

October 2026 Newsletter



Walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called.
— Ephesians 4:1

The Long View: Planning for Well-Being in Ministry

By Matt Sturtavant

Six weeks ago, today, I was standing on top of Mt. Antero in Colorado. At 14,271 feet above sea level, it is not a place you arrive at without some planning. There is a road for jeeps or high-clearance 4X4 vehicles that goes most of the way to the top, but it requires specialized off-roading tires. Possessing none of those things, I instead took an alternate route, the Browns Creek Trail, some eight miles from the summit. So, I packed my gear the night before, popped out of bed at 3:30 am, had toes on the trail by 5:00, and still barely made it back down to the car before the Colorado afternoon lightning was at my heels!



What is your plan for self-care this season of your ministry? Just like no one decides after a leisurely brunch that they will pop up a 16-mile trek to the top of a “14er,” ***self-care requires some forethought***. I stood on top of Mt. Antero because of the planned generosity of my congregation to offer a sabbatical policy, in place years before my tenure began. This sabbatical required planning with the congregation for over a year in advance. My decision to pursue a sabbatical was in part inspired by long-standing peer groups that I belong to, mentoring and encouraging me to receive the rest that I need. Each of these elements, and more, were not accidental, but required intentional planning with a mind toward longevity in my ministry. What will help you reach the long views of the self-care summit today? Exploring the Hub for Clergy Well-being to assess your current needs

(<https://ministerscouncil.com/wb/>)? Applying for a grant for a Together in Ministry group, to help start or support your peer group

(<https://ministerscouncil.com/grants.php>)? Starting the plan for a sabbatical, *long before* you truly need one (<https://ministerscouncil.com/resources/sabbaticals.php>)?

Ephesians 4 begins, “I...beg you to *walk in a manner worthy of the calling* to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love.” This season, I pray that your ministry walk (14er-hike/bike-ride/dog-walk...insert your favorite ambulatory metaphor here!) is planned with the intentionality that Ephesians describes. We are in this journey together, following the “calling to which we have been called,” with grace, discernment, and wisdom. Let us know if you need a hiking partner...we’ll lace up our boots and meet you at the trailhead!



The Hub for Clergy Well Being

National Updates



It’s Time to Register!

Join the Ministers Council USA/ABC for our 2026 Biennial Retreat, November 9–12 at the beautiful Seabeck Conference Center in Seabeck, Washington. Chapter Presidents and Chapter Representatives are strongly encouraged to attend, and all Ministers Council members are invited to be part of this special time of learning, renewal, connection, and fellowship.

This Year’s Featured Presenter: Rev. Margaret Marcuson

Clergy consultant and author of *Sustainable Ministry: How to Lead (and When to Nap)*, Rev. Margaret Marcuson will lead us in exploring what it means to lead faithfully and effectively without losing ourselves in the demands of ministry.

Her work encourages pastors and ministry leaders to think differently about how we relate to our work, the people we lead, and ourselves.

Come ready to learn, reflect, reconnect, and fellowship with Ministers Council colleagues from across the country.

Don’t miss this opportunity to step away, be renewed, and strengthen your ministry for the journey ahead.

REGISTER TODAY!

November 9–12, 2026
Seabeck Conference Center | Seabeck, Washington

Chapter News

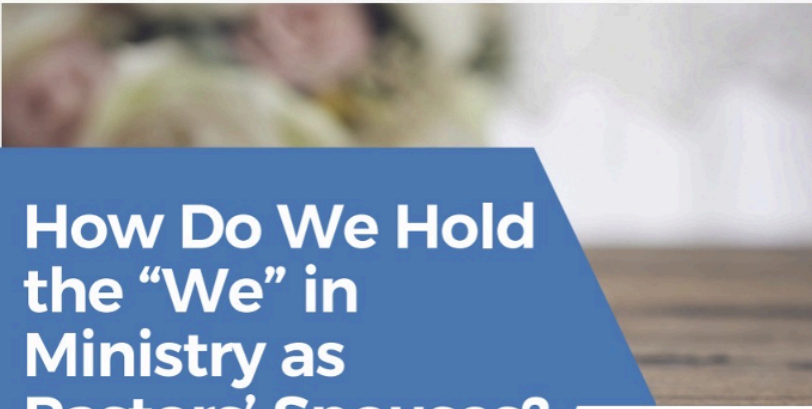
Chapter News: Strengthening Our Connections

Ministers Council chapters continue to provide important spaces for connection, encouragement, and mutual support among ministry colleagues. This fall, the national Ministers Council is working with chapters seeking to strengthen or revitalize their local networks.

Is your chapter reconnecting after a quiet season? Planning a gathering, retreat, continuing education event, or clergy peer group? The Ministers Council can offer support, resources, and conversation as you discern what will best serve ministers in your area.

And we want to hear what’s happening! Send your chapter news, upcoming events, celebrations, and photos to ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org so we can share them with colleagues across the country.

Events and Webinars



How Do We Hold the “We” in Ministry as Pastors’ Spouses?

Rev. Sandra Dorsainvil,
Facilitator

Pastor's spouses often find themselves holding more than they had signed up for, as a pastor's spouse. The roles differ based on the make-up of the congregation. The assigned pews vary and the prayer closets can at times feel silent. The selected shoes may raise eyebrows. Questions and situations surface and yet assumptions never stop building. How might pastor's spouses stand in these crossroads and feel less alone?

Here is an invitation for YOU, pastor's spouses to come and be seen, heard and prayed over in this zoom session where a seat is waiting for you.

Event Details:

 **October 2nd from 1pm till 2pm(EST)**

AND/OR

October 3rd from 9am till 10am(EST)

Via Zoom

 **Register for one or both sessions by 9/28/26 with Erin at admin@ccdmin.org**



Prayers and Milestones

We hold in prayer...

Church leaders who are weary, overwhelmed, or carrying burdens known only to themselves. May they find rest, renewal, and companions for the journey.

Pastors, chaplains, and spiritual caregivers accompanying people through grief, illness, crisis, and uncertainty. May they remember that they, too, are worthy of care.

Congregations and ministry settings experiencing transition, conflict, or change. May patience, wisdom, grace, and a spirit of reconciliation guide the way forward.

Those affected by domestic violence and all who work to create communities of safety, healing, and hope.

Ministers discerning a new call, beginning a new ministry, preparing for retirement, or wondering what comes next. May God meet them in the uncertainty and open the way ahead.

125 Years of Theological Education

Central Seminary is celebrating its 125th anniversary this year. American Baptist Churches of Wisconsin will mark the anniversary with a special celebration during its October 9–10 Annual Gathering

Have a milestone to share?

We celebrate with our members! Send us news of ordinations, installations, new calls, retirements, anniversaries, graduations, or other significant moments in your ministry journey for a future Ministers Council newsletter.

ABC Announcements

OCTOBER WEBINAR Series

Tuesday, October 6, 2026
8:00pm EDT Zoom
Presenter: Dr. Cynthia Raines

&

Tuesday, October 20, 2026
8:00pm EDT Zoom
Presenter: Dawn M. Doerr-Johnson, LMFT, LMHC



Office of the General Secretary
abc-usa.org

Dr. Cynthia Raines
Licensed Professional Counselor



Dawn M. Doerr-Johnson, LMFT, LMHC
Therapist & Mental Health Counselor



October Webinar Series: Domestic Violence and Mental Health

This October, American Baptist Churches USA invites clergy and ministry leaders to two online webinars addressing important issues that touch our congregations, families, and communities: domestic violence and mental health.

The first webinar will be held Tuesday, October 6, at 8:00 p.m. ET, with Dr. Cynthia Raines, a licensed professional counselor, mental health advocate, consultant, and

owner of Pavilion Behavioral Health. Dr. Raines specializes in working with adults and families experiencing mood, anxiety, ADHD, and trauma disorders.

The series continues Tuesday, October 20, at 8:00 p.m. ET, with Dawn M. Doerr-Johnson, LMFT, LMHC, a licensed marriage and family therapist and mental health counselor. Doerr-Johnson specializes in working with girls and young women and has a long history of leadership with American Baptist Girls in Relationship, Leadership, and Service.

Both webinars begin at 8:00 p.m. ET via Zoom.
Learn more and watch for registration information at abc-usa.org/events.

October Opportunities from ABHMS

American Baptist Home Mission Societies’ Healing & Transforming Communities invites clergy, pastors, chaplains, spiritual caregivers, and other ministry leaders to two online gatherings in October.

A Plenty Good Room Economy

Wednesday, October 7 | 12:00 p.m. ET

The next Decolonizing Christianity gathering welcomes the Rev. Andrew Wilkes, Ph.D., for A Plenty Good Room Economy. The conversation will explore the intersection of solidarity economics and Black social Christianity, with particular attention to Christian education and practical ways participants can put what they learn into action in their congregations and communities.

[Register for A Plenty Good Room Economy](#)

The previous Decolonizing Christianity gathering, Justice and Belonging in Children’s Ministry, featured ABHMS’ Nurturing Children Initiative and explored children’s voices, intergenerational ministry, justice, and belonging. [Watch the recording](#).

Watched & Wired: Smart Protection in an Always-On World

Wednesday, October 21 | 2:00 p.m. ET

The October installment of You Are Not Alone will be led by the Rev. Saeed Richardson. This timely session will focus on cybersecurity and practical ways clergy and spiritual caregivers can better safeguard themselves amid increasing digital threats.

[Register for Watched & Wired](#)

The September You Are Not Alone gathering, presented entirely in Spanish in partnership with ABHMS’ Creciendo Juntos Initiative and featuring the Rev. Dr. Alexandra Zareth, is also available [to watch online](#).

These programs are offered by American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS), Healing & Transforming Communities.

AN HOUR OF *Soul Cave*

**November 20th
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.

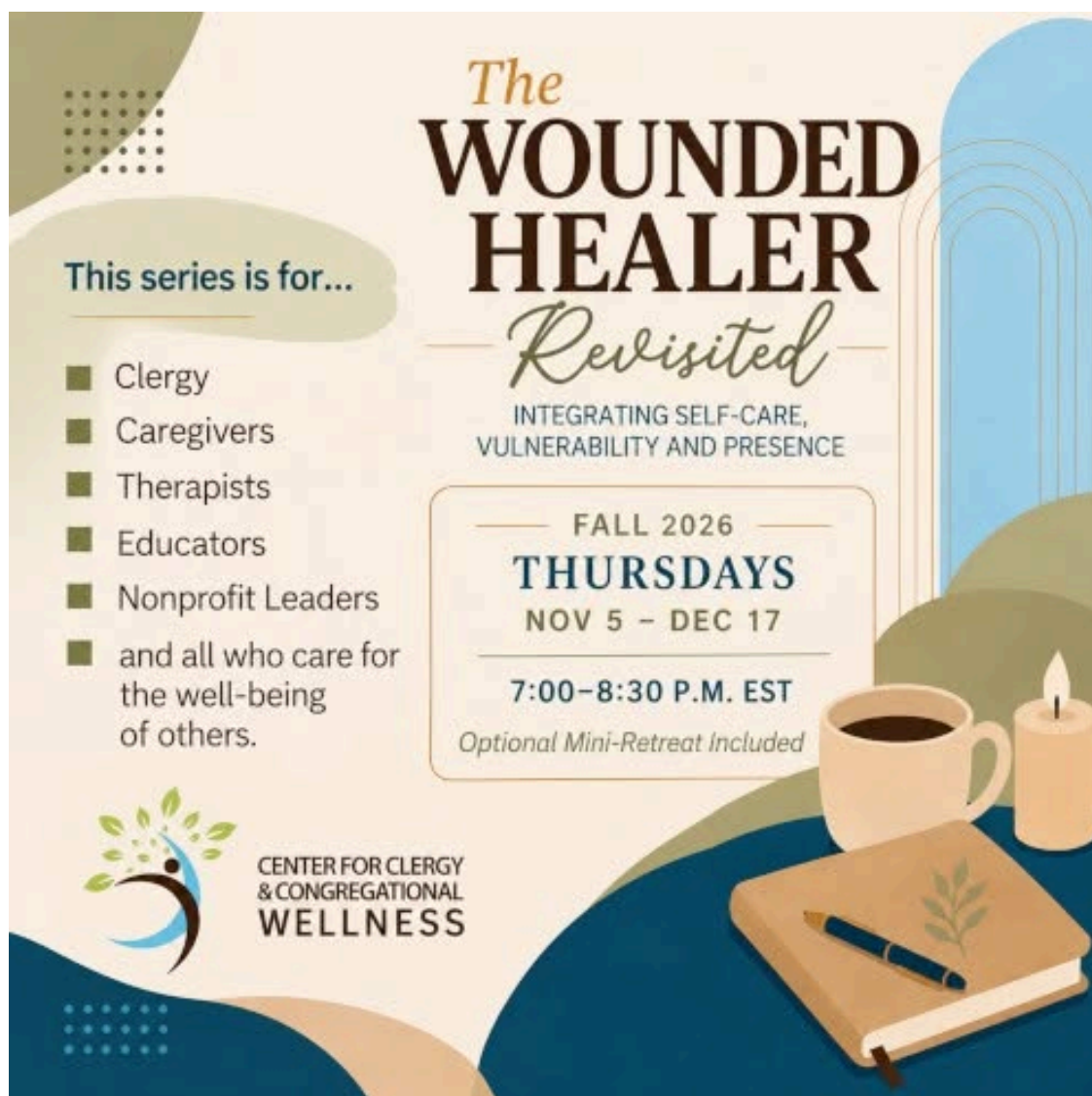


To Register:

Email Erin at
admin@ccdmin.org
by November 17th



Ecumenical Resources



The Wounded Healer Revisited: Caring for Those Who Care for Others

Those who care for others often find it difficult to make space for their own care and renewal. This fall, the Center for Clergy & Congregational Wellness is offering *The Wounded Healer Revisited: Integrating Self-Care, Vulnerability, and Presence*, a six-week online learning and formation experience rooted in Henri Nouwen's classic image of the wounded healer. clergyandcongregations.org

Designed for clergy, chaplains, caregivers, therapists, educators, nonprofit leaders, and others in caring professions, the series will explore the hidden costs of caregiving, compassion fatigue, boundaries, vulnerability, healing presence, and sustainable rhythms for ministry and leadership. Sessions will include reflection, conversation, contemplative practices, and practical tools, with an optional online mini-retreat for deeper reflection and renewal. clergyandcongregations.org

The six-week online series begins November 5.

[Learn more and register](https://clergyandcongregations.org)



HR in the Local Church: A Webinar Series for Clergy

The Western North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church is offering a seven-part Zoom series addressing the practical human-resources responsibilities that often come with congregational leadership. Topics include job descriptions and compensation, hiring and onboarding, staff roles and responsibilities, supervision and mentoring, legal issues and risk management, performance management, and conflict and termination.

The series begins October 5, and one registration covers all seven sessions.

[WNCCUMC](#)
[Learn more and 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 November issue, send these to ministerscouncil@abc-usa.org by October 25.



How to reach us:

- Phone: 215-469-1859



Stay connected

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

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