

THE STAR OF ZION

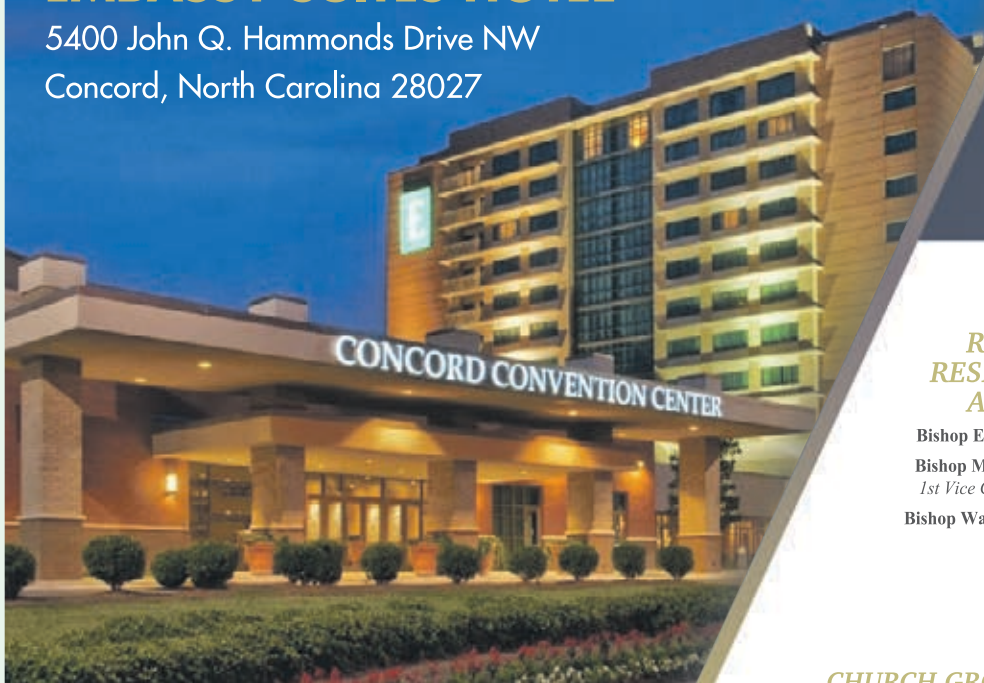
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THE STAR OF ZION
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Being guided by the core values of truth, faith, and love, the Star seeks to raise the consciousness of readers with news that is current, relevant, and dependable.

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RISING STARS

More for Monroe

After the untimely passing of an active Bishop in the A.M.E. Zion Church, it has been custom for the Conferences they preside over to be assigned to other active bishops. They give administrative and spiritual leadership to these conferences until the next General Conference. The most recent example we have of this is the sudden passing of Bishop Roy A. Holmes in May of 2013.

At the time of his passing, Bishop Holmes was Presiding Prelate of the Northeastern Episcopal District. After his funeral it was announced to the church- the Annual Conferences which make up the Northeastern Episcopal District will be divided as follows; The Western New York Conference, The New York Conference, and the overseas work in Great Britain were assigned to Bishop Dennis V. Proctor. The New England Conference, and the Bahamas Conference was assigned to the late Bishop Mildred B. Hines.

Nearly ten years later The A.M.E. Zion Church finds itself in the same predicament. The South Atlantic Episcopal district has sadly lost both of their episcopal leaders within one quadrennium; However, sources tell us at the *Star of Zion* a collective plea was made by the Presiding Elders of the South Atlantic Episcopal District to the Board of Bishops-” not to be split up.” This decision is made by the Board of Bishops- as the discipline prescribes, they are the ultimate authority in the church during the interim of the General Conference.

The Board of Bishops has assigned the entire South Atlantic Episcopal District to Senior Bishop Kenneth Monroe who is also Presiding Prelate of the Eastern North Carolina Episcopal District. Bishop Monroe was assigned as Presiding Prelate of South Atlantic in 2008 and served there for eight years. During his tenure there, he led them in the purchasing and subsequent development of the Kenneth Monroe Transformation Center. As Senior Bishop of the Church The Reverend Doctor Kenneth Monroe is Chairman of the Board of Trustees at Livingstone College and he is again Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Clinton College.

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“Excellence in Ministry”

17th Annual Little Rock Day Observance



Written by, **Mrs. Debra Chappelle-Polk**,
Zion Spotlight Editor, *The Star Of Zion*

The Spring Revival at Little Rock AME Zion Church took place at 7:00 PM from May 18 through May 20, 2022. The revivalist was Rev. Kelcy G.L. Steele, Pastor of Varick Memorial AME Zion Church in New Haven Connecticut.

Each evening the music was provided by members of the Little Rock Sanctuary Choir which as usual, prepared the congregation and visitors to an uplifted spiritual place each evening, Members of the ministerial staff read the scriptures and took us to the throne of grace in prayer.

“The Theology of Thorns” was the Subject of Rev. Steele’s sermon on Wednesday evening from 2nd Corinthians 12. The thorns in our lives can be a testimony of God’s saving grace.

Thursday brought Rev. Steele’s sermon on “Hope for the Outcasts” as he preached the story of the lepers from 2 Kings 7:3-11. We are to spread the Good News as we are all outcasts. From Genesis (Moses) to Revelation (John) the heroes of the Bible were all outcasts. God’s grace for us will be made manifest through our faithfulness even in bad situations.

On Friday, Rev. Steele concluded the revival with a sermon entitled “Risky Accommodations” about the ministry of Rahab from Joshua 2:1 among other scriptures. Rev. Steele left Little Rock with a renewed spirit, and we were revived again. All praise belongs to God!

At the Saturday Awards Luncheon Celebration, following the Liturgy, we were blessed by Mrs. Yorlette Anthony of the Adult Liturgical Dance Ministry who performed to the song, “Speak the Name”. “Little Rock Speaks” by Mrs. Mary Davis, Mr. Robert Foster and Ms. Sabrina Washington shared their hearts on “what Little Rock means to me”.

On Saturday, May 21, members, and friends participated in the First “Sunday Best Fashion Showcase” directed by Mrs. Dianna Davis and Ms. Shatia Lee at the Awards Luncheon. This event was a huge success and graciously depicted fashion at its finest. Model age groups covered children, youth, young adults, and adults. Special thanks to Hats by Wanda Boulware Hooper for a spectacular array of hats for the showcase.

Dr. Walker and Mr. Keith Powe, General Chairperson of the 17th Annual Little Rock Day presented the awards. The “Excellence in Ministry Award is given to a person who has gone beyond the call of duty, as well as received the most votes from the con-

gregation. Mr. Jesse Massey received the “Excellence in Ministry” Award. He has been a member of Little Rock for more than 40 years. He serves as an officer on the Board of Stewards, leader of the Parking and Security and Substance Abuse Ministries, a member of the Evangelism Board, Prison Ministry, Street Ministry, Men’s Boosters, and the Men’s Choir. Mr. Massey generously accepted the award and thanked everyone. Other nominees were: Mr. Dirk Clark, Ms. Shamiyah Crowder, Mrs. Atanya Graham, Ms. Sandra J. Lee and Mrs. Anika Robinson who received the “Ministry Recognition Award”. The Culinary Ministry under the Direction of Mrs. Mattie Klutz, prepared a wonderful “to go” meal.

Our 17th Annual Little Rock Day culminated on Sunday, May 22, 2022. God was glorified and we were thoroughly blessed by the praise dancing of our Adult Liturgical Dance Ministry. We were also blessed and honored to have The Right Rev. Kenneth Monroe, Presiding Prelate of the Eastern North Carolina Episcopal District and Senior Bishop of The A.M.E. Zion Church with us. Bishop Monroe was accompanied by his lovely wife and Missionary Supervisor, Mrs. Sheila Monroe. Bishop Monroe used Romans 10:1-3 with the Subject “Lost In Church” to preach a very powerful, thought-provoking message. He challenged us to stay connected to God and to one another; save people by loving them, because it is the grace of God that saves us. Also visiting with us were Rev. Dr. Wardell Henderson, Presiding Elder of the North Charlotte District and his lovely wife, Mrs. Myrtle Henderson. Presiding Elder Henderson donated \$1,000.00 for the support of Little Rock Day. Mr. Randy Freeman, Trustee Board Member, donated \$2,000.00 for the support of Little Rock Day.

Other visitors included Mr. Joseph King Davis, International President of the Connectional Lay Council, A.M.E. Zion Church, Presiding Elder Tony Davis and his lovely wife from the Raleigh District and Presiding Elder Ricky Frazier and his lovely wife from the Durham District. Also visiting were the family of Mr. Keith Powe, General Chairperson of the 17th Annual Little Rock Day, Rev. Grover Powe and Elder Leomi J. Powe of New Mill Branch Missionary Baptist Church, Latta, SC.

We praise God for our Little Rock Choir, led by our Minister of Music, Mr. Sid Oliver, as well as the Ministerial Staff, officers, audio Visual Ministry team, our Minister of Technology, Rev. Brandon J. Smith, our Parking and Security Ministry, the Administrative Staff, and the Little Rock Day Committee. God gets the glory!



SHAW TEMPLE A.M.E. ZION MISSION - PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE



Rev. Eldren Morrison,
Senior Pastor

*Written by, Mrs. Debra Chappelle-Polk,
Zion Spotlight Editor,
The Star Of Zion*

When you visit the Shaw Temple A.M.E. Zion Church website, you will find the following: Shaw Temple was founded in 1890 in the Sweet Auburn Avenue neighborhood in Atlanta Georgia. Shaw Temple has grown from a small urban church to a church that serves urban and suburban families in the Atlanta Metropolitan

area. Shaw Temple is a place where people from all walks of life can worship and connect to programs and ministries that foster growth in their spiritual journeys. Shaw Temple believes that whether you are a life-long member, just beginning your relationship with Christ, or are not certain about your walk, we welcome you!

In August 2016, the late Bishop Mildred B. Hines appointed Eldren Morrison as the pastor of the Shaw Temple A.M.E. Zion Church, Zion's flagship congregation in the South Atlantic Episcopal Area.

In 2021, Pastor Morrison led Shaw Temple in historically hosting both the 51st Quadrennial Session of the General Conference and the 12th Quadrennial Lay Convention. On August 3, 2021, Bishop Hines appointed Pastor Morrison as the Presiding Elder of the South Korea Annual Conference of the A.M.E. Zion Church, which is a part of the South Atlantic Episcopal District.

In an exclusive interview with The Star of Zion, Rev. Morrison shared his thoughts and plans for his church, his members and the community. "I don't know how to pastor without also being active and involved in the community in which the church sits. From my first pastorate at Warner Temple in Lancaster, SC to now at Shaw Temple, I have worked so that the city and community knows that our church is all about finding ways to serve the people."

Rev. Eldren Morrison is blessed to stand in the Shaw Temple pulpit and preach the Word of God with compassion, clarity and conviction. From the first day Rev. Morrison began his pastorate at Shaw Temple, he has been working tirelessly to ensure that Shaw Temple continues to grow and enlarge its impact in the Atlanta Metropolitan Area. Through partnerships, education and civic engagement, Shaw Temple is deepening its roots in Cobb and Fulton counties.

Like many churches, in 2019, Shaw Temple was forced to close its doors due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, services were held online and live-streamed. Fortunately, with the declining spread rates of the virus, Shaw Temple resumed in-person services in March 2022.

During the height of the pandemic, Shaw embarked on a Stop the Spread Campaign. Rev. Morrison said, "our Church sponsored a drive-up clinic in collaboration with Well Star Hospital System where persons in our community were able to receive the vaccines and boosters." The Wellness Ministry hosted regular workshops and town halls on the pandemic. Information was disseminated to members and commu-

nity residents regarding the virus, the safety and efficacy of the vaccines, as well addressing vaccine hesitancy issues.

Rev. Morrison said, "the pandemic stopped everything." Shaw Temple must now hit the "reset button" and rethink ministry in a post-pandemic setting. Thankfully, many of Shaw's members have returned and new people have joined as well. Rev. Morrison acknowledged there are some who are still reluctant to return for in-person service. "The challenge," he said, "is to make everyone feel safe and comfortable, and attend to the spiritual needs of our congregants in the pews and at home."

Approximately one year ago, Rev. Morrison became Chaplain for Cobb County Sheriff's Office, and has been working with Craig Owens, Cobb County's first African-American sheriff. Sheriff Owens has transformed the Office and has opened its doors to community programs that work toward bettering the lives of inmates and their families once released. "My idea was that in our community I wanted to start a dialogue. I want to stand in the gap being created between the cops and citizens and be a catalyst of reconciliation and understanding." As chaplain, Rev. Morrison serves the inmates of the detention center and is also available to officers and staff.

Shaw Temple has had a Prison Ministry for some time. Rev. John Stephens has worked pre-pandemic in this ministry. In addition to visiting local detention centers, the Prison Ministry sends cards and toiletry items to inmates. Because there were no in-person services due to the pandemic, Shaw Temple's worship services and bible studies were edited and electronically made available to the inmates.



In describing what the Prison Ministry does, Rev. Morrison said: "We primarily listen. It is through this "listening ministry" that a rapport is established, which often leads to prayer and spiritual guidance. Listening to the inmates [especially black and brown men and women] helps us to serve them while incarcerated, as well as provide services (i.e. housing, education, employment, etc.) upon their release. The church can offer something the penal system can't --- rehabilitation and hope."

Rev. Morrison opined, "our country has seen the COVID-19 pandemic but also a pandemic of violence, and one area of violence has unfortunately been with law enforcement officials unfairly hurting or taking the lives of citizens." In July 2021,

“INVITING ALL INTO A GROWING RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST.”

Shaw Temple in collaboration with the Cobb County Ministers Alliance, hosted an outdoor Community Day with Law Enforcement. The event was co-sponsored by Cobb Police Department and Sheriff’s Office. After almost two years of socially distancing, families in the community came together, “had a great time fellowshiping and interacting with law enforcement.” The Shaw Temple Men’s Ministry also organized workshops and seminars with law enforcement.



Shaw Temple has close to 1500 members. The church that started in downtown Atlanta is presently located in the suburbs of Atlanta (Smyrna, GA), and is about 10 minutes from the Braves Baseball Stadium. It is an intergenerational congregation comprised of singles, couples and families, with a good sampling from each age demographic. Shaw Temple in Rev. Morrison’s words is “a family oriented church.” Attire is dressy to casual. Summer attire is usually laid back and casual. There’s Bible Study each Wednesday and Sunday School meets virtually on Sunday’s at 9:30a.m. Sunday worship services are at 8:00 and 11:00 a.m., in-person, YouTube, Facebook live, and through the church website. “Shaw Academy”, a quality-rated day care center, is located on-site.



Notable members have been the late Bishop and Mrs. Louis Hunter, Sr., Bishop and Mrs. George D. Crenshaw, Bishop and Mrs. Warren Mathew Brown, the late Bishop Clarence Carr and Mrs. Carr. Everyone from bishops, lawyers, doctors, law enforcement, educators and even one or two “unauthorized local street pharmacists” consider Shaw Temple to be their church home. “Our church,” Rev. Morrison said, “reflects the community we are a part of – good and bad. We are trying to be what God would have each of us to be.”



Shaw Temple has developed a four step spiritual development process as a reflection of Jesus’ model of the Christian life. The four parts are Worship, Work, Witness and Wonders. “We believe that healthy things grow and growing things change.”

Rev. Morrison is intentional about the worship experience at Shaw: “Our worship services are a great blend of traditional Methodist and contemporary Christian worship. We are passionate about Jesus! We want everyone to know Him. We use all the gifts God has given us to worship Him – music, visual arts, creative liturgy and other forms.” Rev. Morrison stated proudly, “We are blessed with a gifted ministerial staff. We are a church that is multi-generations and multi-gifted. Those generations and gifts are present in our ministerial staff.”



Rev. Morrison, is a lifelong Zionite and honors the Zion Methodist history, while embracing the new things that God is doing in His people presently to grow us in closer relationship to Him. To that end, Shaw Temple offers a mixture of traditional and contemporary elements in worship. “We are dedicated to reaching multiple generations through worship.”

BISHOP ERIC LEAKE LEADS LEAVING



Written by, **Mrs. Debra Chappelle-Polk**,
Zion Spotlight Editor, *The Star Of Zion*

To leave no stone unturned is to make every possible effort, use every possible option, and exhaust every available resource to achieve the work that one has been commissioned to do—doing it meticulously, methodically, and without hesitation. We have found this to be the praxis of the man of God, the Right Reverend Eric L. Leake, elected the 107th Bishop in the line of succession of the A.M.E. Zion Church, and commissioned to serve as the Presiding Prelate of the Southwestern Delta Episcopal (SWD) District, which includes the South Mississippi Conference (SMC). In a pre-Conference virtual gathering, Bishop Leake shared his plan to use one of his Checkup Meetings to execute an evangelistic effort that would involve actually going out into the community and knocking on doors. Working with the Presiding Elders, Dr. Floyd E. Chambers (Canton District), Dr. Moses E. Thompson (Jackson-Panola District), and the Conference Director of Evangelism, Dr. Belinda Johnson, as well as other SMC leadership, Bishop Leake along with our Missionary Supervisor Mrs. Jean McMurray-Leake, brought his plan to

fruition. On April 23, 2022, at the 2nd Bishop Checkup Meeting for the SMC, all in attendance had the rare opportunity to witness and participate in such an anomaly, a “new thing” at the Conference level.

The Meeting was hosted by Lee’s Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church where Presiding Elder Dr. Thompson serves as the pastor, and held on the grounds of Greater Sims A.M.E. Zion Church where Rev. Bonnie Travis, the SWD Episcopal District Prayer Coordinator, is the pastor. Under a beautiful blue, cloudless sky, tents could be seen from a distance where vaccinations against the COVID-19 virus, masks and hand sanitizer, voter registration, and refreshments, were offered. The parking lot, filled with chairs, offered seating; however, many mask-clad faces mingled, happily greeting each other. Persons from churches in both the Canton District and the Jackson-Panola District were in attendance, along with visitors, including the Rev. Dr. Eleazar Merriweather, Executive Director, Church Growth and Development of The A.M.E. Zion Church and his wife, Rev. Wanda Merriweather, as well as leadership dignitaries from the Louisiana



NO STONE UNTURNED IN SOUTH MS



Conference, the Arkansas Conference, and the West Tennessee-Mississippi Conference.

Following the enthusiastic, Spirit-filled greetings given by the Bishop and the host pastor, Dr. Thompson, Rev. Travis, along with, a team of prayer warriors saturated the atmosphere, and bombarded the throne of grace with prevailing prayers and supplications. Additionally, recording artist, Ms. Cynthia Allen, guest soloist, touched the souls of the attendees with a spiritually uplifting gospel song. At an appointed time, the Bishop designated pastors to serve as team leaders, and encouraged those who were physically able, to join a team and go door to door in the surrounding neighborhood. Instructions for making contact with residents were given, and teams, one of which was led by Bishop Leake, went out offering prayer for any who would desire it, and gospel tracts.

Upon returning, attendees were fired up by Dr. Johnson along with District Evangelism Coordinators, Rev. Henry Garrett

(Jackson-Panola District), and Rev. Acquanette Johnson (Canton District), each igniting the congregants with a powerful meditation. Next, fulfilling the mandate to “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature”, the spiritually gifted Dr. Merriweather set hearts ablaze with a provocative and soul-stirring message. Bishop Leake, the last of the preaching *pente*, under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, delivered an explosive *rhema* from on high. The memorable event was brought to a close by the Bishop who gave an Invitation to Christian Discipleship, and an altar call, followed by a benediction.

“I will feed my flock, and I will let them lie down to rest’, says the Lord God. ‘I will seek the lost, bring back the scattered, bandage the crippled, and strengthen the weak and sick; . . .’” **Ezekiel 34:15-16a**, (Amplified Bible) By God’s grace and their leadership, Bishop Leake and Missionary Supervisor McMurray-Leake are determined to see that God’s transformative will is done in South MS by leaving no stone unturned.

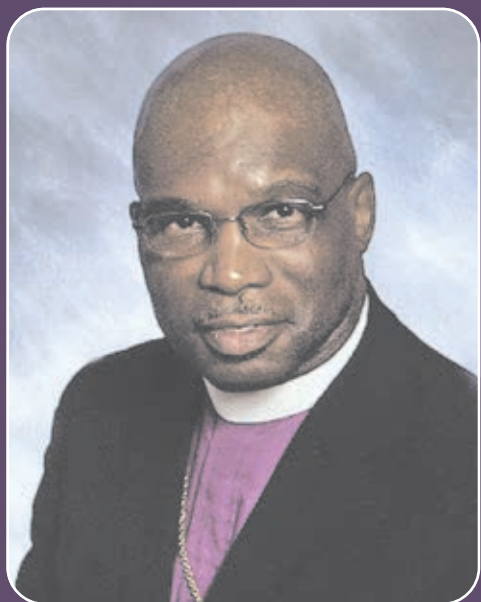




Official Statement

*from Bishop Darryl B. Starnes, Sr.,
the President of the Board of Bishops*

The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church continues to mourn the passing of Bishop Mildred Bonnie Hines, the Presiding Prelate of the South Atlantic Episcopal District and the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of Clinton College.



The Board of Bishops has appointed Bishop Kenneth Monroe, our Senior Bishop, who is the former Presiding Prelate of the Episcopal District and the former Chairman of the Trustee Board, to supervise both of these entities with the assistance of other bishops, until the 2024 General Conference.

The Board of Bishops of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

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DONE THIS THE 6TH DAY OF JUNE, 2022

Wilmington District Lay Council Celebrates 2022 Lay Persons of the Year

Before an audience of over 100 Zionites of the Wilmington District, The Wilmington District Lay Council held its annual Lay Person of the Year Celebration! On Sunday, May 29, 2022, at the Brunswick Senior Resource Center, Supply, NC. 1st Vice President Reginald Ballard presided over the celebration. The scripture was given in three parts by Reginald Ballard asking how Shall we strengthen our fellowship? Mary Cheek of Johnson Chapel, Leland answered with Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; Sonja Green of Warner Temple, Wilmington, NC answered with Hebrews 10:24-25 and Celeste Chadwick of Price cathedral answered with Colossians 3:16. A recording of the Lay Council hymn, Guide Me O thou Great Jehovah, was provided by Brother Darryl Dyson of Johnson Chapel, Leland, NC that directed us to the Throne of Grace led by Bro. Ricky Henderson of Blackwell Chapel, Leland, NC.

Following a delicious meal, President William Evans introduced the speaker, Brother George Newkirk of Zion Chapel, Wilmington, NC. Brother George Newkirk elaborated on the topic The Freedom Church: Strengthening Our Fellowship using the scriptures. He began by building on the definition of fellowship, 'to share in common'. As fellowship is an integral part of our faith as it 1. Paints a picture of who God is; 2. It is a source of strength; and 3. It enhances encouragement of one another. To alienate oneself from the fellowship is to restrict the life-giving blood flow of the body of Christ thus regressing down a path that leads away from God to destruction.

Each of the 22 churches of the Wilmington District submitted the name of their local Lay Person of the Year. From this cadre of candidates, the Lay Person of the Year representing the district was chosen. The names submitted were: Lavonia Lewis of St. Paul, Bolton, NC; Gloria Johnson of St. Mark, Whiteville, NC; Fleta Brooks of Walters Chapel, Bolton, NC; Mack Freeman of Evergreen, Delco, NC; Tony Robinson of Mt. Hebron, Hallsboro, NC; Daphne Smith of Lees Chapel, Bolton, NC; Larry Godwin of Mt. Zion, Lake Waccamaw, NC; Melinda Neil of Price Cathedral, Wilmington, NC; Sheri Shaw of St. Luke, Wilmington, NC; Pearl McQueen of St. Phillip, Wilmington, NC; Alan Santiago of Warner Temple Wilmington, NC; Cynthia Bryant of Summerville, Leland, NC; Johnsie Davis, St. Andrew, Wilmington, NC; Alton Baldwin of Johnson Chapel, Leland, NC; DeShondra Smith of Browns Chapel, Southport, NC; Beverly Coleman of St. James, Southport, NC; Makyah McNeil of Moores Chapel, Leland, NC; Leonora Hall of Bowen Chapel, Wilmington, NC; Faye Hankins of Christian Chapel, Winnabow, NC; James Lee Harrison of St. James, Leland, NC; Steve Washington of Blackwell Chapel, Leland, NC. The Wilmington District Lay Person of the Year is chosen based on the content of their application form by a committee independent of the AME Zion Church. The 2022 District Lay Person of the Year is Lavonia Lewis of St. Paul AME Zion Church, Bolton, NC.

The celebration is motivational and is designed to show ap-



preciation of the work one has done to get others to come with us to Christ.

Keeper of the Flame Awards are given by the President of the Wilmington District Lay Council to those persons who have shown dedication to the purpose of the lay council in word and deed. The 2022 awardees are Brother George Newkirk of Zion Chapel AME Zion Church, Wilmington, NC and Sister Pamela Evans of St. Luke AME Zion Church, Wilmington, NC.

Brother Hank Dobson, Regional Director of the Eastern North Carolina Episcopal District Lay Council was our guest. He told the audience how good it was to see both elements of the church, laity and clergy, in celebration of the achievements that make us all who we profess to be. He also noted the presence of youth at an occasion that promotes Christ through the auspices of the AME Zion Church. A sign that there is leadership training is in progress.

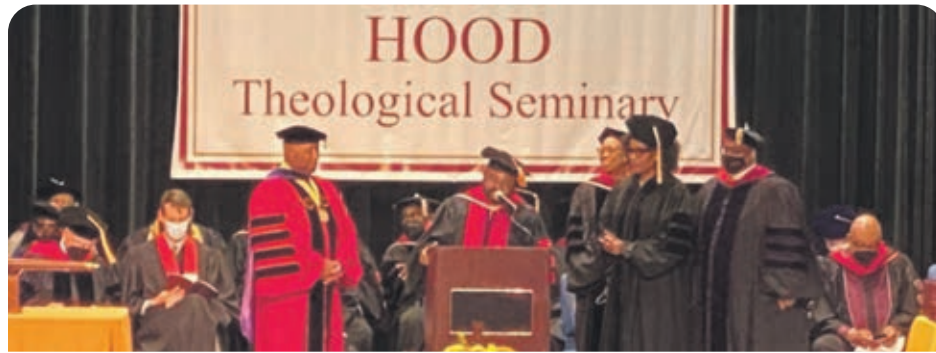
The celebration concluded with acknowledgements from our Presiding Elder, Reverend Alexander Jones. Reverend Jones expressed the joy of being able to once again assemble in person to celebrate an occasion that promotes the future of the church while we glorify God in season and out of season.

“It is a witness to those who will come after us and to those who are in the crowd watching us that God is still in control and that He has and will do just what He said He would do. We lost some during the pandemic, but we were left to keep keeping on; The pandemic did not stop us from our spiritual assignments, it taught us some things; it forced some to view times and situation from a new perspective; it may have even forced some from a position of too much comfort. Now we are ready to resume our places in our churches better equipped with new tools and a clearer defined vision than we had before the pandemic.”

Sister Cynthia Johnson of St. Luke dismissed the celebration with a prayer for peace and well-being of mind, body and spirit then led the audience in the Lay Council closing prayer.

Hood Theological Seminary Celebrates its Twenty First Commencement

Hood Theological Seminary celebrated its twenty first commencement on Saturday, May 21, 2022 at Varick Auditorium on the campus of Livingstone College. Family and friends gathered to support the 2022 graduating class of Hood Theological Seminary. The day was met with excitement, support, and enthusiasm for the graduates' futures. Reverends Lara Musser Gritter and Josh Musser Gritter, Co-Senior Pastors of First Presbyterian Church of Salisbury, North Carolina were the 2022 Commencement Speakers.



In their address, Reverends Lara Musser Gritter and Josh Musser Gritter discussed the joys, triumphs, hardships, and difficulties ministry offers. They stated that "...with God's help, the graduates completed their degrees during this time of uncertainty..." As Rev. Lara Musser Gritter stated "Well done good and faithful servants." She also stated that "You will find God's power when you are humble, you will find God's power when you are open, and you will find God's power when you are weak...Our final charge to you is this, love the Lord your God, with all your heart, mind, and strength. Make your love of God be like an oak tree, planted by streams of water. May its roots grasp deeply into the earth to ground you, and may its branches move out thickly and widely to shade you...You

are the imperfect instrument that God is delighted to work through." Rev. Josh Musser Gritter also stated "Show the love of Jesus to all people...Preach the word of God in season and out. Teach faithfully watching over your people. Guide them in faith and instruction. Nourish them in wisdom, strengthen them to glorify God. Celebrate their encounters with God, as if they were your own." Rev Lara Musser Gritter stated: "Your calling for all its difficulty, let it be a source of joy. Whatever the future holds, remember that God is your beginning and your end. God will show up."

The Doctor of Humane Letters was awarded to Reverend Dr. Robert Milton Lewis, Carla Maxwell Ray, and Gregory M. Alcorn. The highlight of the graduation service was the conferring of six Doctor of Ministry degrees and fifteen Master of Divinity degrees.

Hood Theological Seminary is a graduate and professional school sponsored by The A.M.E. Zion Church and approved by the University Senate of The United Methodist Church. Its student body, faculty and staff currently comprise persons from many different denominations. Hood's mission is to prepare women and men for bold and creative leadership for the Christian church for a diverse world.

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Written by Dr. Da'Tarvia Parrish

The One Hundred Fortieth Annual Commencement for Livingstone College convened many on Saturday, May 14, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. in Bishop James Varick Auditorium. The 105 members of the graduating Class of 2022, were met with the loving support of family and friends, led by the college's administration and Board of Trustees. All gathered were exposed to a spirit-led ceremony as Student Government Association President and Class Valedictorian, Justin E. Wade, set the atmosphere for what soon became a spiritual revival. Guest speaker and Honorary degree recipient Malik Yoba said, "This is the most lit graduation I've ever attended," while too giving a spiritual testimony of God's grace and mercy regarding a quadruple heart bypass surgery he underwent in 2021. The college's retiring president, Dr. Jimmy R. Jenkins, Sr., stated, "This is the type of atmosphere we want to send our students out into."

As the college received much recognition because of its soul-stirring graduation, the foundation of Livingstone College and principles of its mission were undergirded in the One Hundred Thirty-Eighth Baccalaureate Service. A tradition many institutions have eliminated, Livingstone College has remained steadfast in this spiritual service that occurs the night before the official graduation ceremony. In Bishop James Varick Auditorium, attendees experienced a formal spiritual platform that included hymns, Old and New Testament scriptures, choral selections, and a sermon, delivered by Bishop Darryl B. Starnes, Sr., the presiding prelate of the Piedmont Episcopal District of the AME Zion Church, and Vice Chair for Livingstone College's Board of Trustees.

Following the Old Testament reading of Psalm 1 by Rev. Al



Silver Graduates Shine

take an honest look at where we are headed." Reaffirming the foundation of the institution, the invitation to a spiritual rebirth was extended as the spirit of the Lord filled the atmosphere that overflowed the following day into something quite grand.

Celebrating as a Class of 1972 Golden graduate, Rev. Dr. Andrew Smoke stated, "I'm blessed to be with my class fifty years after graduation, but most of all, my soul is happy to see the AME Zion Church standing firm in its commitment to Livingstone College."

Senior Bishop Kenneth Monroe stated to graduates, "Deposits have been made and it's always important that each of us before we exit this world to make a deposit." Moved by the words of Bishop Monroe, alumna Carmen Harper who served as a class agent for the Class of 1997, celebrating their silver anniversary stated, "Bishop Monroe mentioning that HBCUs have a special place in the world and the necessity of depositing our time and talents resonated with me, and simply affirmed my purpose for engaging. As a silver graduate, I was able to reconnect not only with friends and classmates, but my classmates and I were able to collectively connect with our institution for a more impactful deposit."

C. Hamilton, the New Testament reading of Matthew 7:13-14 by Bishop Eric Leake, Prayer by Bishop Michael Frencher, Sr., and a choral selection of "Holy Is Thy Name," rendered by Livingstone's Gospel and Concert Choirs, Bishop Starnes challenged listeners as they set sail for new horizons, to examine their journey and "Take the Road Less Traveled."

He urged, "Get off the wrong road and get on the right one," as Christ has stated, one is broad and one is narrow. The audience was challenged to: "Take an honest look at who we are following; take an honest look at what we are like, and

Tribute to Rev. Dr. Dale P. Andrews

“Why is it so difficult for us as ministers, to acknowledge significance and distinction amongst ourselves as Black Clergy?”



We seem to have a blind spot in our ecclesiastical circles that allows us to remain unaware or unable to see the exceptional in those close to us.

The Rev. Dr. Dale P. Andrews, on June 23, 2017, at the young age of 55 years passed away. He had been battling cancer for a number of years. He was the distinguished professor of homiletics, social justice and practical theology at Vanderbilt University Divinity School and Graduate Department of Religion. He previously, served on the faculty of Boston University’s School of Theology as the Martin Luther King Jr. Professor of Homiletics and Pastoral Theology and at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary as the Frank H. Caldwell Associate Professor of Homiletics and Pastoral Theology. His outstanding scholarship made him the recipient of numerous fellowships and awards.

The most telling legacy Rev. Dr. Andrews has left the Black Church inclusive of the AME Zion Church, is his contributions to the relationship between pastoral care and prophetic care.

Could it be that there is room here for a creative collaboration

between Vanderbilt University, Livingstone College, and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church?

In an age where the discussions in coffee shops, street corners, conglomerates, and state legislatures pertain to ‘Black Lives Matters’ should we not accept the late professor’s gift to us?

This could certainly inject a contemporary agenda of great relevance to our churches, communities, ministers, elders, deacons, millennials and youths. It may even start a trend to honour those whom God has blessed us with.

1. *Practical Theology for Black Churches: Bridging Black Theology and African American Folk Religion* (2002)

2. *Preaching Prophetic Care: Building Bridges to Justice, Essays in Honor of Dale P. Andrews*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Papers. Editors :Phillis-Isabella Sheppard, Dawn Ottoni-Wilhelm, Ronald J. Allen.

Written by, Rev. Ronald A. Nathan, World Politics Editor, The Star Of Zion

Continued from front page... & continues on pg 22

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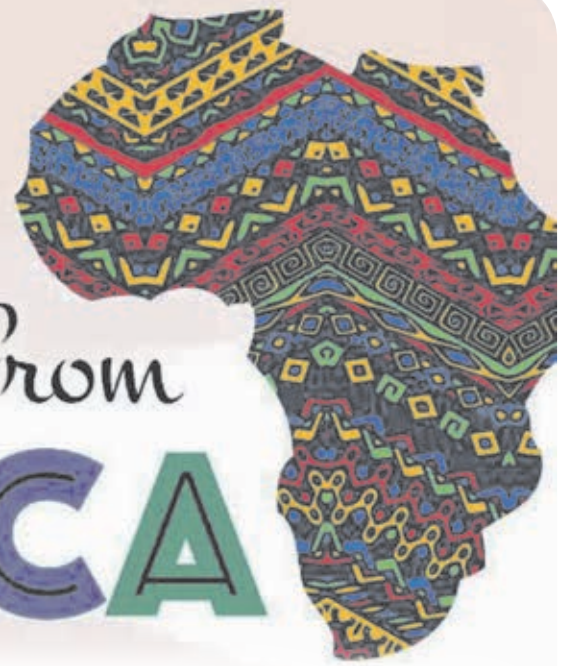
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The Africa We want

Shalom from
AFRICA



Written by, **Rev. Ronald A. Nathan,**
World Politics Editor, The Star Of Zion

What would 'Shalom' look like for Africa's 1.4 billion people who live on less than US\$2 a day? The African Christian church, is uniquely placed to make sure that Africa's focus on first world developmental ambitions deliver for the poor, be they farmers or slum dwellers.

'The Africa We Want', the African Union's most comprehensive and ambitious visionary statement since the prophesy of Psalms 68:31, 'Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God' has to be located and evaluated by its masses not its elites.

This writer is of the opinion that the African Christian Church should use the North-East African concept of 'Shalom'. Shalom offers a constructive framework for completeness, wholeness, health, peace, welfare, safety and soundness. It provides for tranquillity, prosperity, harmony and the absence of

agitation or discord.

This framework is necessary in light of the fact that sixty percent (60%) of Africa's population is under the age of 25, and in forty, (40) African countries, over 50% the population is under the age of 20.

How these challenges are being addressed would be critical for the African continent. Africa is now home to 650 million Christians, the largest population of Christians in the world for the first time ever.

Shalom inspired church work therefore, has the capacity to reduce the numbers of youths, that run into the arms of militant extremists groups or that cross the Sahara desert for the Mediterranean Sea. The African Christian Church need to train its leaders to raise up a generation of young people who will be productive citizens with strong Christian values.

Facing Down Violence in Nigeria

Written by, **Rev. Ronald A. Nathan,**
World Politics Editor, The Star Of Zion

There was international alarm as the news broke on various media platforms that the Prelate of the Methodist Church of Nigeria, Rev. Samuel Kanu Uche was kidnapped in Abia State, Nigeria on Sunday 29 May 2022. Two days later, the Bishop and his associates were released after having paid a ransom of US\$240,000 equivalent to 100 million naira, the Nigerian currency.

One could easily conclude that violent perpetrators had taken over Africa's most populous nation of 217 million. We are reminded however, by the Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, to be aware of the danger of a single story. She encourages us wisely, to consider that our lives are made up of many overlapping stories.

For example, the former capital, Lagos is now one of the world's fastest-growing megacities, with real estate estimated to cost up to US\$400 a square feet. Recently, Abuja, the federal capital, saw the commissioning of its own World Trade Centre. The WTC is a non-profit organization that assists Nigerian businesses with all aspects of international trade, promoting and facilitating investment and assisting foreign businesses in being matched with suitable local counterparts.

All of this in the same nation where the World Bank projects that 95.1 million persons will be counted amongst the poor this year. This level of inequality is one of the contributing factors to a growing number of young Nigerians seeing kidnapping as a legitimate career path.

Nigeria's 100 million Christians, including, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church's Eastern West Africa District led by Bishop Uduak Effiong are having to follow the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ in the face of daily violence.

What is quite clear is that Christians of all persuasions in

Nigeria are compelled to engage in peace-making if this major African powerhouse is to hold together. It must also be noted that in facing the violence of our times we, like Jesus Christ in Matthew 8 may not get any thanks from the residents but be asked to leave town by commercial interests.



Blacks and the U.S. HealthSCARE System: HOW DO WE SURVIVE?



Written by,
Mr. Daman De Leon,
Health and Wellness
Editor, *The Star Of Zion*

I remember breaking four bones in my right foot playing football in middle school when I was thirteen years old. The Doctor who tended to my injury (Carlisle...if I'm permitted to reveal his name) was a good ole' hick from Lenoir County North Carolina. I recall Dr. Carlisle displaying a casual

persona regarding my injury, although I was in excruciating pain. He administered a painkiller and left my mom and I waiting while he tended to another matter that "required his assistance". I remember being angry at the world, and when he FINALLY addressed my injury it appeared to be a slight infection where the injury was. Thankfully it was minor.

I remember my mother being very upset at the way my issue was handled. Several years later while in college a good acquaintance of mine suffered a severe spinal injury during a preseason football game. The EMTs were slow in responding, and while in the care of the medics he began to hemorrhage. To this day he remains paralyzed from the waist down. Now are the doctors, healthcare physicians, and medical staff to blame ENTIRELY for what happened to me and then years later my friend? Well...BLAME is not a term I personally would use for it. I prefer PARTIAL ACCOUNTABILITY. Which is justifiably debatable.

The disparaging numbers of quality medical service for African Americans have become increasingly alarming. Several years ago, tennis star **Serena Williams** shared a similar story of dismissal by hospital staff where she said she "almost died," suspecting blood clots in her lungs after the birth of her daughter, Olympia. Williams nearly became part of the statistic that Black women are three to four times more likely to die of pregnancy or delivery complications than white women in the United States. Maternal Mortality is only one facet of a larger issue around Black people receiving quality healthcare in the U.S. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, centuries of racism has had a "profound and negative impact on communities of color," leading to vast inequities across a range of social and economic factors and significant risk for poor health outcomes. "Systemic racism, inherent biases, and healthcare disparities create a bleak situation for Black people," says Lisa Mallory, executive director of the *National Association of Health Services Executives (NAHSE)*

"Receiving equitable medical care for us can be an uphill battle, no matter who you are or where you come from."

Consider the story of Dr. Susan Moore — a Black medical doctor who made national headlines in 2020 after her Facebook video went viral, alleging racial bias while admitted

to Indiana University Health North Hospital in Indianapolis. Dr. Moore, who was being treated for COVID-19, was also experiencing severe neck pain. In her video, she described how her doctor ignored her concerns and made her "feel like a drug addict" after requesting pain medicine. Sadly, just three weeks after being admitted to the hospital, Dr. Moore passed away from COVID-19.

Dr. Moore's experience is no surprise, given what we know. Research tells us that Black Americans are 34% less likely than white Americans to be prescribed opioids for backaches, abdominal pain, and migraines. In 2016, a scientific journal published research stating that half of medical students and residents believe in myths that Black people having thicker skin or less sensitive nerve endings than white people — another factor contributing to racial disparities in pain assessment and treatment. Mallory asserts, "Although we as Black people continue to face deep challenges receiving the quality care we deserve, we do have the power to take charge of our medical experiences and wellness."

The first thing you can do before any appointment is to take notes and make sure you and your doctor discuss what's on your mind. Have your questions ready, and make sure you understand what you're being told. According to Dr. Leana Wen, author of *When Doctors don't listen: How to avoid Misdiagnoses and other Unnecessary Tests*, says another way to improve communication with your doctor is through storytelling. Also, consider taking a friend, family member, or person that can join in advocating for you. Sometimes we get caught up in emotions or a diagnosis, and everything else is foggy.

Wen explains that doctors typically end up asking about symptoms, which leads to patients responding to yes-no questions in place of telling their stories. For example, instead of just saying your stomach hurts, tell the story of when it started, if it's been painful before, what you were doing when you first felt it, how it felt and how often you feel the pain. Wen says that over 80% of diagnoses can be made just by listening, and if patients are allowed to tell their stories, it can help them feel heard.

"It's critical that Black people advocate for themselves and to speak up and be assertive when necessary to get the medical care they need," says Mallory.

"You don't have to settle. Do what you can to find medical providers you can trust, who make you feel comfortable and will listen to you. This is why NAHSE promotes greater participation of minority groups in the health field. Representation matters."

References

What Your Doctor Won't Disclose. (n.d.). Retrieved 6 15, 2022, from http://www.ted.com/talks/leana_wen_what_your_doctor_won_t_disclose

Steps Black Patients can take to survive the U.S. Healthcare System
Misty Starks <https://aawellnessproject.org/2022/06/13>

JUST A LITTLE

Reminder

Encouragement for Teens: Presence Over Doubt

“Moses answered God, ‘But why me? What makes you think that I could ever go to Pharaoh and lead the children of Israel out of Egypt?’ ‘I’ll be with you,’ God said.”
Exodus 3:11-12a (MSG)

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

Try This!

Trusting God is not as easy as it sounds. Sometimes we become fearful based on what we see or do not see. How well can you trust God when you only can hear Him or read His Word.

- Close your eyes and try to maneuver through your house or room without any direction? How easy is it?
- Now try to do the same thing with the guidance of a peer or friend? How was your experience this time?

By hearing a voice navigate you through your moments of uncertainty, were you able to feel reassured? God’s presence reassures in moments of doubt when answering the call. We may never know why He calls us - but rest assured He is there with us.

Educate

Rosa Parks. Nelson Mandela. Queen Esther. Martin Luther King, Jr. Jesus Christ. These are only a few examples of noted individuals who so fiercely stood up for what they believed in, in a time which it was unpopular to do so. While uniquely different, each of these individuals are linked by a common thread - God. God was with them every step of the way, even when they doubted themselves. We often must choose to stand up for what we know is right in the face of people and situations who may not respect or believe us, and we cannot understand why we are chosen to lead in such a manner. It is normal for us to be hesitant, to question ourselves and those who sent us, and to wonder whether or not the power to succeed lies within us. When the history books close, people will not remember that you were afraid - they will instead remember that God was with you and you

overcame.

Moses, the Israelite who grew up in Pharaoh’s palace, is one of the most renowned characters in all of the Bible. He is known for breaking the Israelites out of the bondage of the Egyptians, receiving the Ten Commandments directly from God on Mt. Horeb, and leading the people of Israel through the wilderness, to name a few things. Here, we find Moses in the third chapter of Exodus experiencing the call of God like no other. God tells Moses that he hears the prayers of the Israelites, and he will deliver them out of the hands of the Egyptians. In order to do this, however, he plans to use Moses. Moses is shocked and wonders why God believes that he is capable of such a task. God simply tells Moses that He will be with him. The call of Moses reminds us that:

1. God confirms our call in spite of our doubts.
2. There is power in God’s presence.
3. God will never call you where He is not willing to go before you.

How powerful is the simple presence of God? Like Moses, we may not know, see, or understand just why God believes that we are capable of carrying out an assignment, yet His simple promise to always be with us provides strength for the journey that we are on. We too, are called to fight for the oppressed, the downtrodden, and the poor. Just when we think that we are unable to complete the job and cannot understand why God would choose us, the still, sweet promise of God rings loud and clear to us, “I’ll be with you.”

Work It Out

The power of presence is one of the most rewarding and revitalizing elements of community. To be provided with the assurance that someone cares is essential to all those who encounter this life. This week, take a moment to share in the ministry of presence with someone.

Poor People's Campaign



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

On June 18, 2022, people of every race, nationality, and creed descended upon the United States capital of the District of Columbia in order to take part in the annual Poor People's and Low Wage Workers' Assembly and Moral March on Washington to the Polls. Individuals and groups rallied together in protest of: poverty, racism, lack of healthcare access, wrongful imprisonment, gun violence, women's reproductive rights, and voter suppression, among many other causes. Those present could be seen for blocks on end carrying signs stating, "Black Lives Matter," "Forward Together! Not One Step Back!" and "When We Lift from the Bottom, Everybody Rises." As speakers talked on the stage and individuals shared their stories, it was clear that most who were present had been either deeply affected or knew someone who had been affected by one of the aforementioned issues. Due to the collective struggle, speakers from the march impressed the importance of voting in November to those in attendance in order to shake the table through who constituents allow to be elected into office.

This movement, first termed solely "The Poor People's Campaign," was started in 1968 by the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther

King, Jr., Ralph Abernathy, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and several others who worked alongside them. The initial aim of this campaign was to call attention to a realigning of priority in America or a "revolution of values." This involved connecting impoverished communities across the country and requiring both the United States Congress and the federal executive branch to take action toward and be intentional about increasing jobs, raising wages, and ensuring nondiscriminatory housing. Each of these were actions that – if taken – would better the predicament of the working poor. At the time, the Poor People's Campaign was not immediately able to secure the crucial antipoverty legislation that it so desired. Even still, the foundation that it laid was significant for the work to be carried out for years down the line.

Fifty-four years later, the movement birthed out of employment and housing issues for the economically disadvantaged is still going strong and has increased in both number and initiative. Although the insistence and effort to shine a light on injustices associated with the poor and disenfranchised grows heavier by the day, we still have a long way to go. The Rev. William Barber, co-chair of the Poor People's Campaign stated, "As long as there are 140 million poor and low-income people in this country, and we know it doesn't have to be this way, we won't be silent anymore."



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When Is Enough ENOUGH?

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

I am tired, upset, numb, and angry...definitely angry. I am processing. Is there a particular way that one should feel after experiencing senseless tragedy coupled with heartache time and time again? As I pen these words, I am sitting in my living room at 6:33am on the 26th of May both soaking in the beginning of a new day and seemingly cemented in the never-ending night associated with the terrors which occurred at the Tops Friendly Markets store in Buffalo, New York on May 14th and at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas on May 24th. I cannot help but wonder: *When is enough enough?*

Legislators have talked and argued over the practicality or perceived lack thereof regarding gun control laws in the wake of every tragedy involving firearms. “A complete and total ban on assault weapons could prevent mass shootings.” “It would be unconstitutional to infringe upon the individual right to freely bear arms.” “Raising the minimum age to buy rifles and shot guns should be considered.” “Red-flag laws could be implemented across the board in order to mitigate risk.” “No proposed laws could have kept these shootings from happening.” “Have we considered universal background checks?” We have somewhat of an understanding as a country that something does indeed need to be done, yet the disagreement about what that something is has led to nothing changing quick enough to prevent each next act of mass murder. *When is enough enough?*

By the time that this think piece goes to print, we will be in the thick of summer – July. Kids will be out of school and living free. People will be on vacation, headed to family reunions, and Zionites will be preparing to entertain a host of conferences, trainings, and workshops as we do around this time of the year.

By the time you read this article, we will have reached seven years since the Emanuel 9 lost their lives in sacred space during Bible Study. If I can base the future off of the past, life in the United States of America will for all intents and purposes have returned to normal: news stations will have moved forward with the hot topics of the week, discussion will still be taking place regarding how outrageous gas prices are getting, and our social media newsfeeds will have ceased to demand action that produces change. Life will seemingly have returned to normal. Except...normal no longer exists. *Now* there is a hole left by the loss of adults murdered in cold blood when trying to buy groceries on a Saturday. *Now* there are 19 beautiful children slain in what should have been one of the safest places in the world. *Now* there are two teachers – superheros, if you will - who did not make it home to their families after going to what they could have only assumed was a typical day of work. *When is enough enough?*

Although this piece started with a snapshot of my personal perspective, now it is time to turn the lens upon us all. I know that I am not alone in my sentiments. Perhaps you too are tired, upset, numb, and even angry. Are we collectively, however, fed up to the point of pressing change until it has no choice but to come? Will we continue to speak out on the problem in horror and disbelief when tragedy strikes without continually applying pressure in the off-season? Have we become so desensitized to trouble that it does not faze us enough to move? Are we comfortable with being bystanders when we could continually do something to effect change? Laurie Buchanan coined the phrase, “Whatever you are not changing, you are choosing.” *When is enough enough?*



My Godmother-Bishop Mildred B. Hines (98th)

By Rev. Ryan Godfrey

As many of you know, La'Toya, Laila, Leilani and I loved and admired Bishop Hines so very much. It was my honor to be the godson of such an exceptional woman-the First Female Bishop in The A.M.E. Zion Church and I was blessed enough to call her "Mom." I loved when she would introduce me when preaching in an Annual Conference, she'd say these words, "I am pleased to call you my godson. I am not ashamed to call you that. I couldn't love you anymore if I had given birth to you myself." I am thankful for her role in my life and my ministry, for without which, none of it would have nearly been as successful as it was without her. Over the past twenty-years, Bishop Hines has had the privilege of nurturing me. She laid her hands on me and ordained me an Elder. She appointed me to some of the greatest churches, often times reminding me "to guard your character with your life," as well as, quoting Proverbs 3:6 "in all your ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." She was a great inspiration to others that she shared her life with so willingly, the joy that she brought to so many and my family will never end and one day we will be together again!

In our legal system, we have something entitled, "Probable Cause" and sometimes in life, God gives us His decisions and we wrestle with Probable Cause. Perhaps, many of us sat May 31, 2022 and viewed her as godmother, sister, Bishop and friend, the one who has nurtured and been a provider low these many years, maybe the thought of Probable Cause skimmed across the recesses of our minds. We are now left wrestling with making decisions, moving forward, and doing life without her in the flesh and once again

wrestling with Probable Cause. However, Probable Cause can only be dismissed in unwavering evidence. I am grateful to God that in the middle of and midst of my Probable Causes, I have unwavering evidence that she transitioned on the front line with the one she signed up to serve for the rest of her life. She always thought everything was more special than it was, that's probably why my wife, daughters and I thought we were incredibly special because she made us feel that we mattered no matter what the situation. I cannot thank God enough for her unconditional love. My heart is shattered and I am allowing God to put the pieces back how he chooses to do so.

I was watching the ID channel the other day and someone was missing. The investigators were searching and looking for any evidence to place a suspect at the scene. The investigators were looking for a trace of blood to prove the suspect had been there. You see, only a tiny trace of blood can only be detected by a black light with a solution called luminol. They were looking for some evidence, any evidence to place someone at the scene. They were looking for a microfiber of hair, a hair as small as an eyelash could be the only evidence they needed to place a suspect at the scene. They were looking for a fingerprint, a fingerprint would be the only evidence that could place the suspect at the scene. Well, my godmother is gone and will never be forgotten because many of us have evidence and DNA showing that she was on the scene, she touched each of us with her hands and left fingerprints all over us. Sleep on my precious darling, I Love you and don't you forget it!



Bishop Mildred B. Hines Obituary

Bishop Mildred "Bonnie" Hines, the 98th Bishop in succession of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church died Monday, May 23, 2022 in Los Angeles, California. Elected and consecrated in Atlanta, Georgia at the denomination's 48th General Conference in 2008, Hines is the first and only woman elected to the church's highest office in its over 225-year history which dates back to 1796.

The Communications Office of the A.M. E. Zion Church released an official statement Tuesday, from The Board of Bishops - "We are glad because she is free from her infirmities and is in the presence of her Lord; whom she served so faithfully." These sentiments were expressed by Board of Bishops President, Bishop Darryl B. Starnes, Sr., Presiding Prelate of the Piedmont Episcopal District.

A native of Mount Airy, North Carolina, Bishop Hines served in every capacity with diligence and excellence. Bishop Hines was formally educated in the public schools of Surry County, North Carolina. She always credited Miss Virginia Galloway, her first-grade teacher, for instilling in her a thirst for learning and a passion for speaking. Her favorite subjects were English, chemistry, history, and home economics at North Surry High School. After receiving an academic and athletic scholarship, Bishop Hines attended Mars Hill College in Mars Hill, North Carolina, where she received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Home Economics Education. She received her Master of Arts in Psychology from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She was awarded a Master of Divinity from the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia, and certification in Clinical Pastoral Counseling from the Colgate Rochester School of Divinity in Rochester, New York. She was awarded a Doctor of Ministry from the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia.

Rev. Dr. Anthony Witherspoon, President of the International Ministers and Lay Association remembered Bishop Hines - "Zion has lost a giant who is leaving an indelible legacy that changed

the trajectory of our church's denomination. Not only was Bishop Hines a staunch supporter of the International Ministers and Lay Association, but she also championed all we stand for even in the face of opposition. Bishop had no problem standing alone for the good of others if need be. Our association has been made all the better because of her courage, strength and tenacity. Servant, well done."

Once a buyer for Belk Department Stores, she said an illness forced her to leave the fashion world behind. "I bargained with God," she said, stating she would follow divine guidance if she survived. Bishop Hines pastored First A.M.E. Zion Church in Los Angeles, California, prior to her election to the episcopacy. Previous pastoral assignments include: Walls Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church in Charlotte, NC, Saint Peter's Tabernacle A.M.E. Zion Church in Gastonia, NC, and Waddell Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church in Shelby, NC. Rev. Dr. Darrius Benton, Presiding Elder of the Dallas-Fort Worth District and spiritual son to Bishop Hines commented, "She truly exemplified what it was to have a pastor's heart; she made a point to call me every Sunday the entire time I was pursuing my undergraduate studies.

Hines served as Bishop of the Western West Africa Episcopal District and later was assigned to serve the Southwestern Delta Episcopal District which includes churches in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Texas and Tennessee. After the sudden death of Bishop Roy Holmes in May of 2013, the New England and Bahamas Islands Conferences of the North Eastern Episcopal District were added to her supervision. Most recently, she served the South Atlantic Episcopal District which includes churches in South Carolina and Georgia. Hines was also the chairperson of the board of trustees of Clinton College in Rock Hill, South Carolina and a member of the Board of Trustees of Livingstone College in Salisbury, North Carolina. Bishop Hines is fondly remembered by colleagues and constituents alike for her style, intellect, wisdom, and grace.





Bishop Mildred B. Hines Funeral Recap

Rock Hill, South Carolina—Members from every corner of The A.M.E. Zion Church, ecumenical guests, and civic leaders gathered in Rock Hill, SC for the celebration of life for the late Bishop Mildred Bonnie Hines.

Funeral services were held Tuesday, May 31, 2022 at the Kenneth Monroe Transformation Center located at 745 Saluda St. in Rock Hill.

Bishop Darryl B. Starnes, Sr., President of the Board of Bishops and Presiding Prelate of the Piedmont Episcopal District presided over the service. The call to worship was rendered by Bishop George D. Crenshaw, followed by the invocation by Bishop Seth O. Larney. The hymn of praise was “When I can read my title clear”. Worshippers were led in the affirmation of faith by Bishop Michael A. Frencher Sr. The Old Testament reading Job 19:23-27 was read by Bishop Warren M. Brown. The New Testament II Corinthians 5:1-10 was read by Bishop W. Darin Moore, followed by a powerful prayer of comfort from Bishop Brian R. Thompson. Attendees were favored with another musical selection from the men of Zion.

Tributes from various leaders across Zion displayed the deep love and admiration those who served under Bishop Hines’ administration had developed over the years.

The Reverend Dr. Floyd Chambers gave expressions on behalf of the Southwestern Delta Episcopal District. The Reverend Dr. Terry Jones, representing the New England Annual Conference. Reverend Lelar B. Johnson, the South Atlantic Episcopal District. Mrs. Sandra B. Crowder, the Women’s Home and Overseas Missionary Society. Reverend Dr. Dwight B. Cannon, Department of Global Missions, and Bishop Dennis V. Proctor, speaking on behalf of the Board of Bishops.

The Boyd Trio sang following the tributes.

The presentation of the eulogist is given by the presiding officer. The Hymn of preparation was “I am thine, O Lord”. The eulogy was given by the Senior Bishop of The A.M.E. Zion church and Presiding Prelate of the Eastern North Carolina Episcopal District, Dr. Kenneth Monroe. Bishop Monroe preached from the subject, “Living with Great Expectations”.

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SAVE THE DATE JULY 25, 2022

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A Reason to be Shoutin'

Written by
Rev. Deirdre P. Rowson,
Entertainment & Arts Editor,
The Star Of Zion

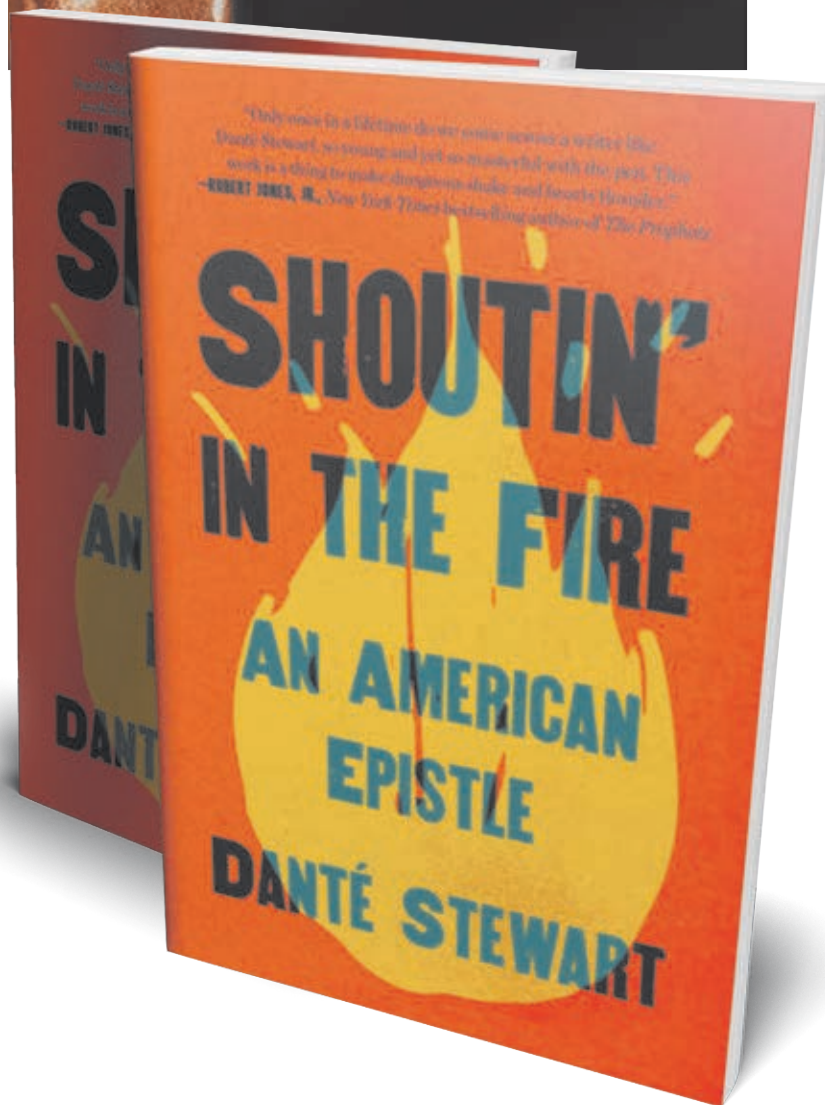
I believe that words are containers of power. God said, “let there be” and there was. Life and Death are in the power of the tongue. The power of our tongues is our words. As a kid I used to read the dictionary. I even have a favorite word. I am known as extremely verbose. That’s just a nice way of saying I have a big mouth, but it is because I love words.

As a lover of words and an avid reader, I want to bring to this space my love of reading in the form of this question: Do you believe that the gospel is still being written? I asked this question of Rev. Vincent Long, Pastor of Bethel AMEZ in Spring Lake, NC.

“When I think of ‘the gospel,’ beyond the traditional explanation of what that word refers to, I think primarily of Matthew 4:23, where we’re told that Jesus proclaimed the ‘gospel of the kingdom.’ Additionally, I would say that there is nothing that I have read or been exposed to that would definitively indicate that God, at any point, closed the so-called canon. Bearing these things in mind, if by gospel, you mean it in the traditional sense – Jesus being born, being crucified, and rising again – then, yes, I believe that is a completed work. But, if by gospel, you mean the good news of how God is simultaneously preparing us for and pressing upon us His ultimate reign and rule, His kingdom, then I believe that is a yet unfinished work. I believe that part of the reckonings of the past we see going on, in so many areas of our world, are part of this gospel of the kingdom still being written.”

This question will be explored as this lover of words examines what we, as Christians, are reading. The book that made me ask this question is “Shoutin’ in the Fire: An American Epistle by Dante’ Stewart. I first heard of Stewart through Instagram. Many people were sharing quotes from him.

One such quote from his Instagram: “Being healed, whole, creative, and ordinary is black liberation too. I keep thinking about this Maya Angelou quote: My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor and some style.”



Anybody who can quote Maya Angelou is cool with me. But with Stewart it is more than just being able to quote someone else. As a black Christian, a black preacher, matriculating in a white evangelical space, Stewart discovered some uncomfortable truths about their vision of the quintessential Christian. In these spaces, the Christian is white and male.

Stewart explores in the book how being in those spaces desensitized him to the ongoing struggle of living in a world that is anti-Black, and how that can permeate your being stealthily.

Stewart writes:

“White supremacy was not just about terrible white American men in white hoods with white crosses. It was also about all the terrible ways I learned to harm black people and be terrible to Black people and not listen to Black people and not cry over Black people and not care about Black people and do it all in the name of Jesus. I believed white people were the center of my world. I believed every other white person’s value was determined by them. I believed Black people must be the cause of their own pain, or death. I must make this confession: I was anti-Black.”

Stewart’s writing style is lyrical and poetic, with a little ham hocks and red beans and rice for flavor. He describes in detail memories and traumas that black people can relate to and allies can learn from. This book is sweetened with southern charm (Stewart is from South Carolina), and peppered with unadulterated truth. This book is a gut-wrenching, truth-telling memoir of being black, male, and Christian.

“Rage woke me up out of my illusion and writing became my way to love us...I knew I that I didn’t have to hate myself, or my people, or our art, or our creativity or our beauty to be human or to be Christian.”

Stewart uncovers a paradigm shifting faith, that defies the violence of the spaces that he moved in. A faith that embraces blackness and seeks the truth that will set us all free.

Artist Profile: Helen Barnett

Written by

Rev. Deirdre P. Rowson,
Entertainment & Arts Editor,
The Star Of Zion

Helen Barnett is a beautiful, bright-eyed twenty-three-year-old artist. Originally from Portsmouth, VA, Helen currently lives and works in Wilmington, NC. She received the Bachelor of Arts degree in Studio Art with a minor in Spanish from High Point University in 2021. We caught up with Ms. Barnett on a lazy Tuesday evening for a chat about her passion for art, her current work, and her future plans.

When did you know that you were not just ordinary but really good at it?"

Barnett: In middle school. I was in the 8th grade. The art teacher gave us animals to do. I chose the Chimpanzee. It was entered into a contest. I won the Gold Key Scholarship for Art and Writing, and I got offered a full scholarship to Barton College.

Wait, you were offered a full scholarship to college in the 8th grade?"

Barnett: Yeah, but I knew I wasn't going to go there. That summer things took off. I was commissioned to do a piece and-

Hold on. I don't mean to keep interrupting you, but you were commissioned to do a painting when you were in the 8th grade?"

Barnett: It was the summer after the 8th grade.

So basically, you've been working as a professional artist since the 8th grade.

She paused for a moment and looked introspective. She laughed. A sound as pleasant as the tinkling of bells. The smile that remained lit up her face.

Barnett: Yeah, I have.

"That sounds a little podigy-ish to me".

Barnett: I've heard that before.

You were at High Point University at the height of the Covid 19 Quarantine. That was an unusual and stressful time for all of us. How did handle that? The quarantine, the virtual classes?

Barnett: There were a couple things before then. There was a student who brought guns to campus and was planning a mass shooting. Students kept getting hacked on campus. Then there was this art challenge. The professor introduced the palette knife. I have never been one to cry over my art or not being able to get something, but it caused a lot of sleepless nights and multiple tears. I was supposed to study abroad in Spain May 2020, but it was cancelled. It felt like since the beginning of Junior year everything was taking the wrong turn. I shut myself off from the world. I didn't go outside... I barely wanted to take my dog (Andy) out to use the bathroom. I was really mean to my family. If they were within five feet, they would hear from me. Then going back to school after that, I just kept getting more and more of these breakdowns. I was scared to go anywhere. Scared to live really and that's when I started therapy.

Friends and family weekend and Valentines Day were the same weekend. All my friends had their families or their significant other. My brothers were with their significant others and my parents had each other. I was by myself. I was thinking about my grandmother... and I see this girl take off running and she hugged someone who looked like her grandmother. In that moment I felt so alone. I just started crying. When I got home I called my mom and told her I was coming home. But she told me not to come home for one day.



That's when I knew that depression is real and I knew I needed to get therapy.

It takes a lot of maturity and self-awareness to realize that you could benefit from additional tools to navigate difficult situations like that.

Barnett: Thank you. It helps.

My next question was going to be how it felt to study art and be taken seriously, but that doesn't apply because you've already answered that. You've been taken seriously as an artist since the eighth grade!

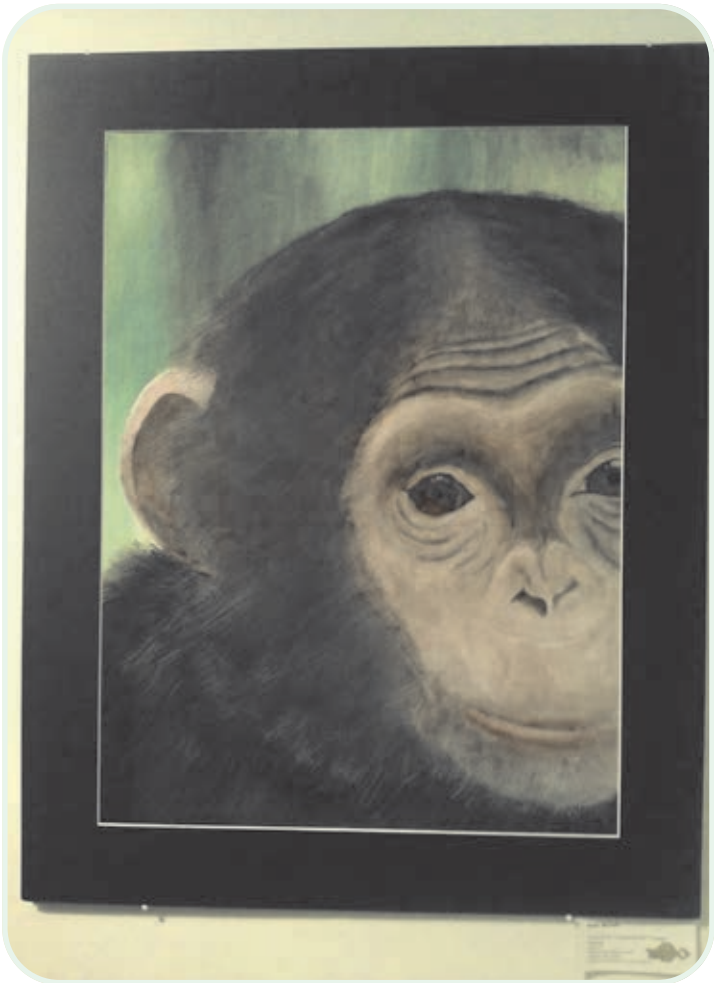
Barnett: It was interesting because I don't know if everyone I graduated with was as serious as I was. I don't want to say they weren't. They could've been in their own way, but I couldn't tell. It was interesting, that unknowing factor...I know I was serious about it. I did love it.

My two professors, actually got me connected to the University of Delaware. I'm going there for Grad school in August.

Congratulations!

Barnett: Hold on, you're not ready for this...a full ride...with stipend. That's my next plan. I wasn't ready to go to grad

school. I wanted to take a year off and then revisit this. My number one school was Maryland College of Art in Baltimore. I wasn't going to get an answer from them until June 1st. Delaware needed an answer by April 15th. They already told me they would pay the whole thing and give me a stipend as long as I teach a class. A part of me was still fighting God and saying 'I'm gonna wait and see what Maryland says'. But I have to say that my professors played a big role in helping me through this journey.



You are an amazing artist. How do you feel when you're creating?

Barnett: I don't. I don't know what happens. I lose track of

time. When I paint, or when I'm in my creative space I lose track of time. It's like I'm in a haze. I don't know what goes on around me. There have been days where I haven't eaten or had anything to drink because I lose track of time completely. There have been multiple times that I will start painting at 10:00am and be done at 7:00pm, and I'm like, dang, I was supposed to meet up with somebody today but the day is gone. **It is amazing that you can give yourself completely to your passion like that.**

Barnett: When I was working on my senior exhibition content, I had nine things already done. My professor said you need one more thing. Do something you're afraid of. I didn't know what that was. He said, "but you need to go big". I said, "I don't wanna do that, but I got you." So, I went to Lowes and got a 4 x 8 plywood. I had those cut into 2 4 x 4s. "This isn't what I meant. What are you going to do with this?"

"I said, 'well you told me to go big! It's all your fault. Now I gotta worry about it because you told me!' I put it together. I put it on two easels. I'm 5'2". This thing hovered over me and I was terrified. I had no clue what to do. I think I stalled for about a week. When I paint is just go for it. I can't sit and plan everything because if I do that I will get too caught up in my expectation. I like to start with one line contour drawing with charcoal. I did faces. I used a palette knife. I can only remember the moments when I stopped. And then I would say, "Okay let's do another one".

When a piece is completed is there a feeling of accomplishment or do you look at it and say, "yeah I'm done" and just walk away?

Barnett: A little bit of both. More of the latter when I was younger because I didn't realize my talent. Now, I can speak of my talent. When I finish, I go back and analyze what I did.

It is an amazing work of Art. And so are you.

Thank you, Helen, for spending this time with us and for sharing your process and your journey out of depression. We at Star of Zion wish you nothing but success in the future.

You can see more of Helen's art on Instagram and Facebook @ helen.b.art



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My Jazz Pilgrimage

By *Dr. Daran Mitchell*

Since June is African American Music Appreciation Month, we reached out to Dr. Daran Mitchell, who is an Adjunct professor of Preaching at Hood Theological Seminary, Pastor of Trinity AMEZ in Greensboro, a Hymnologist, vocalist, and Jazz lover.

When my sister pastor asked me to share reflections and recollections of my journey with jazz, my mind travelled back to 3 places/spaces: Middleton, the Muppets, and the movies. At Middleton Junior High School in Tampa, Florida, I was a member of the intermediate band (and subsequently the advanced band) under the direction of Mr. Greg Dunn. Mr. Dunn was a professional jazz trumpeter who “moonlighted” leading and teaching rowdy teenagers (like me) in the music department at Middleton. In the band I played clarinet and bass clarinet, but I always had a fascination with the saxophone (alto, tenor, and soprano), because I watched Zoot on the Muppets play the saxophone. In my opinion he was the coolest Muppet on the show. I picked the clarinet however, because I learned to play it so easily that my band director said that I had been divinely gifted.

I remember the first piece Mr. Dunn taught the band, “Things Ain’t What They Used to Be”, played by Duke Ellington in the 1943 film, “Cabin in the Sky”. It was a catchy tune, arranged by Mr. Dunn for junior high students that with a surfeit of screeches, squeaks, and squawks we thankfully made it to the end of the piece and thus my entre into the world of Jazz.

Fast forward to the 90’s, when I first watched Spike Lee’s “Mo Better Blues”, a musical comedy drama starring Denzel Washington, Wesley Snipes, and of course Spike Lee. The movie depicts Bleek Gilliam leading his own band, struggling with the life issues of friendship, commitment, fidelity, and finally, redemption. I was moved by the various jazz selections but the piece that gripped me the most was (and still is) “Acknowledge-

ment” from John Coltrane’s magnum opus arrangement, “A Love Supreme”.

Each morning, I am awakened by this beautiful piece as I rise to meet the challenges of a new day. I use it as my alarm that summons me from the cosmic depths of peaceful into the beautiful daybreak of God’s love—A Love Supreme. When I read the story of John Coltrane’s trek into the spiritual dimension of divine love, I was immediately reminded of how beautiful life becomes when we are enraptured in God’s love. During the pandemic, this piece became *my* peace as I treasured each day as a gift from God. I vowed never again would I take my breath and life for granted. These grace gifts became, for me, a revelation of God’s creative capacity to partner with frail humanity in a jazz symphony—A Love Supreme.

Without question, Jazz is God’s gift to America and God’s ever-evolving gift to me. Of all the musical genres, it’s Jazz that lifts my soul to cosmic heights of joyful creativity and holy imagination. The innovation and improvisation of Jazz is clearly what inspires my preaching and now, my living. Jazz is the hope for a world that is polarized and paralyzed by the rampant ignorance of individualism that robs humanity of the gifts that collaboration and teamwork offer through the jazz impulse. Jazz is God’s language played out from Genesis to Revelation. Me-thinks the reason why I love Jesus so is because his life, death, and resurrection is the greatest jazz improvisation ever played out in real time. Terri Lynne Carrington is right, “jazz is a spirit” and dare I assert, that the Holy Spirit is God’s creative impulse bringing joy and gladness to the human search for meaning, purpose, passion as we navigate through this wilderness called life. Finally jazz for me is the invitation to escape the dismal doldrums of rigid, regimented occupation into the bright, blissful space of love—A Love Supreme.

Black Music: The Fabric of Our Lives

What is the soundtrack of your life?

Written by

Rev. Deirdre P. Rowson,

Entertainment & Arts Editor, The Star Of Zion

Since June is Black Music Appreciation month, we invite you to examine the music that is the soundtrack of your life. Now everybody’s sound track will not be the same because we are of our specific era. I know for my parents it was the music of the 50’s and 60’s. Fats Domino, The Platters, James Brown and Sam Cook. My parents’ soundtrack come in the mail one day. It came in a shiny cardboard box that they ordered from an info-mercial. They invited their friends over and they played those albums and they danced and laughed like they were teenagers. It was the most amazing thing I had ever seen. Black Music has a way of reminding us of the things we always want to remember and the things we hope we live to forget.

I have finally reached that amazing stage that I saw my parents experience when they turned on their soundtrack. My soundtrack is the 70’s and 80’s. When we listen to Stop the Love you Save, by the Jackson five we feel like we can do all

the moves that we did back in the day when afros were strong and music was militant. When Sweet Thing was by Chaka only and you had your first crush. And you cried your heart out when the love you found on a two-way street was lost on a lonely highway. I don’t think y’all hear me. Pack your grip, I’m trying to take you on a trip. Aint no seats, all we got is dancing feet. Leave your worries behind... I may be just a foolish dreamer but I don’t care!

Black music is unique in that it contains a longing for a motherland that has never held us. Black music speaks of the rhythm of the ocean that cradled us as we traveled the middle passage. Black music speaks of a faith so deep that it survived to survive so that we can thrive. Black music: Jazz, Bebop, or Hip Hop, rap, R&B, Soul, Neo Soul, Neo, Soul Gospel, contemporary Gospel, traditional gospel, is not only the soundtrack of our lives, it is the soundtrack of the world. It is evolution, it is revolution. It is restitution, it is comfort. It is the fabric of our lives. I appreciate black music. Go listen to your soundtrack, even if your knees hurt too much to get up and dance. Just listen, and remember...

sankefa

Looking Back to Move Forward

Sign Of The Times

By Dr. Asa G. Hilliard III

Presented By Rev. Dr. Sarah Fleming

When you hear the robins signing happily in the trees, you consider this a sure sign of the approaching spring season and the return of warm weather. What if you see a suspicious looking person standing in an alley? Perhaps you might view his presence as a sign of danger, and a good reason to be on guard in order to avoid any trouble.

Signs are wonderful things. They tell us where we are, where we are going, or where we have been. When we properly interpret signs, they can yield some valuable information.

If you want to understand signs and the events they are announcing, learn how to interpret them. Every coming event is preceded by specific tell-tale signs. To be forewarned is to be forearmed, and hindsight is 20/20 vision. In order for you to read and understand the signs of current events, you will need to develop a special kind of vision called *insight*.

The frequent incidents of child abuse, murder and teenage suicides are all signs that this nation is in deep trouble. Every day we are shocked with new revelations of madness and cold-blooded brutality. People are asking themselves how and why this is happening. Is this a sign from God or what?

What is happening, in no uncertain terms, is the law of reciprocity...better known as *cause* and *effect*. After the assassination of President John Kennedy, Malcolm X referred to this phenomenon as "*America's chickens coming home to roost.*" In more familiar terms, he was describing "*What goes around, comes around.*"

Applying this philosophy to history yields some interesting perspectives. Each chapter in the story of mankind was preceded by signs which indicated the direction that particular societies would take in their growth and development. It is quite easy to look back at a series of historical events and determine what led to certain inevitable conclusions.

America is a nation deeply rooted in violence. This country holds distinction of being the wealthiest nation on the planet, but it is also the most violent nation. There are more people murdered in the United States in one month than are killed during an entire year in most countries.

Because of greed, there are people in America who have committed murder and promoted bloodshed for so long that these acts have become second nature. For some people, a human life is seen as no more significant than the life of an insect.

The cruel and merciless disrespect of human life was the foundation upon which this nation was built. The destruction of the Red Man was followed by the destruction of the Black Man. Current signs of the times indicate that the European has



"Am I Not a Man and a Brother?", 1787 medallion designed by Josiah Wedgwood for the British anti-slavery campaign

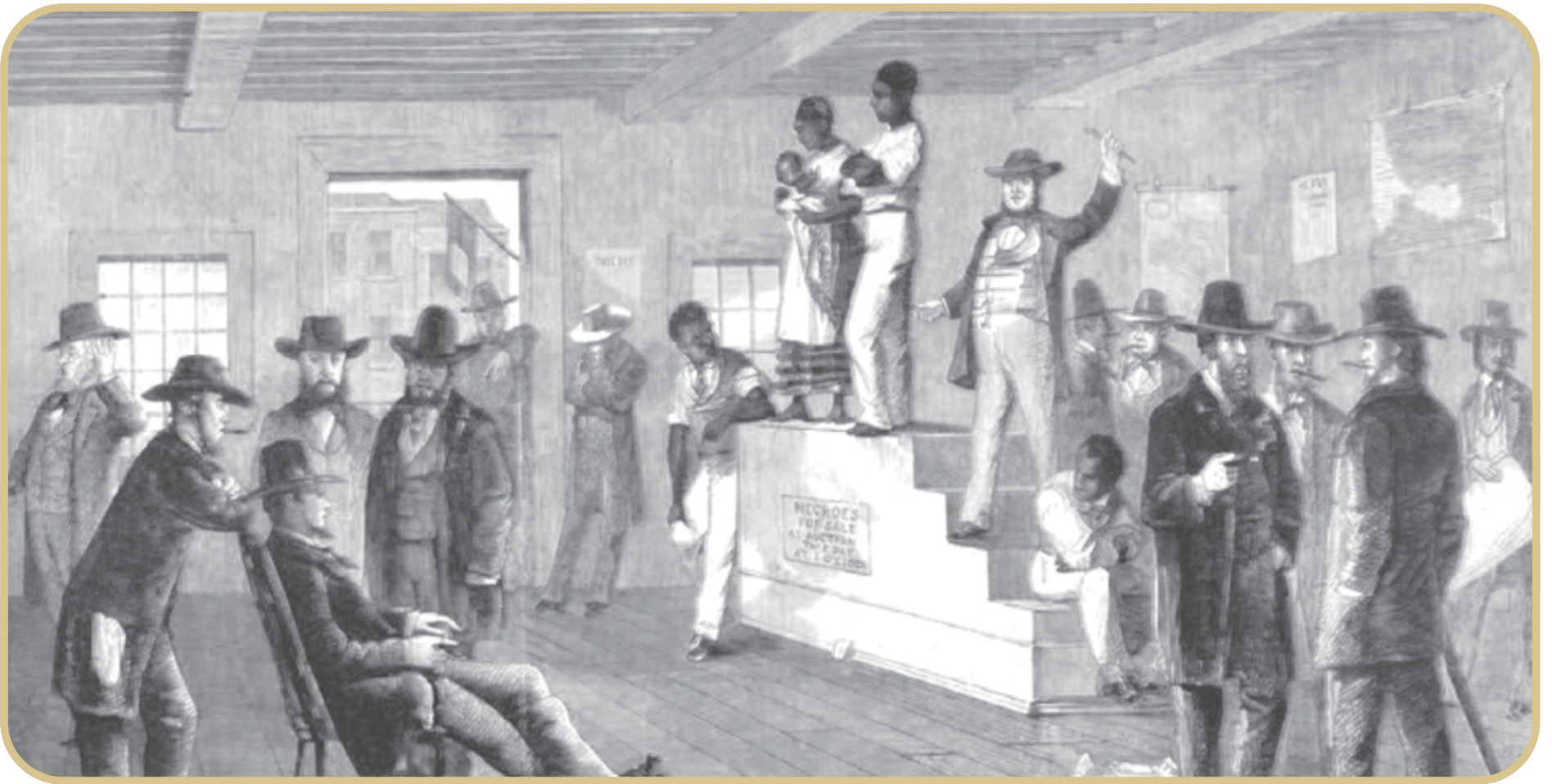
turned on himself. Now they appear to be on a KARMIC collision course toward self-destruction, and the madness shows no sign of ending.

Any time the value systems of a society tolerate pre-teen and teenage sexploitation, that society should not be surprised when these problems manifest themselves on a larger scale. Social groups have to be morally bankrupt to tolerate the sexploitation of children. In American society, child molesters are rarely criminally punished. All too often, they're simply slapped on the wrists and released back into society. This is tantamount to giving a seal of approval to this madness and does little to discourage potential victimizers.

The youth of America see the hypocrisy and disrespect for human life that this country displays. Many of them choose not to be a part of the confusion and sometimes adopt antisocial behavior patterns. Sure, there are a number of available options, but not for those unable to clearly see possible alternatives. Fear seems to present only one tragic choice---self destruction. Many young people decide that suicide is one way to escape.

America is a nation in big trouble. One does not have to be a prophet to see the handwriting on the wall and read the signs of the times.

The key to surviving this national insanity is to learn how



A VISUAL RECORD OF THE AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE AND SLAVE LIFE IN THE EARLY AFRICAN DIASPORA
A Slave Auction in Virginia. 1861. PHOTO FROM SLAVERYIMAGES.ORG

to live in the world, and not of it. Cause and effect works both ways. You can create the causes that produce the desirable effects.

If you wish to produce positive effects, you must first generate positive causes. You get out of life what you put in it.

The time for apathy and inactivity is long gone. You cannot idly sit around complaining and waiting for things to change. Either you make things happen, or things happen to you. Believe that you count and that you can make a difference. The signs of the times will reflect your new belief.

Commentary

America was founded on violence. Its soil is soaked with the blood of its original inhabitants, those who fought to steal their land, and those enslaved to rebuild it. The sins of the Founding Fathers have continually visited their sons and daughters down thru the ages. It is becoming more evident every day.

Phrases such as “going postal” or “going ballistic” reflect the signs of the times. The names of high schools such as Columbine and Pearl are permanently etched in the minds of millions. Little known towns such as Paducah, KY; Jonesboro, AR and Littleton, CO, have gained reputations which will be

difficult to erase. Violence is as American as apple pie, baseball and McDonald’s.

As this commentary was being written a 6-year-old boy shot and killed his 6-year-old classmate in Michigan. This violent act prompted President Clinton to assert that, “the rate of accidental gun deaths among American children is nine times higher than the world’s 25 other largest countries combined.” These are the signs of the times.

According to statistics from the National Commission on the causes and Prevention of violence, 9,390 Americans were killed by handguns in 1995. That same year, there were 106 handgun deaths in Canada, 30 in Japan and just two handgun deaths in New Zealand. These are the signs of the times.

Much of America’s growing wave of violence is taking place in the suburbs---not the inner city. Many of the violent perpetrators are middle class white males---not African Americans. Call it karma. “Call it chickens coming home to roost.” Call it what it is---an inherited shame.

Circumstances will improve only when America admits its crimes of the past and begin to implement sincere policies to honor the life of all of its citizens. Until then, America will continue to reap what it sows.

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Written by, **Dr. Dana Stilley**,
Financial Freedom Editor, *The Star Of Zion*

Juneteenth, a day that marks the emancipation of all enslaved people in the United States was celebrated by many with outdoor cookouts, prayers, and fireworks. For others, the celebration included shopping only at Black-owned businesses, imparting African American history, or drinking red drinks which symbolized the perseverance of our ancestors and honored the blood which they shed. I imagine that others spent the day pondering the emotions of our ancestors on June 19, 1865, when they discovered that their freedom had been delayed some two and half years after the signing of the emancipation proclamation.

The notion of delayed freedom stuck with me and drifted throughout my mind for days. I recounted several historical events where the freedoms of Black people were, or continue to be, delayed, or denied. The magnitude of these actions on the socioeconomic status of Black people in America today cannot be denied. Consider the impact of the Black Code and Jim Crow laws. The enactment of these laws successfully limited Black peoples' labor opportunities, access to education and services, and the right to vote. These laws also prohibited Black people from living anywhere they wanted to (Black Codes, 2022; Jim Crow Laws, 2022).

Intent on marginalizing Black people, these laws successfully prohibited Black people from gaining skills and knowledge that would enhance their ability to earn a living wage and accumulate wealth. When Blacks were able to unite and make economic advancements, they endured violent attacks, such as the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre. Often viewed as one of the worst acts of racial violence in the history of the United States, a white mob destroyed what was known as Black Wall Street, a self-sustaining Black community that included restaurants, movie theaters, and medical and law offices. In less than 24 hours, the school system, post office, banks, and transportation services were annihilated. One thousand homes were de-

molished, and hundreds of Black lives were lost (Tulsa Black Massacre, 2022). The wealth and livelihoods of an entire Black community was decimated.

Although the Jim Crow laws formally ended in 1965, the quest for equality and equity within the Black community continues today, while the wealth that was accumulated by white landowners beginning in the 1800s, continues to be passed down to white generations. For this reason, the concept of financial freedom may seem daunting to many in the Black community. Most often defined by the goals of the individual, generally, financial freedom comes with the accumulation of wealth (savings, investments, cash, retirement funds) that allows one to live the lifestyle they desire. Financial freedom includes the ability to choose any career, without the stress of having to earn a particular salary.

As the Black community works to gain financial freedom, there are many strategies and viewpoints that warrant exploration. An important concept to consider is what is the role of the Black church in the quest for financial freedom. Believed to be the most influential institution in the Black community, the Black church is often considered vital to this community's economic development and stability. I will develop and investigate this point of view, and many others, in the coming months.

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My Once In A Lifetime Thing!

“One Unpleasant Situation Established A Career Achievement”

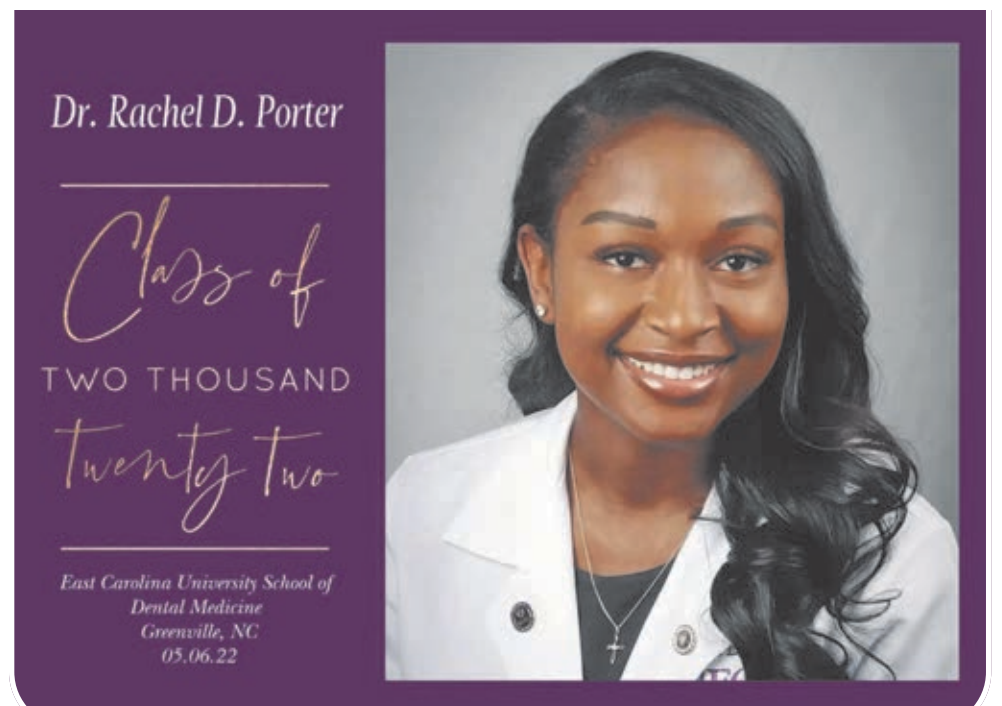
Submitted By Rev. Diane Commander

CHARLOTTE, NC – When focusing on fun and exciting adventures in life, an appointment at your local dental office never comes to mind. At age nine, Rachel Porter had a bad experience at her dental appointment to repair a cavity. She states, “The way the dentist spoke to me made me feel he was mean, and I was scared of him. His tone made me super apprehensive. I went to the waiting room and advised my mom that I did not feel comfortable and safe with this dentist”. My mom was upset that the procedure was not done which delayed me receiving my braces.

On the next week Rachel visited a PEDO doctor (the branch of dentistry that deals with children’ teeth) and had a very good experience. “I thought to myself, this is how it is suppose to be (loving and caring) and, it brought me to the realization that I don’t want any other child to have a negative experience with a dentist. This positive thought inspired me to pursue my passion of becoming a dentist for children. One unpleasant situation was establishing a career achievement!

After graduating from West Charlotte High School in 2014, Rachel entered Howard University where she majored in Biology and minored in Chemistry. She earned a B.S. degree in Biology and graduated Magna Cum Laude. Rachel’s dream became a reality with her graduation from East Carolina University Dental School on May 6, 2022 where she received her Doctor of Dental Medicine degree. Dr. Rachel Porter will enter Boston University on July 1, 2022 to earn her Pediatric Residency to specialize in Pediatric Dentistry. What a God we serve...

Outside of Rachel’s professional life, she exhibits a love for God through Jesus Christ and a love for her church. She is a life-long member of Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church where Rev. Dr. Dwayne A. Walker is her Pastor. She has participated in various ministries throughout the church (Acolyte, Liturgical Dance, Bell Choir, and the Children’s Nursery) where she thoroughly enjoys working with children. She also continues to exhibit a “lady of excellence” lifestyle. Rachel is the proud daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Porter.



Rachel Porter, your family, church family and friends salute you for your many, many accomplishments. May your life continue to be filled with God’s Richest Blessings!



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