



# CBMM NEWSLETTER

EDITED BY THE REV. CHERYL HARRIS

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## WELCOME!

We are pleased to publish the CBMM quarterly newsletter for American Baptist Ministers in MA. Our aim is to support you in fulfilling God's call to ministry. Produced in collaboration with you, for you, and all about you, we include inspiring prayers, professional development resources, and your joys and prayer requests.

We will publish the newsletter four (4) times per year, on the third Friday of the month in November, February, May, and September.

## FROM OUR PRESIDENT

As we slowly emerge from the pandemic, I give thanks to God for the opportunity to continue our journey together in this new time. We hold on to God's promise that God will be with us every step of the way. Each new moment is precious, and that we seek to make the most of it. Time is passing even as you read this. We can't stop the moments from fleeting, but we can seize the time to do good deeds and let good thoughts thrive in us.

During the past year, as I sat alone in my office at the church thinking about the situation of the world, and staring into the large empty building, I asked myself, Why am I here? What is my purpose? What are all these humans and all living beings covering the face of the earth for? What is the meaning of life? These questions are ancient! But they tugged at my heart as if I was asking them for the first time, in that moment. In the deadening silence, I saw my mini electric teapot, a cup and some apricot tea bags in a new way. I realized how special these small things are to me. They are special to me because they bear a story. They were gifts of love. Some years ago, a beloved church member (may she rest in peace) gifted me with a beautiful cup with a scripture verse printed on it: The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace (Ps. 29:11), and some apricot teabags. Then, just before the COVID-19 pandemic, another dear member gave me an electric teapot to make sure I have hot water for tea. I saw in these small things the gesture of love, care and thoughtfulness. I saw meaning in this. As I drank the apricot tea in my office, warm memories flooded my mind and soul. I thought about all the years I spent together with my beloved church members in health, in sickness, and in death; our conversations, our worship, our events, etc. I also remembered the beautiful friendship between the two givers. They were best friends, one gone to be with the Lord and the other still working very hard on earth for the Lord in her 80s. What a gift to our generation to have women and men of faith walking alongside us advising, teaching, caring, and touching our hearts.

Life's small gestures bring meaning into our lives—a little love, a caring touch, creating warm and beautiful memories of friendship. We realize that life is worth living. In life, crossing into the unknown can be scary; being on the edge of change can be fearful like a heavy wind sweeping over us, wounding us deeply and interrupting our plans. When we are hit hard in life, friends remain. Friendship is a beautiful gift. In this is love, encouragement, sacrifice, forgiveness, welcome, consolation, patience, support, acceptance, and more. At the end of his life on earth, Jesus told his disciples: "I'm no longer calling you servants because servants don't understand what their master is thinking or planning. I'm calling you friends because I've let you in on everything I've learned from the Father" (John 15:15). We have a wonderful friend in Jesus! More so, he instructed us to forge deep friendships while on earth, and he showed the most excellent way to do this: LOVE—"love one another as I have loved you."

As we step out in this new time, I hope we will hear God calling and leading us into a significant and abundant life, to be open to new things, and find our own stories that we will be excited to share with others—our stories of trusting God, of love, faith, friendship, greater confidence, transformation, and surprises. As we start each new day with God, may this be our prayer: Lord, teach me to live well; teach me to live wisely and well (Ps. 90:12).

I hope you enjoy the splendor of this beautiful season!

In the abundance of God's grace,  
Atula Jamir, President

# YOU'RE INVITED!

There are a number of ways in which we invite your partnership. First and foremost, we welcome your input. Please send your ideas and let us know what you'd like us to add, subtract, or increase.

## NAME IT

Our newsletter needs a name. After God created the animals and birds, God invited Adam to name them. His accurate descriptions remain and those names stuck. Would you help us by submitting your creative ideas for a name of our newsletter?

How will you describe, through naming, the CBMM Newsletter? What do you want the name of the Newsletter to represent? What shall we call it?

Please submit your creative ideas no later than January 31, 2022 to [office@conferenceofbaptistministers.com](mailto:office@conferenceofbaptistministers.com). The new name will be published in the February 2022 issue. The author of the new name will be rewarded with his/her/their name in bold, colorful lettering at the top of the newsletter with a huge "Thank you."

## NEWS AND GOODS

"News and Goods" will be a regular column of joys and prayer requests. In accordance with James 5:13-15, we join together to pray for the suffering, to seek healing for the sick, and to sing songs of praise with the cheerful.

To clarify, "News" represents life events for which you seek prayers, support, and solidarity. "Goods" are life events for which you invite the community to join in rejoicing with you; perhaps an achievement; accomplishment; graduation; grant award, etc."

Please submit "News" and "Goods" anytime. They will appear in the next newsletter following submission.

## BOOK RECS

What are you reading that you'd like others to enjoy? Submit recommendations anytime.

## OTHER IDEAS OR RECOMMENDATIONS

We would love to hear your feedback. All input and submissions can be sent to [office@conferenceofbaptistministers.com](mailto:office@conferenceofbaptistministers.com). Submissions will be accepted through the last weekday of the month prior to publication.





## CLERGY SELF CARE



THE CENTER FOR  
CAREER DEVELOPMENT  
AND MINISTRY

As a member of the CBMM, you are eligible to receive compassionate and wise counsel from The Center for Career Development and Ministry. A vibrant and diverse team of experienced coaches are available, including The Rev. Dr. Meg Hess, The Rev. Canon Hannah Anderson, The Rev. Dr. Jim Stone, The Rev. Margaret Marcuson, Pastor Nick Munn and The Rev. Dr. Will Ashley.

Please do not hesitate to take advantage of individual ministry coaching. Contact CCDM and they will guide you in deciding on the best course of action to meet your personal and spiritual needs.

Our collaboration with The Center for Career Development and Ministry continues to go well. They have developed and presented several workshops including Advanced Interim Ministry training, Ethics and Boundaries, and Support for the Heavy Lifting of Ministry. Rev. Maggie Lewis and Dr. Will Ashley lead several ongoing support groups for clergy dealing with cancer and a monthly Zoom drop in call for any clergy who wish to talk.



## "THANK GOD FOR HUMOR!"\*

There is always a place for humor. In his timeless writing, Thurman aptly states, "It is easy to understand the reason for much of the tension that engulfs us." Given all that ministers are dealing with, it is reasonable to feel overwhelmed, put upon, drained. That's when a little humor comes in handy. As Thurman says, it may not be laughter or even a smile, humor is "a point of view, an attitude toward experience." When we can step back and take a panoramic view – take it all in, we can establish perspective and regroup, allowing "true humor" to surface. True humor is a spiritual weapon, used creatively to laugh at oneself, identify what doesn't belong, what is out of place, what is worthy of a chuckle. "All the gods of depression, gloom and melancholy must shriek with alarm when there rings down the corridor the merry music of the humorous spirit. What a deadly religion, if it has no humor. Thank God for humor!"

\*Thurman, H. Meditations of the Heart. Beacon Press. Boston. 1953

"It is easy to  
understand  
the reason  
for much of  
the tension  
that engulfs  
us."

HOWARD THURMAN







# SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

## GIVING THANKS

We give thanks to the God of our salvation. Reflecting upon the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday, I am reminded of the song, “Every day is a day of Thanksgiving,” some of the lyrics are;

“

*Every day is a day of thanksgiving.  
God's been so good to me, every day,  
God's blessing me. Every day is a day  
of thanksgiving. Take the time to  
glorify the Lord, today.*

”

The Book of 1 Chronicles 16:8-13 provides some reasons for giving thanks to God. Supreme among them is God's name.

God's name is above all names and worthy of honor. The writer admonishes us to glory in God's holy name. Further, the writer encourages us to remember God's wonderful works; God's miracles; and God's judgments. The writer goes on to urge us to give thanks to God because of God's deeds among the people; to tell of God's wonderful works. The refrain of the song echoes in my mind, “Every day is a day of thanksgiving.”

The holiday is set aside to stop and give thanks. As with most things in society today, there is also the shadow of suffering that is worth acknowledging. As co-laborers with Christ, we would be remiss not to mention that some view the Thanksgiving holiday as a source of pain. Fifty-one years ago, on November 27, 1970, The United American Indians of New England declared the Thanksgiving holiday as a national day of mourning\*. It serves as a reminder of the hardship and slaughter of loved ones, loss of land and denial of dignity.

I am convinced that God does not consider it robbery to stand in solidarity with those in pain; to walk alongside them and to compassionately see them. Our thanksgiving holiday is not ruined by extending compassion. In fact, I am certain our Thanksgiving celebrations are enhanced when we fulfill our Christian duty to rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. We do not need to give into a binary perspective of either/or, that is, either we celebrate Thanksgiving or we mourn with the hurting. Instead, we can exercise a both/and perspective, giving thanks on Thanksgiving Day for what God has done and praying for atonement of sin and comfort for the hurting, forgotten and ignored.

Adding to our daily thanksgiving in honor of our siblings is a path to living in harmony with one another.

God's Blessings to you!

\*<https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2020/11/25/native-americans-thanksgiving-mourning>

## VETERANS DAY

Thank you to all veterans for your service and sacrifice.

A reflection for Veterans Day by from a workshop offered on August 18, 2009 by Dr. Wayne Eastlack.

Anxiety Disorders: Research, Diagnosis and Treatment



While sitting at O'Hare Airport in Chicago a man walked past and Wayne asked him if he was a Marine. The man said "Yes. How can you tell?" Wayne told him by his haircut and the way he was walking. Wayne shared with the man he had been a Marine and served in Vietnam in the 3rd Recon 3rd Marines from 1968-1969. The Marine told Wayne he was headed back to Iraq for his fourth tour of duty. Wayne asked him why he was going back as he only had to do three tours. The Marine replied, "I have lost the switch." The Marine went on to explain that he no longer has the ability to connect with his wife and children. His wife has taken the kids and left him. He is going back to his Marine Unit as it is the only way of life he knows and feels at home. Wayne went on to explain to those at the workshop of how in the Marines one is taught how to not feel as if you feel you have lost your edge. Wayne shared with the Marine of his work as a psychologist. Wayne gave his contact information to the Marine and told him that at any time he, his wife and children can come to his facility in NC and he will provide them all with free treatment and lodging for as long as it takes. Wayne said at the workshop that he does not know if he will ever hear from the Marine.

Wayne, the son of a preacher, was drafted after receiving his Master's Degree in Psychology. He was serving in Vietnam in the Marines and was responsible for a troop of 11 men who went to rescue soldiers in enemy territory. While he was in Vietnam his fiancé at home became a "flower child" and then began to see Wayne as a baby killer with what he was doing in Vietnam. As a result, she broke off the engagement and ended their relationship.

Wayne always flew with his men in the chopper on every mission. The first mission he was not able to go with his men on a mission he asked a Sergeant to take his place. While on that mission the chopper was shot down and everyone was killed. While in Vietnam Wayne always wore a jacket with the writing on the back "You and Me God!" After the chopper was shot down his commanding officer told him even he has to take some time and deal with what happened. Wayne proceeded to place his jacket on a pole and shot it with his gun until it was in shreds. Wayne shared he was so mad at God for letting the chopper be shot down that he lost his faith in God.

A while after he returned to the States he received a phone call from a woman who said they had never met but she was supposed to be the maid of honor when he was engaged. She said she called to tell him that she supported his efforts and all he did when he was in Vietnam. He asked her if they could meet so he could buy her coffee or a meal. The only place open was a 24-hour truck stop and they sat there talking for hours. She later became his wife and they have two children.

After being married 14 years they were living near DC. His son had asked Wayne several times to take him to see the Vietnam Memorial Wall. His wife said to Wayne one day that they should go and take their son so he will get to see it. When they arrived at the Memorial, his son went running toward the wall. His wife said to go and run after their son. As he approached his son there was a woman talking to him. His son then said to him, "Daddy, we have to find the names of your men." The woman knew what was going on and told Wayne she can help him find the names of his men. He said he would wait and come back when it was not so crowded to look for the names. She said, "It is always this crowded." She shared with Wayne she had lost her husband in Vietnam and she now spends her time at the Memorial to help those who come to visit.

At that moment Wayne began to have heart palpitations and realized he was having a panic attack. He practiced deep breathing and was able to ease the symptoms of the attack. The woman helped Wayne find the name of the Sergeant that had taken his place on the chopper the day it was shot down and all were killed.





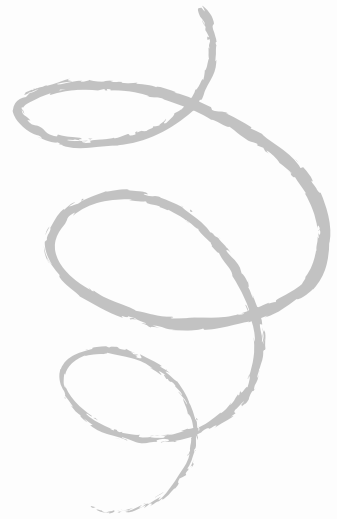
## VETERANS DAY CONT.

Wayne said he placed his hand over the Sergeant's name and began crying and said, "It should have been me." The woman replied, "Mister, it was not supposed to be you or it would have been. God has a plan for your life and you are not doing it."

Wayne's wife said to him later as they stood near the Memorial that she needed to speak with him. She said to him, "We're going on being married 15 years and I have never felt your heart. Get better this year or I am leaving. I've waited all of this time for your heart." Wayne shared that he did not feel he had the right to get better after losing all of his men. His wife said to him, "You know the words but not the music."

He did find a therapist who was able to bring him home to himself. The therapist helped him realize his underlying fear of why he avoids being close to his wife and children. If he avoided getting close to them and God took them away from him, he would not hurt. The therapist told Wayne, "I need to walk you through the mine field in Vietnam. When it gets bad, stay focused on where you are going (the picture of his wife and children) and not where you are coming from." Wayne said, "For the first time since coming home from Vietnam I felt relief and realized I was only then truly back home." Wayne said it was then that he began to rekindle his faith in God. Wayne's wife now refers to him as "My second husband."

"When I forgive I set a prisoner free. That prisoner is me." Dr. Wayne Eastlack







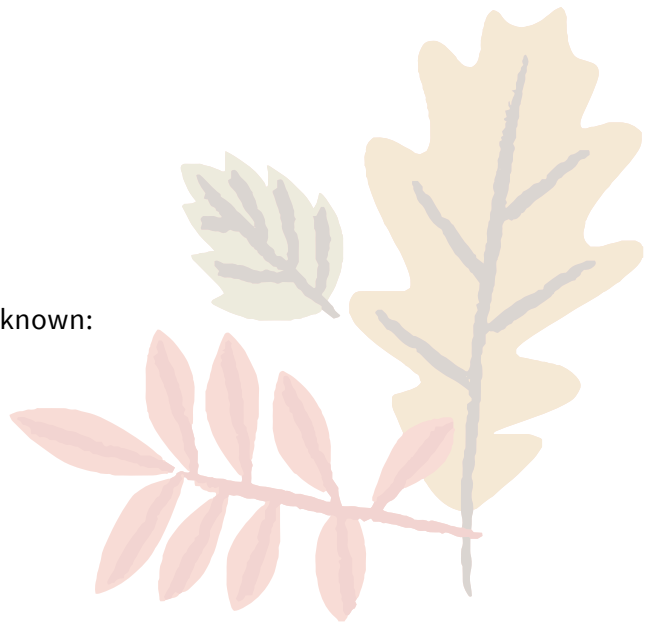
## A THANKSGIVING PRAYER

By Howard Thurman

Today, I make my Sacrament of Thanksgiving.  
I begin with the simple things of my days:  
Fresh air to breathe,  
Cool water to drink,  
The taste of food,  
The protection of houses and clothes,  
The comforts of home.  
For all these I make an act of Thanksgiving this day!

I bring to mind all the warmth of humankind that I have known:  
My mother's arms,  
The strength of my father  
The playmates of my childhood,  
The wonderful stories brought to me from the lives  
Of many who talked of days gone by when fairies  
And giants and all kinds of magic held sway;  
The tears I have shed, the tears I have seen;  
The excitement of laughter and the twinkle in the  
Eye with its reminder that life is good.  
For all these I make an act of Thanksgiving this day

I finger one by one the messages of hope that awaited me at the crossroads:  
The smile of approval from those who held in their hands the reins of my security;  
The tightening of the grip in a simple handshake when I  
Feared the step before me in darkness;  
The whisper in my heart when the temptation was fiercest  
And the claims of appetite were not to be denied;  
The crucial word said, the simple sentence from an open  
Page when my decision hung in the balance.  
For all these I make an act of Thanksgiving this day.



## A THANKSGIVING PRAYER CONT.

I pass before me the main springs of my heritage:  
The fruits of labors of countless generations who lived before me,  
Without whom my own life would have no meaning;  
The seers who saw visions and dreamed dreams;  
The prophets who sensed a truth greater than the mind could grasp  
And whose words would only find fulfillment  
In the years which they would never see;  
The workers whose sweat has watered the trees,  
The leaves of which are for the healing of the nations;  
The pilgrims who set their sails for lands beyond all horizons,  
Whose courage made paths into new worlds and far off places;  
The saviors whose blood was shed with a recklessness that only a dream  
Could inspire and God could command.  
For all this I make an act of Thanksgiving this day.

I linger over the meaning of my own life and the commitment  
To which I give the loyalty of my heart and mind:  
The little purposes in which I have shared my loves,  
My desires, my gifts;  
The restlessness which bottoms all I do with its stark insistence  
That I have never done my best, I have never dared  
To reach for the highest;

The big hope that never quite deserts me, that I and my kind  
Will study war no more, that love and tenderness and all the  
inner graces of Almighty affection will cover the life of the  
children of God as the waters cover the sea.

All these and more than mind can think and heart can feel,  
I make as my sacrament of Thanksgiving to Thee,  
Our Father, in humbleness of mind and simplicity of heart.



## ADVENT

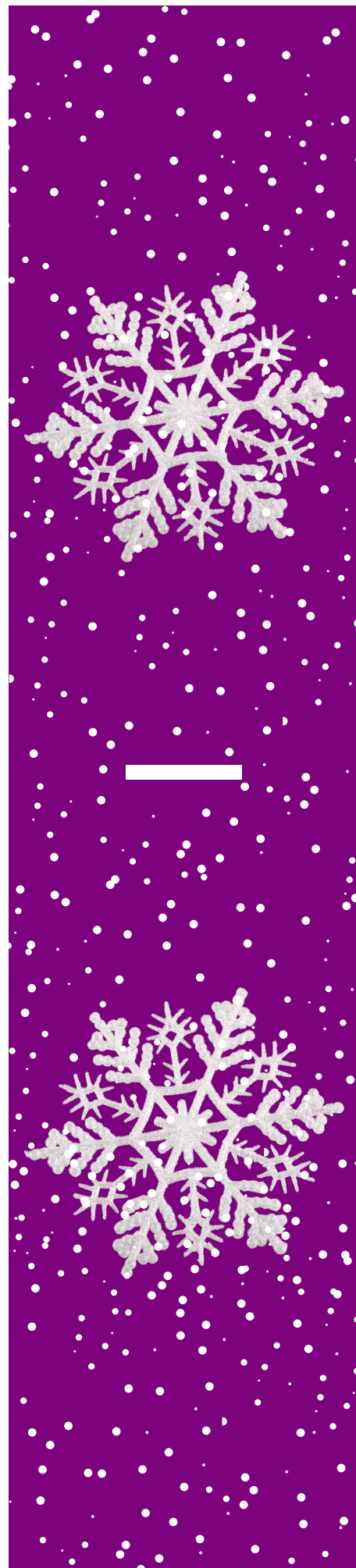
Are you looking for a new devotional this Advent season? Check out a new book by two of our colleagues. Rev. Daryn Stylianopoulos (TABCOM President) and Rev. Lin Story-Bunce (Together in Ministry Coordinator with the Minister's Council), along with their sisters Kendall Grubb and June Bunce, have published a book of Advent devotions entitled *Advent at the Welcome Table*. Describing this book, they write, "Each day offers an invitation to come as you are, to meet God anew in stories and scripture, to remember our belovedness, and to see the community around us through the renewed understanding of God's gift of love for the world."

You can find more information on their [website](#).



## 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

By the time Christmas comes along, many of us are wiped out. We are lucky if we have the energy to fully celebrate on Christmas Day, never mind maintaining that celebratory energy for the full twelve days of Christmas. The Conference would like to offer a short word of renewal, faith, hope, and encouragement to refill our cups after we have poured out so much during the previous month. We will be offering a series of daily devotions during the twelve days of Christmas to offer you a good word in a stressful season.





# NEW ON THE HORIZON



## BLACK CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE RESOURCE CENTER

In October, 2021, Dr. Emmett Price III, pastor of Community of Love Christian Fellowship in Allston, MA and Dean of Africana Studies at the Berklee School of Music formally launched the Black Christian Experience Resource Center (BCERC). The Center's purpose is to empower the resilient legacy and prophetic hope of the Afro-Diasporic Christian Experience. The Center will guide "congregations, communities and leaders through cutting edge research, educational initiatives and programmatic offerings with the goal of empowering the global witness of the Black Christian Experience."

For more information, call 617-221-3190 or visit their [website](#).



## "LISTENING WITH EARS TO HEAR"

Boston Praise Radio airs local and national news, Gospel music, and live talk radio. It started as an internet radio station housed at the Global Ministries Christian Church in Boston, MA. In 2014, it added a 24-hour 7-day a week satellite signal. It is now licensed by the Federal Communication Commission and has the honorable distinction of being "the only licensed FM station in Boston that is church-based, Black-owned, social media, Internet, and TV multi-media network in New England."

You can access Boston Praise Radio & TV on boxcast, appletv, audionow, or <https://bostonpraiseradio.tv/>



# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## LIFELONG LEARNING

Lifelong Learning at Vanderbilt  
Courses as little as \$60

Welcome to Lifelong Learning (LLL) at Vanderbilt Divinity School. The Purposes and Commitments at the heart of the school's mission emphasize the points at which theology and practice meet. Two of the guiding questions for LLL are about the what and the how of life: "What can we glean from our traditions, methods, and practices?" "How are we to live in light of what we know to be just?"

Enrollment begins October 25, 2021, and continues through November 22, 2021. Classes begin December 1, 2021. There is no deadline by which the course must be completed, but we recommend completion by mid-February. Upon completion, you will receive a certificate via email. More information is available on their [website](#).

Boston University School of Theology  
Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)

The School of Theology has created four MOOCs, which are available on [edX](#). These courses are as follows:

- Faith and Finance
- Ethical Leadership
- Religion and Conflict Transformation
- Interfaith Leadership

A small fee will be assessed for those who wish to register as verified learners with full access.

## PODCASTS

Here are a few podcasts we recommend. Stay tuned for more suggestions in the next issue.

[Yale Center for Faith and Culture podcast: For the Life of the World](#)

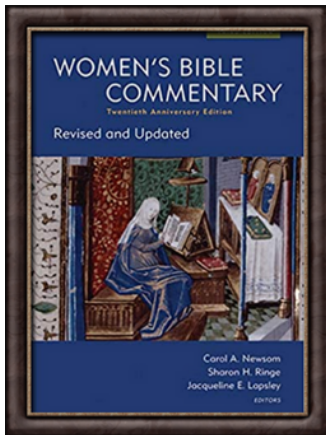
NPR- The Hidden Brain -  
Check out [this one](#) on laughter

[Amy Jill Levine – the Bible with and without Jesus](#)

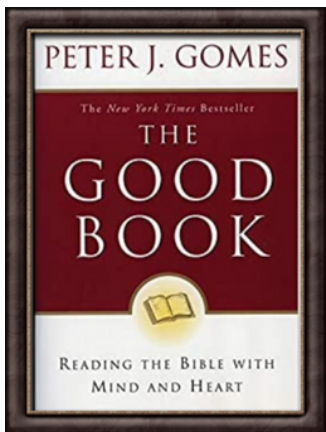
Amy-Jill Levine is University Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies, Mary Jane Werthan Professor of Jewish Studies, and Professor of New Testament Studies at Vanderbilt Divinity School, Graduate Department of Religion, and Department of Jewish Studies; she is also Affiliated Professor, Woolf Institute, Centre for the Study of Jewish-Christian Relations, Cambridge UK.



## EXPANDING OUR PERSPECTIVES: BIBLE COMMENTARIES FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION



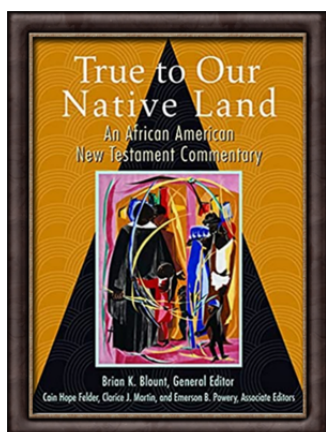
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Gomes, P. *The Good Book: Reading the Bible with Mind and Heart*. HarperOne. 2002



Patte, D., Croatto, J., Duran, N., Okure, T., & Lee, A. *Global Bible Commentary*. Abingdon Press. 2004



Blount, B., Felder, C., Martin, C., & Powery, E. *True to Our Native land: An African American New Testament Commentary*. Fortress Press. 2007





# ABOUT CBMM

## NEW OPERATIONS MANAGER

The Conference of Baptist Ministers in Massachusetts is pleased to announce that Rev. Jana Yeaton has joined our staff as our Operations Manager!

Rev. Yeaton has served churches in Chelmsford, Lowell, and North Billerica, as well as working in social service and higher education administration. In this new position, she will be working closely with the Conference Board to develop and implement programs and will serve as the primary point of contact for operational and administrative matters.

Jana can be reached at [office@conferenceofbaptistministers.com](mailto:office@conferenceofbaptistministers.com)



## OUR BOARD MEMBERS

Atula Jamir	President
Cheryl Harris	Immediate Past President
Jaqueline Dyer	Secretary
Matthew Rasure	Treasurer

John Denardo	Adoniram Judson
Sheila Sholes-Ross	Berkshire
Moreen Hughes	Boston Southwest
John Bio Asante	Central
Nathaniel Burnes	Merrimack Valley
Diane Badger	Old Colony
Paula Alexander	Pioneer Valley
John Odams	Samuel Stillman
Mar Imsong	At-large
June Cooper	At-large

## DONATIONS & DUES

We welcome your material and spiritual support to the CBMM. You can send your donations electronically via our website, [www.conferenceofbaptistministers.com](http://www.conferenceofbaptistministers.com), or mail them to Conference of Baptist Ministers at 167 Prescott Street, Groton, MA 01450.

## ACRONYM SOUP

Do you ever wonder  
what the acronyms mean?

### TABCOM

The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts

### MBCS

Massachusetts Baptist Charitable Society

### MBMM

Massachusetts Baptist Multi-Cultural Ministries

### CBMM

Conference of Baptist Ministers in Massachusetts

### CCDM

The Center for Career Development and Ministry

### A&F

Administration and Finance



*“We beseech you O Lord, to grant us your help and protection. Deliver the afflicted, pity the lowly, raise the fallen, reveal yourself to the needy, heal the sick, and bring home your wandering people. Feed the hungry, ransom the captive, support the weak, comfort the faint-hearted. Let all the nations of the earth know that you alone are God, that Jesus Christ is your child and that we are your people and the sheep of your pasture.*



**- SAINT CLEMENT OF ROME**

