

For the past three years the Conference of Baptist Ministers in Massachusetts has spearheaded a program of stronger collaborative partnership with the various groups that serve in various ways the American Baptist clergy and churches of Massachusetts. Leaders of the Conference, TABCOM's administration, the Massachusetts Baptist Charitable Society, the Boston Baptist Social Union, The Northern Baptist Education Society, The Massachusetts Baptist Multicultural Ministries, and the Center for Career Development and Ministry came together for “**a future with hope**” in our region. The original program was led by our new President, Cheryl Harris and Matthew Rasure, a member of our board representing Judson Association. Matthew is also the President of the board of the Center for Career Development and Ministry. This program has created stronger partnerships in our region. The partners' groups are working on a theme “**Embracing Hospitality**”, for which the Massachusetts Baptist Multicultural Ministries has taken the lead. This involves small diverse dialogical groups, workshops and coming together at Mission Works in October, celebrating this theme and our partnership.

The Conference and the other groups have been partnering in several ways:

- Our Convocation is now a Gathering in November with the Massachusetts Baptist Multicultural Ministries, in which leaders from the other Partner groups participate. The theme in November was “Embracing Hospitality. I led the dialogical part of the program, Sandra Dorsainvil came from International Ministries to bring a message, and we had a beautiful worship experience with 3 minute sermons by two lay persons and two clergy. The music leader was Matthew Rasure, and Mar Imsong acted as moderator. It was for me a spirit filled experience.
- The Conference and the Center for Career Development and Ministry sponsored several workshops together, including a Professional Ethics and Boundaries Workshop which was ably led by the Executive Minister of TABCOM, Mary Day Miller. The collaboration between Mary Miller, Maggie Lewis and myself is rich and fulfilling in this critical area of ethics.
- The Massachusetts Baptist Charitable Society and the Conference serve the same clientele and we continue to work together to serve the clergy and their families. We are planning for an even richer collaboration as we face the challenging situation of clergy today.
- The leaders of the Partner groups - myself, Mary Day Miller, the Charitable Society executive, Roger Spinney of Northern Baptist Education Society, Maggie Lewis of the Center for Career Development and Ministry, Mar Imsong of MBMM, meet regularly to dialogue about ways for continuing and creative collaboration.
- Our board President, Richard Haley has done an excellent job as the Chair of the Commission on Ordained Ministry, where I also serve, as does Mar Imsong, Mary Day Miller. And Marlene Gil, and several other clergy and lay people, seeking to enrich the lives and ministries of new clergy in the region.

- I lead a Dialogue Program with the School of Ministry, and also introduce the students to Interim Ministry. This year I was privileged to speak at the graduation ceremony at Grotonwood.
- The Conference continues to train and certify Interim Ministers for TABCOM. We hold two workshops every year, maintain a list of Approved Interim Ministers, and meet with church leaders to explain Interim Ministry. We have published two workbooks, one for the Interim Minister, “An Interim Ministers Handbook” and One for churches, “What Do We Do Next?” Our Interim Ministry Team is Anita Farber-Robertson, Linda Lea Snyder, John Minott, Cynthia Smothers, myself and Jerrie Shepard Matney, our new member.
- The Conference also co-sponsors a program developed by the Old Colony Association for clergy and lay leaders.
- ABROM, the American Baptist Retirees of Massachusetts, holds a spring luncheon every year. It is a great way for the Retirees and their spouses to share their experiences, talking, worshipping and enjoying each others’ company. I attempt this way and other ways to stay in connection with the retirees. Our treasurer, **Milt Ryder** also publishes a newsletter for the retirement grant recipients, helping to keep them in touch with each other. Milt has served the Conference as treasurer for many years, and this year is **the recipient of The Daniel Sharp Award for excellence in ministry.**
- I continue to reach out to the churches with programs and preaching to support pastors .
- I offer pastoral care to the clergy and their families. If you want my presence as a pastor, you should feel free to call me. If you want me to pray about any issue in your life, I will pray with you and/or in my private prayer. Keep me informed.
- I am often at Ordination councils as a prayerful presence, and attend ordination and installation services as my schedule allows.

The Conference has developed an active, diverse and dialogical board. They have worked well together and are looking to the future with renewed hope. I give thanks for each one of them.

I am encouraged because of the thoughtful and creative younger clergy in our churches. The realities in the church and the world are dark and difficult. But in our region God has raised up prophets, pastors and teachers for these times. I feel deep hope. And I remind myself and all of you that **“faithfulness is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”**

Michael Harvey