

REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE MINISTER

Welcome to the 192nd annual meeting of the American Baptist Churches in Rhode Island. Your presence represents your congregations' commitment to our shared ministries as well as your personal investment in what God is doing through our churches in Rhode Island. As you review the reports of our work together in 2018, do not fail to look up from the printed page and notice the remarkable individuals who surround you. Together, as individuals and as churches, we have enjoyed wonderful opportunities for ministry and mission throughout the past year.

I have the unique privilege of moving among you. Sunday after Sunday, week after week, I am amazed at how God is present and calling us through worship and ministry within each of our local congregations. It was my great joy to join in worship with 31 of our congregations during this past year. Time and again I was encouraged to pray and praise. The vast reach of your weekly ministries humble and excite me.

In addition to what God is doing in each of our local settings, we have joined together in some shared ministries. These shared ministries are celebrated this evening. It is amazing! Look at some of what God allows us to do together.

- Touch hundreds of children through our Camping Ministries
- Encourage and engage hundreds of adults in their third, third of life through Elder Care ministries
- Be shaped by our heritage through the Baptist Heritage Center
- Encourage theological education through the Rhode Island Baptist Education Society
- Provide space and opportunity for spiritual and physical renewal through conferencing
- Practice stewardship of sacred and shared resources by our Investment Committee
- Call out gifted servant leaders through our Recruitment Committee
- Share in the work of the Baptist Home Board as they marshal resources to meet unique needs of older adults
- Be challenged and sent into missional ministry by the strong leadership of American Baptist Women
- Provide necessary resources for ministry partners as well as emergency funds for clergy families through the Baptist Fund
- Shepherd those God is calling into ordained ministry through the work of the Standing Committee on Ordained Ministry
- Walk with churches during times of transition as they search for the gifted leaders prepared to lead them into the future
- Join sister congregations for times of celebration and provide ongoing presence and support during times of stress
- Provide opportunities of spiritual enrichment, professional development, and collegial growth through the work of our Minister's Council.
- And, of course, there is much more.

One of my greatest joys is spending time with our pastors and church leaders. They honor me with their time, friendship, and shared tasks. Whether it is a cup of coffee and prayer with a

pastoral colleague, an evening meeting with a gifted congregational committee, or a day of conversation and planning with a gathered group of church leaders as they looking into God's future, I am increasingly aware that God is at work among American Baptists in Rhode Island.

We have much to celebrate and more work to do. Thanks be to God!

Blessings+

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Wiles". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends under the word "Wiles".

Rev. Dr. Tom Wiles
Executive Minister