



April 2025 Newsletter



"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." -Romans 15:13

From the Leadership Team

Is Lent for Baptists?
by Rev. Linda M. Bergeon

As I sat with a group of pastors from 4 mainline denominations to plan Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday joint services they were surprised that I, a Baptist, not only knew about Lent but had often participated in services during Lent. That conversation led me to thinking about Baptists and Lent which led me to ponder the question: is Lent for Baptists?



Did you know prior to the 1970s, most Baptists did not observe Lent. Historically Lent customs have been practiced by Roman Catholics, Anglicans, and some Protestant groups who engage in acts of penance, voluntary fasts, and who may practice some form of self-denial.

In the years since then many Baptist congregations have begun to observe at least some if not all of these customs. As a result, Baptist theologians have weighed in with arguments for and against such practices with a few landing somewhere in between. For example, Jim Denison, former theologian in residence for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, suggests that Lent is a spiritual discipline practiced for "more than 17 centuries by the vast majority of Christians and is therefore a valid practice for today."

[READ MORE](#)

Walking Through Holy Week: A Prayer Journey for Ministers

As we enter the sacred days of Holy Week, we recognize the emotional and spiritual weight this time holds for those in ministry. The journey from Palm Sunday to Easter is one we lead for others—but it is also one we are called to walk ourselves.

We offer these daily prayers as a gift to nourish your spirit, center your calling, and remind you that you are not alone. Whether you use them in personal devotion, in worship, or as part of a communal reflection, may they be a source of strength, renewal, and hope.

Blessings to you in this holy season.

[DOWNLOAD PRAYERS](#)

YOU ARE INVITED:
**SABBATH-MINDED
MINISTRY**

Receiving Applications Now

This is an invitation to apply to a Cohort Group of Clergy and Pastors seeking more sustainable models of wellness in ministry. The cohort's purpose is to engage clergy and lay leaders in development of more sustainable models of wellness for clergy in their ministry context.

Application Deadline: May 1, 2025
Program: May 2025 - March 2026

Rev. Dr. Eugene Downing, Jr.

Rev. Jacki Belile

We're pleased to have received applicants for this cohort. **Deadline has been extended to May 1st.**

[Sustainable Models for Sabbath-Minded Ministry: An Info Session](#)
(Run Time 18:03)

[Sabbath-Minded Ministry Cohort Application Form](#)

Events and Webinars

CHAPTER REPS' CORNER -

3rd Tuesdays - 5pm Pacific/7pm Central/8pm Eastern

Next meeting - April 15

Convened by Rev. Dr. Dianthia Y. Gilmore,
National Coordinator of Chapter Representatives



On the Way to Glory

The season that my three adult children, Elijah, Uriah, and Alisha, left home for college was bitter-sweet. We were family-oriented, which has made us tight-knitted today. Our earlier family activities centered around our children. We provided the necessary cultural experiences for assisting them to become productive adults. They attended the various museums, weekly trips to the library, petting farms at the zoo, Sea World, bike riding as a family, nature walks, Friday's game night, and amusement parks. Our yard was always full of a host of other children that we ministered to and included in our outings.

At an early age, Thomas and I modelled the importance of family, quiet time, and academic excellence. We had weekly Bible study at home with our children, arts and craft, coloring books depictions of God's love for them, such as Jesus sitting and conversing with the children. There were summer Christian camps where more solid food was provided: the sin nature of humanity and the consequence of such. Perhaps, it was too much or not enough. For as they entered teen years, there seemed to be a forsaking of home and God. For at the age of fourteen, my sweet and respectful children became strangers. No longer was the home the centermost place for learning, fun, and living out Godly principles. Now, peers, tv, and other outside influences became their new way of living and being. It was so traumatizing that I conducted a workshop at a large conference titled, Whose Kids Are These? I imagine God has asked the same question, as He watches His beloved assimilate and forsake what is right in His sight, to appease the flesh, ego, and others.

[READ MORE](#)



We will not host our monthly gathering on Maundy Thursday. Instead, we commend these resources for your personal reflection on themes of the day. Then call it-

MAUNDY THURSDAY REFLECTION/WORSHIP RESOURCES

Thursday, April 17, 2025

Maundy Thursday invites us into the Upper Room—into intimacy, vulnerability, and love. We remember the Last Supper, Jesus' commandment to love one another, and the radical act of footwashing. This toolkit offers a simple, participatory order of worship to mark this holy night.

[DOWNLOAD TOOLKIT](#)

SAVE THE DATE! MC Live in May - 2nd Thursday (not 3rd)

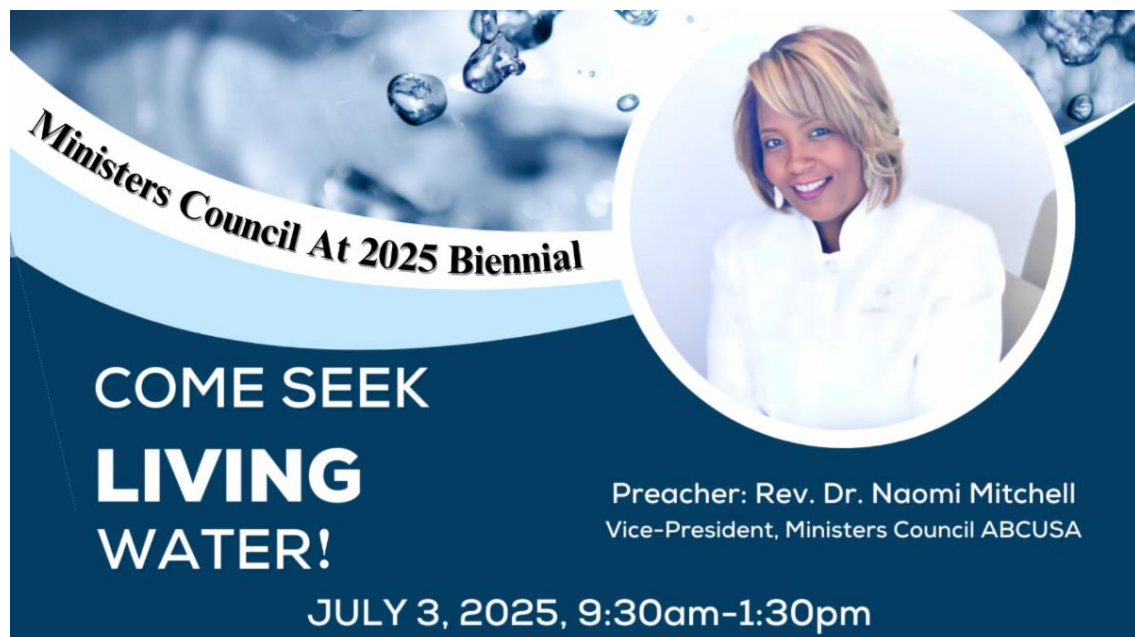
**All God's People -
Intercultural Work as
Pentecostal Ministry**
May 8, 2025
5pm Pacific/7pm Central/8pm Eastern



Join us for conversation with Rev. Dr. Marie Onwubuariri, Director of Intercultural Ministries for ABHMS. Marie will share resources and vision for growing in our intercultural ministry competency.

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

[Quote and Bio](#)

A promotional graphic for an event. It features a dark blue background with a light blue curved banner at the top left containing the text 'Ministers Council At 2025 Biennial'. Below the banner, the text 'COME SEEK LIVING WATER!' is written in large, white, bold letters. To the right of this text is a circular portrait of Rev. Dr. Naomi Mitchell, a woman with short blonde hair, wearing a white jacket. Below the portrait, the text 'Preacher: Rev. Dr. Naomi Mitchell Vice-President, Ministers Council ABCUSA' is written in white. At the bottom of the graphic, the date and time 'JULY 3, 2025, 9:30am-1:30pm' are displayed in white.

SAVE THE DATE!

Join us on July 3rd for our Biennial Program "Come, Seek LIVING WATER". 9:30am-1:30pm (concludes w/ lunch buffet). Attendees will gather for grounding in worship, fellowship, healing ritual, Biblical proclamation and lunch.

[REGISTER TODAY!](#)

STUDY CIRCLES - OASES FOR LEARNING AND RENEWAL

In these challenging times, some are

finding a renewed sense of oases in the wilderness. The form of the oases may vary but it sure frequently occurs in the timeless gift of dedicating TIME for study, sharing and wrestling. Remember our established model of Together in Ministry (TIM) Covenant Groups, and that we have grant funds to help support those convening groups this year. These typically span at least one year and often much longer. Apply at our website. www.ministerscouncil.com



Other oases may be [READ MORE](#)

National Updates

NEED A GRANT? WE'RE HERE TO HELP...



The Ministers Council is pleased to announce we now have access to Grant Station Inc., an organization dedicated to assisting nonprofits in identifying potential funding sources for their programs or projects.

To obtain a list of potential grant sources please email information about the program or project for which you are seeking funds to Rev. Linda M. Bergeon at lbergeon@abccpc.org. Upon receipt of your request she will generate a list of grants you may be eligible for.



You have time to **Join or Renew** Your Membership for 2025

The Ministers Council has been inspiring ministerial excellence to the glory of Jesus Christ since 1935! We're committed to being "Together in Ministry." Learn more about current commitments to you [HERE](#). Click the button to join or renew today and continue being part of this vital community.

[A message from the President](#)

We look forward to serving you!

Join/Renew
NOW

Prayers and Milestones



God of mercy, justice, and steadfast presence,

We lift before you the people of Myanmar in the wake of the recent earthquake. Amid crumbled homes and fractured hearts, hold close all who grieve, all who are injured, and all who have been displaced from the safety of shelter and community.

Be the sure ground beneath the feet of first responders, medical teams, and all offering aid.

Grant wisdom and courage to leaders guiding the path of recovery, that their decisions may be rooted in compassion and equity.

We remember especially our sisters and brothers in the ABC family—those with ancestral ties to Myanmar, and those whose ministries are woven in solidarity and love with its people. May they feel the strength of our collective prayers and presence, even from afar.

Stir our hearts, O God, beyond compassion into commitment.

Mobilize us to respond with generosity, advocacy, and accompaniment—whatever form of solidarity this moment requires.

Let our hands be extensions of your healing, our voices echoes of your justice, and our lives witnesses to your peace.

Where buildings have fallen, raise up hope.

Where spirits are shaken, bring calm.

Where despair threatens, plant seeds of resurrection.

We pray all this in the name of Christ,

who does not stand apart from suffering but walks with us

Even on trembling ground.

Amen.



Dr. Raimundo Barreto Honored: In March 2025, Dr. Raimundo Barreto was named the recipient of the prestigious Luke Mowbray Ecumenical Award. This award recognizes individuals who have demonstrated exceptional dedication to ecumenical work, fostering Christian unity at various levels.

Dr. Susan Gillies Celebrated: Dr. Susan Gillies has been honored as the 2025 recipient of the Cora and John Sparrowk President's Award. This distinguished award will be presented during the 2025 American Baptist Churches Biennial Mission Summit in Omaha, Nebraska.



O God of grace and glory,

As we enter the sacred days of Holy Week, **we lift before you all who lead your Church.** Pastors, chaplains, deacons, musicians, worship planners, educators, and faithful volunteers—those who pour out their hearts in word, song, and service.

Prayer for Easter Sunday Worship

*Risen Christ,
Today we rejoice!
The stone is rolled away, the tomb is empty,
and your love has broken open every grave.
You have conquered death,
and with you, we rise.
Let this sanctuary echo with Alleluias
not just in our songs, but in our lives.
May the weary find hope,
the broken find healing,
the outcast find welcome,
and all creation find joy in your rising.
Fill us with the light of your resurrection,
that we may go forth as witnesses to life that cannot be silenced,
and love that cannot die.
Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!
Amen.*

Do you have milestones or prayer requests to share for May? Send to Ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org by April 26.

ABC Announcements

New Devotional and Earth Day Toolkit from Creation Justice Network

The Creation Justice Network of ABCUSA has released a timely new resource: American Baptist Meditations on The Power of God. This devotional and Earth Day toolkit features reflections from eight American Baptist voices and invites churches to explore how God's power is revealed in creation, scripture, and our collective ecological witness. Rooted in *The Power of God: From Extractive Theology to Transformative Faith* by Creation Justice Ministries, the resource includes seven reflections suitable for use during Holy Week, Earth Action Month, or seasonal programming. It reframes theological understandings of power—from control and exploitation to a vision of God's power as relational, life-giving, and restorative.

An accompanying toolkit offers worship materials and action steps to help congregations engage in faithful Earth Day observances and creation care ministries.

The devotional is available as a free download at abcreationjustice.org. For more information, contact Amber Naylor, Program Leader of the Creation Justice Network, at ambern@abcmc.org.



[READ PRESS RELEASE](#)



ABWM Telethon – April 12, 2025

Join American Baptist Women's Ministries for a live Telethon Fundraiser on Saturday, April 12, from 5–8 PM ET on Zoom and Facebook. Help raise \$30,000+ to support ministries with women and girls through music, stories, and opportunities to give.

[Learn more](#)

International Ministries' Virtual 5K: Miles for Mission

International Ministries has launched its first-ever virtual 5K event, "Miles for Mission," scheduled during Holy Week 2025, from Palm Sunday, April 13, through Easter Sunday, April 20. This event invites individuals, families, and communities to walk 5 kilometers together in support of global mission work. Participating in this event can serve as a meaningful Easter activity, embodying the spirit of walking together in faith and mission.

[MORE INFORMATION](#)

The Generosity Project

The United Mission Toolkit provides comprehensive information about United Mission, the primary funding source for ABCUSA's mission and ministry efforts. While it focuses on stewardship and giving, the toolkit includes materials that can be utilized during the Easter season to highlight themes of renewal and mission.

[INFO SHEET](#)





You're Invited to the 2025 American Baptist Churches Biennial!

Get ready for an unforgettable experience at the 2025 Biennial Mission Summit, kicking off on Thursday afternoon, July 3, 2025! From July 3 to July 6, we have a fantastic lineup of events and activities planned just for you. Be sure to check the schedule— we can't wait for you to experience all the wonderful happenings in 2025, and we don't want you to miss a single moment!

[MORE INFORMATION & TO REGISTER](#)

Ecumenical Resources

Webinar: Stand with Refugees

Tuesday, April 8 - 12pm Pacific/2pm
Central/3pm Eastern



Church World Service invites you to turn faith into action through the Ash Wednesday Ecumenical Declaration: Defending Refuge. Whether you've already signed or are just learning about it, join us for a special webinar on Tuesday, April 8 at 3:00 PM EDT.

"Beyond the Signature" will feature CWS President Rick Santos, Director of Policy Danilo Zak, and faith leaders from across the country sharing practical ways to support refugees and immigrants.

Don't miss this chance to deepen your congregation's commitment to welcome.

[Register](#)



Enhance Your Caregiving Skills with the On-Demand Spiritual First Aid Certificate Course

Looking to deepen your ability to provide spiritual and emotional support? The On-Demand Spiritual First Aid Certificate Course offers flexible, self-paced training designed to equip you with trauma-informed, biblically-grounded caregiving techniques. Through the step-by-step BLESS CPR framework, you'll learn to effectively assist individuals facing challenges ranging from everyday stress to significant trauma. Most participants complete the core sessions in approximately six hours, with optional bonus content available. [READ MORE](#)

Reflective Leadership Grants – Applications Open!

Leadership Education at Duke Divinity is offering Reflective Leadership Grants of up to \$15,000 to support Christian leaders seeking "balcony time"—a chance to reflect on accomplishments, broaden perspectives, and discern next steps in their ministry. These grants are ideal for lay or clergy leaders at pivotal moments in their organizations. The application deadline is May 2, 2025, with funds available starting September 1, 2025. Grantees are also invited to a convening in Durham, NC, from October 27–29, 2025. For more details and to apply, visit: <https://leadership.divinity.duke.edu/what-we-offer/grants/reflective-leadership-grants/>



advaya

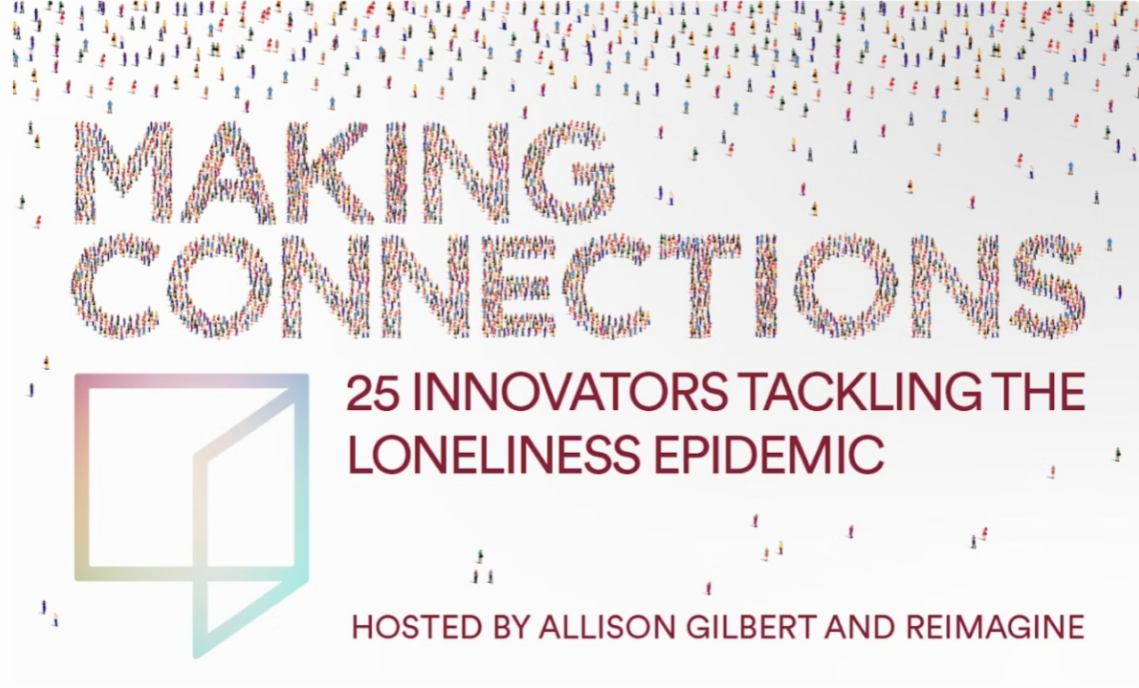
The Christian Mystics:

Wisdom for Our Time

Join our free webinar with theologian Matthew Fox and Ruby Reed as they explore the wisdom of Christian mystics—visionaries who connected deeply with the divine, celebrated life's beauty, and stood against injustice.

09-04-25 FREE WEBINAR 6pm GMT

Join us for an enlightening webinar, "The Christian Mystics: Wisdom for Our Time," on April 9, 2025, at 6 PM BST. Hosted by Advaya, this session features renowned theologian Dr. Matthew Fox and Ruby Reed of Total Yoga, who will delve into the timeless insights of Christian mysticism and their relevance in today's world. This event is free and offers a unique opportunity to explore profound spiritual teachings that can enrich your personal and ministerial journey. For more details and to register, visit [Advaya's webinars page](#).



25 Changemakers Combatting the Loneliness Epidemic

Join Reimagine and host Allison Gilbert on April 17, 2025, for "Making Connections: 25 Innovators Tackling the Loneliness Epidemic," a virtual event showcasing 25 leaders with groundbreaking projects aimed at fostering togetherness and reducing loneliness. Each innovator will deliver a concise, two-minute presentation highlighting how their work is transforming lives. This event is part of the broader "Making Connections" series, which continues with more in-depth discussions on May 22 and June 12, focusing on imaginative solutions to combat social isolation.

[MORE INFORMATION](#)



2025 IPD Summer Programs in Basel, Switzerland

Early Bird Application Deadline: April 30, 2025

Join the **2025 Summer Programs of Institute for Peace and Dialogue (IPD)**, which will be held in **Basel, Switzerland**.

- Basel Global Peace Conference: 4 August, 2025
- 15th Summer Academy: 5 - 15 August, 2025
- 3 Month Summer Research Program: 5 August - 30 October, 2025

[MORE INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION](#)

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 May 2025 issue, send these to ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org by April 26.



How to reach us:

- Phone: 215-469-1859

Office Hours: Tuesday - Friday
2-5pm (CT), other times by
appointment.



Stay connected

- Visit us at our **website**.
- Join us on **Facebook**

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