

# AN INVITATION FOR SHARED MINISTRY ON THE CANONICUS PROPERTY



# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Revive a camping and retreat ministry on site as soon as possible
- Preserve this space for the benefit and enrichment of ABCORI congregations and the RI community
- Develop mutually beneficial partnerships which creates new offerings to ABCORI churches and the wider community
- Provide financial sustainability of the region
- Conservation of the land God has given us to steward



# Proposed Core Elements

*Ecclesiastes 4:12 “By yourself you’re unprotected. With a friend you can face the worst. Can you round up a third? A three-stranded rope isn’t easily snapped.”*



- An invitation for a three-way partnership between the American Baptist Churches of RI, Canonicus Ministries Inc., and Lumina
- Lease agreements with the American Baptist Churches of RI retaining stewardship responsibility
- Negotiated shared use and exclusive space of the property
- Shared revenue with the American Baptist Churches of RI and CMI for long-term needs and deferred maintenance



The 2025 votes by the region delegates not to sell the property has resulted in thoughtful conversations, increased exploration of the options, and the sharing of information. As a result, the region has received two proposals with exciting opportunities for use of the Canonicus property. Unfortunately, neither proposal taken alone provides for sustainability for the American Baptist Churches of RI. This is the reason for the development of this third proposal.

This proposal we believe would help bring the Canonicus Ministries Incorporated and the Lumina proposals into fruition, opening new ventures which could be of benefit to ABCORI congregations and the wider communities of Rhode Island and New England while also providing greater sustainability to all three partners.

The partnership with a for-profit endeavor is what provides for long-term stability, but not just any partnership, but one which aligns with the mission statement of the American Baptist Churches of Rhode Island which is a “*commitment to proclaiming good news and transforming lives.*”

To “*proclaim the good news and transform lives*” is a dual mission rooted in our Christian faith. It carries a broad meaning of sharing a message of hope and following it up with action that changes lives.

# Advantages of a Collaboration



There is more potential for a quicker return to summer camping by using current facilities



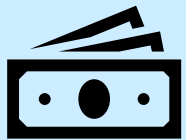
Open space is preserved for future generations



Adding the Lumina feature creates greater visibility and opportunities and new revenue



Sharing costs and revenue is budget relieving for ABCORI and reduces start up expenses for the partners



Lumina revenue would rebuild depleted reserves and address deferred maintenance



The delegates of the American Baptist Churches of RI continue to serve as stewards of the property

# Important Property Tax Information

- These are the assessment rates in Exeter
  - a) Commercial - \$2500/acre
  - b) Open Space - \$600/acre
  - c) Forest Space - \$115/acre
- Tax rate in Exeter is \$11.75/\$1000
  - a)  $(300 \text{ acres} \times \$2500.00) / 1000) \$11.75 = \$8812.50$
  - b)  $(300 \text{ acres} \times \$600.00) / 1000) \$11.75 = \$2115.00$
  - c)  $(300 \text{ acres} \times \$115) / 1000) \$11.75 = \$405.36$
- Recently in conversations with the Town of Exeter, we learned that our property is tax exempt by vote of the RI State Legislature exclusively to ABCORI and is not transferable.
- Current understanding is that with seasonal use, the limited percentage of the property used by Lumina would not be assessed for taxes according to the Exeter Tax Assessor



# Possible Shared Spaces and Exclusive Spaces

## Shared Spaces

- Lawrence for shared offices if desired (ABCORI, Lumina, CMI)
- One of 3 buildings suitable for Camp Director and Executive Minister housing or as rental to provide for housing allowances (One each ABCORI and CMI)
- Beach and Boat Launch area during daytime hours (CMI) evening hours (Lumina)
- Beach Pavillion and fields during daytime hours (CMI) evening use (Lumina)

## Exclusive Spaces

- Meadowood/Pierce Lodge (CMI)
- Green and Rathbun (CMI)
- Motter (ABCORI)
- Approximately 30 acres of wooded paths including existing sleeping shelters (Lumina)
- A-frame & Shaub kitchen area (Lumina)
- Shaub main meeting room (CMI)
- Archery range area (CMI)
- Indoor and Outdoor chapels (CMI)
- Approximately 250+ acres of woodland (CMI)

# Canonicus Background Information

## Previous Camp Attendance Averages 2002-2019

- Day Camp over 17 years – 36 campers/week (216 Summer Total)
- Overnight Camp over 17 years – 37 campers/week (222 Summer Total)

## 2019 Camp Attendance

- Day Camp 16 campers/week (98 Summer Total)
- Overnight Camp 22 campers/week (132 Summer Total)

## Conference Average Income and Summer Usage

- Average Income \$200K
- $\frac{3}{4}$  of rentals were for Pierce/Meadowood/Green & Rathbun, Shaub
- The pavilion and waterfront make up the remaining  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the rentals
- Summer use of conference areas have been almost exclusively weekend rentals. Weekday use during summer months has *been 2 weeks on average* by groups using it as a summer overnight camp

# Proposed Use of Meadowood/Pierce Lodge for Summer Overnight Camping

## Benefits

- Earlier resumption of a summer overnight camping program
- An upgraded summer camp facility which might potentially be more attractive to parents/participants and equivalent to facilities that have been used for ABCUSA conferencing and retreats
- Sunday evening to Friday afternoon overnight resident camping (males and females on separate floors) – making use of what has been an underutilized facility in the summer months
- Potential Income/Week \$26,400, which is \$158,000/year (44 campers x \$600x 6 weeks)
- There is space so that the Health Station, Bathroom and Dining Facilities could all be on one site



# Proposed Principles for Determining Costs and Revenue

## Expenses

- The American Baptist Churches of RI through its delegates remain owners and responsible for expenses for use, maintenance, upgrades and upkeep of the Lawrence Office Building, Motter, and one residence
- The American Baptist Churches of RI would lease buildings and spaces which would be used by CMI and Lumina, who would be responsible for maintenance, upgrades and upkeep as determined by a lease agreement
- Each organization would secure required liability insurance specific to their use of the property
- Property insurance would be obtained by the American Baptist Churches of RI and the expense would be apportioned by the leases according to share of use

## Revenue

- Formulas for revenue sharing would be determined by contractual agreements in leases with the partners
- The American Baptist Churches of Rhode Island's annual budget would be submitted to the delegates with details on how revenue would be appropriated

# Benefits to Canonicus Ministries Incorporated

- Accelerated timeline for resumption of camping and retreats by use of Meadowood/Pierce, Rathbun, and Green
- A continued direct partnership with ABCORI congregations, potentially as an Affiliated Organization
- Opportunity for ABCORI congregations to send campers and utilize the property for gatherings and retreats
- Free advertising and exposure to Canonicus' camping and retreat ministries by Lumina guests
- No mortgage payments
- Anticipated funds for deferred maintenance and reserves, especially in that not all but many of the existing endowments currently held by ABCORI are not transferable.

# Benefits for Lumina LLC

- Access to forested land conducive for their light and sound spiritual experience.
- The Canonicus property is central in the State of RI near other vacation destinations making it a desirable location for such an attraction.
- There exists an underutilized infrastructure which fits Lumina's needs. Potential for facility rental for staff and/or guests seeking overnight accommodations.

# Benefits for the *American Baptist Churches of Rhode Island*

- Camping and retreat ministries would return to the property, restoring a dearly missed opportunity to share the love of Jesus with the ABCORI congregations and the larger RI community.
- Retained stewardship for the property by the delegates of the region churches for generations to come.
- Additional Lumina income (estimate of \$1.5 million over 10 years) through revenue and expense sharing with partners with the intention for building financial reserves which would be used to address current and future capital needs.

# In Conclusion

The ABCORI Board of Ministries has listened and pondered what we have heard from pastors, church members and delegates, and have had extensive dialogue with the two groups which have submitted proposals separately and together. We have also been in prayer about where God might be leading us. This is what has prompted this invitation to enter a three-way partnership.

ABCORI has invested well over a half a million dollars in endowments and reserves from sale of the prior Providence office building and the rebuilding of the dam. Unrestricted Canonics reserves have been depleted. This joint operation provides the potential to honor these investments and provide for future enhancement of the property.

# Can We Imagine?

The Good News of Jesus Christ is the core of who we are and what we do. This property has been dedicated as a place for sharing the Gospel with children, youth and adults. This proposal provides the opportunity to do this and even more.

Can we imagine a retreat center filled with summer overnight campers?

Can we imagine a possible second housing wing being added, which has been hoped for these many years, to minister to even more people?



Can we imagine the lakefront area serving as a place where hundreds of children would once again experience the love of Christ in a day camp setting?

Can we imagine new uses of the largely unused backwoods property for new ministries?

Can we imagine the Lumina spiritual experience touching hearts and minds in new ways while introducing hundreds of families to the camping ministries which share the property?

Alone the challenges are great but together the opportunities are many.

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