



## December 2019 Newsletter



*A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. - Isaiah 40:3*

Multiple demands on our minds and time can cause us to rush through the holidays without recognizing the holy and sacred. This year give yourself permission to slow down and pay attention to the traces of faith all around you. And above all, allow yourself to trust and anticipate the radical love and compassion that Jesus brings, this Advent and every day.

### Advent Devotional Week 1

#### **Still, Still, Still**

By Rev. Debbie Handkins  
Cincinnati, Ohio

One Christmas Eve, our pastoral staff divided up responsibilities for different parts of the service. I accepted responsibility for the time when we dismissed the children for activities during the message, and (because our accompanist was out of town) for playing the piano for the soloist, Debi Smith. That night, I made final preparation for the Christmas activities for the children. I always try to pre-cut everything and prepare samples for the crafts so that explaining them to the helpers is simple and straight-forward. (We don't have a lot of time that night, you know.) I put all the materials, along with my sole copy of "Child of Peace," Debi's solo, beside our outside door. There was also a bag of trash there, ready to be carried out, too.

Bridget, our three-year-old, and my husband, David, left early to grab a bite to eat, planning to meet me at the church building just before the service. (I needed to be there too early for them to come with me.)

When I prepared to leave the house, I noticed that the bag I had left beside the

door was missing, so I assumed David had put it in my car. Then I noted that David had taken *my* car and the materials weren't in *his!* . . .

Click to read more:

[English version](#)

[Spanish version](#)



*Rev. Debbie Handkins served as Associate Pastor at Montgomery Community Baptist Church in Cincinnati for 15 years. She currently ministers as a Chaplain at Bethesda North Hospital. She and her husband, David, have four children: Bridget, and triplets Gavin, Rachel, and Elliot.*

THANKS to Debbie for this thoughtful offering! Watch for upcoming offerings from Rev. Jennifer Schneider, Rev. Dr. Luis Collazo and Rev. José Flores. Thanks to these authors, and to Rev. Flores for Spanish translation!

## National Update

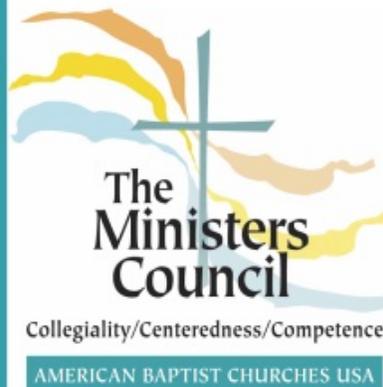
**Take the Code of Ethics Online Survey Today!  
Simply click the button below to access.**

Read current doc [here](#). Please respond by December 31.

We Want Your Feedback!



ALL QUALIFIED ABC MINISTERIAL LEADERS ARE INVITED TO ENROLL FOR A ONE YEAR FREE MEMBERSHIP WITH THE NATIONAL MINISTERS COUNCIL FOR 2020.



Contact your Local MC Chapter or go to [www.ministerscouncil.com](http://www.ministerscouncil.com) to register for your complimentary national membership.

**WHY JOIN?**

*We rejoice in the trustworthy God who's guiding us in new ways of serving you. We know many will want to connect or reconnect on our journey of supporting 3C's in new ways...*

### Join us for the Jubilee!

Complimentary national enrollment available from 11/1/2019 and valid through 12/31/2020 enroll today at [www.ministerscouncil.com](http://www.ministerscouncil.com). Visit site for more info including your local chapter contacts and local chapter dues information.

Contact Mrs. Lisa K. Simpson, Member Services Coordinator, at [info@ministerscouncil.com](mailto:info@ministerscouncil.com)

### Our Current Projects:

- Monthly Newsletter
- MC Live Monthly Webinar
- Together in Ministry Colleague Groups
- Clergy Gatherings
- (Pre-Mission Summit & Local Events)
- Support and Resource Sharing via Facebook
- Code of Ethics Revisions for 2020

*Come and see us now!*

[www.ministerscouncil.com](http://www.ministerscouncil.com)

## A Together in Ministry Group From Oregon



Above photo from Oregon  
*Back row: Slayden Yarbrough, John Aman*  
*Front: Darryl Elledge, Carren Woods, Randy Pearson*

Do you belong to a Together in Ministry Group? If so, please send your photos and/or testimonies for inclusion in a future newsletter to [info@ministerscouncil.com](mailto:info@ministerscouncil.com).

## National Leadership Team preparing for Retreat

Your national Leadership Team will be on retreat planning our ministries on behalf of the Ministers Council in mid-February. We're returning to a Franciscan Spirituality Center in the Philadelphia area for its centering atmosphere, affordability and proximity to denominational leaders. Please pray for us! If you have feedback or needs to share, please contact incoming President RT Miller at [rtmiller.mc@gmail.com](mailto:rtmiller.mc@gmail.com).

## Events and Webinars



Join us for our monthly "MC Live" Webinar - **Letting Go in Advent** - on December 12, 2019, at 11:00 AM Central Time (US and Canada).

Via Zoom: [Click for instructions](#)

## Chapter News

**EVERGREEN:** Will be holding a retreat in 2020.

**METRO CHICAGO:** A few Cabinet members are planning ahead for transitions in leadership, and leaders are actively planning for a strong smooth transition. The Chapter is reworking its by-laws, last done in the 1980s to be in sync with the national by-laws.

Revs. Jacki Belile and Francine White will co-lead a "self care" retreat in the Winter of 2020.

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**MID-AMERICA:** The Annual Ministers Council Dinner will be held December 6th. The theme will be Rhythms of the Spirit, led by Brad Berglund. Also, a retreat will be held in 2020.

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## Staff Reflection

### Heroes and Sheroes A Word from Lisa

Not all heroes and sheroes are “faster than a speeding bullet, more powerful than a locomotive, able to leap tall buildings in a single bound” and walk around in a cape (*not a fashion statement*). Heroes and sheroes are everyday people, which is best stated in the song by Robert Palmer, “It takes every kind of people to make what life’s about, it takes every kind of people to make the world go round.”



If we reflect on our lives, we can undoubtedly recall instances when we have aided someone who needed a helping hand, a listening ear, or a shoulder to cry on. Throughout the years, we have lost count of how many Thanksgiving baskets we have packed, how many Saturdays we have spent feeding the homeless, how many clothing drives we have participated in, and how much monetary support we have provided to the needy. By no means should this cause us to “pop our collar” or beat our chest like Tarzan (or Jane); however, it should simply remind us that GOD can use ANYONE!

Likewise, we, too, have been on the receiving end; we had needed a hero or a shero. Whether the support received was from an unexpected source, undeserving, or during one of our darkest hours, it reminds us that we have all needed something. This goes to show that we are heroes and sheroes to each other; everyday people doing extraordinary things!

As we embark on the Christmas season and prepare for a time of "giving," let us remember that the most meaningful gifts to give are the ones wrapped with “Acts of Kindness” with no superpowers required.

*Reflections:*

*Reflect on your most recent act of heroism/sheroism; was it unexpected or planned?*

*Are you willing to be a hero/shero for someone this Christmas season?*

*What is your "every day" superpower?*

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## ABC Announcements

The American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA) Robert A. Roblee Ministry Building was dedicated on November 8; the new home to the ABCUSA Office of the General Secretary and the American Baptist Historical Society (financial secretary’s office), located at 1015 West Ninth Avenue, in King of Prussia, Pa. [\(Click to read more\)](#)

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International Ministries will be facilitating the "Hear The Call" retreat scheduled for July 11 - July 14, 2020, in Green Lake. [\(Click to read more\)](#)

# Milestones & Prayer Requests

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At the November 2019 meeting of the Board of General Ministries, the Board voted to approve the nomination of **Rev. Dr. C. Jeff Woods** as Acting General Secretary of American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA).

[\(Click to read more\)](#)

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**Rev. Dr. Riley Walker**, former ABC of the Dakotas Executive Minister, passed away Sunday, November 24, from mesothelioma. Please keep his family in your prayers. Memorials can be sent to the Systemic JIA Foundation. [www.systemicJIA.org](http://www.systemicJIA.org) or First Baptist Church Summitville, Second Staff, 700 E. Mill St, Summitville, IN 46070

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God of hope  
be with us in our Advent journey  
to the stable and beyond,  
be with us in our meeting  
and in our travelling together,  
be with us in our worship  
and our praying together,  
be with us in our Advent journey  
to the stable and beyond,  
our God of hope.

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*Please share prayer requests and milestones for future issues by emailing [info@ministerscouncil.com](mailto:info@ministerscouncil.com).*

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## Reminders



### How to reach us:

- By phone: (610)314-7837
- By email: [info@ministerscouncil.com](mailto:info@ministerscouncil.com)
- Address: 221 S. High Street, West Chester, PA 19382
- We can generally be reached in the office on Tuesdays and Thursdays (emails and voicemails will be responded to during this time)



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