

Region Board Retreat
Friday & Saturday — February 19 & 20, 2016
PARTNERSHIP IN THE GOSPEL PHILEMON 1:6

“⁶ I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective when you perceive all the good that we may do for Christ.”

February 19, 2016 7:30 pm

Meeting was opened by President Sharron Sedziol.

A formal welcome to our new Executive Minister, the Reverend Dr. Ernest Jones and his wife, Mrs. Denise Jones. Two of our four new members, Anita King and Reverend Joshua Ward were welcomed. Welcome to Jane Gibbons and Mark Click and to all the current board members.

Our theme is Partnership in the Gospel, based on **Philemon 1:6 (NRSV)** ⁶ *I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective when you perceive all the good that we may do for Christ.*

Prayer Requests: Beverly Keyes regarding her stroke. She is improving. Bev sends Thanks for your prayers.

President Sharron Sedziol opened in prayer.

Joe Sanders and Joe Seese led us in worship where we sang, “In His Stars His Handiwork I See”, “The Revelation Song”, and “God of This City”.

Jane Gibbons introduced the new ABC/OH theme logo. It is focused on partnership. Jane’s hope is we can “One Another Each Other”. Jane spoke on how the whole was made up of the sum of parts but also how through synergy the parts make up more than the whole. She referred to the feeding of the 5000 in Matthew 14. God has gifted each of God’s children with a supernatural ability to serve on the Region Board. Through our working with each other in the Spirit we will individually contribute to make something larger than the sum of our parts.

We spent some time getting acquainted with each other through a wheel within a wheel and questions that we answered to one another. It was a blast.

The Rev. Jane Gibbons led us in a time of Nurturing Board and Staff Relationships regarding our conflict of interest agreement and our covenant.

Joe Seese closed us in prayer.

September February 20, 2016 9:00 am

President Sharron Sedziol called us to order. Ken Atchison opened with prayer. Worship Songs led by Rev. Joe Sanders and Rev. Joe Seese were “10,000 Reasons” and “We will Glorify”.

Rev. Mark Click led us in devotions on Philemon 1:6, “Partnering in Understanding”. “I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective *when you perceive all the good that we may do for Christ.*” In light of Onesimus’ sin against Philemon of running away from his owner, Paul sends him back. Can you imagine Onesimus’ feelings of doom regarding what will happen to him when he returns? But yet Paul calls Philemon to see Onesimus as a brother, a brother in Christ. So Paul calls to Philemon, “to perceive the good we may do for Christ” It calls us to be united in Christ, and our call to Christ takes down the boundaries to move from “us” to “we” (in Galatians 3 and Ephesians 2 fashion, we are “one”.) This calls us to inform and transform our behaviors (“by acting in faith,” not just believing, which leads us to maturity in Christ, Fruit of the Spirit). Paul calls on Philemon to share his faith effectively.

Paul calls Philemon to 1) forgive, 2) freedom, 3) transformation of relationships, and 4) shared ministry. In light of this word ABC/OH 1) we learn we are to share as ministry partners, 2) we have to begin to think in new ways how we do ministry in this century, 3) we have to change our behaviors to meet the needs of the churches. 4) we have to be equally committed to the mission of Christ’s church through our shared work as American Baptists.

Executive Minister, Dr. Ernest Jones, shared with us that God leads us to challenges: to whom much is given, much is required. He shared with us about partnership. Our theme verse of Philemon 1:6 fits within the context of justice. It has to be done within the communication of our faith to “koinonia” (fellowship, partnership) to the action of redemption practice not just saying. WE are called to affirm the action of the OT prophets, salvation from sin, the amazing gift of God through Christ in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit like Micah: walk humbly, love mercy and justice. We are called to love God and go where God leads and do what is right through love. Justice tempered by love in the humble walk is the core of how we are to live. This is the partnering that Paul is asking of Philemon. This is what is meant by partnership. It is about abiding in Jesus so we do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with the people, even the people we don’t get along with. The Gospel is risky business, our partnership is not a contract but a covenant. We walk with God to do what God calls us to do and say. It is a partnership. It goes beyond barriers: economic, racial, gender, political barriers to present the partnership of God. We are there to give the presence of Christ.

Dr. Jones shared with us his faith journey. It begins with following his heart and encountering many different people. Dr. Jones comes from a family from the Deep South. And having the typical experience of people of color in the South, they were tenement farmers. His father’s father was lynched and his mother died when he was age 12. His father had to support his family: a challenged sister and two other siblings whom he supported. Dr. Jones’ father’s experience was poured on Dr. Jones. Even in this difficult situation his father welcomed everyone and carried this on to Dr. Jones’ family.

When Dr. Jones was young his father came down with Mesothelioma. When he was waiting in the hospital for his dad, he was having a life changing conversation with a young white child and they discussed the racial divide.

Dr. Jones was present for the 1967 riots in Detroit. At Christmas his family would drive back to Alabama. They drove down and as they were driving south, and got between Kentucky and Tennessee, they pulled into a KFC, and while they were eating white folks were leaving because of their presence and they then found out about the Detroit riots. They called their older siblings who had stayed in Detroit, who said they were searched by the military and had tanks in the neighborhood. That always stayed with Dr. Jones and formed his perspective as to where he comes from. If we are brothers and sisters in Christ we have to break down the social construct that keeps us separated. It is sin. It infects us. And it is something God can cure. It doesn't become a detractor of who we are but transforms us from what we encounter to what God wants us to be different.

Dr. Jones knows it will be hard. God has drawn Dr. Jones to engage all people to admit we are different in appearance but our DNA genotype shows us we are closer than our phenotype. We are in Christ, there is no free or slave, female or male, there is no white, black, yellow or brown. We are one in Christ.

Dr. Jones comes from this context. This informs the trajectory of his life. You can't live from where we come, you can't live with the anger, the bitterness, because you circumscribe God from working and blessing your life. It is his filter. Our journey towards heaven is to bring a touch of it in our life to others as we journey on our way there.

Dr. Jones is here because God called him here, not out of politics but as a call from God. It is not about politics but because God put you there because God knew you would be there so the purpose of why God put you there was to bring redemption to the community. It becomes redemptive to those who are watching the suffering and causing suffering. We are called to go through the Refiners Fire. Wherever Dr. Jones has gone he has had to deal with financial struggles. The world has changed to a postmodern society, maybe even a post, postmodern society.

The problem is we model ministry on human construct, not necessarily the NT model. When God calls us to transform we have to go through transformation, we have to go through personal transformation before institutional transformation. We have to see the issues of justice that will show us where we need to be redemptive. The justice we call for has to be tempered by the love of Christ. You can't do that if you are judgmental in opposition. But we have to be tempered by the love of Christ. Jesus didn't beat them with the Bible but loved them into the kingdom.

We are not perfect but God loves us, and those to whom we minister. None of us is perfect, but we are called to love. Yes we need to talk about our sin, but people don't hear or see their sin if they are in pain. So we have to love them through it to encounter the forgiveness of God.

We have to be sensitive to one's struggle which is what it means to partner with (back to Philemon 1:6). People in pain don't want platitudes they want Percocet. Dr. Jones says this begins with talking and listening with one another.

Dr. Jones shred his 100 day plan. He prayed a lot, and felt God led him to create a 100 day timeline. He needs to discover where people's hearts are, so he needs to interview pastors, laity within and without ABCOH life. He wants to discover our strengths and areas of needed growth. He wants to develop a vision, not through a mosaic model, but a vision born out of community, based on Pastor with people. Vision is defined by the give and take of the congregation. Then one can create buy-in, and create critical mass of movement.

At our next meeting he is hoping to have a page of listening's he has discovered in this 100 days of listening that will inform our strategic plan. Dr. Jones believes we need to do things well, it may be a few things, but we are about ministry and mission and impacting hurting people. That way those who are outside of the community can see what is going on inside of the community and be drawn to it through the Spirit in the grace of Christ.

He believes Justice Peace is a part of us. He believes people need to be heard and know they are heard. He believes we need to engage more Millennials in our process. He is sensing the need to build relationships with pastors, staff, and create town halls where he can meet not just pastors but congregants.

He sees a big part of his focus is the health of Pastors. He wants to refocus them to the Pastor's family, then the ministry. He believes he needs to support and love the pastors. Retool them to see the image of God in fellowship with family, then ministry. Take care of oneself. Watch what one eats, sleeps and take at least 1 day off. We need to move from the job to the calling of Pastor. That keeps one in the passion of Christ. That is Chuck's (what Dr. Jones likes to be called) big passion.

The strength of ABC is we decided to be with one another, Partnership. Like Onesimus we pack up and leave, but yet God calls us to go back and reconcile our relationship. People of all color are coming together to partner in the life of Christ. He wants to make Pastors healthy and strong to do justice, love kindness, and to walk humbly with the Lord. He wants to do bridge building.

How can we pray for Dr. Jones: strength, clarity and discernment of God's will. Pray for Jane and Mark for their spiritual enrichment as they deal with overwhelming changes, of their job, the expanse of their job.

The suggestion was made for regular prayer requests from staff to be given to the Regional Board through email.

Another suggestion was to set up a monthly pod cast or skype session that updates us on what Staff is encountering and planning.

Dr. Jones was thinking about doing a monthly blog with prayer requests, and workings, and accomplishments, and needs.

Saturday Afternoon Session - PARTNERING FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST 1:00 pm

Joe and Joe opened us up with worship. We sang "Seek Ye First". Pastor James Willis opened us in prayer.

The Rev. David Nuhfer addressed us regarding the Leadership Conference and Dr. Jones' Installation Service. **The ABCOH Leadership Conference will be April 22-23, 2016 at Second Baptist Church**, 186 N. 17th St. Columbus OH 43203. Dr. Dan Buttry will be the Conference Leader. The theme is "Partnership in the Gospel". Dr. Jones Installation service will be on Saturday of this event in the afternoon. They based the price on 125 people attending both days. Price includes the snacks, lunch, and teaching documents Dr. Buttry will be teaching.

President Sharron Sedziol presented our consent agenda and following a motion from Rockney Carter and a second from James Willis, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer Rick Dostal presented the 2015 budget and expenses. Rick stated his preparation for this report was both stressful and rewarding. Our times are challenging on all levels: ministry, mission, finances, and changes. In the midst of this we need to remember Ecclesiastes 4:12: A threefold cord is not easily broken.

The Treasurer distributed the 2015 Monthly Revenue Trends. (See attached) It shows an undesignated revenue giving of \$364,255.22. Designated Giving total as \$22,638.38 for a total of \$386,893.60. Our Undesignated budget was \$347,943.02 for a \$38,950.58 plus for an extra 4.69% increase over our prediction.

Our Net Worth was as follows: ↓ 12%, or \$656,019.40 Revenue: ↓ 48%, or \$358,063.02 Expenses: ↑ 12% or \$112,898.53 Surplus (Deficit): ↑ 254%, or (\$470,961.55) Receivables: ↑ 14%, or \$27,541.12 Payables: ↑ 10%, or \$12,910.99 Assets: ↓ 12%, or \$643,126.41.

Our 20 quarter investment reading was 5.61% of our investment, but we only received 3.84%. Our inflation over 20 years has been 1.71% inflation rate. Kipling is now thinking 2016 will be over 2%.

The Treasurer stated there will be a new reporting process of income, expense, and budget. It is on pages 9 and 10 of the report.

Overall we ran a paper deficit in our investments of \$527,510

We ran a real shortfall of income of \$ 69,130

Plus we overspent \$5,470

Add to the \$25,000 from the Palmer Grant and other expenses, we come up with a total negative (\$656,019.40).

\$150,583 was overspent the income of our budget.

We will review our budget for 2016 the first quarter and make decisions for the budget expense based on income for 2016.

So when we look at what has taken place:

We have added 2 accounts to the BFI. One is for the First Baptist Church of Xenia where we will become land owners of the property and the other is selling of the Church of the Carpenter church building.

The Treasurer closed with this Application Bible explanation of Philemon 1:6, "like a cold water on a long hike this Christian brother Philemon was a refreshment to the Apostle Paul."

The Treasurer motioned we review the 2016 budget and ratify it after the first quarter via email. Joe Seese second. It unanimously passed.

Rita McClure motioned and Ken Atchison second that the Treasurer's report be accepted. Motion passed unanimously.

The Treasurer has recognized the work that Matt Thomas has done to bring us to an understanding of what we had done fiscally three or four years ago. Matt has done a great job. But there is a need to go to an in-house fiscal person who can assist in the office and run our finances. Matt's contract is up in August.

There is a need to create a job description to follow up on the day-to-day expenditures as well as tracking endowment income and expenditures.

The current contract costs us a program side of BFI of ministry and ABC Ohio income for a total of \$77,050.00.

We are hoping to hire someone in the area of \$40,000.

This person will be under Dr. Jones' authority and the Finance Ministry team will work at hiring someone.

Association Task Force report was given by the Rev. Joe Sanders (see attached document dated February 12, 2016 from the Association Task Force). Discussion regarding actual expense for ABCOH staff verses what churches are giving for ABCOH budget ensued. There is a discussion regarding how to quantify the cost for ministry.

After much discussion Denny McDonald moved we would personally email Joe Sanders with our comments on the covenant within two weeks by March 7. Motion second by Joe Seese. Motion Passed Unanimously.

Jane Gibbons will email us a list of some of the services the region Staff provide.

Friends of the Region Legacy Initiative was reported by Rev. Rita McClure. She reported \$2107 for 2015 in pledges have been made and #31.2% has been paid. She handed out a tri-fold.

President Sharron Sedziol announced that the First Baptist Church of Coshocton has moved from the Cambridge Association to the Zanesville Association. Joe Seese moved to acknowledge the move for the First Baptist Church of Coshocton from the Cambridge Association to the Zanesville Association and that the Coshocton church send a request of letter of release to the Cambridge Association pastors. Chad Mugrage seconded it. It approved unanimously

Staff reports

The Reverend Jane Gibbons reported ministry is going well but her time constrictions are overwhelming. Her hope as she deals with the change from 3 to 2 area ministers is that time constraints will become more manageable. She has met with Akron, Ashtabula, and Mahoning Association Pastors which are now a part of her portfolio.

There are conflicts between two association meetings. There is a sense of loss regarding the loss of Bob Cassady and there is some transition of emotions that occurs with Jane and possibly Mark. One prayer concern is the grief of losing Bob and transitioning to the new staff member and how they can manage time. Jane has several speaking and preaching events with various churches. She is working with 7 pastoral searches. Pray for Ashland church as they are near the end of the calling process. She is working on Face to Face in March. Another prayer concern is Ben Green Pastor of New Covenant Church of Toledo and praise his double lung transplant has gone well and last Friday he came home. Jane and Mark have been connecting with the ARMS to see which will stay on. Her ARMs are Dave Sedziol, Chuck Armstrong, Ruby Radford, David Stone, Ed Holland, and Dean Davidson. She had 5 and now has 9 associations and now she has 120 churches.

Joe Sanders asked what can the Region Board do to energize the ARMS program. Jane said staff is still working on how to implement them differently.

The Reverend Mark Click shared that the last 4 months have been turbulent times to expand from 6 to 10 associations and from 85 churches to 120 churches. There is a concern on the association level how their needs will be met. There is a concern their funds will dwindle without improved connection. They want to meet Dr. Jones. Church conflicts, sexuality issues have increased frustration. Assisted the Church of the Carpenter with their assets, and First Baptist Church of Xenia and their property with ABCOH. Church of the Carpenter has interest in utilizing the Xenia property.

Successful Pastoral searches with FBC Greenfield, St. Paris, and Columbia Baptist Church. FBC Dayton Pastor retires. Tabernacle leaving, FBC Middletown pastor's retired. And 4 other pastors have informed Mark they are resigning. The Turn Around Church Program continues to be implemented by Mark. The hope is in time some of the Turn Around Pastors will assist him in being coaches for others.

His ARMS are Larry Stewart, Marva Hughes, Scott Johnston, Charles Russel, James Van Zile. Chaplain Frank McClure, and Chris Osterbrock, ARM for Student Ministries plus ABC Dare to

Share Assistant Scott Weaver. 4 out of 10 association don't have ARMS , 3 out of 4 associations are not active. Current ARMs are reimbursed for mileage, food, Annual Meeting, and a hundred dollar stipend per year.

Our Executive Dr. Jones reported he has spent the last 3 weeks of his new employment learning our ABCOH situation, speaking at several events, dealing with staff and having 1 on 1 with people. He also has presented his 100 day plan as mentioned above.

Bob and Sharon Cassady shared thank you notes regarding their retirement gifts and service.

Chad Mugrage closed with prayer and the Region Board shared in communion led by Dr. Ernest Jones and Rev. Joe Seese.

Roger Alber
Interim Secretary substituting for Beverly Keyes, Secretary

Sharon:

Please accept my deepest appreciation for the gifts I received from both the ABC/Ohio Region and the Region Board.

God has truly blessed me with the opportunity to share in ministry with many wonderful pastors, churches, leaders, staff members & board members & of course PRESIDENTS!

God is preparing ABC/OHIO for even greater ministry in the days ahead. You & the board will be in my prayers as you move to "BUILD Healthy Churches that impact the world for Christ. Stay strong in your service to the Lord!

rec'd 11-14-16 @

Bob Casady

11-2-15

Dear Sharon,

My sincere thanks
to you and all those with
ABC of Ohio that decided to
get me gifts!

The large mum plant
is doing well. Bob took a
picture with his phone &
showed Leslie! The gift
card will be put to good
use in the spring! I love
to shop at Wilson's.

Thanks to all for your
kindness.

In Christ's love,
Sharon

