

January 2021 Newsletter



Epiphany of Our Lord

When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage.

- Matthew 2:10-11

The Bible doesn't mention the magi again or how exactly their encounter with Jesus changed them. We are left with room for us to ponder how Jesus' life will disrupt and enrich our lives in the new year.

EPIPHANY 2021

It was a time of unveiling
The truth about America was laid bare
But opinions vary about what was revealed.

Was Lady Liberty ravaged or was it she who did the ravaging?
Was she desecrating the hallowed halls or was she desecrated?

Black and brown children already have opinions
For others, the dreams have become nightmares
Blinded by power, greed and ambition.

Yet for such a time as this

There is another epiphany
another revealing
The time is fulfilled
The Kingdom of God is here
Change your way of thinking
believe

... that creation waits with eager longing
for the revealing of the children of God.
God is waiting too.

*We are praying for you and your ministries in this tumultuous and dangerous time. Randy's poem above is just one example of the Spirit's stirring into voice. How and where are you uttering what you need? How do those utterances sound? Clear witness? Groans? Wrestling with holy messy questions? Who are the companions you trust, or you **need**, in order to bear faithful witness in our age?*

What is God revealing? What is God calling you to help reveal?

Resources For Such a Time as This - After the Capitol Riot

Braver Angels <https://braverangels.org>

#INTHISTOGETHER: Ministry in Times of Crisis, Curtis Ramsey-Lucas, editor
<https://www.judsonpress.com/Products/J291/inthistgether.aspx>

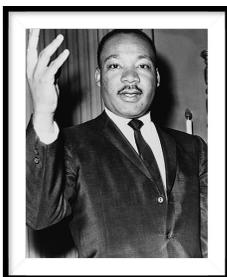
Forum: How to Shepherd Your People in Light of the Capitol Riot, by 9Marks
<https://www.9marks.org/article/forum-how-to-shepherd-your-people-in-light-of-the-capitol-riot/>

5 Suggestions for Managing Conflict in Polarized Contexts, from the Lewis Center for Church Leadership
<https://www.churchleadership.com/leading-ideas/5-suggestions-for-managing-conflict-in-polarized-contexts/>

Response Resources for Leaders, from the CDC
<https://emergency.cdc.gov/coping/leaders.asp>

Preaching in the Purple Zone, by Leah D. Schade
<https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781538119891/Preaching-in-the-Purple-Zone-Ministry-in-the-Red-Blue-Divide>

The Church's Role in a Divided Society, by the Faith & Deliberation Initiative
<https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/sites.baylor.edu/dist/0/208/files/2019/10/New-Churchs-Role-Moderators-Guide.pdf>



Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was born on January 15, 1929. We will celebrate Martin Luther King (MLK) Day on Monday, January 18, the federal holiday that honors his life and legacy.

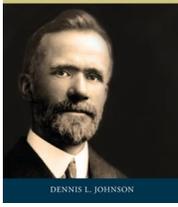
The Martin Luther King (MLK) Day of Service is observed as a "day on, not a day off." Dr. King's work calls us, all of us, to remember our neighbor. He spoke of a vision of a beloved community and preached a message of love. In his last speech, he said, "Let us develop a kind of dangerous unselfishness" and went on to speak about the parable of the Good Samaritan. This parable illustrates that being a neighbor is about how you act when a person is in need.

Have you considered how to spend the MLK Day of Service this year?

Journey with Rauschenbusch

Beginning January 1, 2021, a group of Ministers Council

To Live in God
DAILY REFLECTIONS WITH
Walter Rauschenbusch



pilgrims - more than 90 colleagues! - began walking with the writings of Walter 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.

National Update

TOGETHER IN MINISTRY GROUPS

We're excited to welcome Rev. Lin Story-Bunce to the national Leadership Team. Lin will be crafting next steps for support of Clergy Covenant Groups, building on the committed work of Rev. Dan Hopkins. For more information, contact info@ministerscouncil.com.

We'd like to feature a TIM group in each newsletter going forward. Please share your pictures and testimonies by January 25th for February issue. Send to info@ministerscouncil.com.

MC LIVE WEBINARS



MC Live will resume on Thursday, February 18th at 8pm Eastern/7pm Central/5pm Pacific. In the meantime we're developing a brief survey to engage attendees and non-attendees alike on feedback about needed offerings, and format going forward. Feel free

to share your thoughts by email or wait for the survey in the February newsletter.

CODE OF ETHICS

As reported in the December newsletter, a final revision of the Covenant and Code of Ethics was approved on November 19, 2020 at the Biannual Business Meeting of the Chapter Representatives and members of the Leadership Team. The next step is the ratification by 2/3 of our Active Chapters over the course of 2021. Please help us ensure each chapter is setting aside time for these deliberations. Members of the national team will continue to be available for presentation and "Q and A."

Also, we are establishing the editorial team for 2021 revisions to the current Learning Guide. (While ratification decisions are underway, we'll start on introductory sections and those not affected by the changes.) We seek a diverse and interdisciplinary team for this learning journey. To volunteer, contact Jacki Belile, National Vice-President, at jacki@livingwellministries.net by February 28, 2021. To review the approved document, visit www.ministerscouncil.com or email info@ministerscouncil.com.

LENT PRAYER TRADITION CONTINUES



For a number of years we've held space each Lent for an offering of prayer, devotional and support time. The schedule and content have varied. If you'd like to attend or lead one or more this season, please fill out this [survey](#) by January 27th.

FACEBOOK GROUP GATHERS FOR WORSHIP PLANNING

Lent through Easter

Our colleague-leader in the Evergreen Chapter, Mindi Welton-Mitchell, regularly gathers folks across the nation for brainstorming and theological reflection for worship planning. The group is called "Baptist Worship Prep and Planning." Here's the [recording](#) from last week's session on Lent through Easter...

Password: 4ck\$bH^z



"WE BELONG TO EACH OTHER"

A Theology of Dues?

Our beloved Chicago-area minister and mentor, Rev. Dr. Alan V. Ragland, said this at a Ministers Council dinner some years ago: "We belong to each other." He was speaking to the depths of ministers among ministers, ministers *serv*ing ministers.

A sense of belonging and shared commitment ideally animates all we do for excellence in ministry. Ideally, this belonging undergirds our desires to share and receive resources, to grow in wisdom, courage and compassion as leaders, to offer mutual guidance and accountability. Ideally, these bonds inspire us to share our time, talent and treasure in the variety of settings we are called to lead collaboratively, including the Ministers Council as one organizational form God still uses for blessing.

We're receiving dues now for the 2021 calendar. You can pay these affordable dues (on a sliding scale) conveniently online at www.ministerscouncil.com or through your local treasurer.

Let's dedicate ourselves with renewed passion for this common work, for such a time as this!

Rev. Jacki Belile, CPC
Vice-President
Ministers Council ABCUSA

Prayers and Milestones

American Baptist Home Mission Societies Announces Staffing Transitions. [Read here.](#)



The Rev. Perla Dirige Belo of Seattle, Wash., went to be with the Lord on Saturday, Dec. 5. From 1990 until retiring in 2003, she served as director of Asian Ministries for American Baptist Home Mission Societies' (ABHMS), when it was known as National Ministries.

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

Almighty and ever-living God, as we face these uncertain times in our nation we ask you to dwell among us. Send Your Spirit to touch the hearts of our nation's leaders. Comfort all who are in distress. Give us Your light and Your truth to guide us. In Jesus' name we pray.

Do you have prayer requests or milestones to share? Submit by the 25th of each month for the following month's newsletter.

Chapter News

Share your Chapter News

Our local MC Chapters are the foundation of the organization! Let us know your events, best practices, and ideas so that we can share them across ABC USA. Send your news by contacting the Ministers Council phone: (610)314-7837 or by email: [By email: info@ministerscouncil.com](mailto:info@ministerscouncil.com)

We're grateful for our members who find themselves in areas with chapters, and for those elected leaders who seek diligently to serve them well. We remind you that we have "**Excellence in Ministry Grants**" - up to a \$1000 per year -- available for chapters planning a chapter-wide resourcing event. Learn more and apply here: [The Excellence in Ministry Fund--Ministers Council, ABCUSA](#)

Do you find yourself in an area with no chapter, or a chapter on hiatus? We want to connect with you to explore ways to offer collegial support across the miles and/or to discern together what chapter development might look like over time where you are. Our new national Leadership Team member designated to support you is Rev. Jerry Bertelson. For more information, contact info@ministerscouncil.com.

Staff Reflection

Reflect on This

A Word from Lisa

For the past two years I have been submitting my thoughts on "reflections." I trust that they have been a source of inspiration and encouragement. Although each submission was woven with its own narrative, all shared the same common thread of "hope".



As we step over the threshold into the new year, my desire for you is a renewal of faith, courage, resilience, love and forgiveness. Faith to strengthen your relationship with God. Courage to aspire for all which you considered unattainable. Resilience to never, ever give up on yourself; and most importantly, show love and forgive.

I leave you with this encouragement from Philippians 4 v 13(KJV)- *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*
Wishing you God's favor in this new year!

ABC Announcements

American Baptist Churches USA seeks **nominations for the Luke Mowbray Ecumenical Award**, which recognizes an individual for outstanding ecumenical work at the local, state, national or international level, either as a volunteer or paid professional. This award will be presented at the American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA) 2021 Online Biennial Mission Summit, June 24-26, 2021. The award winner will be selected by the ABCUSA Committee on Christian Unity and Interfaith Relations. The deadline for nominations January 31, 2021.

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

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)



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