Reverend Dr. Denise Smartt Sears is a native of Brooklyn, New York. She currently serves as District Superintendent of the Metropolitan District of the New York Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. In her role as the district superintendent, Sears is responsible for guiding the spiritual disciplines of the faith, building relationships amongst the clergy, and increasing the vitality of 62 congregations throughout the Bronx, Manhattan, Staten Island, and Westchester. Prior to this position, Rev. Sears served as a lead pastor for 23 years throughout the New York Conference. Under her leadership two congregations united to establish the New Rochelle United Methodist Church.

Sears seeks to unite individuals from various socio economic and cultural backgrounds while leading them in faithful relationships with Christ. She is passionate about living out the challenge of being a church of “Open Hearts, Open Minds, and Open Doors.” Rev. Sears is a clergy coach, and a congregational growth facilitator. She designed and implemented the Social Entrepreneurial Undergraduate Project, at Drew University; launched the pilot for the New York Conference Eight-Year Assessment Tool for over 300 clergy of the conference; and authored the 2019 United Methodist Women Spiritual Growth Leader’s and Participant’s Guide. The Commission on Race and Religion has awarded Rev. Sears grants to address culture inclusion within the church.

Rev. Sears holds a B.S. from Dillard University, New Orleans, Louisiana, an M.S. from Bank Street College of Education, New York, New York, and the M.Div. from Drew University, Madison, New Jersey. She earned her D.Min from Drew University in Congregational Growth and Development.

Rev. Sears and her husband, Wendell T. Sears are active in their Westchester community, and they are the proud parents of two sons.