

American Baptist Churches USA
Board of General Ministries
Meeting Overview – June 12-14, 2024
Green Lake Conference Center, Green Lake, Wis.



1. The Board of General Ministries of American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA) met June 12-14, 2024 at Green Lake Conference Center in Green Lake, Wis.
2. ABCUSA President Rev. Nikita McCalister welcomed all BGM directors and staff and called the meeting to order on Wednesday afternoon, June 12.
3. The ABCUSA Focus Statement was shared in unison.

American Baptist Churches are missional congregations that nurture devoted disciples of Jesus Christ who live their lives in mission and ministry for the healing of the world through the love of God.
4. An integral part of the June Board of General Ministries meeting was the installation of Rev. Dr. Gina C. Jacobs-Strain as General Secretary of American Baptist Churches USA on Thursday evening, June 13, which was celebrated at the Federated Church of Green Lake, Wis. Board of General Ministries Directors shared in the opportunity to witness a historic installation with leaders from American Baptist Home Mission Societies, the American Baptist Foundation, American Baptist Women's Ministries, the American Baptist Extension Corporation, American Baptist International Ministries, the Ministers Council, representatives from the ABC Women's Caucus, National Black Caucus of ABC, the Intercaucus, Regional Executive Ministers, local church members from the Federated Church of Green Lake, Wis., Mt. Zion Baptist Church of Madison, Wis., and American Baptist women and visitors in person and via live stream. Learn more and find a link to the live stream here: <https://www.abc-usa.org/2024/06/rev-dr-gina-c-jacobs-strain-installed-as-general-secretary-of-american-baptist-churches-usa/>
5. In General Secretary Rev. Dr. Gina Jacobs-Strain's Board report, she noted that serving as General Secretary is an incredible joy. She shared about updates in the Office of the General Secretary since her term started at the beginning of 2024, saying, "We now have a new onboarding and orientation process for newly hired staff. We want staff to feel welcomed. New staff have a full day orientation with remote staff and partners, which includes a tour of the partners' facilities in King of Prussia. They are also assigned buddies." Dr. Jacobs-Strain emphasized the Mission Table priority "Empowering youth and young adults," lifting up the Biennial Mission Summit Planning Team's decision to intentionally include a Young Adult Advisory Team in the planning for the 2025 event. Each national partner sponsored a member of this advisory team. She shared the theme of the 2025 Biennial Mission Summit event, "Come Seek Living Water," which was inspired by a contest to develop the theme for the Biennial. She invited directors to the Biennial in Omaha, Neb., at the CHI Health Center Convention Center, July 3-6, 2025. She also noted the National Leadership Council's special meetings, held 6/4-6/6, to discuss the seven Mission Table priorities to facilitate continued conversation and ways to implement follow up actions.
6. The ABCUSA Office of the General Secretary will be rebranding and updating the One Great Hour of Sharing offering.

7. The Board heard a report of the nominating committee. The committee noted that Thomas Ross resigned as Vice President of American Baptist Churches USA. According to ABCUSA Bylaws, "When a vacancy occurs in the office of the Vice President, the Board of General Ministries shall, upon nomination by the ABCUSA Nominating Committee, elect from among its At-Large Directors a Vice President to serve for the remainder of the term so vacated." The Nominating Committee met in May 2024 to discuss the vacancy of Vice President, and at the June meeting Board of General Ministries Directors voted to elect the nominee of the Nominating Committee, Bill Poland (ABC of the Central Region) as Vice President of American Baptist Churches USA.
8. The Board voted to elect Joy Martinez-Marshall, the President's nominee, as a member of the BGM Executive Committee, filling one vacancy, and to elect Brandon Bouldin, the President's nominee, as a member of the BGM Finance Committee and ABCUSA Finance Committee, also filling one vacancy.
9. ABCUSA Past President Jim Wolfe presented a motion on behalf of the BGM Executive Committee that American Baptist Women's Ministries be recognized as a national board. The motion passed, with an understanding that the Standing Rules Committee would work to move this forward, preparing the appropriate bylaws revisions to be approved at the board's November meeting, and to then be brought forward for vote at the 2025 Biennial Mission Summit business meeting in Omaha, Neb.
10. President Nikita McCalister shared in her report that it is an honor and privilege to serve and to come together as a board. She noted that what excites her is being in places where she can hear other people's "God stories." President McCalister stated she would continue to make herself available to engage, introduce, and reintroduce American Baptist Churches to individuals and congregations in every way that she is able.
11. In a report of the Budget Review Officer, Paul Higgins gave an overview of the 2023 Audited Financial Statement of the independent certified public accountants, Tait, Weller & Baker LLP. Higgins reviewed the financial reports prepared by Alan Musoke, Associate General Secretary for Finance/CFO/Treasurer, including financial reports for the year-to-date through April 30, 2024 and also the prior year, through December 31, 2023.
12. The Board Directors spent time in conversation around the seven Mission Table priorities. Directors were asked to choose a topic that they are most passionate about and to share ideas on how they can have an impact in their regions related to the topic they chose.
13. Action Group reports were given on Friday morning, June 14, for each of the following action groups: BGM Finance Committee, Christian Unity and Interfaith Relations, Becoming a Beloved Community, and Communicating ABC Identity.
14. The meeting was adjourned and BGM Chaplain Douglas Scalise led a closing worship with communion, and a reading of the Lord's Prayer.
15. The Board of General Ministries meetings concluded on Friday, June 14.