

THE STRUGGLE IS REAL!

How the Church can Understand Ways to Listen, Engage & form Relationships with Communities to Eradicate Poverty.

Dialogue and Listening Forum with Church and Community Leaders

Panelist Bios

Marvin Walter Hegar III (Trey) felt the call to ministry early in his life in Texas. His father suggested that if he was going to preach about life, he should gain some life experience. To gain experience, Trey decided to join the Marines after High School. In the Marines, he served as an air control electronics operator. After 4 years in the Marine Corps, he attended Texas State University, earning a BA in English Literature with a minor in Psychology. He received the Master of Divinity degree at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary in 2007. After receiving his Master of Divinity degree, he completed a year-long residency in Clinical Pastoral Education. Following his work as a chaplain, Trey served at Brentham Presbyterian Church and at Purity Presbyterian Church in Chester, South Carolina. Trey writes that he thinks a call is “not just to a church but a whole community.” He has demonstrated this in his actions, where he has worked with his congregation to get “outside the walls of the church”.

Nkazi Sinandile is the founder of New Mexico Women’s Global Pathways (NMWGP) and served as its founding Program Director/Coordinator. The organization empowers vulnerable women, girls, children & families to attain self-sufficiency and quality of life. Conceived by Nkazi and initiated by African and Asian immigrants and refugees, NMWGP strives to bridge any gaps and form a village (community) of sorts for the new children and families that resettle in Albuquerque.

SDOP has previously awarded a grant to NMWGP for a project that focused on creating and sustaining a training and development center for refugees and other immigrants in Albuquerque, NM. The project involved the use of sewing, weaving, micro-enterprise, and English as a second language and skills training.

Pastor Reginald Ragland is the interim pastor at Southminster Presbyterian Church in Phoenix, Arizona. Pastor Ragland earned an associate degree at Central Arizona Community College, a bachelor’s degree at Norfolk State University, and Master of Divinity and Theology degrees from Fuller Theological Seminary. He also holds certificates in Leadership and Organizational Management from Peter Drucker Management Institute and Management from the Johnson and Johnson Management Institute/UCLA Anderson School. He has previously served on the National and Presbytery of the Pacific SDOP Committees.

Erica Johnson is the Founding Executive Director of Iowa Migrant Movement for Justice. Erica directed American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) Iowa's Immigrant Rights Program from 2017-2020. She has advocated for immigrant rights for more than a decade and has a diverse background in organizing meat-packing plant workers and statewide coalition partners, as well as providing direct assistance for immigrant victims of crime. From coordinating mega-marches for humane immigration reform in Washington DC to building local, congregation-based approaches to address human trafficking and domestic violence, her work is driven towards positive, systemic changes at the local, state, and federal levels. Erica holds a MPA from Drake University in Des Moines and a BA in Psychology and Spanish from North Park University in Chicago. She is a native Iowan who has lived and worked in Latin America and Chicago for several years.

Marissa Galván-Valle is the pastor at Beechmont Presbyterian Church, an intercultural church nestled in the Beechmont Neighborhood of South Louisville. Members come from different countries and continents. There are people from the United States, Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Haiti, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Liberia, the Philippines, and South Sudan. She has been the pastor there for about six years. Originally from San Juan, Puerto Rico, she has been living in Louisville for sixteen years, working full time with the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, where she is the Senior Editor for Spanish Language Resources.

Alejandro Ortiz is a community organizer with Iowa Migrant Movement for Justice. The organization advocates alongside members of their community and works to help empower the immigrant community to take the lead in creating long-lasting, positive changes in their cities. Iowa Migrant Movement for Justice is driven and led by immigrant and refugee voices and united with allies that provides legal services.