



American Baptist Churches of Pennsylvania & Delaware

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Friends:

On December 29th, I joined a Mission Team from the First Baptist Church of Wellsboro serving in the Dominican Republic. The team started construction on a building that will be part of a medical clinic in San Pedro. Construction was challenging in the Dominican heat with significant manual labor including moving cinderblocks, hauling water, mixing cement, and carrying the cement to the masons building the walls of the structure. Each day, I would return to our compound, physically exhausted from the work but joyful having spent time working alongside our Dominican Republic / Haitian partners.

Most evenings included a worship service at the church on the compound. Despite language barriers, the worship was rich, with inspiring music and time spent studying God's Word. It was a joy being with the DR / Haitian construction workers for worship. On New Year's Eve, the church held an extended service to ring in 2022. The sanctuary was electric with energetic praise and worship including a Conga line to ring in the New Year. Earlier in the day, I had been concerned about being far from my wife and children on New Year's Eve, but as I worshipped at the church, I realized I was with family, the family of God, and that was inspiring. Our mission team was encouraging and supporting to our DR / Haitian partners and our DR / Haitian brothers and sisters in Christ were encouraging and inspiring to us. That ministry of presence was amazing and that experience I will NEVER forget.

Over the past two-plus years, many pastors and local congregations have felt isolated and alone due to the pandemic. Both Pastoral and Congregational Leaders have witnessed decreases in worship attendance and confronted challenges, unlike anything the church has faced in its history. Amid this reality ABCOPAD (American Baptist Churches of Pennsylvania and Delaware) has sought to be family, coming alongside pastoral leaders and congregations to support and encourage. Through webinars, grants, Zoom meetings, small face-to-face gatherings of LLC groups, and more, ABCOPAD has sought to be family, partners in ministry throughout the COVID-19 crises.

As we move into a season of transition in our Region, ABCOPAD has built a new team of GPS (Geographic Pastoral Servants) to work alongside our RMAs (Regional Ministry Associate). The GPS will help to sustain and grow connections and relationships in our Region. The team is already hard at work meeting with pastoral and congregational leaders. Together, the GPS and RMAs are supporting ministry and touching lives all across the Region.

When you support ABCOPAD through contributions to our Partners in Ministry (PIM /Regional) Offering, you make it possible for our Regional Staff to be family in the lives of churches and pastors. Your support makes sustaining and encouraging relationships possible. Thank you for your contributions to PIM in 2021, helping us surpass our annual goal. Please continue to give, making it possible for us to be Partners in Ministry together in 2022.

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