



## Ministers Council Newsletter

*Rev. Dr. Debora Jackson, Executive Director*

*November 2012*

### 2013 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Years ago, American Express remade itself with a campaign slogan "Membership has its privileges". The reason that the slogan resonated with so many was because it was true. By showing your American Express card, doors were opened, access was gained and services could be secured. Because this card wielded so much power, people wanted to have it.

It's nearly 2013 and we believe that membership in the Ministers Council has its privileges as well. First, as members of the Ministers Council, doors are opened to you. We are a professional society of ministerial leaders who hold dear the craft of ministry and commit ourselves to excellence as we live out the call that God has placed on our lives. Being a Member of the Ministers Council is an affirmation of our commitment to God, to one another, and to the people we serve.

Second, membership in the Ministers Council has its privileges because it will give you access. Even now, the national council is planning programs and initiatives that we will make available to you at no or discounted cost because of your membership in Ministers Council. Think about it: you will have access to online seminars and thought provoking reports. You will have access to prayer groups for your spiritual enrichment. In short, you will have access to the benefits we have to offer.

Third, membership in the Ministers Council has its privileges because it will allow you to secure services. We are forming partnerships within our denomination and beyond with the intent to harness the power of those partnerships for the betterment of our members. Our goal is simple: we want to meaningfully partner with others so that we can better serve our members.

Do you have your 2013 Ministers Council Membership Card? If not, get more information about the Ministers Council at [www.ministerscouncil.org](http://www.ministerscouncil.org). You will not want to leave home without your membership card, because after all, Membership has its privileges.

	<p>THE MINISTERS COUNCIL American Baptist Churches/USA</p> <p><i>Certifies that</i></p> <p><u>&lt;Your Name Here&gt;</u></p> <p><b>IS A MEMBER FOR THE YEAR 2013</b></p>
<p><i>Donna Turlington</i> NATIONAL PRESIDENT</p> <p><i>Debora Jackson</i> EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</p>	<p>_____ MEMBER'S SIGNATURE</p> <p>_____ LOCAL PRESIDENT</p>

## THE TOGETHER IN MINISTRY CAPITAL CAMPAIGN ENTERS THE LIVE PHASE



Collegiality/Centeredness/Competence

The Ministers Council

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA

*Join us in our effort to sustain ministerial excellence*

Together in Ministry has played a vital part in fostering collegiality among our ministerial leaders; centeredness as we come together for our spiritual deepening; and increased competence as we learn new ways to be more effective in the ministries to which we are called. In addition to helping us be more effective, the Together in Ministry program has enabled our leaders to partner together, minimizing that “Lone Ranger” syndrome that sometimes permeates our profession. Rather than succumbing to the troubling trends of ministerial burnout or misconduct, Together in Ministry participants are more likely to flourish in ministry because they experience first hand through “Holy Friendships” that a three-fold cord is not easily broken.

Over the past ten years, we have had the benefit of the Lilly Endowment to finance the operational and administrative costs of the Together in Ministry program. After a decade of TIM groups, seeing positive impacts and hearing numerous testimonials, we know that this is a program that we must continue because it works. However, it was never the program’s design that Lilly funding would continue indefinitely. The expectation was that groups funded by Lilly would determine how to sustain and continue these programs into the future. To that end, it is now our turn to take Together in Ministry forward.

Our campaign goal is to raise 1.1 million dollars of funding in cash, pledges and in-kind services for the continuation of the Together in Ministry program and we want to invite everyone to be a part. You can help by making a cash donation or writing a check to the Ministers Council through the Together in Ministry capital campaign. The link for donations can be found at <http://www.ministerscouncil.com/CapitalCampaign2012/documents/12TiMResponsePrintFINAL.pdf/>. You can make a one time gift or annual pledge over a three year period. You can also make a donation of in-kind facilitated services. We want to extend these services to existing TIM groups so that we continue to encourage TIM group gatherings into the future. You can also contact us if you are interested in planned giving. Moreover, you can encourage others to support this campaign. The Ministers Council is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization and your contributions are tax-deductible contributions. The monies we raise will enable us to continue the benefits of Together in Ministry for decades to come.

Thousands of ministerial leaders have been served by the Together in Ministry program. We want to continue it for the continued health and vitality of our leaders. Help us extend our efforts to sustain pastoral excellence by making your donations today.

## AN ARC OF DAMAGE

Lee Spitzer, Executive Minister, New Jersey

### New Jersey Bore the Brunt of the Storm

At one point, over 2 million people were without power. Approximately 1.2 million still do not have full power. Another key concern is lack of fresh food for grocery stores and gasoline (half of NJ service stations are closed). Most barrier islands are still closed to civilian traffic. In many parts of the state, life is slowly returning to normal – stores are opening and schools are slowly getting back into session.

The damage reports we have received reveal an “arc of damage” pattern. The storm battered the shore communities (but not uniformly; at least 2 churches in the direct path were not damaged), but it also delivered the most rain and highest winds to the communities north of the eye.



### *ABCNJ's Church Damage Assessment*

During the storm, the ABCNJ ministry team attempted to stay in touch with our 280 churches and 320 active clergy. Immediately after Sandy passed, we began reaching out to our people through every avenue of communication at our disposal – phones, email, IM, Constant Contact, Facebook and personal contacts. Our efforts have been hampered by loss of power in many communities. We have heard damage assessment reports from 108 churches (42%) from all 8 of our associations. We are actively attempting to hear from those who have not yet reported in.

As of FRIDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 2, we have learned that 34 churches (12%) have suffered damage, ranging from minor (broken windows, one or two trees down) to moderate (roof damage, some flooding) to major (significant roof or water damage). Furthermore, the region's Camp Lebanon suffered damage (broken doors and windows, downed trees and power lines). The Camp estimates it will lose over \$20,000 in revenues from retreats cancelled over the next two weeks.

We estimate that between 20-30% of our churches may have suffered damage – about 70-90 churches. Many of our churches are trying to minister to their communities, and need assistance in meeting the needs of people without shelter, power, and food.

### How Can My Church and I Help?

The best way to partner with ABCNJ as we help our churches recover from Hurricane Sandy is to contribute to One Great Hour of Sharing. ABCNJ has received an initial grant, which we will begin distributing immediately. Visit our regional website, [www.abcnj.net](http://www.abcnj.net), for regular updates.

## FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Today, as I write my musings, it is November 7<sup>th</sup>. To be honest, I have gotten little sleep, post the election. Like many of you, I stayed up late watching returns. However, even in this sleep deprived state, I find myself in reflection. I cannot help but reflect on my role, and yours for that matter, as a ministerial leader.

What we saw from the election and in the days leading up to it was confirmation that we live in a deeply divided and polarized country. Looking over the Electoral College map as it was painted on the ice rink of 30 Rockefeller Place was troubling to say the least. The coasts and northern perimeter of the country was blue; the center and south was red. Only Florida was purple and even that was misleading as you considered the four distinct populations and allegiances across the state. Evidence of the polarization was seen as Governor Chris Christie, a popular Republican surrogate, was eviscerated for saying "Thank you" to the president for his leadership during Super storm Sandy. Extending heartfelt thanks is cause for vilification? What on earth is happening?

So in the face of this polarization, what can we do as leaders? I cannot help but think that our role as leaders in our communities is that of healer. "Is there no balm in Gilead?" Although Jeremiah found no medicine to cure the hurt in the world, God gave us his son to bring salvation. Moreover, he called us, his ministers, to skillfully share the salve of that salvation, applying it to a sin-sick world. Considered this way, it seems clear that we are God's healers and there is a need for us to help heal the world.

As leaders, we are to be the peacemakers. Jesus said "Blessed are the peacemakers," for we are the ones who show others how to have inward peace with God. We also show others how to be instruments of peace in the world. As ministers called of God, this is what we do. We help others to be at peace by being a non-anxious, calming presence in the world. The world needs the peace that is brought by peacemakers.

As leaders we are to be reconcilers. It is the love of Christ that urges us on to give ourselves for the healing and restoration of others. We are urged on because we are compelled by the knowledge that if Christ died for us, then we cannot simply live for ourselves, but we have to live for the one who died for us all. Thus is it in this compulsion that we recognize our call to a ministry of reconciliation. We are called to encourage others to be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ so that we might realize together the righteousness of God through Christ.

And maybe through the exercise of our leadership as healers and peacemakers and reconcilers, we might be able to bring people together. Maybe through our leadership, dialog can happen. Maybe through our leadership, people might come to hear and ultimately value the opinions of others. Our polarized nation is in need. So let us be the leaders – the healers, peacemakers and reconcilers – that God has called us to be.



## LEADERSHIP CHANGES



Rev. Dr. Jeff Savage has announced his resignation as President of the Ministers Council, effective September 15, 2012. We have been most grateful for Jeff's leadership over the past decade, as he has worked to move us forward. We pray God's blessings and favor on Jeff and his family as he leads his congregation with a renewed focus on the ministries of the church.

We are blessed that Rev. Dr. Darla "Dee Dee" Turlington has accepted the appointment as President of the Ministers Council, serving out Jeff's remaining term. Dee Dee was the senior pastor of the First Baptist Church of Westfield, NJ before retiring in 2010. She has served the Ministers Council in various capacities over the past six years, most recently serving as Vice President of Professional Effectiveness.

The American Baptist Churches of the Central Pacific Coast (formerly ABC of Oregon), at their Annual Gathering in Alameda, California in late October, announced the appointment of Rev. Miriam Méndez to the position of Associate Executive Minister. Rev. Méndez assumed her new role on November 1. Miriam represents the ABCCPC on the Ministers Council Senate.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### ABHMS Calls for 2013 Biennial Awards Nominations

The Board of American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS) seeks nominations for ministry awards to be announced at the American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA) 2013 Mission Summit/Biennial to be held June 21-23, in Overland Park/Kansas City, Kan. Nominations are needed for nine national recognition awards that honor American Baptist individuals, churches and organizations for exceptional faithfulness in ministry, in addition to three merit awards that honor chaplains and pastoral counselors. Nominations will also be accepted for the Luke Mowbray Ecumenical Award, to be presented by ABCUSA.

Awards that recognize individuals, churches and organizations are as follows:

- Edwin T. Dahlberg Peace Award to an individual or church for outstanding work for peace;
- Jitsuo Morikawa Evangelism Award to a layperson for outstanding leadership in holistic evangelism;
- Rosa O. Hall Rural and Small Town Award to a pastor for exceptional effectiveness in rural ministry or small town ministry;
- Edward H. Rhoades Urban Ministry Award to a pastor for exceptional effectiveness in urban ministry;
- Richard Hoiland Local Christian Education Award to an individual for faithful, effective leadership in Christian education;
- Luther Wesley Smith Education Award to an individual for faithful, effective leadership in strengthening Christian education at an American Baptist-related college or seminary;
- Kenneth L. Cober Regional Discipleship Award to an individual for faithful, effective leadership in discipleship education in an American Baptist region;
- Newton C. Fetter Higher Education and Campus Ministry Award to an individual for significant innovation in campus ministry;

- Religious Freedom Award to an individual, church or organization for leadership in defending God-given religious liberty for all; and
- Luke Mowbray Ecumenical Award to an individual for outstanding ecumenical work at the local, state, national or international level; this award is to be presented by ABCUSA.

Merit awards that recognize chaplains and pastoral counselors are as follows:

- Institutional Chaplain Merit Award;
- Pastoral Counselor Merit Award; and
- Military Chaplain Merit Award.

**Deadline for nominations is Nov. 30, 2012.** Nominations for these 2013 awards can be submitted online or by fax, postal mail and email. Nominations submitted by postal mail must be postmarked by Nov. 30; those submitted online or by fax or e-mail must be received at ABHMS by Nov. 30. For awards to individuals, churches or organizations, request an English or Spanish version of the hard-copy nomination form by contacting Susan Bogle at [susan.bogle@abhms.org](mailto:susan.bogle@abhms.org) or 1-800-222-3872, x2028. For chaplaincy and pastoral counseling awards, contact Yolanda Schweikert at [yolanda.schweikert@abhms.org](mailto:yolanda.schweikert@abhms.org) or 1-800-222-3872, x2447, to request a hard-copy nomination form in English or to receive help in interpreting the form in Spanish. For awards criteria, to print nominations forms or to submit nominations online, please visit the [nominations page](#) on ABHMS' website at [www.abhms.org](http://www.abhms.org).

### **ABHMS Calls for Letters of Intent for 2012 Palmer Grants**

American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS) is calling for letters of intent from those interested in applying for American Baptist Foundation-administered 2012 grants from the Virginia and Gordon Palmer Jr. Trust. Awards will range from \$10,000 to \$15,000.

With the theme of "Discipleship: Engaging the 18 to 29 Years Old Community," this year's grant cycle seeks to fund special projects and programs of American Baptist Churches USA (ABACUSA)-related colleges, universities and institutions.

Individuals 18-29 are in the "black hole" of church attendance, according to the Barna Group, while, at the same time, struggling with critical life decisions regarding higher education, military service, marriage, procreation, parenting and faith, among others. As the foundation for this and future generations, this age group must not be ignored. Therefore, this year's grant proposals should identify best ministry practices aimed at this age group.

A project must be:

- an existing ministry project worthy of further study or a new project addressing the adaptive challenge of how best to engage this age group;
- conducted under the auspices of a church, institution or organization related to ABCUSA; and
- completed within a 12-month time frame.

In addition, grant recipients must be willing to share their stories and learnings with a gathering of ABHMS and the foundation in winter/spring 2014.

The deadline for letters of intent is Dec. 14, 2012. Please do not submit a full grant application at this time. Those who submit a letter will be notified by Jan. 13, 2013, as to whether to complete an application packet.

For additional information, download the "[Request for Letters of Intent](#)" booklet on ABHMS' website at [www.abhms.org](http://www.abhms.org) or call the foundation office at 1-800-222-3872, x2035.

## **REFRESHMENT DAY at the Bethany House of Prayer in Arlington, MA**

**Tuesday, December 4, 2012, 9AM to 2PM**

**Led by the Rev. Dr. Debora Jackson, Executive Director American Baptist Ministers Council**

*Prepare for the gifts of the season with a day of refreshment. Registration required. Fee: \$50 includes a midday meal at the Convent. To register online, please [click here](#). Otherwise, please contact Bethany House by [phone or email](#) with your request.*

## **REMEMBER US!**

When planning your estate, please remember The Ministers Council.

## **HELP US KEEP YOU INFORMED**

The hard reality about this newsletter is this: Our email mailing list is not as complete as we would wish. But you can help and your help we ask. Please forward this to your constituencies and friends. Most months, there is something helpful and when there is not, the delete button is only about an inch away and there will be little imposition impressed upon your friends. We appreciate your help.

## **SIGN UP FOR FUTURE ISSUES OF NEWS YOU CAN USE FROM THE MINISTERS COUNCIL**

Sign up for future issues of the monthly Ministers Council newsletter by replying to this message from the email address to which you wish issues to be sent. Add the newsletter email address to your address book so that future newsletters will not go into your spam filter.

If you have news, ideas, events or websites from your Ministers Council to share with colleagues, please email to [debora.jackson@abc-usa.org](mailto:debora.jackson@abc-usa.org). The more we share with one another what works, the stronger we will all be.

## **MINISTERS COUNCIL CONTACT INFORMATION**

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