days like this" in our ministries.

But God is still about healing, restoration and calling new disciples. Most churches are still doing exciting ministry, making it easier to see God at work. If you have something exciting happening at your church, please get in touch with me or one of our regional staff members so we can share it with our ABCOPAD family. **Hebrews 10:24-25** Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.





Rev. Kelly Legg
South Central Geographic
Pastoral Servant
pastorkdl@gmail.com

The sudden change from winter to mid-summer around here has me reminiscing about my first dog, Levi. When he was young that mutt had quite the personality. He could put on a melodramatic performance for passersby on a hike, for instance, that would surpass *any* SPCA commercial.

Several years ago, I came home one evening in the late fall to a somewhat chilly house. I'm cheap, so the heat doesn't go on until you need a sweater to survive sitting in the living room. 😊 The dog decided enough was enough, so began following me around, curling up in a ball directly in my line of sight, and shivering pathetically. I got the hint. But there was one tiny little problem: the window AC units were still installed. Remember, I'm cheap. The heat was not coming on just to go back out those windows!

So at 10 PM that night I decided to embark on "operation remove the AC units"; tired, without help, but determined that I didn't need any. I installed them alone, after all! I removed the units expertly and efficiently (with Levi shivering well enough to win an Academy Award) and began the descent to the basement effortlessly. This, friends, is when the problem began.

Apparently, it rained earlier that day. Two steps down my very narrow, steep, painted stairs the unit began pouring water down my leg, onto my shoes, and onto the stairs. That left me precariously perched, top-heavy from clutching an appliance, walking on a cascading stream. Let's just say the next few minutes were not pretty, even a little risky, and in the end, involved a great deal of strain on muscles that reminded me for weeks of just how unintelligent it is to try to do everything alone...even the things I think I can handle.

I am wondering what you are trying to do alone? Make life decisions, work at your marriage, or walk through this season of transition? Guide your congregation through needed, but heavily resisted, change? Probably you are fully capable of lifting that load, maybe you've done it before. Yet, going alone is putting you in a position that just is not safe.

That's one of the reasons that ABCOPAD is committed to offering clergy & spouse retreats. This year we're even providing two, one on each side of the region, so that we can welcome as many pastors as we can. Let's face it, pastor, we regularly lift loads on our own. Those three days away give us the opportunity to rest and to share about life.

Doing so just might mean having an extra set of eyes looking at your world, so someone can see the water in the bottom of the a/c unit when you totally miss it. And, maybe, avoiding the precarious position and aching back on the other end, because you are not doing this alone. It's not too late to register for either retreat. Or too soon to invite someone else to carry the load with you.





Rev. Rob Rice
North Central Geographic
Pastoral Servant
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May Memories and Celebrations...

As I think about the month of May in my life and the life of the church, this month is highlighted by several celebrations and memories. As I reflected on these things, I was reminded of the verses that Paul writes in the opening chapter of 2 Timothy: I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. **2 Timothy 1:5-7**

On May 12 we will celebrate Mother's Day and then on May 13, my grandmother will celebrate her birthday. As I think about both my mom and grandmother early this month, I know I could fill their names in the verse that Paul writes to Timothy. My faith is a result of my grandmother, Frances, who watched me when I was a little boy. She read me Bible stories, demonstrated the love of Christ, and was even my fourth grade Sunday School teacher. It was in my grandmother's back bedroom where I first accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior while she kneeled alongside me. Still today, my grandmother encourages my faith, praying for me, and calling me most Sundays after she watches our church service via Facebook.

In the same way, my mother, Terri, was influential in my faith. It was my mom who always made sure we got to church, since many weekends my dad was traveling for his job. She made sure my siblings and I were in church, even if that sometimes meant a harried and hurried ride to the church as we were running a few minutes late. Looking back, I realize what a sacrifice it was for my mom to wrangle four kids, drive us to various groups and activities, and still make her faith and our growing relationship with the Lord a priority. This month, give thanks like the words of Paul remind us to, for those women in your life who have made an impact on your faith!

If that was the only connection to May celebrations and memories for me in these verses of 2 Timothy, it would be enough. But the next verse, Paul's encouragement to "fan into flame the gift of God" takes me back to May 2010 when I, along with others in our region attended the *Fanning the Flame Conference* in Green Lake Wisconsin. I was brand new in pastoral ministry, having only been serving at my first church a year when I attended. I remember having already been through the gauntlet, and that conference giving me an opportunity to take time apart with God, and renew my faith and be filled afresh with the passion to do ministry. In many ways, that conference sparked my own desire to help other pastors have opportunities to do the same, and later this month and then in June, we will seek to do that again in our Pastors' Retreats.

Finally, this year, on May 19, we will celebrate the day of Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit. The last verse in the passage from 2 Timothy speaks to us about the Holy Spirit, and His ministry in our lives. The Spirit empowers us and makes us bold in our faith. He teaches us how to love one another, and reminds us that as people, our call is to discipline ourselves as we seek to continue in our faith, share our faith and live out the calling that God has placed on our lives.

This May, there are many opportunities for us to reflect on and be challenged in our calling to be people of faith who share the Gospel. I pray You would use each day, especially the special Sundays in May, to give thanks to God for those people who have shaped Your faith, and be renewed in Your faith and calling for the Kingdom of God.





Rev. Tim Schwartz
Northeast Co-Geographic
Pastoral Servant
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The sun has finally started to come out in Northern PA and the days are getting warmer. My children were outside playing last weekend and came in complaining about how hot it was outside. It might have been 70 degrees and sunny – but it was nothing like the heat and humidity we will experience in the summer in a couple of months.

Now that the cold has broken (hopefully), it is a good time for us to get out into our communities to learn more about our neighbors. It is a good time to learn how we can serve our community and neighbors with the love of Jesus.

Here are four ways - good ways - to connect with your community if it has been difficult to step outside the church doors throughout the winter:

Your local school is desperate for people to come alongside them. The principals and teachers at my children's elementary school are incredible people that wear many different hats throughout a typical week: they teach students, they interact with families, they sometimes work as social workers, sometimes they are parental figures, sometimes they are advisors, sometimes they are mentors and role models. Principals and teachers know your community because they know the students and families of the community. Chances are that the principals and teachers of your community are under-resourced and under-recognized. Connecting with them (and serving them) will give you a good idea of the community and reveal service opportunities. As the president of the PTA at my kid's school for numerous years, I would invite your church to participate in the PTA/PTO of the school. PTAs are always looking for volunteers. It is a nice way to get to know families, students and staff at the school.

I would bet your local youth sports leagues are looking for people to coach teams and/or volunteer in the snack stand during the games. On top of that, the Little League field and the gymnasium are gathering places of families from all over the community. What if your church sponsored one of the teams in your little league – so that one team in the league ran onto the field or court all season with your church's name on the shirt? What if your church then committed to being super-fans of that team – where everyone would know the names of all of the kids on the team and root them on at the games? What if your congregants, while sitting at the game watching the kids, got to know and build friendships with the families of the players?

Does your community have neighborhood associations? At the last place I lived, I got involved with the local neighborhood association. It was a good place for me to get to know people and make friends. I learned the desires of the people in my neighborhood, and had a good opportunity to advocate for those desires alongside my neighbors. In that neighborhood, abandoned houses and overgrown lawns were issues of concern for the residents. I had the opportunity to work with my neighbors to advocate in front of city council to move toward good solutions of these blighted properties.

What if we were to ask our neighbors about the community? I have known churches that have gone door to door in their neighborhood and asked neighbors a couple of questions. Here are a few of the questions: "What do you like most about living in this area?" "How can our church pray for you?" "What is the best way for our church to serve this community?" If we are to serve our neighbors, it is good to ask them how we can serve them!

In northern PA, the weather is finally coming to the point where our winter hibernation is over. It is time for all of us to get out into our community, sharing the love of Jesus with our neighbors and in our neighborhoods!





Writing this on the National Day of Prayer, I rarely pass this day that emphasizes the importance of prayer, without thinking of this story.

While working as an activities aide in a care home, I met Sunny. Sunny, whose full name is too long to worry about – per Sunny, served God as a nun from the time she was a teenager until the day she was unable to care for others due to a stroke. It took her ability to walk and caused her left side to be permanently weak. That’s when Sunny became a resident in the home where I met her. Her decline of health did not deter her from still serving God – she became a friend to everyone – helping where she could as she rolled her way all through the hallways. Sunny always knew the scoop in her community!

She was a joy to have in my world! When I arrived at work in the morning, she gave me the quick rundown on who she had visited, checked on, prayed for...and why. God blessed me and everyone there with the sunshine Sunny spread! (her shortened name was more than a name, it was HER!)

One morning as I walked past her doorway she cried out, ‘Jodie girl, is that you?’ Some residents became very keen on listening for who was ‘stepping’ through the hallway, the sounds of feet identifying who was out of their view. A skill I still find fascinating!

I entered her room to find her in bed – rare – with the bedrails both pulled up into their protective positions. She began to weep to me that she wasn’t able to get out of bed because her leg was swollen and how could she be of any help to anyone today? Her joy truly was in helping others. As I held her hand and lowered my face towards hers, I asked, ‘Sunny, can you still pray?’ She said ‘Yes!’ – then grinned in spite of her tears and the sunshine returned to her eyes.

This precious memory of Sunny always reminds me just how important our prayers are – and prayer should be our first resort instead of our last resort. We can always pray! We should always pray!

1 Thessalonians 5:17 tells us to:
‘PRAY WITHOUT CEASING’

Our ‘23-’24 Region Project is feeding and caring for children in the care of Global Servants Bill and Ann Clemmer in the city of Goma, Dominican Republic of the Congo.

The current conflict in DR Congo includes the city of Goma. We want to express what a blessing your generosity in supporting this Region Project is as we see funds for their work grow and grow. Can we ask you please to remember these in your constant prayers as well. Goma is right in the middle of the conflict and our prayers are needed. Thank you for being as generous with your prayers as you have been with your dollars.



Prayers also include PRAISES!

Our Region has so many reasons to lift praises to our God:

1. *The ministers and ministries looking to the needs of people locally, associationally, regionally and globally.*
2. *The servant hearts and hands that give generously to others in a society that says look out for yourself.*
3. *The seeking of God’s will & the courage to follow it.*
4. *For walking worthy of this calling we share.*

UPCOMING
Events

June 20-22, 2024

ABGirls/Young Ladies Retreat at Camp Hebron

August 16-18, 2024

2024 THRIVE RETREAT at Camp Hebron
Information/Registration booklets have been mailed to your church and to individuals on our ABWM Mailing list. Full details along with registration forms and instructions are also downloadable at this web address:

Thrive24.pdf (abcopad.org)

October 17-19, 2024

ABCOPAD Biennial in Altoona, PA

November 2, 2024

North Western PA Women’s Event
First Baptist Church, Franklin PA
Look for details soon!



Questions about these scheduled events, please contact:

President Sue MacDonald
717-682-8516

or

Spiritual Enrichment Coord./Director
Jodie Vasbinder 814-845-2355

News From our Associations (www.abcopad.org)

Abington

NEPA GPS Tim Schwartz had the opportunity to worship at the **FBC of Abington, Waverly**, where he worked as the interim minister at the church years ago. It was a great opportunity to see many familiar faces especially his friend, Milt Massey, who recently celebrated his 24th birthday.

Central Union

Siloam, Norristown, sees itself as a place of Hope, Healing, and Wholeness. Rev. Dr. Randy Harris is currently serving as the Interim Pastor at the church, and the congregation is experiencing a wonderful revival under his leadership. With over 20 recent baptisms and a large group of leaders answering God's call to become ministers at the church, God is moving among the people. Minister Nicole Skinner serves as worship leader and leads the congregation in an energetic and joyful worship service.

FBC, Lansdale and **Hatboro Church** are combining forces to serve our dear friends in La Paz and Los Planes. A part of our group helped to finish a project at the seminary and the other half served in Los Planes at Casa de Dios. We were also blessed to share in worship with Casa De Dios for Los Planes and with the seminary church, Point of Grace.

Delaware

It was an epic ordination ceremony at **Canaan, New Castle**, for the Rev. Dr. Debbie Ardella Strickling Bullock. A recent graduate from the Seminary of the Virginia Union University in Richmond, VA, Dr. Debbie has been on a fascinating journey. For over 50 years, she has filled leadership roles in business, education, music and church administration. Dr. Debbie is a P.K. and is devoting her substantial gifts towards equipping and mentoring other people into the gospel ministry. We are blessed to have her on the ABCOPAD team!

French Creek

An annual tradition — At **FBC, Franklin**, local clergy took turns leading readings for each of the 14 Stations of the Cross (FBC, Franklin, is always station #2). 130+ participants represented well over a dozen churches, a time to remember the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus.

Recently Pastor Jeff Landfried of **FBC, Greenville**, celebrated the baptism of 8 (!) teens at his church during their Easter celebration. Baptism at Easter is such a fitting reminder that we join Christ in death that we may join him in his resurrection.

Harrisburg

Regional Exec Pastor Mark Mahserjian-Smith joined Rev. Dr. Rodney Smalls at the **Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church, Harrisburg**, for their Ecumenical Good Friday Service. It was awesome joining Pastor Rodney, Church Administrator, Deaconess Cassandra Scott, Deacon Emmanuel Marshall, and the Clergy representing congregations throughout Harrisburg. Mark had the opportunity to bring the invocation and listen to incredible preaching as seven different pastors spoke on the last words of Jesus from the cross. The service ended with Holy Communion. Mark writes, "Being with God's Family in this small corner of the Kingdom was inspiring, singing praise, sharing God's Word, and experiencing what Heaven will be like for just a few minutes."

Monongahela

Ladies of **Olive Branch, Belle Vernon** gathered today to bless the children of Hope Unlimited with Valentine Cards. They wrote out over 125 cards in Portuguese to be given to children for their special day. Each card was written with the child's name on it. Being the Hands & Feet of Jesus! It was the ABW project of the month! Meanwhile, it was a busy day of outreach when a team of men from the church did some much needed and appreciated yard work for one of the church's senior saints. Serving hands, Serving hearts.

The Monongahela Association had their first Association meeting in several years. Rev. Ken Sommerfeldt of Olive Branch Church served as Acting Moderator. It was exciting to see seven churches represented as they gathered at Great Bethel Church. Pastor Ken welcomed all and brought a message concerning the importance of an association: 1. Fellowship, 2. Missions, 3. Doctrine accountability. Rev. Cristy Wise, GPS for the SW, brought greetings from ABCOPAD and shared info about coming events: Pastor's Retreat, Women's Day Event, ABCOPAD Biennial in October. It was an amazing time to see the Monongahela Association come together. It was certainly a great thing to witness as the excitement and enthusiasm was positive and encouraging to see God moving in our midst!

Northumberland

It was a big night at **FBC, Milton**, when Pastor Andy Reich hosted a great Youth Group Meeting: Boomers vs Zoomers. Pretty Cool!

The AB Women's Ministry Leadership gathering at the **FBC, Milton**, where ABWM President Sue MacDonald and Director Jodie Vasbinder did an outstanding job coordinating the meeting. Reports were offered from

each leadership team member, along with significant time spent planning for the Thrive Retreat at Camp Hebron on August 16-18. This dynamic and innovative group of ladies continues to be a driving force in Regional Ministry.

Oil Creek

The Oil Creek Association gathered for their spring meeting at **Delaware Avenue, Erie**. It was an encouraging time of fellowship and discussion of our missional purpose both as individual churches and in ministry together.

Pittsburgh

GPS Cristy Wise had the privilege to bring the message at Rev. Don Dague's church **Riverview Baptist**. It was great to join the church family where God is at work within the congregation as they desire to be about Gods business. May God be praised!

The Pittsburgh Association churches will meet both in person and/or on Zoom on May 19, 3 p.m., at **FBC, Pittsburgh**; 159 N. Bellefield Ave; Pittsburgh, PA 15213 to vote on their proposed membership of the **Pittsburgh Karen Baptist Church**. We are excited about this opportunity to possibly welcome a new church into the Association. Your participation is important. Please make every effort to attend to represent your church. Please contact 412-687-3940 / pghbaptist@aol.com to confirm your attendance so we can assure that we have a quorum.

Riverside

New Hope Christian would like to share a testimony and words of encouragement from their outreach ministry the Healing Rooms of Del. Co. What a way to begin our 20th year in ministry. For the past 2 months, we have had a continual flow of people to the Healing Rooms. New people coming for healing prayer and returning individuals who may need their faith strengthened and more supportive prayer for their healing to be manifested. For as Exodus 15:26 reminds us; "I am the Lord who heals you."

Ten Mile

Jefferson Baptist celebrated Youth Sunday where all those participating were a part of the youth ministry. The church was packed with many teens involved from reading Scripture, to worship leaders, offering, children's moments, and the list goes on! One of the youth leaders, Ross Owens, brought the message. These youth leaders are from Waynesburg University and students in the Biblical Ministries Studies program. What a great idea for Jefferson to utilize the university and help disciple and mentor students giving them experience as well.

Kudos to Jacob Cannon a recent graduate of ACTS. He was given provisional certification by the Ten Mile Association during its recent meeting at **Jefferson Baptist**.



	2024	2023
United Mission Basics	\$19,400.00	\$21,130.00
Love Gift	\$436.00	\$1,969.00
Partners in Ministry	\$19,686.00	\$25,441.00
Over & Above	\$852.00	\$0.00
Annual Offerings		
AFC	\$13,812.00	\$18,573.00
WMO	\$1,228.00	\$1,039.00
RMMO	\$1,867.00	\$648.00
OGHS	\$3,318.00	\$3,977.00



The cumulative comparison figures

United Mission Basics is behind for Mar. 2024 by \$(1,730)
 The decrease in United Missions (includes UMB and Love Gift) amounts to (\$4,865) less in actual dollars, that ABCOPAD received thru March.
 Over & Above is the ABCOPAD Womens Ministry offering.
 AFC is behind by (\$8,041) thru March. This decrease amounts to (\$2,358) less in actual dollars, that ABCOPAD received thru March.
 Partners in Ministry is ahead by \$20,463 thru March.
 This amount includes a \$30,063 from a charitable gift annuity.
 In actual dollars, from UM, AFC and PIM, ABCOPAD has received \$13,240 more thru March.
 ABCOPAD Womens Ministry supports ABCOPAD monthly.



Ecclesiastes 3:1 (NASB)

**There is an appointed time for everything.
 And there is a time for every matter under heaven.**

June, 2024 Deadline:

Items to be included in the June issue of Notes & News need to arrive by 5 p.m., Thursday, June 6.

Please send all material to Denise Veselicky via one of the following:

Mail: ABCOPAD • 159 N. Bellefield Ave. • Pittsburgh, PA 15213-2609 • Email: dveselicky@abcopad.com
 Phone: 888-687-0883 • Fax: 412-687-3941

Thank you! Donna L. Schneff, designer • deeschneff@gmail.com

ABCOPAD BIENNIAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 17-19, 2024

Blair County Convention Center

One Convention Center Blvd
Altoona, PA 16602

WWW.ABCOPAD.ORG



RENEWAL FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Can churches in the 21st century stop, reverse, or prevent decline – and even become healthy, thriving congregations? Leading scholar and practitioner of congregational renewal, Michael Beck, says they can.

But the old cookie cutter ways of doing church won't cut it in today's world. If churches are going to stop the shocking rates of pastoral burnout and exodus from the pews, they must learn to be the church with new people, in new places, and in new ways.

For congregations to experience what Beck calls, "re-missioning" they must "grow the center, experiment on the edge." The Five Types deals with the internal work that must happen in a congregation to reorganize for a blended ecology, in which inherited and fresh expressions live together in a symbiotic relationship.

Every church has a distinct personality type, which can keep it stuck or propel it into maturity, depending on how it's used. Find out how you can understand and leverage your congregation's culture and personality to position your church for growth and new forms of vitality!

Congregational Renewal





In Philippians 4, Paul says, *not one church helped out in the **give-and-take** of this work, **except for you**.* The Message

While reading these verses, I couldn't help but think of so many of the "**except for you**" churches here in ABCOPAD. Last year, 182 congregations were a part of the **give-and-take** partnership that supports regional work through **Partners in Ministry**. This financial support means that full-time Staff, GPS Staff and RMA's were able to **give** assistance and participate in pastoral searches, ordination preparation and services, pastoral retreats, the ABW Ministries conference and the AB Men envisioning retreat, mission trip experiences, disaster relief and pastoral & church anniversaries and celebrations.

Last year, 23 congregations, 8 Associations, ABW Ministries, the AB Men, ACTS, 3 camps in ABCOPAD, Women in Ministry, the Commission on Ministerial Leadership and Student Ministries were able to **take** advantage of the grants that are available through 3 funds that ABCOPAD administers and disburses twice a year when the earnings allow.

Paul's writing reminds us that the work of the kingdom happens when people want to be on both sides of this equation. We need to **give** to the work happening in and around ABCOPAD and we need to **take** advantage of the fruits of that labor, to further ministry in our congregations, communities and with partners in other countries.

Partners in Ministry encompasses the very definition of the **give-and-take** that Paul describes. Without the **give** (gifts) no work or support for pastors and congregations can happen, without the **take** (grants) churches, Associations, ABW Ministries, AB Men, the Ministers Council, ACTS, and Student Ministries miss out on opportunities to envision and live out the words of Jesus, "*Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I'll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age.*"

You can give to Partners in Ministry...

1. Through your local congregation's weekly offering by designating your gift to ABCOPAD - Partners in Ministry.
2. Through ABCOPAD's Online Giving option, available on the Regional website (www.abcopad.org). Your church can receive mission-giving credit for your online gift.
3. By giving through your mobile device
4. By sending your check (made payable to ABCOPAD WMS) to:



ABCOPAD; P.O. Box 421; Hatboro, PA 19040

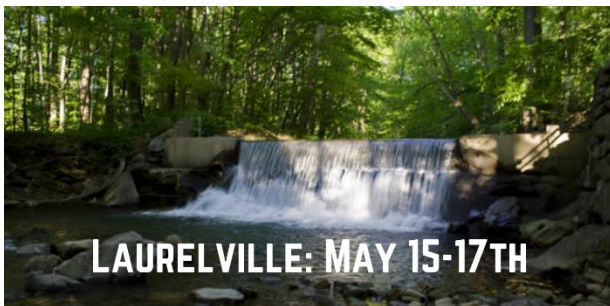


**American Baptist Churches of
Pennsylvania and Delaware**

Pittsburgh Baptist Association
159 N Bellefield Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

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2024 RETREATS

“AN INVITATION FROM GOD”

OPEN TO PASTORS AND SPOUSES

COST: \$150 (INCLUDES MEALS/LODGING)

EARLY BIRD RATE: \$125 (UNTIL 3/15)

2024 Pastors and Spouses Retreats

Retreat is a strategic withdrawal from the battle lines, whatever and wherever they may be in your life, to take a breath, physically and spiritually, and reconnect with God. This year, ABCOPAD welcomes you to do precisely that. To intentionally retreat and purposefully say ‘yes’ to God’s invitation to take refuge, to rest & to return encouraged and strengthened to join in His work. We will be led by Rev. Jeni Pedzinski, spiritual director and Director of Mission Mobilization at International Ministries (IM).

Our clergy & spouse retreats provide the space to worship and relax, pray and play. And this year we’ve added a second location in the western part of the state to make the experience even more accessible to all!

Join us at [Laurelville Retreat Center](#) in the western corridor May 15-17 or at [Harvey Cedars Bible Conference Center](#) in New Jersey June 19-21. Cost is \$150/person, providing lodging & 5 meals, and the retreats are open to all ABCOPAD clergy and their spouses.

Scan the QR Code to register and pay online.

If cost is an issue, please contact Rev. Rob Rice or Rev. Kelly Legg. We have resources to help make it possible for you to come to the retreat.

