

Biographical Sketch for The Reverend Dr. Tanisha L. Sparks



Reverend Dr. Tanisha L. Sparks is a graduate of the American Baptist Seminary of the West, a school of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA where she received her Master of Divinity degree in Preaching and a Certificate in Black Church/Africana Studies in May 2012. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Administration and a Master of Business Administration degree in Leadership and Management, both obtained from Holy Names University, Oakland, CA. In addition, she holds a Certificate in Christian Ministry awarded by the Leadership Institute at Allen Temple.

In January 2003, Dr. Sparks received her license to preach and ordination in March 2009 from Cosmopolitan Baptist Church, Oakland, CA. In November 2014, she received her denominational ordination by the American Baptist Churches, USA. She has held numerous ministerial positions throughout the Bay Area serving as Minister to Young Adults, Young Adult Pastor as well as Youth Pastor.

Dr. Sparks is the 2011 *L. Doward McBain Preaching Prize recipient for Outstanding Senior Sermon* and the 2012 *J. Alfred Smith, Sr. Award recipient for Outstanding Ministry in the Black Church*, both awarded by the American Baptist Seminary of the West in Berkeley.

In May 2019, Dr. Sparks received her Doctor of Ministry degree in Biblical Interpretation and Proclamation from the Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia.

During Black History Month 2020, she received a Congressional Recognition Award from Congressman Ro Khanna (CA-17), Santa Clara, CA for her commitment and dedication to the African American church and community in the Bay Area.

Currently, Dr. Sparks is an Associate Minister at the historic Allen Temple Baptist Church in Oakland, CA and serves as the Director of Finance and Administration at the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University, Berkeley Campus. In addition to her full time position, she also serves at Santa Clara University and at the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University as a guest preacher, as a guest lecturer on topics such as African American Spirituality, Black Christology and African and African American Liberation Theology.

Because of her passion for faith, justice, diversity, equity and inclusion, Dr. Sparks also serves as an Inclusive Excellence Liaison to the Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer at Santa Clara University; a Spiritual Advisor to the Beloved Community African American Student Group and as a Mentor for the Finding Affirmation and Meaning, Office of Multicultural Learning, both at Santa Clara University.

Dr. Sparks unapologetically believes and accepts that God has called her to be a prophetic voice in this generation. As such, she exercises her calling through the preaching and teaching of God's Word across generational, denominational and racial barriers.