

The Rev. Dr. Gregory James Edwards

Rev. Dr. Gregory James Edwards is Founder and Senior Pastor of the Resurrected Life Community Church, United Church of Christ, and President and CEO of the Resurrected Community Development Corporation. Under his leadership the church and community development corporation have experienced exponential growth, evidenced by membership, financial self-sufficiency, and employment creation.

His contextual approach to urban ministry--based upon an understanding of the intersectionality of race, spiritual growth, educational empowerment, economic self-sufficiency, community development and public policy--led to the creation of the Resurrected Life Children's Academy, the James Lawson Freedom School, and the Campaign for Change community organizing initiative.

A frequent lecturer at colleges and universities, he has presented to the faith-based, corporate and nonprofit sectors, has been featured in TIME Magazine. As a professional musician, he is a musicologist specializing in Black Sacred Music and Jazz.

Dr. Edwards is the Director of POWER-Lehigh Valley, the areas largest interfaith community organizing initiative, Board Chair for Promise Neighborhoods of the Lehigh Valley, board member for PA Stands Up, co-founder of Lehigh Valley Stands Up, and board member for the Community First Fund, the financially largest Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) in Central Pennsylvania and the Lehigh Valley focused on improving the economic well-being of historically marginalized, and under represented communities in Eastern Pennsylvania. He previously co-chaired the Water Fountain Project, a regional task force comprised of African-American and Latinx political and community leaders committed to addressing educational and economic inequities in the greater Lehigh Valley.

During his 2016 trip to Liberia, West Africa, Dr. Edwards was enstooled as Chief by the National Council of Elders of the World-Wide Missions of Liberia, and the people of Grand Bassa.

In 2016, Dr. Edwards was inducted into the inaugural class of the Martin Luther King, Jr. College of Pastoral Leadership at Morehouse College, for his exemplary leadership in advancing Martin Luther King's Beloved Community through peace, truth, justice and nonviolent direct action. In 2017, during their Sesquicentennial celebration, Morehouse further honored Dr. Edwards, inducting him into the college's prestigious Martin Luther King Jr. Board of Preachers.

As the first person of Black African Heritage to run for federal office in the Lehigh Valley of Pennsylvania, his historic candidacy for Congress in 2018, was covered by MSNBC, the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Atlantic, Guardian Magazine, NOW THIS, and a hosts of other media, and featured in the PBS documentary "Battleground." In 2019 he was appointed Chair of the Lehigh County Democratic Black Caucus, and in 2020 he was appointed to the Pennsylvania Democratic State Committee.

A graduate of Geneva College (Bachelor of Science in Urban Ministry Leadership), the University of Delaware's Graduate School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs (Certification in Community Economic Development), Drew University (Master of Divinity), and the New Brunswick Theological Seminary (Doctor of Ministry in Prisons, Public Policy and Transformative Justice), Dr. Edwards has been awarded the NAACP Man of Vision Award, the Peace Pilgrim of the Year Award, the Community Development Award by the Allentown Human Relations Commission, the William Gray III Leadership Award, and the prize for Multi-Cultural Church Leadership from Drew University, where he simultaneously served as President of the Theological Student Association and the Black Ministerial Caucus.