



## AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA

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*Rev. Dr. Gina C. Jacobs-Strain*  
*General Secretary*

*And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue His work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns. Phil. 1:6, NIV*

Dear Pastors, Chaplains, Pastoral Counselors, Spiritual Directors and Spiritual Caregivers:

We are thinking of you and praying for and with you as you stand in the gap during these turbulent times. Thank you for intercession, revivals, retreats, and your persistent presence within our churches, hospitals, correctional institutions, hospice agencies, communities, military branches, and other specialized settings.

We are grateful for the many ways you share love, sacred imagination, prophetic preaching, and advocacy for justice. You are both a testimony and witness to the grace and love of Jesus Christ! As we travel to your annual regional events and other sacred services, we hear your stories of joy, challenges, and concerns. We empathize with you, and more importantly, God sees and hears each of you.

We know that you are often the first responders to engage congregants' and community concerns. You are attentive to individual losses, community crises, new immigration and refugee matters, and displacement due to natural disasters and other catastrophes. Amidst escalating healthcare costs and diminishing resources, job losses, and a growing intergenerational concern for mental wellbeing, you are a healing presence.

We also realize that young adults in our communities are navigating a landscape quite different from their parents, and the uncertainty of their future post-college and seminary graduation, you are individually and collectively extending compassionate support, spiritual guidance, and career counseling.

These are some of the professed worries and silent hardships at your doorstep, and you help to move us forward toward safety, wellness, and stability. We thank you for home visits, late-night conversations, hospital bedside prayers, and so much more. We are profoundly grateful for the care, kindness, and grace that you consistently share without hesitation or often without pausing to take care of yourself.

Thank you for visiting schools and showing up to sporting events and enthusiastically cheering for kids on the team, even when it required you to miss a family event. Thank you for encouraging those who have lost their hope and reminding seasoned saints and seekers that God

is still God and has promised never to leave us. Thank you for the long days, too many hours to count, and especially to our bi-vocational and part-time clergy. We are grateful that you are the bridge from despair to hope, from isolation to community, and from silence to representation. Individually, collectively, and collaboratively, you are the hands and feet of God.

Even with all that you do, we ask you to do one more thing... pause for rest and restoration; be still so that you can be replenished. We need *you* to take care of *you*. We need you to be well. We need you to take the time to be you, to be with family, to be with friends, to be counseled and supported. We are trusting that the good work that God began in you, God will indeed finish, and part of that good work is the Sabbath.

We also encourage you to reach out to others for help, to be mindful that there are many ways to provide support and that you alone are not a village. There is support in your churches, regions, national, and ecumenical partners. There is benefit in shared experiences and wisdom. There is renewal in recognizing that God has not called you to serve alone but to serve in community.

We invite you to review these resources as you consider ways in which you might be able to find additional support. You may also reach out to Rev. Dr. Gina Jacobs-Strain, General Secretary at [communications@abc-usa.org](mailto:communications@abc-usa.org), and Rev. Dr. Patricia Murphy, Ecclesiastical Endorser and Director of Spiritual Caregivers, [Patricia.Murphy@abhms.org](mailto:Patricia.Murphy@abhms.org), for information specific to ecclesiastical endorsement and spiritual care.

[MMBB Cares](#)

[Clergy Disaster Relief Grant](#)

[Mission Initiative Fund](#)

[Chestnut Street Baptist Church Endowment Fund Grants](#)

[ABHMS' Beyond the Stained-Glass Ceiling Grant](#)

[ABHMS' Continuing Education Grants](#)

[Center for Continuous Learning](#)

[Chaplaincy & Specialized Ministries - American Baptist Home Mission Societies](#)

[Ministers Council](#)

Sending love, prayers, and joy your way.

Prayerfully shared,

*Rev. Dr. Gina C. Jacobs-Strain*

Rev. Dr. Gina C. Jacobs-Strain - General Secretary ABCUSA