

WORLD AIDS DAY OBSERVANCE



Today we present our 4TH Annual *Bishop Leontine T.C. Kelly Award of Courage* in honor of the memory and legacy of the first African American Female Bishop

in the UMC. Bishop Kelly was a visionary, courageous, bold, and compassionate national leader in the area of HIV/AIDS. As an ordained United Methodist elder, she served local churches in Virginia and assumed the position of Associate Program Council Director of the Virginia Annual Conference. A natural leader, in 1983, she became Assistant General Secretary for evangelism for the United Methodist General Board of Discipleship, Nashville, Tennessee. This daughter and wife of ministers who followed her own calling, became the first black woman bishop in a major Christian denomination when the United Methodist Church elevated her to the position in 1984. Bishop Kelly oversaw Northern California and Nevada, and was only the second woman to hold the post of Bishop in the United Methodist Church.

Bishop Kelly served as President of the AIDS National Interfaith Network (ANIN), where she advocated for an end to stigma and to make HIV/AIDS a social justice imperative in the United States and throughout the world. She was widely recognized for her work and commitment to social justice issues. Throughout her life, Bishop Kelly opened dialogues on critical issues — violence, poverty, racism, sexuality, and illiteracy — building bridges between those with power and those without. She considered herself a social and political activist as well as spiritual leader, supported the inclusion of gays and lesbians in the church organization, ministered to AIDS patients and spoke out against nuclear weapons and armed conflict. "All my life, my political and social and spiritual selves have all moved together," Kelly told the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette in 2002. "I just could not separate them."

Bishop Leontine T.C. Kelly made her transition in 2012 at the age of 92.

Please visit <http://www.visionaryproject.org/kellyleontine/> for more info. on Bishop Kelly. We celebrate the presentation of this award as part of our World AIDS Sunday Observance.

2016 BISHOP LEONTINE T.C. KELLY AWARD OF COURAGE RECIPIENT



CHARLES McWELLS

Charles McWells is the Co-Principal Investigator / Project Director of the *Passport to Wellness* research project, and the Program Manager of the *At-Risk Men's Services* program at the Los Angeles Centers for Drug and Alcohol Abuse. In these positions, Charles oversees HIV prevention and health literacy services for Black men who have sex with men. In addition, he is an Instructor with the Community Faculty Program at Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science, where he conducts research on the impact of HIV/AIDS and related health disparities in communities of color.

Charles is the Lay Leader and the Chair of the HIV/AIDS Education and Empowerment Project of Grace United Methodist Church in South Los Angeles. He is also the Co-Host of the *Good News Radio Magazine*, a weekly program which focuses on healthcare and is broadcasted on Wednesdays from 1 pm–2 pm on acceleratedradio.net.

Charles is also the author of *The 9th Step*, a stage play that tells the story of a South L.A. neighborhood caught up in the crack cocaine epidemic of the 1990s. The play received an NAACP Theatre Award nomination in 2002, and was turned into a film in 2007. He is currently working on a second play which he expects to debut in 2017.

Along with Rev. Paul Hill, Senior Pastor of Grace United Methodist Church, Charles has served as Co-Dean of the annual Strength for the Journey Retreat (Los Angeles) for the past 6 years, a program that provides an opportunity for adults living with HIV/AIDS to experience a week-long time of nurture and encouragement in their journey.

Holman UMC and our H.O.P.E. Ministry has had the opportunity to partner with Charles over the years in making real the awareness and outreach regarding HIV/AIDS.