

Rev. Tarsha W. Banister, D.Min.

Executive Director, Wisdom Keepers, Hope Seekers | Howard University School of Divinity

Rev. Dr. Tarsha W. Banister is a minister, educator, and program strategist whose work sits at the intersection of faith, education, and public health. For twenty years, she has led federally funded initiatives that strengthen public systems and improve community outcomes, with particular depth in grant management, cross-sector partnership development, and large-scale program implementation. Across every chapter of her career, her focus has remained constant: equipping institutions and leaders to serve their communities faithfully and effectively.

At Howard University School of Divinity, Dr. Banister directs Wisdom Keepers, Hope Seekers, a Lilly Endowment-funded collaborative uniting historically Black theological institutions to prepare and sustain the next generation of pastoral leaders. Grounded in Howard Thurman's vision of Beloved Community, her leadership reflects a commitment to honoring the legacy of these institutions while equipping them to meet the evolving needs of students, churches, and communities.

Before coming to Howard, Dr. Banister served as Faith and Health Education Manager at the Faith COMPASS Center at Wake Forest University School of Divinity, advising executive leadership, healthcare systems, and faith communities on grant-funded programming in public health preparedness and equity. Earlier, at the Old North State Medical Society, she co-developed North Carolina's inaugural HIV & Faith Ambassador Initiative, bringing physicians, public health professionals, and faith leaders together around culturally responsive programming.

Ordained in 2019 by the Rowan Baptist Association, Dr. Banister was formerly affiliated with the General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and now serves as an Associate Minister at Mount Carmel Baptist Church in Washington, D.C. She holds a Doctor of Ministry from Duke Divinity School, a Master of Divinity from Wake Forest University School of Divinity, a Master of Science in Early Childhood Studies and Adult Education from Walden University, and a Bachelor of Science from North Carolina Central University. She also serves as a member of the National Alumni Council of Duke University School of Divinity.

She is married to T. Ashby Banister III and is the proud mother of two children and a son-in-love.