

Together in Ministry



Collegiality * Competence * Centeredness

August 2021 Newsletter



When evil darkens our world, give us light. When despair numbs our souls, give us hope. When we stumble and fall, lift us up. When doubts assail us, give us faith. When nothing seems sure, give us trust. When ideals fade, give us vision. When we lose our way, be our guide! That we may find serenity in Your presence, and purpose in doing Your will.

-Prayer by John D. Rayner

A Reflection From the President

Thoughts on Unity: A Mission Summit Conversation

There was a time when American Baptists would meet at Biennial celebrations, only to be distracted by the drama of controversy and division around some “statement of concern.” Significant time would be dedicated to public debate with delegates taking ‘pro and con’ positions. In my experience, this design did not allow for deeper conversation around an issue. This debate was followed by a vote that had no policy implications and only served as an expression of that Biennial. On some occasions these controversies would be amplified by national or local news media.



Somewhere around ten years ago, the “statement of concern” design was dropped from the Biennial schedules and “table conversations” were introduced. The distracting debate drama was replaced by constructive times of listening and talking to one another.

On Saturday, June 27, 2021, a group of 10 people from across American Baptist life discussed the question:

How can we demonstrate our love regardless of political persuasions?

As the conversation deepened, the following were some insights that surfaced:

- 1) Begin with dialogue and a willingness to engage and re-engage with others who are different. Be willing to engage in the intimate practice of “breaking bread” with others.
- 2) Embracing traits of love, be humble and vulnerable.
 - a. Recognize the mystery in others
 - b. Look for Jesus in the other
 - c. Look and see the other as human beings loved by God.
 - d. Recognize that God is not done with us or them.
- 3) Love others? Just do it.
- 4) Recognize that disagreement – disunity has been long standing in the church, long before Red and Blue States, there were other division – disagreements, which is why Jesus made “Love One Another” a core value.

Example: “For when you come together, I hear there are divisions among you and to some extent I believe it ... there have to be factions among you, for only so will it become clear who among you are genuine.” (I Corinthians 11: 18ff)

I wonder what it means to be genuine. Could it be to sit at the ‘Lord’s Supper’ with an open heart to God’s work in the lives of others? Mercy.

I am giving thanks for my AB family that continues to shape my faith.

Randolph T Miller,
President, Leadership Team



*"We're taking a break in August - No session
Thursday, August 19th"*

Join us September 16 @7pm Central Time for :

**Holding Space: The Ministry Arts of
Spiritual Direction and Coaching**

Do you want to connect with other Spiritual Directors or coaches in the ABC ministry family? Are you drawn to explore transitioning to this work, or adding these competencies to your present work? Rev. Dr. Randolph Miller, our national president, will host this special networking and sharing session of "MC Live." (We're considering the formation of a new chapter for these specialized ministries.) Bring your stories, questions and resources!

[Zoom Instructions](#)

Did you miss the July session on Personal Compass with Lisa Beacham? View the recording [here](#). To join Lisa's monthly "Recentering" group, view the video and contact her at lisa@lisabeacham.com

National Update

Code of Ethics Revisions - Ratification Process Underway

Three chapters have voted on the proposed revisions, and others are planning their votes for upcoming months. We ask that chapters consider doing the following as part of their processes:

- a) circulate the proposed revisions, available with a companion hand-out [here](#).
- b) schedule a "Q and A session" with a member of the national Leadership Team, to review the 2018-2020 project, share questions and offer feedback

c) hold a duly-organized meeting at which chapter members* will hold an "up or down" vote, preferably before 12/31/21.

In addition, we give thanks for those who signaled willingness this Spring to serve on an editorial team for the companion resource we will be updating. This Learning Guide will be inspired by and drawn from the [tool](#) created in 2006 by a group of 10 colleagues. (The Guide will serve as a professional development resource for clergy discussions on the topics included in the Code of Ethics; it is not an interpretative guide for the Code of Ethics.)

The Team will be convened this month for an official launch in September. For more information, contact ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org.

*Those who are national members of the Ministers Council in the year of the chapter vote



We're Hiring! Help Us Find the Right Person "For Such a Time as This."

As shared previously, our national office is being ably staffed this summer with an Interim Program Administrator, Ms. Linda Miller, who began in mid-June. Your Search Committee has been working hard on discernment and publicity, and has begun interviewing candidates. Do you have friends or colleagues in the Greater Philadelphia area who might be called to this part-time position? Perhaps a bi-vocational minister with right administrative skills? Or a recent retiree? Please help us by sharing the job description found [here](#) widely. ***We're accepting applications until August 20, 2021.***

Search Committee:
Rev. Jacki Belile
Rev. Jerry Bertelson
Rev. Dr. Sara Day
Rev. Dr. Randy Miller

From the Staff

I am the new Interim Program Administrator, at your service. You can contact me through email at: info@ministerscouncil.com or by phone: 610-314-7837. I will be available to answer your emails and phone calls on Tuesdays and Thursdays. My hours on those days can be flexible, but usually 8 am to 4 pm Central Time.



No question is too great or too small, feel free to call. I am happy to help you in any way I can. That is my plan.

Blessings,

*Linda Miller
Interim Program Administrator*

Ministers Council

Prayers and Milestones

Rev. Karen Pickler is retiring from chaplain ministry, her most recent position being at Northport, VA Medical Center.

Rev. Carol McVetty is beginning an interim ministry call at the Community Church of Barrington in Barrington, IL.

Rev. Dr. Michael Newheart will begin as Interim (Bridge) Pastor at First Church Congregational of West Hartford, CT later this month.

We encourage you to share your prayer requests and announcements with us. Submit these for the September newsletter by August 25 to ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org.

O Lord, you who have called and equipped teachers, we pray for them today. Watch over them, provide for them, guide them, sustain them. May you be their sun and shield, so that they might do the work that you have entrusted to them and sense your care in these uncertain times. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Ever-listening God, you know what is in our hearts when we cry out to you. Help us, guide us, and rescue us when we are in any need, that we might be beacons of your love for others to witness.

Faithful God, keep us steadfast in faith and increase our trust in you, that we might remain examples of discipleship.

O God, we praise you for calling diverse people into the ministry of the church. Uphold all pastors with your strong and loving arms. Empower our ministers to serve your people with the word of scripture, the water of life, and the meal of grace. Grant special graces of presence and listening to all who counsel, whether in offices, at the bedside, in the military service, jail or nursing home. Equip them with both beloved traditions and fresh ideas; grant them joy in their tasks; and renew them daily by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the Word among us, now and forever. Amen

ABC Announcements

American Baptist Home Mission Societies' (ABHMS) will present "**Chaplaincy Skills for Community Ministry**" 6-8 p.m. ET Oct. 4, 11, 18, 25 and Nov. 1 and 8 online via its Center for Continuous Learning. A cohort celebration will be held 6-7 p.m. ET Nov. 15.

Taught by board-certified and endorsed chaplains, this practical course in chaplaincy skills is for community contexts, where a ministry of nonsectarian

spiritual care is needed. Learn how to offer a ministry of presence that honors ecumenical and interfaith engagement, demonstrates cultural humility, practices refined listening skills, and responds to trauma with sensitivity and accountability. Cost: \$249. Read more [here](#).

COVID-19 RESOURCE PAGE

Have you seen our denominational resource page recently? Check out a variety of resources [here](#).



Join or renew your national and local chapter membership today! We're receiving dues now for the 2021 calendar. You can pay these affordable dues (on a sliding scale) conveniently online at www.ministerscouncil.com or through your local treasurer.

Reminders



How to reach us:

- By phone: (610)314-7837
- By email: info@ministerscouncil.com
- Address: 221 S. High Street, West Chester, PA 19382
- We can generally be reached in the office on Tuesdays and Thursdays (emails and voicemails will be responded to during this time)



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