

EXPLORING LESSONS LEARNED IN 2020 TO DRIVE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGE IN 2021

Panelist Bios

Paula Lomazzi, Sacramento, CA

Paula Lomazzi is on the board of directors of Safe Ground Sacramento, Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee (SHOC), a Self-Development of People funded project. Paula became involved in homelessness issues when she became homeless. While homeless she became involved in advocacy, a street newspaper, environmental protection of the American River Parkway, and led community trash pickup efforts with the Sacramento Homeless Organizing Committee. After she got permanent housing, she continued to stay involved with SHOC and eventually became the Executive Director. SHOC founded Safe Ground Sacramento in 2009 in response to a city closure of a large tent city. Safe Ground became its own non-profit and she continued her involvement as a board member and volunteer staff. Safe Ground's mission is to advocate for the decriminalization of homelessness and establishment of Safe Ground communities where those who are homeless may reside until they are able to obtain housing.

Currently she is also on the board of directors of Western Regional Advocacy Project, Sacramento Loaves & Fishes, Sacramento County Health Center Co-Applicant Board (Co-chair), and Mercy Pedalers (Secretary).

Rev. Dr. Alonzo T. Johnson, Louisville, KY

Rev. Dr. Alonzo T. Johnson is the Coordinator for the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People Program (SDOP), a program of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Rev. Johnson has 25 years of experience in urban, congregational based organizing, youth/education, creative arts, peacemaking, anti-racism, anti-poverty, anti-violence and social justice ministries. Rev. Johnson was pastor at an urban congregation and Presbytery in Philadelphia, PA for almost 12 years and has worked as a volunteer chaplain in prison ministry for 9 years.

Phyllis J. Edwards, Detroit, MI

Phyllis J. Edwards is the executive director for Bridging Communities, a non-profit in Southwest Detroit Michigan, whose primary focus is eldercare case management, development and rehabbing quality affordable housing and neighborhood stabilization. She is responsible for oversight of corporate resources, management of two senior independent living facilities, 24 townhomes, and several land contracts, in addition to other asset management and compliances. She is an advocate and supports administration and programmatic changes to current laws and practices that prohibits quality affordable housing for all. She endeavors to change the current housing practices by influencing legal, regulatory, and legislative policies, and by fostering strong relationships with policy makers by lifting community voices. She serves as a partner with Aging Matters a day of learning for caregivers and seniors. She is the chair for Aging Services Consortium for Detroit, treasurer for the Southeast Michigan Senior Regional Collaborative, member of the advisory board for the Detroit Area Agency on Aging 1A, Board Chair for Community Development Advocates of Detroit (CDAD) and an Advisory board member for First Merchants Bank. Nationally, she is a board member for Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People National Committee, and National Association of Nonprofit Organizations and Executives.

Rev. Dr. Jermaine McKinley, Pittsburgh, PA

Rev. Dr. Jermaine McKinley currently serves as the Pastor of Bethesda Community Church (PCUSA) in Pittsburgh, PA. She is an ordained Presbyterian Minister of Word and Sacrament, a former Moderator of Pittsburgh Presbytery, and a current Co-Chair for Pittsburgh's SDOP (Self-Development of People Committee). Rev. "Dr. J" has served God in many capacities: Ecumenical Itinerate Preacher and Revivalist; Street and Prison Evangelist; Christian Educator, Adjunct Instructor (Tech Systems, Business, and Ministry); Poet and Writer. Dr. "J" – is a consultant, researcher, and presenter with a special interest in Urban Theology, Christology, and Prayer; local missiology, faith-based initiatives, community ministry, and the role of the church in the public arena. She is a proud native of Pittsburgh where she attended public schools. Building on a solid and nurturing public school education, she has earned a Bachelor degree in Business, three (3) master level degrees -- Master of Sacred Theology (STM), Master of Sacred Divinity (MDiv), a Master of Business Administration (MBA) – and a Doctorate in Ministry.

The Rev. Dr. McKinley also works in the non-profit arena to empower congregations, community organizations, and individuals holistically and creatively across a wide ethnic-cultural and socio-economic spectrum, especially where challenges exist. *She firmly believes God requires her to fulfill a Divine Call utilizing all the gifts and talents endowed by the Master to glorify God; to encourage and build up the people of God and the community; to eliminate poverty on all of its fronts—the spiritual, the emotional, as well as the economic and academic.*