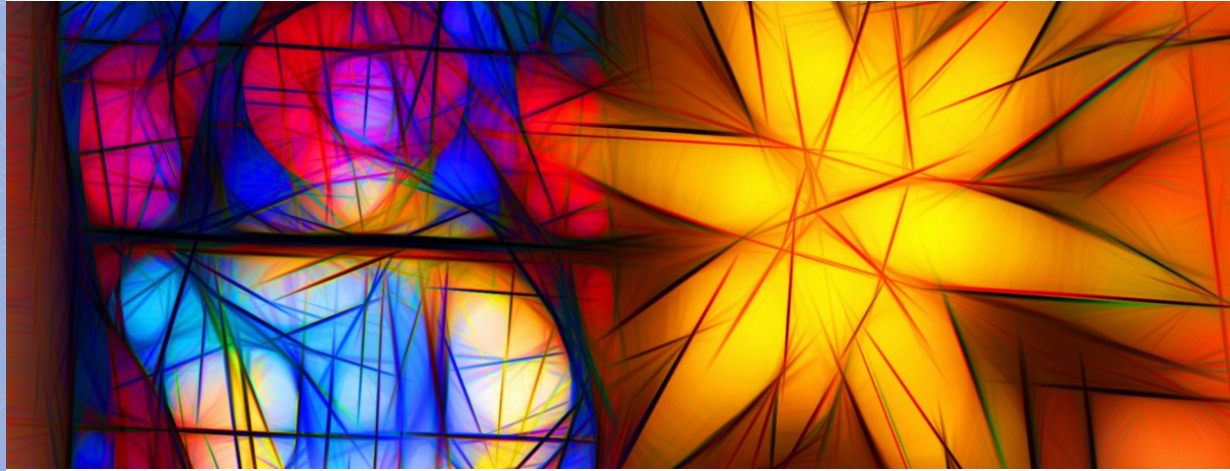




## December 2020 Newsletter



*Prepare a way for the Lord!*

### Advent Resources

Here are resources to help you in your ministry as we enter the Season of Advent.

- Throughout the 2020 Advent Season, Jeff Woods, General Secretary of the American Baptist Churches USA will share an online devotional for prayer and contemplation [HERE](#)
- Judson Press: [Advent](#)
- American Baptist Churches USA: [Advent Reflection Series: Christmas](#)
- Sunday school lessons and resources. [Preparing for Advent and Christmas 2020 in the COVID Pandemic](#)
- Baptist State Convention of North Carolina: [Christmas/Advent Survival Kit](#)
- Celebrating Advent at home - 2020: [Advent Wreath Candle Lighting Prayers](#)
- North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church: [Advent Resources for 2020](#)
- Building Faith: [Advent Resources for 2020 from Four Publishers](#)
- The Episcopal Church: [Advent and Christmas Resources](#)
- Creighton University Online Ministries: [Praying Advent](#)

### A Word From the President



#### Advent Pilgrimage Practices

Peace and goodness to you.

With the Journey of Advent upon us, perhaps it is time to revisit practices as suggested by the Franciscan friar, Murray Bodo in his Pilgrims Credo:

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 and goodness.
5. I bring back only that which God gives.

To this list, others have added:

1. I look for what God is doing.
2. I look for joy in the ordinary things of life.

What practices might you add?

Peace and all goodness... let practice this in Advent!

Randolph "RT" Miller  
President

## National Update

### Report from Bi-Annual Meeting

Thursday, November 19, 2020

Meeting over ZOOM, 63 people attended the Bi-Annual gathering including 23 voting representatives that represented a quorum allowing business to be conducted. The following items were approved:

1. The theme “For Such A Time as This” was adopted for the year 2021.
2. The 2021-2022 proposed [budget](#) was approved.
3. The following persons were elected to the Leadership Team of the Ministers Council
  - Jacki Belile of Chicago, Illinois will serve as Vice President
  - Sara Day of Flagstaff, Arizona will serve as Treasurer
  - Jerry Bertelson of Canistota, South Dakota will serve as the Coordinator for Membership and Chapter Development.
  - Lin Story-Bunce of Greenville, North Carolina will serve as coordinator of TIM Groups.

Those stepping down from the Leadership team include: Dan Hopkins of Tell City, Indiana (TIM Coordinator), Shane Kinnison of Glendale, California (treasurer), Barbara Jim-George of Oakland, California (Membership and Chapter Development). We are deeply grateful for their faithful service and the wisdom they brought to the Leadership Team.

4. The revised [Covenant and Code of Ethics](#) was approved by the representatives and will now be forwarded to local chapters for ratification for final adoption. (Two thirds of our chapters will need to ratify it by formal local votes before it goes into effect. See your chapter representative for more information.)

We are grateful for the efforts of the Planning Committee in shaping our pre-business opportunities for renewal and preparation.



Find recordings of the meetings on our website at:

- [Video of the October 29 Renewal Gathering](#)
- [Video of the November 5 Renewal Gathering](#)
- [Video of the November 12 Q&A Session of Business Material](#)
- [Video of the November 19 Formal Business Meeting](#)

Commissioned music

["Perhaps You Have Come" 1](#)

["Perhaps You have Come" 2](#)

*A generous person will  
prosper; whoever refreshes  
others will be refreshed.  
Proverbs 11:25*



*As we enter the Advent season we may choose to be more present to the gifts of this life in ministry. The gift of Jesus Christ to us and for us and in us. The gifts given by those who have come before us and who have shaped us. The gift in our present circumstances, however challenging or light. The gifts of colleagues working to ensure you are able to connect with the wider community of ABC ministerial companions, through the work of the national Ministers Council.*

**IT'S GIVING TUESDAY**

# WEEK FOR US...

Send in a gift today!

With the assistance of a \$ 1,000 Challenge Grant, all gifts given between Tuesday December 1 – 8, 2020 in support of the on-going work of the Ministers Council ABC-USA will be matched dollar for dollar. We hope you will [give](#) generously.

**HONOR EXCELLENCE IN MINISTRY...** Share a gift today in a mentor's honor. [Click here to learn more.](#)

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## Grants Available

Connecting You - A Service Provided by the National Ministers Council

[Read more](#) about:

Clergy Renewal Grants

COVID-19 Emergency grants

Other Foundation Grants

Thanks to DeeDee Turlington for being our grant steward!

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## We Bid Farewell With Thankful Hearts

Kinnison, Hopkins and Jim-George conclude Leadership Team Roles

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**“There is a time for everything and a season for all activities under the heavens...”**

by Shane Kinnison



As I conclude my tenure as a member of the Leader Team of National Ministers Council, I want to say how thankful I am for the time and season of service and ministry. It was my privilege to come aboard on the former Board of Governors at the invitation of Executive Director Dr. Debora Jackson to fulfill an unexpired term as an at-large member and then to serve two full terms both as at-large and later as Treasurer.

[Read more](#)



### A Message From Dan Hopkins

My experience with National Ministers Council has been a blessed one over the last 6 years or so. I began as a rep from the Indiana/ky region, where I served as president for several years. I had the chance to get to know folks in ministry from all over the country. We all had this same goal: to encourage, connect and support others who shared the calling of Christ.

[Read more](#)

### Blessings

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High  
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.  
I will say of the Lord, “You are my refuge and my fortress,  
my God, in whom I trust.”

Psalm 91 has kept me through all kinds of trials. God bless each of you! -Rev. Dr. Barbara Jim-George



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## A JOURNEY OF JUBILEE: Final 2020 Reflection from Leadership Team



As I think of Jubilee and Peace, I think of the truth which has anchored so many colleagues this year. We've reflected in myriad ways on the topic and what it means to live into a Jubilee ethic in life and ministry. The truth - in so many different keys - comes always to the goodness and trustworthiness of our abundant God. And the vision God holds for us, that we might learn the habits of obedience that make FOR PEACE.

This hymn anchors that testimony for me. Enjoy it and savor its message again this season.

--Rev. Jacki Belile, CPC  
Metro Chicago  
Vice President, National Leadership Team

### **MY LIFE GOES ON IN ENDLESS SONG**

My life goes on in endless song  
Above earth's lamentations,  
I hear the real, though far-off hymn  
That hails a new creation.  
Through all the tumult and the strife  
I hear its music ringing,  
It sounds an echo in my soul.  
How can I keep from singing?

[Read more](#)

## **Events and Webinars**

### **An Advent Path: A Circle for Sharing our Practices, Resources and Wrestling**

December 10

[Zoom Instructions](#)

What does "Advent Path" mean to you? How has that changed over the years? What practices or resources are you resonating with personally or using in ministry settings this season? Are there issues or complexities with which you're wrestling? Join colleagues for this time set aside for some shared music, prayer and supportive conversation. Hosted by Revs. Dan Hopkins and Jacki Belile.



Have you missed our recent MC Live webinars? Visit the archive [here](#).

### **Recent MC Live webinars:**

**Journeys for Justice: Testimonies from International Ministries**  
*A Conversation with IM Colleagues*

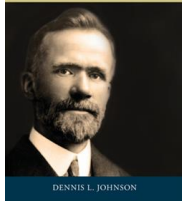
**MC Webinar: Constructive use of Social Media**  
Hosted by Code of Ethics Subcommittee & Facebook Team

**Thriving in Retirement**  
A Conversation with Revs. Douglas Harris and Carol McVetty

## **Journey with Rauschenbusch**

Beginning January 1, 2021, a group of Ministers Council pilgrims will begin walking with the writings of Walter

To Live in God  
DAILY REFLECTIONS WITH  
Walter Rauschenbusch



Rauschenbusch. Dennis Johnson has crafted this work containing 180 reflections in three sections - the Inward Journey, the Outward Journey, and the Common Journey. You are invited to join the adventure. Come along with us and discover how the Spirit came alive in Walter Rauschenbusch and speaks truth in our time as well. You won't be disappointed.

A few copies are still available for \$ 15.50 with free shipping through the Ministers Council ABCUSA using [paypal](#). Copies are also available through the publisher, Judson Press.

## Prayers and Milestones

### A PRAYER FOR POLITICIANS & PUBLIC OFFICE HOLDERS

by Walter Rauschenbusch

O GOD, thou great governor of all the world, we pray thee for all who hold public office and power, for the life, the welfare, and the virtue of the people are in their hands to make or to mar.

We remember with shame that in the past the mighty have preyed on the labors of the poor; that they have laid nations in the dust by their oppression, and have thwarted the love and the prayers of thy servants.

We pray thee that by the free institutions of our country the tyrannous instincts of the strong may be curbed and turned to the patient service of the commonwealth.

Strengthen the sense of duty in our political life. Grant that the servants of the state may feel ever more deeply that any diversion of their public powers for private ends is a betrayal of their country.

Purge our cities and states and nation of the deep causes of corruption which have so often made sin profitable and uprightness hard.

Bring to an end the stale days of party cunning.  
Breathe a new spirit into all our nation.

Lift us from the dust and mire of the past that we may gird ourselves for a new day's work.

Give our leaders a new vision of the possible future of our country and set their hearts on fire with large resolves. Raise up a new generation of women and men, who will have the faith and daring of the Kingdom of God in their hearts, and who will enlist for life in a holy warfare for the freedom and rights of the people.

Walter Rauschenbusch, 1910  
Baptist pastor, social prophet, American reformer

*Dennis Johnson shares this prayer from Walter Rauschenbusch, a Baptist pastor and founder of the Social Gospel movement in his book **To Live in God: Daily Reflections with Walter Rauschenbusch**. May we remember that God continues to work for justice, peace, and healing as we move through this season of election. --[Central Baptist Church - A Prayer for Politicians and Public Officeholders | Stories \(lexcentral.com\)](#).*

\*\*\*Remember to share your prayer requests and milestones at [info@ministerscouncil.com](mailto:info@ministerscouncil.com) for inclusion here.

## Chapter News

**PUERTO RICO:** On October 3, 2020 the MC of Puerto Rico sponsored a 3-hour seminar on the issues of suicide prevention and ministers' mental/emotional self-health care. More than 50 members of our pastoral leadership participated in it. The seminar was open to all members of our pastoral body. The interest in those issues was excellent. We were nurtured by two virtual workshops offered by a Director of the Christian Coalition for the Prevention of Suicide and a distinguish clinical psychologist.

We already programmed a second seminar on these issues for May 2021. Thanks for the financial support that the MC / ABCUSA has provided for those seminars!

Rev. Dr. Luis Collazo  
President,  
Puerto Rico Chapter

**CHICAGO:** Chapter leaders have completed a by-laws revision and will share the revised document with any chapters looking for a template. We will also see that it gets translated into Spanish. We recently held a Zoom chat on "Together in Ministry Covenant Groups" where veteran leaders shared personal experiences and best practices. Contact [jacki@livingwellministries.net](mailto:jacki@livingwellministries.net) for the video link.

## DUES FOR 2021-- JOIN NOW!

Whether or not there's a chapter near you... you can join!  
Remember, many churches or employing groups opt to pay for or reimburse professional dues.

## Staff Reflection

### With Thanksgiving *A Word from Lisa*



The Bible teaches us in Philippians 4 verses 6 and 7 KJV, Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Personally, this is one of my favorite passage of scripture. It keeps me grounded in my faith because it strongly defines my relationship with God and His relationship with me. It provides hope when I need it, courage when I lack it, love when I crave it and peace when I seek it. It gives me "calm during my storms" knowing that God has already set the expectations for my relationship by encouraging me to always come to him. However, he is very specific about one requirement and that is to come to him with thanksgiving in my heart and likewise in your heart.

I wish you and your family a very Happy Thanksgiving and a reminder to give praises unto whom "all blessings flow".

*Reflection: Is your approach to God with thanksgiving? During this time of uncertainty, it is sometimes hard to have a thankful spirit; however, let us take comfort in knowing that despite the trials and tribulations that we face, he promises to never leave or forsake us.*

## 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)

### 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