

President's Report November 2017

Serving as President of ABCUSA carries joys, challenges, and opportunities. Each has been a part of this president's tenure during a season of transition and change. God's sustaining grace, the guidance of the officers, and the support of OGS staff has blessed me daily. With gratitude for all who walk the way with us, I write this final report as president.

The past few months have been a season of settling into a new normal with Dr. Spitzer as our General Secretary. His strategy for moving ABCUSA forward is bold, yet possible. I pray for Lee and ask that as BGM, we each do the same. May God give him grace, wisdom, and strength as he works with REMC, NEC, NLC, OGS staff and BGM.

Since June's BGM and Biennial Mission Summit, I have attended a portion of the Christian Church Disciples (of Christ) General Assembly where I participated in their ecumenical dinner and evening worship. We share many similarities with our Disciples brothers and sisters, so I was blessed to see teens actively participating in worship and hearing their strong commitment to growing healthy churches and seeking justice for the sake of God's Realm on earth.

August brought planning for the September Executive Committee meeting. There was also time devoted to working out communication with ABHMS regarding relocation to 1075 property. I participated in Rhythms of the Spirit Retreat August 14-18 at Camp Canonicus in Rhode Island. It is my prayer that OGS will continue to explore possibilities for supporting and expanding the ministry of Rhythms. In these troubling times persons need space for deepening spiritual formation and contemplative ways to connect with Christ. The opportunities for Rhythms of the Spirit are extensive if we will seek ways to move this effort forward.

ABC Wisconsin asked me to facilitate an American Baptist Distinctives course for a prospective ordination candidate. What a blessing to walk with someone who encountered American Baptist autonomy, interdependence, and ordinances with new eyes. This opportunity raises awareness that those who lead our congregations are taught so they might keep our American Baptist tenets alive and functioning.

September 14-16 the BGM Executive Committee met in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The meeting focused on building relationship with Dr. Spitzer and discussing current needs and issues for BGM; many which are brought forward to this November BGM meeting. Our meeting was literally between Hurricanes Irma and Maria. The Executive Committee experienced the generous hospitality of ABC Puerto Rico, particularly Iglesia Bautista Rio Piedras, who hosted our meeting. Our hearts carry concern, prayers, and hope for the people of Puerto Rico. I am grateful our BGM offering will go to meet needs in ABCPR.

In October attention turned to preparation for this BGM meeting. Thanks go to Marilyn Tyson for her expertise with Board matters. We will miss Marilyn and pray God's blessings upon her in her retirement. Also in October I attended the Evergreen Association Annual

Meeting. It was an honor to share in the celebration of Marica Patton's tenure as that region's Executive Minister.

President-Elect, Josue Gomez, and I have worked together to prepare for the transition into his leadership. I am grateful for Josue's wisdom and strength. He will lead with discernment and openness these next two years.

I thank the staff, particularly for their gracious ability to help the officers and BGM do our work. Without their wisdom, guidance, and assistance, this season of tremendous transition would have been overwhelming to lead. I'm also thankful for the officers and Executive Committee who continue to share their perspectives as we've wrestled with some changes, like the building move, and embraced other changes. Thank you for support and encouragement these past two years. I look forward to serving with Josue and Dean as Past President. ABCUSA has much to share with God's world. May we continue to listen to the Spirit's leading and act with compassion, grace, and mercy in the many ways we minister together.

In the spirit of grace and trust,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judy Fackenthal". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping "F".

Judy Fackenthal, President 2016-2017