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**DR. BARBARA AUSTIN LUCAS TO PREACH at BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH WOMEN'S DAY**

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on SUNDAY, APRIL 27, at 8 am and 11 am

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Dr. Austin Lucas Will Be the First Woman to Preach in the Bethany Pulpit

/24-7PressRelease/ - BROOKLYN, NY, April 19, 2008 - For the first time in 125 years, a woman will preach in the pulpit of historic Bethany Baptist Church, located at 460 Marcus Garvey Boulevard in Brooklyn. Dr. David A. Hampton, the new Pastor of Bethany, selected The Reverend Dr. Barbara Austin Lucas to bring the history-making message during the 68th annual Women's Day services on Sunday, April 27, at 8 am and 11 am.

The Bethany Women's Day celebration begins on Saturday, April 26, at 1:30 pm with An Elegant Afternoon of High Tea in the Fellowship Hall. All women are encouraged to wear a hat and gloves for the Tea. The program includes comedian Linette "Ma Lou" Banks and vocalist Leilani Bryant from the cast of "The Color Purple," accompanied by Bethany musician Harold Collier. Donation is \$20. The theme of Women's Day is Bethany Women of Victory United by Christ. The celebration continues with guest preacher Dr. Austin-Lucas on Sunday.

"Dr. Austin Lucas is a dynamic and gifted preacher with a passion for bringing people closer to God," said Pastor Hampton. "I extended the invitation to Reverend Austin Lucas to preach at Bethany's Women's Day as testament to her preaching gift rather than to her womanhood. She is well-respected around the city and the world and I believe she will not only bring a great and powerful message to the women in the congregation, but to everyone under the sound of her voice."

"God's promise to me was 'If you go, I will open doors for you,'" recalls Dr. Austin Lucas. "God has been faithful in that promise. I understand that I am God's instrument, God's vessel. I seek to hear God's words and share the message with all people. I believe God has a specific purpose for me as a woman pastor, but God's word can touch everyone. I will continue to go as God leads me, and I am pleased that I am being led through the doors of Bethany Baptist Church, not only as the first woman to preach there but also as a messenger to stand in the pulpit of this historic church."

Reverend Dr. Barbara Austin Lucas stepped into her destiny as founder and CEO of Women Organizing, Mobilizing, and Building, Inc. (WOMB) in 1966. Through WOMB, she has assisted women and their families, through creative programming, to improve their quality of life. With a holistic approach to community development, the needs of women are addressed in the areas of spiritual, physical, mental, emotional and economic wellness. Following the destiny of God in 1998, Rev. Dr. Austin Lucas became Pastor Barbara, when she founded the Agape Tabernacle International Fellowship. Through Agape, Pastor Barbara has dedicated herself to transform lives, ministering out of a personal commitment to the revelation of God's purpose for human life, encouraging and inspiring all people to discern the purpose of God in every life experience.

Throughout her 25 years of ministering and teaching Christians worldwide, Rev. Dr. Austin Lucas has forged a reputation as a creative visionary and dedicated administrator. She served as the Assistant Pastor of Agape AME Church in Buffalo, NY, and Bridge Street AWME Church in Brooklyn. Revered for her vibrant and energetic preaching style, Dr. Austin-Lucas has taught and preached throughout Liberia and Haiti and led Educational Missionary Development Workshop Tours internationally to Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, West Africa, and the Caribbean.

An Apostle, pastor, missionary, evangelist, educator and community activist, Dr. Austin Lucas has earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Tufts University (Medford, MA); Master of Arts in Afro-American Studies from Boston University (Boston, MA); Master of Divinity in Counseling and Family Ministry from Colgate Rochester Divinity School (Rochester, NY); Master of Education from Teachers College at Columbia University (New York, NY), and a Doctorate of Education in Religion and Education with an emphasis in Urban Education from Union Theological Seminary and Teachers College at Columbia University (New York, NY).

For more information on Bethany's Women's Day services, please call the Church office at (718) 455-8400. Bethany Baptist

Church is located in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn and is easily accessible via the C train to the Kingston-Throop stop.