

## Reverend Essentino A. Lewis, Jr.



Essentino A. Lewis, Jr. is the pastor of Clifton Park Baptist Church (CPBC) located in Silver Spring, Maryland, a vibrant and culturally diverse suburb of Washington, D.C. Rev. Lewis is a visionary and progressive thinker who is guided by his faith in the power and priority of the Word of God. His well respected civic and social leadership is undergirded by his conviction that the message of Christ is not simply one of personal spiritual formation, but includes a mandate of concern for the underserved and those on the margins.

At Clifton Park, Rev. Lewis serves as the spiritual shepherd to over 500 members drawn from more than 30 countries from around the world. He has a passionate and dedicated style of leadership that is focused on ministering to the whole person – spiritual, physical and emotional. Since becoming the fourth pastor of CPBC in February 2008, Rev. Lewis' inspirational and accessible biblical teaching and preaching has resulted in the congregation experiencing remarkable growth: CPBC has not only welcomed over 250 new members, but the lives of those members are being changed daily.

Determined to broaden and advance the church's ministry within its immediate community, Rev. Lewis oversaw the creation of Project Neighbor Care, a rapidly-growing community market that, each month, provides hundreds of local families with the basic necessities of food, household goods and seasonal clothing. In addition, he led the charge to open (August 2012) the Clifton Park Baptist Church Christian Academy, an educational enrichment center for low- to moderate-income elementary, middle and high school students. Under his guidance, CPBC has established a ministry partnership with a local Hispanic congregation, Iglesia Bautista Cristo Vive, to provide Spanish-speaking worship services and Bible studies to the burgeoning Latino community surrounding the church. Rev. Lewis' ministry extends beyond his immediate community to several countries throughout the world. He has led several delegations to the Republic of The Gambia (West Africa), where he conducted pastoral leadership training and development for many of the nation's independent churches. All of these ministry-led efforts motivated him to personally establish Samaritan's Well, a Maryland nonprofit helping to bring clean water to remote areas of the world.

Consistent with his core values and his understanding of the gospel, social justice and civil rights advocacy have always been an important part of Rev. Lewis' life and work. Very early in his legal career, he worked at the US Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, helping to enforce protections against, race, age and gender discrimination in elementary, secondary and postsecondary education. Later, Rev. Lewis' strong commitment to equity and equality in higher education, led him to examine desegregation efforts in Maryland as a part of a highly regarded team, which included executives from the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights under Law, NAACP, and NAACP Legal Defense Fund. The broad scope of Rev. Lewis' work also included advocacy in the areas of banking, housing and employment discrimination.

Rev. Lewis excelled as a corporate attorney, working for almost a decade as the assistant general counsel at Morgan State University. While practicing law at one of the nation's top historically black colleges and universities, he provided broad-ranging legal counsel, including advising on many of Morgan State University's capital construction projects, which exceeded a total value of \$250 million. He also helped secure funding for a \$750,000 childcare center at the Morgan Interfaith Center.

Rev. Lewis currently serves on the executive board of the District of Columbia Baptist Convention. He is also the Board Chair of the District of Columbia Baptist Convention Preservation Trust, a nonprofit corporation he helped form to protect sacred spaces of the DC Metropolitan area against commercial development.

A native of Buffalo, N.Y., Rev Lewis holds a Master of Arts in Biblical Exposition from Capital Bible Seminary in Lanham, MD. His other formal education includes a Juris Doctor from the University of Maryland School of Law and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the State University of New York at Buffalo. He is a member of the Bar of the State of Maryland.

Rev. Lewis has been married to Dr. Cassandra C. Lewis for 14 years. They live in Prince George's County, MD, with their three children, Sidney, Simone, and Essentino III.