**Pastor’s Annual Report 2023/24**

If a shepherd has a hundred sheep and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? **13** And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. **14** So it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost.

As I begin the annual report for the start of my 20th year at Berean I am grateful for many things. I am grateful for Berean’s ongoing and ever-growing engagement in the community. The clothing exchange, food closet, and holiday food basket ministries have proven to be incredibly important resources for our neighbors. I am so grateful for the ongoing support of the whole church to keep these ministries going. I am also grateful for the way that Sharon and the Outreach committee involve friends and neighbors from the community in the operation of these ministries. Many other ministries reach out into our community; the Weekend Snackpack program, meals for Sanctuary Men’s Shelter, donations of clothing to Mathewson Street Methodist church in Providence and their ministry to the unhoused, and Davis’s Purses of Love, to name a few more. I am so proud to be a part of a church that is so intent on serving the community. So, I thank you all for maintaining that engagement over the past year.

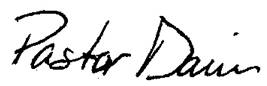
The music ministry at Berean is another aspect of our lives together that I am particularly proud of and grateful for. It has been so enjoyable to begin to learn new praise songs with some of our new members who are passionate about that form of worship music. The Little Girls Choir has been such a blessing as has the Adult Choir. Welcoming student musicians from Emma and Bill’s music studio has been such a wonderful gift for our worship experience. But it is also a chance for us to give a gift as well. The raucously affirming response that you give to these young people means more to them than you may know. Some come to our church with some significant emotional stresses and questions about identity. Your extravagant and enthusiastic love for them is a true gift that has a lasting impact on their well-being. We cannot close any mention of the music program without expressing how grateful we are for Emma and Bill, their talent, their hard work, their inclusion and encouragement of anyone who wants to make a joyful noise, and their understanding of how important music is to the worship experience are all gifts beyond measure.

I’m grateful for the work that is more behind the scenes but no less important to Berean’s ministry. The time that Shawn and other volunteers put into managing our finances. The hours that Kelly spends managing the books, which is no simple task and very demanding. We wouldn’t be able to serve many people in the neighborhood if we didn’t have a clear understanding of our financial resources. We are so blessed to have such knowledgeable and dedicated folks working on church finances. The same could be said of the House committee (again, under Kelly’s direction). The new driveway and parking lot are beautiful and we are grateful for Kathy Robert’s remembering Berean so generously in her will, which made this improvement possible. When people come to visit Berean for the first time they often remark upon how lovely the space is. And that is due to the hard work and attention of the House Committee and Al Heon. While many of us may not see or even speak to Barbara Sidla, the church secretary, she too is a key to Berean’s ongoing ministry. Going beyond getting the mail, answering the phone and email, keeping us all connected, printing bulletins, and creating the newsletter, Barbara provides a warm and encouraging presence in the church office.

When I think about Christian Ed for the young people here at Berean I am reminded of the quote by Maya Angelou, “I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” We may not have a large number of students in our classroom. But what I know is that the young people who show up feel safe, loved, encouraged, and celebrated. And I’m grateful for Aaron, Ann, Donna, and Carol who make sure that no matter if the class size is 2 or 12, those who arrive, know they are loved madly by God. And I also appreciate the lessons that they share, for Black History Month, Native American History Month, Pride Month, Women’s History Month, and our special holiday seasons as well. They teach us and lead us in integrating our faith with the world, and the people, around us.

I am grateful for the work of the Worship and Fellowship committee, and their efforts to create meaningful experiences of worship and fellowship (hence the name.) I am thankful for the time they spend getting to know prospective new members. I am grateful for their efforts in helping me to stay better organized, which is not easy I assure you. In particular, I want to thank Neil Sepe for being so dependable. Whether I need a reader in a pinch, or someone to help set something up or take it down, make a phone call to a member, take the collection, or greet people, well, Neil is always ready, willing, and able to help. Thank you, Neil. I also want to make mention of the fact that this year marks Berean’s 150th anniversary. Sandy, the chair of Worship and Fellowship has formed a subcommittee and they have been meeting to plan a variety of events so that we can celebrate. I am grateful for the work of this subcommittee and invite you to keep watching for more details.

We have been blessed by so many new members and friends. These folks have not only been faithful to church attendance, but they have jumped right into offering their time talent, and passion to the ministries of the church. I am so grateful that God has brought you to us. I am thankful for the positive impact you’ve had on our life and ministry here at Berean. You’ve all been such a gift that has enriched our church family and improved our service to the community. Thank you.

It is this gratitude for new friends and members over the past few years that leads me to the focus I plan to personally maintain and I invite you to join me. That is a focus on being a safe space for those who have been hurt by the church. It isn’t a totally new ministry focus. When I look back over my 20 years here I think we have always been a worshiping community that has attracted those who had been hurt or disappointed by Church. But as I’ve been reflecting on this fact and also on the increase in people writing books, sharing on social media, and creating podcasts about the harm done to themselves and to others by church I think I hear God’s leading. This increase in folks being open about their hurt confirms our long experience and hints at our unique call. God has been preparing us to be a safe and healing space for those harmed by religious communities who seek some sense of healing and peace. So, I hope you will join me in praying about this, asking God to confirm this sense of calling (or correct it if I’m mistaken). If this is our call I hope you will join me in strategizing how to seek and find those who need a safe place to heal and exploring what faith might look like for them. Finally, I hope you will join me in praying about how we can continue to nurture the skills and gifts necessary for being allies and companions of folks hurt by church.

**Berean Baptist Annual Meeting**

**Jan. 22, 2023**

Attendance was taken. Twenty-nine church members were present in the sanctuary and six more were present online; a quorum was met.

The minutes from the 2022 Annual Meeting were accepted as presented.

Clerk’s report was presented and accepted.

Pastor’s report was presented and accepted.

**Treasurer’s Report:** Jen Collins has stepped down from the treasurer role. Shawn Harwood presented this report and thanked Jen for her many years of diligent service.

We are within $1,000 of last year’s income.

Pre-COVID we were receiving $22,500 annually in income from the preschool (10 months at $2,250 per month). We are in the process of reworking the lease with the preschool to ensure more revenue. If that isn’t successful, we will have to consider other options for leasing the hall.

Shawn noted that we used $9,000 from our pooled funds last year to meet expenses. We do have reserves, but this will run out in approximately ten years if we continue to use the funds at this rate. Shawn added that we’ll be OK if we get the lease sorted out.

We’ve been successful at acquiring grant funds and have begun to build in 10% for administrative costs.

We are still planning to give our paid staff members bonuses from gains realized from our invested funds.

**Christian Education:** Anne Harwood presented this report and announced that Aaron Coutu will serve as committee chair this year.

**Outreach Report:** Sharon presented this report. She recognized Kathy Roberts’s many years of contributions and dedication to this committee. Anne Harwood has offered to co-chair the committee with Sharon, and Carolyn Ross will serve as secretary. Sharon noted that members of the Burrillville community have also been very helpful. She expressed gratitude to Mary Beth Martin, Jean Wiberg, Linda Dickey, and many others. We have been serving 20-25 families per month. Sharon is excited about 2023; the ARPA grant has been submitted with a request for $25,000 which will be used to support the work of the Outreach Committee as well as the church in general.

**House Committee:** Kelly Hunt presented this report. She recognized the good work of our sexton, Al. She also noted that George Robert (Burrillville resident) puts great effort into maintaining our building and makes donations to Outreach. Kelly welcomed Robert Collins to the Committee.

**Worship and Fellowship:** Sandy Easterbrooks thanked the committee for their work and noted that we were pleased to be back to having our Agape meal, post-Annual meeting meal, coffee hours, and choir returning. We’re hoping to expand our fellowship offerings in the coming year.

**Finance Committee:** Shawn presented this report and announced that we need a new treasurer. Duties include writing checks, approving expenses, and helping to count the offering. Marge will be stepping down from the committee. Shawn thanked Marge and Don for their help with weekly counting.

Shawn reassured those attending the meeting that we don’t have a structural deficit.

Sharon asked how she should purchase food for the food pantry in the absence of a treasurer. Shawn said that Sharon will be able to use one of the church cards to make these purchases.

**Pastoral Relations:** Veronica Bessette said that the Pastor’s evaluation was conducted in the fall and “all is well.”

**All committee reports were accepted.**

**ABCORI:** Election of ABCORI delegates: Don Waterman and Marge Fenley will stay on as delegates. Don noted that ABCORI has Wednesday morning virtual “coffee chats” on relevant Christian topics (“eNotes”). ABCORI delegates attend the annual meeting in March and participate in voting.

**Budget:** Shawn presided over the vote on the budget, which was accepted.

Discussion followed regarding the preschool lease. Shawn proposed that we offer a new lease of $2,250 per month for 10 months if the owners sign the agreement before the end of the school year. If they can’t commit to that, Shawn proposed we end that relationship. Mark Bonn suggested that we require acceptance of the lease before the end of the school year (April 1) to allow us time to find another tenant if necessary. Kelly suggested a month-to-month option as a back-up, but Shawn and Mark said that would not work for the preschool. June Bizier asked if we have other tenants in mind or if others have inquired. Shawn said that yes, we have been approached, and he will reach out to those parties if the space becomes available.

A motion was made and passed that we will present the lease to the preschool with the terms as discussed, with signature required by April 1.

**Reelection of Pastor:** When Darin left the sanctuary, Roberta thanked the congregation for their support of Darin during what was a very difficult year for our church, as we lost four dear members. The congregation voted unanimously to retain Darin as our pastor.

**Election of Officers:** Roberta and Kelly offered to serve as co-treasurers. Veronica will remain as moderator, Cindy Bonn will remain as church clerk, Shawn will remain as assistant treasurer. Slate of church officers was approved.

**Committee Members and Chairs:** Committee chairs and members were confirmed and approved.

**Clerk’s Report for 2023**

The Diaconate Committee met every month except July during 2023.

**Membership Status**

We currently have 90 active members. Our by-laws require a quorum of 25% of the membership attend the Annual Meeting for voting purposes, which will be 22 members for the 2024 meeting.

**New members:** In 2023 we welcomed seven new members: Gail Creque, Cheryl Lacey, Cortney Lacey, Kathryn Palen, Joel Rawson, Brenda Rene, and Marc Rene.

**Baptisms:** None

**Dedications:** None

**Deceased:** None

**Berean Baptist Church**

**Finance Committee Report**

**2023**

The Finance committee consisted of the following members this year: Don Waterman, Sharon Ponce, Marge Fenley, Rose Doughty, Roberta Collins, Kelly Hunt and Shawn Harwood. Kelly Hunt and Roberta Collins share the Treasurer duties and Shawn Harwood is the Assistant Treasurer.

The finances at Berean improved this greatly year due to generous gifts from current members, contributions from new members and the return of the full Harrisville Preschool income. All these blessings made it possible to eliminate the deficit predicted in last year’s budget. Thank you so much for making this all happen!

The increase in the funds available to the church has now made it possible for us to better recognize the contributions of our pastor and other church employees. A performance review was undertaken for all employees this year and as a result we are proposing a modest increase in salaries based on what is required by law (minimum wage) and increased income in the general fund. Also, we are also proposing to continue awarding bonuses to church employees based on their salary and the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for 2023. The current CPI for the economy in 2023 is expected to be 3.1% this year (6.5% last year). Money for the bonuses would come from our gains in our investment funds with ABCORI if available (very likely given 2023 market performance).

Another personnel change this year is that we will be switching our wonderful Music Director Emma Latendresse from a contractor to an official employee of Berean. This will make it easier for Emma and for Berean Finance by reducing reporting requirements. Welcome employee Emma!

The Finance committee examined our stock and bond holdings with ABCORI this year to see if we needed to make a change to improve returns. It was decided not to withdrawal or change our investments at this time due to the needed support that our investment fees provide to ABCORI. We may revisit this topic in the future depending on the investment return and management.

The outlook for 2023 is that our finances will be stable this year provided that giving to the general fund remains stable and that Harrisville Preschool will continue to provide us rental income. In other good news there is room in the budget for the Berean 150-year celebration this year. This looks to be special year for Berean!

Respectfully submitted,

Shawn Harwood

Finance Committee Chair

**Christian Ed Annual Report**

**2023**

﻿

Christian Ed Committee:

Aaron Coutu  
Ann Harwood   
Friend to Christian Ed: Donna Landry   
  
Christian Ed. had a great year with a wonderful core group of ~ 6-8 children.

They enjoyed learning about social justice leaders during Black History month in February and Pride month in June.   

We also learned about how the power of prayer can be so helpful in our lives and in the lives of others and made prayer pretzels for Lent.

We enjoyed reading stories about the life of Jesus and his followers, and thanks to Emma and Ashley, the children were able to share beautiful music and singing throughout the year.

We look forward to helping our food pantry in 2024 with creative fundraising.

**Outreach Ministry Annual Report**

**“Do the best you can until you know better”**

**(Maya Angelou – April 4, 1928 – May 28, 2014)**

**Year Ending December 31, 2023**

Chair heads for “2023” were Ann Harwood and Sharon Ponce. Team members were: Marge Fenley, Julie Markey, Carolyn Ross, Kristine Sullivan, Mary Beth Martin, Linda Morgenstern, Glennis Esterbrook, Jeff Jones, Lauren Capron, Lynn Holden (friend) and Donna Landry (member at large).

**HELPING HANDS FOOD PANTRY**

Helping Hands Food Pantry- Throughout 2023 we received generous monetary donations as well as food products from our congregation, families, friends, people in our community and groups such as the Masons, VFW in Harrisville (Ray Trinque), New Rhode Nutrition (Courtney & Cheryl Lacey) Woonsocket Sportsman’s Club (Chris Schwartz). Also, the Town Grant of $12,000.00 that was received from the State of Rhode Island America Rescue Plan Act) through funds allocated from the federal government have been instrumental in keeping the pantry stocked and operational. The funds are dwindling so we do plan to apply for a Basic Human Needs Grant from the Rhode Island Foundation. We appreciate the generous support of our community friends, Corky Emrick, Kelly & Ernest Ciummino, George Robert, among many, who all provided monetary and also food/personal hygiene items. The number of families serviced greatly increased due to the high rise in food prices which in turn had an effect on families struggling to pay for food, heating oil/gas, medical, and clothing. Ann, Sharon and Jean Wiberg did the main shopping and the pantry was mainly staffed by Jean Wiberg, Amanda Rawson, Nancy Linda Morgenstern, Nancy Arnold, and Linda Dickey, and they did an amazing job! Thank you to Pastor Collins, Lance Collins, Linda Morgenstern, Donna Landry, Amanda Rawson, Jeremy Ponce, Nef Ponce (his truck ☺), Donna and Brianne Tucker, who over the course of 2023 helped unload all the groceries at the church.  
  
**FOOD BASKET DISTRIBUTION**

**Easter-** Twenty-two (22 families) received a food basket and gift card to Price Rite for $40.00on Saturday, April 1st as Easter fell on Sunday, April 9th.

**Thanksgivin**g- Thirty (30) families received a food basket and gift card to Price Rite or Walmart of $40.00 on Saturday, November 18th.

**Christmas**- Thirty-two (32) families received a food basket and gift card to Price Rite or Walmart of $40.00 on Saturday, December 17th and the **Pajama Giving Tree** had twenty-eight (28) children who received a gift of pajamas that same day.

We are so grateful for the generosity of so many in our community and beyond. The dedication of all the volunteers who also gave their time throughout the year was humbling. The assembly of baskets was achieved with the touches of Linda Morgenstern, Nancy Arnold, and Diane Champagne. Linda’s idea with adding a gingerbread cookie decorating kit was a huge hit. Debbie Tillinghast’s cookies- absolutely scrumptious! The PJ Gift Giving Tree was organized by Amanda Rawson and Nancy Arnold and the ornament tags worked well. All gifts were bought and brought to the church by the deadline making the task go smoothly. Linda Dickey and Miss Avery Covino (Sharon’s granddaughter) took care of the distribution.

**FAMILY CLOTHING EXCHANGE:** We were blessed with donations of coats and clothing from church members, community, & various agencies. As word of our clothing ministry continued to be shared we were very happy to be able to assist many more families with their clothing needs, especially those with young children. Social media has been utilized through Facebook and our Town’s pages.

We are also very appreciative of the volunteers who helped throughout the year or visited to learn how it works and did community service. Shout out of thanks to Christine Mulligan and Vicki Martin who have been faithful to this ministry for the past sixteen (16) years and to many others, Carol Pelkey, Amanda Rawson, Linda Dickey, and Nancy Arnold, Ella Covino, & Avery Covino.

Giving Table- Mary Beth Martin continued to offer free household items on the Saturdays the HHP and FCR were open. She set up a table and not only greets the families visiting but encourages them to stop by the table and take what they may need or like. It has been well received. There are household items such as dishes, cups, glasses, decorative items, seasonal etc. For 2023 we decided due to the colder weather it would be prudent to hold off doing the table in the winter months and resume in the spring, 2024, late April, early May.

Mother’s Day Tea- Mary Beth Martin’s wonderful idea for this tea was warmly received by those who attended. We were grateful to Emma Latendresse for providing music for the event. Some of her piano students played keyboard during the tea and it was a very nice touch. There some nice raffle baskets and dahlias for sale. There was a fashion show with some of our families modeling clothing they selected when visiting the Family Clothing Resource. They were great! We hope to have this again in 2024- date TBD.

Family Fair- The Fair was cancelled due to inclement weather in June 2023 and we hope to participate in 2024.

Tri-County Community Action Agency- We hosted one Heating Assistance Workshop on October 7th with Dawn Taylor Church, the heating assistance coordinator. Families were happy to have help with their applications for LIHEAP.

“One Warm Coat” – We continued our partnership with this agency and are looking forward to receiving donations of new and/or gently used winter coats in January 2024.

Harvest Community Church - “Men’s Sanctuary”- Meals were prepared for this ministry that services homeless men. The shelter re- opened on November 1st 2023. Pastor Steve Bacon at HCC has been the Director of this program for the past 19 years. Some members of our church and community prepared wonderful meals. Jim & Cindy have faithfully made the deliveries and will continue to do so. The program runs from November until mid-April 2024 and delivery is made to HCC on the second Tuesday of those months.

Mathewson Street Church: Over the course of the year Kevin Simon, Outreach Director, has arranged to have volunteers come to Berean to pick up clothing, blankets, and “Davis’s Purses of Love” (women’s handbags filled with personal hygiene items). We will continue this ministry now on an annual basis with distribution to MSC in the fall of 2024. Donna Landry and Sharon Ponce are the contacts for this ministry.

At this time, we want to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to everyone who has worked hard this past year to help us attain our goals of celebrating and helping those in need in our own community and providing assistance to others in need beyond our immediate community.

Respectfully submitted,

Peace,

The Outreach Team

**House Report**

House had another busy year with building maintenance and projects. Here is a list of items completed by House in the past year:

* Indoor/Outdoor cleaning on April 22, 2023.
  + Trimming bushes/trees, filling in mulch, weeding, sweeping sidewalks, polishing items in the sanctuary, dusting, wiping down walls.
* Fire Extinguisher Inspections
  + George Roberts completes Quarterly inspections with yearly state inspections being conducted in August/September.
* The Ansel System (fire protection system for the stove in the kitchen) is inspected every 6 months.
* The Fire Marshall inspection was completed on May 30, 2023, and no deficiencies were cited.
* George Roberts and Kelly addressed the drainage issues on the outdoor stairwell leading to the lower level of the church. They removed a lot of debris from the pipe and it will continue to be monitored.
* The mechanism at the top of the outside door on the Town Hall side of the church was adjusted by Al and Kelly, as it was bent.
* In July, the parking lot had a complete overhaul, completed by Nulook. The previous parking lot was torn up and the ground leveled. Drainage was created around the fencing by adding 2-3 feet of 6-inch-deep crushed stone. They removed the beehive drainage system that was being stored behind the shed and repaved the two walkways leading to the church and 1 leading to Ashton Court.
* Outreach had a grant approved for air purifiers and George Roberts completed the electrical updates needed for the purifiers to work. George provided his services at no charge.
* A new snowplow person was hired.
* House approved salary increases for Al and Barbara.
* Al had to fix the toilet in the front bathroom closest to the road.
* George and Kelly reviewed the splits in January to determine where the baseboard pipes go to prevent the possibility of freezing should there be a long stretch of cold temperatures. If there is a prolonged cold snap it has been determined the splits should be shut off and the furnace turned on.
* Al kept the building clean throughout the year.
* Al continues to maintain the grounds of the church which includes mowing, raking, weeding shrub beds, and trimming the shrubs. House approved the purchase of a new lawn mower in April 2023.
* The church has been removed from the Hartford Steam Boiler inspection list.
* The AED is monitored for proper battery levels and function.

Future Projects to be addressed:

* Paint on the walls and molding in the sanctuary is chipping and needs to be addressed.
* Entry way on the Town Hall side needs drywall repair and painting. Damage was left from previous leaking after ice dams formed.
* Weather stripping needs to be installed on the handicap ramp door, driveway side door and basement door.
* Consider rehab of preschool bathrooms.
* The Granger-Hall hall roof was installed in the 1980’s and will need replacement.
* Continue to monitor intermittent leak in Granger-Hall hall which occurs only under specific conditions with wind and rain.
* Address ceilings in rooms of basement.
* Paint most rooms in the basement.
* Continue to monitor for mold during damp seasons, particularly in area of Pastor’s office and humidifiers will be run as needed.
* Continue to clean and monitor basement rooms that turn into a “catch-all” for items.
* Plan Spring clean-up project.
* Changing lighting behind stained glass in pulpit area. George Robert suggested changing to LED lighting and cutting eight-foot plywood in half for ease of bulb replacement in the future.
* Floor strips for ramp leading from the sanctuary to Granger-Hall hall.

If anyone can assist with any of these projects, please contact a member of the House Committee.

Members of the committee for 2023

Kelly Hunt, Mark Bonn, Marge Fenley, Roger Landry, Deanna Larson and Roberta Collins

House Committee

**WORSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP**

**2023**

With COVID in our rear-view mirror, Berean Baptist Church has embraced many activities that were put on hold during the pandemic. Our church attendance has continued to increase with many in the sanctuary and online. In 2023 we welcomed seven new members (Kathryn Palen, Joel Rawson, Marc and Brenda Renee, Cheryl and Cortney Lacey, and Gail Creque) through transfer of letter and/or profession of faith.

Coffee hour resumed with Linda and Carolyn offering coffee and many different treats

each Sunday. We offered iced tea and lemonade this summer, but it was too hot to leave the

air-conditioned sanctuary so we stayed in the sanctuary to visit.

Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and our Easter Services were held in the church and on

line. Don Waterman led the Sunrise Service. Thanks Don!

We met at ice cream shops on a couple of occasions this summer. Any excuse for ice cream!

Some of us met on a dismal afternoon in August for a picnic supper by the falls in Harrisville.

We enjoyed the conversation and fellowship.

Our AGAPE service and brunch were the Sunday before Thanksgiving and was a great

time for fellowship, and of course, good food. Thanks to all who helped set up and clean up! “Many hands made light work.”

Our music program is the BEST!! Emma and Bill continue to offer wonderful music

each Sunday. Emma varies the music selections, and they are always fantastic. Emma also

offered a hymn sing this year. The congregation sent her lists of favorite hymns and they

were included in our worship service. Everyone is hoping for another. Bill leads us in the hymns and thanks to Cindy Bonn and Ashley Palmer for filling in as song leaders when Bill isn’t available.

The church choir is now singing once a month, a girls’ choir has formed and they sing

often. Ashley Palmer, Becky Boss and Joy Schuyler have sung beautiful solos and Mark

Renee has joined on percussion for some of the music. Emma has continued to have her piano students play for us. We thank Emily Martin, Liam Latendresse, Keegan Alix, Braelyn White, Liam Tracy, Mason Gaucher, Julian Branchaud, Kennedy Gaucher, Skylar Killen, Madelyn Lapierre, Riley Allen and Anna Collins. Emily Cook has been wonderful as a substitute when Emma is on vacation.

The Christmas music was unbelievable this year. Emma’s sister-in-law, Elsie Smith, joined

her for piano duets, and Emily Cook played her oboe. So great. Thanks Elsie. And Emily!

We would also like to thank Rev. Lynne Holden, Rev. Phyllis Hackett, and Rev. Kathryn

Palen for filling in for Darin while he was on vacation. Rev. Holden and Rev. Hackett

stepped up at the last minute when Darin had to go to Maine because his mom was ill.

Christmas Eve was on a Sunday this year and we had the traditional 10:00AM service and

5:00PM service. Both were well attended and meaningful.

Thanks to Barbara Sidla, Al Heon, Veronica Bessette, and Pastor Darin for their support of the work of the Worship and Fellowship Committee this year. Thank you to all who have served as Worship Leaders and ushers. We’re always looking for volunteers for these roles! Special Thanks to Cindy Bonn, Beth Capron, Marge Fenley, Deanna Larson, Linda Morgenstern, Carolyn Ross and Neal Sepe for all their help throughout the year. Could not have done it without you.

Sandy Easterbrooks,

Chair, Worship and Fellowship

**Pastoral Relations Report 2023**

The Pastoral Relations Committee is currently comprised of six church members, including the moderator as the chairperson. We use the guidelines from a handout provided by ABCORI to guide our meetings.

The purpose of the committee is to meet monthly with the Pastor and to:

* Listen to the Pastor’s concerns both personal and professional and to provide support.
* To highlight and celebrate positive occurrences, again both professional and personal.
* To ensure that the congregation’s concerns with pastoral performance are addressed in a healthy and satisfactory manner for all.
* To work with the pastor to address conflicts with the goal being reconciliation.
* To brainstorm solutions for church challenges with the Pastor.
* To evaluate the Pastor’s performance regularly which includes identifying both strengths and growing edges and creating a plan to improve on the former and address the latter.

A typical meeting begins with an opening prayer followed by a sharing of positive feedback, both from Pastor’s perspective and from the church’s perspective. We then move on to discuss any concerns we have regarding pastoral performance or church performance in general. Pastor shares any concerns personal or professional.

Action plans are developed in response to any concerns that may have come up and revisited in subsequent months to ensure that these plans are put into action and that they are successful.

There is a discussion of Pastoral Care and contact to ensure that sick, hospitalized, or home-bound members of Berean are receiving adequate pastoral care.

It is our responsibility to perform a written evaluation of the pastor, review old goals and establish new goals of the next year. This has been done for the year 2023.

This year’s committee members are Veronica Bessette (chairperson), Don Waterman, Mary Beth Martin, Sandy Easterbrooks, and Jeffrey Coutu-Jones. While we strongly encourage anybody, who may have concerns regarding the Pastor’s performance to contact the Pastor directly, if you feel you need support in doing so or have not found the discussion to have adequately addressed your concerns, please contact any member of the committee and they will ensure that a discussion and solution are arranged.

**Pastor’s Job Description**

The Pastor is a person with a commitment to carry out the mission of Berean Baptist Church. The Pastor is a person of prayer and vision who emulates Christianity and has a genuine interest in people and bringing them closer to God. American Baptist beliefs and traditions are part of the Pastor’s faith.

**Prayer, Preaching and Worship Planning**:

The Primary responsibility is prayerful preparation of sermons and conducting and planning the worship service. Preaching should be Bible-based, providing clear insight that speaks to a person’s everyday life. Seek to develop, include and encourage lay leaders in the worship experience. Conduct weddings, funerals, baptisms, and special services (especially at the holidays).

**Evangelism, Discipleship, Church Growth**:

Provide spiritual leadership as the church develops and implements programs for church growth, including evangelistic outreach and small group discipleship. The Pastor must be able to delegate and share leadership, but most importantly to keep the vision and mission of the church in the forefront.

**Education:**

Communicate a comprehensive understanding of the Bible and Christian theology in terms relevant to person’s lives through small group situations. Provide opportunities for individuals and groups to understand and enhance the spiritual dimensions of their lives. Actively support the Sunday School program.

**Shepherding:**

A reasonable amount of time should be spent learning to know members of the church and providing empathetic understanding and concern for persons in every situation. Be available during scheduled office hours for members/friends in need of assistance/advice. Visitation of sick, elderly, new parishioners and those in crisis.

**Administration:**

The Pastor shall work with the boards and committees as a team leader, in discussion, fellowship, prayer, and charting the daily course of church events. Assisting in communication within the church and community will be part of the daily responsibilities. The Pastor shall be accountable to the Deaconate and to the congregation to carry out the standards and goals outlined. Active involvement in the American Baptist Churches of Rhode Island.

Developed by the Pastoral Search Committee – December 2003

Based on the Congregational Survey results

**ABCORI Report**

On March 6, 2023 Pastor Darrin Collins, Marge Fenley, and Don Waterman

Attended ABCORI’s annual business meeting at Wakefield Baptist Church. The meeting was lively with considerable discussion concerning the annual budget and the strains of reduced revenues due to Covid. The completion of the Chepucket was welcome news. It was good to see and greet the many faithful and committed Baptists who give of their time and talents to build healthy churches and healthy pastors across our state.

Don Waterman

**Proposed Diaconate Membership List for 2024**

**Slate of Officers:**

**Moderator:** MaryBeth Martin

**Clerk:** Cynthia Bonn

**Treasurer:** Kelly Hunt

**Assistant Treasurer:** Shawn Harwood

**Director of Education:** Aaron Coutu-Jones

**Christian Education Committee:** Aaron Coutu-Jones, Anne Harwood, Donna Landry

**Finance Committee:** Roberta Collins, Aaron Coutu-Jones, Rose Doughty, Shawn Harwood, Sharon Ponce, Don Waterman

**House Committee:** Mark Bonn, Robert Collins, Marge Fenley, Kelly Hunt, Roger Landry

**Outreach:** Lauren Capron, Jeffrey Coutu-Jones, Glennis Estabrook, Marge Fenley, Ann Harwood, Cheryl Lacey, Cortney Lacey, Julie Markey, MaryBeth Martin, Linda Morgenstern, Sharon Ponce, Carolyn Ross, Kristine Sullivan (Friends of the Committee: Lynne Holden, Jean Wiberg)

**Pastoral Relations:** Darin Collins, Jeffrey Coutu-Jones, Sandy Easterbrooks, Marge Fenley, MaryBeth Martin, Brenda Rene, Don Waterman

**Worship and Fellowship:** Cindy Bonn, Beth Capron, Sandy Easterbrooks, Linda Morgenstern, Carolyn Ross, Neil Sepe

**Member at Large:** Vacant

**ABCORI Delegates**: Don Waterman, Marge Fenley