

Together in Ministry



The
Ministers
Council

Collegiality * Competence * Centeredness

February 2023 Newsletter



A Prayer for Such a Time as This:

Lord, Lord,
Open Unto Me
Open unto me,
light for my darkness
Open unto me,
courage for my fear
Open unto me,
hope for my despair
Open unto me,
peace for my turmoil
Open unto me,
joy for my sorrow
Open unto me,
strength for my weakness
Open unto me,
wisdom for my confusion
Open unto me,
forgiveness for my sins
Open unto me,
tenderness for my toughness
Open unto me,
love for my hates
Open unto me,
Thy Self for myself
Lord, Lord, open unto me!

- Howard Thurman, from *Meditations of the Heart*

May we all say "Yes" to the ways the Holy Spirit would open us, expand us, change us this Lent.

Black History Month Resources

- [*The Sunday After: Preaching in Moments and Movements*](#), by Clarence Wright, Judson Press 2023
- [*The Polished King: Living Words of Martin Luther King Jr.*](#), by

Joseph Evans, Judson Press 2022 Joseph Evans shares why he wrote "The Polished King" - <https://vimeo.com/657029392>

- [***Freedom Faith: The Womanist Vision of Prathia Hall***](#) by Courtney Pace
- [***Beyond Eden: The Collected Sermons and Essays of Prathia Hall***](#), edited by Courtney Pace
- [***Africa's Great Civilizations***](#), PBS
- [***God in the Ghetto; A Prophetic Word Revisited***](#), by William Augustus Jones Jr.
- [***History of the Black Baptist Church***](#)
- [***Jesus and the Disinherited***](#), by the Rev. Dr Howard Thurman
- [***28 Days of Black History***](#) - A virtual exhibition of 28 works that celebrate Black legacy in the U.S. The third annual series starts February 1, 2023.

[DOWNLOAD COMPLETE LIST](#)



Lent: A Time to Draw Closer...

by Rebecca Driscoll
Vice President

This year, the month of February brings us to the season of Lent in the Christian liturgical calendar. Beginning on Ash Wednesday, we embark on a forty-day journey leading us to Easter. These forty days mirror the forty days Jesus spent in the desert before

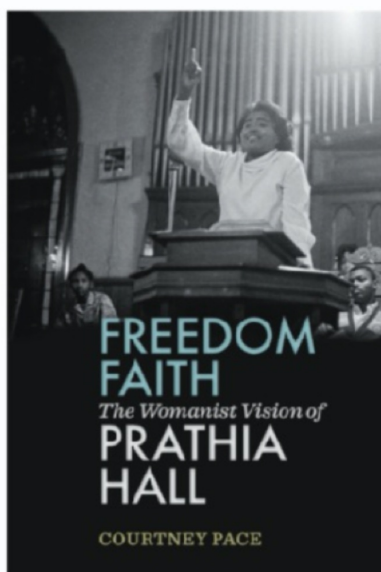
beginning his public ministry.

Many Christian communities that observe Ash Wednesday also hold a worship service and take part in the spiritual practice of the imposition of ashes on worshippers' foreheads or hands. This practice is often accompanied by the phrase, "Remember that you are dust and to dust you will return."

[MORE](#)

Events and Webinars

3rd thursdays WEBINAR SERIES



**Thursday,
February 16
5pm Pacific/7pm
Central/8pm
Eastern**

A Black History Month Conversation
w/ Rev. Dr. Courtney Pace
Author of Two Books on Dr. Prathia
Hall

Learn more [HERE](#)

[Click here](#) for the Zoom
information.

Ministers Council Grants: Small Group and Chapter Grants

by Lin Story-Bunce
Coordinator of Together in Ministry

In the 1990s, a Duke University study found that eighty-five percent of seminary graduates entering the ministry leave within five years and ninety percent of all pastors will not stay to retirement.

This is startling data! Following the release of his study, the Ministers Council,



ABCUSA, through a grant provided by the Lilly Endowment Sustaining Pastoral Excellence initiative, led the Together in Ministry program from 2002-2012 as a way of assisting ministers in creating healthy collegial connection and support.

Through this 10-year study, we learned and have conclude that:
Successful ministers cultivate consistent collegial support relationships.

In response, the Ministers Council continues to provide funding for two important grants that support collegial support through chapters and in small groups.

[MORE](#)




Collegiality for Such a Time as This:
Baptist Covenants for Following Jesus and
Resisting Evil

MINISTERS COUNCIL
GATHERING &
LUNCHEON

JUNE
22
2023

9:30 AM - 1:30 PM
\$35 includes Program & Lunch
Feat. Rev. Juan Ángel Gutiérrez Rodríguez



The Ministers Council
Collegiality/Centeredness/Competence
AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA

AT THE
BIENNIAL MISSION SUMMIT

SAVE
THE
DATE

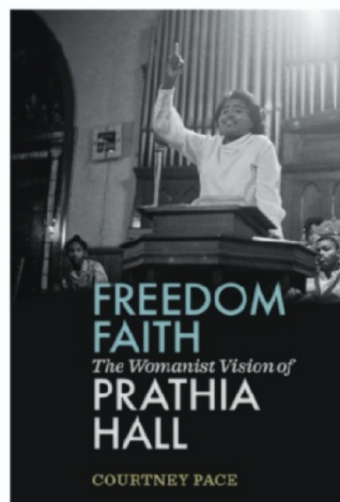
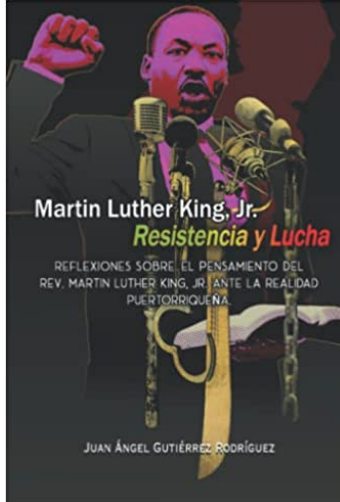
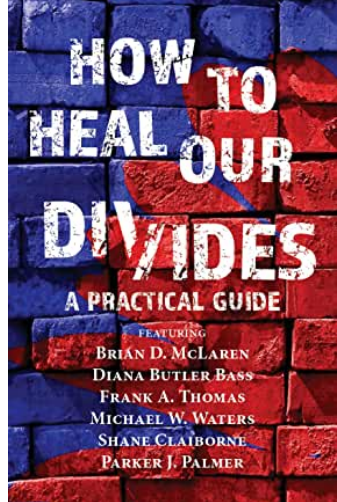
National Updates

"WE BELONG TO EACH OTHER"

A Theology of Dues?

A beloved colleague and mentor to many in the Ministers Council family, Rev. Dr. Alan V. Ragland once said: "We belong to each other." He was speaking to the covenantal bonds of ministers among ministers -- *ministers serving 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 2023 calendar. You can pay these affordable dues (on a sliding scale) [conveniently online](#) or through your local treasurer. Let's dedicate ourselves with renewed passion for this common work, for such a time as this!



The Ministers Council Leadership Team would like to announce a special gift for all who sign-up as members of the Ministers Council for 2023. For all who have already joined, and **all new members who join** by February 28th, a book will be sent to you as a gift of appreciation. Click on book picture above to learn more. Just email a note to Linda at ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org to choose which of these timely titles you'd like. Note: *Freedom Faith* will be focus of MC Live on Feb. 16th with author Dr. Courtney Pace; Brian Allain, editor of *Healing Our Divides*, will be with us on April 20th.

Visit video archive at www.ministerscouncil.com to listen to session held on Martin Luther King text by Rev. Dr. Juan Ángel Gutiérrez Rodríguez

OFFICE UPDATE DURING STAFF TRANSITION

Beginning January 30, the office hours for the Ministers Council ABCUSA will change. We are happy to welcome back Linda Miller as our Interim Program Administrator and she will be able to respond to phone calls and emails. Her hours will be Monday from 9:00 - 2:00 (EST) and Thursday from 1:00 - 5:00 (EST). You may email her at ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org. We are beginning to receive resumes for a new Program Administrator ([see job description](#)).

CODE OF ETHICS

NEW NATIONAL COVENANT & CODE OF ETHICS

Effective February 1, 2023

As reported last month, our new national [Covenant and Code of Ethics](#), approved by 2020 vote and a two-year ratification process, takes effect on February 1, 2023. If you've not previously engaged in conversations about it, know that we will provide opportunities to continue the lively and equipping discussions which have blessed so many over last three years. (For a complete final report on the process, contact Linda in our office at ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org.)

NEW!!! ETHICS LEARNING GUIDE TO BE PUBLISHED

We extend our heartfelt gratitude for the Editorial Team who worked from September 2021 through January 2023 to complete a Learning Guide for the new Code. Once the Code was passed they were able to make final formatting and content decisions aligning with the revised document. Focus groups on Draft 1.0 will be held with diverse constituencies in February and March; these sessions will inform any further edits. Translation plans are underway. We plan to release these important new tools in advance of the Biennial. (Join us there to celebrate on June 22!)

We thank these colleagues for their service: Rev. Jacki Belile, Rev. Dr. Jacqueline Dyer, Rev. Jerrod Huguenot, Rev. Florence Li, Rev. Dr. Mary Day Miller, Rev. Dr. Randle "Rick" Mixon, Rev. Dr. Alan V. Ragland, Rev. Juan Ángel Gutiérrez Rodríguez

For more information, contact Rev. Jacki Belile at jacki@livingwellministries.net.

Chapter News

Metro Chicago: The ABCMC region will be sponsoring a clergy retreat on Feb. 3-4th.

Rocky Mountains: Chapter leader Rev. Kay Farley organized two unique worship services for Thanksgiving and Christmas season, drawing fellow pastors to lead and worship together as a part of 2023 chapter revitalization plans.

Massachusetts: CBBM recently sponsored "12 Days of Christmas" Devotions by email and hosts ongoing workshops and "Conversations We Need".

Northern California: Upcoming activities include Zoom gathering with Brian K. Woodson (Pastor, author, community organizer) on Feb 9, a discussion on March 9 with Charlie Scandlyn on "Ministry with Ministers". The chapter recently held Being the Beloved Community: Breathe/Contemplate/Revive.



Chapter Representatives!

Several of us have met over the last few weeks to get to know one another, and so that I can get to know you! I am here to support you and your chapters as we continue to do this important work of ministry together!

If you are a chapter representative and have not yet completed this survey, please so do as soon as possible so we can find the best ways to connect and support one another. <https://forms.gle/3YYg1rfnoepZwyS97>

As always, any questions or concerns can be passed along to me at: pastorsarah@rbcabc.org

Blessings!
Sarah SK

(If you live in an area currently without a local chapter, and would like to connect about membership, involvement or revitalizing a chapter, contact Rev. Jjacki Belile at jacki@livingwellministries.net.)

Prayers and Milestones

For **Rev. Karen Sundland** and partner Eric Lundquist, as Karen is hospitalized in Wyoming.

Grant us humility and hearts of flesh, not stone, as we encounter the individual and systemic sin of our day.

Oh God, kindle and sustain our desire for your Word, and for the Christ-centered interpretation of Scriptures we steward.

Sharpen our desire, Lord, to learn from all those You send on our path; make us steadfast and willing as ministers to sharpen one another.

Dear God, you have created the people of the world in your own image: Give us grace, we pray, to rejoice in the differences of culture, language, and race by which you have enriched humanity; to repent when we fail to recognise Christ in one another; and to pursue justice and peace for all your children; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who, taking our human nature, accepted death upon the cross, and lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for eternity. Amen.

God of the oppressed, open our eyes to the harm that continues to be inflicted on our siblings in Christ. May your Spirit give us the courage to sing in unison, and raise our voices with those whose suffering is unheard.

Lord, you are the source of our wisdom. We pray for wisdom and courage to do justice, to respond to what is wrong in the world by acting to make it right; We pray for wisdom and courage to grow in the unity of your Son, Jesus Christ, who with you and the Holy Spirit, reigns forever and ever

Gracious and loving God, expand our vision that we might see the mission we

share with all of our siblings, to show forth the justice and loving kindness of your kin-dom. Help us to welcome our neighbors as Jesus welcomed us.

ABC Announcements

Free webinar on February 23rd on Soul Care in African American Practice!

• LIVE

INTERACTIVE WEBINAR

Soul Care in African American Practice



Barbara L. Peacock
Soul Care Director and Author



Nicole Massie Martin
Chief Impact Officer for Christianity Today

Thursday, February 23rd at 1pm CT/ 2pm ET

SPONSORED BY:

SEMINARY **NOW** + **CT**

For more information and to reserve your spot click [HERE](#)

Camino de Santiago Pilgrimage | American Baptist Women in Ministry and Illuminated Journeys invite you to "The Way," a Walk/Ride Pilgrimage across the Camino de Santiago in Spain, April 9-19, 2024. [Read more here.](#)

Ecumenical/Interfaith Announcements



Exciting Upcoming Events

February Events To Nourish Your Soul

With **Gareth Higgins**, author of “How Not to be Afraid.”

Irish Storytelling and Peacemaking - **February 16 and 18**

Theology & Peace Quarterly Online Speaker Series Begins **February 23**

[More information & register](#)



Leadership Tune Up - Fresh Expressions

Is your team ready for the unique challenges and opportunities of 2023?

The world has changed dramatically in the last few years, and it can be tough for church teams to embrace the new realities. Leadership Tune-up will help you reconnect with your leadership team while making bold and actionable plans for the year ahead.

At Leadership Tune-up you will:

- Go beyond calendaring to plan exciting new experiments for your church
- Introduce your leadership team to outside voices with experience helping churches get unstuck
- Catalyze a new mission-centric approach to leading your church or ministry

[MORE INFORMATION](#)



A Contemplative Retreat for Clergy Leaders
February 27-March 1, 2023

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

\$275*

Includes overnight accommodations (single-occupancy), meals, and any retreat materials



Clergy leaders are invited to “come away” for a time of rest and reflection during the Lenten season. The retreat begins on Monday evening and concludes late Wednesday afternoon. For more information, or for a link to the registration form, please contact CCFV@eastern.edu or use the QR code.

*We make every effort to keep costs reasonable so that anyone who wants to attend may do so. To that end, we have a limited number of scholarships available to assist those who would find the retreat fee a hardship. Check the box in the payment section if you need to apply.



True Faith Community Church Ministers-in-Training Program

A program for clergy, inclusive of all congregations, designed for both new as well as experienced ministers in the Baptist tradition to



prepare and/or reinvigorate ourselves for the rigors of ministering in a rapidly changing, 21st-century context; both in and outside the walls of the sanctuary, and focusing on the best ways to

address the needs of those living on the margins as an integral part of ministerial obligations.

Register Now Through February 4th for Online Classes.

[Program Flyer](#)

[Schedule](#)

[Website](#)

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 February 27.



How to reach us:

- Phone: (610) 314-7837
- Office Hours: Monday from 9:00 - 2:00 (EST) and Thursday from 1:00 - 5:00 (EST).



Stay connected

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

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