

## BRYAN TRAVIS HOOPER

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Currently, I am living in Hartford, CT, with my wife, Baylah, our dog, Buster and our cat, Robie. We are both active in our West End community. I am serving as the Chair of the Board of Directors of Hands On Hartford, a faith-based non-profit that meets the needs of poor and marginalized people in Greater Hartford.

Since July 1, 2005, I served as the pastor of the United Methodist Church of Hartford. Being new to the Hartford area, I connected quickly with the area's clergy through various associations and interfaith organizations. A dynamic and diverse congregation of over 200 people, I began a discernment process to help the congregation envision a prosperous future. That process resulted in a new vision statement, a set of shared values and clear definition of mission. Hartford is a complex city, with immense challenges in the areas of economic opportunity, public safety, education, and housing. UMC of Hartford provides a food program to the neighborhood's hungry and offers meaningful opportunities for worship and spiritual growth. Increasingly, the congregation represents the ethnic, cultural and economic diversity of its surroundings.

As the current programs have expanded, new programs have emerged. Together, we improved our nursery and began offering professional nursery care to our congregation on Sunday mornings. We established an active young adult group and continue to reach out to new populations in our community. We have brokered unique relationships in our neighborhood with the Noah Webster Microsociety Magnet School and the West End Civic Association. Our attendance has increased each year, as has our budget. I have also served extensively on the Board of Directors for Hands on Hartford, formerly Center City Churches. In my capacity there, I served on several committees that strategized the transition from Center City Churches to Hands on Hartford, including the search committee for the current CEO, the initial board-restructuring task force and the branding task force. I currently serve as Chair for the Board.

Previously, I served as the pastor of the Washington Square United Methodist Church from July 2002 to July 2005. When I began this appointment, the Washington Square Church was in a state of chaos. The small congregation was struggling to manage a large, decaying building through a combination of aggressive rental agreements and resource development. Through my leadership, the congregation quickly realized that the decades-long project to "save the building" was unrealistic. A new initiative was begun to re-evaluate the future of the congregation without a building.

I then led the congregation through the process of selling their building. In addition, I worked with two other struggling congregations in the Village, Metropolitan Duane United Methodist Church and Church of All Nations, to begin conversations about a new ministry in the Village. The result of these efforts is a new well-funded congregation that is striving to meet the needs of the community it serves.

In addition to the congregational changes, I served as a leader in the New York peace movement, as co-chair of the New York Forum of Concerned Religious Leaders. I served on various

committees and task forces working for peace. I also successfully lobbied the NY State Legislature to change a law in order to allow for the transfer of funds held by an independently managed endowment to the trustees of the church.

In my broader church service, I served as the chair of the Board of Church and Society of the New York Annual Conference, and previously served as the secretary of the Conference Commission on Religion and Race. I am currently a member of the Board of Church and Society and the District Committee on Ordained Ministry.

Before that, I was appointed to the Park Avenue United Methodist Church, New York, as their associate pastor. There I focused primarily on building a lively young adult ministry and an effective adult education program, as well as extending the congregations social justice ministries. I frequently preached and designed special services for the worship life of the community. I also worked through a significant transition with the senior pastor who replaced a pastor who had served the congregation for 43 years.

I received my Masters of Divinity from the Theological School at Drew University in 2000. I graduated from Southwestern University, Georgetown, Texas, in 1993 with a Bachelor of Arts in Computer Science.

From 1995 to 1997, I worked as Administrative Coordinator for the New York office of United Methodist Communications. In that capacity, I assisted in the production of national satellite teleconferences and satellite educational training events. I managed all aspects of the training events and teleconferences, including registrations, assistance in content production, procurement of appropriate facilities and equipment, scheduling and arranging for talent, and budgeting. At UMCom, I also used my technology background to design a software system to track training event participants and facilities. I also created and managed a web site for the teleconferencing program and oversaw all technology issues in the New York office.

My relationship with UMCom allowed me to attend General Conferences in 1996, 2000, 2004 and 2008. At all of these conferences, I focused my work on media relations and media placement. In this capacity, I served as a liaison between the General Conference and the media, providing appropriate United Methodist spokespersons as requested by media, and managing access to the conference floor by local and national media representatives. In addition, I assisted in the advance preparation of spokespersons for interactions with the media.

A native of Houston, Texas, I enjoy Astros Baseball, Texas folk music, and reading a lot! In January of 2010, I married my wife, Baylah Tessier-Sherman, a researcher at Yale University working in the field of occupational health. I have a brother, Jeff, sister-in-law, Kara, and two nephews, Hayden and Hiram, living in Ojai, California. Jeff and Kara work as school teachers and coaches at the Thacher School. My extended family mostly occupies the western hills of Oklahoma. This explains my strange passion for Sooner football.