

1. What is ABCOPAD Biennial?

The Biennial is an opportunity for the family of American Baptist Churches of Pennsylvania and Delaware to come together every other year to celebrate our partnership in mission and ministry. The Biennial provides times of worship, inspiration, celebration, and opportunities to strengthen pastoral leadership and to grow healthy congregations.

2. Why Altoona?

For many years, we met at the Embers in Carlisle. There was continuity in knowing where we would be meeting and what to expect because of a long term business relationship with the Embers. Due to changes at the Embers, we then tried rotating around the Region to different areas for our Biennial; however, this was somewhat problematic. It's not easy to find a facility large enough to accommodate our group that can also provide parking and lodging. Each Biennial we had to start over developing a relationship with a new venue.

Altoona was selected for a number of reasons. The Blair County Convention Center in Altoona provides a beautiful facility with lots of parking. Within 2 miles of the Convention Center are a large number of motels and restaurants. The facility, which meets our needs, is the closest to being central in our very large Region.

While the facility is called a "convention center", it is not what we think of as a large city convention center, such as Denver or Philadelphia. In fact, the walking at the Blair County Convention Center is less than many of the large hotel venues or large churches where Biennials have been held in the past. Everything we need is on one floor and very much handicap accessible.

The cost has been comparable to our recent Biennials held in hotel venues. The Blair County Convention Center staff has been wonderful to work with and unlike the hotel business, they do not have the staff turnover which often caused us problems.

3. Is the Biennial only for delegates?

NO!!! The Biennial is for EVERYONE! Delegates are selected by their local churches to be able to vote on any Region business presented during the Biennial meeting. For the most part, the business amounts to voting on Region officers and Region Board members serving for the next biennium. In addition, the Region budget is approved by delegates in years

when a Biennial is held. Occasionally other matters of business might be presented for a vote.

4. Is the event on Thursday, "Irresistible Evangelism", only for Pastors?

NO! While the event is sponsored by the Ministers Council and provides CE units for pastors, the event is for anyone interested. Church leaders are encouraged to attend!! Speaker, David Ping, will challenge all of us to move from a "self focused world" to an "outward focused living". This event begins Thursday at 9 a.m. and concludes at 3 p.m. with noon lunch.

5. When does the Biennial officially begin?

The Biennial meetings will begin on Thursday evening and conclude on Saturday morning by approximately 11 a.m. For years, Biennials were held Friday-Sunday; because many attending Biennial are the pastors or lay leaders, they often needed to return home to be in their local church setting on Sunday morning. The committee made the decision to change the days we meet, as many requested.

6. What about Women's Day?

We are grateful that the Women's Ministries leadership was willing to "do a new thing" and agreed to be a part of the Biennial program on Friday morning allowing the women to share in the excitement of speaker, David Ping, as he challenges us to develop "outward focused thinking". The women are encouraged to come for the Thursday evening opening session of the Biennial and stay through Saturday a.m.

Following the Friday morning session with David Ping, the women will gather for lunch and an afternoon program concluding at approximately 2 p.m. Women are encouraged to stay and be a part of the community outreach events between 2 p.m.-4 p.m.

7. What about the Friday afternoon 'hands on' evangelism opportunity...will we be doing street evangelism and knocking on doors?"

No! *Outflow* is all about us learning how to let our love for Jesus Christ flow out into the lives of those around us through what is known as 'servant evangelism'. *Servant evangelism* is a simple, straightforward approach to sharing God's love in simple, practical ways, through small acts of kindness. On Friday afternoon we will put our love for Christ into 'motion' by sharing simple acts of kindness with the people of Altoona, just as a way to say that God loves them.