



# Bishop John Shelby Spong

*“True religion is not about possessing the truth. No religion does that. It is rather an invitation into a journey that leads one toward the mystery of God.”*

John Shelby Spong, whose books have sold more than a million copies, was bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Newark for 24 years before his retirement in 2001. His admirers acclaim him as a teaching bishop who makes contemporary theology accessible to the ordinary layperson — he’s considered the champion of an inclusive faith by many, both inside and outside the Christian church. In one of his recent books, *The Sins of Scripture: Exposing the Bible’s Texts of Hate to Discover the God of Love* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2005), this visionary thinker seeks to introduce readers to a proper way to engage the holy book of the Judeo-Christian tradition.

A committed Christian who has spent a lifetime studying the Bible and whose life has been deeply shaped by it, Bishop Spong says he was not interested in Bible bashing. “I come to this interpretive task not as an enemy of Christianity,” he says. “I am not even a disillusioned former Christian, as some of my scholar-friends identify themselves. I am a believer who knows and loves the Bible deeply. But I also recognize that parts of it have been used to undergird prejudices and to mask violence.”

A visiting lecturer at Harvard and at universities and churches worldwide, Bishop Spong delivers more than 200 public lectures each year to standing-room-only crowds. His bestselling books include *Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism*, *A New Christianity for a New World*, *Why Christianity Must Change or Die*, and *Here I Stand*.

Bishop Spong’s extensive media appearances include a profile segment on *60 Minutes* as well as appearances on *Good Morning America*, *Fox News Live*, *Politically Incorrect*, *Larry King Live*, *The O’Reilly Factor*, William F. Buckley’s *Firing Line*, and *Extra*. Bishop Spong and his wife, Christine Mary Spong, have five children and six grandchildren. They live in New Jersey.



# Dr. Diana Butler Bass

“An awakening happening in faith and politics? -- A new sort of faith “beyond conventional boundaries” based on experience and a new sense of connection, justice, and unity.

Diana Butler Bass is an author, speaker, and independent scholar specializing in American religion and culture.

She holds a Ph.D. in religious studies from Duke University and is the author of eight books, including *Christianity After Religion: The End of Church and the Birth of a New Spiritual Awakening* (HarperOne, 2012). Her other books include *A People's History of Christianity: The Other Side of the Story* (HarperOne, 2009), nominated for a Library of Virginia literary award, and the best-selling *Christianity for the Rest of Us: How the Neighborhood Church is Transforming the Faith* (2006) which was named as one of the best religion books of the year by *Publishers Weekly* and was featured in a cover story in *USA TODAY*.

Diana regularly consults with religious organizations, leads conferences for religious leaders, and teaches and preaches in a variety of venues. She blogs at [The Huffington Post](#) and [Patheos](#) and regularly comments on religion, politics, and culture in the media including *USA TODAY*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *The Washington Post*, CBS, CNN, FOX, PBS, and NPR.

From 1995 to 2000, she wrote a weekly column on American religion for the *New York Times* Syndicate. She is a contributing editor for *Sojourners Magazine* has written widely in the religious press, including *Christian Century*, *Clergy Journal*, and *Congregations*.

From 2002 to 2006, she was the Project Director of a national Lilly Endowment-funded study of mainline Protestant vitality—a project featured in *Newsweek*, *U.S. News and World Report*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Los Angeles Times*.

She is the recipient of numerous grants and awards including an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from The General Theological Seminary in New York. Diana also serves on the boards of the Beatitudes Society and Public Religion Research.

Diana has taught at Westmont College, the University of California at Santa Barbara, Macalester College, Rhodes College, and the Virginia Theological Seminary. She has taught church history, American religious history, history of Christian thought, religion and politics, and congregational studies.

She and her family live in Alexandria, Virginia.

<http://www.dianabutlerbass.com>





# Rev. Winnie Varghese

*“Faith is an often-overstated piece of Christianity. The idea of the story of the life of Jesus really works for me. The idea that there are riches in that story to be plumbed for the rest of my life really works for me. That we would try to organize communities around that really works for me.”*

Rev. Winnie Varghese is moving from St. Marks in the Bowery to Trinity Wall Street. The Reverend Dr. William Lupfer, Rector of Trinity Church, writes these words:

Dear Parish Community,

It is my great pleasure to announce that the Rev. Winnie Varghese will be joining the Trinity staff as Priest and Director of Community Outreach. She will get to know Trinity over the summer and be in the office full time on August 1.

Winnie, like Trinity, has a huge heart for mission and social justice. As a staff member she will challenge us to go even deeper into our mission commitments and will engage all of us in new opportunities. Her position will focus on Trinity’s social justice ministries, including outreach grants, feeding ministries, public school support, and the Trinity Parish Center. She will also be a key partner in determining the expansion of Trinity’s low-income housing ministry.

Winnie has been a priest for 15 years in parishes and as a college chaplain. For the past six years Winnie has served as priest-in-charge and then rector of St. Mark’s-in-the-Bowery, a vibrant and diverse church in Manhattan that has tripled in size under her leadership.

Through her [writing on the Huffington Post](#) and elsewhere, as well as her diocesan work, she has become a prominent voice for justice in the Episcopal Church. Because of Trinity’s investment decisions in recent years, we are poised to expand and deepen our impact on New York and the world. Winnie will be an important part of those efforts. I am overjoyed that she is joining Trinity and look forward to working with her.

Faithfully,

The Rev. Dr. William Lupfer  
Rector



# Dr. Patrick Evans

*Dr. Patrick Evans has been named Chair of the University of Alabama at Birmingham College of Arts and Sciences Department of Music.*

Evans, a baritone who has performed nationwide and abroad, is a lecturer, practitioner and clinician in the fields of sacred music and congregational song.

He is committed to the reclaiming and renewal of congregational song.

Now completing his time at DePauw University, he was formerly director of music for the daily ecumenical worship in Marquand Chapel, Yale University where he worked with the dean of chapel, student chapel ministers, and musicians, and a wide range of students, faculty, and guests from varied denominational backgrounds and musical traditions.

He recently joined a team of church musician/teachers convened by the United Methodist Church's General Board of Global Missions, spending two weeks in Uganda, teaching and learning from church musicians and pastors from that country, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, and Sudan.

He has also been on the faculties of the Montreat and Westminster Conferences on Music and Worship, and was director of music for Seattle University's 2007 Summer Institute for Liturgy and Worship.

As a singer, he has been a fellow of the Tanglewood Music Center, the Cleveland Art Song Festival, and the Pacific Music Festival, Sapporo, Japan. He has appeared regularly in opera, oratorio, and recital performances, and has sung *All the Way through Evening: Songs from the AIDS Quilt Songbook* throughout the United States.

He served as artist-in-residence at Union Theological Seminary, and currently serves in the same capacity at Broadway Presbyterian Church in Manhattan. Previously he was Minister of Music for ten years at Hanover Street Presbyterian Church in Wilmington, Delaware, Associate Professor of Music at the University of Delaware, where he chaired the voice faculty and directed the opera program. B.M., B.M.E. University of Montevallo; M.M., D.M. Florida State University.

[http://www.about.me/patrick\\_evans](http://www.about.me/patrick_evans)



# Onawumi Jean Moss

Onawumi Jean Moss of Amherst, Massachusetts is a storyteller, narrator, keynote speaker and author. The performances of this talking book and rhythm master encourage pride of heritage, appreciation of cultural differences and recognition of kinship. This Tennessee native's first stories were learned from her parents and in church. Her mother, a self-taught reader conveyed, by example, the inherent relationship of context and story and life-lessons. Her father, a natural-born comedian, told riveting night-sky stories as well as eerie, sometimes funny, ghost stories.

Today Onawumi is an accomplished storyteller in her own right- a significant accomplishment considering the fact that over the course of twenty-one (21) years, she was a full-time Associate Dean of Students at Amherst College (1985-2006).

During her career as a part-time storyteller, Onawumi has made content-rich, thought-provoking and entertaining presentations before inter-generational audiences across the U.S. and in the Netherlands. Her solo performances, workshops and keynotes, a seamless blend of story and *a cappella* singing, have consistently won high praise from audiences—kindergarten through college. The same is true of audience feedback from civic, community, religious and business sectors.

Onawumi's story programs inspire imagination, inquiry, reflection and expression and also complement the study of communications, the humanities, performance, the social sciences and history.



# Willie Sordillo

*“Transporting God, help us appreciate the sacred in the everyday, to be grateful for time spent with loved ones, whether talking about the big questions, just shooting the breeze or sitting in unhurried silence. And when world leaders can’t see eye to eye, please send them on a long drive together.”*

Willie and friends bathed the first two Awakenings conferences (2012 & 2014) in the rich textures of gospel and jazz music. This year for the first time, he will help to create a jazz communion service for the entire conference. He will also bring “gathering music” before several of the sessions.

A writer as well as a player, Willie's original compositions have been reproduced in a number of magazines, songbooks and textbooks and he has had the pleasure of hearing his songs recorded by other musicians. He has composed theme music for four movies. Willie is often found in the recording studio as a session musician and producer. Recordings featuring his saxophone work include *Muévete* and *Bailando en la muralla* by Flor de Caña, *Cartagena*, with the Geoffrey Hicks Quartet, *Besame Mucho*, a duo session with Geoffrey Hicks, *The Color of Grace* and *The Colors of Love* by Judy Hanlon, and Ben Tousley's recordings *Open the Gates* and *Take My Hand*. His most recent CD as a leader, *echoing*, features some of the Boston area's finest jazz musicians.

Performances include the Amazing Things Arts Center in Framingham; duo performances with pianist Jacqueline Schwab; AIDS Walk Boston; Latin Jazz concerts at the Barbieri School (co-leading a band with world-renowned Latin Jazz stars Victor Mendoza and Eguie Castrillo), family concerts at the Connolly Library in Jamaica Plain; a house party in one of the storied mansions along Newport's famous Cliff Walk; Slade's; Scullers; and The Charles River Creative Arts Program. Since September of 2005, Willie has been musical director of a weekly jazz worship service at Old South Church on Copley Square, Boston. He served for two years as musical leader for *OpenSpirit*, a creative worship service in Framingham, MA and frequently brings Jazz Worship to churches in New England. Willie has been a featured in-studio guest on Worcester's WICN and WGBH's "Eric in the Evening".



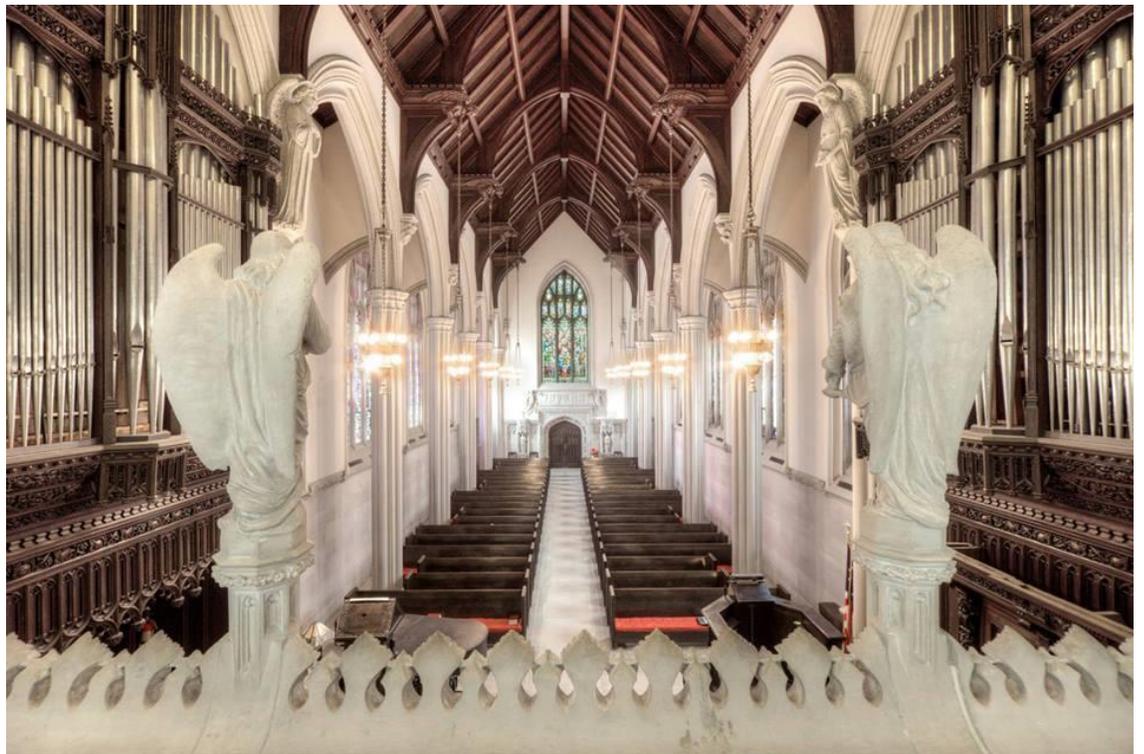
# Roberta Morkin

*I moved to Holyoke in 2007 to serve on the pastoral team of the United Congregational Church of Holyoke (UCC/ONA). In 2009 I also accepted the position of Organist and Choir Director, with the privilege of playing two of the finest E.M. Skinner pipe organs to be found anywhere.*

Bobbie grew up on a farm in Northern Iowa, but she always thought that the stork had set her down in the wrong place. Over the years, she has been a church musician in the U.S. and Great Britain, a porcelain artist, a weaver, a farmer, a cattle rancher (leading 2,000-pound bulls into the show ring) and a pastoral team member with her husband in Wisconsin and Massachusetts.

After a twenty-year hiatus from music, her soul's calling and first love, she returned to it with great passion, bringing Classical and French Romantic pieces to life in her present position. Some of her performances can be viewed through the church's website ([www.uccholyoke.org](http://www.uccholyoke.org)).

In addition to her work on the planning committee for each of the Awakenings conferences, she is active with the Organ Historical Society and the American Guild of Organists.



Photograph by Len Levasseur

<http://www.uccholyoke.org>



# Anthony Livolsi

*Anthony will collaborate with Willie Sordillo to host a jazz communion service during Awakenings.*

Anthony received his Master of Divinity degree from Princeton Theological Seminary and comes to Old South Church from Plymouth United Church of Christ in Des Moines, IA; there he served through the Lilly Endowment's Transition into Ministry pastoral residency program.

In his role as Associate Minister, Anthony oversees Old South Church's (Boston) children, youth, and adult faith formation programs, leads [Jazz Worship](#), and enjoys other of the job's many, many delights: teaching, preaching, companioning, caring ... and over-eating at any after-service fellowship hour.

For fun (but what's more fun than church, really?!), Anthony reads, runs, haunts quirky coffee shops, plays a bit of banjo, and rarely loses at Scrabble. He lives in Coolidge Corner, Brookline.

<http://www.oldsouth.org/staff/anthony-t-livolsi>



# GILBURG LEADERSHIP INC.

*Many conference planners are discovering the need for creating structured opportunities for participants to connect with one another to collectively access their knowledge and wisdom. Though content presenters are valuable, there is tremendous opportunity when participants can connect with each other to **make meaning** of what they are learning and **apply** it to their own realities.*

*A conference design that oscillates between content expert presentations and collective learning opportunities mimics breathing: take in content and knowledge (breathe in); connect, make meaning and gain insight (breathe out). This kind of design yields a powerful learning environment where participants take away more than the sum of the presentations—but a connection to a larger community and deeper understanding of how and where to apply what they are learning.*

In this third iteration of the Awakenings Conference, there is a desire by the conference planners to ensure participants have enough space and connection time with one another to incorporate the learning from the plenary sessions. Additionally, they want to encourage renewal and recharge vs. creating a schedule that is so full of content, participants have fewer options to really connect with one another and process their learning.

<http://www.gilburgleadership.com>



## Rev. Felix Carrión

*The Reverend Felix Carrion is presently serving as the Interim Minister at Hough's Neck Congregational Church in Quincy, MA. He is also serving as a consultant, preacher and keynoter. Rev. Carrión brings to his work a commitment to the empowerment of clergy and lay for effective ministry and witness in Church and society. In his work, he weaves together head and heart, as well as faith and justice.*

For close to five years Rev. Carrion served as the Coordinator of the Stillspeaking Ministry of the United Church of Christ (UCC). In this capacity he directed the "God is still speaking" national messaging, marketing and identity campaign. His efforts were guided by a close collaboration with the Local Churches, Conferences and Covenanted Ministries of the UCC.

Born in New York City, Carrion earned a Masters of Divinity degree (1986) from Andover Newton Theological School where he graduated valedictorian of his class. He also has studied in several seminaries at Oxford (England) University and in Seminaries in Managua, Nicaragua and San Jose, Costa Rica.

Carrion is married to Dannette Costas-Carrion. His two sons are Lucas and Aaron.

<http://www.ants.edu/faculty-felix-carrion>



## Heshima Moja

*Heshima is a musician/singer/songwriter using music as a tool for healing the spiritual and emotional conditions of our society. He leads drumming classes at the United Congregational Church of Holyoke*

I am a bassist, vocalist, songwriter/composer, teaching artist, author, who has toured, shared the stage, and/or recorded with the likes of Patti Labelle, Avery Sharpe, James Carter, Marion Meadows, Amira Baraka, Paoli Mejias, Richie Garcia, Fiidla Owen Brown, and Quest Love of the Roots. In addition, I have written music for film, theatre, and for such renowned spoken word artists as Mahogany Brown of HBO's Real Sex and Magdalena Gomez, and Sandra Maria Esteves.

I have one album to my credit as a leader: "The Awakening" ([www.cdbaby.com/heshima](http://www.cdbaby.com/heshima)) and am planning to release "Ofrecimiento" and "Inside Songs" this year.



## Zoë Daggett Krohne

*Zoe Krohne brings her amazing voice to the weekly Jazz worship service at Old South Church in Boston. She has led the Admissions offices of two of the leading college music programs in Boston. With the birth of her first child in 2006, she was moved to become a certified birth doula, supporting laboring mothers and their partners as they welcome new life into the world. Most recently, Zoe has been apprenticing with a homebirth midwife and dreams often of catching babies throughout the world. A yogi, gardener and runner, Zoe values her work in supporting the My Path Medical community, as she understands the importance of finding balance and true health and wellness..*



## Mina Cho

*Mina Cho will be at the piano during the Jazz Communion Service on Friday afternoon. An article in Boston.com revealed that it was a pair of musical revelations that exposed Mina to the emotional force of gospel, and then to the beauty and improvisational potential of South American folk music. As a child in Korea she had the ambition to become a world-famous classical pianist,*

*Revelation in the religious sense has accompanied Cho, a committed Christian, along the parallel tracks of religious and secular music, and into unexpected roles, for instance as the pianist in several Boston black and immigrant churches. (She plays as part of the jazz ensemble at the Thursday jazz worship at Old South Church in Boston.)*

*Along the way, she earned a summa cum laude degree from the Berklee College of Music and is poised to emerge from the Boston regional circuit with a debut CD, "Originality," that aptly lives up to its name.*