

Together in Ministry



Collegiality * Competence * Centeredness

April 2020 Newsletter



EASTER

*Dear God, during this time may your Church be a sign of hope, comfort and love to all.
Grant peace.
Grant comfort.
Grant healing.
Be with us, Lord.*

RESOURCES FOR CLERGY DURING A PANDEMIC

During these days of the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders have found themselves suddenly thrust into brand new ways of doing and being church. Here are resources to help you in your ministry.

- [10 guidelines for pastoral care during the coronavirus outbreak](#) (The Christian Century)
- [Five things church leaders should do about coronavirus](#) (CatholicPhilly.com)
- [Resources For Doing Church Well During A Pandemic](#) (Patheos)
- [Multifaith Clergy & Spiritual Communal Responses to Covid-19](#) (Facebook Group)
- [American Baptist Home Mission Societies offers guidance, litany, prayer for congregational response to COVID-19](#)
- [Prayers for Times of Public Health Concern: COVID-19/Coronavirus](#) (from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America)
- [CONGREGATIONAL SONG](#) (The Center for Congregational Song)
- [Hymnal and Book of Common Worship Rights during Covid-19 Pandemic](#) (PC USA)
- [How to Livestream Your Church Service: A Practical Guide](#) (The Gospel Coalition)
- [Live Streaming Your Church Service: Livestreaming 101](#) (YouTube video)
- [Worship resources for churches during uncertain and reforming time.](#) (Denver Presbytery)
- [Worship ways: prayers, liturgies, and how-to articles](#) (from the United Church of Christ)
- [Worship resources for Pastors](#) (from the United Church of Christ)
- [COVID-19 and Worship: Resources for Churches Adapting to](#)

[Social Isolation](#) (Calvin Institute of Christian Worship)

- [GUIDE FOR CHRISTIAN FUNERALS DURING COVID19](#) (Massachusetts Council of Churches)
- **KEEP UP-TO-DATE:**
- [Resources for Community – and Faith-Based Leaders](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Comprehensive information from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) Pandemic](#) (The World Health Organization)

For your members who do not have access to electronic communications

- Phone
- Send newsletters and other communications by mail. The US Postal Service is an essential service.

Relief available to Non Profits and Churches from the SBA

Provided by Maggie Martensen, Chicago IL

The \$2 trillion stimulus bill expands the charitable deduction to all taxpayers for a year, makes nonprofits eligible for federal loans that could be largely forgiven, and boosts tax incentives for corporate giving, according to nonprofit analysts.

Read the complete article [HERE](#)

A Word from the President

"I wish you all peace and good!"



In the June 07, 2019 issue of *America, the Jesuit Review*, Stephen Grant wrote of his experience of being a monk for a month at the Trappist monastery, Mepkin Abbey. He recounts how the first two weeks of living as a Trappist were novel and engaging. But during the third week, he hit the monastic wall of monotony and began counting the days until his departure.

I am thinking about his experience as I am finishing my third week of self-isolating retreat in what I refer to as my urban monastery in southern Oregon. The first two weeks were novel and I was engaged in practices of prayer and contemplation. But like Stephen Grant, the third week began to wear on my soul. My pace began to slow as future plans evaporated. This was further complicated by the rising fears of contagion and the reality that this imposed monasticism will last more than a month.

As I enter this fourth week of curious monastic life, I am reminded of five-point Pilgrims Credo of Murray Bodo^[1], 1) I am not in control, 2) I am not in a hurry, 3) I walk in faith and hope, 4) I greet everyone with peace, 5) I bring back only what God gives me.

From my hermitage to yours, I wish you each peace and all good. Be gentle with yourselves and others around you. The Lord is near. (Phil. 4:5) Be strong and of good courage... God is with you. (Deut. 31:6). All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well (Julian of Norwich).

^[1] Murray Bodo, *The Place We Call Home: Spiritual Pilgrimage as a Path to God (Voice from the Monastery)*, (Paraclete Press, 2004).

R.T. Miller
President
"A Monk for a Month"



JUBILEE DEVOTIONS

- A Series Drawn from the National Leadership Team's February Retreat

Devotional, "**Creation's Jubilee**" by The Rev. Rebecca Driscoll. Download [HERE](#)

Devotional, "**Jubilee & the Face of God**" by the Rev. Jacki Belile. Download [HERE](#)

Devotional, "Personal Jubilee Experience" by The Rev. Dr. Stephanie Salinas. Download [HERE](#)

... and you shall make holy the year and you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants ... you shall return, everyone one of you, to your property and to your family ... you shall not sow or reap the aftergrowth or harvest the unpruned vines ... you shall eat only what the field itself produces. – parts of Leviticus 25

WHEN GOD DECLARES JUBILEE

The Spirit descends
Good News proclaimed:
you are free and deeply loved.
The empire is disrupted
and the earth takes a breath.
Everyone returns home
work is suspended.
All creation rests

Captive thoughts are set free
Storage boxes are opened
freed memories escape
An exiled loved one returns home.

Disoriented,
illusions wither,
blindness give way to a new vision of life
shaped as Fruit of the Spirit

It is the Sabbath of Sabbaths
a year of favor
an acceptable time to
ask the questions:
Who am I?
Who are you, God?

Randolph T Miller
March 30, 2020

National Update

Complimentary Membership Resources being offered by The Ministers Council

In keeping with the 3Cs, CENTEREDNESS. COLLEGIALITY. COMPETENCE., **The Ministers Council** is offering resources and tools to enhance the ministries of our members.

Download the list of Resources [HERE](#)

Events and Webinars

TOGETHER IN MINISTRY -
Testimonies & Tips for Clergy
Covenant Groups

Thursday EVENING April 23
7pm Central/8pm Eastern

Call in info [HERE](#).

Hosted by Revs. Dan Hopkins and
Jacki Belile



WE ARE CALLED TO PRAYER!

We've been holding space for prayer weekly throughout Lent, and will conclude the current series with these 30-minute sessions:

Tuesday, March 31 - 8:30am Central
Thursday, April 2 - 6:30pm Central
Tuesday, April 7 - 8:30am Central
Thursday, April 9 - 6:30pm Central

Call in info [HERE](#)

Milestones & Prayer Requests

Reverend Dr. Jimmy Reader celebrates 50 years of active ordained ministry on May 3, 2020. He was ordained in 1970 by the First Baptist Church of Chetopa, KS (Southern Baptist) and has served as an American Baptist minister since 1979 in Kansas, New Jersey, and New York.

An ardent supporter of bivocational ministry, Rev. Reader has often worked in other employment (especially college teaching and church consulting) while continuing in pastoral ministry. He also served five churches as an intentional interim minister, including four PC/USA congregations. Since 2013, he has served as senior minister at the United Church of Pittsford, NY, which is related to both the UMC and ABC/USA. He also served as secretary and treasurer of the Ministers Council Senate in the 1990s and was again on Senate from NYS in the 2000s.



Jimmy Reader
2071 Westfall Road
Rochester NY 14618
585-315-9241



The Rev. Kyle Edward Weeks Taylor, 62, of Muskogee, Okla., died March 13, surrounded by family in Tulsa, Okla. He was married for 32 years to Marcia Luann Taylor.
[\(Click to read more\)](#)

On behalf of our staff and entire Leadership Team... Remember we are all praying for your lives, families, and ministries in this challenging Holy Week season. May our common hope in Christ's work sustain us as we are caught up in his resurrecting reality.



ABC Announcements

The American Baptist Churches of Michigan announced in January that the Region board voted to approve the recommendation of the Executive Minister Search Committee, calling Rev. Brian D. Johnson to serve as Executive Minister.

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

MMBB Financial Services—In response to the recommended guidelines to contain the spread of COVID-19, on Monday, March 16, most of the staff began remote work operations.

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

American Baptist Foundation (ABF) — In line with guidance received from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania associated with the spread of COVID-19, staff will be working remotely.

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

American Baptist Home Mission Societies' (ABHMS) —Beginning Monday, March 16, staff will work remotely to support the nationwide effort to contain the spread of COVID-19.

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

American Baptist Home Mission Societies' (ABHMS)—The World

Health Organization has declared the coronavirus a pandemic, defined as the “worldwide spread of a new disease.” Given the unfolding of COVID-19 in the United States, American Baptist Home Mission Societies is striving to inform American Baptists and American Baptist congregations about best practices to help reduce the spread of the virus in general as well as in congregational settings.

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

Radical. Redeemed. Ready.



Celebrating Ministering Women

Plans continue for Celebrating Ministering Women: Radical. Redeemed. Ready.

We continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation and will prioritize the health and well-being of everyone in our preparations. If the evolving situation requires a change in plans, we will communicate that as soon as possible. Meanwhile, our prayers are with you.

The Leadership Team (Soozi Whitten Ford, Tom Wiles, Gina Jacobs-Strain, Patricia Hernandez)

The ABC Ministers Council is an official sponsor official and will have a leadership presence at the June Women in Ministry Conference.

Reminders



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 reached in the office on Tuesdays and Thursdays (emails and voicemails will be responded to during this time)

Stay connected

- Visit us at [**www.ministerscouncil.com**](http://www.ministerscouncil.com)
 - Join us on **Facebook**
 - Consider signing up for our monthly newsletter by selecting "subscribe" on the home page of the website
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