

CREATIVITY, COMPASSION, COMMITMENT &  
COMMUNICATION

# Metropolitan Association, NY UCC Newsletter

February 2022

Ministering to the  
Metropolitan Association  
Churches and Ministers.

**BLACK HISTORY IS  
AMERICAN HISTORY**

[EADMIN@METROUCCNYC.ORG](mailto:EADMIN@METROUCCNYC.ORG)

## **BOARD PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

*This is the day God has made. Let us REJOICE...!* It seems wherever we turn, some matters arise leaving us feeling anything but joyful. Yet, the psalmist says, *REJOICE...!* and *all nature rings and round us sings the music of the spheres.* Yes, no matter what it looks like, *This is God's world!*

Our season of intentional praying has led us to embrace the continual call on the life of this Association to be whom God has called us to be. We proclaim we are **#METROSTRONG**, acknowledging the rights, responsibilities, and blessings to joyfully live into our purpose and destiny. With the recent announcement of the retirement of our Conference

Minister Rev. David Gaewski, Metro Board of Directors as well as we the Metro Association, pledge to uphold him and our Conference leadership in prayer. We wish him God's very best as he journeys into the new realm of possibilities awaiting him. It is our sincere desire to joyfully live into a new reality with our covenantal partners knowing that, in God, endless possibilities abound to do *greater works*.

2021 surely brought on its challenges and I am sure, 2022 will give us its share of them as well. But we are grateful to our elder brother and Savior, Jesus, who waits and wants to be confronted by the issues of our day and the problems, pains, and pressures of hurting people. We saw in 2021 that in our despair, God met us there.

In our painful wounds, God provided that *"balm"* from Gilead. In our hurts and pressures, God extended a hand of mercy with a *love that will never let us go*.

The stories of our siblings in bondage in Egypt, our family enslaved here in America, our people who broke ground to plant and build up a new society, bear witness to the truth of our **WE KNOW FAITH:**

***FOR WE KNOW THAT ALL  
THINGS WORK TOGETHER  
FOR GOOD FOR THOSE  
WHO LOVE GOD, WHO ARE  
CALLED ACCORDING TO  
[GOD'S] PURPOSE.***

In Christ,  
Rev. Dr. Ruby M. Wilson

## **MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

In this issue, I want to lift up

**Rev. Ron Garner, the Senior Pastor of Wantagh Memorial Congregational Church.** Rev. Ron is a Metro board member, and is the Secretary of the Association, serving on the executive Committee. When I first met Rev. Ron, I was struck by his gentle demeanor and his deep spirituality. One would never guess that Rev. Ron is one of the most fierce advocates for justice that I have ever met. Rev. Ron chairs the Metro Social Justice committee and is a leader at the National level in the Open and Affirming Coalition. Rev. Ron is also on the NY State Poor People's Campaign Faith Committee, and a board member of the Long Island Council of churches that sponsors the Freeport Emergency Food Pantry. Wantagh Memorial was listed as the second largest donor of food to that Food Pantry. In December, Wantagh Memorial had five volunteers distribute prepared meals and

groceries to the food insecure in Long Island. Indeed, Rev. Ron is a jewel in God's crown!

### **Rev. Jerry Greene, the Senior Pastor of Hollis Avenue**

**Congregational Church** in Queens is an amazing man of God! Rev. Greene, a retired correctional officer, is passionate and dedicated to serving the community in excellence. Always finely attired in African garb, Rev. Greene leads his congregation with sincere dedication and a huge heart. Serving along side his First Lady, Joyce, Rev. Greene leads not just the Congregation spiritually but a vibrant and thriving Food Pantry managed by JT Thomas. This Food Pantry feeds thousands in Queens, and now throughout the Metro Association through a partnership with The Metro Association. He is also passionate about mental health in his community and sits on several boards dedicated to maintaining and improving mental health outcomes for people of African descent.

**Rev. Erica Poellot, of Judson Memorial Church** is a true inspiration to the Body of Christ. Rev. Erica was

ordained last month to the National Ministry of Harm Reduction. Rev. Erica M. Poellot, MSW, MDiv is the Senior Ministry Innovator at Judson Memorial Church in NYC. As a faith leader in long-term recovery, Erica founded 'Faith in Harm Reduction' to co-create a justice movement which connects people who use drugs, people who trade sex, and communities of faith through the development of harm reduction centered spiritual resources, ritual support, and spiritual care. With joint MDiv/MSW degrees from Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University in NYC, Erica currently works as the Director of Faith and Community Partnerships for National Harm Reduction Coalition and the Minister of Harm Reduction and Overdose Prevention Ministries for the National Setting of the United Church of Christ.

Rev. Erica ministers to the people that most people in the church would run as far away from as humanly possible. Her ordination was a true inspiration to all who attended, replete with moving testimonials from people she has ministered to who have

used or may currently be using drugs. Erica has used her gifts and talents to edify the body of Christ by ministering to those who are left out and left behind. She is a true inspiration!

### **Our lay leaders in Metro are also AMAZING!**

**Sister Monica Fisher of St. Albans Congregational** Monica has been a member of St ALBANS FOR OVER 40 YEARS, she is a cancer survivor and has been instrumental in helping the Church maintain awareness of Breast Cancer and is consummate professional in relating to individuals in and outside the church. As the facilities manager for St. Albans Sister Monica manages a vibrant Robert Ross Johnson family Life Center, a property established under the leadership of Rev Henry Simmons, 33,000 square foot facility with a commercial kitchen and that facilitates the Church's community outreach mission. Monica's late mother was a deacon at the church as well. She is hailed by Dr. Simmons and Rev Eli as dedicated and

hardworking servant of the church.

Pastors, Congregants, METRO: 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 delighted to announce that our fundraising efforts for the victims and families of the tragic **Bronx fire raised \$4,340.00! THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY. THIS IS WHAT MAKES US #METROSTRONG**

**As churches and as an Association, our call is to help those in need wherever and whenever we can. We count on each of you to help us continue to serve the people of God in meaningful ways!**

**IF YOU WANT TO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT OUR EFFORTS TO SUPPORT OUR CLERGY AND**

**CHURCHES, PLEASE CONSIDER MAKING A DONATION FOR OUR SCHOLARSHIP FUND, SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL JUSTICE EFFORTS!**

**TO: METROPOLITAN ASSOCIATION, UCCNY at**

**102-19 34<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE, CORONA, NY 11368**

We prefer if you can go to our website donations **PAGE AT [Donation \(eservicepayments.com\)](http://eservicepayments.com)**

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### **UPCOMING METRO EVENTS:**



Attention all authorized clergy and those seeking standing in the Metropolitan Association: Did you know that **anti-racism training is REQUIRED** for ministerial standing in the Association? If you need this training, the Association is offering it in February. **The cost is \$250.00 per person.** Scholarships are

available. The course is scheduled for February 22-23 from 10am-2pm via zoom. To register for this please contact our Executive Director: Rev. Kris Watson at eadmin@metrouccnyc.org no later than February 10, 2022. There are assignments to complete prior to the start of the workshop.

**WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH IS COMING IN MARCH: THIS IS WHAT WE HAVE PLANNED:**



**Women of European descent Walking the Walk and Talking the Talk about Racial Justice. Co-sponsored by the Social Justice Committee and the Metro Association**

**A month-long series in discussion with Euro-descended pastors in the UCC who are racial justice facilitators working in the church.**

**ZOOM ID FOR EACH GATHERING IS MEETING ID# 84757512957**

**THE METRO ASSOCIATION PARTNERS WITH HOLLIS AVENUE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH AND ITS FOOD PANTRY TO FEED THOUSANDS!**



**IF YOU, A FAMILY MEMBER OR CONGREGANT NEED HELP WITH FOOD PLEASE CONTACT HOLLIS AVENUE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, Rev. Jerry Greene, Senior Pastor 211-04 Hollis Avenue, Queens Village 11429. HOURS OF OPERATION: 8am-11am: The Food Pantry is open every Tuesday. If you have special needs or an immediate need contact James**

**Thomas at 516-528-2422**

[Overwhelm Workshop](#)

**Thursday, February 10, 2022**

**2:00 - 3:15 PM EST**

**Leaders: Heidi Carrington Heath, Callie Swanlund, Laura Stephens-Reed**

Are you carrying too much in this season? Struggling to balance caring for your community, church, family, and self? Trying to find your way in the new normal? You are not alone.

This is a workshop in three parts: in the first 30 minutes we'll hear from three clergy coaches with simple practices to ease the burden. This section will be recorded and can be watched later (at 2X speed) if that's all you can fit into your life right now.

If you can invest a little more time, please plan to attend the full workshop. Following the panel will be a 45-minute breakout session, led by one of the three coaches, in order to go deeper and gain support. Note: these will not be recorded.

Finally, if you are longing for a deeper transformation, you'll have the opportunity to engage this topic in a coached cohort.

**Our team of experts:**

**The Rev. Heidi C.**

**Heath** is ordained in the United Church of Christ, Executive Director of the New Hampshire Council of Churches, a Spiritual Director, author, and holy mischief maker. Heidi specializes in care and flourishing of LGBTQ+ clergy and clergy women. Learn more at [www.revfemme.com](http://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](http://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](http://laurastephensreed.com).

**STEWARDSHIP CORNER**

**Special thanks to all who make donations to the association! We appreciate your financial support and pledge to use your gifts to the building of the beloved community!**

**FEBRUARY 2022 ISSUE 3**

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

**NY CONF MINISTER GAEWSKI TO RETIRE JUNE 30, 2022**

February 7, 2022:

Dear New York Conference Members and Friends, It has truly been my great privilege to serve in conference ministry for the past twenty-five years, the last ten years in New York. I have discerned that now is the time for me to retire. During Covid I have been working from our home in Maine. This is where I need to be. Therefore, my ministry in New York will conclude on June 30th.

I have done my utmost to serve you with integrity, honesty, and faith. I am grateful to all the conference leaders with whom I have served God. I could never say enough to express my appreciation, admiration, and joy of working with such a talented and deeply faith-filled staff. I have no doubt that you will hear from our conference moderator, Dona Roll, soon regarding the transition period. She and the Conference Board have been in conversation with the national setting of the UCC which will assist the New York Conference during this period of transition. I wish each of you wellness, deep peace, and the abiding love of God.

David

New York Conference UCC  
P.O. Box 487  
Syracuse, NY

**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](mailto: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](mailto:eadmin@metronyucc.org) or call Rev. Kris Watson on her cell at 646-523-1936.**



**SOW A SEED INTO THE METROPOLITAN ASSOCIATION TODAY.**

**YOUR DONATION IS TAX DEDUCTIBLE**

**MAKE DONATIONS HERE:**

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

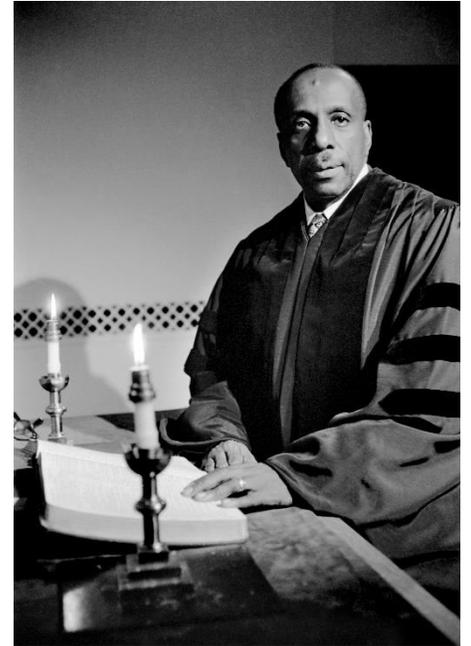
**#METROSTRONG:** Our Association is following Christ, empowering our churches to change the world.

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

**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.

**FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH!**



Howard Thurman was an eminent Afro-American theologian, author, educator, civil rights leader and philosopher. He was a prominent religious figure and played a pivotal role in many social justice organizations and movements of the 20th century. His thoughts, writings and theology of radical non-violence shaped and influenced a generation of civil rights activists that included Martin Luther King Jr. He was the co-founder of the first major interdenominational, inter-racial church in the United States. Thurman also served as the dean at 'Howard University' of the 'Rankin Chapel'. He also served as the dean at 'Boston University' of 'Marsh Chapel'.

## HAPPENING IN OUR CHURCHES:

**SAFE HAVEN UCC LEARNING LAB PRESENTS**

GOD'S PROPHETS DEMAND JUSTICE:

A SIX WEEK LENTEN BIBLE STUDY SERIES FACILITATED BY REV. KARYN CARLO, PHD



March 8, 15, 22, 29, April 5, 12  
6PM-7PM  
Via ZOOM  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81164460526>

The Hebrew prophetic tradition, from which Jesus descended, was a constant call for social justice. The covenant God established with God's people was a call to live in right relationship with the Creator, and one another with particular concern for the oppressed. Sadly, the people often fell away from the terms of the covenant. The powerful oppressed the weak. Worship became empty ritual. Therefore, God raised up prophets who demanded justice.

This class will focus primarily on Amos, Micah, and Isaiah with an eye toward the ways in which their demands for justice applied both to ancient Israel and Judah as well as us today.

**Safe Haven UCC Learning Lab presents: Passport to Truth**




"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."

Join Us as we learn about African American history

**MONTHLY GATHERINGS:**  
FEBRUARY 10  
MARCH 10, APRIL 14,  
MAY 12  
AT 7PM  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81164460526>

What You Will Learn:

- Introduction to massacres in African American Communities
- Cultural Contributions of African Americans
- Hot Button issues and current events
- Tools for engagement

Join us virtually at 9:30 AM (ET)!

THE YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT DEPARTMENT OF RIVERS

**SUNDAY MORNING IMPACT!**

FOR YOUTH UP TO 12TH GRADE

REGISTER TODAY @ <https://bit.ly/IMPACTYOUTH>

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT PASTOR SUS WHEELER AT [EDITHY@RIVERS.COM](mailto:EDITHY@RIVERS.COM)

ONLINE



St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran United Church of Christ

Meeting ID: 471 087 0474

2134 NEWBOLD AVENUE, BRONX, NEW YORK, 10462

St. Albans CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH United Church of Christ

St. Albans Congregational Church Presents:

**Financial Literacy & Empowerment SERIES**

02/08/22 | 02/15/22  
7:00PM

TOPIC: INFLATION, CREDIT, & CRYPTO CURRENCY

SHAWN HUNT PRIVATE WEALTH ADVISOR & MANAGER

TREVOR HOWARD CO-FOUNDER OF HOWARD, MARTIN & ASSOCIATES

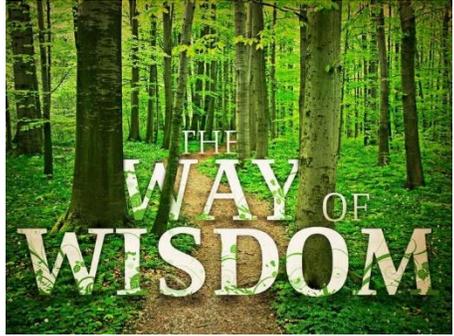
02/08/22 | 02/15/22  
7:00pm  
Topics:  
Inflation, Credit, & Crypto Currency  
Presenter: Shawn Hunt Private Wealth Advisor & Manager  
Presenter: Trevor Howard Co-Founder of Howard, Martin & Associates  
In The Gathering Place Zoom: 7887239192

St. Albans CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH United Church of Christ

EVERY TUESDAY  
NEHEMIAH MENS BIBLE STUDY @7:00PM

Join us in  
The Gathering Place Zoom  
@7887239192

ST. ALBANS CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UCC



Our Lenten Program: The Wisdom Challenge  
Join in reading and discussing Godly wisdom as made known in the Book of Proverbs this Lent. Starting on March 1, we encourage you to read one chapter per day of the often overlooked gem, the Book of Proverbs. There are 31 chapters in Proverbs and 31 days in March, so we'll work together all throughout March. To sign up contact Pastor Noel: [pastorccop@gmail.com](mailto:pastorccop@gmail.com) and please copy Pastor Asayo: [yumegakanau@aol.com](mailto:yumegakanau@aol.com)

