

November 2023 Newsletter



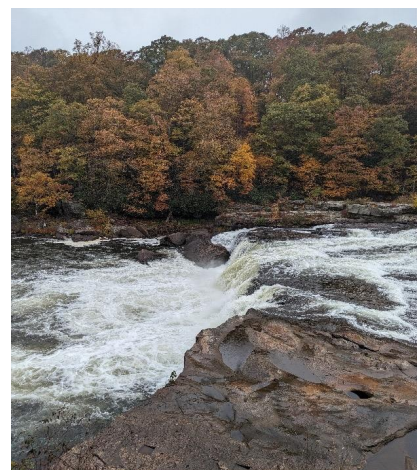
You crown the year with your goodness, and your paths overflow with plenty.
- Psalm. 65:11

At harvest time we join the psalmist in offering thanksgiving to God.

Almighty God, your generous goodness comes to us new every day. By the work of your Spirit lead us to acknowledge your goodness, give thanks for your benefits, and serve you through Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

Jeremiah 17:7-8

*Blessed are those who trust in the LORD,
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.*



I recently traveled to Western Pennsylvania and stood beside the Youghingheny River. It was a powerful river, especially on the rainy day I was there, and it is often used for white water rafting. Yet, my eyes were drawn to the trees growing by the water, and I could sense their limbs spreading out tall and strong and their roots growing down towards the stream. The roots were growing out and down, going down deep, collecting nutrients and water, even in this autumn time of the year. I could see that that river, the stream, was always present and ready for those roots that spread out and reached down.

The passage from Jeremiah reminds us that we too can be like the trees by this river, sending out our roots by the stream. And the wonderful thing is that God

is always there. It takes some trust to reach out; hoping and believing that the nourishment will be there. The tree roots grow deep in the ground and sometimes it feels like darkness for us as well. We don't see the light and it may feel cold. Yet, God is present. Nourishment is available. God's grace, God's mercy, God's love is always obtainable. We do not need to be anxious; we just need to reach out.



My prayer is that we all continue to trust in our God and to reach out. To find God's nourishing goodness in a walk in the out of doors, through a conversation with a friend, in a quiet prayer and meditation time, though the singing of songs, while reading the Scriptures, or the many other things that we can do to reach out to our ever-present God. Trust – for God is with us.

Rev. Sara Day

National Updates

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



CONTINUING COVENANT: Inviting Feedback on the Code of Ethics and Covenant Learning Guide"

NOVEMBER 16, 2023

5pm Pacific/7pm Central/8pm Eastern



Rev. Mary D. Miller



Rev. Jerrrod H. Huguenot

In February of this year, the Ministers Council officially began using the updated language for our revised Code of Ethics and Covenant. This was the pinnacle of a process that included several listening sessions and chapters' approval, guided by a diverse team over the course of several years. The

ultimate goal of that team was to accompany the Code of Ethics with a **Learning Guide**, a longer document which allowed for more thoughtful reflection upon the ideas in the Code of Ethics. Since February, we have been eliciting feedback and responses about what might be included in the Learning Guide.

On **Thursday, November 16** at 8:00pm Eastern Time, two members of that team want to invite YOUR feedback, as a part of that process. Mary D. Miller, Executive Minister of the ABC of Massachusetts, and Jerrod H. Huguenot, Associate Executive Minister of the ABC of New York State, will host the session, sharing a summary of the process, and inviting conversation around the document. As a part of our ongoing work toward collegiality, competence, and centeredness, we will share space together to think about how we might continue our covenant with one another as ministers in this time and place. You are invited to join us!

-Matt Sturtevant
President
Ministers Council ABCUSA

[ZOOM INFORMATION HERE](#)

Staff Reflection

In 2009, the Reverend Charles Nicks and the Baptist Assembly of Churches Mass Choir sang ***I Have So Much to Thank God For.*** The lyrics are as follows:

I have so much, so much, to thank God, thank God for
I have so much, so much to thank God for
He made a way for me
He gives me victory
He opens doors for me
that i’m unable to see
so much, to thank God for!



In this season of thanksgiving, might you too, have much to thank God for? Have you been learning the beauty of the “in-between” timing of God? I am sure it has not been easy, but might we agree it could very well be worth it, when we consider how good God is actively renewing, reviving, and remolding us?

Paul urges in II Thessalonians 5:18 to “give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” If perhaps, you are drinking from a bitter cup, having much to thank God for may be difficult. However, know that God sees, hears, and is with you; and will never leave you! I encourage you to find joy in knowing that God loves you enough to carry you through the burdens of life so that you can begin again; experience-restored strength; and, marvel at God’s handiwork of reshaping you. Look forward to that blessed day when you too can sing, “I HAVE SO MUCH, SO MUCH, TO THANK GOD FOR!” Happy Thanksgiving!

Rev. Dr. Valerie Andrews, Program Administrator

Prayers and Milestones

Lord,
Lead us from death to life,
From falsehood to truth.
Lead us from despair to hope,

from fear to trust.
Let peace fill our hearts, our world and our universe.
Let us dream together, pray together and work together,
To build one world of peace and justice for all.

Dear God, Our hearts are crowded with gratitude as we celebrate the feast of Thanksgiving. We are truly grateful to you, our God, for all that we have been given. We pause now and, in silent prayer, to thank you for the great generosity of Your gifts.

Prayers of Intercession

For peace in the Middle East
For all who mourn
For victims of gun violence
For increased understanding and cooperation among religions, cultures, and peoples
For upcoming elections and transitions in government
In thanksgiving for our ancestors of faith

Please share your prayers and milestones for the December issue by sending an email to ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org before November 27.



ABC Announcements

Violence in the Middle East and in the United States

Read a message from ABCUSA General Secretary Dr. C. Jeff Woods, [HERE](#).

Massachusetts Baptist Charitable Society Seeking Executive Director

The Massachusetts Baptist Charitable Society has served American Baptist clergy since 1794 by providing aid to the vulnerable among them and their families. The Society is seeking an Executive Director with strong leadership, administrative, and pastoral care skills, who can work independently and collaboratively with the highly dedicated Executive Committee of the Charitable Society’s Board of Trustees. The individual will report to the Executive Committee.

[DOWNLOAD JOB DESCRIPTION](#)

Dr. Jeffrey Haggray Honored

VALLEY FORGE, PA (10/30/23)—At the Yale Divinity School (YDS) Alumni Association Awards Ceremony and Reception on October 12, **Dr. Jeffrey Haggray**, ABHMS executive director, was honored with the Distinction in Congregational Ministry award, a recognition of individuals who have “shown exceptional pastoral competence in the work of developing the ministry and mission of local congregations.” The awards ceremony was part of the school’s 2023 convocation and alumni reunion.

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

ABCOPAD Now Accepting Applications for Regional Executive Pastor

The American Baptist Churches of Pennsylvania and Delaware (ABCOPAD) has announced that applications are now invited for the region’s next Regional Executive Pastor. The deadline for applications is November 20, 2023.

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

ABHMS Seeking Nominations for Ministry Awards

In its continuing effort to recognize excellence among ministry professionals, American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS) is seeking nominations for four distinguished national ministry awards that honor American Baptist chaplains, pastoral counselors, spiritual directors and other specialized ministers for exceptional faithfulness in ministry in ways that manifest cultural sensitivity, generational inclusiveness, contextual relevance and missional appropriateness.

Award recipients will be formally recognized at ABHMS’ Chaplaincy & Specialized Ministry Luncheon on April 10, 2024. The luncheon is part of the denominational organization’s signature gathering, Space for Grace & Spiritual Caregivers Conference 2024, to be held April 9-11, in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania.

The deadline for all nominations is November 17, 2023.

[MORE INFORMATION](#)

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 December issue, send these to ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org by November 27.



How to reach us:

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

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

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