



**PLEASE NOTE REVISED DATE AND TIME!!!**

807 Walker Avenue – Memphis, TN 38126

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Elaine Y. Sanford, Public Information Officer**  
Office of the President – Mrs. Velma Gray

**(901) 292-3943**  
**(901) 435-1676**

**National UCC Minister of Higher Education to Visit LOC campus**

**MEMPHIS, TN (March 3, 2011)** – President Johnnie B. Watson and the LeMoyne-Owen College family will host a reception **from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m., on Tuesday, March 8, 2011** in the Wilhelmien Thompson Lounge to welcome The Reverend Barbara J. Essex, National United Church of Christ (UCC) Minister for Higher and Theological Education at National United Church of Christ Headquarters in Cleveland, Ohio. Rev. Essex is visiting six colleges, including LeMoyne-Owen College, that were founded by the American Missionary Association, which absorbed the United Church of Christ. The other institutions are: *Fisk University, Talldega College, Dillard College, Tougaloo College, and Huston-Tillotson University*, which all maintain the proud tradition of the AMA in education by actively relating to the Council for Higher Education of the United Church of Christ. The Presidents of these institutions meet annually with the Council of Higher Education to continue the unfinished work of ensuring that a society of true equality continues. Historically, the intention of these schools was to provide recently freed slaves and their children with an education that would allow them to participate as equals in American society. Drawing on the resources of the abolitionists in the north, the AMA helped freed slaves begin the process of finding their own destinies. The AMA was a visionary organization dedicated to both education and equality.

The College is delighted to host a reception for Rev. Essex, who is a noted speaker, author, and professor, who has served for ten years as the Minister and Director of Pastoral Services at Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, CA. She was professor of philosophy and religion at Contra Costa Community

College in San Pablo, CA. She has also served as adjunct faculty for the Hartford Seminary's Women Leadership Institute in Connecticut since the late 1990s.

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Her other professional work includes serving as Program Director and Co-Convener for the National Religious Leadership Program, co-sponsored by Pacific School of Religion and Hartford Seminary. She has provided consultant assistance in the areas of leadership, education, spirituality, and program development and evaluation for individuals, diverse congregations, denominational agencies, seminaries and other institutions across the nation. She pastored and served on the staffs of several churches in the Chicagoland area.

Rev. Essex is a Pilgrim Press best-selling author of such works as: *Bread of Life: Lenten Reflections for Individuals and Groups*; *Bad Girls of the Bible: Exploring Biblical Women of Questionable Virtue*; and *Women in the Bible: Insights Bible Study for Growing Faith*.

She received a Pilgrim Press Mayflower Award for Spirituality for *Bad Boys of the Bible: Exploring Men of Questionable Virtue*. Her recent titles include *Krazy Kinfolk: Exploring Dysfunctional Families in the Bible*; *Misbehavin' Monarchs: Exploring Biblical Monarchs*; *Bible for Vital Congregations* and *More Bad Girls of the Bible*. Her latest work is *Bold and Brazen: Exploring the Hebrew Prophets* and connects scripture with social activism and justice work. Her books are making a difference in how we study the Bible and in how we view ourselves as children of God.

Before entering the ministry, Rev. Essex taught English and Reading to high school students in the Chicago Public School System. She has earned degrees from Northwestern University and Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, both in Evanston, IL.

Rev. Essex is an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ, member of Mt. Zion Congregational United Church of Christ in Cleveland and associate member of Sycamore Congregational United Church of Christ in El Cerrito, CA.

For more information, please see the contacts above.

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