



Ministers Council Newsletter

Rev. Dr. Debora Jackson, Executive Director

September 2014

From the Desk of the Executive Director

Preaching from the book of Micah, the sixth chapter and the eighth verse, Rev. Al Sharpton recited the familiar strains of "...And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God" at Michael Brown's funeral in Ferguson, MO. He said as a challenge to the waiting congregation "We sit like we have no requirements. Like it's somebody else. But all of us are required to respond to this. And all of us must solve this."

I found myself asking the question, "What is it that we could do as clergy?" So many times, people expect that we would offer prayers in the midst of the crises or after the fact. We are expected to hold the hands of those who are bereaved in the midst of their grief. Yes we should do those things, but I can't help but think that's too late. Not only do I believe that there is a role for us before the fact, but also there is a mandate that we live our call to make a difference in our communities. So what can we do? We can make connections, build bridges, foster dialogue, and speak truth.

When I first became a pastor, I realized that there were so many services that people expected from the church, but I had no capacity to supply. People came to the church seeking food, clothing, health care, money for temporary housing and the like. I knew that my church couldn't supply these needs, but as I started to do a bit of research, it became clear to me that many of these services existed within the community. What was required of me was that I go out and make connections. I reached out to the housing authority, and the office of public health. I connected with the police and fire department and the Board of Selectmen (that's a New England thing – the local government in small cities and towns). I started making these connections in order to ensure that I could connect people with services as they had need, but what I found was that I became known in the community because of my outreach. So, when we had a spate of teen suicides and the community was in crisis, I was one of the people called. If people know who we are in the community before calamity strikes, we will be some of the first responders in the times of trouble.

When we take the time to make connections, we are able to build bridges particularly between factions. I recently reconnected with a woman whom I had not seen for nearly a decade. During our conversation, she asked me, "What are you doing these days?" I told her that I was a member of the clergy. She looked at me closely and said, "I see it. There is such a calm and presence about you now."



I'd like to believe that that is something all of us who are clergy bring to the table. There is a centeredness that comes from our relationship with Jesus Christ. We can bring that centered balance into deliberations to speak calm and peace, while promoting a spirit that brings parties together. If we have taken the time to make connections then we are positioned to bring those entities together to seek common ground.

And that is this third point of what we can do. We have to foster dialogue to help parties seek common ground. I met Tal Becker when I was in Jerusalem. Tal is a renowned political negotiator and on the day that he spoke to our class, he was just coming from a meeting with Benjamin Netanyahu and John Kerry. He said that the only way for sides to reach a deal is to determine how both sides succeed, noting that "you are not trying to win arguments; you are trying to reconcile interests." When we as ministerial leaders can operate from that centered, balanced place that is also neutral, then I believe that we have a chance of helping each side realize wins.

And yet, regardless of our efforts, there are times when we, like Jeremiah, must "cry violence." However, we are seemingly so afraid of alienating others that we say nothing. However I insist that there are some things that are so egregious and heinous that we cannot be quiet. As Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said in his "Letter from Birmingham City Jail," "We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the vitriolic words and actions of the bad people, but for the appalling silence of the good people." Too many of us are the good people – those silent ones who have had little to say when a 9 year old lost control of an uzi and killed her firing range instructor; when an unarmed teenager was shot by police; when a mother was beaten and arrested in front of her children in a case of mistaken identity; or when a man carrying a BB gun from the toy department at Walmart is shot dead as he declared, "It's a toy."

What does the Lord require of you? We are God's priests and prophets. We are the preachers and teachers. We have been gifted to bring comfort. But we are also gifted to make connections, build bridges, foster dialogue, and speak truth. Let us use our gifts and live fully into our calling for there is much that we can do.



Rev. Shakespeare Osorio serves communion to Rev. Michael Harvey during Worship at Senate.

The Ministers Council Senate / Annual Meeting: New Wine for New Wine Skins

The Ministers Council convened its Senate / Annual Meeting from August 11-14, 2014, at the American Baptist Assembly / Green Lake Conference Center in Green Lake, WI. Using the theme "New Wine for New Wineskins" from Luke 5:36-38, Senators assembled to consider a new structure of governance for the Ministers Council.

The meeting was convened by President Rev. Douglas Harris. Senators immediately began the work of considering the new Bylaws and Standing Rules, both which were ratified. Key changes in the Bylaws included changing the name of Constituent Ministers Councils to Local Chapters, with local chapter representatives attending the Annual Meetings, rather than Senators attending Senate. These changes constitute a shift in the organizational governance, moving from a larger Senate governed structure to a smaller Board of Governors, the elected officers of the Ministers Council.

The Annual Meeting was also established as an open meeting for all ministerial leaders and visitors. Annual meetings will consist of a business meeting for chapter representatives to ratify the

proposals of the Board of Governors, and a time to convene the Ministries Team, which is the programmatic arm of the Ministers Council made up of chapter representatives and Ministers Council members. There will additionally be time for speakers, workshops, prayer teams and Sabbath time for all attendees given this new open format.

Other changes to the structure include the establishment of a Development Council, which has responsibility for Fund Development and Marketing initiatives. The Ministries Team, which would continue to convene and operate between Annual Meetings, would be responsible for coordinating programmatic efforts and initiatives, as well as sharing best practices and ideas between local chapters to increase involvement and interest in the Ministers Council at the local level. The Board of Governors would serve as a working board, convening monthly to ensure strategic momentum and organizational sustainability.

Key standing rules passed include a sliding scale dues structure based on income; the elimination of the life member category after 1/1/2015, but the grandfathering of all who were life members prior to; and an annual 10% reduction of the amount that the national council contributes to a chapter representative's meeting expenses. Full details of the changes will be available through your local council.

Tuesday evening marked the start of our refreshment time together, a feature of our new format. Our opening banquet was especially blessed by Rev. Molly T. Marshall, Ph.D., President and Professor of Theology and Spiritual Formation, who preached to our theme of New Wine in New Wineskins. On Wednesday, she further graced us by sharing the Central Baptist Theological Seminary story and her leadership efforts to bring the school back from the brink. It was a powerful time of sharing as many were able to view her efforts in terms of their own ministries, identifying strategies that could be personally applied.

On Wednesday afternoon, participants were treated by workshop participants whose expertise was motivated by the Clergy Health Initiative, a grant-backed program launched by the Ministers Council, American Baptist Foundation, ABHMS, and MMBB. Every workshop was exceptional and attendees came away with numerous resources to support them in their efforts to achieve improved wellness on a number of fronts.

Senate attendees in years past have most appreciated time for prayer groups and Sabbath and our new format incorporates these components as well. The Spiritual and Personal Wholeness Committee members served as prayer team leaders, and participants were able to engage in several times of deep prayer and listening. From Wednesday afternoon through Thursday, we enjoyed a time of Sabbath rest. Folks went to the movies, enjoyed a round of golf, rented boating equipment or simply took the time for respite. Wednesday evening concluded with a lovely Compline service, which was a perfect end to a perfect day.

On Thursday morning, we completed a few details of business, and then came together for closing worship and communion. It was a particular pleasure to celebrate Rev. Dr. Darla "Dee Dee" Turlington, Immediate Past President and author of our newly passed Bylaws and Standing Rules as she received the Ralph Garfield Schell President's Award.

In all it was a wonderful time. We believe that our newly passed Bylaws and standing rules will help us realize a more nimble governance structure that is better able to position us for sustainability into the future. The fact that the meeting will now be open to ministerial leaders will encourage others to get involved in the Ministers Council. While this was our first attempt at such an open meeting, several visitors were in attendance and expressed their positive feedback having been part of the fellowship, with the opportunity to engage in spiritual deepening and professional development. During Mission Summit years, the Ministers Council annual meeting will overlap with our biennial gathering. During off Summit years, we hope to identify locations around the country so that others may have the opportunity to attend the meetings. We are preparing the new wine for new wineskins. It was an exciting 2014 meeting. We hope that you might consider attending the Ministers Council Annual Meeting in 2015 and beyond.



Got announcements?

Share your news by contacting the Ministers Council office at (800) 222-3872 x 2334 or email Joyce Moon at joyce.moon@abc-usa.org

Sign up now for the Clergy Health Initiative

Has your Together in Ministry Group signed up yet for the Clergy Health Initiative? Did you read about the initiative and think, "Hey, what a great idea. I should get more information!" Well, here's your chance. Go to http://ministerscouncil.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/CLI_Application.pdf and complete the application today. We are looking for a few good groups to participate in this study. What Together in Ministry has taught us is that when we are personally engaged in our own self care and wellness, we are



more vested in the outcomes, our participation increases and our results are greater. We found this to be true with regard to peer group learning. Our theory is that health care outcomes will be improved as well when we apply the peer group model to it. Now we need to prove out that theory and you can be a part of the study.

Groups will receive the Clergy Health Care Initiative booklet through which individuals can assess health care needs. Groups will also receive support from resources and experts who are committing their time and expertise to work with you. On a monthly basis, members of the Clergy Health Action Learning Team will follow up with groups to see how the process is going – whether it is helpful to use the peer group model to make progress against health goals. Group members will additionally receive a Fit Bit to track movement, and information on health monitoring apps that can be used to manage health care goals.

Don't miss out; be a part of this study. Click the link http://ministerscouncil.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/CLI_Application.pdf and start your group's participation today. For more information call (800) ABC-3USA ext. 2334.



Together in Ministry – Current Status

Not too long ago, the office phone rang in Valley Forge and thanks to modern technology, the call was transferred to my cell phone as I sat in Newton, MA. Upon my answer, I heard, "I'm trying to reach the Ministers Council." I said, "You have reached the Ministers Council, this is Debora Jackson. May I help you?" Immediately, my caller was a bit flustered. He said, "Oh my! I didn't think I would get you. I was just calling because I wanted to contribute to the capital campaign and I was having trouble. Is there someone who can call me back and help me?" Well, I can tell you, in that moment, there was nothing more important that I had to do to help my fellow pastor complete his transaction. What a privilege it was to serve him and hear how he was willing to support those of us who are still active in the ministry, even though he had retired.

I continue to be humbled by that phone call and this man's generous spirit. Because there were people like this pastor who believed in me, supported me, offered a word of encouragement to me, and shared resources with me, I was able to minister as God has called. I dare say the same is true for you. Who made it possible for you to minister? Now, will you make it possible for others to do the same?

Together in Ministry has been the means by which ministerial leaders have come together as peers to learn, grow, share, and be encouraged. And because of the generosity of many, this program can continue. But are you counted in this number? Will someone be able to say they have ministered because you contributed? A retired pastor called me and thought it not robbery to give of his resources. You can click <http://ministerscouncil.com/together-in-ministry-capital-campaign/> and do the same. We have raised \$289,308.05 in cash gifts and pledges, and \$71,519.20 in in-kind contributions. Just \$139,172.75 in pledges/cash or in-kind donations and we have reached our target of \$500,000. Ensure ministerial excellence for years to come. Make a tax-deductible donation today.

7 Things to Remember while Planning for Your Church's Fall Stewardship Program

By Margaret J. Marcuson

Some churches have their stewardship campaign all set for this fall. Others haven't even started planning. Whatever your situation, big church or small, early planning or last-minute effort, here are seven things to remember.



1. Ask yourself, "What do we want for this campaign?" A dollar amount, a specific number of pledges or new pledges, a spirit of gratitude, celebratory worship around stewardship? You're more likely to get what you want if you are clear about it.
2. The pastor needs to ask. If you're the pastor, don't hesitate to specifically ask people to support the ministry in your stewardship sermons, articles and letters. If you're a lay leader, tell the pastor you want him or her to clearly ask people to give.
3. Highlight vision, not maintenance. People don't want to give to keeping the lights on; they want to give to ministry. Find a few stories and photos of a youth mission project, worship celebration, or other events during the year, and use them. Even if your plans are in place, find some new stories or photos between now and the time you kick it off, the more recent, the better.
4. Have more fun with it. Stewardship sometimes seems like a dreary duty, but it doesn't have to be. If you are still forming your committee, choose someone lighthearted to be a part of it. And see if you can be lighter about it yourself. What can you celebrate about stewardship this year?
5. Consider providing a way for people to give electronically. Younger folks, and many older ones as well, are used to paying their bills online. Provide options for giving.
6. Give thanks and celebrate. Make sure you report results and celebrate along the way. And thank those who pledge individually, ideally with a handwritten note from the pastor. The pastor doesn't have to know the pledge total to do this, if that's a big issue in your church. And if the pastor can't or won't, find another way to thank people individually, not simply in the newsletter or bulletin.
7. Think of stewardship as a ministry. You are helping people to experience the joy of giving and to develop a new, freer relationship with their resources. This is God's work.

Which one (or more) of these would you like to try this year?

Rev. Margaret Marcuson is Vice President of the Ministers Council's Spiritual and Personal Wholeness Committee and a Member of the Executive Committee. She is the author of Leaders Who Last: Sustaining Yourself and Your Ministry (http://www.amazon.com/Leaders-Who-Last-Sustaining-Yourself/dp/1596270950/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1264435127&sr=8-1) and Money and Your Ministry (http://www.amazon.com/Money-Your-Ministry-Balance-Keeping/dp/0976436647/ref=sr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1390508182&sr=1-2&keywords=margaret+marcuson)



Will you Be a Member in 2015?

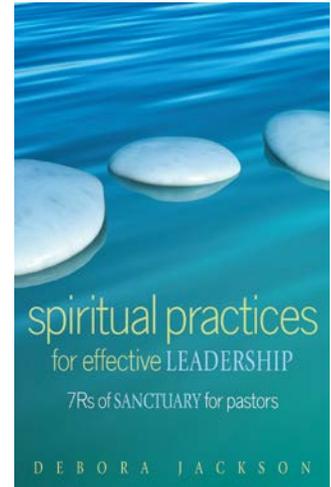
The Ministers Council is growing and moving forward. Will you be a part of this movement in 2015 or will you be left behind? Ministers Council members have access to information, discounts from Ministers Council partners, reduced event registration, and Members Only Website access. You can connect with the Ministers Council for latest information for your local council and ministry resources. You can be apart of the winning circle of leaders who are equipped, who can connect, and who are better prepared to thrive in ministry. What's more, the new dues structure may make it more affordable for you to participate. Want to find out more? 2015 Membership information will be available soon. Be a part of the Ministers Council.

New Judson Press Releases



Millennials in Ministry is the latest Judson Press release that you need for your collection. Based on a qualitative study of more than thirty young adults (ages 18–35) from diverse denominations and countries serving in various ministry positions, *Millennials in Ministry* unveils the heart and vision of young leaders for the Christian church today. Highlighting the generational traits, values, and needs of Millennials in ministry, this book offers helpful insights for churches and organizations that are hiring, retaining, and equipping this new generation of leaders. Get your copy today as a member of the Ministers Council, you can receive free shipping on this and other Judson Press titles when you spend more than \$15.00.

Coming in the spring 2015, look for the new Judson Press book *Spiritual Practices for Effective Leadership: The 7Rs of Sanctuary for Pastors*, by Debora Jackson.



Judson Press Launches a Pubslush Crowdfunding Campaign for a Unique Clergywomen Project

Judson Press is launching a crowdfunding campaign on Pubslush for a special project called *Reflections Along the Journey: Theological Narratives of Korean American Clergywomen*. The project is a compilation of theological reflections, sermons, and stories of faith from Korean American women in various forms of ministry in the church. The primary goal is to share their stories to provide a window of understanding into the trials of Korean American women in ministry—a window that may serve as a mirror for other women who know what it is to be marginalized, overlooked, or prejudged based on their gender, ethnicity, culture, or appearance. The project is unique in that the book contains various genres of writing—sermons, theological reflections, stories of personal journey, and poetry from women of various generations. By supporting this project, people will become a source of encouragement, inspiration, and affirmation for other Asian American women called to Christian ministry. Their stories and voices add clarity, wisdom, and hope, enriching the overall landscape of writings in this field. Now through October 8, 2014, Judson Press will be soliciting support to join its Pubslush [community](#) and bring this important compilation to life. Learn more about the project and how you can participate at <http://pubslush.com/project/3516>.

Sign Up Now: Peer Power: Cultivating Clergy Communities of Practice

Retreat and Conference Center at Bon Secours

1525 Marriottsville Road
Marriottsville, MD, USA

It's a proven fact: pastors who are part of peer learning groups, like *Together in Ministry*, are more effective leaders. Come and learn why. **Peer Power** will offer presentations and workshops drawing on a broad mix of perspectives, foundational practices, and direct experiences of clergy peer learning approaches as we explore these questions.

Peer Power is an offering sponsored by **The Pastoral Excellence Network**. Their purpose is to sustain and amplify the impact that Lilly Endowment Inc. initiated through the Transition into Ministry and Sustaining Pastoral Excellence programs. We seek to help churches and church-related organizations provide opportunities for pastors to find



support and learning throughout their professional lives. We work with congregations and organizations to help new pastors get the best possible start in ministry and equip experienced pastors with practices that will sustain their vital ministry, particularly through peer learning groups.

Dates and Cost: October 28: breakfast, lunch, and dinner, plus overnight accommodations on Oct. 27, if desired (if you arrive by 6 pm, Oct. 27, dinner is also provided)

- Peer Power, Oct. 28 only, no overnight accommodations: \$50
- Peer Power, Oct. 28 with overnight accommodations Oct. 27: \$100

Peer Power will be held at the Retreat Center at Bon Secours is situated on a breathtaking 300-acre property less than 30 minutes from the BWI airport. Space for this event is limited, so please register early. *We encourage you to come in teams of two or more.*

To register, click <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/peer-power-cultivating-clergy-communities-of-practice-tickets-11980651451>

Registration deadline: October 7

Contact: Willie Sordillo, **Email:** wsordillo@cts.edu, **Phone:** 508-405-1850

Reflections Along the Journey: Opportunity to support Korean American women in ministry.

Here is your opportunity to support a very exciting project submitted to Judson Press by Grace Ji-Sun Kim, a PC (USA) ordained clergywoman. *Reflections Along the Journey: Theological Narratives of Korean American Clergywomen* is a unique compilation of theological reflections, sermons, and stories of faith from Korean American women in various forms of ministry in the church. The main goal of this project is to share their stories and provide a window of understanding into the trials of Korean American women in ministry—a window that may serve as a mirror for other women who know what it is to be marginalized, overlooked, or prejudged based on their gender, ethnicity, culture, or appearance. The project is unique in that the book contains various genres of writing—sermons, theological reflections, stories of personal journey, and poetry from women of various generations. By supporting this project, people will become a source of encouragement, inspiration, and affirmation for other Asian American women called to Christian ministry. Their stories and voices add clarity, wisdom, and hope, enriching the overall landscape of writings in this field.

The list of contributors are Unzu Lee, Aram Bae, Grace Ji-Sun Kim, Christine Hong, Yena Hwang, Nayoung Ha, Mihee Kim-Kort, Jean Kim, Mickie Choi, Irene Pak, and Joann Lee; with a foreword by Neal Presa and epilogue by Laura Mariko Cheifetz.

Judson Press is running a crowdfunding campaign to support the production of this manuscript. You can view the Judson Press Pubslush page (the crowdfunding website) and join our community by clicking www.judsonpress.pubslush.com. The campaign will last until October 10. Please support this wonderful project by supporting this effort today.

Nine Participate in ABHMS' Young Adult Leadership Experience

“It was like binary fusion, in which American Baptist Home Mission Societies [ABHMS] gave all of itself for the growth and continuity of the continual building of God’s kingdom here on Earth,” said Agnes Lamin, 41, of Siloam Baptist Church, Norristown, Pa., about ABHMS’ Young Adult Leadership Experience held July 31-Aug. 3 at and around American Baptist Churches USA’s Mission Center, Valley Forge, Pa. Lamin was one of nine participants chosen for the invitation-only experience via recommendations by members of ABHMS’ department of Missional Life and Leadership.

“Staff gave their utmost, and all came in expectation to receive,” Lamin continued. “A mighty move by God was exhibited, as seeds were sown in our lives by various speakers.”

One of those speakers was the Rev. Lisa Harris, ABHMS national coordinator of the Justice for Children Initiative and Christian Center Relations. In a leadership seminar, Harris presented sobering statistics

about poverty—including the fact that 1 in 5 children in the United States and Puerto Rico is considered “in poverty.”

“What does poverty have to do with leadership?” Harris asked. “Part of leadership is vision. Vision is the ability to look and see what’s really there. Sometimes people don’t want to do that. Leadership is called to make a difference.”

Preparing the group to serve meals to the homeless that evening at Chosen 300 Ministries Inc., Philadelphia, Harris offered these words: “You will be working with people who are experiencing challenges. Some are extremely brilliant and had breakdowns. Some are returning from seasons of incarceration. Some are working poor, who do not make enough money to eat.

“It’s up to you to decide if it’s a privilege to serve them,” she continued. “And how do we see the Christ in the other person—to feel free of judgment.”

The group helped to serve approximately 100 individuals in attendance at Chosen 300’s center city site, one of the ministry’s three locations. A validated regional ministry of the Philadelphia Baptist Association, Chosen 300 serves 100,000 meals yearly from that site alone, according to co-founder Brian Jenkins. In addition to Lamin, other participants were Ketsia Angerville, 27, of Bethel Haitian Baptist Church (BHBC), East Orange, N.J.; Daniel Brockway, 29, First Baptist Church (FBC), Pasadena, Calif.; Santiago Norori, 31, FBC of Laurelton, Brick, N.J.; Juliette Pailin, 20, Bethlehem Baptist Church, Springhouse, Pa., Emmanuel Simeus, 24, BHBC; Andre Taylor, 18, Mount Jezreel Baptist Church, Silver Spring, Md.; Jacob Taylor, 24, FBC, Newark, Ohio; and Dana Zamor, 27, New Vision Community Church, Brooklyn, N.Y. Register online to receive information about ABHMS’ future events for young adults. View a slideshow from the Young Adult Leadership Experience.

Prayer Requests

In our prayers, let us remember:

- Iraqi Christians who have been displaced from Mosul and Karakosh by the Islamic State in their major offensive in Northern Iraq.
- Pastors and Churches in West Africa and their efforts to prevent further spread of the Ebola virus.

Upcoming Events

- Annual Women’s Day Celebration – New Fellowship Baptist Church, Nashua, NH – September 14, 2014.
- AB Women’s Caribbean Cruise – September 19-21, 2014, Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines.
- Pastoral Excellence Network Peer Power Workshop – October 28, 2014, Bon Secours Retreat Center, Baltimore, MD
- Unity Day Worship – Providence Baptist Church, Baltimore, MD – November, 16, 2014.
- MLK Day Worship – New Beginnings Christian Fellowship, Renton, WA – January 18, 2015
- MLK Day Worship, Evergreen Association of the American Baptist Churches – January 19, 2015
- New England Assembly of American Baptists, Leominster, MA – January 23-24, 2015

Ministers Council Contact Information

Web: www.ministerscouncil.org

Mail: The Ministers Council
PO Box 851
Valley Forge PA 19482-0851

Phone: 1-800-222-3872, extension 2334 (Joyce Moon), 2333 (Rev. Debora Jackson, DMin)

FAX: 610/768-2066