



## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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### **Local Religious Leader Brings New Seminary Program to Tampa** *Open House for Future Interfaith Ministers Slated for Feb. 6 at Esperanza Interfaith Center*

**Jan. 18, 2011 (Tampa, Fla.)** – Esperanza Interfaith Center and Seminary will host an open house on Sunday, Feb. 6, from 4 to 6 p.m., at 1217 Leisure Ave. Rev. Maria Pierre, the center's ordained interfaith minister, invites spiritually minded individuals from all faiths to join in this event focusing on the seminary's minister training program.

Guests will meet the program instructors while obtaining information about the all-inclusive service of interfaith ministry. As non-denominational leaders and counselors, trained interfaith ministers support the spiritual needs of individuals, couples, and families of all faiths and beliefs.

"I am delighted to bring this groundbreaking ministerial training to the Tampa bay region because our area has many diverse families with an interfaith component," said Rev. Pierre, who received her interfaith training through the New Seminary of the United Kingdom, at St. James Church, a 500-year-old church in London. "This inaugural program in Tampa is designed to offer the highest quality interfaith training for visionary leaders."

Rev. Pierre, along with area faith leaders from various traditions, will provide ample information about the seminary program during the open house. Curriculum will include monthly classroom work and study groups, visitations to local churches and temples, shamanic circles, structured reading of sacred texts, academic compositions, and group spiritual direction. A fluent speaker of English and Spanish, Rev. Pierre offers bilingual coursework. Classes and study groups are in English, but students wishing to read and write their work in Spanish, may do so. This year's coursework will be conducted on-site, but Rev. Pierre plans to expand the seminary to offer distance learning to students outside the Tampa area in 2012.

"To see religious prejudice and bigotry melt away, and to watch dogma and differences be set aside for peaceful collaboration and joyful service, is a dream come true for me," said Rev. Pierre.

Rev. Pierre graduated from the prestigious Harvard University, where she earned her Bachelor's degree in Sociology. She honed her counseling skills for several years in social work and later became an ordained minister through the New Seminary of the United Kingdom. In addition to serving as spiritual director at Esperanza Interfaith Center, Rev. Pierre's affiliates include the Association of Interfaith Ministers, The Spiritual Directors' Association, and The Hillsborough County Clergy Association.

Esperanza Interfaith Center is a complete source for spiritual advisory, counseling, interfaith wedding services, and celebration services. The center is committed to serving all who seek a personally meaningful experience of connection with the Sacred, whether within or outside of an established religious tradition.

Learn more about the seminary and register at: <http://www.esperanzainterfaithcenter.com/seminary.html>.  
For further details regarding Esperanza Interfaith Center's services and events, please contact Rev. Pierre at 813-293-9410 or e-mail [revmpierre@esperanzainterfaithcenter.com](mailto:revmpierre@esperanzainterfaithcenter.com).

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**Esperanza Interfaith Center: 1217 Leisure Ave., Tampa FL 33613**  
*~ Boundless Spirituality and Joyful Celebration*  
**www.EsperanzaInterfaithCenter.com**