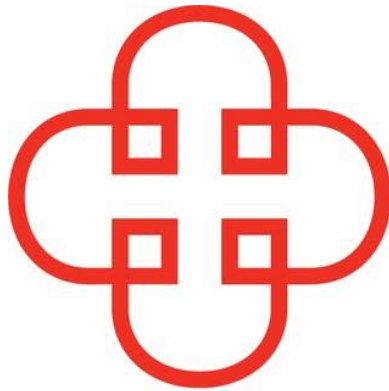




MADISON AVE · BAPTIST CHURCH

MADISON AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH PASTORAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM - 2026-2028

Pastoral Residency Opportunity for Emerging Ministers

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PASTORAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM OVERVIEW

a. Program Philosophy

The Madison Avenue Baptist Church (MABC) Preaching Fellowship Program provides emerging ministers with an exceptional opportunity to cultivate their ministerial gifts within one of New York City's most historic and progressive faith communities. This two year fellowship combines practical ministry experience with intensive mentorship in preaching, storytelling, and worship as an art form—treating Sunday worship as a creative, theological exploration.

b. Program Overview

- **Duration:** Two years
- **Commitment:** 20-25 Hours/Week
- **Start Date:** Spring 2026, with flexibility to accommodate candidate needs and moving arrangements
- **Application Period:** October - December 2025
 - Applications should be submitted to fellowship@mabcnyc.org

c. Unique Mentorship Opportunity

Residents will work directly with Rev. Susan Sparks, whose unique background spans:

- **Preaching Excellence:** Nationally recognized speaker and preacher
- **Comedy & Storytelling:** Professional comedian with expertise in narrative engagement
- **Writing & Communication:** Published author with platform reach
- **Progressive Ministry:** Leader in welcoming and affirming Baptist circles

This multifaceted mentorship offers residents skills rarely available in traditional pastoral training—the ability to connect with diverse audiences through humor, storytelling, and authentic communication, while maintaining theological depth and a commitment to social justice.

d. Program Components

Ministry Leadership Development

- Co-leadership of weekly worship services as an art form
- Primary responsibility for Adult Bible Study programming
- Youth and young adult ministry strategic planning
- Global Family congregation development and pastoral care
- Generalist ministry approach with a specialized focus on preaching and storytelling

Preaching & Communication Intensive

- Consistent preaching opportunities and feedback
- Storytelling and narrative development workshops
- Comedy and humor in ministry training
- Manuscript-free preaching development
- Digital ministry and broadcast skills

Social Justice Integration

- Hands-on community ministry involvement
- Service trip planning and leadership
- Neighborhood engagement initiatives

Professional Development

- Conference attendance and continuing education support
 - Networking within progressive Baptist and ecumenical circles
 - Administrative and operational church management
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IDEAL CANDIDATE PROFILE

We seek an emerging minister who demonstrates:

Educational Requirements

- Master of Divinity (MDiv), Master of Theological Studies (MTS), or equivalent degree
- Preference given to candidates already ordained or on track to receive ordination, compatible with American Baptist Churches USA

Theological Alignment

- Commitment to progressive Christian theology
- Passion for social justice and inclusion
- Understanding of Baptist polity and practice
- Embracing of racial diversity and LGBTQ+ affirming ministry
- Comfort with theological exploration and worship as creative expression

Ministry Gifts

- Strong preaching and communication abilities
- Interest in developing innovative worship experiences
- Comfort with technology and digital ministry platforms
- Collaborative leadership style

Personal Qualities

- Sense of humor and creative spirit
- Cultural competency and appreciation for diversity
- Urban ministry interest and experience
- Entrepreneurial mindset for program development
- Self-starter; who thrives in communal and independent work environments

Professional Goals

- Desire to deepen preaching and comedic/storytelling skills
- Interest in progressive Baptist ministry
- Commitment to social transformation through faith

- Openness to mentorship and feedback
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WHAT WE OFFER

Competitive Fellowship Package

- Annual stipend commensurate with experience
- Healthcare benefit allowance
- Professional development funding

Unique Ministry Context

- Historic Manhattan location with modern facilities
- Diverse, engaged congregation
- Professional music ministry and concert series
- State-of-the-art broadcast and digital capabilities
- Strong financial foundation

Exceptional Mentorship

- Direct training with a nationally recognized ministry leader
- Rare opportunity to develop comedy and storytelling skills
- Possibility of participating in NYC comedy shows and/or storytelling jams
- Platform development and national exposure opportunities
- Network access within progressive religious circles

Growth Opportunities

- Regular preaching in a prestigious Manhattan pulpit
 - Program development autonomy
 - Service trip leadership experience
 - Digital ministry innovation
 - Community partnership development
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PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Fellows completing this fellowship will emerge with:

- Advanced preaching and comedy, storytelling capabilities
- Digital ministry and broadcast experience
- Urban ministry and social justice leadership skills

- Progressive Baptist theological grounding
 - Professional network and platform development
 - Real-world experience in church administration and growth
 - Unique training in humor and narrative in ministry
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FELLOWSHIP COMPENSATION AND APPLICATION PROCESS

Fellowship Compensation

- **Base stipend:** \$60,000-\$70,000 (Annually)
- **Healthcare allowance:** \$5,000 (Annually)
- **Professional development fund:** \$1,000 (Annually)
- **Relocation Support** - One-time Reimbursement dependent on Candidate's location

Application Requirements

- **Resume or CV** naming MDiv, MTS, or equivalent graduation location and date, and ordination location and date or ordination timeline
- **Cover letter**, briefly answering these three questions:
 - *Given that you'll be mentored by a pastor who is also a professional comedian and author, what aspects of your own personality, background, or life experiences would you bring to this unique learning environment? How would this unconventional mentorship shape your ministerial identity?*
 - *MABC treats Sunday worship as an "art form" and serves as a theological place for exploration. How would you contribute to creating worship experiences that engage both artists and seekers while maintaining theological depth?*
 - *MABC has a 177-year legacy of taking "great risks" for ministry (like rebuilding inside a hotel in 1929). If you could design one innovative ministry program or initiative during your fellowship that others might consider "risky" but could transform lives, what would it be and why?*
- **Video submissions:** 2-3 compelling preaching/storytelling clips (2-3 minutes each, reel format acceptable)
- **Two professional references** (Optional in initial submission, required before we reach the Final Interview Stage)
- Please submit all of the above to fellowship@mabcnyc.org

VISION FOR IMPACT

The MABC Ministry Fellowship Program represents more than professional development—it's an investment in the future of progressive Christianity. Our fellows will carry forward MABC's 177-year legacy of welcoming all people, pursuing justice, and creating innovative ministry while developing the communication and leadership skills needed for 21st-century religious leadership.

As MABC looks toward its 200th anniversary, we are committed to nurturing the next generation of ministers who can blend theological depth with creative communication, social justice passion with inclusive welcome, and traditional Baptist values with contemporary innovation.

"Where your talent and the needs of the world cross, there lies your vocation." - Socrates

Join us in creating something new, brave, and magnificent for the future of Christian ministry.

ABOUT MADISON AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH

Madison Avenue Baptist Church stands as a beacon of progressive faith in the heart of Manhattan, celebrating 177 years of bold, forward-thinking ministry. Founded in 1848, MABC has consistently positioned itself at the forefront of social justice, welcoming all people regardless of race, nationality, sexual orientation, or background—a commitment evident in everything from our 1908 Vacation Bible School photographs showing children of every race to our founding membership in the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists in 1993.

Located in the vibrant NoMad neighborhood at Madison Avenue and 31st Street, MABC occupies a unique space within the fashionable AKA NoMad hotel, featuring a sanctuary that seats 250 and houses treasured historical elements, including original 1848 pews, 19th-century Franz Zettler Royal Bavarian Art Institute stained glass windows, and state-of-the-art broadcast equipment for digital ministry.

MABC serves as a theological place for exploration, creativity and artistic worship. Our congregation represents a true microcosm of the world, spanning ages from 2 to 100 years old and encompassing remarkable diversity in race, nationality, and background. We are a community that follows Christ's revolutionary model of siding with the marginalized, feeding and healing all, and standing against injustice while proclaiming joy and hope over judgment and shame.

Under the leadership of Rev. Susan Sparks, a nationally recognized preacher, author, and comedian, MABC has emerged from the post-COVID era with renewed energy, featuring an

exceptional music program led by world-renowned concert pianist and choral director Aza Sydykov, a growing staff of dedicated professionals, and an exciting trajectory toward our 200th anniversary in 2048.
