

Religious Leader of the Year

Nominee's Name: Reverend, Dr. Maurice Watson

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Nominated by: Brother Terry L. Satterfield, Sr. (Epsilon Sigma, 71)
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Bio & Narrative:

Dr. Watson is Metropolitan's sixth pastor in 150 years. Elected on November 3, 2014, Dr. Watson is a dynamic preacher, pastor and leader who brings close to 40 years of pastoral experience to the great Metropolitan Baptist Church pulpit. He received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Education from Philander Smith College in Little Rock, Arkansas; earned a Master of Arts Degree in Theology from Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska; and earned a Doctor of Ministry Degree from Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Alabama. His first pastorate was at St. Mark Baptist Church in Little Rock, where he served for 7 years. In November 1988, Dr. Watson accepted the call to pastor the Salem Baptist Church in Omaha, Nebraska, where he served for 15 ½ years. In early 2004, sensing a new call of God on his life, Dr. Watson accepted the senior pastorate of Beulahland Bible Church in Macon, Georgia. His leadership took Beulahland to a second location in Warner Robins, Georgia in February 2005. At the renewed urging of the Holy Spirit, Dr. Watson accepted God's call to Metropolitan Baptist Church in 2014. Dr. Watson assumed the leadership of the 150 year old Metropolitan Baptist Church following the retirement of Dr. Henry Beecher Hicks five years ago. Since that time, he has gained increasing notoriety both locally and nationally for his **Uplifting** ministries. Among the most noted accounts of his **Community Uplift** is his stoic defense of and **uplifting** support of the Prince Georges County Community and his multicultural congregation on the occasion of the celebration of the National Recognition of the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King. Following the disparagement of the multicultural members of the Prince Georges County community, who's home of origin were labeled "shitholds" by high ranking national leaders, Dr. Watson was launched into international acclaim by addressing racism and ethnocentrism while Vice President Pence paid an unannounced visit to his congregation. In an interview which occurred on CNN Dr. Watson stated:

"I felt I needed to speak up, and I would have spoken up regardless to whether the vice president came or not...It wasn't about his being there. This was about trying to be a responsible pastor to speak up for God's people. I have to speak up for my people, and the vice president just happened to be in our congregation". (Dr. Watson on CNN, January 16, 2018).

Among Dr. Watson's additional ministries and accomplishments are the following:

1. Tune up Tuesdays
2. Health and Wellness
3. Marriage Retreats
4. Young Adult Prayer Call
5. Prayer conference calls
6. Prison Ministries
7. Counseling and Family Services
8. Christian-spiritual Formation
9. moved Metropolitan Baptist Church in positive strides toward fiscal solvency
10. completed Prince Georges County Citizen Police course
11. Featured in Capital Preaching

Dr. Watson and his lovely wife Janice are the proud parents of two beautiful daughters.