

Together in Ministry



September 2025 Newsletter



Do All to the Glory of God

“All things are lawful,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful,” but not all things build up. Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor. Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience.

Complete reading: [1 Corinthians 10:23-33](#)

Staff Reflection

Finding Sanctuary Together

“The times are urgent; let us slow down.” —Bayo Akomolafe

That provoking statement rings true and convicts me this day. I suspect it might also call to many of you. Choosing to surrender and to obey its wisdom for the sake of prayer, fellowship, study, solitude and “holy loitering” (thanks, Len Sweet) is an integral part of our spiritual growth. It’s a subject in which we rightly invest collegial conversations. How are you doing on this path, a path we’ve begun calling “sabbath-minded ministry” at the Ministers Council?



[READ MORE](#)

Leadership Team Reflection



Find a Peer Group!—Rev. Dr. Matt Sturtevant Returns to Help Lead TIM/EIM

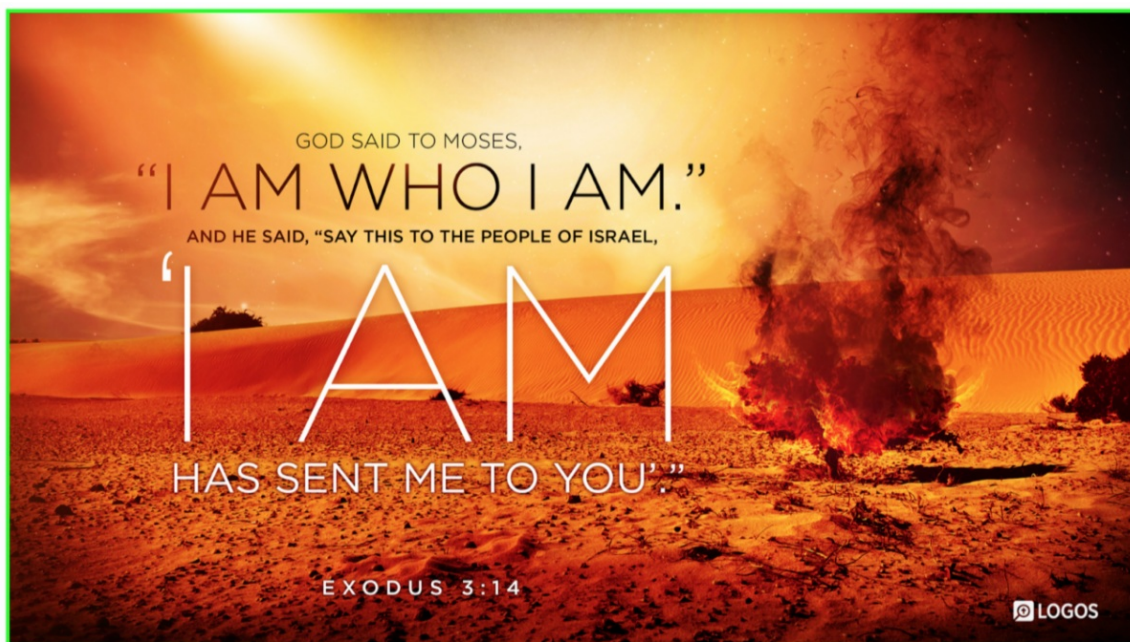
It is with humble gratitude that I have accepted the invitation to re-join the national leadership team, in the role of Coordinator of TIM/EIM grants. I am thankful to join the team under Rebecca's phenomenal leadership, and am excited to be a part of the TIM/EIM story! Early in my ministry, my mentor pastor told me "find a peer group!" [It didn't hurt that it was Joe Kutter, then president of the Ministers Council national team, and involved in the process for ABC-USA MC to receive money to create the first TIM grants!] He was right then, and it is still good advice now. Over the years, I have described myself as a peer group junkie, and TIM groups have been an important part of my vocational support and care throughout my ministry.



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Together in Ministry,
Rev. Dr. Matt Sturtevant

Events and Webinars



MC Connects September 16 9am Central Time

Join us for this monthly time of devotions, fellowship and resource sharing. Our opening text for September 16 and October 14 (9am Central) will be the Call of Moses in Ex. 3. Join us to share journeys, current resources and needs and learn about our national Ministers Council programs to support Centeredness, Collegiality and Competence. We welcome conversation with Matt Sturtevant, our Coordinator of Grants for TIM (clergy groups) and EIM (chapter grants). We'll also make a brief presentation on the Learning Guide

for the Code of Ethics now available.

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

Or call in by dialing: 1- 312-626-6799 Meeting ID: 295 416 6836

CHAPTER REPS' CORNER

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

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



Next Meeting:

Tuesday, September 16, 7pm Central

Welcome back, Fellow Colleagues!

I pray your summer was enjoyable and restful. I enjoyed my summer. I attended our well-organized ABCUSA-MC Biennial and the Alpha Kappa Alpha Leadership Conference in Anaheim, CA, with about 30,000 other women. Both conferences were awesome. However, August was the real treat. It is my annual sabbatical for one entire month away from running, going, and doing. Read [More](#)

[ZOOM](#)



SABBATH-MINDED MINISTRY



Rev. Dr. Eugene
Downing, Jr.



Rev. Jacki Belile



God's Invitation: Sabbath-Minded Ministry for This Year

MC LIVE

September 18, 2025

5pm Pacific/ 7pm Central/ 8pm Eastern.

Join us as we share encouragement and insights on keeping "sabbath-minded" on an ongoing basis. Led by Rev. Dr. Eugene Downing, Jr, Pastor of New Hope Baptist Church in Denver, and Rev. Jacki Belile, Interim Program Administrator of Ministers Council ABCUSA.

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

National Updates

Discover the Ministers Council 2025 Brochure!

We're thrilled to share our brand-new **Ministers Council 2025 Brochure**—a warm invitation into our vibrant national community of American Baptist ministers. Download it now and use it to share our mission: fostering **Centeredness, Collegiality, and Competence** in ministry!

In this concise yet rich two-page resource, you'll find:

- **An invitation to join a longstanding family of ministry leaders.** We've been serving since 1935, supporting one another through retreats, peer learning, local chapters, and congregational connection. (ministerscouncil.com)

[READ MORE](#)

[DOWNLOAD BROCHURE](#)



**The
Ministers
Council
ABCUSA**

*Inspiring Ministerial Excellence
for the Glory of Jesus Christ
Since 1935*

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

[READ MORE](#)

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.](#)

COMMUNICATIONS/MEMBERSHIP TASK FORCE SERVING YOU—

We Seek A Variety of Volunteers for 3-6 Months

Over the past year, we've been hard at work in order to improve our communications in the areas of mission, strategy and contact management. We sought both internal and external feedback. We enlisted Ms. Jan Rizzo, a communications professional with many years of experience serving the ELCA denomination and our longtime newsletter editor, to guide and aid u. Last Fall, she met with our Communications/Membership Task Force, our Facebook Admin, and members of the Leadership Team. Since then, she and Rev. Jacki Belile, have worked toward implementation of numerous improvements, as well as significant product development for our Biennial booth and July 3rd gathering in Omaha.

The Communications/Membership Task Force will seek to close out its current imagined short-term tenure by March 1, 2026. In the coming months, we seek additional input from committed members, as well as volunteers for various contact management related projects that will help us greatly improve our contact lists and plans for the future. If you care about our relevance and reach, and can invest a little or a modest amount of time, please email Jacki at ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org.

Attention “Lifetime Members” – Let’s Reconnect!

Back in 2013, the Ministers Council updated our membership structure, phasing out the complimentary Lifetime Member category for new retirees while continuing to honor those already enrolled (or those who retired in 2014 and requested this status).

If you are part of this grandfathered group and have not received your 2025 membership letter and card—or if you’ve missed previous years—we’d love to get you reconnected. Please reach out to us at: ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org

And mark your calendar:

Lifetime Members Zoom – A Time for Sharing, Support, and Strategizing Next Steps

Wednesday, October 1
2:00 PM Central

Join fellow Lifetime Members on Zoom for conversation, connection, and next steps together! <https://ministrelife.zoom.us/j/2954166836>
Or call in by dialing: 1- 312-626-6799 Meeting ID: 295 416 6836

Connect and Grow with Us

Looking for encouragement and connection with fellow ministers?

Join the Ministers Council Facebook Group – A supportive space to share questions, resources, and prayer with colleagues from across the country.



Follow the Ministers Council Facebook Page – Keep up with events, new resources, and stories that inspire.

Be part of the conversation. Be part of the community. Be part of what God is doing among us. And don’t just join—invite a colleague in ministry to come along, too!

[FACEBOOK PAGE](#)
[FACEBOOK GROUP](#)

Chapter News

We’re grateful for the significant work of all our volunteer elected leaders and members of our chapters serving in their local settings. Remember to share your announcements with ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org so we can share with our Leadership team and pray for you and your work.

We are also working to support a variety of chapter revitalization efforts this Fall. Contact us so that we can support you in customized ways. We can share in listening, prayer, templates for proceeding.

Prayers and Milestones

Remembering Rev. Dr. David C. Gregg, PH.D

Colleagues from across the country gathered at North Shore Baptist Church in Chicago to honor the life and ministry of Rev. Dr. David C. Gregg, who most recently served as the Executive Minister of the American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago until his passing in June. Rev. Dr. Naomi Mitchell, President of the Ministers Council of Metro Chicago and Vice-President of Ministers Council ABCUSA presented presented this [resolution](#) on our behalf. Watch memorial video [HERE..](#)



A second memorial service will be held on Sunday, September 14, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. at First Baptist Church of Ann Arbor. Contact the [church](#) for broadcast information.

Together, we give thanks for his faithful leadership, scholarship, and friendship that blessed so many within and beyond the American Baptist family.

Executive Minister Installation

We celebrate with the American Baptist Churches of New York State and **Rev. Jerrod Hugenot** as they hold a service of installation for Rev. Hugenot as their new Executive Minister. The installation will take place on three dates this Fall (9/13, 10/4 and 11/15), allowing more opportunities to celebrate and gather across upstate New York and via Zoom!



[READ MORE](#)



Our faithful colleague **Rev. Jim Hopkins** is entering retirement after faithfully and fruitfully serving Lakeshore Baptist Church for 37 years and our Ministers' Council of Northern California for 6 years as president. (Thanks for continuing on, Jim! Join us across the miles in prayer as Jim's local community celebrates with dinner Sept. 12 and a final worship service on Sept. 14.

Perry J. Hopper Named MMBB CEO



MMBB Financial Services has announced the appointment of **Perry J. Hopper** as its new Chief Executive Officer. A longtime leader within MMBB, Hopper brings deep experience in ministry and financial services, continuing MMBB's mission of supporting clergy and church workers with retirement, financial, and benefits resources.

Hear our prayers

We ask for your prayers for **Rev. Dr. Naomi Mitchell's family** upon the passing of her nephew Alex.

Sovereign God,
We lift up the leaders of our nation. Grant them wisdom from above, that they may act with integrity, justice, and humility. Guard them from pride and selfish ambition, and guide them to seek what honors You and serves the good of all people.

Compassionate Lord,

You care for the widow, the orphan, and the stranger. Keep our eyes open to those who are hurting or in need. Strengthen Your church to be faithful in both word and deed, serving our neighbors with kindness and pointing always to Christ.

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

ABC Announcements



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. 9TH AVE.
King of Prussia, PA 19406
Saturday, September 13, 2025
9:30 AM - 3:00 PM

To register visit: www.abc-usa.org/events

Renew & Lead: A Workshop for Ministry Wellness

Saturday, September 13, 2025 | 9:30 AM – 3:00 PM | King of Prussia, PA
Ministry is rewarding—but also demanding. This concluding session of our Renew & Lead Workshop series offers clergy and ministry leaders a day to pause, reflect, and strengthen body, mind, and spirit. Through worship, presentations, and group reflection, participants will explore spiritual direction as a resource for sustainable leadership and connect with others who share their heart for ministry.

Key presenters include Rev. Betty Wright-Riggins (Ursinus College) and Rev. Dr. Patricia Murphy (American Baptist Churches USA/ABHMS), who bring deep experience in spiritual care, leadership, and formation.

[More information and registration](#)



New Fall Offerings from ABHMS CCL

The ABHMS Center for Continuous Learning is launching a range of new courses and gatherings this fall—equipping ministry leaders with timely skills and support. Upcoming topics include:

- Faithful Finance in Fraught Times
- More Skills for Community Chaplaincy
- Ministry Ethics and Healthy Boundaries
- Bridge Being: Space for Respite & Refueling
- Faithful Finance 101

- When Our Kids Are Not Okay

Discover the full schedule and register here: [New Offerings for Fall – ABHMS CCL](#)

Support for Your Mental Health & Vocational Wellness

Looking for support in ministry? MMBB Cares offers free counseling and coaching for clergy and their families—helping you access the mental health and vocational resources you need to thrive.

Learn more: www.mmbb.org/mmbb-cares

Email: mmbbcares@mmbb.org



Ecumenical Resources



**THE
AFTER PARTY**
TOWARD BETTER CHRISTIAN POLITICS

Feeling Weary? The Kingdom Belongs to You.

It's been nearly a year since one of the most contentious elections in American history, and many of us are still feeling the strain—fractured relationships, divided churches, and weary spirits. The After Party invites us to turn to Jesus' Beatitudes as a guide for renewal: not campaign slogans, but a new way of being rooted in humility, mercy, and peace.

This fall, join an eight-week journey through the Beatitudes, beginning with: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

[Read more and explore new resources here.](#)

THE CONTEMPLATIVE SUMMIT



FREE & ONLINE | SEPT. 25-28

REGISTER NOW!

Join thousands worldwide for the 2025 Contemplative Summit (Sept 25–28).

Theme: “The Spacious Heart: Holding Suffering with Love.”

Featuring Parker Palmer, Jacqui Lewis, Greg Boyle, Kathleen Norris + more.

Free • Online • Four days of renewal.

[Reserve your spot today!](#)

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 October 2025 issue, send these to ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org by September 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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