

MEET PTS



Alumnae/i Council member the Rev. Dr. Renee Mikell '10 grew up in Western Pennsylvania and, after studying information science, spent 16 years pursuing a career in the worlds of business and government—the worlds of Time-Warner, Turner Broadcasting, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, for example. Then she went to seminary.

Dedicated to lifelong learning and the church, in which she had for many years served as a lay leader, Renee one day sensed God's prompting of her to reach out to the homeless people in the park across from her office. She started a daily noon Bible study with them, and the experience led her to follow God's call on her heart to enroll in seminary and pursue full-time ministry. So she left her job and returned to school. And started serving as a pastor at the same time.

"In my ministry I've always sought to strengthen the local church through outreach, preaching, discipleship practices, spiritual growth, and fostering an inclusive awareness of God's kingdom at work among all people," Renee says. And over the years, both as a lay leader and a pastor, Renee has put those goals into practice—as a student chaplain at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Atlanta, a children's Sunday school teacher, a volunteer working with both teenaged youth and seniors, a planning participant in outreach programs, a transition team leader to form an intentionally multi-cultural congregation, and a communications coordinator for North Georgia's Atlanta Marietta District UMW (United Methodist Women)—work for which she received the Special Mission Recognition Award from the UMC's General Board of Global Ministries.

With an avid interest in international cultures, Renee offered lay leadership as a member of a teaching and revival ministry team sent by her church to Port Harcourt, Nigeria. She served overseas in other contexts as well—England and Egypt, for example, as well as Zimbabwe, where she spent six weeks with other participants in a cultural immersion project to learn about church growth, discipleship, and leadership dynamics.

Having begun as senior pastor at Albright UMC while attending seminary, Renee went on to serve other congregations in the Pittsburgh, Butler, and Greensburg, Pa., districts for nine years in ever more expanding leadership roles. And just last spring, Renee was named assistant to UMC Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi (who also serves on the Pittsburgh Seminary Board). In this role she handles administrative matters, sits on the Coordinating and Appointive Cabinets, represents the Bishop on boards and at events, and more.

As a pastor, preacher, teacher, and mentor Renee says that she "finds joy when God allows me to witness spiritual growth and transformation in the lives of others. In each of my life's experiences, I have found that it is most important to remain open to what God is saying and doing in the particular contexts in which I find myself. There is no way to anticipate what will transpire, but I always walk away from these experiences with a new realization of how the Spirit of God is able to move in any and every situation."

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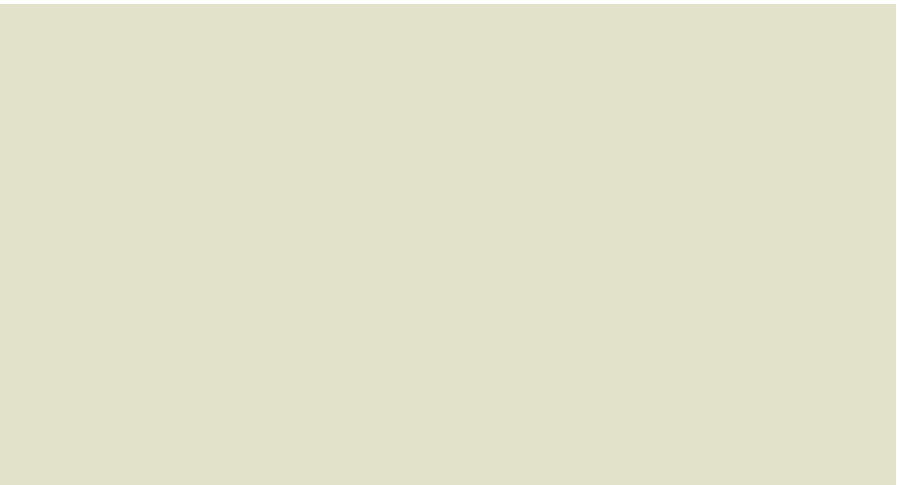
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