



July 2024 Newsletter



You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.
-Galatians 5:13

Dear Friends,

In her book *Wake Up to Wonder*, Karen Wright Marsh tells the story of Dr. Wangari Maathai. Born in 1940, Maathai grew up in the highlands of Kenya that were lush with fig trees and rivers that nourished a great biodiversity of plant and animal life. Maathai was mesmerized by this lush landscape and dedicated herself to studying it, so she went away to school. As part of a post-doctoral research study, she returned to her family's village outside of Nairobi to find that things had drastically changed while she was away. The lush highlands had been replaced by commercial coffee and tea agricultural tracts. An eco-system that had nourished untold generations of Wangari's family no longer existed. Noticing the suffering and poverty, malnutrition and lack of resources that her family and their neighbors endured because of these colonial cash crops, she wondered what could be done to bring back the once thriving community. She decided to plant trees. Her efforts to scatter, sow, and plant a few seeds gained traction all over Kenya. It became known as The Green Belt Movement. Thousands of women joined Maathai and together they planted more than forty million trees in Kenya alone. In 2004, Maathai was recognized for her work of planting seeds as well as the relationships her efforts cultivated throughout Kenya in a time of deep unrest and in 2004, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.



[READ MORE](#)

July 18, 2024
8pm Eastern/7pm Central/6pm
Mountain/5pm Pacific

**The Evolution of American
Baptist Personnel Services**

3rd thursdays **mc live**
WEBINAR SERIES



Erica Van Brakle



Megan Biddle

We welcome Revs. Erica Van Brakle and Megan Biddle to share in an interactive orientation to MinistrElife, the "evolution of American Baptist Personnel Services." MinistrElife is a vibrant online hub designed especially for ministry professionals. Learn more about this platform designed for all ordained pastors, chaplains, specialized ministers, church musicians, religious non-profit executive directors, seminarians and those discerning a call to ministry. Van Brakle is the Director of MinisterElife and Biddle is the National Coordinator. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

ZOOM INFO:

Join Zoom Meeting by clicking
here: [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88612223788?
pwd=d2VYTHlrMDVEV1ppVDhmR2ljZ2t3dz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88612223788?pwd=d2VYTHlrMDVEV1ppVDhmR2ljZ2t3dz09)

Or call in by phone and use
Meeting ID: 886 1222 3788
Passcode: 740763

Find your local Zoom number here:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kcFbMxYgPc>

**TOGETHER IN
MINISTRY!**

**Learn more about Grants for
Clergy Covenant Groups (TIM)
and Local Chapters (EIM)
Wednesday, July 10
9am Pacific/10am
Mountain/11am/Central/12pm
Eastern**



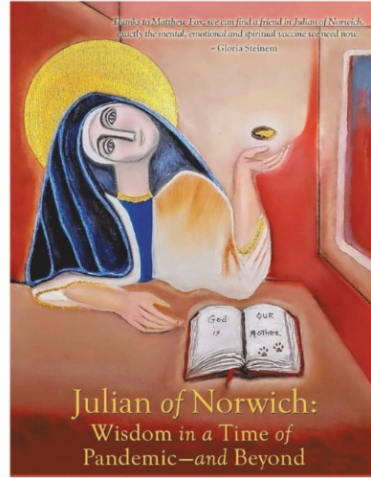
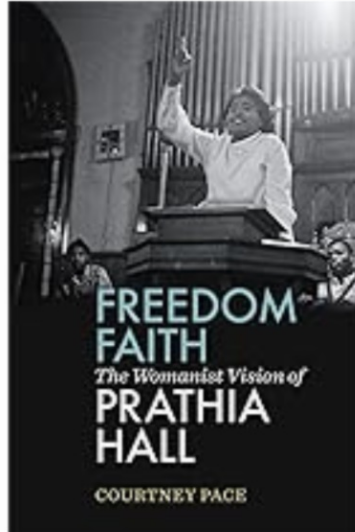
Since 2017 our missional passion has been "local, local, local." We've used grant funds to reinvest in a national network of clergy covenant groups ("TIM" applications submitted by individuals for small groups they convene) and local chapter events and projects designed for revitalizing and connecting local ministerial leaders (EIM). Join Rev. Lin Story-Bunce to learn more about these funds, testimonials from recipients and how to complete your applications. For more information, contact linbunce@gmail.com

Zoom Info

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

Or call in by dialing: 1-312-626-6799

Meeting ID: 295 416 6836



Matthew Fox
Foreword by Mirabai Starr

"Bear One Another's Burdens: Learning and Leading Together"

Tuesday, July 30

9am Pacific/10am Mountain/11am Central/12pm Eastern

Did you miss this June session? Join us for deepening in July, the dog days of summer!

We gather for this devotional and resource-sharing time centered on Galatians 6:2. Share your own insights and join with others in praying for one another. Learn more about how your Ministers Council family is expressing care, as well as upcoming retreat and study circles being formed. Summer launches include discussions of *Freedom Faith: The Womanist Vision of Prathia Hall*, by Courtney Pace and *Julian of Norwich: Wisdom in a Time of Pandemic—and Beyond*, by Matthew Fox.

For more information, contact Rev. Jacki Belile, Coordinator of Membership and Chapter Development.

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Thriving Stories

Are you thriving in a particular area of your life/ministry? Do you have a story to share? We want to hear from you! Send us a brief note telling us what is going well and how God is one the move. Include a picture as well! Email ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org and share your story!

National Updates



ATTENTION MINISTERS COUNCIL FRIENDS!!!

IF YOU PAID YOUR 2024
MINISTERS COUNCIL
MEMBERSHIP DUES AND HAVE NOT
RECEIVED YOUR MEMBERSHIP
CARD AND/OR STICKER, PLEASE
SEND AN EMAIL TO:
MINISTERSCOUNCIL@ABC-USA.ORG
WITH YOUR CONTACT
INFORMATION AT YOUR
CONVENIENCE.

Chapter News

Do you have Chapter News or Events to share? Challenges or lessons? Please send news for the August newsletter to info@ministerscouncil.com by July 26.

Prayers and Milestones

Loving God, We come before you grateful for the freedom we have in Christ, a freedom that transcends boundaries and embraces diversity. In a world where opinions differ and beliefs vary, help us to navigate with grace and compassion.

Birthday Blessings

To all born in July



From the Ministers Council

Staff Reflection



Noise Pollution

Are you a victim of “noise pollution”? Over the past several months, I came to discover that I was. Ironically, it was not the result of car horns blowing at the green light; sounds of a fluorescent light bulb; the construction within the city limits; neither that of the newborn crying across the hallway. The noise pollution was in my thoughts.

Yes, my thoughts! Life had become so chaotic until I could not think beyond what was “true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy” as offered by Paul to the church of Philippi. Instead, I found myself in a place of discouragement, and feeling unworthy, unwanted, unloved, and as if I had nothing to offer. But thanks be to God, I have been reminded of who I am in Christ Jesus! I am loved, a child of the promise, Jesus’ friend, accepted, known by God, redeemed, and a member of Christ’s body”.

If you are a victim of “noise pollution,” know that you have the power within to silence the noise that is in your life. What is this noise you ask? It is the noise of “unbelief”. It raises its ugly head to distract you from the ultimate power source that lives on the inside of you. This noise wants to make you doubt who you are in Christ Jesus! And it wants to hinder what God is going to do for you!

Remember the story of Jarius, whose daughter had died? In Mark 5: 21-43, Jarius went to Jesus, and exclaimed, “Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live.” As the story unfolds, Jesus arrives at Jarius’ home and “saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly.” Jesus responds, “Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping.’ And they laughed at him.”

Knowing what He was going to do for Jarius, the text informs us, “Then he put them all outside...” If Jesus had to the put the noise of unbelief outside to do what he had intended to do for Jarius (raise his daughter from the dead because of Jarius’ trust in Him), should we not put the noise of unbelief out of our lives so that Jesus can do for us likewise? My sisters and brothers, silence the noise; annihilate the noise; exterminate the noise; and obliterate the noise

of unbelief, and exchange it for total trust in God, so that the Lord of Lords, and King of Kings may do a great work for you!

Submitted by the Reverend Dr. Valerie Andrews

ABC Announcements

Fall Retreat and Annual Meeting Leader Announced

The Ministers Council of the ABCUSA is happy to announce that the Rev. Kym McNair will lead our fall retreat and annual meeting, which will be held at Tuscarora Conference Center in Mt. Bethel, PA, from October 28 to 31.



Our theme is from Isaiah 43:19: "I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."

More details on this fall meeting will be forthcoming. However, we hope you will hold the dates for this event in a picturesque setting.

Rev. McNair is the descendant of enslaved Africans, Jamaican immigrants, community organizers, preachers, and teachers and carries their legacies as she works to address the oppressions that are impacting all of humanity, and especially the ways systemic racism disempowers Black women and girls. Professionally, Rev. McNair organizes on behalf of all people who have experienced the imposition of power and control in their intimate relationships with their partners.

Kym has spoken on panels, facilitated conversations for religious and civic organizations across Westchester and has consulted with local congregations endeavoring to incorporate anti-racism principles into their theology. Kym serves on the Board of Directors of Caring for the Hungry and Homeless (CHHOP) and the Westchester Womens Agenda.

A lifelong fan of sci-fi and fantasy, she enjoys Afro- and African futurism fiction, where the protagonists are women. Whether she is out walking her rescue dog, Simba, or tending to her gardens, she dreams of a world in the not-so-distant future when, like the protagonists in her favorite literary genre, Black women's voices are heard, and their leadership is followed, and their lives are protected.

***Mark your calendars to Save the Date - October 28-31!
Registration information coming soon.***

ABNS: ABC of Vermont and New Hampshire Announces Opening of Applications for Executive Minister

KING OF PRUSSIA, PA (ABNS 6/24/24)—The American Baptist Churches of Vermont and New Hampshire region has announced the opening of applications for its next Executive Minister. The Executive Minister will serve as theologian, evangelist, visionary, conservator of the faith, and biblical role model, as well as promote a spirit of unity within the diverse array of churches represented within the region. The Executive Minister will be the spiritual leader, pastor to pastors, and chief executive officer of the American Baptist Churches of Vermont and New Hampshire, subject to the general direction of the board of trustees.

The application submission deadline for this role is August 1, 2024.

[View the full position announcement, including qualifications and specifics, here.](#)

Rev. Dr. Gina C. Jacobs-Strain was installed as General Secretary of American Baptist Churches USA on Thursday evening, June 13, at the Federated Church of Green Lake, Wis. The installation was an integral part of the American Baptist Churches USA Board of General Ministries meeting, which was held June 12-14



Be Strong, Be Courageous - Women and Girls' Conference

July 18-21, 2024, at Roanoke College in Salem, Virginia, where Women and Girls of all ages across the United States, including Puerto Rico, will gather for an opportunity to deepen their understanding of God's word and to unlock the leadership potential within them.

You can learn more about the speakers and agenda, and to register, go to abwomensministries.org/events.



SAVE THE DATE!

American Baptist Churches USA
BIENNIAL MISSION SUMMIT
July 3-6, 2025 | Omaha, NE

**COME SEEK
LIVING
WATER**

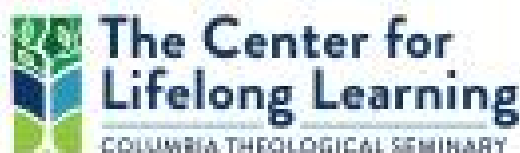
COME SEEK:

- ◆ New Life in Christ through dynamic worship services and learning opportunities.
- ◆ New Connections with other American Baptists. Build your network!
- ◆ What God has to share with you!

Come Seek Living Water

[Sign-up to Receive Information About the 2025 Biennial Mission Summit!](#)

Ecumenical Resources



Spiritual Dimension with the Enneagram Online August 7- 28, 2024

Course Description: The Enneagram is a psychospiritual model and invaluable tool for attuning to others and deepening our self-awareness. A map of our

inner landscape, the Enneagram reveals the automatic patterns that limit us and the false personal narratives that shrivel us. It takes awareness, patience, desire, and grace to move from our type's specific fears towards abundance and love.

[FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER CLICK HERE](#)

What's Next for Me?

Discerning Your Next or Second Career Ministry Calling August 26-28, 2024

Course Description: Find your life-giving ministry career in this guided and practical process for discerning your ministry vocation. Whether you are looking to discover your vocational passion, change your ministry context, enter a new field, or discern a post-retirement second career, this practical program will provide both method and process to discover your next calling.

[FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER CLICK HERE](#)

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 August issue, send these to ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org by July 26.



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**

Ministers Council ABCUSA | 221 S High Street | West Chester, PA 19382 US

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