

SCHOOL FOR DEACONS & DEACONESS
DEACON HOLLOWAY COATS, JR PRESIDENT

2026 CONGRESS THEME:

"UNITED IN CHRIST: "GROWING TOGETHER TO SERVE
GOD" (EPHESIANS 4:16)

TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2026 @7:00 – 9:00PM

**Course Title: Servants of Christ Church -
The Silent Ligaments**

National Baptist Deacons Convention of America, Inc. & its Auxiliaries



Deacon Curtis M. Smith Jr. President



Dr. Mary Lomas
Women's Auxiliary President

Save the Date

92ND ANNUAL SESSION
July 20-24, 2026



Host
General Baptist Deacons Association of Washington, D.C.
& its auxiliaries
Deacon Holloway Coats, Jr. President

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Registration Info:
<https://book.paskey.com/go/NATBAPTISTDEACONS2026>
www.nationalbaptistdeaconsconvention.org

Welcome



- Greetings
 - Moderator
- Now what is a Ligament?
 - Opening Narrative
 - Biblical exposition
 - Metaphorical teaching (anatomy & ministry)
 - Practical application for service
- Who are Today's Facilitators: Meet the team.

Session Facilitators In Order of Presentation

Deacon Holloway Coats, Jr. – Foundation & Readiness (Feet & Ankles)
Strength, Movement & Growth (Legs)

Deacon Rosalyn Jones Fountain – Unity & Burden-Bearing (Hips)

Deacon Cynthia Prather – Service in Action (Arms, Wrist, and Hands)

Deaconess Yvonne (Butterfly) Harris – Flexibility & Joint Holders

Deacon John Mills – Alignment & Posture (Spine)

Deacon Al Stewart – Support & Submission (Neck)

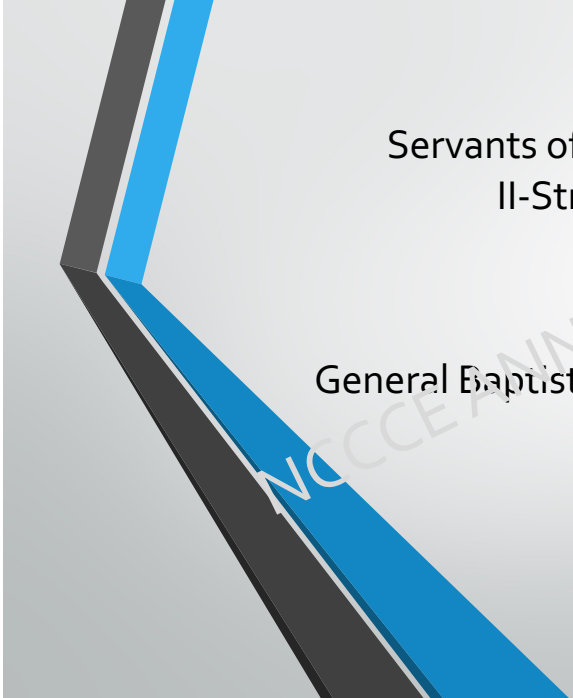
Deacon Holloway Coats – Employs Wisdom, Direction & Authority (Head)

Servants of Christ's Church: the Silent Ligaments I-Foundation & Readiness (Feet & Ankles)

Presenter: Deacon Holloway Coats
General Baptist Deacons Association of DC & Vicinity


Ministry: Foundation, Readiness, Prevents collapse Balance (Feet & Ankles)

- Pivots vision into action Prov 4:26; Ps 18:36
- Fitted with readiness & Flexibility Eph 6:15
- Cultivated strength in faith Acts 3:7-8
- Walk with integrity & responsiveness Prov. 4:26
- Burden bearers - heavy load carriers Ps 18:35-36
- Gal 6:2



Servants of Christ's Church: the Silent Ligaments II-Strength, Movement, and Growth (Legs)

Presenter: Deacon Holloway Coats
General Baptist Deacons Association of DC & Vicinity



Ministry: Strength, Movement & Growth (Legs)

- Supports steady movement
- Runs with endurance
- Takes ordered steps
- Stands strong in the Lord
- Advances unity and mission
- Bridges leadership & laity
- Acts 6:7; Eph 4:5;
- Heb 12:1
- Ps 37:23
- Eph 6:10-11
- Matt 28:19-20
- 1 Cor 12:12-27

NCCCE DEACONS & DEACONESS TRAINING III – UNITY and Burden Bearing (Hips) May 19, 2026

Facilitator: Deacon Rosalyn Jones Fountain
General Baptist Deacons Association of DC and Vicinity

Unity and Burden Bearing (Hips)

Focus Scriptures:

Numbers 11:16-17 (NIV)

¹⁶The LORD said to Moses: "Bring me seventy of Israel's elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people. Have them come to the tent of meeting, that they may stand there with you. ¹⁷I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take some of the power of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them. They will share the burden of the people with you so that you will not have to carry it alone.

Galatians 6:2 (NIV)

²Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Shared Leadership and Collective Strength

Shared and collective leadership in a church refers to a collaborative model where pastoral authority and decision-making are distributed among a team of leaders (such as an elder board or ministry council) rather than resting solely on a single senior pastor. This approach empowers both staff and laypeople, distributing the workload and leveraging diverse spiritual gifts.

Shared leadership is about engaging teams and sharing the responsibility of leadership with others to maximize success. Shared leadership embraces the idea that leadership is a role and not a position assigned to one person.

The transition from a top-down model to a shared structure draws heavily on the early church and biblical principles:

- The theological understanding is that no single individual possesses all the gifts needed to run a church. Mutual submission and shared responsibility reflect the diverse, interdependent nature of the body of Christ.
- Shared leadership is often viewed as a reflection of the collaborative nature of the Trinity, practicing mutual influence and collective agency

Benefits of Shared Leadership

- **Prevents Burnout:** Distributing pastoral responsibility protects pastors from the overwhelming weight and expectations of modern ministry.
- **Balanced Perspectives:** A team naturally compensates for individual blind spots, unconventional behavior, and weaknesses, resulting in wiser decision-making.
- **Layperson Empowerment:** It mobilizes the wider congregation, transforming passive attendees into active co-responsible disciples.
- **Crisis Management:** Different leaders can step in to handle specific crises based on their specific gifts or emotional capacity before it becomes a churchwide problem/disruption.

Bearing Responsibility Together

- **It takes Teamwork.** Teamwork is essential to the vitality and life of the church. One person cannot do it all.
- The Christian life is designed to be a **shared experience of grace** rather than an isolated, independent struggle.
- The goal is to be attentive to one another's needs; to be watchful as we get to know one another better; to better sense when someone is struggling, and to cultivate a climate in our fellowship where people can talk about their burdens.
- All of us can be tempted to look down on someone struggling, rather than seeking to lift them up. We roll our eyes, we label things 'drama', we minimize hurts, we determine certain burdens not worth our time, or we write people off as 'un-helpable'. But **WE** in turn don't receive the same response from God!
- Sometimes burden bearing simply means a willingness to listen to someone who's struggling. That's how we make a difference in the lives of our church members and strengthen the mission and goals of the Church.

Thank you for your attendance.

Servants of Christ's Church: the Silent Ligaments

IV. Service in Action – Arms, Wrist, & Hands

Deacon Cynthia Prather

May 19, 2026

Scriptures

- Psalm 90:17
- *"And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it."*
- Proverbs 31:20
- *"She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy."*

What does this mean?

- Reaching, carrying, and supporting others
- *Visible* acts of compassion and ministry

Psalm 90 – Context

- 1-2 *Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou are God.*
- 10 *The days of our years are three score and ten; and if by reason of strength, they be fourscore years, yet is their strength, labour, and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away*
- 12 *So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*

Psalms 90: 17

And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

Work of our Hands: Deacons' Work

- Support the pastor
- Provide spiritual guidance/example for the church
- Set up and serve communion
- Visit the sick-and-shut in; the bereaved.
- Support church/family members for home going services/celebrations of life
- Teach
- Recruitment
- Represent the church in outside functions

Hands and Heart Together

"So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

Scripture 2: Proverbs 31

- The Virtuous Woman scripture.....
- *"Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies....."*

Scripture 2: Proverbs 31:20

"She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy."

Visible acts of compassion and ministry

Giving to the Needy: Easy

- Regular church collections
- Holiday baskets and other gifts/donations
- Requests from organizations/other churches

Giving to the Needy: More Challenging

- People on the street/outside of the stores & gas stations
- Mail/phone solicitations
- Tight times

How Would You/Your Church Respond?

As reported in the HUFFPOST, Nov 14, 2025

A woman tested faith centers' willingness to donate formula. What she found says a lot about Charity in the US.

Scenario:

Kentucky woman "tested" local churches and social organizations by calling and requesting a can of formula for her crying baby (it was only a test; not an actual situation)

Findings:

42 churches/organizations contacted

- 33 said no, or only had longer-lead support connections rather than a rapid response
- 9 said yes
- 1 pastor, responded: I'll see if I can get somebody to do this. We can do this. ... Tell me what the formula is called in case I have to go get it because I'm a great-grandfather. What's it called?"

Which group would you/we be in?

Older Deacons at Work – Can I Still Serve?

Issue:

Can't do what we used to do.

Strategies:

Use mail – send cards and notes!

Use the technology – call, text, zoom!

Car pool

Other?

Remember: You may not be able to do everything, but you can do something.

Giving to the Poor/Needy - Guidelines

- God loves a cheerful giver.
- Give from your abundance and as a sacrifice.
- Giving to the poor/needy can be giving of your time, talent, and/or money.
- God knows your heart. Accept that we can't give every time.
- Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Even if you can't give money, you can give something – a smile, a kind word, referral to local agency.

Service in Action Summary – Using Our Hands

- God calls us to use our *hearts* and *hands* to serve by reaching, carrying, and supporting others.
- As deacons, deaconess, and Christian followers we are called to do visible acts of compassion and ministry.
- Using our hands is action-oriented – giving of our time, our talent, and our resources.



Servants of Christ's Church: the Silent Ligaments
V-Flexibility and Lift (Shoulders)
Deaconess Yvonne "Butterfly" Harris
May 19, 2026

- **Serving with humility and adaptability**
- **Lifting others without seeking self-glory**

Scriptures:

Galatians 5:13
1 Corinthians 10:33
2 Corinthians 4:5

Shoulder

Your shoulder is the most mobile joint in the human body, but its incredible range of motion leaves it susceptible to injury. It connects the upper arm bone (humerus), shoulder blade (scapula), and collar bone (clavicle).

➤ **Galatians 5:13 (New Living Translation (NLT))**

You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love.

➤ **1 Corinthians 10:33 (NIV)**

Even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.

New Living Translation (NLT)

I, too, try to please everyone in everything I do. I don't just do what is best for me; I do what is best for others so that many may be saved.

➤ **2 Corinthians 4:5 (NLT)**

You see, we don't go around preaching about ourselves. We preach that Jesus Christ is Lord, and we ourselves are your servants for Jesus' sake.

2 Corinthians 4:5 (NIV)

For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. We have been set free, but how we use this freedom is what makes the difference. As followers of Jesus Christ, we have been set free!

Christians are instructed to use their freedom to humbly and selflessly serve one another through love.

Key Themes

- **True Freedom:** Highlights that freedom in Christ liberates people from the burden of the law and sin, but it is not a license to indulge in worldly or sinful desires.
- **Active Service:** Rather than turning freedom inward, believers are called to redirect it outward, focusing on the needs of others.
- **Love as the Foundation:** Serving one another in love is portrayed as the ultimate fulfillment of the law.

The Power of Humble Adaptable Service.

- Selfless Focus: Humility ensures your service remains focused on the people you are helping, rather than seeking personal recognition.
- Continuous Learning: Being adaptable means you are willing to embrace new methods and pivot when the unexpected happens, ensuring your support is always relevant.
- Deep Empathy: Putting aside your own ego, you can understand and meet the true needs of those you serve.
- Resilience: When faced with obstacles, an adaptable mindset prevents frustrations and allows you to find creative solutions.

How to Put it Into Practice

- Listen intentionally
- Embrace feedback
- Focus on the outcome
- Take responsibility

Living a life of service and humility pleases God and brings joy and fulfillment. It shifts our focus from self-centered ambitions to the well-being of others, creating a ripple effect of love and compassion.

Lifting others without seeking self-glory.

Lifting others through service, compassion, and bearing one another's burdens.

Matt 23:23 emphasizes that serving others is equivalent to serving Christ.

Lifting others without seeking self-glory is the purest form of service, shifting the focus from personal ego to genuine empowerment. It requires operating with humility, ensuring that those you support receive the credit, the resources, and the spotlight to truly shine on their own.

Key Principles:

- Lead from the background: True impact doesn't require a megaphone. By providing guidance, resources, and constructive feedback, you empower others to take ownership of their success.
- Practice silent generosity: Acts of kindness lose a bit of their magic when they are used to build on your own brand. Give your time, energy, and resources unconditionally, without needing an audience or public recognition.
- Cultivate Ego-Free Mentorship: Celebrate the accomplishments of others as if they were your own. Step back and let peers, mentees, or team members take the podium when their products succeed.

Follow the “Invisible Hand” Philosophy

- Support people so effectively that they achieve on their own momentum. As the famous leadership concept goes, we rise by lifting others, knowing that the ultimate reward is the collective growth of your community.
- “You rise by lifting others, not by standing taller than them.”
- True leadership isn't about outshining people- It's about empowering them. Your influence grows every time you help someone else rise.

Practical Ways to Serve Others

- Acts of Kindness: Small acts of kindness can have a significant impact.
 - * Offer a listening ear to a friend in need
 - * Lend a helping hand to a neighbor or Smile at a stranger.These seemingly insignificant gestures can make a significant difference in someone's life.

- Volunteer Your Time: Find a cause or organization that aligns with your passions and dedicate some time to serving there.
 - * Whether helping at a local food bank,
 - * Mentoring youth or visiting the elderlyYour Time and Presence can be a great blessing.

- Share your resources: If you have been blessed with abundance, consider how you can share your resources with those in need. This could be through:
 - * financial donations
 - * providing meals for families in crisis OR giving away items you no longer need.

- Encourage and uplift: Words Have Power!
 - * Use your words to encourage and uplift those around you.
 - * Write a note of appreciation
 - * Speak words of affirmation or Pray for someone struggling.

SUMMARY

- The goal is to LIFT Jesus Christ as Lord!!
 - Proclaim the greatness of Jesus Christ!
 - Lift others without seeking self-glory.
 - Take eyes off self and serve one another in humility and love.
 - Serve with humility and adaptability.
-
- AMEN

Servants of Christ's Church: The Silent Ligaments

Alignment and Posture (The Spine)

By Deacon John Mills

Tuesday, May 19, 2026

Scripture: Titus 2:2-4

2 That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.

3 The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;

4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children...

The Spine Alignment and Posture

- Structural support
- Holds the body upright
- Leads to upright conduct and Godly example

The Spine Flexibility: Movement and Action

To respond to sudden crisis
in the church and effectively address
the pressing need

The Spine: Protection! Guarding What Is Important

- Guarding the harmony and unity of the church.
- Identifying and recognizing the need to prevent division and address poverty needs of members.

The Spine A Symbol of Fortitude: The Spinal Backbone of the Church

Providing courage and resilience to carry out acts of mercy, stand firm in Faith, and deliver heart-felt services to the church and the congregation in a humble and unselfish manner.

The Spine as Silent Ligament – Summary

- Structural Support – Holds the body upright
- Flexibility - Allows for movement and action
- Protection – Guards what is important
- Fortitude - Provides spinal backbone of the church

The Spine as Silent Ligament - Conclusion

- Churches need deacons and deaconesses to stand upright and be properly aligned with the word of God.
- It's a walk of faith every day. Willing to work for the Lord until he comes.
- Matthew 6:33 and Hebrew 11:6 – *But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, for He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

Washington DC Congress of Christian Education Deacons Training Group 7: The Importance of the NECK in the SERVICE of the Body of Christ

Washington DC Congress of Christian Education

Tuesday, 19 May 2026

Presented by: Deacon Al Stewart
(General Baptist Deacons Association)



Group 7: Neck Support and Submission

- Scriptural References: Job 41: 22
- *[In his neck remaineth strength, and sorrow is turned into Joy before him*
- New Testament: Hebrews 13: 17
- *[Obey them that have rule over you and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give an account. That they may do it with joy and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you.]*
 - *Faithful Support to the Pastor
 - *Respect for Spiritual Authority
 - *Ensuring the Smooth flow of Direction from the Head to Body

Neck Explained:

- The NECK serves as the central coordination between the brain (head) and the rest of the body:
- The critical connection for nerves, blood vessels, and airways:
- The Ultimate crossroads for your survival, mobility, and communication
- Ephesians 4:15

(Christians should speak the truth with love, growing in maturity to become more like Christ, the head of the church.)

Neck Example

- (Stubbornness and Rebellion)
- Stiff Neck
- --An Ox needs a goad to guide him. If you as a Deacon refuse to follow direction, you as Stephen would say, are stiff-necked.
- The yoke on the neck is a symbol of following the Will of God through his manservant.
- The book of Proverbs instructs the believers to bind parental or pastoral teachings around the neck as a sign of wisdom.
- A Deacon's wisdom and strength in following the teachings manifested in the head and moves to the body to serve by virtue of the neck.

Following Sound Leadership

- The Pastor is the Head of the church. The Deacons carry out the assignments or duties as assigned with the members of the body.
- They are to work in harmony, not out in front of or against the Pastor, but in humility and spiritual temperament that flows to the rest of the congregation.
- If the neck is not aligned; the message is distorted between the head and before it can get to the body.
- When the head and body are misaligned, a common spiritual consequence is to lose your vertical connection line of service.

Misalignment

- When confusion sets in due to misalignment of the head, neck, and body, then as a consequence—The deacons aren't talking to the Pastor, message of the Gospel gets lost, and leadership is severed.
- The neck is the bridge, and when it is out of alignment with the neck, your system gets stretched, ministry stalls, members grow weary, confusion and fog enters in, and participation suffers.
- Deacons must hold up the head with strength and energy and protect the head from unnecessary obstacles that can crowd out the programs of church growth messages, the teaching of the Gospel, caring for the elderly, praying for the sick, and training of the youth.

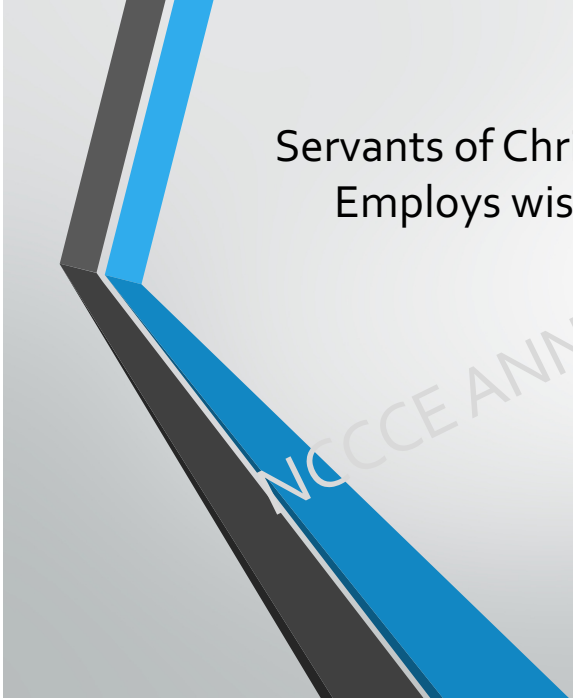
Conclusion:

- The neck is vital in ensuring what flows from the head is pure and is not out of line, causing a weight imbalance where individuals can fall or get sidetracked from their journey.
- Each Servant Leader has a part to play: The Head, Neck, and Body
- They should not be in competition.
- The neck is a place of strength from historic battles, to placing relics of valor from victory, the neck allows a smooth flow of information.

?Questions?


Summary

- How has the vision and message from leadership of your church been distorted from the smooth flow of message and ideas to the body?
- Is it important to church leadership to work in harmony with a clearly defined church leadership matrix and order of authority?
- What recommendations would you bring to your church leader to ensure the message flow from top to bottom is not obstructed between the Pastor and the Membership?
- As a Deacon, should you be a force multiplier in support of the vision for the church, or develop your own path for operations and inform the Pastor of your and your ministries plans?



Servants of Christ's Church: The Silent Ligaments Employs wisdom, direction & authority (Head)

Presenter: Deacon Holloway Coats
General Baptist Deacons Association of DC & Vicinity



Ministry: Employs, wisdom, direction & authority (Head)

- Speaks with sound mind
- Seeks wisdom
- Follows divine order as Christ follows God
- Helps body stay joined
- Ensures body is nourished
- Titus 2:1
- James 1:5
- 1 Cor 11:3
- Eph 4:15-16
- Col 2:19

The End



Thank
you...

Questions
&
Answers

Closing
remarks &
Prayer

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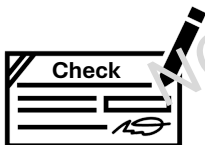
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