

American Baptist Churches of Nebraska
Saturday May 4, 2024
Region Meeting
Gibbon Baptist Church, Gibbon, Nebraska

Members attending: Orin Clinger, Nola Crooks, Craig Erickson, Traci Gilmer, Susan Howell, Scott Jones, Greg Mamula, Joy Martinez-Marshall, Bev Pacas, Brad Pope, Jamie Yendra, Steve Wisthoff

Via zoom: Aaron Sprock

American Baptist Foundation: Paul Weers

Craig Erickson called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Stephen Wisthoff opened the meeting with a devotional and prayer.

Craig Erickson welcomed the board to the region meeting and led the attendees team in introductions of each member.

Craig Erickson requested any additions or corrections to the minutes. Joy Martinez-Marshall made a correction to the minutes from January, the church she is working with is a "Karenni" church, not a Karen church. Orin Clinger moved to accept the minutes, as corrected. Traci Gilmer seconded. Motion Passed.

Paul Weers from the American Baptist Foundation presented regarding the foundation and the ways in which it can be utilized for giving and stewardship for our churches and regions. The foundation also assists churches and regions creating a foundation and endowment. Greg Mamula shared that we hope that the region can create an atmosphere of giving and allow the region to share in the Strengthening Your Financial Future (SYFF) program to a greater degree.

Moses Merrill Camp & Conference: Bev Pacas reported that 24 days from today the summer staff arrives at camp. All necessary staff have been hired with the exception of a health aide. Registrations are at the same pace as last year at this time and there are lots of new children registering for the first time this year. As an example she shared that they have registrations for the first time in ten years from youth from FBC Albion. Bev Pacas credits those registrations to a presentation regarding Weaver Hall that was given by Jill Blaylock. The rain has made preparing for summer camp difficult, the pool has been painted

and there are new pumps. The Zipline has been improved with an add on to the deck. Inspector is coming on May 28, 2024 to inspect and train leaders.

A new well has been dug, down to 350 feet, and should be connected before summer camp begins. Waiting for the state to approve the system. Bev Pacas indicated that she was very excited to have this issue resolved.

Cabin remodel update: The remodel on Cabin 9 is wrapping up and leave only cabin one left. All materials are on hand and in the fall we will begin the remodel.

Weaver Hall: Board member presentations for Weave Hall have been a huge help for fundraising. Currently \$400,000.00 has been raised towards the \$500,000.00 goal. Bev has spoken to a contractor and construction is scheduled for November. The contractor is considering putting in a PVC pipe as a temporary fix for summer and fall.

A team will be created from three individuals from the board to create an event to celebrate the completion of camp remodeling and upgrades.

Dept. of Professional Ministry – Scott Jones reported that his team is in talks with two individuals that are in the ordination process. One is Taylor Shippy from Gibbon. He has just presented his paper of faith this week and the next step is for the team to read and review the paper and then for an ordination council. Verla Dorn from FBC Beatrice, working with her on the paper and education requirements.

No pastoral misconducts at this time.

ABMEN – Brad Pope reported that they have been meeting about planning the conference in August. ABMEN has given money to various organizations that have been impacted for different disasters. \$500 to panhandle region of Texas for wildfires in February. They have also given money to Fire Dept of Brady for massive fires they have experienced. Actively looking for any area that has been impacted/churches by recent tornadoes to provide funds. Getting ready to award scholarships for seminarians for upcoming year. Contact the region office for any individuals who might be in need of a scholarship.

August 9 & 10, 2024 is the ABMen of Nebraska Retreat at Moses Merrill.

Bev Pacas mentioned that the ABMEN donated a trailer with the Fire Department in Linwood. That fire department will be sharing the materials with smaller rural fire departments.

ABWM: Susan Howell reported that she visited Scottsbluff in March for a luncheon and the churches from Bridgeport and Chadron attended. The general response she received from

the women was that they felt they had been ignored in the past and appreciated that she was there. Conference is in June at Camp Comeca and there are not any registrations from churches west of North Platte. Currently there are 20 registrations for the conference.

The Weichelman funds have been located in two banks; one in Pennsylvania and one in California. Susan Howell is working on moving the funds to Nebraska and has been updating the paperwork on the accounts. ABWM of Nebraska will be setting up new Weichelman board for the management of the fund.

The next ABWM board meeting is on May 30, 2024 in preparation for the summer women's conference. Susan 'Howell advised she is planning more church visits this summer to reintroduce ABWM of Nebraska.

ABCUSA: Orin Clinger reported next meeting is in June in Greenlake, June 12-14, 2024. During the meeting Rev. Gina Jacobs-Strain will be installed as the new General Secretary of ABCUSA.

ABCNebraska chose not to be in compliance with having an annual audit in 2017 or 2018. The ABC Nebraska board indicated that we did not need a local audit. Greg Mamula understood that only 30% of regions are in compliance with having the audit.

Engaged with Tait Weller to do a "review" that is dependent on the amount of mission giving that will put us back in compliance with ABCUSA regulations. Will cost between \$0-\$2500 each year.

Orin Clinger requested that as a member of finance committee they are requesting quarterly updates from the ABCUSA finance team.

Adjourned for a 5 minute break at 11:24 a.m.

Called back to order at 11:33 a.m.

Region Staff:

Greg Mamula shared that he was hearing a theme of "reconnection" throughout the reports that have been received this morning. There was a sense of positive accomplishment throughout all reporting.

Aaron Sprock reported his appreciation that Susan Howell had come out to the ABWM event in the west.

International Ministries is having a global mission event, the "Global Encounter" on May 21 and 22, 2024. Individuals can register or churches can register for a watch party. The event will have missionaries around the globe to share the work they are doing. There will be time for worship and sharing from different speakers. This is most likely a one-time event and in two years they will return to conference back to the United States at Greenlake.

Aaron Sprock will have a list of missionaries from IM that will be stateside and will share those individuals when they can come to Nebraska to visit churches in our state.

Aaron Sprock is working with Greg Mamula coordinating the "Faithful Citizenship" event with Region office and is also planning events for the western churches, worship and some want to come help with the tornados.

Blake Wilks not available as he is pastoring at a funeral today. He is working on creating guilds or pastor training groups. This would be a network of lay leaders who can do pulpit supply and help in their local churches. Currently he has a group of four individuals that are part of the platform at this time. Joy Martinez Marshall added that the group will increase discipleship and encourage the ministry at churches..

Joy Martinez Marshall reported that she has been traveling. Went to the Board of General Ministries meeting in March 2024. She reported that she was invited to serve on the executive committee of the Board of General Ministries. In March she traveled to San Francisco and met the General Secretary and board.

Was present at the Prairie Pastor Conference in March in Omaha and was encouraged by the fellowship. There was a large contingent of national leadership that attended the conference.

Joy preached at Livingstone Christian Church on Easter with multicultural connections and has made contacts with many of the congregations that are not geographically located in Nebraska.

Was the last minute replacement for the Nebraska Youth Retreat as replacement for the speaker who had deaths in his family.

There was a meeting two weeks prior with ABHMS to discuss the Space for Grace conference. There is a focus on intergenerational connections, as it has been determined that students and younger individuals are thirsty for a connection with older members. The future is now and we need to the work of investing in our churches and be open to different ways of ministry as the world changes

Joy served on a women in ministry panel at Truett Seminary, as a recruiting tool for people in our region. The time was spent speaking positively about our denomination and the ABC church.

Recently there was work with the ABCUSA Biennial committee in promotional work with the naming contest. In July will be speaking at the ABWM conference and also at a Central Seminary worship service via ZOOM.

Joy further reported that there are several small events to encourage and empower our Baptist distinctives and one of those distinctives is biblical authority. On August 24, 2024, at FBC Lincoln, will be hosting Rev. Dr. Dennis Tucker who recently released book on Malachi. Rev. Dr. Dennis Tucker is an Old Testament professor and will be giving a discussion in a one day conference on the message of Malachi. The registration is in discussion and will be priced between \$20-25 per person.

Greg Mamula reported that the Carpenter Fund, which is a scholarship fund for pastors for continuing education can also be used for doctors and teachers going into the mission field. The directives for the scholarship are not clearly specified and is technically available to "anybody." Looking to develop a committee to review the requests for scholarships and are looking to do fewer larger scholarships and more smaller scholarships.

The region was notified that it has been dropped by Church Mutual for its insurance coverage. Church Mutual has dropped several churches in the region as it recently lost its reinsurer and are dropping any risk profiles from coverage. The region has applied for coverage with Brotherhood Insurance and Farm Bureau and will review a third possibility as well. The need may exist to maintain two separate policies; one for camp and one for the region offices.

There are upcoming meetings with ABCUSA for the 2025 Mission Summit with more information about what we will be doing onsite.

FBC Kearney has shifted its college ministry and donations will go directly to Navigators and not through the region office.

In process of creating an event for rural churches and as an online event registration will be approximately \$20.00.

The parking lot at the region office will need a large amount of work and the quotes for the work have been quite high. Next Saturday is a "Clean Up Day" at the region office.

Greg Mamula has been visiting a lot of churches and ten year events.

Greg Mamula will be attending board meetings for ABHomes next week.

Summer Camp all of June at Moses Merrill.

Worship Conference on July 20, 2024, with Bob Myers, who has a worship degree leading the conference. Will be held at FBC Omaha.

Faithful Citizenship program is scheduled in September and it will offer a weekly ZOOM conversation with pastors and leaders for four weeks. The program is about thinking about politics and offer critical thinking skills when it comes to thinking about politics. There will be a follow up at the fall retreat.

October 14-16 2024 is the pastor retreat. There is a region event every month from July through October.

Bob Fairchild was unable to attend the meeting but Greg Mamula presented a brief report on finances. The region finances are behind expectations and the camp is currently on budget. The investment pool is up, even with a \$23,000.00 draw on the investments. There may be a need to complete three draws to meet budget. While United Mission giving is down the church giving is up.

Craig Erickson closed the meeting with a sense of positivity with the amount of work that has been done and how much we have come together.

Steve Wisthoff closed the meeting in prayer.

ABC Nebraska State Board

2024 Meeting Schedule

February 10, 2024 @ Region Office

May 4, 2024 Gibbon Baptist Church, Gibbon, Nebraska

August 3, 2024 – Second Baptist Church, Lincoln, Nebraska

October 4-5, 2024 – State Convention, Gibbon Nebraska

November 8, 2024 Moses Merrill Camp

Respectfully Submitted,

Nola Crooks

ABC Nebraska Region Secretary