



Philadelphia
BAPTIST ASSOCIATION



Metrolines

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Visit our Website

Resurrection Thoughts



"Open your eyes and there it is! By taking a long and thoughtful look at what God has created, people have always been able to see what their eyes as such cannot see: eternal power, for instance, and the mystery of his divine being." Romans 1:19-20 The Message.

In mid-winter, I like to sprout spring flowering bulbs. I place the bulbs in a shallow dish filled with water and stones. I put the dish of bulbs in a sunny window. Daily I watch the miracle unfold; I witness resurrection.

A bulb is not pretty. It is brown, sort of round or pear shaped, with a knobby rough texture. There is nothing about the exterior of a bulb that gives a hint of the beauty it will one day produce. From one day to the next change occurs. A tiny hint of green emerges from the center of the bulb, pointing upward. Day by day, anticipation grows as that green reveals itself to be a stem, which will support the blossom or blossoms. Finally, at the right time, our hope is realized. The bulb blooms its magnificent colorful flower and we delight in it. But eventually, the flower dies. The dead petals with its supportive stem must be cut down to its base, leaving no trace of its former beauty. The bulb must be placed in a dark cool place for about three months. It can then be planted and sprouted again. Each blossom from each sprouting time is new and unduplicated.

Most of us live ordinary lives making a living and caring for our families. However, at the core of our being there lies hidden, God-created

transformative potential. Whatever the spiritual path we take, we will experience “dark times.” Exteriorly dark times impose without our consent or control. Interior reactions to these times may be doubt or discouragement or waiting until the unknown is made knowable.

In dark times it’s good to remember, *“No test or temptation that comes your way is beyond the course of what others have had to face. All you need to remember is that God will never let you down; he’ll never let you be pushed past your limit; he’ll always be there to help you come through it.”* 1 Corinthians 10:13

From the *“mystery of God’s divine being,”* we learn that spiritual and emotional transformation begins in darkness. We “get through” with the help of our spiritual guides (worship, scripture reading, prayer, meditation and holy loving friends). God’s *“eternal power”* equips us with hope to see beyond our painful circumstances through the images spring and blossoming bulbs, to know resurrection is real!

Resurrection Day is the yearly commemoration of this cornerstone event of the Christian faith: That Jesus conquered, death, hell and the grave. *Resurrection Spirit* is what we acquire, by faith, to guide us through life. *Resurrection Power* is what we use to initiate the change needed to save our neighborhoods and our country and our world, even the cosmos.

Written by Rev. Julia Bruton-Shepherd, PBA Consultant for Area Ministry

PBA 314th Annual Meeting - A Virtual Meeting

Save the Date

**314th Annual Meeting of
The Philadelphia Baptist Association
Virtual Meeting May 1, 2021
9:00 am - 11:00am**

Theme: Bring Peace During the Storm - Our Ministry During the Global Pandemic

Scripture: Mark 4:35-41

Devotions: Does Jesus Care? Does His Church?

Annual Business Session

Plenary: Healing and the Impact of Covid-19

Workshops:

- Vaccinations- Reaching the Community via the Church
- Ministries of Caring- helping people suffering significant loss
- Church Ministry Post Pandemic Dialogue- what ends and what continues?
- Global Picture of COVID-19 the Impact and Vaccine Distribution

Save the date and plan to attend the meeting. Complete details and registration link will be sent out soon.

A Call to Prayer for Myanmar

The American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA) Office of the General Secretary and the American Baptist Churches Burma Refugee Commission are issuing a Call to Prayer for Myanmar starting in March 2021. American Baptists are invited to consider setting aside time(s) to lift up prayers for Myanmar individually or collectively, in the midst of the current sociopolitical situation in the country.

The Burma Refugee Commission is a commission of the ABCUSA Board of General Ministries coordinated out of the ABCUSA Office of General Secretary. It includes representatives of the American Baptist Home Mission Societies, International Ministries, the Regional Executive Ministers Council, Burmese Baptist Churches USA, Chin Baptist Churches USA, Chin Association of North America, Kachin Baptist Churches USA, Kachin American Baptist Association, and Karen Baptist Churches USA.

On a newly created ["Burma Refugee Commission" webpage](#) on the ABCUSA website, interested persons can find an introductory message from Interim General Secretary C. Jeff Woods, prayer requests and prayers, both written and recorded, information about the current sociopolitical situation in Myanmar, additional resources from the Burma Refugee Commission, and a contact form to connect with the Commission.

PBA Ministers' Council Update

Intergenerational Ministerial Support Groups

The PBA Ministers' Council has been sponsoring Intergenerational Ministerial Support Groups since January. The meetings occur the first week of the month. The focus of the groups is to provide a safe space for participants to share authentically, know they are being heard and feel accepted. We review current spiritual practices and explore new ones to deepen relationship with God and a healthier sense of self-worth. It is understood that as leadership grows spiritually, emotionally and physically so will their respective congregations. The groups will end their meetings in June and resume in September. The Ministers' Council plans to begin new groups in the fall. Invitations will go out in late summer to the PBA membership.

Rev. Wakaki Thompson, Rev. Julia Bruton-Sheppard, Facilitators

Christ & Cultural Humility Program Update

Philadelphia Baptist Association's Christ & Cultural Humility Program is engaging seven congregations in learning how to effectively break down socio-cultural barriers within their congregations. The goal of the program is to teach cultural humility strategies that will equip the congregations to address the demographic and generational shifts facing churches today. Each congregation is represented by a Learning Team that is currently assessing its congregation's strengths and potential areas for growth. Each team will collaborate with the pastor and congregation to identify an aspect of need in the church to which the Learning Team can apply the cultural humility and adaptive change theories which the team is learning in phase one of the

program.

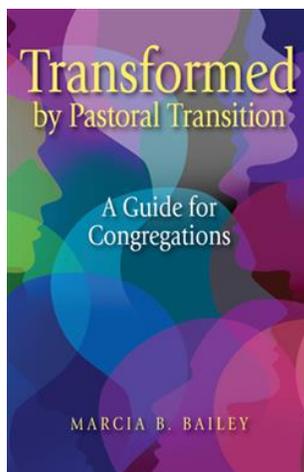
While individual Learning Teams meet on their own schedule, all seven Learning Teams come together monthly to integrate the program's components and to share ideas. Phase one will continue into June and then the program will resume in September with phase two. Learning Teams will then share the strategies they have learned to engage their congregations in effecting change in their chosen targeted area. The entire learning process will be a way forward for churches to proactively maximize their ministry efforts with the focus on "leave no member behind." The cultural humility tenets congruently paired with Christ's teachings on humility is a pathway for churches to develop all-inclusive ministries that empower each congregant, as well as build relationships with neighborhood constituents who can become ministry partners.

The PBA Christ & Cultural Humility program helps us live out Christ's mandate to love God and to love our neighbors as ourselves. Through this program, congregations become continuous learners who are able to adapt to the forever-changing and challenging issues that confront the church and society. Churches currently participating in the program include Bethlehem Baptist Church, First Baptist Church of Philadelphia, Grace Baptist Church of Blue Bell, Second Baptist Church of Doylestown, Second Baptist Church of Germantown, Second Baptist Church of Media, and St. Paul's Baptist Church of West Chester.

Rev. Shelby Haggray, Facilitator

Newly Published Books

Judson Press has recently published books written by two PBA Pastors, Rev. Dr. Marcia Bailey and Rev. Dr. Wayne Croft.

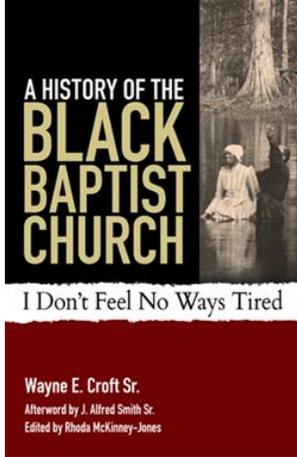


[“Transformed by Pastoral Transition: A Guide for Congregations”](#) is a practical and deeply spiritual guide for congregations facing pastoral transition, this new book from experienced transitional pastor and consultant on interim ministry, Rev. Dr. Marcia Bailey, uses the framework of the Christian worship service to help church leaders usher their faith community through a process of honoring the past, healing the present, and discerning the future. Includes worship resources for each stage in the transitional season, from bidding farewell and processing grief related to the outgoing minister, to celebrating the gifts of community and anticipating the next stage in the congregation's life

together.

By Rev. Dr. Marcia Bailey
Pastor of First Baptist Church of Pottstown

The history of black people in the United States is a history of challenge and resilience, of suffering and solidarity, of injustice and prophetic resistance. It is a



history steeped in the hope and strength that African Americans have derived from their faith in God and from the church that provided safety, community, consolation, and empowerment.

In this new volume from pastor and scholar Rev. Dr. Wayne Croft, the [History of the Black Baptist Church](#) unfolds—from its theological roots in the Radical Reformation of Europe and North America, to the hush arbors and praise houses of slavery's invisible institution, to the evolution of distinctively black denominations. In a wonderfully readable narrative style, the author relates the development of diverse black

Baptist associations and conventions, from the eighteenth century through the twentieth century's civil rights movement.

Ideal for clergy and laity alike, the book highlights key leaders, theological concepts, historic events, and social concerns that influenced the growth of what we know today as the diverse black Baptist family of churches.

By Rev. Dr. Wayne Croft
Pastor of St. Paul's Baptist Church in West Chester

Ordination Council and Service

The **Grace Baptist Church of Germantown** called an ordination council for **Minister Brian Wallace** on February 18th. Following questions and answers delegates voted unanimously for the church to proceed with ordination.

On Sunday, March 21st a service of celebration and ordination was held. The event was livestreamed for those wishing to attend. The ordination message was given by the Rev. Merle McJunkin, Pastor of the Antioch Baptist Church, Bedford Hills, NY and formerly served as Assistant Pastor/Minister of Christian Education of Grace Baptist Church of Germantown.



News and Notes Around the Region

Pastoral Transitions

The **Point Pleasant Community Baptist Church** said good bye to their pastor, **Rev. Brenda Egolf-Fox** (pictured left) who retired at the end of December after serving as pastor since 2016. The church is excited to welcome the **Rev. Dr. Courtney Davis-Olds** as Interim



Pastor.

The **Second Baptist Church of Germantown** welcomed their new pastor **Rev. Crystal Goree-Jennings**. This is a milestone achievement as she will become the first female and the first African American to hold this title at Second Baptist Church.



Rev. Shelby Haggray has been called as the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Levittown/Fairless Hills. She began in this position on Easter Sunday, April 4th. She had been serving as the Acting Pastor since last fall.

In Memoriam

We remember **Reverend Dr. Lowell M. McCown**, who passed away February 17, 2021. He served the **McKinley Memorial Baptist Church** in Willow Grove for 36 Years from 1970 until his retirement in 2006.



Biennial Mission Summit An Online Experience

Registration for the 2021 ABCUSA Biennial Mission Summit, an online experience is now open. The event will be held Thursday-Friday, June 24-26, 2021. [See the flyer for more details.](#) To view the entire schedule or to register visit www.americanbaptists2021.com



Upcoming Events

- ◆ **May 1, 2021** - 214th PBA Annual Meeting - A Virtual Meeting via Zoom
 - ◆ **June 24-26, 2021** - ABCUSA Biennial Mission Summit, An Online Experience.
 - ◆ **November 13, 2021** - Annual PBA Mission Banquet @ The Drexelbrook Events Center, Drexel Hill, PA
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Rev. Dr. James E. McJunkin, Jr., Executive Regional Pastor

STAY CONNECTED

