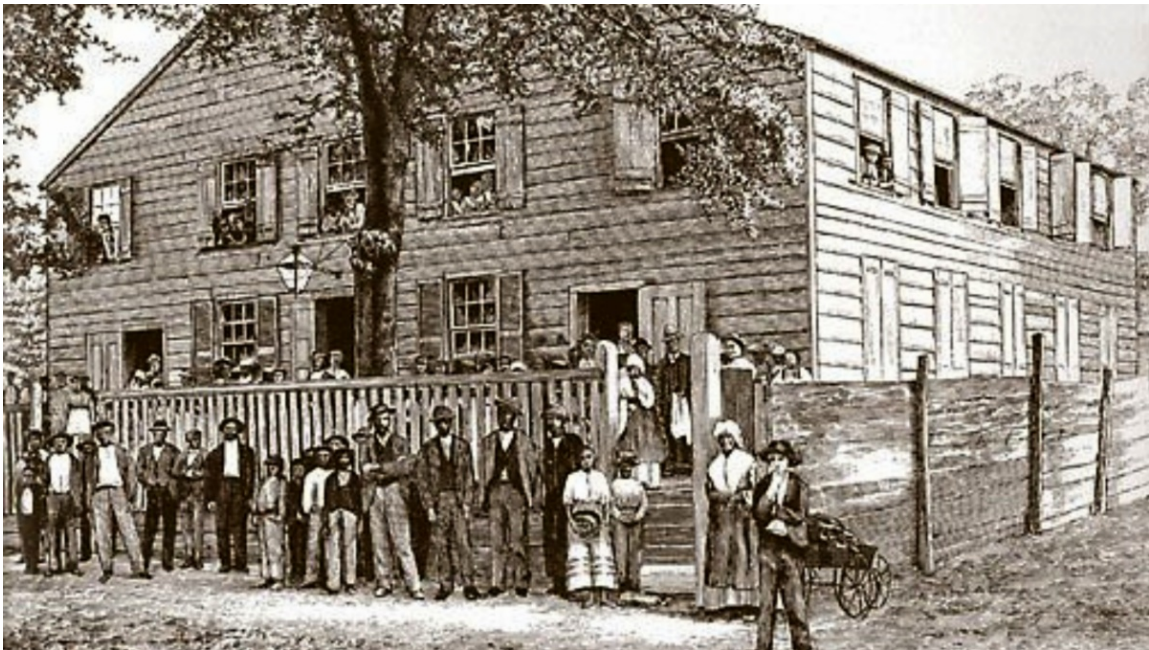


## February 2024 Newsletter



*The first Black Church in the United States was the First African Baptist Church of Savannah, Georgia.*

The church was **founded in 1777** to host the First Black Baptist congregation members in North America organized in 1773. The creation of this church can be majorly attributed to [George Leile](#), an African-American man who was still enslaved back in 1773. That year, he became the first Black man licensed to preach to the plantation slaves in the state of Georgia. Leile played a key role in founding the First African Baptist Church in the country. -From [original.newsbreak.com/@new-your-culture-1589125](https://original.newsbreak.com/@new-your-culture-1589125)

## A Pastoral Reflection from the President



What a day! Only a few times this century does Ash Wednesday occur on Valentine's Day, but February 14 this year is also special for another reason: it's the day when my beloved Cubs begin Spring Training! OK, so perhaps it is not as momentous as the beginning of Lent, or even a cultural celebration of romantic love, but for baseball fans Spring Training represents something pretty important...

### Hope.

Whether you cheer for a big market team like the Dodgers or Yankees expecting another World Series title, or you love a small market team like the Reds or Royals hoping to catch fire with some young prospects, every team starts in the Spring with the same record and technically the same chance to come home



with the ring. Last year, the Baltimore Orioles and Tampa Bay Rays—two of the bottom three payrolls in baseball—made it to the playoffs!

Hope is a powerful thing in the sports world, but also in the world of ministry. Some of the smallest churches, without big staffs or buildings, are making significant impacts in their communities. Pastors without the most experience or glittering resumes are doing incredible ministry week in and week out. Hospital chaplains with tiny offices tucked off the beaten path are offering life-changing presence to those who walk in the valley of the shadow of death. And what do these ministers have in common? Hope. Each believes that God works through them, regardless of resume or annual budget.

So as pitchers and catcher report this month and hope springs eternal again, may it be a reminder that your ministry, “small market” as it may be, makes a big difference in the lives that you touch every day. Thanks be to God for the hope that carries you, and thanks to each of you for the hope you carry to the world.

Matt Sturtevant  
Ministers Council ABCUSA President



## Black History Month Resources

[\*\*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, 2024.

[\*\*African American Heritage Hymnal\*\*](#), Compiled and Edited by Delores Carpenter and Noland E. Williams Jr.

[\*\*An Encyclopedia of African American Christian Heritage\*\*](#), by Marvin A. McMickle

[\*\*Black Church Beginnings: The Long-Hidden Realities of the First Years,\*\*](#)  
by Henry H. Mitchell

[\*\*The History of the Black Baptist Church\*\*](#), by Wayne E Croft Sr.

[\*\*I’m a Piece of Work: Sisters Shaped by God\*\*](#), by Cynthia L. Hale  
[\*\*Substance of Things Hoped for: A Memoir of African American Faith\*\*](#) , by Samuel D. Proctor

*"Repairing the Breach, Restoring the Streets:  
The Academy & the Church Working Together"*

# THE 43RD MITCHELL LECTURE

AFRICAN AMERICAN SCHOLARS ON THE AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCH

**FEBRUARY 2, 2024 | 10 AM**



2024 LECTURER

**REV. DR. VALERIE BRIDGEMAN**

Dean & Vice President of Academic Affairs  
Methodist Theological School of Ohio, Delaware, OH  
Associate Professor of Homiletics and Hebrew Bible

**PINN MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH**

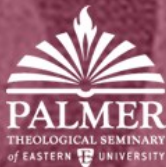
2251 N. 54th St, Philadelphia, Pa

Facebook: [PalmerTheologicalSeminary](#)

YouTube: [palmertheologicalseminary3462](#)

**JOIN US FOR LUNCH AFTER THE LECTURE! R.S.V.P. HERE:**

**[HTTPS://BIT.LY/PALMERMITCHELL](https://bit.ly/palmermitchell)**



**CELEBRATES AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH**

**Streaming on:**

**[Facebook](#)**

and

**[YouTube](#)**

## National Updates



### **MC CONNECT!**

***A Pre-Lent Gathering to  
Strengthen the "Ties that Bind"***

Are you a new Ministers Council member looking for connection? A long-timer who needs fresh support? A Baptist minister not previously

an invested member? A person who longs for a new chapter or a revitalized chapter where you serve? Join us for this first connecting session of 2024, with content-rich sharing about YOU, what you need and the Ministers Council's resources for serving you. Rev. Jacki Belile, Coordinator of Membership and Chapter Development, will lead us with an anchoring devotion inspired by



Matthew 11:28-30.

Contact [ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org](mailto:ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org) for more information.

#### TWO OPTIONS:

Tuesday, February 6  
9am Pacific/11am Central/12pm Eastern

OR

Tuesday, February 27 **NOTE DATE CHANGE**  
5pm Pacific/7pm Central/8pm Eastern

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

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## Ministers Council Survey

The national office of Ministers Council is interested in learning what your professional and personal needs are as clergy. We would love to hear from you about specific opportunities that would be most beneficial to you. Your feedback will help us to make adjustments and prioritize ways we are able to serve you. The survey should take 3-5 minutes, and your responses are completely anonymous.

We appreciate your input!

The Ministers Council Leadership Team

[TAKE THE SURVEY](#)

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## Inspiring ministerial excellence for the glory of Jesus Christ since 1935

... to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.

—Ephesians 4:12-13



To make your payments, please visit the Ministers Council website at:  
<https://www.ministerscouncil.com>

Contact **Rev. Dr. Valerie Andrews** if you need contact info for your local treasurer.

For all these decades, your national Ministers Council family has strived to provide opportunities for Collegiality, Competence and Centeredness. We've created resources articulating the challenges and ideals of an "excellent" (not perfect) minister in the Baptist contexts of ministry. Today, we connect

chapters and developing affinity groups, host monthly webinars, and provide grants for clergy covenant groups and chapter events. Your Annual Dues ensure this work continues, and expresses your commitment to the "building up" of yourself and your colleagues. Renew for 2024 today!

## Events and Webinars



**February 15, 2024**  
**5pm Pacific/7pm Central/8pm**  
**Eastern**

Ash Thursday: A Virtual Prayer Service Beginning Our Lenten Journey

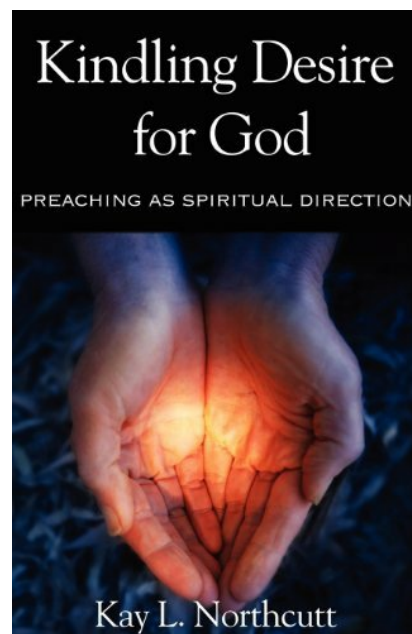
[ZOOM INFORMATION](#)

### Lenten Book Discussion

Join us at Noon Central on Tuesdays in March for discussion of *Kindling Desire for God: Preaching as Spiritual Direction*.  
March 5, 12, 19, 26.

Read more and order book [HERE](#).

ZOOM INFO HERE:  
Join Zoom Meeting by clicking

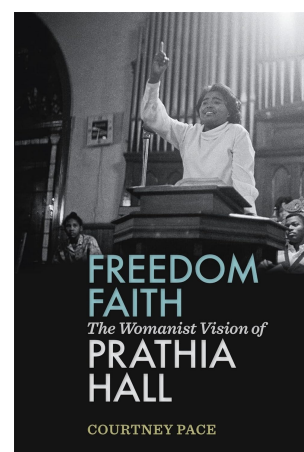


here: <https://ministrelife.zoom.us/j/2954166836>

Or call in by dialing: 1-312-626-6799 Meeting ID: 295 416 6836

### WATCH FOR DETAILS!

Lenten Class Inspired by Rev. Dr. Prathia Hall through the lens of *Freedom Faith: The Womanist Vision of Prathia Hall* by Rev. Dr. Courtney Pace. In honor of Dr. Hall, Black History Month and Women's History Month (March), we're convening a 3-part discussion of this inspiring text. Suggested donation of \$25 will cover the cost of your book and a donation toward the sessions which will be part class, part coaching with a diverse team of leaders.



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# Prayers and Milestones

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Creator God, as we enter our Lenten journey, guide us on the path that leads to you. Fill our hearts with gratitude, patience, strength, peace, and hope. Help us to grow closer to you this Lent through the practice of prayer. In your name we pray, Amen

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Dear God, as we celebrate Black History month, help us to see the humanness of our siblings and their place in the body of Christ. Help us to make ourselves a Holy living sacrifice Prioritizing or responsibility to God, Christ and each other.

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## Prayers of Intercession

For victims of abuse, harassment, and trauma...  
For deescalation among nations, governments, and political parties...  
For safety and compassion for refugees and all migrants...

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**Dr. Richard K. Gladden**, 92, former deputy general secretary for Research and Planning for American Baptist Churches USA, died on Friday, November 17, 2023, at Warren Memorial Hospital, Front Royal, Va.

Gladden retired on June 30, 1996, after a denominational career of 34 years. For more than a quarter century Gladden was a strategic resource person for the ABCUSA Office of the General Secretary, General Board and other American Baptist boards and agencies. He researched, wrote on, and provided expert advice in such matters as the denomination's polity, bylaws and standing rules, policy planning, evaluation and assessment of programming. He served as staff to the denomination's Standing Rules Committee, Planning and Evaluation Committee and Reference Committee.

### [More information](#)

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***Please share your prayers and milestones for the March 2024 issue by sending an email to [ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org](mailto:ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org) before February 27.***

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Celebrate your birthday with style!

HAPPY  
BIRTHDAY

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

To everyone born in February.

Ministers Council wishes you the  
very best today and everyday!

F E B R U A R Y 1 4

HAPPY  
VALENTINE'S  
DAY!

THE MINISTERS COUNCIL

## Prayer Service and Protest to Mark the Anniversary of Myanmar's Overthrown Election

**Washington, D.C. (1/29/24)**—In a significant show of solidarity and remembrance, Rev. Saw Ler Htoo of Calvary Burmese Baptist Church, in collaboration with the Burma Advocacy Group and the American Baptist Churches USA Burma Refugee Commission, will lead a prayer service and protest on Saturday, February 3, 2024, to honor the third anniversary of the military coup that disrupted Myanmar's democratic processes.

[Read More](#)

## American Baptist Women's Ministries Calls Interim Executive Director

**KING OF PRUSSIA, PA (1/12/24)**—The search committee unanimously recommended, and the executive committee of American Baptist Women's Ministries (ABWM) shared on Friday, January 12, 2024, their unanimous decision to call Rev. LaThelma Yenn-Batah to the position of Interim Executive Director, beginning March 1, 2024.

[Read More](#)



## MINISTERIAL EXCELLENCE FUND

### APPLICATION WINDOW:

**January 29 – February 9, 2024**

American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS) is pleased to provide up to forty debt-relief grants of \$5,000 to American Baptist pastors who engage with financial education and are accessing these grants for the first time.

### ELIGIBILITY:

- Pastors must currently be serving American Baptist congregations.
- Ordained, licensed, and lay pastors are all eligible to apply.
- Pastors serving in all capacities are eligible (youth, associate, senior, solo, bivocational, etc.).
- Pastors must commit to and complete one of three learning "tracks" before receiving the grant.

*Note: These grants can be used for consumer, medical, student loan, or other debt identified in your application. Funds received are taxable as income.*

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO APPLY, VISIT:

 [ABHMS.ORG/mef-app](https://ABHMS.ORG/mef-app)  [CCL@ABHMS.ORG](mailto:CCL@ABHMS.ORG)



# Ecumenical Resources

## Pastors & Leaders Conference: Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary

AMBS Pastors & Leaders is an annual gathering of pastors and those who hold leadership roles in local congregations, chaplaincy contexts, regional churches, denominational settings, not-for-profits and community organizations.

We meet together to connect, worship, learn and be inspired for our ministries. Our gatherings reflect AMBS's Anabaptist orientation but are open to people from any denomination or no denomination.

Plus daylong **Leadership Clinics** before the start of the conference on Monday, Feb. 19!

- The early registration cost is **\$200** USD for in-person or online when you register by **Jan. 19, 2024**
- The registration cost after Jan. 19 is **\$250** USD
- The final registration deadline is **Feb. 12, 2024**

For more information and to register go to:

<https://www.ambs.edu/pastors-and-leaders-conference/>

## 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](mailto:ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org) by February 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**



Try email marketing for free today!