Jubilee and Caring for our Neighbors

A year of Jubilee has been declared for the national Ministers Council for 2020. It is a year of free membership, a year of encouragement, and a year of considering how this Old Testament principle is still applicable today. If you have followed along with previous devotional articles, you'll know that Jubilee can impact our theology and practical living. Today we consider how the spirit of Jubilee should cause us to treat our neighbors.

In Leviticus 25, we read where the year of Jubilee is time to "proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants"...and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family" (v. 10) Verse 11 tells us that Jubilee should be a time of rest without working the fields or the vineyards. I would note that during the odd pandemic season that we are in, it is apparent to me that God wants to use this as a time of rest and step back, particularly for those in professional ministry.

With fewer people in church (if you are having corporate church at all), fewer live meetings, and fewer ministry activities, that pastors would take advantage of the Sabbath opportunities that this period might produce. Yet many pastors are busier and feel more stretched than ever. God promises to use even the most challenging situations and periods for good, and I believe that rest (whatever that looks like to you) is one such way.

Continue reading

Events and Webinars

Have you missed our recent MC Live webinars? Visit the archive here.
MC Webinar: CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA: Hosted by Code of Ethics Subcommittee & Facebook Team

Thursday, August 6th
7 PM Central/ 8 PM Eastern/ 5 PM Pacific
Zoom Info Here

What is "Constructive Use of Social Media"? In its various forms and purposes, what is constructive (or not constructive) FOR CLERGY specifically? The Commitment to be disciplined in a "constructive use" is a proposed addition to the Ministers Council Covenant and Code of Ethics to be voted on later this year.

Join Revs. Jacki Belile, Jerry Bertelson, Dan Hopkins and Steve Neal (Subcommittee for Code for Code of Ethics Revision) and others in the Ministers Council family (including Facebook admins) for discussion. We'd love to have your experience and voice on this vital topic as we think about best resourcing for one another.

August 20 Webinar: Our Kairos Moment—Leading Together in Crises of Health and Justice

Thursday, August 20th
7 PM Central/ 8 PM Eastern/ 5 PM Pacific
Zoom Info Here

Join colleagues from the ABC-USA ministry family in conversation with the Rev. Dr. C. Jeff Woods, Interim General Secretary of ABC-USA. Dr. Woods will give a brief ABC-USA update including an outline of our newly formed anti-racism task force and other updates. We’ll also spend some time with a focus on our collective learnings from the Covid-19 pandemic. We’ll preserve time for Q and A from participants. Do you have questions for Dr. Woods? If so, please submit in advance to info@ministerscouncil.com by August 18th.

Rev. Dr. C. Jeff Woods serves as Interim General Secretary of American Baptist Churches USA. Prior to serving as Interim General Secretary, Woods served as Associate General Secretary for Regional Ministries. In this role, Rev. Dr. Woods worked to encourage the health and vitality of the 33 regional judicatories coast to coast throughout the United States. Other denominational positions include serving as the Executive Minister of the Ohio Region and four pastorates within the ABC Region of Indiana.

Read complete bio. Here

National Update

Identifying Potential Grantmakers for Your Project: A National Ministers Council Service

National Ministers Council has a subscription to Grant Station that a volunteer will search for you. Tell us what is involved in your project and former MC President Dee Dee Turlington will search Grant Station’s providers and send to you contact information for the most promising possibilities.

For example, an historic Chicago church in need of a new roof and refurbished organ requested help. They received the name, parameters and contact information for nine grant-makers that would consider religious institutions and capital needs. If you are seeking grant funding, contact former President Dee Dee Turlington at darla.turlington@gmail.com and she will work with you to mine the riches of Grant Station.

Current emphases include nationwide grants by Wish You Well Foundation to benefit adult literacy programs, including ESL, and Chinook Fund support of Colorado community organizations working on social and economic justice.
Reminders:

The Grant Station website has made available even to non-members a list of funding opportunities related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Go to https://grantstation.com/covid-19-related-funding and scroll down the page.

The State of Grantseeking Report spotlights recent developments in funding so that organizations can be more strategic in their grant seeking. Click on the title above to access it or a summary of its findings.

Excellence in Ministry Grants

Local chapters in good standing* with the Ministers Council, ABCUSA are eligible to apply for grants supporting chapter-sponsored programs which nurture excellence in ministry. For more than a decade, we have lifted our witness that ministerial excellence is to be found and nurtured at the intersections of our 3C's: Competence, Centeredness and Collegiality.

The Excellence in Ministry Fund will distribute resources received from the Center for Pastoral Excellence at Christian Theological Seminary (Indianapolis, Indiana). Applications will be available August 1, 2020 for grants up to $1000 for retreats, workshops or seminars which support excellency by one or more of the 3Cs. Contact info@ministerscouncil.com for more information.

*"Good standing" is defined as active engagement in our national organization’s life and reporting requirements OR engagement in a chapter revitalization process with our National Leadership Team.

GRANT APPLICATION PACKET
EMI Cover page
EMI Grant Application
EMI Program FACILITATORS Post Evaluation Form
EMI Program PARTICIPANTS Post Evaluation Form

MC ABCUSA Seeking Nominations For Two Positions

Ministers Council ABCUSA is seeking nominations for two positions - Treasurer and Member at Large - on the Leadership Team for the 2021-2022 term of office. If you are interested in serving or wish to recommend someone to a position, please forward their name to the Ministers Council office email. The Leadership Team holds monthly Zoom meetings (1 1/2 hours).

TREASURER: Overall responsibility for the MC ABCUSA financial matters, participating in monthly Team meetings and provide monthly financial reports. Must be versed in (or willing to learn) Quick Books.

MEMBER AT LARGE: Responsible for the Together In Ministry groups applications and grants. Will develop a team of three to assist in this nationally based project.

Milestones & Prayer Requests

Rev. Ivan George passed away on June 24th. Rev. George served as pastor of four Baptist congregations in California. He served with distinction the Board of International Ministries, ABCUSA as Area Director for Africa, the Philadelphia Baptist Association, American Baptist Churches of the South, American Baptist Churches of New Jersey, the Ministerial Leadership Commission, and World Mission Support. Rev. Ivan George served as the primary historian for the William T. McKee Consultation. He earned a master’s degree from Andover Newton Theological Seminary and from Temple University.

Retired Executive Minister of ABC of Rhode Island, Dr. Tom Wiles, was recently admitted to the ICU. Please keep Dr. Wiles and his wife Linda in your prayers.
Gentle Jesus, be our strength and shield against all of our fears and anxieties in this time of uncertainty. Help us to not look at our neighbors with fear, but to see all as your beloved children. In your holy name we pray. Amen

We lift up in prayer schools, students, teachers, and parents as they prepare for another school year.

Staff Reflection

Prayer for Peace
A Word from Lisa

Almighty Creator, the everlasting God, the Prince of Peace; there is none like you!

We pray for the peace that surpasses all understanding. Let it fall like dew drops to refresh our weary souls, to give strength to bare one another's burdens and to provide light in this darkened world. Transform the hearts of those who plot to rob us of this gift.

Oh Lord our God, lover of our soul, have mercy on us. Hear our cry and grant us your peace. Amen.

ABC Announcements

The ABCUSA Creation Justice Network invites you to participate in a webinar series. The four session Thursday webinar series, entitled “Praying with Creation: Sabbath, Lament, Restoration/Resiliency, and Resurrection,” will meet weekly from July 23, 2020 to August 13, 2020 at 12:00pm EDT/9:00am PDT. Each session will center on a theme: Sabbath, Lament, Restoration/Resiliency, and Resurrection and will include scripture, prayers, reflections, insight from a guest speaker, and an opportunity for discussion on that week's chosen theme. Join guest speakers from across the denomination as we reflect on how we as individuals and as congregations can collaborate to restore/heal God's creation and communities in this time. Join the American Baptist Churches Creation Justice Network, along with the ABCUSA Office of the General Secretary’s Minister for Creation Justice, Rev. Rebecca Driscoll, as we explore what God's creation can teach us about living and responding to these times of global pandemic and ongoing racial injustice. Register for the webinar series here.
(Click to read more)

The ABCUSA Office of the General Secretary announces a search for a new Associate General Secretary for Mission Resource Development.
(Click to read more)

American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS) - The daily workweek devotional “Word and Witness” has been written by Executive Director Emeritus the Rev. Dr. Aidsand F. Wright-Riggins III since its inception in 2014. Wright-Riggins continued writing the digital devotional, which launched ABHMS' Passionary emphasis, following his 2015 retirement.
(Click to read more)
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
- Join us on Facebook
- Consider signing up for our monthly newsletter by selecting “subscribe” on the home page of the website