



**AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA**  
*Serving as the hands and feet of Christ*



## LAUGHTER

**Colleagues,**

Advent greetings to each of you. As the season of Thanksgiving gives way to the season of Christmas, I have been thinking about the significance of the gift of **laughter** and the ways in which it is good for body and soul, for individuals and communities. The Psalmist celebrates the steadfast love of God with the words, "Then our mouth was filled with **laughter** and our tongues with shouts of joy." (126:2a) Of laughter, the great scholar, prophet and philosopher W.E.B. DuBoise wrote, "I am especially glad of the divine gift of **laughter**: it has made the world human and lovable, despite all its pain and wrong."

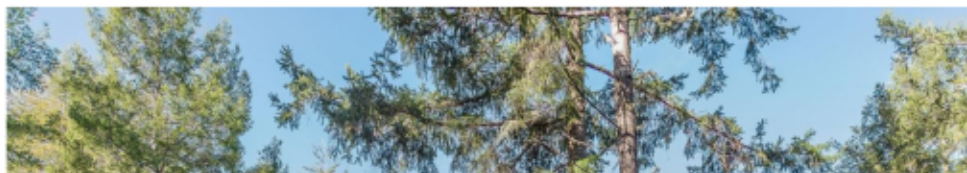
I hope that, for you, the days of November have been, and the days of December will be, filled with much **laughter**. It is a gift much needed in families, our churches, our nation and our world. It does indeed make the world human and lovable.

Our January retreat promises to be a time of learning and **laughter**. Thus, I hope you will join me in registering soon and making plans to attend. This year's leader, Petra, has a great heart for the well being of faith leaders and spiritual practitioners. We will benefit from her skill and caring.

Looking forward to seeing you at Redwood Glen on January 6-7.

Peace,

**Peace,  
Jim H.**





## Minister's Council Retreat

### January 5-7, 2025

### Redwood Glen

10 Good Reasons to attend this retreat:

1. A great time to sabbath
2. A change of scenery and enjoying the peace and beauty of the redwoods
3. A slower pace and rhythm after Advent and Christmas
4. A block of free time on Monday afternoon to do whatever your heart desires
5. An opportunity to learn new things about self-care and gain resources and insights so we can be God's best in our ministry context
6. An experience of meaningful worship and uplifting music and singing
7. A time to restore your soul
8. A time of interacting with colleagues who can understand and support you as well as sharing your fruitful resources and best practices, if you wish
9. An experience of fellowshiping with old friends and making new ones
10. Comfortable accommodation and good, nutritious food

You can arrive early and stay free Sunday night, January 5, or arrive by 9 am Monday for the Opening Worship and first session. The retreat ends after lunch on Tuesday, January 7.

Our speaker is **Rev. Dr. Petra van de Water**.

Petra has designed this retreat to be both enlightening and practical. She aims to provide a sacred awareness of self care as individuals beloved by God and to offer useful suggestions to enhance your ability to care for yourself and others in your community of service.

Petra holds Doctor of Ministry and Master of Arts in Christian Leadership from Fuller Theological Seminary. She is ordained as a healthcare chaplain by the American Baptist Church U.S.A. and works as a relief chaplain at Stanford Medicine Children's Health. Petra and her husband, Cor, have two adult children. They were all born in the Netherlands and have called India and California their home.



Please register through Redwood Glen at [www.redwoodglen.com](http://www.redwoodglen.com) but our Ministers' Council can provide a scholarship for anyone who needs one. Please contact **Rev. Nathan Brittsan** to secure a scholarship.

**First Friday Lunch & Learn  
Berkeley School of Theology  
DECEMBER 6 @ 12pm on Zoom**

We are delighted to partner with the Worship and Student Life Committee for this special and virtual Advent Chapel. Our guest preacher is Rev. Dr. Valerie Miles-Tribble.

Can't make it to the December 6, 2024 session? Don't worry, it will be recorded and uploaded to our **YouTube Channel**. Also, check out the list below of Upcoming First Friday Lunch & Learns!

First Friday Lunch & Learn is **FREE**, but all participants must REGISTER to receive the ZOOM link! Please click the button below to sign up and you'll receive a confirmation email with the Zoom details.

<https://bst.edu/alumni-and-friends/first-friday-lunch-learn/>

[Click Here to Register](#)



---

**Job Openings through Baptist Women  
In Ministry**

Our mission is to support women who pursue ministry and leadership with sustaining resources and community, and to advocate for the full affirmation of women in ministry and leadership in Baptist life. [Click here for the latest postings](#): <https://bwim.info/job-openings/>

