



Ministers Council Newsletter

Rev. Dr. Debora Jackson, Executive Director

February 2016

From the Desk of the Executive Director

It's been a busy year for me and it's only February! But I am grateful to God for all that has been thus far.

First I have to back up to December. I often talk about the need for leaders to take time apart from their leadership context to restore their physical and spiritual resources. December was the opportunity for me to practice what I preached.

The holidays were a time of relaxation with family. Having

that break provided spaciousness I needed to realize renewal for the New Year. Time apart makes a difference and we all need to be reminded that this is one of the strategies for our effectiveness.

Then in January I had the privilege of teaching the doctoral-level course, *Finding Sanctuary in the Midst of Leadership*, at American Baptist Seminary of the West. It was an incredible experience for which I am extremely grateful. The foundation of the course was the exploration of different models of leadership and how leaders would find sanctuary for their spiritual well-being and effectiveness in leadership. In addition, because the course was planned as an offering for ABSW's new Womanist Leadership DMin cohort, the course explored womanism and models of leadership based on the cultural norms of African American women. For the uninitiated, womanism connotes the uniqueness of feminism among women of color and stresses the mother / other-mother who acts a mentor for others, usually younger, women. But because the majority of the students were not womanist theologians, there was a refreshing exchange through which we all learned.

I also had the opportunity to participate in another Peer Power Conference, offered by the Pastoral Excellence Network. The Pastoral Excellence Network exists to sustain the momentum and amplify the impact which Lilly Endowment Inc. started more than ten years ago through the Transition into Ministry (TiM) and Sustaining Pastoral Excellence (SPE) programs. The workshop encouraged participants to engage in clergy peer group learning as a means to strengthen ministry. By our participation, the Ministers Council continues to promote the importance of clergy peer group learning. And we are also a continued beneficiary. In January, we learned that Ministers Council was awarded a \$25,000 catalyst grant from the Pastoral Excellence Network to extend the 7Rs of Sanctuary program. The hope is to begin two new cohorts starting in the Fall 2016 and then Spring 2017. It is exciting that this important program is being recognized and that our funding allows us to offer scholarships that defray up to 75% of program costs.

Additionally, I had the privilege of participating in the ordination service of Reverend Patti Stratton at the First Baptist Church in Rutland, VT. On some levels, participating in an ordination

Hello
February.

service should be a fairly routine matter. But unfortunately, so many women still experience numerous challenges to our call. We are made to jump through hoops and navigate unnecessary obstacles. Many drop out because it's just too hard. And so when one who is called of God to serve God's people as minister perseveres to the end, it is an occasion to celebrate. I'm still celebrating Reverend Patti Stratton.

So now that February is here, the Ministers Council Board of Governors is preparing for our Winter Meeting. We want to look critically and strategically at the Ministers Council to analyze our financial performance and metrics. And again, I am grateful for the days that came before. The time apart created the spaciousness necessary to create perspective. Teaching a course at ABSW provided a new vision of emerging styles and models in leadership that have the potential to transform how we lead. Leading a workshop for the Pastoral Excellence Network and receiving a grant to support our programs provided that grounding that affirms efforts that make a difference in the lives of leaders. So with perspective, a new vision, and grounding, I head into our board meeting energized to confront the challenges. It's been a busy year and it's only February, but what an amazing start. We are going to do great things!



Rev. Patti Stratton cuts the cake after her ordination on January 31, 2016, FBC Rutland, VT.



Emerging Approaches to Ministry – Webinar Hosted by the Ministers Council Ministries Team

You are Invited - Ministers Council Webinar for Ministers on February 11

Please plan to attend the upcoming webinar, ***Emerging Approaches to Ministry***. The first in a quarterly series of webinars prepared by ministers for ministers, this session will be held on **February 11, 2016 at 2 p.m. eastern**

time (1 p.m. central, 12 noon mountain and 11 a.m. pacific times). Three pastors who lead churches in Pennsylvania, Indiana and Massachusetts will share hopeful new ways of doing ministry that they have personally experienced and observed. The hour-long session will allow time for questions after the presentations. All the presenters are members of the Ministers Council's Ministries Team and offer this webinar in a spirit of learning and support for all ministry colleagues.

Please join our meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone by going to: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/875984733>.

You can also dial in using your phone by calling (571) 317-3122. The access code is 875-984-733.



Faithfully Serving Those Who Serve: Maryland Houses of Worship Lift Up National Guardsmen

This article, written by Rev. Sean Lee, was originally published by the Huffington Post in November 2013. As ABCUSA colleagues sometimes struggle to understand how military chaplaincy is consistent with the peaceful message of the gospel, this article helps to demonstrate the work of this ministry.

As chaplain for the Maryland National Guard, in 2005 I helped launch Partners in Care, an innovative program linking religious congregations with members of the Maryland National Guard. The system is simple: A faith community of any denomination formally pledges to provide free help to National Guardsmen and women, with no religious obligation, affiliation, or strings attached.

Houses of worship across Maryland were eager to support men and women in uniform, but there was no clear way to integrate the faith community with the military. Partners in Care bridges the two.

I hear stories of Partners in Care successes all the time. One Guardswoman, a single mother, lacked transportation to doctors' appointments. Local church members who shuttled her around town discovered she needed more than just a ride: The soldier was underemployed, and struggling to support her family. Congregation members introduced her to an aerospace professional in the church, who hired her for a better-paying position with benefits. That simple act transformed her life, and strengthened our National Guard. Such good will defines Partners in Care, underscoring the importance of connecting returning members of the Guard with their community.

Everyone knows that American troops have been confronting threats in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001. But not many realize that nearly half of those deployed -- more than 1 million men and women -- served as "citizen soldiers" with the Guard or Reserve. Many of our young warriors know only a wartime military. Never before have our citizen soldiers been so stretched. People have lost their sense of normal.

While many active duty military members live on bases or in military-centric communities, members of our National Guard and Reserve live next door. They deploy from towns and cities across every state. Guard duty historically meant one weekend a month and mobilizing during a local or national crisis; it now routinely includes nine-month deployments to a war zone thousands of miles away -- putting family, finances, education and work on hold. We answer the call to defend our country with pride, courage and honor, but it can take a toll.

For these defenders hidden in plain sight, transitions back home from the battlefield can be rocky. When Guardsmen and women come to me as a chaplain, I encounter them as a whole person, try to understand their needs and make recommendations to connect them with support. Psychologists, financial planners and job training are parts of the puzzle. At times our discussions touch on faith; other times, warriors simply share concerns.

Churches, temples and mosques comprise a powerful national network and form the foundation of many communities across America. When we bring religious groups into the circle of resources available to those who serve, we can better support Guardsmen and women spread across the state, some of whom live hours from the nearest U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) or U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) facility. Crisis takes many forms; Partners in Care mobilizes faith organizations to strengthen the community safety net for the men and women who defend our nation. Most religious traditions urge their followers to care for their neighbors. For those of us who serve in the National Guard, we *are* your neighbors.

Today, we work with 93 religious groups and organizations. Jewish, Protestant, Ukrainian Catholic congregations, even Christian motorcycle clubs, among others, have partnered with the Maryland National Guard in every corner of our state. Partners in Care has since spread to 22 other states, and the DoD is working to adopt a similar initiative across the service branches.

Last year, we referred 138 members of the Guard to Maryland Partners in Care congregations embedded in communities where these men and women live. Nearly half of those

folks' immediate need was food. Some received simple help such as lawn mowing or home repair. But once caring church or temple volunteers get to know these Guardsmen and women, they can tell when something isn't right. A critical part of Guardsmen's support system, Partners in Care volunteers often uncover more serious concerns -- and can help.

As our warriors are pushed to their limits, Partners in Care offers an important line of defense against Veteran and military suicide. When soldiers feel disconnected and isolated, we show them that they are not alone. Volunteers undergo suicide prevention training and learn the warning signs. And Partners in Care works closely with VA and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to provide warriors comprehensive support, including the toll-free Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 (press 1).

Our hope is that a program like Partners in Care will strengthen our soldiers' and Guardsmen's connection to the community. We want to empower everyone with the knowledge of available help and how to access it. Each of us has the power to help our neighbors, to support the Veteran or service member next door.

Our message is, "You're not alone. We're here." It may not be a cure-all, but neighbors helping neighbors is something we can all put our faith in.

Save the Date! 2016 Ministers Conference



You are invited to
SAVE THE DATE
August 22-26, 2016
for the
2016 Ministers Conference
Holistic Maintenance of the Ministry

Go to www.ministerscouncil.com
*for updates or look for the details and the
location confirmation in future emails.*

Have you saved the date? Now you can save the location as well.

The conference will be held at the National 4H Conference Center, <http://www.4hcenter.org/>, in Chevy Chase, MD right outside of Washington DC. This lovely venue will provide opportunities for respite and retreat as we engage in the spiritual practices and professional development competencies that will ensure the *Holistic Maintenance of the Ministry*. Your hosts for what promises to be a memorable event are the Office of the General Secretary Board of General Ministries, American Baptist Foundation, American Baptist Home Mission Societies, MMBB, the Ministers Council, and the Regional Executive Ministers Council (REMC). The plans are being finalized, however, will open registration in March at which time a full schedule of events will be available.

So save the dates of August 22-26, 2016 and set your destination to DC for the 2016 Ministers Conference. You will not want to miss it.



Resources to Help Prepare Houses of Worship for Emergencies

I had the opportunity to connect with a very important webinar in December on "Resource to Help Prepare Houses of Worship for Emergencies." The webinar was hosted by Marcus Coleman, Special Assistant, from the Department of Homeland Security for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships.

Participating in this webinar were individuals from

the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, Chief Executive of Security from the Potters House Baptist Church in Dallas, the FBI, the Office of Infrastructure Protection and the Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties. The purpose was to share information with faith-based organizations to help them ensure that their institutions/congregations are welcoming, safe, and secure for all.

The process that the speakers addressed was straightforward. In order to respond to emergency situations, faith-based organizations must:

1. Plan,
2. Train,
3. Connect,
4. And Report.

The Planning step encourages churches and faith-based organizations to develop emergency operations plans, and include a broad cross section of people in the development to realize the most robust plan. Team members should include members of the congregation, community first responders, military personnel, people with access and functional needs, insurance agents, voluntary organization partners, association/region/denominational leaders, local emergency management (law enforcement, fire department, and public health), and government officials. Such a broad constituency ensures that a multiplicity of needs are considered and accommodated. As one presenter noted, the Paris attacks created the demand for increased security at public events. Our measures demonstrate that we understand security and are interested in keeping congregants safe.

Part of planning is also evaluating what is or is not currently in place. Are there clearly marked exits so that people can vacate quickly in the event of an emergency? Is there a daily and weekly operational plan at the church so that people are aware of what is going on and when? Has the church considered the needs of other groups that rent space or meet in the church such as Daycare or AA? Cyber security should also be a part of the planning process. It is too easy to shut down a computer site or steal personal information from your congregation through a cyber-attack.

Regarding Training, the Chief Executive of Security at the Potter's House suggested the simple, low-cost measure of having ushers and greeters in the parking lot, stationed at doors and in the sanctuary. Greeters should be trained to watch and be alert. They should make contact – perhaps offering the Holy Ghost Hug - as a means of patting down people and feeling for weapons. Greeters or ushers should also be trained to pay attention to the out of the ordinary. For example, is someone wearing a full leather coat in 80 degree weather?

Part of training is readiness. A speaker from the FBI noted that part of training is to help people decrease the "startle factor" in response to emergencies so that they are able to respond more quickly. Thus they recommend the [Run, Hide, Flight](#) video developed by the city of Houston as a means to increase awareness and help people be more prepared.

Connecting was large component of the webinar. Churches were encouraged to connect with local law enforcement officials. For example, consider inviting police officers to come to worship and remain for coffee hour as a means of getting law enforcement involved and familiar with the congregation. Churches and faith-based organizations were also encouraged to take advantage of the numerous free resources that are available to faith-based organizations to help develop emergency operations plan. For example, [Developing Emergency Operation Plans for Houses of Worship](#) is a great resource that provides a framework for plan development. FEMA has a website,

www.fema.gov/protecting-houses-worship, which provides tools, trainings, and templates are available at no cost through various partners to help churches get started.

Additionally, the Office of Infrastructure Protection, an entity within the Department of Homeland Security, has security advisors in every state and in Puerto Rico. They provide advice and assistance to help with security assessments and training. They also recommend a number of resources to assist with planning efforts:

- The Ready Campaign – provides help with planning for businesses:
<http://www.ready.gov/business>
- DHS Active Shooter resources are available at <http://www.dhs.gov/active-shooter-preparedness> - they have workshops and more information on the workshops can be found by emailing asworkshop@hq.dhs.gov.
- Protective Security Advisors – organizations can proactively engage with government partners and the private sector to protect critical infrastructure. For more information or to contact your local PSA, email NICC@hq.dhs.gov.
- Counter-Improvised Explosive Devices – information and resources are available at www.dhs.gov/tripwire.
- DHS Cyber security programs information is available at www.dhs.gov/cyber; Cyber Security Awareness Campaign – <http://www.dhs.gov/stopthinkconnect>; and tips from the U.S. Computer Emergency Response Team <https://www.us-cert.gov/ncas/tips>.

Infrastructure Protection also offers “pre-packaged” tabletop exercise programs for faith-based organizations. This offering provides scenarios, discussion questions, and templates for faith-based partners to plan and execute their own tailored exercises. The scenarios include domestic threats, active shooter, and improvised explosive device attacks. For information about these exercises, contact IP.Exercise@hq.dhs.gov or the Homeland Security Information Network at <https://hsin.dhs.gov/ci/sites/exerciseinfo/Pages/default.aspx>.

Then there is reporting. More than just a slogan, the national “If you See Something, Say Something” campaign offers resources on reporting suspicious activities. That can be found at <http://www.dhs.gov/see-something-say-something>. There is also the National Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) Initiative (NSI). Information on this initiative can be found at <https://nsi.ncirc.gov/> and SAR training for private sector partners is located at https://nsi.ncirc.gov/hsptregistration/private_sector/

Additionally, as aspect of reporting is to understand how some of these activities are considered hate crimes. Webinar presenters briefly shared a couple of acts that were passed to address such offenses. The Church Arson Prevention Act criminalizes damaging religious properties, and threatening or assaulting people to interfere with their right to exercise their religious freedom. Also the Shepard Byrd Act of 2009 covers assaults based on sexual orientation, disability and gender, and race, color, religion, national origin.

Much more was shared than can be captured in this overview of the webinar, but participants were encouraged to share this information with our networks, and because the Ministers Council exists to help equip ministerial leaders to be more effective, we are sharing this information with you. If you are interested in hearing the webinar recording for yourselves, go to Webinar Recording: <https://icpd.adobeconnect.com/p76tasmpitn/>. Then if you want to access any of the services and resources offered through the federal government, you can connect to:

- FEMA Preparedness Resources for Your Houses of Worship
 - Website: www.fema.gov/protecting-houses-worship
 - Website: www.ready.gov/prepare
 - (for reference only) FY 2015 Non-Profit Security Grant: <https://www.fema.gov/fiscal-year-2015-nonprofit-security-grant-program>
- Federal Bureau of Investigation
 - Website: <https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/office-of-partner-engagement/active-shooter-incidents>
 - Protective Security Advisors, DHS Infrastructure Protection
 - Contact: nicc@dhs.gov to be connected with regional protective security advisors
 - Website: http://www.dhs.gov/files/programs/gc_1265310793722.shtm
- DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, Community Engagement Section
 - Contact: communityengagement@hq.dhs.gov
 - Website: <http://www.dhs.gov/crcl>

- DOJ Community Relations Service
 - Contact: (202) 305-2935
 - Website: <http://www.justice.gov/crs/index.html>
- DOJ Civil Rights Division,
 - Website: www.justice.gov/crt
 - Criminal Section of the Civil Rights Division: (202) 514-3204
 - Main Civil Rights Division number: (202) 514-4609
 - Eric Treene, Special Counsel for Religious Discrimination: (202) 514-2228 or Eric.Treene@USDOJ.gov
- White House Office of Faith-based & Neighborhood Partnerships and the DHS Center for Faith-based & Neighborhood Partnerships
 - Contact: WHPartnerships@who.eop.gov
 - Contact: Partnerships@fema.dhs.gov

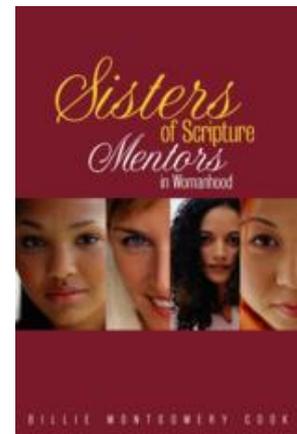
Judson Press Honored with Three Titles in Illumination Book Awards



Judson Press has received three awards in the 2016 Illumination Book Awards. The books are judged with an emphasis on innovation and creative ways of expressing a Christian worldview. The Judson Press titles won two Silver Awards and one Bronze award.

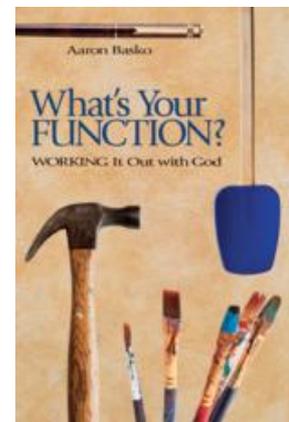
Illumination Book Award Silver Award Winners

Sisters of Scripture: Mentors in Womanhood by Billie Montgomery/Cook—Devotionals category
Spiritual Practices for Effective Leadership: 7Rs of Sanctuary for Pastors by Debora Jackson—Ministry/Mission category



Illumination Book Award Bronze Award Winner

What's Your Function? Working It Out with God by Aaron Basko—Christian living category



“These awards are truly a celebration of the authors and staff of Judson Press who continue to produce recognized excellence in religious publishing,” stated Laura Alden, Publisher at Judson Press. “Congratulations to these talented and hard-working folks who offer their talents in ministry for Jesus Christ.”

The Illumination Book Awards are designed to honor and bring increased recognition to the year’s best new titles written and published with a Christian worldview. Award winners are chosen by experts from the fields of education, clergy, book production and bookselling. Gold, Silver and Bronze medals are awarded in each category.



It’s a New Year; Renew Your Membership or Join the Ministers Council

It’s time to re-up for 2016! A new year means that your dues are due to the Ministers Council. We are the only organization in ABCUSA that is solely focused on you, the ministerial leader. We offer programs to support you in ministry. We advocate on your behalf in matters such as ordination standards, fair compensation packages, Sabbatical leaves, and Pastoral Relations Committees. We raise funds and seek

foundational support so that we can defray the costs of participating in programs such as the 7Rs of Sanctuary. We make resources available to you and your churches such as the Productive Partnership, a video resource for establishing a Pastoral Relations Committee. We do these things because our purpose as an organization is to serve you.

Renewing or joining has never been easier. You can contact your local chapter or you can access the Ministers Council website and pay your dues electronically at <http://ministerscouncil.com/subscriptions/>. National dues are incredibly affordable and scaled to income levels.

Renew or join the Ministers Council today. Join the thousands of ABC clergy, lay leaders, counselors, and seminarians who recognize the benefits of collegiality, centeredness, and competence. This is your organization. Be a part of it.



Local News Anyone?

We want to share news and events from local Ministers Council chapters, and ABCUSA organizations that want to promote their good works across the country. Do you have news to share? Forward your stories and information to Joyce Moon at joyce.moon@abc-usa.org. We want to share your happenings with others.

Give to the Ministers Council

Support the work of the Ministers Council. Use our [Donor Information Form](#) to contribute to the Equipping Ministries Endowment Fund, Together in Ministry Endowment Fund, General Fund or to a designated ministry effort that you specify. As you support the Ministers Council, you make ministry happen.

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

Special Announcements from our Partners

“See...the Beloved Community”: A Virtual Mission Encounter for Women

“See...the Beloved Community,” based on the 2015-2016 national mission focus of American Baptist Women’s Ministries of the same title, is a virtual mission encounter for women from March 7-11, 2016, sponsored by American Baptist Women’s Ministries. This virtual mission encounter will give participants the opportunity to explore the vision of Beloved Community and understand their Christian calling to transform their communities through their relationships with one another. Special guest presenters include Rev. Betty Wright-Riggins, Philadelphia Baptist Association Consultant for Area Ministry and Communication and founder and Principal of TrustOne, a ministry of spiritual direction and leadership coaching; Rev. Dr. Cheryl F. Dudley, Regional Executive Minister of the American Baptist Churches of Metropolitan New York; Rev. Marie Onwubuariri, Regional Executive Minister of the American Baptist Churches of Wisconsin; and Rev. Dr. Karyn Carlo, adjunct

faculty at New York Theological Seminary and founder and director of the Clergy, Community, Cops Project. Each speaker brings experience in building Beloved Community and will offer critical perspectives to virtual mission encounter participants.

Registration is open now for “See...the Beloved Community.” Visit www.abwministries.org/vme for more information about virtual mission encounters, speaker biographies, and registration. For information about the 2015-2016 mission focus “See...the Beloved Community,” visit www.abwministries.org.

ABHMS Receives Lilly Grant to Address Economic Challenges Facing Pastoral Leaders

American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS) has received a grant of \$1 million as part of Lilly Endowment Inc.’s National Initiative to Address Economic Challenges Facing Pastoral Leaders. The initiative supports a variety of religious organizations across the nation as they address the financial and economic struggles that can impair the ability of pastors to lead congregations effectively.

The Endowment is providing \$28 million in grants to 27 Christian organizations across the United States.

With the grant’s support, ABHMS will establish IN SUPPORT OF EXCELLENCE—a program committed to equipping, supporting, encouraging and advocating for the well-being of American Baptist pastoral leaders. The program will utilize education, professional coaching and collegial support groups to help alleviate the economic challenges and related stress these leaders face. Also, the program will offer opportunities for exploration of ministry models that promote excellence in ministry for pastoral leaders and their congregations.

“ABHMS is committed to working over the long haul to address the financial and economic issues that impact pastoral leaders today,” says Dr. Jeffrey Haggray, ABHMS executive director. “The grant will help us equip pastoral leaders and congregations with tools to deal with these issues through affordable and accessible financial literacy and church financial management training programs, and the Ministerial Excellence Fund will provide direct financial support. Each of the parts of the IN SUPPORT OF EXCELLENCE program will help American Baptist pastors and the churches they serve to thrive as they seek to incarnate Christ’s presence in their communities.”