

## May 2026 Newsletter



*“Come to me, all you who labor and carry heavy burdens,  
and I will give you rest.” -Matthew 11:28*

Clergy overwhelm does not always come from having too little. Often, it comes from having too much—too many needs, too many expectations, too many resources to sort through.

Jesus’ invitation cuts through the noise: come.

Not to take on more. Not to figure it all out. Just come—and receive what is needed.

In this season, the work may not be adding another tool, but letting go of what is not yours to carry, trusting that Christ equips you with exactly what is enough.

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### **When We Have Too Much Equipment!**

by The Rev. Dr. Matthew Sturtevant

Do any of you have a “sports barrel” in your garage or basement? We do. It is the place where all of our manifold sporting equipment goes. Our thinking was that if it was all in one place, we could find it more easily, but it ends up being a tangled mess that makes it impossible to find anything: Half-flat basketballs and fully-flat volleyballs and a single old golf shoe, all wrapped up in a badminton net!



Does searching for clergy health resources ever feel that way to you? You know that there are a ton of great options for clergy well-being out there, but you aren’t sure where to start? When you search the internet, it feels as overwhelming as the sports barrel, like closing your eyes and pulling out whatever you find first.

“...to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ...” This passage from Ephesians 4.12 is one of my favorites in all of Scripture, as it reminds me how manifold and diverse the Church is. But it was verse 16 that caught my eye as I re-read the passage this time: “...joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, *as each part is working properly...*” If we are to achieve the purpose of the Body, sometimes we don’t need *more* equipment, but the *proper*

equipment. What is needful for *this* moment? What ligament will equip us for *this* season?

To that end, the Ministers Council has created a resource to help you sort through the work of becoming equipped. The **Hub for Clergy Well-Being** is designed to help you think through where you need some extra support in this moment and point you in the right direction for helpful equipping. In this season, it might be vocational well-being. Or maybe right now it is emotional well-being. For each of nine different areas, there are resources to help you narrow the search and point you in the right direction.

Holy saint of God, you and your future ministry are worth the few minutes that it takes to sit down and explore, pray, and discern what your equipping needs are today. Head to [ministerscouncil.com/wb/](https://ministerscouncil.com/wb/) and see where God leads today!

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## A Resource for This Moment

If the above reflection speaks to where you are, the Ministers Council's Hub for Clergy Well-Being is here to walk alongside you. Thoughtfully organized around key areas of well-being, it can help you gently discern what you need most right now—without adding to the noise.

Take a few moments to explore:

<https://ministerscouncil.com/wb/>



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## National Updates



### Stay Connected. Be Strengthened for What's Ahead.

Ministry does not slow down—but you do not have to carry it alone.

In a season when many clergy feel stretched, the Ministers Council is more than a network—it is a place of grounding, support, and renewal. For nearly a century, we have walked alongside one another, strengthening leaders through collegial relationships, shared wisdom, and resources that meet the realities of ministry today.

Through chapters, affinity groups, webinars, grants, and gatherings, this community helps you stay rooted, resilient, and equipped for what comes next.

This is your community. And it is sustained by your participation.

Join or renew your 2026 membership today—an investment in your ministry, your well-being, and the shared life we build together.

Get started: [Ministers Council website](https://ministerscouncil.com/)

Questions? Rev. Lachelle Dixon-Harris • [ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org](mailto:ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org)

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## Events and Webinars

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**3rd thursdays** **mc live**  
WEBINAR SERIES

8 PM EASTERN / 7 PM CENTRAL / 6 PM MOUNTAIN / 5 PM PACIFIC

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### **MC Live Update**

Please note that there will be no MC Live gathering in May. We look forward to being together again next month!

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## **Prayers and Milestones**

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### **Honoring Rev. Dr. Debora Jackson's Leadership in a New Season**

We are happy to share that Rev. Dr. Debora Jackson, former Executive Director of the Ministers Council, has been named Interim Executive Director of the Conference of Baptist Ministers in Massachusetts (CBMM).



In this role, she will serve as a “pastor to pastors,” supporting clergy while guiding CBMM through a season of discernment and renewal. Rev. Dr. Jackson brings a remarkable breadth of leadership experience across ministry, education, and nonprofit work, along with a deep commitment to cultivating strong, connected clergy communities.

We celebrate this significant milestone and give thanks for her continued leadership in strengthening and sustaining those called to ministry.

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God of wisdom,  
When we are surrounded by more than we can hold,  
quiet our urgency to gather  
and guide us instead to what is needful.  
Knit us together in your purpose,  
and equip us for this moment—no more, no less.  
Amen.

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Faithful God, in the midst of many voices and demands, guide us to what is needful.  
Give us wisdom to choose well and courage to let go. Amen.

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Christ our companion, when we are weary, meet us with your grace. Renew our spirits  
and equip us for the work you have given us this day. Amen.

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God who calls and sends, bless those stepping into ministry. In moments of uncertainty, grant clarity; in moments of overwhelm, grant peace; in every step, grant trust in your leading. Equip them not with everything, but with what is needed for the work ahead. Amen.

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God of new beginnings, bless those who graduate in this season. Guide their paths, deepen their calling, and surround them with your wisdom and peace as they step into what is next. Amen.remaining!"

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## ABC Announcements

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### May Opportunities for Connection, Learning, and Renewal

Grace and peace to you in this season of ministry. Following a meaningful time of connection at the Space for Grace & Spiritual Caregivers Conference 2026 in Cleveland, we give thanks for the opportunity to gather, reflect, and be renewed together. As we move into May, there are several opportunities to continue that work of learning, dialogue, and encouragement.

#### **Justice Dialogues: Decolonizing Christianity**

The launch of the Justice Dialogues series, Decolonizing Christianity, brought together a thoughtful and engaged community for its opening session. We are grateful to all who participated and helped shape a meaningful conversation. Special thanks to Rev. Dr. Jeremy L. Williams, Assistant Professor of New Testament at Brite Divinity School, for leading the discussion, “Decolonizing Christianity: What Does One Use Jesus to Do?”

If you were unable to attend, the recording is available here:  
[https://youtu.be/EMgNHdq5PGQ?si=4fVgd0nt\\_sKD3f70](https://youtu.be/EMgNHdq5PGQ?si=4fVgd0nt_sKD3f70)

Those wishing to continue the conversation are invited to reach out directly to Dr. Williams at [jeremywilliamsphd@gmail.com](mailto:jeremywilliamsphd@gmail.com).

The next gathering in this series will take place on Wednesday, May 6 at 12:00 PM EST, featuring Dr. Miguel A. De La Torre, author of Decolonizing Christianity.

Session Title: Rejecting Eurocentric Christianity

This conversation will explore how Eurocentric frameworks have shaped Christian practice and how communities might faithfully respond by centering the voices and experiences of the marginalized.

Register here: <https://mailchi.mp/288ed40a16d8/1ktmo4umul>

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## Philadelphia Baptist Association 2026 Missiological Conversation



### 250 Years and More Baptist Foundations for American Freedom

**Amanda Tyler**  
Executive Director, Baptist Joint Committee  
Keynote Speaker

**Thursday, May 7, 2026**  
**9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.**  
**American Baptist Home Mission Societies**  
**1075 First Avenue**  
**King of Prussia, PA 19406**

To donate to the Philadelphia Baptist Association  
to support this event, visit:

<https://pci.jotform.com/form/260565661439161>

or mail your donation to: Philadelphia Baptist Association  
Attn: Missiological Conversation  
8711 Ridge Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19128

\$50 in person (including lunch)  
\$25 online

[ccl.abhms.org](http://ccl.abhms.org)



## 250 Years and More: Baptist Foundations for American Freedom

As the nation approaches its 250th anniversary, this course from ABHMS explores how Baptist commitments to religious liberty and justice have shaped American life—and how they continue to inform faithful witness today.

Learn more and register: <https://ccl.abhms.org/courses/250-years-and-more-baptist-foundations-for-american-freedom>

**THE  
JUSTICE  
DIALOGUES**

## *Decolonizing* CHRISTIANITY

### Rejecting Eurocentric Christianity

Eurocentric Christianity is detrimental to marginalized communities. For those seeking an ethical response to the world's crises, it must be rejected in favor of however the disenfranchised understand their faith. Decolonizing Christianity is an exploration on how to accomplish this and live faithfully to what we claim to believe.



Dr. Miguel A. De La Torre

- May 6<sup>th</sup> 2026
- 12:00 PM EST
- Online Event



Register Now

# You Are Not Alone

A SAFE SPACE FOR PRAYER, ENCOURAGEMENT, AND CONNECTION  
RESOURCES


## Laughing Our Way Toward World Peace



Rev. Susan Sparks

Laughter is a sacred equalizer that reminds us we are all flawed, beloved, and bound together in the same human story. When we laugh together, fear eases, differences fade, and our shared humanity shines through. Join Rev. Susan Sparks, Baptist pastor and standup comedian for a joy-full, laughter-filled, Spirit-led exploration of how God's gift of humor can open hearts, build bridges, and move us toward peace.

The first 25 persons who register and attend the live session will be eligible to receive a complimentary copy of Rev. Sparks' book: *Love, a Tiara and a Cupcake* (finding joy in hard times).

 Wednesday, May 13, 2026

 2:00 PM EST

 Online Event



**REGISTER NOW**



## Ecumenical Resources

### Theology Beer Camp 2026

Looking for a different kind of theological gathering? Theology Beer Camp offers a three-day experience that blends thoughtful theological reflection with community, creativity, and a bit of fun. Organized by Homebrewed Christianity, the event brings together scholars, pastors, podcasters, and spiritual seekers for engaging conversations on faith, justice, and the questions shaping our world today.

Set for October 8–10, 2026, in Kansas City, this unique gathering invites participants to “nerd out” on theology in a welcoming, justice-oriented space that values both deep thinking and authentic connection.

Learn more and explore registration: <https://theologybeer.camp>

THEOLOGY BEER CAMP  
THE GODPODCALYPSE  
2026

# SPEAKER LINEUP

Theology Beer Camp 2026 Speaker Lineup featuring four individual speakers and two groups. The speakers are: Cornel West (Prophetic Philosopher of Justice), Ilia Delio (Evolutionary Theologian of Divine Emergence), Gary Dorrien (Social Ethicist of Liberal Theology), and Bill Leonard (Historian of Baptist Dissent Traditions). The groups are: The Convocation Unscripted and The Bible Divas. The event is held in Kansas City, MO, from October 8-10. The website theologybeer.camp is listed at the bottom right.

**Cornel West**  
PROPHETIC PHILOSOPHER OF JUSTICE

**Ilia Delio**  
EVOLUTIONARY THEOLOGIAN OF DIVINE EMERGENCE

**Gary Dorrien**  
SOCIAL ETHICIST OF LIBERAL THEOLOGY

**Bill Leonard**  
HISTORIAN OF BAPTIST DISSENT TRADITIONS

**The Convocation Unscripted**

**The Bible Divas**

**OCT. 8-10**  
Kansas City, MO

theologybeer.camp

## 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 June issue, send these to [ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org](mailto:ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org) by May 26.*



### How to reach us:

- Phone: 215-469-1859



### Stay connected

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

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