

Over 70 join the ACLC Women in Ministry retreat with George Augustus Stallings

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“Let us rise up and remember that we must not hide our light. We must keep our light on top, so the world knows we are coming. We must be kind, considerate and compassionate and help each other. We are ambassadors for the one true God.”

With these words Rev. Sulanch Lewis-Rose, the national co-chair of the American Clergy Leadership Conference (ACLC) Women in Ministry, opened a retreat held in the Washington, D.C., area from June 10 to 12. More than 70 women and men came from as far as New York, New Jersey, Los Angeles, Chicago, Oklahoma, Arizona, Philadelphia, and Indiana, as well as Washington, D.C., and the neighboring states of Maryland and Virginia.

Rev. George Augustus Stallings Jr., national co-chair of ACLC, hosted the Women in Ministry Retreat in his own church, the Imani Temple, which relocated last year to a new facility in Suitland, Maryland. The building, a former convent, had been fashioned into a beautiful house of worship with a serene and warm atmosphere.

The retreat began on Friday, June 10, with welcoming remarks by Rev. Wanda Outlaw, the senior associate pastor of Imani Temple, followed by a sumptuous dinner feast prepared by Rev. Stallings’ mother and other members of the congregation. Rev. Marilyn Kotulek, ACLC WIM co-chair, and Rev. Betty Tatalajski, Arizona ACLC co-chair, also offered brief remarks.

Dr. Michael Jenkins, ACLC chair emeritus, gave a congratulatory message and introduced Father Peter Chavier, the author of the biographical novel *Tears of Jesus*. Rev. Stallings welcomed everyone on behalf of National ACLC and Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, national ACLC co-chair. He then talked about the importance and significance of women to God’s work of creation by citing the famous fresco by Michelangelo Buonarroti in the Vatican’s Sistine Chapel, depicting the creation of humans. “There is a woman enfolded in the right arm of God, showing that God already had a woman in mind for Adam,” Rev. Stallings said. “Throughout history women have always stood in a pre-eminent place in the life of every man ... bringing men to a place where they are able not only to worship God but also see God in each other. ... Women are the ones who are always faithful. ... They are the heart of the family.”

Rev. Sulanch Lewis-Rose gave the keynote address, entitled “Rise Up and Take Courage.” The theme came from Ezra 10:4, in which Ezra was told to rise up, take courage, and fix a problem that needed resolution. “In this age we need to fix a problem that exists now, before it is too late,” Rev. Lewis-Rose said. “Today we as women united in heart for the family and world are working hard to fix problems before it is too late,” she said.

“In True Father’s poem ‘Crown of Glory,’ it says to love those who betray us. Love those who hate us. ... It is time for women to take root in the word of God and rise up. Let the people know we are standing for God. Rise up and take courage. ... God wants us to move forward.”

The morning of Saturday, June 11, started with an icebreaker exercise led by Rev. Outlaw. Each person found another participant whom they did not know and introduced themselves; then representative pairs

stood and introduced their partners to the whole group. It was a meaningful way to learn about one another and come together as a group.

Two presentations of True Family Values were given: “God’s Original Ideal,” presented by Rev. Patra Kidwell, the pastor of God’s Ministry International Church in Landover Hills, Maryland, and “What Went Wrong?,” presented by Rev. Tanya Edwards, pastor of the Manhattan Family Church in New York City. Table discussions followed each presentation, in which each table chose one question from a list of five to discuss. The discussions became so lively and engaged that it was difficult for the emcee to call the participants’ attention back to the podium.

Then the focus shifted to the topic of “Women and Healing.” First Rev. Outlaw read from Acts 12:6, which speaks of Peter’s chains being broken. She then used links of heavy chain as a visual help to symbolize issues that we carry around every day. Rev. Outlaw gave a personal testimony of her overcoming cancer.



Teresa Ferrete, youth minister of Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) USA, also gave a talk and led everyone in an exercise in which each person found a partner to disclose the complaints they had, as well as the reasons blocking them from getting past those complaints. The purpose was to consider how God is guiding us to overcome those “chains.”

Mrs. Angelika Selle, the president of Women’s Federation for World Peace (WFWP) USA, gave a short presentation, which was very healing according to many of the participants.

Dr. Elizabeth Pierce, the pastor of International Revelation Ministry in Chicago, led a healing and deliverance service. The session ended with a traditional foot washing led by Minister Reiko Jenkins, Rev. Kotulek and Rev. Lewis-Rose, who washed all of the participants’ feet, following the example that Jesus set before the Last Supper of washing the feet of his disciples.

The beautiful songs offered by Evangelist Rita Pritchett from Chicago, Evangelist Carrie Sanders from Los Angeles and the members of Little Rock Zion Deliverance Ministry of New York enhanced the spirit of the event.

After dinner there was the cutting of a cake and a skit about prominent women in the Bible. The evening concluded with a prayer and reading of an excerpt from the final speech that True Father made to women, “The Inauguration of the Abel Women UN.”

Two Sunday services were held on the morning of June 12. Rev. Outlaw preached for the Women’s Service, followed by the powerful Imani Worship Service led by Rev. Stallings. This concluded the retreat, and many participants expressed that they were deeply moved by the power of love and all the learning from each presentation.

The success of the retreat can be measured not only by the number of participants but also by the depth and breadth of the transformation that takes place. The participants were challenged to take a good look at themselves behind the masks they wear to cover the pain, worry or other issues that weigh them down like heavy chains. They said they had received amazing grace through worship, prayer and the word of God.

Rev. Stallings and the Imani Church family poured out all their love and Christian hospitality to make everyone feel at home. The ACLC WIM National Staff (Minister Michael Jenkins, Rev. Kotulek, Rev. Lewis-Rose and Margaret Herbers) invested an immense amount of prayer and detailed preparation to make the sessions flow seamlessly. All the speakers and presentations enhanced and enriched the retreat experience.