

THE STAR OF ZION

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Merry Christmas
And A Blessed New Year
from the



Board of Bishops of The A.M.E. Zion Church

BE A BLESSING LIKE JESUS, BE A GIFT

Submitted by Reverend Leona Welch

Christmas bells are ringing, houses are lit up with dazzling colors intertwined through a tree, on a wall or on the front facade of our homes, while joyful carols blasted through various digital devices, fill our homes with happy anticipation. Both eagerly and anxiously, we find ourselves in the hustle and bustle of gift shopping, in and out of virtual malls, plowing through virtual traffic, or braving the streets and parking lot malls in real time, to select the perfect gift for a family member or a dear friend. When all is said and done, it is all about the gift.

On the subject of gifts, let us pause. Let us take a moment to turn that word around in our minds. better yet, let us re-position the

word, "gift," in our hearts and in our spirits, and make it truly the focal point of our Christmas celebrations. Remember the biblical message, God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son... (John 3:16). This message assures us that God sent His Son so that we could have eternal life by accepting His Son. Speaking further of gifts, Our Heavenly Father gave the ultimate, the most profound, the most precious, and the most sacrificial gift every given or to be given to anyone, at anytime.

Not only did the Father give His Son as a gift to us, but the Son also gave Himself as a gift to all humankind. Of His life, we hear Jesus saying, No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord (John 10:18). With this message resounding in our hearts this Christmas, I urge us to take what

Jesus and His Father did for us as the perfect example of gift-giving.

During this Christmas season, Dear Friend of God, I suggest that you wrap yourself in the brightness of God, tie a bow of love around your heart, and take your time, your money, your encouragement, your prayers, and whatever goodness you have, and offer it to someone who needs it.

For all practical purposes, if you do not use the high tech devices in such demand today, you are still well-versed in using the telephone, and we know well how crucial personal contact is at this time of the year. Purpose in your heart to take the initiative.

To state it simply, I urge all of us, during this Christmas season, to BE LIKE JESUS, BE A BLESSING. BE A GIFT.

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The Star of Zion is an award-winning newspaper and journalistic media organization, published by The A.M.E. Zion Church as its official organ since 1876.

Being guided by the core values of truth, faith, and love, the Star seeks to raise the consciousness of readers with news that is current, relevant, and dependable.

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BE A BLESSING

The Doors of The Church Are Open

By: Reverend Leona Nicholas Welch

Sunday, after Sunday, after Sunday, in churches across the world, we make a most important and powerful statement, inviting others to Christ. THE DOORS OF THE CHURCH ARE OPEN, we offer. This is a good statement – noble, godly, gracious, and potentially soul-saving, and it is very well meant. Our hearts are in it, and we celebrate when someone accepts the invitation.

Sadly, however, many among us, church leaders and all, have preconceived notions about whom we expect to come. We also limit the concept of “door.” So, what we have here is a notion that people will look like us and think like us; that they will smell good and be well-behaved. As for the door, we see only the building, and this limits those we might welcome as possible disciples or those simply seeking refuge or fellowship. The question is, how does God view it all?

Jesus’ love and compassion prompted these words: *For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost...* (Luke 19:10). In John 10:9, Jesus says, *I am the door...*

The lost, Jesus said. Let’s be real. It is easy to welcome someone through the church door who is well and well behaved while the spirit is high and the Holy Spirit is moving from the choir to the pulpit to the pews, and when the music is filling the sanctuary, and we are drunk on worship, fellowship, and the Spirit. This is all very beautiful! Thank God we have this experience frequently.

What if we extended the definition of the word, door, to mean Jesus, since He has called Himself just that. If we do that, Dear People of God, we will see more clearly, that there is absolutely no one uninvited to come through. The lost – the undesirables who do not look like us- these are the ones for whom Jesus came. The door leading someone up the Isle to accept the pastor’s hand of fellowship is important, but it is not ultimate. The Door to salvation and an abundant life here on earth, is Jesus. He is the Ultimate.

THE DOORS OF THE CHURCH ARE OPEN: Be a Blessing!

CORRECTION NOTICE

The November issue of the Star of Zion incorrectly placed the image of Bishop Battle with Bishop Brown’s Name & Contact info on the Global Leadership Page. Corrections have been made this Issue.

155th GEORGIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

October 6-8, 2022

Submitted by Janice Williams

Faith A.M.E. Zion Church, Atlanta, Georgia - Under the excellent leadership of Bishop Kenneth Monroe, Presiding Prelate, South Atlantic Episcopal District, the 155th Session of the Georgia Annual Conference was held October 6-8, 2022, at Faith A.M.E. Zion Church in Atlanta, Georgia. The host pastor was Rev. Brandon Moore and host Presiding Elder Rev. Reginald Morton. Retired Bishop Rev. Dr. Warren M. Brown, Bishop in Residence assisted Bishop Monroe.

From the opening Thursday evening worship service until the closing reading of appointments on Saturday afternoon the conference was spirit filled and informative. Reverend Brandon Moore, host pastor, was the worship leader for the Thursday evening worship service. Following music of inspiration and preparation from Faith A.M.E. Zion church choir, Rev. Rena R. Hunter, Pastor, Smith Chapel A.M.E. Zion church, Girard, Georgia reminded us of our purpose with a sermon-"Ministry Matters" using Philippians 2:1-8 as scriptural reference. She posed the question of "why are we here and is ministry a service, function or profession?" She reminded us that "when we get on one accord, we will discover that ministry really matters."

Bishop Monroe opened the Conference for business. The roll call of pastors, ministers and lay delegates was taken, and the Conference organized.



Friday morning, we received the Episcopal Address from Bishop Monroe. His message "Making the Most of Change". He stated that "we must change." "A worker of faith must wake up and be an agent of change, not the victims of change." We must use 'Discerning Sight' to manage transitions. He spoke about how we must use the quarterly conference to help us see ourselves and determine our strengths and weaknesses. We must possess 'Developing Insight' to see the present time and see things

better or in more successful ways. We must have 'Distinguishing Foresight' to have clear goals and objectives for the future of the church. His recommendations were: 1. Each pastor create a Task Force to examine the ministries of the congregation and determine what would be necessary to adjust the ministries to capture people beyond the walls of the church building; 2. Each presiding elder to use the quarterly conference to evaluate the ministry of the church; 3. That the Christian Education Department develop spiritual formation classes to edify the congregation and create a curriculum in Christian Education designed to make disciples of Christ and prepare individuals to become strong witnesses for the Christian faith and 4. Create a faith demonstration project in each congregation and prayerfully seek to accomplish a faith project that would require significant sacrifice on the part of each member. His powerful message was enlightening, motivating, and challenging.



The Presiding Elders' reports were given via power point presentations by Rev. Lela Johnson- Augusta District, Rev. Dr. John Paul Ruth, Conyers-Winder District and Rev. Reginald Morton, Atlanta District.

After lunch the Visionary Moment, "The Price of Progress: Overcoming the Fears of the Pandemic" was presented by Rev. Dr. Erlinda C. Dobson, Presiding Elder, New Bern District-North Carolina Annual Conference. She reminded us that "we need to look at what God has already done! You don't have to go back."



Reports were given by Mrs. Lovetta Holmes, Missionary Supervisor; and Rev Ms. Deborah Wilcox- Augusta District, Mrs. Wanda Macon-Rose-Conyers-Winder District and Mrs. Michele Morton-Atlanta District. Other reports given were from Christian Education Director, Mrs. Gloria Ricks, Lay Council- Mrs. Gwendolyn Freeman, Director of Evangelism-Rev. Donald Patterson, Men of Zion President-Rev. Charles Watkins, Home

Missions- Rev. Lela Hodges Johnson, and Ministers' Wives and Spouses- Mrs. Michele Morton. Dr. Mercuria Chase Williams updated us on Project 100 and stressed the importance of voting in the General Election. The Necrology Committee Chair Rev. Donald Patterson presented the report which stated the names of those saints who departed last Conference year.

Friday evening worship service we were inspired with the Annual Sermon, delivered by Rev. Dr. Karim L. Currey, pastor Solid Rock A.M.E. Zion church. His message "Closing on a High Note" referenced Revelation 22:21 as he reminded us that "the journey makes the message sweet" and that "the last word should be the best word." He spoke about "how we must keep growing in grace and that the journey is about grace."



Saturday morning the Visionary Moment was given by Rev. Dr. Erlinda C. Dobson, Presiding Elder, New Bern District- North Carolina Annual Conference. Part of two of her message - The Visionary Moment, "The Price of Progress: Overcoming the Fears of the Pandemic" was based on Numbers 14:1-9 focused on the fact that "we are in a new shift and that the pandemic has come to prune us." She elaborated on what she called the three P's - Praise, Prayer and Purpose."

Following reports from the committee on Admissions, Conference Studies, and Holy Orders the Finance Report was given by Rev. Reginald Morton, Conference Finance Committee Chair. The Courtesy Committee, Mrs. Crystal Ruth, chair, thanked the Faith A.M.E. Zion church family for the excellent way they welcomed us and served us during the Conference.



Bishop Monroe asked the Disciplinary questions and the Presiding Elders stood with their respective pastors and ministers of their Districts as the character was passed for each.

Bishop Monroe read the appointments for the next conference year. The next Annual Conference will be October 5-7, 2023 convening at Solid Rock A.M.E. Zion Church, Lithonia, Georgia.

The A.M.E. Zion Church Communications Department
Presents
Christmas in Zion
LET US CELEBRATE CHRIST TOGETHER THIS CHRISTMAS
FEATURING SPECIAL CHRISTMAS THEMED MEDITATIONS & PRESENTATIONS FROM VARIOUS
A.M.E. ZION EPISCOPAL DISTRICTS
WATCH LIVE
Sunday, December 25 @ 3PM EST AMEZ.org StarOfZion.org

Bishop Kenneth Monroe Convenes the One Hundred Eleventh Cape Fear Annual Conference

November 21, 2022

Submitted by LaVerna Hargrove, Cape Fear Conference Reporter



Cape Fear, NC - The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church was founded in 1796. The Cape Fear Conference was established in 1911. How do institutions remain in existence for 226 years, and 111 years, respectively, in the face of endless, ceaseless change from every corner of our society? Senior Bishop Kenneth Monroe, the 95th Bishop in the line of succession, Presiding Prelate of the Eastern North Carolina Episcopal District and the Presiding Prelate of the South Atlantic Episcopal District in his greeting to the Cape Fear Annual Conference addressed such changes.

Thus the tone of the Cape Fear Annual Conference was set. Bishop Monroe admonished the conference “ as we deliberate during the annual conference, I hope we will examine our conditions and embrace a new mind-set because if we are to survive in this changing and unpredictable time, we must become a new people; we must select a new position; and we must start a new practice to survive; but more importantly to develop into the people God has called us to become —Miracle Workers”. The AME Zion Church under such leadership as this has not only existed for over 226 years, and the Cape Fear Conference for 111 years, but it has been given years when we have had our ”territory expanded” to do more for the sake of Christ.



The 111th Session of the Cape Fear Annual Conference was hosted by the Lumberton District, Rev. Dr. Florence Brown, Presiding Elder, and held at Greater Chrysolite AME Zion Church, Lumberton, NC pastored by Reverend Kitty Jacobs. The conference was held on two or more platforms, Zoom and In-Person, to meet the needs of the Church. Rev. Kitty Jacobs , host pastor, served as worship leader during the Opening Service



The sermon, given by Reverend David Elliot, Pastor of St. James AME Zion Church, Goldsboro District, Goldsboro, NC, focused on 1 Samuel 17:50 used as a subject “How To Prevail No Matter the Odds”.

Reverent Elliot told the Cape Fear Conference and guests that we must (1) Hold to God’s unchanging hands. In time of frailty He strengthens and sustains; in times of well being he strengthens and sustains (2) keep your doubts low (3) Everybody has a part to play don’t argue with those that do not value you, maintain your focus and (4) God’s glory will shine through when you keep your focus on your given assignment and follow His directions

The Episcopal Address by Bishop Kenneth Monroe, Senior Bishop, focused on Positioning For Progress, Production, and Perfection. Bishop Monroe noted the statistics on the declines of the church universal and specifically the AME Zion Church, but the true mandate of the Christian Church is to make disciples. To accomplish this mandate is not to reflect, restore or adjust to the decline, but to reposition ourselves for the movement of God. We cannot do what we always did. We must have a plan, we must have movement to reach perfection. Pastors as well as laity must evaluate their personal ministry. We must determine how far we are from the mandate of God, noting whether our praising, promoting, praying is inclusive or exclusive.



To meet the mandate to make disciples we must communicate with the Master, change our state of mind to the state of mind of the Master so that we can comply with the mission of the church, refine, create, adjust to form new models of ministry. Communicate a transforming message to an audience that does not come to the church as they once did, but yet wants and needs to know Christ. This can be done by making our presence known rather than letting our location be known. We can let our presence be known be mirroring the existence of God. To position for reconciliation we must cancel injuries to those we are attempting to serve, employing a plan for productivity, and explore the possibilities that are presented. Bishop Monroe presented the following recommendations for Position for Progress, Production and Perfection:

1. Congregation should employ both in-person and digital teaching, peaching, and witnessing
 2. Ministries should plan to reconcile
 3. Examine your vocation to make disciples. Ministries must be relevant to those we serve
 4. Supernumerary ministers should execute a project and report progress to the quarterly conference
 5. Bless the Eastern North Carolina Resource Center with prayers and with financial support
 6. Examine the idea of creating an endowment fund to the church
- Following the provocative and informative Episcopal Address many expressions of commendations and appreciations for the stellar leadership of Bishop Monroe was given.



The Presiding Elders of the Cape Fear Conference, Reverend Michael Bell of the Wilson District; Reverend Dr. A D Brown, of the Goldsboro District; Reverend Alexander Jones, Sr. of the Wilmington District, , and Reverend Dr. Florence Brown of the Lumberton District gave holistic reports showing the stewardship of the leaders on their districts. The reports demonstrated concentrated efforts of the 2022 element of the quadrennial theme, ‘Serving the Flock’.

The Visionary Moments were presented by Reverend Dr. Paul Atlas, Pastor of Amanah AME Zion Church, Knightdale, NC

Topic: The Power of the Church in the Midst of the Pandemic.



Dr. Paul Atlas presented the definition of the church from two different perspectives: (1) from the ecclesiastical perspective using Paul’s letter to the Ephesians (Ephesians 1:3, 1:9, 1:20-21 and Ephesians 4) and from the practical perspective. The church has one job, the job of reconciliation—reconciliation from man to man and from man to God. The church should be shining its brightest in the midst of the pandemic.

If the church is to carry out its mission it must do so with great energy, tapping into all of the power it has been given by God to do the job.

The practical side of the definition of the church was to be the instrument of reconciliation as instructed in Ephesians 4. What does ‘the church’ do when it is feeling overwhelmed? Reflect on the mercy; the Gospel is the power for everyone that believes; Tap into the message of the Gospel’ remember whose message it is; be mindful of to whom the message has been entrusted—the messed up folk who are called to preach, witness, birth new congregations, and make disciples. It’s not the vessel the message is in— it’s the message itself that is within the vessel.

This is the power of the church in the midst of the pandemic — the

message!

The message for the Missions and Evangelism Session, “Flawed But Favored” was brought by Reverend Sharon Browning, Presiding Elder of the New Rock Hill District, South Atlantic Episcopal District and CEO of the Kenneth Monroe Transformation Center, Rock Hill, SC. Reverend Browning referencing Jeremiah 18:1-6 to demonstrate that God specializes in new beginnings. Even when we are disfigured by people, events, or even ideas, God can and does still use us because we belong to Him. Our vision of ourselves or as others see us is not the same vision of us that God has. He sees the possibilities, the potentiality, the perfection of His purpose. God has a plan for each of us. He allows detractions so that we can be transformed and transfigured for His purpose. God can make jewels from junk; riches from rubble; and even miracles from messes during the transforming and transfiguring process.

The Evangelism Report entitled Content, Context, Christ recommended that (1) Each Committee on Church Growth and Development expand training beyond Spiritual Emphasis Week; (2) A major evange



E. DELALI GADZEKPO’S BIO

Special To The Star

The first child of Rev. Dr. Richard Gadzekpo and Noreen Gadzekpo, Delali is a proud citizen of both Ghana and the United States. In 2002, her family relocated from their home to America with the hopes of securing a bright future for their growing family. 21 years later, Delali is a proud realization of her parents’ goals and aspirations. She is now a Frederick Douglass Global Ambassador and a Fourth-Year Vocal Music Education Major and a Brock Honors Student at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. On Campus, she currently serves as the Vice President and Director of the Littleton H. Mason Singers, the 2022-2023 Homecoming Queen, and the President of the Student Body. Delali aims to become a Collegiate Choral Conductor and incorporate

cultural competency through the medium of music. These opportunities are allowing her to learn and effect change in a meaningful way. Growing as an activist and educator, she is a strong believer in encouraging minds towards radical empathy and vivid curiosity to bridge gaps between our communities. With an entrepreneurial spirit and fervent dedication, Delali fights to inspire these key principles in everyone she meets.



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HARTFORD DISTRICT LAY COUNCIL HONORS 2022 HONOREES IN NEW HYBRID PROGRAM



November 14, 2022
Submitted By Rev. Janet Davenport

Plainville, Conn. - Clergy, lay leaders, family and friends from the Hartford District converged this month (November 5) in physical space for the first time in two years at Cross Street African Methodist Zion (AMEZ) Church in Middletown to honor their lay members of distinction.

The theme of The Alton F. Brooks 43rd Lay Honoree Program was "Serving Our Flock through Prayer, Participation and Partnership." Commending the 15 lay honorees of distinction for their faithful service, the Rev. Moses L. Harvill, the host pastor and presiding elder of the district, also applauded the steadfastness of district lay president, Sister Shelley Henry, members of the executive board, and church lay leaders.

He said, "We are grateful for your tenacity during these challenging times and for the Lord allowing us to come back together again in fellowship in person." Presiding Elder Harvill said, "It is a blessing to be able to accommodate members of our AMEZ family who were unable to attend physically or who felt more comfortable with virtual access. This is the new normal."

Like many of the AMEZ lay councils across the country, the Hartford District has conducted its annual lay honoree program virtually via Zoom for the past three years as a precautionary measure during the initial period of Covid-19 pandemic. The "hybrid" style service featured a mix of virtual and live musical performances, including a solo by Bro. Olin Dorsey of Walters Memorial AMEZ in Bridgeport, as well as honoree presentations.

Sis. Henry told the gathering, "It is with your prayers, participation,

and partnership the Hartford District Lay Council will continue to edify our local churches. We say thank you to deserving and dedicated laity throughout the district."

During the program emceed by Dr. James H. Gatling of Waterbury, the lay district's 1st vice president, Sis. Jeanette Reynolds of Varick Memorial AMEZ, New Haven; Sis. Amber-Jones of Metropolitan AMEZ, Hartford; and Sis. Tiana Arline of Archer Memorial AMEZ, Windsor, each delivered uplifting messages on the importance of "serving the flock" through prayer, participation and partnership, respectively.

The honorees were nominated by their flocks for their contributions to their local churches including serving as stewards and trustees, and leading and supporting various ministries such as music, youth and Christian education.

St. Stephens AMEZ, Branford, and Parker Memorial AMEZ, Meriden, are this year's recipients of the Lay Membership and the Aramenthia Coley President's Award, respectively.

The 2022 Hartford District Lay Honorees are: Bro. Wilbert "Wibo" Boles (posthumously), Workman Memorial AMEZ, Torrington; Bro. Nolan Butler, III, Blackwell AMEZ, Hartford; Sis. Adrienne Rouse Senior, St. Stephens AMEZ, Branford; Bro. Jalen C. Riley, Clinton AMEZ, Ansonia; Sis. Kametra Hickey, Beulah AMEZ, Bristol; Sis. LaVerne Jeffreys, Spottswood AMEZ, New Britain; Sis. Kim DiBenedetto-Rogers, Varick Memorial AMEZ, New Haven; Sis. Delia Jubrey, Archer Memorial AMEZ, Windsor; Sis. Susan Simone, Redeemer's AMEZ, Plainville; Sis. Annette Anderson, Mt. Pleasant AMEZ, Danbury; Sis. Sylvia M. Dericot-Pina, Middletown; Sis. Yasmina Bailey, Walters Memorial AMEZ, Bridgeport; Bro. Frederick Gatling, Mt. Olive AMEZ, Waterbury; and Sis. Doris B. Arrington, Metropolitan AMEZ, Hartford.

WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE ANNUAL HOME MISSIONS LUNCHEON CROWNING OF THE QUEENS/KING

Submitted by G. Joyner Johnson

CHARLOTTE, NC – On a lovely afternoon at the Koury Convention Center, Greensboro, NC, the ballroom was filled with members and guests of the conference waiting with great anticipation for the spectacular event about to take place. The Master of Ceremony was Rev. Henrico White, pastor of the Weeping Willow AME Zion Church and the beautiful music was provided by Reverends D. Scott Cunningham and Renee McClain. The prayer and blessing of the food by Rev. Dr. Anthony J. Freeman preceded a delicious lunch. Presiding Elder Grant Harrison presented the Presiding Prelate Bishop

Darryl B. Starnes, Sr. and Missionary Supervisor Sister Camille Cullom Starnes who presented the winners with their awards. Mrs. Mary G. Bonaparte, Conference President of the Home Mission Department gave heartfelt thanks to all the contestants, their families, pastors, presiding elders and communities in general. The photos accompanying this article tell the story that a thousand words would not do justice. The mission and purpose of the Home Mission Department is to strive to provide financial assistance to the needs of churches in the Western North Carolina Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Bishop Starnes gave many thanks and congratulations to all the participants in this worthy cause of Home Missions.

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Continued on page 11...

LITTLE ROCK'S LAY DAY 2022

G. Joyner Johnson, Reporter
Anika Robinson, Linda W. Kennedy, Photographers

CHARLOTTE, NC - It was with great anticipation that the laity and clergy at Little Rock AME Zion Church, pastored by Dr. Dwayne Anthony Walker waited for the annual Lay Day worship service. It is the one Sunday each year that the pastor allows the Laity to conduct the worship service from the pulpit.

Led by the local president, Mrs. Gloria Joyner Johnson the other laity participating in the liturgy were Ms. Hazeline Smith and Ms. Christy Bryant leading the Litany and the Affirmation of Faith respectively. The Sanctuary Choir and the musicians (Koinonia) under the direction of Mr. Sid Oliver provided heavenly music throughout the service. The speaker of the morning was Mr. Joseph King Davis, Jr., International President of the Connectional Lay Council.

Mr. Davis spoke from the Quadrennial Theme, "How Zion Laity Will Strengthen Our Fellowship and Serve Our Flock". In these times of strife and turmoil, we must gain momentum and encourage others to "Come with us to Christ" to achieve the five goals of the CLC. This may require us to re-tool our evangelistic outreach such as how we teach, motivate and train. God remains the same even though how we reach the masses may change. We must leave behind our turmoil and even some rituals and customs which no longer have a real meaning. This requires that our positions need to be evaluated and reassessed. We all need to develop an appreciation of the rich history of Zion.

He continued that we should mean the words of the Affirmation of the Laity and truly believe the words of the theme song, "Onward Christian Laity", the Lay Council Closing Prayer and perhaps most importantly, the scripture in Proverbs 3:4-6, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart,

and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." The Holy Spirit was evident as Mr. Davis concluded his thought-provoking message and reminding as we invite others to become members of the body of Christ, we must bring "a message, not a mess!"

After the doors of the church were opened, Mr. Davis led the congregation in the Life Members Stoling ritual. Mr. Stafford Mackey and Mrs. Cynthia Mackey received their stoles. Participating in the stoling were Mrs. Leondras (Le-Le) Davis, 1st Vice President of the CLC, Mrs. Priscilla Leeper, CLC Executive Assistant, Mrs. Ruby Tarver, local 2nd Vice President and District Lay Council 1st and 2nd Vice Presidents Ms. Sandra Pickens and Hazeline Smith, respectively.



REEVES TEMPLE'S LINGLE HUT DEDICATED AS HISTORIC LANDMARK



October 2022
G. Joyner Johnson, Reporter
C. Conner, Photographer

DAVIDSON, NC- On a beautiful October fall day, the members of Reeves Temple AME Zion Church along with local government leaders of the town of Davidson, community members, and staff of Davidson College gathered for the dedication of the Lingle Hut, a Historic Landmark.

The Lingle Hut had served as a meeting place for the community and the congregation until 2014. Due to the lack of adequate up-keep for several years, in 2018 a Lingle Hut committee was formed with congregants and outside community members to raise funds for a robust restoration campaign raising over \$190,000.00. Multiple obstacles brought the campaign to a stop, first the Covid 19 pandemic, then vandalism of the structure. But with the tenacious spirit of the board and congregation under the Godly guidance of pastoral leadership, the prayers of many, the Lingle Hut was refurbished and was rededicated on Saturday, October 8, 2022, and opened to the surrounding communities. Praise be to God!!



Participating in the service of dedication was Bishop Darryl B. Starnes, Presiding Prelate of the Piedmont Episcopal District; Dr. Waddell Henderson, Presiding Elder of the North Charlotte District; Dr. Anthony Davis, Immediate Past Pastor of Reeves Temple and Rev. Reginald O. Coffey, Pastor of Reeves Temple.



The structure was previously named Unity Church Cabin. The name was changed to Lingle Hut for a Davidson College professor's family who donated funds at the request of Mrs. Cecelia Conner. Mrs. Conner, a life-long member of Reeves Temple had worked for the Lingle family reading to the bedridden Mrs. Louise Lingle, wife of Davidson College Professor Walter Lingle Sr. In the 1960's, Mrs. Conner wrote to Walter Lingle Junior, a vice-president of Proctor and Gamble in Cincinnati, to ask for assistance in sealing the deal on purchasing the Unity Church Cabin. In consideration of Mrs. Conner's good work, and of his mother's involvement in the Unity Church Cabin Sunday School, Walter Lingle



Jr. agreed to donate \$6,000 with a commitment to donate an additional \$3,000

each year for the next three years for a total of \$15,000. The only condition was that the Unity Church Cabin be re-named the Lingle Hut in honor of his mother

Under the pastoral leadership of Rev. (Dr.) Amy Ciceron along with Local Deacon at that time Rev. Dora DuBose, 2006-2008 the push began to have the structure designated a Historic Site by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Landmark Commission. Serving on the Davidson Planning Board during that time was the daughter of Mrs. Cecelia Conner and current church leader (including Trustee Board Chairperson, Deaconess, etc.) Ms. Castella Conner.



THE 140TH SESSION OF THE VIRTUAL ARKANSAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

September 2022

Submitted by Ms. Lillie Carter, Reporter

SOUTHWESTERN DELTA EPISCOPAL DISTRICT - The 140th Session of the Virtual Arkansas Annual Conference was held September 15-17 2022. Payne Chapel AME Zion Church, Host Pastor Rev. Victor Patterson and First Lady, Mrs. Ashlee Paterson. Bishop Eric Leake Presided, Mrs. Jean McMurray Leake, Missionary Supervisor, Presiding Elders were Rev. Janice Nelson and Rev. Gregory Gyce. The Conference opened on Thursday morning. Bishop Leake shared with the conference our Theme: The Freedom Church: A Movement Empowered by the Holy Spirit: Strengthening our Fellowship, Serving our Flock, Sharing our Faith and Securing Our Future. A very inspiring message was delivered by Rev. Danny Lewis, Pastor of New Walters AME Zion Church; Scripture-Psalms 51:10-13-Subject "A Right Spirit." Presiding Elder Janice Nelson Presented Bishop Eric Leake, Presiding Prelate of the Southwestern Delta Episcopal District, a selection, followed by the Episcopal Address.

It is with humility and gratitude that I share with you my second episcopal address. The Lord carried us through round one and now we're into round two. I'm excited about what the Lord is already doing in Arkansas! It's a miracle and a blessing that after 140 years the grand old ship of Zion is still sailing along in the state of Arkansas! You've weathered so much; you've endured so much, and you have accomplished so much! To God be the glory! You've had great leaders to come through Arkansas, both lay and clergy. Many have slipped into eternity, but the Lord has kept us here for such a time as this. The Quadrennial Theme for the A.M.E. Zion Church is, "The Freedom Church: A Movement Empowered by the Holy Spirit: Strengthening our Fellowship, Serving Our Flock, Sharing Our Faith, and Securing Our Future. This year's focus is Sharing Our Faith Through H.E.L.P. Background scripture for this address is: Mark 16:15-16; Philemon 1:6 "And then he told them, "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone." NLT.

"I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective when you perceive all the good that we[b] may do for Christ."

Everybody has faith! The question is who do you put your trust in or what do you put your trust in? What's important in faith is that we put our confidence in someone who is adequate, reliable, capable, available and trustworthy! When we speak of sharing our faith it is about sharing our faith in Jesus Christ and Christ alone! In October 2019, I sat in the Cape Fear Conference and listened to Bishop Kenneth Monroe talk about sharing our faith, and I quote: "Perhaps we should understand what our faith means or what our faith does before we can Share Our Faith. My faith gives purpose to my life. My faith helps me to deal as well as overcome the difficulties as well as the indifferences and uncertainties of this life. Of course, the object of our faith 10 | P a g e determines its magnitude or even its longevity. Legitimate or genuine faith is having confidence in that which is competent. Faith is not wishful thinking, but it is having an assurance that God is with us regardless to what may befall us and whatever the outcome may bring, He will sustain us. Needless to say, that is not what we have been taught regarding our faith. Our society is complete with various religions, ideologies, and other means of faith. It has become difficult and confusing for us to Share Our Faith as we should. Believe it or not, we are engaged in a movement of faith. As people of God, we are on a journey of faith; each day we walk by faith to fulfill the will of God on the earth. As people of faith, we have the ability to do miracles; to change our communities; change our environs; change even the conditions and the people that

we encounter. We believe this because our God has promised that we would." Before we can share our faith, we must learn to live by faith. I shared last week in the Louisiana Conference Check Up meeting that Living by Faith is confidence in God's Promises, Confidence in God's protection and Confidence in God's provisions. Once we live by faith we can begin sharing our faith, witnessing and testifying of the loving and saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ! According to the late Dr. Eddie Fox, immediate past director of World Methodist Evangelism, "the heart of evangelism is not found in formulas or propositions; it does not reside in slick programs or dramatic preaching. The heart of evangelism resides in the sharing of each person's unique and valuable story of faith; it is directed toward empowering people to share that story." Without comprising the message of the gospel or the mission and mandate of Christ evangelism and faith sharing must be at the forefront of ministry. As we look at the theme for this conference year, "Sharing Our Faith," we are challenged to really look at what it means to share our faith, how we share our faith, when we share our faith and where we share our faith. In order to keep the ministry of H.E.L.P. before us there are many ways to share our faith through H.E.L.P.

1. Sharing Our Faith with Health

In health we can share our faith with those who are in crisis. We can share with them that Jesus Christ is a healer and a deliverer. When people are struggling, suffering, straining, and stressing in a health crisis, it's a good opportunity to offer love and compassion and then your faith in Jesus Christ. As tragic as the water crisis is in Jackson, Mississippi, the Lord has allowed us to share our faith with those who's health and well-being is threatened by unclean and unsafe water. John 9: 1-3, "Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. 2 And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him." It was an opportunity for God to show them His power. We know that by verse 11 he goes to was in the Pool of Siloam as receives his sight. Sometimes God will our faith to help bring healing and deliverance to someone else.

2. Sharing Our Faith through Evangelism

This is the heart of the message today and the heart of the gospel, evangelism or faith-sharing. Evangelism is where it all begins, sharing our faith or telling our story about Jesus Christ. There are so many ways here we can share our faith. I'd like to share the following ways today: Virtual, Personal, Outreach, Social Justice.

A. Virtual Faith Sharing

During COVID-19 we found ourselves living and communicating in a virtual world with real people who have real problems. There are numerous ways to share our faith one way is virtually. We find ourselves virtual each week in some way. Can you guess what happened in the last 60 seconds online?

- 1 million people logged onto Facebook.
- 3.8 million searches were made on Google.
- 4.5 million videos were viewed on YouTube.
- And 347,222 users were scrolling on Instagram.

Those options were once just newspapers, radio, and television.

Now we have more Virtual Options for Evangelism and Sharing Our Faith:

- Blogs, Vlogs, Podcasts, Downloadable, eBooks, Videos, Graphics, Online small groups, Photos, Articles,
- Online small groups, Photos, Articles, Electronic Newsletters, Emails, Text, Conference Calls, Facebook, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, WebEx, Stream Yard, Restream and the list goes on

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Continued on next page...

B. Personal Evangelism

This has probably been one of the most effective ways to share our faith. Especially with our unsaved loved ones, friends, neighbors, and co-workers. (One on One sharing your faith, offering a testimony about how you came to know Jesus Christ. Personal and small group evangelism are going to be the key tools to sharing the gospel for at least during the history of this pandemic. * For too long we depended on the pastor and the evangelist; we've de-emphasized personal evangelism and over-emphasized church evangelism to the point where people can't share the gospel unless their pastor is involved, and if they bring somebody to church. In other words, the pandemic may take us back to the early church's practice. Michael Green in *Evangelism in the Early Church* observed laypeople were the "informal evangelists" who spread the gospel widely.

C. Outreach Evangelism (Meeting needs and then sharing the gospel.

Food, clothes, health care, social services, etc. and then telling them about Jesus. It is a cup of cold water in the name of Jesus. If we provide a physical need and have not mentioned the name of Jesus, the gospel is not complete. People are still in need and as we provide their needs, we invite to them Jesus. Outreach is the deed arm of evangelism. (Praying at the front door of the schools – adopting a school and showing what faith looks like).

D. Social Justice-As the people of God, our involvement in social justice is to help set right what is wrong around us. We must become intentionally and visibly involved speaking against racism, violence, crime and the injustices in our communities. We must also encourage people to register and to vote. The final thing I want to say about social justice is that just speaking out for the sake of speaking out is not enough. We must offer people love, grace and Jesus Christ! We are all aware that all lives matter, but during this time we exclaim that black lives matter, but black souls also matter. We have a responsibility for such a time as this to be a voice for those who have no voice! To seek to save lives and not save souls defies the very reason for which the church exists! Social Justice means nothing without Jesus Christ! We must do what you can. Love the people, train other leaders, help the needy. And let the Holy Spirit do the rest. Examples: Praying at the Poles – Praying for your officials and trusting God to give us an open door to share our faith even in that arena.

The church has one of the greatest opportunities to share the goodness of the gospel of Jesus Christ! Lost people matter to God and if they matter to God they should still matter to us. While there are many people who do not want it, there are others waiting for something that will transform their lives or their situation. We have the best news in the world! It's about the gospel of the grace of Jesus Christ, that God so loved the world...May we get the story in, get the story straight and get the story out, because everybody ought to know what Jesus is.

3. Sharing Our Faith through Leadership

When we look in the Book of Discipline for the A.M.E. Zion Church there is a requirement for Stewards and Trustees that we often overlook: That they should be persons of solid piety who know Methodist Doctrine, the Discipline and the practices of the A.M.E. Zion Church and "who have given evidence of their ability, desire, and practice of witnessing to the Gospel of the Kingdom of God in and beyond their environ..." If my interpretation is correct, I believe that faith sharing as a Christian's way of life. (Footnote: Pastors, this does not mean you go back after this conference and remove everyone from the Steward and Trustee Board who is not doing it exactly like you think – pray, teach, train and patiently trust God to do the rest.) Even as Pastors, it notes in the Discipline the following: "The pastor who stresses his/her salary and finance to the exclusion of the salvation of souls need not be surprised if there is a decreasing interest in his/her sermons on the part of his/her congregation. It further states have special services in the church for the unsaved. This gives us great and grand opportunities to share our faith as leaders in our communities. Leaders have influence. As leaders we share our faith not just in church, but at home in the community, the

workplace and ultimately in the world. Everywhere we go we share our faith.

4. Sharing Our Faith through Prayer

Praying for others is a wonderful way to sharing our faith. As we offer to pray for people it can open a door for a conversation about their soul salvation. Some of you will remember of Evangelistic Outreach efforts we ask the question first, "For what do we desire prayer?" "What can we pray about for you?" This is a simple and yet non-threatening way to share our faith through prayer. Then there is this thing called, Prayer Evangelism. Prayer Evangelism is telling Jesus Christ about your friends and loved ones, before you tell your friends and loved ones about Jesus Christ. This allows the Holy Spirit to begin to do a work in the heart of friends, relatives, associates, and neighbors before we can get to them.

We cannot carry these people's burdens, but what we can do is take them and their burdens into the throne room and ask the Lord to begin to touch their hearts that they might be open to receiving Christ as Savior and Lord. Ultimately, we must remember that in faith-sharing one plants, another waters, but God gives the increase.

Let us continue to share our faith through HEALTH, EVANGELISM, LEADERSHIP AND PRAYER

Four applications for faith sharing I would like to leave with us today:

1. Pray daily for open doors to share our faith and boldly take advantage of them.
2. Create an impact list of people you pray for daily that need to be saved, healed, or delivered.
3. Plan regular times to spend with lost friends.
4. Be ready to take a step of faith and respond with a word of encouragement and truth.

If you are going to share your faith, you must know what you believe. My I remind us of what we believe: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, the Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Begotten Son, our Lord: Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. The third day He arose from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy *catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen."

Go share your faith: Acts 1:8: "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be [a]witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Tell the story, Tell it at Home, Tell it in the Community, Tell it in the Workplace, Tell it in the World. People need the Lord, People need to be saved, People need to be restored, People need to be healed, People need to be delivered, People need to be encouraged, People need to be strengthened, Tell the story! Share your faith!

1. "I love to tell the story of unseen things above, of Jesus and his glory, of Jesus and his love. I love to tell the story because I know it's true; it satisfies my longings as nothing else can do.
2. I love to tell the story, for those who know it best seem hungering and thirsting to hear it like the rest. And when in scenes of glory I sing the new, new song, 'twill be the old, old story that I have loved so long.
3. Christ Jesus, pure and holy, without a spot or stain, by wicked hands was taken, was crucified and slain! And now the word is finished, the sinner's debt is paid, because on Christ the Righteous the sin of all was laid.
4. O wonderful redemption! The price for sin is paid, salvation is accomplished, my heart is unafraid, for God has raised Christ Jesus to show the work was done; his glorious resurrection declared the victory won!
5. The Savior of all people has brought his peace to you; now go and tell the story, for others need it too. To every land and nation ring out the

gospel call; proclaim that Christ is risen and grants his peace to all. “

I love to tell the story; ‘twill be my theme in glory to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love. “I said I wasn’t going to tell nobody, but I just couldn’t keep it to myself. . .

Responses to the dynamic Episcopal Address were given by the Laity: Bro. Ed Davis, Minister: Rev. Dorothy Gardner and Presiding Elder Rev. Gregory Gyce.

Thursday afternoon Sheriff LaFayette Woods, Jr. of Jefferson County, Arkansas conducted Sexual Misconduct Training.

Thursday Evening the Christian Education Worship Service was held. Mrs. Ava Swinton Presided. Payne Chapel, Host Church had a short Welcome Program. The special guest was Mr. Frank Scott, Jr. Mayor of Little Rock, AR, he greeted Bishop and Mrs. Leake and declared September 16th Arkansas Conference Day in Little Rock. Rev. Rick Lee, Pastor of Moores Chapel AME Zion Church delivered a dynamic and inspiring message “Don’t Leave Jesus At The Church. Scripture Luke 2:41-50.

Friday was Missionary Day, Missionary Supervisor Mrs. Jean McMurray Leake Presided. During the Convocation, she delivered a powerful and inspiring address on AGAPE Love 1st Corinthians Chapter 13. “How Deep is your love, how deep are you willing to go in the mission field? Our first mission is to love and sacrifice unconditionally. We got to love and that is what will make the world go round. Agape Love is sacrificial.

Friday afternoon the Necrology Service was held. Rev. Linda Inmon, Presiding. Rev. Derotha Jermon delivered the Memorial Message, Subject: “What Can Separate Us From The Love Of God” Scripture: Romans 8:31. Immediately after this service the School Of The Prophets was presented by Rev. Dr. Charlean Mapson, Pastor, Price Cathedral

AME Zion Church, Wilmington, North Carolina. The focus was “Sharing Our Faith-It’s Time To Turn Up! Highlights are as follows: Faith is a Spiritual Gift. The Holy Spirit distributes the gift of faith to some in order to encourage and build up other believers in their confidence in God. Those with the gift of faith, trust that God is sovereign, and that he is good. They take Him at his word and put the full weight of their lives in His hands. If we are going to share our faith we must Turn UP the Faith Instilled by our families, encouraged by our friends and empowered by our Father.

Friday Evening Missionary Worship Service, Missionary Supervisor Mrs. Jean McMurray Leake, Presiding. The speaker was Rev. Bobbie Willis of the West Tennessee-Mississippi Conference delivered a powerful and spirit-filled message on Love. Scripture John 13: 34-35.

Saturday, Intercessory prayer led by Rev. Dorothy Gardner. Bishop Eric Leake installed the Youth Council Officers. This was followed by the closing worship service and Holy Communion.

Bishop Leake preached a powerful, uplifting and inspiring message. Subject: “A Nevertheless Obedience” Luke 5: 4-11. Highlights are as follows: When we have a nevertheless obedience even a good excuse won’t work. When we have a nevertheless obedience, extraordinary events take place. When we have a nevertheless obedience, it prepares us for a higher calling. After the Charge, Bishop Leake passed out Appointments.

Saturday afternoon the Home Missions Department held the annual Home Missions Luncheon. Mrs. Cecil Mitchell, Presiding. After a delectable lunch was served, the Crowning of the King and Queen of the Arkansas Conference was held. Bishop Leake gave the final remarks and Benediction.

The 2023 Annual Conference will be held at Cherry St. AME Zion in



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**Bishop Daryl B. Starnes, Sr.,
Presiding Prelate of the Piedmont Episcopal District
Sister Camille Starnes, Missionary Supervisor
Ms. Mary Bonaparte, WNCC Home Missions President**

2021 – 2022 WNCC Home Missions Winners

<p>Category A</p> <p>1st Place</p>  <p>Miss Peyton Evans Goler Metropolitan AME Zion Church Winston Salem District Ms. Linda Riggs, District President Rev. Dr. L. Ruff, Pastor Dr. Calvin L. Miller, Presiding Elder</p> <p>2nd Place</p>  <p>Miss Jaiicia Black Marable Memorial AME Zion Church Salisbury District Mrs. Charlene Smalls, District President Rev. Tamica Robinson, Pastor Dr. Grant Harrison, Jr. Presiding Elder</p> <p>3rd Place</p>  <p>Ms. Althea G. Stewart East Stonevall A.M. E. Zion Church Charlotte District Mrs. Rudell Washington, District President Rev. Dr. Michael E. McLean, Pastor (Deceased) Dr. Andrew B. Smoke, Presiding Elder</p>	<p>Category B</p> <p>1st Place</p>  <p>Ms. Barbara Saddler Zion Wesley AME Zion Church Salisbury District Mrs. Charlene Smalls, District President Rev. David Smalls, Pastor Dr. Grant Harrison, Presiding Elder</p> <p>2nd Place</p>  <p>Mrs. Rosha Walker China Grove A.M. E. Zion Church Charlotte District Mrs. Rudell Washington, District President Rev. D. Scott Cunningham, Pastor Dr. Andrew B. Smoke, Presiding Elder</p> <p>3rd Place</p>  <p>Ms. Michelle Donaldson-Horton Caldwell Chapel A.M. E. Zion Church North Charlotte District Ms. Sandra Y. Pickens, District President Rev. Louis Hunter, Jr., Pastor Dr. Wardell Henderson, Presiding Elder</p>	<p>Category C</p> <p>1st Place</p>  <p>Miss Chloe Bush South Inedell AME Zion Church Salisbury District Mrs. Charlene Smalls, District President Rev. Bobbie Samuels, Pastor Dr. Grant Harrison, Presiding Elder</p> <p>2nd Place</p>  <p>Mr. Anthony Holman Union Chapel AME Zion Church Winston Salem District Ms. Linda Riggs, District President Rev. Donna Cuthbertson, Pastor Dr. Calvin L. Miller, Presiding Elder</p> <p>3rd Place</p>  <p>Miss Gabrielle Forman Wesley AME Zion Church North Charlotte District Ms. Sandra Y. Pickens, District President Rev. Clarence Jones, Pastor Dr. Wardell Henderson, Presiding Elder</p>
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JONES A.M.E. ZION TABERNACLE – THE FIRST CHURCH OF THE INSPIRATIONAL INDIANAPOLIS DISTRICT

Submitted by Debra Chappelle-Polk, Zion Spotlight Editor,
The Star of Zion

New York, NY... Jones Tabernacle African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church is located at 2510 East 34th Street in the beautiful city of Indianapolis, Indiana and is the First Church of the “Inspirational Indianapolis District” of the Indiana Annual Conference. Rev. Dr. Anthony K.R. Gibson is Pastor and the SOZ recently chatted with him about his ministry at Jones Tabernacle, its future and the future of the Black Church, post-pandemic and in the age of social media.

Dr. Gibson has been in ministry for over 30 years and has been pastor of Jones Tabernacle since June 2022, having received this pastorate upon the retirement of Reverend Harry Spigner in 2021. He’s married to Belinda Gibson and they have three sons and one granddaughter. Dr. Gibson is also Chief of Human Resources for Tenet Healthcare, a consortium of hospitals across the country, with more than 100,000 employees.

Dr. Gibson was raised by his grandmother and spent his Sundays in church. Following the traditional after-service meal, the kids would “play” church. Dr. Gibson always “played” the pastor. Despite family and friends telling him “oh, yeah you gonna be a preacher,” he resisted the call to ministry. “I thought you needed to be a saint to be a minister and that, I am not.” He told his Sunday School teacher, “I think God’s calling me, but I’m not really sure.” His Sunday School teacher said, “Son, if you sneeze, you don’t have a cold, but if you keep sneezing and coughing, you have a cold.” He understood the analogy and recognized his call to ministry. He preached his trial sermon in 1992. The first church he pastored was in Springfield, Kentucky. Rev. Gibson said, “It’s rather ironic that the first church I pastored and the church I’m currently pastoring are both celebrating their 150th anniversary. It’s kinda serendipitous.”

Like many churches, Jones Tabernacle shut down because of COVID in 2020 and services were held virtually on Zoom. The church returned to in-person Sunday worship service in April 2022, adhering to preventive protocols: members are required to wear masks and every other pew is sectioned off to manage social distancing. The worship experience at Jones Tabernacle has, by necessity, evolved in an effort to keep the congregation safe and still meet their spiritual needs. Services are now both in-person and virtual.

Rev. Gibson admitted that prior to the pandemic, he would have never entertained the thought of Zoom worship services. He now believes that “if you do not have some sort of on-line ministry, your ministry will die.” He’s also proud to say that his members, including many of the older members, are “tech-savvy.” In fact, many of his seasoned saints often ask, “Pastor can we have a Zoom meeting with you?” They realized they had to “get with the program, or get left behind.” He related a story about when he told his mother he wanted to buy her an I-Phone, she told him not to bother. All she needed was “her flip-phone and her bible.” She now loves “face-timing” with the grands on her I-Phone.

Rev. Gibson has learned how to make on-line ministry work not only as Pastor of Jones Tabernacle, but also as Presiding Elder. He often checks in with other churches in his District: “Did I see you on Zoom this morning?” It’s a way for him to be involved in their worship experience. He’s also appreciative of his Zoom viewers and thanks them for spending their Sunday mornings with Jones Tabernacle. An added bonus of on-line services is the electronic giving component: “5% of the offering comes from people watching on-line who are not members of our church.”

Rev. Gibson acknowledged that membership has decreased since returning to in-person service, particularly among Millennials and Gen-Zs, many of whom choose not to be vaccinated and must be encouraged

to wear masks during service. Fortunately, members of the Jones Tabernacle congregation, some of whom are also health care clinicians, have been able to “educate” some regarding the benefits and efficacy of being vaccinated.

He said the younger generation, who are the future of our church, are doing things differently. “They don’t like being pressured, and they



don’t like being told what to do,” and he doesn’t think that trend will regress. “It is an interesting paradigm in the church, and the church will have to evolve and find ways to embrace what people want in ministry, or ministry will die.”

Rev. Gibson believes the younger generation, the Gen-Zs, are social people. They “connect and build relationships” through social media and events outside

the church. “So what we’ve done,” he said, “is help people connect outside the church.” They’ve had outings to the zoo and meet at bowling alleys, where the focus is about fellowship, not the bible. When asked if this approach has been successful, he admitted “it’s still a work in progress.” He has found, however, that the young people who do come to church, look forward to the outside social activities.

Rev. Gibson believes that if you connect with young people socially, you can use that as a platform to introduce them to the church and to Jesus Christ. In fact, he tells his ministry leaders “to do everything during their outings with the young people, but talk about Jesus, unless they bring it up. If they do, run with it, but it’s not Sunday School or Bible Study; it’s a time for relationship building.” He believes that having moments that matter will draw people to the church.

Older members at Jones Tabernacle also connect outside the church and often meet at local restaurants. They have reminiscent moments, “talking about where they went on their honeymoons; what they used to do; what happened when they retired, etc.” There are also “fun days” at the church where board games are played and where people can come and “just have a good time.”

The “Educational Hour,” a/k/a Sunday School, is led by retired school teacher Marianne Fort. Rev. Gibson said they’ve been blessed with “an extremely robust Sunday School, with classes for all ages and over 30 members.” The Sunday School also holds Black History programs, Thanksgiving and Christmas programs, and feeds the homeless.”

In August, as part of the Jones Tabernacle 150th anniversary celebration, the Missionary Society prepared 150 care bags (socks, toothpaste, toothbrushes, wash cloths, water, snacks) and gave them out to the homeless. “We didn’t talk about Jesus.” Rev. Gibson said some people did ask why we were doing this. That was our “walk in.” We told them “we’re doing this because we love Jesus and we want to show you that Jesus loves you too.” Jones Tabernacle also has a very active food pantry that gives away food every week, some of which is donated by local stores and businesses. Rev. Gibson said the church is situated in a food desert, or, as he likes to say, “we are resource challenged for nourishment in our community.” This Thanksgiving and Christmas season, the food pantry will give away 150 food baskets to the community to mark their 150th Church Anniversary.

When asked about the future of the Black Church, Rev. Gibson said “I’m grieved, yet confident.” He’s grieved because church attendance has decreased. “There’s a generational thought that the church is optional”. One of the reasons he believes people can harm or kill each

other so easily is because “they didn’t go to Sunday School; no God has been put in them. They don’t understand that God is the giver of life. That God commands that we love one another. Look how angry God got when Cain killed his brother Abel.”

He said “the value of the Christian ministry is not being put in the lives of our offspring like nourishment; like the milk or the Similac they need. If you don’t put that [God] in a child at an early stage, it’s hard for them to ward off all the enticements that are out there now.” When asked what he believed caused this condition, he said he doesn’t think it’s something that has been done to us, “but rather, something we have done to ourselves.” He said in the 80s and 90s, there was no debate—on Sundays, you went to church. He recognizes that times have changed. Even his own children view church differently. He said his sons will come to at least one night of revival out of respect: “Okay, Pops, I’ll come because it’s you.” They don’t come because they need to hear a word from God.” He said it’s a different mindset and he’s not certain if it will change. However, he still believes it’s important to get Jesus into kids early. “The seeds we plant early will someday have to sprout.”

Rev. Gibson recognizes the church may no longer be just brick and mortar, but a hybrid. He’s also cognizant of the fact that while we are asking for the younger generation to be more involved with the church, the older generation must adjust as well. Rev. Gibson said he encourages his “seasoned saints” to be more engaging, more social, more relationship-oriented. He said that for many seniors, church means sitting in pews with the choir singing and the preacher preaching. He candidly admitted that some of the seniors aren’t particularly interested with engaging with the younger generation outside the church in bowling alleys. They’d much prefer to engage with them in church. Rev. Gibson said he’s aware of ministries that have “wine and bible studies” at local restaurants. Although it is one way of building relationships, Rev. Gibson said he isn’t ready to go that far, but admires the creativity.

Asked what gives him confidence: “I don’t care what this world or this generation does, Christ will not fail us.” He believes that no matter what people say about the church and no matter how it evolves, “Christ’s Church will never die.”

Jones Tabernacle still maintains Zion traditions. In October 2022, they held revival services: “A Mind to Press Forward” Philipians 3:1-15. There was also Welcome the New First Family Dayla in October. “Dayla,” Rev Gibson explained, is a made-up word you won’t find in Merriam-Webster. It’s a play on the word “gala” and is a grand gala/event held in the daytime. The Jones Tabernacle Choir celebrated the 150th Anniversary through PRAISE IN SONG! “They brought

their ‘A’ game!” - Face Book post.

“AT JONES TABERNACLE WE BELIEVE THAT MEANINGFUL WORSHIP RESULTS IN MEANINGFUL LIVES AND ALL ARE WELCOMED!”



Rev. Dr. Anthony Kenya Robertson Gibson Indianapolis District Presiding Elder & 7th International President of the Presiding Elders’ Council.

The late Bishop Roy Anderson Holmes appointed Dr. Gibson Indianapolis District Presiding Elder of the Indiana Conference of The

A.M.E. Zion Church on October 2, 2010. On February 23, 2017, Dr. Gibson was elected the seventh and the youngest International President of the Presiding Elders’ Council of The A.M.E. Zion Church. He was ordained in the A.M.E. Zion Church, a Deacon 1996 and an Elder in 1998. Dr. Gibson is a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Incorporated; the American College of Healthcare Executives; the American Society for Health Care Human Resources Administration; the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM); Past Asst. Grand Chaplain of The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge Jurisdiction of Kentucky; and Past Master of Industrial Lodge #145 P.H.A. Louisville, Kentucky. Elected in 1992 at age 23, he holds the distinction of being the youngest master ever elected in the history of Prince Hall Masonry in the Jurisdiction of Kentucky.



A LITANY OF REMIEMBRANCE

THE MOTHER CHURCH CELEBRATES ITS 226TH ANNIVERSARY



Submitted by Debra Chappelle-Polk, Spotlight Editor, Star of Zion

New York, NY October 23, 2022 - *"We give you thanks, O God. Before there was a United States of America, there was a witness of liberation here in New York City, it was named the Free African Society, founded in 1774. They met privately amongst themselves yet God was watching! They emerged as a Church now known as Mother Zion in 1796. We remember James and Aurelia Varick, Peter Williams, William Miller, Abraham Thompson, Levin Smith, and others who broke the law to demand the right to assemble. We remember Samuel Cornish and John Brown Russwurm, who published the nation's first Black newspaper, "Freedom's Journal" at Mother Zion in 1827. We remember the tireless efforts of the Mother Zion congregation who labored for 50 years to abolish slavery in New York State. They succeeded on July 4, 1827. She joined our church in 1829. Her slave name was Isabella Baumfree but in 1843 at the altar of Mother Zion, she became Sojourner Truth. We give you thanks, O God for the hundreds of enslaved Africans who found safety and shelter in the cellar of Mother Zion as the leading stop on the Underground Railroad. We give you thanks, O God for our members Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, T. Thomas Fortune, Paul Robeson, Madam C.J. Walker, Samuel Battle, Dabney N. Montgomery, Ruth W. Whaley and others. We give you thanks, O God for the thousands who are gone and for the thousands who will come. We thank you, O God! Hallelujah, Amen!"*

On Sunday, October 23, 2022, The Litany of Remembrance, (printed above) led by Rev. Dr. Malcolm Byrd, Pastor of Mother AME Zion Church, was recited by friends and members as they gathered in the sanctuary to celebrate the church's 226th anniversary. The guest preacher for the morning was the Reverend Dr. Brandon A.A.J. Davis, Pastor of Ebenezer A.M.E. Church in Aliquippa, PA.

The Call to Worship followed the processional hymn, "God of Our Fathers, Whose Almighty Hand," Rev. Byrd greeted the worshippers: "Dear friends, today is a special day. We are commemorating the 226th

anniversary of the Mother African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, and we thank God for his blessings. We are nowhere we once were, but God is not through with us yet." Rev. Audrey Williamson offered the morning prayer, thanking God "for looking beyond our faults and seeing our needs," and for allowing Mother Zion to celebrate 226 years.

Following the sermonic selection, Let Mount Zion Rejoice sung by the Paul Robeson Ensemble, Rev. Brandon Davis stepped to the pulpit. Looking up, he said "it was a blessing to be in the hull of the old ship of Zion, this great house that God built." He said he was overwhelmed



by the singing and the friendship of the Church, and admitted he was "extremely nervous."

Rev. Davis read from John 7:51(NIV) - Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing?" The title of his sermon was Let Jesus Speak, and he asked the congregation to "let Jesus speak on this your 226th anniversary." He recounted how some people always have something to say with little regard for the

truth or validity of what they're saying. "Opinions are often stated as facts in an effort to change the scope of what it is to be believed." He cited the Supreme Court's recent overturning of Roe v. Wade, which stripped away women's reproductive rights; the inhuman treatment of asylum-seekers, and laws restricting voting rights. He said "it's a sad reality that much of where we are in the procurement of social advancement as a society is loosely tied to who has the microphone and who's speaking the loudest. We don't care who's speaking as long we have assurance that we'll get what we want." He told congregants that "as the storms of life mount, our greatest resource, our only choice for survival is to let Jesus speak. I'm learning the more I stop talking and let the Lord speak, he'll do more for me than I ever could have done for myself."

Rev. Davis referenced the passage in scripture wherein Nicodemus is seeking the revelation of truth after hearing Jesus speak. Nicodemus challenged Jesus, convinced he [Nicodemus] knew the answer to eternal life. He paraphrased Bertrand Russell: "What men want is not knowledge, but certainty." Rev. Davis said that as we confront the evidence of our reality, we need someone who is fully aware of what we need, someone who is truly capable of speaking to the core issues of our struggles. "What I love about Jesus," he said "is that I don't have to articulate what I'm going through. I just need to be willing and confident that he already knows." Jesus told Nicodemus he had to forget everything he thought he knew about eternal life. Jesus told Nicodemus "you must be born again and accept me as your Lord and Savior." Rev. Davis also referenced Romans 10:17, ESV: "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."

Rev. Byrd mentioned earlier in the service that he and Rev. Davis have been good friends for a

long time. As a testament to their friendship, they've made an unique pact: they've promised to be the eulogist at each other's funeral. Rev. Davis corroborated the pact. They also agreed that neither of them had any intention of honoring the commitment any time soon.

Noting his admiration for the late Rev. Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., and as a token of his friendship, Rev. Davis gave Rev. Byrd a replica of the Star of Victory medallion (pictured) given to Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. by Emperor Haile Selassie. Rev. Byrd thanked Rev. Davis for preaching an insightful sermon and for the gift. He said he has always wanted the medallion like the one given to Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.

"If you thought I was the Mayor of Harlem before, just wait to see me strutting up Lenox Avenue. I plan to wear this every day."

NY State Supreme Court Justice W. Franc Perry and Tyrone Clinton, Jr., Founder of The Unsung Collective were also attended the service, along with the Reverend Caura Washington, Asst. Pastor, New Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Harlem, who delivered the benediction.

It was a wonderful Anniversary Service. Rev. Davis' sermon was power-



(Top Row) Rev. Audrey Williamson, Rev. Malcolm J. Byrd, Rev. Brandon Davis
(Bottom Row) Members & Friends

CELEBRATING FATHERS AT CHRISTMAS

November 3, 2022

Submitted by Rev. Nicolle D. Harris, Presented by Debra Chappelle-Polk, Zion Spotlight Editor, The Star of Zion

New York, NY...During the Christmas season we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. The miracle of his birth is often at the center of our reflections and festive activities, as it should be. The virgin birth is the fulfillment of an ancient prophecy. The Prophet Isaiah foretold that “the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel.” We marvel over the immaculate conception of our savior and observe this holiday with adoration; however, the truth is that at the time it was a “disgraceful scandal.” Scandals are never easy to manage and for this reason I would like to applaud somewhat of an unsung hero in this story, Joseph.

Joseph was a descendant of the house of King David. After being betrothed to Mary, he found out she was already pregnant. That must have been a punch in the gut and a blow to his ego. We are all familiar with the excitement that surrounds wedding preparations. Marrying Mary was something that Joseph was supposed to be looking forward to, but his excitement must have turned to shame and embarrassment. I cannot imagine how he felt learning this information, or maybe I could. I must admit I have seen my fair share of Paternity Court television shows to know that all men do not respond to finding out they are not the father with dignity and class.

Not only did Joseph respond in a dignified way, but the bible teaches that he also protected Mary. The scriptures state that Joseph was “a righteous man and unwilling to expose Mary to public disgrace.” (Matthew 1:19) There is something admirable about a man who will protect a woman. A man who can put his ego aside and do what is right in the eyes of God even if it looks foolish to man. Joseph decided to divorce Mary quietly. Yet the scripture continues and says “But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” So, all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.” Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus.”

Joseph knew that exposing Mary would mean certain death for her and her unborn child. So, divorcing her privately would at least give her a chance to live and not include him in her demise. Yet, God required further involvement by asking Joseph to be her assigned protector. Joseph could have easily moved on with his life, found another wife and lived happily ever after. His actions would have been justified. No one would have faulted him. Fortunately for Mary and for us, an angel appeared and told Joseph that the child was the Son of God and was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Joseph decided to obey the angel. Joseph took

Mary as his wife. This decision protected Mary. If Mary’s pregnancy was not yet noticeable, no one would be the wiser and everyone would believe that Jesus was Joseph’s son. A honeymoon baby. Joseph would know the truth, but no one else needed to know in that moment. Some things ought to stay private until making it public knowledge is beneficial. The moment Joseph decided to protect Mary, he was not a stepfather but a father who stepped up.

His assignment as protector did not stop there. After Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem, an angel appeared to Joseph again and warned him that King Herod sought to kill Jesus. As a result, the family fled to Egypt. This assignment of protecting Mary and this baby came with one problem after another. Nevertheless, he stuck to the assignment. They eventually settled in Nazareth. Joseph raised Jesus as his own and taught him the trade of carpentry. Joseph is last mentioned in the Gospels when he and Mary searched for the missing adolescent Jesus. They found him in a temple in Jerusalem, where he was about his heavenly father’s business. By all accounts Joseph was an excellent father. I want to encourage us to include honoring fathers in our Christmas festivities this year. Fathers do not get enough positive attention, especially in our communities. If you have a good father in your life whether its your biological father, husband, stepfather, godfather, or spiritual father, recognize him during this joyous season.

If you cannot tell by now, I am a proud daddy’s girl. My father made countless sacrifices for me throughout my life and often I was unaware of those sacrifices. My father never complained about picking up an extra job to pay my tuition while I was in undergraduate school at Delaware State University. I will never understand how he worked so much and still made it to my basketball games, track meets and high school performances. I was one who was never bamboozled by the myth that Black men were incapable of being good fathers. I was blessed to have my own “Joseph” at home.

Let us celebrate the Josephs in our lives this year. Let us not forget this important character in the nativity scene. In my humble opinion, he is the real MVP of this story. I do not know what honoring your Joseph looks like. Maybe it is writing a heartfelt message in a Christmas card or adding his favorite dish to the family meal on Christmas Eve. This year, I am most certainly going to do something special for my father and my husband on this holiday. On Sunday December 25th when I stand behind the pulpit to preach the Christmas sermon, we will celebrate the birth of our Savior Jesus the Christ and also recognize his assigned protector who helped to make it all possible, Joseph.



Rev. Nicolle Jean-Simon Harris is Pastor of Duryee Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church located in Schenectady, NY. She is a graduate of The Theological School at Drew University and a Doctoral Student at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. She is also the NAACP President, Schenectady Branch 2175.



PROGRAM LEADER ASSUMES NEW ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATIVE ROLE

Submitted by Kelly Bryant

Salisbury, NC. - Dr. Vincent W. Howell has been appointed Director of the Doctor of Ministry (D. Min.) program at Hood Theological Seminary (HTS), Salisbury, NC. This appointment will be effective January 1, 2023. The purpose of the D. Min. program is to provide a post-Master of Divinity educational experience in which Christian maturity and ministerial preparation take place together and to prepare for the church people committed to the witness of the gospel in whatever sphere of ministry or service God calls them. He succeeds Dr. Jim Wadford, who is retiring as D. Min. Director after 13 years of stellar leadership, effective December 31, 2022. Dr. Howell will continue to provide leadership of The Congregational Faith & Learning Center (TCFLC) at Hood Theological Seminary. The goal of TCFLC is to provide training and faith engagement directly to congregations in the community by being a place to “educate, empower, and equip” congregations to thrive.

Dr. Howell was ordained as an Elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion (A.M.E. Zion) Church nearly 36 years ago. Moreover, he served as a pastor in the A.M.E. Zion Church and United Methodist Church (UMC for the past 10 years) before retiring from pastoral ministry. His ministry in the UMC includes appointments to both District and Conference Leadership teams in the Upper New York Conference and serving as a design team member and workshop facilitator for the Racial Healing and Reconciliation cohort initiative in the Western North Carolina Conference. Educationally, he has a B.S. in Industrial Technology (Manufacturing) from North Carolina A & T State University (1975). He has a M.A. in Organizational Management (Human Development), Salve Regina University (1981). He completed a Diploma in Biblical,

Theological, and Ministerial Studies from Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School (1986). Dr. Howell completed the Executive Program, Rochester Institute of Technology, College of Business (1990). He also possesses a Master’s Certificate from George Washington University in Project Management (2005). His Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) is from Ecumenical Theological Seminary, Detroit, MI (2013). His dissertation topic was “Applying Project Management in the Church.” Howell’s research interest is church leadership and strategic planning.



Dr. Howell is author of four books. His most recent books are MBA QuickBooks for Ministers (Judson Press, 2019, co-authored with his son) and Managing Projects in Ministry (Judson Press, 2017). He has taught as an Adjunct Professor of Management at Elmira College, Elmira, NY. and as an Adjunct Instructor for the School of Christian Leadership, Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity, Rochester, NY. He was also a Workshop Instructor for the Center for Congregations, Indianapolis, IN.

With a noted technology career that resulted in Dr. Howell’s election to the SME College of Fellows, he has worked nationally and internationally on technology, engineering, computer systems and electronics with various companies before retiring from Corning, Incorporated. He holds two patents, has published numerous professional and technical papers, and has a number of special awards.

Finally, he is married to his college sweetheart Carolyn and they have two adult children and two grandchildren.

31ST ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HONORS PROGRAMS

Submitted By Dr. Da’Tarvia Parrish

Salisbury, NC - Hosted by Morgan State University, five students from Livingstone College traveled to Baltimore, Maryland to compete in the 31st Annual Conference of the National Association of African American Honors Programs (NAAHP), with faculty advisor Dr. Da’Tarvia Parrish. Freshmen Rodney Courtney of Charlotte, Mia Mason of Salisbury, and Serenity Lunnermon of Newport News, Virginia, joined sophomore Ja’Nya Lunnermon – sister to Serenity, to compete in the Model African Union as the delegation for Cape Verde. Their performance was exemplary and granted them a first place award, tied with Prairie View A&M University.

Model African Union is one of many competitions featured at the conference. Other contests include Community Service, HCASC Quiz Bowl, Research papers/STEM Poster presentations, The Great Debate, and the Oratorical contest; an event freshman Livingstone College student LC Fuller of Richmond, California was as a category winner for Best Content. Other activities include professional development workshops such as career planning, financial literacy, and one-on-one sessions with corporations and institutions at the Career and Graduate School Fair. For entertainment, students are judged in a talent showcase whereas



Livingstone’s Mia Mason won a third-place award for her original song composition, Dreamcatcher.

As Livingstone College is frequently noted throughout NAAHP (pronounced N - triple A – HP) as an institution who produces servant-leaders, the college was also winner of the Community Service competition, highlighting its programming in voter awareness and engagement. Music major Mia Mason stated, “Although I am seventeen and unable to vote, I was happy to be a part of something larger than myself, and I am excited my college places an emphasis on civic engagement and duty. I am ready to cast my ballot in all upcoming elections.”

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Another music major Kaiyon Courtney added, “Voting is fundamental to our democracy. In our programming, we wanted to support our holistic modules of political action and social responsibility, cultural and social awareness, and individual and organizational leadership. All of these were addressed in our voting initiatives, and I’m proud to say Livingstone is the #1 voting HBCU in North Carolina.”

Through the generous sponsorship of alumnus and Mayor of Enfield, North Carolina, William Mondale Robinson, who is also a former attendee of the NAAHP conference; students and faculty were granted the opportunity to freely travel and explore a conference that not only energizes attendees, but examines skill sets, equip students with living tools, and empower young men and women to grow, serve, and lead. Mayor Robinson stated, “I am elated to give back to my alma mater in

a way that directly benefits students, and charges them to forge forward in uncharted territory that will challenge them, mold them, and make them greater than they ever knew they could be.”

This year’s conference theme, Homecoming: The Resilience of HBCU Excellence in a Global Pandemic hosted institutions such as Fisk University, Southern University and A&M College, Spelman College, Virginia State University, Tennessee State University, and more, at the Baltimore Regency Inner Harbor from November 9-12, 2022. Livingstone College has been an institutional member since 2007. Librarian Laura Johnson serves as the current parliamentarian and Dr. Da’Tarvia Parrish is a former president, and member of the Board of Directors.

LIVINGSTONE COLLEGE HOSTS 2022 GEEK WEEK

Submitted By Dr. Da’Tarvia Parrish

Salisbury, NC - Annually, Livingstone College students with a record of academic achievement host a week of fun-filled activities undergirded with scholarship and civic engagement. This year, from October 24-28, 2022, the Honors Program’s Geek Week activities reflected the power of collectivism with several campus and community organizations. The week began Monday, with leadership from the President’s Office as the campus community gathered at the Bear for prayer, an event students have now named, Prayer Bear time. The event followed with critical conversations about public safety on campus in a “Where do we go from here?” town hall meeting; facilitated by the Student Government Association president, Michael Gilyard and esteemed criminal justice professionals retained by President Anthony J. Davis. The Monday evening activity included research presentations by 12 students whereas senior, Emile Dogbe-Gakpetor of Accra Ghana was awarded top prize for his research on the Impact of Covid-19 on Small HBCUs.

Tuesday was all about Toshiba. Representatives from the company visited Livingstone College to discuss social media profiles, personal branding, job search strategies, and internship and job opportunities within the corporation. Moderated by alumnus William Mondale Robinson who currently serves as Mayor of Enfield, North Carolina, Tuesday’s evening activity, “Candidates and Quesos” led students to the cafeteria to engage in a forum featuring Rowan County candidates. This event was in partnership with the Office of Student Affairs and with support from Students Learn Students Vote, Interfaith America, and Black Voters Matter.

The voting momentum continued Wednesday morning with “Party with the Prez” as the campus met in a pep rally style gathering in an effort to energize and mobilize the vote. Joining the Livingstone College family were Salisbury NAACP President Gemale Black, and Power 98 radio personality host No Limit Larry, who too shared sentiments on the power and importance of voting. Faculty, staff, and students present caravanned to the Board of Elections from 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. in efforts of early voting. Wednesday evening activities included presentations by Livingstone College faculty Dr. Da’Tarvia Parrish, who presented AAUW Start Smart Salary Negotiation, and alumna Chanel Quick of Thurgood Marshall College Fund, who shared best practices in scholarship application.

Society of Financial Education and Professional Development led Thursday morning with financial literacy. Facilitated by Dwayne Hall, the “Mind Over Money Skills” presentation included steps to prepare 21st century learners to be financially literate and navigate credit and student loan debt. The Honda Campus All-Star Challenge Quiz Bowl team rounded out the evening activities with a campus tournament. Tournament champions, team “Never Stop” included sophomore Jacob Adkins of King, North Carolina, junior Christian Bussey of Pensacola, Florida, and freshman Darren Wharton of Winston-Salem,



North Carolina.

Friday morning encouraged early voting efforts to those unable to cast their ballots on Wednesday; and as Geek Week culminated with voting, much support from Mission House, Rowan Concerned Citizens, Black Voters Matter, Interfaith America, and Students Learn Students Vote, poured in to fund Geek Week’s final event, LitMic. An open arts and talent showcase, LitMic featured Livingstone College students who displayed a variety of gifts and encouraged their peers to vote with personal testimonies on the significance of exercising their constitutional right. The Black Voters Matter themed event was hosted by students junior Jalen Robinson of Hempstead, New York and senior Samari Gorman of Charlotte, North Carolina. The first place winner was freshman Culinary Arts major Kendrid Briscoe of Upper Marlboro, Maryland, second place winner, freshman Voice major Mia Mason of Salisbury, North Carolina, and third place winner, freshman Music major Kaiyon Courtney of Charlotte, North Carolina. When asked about events Student Government Association president Michael Gilyard stated, “Geek Week is always carefully planned with essential programming that speaks to the needs of college students. I look forward to it every year. In fact, it’s just as important as homecoming.”

WILL AFFIRMATIVE ACTION SOON BE A THING OF THE PAST?

Submitted by Dr. Dana G. Stillely, Financial Freedom Editor, The Star of Zion

Charlotte, NC - Since its inception in the United States in 1964, affirmative action has been the subject of much debate. Designed to respond to and eradicate racial discrimination that constricts equal access to job and educational opportunities, affirmative action policies addressing higher education admissions are now being reconsidered by the Supreme Court for the first time since 2016. At the heart of the matter is whether educational diversity be achieved without Affirmative action.

The most recent proceedings that began in late October indicate that the conservative members of the court are ready to dismantle the race-conscious admissions programs currently in place at the University of North Carolina and Harvard University. While these two cases explicitly involve discrimination against Asian Americas students, the results of these decisions will affect admission decisions for every minority student. Should the plaintiffs succeed in these cases, the racial demographics on college and university campuses will surely shift. The White and Asian student population will increase, and the Black and Latino student population will lessen. Deliberation on the topic included commentary suggesting that affirmative action is a zero-sum gain and granting an advantage to some results in a disadvantage for others. Additionally, Justice Clarence Thomas voiced his inability to understand the definition of diversity, while Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr failed to comprehend the



meaning of underrepresented minority. (201)

Comments from the three liberal members of the Supreme Court centered around the inability to separate race from lived experiences and not others. Also, Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson noted the incongruousness of considering parental, disability, and veteran statuses as opposed

to racial status. Of major concern is the decline in the development of diverse leadership if minority students are excluded from admission to college, especially the elite institutions. Higher education is the gateway to higher wages, empowerment, and improved health. A win-win for every community, higher education facilities wealth accumulation, and a decreased dependence on social services.

The decision on these two cases is expected in June 2023.

[nytimes.com/2022/10/31/us/supreme-court-harvard-unc-affirmative-action.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/31/us/supreme-court-harvard-unc-affirmative-action.html)

CHRISTMAS: GIVING WITHOUT BREAKING THE BANK

Submitted By Dr. Dana G. Stillely, Financial Freedom Editor, The Star of Zion

Charlotte, NC - Advent season, approximately four weeks prior to Christmas Day, is a time of preparation and expectation for Christians all over the world. During this period hearts and minds are centered on preparing for the coming celebration of the earthly birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ, while simultaneously waiting with glorious expectation for the second coming of Christ. During the Advent season countless hours are spent planning for family gatherings, creating special menus, plotting delightful surprises, house-cleaning, and shopping. Sometimes our excitement and eagerness to have a perfect celebration on Christmas day overshadows the true meaning of the season.

If we are honest with ourselves, the hustle and bustle of planning for Christmas sometimes is very overwhelming. Instead of embracing the themes of Advent – love, hope, joy, and peace –our thoughts and emotions are often consumed with dread and trepidation, as we worry about the finding the perfect gifts, and the financial impact of spending the money to purchase them.

It is difficult to believe that prior to the 1840s Christmas was not widely celebrated in the United States. In fact, it wasn't until the beginning of mass advertising in the 1920s and 1930s that celebrating Christmas started to gain popularity. Over next several decades businesses recognized the profit potential of marketing Christmas as more than the birth of Jesus Christ. With the major focus of this holiday season transformed to children and exchanging gifts, Christmas and the celebration of Christmas grew to include images of Santa Claus, joyful



children surrounded by gifts, Christmas trees, and snow. Today, one of the holiest religious seasons is also the greatest commercial season.

Christmas is my favorite time of year! I love the Advent wreath and Candlelight Services at church. I also love decorating and shopping! I must admit that I have been guilty of ignoring my budget and spending frivolously, only to regret it later when the credit card bills come in. This year, especially, as we face interest rates that are higher than we have seen since 2008, I invite you to join me in considering these alternative, creative gift options which may alleviate stress on your wallet.

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- o Try to give an experience, rather than a gift. For example, you may want to plan a day at the bowling alley or schedule an opportunity to do community service together.
- o Make a DIY gift. Nothing is more treasured than a personal, unique hand-made gift. Visit the internet for ideas and instructions.
- o Give the gift of you! Everyone has a special talent or gift. Package yours creatively and gift it to your loved one. For example, if baking is your thing, gift a gift card for 3 dozen cookies or a special birthday cake.



*Merry
Christmas!*

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IS AMERICA 'WOKE' TO US FOREIGN POLICY?

Submitted by Rev. Ronald A. Nathan, World Politics Editor,
The Star of Zion

The urban dialect called African American Vernacular English renders the word, 'awake' as 'woke'. This term 'woke' has been interpreted within America as a call for Americans of all races to be "aware of and be actively attentive to important facts and issues (especially issues of racial and social justice),"

Africans and the peoples of the Caribbean are looking forward to the day when this concept of 'awoke' will engage US foreign policies. There seem to be an ambivalence by Americans, including African-Americans to the deleterious impact of US policies overseas. Let's take the Caribbean for example.

It may not be on the curricula of America's middle schools but since 1800 the United States of America has invaded Cuba (1898,1961), Dominican Republic (1965), Grenada (1983), Haiti (1915-34), Panama (1989) and Puerto Rico (1898). Is it too much to ask that if Black Lives Matter in American cities such as Los Angeles and Detroit that they also matter in Port-Au-Prince and Havana?

The Caribbean has vigorously supported the international Black Lives Matter movement from Bermuda to Belize. We are deeply concerned how our brothers and sisters and many of our own citizens who reside in the United States of America are treated by the security services. Is it too

much to ask that American congress persons, ministers and congregants be 'woke' to the lack of economic, racial and social justice in US foreign policies towards the Caribbean region?

How long must the Caribbean accept the economic blockage of Cuba? How long must Haiti be treated as a pariah in the region?

That Black Palestinian called Jesus the Christ in his deeply prophetic style reminded us to be 'woke' to do unto others as we will have them do to us.



BACK TO AFRICA

Submitted by Rev. Ronald A. Nathan, World Politics Editor,
The Star of Zion

Charlotte, NC - The success of Ghana's year of return initiative (2019) was an indication of the possibilities of what can happen through the repatriation of persons of African Descent to the Africa continent. It is estimated that some 500 million (mainly) African-Americans visited Ghana in 2019 as the country showcased itself as a great tourist, business and investment destination.

The fact is that Africa is waking up to the developmental possibilities of a Diaspora of 350 million people. This is a population equivalent to the third largest country in the world after China and India. Back to Africa movements have existed since the 1800's and have been led by philanthropic organizations and religious organizations. Returning to Africa has not always been as successful as planned case in point is the nations of Liberia and Sierra Leone.

The unspoken challenge is how will this return resonate with Africa's 1.5 billion people who are

eager for higher standards of living. We will have a win-win situation if African diaspora engagement with African countries will leverage critical services at a local level.

The average Ghanaian, Kenyan or South African need to see a clear link between the return of their African sisters and brothers from the Diaspora with greater levels of efficiencies in the delivery of domestic services such as clean running water, affordable health care, decent education, increase job creation, better infrastructure and greater access to human rights.



In the future we can expect a continuation of African countries realigning their foreign policies and development priorities to include people from the African Diaspora following on from the African Union's designation of the African Diaspora as its' sixth region.

Africans from outside of Africa cognizant of the fact that there are increasing opportunities for cultural, social, economic and political advancement in the fifty-five countries of Africa will return on their feet and with their pocketbooks.

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STROKE: THE SILENT ASSASSIN

Submitted by Daman De Leon, Health & Wellness Editor, The Star of Zion

A stroke occurs when blood flow to the brain is blocked. Blood brings oxygen and nutrients to the cells. Without blood, brain cells die. This means that a section of the brain starts breaking down and brain function is altered. The quicker a stroke is addressed, the less brain damage there will be and the better the recovery. Strokes are usually painless, but there are signs. Here are 7 ways to tell if you are possibly having a stroke.

Use the acronym, FAST. F = Face drooping, A = Arms weak, S = Speech slurred, and T = Time to call 911. This is the most common way to immediately tell if you are having a stroke. If you are unable to smile evenly is one more indicator. If you cannot raise both arms above your head suddenly. If you are unable to say a simple sentence without slurring - then you are most likely having a stroke. Having any combination of these signs, without being intoxicated, means that you need help.

One-sided Numbness

Numbness or weakness on one side of your body is a symptom of a stroke. It is not just limited to your face and arms. This can be experienced in your spine, legs, and feet. The brain cells controlling nerve communication to different parts of your body may be dying. All of a sudden, if you are unable to walk evenly, lose your balance, or get really dizzy - you may be having a stroke. If you suddenly develop a slouch and cannot sit up straight, then you may be having a stroke.

Stroke – there's treatment if you act FAST.



Vision Problems

Vision problems associated with a stroke are drastic and occur suddenly. In one or both eyes. This is very different from typical vision problems that occur gradually and are less severe. So, we are not talking about your need for reading glasses or your inability to see well at night.

Blurriness, loss of peripheral vision, or total loss of vision are signs of stroke when they happen without warning. This means that blood supply is not getting to the brain cells that communicate with the eyes. Again, the sooner that a stroke is addressed, the more likely vision will return. Other than a stroke - vision problems may indicate other issues such as an ocular migraine.

Confusion

Another way to tell if you are having a stroke is if you are suddenly very confused. Not knowing some basic facts such as the year, your name, or your location - these are pretty blatant indicators of a stroke. Sudden confusion is often accompanied with anxiety and feelings of fear.

It would be pretty scary to suddenly not know where you are going, right? Chances are, if you are experiencing stroke-related confusion, you are not going to remember this list. Stroke or no stroke, if you are feeling abnormally confused, get help immediately.

Problems Understanding Others

A stroke can affect the area of the brain that deals with language and communication. Your speech may be slurred making you hard to understand. But, you may also experience that it is hard to understand what other people are saying to you. This is a cross between confusion and loss of communication. You do not have to exhibit both slurred speech and inability to understand others, but you could. If you are having a hard time communicating with others, then you may be having a stroke.



Sudden Painful Headache

Although no pain is usually associated with a stroke, it is possible that a headache can occur. Headaches associated with strokes are different from other types of headaches. Most headaches have warning signs and gradually worsen. Not these. Stroke headaches occur without warning and are extremely painful. From a pain scale of 0 to 100 in seconds, this headache is a sign that you are having a stroke. Get help immediately.

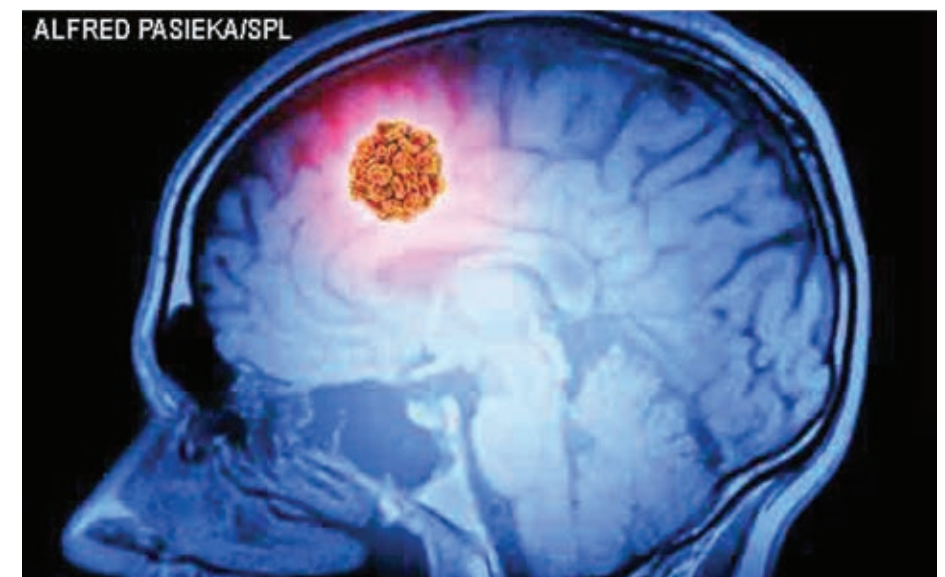
Subtle Tells in Women

Men and women can experience all the previous symptoms. But, women can experience other additional symptoms that are more subtle. These can include nausea, fast heartbeat, or hiccups. Pains in the face, chest, or legs. Full-body weakness and shortness of breath are also symptoms.

With this list, you may wonder "How the heck would I know if I were having a stroke? It is hard to tell if these are the only signs. But, if they appear out of the blue and are strong enough to make you take notice - then, seek help. When in doubt, get it checked out!"

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ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION – WESTERN CAROLINA CHAPTER

EIGHT WAYS TO SUPPORT AN ALZHEIMER'S CAREGIVER



November 2022

Submitted by Alzheimer's Association- Western Charlotte Chapter

Charlotte, NC - November is National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month and Family Caregivers Month. To mark these events, the Alzheimer's Association - Western Carolina Chapter is encouraging people to lend a helping hand to more than 356,000 family members and friends serving as Alzheimer's caregivers.

"The demands of being an Alzheimer's caregiver are all-encompassing and increase over time as the disease progresses, said Katherine L. Lambert, CEO of the Alzheimer's Association - Western Carolina Chapter. "This month, we are recognizing family caregivers for all they do every day to support people in their lives living with dementia, and invite the public to identify ways to support them as caregivers."

Providing help and support to caregivers can be easier than most people think. Even little acts can make a big difference. The Alzheimer's Association offers these suggestions:

- **Learn:** Educate yourself about Alzheimer's disease – its symptoms, its progression and the common challenges facing caregivers. The more you know, the easier it will be to find ways to help.
- **Build a Team:** Organize family and friends who want to help with caregiving. The Alzheimer's Association offers links to several free, on-line care calendar resources that families can use to build their care team, share takes and coordinate helpers.
- **Give Caregivers a Break:** Make a standing appointment to give the caregiver a break. Spend time with the person living with dementia and allow the caregiver a chance to run errands, go to their own doctor's appointment, participate in a support group or engage in an activity that helps them recharge. Even one hour could make a big difference in providing the caregiver some relief.
- **Check In:** Many Alzheimer's and dementia caregivers report feeling isolated or alone. So start the conversation – a phone call to check in, sending a note, or stopping by for a visit can make a big difference in a caregiver's day and help them feel supported.

- **Tackle the To-Do List:** Ask for a list of errands that need to be run – such as picking up groceries or prescriptions. Offer to do yard work or other household chores. It can be hard for a caregiver to find time to complete these simple tasks that we often take for granted.
- **Be Specific and Be Flexible:** Open-ended offers of support ("call me if you need anything" or "let me know if I can help") may be well-intended, but are often dismissed. Be specific in your offer ("I'm going to the store, what do you need?"). Continue to let the caregiver know that you are there and ready to help.
- **Help for the Holidays:** Holiday celebrations are often joyous occasions, but they can be challenging and stressful for families facing Alzheimer's. Help caregivers around the holidays by offering to help with cooking, cleaning or gift shopping. If a caregiver has traditionally hosted family celebrations, offer your home instead.
- **Join the Fight:** Honor a person living with the disease and their caregiver by joining the fight against Alzheimer's. You can volunteer with your local Alzheimer's Association chapter, participate in fundraising events such as Walk to End Alzheimer's and The Longest Day, advocate for more research funding, or sign up to participate in a clinical study through the Alzheimer's Association's Trial Match.

As part of National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month and National Family Caregivers Month, the Alzheimer's Association's Chapters in North Carolina are offering free education programs and support groups to help all North Carolina caregivers and their families. For a complete list or to register for upcoming programs, visit act.alz.org/ncmonthlyprograms.

To learn more about Alzheimer's disease, support families and people living with the disease and information on the Alzheimer's Association - Western Carolina Chapter, visit alz.org/northcarolina or call 800.272.3900.

KWANZAA AND “CHRIST-MASS”: WHICH IS MORE IMPORTANT FOR BLACK PEOPLE TO CELEBRATE?

Submitted by Daman De Leon, Health & Wellness Editor, The Star of Zion

In 1966, the African American Maulana Karenga created the holiday of Kwanzaa to give black people an “opportunity to celebrate themselves and their history” rather than indulge in the customary traditions of a white Christmas. The celebration starts on Boxing Day and runs for seven days, each marking one of the “principles of African heritage”, which include umoja (Swahili for unity), kujichagulia (self-determination) and ujaama (cooperative work and economics)

Karenga was a Black nationalist who later became a college professor, created Kwanzaa as a way of uniting and empowering the African American community in the aftermath of the deadly Watts Rebellion. Having modeled his holiday on traditional African harvest festivals, he took the name “Kwanzaa” from the Swahili phrase, “matunda ya kwanza,” which means “first fruits.” The extra “a” was added, Karenga has said, simply to accommodate seven children at the first-ever Kwanzaa celebration in 1966, each of whom wanted to represent a letter.

Though often thought of as an alternative to Christmas, many people actually celebrate both. “Kwanzaa is not a religious holiday, but a cultural one with an inherent spiritual quality,” Karenga writes. “Thus, Africans of all faiths can and do celebrate Kwanzaa, i.e. Muslims, Christians, Black Hebrews, Jews, Buddhists, Baha’i and Hindus, as well as those who follow the ancient traditions of Maat, Yoruba, Ashanti, Dogon, etc.” According to Karenga, non-Black people can also enjoy Kwanzaa, just as non-Mexicans commemorate Cinco de Mayo, for example.

The seven principles of Kwanzaa, as determined by Karenga, are umoja (unity), kujichagulia (self-determination), ujima (collective work and responsibility), ujamaa (cooperative economics), nia (purpose), kuumba (creativity) and imani (faith). Kwanzaa also has seven symbols—mazao (crops), mkeka (mat), kinara (candleholder), muhindi (corn), kikombe cha umoja (unity cup), zawadi (gifts) and mishumaa saba (seven candles)—that are traditionally arranged on a table. Three of the seven candles are red, representing the struggle; three of the candles are green, representing the land and hope for the future; and one of the candles is black, representing people of African descent. Some families who celebrate Kwanzaa dress up or decorate their homes in those colors.

In order to avoid over-commercialization, gifts handed out to family members on the last day of Kwanzaa are often homemade. Alternatively, some participants buy books, music, art accessories or other culturally themed products, preferably from a Black-owned business.

Scroll to Continue

Each day of Kwanzaa emphasizes a different principle.

Unity: Umoja (oo–MO–jah)

To strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation, and race.

Self-determination: Kujichagulia (koo–gee–cha–goo–LEE–yah)

To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves, and speak for ourselves.

Collective Work and Responsibility: Ujima (oo–GEE–mah)

To build and maintain our community together and make our brother’s and sister’s problems our problems and to solve them together.

Cooperative Economics: Ujamaa (oo–JAH–mah)

To build and maintain our own stores, shops, and other businesses and to profit from them together.

Purpose: Nia (nee–YAH)

To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.

Creativity: Kuumba (koo–OOM–bah)

To do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.

Faith: Imani (ee–MAH–nee)

To believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders, and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

Kwanzaa was instituted as a means to reaffirm the human agency and cultural dignity of people of African descent. This agency was disrupted during enslavement as persons who owned enslaved Africans, influenced a displacement of practices that were intrinsically African. In its stead, Christianity was often misused to justify the institution of slavery. Therefore, upon the birth and annual observance of Kwanzaa, people of African descent who do not honor the Christmas holiday, which is rooted in the Christian belief system, were able to relocate their own African spirituality and practice.

In 1977, Karenga wrote in his book *Kwanzaa: Origin, Concepts, Practice*: “Kwanzaa is not an imitation, but an alternative, in fact, an oppositional alternative to the spookism, mysticism and non-earth based practices which plague us as a people and encourage our withdrawal from social life rather than our bold confrontation with it.”

However, as Kwanzaa gained notoriety amongst Christians, who were also of African descent, its stance as an opposition to Christmas, changed.

Being individuals of African descent, with this striving, equated a new means for Black America to adopt a system that did not oppress but instead, gifted communalism in relation to the edifying of Black culture. It returned displaced value in the Black community and before America, performed cultural relevance and the quality of life for people of African descent. Beginning on December 26, in the spirit of feasting and gift giving, Kwanzaa is a tonal extension the holiday season intends to set. But while the daily candle lighting of the kinara occurs, can we, meaning Americans, honestly state that we offer a place on the celebratory stage for Kwanzaa to hold relevance in our Americanized discourse and demonstration of “holiday”?

In consideration of this country’s foundational precepts, the assumption could be that America is not largely interested in Kwanzaa, for it is too culturally forward. This is not to state that there should be limitations on the dialogue about Christmas, for the truer and often blurred Christmas message is not about elves, a traveling sleigh, or retail sales. This is to state that we, in America, can begin to be more reflective about whether or not we’ve become so wired by the the celebration of a holiday, that we miss observances, like that of Kwanzaa, which prove a cultural richness and relevance America struggles to promote overall.

The overarching question is when will we, the American family, get pass the preliminaries that acknowledge that we are a culturally manifold country, and reach an adoption of knowledge and action that promotes cultural competence, especially during times like these where thick cultural history, thought, and practice are abundant and easily recognizable? Cultural competence begins with discussing what appears to be invisible and making it seen. Acknowledging and educating about Kwanzaa, on a greater scale, is another beginning we can start from.

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IT WAS NECESSARY: STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Allison Lee, Social Justice Editor, The Star Of Zion

“It should be the norm that every single student in this country is guaranteed a quality education no matter where they live, which tax bracket their family might fall into, or their race. And it’s unfortunate that it has to be argued so often and politicized.” – Genel Fowler

It can be said that a cornerstone of society is, without a doubt, education. The American culture has long maintained that education is the key that both metaphorically and in actuality unlocks doors and mind-sets alike. The mere thought of education is so powerful that before the Civil War, African Americans were not allowed to be educated by and large in the South. In *The Education of the Negro prior to 1861: a history of the education of the colored people of the United States from the beginning of slavery to the Civil War* written by Carter G. Woodson, he shares that originally, slaves were thought to be unintelligent in comparison to their White counterparts and therefore unable to learn (Woodson, 1915). As time went on however, slave owners discovered that slaves were not in fact lacking intelligence, rather, to educate a slave in any way would be to give them awareness to see and know the world, therefore making them ill-suited to be proper slaves and thus difficult to retain and control (Woodson, 1915). Slave owners took the oppression of slaves so seriously that laws were set – depending on the state - deeming the teaching of any slave to read or write as criminal, for fear that they would one day revolt (McCarty, 2006). There is power in what is poured into the mind.

Today, we send our children to schools at around five years old to begin the formal process of learning what society deems necessary in order for textbook success to occur and a contribution back into the world to take place. Education is used a measure for employability. It is the law that up until a certain age, minors attend school. Our kids remain in grade school until the age of 18, or more accurately, the completion of their Senior year of high school at which time if they have had the good fortune to speak to a guidance counselor, career services teacher, or family member about their next steps for the future, they typically go into the workforce, the military, or to college at either a two or four year institution of higher learning. Learning is important. Whether it takes place on the job, at home, while serving and defending our country, or in a college classroom, learning is the process by which we as humans continue to grow mentally, stretch socially, emotionally and spiritually, and continually lean into becoming our highest selves.

If our country places an importance on education and learning, is aware of the power of knowledge, believes that every citizen should take part in learning for a mandatory amount of time in grade school, and persuades students to attend college upon graduation, it is disturbing that the United States ranks high on the list for students who graduate both college and graduate school with astronomical amounts of student loan debt. By astronomical, it is meant that according to student loan debt statistics, there is currently \$1.75 trillion in total student loan debt seated within the United States of America, which is inclusive of both federal and private loans. According to the White House, the cost of attendance to a four year institution since 1980 has close to tripled. Although the price for a university education has gone up, the White House also shared that support from the federal government has not been able to sustain the increase in cost of attendance. The Federal Pell Grant, which is a need-based grant typically awarded to undergraduate students who demonstrate exceptional financial need, continues to decrease the amount offered (from 80% of costs covered down to 30%) which causes students to have to take out some and/or more loans, which increases student loan debt, which then defaults to the question of What is being done about the student loan debt crisis in the United States and why is it so prominent?

Student loan debt crisis has become so much of a burden both to individuals and mainstream society that over the last couple of presi-

dential cycles, candidates have begun to partially focus their attention in the direction of promising to eliminate some portion of student loan debt, should they be elected. Presidential hopefuls Bernie Sanders, Hillary Clinton, and the 46th President of the United States of America, Joseph R. Biden are some of the individuals who included dealing with student loan debt as part of their campaign platforms. After President Biden was elected in November of 2020, his Administration started the work of dealing with the student loan debt crisis by:

- Discharging student loans taken on by borrowers in order to attend for-profit schools that were defrauding the very students they alleged to help,
- Realigning the promise of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program (PSLF) in order to help more students achieve having some of their student loan debt forgiven,
- Forgiving student loan debt of some borrowers (over 300,000) who have either total or permanent disability, and
- Continuing to maintain the pause on federal student loans, although the hold is expected to be lifted in 2023.

Most recently - and for many, most notably - the Biden Administration announced over the summer that in order to meet the overwhelming need for student loan forgiveness – particularly in regards to low and middle income borrowers – and to fulfill the President’s campaign promise, that the Department of Education would pardon an amount of up to \$20,000 in student loans for borrowers. There is an income cap with individual borrowers having to make less than \$125,000 and married borrowers having to make less than \$250,000. Borrowers also had to receive a Pell Grant in order to receive the full \$20,000, but could qualify via income without having had an income and be capped at receiving \$10,000. For many, this is major. Although the forgiveness is a drop in the hat for the total amount of loans out there, for some it will eliminate their debt completely, for others, it provides a glimmer of hope amidst a bleak reality of input into education versus output received via salary in the working world.

For many, the news of student loan forgiveness is a matter of excitement fueled by an unloading of weight that is heavy to carry – debt. With the recent release of the online Student Loan Forgiveness Application, there have been a variety of tweets, posts on Instagram, and Facebook, plus videos of thrilled individuals sharing how they anticipate the decrease in debt to positively affect them from an increase in credit score to going back to school to being debt free. It is believed that this move will eliminate all student loan debt for close to 20 million people, which is near 50% of the 43 million US citizens who owe student loans. Currently in theory, though hopefully soon in actuality, racial equity will be advanced through this process with Black students being more likely to borrow outright and do it in larger sums for college. This forgiveness has a direct effect on communities of color, with Black borrowers being twice as likely to receive Pell grants as our White counterparts. Also, 90% of this forgiveness will go to individuals making less than \$75,000 per year. This is a good thing.

Although there is quite a bit of enthusiasm, there is also much displeasure. Some Americans are questioning the logic pertaining to elimination of a debt that was voluntarily accumulated, especially when some paid off their loans out of pocket. Others can acknowledge that student loans are indeed problematic, but do not believe that now is the time to make it happen either due to what could be a rise in inflation, wanting to allocate that \$500 billion elsewhere at the current moment, or a variety of other reasons. Have we as a people arrived in a place where because we did not need help doing a thing, we block others from getting the help needed? Are we so without compassion for others that we would rather they suffer than lean into what is able to be a transformative force in the lives of many? Even as these questions are penned to paper, they are not surprising; this is, after all, America. This is a country that has a culture steeped in a mentality of “I” and “what about me?” This is America.

May we recognize the power in pouring learning into minds. May we focus on the good that student loan forgiveness will bring. May we continue to seek ways to abolish a structure that demands we pay a hefty

price to learn. May we persist in pushing society to invent new ways of living into equitable practices. May this pardoning of debt be the beginning of more freedom, release, and a new age to come.

WHEN FREEDOM SPEAKS RECAP LOVE DOESN'T HURT: RECOGNIZING AND ADDRESSING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WITHIN THE CHURCH

November 27, 2022

Submitted by The Star of Zion

Charlotte, NC - Annually, October is observed as Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Founded in October of 1987, Domestic Violence Awareness Month traditionally shines a light on: raising awareness regarding domestic violence, practical ways to support survivors, and connection of individuals in need to organizations that are able to provide assistance.

On October 24th at 8:00pm EST, the Star of Zion broadcasted an episode of When Freedom Speaks, entitled, "Love Doesn't Hurt: Recognizing and Addressing Domestic Violence within the Church." Mr. Damon De Leon, Health and Wellness Editor of the Star of Zion and Rev. Dr. Allison N. Lee, Social Justice Editor of the Star of Zion, served as co-hosts. Ms. Valerie Simon, Author, Entrepreneur, and five time Domestic Violence Survivor brought greetings and shared her personal story about living in and getting out of a long-term situation of domestic violence. Ms. Simon, shared that domestic violence: has no face or socioeconomic status, but can happen to anyone at any time, does not just involve women being harmed by men, but men being harmed physically by women and children being harmed by parents, for example and can take place via a variety of ways, such as verbal, emotional, spiritual, financial, physical, sexual, etc. Ms. Simon shared that as of October 6th, the state of North Carolina had seen 36 homicides in 2022 that were related to domestic violence and about the impact of domestic violence on children.

Regarding support for victims, Ms. Simon posited that although there are organizations in place to assist, support overall is often lacking both through the judicial system and the Church. She states, "The judicial system is not victim friendly." Pertaining to the Church, Ms. Simon asserted a desire for churches as a whole and church leadership to become educated on the matter, which would include having a ministry for domestic violence and mental health. In a perfect world, this would also entail churches having clinically trained and licensed professionals along with victim advocates on staff. Backing one of the reasons for this need, Ms. Simon said, "Ineffectively addressed trauma leads to abuse." Her hope is that mental health professionals and advocates be more readily available through the Church to deal with families, teenagers, identify red and yellow flags, and begin to break down trauma that takes

place and has been passed down from generation to generation. Ms. Simon shared that supporting victims of domestic violence and highlighting mental health is not something that can be done by any one individual, but it takes unity and togetherness to move the needle forward.

Prior to closing the broadcast, Ms. Simon spoke on the importance of establishing a safety plan for individuals who are experiencing domestic violence, especially as they are preparing to leave their partner. She highlighted having: a separate bank account, a place to go, an emergency contact, additional streams of income, and an overall way to protect self due to the dangers often associated with leaving. Ms. Simon provided information on a Facebook group pioneered by her called, "Against All Oddz Still I Rise," which provides access to safety plans.

The broadcast was just a little over an hour, but rich in: experience shared by both Ms. Simon and individuals tuning in via chat, conversation regarding the role of the Church, ways that we all can uplift and support both victims and survivors of domestic violence, an understanding that the system is very much a system and other supports are needed to undergird victim needs, red flags to look out for, and ways to think critically about next steps outside of Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Strikingly and importantly, this broadcast provided a space for individuals from all over to be present and prayerfully in some way seen in a matter that can often impress isolation and invisibility. Even after having left October, may we stay the course. May the work of our hands DO and not just say, when it comes to supporting initiatives and awareness of domestic violence. May the strength of our voices ADVOCATE where and when there is a need. May the faith that we stand on BE a vehicle through which we seek to affect change. May those in situations of domestic violence know that they are not alone.

The Love Doesn't Hurt: Recognizing and Addressing Domestic Violence within the Church full broadcast can be found on YouTube on the Star of Zion page at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NTXU0N-BrQPg>. It is also on Facebook under the Star of Zion account.



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MY GOD IS ABLE LESSON 2

November 21, 2022

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Dwayne L. Tutt

Ezraassociates24@gmail.com

Charlotte, NC - Last month, I issued a challenge to the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (AMEZ). I reminded the church that AMEZ was growing in the 1920s and was setting General Conference budgets to promote further growth. Then the Great Depression began in 1929. After this the General Conference of 1932 cut budgets. The budget cuts were drastic and impacted the church. I also stated that a church should plan to grow regardless of economic conditions internal or external to the church. I also proclaimed My God Is Able to assure His people will survive, and in many cases even thrive given any economic condition. With those thoughts in mind, I asked the question, "why not grow AMEZ"?

There is a story which was told well over a hundred years ago. The story was called, Building Cathedrals. The story goes: Three men were all engaged at the same employment, were asked what they were doing. One replied he was making five dollars a day. Another replied he was cutting stone. The third said he was building a cathedral. The difference was not in what they were actually doing, although the spirit of the third man might quite possibly have made him more expert at the task. They were all earning the same wage; they were all cutting stone; but only one held in his mind that he was helping build a great edifice. Life meant more to him than his mates because he saw further and more clearly. Now let us focus on building in AMEZ.

For the next few monthly lessons, I will use the Book of Nehemiah as my biblical foundation. I will use the Book of Nehemiah to help us to prepare for General Conference in 2024 and to help us thrive in our local churches and within our family households.

The Book of Nehemiah opens in chapter one stating that a Jewish government worker in Persia (cupbearer for King Artaxerxes) named Nehemiah inquired as to the conditions of his people and their place of worship back in Jerusalem. The text reads: Nehemiah 1:2-4 "2 That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. 3 And they said unto me, the remnant, that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire. 4 And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven."

AMEZ, notice Nehemiah had something inside of him which caused him to inquire as to how his people were doing and how were things in Jerusalem (spiritual home). This begs the question of how often do we stop and ask how are our people doing and how are our houses of worship? Notice in the third verse those he asked replied making two important points. Point one was "there is still a remnant." Point two was the remnant was in great trouble and shame. As a pastor in AMEZ, I praise God that there were still people at home! I also praise God that the people at home knew they were in trouble and were suffering disgrace. I thank God that Nehemiah asked the tough questions and those who answered were willing to say, "we are not who we once were, but we are still here." AMEZ, I contend we are not who we once were, but we are still here!!!

I am a firm believer there are still toughminded members in Zion who know where and how we once stood. Furthermore, there are members in Zion who know we have great days ahead of us if only we trust the God of our Fathers and Mothers. Now let me share a real-world example in AMEZ of building a great edifice and not just paying claims and assessments.

Many of you may not know much about Camp Dorothy Walls, but it was a former health facility. The property includes over

57 acres, pond, buildings, and acreage for recreation. The property is located in Black Mountain, North Carolina. The town of Black Mountain, North Carolina is in the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains. The closest major city to Camp Dorothy Walls is Asheville, North Carolina. Asheville is within minutes of Camp Dorothy Walls. The property was purchased in the 1950s by Bishop William Jacob Walls of Chimney Rock, North Carolina. Bishop Walls was ordained a preacher in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Hopkins Chapel in Asheville, North Carolina just after his 14th birthday. Much later in life after serving the church as a Bishop, he was asked about his thoughts on religion and politics. He stated, "There's too much self-seeking and not enough devotion ... we should mix in politics, but only to purify it. Let's conquer politics, but not be conquered by it." Bishop Walls recorded in his history book called, *The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church: The Reality of the Black Church* that the missionaries who served with his wife Dorothy, played a major role in the acquisition of the property (Camp Dorothy Walls) which would be named after his wife. Furthermore, he wrote that the idea of camp ministries was to allow urban children to experience the outdoors over the summer months. The camps were to bring together children from all walks of life and allow them to learn and to grow in their love of God and humanity.

I personally learned about the importance of Camp Dorothy Walls from working with people like Russell and Betty Lackey, Ervin Reid, Herbert Mayberry and many others. I recall my first visit to Camp Dorothy Walls. There was a request made for men to go to the camp and help Presiding Elder Herbert Grant of the Asheville District to mow the property. Presiding Elder Wilford Bailey from the Statesville District made the call within our district. I accepted the call. He came to my home, and we loaded my riding mower on his trailer beside his riding mower. He asked me to drive the hour and a half to the camp. During the ride, he explained to me how important the camp was and the role it played in the Piedmont Area. Once we arrived, I was absolutely amazed at what AMEZ owned in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Furthermore, I thought about the challenges our people would have encountered to acquire such a piece of real estate in the 1950s. I rode my mower all day cutting grass and thinking about what God did for AMEZ. I had a WOW moment!

While some of you may not know much about Camp Dorothy Walls, you probably have heard of the Reverend Billy Franklin Graham. As you will recall Reverend Graham was the great evangelist and spiritual leader who promoted racial integration within the church. He felt and preached messages of love and even asked Reverend Dr. Martin King, Jr. to speak with him to demonstrate love. That being said, Billy Graham was born and raised in Charlotte, NC. After marriage he relocated his family and ministries to Black Mountain, NC. By the time he arrived in the Black Mountain Area, AMEZ had churches in the area. I want you to know that around the time Billy Graham was growing his family and ministries from Black Mountain, Bishop Walls and the AMEZ were doing the same! As a matter of fact, Billy Graham and his wife (Ruth) both loved Black Mountain, NC and lived in the area called Montreat. Both Billy and Ruth departed this earth from Montreat, NC. Again, as Billy Graham was evangelizing the world with the message of Jesus, AMEZ was also in Black Mountain doing the same. Look at what AMEZ did in the 1950s.

In the aerial below is the over 57 acre tract of land that Bishop Walls and the Missionary Society purchased:

It was Bishop Walls and the missionaries who had the vision to purchase this property. It was envisioned this property would be



a place in the mountains for recreation and worship for AMEZ. Every Bishop of the Piedmont Episcopal District since Bishop Walls have worked to continue the vision of Bishop Walls. Under various Episcopal Leaders and lay people, many new facilities were constructed, and worship services were continued. Then history has it that a new bishop was appointed to the Piedmont Episcopal District. His name was Bishop George Washington Carver Walker, Sr.

After Bishop George Washington Carver Walker, Sr. was appointed to the Western North Carolina Conference, he made arrangements to “inquire” as to the state of Camp Dorothy Walls. On the day that Bishop Walker was to make his first inspection of Camp Dorothy Walls he left his home in Chicago, Illinois. He drove from Chicago to Black Mountain, NC. On the day he drove, it was a really rainy day. As he drove, he was becoming disappointed that he would not be able to inspect the property because of the rain. Yet, he kept driving and he arrived on the grounds. He met Presiding Elder Herbert Grant of the Asheville District who also served as a local overseer of the property. As they walked the property, Bishop Walker was able to see the roof and walls were taking in water ... he could see rain was coming inside of Zion. It was then that he knew, “we must repair the walls and roofs of Camp Dorothy Walls.” God laid it squarely in his heart to restore the facilities and restore Camp Dorothy Walls. I still remember him saying to the Piedmont Episcopal District, “we can do better, and we must do better” and “there is an army who awaits us, but we cannot see them because we are in the valley, but when we get to the top of the mountain we will see them waiting on us.” Bishop Walker’s tenacity and faithfulness to restore Camp Dorothy Walls was Nehemiah in action within AMEZ. Over the next several years he would assemble various teams to repair buildings, work on the pool, build a new hotel, demo old buildings, purchase a home for the groundskeeper, brought the summer camps days back, held conferences and meetings for the Episcopal Area at Camp Dorothy Walls.

In order to do the above, the Piedmont Episcopal District was able to secure millions of dollars from major lenders TO BUILD AMEZ MINISTRY. Not only did the Piedmont secure millions of dollars for Camp Dorothy Walls, but it also financed the purchase of an Episcopal

Residence in South Charlotte and fully furnished the home. AMEZ think about the challenges of getting the above done. Please think about what stops you from getting things done in your local church and in your life. I digress, when I was a student at Hood Theological Seminary, I had a discussion with Dr. Albert Aymer the former president of the seminary. During the discussion, I shared with him my vision. He listened, looked me in the eye and asked, “what stops you?” AMEZ in the spirit of Dr. Aymer, what stops your church, family and you from realizing your visions?

AMEZ going back to how the Piedmont was able to secure millions of dollars; what I have not said was that the funds borrowed were in the period of the Great Recession. This was the period in the first decade of the 2000s of high unemployment, high gas prices, downturn in GDP, people were losing homes and the country was struggling. I still recall hearing Ms. Mary Bonaparte the Western North Carolina Home Missions Director saying, “I know there is a recession, but I refuse to participate in it.” She proceeded over the next several months as planned and was able to raise the same amount of funds for Home Missions as she had in previous years. Again AMEZ, the economic climate was not great, but God allowed the Piedmont Episcopal District to secure funding to rebuild and to build new walls in Zion.

As I close this lesson, again I remind you that My God Is Able! AMEZ God is able regardless of economic conditions. Now to show you how God builds cathedrals and God rewards faith, I remind you that Bishop Walker was used by God to restore Camp Dorothy Walls and to secure an Episcopal Residence. When Bishop Walker retired, the Piedmont Episcopal District did have stronger assets and the district had millions of dollars of debt. Then God sent to the Piedmont Episcopal District a banker from Rocky Mount, North Carolina. Next month, I will talk about that banker and how My God Is Able! Why not grow? Why not now? Why not us? Why not YOU? See you next month!

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of the Star of Zion.

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THE GIFT OF FUN WITH A SIDE OF FAITH

November 10, 2022

Submitted by Dierdre Parker- Rowson, Entertainment & The Arts Editor, The Star of Zion

Fayetteville, NC – The morning talk show landscape was flooded with new faces and voices this season. Academy Award and Grammy winner Jennifer Hudson threw her hat into the ring, along with Karamo (of Queer Eye fame). Entering the battle for a permanent spot in the morning talk show neighborhood, is Sherri Shepherd. We all know Sherri Shepherd or have seen her in movies and sitcoms. She usually plays the ratchet best friend or the mother who doles out funny but sound advice, along with substantial hugs. Maybe you have caught her stand up show. Maybe you remember her stint as a co-host on The View. She is a familiar face in the entertainment industry landscape.

Sherri has been on other talk shows before landing her own talk show. As a matter of fact, she, along with a veritable cavalcade of stars (Michael Rappaport, Fat Joe, and Remy Ma) co-hosted the now defunct Wendy Williams show, as Wendy remained on an extended hiatus due to health issues.

It was Shepherd who resonated best with the existing audience. After years of hurtful gossip and negativity, Sherri’s positivity was a breath of fresh air. The theme song promises that “we’re gonna have a real good time, feel good time,” and that is exactly what you get when you watch Sherri. Even the colors of the set seem to let the sunshine in.

What surprised this writer about the show is Shepherd’s faith, which



she is unashamed to talk about. She has shared stories of losses and victories. She talks about the prayers she’s prayed and how her faith sustained her in the dark times. She talks about her time of sleeping in her care as she was breaking into the comedy game. Eyes glistening as she fights to hold back the tears when she declares to the audience “if you just don’t give up...”

Sherri Shepherd has believed in her dream and kept the faith. She encourages others to do the same. She does it all in signature Sherri style, which is with a whole lot of laughter and a whole lot fun. It really is a feel-good time.

You can watch the Sherri Shepherd show on your local Fox station.



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BLACK PANTHER: WAKANDA FOREVER

November 14, 2022

Submitted by Anthony Marshall, anthonymarshall2@gmail.com

Raleigh, NC- Because December is the month where we celebrate the greatest gift ever given to humanity, we would like to share some of what we have found to be gifts in the world of Entertainment and the Arts. We reached out to Marvel Comics Superfan, Anthony Marshall for a look at the long-anticipated sequel to Black Panther, Wakanda Forever.

The news that the role of T'Challa would not be recast by Marvel Studios' President Kevin Feige, raised questions about the upcoming sequel, Black Panther: Wakanda Forever. What would become of the beautiful African nation? How would the story progress without the titular character? Those questions have finally been answered.

The film thrusts us into complete chaos right off the bat, as we are reintroduced to the brilliant Princess Shuri (Letitia Wright), in a race to save the life of the unseen King suffering from an unspecified disease. The distressing opening scene ends abruptly with the announcement of the death of King T'Challa. by the legendary Angela Bassett reprising her role as Ramonda, is easily one of her most stirring performances in recent memory. This sets forth one of the most deeply emotional Marvel efforts since 2019's Avengers: Endgame. The sentiment is felt throughout the two hour and forty-one-minute runtime.

Ryan Coogler returns to the directing and writing helms. His keen eye is again on full display as the visuals of Wakanda are even more breath-taking than the last outing. From the festive yet solemn



send-off of the benevolent king, to the views and scenes of everyday life in the fictional African Commonwealth, Coogler, once again proves why he is one of the best young directors in Hollywood today.

The movie features our favorite surviving Wakandans pitted against mounting pressure to supply the world with their precious native Vibranium. There is also the new threat of the underwater empire of Talokan led by classic Marvel anti-hero, Namor, in his MCU debut. Namor, played by Tenoch Huerte, shines as another relatable antagonist. This illuminates the wisdom of Wakanda having remained secluded from the world for so long. Now, Talokan is at risk of being exposed to the world as a nation also rich with Vibranium.

The ensemble does an impressive job, all things considered. Strong performances by Lupita Nyong'o, Winston Duke, and Danai Gurira reprising their roles as Nakia, M'Baku, and General Okoye respectively. A newcomer to the MCU, Dominique Thorne, portrays Riri Williams, a young and gifted MIT student who finds herself reluctantly immersed in the conflict of the warring nations and serves as a wonderful foil to Shuri.

Shuri's character arc is among the best in recent Marvel movie history, transitioning from intriguing supporting character to the new titular Black Panther. While the movie as a whole is an absolute triumph, it is not without flaws. The pacing is disjointed at times and with the second longest runtime for a Marvel film in history, some scenes and lesser storylines should've been cut. However, despite these small gripes Black Panther: Wakanda Forever remains a solid entry into the MCU, a classy tribute and love letter to the late Chadwick Boseman, as well as an exciting glimpse into the future of the legacy of Wakanda.

THE GIFT TO INSPIRE (BECAUSE THAT'S HER BUSINESS)

November 11, 2022

Submitted by Dierdre' Parker-Rowson, Entertainment & the Arts Editor, The Star of Zion

Lillington, NC- Always looking for how and where we find good news written in today's world, SOZ reached out to Rev. Dr. Clifford Barnett of Warner Temple in Wilmington, NC with the question: Is good news still being written? If so, where do you find it?

"Good news is always being written. Believe it or not, I find good news in some of the things people share on social media. For example, this is the one I read today, 'The first to apologize is the bravest. The first to forgive is the strongest. The first to forget is the happiest (Unknow)'".

While social media can be a hotbed of division and partisanship, and a place to spew hatred, there are some people making a positive impact in the social space. One such person is Tabitha Bonita Brown. Brown exploded onto the social media scene during the height of the global pandemic at a time when we were looking for something to make us feel like everything was going be all right. With her signature



"Hello there! Y'all alright?" Brown came through with practical advice and encouragement that was as warm and fresh as a just-baked apple pie. Her advice went viral. She became everybody's favorite auntie. Now she has over four million followers on TikTok and over four million on Instagram.

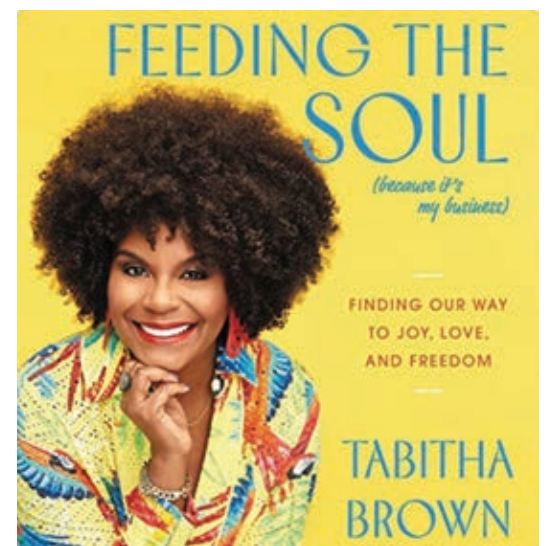
Although the world at large got to know her through her social media posts, Tabitha Brown is an actress who has been on her grind for over a decade. Her credits include several straight to video movies as well as Episodes of The Chi;

her YouTube series, Tab Time is nominate for an Emmy, and she has her own vegan cooking show, It's Compli'plated on the Food Network. Her book, "Feeding the Soul (because it's my business)" is a New York Times best seller. The book is separated into five parts: That's your business, Have the most Amazing Day, Don't You Dare go Messing up Nobody else's, Like So Like That; and Very Good.

If you've ever seen any of her videos then you are familiar with these phrases. On the surface this sounds full of whimsy and fanciful thinking. The golden thread that runs through this book, however, is much more spiritual than whimsical. Brown is honest and vulnerable and it invites the reader to be the same.

"Whenever I'm having one of those moments when I don't want to do something, I remind myself that there was a time when I couldn't do it. There something about sitting in gratitude that pushes you when you need it. I encourage you to let your blessings be your motivation to do the things that you don't necessarily want to do. Because honey, the blessing is the fact that you still get to do it."

Brown shares many stories with her signature honesty and country charm. Reading this book felt like Sunday dinner in the fellowship hall with the Elders, but it also felt like spilling the tea with my girls. This is a great read, that may just help facilitate growth. If that's what you're looking for. But that's your business.



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CLASSIFIEDS SECTION

Marvin AME Zion Facility Manager Job Description

Purpose: The Facilities Manager is a full time position responsible for assuring successful operation and function of the church's building and grounds in support of its mission. The position is responsible for completing and/or overseeing maintenance of all systems for plumbing, electrical, HVAC (heating ventilation air conditioning), security, telecommunications, sound, lighting, fire safety, security digital recording and landscaping. The position also requires completion of carpentry, painting, masonry work and general handyman knowledge to maintain the interior and exterior of the church. The position reports to the Senior Pastor and works closely with Trustee Chair.

Specific Duties: The Facilities manager is responsible for completion/coordination of the following:

1. Performing preventive maintenance activities on a weekly, monthly, quarterly or annual basis to reduce wear and tear or breakdown of systems, including computer systems.
2. Assessing system breakdowns and determining the kind of repairs that are required.
3. Completing in-house system repair whenever possible.
4. Schedule/supervise outside vendors, when necessary, to meet on site, review system failures, request estimates and oversee repairs.
5. Setting up and taking down the chairs and tables in fellowship hall, gym, and other rooms to accommodate regularly scheduled weekly or monthly activities as well as special events.
6. Coordinate, receive and provide access to outside vendors making deliveries.
7. Communicating regularly with Trustee Board Chair and participating in regular meetings as needed – providing a monthly report. He/she needs to be involved in the coordination of scheduling of events to assure readiness of the facility.
8. After approval by Pastor/Trustees, the Facility Manager may be asked to work with lay leaders as well as volunteer workers in support of regular activities and special projects.
9. Meeting building inspectors and resolving any deficiencies.
10. Ensure daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly routine janitorial functions are completed as outlined.

Skills, Qualifications & Experience:

- Basic handyman knowledge of plumbing, HVAC and other building systems.
- Competence with repair tools and techniques.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, including the ability to speak with all levels of employees, guests, vendors and members.
- Great time management, organization and prioritization abilities.
- Keen attention to detail and efficient problem-solving skills.
- Ability to lift equipment, tools, etc. weighing 50 – 75 Lbs. and comfortable standing or walking for long periods.
- Candidates should have many years of experience in building maintenance roles.

Marvin AME Zion Facility Manager Job Description

- Previous leadership experience is also beneficial.
- Must have a valid driver's license.

Education and training requirements:

Facilities Manager candidates must have at least a high school diploma or GED and some years of on-the-job training from previous roles in the industry. General handyman knowledge is required. Completion of some educational programs, certification in project management, communication, sustainability and/or operations management is preferred but not required.

Salary Expectations:

The Facilities Manager will be paid a salary commensurate with experience, level of education and pertinent job skills. Salary range between \$35,000 - \$42,000. The selected candidate must complete a ninety-day probationary period successfully once hired and will be evaluated for performance annually. Additional performance reviews may be appropriate at the discretion of the Pastor and Trustee Board Chairperson.

Equal Employment Opportunity:

To provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions at Marvin AME Zion Church will be based on merit, qualifications, and abilities. Marvin AME Zion Church does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices based on race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age, religion, physical or mental disability, military/veteran status, and/or any other class protected by federal or state law.

Serious Inquires Apply: info@mamez.org

ZION

THE A.M.E. ZION CHURCH
The Freedom Church



Save the Dates



The Christian Education Department Winter Meeting
Truthville 2022: The Reunion
Chicago Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile
540 Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611

December 27-30, 2022

February 14-17, 2023

The 2023 Board of Bishops Meeting & International Ministers and Lay Association Annual Meeting
Hyatt Regency Los Angeles International Airport
6225 W Century Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90045



Connectional Council 2023
Hilton New Orleans Riverside Hotel
Two Poydras Street, New Orleans, LA 70130

July 18-21, 2023

July 22-28, 2023

Women's Home & Overseas Missionary Society
30th Quadrennial Convention
Hilton New Orleans Riverside Hotel
Two Poydras Street, New Orleans, LA 70130



52nd Quadrennial General Conference

Sheraton Greensboro at Four Seasons & Joseph S. Koury Convention Center
3121 W. Gate City Blvd., Greensboro NC 27407

July 24-28, 2024

The Freedom Church: A Movement Empowered By The Holy Spirit
Strengthening Our Fellowship, Serving Our Flock, Sharing Our Faith and Securing Our Future

GENERAL INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE:

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