

NJ Interfaith Campus-Community Initiatives

DATE: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2021.

TIME: 9:30 AM – 12 NOON



THE DREW UNIVERSITY CENTER ON RELIGION, CULTURE AND CONFLICT WAS PLEASED TO HOST THE FALL 2021 NJ INTERFAITH CAMPUS-COMMUNITY INITIATIVES (VIRTUAL), ENGAGING STUDENTS FROM INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION ACROSS NEW JERSEY.

Our goal with our upcoming October gathering was to bring students together online to discuss priorities for change they would like to see on their New Jersey campuses and in their communities.

In workshops and breakout-sessions, students learned from experienced educators, leaders, and organizers about ways to put these priorities into action. The NJ Interfaith Campus-Community Initiatives connected students and academics with activists and practitioners from institutions around our state.

Co-sponsored by the Drew Religious Life Council and Office of the University Chaplain.

Plenary breakout session:

Education Equity in New Jersey

Elise Boddie, J.D., Professor of Law, Rutgers Law School

Rev. Dr. Sammy Arroyo, Pastor, First United Methodist Church, Hightstown, New Jersey

Rev. Dr. Tanya Linn Bennett, Drew University Chaplain and Associate Dean for Vocation and Formation

Concurrent Workshops:

Navigating Interfaith Inclusion on Campus

Professor Jonathan Golden
Drew University Director, CRCC

Marcus White, Rider University
Center for Diversity and Inclusion

Religion and Global Health

Professor Kenneth Ngwa
Drew University
Director, Religion and Global Health Forum

Gender and Sexual Equality in Religious and Social Justice Movements

Professor Kate Ott
Drew University
Professor of Christian Social Ethics

About our keynote speaker



Elise Boddie, Rutgers Law School

Professor of Law, Henry Rutgers Professor, Robert L. Carter Scholar

A nationally-recognized expert in civil rights and award-winning legal scholar, Professor Boddie was previously the director of litigation for the NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund. She is a frequent public speaker and has appeared on MSNBC, NBC Nightly News, Democracy Now and National Public Radio.

Read more about Professor Boddie [here](#).

[link: <https://law.rutgers.edu/directory/view/ecb95>

Meet our facilitators (in alphabetical order)



Rev. Dr. Sammy Arroyo

Pastor, First United Methodist Church of Hightstown, NJ.

Pastor Sammy is the Public Education and Outreach Coordinator for Salvation and Social Justice, a New Jersey non-profit organization that seeks to liberate Public Policy, theologically. Over the past few years, he has advocated for a Public School system that is equitable and fair to Black and Latinx students in NJ. He has also championed changes in unfair immigration policies in New Jersey.

Pastor Sammy received his PhD in February 2020, his dissertation focused on Church, Evangelism and Slavery in Latin America during the 16th and 17th centuries.



Rev. Dr. Tanya Linn Bennett

Drew University Chaplain

Associate Dean for Vocation and Formation
Associate Professor in the Practice of Public Theology and Vocation

Rev. Bennett is an associate professor in the practice of public theology and vocation, and associate dean for vocation and formation. An ordained elder in the United Methodist Church, Rev. Bennett is active in worship design and leadership nationally. Her research interests include emerging adults and religion, urban

community organizing and advocacy, liturgy for non-traditional worshipping communities, and feminist approaches to public theology.



Jonathan Golden, Ph.D.

Director of Drew University's Center on Religion, Culture and Conflict

Center on Religion, Culture and Conflict at Drew is an interdisciplinary center focused on global peacebuilding and interfaith leadership. <http://www.drew.edu/crcc/>

Professor Golden has been teaching at Drew since 2000. Honored with the Thomas Kean Scholar/Mentor Award, and specializes in Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding, Comparative Religion, Anthropology, Middle East, and Forced Migration.

Golden convenes Drew's program in Conflict Resolution and Leadership and is a leader in Drew Action Scholars, an innovative new program focused on immersive learning. He also runs the Drew Institute on Religion and Conflict Transformation, which brings together young, emerging leaders of different faiths from around the world for three-week seminars on leadership, peacebuilding, and conflict resolution.

Golden has a B.A. from Brandeis University and a Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Pennsylvania. He is author of two books and numerous scholarly articles, and is co-author of the forthcoming *Religion in the Classroom*. He is currently writing *Turning Point*, a book based on interviews with ex-combatants and victims of conflict that become peace activists.

Professor Golden holds several certificates in conflict resolution and works closely with interfaith and peace organizations in NJ and around the world, serves on the board of the Peace Islands Institute and sits on the Interfaith Advisory Council for the NJ Dept of Homeland Security and Preparedness. He was recently invited to join the Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education of the Council of Independent Colleges as a fellow.

Professor Golden lives in Florham Park, NJ with his wife and two children.



Kenneth Ngwa, Ph.D.

Professor of Hebrew Bible at Drew University.

Dr. Ngwa holds a Ph.D. from Princeton Theological Seminary and a Master of Divinity from the Faculty of Protestant Theology in Cameroon, his native country.

Professor Ngwa is founder and Director of Drew's [Religion and Global Health Forum](#). The Forum partners with scientists, researchers, religious leaders, writers, poets, educators, counselors, etc. in the fields of medical, social, political, and environmental sciences, to host panel discussions, presentations, and partnership building platforms that will improve individual and public health outcomes across the world. The Forum brings the expertise of different health-related disciplines to share knowledge, strategies, challenges, and processes associated with examining religion as a health asset and a catalyst for health.

Professor Ngwa's major research interests are in the areas of ancient Israelite wisdom literature and Africana biblical hermeneutics. He has authored *The Hermeneutics of the 'Happy' Ending in Job 42:7-17*. His second monograph, *Let My People Live: An Africana Reading of Exodus*, is anticipated in 2022.



Kate Ott, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Christian Social Ethics

Drew University Theological School

Professor Ott is a feminist ethicist addressing the formation of moral communities. She facilitates faith-based workshops on sexuality education, digital literacy, and professional ethics across North America for Christian, interfaith, and secular audiences.

She is author and editor of works on digital ethics, sexuality and pedagogy, and faith-based sexuality education. Her forthcoming book is *Sex, Tech, and Faith: Ethics in a Digital Age*. Her other books include: *Sex + Faith: Talking with Your Child from Birth to Adolescence*, *Christian Ethics for a Digital Society*, and two co-edited volumes in addition to multiple book chapters and articles. <http://www.kateott.org>



Marcus A. White

Rider University Center for Diversity and Inclusion

Marcus White is a graduate student at Rider University where he is in the final year of completing his master's degree in organizational leadership with a concentration in higher education. He manages and develops spirituality efforts with several faith-based student organizations and local spiritual leaders, in alignment with the InterFaith Youth Core (IFYC). Marcus also oversees the management of mentoring programs for first-year students of color who may identify as underrepresented, marginalized, and/or underresourced and leads in the design and collection of data for the Center's annual report.

A native of Brooklyn, New York, Marcus grew up in Southern New Jersey and received his Bachelor of Science degree from The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) in Business Administration, specializing in Management. During his pursuit to become an attorney, he quickly realized in his first year of law school that he held a passion to advise and support college students, which led him to shift career paths and pursue a career in higher education. Through his servant leadership, Marcus is a counselor of the Male

Leadership Academy (MLA) for the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) at Rider University. Marcus is an ordained minister of the Christian faith.

Special Thanks to



K. Vanessa Rodriguez, J.D.

Ph.D. student, Religion and Society Program, Drew Theological School

2021-2022 CRCC Graduate Student Assistant

Vanessa received a M.Div. from Wesley Theological Seminary (Washington, DC) and a J.D. from Washington College of Law at American University. She holds a B.S. (honors) in Business Administration (International Finance) and Computer Information Systems from American University.

Her research interests are in Liberation Theology, Mujerista & Feminist Theology, Critical Race Analysis, and Religion, Peace, and Reconciliation. Currently an on-call hospital Chaplain, Vanessa is passionate about serving the interfaith and intercultural community in the northern Virginia area.



Janet Okang

Ph.D. student, Drew University Theological School

Janet (Jane) Okang is the founding President of Amanfrom Academy in the Eastern Region of Ghana. She was a faculty member, pastoral staff, and Bursar of The Bible College of Ghana prior to arriving in the United States for graduate studies. Apart from her passion for equipping women for Christian ministry, her commitment to empowering and educating “underprivileged” children has taken her to several rural areas.

Jane is a graduate of Regent University in Ghana (BA), Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York (MA & STM), and now a doctoral student at Drew University, pursuing a Ph.D. in Bible and Cultures with a concentration in New Testament Studies.

Her research interests include comparative study of mealtime fellowship in the New Testament, Greco-Roman antiquity, and West African mealtime traditions. Other areas include the Bible and Culture and the portrait of children in New Testament discourses.

She loves playing with children and enjoying the beauty of nature in outdoor activities.



Labenyimoh Patrick

Master of Divinity Student, Drew Theological school.

Labenyimoh holds a Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Science from Africa University Zimbabwe. He is a native of Nigeria and an executive for the Black Ministerial Caucus at Drew Theological School. Labenymimoh works as a student intern at Covenant United Methodist Church in Plainfield, New Jersey. He is also the Graduate student Intern for Drew University’s Center for Civic Engagement and a Graduate Assistant for the Office of Graduate Admissions at Drew University.



Yajenlemla Yajenlemla

Ph.D. Student, Drew University Theological School

Yajenlemla Yajenlemla is pursuing her PhD in Bible and Cultures at Drew University. Her research interests are New Testament Studies, Purity Culture, and Postcolonial (Asian) Biblical Criticism. She is an intern at Drew's Religion and Global Health Forum, a Research Assistant, and a Graduate Student Assistant (Dean's Office).

Yajen has a Master of Arts in Theological Studies (2020) from Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, GA. She also has a Bachelor of Divinity (2017) from United Theological College, India, and a Bachelor of Arts with Honors (2012) from St. Mary's College, India. Prior to arriving in the United States, she served as a Youth Director in her home church, Chang Baptist Church Dimapur (Nagaland, India). Her passion lies in empowering and equipping her community and church, especially women.