

THE STRUGGLE IS REAL!

A Webinar Series on how the church can Listen, Engage & form Relationships with Communities to Eradicate Poverty

The Next Episode Will Focus on Poverty and Disabilities

Panelist Bios

Lisa Franklin, CEO & Founder, Warriors on Wheels of Metropolitan Detroit, Dearborn, MI. Believing that this was her God given purpose, in 2008 Lisa founded Women on Wheels but promptly changed the name to Warriors on Wheels (WOW) of Metropolitan Detroit. Injured by a drunk driver in 1996, Lisa is on the front line, accepting personal calls, accepting leadership roles, sitting on boards, and making a difference on behalf of individuals with disabilities creating systemic change and respect for all. Since the COVID-19 outbreak, WOW has developed a program for people with disability (PWD) and seniors to receive their groceries through its shop/delivery service. Also, during COVID, with the help of a few community grant funders, WOW has been able to provide caregivers to individuals with spinal cord injuries and other mobility challenges. Advocacy highlights include curb cuts throughout the city of Detroit; Criminal justice reform for the rights of PWD; Disabled voters rights (accessible polling sites and training of poll workers); Deserving safe transportation; Accessible affordable housing through Michigan State Housing Development Authority and Detroit Office of Disability Affairs. The goal of Warriors on Wheels is to create an environment where disability will no longer affect one's Quality of Life. Warriors on Wheels has previously received a Self-Development of People grant.

Lisa has won numerous awards and commendations for her advocacy and service to the community of people with disability including the African American Leadership Award; iDetroit project of the Top 100 Change Makers in Detroit and the Detroit Housing Trust Fund Task Force pushing for affordable/accessible housing in Detroit and advocating funding. Governor Whitmer has appointed Lisa to serve on the State of Michigan Barrier Free Design as a Board Member. She has worked in collaboration with many groups and organizations to enhance the lives of people with disabilities in addition to working on behalf of her community with the city of Detroit and other municipalities.

Rev. Mark Baridon, Co-Pastor, Central Presbyterian Church, Louisville, KY. Mark has been co-pastor at Central Presbyterian Church in Louisville since 2001. He currently serves as Treasurer of Central Louisville Community Ministry, serving one of the poorest zip codes in the United States. Mark also serves on the Mid-Kentucky Presbytery Self Development of People Committee.

Laura McGannon, Teacher-Consultant, Blind and Visually Impaired, Ludington, MI. Laura has been teaching students with blindness, low vision, and multiple disabilities for 30 years. She has recently completed a master's degree in Orientation & Mobility for Blind Children. Part of her duties include helping her students transition to independent living. She has served with the Opportunities Unlimited for the Blind (OUB) Board of Directors for the past 10 years. the Opportunities Unlimited for the Blind has previously received a Self-Development of People grant. Laura lives and teaches in Northwest Michigan.

Brion Edwards, Member, Detroit Disability Power, Detroit, MI. Brion is an advocate that stands in the gap for persons with physical and mental disabilities. She revels in being the voice for the voiceless individuals throughout the world and acknowledges living with a disability is by far challenging enough while learning how to navigate in a world that has placed so much stigma around persons with disabilities. She enjoys being connected to the community as well as the many organizations such as Detroit Disability Power as a member, Michigan Rehabilitation Services as a former consumer, Rehabilitation Institute of Michigan Foundation, Community Economic Development Association of Michigan as a board member, Disabilities Rights Coalition and Building Community Value.

Rev. McKenna Lewellen, Maryland Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, MD. McKenna has served as temporary supply pastor with Maryland Presbyterian Church since June 2022. For the last five years, she served on the staff of The Center, a mission and community engagement initiative of the Presbytery of Baltimore. McKenna is a graduate of Rhodes College, a PCUSA-affiliated school in Memphis, TN, and of the Boston University School of Theology. She brings her knowledge of environmental, feminist, trauma, and disability theologies with her to ministry.