

## October 2023 Newsletter



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### **I Saw a Sparrow Today by B. Michelle**

I saw a Sparrow Today  
She flew by my window

She flew by bidding adieu as summer is off to slumber  
She is on her way home for fall has come

With hues of happiness, she flew upon the tree on my lawn

And laid there in bared beauty

She displayed her dignity and delight of being drawn by the Divine

Designer of Destiny  
I saw a sparrow today  
She rested on the branch  
Perched in her perfection  
Reddened by the Redeemer  
Golden leaf on limb with her

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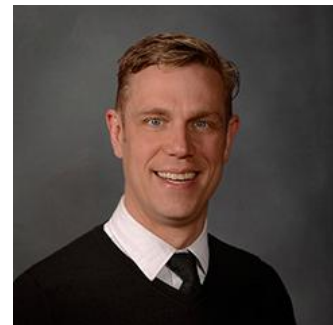
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Blessed are those...whose trust is the Lord.  
They shall be like a tree planted by water,  
sending out its roots by the stream.  
It shall not fear when heat comes,  
and its leaves shall stay green;  
in the year of drought it is not anxious,  
and it does not cease to bear fruit. (Jer. 17:7-8)

I have read these words over and over again this year, as they have been a focus of our national Ministers Council leadership team. These last few weeks, though, the line that sticks out to me is “It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green.” It has been a dry couple of months here in Kansas. That’s not too unusual in the summer, but we had a pretty wet June and July. So when the heat indices soared over 130 degrees in August, and everything dried up in September, we noticed! Watching the stressed and prematurely yellow leaves cover the ground in our backyard gives me a newperspective on “fear when heat comes.”



Perhaps you can relate? How many of us struggle through dry seasons in ministry, feeling isolated, overworked, embattled, or stuck in the middle of political fights in the pews? Like the stressed and embattled tree sending out its roots, what are your strategies for seeking the life-sustaining groundwater of God’s good grace and peace? It is time to put together a Together in Ministry group, or revive one that has stopped meeting in the last few years? Is it time to connect online with national organizations such as the Ministers Council, through programs of collegiality (see below for a few coming up!) It is time for a spiritual retreat? A vacation? A real day off?

I believe that the groundwater is there, and I believe that we are each given the ability to reach it. But, like the tree whose leaves stay green, it might be up to us to stretch our roots in a different direction, or just go deeper. Siblings in Christ, if this is a year of drought for you, let’s work together, not ceasing to bear fruit.

Grace and peace,  
Matt Sturtevant  
President  
Ministers Council ABCUSA

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## October is Clergy Appreciation Month

Clergy Appreciation Month is a time set aside to recognize the contributions and service of all clergy. Within Clergy Appreciation Month is Pastor Appreciation Day, which falls on the second Sunday in October. This year it is celebrated on October 8. It is a day when the faithful come together nationally to pay tribute to our pastors and their staff.

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# PASTORAL CARE WEEK

October 22-28, 2023

Theme: **Chaplaincy and Mental Health: It's Healthy to Get Help**

Spiritual Care Week/Pastoral Care Week is hosted by The COMISS Network: The Network on Ministry in Specialized Settings. The first Pastoral Care Week was held in October 1985.

Since then it has grown from a national to an international celebration. The celebration of Spiritual Care Week provides an opportunity for chaplains and pastoral care counselors, educators, and providers to share their story and to celebrate various ministries.

[More information](#)

**Chaplaincy and Mental Health:**

*It's Healthy to Get Help*



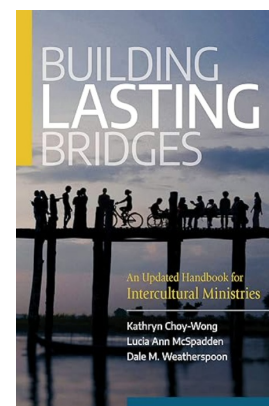
**Spiritual Care Week 2023**

## National Updates

The Ministers Council is excited to announce the Reverend Katie Choy-Wong has written the book, "Building Lasting Bridges".

The beloved author writes, "it's a handbook with a free online workbook for church leaders and clergy who are interested in intercultural ministries."

To purchase your copy, please visit the [Judson Press website](#).



### **Renew Your Ministers Council Membership**

November 1, 2023 is the kick-off date to join or renew your Ministers Council membership for 2024. Please share this information with your ABC clergy constituencies. To make your payments, please visit the Ministers Council website at: <https://www.ministerscouncil.com>

## Events and Webinars



**The Challenge of Ministry: Being Effective in Times of Stress**  
**Thursday, October 19**  
**5pm Pacific/7pm Central/8pm Eastern**



## Staff Reflection



October is here and it is my favorite month! I thoroughly enjoy gazing at the beauty of the trees with their many colors, walking on the leaves that appear to crunch, the crisp morning breeze resting upon my face, and the idea of simply “taking it all in.”

For many of us however, we struggle with absorbing the beauty around us, because we are constantly on the move; going to the next meeting; attending the next service, or, showing up at the next appointment. However, did you know that in the Hebrew language, October means “quiet?” In this fast-paced world with the busyness of life, family, church, work, and social responsibilities, is it any wonder that we struggle with being quiet long enough to absorb the beauty which is all around us?



Even the LORD reminds us in Psalm 46:10 to, ‘Be still and know that I am God.’ As you enter into the month of October, what area(s) of your life long for stillness? What might you do to practice “quietness” in the days to come? Might I encourage you to quiet yourself long enough to “take it all in” and absorb all that God has created just for you to enjoy. I assure you, it will be a great way to re-connect with our LORD!

Rev. Dr. Valerie Andrews, Program Administrator

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## Prayers and Milestones

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It is with a heavy heart that we announce the resignation from the leadership team of **Rev. Dr. Charlotte Myers**, due to health reasons. Rev. Dr. Myers has served as the Secretary to the team in 2023, providing us with thoughtful organization, prayerful passion, and a dedication and devotion to the work of the Ministers Council. She exemplifies our Bible focus for this





year from Jeremiah 17: "Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is in the Lord."

Please pray for Rev. Dr. Myers and her family and friends in the coming days, that she might know the Spirit of God walking beside her.

Matt Sturtevant  
President, Ministers Council ABC-USA

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Loving God, you have called from among your people those who carry out the ministry of the church. Thank You for blessing our Pastors with their leadership and wisdom.

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Abba God, we joyfully lift up the families of our Pastors. Holy Spirit, we ask You to fill their homes with Your gentleness, peace, joy, and Godly order.

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## Prayers of Intercession

For leaders in all levels of government  
For writers, artists, musicians, and all in creative vocations  
For victims of gun violence  
For areas around the world experiencing violence and unrest  
Lord, in your mercy.

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## ABC Announcements

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VALLEY FORGE, PA (9/26/23)—**American Baptist Home Mission Societies** (ABHMS) extends heartfelt thanks to the **Christian Community Credit Union (CCCU)** for a gratefully received \$5,000 donation to the One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) fund for the survivors of the Maui wildfires.

Though authorities revised the number of fatalities downward in mid-September from 115 to 97, the conflagration remains the deadliest wildfire in the United States in more than a century.

[Click here to view the news release](#)

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