



Ministers Council Newsletter

Rev. Dr. Debora Jackson, Executive Director

April 2015

From the Desk of the Executive Director

Years ago, my church hosted a Passover Seder with members of a synagogue in our community. The Seder was made special because our partner synagogue embraced Messiah Yeshua, Jesus Christ, as the long awaited Messiah and King of the Jewish people. Thus our Haggadah, or the text that was recited at the Seder, was not the typical Haggadah.

Contemplating the Passion of our Savior, and recognizing the coming of Passover, I am reminded that the Seder is meant to be a personal experience – that each might understand God’s redemption for him or herself. With that in mind, I thought I would offer my reflections and how I now connect with this ancient tradition.

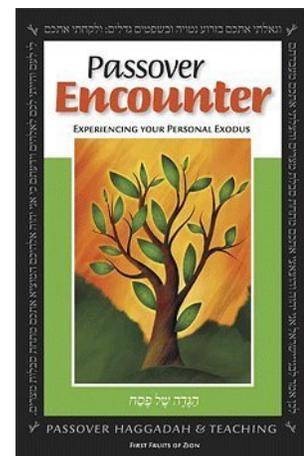
As you may know, over the course of the Passover Seder, participants drink four cups of wine or grape juice, which connects people with the four expressions of “I will” in Exodus 6:6-7. In this passage, God says to Moses, “Say therefore to the Israelites,

- ‘I am the LORD, and I will free you from the burdens of the Egyptians, (Cup of Sanctification)
- And I will deliver you from slavery to them. (Cup of Deliverance)
- I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. (Cup of Redemption)
- I will take you as my people, and I will be your God. You shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has freed you from the burdens of the Egyptians.” (Cup of Hope).

First is the Cup of Sanctification. God desired that we be set apart that we might worship God. As Baptists, we would recognize this as a freedom – we are freed that we might worship and serve God as God intends. As ministers, we resonate with this cup of sanctification. We have been set aside for God’s purposes. Remember Isaiah 43:1: But now thus says the LORD, the God who created you, O Jacob, the God who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. God has called us by name and has set us aside to fulfill God’s purposes in us. We are the Lord’s.

The second cup is the Cup of Deliverance. God promised to deliver Israel out of bondage. In the second cup of the Messianic Jewish Seder, we are reminded that the Messiah, our Passover Lamb, has already been sacrificed for the Passover meal (1 Corinthians 5:7). We remember the sacrifice of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and remember especially that it is personal. Each of us can say, “Jesus died for me.” And because Jesus died for us, we have been delivered from bondage.

This good news continues to give life. As ministers we don’t have to point to our perfection – in fact we cannot point to our perfection. But this is not about us. It is about the sacrifice of Christ and how he gave himself for us so that we could be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus by the power of the



Holy Spirit. Truly our desire is to lead people to Jesus and we can do this by speaking of the personal connection that each of us have. This is not just an old story. It's a story that is alive and well with each believer and as we share our story and lift the Savior up, the Spirit will draw people to Christ (John 12:32).

The Cup of Redemption is the third cup of the Seder. God promised to redeem the people with a mighty, outstretched arm. In this third cup of the Messianic Jewish Seder, we remember that Jesus took the cup and blessed it, saying, "This cup is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood." (Luke 22:20. God has ransomed people back to God's self through Jesus Christ. We are God's people, not just by decree but through the shed blood of Jesus. This has sealed the deal for us and by faith we are saved.

And finally the fourth cup is the Cup of Hope. I remember the first time I participated in this Seder. Our host told us to look forward to our final redemption, where we would be truly sanctified, delivered and redeemed. Doing so, we were to declare, "Next year in Jerusalem!" Had we actually consumed four glasses of wine, I suppose that we would have been fairly raucous in our exclamations, indeed. And yet there was something incredibly powerful about that eschatological reality that assures us that one day, we will drink that final cup with Jesus just as he promised his disciples. That is the hope that we have for our ministries; that is the hope that we give to those under our leadership, because that is the hope that God has given to us.

So as we prepare for the Resurrection and Passover, may you be inspired knowing that God has sanctified, delivered and redeemed you. And may you have the hope and boldness to declare, "Next year in Jerusalem."

American Baptist Pastor's Work will air on CBS News – April 12.

"Faith, Hope & the Burden of Addiction" is a CBS Interfaith Special that looks at how the nation's prescription drug and heroin epidemic is affecting communities in America. American Baptist Pastor, Rev. Barbara Welch, was interviewed for the program as a result of her work with Scituate (MA) FACTS: Families, Adolescents, Communities, Together against Substances. This work represents a grass-roots effort that lies at the heart of Rev. Welch's ministry.

Rev. Welch began this work as she recognized her call to serve individuals who suffered from "Adverse Childhood Experiences" (ACE) resulting from child abuse. A survivor of ACE herself, Rev. Welch was committed to making this type of human suffering known to others and God used her experiences to impact her ministry. Rev. Welch shared that in the first church she served as a interim minister, a deacon had abducted, molested and murdered a ten year old girl. In her third church, the pastor had lost his credentials for molesting nine young boys at a Christian summer camp. Then Scituate suffered from a number of substance abuse related deaths. These needs moved Rev. Welch and her Mission Board President, Nancy Antonelli, to began a program called *Horizons of Hope*, a safe ministry to open wider the doors of the church in a community education model.

As part of *Horizons of Hope*, Rev. Welch leveraged her network to bring speakers to the community for an educational forum. It was during this program that Rev. Welch learned from one of the speakers, Dr. Sion Kim Harris, Professor of Pediatrics at Harvard Medical School and Research Scientist at Children's Hospital Adolescent Substand Abuse Program, that 96% of the youth in her program for substance abuse had sufference ACE/childhood trauma. This realization crystalized for Rev. Welch her ministry focus on outreach and education to substance abuse users.

The next year, the town of Scituate contacted Rev. Welch to serve as the Community Religious Leader on a grant proposal from the Federal Government to establish Scituate FACTS. The town received \$625,000.00 in grant funding with an option to renew every five years.

When CBS News: Religion & Culture began researching what faith communities were doing to help in the epidemic of substance abuse, the producers learned of FACTS and were subsequently directed to Rev. Welch as a charter member of the organization. Although going on camera for an interview is her least favorite thing to do, Rev. Welch recognized that this is the move of God. How could she possibly say no?

The Program Faith, Hope & the Burden of Addition will broadcast on Sunday, April 12, 2015. Check your local listings for the time. More information about the program can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/CBSReligion>.

Have You Signed Up for the Ministers Council Retreat ?



How are you holding up during Holy Week? In the journey through Lent, we expend ourselves as we minister to others. We are often left empty and wanting. Do you need a resurrection? Do you need an opportunity for renewal and refreshment? Then “Let Go, Behold, Sing!”

The Ministers Council is hosting the Let Go, Behold, Sing Retreat on June 29 – July 1, immediately following the Mission Summit. Our retreat theme is Sabbath-keeping ministry: being, having and doing enough; being filled with light to the point of singing; and going deep rather than wide. It is the perfect opportunity to be revived in ministry, especially after the demands of Lent and Holy Week.

Our retreat will be led by [Rev. Dr. Heather Entrekin](#), Des Peres Associate Professor of Congregational Health at Central Baptist Theological Seminary. As an American Baptist Pastor and professor whose educational focus is congregational vitality, Dr. Entrekin is an ideal leader for our time apart.

The retreat will be held at the [Unity Village Conference and Retreat Center](#). Shuttles will transport participants from the Overland Park Convention Center on Monday, June 29. Shuttles will also transport participants to the Kansas City International Airport on Wednesday, July 1 at the conclusion of the retreat.

The Retreat Schedule and Costs are as follows:

June 29th

- Morning shuttle will depart from Overland Park to Unity Village.
- Sabbath day experience
- 6:00 PM – Dinner at Unity Village
- 7:00 PM – Ice Breaker activities; Overview of Ministry Challenges.
- 8:30 PM - Compline Service followed by fellowship of Song and Silence.

June 30th

- 8:30 - Breakfast
- 9:30 – Part 1 – Let Go
- 11:00 – Prayer Circles
- 12:00 – Lunch
- 2:00 – Part 2 – Behold
- 4:00 – Part 3 – Sing
- 5:30 – Prayer Circles
- 6:00 – Dinner
- 7:00 – Leading a Sabbath-keeping Church
- 8:30 – Compline Service followed by fellowship of Song and Silence.

July 1st

- Breakfast
- Departures

Retreat Cost

Retreat Registration	\$35.00
Meals on 6/29	\$48.00
Meals on 6/30	\$54.00
Transportation	\$60.00
Unity Village Lodging (\$104.49/per room cost)	
	<u>\$208.98</u>
Total Cost	\$405.98

Make your plans now to join us for this post-Mission Summit Retreat hosted by the Ministers Council. **Registration is now open. All are welcome. The retreat is designed for ages 12 and over.** Click [here](#) to register. For a registration tutorial, click the [Registration Guide](#).

How to Survive Holy Week: A Guide for Church Leaders

Margaret Marcuson

It's Holy Week (no surprise to any reader of this blog). Depending on your tradition, you may have one, two, or as many as five extra services. Here are some ideas for surviving with more grace and less stress:



1. **Keep the end in mind.** We're heading for Easter. It's about life, not exhaustion. What are one or two things you can do this week to give *yourself* life and energy?
2. **Do one thing at a time.** Multitasking has been discredited. Focus on the task at hand and the person in front of you. Turn your phone off, or at least silence it, while you are writing your Easter sermon.
3. **Accept the burden.** It's a busy week, and it will be over on Sunday. When I was a pastor, I never seemed to be able to even begin my Easter sermon until Saturday. Once I accepted it, Holy Week was a lot less stressful. I never got up in the Easter pulpit empty-handed.
4. **Have compassion for the Easter-only crowd.** Celebrate that they are there, and accept the reality you won't see them again until next year. And ignore the person who says, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if we had this many people every Sunday?!"
5. **Let go of perfection.** You won't be prepared enough. And someone, probably you, and probably someone else, too, will make a mistake that will mar the worship.
6. **Plan a reward.** You are taking Monday off, right?
7. **Protect yourself from the anxiety of others.** If staff or lay leaders are running around like crazy, let them. Do a little hand-holding if necessary but be clear about your own responsibilities and keep your focus on them.
8. **Celebrate!** It's Easter, after all. Even if the week is truly crazy and you can only really celebrate at 1:00 p.m. on Easter Sunday, do it then.
9. **Remember that it's not about you.** You're the messenger. It's about Jesus, the Resurrection, and new life for all. Let that reality not add to the pressure, but relieve it. The new life is for preachers, too.

Rev. Margaret Marcuson is the author of [Leaders Who Last: Sustaining Yourself and Your Ministry](#) and [Money and Your Ministry](#). Contact Rev. Marcuson for ministry coaching, congregational leadership development, or for speaking engagements. Ministers Council members receive discounted pricing for services.





Join the Ministers Council

Are you a Member of the Ministers Council? Dues for the Ministers Council are due by April 30th. Don't be left out. You can join today by going to www.ministerscouncil.com and clicking the Subscribe button or renew directly with your local council. Either way, you will be a part of a network of ministerial leaders who covenant together to strengthen clergy relationship, deepen spiritual, and increase professional competency through our gatherings and events. Membership fees at the National level are based on a personal income sliding scale as follows:

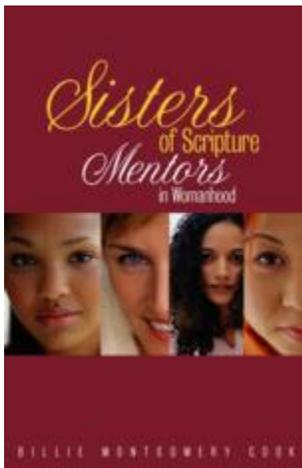
\$55,000+	\$100
\$25,000 - \$54,999	\$50
\$10,000 - \$24,999	\$25
< \$10,000	\$10

Become a member or renewing your membership in the Ministers Council. Contact your local council or go to www.ministerscouncil.com for more information.



Local News Anyone?

What is going on in your local chapter? Share the word so that others might join in. Did you know that more than 2000 people view this newsletter every month? What better way to share your news.



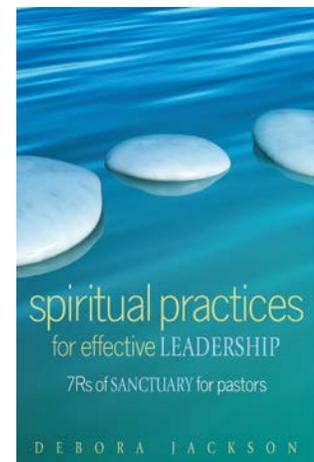
New Release from Judson Press

Judson Press announces the nationwide release of the new Christian living book, *Sisters of Scripture: Mentors in Womanhood* by Billie Montgomery Cook.

In the spirit of her best-selling book, *The Real Deal: A Spiritual Guide for Black Teen Girls*, author Billie Montgomery Cook ushers young women into a warm and welcoming relationship with the women of the Bible. Through the biblical stories of women from Eve to Lydia, young women today will discover reflections of their own struggles with relationships, trust, and self-respect. And as they read, they will find hope, love, and faith to thrive. Who could be better mentors in navigating life with courage, grace, and a faithful portion of trust in God?

Order your copy today and enjoy free shipping with your Ministers Council Membership.

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



2015 Hampton University Ministers Conference

All ABC persons planning to attend the *2015 Hampton University Ministers Conference* in Hampton, Virginia, to be on the look-out for coming details for the annual ABCUSA Reception on the evening of Wednesday, June 10!

Biennial Mission Summit Update

Make sure to submit your Individual Registration forms for Mission Summit 2015! Individuals may visit www.americanbaptists2015.com for additional details, a schedule at a glance, or to register online or to download a PDF registration form.

Employment Opportunities

Calvary Baptist Church, 747 Broad Street, Providence, RI 02907, is looking to call a part time Youth Pastor/Leader. If you or someone you know is looking, please have them send their resume to the church or email info@calbaptisi.org.

Local Chapter News

The **Ministers Council of Upstate NY** announces their **Ministers Council Retreat**, May 3-5, at Good News Center, 10475 Crosby Manor Road, Utica, NY. The theme of the retreat is "Speak so people will hear." The registration form for the retreat can be accessed at <http://ministerscouncil.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/MCretreat2015.pdf>.

SPEAK SO PEOPLE WILL HEAR

And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without someone preaching to them? (Ro. 10:14)

Paul's assumption: There is some content that must be communicated in order for people to have their lives transformed by Jesus Christ. Consequently, effective communication is of crucial importance for a faith like ours. How do we shape ministry to engage people living in today's multiple media culture? Our capacity to "hear" is shaped by the method of communication. Is it a speech, a book, or a 60 second video? Over the millennia the church has adapted to changing media of communication. How do we in our day shape ministry to engage modern persons? We will talk about communicating in a way that will be heard and understood.

Recommended reading (in order of priority)

Amusing Ourselves to Death: Discourse in the Age of Show Business by Neil Postman

The Millennium Matrix--Reclaiming the Past, Refram-ing the Future of the Church by M. Rex Miller (Part 2)

Cadences of Home--Preaching Among Exiles by Walter Brueggemann

Attend the MCGBA Spring Gathering

When: Friday April 10, 2015

Time: 12 noon to 3:00 pm

A Panel Discussion:

"CELEBRATING RESURRECTION IN OUR MINISTRIES"

A time to reward yourself, rest, and celebrate post-Easter with your American Baptist ministry colleagues.

Where: McGee Avenue Baptist Church

(1640 Stuart Street, Berkeley, CA)

Cost: \$13.50 - members/students, \$15.00 - non-members,
\$20.00 - at the door

RSVP by 4/7 to Tracy Freeman: its4mstracy@yahoo.com

Click [here](#) for a flier.

Please invite a ministry colleague. All are welcome.



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A Visa Signature Rewards Card for International Ministries. The card is black with gold and white text. It features the Visa Signature logo and the text "INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES COME GROW, CHANGE REWARDS". The cardholder's name is JEREMIAH JUDSON. The card number is 4756 0123 4567 4567. The expiration date is 00/00 00/00.

Sign up for the Card that gives to Global Missions

The Ministers Council is continuing our partnership with the Christian Community Credit Union to offer you the International Ministries (IM) Signature Rewards Visa Card.

There are no annual fees, a 0% APR introductory rate on purchases for 12 months, 0% APR for 12 months on balance transfers, and you can earn rewards, using points for travel, merchandise, gift cards, and more. What is more, you can double your points through any donation to the Ministers Council, IM, and many churches. Apply for the card today by going to www.myCCCU.com/tmc Use Promo Code 9001 or call (800) 347-CCCU (2228) ext. 4125.

Upcoming Events

- National Leadership Committee meeting, Green Lake, WI, April 7-10, 2015.
- Prairie Pastors Conference, Omaha, NE, April 13-15, 2015. "Life Together: Who Cares?" Speakers: Debora Jackson and Christian Collins Winn, Bethel University, St. Paul, MN. Go to <http://www.prairiepastors.org/> to register or for more information.

- Peer Power Conference, San Francisco, CA at the Mercy Center, May 5-6, 2015. Back by popular demand, Debora Jackson on Leadership Strategies for Effective Leadership. Go to <http://www.cpx.cts.edu/network/events/2014/12/02/peer-power-cultivating-clergy-communities-of-practice-and-training-for-peer-group-facilitators-may-2015> to register or for more information.
- Professional Ministries Team Meeting, Valley Forge, PA, May 18, 2015.
- Ministers Council Board of Governors Meeting, Overland Park, KS, June 23-24, 2015
- Ministers Council Ministries Team Meeting, Overland Park, KS, June 24-25, 2015
- Mission Summit, Overland Park, KS, June 26-28, 2015
- Ministers Council “Let Go, Behold, Sing!” Retreat, June 29 – July 1, 2015

Give to the Ministers Council

Support the work and ministry of the Ministers Council through the Ministers Council Endowment. Visit <http://ministerscouncil.com/the-ministers-council-endowment> for more information.

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