

## Rev. Dr. Howard-John Wesley Pastor, Alfred Street Baptist Church



Rev. Dr. Howard-John Wesley, a biblical scholar and arguably one of the greatest orators of our generation, is the gifted, anointed, and dynamic pastor of the historic Alfred Street Baptist Church (ASBC) in Alexandria, Virginia. A courageous, exciting, and visionary leader, Dr. Wesley is a much sought after preacher, teacher, and featured national keynote speaker for various churches, leadership and development programs. He is only the eighth pastor to be installed in the 213 year history of the historic and world-renowned Alfred Street Baptist Church.

Alfred Street Baptist Church is the oldest, largest and most prominent African American church in Northern Virginia. Under Dr. Wesley's leadership, the church has grown to over 7,000 members with nearly 80 active ministries. As a result, Alfred Street Baptist Church is the first and only faith-based organization to date, to donate \$1 million to the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC). Alfred Street as it is affectionately known in the community; currently holds four services, three on Sunday and one on Saturday evenings (the only African American Baptist church in the Washington, DC area to do so). He is most passionate about today's youth, and is often recognized for his sermons which promote spiritual, social and intellectual growth amongst young adults.

A plethora of innovative worship services and ideas have been conceptualized and implemented under his direction, such as the Come As You Are (CAYA) worship service. CAYA is designed specifically for young adults, ages 20–30 something which is held on the first Wednesday of every month. A host of innovative spiritual programs, services and study groups have been implemented under Dr. Wesley's direction such as: the AWANA program; which raises children and youth to know, love and serve Christ, Senior's Bible study, Men's Bible study, and Praying with the Pastor, just to name a few.

As a compassionate pastor; he has led ASBC to purchase property adjacent to the church which kept affordable housing in historical Old Town Alexandria. Under Dr. Wesley's direction, more emphasis has been placed on domestic violence awareness, community awareness, mentoring programs for youth, human trafficking and after incarceration assistance. Not afraid to take on social and political issues, Dr. Wesley led community protest marches against the New York grand jury's decision not to indict in the death of Eric Gardner. His sermon, "When the Verdict Hurts," was acknowledged in *Time* magazine's July 29, 2013 cover story, "After Trayvon" as one of the best sermons preached in the United States following the "not guilty" verdict in State of Florida v. George Zimmerman. Three of Dr. Wesley's sermons, "When the Verdict Hurts," "A Rizpah Response," (along with the black hoodie he donned while preaching this sermon), and "Tell Your Own Story," will all be archived in the NMAAHC's faith-based collection.

Reverend Dr. Howard-John Wesley represents the fourth generation of Baptist preachers in his family. He is the son of the late Rev. Dr. Alvin J. Wesley and Dr. Helene J. Wesley. A 1994 magna cum laude graduate of Duke University; he doubled majored in Biomedical and Electrical Engineering. After his first year in medical school, he yielded to God's call once again and walked away from a medical career to attend seminary in preparation for serving God's people. He attended the Boston University School of Theology where he was a Martin L. King, Jr. Scholar and a 1997 summa cum laude graduate concentrating on Biblical Studies and African-American religious history. His passion for preaching and learning led him to the Associated Chicago Theological School's Doctor of Ministry in Preaching Program where he graduated from the Northern Baptist Theological Seminary with his Doctor of Ministry degree in 2003.

For his labor, Dr. Wesley has received numerous awards and accolades including the recent 2016 NAACP Chairman's Image Award, which celebrates the accomplishments of people of color in the fields of television, music, literature and film and also honors individuals or groups who promote social justice through creative endeavors. Dr. Wesley was inducted into the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Board of Preachers of Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia in 2015. He was one of seven to receive the 2014 James Floyd Jenkins Pillar of Faith Award presented by Howard University School of Divinity, in collaboration with the United Church of Christ. Additionally, he was one of the 2013 recipients of The Root 100: A Who's Who of Black America Award.

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Dr. Wesley is associated with several organizations including but not limited to: Alexandria NAACP, the Northern Virginia Urban League, the Community Coalition for Haiti, a member of the Board of Directors for the Hopkins House and the Institute for Responsible Citizenship, a member of the Board for the Lott Carey Convention, and a member of the board of the John Leland Center for Theological Studies. He has also served as honorary chairperson for the African American Adoptions, Inc. just to name a few. Dr. Wesley has also hosted the weekly *Sunday, Life App Moment with Pastor Wesley* which aired on DCW50/CW Network. The weekly *Life App Moment* provides practical life applications, leaving one empowered and able to cope with the stresses of everyday living while creating and encouraging a relationship with God. He is often a guest on various MSNBC talk shows discussing relevant social justice issues plaguing society.

A member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., Dr. Wesley is an avid golfer who also enjoys movies, reading, and working out. He is the proud father of two beautiful sons, Howard-John, II and Cooper Reece.