

ABCOM Committee on Ministry Report To the ABCOM Board
May 2025

The ABCOM Committee on Ministry [COM] consists of representatives from each of our associations, serving three-year terms. At the last annual meeting we were pleased to welcome back to the COM Ken Phelps (North Aroostook) and Jonah Bissell (Bowdoinham). The Damariscotta and Penquis associations are currently not represented because they have not sent anyone to serve in this capacity.

The COM is responsible for implementing standards of recognition for ministerial leadership as determined by the ABCOM. Whether it is commissioning or ordination, our focus is to listen for a Call to ministry, and to discern and assess Character and Competency for ministerial service.

In the course of our work, we meet candidates seeking recognition or ordination who come to us from other denominations, as well as from other ABC regions. Too often a lack of understanding of what it means to be an American Baptist as well as a misreading of Maine and ABCOM culture has led to problems in our churches. Since November 2023 we have been working on a series of educational videos to help potential candidates better understand ABCOM's history, polity, culture, mission and the like. While our primary focus is on potential candidates, we hope this series will also benefit local church search committee members, AIM students, current pastors who are presently serving our churches but have no ABC background, and others interested in learning more about ABCOM.

Maine American Baptist History video can be viewed at:
<https://youtu.be/KiTiwXAlTgM?si=ZeDRIOhfvnFWkdwl>

Maine American Baptist in Mission video can be viewed at:
<https://youtu.be/80FJGct2bKU?si=Gtj3u4e3Q4hNFBly>

We are currently working on two more videos for the series: An Introduction to Maine Culture and Maine American Baptist Women in Ministry.

Last November we hosted a full-day workshop with Jeff MacDonald, author of *Part-Time is Plenty: Thriving Without Full-Time Clergy*. The need for this conversation and envisioning arose from the reality of our unfolding situation as attendance in our churches decrease with accompanying changes in finances. The changing nature of available, trained pastors has an impact as well. We invited representatives from AIM and the Small Church Committee to join us. What we discussed and learned continues to have an impact on our deliberations.

The COM continues to serve our larger ABCOM family through its concern for the ministerial leadership serving our churches.

Sincerely,
Rev. Dr. Pamela Morse
Chair, ABCOM Committee on Ministry