



**Greetings from the Senior Pastor**  
**Rev. Dr. Ianther Marie Mills**  
**August 1, 2013**

Grace and Peace to you Asbury UMC family! I am so honored to have been appointed to serve as your Senior Pastor and as well serve with our new Associate Pastor, Rev. Adam Briddell. These initial days have been full of opportunities for us to hear and see the incredible ministries here at Asbury. Your outreach of love which extends to all ages and social strata has been a model of kingdom building for God.

Before I introduce myself and family, I want to thank my predecessor, Rev. Dr. Lou Shockley, for his faithful service. We will build upon the foundation that has been laid under his leadership. I also want to thank the Transition Team, made up of SPRC Chair, Tawana Jackson; Connectional Table Chair, Carol Travis; Lay Leader, Ruth Scarbrough; and Trustees Chair, James Nero. They have been informative, welcoming, and gracious during our transition.

It is by God's grace that I have been appointed to serve at such a time as this. It was God's prevenient grace that went before me as I was baptized in my grandparents' church, Union UMC in Lothian, MD; and nurtured and came to faith at A. P. Shaw UMC in Washington, DC. By God's grace I came to know Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior at the age of 17 and began striving for a Christ-like and Holy Spirit led life. By God's grace I said "Yes" to the call into ordained ministry on June 22, 1990, under the leadership of Rev. E. W. Stevenson, Sr. By God's grace I was ordained an elder in the United Methodist Church and have been privileged to serve in the Baltimore-Washington Conference at Mt. Carmel UMC, Catonsville UMC, Good Hope Union UMC, as Superintendent of the Washington East District, and as Dean of the Cabinet. Within the connectional structure I have most recently served on the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, of which I am currently a Vice-President. And now it is only by God's grace that I will serve with you, having this charge to keep – *"to search the unsearchable riches of Christ and share the fullness of God"*.

I am a native Washingtonian, who attended D.C. Public Schools and graduated from Ballou Senior High School as the class valedictorian. I attended Georgetown University on a scholarship and earned a B.S. in Mathematics. Subsequently, I earned a M.S. in Computer Science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and M.B.A. (summa cum laude) from the University of Oklahoma. I spent 15 years working as a Software Engineer and Project Manager in the defense industry before entering ordained ministry full-time. I received both my Masters of Divinity (summa cum laude) and Doctor of Ministry from Wesley Theological

Seminary. For the last twenty years I have lived in Montgomery County and Prince George's County. I am very happy to have the opportunity to now serve in the heart of the Nation's Capital.

I have been married to Hilton E. Mills, Jr. for twenty-one years. He is a member of Alfred Street Baptist Church in Alexandria, Va. He is devoted to a calling to prison and men's ministries and serves monthly leading a Bible study at the Jessup Detention Center. Hilton worked for the Department of Army many years as a Systems Engineer. He is now Founder and President of OnAir Applications, Inc.

My immediate family resides in the Washington Metropolitan area. My mother is a lifelong United Methodist who is a member of Brighter Day Ministries (formerly A. P. Shaw UMC). I am the oldest of three and have a younger sister and brother. They too attend Brighter Day Ministries.

As we begin our ministry together, I want you to know that I am grateful that the Asbury leadership team recently engaged in a visioning process and developed key goals and objectives. As a result of this work, there is a strong foundation to build on. During these initial months our priority will certainly be addressing the critical issues of stewardship and evangelism that Asbury has been facing in the last couple of years. We will have a Fall stewardship program and later a congregation-wide evangelism focused study and sermon series. In our first six months you can also expect us to meet with all of the church membership to hear what ministries have been important in your faith formation, and your hopes and dreams for the future. This will be accomplished through small group meetings hosted in member homes. If you would be willing to host a meeting please contact SPRC Chair, Tawana Jackson or call the church office. From these small group meetings we will gather the congregation's collective hopes and dreams, and begin to shape our vision going forward.

In the area of evangelism and outreach, we are excited about the appointment of our Associate Pastor, Rev. Adam Briddell through a Baltimore-Washington Conference Grant. As you know Rev. Briddell was previously at Asbury two years ago as an Urban Fellow as part of his coursework at Wesley Theological Seminary. Since that time, he has completed seminary, been commissioned as a Provisional Elder, served one year as Associate Pastor at Bethesda UMC, and now returns to us as one of our pastors. Rev. Briddell will be concentrating on re-engaging and reaching new young adults and young families. This will include exploring new discipleship ministries, outreach ministries, and alternative worship services. A team is being formed to work with Rev. Briddell in this essential ministry.

Many of you have already expressed a desire to grow, to reach our new surrounding community that looks different than Asbury, and to continue to be an agent of God's grace addressing social justice concerns, especially homelessness. Look around us! The fields are ripe for harvest. I envision an Asbury that looks like the kingdom of God. Let's go forward in God's grace!