InterFaith Leadership Council of Metropolitan Detroit PRESENTS:

Interfaith Day of Unity

Sunday, March 2, 2025
4:00-6:00 p.m.
Hartford Memorial Baptist Church,
18700 Couzens Fwy, Detroit, MI 48235

Watch this special invitation from Rev. JB Fields, Youth Pastor at Hartford Memorial Baptist Church to learn why you won't want to miss this event!

Hartford Memorial Baptist Church: A Legacy of Faith, Justice, and Interfaith Outreach

For over a century, Hartford Memorial Baptist Church has been a leader in faith, service, and community building in Detroit. Founded in 1917, the church has a history of community leadership and social activism, as well as a commitment to justice. Under the guidance of pastors like Rev. Charles A. Hill Sr. and Dr. Charles Gilchrist Adams, Hartford has not only grown into one of the largest congregations in the city but has also played an important role in the civil rights movement, labor rights, and community development. Today, this historic church continues to evolve, expanding its mission to embrace interfaith collaboration as a vital part of its

service.

From its earliest days, Hartford has been a champion for inclusion and justice, welcoming dialogue and diverse voices. Dr. Hill, an advocate for civil rights, invited leaders like W.E.B. DuBois and Paul Robeson to speak from Hartford's pulpit, cementing the church's reputation as a place where difficult conversations could take place and action could begin. His successor, Dr. Adams, built on this legacy, expanding Hartford's facilities and outreach programs, including The AGAPE House, which provides needed social services to the surrounding community. Today, Hartford continues to embrace the spirit of inclusion and seeks to ensure that faith remains a force for unity rather than division.

In keeping with its mission of fostering understanding, Hartford has actively engaged in interfaith initiatives, building relationships across religious and cultural lines. The church's Hartford Women United Ministry has collaborated with the Women of Temple Israel on shared worship services, historical site visits, and educational programs that deepen connections between Christian and Jewish communities. Hartford has also hosted interfaith workshops, concerts, and joint Good Friday services with Cranbrook Church, demonstrating a commitment to dialogue and shared spiritual experiences. These partnerships reflect Hartford's belief that faith should be a unifying force, bringing people together rather than keeping them apart.

This dedication to interfaith engagement has led Hartford to take an active role in the Interfaith Day of Unity (IDU), an annual event sponsored by the InterFaith Leadership Council of Metropolitan Detroit that invites everyone, regardless of faith tradition, to participate in the important work of building a community of justice, equality, respect, and peace. Faith leaders believe that gatherings like the IDU are essential for strengthening relationships, promoting understanding, and celebrating differences. By bringing together individuals from different backgrounds, the event provides a space to explore faith and cultural differences while reinforcing a shared commitment to humanity and resilience.

Reverend JB Fields, youth pastor at Hartford Memorial Baptist Church, emphasizes the impact of these gatherings: "This helps us to look past people as the other, as someone who is outside of our community, who is outside of our sphere of being, and recognize once we get a little bit closer, once we share a smile and receive a smile, that we have so much in common with one another." Church leadership seeks to continually highlight that true faith is not about uniformity, but about embracing differences with empathy and understanding. As is often stated at Hartford, "You may not belong to Hartford, but Hartford belongs to everyone."

Looking ahead, Hartford envisions an even greater role for interfaith efforts in advancing its broader mission of community transformation. The church sees interfaith dialogue as a powerful tool for building bridges, combating misunderstanding, and working together for the common good. By developing and deepening partnerships with other faith communities, Hartford hopes to inspire future generations to view diversity as a strength and to live out the values of love, compassion, and equity.

Rev. Charmaine Johnson highlights the church's longstanding commitment to

interfaith engagement: “Our church is in the heart of Detroit and has advocated for the rights of others. We see the need to share our resources and traditions. Each of us may be curious about the beliefs of other faiths, but with effective dialogue, we will become sensitive to the beliefs of others. The support we receive from others increases our mission.” As it moves forward, Hartford Memorial Baptist Church remains dedicated to being a place where faith and unity walk hand in hand, welcoming all who seek to build a more inclusive and united world.

Photo Credit: The Detroit News

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