

PAYNE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

# NEWSLETTER

*Learn. Lead. Liberate.*



January 2023

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LEARN. LEAD. LIBERATE.

# PAYNE

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

## MASTER OF ARTS IN RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP

### ONLINE DEGREE FOR PERSONS NOT SEEKING ORDINATION

#### FOUR AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION



#### Christian Education

This specialized area will introduce the student to the Christian educational task of the Church. It includes an examination of the biblical, theological, and social foundations. Preparing the basic components of the Christian education program, methodologies and techniques for implementation, curriculum selection and development, as well as program evaluations will be examined.



#### Worship and Liturgy

This area will examine the history and development of music and worship in the black church. Various genres of music and various styles of worship, with key issues, concerns, and challenges for the 21st century black church. Insight and analysis into contemporary worship, along with directions and practical resources for developing and planning worship in the black church will be explored.



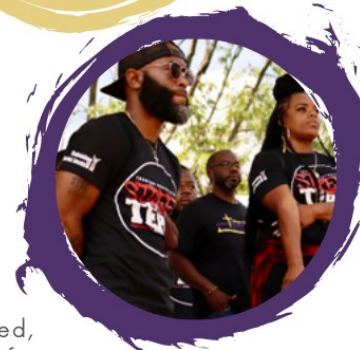
#### Church and Administration

This specialized area is designed to help students explore the various ways in which pastors and church leaders can successfully utilize the governing framework of the local church, fuel church growth and community revitalization. Students will be assisted and encouraged to identify and relate management and administrative principles to their particular context. Students will prepare for ministry in the marketplace, urban, rural and small contexts.



#### Social Justice Ministries

In this area students will understand the pluralistic nature of institutions, society, and culture in the United States and globally to become educated, productive, and principled citizens/leaders. The focus is on all aspects of social identity, including but not limited to race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status, and national origin. Topics of identity, social justice, and diversity through various lenses, with the impact these identities have on understanding the world.



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# Learn. Lead. Liberate.

Rev. Dr. Charles & First Lady Rosalee Boyer

***I learned to follow Jesus at Payne Theological Seminary. Payne is the antithesis of the white terroristic, colonial, chattel, evangelical, demonic theology used to justify our enslavement. The liberating theology Payne scholars and mentors teach challenged me to engage the socio-spiritual experience of Black people prophetically. Payne taught me that Jesus' three years of ministry of advocating for the marginalized, healing, feeding, setting the captives free, and bringing good news to the poor, was just as important (if not more) as his three days of crucifixion, burial, and resurrection.***

One of the last classes I took was Race, Crime, and Justice, taught by Dr. Leah Gaskin Fitchue, the former President of Payne, and Marc Mauer, Executive Director of the Sentencing Project. We spent a week immersed in Washington, D.C., understanding how public policy gave rise to the greatest shackling of Black bodies since slavery. My senior thesis project and doctoral work at Payne focused on mass incarceration and Black liberation. Fleshing out my ministry and calling was transformative and is what gave life to Salvation and Social Justice. Salvation and Social Justice (SandSJ) is a Trenton, New Jersey-based advocacy organization that seeks to liberate public policy theologically by modeling the hope and resiliency of Black faith; where historically marginalized people move from lament to liberation by envisioning and creating their own community-led solutions and alternatives to a structurally racist society.

God has used SandSJ to set captives free within just a few years. We led the legislative campaign, which now requires New Jersey to develop Racial Impact Statements for proposed criminal justice legislation. We restored voting rights for 83,000 formerly incarcerated people. We led the campaign to restrict solitary confinement. New Jersey had the highest prison death rate in the country at the start of the pandemic. Our advocacy led to a law that released over 8000 people from prison through the pandemic, a 40% reduction in the state's prisons. This reduction is the most significant singular reduction in the state's history. Our advocacy and hearings held in Black churches throughout the state to hear from people who experienced police violence led to the Independent Prosecutors Law and the nation's most robust Use of Force

Directive. We shut the state legislature down four times until they included equity in cannabis licensing and a social equity excise tax. That 70% of all sales tax goes back to communities impacted by cannabis prohibition.

SandSJ, in partnership with the NJISJ, advocated and won the closure announcement of two New Jersey youth prisons. Our advocacy and community work led to an 8.4 million appropriation for restorative justice hubs for youth. We were awarded \$500,000 from the Attorney General to do violence interruption in Trenton through restorative justice practices giving birth to our Trenton Restorative Street Team. Since 2018 we have grown from a two-person (my wife Rosalee and I) \$8,000 budget to 18 full-time staff and a multimillion-dollar annual budget.

In 2021, Rosalee and I was blessed to be assigned to Trenton's oldest Black church Greater Mount Zion. It's also one of the oldest churches in the New Jersey Annual Conference and African Methodism. It is the capitol city church. In a short time, God has allowed us to preach an unapologetically Black liberating gospel. People who were gone for years are returning. Young adults are joining. The city is buzzing about the church's revival. We've agreed on a mission focused on a liberating gospel, satisfied a \$700,000 debt, housed Afghan refugees, fed thousands, and are renovating our sanctuary, parsonage, administrative building, and outreach center. Our advocacy led to a \$2 million legislative grant to rehabilitate one of Greater Mount Zion's buildings to be converted into a birthing center and restorative justice hub. And most



recently, we took the 10-foot white Jesus statue down from off the roof of our building. I can say without a doubt that these things were sparked through the theological training I received at Payne. Payne taught me to set captives free.

Black theological reflection shows us that deliverance from the bondage of being denied fundamental human rights should be a priority and a mandate. We achieve Kin-dom building by doing the work of Jesus in the community. This culturally competent reflection frees local congregations and faith leaders from judgmental stances that focus solely on personal sin. It commits the faith community towards restorative mercy and grace. It transforms perspective and concentrates on crimes committed against peoples' humanity. Payne's liberating theology infuses hope into the suffering and provides emerging faith leaders with purpose and divine identity. By becoming not only recipients but also agents of transformation, we are liberated and become liberating.

My choice to attend Payne Theological Seminary has proved to be a pivotal point in my ministry and calling and has given me an Afrocentric theological sensitivity few seminaries offer. Coursework at Payne shaped my theology through a rigorous immersion in the global African religious experience while guiding me towards forming a solid set of ethics that represent the Divine, handle the sacred things in fear and trembling, and respect all humanity. Black liberation theology is my life experience. God used Payne to shape my prophetic context and set me toward transformative ministry. It challenged me to understand scripture and church through the unique context God created

for me; A Black man born in America into a multi-generational A.M.E. family. Understanding the unique lens God had given me confirmed not only my calling but also clarified it. I didn't fully appreciate my ministry or even my life's purpose until I went to this historically Black seminary. It is here I learned the liberating power of the priestly and prophetic. We, as leaders pastoring in communities with high poverty and violence, Black maternal and infant mortality rates, food deserts, and blight, leave us no choice but to engage if we are faithful to the Gospel of Jesus.

Pastors no longer have the luxury of choosing to be either prophetic or priestly. We cannot be prophetic without using our priestly gifts to heal the people broken by the power structure. Conversely, we cannot be priestly without prophetically engaging systemic sin, which exists to hurt the people we serve. The prophetic role is not solely vocal but also visionary. The prophet reimagines and advocates for God's revealed alternative realities. We must hold the priestly and the prophetic in divine tension to be unbossed and unbought by worldly lusts and lucrative opportunities. We must resist the desire for prosperity financed by forces that look to devour the sheep.

Similarly, the congregation cannot disconnect from its broader community. The proclamation of the preacher must germinate in the vineyard through the pew. The reimagined connection of congregation and society is a constituency by Divine providence. People in the church's surrounding community suffer from inadequate health care, subpar schools, addiction, violence, poverty, and disenfranchisement. We become communal evangelists congregationally when we bring spiritual and physical healing to the community while advocating for systemic and cultural change. Through advocacy, our churches transform from mere real estate to centers of community restoration. Our task is to be more than commuters but liberating

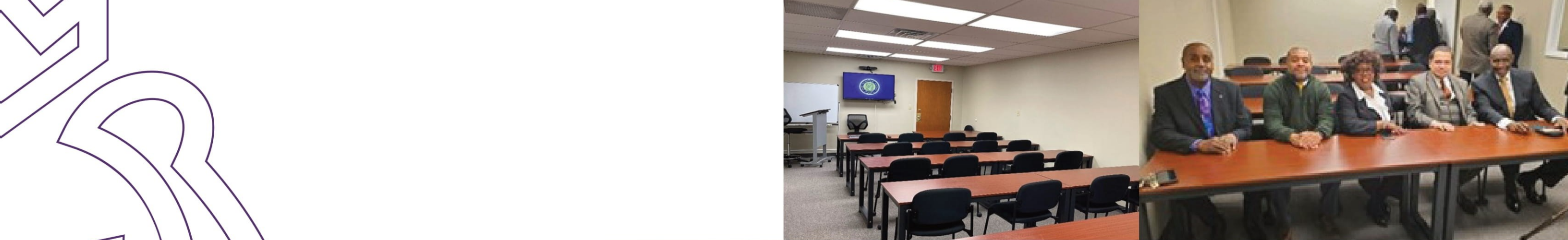
community engagers. The work of discipleship is profoundly spiritual and is the path towards sanctification, but it is also a work of justice. That work is to liberate others after being liberated ourselves.

The (Learn. Lead. Liberate) framework and calling of Payne is critical, especially to A.M.E.s seeking ministry. Our values must be realigned to those of the Black prophetic tradition. We cannot get that from white institutions or evangelical celebrity culture. Period.

*“My choice to attend Payne Theological Seminary has proved to be a pivotal point in my ministry and calling...”*







# PTS Savannah

## PAULA A. BOYD

Payne Theological Seminary has an extension site located in the beautiful city of Savannah, Georgia where Dr. Daniel Stevenson is the Director.

The Savannah extension site was established to give students in the southern part of the United States the opportunity to meet attend in-person classes. Its classes are of high quality, commitment, and excellence, which allows students to prepare to be great leaders in the ministry.

The mission of the Savannah extension site is the same as it is for the Payne campus – to prepare men and women of faith to be spiritual leaders, intellectual leaders, and agents of constructive social change in the church and world. This commitment positions Payne, critically and creatively, to inform and be informed by challenging

insights and values from other cultures, spheres, and orientations.

The Savannah extension site also disseminates and positions the name of Payne Theological Seminary at the national level as a seminary of great prestige, trajectory, and commitment to higher theological education.

The Savannah extension site's classes started at Savannah State University in 2015. In 2019, the Savannah Site moved to its present location (6555 Abercorn Street, Suite 120, Savannah, GA 31405). Due to the COVID pandemic in 2020, the Savannah Site's classes moved to online.

Look for in-person classes to resume in Savannah soon.



## BOOK REVIEW

Rev. Sandra E. H. Smith Blair

# Rebirth of the Women's Prophetic Voices

***The Rebirth of the Women's Prophetic Voices is empowering to all women because it is designed for and speaks to women of varying ages and different levels of spiritual maturity.***

Through the personal testimony of Rev. Dr. Rosalynn Brookins, women are encouraged to reflect upon their individual journey of spiritual growth, life stories, academic undergirding and prophetic experiences. The author's deep and candid self-reflection and connection with the prophetic lineage among women in her family spark and inspire women on the path of self-discovery.

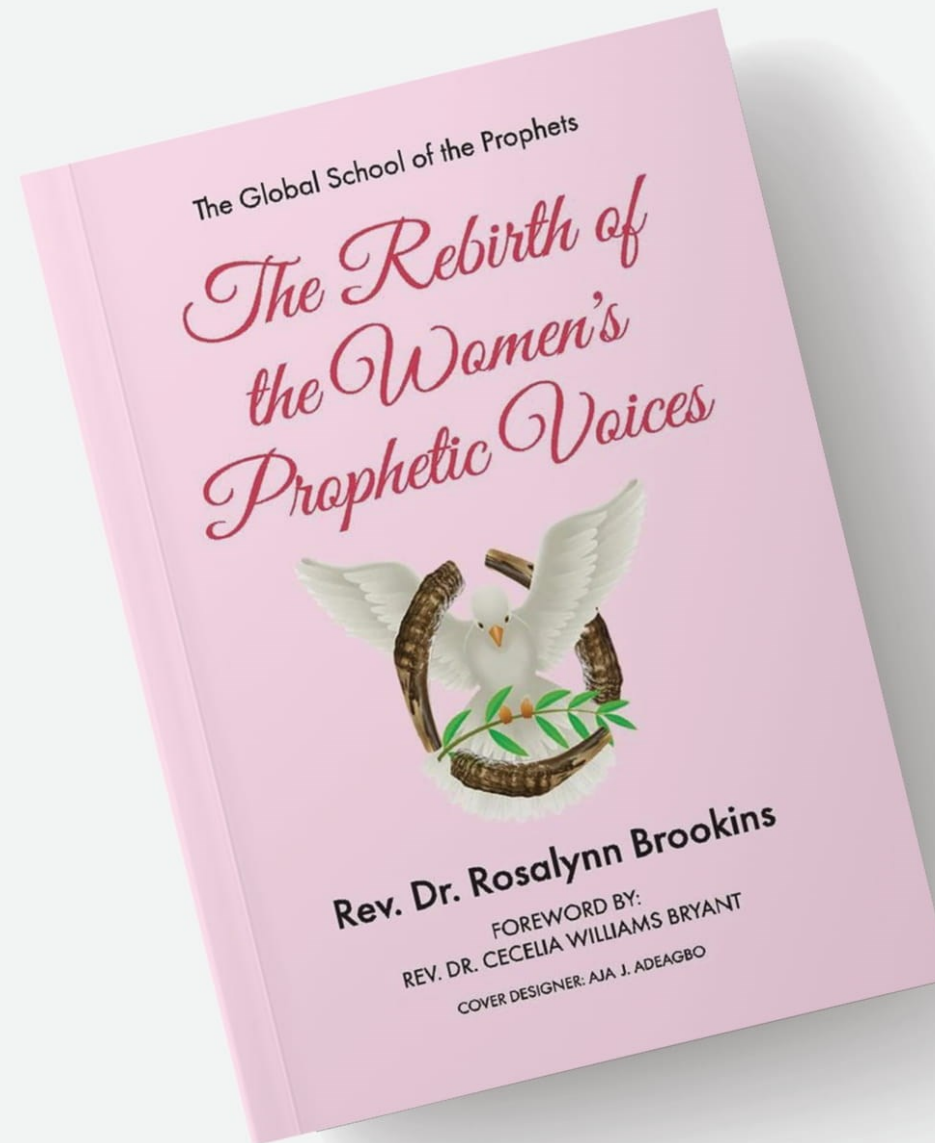
The eight modules of the comprehensive curriculum introduces a practical resource with detailed lessons, innovative activities,

uplifting prayers, extensive bibliography, and informative glossary. They are intended to serve as a guide for individuals, groups and leaders of lay and clergy women to understand the meaning of prophecy and navigate the pathway of prophetic call, ministry, intercession, prayer, praise and support of sisterhood.

Rev. Dr. Brookins' publication equips women with tools that enable them to further their understanding of God and strengthen their connection with God's Spirit. It is a vessel

for unfolding the prophetic for readers to claim their divinely appointed gifts, and grasp the power and strength of their voice as prophetic women of God.

The passion and enthusiastic delivery of Rev. Brookins in her live presentation steeps through the rich content of her penned words and makes it a valuable and empowering manual.

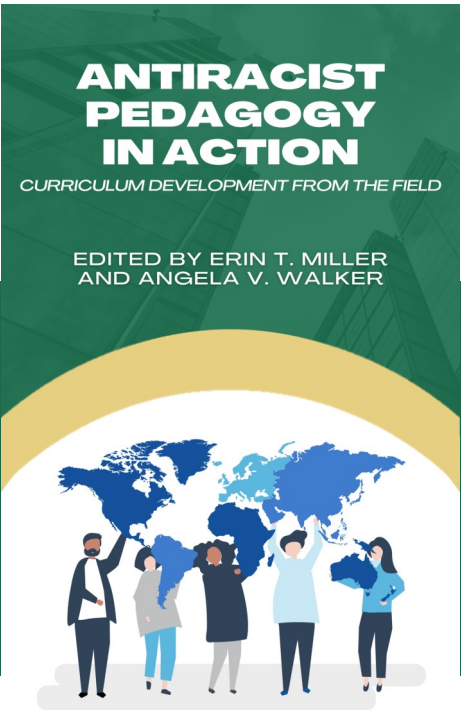


*Dr. Brookins has received awards for outstanding service from the Women's Missionary Society of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Top Ladies of Distinction, and NAACP leadership award.*



“This time last year, I embarked on a new endeavor to coedit a book with the amazing Dr. Erin Miller. This process challenged me more than I could ever imagine as I not only had to work out my own thoughts about how and why I teach, but I also had to sit with the experiences and insights of a cadre of brilliant educators as we collaborated to produce a book about antiracist teaching. Our labor of love is finally ready to share, and I am so excited to post it here. Shout out to the incredible Rev. Dr. Kathleen Wright for the cover design.”

This book is written by a diverse group of educators who spent the better part of one year learning about and implementing antiracist pedagogy. We hope our work is inspiring to other educators who want to learn more about antiracist pedagogy; more than that, we hope it provides a tool to engage with and speak back against repressive policies that seek to push out antiracist pedagogies. We worry that antiracist pedagogy has become a buzzword in scholarship and public discourse — simultaneously feared, silenced, hated, misunderstood, misused, and appropriated. We believe antiracist pedagogy has a place in democratic education. Therefore, we consider this book to be a clarifying project. In it, we provide precise definitions and concrete examples to demonstrate how antiracist pedagogy is a way of teaching and learning that engages past failures of American democracy in order to inspire students to take action toward fulfilling the promise of American democracy.



## Why We Need Critical Race Theory in Education (Part I)

ANGELA V. WALKER, PH.D.



*Dr. Walker is a Payne Seminary alumni as well as an English teacher at West Charlotte High School and an adjunct lecturer in the Antiracist Graduate Certificate Program at UNCC. She is deeply committed to practical deployments of Antiracist pedagogy, and has conducted numerous workshops exploring the intersection of faith-based epistemologies, education, and antiracism.*

***As an educator who has taught in predominately white secondary and post-secondary institutions, I have always detected a preoccupation with what educators are teaching in the classroom, especially when the educator is a person of color.***

My educational career began in 2005, and since then, I can recount multiple instances of white students questioning my credentials, dropping my classes because they believed the section that I was teaching was inferior to other sections my white colleagues taught, and white parents accusing me of having a hidden agenda whenever race was discussed in my classes. Suspicion, I learned early on, is par for the course in certain settings.

But what I have witnessed in public education over these past two and a half years is something different. A wave of backlash has hit education, and it emerged when the former U.S. Commander in Chief sent out a memo in 2020 banning diversity education, the 1619 Project, and antiracist education, labeling them “Anti-American” and “propaganda.” They were all placed under the misnomer of critical race theory, and critical race theory, not the abuse of power, became the target of attack. What was previously suspicion has been upgraded to outright alarm and has resulted in efforts by state leaders, college trustees, and local boards of education to control curriculum. Where I previously dealt with accusations from individual parents fearing that little Ken or Karen was too uncomfortable with my rhetoric class because I quoted a James Baldwin text or I pointed out discrepancies in language used during Hurricane Katrina, I now contend with state leadership seeking to

sniff out indoctrinators and proposals to submit lesson plans to state authorities for approval.

The whole issue is rather complex; I cannot unpack it in one article. My main goal is to emphasize that the critical race theory that is being publicly vilified is not critical race theory at all. Critical race theory has strategically been made into a catchall phrase to rally the forces against anything meant to present an accurate account of history, challenge structural inequity, dismantle white supremacy, and expose injustice. In doing so, opponents have conflated ideas, misrepresented facts, and distorted the messages of anything pertaining to racial justice. True critical race theory aims to achieve democracy by drawing attention to the subtleties of power dynamics with the end goal of envisioning and revisioning a more just society whose structure considers the multidimensional ways that people are affected by inequity in all forms. Facets of critical race theory are useful for application in the whole spectrum of education and are especially relevant to the type of theological education that Payne Seminary provides, one that is rooted in a liberatory Africentric tradition concerned with reconciliation, social justice, and human dignity.

***“I can recount multiple instances of white students questioning my credentials”***



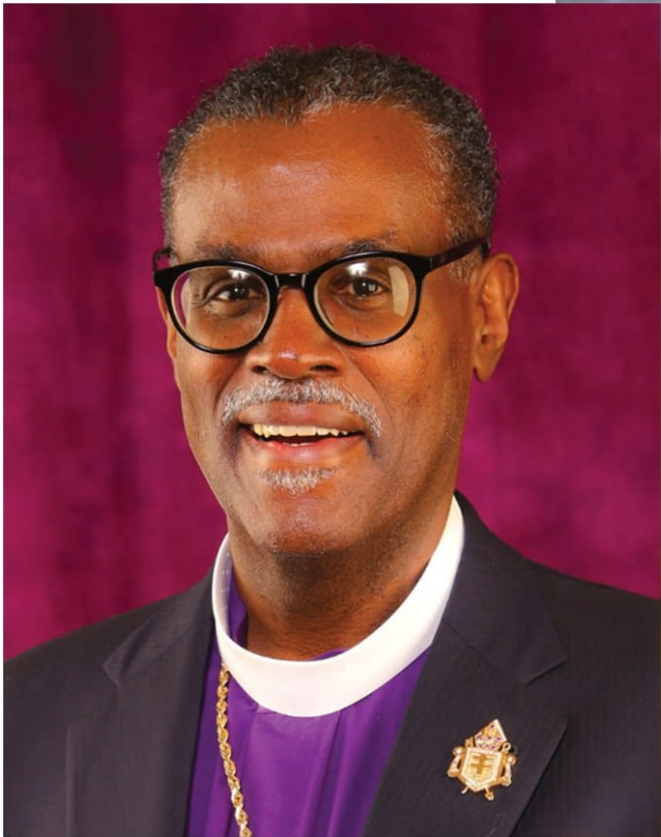
# Silvester Beaman & Toni Belin

## *The Right Rev. Dr. Silvester Beaman*

Dr. Silvester Beaman is the 139th elected and consecrated Bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. As an alumnus of Payne Theological Seminary, Bishop Beaman additionally holds degrees from Wilberforce University, Boston University, and Richard Wright Theological Seminary.

Dr. Beaman's pastoral career began in 1985. During this time, Bishop pastored three churches. Major renovations were completed, debts reduced and paid off, over 50 new ministries established, over 2,700 new members taken in. Bishop Beaman has been a 20-year General Board member of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. He is also a member of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, and a Prince Hall Mason.

Dr. Beaman was honored to be asked by President Joseph Biden, a friend for close to 30 years, to offer the benediction at the January 20, 2021, Presidential Inauguration of Joseph R. Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris. Delaware Governor John Carney awarded Dr. Beaman with the highest honor as a Delaware citizen, with the "First Order of the State Award."



## *Rev. Dr. Toni Belin Ingram*

Dr. Toni Belin Ingram is an ordained itinerant elder in the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church and is the Presiding Elder of the Augusta North District. Under her leadership, Augusta North strives to be a people that embodies and abides in God's love and seeks to serve God by serving God's people.

Toni's vision is to ensure that more of God's people reach their full potential and fulfill their divine purposes. Currently, she serves on the Board of Directors for Interfaith Children's Movement. She is a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated. Toni is member of the 2014 class of Morehouse College Martin Luther King, Jr. Board of Preachers.

Toni earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Morris Brown College in Atlanta, Georgia, and a Master of Divinity Degree from Candler School of Theology at Emory University. She recently completed her Doctor of Ministry at Payne Theological Seminary where her focus was an Adaptive Leadership approach to Intentional Intergenerational Ministry.





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