

Together in Ministry



Collegiality * Competence * Centeredness

March 2021 Newsletter



COMPETENCE FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS --

New Monthly Column Explores Aspects of Competence in Ministry

Your national Leadership Team has committed to envisioning ways we can best nurture "Competence" amid the important nurture of the other 2C's - Centeredness and Collegiality. With our ministry paradigm as a largely volunteer-led organization, this requires optimizing how we use our communication tools to share resources and reflections which enrich one another.

To that end, we invite YOUR experienced reflections and honest searching on competency themes going forward each month. We'll be following a [Competencies list](#) compiled and authored by the Midwest Ministry Development Center, starting with a section on "Relationship to Self." For March, we're claiming questions and discussion on competency and self-awareness. What does that mean to you? What are you learning? What resources could help deepen your self-awareness?

Check out a blog post that reflects on leadership and self-awareness here. [Ministry Matters™ | Leadership and Self-Awareness](#). Also, check out this week's discussion in our Facebook group on this topic, and the complete list of topics we'll be exploring in coming months. Do you have a witness or resource to suggest on Competency and Being Self-Directed/Managed? Please share any contributions you are led to make on that theme by March 26, 2021. Send to info@ministerscouncil.com.

National Update

We continue to be grateful for Rev. Dr. Darla "Dee Dee" Turlington's work in supplying our constituency with these resources from Grant Station. Here's

the latest update:

A rare opportunity for churches in need of capital improvements

The [National Fund for Sacred Places](#) provides support to community-serving congregations to aid in the stewardship of their historic facilities. The first and only program of its kind, it offers support for capital projects and technical assistance to ensure success. Projects must be able to raise matching funds. Letters of intent must be submitted by March 15, 2021 and full applications will be due July 14, 2021.

This is just one of thousands of opportunities listed on Grant Station, an online data base of grant makers that accept unsolicited requests, including foundations, corporate giving programs and faith-based grant makers. National Ministers Council purchases an annual membership, which allows one person to search the database at will. Past President of MC Dee Dee Turlington has access and is willing to search in response to your church's or non-profit's needs. Contact her at darla.turlington@gmail.com.

Current COVID-19 funding opportunities are available for free on the Grant Station website:

<https://grantstation.com/covid-19-related-funding>

Highlighted now are national opportunities for

- organizations serving military members and veterans;
- youth-designed projects promoting racial equity;
- public service organizations using the power of volunteers to improve their communities; and
- outreach strategies to provide services to victims of domestic, dating, or sexual violence.

Code of Ethics: Updates & Next Steps

Editorial team for learning guide now being formed

Our Chapters have begun holding educational sessions on the [Proposed Revisions](#) to the Covenant and Code of Ethics which were adopted at our national business meeting on November 19, 2020. For the changes in text to pass, 2/3 of our active chapters must ratify the document and submit notification of their vote to our national office during this year. Members of the drafting committee are available to answer questions or make presentations for your chapter.

In the meantime, we are establishing an editorial team to update our Learning Guide (see present version at www.ministerscouncil.com). Please respond by April 8 to register interest in serving.

IN SEARCH OF:

Members, Editorial Team for Revisions to the Learning Guide
Ministers Council Covenant & Code of Ethics

www.ministerscouncil.com

TIMELINE:

April 2021-April 2022

SCOPE:

Between now and April 11, our national Leadership Team will appoint a diverse editorial committee of 8-12 ministers for the work of revising the Learning Guide companion to our Code of Ethics. The team will begin with a visioning and values phase, then proceed to review and update texts pertaining to our *existing Code*. New or revised sections contained in the 2020 Proposed Revisions,

approved by chapter representatives in November 2020, will be taken up as a last phase if the document is ratified by the necessary 2/3 majority of our chapters in 2021.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Members will bring a sense of call to the challenge of writing substantial and accessible material grounded in wisdom from Biblical tradition and the professional best practices of our diverse ministry settings. Diversity in ministry contexts, ministry and life experiences and theological moorings is sought. For the most valuable outcomes, we hope the team will bring competent understandings of diversity including racial, cultural, gender, class, age, ability, sexual orientation and gender identity. In addition to the creative work of textual revisions, we hope this team will help us in strategic visioning for widest impact of the revised Learning Guide. Current membership in Ministers Council required.

For more information or to explore volunteering, contact Rev. Jacki Belile (jacki@livingwellministries.net) or Rev. Jerry Bertelson (jerry.bertelson@gmail.com) by April 8, 2021.



Learning about MinistrELife w/Rev. Erica Van Brakle

THURSDAY, MARCH 18

8pm Eastern/7pm Central/5pm Pacific

Join us for training and Q&A time with Rev. Erica Van Brakle, Director for ministrElife and American Baptist Personnel Services. MinistrElife is ABHMS' social networking platform, and American Baptist Personnel Services is the computer-based, data-storage-and-retrieval system.

ZOOM INFO [HERE](#)



Having served in many ministry roles, the **Rev. Erica Van Brakle** is well-suited to her roles as director for ministrElife and American Baptist Personnel Services. MinistrElife is ABHMS' social networking platform, and American Baptist Personnel Services is the computer-based, data-storage-and-retrieval system.

"The work is meaningful to me because I have been in the field in roles that I am now able to support," she says. "I am so excited about supporting ministry professionals from start to finish—and even keeping them connected to the American Baptist family in retirement!" Noting that ministry is not done in isolation, Van Brakle says she is passionate about connecting ministry professionals who share a sense of call to collaborate.

"I want to make ministrElife the platform that ministry professionals rely on to do the work that God has called them to," she says.

A unique aspect of ministrElife is its ability to adapt as new models of ministry, delivery of continuing education and resources emerge.

"The MinistrElife platform," Van Brakle says, "is able to not only speak into these facets but connect those who are doing the work in the field to communicate in real time."

From: <https://abhms.org/about-us/staff/rev-erica-van-brakle>

We want your feedback on MC Live! Watch for upcoming "Special Edition" newsletter with a simple survey for our readers.

A COVENANT JOURNEY- LENTEN PRAYER & STUDY SESSIONS

Tuesdays, 9am-9:30am (Prayer) and 7:30pm- 8:15pm(Study/Reflection)
February 23-March 30, 2021

Join Revs. Rebecca Driscoll, Scotty Robertson and Jacki Belile for these special times set aside for prayer, study and connection. Tuesday mornings will be a guided prayer experience on the theme of covenant, utilizing lectio divina. Led by Rebecca and Jacki. Tuesday evening study-chats will be led by Scotty. Together, we will explore the covenants and promises that God makes with God's people from the Hebrew Scripture. As we journey together toward Easter, may we be formed as the people of God today who are ready to receive the Covenant promises of God at work in our lives.

[More Information](#)

Chapter News

Our **Northern California Chapter** typically meets weekly with a variety of special guests. They've graciously opened up the attendance to these upcoming sessions for anyone interested.

Meetings are by Zoom on Thursdays at 10am Pacific/12pm Central/1pm Eastern.

March 11: The Struggle of the 21st Century Church (Marilyn Bennett)

March 18: Conversation w/ Lani Wilson (author of Baptist letter confronting “Jezebel” epithet for VP Harris)

March 25: Burma Raid on Kachin Baptist Office (Naw San Dee KD)

April 11: Conversation with Marvin McMickle (author of *Let the Oppressed Go Free*)

Read more [here](#)

Staff Reflection

Loving the Gifts More than the Giver

A Word from Lisa



On a human level many are more focused on how the world perceives them, rather than how God sees them. For them it is important to project a successful image by attending a prestigious institution, having an impressive job title, living in a desired neighborhood, being accepted into the right circles and the list goes on. However, we need to be reminded that we are God-made and not self-made. God holds the blueprints of our lives. Hebrews 12:2 (KJV) reminds us to “[Look] unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.” Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV) states “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” There is nothing wrong in aspiring for the best that life has to offer. However, we must be careful not to love the gifts more than we love the Giver of these gifts.

God wants us to prosper. He loves us so much that He gave us free will to love, worship and serve Him in spirit and in truth. Do we take the time to acknowledge him as the source of our blessings, do we say, thank you? Remember the songs of old that were hummed by our parents and grandparents. They thanked God for His faithfulness and praised Him for His goodness. This strengthened their relationship with Him. So too must we strive for a closer relationship with God. God (the Giver) is our source for all that is good (the gifts) and we must never cease to praise him for His goodness and mercy towards us.

Reflection:

As we continue to strengthen our relationship with God during this Lenten season through fasting and prayer; let us put into action daily “loving the Giver more than the gifts.”

ABC Announcements

The American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA) Board of General Ministries on Wednesday, February 17, released a statement on a recommended Interim Proposal timeline for the denomination. Read the statement below.

[Click to read more](#)

American Baptist Home Mission Societies' (ABHMS) Latino Ministries will offer “De la crucifixión de Jesús a la resurrección de Cristo” (“From the Crucifixion of Jesus to the Resurrection of Christ”), a series of four online workshops offering sermon ideas in the Spanish language. Participants will receive a certificate from ABHMS and Jerusalem Center for Biblical Studies. Workshops will be offered 4-5 p.m. Eastern Time on Feb. 27 and March 6, 13 and 20.

[Click to read more](#)

The American Baptist Churches of Indiana and Kentucky (ABC-IN/KY) announced in January that the Rev. Soozie Whitten Ford will retire from the position of executive minister of the ABC-IN/KY on September 1, 2021.

[Click to read more](#)

American Baptist Foundation (ABF) Rev. Perkin Simpson has resigned as Executive Director effective Friday, February 19, 2021. Associate Executive Director of Development Advisory Services Linda Cassel CSA, CAP® will serve as Interim Executive Director as the American Baptist Foundation Board conducts a nationwide search for a permanent director.

[Click to read more](#)

The Rev. William (“Bill”) C. Cline, 86, passed away Feb. 1 in his home at Shannondell at Valley Forge, Pa. He worked at American Baptist Home Mission Societies when it was National Ministries, holding a variety of roles, including evangelism, social concern and new church, before he retired in 2000 as director of Chaplaincy & Missionary/Staff Services.

[Click to read more](#)



Dr. John A. Sundquist, who served as Executive Director of American Baptist International Ministries (IM) from 1989 until 2003, entered fully into the presence of his Lord on Sunday, February 21, from his beloved home at Bethany Beach (in Sawyer, Michigan), at the age of 84. International Ministries joins with his family, friends, disciples, and colleagues all around the globe in giving thanks to God for his life of dedicated service to the cause of Christ.

[Click to read more](#)

We share the sadness of many within and beyond ministry circles at the passing of **Rev. Mildred Myren** from Metro Chicago in February. Millie was ordained into the Christian Ministry within the American Baptist churches in 1998, and served as Interim Minister at Morgan Park Baptist Church, where she was a lifelong member. She also served as Interim Executive Minister for American Baptist Churches of Metro-Chicago. Her love of music permeated her entire life from singing in church and community choirs, to playing the piano, to preparing music for worshipful church services. Millie will be remembered for her unconditional love of family, her generosity of spirit, her passion for books and words, and devotion to her God. [Read Millie's obituary here.](#)



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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