



*Sr. Pastor,
Scott United
Methodist Church
Pasadena, CA*

ABOUT REV. DARRELL J. WESLEY, PHD.

The Rev. Dr. Darrell J. Wesley is a seasoned pastor, retired U.S. Navy chaplain, scholar, educator, and advocate for social justice whose career spans more than four decades of ministry, military service, higher education, and community leadership.

The grandson of a Baptist preacher, Dr. Wesley was nurtured in ministry under the leadership of Minister Carl Taylor. His call to ministry emerged early: he preached his first sermon at the age of eleven and accepted his first pastoral appointment at twenty-one.

Dr. Wesley began his higher education at Southwestern Christian College, a historically Black college in Terrell, Texas, where he earned an Associate degree in English. He continued his education at Abilene Christian University, earning a Bachelor's degree in English and a Master's degree in Biblical and Related Studies. Abilene Christian University later honored him with its Distinguished Alumni Citation in recognition of his personal and professional achievements.

From 1995 to 2019, Dr. Wesley served on active duty as a chaplain in the United States Navy, completing twenty-four years of distinguished military service and retiring at the rank of Captain (O-6), the Navy equivalent of Colonel.

His assignments took him throughout the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coastguard and included senior leadership positions supporting Sailors, Marines, members of Coastguard and their families. Dr. Wesley is an ordained Elder in Full Connection in the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. From 2016 to 2021, he served as Dean of the Leadership Training School for the CME Church's Ninth Episcopal District. His ministry has crossed denominational boundaries throughout his career, reflecting a longstanding commitment to the broader Christian church and its witness in the world.

A lifelong scholar, Dr. Wesley holds advanced degrees in philosophy, theology, religion, and national security. He earned a Master of Arts in Philosophy from the University of Tennessee, a Master of National Security and Strategic Studies from the U.S. Naval War College, a Master of Sacred Theology from Yale Divinity School, a Doctor of Ministry from United Theological Seminary, and a Ph.D. in Religion from Claremont Graduate University.

Dr. Wesley came to Scott United Methodist Church following a successful three-year tenure as Senior Pastor of Redlands First United Methodist Church, where he made history as the congregation's first African American senior pastor.

During his tenure, the congregation welcomed approximately sixty new members while strengthening its commitment to inclusive ministry, community engagement, and social justice.

In addition to his pastoral ministry, Dr. Wesley is a scholar, professor, and author. He currently serves as an adjunct professor at Turner Theological Seminary and as teaching faculty at Claremont Lincoln University. His scholarship engages ethics, philosophical theology, African American religion, social justice, and the intersection of religion and culture.

His publications include *Toward a Postmodern Ethic of Radical Freedom: Cornel West and Michel Foucault in Discursive Dialogue*; the book chapter “Let the Redeemed of the Lord Say So: Viewing Rap Music as a Form of African American Spirituality”; and the article “Say It Loud: African American Preaching as a Counter-Hegemonic Movement.” He is also a member of the Society for the Study of Black Religion and the American Academy of Religion.

A passionate advocate for social justice, Dr. Wesley serves as a member of the African American Community Empowerment Council and most recently succeeded Bishop Noel Jones as Chair of its Criminal Justice Reform Committee. Throughout his ministry, he has sought to bring together faith, scholarship, public service, and advocacy in pursuit of stronger churches and more just communities.

Dr. Wesley enjoys traveling and is a proud member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.