

**American Baptist Churches of Wisconsin**  
*177th Annual Gathering*

**Romans 12:3-5**



**Church Together**  
2021 ABC/WI Annual Gathering

**OCTOBER 2, 2021**

**SATURDAY, 9 am - 3 pm**

**ZOOM | VIRTUAL PLATFORM**

**DELEGATE PACKET**

**PROGRAM SCHEDULE**

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2021**

**9:00-10:00 AM | ANNUAL MEETING | For delegates**

**10:15-11:45 AM | Select 1 from 3 options BREAKOUT WORKSHOPS**

- A – “Mindful Self-Compassion for Caregiver Fatigue”
- B – “Exploring ‘Hybrid’ Church- A Spiritual Practice in Community”
- C – Thematic Bible study: “Better Together: The Body of Christ working in unity”

**12:15-12:45 PM | LUNCH SPEAKER**

**1:00-1:45 PM | Select 1 from 3 options EQUIPPING SESSIONS**

- A – “Providing Mental Health Support in Church”
- B – “Using Technology as Church Together”
- C – “Hands and Feet Together: Church Mission in a New Era”

**2:00-3:00 PM | CLOSING WORSHIP**

**WORSHIPFUL WORK – ANNUAL MEETING SESSION | Virtual Meeting, Zoom Platform  
Presiding, Fred Oaks, ABC/WI Board President**

**AGENDA**

Welcome and overview of the Annual Gathering

Prayer

Call to Order for Annual Meeting

Voting Procedures – John Jones

Approval of Annual Gathering Program and Annual Meeting Agenda (pgs. 2-3)

Recognition of the Program Committee and Recorder

Approval of Minutes from 2020 Annual Gathering (pgs. 4-7)

Nominating Committee Report, Presentation of Slate for Elections, Receipt of  
Nominations from the Floor, Vote – Ruby Jackson (pgs. 8-9)

Recognition of those completing their terms of service to the Region

Treasurer's Report – Jose Faz (pgs. 10-11)

Interim Regional Executive Minister's Report – John Jones (pgs. 12-15)

REM Search Committee Report

President's Report – Fred Oaks

Prayer for Personnel of the Board of Managers and region commissions and  
committees

Announcements (pg. 16)

Adjournment (to be given at the end of the 2:00 PM Closing Worship Service)

## 176<sup>th</sup> Annual Gathering of the American Baptist Churches of Wisconsin

Friday, October 10, 2020 | Virtual Event – Zoom Platform

### Draft Minutes

*[See Final Program and Post-Event Summary Reports for supplemental details]*

**Program Committee Members:** Ruby Jackson (Chair- VP Board), Milwaukee, Metropolitan; Grady Iang (Board), Greenfield, Carson Chin; Jane Mathison (Originally local host), Honey Creek, Community; Cathy Muro (Board), Brookfield, Immanuel; Kim Drost (ABWomen), West Allis, First; Eric Lundquist (Ministers Council), Waukesha, First; Franklin Onwubuariri (ABMen), Marie Onwubuariri (REM/Ex-Officio), Jim Carlson (Hispanic Community Liaison); John Jones (Staff/ex-officio)

**Staff Registration Team:** Reshma Zadda, Marie Onwubuariri, John Jones

**Tech Team:** Jim Carlson (Hispanic Community Liaison); Biak Chaung (Greenfield, Carson Chin); Kenneth Cutler (Milwaukee, Greater Mt. Zion); Kim Drost (Assistant Minister of Camping, ABC/WI); Byron Johnson (Milwaukee, Progressive); Kurt Kaufman (Green Lake, Federated); Eric Lundquist (Waukesha, First); David Perkins (Delafield, First); Richie Zadda (Waukesha, First)

#### 9:00-10:00 AM | ANNUAL MEETING/WORSHIPFUL WORK SESSION

- **9:04am**- President Fred Oaks welcomed all participants to the 176<sup>th</sup> Annual Gathering, noting the theme “Glorious Transformation” and providing an overview of the schedule. He then offered an opening prayer. He **called the meeting to order**, noting that the meeting would be considered **adjourned with the benediction** of closing worship in the afternoon.
- **9:08am**- John Jones provided instructions and guidance for the unique voting procedure in the Zoom meeting. Votes will be taken by acclamation, with those objecting to the motion and those abstaining from the motion asked to register their objection or abstinence by either unmuting and speaking or using the “raise hand” option on Zoom.
- **9:10am**- The motion to approve the Annual Gathering program and the Annual Meeting Agenda was approved by acclamation with no objections.
- **9:11am**- President Oaks expressed recognition and appreciation for the Program Committee and their considerable efforts in adopting the Annual Gathering considering the circumstances generated by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **9:13am**- President Oaks acknowledged the recorder of record, corporate secretary and Reg. Executive Minister Rev. Dr. Marie Onwubuariri. He also acknowledged that Dr. Onwubuariri has resigned from her position to accept a call to the position of Associate General Secretary of Mission Resource Development of the American Baptist Churches USA. The Board of Managers is planning farewell events to honor her 6 wonderful years of ministry in the Region.
  - President Oaks recognized those attending 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Gathering, those attending last 5 in a row, and those attending from out of state.
- **9:19am**- Reginald Ivy of Milwaukee, New Hope made a motion to approve the Minutes from the 2019 Annual Gathering. Ruby Jackson, Milwaukee, Metropolitan seconded the motion. The motion was approved by general consent with no revisions and no objections.

- **9:24am**- The slate for elections to the Board of Managers and the Nominating Committee was presented by chairperson of the Nominating Committee Dr. Archie Ivy, Milwaukee, New Hope. Dr. Ivy acknowledged that there were two slots still vacant on the slate, one each for the Board of Managers and the Nominating Committee. No nominations for either position was presented from the floor. As the motion to elect these officers comes from Committee, it needs no second. The motion was approved by general consent with no objections or abstentions. President Oaks recognized members of the Nominating Committee for their work.
- **9:25am**- President Oaks encouraged the gathered body to express appreciation to those completing their terms of service with this Annual Meeting with a “virtual” round of applause.
- **9:28am**- Jose Faz, Treasurer, provided an overview of the Financial Report as provided in the delegate packet on p. 10-11. Financials look good due to better performance of investments in 2019, influx of cash due to a tree harvest, and low expenses because of understaffing. 2020 looks to be a volatile year because of so many unknowns. Balances are strong. Holly Anderle, Racine, First, moved to receive the Treasurer’s report. Archie Ivy, Milwaukee, New Hope, seconded. The motion was approved by general consent with no objections or abstentions.
- **9:31am**- Rev. Dr. Marie Onwubuariri presented the REM.s report. State of the Region was sent out earlier in the morning and is available on the website. Highlights: wonderful to see how churches have adjusted and responded to a challenging year; thanks to the board and region for sabbatical time during the summer. Areas of purpose highlighted in the report: supporting churches and ministers, providing camping and educational opportunities, pursuing innovative initiatives, strengthening the networks in which we work, and developing a strong administrative infrastructure, inclusive of communications, governance, staffing, financial health, and a regional office location that can serve our constituency. Encouraging collaborative conversations among all stakeholders for region. Camping and Educational ministries continue to experience transition. Both ministries will need the region to have conversation about the future of those ministries and the investment and opportunities they present. Innovative initiatives: the POST, Circuit Team, and New Wineskins, all of which have shown some promise; the most recent initiative is a co-consultation on race and culture. Networks: with ministry and national partners continues. Acknowledge region notes and celebrations:
  - New pastorates/ministries: Don Iliff, interim (La Crosse, First); Jason Mack, pastor (Wauwatosa, Underwood); Ron Zielinski, Lay Minister (Sheboygan Falls, Falls Community)
  - Transitions: Patrick Roberts (region staff), Carolyn Dugan (region staff), Brian Butcher (Mauston), Jason Mack (Madison, First), Michael Newheart (Madison, First, Interim)
  - Retirements: Bonnie Bell, Jane Matheson (Honey Creek – at end of 2020)
  - New Church to ABC/WI: Milwaukee Siyin Chin – welcomed with “virtual” round of applause
  - Ordination Anniversaries:
    - 5 years: Brandle Morrow, Milwaukee, Metropolitan
    - 10 years: Kim Drost, Region staff; Melva Bishop-Hewing, Madison, Mt. Zion; Jason Mack, Wauwatosa, Underwood; Peggy Williams, Madison, Mt. Zion
    - 15 years: Roxanne Cardenas, Milwaukee, Tangible Word; Jane Matheson, Honey Creek, First; Marcus Allen, Madison, Mt. Zion
    - 25 years: Marilyn Merrill; Martin Childs, Milwaukee, Pilgrim Rest;
    - 30 years: Steven Cornelius; 40 years: Sam Brink; 50 years: Bishop Lawrence Kirby, Racine, St. Paul Missionary
  - Church milestone anniversaries:
    - Racine, First – 180 years | Milwaukee, Calvary- 125 years | Wauwatosa, Underwood – 175 years
- **9:42am**-President’s Report – New organizational structure, committees and commissions are functioning well, recently completed a strategic plan. We are at a natural inflection point with a very capable Board of

Managers. In a divisive time, it is encouraging to be part of such a diverse, unified, and grace-filled community of leaders. With departure of our REM, the Board has important work to do, work that will be guided by Interim General Secretary of ABC-USA, Jeff Woods. President Oaks requests that the region keep in prayer Marie and her family in their move to Pennsylvania and for the Board in their work. Expect regular communication from the Board regarding that work.

- Prayer for Board of Managers, especially newly elected officers.
- **9:46am** – Announcements and highlights from churches:
  - Feedback survey for AG was promoted
  - Link for giving toward Mission of Region
  - Save the Date – 177<sup>th</sup> Annual Gathering – October 8-9, 2021
  - Virtual Biennial Gathering – June 2021
  - Archie Ivy, celebrating 25 years at Milwaukee, New Hope and recently published book, *Here by Assignment: The Story of Archie Ivy*.
  - Racine, First – renovations coming to a conclusion and gathering resources for anniversary celebration;
  - Waukesha, First– gathered for socially distanced communion on October 4, World Communion Sunday
  - Madison, Mt. Zion – Pastor Marcus Allen published his first book, *I Got Next*; church has paid off mortgage; also collaborating with Mental Health facility in Madison to provide free Mental Health services at the church one day a week; also setting up a school without walls for socially distanced remote learning for up to 30 students at the church
  - Milwaukee, Calvary – has a “virtual” 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration with videos and bouquets of flowers filling the sanctuary; construction and refurbishment work taking place on the building;
  - Green Lake, Federated – major sanctuary renovation has taken place, waiting to go back to that space; the school district has partnered with Federated for using space for pre-K and K classes;
  - Milwaukee, Emmanuel Chin – Pastor Stanley will be ordained through Chin Baptist Churches USA; also seeking a church building
  - Sheboygan Falls, Falls Community – expressed gratitude for Ron Zielinski’s leadership as Lay Leader;
  - Chakravarthy Zadda – requested by ABC USA represent denomination in Interfaith Commission of National Council of Churches, USA and Baptist World Alliance for next 5 years; asking for prayers for this service opportunities
  - Milwaukee, Metropolitan – ministry to congregation: M-F morning devotions for all people led by pastor and 7:30pm devotions led by other ministers, several other opportunities for learning and support;
- **10:00am**- Annual Meeting Business session is adjourned

**10:15-11:45 AM | WORKSHOPS | Breakout Sessions** | Five topical breakout sessions were offered in separate Zoom rooms; one was canceled (Burmese Bible Study) prior to the even due to low registration.

- A – COVID Changes "Idea-Swap" – presented by Commission on Congregational Mission of ABC Wisconsin.
- B – Bible Study on “Transformation” – presented by Rev. Dr. Demetrius Williams, pastor, Community Baptist Church, Milwaukee
- C – Reshaping Church: Learning from Unplanned Transformation – presented Rev. Dr. Angela Jackson of Central Baptist Theological Seminary and Rev. Dr. Ircel Harrison of Pinnacle Leadership Associates
- D- Baptist History and Polity: The Associational Principle- presented by Rev. Dr. Pam Durso, president, Central Baptist Theological Seminary

**12:15-12:45 PM : LUNCH SPEAKER:** Rev. Dr. C. Jeff Woods, Interim General Secretary of American Baptist Churches USA | Dr. Woods shared a good word on transformation, including imposed transformation in this season of unexpected adaptation.

**1:00-1:45 PM | FACILITATED CONVERSATION** | Breakout Sessions, 3 topics for Intimate Conversations about Important Matters were offered. These were opportunities to share thoughts on a topic in a small group setting and develop the essential skill of LISTENING.

- A – Racial Justice facilitated by Rev. Walter Lanier, pastor, Progressive Baptist Church, Milwaukee
- B – Post-COVID Emerging Ministries facilitated by Rev. Betsy Perkins, pastor, First Baptist Church, Delavan
- C – 2020 – Stories of Faith facilitated by Rev. Jason Mack, pastor, Underwood Memorial Baptist Church, Wauwatosa

**2:00-3:00 PM | CLOSING WORSHIP** was the final Zoom session but was also streamed to the region Facebook page. The order of service included:

- Memorial slide show
- WELCOME AND CALL TO WORSHIP by Cathy Muro, Member of the ABC/WI Board and Program Committee; Home Church: Immanuel Church Brookfield
- OPENING CONGREGATIONAL SONG: BE THOU MY VISION Arranged by Ascend the Hill led by Immanuel Church Brookfield Praise Team
- OPENING PRAYER WITH LORD’S PRAYER led by Rev. Max Ramsey, Pastor, Immanuel Church
- INTRODUCTION OF VIDEO PRESENTATION AND PREACHER by Mr. Jose Faz, ABC/WI Treasurer/Board Member; Home Church: Iglesia Bautista Renacer, Racine
- PICTURE SLIDE SHOW PRESENTATION: AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES WISCONSIN 2014-2020
- MUSICAL OFFERING: YOU ARE Written by Kirk Franklin offered by Levite’s of Zion Praise Team, Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Madison
- SCRIPTURE REFERENCES WERE Romans 12:1-2 NRSV and Ephesians 3:16-19 NRSV
- SERMON: “Transformation: Realign, Resist and Renew” by Rev. Dr. Marie Onwubuariri, ABC/WI Regional Executive Minister
- CONGREGATIONAL SONG: YOUR WAY, YAHWEH by Jeremy Camp led by Immanuel Church Brookfield Praise Team
- CLOSING WORDS by Rev. Fred Oaks, ABC/WI President of the Board of Managers
- SENDING SONG: LOVE CHANGES EVERYTHING by Red Rocks Worship led by Immanuel Church Brookfield Praise Team

**~3:58pm- Annual Gathering Adjourned**

*Final Numbers: Total attendance: 116; 27 churches represented*

*Respectfully submitted: Marie Onwubuariri & John Jones*

# AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF WISCONSIN 2021 NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT



## SLATE FOR ELECTIONS

### BOARD OF MANAGERS

	Name	Term End (October)
<b>PRESIDENT</b>		
Brandle Morrow	Milw., Metropolitan	2023
<b>TREASURER</b>		
Jose Faz	Racine, Renacer	2023
<b>AT LARGE POSITIONS</b>		
Kenneth Cutler	Milw., Greater Mt. Zion	2024
Carolyn Parker	Milw., Progressive	2024
Michelle Peterson	Milw., Calvary	2024
VACANT		2024
VACANT		<b>2023</b>

### NOMINATING COMMITTEE

	Name	Term End (October)
Delois Taylor	Milw., Metropolitan	2024
VACANT		2024
VACANT		<b>2023</b>

*[End of Slate]*

### THANK YOU TO THE 2021 NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Archie Ivy, Chair	Milwaukee, New Hope Miss.	2023
May May Latt	Milwaukee Myanmar Christian Church	2021
Mark Brandel	Wyocena, Community	2022
Carol Lewis	Milwaukee, Greater Mt. Zion	2022 (inactive)
Sudie Jones,	Milwaukee, Greater Galilee	2021
Ruby Jackson, Board Rep	Milwaukee, Metropolitan	2022
1 Vacancy		(2023)
John Jones, ABC/WI Interim REM – Ex-officio		

## THOSE CONTINUING AND COMPLETING THEIR SERVICE ON THE BOARD, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES

### **BOARD OF MANAGERS**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Term End (October)</b>
<b>At Large</b>		
	Reginald Ivy	Milwaukee, New Hope Missionary 2022
	Ruby Jackson	Milwaukee, Metropolitan Miss. 2022
	Kurt Kaufman	Green Lake, Federated 2022
	Cathy Muro	Brookfield, Immanuel 2022
	Mike Shawgo	West Allis, First 2023
	Stanley	Milwaukee, Emmanuel Chin 2023
	Shani Smith	Milwaukee, Greater Galilee 2023
Completing: Brandle Morrow, Grady lang, Bonnie Sorenson, Terry West		

### **COMMISSION ON CONGREGATIONAL MISSION**

Continuing: Carolyn Parker, Linda Cutler, Russ Antos

Completing: Bonnie Sorenson & Terry West – Board Reps | Vacancies going into 2021-2022 = 2 board reps

### **COMMISSION ON MINISTRY**

Continuing: Kurt Kaufman, Holly Anderle, Martin Childs, Jr., Jose Encarnacion, Eric Lundquist, Shani Smith

Completing: None | Vacancies going into 2021-2022 = None

### **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Continuing: Jose Faz, Antoine McDuffie, Ed Hansen, Mike Shawgo, Stanley

Completing: None

Vacancies going into 2021-2022 = **1 appointee**

### **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

Continuing: Brandle Morrow, Jose Faz, Reginald Ivy

Completing: Fred Oaks | Vacancies going into 2021-2022 = Board VP

### **PROGRAM COMMITTEE**

Continuing: Cathy Muro

Completing: Brandle Morrow, Eric Lundquist, Linda Jolly, Delois Taylor, Alexis McKinnie

Vacancies going into 2022 = VP, **2 appointees | 1 rep from ABW, ABMen, Ministers Council optional**

***To learn more about serving in any of these roles, please contact the ABC/WI region office.***

**AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF WISCONSIN, INC.  
UNAUDITED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION  
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2020**

ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents	\$39,817
Accrued interest receivable	\$908
Prepaid expenses	\$1,592
Funds held in trust	\$13,571
Inventory	\$0
Investments	\$4,405,177
Mortgage loans receivable:	
Churches and other	\$0
Land, buildings, and equipment – net	\$839,178
Total Assets	<u>\$5,300,303</u>

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Accounts payable – trade	\$11,919
Accrued liabilities	\$91,176
Accrued real estate taxes	\$5,043
Funds held in trust	<u>\$10,140</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>\$118,278</u>

Net Assets:

Unrestricted	\$3,206,208
Temporarily Restricted	\$905,552
Permanently Restricted:	
Bay View Fund	\$604,289
Blumer Fund	\$398,236
Total Permanently Restricted	<u>\$1,070,265</u>
Total Net Assets	<u>\$5,182,025</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	<u>\$5,300,303</u>

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AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF WISCONSIN, INC.  
UNAUDITED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES  
Year Ended December 31, 2020

**AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF WISCONSIN, INC.**  
**UNAUDITED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES**  
**YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2019**

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total
Revenues, Gains & Other Support:				
American Baptist Missions support	\$51,774	\$0	\$0	\$51,774
Other Support and contributions Investment income:	\$30,277	\$0	\$0	\$30,277
Interest and dividends	\$101,712	\$22,639	\$0	\$124,351
Gains on investments Camp Tamarack: Revenues	\$133,840	\$77,694	\$82,299	\$293,833
Contributions	\$89,462	\$0	\$0	\$89,462
Gifts & bequests	\$0	\$19,762	\$0	\$19,762
Miscellaneous	\$3,914	\$0	\$0	\$3,914
Net assets released from restrictions	\$2,755	\$0	\$0	\$2,755
Total revenues, gains and other support	\$84,791	-\$60,475	-\$24,316	\$0
	\$498,527	\$59,619	\$57,983	\$616,129
Expenses and losses:				
General and administrative	\$213,709	\$0	\$0	\$213,709
General program—Christian outreach, Christian education and other Aid to Churches and other Camp Tamarack:	\$58,619	\$0	\$0	\$58,619
Operating expenses	\$5,575	\$0	\$0	\$5,575
Capital fund campaign expenses	\$161,123	\$0	\$0	\$161,123
Joint ministries	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Ecumenical work	\$11,400	\$0	\$0	\$11,400
Investment counsel fees	\$12,200	\$0	\$0	\$12,200
Annuities	\$12,311	\$0	\$0	\$12,311
Total expenses	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Losses on investments	\$474,937	\$0	\$0	\$474,937
Total expenses and losses	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Changes in net assets	\$474,937	\$0	\$0	\$474,937
Net assets at beginning of year	\$23,590	\$59,619	\$57,983	\$141,192
Net assets at end of year	\$3,202,714	\$825,837	\$1,012,282	\$5,040,833
	\$3,226,303	\$885,457	\$1,070,265	\$5,182,025

## “STATE OF THE REGION”

American Baptist Churches of Wisconsin, October 2, 2021 Annual Meeting  
“Church Together” | Romans 12:3-5

**Rev. Dr. John Jones, Interim Regional Executive Minister | [john.jones@abcofwi.org](mailto:john.jones@abcofwi.org)**

It has been a true honor to serve as Interim Regional Executive Minister this year. I am grateful for this opportunity to try and serve this association of congregations for this season. Serving in the role of IREM has only deepened my appreciation for all the faithful pastors and leaders in our congregations, all those willing to engage in the common mission of the region. The challenges faced by churches over the past two years have been remarkable. The creativity and determination of our churches in responding to those challenges has been inspiring.

2021 has been another difficult year. It began with the introduction of vaccines and the corresponding hope for a return to some semblance of normalcy. Our various churches had several different timelines. But most were steadily moving toward in-person worship and expanded ministry opportunities. That movement has been stymied by the Delta variant of the Coronavirus. One step forward and two steps back. That difficulty has been wearing, especially on leadership in our congregations.

That situation highlights the need within and between churches for personal connection and cooperation, not only for common mission, but even and especially for mutual support. That connection and cooperation has been happening, even in the face of all the challenges of the pandemic. The work of the Commissions and Committees of the region has continued, in service of our common mission, through the faithful and diligent attention of our leaders. Note the Program Committee, whose thoughtful and discerning reflections led to the selection of our “Church Together” theme. Their hard work and commitment to this association made the Annual Gathering possible. We have maintained the personal connections that can sustain good work even in challenging times.

The same could be said for our pastors. Many pastors and ministers have taken advantage of the monthly online check-ins for mutual support and encouragement. Though attendance at any particular session has typically been small, the diversity of participants over the course of these many months has been substantial. And the effort to provide a place for mutual support and encouragement for ministers has been appreciated by all participants.

Building and nurturing relationships is long and difficult work. Doing so during a pandemic is incredibly challenging, but it remains essential for engagement in the broad sense of the mission of *being* church. We build relationships in congregations. We build relationships between congregations as well. This difficult but important work helps us embody the value in our mission statement that “affirms our diversity of culture, gender, and theological perspectives as gifts for ministry.” I have seen and felt those gifts for ministry this year. In challenging circumstances, we continue to do the difficult work of building and nurturing relationships that serve as Christ’s witness in the world.

### NEW INITIATIVES

Our recent initiatives have remained active and viable despite the challenges of the ongoing pandemic. The **New Wineskins** grant program can be the seedbed for new ministries. The **Circuit Ministry** serves as a resource to congregations in transition who desire that assistance. The **Co-Consultation on Race & Culture** remains a valued space where pastors can support and encourage one another as they navigate the cross-racial and multi-cultural efforts for justice, mutual understanding, and Kingdom-actions. We are working together creatively and collectively to support one another.

## CAMPING

The camping ministry returned to activity this summer, though in an abbreviated format. See Rev. Carolyn Dugan's report below. Camping is a beloved ministry for ABC/WI constituency. Camp Tamarack will be entering a period of intentional promotion among ABC/WI churches (see report below) and of discernment for the future of that tremendous asset.

## EDUCATION

At the end of 2020, the financial relationship between Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Shawnee, Kansas and ABC/WI ended, effectively ending the seminary site that has been housed in the region office since 2008. CENTRAL Wisconsin was an important part of region ministry and an important presence for theological education in the area. The imprint of the site upon the region can be seen in the number of ministers and pastors who received their education through the site as well as through the offerings of the site to the wider community. Nevertheless, the end of the site requires a rethinking of the educational ministry of the region. That will be an important task for the Board of Managers and the new settled Regional Executive Minister.

## STAFFING

2021 saw more stability in staffing for the region with a new permanent part-time Office Administrator (Maretta McMullen) and the return (part-time) of Rev. Carolyn Dugan as Associate Regional Minister-Camping. The evolving nature of region ministry and the immanent transition to a new settled Regional Executive Minister will require continued attention and consideration of appropriate staffing for the region office.

## GOVERNANCE

We are entering our third year under the new by-laws adopted during the 2019 Annual Gathering. The Board of Managers is active, diverse, and engaged in the ongoing work of the region, suggesting that this reconfiguration has been both welcome and effective. However, the difficulties faced by the Nominating Committee in recruiting new Board members the past two years suggests that the region will need to give continued attention to developing leadership throughout our diverse constituency to participate in this important work of visioning and oversight.

## REPORTS

This year we had one congregation make the difficult decision to close after 173 years in ministry. **Darien Community** closed at the end of July.

We have new pastorates that began since our last gathering. **Rev. Tim Schaefer** began his ministry at **Madison, First** in November 2020. **Honey Creek, Community** called **Debbie Giese**, a student at Central Seminary, as pastor in May. And **La Crosse, First** took the bold and creative step of installing a pastoral team in September: **Rev. Dr. Timm Ashley, Rev. Maxine Ashley, Rev. Don Iliff, and Rev. Mark Stahlhut.**

## CONCLUSION

I will quote Marie's last state of the region report when she encouraged us to "(r)emember, value, envision, and implement joint ministries and mission." This is what it means to be Baptist – to be associational in our mission work, however broadly or narrowly that work is understood. That is **being** church. We **choose** to engage in mission **together**. This is one of the reasons our Program Committee chose the theme of "Church Together" for this year's Annual Gathering. We are better together. We need each other probably more than we realize. And a conscious effort to live out that life together is what builds the capacity to respond to God's call well into the future.

2021 has been another challenging year. But our churches and leaders have been drawing on faith to respond to those challenges. The uncertainty can be daunting, but it is a reminder that we walk by faith

and not by sight. May we all continue to follow the example of our savior who spoke with a prophetic voice, ministered with a healing hand, and loved with a big, beautiful heart. May we follow in his footsteps toward the marginalized and despised. May we walk a path neither simple nor easy but true. May we be his feet and hands, his body – the body of Christ – in this world.

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REGION NOTES:

Congregations and Pastors: *Completed:* Don Iliff—La Crosse, First (Interim); Carolyn Dugan—Fond du Lac, Memorial (Interim). *Beginning:* Tim Schaefer—Madison, First; Debbie Giese—Honey Creek, Community; Don Iliff, Timm Ashley, Maxine Ashley, & Mark Stahlhut (team pastorate)—La Crosse, First.

Closed Churches: Darien, Community, Robert Sullivan, Pastor

Pastorate Milestone Celebrations: Lawrence Kirby (Racine, St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church) — 40<sup>th</sup>; Louis Sibley (Milwaukee, Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church) — 35<sup>th</sup>; Karen Gygaz-Rodriguez (Green Lake, Federated Church) — 25<sup>th</sup>; Juan Contreras (Kenosha, Iglesia Bautista El Calvario) — 20<sup>th</sup>; John Nehs (Green Bay, Bridge Point) — 15<sup>th</sup>; Juan Arcila (Waukesha, Hispanic Congregation of First Waukesha) — 15<sup>th</sup>; Eugene Cowan (Milwaukee, Jeremiah Missionary Baptist Church) — 10<sup>th</sup>; Walter Lanier (Milwaukee, Progressive Baptist Church) — 10<sup>th</sup>; Betsy Perkins (Delavan, First)— 5<sup>th</sup>; Marcus Allen (Madison, Mount Zion Baptist Church) — 5<sup>th</sup>

In Memoriam (ABC/WI Clergy): Karen Bailey (Milwaukee, Songs of Life); Jaime Davila (Milwaukee, Iglesia Bautista - retired)

***Rev. Dr. John A. Jones IV, Interim Regional Executive Minister | [john.jones@abcofwi.org](mailto:john.jones@abcofwi.org)***

**CAMPING**

**Rev. Carolyn Dugan, Associate Regional Minister – Camping | [carolyn.dugan@abcofwi.org](mailto:carolyn.dugan@abcofwi.org)**

**Rev. Kim Drost, Assistant Minister – Camping: Facilities and Guest Services | [kim.drost@abcofwi.org](mailto:kim.drost@abcofwi.org)**

This year the theme was based on Romans 8:39. After a year of virtual camp and physically distancing, the reminder was that nothing can separate us from God’s love. love surpasses a virus and pandemic.

We slowly and carefully opened things up on the property for the year. We implemented a COVID protocol that includes wearing masks when indoors, reducing capacity of buildings, changing some of our meal procedures and monitoring temperatures. For all of our decisions we consulted with the Waupaca County of Health and Waupaca High School nurses. With all of this in place, we only had one camper we needed to send home and as far as we know the issue was not COVID related.

It was a small, but successful camping season and we are grateful to all the volunteers helped make it happen. As part of the programming we added a few “new” offerings year including a Canoe/Kayak Camp, Reunion Camp and a Fishing Fun Day. We are to offer events that give people a chance to gather in fellowship and maybe try something new.

We continue to have opportunities for those that maybe can’t commit to a full camp, but could come up for a day or two to help paint cabins or support our Spring In and Fall Out of camp work days to keep the space maintained and ready for our next arrivals.

In the coming year, we will be encouraging our churches and affiliated partners to explore the camp space for any needs they may have such and small group retreats, youth groups, and more. We understand that needs change over time, but one thing that doesn’t change is how spending time in creation gives the soul rest and restoration.

Thank you to the Board and the Region for the continued support of Camp Tamarack as we look to the future.

Grace and Peace – Rev. Carolyn Dugan



*Neither height nor depth,  
nor anything else in all creation,  
will be able to separate us  
from the love of God that is  
in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
Romans 8:39*

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **FEEDBACK SURVEY:**

Our hope for the Annual Gathering is that it will be a time of fellowship, learning and inspiration that is shaped not only by the Program Committee and regional staff, but also by all who attend. We also hope you will experience something that you will be inspired to take back to your communities.

To this end, all attendees are encouraged to participate in the Feedback and Reflection Survey designed to help the planners assess the event, to give you an opportunity to shape future gatherings, and to encourage you to take time for self-reflection for the purpose of your own discipleship.

Please use the link below to fill out our online survey no later than Friday, October 8, 2021 Thank you. [bit.ly/ag2021survey](https://bit.ly/ag2021survey)

### **SUPPORT ABC WISCONSIN GIVING**

To give online, go to [bit.ly/ag2021giving](https://bit.ly/ag2021giving) or support the work of American Baptists through your local church mission giving.

### **SAVE THE DATE:**



#### **178<sup>th</sup> ABC Wisconsin Annual Gathering**

Friday-Saturday, October 7-8, 2022 | Location TBD