# OUR SPEAKERS:

## [9:10 Speaker] **The Rev. Dr. Brian Henderson**

Rev. Brian is an ordained minister within the American Baptist Churches, USA, with over twenty-five years of pastoral leadership across three congregations. Since 2019, he has served on the Board and Staff of the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists (AWAB), assuming the role of full-time Executive Director in 2024. His ministerial vocation is complemented by his commitment to social justice, interfaith collaboration, and inclusive theological engagement.

Rev. Brian began his undergraduate education in urban ministry management at the Center for Urban Theological Studies in Philadelphia, subsequently transferring to Eastern College (now Eastern University), where he earned his Bachelor of Arts in Theology, graduating *cum laude*. He holds a Master of Divinity from Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary (now Palmer Theological Seminary), and a Doctor of Ministry with a concentration in Family Systems Theory, also from Palmer Theological Seminary.

Throughout his career, Rev. Brian has engaged in ministry and denominational leadership at local, regional, and national levels within the American Baptist tradition. He has served on numerous nonprofit boards, most recently as Chair of the Board of Directors for the Interfaith Alliance of Colorado. His ministerial service has also included chaplaincy in fire and emergency contexts and certification as a funeral celebrant, with extensive experience presiding over hundreds of memorial services.

Rev. Brian has contributed commentary and analysis to a range of scholarly and public-facing platforms, including national and local news outlets, journals, and magazines. He has also provided endorsements for a number of academic and trade publications.

Rev. Brian's commitment to inclusive ministry is deeply informed by his own lived experience. In 2011, after more than two decades of navigating the theological, cultural, and personal tensions surrounding sexual identity within a faith context, he came out as a gay man. This decision, undertaken through profound professional and spiritual reflection, marked a pivotal reorientation of both his personal and ministerial life. Though initially accompanied by fear of personal and vocational loss, he took the steps necessary to be true to himself, his family, colleagues, and friends, an act of integrity shaped by careful discernment. This transformative journey continues to inform a theological vision

grounded in radical inclusion and a steadfast commitment to cultivating faith communities that affirm the full dignity and humanity of all persons within the life of the church.

## [10:00 Speaker] **The Venerable Rosalyn Kantlatant Elm**

The daughter of Leslie Tewaslake Elm and Dr. Olive Watahine Elm (Huron DD 2021), Archdeacon Rosalyn Kantlatant Elm is a member of the Oneida First Nation of the Thames. She and her siblings go by their mother's clan, the Bear Clan. Rosalyn graduated from Huron University College in 2014 and was ordained as a Deacon and later posted as Curate at St Paul's Cathedral in London, Ontario.

Ven. Rosalyn is an Indigenous theologian and national church leader in the Anglican Church of Canada, where she serves as Director of Indigenous Ministries. She speaks into a Church still navigating the weight of its own history, including the ongoing realities of colonial structures and assumptions. And yet, she does not remain in critique alone. Her voice calls us forward.

Ven. Rosalyn's ministry is rooted in Indigenous ways of knowing—formed in relationship to land, to community, and to Spirit. She brings forward a vision shaped not by hierarchy or control, but by consensus, accountability, and sacred connection. In her work, authority is not something imposed; it is something that emerges—through listening, through trust, and through the careful work of being in right relationship with one another.

Ven. Rosalyn is widely respected as a speaker and teacher on reconciliation, decolonization, Indigenous governance, and the evolving life of the Church. But more than that, she is a guide—helping communities step into a deeper way of being together.

## [11:15 Speaker] **The Rev. Dr. Clifford Matthews Jr.**

Rev. Cliff is the founder, owner, and managing partner of KairosNow LLC, a professional consulting and coaching firm dedicated to holistic leadership and specialized identity support. Through KairosNow, Rev. Cliff bridges the gap between executive excellence and deep personal restoration, ensuring that leaders and communities alike operate from a foundation of authenticity and mental wellness. His practice is uniquely committed to providing expert coaching for queer-identified couples and individuals healing from religious trauma, alongside delivering critical training for faith-based and non-profit institutions on LGBTQ+ inclusion and affirmation.

Rev. Cliff serves as the Senior Pastor of St. Luke Missionary Baptist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina. Under his visionary leadership, St. Luke has made momentous strides in inclusion—opening the pulpit to women, ordaining women as deacons, launching a vital HIV/AIDS initiative, and establishing ministries that serve both local and international communities. His powerful message is rooted in Black faith, possibility, and LGBTQ+ liberation.

Rev. Cliff is a native of West Palm Beach, Florida, and a veteran of the United States Air Force. He holds a Master of Social Work from UNC Charlotte and has served as a therapist in both private practice and within the Mecklenburg County justice system, specializing in helping the incarcerated break self-destructive cycles and reconcile complex emotional challenges.

Rev. Cliff furthered his intersectional work by earning a Doctor of Ministry from Duke Divinity School. His groundbreaking dissertation, "Walking the Back of the Crocodile," explores biblical interpretation for Queer members of the Black Church, directly confronting the weaponization of scripture to offer tangible tools for liberation.

## [13:15 Speaker] **The Rev. Robert Bond**

Rev. Bob began his professional life as an Honours Physics graduate of the University of Waterloo, working at Bell Northern Research, Ottawa. Pursuit of yet greater passion led to Master of Divinity studies (McMaster University), six years as a congregational pastor (Selkirk Baptist Church), and then 33 years of clinical practice, continued training, professional and inter-professional leadership in Spiritual & Religious Care at Niagara Health (the Niagara Peninsula system of hospitals). From 2010 through 2022, he was also an adjunct clinical professor at McMaster University's DeGroote School of Medicine. He retired at age 66 in early 2024 and, in retirement, has published the book, *Spirituality Put in Its Place*.

Rev. Bob is an ordained minister within The Gathering of Baptists. He practiced as a Registered Psychotherapist (College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario) and a Specialist in Spiritual Care and Psychospiritual Therapy (Canadian Association for Spiritual Care / Association Canadienne de Soins Spirituels).

Rev. Bob and his wife Lynn are active members of MacNeill Baptist Church, Hamilton. They are parents to three and grandparents to four, all living within easy driving distance, which is most fortunate indeed!

## [14:05 Speaker] **Karen Turner**

Karen Turner is a retired Social Worker who now lives with her wife, Heather Steeves, in Bobcaygeon, ON. Both Karen and Heather have Baptist histories, but now hang out in the Anglican world, keeping their Baptist connections through the Gathering of Baptists, and the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America. For the last 15 years she has been committed to environmental issues, and to influencing the church to understand environmental justice and creation care as discipleship issues. She firmly believes the climate crisis must be a deep concern of the church. We need to change the worldview in which we have been steeped, and learn to see ourselves as humans as part of the earth community, and not separate from, and superior to, the rest of creation.

## [15:15 Speaker] **The Rev. LeeAnn McKenna**

Rev. LeeAnn is a Baptist minister, member of the Gathering since its inception, and a trainer in nonviolence, nonviolent direct action and conflict transformation in conflict zones around the world. Recently, the Canadian Voice of Women for Peace recognised the "work and storytelling of LeeAnn with the Muriel Duckworth Award for a Lifetime of Achievement in Peace Activism." Her about-to-be published account of her work is entitled, 'Midwifing Peace: Caught in the Crossfire'. She is mother to Emily and Gillian and grandmother to Owen and Morgan. She and her husband, Jeffrey Cottam, live on four hectares of the rolling hills of the Niagara Escarment.

## [16:05 Speaker] **The Rev. Brent Helwig**

Rev. Brent is the Lead Pastor of First Baptist Church in Guelph, Ontario, where he helps cultivate a community shaped by inclusion, curiosity, and the ongoing work of 'building a bigger table.' His ministry is rooted in the belief that faith is not about having all the right answers, but about participating in a story of love, justice, and transformation that is both deeply personal and profoundly communal.

Rev. Brent's preaching often explores the teachings of Jesus through fresh, deconstructive lenses…challenging inherited assumptions and reclaiming the gospel as good news not just for individuals, but for systems, communities, and the world we share. He is especially passionate about reimagining Scripture in ways that resist exclusion, centre dignity, and invite people into a more expansive understanding of God.

His journey has been shaped by seasons of questioning and reconstruction, which continue to inform his pastoral approach...creating space for doubt, honesty, and growth.

Outside of church life, Rev. Brent finds deep joy in his family. He and Jerren have raised four kids, who continue to be an important and grounding presence in his life. In this season, he also finds space to explore some of the things that renew him...music, time in the outdoors, and the spiritual practice of pilgrimage. Whether through a song, a trail, or a journey to a sacred place, he is drawn to experiences that create room for reflection, connection, and wonder.

At his core, Rev. Brent is driven by a simple hope: to help people encounter a faith that is freeing, compassionate, and deeply rooted in love.