

Leadership Team Meeting 3/1/25

Greg opened with words of welcome at 10:01 am

What does spring make you hopeful for?

Things to Remember:

- Bob Fairchild retires May 10th
- Steve Wisthoff retires on June 8th – his last Sunday at SBC in Lincoln, NE

Prayer

- Nola—pneumonia
- Craig's wife-Jan Erickson- has been really sick and has had respiratory challenges
- Bill Prather- medical challenges with cancer

Upcoming Dates:

- May 3, 2025-Moses Merrill Camp and Conference Center 9am-11:30am
- August 16, 2025-Gibbon Baptist Church 10am-12:30pm
- October 10-11, 2025-FBC Scottsbluff, ABC NE State Convention
- November 15, 2025-Moses Merrill Camp and Conference Center 9am-11:30am
- March 22, This is (your Story: Baptist History Conference- Second Baptist Church, Lincoln
- March 27, MLB Opening Day
- March 31-April 2 Prairie Pastors Conference
- Sunset Hills Baptist Church
- April 13, Palm Sunday
- April 13-April 20 Holy Week
- April 20, Easter
- May 3, Weaver Hall Dedication and Open House
- June 1-3, JAM Camp
- June 6-8, Women's Retreat
- June 8-13, Junior Camp
- June 15-20, Mid High Camp
- June 22-27 Senior High Camp
- June 27-29, Family Camp
- July 3-6, ABCUSA Biennial Mission Summit "Come Seek Living Water"
- August 8-9, ABMen Summer Conference

- October 10-11, ABC NE Region Convention "Love with Courage"
- October 24-26, ABW Retreat
- October 27-29, Fall Pastor Retreat
- November 14-15, Leadership Team Retreat
- November 30-December 21 Advent

Notes:

Steve shares devotional 2 Cor. 12:9- we are reminded in scripture that God is with us in our challenges

Jane, Madam President, offers greetings and thanks to those in attendance

No minutes available from November Meeting

Guest: Paul Weers, AB Foundation

- Gave an update on what's happening at ABF
 - Uniform Prudent management of institutional Funds Acts, Broader gift awareness, financial Services firms, community foundations, SYFF. www.abcofgiving.org
- ABF offers planned giving services and offers help to ABC family to expand your future
- ABF is different than others cause they increase financial support by investment group and inspiring support
- SYFF (Strengthening Your Financial Future) Program
 - Helps with vision, custom made literature/brochures, ways to honor donors
- Handle funds for churches and ABC institutions

Rev. Dr. Christine Roush, Chief Executive Officer, will be guest speaker at our ABC NE Convention in October—ABC NE working on how we would go about strengthening our financial future

All resources online and on ABC NE "Resource" Page

Greg gave upcoming dates—please see "Upcoming Dates" Subtitle

Follow up from Nov. Meeting- subcommittees

- These committees have work to do every group meet minus Personnel Committee

Finance: Bob Fairchild- finance team reviewed last years' results and looked at the purposed budget for 2025

- Region has upwards of \$25,000 deficit budget and ahead primarily because of money from Layton legacy

- Camp- first 2 months of year is hard to get a picture of what is going on but budgeting a surplus right now
 - More January and February donations this year than have ever seen
 - Churches have been generous to Region
- Budget Line 7190 had some more clarity and added specific lines (like speakers and conferences, church filings, clergy wellness- Jason Workmann, FBC Hastings, hospitality)
- Budget Line 4685 building usage had been run separately and now we are tracking those differently than just “in and out”
 - Example- Sanctuary windows repaired because they were rotted out
- Jamie said the meeting provided details and really helped
- Designated Funds that ABC NE manages besides budgeting

Bev: Camp Moses Merrill updated (following region theme of loving courageously)

- Registrations coming in and same pace as last couple years and going back to 1 month camping in June
- Church visits have begun
- LIT had 22 young people that are planning on serving at camp and it’s creating a culture of participation
- Youth Retreat next weekend- Greg will be the speaker
- Alarm system was not working and needed to be repaired \$22,000 completed and part of process was that the system must be approved by the Fire Marshal
- Well has been approved by State Department and should be connected by Spring (had signed for well in 2023)
- Cabin 1 in progress and will be done by summer
 - 8 bunks in a cabin is too many and decrease to 7- which will be 14 kids
- New investment-- \$58,000 gift to camp per memorial
- Weaver Hall- check social media and in rebuilding point
 - Demo started in November with volunteers gutting kitchen
 - Contractors started at end of January
 - New sewer lines, sheetrock, water lines
 - Resin floor throughout building
 - HVAC is in
 - Custom cabinets made because of steam table and salad bar
 - New appliances are going to be ordered in cycles so that they can be put in as construction continues
 - Weaver Hall Estimated Project Cost-- \$369,671.00 (see handout)

- Hoping to have \$100,000 left after the project—protection to but fire pit by the bell or to replace the deck with composite and to take bricks outside building and awning for the grill
- May 3 opening of Weaver Hall
 - Bev will have next capital campaign ready for the next projects for all the buildings that need to be updated because everything is 20 years old

Department of Professional Ministries: Aaron

- 1 incident does not include ABC NE pastor at current churches and person that has ordination and uses it for chaplaincy in military working with misconduct allegation
 - Provided pathway to forgiveness and restoration and set for them and looking at finances to assist that person
- Meet together and put ordination practices into 1 document along with ethics

ABMen: Brad Pope- Men's conference August 8-9 and have men do work projects with devotional time

- Purchased tires for skid loader for Camp
- Disaster relief money used to have trailers but now are focusing on providing money to rural fire departments that are helping with wildfires (\$500 to Gage County) and help with Western
- Strongly considering the one north of Broken Bow, NE grassland fire giving about \$500 each and something to assist and support the work that they are doing

ABWM: Susan Howell- final stages of planning June Conference (Be Strong and Courageous) Rev. LeThelma Yenn-Batah will be speaker

- Have by-laws and with elections
- Request for things to be virtual as well as in-person
- Fall Retreat—October 24-26 and hoping to find a church out west that will do the western side of state and then the east side to have them do same theme
- Found Wycleman Funds- some in Pennsylvania and California
 - Filling out paperwork and working towards
- Helping with ABWM Women and Girls' Day at the Biennial
 - Announcement in ABC NE newsletter and ABWM NE newsletter as well
- Plans to visit churches in the Spring

ABC USA BGM: Orin- provided the report and working on confidentiality

- Item 13 change of relationships with churches and the number of churches we have that and those that leave
- Go to ABC NE website <http://abcnebraska.com/ministry-partners> will find mission organizations and partners
- Next meeting prior to summit meetings in Omaha and signed up for that

ABC NE Region Staff: Blake

- Guild projects in Arthur, NE- training lay ministers to preach (currently has 6 members)
 - Discipleship pathway with theological emphasis/training
 - Have them preach last Sunday of the month and will use them during Sabbatical
- C3C clergy groups meeting on Zoom every 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month

Aaron

- Pulpit Swap with Pastor Charlie in Scottsbluff and working to incorporate the churches in the West
- Continuing to work on how to do corporate fellowship and region convention and try to encourage the churches to participate
- International Ministries Global Servants in Nebraska in time around mission summit
- To do a pastoral spousal support and in pre-planning process together

Joy

- America for Christ Offering 2025
- Space for Grace in 2026—Cleveland, Ohio
- Immigrant Updates/ Meeting to talk about how churches can respond
- LAC update
 - Finances
 - Working with volunteers

Mission Summit

- July 4th family picnic with carnival games, face painting, corn hole (camp has one)
- Region Exhibit Table
- Finance Team
 - Counting after worship services
 - Tracy
 - Bob (will help with driving)
 - Jamie will be a point person

- Added conversation about security at the event have to pay per hour and pay plain-clothes officers - OGS is looking into this
 - Tracy's son works for the Sheriff
 - Marlesh Mbory might be a good contact too

Greg

- Lenten Devotional Series- Rev. Taylor Shippy helped be the editor
- What Teenagers Want You To Know Webinar—Fuller Youth Institute through Northern Seminary
- American Baptist Homes of the Midwest- Greg continues to serve on that board and strengthening those relationships
- Burma Advocacy Group and working with group to assist with our folks that are affected by changes in the government
 - Providing accurate information
 - Advocating for humanitarian aid where there are refugees
 - Education- training teachers in refugee camps and diaspora areas
 - Met with Senator Pete Rickett's staff to talk about this (he is on Foreign Affairs)
 - Have audience with his Washington staff
 - Our goal is to make the stories real and heard because there are personal stories
 - Burmese and South Sudan
- 3 vehicles- 2 to be traded-in for a new one—blue book prices included in your packet
 - Black escape to Bev—old camp and Greg's car to be traded in for another vehicle Greg would drive
 - Brad makes motion for Greg to continue forward with car trade-in/ pricing of new vehicle
 - Jamie seconds motion
 - Motion carried
- Greg taking 2 weeks off in July

Jane closes meeting with prayer 12:40 pm

American Baptist Churches of Nebraska
Saturday, May 3, 2025
Region Meeting
Moses Merrill Camp & Conference Center

Members attending: Jill Blaylock, Orin Clinger, Nola Crooks, Patrick Fleeman, Jane Gangwish, Susan Howell, Doug Larsen, Laura Lyons, Greg Mamula, Joy Martinez-Marshall, Bev Pacas, Brad Pope, Jamie Yendra

Members attending by ZOOM: Hla Aung, Aaron Sprock, TN Praveen Kumar

Greg Mamula opened the meeting at 10:06 a.m. with greetings, a devotional from John 21, and prayer.

Greg Mamula discussed attendance at region board meetings and the need for a review for board members who have not attended multiple meetings.

Jane Gangwish welcomed the board to the leadership meeting and expressed appreciation for the meetings that have been held by the board members in order to pursue their leadership obligations.

The meeting minutes were approved motioned by Brad Pope and seconded by Jamie Yendra. Susan Howell noted that Wiechelman is spelled incorrectly, corrected the spelling.

Greg Mamula reviewed the upcoming dates for the remainder of 2025. Potential conflict for the November meeting, several board members noted meetings on a national level that conflict

Department of Professional Ministry:

Aaron Sprock in the continuation of the process of right standing in ordination for the individual mentioned in prior meetings.

Effort underway to condense multiple region documents into one document.

AB Men:

Brad Pope reported that they are planning ABMens conference.

Bob Myers is the conference speaker for the Men's conference, has written several books about the worship experience.

Using disaster relief money to provide stipends to volunteer fire departments in high risk fire areas of \$500.00.

Jason Workman is a licensed therapist, and has put together a one day workshop session for volunteer first responders, a date is scheduled in August 2025. ABMen are sponsoring all the attendees to attend the workshop at no charge. Jason Workman is planning second workshop for allow first responders to listen appropriately and ask question to fellow responders who are processing situations encountered in their work. ABMen are considering sponsoring the second one after seeing response to first workshop.

Jane Gangwish asked how the money is raised for disaster relief. Brad Pope shared that the disaster trailers that ABMen owned have been sold and provided the funds for disaster relief.

ABMen have a golf tournament on May 24,2025 to raise funds for scholarship. ABMen provide up to three scholarships yearly.

Greg mentioned the Nebraska relief disaster funds that could be used to supplement disaster relief projects that are in Nebraska.

American Baptist Women's Ministries:

Susan Howell reported that June conference is around the corner, recent board meeting was held to finalize activities.

Susan Howell mentioned the issues with the nominating committee finding people to be an officer. She is visiting additional churches to focus on the need for officers in ABWM.

Fall retreat – hoping to have it both East and West. “When Life Gives You Lemons” looking for a church to host in the west side of the state.

Wiechelman Fund – received a check last week from the Pennsylvania for \$103,000.00 Once we have a committee set up for the Wiechelman fund can recreate the trust. The original documents have been lost. Seeking members for the new committee that have the financial and knowledge wherewithal for the fund.

ABCUSA General Board:

Orin Clinger reported the next full meeting will be at Biennial-Mission Summit, July1-3, 2025. There are several upcoming meetings for the finance committee members, reviewing the audit, prepare for the Mission Summit meetings and the Mission Initiative Fund grant process and requests. The last meeting for 2025 will be November 13-15, 2025 in King of Prussia, PA.

Jane Gangwish dismissed the meeting at 10:53 a.m. for a short break. Meeting reconvened at 11:01 a.m.

Finance:

Greg Mamula reported for the finance committee. He reported that our finances are currently in the positive. The Laten Funds have been received for the year and will be spent throughout

the year. There have been an increase in direct region donations and an additional \$5000.00 gift was received from the Palestine church which has closed.

Joy Martinez Marshall is leaving the region but will remain on mission staff throughout Mission Summit, and will receive her salary.

The camp budget is positive and received funds from Harlan Waugh, a member of the Fremont FBC Church, who left his life insurance proceeds to camp in the amount of \$50,000.00. In addition the Palestine church left funds to the camp.

Bev Pacas indicated that there are substantial capital expenses at camp and those funds will either be used for those expenses or as seed money for another capital campaign.

Current mutual fund investments are down approximately 9% with current financial environment. The decision was made to take the first draw of 2025 early and the 2.5% was withdrawn in January. In addition, it was decided to trade in the two region vehicles for one newer vehicle, an additional \$18,000.00 was withdrawn for the expense of the new vehicle. Another draw of 2.5% will be taken in the last quarter of the year.

Weaver Hall project is below budget, leftover funds will be used to for capital repairs; the foundation and repairs to the conference center are being considered.

Jamie Yendra reported at a finance meeting last week that they are seeking to share the message by the finance committee to engage local congregations. The finance committee wwill be creating video and sending out screen slides for pre-church announcement videos.

Greg Mamula mentioned that Bob Fairchild will be at the end of his six year team at the end of the next calendar year, we will need to address the replacement for him and he would like the board to consider appointing a secondary finance chair to assist in the finance team and be prepared to cover the position after the term.

Patrick Fleeman inquired regarding the replacement of the Finance Chair and the possibility of hiring a CPA firm to cover it. Greg responded that the possibility of hiring finance to cover and the board can consider it, although we will need to always have an individual on the board.

Biennial Mission Summit:

Jamie Yendra reported that they will be putting an ask for volunteers for specific time slots. Currently there are only three children registered so far and there will be a registration to come out just for Sunday Morning and worship with the mission summit.

abcneregion@gmail.com is the region email for the volunteers.

On June 12, 2025, there will be a meeting for an orientation for local arrangement committee and volunteers.

Greg Mamula indicated that they have received a request from ABHMS for their luncheon on Sunday afternoon, looking for someone in the region to read a litany.

There are currently 600 people signed up for Biennial Mission Summit, however, it has been noted in previous years that many attendants register just prior to the event.

ABC NE Region Staff:

Blake Wilkes – Reported that he is on the cusp of a sabbatical. Has been working on the 3C3 committees and has been successful connecting pastors to the region. 3C3 will continue throughout the summer. Planning will be set up to allow the 3C3 group to meet online as well as in person.

Guild program – This will be utilized while he is on sabbatical and he will be creating a package so the program can be utilized for other churches in the future.

Joy Martinez Marshall – Joy is leaving the region for another call in Kansas and she extended her gratitude to be part of region staff the past two years.

Biennial has been her main focus of the past few months and also helped with Prairie Pastor Conference. Joy Martinez Marshall will remain on staff throughout the mission summit.

Aaron Sprock – Is planning a spousal retreat in conjunction with the region convention. Thursday and Friday through noon. Brian Marvel is the speaker and speaks on the idea of spiritual support, encouragement and value of the position. The retreat will be open to Central Region and Rocky Mountain regions.

IM: Mission partners will be here for Mission Summit, two mission partners Mercy Barnes and Mike and Becky Mann have reached out to provide their availability to local churches for visits.

Patrick Fleeman and Pastor Begley are planning for the October 2025 Region Convention in Scottsbluff.

Greg Mamula shared the information regarding the region conference in October and the current status of the planning. The board was provided a packet of information with speaker information and tentative schedule.

Region Update:

Greg provided a written report for the region update.

Greg Mamula advised that the region needs to update the Region policy and procedures as the current one dates back over a decade.

November board meeting will consist of a review of the executive minister and staff. Doug Larson is heading the committee for the review.

Audit with Tate and Weiler has been submitted. No charge due to the amount that is donated to the United Mission and we are in compliance with ABCUSA.

ABC congregations were asked to do an annual update. Several different platforms to submit the information. Currently our region has only had six submissions.

Greg requested an update to his housing allowance. Requesting approval for housing allowance increase to \$50,000.00 through the end of year. Susan Howell moved that we approve the housing allowance increase. Doug Larson seconded and motion passed unanimously.

The region needs to update the signatories for American National Bank, our current list of signatories is Greg Mamula, Sue Gammel, Beverly Pacas, Dick Peterson. Dick Peterson needs to be removed from the signatory list and Doug Larson added as signatory.

Susan Howell motioned that we update the signatories with American National Bank, Traci Gilmer seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Greg Mamula expressed his appreciation for the work of Joy Martinez Marshall and her work with the region during her tenure here.

Jane Gangwish dismissed the meeting for an on-site lunch at 11:55 am, meeting resumed at 12:35 pm.

Moses Merrill Camp and Conference Center

Jane Gangwish began by stating all the activities that Bev Pacas executes at Moses Merrill Camp and Conference Center and gave her a gift of flowers.

Bev Pacas reported is that Summer camp is less than one month, Love Courageously is the theme. Registration numbers are about the same as last year and aiming to have 200 summer campers. Summer staff is hired except the health aide, paid cabin leaders and kitchen staff are hired.

Most of the retreat groups from previous years are returning and expanding this year with new youth groups coming in July. Many of the groups hope to have these an annual event.

The Well, waiting on one last part, expecting it to be here in the first party of May. As soon as it is received the contractors will come out and connect the new well.

Cabin 1 is in progress but completion will have to wait until all other projects are completed. Basic plumbing is done and the expectation is that it will complete this summer.

Alarm system was replaced in conference center. When inspected the fire marshal requested the alarm system be extended to the chapel and the handicapped rooms have visual and sound warnings. This will have to be updated and currently waiting on parts.

HVAC has been replaced in conference center and chapel.

The swimming pool lost water this winter, the pool has been drained and the pool company came out and indicated that the water valves in the walls are crumbling. The valves will need to be replaced and it is scheduled to be repaired when time available. The cost for the repair is approximately \$9,000.00. There may be no pool for JAM camp and Bev Pacas is considering alternatives.

The March blizzard set everything back for the Weaver Hall reconstruction two weeks. Significant tree damage and camp has had two days with volunteer work crews but there are still a substantial amount of downed trees to clear. All trails are unpassable at this time due to tree damage. The camp does not have a chipper and is reviewing what to do with the large amount of downed trees.

Weaver Hall is not ready for inspection, mainly due to the hood in the kitchen that has been slow in coming. All work and inspections will need to be completed prior to JAM camp and the time line is drawing close. Currently, the remodeling is running approximately \$100,000.00 under budget and the excess will be used for additional capital projects around Weaver Hall such as replacing the deck and setting up an outdoor kitchen area for the grills.

Bev Pacas expressed her thanks for all the support, stated "We serve a big God and Weaver Hall is testament to it."

Jane Gangwish closed the meeting with prayer at 1:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nola Crooks
ABC NE Secretary

American Baptist Churches of Nebraska
Saturday, August 16, 2025
Region Meeting
Gibbon First Baptist Church, Gibbon, Nebraska

Members attending: Orin Clinger, Nola Crooks, Jane Gangwish, Scott Jones, Greg Mamula, Bev Pacas, Jamie Yendra

Members attending by ZOOM: Carlos Angulo, Jill Blaylock, Doug Larsen

Devotions: Greg Mamula opened the meeting at 10:02 a.m. with greetings, a devotional from Matthew 13.

Leadership Team: Jane Gangwish welcomed the board to Gibbon. Jane expressed her appreciation for all the work that was done at the ABC USA Biennial Mission Summit. Jamie Yendra also followed up with her appreciation for the assistance that was provided by our state.

Discussion followed among the board regarding the mission summit with both positive and negative feedback on the event.

Review of Minutes: Traci Gilmer fix Doug Larsen spelling of the name
Scott Jones moved that we approve the minutes with corrections to the last names, seconded by Jamie Yendra, motion passed.

Calendar: State convention is October 10-11, 2025, in Scottsbluff. There is a scavenger hunt and two workshops. Brian will also be a workshop presenter on Saturday. There is an opportunity for groups associated with the region to have a group meeting.

November 14-15, 2025 is the scheduled date for the fall retreat. Dr. Jeff Woods is board training/board encouragement – potential speaker/ facilitator for the meeting/retreat

Greg Mamula encouraged the board to create the 2026 Calendar for new members of the board to have.

2026 Dates

February 28, 2026- Region Office
May 2, 2026 – Norfolk, Nebraska
August 15, 2026 - Gibbon, Nebraska
October 2-3, 2026 State Convention - Fremont
November 13-14, 2026 – Fall Retreat at Moses Merrill

ABCUSA General Board: - Orin Clinger reported that at the national meetings of the ABCUSA he sat next to a pastor and was moved by his faith story.

Orin expressed concerns that he become aware of regarding AWAB and the national denomination. He expressed issues that he became aware of at the national meeting and he inquired as to how the board expected him to approach the issues.

Greg Mamula shared his belief regarding the issue and the responsibility of region leadership to support local churches. He shared that the work of the region is to affirm the priesthood of all believers and support autonomy of the local church, protecting churches to do the work that God is calling them to do. Greg expressed his hope that our region would be able to work in harmony, regardless of individual church beliefs.

Nola Crooks moved that we table the conversation regarding the issue. There was no second. Greg Mamula indicated we can pursue conversation at our November retreat if the board feels it is necessary.

Moses Merrill Camp: Bev Pacas shared there were 167 campers for the summer and felt the summer was very impactful. Senior High Camp was the most phenomenal – the message, the leaders and the campers. Keira recruited leadership from young working adults.

This summer, 13 campers received financial aid of approximately \$4,120.00. Seven churches in our region offered financial assistance to their campers. The rates for summer camp, charged to the campers, does not cover the entire cost for the camp.

Looking forward to 2026, one of the goals is to recruit at the college level and older for leaders over the summer and look for more mature leaders.

The summer 2026 summer camp schedule is set and Bev Pacas is looking for input from board members for creative ways to recruit summer campers.

A young adult retreat is scheduled at camp on November 1st and 2nd 2025.

Due to age, there has been a loss of eight members of the 2300 team, looking for new members. Encouraged any current board members who are not already a member to become a member of the 2300 club. The funds received through the 2300 club total approximately \$30,000.00 each year and covers the utilities for the camp.

Bev Pacas and Greg Mamula are working on a new capital campaign and encouraging legacy giving throughout the region.

Construction Updates: The well is in the final stages, there have been two clear tests and are just waiting a final inspection. Weaver Hall – Almost completely done and landscaping is being completed this morning. Retaining wall along the road is complete. Patio is in process.

The meeting paused for a break for lunch, at 11:40, reconvened at 12:10

Exec Min Report - Greg Mamula has visited multiple churches since our last board meeting. FBC Omaha will be candidating a pastor, Andrew Mahoney, next weekend. Has been advised from Blair FBC and Hastings FBC that they will not be searching for pastors – will work with pulpit supply and other options.

The search for a pastor for 2nd Baptist Lincoln continues as they are ready to public their profile for the pastor search. FBC Lincoln is working with options in terms of the multiple ministries that work in their space as they consider the search process.

First Karen Church in Lincoln is moving to a new space from FBC Lincoln, a cohort of the church will remain at FBC Lincoln.

Susan Gillies received the Sparrowk award on Sunday evening. The idea of a reception was suggested and Greg Mamula will follow up with the idea.

Staff transitions – Joy Martinez Marshall has moved to Kansas, Sue Gammel has announced her retirement from the office, she will leave at the end of the year. Greg Mamula provided a “working” job description for a new position. The hope for the region is to hire before the end of November. allowing the new hire some time to shadow with Sue Gammel before the end of the year.

National Leadership Council – in May of 2025 – Ryan Burge shared the data ABCUSA member ships are down 40%, individuals who identify as Christian 9%, only the Assemblies of God church is increasing membership but are also having growth pains with leadership.

Questions regarding our structure, on a national level, and what is needed and necessary versus as opposed to how we are currently structured. The expectation is the regions and staff will be merging across states in the future.

International Ministries is reaching out to the Midwest for more board members.

Greg Mamula is part of the Immigration response group with the Executive Ministers board of ABCUSA.

The most recent Palmer Grant cycle just closed and the funds were disbursed on Thursday. Palmer Foundation will make the announcement regarding who won the grants. There were 388 applications for the technology groups, totaling more than \$4 Million dollars.

Burma Advocacy group hired an advocacy group to assist with lobbying in Washington D.C., the group continues to work with Roy Medley

Greg Mamula has been asked to serve on the AB Historical Society Board and will begin in 2026. He is still service on the American Baptist Nursing Care board. He attended a planning meeting for the Mountain Prairie Youth conference in Colorado last week.

Finance: Bob Fairchild reported on the current financials of the region and Moses Merrill Camp and Conference. The board reviewed the midyear totals for the different line items and there were no outstanding categories that caused concern.

Bob Fairchild and Greg Mamula shared a line item inventory of expenses for each category as well as contributions.

Greg Mamula shared the information regarding the region and giving to United Mission.

Our mission giving has been audited by request by ABCUSA and the region is in compliance.

Greg Mamula shared a prospective document regarding the open positions on the board and the individuals who will be departing the board as well as those who have agreed to serve in the future.

Greg Mamula shared that the region has contracted with Mail Chimp to create an SMS notification system and will be working to set that up.

Department of Professional Ministry:

Scott Jones advised there are no new ordinations or new pastors currently in the process. One clergy misconduct case was resolved

AB Men: There was no report for ABMen

American Baptist Women's Ministries:

Nola Crooks reported that the fall conference and the spring conferences are being "redesigned" and will begin on Friday evening and end on Saturday after dinner.

There is a fall retreat happening October 24, 2025 and a Spring conference June 5&6, looking into new locations and formats. Conferences are coming up – changing them to just a Friday night – 24 hours conference, with a potential "preconference" on Friday afternoon.

The project for ABWM this year is the Kodiak Baptist Mission Bicycle Project and the goal is \$2500.00, currently we have reached 35% of our goal.

Weichelman Fund – Susan Howell is coordinating the committee to create the new trust and facilitate the trust/fund.

Greg Mamula closed the meeting at 1:10 p.m. with prayer and benediction.

Respectfully submitted,

Nola Crooks

Nola Crooks
ABCNE Secretary

American Baptist Churches of Nebraska

Saturday, November 15, 2025

Leadership Team

Moses Merrill Camp and Conference Center

Members attending: Jane Gangwish, Bev Pacas, Traci Gilmer, Bob Fairchild, Dale Pracht, Pawsbeh Moo, Bill Prather, Jill Blaylock, Scott Jones, Patrick Fleeman, Doug Larsen, Blake Wilkes, Brad Pope, Nola Crooks

Members attending by ZOOM: Jamie Yendra, Carlos Angulo, Marlesh Mbory, Aaron Sprock

Devotions: Dale Pracht opened the meeting at 9:30 a.m. with a devotional from Micah 6:8.

Leadership Team: Jane Gangwish welcomed the board to Camp Moses Merrill.

Review of Minutes: Nola Crooks moved that we approve the minutes, seconded by Traci Gilmer, motion passed.

Moses Merrill Camp: Bev Pacas informed everybody about the completion of the new well project, and the camp expects to be able to pay it all off, thanks to the generosity of multiple donors. They anticipate to be slightly under budget for the Weaver Hall project and intend to apply that leftover money to other parts of the camp. Cabin 1 is the last of 10 to undergo remodeling, and it should be done by end of December, beginning of January. Greg Mamula and Bev Pacas thanked everyone who donated to Camp's upkeep.

Dept. of Profession Ministry: Aaron Sprock informed the board that two new team members have been added to the department: Pawsbeh Moo and Reverend Prather. He has set a goal to condense and clarify the steps of ordination.

ABMen NE: Brad Pope announced they are still looking for additional members to their leadership team. The ABMen Pastor of the Year award was presented by Brad to Greg Mamula in Scottsbluff in October.

ABWomen NE: Nola Crooks shared that the ABWomen had their retreat in October, and 38 women were in attendance. She met with women in Scottsbluff to figure out their desired roles in ABWomen. They have almost reached their goal of 2,500 stickers for the Kodiak Baptist Mission Bicycle Camp, with 1,747 at the time of the meeting. Their next big event is the summer conference, which will be in Kearney.

Youth: There was no report for Youth

ABCUSA General Board Representative: Orin Clinger was not available to give a report, as he was meeting with ABC USA that same day.

ABC NE Region Staff: Blake Wilkes reported that the Colossians 3 Community Clergy group is doing well, and he hopes to expand its support to other pastors in the region. Additionally, he is working on the guild program and working to turn it into something more packageable to share with the region. Blake went on a three-month sabbatical to the Kodiak Baptist Mission. He visited many rural churches in Alaska and Canada. Greg Mamula suggested that paying closer attention to rural churches on a national level would be beneficial to their growth. Wisconsin and Illinois are now included in the Prairie Pastors Conference starting next year.

Discernment from Retreat: Aaron Sprock expressed gratitude for the successful biennial in Scottsbluff, acknowledging the efforts of the local church leaders and volunteers. He also mentioned the pre-conference spousal retreat, which many participants found spiritually refreshing. He described meaningful connections formed at the fall Pastor's Conference, including conversations during long carpool trips and a powerful concluding Communion service in which participants gathered around Greg for prayer and blessing. Greg shared briefly about the significance of that moment in a season of "good tiredness" after an intense ministry year.

The Board affirmed continued plans to develop a series of regional gatherings in 2026 that combine: Baptist identity teaching, listening sessions with congregations, and representation from national partners (Central Seminary, ABCUSA Foundation, Historical Society, etc.)

The Board agreed to create and distribute a survey to assess church needs, ministry priorities, and demographic realities. This includes things like: Use both online and physical/paper formats, create video and written promotional materials to explain the purpose, equip the Leadership Team members with scripted talking points, handouts, and phone lists to connect with churches—especially those without technology personally. They plan to launch the survey after Easter, running from April through late summer. They're aiming for at least 120–150 responses to gather adequate data. Use results to inform 2027 constitutional revisions and future programming.

The Board discussed the unexpected \$1.2 million offer from Hope Evangelical Free Church to purchase the Region office property. Members acknowledged the significance of the decision and discussed the pros and cons with great detail.

They agreed to pursue the offer based on an appraisal by a professional appraisal company.

Motions made to continue this work:

1. Nola Crooks made a motion the board vote to move forward with accepting the proposal from Hope Evangelical Free, pending an appraisal to determine if it is a fair offer. Seconded by Scott Jones. A discussion was held where all were invited to speak if they had opinions. Carlos Angulo shared his hesitation about selling the property because allowing churches to meet in the building symbolizes our commitment to "Churches Helping Churches." Vote 12-1 in favor of moving forward.
2. Patrick Fleeman made a motion that Doug Larsen from the Leadership Team work alongside Greg Mamula during this process for the purposes of board support and accountability. Seconded by Nola Crooks. Unanimous approval.
3. Nola Crooks made a motion that Greg Mamula and Doug Larsen be empowered to engage any professional services necessary to sell the building and identify a new location. They are to provide regular updates to the Leadership Team via email and via Zoom meetings as needed. Motion was seconded by Jill Blaylock. Unanimous approval.

Region staff were dismissed, and reports by the Executive Minister on the staff were provided. All feedback was positive, and there are no HR concerns. The Executive Minister was also dismissed, with Doug Larsen's report on the annual review of the Executive Minister being presented. The review was positive, leading to a 3% raise that was offered and approved by the board.

Closing

Jane Gangwish concluded with appreciation for the Board's commitment, the camp's faithful progress through a demanding year, and the spiritual encouragement felt throughout the retreat. She emphasized the importance of presence, collaboration, and prayer as ABC Nebraska enters 2026 with significant opportunities and decisions ahead.

The meeting adjourned with a closing prayer from Dale Pracht.

Minutes created and submitted by Sophie Mamula, Office Assistant at ABC NE, after reviewing the recorded Zoom meeting available on the ABC NE Microsoft Cloud.