



CLEVELAND BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

2025 Annual Report & 2026-2028 Strategic Vision



Presented at the 193rd Annual Meeting
October 11, 2025
at Union Grove Missionary Baptist Church

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President's Welcome

Rev. Dr. James P. Quincy, III, President of the CBA Board of Trustees



Welcome to the 193rd meeting of the Cleveland Baptist Association. As President of the Board of Trustees, I am extremely excited about what God is doing in our region. Despite the challenges we face both nationally and internationally, we remain steadfast in our commitment to witness for the Lord and continue the vital work of Kingdom building.

No one embodies that commitment with more poise and tenacity than our Regional Executive Minister, the Rev. Dr. TaNikka Sheppard. Dr. Sheppard has truly been a Godsend to us, leading with vision, creativity, and innovation, and making a dynamic impact throughout our region. Our association is on an upward trajectory. While we acknowledge that churches are navigating difficult times, we are also seeing signs of growth and renewal.

New Growth

Just last week, the Board of Trustees joyfully voted to receive two new churches into our association—an encouraging testament to the vitality and relevance of our mission.

Fresh Vision

We are committed to continuing the Fresh Expressions Movement and introducing our Voices of Change Youth Advocacy Initiative.

Leadership Development

The Ohio Leadership Academy is poised to offer impactful training for current and future leaders through our virtual learning communities.

Today, as we gather to discuss the business of CBA, including next year's annual budget, you will witness the determination and hope that your leadership brings to moving us to the next level. Our mission remains as it has been since 1832: to strengthen local churches, uplift their members, and build up our region for the glory of God.

"As we move into a new season with new concepts and opportunities, our focus remains unchanged: to serve our incredible God—the One who not only wakes us up each morning but inspires us to pursue bold new frontiers for Kingdom work."

Finally, I want to offer a heartfelt welcome to our newly installed pastors, our new congregations, and all of you who are part of this incredible work. May God bless each of you, and may God continue to bless the Cleveland Baptist Association.

Executive Minister's Greeting

Rev. Dr. TaNikka Sheppard, CBA Regional Executive Minister



Grace and peace to you in the liberating power of Jesus Christ! With deep joy and gratitude, I welcome you to the 193rd Annual Meeting of the Cleveland Baptist Association. This sacred gathering of churches, leaders, and partners strengthens us as we stand together in justice, mercy, and humility.

This year's meeting is both a celebration and a charge. We look back with thanksgiving and ahead with great anticipation for what God is birthing among us. You'll hear inspiring updates, witness the fruit of our collective labor, and share in the excitement of launching our CBA 2026–2028 Strategic Vision, which will guide our next steps.

We are honored to welcome distinguished guests and partners from ABC-USA, ABHMS, and ABF, reminding us that we are part of a larger, united movement bringing healing, justice, and hope. We thank God for everyone who made this day possible, from planning teams to presenters and all who serve behind the scenes.

Gratitude

Special thanks to Rev. Jeremy Wanton and Union Grove Missionary Baptist Church for their grace and exceptional hospitality.

Celebration

Congratulations to our Ohio Leadership Academy graduates! Your commitment to leading with excellence and courage is truly inspiring.

"God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." — 2 Timothy 1:7

Though we face uncertain days, we do not despair. We stand firm in this truth, proclaiming prophetically, empowering our churches, nurturing leaders, and bringing light and life to our communities. Together, with great expectation, we will continue CBA's enduring legacy of serving with integrity, leading with compassion, and standing as a beacon of hope and freedom for generations to come.

CBA Board of Trustees 2025-2028

Thank you for your dedication and service!

Regional Executive Minister	Rev. Dr. TaNikka Sheppard
President	Rev. Dr. James Quincy (Lee Road Baptist Church)
Vice-President	Rev. Cynthia Smith (Olivet Institutional Baptist Church)
Treasurer	Sis. Diana Eldemire Veira , (Grace Tabernacle Baptist Church)
Secretary	Rev. Stephanie McHenry (Bethany Baptist Church)
Chair of the Department of Christian Education	Rev. Dr. David Cobb Jr. (Emmanuel Baptist Church)
Chair of the Department of Christian Education	Rev. Dr. Lisa Goods (Shiloh Baptist Church)
Chair of the Department of Ministry	Rev. Dr. Napoleon Harris, V (Antioch Baptist Church)
Chair of the Mission Promotion Department	Sis. Antoinette Henderson (Affinity Baptist Church)
Chair of the Metropolitan Ministries Department	Rev. Dr. Kevin VanHook, II (First Baptist Church of Greater Cleveland)
Board Member	Rev. Brian Cash (East Mount Zion Baptist Church)
Board Member	Rev. James Crews (Columbia Baptist Church)
Board Member	Rev. Lachelle Dixon-Harris (Cornerstone Baptist Church)
Board Member	Deaconess Vanetta Jamison (Mt. Haven Missionary Baptist Church)
Board Member	Trustee Diane Jones (Lee-Seville Baptist Church)
Board Member	Rev. Mark Ribbins (Avon Avenue Baptist Church)
Board Member	Rev. Dr. James T. Thomas (Affinity Baptist Church)
Board Member	Rev. William Maddox, Jr. (Fidelity Baptist Church)
Board Member	Rev. Jeremy Wanton , (Union Grove Baptist Church)
Board Member	Rev. Dr. Gregory Walker (Warrensville Road Community Baptist Church)
CBA Rep. for ABC Board of General Ministries	Rev. Dr. Thomas F. Gilmore (Antioch Baptist Church)
Affiliated Rep. for the CBA Ministers Council	Rev. Dr. Dianthia Gilmore (Antioch Baptist Church)
American Baptist Women's Ministries of Greater Cleveland	Rev. Kathryn Johnson (Restoration Ministries of Greater Cleveland)

Cleveland Baptist Association Covenant Churches



1. **Affinity Baptist Church**, *Rev. Dr. James T. Thomas, Pastor*
2. **Antioch Baptist Church**, *Rev. Dr. Napoleon Harris V, Pastor*
3. **Avon Avenue Baptist Church**, *Rev. Mark D. Ribbins, Pastor*
4. **Bethany Baptist Church**, *Rev. Dr. Stephen Rowan, Pastor*
5. **Church of the Master**, *In Pastoral Search*
6. **Columbia Baptist Church**, *Rev. James Crews, Pastor*
7. **Concord Baptist Church**, *Rev. Lorenzo Norris, Pastor*
8. **Cornerstone Missionary Baptist Church**, *Rev. Dr. Earl C. Simpson, Pastor*
9. **Damascus Missionary Baptist Church**, *Rev. Samuel V. Harrell, Pastor*
10. **East Mount Zion Baptist Church**, *Rev. Brian A. Cash, Pastor*
11. **Emmanuel Baptist Church**, *Rev. Dr. David A. Cobb, Pastor*
12. **Fellowship Baptist Church**, *Rev., Isaiah K., Simmons, Jr., Pastor*
13. **Fidelity Baptist Church**, *Rev. William A. Maddox, Jr., Pastor*
14. **First Baptist Church of Bedford**, *Rev. Deborah Federico, Pastor*
15. **First Baptist Church of Greater Cleveland**, *Rev. Dr. Kevin VanHook, II, Pastor*
16. **Grace Tabernacle Baptist Church**, *Rev. Wayne Dawson, Pastor*
17. **Greater Galilee Baptist Church**, *Rev. Dr. Emmitt J. Lee, Pastor*
18. **Lakewood Baptist Church**, *Pastoral Search*
19. **Lee Road Baptist Church**, *Rev. Dr. James P. Quincy III, Pastor*
20. **Lee-Seville Baptist Church**, *Rev. James Greenwood, Pastor*
21. **Mount Haven Baptist Church**, *Rev. Michael Dwayne Small, Pastor*
22. **Morning Star Baptist Church**, *Rev. Ronald Simpson Sr., Interim Pastor*
23. **Mount Olive Baptist Church-Cleveland**, *Rev. Larry L. Harris, Pastor*
24. **New Cornerstone Missionary Baptist Church**, *Rev. Blanton Harper Jr., Pastor*
25. **New Creation Baptist Church**, *Rev. Dr. , Joseph, Lucky, Pastor*
26. **New Hope Baptist Church**, *Rev. Dr. David M. Nelson, Pastor*
27. **New Sardis Primitive Baptist Church**, *Elder Dr. Vincent E. Stokes, Pastor*
28. **Olivet Institutional Baptist Church**, *Rev. Dr. Jawanza K. Colvin, Pastor*
29. **Purpose Community Church**, *Pastor Dylan Sellers, Pastor*
30. **Restoration Ministries of Greater Cleveland, Inc.**, *Rev. Dr. Christine A. Smith, Pastor*
31. **Shiloh Baptist Church**, *Rev. Dr. Lisa M. Goods, Pastor*
32. **Union Grove Baptist Church**, *Rev. Jeremy Wanton, Pastor*
33. **Warrensville Road Community Baptist Church**, *Rev. Dr. Gregory Walker, Pastor*

Department of Ministry's (DOM) Annual Report

This year has been marked by notable flourishing within the Department of Ministry. Our team is comprised of:

- Rev. Dr. Lisa Goods
- Rev. Brian Cash
- Rev. Dr. James Thomas
- Rev. Mark Ribbons
- Rev. Dr. Blanton Harper
- Rev. William Maddox
- Rev. Cynthia Smith

These leaders have cultivated environments of trust and mutual support, resulting in increased participation and a deepened sense of purpose within our department. We are witnessing transformative growth through intentional engagement and collaborative development, and we have fostered unity and enthusiasm by establishing the following committees:

- Conflict Resolution, led by Rev. Dr. James Thomas
- Church Membership and Recruitment, led by Rev. Dr. Lisa Goods
- Ordination and Licensing, led by Rev. Dr. Blanton Harper

The Department of Ministry continues to advance our annual, mission-aligned objectives with significant milestones reached this quarter. We have updated the CBA ordination process and documents. On September 20th, we hosted an informational meeting for ordination, emphasizing the process, call, and significance of ordination within both the Cleveland Baptist Association and ABC-USA. 22 individuals have committed to our Covenant and Code of Ethics for Ministerial Leaders of American Baptist Churches USA, demonstrating a shared commitment to principled leadership and spiritual growth. The gathering was not only informative, but also provided valuable opportunities for fellowship and reflection, further strengthening our communal bonds and vocational support.

Our department's efforts have tangibly touched lives within the broader community. Notably, two congregations, New Sardis Primitive Baptist Church and Purpose Community, have engaged in meaningful dialogue with our Regional Executive Minister and myself, expressing interest in establishing a covenant relationship with the Cleveland Baptist Association. They submitted their respective forms to signify their readiness to join our fellowship. On September 22, 2025, the Board of Trustees voted to accept them as new members of the CBA. We are honored to present both churches for membership at the upcoming Annual Meeting, reflecting the expanding reach and impact of our ministry.

Our future priorities center on elevating the quality of ministry within our covenant churches. We are poised to establish and implement measures to ensure that our congregations receive the highest standard of pulpit supply, reflecting the excellence Christ's church deserves. Additionally, we are excited to partner with the Department of Education to offer expanded learning opportunities for our consecrated clergy. These initiatives will further our mission, empowering our leaders and enriching the spiritual life of our wider community.

Looking ahead, we recognize numerous opportunities to further strengthen our department. Continued growth will be supported through increased meetings and enhanced fellowship opportunities, fostering deeper relationships and renewed inspiration. Rather than viewing challenges as shortcomings, we embrace them as invitations to excellence and greater faithfulness, striving to expand our capacity for service and leadership.

Submitted by:

Rev. Dr. Napoleon Harris, V

Chair of the Department of Ministry

Department of Education's Annual Report

Grace and peace to all gathered for this historic 193rd Annual Session of the Cleveland Baptist Association.

It is my privilege to submit this report on behalf of the Department of Christian Education. We continue to advance the mission of equipping leaders and nurturing lifelong learners for effective ministry within the church and community.

Ohio Leadership Academy

This year, we celebrate three students who will graduate from the Ohio Leadership Academy. We commend them for their perseverance and commitment to ministry preparation. Last year, we were blessed to have thirteen (13) students enroll in the Academy, demonstrating a renewed interest in theological training and leadership development within our Association.

Program Expansion

We are pleased to report that our academic offerings have expanded and now include the following dynamic learning tracks:

- Youth & Children's Ministry Track
- Minister Essentials Track (formerly known as the Associate Ministers Track)

Looking ahead to 2026, we are preparing to launch additional tracks that will meet the diverse needs of our congregations and leaders and increase our population of students:

- Biblical Justice and Social Action Track
- Diaconal Track
- Discipleship & Marketplace Leaders Track
- Pastoral Transition Courses – designed to assist new pastors in the early years of ministry.

Course Model and Accessibility Our new quarterly model will feature flexible and affordable learning opportunities.

Standardized courses will range from 4 to 8 weeks, while mini courses will meet twice for concentrated learning. In addition, self-directed courses will allow participants to progress at their own pace. We will also offer taster sessions, mini seminars, and clergy- strengthening sessions designed to encourage continued growth and excellence among our pastors and leaders.

Vision and Learning Community

Our vision remains steadfast: to build a robust learning community that serves three primary audiences:

1. Those aspiring to ministry
2. Those discerning their call from God
3. Those seeking to lead within the church and beyond.

We are excited to announce that we are now fully equipped with a professional LearnWorld platform. This state-of-the-art virtual classroom streamlines the entire learning experience—from registration and grading to assignments and video lectures— all within one centralized portal. Through this digital space, we will offer courses such as Social Justice and Advocacy, Safe Church Training, Leadership Development, and Bible Interpretation. For more information and to register for courses, please visit the CBA website and explore the CBA Virtual Learning Community LearnWorld.

Current and Future Goals

- Completing the full construction of the CBA VLC platform
- Training both instructors and students to effectively use the new system
- Recording and archiving lectures for on-demand learning
- Hosting information sessions at local Houses of Worship for those seeking to grow in Christian education and

Conclusion The Department of Christian Education stands committed to providing relevant, accessible, and spiritually enriching educational opportunities. Together, we are building a strong foundation for ministry that will impact the next generation of leaders within the FGC.

In HIS Service,

Reverend Dr. David A. Cobb Jr.,

Academic Dean / Chairperson of Christian Education

Cleveland Baptist Association

Department of Mission Promotions' Annual Report

This year started with a meeting in January with Dr. Sheppard to plan how to keep our churches better informed about our mission giving and support. We decided that invoices would be sent out four times a year and that information about our missions would go out with them. Invoices were sent in April and September.

I contacted all four ABC-USA mission areas to get updated materials. Two sent new information, and for the others, we used last year's materials so that every church could still receive something. After talking with Albertine, we decided the packets would be too large to send with the invoices, so they will be given directly to pastors to share with their congregations.

The CBA staff has also been working with ABC-USA to improve how we receive and report mission giving information. This will help us get more accurate and timely updates to share with the Board and to send out to our churches.

We continue to promote the four main ABC-USA mission offerings throughout the year:

- **America for Christ Offering (January–March)** – supports ministries that help people in need across the U.S.
- **One Great Hour of Sharing (May–June)** – helps with disaster relief and development projects around the world.
- **World Mission Offering (September–October)** – supports missionaries and global partners serving in over 70 countries.
- **Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (November–December)** – helps retired servants of the church and their families.

Churches can get involved by praying for our mission partners, giving to the special offerings, and sharing the information with their members.

Mail gifts to:

Cleveland Baptist Association
P.O. Box 43728
Cleveland, Ohio 44143

Or give online at www.cbacleveland.org/give.

Thank you for your faithfulness and commitment to our mission. Let us continue to work together to cultivate a spirit of generosity that reflects the love of Christ in all we do.

In Christ's Service,
Antoinette Henderson
Department of Mission Promotion, Chair

CBA The Ministers Council's Annual Report



The Ministers Council is an autonomous, professional, multicultural organization of ordained, commissioned, and lay Christian leaders within the American Baptist Churches, USA and the Cleveland Baptist Association. We are women and men who advocate for and covenant with each other to deepen our spiritual journey and to increase our effectiveness as persons who are accepting the call of God and the church for the advancement of the mission of the church of Jesus Christ and to proclaim His truth in a prophetic voice as led by the Holy Spirit.

The Ministers Council continues to engage its membership to provide collegiality, centeredness and competence. We meet monthly on the 4th Saturday. We meet in face-to-face gatherings each quarter and online at other times. In the past year we have come together for the following special gatherings:

January 11th – The Necessity of a Contingency

We gathered at Lakewood Baptist church to discuss how to prepare for natural disasters and how to have a contingency plan in place in case of chaos. **Rev. Gloria Chaney**, Chaplain for the FBI, led us in putting together and emergency kit, and **Rev. Dr. Marvin McMickle** led a discussion covering this year's inauguration's effects on the country and our communities and how to take the next steps.

May 24th – Emotional Exhaustion

We gathered at Bethany Baptist Church to be informed and engaged with how to combat Emotional Exhaustion. **Rev. Dr. Dianthia Gilmore** led us through activities designed to relieve stress and restore our well-being.

Memorial Tribute to Rev. Itherine Spencer:

We also paused to pay tribute to **Rev. Itherine Spencer** who was called home from labor to reward. It was Rev. Spencer who initiated our call to restore the Ministers Council in September of 2022. We are active again because of her prayer that the Ministers Council would not only survive, but become a place where clergy can strengthen and encourage each other as we do ministry together.

July 3rd – 6th - ABCUSA Biennial Mission Summit

The Biennial Mission Summit was held this year in Omaha, Nebraska from July 3rd – 6th. American Baptist from across America and Puerto Rico gathered to Seek Living Water. Our region was well represented as **Rev. Dr. TaNikka Sheppard** was one of the main speakers. **Rev. Dr. Thomas Gilmore** was present as a member of the Board of General Ministries, **Rev. Dr. Dianthia Gilmore** was present as a member of the Executive Board for the Ministers Council, and **Rev. Dr. James Quincy** represented the CBA.

Cleveland will host the Space for Grace Conference April 21st – 23rd 2026

Summer Event: Movie Day - August 23rd

We gathered at the Mayfield Branch Library for a review and discussion of the award winning movie by Tyler Perry, *Straw*. Our guest facilitator was **Kayla S. Griffin Green, Esq.**, the immediate past president of the Cleveland Branch of the N.A.A.C.P. Our discussion centered on how does the church respond when there seems to be no relief from the pressures that so often destroy our mental health and well-being. This event included great food and snacks for the casual movie goer.

Election of New Officers: In our October Meeting we will solicit nominations for new officers to begin their term in January of 2026.

Annual Gala

The 2024 Annual Gala Celebration was held on December 22nd at the Mediterranean Party Center. There was a grand buffet of food and fun. It was great to dine and laugh together as we celebrated God's goodness. This year's event featured five clergy groups competing with five versions of Christmas music. To view the results go to this link: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61554646566283>

The 2025 Gala Celebration will return to the Mediterranean Party Center on December 14th from 3:00 – 6:00 PM. Event details and invitations are coming soon.

Together In Ministry: The Lilly Foundation awarded a grant for CBA ministers from Bethany Baptist Church working with challenged youth.



The grant supported the church's work along with East Mount Zion Baptist Church regarding youth, with a focus on the Juvenile Detention Center (JDC) Ministry. The stated purpose was twofold: 1) to deliberate best practices for engaging youth in the criminal justice system; and 2) to support clergy engaged in various aspects of Christian youth development who can contribute to these best practices. A portion of the funds were also used to provide resources for use in this work. To date, dozens of Bibles have been purchased to distribute to JDC residents, and there are plans to provide study materials for the facility's library. The first meeting was held in May 2025 and included sharing experiences working with youth and developing ideas to enhance the JDC ministry.

Photo L - R: Rev. Stephanie McHenry, Rev. Artis Arnold, Rev. Michael Fordham, Min. Hosea Anderson.

"We are grateful to the Lilly Foundation for the resources to support us in this challenging and important ministry for the youth and community. The impact of our engagement reaches beyond the facility as the young people leave that setting and return to their homes in Greater Cleveland," said Rev. Stephanie McHenry.

Are you interested in starting a Together in Ministry Group? Here is where you can begin:
Grants | Ministers Council, ABCUSA

Ministers Council Partnerships: Visit the following MC pages for resources in Well-Being, Together in Ministry, and news about the ABCUSA Biennial: [Hub for Clergy Well-Being](#) | [Ministers Council](#), [ABCUSA CBA MINISTERS COUNCIL](#) | [CBA Cleveland](#)

Membership: The Ministers Council is the only ABC organization dedicated solely to the well-being of ministers. We meet monthly on the fourth Saturday at 1:00 PM. Our focus is on the three items that provide this care: Collegiality, Centeredness, and Competence. We currently have 51 active members and invite you to join us. There are many benefits to membership.

January 2026 and February 2026 are the times to pay your annual membership fees to the local and national bodies for the year 2026. (You may still pay dues for 2025 if you have not done so already.) The local fee is \$25 and the national fee is paid on a sliding scale (posted on the Ministers Council Website). Please pay your combined total using the CBA website under Ministers Council or you may send your payment to our local treasurer, Min. Charles Chavers. He may be reached at 216-544-3864 or deacon.chavers@gmail.com

Submitted October 6, 2025

Rev. Dr. Thomas W. Gilmore, President
Rev. Camille Brown, V. President
Min. Charles Chavers, Treasurer
Rev. Dr. Dianthia Gilmore, Senator
Rev. Dr. Yvonne Carter, Education Chair
Rev. Gloria Chaney, Fellowship Chair
Secretary, Open
Membership, Open

The CBA Representative to the ABC Board of General Ministries' Annual Report

This is a report on the ABCUSA Biennial meeting of 2025. The denomination met in Omaha, Nebraska from July 3rd to July 7th. The official report of this gathering is not yet available. However, this is the link to reporting the gathering of 2023.

The denomination welcomed our new General Secretary, Dr. Gina Jacobs-Strain. She is the first African American female General Secretary. This marks a progressive change moving forward, especially in a climate of reverse equality. In another major change, that reflects the denomination's long-time advocacy for women, the denomination also voted to approve the American Baptist Women's Ministries as a National Partner.

This gathering in Omaha was a reunion of many of our older members. There appeared to be a graying of the denomination as there were many seniors who were able to attend. People such as the Oldens (formerly with the CBA) were present.

We are optimistic that ABCUSA will continue to be a beacon for justice and equality as we move forward under new leadership.

As a member of the Finance Committee, and under the new leadership of Dr. Jacobs-Strain, the new denomination is addressing the continued decline in our finances and is initiating a' campaign to reverse this national trend.

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Thomas Gilmore

Date: 9/20/25

American Baptist Women's Ministries of Greater Cleveland's Annual Report

ABWM of Greater Cleveland continued to hold monthly meetings via Zoom. 2025 saw vibrant discussions and Bible studies hosted by Lee Road Baptist Church, Emmanuel Baptist Church, Bethany Baptist Church, Restoration Ministries of Greater Cleveland, and Fellowship Baptist Church.

The organization continued with its financial support of the Racetrack Ministry, and The Haven Home. Support for the 2025 fundraising recipient, Community of Hope, is forthcoming. The 2025 Annual Fundraiser Luncheon was cancelled due to poor participation among the churches. ABWM of Greater Cleveland will make a financial contribution to Community of Hope by the end of 2025.

Support for ABWM National continues by supporting endeavors such as the Rudd Empowerment Center's first Empowerment Series: "How's Your Health"? The series addressed mental, financial, educational, and family/holistic health. The weekly series was held via Zoom during the month of February and was well received. The Rudd Empowerment Center was named for Viola Rudd who served as the Administrative Secretary in 1951 and the Executive Director in 1976. During her tenure she worked tirelessly to prepare women for mission work and the development of leadership skills. Additional information regarding the Rudd Empowerment Center is available at www.abwomensministries.org.

ABWM of Greater Cleveland was present for the Annual Women's Day as part of the 2025 ABC Biennial in Omaha, NE. the 2025 – 2027 ministry focus is "Building God's Community. The organization was represented globally as Rev. Dr. Christine Smith, ABWM Associate Executive Director and Rudd Empowerment Center Director, and Restoration Ministries of Greater Cleveland, Senior Pastor spoke about the Rudd Empowerment Center at the Baptist World Alliance Congress in Brisbane, Australia. Cleveland was the sight of the Rudd Empowerment Center's Sojourner Truth Conference held in September at Restoration Ministries of Greater Cleveland. Women from around the nation gathered for a Pre-Conference held in Akron, OH, and a weekend conference full of workshops, and worship. Finally, ABWM of Greater Cleveland will represent CBA at the annual Shalom Retreat which takes place October 10th – 12th in Oakland, CA.

ABWM of Greater Cleveland needs greater participation from all CBA churches if the organization is to survive. Churches do not need an active women's ministry. All women of a CBA church are members. All positions will end in 2026. Any woman interested in serving as an officer is asked to contact Sis. Delores Gains or Rev. Kathryn Johnson.

Humbly Submitted,
Rev. Kathryn Johnson, Associate Regional President,
American Baptist Women's Ministries of Greater Cleveland

The Regional Executive Minister's Annual Report

Submitted by Rev. Dr. TaNikka Sheppard

I begin by giving thanks to Almighty God for the sustaining grace that has carried us through another year of faithful ministry. I extend deep gratitude to:

- The CBA officers and Board of Trustees, led by the steadfast leadership of Rev. Dr. James Quincy
- The CBA pastors, churches, and lay leaders who continue to embody the spirit of partnership and perseverance
- The community partners throughout Greater Cleveland, who labor beside us daily in shared mission;
- Our denominational family: the CBA Ministers Council (the American Baptist Churches, USA (ABC-USA), the American Baptist Home Mission Society (ABHMS), the Regional Executive Ministers Council (REMC), the American Baptist Foundation (ABF),) and all of our affiliate partners, for their vital support and collaboration, and
- Most especially, Sis. Albertine Boclear, my co-laborer and administrative assistant, whose adaptability, support, and dedication cannot be measured.

This has been a year marked not only by progress, prayer, and purposeful work, but also by unexpected challenges brought on by unprecedented circumstances in our nation and communities. Yet, even in the midst of the darkest seasons, we find hope, knowing that these very moments are opportunities for the light of Christ to shine most brightly through us as we continue the sacred mission of strengthening churches to strengthen communities. Together, we remain steadfast in discerning how God is calling us to lead faithfully, respond prophetically, and serve courageously in this present moment.

The following sections of this report highlight the five major “Regional Executive Minister priorities” that have shaped the CBA’s collective work this year.

**1. Strategic Development
and Vision Alignment**

**2. Leadership,
Relationship, and
Congregational Support**

**3. CBA Events and
Gatherings**

**4. Justice, Community, and Prophetic
Engagement**

5. Funding and Future Sustainability

1. Strategic Development and Leadership Support

Guided by Robert Sheehan's Mission Impact Model, we have continued to deepen our strategic planning process to clarify what it means for the Cleveland Baptist Association to strengthen churches amid the shifting realities of our time. Through listening sessions, surveys, and collaborative gatherings, we collected meaningful data that is shaping our Collective Vision and informing our next steps. Our efforts have focused on:

Clarifying the CBA Mission Statement and Mission Accomplishment Measures	Developing a Collective Vision through collective feedback from pastors, trustees, and lay leaders	Establishing Strategic Stretch Goals designed to close the "Mission Gap" between where we are and where God is calling us to be
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Board of Trustees: Strategic Development and Leadership Alignment

This year marked an important step toward ensuring that the right people are serving in the right places for the good of our shared mission. We honored longtime trustees who have served sacrificially, welcomed new members who bring vital expertise, and aligned responsibilities with the capacities needed for a growing and effective board. We introduced a new orientation process and reporting system that defines clear expectations, standardizes departmental reports, and strengthens accountability. Each board member is called to lead with integrity, unity, and compassion so that no one person or group is overburdened. This work is not complete. We will continue moving forward with intentional recruitment to fill needed capacities in 2026, ensuring our leadership reflects both the diversity and the depth of our association.

Youth and Children's Programming

The development of the Empowering Generations: Youth and Children's Ministry Initiative and the creation of the Youth and Children's Ministry Certification Program mark transformative steps forward for the CBA were developed through a grant from ABHMS. The 12-module certification program, launched on July 22, 2025, with a virtual information session and followed by an August 16th "one-day" intensive at Lee Road Baptist Church.

The Voices of Change Youth Leadership and Advocacy Initiative, supported by a GCIA grant, is developing young leaders who are rooted in faith and committed to justice. Each participant is designing a peer-led project that engages additional youth in community impact, affirming that young people are not the church of tomorrow, but vital agents of transformation today.

The CBA Virtual Learning Community (VLC)

After 20 months of development, the new digital platform for theological and leadership education will launch at the Annual Meeting. We thank Sis. Beverly Gaffney for her many years of service as she retired in June 2025 and welcome our new registrar, Min. Celeste Ribbins, who began in July 2025. Special thanks to Rev. Dr. David Cobb and Min. Ribbins for their dedication and innovation in bringing this project to life.

📌 A warm welcome to our new registrar, Min. Celeste Ribbins, who joined us in July 2025!

2. Leadership, Relationship, and Congregational Support

Throughout 2025, I have continued visiting our churches, connecting with pastors, and learning more about each congregation. These visits remind us that the health of our churches depends on shared leadership, spiritual care, and collective encouragement.

Pastoral Support & Community Engagement

2025 Pastoral Installations:

1. Affinity Baptist Church, *Rev. Dr. James T. Thomas*
2. Columbia Baptist Church, *Rev. James Crews*
3. Fellowship Baptist Church, *Rev. Isaiah K. Simmons*
4. First Baptist Church of Greater Cleveland, *Rev. Dr. Kevin VanHook, II*
5. New Creation Baptist Church, *Rev. Dr. Joseph Lucky*
6. Union Grove Baptist Church, *Rev. Jeremy Wanton*

Current Pastoral Searches:

1. Church of the Master
2. Morning Star Baptist Church
3. Lakewood Baptist Church

3. CBA Events and Gatherings

Our gatherings throughout the year have been sacred spaces for connection, collaboration, and renewal. Each event has played an important role in strengthening churches, nurturing leaders, and advancing the collective mission of the CBA.

Pastoral Advisory Council Meetings

We relaunched these meetings in 2025 to create a consistent rhythm of providing mutual encouragement and peer learning, while getting shared feedback from pastors across the CBA. The meetings were held on February 22nd (at Emmanuel Baptist Church), May 31st (via Zoom), and September 13th (via Zoom). A Pastor's Day Retreat will occur on December 5th.

2025 Spring Meeting (April 5th at Lee Road Baptist Church)

Attendance: 55 participants representing 18 churches. This meeting celebrated progress, honored leaders, and introduced the new Biblical Justice and Social Action Initiative within the Department of Metropolitan Ministries, reaffirming our commitment to faith in action.

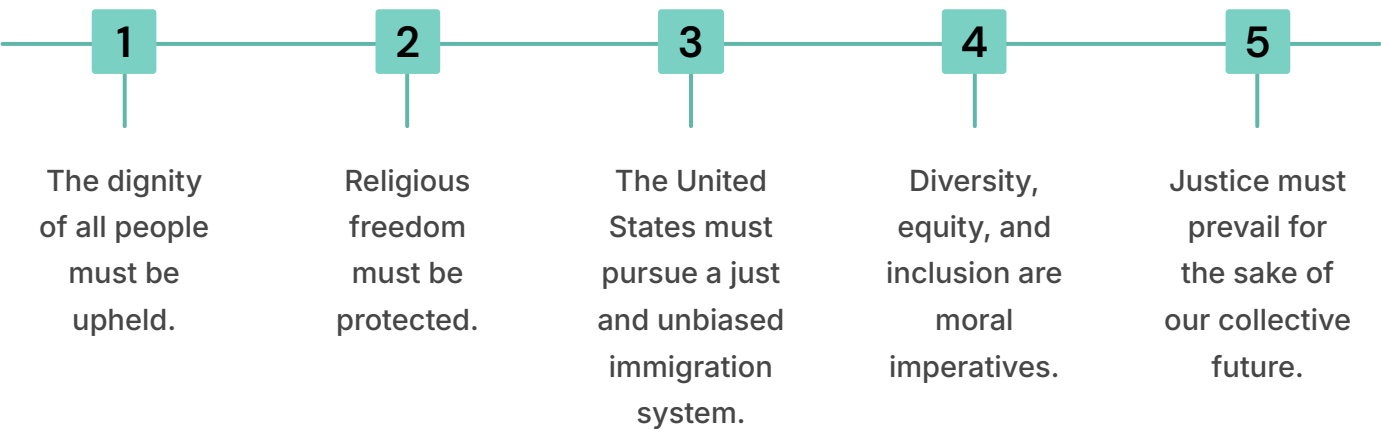
Deacons & Deaconesses Appreciation and Fellowship (June 7th at First Baptist Church of Greater Cleveland)

As an integral part of the CBA Healthy Churches Initiative, this inspiring experience brought together over 70 participants from 16 churches for learning and connection. They were encouraged and equipped for stronger service and celebrated for their decades of faithful ministry, reinforcing that every servant leader plays a vital role in the health of the Church.

These moments of gathering, learning, and renewal embody the truth that ministry is not solitary work. It is the shared movement of God's people striving together for the liberation and flourishing of our communities.

4. Justice, Community, and Prophetic Engagement

We continue to live out the gospel mandate for justice through the Biblical Justice and Social Action Committee, now housed within the Department of Metropolitan Ministries under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Kevin VanHook II. Our Jesus and Justice Gathering on June 12, 2025, co-led by Rev. Dr. Napoleon Harris and Elder Kayla Griffin Green, brought together leaders to deepen our commitment to prophetic ministry and civic engagement. Our prophetic priorities affirm that:



Through partnerships with multiple faith leaders, a meeting with Congresswoman Shontel Brown on October 3rd, marked steps towards advancing practices that reflect God's righteousness in public life. Faith without works is incomplete, and CBA is committed to embodying both.

5. Funding and Future Sustainability

We have advanced our financial development with a focus on vision-led funding, inviting partners to invest in transformation rather than simply fill gaps. A newly formed Finance Committee brings financial expertise to help shape a long-term sustainability plan for the CBA.

Key accomplishments include:

- GCIA Grant awarded for the Voices of Change Initiative.
- UBF Grant awarded for Faith Empowered
- Ongoing participation in national funding development cohorts.
- Continued focus on member church covenant giving and transparency.

Our vision-led approach is aligning generosity with impact, ensuring that every contribution strengthens churches, serves the vulnerable, and transforms our region for the glory of God.

Moving Forward

As we move into the next season, we stand at a pivotal moment in the life of the Cleveland Baptist Association. At this 193rd Annual Meeting, we are launching our 2026–2028 Strategic Vision, the fruit of prayer, collaboration, and collective discernment. This vision will guide our ministries through the next three years with clarity, accountability, and hope.

We move forward with faith that the God who began a good work among us will bring it to completion. The Spirit continues to call us to be bold, creative, and courageous in our leadership. Together, we will strengthen churches, nurture leaders, and transform communities throughout Greater Cleveland and beyond.

To God be the glory for what we have accomplished together, and for the greater work yet to come.



CBA's 2026–2028 Strategic Vision

Moving with Purpose and On Mission Together

The Cleveland Baptist Association (CBA) has entered a transformative moment. Our **2026–2028 Strategic Vision**, developed through intentional discernment and collaboration, utilizes Robert Sheehan's *Mission Impact Model*. This vision moves us beyond mere activity to measurable mission accomplishment, strengthening churches, developing leaders, serving families and communities, and living out the liberating power of the Gospel in Greater Cleveland and beyond.

CBA MISSION STATEMENT

A foundational aspect of the Mission Impact Model is the development and adoption of a strong mission statement for the CBA, which is critical for shaping vision, aligning actions, and evaluating long-term impact. This compelling mission statement must be aspirational, memorable, and future-oriented, reflecting both who we are and who we are becoming.

The Cleveland Baptist Association equips churches to grow, serve, and lead together in transforming lives and communities in Northeast Ohio through the love and power of Jesus Christ.

As we enter this new chapter, we do so as a Spirit-led movement committed to Christ, to each other, to our region, and to American Baptist Churches-USA. The vision below reflects our belief that **Growth, Empowerment, Next-gen, Collaboration, and Justice** are our strategic priorities and spiritual mandates.

The outlined "strategic stretch goals" are SMART^[1], with the "A" representing *Almost Impossible*. These objectives cannot be accomplished by human effort alone, compelling us to rely on the Holy Spirit, God's favor, and each other. They foster focus, faithfulness, cooperation, and prayer, rooted in our trust in God's provision and power. We move forward with expectancy, believing that divine favor and collective commitment can realize what seems unreachable.

[1] "SMART" typically stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. However, in the Mission Impact Model, the "A" stands for *Almost Impossible*.

1. GROWTH: Advancing Impact Through Four Areas of Growth

The Cleveland Baptist Association is committed to fostering comprehensive growth across our network. This strategic pillar encompasses four key areas:

A. Spiritual Growth

At the heart of our vision is a commitment to nurturing deeper spiritual vitality among our churches. Spiritual growth is the foundational aspect of the Church. Without it, we cannot fulfill our purpose and calling. In a time when spiritual maturity is urgently needed, we must intentionally center Christ in all we do and seek the fire of the Holy Spirit to draw people to the real Jesus who loves, heals, and restores. Increasing our “spiritual capital”, will also raise the other types of capital (Matthew 6:33)

- This is the foundational element that enables us to fulfill our purpose
- It helps us course-correct and remain grounded in God’s truth
- When we prioritize growing in Christ, we resist spiritual decline and embrace transformation, revival, and renewal.

B. Leadership Growth

We will invest in the development of both current and emerging leaders across the Association. This involves:

- **Identifying needed skill sets:** Strategically mapping out the competencies essential for effective leadership within our various programs and initiatives.
- **Targeted board repositioning and recruitment:** Actively seeking diverse and effective leaders who reflect the mission and vision of the Association to serve on our board.
- **Developing new leaders:** Creating a sustainable leadership pipeline that discovers, develops, mentors, and connects aspiring leaders to meaningful service and leadership roles.
- **Governance policies:** Crafting and updating policies that ensure clarity, accountability, and alignment with the evolving mission and needs of the Association.



C. Financial Growth

CBA will implement a progressive, vision-led financial model that aligns stewardship with mission. This includes:

- A revitalized Finance Committee made up of financial professionals, organizational specialists, and strategic thinkers from across Greater Cleveland, who can help ensure that the CBA's funding models are directly tied to missional outcomes and goals.
- A new **Strategic Development and Sustainability Team** to explore grants, donor cultivation, legacy giving, and investment strategies.
- Vision-led funding strategies that frame giving around how churches are supported, the poor are served, and our region is transformed.
- The Mission Promotion Department efforts to expand the donor base across ABC-USA & the Affiliate organizations' resources and benevolence funds, thereby reducing reliance on any single source of funding.
- Pursuing the **acquisition of a mixed-use property** that can house **ABC-USA regional offices**, offer **shared space for CBA churches and ministries**, and provide **collaborative workspaces for faith-based and mission-driven organizations**, advancing our presence and deepening impact across Greater Cleveland.

D. Influential Growth

The CBA will expand its regional impact through strategic partnerships, communication, and outreach that amplify the work of our churches and position the Association as a trusted leader across Northeast Ohio. We will:

- Establish strategic partnerships that elevate CBA's presence and capacity as a trusted regional resource, convener, and collaborator.
- Strengthen and streamline CBA's communication mechanisms to ensure a consistent, unified, and impactful voice across the Association, especially among the leadership.
- Platform the mission and ministry of CBA churches through clear messaging, shared storytelling, and expanded digital and community outreach.

Objectives and Timeline for Growth (2026–2028)

2026

- Establish the Strategic Growth and Sustainability Team, which will be responsible for advancing the CBA's financial growth objectives. This includes expanding the funding pipeline by identifying at least five new high-potential grant funders and establishing priorities for pursuing national funding opportunities through American Baptist Churches-USA and other affiliated organizations.
- Fill 100% of Board and Department positions with diverse, skilled leaders who possess the interest, experience, and capacity to fill those leadership roles.
- Host the a citywide regional prayer & worship experiences attended by at least 100 participants in total.
- Increase giving through covenant contributions and church pledging by 5%.
- Welcome four (4) new churches.

2027

- Establish and deploy a full leadership pipeline with at least 25 identified and mentored emerging leaders positioned to serve as leaders within the organization.
- Provide training for 100% of Board of Trustees and Department leaders through new leadership development modules.
- Host two (2) citywide regional prayer & worship experiences attended by at least 200 participants in total, planned by an expanded team of lay leaders.
- Secure \$75K in grant and donor development revenue for strategic initiatives.
- Welcome four (4) new churches.

2028

- Finalize acquisition plans for a mixed-use property to serve as a regional CBA hub.
- Achieve a cumulative increase of 25% in covenantal giving since 2025.
- Establish eight (8) formal, values-based partnerships with community organizations that demonstrate equitable leadership and advance CBA's mission through collaborative solutions to regional needs.
- Host two (2) citywide regional prayer & worship experiences attended by at least 200 participants in total, planned by an expanded team from additional churches, including at least five (5) congregations that are *not* members of the CBA.
- Engage at least 1,000 unique participants across all prayer, education, leadership, and worship gatherings held under this Strategic Vision over the course of the three (3) years.
- Welcome four (4) new churches.
- Publish the "Growth" outcomes in the *CBA Strategic Vision Impact Report*, capturing data, stories, and growth outcomes across the three years.

2. **EMPOWERMENT**: Equipping Leaders and Churches to Thrive

The CBA is committed to equipping leaders, churches, and ministries with the tools, skills, and training needed to thrive in this rapidly changing world.

Department of Education

This department supports and aligns all educational efforts across the Association, fostering growth and learning through diverse programs:

- The **Ohio Leadership Academy (OLA)** is now a key track within the Virtual Leadership Academy (VLC).
- The **Virtual Learning Community (VLC)** offers professional certification in areas like Ministerial Leadership, Diaconal Ministry, and Social Justice & Advocacy.
- The **Quarterly Training Institute** continues as a hybrid offering for deep congregational learning, with all digital content available via the VLC.
- We partner with the **CBA Ministers Council** for collegial Bible Study, particularly for emerging ministers.
- Emphasis on **vocational discipleship** helps individuals and churches align God's calling with every area of life.

Department of Ministry

Dedicated to supporting ministers and church leaders, this department cultivates spiritual growth and practical leadership skills:

- Provides comprehensive support through ordination preparation, pastoral training, leadership retreats, and one-on-one coaching.
- Actively builds a ministerial leadership pipeline via mentorship, workshops, and formation cohorts.
- The **CBA Pulpit Supply Team** consists of trained, coached, Spirit-led ministers delivering contextually relevant and transformative sermons.
- Connects clergy and ministry leaders to certification trainings and service opportunities in chaplaincy, transitional leadership, conflict resolution, and congregational care.



Objectives and Timeline Empowerment (2026–2028)

2026

- Launch three (3) professional certification tracks in the VLC with at least 30 participants enrolled across all tracks.
- Develop a marketing and outreach plan for the educational offerings, which includes advertising, church-based recruitment, etc.
- Form one (1) Ordination Cohort, with a goal of ordaining five (5) ministers by year-end.
- Recruit and onboard four (4) new VLC instructors from across CBA congregations and partners to broaden our teaching team with diverse expertise in ministry, leadership, wellness, justice, and congregational care.
- Institute an instructor support and evaluation model to foster instructional excellence and long-term improvement and sustainability
- Recruit and develop the CBA Pulpit Supply Team, with at least 12 ministers trained in contextual preaching and ministerial excellence.
- Department of Ministry assist four (4) new churches in joining the Association, identifying at least one new VLC participant from each.[\[1\]](#)
- Host three (3) leadership intensives through the Quarterly Training Institutes (QTI) focused on vocational discernment and ministerial formation, with a combined reach of 150+ attendees.

2027

- Expand the VLC offerings to include additional multi-department content, with 12 more courses with a combined enrollment of 100 participants.
- Evaluate and update the marketing and outreach plan as needed.
- Advance the Quarterly Training Institute (QTI), offering four (4) sessions with at least 60 participants per session, including bilingual or context-specific options.
- Expand the VLC instructional team by recruiting 4 additional instructors, prioritizing diversity of theological background, practical ministry experience, and cultural relevance.
- Strengthen ministerial pipeline by launching a new mentorship cohort and supporting 10 ministers in active field-based learning or transitional ministry placements.
- Expand the CBA Pulpit Supply Team to include 20 active preachers, with at least two (2) preaching assignments fulfilled.
- Assist four (4) new churches in joining the Association and connect each to the VLC and ministerial support.[\[2\]](#)

2028

- Graduate the first cohorts in the VLC 3-year certification tracks, with at least 30 certificates awarded.
- Evaluate and update the marketing and outreach plan as needed.
- Develop a comprehensive “CBA Regional Leadership Directory” of all trained, certified, or actively ordained leaders across the Association.
- Recruit 4 more qualified instructors to reach a total of at least 12 new VLC instructors added since 2026.
- Train 10 ministers from the CBA Pulpit Supply Team to serve as regional preaching coaches or mentors for younger or newer clergy.
- Assist four (4) new churches in joining the Association, bringing total new member churches to 12 across three (3) years.
- Publish the “Empowerment” outcomes in the *CBA Strategic Vision Impact Report*, including participant feedback, data dashboards, and longitudinal outcomes from trainings, ordinations, and placements.

- ❑ [1] This is the same objective that applies to the 2026 'Growth' goals.
- [2] This is the same objective that applies to the 2027 'Growth' goals.
- [3] This is the same objective that applies to the 2028 'Growth' goals.

3. NEXT-GEN: Investing in the Present and Future of Our Communities

The CBA understands that our future is in "the future," and we must prioritize children and youth, as well as those called to disciple them. The time to engage, equip, and elevate them is now. This is not only about sustaining the Church but about changing the course of entire communities, particularly in Greater Cleveland where some neighborhoods face the highest child poverty rates in the country. Our commitment is to provide real help and enduring hope to children, families, and communities through these initiatives:



Youth Enrichment Program (YEP)

Relaunched as a separate nonprofit, YEP specifically addresses the holistic development and discipleship of children and youth. The VLC's Young Leaders will oversee its expansion, aiming to reach 10,000 children and young adults across the region.



Voices of Change (VOC)

A youth leadership and advocacy program that equips young people (ages 12-17) to use their voice, lead service projects, and influence positive change in their churches and communities.



Empower Generations

An initiative designed to help churches foster healthy, welcoming, and vibrant environments for young people to thrive spiritually, emotionally, and socially.



Ministry Certification Track

Housed within the VLC, this program provides comprehensive training for those serving in vital ministry roles, strengthening their ability to guide and nurture the next generation of leaders.



Rizpah's Children Initiative

YEP will partner with a local organization in Greater Cleveland to renew the CBA's engagement in this ABHMS initiative, aligning with an existing program focused on the spiritual, emotional, and physical development of children.



Youth Leadership & Mentorship

CBA will host youth-focused gatherings, mentorship opportunities, and leader intensives throughout the year to invest in the spiritual formation and leadership development of the next generation.

Through our Next-Gen efforts, the CBA affirms Jesus' words: *"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these"* (Luke 18:16).

Objectives and Timeline for Next-Gen (2026–2028)

2026

- Establish a new YEP board and leadership (at least a part-time coordinator) and website.
- Relaunch the Youth Enrichment Program (YEP) with new nonprofit status, a new website, and a fully functioning board of directors.
- Recruit and onboard a part-time YEP Coordinator to oversee program development and outreach.
- Facilitate a new VOC 15-member youth cohort representing at least 10 CBA churches.
- Identify and meet with at least three (3) potential afterschool or community-based organizations aligned with Rizpah's Children principles to assess fit, shared values, and mutual goals for partnership.

2027

- Certify the first cohort of 25 Youth & Children's Ministry leaders through the VLC.
- Host two (2) regional "Empowering Generations" citywide youth events with participation from at least 20 churches, including non-CBA congregations.
- Facilitate a third VOC 20-member youth cohort representing at least 10 CBA churches.
- Support five past VOC participants in securing meaningful youth leadership opportunities through city commissions, nonprofit councils, or business internships that model equitable leadership, civic engagement, and mutual community benefit;
- Revive the CBA Scholarship Program through YEP, with the goal of transforming it into a separate endowment fund over the next five years.
- Establish one (1) formal collaboration agreement with a selected organization, clarifying that CBA/YEP will serve as a capacity-building partner, providing faith-based enrichment resources, strategic support, and access to denominational networks.

2028

- Develop and launch a *Next-Gen Innovation & Incubation Hub* to equip churches in intergenerational ministry models.
- Facilitate a fourth VOC cohort with expanded support structures and mentorship, intentionally recruiting youth from under-resourced neighborhoods in Greater Cleveland.
- Establish a public-facing regional campaign lifting up the voices and stories of young leaders from CBA churches to shift community narratives and provide visible hope.
- Partner with 5 CBA churches to pilot youth-led ministry teams, co-designed with previous VOC participants to promote leadership, ownership, and creativity in worship and outreach.
- Award the first two \$500 scholarships in 2028 and add \$2500/year into a separate endowment fund over the next five years to ensure sustainability and long-term impact.
- Support the after-school collaboration (Rizpah's Children) by providing curriculum consultation, volunteer recruitment, and shared evaluation tools, while maintaining a *non-operational advisory role* to ensure programmatic integrity and alignment with CBA values.
- Publish the "Next-Gen" outcomes in the *CBA Strategic Vision Impact Report*, including participant feedback, community narratives, data dashboards, media highlights, and longitudinal outcomes from trainings, ministry updates, scholarships, and leadership placements.
-

4. COLLABORATION: Strengthening Churches through Cooperative Ministry

The Department of Evangelism and Church Development will strengthen the covenantal relationships within the CBA by listening deeply to the unique needs and contexts of our churches. Cooperative ministry is the heartbeat of the Association. We believe in the power of shared ministry, mutual support, and collaborative problem-solving. We will have a fresh emphasis on strengthening churches through these five key endeavors:

- **The Healthy Churches Initiative** will help churches develop and implement holistic **Congregational Wellness Plans** that engage the *"CBA's Seven Signs of a Healthy Church"* and includes: spiritual vitality, leadership health, financial sustainability, operational excellence, and community engagement. Wellness should be imbedded and exemplified throughout the Church to foster healthy communities filled with healthy people, and led by healthy leadership.
- **Mutual Collaborations and Outreaches** will encourage cooperative outreach efforts between churches and promote shared ministry opportunities to impact local communities more effectively.
- **Resource and Information Sharing Platform** will be developed with accessible tools to help churches share successful practices, ministry models, and timely information.
- **Fresh Expressions & Evangelistic Works** will encourage innovation in evangelism and support new expressions of ministry, including church planting, re-planting, and starting new congregational efforts aligned with local contexts and emerging needs.
- **Access to Regional and National Resources** will help churches access and utilize resources available through the CBA, American Baptist Churches-USA, and other denominational or ecumenical partnerships.

Through regular touch points, pastoral fellowships, and strategic conversations, we will create space for listening, lamenting, celebrating, and growing together.



Objectives and Timeline Collaboration (2026–2028)

2026

- Develop and pilot the Congregational Wellness Plan model with five (5) diverse CBA churches through CBA's Healthy Church Initiative and begin measurable implementation that engages "CBA's Seven Signs of a Healthy Church."
- Commission two (2) Fresh Expressions programs (six (6) leaders total) focused on context-driven innovation and evangelism.
- Host first citywide regional prayer & worship experiences attended by at least 100 participants in total. [\[1\]](#)
- Host one regional shared ministry event co-led by at least four (4) churches across different neighborhoods.

2027

- Expand the Healthy Churches Initiative to engage 5 (five) congregations in active wellness planning and coaching.
- Host two (2) citywide regional prayer & worship experiences attended by at least 200 participants in total, planned by an expanded team from additional CBA churches. [\[2\]](#)
- Build a Regional Resource Sharing page on the CBA website featuring at least 24 tools, templates, sermons, or guides shared by CBA churches [two (2) highlighted and communicated each month].
- Commission two (2) Fresh Expressions programs (6 leaders total) focused on context-driven innovation and evangelism.
- Facilitate two (2) cooperative outreach campaigns led by multi-church teams that include underserved communities.

2028

- Engage 5 (five) new churches in the Healthy Churches Initiative with documented progress across all seven dimensions of the "Health Church" model.
- Host a CBA-wide cooperative outreach weekend with 20+ churches serving across Greater Cleveland.
- Host two (2) citywide regional prayer & worship experiences attended by at least 200 participants in total, planned by an expanded team from additional churches, including at least five (5) congregations that are *not* members of the CBA. [\[3\]](#)
- Commission two (2) Fresh Expressions programs (6 leaders total) focused on context-driven innovation and evangelism.
- Publish the "Collaboration" outcomes in the *CBA Strategic Vision Impact Report*, including shared metrics and narratives of lives reached through evangelism and outreach efforts, ministry growth, and church development case studies.

5. JUSTICE: Living Out the Liberating Power of the Gospel

Though listed last, this focus is foundational and urgent. Our communities and churches are grappling with injustices that impact everything from economics to education, from healthcare to housing. Our biblical call is to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. We must respond with urgency, clarity, and Christ-centered compassion. Our justice work is a critical aspect of our collective public witness of the tangible work of the Body of Christ and transforming power of the Gospel.

1

The **Metropolitan Ministries Department** will lead initiatives focused on biblical justice, liberation theology, prophetic preaching, and faithful activism.

2

We will train members of churches and our communities to discern, engage, and respond to social justice issues in Greater Cleveland (and beyond) with clarity about justice and compassion.

3

Through partnerships, trainings (e.g. Voices of Change), and collaborative work, we will build a network of justice-minded churches empowered to impact systems and serve people.

4

The **Jesus 4 Justice Gatherings** will create interchurch and intergenerational worship and advocacy spaces focused on biblical justice and community renewal.

5

The **Faith Empowered Initiative** will offer virtual training and in-person opportunities for churches and community members to learn about justice, advocacy, civil rights, and how to mobilize for collaborative justice work.

6

We will **reclaim and redeem Christ-centered language** that has been misused or co-opted by aligning ourselves with the radical love of Jesus ("radical" meaning a faithful return to the fundamentals of the Gospel).

Timeline for Justice & Witness (2026–2028)

2026

- Establish virtual and in-person *Jesus 4 Justice* gatherings in at least two (2) locations across Greater Cleveland with participation from 50 persons.
- Offer four *Faith Empowered Initiative* trainings (virtual and in-person), reaching at least 100 participants in total.
- Develop a foundational curriculum for biblical justice and prophetic ministry within the VLC, including a 6-module course with scriptural studies and community action plans.
- Establish a CBA Justice Advisory Team of 5–7 members to guide priorities, offer theological grounding, and monitor equity and impact.

2027

- Support three (3) church-led community engagement projects focused on housing insecurity, youth violence, or food equity.^[1]
- Form at least five (5) regional partnerships with like-missioned organizations to amplify our collective impact in justice advocacy and outreach.
- Publish two digital theological justice resources (e.g., devotionals, sermon guides, position papers) rooted in biblical theology and liberation frameworks.
- Host a regional *Jesus 4 Justice* citywide forum in partnership with local institutions to convene 100+ leaders across faith, nonprofit, education, and civic sectors.
- Introduce a “Justice & Witness” audit tool to help 10 churches assess their community engagement, advocacy alignment, and discipleship practices through a justice lens.

2028

- Partner with the CBA Minister’s Council to establish a *Prophetic Preaching & Public Witness Cohort* in the VLC for 12 pastors and ministers committed to courageous pulpit ministry and transformative justice engagement.
- Form at least five (5) regional partnerships with like-missioned organizations to amplify our collective impact in justice advocacy and outreach.
- Create and distribute a digital multimedia series (e.g., mini-documentaries, interviews, advocacy moments) highlighting the intersection of faith and justice across CBA churches.
- Publish the “Justice” outcomes in the *CBA Strategic Vision Impact Report*, that includes narratives, ministry models, and measurable outcomes.

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. - Micah 6:8

CONCLUSION: A Future We Build Together

CBA's 2026-2028 **Strategic Vision** is a daring declaration of who we are becoming as the Cleveland Baptist Association. It is a call to rise together in faith, to serve together with compassion, to lead together with courage, and to act with conviction. Rooted in Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to strengthening churches, strengthening leaders, raising up new generations, collaborating with purpose, and pursuing biblical justice. This vision is designed to scrupulously measure our *impact* and *effectiveness*, not just our efforts. We are committed to remaining flexible, discerning, and adaptive throughout this process, making necessary shifts to faithfully fulfill the vision the Lord has entrusted to us.

As the CBA, we do not move forward in our own strength, but with God leading the way, we trust that what lies ahead will exceed what we can ask, imagine, or accomplish alone.

“

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. – Ephesians 3:20-21

”



Treasurer's Annual Report

<u>Cash Account Balances</u>	<u>12/31/24</u>	<u>3/31/25</u>	<u>5/31/25</u>	<u>8/31/25</u>
Checking account	\$ 5,443	3,541	4,519	14,629
Vision 2020	\$ 2,789	2,789	2,789	2,789
Endowment Fund	\$391,573	370,166	367,988	372,043
Total	\$399,805	\$376,496	\$375,296	\$389,461

Revenue:

- Total of \$51,203 received through August 31, 2025
- Total of \$30,877 in Endowment draws
- Total tuition received for OLA of \$526, Total for QTI of \$0
- Total Income was \$89,060 through August 31, 2025

Investment:

- Earned about 10.3% in 2024.
- Current allocation is 65% Equity/35% Fixed Income

Expenses:

- \$74,481 spent for CBA Operations budget
- \$8,800 spent for OLA, \$0 spent on QTI
- Total Expenses of \$83,281 through August 31, 2025
- Net income was \$5,779 through August 31. 2025

Comments:

- Praise God, all bills and commitments continue to be paid on-time.
- Also awarded grant of \$7,500 from United Black Fund to be paid out quarterly over the next year for Virtual Learning Community Initiative
- Leadership has curtailed expenses to bare necessities

31-Aug-25				
	Operating	OLA	QTI	TOTAL
Income	88,534	526	0	89,060
Expenses	74,481	8,800	0	83,281
Net	14,053	-8274	0	5779

Recommendations: 1) Motion for Board Policy 200:Authorized Financial Signers 2) Motion identifying current authorized signers 3) Motion for draft of 2026 Budget

CBA Proposed 2026 Budget

Operating Income

		January 1, 2026 - December 31, 2026				
					PROPOSED	
		Dept 10		ACTUAL	Budget	Budget
				YTD as of July 31, 2025	Jan. 1, 2025 - Dec. 31, 2025	Jan. 1, 2026 - Dec. 31, 2026
INCOME			Coding			
AB Mission Program						
United Mission - 64%			400111	\$5,395	\$50,000	\$55,000
America for Christ - 33%			400112	\$1,972	\$4,000	\$4,000
CBA Specifics - 100%			400113		\$5,000	\$0
CBA Region			400114	\$3,497	\$35,000	\$40,000
				\$10,865	\$94,000	\$99,000
Investments						
Mouat Fund (Oil Revenue)			540100	\$1,970	\$4,000	\$4,000
Multi Region (33 regions)			540101	\$0	\$300	\$300
Endowment			540105	\$44,428	\$83,568	\$72,000
AB Foundation			550100	\$4,291	\$1,715	\$5,000
				\$50,689	\$89,583	\$81,300
Other Income						
Church Contributions			400100	\$8,232	\$3,000	\$10,000
Fairview Donation			400101		\$2,000	\$2,000
Fundraisers			400102		\$11,500	\$11,500
Individual Giving			400103	\$5,519	\$12,611	\$15,000
Scholarships			400109			
Advertising Revenue			505000			
Misc other			520006	\$1	\$1,000	\$1,000
				\$13,752	\$30,111	\$39,500
Programs & Meetings						
Conferences & Workshops			520001			
Annual Meeting			520003		\$2,010	\$2,010
				\$0	\$2,010	\$2,010
TOTAL INCOME				\$75,305	\$215,704	\$221,810

CBA Proposed 2026 Budget

Personnel & Program Expenses

EXPENSES				Coding	ACTUAL	Budget	Budget
					YTD as of July 31, 2025	2025 - Dec. 31, 2025	2026 - Dec. 31, 2026
<i>Contract Services</i>							
Audit & Accounting Fees				624100	\$1,920	\$4,000	\$4,000
Payroll Services				624102		\$1,872	
Legal Fees				623000	\$10	\$0	\$0
Banking Fees				624106	\$21	\$800	\$400
Contracted Services				705101		\$3,000	\$3,000
Storage Fees				715105		\$0	\$0
Audio & Visual				705108		\$0	\$0
Faculty/Workshop Honorarium				708730		\$0	\$0
Contract Employees				715111			
					\$1,950	\$9,672	\$9,672
<i>Personnel Services</i>							
Regional EM				700100	\$17,309	\$29,672	\$31,156
Clerical Salaries				700102	\$10,472	\$15,600	\$19,448
RM Benefits: Housing Allowance				700110	\$20,608	\$35,328	\$37,094
RM Benefits: Education				700113		\$4,000	\$2,000
RM Benefits: Retirement				614108	\$6,067	\$10,400	\$10,920
Works Comp Ins				700114	\$197	\$300	\$300
FICA - ER portion				700104		\$4,956	\$5,204
Project Coordinator				708684		\$0	\$0
Travel				691224	\$242	\$3,000	\$3,000
Regional E.M. Memberships				708300	\$150	\$300	\$300
					\$55,044	\$103,556	\$111,422
<i>Program & Baptist Work</i>							
Conferences/workshops/seminars				692000	\$3,630	\$1,200	\$1,200
Annual Meeting				692000		\$2,000	\$2,000
Association Meetings				708701		\$200	\$200
Department Expenses				708405		\$0	\$0
Metro Ministries						\$500	\$1,000
Dept of Ministry						\$500	\$1,000
Christian Ed						\$6,000	\$1,000
Mission Promotion						\$500	\$1,000
Theological Education Fund				400207		\$0	\$0
Mission Projects - Burundi - Haiti				400104		\$0	\$0
Youth Enrichment program (YEP)				691311		\$5,000	\$5,000
Camp Koinonia				720010		\$500	\$500
Association Memberships				703000		\$300	\$300
					\$3,630	\$16,700	\$13,200

CBA Proposed 2026 Budget

Promotions, Communications, & Ecumenical Expenses

Publication & Promotions							
Printing, Books, Magazines			667000		\$500	\$500	
Local Promotion (Marketing)			708742		\$500	\$500	
				\$0	\$1,000	\$1,000	
Records & Communication							
Office Supplies			715119	\$1,653	\$1,000	\$1,000	
Telephone			715122	\$531	\$1,500	\$1,500	
Internet			715124	\$714	\$4,000	\$4,000	
Postage			715125	\$268	\$500	\$500	
Equipment			661112	\$500	\$2,500	\$2,500	
Misc giveaways & supplies			700115	\$1,485	\$500	\$500	
Insurance			702000		\$600	\$600	
Website maint			706010	\$35	\$1,500	\$1,500	
				\$5,186	\$12,100	\$12,100	
Ecumenical Work							
GCC Donation			720025		\$500	\$500	
United Protestant Campus Ministries			720047	\$200	\$300	\$300	
				\$200	\$800	\$800	
TOTAL EXPENSE				\$66,011	\$143,828	\$148,194	

Net Operating Revenue & Expenses

TOTAL INCOME					\$75,305	\$215,704	\$221,810
TOTAL EXPENSE					\$66,011	\$143,828	\$148,194
Net Operating Revenue & Expenses					\$9,294	\$71,876	\$73,616

CBA Proposed 2026 Budget

Ohio Leadership Academy/Virtual Learning Community/QTI				PROPOSED		
	Dept 33		ACTUAL	Budget	Budget	
INCOME		Coding	YTD as of July 31, 2025	Jan. 1, 2025 - Dec. 31, 2025	Jan. 1, 2026 - Dec. 31, 2026	
Grants		400115	\$0	\$10,000	10,000	
Tuition & Fees		520002	\$526	\$14,130	18,250	
Donations		708534	\$0	0	2,195	
Workshops		520004	\$0	500	1,000	
QTI					1,150	
TOTAL INCOME			\$526	\$24,630	32,595	
EXPENSES		Coding	YTD as of July 31, 2025	Jan. 1, 2025 - Dec. 31, 2025	Jan. 1, 2026 - Dec. 31, 2026	
Catering		715107			750	
Contract Employees		715111			1,875	
Faculty Honoraria		715112	\$3,000	\$10,000	9,000	
QTI Instructors					1,000	
Academic Dean		715113	\$4,200	\$7,200	7,200	
Staff - Registrar		715114	\$500	\$3,000	8,400	
Materials & Supplies		715121		\$300	300	
Develop virtual platform				\$1,500	3,320	
Meeting space		715128				
Printing, Books, Magazines		667000			250	
Travel Expense		691130				
Hotel and Lodging		708360				
Meetings (Outreach Programs)		692000		\$1,000		
Marketing and Promotions		706005		\$500	500	
TOTAL EXPENSES			\$7,700	\$23,500	32,595	
Net Revenue/Expenses			(\$7,174)	\$1,130	\$0	

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Fulfill the Vision.

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- Engage in leadership development & training
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- Diaconal Ministry Track
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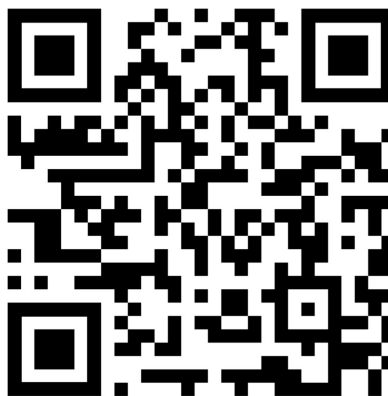
"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

— 2 Corinthians 9:7

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