

Notes & News, Thoughts & Views



For ABCOPAD Churches from Rev. Mark Mahserjian-Smith
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Hebrews 10:23-25 *Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

Our Region is painfully aware of the struggles ABCOPAD Associations are facing. Much of our ABCOPAD Polity is built on the need for functional Associations. The ABCOPAD Regional Board that governs our Region provides for a Representative from every Association a seat on the Board. Dysfunctional Associations become unable to elect or appoint an Association Regional Board Representative leaving the ABCOPAD Board struggling to meet a quorum and conduct business.

While Baptist Polity makes it clear that it is the local church that Ordains and Certifies a person's call to ministry, it is the Association that has the vital task of making sure each person seeking credentials meets a rigorous set of standards for the credential to be recognized. ABCOPAD, as a Region, does not credential anyone experiencing a call to ministry, it is the local church and the Association who watch over this extremely important ministry.

Churches enter and leave the American Baptist Churches of Pennsylvania and Delaware and thereby ABC-USA through an Association. ABCOPAD cannot pick and choose the churches who are in the Region and churches who are expelled. It is the Association that welcomes a church into its fellowship and an Association who can decide to disfellowship a church, forcing it to leave not only the Association but also the Region and perhaps the Denomination.

Much of our Regional Polity is based on the understanding ABCOPAD has healthy and active Associations.

Everyone is abundantly aware many Associations have fallen on hard times. The decline of Associations began long before the Covid-19 Pandemic. Diminishing attendance to annual Association meetings, with many being canceled, became normative. Those that attended Association Meetings were Senior Saints who came to the meeting out of a sense of duty and loyalty. Association gatherings that were struggling pre-pandemic, came to a final end during the long months of quarantine when churches were closed and meetings ended. Associations whose backs were "against the ropes" received a knockout blow from Covid-19.

Since 2022, ABCOPAD has been investing money and staff time to rebuild Associations. The method was borrowed from two different Associations: the Northumberland Association and the Central Union Association. Both of these Associations had adopted "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, but expecting different results". It was time to try something radically new. The NBA started doing their Association gatherings to appeal to families with children. Gone were stuffy, dry business meetings. Associations would look more like a county fair with delicious food, outdoor games, bounce houses and other inflatable attractions, a praise band doing great music all providing an opportunity to just be together and get to know one another. Often hosted by Rev. Jamie Dries at the First Baptist Church of Milton, these events were fun and exciting, bringing many people from the Association together for fellowship.

The CU Baptist Association used a slightly different strategy. They too did away with the traditional Business Meeting, instead, focused on Mission and (at first) smaller informal gatherings. Rev. Dan McDowell (GraceCrossing, Phoenixville) did extensive research regarding the History of the Central Union. Highlighting the mission endeavors of local churches and time simply to be together for personal conversations, events were organized to bring the churches in the Association together.

Congregations came in droves to share their own mission work, as well as hear what other sister churches were doing. There were many informal gatherings bringing people together to get to know one another that often centered around a great meal.

ABCOPAD decided to use a similar approach. Using the recently-trained Geographic Pastoral Servants (GPS) to organize events, fun informal gatherings were launched. These gatherings would be highly subsidized or paid for through ABCOPAD Grants. These events would kickstart Association relationships that have faltered or failed as a result of the Pandemic. GPS began organizing outings to venues like Keystone Safari, Sight and Sound and the Pittsburgh Gateway Clipper. Both in 2022 and 2023, GPS organized outings to Baseball games and meals at local restaurants, all in an effort to rebuild Associations. While the work has been slow, many ABCOPAD members have availed themselves to these opportunities; and slowly, Associations are coming back.

I am reminded of the words found in Hebrews 10:24-25. “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. ABCOPAD remains committed to building healthy partnerships including the partnerships grown in the incubator of Associations. Thank you for your commitment to our Region and its ministry. Know how much we appreciate you.

Blessings.





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Some variation of the phrase, “What have you done for me?”, seems to be everywhere lately. You hear it said in stores, on the news, certainly all-over social media and sadly, sometimes even in our churches. Maybe this thought or attitude has always been a part of who we are and how we act, but it isn’t something that ever seemed so glaring and bold as it is today. Certainly, we all want to feel valued, appreciated and known; but, can the world ever really do that for us? Or have we already received all those things because we have a God who valued us enough to provide a plan for our salvation, who appreciates our gifted uniqueness and who knew us before we were born.

Believing those things, I think means that when we look around us, we wonder how we can share all that we have been given with others. It’s a heart condition, that requires us to care for each other, support each other with our finances, resources and prayers, and to value the ministries of others, as well as our own.

It would be easy to look at the giving totals for 2023 from January through August and spare ourselves the hard conversations, with the often used, well-worn phrases that inflation was high, money is tight and there are so many good organizations that need our support. Those things can all be true, but if our hearts are open and we believe that God is at work in our region, with our pastors, congregations, associations and auxiliary groups then we need to reflect on how we respond to these ministries.

United Mission Basics is behind by \$12,434, Love Gift is behind by \$1,763 and Partners in Ministry is ahead by \$18,000 through the first 8 months. The August mission close showed that 15 churches have given \$500+ less to United Mission Basics than they did during that same time last year, and 17 churches have given \$500 less to Partners in Ministry than the previous year. Six churches have given \$500+ more to UMB than they did last year, and 14 churches have given \$500+ more to PIM than they did last year. Some churches have had smaller increases or decreases in their giving, while others have kept their giving at last year’s levels. We received a one-time gift of \$25,000 from a church merger for Partners in Ministry or we would be behind in that giving line by \$7,000.

Let us pray that our giving always comes from an open-heart condition that recognizes what God has given us and never from the world’s perspective of “What have you done for me?” We are blessed enough to know the answer, **Christ has done everything for me.**





Rev. Dan McDowell
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Genesis 32:24-25, 28 NIV

²⁴So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. ²⁵When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man... ²⁸Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome."

I have read the story of Jacob's wrestling match with God many times over the years and I have to admit that it has mystified me somewhat. You probably know the story. Jacob and his twin brother Esau have a contentious relationship from the moment of their birth. Through a series of events and schemes that Jacob and his mother pull off, Jacob and Esau are estranged. In fact, Esau seeks to kill Jacob and he has to run for his life to his mother's family in another country.

But eventually God calls Jacob back home to fulfill his destiny. In order to do that, he has to reconcile with Esau and atone for his sins. As he approaches his homeland, Jacob's wrestling match with God ensues. It has mystified me because the Bible doesn't tell us who the "man" Jacob wrestles with is. It says he "struggled with God and with humans and have overcome". So, was he literally wrestling with God? I have heard it said he wrestled with an angel (God's messenger).

In the end, it seems clear to me that Jacob's struggle was with his own behavior. He had sinned against his brother, had manipulated things for his own benefit and had stolen Esau's blessing – the only thing that Esau had left to inherit from his dying father. And it was not something that Jacob could undo. He had to live with it as did Esau. But he discovered God's grace (and Esau's) in the process as he was forgiven by both of them.

This is how Israel was born; from the struggle with God and humanity. Jacob walked with a limp from that day forward as a result of his injury he incurred during that wrestling match. His limp was a constant reminder of his struggle over his previous sins. That is how salvation works. We recognize our sins, repent of them and receive the gift of God's grace and forgiveness. It is the only way to be adopted into God's family.

As I have reflected on this story, I find myself pondering the body of Christ in America today. The church as we have known it is experiencing significant decline. Recently the regional staff of ABCOPAD were given a report of the churches that have closed in recent years. It was daunting. And there is little sign that the trend is going to be reversed.

Yet in the midst of this we have heard story after inspiring story of churches experiencing remarkable growth, celebrating baptisms and being used by the Lord to transform lives in miraculous ways! God is not dead! The Holy Spirit is still moving! It seems that we just need to figure out how to get out of God's way!

Perhaps part of the problem is that we are too invested in reliving the past and maintaining our traditions than we are in serving God and loving others. We are more concerned with how to fill the seats in our churches and maintain the buildings we occupy than we are in edifying and discipling the people God is calling us to reach. Cultural Christianity that took hold after World War II seems to be dying. Perhaps that is not such a bad thing. This crisis we are facing is causing us to search our souls and seek a new vision for the church.

Most of the people I know who go to church are good people. Nice people. Caring people. We will give our neighbors food and clothing and seek to bless them in very tangible ways, but it seems to me that we have lost our passion for evangelism. We will offer people material blessings; but do we offer them spiritual ones? Are we aiming to truly share Christ with them?

Back in the day, Baptist churches spread like wildfire across this nation because we believed that God called us to reach people with the Gospel, He revealed to us. Distinctive beliefs and practices like soul liberty (the right and privilege to interpret the Bible for ourselves as the Holy Spirit leads us)... Believers baptism by immersion as a witness to God's movement of salvation in our lives... The autonomy of the local church... Voluntary association with other Baptist (and non-Baptist) churches so that we can unite in mission... Separation of church and state... Those distinctives made us a movement.

In many ways, I see the church limping forward like Jacob did after his wrestling match. But Israel's best days were ahead. Once He repented, he found God's grace and he discovered the destiny that God ordained for Him. I pray that we - the churches of ABCOPAD will do likewise! We can't let the past get in the way of the future God is calling us toward!

¹¹For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. ¹²Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. ¹³You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. (Jeremiah 29:11-13)



Rev. Kelly Legg
South Central Geographic
Pastoral Servant
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“Sometimes I just need someone to tell me that I’m doing any part of this right.”

A while ago, I spent an hour on a zoom call connecting with a colleague. He’s been with his congregation for a few years. There’s no conflict, no drama, no nonstop criticism. And that’s wonderful, but there also isn’t any encouragement. He does his job. They do theirs. And everyone simply takes for granted that all is well.

But he’s wondering. There’s no one in his corner serving as his cheering section. No outside voice that points out what God is doing, how He’s using him. Just silence.

“Sometimes I just need someone to tell me that I’m doing any part of this right.”

I’ve been thinking about what he said and wondering how many pastoral leaders feel that way. The sad truth is that we generally only receive feedback if someone is disgruntled, disappointed or disinterested. And the same experience hits lay leaders who are working hard to see Kingdom ministry take place in and through their sphere of influence in their local congregation. No one, including the pastor at times, cheers and encourages.

Of course, the same can be seen in any area of our life. Maybe you’re trying to parent well as your child enters a new phase of life; the new struggles or status have you questioning whether you’re hitting the mark. Or you’re stepping out in faith in a new way and genuinely haven’t found your footing. Perhaps you are working to live differently, walk a new path than ever before, and are so in the thick of things that you actually cannot see how far you’ve come.

Sometimes we all just need someone to tell us that we’re doing any part of this right.

The author of the book of Hebrews commands us to “consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching” (Heb. 10:24-25). Something amazing happens, doesn’t it, when we put this command into practice? When we make it a habit to encourage one another, to point out the evidence of where another person is growing in Christ, to cheer from the sidelines, we spur one another on to go further up and further into God’s heart and ways.

Because sometimes all we need is one person offering encouragement, one person helping us to see how far we’ve come, one person committed to speaking life over us in order for us to keep going toward Christ.

What if you were that person?

~ Pastor Kelly



freepik



Rev. Tim Schwartz
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October is Pastor Appreciation month. Here are seven ways to appreciate your pastor:

1. Take your pastor a meal or treat them to dinner. I pastored a bi-lingual Hispanic church in Texas before moving to PA. One of the things that blessed me most during my time there was when one of the ladies of the congregation would knock on my front door. When we answered the door, she would hand us a plate of tamales and instruct us that we must eat them for dinner that night. The tamales were delicious, and we felt loved.
2. Take care of your pastor's family. Attend a sporting or school event of one of the children of the family. Be sure the kids know that they are important and cared for. Wouldn't it be great if your pastor's child has a cheering section at their next soccer or basketball game? Wouldn't it be great if there were a group of people going bananas to show support for a child when they have received an award at school? How significant would it be for a pastor's child to get a Facebook message that says that someone has been praying for them?
3. Be sure that your pastor is using all his or her vacation days. Many pastors are lone wolves that like to work hard and hold things tightly. However, churches need pastors that are rested, refreshed and restored. Rest loosens the strong grip that pastors like to hold on things. Rest and refreshment are antidotes to burnout. Restoration is a key to living life to its fullest — which is how we want our pastors to live.
4. Help your pastor pursue their interests and hobbies. If they are a sports fan, get them tickets to a ball game. If they like to read, a gift card to Amazon. If they relax while watching a movie, a gift card to a movie theater or Fandango. It is easy to know what your pastor's interests and hobbies are — supporting them in their interests is a good way to appreciate your pastor!
5. Take one thing off your pastor's plate for the month. Teach Bible study. Visit a shut-in each week. Offer to lead worship or prayer meeting. Ask your pastor what you can do to make his/her job easier.
6. Tell your pastor that you appreciate them. It is valuable for a pastor to hear feedback more than "I enjoyed the message, pastor!" Everyone wants to be recognized in the work that they do.
7. Pray *for* your pastor and pray *with* your pastor. A member at the first church I pastored committed to praying for me and our church service every Sunday morning. He would meet me in my office and we would pray together. It was a valuable ministry of service to me as I lead the worship service each Sunday morning.





HANDS ON MISSIONS

She opens her hand to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy.
Proverbs 31:20 ESV

At the Annual gathering in August, I was elected to serve as our first Coordinator of HANDS-ON MISSION. This replaces WHITE CROSS as we have known it. I will be happy to answer any questions as you search for projects that interest you.

Years ago, I had an opportunity to go to Haiti. Sunday found us in a church in Terre Rouge. The church was overflowing (literally). The women's group was named after Dorcas (Acts 9:36-42). These Haitian women gave what they could to help their neighbors; and, I believe if they could, they would have reached out to the world. Can we as ABWMOPAD do any less?

At our recent THRIVE Retreat, I had a chance to speak to the women at Camp Hebron, while working on sanitary pads. They shared what projects they were doing in their communities. We live in various communities that have various needs. If you are using your hands to meet needs and share the love of God, you are a missionary in your community. Here are some of the projects that were shared with me along with ideas I have found:

- Lap robes for nursing homes
- Baby blankets for newborns at church
- Small stuffed animals for police and fire departments as they may deal with frightened children
- Tote bags with items for homeless shelters
- Making washable, reusable sanitary pads
- Fill good used purses with small items for shelters – shampoo, deodorant, toothbrush/paste, feminine products, underpants. Basic need items that homeless or women that have left abusive situations may not have.
- Make tote bags for the kids, too. A book, small blanket, stuffed animal, coloring book, crayons and more.

Reach out to organizations in your area (Pregnancy Centers, Victim Services, Women's, Childrens and Homeless Shelters, Community ministries, etc.) to assess present needs and before dropping off well-meaning items.

Use your hands: sew, gather, crochet, knit, cut, deliver and of course, pray.

As we work at developing this new coordinator position with a desire to begin sharing our ideas in a cohesive network, please supply me with the name and contact information for a person in your church or group that I can reach out to and share hands on ministry ideas.



Pam Hughes **Hands-On Missions Coordinator**

Here are a few giving suggestions as well as websites that will provide you with mission project information as you continue mission outreach in your local church and association.

Send: Walmart or Aldi gift cards

Rankin Christian Center
230 3rd Avenue
Rankin, PA 15104



Send: Walmart, Amazon, or Target gift cards

Rev. Dr. Rick Bunker, Chaplain
PARX Racing
PO Box 1000
Bensalem, PA 19020



These websites are full of giving ideas too, including SCHOOL, HYGIENE & BIRTHING KITS – some of our most loved projects. We encourage you as individuals or groups to look over the many giving options at these websites.

Overseas – reaching beyond our national borders

[White Cross - Dominican Republic Health Kits | International Ministries](#)

[White Cross - Philippine Kits | International Ministries](#)

Overland – reaching within our national borders

[Operation Planting Hope — American Baptist Home Mission Societies \(abhms.org\)](#)

At our Retreat in August, ladies worked at sewing reusable sanitary pads that will be sent to women in third world countries. Some of them will physically be carried to women in Uganda with our own secretary, Lori Jennings. Sanitary Pad kits can also be included in

Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes! Instructions for sewing sanitary pads can be found here.

[2023 Retreat Project Pattern \(abcopad.org\)](#)





*She opens her hand to the poor
and reaches out her hands to
the needy. -Proverbs 31:20*



STRAIGHT FROM THOSE WHO MANAGE FOOD BANKS!

1. If your local food bank has refrigeration available for donations consider these: Milk, butter, margarine, cream cheese, eggs – most of the boxed food items call for *OTHER* ingredients like those listed. Consider carefully how you might add *EVERYTHING* persons might need to complete a boxed food item. Cereal is a popular donation, but without milk... it's dry....one suggestion was powdered milk!
2. Baking items – including flour, sugars (white, brown, powdered), baking powder, baking soda, vanilla. Add a tub of ready-made frosting and sprinkles for a real treat.
3. **A hand held can opener!**
4. Canned meats like chicken or tuna, nuts, raisins.
5. Fresh meats – again, if the facility has refrigeration or it is an arranged pickup day that things will be given fresh.
6. Vegetable oil, vinegar, mayonnaise, ketchup, mustard, relish.
7. Dish washing liquid, cloths and towels.
8. Feminine hygiene products, toilet paper, baby wipes, bandaids.
9. Coffee and tea bags.
10. Bread, buns, wraps, crackers
11. Canned vegetables and again, if possible, fresh vegetables.
12. Salt, pepper, cinnamon, Italian seasoning, gravy and taco seasoning packets, garlic and onion powders.
13. Boxed meals like 'helpers' and mac and cheese, pasta and sauce and parmesan!
14. Instant mashed potatoes, boxes of gelatin, sides like noodles with seasoning pouches.

Be thoughtful in your donations. What do you reach for in your cupboards on a daily or weekly basis? Others need those things too. Also consider volunteering at your local food bank. Don't have one in your community? How about organizing a bank or a giveaway?



Always somewhere to lend a helping hand!



'1 - 4 - 1'



The ABCOPAD WOMEN'S MINISTRIES 2023-2024 **REGION PROJECT** is to raise funds to help Ann & Bill Clemmer - currently serving God in the Democratic Republic of the Congo – in the town of Goma. We are asking the generous folks in our Region to help feed the children who come to the Clemmers for help, most of them are street kids after a devastating volcanic eruption.

This fundraising drive titled **'1-4-1'** because your gift of **just \$25.00** will feed **ONE** child **FOR ONE** month in the town of Goma at the center where the Clemmers care for the kids - body, mind and soul.

During the month of November, our month of giving thanks, would you consider feeding one child for a month with your gift? These funds will be sent *before* Christmas to help feed the kids. My personal pledge is to feed 4 children, because that is how many children I have raised and fed. As I recall many thankful days around *our* family table, I want to ensure that other children get the opportunity to be fed, loved, and hear about Jesus.

*These represent the children you will be feeding –
we thank you for feeding God's sheep, caring for
His lambs.*



Donations can be made by check, written to **'ABWMOPAD'** with **'2024 REGION PROJECT'** in the memo. Send to ABWMOPAD Treasurer:
Sally Breski
1381 Butler Road
Worthington, PA 16262

ONLINE CONTRIBUTIONS CAN BE MADE HERE:

[Contributions and Payments \(abcopad.org\)](https://www.abcopad.org)

News From our Associations (www.abcopad.org)

Central Union

A Place in the Conversation hosted the first of an ongoing series of seminars under the title "A Community at Worship". These seminars are based on a book by the same title authored by Rev. Dan Nicewonger and Chris Wells. These seminars are designed to help congregations to explore their unique worship cultures, the theology behind that culture and the best way to practice worship in that culture.

Centre

Mt. Zion Missionary, Altoona, celebrated their 150th Anniversary. Rev. Keith Moore has served Mt. Zion for almost 10 years alongside his wife, Rev. Ruth Moore, who is also the Dean of Advancement for our ACTS Christian Education Program. Mt. Zion has a rich history, including being a Station on the Underground Railroad, launching the first Head Start program in Blair County, and being the oldest African-American Church in continuous operation in the County (and one of the oldest in PA). State Senator Judy Ward presented a Citation of Accomplishment, while Altoona Mayor Matthew Pacifico gave Pastor Keith a Key to the City.

Harrisburg

Westgate, Lancaster, was delighted to host the Lancaster Chapter of the American Guild of Organists for a concert/hymn sing. After enjoying a joint dinner with the American Guild, the sanctuary was packed for an evening of terrific music.

Rev. Dan Woodring is currently serving as the interim pastor at **FBC, York**. Dan and Barbara are on furlough from their ministry as missionaries in the Dominican Republic, where both serve alongside pastoral and congregational leaders to raise up church planting teams. These servants of God have amazing hearts for missions and seeing people come to know Jesus.

Laurel

To celebrate our 150th Anniversary, a group of women at **FBC, Greensburg** created handmade Chrismon ornaments for this year's Christmas tree highlighting our Savior's birth. Another group spent hours searching the archives for pictures to decorate the walls of the Fellowship Hall. On Sat., Sept. 16th, we began a weekend celebration event. The Lord graciously provided a perfect sunny afternoon for an outdoor performance by the Irwin Male Chorus dedicating a newly-planted red maple tree in memory of 150 years in ministry. In addition, we enjoyed activities such as Bocce and cornhole, a picnic and music presented by our Praise Team under the pavilion and later roasted marshmallows over a bonfire. We cherished the time of rekindling friendships with former church members and pastors, some who traveled long distances, to join us. On Sun., Sept. 17th, we began with Worship as Rev. Mark Mahserjian-Smith, Acting Regional Executive Pastor, delivered a wonderful message to our congregation. Following the service, a delicious buffet-style luncheon was held at Giannilli's II Restaurant. It was nice to hear the heartfelt stories from friends who shared their 'tie that binds' us together in Christ and His Church. Special gifts, including a handmade ceramic ornament with "150th Anniversary, First Baptist Church 2023" and a booklet detailing the History of the Church were given to all who attended. We're grateful to everyone who made this special anniversary a memorable one and thank God for His provisions.

Oil Creek

Wesleyville, Erie officially welcomed their new pastor, Rev. David Sherwood. The installation Service was a time of great joy and on behalf of ABCOPAD, Pastor David was gifted with a Shephard's staff. Following the installation service there was a reception and an opportunity to celebrate this new partnership between pastor and congregation.

Twix... Snickers... M&Ms... KitKats... What's in your TRUNK? **Greenfield Baptist** has the goodies. Their Trunk or Treat event is a great community outreach. You can be sure the neighborhood kids had a great time!

Pittsburgh

Southwest and Pittsburgh pastors got together for a baseball outing. It was a great time as they had the opportunity to watch the Pittsburgh Pirates play at PNC Park AND had a Pierogi Race. Seriously!

As one of the regional goals for the GPS staff is to rebuild and renew partnership with association pastors, leaders and lay people, we have been blessed by grant funds that enable special events and fellowship activities to be held in each geographical area.

In the Pittsburgh Baptist Association, 2 Clergy and Spouse gatherings have been scheduled with Rev. Dr. Felicia Brock, the Laurel/Pittsburgh GPS.

November 30, 6 p.m., at the Olive Garden; 260 Mall Plaza Blvd; Monroeville, PA 15146

or

December 1, 6 p.m., at the Walnut Grill; 911 Freeport Road; Pittsburgh, PA 15238

The **Pittsburgh Karen Baptist Church** has expressed interest in joining the Association. We are hoping their pastor, Hsa Plo Minn, will be able to join us. Please come, and let's take advantage of this opportunity to welcome Pastor Minn, renew old friendships and make some new ones. Call 1-888-687-0883 or visit dveselicky@abcopad.com to register.

On Thursdays at 6 p.m., **FBC, McKees Rocks** congregants "pray on the lawn" for their community, schools, government leaders, brothers and sisters in Christ, the ministries of not only FBC but those of our sister churches in the area, and any needs or concerns brought to us. When the weather is bad, we move to the sanctuary. On Fridays at 6 p.m., we are showing the *Chosen* series and invite all to join us. There is a brief discussion about what we have watched and a time of refreshments. On Sat., Oct. 21 at 6 p.m., we will host the music ministry of Randy & Marli Brown and invite all to join us for this special time. Refreshments will be served after the performance with an Oktoberfest theme. On Tues., Oct. 31, 5-8 p.m. we will hold Trunk or Treat for the children in the community.

Reading

Calvary, Allentown, held a community Food Truck event in their parking lot. There was a great turn out and connections were made with a lot of folk in the community. Members brought their friends, families and neighbors. This was such a

great idea for outreach in their neighborhood and plans are already underway to do this event next year with even more vendors.

Riverside

New Hope Christian Church would like to share a testimony from their outreach ministry "The Healing Rooms of Del. Co." A few nights ago began our 19th year in ministry. I am blessed to say that this year we have eight members on team who have committed to pray for the healing of others. And last night, after a lady was prayed for and over, she came out saying "what power, what power." "They overcame the devil by the blood of the lamb and the word of the testimony." (Revelations 12:11)

Ten Mile

Pastor Harry "Bud" Hawk was recently installed at **Sugar Grove, Greensboro**. It was exciting to see and feel the enthusiasm for Pastor Bud and Sugar Grove. Great time of coming together in

the afternoon to celebrate what God is doing! Pastor Bud had a well-organized service using several from his family and church membership including his wife, Denise. Then Pastor Cristy Wise, SW GPS, brought the sermon, a welcome to Ten Mile Association and ABCOPAD, and a prayer with the laying on of hands. Following Pastor Bud's remarks and benediction, they went to the fellowship hall for a delicious full meal that was prepared by the church family. The time around the table eating was great for stories, laughter and just being together as God's family.

It was a great day as Rev. Dr. Kevin Roberts was installed as pastor of **Jefferson Baptist**. Pastor Cristy Wise brought the sermon and charge, then Pastor Mark Mahserjian-Smith welcomed him to ABCOPAD, presenting him with a shepherd's staff. It was a special time to be together. Following the service, a light lunch was prepared for people to visit on this special occasion. There was a great spirit among those gathered, and God is already on the move under Pastor Kevin's leadership.

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
United Mission Basics	\$29,268	\$17,023
Love Gift	\$758	\$2,588
Partners in Ministry	\$28,261	\$25,750
 Annual Offerings		
AFC	\$964	\$2,824
WMO	\$3,696	\$6,523
RMMO	\$1,286	\$2,391
OGHS	\$6,662	\$7,830
 The cumulative comparison figures		
The decrease in United Missions (includes UMB & Love Gift) amounts to (\$15,844) less in actual dollars, that ABCOPAD received thru Sept.		
AFC is ahead by \$6,797 thru Sept. This increase amounts to \$1,994 more in actual dollars, that ABCOPAD received thru Sept.		
Partners in Ministry is ahead by \$15,489. through Sept.		
In actual dollars, from UM, AFC and PIM, ABCOPAD has received \$1,639 more thru Sept. 2023.		



November, 2023 Deadline:
Items to be included in the November issue of Notes & News need to arrive by 5 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 9.

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

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Partners in Ministry

Fulfilling Christ's Mission in the World



Rev. Robert Rice
North Central GPS
rrice@abcopad.com

Members of an LLC spend time having fun together on their annual baseball stadium trip

Throughout the New Testament, many of the commands that we are given as followers of Jesus end with the phrase, “one another.” We’re told to “love one another” (John 13:34), “bear with one another” (Ephesians 4:2), “pray for one another” (James 5:16), and “serve one another” (Galatians 5:13). You don’t have to be a biblical scholar to realize that given all these commands, at its very core, our faith involves building and maintaining relationships with other Christians.

As a Region, we’ve always leaned into this idea. Much of our ministry focuses on being in relationship and partnership with one another. Through these relationships and partnerships, we not only carry out the commands of Scripture, but we also grow in our faith and help build the Kingdom of God.

Over the past several years, I’ve had the opportunity to serve the Region in a number of capacities, as a Region board member, Regional Ministry Associate for Leadership Learning Communities, and most recently as a Geographic Pastoral Servant for the North Central part of our Region. In each of these areas, it’s been a joy to have the opportunity to build relationships with pastors and churches and encourage them in the ministry God has given them.

Of course, this work is only possible because churches and individuals choose to support our Region by giving to the Partners in Ministry offering. Through this offering, we are able to carry out the commands “to encourage and build one another up (1 Thessalonians 5:11)” and “stimulate one another towards love and good deeds.”



Clergy from the Northumberland Association gather together to pray and encourage one another

There are numerous ways we do this throughout the year, through things like phone calls, visits, church workshops and even retreats for our clergy and spouses, but again, none of these things would be possible if it weren’t for you! We need you to carry out our work, so please, pray for our Region, and give generously to it, through the Partners in Ministry Offering, so we can continue our work together for the Kingdom of God!

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 (www.abcopad.mobile).
4. By sending your check (made payable to ABCOPAD WMS) to: ABCOPAD; P.O. Box 421; Hatboro, PA 19040

Thank you for your giving to **Partners in Ministry** and for your partnership as we minister together in Pennsylvania and Delaware.



**American Baptist Churches of
Pennsylvania and Delaware**

Pittsburgh Baptist Association
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Pittsburgh, PA 15213

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Pastoral Care | Rev. Carol Ross Irwin

Offered on Saturdays, October 21 - December 9 from 8 am - 10 am

An introduction to the role of the pastor in caring and counseling covering: The effect of the role of pastor on the person under care; the influence of the personality of the pastor; listening skills, visitation; helping parishioners deal with life events. Resources, services, conducting marriages and funerals. Counseling techniques and resources will be discussed.

Baptist History and Polity | Rev. Randy Powell & Rev. Dr. David Laubach

Offered on 3 Thursdays @ 7 pm, October 19, 26 & November 2

This course is an introduction to the origin of Baptists and the resulting church organization. After a brief introduction to early church history and the Reformation, this course will focus on the history of Baptists, both in England and America. The course will discuss the organization of a Baptist church with an emphasis on pastoral leadership.

For more information, visit

<https://www.actsministrieschool.com/contact.html>

**NW & SW AB Men's
Breakfasts - Free**



After breakfast, we will worship and pray together. In addition, Global Servant David Reed will be there to share some insights.

Southwest: November 4, 8 a.m.
Bethlehem Baptist
Church of Ruff Creek
(685 Washington Rd,
Prosperity PA 15329).

Northwest: December 9, 9 a.m.
Camp Judson (398 Holliday Rd,
North Springfield, PA 16430).

Contact 1-888-687-0883 /
dveselicky@abcopad.com to
register.