

THE REVEREND DR. JESSICA KENDALL INGRAM

THE REVEREND DR. JESSICA KENDALL INGRAM has served as the Episcopal Supervisor for the First Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church since July 4, 2012. Dr. Ingram oversees the work of the Women's Missionary Society, the Young People's Division, the Ministers' Spouses and Women in Ministry for more than 400 churches in Delaware, New England, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and the British Overseas Territory of Bermuda.

Prior to her current assignment, Dr. Ingram served from 2004-2012 as the Episcopal Supervisor in the Tenth Episcopal District, which comprises the State of Texas. From 2000-2004, she was the Supervisor of Missions for the Fifteen Episcopal District, which includes Angola, Namibia and most of South Africa.

From 1987-2000, Rev. Jessica—as she affectionately is called by many—served as the full-time Assistant Pastor of Oak Grove A.M.E. Church in Detroit, Mich., where she established a comprehensive Ministry to Women. In 1992, while at Oak Grove, Dr. Ingram founded the L.I.F.T. Women's Resource Center to address the needs of women who are recovering from physical, mental and substance abuse. The Center, which celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2012, has aided more than 30,000 women since its inception.

In addition to her work in the local church, Dr. Ingram has served as an Adjunct Professor at Ashland Theological Seminary, where she taught classes on Women in Ministry, Spiritual Formation and Ministerial Ethics. She has traveled the United States, the Caribbean and Africa preaching, lecturing and facilitating workshops and retreats.

Because of her concern and compassion for the plight of women in South Africa, Dr. Ingram in 2004 founded the Balm in Gilead Centre: The Healing Place for Women. She raised more than \$300,000 to construct the facility and an additional \$100,000 for operational support. The Centre is located in Wallacedene, an impoverished settlement east of Cape Town, where many of the women are unemployed, uneducated and underserved. The Centre provides them basic diagnostic medical testing and referrals, along with parenting skills, computer classes and job training. Dr. Ingram has made four mission trips to the Centre since 2005.

In addition, she planned and executed six International Women's Convocations (IWC). In 2003, more than 900 people from the USA joined hundreds of women from Africa for IWC 2003 in Cape Town. This historic event was a week-long, cross-cultural, intergenerational experience that included worship services, workshops and a wide-ranging outreach ministry. IWC 2004 was held in Kimberley, capital of the Northern Cape Province in South Africa. That was followed by IWC 2006 in Dallas, Tex. The women of the Tenth Episcopal District raised more than \$100,000 to cover travel and hotel expenses for women who attended from every overseas district of the AME Church. This was the first comprehensive, global convocation for women in the history of the AME Church to originate in the United States. Dr. Ingram continued to act on her passion for bringing women of all nations together for spiritual enrichment by sponsoring three additional International Women's Convocations. They were held in Cape Town in 2008, 2009 and 2010.

Always searching for new ways to bless the lives of women, Dr. Ingram founded the Women of Hope Project, Inc., while in Texas. Women of Hope is a nonprofit, women's resource and advocacy group headquartered in the United States, but motivated by a global agenda. The organization's Mission is to disrupt the status quo for disadvantaged women by improving their physical, spiritual, emotional and financial well-being.

An accomplished writer, Dr. Ingram has self-published three widely read and highly praised books: *The Journey Inward*, *Still on the Journey* and *A Journey in the Experience of Prayer: A Guide for the Pilgrim Traveler*. She was featured in *Ebony* magazine as one of the Fifteen Top African-American Female Preachers in the United States. *The African-American Pulpit*, considered to be the definitive journal on preaching in black America, named her one of the 20 Great African-American Revivalists. Her sermon, "The Silence of God," was included in the journal along with a CD.

Dr. Ingram earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Special Education from the University of Missouri, a Master of Arts degree in Guidance and Counseling from St. Louis University, a Master of Religious Education from Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary and a Doctorate of Ministry in Spirituality from United Theological Seminary. She was the first African-American in the country to be trained in Spiritual Direction at the Colombiere Center in Clarkston, Mich.

Dr. Ingram is a past President of the Supervisors Council of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. She has received numerous awards from civic groups, community organizations and the seminaries she has attended. She has been a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., since 1966, when she became a charter member of the Epsilon Psi Chapter at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Dr. Ingram has been married to Bishop Gregory Gerald McKinley Ingram for 35 years. They are the parents of one beloved daughter, Jennifer Eman Keanne, and one beautiful granddaughter, Jayda Eman Keanne.