

THANKSGIVING

It is my honor to give my fourth Annual Pastor's Report of my tenure at Bronx Bethany Church of the Nazarene. What a privilege it is to be entrusted with the responsibility of pastoring this special community of faith. I thank the Lord for His unfailing love and direction to us. The writers of Exodus underscore my sentiments best, "*In your **unfailing love** you will lead the people you have redeemed. In your strength you will guide them to your holy dwelling.*" (Exodus 15:13 NIV)

I echo the declaration of the songwriter Joachim Neander...

*Praise to the Lord, above all things so wondrously reigning,
sheltering us under his wings so gently sustaining!
Have you not seen all that is needful has been sent by his gracious ordaining?"*

REMEMBRANCE

In 2022, we experienced great loss as a faith community. The Pastoral Staff formally officiated nine (9) funerals and have been present with many more families in and through times of bereavement. I would be remiss to not mention the seven (7) members who we have transitioned to glory. Sis. Sonia Jennings, Bro. Fitzroy Jennings, Bro. Don Richards, Sis. Valerie Llewelyn, Bro. Wilbert Green, Sis. Zenrin Lyons, and Sis. Vivian Crichton. Mention must also be made of the loss of Sis. Ruchelle Blackwood. We thank God for their commitments, their sacrifices to the Lord, and their service in Christ's church. We will continue to stand with the families and community members who are mourning. I would like us to have a moment of silence now to remember those who have gone on to receive their crown.

Our leaders and members have gone to great lengths to stand with the bereaved. We have engaged in a myriad of ways to serve families during their most difficult times. Whether it was through funeral planning, hospitality and hosting, ministry in music, valet parking, cards, phone calls or financial support, people have attested to an experience of the unbridled love of God through this congregation. I am certain that the Lord will not forget these sacrifices and labors of love. It is in these times when we are reminded of how good it is to be a part of the family of God.

WORSHIP

2022 was our first full year of in-person worship services since 2019. We give thanks to God for the ability to be together in this way. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly reshaped how corporate worship is engaged and experienced. We continued to see value in the hybrid experience and organized each week for in-person, live, and on-demand worship. In September, the Lord led us to reduce our multiservice offerings on a Sunday to one combined bilingual service (English and Spanish) with an intentional ethnic blend. We know that unity in our diversity is a hallmark of the Holy Spirit, and we sensed the Spirit's leading us toward this challenging work. I believe our worship times together were experiential, participatory, image-rich, and connective (Leonard Sweet). In-person adult worship averaged 229 people in 2022 (Up from the average of 106 people in 2021). Thankfully, attendees (both English and Spanish speakers) have testified to the Spirit's transformative presence and power in our corporate worship experience. Alongside the sound preaching of the Pastoral staff, we experienced special guest preaching that was deeply formative. We are thankful for Bishop Daryl Starnes, Dr. Sam Vassel, Dr. Levi Jones, Rev. Althea Taylor, Rev. Andrew Bennett, Dr. Jeff Barker, Dr. Frank Thomas, Rev. Albert Hung, and Rev. Juan David Paniagua for their service to the Lord and to us.

Children's Church in-person each Sunday was rich and effective. There was an average of twenty-five (25) students (87% elementary aged and 13% junior high) in-person. Our virtual on-demand offering has been a major success for us as well. Students were able to participate and revisit lessons throughout the week providing a great way to reinforce curriculum and grant access to families who have dynamic schedules. Children's content averaged 126 views per week. The children are learning and growing as they enjoy the interactive lessons. The feedback from children and parents have been very encouraging. Special thanks to our Children's Ministry Director, Sis. Roodlyne (Woods) Altidor and the committed team; Sis. Asanya Hanson, Sis. Merlene Ferguson, Sis. Deidre Ottey, Sis. Caryl Trocard, and Sis. Charise Burt-Miller.

Online worship still served as a key component of outreach and connectivity. *Here are some highlights...*

- There was a total of 70,117 views on YouTube with an average of 192 daily views.
- There were an average of 1700 total unique viewers for adult worship per month (800 average return viewers and 900 new viewers).
- Viewership extended nationally from New York to Philadelphia, New Jersey, Connecticut, Texas, Georgia, Ohio, Illinois, Florida, Massachusetts, and internationally to Colombia, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Guatemala, Canada, Honduras, London, Mexico and Nicaragua.
- Avg age groups: 18-24 (3%), 25-34 (3%), 35-44 (26%), 45-54 (18%), 55-64 (22%), 65+ (27%)
- Duration: 18-24 (4 min), 25-34 (17 min), 35-44 (7 min), 45-54 (21 min), 55-64 (31 min), 65+ (26 min)
- Female (63%), Male (36%)

More online engagement stats...

- 11,648 users of the website and of that 11k+ users, 11,483 were visitors.
- Social media viral post of 1.9 m.
- Gained over 1400 followers on Instagram.

One of the most impactful and noteworthy experiences in worship this year was the formal robing of Rev. Caselin Lopez in our 58th Anniversary Celebration Sunday Service. We recognized God's faithfulness to us and his intentional work in the establishing of the Latino ministry which again led to the ordination of dear sister in Christ! We celebrate God and Pastor Caselin as a leader of Bronx Bethany.

Thank you to every person who made our worship experiences both possible and dynamic. The entire Pastoral Staff faithfully and consistently preached the Gospel. Our Praise and Worship team members dedicated countless hours to prayer, preparation, and execution, leading us each Sunday. The Chapel Choir, Chosen, and the Children's choir prioritized worship and committed themselves to exuberant praise despite the many limitations. The Production and Communication teams were stellar in identifying, recruiting, developing, and envisioning new ways forward to connect the community and provide an avenue for congregational onboarding. Special thanks to Odane Whilby, Arlene Nembhard, Nichelle Maynard-Elliott, Devon Bennett, David Mendes, Nicholas Burt-Miller, Christopher White, and Cemoy Clarke who have led Worship, Music, and Production teams. To Junior Bowen, Kyle James, Nadjé Leslie, Jusani Morris, Rhiannon Rerrie, Jude Arthur, Brian Pucci, Daniel Joseph, Genise Reid, Musicians Ricky Joseph, Jermaine Collins, Manny Rosillo, Aaron Brockett, and David Moxey, you have served the Lord and his church with consistency and excellence. Thank you to Glendalys Whilby, Ann-Marie Joseph, Brianna Bogle, Ashley Gil, LaToya Jones-Herbert, and Sharon Francis. Special thanks to the men who comprise both the safety and parking teams and the host team that ensures of check-in and registration each Sunday. Your commitments must never go unnoticed as you ensured week after week, that persons could engage the Lord without fewer impediments.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

It is my responsibility and intention to curate a congregational curriculum that is formative, connective, and directional. Each individual offering is designed to be a critical piece in the road towards God's vision for this faith community. It is extremely important for each member to not look at seasonal offerings as isolated and disconnected events but view the offerings as spiritual pavers that tile the road towards God's preferred future.

The continuous spiritual formation of our community remained a great priority and happened in various ways throughout the year. Our *Deeper Life Classes* (Fresh Start, Bridge, and Spirit-Filled Life) continued and were accessible to new believers, persons desiring to be baptized, become members, and grow in the knowledge and experience of the Holy Spirit. Through these classes a cadre of people were prepared for the spiritual markers their journey with Christ. We baptized twelve (12) people and received seventeen (17) new persons into membership. Additionally, ten (10) people took part in Spirit-filled Life classes. Thanks be to God! Many thanks to Sis. Shyrill Powell, Sis. Francine Mullings and the entire group of willing and proficient teachers who ensured people were guided in their faith journey.

In 2022, Congregational formation began with the Church-wide 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting. Out of that, birthed the beautiful 24-hour continuous prayer line. We say that prayer is the work. The Spirit has confirmed to many the prayer priority and I am overwhelmed with joy and gladness because of it. Many people have been blessed and encouraged by this availability. Thanks to Sis. Sharon Davis and other faithful men and women who have committed to leading throughout the days. Thanks also to Sis. Francine Mullings and Jaden Hylton who provided technological support to make the online gathering possible. Let's take a moment to celebrate this amazing work.

In February, we had Revival Services featuring Bishop Darryl Starnes (Presiding Bishop of A.M.E. Zion Church). He led us in a 4-part series of, "*Walking in Holiness, Walking in Love, Walking in Light, and Walking in Wisdom.*" He also led us in a time of reflection and appreciation of our Wesleyan holiness tradition.

During the Lenten season, Women and Men collaborated to deepen their understanding and engagement of the spiritual disciplines with presenter Rev. Andrew Bennett. Attendance averaged approximately 80 persons.

In the summer, Men and Women gathered together to participate in our *Summer Speaker Series*. We focused on the theme, "*Summer Love*" and explored together how we are called to, "*Love Self*" (Rev. Karen Althea), "*Love Neighbor*" (Rev. Dr. Levi Jones), and "*Love the City*" (Dr. Al Tizon). This of course culminated in a collaborative community walk where we explored our neighborhood to become more aware of the changing dynamics of the area.

Our Leadership Symposium was held On Saturday, October 29th with acclaimed theologian Rev. Dr. Frank Thomas as the guest lecturer. His Topic was, "*The Removal of the Mask: 30 Minutes of Unveiled Faces.*" He led us in exploring the intricate connection between inner authenticity in our private lives and outer legitimacy in ministry to live liberated and empowered. Many have attested to its depth and impact.

Additional Highlights:

- Men and women (English and Spanish speaking) gathered virtually each week in their respective sessions with their corresponding pastors to foster community, to find encouragement, and to mature in Christ.
- We co-designed and participated in the Ecumenical Service during Holy Week as an expression of our corporate collaborative responsibility and connectivity to the universal body of Christ.
- Facilitated intergenerational and multicultural gathering in July. The Women's Committee and Women Pastors held a gathering for English and Spanish speaking young adult women to build connectivity

through Word, and fun activities, creating space for vulnerability and healing. Over twenty-one (21) young adult women participated.

- Held successful Women's retreat in September. Over one hundred (100) women gathered at Mirror Lake for a retreat around the theme, *"Better Together."* An intergenerational gathering which created an opportunity for fellowship, healing, and spiritual growth.
- Held successful Men's Retreat (September 9th-11th) at Mirror Lake Retreat Center. Forty (40) men attended and explored various related issues. Men were encouraged and strengthened in their walk with God and each other, and one man testified to a true experience God's grace and eventually was both baptized and taken into membership.
- Adult Sunday School was ably led by Sis. Frances Williams virtually with an average attendance of twenty (20) people.
- Sis. Arlene's work with the Children's choir was deeply formative. Children were taught and encouraged using contemporary songs and classic hymnody to reinforce the faith we profess.
- The Chapel Choir Retreat was an amazing time in the Lord where choristers were deeply enriched and encouraged. After ministering regularly throughout the pandemic, the time away was necessary and refreshing. Special thanks to Devon Bennett for his leadership and resolve to ensure of its execution.
- Chosen ministered powerfully at the Black Nazarene Conference in Tampa Florida. Undoubtedly a great experience to share amongst the various congregations while affirming our unique call and highlighting the importance of our contributions. Special thanks to Nichelle Maynard-Elliott for leading this galvanizing charge.
- Fifteen (15) active quizzers from first through sixth grade participated in 2022. Our students continue to excel at the district level. Sis. Sharon Davis (Director), assisted by, Bro. Garnet Burey, Sis. Veronica Maxwell and Dr. Andrea Gray- Robinson must be recognized for their outstanding and consistent work.
- Pastoral Counseling was readily offered to individuals and couples in-person and virtually. We facilitated premarital counseling, crisis intervention, mental and emotional support, and attended to a myriad of socio-emotional challenges.

A special thanks to fourteen (14) women who gave of their time on Tuesdays to ensure that Women's Gathering was made possible in 2021: Sisters: Donna Marie Williams, Veronica Burt-Miller, Francine Palmer Mullings, Coleen Mendes, Maureen Griffiths, Loisen Harris-Jacobs, Stephnie Hoilett, Yvette Phillips, Janette St. Hill, Nadia Getfield, Shirley Smith, Treacher Ottey, Cheryl Baker, Cheryl Tugman. Special thanks to men who also gave of themselves to ensure of ministry to men, Brothers: Curtis Dale, Owen Dyer, Dave Sharpe, David Mendes, Stelton Syblis, Brian Charles, Stephan Martin, and Devon Bennett.

I am grateful for our Men, Women, and Latino Pastors (Rev. Andy Rubin, Rev. Lilly Porter-Bennett, Rev. Martha Fajardo and Rev. Haughton Brown) for cultivating leadership, intentionally journeying with persons, and sharing in the work of spiritual development and congregational connectivity. Even more so, being present for celebration, counsel, and support at critical times in the lives of people.

Special thanks to Rev. Lilly Porter-Bennett who spearheads our congregational formation and works closely with me. Her heart, mind, and contributions are invaluable and has helped to impact lives and change spiritual trajectories.

MISSIONS

In lieu of a Missions report, I want to offer the following update. We continued to participate in the global missionary agenda through our denominational commitments and have additionally partnered with persons and ministries in the Caribbean, South America and Africa. In 2022, we gave over 170k to engage missional efforts. Throughout this season, our community has ministered to shelters, assisted in visitation to hospitals, sick and shut-ins, and much more.

Here are some additional highlights...

- Worked with Rev. Yves Latouche (Springfield Gardens Church) and Sis. Roodlyne “Woods” Altidore to provide resources for Haitian disaster relief.
- Provided resources for the church planting work of Rev. Amalia Henao in Colombia.
- Provided resources for Pastor Racquel Cruz and her work in Nicaragua. (**will be ordained this coming District Assembly*)
- Responded to the Bronx Fire by providing resources to bereaved families from Gambia.
- Gave resources to New Life Fellowship (Rev. Lugize Paddy).
- Supported a pastoral family in South Africa.
- Gave to the missionary work of the Rev. Dr. Gabe Benjiman and family.
- Responded practically to needs locally through local benevolence (38k)
- Contributed to Vine Church.
- Served our neighbors through the Food Pantry and its associated connective services serving 66,149 Adults, Children and Seniors according to the FeedNYC monthly reporting statistics.
- Participated in Community exegesis walk.
- Engaged with the Bronx-wide People’s Platform to continue relationships with community-based organizations.

Many thanks to Sis. Loisen Jacobs and the team for their availability to the Lord. I continue to be encouraged by our church’s desire to be bearers of God’s presence.

2022 PRIORITIES

In 2022, I outlined seven major priorities for 2022 in my last Pastor’s report:

1. Prayer.
2. Student ministry development including onboarding of Student Ministries Pastor(s).
3. Gaining missional clarity and reorganizing leadership.
4. Continuing leadership development of laity.
5. Small group restructuring and relaunching.
6. Strategic community partnerships.
7. Fund & facilities development strategies. (Will address in 2023 Priorities section)

As was highlighted earlier, I believe we responded to the Lord’s leading and prioritized prayer. Beyond the pastoral direction, I appreciated and celebrate the Lord for the organic prayer movement amongst the congregation.

While we did not onboard a Student Ministries Pastor, we continued to press toward that end. We have however considered and began the implementation of a comprehensive approach to student ministry. It is important to establish a church-wide responsibility of student engagement as opposed to a separate student structure. As Shane Pruitt recently submitted, *“if a student ministry is run like a ‘church within a church’, then when the teen graduates out of that student ministry, it feels like they’re having to go join a different church. That’s why many leave. It’s ONE church, multi generations. Find ways to be on mission together.”* Each ministry department (Men, Women, Marriage & Family, etc.) were charged to be intentional in planning for student engagement and integration as an index of success. I believe major strides were made towards that end particularly in the emerging adult demographic.

Over the year, we finalized the areas of our unique missional priorities. They are in the areas of Food Sovereignty, Health & Wellness, Student Education, Housing, and Immigration. I believe these are key areas of focus for us as we learn to love, engage, and serve our neighbors. As we began to identify the shifts in ministry and the need to be missional, the church board restructuring was also our goal as the first step in a multi-step process to align BBCN leadership with the developing and evolving mission, strategy, and purpose of the church. Here are some of the major highlights of the church board restructuring:

- The Board was restructured to be fully governance.
- The Board is comprised of nine (9) board members who will be elected to serve 2-year terms.
- Board members are generally elected, are appointed stewards and trustees at first board meeting, and are assigned to committees.
- The new Board structure with working committees affords the Lead Pastor and Executive Director the framework to be used to continue reorganization of pastoral and administrative staff and identify gaps to be filled.
- The committees are now (Assets and Audit, Nomination and Governance, Human Resources and Human Capital) – *See Appendix for Board Charters.*
- During the 2022 church year, each committee (1) was formed, (2) created a committee charter, and (3) established committee objectives for the year.
- Audit & Assets Committee - Responsibilities include finances, investment, risk. *Treasurer serves as chairperson* 129.7 – MANUAL 2017–2021 (nazarene.org)
- Compensation and Human Capital Committee - Responsibilities include compensation and benefits, human resources. 129.8 – MANUAL 2017–2021 (nazarene.org)
- Nominating and Governance Committee - Responsibilities include the identification, recruitment, vetting and onboarding of potential board members, as well as overall organizational policies. *The pastor shall be chairperson of the committee.* 113.10 – MANUAL 2017–2021 (nazarene.org)

The leadership development of the laity continued to be a priority. Men, Women, Latino, and Marriage and Family pastors have established a leadership core who are being trained to execute ministry including the development of young men and women. In fact, it is important to the note people who are responding to the call of God on their lives to pursue formal ministry. Bro. Brian Charles and Bro. Stephon Martin towards pastoral ministry, and Sis. Roseann Deane to the ministry of deaconess. They have all been granted local ministers licenses by the church board upon my recommendation.

Small group restructuring and relaunching was critical for our next season. To attend to the comprehensive discipleship formation, love for neighbor as the expression of Christ's love should not be optional for a disciple of Christ. We engaged with Church in Action, a para-church organization that helps churches to initiate and transition small groups to become "*Communities on Mission.*" Our small groups will not only be the means for Christian learning, support, and fellowship, but also our method of pushing beyond episodic compassionate engagements (Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc.) to consistent interactions with our neighbors. The staff has completed an orientation and now select leaders are beginning their training and onboarding.

Strategic community partnerships are essential in this new phase of ministry. The Lord has already provided likely and unlikely candidates for collaboration that we must be postured to notice. Over this year, we have dialogued with potential strategic partners in the Bronx (Community Based Organizations, Educational institutions, State

and City agencies) and the greater New York area to investigate the possibility of partnerships that align with our mission, values, and heart. David Vassel has been assigned the Executive Director of both BBCN and BBCC to ensure there is attention to the full and dynamic scope of ministry and mission of the church.

FACILITIES HIGHLIGHTS

- Replaced roof of both main church building (971) as well as the church office building (964).
- Replaced boiler.
- Converted baseboard heating in basement and sanctuary to forced air church-wide.
- Completed basement refresh including wiring for state-of-the-art Audio & Visual.
- Facilitated major emergency repairs of leaking pipes.
- Actively decluttered the main church building.
- We purchased 4041 Paulding on March 13, 2020, for 875k. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were forced to close our doors on March 15, 2020. We currently now owe 140k on the property. This surely is a reason to stop and give God thanks!

2023 LOOK AHEAD

The theme for this year is “Forming to Serve.” It is not an organizational shift to become a service entity but a commitment to God’s intentional process for our personal renewal and our reshaping as a body. This reshaping is necessary so that we would prosper and be experienced as agents of God’s blessing and appeal in the world.

An attractional model of ministry expects people to come to us. This thought process believes that people will naturally want to be a part of our faith community if our worship, preaching, and programs are dynamic enough to woo the unsaved to Jesus. People will subsequently be saved, and the church will grow. However, a missional church thinks and engages ministry differently. It sees God’s strategy for redemption as a sending strategy; intentional in dispatching communities of faith to be agents of reconciliation, compassion, and justice. A missional church is not simply a church that supports global missionary efforts but a community that understands its “*sentness*.” The missional church sees itself as the missionary. The missionary must be in-tune with the Holy Spirit, love people, learn the culture, notice trends and changes, and adapt its methodologies while maintaining its essence.

Richard Branson and Juan Martinez in their book *Churches, Cultures and Leadership* remind that a “missional church first asks, ‘What is God already doing in our context, and how do we participate?’ A church then asks, what does God want us to do in this context?’” This is beyond an organized effort to ensure we are passing out tracks to our neighbors to check an “Evangelism” box. This requires the long and slow work of relationship forming, discipleship, and compassionate engagement. This means that we must find ways to engage our neighbors with regularity so that the beauty of Jesus can be experienced through us. This is not a new phenomenon but is central in our holiness holistic theology that prioritizes love for neighbor alongside personal piety.

In a real sense, this post-modern landscape makes us recognize two things in particular: 1. Most non-believers will not walk through the church doors on a Sunday morning. In fact, most church growth in the US is due to the Christian’s relocation or ministry dissatisfaction. 2. In the Bronx, New York, people will have the confidence to readily share their faith and their church when they are confident in their church’s commitment to tangibly display the love of God.

I have written a piece called, “*Compassion as Entry Point*” where I highlight the reality of the shift from the worship service being the primary point of entry for the contemporary context. Two things: 1. This does not mean

we stop preaching and abandon the traditional proclamation as we know it. In fact, I've written another piece called, *"Keep Preaching."* We are a worshipping community and that will not change. 2. This does not present a problem as some may suspect but provides an opportunity for true discipleship, congregational decentralization, and leadership ontogeny. In this age of religious pluralism, agnosticism, and religious disheartening, people are more likely to onboard and participate in the compassionate work of the church than attend worship services.

It must be said that compassion is not our proselytizing tool. We are not compassionate because we want more numbers on the religious scorecard. It is God who calls, Christ who saves, and the Spirit who sanctifies. It is our job to see our neighbor in the fullness of their humanity. It is our job to be ready to give an account for the faith that we profess (1 Peter 3:15). It is our job to trust that the same love of Christ that compels us, will compel others as we serve them (2 Corinthians 5:14).

Our Missional and compassionate emphases will be in five (5) areas:

1. Food Sovereignty
2. Health & Wellness
3. Student Education
4. Housing
5. Immigration

Over this year we will drill down further to explore how we approach our church-wide compassionate engagement.

In light of our commitments to continuous development we will focus on the following areas in 2023:

1. Prayer.
2. Youth Engagement.
3. Missional and compassionate organization.
4. Small group development and relaunch.
5. Fund and facility development strategies.

AREAS OF NEED

- **Prayer** - We have made great strides in this area however many more of us can participate.
- **Giving** – We are a generous community. In fact, many in our church who have committed to tithing have increased their contributions and given sacrificially. Thank you! In this new season of ministry however, we will need our entire community to remember our commitment to generosity, and to give to God not only our time and talent, but also our treasure.
- **Volunteerism** – Our student ministries teams (Children, Youth, and Young Adults) need support. The current Children's Church team have ministered consistently and well. To ensure a healthy staff structure and to guard against burnout, we need help in this area.
- **Production in Communications Staffing** - We have made great strides in the area of communications. However, we still require a more robust team. For Spanish language integration we will need more bilingual speakers.

- **Safety** – Our safety team and parking teams are critical to our ministry. They make things easy and seamless for those who come to worship. Words cannot express our gratitude for their sacrifice. As we must be aware of the dangers that lurk, expanding these teams are critical. My hope is that these men are able to rotate and themselves engage in the fullness of worship and experience their own spiritual nourishment.

RECOGNITION

The staff of Bronx Bethany have preached, taught, counseled, served, cleaned, administrated, prayed, admonished, and comforted. Throughout this year they have shouldered much, and I give thanks for their partnership and friendship. Special thanks to Rev. Carlene “Joy” Reynolds, Rev. Andy Rubin, Rev. Martha Fajardo, Rev. Lilly Porter-Bennett, Rev. Haughton Brown, David Vassel, Coleen Mendes, Pansy Thomas, Arlene Nembhard, Melanie Blackwood, Everith Palmer, Cliff Turner, Jocelyn Turner, David Blackwood, and Rick Fergerson.

I thank God for the church board that has led us faithfully. Their prayers, encouragement, commitment, leadership, and counsel have proved invaluable to me. They have served the Lord and His church well. May God bless you and provide for your households in abundance!

Thanks for your prayers and support as I completed my doctorate and received a special award of distinction for my dissertation, *“A Theology of Hope: A Prophetic Vision for the Bronx.”* I must make mention of my editors, Yanique Griffiths, Sis. Genise Reid, and Sis. Angela Vassel. God bless you!

I am deeply grateful for my wife Yanique who has played a vital role in ministry. She has served humbly and faithfully by encouraging, loving, and counseling others while ensuring that I stay the course. It is not easy raising two young children with demands of the church. However, Yanique continues to be the engine of our family and is committed to facilitating atmospheres of hard work, rest, vision, imagination, expectation, interdependence, and celebration. Thank you to my wonderful children Seth and Hannah, who too have served. They have participated in ministry and sacrificed as well. Thanks for refreshing me, praying for me, encouraging me, laughing at me, and reminding me that all will be well.

Bronx Bethany, I thank the Lord for the opportunity to serve you.

May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones. (1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 [NIV])

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Dr. Richard Griffiths, *Lead Pastor*