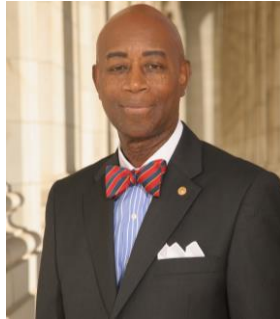




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‘From the Hood to the Hill’

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U.S. Senate Chaplain Barry C. Black — the first African-American to hold the position and a nationally-acclaimed spiritual leader — to speak at Providence’s Central Congregational Church.

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Author of the autobiography, *FROM THE HOOD TO THE HILL*, Rear Admiral (Ret.) Barry Black will be this year’s Darrell West lecturer. He’ll speak about the forgotten role of philosophy and faith in an age of starkly divided politics.

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PROVIDENCE, R.I. / January 15, 2019 — U.S. Senate Chaplain Barry C. Black, history's first African American to serve in the high-profile role and a nationally acclaimed author and faith leader, will be the featured speaker at **Central Congregational Church's** annual **Darrell West Lecture on Religion and Politics**. The 62nd Chaplain of the U.S. Senate, Black is also a much-decorated Rear Admiral (Ret.), and the first Seventh-Day Adventist to hold the office.

The event will take place on **Saturday, February 16th, 2019, at 6:00 p.m.** at Central Congregational Church in Providence (296 Angell Street / www.centralchurch.us) and will include a Q&A session and book signing at the end of the talk. **The lecture is free and open to the public**, and no advance registration is necessary.

For over two centuries, the United States Senate has honored the historic separation of Church and State, but **the legislature's spiritual life has burned quietly at the core of each of its deliberations and of every piece of legislation**. During the past two hundred and seven years, sessions of the Senate have opened with a prayer led by the legislature's **non-partisan and non-sectarian Chaplain**, who also serves as a full-time counselor and key Senate Officer.

Elected in 2003, Black grew up in urban Baltimore and is **the author of the widely admired autobiography, *From the Hood to the Hill: A Story of Overcoming*** (Thomas Nelson, 2006). Along with many others, **President Barack Obama** praised the author, noting: "Chaplain Barry Black...is a man of great erudition who has never forgotten his humble roots; a man of great faith who remains

open to all the wisdom of all people; a man of great seriousness who knows how to laugh.”

Known for his riveting speeches and unapologetic advocacy for bipartisanship, **Black’s invocations began to gain media attention during the U.S. government shutdown of 2013.** On October 3rd, the third day of the shutdown, he prayed, in part: **“Save us from the madness. We acknowledge our transgressions, our shortcomings, our smugness, our selfishness and our pride... Deliver us from the hypocrisy of attempting to sound reasonable while being unreasonable.”**

On October 4th, 2013, the day after U.S. Capitol police shot and killed an intruder who had attempted to break into federal grounds, Black pointed out that the officers were on furlough because of the ongoing stand-off. **Though Black, too, was unable to draw a salary during the shutdown, he noted, “I’m being remunerated from above. And that’s pretty special.”**

This past August, following **the death of Sen. John McCain**, Black dedicated the chamber's daily prayer to the late Senator, thanking God for the ‘gift’ of the Arizona Republican. **“We are grateful for his sacrificial willingness to take the road less traveled,”** prayed Black, **“to rise above partisanship, to provide a profile in courage and to give his life in service to you and country.”**

Following up on his autobiography, *From the Hood to the Hill*, Black’s more recent titles include *The Blessing of Adversity: Finding Your God-Given Purpose in Life’s Troubles* (2011), *Nothing to Fear: Principles and Prayers to*

Help You Thrive in a Threatening World (2017), and *Make Your Voice Heard in Heaven: How to Pray with Power* (2018).

In addition to many other honors, Chaplain Black was chosen from 127 nominees for the **1995 NAACP Renowned Service Award for his contributions to equal opportunity and civil rights**. In 2002, Black received the **Benjamin Elijah Mays Distinguished Leadership Award** from The Morehouse School of Religion, and in 2004, the Old Dominion University chapter of the NAACP conferred on him the Image Award: “Reaffirming the Dream – Realizing the Vision.”

Prior to Capitol Hill, Chaplain Black served in the U.S. Navy for over twenty-seven years, **ending his distinguished career as the Chief of Navy Chaplains**. As Rear Admiral, his personal decorations included the **Navy Distinguished Service Medal**, the Legion of Merit Medal, Defense Meritorious Service Medal (two medals), Meritorious Service Medals (two awards), Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medals (two awards).

Chaplain Black is an alumnus of Oakwood College, Andrews University, North Carolina Central University, Palmer Theological Seminary, Salve Regina University, and Alliant International University. In addition to earning Master of Arts degrees in Divinity, Counseling, and Management, he has received a **Doctorate degree in Ministry** and a **Doctor of Philosophy degree in Psychology**.

Black is married to the former Brenda Pearsall of St. Petersburg, Florida. They have three sons: Barry II, Brendan, and Bradford.

The Darrell West Lecture Series on Religion and Politics provides an open forum on the intersection between religion and politics. **U.S. Senate Chaplain Barry C. Black will be the fourteenth lecturer in the series.** Previous speakers have included internationally known author and activist **Ayaan Hirsi Ali**; *Washington Post* columnist and Georgetown University professor **E.J. Dionne**; **Mara Liasson**, national political correspondent at *NPR*; **Juan Williams**, political analyst for *Fox News*; and **Dr. Elaine Pagels**, renowned Princeton University scholar and author of *The Gnostic Gospels*.

Central Congregational Church, a member of the United Church of Christ, **was established in 1852 and is proud of its history as a beacon of thoughtful and inspiring worship in Providence, Rhode Island.** An open and affirming Global Mission Church, Central is led by The Rev. Rebecca Spencer, Senior Minister, and welcomes all regardless of age, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, economic circumstance, or physical condition. The church draws its approximately 600 members from throughout Rhode Island and Massachusetts. Central is located at 296 Angell Street (the corner of Angell and Diman Streets) on Providence's East Side. Handicapped parking is available. **For more information contact 401-331-1960 or go to www.centralchurch.us.**

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