

*Together in Ministry*



## April 2023 Newsletter

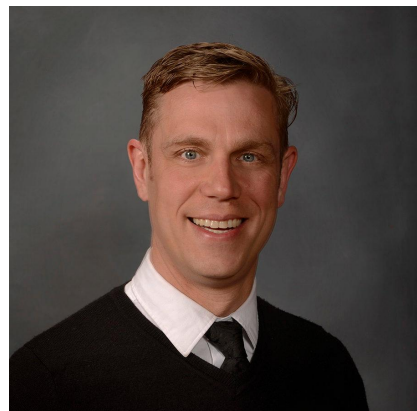


*Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." John 20:19*

I do not seal my lips, Lord, as you know.  
I do not hide your righteousness in my heart;  
I speak of your faithfulness and your saving help.  
I do not conceal your love and your faithfulness  
from the great assembly.  
May your love and faithfulness always  
protect me.  
-Psalm 40:9-11

## A Pastoral Reflection from the President

The last few years, the way I have done collegiality has been, well, different. There have been colleagues I haven't seen, new pastors I haven't met, and friends that I have caught up with only through a few brief check-ins on Zoom. Even with virtual meetings, it has been easy to miss the nonverbal "rest of the story" only seeing folks on a computer screen, to catch only the briefest of updates between the "click to enter" and "click to leave meeting," and quite frankly, to allow many relationships to become rather shallow. That is not to say that I haven't experienced collegiality online. I am thankful for the technology that has let us stay connected *and* remain healthy, and for the long-distance relationships that have flourished because of our increased comfort with virtual meetings. But, like I said, it makes for a different kind of collegiality.



What about you? What does collegiality look like for you in this new normal? Whatever it looks like in this new era of a different kind of collegiality, I invite you to embrace it. Rekindle that group that hasn't met in a few years. Challenge yourself to a fuller expression of deeper relationships. Consider a new and creative way for your clergy group to meet together (and if it requires some additional funding, consider applying for a TIM grant at [ministerscouncil.com](https://ministerscouncil.com)), whether in person or virtually.

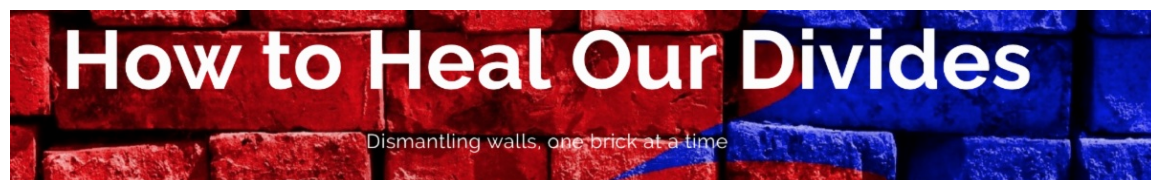
I believe that this is part of what it means to be a Resurrection people. We gather in an upper room, tell one another the story of Good News, and then spill out into the world, refreshed and enlivened. May this Eastertide be an opportunity for you to see Christ alive in your world and in our shared ministry of togetherness.

Grace and peace,  
Matt Sturtevant  
President  
Ministers Council ABCUSA

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## Events and Webinars

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**April 20, 2023 MC Live**  
**5pm Pacific/7pm Central/8pm Eastern**

How to Heal Our Divides  
Learn more about this organization and resources [HERE](#).

Join us for conversation with Brian Allain, editor of *How to Heal our Divides*, Vol. 1 and 2.

[Zoom Info Here](#)

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MINISTERS COUNCIL  
GATHERING &  
LUNCHEON

AT THE  
BIENNIAL MISSION  
SUMMIT

JUNE  
22  
2023

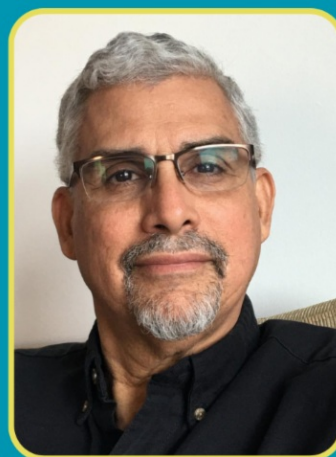
9:30 AM - 1:30 PM

\$35 includes  
Program & Lunch



COLLEGIALITY FOR  
SUCH A TIME AS THIS

Baptist Covenants for  
Following Jesus and  
Resisting Evil



Feat. Rev. Juan Ángel  
Gutiérrez Rodríguez

*American Baptist Minister and Author*

Worship | Reflections | Round Table Talk | Luncheon



REGISTER NOW!

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER

**Biennial Scholarship Available**

We want to support Biennial attendance and the economy of San Juan. While funds last, the Ministers Council ABCUSA will designate up to \$400/person to help Ministers Council members with partial reimbursement of event expenses. The grants are restricted to clergy whose dues have been paid for 2023 by April 30, 2023. Grants will be awarded on a rolling basis until June 30th as a mailed paper check. For questions about qualifications or Biennial, please reach out to [ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org](mailto:ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org).

**Application deadline 5/17/23**

[Apply for scholarship](#)

## Chapter News



## Code of Ethics Signing at Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church

On Sunday, March 26, 2023 the Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church, Oakland, California congregation received a spoken Word message by Senior Pastor, H. James Hopkins, “A Matter of Accountability”. Then, they witnessed at least ten Lakeshore Avenue BC affiliated clergy, chaplains and ministry leaders publicly signing the recently updated (effective Feb 1, 2023) American Baptist Churches **National Ministers Council Code of Ethics**. The Message emphasized the three principles which guide the Code of Ethics, “Centeredness. Competence. Collegiality.” It was a moment of spiritual gravity centered on bringing the document to life through shared participation and witness that each person made a personal commitment to maintain high standards of the Code of Ethics with collegial clergy and their congregations.



This is an inclusive community that embraces all followers of Jesus Christ. This congregation is committed to worship, witness and work to advance God’s purpose in all of life. Their convictions grow out of a sense of being empowered by the Spirit. Congregational members are committed to strive to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8)

The signatories of the document will follow up with ethics training sessions available through a forthcoming ***Learning Guide*** edited by Jacki Belile, Jerrod Huguenot, Mary Day Miller, Florence Li, Alan Ragland, Juan Ángel Gutiérrez Rodríguez, Jacqueline Dyer, and Rick Mixon. The Team plans for this Guide to be available and shared at the Biennial Mission Summit in English and Spanish, and for translations into additional languages in 2023. The document(s) will be housed at [www.ministerscouncil.com](http://www.ministerscouncil.com).



## For Such a Time as This--

Membership & Chapter Development Support Calls

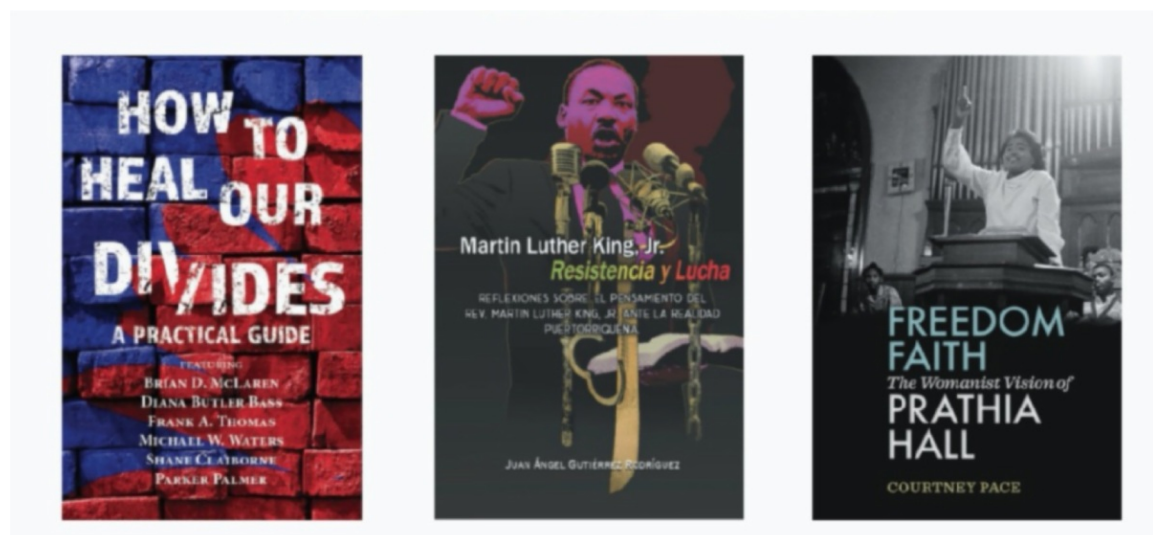


Do you have questions about joining the Ministers Council? Would you like conversation on how to get more involved this year (whether or not there is an active chapter near you)? Would you like support to restart a chapter, or support others engaged in this work?

We'll be offering ongoing opportunities to connect throughout the year. The next two Zoom sessions for "drop-in" conversation with Rev. Jacki Belile, Coordinator of Membership and Chapter Development, will be Thursday, April 27 at 7pm Central and Saturday, April 29 at 11am Central. Zoom Info [HERE](#).

Join Zoom Meeting by clicking here: <https://ministrelife.zoom.us/j/2954166836> Or call in by dialing: 1-312-626-6799 Meeting ID: 295 416 6836

You are also welcome to contact Jacki at [jacki@livingwellministries.net](mailto:jacki@livingwellministries.net) to set up a time convenient for you.



## MEMBERSHIP "THANK YOU" FOR EARLYBIRDS--

*Last Call for Your Book Requests*

Did you miss out? Dozens of early joiners for 2023 received a complimentary copy of one of the above titles. If you joined between 11/1/22 and 3/10/23, you are eligible if we hear from you by April 24, 2023. Email [jacki@livingwellministries.net](mailto:jacki@livingwellministries.net) with your title suggestion. Note: *Freedom Faith: The Womanist Vision of Prathia Hall* was the 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](http://www.ministerscouncil.com) to listen to previous sessions held on *Martin Luther King: Struggle and Resistance* by Rev. Dr. Juan Ángel Gutiérrez Rodríguez and Dr. Pace's book on Rev. Dr. Prathia Hall.

**Retreat Planning for Leadership Team:** Your national Leadership Team will be on a visioning retreat May 1-3, 2023 in the Philadelphia area. We continue our tradition of recent years of seeking an affordable, ecumenical and renewing retreat center for this work. Contact us at [ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org](mailto:ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org) to share your prayers or feedback for our time together.

**Biennial Mission Summit:** We're planning for an incredible renewing and meaty time together on the morning of June 22, 2023. Please join us! Also, visit us at our booth in the exhibit hall. Want to volunteer to be a face of collegiality for the booth for a brief time? Contact us at [ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org](mailto:ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org).

# Prayers and Milestones

**American Baptist Churches** USA President and Chair of the General Secretary Search Committee Rev. Dr. James O. Wolfe is grateful for your prayers as he discern God's direction in the process of reviewing candidate materials.

## Staff Reflections

Greetings, colleagues!

I am delighted to join the Ministers Council Leadership team as your Program Administrator, and looking forward to serving and working with you! Over the past three weeks, I have been "baptized" into Orientation, Zoom sessions, emails, and texts to learn as much about our processes and ensure that you receive the best attention possible. With this in mind, I ask for your patience as I maneuver some of the tasks and develop a rhythm that compliments my skills.

In the meantime, if you still need to register for the 2023 year, please do so. As you know, the Ministers Council's overarching goal is to equip you with the necessary tools to effectively minister professionally and personally for such a time as this!

I look forward to speaking with each of you in the coming days, perhaps by phone, email, or in person. If you have any questions, I can be reached Eastern Standard Time on Tuesdays, 9am-1pm, and Thursdays, 2:30pm-6:30pm.

May the Spirit of the Living God continue to rest upon you and yours during this Holy season!

Blessings, Valerie



## ABC Announcements

**The Generosity Project** presents a live Zoom event with Tod Bolsinger on Monday, May 22 at 1:00 PM ET. Join us as we hear from Tod Bolsinger, who will be sharing from his book "Tempered Resilience." Following the presentation there will be a short time of Q&A.

[Click here to register.](#)

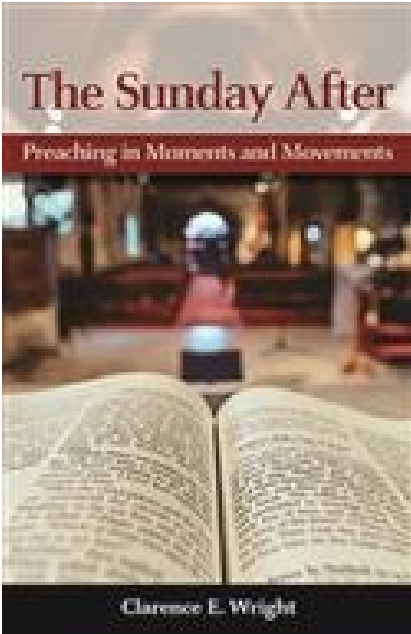
**The American Baptist Historical Society** announces a Call for Papers for the Torbet Prize. Each year ABHS seeks essays on Baptist history from authors who have not already published a major scholarly work. The Research and Publication Committee of the ABHS Board of Manager serves as judges, and the winning essay is eligible for publication in an upcoming issue of the American Baptist Quarterly and its author awarded \$500.

For additional information, visit: [abc-usa.org/2023/03/american-](http://abc-usa.org/2023/03/american-)



[baptist-historical-society-announces-call-for-papers-for-torbet-prize-4/](#).

Available now: **ABHMS 2023-2024 school year student scholarship** applications until April 25, 2023, at 5 p.m. EST. The scholarships range from \$500-\$1,000 for students enrolled part-time, and students attending community college. For more information, visit: [abhms.org](#).



**Judson Press** is pleased to release its latest book, "The Sunday After: Preaching in Moments and Movements" by the Reverend Dr. Clarence E. Wright, pastor of Zion Baptist Church, assistant professor of practical theology and director of urban initiatives at Missio Seminary in Philadelphia, PA.

Dr. Wright's book addresses the neverending question "*what shall I preach*" particularly in seasons of high-profile incidents of racial injustice. "The Sunday After" is available at Judson Press.com., so why not purchase a few and distribute them as gifts to other clergy for a great book discussion!



[Click here for more information](#)

Register

## Ecumenical/Interfaith Announcements



# A 5-Week Series on Bonhoeffer and Faithful Praxis

## Launching May, 2023

For more information and to register go to:  
<https://homebrewedchristianity.lpages.co/bonfuturechurch/>

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



- How to reach us:**
- Phone: (610) 314-7837
  - Office Hours: Tuesdays from 9am - 1pm (EST), and Thursdays from 2:30pm - 6:30pm (EST).



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

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