

WHAT'S NEW ABWOTS!

American Baptist Women of the South
an auxiliary of American Baptist Churches of the South

In this issue:

- ♦ Letter from Our President
- ♦ Birthday Shout Out!
- ♦ Highlights from ABWOTS Leadership Seminar
- ♦ Seminar Evaluation Results
- ♦ ABWOTS Silver+ Recognition
- ♦ WHAT'S NEW!
 - * Save the Date –56th ABCOTS Annual Session
 - * Upcoming ABWOTS Virtual Tea
- ♦ ABWOTS Open Positions

From the Pen of ABWOT's President Cynthia Bentley



Hello to my sisters in Christ.

I thank The Lord and you for everything big and small to glorify His name. “O magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together.”, Psalm 34:3 KJV

I am honored to continue to serve as your President of American Baptist Women of the South. I am blessed to be a blessing to you and grateful to God that He has kept me and strengthened me to do His will. With great joy, I give gratitude to you as American Baptist Women of the South for your support and encouragement because you do empower me to walk faithfully to bless women around the region. I continue to represent you on the American Baptist Women Ministries (ABWM) Board and as an ABWM Intentional Ambassador for the region, also the representative to the ABCOTS Executive Board and in the churches across the region. May God extend His grace and mercy upon me that I may persevere to empower the women of the South to “Rise, Rebuild, and Restore”.

1. **Rise:** We are called to rise with strength and courage, stepping boldly into the purpose that God has placed within each of us. Whether leading in your church, family, or community; this is your time to stand firm in faith and embrace the journey ahead.
2. **Rebuild:** Together, we will share stories and strategies for rebuilding after seasons of hardship—whether personally, spiritually, or within our communities. With God’s guidance, we will renew the foundations of our lives and ministries.
3. **Restore:** As we come together in worship and reflection, we will experience the restoration of our hearts, minds, and spirits. In this sacred time of gathering, God will restore us to wholeness and renew our sense of purpose.

To God be the glory for He is good.
Deacon Cynthia Bentley, President
ABWOTS / ABCOTS



Turn challenges into opportunities!

Blessings to you!

ABWOTS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Highlights from ABWOTS Annual Leadership Seminar

On Tuesday April 29th in Charlotte, North Carolina, we held our ABWOTS Annual Leadership Seminar and Business Meeting as a part of the ABCOTS 55th Annual Session. Our theme for the program was “Welcoming the Stranger”. Our theme scriptures were from Matthew 25: 35 & Hebrews 13: 2, NIV. Our three speakers were excellent, inspirational, and motivational. The women were empowered by their presentations as they provided valuable information, and new perspectives for professional growth or problem-solving (photos on pages 5-6). We were truly blessed by the skills, gifts, and talents of these women.

Speaker Descriptions

Rev. LaThelma Armstrong is the Executive Director of American Baptist Women’s Ministries. She is a dynamic leader and trailblazer in ministry, making history as the first African American pastor of Flemington Baptist Church in Flemington, NJ. Before stepping into this role, she served as the Associate Executive Director of American Baptist Women’s Ministries (ABWM) where she empowered communities of faith-filled and justice-driven women and girls. During her presentation Rev. Armstrong encouraged women to be strong and courageous and to “take up space” in this world. She emphasized the importance of belonging and getting involved in improving our communities.

Ms. Kimberly Pennamon is a Social Skills Coach and Career Counselor for clients with intellectual and developmental disabilities. She also serves as a volunteer mediator for the Montgomery County Commission on Common Ownership Communities (CCOC). She is a trained arbitrator and is a Registered Neutral (Mediator) for the Georgia Supreme Court Commission. She is a new member of the Mount Calvary Baptist Church in Rockville, Maryland where she serves as a teacher for Youth Church and member of the Health & Wellness Ministry and Mental Health Team. Ms. Pennamon spoke about the importance of mindfulness to our spiritual and emotional well being.

Ms. Kellee Helton Hicks’ career began at Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services in the Youth and Family Services Division, where she served as a Senior Social Worker in the Investigations unit; worked as a Social Work Supervisor, overseeing a team of Investigative and In-Home Social Workers. Currently, she serves as a Director of Program Services at the Salvation Army Center of Hope Homeless Shelter, where she provides leadership and oversight of the Social Services department. As representative of the Center of Hope, our mission outreach recipient organization for 2025, Ms. Hicks provided information about their programs and graciously accepted the generous donations from our churches throughout the region.

Leadership Seminar Evaluation Results

We sincerely appreciated your participation in the women's programs and your valuable feedback in the evaluations. Most of your responses indicated the event met or exceeded your expectations. The most positive feedback was on the speakers and content of the leadership seminar. Respondents thought the speakers were very good and the topics were appropriate and relevant. The participants were very pleased with the meeting space and the church facilities. The Pastor and staff at Mount Carmel Baptist Church were gracious and welcoming. Overall, the women appreciated the opportunity to meet and fellowship with our sisters from across the region.

Suggestions for improving the program included:

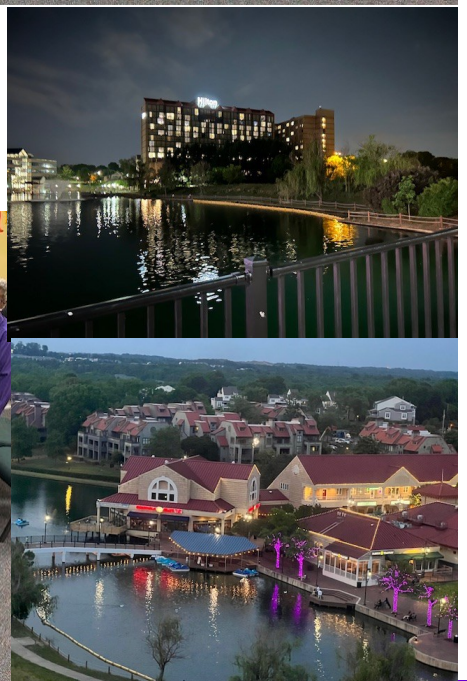
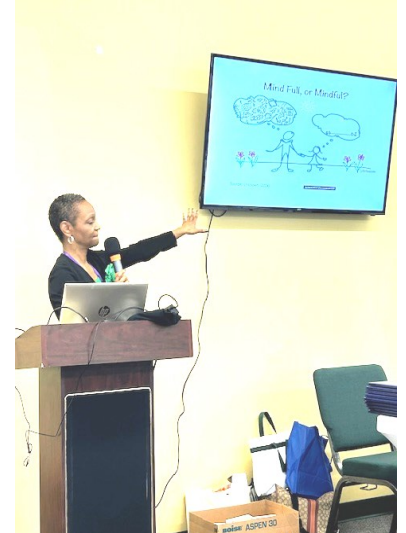
- better allocation of time for the Leadership Seminar since some respondents felt the speakers did not have enough time,
- the time schedule should be monitored and adhered to during the seminar and business meeting,
- participants really appreciated the Silver+ Recognition being included in the program,
- ABWOTS expense budget line items should be more descriptive to focus on the nature or type of expense and purpose rather than who incurred the expense.

Suggested topics for future seminars included:

- more training or information about the duties of the ABWOTS Executive Committee,
- provide suggestions and ideas about ABW Ministry programs,
- more discussions to strengthen women overall.



Photos from ABWOTS 2025 Annual Session



Photos from ABWOTS 2025 Annual Session



2025 ABWOTS Silver+ Recognition



to the following women recognized during the Annual Session for their involvement in church ministries, ABCOTS, and/or ABCOTS ministry objectives for over 25 years.

AREA I

Mt. Calvary Baptist Church, Rockville, MD

Betty Brown Hettie Fleming Janice Gary Audrey Hankinson Patricia A. Jackson
Inez Lipscomb Sylvia Morrison Susan Payne Susan Peevy
Mariea Snell Audrey Tyler Izetta Wade Antionette Walker

Providence Baptist Church, Baltimore, MD

Thomasine Baskerville Cynthia C. Bentley Shirley Bolding Laura Brown
Elizabeth Craig Fannie Cunningham Stacy Rodgers Eley Barbara Evans
Mattie Gaines Patelle Harris Yolando Lowery Rosetta McCullough Lily McElveen
Deborah Muse Barbara Redman Barbara Roberts Denise Ruffin Monica Russum
Margaret Shipley Sally Whitaker Cheryl Williams Maxine J. Wood

Area II

Main Street Baptist Church, Smithfield, VA

Cathy Harrison Reverend Julie Woodland Reverend Denise Wynn

AREA IV

First Baptist Institutional Church, St. Petersburg, FL

Lorraine Brown Thelma Bruce Bessie Camble Christal Echols Maxine Feazell
Valerie McGarrah Margaret McHenry-Stubbs Ethel Robinson Mary Walker
Alberta Waters (Posthumously) Lena Wilfalk

WHAT'S NEW!



Join ABCOTS in Atlanta, GA 56th Annual Session

Theme: *"A Call to Social Justice and Individual Reflection"* - Isaiah 1:17

Theme Hymn: "Amazing Grace"

SAVE THE DATE: April 28th – 30th, 2026

Host Area: III

Host Church: Friendship Baptist Church, Atlanta, GA
Dr. Kelly Miller Smith, Jr. Pastor



Remember to send your announcements about upcoming events at your church or in your area to us at abwotswomen@gmail.com for publication in our next newsletter!

SAVE THE DATE!

*American Baptist
Women's Ministry of the South
First Virtual Tea*

AT One O'CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON

SATURDAY, October 25, 2025

*Have your favorite pot of
tea and sandwich, and
wear your favorite hat*

More
information will
be forthcoming.



ABWOTS Open Positions

Coordinator of Mission with Women and Girls promotes the vision for all women and girls to have opportunities to live in the fullness of God's purpose for their lives; studies issues related to executive committee's current emphases on women and girls and suggests materials for study and action; promotes the Women and Girls Mission Fund and special mission projects that empower women and girls; suggests ideas for education and promotion of mission related resources.

Coordinator of Events provides leadership in planning all regional women's events sponsored by ABWOTS; oversees and delegates tasks in the implementation of regional ABWOTS meetings and conferences; assures that the conference revenues exceed expenses; and leads the budgeting process for upcoming conferences working with the Treasurer.

Coordinator of AB Girls is responsible for the regional Gathering of Girls and promotes AB GIRLS.

Coordinator of Love Gift is responsible for the education and promotion of the Love Gift offering.

Area President positions for Area I, II, III, IV, V and VI are also open.

Photos—The Salvation Army, Center of Hope



**ABCOTS Executive Minister, Rev. Dr. James Harrison
and his wife Kathy**



**Area VII Women's President
Sister Georgianna Jones**

**Area I Moderator
Sister Loretta Speight**

***Condolences to the
family of***

**Former Executive Minister
Rev. Dr. Walter Parrish, II**

**2025 ABWOTS
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**President
Mrs. Cynthia Bentley**

**Vice-President
Event Coordinator Co-Chair
Newsletter Coordinator
Mrs. Angelia R. Mumford**

**Secretary
Event Coordinator Co-Chair
Mrs. Claretha N. Harris**

**Treasurer
Mrs. Kathia M. Miles**

**Chaplain
Mrs. Linda Woodson**

**Area VII Women's President
Mrs. Georgianna Jones**

**Spiritual Advisor
Mrs. Adranna Grant**

