



Ministers Council Newsletter

Rev. Dr. Debora Jackson, Executive Director

October 2014

From the Desk of the Executive Director



October marks Clergy Appreciation Month and it feels sort of self-serving to write an acknowledgement of it. Undoubtedly, given our constituency, every one of us believes it important to show appreciation to members of the clergy. But as one of the members of the Ministers Council Facebook group said in

response to the post regarding this October observance, "Appreciation? What an interesting and foreign word."

I understand. Given my cultural background, I remember the grandiose programs that our church would put on for "Pastor's Anniversary," or "Pastor Appreciation." A guest preacher would come to deliver the word. Guest choirs would come to add to the festivities. A big dinner would be hosted with an overabundance of food. The Pastor and his wife (always he and his wife...) would sit in a special chair. It was like King and Queen for a day. Presentations would be made by every board and auxiliary. And of course, there would be significant monetary gifts as well. In fact I remember one year that the Trustees actually raised money so that the church could buy Pastor a car.

Of course these things don't happen in most of our churches. I remember my church used to take a collection at the end of the year so that I could have a Christmas bonus. But after overhearing people complain about having to give so that I could get a bonus, I nixed the practice. The Lord isn't the only one who "loves a cheerful giver."

But this begs the question: What is the problem? Why are clergy so underappreciated? For pastors, I think it might have something to do with our "Suffering Servant" persona. We suffer in silence and then feel slighted because no one notices. I remember reading the 1954 annual report from the church I served. The pastor, in his report, noted that he had made over 900 visits to members of the congregation over the past year. I remember thinking, "That's nuts! There's no time to do anything else." But it was like a badge of burden. We suffer, never expressing the heaviness of the burden we have to bear. And I am not suggesting that we complain and moan, but I am suggesting that we stop to consider what is reasonable in our work efforts. Perhaps we need to stop working to the point of burnout, so that we are not feeling so underappreciated. Then, if we are more communicative about what we do as pastors, people might have greater appreciation as well. There is a reason why people believe that pastors only work on Sundays...

And consider the challenges of chaplains. Chaplaincy has become increasingly difficult as hospitals and care facilities cut staff. I knew a chaplain who had to cobble together an earning by serving multiple nursing homes. There was no time to establish a relationship with residents because she was too

busy traveling from facility to facility. The same downsizing is happening in hospitals. Not only are hospitals cutting chaplaincy staffs, but also internships are disappearing as well. How sad is it that Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is being dropped in many seminaries because there are too few chaplaincy programs for CPE students?

Spiritual Counselors and Directors struggle as well. Like many clergy, they are bi-vocation by necessity, which can be financially challenging. They also struggle to make space for the Spirit in order to be present for their clients, because spaciousness requires time. I am serving as an "Itinerant Spiritual Director" in my home church. The most difficult challenge that I face is the time to be "prayed up" so that I can simply "be" for my group. When your prayer life as clergy is reduced to "Lord have mercy" in the midst of rushing hither and yon, when can you make space?

So it is Clergy Appreciation Month and if no one else tells you, allow me to tell you that I appreciate you. I appreciate the pastors who have provided an encouraging word from the pulpit or visited me when I was sick. I appreciate the chaplains who came to the hospital to pray prior to surgeries, and especially the chaplain who prayed with me when pregnancy was at risk years ago. I appreciate the spiritual directors who journeyed with me and helped me to realize and claim my own deep wisdom. I appreciate you, my clergy colleagues, and I pray that God continues to prosper you for all that you do.



Got announcements?

Share your news by contacting the Ministers Council office at (800) 222-3872 x 2334 or email Joyce Moon at joyce.moon@abc-usa.org



Together in Ministry – Current Status

In 2012, the Ministers Council came up with a revelatory idea. We would hold a capital campaign to raise money for the Together in Ministry program. We knew the tremendous success of the program: thousands of people had participated, millions of dollars had been well spent, and so many had benefited. We had to find a way to make the program continue.

So together, Rev. Dr. Joe Kutter, Executive Director, backed with the support of the Executive Committee and Senate launched the Together in Ministry capital campaign. Feasibility studies were not terribly promising. We had never done anything like this before. But our resolve was strong. The leadership made donations and pledges. They committed to make phone calls to engage you, our colleagues and recipients, in the program. While we had some slower starts and challenges, such as a new Executive Director coming on board in the midst of the campaign, we kept moving and added to our numbers.

But this was a three year campaign. Our intent was to raise funds from 2012 through 2014. So that means that we are done. Feasibility studies suggested that we would be hard pressed to raise more than \$250,000. Yet here we are. We have already raised more than was believed possible. But can you help us to finish strong? To date, we have raised \$289,663.05 in cash gifts and pledges, and \$71,519.20 in in-kind contributions. Every cent makes a difference and we want to maximize our impact. You can click <http://ministerscouncil.com/together-in-ministry-capital-campaign/> and help us realize our goals for this campaign. Together in Ministry is one of the most impact-filled programs ever offered. Contribute to its continuance and help us to ensure ministerial excellence for years to come through your tax-deductible donation.

The Spiritual Practice of Daily Examen

-Katie Huffman

The spiritual practice of the daily examen has 16th century origins in Ignatius of Loyola yet offers a framework for prayer that continues to resonate even more than 500 years later. The focus of the daily examen is on finding God's presence in your life so that you can be grateful and so that you can listen for His guidance.

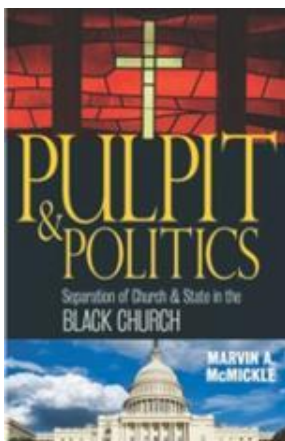
There is no designated way to go through the prayer or even length of time needed to complete it; in fact, just 10 minutes should be enough time. In the approach outlined below, the daily examen is practiced at the end of the day.



1. Prepare your heart and mind. Center yourself by lighting a candle or taking a few deep breaths. Allow yourself to feel the presence of the Holy Spirit.
2. Review the day with gratitude. Think back through the events of your day, noting the joys and delights. Think about the people you interacted with and what you shared with each other. Don't forget the little pleasures! Then, thank God for these experiences.
3. Pay attention to your emotions. Notice the points in your day where you felt strongly. What is God telling you through your feelings? Feelings of frustration may indicate that you need to change course on a certain project. Feelings of worry about a friend's situation might later prompt you to send a comforting note.
4. Select a part of your day to pray over. What one part of your day stands out most to you? It can be positive or negative. Lift up a prayer of gratitude, intercession, repentance, whatever the case may be.
5. Pray for tomorrow. Ask God to guide you through tomorrow's challenges. Turn your anxieties over to God and pray for hope.

A simple prayer card listing the steps of the examen can be found [here](#). Other approaches to praying the examen can be found at [Ignatian Spirituality](#) (from Loyola Press).

Katie is a Wellness Advocate with the Duke Clergy Health Initiative. She has an undergraduate degree in History and French and a Masters degree in Gerontology; prior to her current position, Katie worked as a social worker in a retirement community in Chapel Hill. Outside of work, she enjoys gardening, spending time outdoors, baking, and hanging out with her husband, Noah, their daughter, Ada, and two kitties, Grady and Gracie.



New Judson Press Releases

Judson Press best-selling author Marvin A. McMickle has written the book *Pulpit & Politics*, which chronicles the political activism of the African American church in U.S. history, and then examines the leadership role many African American clergy have played in the political process. It also details the dos and don'ts of church involvement in the political process, and emphasizes the importance of African American churches and of clergy political activism in the future. Order your copy today and enjoy free shipping with your Ministers Council Membership.

Coming in the spring 2015, look for the new Judson Press book *Spiritual Practices for Effective Leadership: The 7Rs of Sanctuary for Pastors*, by Debora Jackson.

Attend the Women of Color in Ministry Project Launch Event

PROJECT LAUNCH EVENT


Women of Color IN MINISTRY

FRI. OCT. 17, 2014 6:30-9:30 pm
& SAT. OCT. 18, 2014 9 am to 4 pm

Location
Convent Avenue Baptist Church
420 W. 145th Street, New York, NY 10031

Speakers

 Bishop Vashti McKenzie

 Dr. Nikki Toyama-Szeto

 Dr. Doris Garcia

2 DAYS OF INFORMATION & CELEBRATION FOR WOMEN OF COLOR WHO ARE IN MINISTRY

Cost for both days \$25.00 Online registration only
www.WomenofColorInMinistry.org by Oct. 13th

- GET ANSWERS ABOUT MINISTRY
- VISIT WITH SEMINARY REPRESENTATIVES
- LEARN HOW TO GET A JOB IN MINISTRY

Women who are members of denominations and those who are not are welcome!

Organize, Advocate, & Succeed!

  @WOCIMIN

Sponsored by Union Seminary, The African American Pulpit, & Convent Avenue Baptist Church

The Women of Color in Ministry Project (WOCIM), an effort designed by Reverend Martha Simmons (creator of The African American Lectionary, head of the African American Pulpit Journal, and co-author of "Preaching with Sacred Fire" which is the African American Anthology of Preaching), is led by The African American Pulpit, Inc., along with collaborative partners Union Seminary of New York, and Sisters Chapel of Spelman College. The over-arching aims of the project are to provide women of color clergy around the country educational assistance, mentorship, advocacy, and employment assistance. The Ford Foundation is a project sponsor.

To announce the project nationally, the WOCIM Project will host an event on October 17 and 18, 2014 at Convent Avenue Baptist Church, in Harlem, NY. Preachers, lecturers, and workshop leaders include renowned women such as: Dr. Nikki Toyama-Szeto (author of "More than Serving Tea," and Director of Biblical Justice Integration and Mobilization for the International Justice Mission), Bishop Vashti McKenzie (the first AME female Bishop), Dr. Stacey Floyd-Thomas (seminary professor at Vanderbilt and head of the Black Religious Scholars Group), Dr. Boyung Lee (seminary professor at Pacific School of Religion), ABCUSA's own **Rev. Patricia Hernandez** (National Director, American Baptist Women in Ministry/Transition Ministries) and many others.

Register online at www.WomenofColorInMinistry.org. The cost for both days is \$25.00 and the registration deadline is October 13.



I Want to Be in the Number

The old gospel hymn intones

Oh Lord I want to be in the number, when the Saints go marching in.

Posing a question about membership in the Ministers Council for 2015, will you be in the number? Both our national office and local councils are gearing up for fall membership drives. Membership fees are based on a personal income sliding scale as follows:

\$55,000+	\$100
\$25,000 - \$54,999	\$50
\$10,000 - \$24,999	\$25
< \$10,000	\$10

Do you want to be in the number? Say yes and join the Ministers Council in 2015. Say yes and renew your membership in the Ministers Council in 2015. Contact your local council or go to www.ministerscouncil.com for more information.

Ministers Council Greater Bay Area

SURPRISED BY JOY??

Monday, January 12 - Tues, Jan 13, 2015

at Redwood Glen with Rev. John Polite

As ministers we can get cynical. Often we don't look for joy and thus do not experience joy amid the challenges we face each day in ministry. Join us and Rev. John Polite at Redwood Glen as we focus on finding joy amid loss, obstacles, and busyness. You just may be surprised at how easy it is to experience joy as you open yourself to the Spirit and your colleagues. For a registration form, click [here](#).

Though the MCGBA retreat officially begins on Monday and ends on Tuesday, you are invited to extend your retreat at Redwood Glen with an early arrival or late departure at no additional cost!

The move to Redwood Glen has also reduced retreat costs this year:

\$120 for Conference Center lodging and **\$90** in the cabins.

Rev. John Polite will be our featured speaker. A Southern Cal native, John has strong NorCal ties as a graduate of ABSW and a current member of the ABSW Board of Trustees. A pastor, gifted worship leader, and speaker, JP will bring a fresh perspective on how to experience joy in ministry.

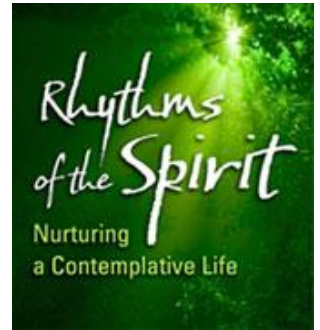


Download a registration form [here](#), or [email](#) Rev. Larry Jay for more details.

Rhythms of the Spirit: Nurturing a Contemplative Life

Sponsored by American Baptist Churches USA
Monday, Nov 3 - Friday, Nov 7 @ Redwood Glen, Loma Mar, CA

Do you struggle for balance between prayer and activity? Do you long for more silence and solitude in your life and ministry? More energy for compassion, peace, and justice? This retreat provides a unique opportunity to explore and practice the contemplative life together. Leaders include Dr. Jennifer Davidson, Rev. Larry Jay, Sherry Johnson, Rita Berglund, and Brad Berglund. For more information, check the [website](#) or download a registration form [here](#).



Nine Participate in ABHMS' Young Adult Leadership Experience

"It was like binary fusion, in which American Baptist Home Mission Societies [ABHMS] gave all of itself for the growth and continuity of the continual building of God's kingdom here on Earth," said Agnes Lamin, 41, of Siloam Baptist Church, Norristown, Pa., about ABHMS' Young Adult Leadership Experience held July 31-Aug. 3 at and around American Baptist Churches USA's Mission Center, Valley Forge, Pa. Lamin was one of nine participants chosen for the invitation-only experience via recommendations by members of ABHMS' department of Missional Life and Leadership.

"Staff gave their utmost, and all came in expectation to receive," Lamin continued. "A mighty move by God was exhibited, as seeds were sown in our lives by various speakers." One of those speakers was the Rev. Lisa Harris, ABHMS national coordinator of the Justice for Children Initiative and Christian Center Relations. In a leadership seminar, Harris presented sobering statistics about poverty—including the fact that 1 in 5 children in the United States and Puerto Rico is considered "in poverty."

"What does poverty have to do with leadership?" Harris asked. "Part of leadership is vision. Vision is the ability to look and see what's really there. Sometimes people don't want to do that. Leadership is called to make a difference." Preparing the group to serve meals to the homeless that evening at Chosen 300 Ministries Inc., Philadelphia, Harris offered these words: "You will be working with people who are experiencing challenges. Some are extremely brilliant and had breakdowns. Some are returning from seasons of incarceration. Some are working poor, who do not make enough money to eat.

"It's up to you to decide if it's a privilege to serve them," she continued. "And how do we see the Christ in the other person—to feel free of judgment."

The group helped to serve approximately 100 individuals in attendance at Chosen 300's center city site, one of the ministry's three locations. A validated regional ministry of the Philadelphia Baptist Association, Chosen 300 serves 100,000 meals yearly from that site alone, according to co-founder Brian Jenkins.

In addition to Lamin, other participants were Ketsia Angerville, 27, of Bethel Haitian Baptist Church (BHBC), East Orange, N.J.; Daniel Brockway, 29, First Baptist Church (FBC), Pasadena, Calif.; Santiago Norori, 31, FBC of Laurelton, Brick, N.J.; Juliette Pailin, 20, Bethlehem Baptist Church, Springhouse, Pa.; Emmanuel Simeus, 24, BHBC; Andre Taylor, 18, Mount Jezreel Baptist Church, Silver Spring, Md.; Jacob Taylor, 24, FBC, Newark, Ohio; and Dana Zamor, 27, New Vision Community Church, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Register online to receive information about ABHMS' future events for young adults.

View a slideshow from the Young Adult Leadership Experience.

Caring for You and Your Ministry



CARING FOR YOU AND YOUR MINISTRY

Do you feel like you're being pulled
in too many different directions?

Does the leadership team of your ministry
feel burned out?

Experience reflections and Bible studies by women who have personally experienced the dangers of not caring for themselves adequately while trying to attend to responsibilities.

Find guidance for attending to your own energy and the energies in the ministry as a whole.

Become a more effective leader in Christ's name.

8 pages, \$13, Item #W4940 available at <http://www.abwministries.org> or 1-800-4-JUDSON Published by American Baptist Women's Ministries in partnership with American Baptist Women in Ministry, P.O. Box 851, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851, (610) 768-2288

Upcoming Events

- Pastoral Excellence Network Peer Power Workshop – October 28, 2014, Bon Secours Retreat Center, Baltimore, MD
- Unity Day Worship – Providence Baptist Church, Baltimore, MD – November, 16, 2014.
- MLK Day Worship – New Beginnings Christian Fellowship, Renton, WA – January 18, 2015
- MLK Day Worship, Evergreen Association of the American Baptist Churches – January 19, 2015
- New England Assembly of American Baptists, Leominster, MA – January 23-24, 2015

Ministers Council Contact Information

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