

American Baptist Churches of Nebraska
Leadership Team Meeting
February 1, 2020
First Baptist Church Hastings, Nebraska

Present: President Steve Wisthoff, Treasurer LaVonna Cline, Executive Minister Robin Stoops, Secretary Janis Berry, Caleb Cornelius, Craig Erickson, Jane Gangwish, Mark Harvey, Bob Howe, Brian Jenkins, Kathy Krough, Caleb Lind (via SKYPE), Lorlea Mees, Bev Pacas, Brad Pope, Clint Walker

President Steve Wisthoff called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m. referring to Josuha 3:1-5. He also gave the opening prayer.

Review of Minutes: Bob Howe made the motion to accept the minutes of November 16, 2019. Second by Craig Erickson. Motion passes.

Finance: Executive Minister Robin Stoops gave the report. Total United Mission YTD thru December 2019 and YTD thru December 2018 showed a \$ difference of (\$6,193)/% difference of(3.8%). Total ABMS YTD thru December 2019 and YTD thru December 2018 showed a \$ difference of \$12,428/% difference 3.4%. Targeted Mission Giving could account for 3.3% decline in United Mission and 7.1% decline in America For Christ. **Investments** started year with \$1,135,033.18 – ended year with \$1,183,885.83. Pulled out \$140,000 for Camp, Region and Special Projects expense. Current balance \$1,089,193. **Camp** – ended 2019, \$6,681.85 surplus. Received a \$35,000 gift from First Baptist Grand Island. If not received this gift, Camp would have had a \$29,000 shortfall. Major issues repaired that will hold up in the future. Adjusting budget. Trying to make sure budget is on target. **Region** – ended 2019, \$6,966.27 shortfall. With the help of the Camp donation, year end was revised to a \$500 shortfall. Brad Pope made the motion to accept the Finance Report. Second by Bob Howe. Motion passes.

Moses Merrill Camp/Conference: MMCCC Program Manager, Caleb Cornelius gave the report. In the process of planning 2020 Summer Camp. Half of the Pastors needed are committed. LIT will be held next week-end. Will hire same number of staff. We have the most number of registrations in January than we have ever had in January – 25. Requiring a deposit from campers at the time of registration. Distributed and reviewed flyer for 2021 proposed Summer Camp schedule. Not much changed. Youth Retreat coming up March 13 – 15, 2020. Will be held at Camp. Youth groups from Norfolk First Baptist and Bethel Neighborhood Center will be coming to volunteer and attend the Youth Retreat. LaVonna Cline made the motion to accept the 2021 Summer Camp dates. Second by Craig Erickson. Motion passes.

MMCCC Director, Bev Pacas gave the report. Distributed 2019 year-end report. The report gives a recap of what happened in 2019. A small flyer was distributed with all activities/events proposed for 2020 and information regarding the 2300 Club. A slideshow with the same information was also sent to all churches. Will be focusing on the 2300 Club this year. Goal is

to add 100 new members. Five new members have been signed up. This will add \$27,000 to the budget. Cabin 4 and 5 are near completion. A group from Fairbury will renovate cabin 10. Member of Fairbury Church will fund the project. Lumber will be donated. 2019 everything happened – a lot of repairs needed to be taken care of. Biggest issue was the water system. Will replace 6 curb stops, installing new valve on pressure tank and replaced pump at lift station. ABMen purchased all tools on the list that Craig Erickson submitted. Robin stated he would be asking the 2300 Club Team to raise the monthly giving donation to \$30. In doing so, perks will be offered to the 2300 Club Team members. Update – Kim will have two Isle treatments to help immune system. She will be out all of February.

Professional Ministry – see Executive Minister's Report.

ABMen of Nebraska: Brad Pope gave the report. Group met once. Revising by-laws. Another meeting will be scheduled to plan for conference coming up in July 2020. Members responded to Craig's needs list for Camp.

ABW Ministries: LaVonna Cline gave the report. Will have a speaker during the Expo from Bethel Neighborhood Center. Each year we choose a Project. This year we will raise funds for Bethel Neighborhood Center to purchase a washer/dryer, tables and cabinets. **June 2020: Women's Conference** will be held June 5,6,7 at Moses Merrill Camp and Conference Center. Dr. Lachaka Askew – Coordinator of Midwestern Section will be our guest speaker all three days. Conference Committee is Nola Crooks and ABWM of First Baptist Church Fremont. **October 2020: Women's Fall Retreat** will be held at Moses Merrill Camp and Conference Center October 23 – 25. Susan Howell and ABWM of First Baptist Church Lincoln are retreat committee.

ABC/USA General Board: Mark Harvey gave the report. New Acting General Secretary is Jeff Woods. In June, will drive up to Green Lake for a meeting. Robin stated Kevin Walden and Masha Shiprio laid off due to lack of funds. Kevin Walden is looking for work.

Executive Minister's Report: Robin Stoops gave the report. Greg is doing fine. He can't drive until February 9th. Still doing PT. Have a Zoom call, text or email everyday with him. Ordination will be held for Joy Marshall in February. (Professional Ministry Report – Joy Marshall approved for Ordination. Service will held February 9, 2020. Greg will be preaching. More Ordinations coming up soon. Candidates need to write a paper.) Last week in Valley Forge. ABHM brought in Greg Van Kelder, one of the founders of the Mission Movement, for a two day presentation. Will be coming to Omaha in October to meet with our Pastors to share mission strategies. Met with all staff and they shared what they could do. Very positive experience. Eager to help us. Spring will bring a group to work in flooding area and to see what we are doing as a Region. Had a face-to-face meeting with Jeff Hagra. Beginning of a conversation. Left with heart being changed not his mind. Would like to bring him to Omaha. Discussion. Working on New Beginnings with a couple of churches. This program requires nine months doing workshops, evaluation and assessment. Then work with them in small groups as they move forward. **Expo Update** – Women's Pre-Conference meeting, Pastor's Pre-Conference meeting, Rev. S. Bacus,

Salem Baptist Church/Choir, Bill Shield – Northern Seminary, Becky Mann - Missionary in Thailand.) **2300 Club Program** information will be handed out to Churches along with information displays. Received **Mediation Certificate**, along with Greg, from UT Dallas. Very positive. Tuition was \$6,500 per person. Carl Sledko negotiated tuition down to \$950 per person. May be next for Pastors – 3 month program on-line. Still working with the **Carpenter Funds**. Very happy with the outcome. At Expo, Thrive It and Habitat for Humanity may build something on site. Next week will be on Zoom talking to Pastors about Thrive It. In 2019 the **Bi-Ennial** was held in Virginia Beach. In 2021 it will be held in Puerto Rico. A suggestion will be made to Jeff Woods to have the Bi-Ennial in Omaha 2023. The dates will work. Insurance – **Church Mutual** will decrease premiums by 15% of the total. This offer will be offered to every church in the Region. Next year, a rebate based on claims or not. Discussion. On Sunday, a **Kachin Church in Dallas, Texas** will be voting to join ABC NE. May become third Kachin Church outside of Nebraska to join ABC NE. Discussion. Jane Gangwish made the motion to accept Kachin Church into ABC NE contingent upon their vote Sunday. Second by Bob Howe. Motion passes.

Other Business: Robin gave the Nominating Team Report. Ballot was distributed and discussed. Bob Howe made the motion to accept the Proposed 2020/2021 Leadership Team ballot. Second by Jane Gangwish. Motion passes.

LaVonna Cline reported Sturgis registrations are needed.

Jane Gangwish said we need to get the churches involved in missions. There are so many needs right here at Camp. Gibbon does a Food Pantry. Can put in or take out.

Caleb Lind reported 19 were served on Puerto Rico Mission Trip. Great work done. A lot of work still yet to be done. People desire to continue to serve when they return to Omaha.

Bev Pacas stated culture at Camp has changed. Volunteer core is shrinking. Donations have changed. Question – How do we replace those volunteers?

Closing/Prayer: Steve Wisthoff thanked everyone for attending and for all the good work that's going on. He also closed in Prayer.

Meeting adjourned at 11:42 a.m./Lunch

Respectfully submitted

Janis Berry, Secretary

**American Baptist Churches of Nebraska
Region Expo 2020
Saturday April 25, 2020
Online Zoom Meeting Due to COVID-19 Pandemic**

The American Baptist Churches of Nebraska gathered digitally via a Zoom video conference call April 25, 2020 for the annual Region convention, known as the Region Expo. Meeting was called to order at 10:00am

Present: 39 Church Delegates along with all the two ABC NE Region and two Moses Merrill Camp and Conference Center staff for a total of 43 participants.

Welcome: Region President Rev. Dr. Steve Wisthoff of Second Baptist Church, Lincoln, NE. Shared how to best engage the process via zoom. Led in prayer for churches, region, and Covid-19 pandemic.

Review of 2019 Region Convention Minutes:

- 2019 minutes accepted as written

2019 Finance report by Executive Minister Rev. Dr. Robin Stoops

- Budget v. Actuals for 2019 presented.
 - ABC NE ended 2019 with a \$-6,966.27 deficit
 - MMCCC ended 2019 with a \$6,681.85 positive balance
- Investment Report
 - 2019 ended with an overall investment balance of \$1,183,885.83
 - Reminder that many of the investments are designated for specific ministries.
- ABC NE applied for and received Payroll Protection Plan grant in the amount of \$59,600. Grant can be applied to payroll and utilities.

Moses Merrill Camp and Conference Center—Bev Pacas

2019 Summer Camp—had 21 campers make a first-time commitment to Christ. 22 Recommitments. 7 camp pastors, 11 resident staff, and many volunteers. February 2020 LIT had 40 participants. MMCCC sent out videos links for camp promotion to local churches. Cabins 4&5 renovations are complete. Cabin 10 is in process of renovation thanks to FBC Fairbury. Consider a donation to the cabin remodel campaign. Camp is updating contact database. Goal to increase 2300 team by 100 giving units.

American Baptist Men—Brad Pope

Last met in February 2020. Looking forward to summer men's retreat in July at MMCCC. It was fun to be able to help with the Christmas wish list for camp.

American Baptist Women—LaVonna Cline

Last year spring and fall events were good events. Have already postponed spring event. Please support the ABW offerings even though we cannot meet in person. October fall retreat is still being planned.

ABC USA General Board Report—Mark Harvey

Spring General Board meetings were cancelled to due to COVID.

Nominating Committee—Rev. Dr. Robin Stoops

The nominating committee for the American Baptist Churches of Nebraska submitted the list of names for the Region Leadership Team 2020/2021.

- New Positions for 2020/2021 President: LaVonna Cline; Vice-President: Craig Erickson; Secretary: Nola Crooks; Treasurer: Bob Fairchild; Youth Ministry: Cassie Nelson. Remaining board members continue to serve out terms.
- Slate of officers was accepted. Chat feature in Zoom call served as an official vote tally. That chat manuscript is enclosed.

Executive Minister Report—Rev. Dr. Robin Stoops

- Extended gratitude to region and camp staff for all their hard work.
- Region is hosting pastoral zoom calls for updates and encouragement.
- ABC/NE, MMCCC, and other ABC campgrounds across USA have been having large meetings to discern how to best host camp in 2020. Region will decide in May if summer camp is an option for us.
- FBC Fremont has agreed to host the Region Expo in 2021 because we could not gather in person this year.
- 2020 Hornberger Volunteer of the Year awarded to Keith and Brenda Baker of Miracle Hills Community Baptist Church for all the work they do for Camp and the preschool at Miracle Hills.
- We are grateful to the pastors and churches using their creativity to meet the demands put upon them by the COVID crisis.

Closing—Rev. Dr. Steve Wisthoff

Grateful for everyone coming. I have asked Greg Mamula to close in prayer.

--Prayer--

Meeting called to conclusion at 10:57am

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Greg Mamula, Associate Executive Minister ABC NE

Zoom chat box manuscript

10:03:09 From Pracht : Signing in ... Dale and Alice Pracht rpresenting FBC Norfolk
10:03:25 From Sean Dougherty : I agree
10:03:38 From Sean Dougherty : Sean Dougherty, FBC Kearney
10:03:40 From Stephen : Steve Wisthoff
10:03:40 From brian : Brian Jenkins here
10:03:40 From Nathan King : Nathan King, FBC Tekamah
10:03:42 From Caleb Lind : Caleb Lind - FBC Norfolk
10:03:42 From Zau Sam : Zau Sam, First Kachin Baptist Church of America, Omaha
10:03:43 From LaVonna : LaVonna Cline

10:03:43 From Mark Harvey : Mark Harvey, FBC Hastings
10:03:44 From Clint Walker : Clint Walker FBC North Platte
10:03:47 From san lat : San Lat - Omaha Kachin Baptist Church
10:03:54 From Shirley Horstman : Shirley Horstman, Second Baptist Church
10:03:58 From brian : Brian Jenkins, FBC Oxford
10:04:00 From nola : Nola Crooks, FBC Fremont
10:04:04 From Brad Pope : Brad Pope - Chair ABMen Second Baptist
10:04:08 From Bob Fairchild : Bob Fairchild, FBC Lincoln
10:04:12 From Sandy : Sandy Goodwater Ansley Baptist
10:04:13 From Bob : Bob & Margene Phares
10:04:18 From Bev : Bev Pacas MMCCC
10:04:24 From Karen : Dallas Denton and Gale Carel, from Beatrice are on
10:04:32 From Caleb Cornelius : Caleb Cornelius MMCCC
10:04:32 From Orin and Becky : Orin and Becky Clinger Kearney
10:04:39 From Gary Belk : Gary Belk FBC Alliance
10:04:39 From Traci Gilmer : Traci Gilmer Sunset Hills
10:04:45 From Joy Martinez-Marshall : Joy Martinez-Marshall, FBC Lincoln
10:05:23 From Hornberger : Ron and Beryl Hornberger
10:05:28 From richard : Richard crooks fbc fremont
10:05:50 From Randy MEES : Lorlea MEES fbc Fairbury nebraska
10:06:07 From ABC NE Greg Mamula : Greg Mamula ABC NE
10:06:20 From ABC NE Robin : Robin Stoops ABCNE
10:14:07 From Jacksonville KBC : Rev. Tu Lum Lamung, Pastor of Jacksonville
Kachin Baptist Church, FL
10:17:57 From Sean Dougherty : FBC Kearney received it.
10:18:20 From Clint Walker : FBC has applied in phase 2. Yet to be approved
10:18:41 From Clint Walker : FBC NORTH PLATTE applied in phase 2. Yet to be
approved
10:21:30 From Pracht : CAMP --- YEAH!!!!
10:23:16 From Clint Walker : We will be sharing as we gather again, which appears
to be possible next week
10:23:33 From Pracht : Pastor Caleb --- can we put the camp videos on our service
tomorrow?
10:24:06 From richard : we were going to show the camp video tomorrow, but
since we can come back together soon, we may wait until that week....
10:25:49 From ABC NE Robin : yes
10:30:57 From Mike Kidder : Thank you Bev and everyone at Camp! God's rich
Blessings
10:31:18 From Pracht : HERE IS OUR R O U N D OF "YEAH" FOR CAMP
10:33:30 From Pracht : Looking forward to JULY
10:34:03 From Stephen : Maybe even just tithing on your stimulus check -- and send
it to camp.
10:37:03 From ABC NE Greg Mamula : ABW Offerings can be sent
4028 J St, Lincoln, NE
10:41:44 From Clint Walker : Yes
10:41:46 From Mike Kidder : Vote Yes to slate
10:41:46 From Sean Dougherty : Yes
10:41:48 From Nathan King : Yes
10:41:49 From Zau Sam : Yes
10:41:49 From Caleb Lind : Caleb Lind - YES

ABC NE ZOOM MEETING
MAY 16, 2020

Attendants: Robin Stoops, Orrin Clinger, Bev Pacas, Greg Mamula, Clint Walker, Paul Marine, Caleb Lind, LaVonna Cline, Bob Fairchild, Caleb Cornelius, Nola Crooks, Traci Gilmer, Zausam Lahtaw, Craig Erickson, Cassandra McDonald

Lavonna Cline opened the meeting with an introduction to the meeting.

Orrin Clinger opened the meeting with a prayer.

Bev Pacas shared the extent to which she and Caleb Cornelius have reviewed the advice of many experts and participated in numerous webinars regarding the Coronavirus. At this time she and Caleb Cornelius are leaning toward not having the traditional physical camp. Believes that a family camp might be possible in July. Relayed the difficulties of keeping campers of all ages in groups of less than 10 in the camping week.

Caleb Cornelius shared that the primary question is "What would the summer camp experience be like?" If we had camp this year, the experience would not be anything like the camp that campers are expecting and used to. No cabin intermingling, not seeing friends, staggered meals, chapel would have to be separated - this type of camp would be extremely difficult to maintain and detract from the camp experience. If we were to offer camp - it would have to be shorter season and moving the June sessions in July and fewer sessions. The camp would still have to adhere to CDC guidelines. Recently conferenced with other ABC Camps - all but 3 camps have cancelled their summer camping sessions. Registration numbers are lower already this year; Moses Merrill currently has 55 registrations for camp this year - 30 were received before the COVID virus was an issue in March - but traditionally MM has over 200 applications at this point in the season. Central question is; "Are we going to be able to offer a quality camp - and is that something we should do?"

Robin Stoops shared that Greg, Bev and Caleb all want to do camp and that camp is one of the greatest things we do in Nebraska from an evangelistic standpoint. The cost for not doing camp will be estimated around \$50,000.00. But he has also been part of the same conversations that Bev and Caleb have been a part of. Relayed that Camp Judson in South Dakota is the only ABC camp still scheduled for this summer, with about half the numbers that they normally have. Concerned that Nebraska has not actually peaked yet in the COVID. Robin will support whatever decision is chosen. Robin relayed that he is concerned about the health and safety of the staff, the counselors, and the volunteers as much as the campers.

Craig Erickson referred to the CDC Guidelines "what does significant mitigation" mean? Will the camp limit the campers and staff to just the local area? If the answer to any of these is no, then do not open.

Paul Marine relayed that Sunset Hills will be restarting their services this Sunday and that parishioners are asked to call ahead to fill a "spot" they only have 28. Cancelled VBS for June due to social distancing concerns.

Caleb Lind stated that as Norfolk moves to returning to worship their question is; "When people come to worship are they going to be more frustrated than being fed?" Relayed that keeping kids apart would be a full time job for the camp and staff - experience would be more frustrating than a positive experience - leaning toward the same decision as Bev and Caleb

Traci Gilmer agreed with Caleb Lind, keeping the youth separated would be a huge burden and would require the staff to constantly discipline or nag the kids and she questions if this

experience going to be the best for our youth? Emotionally we know we want to have camp but intellectually we know it is probably best not to have camp - it wouldn't be a good experience for anyone

Clint Walker He realizes that we are definitely losing \$50,000 if we don't have camp, but what would our loss be if we scheduled camp, staffed and supplied it and attendance was low, wouldn't that just increase our losses.

Robin Stoops replied that in terms of losses, the ABC of Nebraska has the the PPE loan that will cover the salary with these losses but we have not had any funds come into camp in 2020. The good news is that we have endowment funds and we can take a hard look at all of those sources. "We serve a great God and it is easy to focus on bottom line, but we've also gotten this far by faith and I am perfectly fine for God to provide in ways he hasn't even thought of. God will provide for us in the future and we have people who are committed tot he camp." Currently we have no debt on the camp and there is no fear that we will lose the camp.

Paul Marine - I have directed 24-25 camps at MM through the years and I would not want to lead a camp under these restrictions , especially a drama or music camp.

Cassie McDonald agreed with Paul Marine, It is not even feasible to do a drama and music camp with teaching the choreography and also keep people six feet apart.

Traci Gilmer - I have talked to our youth ministry leadership at Sunset Hills Baptist Church and Traci has requested that the budgeted money that would have been paid for the half tuitions to forward that money to camp. Traci is curious as to whether other churches would be willing to do that.

Paul Marine and Cassie McDonald agreed that their church would probably be willing to follow suit. -

Robin Stoops stated that the region has close to 70 churches and if every church would pay for 5 campers that would cover the expenses for the summer.

Bev Pacas said that they have seen donations this year, Moses Merrill sent out a letter in the spring, and although they have not seen any large donations, they have seen many small donations and feel like they will get through this

Orin Clinger - Returning back to the CDC guidelines and the recommendation for "significant mitigation," the only thing stronger would be stay at home. He also serves on the board for Boy Scout camping and that board had made the decision to close their summer camps two or three weeks ago. He also noted that the ABWM conference was one of the first conferences to be cancelled. It just would be very difficult to keep diners six feet apart, concerned for the staff at camp and feels the best thing this year would be to not have camp

Nola Crooks our expectation from my employer that we will be working from home through the next quarter.

Greg Mamula indicated that his wife's employer has agreed that their employees have been given work from home instructions through August.

Clint Walker When I look at the statistics, there are a number of locations close to camp where there have been an explosion in the number of cases of virus.

Bev Pacas relayed that Schuyler has been a hotspot and that she and Caleb Cornelius have avoided the grocery store in that city due to the number of cases.

Robin Stoops We can't guarantee that children on the way to camp won't stop in Schuyler or in Grand Island at a gas station.

Orin Clinger: It very well could be the person who brings a camper to Moses Merrill as you are already putting people into a vehicle to come to camp.

Cassie McDonald: I feel family camp would be easier to manage, but just thinking about my own children at camp, I know they want to see their friends, but even at a family camp it would be difficult to keep her own kids away from their friends, especially at their young age.

Bev Pacas: I feel bad, kids need camp and I want kids to be here but I also need to know that it is safe to be here.

Cassie McDonald: We also don't know who the campers are living with in their own homes, the possibility exists they could take the virus home to grandparents and other family members.

LaVonna Cline: "We serve an awesome God and our God doesn't tell us to only share the good news when it is safe; are we able to minister to our youth in only one way?" I feel that we need to be considerate of everyone and follow the CDC guidelines but do we only follow what the secular world says and is that really following the will of our Lord?

Caleb Cornelius - The times are really different and Bev and I have been talking about ways to minister to the youth even if we do cancel and we want to be very careful about the language we use to cancel camp. We want to try our best to offer some kind of programming, family camp online and use camp as a ministry, it is a time that families are stuck inside and we need to seek a way that they can get away to camp. Our family camp as we have had it in the past is probably not possible but Bev and I have been discussing creating a camp for those families that have been cooped up and really need camp. Could be opportunities to get to camp for a quiet weekend when families stay in a small family group, we could offer activities that would minister to those families, and the experience will be different. We are also considering focusing on online activities, such as bringing in the pastors that have already committed to a program and having them do an online devotional and finding a way to connect to the campers. There is a special connection that is created when campers come to camp and looking for a way to create that as an online presence. We don't want to sit on our hands, we are looking for ways to meet the needs of our churches and families and while this potentially going to be a slower year but it may be a year to get ready for a new era at camp. If we don't have camp this summer then we need to make sure that 2021 is the best season of camping ever.

Bev Pacas: We're just ready to go, ready for a decision so we can with a decision so we can hit the ground going, we want to go and we will be a presence, whether they are physically at camp or not. We will be very very visual this summer.

Orin Clinger: What about the RV's and our facilities? What do you see happening if we have no summer camps?

Bev Pacas: We have a lot of people in Schuyler that think we are a public camp and will show up. We are keeping the gate closed. Our regular RV people are starting to come back and our gate is still closed, but we set up a designated time to arrive and leave. Those RV's must be -

totally self contained. Once we are past Memorial Day I am willing to allow some regular people who have camped here before although I don't want to spend the entire weekend opening and closing the gate. I would like to come up with some kind of program where church families could come out with no organized activities, bringing their own lunch and activities. We will make work to make our camp accessible to the families and churches.

Orin Clinger: What about volunteers like myself, when will I know when you would like someone like me to come? How will we use volunteers?

Bev Pacas: It is very possible that we will use volunteers this year. We have lots of projects that are very manual, splitting wood, etc. that would allow volunteers to maintain distance. In June we will evaluate our camp needs and send information to the churches regarding volunteer opportunities. I believe that small groups that feel safe coming together could come and complete projects at camp. I have a list of projects that need to be done and planning for that will begin shortly.

Orin Clinger: Is it possible to send something out to the churches today? I showed the camp promo just a week ago.

Robin: In the next week we will announce our decision around camping, we would ask that you would wait until we can formulate our announcement.

Clint Walker: Then we should wait until next week to announce this?

Robin Stoops: It is not necessarily a secret, but we don't want people to get on social media and announce camp is closed. We want to make sure that we announce camp closure in way that conveys the goals that Bev Pacas and Caleb Cornelius are developing for camp.

LaVonna Cline: We want a well thought out announcement. Do we have a motion from the floor?

Craig Erickson - I move that the camps be closed for the summer.

LaVonna Cline: I think we need an amendment, around the idea that we will not offer traditional camping experiences for the summer

Greg Mamula: I think the term is resident camp.

Lavonna Cline: I thinks we want to give the staff the latitude to develop experiences that reflect their goals.

Lavonna Cline: Amended Motion: We will not offer a traditional resident camp for the summer of 2020.

Paul Marine; seconded the motion

LaVonna Cline: Motion is approved by the majority. (9 yes votes)

LaVonna Cline: Thank you to everyone, this has been a good discussion.

Robin Stoops: In terms of our next meeting date, we have the 21st and 22nd of August and we will wait and see if we can meet together, perhaps at Moses Merrill.

Lavonna Cline: Please check your calendars for the August 21 and 22nd date. Is there any more discussion? Do we feel we have given the camp staff all the direction they need?

Robin Stoops: We have a meeting with camp staff this week and will begin the process of putting things together to work on our alternative plans for the summer.

Nola Crooks: What about a campaign or information about donating to camp?

Robin Stoops: We will work on that in our meeting this week and we will send out information regarding contributing to Moses Merrill.

Traci Gilmer: Closed the meeting in prayer

**American Baptist Churches of Nebraska
Leadership Team Meeting
Saturday, August 22, 2020
Online Zoom Meeting Due to COVID-19 Pandemic**

The American Baptist Churches of Nebraska Leadership team gathered digitally via a ZOOM Video Conference.

Meeting called to order at 9:33

Attendees: Robin Stoops, Greg Mamula, LaVonna Cline, Bev Pacas, Lorlea Mees, Caleb Cornelius, Craig Erickson, Traci Gilmer, Brian Jenkins, Brad Pope, Orin Clinger, Caleb Lind, Zausam Lahlaw, Jane Gangwish, Clint Walker,

Welcome: LaVonna Cline opened the meeting with a devotional from Psalm 56:3.

Review of Minutes: Correction of minutes from May 16, 2020 meeting: Cassandra McDonald name should be Cassandra Nelson Craig Erickson moved to accept the minutes as corrected. Brad Pope seconded

Finance: Robin Stoops filled in with the finance report, due to the late arrival of Bob Fairchild. Currently the region is reporting a positive budget balance of \$ 12, 858.43 due to the PPP Grant and fewer expenses for travel due to the COVID pandemic.

Moses Merrill is currently reporting a \$ 23,032.31 negative budget balance. The balance could potentially be much worse without the 2300 club, individuals/churches that have provided extra gifts and churches that have sent in registration funds. Camp expenses are much less than normal and generally the expectation would be a negative \$40,000-50,000 budget balance.

Our foundation funds, at the end of July were \$ 1,088,451.00. In 2019, the region had to borrow much more from reserves that is generally necessary. However, this year we believe we will only be pulling 2.5%. God has truly blessed us and we are praying that it will continue. Bob Fairchild arrived into the ZOOM Meeting during the report and advised Robin Stoops that he had nothing further to add to the report.

Moses Merrill Camp/Conference:

Caleb Cornelius began the report focusing on the Camp Connect, the alternative summer programming offered by MMCCC. Three Camp Connect sessions were offered, one week for each primary age group. The sessions provided small groups and age appropriate activities via zoom. There were good discussions and small groups with cabin leaders from previous summers included in the camp. Attendance was 30 children and it was good to connect with the campers with feedback indicating that it turned out well. Although it was a huge positive experience we are excited to offer camp in person the next summer.

We are already in the planning stages for camp for 2021 and we need to make sure that 2021 is the best we can offer with programming that campers are excited to participate. One of the differences for next year is that we are going to promote and open registration September 18, 2020. This is done with the expectation that campers will know what to expect and that families will lock into camp earlier enabling them to plan the upcoming summer. Promotion will include flyers and email marketing with the early registration date. As part of early planning we are also approaching individuals to act as camp pastors and looking at staffing. Since we don't completely know what to expect in 2021 we are focusing on what we can do to make it a great camp, not necessarily focusing on the COVID aspect of 2021 camp. We are moving along in normal planning with back up plans.

We are also considering a day camp for next summer, attracting new parents and families who are unsure about sending children to overnight camp with COVID. This would allow parents to try something local and would be an asset for local families as well as a great opportunity to reach out to the local community, provide an evangelistic tool and introduce new campers to our camping community. The perfect week for this would be the week we use for MAD Camp, the last week of June due to smaller numbers of campers and cabin leaders with free time.

The dates for camping are generally the same as they would have been in 2020, the same weeks they would have been this summer.

Three years ago the board proposed a schedule for increasing camp fees, and continuing with that schedule, looking at our budget, our camp fees need to cover the cost of summer camp and so we feel it is important to raise those prices.

Bev Pacas reiterated the goal of making 2021 a great summer camp season, having missed the entire 2020 season. She also thanked the board for the wisdom and the decision to suspend summer camp. Now, that we are in the back side, it was the best decision. Thank you to the board and also for the great financial support and prayers from churches and individuals which has made this summer a little bit easier for us. Camp is squeaky clean, Denise has cleaned every corner and we have a full inventory of everything at camp. We have had some RV camping at the end of May but a lot of our fall groups have started to cancel. This fall might be a quiet time. We had a very small men's retreat last weekend and went very well. Work is complete in cabins 4 & 5 and the Fairbury Church, despite a COVID slowdown, is still working on Cabin 10. We have some designated funds slated for projects to complete in the fall. A deck for the shooting sports area as well as chain link fencing for the area. We also have enough funds for a small shed to house the archery and BB gun equipment. A stargazing deck on the hill above the pavilion that adult groups as well as summer campers would be able to use.

We are intending to enhance our memorial garden with a Memorial Bricks fundraising campaign, kicked off before the holidays. We are planning to work with Polar Engraving as they will help us create the website, and assist with orders and flyers. Polar Engraving offers 4 x 8 bricks and 8 x 8 bricks and with a minimum order of five bricks they will ship for free. We also intend to add additional rock and parking at the memorial garden. The sale of fifty bricks will

fund the garden improvements. Jane Gangwish motioned that we create a memorial brick sale for the memorial garden. Traci Gilmer seconded the motion and the motion passed.

We have a goal of adding 100 people to the 2300 team, statistics show that there is a 90% retention when donors contribute on a monthly basis. This is a perfect opportunity to get people on board to support camp and we intend to use multiple avenues to gain contributors. A calling campaign will be included with board members and region supporters trained to call out for new supporters. Jane Gangwish relayed a personal story about being personally asked to contribute when they were initially building Moses Merrill in 1974. Orin Clinger asked about the records that will be maintained regarding donors when they are called, would that be shared with the calling team? Bev Pacas advised that we are missing an entire generation that loved camp and is now part of the work force and we have failed to connect with that group. Stated her desire to reach out to those who have this emotional connection to Moses Merrill and are now in a position to become contributors. Caleb Cornelius confirmed that they would create a database and that they were basically starting from scratch in terms of the data we now have on former campers.

Lavonna Cline stated her appreciation for everything Bev Pacas and Cornelius have done and our appreciation for using the downtime to their advantage.

Professional Ministry:

Greg Mamula advised that we have new pastors in the region from other denominations who are in the process of having their ordinations recognized by the American Baptist Churches. Several pastors have gone through the process and currently Pastor Keith Brich in Albion and Pastor Ben Poole in Scottsbluff are beginning the process.

ABMen of Nebraska:

Brad Pope reported the because there was no summer conference for ABMen, the revisions to bylaws were not approved, this action has been postponed for a year. ABMen continues to support Moses Merrill in several ways. ABMen replaced the tires on the skid loader, purchased a brand new zero turn mower for approximately \$2,000.00, and is in process to purchase a new shredder for the back of one of the tractors. The expected cost for these three improvements is approximately \$4-5,000 and ABMen is starting a fund raiser to raise money for these projects. Saturday, August 15, 2020, ABMen had a board meeting at camp. Craig Erickson has been doing a lot of work at camp and one of his projects to replace the cross at the top of the hill. During the board meeting we carried a new cross to the top of the hill and it was a neat experience for Crag and the entire board.

Bev Pacas shared her appreciation to ABMen for all that they do to support camp.

ABWM of Nebraska:

Lavonna Cline relayed that ABWM had cancelled the June conference at MMCCC but that the fall conference is completely ready to go, and that the Lincoln Church has planned the entire event. Lavonna relayed that she would be discussing with Bev Pacas whether ABWM would cancel the fall conference.

Sturgis Ministry:

Lavonna Cline reported on the Sturgis Ministry as she just returned from the event. The Sturgis Ministry had 25 volunteers, with over half of them as first time volunteers, and they were all great workers. Calls to the Sturgis Center were very different this year with more transporting of disabled bikes resulting in 500-600 miles on the tow vehicle. Lavonna relayed an appreciation for the prayer support from our area.

ABC/USA General Board:

Robin Stoops reported the in the stead for Mark Harvey. Jeff Woods continues as interim for ABCUSA and he has heard no reports that a search committee is active.

Executive Minister's Report

Robin Stoops advised that they haven't continued the ZOOM calls with pastors because pastors are very busy right now and they don't have a sense that pastors need the calls. The PPP grant paperwork has been filed to turn the loan into a grant and not expecting any issues with it becoming a grant

Most churches have returned to having services with only a few waiting to resume their services. Most churches outside of Omaha and Lincoln are meeting and the decision to resume services is contextual to each community and churches are responding in their own way.

The church in Gibbon is the only church in the region actively seeking a pastor at this time.

FBC in Ainsley is exploring leaving the denomination and region and the region office is assisting members as they process this decision.

Most churches outside of Omaha and Lincoln have resumed meeting. The reasons for each church that is not currently meeting is contextual to the community and each church needs to respond in their own way.

Robin Stoops and Greg Mamula have come to realize the degree to which many church members have no knowledge of the American Baptist Church, it's history, background and policies. They have launched into a project to create materials to help churches educate their members. They are developing video and printed materials for this venture that can be shared and used by churches in the region.

The October Pastor conference is still scheduled for October at Moses Merrill. Surveys of pastors indicate that they do want to come to camp for this conference and social distancing will be maintained with private rooms for each attendee. The original speaker from Washington state is not available so the region is looking at alternatives.

There is a current aim to reformat the region update newsletter email. Our statistics provided by Mail Chimp show us that the newsletter is not being opened so we are changing the format and the process by which it is sent out.

There are some discussions regarding the Mission Summit for 2021 and whether the location will be changed, updated information will be provided when it is made available.

There is an updated encouragement for churches to assist them with Mission Giving through explaining the process to send in funds. This updated information will be sent out to all churches.

New Beginnings continues with New Start that is working with churches to help them do a restart.

Nominations for next year's leadership team can be concluded quickly if everyone that is currently on the team would be willing to serve one more term. Leadership team members who fall in this category should contact Robin Stoops to discuss continuing your term.

Robin Stoops has a list of missionaries that are willing and able to do virtual meetings with churches.

Robin Stoops concluded with the message that it has been amazing coming through this pandemic and seeing all the ways that God has provided and blessed us, for the region, the men and the women. It has been pretty amazing to see it happening.

Other Business:

Lavonna Cline asked if there was any other business to be brought forward to the board. No responses were given. No other business brought forward

Brian Jenkins closed the meeting with prayer.

**American Baptist Churches of Nebraska
Leadership Team Meeting
Saturday, November 7, 2020
Online Zoom Meeting Due to COVID-19 Pandemic**

The American Baptist Churches of Nebraska Leadership team gathered digitally via a ZOOM Video Conference.

Meeting called to order at 8:08

Attendees: Robin Stoops, LaVonna Cline, Bev Pacas, Lorlea Mees, Caleb Cornelius, Craig Erickson, Traci Gilmer, Brian Jenkins, Brad Pope, Orin Clinger, Caleb Lind, Zausam Lahlaw, Jane Gangwish, Robert Fairchild

Welcome: LaVonna Cline opened the meeting with a devotional encouraging us to think of 2020 as a year of opportunity.

Review of Minutes: Robert Fairchild moved to accept the minutes. Craig Erickson seconded.

Finance: Robin Stoops filled in with the finance report, due to the late arrival of Bob Fairchild. Currently the region is reporting a positive budget balance of \$ 15,147.47 due to the PPP Grant and fewer expenses for travel due to the COVID pandemic.

Moses Merrill is currently reporting a \$ 16,790.96 negative budget balance. The balance could potentially be much worse without the 2300 club, individuals/churches providing extra gifts and churches that have sent in registration funds. Camp expenses are much less than normal and generally the expectation would be a negative \$40,000-50,000 budget balance at this time in the year.

Our foundation funds, at the end of July were \$ 1,088,451.00. Our standard draw from the foundation funds is 5%, however in 2019, the region had to borrow a greater amount. This year the expectation is that we will only draw 2.5%. God has truly blessed us and we are praying that it will continue. Bob Fairchild arrived into the ZOOM Meeting during the report and advised Robin Stoops that he had nothing further to add to the report. Robin Stoops feels very positive in regards to the region financial position at this point.

Our PPP loan/grant was paid off in full by the SBA on the 1st of October.

Jane Gangwish referenced the CARES act and some information from some farmers in her areas that there was additional relief available from the CARES act. Robin advised that he would discuss this with the banker that has been assisting with the CARES act/PPP loan for the region but that he was currently unaware of any additional relief outside of the grant that we received. Robin Stoops advised the board that while he would be open to any available grants but not any loans.

Robin also advised that several windows had to be replaced at the region office, some due to wear and one due to breakage.

Robin presented the 2021 proposed budget the region advised that insurance premiums had decreased, they were holding all expenses to 2020 levels and freezing any new spending.

Nola Crooks advised that while she appreciated that the region staff was willing to forego any salary increases due to the current pandemic it was also unreasonable not to expect that region staff should receive, at minimum, a cost of living adjustment.

There was discussion among the board and quickly determined that the cost of living expense for 2021 was currently set at 1.5%.

Craig Erickson motioned that we have a cost of living increase for camp and region for all staff at 2% Traci Gilmer seconded motion passed unanimously

The budget will be amended for those cost of living increases and Brad Pope approved the 2021 budget as amended, Jane Gangwish seconded motion. Motion passed.

Robin Stoops mentioned that the region could potentially be looking for a new representative for the Board of General Ministries. Jeff Woods is currently the acting General Secretary for ABC-USA and there is no current search committee in place.

Moses Merrill Camp/Conference:

Caleb Cornelius reported that for summer camp 2021, the camping staff was already ahead of schedule, in terms of planning and opening up registrations. The camp has received a few registrations already and is running a promotion for Christmas. Any campers registering in the month of November receive an exclusive beanie and hat in time for Christmas. Many projects have been completed, the archery and gun range have been completely redone and updated, adding a shooting pavilion for the BB Guns, more fencing and researching the purchase of new equipment. Crafts have been moved to a new building. This was all possible because summer camp 2020 was not held and confirmed goal of making Summer Camp 2021, the best ever.

Bev Pacas reported that the calling campaign to add 100 new members to the 2300 team is underway. In the previous six weeks 11 new members have been added to the 2300 team. The 2300 team is critical for year round sustainability for Moses Merrill.

Additional upgrades to camp include the planning of a stargazing deck and a time line to build it and an upgrade to the zip line has been completed.

Despite the pandemic, the cabin remodel is moving along. Cabins 5 and 6 are done and Cabin 10 is halfway completed. Cabin 10 will be an extension of the lodge with twin beds in it. Fairbury church has not been able to come up to work on it but the Norfolk church men's group

was able to come and sheetrock the cabin. Camp may need to start using staff to complete the cabin remodel. Bev continues to be grateful to everyone who continues to support camp, including the churches who paid for summer campers who were unable to come to camp in summer 2020 and the increased donations across the board.

Nebraska ABMen continue to support camp. Recently the camp had two tractors break at the same time and was an extraordinary expense. ABMen have almost completely raised the funds for another zero turn mower and the ABMEN have funds for a bushhog and log splitter

Professional Ministry:

Robin Stoops advised that we have several pastors who are new to the region seeking recognition by the denomination.

ABMen of Nebraska:

Brad Pope, ABMEN have not met in person, since the last region meeting but over email they have managed to meet and have managed to raise a considerable amount of money ABMen have purchased an almost new zero turn mower, to replace the older one that was no longer working. Craig has a grasp on the true needs of the camp and can report back when equipment is no longer functioning and has assisted in raising nearly \$5000 in the last few months,

ABMEN have intention of a summer conference in 2021 but will see how it goes

ABWM of Nebraska:

LaVonna Cline reported that ABWM of Nebraska held the fall retreat at Moses Merrill the weekend of October 23-25, 2020, despite weather and the pandemic. FBC Lincoln did a fantastic job of creating a nice retreat with the theme of reclaiming prayer, On recommendation of the ABWM board and the resignation of the ABWM Nebraska White Cross Chairman, it was voted to restructure their board and eliminate the position of a White Cross Chairperson. As White Cross for both International Ministries and ABHMS is structured through the organizations themselves and not through National ABWM it no longer makes sense for ABWM Nebraska to act as facilitator for this program. Churches are encouraged to go directly the International Ministries Website and ABHMS to participate in White Cross.

This restructuring provides a new opportunity for ABWM Nebraska to focus on a state ministry project. Over the course of the next twelve months, ABWM Nebraska will gather 100 sewing kits and raise \$3,000.00 for the Immigrant Sewing Program and Bethel Neighborhood Center in Kansas City, Kansas. There currently is promotional materials available to churches for the project. LaVonna is excited about this new project and feels it is a great opportunity for the women of ABWM Nebraska.

ABC/USA General Board:

Robin Stoops reiterated his previous information regarding Jeff Woods and advised he had no further information at this time.

Executive Minister's Report

Robin Stoops advised that they moved the insurance from Brotherhood to Church Mutual providing approximately \$15,000.00 in savings to the region over the course of the next year. National ABC-USA has a coordinating program with Church Mutual that provides additional benefits such as HR Now, a program that allows the region to create packages for churches. In addition the representative for Church Mutual is based in Omaha and has been very high contact and helpful.

Three years ago the region began Churchhelp.net, offering services to churches that are not connected to any denomination. The region has earned approx.. \$9,000.00 this year and we have been working with three different churches, (in Wichita, Kansas and St. Joseph Missouri) and a non-profit agency (in Norfolk, Nebraska) assisting them with searching for directors and pastors. We encourage those who are not in a denomination to consider the ABC. This work has not impacted our work for the region in any way.

We are having regular ZOOM meetings with the National staff and we hosted a Pastor's retreat in October. We hired no speakers for the pastor's retreat, practiced social distancing, wore masks and everyone was in a private room.

FBC in Ainsley voted to stay ABC, the pastor has resigned, and they are in the process of recovering from the stress and looking forward to what is next.

The pastor in the church at FBC Hastings has retired and the building has some serious structural issues which is impacting their financial ability to hire a new pastor.

Gibbon Baptist Church potentially could have a new pastor soon, they are working through candidating with COVID impacting that process.

Most churches outside of Omaha and Lincoln are meeting. Sunset Hills and Miracle Hills are not meeting. FBC Lincoln is virtual at this time. It appears that COVID will continue to impact churches for quite a while and we need to come together as community in the midst of the pandemic.

Camp staff have been working diligently and we are excited about camp and how our churches have stood with us in the mess

Greg Mamula has been doing some writing and has published in ABHMS and Word in Way,

Jeff Woods has sent out a survey that will be forwarded to churches in the region via email.

The newsletter/email has been changed to a general email to all subscribers twice a month and then an additional email just to pastors one a month.

The board has been provided a slate of proposed new officers/leadership team, this will be voted on at the spring business meeting. Craig Erickson motioned to accept the slate presented to the board. Bob Fairchild seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Other Business:

February 6, 2021 was set as the next meeting and then the following meeting would be at the EXPO, the weekend of April 30-May 1st at FBC Fremont, in Fremont, Nebraska.

Lavonna Cline asked if there was any other business to be brought forward to the board. No responses were given. No other business brought forward

Jane Gangwish closed the meeting with prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nola Crooks". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Nola Crooks