



DISCIPLES DIVINITY HOUSE  
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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Disciples Divinity House-Vanderbilt Announces New Dean

NASHVILLE, TN, April 12, 2024--The Board of Trustees of the Disciples Divinity House at Vanderbilt is pleased to announce its newly elected Dean, The Rev. Cherisna Jean-Marie.

Rev. Cherisna Jean-Marie is the first woman and person of color to serve as Dean of the Disciples Divinity House at Vanderbilt. A pioneering thinker and leader, her career includes a long list of firsts: first to serve as Director of Leadership and Organizing at Children's Defense Fund; first to serve as the Director of Racial Justice Ministries at Scarritt Bennett Center; first person of color to serve as Dean of Chapel at Bethany College, Bethany, West Virginia; first woman to serve as Chaplain at Jarvis Christian College, and the first woman to be ordained by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) at New Covenant Christian Church in 2012.

"Not only is Rev. Jean-Marie an able administrator and mentor to emerging theologians and pastors, she is a leader with both vision and wisdom," shared Rev. Brandon Gilvin, current Chair of the Board of the Disciples House. "Theological education in the 2020s requires leaders who know how to listen, plan and create new initiatives, and help institutions pivot as the context requires. We are excited about the next chapter for the Disciples House with Rev. Jean-Marie at the helm."

In 2022, Jean-Marie founded The Co-Conspirator Institute. A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that seeks to create space for individuals to confront and eradicate systemic, social, structural, and institutional racism and provide opportunities for healing from racial trauma. TCCI was started in honor of her nephew Christopher Aldy Morand, murdered by gun violence in 2019. She is the Vice President of the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRIC), a member of the Fellowship of Black Disciples Clergywomen, and an alumna of Bethany Fellows.

In 2001 Rev. Cherisna Jean-Marie graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Public Communications from Kean University in Union, NJ. She completed the Master of Divinity from Vanderbilt Divinity School in 2010 and was awarded the coveted Florence Conwell Prize for outstanding preaching. In 2014, she completed Chaplaincy work in Atlanta, GA, where she focused on pastoral care and counseling with a diverse patient and family community.

Additionally, Rev. Cherisna Jean-Marie is a co-contributor to five book projects, a mentor, a social entrepreneur, a community organizer, an antiracist activist, an international teacher, and a preacher. Most of all, her most beloved role is being “auntie” to her nine nephews and one niece.

According to Rev. Dr. Judy Cummings, Vice-Chair of the Disciples House Board, "Over the years as her former pastor and colleague, I have watched Rev. Cherisna Jean Marie's ministry blossom as she matriculated at Vanderbilt Divinity School and served in various positions in the Christian Church (DOC). She is an outstanding minister who comes to this position, with experience, enthusiasm, and energy all powered by the Spirit of God".

Rev. Cherisna Jean-Marie began her role as the new Dean on Monday, April 1, 2024.

The Disciples Divinity House at Vanderbilt is a 501(c)(3), residential living/learning community for Disciples of Christ students at Vanderbilt Divinity School and our ecumenical partners. Our mission is to prepare excellent Disciples ministers through a supportive community of faith.

