



E-Newsletter May 2025

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Upcoming Events

ICFSH Spring 2025 Earth Day Conference Recording

Listen to the Audio Recording [HERE](#)



Save the Date: 2025 Commencement

The 2025 Hood Theological Seminary commencement will take place **Saturday 17th May 2025 at 10:30 a.m. on the campus of Livingstone College (Varick Auditorium) at 701 W Monroe St, Salisbury, NC 28144. The speaker will be Bishop Darryl B. Starnes, Sr.**



Livingstone College Worship & Preaching Institute

By: Dierdre' R. Parker

As a preacher, there are preachers whom I admire. They are varied in all the ways that make humanity the most interesting box of crayons in creation. As I lean into traveling just over the downside of this hill called life, I have outlined my intention to travel to see some of my favorites on this side of the chilly Jordan. Every once in a while, God creates serendipitous meetings between preparation and opportunity. You find yourself with the opportunity to see some of your favorites, and you only have to go right down the street.

For the last two years, that has been the case for me. Livingstone College's Worship and Preaching Institute, held at 530 Jake Alexander Blvd., brings some of the nation's top black preachers to Salisbury, North Carolina, in a big way. Last year, there were Bishop Vashti McKenzie, the first Woman Bishop of the A.M.E. Church, and Dr. Melva Sampson, Assistant Teaching Professor of Preaching and Practical Theology at Wake Forest School of Divinity.

I met and mingled with the prolific pontificator, Dr. Lance A. Watson, this year. Dr. Watson is the pastor of St. Paul's Missionary Baptist Church in Richmond, Va. I've never been to St. Paul's Missionary Baptist Church, but I have seen Dr. Watson numerous times on television. When I first started watching him, his hair was a little thicker and his waistline was a little thinner, but the commitment to and passion for the word of God did not change. I was inspired and encouraged by our brief conversation.

Meeting Dr. Tori Butler, Adjunct Professor of Pastoral Theology at Hood Theological Seminary, was a revelation. I had the *intense* pleasure of taking a class with Dr. Butler during J-Term. Since the DMin classroom is virtual, this was the first time I met her in person. Underneath that diminutive stature is one tough professor. She pushed me. I needed pushing. At the Institute, Dr. Butler introduced the audience to "the Holler" and its place in her work surrounding grief.

There were so many powerful preachers and teachers involved in the Institute that it could not all be contained in one place. The partnership with Hood Theological Seminary this year brought workshops to our campus. Gail Estella led one such seminar. It was titled “Through It All”. Gail Estella is a survivor of Domestic Violence and has 33 years of sobriety under her belt. She shared heart-wrenching stories of trials and triumphs, loss, and regret with her audience. But finally, the victory that comes when you put your life in the Savior’s hands. She grounded her stories in Psalm 34, encouraging the audience to use their voice. She reminded us that when God uses God’s voice, things happen. When Jesus used His voice, things happened. We must also use our voices to make things happen. We were all encouraged to do just that.

Our Senior Bishop, the Right Reverend Darryl B. Starnes also presented at the institute. He spoke about the church as a Movement from the Pulpit to the Streets. “There must be some movement in us that propels us to move for God, to the benefit of others. That movement is the indwelling *and* the filling of the Holy Spirit. If we are not *filled* with the Holy Spirit, everything we do will be for our benefit. Once we yield to the Holy Spirit and grow, He moves us to come out of our comfort zones, to reach the people around us, to reach the people beyond us, to reach the ones who have been thrown away-the outcasts-and He will even move us to the ends of the earth.”

The Institute culminated in the induction of twenty-one preachers into the Bishop Alfred G. Dunston College of Preachers [three posthumously]. Bishop Dunston was known for his charismatic and passionate preaching. The preacher they chose for this prestigious event is also known for his charismatic and passionate preaching; Rev. Dr. Reginald W. Sharpe Jr. I first became aware of Dr. Sharpe when he was preaching for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes at his High School, through a YouTube search. I returned frequently to the YouTube Channel. I watched as he graduated, went to Morehouse, went to grad school, and became the pastor of Fellowship Baptist Church in Chicago.

I encountered Rev. Sharpe virtually in 2021 when Dr. Andre’ Resner invited me (and other students) to preach for a class he taught for the PhD Program in African American Preaching & Sacred Rhetoric at Christian Theological Seminary. The facilitator of the discussion of the sermon that I preached was none other than that kid who was no longer a kid that I had been watching since he was a kid! Thanks to the Livingstone College Worship and Preaching Institute, I have finally met my internet nephew!

Dr. Sharp preached a fiery and dynamic sermon titled “Notes from the Nets” (Luke chapter 5). In his unique way, Dr. Sharpe encouraged the inductees into the Bishop Alfred G. Dunston Colleges of Preachers. He admonished that “if you think you’re too big to do something little, then you’re probably too little to do something big.” He reminded us not to judge Peter just because he was tired. They had been out all night and caught nothing. Many of us have been so tired from the work that we had no energy to try again. Then Rev. Sharpe did the thing that makes his preaching unique. He gave voice to the *nets* in this passage of scripture. The nets reminded us that it is challenging to carry something so heavy that its weight makes you question whether you can even hold yourself together. Rev. Sharpe preached us right into a reset of heart and mind. “They Like to Never Quit Praising God.”

The Livingstone College Worship and Preaching Institute was a cornucopia of preaching and teaching excellence. I look forward to what its next iteration will bring to the lives of students, preachers, and teachers of the word of God.

The Institute for Rural and Small-Town Ministry and Leadership



The Institute for Rural and Small-Town Ministry and Leadership is excited to share with you what we’ve been up to lately.

We are gearing up to hold our quarterly workshop, “Strengthening Congregations” on May 31 in the Aymer Center. Topics of discussion will be Facility Security, Outreach Within your Congregation and Grant Writing. The event is free, but registration is required by May 22, 2025. To register, scan the QR code below.

This workshop is for Ministers, church leaders and laity of Rural & Small-Town Churches in North Carolina.

It will be held in the Aymer Center on Saturday, May 31st. Check-in is from 8:00-8:30 am and the event will last until 1:00 pm.

A light breakfast and lunch will be provided.

We held a town hall meeting on Saturday, April 30th at the Mt. Pleasant AME Zion Church in Statesville. It was hosted by Rev. Dr. JC White, the host pastor and Rev. Dr. David R. Baker, Presiding Elder of the Statesville District.

There were over thirty attendees and the response by them was phenomenal! It was great that we had an opportunity to tell people about the programs and resources we have that will Empower them to serve future generations.

Susan Cooper

Program Coordinator

The Institute for Rural & Small-Town Ministry and Leadership.



Did You Know?

You can audit a class at HTS! Learning is a lifelong process; continue the journey with us. For clergy, church professionals, and laypersons. All denominations welcome! Read more [HERE](#)



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!

To all our May Faculty, Staff, Alumni & Donors - A Blessed Birthday with Many More to Come!



Faculty/Staff News

Dr. Vergel L. Lattimore



Dr. Vergel Lattimore, President and Professor, will participate in a planning meeting of the Gift of Black Theological Education & Black Faith Traditions Collaborative, Inc. in Philadelphia, PA (5/19 -5/20/25)

He will attend Women of a New Tribe Exhibition and Luncheon sponsored by the Kannapolis African American-MaCC, Laurette Center, Kannapolis, NC (5/31/25)

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Hood News

Congratulations to Hood Adjunct Professor Mark Conforti who has been selected to be the District Superintendent of the Yadkin Valley District of the Western NC Conference of the United Methodist Church and Hood Alum Rev. Rodvegas M. Ingram MDiv'05 who has been selected to be the District Superintendent of the Northern Piedmont District of the Western NC Conference of the United Methodist Church. They will begin their new appointments July 1, 2025.



Dr. Mark Conforti



Rev. Rodvegas Ingram

Alumni News

Rev. Janet Garner-Mullins

Charlotte.
...ow thoughtful planning, collaboration and can transform our

ALUMNI NEWS

Congratulations to Hood Alum Rev. Janet Garner-Mullins, MDiv'15, on being awarded the Most Inspiring Individual for the 2025 Sustain Charlotte Awards!

 **Hood Theological Seminary**
Theological Preparation for Effective Ministry in a Diverse Society

Congratulations to Hood Alum Rev. Janet Garner-Mullins, MDiv'15, on being awarded the Most Inspiring Individual for the 2025 Sustain Charlotte Awards!

FaithLearnThrive News

☐ Ready to Move from Ideas to Impact?

The Community Strategy Lab is your next step! Designed for congregations ready to put vision into action, this dynamic lab will help your church design innovative, practical strategies to serve your community more deeply. Through guided sessions, collaboration with other churches, and expert facilitation, you'll leave with a plan that fits your context—and inspires your people. [LEARN MORE](#)

In this 8-week lab, you will:

□ Learn strategic approaches for community impact

□ Network with like-minded church leaders

⇒ Gain actionable insights to grow your church

□ Enhance your credibility as a community leader

□ Starts June 2nd | Meets weekly for 8-weeks via Zoom

Limited spots available—register today to secure your place!

□ <https://bit.ly/CommLab2025>



FAITH LEARN THRIVE
COMMUNITY STRATEGY LAB

Join our 8-week Community Resource Lab to transform your church's community outreach! Starting June 2025, this virtual cohort is designed to equip church leaders with the skills and strategies needed to make a lasting impact. You'll learn how to plan, execute, and evaluate successful community initiatives using the 30-Days of Community Impact Resource Guide.

WHY ATTEND?

- ✓ Gain actionable strategies for community impact
- ✓ Network with other church leaders
- ✓ Enhance your credibility as a community leader
- ✓ Create a strategy for church growth
- ✓ Work with church growth strategist Nicole Johnson, The100foldblueprint.com

REGISTER NOW

LIMITED SPACE AVAILABLE | STARTS JUNE 2, 2025

QR code

Center for Bold Leadership News

The Tribe of R.U.T.H. Transformation Retreat for Women

Save the Date: November 6–8, 2025

Sponsored by the Center for Bold Leadership

Navigating the Path of Women of Color in Ministry Transformational Retreat

This transformational retreat is designed for women of all ages and stages who are ready to deepen their faith, ignite their purpose, and connect with a sisterhood of bold, empowered sister-leaders.

Experience:

Dynamic Plenary Sessions led by nationally recognized speakers

Inspiring Workshops on leadership, healing, spiritual growth & resilience

Vendor Market with local businesses

Wellness Suite featuring mindfulness and holistic care

Prayer Room & Reflection Spaces for personal restoration

Special Programming for Men

Worship Experiences with powerful music and message

Location:

Hood Theological Seminary

1810 Lutheran Synod Dr. | Salisbury, NC 28144

Registration Opens July 2025

Limited Spots Available – Don't Miss It!

Leadership Development Cohort for Black Clergy Women in Early Ministry

Save the Date

Join the 2025-2026 Leadership Development Cohort a yearlong program designed to nurture, equip, and uplift Black clergy women in the early stages of their ministerial journey.

In person Retreat: September 11 – 13, 2025

Hood Theological Seminary | Salisbury, NC

This immersive experience will include:

Leadership formation rooted in faith and justice

Peer learning and mentorship

Spiritual renewal and community building

Spiritual Direction and Coaching

Virtual meetings

Applications go live on June 1st

Deadline for application is August 15th

In Memoriam



[Annie Marie Leazer Pruitt](#) passed away on April 17, 2025. She worked for Livingstone College and Hood Theological Seminary for 37 years (1962-1999). Please keep her friends and family on your prayers.

[Hood Alum Dr. Overseer Ivey Lee Cowan](#) passed away on April 30, 2025.

Hood Travels

Hood traveled to The Power of the Equitable Church Conference in Atlanta, GA.



Planned Giving

Create your legacy through a planned gift by remembering Hood Theological Seminary in a bequest or will with gifts of stocks and bonds, gifts of real estate or personal property, life insurance, charitable trust, retirement funds/IRA or life income gifts. By making a planned gift, you will become a member of the [Hood Legacy Society](#).

- ~ Do you have an IRA?
- ~ Are you at least 70 1/2 years of age?
- ~ Would you like to help HTS in its mission to prepare women and men for bold and creative leadership for the Christian church for a diverse world?

If you answered "Yes" to all three questions, please consider an IRA Charitable Rollover.

In an IRA Charitable Rollover, the distribution of up to \$100,000 annually made directly from the IRA custodian to a qualifying public charity, such as HTS, is excluded from gross income and counts toward the required minimum distribution.

Contact:

John Everett

Director, Institutional Advancement & Enrollment Management

704.636.6545 jeverett@hoodseminary.edu

Visit our [Planned Giving](#) website for lots of helpful information.



Monthly Giving

Join the Faithful Friends Partner Recurring Monthly Program!

To become a Faithful Friend Partner, click the link below to donate and become a member for a minimum of \$25 monthly.

[Become A Faithful Friend Partner](#)



Your gift is essential in promoting the mission of the Seminary. Every gift, small and large, is greatly appreciated and stewarded responsibly!

It's so easy to [donate securely online](#) or mail your check directly to the Seminary at 1810 Lutheran Synod Dr., Salisbury, NC 28144.

Contact:
Tyesia Walker
Director,
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