

Together in Ministry



Collegiality \* Competence \* Centeredness

## November 2022 Newsletter



### **ALL SAINTS DAY**

This past week when many across Christ's churches have remembered and honored those who've labored and gone on to eternal rest before us, we pause in these days to remember those dear servants, some of whom laid hands upon us in the sacred entrustment of ordination, licensing, or commissioning. We are reminded that we are a small part of the ongoing parade of the disciples traveling through time towards the eschaton. Together, we say, "Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus."

The Ministers Council is the only organization dedicated solely to the well-being of American Baptist clergy. Our shared ministerial vocation is to "equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ." This week we invite you all to remember and honor those whose leadership has blessed and shaped *your* well-being in leadership. Your centeredness. Your competence. Your collegial connections. Some of us have been on retreat together, where we've remembered these precious souls in the "stories we live." Some of us have been thinking and writing about this theme in recent days, in touching and equipping ways. Read more from [Rev. Ken Williams](#) and [Rev. Dr. Phaedra Blocker](#).

In recent days we've marked the passing of [Rev. Dr. Ralph Elliott](#) and [Rev. Dr. Calvin Butts](#). Remember, we receive ongoing gifts of honor and remembrance for all those who have shaped us. These gifts support our [Excellence in Ministry Fund](#), which gives grants to chapter-sponsored events at the local level. We gratefully receive your gifts all year long, with a special invitation to give during this remembrance season.

In Christ's Peace,  
Rev. Dr. Randolph Miller, President  
Rev. Jacki Belile, Vice President

## National Updates



## NATIONAL RETREAT & BIENNIAL BUSINESS MEETING

Twenty-four ministers and leaders gathered at the St. Benedict's Retreat Center in Schuyler, NE committed to a time of retreat, discovery of story, and fun. We enjoyed hearing from internationally acclaimed Storyteller, Rev. Donald Davis,

as well as from amongst our own colleagues, Revs. Cheryl Harris and Lin Story-Bunce. Together, they tapped into the artful crafting of compelling storytelling while examining our own stories, while in turn encouraging us to be attentive to the ongoing stories of others.

We also enjoyed an exploratory lecture about the Heritage Version of the [Saint John's Illuminated Bible](#) which is housed here at St. Benedict's, guided by historian David Crawford. We were all drawn in by the incredible art and intentionality of the project. Truly a great subject for *visio divina*, which we did have opportunity to dive into.

The Biennial Business Meeting took place on Tuesday, November 1st while at the retreat center, pulling in several online attendees, as well. In total, twelve chapters were represented. God has been ever faithful and moving in our midst, both on the national and local chapter level, for which we are grateful and excited!

The chapter representatives and Leadership Team voted to approve the [2023-24 Budget](#) as presented by Rev. Sara Day, Treasurer, and the slate of officer nominees below.

[Click here](#) to see more photos from the retreat.

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## **NEW OFFICERS APPROVED FOR 2023-24 SERVICE**

- President | Matthew Sturtevant, Central Chapter
- Vice President | Rebecca Driscoll, Massachusetts Chapter
- Secretary | Charlotte Myers, Northern California Chapter
- Coordinator of Chapter Representatives | Sarah Strosahl-Kagi, Valley Forge Chapter
- Coordinator of Membership and Chapter Development | Jacki Belile, Metro Chicago Chapter

Full bios for each leader can be found [here](#).

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## **Blessing Prayer & Video**



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## **CALL FOR ADVENT DEVOTIONS AND TRANSLATION SERVICES**

We return this year to a tradition of recent years, sharing Advent reflections with one another. Are you led to share an existing reflection or write a new reflection? Would you be able to assist in a translation of one or more of these (into Spanish, Karen, Chin, Kachin, Burmese, Portuguese, etc.)?

Devotions will be posted and circulated on Mondays throughout Advent. All content due by November 21 for translation.

Theme: "In the Presence of the Anointed One".

We encourage a reflection that includes reference to Isaiah 9 themes in some way. Reflections including lectionary texts or other sacred literature welcome.

Length: 250-500 words. Graphics welcome.

Please contact [ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org](mailto:ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org) by November 15<sup>th</sup> to RSVP for your submissions. All content is subject to editing for length and clarity.

## **Events and Webinars**

**Code of Ethics:  
Ongoing  
Opportunities for  
Discussion of  
Revisions**

**NEXT Q&A SESSIONS:**

*just*  
**2**  
months to go!

At the end of the year, the vote for the Code of Ethics ratification will conclude

**Thursday, November 10th**

8:30am Pacific/10:30am  
Central/11:30am Eastern

**Thursday, December 1<sup>st</sup>**

5pm Pacific/7pm Central/8pm  
Eastern

Our recent info sessions have sparked enriching conversation and enabled some of our remaining chapters who have not yet voted to get some traction for that work this Fall!

**Our November "Q and A" session** will be Thursday,

November 10th at 8:30am Pacific/10:30am Central/11:30am Eastern.

Has your chapter voted yet on the ratification of our proposed revisions\*? Or, do you serve in an area without an established chapter and desire conversation about the content and process underway? Join us to learn more. See Zoom info [here](#).

Rev. Jacki Belile (from the Revisions Subcommittee) and Rev. Dr. Corey Fields, a committed Ministers Council member and pastor at Calvary Baptist Church in Newark, DE, will share about the process, content, and ratification status.

Per our national bylaws, the ratification process must be complete by December 31, 2022. \*The document was approved at the national business meeting held November 19, 2020. These Q&A sessions are to raise awareness of the project, receive feedback that can be incorporated in the Learning Guide and other settings, and familiarize people with the ratification process. The document being voted upon is being ratified by Chapter votes and is not subject to further editorial revisions. Corey recently authored this [support letter](#) as we approach the deadline for ratification, December 31, 2022.

**SAVE THE DATE!** Last open session scheduled for December 1st. Contact [ministerscouncil@abcusa.org](mailto:ministerscouncil@abcusa.org) to arrange an alternative time for a group presentation before your chapter's vote.

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## **Living the Labyrinth**

With Rev. Carolyn Shimabukuro



Topic: Spiritual Direction: Living the Labyrinth

Time: Thursday, November 10, 2022 1:00pm PT / 4:00pm ET

Join Carolyn Shimabukuro as she guides us in the ancient practice of entering the Labyrinth as a means to discover another aspect of the mystery of our lives and our lives in Christ.

Zoom information [here](#)



**Thursday, November 17, 2022**

**5:00pm PT / 7:00pm CT / 8:00pm ET**

**Featuring Rev. Lauren Lisa Ng**

Lauren will share her own poetry and engage in a conversation about identity and grace.

**Click here** for the Zoom information.

## What I See

I stand in front of my mirror at 43  
and my black hair converses with  
the ink on my forearm. I like what I see.

I see an engraving of pride –  
permanent in a way that shows I am  
no longer in need of running.

I see sixty-five inches of bone,  
sinew, cells that have filled my bag  
of invisibility with moored breath.

I see my PoPo; I see my Ngin Ngin.  
I see my mother.  
I like what I see.

I see my chin tilt heavenward like  
when I scored that first goal and  
earned my first round of applause.

I see my parents waving to me, I see  
that sister in a sea of white who gives me  
the nod when I come through the door.

I see my aunties and uncles as they  
laugh and eat, mouths open and  
untroubled. I like what I see.

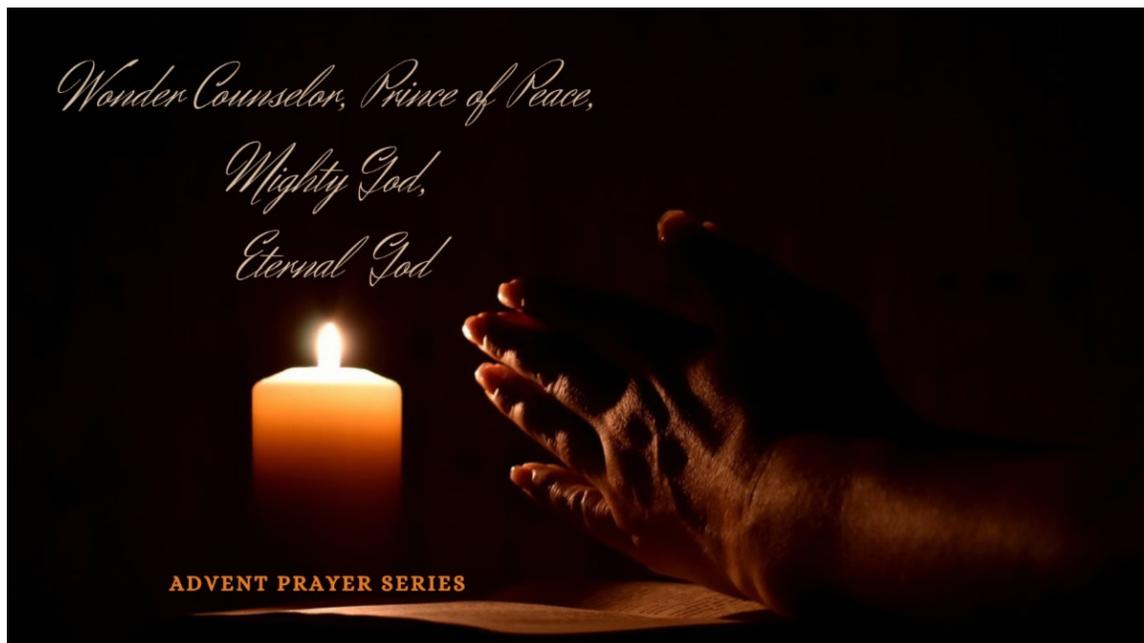
It wasn't always this way –  
my pin dropped into the only  
center I knew. But power,  
it turns out, comes from  
the places undrawn, from  
the things we see when we  
turn it around, flip it over,  
tear it down the middle  
and into pieces.

I have delighted  
in my reassembling—  
new snippets to incorporate,  
tape on the tips of my fingers,  
my cartograph stretching tracklessly  
into the hall and down the steps,  
twisting into every room. Do you see  
its wild ends hanging from my  
windows like greenery? Like a  
wondrous earth with no center?

LAUREN LISA NG

@laurenlisang

with gratitude to Grace Ji-Sun Kim and bell hooks



**ADVENT AI:  
Affirmations and Intercession in the Presence of the Anointed One**

**Tuesdays, 6:30am Pacific/8:30am Central/9:30am Eastern  
November 29, December 6, December 13, December 20  
Zoom Info [HERE](#).**

Join ministry colleagues for this brief oasis time offered for sustenance in the demanding Advent season. This 20-30 minute weekly session will draw us in toward silence, affirmation and intercession (adapting the Buddhist meditation form of tonglen). Led by Revs. Rebecca Driscoll and Jacki Belile. For more information contact [drisreo1@gmail.com](mailto:drisreo1@gmail.com).

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## Chapter News



On April 28, 2022, our Puerto Rico Minister Council develop a seminar on Neuropsychology and communication: preaching, theological / Christian education teaching. Dr. Joel Acevedo Nieto was the professional resource on this occasion. WE are planning a second seminar on Neuropsychology and pastoral care this year.

Thanks for your continuous support and solidarity,

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**Last Things We Talk About** | hosted by the Chaplains and Pastoral Counselors Chapter  
November 9, 2022 | 5:00pm PT / 8:00pm ET

**Learning Objectives:**

- To inspire your clients to have a head start regarding end-of-life inventories and tasks and the confidence to be engaged in living every day to the end.
- To encourage your client's well-being and stewardship, to understand the cast of characters in the medical universe, and to plan for the inevitable costs of long-term illness and death.
- To engage in communication with family members so that the "treasure hunt and competition" of estate matters is minimal.

Read more about this webinar [here](#).

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**MLK & Colonialism in Puerto Rico** | hosted by the Metro Chicago Chapter  
November 15th, 7:30-9:00pm CT on Zoom

Workshop led by Rev. Juan Ángel Gutiérrez Rodríguez on his book, *Martin Luther King, Jr.: Resistencia y Lucha: A Reflection from a Colonial Perspective*, one of the free books given to national Ministers Council members earlier this year. [Click here](#) to read more and find out how to sign up for this event.

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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.

For more information contact [jamiratula@yahoo.com](mailto:jamiratula@yahoo.com). Please



send news for the December newsletter  
to [ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org](mailto:ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org) by November 27.

## ABC Announcements



American Baptist Home Mission Societies

In the wake of extreme weather that pummeled Kentucky, then Mississippi, and most recently Puerto Rico, American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS) is responding purposefully.

Through the One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) fund, ABHMS manages disaster relief donations to provide financial assistance to devastated communities. ABHMS is presently mobilizing support for storm-ravaged Puerto Rico and planning a response to the water crisis in Jackson, Mississippi. Already having released \$24,000 of OGHS dollars for Kentucky flood relief, ABHMS continues to seek financial support for that traumatized region. Read more [here](#).

American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS) grieves the lives lost and prays for God's comfort to those who were in the path of Hurricane Ian, a Category 4 storm that killed at least 68 people on a devastating multi-state journey. [Click here](#) to read more about it and to see how you can help.

### **How to Handle a Money Crisis (Or Simply the Fear of One) | from the ABHMS Center for Continuous Learning Tuesday, November 15, 2022, 4:00 – 5:30 pm ET / 1:00 – 2:30 pm PT**

Congregations have experienced different financial circumstances through the last couple of years—but the future remains uncertain even for those churches with steady income. Every pastor can benefit from considering their leadership role in the event of financial concerns for their congregation. Read more about the course [here](#).



The American Baptist Churches Creation Justice Network is excited to offer the ABCUSA Blessed Tomorrow Ambassador Training, a new four hour on-demand training available online, for individuals to complete on their own

schedule. [Click here](#) to read more.

The American Baptist Churches USA President and Chair of the General Secretary Search Committee Rev. Dr. James O. Wolfe shares a report of the work of the Search Committee to date [here](#).

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## Ecumenical/Interfaith Announcements

**A CALL TO CONSCIENCE:**  
**Defending Freedom  
& Human Rights**

AUGUST 14-18, 2023 | MCCORMICK PLACE



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The Early Bird rate for the [2023 Parliament of the World's Religions](#) has been extended to December 15th.

Explore the different ways that you and your community can save for the Chicago Convening with the Early Bird rate:



### **Book as an individual...**

and save over 40% off the on site registration rate! Prices go up \$100 with the Advanced rate.





### **Book as a student...**

with your student ID (through undergraduate) and save over 60% off the general admission rate.



### **Book as a group...**

of 5-9 for a special rate of \$280 per registrant and groups of 10+ for a rate of \$250 per registrant.



### **Book as a student group...**

for your community or institution, faculty enjoy access the student rate.



**SAVE 40%**  
WITH EARLY BIRD  
2023POWR.ORG

**BOOK YOUR TICKET for the World's Premier Interfaith Convening**  
August 14 -18, 2023 | Chicago, USA

Have questions or concerns about registrations? Email us at [info@parliamentofreligions.org](mailto:info@parliamentofreligions.org) or leave a voicemail at 312-629-2990; a member of our team will get back to you as soon as possible.

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*"I will refresh the weary and satisfy the faint."*

Jeremiah 31:25 NIV

# refresh

A Contemplative Retreat for Clergy & Ministry Leaders

**December 14-16, 2022**

St. Raphaela Center, 616 Cooperstown Road, Haverford, PA 19041

**\$150\***

Includes overnight accommodations, meals, and any retreat materials.

Clergy and ministry leaders are invited to "come away" for a time of rest and refreshing before entering the busy holiday season. The retreat will begin on Wednesday evening, and close late Friday afternoon. For more information, or to register, contact [CCFV@eastern.edu](mailto:CCFV@eastern.edu), or use the QR code.



*\*This is a subsidized fee; however, we want to make it possible for anyone who wants to attend to do so. To that end, we also have a limited number of scholarships available.*

**CENTER**  
FOR COMMUNITY CARE, FORMATION, & VITALITY  
AT PALMER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



## 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 January issue, send these to [ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org](mailto:ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org) by November 27.***



**How to reach us:**

- Phone: (610) 314-7837
- Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:00am-12:00pm Pacific Time

**Stay connected**

- Visit us at our **website**.
- Join us on **Facebook**

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