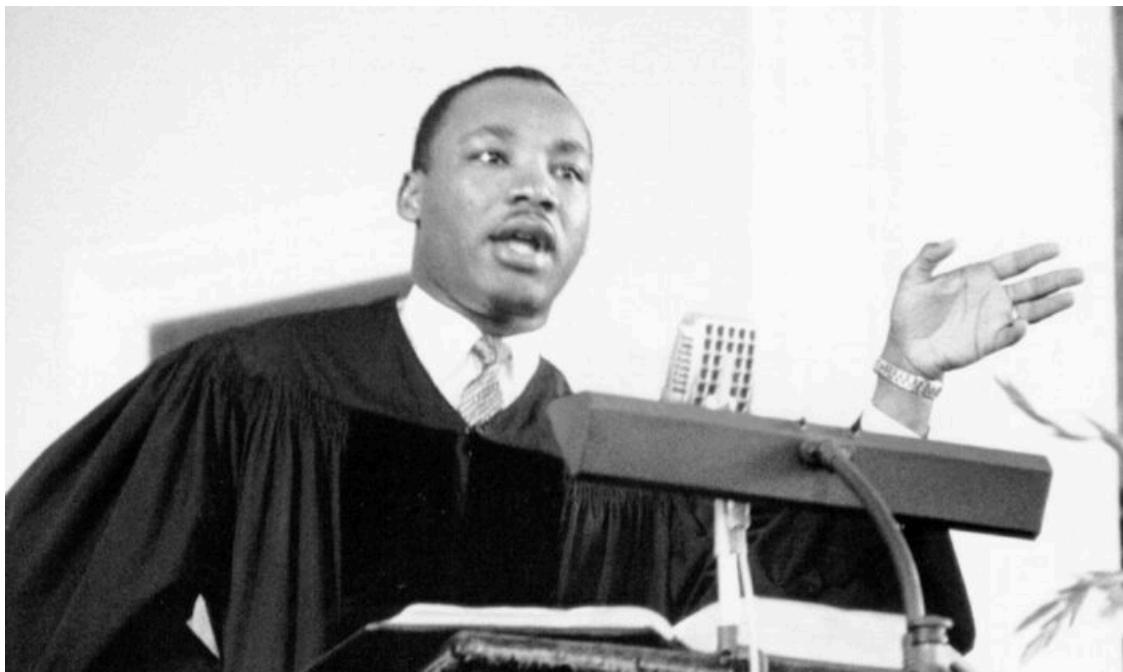




January 2026 Newsletter



“Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve.”

— Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Faith in Action: Honoring Dr. King Through Service

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. reminded the church that faith is never passive. Rooted in the Baptist tradition, his witness calls us to a discipleship that shows up—in neighborhoods, congregations, and communities longing for justice, dignity, and hope.

A Day of Service is one way we honor Dr. King’s legacy—not as a memorial alone, but as a living practice. Whether through feeding ministries, advocacy, mentoring, care for creation, or acts of compassion often unseen, service becomes prayer with hands and feet.

For ministers and congregations, this day is also an invitation to teach and model a gospel that moves beyond words. It is a chance to engage all generations in the work of love, to partner with local organizations, and to bear witness to a faith that seeks the common good.

As Dr. King taught, greatness is found not in power, but in service. May our ministries continue to proclaim that truth—not only from our pulpits, but through lives poured out in love.

Events and Webinars

3rd Thursdays

mc live

WEBINAR SERIES



SAVE THE DATE!

A Call to Justice and Courage:

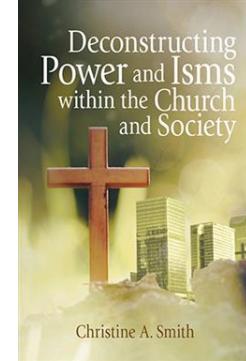
A Conversation with Rev. Dr. Christine A. Smith

Thursday, January 15

5pm Pacific/7pm Central/8pm Eastern

ZOOM INFO [HERE](#).

Join the author and colleagues on the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr. for a timely and courageous conversation inspired by Dr. Smith's latest book. Drawing on Dr. King's enduring witness, Smith offers an unflinching examination of systemic oppression—paired not with despair, but with a clear call to action. Through testimonies of resilience, practical strategies for change, and thoughtful discussion questions, the book equips readers to confront injustice and participate in the work of building a more just, compassionate, and beloved community.



Order from Judson Press [HERE](#)



Rev. Dr. Christine A. Smith is a pastor, author and leader serving in numerous capacities in the ABC and Progressive National Baptist Convention. Among them are her current roles as Pastor of Restoration Ministries of Greater Cleveland, Inc. as well as Associate Executive Director of American Baptist Women's Ministries. [LEARN MORE HERE](#)

National Updates

Join or Renew Your Membership



JOIN THE MINISTERS COUNCIL FOR 2026 -

Ministers Serving Ministers Since 1935!

Since 1935, the Ministers Council has supported ministerial excellence for the glory of Jesus Christ—not as a pursuit of perfection, but as a shared commitment to faithful, grounded ministry. Rooted in collegiality, competence, and centeredness, we continue to walk alongside ministers across diverse Baptist contexts.

Today, the Ministers Council connects chapters and affinity groups, hosts monthly webinars, and provides grants that resource clergy covenant groups and chapter events. This work happens because of you.

Your Annual Dues make these connections and resources possible—and renewing your membership for 2026 is a meaningful way to invest in your own ministry and the well-being of your colleagues.

Join or Renew today by visiting the [Ministers Council website](#) to pay online.

Questions or need help connecting with your local treasurer? Contact Rev. Lachelle Dixon-Harris at ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org.

Chapter News

Excellence in Ministry Grants — Local Chapters

In an effort to encourage strong, creative, and sustainable ministerial practices, the Ministers Council has established the Excellence in Ministry Fund, made possible through a generous grant from Christian Theological Seminary.

Grants of up to \$1,000 are available to local chapters in good standing with the Ministers Council to support programs, initiatives, and gatherings that strengthen ministry and leadership.

[Apply here: Excellence in Ministry Grant Application](#)

Prayers and Milestones

ABC Nebraska Welcomes Rev. Lauren Parliament

American Baptist Churches of Nebraska is delighted to welcome Rev. Lauren Parliament as its new Associate Regional Minister for Ministry Coordination. In this role, Lauren will support pastors and congregations, help coordinate regional ministries, and strengthen collaborative work across the region. We rejoice in her leadership and look forward to the ways God will use her gifts for the flourishing of churches throughout Nebraska.



God of justice and hope, we give thanks for the witness of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Inspire us to love boldly, resist injustice nonviolently, and keep building the beloved community. Make us doers of the dream. Amen.

Faithful God, strengthen your church to speak with courage and act with love. Root us deeply in Christ as we serve a hurting world. Amen.

Compassionate God, meet those who are exhausted in body, mind, or spirit. Grant rest, renewed courage, and signs of hope along the way. Amen.

ABC Announcements

Leading Well Through Change

The 2026 Transition Ministries events from American Baptist Churches USA invite pastors, church leaders, and those engaged in ministry transitions to learn, connect, and grow in skills that support congregations through times of change. The year opens with informational training sessions that provide an overview of Transition Ministries resources, upcoming training opportunities, and how to apply as a Transition Minister, equipping leaders to assist congregations with clarity and care during interim seasons.

[MORE INFORMATION](#)



Space for Grace & Spiritual Caregivers Conference 2026

Registration is open! Ministers, chaplains, pastoral caregivers, and spiritual leaders are invited to attend the Space for Grace & Spiritual Caregivers Conference 2026, hosted by American Baptist Home Mission Societies. Join colleagues from across the denomination for worship, learning, and renewal centered on the power of storytelling in ministry.

April 21–23, 2026 | Cleveland, Ohio

Make space for grace—for yourself and for the communities you serve.

[More Information](#)

[**REGISTER**](#)

Biennial Mission Summit 2027 — Save the Date!

American Baptist Churches USA invites you to gather for the 2027 Biennial Mission Summit, set for June 10–13, 2027, in Rochester, New York. This national biennial event brings together American Baptists of all ages and ministries for inspiring worship, learning, fellowship, and shared celebration of God's work among us and around the world.

Stay tuned for updates on the event theme, registration, speakers, and program details as plans unfold! Or visit the Biennial webpage at: <https://www.abc-usa.org/biennial/>

Ecumenical Resources

AN HOUR OF *Soul Care*

Calling clergy to a Noon time to pause and be invited into a guided meditation and contemplative practice of breath. Give yourself an hour to step away from divisive conversations, polarizing statements, stirring newsfeeds and intentionally pause and receive gentle nourishment from the Holy Spirit. Make this hour a choice to sit, breathe and feed your soul. Rev. Sandra Dorsainvil will lead a guided meditation and time of silence.



**January 16th
12-1pm EST
Via Zoom**



To Register:

Email Erin at
admin@ccdmin.org
by January 12th



THE RISE OF THE NONES

100 Million Americans
Beyond Religion



RYAN BURGE

The Nones Project
Washington University in St. Louis



TONY JONES

The Nones Project
Author of "The God of Wild Places"



TRIPP FULLER

Homebrewed Christianity
Luther Seminary

**A 4-Week Online Course
starting January 2026**
to Understand the Changing
Spiritual Landscape



Pay What
You Can

REGISTER NOW - JOIN THE CLASS!

Explore a vital conversation for today's church!

The Homebrewed Christianity online course "The Rise of the Nones" offers a four-week, donation-based learning experience unpacking the latest research on America's rapidly growing population of religiously unaffiliated people. What does it mean that more than one-third of Americans now identify as "nones," and why are they not all the same? Join theologian Tripp Fuller with scholars Ryan Burge, Tony Jones, and Sarah Lane Ritchie as they explore who these individuals really are, what motivates them, and how the church can listen, learn, and engage in faithful, compassionate ways. homebrewedchristianity.com+1

[Learn more and register at: HomebrewedChristianity.com](http://HomebrewedChristianity.com) / The Rise of the Nones (donation-based, including \$0).

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 February issue, send these to ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org by January 26.



How to reach us:

- Phone: 215-469-1859

Stay connected

- Visit us at our [website](#).
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