



Biographical Sketch of **REVEREND ERNEST D. LYLES, SR.**

Family

The Reverend Ernest D. Lyles, Sr. was born in Washington, DC the son of Thelma Allen and grandson of the late John and Norine Allen and the late Mabel Lyles. He is married to the former Alyce Saperau, co-founder of the United Methodist Church in Senegal, West Africa. They are the proud parents of a blended family of seven children and thirteen grandchildren.

Community Service

During the 1970s, Reverend Lyles worked diligently in the schools he attended, his community, and church. He served as Student Representative on the Anacostia Community School Board and the Johnson Junior High Local School Board where he served as its Chair for three (3) years. At Chamberlain Vocational High, he was a member of the Student Council and Newspaper Staff. At the University of the District of Columbia he was a representative for the National Student Business League, a member of the DC Chamber of Commerce and Co-Editor of the yearbook staff. In the community, Reverend Lyles served as a member and later Chairman of the Stanton Dwelling Resident Council. He also organized and served as Director of the Stanton Dwelling Youth Center, which was established to assist young people in developing productive lives.

Education

Reverend Lyles attended the District of Columbia Public Schools, graduating from Spingarn High in 1973. He holds an Associate of Arts degree in Business Management from the University of the District of Columbia, a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Southeastern University, a Master of Divinity degree from Howard University, and a Master of Arts Degree in Counseling from West Virginia University.

Call to Ministry

It was in 1980 that Reverend Lyles accepted his call from God to full-time ministry and became Assistant Minister of A. P. Shaw United Methodist Church in Washington, DC under the pastorate of the late Reverend E. W. Stevenson, Sr. In 1984, he was ordained deacon in the Baltimore/Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church, and appointed pastor of both Asbury and Mt. Zion churches in Jefferson County, West Virginia. In 1987, he was ordained an elder in the same conference.

For two decades, Reverend Lyles was the pastor of Asbury United Methodist Church in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. In this role, he dedicated himself to winning souls for Christ, promoting racial equity, and improving the quality of life for disenfranchised people. During his bold and effective leadership at Asbury, the membership nearly tripled, the average attendance quadrupled, and over 30 vital and vibrant ministries were created or expanded. In 1986, the congregation purchased a five acre lot outside of Shepherdstown and built a new edifice on that site in 1989.

Shepherd University

In 1989, Reverend Lyles was hired as the Minority Student Advisor at Shepherd College (now Shepherd University). In 1992, he established the Office of Multicultural Student Services and served as its first director. Reverend Lyles held this position until 2001 when he felt led to broaden his efforts to alleviate worldwide poverty, especially in West Africa. During his tenure at Shepherd, the ethnic minority student enrollment more than doubled from 3% to 8%; the Multicultural Leadership Scholarship was created awarding over \$1 million to deserving

students; the Multicultural Leadership Team was created; the Martin Luther King, Jr. Convocation was established, cultural diversity workshops were offered and student organizations such as the United Brothers, NAACP Student Chapter, AHANA Student Organization, Asian Student Fellowship and the International Student Union were founded. For Reverend Lyles, both the church and the college have been places where he has worked to advocate racial unity and equity for all people. According to John McVey, an editor with the Martinsburg Journal Newspaper, *“The Rev. Ernest D. Lyles, Sr., pastor of the Asbury United Methodist Church in Shepherdstown, is the type of person I think of when I think of a true community leader. He is proactive, progressive, and positive. His projects and programs are inclusive. He leaves no one behind regardless of what kind of hyphenated American you might be or what ‘ism’ or ‘ist’ you might adhere to...”* Mr. Mc Vey’s comments clearly reflect the sentiments of those who have known and worked with Reverend Lyles in the tri-state area.

Local & Global Ministry

Reverend Lyles is co-founder and past president of FAIR (Friends Advancing Intercultural Relations); co-founder and president of the Tri-County Minister’s Association; a Life Member of the NAACP; former chair of the Political Action Committee of the Jefferson County Branch of the NAACP; an organizing member and past president of FOCUS (Free Our Citizens of Unhealthy Substances) an anti-drug program; founder and executive director of Project Excel, a community based after-school program that offered academic support services, artistic activities and cultural enrichment opportunities to elementary school students and their families for 19 years. Reverend Lyles is also founder and president of El Shaddai International (ESI), a non-profit global community development corporation, organized to alleviate poverty through education and economic empowerment programs, projects, and initiatives. On May 19, 2009, ESI dedicated the Greta D. Shepherd Community School that it is built in the Anyaa village in Ghana, West Africa.

A Southeast Washington Vision for Ministry

When Reverend Lyles announced on February 1st, 2004, that he was leaving the “comfort and convenience of the pulpit at Asbury Church to devote his energy toward alleviating world-wide poverty,” he was unaware that a meeting with Bishop Felton E. May would lead to the most daunting challenge of his life. Reverend Lyles was asked by the Bishop to return to his roots and bring hope and vitality to a congregation located in one of Washington’s most impoverished neighborhoods that had lost nearly 1,000 parishioners, over a fifteen-year period. Reverend Lyles graciously accepted the change and assumed his new role as pastor of A. P. Shaw United Methodist Church on July 1, 2004. His personal connection, genuine passion, and undisputed qualifications further solidified that his appointment was appropriate and timely. Reverend Lyles’ life has been filled with experiences preparing him for such a time as this.

Upon his return to Washington, DC the A. P. Shaw average worship attendance increased from 80 to 214; the adult Bible study class attendance increased from 27 to 144; a vision for ministry plan was developed by the congregation and property improvements exceeding \$1 Million were completed.

Brighter Day United Methodist Church also known as Brighter Day Ministries was established in 2010 when A. P. Shaw and Congress Heights United Methodist churches merged. Also, a cooperative parish was formed with Bradbury Heights and Ryland Epworth United Methodist churches. This cooperative Until 2012. Brighter Day Ministries continue to have vital, vibrant and visible ministries that include choirs, dance troupes, fellowship groups, small study and support groups, and numerous academic year Bible study classes.

The Brighter Day congregation operates a food pantry that feeds approximately 18,000 people a year; sponsors a Back to School festival that provides 1,000 book bags with school supplies to needy students; distributes Thanksgiving baskets, sponsors a march madness basketball tournament that draws 400 people from the community, and supported the construction of the Greta Shepherd School in Ghana.

In 2012, Reverend Lyles initiated the Brighter Day Enrichment Academy which is now 501c(3) non-profit corporation that provides expanded learning opportunities for young people in our community during out of school time.

The Next Chapter

After 36 years of faithful and committed service as an assistant pastor and senior pastor, Reverend Lyles announced to his congregation that effective June 30th, 2017, he will retire from the Baltimore/Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church.

On July 1st, 2017, Reverend Lyles will continue creating a positive future for children, youth, and families locally and globally as the Pastor of New Life Ministries-DC.

On November 19th, 1996, an editorial in the Martinsburg Journal newspaper named Reverend Ernest D. Lyles its "Unsung Hero," stating that he works day in and day out as a mentor, pastor and friend helping people in need.

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!" Isaiah 6:8