

August 2026 Newsletter



Making the Call for Justice

The World Cup!

Rev. Dr. Julio Gonzalez-Paniagua

Every four years, a large part of the world pauses for a month to cheer on their favorite team in the most-watched sports competition on the planet: the FIFA World Cup. The tournament final draws more viewers than the finals of the main sports in the United States combined. In many Hispanic households, soccer is part of daily life.



Many of you don't know it, but I played soccer during my childhood and youth. After my university years, away from any sport, I wore the black referee uniform for a while. The time spent learning, before I had a flag, a whistle, or a set of yellow and red cards in my hands, made me think a lot about justice.

Ultimately, the referee's decision is the law on the field of play; therefore, keen vision, a vast knowledge of the rules, and complete impartiality are vital to the exercise of justice. Often, exercising justice requires great fortitude because a large crowd will be against your call. Practically no player is going to admit that he committed a foul; the fans, even less so.

The world we live in is much like a football field. The erosion of ethics and solid values poses a serious challenge to the Kingdom of God's values. But believers are called by God to stand firm in the truth and not succumb to the pressure that evil exerts on us. God expects his people to make a supreme call for justice. The book of Exodus offers us numerous calls to remain righteous, for example: "You must not follow the crowd in doing wrong. When you are called to testify in a dispute, do not be swayed by the crowd to twist justice." (23:2 NLT).

Many voices will be raised around us, shouting words that make us doubt our calling and the just and necessary action. Like the referee, we must keep our eyes on what is right, what is right. We must fix our gaze on the example of Jesus, close our ears to voices that would divert us from the truth, and attune to the voice of the Master. We

have to pronounce the word of justice, sound the alarm, and raise the flag of truth. To this, the Lord has called us.

Ministry Idea of the Month: Welcome Notes

As summer winds down and congregational life picks up again, invite members to write handwritten notes of welcome and encouragement. Whether sent to first-time visitors, returning members, college students, teachers, or families beginning a new school year, these simple notes are a meaningful way to extend Christ's hospitality. A few sincere words can help someone feel seen, valued, and connected to your church community.

National Updates



Renew Your Ministers Council Membership

Your ministry matters. So does having a community that supports you. Whether you're seeking continuing education, meaningful connections with ministry colleagues, or resources to strengthen your calling, the Ministers Council is here for you.

If you haven't already, now is a great time to renew your membership or join the Ministers Council.

Join or Renew Today
Questions?

Rev. Lachelle Dixon-Harris

ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org

Events and Webinars



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

See you in September! There will not be an August MC Live Webinar. Information regarding the upcoming September webinar will be shared soon.

Prayers and Milestones



The Ministers Council joins in prayer with the family and friends of **the Rev. Dr. Slayden A. Yarbrough**, who entered the Church Triumphant on May 22, 2026, at the age of 82.

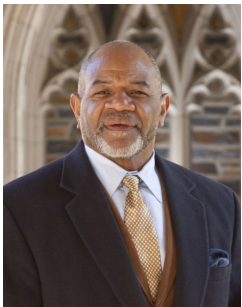
Dr. Yarbrough was a longtime Baptist scholar, teacher, and pastor. He served as Professor Emeritus of Religion at Oklahoma Baptist University. Following his retirement, he continued to answer God's call through interim pastoral ministry, pulpit supply, and teaching in American Baptist churches

throughout the Portland, Oregon, area. He was also a respected author and church historian.

Please Dr. Yarbrough's wife Janis Yarbrough, their family, friends, former students, and the congregations he served in your prayers as they give thanks for a life faithfully lived in service to Christ and the Church.

"Well done, good and faithful servant." — Matthew 25:23

The Rev. Dr. William Clair Turner Jr. entered eternal rest on July 26, 2026, at the age of 78. Rev. Dr. Turner faithfully served as pastor of Mt. Level Missionary Baptist Church in Durham, North Carolina, and as Professor Emeritus at Duke Divinity School, where he shaped generations of pastors, preachers, and church leaders through his teaching and witness.



We hold his wife, Joyce, their family, the Mt. Level congregation, former students, colleagues, and all who mourn his passing in our prayers.

Gracious God, grant us the courage to stand for truth with humility, speak with compassion, and serve with integrity. Amen.

Loving God, strengthen pastors and ministry leaders with wisdom, perseverance, and the assurance that they never serve alone. Amen.

God of justice, help us seek what is right, defend the vulnerable, and reflect your love in all we say and do. Amen.

Faithful God, when the world feels divided and uncertain, fill our hearts with your peace and lead us to be bearers of hope in every place. Amen.

ABC Announcements



Transition Ministries Level I Foundational Training

Friday-Saturday, September 18-19, 2026

Friday: 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. (ET)

Saturday: 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. (ET)

Location: ABCUSA Office, King of Prussia, Pennsylvania

Instructors: Rev. Nikita McCalister and Rev. Dr. James Wolfe

Cost: \$175 per person. A \$25 discount will be applied to each registration when more than one person registers from the same church or region.

Registration Deadline: Friday, August 28, 2026

Designed for pastors and ministry leaders serving congregations in times of change, this in-person foundational course introduces the theology, framework, and core practices of intentional interim ministry.

Participants will explore the five focus points of transition:

- Heritage
- Mission
- Leadership
- Connections
- Future

[Register:](#)

AN HOUR OF *Soul Cave*

September 25th

12-1pm EST

Via Zoom

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.



To Register:

Email Erin at
admin@ccdmin.org
by September 22nd



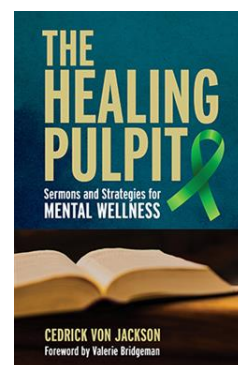
Judson Press Resource Spotlight

The Healing Pulpit: Sermons and Strategies for Mental Wellness

By Cedrick Von Jackson

Mental health concerns increasingly shape the pastoral landscape. The Healing Pulpit offers practical guidance, theological reflection, and sermon resources to help clergy foster congregations where healing, hope, and wholeness can flourish. This timely resource equips ministry leaders to engage mental wellness with compassion and confidence.

Learn more: <https://www.judsonpress.com/>



Coming Soon:

Faithful Transitions: Preparing for Pastoral Succession

By Patricia Gould-Champ

Healthy pastoral transitions strengthen congregations and create opportunities for new ministry. Available this fall, Faithful Transitions provides practical guidance for pastors, church leaders, and search committees as they navigate leadership changes with intention, clarity, and grace.

Learn more: <https://www.judsonpress.com/>

Ecumenical Resources



Preaching in an Age of Contempt

September 15-17, 2026

Iliff School of Theology

Denver, Colorado

In a time marked by growing division, polarization, and distrust, the church is called to proclaim the Gospel with courage, wisdom, and hope.

Preaching in an Age of Contempt is a three-day conference designed to renew, equip, and encourage pastors, preachers, worship leaders, and ministry leaders for faithful proclamation in today's complex cultural landscape. Through inspiring keynote presentations, practical learning, and meaningful conversation, participants will deepen their preaching ministry while connecting with colleagues from a variety of ministry settings.

Registration Options:

- In Person: \$350
- Online: \$199

Learn more and register at:

<https://www.iliffpreachingconference.com/course/preaching-in-an-age-of-contempt-2026>

Ecumenical Opportunities

Looking to connect with the wider church?

Explore these upcoming ecumenical learning and worship opportunities.

Season of Creation: Living Waters

September 1-October 4, 2026

Join Christians around the world in prayer, worship, and action for God's creation. This year's theme, Living Waters, is inspired by Ezekiel 47 and includes free worship resources for congregations.

Learn more: <https://seasonofcreation.org/>

Faith and Genetics (Online Course)

September 14-December 7, 2026

Explore the intersection of faith, genetics, ethics, and public trust in this 11-week online course offered by the World Council of Churches and Christian Medical College.

Learn more: <https://www.oikoumene.org/events/faith-and-genetics-course>

World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel

September 20-26, 2026

Join churches around the world in prayer, education, and advocacy for a just peace in the Holy Land. Worship resources and event information are available through the World Council of Churches.

Learn more: <https://www.oikoumene.org/events/world-week-for-peace-in-palestine-and-israel>

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



How to reach us:

- Phone: 215-469-1859



Stay connected

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