

## SEJ Biographical Sketch for The Reverend Edith L. Gleaves

The Reverend Edith (Edie) Gleaves has brought gifts in service for the past thirty-five years in seeing the big picture, building inclusive, connected and outward reaching community in new ways, listening to and encouraging others to listen for the Holy Spirit, working through conflict, nurturing and leading spiritual growth and mission. She is a leader, teacher, preacher, pastor, administrator, and a life time learner. She believes Christ gives us 'Strength for Today, and Bright Hope for Tomorrow' for The United Methodist Church.

Edie has served as the District Superintendent of the Harbor District of the North Carolina Annual Conference since 2016. A North Carolina native, she is a graduate of Wake Forest University (BA, 1982), and of Duke Divinity School (Masters of Divinity, 1985).

Reverend Gleaves was raised in Robeson County, N.C., a poor, yet richly diverse area made up of equal population of White, Black, Hispanic and Native American people. She comes from a loving, poor, working class family of rich Methodist DNA, with a long line of Methodist pastors reaching back to her paternal grandfather and great-grandfather. She grew up in St. George UMC, a small, African American church which was part of a three-point charge. It was there she gave her life to Christ at 11 years old and received her call into ministry at 16 years old.

Edie has been a trailblazing leader throughout her ministry, with a passion for making disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. She was ordained as the first clergywoman of color in the North Carolina Annual Conference as a deacon in 1984 and elder in 1988. The members of the North Carolina Conference Delegation have endorsed Reverend Gleaves as its episcopal nominee, a historic first for a clergywoman of color.

She has served in diverse pastoral appointments where her leadership saw worship attendance and membership growth: Pastor of Cokesbury UMC, a small, Black suburban church; Associate Pastor of over 1000-member North Raleigh UMC as the Conference's first cross-racial appointment; N.C Annual Conference staff as Director of Multicultural Relations, Social Ministries and Spiritual Formation; Lead Pastor of Resurrection UMC, doubled in size from 200 to 400 and received the district evangelism award; Deputy General Secretary of Mission Personnel for the General Board of Global Ministries, leading in commissioning over 400 new missionaries, starting the new Home Missionaries and Global Missionary categories, working across the US and in over 40 countries; Associate Pastor in first cross-racial appointment at Wrightsville UMC, near 2000 membership church.

As the primary "missional strategist" of the Harbor District, Edie oversees 100 churches in eleven counties of southeastern and coastal North Carolina, an area of large, medium and very

small churches in urban, suburban and rural areas. Equipping and resourcing churches for ministry has included helping to establish four new staffed Disaster Recovery Centers, and four new Satellite Housing Centers in the areas sustaining damage by Hurricanes Matthew, Florence and Dorian, while connecting local churches with other local church, Conference, UMCOR and other partnership and funding resources. In this current society of racial tension, she leads the Harbor District in an outreach partnership between the churches of The UMC and the churches of the African Episcopal Zion Church.

A leader in the Annual Conference and beyond, Reverend Gleaves currently serves as Cabinet Representative to the Strengthening the Black Church for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (SBC21); initiated the the Mission of Hope: Rotifunk Hospital (Sierra Leone) N.C. Mission Initiative; N.C. Board of Ordained Ministry; Harbor District dCOM; Jurisdictional Reserve in 1992 and Jurisdictional Delegate in 1996; 2020 General/Jurisdictional Conference delegate. Other involvement includes Board of Directors for Methodist Home for Children, Board of Managers, Duke Divinity School; Conference Committee of Higher Education and Campus Ministry, Conference Committee on Investigation; Preacher, Annual Conference Sierra Leone, N.C. Black Methodists for Church Renewal, Black Clergywomen of The United Methodist Church.

Edie and her sister-Barbara- have always been close and share a home with her three adorable little rescue dogs who help keep them joyful. She enjoys cooking and sharing meals with friends, the outdoors, walks with her dogs, horseback riding, pier and surf fishing.