

## Summer 2025 Newsletter



### **Prayer for Rest and Renewal**

God of all seasons,  
Grant us rest for our bodies  
and renewal for our spirits.  
Give us quiet moments to breathe,  
time with those we love,  
and wisdom to pause when the work can wait.  
Refresh us by your Spirit,  
that we may return to our callings with joy.  
Amen.

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## **Keeping Watch from the High Tower**

The prophets often speak of the watchman on the high tower—a figure stationed where the horizon meets the sky, looking out for what is coming. Habakkuk says, “I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts; I will look to see what God will say to me” (Habakkuk 2:1).



In ministry, we are called to a similar posture—attentive to the movements of God, alert to the needs of God’s people, and aware of the world’s changing winds. But biblical “watching” is not simply about scanning for danger; it is a balanced rhythm of rest, sustainability, wisdom, vigilance, and action.

- **Rest** – Even the watchman sleeps. Elijah, after his long night of confrontation and fear, was met by God with food, water, and time to rest (1 Kings 19:5–8). Without rest, our watch grows clouded and our vision blurs.
- **Sustainability** – The watchman’s task is ongoing. Long obedience requires pacing ourselves, stewarding our bodies, minds, and spirits so

we can remain faithful for the long road (Isaiah 40:31).

- **Wisdom** – Wisdom is what allows us to discern between the passing shadow and the true approach of God’s call. Solomon prayed for “a discerning heart” (1 Kings 3:9)—we pray the same as we watch.
- **Vigilance** – Like Nehemiah’s builders who worked with one hand and held a weapon in the other (Nehemiah 4:17), vigilance keeps us alert and ready to respond.
- **Action** – Watching is not an end in itself. When the watchman sees the dawn or the danger, they sound the trumpet (Ezekiel 33:6). Seeing must lead to doing—bearing witness, speaking truth, and moving forward.

Ministry in our time requires the high tower perspective—eyes lifted, spirit attuned, feet grounded. We keep watch not out of fear, but in hope. We stay awake because we trust that God is at work, and we want to be ready to join in.

*Where is God inviting you to pause so that your vision and discernment remain clear?*

*Where is God inviting you to pause so that my vision and discernment remain clear? How does trusting God’s ongoing work shape the way you “keep watch” in your ministry?*

*Image: Desert View Watchtower*

## Staff Reflection

*The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.*

— Frederick Buechner

I’ve always loved this quote; I find it settling and challenging at the same time. Comforting and provoking. Self-examining without being self-centered. Buechner’s words have blessed many an “ahhh” moment of discernment and clarity for me, for many of us.

We minister in times of unprecedented change, power shifts, division and vulnerability. We may find ourselves struggling to know HOW, WHEN AND WHERE to invest our time and energy as leaders.



[READ MORE](#)

## Events and Webinars

3rd thursdays **mc live**  
WEBINAR SERIES



Isaiah 55:1a

Come, all you who are thirsty,  
come to the waters...

**MC Live August 21 2025**  
**5pm Pacific/ 7pm Central/ 8pm Eastern.**

Our summer “MC Live” series on the Biennial theme *Come Seek Living Water* concludes August 21. For our concluding session, join us for study and reflection on Isaiah 55:1-5, led by Rev. Jacki Belile. Our Interim Program Administrator and 8-year veteran of the national Leadership Team, Jacki will lead us in reflections on this text as she has used it in church growth consulting and retreat ministries for 20 years. We'll use Lectio Divina with the passage, then discuss the 3V's model (Vitality, Visibility, Vision) for FeastFirst: Church Growth from the Inside Out. Join us August 21 at 5pm Pacific/ 7pm Central/ 8pm Eastern.

**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

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## National Updates

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### **LEARNING GUIDE FOR CODE OF ETHICS NOW AVAILABLE -**

We are grateful and pleased to share that our “Public Release 1.0” edition of the Learning Guide for the Covenant and Code of Ethics was released on July 5th in Omaha at our Biennial Exhibit Booth and at our website. English and Spanish translations are now available at links below, with planning for additional translations underway. Download it today for study, conversation and feedback. Watch for details on Fall 2025 presentations and group study opportunities... and plan your own! We're grateful for editorial review, design, and translation assistance from Dr. Rachel Lawrence. Jan Rizzo, Wanda I. Pabellón García and Rev. Dr. Juan Ángel Gutiérrez Rodríguez (respectively). See complete roster of our diverse and hardworking editorial team on p. 37 of the Guide.



LEARNING GUIDE  
*on the*  
**Covenant and  
Code of Ethics**  
*for Ministerial Leaders*  
**American Baptist  
Churches-USA**

Inspiring Ministerial Excellence for the  
Glory of Jesus Christ Since 1935



[Click here for English version](#)

[Haga clic aqui para la version en Espanol.](#)

## Explore the Clergy Well-Being Hub

The Ministers Council's Well-Being Hub offers resources across nine dimensions of whole-person health—from spiritual to vocational to financial. It's designed to support clergy in every season of ministry.

Help us grow this collection! Send your favorite articles, tools, or ministries that support well-being to Jacki at [ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org](mailto:ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org).

Visit: [ministerscouncil.com/wb](https://ministerscouncil.com/wb)



## “COME, SEEK LIVING WATER” -

*Worship and Fellowship Central to our Biennial 2025 Presence*

Over one hundred people gathered for our July 3rd program featuring amazing music, powerful preaching, releasing ritual and the delight of deep and leisurely fellowship over a meal. Did you miss it? See the printed program [HERE](#).

Throughout the Biennial, colleagues familiar and unfamiliar with our mission spent time at our warm and hospitable booth set as a “living room of the Ministers Council.” Many seeds of nurture and collaboration were planted or



watered. May our presence and resources continue to be **refreshing** as we live out our 90-year old calling - ***inspiring ministerial excellence for the glory of Jesus Christ.***

***Our heartfelt gratitude for our Biennial planners and volunteers.***



***Photos from our Biennial Gathering. Photo Credit: Rev. Jerrod Huguenot***

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## **LEADERSHIP TEAM TRANSITION**

We give thanks to Rev. Linda Bergeon for her spirit and gifted service this year as the Coordinator of TIM/EIM Grants. She will be stepping out of this role this month, and Rev. Dr. Matthew Sturtevant has been appointed by the Leadership Team to complete her term, ending 12/31/26. Thank you, Linda and Matt!



**Rev. Linda Bergeon**



**Rev. Dr. Matthew Sturtevant**

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## **GRANTS FOR CLERGY GROUPS & CHAPTERS**

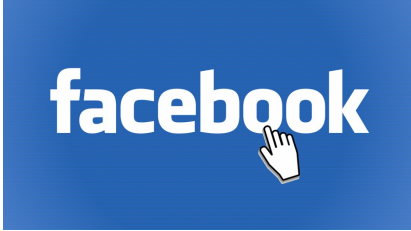
Remember that members are eligible for “Together in Ministry” Clergy Group Grants and “Excellence in Ministry” Chapter Grants. Visit [www.ministerscouncil.com](http://www.ministerscouncil.com) for more info and application forms.

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## **Stay Connected!**

Looking for a place to connect with colleagues in ministry?

- Join the Ministers Council Facebook Group – A welcoming space for conversation, encouragement, and peer support with ministers from across the country. Ask questions, share resources, and walk alongside one another in ministry.
- Follow our Facebook Page – Stay in the loop on upcoming events, new resources, and stories that inspire.



Be part of the conversation. Be part of the community. Be part of what God is doing.

→ [FACEBOOK PAGE](#)

→ [FACEBOOK GROUP](#)

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## Let's Keep the Connection Growing

If this newsletter has encouraged or inspired you, share it! Forward it to a colleague, friend, or regional/denominational staff who might not be on our list. Together, we can make sure every minister serving in every setting stays connected to our 3C's conversations - for Centeredness, for Collegiality, for Competence. FOR CHRIST



If you received this from a friend and want to get it directly, you can subscribe [here](#).

Together, we strengthen the circle. Thank you for helping us spread the word!

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## Prayers and Milestones

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God of wisdom and wonder, we lift to You students, teachers, and school staff as a new year begins. Bless the joy of learning, the courage to ask questions, and the patience to listen well. Protect all from harm, and plant seeds of kindness and justice in every classroom. Amen.

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Holy One, guide the hearts and minds of leaders in every land. Grant them wisdom to seek the common good, courage to stand for what is right, and humility to serve with justice and compassion. In every decision, may peace be the measure and love the goal. Amen.

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Creator God, the winds, waters, and fires seem fierce in these days. We pray for all who have lost homes, livelihoods, or loved ones to storms, floods, droughts, and wildfires. Strengthen the hands of those who bring aid, and stir in us the will to care for Your creation so all may live in safety. Amen.

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**Do you have milestones or prayer requests to share for September? Send to [Ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org](mailto:Ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org) by August 26.**

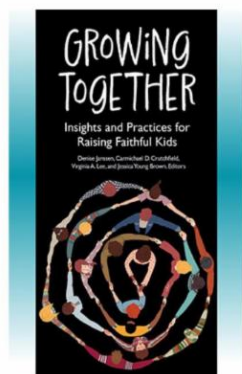
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## ABC Announcements

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**Featured Book**



Available on [JudsonPress.com](https://www.judsonpress.com)

# Judson Press Book Club

Monday, August 18th 12:30PM ET on Zoom

Join Dr. Cheryl Price for a special interview with Denise Janssen, Rev. Dr. Carmichael Crutchfield, Jessica Young-Brown and Virginia Lee as they discuss their latest Judson Press release, ***Growing Together.***



Denise Janssen



Rev. Dr. Carmichael Crutchfield



Jessica Young-Brown



Virginia Lee

Register and join our bookclub: [bit.ly/judsonpressbookclub](https://bit.ly/judsonpressbookclub)

Can't join us live? Watch the replay on our Facebook & Youtube pages @JudsonPress



Facebook: Judson Press / Youtube: Judson Press

## Unraveling the Myths of Grief

A Free Online Gathering — August 26–29, 2025, 9 am PT / 12 pm ET

In a world that often rushes to "fix" grief, this free four-day event invites participants into a sacred space where heartbreak is honored rather than dismissed. Guided by Mirabai Starr and Willow Brook, "Unraveling the Myths of Grief" gently dismantles harmful beliefs like "there's a right and wrong way to grieve" or "spiritual people don't grieve," and reframes grief as a transformative journey of love, healing, and connection. Through writing, meditation, poetry, and community, you'll be invited to affirm your authentic grief—personal and collective—as sacred ground. [More information](#)

ABHMS CENTER FOR  
CONTINUOUS LEARNING

IL INTERCULTURAL  
LEADERSHIP  
INSTITUTE



Immerse yourself in a dynamic, bilingual certificate course designed to deepen your cultural awareness and equip you to be a bridge-builder in today's diverse world. Join fellow learners for three cohort-based, live Zoom sessions—September 4, 11, and 18 (7:00–8:15 pm ET)—and explore key themes like cultural identity, implicit bias, and intercultural dynamics. Led by Rev. Dr. Marie Onwubuariri and Rev. Abigail Medina-Betancourt, this experience empowers faith leaders to enrich their communities and become agents of transformative change.

[Click here for more information and to register](#)



Join Us At  
**RENEW AND LEAD:  
A WORKSHOP FOR MINISTRY WELLNESS**

Our Speakers Will Be:



Rev. Betty Wright-Riggins  
Chaplain and Director of Religion and  
Spiritual Life at Ursinus College



Rev. Dr. Patricia Murphy, BCC, GRMS  
Board Certified Chaplain,  
Director of Spiritual Caregivers, Ecclesiastical  
Endorser for American Baptist Home Mission  
Societies (ABHMS)

This event is an extension of our leadership  
wellness workshop series

**ABCUSA**  
1015 W. 9<sup>TH</sup> AVE.  
King of Prussia, PA 19406  
Saturday, September 13, 2025  
9:30 AM - 3:00 PM

To register visit: [www.abc-usa.org/events](http://www.abc-usa.org/events)

## **Renew and Lead: A Workshop for Ministry Wellness**

**Saturday, September 13, 2025**

9:30 AM - 3:00 PM

King of Prussia, PA

American Baptist Churches USA invites you to be part of the concluding session of our three-part Workshop series, Renew & Lead: A Workshop for Ministry Wellness, on September 13, 2025, from 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania.

Ministry leadership is a sacred calling—rewarding yet often demanding. As part of our Leadership Wellness series, this in-person Workshop creates intentional space for clergy and ministry leaders to pause, reflect, and nurture their spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being. Together, we will strengthen relationships with God and equip participants with practical tools for sustainable ministry.

Through a rich blend of presentations, group reflection, and worship, attendees will discover the value of spiritual direction in sustaining their work, gain wisdom from experienced ministry leaders, and connect meaningfully with others who share their heart for service.

Rev. Betty Wright-Riggins, Chaplain and Director of Religion and Spiritual Life at Ursinus College, and Rev. Dr. Patricia Murphy, Ecclesiastical Endorser for American Baptist Churches USA and Director of Spiritual Caregivers at American Baptist Home Mission Societies will be our key presenters. Join us for a transformative experience as we prioritize wellness in leadership!

### **Learn more about the Presenters:**

**Rev. Betty Wright-Riggins** is an American Baptist ordained minister and the Principal (CEO) of TrustOne Ministries, a ministry of Spiritual Direction/Spiritual Formation, Church Consultancy and Congregational Transformation.

She currently serves as the Chaplain and Director of Religion and Spiritual Life at Ursinus College and is an adjunct professor at Eastern University, teaching Christian Spirituality. She is a spiritual director on staff at the Middleton Counseling Center in Bryn Mawr, PA and provides spiritual direction at The Common Place in Philadelphia, PA. Rev. Betty is a lecturer and was facilitator of practice at Oasis Ministry for Spiritual Development, and spiritual director to staff and students at Princeton Theological Seminary.

Rev. Betty engages an active spiritual director practice and leads retreats. She is a contributor to the recently published book, "Kaleidoscope: Broadening the Palette in the Art of Spiritual Direction," and the classic, "Those Preaching Women, Volume 1." She often teaches and lectures in the areas of spiritual direction practice, spiritual formation, spiritual disciplines and African American Spirituality.



**Rev. Dr. Patricia Murphy** is the Ecclesiastical Endorser for American Baptist Churches USA, giving leadership to the American Baptist National Network of Chaplains, Pastoral Counselors and Specialized Ministers and the National Coordinator of Chaplains, Pastoral Counselors and Specialized Ministers at American Baptist Home Mission Societies.

She is a Board-Certified Chaplain (APC) with experiences as a Palliative Care & Protestant Chaplain, Bio Medical Ethicist, and with Labor Relations. She is the chair for the Association of Religious Endorsing Bodies (AREB), a Member-at-Large of the National Conference Military and Armed Forces (NCMAF) and chair of the Executive Committee for Veterans Affairs Chaplains (ECVAC).

Dr. Murphy has also served as a national conference facilitator on racial trauma, bio-medical ethics, palliative care, leadership practices, ministry and vocation beyond the pulpit, and has discussed topics with respect to pastoral counseling, chaplaincy, and spiritual direction.

[More information and registration](#)



**Equip Your Ministry for a Changing Climate**

This fall, the Buttry Center for Peace and Nonviolence at Central Seminary invites pastors, ministers, and faith leaders to engage deeply with creation care in the context of climate change. Both opportunities are free of charge thanks to grant funding.

Learn more & register: [Buttry Center for Peace and Nonviolence](#)  
Because caring for God’s creation is not optional—it’s central to our calling.

**Ecumenical Resources**

# Pursuing An Unhurried Ministry

A six-week Zoom cohort for pastors who want to reorient their soul, regain their sanity, and re-fix their eyes on what matters.

ENROLL



**Click above image for more information and to enroll**

# STEEPLE to STREET



## From Steeple to Street—Activate Your Mission

Join us Sept 19–20, 2025, at Messiah University for 24 hours of vision, tools, and inspiration to help everyday churches impact their communities. With Mitch Marcello, Kris Beckert, and Rev. Dr. Eliseo Mejía, you'll gain practical strategies, fresh ideas, and renewed passion for ministry beyond the walls. Your church. Your neighborhood. God's mission.

[FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER](#)

## 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 September 2025 issue, send these to [ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org](mailto:ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org) by August 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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