



February 2022 Newsletter

Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever:
for they are the rejoicing of my heart.

Psalm 119:111



DailyVerses.net

A SPIRITUAL CALL TO ENGAGE LEARNING IN "BLACK HISTORY MONTH"

Just One Person's Testimony



Why do we undertake the spiritual practice of naming specific months for topical learning, such as Black History Month or any other? It's a practice we do along with faith-based and secular counterparts and motivations. Many of us would name our hopes that such observances contribute to greater peace and justice.

I've come to see this as a practice of wisdom. A practice that indicates we want to learn more, with intention, about other communities. Or, our own. It's a practice with confession shot through it. For when we program significant content for such learning, we confess that significant history of suffering or societal contributions may have been previously unknown. Unknown to us. Unknown to those we are called to shepherd. We can then interrogate... why is that? Who would we be if we'd known that, earlier? Years or decades or centuries earlier?

[Read more.](#)

A Few Black History Month Resources

Books

- [African American Heritage Hymnal](#), Compiled and Edited by Delores Carpenter and Noland E. Williams Jr.
- [An Encyclopedia of African American Christian Heritage](#), by Marvin A. McMickle
- [Black Church Beginnings: The Long-Hidden Realities of the First Years](#), by Henry H. Mitchell

- [Deacons in Today's Black Baptist Church](#), by Marvin A. McMickle
- [Gifts of Our People: An Alphabet of African American History](#), by Portia George
- [The History of the Black Baptist Church](#)
- [I'm a Piece of Work: Sisters Shaped by God](#), by Cynthia L. Hale
- [Profiles in Black: Phat Facts for Teens](#), by Marvin A. McMickle
- [Substance of Things Hoped for: A Memoir of African American Faith](#), by Samuel D. Proctor

Other resources

- [28 Days of Black History](#) - A virtual exhibition of 28 works that celebrate Black legacy in the U.S.
- [Mission Stories: ABHMS honors Black History Month](#)
- [The Promise of Freedom](#), 20-minute informational video by The American Baptist Home Mission Society, an ABHMS predecessor organization.

An Invitation to Prayer from our President

The Cloud of Unknowing

A colleague in ministry told me, “I am tired, pissed-off, and very fragile these days. I feel so out-of-control and unprepared for ministry.” Others say, “I am lost and feel alone. If I could find something else to do, I would.” Still others, “This is such a hard time for ministry.”



These are not uncommon complaints. Without a doubt, it is a time of trial and testing of our faith. St. John of the Cross wrote of the time of personal doubt as a time of the “Dark Night of the Soul.” Perhaps this is a time of a Dark Night of the Soul for our world.

Perhaps we know too much these days. Perhaps we remember the good old days too well. I wonder if knowledge and control of our destinies has blinded us to the mysteries of God. I wonder if we might find salve for the soul by entering what a 14th century English monk called, the *cloud of unknowing*. He wrote:

“When I speak of darkness, I am referring to a lack of knowing. It is a lack of knowing that includes everything you do not know or else that you have forgotten, whatever is altogether dark for you because you do not see it with your spiritual eye. And for this reason it is not called a cloud of the air, but rather a cloud of unknowing that is between you and your God.”**[1]**

Perhaps we need view the world events around us from within the Cloud of Unknowing and find our way back to a trusting faith expressed by another mystic of the 14th century, Julian of Norwich, who wrote, “All will be well, and all will be well, and all manner of things will be well.”

Hmm – Can I trust that statement? Can I trust God in this pandemic? If not, where else can I turn?

Dear friends and colleagues in ministry, I would ask you would pray for the Leadership Team of the Ministers Council as we enter the “Cloud of Unknowing,” on a retreat from February 14 – 17 at the St. Francis Springs in North Carolina. More than planning and business, this is a time of prayer and reflection on what God is doing in the Ministers Council ABCUSA. Our theme is, “Behold, I Tell You a Mystery.” Our hopes are that God will indeed speak from within the Cloud on behalf of those who serve as American Baptist ministers in our time.

Wishing you Peace and All Goodness,

Randolph Miller, President
Ministers Council, ABCUSA

[1] Ira Progoff, *The Cloud of Unknowing: Introductory Commentary, New Preface, and Translation* (NY: A Laurel Book, 1983), 69.

Events and Webinars



FEBRUARY MC LIVE EVENT

EXCELLENCE IN MINISTRY
CHAPTER GRANT OPPORTUNITIES



How could your chapter
use \$1,000?

FEBRUARY 17th, 8 pm EST
via Zoom
Meeting ID: 889 6254 4887,
Password: 065238

Please spread the word about these monthly gatherings! In 2022, Rev. Cheryl

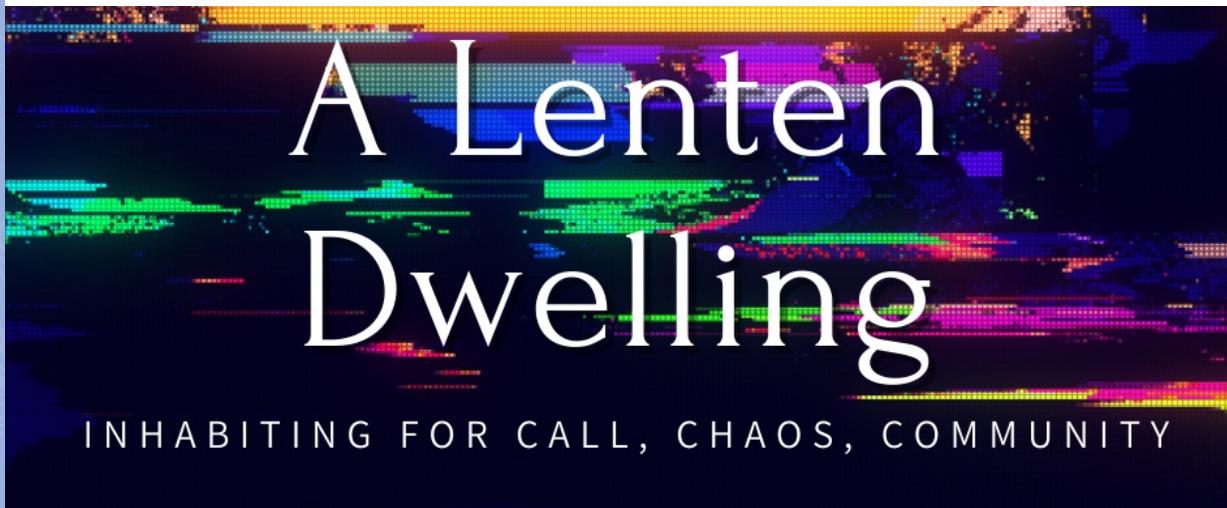
Harris is coordinating our content and hosting guests. We welcome Rev. Lin Story-Bunce for the February session on chapter grants. Can't make it? Remember all sessions are recorded and stored on our website at www.ministerscouncil.com.



Lin Story Bunce



Cheryl Harris



A Lenten Dwelling: Inhabiting for Call, Chaos, Community
Wednesdays, March 9-April 13
6am Pacific/8am Central/9am eastern

Join us for 30 minutes with your ABC colleagues during Lent. This seven-week journey will "re-turn" us to Jesus' baptism, wilderness temptations, and anointing. Where will it take us? Through this time of music, prayer, Scripture and fellowship we'll open up together to the Spirit's lessons for this Lent. Convened by Revs. Jacki Belile, Rebecca Driscoll and Scotty Robertson.

[ZOOM INFO](#)

National Update

Join or Renew Your Membership



JOIN US FOR 2022!

We pray that our fellowship and collaboration - in all their manifestations - contribute to ministerial excellence for the glory of Jesus Christ. This is why we exist. To be stewards of our national resources in support of such excellence, we rely on our modest annual dues and occasional grants.



It's that time of the year! Most members join or renew in the first quarter, so that our dues are paid for the calendar year. This grants voting privileges, occasional program discounts and is sometimes the criteria for various grants. Deeper than that, your dues express your commitment to our organization's mission and sustainability.

We're cooking up something special for 2022!

The Ministers Council Leadership Team would like to announce a special gift for all who sign-up as members of the Ministers Council for 2022. Each Minister Council member will receive a book. A list of books from which to choose will be available in the March newsletter. A book discussion will be offered for each book throughout the year, as well.

Learn more about our affordable sliding scale for dues and how to join [here](#). Thank you in advance for your membership and participation!

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In Christ's Service,
Rev. Jerry Bertelson
On behalf of the Leadership Team

CODE OF ETHICS - RATIFICATION PROCESS UNDERWAY

Our chapters continue the process of deliberating on the proposed revisions to our national organization's Covenant and Code of Ethics. These changes were adopted at the national business meeting in November 2020, but require a ratification by 2/3 of our chapters by the end of this year. If your chapter has not yet scheduled a discussion and vote, we urge you to do so soon. Volunteers from the national Leadership Team and Ethics subcommittee are available for a Q and A session.

CODE OF ETHICS "LEARNING GUIDE" TEAM FORMED

We're proceeding with the project of an updated "Learning Guide" to serve as a companion tool for continuing education and collaborative learning on topics in the Code of Ethics. A previous guide was authored by a team in 2006 and can be found [here](#). The team had an initial orientation session in the Fall and will meet for the first time for a working session on February 7th. Watch for a special issue of this newsletter dedicated to reporting on their progress and ways to engage in the project.

Chapter News



Do you have Chapter News or Events to share? Challenges or lessons? Rev. Atula Jamir, Ph.D., coordinates the bi-monthly meetings of our chapter representatives. The next meeting is Tuesday, March 15 at 12:30pm Pacific/ 2:30pm Central/3:30 Eastern. On the agenda will be a substantial update on our Code of Ethics projects. For more information contact jamiratula@yahoo.com. Please send news for the March newsletter to info@ministerscouncil.com by February 25th.

Prayers and Milestones



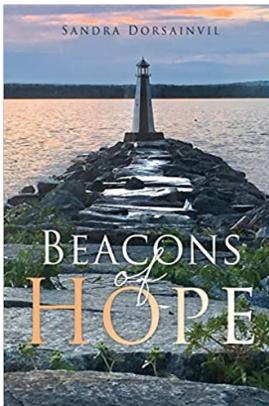
Rev. Mindi Welton-Mitchell has been called to serve as Executive Minister of American Baptist Churches of Wisconsin. We extend our congratulations and prayers. We're grateful for Mindi's leadership in helping to restart a Ministers Council chapter in the Evergreen region.

Rev. Dr. Rachael Lawrence has been called to serve as Senior Editor at Judson Press of ABHMS.



Please share your prayers and milestones for the March issue by sending an email to info@ministerscouncil.com before February 25.

ABC Announcements



Already available electronically, the paperback edition of the **Rev. Sandra Dorsainvil's** 12-day devotional, *Beacons of Hope*, will be available from Amazon on February 13. This devotional is meant to be part of a beginning conversation about transformation, gender equity, dignity, and servant-leadership roles women have held for many centuries, whether publicly recognized or in the shadows.

More information from [Amazon](#)

Chaplaincy Skills for Community Ministry – Spring 2022

A practical course in chaplaincy skills for community contexts where a ministry of nonsectarian spiritual care is needed. Learn how to offer a ministry of presence that honors ecumenical and interfaith engagement, demonstrates cultural humility, practices refined listening skills, and responds to trauma with sensitivity and accountability.

[More Information](#)

Radical.
Redeemed.
Ready.
Celebrating
Ministering
Women

Conference Dates: June 15-18, 2022

With women serving in a multitude of ways and a variety of roles throughout the United States and around the world, American Baptist Women in Ministry (ABWIM) is hosting a unique conference: Celebrating Ministering Women: Radical. Redeemed. Ready.

[MORE](#)

Reminders

We are committed to an exchange of chapter news, as well as announcements of personal and communal milestones and prayer requests. For inclusion in the March issue, send these to ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org by Feb. 25.



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