

May 2020 Newsletter



When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. -Acts 2:1-4

Ponder Pentecost Planning [Here](#)

It is Okay to Grieve

by Clare Josef-Maier

There is a lot of well-intentioned messaging that "yes, it's hard to be home instead of at church on Sunday mornings, but the church is not defined by/just a physical building!"

This kind of messaging can be harmfully off the mark.

In some part, the grief of ministers and members of the congregation may be in losing the ritual of worship, including full engagement of our senses (sight, sound, smell, taste, etc) that evoke every week we've done this, like a resonance with not only our own lives but generations before us and around the world. That alone is meaningful loss.

But additionally, it is a foundational definition that we are corporate, and we worship corporately. People's grief isn't about the building. It is a very accurate and healthy awareness of how broken it feels when the corporate body has to worship dismembered or even "together remotely." Our bodies do not recognize Zoom or live-stream as being together with anyone. And physiology and psychology (and our soul/spirit) are tightly interwoven.

Faithful people should not only be allowed to grieve the loss of corporate worship and the definition it gives us, but be affirmed in that grief.

We stay at home. But messaging meant to comfort or "fix" our grief, based on flawed assumptions, can wind up confusing people in their (largely ambiguous)

grief or just be salt in the wound.

Just as the disciples, on the morning of the first Pentecost, we are in a disrupting and waiting time. We are grieving the loss of fellowship and look forward to going out into the world again.

A Word from the President

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God... (I John 4.7)

Dear friends and partners in the Gospel,

As with many other places in the country, we are in phase one of reopening the state of Oregon. This three-phase process will continue to monitor for Covid 19 hot spots. It is scientific and rational process rooted in caring for others. It is another expression of how broadly and deeply the Gospel has permeated our culture in very subtle ways. It is remarkable to witness the nationwide social solidarity around the sheltering practices. This is gratifying.

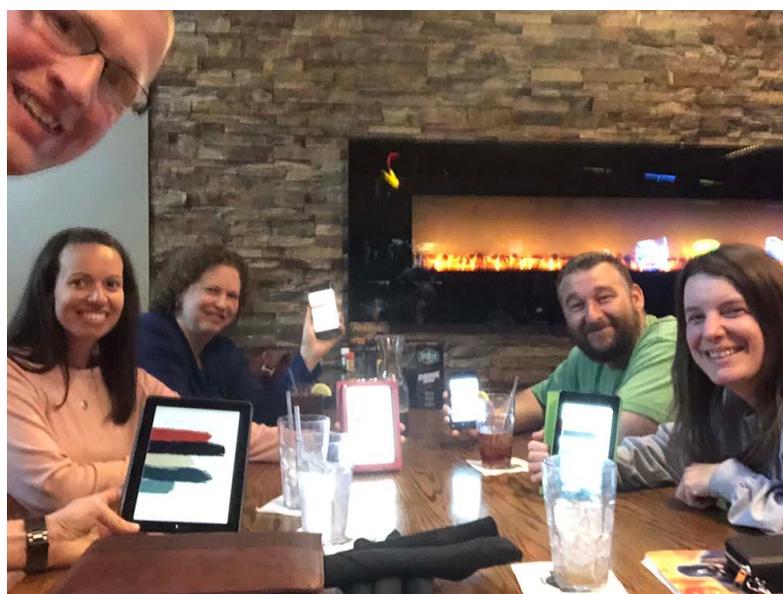
Our national Leadership Team is comprised of colleagues laboring in diverse ministry fields, yet investing time in the national ministry of the Ministers Council. Read more on updates [here](#).

National Update

PICS FROM TOGETHER IN MINISTRY GROUPS!



Harrisburg Association Pastors Group



TIM Group meeting, Jefferson, Iowa



Group Retreat, Puerto Rico

Events and Webinars

WE'VE MOVED!

In response to periodic feedback, we've moved our monthly webinar to Thursday evenings at 7pm (Central time). As always, each session is recorded. Check out our video archive [here](#).



Did you miss our special time with colleague Michael Harvey last week? Listen to our MC Live [recording](#) of his presentation and discussion of "dialogue process" for groups, and the relevance to our ongoing emphasis on "Together in Ministry" Clergy Groups.



TO LIVE IN GOD:

A Renewing Interview with Dr. Dennis Johnson (Author, *To Live in God: Daily Reflections with Walter Rauschenbusch*, Judson Press)

Co-Hosts: Revs. Jacki Belile & Dan Hopkins

Read more about Dr. Johnson's book and order information [HERE](#)

Thursday, May 21
7pm Central

Read More [Here](#)

HEALTHY HABITS, HEALTHY MINISTRY?
EXPLORING THE "ETHICS" TOGETHER

Chapter News

Local Chapter Representatives meet regularly together by conference call (zoom) and email. The next conference call is the third Thursday in June at 1:30 pm Eastern Time. Read an outline of Chapter News from April call [here](#).

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.

- **The Regional Executive Ministers Council (REMC)** of American Baptist Churches USA has released a new document, “REMC Recommended Best Practices for Pastors During the COVID-19 Crisis”. The best practices recommended by the REMC touch on worship services, memorial services, weddings, and pastoral care. ([Click to read more](#))
- **Chaplains and Ministers** are on the forefront of spiritual care and pastoral ministry during a pandemic. No one person or agency can meet the needs of the millions who are affected by all the aspects of such a crisis. In “Ministry during Pandemic: From Awareness to Implementation,” Judson Press and the Rev. Dr. Naomi Kohatsu Paget offer a free and downloadable resource at www.judsonpress.com for ministry in these times ([Click to read more](#))
- [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)

Milestones & Prayer Requests

Long-Serving Commissioned ABHMS Home Missionary Dies in Michigan
Doris Mae Fell, commissioned American Baptist home missionary, died of natural causes in Troy, Mich., on April 11. She was 89.

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

O God, in the midst of the coronavirus crisis, we bring before you the brave women and men who are closest to the sick and suffering. For doctors and nurses, orderlies, chaplains and ambulance drivers. We give thanks for these men and women and all who prepare and deliver their food, clean their workplaces and ensure their safe transport home.

God of life, hear our thanks as we see new opportunities in the midst of restrictions. God of life, hear our prayers for perseverance as we endure closed doors and lost income in the midst of the pandemic. God of life, fill us with your abundant love as we wait and watch as communities grounded in your hope.

Pray for pastors and leaders who are discerning Spirit-led decisions regarding physical meetings.

Pray that we will be guided by the spirit, manner and example of Jesus to be humble and gracious in our faith, service and daily lives.

Pause throughout the day and give thanks for the simple things of creation that enrich your life and faith and fill you with joy and wonder

Staff Reflection

Love in the Time of Corona... *A Word from Lisa*

God is the ultimate example of love. Regardless of the times that we are in and the circumstances that we face, we are mandated by God to show love.



John 15:9-17 (NIV) affirms that *"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit-fruit that will last-and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other.*

As we observe human behavior during these uncertain times, we witness people doing extraordinary things daily. We see the tireless efforts of our first responders and healthcare workers fighting to keep their neighbors alive. We

see individuals donating their time and resources to provide meals and create face masks for others. We see teachers and coaches going the extra mile to provide in person academic guidance when needed and skill training drills while observing social distancing from across the street. We hear accounts of individuals paying the rent of others who have lost their jobs and the list goes on and on. We are reminded that we are our brothers' and sisters' keeper and that there **is love, especially in the time of Corona.**

May the love of God abide with you during this difficult and uncertain time and forever more.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

Where do you see love in action in your ministry setting?

What are the challenges to faithfulness in sharing that love?

What do you need to receive and to trust Christ's love more fully this day?

ABC Announcements

Courageous Conversations with Chaplains Webinar

Thursday, April 30, 2020

7:00 PM Eastern/4:00 PM Pacific

Join American Baptist Women's Ministries (ABWM), Thursday April 30, 2020, at 7:00 PM Eastern/4:00 PM Pacific for a Courageous Conversation with chaplains. Chaplains are on the frontlines of spiritual care during this trying time. This webinar will equip faith leaders with the resources they need to provide pastoral care and support to their communities during COVID-19 and beyond. Please share this valuable resource with your network!

[Click here to register.](#)

Panelists include:



Rev. Angel Sullivan
Staff Chaplain
St. Joseph's Hospital-Bay
Care Health Systems



Samuel Yenn-Batah
Manager of Pastoral Care
Penn Medicine Princeton
Health, Plainsboro, NJ



Rev. Barrie-Lyn Foster
Pastor of the United Church
of Genoa in New York State
FASNY & CNYFA Fire
Chaplain
Rescue Captain AVFD



Rev. Dr. Patricia Murphy
Ecclesiastical Endorser and
National Coordinator of
Chaplaincy & Specialized
Ministries
American Baptist Home
Missions Societies



Rev. Susan Fair
Board-Certified Chaplain,
C.P.E. Supervisor, and a
Community Chaplain
Jersey City Police
Department



Rev. Kei Okada
Program Manager, End-of-
Life Spiritual Care
Visiting Nurse Service of
New York Hospice and
Palliative Care in New York
City

Register Now!

[Click here to register for this free webinar.](#)

This webinar is a free event, but donations are welcome. Your donation will allow American Baptist Women's Ministries to continue providing webinars and other resources on critical topics for women and girls. [Click here to make a donation.](#)

ABC Creation Justice Network Climate Ambassador Training

Public · Hosted by **ABC Creation Justice Network**

People are growing more concerned about climate change. As they witness and experience impacts to their health, livelihoods and communities, they are increasingly looking for guidance on solutions from people in their daily lives – including faith leaders like you.

On May 8, 2020 from 11:30am-4:00pm EST, the ABC Creation Justice Network will be hosting a webinar training that will equip you with the knowledge, hands-on experience, and resources to speak and act confidently from a firm biblical grounding on climate change and solutions. Registration is required for the free training:

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJwsfuyqqD8oHdeMC4PALJRYn4b3CPTMMRhO>.

Any member of the ABCUSA community who wants to become a #BlessedTomorrowAmbassador to talk about climate change and faith confidently and advocate effectively for solutions at all levels are invited to participate.

BONUS: Listen to “ABCUSA Moving Forward: A Guide to Climate Action for People of Faith” for additional background information (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jx5OY3atXTA>).

Radical. Redeemed. Ready.



Celebrating Ministering Women

The Planning Team has announced postponement of this significant milestone celebration. Join us in prayer and promotion for the gathering in 2022, details pending!

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)



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