

The Reverend Shonda Nicole Gladden 2024 Ministry Bio

The Rev. Dr. Shonda Nicole Gladden has been serving in ministry since 1994. She is the ministry daughter of Rev. Dr. Lee P. Washington and Rev. Dr. Debyii Sababu Thomas. A proud Itinerant Elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, she hails from the Washington Annual Conference of the Second Episcopal District where she was ordained by Bishop Adam Jefferson Richardson, assisted by both Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie and the late Bishop McKinley Young. Long before being ordained, Rev. Gladden has preached, presented workshops and facilitated panel discussions throughout the Connection as a servant of God.

Rev. Gladden currently serves as the Senior Associate Pastor of Broadway United Methodist Church in Indianapolis, IN. Prior to joining the staff at Broadway, she held pastoral appointments in Indianapolis, IN, Marion, IN, where her ministry flourished and she became deeply involved in the fabric of the community, as well as in Lafayette, IN. In addition to her pastoral appointments, Pastor Gladden has served on pastoral staff of six AME churches throughout the Midwest and the greater Washington Metropolitan area. Rev. Gladden has previously served as the Indiana Annual Conference Director of Christian Education, the Coordinator of the Indiana Annual Conference Women in Ministry, the Connectional Treasurer of the Richard Allen Young Adult Council (RAYAC) and as Worship Leader of the Fourth Episcopal District Women in Ministry (WIM). With thirty years of combined lay and clergy experience, Rev. Gladden is still young enough to be relevant, but seasoned enough to appreciate the wisdom, history and legacy of the shoulders upon which she now stands.

Anointed and called both for the academy and the church, education is of prime importance to Rev. Gladden. She participated in the 2022 commencement recognizing her matriculation through the American Studies PhD program at Indiana IUPUI, and she holds a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy from Morgan State University, and both a Master of Divinity and Master of Theological Studies from Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, DC. Her research sits at the intersections of philosophy, art, gender, and cultural studies; she examines plantations, memory and representations of identity within the framing of movements- social, spatial, and spiritual- as cultural productions that inform Blackness, and Black aesthetics, within the colonial project of the Americas. She currently works as the Multicultural Center & Social Justice Education Specialist at Indiana University-Indianapolis.

She has led and participated in short term humanitarian projects throughout the continental United States, Ghana, Canada, England, France, Germany, Switzerland, Czech Republic, South Africa, Kenya and South Korea and has received numerous awards and recognitions, including a Reflective Leadership Grant from Leadership Education at Duke Divinity (2018), a Do Good X Fellowship from The Forum for Theological Exploration (2017) and The Wabash Pastoral Leadership Award from Lilly Endowment, Inc. (2014). Vocationally, she is the CEO of Good to the SOUL, a social enterprise that energizes individuals and institutions to flourish and do good, especially good that promotes the “spirit of universal liberation”(SOUL).

As a classically trained vocalist, she has a passion for creating, performing and experiencing musical art. She has had the privilege of singing at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and the Kennedy Center, to name a few. She has sung under the baton of the late Dr. Nathan Carter, Moses Hogan, and Robert Shaw, as well as alongside living legends such as Wynton Marsalis, Bobby McFerrin, and Yolanda Adams. Her 2016 single entitled, "Becoming" can be streamed on all major music streaming platforms.

As a proud member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, she is committed to service to all humankind through community engagement as part of the Central Region Team READY and the Chi Chi Omega Chapter in Indianapolis, IN. Some of her sisterly joys include serving as part of her chapter's Chaplain Council, Standards and Protocol Committees, as well as serving as the Copy Editor for the Central Region.

More important to her than any of the aforementioned accolades, Rev. Gladden is the proud mother of one son, who is her most precious gift and responsibility. Her favorite hymn is “Oh For a Faith” and the scripture she lives by is Philippians 3:12-14: “Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brothers and Sisters, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.