



The

Connection

Connectional Lay Council
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

CLC Newsletter

Spring Edition 2024



Celebrate

**WOMEN'S
HISTORY
MONTH**

March

THE CONNECTIONAL LAY COUNCIL

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The Connection

CONNECTIONAL LAY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Mr. Joseph King Davis, Jr. International President

REACHING OUR POTENTIAL & SECURING A STRONG FUTURE FOR ZION

Greetings in the divine grace, mercy and peace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus, who by faith we call the Christ. Because His faithfulness and favor continuously uphold every fiber of my being, I must always give Him thanks, praise, and worship Him in spirit and in truth. The awesomeness and favor of God has allowed each of us to enjoy the preservation of life, health, and strength in the face of uncertainty, even as we attempt to continue to remain passionate about the work assigned our hands in the lay ministry vineyard. We must be prepared to expand our thinking, sharpen our skills, and leave our comfort zones, eliminating a “business as usual” mentality and attitude about this work of laity. It takes critical planning, believing in our vision, mission, goals and objectives, cooperation, and effective dialogue to bring about change we desire, to continue with uplifting the prestige and promise of the organization. It takes tackling our weaknesses and continuous development of programmatic strengths, being ambassadors for change, to transform your lay ministry programs from drought and stagnancy to a “blooming agenda” of programs and services that will transform lives. You must utilize your resources through social media platforms and other researched communication techniques, innovative teaching, and training to equip our people, explore our possibilities and then ultimately, we expand our presence, and watch God work on our behalf. Yes, it is so easy to be overwhelmed by despair and fear in the world today, but there is power and strength in knowing God promises that He has plans for us in the future, undergirded with our hope. The strong future of the church, our Zion, the Freedom Church will be stronger if we, both clergy and laity are in this together, if unity and bonded spirits are evident, our future rises to monumental heights. It entails intentional approaches to focus on our similarities rather than our differences, to fervently pray for each other, to learn from each other and strategies for development and sharing our resources to build a strong future. The church’s strength, our Zion, the Freedom Church, is not in the quality of its programming, but in the character of its leaders at every level of our Zion structure.

Spring Edition

INSIDE THIS EDITION

An Inspiring Message From
Joseph King Davis, Jr.,
International President

CLC Updates – Mrs. Leondras Davis
Membership – Mrs. Connie Bell-Wright
Around the Region – Regional Articles

CLC Convocation Information



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MR. JOSEPH KING DAVIS, JR.,
CLC INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT



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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Mr. Joseph King Davis, Jr. International President

REACHING OUR POTENTIAL & SECURING A STRONG FUTURE FOR ZION (cont.)

Character may be the quiet strength for the future of the church, and we must settle for nothing less, not letting our challenges and problems affect our overall mission for manufacturing strength. Our strong future for Zion cannot be won with our casual efforts, but we must press forward with strong purpose and strong passion. The word of our God and the message of Jesus may be the obvious strength of the church in the future, but we must remain focused and stand firm on the principles of our faith and not become sidetracked by challenges, problems, and cultural pressures that are not important. Yes, a strong future for our Zion, if we place integrity of character above our desire for programming excellence, remembering the reason for our existence, and look to God as we spread the message and strategies to build a strong future for the Freedom Church, one brick at a time, in order to make a difference in people's lives.

I am grateful to an awesome God for the unfolding of new mercies each day, His sufficient grace and His unfailing love and support to the Connectional Lay Council. God is a powerful provider of everything we need to do the work He has called us to do, so that we might be a blessing in our Episcopal regions, our homes, the workplace, our cities, nations, and the world. Our success as laity is carved out with the chisel of efficiency, integrity, and hard work.

Thanks to the Editor, Ms. Paula DeBerry and her editorial staff for their faithfulness in disseminating this issue, and the support of the Lay Councils across the Freedom Church who offered submissions. May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace, as you trust Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit to reach your potential.





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CONNECTIONAL LAY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
OFFICE OF THE 1ST VICE PRESIDENT
Mrs. Leondras "Lele" Davis



News from the First Vice President *March 2024 ~ Spring Edition*

Greetings Laity and Zion Family,

While Spring is in the air, we also recognize the month of March as Women's History Month...a time to celebrate the many accomplishments and contributions from women past and present! How will you celebrate or recognize women this month?

March was also the month the Connectional Lay Council held its 12th Quadrennial Lay Convocation, March 14th-17th at the Louisville Marriott East in Louisville, KY. The CLC Planning team began their work in April 2023. The theme we chose was "Cultivating Our Faith, Committed to Service: Generation to Generation." Save the Date cards were distributed at the 2023 Connectional Council Meeting in New Orleans. Months and months of planning took place. The CLC Planning Team began their work to ensure everyone in attendance, laity and clergy, delegates and alternates would leave the Convocation prepared and equipped about the operations of the upcoming General Conference. Bishop Michael A. Frencher, Sr., Host Bishop, Presiding Prelate of the Midwest Episcopal District, and the Chair of the Board of Lay Activities organized a Host Partners Team of the Midwest Episcopal District comprised of the Clergy and Laity of the Louisville District and Kentucky Conference as well as members across the Midwest Episcopal District. We are most thankful to Bishop Frencher and Mrs. Gelenia Frencher and the Host Partners Team for all their hard work and support shown to the Connectional Lay Council in the planning and implementation of the 12th Quadrennial Lay Convocation.



Whether by plane, train, bus, or car, you arrived ready to take on the Louisville Experience with us. Excitement was in the air as we opened the doors to welcome you for the 3 days of the CLC Convocation on Thursday, March 14th. Priscilla Leeper, Registration Chair, and her team provided you with Registration packets and Health and Wellness bags. Thanks to the Host Partners for donating the items and preparing the Health and Wellness bags for each registered attendee.

The Convocation theme was "Cultivating Our Faith, Committed to Service: Generation to Generation." The Convocation is designed to include all members of Zion, males, females, young adults, seasoned adults, laity and clergy, General Officers, Bishops, and Episcopal candidates. There was something for everyone!

CLC Chaplain Jerry L. McCombs along with the Host Partners Prayer Team opened each day, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday at 6:00am with the Morning Watch Conference Call for anyone desiring to pray for and with us.



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OFFICE OF THE 1ST VICE PRESIDENT



Mrs. Leondras "Lele" Davis

The Convocation officially opened with Chaplain McCombs leading us in devotion. The Welcome and Greetings followed by Lele Davis, Convocation Chair, Joseph King Davis, Jr., CLC International President and Bishop Michael A. Frencher, Sr. Chair of the Board of Lay Activities.

The Rev. Patrick Barrett, General Secretary of Christian Education led the opening session with a powerful Meditation. Resolutions and the Voting Process was presented by the Rev. Dr. J. Elvin Sadler, General Secretary Auditor, and the General Conference Budget was presented by the Rev. Al C. Hamilton, Chief Financial Officer of the AME Zion Church.

The CLC was graciously welcomed by the Midwest Episcopal District with a Welcome Program and Reception. The sounding of the bugle, hats, and bowties parade was a great introduction to the Louisville Experience! We were greeted and welcomed by the Governor of Kentucky, the State Senator's Office, the Mayor's Office and Mrs. Martha Scudder, Host Regional Director, and Co-chair of the Host Partners Planning Team.

The Rev. Dr. O. Lacy Evans, Presiding Elder of the Louisville District, and Co-chair for the Host Partners Planning Team presided over the Friday night Opening Worship Service. The Louisville District Choir provided the music. Bishop Michael A. Frencher, Sr. Host Presiding Prelate and Chair of the Board of Lay Activities delivered the Message.

The CLC Prayer Breakfast was held on Friday morning with Dorothy Gill-Smith, Chair, presiding. Prayers were focused on our theme: *Cultivating our Faith, Commitment to Service: Generation to Generation*. Thank you to each of our prayer warriors who prayed mightily during this time. The music was rendered by CLC musician Othello Jefferson.

The Plenary Session followed and opened with Devotion and the Opening Address from the CLC International President, Mr. Joseph King Davis, Jr. The President gave impactful words of inspiration. We are grateful to him for his leadership. The presenters of the morning included the Rev. Dr. Anthony K. Gibson whose presentation discussed the Work of the Interface Committee and Administration Boards of the General Conference. Resolutions from the IMLA and CLC By-laws and Legislation presentation was led by Rev. Erich Shumake and Dr. Mary Matthews.

During the lunch hour, we gathered for the "Derby style" Global Leadership Luncheon. The Chair of the Luncheon, Mrs. Rynette Nixon presided. Our speaker for the occasion was the Rev. Dr. Anthony Davis, 13th President of Livingstone College, Salisbury, NC. The honoree of the hour was none other than the Presiding Prelate of the Midwest Episcopal District and Chair of the Board of Lay Activities, Bishop Michael A. Frencher, Sr. The CLC showed our appreciation to Bishop Frencher for his leadership and loyalty as the chairman of the Board of Lay Activities. A special selection and video presentation was included highlighting the honoree.





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Mrs. Leondras "Lele" Davis



Presentations were made to Bishop and Mrs. Frencher by CLC International President Joseph King Davis, Jr. Service Awards were presented to CLC First Vice President Lele Davis, CLC Secretary Mireille Landrum, CLC Treasurer Cynthia White and CLC Event Planner Joyce Reid.

Plenary Session 2 was filled with more opportunities to gather some much-needed information as it relates to the General Conference. Dr. Frances Jackson, Nationally Registered Parliamentarian provided a wealth of information on parliamentary procedures and current trends to conduct a meeting; Rev. Dr. Hanna Broome prepared us with the most recent updates on Social and Political Action; Mrs. Loranda Melton, served as chair for the General Officers Candidates. General Officers were invited to participate in the General Officer's Platform to introduce themselves and provide details of what their job entails in the work of our church.

Following the dinner hour, Plenary Session 3 began with the Episcopal Candidates Forum. Ms. Lynda Byrd, CLC 3rd Vice Chair agreed to serve as the chair in the demise of Rhandi Stith, CLC Regional Director, North Eastern Episcopal District. Sixteen of the Episcopal candidates were present to participate in the forum. The forum was designed to have each candidate provide their views on a variety of topics about the church. We are grateful for their time in attending and participating at the CLC Convocation.

The evening concluded with the Candidate's Reception. Each participating candidate had the opportunity to talk openly and candidly with the attendees about their vision for the church.

The Bishop George J. Leake, III Endowed Scholarship Breakfast chaired by Rose Stokes was held Saturday morning. The Leake Scholarship promotes scholarships given to "pay it forward" to clergy members desiring to further their education attending Hood Theological Seminary. The Crystal Awards were presented in 3 categories (Gold, Silver, and Bronze) recognizing those who donated in support of the Leake Scholarship Fund. The speaker for the hour was the Rev. Dr. Laticia Godette, Presiding Elder of the New Jersey District, North Eastern Episcopal District. Dr. Godette's message left a lasting impact. She concluded by thanking the CLC for assisting her on her journey in the ministry. She recalled receiving the Bishop George J. Leake Scholarship from the CLC over 10 years ago. She further stated she came to contribute to the Bishop Leake Scholarship. Dr. Godette presented to the CLC President, Joseph King Davis, Jr., a check in the amount of \$30,000. Bishop Eric Leake, Presiding Prelate of the Southwestern Delta also made a pledge to donate \$500.00. Bishop Dennis V. Proctor also donated \$500.00. Attendees were then asked to hold up an envelope on their table. As persons held up their envelope, a prayer was prayed to bless the giver holding each envelope that they would be a blessing to the scholarship fund. A list of the Crystal Awards presentations is shown in this newsletter.

Our thanks to the Episcopal candidates who took part in the opportunity to "Pay it forward" by also donating to the scholarship fund. We also took a moment to recognize any past Leake Scholarship recipients.





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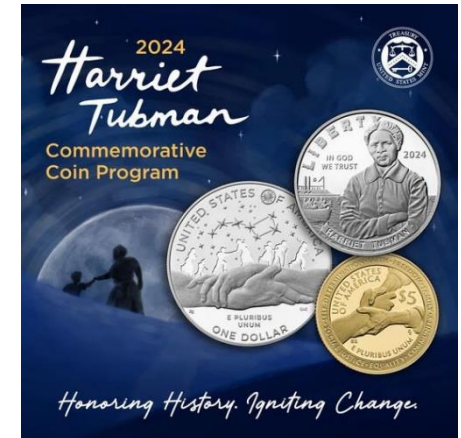
Mrs. Leondras "Lele" Davis

Plenary Session 4 opened with the CLC/YAI presentation on Gate Keepers...Chaired by Dottie Stevens. The Welcome was given by Loranda Melton. Young Adults present were Sandra "Muffin" Newman, Deidra Camp and Dr. Ian Jefferson. The CLC Young Adult Initiative is on the move to do great things. While some of their members were not able to attend, the 3 ladies present provided an engaging, informative, and interactive presentation.

The YAI session was followed with the presentation of the Harriet Tubman coins by Ms. Karen Hill, CEO and Director of the Harriet Tubman Home. Keepsake coins have been printed in recognition and honor of Harriet Tubman and will be on sale.

The finale of the session was from the Chief Communications Officer, Darin Kent. He provided us with social media trends and updates. His very thorough and uplifting presentation ended the 4th Plenary session on a high note.

The CLC was grateful to have such an outstanding group of presenters and speakers for the Convocation. It is our prayer you were able to take something back to share from the sessions you attended.



Following the closing of the Plenary Session, the CLC caravanned to the Newburg Community Center for the CLC Outreach Project, chaired by Pat Hunter. Members of the CLC donated children's books for grades pre-k to 5th grade for the "Literacy in Louisville" outreach project and solar lights were donated to the "Safety for Seniors" project. The CLC continues to provide support and services to the various communities wherever our meetings convene. Greetings were made by the chair, Pat Hunter, Joseph King Davis, Jr., CLC International President, Bishop Michael A. Frencher, Louisville Senator woman, WH&OMS International President, Mrs. Sandra Crowder. Snack bags were prepared and given to the children and seniors of the Newburg Community.

An Evening to Remember- The CLC was granted the opportunity to attend ROOTS 101, an African American Museum in Louisville. The Louisville Host Partners was able to obtain group rate tickets for a live presentation. It was an engaging experience to hear the story of our heritage and listen to voices of the players. The evening was well spent as we concluded our visit by touring the museum. Our thanks to Lynn Johnson, Kentucky Conference Lay Council President for securing this opportunity for the CLC to visit in the city of Louisville.

The 12th Quadrennial Connectional Lay Council Convocation is in the books. Months and months of planning by CLC Planning Team and Host Partners of the Midwest Episcopal District made for a very successful time in Louisville, KY! Kudos to the Bishop and Mrs. Frencher, the Louisville District, the Kentucky Conference and the entire Midwest Episcopal District for ALL the support given to the Connectional Lay Council.

We thank our presenters, speakers, Episcopal candidates and all who supported the Convocation by registering. Thank you to those who also gave a helping hand when called upon. We hope your experience at the Convocation equipped and prepared you with more knowledge of the upcoming General Conference. We enjoyed our time with you and prayerfully you enjoyed your time with us! To our registered attendees, please take a moment to complete the Convocation evaluation link.

12TH CLC CONVOCATION

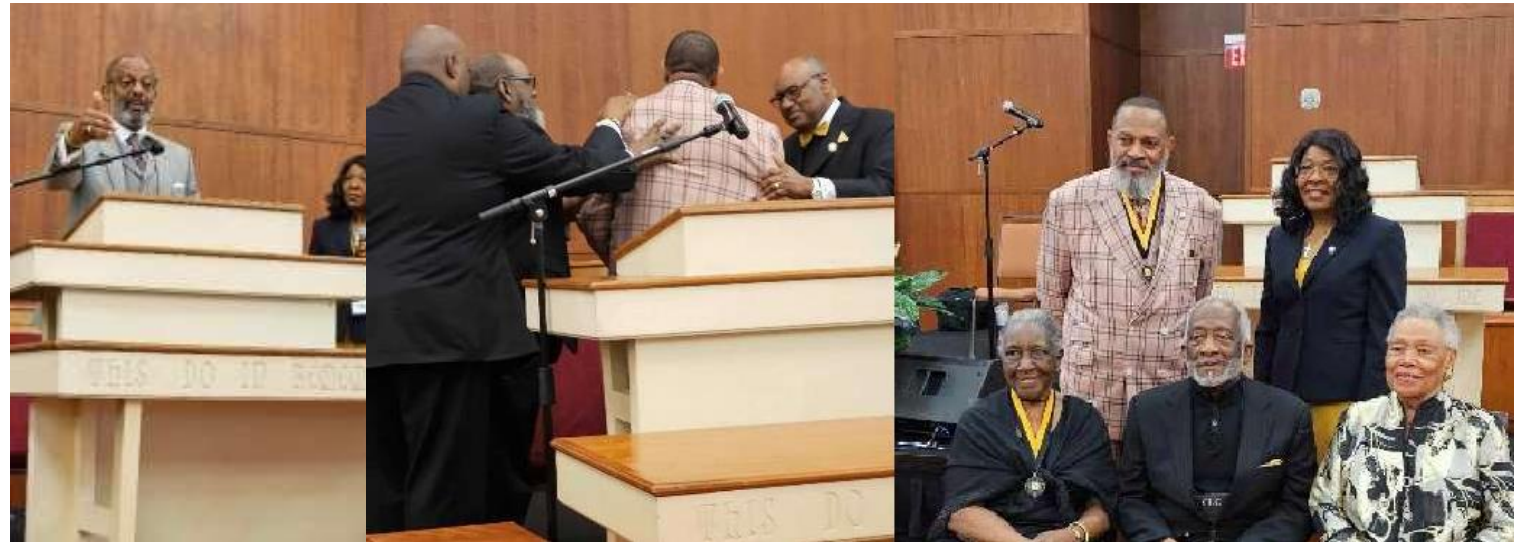


12TH CLC CONVOCATION



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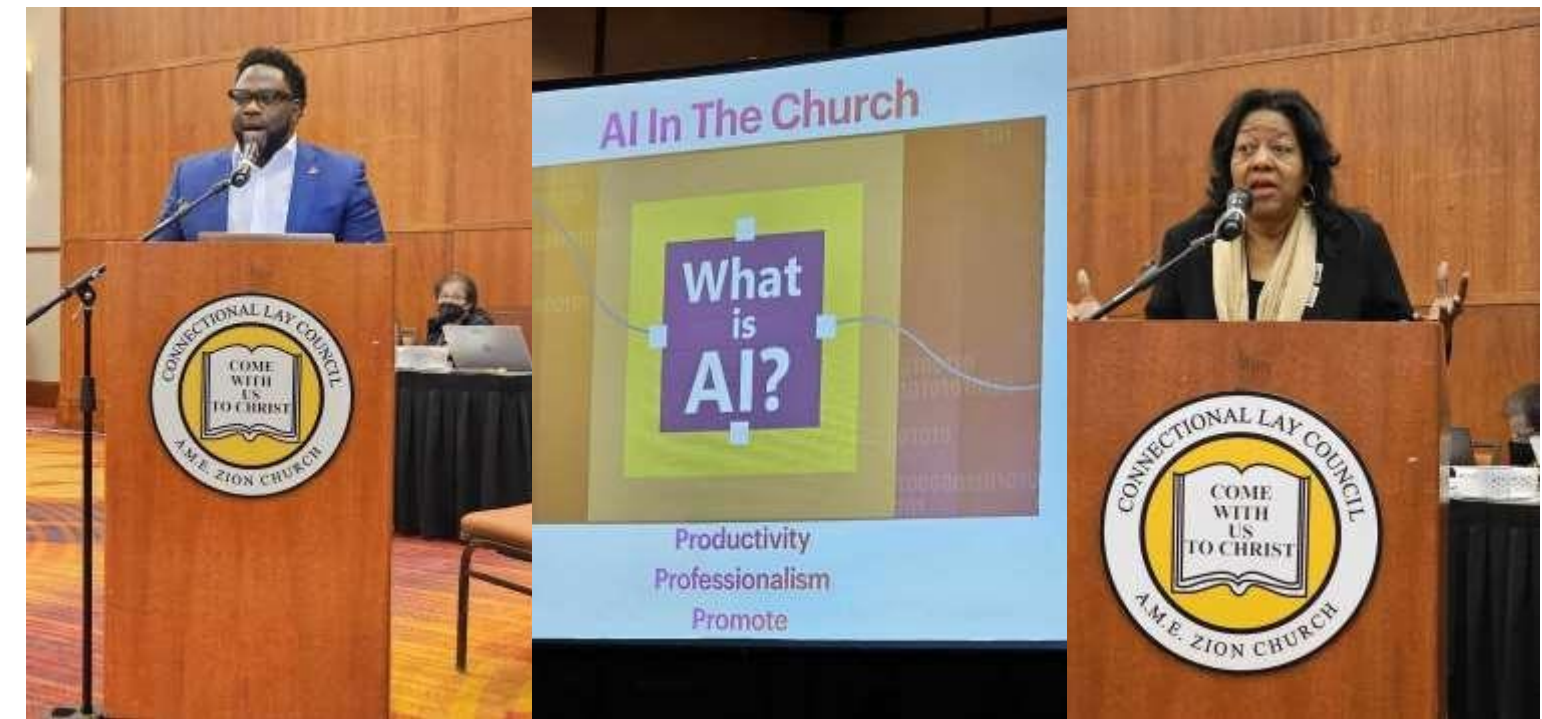
12TH CLC CONVOCATION





12TH CLC CONVOCATION





12TH CLC CONVOCATION





12TH CLC CONVOCATION







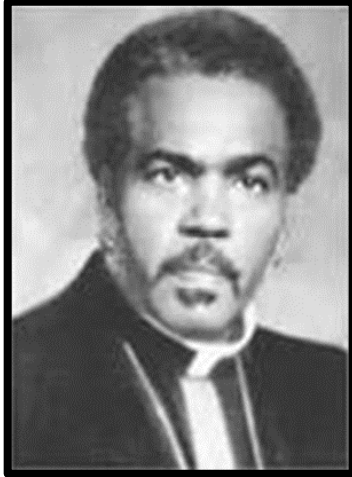
12TH CLC

CONVOCAATION



*12th Quadrennial Connectional Lay Council
Bishop George J. Leake, III Endowed Scholarship*

~2024 Crystal Awardees~



Gold Level

Rev. Dr. Laticia Godette

Mrs. Lula Howard and Family:

In Memory of Macie K. Becker

~Silver Level~

Eastern Tennessee/Virginia Conferences Lay Council

~Bronze Level~

Blue Ridge Conference Lay Council

Eastern North Carolina Annual Conference- Sherry Smith

Leake Temple AME Zion Church: Margaret Stills

Michigan Conference Lay Council

Rev. Wayne Taylor & Browne Family: In memory of Shirley Reid

Southwestern Delta Episcopal District: In Memory of Malcolm Russell

Rev. Dr. Victor Wilson

Episcopal Candidates who donated to the Scholarship Fund to "Pay it Forward."

Rev. Gary Adams

Rev. Dr. Alfred Carson

Rev. Dr. Keith I. Harris

Rev. Dr. Melanie Miller

Rev. Dr. Daran Mitchell

Rev. Eldren Morrison

Rev. Dr. Paul Murphy

Rev. Julian Pridgen

Rev. Dr. Dwayne A. Walker

Rev. Victor Wilson

Rev. Dr. Anthony Witherspoon

Thanks to all our Donors!

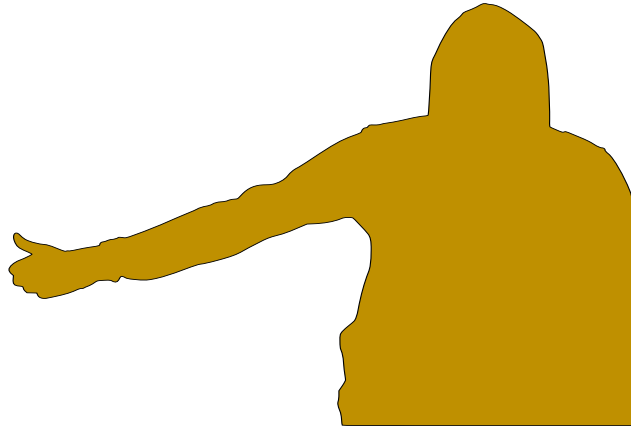


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SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

Mrs. Connie Bell-Wright



TAKE THE BRAKES OFF!

They...would not put their shoulders to the work. Nehemiah 3:5 (NIV)

Against all odds, God's people rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, but sadly some of them refused to put their hearts into it. Could that be said of you?

Two men were riding a tandem bicycle up a hill. When they finally reached the top exhausted, the one on the back seat said, "Man, you're lucky; if I hadn't kept the brakes on all the way, we'd have slid back down that hill again!" You may speak of being "balanced", or "prudent", or "not making waves," but the truth is they don't make any impact at all!

On the summit of Mt. Everest there's a marker placed in memory of one of the oldest climbers ever to attempt to scale the mountain. It reads simply: "*He died climbing!*" Make that your testimony!

Harold Kushner says, "*Our souls are not hungry for fame, comfort, wealth, or power. Those rewards create almost as many problems as they solve. Our souls are hungry for meaning, so that our lives matter, and the world will at least be a little bit better for our having passed through it.*"

Whatever God's called you to do—build cathedrals or sweep streets—take the brakes off and give it everything you've got!

Connie Bell-Wright



February 15, 2024

The Connectional Lay Council (CLC) consists of laity and clergy working together to:

1. Strengthen bonds among teammates in the building of God's kingdom.
2. Complete tasks and projects more efficiently.
3. Promote and enhance growth with practical training.
4. Provide support and resources needed to evaluate, improve, and expand involvement.

The goal of membership dues collected in the local church is to have 100% of the members carrying active cards. Another consideration is for the district to agree to have all memberships expire at the same time.

The "MEMBERSHIP FORM" is used for NEW MEMBERS ONLY, i.e., a first-time Lay Council member. Please request by phone, text, or e-mail the COMPUTER-GENERATED MEMBERSHIP ROSTER with the Episcopal District, Annual Conference, Presiding Elders, District, and Local Church Names.

The amount collected for dues must be correctly submitted to the District Conference and Connectional Lay Council Office along with the check and a copy of the Local Church Membership Roster(s) with the "Status Code" field.

If the district system is used to submit membership roster(s), please provide a cover sheet with the church name and a breakdown of membership categories that are being paid. Notice the example below of the "MEMBERSHIP FORM" verses the COMPUTER-GENERATED MEMBERSHIP ROSTER:

Church Name	Regular \$3	4 Years \$12	Life Member \$40	Total
Joshua's Chapel	5	2	11	\$479
Noah's Chapel	40	1	5	332

Questions? I would love to have them.

Connie Bell-Wright

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SECOND VICE PRESIDENT
Mrs. Connie Bell-Wright

February 15, 2024	Membership Totals by Type			Total	Total	Number of Churches	% of Churches
	1 Year	4-Year	Life	Memberships	Number of Churches	w/active	w/active
					(*)	Memberships	Memberships
Eastern North Carolina Episcopal District <i>Bishop Kenneth Monroe</i>	9,807	138	798	10,743	304	278	91%
Piedmont Episcopal District <i>Bishop Darryl B. Starnes, Sr.</i>	9,285	103	565	9,953	224	220	98%
North Eastern Episcopal District <i>Bishop Dennis V. Proctor</i>	3,185	254	535	3,974	147	106	72%
South Atlantic Episcopal District <i>Bishop Mildred B. Hines</i>	3,872	129	541	4,542	155	127	82%
Mid-Atlantic Episcopal District <i>Bishop W. Darin Moore</i>	1,698	56	654	2,586	150	93	62%
Midwest Episcopal District <i>Bishop Michael A. Frencher, Sr.</i>	906	53	151	1,647	95	55	58%
Alabama-Florida Episcopal District <i>Bishop George D. Crenshaw</i>	3,369	126	239	3,734	227	134	59%
Western Episcopal District <i>Bishop Brian R. Thompson</i>	279	53	94	426	36	26	72%
Southwestern Delta Episcopal District <i>Bishop Eric L. Leake</i>	1,059	41	159	1,260	71	43	61%
Sub Total	33,460	953	3,736	38,865	1409	1082	77%
Central Southern Africa Episcopal District <i>Bishop Seth O. Larney</i>							
Western West Africa Episcopal District <i>Bishop Hilliard K. Dogbe</i>				12,609			
Eastern West Africa Episcopal District <i>Bishop Uduak Effiong</i>				7,276			
Angola Annual Conference				16,000			
Bahamas Islands Annual Conference				16			
Grand Total				74,766			



GOALS FOR 2025

- 1** 50,000
ACTIVE LAY COUNCIL MEMBERSHIPS
- 2** 100%
ACTIVE LOCAL CHURCH LAY COUNCIL MINISTRIES
- 3** 4,000
LIFE MEMBERS

HOW DO WE GET THERE?

Piedmont	11,000
Eastern North Carolina	12,500
Midwest	3,000
North Eastern	5,500
South Atlantic	5,000
Mid Atlantic	4,500
Alabama Florida	5,500
Southwestern Delta	2,000
Western	1,000

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CHAPLAIN

Mr. Jerry L. McCombs



THE POWER OF PRAYER

2nd TUESDAYS @ 8:30 P.M. - EST

WE CARE PRAYER CALL

605-313-6058

CODE:773910#

Email Prayer Requests to: clcchaplain21@charter.net

Jerry McCombs, Chaplain



A Memorial Tribute



IN MEMORY OF THE
CLC REGIONAL DIRECTOR
RHANDI STITH

1955-2024

**NORTH EASTERN
EPISCOPAL DISTRICT**

IN MEMORY OF THE CLC
ELECTIONS COMMITTEE CHAIR
MALCOLM RUSSELL
1948-2024





Connectional Lay Council

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

PIEDMONT EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Mrs. Dorothy Gill-Smith – Regional Director



Piedmont Episcopal District The Salisbury District Lay Council

The Mary G. Dawkins Systematic Lay Academy 2024

The Salisbury District Lay Council held its Annual Lay Academy 2024 on Saturday, February 3, 2024, at Soldiers Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church, Reverend Dr. Derrick Anderson, Host Pastor. Mr. Gerald Rush, Local Lay Council President, served as the Worship Leader for the program. Dr. Mary S. Ponds, President, WNCC Lay Council brought greetings. The Focus for this Lay Academy was: **“Legislation Adopted at the 51st General Conference Impacting the Local Church”**. Our presenters for this academy were the elected and appointed officers of the District Lay Council. The Moderators were Dr. Yvonne Tracey, President - District Lay Council and Reverend Dr. Grant Harrison, Jr., - Presiding Elder. The following topics were presented as outlined in the 2021 AMEZ Book of Discipline adopted at the 51st General Conference: “Liturgical Colors, Liturgical Colors and Seasons – presented by Mrs. Tracy Culbertson; “501(C)3 Memorandum of Understanding Stewards” and “AME Zion Resolution for Training on Sexual Misconduct Policies” – Mrs. Dorothy Gill-Smith; “Sale of Property” and “Pertaining to an Economic Sustainability Program” – Mrs. Delphine McCullough; “Change of Membership Classification & Nomenclature for Admitting Members in to the Local Church”, Evaluation of Candidates for Preaching Licensure”, and “The Local Society Energy Conservation measures in the reduction of its carbon footprint” – presented by Brother Sylvester Culbertson; “CLC & WHOMS Bylaws” and Judicial Administration- Declaratory Judgements” – Ms. Catherine Rivens; “Qualification of Delegates to the General Conference” and “Writing Resolutions and the Legislative Flow Chart” – Mr. Kela Hunt. The attendance and interaction of the attendees for this academy exceeded our expectations. In addition, we gave monetary gifts to four people who responded and shared their “take-aways” in the various categories of discussion, that they would share with their local congregations/members. **Reverend Dr. Grant Harrison, Jr., Presiding Elder gave a rich, encouraging challenge to each of us. The Challenge Message:**

“The Balanced Christian Life-A.M.E.Z.! A Challenge”

“As we conclude this Mary G. Dawkins Systematic Lay Academy; As we continue to reflect over the information we have researched, reviewed and reported; I urge the Sensational Salisbury District, let alone, our beloved A.M.E. Zion Connection, to not be so overcome by the process of preparation of resolutions, attending meetings such as this and the General Conference, itself, that we miss a very significant point-What is the goal of all Christian living?” The late Dr. Charles C. Ryrie, the author of more than 25 books and a Biblical Scholar renown, asks this question as the central thought of his book, “Balancing the Christian Life”. He answers this question by say “Genuine and





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PIEDMONT EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Mrs. Dorothy Gill-Smith - Regional Director



wholesome spirituality is the goal of all Christian living.” Ryrie goes on to enlarge his premise by defining two words-“genuine” and “wholesome”. He says, “By the word “‘genuine’ I mean biblical, for only in the Bible do we have truth that is indisputably reliable...By ‘wholesome’ I mean balanced. There is nothing more devastating to the practice of spiritual living than an imbalance.”(Ryrie, p. 9)

How often is it, that we have meetings such as this one today, and even that great one we are preparing for, The General Conference, and fail to add to our thought processes an appropriate application of the Word of God. Picture in your mind the traditional image of a scale, such as the scale of justice, with two suspended metal dishes, attached to a bar, where objects are placed in one dish, and weights are placed in the other. To achieve a balance, the contents of each dish must have the same weight.

My challenge to each of us is that we must apply the contents of that weighty book, The Holy Bible, and a liberal dose of fervent prayer, to our use of The Discipline, both current and former editions, our proposed resolutions and any resulting discussions that will lead to the manner in which our Connection does the work God assigns us to do. This will protect us against any unintentional errors or hidden agendas that spiritual discernment can bring to light. This will keep in the forefront the Who and the Why that should help us recommend to our Zion, the How, of “doing things decently and in order”(1Corinthians 14:40 KJV). May we take the proper steps, in the proper sequence, in this resolution process, that the end result will be something we, and more importantly, God, will be pleased with. May our scales all be properly balanced, as we go forward. In Jesus’s Name! Amen!”

Dr. Yvonne Tracey, District President, expressed how pleased she was with the Lay Academy and how much she appreciated the support and prayers of all of the Pastors and Lay members from our local churches. We closed our program with the Lay Council Closing Prayer.

Submitted

Dorothy Gill-Smith





Connectional Lay Council

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

PIEDMONT EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Mrs. Dorothy Gill-Smith – Regional Director





Connectional Lay Council

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

PIEDMONT EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Mrs. Dorothy Gill-Smith – Regional Director



Seasoned Saints on Parade

G. Joyner Johnson, Reporter

Rev. Clarence Jones, Photographer

The Columbus Chapel AME Zion Church was transformed into the likes of a Broadway theatre for the North Charlotte District Lay Council Annual Seasoned Saints Program!

Rev. Jarma R. Chisholm, the host pastor and the congregation provided a welcoming environment for participants and the congregations of the churches of the North Charlotte District, Dr. Wardell Henderson, Presiding Elder. Following the Praise and Worship portion of the program, Rev. Chisholm presided over the remainder of the service.

After the opening hymn, “Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah”, the scripture and prayer, Sis. NaKisha Deshield and Ms. Sandra Y. Pickens, the 1st Vice President of the District Lay Council welcomed those present and reviewed the occasion. The Clement Memorial Youth Choir sang “Shake the Devil Off” and “Inside Out” to get the talent show get started for the seniors.

Eighteen district churches participated with senior citizens showing their talent by acting (Myers Tabernacle, Caldwell Chapel), poetry (Watkins Chapel, Reeves Temple, Little Rock), readings (Wesley, Mowing Glade) and songs (Greenville Memorial, Torrence Chapel, Rockwell, Bethesda, Union Bethel, Columbus Chapel, Huntersville, Jonahville, Torrence Grove, Hopewell, Union Bethel).

Each church brought cases or storage bins full of snack foods for the Livingstone College students. As they study, they may not have the funds to purchase snacks. A van was packed full of the snack foods and taken by Mrs. Miriam Rush, Executive Administrative Assistant at Livingstone back to the college’s food pantry. Mrs. Rush thanked the North Charlotte District for all their contributions to the students. She was overwhelmed by the quantity of food being donated. She stated the snacks were needed and would be greatly appreciated by the students.

Final remarks were given by Ms. V. Carolyn Hubbard, District Lay Council President, 1st Lady Mrs. Myrtle Henderson and Presiding Elder Wardell Henderson,







Connectional Lay Council

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

PIEDMONT EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Mrs. Dorothy Gill-Smith - Regional Director



Little Rock Students Receive CD Rippy Scholarships

G. Joyner Johnson, Reporter

On Sunday, February 4, 2024, twelve members of the Little Rock AME Zion Church, Charlotte, NC each received a check for two hundred dollars for their continuing education at various accredited institutions of higher learning. The CD Rippy Scholarship was established by the pastor, Dr. Dwayne A. Walker upon his arrival at Little Rock as the pastor in 2005.

Only members of Little Rock are eligible to receive the funds which are given twice per school year. Qualifying criteria include being an active member in at least one of the over fifty ministries at the church and proof of current enrollment among others.

Members contribute to the scholarship fund through the envelope system or the online platforms, designating CD Rippy Scholarship Fund. Also contributing significantly to the fund annually is the Men's Boosters Ministry led by Mrs. Christopher Caldwell who transitioned on October 21, 2023. They raise funds from their annual golf tournament for the scholarship fund. Thanks to the Men's Booster's sizable contributions, the individual scholarship range from \$200-\$750.

For this semester, a first-time donation was given by the men of the Pi Phi chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity. They were invited to Little Rock by Mr. Robert Horsley and worshipped with Little Rock in November 2023.

The recipients show their appreciation by writing "Thank You" notes to Dr. Walker and the members of Little Rock, which are read during the worship service.





Connectional Lay Council

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

SOUTH ATLANTIC EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Mrs. Loranda Melton – Regional Director



SAED EPISCOPAL DISTRICT NEWS

GEORGIA CONFERENCE

Augusta District

Sarah Townsend, President

Reverend Lela Johnson, Presiding Elder

The Augusta District president works with the churches in Augusta and makes sure every church in the District is aware of the Lay Academics held to ensure successful Lay Academies. The location of the academies may be Mt. Zion; however, the churches in the district participate. On Tuesday, January 9, 2024, all the churches in the Augusta District were invited to come to Mt. Zion for a Lay Academy. Breakfast was served and everyone traveled to Salvation Army to deliver packages that included gift cards, socks, toiletries, hand sanitizers and more. It is always a group effort with Ms. Townsend. The laity has been contributing to the Salvation Army for the last seven (7) years.





Connectional Lay Council

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

SOUTH ATLANTIC EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Mrs. Loranda Melton – Regional Director



PALMETTO CONFERENCE
Mrs. Annie M. Williams, President
Mrs. Linda P. Jones, Contributor

The Palmetto Conference Lay Council Shares the Faith

The Greater St. John A.M.E. Zion Church in Winnsboro, South Carolina was the setting for the Annual Lay Academy on Saturday February 2, 2024. Reverend Derrick Scurry, host Pastor and the congregation left no stone unturned as they rolled out the holy ghost carpet to the many members of the Columbia-Camden and Spartanburg Districts. Mrs. Annie Williams, President of the Palmetto Conference Lay Council warmly welcomed the attendees then presented the President of the Columbia-Camden District Lay Council, Mrs. Loranda Melton.

Mrs. Melton, who also serves as the South Atlantic Episcopal District Regional Director, radically greeted the Academy of clergy and laity. Mrs. Williams introduced the presenter for the session and expressed gratitude for the blessing of having the International President of the Connectional Lay Council, Mr. Joseph King Davis, Jr. The holy ghost continued to take center stage and President Davis commented that he had never experienced a more spirit-filled session during his tenure.

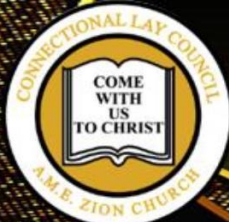
Mr. Davis did not disappoint when he delivered a much needed and fundamental session on the objectives and purposes of the Lay Council. He also stressed that the vision of the Connectional Lay Council is, “To prepare the lay members of this denomination for a life of service in the Kingdom of God”. President Davis did a yeomen’s job expounding on the Quadrennial Theme component, “Sharing Our Faith”. He masterfully shared that our faith frames who we are, our existence, our values, our hopes, and dreams. He further stated that we must have an experience of what faith is and what faith does. Sharing one’s faith is an act of God’s grace revealed through Jesus Christ and faith-sharing is a gift from God. President Davis gave the laity and members reassurance that the purpose of faith is the means by which we have a relationship with God; “For by grace we have been saved through faith” (Ephesians 2:8).

He concluded this segment of the presentation by reminding the members that faith is how we receive the benefits of what Jesus has done for us. President Davis along with Conference President, Williams encouraged the members to take the information gleaned from this great informative session back to their local churches as they continue to share their faith.

Pictures from the Palmetto Conference Lay Academy



L-R Mr. Joseph King Davis, Jr, International President, Loranda Melton, South Atlantic Regional Director, Karen Scott, Special Project Chairperson, Priscilla Foggy Murrell, Parliamentarian



Connectional Lay Council

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

SOUTH ATLANTIC EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Mrs. Loranda Melton - Regional Director



SPARTANBURG DISTRICT

Rev. Dr. Victor Wilson, Presiding Elder

Ms. Angel Underwood, President

The Spartanburg District has been very active since the Annual Conference. They have participated in several local Lay Council events. The lay council has been active in the community supporting the "Walk with the Mayor". This event was centered around spending time in the local neighborhoods providing history about the neighborhoods and addressing the needs of the people.

On December 12, 2023, the District President, Angel Underwood assisted in a collaborative event with the Fairfield County Area on Aging and County Councilwoman, Becky Swearingen in the bagging and distribution of 250 food baskets to local churches. The local church was then charged to distribute the food baskets in their local community.

The District Lay Council is getting ready for a day trip to the African American Museum in Charleston, South Carolina. This will prove to be a fun-filled day and a day of learning.

DAY TRIP
INTERNATIONAL AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM
Charleston, SC
April 13, 2024

JOIN US

Sponsored by the Spartanburg Lay Council
(two pickup locations will be available)

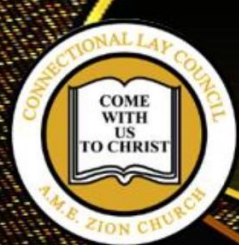
Only 50 slots available!
Tickets go on sale January 2, 2024

\$50.00 for Adults and
\$40.00 for Seniors (62+)

Payments should be made to:
Spartanburg Lay Council
Attn: Elaine Bracket
187 South Pine Lake Drive
Spartanburg, SC 29306
864.497.3570
brackette@charter.net

"Relax and ride!"

Spartanburg Lay Council
District President
Angel Underwood



Connectional Lay Council

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

SOUTH ATLANTIC EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Mrs. Loranda Melton – Regional Director



PEE DEE CONFERENCE CHERAW BENNETTSVILLE DISTRICT Rev. Sandra Sistare, Presiding Elder Mr. Clarence Malloy, President

January 12, 2024, The Cheraw Bennettsville District had their 1st District Quarterly Meeting at Smithville AME Zion Church in Cheraw, SC where Rev. Hardy Ballard, Jr. serves as pastor. This is a time where the Missionary, Christian Education and Lay Council district departments come together with all 19 churches and present workshops to the district. During the Lay hour we were able to stole 17 of 20 new members. Our newly appointed Presiding Elder, Rev. Sandra C. Sistare presided over ceremony.

On January 28, 2024, the District President worshipped with Smithville AME Zion Church and was able to stole the Pastor and other members that were not able to attend the meeting. The Second Vice President Ms. Latisha Bell assisted. God be praised that all 20 were able to be stole this quarter and we are looking forward to many more life members to join.





Connectional Lay Council

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

SOUTH ATLANTIC EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Mrs. Loranda Melton – Regional Director



SOUTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE

Ms. Frances J. Glenn, President

The South Carolina Conference Lay Council met on Saturday, January 13, 2024, at Brown Chapel A. M. E. Zion Church. Rev. Dr. Otha L. Smith, Host Pastor. The devotion was led by Mrs. Doris Edwards, the South Carolina Conference Lay Council Chaplin. The opening song, “Come by Here, My Lord.” The Scripture was read by Mrs. Dorothy Barrett and prayer offered by Mr. Ray Knox. Ms. Edwards led the members in the Affirmation for Laity. We received a warm welcome from the Brown Chapel A. M. E. Zion Church.

Ms. Frances J. Glenn, the President extended greetings to all in attendance and acknowledge the presence of the Chair of the Board of the South Carolina Conference Lay Activities, Rev. Otis Stroud, Sr. The Presiding Elders, Rev. Sharon A. Browning of the Rock Hill District and Rev. Dr. Otha L. Smith of the York-Chester District. The President gave the report of the card-carrying Lay Members of the South Carolina Conference and expressed the importance of becoming Connectional Lay Council card carrying members. Members were encouraged to become Life Members. The South Carolina Conference has a total of 1,770 members currently. The goal for this conference year is 2,000 or more card carrying members.

Information was shared on the up-coming Connectional Lay Council 12th Quadrennial Lay Convocation to be held on March 14-17, 2024, in Louisville, KY. Following the business session Ms. Renee Watson, the South Carolina Conference Lay Council Secretary led the very informative Lay Academy. Emphasis was placed on “Know Your Church” Church Attendance and Church Participation. There was participation from Clergy, Officers, and Laity.

We all left inspired and empowered to do more for our local churches and the African Methodist

Episcopal Zion Church. We heard remarks from the South Carolina Conference Lay Council Chairman of the Board of Lay Activity, Rev. Otis Stroud, Sr., Rev. Sharon A. Browning, Presiding Elder of the Rock Hill District and Rev. Dr. Otha L. Smith, Presiding Elder of the York-Chester District.



Presiding Elder Otha Smith

The meeting closed with a powerful prayer offered by the Chairman of the Board of Lay Activity of the York-Chester District of the South Carolina Conference, Rev. Marcus King, followed by the Lay Council Closing Prayer.



Laity of the South Carolina Conference



Rev. Marcus King, Chairman of the York-Chester District Lay Activities



South Carolina Conference Lay Council Officers



L-R Rev. Dr. Otha Smith, Rev. Sharon A. Browning, Ms. Frances J. Glenn, Rev. Otis Stroud



Connectional Lay Council

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

SOUTH ATLANTIC EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Mrs. Loranda Melton – Regional Director



ROCK HILL DISTRICT REVEREND SHARON BROWNING, PRESIDING ELDER

Mr. Demond Nichols, President

The Rock Hill District Lay Council ended the 2022-2023 conference year on a high as we wrapped up a productive and fruitful year of ministry. We are happy to report that we ended the conference year with 919 financial and active Lay Council members, and we are in position to have a great start for the 2023-2024 conference year. The 2023-2024 conference got off to a great start with our first district Lay Council meeting which was held at Tabernacle A.M.E. Zion Church on December 9, 2023.

Our host churches were Tabernacle and Mt. Calvary. We had the great pleasure of stoling 11 new Life Members. We are thankful and grateful for completing the conference year 2022-2023, having completed new ideas and goals and embracing our mandate to have others “Come With Us To Christ” The Rock Hill District was well represented at the South Atlantic Episcopal District and the Eastern North Carolina Episcopal Convocation and Check-up meeting that was held at Simon Temple A.M.E. Zion Church in Fayetteville, NC January 18-20, 2024.





Connectional Lay Council

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

SOUTH ATLANTIC EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Mrs. Loranda Melton - Regional Director



YORK-CHESTER DISTRICT LAY COUNCIL JESSIE GLENN, PRESIDENT REVEREND DR. OTHA L. SMITH, PRESIDING ELDER

The York-Chester District Lay Council begin this conference year with a meeting with the local presidents. We had our first meeting on January 6, 2024, at Clinton Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church, York, SC, Rev. Richard Woods, pastor, and Mrs. Lois Parker, local president. There was inclement weather on that day; however, it was lay members present from 18 of the 22 churches on the district, as well as ministers including the Presiding Elder Reverend Dr. Otha L. Smith. The participants of the Lay Academy were Ms. Latonya Walker, Ms. Renata Cunningham, Ms. Jessie Glenn, and Rev. Dr. Brandon Ingram.



Ms. Latonya Walker spoke on What is Faith? She is a member of Rehoboth AME Zion Church



Ms. Renata Cunningham spoke on ways to Share our Faith. She is a member of Brooklyn/Willamsville AME Zion Church



Ms. Jessie Glenn spoke on Sharing My Faith Brown Chapel AME Zion Church



Dr. Brandon Ingram spoke on Sharing Our Faith Motivated by Biblical & Personal Assurance, Pastor of Shiloh AME Zion Church, Grover. NC

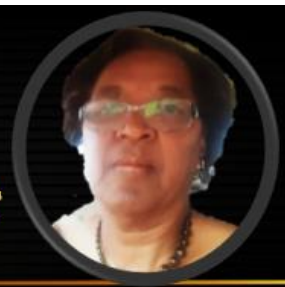


Connectional Lay Council

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

ALABAMA/FLORIDA EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Ms. Patricia Jackson – Regional Director



Alabama Florida sends greetings and best wishes to you for a blessed 2024 year of "Sharing Your Faith"

We began our year with our Winter Convocation. Workshops were shared on many topics. Those of interest to me were 1. Obtaining and keeping your 5013C status that would help when seeking help. 2. How to make Church School Pop. and 3. Grant writing and how to get it done efficiently by being timely and sticking to key elements stated in the grant process. All of the tidbits were right on time

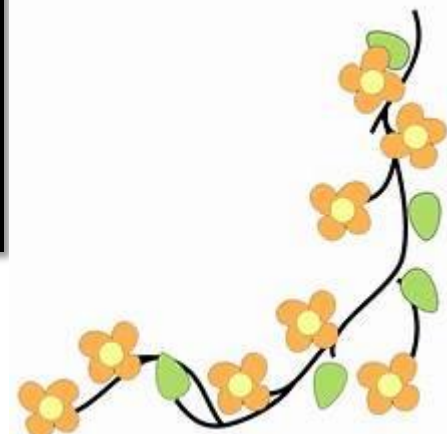
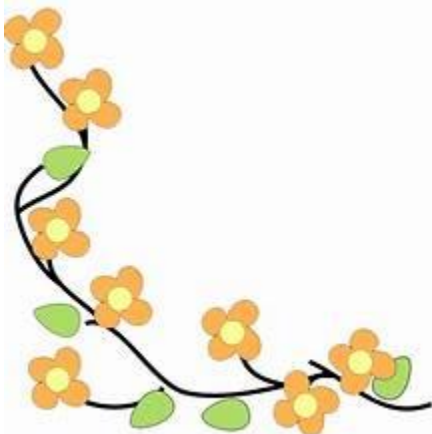
On Saturday morning we held a Lay Academy "Sharing our Faith". We had an interactive meeting where people played roles as sharers and receivers of the sharing. One had to be opposed to the sharing while another was acceptable to the sharing. It was a bit different bit enjoyed by all of us. Just another way to include more people and encourage participation.

We also attended our joint Check-up meeting! All Episcopal leaders made reports and other reports peculiar to a check-up were done.

On addition, there was an ordination of several Deacons and Elders. It was an experience to be remembered.

West Alabama State Street Jackson District

Men of Zion working at church. The Men of Zion have monthly meetings. Their project was to line the church parking lot.



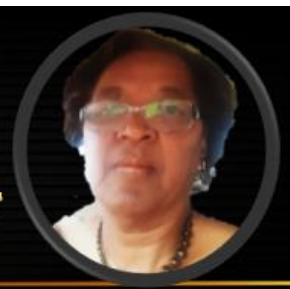


Connectional Lay Council

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

ALABAMA/FLORIDA EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Ms. Patricia Jackson – Regional Director



Mobile Historic Development Commission Award Ceremony recognized State Street AME Zion Church at the Braggs-Mitchell Mansion with a historic shield and banner.



State Street Christmas A Christmas party to remember!



North Alabama Metropolitan /Birmingham District
Lay Sunday was celebrated with Mrs. Linda Perdue as our speaker! It was a great time!



Connectional Lay Council

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

MID ATLANTIC EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Dr. Larry B. Johnson, Regional Director



MID-ATLANTIC REGION

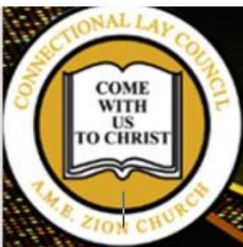
Dr. Larry B. Johnson, Regional Director

As one of the new regional directors on the block, I have tried to travel as much as possible to make on-site visits. It is somewhat like checking on a member of the family or on a friend. Even though the person seems to sound all right over the phone, I get a better picture when I go to “see for myself.” So, I travel to “see for myself.” Hence, I learn a lot more, I meet others face to face, I develop open contacts, and I connect in a way that Zoom does not allow. So far, I have learned several things that can lead to improved *laymanship* in the Mid-Atlantic Region:

- (1) We will work on a Membership Drive that results not only in increasing membership but also in maintaining that membership. Our Life Memberships continue to rise, for in many cases there are Life Memberships where there are no Regular Memberships-- hence, a disparity.
- (2) We will improve the production of Lay Academies, making them available to all Districts and churches, whether they are from the Conference, District, or local church. We need to see what each other is doing. Meetings are necessary, but Lay Academies help to cultivate our faith and discipleship and even our denominational loyalty. Use of the *Facilitator's Guide for Interactive Lay Academies* is low and not widespread enough.
- (3) We will improve our collective efforts to bring younger generations into the fold. We keep saying we will, but our words speak louder than our actions.
- (4) We need to engage not only lay people but also the presiding elders and pastors. Furthermore, people in key lay positions should certainly be members of the Lay Council. How can one be an officer, a missionary, or a Christian educator and not be a member of the Lay Council?

To begin with these emphases will be a building block for other initiatives. Also, I am sure that what is true of this region may also be true of other regions. That we are connectional should provide the kind of engagement that will help us grow not only individually but also together. We are all connected.





Connectional Lay Council

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

MID ATLANTIC EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Dr. Larry B. Johnson, Regional Director



PETERSBURG DISTRICT LAY COUNCIL

PRESIDENT - DOROTHY L. MINTER-SAUNDERS

PRESIDING ELDER - REV. T. KENNETH VENABLE

VIRGINIA CONFERENCE, MID-ATLANTIC EPISCOPAL DISTRICT - BISHOP W. DARIN MOORE

Greetings everyone from the Petersburg District Lay Council. We pray you are enjoying the goodness of God. Welcome to 2024. How amazing that God still keeps us in His care. What follows are some highlights of what we have been about in the District. You can see that we have been involved in many different activities, all to the glory of God. We have, as have you, continued with feeding the hungry, visiting the sick and shutin, praying for the lost, and making disciples.

GREATER FAITH

Rev. Randy Kiah, Pastor

Mrs. Mary Rodwell-Dickens PDLC First Vice President and Local Lay President



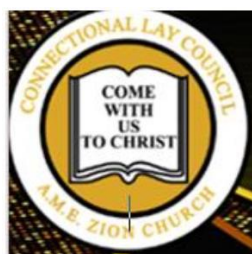
Celebrating with Deaconess Creola Boyd on her 96 Birthday



Kyree Ross and Zyasia holding Baptism Certificates



Ruth Wilson Christmas Clothing Outreach for Tri Cities Mental Health Services, Hopewell, VA where she is doing her internship



Connectional Lay Council

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

MID ATLANTIC EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Dr. Larry B. Johnson, Regional Director



HOOD TEMPLE

Rev. Dr. Lorenza Ricardo Meekins, Pastor
Ms. Glenda Wright, Lay President



SUPER BOWL SUNDAY

MT. ZION

Rev. Dr. Vanessa Hicks, Pastor
Mrs. Martha Wilson, Lay President



Picture on left shows gift bags with handmade lap blankets given to Envoy Nursing Home in Lawrenceville, VA . Picture on right shows gifts to family who had a fire.



Connectional Lay Council

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

MID ATLANTIC EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Dr. Larry B. Johnson, Regional Director



OAK STREET

Rev. Reginald Jones, Pastor

Ms. Elizabeth Wilson, Lay President



Observing Black History



Connectional Lay Council

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

MID ATLANTIC EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Dr. Larry B. Johnson, Regional Director



PARADISE

Rev. Cecilia White, Pastor, Ms. Gracie Hardy, Lay President



The Buds participated in the “Covering Little Toes” Ministry. 329 pairs of socks were collected and given to homeless children in Petersburg, VA.

ST. PAUL

Rev. Alma Coles Charles, Pastor
Mrs. Mattie Walker Bates, Lay President

Every weekend you will find St. Paul providing a complete cooked meal to a needy family in the community.



And every Saturday, St. Paul’s youth select a senior member of the church and Cleans their house.



Connectional Lay Council

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

MID ATLANTIC EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Dr. Larry B. Johnson, Regional Director



WHITE ROCK

Rev. Yolanda Buck, Pastor

Ms. Sandra Gordon, Secretary of PDLC and local Lay President



Celebrating Valentine Day with a presentation on The Heart, loving and taking care of it by Ms. Sandra Gordon, Lay President. And a Black History presentation on “Why We Celebrate Black History Month” by Ms. Dorothy L. Minter-Saunders, PDLC President.



Middle picture on left Alfreda Jarrat Reynolds, Brunswick County Director of Economic Development, and our musician; on right Deaconess Shelly Edmonds working the 2024 Stew Day at the General Assembly in Richmond, VA. The fourth Wednesday in January has been designated by the General Assembly as Brunswick County Stew Day. Mr. Jonathan Lee Brown is 2024 Stewmaster and cooked up, on site, 85 gallons of stew served to legislators, staff and public. Brunswick County (where we have five churches) lays claim to being the home of Brunswick Stew



Connectional Lay Council

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

MID ATLANTIC EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Dr. Larry B. Johnson, Regional Director



ZION CHESTER

Rev. Dexter Feely, Pastor
Mrs. Karen Spence Lay President



Zion Chester Lay Council sponsored their annual raffle for a Super Bowl Basket filled with all the goodies to enjoy the big game. This year we also included a raffle for a Valentine's Day basket. Mrs. Sherell Barbour won the Super Bowl basket and Mrs. Joanne Roane won Valentine's Day basket. Congratulations to these ladies and thank you to all who supported this endeavor.



The Zion Chester AME Zion Church sponsors an annual Christmas Card, Cookies and Cider event. At this event, members bring Christmas Cards to exchange and cookies - mostly homemade - to share with other members. The Lay Council provided Cider - hot or cold, Hot Chocolate as well as Candy Canes. This event also coincided with our annual Ugly Christmas Sweater contest. Prizes were given to the members, top 3, with the ugliest sweaters. This is not only a kickoff to the holiday, but also a great time of fellowship for members



Connectional Lay Council

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

MID ATLANTIC EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

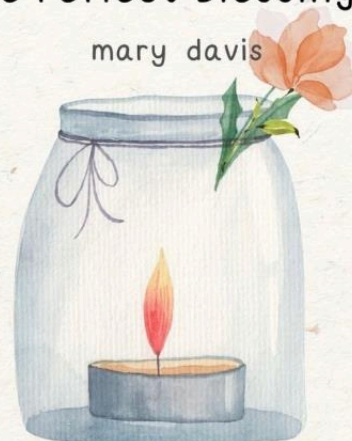
Dr. Larry B. Johnson, Regional Director

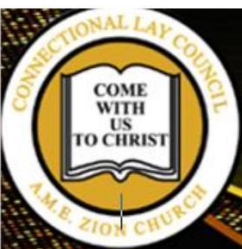


Zion Chester celebrated Fanatical Sunday on February 11, 2024. Members were encouraged to represent their favorite team by wearing team gear.

When we focus on beauty
we reflect light.
When we focus on harmony
we reflect love.
When we focus on gratitude
we reflect blessings.

mary davis





Connectional Lay Council

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

MID ATLANTIC EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Dr. Larry B. Johnson, Regional Director



Norfolk District Unsung Hero

Each year Norfolk District Lay council recognizes a local person. In observance of Black History Month this year the Lay Council hosted a luncheon, where the recommended attire was African. Each church was represented by their Pastor, Lay person, and church members.



Metropolitan – Mrs. Janette White – Rev. Dr. Darwin D. Little, Pastor

St. Thomas- Darlene Spratley – Rev. Dr. Joseph E. Lamb, Sr., Pastor

St. John – Ms. Benicia Spivey - Rev. Joseph Whitney, Pastor

Gabriel Chapel –Velma Wilson Baldwin–Rev. Dr. Sandi Hutchinson, Pastor

Greater Metropolitan – Mrs. Effie Marcus – Rev. Sharon D. Hall, Pastor

Brighton Rock – Mario Marin, Rev. Dr. Tonya M. Pass, Pastor

St. Joseph – James Allen Griffin, Jr. – Rev. Alphonso Griffin, Pastor

Wesley Union – Taelor McClenny – Rev. Brandon Praileau

Walton Grove- Mrs. Lessie Smith – Rev. Ronald Sears, Pastor

Providence- Mrs. Cassandra Griffin– Rev. Bristol Elliott, Pastor

Hood Chapel – Charles Jones – Rev. Samuel Warren, Pastor

Red Oak Grove – Ms. Kelli Boone – Rev. Kevin Knight, Pastor

New Foreman Temple – Mr. Toin Hines- Rev. Alvania Eason, Pastor



Connectional Lay Council

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

MID ATLANTIC EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Dr. Larry B. Johnson, Regional Director



CLC Treasurer - Cynthia White
VA Conference President – William English, Jr.
CLC Editor – Paula M. DeBerry



Norfolk District Lay Council Executive Board

President - Paula M. DeBerry, 1st VP Florence Brown, Secretary – Sue Wilkerson
Treasurer – Natalie Lassiter, 2nd VP – Brenda Harps, Chaplain – Adrian Barney



Rev. Dr. Darwin D. Little
Mrs. Janette White



Rev. Dr. Joseph E. Lamb, Sr.
Ms. Darlene Spratley



Rev. Joseph Whitney
Ms. Benicia Spivey



Rev. Sharon D. Hall
Mrs. Effie Marcus



Rev. Alphonso Griffin
Mr. James Allen Griffin, Jr.



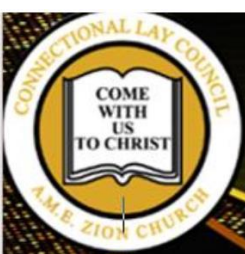
Rev. Dr. Tonya M. Pass
Mr. Mario Marin



Rev. Brandon Praileau
Ms. Taelor McClenny



Rev. Alvania Eason
Mr. Toin Hines



Connectional Lay Council

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

MID ATLANTIC EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

Dr. Larry B. Johnson, Regional Director



2024 Unsung Heroes'



2024 Unsung Heros' & Pastors



Wilmington District Lay Council Begins the New 2023-2024 Conference Year

LaVerna Hargrove, Reporter Images by Deborah Price



The first Lay Council Meeting of the 2023-2024 Conference Year was off and running with the election and installation of a new slate of officers, 18 new Life Members, and a memorial for those who transitioned from earth to glory during the 2023-2024 Cape Fear Conference Year. St. Paul AME Zion Church, Bolton, NC Reverend Thomas Williams, pastor; Mr. Jefferson Graham, Lay Council President hosted the meeting.



Rev. Dr. Jones, Presiding Elder of the Wilmington District and Host Pastor, Rev. Thomas Williams



The Wilmington District gathers for the first Lay council Meeting of the new Cape Fear Conference Year



Sis. Mary Thompson welcomes the district to St. Paul AME Zion Church, Bolton, NC



Praises go up, blessings come down!



Bro. Marvin Fulton reads the love chapter, 1Corinthians 13, as our spiritual foundation.



Bro. Jefferson Graham, President of the St. Paul Lay Council sends petitions to God on our behalf.



2nd Vice President Reginald Ballard reads the Mission of the Connectional Lay Council.



Wilmington District elected and installed the 2023-2024 slate of officers. These officers are President William Evans, 1st Vice President Reginald Ballard, 2nd Vice President Linda Simpson, Secretary LaVerna Hargrove, Finance Secretary/ Treasurer Janice Robbins, and Chaplain Alice Fennell.

2023-2024 Officers take their Oath

18 New Life members were installed. They are Cynthia Johnson, Deborah Price, Ruth Matthews (St. Luke); Annie Brown (Evergreen); Brenda Brown, Charles Grady, Brenda Grady (Summerville); Dorene Crumpler, (St. Phillip); Annette Ballard, Clifton Ballard, Elizabeth Hasty, Rev. Walter Mapson, Dana Mapson, Barbara Williams, Sadie Mapson, (Johnson Chapel); Johnsie Davis, Willie Eaddy, Sherby Eaddy (St. Andrew). Lavonia Lewis (St. Paul). Reverend Dr. Alexander Jones, Sr. conducted the installation service assisted by William Evans, President of the Wilmington District Lay Council and Linda Simpson, 2nd Vice President of the Wilmington District Lay Council.



18 new Life members take the Life Members oath.

2nd Vice President Linda Simpson and President William Evans assist Reverend Dr. Jones, Presiding Elder of the Wilmington District in the installation service.



The Wilmington District also used this opportunity to welcome the three new pastors to our district with gift bags, and an official Certificate of Welcome and well wishes. New pastors on the Wilmington District are welcomed by WDLC. (left to right) Rev. Dr. Luther McKinney, Jr., St. Mark, Whiteville; Rev. BetteJean Payton, St. Phillip of Wilmington, NC; and Rev. Fannie Dooley, Moores Chapel, Leland and President William Evans. We are looking forward to working with the new pastors as we work to get others to come with us to Christ.

WDLC Certificate of Welcome

THE WILMINGTON DISTRICT LAY COUNCIL
MOST SINCERELY WELCOMES
Reverend Dr. Luther McKinney, Jr., Pastor
OF
ST. MARK
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH
WHITEVILLE, NC
TO GET OTHERS TO COME WITH US TO CHRIST

William Evans
 William Evans, President WDLC

Alexander Jones Sr.
 Reverend Dr. Alexander Jones Sr., Presiding Elder

With sadness for our loss and with great joy at their entry into the joy of the Lord, the WDLC presented a video memorial of the 31 members of the Wilmington District who have gone to glory during the 2022-2023 Conference Year. Included in this memorial was one of our centenarians, Mrs. Lydia Howie.

Members were admonished to vote in the local elections November 7 to exercise their rights as citizens of the United States and to prepare to attend the Connectional Lay Council Convocation in Louisville, Kentucky March 14-17, 2024, to become more knowledgeable of the election process of our church.

Following the Lay Council Closing Prayer, St. Paul hosted a reception for the worshippers.



Connectional Lay Council
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
MID-WEST EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
Ms. Martha Scudder, Regional Director

The Mid-West Episcopal District is overjoyed that we have been afforded the privilege to host the 12th Quadrennial Connectional Lay Council Convocation. We are looking forward to welcoming you to Louisville, KY; the home of Muhammad Ali, the Kentucky Derby, and the Louisville Sluggers on March 14-17, 2024.

The Conference Presidents: Michigan Conference, Ms. Lynda Byrd; Tennessee Conference, Ms. Roslyn Eskridge; Kentucky Conference, Ms. Lynn Johnson; Missouri Conference, Ms. Debra Payne; and Indiana Conference, Dr. Janet Dorsey; as well as the District and Local Lay Ministries within the Mid-West Episcopal Area remain faithful in their work to equip laity for a discipleship life in the Kingdom of God. During this quarter, Lay Sunday Observances were held across the Mid-West Episcopal District. Following are highlights of some of the observances.

MICHIGAN CONFERENCE

The Michigan Conference has undergone a few changes since annual conference last May. The Detroit and Western Michigan Districts have been consolidated into one under the name “Detroit Western Michigan District.” Thus, the Michigan Conference now consists of two districts: Detroit Western Michigan and Chicago.

Other changes include the retirement of two of our long-time officers of the conference Lay Council. Mrs. Peggy Bryant, retired from the Chicago District Lay Council presidency and Mrs. Jacqueline Williams retired from the treasurer’s position. We were very sorry to lose them, but they continue to support the Lay Council in its work. They have been replaced by Jason Spigner of Daniel Chapel AME Zion Church in Phoenix, Illinois as Chicago District President, and Dyann Longmire of Greater St. Peter AME Zion Church as Detroit Western Michigan District Treasurer.

The churches on the Michigan Conference celebrated Connectional Laity Sunday in grand fashion. Black and gold attire and life member and African stoles were evident throughout the conference, and Lay persons participated in the services as worship leaders and speakers. The Detroit Western Michigan District held its annual Linwood G. Howie Scholarship program at Metropolitan in Detroit. The speaker was Mrs. Patricia Peterson, District Missionary President, and First Lady of Lomax Temple in Detroit.

Other speakers around the conference included Mrs. Selena Miller at St. Paul Toledo, James Adams at Walls Toledo, Dr. Frances Jackson at Blackwell Flint, Bro. Leon Davis at St. Mark East Chicago, Mrs. Karen Harris-Lax at Grace South Bend, Ms. Virginia Adams at St. Mark Chicago, Bro. Andrew J. Nixon, Jr. at Bethlehem, Gary, and Mrs. Dorothy Jones at Blackwell-Israel-Samuel Chicago.

A detailed look at the Laity Sunday program at St. Paul Toledo and photos from the conference follow.

On October 15, **The Lay Council of St. Paul in Toledo, Ohio** of the **Detroit Western Michigan District**, which was recently renamed, observed Connectional Lay Sunday. The St. Paul Lay Council is under the leadership of President, Mrs. Jacqueline Williams; Vice President, Ms. Roxie Vines; Secretary, Mrs. Aline Parker; Treasurer, Mrs. Catherine Lothery; Chaplain, Ms. DiMeka Fuqua. The conference theme, “Sharing Our Faith” was used for Lay Sunday; theme scripture **“So proclaim the Message with intensity; keep on your watch. Challenge, warn, and urge your people. Don’t quit. Just keep it simple.” II Timothy 4:2 (MSG)**. The Invitation to Christian Discipleship and Benediction was given by the Pastor, Rev. Darran Overton, who was recently appointed in June and who is a new member of the Lay Council. Participants in the worship experience included Lay Council members: Invocation, Apostle Creed/Affirmation for Laity, Mr. Richard Hogan; Scripture Lessons, Ms. Janet Whitney; Altar Call Prayer, Ms. DiMeka Fuqua; Announcements and Introductions of Friends, Mrs. Pamela Hopkins. Prior to the message, Elder Lesley Talley, Minister of Music, gave an **anointed** instrumental rendition of “To God Be the Glory”. The messenger was Mrs. Selina Miller of the St. Paul church family and member of the Lay Council and was introduced by her son Mr. Jeremy Miller. Mrs. Miller told us through scriptural illustrations how we get faith. She emphasized that we keep our faith strong by reading the bible, worship, prayer and fasting. Also, that we share our faith by witnessing and sharing the good news of Jesus. The message was well received and a blessing to all. The worship service can be viewed on St. Paul’s Facebook or YouTube page.



Laity Sunday at St. Mark, East Chicago



Laity Sunday at Greater Walters, Chicago



Celebrating at Unity in Merrillville, Indiana

**Mr. Linwood Parker, Laity Sunday Speaker at Unity
AME Zion Church**



**Bro. Andrew J. Nixon, Jr., Lay Speaker at Bethlehem in Gary,
Indiana**

**The Nixon Brothers and Pastor Johnny J. Johnson,
Jr., Life Members of Bethlehem in Gary, Indiana**





The Bethlehem Family celebrates Laity Sunday at the church in Gary, Indiana

Mrs. Karen Harris- Lax, Speaker and Mr. Gregory Hope, Worship Leader of Grace AME Zion Church



Laity Sunday at St. Paul Toledo: Mrs. Selena Miller, Speaker; Mrs. Elsie Harbour, Detroit Western Michigan Lay Council President; Mr. Richard Hogan, Worship Participant; Rev. Darran Overton, Pastor



Mrs. Patricia Peterson, speaker at Linwood G. Howie Scholarship service on Laity Sunday afternoon



MISSOURI CONFERENCE

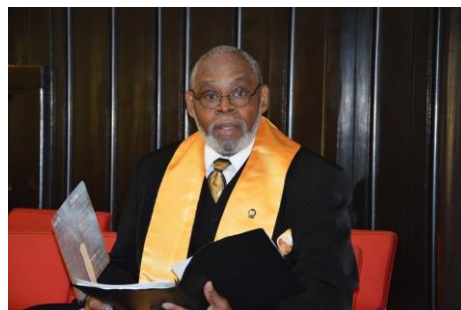
The **Washington Metropolitan AME Zion Church** in St. Louis, Missouri celebrated Connectional Lay Sunday on October 15, 2023. The theme was Sharing Our Faith Thru Our Divine Assignment. Members of the Lay Council and other congregational members led worship service.

Pastor Anthony Witherspoon opened worship service with The Call to Worship. The Invocation was led by Deborah Tansil Graham, Lay Council President and was followed by the Voices of Zion spirited rendition of “You Deserve It”. The Affirmation of Faith was led by Harold Young, Lay Council Treasurer; followed by the reading of the morning scripture, Psalms 90:17, by youth member Jayden McKnight; with altar prayer led by Margaret Brown.

The guest speaker for the morning was the Honorable Renee Hardin-Tammons, Judge, Missouri Court of Appeals, Eastern District. Judge Hardin-Tammons shared her spiritual journey that included her father who was a minister and as a member of the New Sunny Mount Baptist Church in St. Louis. Judge Hardin-Tammons’ message, “A Divine Assignment”, was based on Ephesians 2:10 (NLT), “For we are God’s masterpiece”. “He has created us anew in Christ Jesus so that we can do good things He planned for us long ago.”

Judge Hardin-Tammons shared critical thoughts about the “Divine Assignment” we have been given from God. We must pray about what we believe to be our God given purpose. God is the potter, and we are the clay. He shapes and molds us, we are his workmanship, created for His purpose. Each of us has a personal calling that is as unique as a fragrance. The best way to succeed is to discover what you love and find a way to offer it to others in service. As Christians, we answer the call every time we tell others about Jesus Christ. When we turn the other cheek we show God’s purpose to others – when we act as Christ would act. We were encouraged to bring whatever you believe to be your purpose to the church. God will give us divine assistance. He will always send someone that you may least expect to help and equip you with whatever you need. Relationships improve and change when we walk in God’s will. We are not in this walk alone. With God, there are no “false starts” as in track and field. No matter what, God is merciful and grants us second chances, a fresh start to begin over when we stumble. Favor will follow us when we stand on God’s word and acknowledge Him in all things.

Following Judge Hardin-Tammons’ spirited message, the Litany for Rededication of Laity was led by Dori Jones; followed by the Lay theme song, Onward Christian Soldiers led by Calvin Starks, Lay Council Vice-President. Youth member, Gabriel Woolridge, led the congregation in The Lay Council Closing Prayer.



The **Metropolitan AME Zion Church** observed Annual Connectional Lay Sunday on October 15, 2023. Local lay members participated in the morning service. The Worship Leader for the glorious service was Mrs. Angela Roseburr-Ross. Graciously, Mrs. Vanessa Mahaney, First Lady of New Hope AME Zion Church in Jefferson City, Missouri, accepted the invitation to bring the Lay message inspired by God. Also, Metropolitan is her home church and where her “Christian foundation was formed”. The theme for the day was “The Freedom Church: A Movement Empowered by The Holy Spirit – Strengthening Our Fellowship, Serving Our Flock, Sharing Our Faith, Securing Our Future”. “Sharing Our Faith” was the focus of the message delivered to the congregation. The holy scriptures were read from the Old Testament, Psalms 40: 9-10 and the New Testament, Philemon 1: 4-7. Mrs. Mahaney asked, “Are you willing to share your faith?” There were three points, 1) Put on the whole armor of Christ; 2) Study the Word for yourself; and 3) Be obedient to the Lord. We are all ministers of Christ. We all should Go, Go, Go! To God be the Glory! (Rhonda R. Buford, Lay President, Metropolitan AME Zion Church)



KENTUCKY CONFERENCE

The third Sunday in October has been designated as a day to celebrate the Laity of our great churches. Across the Kentucky Conference that is composed of the Western Kentucky District, Bardstown District and Louisville District; the Laity celebrated “**Lay Day**” on October 15, 2023, with messages of “Sharing Our Faith”. Here are some highlights of Laity at work with a shared message.

Bardstown District

Taylortown AME Zion – Lay Speaker: Ms. Deidra Byrd – “God Favored Me – My Christian Walk”

St. John AME Zion – Lay Speaker: Mr. Donald Croom, Local Lay President – “Sinners Saved by Grace.”

Johnson Chapel AME Zion – Lay Speaker: Ms. Michael Meaux – “The Empty Seats”

Campbell Chapel AME Zion – Lay Speaker: Ms. Brenda Ford-Ware – “The Lay – Just Ordinary People”

Sherman Chapel AME Zion – Lay Speaker: Ms. Michael Meaux – “Where Are Our People?”



Sherman Chapel AME Zion Church celebrates Lay Day.
Left Front: Lay speaker: Ms. Michael Meaux, Bardstown District Lay President; Middle Front: Pastor: Rev. Tanisha Durrett-Simpson

Western Kentucky District

Zion Temple AME Zion Church had a grand day celebrating Annual Lay Day with their Pastor and Presiding Elder, Rev. BaTavi Combs, Lay Council President Tonnette Huskey, Associate Pastor Rev. Deborah Slaton and District Lay Council President Connie McReynolds. The speaker was Bro. Bill McReynolds who spoke on the theme, “Sharing Your Faith”. Following the service, the Laity fellowshiped together at the repast.



Bank Street AME Zion Church - Lay Speaker: Mrs. Alkeshia Blackmon-Boone (First Lady) – Proverbs 3:5-6

Louisville District

The Louisville District Lay Council hosted Lay Day Service at all 8 Local Churches:

Stoner Memorial AME Zion Church - Lay Speaker: Mr. Alex Harris - “A Loving Relationship with Christ”, Deuteronomy 6:4-6

Hughlett Temple AME Zion - Lay Speaker: Ms. Damenica Redd, Local Lay President - “Sharing Your Faith” A Personal Testimony. Philemon 1:4-6

Jones Memorial AME Zion Church - Lay Speaker: Mrs. Linda Harris - “A Measure of Faith”, Romans 12:1-6

Walters Clement AME Zion - Lay Speaker: Ms. Lynn Johnson, Kentucky Conference Lay Council President “Sharing Your Faith, Your Way”, Philemon 1:4-6

Spradling Memorial AME Zion Church - Lay Speaker: Mrs. Symera Talbott – “Going from Chaos to Confidence”

Caldwell Tutt Memorial AME Zion Church - Lay Speaker: Bro. Kenneth Woods - “The Love God Requires”, Romans 13:1,8-10

Brown Temple and Broadway Temple AME Zion Churches - Celebrated Lay Day Worship Service together. Service was held at Brown Temple AME Zion Church. Lay Speaker: Ms. Sandra Cole, member of Broadway Temple AME Zion Church



Louisville District President, Ms. Andrea Henderson led the **Louisville District** in a District Lay Day Worship service held at the Stoner Memorial AME Zion church, Rev. Marcia J. Cole Morton was the Host Pastor. The speaker was Sis. Ellen Tutt, member of Caldwell-Tutt AME Zion Church and her topic was “Sharing Our Faith”. All local Presidents participated during the service.

Left-Andrea Henderson

Right- Sis Ellen Tutt

On Saturday, October 28, 2023, Super Saturday was held by the Louisville District at Jones Memorial AME Zion Church in New Albany, Indiana, Rev. Y. Michelle Washington, Host Pastor. The Lay Council started with wonderful, healthy breakfast casseroles, fruit, and coffee; followed with practical examples of Lay Academy and “Practicing Sharing Our Faith”. Each local Lay president or representative facilitated a table discussing ways of faith sharing and events in their lives with participation from those seated at the table. The “table talk” concluded with everyone praying. It was an enjoyable event, and several mentioned they had a great time sharing with one another. Other workshops by other ministries were presented as well with the conclusion of the day being an outreach evangelism event. The outreach included a prayer table and Bible give-away; clothes give-away; serving of grilled hotdogs and hamburgers; blood pressure screening; games; and music with participation from Louisville District Laity, clergy, and community.



CLC EDUCATION COMMITTEE
Dr. Larry B. Johnson, Chair

Charles Dickens had his *A Tale of Two Cities*. The Connectional Lay Council has its **A Tale of Two Themes**. As we approach the General Conference in July, we are still faced with the ever-present dilemma about which component of the Quadrennial Theme we should be emphasizing. Is it “Sharing Our Faith” or “Securing Our Future”? And the answer is-- “Sharing Our Faith.”

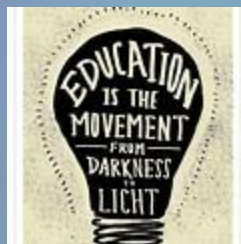
For some reason (and long before this chair came along), we have not been able to stay with the Episcopacy on which theme should prevail on any given year from Quadrennial to Quadrennial. Perhaps one of the main reasons (if not the main reason) is that the Education Committee receives the Theme at the same time everybody else does; hence, the composition of the *Facilitator’s Guide for Thematic, Interactive Lay Academies* begins after July. I guess we are still figuring out how to fix that dilemma.

So, with all of that being said, I direct the attention of the Lay Council to Lay Academy 9 and Lay Academy 10. Since we are all evangelists, Lay Academy 9 explores the many ways that evangelism takes place, starting with the five types of evangelistic strategies: Individual, Vicarious, Lifestyle, Congregational, and Pulpit. Then, Lesson 10 aims to provide practice in sharing our faith, “motivated by biblical and personal assurance.”

The *Guide* is just that-- a guide. So, facilitators are able to adjust and adapt the lessons. Since the themes are inter-related, you would concentrate on “Sharing Our Faith,” linking it to “Strengthening Our Fellowship” and “Serving Our Flock” while giving a preview to “Securing Our Future.” However, keep the main theme the main theme.

The Freedom Church-- A Movement Empowered by the Holy Spirit:
Strengthening Our Fellowship
Serving Our Flock
Sharing Our Faith
Securing Our Future.

Indeed, they are all connected.



PHILADELPHIA-BALTIMORE CONFERENCE LAY COUNCIL

SAMANTHA M. WORMLEY MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINE

Submit applications for the
2024 Samantha M. Wormley Memorial
Scholarship no later than March 18, 2024.

Contact your District's Lay president for applications and more information:

- ✓ *Deoleous A. Parker, BmoreDistrictLC@gmail.com ~ Baltimore
- ✓ Deborah Stanley, Dbstnl@aol.com ~ Eastern Shore
- ✓ John Campbell, jorvilsoup@msn.com ~ Harrisburg
- ✓ Patricia Griffin, motash49@yahoo.com ~ Philadelphia
- ✓ Gilbert Turner, gtnturner@aol.com ~ Washington

The Lay Council accepts
applications in two ways:

1. By Mail
Send applications to:
Philadelphia-Baltimore Lay Council
Attn: Scholarship Committee
P.O. Box 409
Gambrills, Maryland 21504

2. Electronically
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gtnturner@aol.com

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The Connection

CONNECTIONAL LAY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

SOCIAL/POLITICAL ACTION CHAIR

Ms. Patricia (Pat) Hunter



I love to romanticize the Civil Rights movement. I imagine church leaders meeting in the fellowship halls to discuss current events and develop strategies to protect the community's most vulnerable members. I hear the heated debates that emerge as different ideas are presented, with passionate arguments ensuing as the pros and cons are debated. There's an abundance of food to ensure that just as the preached Word has lit a fire in our desire to move toward collective action, the hearty sustenance from kitchens throughout the community will I the fire for the fight.

Regardless of how accurate my depiction may be, we need to create an environment in our church communities that fosters this level of collective civic engagement. Our communities are under attack from leaders who no longer consider how the least of these will be affected but are more concerned about how they will personally benefit. From our local boards, councils, and commissions to our Congressional and Senate leaders, we need more Black leaders of faith listening to the community's needs and using their voices to develop policies for the changes we need to see in our communities. We can no longer believe that just getting out to vote or fiercely protesting will be enough - we need more voices at the table who are not afraid to speak truth to power.



Rev. LaKesha Womack

We have experienced a divestment in schools, businesses, and the infrastructure in the Black community while urban renewal projects are revitalizing the places many of our members once called home but to the point that it is almost impossible for them to remain residents where generations of their family members were raised. The inequity of funding for our schools leaves a group that was left behind pre-pandemic even further behind.

We can go on and on listing the problems that plague us. We can host panel after presentation with professionals sermonizing about potential solutions, but when will we reclaim seats in policy spaces that need our perspective? When will we get behind candidates of character rather than complaining about the divisiveness in our political parties? When will we realize that church leadership should be a steppingstone to community leadership?



The Connection

CONNECTIONAL LAY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

SOCIAL/POLITICAL ACTION CHAIR

Ms. Patricia (Pat) Hunter



The issues are too important, and the policies are too impactful for us to remain silent and hope that someone will come to save us. We are the change that we want to see. We must create spaces and opportunities for a generation of leaders from every age demographic to claim a seat at the table on our behalf.

The 2024 elections will be the most impactful of our lifetime. We may have said that in the past, but this time, the warning holds more truth than we would ever want to believe. Not only are reproductive rights on the ballot but the ability to vote in future elections is being threatened by a group who will cheat to retain power at any cost. January 6, 2021, was the beginning of a movement that could threaten our ability to do more than complain and protest.

We cannot take this moment for granted. We must strategize for the long-term success of the land our forefathers worked, and some died for. We don't only owe it to our ancestors, but we owe it to future generations who will ask, what did we do in this crucial moment? What excuse will we give for not standing up to fight for our future and presenting plausible solutions for the present? Whether volunteering to support a candidate, donating to a campaign, or offering yourself as a candidate, this is your call to action. This is your moment to decide how you will actively advocate for a future that will allow all humans the dignity of a living wage, the opportunity to obtain a quality education, and access to affordable housing and health care.



#YOURVOTEMATTERS2024

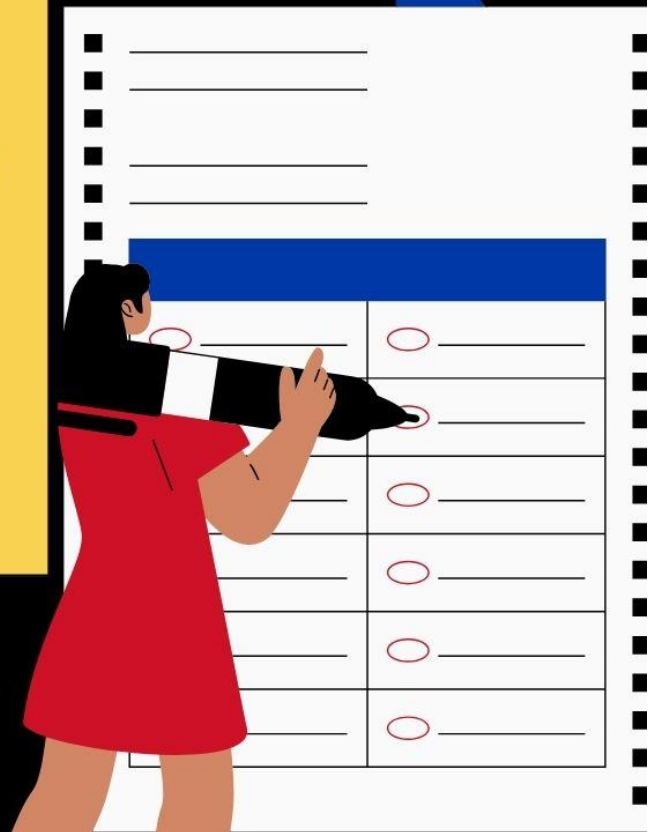
Make your voice heard in the upcoming election!

Zion and beyond join us on Election Day
let's make a difference.



SOME REMINDERS:

- Make sure you're registered to vote before Election Day.
- Don't forget to bring your ID with you to the polling station.
- Stay informed about the election and the issues that matter to you.
- #zionvotes





The Connection

CONNECTIONAL LAY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

CLC Health, *Wellness & Empowerment Initiative*

Tanaya Henry, Chairperson ~ Shelley Henry, Co-Chairperson



REST

Genesis 2:2-3



In our relentless pursuit of productivity and success, we often overlook a fundamental component of well-being: rest. Yet, rest should not be confined to the mere act of sleeping. It is a multifaceted practice that nourishes the body, soothes the mind, and replenishes the soul. To guide you toward a more balanced and fulfilling lifestyle, we invite you to explore the seven areas of rest, each offering unique benefits and opportunities for rejuvenation.

Physical rest is essential yet often misunderstood as merely getting enough sleep. While sleep is crucial, there are other ways to rest physically, such as taking a nap, going for a short walk, or engaging in gentle stretching exercises. These activities help relieve physical tension, improve circulation, and enhance overall well-being.

Exodus 20:8-10

Mental rest, in the age of digital overload, is becoming increasingly vital. Our brains are constantly bombarded with information, making it essential to take breaks from our phones, emails, and social media. Adding meditation to your routine can also provide a much-needed pause, helping to clear your mind and reduce stress.

Exodus 33:12-14

Emotional rest involves distancing oneself from stressful situations and triggers. It's important to recognize the need for a break and find ways to process emotions healthily. Engaging in conversations with trusted friends, journaling, or spending time in nature can offer a safe space to unwind and reflect, promoting emotional balance.

Psalms 4:8



The Connection

CONNECTIONAL LAY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church



CLC Health, *Wellness* & Empowerment Initiative

Tanaya Henry, Chairperson ~ Shelley Henry, Co-Chairperson

Creating a pleasant sensory environment is another wonderful way to achieve rest. Our senses are continuously stimulated, often leading to overload. By lighting a calming scented candle, dimming the lights, or using a weighted blanket, you can significantly reduce sensory input, leading to a more relaxed state.

Psalm 55:4-8

Creativity serves as a unique form of rest, allowing for self-expression and exploration beyond the confines of daily routines. Engaging in creative activities such as writing a story, painting, or any form of art can be incredibly restorative, fostering a sense of relaxation and joy.

Jeremiah 6:16

Social rest is found in the company of positive and supportive individuals. Meaningful interactions and connections with others can provide comfort and energy, emphasizing the importance of building and maintaining uplifting relationships.

Psalm 23:2-3

Lastly, spiritual rest connects us with something greater, offering peace, purpose, and a sense of belonging. Whether through prayer, worship, or meditation, embracing your spiritual beliefs regularly can deeply nourish the soul and align your daily actions with your deeper values.

Incorporating these seven areas of rest into your life is about making intentional, gradual changes that collectively enhance your well-being. Recognizing and embracing the various dimensions of rest can lead to a more balanced, energized, and fulfilling existence. We encourage you to explore these practices, discover their transformative potential, and welcome a renewed sense of peace and vitality into your life.



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