

Rev. Dr. Troy D. Benitone

Directing Pastor- Community of Faith Church & Executive Director- Hands of Hope Foundation

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Troy is a 1984 graduate of Memphis University School a prestigious all male college preparatory academy. He attended Christian Brothers University in Memphis, Tenn., and graduated with a honors degree in Economics and Finance. He attended Candler School of Theology at Emory University and graduated Cum Laude with a Master of Divinity degree in 1994. He received a Doctor of Ministry in the area of church development and evangelism from Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University in 2000.

Before going into the ministry, Troy worked as a ramp agent for Federal Express in Memphis, TN. He worked in the restaurant business in Memphis. Just prior to entering the ministry, Troy became a registered stockbroker and insurance professional who owned and operated his own Insurance & Investment agency in Herrin, IL. Troy began his candidacy for ministry at the Herrin United Methodist Church. He has served the Energy and Hope Chapel UMC in Southern Illinois, St. James and Chalybeate Springs UMC Churches in Manchester, GA, Immanuel and Noble UMC Churches in the Southeastern Illinois. In 1995, he planted a new congregation in Highland, Illinois, called Highland Hope. In 1999, he was assigned to start a second church in Waterloo, Illinois called, Table of Grace. In mid-2001, he was appointed to be the pastor of the Pawnee United Methodist Church and served that cutting-edge congregation until March 2010. On April 1, 2010, Troy made a ministry change, withdrawing from the Illinois Great Rivers Conference of the United Methodist Church to become the Directing Pastor of Community of Faith Church, a large independent and spirit-filled congregation located in Southern Illinois. Community of Faith Church is *“Growing Faithful Followers of Christ regionally and globally through prayer, outreach, evangelism, worship and discipleship.”* Troy has been involved in numerous new church development projects and NGO launches in Honduras, Central America, Liberia-West Africa, and Thailand. Troy became a probationary member of the Southern Illinois Conference of the UMC in 1994 and he was ordained an Elder on May 30, 1996. He served as the chairperson of the Mississippi River District’s task force on New Congregational Development within the Illinois Great Rivers Conference. He was the project coordinator for *The Spectrum 2000 Report*, a global study conducted by the GBGM. In March of 1999, Troy was invited and inducted into the World Evangelism/World Methodist Council *“Order of the FLAME”* -Faithful Leaders as Mission Evangelists. At the 1999, Illinois Great Rivers Conference he was honored to receive the Harry S. Denman Award for Evangelism. In 2004, his church received the Rural Witness Award from the IGRC for our church’s creative and unique work in missions and outreach to our community. He served as an alternate delegate to the 2000 and as delegate to the 2008 North Central Jurisdiction Conference of the UMC. He has served on the Sangamon River District Board of Ordained Ministry, The District Connectional Table, The Illinois Great Rivers Connectional Table and as the Chair of the IGRC Evangelism Committee 2006-2010. Over the last 30 years, Troy continues to serve as an advisory board member to No Greater Love Ministries, an international ministry that seeks to equip and train leaders in the work of evangelism and spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ locally, nationally and internationally. He has served as the Chair of the Board of Southern Illinois Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA). He is the founding board member for the Herrin House of Hope, Herrin, IL that has served over 400,000 clients since launching in 2012. In 2013, he received the honor of being gowned as a Paramount Chief to the people of Margibi County, Liberia, West Africa, to whom he serves as *“The Chief of Hope.”* He is also the founder and executive director of the Hands of Hope Foundation, an international ministry with a mission of *“Offering Hope in Christ”* through both Word and Deed according to 1 Peter 3:15. Pastor Troy launched a podcast called *“On The Dock with Pastor Troy”* in August 2021 to continue his work of offering Hope in Christ. Troy’s personal mission statement is to *“Dream dreams and plan plans so grand that if God is not in them, they are doomed to fail!”*

Troy shares, *“My heart’s desire is to be involved in leading the church in the area of new church starts and church development. I consider myself to be an apostolic-evangelist.”* Troy has led numerous camps, conferences, revivals, crusades and seminars on church development and is the author of the book *Making a Church from Scratch* published by Bristol House Ltd. He is also working on a new book entitled *The Essence of Ministry*. Troy enjoys cooking, hunting and has served as a youth football coach for over 25 years. Troy shares that the most influential books in his ministry, other than the Bible, include *Father Arseny 1893-1973 Priest, Prisoner, Spiritual Father*, *Jesus CEO* by Laurie Beth Jones, *21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* by John Maxwell, most recently *Church as a Team Sport* by Jim Puttman and Oswald Chamber’s *My Utmost for His Highest*. His favorite long-standing writer is TD Jakes. Troy & Beth have four beautiful children: Heather, Joshua, Caleb and Megan. In 2010, our family expanded, with a new son-in law, Tad Rogers. He and Heather reside in Hernando, MS along with our first grand-daughter, Addison Elizabeth Rogers. Troy’s son, Joshua, also married his childhood sweetheart, Sarah Nations in July 2011. Josh is a graduate of McKendree University and has become a successful pastor and serves today as the owner of Crown Brew Coffee Co. His son, Caleb has just received his Doctor of Pharmacy degree (2018) from the prestigious St. Louis College of Pharmacy and has married Jessica Kowalski, who also graduated from STLCOF, in 2018. They live & work in Tulsa, OK. His daughter, Megan, who is still daddy’s little princess, graduated from McKendree University in 2019, she received her Master’s Degree from Southern Illinois University and is doing outdoor education events & tours somewhere in one of many national parks in the US.