

"Do not get lost in a sea of despair. Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month, or a year, it is the struggle of a lifetime. Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble."



Metropolitan Association, NY UCC Newsletter

January, 2022

Ministering to the
Metropolitan Association
Churches and Ministers.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

CREATIVITY, COMPASSION, COMMITMENT &
COMMUNICATION

EADMIN@METROUCCNYC.ORG

BOARD PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

2022 IS HERE!

The Mission of the Metropolitan Association is *following Christ, empowering our churches to change the world. We have a vision of Communities of justice and extravagant hospitality transformed by God's love.*

It is a new day! It is a new year! Who we are becoming as the Metro Association is far better and greater than who we ever were! John's letter says, "...it does not year appear what we shall be..." Our vision statement is unfolding, coming to fruition: *a vision of Communities of justice and*

extravagant hospitality transformed by God's love! Be bold in this new year! Step out in faith. The process IS grueling; but step out anyhow! As Philippians 1:6; *"being confident of this, that [the One] who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."* **Soar in the Spirit, on eagles' wings!** HAPPY NEW YEAR--- #METROSTRONG!

Rev. Dr. Ruby M. Wilson

MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

In our recent information forum with the Association members, we lifted up some of the

Board Members and their many talents.

In this issue, I want to lift up **Rev Todd Farnsworth, the Senior Pastor of Briarcliff Congregational Church.** We first were introduced to Rev. Todd when he preached a spring meeting of the Association many years ago. In this inspiring sermon, Rev. Todd demonstrated humility, humor and a depth of spirituality that is refreshing and engaging. He introduced us to the practice of tapping, a way to center oneself and to bring the body and spirit in alignment. And Rev. Todd is a masterful

storyteller, an expert in trauma awareness, and a great listener. We are blessed to have him in the Metro Association and grateful that he is serving on the Board. Rev. Todd is leading his church in some really meaningful work as well. The Briarcliff Congregational community is having a global impact. Listen to this:

The Briarcliff Congregational Church has joined with Ossining for Refugees to welcome people displaced from Afghanistan into the Greater Ossining area. BCC member Ted Buerger has worked tirelessly with Ossining Town Supervisor Dana Levenberg to connect our communities with people waiting in camps around the country. BCC has helped to provide funding for laptops and ESL education for the refugees who are in need of these resources. Members of the church have volunteered to act as health advocates, answering questions our new neighbors may have about local hospitals and interpreting medical language. "It is a wonderful witness of communities coming together to make a difference in the lives of

people in need" said Rev. Todd Farnsworth, pastor of BCC, "we have members of our church, the local synagogue and the Muslim society working hand in hand to welcome these people who have left everything for a new life. God's love is alive and well!" "The Croton Lay Interfaith Council (also) stepped up with committed volunteers; they and Pleasantville brought helpful experience working with refugees." Buerger added, "This has been a multi-town effort from the beginning." One of the challenges the church has faced is figuring out how to avoid "rescuing" and instead, focus on partnering with their new neighbors. "We are trying to build relationships that will transcend need and grow understanding, respect, and ultimately, love" said Rev. Farnsworth. To learn more about the work of Ossining for Refugees visit ossiningforrefugees.org.

Rev. Carolyn C. Blair chairs our Spiritual Life and Professional Development Committee and the Louise Manigault Scholarship Fund of the Association.

Volumes could be written about this amazingly talented woman of God. A brilliant Educator and educational consultant with decades of experience in the field of education, Rev. Carolyn is also a former Broadway actress and performer, a masterful vocalist, a mother of five beautiful and successful children, an ordained minister of the Gospel, a racial justice and diversity and equity consultant, and an artist. She brings to the Metro Board insights and experiences that are treasured, and, oh my, can she sing!

Rev. Amanda Meisenheimer Minister of Children and Families at the Riverside Church, is an inspiration! During her ecclesiastical council, Amanda impressed me as a humble and extremely talented woman of God. A woman with a high level of self-awareness and a passion for ministry to children, Rev Amanda uses her creative gifts for the building of the Beloved Community.

Rev Amanda Meisenheimer Is the Minister of Children and Families at the Riverside Church. Since 2015 Amanda has

been providing the children of her community with dynamic storytelling, original songs, and a therapeutic approach to spiritual formation. Just as we all continue to receive an abundance of wisdom about the need for intergenerational relationships in faith communities, Amanda recognizes the power and importance of facilitating spaces where every developmental age and stage is welcomed and blessed. And while Riverside has worked hard to find new ways to integrate children into its main worship service, Amanda has also created a service that brings children from the margins into the center of intention and design. She calls it "Family Worship" and it is a monthly service that addresses the needs of all ages and invites participation for all abilities. Amanda is also leading an East Coast Intergenerational Ministry Cohort in collaborative thinking around the potentials and problems of intergeneration church.

Our lay leaders in Metro are also AMAZING!

Deacon Eileen Freedman of Safe Haven UCC is one of the most dedicated servant leaders I have ever met. As a physical therapist working in a rehabilitation facility, Deacon Eileen has spent much of this time of COVID dedicated to the healing of others. Suited up in protective gear from head to toe, she labors with love to care for the least of these. Bringing her colleagues into the ministry from the work place, Deacon Eileen ministers to not only her patients but also to her co-workers who have so needed a church community during these times. She does it with love and grace. Deacon Eileen serves the church in excellence, taking the love of God not only to congregants of Safe Haven, but to those outside the walls of the church.

Our Registrar, Claudette Joy Spence is a delight to work with. CJ, as I call her, is a member of Corona Congregational Church (the church my great Uncle, George M. Hinton founded) and has been in multiple roles of leadership in the UCC at

the National, State and local levels. Claudette is an accomplished author, motivational speaker, leader in the West Indian Community and an exemplary Registrar. Her role requires coordination with both the COM and the Congregational Development and Standing Committees, and attention to detail that is critical to the proper functioning of our Association. She is indeed a joy to work with, and I urge you to help me celebrate the day of her birth on January 20!

Share with me who YOU admire! Send me the stories! TOGETHER We are

METROSTRONG!

Rev. Dr. Kris Watson, Executive Director

HELPING THE VICTIMS OF THE TRAGIC BRONX APARTMENT BUILDING FIRE

The Metro Association is helping our neighbors in the Bronx by raising funds together THROUGH THE END OF JANUARY, 2022, to donate to two funds that aid the victims of the fire and their families. To contribute to this Metro effort,

please send
donations by mail

TO: METROPOLITAN
ASSOCIATION,
UCCNY (earmark for
Bronx Fire Relief
project) at

102-19 34TH AVENUE,
CORONA, NY 11368

We prefer if you can
go to our website
donations PAGE AT
[Donation](#)
([eservicepayments.com](#))

METRO ASSOCIATION INFORMATIONAL FORUM:

The Metropolitan
Association hosted an
information forum
concerning our
covenantal relationship
with the NY Conference
as well as what our
METROSTRONG efforts
are. If you missed it, and
desire more information,
you can request the
PowerPoint presentation
delivered and a follow
up conversation with our
Executive Director.
Please submit your
questions or comments
to Rev Kris Watson at
eadmin@metrouccnyc.org

**JOIN US FOR MLK
DAY: A DAY OF
REFLECTION AND
ACTION!**

**MONDAY, JAN 17,
2022, 11AM-1PM**

[https://metro
uccnyc-
org.zoom.us/j/
89433119109](https://metrouccnyc-org.zoom.us/j/89433119109)

**BISHOP DWAYNE
ROYSTER, Senior
Pastor of Faith UCC in
Washington DC, and
founder of the Society
for Faith and Justice
will be our keynote
preacher for our
Martin Luther King
Day Celebration.**



Bishop Dwayne D.
Royster, a leading voice
in modern faith-based
activism, wants to
change the world.
Whether
he is serving as a
pastor, challenging the
status quo as a political
activist, educating and
empowering
communities as a radio
show host, or
encouraging and
inspiring audiences

around the country as a
writer and public
speaker, Bishop
Royster's work is fueled
by deep faith and
passionate commitment
to bringing about social
justice.

**During the offering we
ask that you text, tweet
or e mail your local
senator to urge the
passage of
comprehensive
VOTING RIGHTS
LEGISLATION.**

specializes in care and flourishing of LGBTQ+ clergy and clergy women. Learn more at www.revfemme.com.

The Rev. Callie Swanlund is an Episcopal priest serving in Philadelphia, helping others Find their Spark, and building a creative ministry. She leads individuals and groups in the work of Dr. Brené Brown as a Certified Daring Way Facilitator. Callie is a mama, creator, lover, and dreamer. Find out more at CallieSwanlund.com

Rev. Laura Stephens-Reed is a Professional Certified Coach who helps clergy and congregations claim the clarity, tools, and encouragement needed to move into a hope-filled new normal. She is based in Alabama, and you can learn more about her coaching and read her weekly writing at laurastephensreed.com.

PLEASE VISIT AND LIKE OUR FACEBOOK PAGE FOR INFORMATION ABOUT HAPPENINGS IN THE METROPOLITAN ASSOCIATION!

Spread the news of all that Metro Association is offering to its members, churches, and ministers!

Share this newsletter with your congregation!

Reach out to us to see how you can get involved and volunteer your time talent and treasure!

Do you have a bright idea or project for us to engage in? Develop the idea and share it by e mailing our Executive Director at eadmin@metronyucc.org

Does your church need pulpit supply? We have a diversity of ministers willing and able to help. Please reach out to eadmin@metronyucc.org or call Rev. Kris Watson on her cell at 646-523-1936.

STEWARDSHIP CORNER

SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL WHO MADE A YEAR END DONATION TO THE ASSOCIATION! WE APPRECIATE YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND PLEDGE TO USE YOUR GIFTS TO THE BUILDING OF THE BELOVED COMMUNITY!

#METROSTRONG: Our Association is following Christ, empowering our churches to change the world.

We are committed to be communities of justice and extravagant hospitality that are transformed by God's love.

Divine Love, flowing through us blesses and increases all that we give, all that we have and all that we receive.



SOW A SEED INTO THE METROPOLITAN ASSOCIATION TODAY.

YOUR DONATION IS TAX DEDUCTIBLE

MAKE DONATIONS HERE:

[Donation \(eservicepayments.com\)](http://eservicepayments.com)

PLEASE NOTE

THE METRO ASSOCIATION IS NO LONGER COLLECTING THE \$2.00 PER CAPITA DUES FOR THE NEW YORK CONFERENCE ASSESSMENT. STATEMENTS SENT TO CHURCHES LATER THIS YEAR WILL REFLECT ONLY THE DUES PAYABLE TO THE METROPOLITAN ASSOCIATION. PLEASE SEND YOUR PER CAPITA ASSESSMENT DIRECTLY TO THE NEW YORK CONFERENCE GOING FORWARD.

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