



American Baptist Churches of Pennsylvania & Delaware

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Even the most casual observer will recognize our culture is changing and the changes are happening at a faster and faster rate. While the Gospel remains timeless and God's Word changeless, our methods for ministry must be innovative and culturally relevant.

In the fall of 2019, ABCOPAD sought to be innovative, tackling challenging situations in new and dynamic ways. One challenge our Region faced was the growing need for Pulpit Supply Speakers when pastoral leaders were on vacation or when congregations were in the midst of pastoral transition. Our Regional Offices were receiving more and more requests for Pulpit Supply Speakers but our actual list of speakers was shrinking. We believed Jesus was still calling people to a ministry of the Word, so we needed to identify those being called and train them to be Pulpit Speakers. In October 2019, we launched our online Recognized Pulpit Speaker Training course with approximately 30 students completing the 6-week course and now ready to help pastors and local congregations with pulpit supply needs.

With many of our congregations calling part-time or bi-vocational local pastoral leaders from outside our American Baptist denomination, there was a need to provide an orientation for new pastors now serving in our Region. In November, ABCOPAD launched its first online New Pastors Orientation with about 15 new pastors participating. The orientation included full-time staff, Regional Ministry Associates and Auxiliary Ministry leaders all connecting with new pastors to share how they can assist local congregations to be more effective in their ministry. We wanted these new pastors to know they are NOT alone but have the entire network standing ready to help.

Each month, there are online gatherings, often led by our Regional Ministry Associates to offer support to the teams they serve. Women in Ministry meetings and the Student Ministries group meetings bring people from across the Region together to encourage and support one another.

At a time when many of our pastoral leaders and congregational leaders don't know where to turn for assistance and support, ABCOPAD remains one place always available to help. We are always looking for new ways to do ministry better in this ever-changing culture. We are seeking to solve real life challenges pastors and congregations are facing with new and innovative solutions.

When you support Partners in Ministry, you make it possible for our ABCOPAD team to be present during challenging situations and to explore innovations that support pastoral leaders and congregations. You make it possible for us to be present, so no pastoral leader or church is alone in the midst of challenges and change.

Thank you for your support of Partners in Ministry. Last year, we surpassed our goal and with your help and support, we will once again have the resources we need to make real our vision, *to Build Healthy Partnerships with Churches, Pastoral Leaders, and the Wider ABC Family, to Fulfill Christ's Mission in Our World.* God Bless and thank you for your partnership in ministry.

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