

PNWD DISTRICT ASSEMBLY 2011

# Embracing Joy!

## Spirit, Art and Activism



**New Date: Saturday, Feb. 5, 2011**



Join us for a new, one-day District Assembly format! We expect that this simpler and less expensive format will alternate every other year with the full weekend format (to be next held in Anchorage in 2012). But, there's some real excitement in store this year: we're delighted to welcome Dr. Ysaye Barnwell (*Sweet Honey In the Rock*) who will lead the morning keynote presentation and stir your soul. Full-day registration includes a box lunch, a choice of expressive and investigative workshops in the afternoon, and more. (A "morning only" registration will also be available, which will include the keynote presentation and the District Business Meeting.) Don't miss this very special day of retreat, reflection, renewal and joy.

**Keynote:** Dr. Ysaye Barnwell (see her biography on page 2)

**Date:** **Note Date Change:** Saturday, Feb. 5, 2011

**Time:** Approximately 9 a.m.–5 p.m. (actual details TBA at time of registration).

**Place:** First Unitarian Church, Portland

**Register:** Register after Thanksgiving at: [www.pnwd.org](http://www.pnwd.org)

Due to the entire event being held in the First Unitarian Church facility (and not at a hotel), registration will be limited.

**Lodging:** First Unitarian Bed and Breakfast Program

Make it a Portland weekend and stay with local congregants. A modest financial contribution benefits the church. Visitors are hosted in a variety of accommodations throughout the metro area. Contact: Anne Mabley, 503-288-3530.



First Unitarian Church, Portland  
SW 12th Ave. between Main and Salmon Streets, Portland, OR 97205  
[www.firstunitarianportland.org](http://www.firstunitarianportland.org)

## Dr. Ysaye Barnwell Biography

Dr. Ysaye M. Barnwell a native New Yorker now living in Washington, DC is the only child and perfect blend of her mother, a registered nurse and her father, a classical violinist. Dr. Barnwell studied violin for 15 years beginning at age 2½, and majored in music through high school. With this background, she went on to earn the Bachelor and Master of Science degrees in Speech Pathology (SUNY, Geneseo, 1967, 1968), Doctor of Philosophy in Speech Pathology (University of Pittsburgh, 1975), and the Master of Science in Public Health (Howard University, 1981). In 1998, Dr. Barnwell was awarded the Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree by her alma mater, SUNY Geneseo. For over a decade, Dr. Barnwell was a professor at the College of Dentistry at Howard University, after which she conducted community based projects in computer technology and the arts, and administered health programs at Children's Hospital National Medical Center and at Gallaudet University in Washington, DC. Dr. Barnwell joined Sweet Honey In The Rock® in 1979 and her training as a Sing Language Interpreter, led her to facilitate the group's practice of making concerts accessible to the Deaf through American Sign Language interpretation.

Dr. Barnwell appears as a vocalist and/or instrumentalist on more than thirty recordings with Sweet Honey In The Rock and other artists. She has, for the past thirty years, spent much of her time off stage working as a master teacher and choral clinician in African American cultural performance. Her workshop *Building a Vocal Community®: Singing in the African American Tradition* has, during the past twenty-five years, been conducted on three continents, making her work in the field a significant source of inspiration for both singers and non-singers, a model of pedagogy for educators, and cultural activists and historians.

Dr. Barnwell has been a commissioned composer on numerous choral, film, video, dance and theatrical projects including Sesame Street, Dance Alloy of Pittsburgh, David Rousseve's Reality Dance Company, The New Spirituals Project, GALA Festival Choruses, MUSE: Cincinnati's Women's Chorus, The Steel Festival: Art of an Industry (Bethlehem, PA), and The King's Singers in England. In 1996 she was awarded the Bessie Award for her score *Safe House: Still Looking*, commissioned by Liz Lerman Dance Exchange. The year 2001 saw the premiere of the work *Suite Death*, a setting of four poems by Langston Hughes for baritone, choir and orchestra, commissioned by the Plymouth Music Series in Minneapolis, MN. In Feb. 2003, the Choral Arts Society of Washington, DC premiered *Truth Pressed to Earth Shall Rise*, a choral work, in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Most recently, she was commissioned by the Waterbury Symphony Orchestra (Waterbury, CT) to compose a musical setting for Marilyn Nelson's epic poem *Fortune's Bones: The Manumission Requiem*. This cantata premiered on May 9, 2009. Barnwell's music, published by Barnwell's Notes, Inc. and distributed by The Musical Source, Washington, DC has been performed and recorded by numerous choral ensembles and individual artists as well as Sweet Honey In The Rock.

In addition to these endeavors, Dr. Barnwell is an actress whose credits include voice-over narration for film, video and radio productions including the NPR documentary: *W.C. Handy's Blues*, appearances in the film *Beloved*, directed by Jonathan Demme, and the TV show *A Man Called Hawk*. She is producer of Sweet Honey's twenty-fifth anniversary recording, *...TWENTY-FIVE...*, and *Endings and Beginnings: Sweet Honey In The Rock Community Chorus*. Her workshop *Building a Vocal Community®* has been produced as a boxed instructional set: *Singing in the African American Tradition*. Volume Two of this set was released in June 2009 marking the 25th year of the workshop and outreach to ever expanding audiences. She is editor of, *Continuum: The First Songbook of Sweet Honey In The Rock*. Her first children's book, *No Mirrors In My Nana's House*, illustrated by Synthia Saint James and published by Harcourt, was released in 1998. A second children's book, *We Are One*, illustrated by Brian Pinckney and published by Harcourt, was published in spring of 2008. In October 2000, Sounds True released *UM HMM*, a feast of personal and traditional African American stories, poems and songs for children produced by Windhorse Productions.

Three axioms have proven significant in Barnwell's life.

**To whom much is given, much is required. As one door closes, another door opens. Everything matters.**