

## **NBA Honors Rev. Margie Pride of Memorial Boulevard Christian Church**

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The National Benevolent Association celebrates the ministry of and congratulates Rev. Margie Pride on her recent retirement from more than 30 years of ministry as pastor of [Memorial Boulevard Christian Church](#) in St. Louis, Missouri.

I first met Margie when [Week of Compassion](#) invited me to speak at Memorial Boulevard's annual [Hunger Hike](#) in 2012, to mark the congregation's committed efforts to support food security in their local community, and globally.

The outreach funds they generated year after year in their Hunger Hike, and the ways this church showed up for their community and congregants, were far more generous than you might expect for a church of its size. It is a credit to the heart of this congregation, and a testament to their long-term pastor, that this "little church that could" lived their values so wholeheartedly and with faithful commitment.

When [NBA XPLOR](#) launched in 2014 with a host site in St. Louis, I looked forward to our paths crossing again. I anticipated that the values central to Margie's ministry at Memorial Boulevard, and the Four Cornerstones central to NBA XPLOR's residential program, would converge with new opportunities for partnership.

NBA XPLOR connected with Margie and her ministry at Memorial Boulevard over multiple years of our orientation program called XPLOR Laboratory. We used the weeklong Laboratory experience to build community among our XPLOR Residents and host team members, who gather from around the country. We especially utilized the time to profile ways that XPLOR Residents, Disciple congregations, and other [NBA partners](#), found unique and transformative ways to live into the life of faith and the work of justice within their own communities.



*Rev. Margie Pride described the many community engagement programs of Memorial Blvd. to XPLOR Residents during XPLOR Laboratory 2015.*

We found the work of Memorial Boulevard to be a convincing exemplar of a ministry dedicated to the world within and beyond the walls of the church. The fellowship hall was filled with community members providing and

enjoying meals; the church made available showers, laundry facilities, offered computer access and had food available for all members of the community. All of the church's events including worship services, bible studies, community meals, prayer groups, and the annual Hunger Hike, brought together neighbors in order to build a true community.

Two XPLOR Residents served with Memorial Boulevard as part of their Community Engagement work—a professional development internship with a community organization, which is a key part of the XPLOR experience. Memorial Boulevard appreciated working with XPLOR and was always careful to focus the energy on the needs and gifts of the local community.



*In August 2017, my newborn son, my mother-in-law, and I worshipped at Memorial Blvd. CC.*

Yet Margie's work had a wideness as well as depth—she was a core trainer with [Reconciliation Ministries](#) and was active in Disciples work at regional and general church levels. These components of her work made her an extraordinary and valuable friend and colleague to me, and to others.

My work as Director of NBA XPLOR often brought me to St. Louis, and I treasured the opportunity to be a guest in her home many times. For me, a big part of the joy of witnessing Margie's ministry, and of being her friend, was her settled gaze on the "good"—the good people she knew and loved through congregational leadership, the good that can come from moving those people into a place of mutual service, the goodness of sharing a table, and of sharing good news, with whomever shows up. I'm grateful for Margie, for her ministry at Memorial Boulevard and across the church, for the ripples of grace she brought to her community during her ministry—and for the chance to number myself among those who were served by her leadership. I'm especially grateful for new joys that may come to her in her retirement.

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*As the health and social services general ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the National Benevolent Association partners with congregations, regions, general ministries, and a variety of Disciples-related health and social service providers to create communities of compassion and care. Founded in 1887 by six women responding to the needs of the day and on their doorsteps, for more than 130 years the NBA has continued to serve "the least of these." Learn more at [www.nbacares.org](http://www.nbacares.org).*

