

**Rev. Nyahaley Labor**  
**Epiphany Lutheran Church, Conyers, GA**

**Tell us a little about yourself and how you serve.**

I am the Associate Pastor for Multicultural Ministry at the Epiphany Lutheran Church in Conyers, GA. I am originally from Sierra Leone, West Africa, and a mother of two. I grew up in the United Brethren in Christ (UBC) church. In 1995 I moved to the United States and lived in New York for 3 years. I then moved to Georgia where I currently reside. In pursuit of rekindling my spiritual thirst, which was abandoned for a couple of years, I joined the St. Stephen Evangelical Lutheran Church in Decatur Georgia where I became an active member both in the congregation and the ELCA. During my time at St. Stephen, I discovered my gifts for ministry which lead me to the TEEM program (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries). I also have a master's degree in Library and information Systems and a bachelor's in Business Administration. I thank God for all my blessings and look forward to what the Lord has in store for me.

**What is your favorite Bible verse and why?**

Philippians 4:6-7 This is one of my favorite scriptures because it keeps me grounded and reminds me of my relationship with Christ. In every situation I encounter: joy, pain, or sorrow, I always know that no matter what, I can take it to the Lord in prayer and give thanks knowing that Christ who brought me this far will indeed see me through. I am reminded that with arms wide open and gracefully broken, in prayer I can make my requests trusting that God's peace which surpasses all understandings, will indeed guard my heart.

**Where have you seen God recently?**

A couple of weeks ago I went out with a friend for lunch and she told me how devastated she was about a good friend of hers who is also her housekeeper. Her friend/housekeeper lost her daughter the night before, and this was the third child she had lost over the years. The housekeeper's daughter who died left behind six very young kids. I was heartbroken at the news and wondered how someone would go through such pain. I thought about the young kids and what their future would look like. I also thought about the mother who has now lost three children. But something I never imagined or anticipated was the message I got from my friend the next day. My friend sent a text message saying, *"If we (universal we) could all be as loving and caring as my friend/housekeeper, we would have no problems in this world. My friend/housekeeper called me today and said she would be over tomorrow to help me pack. Of course I said absolutely not. But the care she has is something else. She is a true angel of the Lord."* In my response, I said, *"In her wilderness moments she finds comfort in helping others. May she be filled with God's blessings."* The day before, I had just preached a sermon on how Christ meets us in the wilderness (Mark 1:9-15). I truly saw God in the housekeeper and I truly saw how God meets us in times of our trials and tribulations. Just as the Spirit lead Jesus into the wilderness and the angels ministered to him, we can see God in our wilderness moments. The friend/housekeeper in the time of her struggles finds joy and comfort in helping others. May we see God in times of our struggles!

**When/how have you been blessed by God's abundance?**

The year 2020 was truly a year of pain and sorrow. As we struggled to deal with the pandemic and its effects, we also experienced the horror of social injustice and racism. There has been a lot of uncertainty, fear, hopelessness, and anxiety. There was a fear of being sick; a fear of financial instability; a fear of change, and the fear of the inevitable: death! The fear of losing loved ones or even our own lives overwhelmed us. However, through it all, I must say I received God's abundant blessings. I got a call and I was ordained. I have been blessed to serve a community that I can share my gifts with. God has provided for me and my loved ones in ways I cannot imagine. My God is a great God and my existence is enough abundance I can ever ask for.