

American Baptist Churches Central Region Life

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Meet Global Servant, Mercy Gonzalez-Barnes

Mercy is a regional consultant in theological education and leadership development in Iberoamérica and the Caribbean. Mercy teaches, mentors, and walks alongside men and women that are following God's call in their lives. She works with colleagues and local leaders to provide resources such as retreats and workshops. Mercy is also part of a team of global servants that are collaborating with Palmer Seminary in a NEW Online master's in theological studies in Spanish. Learning using this medium makes higher education accessible to many people from countries in Iberoamérica and the Caribbean. "I love to see the emotion and gratitude in the eyes of the students; they are truly thankful for this opportunity to stretch for the Kingdom of God. God is indeed doing a new thing".

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Luke 1:38 NIV

The journey of faith can be challenging, disconcerting and full of expected news. The writer of Hebrews says, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1 ESV) As I ponder on Mary's response to the news given to her by the angel, I am challenged to think about my own response to God's call in my life.

God is always ahead of us, preparing hearts and inviting us to join in on the journey. In this time of this pandemic, I see how God has provided the tools that we have needed to continue to be the Church and to provide GOOD NEWS. My heart is full of joy and gratitude.

2021 began with HOPE because a vaccine would soon be available to all. This year I was able to travel safely to Brazil, Ecuador, and El Salvador to start new cohorts in the online Master's in Theological Studies program in Spanish. This program is a team effort, and I am one part of that team.

The students in these cohorts all have stories. Some are missionaries, others are pastors, others are lay people, and others are seminary directors. There are differences in age and gender and theological bent, but they are all responding to God's call in their life. I have this feeling deep inside me that the Holy Spirit is working and preparing the way (like John the Baptist) for a NEW thing that God is doing.

This year we also had our first virtual Orlando Costas conference in three languages (Portuguese, Spanish and English). We had three Keynoters with short 20 min pre-recorded presentations. We had four graduates present their 5-minute summative project. There were videos, music, and the recognition of Dr. Samuel Escobar. It was a Pentecost celebration of the Church.

God is doing new things and God is inviting us to join in on the journey. Mary said YES, she was the servant of the Lord. I strive to say YES everyday and to be that servant, that person that God wants to use. May we all respond like Mary, I am the Lord's servant, may your word to me be fulfilled".

I invite you to pray for our students and alums in the United States, Mexico, Brazil, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Bolivia, El Salvador, Chile and Colombia and many other countries. I also invite you to pray for me and to become part of the many partners in ministry supporting this great effort and giving to my support. I cannot do what I do without YOU. If God is calling you to give, I need individual and congregations that will give in a monthly fashion. Please pray and go to the International Ministries website <https://portal.internationalministries.org/global-servant-support> to pledge your support. Go the part that says I would like to support and choose Mercy Gonzalez-Barnes.

You can also give through the phone calling Donor Services at 1 (610) 768-2323 or send in your support through the mail to:

International Ministries

Donor Services

1003 W. 9th Ave. Suite A

King of Prussia, PA 19406-1210

I am available to come to your congregation to share about what God is doing. Please write to me at my email mercyrickmx@hotmail.com I can also meet virtually in whatever platform you are using.



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Radical Redeemed Ready: Women in
Ministry Conference

4. Help the church continually exercise its “faith muscle”. One reason a pastor may be tempted to announce retirement far in advance is to “help the church plan sufficiently for the transition.” This is an admirable motive, but the truth is additional time is not necessarily the best preparation for the pastor’s retirement. The interim period led by a skilled interim pastor offers plenty of preparation time for what will come next.

Rather the best preparation for moving into the interim phase is to insure the church is full of faith-filled, unified lay leaders working to further Christ’s mission through the congregation. Leaders who have matured through engagement in outward focused ministries will have the spiritual wisdom and tenacity to lead the church well when the pastor retires.

Such highly competent lay leaders emerge as a pastor inspires the congregation to continuously engage in risky mission and trains the leaders to advance the charge. This requires exercising the church’s faith muscles. Churches that build healthy faith muscles routinely step out and follow the Holy Spirit in the next mission endeavor. Doing so keeps a church focused outward, spiritually alive and full of faith-filled people. Developing a culture of engagement in risky mission is one of the best ways to prepare the congregation for an impending transition.

5. Provide transition training for the staff, board and congregation. When Mission Northwest called me to become the executive minister for the region I was in my eighteenth year as pastor of University Baptist Church. Their corporate memory of what happens in transition had grown dim. Knowing this I spent time with board members and the congregation explaining what steps they needed to take in the coming months. I made sure they knew what resources the Region would provide. I insured they were in communication with the Region’s staff. I provided a sketch of the typical search process. I explained the importance of securing an interim minister to pastor them during the transitional period. I urged them to pray and exercise patience until the process of calling their next pastor was finalized.

Some pastors have all of this information at their fingertips and can readily explain it to their folks. Many do not. Pastors, before announcing your retirement we recommend reaching out to the Region staff so we can refresh your memory of what is involved in the transition. Important topics include how Region staff recruits interim ministers, the multiple details involved in the search process, why a church assessment can help the church prepare for the future, and the coaching the Region staff provides the church during the interim.

Making the extra effort to bring the leaders and the congregation up to speed will mitigate anxiety while avoiding missteps. It will provide the church with confidence that the Lord will lead them and accompany them throughout the transition period.

6. Encourage and warn the church as it prepares to enter into the transitional period. The work of the pastor as shepherd is not over until the pastor officially steps away from the role. As the end date for retirement draws near the pastor should encourage the church by preaching or teaching on these topics: 1) The importance of intercessory prayer for the entire search process. 2) Reliance upon the Holy Spirit while avoiding worrying over the coming changes. 3) Trust that God will lead and provide throughout the transition. 4) God expects the church to continue giving witness to Jesus Christ with the expectation that new believers will come to faith even during the interim period.

Furthermore the pastor can admonish the church to avoid the following: 1) Give in to temptation and cut corners in calling the next pastor. 2) Allow the search process to lose steam. 3) Grow inward during the interim period rather than preparing for the next phase of outward focused ministry when the new pastor is called.

7. Highlight the coming shift in the pastor’s role upon retirement. One final and important thing the pastor can do for the congregation is explain the role shift that will take place once he/she retires. When the pastor retires the pastor shifts from shepherd to friend. This means the retiring pastor will no longer be available to provide ministerial duties for church members (weddings, funerals, visitation, etc). These duties should all be transferred over to the interim minister and eventually to the new pastor when that person is called. It is also helpful for the congregation to know that if the retiring pastor remains in town he/she will withdraw from the congregation providing sufficient relational space for the new pastor to fully occupy the role. Usually a 12-month period of absence is best. If the retired pastor returns to the church the pastor should take proactive measures to insure the congregation does not look to him or her as their “unofficial associate pastor”.

Conclusion. There is much for a pastor and congregation to consider when it comes to the retirement of the minister. I encourage you to carefully consider the advice I’ve provided in this article. There is much here to unpack. Please do not hesitate to reach out to Patti Duckworth or me if you have questions or need additional guidance with retirement planning.

Thinking of Retirement? Important Advice for the Pastor and the Congregation

Charles Revis, Mission Northwest Executive Minister

As a Region we’ve been in a 10-year season of numerous baby boomer pastors retiring. The trend will continue for the next ten years or until the wave subsides. Hopefully. It has caused region staff to scramble in an effort to recruit enough strong leaders to replace them. And churches who’ve not been through transition for ten to twenty years (often more!) struggle to navigate their pastor’s retirement.

In light of more retirements on the horizon I want to pass along some advice for pastors and churches to consider. These insights are based on input from Patti Duckworth and our first-hand experiences with what’s helpful and what isn’t when it comes to pastors retiring.

I’ll keep these brief. If you need more information or want to discuss any of these points feel free to reach out to Patti or me. So, here goes:

1. Resist the urge to coast into retirement. It’s understandable that losing steam is an indicator that one should consider retiring. However, a disciplined leader will resist the temptation to let off the peddle until he or she has crossed the finish line. Too many pastors allow the church and their ministry to drift in the last years of their ministry. This weakens the church as it transitions towards its next phase of ministry. It’s better to cross the finish line as strongly as possible rather than slogging towards the end so the church’s momentum will carry forward into its next season of ministry with a new pastor.

2. Engage in crucial conversations and avoid becoming brittle. Almost weekly my wife heads to Fred Meyer to do her weekly grocery shopping. I’m not much of a shopper. When I shop I’m on a mission to get in and out of the store as quickly as possible. My wife is different. She’s in touch with her surroundings and makes astute people observations when she’s shopping. She has discovered there are two kinds of older men: grumpy ones and sweet ones. She often attracts the sweet ones who ask her for advice in their shopping adventures. And, she steers clear of the grumpy ones.

Pastors nearing retirement can become overly sweet, or sour and grumpy. The overly sweet pastor may increasingly avoid conflicts as retirement nears. To lead well to the end a pastor must continue engaging in the normal conflicts that arise in the course of ministry rather than avoiding them. Entering into crucial conversations that constructively deals with conflict is all part of staying engaged as a strong, spiritual leader.

At the opposite extreme are pastors who become grumpy dictators demanding compliance based on their long tenure. The pastor nearing retirement must resist the temptation to play the “my way or the highway” dictator card. Proximity to retirement doesn’t render dictatorial leadership any more effective than when pastors attempt to use it during the middle of their tenure.

3. Do not announce retirement too early. Too many pastors believe they are helping the church prepare for the impending transition by giving three to nine months notice in advance of their retirement. We recommend giving only 30 to 60 days notice. Period. Why? Because as soon as a pastor announces an end date the church and pastor move into a lame duck phase. There is no avoiding it. The pastor’s influence as the directional leader of the church immediately wanes once the retirement date is made public. If retirement is announced too early the lame duck phase is lengthened and the church will be plagued by missional drift. It also opens the door for certain “controllers” to grab hold of the directional wheel which most often results in the church heading towards a ditch or over a cliff. These controllers can arise from inside the church and sometimes outside the church. Keeping the lame duck phase shorter is the better part of wisdom and may be avoided by simply holding off on any retirement announcement until 30 to 60 days out.

Tax Time

When students in my rural Illinois high school English class used to complain to our teacher, Mrs. Dorothy Reynolds, about studying for her class, she used to say and I quote, "You really don't have to study for this class, but if you want to pass it, you should study. The only 2 things in life that you really have to do are die and pay taxes!" I certainly hope that the first event is a long way off for all of you, but unfortunately, the second event—paying taxes-- is coming soon to a month near you, namely April 15th. Yes, it is that dreaded time again, in which we render unto Caesar what is Caesar's or in this case, what is required by us to pay the IRS to help our country in operating basic services.

If you choose to fund a charitable gift annuity, not only do you provide a stream of income for yourself or your beneficiary and benefit the Kansas Baptist Convention Foundation and our other mission partners, but you can also receive an income tax deduction that usually (I emphasize the word "usually") comes out to be a little less than half of the funding amount. If you use appreciated assets, such as stock, a portion of the capital gains tax is eliminated, and the remaining capital gains are spread equally over the expected lifespan of the donor. This could be a win-win situation for you as a donor. It is something to consider as you make plans for next year's taxes.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the Senior Adult Retreat in McPherson, KS, this month. If I can be of help to you in any way, please don't hesitate to call or email me, and I will be ready to assist you in your wishes to save on taxes and bless others in the process of giving.

Judson Baptist Church Celebrates 61 Years

ABCCR Staff Member, Bill Hendricks worshipped with Judson Baptist Church in Kansas City, Kansas this past Sunday and got a free meal and cake! It was the celebration of Judson's 61st anniversary as a church building and a ministry to the community.

Dr John Clark rang in the official first moments of Spring 2022 and called for each participant to think about 'New beginnings,' both in the church and in our personal lives. Bill Hendricks stated, "It was dumb luck that I stumbled into a fantastic meal, but it was intentionally planned to share a great time of worship. The message of this historic memory was filled with joyous times, exceptional music, and great moments of spiritual reflection.



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of Continuous Publication

CENTRAL REGION LIFE

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As we prepare for Holy Week, the Easter Triduum and Resurrection Sunday, let us focus our prayers this month on the motivation for Jesus in everything that he did: love.

Let us pray for those that feel unloved: the downtrodden, the discouraged, the depressed, the hungry, the houseless, the poor, the outcasts, the lonely and many others. What can we do to turn our prayers into acts of love to help people like this?

Let us pray for so many who have been abused by those who "loved" them and might we pray for courage that we could reach out to them with God's love and help them to see how valuable and wonderful they are!

Let us pray for our churches and our pastors that all of us might be agents of Jesus' love as we walk by faith day by day and love others through the power of the Holy Spirit.

As we pray and act, let us remember the commandment that Jesus gave to his disciples on the night of his last supper.

As the scriptures tell us: "So now I am giving you a new commandment: love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples."

John 13: 34-35 (NLT)

MEET THE INTERIMS



The ABCCR roster of active Interim Ministers is about 20 men and women who serve our churches during transition and change. We think you would like to meet them.



Meet Interim Pastor Charlotte Maxwell...

I'm a Kansan, with deep roots in Central Kansas. I am somewhat ecumenical. I am working with the ABCCR RCOM to transfer my, present ordination in the Wesleyan Church to the ABC. I was raised in the UCC church in Partridge, Kansas. But I have had memberships in the UMC, Presbyterian, and Nazarene church's as well.

I have been a Chaplain for the Heart Hospital in Wichita, interned at Hutchinson Hospital, Plymouth County Women's Prison in Minnesota and served as the full-time Chaplain at the Kansas Juvenile Correction Complex in Topeka. I am currently a bi-vocation Interim Minister, serving Central Baptist Great Bend. And, I have worked for Wal-Mart for 3 1/2 years.

I love missionary stories and was a volunteer missionary for Teen Missions International in Merritt Florida for 10 summers with ministry in Minnesota, Athlone, South Africa, and Honduras.

I am the mom of three children and six wonderful grandchildren. I've helped raise 10 other children as a stepmom and foster parent.

Growing up, my church attendance was sporadic although my parents did make sure I baptized. The Holy Spirit kept chasing me. I accepted Jesus into my heart when I was 15. And at the age of 26 of rededicated my life to Christ and was re-baptized at FBC of Lyons.

I was in South Africa when God showed me, I was to continue my education. I received a B.A. in Reconciliation Studies at Bethel University in Minnesota. I was 47 years old. I then completed my M.Div. at Nazarene Theological Seminary at the age of 53.

Something Interesting about me? I am the only adult in my family who has never been to a casino. Oh, I have never smoked! If you catch me reading it is likely Hannah Hurnard's Hinds Feet on High Places or Judy Blume's In the Unlikely Event. Currently I am drawn to the Book of I Maccabees.

Sometimes, I find myself questioning if I am doing enough?

Meet Interim Pastor David Lee...

David describes himself as a proud husband, Minister of the Gospel, and father of 6 awesome young adults who have followed the creed issued by their grandfather, "Just promise that you will be better than me." David's grandfather was half-white/black and married to a Cheyenne (David's grandmother).

To this day, his grandfather's wishes have been met!

David accepted Christ and was baptized at the age of 12 at the Pilgrim's Rest Baptist Church where he learned that faith in God is the only way to overcome... **along with a good education.**

David earned a B.S. in Nursing from the University of Oklahoma Medical Center a B.S at the University of the Air Force and then completed graduate studies at the Institute of Professional technologies in engineering.

He received his M.Div. from Mason Theological Seminary while serving in the military and then his Doctor of Divinity from California State University, Northridge, with continuing studies at Fresno State. An insatiable hunger and thirst to understand more of the Word of God through the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth continue to fuel his search.

David says, "He never set out to be a minister, pastor or clergy of any type... it just happened!"

- "I believe we live in a world where 'Truthiness' has become the norm. When asked where did I go to school? I tell people, I attended the Paul Harvey Institute. I have always wanted to know the 'Rest of the Story'.

- I am amazed at the multitudes who have walked away from the Church due to a lack of understanding God's truth.

- I study the Scripture daily seeking to understand and teach the etiology of teachings hidden in the word of God.

- I encourage and learn from questions. For me 'Why' the question is asked, and the backstory, is usually fascinating as well as illuminating.

David currently serves as the Interim Minister for Community Baptist Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and Watonga Indian Baptist Church.



2022 TRAINING ANNOUNCED

Training of Conflict Transformation Trainers (TCTT)

with Dan and Sharon Buttry

This intensive, 10-day, in-person workshop will focus on conflict analysis, conflict resolution, personal conflict styles, dealing with diversity in conflict, power issues, nonviolent struggle, strategizing for campaigns, trauma and trauma healing, reconciliation, practical issues for peacemaking over the long-haul, and experiential education principles, methodologies and practices. The training will have a specifically Christian focus, utilizing Bible studies for many of the topics.

August 2-11, 2022

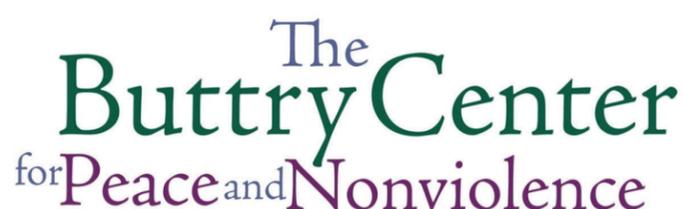
Central Seminary | Shawnee, KS

For more information and to apply, visit cbts.edu/buttry-center



Dan and Sharon Buttry

Presented by:



We invite you to participate. May 1 is the application deadline. There is a limit on the number of participants accepted for this opportunity, and this will likely be the last offering of this training as we look at our own life changes. So if you are interested, go to this webpage to get more information: www.cbts.edu/buttry-center (scroll down the page until you see the TCTT information). There is a link there to the application page.

There will be a significant amount of biblical content and spiritual practices, so the TCTT is definitely Christian. However, we have had Buddhist, Hindu, and Muslim TCTT grads who all loved the training and found ways to connect the content to their spiritual traditions and teaching. The training is demanding—you'll need to attend it all—but many have found it positively life-changing. If this is for you, act now!



AB Women's Ministries

National Theme:

Let the Walls Fall Down



Summer Conference – June 3-4, 2022

Theme: Reshaping in His Image





Caregiver Burnout

Being a caregiver can be the most rewarding and fulfilling job a person can have. Whether the caregiver role is providing for a spouse, for a parent, or even for an adult child, caregivers tend to be a special personality type: big-hearted, sensitive, responsible, and well-intentioned. Caregivers are often people who are motivated by and take a deep satisfaction in providing care to their loved one.

Most caregivers don't worry about their own health. They are solely focused on the person for whom they are caring. But caregivers also tend to live with high chronic stress that increases the risk for negative emotional and physical health outcomes. According to the 2012 Stress in America Report by the American Psychological Association, caregivers are among the three most-stressed groups in the country.

Caregiver burnout, also called Caregiver Fatigue, is mental, emotional, and physical exhaustion that may develop through the responsibilities of supporting and caring for another individual. Very often, caregivers can find themselves accustomed to the routine stress, worry, and discomfort that comes with providing care for a loved one. And as a result, the caregiver may not know the warning signs of caregiver burnout until it already is affecting their health and ability to provide care. It is important for caregivers, as well as others that care about caregivers, to recognize signs of burnout and make a change to minimize that stress.

Some common symptoms of caregiver burnout are:

- a change in emotions or typical responses
- change in sleep patterns
- weight loss or gain
- increased illnesses
- social isolation
- withdrawal from things that were once important to them

Experiencing these symptoms regularly, may indicate that it's time for the caregiver to take some time for themselves, find additional support, or begin preparing for next steps in care options.

If you are a caregiver, or know a caregiver, who may be experiencing Caregiver Burnout, please seek guidance and support. At Prairie Homestead Senior Living, we understand the burden that many caregivers carry. We are here to listen, support, and help connect you with resources to help alleviate the stress of caregiving.

Feel free to call us at (316) 263-8264 to learn more about options that can help.



ABCCR CAMPING 2022



CAMP CHRISTY

- June 6-10: High School; Directors- Steven and Danielle Massaglia (\$180)
- June 13-17: Middle School; Directors- Steven and Danielle Massaglia (\$180)
- June 20-24: Junior Camp; Director- Rishawn Austin (\$180)
- June 27-29: Primary Camp; Director- Valerie Terrazes (\$120)
- June 30-July 1: Day Camp; Director- Tonya Koehn (\$75)

CAMP WHITE MEMORIAL

- July 11-15: Middle School Camp; Director- Wallace Smith (\$290)
- July 18-22: Junior Camp; Director- Kami Minor (\$290)
- July 22-24: Primary Camp; Valerie Terrazes (\$180)
- July 25-29: High School Camp; Director- Morgan Bandy (\$290)

Senior Adult Retreat

April 27-28, 2022

@ First Baptist Church, McPherson
600 E. Marlin St.

Handshakes, Hugs and Hallelujahs

Psalm 107:1-3, 43 (CEV)

Come experience a time of fun, fellowship and learning with senior adults from the Central Region. The registration form can be found on the Region website under the Events tab or through your local church office. Registration deadline is April 11, 2022.

Keynote Speaker is Rev. Joel Grizzle from Lyons First Baptist Church

EVERYBODY NEEDS
A HUG
LET'S KEEP IT GOING.



Central Region Life

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Save the Date for Radical. Redeemed. Ready. this June 15-18, 2022

From the pioneering women of long ago to the trailblazing leaders of today and all women who have responded to the call of God along the way, the movement of women into ministry has involved the whole family of faith from all across American Baptist Churches USA. With women serving in a multitude of ways and a variety of roles throughout the United States and around the world, American Baptist Women in Ministry (ABWIM) is hosting a unique conference: Radical. Redeemed. Ready: Celebrating Ministering Women. The conference will feature inspiring speakers, creative worship, engaging workshops, and multiple ways to connect while experiencing innovative approaches to ministry.

Conference Leaders



Rev. Lauren Lisa Ng
Conference Leader

An ordained minister with American Baptist Churches USA, Lauren Ng serves as director of Leadership Empowerment at the American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS). Ng has a distinct passion for fresh, alternative and entrepreneurial models of ministry and the emerging leaders who pursue them. She is currently completing a Doctor of Ministry in Creative Leadership at Central Baptist Theological Seminary. She earned her Masters of Divinity from the Berkeley School of Theology and was ordained in 2005. Rev. Ng earned her BA in English and Creative Writing from Oberlin College. Her 20+ years of professional experience include serving as network strategist for the ABHMS, serving on development staff with International Ministries, and as an advisor for American Baptist Women in Ministry, a board member of ABHMS, and a trustee of Bacone College. She also served for five years as associate pastor at First Chinese Baptist Church in San Francisco.



Rev. Dr. Trinetta V. McCray
Conference Leader

Rev. Dr. Trinetta Vernell McCray is a native of Milwaukee, Wis., and a life-long member of Calvary Baptist Church who was educated in the Milwaukee Public School system. She received a Bachelor's degree in Urban Affairs from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh and at age twenty-five accepted God's call to ministry. She attended seminary in 1979 at the Morehouse School of Religion in Atlanta, Ga., receiving a Masters degree in Religious Education. She was ordained in 1981 by the late civil rights leader, The Rev. Dr. Ralph David Abernathy in Atlanta, an accomplishment that was both spiritual and social given that Black Baptist churches in Atlanta declared not to ordain women. She went on to earn a Doctor of Ministry degree in Spirituality from Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1998. Rev. Dr. McCray has been a leader both locally and nationally through church, denominational, faith-based organizations, and educational institutions at Cardinal Stritch University and Central Baptist Theological Seminary-Wisconsin. In June 1999, Dr. McCray was elected president of American Baptist Churches USA, having the historic distinction of being the first clergywoman elected as national president. Dr. McCray is currently the president of the American Baptist National Black Caucus.



Rev. Dr. Zina Jacque
Conference Leader

Rev. Dr. Zina Jacque is a member of the pastoral staff of the historic Alfred Street Baptist Church in Alexandria, Va. and will be responsible for the Villages Ministry, a small group program serving over 4,000 men and women across the country. Dr. Jacque has served on the staffs of white, black, multicultural, urban, and suburban churches and has done extensive work in the areas of education, counseling, and support programs. Jacque most recently served as the lead pastor of the Community Church of Barrington, Ill. Previously, she served as Executive Director and Founder of the Pastoral Counseling Center of Trinity Church (Episcopal) in Boston and was the Interim Director of Christian Education at the Melrose Church in Massachusetts. Prior to entering ministry, Rev. Jacque completed a 20+ year career in higher education serving in senior positions at Northwestern (Chicago, Ill.), the University of Chicago (Chicago, Ill.), Mills College (Oakland, Ca.), and the University of California (both Santa Cruz and the Office of the President).



Rev. Adalia Gutiérrez Lee, MD
Conference Leader

Rev. Adalia Gutiérrez Lee, MD, is the area director for Iberoamerica & the Caribbean with American Baptist International Ministries. She is a medical doctor and an ordained minister. She served as an American Baptist missionary for twenty years, first at PROVADENIC (Program of Vaccination and Community Development) a health ministry of the Nicaraguan Baptist Convention and later at Deborah's House, a ministry of healing and hope for families and victims of domestic violence, of the Baja Baptist Women in Mexico. As an area director, she has traveled throughout the Americas for the last six years while promoting, coordinating and strengthening the ministries of 39 American Baptist missionaries, and 50 partners in 18 different countries.



Rev. Dr. Jaime Clark-Soles
Conference Leader

Rev. Dr. Jaime Clark-Soles is Professor of New Testament and Altshuler Distinguished Teaching Professor at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University. She is also the Director of the Baptist House of Studies at Perkins. Dr. Clark-Soles enjoys speaking widely and writing for both academic and popular audiences. As an ordained American Baptist minister, she has served in both parish and hospice settings. She is the New Testament editor of the compelling new CEB Women's Bible and has recently completed a book entitled *Women in the Bible for the Interpretation commentary series*. She is the author of numerous books and essays, with books including *Reading John for Dear Life: A Spiritual Walk with the Fourth Gospel* (Westminster John Knox [WJK], 2016), *Engaging the Word: The New Testament and the Christian Believer* (WJK, 2010); *Death and the Afterlife in the New Testament* (T&T Clark, 2006); and *Scripture Cannot Be Broken: The Social Function of the Use of Scripture in the Fourth Gospel* (Brill, 2003). She earned her M.Div. from Yale Divinity School and her Ph.D. in New Testament from Yale University, Mills College (Oakland, Ca.), and the University of California (both Santa Cruz and the Office of the President).



Rev. Dr. Priscilla Eppinger
Conference Historian

Rev. Dr. Priscilla E. Eppinger has served as executive director of the American Baptist Historical Society since 2016. She accepted the position of executive director of ABHS inspired by the Society's mission to advance Baptist identity, promote historical literacy, and thereby advance spiritual and social transformation. One of her priorities as curator of the ABHS archives is to ensure the inclusion of marginalized voices in the historical record. Prior to taking up leadership of ABHS, Eppinger was professor of religion at Community of Christ Seminary (Independence, Mo.) and Graceland University (Lamoni, Iowa) where she also chaired the Peace Studies program. Earlier ministry experience includes pastoral ministry at First Baptist Church (Plymouth, Mass.), which ordained her in 1994, and North Shore Baptist Church (Chicago, Ill.). At the start of her career Eppinger was commissioned by International Ministries and served as an educational missionary to the Democratic Republic of Congo (then called Zaire), and subsequently worked in the ABHMS Office of Governmental Relations. *Scripture Cannot Be Broken: The Social Function of the Use of Scripture in the Fourth Gospel* (Brill, 2003). She earned her M.Div. from Yale Divinity School and her Ph.D. in New Testament from Yale University, Mills College (Oakland, Ca.), and the University of California (both Santa Cruz and the Office of the President).



Dr. Karen Hetrick
Worship Weaver

Dr. Karen Hetrick has served in music ministry in eight ABC churches over four decades and currently serves as Director of Worship & Worship Arts at Mt. Auburn United Methodist Church in Greenwood, Ind., since 2006. She has served the American Baptist Churches through worship at regional and national events for American Baptist Women's Ministries and the ABCUSA Minister's Council. She is a former board member and Past President of the Fellowship of American Baptist Musicians, helping to plan and lead the FABM Conference for Church Musicians. Hetrick earned a B.A. in Fine Arts from Judson University (Elgin, Ill.), a Master of Arts in Church Music (M.A.C.M.) from Christian Theological Seminary, and a Doctor of Worship Studies (D.W.S.) from The Robert E. Webber Institute for Worship Studies. Her particular interests regarding worship include effective presentation of Scripture in worship, sensory-rich and participatory worship, and cultivating a congregational sense of worshipping God together as God's people. *Scripture Cannot Be Broken: The Social Function of the Use of Scripture in the Fourth Gospel* (Brill, 2003). She earned her M.Div. from Yale Divinity School and her Ph.D. in New Testament from Yale University, Mills College (Oakland, Ca.), and the University of California (both Santa Cruz and the Office of the President).



Rev. Dr. Marie Onwubuariri
Poet Laureate

Rev. Dr. Marie Onwubuariri found a love for the arts through a myriad of communities throughout her life: learning about and growing an appreciation for illustration and watercolor paints; making music with piano, clarinet, and voice; writing short stories and poetry; enjoying live theater and music of many genres, black-and-white photo taking and developing and, more recently, digital photography. In college, Marie focused in on poetry, which she has recently incorporated more intentionally in her ministry, especially "in the moment" as people interact amidst the stirring of the Spirit. In her pastoral, administrative, and educational ministries she strives to embody an approach that integrates cultural self-knowing, interpersonal and organizational practices that affirm the value of and ensure equity for all people, and a deep and active trust in the work of the Triune God. She also offers gifts in bridge-building, hospitality, communication, and holistic administration. Marie now serves as ABCUSA Associate General Secretary for Mission Resource Development, after having served in various capacities, including Regional Executive Minister of the American Baptist Churches of Wisconsin, seminary administrator, and local church pastor. *Scripture Cannot Be Broken: The Social Function of the Use of Scripture in the Fourth Gospel* (Brill, 2003). She earned her M.Div. from Yale Divinity School and her Ph.D. in New Testament from Yale University, Mills College (Oakland, Ca.), and the University of California (both Santa Cruz and the Office of the President).