

## QuickLinks

The newest cohort of ABHMS' In Support of Excellence financial-literacy initiative met for the first time on Jan. 7 and 8. Meeting virtually via Zoom, they will continue to do so monthly for the remainder of the year. Learn more at [abhms.org/about-us/news/](http://abhms.org/about-us/news/).



Minister to those who are grieving with resources at [abhms.org/ministries/developing-leaders/chaplaincy/](http://abhms.org/ministries/developing-leaders/chaplaincy/).

ABHMS' board published a statement decrying the Jan. 6 violence at the U.S. Capitol. Read it at [abhms.org/about-us/news/](http://abhms.org/about-us/news/).

## American Baptist volunteer group remains connected to those they served in Puerto Rico

When it comes to mission trips, both those who give and those who receive can find that they are blessed by remaining in touch long after the work has been done. Take, for example, the 23 volunteers who decided to keep in touch with the individuals and families they served in Puerto Rico in February 2020.

Ranging in age from 19 to the mid-70s, volunteers hailed from Grace Baptist, Esperanza, Cedar Hills and Iglesia Visión Nueva, all of Portland, Ore., and New Community Church, Menlo Park, Calif. They were accompanied by a contractor who is a member of a Greek Orthodox church in Portland.

Sponsored by American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS) and American Baptist Churches of the Central Pacific Coast, the group completed a variety of jobs from roofing to cooking.

The group has remained connected to those they served via e-mail and ministrElife, ABHMS' social media platform for ministry professionals. Several of the women have formed an American Baptist Women's Ministries "Beloved Community" group to work at building multicultural relationships across the four Portland churches.

As Christmas approached, the team mailed to Puerto Rico a Christmas card with a photograph of the volunteers.

"The idea was we wanted them each to know that the team who met them in February had not forgotten them," says the Rev. Dr.

Christine Roush, national coordinator, Faith Formation & Discipleship. "Language was a barrier for half our group who did not speak



Spanish, so we wanted them to be able to attach faces to the card and know we were holding them in our thoughts and prayers."

In addition, the group sent gift cards for groceries and supplies. ABHMS staffer Abigail Medina Betancourt, who had coordinated the volunteer effort, used the gift cards to buy items that families and individuals needed. While one family received a washing machine, one man received a trimmer so he can continue upkeep on the yard that the volunteers cleared.

"Part of the reason we have stayed connected is our deep concern for those we had the privilege of working with while there," says Roush. "As we built friendships with them, it changed us by putting dozens of human faces on a natural disaster. It is no longer just 'Hurricane Maria'—it's the storm that wrecked the lives and livelihoods of people we know and care about."

## ABHMS resources will help your church support the AFC campaign



Featuring the theme "For the Purpose of Equipping Saints," this year's America for Christ (AFC) campaign focuses on ABHMS' Leadership Empowerment and Discipleship ministries. ABHMS' website features a variety of resources to help your church support the AFC campaign, which is grounded in Ephesians 4:11-13.

Six one- to two-minute video testimonials that illustrate ABHMS' support of discipleship and leadership development are available for use as "Mission Moments" during your church service.

Also available for download in English and Spanish are the Leader's Guide, flyers, bulletin inserts, clip art and evaluation

forms. Among other available items are a virtual speakers form, photographs and a frequently asked questions page.

Physical copies of some promotional materials are available by calling ABHMS' office of Development at 610.768.2413.

ABHMS' ministries—along with the ministries of our mission partners—are making a transformational difference in the lives of so many individuals and families. Give during the upcoming designated Sunday at your church or visit [abhms.org/AFCnow](http://abhms.org/AFCnow). Questions should be directed to Kim Wilkins, Development coordinator, at 610.768.2413.



### Mission in America

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ABHMS’ networking platform for ministry professionals—ministrElife—announces its partnership with The Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference Inc. The partnership delivers a platform for like-minded individuals, passionate about engaging issues affecting the African-American community.

As part of this partnership, the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference Inc.’s 2021 Clergy & Lay Leadership Virtual Conference was hosted on the ministrElife platform in February.

Proctor’s online community, the Mbongi Network, is also hosted by ministrElife. *Mbongi*, a word in the Kikongo language, means “learning place.”

Members of ministrElife are encouraged to join the Mbongi Network at [ministrElife.org/engage](https://ministrElife.org/engage).

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## ABHMS launches new online Center for Continuous Learning

On April 1, the virtual home of the ABHMS Center for Continuous Learning (CCL) will have its official launch, providing visitors a 90-day promotional window to explore its initial offerings. Early adopters will be invited to offer feedback, request new content, and secure early access to the calendar and course schedule for the upcoming academic year.

The CCL is the brainchild of ABHMS Executive Director Jeffrey Haggray. “For the past five years, I have marveled at the quality content produced by our staff and partners,” Haggray says. “And I envision the Center for Continuous Learning as a powerful platform to deliver more of that content in dynamic ways for new audiences.”

The CCL was originally conceived as an initiative housed in the ABHMS Leadership and Mission Building, offering in-person learning experiences with the intent to later add a virtual presence, allowing for hybrid and distance learning as well. The COVID-19 pandemic delayed plans for onsite programming, but allowed ABHMS to expedite development of the CCL’s virtual home, [ccl.ministrelife.org](https://ccl.ministrelife.org).

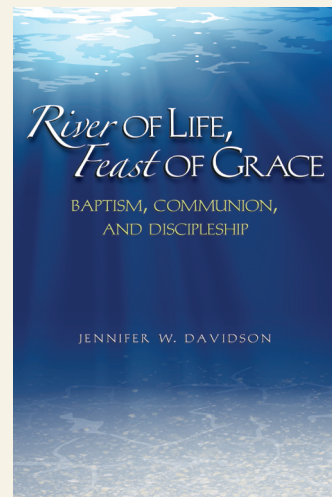
“The online ABHMS Center for Continuous Learning offers opportunities to deepen faith formation among Christ-followers at all stages of faith,” says the Rev. Rebecca Irwin-Diehl, newly appointed director of the CCL. “By offering education for mission and change, the CCL empowers ABHMS’ commitment to equip disciples, cultivate leaders, and heal and transform communities.”

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## Judson Press announces 2021-2022 ‘ABC Reads’ selection

Judson Press, the publishing ministry of American Baptist Home Mission Societies, has named “River of Life, Feast of Grace: Baptism, Communion, and Discipleship” by the Rev. Dr. Jennifer W. Davidson as the “ABC Reads” book for 2021-2022.

Every other year since 2006, in conjunction with the Biennial Mission Summit, ABC Reads highlights a



Judson Press book that is appropriate for reading and discussion in small group settings as well as for individual study.

“River of Life, Feast of Grace” provides students, pastors and congregations with the analytical skills needed to create robust services of their own—services that will help to shape our understandings of

who God is, how God cares about the world, and how Christ-followers can perceive God’s invitation to a life of grace through participation in meaningful services of baptism and communion.

A free, supplemental resource, “River of Life, Feast of Grace Reflection & Study Guide for Individuals & Small Groups,” is available at [judsonpress.com](https://judsonpress.com).

The book’s retail price is \$17.99. Save 15 percent on orders of at least 10 copies. Order at [judsonpress.com](https://judsonpress.com) or by phoning Judson Press customer service at 800.458.3766. Mention promo code “ABCREADS” when phoning, or enter it in the discount box during online checkout.

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