

Together in Ministry



December 2021 Newsletter



*O come, O come, Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear*

A Pastoral Reflection from the President

The Word Becoming Flesh

"Think of us ... as stewards of mysteries of God."
I Corinthians 4:1



There are multiple portals into the mysteries of God. Once inside this undiscovered territory, the inner landscape expands as other mysteries are unveiled. These mysteries of God resist scientific and academic inquiry but may be encountered and experienced. They are not problems to solve, but rather a dance to join.

The Christ Event is such a portal, and the season of Advent/Christmas is an entry point into the grandest of all mysteries: The incarnation – the Word becoming flesh. When one enters this world of miracles, dreams, and angelic visitations, it is not long before those miracles are revealed in healings, resurrections, and the presence of God in the whole creation. The material world begins to dissolve, and a new world view emerges and is often described by mystics as the Kingdom of God or Reign of God, the Peaceable Kingdom, and the Beloved Community.

Prayer:

O Divine Holy One, in this Advent/Christmas journey,
center us in the mystery of your presence,
that we may know the tranquility of your love,
even while we are surrounded by storms.
As we are enfolded in the gentleness of your peace,

remind us of the sacred entrustment

you have bestowed upon us as stewards of your mysteries.

Give us confidence to be faithful to your calling
as we again witness the miracle of the Incarnation
The Word becoming flesh.

Maranatha

Randolph T Miller

President, Leadership Team

- What practices do you employ while wandering in this realm of mystery?
- Do you journal or otherwise document your encounters with the Holy One?
- In the Advent/Christmas narratives, is there one personage to whom you are particularly drawn?
- While on pilgrimage through Advent, what gifts do you receive that you will carry into 2022?

Companions in Christ,

We are privileged to labor together for the Gospel as the family of American Baptist ministers. May you be renewed in the grace and truth of the Christ Child in these difficult days. We pray you will perceive and receive all the wisdom God has for you in these days of dark and light.

In Christ's Peace,

National Leadership Team

Ministers Council ABC-USA



MC Live Advent Vespers
Thursday, 7pm Central/8pm
Eastern/5pm Pacific



Topic: MC Live Advent Vespers

Time: Dec 16, 2021 07:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join us for a 30-minute gathering of music, devotions and prayer. We are preparing a simple time for Advent refreshment led by Rev. Rebecca Driscoll (Member, National Leadership Team; Senior Pastor, First Baptist Church, Attleboro, MA).

[Advent Vespers, December 16 Zoom Instructions](#)



Blue Christmas

HAVE YOU IMAGINED DOING/ATTENDING A “BLUE CHRISTMAS” SERVICE?

A few of us fellowshiping last month found ourselves interested in gathering resources for a “Blue Christmas” service for use during Advent this year or in the future.

If you're not familiar with it, here's one description (Source Unknown): Blue Christmas services are intended to reach out to anyone who might be vulnerable this holiday season. In a holiday season that may seem to neglect the hurting, or pressure toward uplifting and sentimental, these services attend to the tender and hidden pains we carry. We remember Emmanuel, God with Us, in all seasons. Join us for a time designed for validating this, and offering comfort and nurturance to those who are not having a "happy Christmas."

Thanks to Rev. Karen Pickler of our Chaplains and Pastoral Counselors Chapter for sharing their recent [newsletter](#) with relevant resources. Also, here are few ideas and samples which we've begun gathering via our Facebook Group. Do you have any to add?

Possible Components:

Poetry – Barbara Crooker's Poem “Blue Christmas” (Thanks, Dennis Johnson)
Songs – Many have used Joni Mitchell's “River” (Thanks, Doug Donley)

Sample Services:

University Baptist Church, Minneapolis, Link to YouTube [here](#).

Sanctified Art has a few liturgies. They're listed under "Resources for a Longest Night (Blue Christmas) Service"

here: <https://sanctifiedart.org/.../advent-christmas-roll-call...>

(Thanks Anna Strickland)

A Sample Ecumenical [Service](#), done by Focus Albany, via Zoom in households. (Thanks, Kathy Donley)

An Annual Service ... usually interspersing song, scripture and poems by Jan Richardson. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9s9x8vBoeXs>

(Thanks, Mary Meadows)

National Update

CODE OF ETHICS UPDATES

We've made good progress on our ratification votes on the proposed revisions to the national Covenant and Code of Ethics. Six chapters have voted to date. All votes must be taken by November 2022, and we urge chapter officers to arrange these in the months after the holidays. To arrange for a member of the Code of Ethics Subcommittee to join your chapter's Q and A sessions,

contact ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org.

The Learning Guide, a companion template document for professional development, will also be completed in 2022. The Editorial Team in formation held a first orientation meeting earlier this Fall and will launch its work officially after the holidays.



Program Administrator (PA) Search Process Underway

The Ministers Council ABCUSA continues in its active search for a part-time Program Administrator to work from the Greater Philadelphia area. If you are interested in this opportunity, write us at ministerscouncil2021@gmail.com. We are also soliciting referrals for this position if you know of someone who would be suitable. Thank you for your patience and support during this interim period of time.

In the spirit of prayer and discernment,

Search Committee:
Jacki Belile
Jerry Bertelson
Sara Day
Randy Miller



Your national Ministers Council maintains a membership in Grant Station. Former President **Dee Dee Turlington** will search the database for your church or non-profit ministry. Contact her at darla.turlington@gmail.com.

Current COVID-19 funding opportunities are available to you without membership at <https://grantstation.com/covid-19-related-funding>.

Follow this link for some current national emphases with nearby deadlines that you can explore on your own.

ABC Announcements

**Conference Dates: June 15-18,
2022**

Radical.
Redeemed.
Ready.



Celebrating
Ministering
Women

With women serving in a multitude of ways and a variety of roles throughout the United States and around the world, American Baptist Women in Ministry (ABWIM) is hosting a unique conference: Celebrating Ministering Women: Radical. Redeemed. Ready. [MORE](#)

Join or Renew Your Membership



2022 Membership:

It's time to join for 2022! Our dues are collected for the calendar year, with dues received after November 1st going to the next year unless marked otherwise. The 2022 national dues continue to be structured based upon income with the brackets remaining the same as 2021. They are as follows:

Under \$ 10,000	\$ 10.00
\$ 10,000 to \$ 24,999	\$ 25.00
\$ 25,000 to \$ 59,999	\$ 50.00
Over \$ 60,000	\$ 100.00

If you pay your dues through PayPal via the [Ministers Council website](#), it will also offer you the option to pay your local chapter dues as well. If you pay both your local and national dues together, we will forward the local dues to your chapter. We thank you for your continued support of the Ministers Council.

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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- Visit us at www.ministerscouncil.com
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