WEEK ONE OF ADVENT DEVOTIONAL SERIES
In Spanish (thanks to Rev. Jose Flores) and English

PREPARING THE WAY: THE MINISTER AS GARDENER
By Rev. Brent A. Newberry (Pastor of The First Baptist Church of Worcester, MA)

Growing up in the South, the notion of four seasons was a bit like stories of Babe Ruth: we knew he existed, but we’d never actually seen him in person ourselves. Moving to New England then, I discovered Autumn to be the most beautiful time of the year, and I learned more than I ever could’ve imagined about trees and flowers and gardening and even which apples you can eat off the ground (hint: not crabapples).

In soliciting gardening tips, I heard the best advice from a congregant with magnificent gardens that consume her front and back yards. She said, “When you move some place new, you don’t plant anything new in the garden for an entire year. You want to wait and see what pops up first.”

I’m not sure there isn’t a better reminder for ministers to hear.

Read entire devotion
Advent devotions will be emailed weekly and posted to our website at:
http://ministerscouncil.com/advent_meditations.php

This devotion is also available in Spanish:
Preparando el camino: Lla Ministro como jardiner
Read entire devotion in Spanish

THE BUSIEST TIME OF THE YEAR
Advent is a time when the Church stands up in the face of the busyness of the season and asks us to slow down, be still, and be quiet.

We are to keep awake, looking and listening for the God who is coming as a child in the manger and as the King who will come as Immanuel. We are called to prepare the way of the Lord.

We watch and reflect on who we are. We look for Jesus in all the unexpected places – in the poor, the hungry, the neglected, the oppressed.

That is hard work any time but especially at the busiest time of the year, which means it is even more necessary. Advent reminds us that waiting and watching are holy work. But how do we do this?

Silence. Silence is a way of waiting, of watching, of listening to what is going on within and around us. We come to self-knowledge through stillness and silence, through attentiveness and watchfulness.

Ms. Jan Rizzo
MC News Editor

Upcoming Events/Webinars

WHEN LIFE DOESN’T SEEM WORTH LIVING:
The Role of Congregations in Suicide Prevention

Guest Presenter/Guide: Rev. Dr. Delois Brown-Daniels will introduce tools for recognizing the signs of suicide and strategies for suicide prevention, especially the role of making referrals.

Thursday, December 13
11am-12pm Central Time

Click here for sign-in info and speaker biography.

President's Update

GIVING TUESDAY BOLSTERS ANNUAL FUND
More than $2,000 will be added to the Ministers Council Annual Fund, thanks to donations received Giving Tuesday through November 30th. Members of the Leadership Team (formerly the Board of Governors) contributed more than half of the November gifts. Much gratitude to them and to the members who made financial contributions in support of our commitment to collegiality, competence, and centeredness.

Our Annual Fund drive continues through the end of the year and you may donate to it or to the Together In Ministry Fund by going to [www.ministerscouncil.com](http://www.ministerscouncil.com), clicking on "Donate via Pay Pal" and in the form that comes up, entering an amount. Click on "add special instructions to the seller" and indicate if you wish to designate your gift to TIM or to Scholarship Fund. Undesignated gifts will go to Annual Fund, which supports our Leadership Effectiveness.

We have received a generous $400 end-of-year contribution already and are especially grateful for the monthly donations of one of our members, totaling $600 for 2018.

Do you believe in the Ministers Council mission, as these donors do? If so, and if you are able, send a contribution this month.

Rev. Dr. Darla "Dee Dee" Turlington
President

### Board Update

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<th>GRANT APPLICATION FOR EXISTING TOGETHER IN MINISTRY GROUPS</th>
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<td>The national board recently approved four small grants acknowledging the vision and sustainability TIM groups continuing since the cessation of Lilly Foundation funding in 2012. These funds are from the &quot;Together in Ministry Capital Campaign Fund&quot; which was raised for support for continuity of collegial groups.</td>
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Are you a part of an existing covenant group launched by the Lilly grant funds previously received from 2002-2012? We're able to distribute some additional funds. To apply, complete this application and email the completed application to info@ministerscouncil.com. Deadline to receive applications is December 10, 2018. For more information, contact the Rev. Dan Hopkins at missionsdan@hotmail.com.

Looking ahead, please spread the word that we'd like to support continuing and new groups. [Read and share the new brochure.](#)

PS. Please send pictures of your group, we'd like to know how you are doing, what you are studying and any successes you have which we can share on our website.

MINISTERS COUNCILadopts new structure for mission, elects
NEW LEADERSHIP

Two dozen Representatives and members of the Board of Governors met November 12-14 in Philadelphia, PA, at the Annual Meeting of the Ministers Council ABCUSA.

Representatives received reports about local chapters' activities, the renewed emphasis on "Together in Ministry" Covenant Groups, MC Live Webinars and financial reports signalling a stabilizing foundation for sustainable mission.

Read more

NEW MEMBERS OF THE LEADERSHIP TEAM, MINISTERS COUNCIL ABCUSA


Special thanks for Rev. Ivan Marable and Rev. Greg Vigne for their labors of love as they depart the team.

The Rev. Cheryl Harris (Secretary/Communications Coordinator)

is the Senior Pastor of First Baptist Church of Attleboro. Born and raised in Boston, MA, Rev. Harris received a BA in English Literature from Emmanuel College and earned her Master of Divinity degree from Boston University School of Theology. She is the CEO of her consulting firm, Cheryl Harris and Associates, Inc. Serving corporate and non-profit clients, the firm focuses on diversity and inclusion, team development and leadership coaching.

An ordained American Baptist minister, Rev. Harris formerly served as Associate Minister of Messiah Baptist Church in Brockton and interim pastor of West Acton Baptist Church and First Baptist Church of Sharon. She is a past president of the American Baptist Women of Massachusetts and a former board member and Coordinator for the Boston Southwest Association of The American Baptist Churches of MA (TABCOM). She currently serves on the Signature Hospital of Brockton Board of Trustees, and is a member of Greater Attleboro Interfaith Network. GAIN was formed to proactively address interactions between law enforcement and residents of color. The group meets monthly with the city mayor and chief of police.

She is a servant leader devoted to giving voice to the voiceless through preaching and teaching the gospel. Her heart leaps when the people of God put the Gospel into work clothes. Pastor Cheryl resides in South Attleboro. She has two adult children, Craig and Aleisha, and one amazing grandson, Daquan.

The Rev. Atula Jamir (Local Chapter Rep Coordinator) [note Rev. Jacki Belile is continuing on the Leadership Team with responsibility for Membership and Chapter Development]

…is the pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Lowell, MA. She earned her Ph.D. in Constructive Theology and Theological Ethics from Boston University, STM from Yale Divinity School, and M.Th. from United Theological College, Bangalore, India.
Prior to serving at Calvary, Atula has taught as a senior faculty member at the Discipleship Bible College in Nagaland, India. Her research interests include constructive Christology, focusing on the life-bearing work of Jesus that directly affects women’s life and environment.

As a pastor in a culturally diverse city, she is being challenged, and motivated to immerse in people’s complex realities, and find balance in faith and theology.

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**Chapter News**

Do you have news or tips to share from your chapter? Photos or videos? Please pass on to Ms. Lisa Simpson, Member Services Coordinator, at info@ministerscouncil.com.

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**Milestones & Prayer Requests**

Thomas Allan Harris-Adam was born to Rev. Laura Harris-Adam (pastor of West Acton Baptist Church) and her husband, Josiah on Thursday, November 15th at 12:38pm.

You can send prayers and best wishes to:
revharrisadam@gmail.com
or
48 Dorothy Rd
Arlington, MA 02474

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**Staff Reflection**

**TIS THE SEASON**

*During these busy weeks of Advent how can you help your congregation find Christ already here and living*
As we begin another Advent season, let us reflect on the true source of our joy! I’ve shared the poem below as a reminder for us all.

**go tell it on the mountain**
over the hills and far away
**go tell each and every one that Jesus is alive today**
at Christmas time it does not matter
if our gifts are big or small
for the birth of Jesus will always be the greatest gift of all
he came to save us he gave us everything that he had
so this Christmas have a great celebration rejoice and be glad
Jesus is the reason that we live
and his love is the best thing to others that we can give
Jesus is the one that makes us thrive
shout it from the rooftops tis Christmas that Jesus is alive

-Diane Christian

In service together,
Lisa
Lisa K. Simpson,
Member Services Coordinator

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**ABC Announcements**

**AMERICAN BAPTIST QUARTERLY Call for Papers**
ABQ is the peer-reviewed journal of the American Baptist Historical Society. Both established and emerging scholars are invited to submit papers written from original research. Articles and essays should be between 6,000 and 10,000 words. If you are interested in submitting a paper for one of the upcoming issues, please contact editor Curtis Freeman (CFreeman@div.duke.edu) as soon as possible. The next deadline is March 1, 2019 for the theme Celebrating Women in Ministry (biblical, theological, and historical reflections, upon the occasion of the 40th anniversary of American Baptist Women in Ministry).

Read more: [http://abhsarchives.org/american-baptist-quarterly-call-papers/#ixzz5Ye82pl4C](http://abhsarchives.org/american-baptist-quarterly-call-papers/#ixzz5Ye82pl4C)

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**LOOKING FOR INNOVATORS, ENTREPRENEURS, OR CREATORS**
As Director of Leadership Empowerment for the American Baptist Home Mission Societies, I am currently on the search for ministry leaders who would define themselves as innovators, entrepreneurs, or creators. Perhaps you are experiencing a ministry call within a context that could be described as non-traditional. Perhaps you have pursued a non-traditional pathway to your ministry. If any of this resonates with you, I’d love to hear from you as ABHMS explores how to partner with and support the innovators among us.

Grace and peace,
Rev. Lauren Lisa Ng
In her work as Director of Leadership Empowerment for the American Baptist Home Mission Societies, the Rev. Lauren Lisa Ng seeks to support ministry leaders in the cultivation of their call. She specializes in the areas of missional entrepreneurship and innovative models of ministry, committing herself to giving voice to the innovators who are helping us define the future church and broaden our definition of ministry in the world. Lauren received her M.Div. from the American Baptist Seminary of the West, Berkeley, Ca., and her B.A. from Oberlin College, Oberlin, Oh.

Reminders

**Membership Renewals:**
Dues are now being received for 2019 membership. You can submit your renewal by accessing ministerscouncil.com and selecting the “join here” option.

**Chapter Updates:**
Please remember to inform the national office of all updates/changes to Chapter officers and addresses.

How to reach us:
- By phone: (610)314-7837
- By email: info@ministerscouncil.com
- Address: 221 S. High Street, West Chester, PA 19382
- We can generally be

Stay connected
- Visit us at www.ministerscouncil.com
- Join us on Facebook
- Consider signing up for our monthly newsletter by selecting "subscribe" on the home page of the website
reached in the office on Tuesdays and Thursdays (emails and voicemails will be responded to during this time)