



**Capital Baptist Newsletter**

[www.dcbaptist.org](http://www.dcbaptist.org)

A Publication of the District of Columbia Baptist Convention

June 2017/ VOLUME 6

CELEBRATING MEN IN MINISTRY

# PASTOR PREACHER TEACHER

Pictured: Rev. Duncan McIntosh

1628 16th Street NW Washington, DC 20009

# From the Desk of the Executive Director/Minister

By Rev. Dr. Robert D. Cochran

We focus this month on men, especially our fathers in the faith, for June holds Fathers' Day and we celebrate men as a gift from God. Clearly, men just like all humans, fail to live up to God's intended purpose. Many, however, do the best they can as they follow Jesus. Like many others, I for one am thankful for a godly father, a layman and deacon already departed to be with the Lord. We are thankful for the gifts that God gives us in the men who influence our lives, for those who cross our paths.

D.C. Baptists are thankful  
for the men who served our  
churches in the past, too  
many individuals to name  
here.

We can know some types who have dreamed the visions and opened the doors of ministry leading to the paths D.C. Baptists first followed. Many pastors first dreamed of an organized group of congregations set with the purpose of assisting the churches they served. Laymen had a different vision, a vision of churches working together to express the mission of God in both this city and the world. Some dreamed of working together across racial divides, men such as George Whitfield Samson, William J. Walker and others like them. Some dreamed of meeting human suffering like W.W. Corcoran, Samuel W. Woodward and John B. Lord. Even now, men both laymen and pastors work to strengthen the churches of DCBC and to express the mission of God through those churches to others. We are thankful for such men. We know that God is developing others, both men and boys, for future ministry to both churches and the world.

Over the past two to three years, God is developing an organization of men in our midst.

From the time of the Laymen's Missionary Movement in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, our churches organized men together to pray, to fellowship, to learn and to witness. For many years, D.C. Baptists provided sterling examples nationally of men working together for the cause of Christ. At least one of our members rose to become a national president for American Baptist Men. Cultural shifts tragically dulled the interest and commitment to such efforts. Now, however, in this decade D.C. Baptist Men are laboring in order to develop once again a strong fellowship among themselves and between the churches. We give thanks for the efforts of many men whose activities now are coordinated by a council, led by Minister Ronald Greenfield and built on the efforts of many separate congregations.

Only time will tell what God specific good will bring out of these Men's groups. Presently, we can only note that God is raising up men together. God used similar groups in the past. God's purpose will break like a sunrise upon us. A new day awaits; it is uncertain what will emerge. Clearly, we live into the hope of God.

Let D. C. Baptists be thankful  
for the future among D.C.  
Baptists which God holds for  
men.



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1

Urban Summer  
Internship

(June 1 through June 14)

# JUNE

## CALENDAR

7

Chapel and Staff  
Meeting

18

Father's Day

9

Older Adult  
Ministries Team  
Meeting

19

P.G. County  
Pastor's  
Meeting

10

WMU National  
Board Meeting  
(June 10 through June 12)

24

Ministry on the  
Mall

13

SBC Annual  
Meeting  
(June 13 through June 14)

MissionServe  
(June 24 through July 1)





Happy  
Father's  
Day

The Baptist and International Ministries at American University has some community health promotion positions for students interested in internship in community health. Currently, we are working on diabetes prevention and management with churches affiliated with the District of Columbia Baptist Convention in Prince George's County and Washington, D.C. Those interested should directly contact Dr. Harriet Kamandi at [hkamendi@gmail.com](mailto:hkamendi@gmail.com) or Ms. Gail Lacy at [gail.lacy@dcbbaptist.org](mailto:gail.lacy@dcbbaptist.org).

The Baptist and International Ministries is a campus ministry sponsored by the D.C. Baptist Convention.

# Rev. Roland Van Bie

*If there were a word, or phrase to sum up the unique passion that God has given you, what would it be?*

Peace and justice. We don't create peace but we receive it. In order to receive peace we have to look inside ourselves.

*How has that passion worked its way into the purpose of your ministry at your church?*

Our congregation is composed mostly of refugees and those who have sought asylum from Burma. They have come as refugees from trouble areas where there was no peace at all for them. They can identify with the church. It is a place where they can have some kind of peacefulness. I think they realize that material things can give them trouble and that you have to look inside to receive peace.

*What group of people has the Lord laid heaviest on your heart?*

The Lord has laid lots of people on my heart. I am here to serve the larger community. I am very involved in my community. Some days I go to the court with members who need that. Sometimes I go with them to the immigration office. There is always something going on and I try to be present to help my members who are in need.

*What are the unique challenges of ministering in the DC Metro area?*

In the D.C. metropolitan area, it is very busy. Almost every hour I have to be somewhere. D.C. is also kind of territorial with so many cultural differences. It is a challenge to get adjusted at times. But, But I always expect a surprise from God, and I always get one. In order to receive from God, you have to have some part of yourself empty and ready to receive.

*What is your favorite scripture?*

My favorite scripture is John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (NKJV)

My  
Passion  
is...

# Finding The Soft Spot Of Our Fathers

By Rev. Starlette McNeill,  
Minister to Empower  
Congregations

“Happy Father’s Day!” For some of us, those three words bring grief and sadness. This day is not one of celebration as it is a reminder of the loss or absence of our father. Some of us will search our faces and wonder if there is evidence of him there.

The day brings back memories of what was or what we hoped could be. Father’s Day is filled with void as there is no one to bring gifts to, to take out to dinner, to praise and applaud. Some of us will visit cemeteries, revisit photo albums and watch old family videos. Others of us will visit nursing homes and hospital rooms or make long distance phone calls to a seemingly distant relative. Still, others will wonder who he is, what he looks like and if he is thinking of us.

Our new dads will be celebrated with ugly ties and cheap cologne, handmade cards and home-cooked meals, coos, kicks and spittle, hugs at the knees and around the neck. They will recognize that something of their stoicism has been lost, that becoming a father has changed them in ways they could not have planned or prevented. Power lost not

through an arm wrestling match but one little finger wrapped around his. They cannot tell you how it happened or when they let down their guard.

And unfortunately for some of us, many of our fathers won’t. Confined to the limited expressions of masculinity, they will be the strong and silent type. Still, there are the doting dads, the “proud papas” who say what they won’t allow and then do—again and again because we say, “Please, daddy?” Worn down, worn out or both, they give in. They cave in to candy or the park or yet another trip to the store for a newer version of the same toy.

Human jungle gyms, children climb their father’s backs, wrap their legs around their necks, hang on to their legs and their every word. Our fathers are a mode of transportation and a source of inspiration. We cannot move without them. They are our brief-cased crusader.

Our watchman and defender, our fathers represent strength and stability. Yet, we know that our eyes are their weak spot, that their cheek is always



# IGNITE: REMIX

Ten young people joined Carmody Hills Baptist Church (CHBC) in Seat Pleasant, Maryland, one Friday night. That seems mundane until you consider this act takes place during a Friday Night Fuel worship service in which they have been led through a process that lets them know that this act of Faith is a Spiritual one that will lead to a Lifestyle change- the ultimate Remix!

Executive Pastor Curtis McLaughlin and the Ignite Youth Ministry are not just looking to pad the attendance list at CHBC, they are using these 7 p.m. opportunities, held monthly on the third Friday, to intentionally seek to demonstrate the reality of the Christian Faith to the Communities youth and prepare them to become leaders and serve the same challenge- filled Community they live in.

“The success of our Ministry has not been accidental, nor a surprise” McLaughlin explained, “ We are intentional as we plan, promote and execute our various ministries. Our Faith is rooted in the belief that sticking to the tenets of the Bible, truly seeking to meet the needs of young people and being authentic and transparent leads to the trust all parties need and are looking for!”

While the Washington metropolitan area, or DMV, is reeling from revelations that many young people are being identified as missing or are suspected of being exploited, CHBC is poised to exclude this as a problem in the greater Seat Pleasant area.

In its second year, the Ignite Youth Ministry has been on a mission to provide an affordable alternative for before and after school care, summer enrichment camps, and various other contact opportunities. It is those connections that they feel reduce a youngster's chance of feeling alone and walking away or actually being alone to be exploited.

CHBC's Senior Pastor Oscar L. Broadie, Jr. declares that Ignite has been successful in building its presence in the Community and is establishing itself as a safe, caring, learning environment for young people. He also believes that such partnership are the key to weeding out the negative forces in communities and transforming them into the kinds of neighborhoods we all can be proud to call home.

"Our children and their parents are more than our neighbors, they have become family" Broadie contends. "Either formally as members of our congregation or informally through their continued participation. That is a valuable relationship because both parties need each other and vested interests in the development of the

greatest resource in the Community – our youth!"

CHBC is currently gearing up for another successful summer filled with multifaceted fun and learning opportunities. The Church, which enjoys an active partnership with several of the local Prince George's County Public Schools that serve its congregation, strategically plans CAMP IGNITE, its enrichment camp sessions, to both reinforce what schools want to instill in its learners and prepare them for the rigors of their next year of learning. These rich, fun-filled learning environments not only build upon and enhance the work children have been doing in school, they have the added bonus of learning extensions ~ Field trips!

As the Camp's website explains, "At Ignite, we give campers the opportunity to be active, think creatively and discover new friendships that will last a lifetime through a traditional summer day camp program for children between the ages of five and eleven"

Daily activities and trips are centered on S.T.E.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), Faith, Performing Arts, Swimming, Athletics, and Team-building. This program will operate Monday- Friday from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. beginning June 19th until August 18th 2017. Registration will be open through June 2, 2017.

Residents of Seat Pleasant are encouraged to contact Pastor McLaughlin or Deaconess Kathleen Harris to enroll their children in CHBC's Camp Ignite and VBS sessions at 301-336-1254, [chbcignite@gmail.com](mailto:chbcignite@gmail.com) or [www.ignitethehill.com](http://www.ignitethehill.com)



**IGNITE**  
**YOUTH MINISTRY**  
Carmody Hills Baptist Church



# IDOLATRY

By. Dr. Robert D. Cochran

Idolatry at first blush appears as an anachronism. Surely, our society no longer gives credence to idols. We are too scientific, too sophisticated to follow such foolishness. Physical expressions of gods, once held high and treasured, seem merely objects for anthropological study, destined at best for a museum, at the least for the trash bin. Practices of idolatry seem long ago and far away.



No one can overlook, on the other hand, in both our capital city and its suburbs issues which bedevil us daily. Confusion clearly reigns in our politically focused city. Child sacrifice torments us, occurring on altars of wealth and profit as some enslave children to drugs while others kidnap our youth for trafficking. Multiple illicit behaviors associated with idolatry bubble up around us. Some today sense ruin rising in our society, seemingly with little justification or foundation, yet deeply feared by the masses. These terrible experiences are consequences of idolatry, recognized across the ages, now discernible within our sophisticated metropolis.

Are we along with other Christians blind today to the causative issue of such challenging behaviors? The behaviors listed above are horrid, but each is a consequence of idolatry. Viewed singly one might miss any connection to idolatry; taken together, the connection appears strong.

Let us consider once again definitions of idolatry rather than relying on historical knowledge of its practices. Idolatry appears wherever people sense they have a direct road to God, surrendering to the mysteries in created life with all its overflowing richness rather than embracing fellowship and

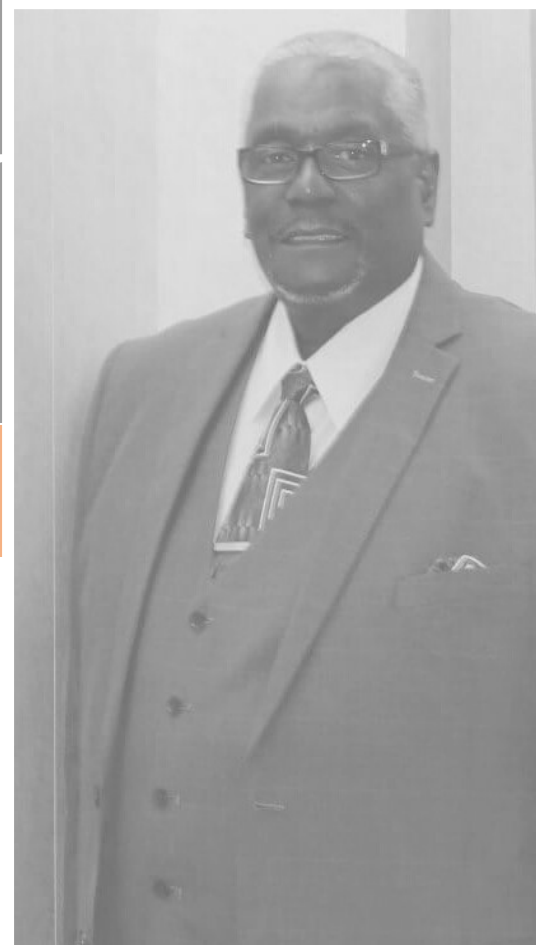
obedience to the Creator God who gives revelation. (Eichrodt, Ezekiel, p. 95) Do we discern today such paths that people blithely follow, although ones separated clearly from God? Others define idolatry as “. . . putting in our lives anything else in the place that belongs to God . . . leaving the heart restless and dissatisfied.” (Conner, Revelation and God, p. 232, see also F. Buchsel, Theological and the New Testament, II, p. 377) Are we surrounded by many who live empty, pointless lives?

Using induction rather than deduction, I wonder if our political and social challenges arise out of idolatries running loose in our society. If so, what are the idols worshipped, ones apparently hidden from our recognition? If we can clear our eyes of any beams of idolatry, perhaps God can use us to remove the specks which make many who wander blindly.

# *Why Am I A* DEACON

## Deacon Melvin A. Watson

Purity Baptist Church and Urban Center



I was ordained as a Deacon on February 24, 2008. This has been one of the most life changing experiences of my life. I attribute my spiritual growth to being selected as a Deacon. This was not a position that I actively sought, in fact I thought seriously about not accepting the position. But after all God had done for me in my life, how could I deny serving my God, my church and my family and friends. You see being a Deacon to me is all about being a servant, not only at Purity Baptist Church and Urban Center but wherever a need arises. Now when my Pastor needs something done to lighten his load, whether it be supporting the congregation spiritually or otherwise, I must make myself available to take on that task. I must lead by example so that my light shines. The best way to get others involved in the work of the church is to let them see you at work. I must attend Bible Study, Sunday School, Vacation Bible School and regular church services. I also must support the various ministries of the church. In short, being a Deacon means rolling up my spiritual sleeves and working wherever I am needed. It means studying the word, teaching the word and living the word.

*Rev. Ed Williams*

**What do you most enjoy about doing ministry in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area?**

Diversity. There are all kinds of things going on for all kinds of people! The sheer number and variety of cultures, ethnicities, languages, viewpoints, and activities makes the greater DC region very stimulating. There are opportunities here that are not found anywhere else, which heightens the sense of both calling and good stewardship for me.

**What are the unique challenges of ministering in the DC metropolitan area?**

Diversity. It's really not usual for a powerful positive characteristic to carry along with it a certain level of risk or danger—a "dark side," so to speak. The incredible diversity that we so love and enjoy in our church—over 25 nationalities among just a couple of hundred people—makes mincemeat out of us any time we get lazy and "assume" things about everyone thinking or acting or believing the same way. Whether it's parenting, finances, communication and expectations about gender roles, respect for pastoral authority, or habits regarding volunteerism, our people have a broad range of experiences that can lead to very different attitudes or actions, even if we all agree we want to do things biblically.

**If you had to name a favorite landmark or place to visit in the DC metropolitan area, what would it be?**

The Smithsonian. Doesn't matter which museum, to me; when I look back at mankind's history, our American story, the civil rights movement, flight, art, or anything else, I see God's generosity and grace and His mercy towards us in our failures and struggles. It makes me grateful and overwhelmed every time I go.

*My  
Passion  
is...*



CELEBRATING MEN IN MINISTRY

# PASTOR PREACHER TEACHER

By Rev. Starlette McNeil



"I don't want to end up a bureaucrat in the time-management business for God or a librarian cataloguing timeless truths. Salvation is kicking in the womb of creation right now, any time now. Pay attention."

Eugene Peterson wrote these words in his memoir, *The Pastor*. Peterson says what many pastors worry about and persons in other professions give voice to: the fear of a mechanistic contribution to society and the desire for meaningful work. For Peterson, it is work that is in response to and in keeping with the movement of the Spirit.

He knows that there is more to pastoring than his job description suggests or that personnel committee members discuss. He knows that he is carrying more than budget sheets and sermon notes. And Peterson is not alone in feeling the pressure of birth, the tension of the push or the excitement for the new creation. This is the aim of the gospel and he cannot sit still on a pew.



I think Rev. Dr. Duncan McIntosh has this same excitement about new life in churches. In fact, when asked his passion for our annual calendar some years ago, he responded, the “revitalization of churches in distress.” He continued, “My view is that the church is the body of Christ on earth. I certainly don’t want to see the body of Christ lying limp and lifeless.

All churches go through a lifecycle. It’s a matter of how we help them discover where they are in their life cycle and how they can break out.” Whether breaking out or giving birth, neither McIntosh nor Peterson is content to sit on their hands. Instead, McIntosh feels for the pulse of the body of Christ. Because he has a heart for its members. Not to be compared with the relationship a patient would have with a surgeon or a nurse, he is the pastoral presence, the bedside companion, the intercessor who stands in the gap until conditions improves. He then stays to practice what he preaches and teaches, until the church is fully alive.



**(continued from page 15)**

Living his passion, McIntosh has served on the editorial board for Kergyma Bible Studies, as the director for the American Baptist Churches, U.S.A.'s Department of Evangelism, the Director of Church Health and Education with the D.C. Baptist Convention and a consultant for long-range planning committees. He presently serves as the senior pastor at the First Baptist Church of Silver Spring, where both the building and people are being revitalized.

*"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."* While it is his favorite verse of scripture, it also speaks to McIntosh's hope for the Church and is the impetus of his passion. The transformative power of God, the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the strivings of the Spirit and the commitment of Dr. McIntosh will ensure that he will not

"end up a bureaucrat in the time-management business for God or a librarian cataloguing timeless truths." But, this pastor, preacher and teacher has served the body of Christ well, empowering many of its members to no longer lie around limp and lifeless. Instead, he creates sacred space for them to break out and to become fully alive.



We are empowering by informing. The Office of Empowering Congregations aims to strengthen the spiritual life of our congregations. While we offer trainings year-round, we also have a [Resource Center](#) that provides tools for daily devotion, monthly ministry events and annual retreats. You can also stop by to peruse the latest Sunday School and Vacation Bible School material from several well-known publishers. A community library, you are invited to check out books from a range of areas and ministry interests. From search committees to children's ministry, we have something for you.





District of Columbia Baptist Convention

One Faith. Many Cultures. Endless Possibilities.  
An eternal and eternal network.

**ABMen**

of West Virginia



# 2017 Men's Ministry Retreat

**THEME: "BRETHREN! RE-IMAGING, RE-FOCUSING, AND RE-ADJUSTING"**  
**"GENESIS 1:27"**

**Friday, June 9<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

**† Check-In time: 4:00 p.m. – June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017 †**

**VENUE: Parchment Valley Conference Center**  
**1715 Lower Parchment Valley**  
**Ripley, WV 25271**

**<http://www.parchmentvalley.org/>**



**\$90.00 per person fee includes all lodging and meals.**

We are requesting payments as soon as possible. Please make your payment payable to **ABMEN/WV**.  
Put **C/O Parchment Valley Conference Center** on the memo line of your check.

Send your payment to:

**Ronald Greenfield**

6503 Grainger Terrace

Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

For more details, please contact BMM's Director of  
Communication:

**Robert Adams**

(240) 475-9795 - cell



CELEBRATING MEN IN MINISTRY

# ATLANTA

## CHIN COMMUNITY BAPTIST CHURCH

By Andre Towner



On Sunday May 7 the Convention helped member congregation, Chin Community Baptist Church of Atlanta, GA dedicate its new sanctuary and education center.





The celebration began with a parking lot ribbon cutting ceremony attended by dignitaries and community leaders including Rev. Sa Tin Lal, General Secretary, Chin Baptist Association North America, Rev. Dr. S. Hre Kio, Event Speaker and Pastor of Indiana Chin Baptist Church, Rev. Joseph Run Chung Mang, Senior Pastor, Chin Community Baptist Church, and Rev. Andre

Towner, Community Engagement Coordinator for the DC Baptist Convention. After the ribbon cutting, participants processed to the sanctuary where they experienced traditional Chin ‘Action Songs’ that combined choreographed dance routines with a mixture of hymns and folk music. During his sermon, Rev. Dr. S. Hre Kio utilized the fourth chapter of Ephesians to remind worshipers of their individual and collective responsibility to contribute unity within the Body of Christ. Prior to assuming the pastorate at Indiana Chin Baptist Church, Rev. Dr. Kio served as a consultant with United Bible Society where he was responsible for translating the Holy Bible into the Falam Chin Dialect.



After worship, participants enjoyed each other’s company while sharing a meal of traditional Chin cuisine.



# Grant Received from Maximus Foundation

By. Dr. Robert D. Cochran

The D.C. Baptist Convention is building an ability to seek grants from various foundations who make grants for philanthropic activities. We are pleased to announce the reception of a grant of \$2,000 from the Maximus Foundation of Reston, VA. This grant strengthens D.C. Baptists so that they might provide food for those families and individuals who experience hunger. Churches may apply for assistance in providing food to those in need by requesting Hunger Funds from the D.C. Baptist Convention.

The DCBC seeks annually grants for several ministry initiatives, mainly from charitable foundations and denominational partners. These grants often focus on needs within the Ministry Area of Engaging Communities, including Hunger, Immigrants and Senior Adults. The Convention also is equipping churches to seek grants on their own, preparing local Baptists in grant writing. The preparation of grant proposals is a regular function of the staff of the DCBC. Grant courses at the offices of the DCBC will be held later this year in the late Summer and early Fall.



# NEWS YOU CAN USE

## The Third Baptist Church

will be having their Vacation Bible School beginning June 26 and lasting until June 30, 2017.

The time is from 5:30pm to 9pm. We will start off with a light meal then we will have lessons, crafts and on Thursday a carnival. All are welcome to attend from Preschool to Adults. Come join us for lots of fun and especially learning more about God. Our theme this year is "The Redeemer". Hope to see you there. For further information please contact Donna King at 703.670.7130.

Third Baptist Church 1536 5th Street NW, Washington DC

# REV. SAUL *Garcia*

By Margarita Pinto

Even after the prisoners have been moved to the federal prison, Saul keeps follow-up contact with them and their families. He knows when they will complete their sentence and when they will return to their countries. He continues

giving them spiritual guidance and many of these who are young and single, get married and they ask for counseling. He has been invited to perform the wedding form them.

The Lord has blessed this ministry greatly along the years. To Him is the glory.

Colossians 3: 27 "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward." Saul gives the Lord all honor and glory for allowing him the privilege of sharing the Good News of Salvation among those in prison following the example of our Lord Jesus Christ. Isaiah 61: 1 "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to . . . proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound."

Saul has been doing the prison ministry at the D.C. Jail and the Correctional Trimming Facility (CTF) on a volunteer basis since 2001 on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. He also pastors a small congregation in D.C. Buenas Nuevas de Salvacion *Good News of Salvation*. The members of this congregation are relatives of the inmates he ministers to at the jails.

During the years he has preached, taught and counsel at these jails, Saul has seen many inmates come to faith in Jesus Christ and also how their lives have been transformed by the Word of God. Some of them who are already out of jail and have gone back to their countries of origin are ministering the Word to their families and friends in their homes. Therefore, this ministry in the jails has expanded even outside of the United States. Saul rejoices witnessing the fruits of his labor among those incarcerated. From the beginning of his ministry, he felt compelled by the Word of God found in Hebrews 13: 3 "Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them. . ." to visit the incarcerated and bring the Good News to them. Another favorite verse is Galatians 6: 2 "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."



CELEBRATING MEN IN MINISTRY



# Rev. Dr. Lynn Bergfalk

If there were a word, or phrase to sum up the unique passion that God has given you, what would it be?

*Community – both in terms of understanding what it means to be the body of Christ as the church, and in living out the reconciling love of Christ in the world. The New Testament not only says but shows us that “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” It is not enough to preach. As imperfect as we are, by the grace of God, we need not simply to proclaim but to be the message – a community of love and mercy, people who serve others and whose lives embody a prophetic critique of the world’s system.*

What group of people has the Lord laid heaviest on your heart?

*That’s a hard question, because the compassion of Christ draws us to all who are in need. A few years ago I began a ministry modeled on the biblical “city gate” where the poor, the widow and orphan, and the foreigner were to receive justice and inclusion into the larger community. So those outside the mainstream have a special claim on my heart. Jesus said what we do to the hungry, naked, sick or imprisoned, we do unto Him, and the church discovers its greatest joy when we love Jesus in this way.*

What are the unique challenges of ministering in the DC Metro area?

*Challenge is just another way to spell opportunity. What an incredible place and privilege our city provides to speak prophetically, to do justice and love mercy, and to grow communities of faith that demonstrate the power of Christ’s love to transcend the boundaries of culture, color, and class which so often fracture our world.*

What is your favorite scripture?

*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. (John 13:34-35)*

*My  
Passion  
is...*

CELEBRATING MEN IN MINISTRY

# Meet *Rev. Andre Towner*

Raised on a family  
farm in East  
Central  
Mississippi where  
faith, family, and  
community were  
intimately  
intertwined.

**COORDINATOR  
TO  
ENGAGE  
COMMUNITIES**

At an early age he made the decision to become a disciple of Jesus Christ and was baptized in the small rural church once pastored by his grandfather. After graduating high school, he joined the U.S. Air Force where he worked in the construction field. While in the Air Force, Rev. Towner attended and graduated from Jackson State University where he met his wife. After college, he became a search and rescue pilot with the U.S. Coast Guard. While stationed in Hawaii with the Coast Guard, he recognized and answered his call to the Gospel Ministry. This calling was confirmed by his congregation, Trinity Missionary Baptist Church, who licensed him to preach and appointed him the Director of Christian Education. He served in this capacity for several years before moving to the Washington D.C. area and serving in ministerial positions at Mt. Olive Baptist Church of Arlington, VA and Westwood Baptist Church in Springfield, VA. In October 2015, Rev. Towner became the DC Baptist Convention's first Coordinator for Engaging Communities. In this role he works with Convention congregations and partners to share the love of Christ by discovering, enhancing, and focusing their passions and capabilities to address the most pressing needs in their communities.

Rev. Towner's personal mission statement is:

**“Working to create a world where everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential.”**

To this end, he's dedicated a substantial amount of time and energy to helping people live lives in harmony with God and their communities. He serves on the Board of Directors for several local and national organi-

zations such as the InterFaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington, DC (IFC). His IFC work has helped create a network of local faith communities that use rapid response teams and proactive educational programs to counter the rising tide of religious and ethnic bigotry. He also assisted organizations to develop and increase the capacity of their advocacy and public theology programs. These efforts have increased awareness of and responses to societal ills such as human trafficking, predatory lending, and homelessness. These efforts are a testament to his commitment to working with God and neighbor to redeem creation.

In addition to his undergraduate degree from Jackson State University, Rev. Towner also earned master's degrees from Wesley Theological Seminary, George Washington University, and Wayland Baptist University. He is life member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. Rev. Towner and his beautiful wife Shondelyn are the proud parents of three adult children and Dustin, a former Guide Dog.



# Baptist Women SOAR at Annual Women's Retreat 2017

By Gail Lacy



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early 60 women from 26 churches gathered at FBC Camp Springs on May 13 for a day of worship, learning, and fellowship at the annual retreat sponsored by Baptist

Women's Ministries. The chosen theme was SOAR: "But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles..." Isaiah 40: 31. It was a day to practice resting/trusting in the LORD, rising above the troubles, work, and griefs that weigh us down, and getting new perspective-a God's-eye view of the opportunities God lays out before us.

Valeria Foster, Minister of Music at FBC Silver Spring led the worship music. We learned several new songs and even a little sign language! Elizabeth Samandi, former chair of the Cameroon Baptist women shared what Cameroon women are doing in ministry especially in training girls and women, helping with medical ministries and disaster relief. Virginia Holmstrom, Executive Director of American Baptist Women's Ministries ABC/USA, shared insights from the hospitality she experienced from Muslims in the Republic of Georgia.

Workshop choices included Advocacy: Making a Difference (Virginia Holmstrom & Heidi Holmstrom); Soaring above Depression & Anxiety; What You Can Do to Help (LaTasha Morgan); Estate Planning: Preparing for the Future (Biola Bakare);

Liturgical Dance: Enhancing Worship (Ashley Hawkins); and Ministry with Immigrants & Refugees: Being a Good Neighbor (Sui Tial).

After lunch and the election of the 2017-18 Baptist Women's Ministries Leadership Team, the afternoon was devoted to discussion groups on various topics—Bible Study, Caregivers, Creative Arts, Mission Trips, Health Ministries, New Leadership, Prayer, Social Media, Leadership and Mentoring, Participants had a chance to share what their own churches were doing in these ministries, where they see God working, what the biggest challenges are, and what can be done in the futures by Baptist Women working together. The program booklet for this event also included an abundance of ideas for volunteering, donating, and organizing various ministries in the DC area.

It was a great day of fellowship! Thank you to FBC of Camp Springs, to the BWM Leadership Team, and to all the speakers and workshop leaders. Baptist Women's Ministries' next event will be the Hands-On Missions Workshop on Saturday, October 7 from 9am-12pm at the Baptist Building.



# CONGRATULATIONS

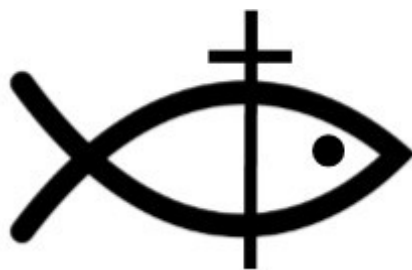


Fort Foote Baptist Church wishes to  
congratulate their newest deacons

**Deacon Raymond Mason**

and

**Deacon Steve Morgan, Sr.**







# save the date

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## arise

ISAIAH 60:1

*More Information Coming Soon...*

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA BAPTIST CONVENTION  
141st ANNUAL GATHERING  
OCTOBER 26-28, 2017