

ACLC Women in Ministry prayer breakfast in East Orange, New Jersey

Kathaleen Sato
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More than 50 women leaders from various churches and organizations gathered at St. Mark AME Church in East Orange, New Jersey, on Saturday, February 25, 2017, for a prayer breakfast held by Women in Ministry (WIM), a project of the American Clergy Leadership Conference (ACLC).

Some of the attendees at the prayer breakfast, which was held under the theme “Women of God United in Spirit,” were new guests from a neighboring Episcopal church, while others were old acquaintances made over the years. Rev. Bruce Grodner, who recently took over the position of ACLC national executive director, was also in attendance.

Dr. Delores Harrison of Riverside Church in New York City, the co-chair of the New Jersey chapter of ACLC, offered the opening prayer. After welcoming remarks by the host pastor, Rev. Dr. Kenneth Mitchem, Dr. Harrison returned to the podium to offer a few words about the contributions African Americans have made in shaping and building the foundations of America’s economic prosperity, as well as its scientific and academic advancement. As a result of their contributions, African Americans have been blessed with wealth and knowledge, she said. Dr. Harrison also said that it was Father Moon who brought the clergy together and taught them to put down the Torah, the Bible, and the Koran and listen to each other.

After breakfast, Rev. Denneze Nelson, the New Jersey chair of Women’s Federation for World Peace (WFWP), prefaced her prayer for unity by emphasizing the role of women in resolving conflict. She announced a leadership seminar for young women that she is planning and encouraged women clergy who were interested in being speakers to contact her.

Representing the male clergy, one pastor prayed for unity between men and women. He expressed gratitude for the sacred office that women are called to hold, as vessels for men and women of God to come forth. His fervent and sincere prayer brought tears to the eyes of some of the women clergy.

The keynote speaker, Minister Reiko Jenkins, the national ACLC WIM co-chair, was introduced by Archbishop Sulanch Lewis-Rose, ACLC national co-president and national ACLC WIM co-chair. Then Ms. Micheline King, a psalmist, sang two beautiful and soulful hymns.

In her keynote speech Minister Jenkins gave an overview of the major events of ACLC WIM in 2016, including weekly prayer conferences, four-city tours, and powwows with 39 Native American tribes. Key ACLC women clergy gave True Family Values PowerPoint presentations during the four-city seminars. She emphasized that all women clergy should learn how to give these presentations in their churches and communities. The presentations touch on the original plan of God and explain why God’s plan did not come to fruition, as well as the process to restore God-centered families through the Marriage Blessing.

Minister Jenkins invited Archbishop Lewis-Rose to talk about the theme and goals for 2017, as introduced by the Archbishop George A. Stallings, Jr., the national co-chair of ACLC. The theme for 2017, “Women of God Stay United in Spirit,” was based on Ephesians 4:3: “Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Last year’s theme was “Women of God United in Heart.”



After reading excerpts from Archbishop Stallings' message to ACLC Women in Ministry, Archbishop Lewis-Rose began to preach. She said we are called to evangelize—spread the good news. We should educate people globally and encourage them to receive the Marriage Blessing, she said. Then she read brief excerpts from *True Families: Gateway to Heaven*, a selection of speeches given by ACLC Founder Father Moon. She went on to say that we should strive to be brothers and sisters united in spirit.

After pausing for a moment, Archbishop Lewis-Rose professed that she has her own ministry, Little Rock Zion International Deliverance Ministries, in the New York City borough of Queens. However, she takes time to be part of the ACLC ministry in order that members of the clergy can be united. When she first got involved in ACLC, she asked God, "If this is the right way, show me a sign." He did, and she has been blessed ever since, she said. She then proclaimed: "I have counted the cost. I have made up my mind!"

A beautiful, warm spirit and a deep sense of unity and camaraderie pervaded the entire program. We often speak about women in leadership bringing about change and creating peace. After hearing Minister Jenkins and Archbishop Lewis-Rose speak, I now feel we can actually achieve it.

