



The Connection Newsletter



Connectional Lay Council The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

September 2019 Edition

Joseph King Davis Jr, Editor



Words From Our President

Dr. Mary J. Matthews

Grace and Peace unto all of you!

It's harvest time, a time to celebrate our many blessings that God has bestowed upon us as we serve in lay ministry. There is no better time to give thanks for how God has blessed the AME Zion Church than on October 20, 2019, "Lay Sunday," the anniversary of our beloved Zion "The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Hold on to your seats on Lay Sunday, we are going to raise the roof with incredible praise all across Zion. As you plan a program of evangelism, use all age groups in planning and participating in the Lay Celebration. Celebrate the laity's service to the local church and in the community. The suggested Lay Sunday worship bulletin has been posted on the Connectional Lay Council web site (connectionallaycouncil.org) under the Resources Tab.

The Lay Sunday offering goal is to exceed \$50,000. The time frame is August 1, 2019 – July 31, 2020. We will provide additional avenues for giving this year - Givelify and a Go Fund Me Page; and of course, the churches will still mail their contributions to the CLC office. All churches are asked to support Connectional Lay Sunday with a special offering. Please make all checks payable to the Connectional Lay Council and mail to Connectional Lay Council PO Box 26770 Charlotte, NC 28221-6770.

This year the Lay Sunday offering will support our schools in Liberia, the AME ZION University, AME Zion Academy along with supporting the major restoration project happening at Mother AME Zion Church to help restore damage to the inside of the structure to restore the beauty of our historical church. Thank you for all you will do to bless others through the ministry of the Connectional Lay Council

Ms. Lele Davis, Convocation chair and the Steering committee are full of excitement as plans are moving full speed ahead in developing an educational forum to help prepare General Conference delegates, alternates and interested persons for the up-coming General Conference. This meeting promises to be a great learning experience and full of fellowship. This is a great time for laity and clergy to come together to view and discuss legislation to be presented during the General Conference, meet and talk with candidates and much more. We are planning just for you, so we are looking forward to seeing you there!

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**News from Your First Vice President
Leondras “Lele” Davis
September 2019**



Greetings CLC Family!

It is my prayer that all is well the Lay Councils in your Episcopal area! The CLC Convocation (March) and the 2020 General Conference (July) of the AME Zion Church are rapidly approaching. As laity, let us do our part by praying for our leaders on all levels, boards and organizations, our churches and for each other! Remember the words penned by the songwriter....” I Need You and You Need Me, We’re All Apart of God’s Body.” There is one body with many parts and to be successful and achieve our goals, the parts of the body must work together. Thanks to all of you for what you are doing to move your Lay Council forward. As we implement the 3rd component of our theme: The Freedom Church: Retooling Our People, let’s also remember to keep your LC members engaged as well as include and encourage your YA’s to sit at the planning table. In planning your LC academy, ask: What can the Lay Council do to “Retool Our People?”

Eleventh Quadrennial Lay Convocation



Have you marked your calendar, and are you making plans to attend the CLC Convocation? In case you have not heard, the dates are **March 19-21, 2020** and will be held at the Simon Temple AME Zion Church, Fayetteville, NC.

Early registration is \$135.00 by February 15, 2020 . After February 15th, registration will be \$150.00. You may print a registration form from the CLC website (www.connectionallaycouncil.org). We are encouraging all laity, General Conference delegates, both clergy and laity to attend.

You will have the opportunity to hear from our Episcopal and General Officer candidates.

The Steering Committee is hard at work to make the CLC Convocation exciting and informative. President Matthews has been busy working with Reverend Dr. George McKain on lodging, online registration and supervising the work as the committee develops the program. Mr. Hank Dobson, Host Regional Director, and his team are making plans for our arrival. Some very important information will be presented from Dr. Sheila Quintana and the CLC Legislation Committee. General Officer candidates and Episcopal candidates will be invited to participate in our forum. Mrs. Dorothea Stevens and the CLC/YA’s are also hard at work in their planning as well. Our Education Committee under the guidance of Dr. Joyce Edwards is planning something interesting and educational for us...you don’t want to miss this! Chaplain William

Manning and the Prayer team are organizing Morning Prayer via conference calls this year. Stay tuned! We are excited about the speakers that are planning to participate during the Convocation. The Prayer Breakfast is a Heritage theme, so please bring African attire. We will have the Challenge Luncheon and the kick-off of the Bishop George J. Leake, III Scholarship Endowment Luncheon. Something new for the Convocation is the Candidates' Breakfast. Every candidate seeking an office in the A.M.E. Zion Church will be invited to attend and participate. ***“Projecting, Preparing, Planning – for Empowered Participation”*** is the Convocation theme. The CLC will partner with the Children’s Advocacy Center (Human Trafficking) for the CLC Community Outreach. Ms. Queen Degraphenreid will provide us with more information on our involvement and support for this community project. The lodging information will be shared as soon as it is available. Transportation will be provided to and from the Fayetteville Regional Airport only. Mr. Hank Dobson, Host Regional Director will be glad to assist you with your travel needs. If you know of persons that would like to be a vendor, spaces are first come, first reserved. Please contact Dorothy Gill Smith @ DGSmith8091@gmail.com for vendor information. We ask that you continue to disseminate this information and encourage the members in your episcopal district to attend. If you have questions or concerns, please contact Lele Davis at CLC.FVP@gmail.com.

Let Us Hear From You!

What are your upcoming LC academies, events and programs in the local church, District, Conference or Episcopal area that we can include on the CLC website? Please take a minute to share them. If your LC has plans for Connectional Lay Day, please send the information as soon as possible. This is a great way to communicate with all of Zion via the website at no cost!!! Please use the form and include your contact information should there be a need for additional information and/or to avoid the delay in posting information.

If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Lele Davis (704.562.0402) or CLC.FVP@gmail.com



Lay Council Convocation

2020 QUADRENNIAL

HOSTED BY EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

(March 19-21 2020)

SAVE THE DATE

ADVANCE REGISTRATION BEFORE FEB. 15, 2020	LATE/ONSITE REGISTRATION AFTER FEB. 15, 2020
\$135	\$150

REGISTRATION FORMS MAYBE FOUND ON CLC WEBSITE
LODGING INFORMATION FORTHCOMING

5760 YADKIN ROAD FAYETTEVILLE, NC

LEONDRA "LELE DAVIS", CONVOCATION CHAIR
 HANK DOBSON, HOST REGIONAL DIRECTOR
 DR. MARY MATTHEWS, CLC INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT
 BISHOP KENNETH MONROE, HOST BISHOP
 BISHOP MICHAEL FRENCHER, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

GENERAL CONFERENCE DELEGATES ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND!

2019 Connectional Lay Sunday Offering Appeal

GOAL: TO Exceed \$50,000

It's Harvest time! A time to celebrate our blessings on Lay Sunday with incredible praise as we observe the Anniversary of our denomination, The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

As you plan a program of Evangelism with the assistance of the pastor, use all ages of the laity to help plan and participate in the program on Lay Sunday. Helpful tips and the Lay Sunday bulletin has been posted on the Connectional Lay Council website (connectionallaycouncil.org). Let us continue our tradition of giving to bless others through the Lay Sunday offerings. For God tell us through his word in Luke 6:38 NIV *"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."* We can't beat God giving, because He not only adds, He MULTIPLIES.

This year the Lay Sunday offering will support our schools in Liberia, the AME ZION University, AME Zion Academy along with supporting the major restoration project happening at Mother Zion AME Zion Church to help restore damage to the inside of the structure to restore the beauty of our historical church.

The AME Zion Academy is in need of major financial assistance to help with payment of salaries in arrears for two principals, support for administrative and teachers' salaries, tiling of classrooms and hallways, etc.; while the AME Zion University is in need of financial support with construction underway of a 3 buildings complex comprising 20 classrooms, 21 restrooms, 3 offices, 2 laboratories and storage at a cost of \$350,688.00 (Three hundred fifty thousand, six hundred eighty-eight United States dollars) is underway.

The Connectional Lay Council will provide other avenues for giving this year - Givelify and Go-Fund-me page. Of course, churches can still mail their contributions to the Connectional Lay Council, PO Box 26770, Charlotte, NC 28221-6770.

Thank you for all you do to bless others through the ministry of the Connectional Lay Council.



CLC MEMBERSHIP REPORT

VISION 2021=50,000



EPISCOPAL DISTRICT	MEMBERSHIP CHALLENGE GOAL NUMBER
PIEDMONT	11,500
EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA	11,280
MIDWEST	4,000
NORTH EASTERN	5,270
SOUTH ATLANTIC	5,500
MID ATLANTIC	5,000
ALABAMA FLORIDA	5,150
SOUTHWESTERN DELTA	1,800
WESTERN	500



By Joyce Perry Edwards, M.Ch.Ed, Ph.D.

The Connectional Lay Council theme for 2019-2020 reminds us that we must continually work on enhancing our ability to serve in God's Kingdom. Three areas to retool immediately come to mind: acquiring broader perspectives, enhancing our knowledge base, and acquiring new skills.

Acquiring Broader Perspectives

We need retooling to serve a more diverse world with people who have a broader experience than ever before. Many of us have hurts, prejudices, and culturally-based ideas about what is godly and need release from these to retool our way of looking at the world. Putting on the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:11-18) will help us to retool emotionally to embrace people who do not share our background. Jesus was the exemplar for this disposition when he talked with the Samaritan woman at the well. The belt of truth will help us to discern our cultural biases from the word of God as revealed in the scriptures. The breastplate of righteousness will replace our self-righteousness with the awareness that righteousness is only ascribed to us by God through the salvific grace of the Christ, rendering us full consciousness that we should not "think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think" (Romans 12:3 NRSV). Putting on the shoes of peace will equip us to use honest communication to achieve true peace with our fellowman, rather than a false peace based on the absence of true communication. The shield of faith will give us hope that there is reason to work for the coming day because "we know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to this purpose:" (Romans 8:28 NRSV). We gladly accept the helmet of salvation. It is sometimes heavy, but it gives us that mysterious strength that comes from God enabling us to face whatever is set before us. Lastly, we use "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" for it is the sure spiritual weapon which gives us consistent and sure fortification against all enemies of God, whether these enemies be in our minds or of the world.

Enhancing Our Knowledge Base

If we are to be effective witnesses in a diverse society, it is a certainty that there is no area more important in our knowledge base than our knowledge of the Christian scriptures. So many of us can spout platitudes related to the Christian faith. Few of us have an integrated knowledge of the scriptures that we can share with others. However, we have little to offer the fledgling believer if we do not have in our minds and hearts the truth of God revealed through the holy scriptures.

There is a deception in modern technology related to learning about which we all need to be aware and govern ourselves accordingly. An in-depth knowledge in any area cannot be acquired through passive means—such as looking at a video, watching television, or hearing lectures. In-depth knowledge is only acquired through engaging the brain in active discourse followed by conversation, practice, and in the case of Christian witness, prayer. Therefore, we must continue or resume engagement in Sunday School, Bible Study, and private study of the scriptures. Moreover, our engagement must be serious, not casual as we are given to do in this world with so many distractions.

Acquiring New Skills

Lastly, there are at least two areas of skill development that compel our attention. It probably goes without saying that in the area of technology, we need to be able to use digital means of communication and also production software (word processing, spreadsheet, and multi-media presentation).

Also, because effective work today is done in groups, not by authoritative fiat, we need group leadership skills, including the skills of planning and conducting meetings where all are included in decision-making and contributing their gifts. As Paul so forthrightly stated: "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you'" (1 Corinthians 12:21). The meaning of this statement is exceptionally applicable for us in this the first century of the 3rd millennium.

Connectional Lay Sunday

Order of Service

Instrumental Prelude

Processional – #648 “We’re Marching to Zion”

Call To Worship: "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

Invocation *(congregation in unison)*

O God, we come before you in worship this morning, trusting in your power to create, to sustain and to enable. As we draw near to you at this hour, be with us, Almighty God. Enable us to leave this sanctuary trusting more completely in your power to fill our emptiness, heal our brokenness, and strengthen our faith that we may be effective vessels of witness to the love and joy in your Kingdom. We pray because of and in the name of Jesus the Christ. Amen.

Choral Response – “Into My Heart”

Morning Hymn – #50 “Are Ye Able, Said he Master” or #439 “A Charge to Keep I Have”

Responsive Reading – 1 Peter 4:3, 7-11

Leader: Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same intention (for whoever has suffered in the flesh has finished with sin), so as to live for the rest of your earthly life no longer by human desires but by the will of God.

Congregation: You have already spent enough time in doing what the Gentiles like to do, living in licentiousness, passions, drunkenness, revels, carousing, and lawless idolatry.

Leader: The end of all things is near; therefore be serious and discipline yourselves for the sake of your prayers.

Congregation: Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins.

Leader: Be hospitable to one another without complaining.

Congregation: Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.

Leader: Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ.

All: To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen

The Apostle’s Creed

Affirmation for Laity

We the Active Members of the Connectional Lay Council do solemnly believe, and firmly advocate, and admirably support the following affirmation of Lay Operation.

- We endorse and need an articulate Self Purpose
- We endorse and need open minds, a faith in Christian Religion
- We endorse and need people who understand all sides to questions, for herein is wisdom
- We endorse and need human decency, good manners, humor and compassion, for each must be considered as blessed as we
- We endorse and need openness, truthfulness and honesty
- We endorse and need courage to stand for each creedal, it is our rock of affirmation

Our mission thus remains as stated that of actively involving more people for Peace, Justice, Christian Teaching and Living for the Brotherhood of Man, Under the Fatherhood of God, and the Leadership of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

Scripture Lessons

Old Testament – 1 Samuel 17:20-37

*Gloria Patri

New Testament – Ephesians 6:11-18

The Morning Prayer

Prayer Response *“Lord, prepare me, to be a sanctuary; pure and holy, tried and true. With a spirit, of thanksgiving, I’ll be a living sanctuary, Lord for you!”*

Choral Selection Suggestions: *“Order My Steps” by Glenn Burleigh, “What Shall I Render” by Margaret Douroux, “Completely Yes” by Sandra Crouch, “Field of Souls” by Wayne Watson, “Guide My Feet” (African American Spiritual)*

Ministry of Kindness

Notices/Announcements

Introduction of Speaker

Hymn of Preparation #681 “Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah”

The Lay Sunday Message – Theme: “Retooling for Service as Disciples of Christ”

***Invitation to Christ Discipleship/ Hymn of Invitation** – #433 “I Am Thine, O Lord”

Alter Prayer

Rededication of Laity – “Litany for Rededication of Laity”

Offering Appeal *(including the Lay Sunday appeal)*

Tithes & Offerings *(including the Lay Sunday Offering)*

Offertory Response

***Recessional Hymn** – #680 Onward Christian Laity

Lay Council Closing Prayer: Oh God, our Father, pour out your steadfast love upon us and keep us in your care, now and forever more. Amen.

Choral Amen

A REFLECTION FOR LAITY

Laity Sunday is a day set aside on the church calendar to recognize the very vital work performed by members as keepers of the Flame.

Paul gives us a wonderful description of the mission of the faithful: And he gave some, apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers.

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

That we henceforth be no more children...But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-15)



CONNECTIONAL LAY COUNCIL (C.L.C.)

YOUNG ADULT INITIATIVE (Y.A.I.)

PROPOSED PLAN OF ACTION



Dottie Stevens

dottie_stevens.yai@yahoo.com

The Y.A.I. is a part of the Connectional Lay Council working to include thoughts, plans and inclusion of young adults (primarily ages 22-40) in the AME Zion Church. The Mission of the Y.A.I. is to foster leadership opportunities and provide curriculum-based training to ensure the sustainability and relevance of the Connectional Lay Council in the 21st Century.

The young Adult Initiative Objective: To provide purposeful and meaningful training to equip new, existing and potential church leaders for elevation to all levels of Lay leadership in The A.M.E. Zion Church; to offer a vehicle for dialogue and exchange of ideas for an intergenerational ministry.

To Deepen the Spiritual Life of the Laity (YAI) by implementing spiritual growth academies for young adults; To utilize Young Adult members of the clergy to make available meditations aimed at deepening the spiritual life of the Young Adult lay persons for the CLC website and other publications.

Disseminate information by implementing the CLC Executive Board to champion Young Adult Lay Academies to disseminate relevant information pertaining to Zion Methodism at the regional, conference and district levels; Enhance the CLC Website to technologically enhance communications with Young Adults.

Cultivate Denominational Loyalty by fostering interactions and communication between the young adults and the leadership of the church; engage with young adults to become more involved in policy-making & decisions; raise awareness for an increase in intergenerational ministries and mutually beneficial church experiences.

Expand the Denomination through Education and Evangelism

Promote any other interests of the Kingdom of God

Purpose of Discussion/Calls

To connect with YA's across Zion to become an effective part of the CLC. The goal is to have representation from every Episcopal Region, eventually spreading into every Conference, District, and Local Church. **(Each Regional Lay Council Director was asked to submit the name and information of a young adult or an adult to represent the young adults for their Region).** Currently the YAI is planning and working with the CLC for the 2020 Quadrennial Lay Council Convocation held at Simon Temple, Fayetteville, NC, March 19 - 21, 2020.

We want to open an honest dialogue and express concerns.

Want to know who our young adults are. Cultures are different based on environment (how they grew up) including how you grew up in church, and where they are now in church.

What are young adults looking for in the church?

What would you like to see differently in the 21st Century? What needs to change?

What role do you want the church to have in your life?

As we plan the Y.A.I. Ministry, we must keep the "Main Thing, the Main Thing. The mission of the Church is to make and grow disciples for Jesus Christ.

Have note takers to summarize –then prepare an implementation plan

Suggestion/or Idea to get something started

Goal: Jesus Christ for Every Young Adult at Every Opportunity.

To accomplish this mission, we will use different objectives:

Examples) Outreach, Growth, Discipleship, Leadership, etc.

Below is our plan

OUTREACH

Have events. Fun events designed to draw crowds. During these events, a devotion is given in order to give the attendees a chance to hear the Gospel. (We can never assume that everyone knows about God or knows about the person of Jesus Christ).

GROWTH

Annual Retreats—have great musicians and speakers join us to challenge our YA's to grow in their relationship with God, each other and the seasoned adults.

DISCIPLESHIP

D-Teams: D Teams are Discipleship Groups that meet on a frequent basis. It would consist of small groups. These persons will be challenged to memorize Scripture; make the Bible applicable to their everyday lives; have deeper relationships with God, family and others and to make a difference in the world. In the next 3 to 5 years, hope to have YA groups throughout Zion meeting on a frequent basis.

LEADERSHIP

Another opportunity for Discipleship that is sometimes overlooked, is leadership. Young Adults leading young adults is an awesome concept of ministry that forces the attendees to grow not only socially and mentally but also spiritually.

Each participant is working with the C.L.C. Y.A.I. to bring YA's together: to share their interest; to be Inclusive in planning and developing; to utilize the goals and objectives of the CLC; to become and remain an active participant in the Lay Council

We would love to have the participation of any interested Young Adults throughout Zion. If you would like to be a part of the plan, please contact:

WE WELCOME YOUR VOICE, TALENTS, GIFTS, IDEAS, AND CONTRIBUTIONS WITH OPENED MINDS AND ARMS.

REGIONAL NEWS

Eastern North Carolina Episcopal District

Hank Dowson, Regional Director

Raleigh District Lay Council Community Day/Backpack Give-a-way Event

The Raleigh District Lay Council held its Community Day/Backpack giveaway event August 11, 2019 in Smithfield NC at Mt. Zion AME Zion Church. Rev. Garo Sheats was our host Pastor. We had hot dogs with trimmings, chips, fruit, cookies and assorted beverages.

There were two licensed barbers on hand for free haircuts. We gave away 84 backpacks and school supplies. The Barbers cut 14 heads of hair.

DJ Trelz provided music for this event. Rev. Jason Ruff opened the event with a prayer.

Jennifer Ruff, Wendy Green and Rev. Ulysses Collins was much appreciated as they assisted in preparing the plates. Noah Green and Annie Collins assisted with giving out the backpacks. Our Chefs for the afternoon was Bro. Neil Lassiter from Mt. Zion and Raleigh District Elder Anthony Davis. Many thanks to Mrs. Joyce Cobb, Mrs. Jackie Davis, Mrs. Tameka Sheats and Ms. Maya Davis for helping where help was needed especially with the games.

Pastors present was Rev. Jason Ruff, Rev. Ulysses Collins, Revs. Alan and Gloria Moore, Rev. Dr. Donald Cozart. Rev. Matthews, Rev. Jerry Cobb, Rev. Dr. Rosa Smith-Williams, Rev. Reginald Tyson, Rev. Solomon Cochren. Thank you, Rev. Garo Sheats and family, for your help! Norrington and Union laity, thank you so much for your support. Elder Anthony Davis closed the event with Prayer.

Humbly submitted by Raleigh District Lay Council President Daphne Lloyd Feldman



In the Spotlight



Mr. Jesse Willard Wilcher, a native of Durham, is the fourth of five children born to Swannie and Twillie Wilcher. He is a product of St. Mark A.M.E. Zion Church and serves there now as a committed lay leader. As a child, he participated in many of the ministries for children including the Junior Church, the Sunday School, and the Boy Scouts. As a young adult, he was a Junior Steward, a Cub Scout master, and the coach of the Little League baseball team.

Mr. Wilcher is a graduate of Hillside High School and also an alumnus of Durham Business College, where he majored in business administration. He is a veteran of the U.S. Navy and afterwards served at the Veterans Administration Hospital here in Durham as a nursing assistant. Later he lived in Delaware and was an employee of the Newark Assembly, a Chrysler automobile factory. During his 26 years in Delaware, Mr. Wilcher remained faithful to his rearing and worshipped with a United Methodist Church

and later with an A.M.E. Zion Church, which his brother, Rev. John Wilcher, pastored.

Returning to Durham in 1992, Mr. Wilcher rejoined St. Mark and became a highly contributing member. He is very committed to the ministry of God at St. Mark Church. For 25 years, he served as a member of the Steward Board and became very active with the Lay Council, an auxiliary of the church which is focused on education and service. He served first as 1st Vice President of the Lay Council and afterwards as president. He is in his 10th year of service in this capacity. Mr. Wilcher is also an active member of the S.P. Perry Builders Club, the I.H. Marsh Men's Club, and the Historical and Archives Committee. As a part of the security staff, he gives a welcoming greeting and ready assistance to everyone who enters the church.

Most notably, since 2004, Mr. Wilcher has been the leader of two of the church's outreach ministries: the food pantry, a project of the Lay Council, which he operates with the support of the St. Mark membership; and the Human Dignity Ministry, which he coordinates with the assistance of approximately 25 persons. The Human Dignity ministry provides spiritual and physical food, toiletries, and with coordination with another church auxiliary, clothing to the homeless of Durham every 4th Saturday. It is through Mr. Wilcher's leadership that this ministry which begun in 2004 is sustained with enthusiasm.

Mr. Wilcher's commitment to his work is expressed in St. Mark's Quasquicentennial Souvenir Book. In 2015, he wrote: "My 51 ½ year association with St. Mark has given me values I cherish with my relationship with God and people. I plan to continue this journey until my time on earth is up."

North Eastern Episcopal District

Rhandi Stith, Regional Director

The New York Lay Council Annual Conference Activities 2019

Submitted by Lovell Jackson, Communication Committee Chairperson for the New York Conference Lay Council.

Augustus W. Printz Scholarship Luncheon



The New York Annual Conference was hosted by Greater Centennial A.M.E. Zion Church at the Marriott Hotel in Tarrytown, New York. The luncheon opened with Ms. Rhandi M. Stith, New York Conference Lay Council President as the Mistress of Ceremonies. Ms Katherine Fisher AARP representative gave greetings.

Ms. Lovell Jackson, New York Conference Communications Chairperson read The Statement of Purpose, followed by The Prayer and Grace given by Mrs. Betty Watkins New York Lay Council Chaplain and Mrs. Ruby Figueroa, New York Conference Lay Council 2nd Vice President, introduced the Luncheon Speaker.



Mr. Stephen Monroe a lifelong member of Greater Centennial A.M.E. Zion Church Mount Vernon, New York and a graduate of Livingstone College, Salisbury, NC. Earned a B.S. in Sports Management. He is currently employed at the Intrepid Sea Air & Space Museum as a Warehouse Supervisor. Mr. Monroe's message to the Luncheon attendees was "Staying to Course" He addressed the topic with two main points.

1." It's what you're standing on that keeps you from sinking." The test of character when nobodies around. Perseverance may become your middle name. The actions of today will affect your tomorrow.

2."There's no point in carrying dead weight". It's okay to let people go. Not everyone can walk your walk. Not everyone is going to make it with you. In concluding Mr. Monroe stated every day is a new test, some hard some light. Stay ten toes down and 3 eyes open. The third eye is for conformation; believe it the first time not after it breaks you.



Ms. Fay L. Fagan Augustus W. Printz Scholarship Fund Chairperson presented the Scholarship recipient, Ms Shania Ellison, Mr. Rainford Raffington and Ms Chyanne Stevenson. A total of \$10,000.00 was awarded. The Augustus W. Printz Luncheon ended with Bishop Dennis V. Proctor opening our scholarship appeal and Rev. A. Alfred Carson carrying it out

Lay Council Convocation

The Lay Convocation theme was “Retooling Our People”



The Lay Convocation began with Reflections on Mrs. Marie Herndon Baxter given by Mr. Ira Golden representing The Connectional Lay Council, Mrs. Dottie Stevens representing The North Eastern Region, Ms. Eloise Homer representing The Westchester District and Ms Rhandi Stith The New York Conference. Ms. Angela McNeil, New York Conference Young Adult Initiative Coordinator introduced the Lay Convocation speaker.



Ms. Xellex Z. Rivera is a native of the Bronx, New York and a graduate of Manhattan College, Riverdale NY, with a double Master’s Degree in Counseling and Mental Health Counseling. She is a Licensed Provisional Mental Health Counselor, as well as a Credential Alcohol and Substance Abuse Counselor Trainee in New York State. She is a proud HBCU graduate, Xellex attended Livingstone College, Salisbury, NC with a major in Liberal Arts; English. In 2019, she conferred her third Master’s Degree from Walden University in Philosophy. Ms Rivera currently works as the Program Director

at a New York City Family Shelter in Crown Heights, Brooklyn.

Ms Rivera began her message to the Lay Convocation by focusing on the different generations and ages in the church and it breaks down some of the stereotypes within the church. Her topic “Airplane Mode: **Who is in the Church Today?**” Ms Rivera discussed and gave helpful solutions to **12 reasons why millennials are Over Church**: 1. Nobody’s Listening to Us. 2. We’re Sick of Hearing about Values & Mission Statements. 3. Helping the Poor Isn’t a Priority. 4. We’re Tired of You Blaming the Culture. 5. The “You Can’t Sit With Us” Affect. 6. Distrust & Misallocation of Resources. 7. We Want to Be Mentored, Not Preached At. 8. We Want to Feel Valued. 9. We Want You to Talk to Us About Controversial Issues (Because No One Is) .10. The Public Perception. 11. Stop Talking About Us (Unless You’re Actually Going to Do Something). 12.You’re Failing to Adapt.

In conclusion, Ms. Rivera stated that we can’t keep trying the same thing and wish the millennials to show up, it will not happen. We have to change the way we deliver the service. The God that we preach and teach is the same. However, the way it is delivered has to change. The message was called Airplane Mode. Why? Because the cell phone is design to find a connection. At this point in Zion we are in Airplane Mode. We have two generations that are trying to get connections. They are trying to connect to us but we are stuck in Airplane Mode. Ms Xellex Rivera presentation to the Lay Convocation audience was very interesting and informative.

After the presentation Ms Rhandi Stith, New York Conference Lay Council gave the President’s report. The election of The New York Conference Lay Council officers and District Presidents were held following the report.

The 2019-2020 New York Conference Lay Council Officers and Board Chair



Left to right: Ms Rhandi Stith Conference President, Mr. Charlton Davenport 1st Vice President, Ms Ruby Figueroa 2nd Vice President and Membership Committee Chairperson, Ms Angela McNeil Recording Secretary, Ms Lottie Tann Financial Secretary, Mr. Ira Golden Treasurer, Ms Betty Watkins Chaplain, Ms Eloise Homer President Westchester District, Ms Virginia Montaque President New York City District, Ms Eleanor Poole President Long Island District, Reverend Monica Marshall Board Chair.

The Convocation ended with the Lay Council Theme Song “Onward Christian Laity” and the Lay Council Closing Prayer.

Life Member’s Stoling

The worship service began with The Call to Worship followed by The Invocation, the Congregational Hymn “My Hope is Built On Nothing less”, The Scripture Lesson, The Prayer Hymn “Sweet Hour of Prayer” Bishop Dennis V. Proctor, Presiding Prelate asked for the New York Conference Life Member’s Stoling service to begin by calling the President for the New York Conference Lay Council Ms. Rhandi Stith to come forth.

Ms Rhandi Stith called the names of all persons willing to be stoled as Life Members. Dr. David A. Aiken Sr. came forth to assist in the stoling. All persons to be stoled read the stoling service litany led by Ms Rhandi Stith with background music selection “Lord Prepare Me to Be A Sanctuary”. Bishop Dennis V. Proctor congratulated all the new Life Members at the end of the ceremony.



The New York Conference Lay Council would like to welcome all new Life Members to the Connectional Lay Council of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.



South Atlantic Episcopal District

Loranda Melton, Regional Director

The Columbia-Camden District Lay Celebration – An Occasion Full of Blessings By Loranda Melton

The Columbia-Camden District ended the conference year with yet another blessed Lay Celebration. All roads led to the War Memorial Building in Great Falls for this wonderful occasion. On July 27, 2019. Each year the celebration of the laity is to recognize and honor those persons from each church who go above and beyond the call to promote denominational loyalty and work diligently within their local churches. It was a blessed black and gold affair. Paradise Church Family hosted the event in style. Each Pastor of the District presented and introduced a lay member from their church to receive this prestigious award. One of the highlights is always the numerous prizes that are donated by the Lay Council to be given to laity. Loranda Melton, District President is always looking new and innovative ideas to bring to the celebration. This year proved to be another overwhelming success and a great time was inevitable.

After a deliciously catered meal, President Melton announced the 2018-2019 Lay Person of the Year for the Columbia-Camden District, Andreaasia Brown of Fairview AME Zion Church Great Falls, SC where the Pastor is Reverend Barry Thompson.



District Officers; Left to Right Dr. Robert Scott, Ms. Dequitta Kennedy, Mrs. Loranda Melton, Mr. Myron Truesdale.



GEORGIA CONFERENCE LAY COUNCIL

Mrs. Betty Stephens, Conference President

PRAISE GOD FOR THE GEORGIA CONFERENCE LAY COUNCIL!!!

This year the Georgia Conference has been retooling their ministries! The three districts: Atlanta, Conyers-Wider, and the Augusta have been very busy working together to fulfill the conference goals of membership and ministry. A major achievement this year has been 100% memberships. All churches in the conference have active paid Lay Councils.

All churches have provided Dial soap for the men and women's prison ministry throughout the state of Georgia. To Date, for this year we have approximately 4000 bars to be given as Christmas Gifts. Soap is still being collected for this year. Praise Be To God!

The Georgia Conference La Council is active in Voter Registration, Military Warrior Project, caring for hospitalized children with sickle cell anemia, children who are incarcerated, Dorian victims, and persons in convalescent homes.

Many, Many, thanks for the Leadership of the Presiding Elders, Pastors, Local Presidents, and all members of the Georgia Conference. Continue to be the Wind Beneath the wings of the Conference as we continue to work on binging others to Christ.

THANKS BE TO GOD FOR THE GEORGIA CONFERENCE LAY COUNCIL!

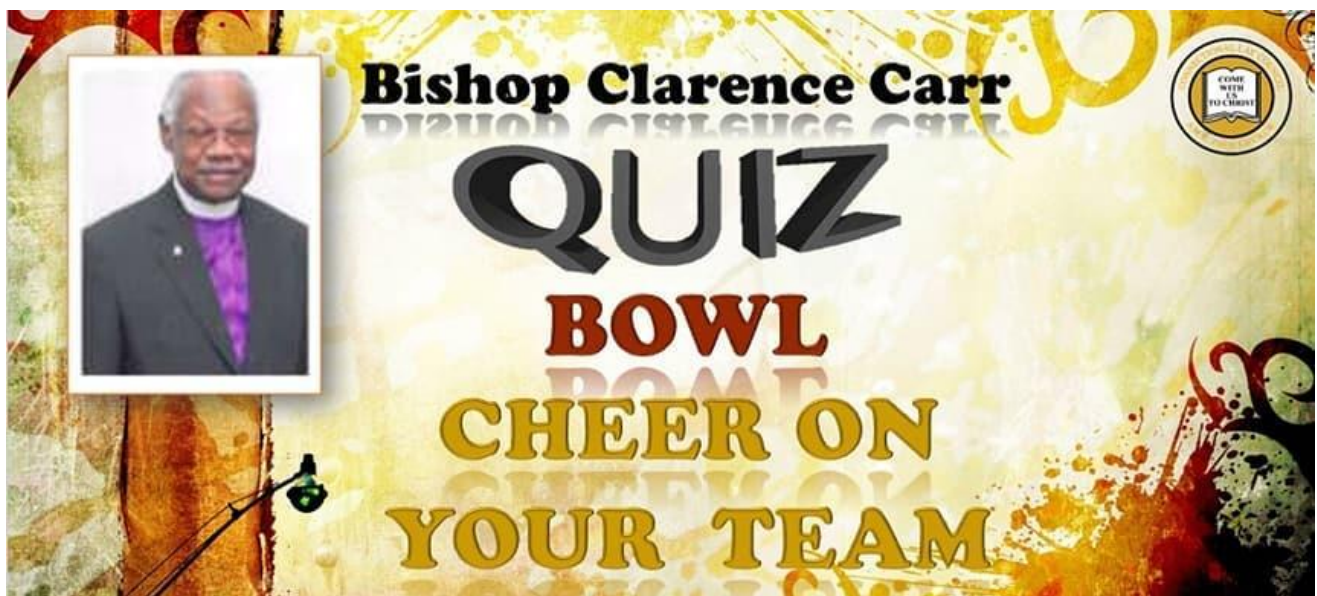


SHAW TEMPLE HOSTS THE BISHOP CLARENCE CARR QUIZ BOWL

The Bishop Clarence Carr Quiz Bowl was the brainchild of Lay Council President, Ms. Coleen Daly. To meet the objectives of the Connectional Lay Council Ms. Coleen wanted to find an avenue through which members can learn about Zion, our church, our district and more importantly about Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. With the blessing and support of Mrs. Barbara Carr, this quiz bowl was named after the late Bishop Clarence Carr who was our Presiding Prelate and an active member of Shaw Temple, to honor his life in Zion, his love for Zion and more importantly his Love for or Savior. In 2017 we celebrated the first Annual Quiz Bowl. On August 16, 2019, we held our third quiz bowl and we continue to strive to learn and teach about the afore mentioned. The quiz bowl focused on three areas; Bible History, Connection Zion and GA Conference/Atlanta district/Shaw Temple A.M.E. Zion church, with 18 questions in each category.

Zion is blessed to have two resident retired Bishops, Bishop Lois Hunter, Sr. and Bishop Warren Matthew Brown. Our church also celebrates one active Bishop, Bishop George D. Crenshaw So we came up with the “Clever Crenshaws, Brown Braniacs, and Head Hunters.” These three team share in a friendly competition focused on developing ourselves and others as Christian disciples; helping others to know, worship and follow Christ in spirit and in truth; and collaborating and cooperating across organizational, institutional and denominational boundaries to minister to the masses. This year’s participants were equally excited and wonderful as before.

Master Brandon Boardman and Daniel Toosen along with Miss. Dominique Sapp, Danielle Pearson, Zanyra Wrice and Tatianna Wrice enthusiastically weaved through the categories as they were led by the Moderator, Mrs. Marcella Nation and cheered on by our faithful members and family guests. Each year participants share how impressed with how much the children and youth retain and how much they learn as a result of it. The Lay Council is already planning to expand this annual event to the district. We thank all those who worked hard to support aided in this events success.



Mid-Atlantic Episcopal District

Katherine Burrell, Regional Director

Mrs. Devieta C. Moore, Missionary Supervisor

Bishop W. Darin Moore, Presiding Prelate

*“Freedom Church, Refocusing on our Purpose,
Reviewing our Practices, Retooling our People, Reaching our Potential.”*



This has been a busy and exciting quarter for the Laity of the Mid Atlantic Episcopal Area, beginning in May with the Philadelphia and Baltimore Conference Annual Conference, where Katherine Burrell is the President of the Conference Lay Council.

The Lay Academy at Annual Conference facilitated by our 1st Vice President, Dr. Larry B. Johnson was an interactive academy, which combine the third component of the Quadrennial Theme (*Reviewing Our Practices*) with the third component (*Re-tooling Our People*). Hence, the title of the presentation was *Reviewing Our Practices to Retool Our Health*. To this end, our presenter, Ms. Anita Pinkney, a health professional in Baltimore City and a member of the Pennsylvania Avenue Church, conducted an abridged workshop on foods for a healthier body for an improved quality of life. Using the *Facilitator’s Guide for Conducting Interactive Lay Academies*, Dr. Johnson, and Ms. Patricia Griffin, Lay Council president of the Philadelphia District, facilitated an activity on reviewing our practices associated with the foods we eat. These hands-on activities showed how to retool our eating habits from living to eat to eat to live.

We held two lunch and learn sessions. First session was presented by the Balm in Gilead, Dr. Pernessa C. Seele, Founder and CEO of The Balm In Gilead, Inc. Dr. Seele and her team presented on Dementia and the care giver. The second session was on “Breast Cancer Awareness” present by Ms. Ricki Fairley, Chair of the Board of Trustees for the Triple Negative Breast Cancer Foundation. Both the Lay Academy and the Lunch and Learn sessions were very informative, interactive and well received by all those attending.

The Scholarship Committee, chaired by Gil Turner presented the High School Seniors who were award the Samantha M. Wormley Memorial Scholarship. **The recipients of the 2019 Samantha M. Wormley Memorial Scholarship are:**

- Mr. Kennedy Corley – Washington District – St. Lucille (Pastor: Rev. David Elliott)
- Ms. Rachel Means – Harrisburg District – Fawn (Pastor: Rev. Samuel Means)
- Ms. Briana Smith – Eastern Shore District – St. James (Pastor: Rev. Dr. David McClendon, Sr.)
- Mr. Matthew Watkins – Baltimore District – Judah Temple (Pastor: Rev. Scot Moore)

Two of our longest serving members of our Executive Board, Mrs. Delores Lancaster and Mrs. Lorraine Toler choose at this time to retire. They were presented with engraved Flower vase for their service to the Lay Council.

As a follow-up of our Annual Conference, we held our Executive Board retreat at the Bon Secours Retreat and Conference Center. This was a time for the leadership to come together to reflect, regroup, recharge and prepare for Conference Year 2019-2020. A plenary was presented by Rev. Dr. Evelina Huggins, “Who are we as Zion Methodists? Know Your Church!” The Challenge Message was given by Rev. Dr. Adrian V. Nelson, Chair Philadelphia and Baltimore Conference Board of Lay Activity. Our committees met and are prepared to move forward for a successful 2019-2020 Conference Year.

Ohio Annual Conference, Mrs. Anita Rankin, President

They held their annual Henry L. Walters Challenge Brunch during their Lay Academy hour held at Wesley Temple – Akron, Ohio. It was well attended to help support their Book Scholarship. Bishop Moore gave words encouraged to continue the work of the Laity.

Allegheny Conference is under new Leadership, Mrs. Debra Dennison has step down from the Presidency. The new president is Kenneth Henderson. Mr. Henderson has fully re-organized the Allegheny Conference. Their new officers are: Louise Prime-Vice President, Michelle Garland-Secretary, Shona McKeithan- Assistant Secretary, Debra Sair-Treasure and Joshua Johnson-Technology and Communication. At their first planning they completely organized their work for the coming conference year. This is the Conference to watch.

East Tennessee-Virginia Conference Mr. Melvin Perrow, President,

Their Lay Academy was held at the Holiday Inn Conference Center in Johnson City, TN. The Convocation was opened by Mr. Perrow leading the attendees in song. Mrs. Ella Hurt read scripture and gave a spirit filled prayer.

Mrs. Katherine Burrell presented the Lay Academy *How to Bring People to Christ – Evangelism* focusing on the idea that Evangelism is relational and intentional about bringing the Good News to someone in the context of a relationship. A majority of believers have come to faith in the context of a network of friends and family. They were challenged to go out and tell someone about Jesus and invite them to come see why they are excited about the Word of God. The Lay Academy was well attended by both Laity and Clergy.

VA Conference Lay Academy, Mr. William English, President

They held their Annual Conference Lay Academy at the Richmond Hilton. After devotion were offered, Mr. English called for those to be stoled to come forward, there were four Life Members stoled. Mrs. Burrell assisted in the ceremony. Mr. English asked the Mrs. Burrell to lead the election process for Conference Year 2019-2020

The officers are President William L. English, Jr., Carlee Cash, 1st Vice President, Glenda Wright 2nd Vice President. Florence Brown, Secretary, Regina Rivera Financial Secretary, Paula DeBerry, Treasurer, Hurley Daye, Chaplain. They are looking forward to serving the Virginia Conference in style and grace.

Newport News Lay Council District – Virginia Conference News Article

Submitted by Mr. Hurley Daye

Newport News District lay Council held their annual Leadership Training on August 17, 2019 at the O’Berry A. M. E. Zion Church, Franklin, VA, with Rev. Dale Seaborne, Pastor and Rev. Dr. Vincent Jones serving as Host Presiding Elder. Mr. Hurley Daye is the President of the New port News District Lay Council.

The theme for the training was “Essentials of Effective Leadership.” The components of our theme were selected to further correlate with the Connectional Lay Council theme for this conference year on “Retooling Our Practices.” The Newport News District Lay Council is a member of the Virginia Conference, Mid – Atlantic Episcopal District, with Presiding Prelate W. Darin Moore as Bishop.

Our training for leadership is an annual event and a great help to all in their roles as Lay Leaders for the conference year and throughout their association with the Lay Council. Presenters are knowledgeable about their craft and are equipped to share with others effective approaches to leadership in their areas of expertise. Our presenters for this conference year included Rev. Priscilla Wiggins, Dr. Willie R. Watson, Ph.D., Mr. William English and Ms. Cynthia Forman. Each of the presenters were motivational and provided a wealth of information beneficial to all in attendance.

Rev. Priscilla Wiggins is an Associate Minister at Hickory Grove A. M. E. Zion Church on the Newport News District and a noted Social Worker in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Rev. Wiggins presented viable information on the topic “Dealing With Grief As A Lay Leader.” She mentioned how important it is to listen to a person who is grieving and the response you give is important too. Another point of interest to members who are experiencing grief is the time frame after the funeral. Contact is necessary for those individuals.

Dr. Willie R. Watson, President of the Virginia Unit of Registered National Parliamentarians and Distinguished Research Associate for National Aeronautics and Space Administration provided a wealth of techniques for conducting a meeting. Dr. Watson is a member of the Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ and very actively engaged as a leader in his church. His information focused on the use of Roberts Rules of Order. Motions and the different types of motions were presented along with the appropriate language for the chair to use. The use of record keeping is essential to all leaders in any organization as expressed by Dr. Watson with references for several sources for record keeping. Making sure there is a quorum for passing any motion while conducting meetings was another key point highlighted by Dr. Watson. Participants were eager to ask questions and respond to the answers given by Dr. Watson.

Mr. William English, Virginia Conference President of the Lay Council and retired supervisor for the Norfolk Naval Shipyard for over thirty years. Mr. English has served the church in many areas as Preacher Steward, currently chair of Trustee Board at Brighton Rock A. M. E. Zion Church, Portsmouth VA, Norfolk District of the Virginia Conference. He was profound with his presentation on comparing leadership as a supervisor in the work world and as a leader in the church. The scenarios that he presented caused all participants to review their approaches to leadership situations they have had to deal with and they were able to see how a Godly approach makes the difference. In as much as the presenter (Mr. English) cited instances where he may have acted differently as a leader, if he had known the Lord. He indicated the need for prayer, knowing the word and being sincere in critical conversations with those you lead or supervise either in the workplace or church.

Ms. Cynthia Forman, 2nd Vice President of the Newport News District Lay Council, wearer of many hats at her local church, Walters Temple A. M. E. Zion Church, Newport News VA, inclusive of being Preacher Steward, usher, Local Lay Council President, Virginia Conference Finance Committee member and a retired Government Worker for a number of years. She is an active Life Member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority.

Ms. Forman informed us of the need to be prayed up in order to effectively serve as a leader in any organization. She indicated the value of being open to learn and willing to grow as a leader. As a member of the leadership team for voter registration on the conference level, she emphasized the need to vote and informed the participants of this leadership training session she was able to conduct voter registration today if anyone was interested and would provide information on dates and times for future registrations for the upcoming elections. Details were presented on an upcoming Banquet for the Lay Council in a few weeks to help with scholarship funding for the Virginia Conference Lay Council Scholarship fund raiser.

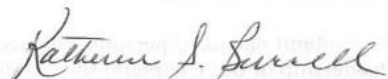
All participants had an opportunity to ask presenters questions and receive answers to their questions. The dialogue was very rich among all.

Many thanks to Pastor Dale Seaborne and the O’Berry Church family for hosting us with excellence. The host Local Lay Council President is Ms. Karen Brown.

Comments were received by the officers of the Newport News District Lay Council and noted for inclusion in our upcoming Lay Academy on “Retooling Our Practices.” Thanks to God and all of the supporters of the Newport News District Lay Council for a successful Annual Leadership Training Session.

To God Be the Glory for the Great things he is doing in the Life of Mid Atlantic Laity

Submitted by



Katherine s. Burrell

Southwestern Delta Episcopal District

Stephany Ricks Fields, Regional Director

Annual Doramae W. Ricks Intergenerational Ladies Tea



The Annual Doramae W. Ricks Intergenerational Ladies Tea was held on June 22, 2019 at Payne Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church, 1702 Rock Street, Little Rock, Arkansas. This year's event was especially memorable because it was held on the 94th birthday of the event's namesake, Mrs. Doramae Ricks.

The fun-filled event began with a greeting & presentation of the occasion delivered by the Church's Lay Council president, Stephany C. Ricks Fields, followed by the scripture Romans 3:5-6 read by the newly appointed Little Rock- Hot Springs District Lay Council president, Mrs. Tomika Clark. As usual, the event started with a warm ice-breaker that encouraged the attendees to get to know each other & discover the commonalities they shared. Activity session 1 continued the sentiment of women sharing with women of all ages through several small group discussions.

Session 2 sparked every participant's attention with a sentences game which continued throughout the final moments of the event. A hoard of door prizes peaked the excitement of the event.

Following the singing of the Wesleyan Grace, tea participants were invited to feast on the assortment of favorites: grape chicken salad, fruit salad, tossed salad with an assortment of dressings, buttermilk pie, and a variety of cold beverages. The culminating event was a Silent Auction.

Host pastor Rev. Silas Redd offered remarks and the benediction.

Next year's event is scheduled for Saturday, June 20, 2020 at Payne Chapel and all are welcome to attend!

ARKANSAS CONFERENCE YOUTH COUNCIL'S NEWEST SERVICE PROJECT

The youth of the Little Rock Hot Springs District of the Arkansas Conf Christian Education Department had a very busy summer of service.

Their Summer community projects included the latest brokering of a partnership with the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance. In early summer, they helped glean corn on an acre of land on a farm just outside Pine Bluff, Arkansas. Their most recent service project was in the late August heat where the youth participated in the organization's Annual Watermelon Crawl.

The participants harvested over 40,000 lbs. of watermelons to be donated to shelters and food pantries in the metropolitan area.

This project is near and dear to the A.M.E. Zion churches in the Little Rock- Hot Springs District because the harvested food stays in our communities. The corn and watermelons were donated to local church pantries and other food distribution sites. One of the pantries that received the donated food was located at Grace Church of Nazarene of North Little Rock, Arkansas. Each Thursday Grace Church of Nazarene distributes food to those in need including the fresh corn and watermelons picked by our youth.

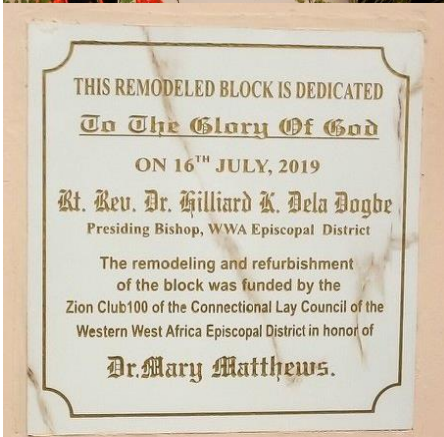


Prior to the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year, the youth partnered with the Arkansas Food Bank to pack foods for the Backpack Program. Backpacks were filled with healthy shelf stable foods like peanut butter, canned soup, fruit cups and granola bars. The backpacks were distributed to kids in participating schools. Under the faithful leadership of Mrs. Tomika Clark, the youth of the Little Rock- Hot Springs District of the Arkansas Conference continue to make a difference one meal at a time!

Western West Africa Episcopal District

Lawrence Kofi Atsyor, Regional Director

True leaders hold themselves and their people accountable. They hold themselves to a high standard so they can hold their people to a high standard as well. Today at the Episcopal Headquarters Bishop Hilliard Dogbe met with the Episcopal leadership to give an account of his tours to the various conferences and to discuss strategies for church growth. At the same event was the unveiling of the Remodeled Multipurpose block which houses the A.M.E Zion Education Unit, Zion Book Shop, Archives and Chapel sponsored by the Connectional Lay Council - Zion Club 100 in honour of Dr. Mary J. Matthews. Kindly say a prayer for our Bishop and his Family, his Leadership team and our Episcopal area even as you pray for yourself.





The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

Come with us to Christ

Connectional Lay Sunday 2019

October 20, 2019

The Lay Sunday Offering Recipients

- ❖ A.M.E. ZION Academy, Liberia
- ❖ A.M.E. Zion University, Liberia
- ❖ Mother A.M.E. Zion Church, NY



Dr. Mary J. Matthews
CLC International President

It's Lay Sunday giving time! Let the A.M.E. Zion Church say, "Amen."
Luke 6:38 NIV "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down,
shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap....."

Many of you may not know a lot about our A.M.E. Zion Schools in Liberia, so I have gathered information to share with you from news articles, the A.M.E. Zion University web site and excerpts from the Report made to the 2019 African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church Connectional Council.

The Lay Sunday offering goal is to exceed **\$50,000**. The time frame is **August 1, 2019 – July 31, 2020**. We will provide additional avenues for giving this year - Givelify and a Go Fund Me Page; and of course, the churches will still mail their contributions to the CLC office. All churches are asked to support Connectional Lay Sunday with a special offering. Please make all checks payable to the Connectional Lay Council and mail to Connectional Lay Council PO Box 26770 Charlotte, NC 28221-6770.

There is no better time to give thanks for how God has blessed the AME Zion Church than on October 20, 2019, "Lay Sunday," the anniversary of our beloved Zion "The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Hold on to your seats on Lay Sunday, we're gonna raise the roof with incredible praise all across Zion!



AME Zion University Breaks Ground for 24-Classroom Building, 6 Office Facilities in Po River

By **Alvin Worzi** - January 17, 2019 (News Article)



The African Methodist Episcopal Zion University (AMEZU) has broken ground for the construction of a 24-classroom building and six office facilities at its Vincent Town, Po River campus in Bomi County.

The project, which is valued at US \$200,000, was part of the Interim Management Committee's initiative to fully move the university from Benson Street in central Monrovia to Po River, Bomi County.

At the groundbreaking ceremony, Dr. Benjamin D. Lartey, acting chairperson and co-chairperson of AME Zion University Interim Management Committee, said the management was delighted to break ground for its new facilities.

Dr. Lartey said the construction will also include two laboratories and six office facilities to accommodate the management team.

"We have 100 acres of land in Vincent Town and intend to fully utilize the space. We have a master plan developed in 2014 for Po River, which envisages a state-of-the-art university. We will invite you within six months for another groundbreaking, which will include a 36-classroom building, technology facilities, 15 offices, among others," Dr. Lartey said.

Dr. Lartey said the construction work of the 24 classrooms and six office facilities will be completed in three months, indicating that "we will immediately move into the building."

According to Dr. Lartey, the management also intends to bring more buses to assist in commuting students from Monrovia to its Vincent Town campus, an initiative that commenced since the university opened classes in Po River.

Dr. Lartey, who is one of the seven members of the interim team currently managing the university, said the university has 100 acres of land at its Vincent Town Po River campus, which was donated by Bishop Solomon D. Lartey (deceased).

According to Dr. Lartey, the university has over the years moved from business school to community college and a full-fledged university with over 30,000 students.

Rev. Dr. Mulbah Gray, president emeritus of the AME Zion University and current president of the Bomi County Community College (BCCC), said he was delighted to witness the groundbreaking of a 24-classroom building and other facilities in Po River, Bomi County.

Dr. Gray, who was the first Liberian to become president of the university after serving as vice president for administration, pledged 100 bags of cement and promised to support the university to ensure success.

"This was the vision we had, while taking over in 1997, two decades ago, but had numerous challenges. Some critics indicated that transitioning to Po River will slump the enrollment, because of lack of means for students to



commute, and we said the devil was a liar. Indeed, the devil is a liar. We finally got a bus in 2006 with around 2,500 students,” Dr. Gray, who served from 1997 to 2016, said.

Bomi County inspector Jumah E. S. Goll, who spoke on behalf of the Superintendent of the county, said the AME Zion University’s relocation to Bomi County has brought proud to the county, lauding the administration for the initiative.

“Our children were finding it difficult to move to Monrovia in order to continue their education, especially university education. Today, the construction of a 24-classroom building and other facilities will create more space for other students to enroll at the university. We will continue to support the university,” Mr. Goll said.

The ceremony brought together Mawine G. Diggs, Director-General of National Commission on Higher Education, Rev. Susie A. Kanneh, dean of students, Alfred A. Kulah, vice president for planning, research, and institutional advancement, Dr. Nadu Cooper, chairperson, Board of Trustees, Rev. Christopher W. Toe, presiding elder, Brewerville District AME Zion Church, among others.



(From right) Mawine G. Diggs, Director-General of National Commission on Higher Education, Alfred A. Kulah, vice president for planning, research, and institutional advancement, Dr. Benjamin D. Lartey, acting chairperson and co-chairperson of AME Zion University Interim Management Committee and Dr. Nadu Cooper, chairperson, Board of Trustees

“We have an obligation to ensure that we are not just providing education but quality education and standardized facilities to the people of Liberia. We are on the path of where higher education should be in Liberia,” Director Diggs said, who also pledged \$500 US.

According to Director Diggs, there is a need for universities across the country to review the curriculum in order to suit the job market in Liberia, indicating that, “It was unfortunate for graduates from universities to be out of jobs.”

AME Zion University was established in 1983, with the founding of the AME Zion School of business. It was attached to the AME Zion Academy, transitioned into a college in 1987 and has been a university since.



Students at the AME Zion University ground breaking ceremony in Po River



About African Methodist Episcopal Zion University

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE AME ZION UNIVERSITY

(From University Web Site)

The AME Zion University commenced in 1983 with the founding of the AME Zion School of Business Studies attached to the AME Zion Academy, a high school owned by the AME Zion Church. In 1987, the AME Zion Community College was established, offering Associate degrees in Criminal Justice Administration and Law Enforcement, Liberal Arts, Business Administration, Diploma in Trauma Counseling, and Computer Science, and held its first Annual Convocation on May 22, 1989. The AME Zion Community College at the time had the best Computer Science Laboratory in the Country.

In 1996 by an Act of the National Legislature, the AME Zion University was established with the Reverend Frederick Umoja, serving as its first President.

In January 1999, the Rev. Dr. Frank K.M. Zormelo was inducted as the second President of the University. In August 2001, a year and a half later, the Rev. Dr. Mulbah B. Gray, Sr. was appointed the third President. He is the first native Liberian to become President of the AME Zion University; prior to his appointment, he served as the University's Vice President for Administration.

The University, which is operated by the AME Zion Church, currently has seven colleges, namely:

- Wilfred E. Clarke College of Criminal Justice Administration and Law Enforcement
- Andrew Cartwright College of Business and Public Administration
- Reuben L. Speaks College of Liberal Arts
- Bishop Warren M. Brown College of Divinity
- Alicia Smith-Lartey College of Education
- College of General Studies awarding degrees in continuing Education
- College of Agriculture awarding Associate of Arts degree in Agriculture

Except for the College of Agriculture, the University currently offers Bachelor Degrees in all of its programs. It has enrolled over 30,000 students and graduated over 10,000 students.

The AME Zion University has a great deal of challenges and opportunities ahead in the reconstruction of a new Liberia in the 21st Century. It hopes to expand and develop new programs to meet the nation's needs. It is committed to responding adequately to the nation's need for high manpower development that will spearhead and also guarantee Liberia's sustainable development by strengthening and expanding its academic programs and making them relevant to the demands of the third millennium.

The AME Zion Church owns 100 acres of land in Po-River, Vincent Town, Bomi County, which was donated by the Late Bishop and Mrs. Solomon Dorme Lartey. This legacy of Bishop and Mrs. Lartey had several buildings which were heavily looted and damaged during the Civil War in Liberia. The University has taken the following Post-War rehabilitation actions at the Po River sites:

- Renovated the administrative offices, and completed the furnishing;
- Renovated the academic building, and completed the furnishing;
- Constructed an annex to the academic building;
- Constructed a graduation podium;
- Constructed a generator house;
- Constructed a water system;
- Installed a 105 KVA generator and a 5 KVA generator.
- Processed the Land Deed and re-surveyed the 100 acres of land in Po-River.
- Adopted the Master Plan for a new modern campus at Po-River.

Prior to the fourteen (14) years of Civil War, (1989-2003) the A.M.E. Zion University operated in rented buildings and continued until 2003, when the war ended. Due to the massive damage done to the educational facilities of all institutions of Higher Learning during the war, over-crowdedness and financial constraints accelerated plans to relocate partially to the future permanent site in Po-River, Vincent Town, Bomi County, about ten (10) kilometers from the capital city (Monrovia).



The current enrollment is 4,031 students. Statistics show an increase in growth rate of 340 students per annum; therefore, in the next five (5) years we project approximately 12,500 students to be enrolled. We must prepare ourselves for this projection. One thing that has distinguished the A.M.E. Zion University from other Institutions of Higher Learning in the country is that it is the only Institution of Higher Learning offering a Bachelor Degree in Criminal Justice Administration and Law Enforcement. The A.M.E. Zion University is recognized and accredited by the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) in Liberia, and also a founding member of the Association of Liberian Universities (ALU). The University also has partnership agreements with the Obafemi Awolowo University in the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and Livingstone College in Salisbury, North Carolina, United States of America.

The Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the A.M.E. Zion University and Presiding Prelate of the Western West Africa Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, comprising Liberia, Ghana, Ivory Coast and Togo, the Rt. Reverend Dr. Seth O. Lartey has emphasized the need for education to form a part of his developmental agenda of the Episcopal targeted areas of concentration. The construction of a new A.M.E. Zion University is therefore a major Episcopal District Project. Already, a blue print for the construction and complete transformation of the university's campus has been approved by the Board of Trustees.

Constraints and Prospect

The African Methodist Episcopal Zion University has the potential to become one of the nation's best Institutions of Higher Learning. However, the university is still faced with a plethora of constraints which need to be addressed appropriately. These include but are not limited to:

Building structures, water supply system, electricity supply, class rooms, thus the urgent need for the construction of a new University Campus

Staff Development

Quality Assurance

Research

Establishment of faculty/staff and Student Welfare Programs

Transportation

The civil war in Liberia from 1989 to 2003 affected the political, social and economic lives of the citizenry. All public and private educational institutions, libraries, research centers and laboratories were looted and destroyed. University campuses which were not destroyed were either occupied by internally displaced persons or used as military base for combatants. Many lecturers, support staff and students were killed, internally displaced, or forced into exile. Most devastatingly, the requisite data base for appropriate educational planning was destroyed.

Tertiary education in Liberia has witnessed many problems: instructional personnel are too few and many class sizes are above average. There are insufficient numbers of classes, and the learning environment is generally not conducive to the learning process. Research activities are minimal, library resources remain inadequate, laboratory equipment and materials are not available or are of low quality and quantity, the quality of students admitted is low and many require remediation. The cost of tertiary education for many Liberians is prohibitive, especially in private institutions. Instructional personnel have few incentives and shuffle between campuses to earn more income.

Our ultimate aim is to ensure that immediate attention is given to these areas if we are to take the university to the next level. We are also hopeful that greater opportunities such as an increase in student enrollment, faculty and staff development, active research programs, job satisfaction and quality education will be achieved.

Brain Drain

Liberian students who studied out of the country are offered employment opportunities upon graduation. Many of these graduates accept the job offers, causing them not to return to Liberia, and subsequently causing a brain drain. This in turn causes skills shortage resulting in inadequate supply of teachers and academics. Without these professionals, the teaching cadre is small and the country is unable to offer adequate study opportunities. Another component of the brain drain is caused by established professionals in Liberia moving to "greener pastures" in America, Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa and other parts of the world. Another vicious circle is thus realized.

INITIATIVES

In order to realize this vision, the following initiatives will be pursued:

- A science park and a state-of-the-art laboratory will be built for research purpose to accommodate researchers in the sub-region and beyond;



1. A regional hub for telecommunications networks;
 2. Post Graduate Program in Criminal justice Administration
 3. Survey Program to train next generation of Surveyors in West Africa. Eight (8) month Courses to Award Diploma/Certificate
 4. An exchange program to
- host international Professors, Students, and experts in various disciplines especially in the field of Criminal Justice;
 1. Provide access for local criminal justice experts, theologians, accountant, managers, and scientists to international facilities in these disciplines around the World.
 - A Heritage Centre focused on Integration and consolidation of indigenous knowledge systems; Commercialization of traditional medicine; intellectual Property Rights.
 1. Establishment of a research program in agriculture and pharmaceuticals;
 2. Establishment of a "learning laboratory" to embed the knowledge applied in establishing the university (including physical construction and project financing);
 3. Establish a state-of-the-art forensic laboratory to not only train our students but to serve as a reference/research center in Liberia and the Sub-region
 4. Partnerships with world-class universities to ensure quality in the design of the curriculum including the learning/teaching and research programs.

An in-depth study has already been carried out to establish the feasibility and sustainability of these units within the proposed university construction project, as well as to map out the strategy for the building of the University. The following structures and/or facilities will be erected on the 100 acres of land own by the AME Zion University:

Buildings for a New Campus:

1. Administration Building
 - a. President Office suite
 - b. Board of Trustees Meeting Room
 - c. Academic Affairs Suite
 - d. Registrar Suite
 - e. Business and Finance Suite
 - f. Planning and Institutional Advancement Suite
 - g. Information Technology Suite
2. Library
 - a. Text books, Reference and Research
 - b. Computer Labs
3. Campus Clinic
4. Student Affairs Building
 - a. Student Affairs Suite
 - b. Enrollment Management Suite
 - c. Dean of Student Suite
 - d. Student Services Suite
 - I. Scholarships Office
 - II. Tutoring Services Suite
5. Science and Engineering Complex
 - a. Math and Computer Science offices and labs
 - b. Physics and Physical Sciences offices and lab
 - c. Chemistry offices and labs
 - d. Forensics offices and labs
 - e. Engineering offices and labs
 - f. Classrooms
 - g. Computer Labs
 - h. Mini Auditorium
6. Social Science, Art, and Humanities Complex
 - a. Social Sciences Offices
 - b. Behavioral Sciences Suite
 - c. Humanities Suite
 - d. Fine Arts Suite including music rooms and Art Labs
 - e. Classrooms
 - f. Computer Labs including Writing Labs
 - g. Mini Auditorium
7. Education Building
 - a. Teacher Education offices
 - b. Exercise Science Offices and labs
 - c. Human Performance Offices and labs
 - d. Classrooms
 - e. Computer Labs
 - f. Mini Auditorium



8. Business Building

- a. Business Administration Suite
- b. Classrooms
- c. Computer Labs
- d. Mini Auditorium

9. Health Sciences Complex

- a. Nursing (LPN, RN, BSN)
- b. Dental Hygiene
- c. Public Health

10. Agriculture and Food Sciences Building

- a. Agriculture and Food Sciences Offices
- b. Soil Labs
- c. Food Labs
- d. Computer Labs
- e. Mini Auditorium

11. Student Union Building

- a. Dean of Student Suite
- b. Cafeteria
- c. Game Room
- d. Computer Labs
- e. Mini Auditorium

12. Classroom Building (only classrooms)

- a. Classrooms
- b. Computer Labs

13. Large Auditorium (Could be attached to student union or classroom building)

14. Athletics Complex

- a. Athletic Suite
- b. Exercise Rooms
- c. Sporting venues with spectator seating
 - I. Soccer
 - II. Running Track
 - III. Basketball
 - IV. Volleyball
 - V. Badminton
 - VI. Softball

15. Chapel or Church Building

16. Power Generation Building

17. Student Residence Hall Buildings

18. Faculty Housing

AME Zion University Breaks Ground for 24-Classroom Building, 6 Office Facilities in Po River





2019 LAY SUNDAY OFFERING RECIPIENT

The University for the Generation of the Future



RT. REV. DR. HILLIARD K. D. DOGBE
PRESIDING PRELATE, PRESIDENT, EDUCATIONAL COUNCIL
WESTERN WEST AFRICA EPISCOPAL DISTRICT



DR. A. NADU COOPER, PHD
Chairperson Board of Trustees





2019 LAY SUNDAY OFFERING RECIPIENT AME Zion Academy

Mr. Alexander O. Marshall, Chairman
AME Zion Academy Interim Management Committee
(Excerpt from the report to the July 2019 Connectional Council)

Brief History:

The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Academy Junior and Senior High School was founded in 1960. The School has since 2010 been operating a financial loss due to a huge decline in the student population.

UPDATE – REPORT ON ZION ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL:

The Interim Management Committee is pleased to update you on the current condition of the AME Zion Academy. Let me first thank the Almighty God allowing you to give us the opportunity to contribute to the revitalization of the AME Zion Academy. It is an institution that is very dear to my heart. I am thankful.

When we took over in August 2018, we inherited 15 returning students, four months of salary arrears, 35 arm chairs, 25 teaching and administrative staff. The physical structure was in need of urgent repairs. Through the help of the Bishop working with the Interim Chairman we were able to meet all salaries arrears, increase our arm chairs to over 100, built the library and the computer lab, paint the school building, did some electrical work to provide lights in all the classrooms, made new classroom doors, repair the gate to the school etc. We also installed a new air-conditioner in the computer lab. The total cost of this was USD \$10,923

SCHOOL CERTIFICATION:

We are pleased to announce that after 10 years without certification from the Ministry of Education, we are finally on the path to being certificated. I must give special thanks to the Ministry of Education District Officer.

DONATION:

The school received six ceiling fans from Mr. Edward Zormelo. This is his second donation to the school. We want to thank him very much.

ALUMNI ASSISTANCE:

We have made many attempts to get the alumni to help in the revitalization of the school, but it has not been fruitful.

On February 27, 2019, we met with some alumni visiting from the United States. They asked us to put together our immediate needs and present it to them. We have not heard back from them.

AME Zion Academy 60th Anniversary:

On November 22, 2018, we held a dinner at the AME Zion Church multipurpose hall to launch the school's 60th anniversary with a goal of raising USD \$60,000. We want to report that to date we have collected \$1,860. Of the amount collected the Bishop met his pledge of \$1,000 and the balance came from ticket sales. Most of those who took tickets and some who attended the dinner have not paid.

PHYSICAL STRUCTURE:

No new work has been done to improve the condition of the school.

IMMEDIATE NEEDS:

For academic 2019/2020 we need the

following Assistance: **DESCRIPTION ESTIMATED COST**

Three computers and two printers \$ 3,800.00

Two sets (each) of Jersey for the school \$ 750.00

football, basketball and kickball teams

Support for administrative and teachers' \$ 6,525.00

salaries (4 Months)

Instructional materials and stationeries \$ 350.00

Tiling of the classroom and hallways \$ 6,500.00

Payment of two Principals salaries arrears \$ 7,000.00

Total Support needed **\$ 24,925.00**

The AME Zion Academy Students





2019 Lay Sunday Offering Recipient

Mother A.M.E. Zion Church



“Isn’t She Beautiful”

Mother African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church is an amazing church with a rich history and a dynamic future.



The Lay Sunday Offering will support restoring this damage in the interior of Mother Zion



Help Us Keep “MOTHER” Beautiful, Inside and Out!



Tuesday, August 26, 2019

Acolyte Newsletter Issue No. 3

Commemorative Souvenir Journal

- General Secretary
Dr. Brenda G. Smith
- Director of Acolytes
Rev. Dr. R.J. Chandler
- Acolyte Task Force
Committee
- Denominational Chief
of Protocol
Rev. Malcolm Byrd
Rev. Dr. Kathy
McLadden
- South Atlantic
Rev. Dr. Victor Wilson
- Eastern North Carolina
Rev. Adriane Newton
- Alabama/Florida
Rev. Lessie Simpson
- Mid-Atlantic
Mr. Robert Goodman
- Midwest
Mrs. Lula K. Howard
- Piedmont
Mrs. Erica DuBois
Bridges
- Southwestern Delta
Rev. Dr. Aureilla Jones
Smith
- Northeastern
Rev. Albert Bacote

You don't want to miss this historical moment in the life of our beloved Zion where young leaders throughout our connection will participate in the National Acolyte Festival. Please consider giving:

Inside cover page _____	\$300.00
Full Page _____	\$150.00
½ Page _____	\$75.00
¼ Page _____	\$40.00
Business Card _____	\$30.00
Patron _____	\$20.00
Back cover Page _____	\$500.00

Please send your Ad to acolytesamez@gmail.com as a jpg, pdf or tiff file format by **September 1, 2019**. Your page size should be 8.5x11. **Checks are to be made payable to the Christian Education Department of the AME Zion Church. Address: CED/AMEZ Church P.O. Box 26770 Charlotte, NC 28221 or GIVELIFY – Christian Education Department (Acolyte Ministry).**

Reserve your Hotel Room: DEADLINE – Tuesday, Sept. 10, 2019
<https://book.passkey.com/e/49961016> Cost: \$118.00/night

Register for Acolyte Festival: <http://Cathedral.org/acolyte>



Bishop Dennis V. Proctor
CED Board Chairman



Bishop W. Darin Moore
Host Bishop
1st Vice Chairman
CED Board Chairman



Bishop Nathaniel Barrett, Jr.
2nd Vice Chairman
CED Board Chairman



Mrs. Ava Swinton
3rd Vice Chairman



Brenda L. C. Smith
Ed.D., UMD
CED General Secretary



R.J. Chandler Sr.
S.Arch., M.Div., Ed.D., Assoc. AIA
Director of Acolytes

A WEEKEND of GLORY

NATIONAL ACOLYTE FESTIVAL

Give online
Givelify
Christian
Education Department
Acolytes



National Cathedral
3101 Wisconsin Ave NW Washington, DC 20016
(202) 527-6200

Friday, October 11, 2019

5:00PM Arrive at Bethesda North Marriott
7:00PM Meet & Greet. Ice breakers & prizes

Saturday, October 12, 2019

8:00AM Arrive at National Cathedral and register
10:00AM Processional
11:30AM Lunch at the National Cathedral
1:00PM Team Building Activity
6:00PM **Fireside with Bishop Warren Matthew Brown** (Pizza & Wings) at John Wesley African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
7:00PM **Turn Up for the Glow Up Worship**
Rev. Edwin Sutton, Preacher

Sunday, October 13, 2019

8:30AM Arrive at John Wesley AMEZ Church
9:00AM Sunday School
10:00AM Worship
Bishop Warren Matthew Brown, Preacher
12:00PM Installation & Send Off



Rev. Dr. Christopher Zacharias
John Wesley AME Zion Church
Washington, DC
Host Pastor



Rev. Edwin Sutton
Caldwell Temple AME Zion Church
Bronx, NY
Guest Preacher



Bishop Warren Matthew Brown
Guest Preacher

Registration
\$10

Online
Acolyte Registration
<https://cathedral.org/acolyte>
Bethesda North Marriott
5701 Marinelli Rd. Rockville, MD 20852 (301) 832-9200
King rooms: \$119 per night plus tax
Queen rooms: \$139 per night plus tax



For More Information: acolytesamsa@gmail.com Please generously give \$100 or more online or mail checks to the CED AME Zion Church PO Box 26770 Charlotte, NC 28221-6770. Proceeds will be used to offset hotel and food costs.



Souvenir Journal Ad Form

Name (Please Print): _____ Phone: _____

Please complete the Ad form and submit to landrumrell@gmail.com
Sunday, September 29, 2019

Make checks payable to the Shaw Temple Lay Council

Ad Options

\$60.00 Full Page Ad \$30.00 1/2 Page Ad

Congratulatory or Memorial: Full or half-page ads throughout the Journal.

\$20.00 Cards Only

Business Partners: Business size cards in the back of the Journal.

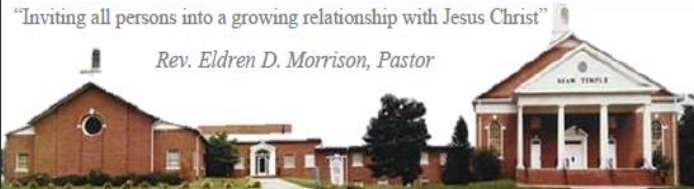
\$10.00 Name Only

Friends of the Council: Printed with a list of others patrons in the Journal.

Name: (Please Print) _____

Examples: Mr. & Mrs. Barack Obama or Barack & Michelle Obama or Mr. Barack Obama

ADS: Email ad/ad content/business card/name(s) to Mireille Landrum at landrumrell@gmail.com or bring to the church office OR give to a ST Lay Council Officer. **PAYMENTS:** bring to the church office or pay through shawtemple.org online giving OR give to a ST Lay Council Officer with your Ad form. Make payments to "Shaw Temple Lay Council" and on the comment line it should say "Journal ad payment".



SHAW TEMPLE LAY COUNCIL

MARSHALL JONES

Recognition Brunch

Saturday, October 19, 2019 @ 11 a.m.

Shaw Temple A.M.E Zion Church
 775 Hurt Road, SW, Smyrna GA 30082
 Ms. Coleen Daly, President
 Rev. Eldren D. Morrison, Pastor



Mayor Al Thurman
 City of Powder Springs



Honorees:

Mrs. Joyce Stephens
 Ministry Leader - Shaw Temple



\$25
 Donation

Rev. John Stephens
 Minister-Shaw Temple



The Connection Newsletter Information

The main thrust of "The Connection" newsletter remains to help publicize and promote the Lay Council programs throughout the denomination. Many informative and exciting events are taking place and we want to share them with all of Zion.

The Connection would like to receive articles from you about what the local Church, Presiding Elder District, Annual Conference or Episcopal District Lay Councils are doing or plan to do. The newsletter is published during the month of **March, June, September** and **December**. Email all articles to Joseph King Davis, Jr., Editor at: clckdj1911@frontier.com.

Deadlines for submitting articles are:

- February 15th**
- May 15th**
- August 15th**
- November 15th**

If you are sending photos please make sure you identify the key persons (district, conference, regional officers, presiding elders, pastor etc.) in the photos.

"Come with us to Christ!"