

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT 2016

The Board of Ministries held six meetings during the year. We agreed on a fundamental change on how “ABCORI” is used in our conversations and how we churches in the region may perceive what this “ABCORI” entity may be. To be clear, ABCORI is not Canonicus nor the offices that exist on that property. ABCORI is the American Baptist Churches of RI. That means that it is you and me and anyone that attends an American Baptist Church in RI. We simply use the acronym because that’s what we do as a society. Our conscious effort in 2016 was to refer to our churches as the “Region” and the administrative offices as the “Regional Office”. Our hope is that we can continue that going into 2017 so that there is no doubt that we are a community of churches working together to serve God – not an office of administrative staff. Our hope is also that all churches will begin to see ABCORI as the Region and make that fundamental change along with us.

When I first took over the office of president I felt that God put on my heart that the communication amongst our churches could be approved upon. I felt passionate that even though there were “pockets” of churches working together, that if we could expand that to more and more churches working together, that God would do even bigger and more powerful things in our Region. I brought this before the Board of Ministries and they agreed. So I put together a team of pastors and lay folks that shared that passion to discuss what the current picture looks like, and what we would like the future one to grow into. We met in 2016 and came up with some wonderful ideas on how to better communicate between churches, share resources, share ministry ideas, and how the Regional Office could support the efforts. Our next step is to gather a team together to start to implement those ideas. I recently sent out an email describing that effort and asking for volunteers. My hope is that I will receive responses from all over the Region representing different cultures and languages and ministries that are already taking place.

We once again were hosted by the Canonicus Summer staff at our June meeting. We had a wonderful dinner and great conversations with the leaders and the teens as we ate among them. Thanks to the Canonicus staff, led by Deb Guilmain, once again for making us feel welcome.

More involvement from the Region’s Ministry teams is still needed. I am excited to say that the teams that are active are providing valuable leadership in helping to plan congregational training, programs to support our pastors, and events to keep the teens active in their relationships and their faith. It continues to be our hope and dream that all the ministry teams will share in our common ministry in 2017.

The All Church Worship was held at Wakefield Baptist and was such a unique and wonderful experience. Led by Pastor Clay Berry, the service was much like they normally have but very different from recent All Church Worship services. Everyone was involved from the teens in the church to the teen leaders at Canonicus Camp, to pastors and lay people from our churches. The music was wonderful and memorable – God has gifted so many churches with choirs that have voices like the angels. Each church had the chance to offer up a ministry that they are doing to share with all the other churches. And after that offering, we had an offering for South Providence Neighborhood Matters in which we raised \$460.82.

The finances for the Region were successfully managed by Tom Wiles, Mark Sjoberg, Nikita McCalister, Bob Butzier and John Tucker. A special thanks goes to these volunteers. They take their ministry duties very seriously and they understand that they play a big role in helping our churches to be good stewards of the blessings that God has provided.

A special thanks to all the administrative staff of the Region for all they do. They keep the “lights on” and they keep things flowing between the churches. They help us to keep this wonderful organism called

American Baptist Churches of RI growing closer and closer so that together – God can do wonderful things and reach Rhode Island with His love.

Lastly, it has been my honor and privilege to serve as your president. It was a wonderful experience, one that I will always cherish. I hope I can continue to be a part of the growth in our churches and perhaps play a small role in connecting the churches in our Region so that God has a mighty and faithful force to do His will with. Rhode Island needs us to take a leadership role and I have faith that God is preparing us right now to do just that.

Your president and faithful servant in Christ,

Ken Marrocco