



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
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**MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES CREATION OF CLERGY ADVISORY COUNCIL TO
FURTHER ENGAGE COMMUNITIES OF FAITH IN FORMATION OF CITY POLICY**

NEW YORK—Today, Mayor de Blasio announced the creation of the Mayor’s Clergy Advisory Council – comprised of local faith leaders from across the five boroughs – to open a direct line of communication between religious leaders and City Hall. The Mayor made the announcement during Sunday’s mass at First Corinthian Baptist Church in Manhattan as part of the Administration’s ongoing commitment to engage communities of faith in the formation of City policy around issues like public safety, housing and education, as well as connect with residents on general City services.

The Council, which is still in formation, will be made up of a diverse set of local clergy tasked with liaising between members of the Administration and local faith communities. Council members will bring the priorities and concerns of New York’s congregants to City Hall, as well as share information on beneficial City programs such as free tax prep services and ID NYC with local faith communities. This effort will formalize and expand City Hall’s relationship with religious communities across the city – making it easier for New Yorkers to share feedback, improving service delivery and strengthening clergy networks across the five boroughs. Members of the Council will also be deputized to hold local meetings on matters pertaining to City policy – such as public safety, housing and education – and help identify and organize additional members of the clergy.

“Local clergy and the religious communities they serve are essential to the fabric of our city. Houses of worship form a foundation of reflection and strength for thousands of New Yorkers. The Clergy Advisory Council will put us in direct communication with these religious leaders so that we can ensure an open and productive dialogue with faith communities from every corner of our city,” said **Mayor de Blasio**.

“The Clergy Advisory Council will serve as a dedicated mechanism for dialogue and feedback for New Yorkers. Clerical leaders are trusted sources of information for the people they serve, and the Council will ensure they can more effectively connect their communities with resources and services. And it will act as an important conduit for communication between government and our faith communities – making it even easier for the City to listen to New Yorkers’ thoughts and concerns,” said **Community Affairs Commissioner Marco Carrion**.

“I am energized by the opportunity to continue working with the Mayor to amplify the voices of New York City’s congregants as chair of the Clergy Advisory Council,” said **Reverend Michael Walrond Jr., Chair of the Clergy Advisory Council and Pastor at First Corinthian Baptist Church**. “Faith communities all across the City are powerful networks, charged by the unyielding strength and devotion of our congregants. In partnership with the Mayor, the competent leaders at City Hall and this truly awe-inspiring group of clerical leaders of all denominations, the advisory council will work to drive positive change for all New Yorkers.”

The Council will work directly with the Mayor’s Community Affairs Unit and senior Administration officials to widen the reach of City services within communities across the city, and provide feedback on ways to strengthen programs that serve their congregations. The City will continue to work closely with groups like the Commission of Religious Ecumenical Leaders (COREL) to strengthen the Administration’s faith community network and further facilitate outreach to the city’s congregants. The Clergy Advisory Council will meet with

the Mayor and his staff throughout the year, and hold monthly meetings with CAU, which will ensure members are supported in their community outreach.

“We are pleased that Mayor Bill de Blasio has fulfilled his campaign promise to establish a Clergy Advisory Council. There is a plethora of issues that affect disenfranchised communities, such as education, economic development, public safety and affordable housing, just to name a few. I’m looking forward to working with the Mayor and this Administration to make New York, a city with great wealth, a place where everyday people have an opportunity to obtain the American Dream, and not only to survive but thrive,” said **Reverend Cheryl Anthony, Judah International Christian Fellowship.**

“We are pleased to see the formation of the Clergy Advisory Council because we believe that partnership between faith and government is essential to the health of our city,” said **Bishop James I. Clark, Christ Temple Church and Board co-Chair of Faith in New York.** “Faith in New York is a federation of 70 member congregations representing 80,000 families organizing for a more equitable New York, and we look forward to working with Mayor Bill de Blasio and the Clergy Advisory Council to ensure that this vision becomes a reality.”

“It is a privilege and honor to be named to the Clergy Advisory Council by Mayor de Blasio. The Mayor has been a colleague and friend for decades, and I am inspired to have the opportunity to advance a bold agenda, especially on behalf of the poor and marginalized,” said **Reverend Fred Davie, Executive Vice President of Union Theological Seminary.**

“I am honored to be chosen as a member of Mayor de Blasio’s Clergy Advisory Council. I look forward to partnering with the many great leaders of this city as we band together and work towards a greater NYC,” said **Reverend Adam Durso, Executive Pastor at Christ Tabernacle Church.**

“In many cities, the clergy is the backbone of the community that offers services to those in need of support. A relationship between clergy and the Mayor’s Office can garner additional support to our neighborhoods by way of housing developments, school support and other community-related efforts,” said **Reverend Floyd Flake, Greater Allen AME Cathedral.**

“I’d like to thank the Mayor for this opportunity to serve on the Clergy Advisory Council. I look forward to advancing the deep values of our faith traditions in the public square,” said **Reverend Serene Jones, President of Union Theological Seminary**

“This partnership between our city’s diverse communities of faith and the Mayor is a key building block as we collectively strive to better the quality of life for all New Yorkers,” said **Rabbi Bob Kaplan, Jewish Community Relations Council-NY.**

“I am delighted and honored to serve on the Mayor’s Clergy Advisory Council. I believe that faith-based communities are essential to help realize Mayor de Blasio’s vision of a more fair and just city for all,” said **Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum, Congregation Beit Simchat Torah.**

“I am happy to be among those who are serving our beloved city to address the critical issues of the day,” said **Imam Tahir Kukiqi, Albanian Cultural Center.**

“As we live in a diversified community, it is very important to understand each other’s faith and culture. And as a Muslim leader, I strongly believe we are under one God. I congratulate the Mayor on taking the initiative to form this kind of advisory group,” said **Dr. Mohammad W Rahman, Jamaica Muslim Center.**

“In a city as diverse as New York it is important that Mayor de Blasio has called together a Clergy Advisory Council to speak to critical issues in our city. As an evangelical called to love the city I am hopeful that our voices will contribute to the peace and prosperity of New York,” said **Reverend Dr. Gabriel Salguero, President of the National Latino Evangelical Coalition and Pastor at Lamb’s Church.**

“It is a privilege to serve with the Mayor and my colleagues on this important committee,” said **Reverend Donna Schaper, Judson Memorial Church.**

“It is a great honor for me to serve on the Mayor’s Clergy Advisory Council as the representative of the 130 United Methodist congregations in the five boroughs,” said **Reverend William Shiliady, United Methodist City Society.**

“Respecting and engaging New York’s rich diversity of religious institutions and beliefs is critical to building a better New York in which the basics of nutritious food, affordable housing, decent jobs and safe neighborhoods are accessible to all. Mayor de Blasio’s establishment of a Clergy Advisory Council recognizes this and provides a positive vehicle to further involve religious communities in dealing with the challenges facing New York,” said **Monseigneur Kevin Sullivan.**

“We applaud Mayor Bill de Blasio for his bold initiative to engage spiritual leaders of the community in a collaborative effort to better the lives of every New Yorker and uplift our great city,” said **Pastor Rohann Wellington, Greater New York Conference of Seventh-Day Adventist Church.** “We look forward to a dynamic working relationship on this mayoral clergy roundtable.”

Initial members of the Council are listed below:

Lawrence Aker, III, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Baptist Church, Brooklyn
Cheryl Anthony, Senior Pastor, Judah International Christian Fellowship, Brooklyn
Onleilove Alston, Executive Director, Faith in NY
Boruch Bender, Rabbi for Achiezer, Queens
Amy Butler, Senior Minister, Riverside Church, Manhattan
Evelyn Castellano, NYS United Chaplains Association, Bronx
James Clark, Senior Pastor, Christ Temple of the Apostolic Faith, Manhattan
Sam Cruz, Senior Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church, Brooklyn
Fred Davie, Vice President, Union Theological Seminary, Manhattan
Adam Durso, Executive Pastor, Christ Tabernacle Church
Que English, Senior Pastor at Bronx Christian Fellowship, Bronx
Floyd Flake, Senior Pastor, Allen AME Cathedral, Queens
James Forbes, former pastor at Riverside, currently at Drum Major Institute, citywide
Kirsten John Foy, Northeastern Director, National Action Network, citywide
Victor Hall, Senior Pastor, Calvary Baptist, Queens
Kieran Harrington, Vicar for Communications, Diocese of Brooklyn
Bhante Heenbunne Kondanna Thero, Abbot and Chief Incumbent, Staten Island Buddhist Vihara, Staten Island
Peter Heltzel, Chair Micah roundtable, professor at NY Theological Seminary, Manhattan
Suzan Johnson Cook, former Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom
Serene Jones, President, Union Theological Seminary
Jennifer Jones Austin, Executive Director, Federation Protestant Welfare Agencies, citywide
Emma Jordan-Simpson, Executive Pastor, The Concord Baptist Church, Brooklyn
Robert Kaplan, Jewish Community Relations Council, citywide
Alex Karloutsos, Assistant to the Archbishop, Greek Orthodox church, citywide
Sharon Kleinbaum, Rabbi, Congregation Beit Simchat, Manhattan
Souleiman Konate, Imam, Masjid Aqsa Mosque, Manhattan
Tahir Kukiqi, Imam, Albanian Cultural Center
Jacqui Lewis, Senior Minister, Middle Collegiate Church, Manhattan
Clinton Miller, Senior Pastor, Brown Memorial Baptist, Brooklyn
Uma Mysorekar, President, Hindu Temple Society of N. America
James Ose-kofi, Pastor, Bethesda Healing Center, Brooklyn
James Richmond, Director of Community Outreach, The World Church of Seventh Day Adventist Church
Raymond Rivera, President, Latino Pastoral Action Center, Bronx

Angelo Rosario, Chair, Bronx Clergy Taskforce, Bronx
Gabriel Salguero, Senior Pastor, The Lamb Church, Manhattan
Donna Schaper, Senior Minister, Judson Memorial Church, Manhattan
Gary Simpson, Senior Pastor, Concord Baptist Church, Brooklyn
Gurdev Singh Kang, President, the Sikh Cultural Society, Queens
Gerald Skolnik, Rabbi Forrest Hill Jewish Center, Queens
Kevin Sullivan, Executive Director, Catholic Charities
Nora-Ann Thompson, Pastor, Unity Fellowship Church Movement, Manhattan
Terry Troia, Executive Director, Project Hospitality
Mohammad Wahedur Rahman, President, Jamaica Muslim Center, Queens
Rohan Wellington, Communication Director, Greater New York Conference for the Seventh Day Adventist Church
Jesse Williams, Senior Pastor, Convent Baptist, Manhattan
Johnny Youngblood, Senior Pastor, Mt. Psigh Baptist, Brooklyn
David Zwiebel, Rabbi, Agudath Israel, Brooklyn

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