

THE STAR OF ZION

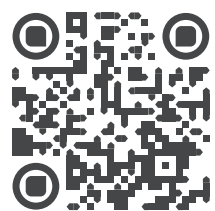
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ZION



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

The Strategic Planning Commission OF THE A.M.E. ZION CHURCH



SCAN THE QR CODE
AND SHARE
YOUR THOUGHTS


The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church is planning its future. As we do so, we recognize that our wisdom is within you, within the collection of clergy leaders and lay leaders, clergy members and lay members. As we pull together to determine the direction of the A.M.E. Zion Church, we will find the direction and plan God has for us and we will produce the A.M.E. Zion Church's Strategic Plan.

According to Indeed.com "Strategic planning is a process used by organizations to identify their goals, the strategies necessary to accomplish those goals and the internal performance management system used to monitor and evaluate progress." For A.M.E. Zion we know our mission is to increase our love for God and to help meet the needs of humankind by "Loving God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with our entire mind, and to love our neighbor as ourselves." Our Strategic Planning process will ask about the concerns and challenges as we meet our mission. It will look for the solutions and opportunities, set goals, and implement processes that will set the stage for the work in our Church for years to come.

At the 2021 General Conference the A.M.E. Zion

Church launched the Strategic Planning Commission. The Board of Bishops asked the Rt. Rev. George Crenshaw to chair the Strategic Planning Commission, which will lead the process. Bishop Crenshaw is joined by Bishop Brian Thompson, Bishop Hilliard Dogbe, Rev. Dr. J. Elvin Sadler, General Secretary Auditor, Reverend Julius Walls, Jr., Chief Operating Officer, Rev. Al Hamilton, Chief Financial Officer, Mr. Darin Kent, Chief Communications Officer, Ms. Sandra Crowder, President of Women's Home & Oversees Missionary Society, and Mr. Joseph King Davis, President of Lay Council. We will bring an update to the 2023 Connectional Council and a full draft for approval to the 2024 General Conference.

To properly prepare this plan, we need everyone. We want to draw on the deep wisdom from all levels of our community of believers to identify the issues confronting the church and solutions. From the pulpit to the pew, from the episcopacy to every God-loving, God-fearing, Zion member; your voice counts. We even want to hear from those persons who do not attend church. We want everyone to participate. Your input will make a difference. Please use the QR code above to answer the questions today.



THE STAR OF ZION

Official Voice of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

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

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

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Accelerating Communication About The Freedom Church

★ The Star of Zion ★

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BE A BLESSING

It's This Christ in You

By: Reverend Leona Nicholas Welch

The Apostle, Paul, says it clearly: *To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles, the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory (Col 1:27 NIV)*. It's on us, Dear Messengers, carrying the hope of Christ's Glory to a sick and dying world, to a hungry and weary world, to a lost and dejected world. It's on us, who are endowed with trust in His Glory, to stay the course for ourselves and for those without a knowledge of God's Hope. It is all a part of being a blessing for others. I think I can say it best in a poem.

IT'S THIS CHRIST IN YOU

She is heavy; she is your sister.
 He is heavy; he is your brother.
 But what's weight got to do with it,
 These bridges over troubled waters?
 Love does not measure,
 How many, how often, how far, what amount.
 In fact, love diminishes in the count.
 You were designed to carry others through.

Equipped and anointed,
IT'S THIS CHRIST IN YOU!
 And speaking of all those burdens of others,
 You desire to do more for the least of your brothers.

Sometimes she's heavy, but she is your sister.
 Sometimes he's heavy, but he is your brother.
 But you've had enough of being a bridge over muddy waters.

You get tired, discouraged; you need love too,
 But you realize that others depend on you.
 So, you hang in- Alleluia, you're back in the race,
 Embracing face to human face.
 Many with needs – much to do,
 But you're big enough -
IT'S THIS CHRIST IN YOU!

CORRECTION NOTICE

The October issue of the Star of Zion mistakenly credited the wrong author for the "Halloween Unmasked: A Christian Perspective" in our lifestyle category. The correct author of this article is Rev. Dr. Sheldon R. Shipman.

MY GOD IS ABLE

Written By: Rev. Dr. Dwayne L. Tutt

Email: Ezraassociates24@gmail.com

As we head toward another General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, I have decided to share with you lessons I have learned over nearly 40 years. These are lessons learned while serving in ministry, as a professor of economics, and business development. I will write and publish these lessons monthly in our Star of Zion at my own personal cost. My hope is that these lessons will remind us of the Most High God and we are His people. I feel a need to remind Zion that My God Is Able.

It would be robbery for me not to thank Bishop George Washington Carver Walker, Sr. for his encouragement in my life. Bishop Walker appointed me back in 2004 to the Western North Carolina Annual Conference Studies Committee. The appointment was made at a planning meeting in Charlotte, NC at Greater Gethsemane AME Zion Church. Bishop Walker appointed me as the instructor of AME Zion Church Polity and History. I still serve on this committee. That appointment lit a fire under me which continues to burn to this very day! I cherish the opportunity to serve this great church. Thank-you Bishop Walker!!!

Lesson One

Years ago, I fell in love with two academic disciplines. One was economics and the other was theology. A part of my love for the two disciplines developed because of discussions I had with my dad about the church. My dad is Rev. Dr. Henry Clay Tutt, Sr. and his home was Kentucky. Dad died as the Presiding Elder of the Indianapolis District of the Indiana Annual Conference on September 6, 2010. Dad often said, "The church has two parts. One part is spiritual, and the other part of the church is business. Yet, many people don't like to admit that the church is a business." From those words, I began to think about the church as both spiritual and as a business. I recalled Jesus said, "I must be about my father's business" (Luke 2:49). I have taught that the business of the church is about saving people's souls and equipping them to be a survivor in this life. With that in mind, I take you back to a period when I was a student at Hood Seminary and was writing my thesis.

In the spring of 2009, I interviewed members of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (AME Zion). In the interview, I asked the following, "What are the main issues within the AME Zion Church?" The common response was related to finances and economics. All interviewed referenced issues which tied economics and religion within the denomination. With the above thoughts in mind, I reread sections of *The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church the Reality of the Black Church* as written by Bishop William Walls. Specifically, I read sections of the book which I thought might shed light on church finances.

In the section of Bishop Wall's book pertaining to Stewardship and the Financial Department, I found some interesting facts. I found the following statement, "The church's economy, like practically all organizations in the nation, suffered during the Depression years. After the General Conference of 1932, Zion began to rebuild her economic program. The Board of Bishops in the Quadrennial Address commended Dr. Goler for the splendid way he handled the finances of the church during the crisis, and the Finance Board for its faithful services. It was observed that Dr. Goler, as secretary and custodian, many times came to the rescue of the church with his own money and credit to meet payments of the budget. The General Conference reverted back to \$1.00 per member general claims annually." The above statement by the Board of Bishops was monumental given what had happened in the 1924 General Conference. In 1924, the General Conference made a decision to raise \$220,000 in order to promote church growth. The \$220,000 assessment was derived by allocating \$110,000 for benevolence programs and \$110,000 for the General Fund. In the 1924 General Conference it was voted to raise the \$220,000 by asking each member of the denomination for \$2.00 each. Each member was to pay \$1.00 for benevolence programs and \$1.00 for the General Fund equaling \$2.00 per member. The church was in a growth mode and the General Conference needed to ensure that the ministers and ministries were sup-

ported. Basically, the church was growing, and it needed more funds and better financial controls to meet its growth curve. The economy was booming in the 1920s ... it was the Roaring 20s. Also, the AME Zion Church was growing in membership. AME Zion Churches had been planted all around the country. It was an exciting time within the denomination and in America.

By the 1930s, the AME Zion Church had planted churches in Charlotte, Wilmington, Fayetteville, and other cities in North Carolina.

The church had expanded from the New England area to Kentucky. The Alabama Conference was formed in 1877. The church called the First AME Zion Church had been formed in San Francisco, California. The Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, and Mississippi Conferences were formed by 1870. The great Broadway Temple AME Zion Church was founded in 1876 and was rebuilt in 1915. In the Midwest, Washington Metropolitan AME Zion in Saint Louis, Missouri was purchased in 1915. Metropolitan Church AME Zion Church in Hartford, CT was constructed in 1926. Big Wesley AME Zion Church in Philadelphia, PA was purchased in 1926. By 1920 the denomination had also planted First Church AME Zion Church in Los Angeles, California. In the AME Zion General Conference of 1920, the Board of Bishops reported that the church had to follow the migration of the Negro from the South to the North and West. The AME Zion Church had followed the migration and the church was growing. Then in October 1929, The Great Depression hit the United States of America. By the time of the next General Conference (1932), the denomination made a drastic financial decision. They cut budgets!!!

The church had clearly grown up to this point in time. Yet, The Great Depression of 1929 and the Crash of Wall Street had impacted the denomination. The impact was so great that the denomination voted to cut its budgets. The denominational funds for the 1932 General Conference were reduced from \$216,200 to \$151,430. This was a total cost reduction of \$64,770 (-29.9%). The denomination also included not funding a new Bishop. The Episcopal Office was reduced from 12 to 11 Bishops because of retirement. There was also a 33% loss in funding for the General Offices of the church. Other reductions included: Education 22% Cut, Church Extension 44% Cut, Home Missions 33% Cut, Ministerial Relief 33% Cut, Foreign Missions 20% Cut, Publishing House 20% Cut, Debts and Contingency 100% Cut, Mother Zion 100% Cut, and Sunday School & VCE 100% Cut. The AME Zion Church changed business strategy! The economic crisis on Wall Street had caused a crisis within the AME Zion Church. The Wall Street crisis impacted a denomination which was predominately African Americans. Did somehow the church lose faith and confidence in God? Did they lose faith in God and that He was able to continue growing their church in the time of The Great Depression? Did somehow the church think the United States' economy or economic conditions were no longer conducive for growth? NOW ZION - fast forward to 2022, almost 100 years ago. Do we as people tend to forget that My God Is Able when our financial situation is not as good as we think it needs to be? Zionites, my research over decades show that ministry must grow during tough times. Furthermore, we must always build business plans for growth in both good and not so good financial conditions.

Beloved Children of The Most High God, please take a journey with me by reading my work in the Star of Zion. My desire for you is to grow when financial conditions are good and to grow when your financial conditions are not so good. I am naïve enough to believe My God is able in all economic conditions. I have an idea! Lets' get ready for the 2024 General Conference of the AME Zion Church. I suggest we choose to grow as our fore parents did in 1924. Why not grow? Why not now? Why not us? See you next month!





Washington, D.C. - Thousands of leaders from across the globe gathered in the Nation's capital September 28th - October 2nd for the 51st Annual Legislative Conference hosted by the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (CBCF). U.S. Rep. Val Demings of Florida and U.S. Rep. Steven Horsford of Nevada were this year's honorary co-chairs focusing on the theme "Advancing Our Purpose, Elevating Our Power".

It was the first in-person ALC since the COVID-19 pandemic led the non-profit to conduct virtual conferences in the past two years. "The return of the in-person Annual Legislative Conference could not have come at a better time," said CBCF President and CEO Nicole Austin-Hillery. With appearances from President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris; panels on advancing healthy equity, Black homeownership, and mental health; and the annual Phoenix Awards Dinner co-hosted by Meagan Good and Omari Hardwick, with a performance by Gladys Knight; attendees were captivated with quality programming from start to finish.

Among the programs at this year's ALC was the 14th Annual Black Women's Roundtable Policy Forum: "Leveraging

for the Northeastern Episcopal District, Ms. Karen Hill, Executive Director for the Harriet Tubman Home Foundation Inc, Rev. Sam Brown, Managing Editor for the "Star of Zion", and Dr. Xellex Rivera, First Vice-President for the Assembly of Christian Educators. Other clergy leaders present were, Dr. Alfred Carson, Presiding Elder of the New York City District, Dr. Keith Harris, Presiding Elder of the Long Island District, Rev. Dr. Laticia Godette, Presiding Elder of the Camden District, Washington D.C. Pastors; Dr. Christopher Zacharias, of John Wesley A.M.E. Zion and Dr. Timothy Freeman of Trinity A.M.E. Zion, Dr. Alvin Durant, Presiding Elder of the Washington District, Dr. Rita Colbert, Administrative Elder for the Mid Atlantic Episcopal District, Dr. Adrian Nelson, Pastor of Lomax A.M.E. Zion in Arlington, VA, and Dr. Tina Nelson Director of Christian Education for the Philadelphia & Baltimore Annual Conference.

Bishop Proctor is indeed no stranger to this conference as he also serves on the National Board for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). "These are the type of ecumenical gatherings where we



the Power of Black Women's Leadership in The Fight for Our Rights, Freedoms, Safety, Justice & Democracy." Hosted by the Black Women's Roundtable and moderated by April Ryan, the session addressed how Black women drive Black political power and discussed findings from this year's BWR/ESSENCE Power of the Sister Vote Poll, which measures Black women's perspectives on policies that affect us.

CBCF calls the Annual Legislative Conference "the leading policy conference on issues impacting African Americans and the global Black community." For this reason, key leaders from across the A.M.E. Zion Church prioritize this event on their calendars annually. Connectional Zion leaders present include; Bishop and Mrs. Dennis Proctor, Episcopal Leaders

should always have a presence. It is here where the "Freedom Church" and entities like it can be at the forefront of shaping policy that positively impacts the communities we serve, thus making our congregations more viable to the communities they serve.", commented Bishop Proctor.

Most of the A.M.E. Zion members present were there to attend the "National Day of Healing"- formerly known as the "National Prayer Breakfast" This is the faith-based component the conference that intentionally brings together various faith leaders to express their respective resolve as informed by their individual faith experience. The keynote speaker for this was Rev. Dr. Otis Moss, III, Pastor of the Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago, IL. There were performances by the How-



ard University Gospel Choir, and special guest solo artist Le’ Andrea Johnson, season three winner of BET’s Sunday’s Best. “We are committed to supporting this event annually, faith must be the primary pillar on which we stand in our fight for justice and equality. We simply follow the example of one of our stalwart Zionites, Harriet Tubman,” commented Karen Hill to the Star.

Other A.M.E. Zion members while not representing the church in an official capacity were present because of their own personal and professional commitment to the Freedom Church’s foundational principle for freedom. Mr. Louis Romain, Political Director for Congressman Jamal Bowman of New York’s 16th Congressional District, and Rev. Lakesha Womack, Founder of Rethinking Church Strategies.

Mr. Romain states, “The A.M.E. Zion Church’s designation as the “Freedom Church” is what attracted me to it at a young age. I am here because the quest for freedom is prophetic so we must remain actively engaged in the work in all circles at all levels, at all times; it is our Christian mandate!” These two individuals are leaders in their own right and labor in many capacities within Zion. Rev. Womack was a featured author for the conference and held a book signing for the work “Unlynched”, a doctrine of economic empowerment for African-Americans.

Next year’s conference will be held in Washington, D.C. at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center, dates are forthcoming.



BISHOP LEAKE AND BISHOP MOORE CELEBRATE WITH LITTLE ROCK A.M.E. ZION ON THEIR 139TH CHURCH ANNIVERSARY!

A Time of Praise and Thanksgiving

Written By Rev. Diane Commander

CHARLOTTE, NC The Ministerial Staff, Officers, and Members of Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church praise God for sustaining, redeeming and never leaving us throughout these 139 years. The history of Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church is so grand and glorious that the essence of its greatness can never be fully captured or retold. Little Rock has been truly blessed with ardent and eloquent pastors, two of which became Bishops, Bishop J. C. Hoggard and Bishop George Junius Leake, III. “Many courageous, dedicated, and visionary men and women have made immeasurable contributions to this bright “Star of Zion”. “Accomplishments made in the past and even now would not be possible without the blood, sweat and tears of our ancestors who laid a strong foundation with their resources, commitment, and dedication. Through spiritual will and fortitude, they bought land and built facilities that we now occupy; their prayers, determination and amazing faith in God allowed them to overcome the difficult and challenging times of their day. They have bequeathed to us a marvelous legacy that we must embrace and maintain”, said Dr. Walker.

The original church property was purchased for a sum



of four hundred and twenty-five dollars on May 31, 1884 (corrected deed filed June 10, 1893). In 1906 under the Pastorate of Rev. W. R. Douglas, the frame structure was moved across Seventh

Street. The brick edifice, which is now the Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Community Development Center, was completed in 1911. The edifice was a blended manifestation of the turn of the century Greek and Romanesque architectural style. The old Little Rock Church building is a remarkable reminder of an exuberant expression of faith and commitment of God’s people to God’s Glory.

The new Sanctuary and Education wing were completed in October 1981. Rev. William White who pastored Little Rock for 16 years, led members and friends in a reverent and stately procession from the Old Little Rock Church into the new edifice on Sunday, December 6, 1981. Rev. Dr. James R. Samuel followed Rev. William White and pastored Little Rock for 16 years,



making improvements to the Church and Education Wing.

In 2005 Dr. Dwayne A. Walker was appointed Pastor and has regained possession of the old church building. He has also provided leadership to facilitate a partnership between the Little Rock Community Development Corporation and the Charlotte City Council to build a 105 unit, five-story apartment building, “Varick on 7th” (where 52 of the units will be affordable housing). The groundbreaking ceremony for Varick on 7th was held on April 28, 2021. At the ceremony, Councilman Malcolm Graham remarked on the significance of this project in which the community, the city and the Church will all benefit. He further stated that the city will also support the project by completely furnishing three of the affordable apartments. May God be glorified for His manifold blessings.

Construction is currently underway for these apartments which is located on the Little Rock Campus in uptown Charlotte, within walking distance to public transportation, city/county government and jobs. For the apartment dwellers with privately owned vehicles, paid parking will be available with the proceeds transferring to Little Rock.



We thank God for our Pastor, Reverend Dr. Dwayne A. Walker who guides his flock with love, inspirational and effectual leadership. We praise God for Bishop Darryl B. Starnes, Sr. Presiding Prelate of the Piedmont Episcopal District for returning Dr. Walker to us in June, 2022 for his 18th Pastoral Appointment.

Under Dr. Walker’s leadership Little Rock has 51+ ministries that serve the needs of its members (in-reach), and the community at large (outreach), to win souls for Christ.

Little Rock’s 2022-2023 theme is “Seriously Striving to Pursue Excellence in Ministry”, Colossians 3:23-24 - whereas,

God is Glorified • Jesus is Magnified • The People are Edified • Faith is Fortified • and Ministry is Multiplied. The Little Rock church family continually worship God physically, mentally, and spiritually in church and virtually while remaining actively vigilant during this pandemic. Through the assistance of technology, we are fulfilling the spiritual needs of our church family. We continue Drive Through Communion, as well as in church Communion. Through Zoom we continue to hold Bible Study sessions for all age groups; children and youth annual activities and many of our board and ministry meetings. Throughout this pandemic, Little Rock has continually served as a Testing and Vaccination Site. Ministries collaborate to consistently provide boxes of food to the community and other churches, as well as hot meals, toiletries, and clothes to the homeless. Toiletry items, Blessing Bags containing food and clothing are given to the homeless and anyone in need during our Community Prayer Walks. We are still holding on to God's unchanging hand.

On our 139th Anniversary Sunday, September 11, 2022, we praise God for our Adult Liturgical Dance Ministry who blessed us through movement. We were honored to have Bishop Eric L. Leake, Presiding Prelate of the Southwestern Delta Episcopal District A.M.E. Zion Church as our Guest Preacher. Bishop Leake used Psalm 34:19 with the Subject "Many Afflictions, but Many Deliverances". He Preached a very powerful, liberating sermon that blessed the entire house. We thank God for the two souls that were added to our roll. Among our many visitors were: Dr. Wardell and Mrs. Myrtle Henderson, Presiding Elder of the North Charlotte District, Dr. Lester A and Mrs. Charlene McCorn, President of Clinton College in Rock Hill, SC, and Ms. Addie Lisby, Past Editor of the Star of Zion, A.M.E. Zion Church. Mr. Gilbert McRae, Leader of Leaders and the Council of Leaders serve as Chairpersons for our Church Anniversary. God was glorified and His people were edified.

Our three-night Revival was held September 13-15 at 7:00 pm. We were honored to have Bishop W. Darin Moore, Presiding Prelate of the Mid-Atlantic Episcopal District, A.M.E. Zion Church who has been our Guest Revivalist for the past

18 years. Bishop Moore was accompanied by his lovely wife, and Missionary Supervisor, Mrs. Devieta Moore and his lovely mother, Mrs. Connie Farrow.

Bishop Moore preached inspirational, motivational, and transformational sermons throughout the revival. He used Genesis 26:12-22 to preach the subject, "Blessed Like That"; Mark 14:3-9 with the Subject, "Breaking Bad" and Exodus 15:22-27 with the subject, "Moving Beyond Bitterness". He reminded us that we don't have to settle for "bitter" when God has "better". Other guest included Dr. Wardell and Mrs. Myrtle Henderson, Presiding Elder of the North Charlotte District, Dr. Lester A. McCorn and Mrs. Charlene McCorn, President of Clinton College in Rock Hill, SC, Rev. Elizabeth Woodruff, Indianapolis, IN, Rev. Brandon J. Smith, Pastor Lee Thee A.M.E. Zion Church, Rockingham, NC, and Rev. Henrico D. White, Pastor of Weeping Willow A.M.E. Zion Church, Charlotte, NC.

Members and visitors were blessed and revived as we reverently shared in the worship service, and with great anticipation sought the deliverance of God's Word. Ministerial Staff members participated in the Litany. We were blessed by our IT Ministry, our Drummer, Minister of Music, Mr. Sid Oliver and the Little Rock Choir who moved us through levels of inspiration through song.

O God we love You, we adore You, we praise You, we Bless Your Name for leading and guiding us through these 139 years. God Gets the Glory!



GRATEFUL! GRATEFUL! GRATEFUL FOR WATER IN SOUTH MS CONFERENCE!



Written by Rev. Dr. Aurelia Jones-Smith

It is one thing to hear and read about news, but an entirely different matter to be a part of, or rather the subject of that news. Such was, and in some ways continue to be the case of the residents of Jackson, MS and other residents located in the South Mississippi Conference of the Southwestern Delta Episcopal District (SWD) who are connected to a water system that, in a flash, went from great concern to crisis. With a nearly weeklong episode of relentless rain that had the potential for catastrophic flooding in the area, coupled with the crumbling infrastructure of a more than a century old water system with broken pipes and failing water pumps, a crisis was imminent. But, while the story of the crisis has been noised worldwide, the purpose of this article is two-fold: firstly, to highlight the call to action, and the response to that call by our beloved African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church Connection; and secondly, to express our profound appreciation and gratitude for the countless acts of kindness that spilled forth from the hearts of everyone involved in providing relief and reprieve.

A Bishop with Purpose – Bishop Eric Leake and Mrs. Jean McMurray-Leake, Presiding Prelate of the Southwestern Delta Episcopal District and Missionary Supervisor, respectively, can be described as persons who are like no other. Each is a *rara avis*. Their passion for doing the will of God is reminiscent of the passion that Paul brought to the table as the apostle called by the risen and ascended Christ. Upon learning of the water crisis, they sprang into action, calling upon the Lord, and upon the Connection, in particular, the Board of Bishops as well churches in the SWD, to be instruments in the hands of the Lord, showing compassion. They were not satisfied with simply making phone calls, texting, and emailing presiding elders, pastors, leaders, and church secretaries. Bishop Leake arrived on site at the “first church” in Jackson, Cathedral A.M.E. Zion Church, where the Rev. Gary D. Adams, Sr., serves as pastor, and proceeded to help with the distribution of hundreds of cases of water. Moreover, he sought out Rev. Bonnie Travis, SWD Prayer Coordinator and Presiding Elders, Dr. Floyd Chambers (Canton District) and Dr. Moses Thompson (Jackson-Panola District), and, with his son Caleb in tow, held a Facebook live prayer vigil with pastors and leaders on the grounds of Cathedral. Beyond those actions, the work of the Bishop and Missionary Supervisor relative to the water issues in Jackson continues. Thank you Bishop Leake and Missionary Supervisor McMurray-Leake for your hand on the plow with passion, purpose, and love.

A Board with Provision – James 2:15-16 (KJV) says, “If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?”

The call for help from Bishop Leake did not go unheeded. The Board of Bishops of the A.M.E. Zion Church immediately donated \$25,000 towards the effort of providing relief in a time of destitution and desperation. Thank you Board of Bishops for your provisions and unanimous, unwavering support.

A Promise to the People – “For all the promises of God in [Jesus Christ] are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us”, says 2 Corinthians 1:20 (NKJV). Standing on the promises of God, Rev. Adams, exercising his spiritual gift of leadership along with first lady Janieth Adams, did not sit back and wait to be called upon. As the pastor of Cathedral, the largest A.M.E. Zion Church in the area, Rev. Adams began amassing resources, contacting and coordinating with other A.M.E. Zion Church pastors of congregations impacted in the area, specifically, Rev. Carla Perry-Johnson (Greater Blair Street in Jackson), Rev. Dr. Aurelia Jones-Smith (Victory in Jackson), and Rev. Henry Garrett (Tabernacle of Grace [TOG] in Clinton where the majority of members are Jackson residents). And, although each pastor worked to provide water, and information to congregants about water distribution times and locations, Rev. Adams did the lion’s share, working tirelessly, receiving water and donations from throughout the SWD and other sources, establishing a distribution site with a steady flow of cases of water to members of the Zion churches and the community at large, and literally distributing countless cases to the many who lined up in need. Thank you Presiding Elders, pastors, leaders, and congregants from throughout the SWD and beyond. “And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” Matthew 25:40 (KJV)

A God of Power – “God has spoken once, twice I have heard this: That power belongs to God.” Psalm 62:11 (NKJV). Despite the forces of nature, political differences, economic inequities and disparities, racism, and much else that humankind perpetuates in the city of Jackson, the state of Mississippi, this country, and this world, in the end, God always arises, demonstrating that He is God and still in charge of His creation. Using the water crisis, He demonstrated His power to change hearts, change decisions, and change unfavorable outcomes, showing that all power belongs to Him. We bless and thank our God for being God, supplying all of our needs according to His riches in glory through Christ Jesus.

Because God is who He is and has made you who you are, we are grateful! May His rich blessings and unmerited favor be yours during this season of Thanksgiving, and always!

WILMINGTON DISTRICT WOMEN'S HOME AND OVERSEAS MISSIONARY SOCIETY HOLDS FOURTH MISSIONARY MASS MEETING



**Written by LaVerna Hargrove, Wilmington District Reporter
Photos by Deborah Price**

The Wilmington District gathered at Evergreen AME Zion Church, Delco, NC pastored by Reverend William Ballard, for the fourth Missionary Mass Meeting.

The Devotions, led by Rev. Dr. William Ballard included Rev. Valerie Robinson of Bowen Chapel, Wilmington, NC presenting the scriptural focus 1 John 4:7-16. A prayer was offered by Reverend George Patrick, pastor of Blackwell Chapel AME Zion Church, Leland, NC. After being presented by the Presiding Elder of the Wilmington District, Reverend Alexander Jones, Reverend Armour gave these points as part of the lessons to us from Acts 9: 17-19:

The Wilmington District WH & OMS was challenged to learn the lessons of the transformation of Saul to Paul as described in Acts 9 focusing on verses 17-19, as delivered by Reverend Dr. Jermaine Armour of St. Luke AME Zion Church, Wilmington, NC in a meditation entitled "Look At Me Now!": Change is a challenge because we begin with a negative perspective, we do not use the tools we have to accept or embrace change, we are too stuck with the status quo, and we are fastened to the point of thinking about it, but never doing anything about it. Lessons we can learn from the scripture sited are: (1) Change is a process; (2) God can change anybody because he changed me, you and Saul to Paul; (3) God can change anybody even if He has to knock them down to do it; (4) God does not tell others what He told you to do, nor does He tell you what He told others to do; (5) there is a price for change—but not all are willing to experience that price though they are willing to accept the end product; (6) God sometimes speaks to us while we are down so that the God inside of us can pick ourselves up; (7) we must be able to trust God even though we may not be able to see where he is leading us, we can trust His voice. (8) Like God sent favor to Paul in the person of Ananias, (his name means favor), God will also send us favor. After the process we can then shout, "Look at me now!"

The Wilmington District Life Members Chairman Linda Simpson stollod Makaih McNeil of Moores Chapel, Leland, NC; CaShante Sledge and DeShondra Smith of Browns Chapel, Southport, NC; Reverend Edith Davis, Denise Murray, and Audrey Riley of Lees Chapel, Bolton, NC and Helen Freeman of Evergreen; as Life Members. DeShondra Smith was also stollod as a Life Matron.

After presenting an essay on the topic "The Great Commission: Globally Committed to Agape Love", Makiah McNeil of Moores Chapel AME Zion Church, Leland, NC, pastored by Reverend Annette Clem-

mons was elected Youth Delegate to the 30th Quadrennial Convention to be convened July 2023 in New Orleans, La. Makiah is finishing a two-year engineering degree program at Cape Fear Community College, Wilmington, NC and will transfer to a four-year institution for further career enhancement. Makiah is a lifelong member of Moores Chapel and serves her local church as a member of the steward board, President of the Junior Ushers, and the Buds of Promise Superintendent. She serves the Wilmington District as a District Usher and serves the Cape Fear Conference as President of the Varick Christian Youth Council.

Makiah served as an alternate delegate to the 2019 Quadrennial Convention of the WHOMS. Zariah Navarro of Warner Temple AME Zion Church, Wilmington, NC, Pastored by Reverend Dr. Clifford Barnett will serve as the alternate delegate to the 2023 Quadrennial Convention of the WHOMS.

Remarks by Presiding Elder Jones reflected that it was agape love that not only sustained, but empowered the Wilmington District WHOMS to meet all challenges of the Covid 19 Pandemic and he thanked the Life Members Council for their persistence in supporting struggling pastors at Hood Theological Seminary, Salisbury, NC as they matriculate.



REVEREND ALEXANDER L. JONES, SR.: CELEBRATING A SILVER ANNIVERSARY AS PRESIDING ELDER; MORE THAN HALF A CENTURY OF MINISTRY!



Written by LaVerna Hargrove, Wilmington District Reporter

Deborah Price, Wilmington District Photographer

The year of 1964 was a very good year, one of many life altering events: Nelson Mandela was imprisoned in South Africa; Martin Luther King won the Nobel Peace Prize; Sydney Portier became the first African American to win an Academy Award; Lyndon Baines Johnson was President of the United States; and Alexander Loire Jones, Sr. was chosen to go into all the world to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and he accepted the assignment with the purpose to serve in ways God directs. God directed him to serve through the auspices of the AME Zion Church. From the pulpit of Butlers' Chapel AME Zion Church, Tuskegee, Alabama, he preached his trial sermon on May 10, 1964 at the age of 18 while a student at Tuskegee Institute. Thus, the man with a purpose began his

life's journey in ministry. This journey included not only the pulpits of the AME Zion Church, but the as a Reserve Air Force Chaplain called to active duty during Desert Storm in 1982. He retired with the rank of Major in 2005 after a distinguished military career.

His journey in the Cape Fear Conference began in 1992 when he was appointed to serve the St. Luke AME Zion Church by Bishop Herman Leroy Anderson. After serving as pastor of St. Luke AME Zion Church, Wilmington, NC (1992-1997), he was appointed Presiding Elder of the Wilmington District by Bishop George Battle in 1997. He has served under the leadership of six bishops. Reverend Alexander Jones, Sr. continues to lead the

Wilmington District under the maxima "Where God is in Control"

The Wilmington District in gratitude for his stellar service as an administrator and overseer of the 22 churches; as one of 'God's Trombones', proclaiming the Word

of God clearly, concisely and showing how relevant the Word of God is to this present age; and for possessing such astute financial planning, celebrated his Silver Anniversary as Presiding Elder of the Wilmington District and his 58 years in ministry using the theme 'A Man With A Purpose'. The event took place at Warner Temple AME Zion Church, Wilmington, NC pastored by Reverend

Clifford Barnett. Presiding Elder Alexander and Mrs. Delma Jones, Sr. were ushered to their seats of honor by Mr. Rick Middleton and Reverend Vaness Middleton, Pastor of St James AME Zion Church, Southport, NC. Reverend Clifford Barnett host pastor, gave the invocation and presented the couple. The opening hymn of the service was *I Am Thine O Lord*, a favorite of Reverend Jones, Sr.. Reverend Nathaniel Johnson of Summerville AME Zion Church, Leland, NC gave the focus Scripture, Matthew 8:5-13. Reverend Avery McAllister, pastor of Browns Chapel AME Zion Church, Southport, NC gave the prayer. Sister Marva Robinson, sang two musical selections, *Keep Your Hand on the Gospel Plow* and *All My Help Comes From the Lord*. Sister Robinson is known throughout the Wilmington District as well as the Cape Fear Conference as the Presiding Elder's Minister of Music. A very gracious welcome and illumination of the purpose of the occasion was given by Reverend Carol Robbins, pastor of St. James AME Zion Church, Leland, NC and Chairperson of the Presiding Elder's Appreciation Committee.

The Honorable Mayor Bill Saffo of the City of Wilmington read a proclamation honoring Reverend Jones for his work in ministry, specifically the service and oversight of the 22 churches of the Wilmington District for 25 years.

Rev. Dr. Vincent M. Jones, Sr. Presiding Elder of the Newport News District of the Virginia Conference and youngest brother of Presiding Elder Alexander Jones, Sr.

brought the message from Matthew 8: 9-10, “This is How It Works”. Using the example of how pearls are formed, he told the Wilmington District that the same process that forms the exterior shell of an oyster is the same process that forms the pearl in the interior. Both the exterior and interior processes require time for maturity. Thus it is so with the children of God. Waiting is a part of the process. The waiting period allows us to learn how to serve; This process of God’s plan includes His authority.

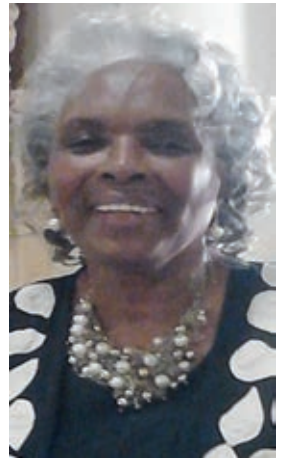
This authority is His protection over our lives. The waiting period develops our faith from good faith to great

faith. Good faith is knowing you can call on God; Great faith is knowing you don’t have to call God, he’s already there. The process of development is a layering process that covers irritants, whatever they may be, with joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, truthfulness, gentleness, self-control and love.

THE MOTHER CHURCH APPOINTS FIRST FEMALE PREACHER’S STEWARD

By Debra Chappelle-Polk, Spotlight Editor

In an historic move, on September 12, 2022, Reverend Dr. Malcolm J. Byrd, Pastor Mother A.M.E. Zion Church, appointed Mrs. Amelia A. Montgomery (*picd.*) to serve as the Preacher’s Steward for the 2022-2023 conference year. The office was left vacant following the death of James “Jimmy” Welsh in February 2022. Bro. Welsh had served as the Preacher’s Steward for decades, starting with his appointment by the Reverend Dr. Alvin T. Durant. Mrs. Montgomery is a lifelong member of Mother Zion, the daughter of the late Hazel Edward and Rev. Nina M. Neely and widow of Dr. Dabney N. Montgomery, a Documented Original Tuskegee Airman of the United States Army Air Corps, WWII, and Mother Zion Church Historian. Mrs. Montgomery has served on several ministries, most recently as President of the Stewardess Board. Rev. Byrd also appointed Mrs. Montgomery President of the Auxiliary Board. She is a member of the Claude B. Govan Tri-State Chapter, Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. and holds the office as chaplain; a member of the Heritage/Kindred Committee, Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. (National level); and, committee member of the 2023 Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. Convention. She is also chaplain and sergeant-at-arms of the West 136th Street [200th] Block Association. Mrs. Montgomery holds a Bachelor of Science Degree, Business Management from Mercy College, Dobbs Ferry, NY, and was on the Dean’s List of Scholars.



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PRESIDING ELDER A. ALFRED CARSON CELEBRATES 30 YEARS IN MINISTRY

Written by Debra Chappelle-Polk, Star of Zion Spotlight Editor.

On Saturday, October 8, 2022, friends and family turned out to celebrate Presiding Elder A. Alfred Carson's 30 years in ministry at a luncheon at the Eastwood Manor, Bronx, NY.

Rev. Dr. Malcolm J. Byrd, Pastor, Mother A.M.E. Zion Church "presided" as Master of Ceremony for the afternoon. He opened the celebration with prayer and said "we've come here today to honor this great man of God and this tremendous milestone in his life." He introduced Anniversary Chairperson Rev. Denise Davenport, Pastor, Caldwell Temple A.M.E. Zion Church and thanked her for organizing the event. Rev. Davenport welcomed everyone and stated, "I am a woman of God and you can thank me for selecting this committee." She then introduced the dais guests, P.E. Carson's wife, Dorian, daughters Alexandra and Alexis, Bishop Dennis V. Proctor, Missionary Supervisor D. Diane Proctor, and Presiding Elder Laticia Hill Godette, Camden, District, New Jersey Conference.

Rev. Byrd acknowledged some of the special guests: Bishop W. Raymond Rivera, National Chairperson of Evangelical Latino Churches and Bro. Nathaniel Higgins, Worshipful Master, Boyer Lodge #1. He also welcomed "our brothers and sisters who are watching from across the pond over in London." There was a video presentation from Bishop Darin Moore, who thanked P.E. Carson "for being a friend" and expressed his regrets for not being able to deliver his tribute in person. Bishop Moore's comments led Rev. Byrd to sing *Thank You For Being A Friend*, with the guests joining in.

Rev. DeForest Raphael, Pastor, The A.M.E. Zion Church on the Hill and Varick Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church Pastor, Rev. Monica Marshall, followed with a musical selection. Rev. Byrd thanked both, and everyone laughed when he said "the New York City District is the most talented and best-looking District." Later in the program, Sis. Natasha Cooper, Mother Zion choir director and "songbird of West 137th Street", sang *Lord You Are Mighty* and *I Love the Lord*, accompanied by "the maestro of Quincy Street", Rev. Marshall, further proof of the New York City District's talent.

Rev. Byrd invited friends to the podium "to tell it, but don't tell it all." Tammy and John Martin flew in from Charlotte, N.C. to attend the celebration. Presiding Elder Carson married the couple in June 1993. Theirs was the first marriage ceremony he had ever performed. The couple recalled asking P.E. Carson how much he would charge for pre-marital counseling. He said he would charge them \$50, however, there was a catch. He wanted one dollar for every year of their marriage *and* he wanted all 50. To date, they "owe" him \$28.

Mrs. Chilborn was the designated spokeswoman on behalf of the Carson family. In preparation for the celebration, she had asked the family for stories about Alfred. One of the brothers told her Alfred has been preaching for far longer than 30 years. The story goes that when Alfred was a young boy, he would put on "his robe," which was actually his older brother's coat and "preach" in the family's backyard. She related other fond memories and said Alfred has always been the family counselor, resident preacher, spiritual teacher and friend. "We love and appreciate you. Congratulations on your 30+ years in ministry. Amen!"

Rev. Ruby Bell brought salutations on behalf of Global Missions and thanked P.E. Carson for his commitment and support of all Mission endeavors. New York State Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins read the proclamation designating October 8, 2022 *Rev. Dr. A. Alfred Carson Day*.

Rev. Dr. Marvin D. Hooks, Sr., Pastor, First A.M.E. Zion Church, asked all clergy to stand and collectively congratulate and thank the Presiding Elder for his guidance and friendship.

Rev. Byrd said there are times when it's necessary to have someone, other than the MC, introduce the speaker who would introduce the next speaker. "Hence, it is my honor to introduce the erudite Rev. Dr. Stephen W. Pogue, Pastor, of Greater Centennial A.M.E. Zion Church, to whom this coveted task has been bestowed." Rev. Pogue attended to the task

bestowed upon him and asked everyone to rise, as he presented the 97th Bishop in the line of succession, the Right Rev. Bishop Dennis V. Proctor, President of the Board of Bishop and his wife D. Diane Proctor, Missionary Supervisor.

Mrs. Proctor spoke first saying P.E. Carson was a valued member of their team. She thanked him for his faithfulness and thanked his wonderful family for allowing him to do all that he does. The Bishop took the mike, and jokingly asked everyone "to give the Junior Bishop [his wife] a hand." He said his wife encapsulated how they both felt about Presiding Elder Carson. "He is part our family and I want you to know how significant this man is. He's caring, competent and he's consistent." He said, some people are caring, but not competent; some people are competent, but not consistent. "Presiding Elder Carson is all of that rolled into one." Of note, the Proctors celebrated their 43rd wedding anniversary the day before.

As a special tribute to P.E. Carson, Sis. Irma Sanders, member of First A. M. E. Zion Church in Brooklyn, New York, who has roots in North Carolina, sang a soul-stirring rendition of *"We Can Walk On By Faith"*, after which Rev. Byrd reiterated his earlier comments about the talent in the New York City District.

Rev. Byrd told the guests what many already knew about P.E. Carson: He's great family man, a great preacher, a loving and caring Presiding Elder, who is interested in what ministry looks like from the perspective of the Freedom Church. "How many remember Freedom Fridays?" he asked. It was this leader who called the churches together to "keep doing the work of God" in the aftermath of the George Floyd killing and the pandemic shutdown. Guests were on their feet, as Rev. Byrd said: "It is my great honor to present Presiding Elder A. Alfred Carson and his wife Dorian Carson."

When the applause subsided, the Presiding Elder and his wife, Dorian greeted the guests. Mrs. Carson thanked the Committee for putting the event together and thanked everyone for coming out to celebrate her husband's 30 years in ministry. P.E. Carson thanked Bishop Proctor and Mrs. Proctor, Elder Godette, clergy members, family and friends for sharing the celebration with him. He also praised his wife, saying he could not have made this journey without her by his side. "She is my one and only wife." He said it twice, adding "she is the wind beneath both my wings." And of course, "she's a great mother" to our daughters Alexandra and Alexis. He thanked his parents in glory, especially his mother, the late Clara T. Carson. "I was a mama's boy." He said that it was because of his mother, who would take him to the campground revivals in Catawba, North Carolina, that his journey into ministry began. However, he admitted, he wasn't sure if the ministry was his calling. "But," he said, "the Lord has a funny way of letting you know things," and after three fateful events and much prayer, he told the Lord, "I'll do what you want me to do." He thanked God for the past 30 years. "I know the Lord has been with me."

The Presiding Elder's Facebook post summed up the day perfectly:

"Every day is a good day but TODAY was one to celebrate! Thank you to all that came out today, bought a journal ad, or has simply said a prayer for me. As I continue this ministerial journey, I am encouraged by the scripture, *"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."* - Isaiah 41:10 (NIV)."



CLERGYWOMEN OF ZION: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Written by Rev. Audrey Akins Williamson

Presented by Debra Chappelle Polk, Zion Spotlight Editor,

The November Spotlight continues with a series of articles written by female ministers, ranging in ages 30 to 60, from various regions of the country, who will share their experiences as female “preachers” and how they approach issues confronting the Black Church. They will also share their views on today’s societal issues and how these issues impact the Black Church.

“And Yet She Persisted”, written by Reverend Audrey Akins Williamson, is the second in the series and features female preachers and pioneers in The A.M.E. Zion denomination. With few exceptions, the names of these women, as well as their “calling” are not widely known to many, and sadly, their contributions have been overlooked. Rev. Williamson’s article enlightens, educates, and pays tribute to these women and their accomplishments.

As the series continues, you will be introduced to the work of the Clergywomen of Zion. Senior Pastors, Presiding Elders, Associate Ministers, Chaplains in the Military and hospitals, and others teaching or working out their call in educational, non-profit, and civic organizations, all while navigating the sexism, patriarchy and misogyny that continues to exist in the church, the academy and society at large.

“... she had nothing to fall back on; not maleness, not whiteness, not lady-hood, not anything. And out of the profound desolation of her reality she may well have invented herself.”

- Toni Morrison

Several years ago, pre-COVID, I visited the Smithsonian Museum of African American History. The celebration of the African American housed in this edifice is indeed magnificent! It celebrates the best of the history and culture of the African American, and is an absolute must see for any child, youth, young adult, or senior. The beauty as well as the violent experience of the African American all housed in this one building is at once daunting, enlightening, awe-inspiring, tear-inducing, and eye-opening. It holds a wealth of information about the history of the “negro”. As I made my way through the many floors of the cultural section, I was, of course interested in the most compelling aspect of how each religious body would be highlighted. I found it interesting and refreshing that as I approached the AME Zion offering, it was the uplifting of women’s ordination that was emphasized.



Many are familiar with the A.M.E. preacher, Jarena Lee, (pictured) who was once denied the right to preach by Bishop Richard Allen, and later, after hearing her stand before people in a prayer meeting, relented and accepted that she was indeed called by God in 1817; however, it was nearly 200 years later that she was “ordained”, posthumously, in 2016. In Zion, we proudly look to our history, a history that gives the denomination the distinction of being the first Methodist body, historically black or white, to ordain a woman to the diaconate, in the person of Julia Foote, in 1895. There is much written about Jerena Lee, and far less information on Julia Foote, but history books are able to trace historically the steps of her life and ministry, and the grave, previously unmarked, was identified and a headstone placed by the Mother Church of our denomination. The museum, however, gave more space to an even lesser-known Zion preacher, the Reverend Mary J. Smalls, who, in 1898 was the first woman to receive Elders orders in Methodism; Foote was the second, in 1899.

Methodism, even at her earliest of beginnings was destined to, whether consciously or not, have a high regard of “women in ministry”. Of Susanna, the mother and primary influence in the life of Charles and John Wesley, John stated: “Susanna Wesley represents, in a limited way the major precursor of the early Methodist women preachers. John Wesley clearly recognized her contribution in this sphere, commenting on the occasion of

her death that, (she) “was in her own right, the first female preacher/pastor of the faith.” Paul W. Chilcote, a Historical Theologian, says of Susanna Wesley: “even she (as well as her father and grandfather, her husband, and her three sons) had been in her in measure and degree, a preacher of righteousness. She was not only the priestess of the family, as Abel Stevens described her, but her ministrations extended beyond the inner circle of the rectory to include the people of Epworth” (the town in which John and Charles were born).



The Reverend Julia A.J. Foote, born in 1823 in Schenectady, New York, moved to Boston in 1839, following her marriage to George Foote. The height of her struggle with the dominant antebellum sense of women and preaching came soon after her marriage, when she defied her pastor, the Reverend Jehiel Beman (who was a member of the prominent family of ministers and black activists), and began testifying and holding meetings of church members in a variety of settings. Beman censured her for preaching in her home and plotted her excommunication from his church. Yet, Bishop Alexander Walters, who allowed Foote to reside with he and his family, said of Foote: “She was a great preacher, and uncompromising advocate of holiness and (one) who practiced the gospel she preached”.

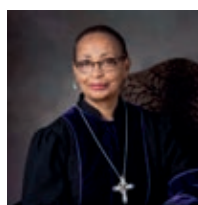
The Reverend Mary Julia Small was born in 1850 in rural Tennessee. Very little is known of her early life, but records indicate that in 1873 she married John Bryan Small, who later become a prominent, beloved and respected Bishop in the A.M.E. Zion Church. Mary Small was licensed an evangelist and missionary, and in 1898, was elected and ordained an Elder in the church. Bettye Collier-Thomas, in her book Daughters of Thunder states. “Her elevation to this status precipitated a bitter debate among male clergy, many of whom questioned the propriety of granting such a status to a woman”. Following the death of her husband in 1905, there is little information on Rev. Small’s ministry, and it appears the bitterness and resentment of her ordination, deemed her unworthy of appointment by the denomination.



And yet, the women of Zion persisted. The story of Zion marks the many accomplishments and history making appointments and elections within the A.M.E. Zion Church.



Most notably, the Reverend Florence Spearing Randolph, who was appointed to Pastor several churches in the denomination, with her crowning pastorate at the Wallace Chapel Church in Summit, New Jersey, where she served for over 20 years.



Most historic, the election and consecration of Mildred Bonnie Hines, the 98th Bishop in line of succession in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Class of 2008. These bold women called by God, created and paved a road less travelled for Women in Zion, and it is this backdrop and rich courageous history that Clergy Women in Zion stand today. Women, either by nature or nurture, or a combination of both, are often predisposed to the activities of the church. Women offer an “indescribable, yet undeniable beauty” to the church. It is there that we begin, but that beauty must be unearthed, and the work of becoming empowered and then empowering others is the work of the Holy Spirit, by coming together and becoming committed and communal in our approach to each other and in support of each other.



The Reverend Audrey Akins Williamson, Th.M.
Principal, AA Consulting
Founding Director, Collaborative for Faith Leadership, Union Theological Seminary
Nina M. Neely Minister for Christian Education, Mother AME Zion Church - Harlem, USA

BECOMING AS AN ETHIC OF WHOLENESS

Written By Justala F. Simpson

This article seeks to wrestle with the following question: What should black Methodist denominations do to promote the experience of black women in America? It should be the task of black Methodist denominations to develop an ethic of care, rooted in justice and equity, that aids black women in fully engaging in the human experience. The teleological approach to ethics asks its conversation partners to determine their goal. The goal of this moral question and the journey to uncover a path forward is two-fold: 1) to grant black women in black Methodist spaces the permission to become and 2) to allow the permission granted to black women to serve as a catalyst for change for other marginalized communities within black Methodist communities. The work of undoing harm done to black women within these spaces begins with a three-pronged approach to community restructuring: naming, acknowledging, and responding. The naming and acknowledging of the harm done closely reflects the womanist understanding of justice-centered reconciliation. In chapter five of *Introduction to Christian Ethics*, Ott Marshall offers the following remarks of reconciliation from the perspective of womanist theology and ethics. She writes,

“By contrast, what we see even in these brief excerpts from womanist scholars is the assertion that justice is non-negotiable. It is not only that reconciliation cannot proceed

without it, or that reconciliation must wait for justice. It is that reconciliation, true reconciliation, cannot exist without justice, without mutual flourishing of all people” (Ott Marshall 110).

Justice and liberation are critical elements of reconciliation. Therefore, the work of reconciliation is obsolete without the powerful hand of justice. The goal, or the telos, therefore, of this topic is incorporating elements of justice and equity that will afford black women (and all members) within black Methodist spaces with the opportunity to fully embody the *Imago Dei*. The story of Hagar found in Genesis 16 and Genesis 21 is the embodiment of the experience of black women. Hagar, slave-girl of Sarai, was selected to produce something from her body while the care of her soul was neglected. Although God provides care to Hagar and her son Ishmael, those that caused harm did not engage in redemptive work to acknowledge the pain that they caused. We cannot place the onus of care and becoming solely on God. It is our responsibility to embark on our personal journeys of wellbeing and wholeness while extending the same opportunities to others; this is the task of the gospel message. Becoming is liberating.

Citation:

Marshall, Ellen Ott. *Introduction to Christian Ethics: Conflict, Faith, and Human Life*.

Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2018.

THE EMMANUEL PRESENCE: GOVERNED BY THE LAW OF LOVE

Written By LCDR Melanie Miller, U.S. Navy Chaplain Corps

The alarm on my watch went off at exactly 2150 military time. I hastily disconnected the bunk straps, which ensured that I would not roll out of my rack [bed]. It is not uncommon for the South Asian sea to rock naval vessels to-and-fro in the rough waves during a storm. After dismounting the top bunk of a three-person stateroom, I donned my boots and Navy utility coveralls before retrieving the folded slip of paper lying between the folds of my pocket notebook. I exited my stateroom and proceeded to the ladder that would take me up to the bridge of the USS Stethem. At 2155, the bridge watch engaged the 1 MC, public address system for the vessel and stated, “Tattoo, Tattoo, Standby for evening prayers by Chaplain Melanie Miller.”

Evening prayers are an ancient naval tradition. However, every night I prepared for those few moments I would have to represent the Almighty to the crew of the ship with their spiritual well being in mind. It did not matter the religious background or beliefs of any of the crew members. What mattered was that I had the opportunity to bring respite and comfort to a moment

where we became part of a space undefined by our differences, and not distinguished by our ranks or duties. Evening prayers was a moment where everyone was equal, everyone was valued, and everyone belonged and were unified as one. My prayers were to reach the ears, heart, mind and soul of the Sailors preparing for slumber in their racks, or those manning the watch forward and aft, on the fantail of the bridge, in the engine room, on the poop deck, deep in the bowels of the bilge, the fos’cle (the front upper deck), or on the quarterdeck (where the gangway is rigged and the watch is posted).

As a Navy Chaplain, my role can be likened to the



Samaritan described in Luke 10:30-37. The Samaritan acted in accordance with the law of love as the Emmanuel Presence in the life of a stranger. The Samaritan lived in a racially divided, pluralistic environment comprised mostly of Jews and Samaritans. Despite this culture that gave him every conceivable reason to ignore the Jewish man and pass on by, he had compassion for him. He became the Emmanuel Presence in this man's life in that he showed forth-unconditional love for him like Christ shows to us, even when we sin against Him. This Samaritan saw what this man needed and did not hesitate to act. He did not wait for someone to ask him to help or to order him to do so. His compassion for the man in his fallen state was enough for him to do something before the man fell into an even worse state. His compassion for the man, his acknowledgment of the man, and his acts of freely giving of his time, resources, and talent were the law of love at work.

My role as the Chaplain is to be the bridge in the life of service members between the sacred and the secular in the different commands I served. In that, I am obliged to perform works of justice and mercy to people in distress. It is the expectation of the U.S. Navy and the Sailors, Marines, Coast Guard personnel, Merchant Marines and their families for me to provide immediate support and comfort in their time of need. As a chaplain, I am expected to be God's representative, the Emmanuel Presence, to act in accordance with Jesus' mandate that I love my neighbor. To do otherwise as the Priest and Levite in that parable would be a flat-out breach of the law of love. To treat others inhumanely is contrary to the nature of my office as a chaplain and contrary to the spirit of Christ that dwells within me.

Navy Chaplains act in accordance with four core competencies, which we refer to as FPCA, Facilitate, Provide, Care and Advise. We facilitate the ability for those outside our own faith to practice their religious beliefs. We do this by identifying their religious need and providing the faith group leadership, resources and spaces necessary to conduct their religious services, education, rites, and rituals. We provide religious services for those of our same faith in accordance with the religious body that provided our ecclesiastical endorsement to serve. As an elder in The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, I act in my role as a chaplain in providing religious service in accordance with The Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. We care for all no matter their religious belief, nationality, gender, ethnicity or other distinction. Care has been the mainstay of my ministry as a chaplain as at least 75 percent of my service has been counseling. Counseling is done with 100 percent confidentiality, dignity, respect and compassion. We advise all personnel in the command we serve from the highest ranking to the lowest. The chaplain is the moral and ethical advisor to the commanding officer and command's mission.

As a Navy Chaplain, serving in a pluralistic environment to carry out those four competencies requires me to be a champion of social justice with the basic premise of "does no harm." In this, I must act as a minister of God for the good of all people using the power I have as an officer and a religious leader (Jer. 22:3). According to the John Lewis Institute for Social

Justice at Central Connecticut State University,

Social justice is a communal effort dedicated to creating and sustaining a fair and equal society in which each person and all groups are valued and affirmed. It encompasses efforts to end systemic violence and racism and all systems that devalue the dignity and humanity of any person. It recognizes that the legacy of past injustices remains all around us, so therefore promotes efforts to empower individual and communal action in support of restorative justice and the full implementation of human and civil rights. Social justice imperatives also push us to create a civic space defined by universal education and reason and dedicated to increasing democratic participation.

As a Navy Chaplain, it is important that we enact the law of love to enforce social justice in our military service institutions, as well as our society as a whole around the world. It matters that service members have someone who literally sees them and their value, sees their need, and acts upon it. Once I was asked why would I spend almost two hours talking to a Marine at 2200 in the middle of the desert while sitting on the side of a Humvee. I said because my Marine needed someone to hear him in his distress at a time that others just passed him by, cut him off, or just ignored his visible signs that something was wrong.

As the Chaplain Programs Officer for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the recruitment of Navy Chaplain, it is my duty to help increase the diversity across gender, ethnicity, and faith group. I believe recruiting these populations will reflect the Navy's desire to aid in dismantling systems that are historically and culturally biased and has allowed injustice to drive the treatment of people and other unjust practices. At the same time, a diverse Chaplain Corps would be the lynchpin as ethical and moral advisors to ensure that there are intentional "efforts to empower individual and communal action in support of restorative justice and the full implementation of human and civil rights."

In conclusion, as a Navy Chaplain, I took the oath,

I, Melanie Miller, having been appointed an officer in the Navy of the United States, as indicated above in the grade of Lieutenant Commander, do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign or domestic, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservations or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office upon which I am about to enter; so help me God.

The duties of my office call for me to be guided by a higher order that is governed by the law of love, which identifies me as social justice advocate and enforcer. Zechariah in 7:9-10 states my solemn vow is a testament of my calling, my ordination and my representation as the Emmanuel Presence in the lives of my Sailors, Marines, Coast Guard personnel, Merchant Marines and their families. "Thus has the Lord of hosts said, 'Dispense true justice and practice kindness and compassion each to his brother; and do not oppress the widow or the orphan, the stranger or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another.'" This is what matters most as I serve.

BRITISH BLACK CHURCHES RALLY AROUND THE FAMILY OF AN UNARMED MAN FATALLY

Written By Ronald A. Nathan, World Politics Editor, The Star of Zion

Chris Kaba, a 24 year old, Black man, was fatally shot in south London on September 5, 2022. Chris, who was a well-known musician, was soon to become a father for the first time,

He died as a result of a firearms incident involving the police. The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC), who are investigating the shooting, said that no “non-police issue firearm” had been found following a detailed search of Chris’ car and the surrounding area

Black churches and faith-based organisations all across London have appealed for compassion and justice for a wounded community. According to the Racial Justice Advocacy Forum, (RJAF) an inter-denominational organization led by the Black Church is working for racial justice in church and the community. On September, 29, 2022 they held a forum meeting to discuss what procedures should be followed by churches that wish to support victims of police shootings.

Rev. Les Isaac, a member of RJAF and head of the Ascen-

sion Trust, the Street Pastors and the School Pastors initiatives has committed his organisations to continue to work with local churches to offer further pastoral assistance and advice to residents who are anxious about what has taken place.

The RJAF has gone further to suggest that praying only will not do. They have appealed to the IOPC (Independent Office for Police Conduct) to act expeditiously for a timely investigation into this unlawful killing in order to help restore community confidence in the Police and reduce the rising tensions in the area.

Recognising the dangers that young Black men and women face from Police arbitrary arrest and shooting, members of the RJAF are working on a project to produce a Civil Rights Card.

This Civil Rights Card would be an instrument which can be used by a person who is stopped by the police. It will allow them access to their rights and in the form of a telephone application they will be able to record the encounter and even alert someone as to what is taking place. As was said relatedly at the RJAF meeting ‘Faith without Works is dead’.

TOWARDS RACIAL JUSTICE: IN ECUMENICAL AND ECONOMIC SPACES

Written By Rev. Dr. Sonia Hinds

We were two Black females, one from Zambia the other from Barbados browsing in a German high-end store. It did not take us long to realize that we were the only Black persons in the store in this predominantly white German city called Karlsruhe. My friend and I, Sarnyan (not her real name) were attending the 11th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches which was held from August 31- September 8 in Karlsruhe, Germany and decided to use our down time for a little shopping.

On our way out of the store the alarm rang and the security officer quickly approached us and asked us to return to have our bags searched. While this might seem like an ordinary matter, the fact that we were two Black women in a store a city that was predominately white raises questions about race. This experience certainly informed our discussions back at the Assembly.

One of the topics of our ecumenical conversations was Together Towards Racial Justice: Confronting and Dismantling the Enduring Legacy of Slavery and Colonialism in a time of Increasing Populism and Xenophobia.

As a Black Caribbean woman of African descent I came to the Assembly praying and hoping for a serious dialogue concerning the sin of racism and to explore how the legacy of slavery and colonialism continues to affect the lives of millions today. Some of us Christians in these conversations included those of us from the Anglican, Dutch Reformed Church and Roman Catholic denominations, denominations that had supported the slave trade and apartheid. The words of

the Old Testament scholar and retired Archbishop John Holder, Archbishop in the Caribbean Anglican Province of the West Indies, came to mind, “It [racism] denies one of the basic biblical convictions that all people are products of the divine act of creation and that their value and importance can never be measured on the basis of their particular race, since these are irreducible.”

The Assembly’s theme “Christ’s Love Moves the World to Reconciliation and Unity” gave us Christians from all over the world in this premier Ecumenical gathering an opportunity to witness Christ’s love for the world. This reconciliation and unity extends to high-end stores in Europe with a history of carrying out racial and ethnic atrocities.

Thus, the presentations, sharing of personal testimonies, storytelling, and small group sharing during the ecumenical conversations helped me to make sense of the different ways that racism is still alive in our societies, in our Churches and even in our economic spaces. The challenge for the Christian Church is to share the good news of how Christ’s love can move the world to reconciliation and unity.

It is our prayer that these discussions and conversations will move from the ecumenical spaces to the economic spaces in our cities, towns and rural communities not forgetting the streets of Karlsruhe, Germany.

Rev. Dr. Sonia Hinds, Anglican Priest in the Diocese of Barbados. Adjunct Lecturer at Codrington College, in Ascetical Theology. She holds a BA Codrington College, MA General Theological Seminary New York and PhD Trinity College, University of Toronto, Canada.

LITTLE ROCK BACK TO SCHOOL BASH

Written by Rev. Dr. Da'Tarvia Parrish

Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church diligently served the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community on Saturday, August 27, 2022 in a Back-to-School Bash that galvanized residents with family recreations to include eSports, bounce houses, life-size checkers, outdoor basketball, and a plethora of board games, music, food, school supplies, and spirited fellowship. Most notable, Little Rock continues to serve as a pillar of strength to its community with initiatives to combat a global health crisis, the Covid-19 Pandemic. In addition to its previous services with vaccinations and testing administered through Ottendorf Labs, Little Rock partnered with Livingstone College to secure support from Bridge Builders of Charlotte, an organization supported in funding from Interfaith America and The Duke Endowment, for Faith in the Vaccine Ambassadors (FIVA) programming. Grant recipient Livingstone College selected Little Rock as one of its civic partners to help promote vaccinations as a trusted community leader. Livingstone College Covid-19 student Ambassador Tevel Adams stated, "We are simply blessed to work with Little Rock AME Zion Church under the leadership of Dr. Walker. The Little Rock family recognizes the importance of improving lives and helping to support community needs during this critical time. They were an easy selection because they were already doing the work."

The four (4) hour event was packed with high-energy mutuality from Little Rock members and organizations such as Oak Street Health, a primary care organization for adults on Medicare. Little Rock's Culinary Ministry was a hit as everyone in attendance engaged in unlimited nutritional intake pleasing to the intergenerational audience. Another Livingstone Covid-19 Ambassador Emile Dogbe-Gakpetor stated, "Their [Little Rock] work not only addresses the impact of the coronavirus, but it also invests in the basic needs of families, strengthening broader measures of the population. The members of Little Rock are incredible."



Livingstone College closes out its community partnerships with the Covid-19 extension grant. It's partners Little Rock AME Zion Church (Rev. Dr. Dwayne

Walker), York Memorial AME Zion Church (Rev. Demond Hairston) and Rush Metropolitan AME Zion Church (Rev. Dr. Maurice Harden) are addressing needs, improving lives, and kingdom building.



Joint Statement from the Salisbury Police Department and Livingstone College

October 17, 2022 - SALISBURY – Salisbury Police Department: Our thoughts and prayers are with the entire Livingstone College family, and the victims of the incident that occurred on campus late yesterday evening. Although the Salisbury Police Department is still very early in its investigation, additional information is being made available by law enforcement.

An altercation occurred on the campus of Livingstone

College last night during its homecoming concert. During the altercation, a person, who is not a student of Livingstone College, fired one or more shots. The investigation up to this point indicates that there was no exchange of gunfire by those involved in the altercation contrary to earlier rumors.

Salisbury Police Department is still investigating the incident and is devoting additional resources to solving this crime.

The City of Salisbury continues to coordinate and work closely with Dr. Anthony Davis and the entire staff at Livingstone College. We appreciate his leadership, patience and full cooperation with law enforcement through this difficult situation.

Livingstone College President Dr. Anthony J. Davis: Our priority is and remains to ensure the mental wellness of our students and to evaluate our public safety measures to create a safe, living, learning and working environment. I am saddened because our students, alumni, family and friends were exposed to this senseless act of violence. We are working collaboratively with our local law enforcement agencies as they are conducting a thorough investigation. Please pray for us in the coming days and weeks ahead.

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FEDERAL STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS

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

It Was Necessary: Student Loan Forgiveness

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

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

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

If our country places an importance on education and learning, is aware of the power of knowledge, believes that every citizen should take part in learning for a mandatory amount of time in grade school, and persuades students to attend college upon graduation, it is disturbing that the United States ranks high on the list for students who graduate both college and graduate school with astronomical amounts of student

loan debt. By astronomical, it is meant that according to student loan debt statistics, there is currently \$1.75 trillion in total student loan debt seated within the United States of America, which is inclusive of both federal and private loans. According to the White House, the cost of attendance to a four year institution since 1980 has close to tripled. Although the price for a university education has gone up, the White House also shared that support from the federal government has not been able to sustain the increase in cost of attendance. The Federal Pell Grant, which is a need-based grant typically awarded to undergraduate students who demonstrate exceptional financial need, continues to decrease the amount offered (from 80% of costs covered down to 30%) which causes students to have to take out some and/or more loans, which increases student loan debt, which then defaults to the question of What is being done about the student loan debt crisis in the United States and why is it so prominent?

Student loan debt crisis has become so much of a burden both to individuals and mainstream society that over the last couple of presidential cycles, candidates have begun to partially focus their attention in the direction of promising to eliminate some portion of student loan debt, should they be elected. Presidential hopefuls Bernie Sanders, Hillary Clinton, and the 46th President of the United States of America, Joseph R. Biden are some of the individuals who included dealing with student loan debt as part of their campaign platforms. After President Biden was elected in November of 2020, his Administration started the work of dealing with the student loan debt crisis by:

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

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

completely, for others, it provides a glimmer of hope amidst a bleak reality of input into education versus output received via salary in the working world.

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

Although there is quite a bit of enthusiasm, there is also much displeasure. Some Americans are questioning the logic pertaining to elimination of a debt that was voluntarily ac-

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

May we recognize the power in pouring learning into minds. May we focus on the good that student loan forgiveness will bring. May we continue to seek ways to abolish a structure that demands we pay a hefty price to learn. May we persist in pushing society to invent new ways of living into equitable practices. May this pardoning of debt be the beginning of more freedom, release, and a new age to come.

US COURT OF APPEALS BLOCKS BIDEN STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM

Written by Dr. Dana G. Stille,
Financial Freedom Author, Star of Zion

On Friday, Oct. 21st, the US Court of Appeals for 8th Circuit blocked the execution of Biden’s student loan forgiveness plan, just one day after the lawsuit was dismissed by a lower court. With debt discharges anticipated to begin as early as this week, the temporary stay has diminished the hope that debt forgiveness would happen quickly for tens of millions of students.

The lawsuit, initiated by the republican led states of Nebraska, Missouri, Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, and South Carolina, claims that the 2003 federal law that permits the education secretary to modify financial assistance programs for students because of a national emergency, or war is not applicable in this instance, and that the Biden administration has gone beyond what Congress intended to authorize. The Biden administration, however, argues that the global pandemic is/was a national emergency.

The debt relief program has been controversial since its initial announcement. It is proposed to \$10,000 in federal student loan debt for those earning less than \$125,000 per year, or \$250,000 per household, and \$20,000 for those who received Pell grants, an act that is believed to greatly benefit minority students. What is important to note it that this emergency stay

does not render the student loan forgiveness plan unlawful or dead. In fact, the program remains active and available to accept new applications. Currently, more than half of the estimated eligible borrowers have already submitted applications. According to the NY Times, the Education Department encourages eligible students to continue to apply, as applications are still under review. However, during the stay there can be no implementation of any student loan forgiveness.

The court said that the Biden administration had until Monday, Oct. 24th to respond. We anticipate more breaking news regarding the Biden program throughout the week.



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Rev. Dr. Melanie Miller



**In Memory of my Dad,
Harmon E. Rogers, Sr.
and those who have
gone on before us.**

LCDR Melanie Miller

CDR Jimmie Miller
(Ret.)

CAPT Jerome Miller

ENS Jason Miller

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SERVING OUR FLOCK IN NORFOLK VA

Written by Angel Eason, Lifestyle Editor, The Star of Zion

Norfolk VA - The Connectional Lay Council of the A.M.E. Zion Church came to the great city of Norfolk, Virginia to host the 7th Evangelistic Retreat, "Serving our Flock in a Change World." Under the leadership of Board Chair Bishop Michael Frencher, International President Mr. Joseph Davis, Host Episcopal District Bishop W. Darin Moore and Mrs. Davieta Moore and 1st Vice President and Evangelistic Retreat Chair Ms. Leondra "Lele" Davis, the retreat kicked off with an outreach event in the local community. Held at the Greater Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion Church, where the pastor is Rev. Sharon Hall, a historic church within the Norfolk District, families who attended were able to receive free school supplies, food, Covid-19 vaccinations, and fellowship.

Rev. Dr. Sandi Hustinson, Co-Episcopal Director of Christian Education for the Mid Atlantic Region shared, "Our outreach plan began with service and stewardship at the core. Our stewardship must be intentional about reaching those who do not know Jesus. We must creatively engage the backslidden, and we must mobilize those who know Jesus in Christian service in order to transform communities. Our goal was to make a functional impact on the local community for their needs today, while also making an eternal impact. Our plan was to make an impact that would start in our home communities and reach heaven."

Ms. Paula DeBerry, Norfolk District Lay Council President, CLC Editor, shared, "The CLC Evangelistic Retreat was very cognitive about time and they maintained great time management throughout the entire event. The outreach was very well attended and set the tone for the expectations of the retreat.

The sessions were all informative that was inclusive with all departments in mind. The exercises provided insight to cause people to think outside of their comfort level. The Young Adult Initiative created a different atmosphere as it created an open environment for open dialogue."

The retreat continued with empowering sessions of teaching and guidance for laity to take back to their local churches.

Connecting the Dots with the Young Adults at the CLC Retreat

During the retreat, the Young Adult Initiative, a body of the Lay Council, hosted a session, "Connecting the Dots."

The Young Adult Initiative is chaired by Mrs. Dorothea (Dottie) Stevens.

The Mission of the YAI is to foster leadership opportunities and provide curriculum based training to ensure the sustainability and relevance of the Connectional Lay Council in the

21st Century.

"Too often YA's (as well as all adults) have been stretched across many Departments in the church. They wanted to get the thought out through the simple game of dominoes that you can connect together to gain even greater results in order to Serve our Flock." - Mrs. Dottie Stevens, Chairperson of the YAI Committee

All things work together for good for those who Love God - Romans 8:28

"Challenges come on every side but it is to only make you strong especially when you withstand the challenge. Being in a team, withstanding the challenges together will make the team stronger collectively and individually. The session provided a foundation for dialogue that we realize should build even more conversation in the future. It allowed many voices to come together to be heard while being led by the young adults. I'm looking forward to more discussions but I'm more excited

to see the action that comes from the discussions." - Ashley Melton, YAI member

"As a committee member of the Connectional YAI, it is important to stress that the process of planning is as important as the actual C.H.A.T. We've given the creative room and mutual respect to bring forth something for the people of God in an unconventional manner. Even when our chairperson didn't clearly understand the concept there was a level of trust she



had in us and God that we would deliver something relevant and in

line with the Will of God. Working with my peers, some old some new, was and is a blessing and work. A work that we all are willing to do. This doesn't mean we all see things the same way all the time. It simply means that we all understand there is something greater than ourselves that must be done. We are business owners, employees, students and/or teachers, professionals and some of us parents and our time is limited but God made a way for us to do the work because in order for us to teach others how to "connect the dots" we had to first connect them in our group.

"The C.H.A.T was everything we intended and more. We

got to put names with faces and we thought that was important because sometimes it doesn't feel like we are a Connectional church but at that moment, "The Connection was Connecting"."

I personally look forward to more opportunities to learn and share so that we can move forward and progress. I encourage anyone who would like us to host a C.H.A.T at your event simply reach out to our progressive chairperson, Mrs. Dorothea "Dottie" Stevens, we are more than willing. Creating Honest Atmospheres Together." - Sandra "Muffin" Newman, YAI Member A statement from the International President, Joseph King Davis, Jr., about the CLC Retreat

The mission of our beloved Connectional Lay Council (CLC) of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church is to prepare and equip laity for life discipleship in the Kingdom of God by maintaining effective ministries that evangelize, encourage and edify laity. Enjoying the offerings and programming opportunities of the Evangelistic Retreat, know that beyond the agenda, evangelism means preaching, announcing, or otherwise communicating the gospel, our salvation. It is delivering the message that Jesus Christ is not only the Son of God, but also gave His life as a sacrifice for our sins. Experiencing the retreat, we appreciate the support exhibited in catching the vision for Christian leadership, accountability, stewardship and Christian service.

Converging upon the grounds of the Sheraton Norfolk Waterside Hotel, we are aware that our world is constantly changing, while recognizing the nature of these changes is key to examining the current context in which we live, and the major changes expected in the future. Refocusing on our mission through the Evangelistic Retreat compels us to evaluate our practices and utilize the methods and strategies that will en-



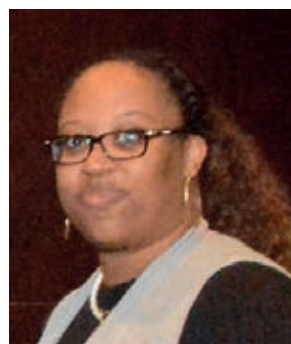
able us to effectively "Serve Our Flock in a Changing World." When we review our practices, we often discover that we need retooling to reach our potential, a lifelong quest as God equips

us anew in each moment of life while we are learning to love God more dearly and live more nearly in God's will.

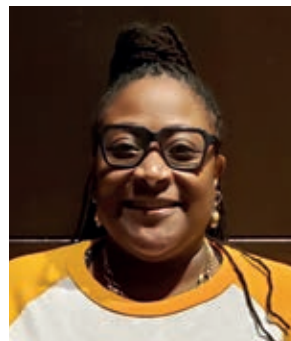
Retreats allow for transforming educational and practical experiences in the doctrines, discipline and polity of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church that will serve to unite, nurture and edify the laity. Fostering meaningful, nurturing, and relevant church ministries as we "Serve the Flock," will assist to cope with the issues of today's complex society, making the denomination stronger and more viable in the 21st century. The 2022 Evangelistic Retreat served as a vehicle for fostering interactions and communication to cultivate denominational loyalty and deepening the spiritual growth ensuring the longevity of the denomination.

In the season of thanksgiving, what are you thankful for?

A few things. I'm thankful for the unconditional love of God. Thankful for the gifts that God has blessed me with to use for the upbuilding of his Kingdom. Thirdly, I'm thankful for the support system God has blessed me with in the form of family with my biggest supporters being my parents and mini-me, Paisley. - Ms. Melton



I'm thankful for my testimony. I'm thankful that my hardships are not just hard but they have the potential to bless others. I'm also thankful for the connection. Connection with God, connect with family and connection with the community and church. - Ms. Newman



I'm thankful to be able to step back and learn from our Young adults as well as them learning from my generation. Such joy comes from generations working together. - Ms. Stevens



The ability to be able to have the opportunity to be able to serve on a different level in Zion which is causing me to step out of my comfort zone. - Ms. DeBerry



I am thankful for good health, my family, provisions of comfort, the ability to serve, and the building back of my church, Gabriel Chapel AME Zion. - Rev. Dr. Hutchinson



Photos provided by: Willie Landrum of the Alabama/Florida Conference



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Looking Back to move forward

Written by, **Dr. Anthony T. Browder** • Presented by, **Rev. Dr. Sarah Fleming**

Eat, Drink and Be Merry...

Diet and African Americans

Ham, potato salad, French fries, pork chops, ice cream, egg nog chitterlings, T-bone steak, cakes, pies, cookies, cornbread, macaroni and cheese, wine, liquor and beer---face it, black folks buy and consume a lot of food and drink during the Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Holiday season. Though you eat, drink and make merry, wishing the good cheer of a long life, peace and prosperity, the food choices that you make may end your life prematurely. Without a doubt, by eating foods fried in heavy grease and with excessive concentrations of sugar and salt, you may be feasting your way to an early grave.

We've definitely allowed a killer to run loose in the black community. This killer is responsible for more deaths than drugs or black-on-black crime. This killer makes all age groups its victims, stalking its prey during all hours of the day and night. This killer is responsible for the high infant mortality rate and slow, miserable death of many of our senior citizens. This killer is the diet of the African American people.

The Washington, D.C. community was shocked several years ago when an ad campaign sponsored by American Cancer society stated: "If you are black and live in D.C., you stand a greater chance of dying of cancer." Many thought the ads were racists in their approach, but they were frank and to the point and they told the truth, whether we wanted to hear it or not.

Cancer of the colon is the most common form of cancer in blacks. Colon cancer is as intricately related to diet as alcoholism is related to drinking or lung cancer to smoking. The colon is an essential part of the digestive system. If we are dying because of our food is not being properly digested, then we must reconsider the foods that we put into our bodies.

The body is basically designed to heal itself. It has the capacity to regenerate over two billion new cells every day. The energy necessary to maintain this process is derived from the foods that we eat. If your diet is not providing you with the proper nutrients, your body cannot do its job. We will get sick and continue to get sick until we either change our diets or die. These are the only two choices that we have.

Many people don't know it, but the worst possible food you can put into your body is meat. The human digestive tract

is not designed to process meat. Any food which stays in your body for more than 8 hours is going to cause problems. It takes meat an average of 90 hours to be digested. During that time, undigested pieces of meat will remain in the colon and rot, sending toxins into the body, which slowly kill you.

The soul food that we so proudly claim, is our worst enemy. This food causes bloated stomachs varicose veins, swollen ankles, high blood pressure, heart disease and a number of other related illnesses. I am sure that everyone knows at least 10 black people who have suffered or died from high blood pressure, diabetes or heart disease. The sad truth of the matter is that these illnesses can be significantly reduced by changing our diets.

Without your health, you have nothing. Money, power or friends can do little to correct the harm which we bring upon ourselves by eating improper foods. Since the purpose of this essay is to inform and enlighten the reader, I would fail to accomplish my purpose if I did not include some helpful guidelines for improving the quality of your health. Please practice the following positive health tips:

1. Stay interested in your health and nutrition.
2. Cut down on food intake.
3. Remove foods high in sugar content (candies, cakes, pies, rolls, ice cream and refined sugar).
4. Replace junk foods with fruits, fruit juices and nuts.
5. Replace dairy products such as milk and eggs with their organic counterparts. Organic foods are those produced by nature such as fresh fruits and vegetables.
6. Replace meats with organic chicken and fish.
7. Completely remove all inorganic foods from your diet; that is, all synthetic, highly processed, man-made foods.
8. Work toward being a healthy and vigorous individual.
9. Fast one day a week.
10. Drink 2 glasses of water (room temperature) upon rising each morning.
11. Water helps eliminate toxins in the body, and flushes the body to help prevent colds and flu.
12. If you are sick, sufficient amounts of water can reduce the complications of fever.
13. Water is the oldest, safest diuretic known. Moni-

toring your urine will tell you about the quality of water in the body. Your urine should be clear and not yellow.

14. Body poisons are released through the kidneys---sufficient water reduces the risk of infection because of an over concentration of urine.

15. Fluid is much more important to human life than food. A person fasting can live two months on water alone. Without water he or she could live only two weeks.

I believe in drawing on my life experiences and the experiences of those around me, which is why I adopted a vegetarian lifestyle many years ago. Believe me when I tell you that it does make a difference. Granted, it's not for everyone, but if you can regulate your diet, you can regulate your health. You are what you eat. Think about this when you sit down to your next meal at the dinner table.



Commentary

The relationship between diet and health is as similar as the relationship between a vote and a politician. The condition of the later is determined by the former. Similarly, the relationship between African American and their health is directly determined by their diet.

Modern medicine cannot cure you of cancer, arthritis, diabetes or the common cold. But you can be treated once you've contracted them. Treating these diseases may cost you an arm and a leg, or a breast and a kidney, or even your life. That's the price you pay for getting sick.

There's another approach to health. It's called prevention. Many of the aforementioned diseases can be prevented by simply eating properly and avoiding certain foods.

Diet is your first line of defense against illness. David Reuben, M.D. offers simple words of advice. He says, "The greatest threat to the survival to you and your family...is what you are going to eat on your dinner plate tonight." Whether you choose to be a vegetarian, or eat meat, fish fowl, know that your physical wellbeing is determined by the foods you eat."

Many physicians are now publicly advocating "health care" instead of "sick care." One such physician is Dr. Michael Klapper who hosts a weekly radio program in the Washington, D.C. area. Since Dr. Klapper's listening audience is predomi-

nately African American, he did a show on the major cause of death and illness which affect the African American community. The information was so significant that I am compelled to share it with you.

The 8 Causes of Illness and Death Among African Americans

- **High Blood Pressure:** This disease leads to heart attacks and stroke. African Americans are four times more likely to have high blood pressure than whites.
- **Lung Cancer:** African Americans have the highest rate of lung cancer among any group in America.
- **Prostate Cancer:** African Americans have the highest rate of prostate cancer among any group of men on earth.
- **Breast and Cervical Cancer:** African American



women have the highest rate of breast cancer among American women.

- **Diabetes:** African Americans are 17 times more likely to need an organ transplant than any segment of the U.S. population.
- **Obesity:** This disease increases the risk of breast and prostate cancer, diabetes, and high blood pressure. The primary cause of obesity is eating an excess of fatty and fried foods.
- **HIV and AIDS:** While the number of AIDs cases has been dropping overall, African American's AIDS cases are eight times higher than white and four times higher than Hispanics.
- **Trauma:** Gunshots, stabbings, auto accidents and other related acts of violence account for an extraordinary high loss of African American lives.

As bad as statistics are, it's sadder to know that 90% of the illnesses and deaths related to them can be prevented. We can begin by developing new eating habits and changing our behavior patterns.

One of our biggest faults is that we've come to accept such high levels of death and illness as normal. If we understand that dietary imbalances are the leading preventable contributors to premature death, maybe we would learn how to eat well, live healthier, and have more productive lives.

THANKSGIVING:

A WHOLESOME AMERICAN HOLIDAY, A DARK COLONIAL HISTORY, OR A TIME TO REFLECT AND BE THANKFUL?



Written by Daman De Leon,
Health and Wellness Editor, *The Star of Zion*

The Turkey. The Collard Greens. The Stuffing (or “Dressing” as they say in the South). The Cranberry Sauce. The Mac & Cheese. The Sweet Potatoes. The Cornbread. The Lemon Pound Cake, etc. We all can relate to that time of year in the latter part of November. The “get together” at our grandparent’s house where we know grandma is “gonna throw down” in the kitchen and “put her foot in” the dish. She will employ the assistance of the women in the family (your mom, aunt(s), sister(s), cousins, and even your significant other (spouse, fiancé, girlfriend/boyfriend, etc.)). However please understand that whatever cooking is going to be done was/is ALWAYS going to be done HER way...because grandma knows best and it comes with the role of a true familial matriarch.

The Thanksgiving Holiday is celebrated in varying ways depending on the culture in which you identify with. As an individual of the African Diaspora who happens to live in the United States, I tend to acknowledge most holidays within the confines of the African American experience. However the history of the Holiday of Thanksgiving tends to be a rather dark one when one conducts the research behind it.

The Mythos vs. The Truth

Chief Ousamequin shares a peace pipe with Plymouth Governor John Carver. California State Library

In Thanksgiving pageants held at schools across the United States, children don headdresses colored with craft-store feathers and share tables with classmates wearing black construction paper hats. It’s a tradition that pulls on a history passed down through the generations of what happened in Plymouth: local Native Americans welcomed the courageous, pioneering pilgrims to a celebratory feast. But, as David Silverman writes in his new book *This Land Is Their Land: The Wampanoag Indians, Plymouth Colony, and the Troubled History of Thanksgiving*, much of that story is a myth riddled with historical inaccuracies. Beyond that, Silverman argues that the telling and retelling of these falsehoods is deeply harmful to the Wampanoag Indians whose lives and society were forever damaged after the English arrived in Plym-

outh. Silverman’s book focuses on the Wampanoags. When the pilgrims landed at Plymouth in 1620, the sachem (chief) Ousamequin offered the new arrivals an entente, primarily as a way to protect the Wampanoags against their rivals, the Narragansetts. For 50 years, the alliance was tested by colonial land expansion, the spread of disease, and the exploitation of resources on Wampanoag land. Then, tensions ignited into war. Known as King Philip’s War (or the Great Narragansett War), the conflict devastated the Wampanoags and forever shifted the balance of power in favor of European arrivals. Wampanoags today remember the Pilgrims’ entry to their homeland as a day of deep mourning, rather than a moment of giving thanks.

The myth is that friendly Indians, unidentified by tribe, welcome the Pilgrims to America, teach them how to live in this new place, sit down to dinner with them and then disappear. They hand off America to White People so they can create a great nation dedicated to liberty, opportunity and Christianity for the rest of the world to profit. That’s the story—it’s about Native people conceding to Colonialism. It’s bloodless and in many ways an extension of the ideology of Manifest Destiny.

There are many inaccuracies with this false narrative. One is that history doesn’t begin for Native people until Europeans arrive. People had been in the Americas for least 12,000 years and according to some Native traditions, since the beginning of time. And having history start with the English is a way of dismissing all that. The second is that the arrival of the Mayflower is some kind of first-contact episode. It’s not. Wampanoags had a century of contact with Europeans—it was bloody and it involved slave raiding by Europeans. At least two and maybe more Wampanoags, when the Pilgrims arrived, spoke English, had already been to Europe and back and knew the very organizers of the Pilgrims’ venture.

Most poignantly, using a shared dinner as a symbol for colonialism really has it backward. No question about it, Wampanoag leader Ousamequin reached out to the English at Plymouth and wanted an alliance with them. But it’s not because he was innately friendly. It’s because his people have been decimated by an epidemic disease, and Ousamequin sees the English as an opportunity to fend off his tribal rebels. That’s not the stuff of Thanksgiving pageants. The Thanksgiving myth doesn’t address the deterioration of this relationship culminating in one of the most horrific colonial Indian wars on record, King Philip’s War, and also doesn’t address Wampanoag survival and adaptation over the centuries, which is why they’re still here, despite the odds.

So how did the “Great Dinner” become the focal point of the modern Thanksgiving holiday?

For quite a long time, English people had been celebrating

Thanksgivings that didn't involve feasting—they involved fasting and prayer and supplication to God. In 1769, a group of pilgrim descendants who lived in Plymouth felt like their cultural authority was slipping away as New England became less relevant within the colonies and the early republic, and wanted to boost tourism. So, they started to plant the seeds of this idea that the pilgrims were the fathers of America.

What really made it the story is that a publication mentioning that dinner published by the Rev. Alexander Young included a footnote that said, "This was the first Thanksgiving, the great festival of New England." People picked up on this footnote. The idea became pretty widely accepted, and Abraham Lincoln declared it a holiday during the Civil War to foster unity.

It gained purchase in the late 19th century, when there was an enormous amount of anxiety and agitation over immigration. The White Protestant stock of the United States was widely unhappy about the influx of European Catholics and Jews, and wanted to assert its cultural authority over these newcomers. How better to do that than to create this national founding myth around the Pilgrims and the Indians inviting them to take over the land?

This mythmaking was also impacted by the racial politics of the late 19th century. The Indian Wars were coming to a close and that was an opportune time to have Indians included in a national founding myth. You couldn't have done that when people were reading newspaper accounts on a regular basis of atrocious violence between white Americans and Native people in the West. What's more, during Reconstruction, that Thanksgiving myth allowed New Englanders to create this idea that bloodless colonialism in their region was the origin of the country, having nothing to do with the Indian Wars and Slavery. Americans could feel good about their colonial past without having to confront the really dark characteristics of it.

So in conclusion, how should we really perceive Thanksgiving...a wholesome American Holiday, a dark Colonial Period of History, or a time to reflect and be thankful? Well, the answer for that is simple...whatever an individual perceives it to be to them. The beautiful thing about the Free Will that our Heavenly Father has bestowed upon us is the ability to choose. Outcomes may vary, however I advise each individual to find that balance that gives them peace. I personally know the history of Thanksgiving here in the U.S. very thoroughly, however I customize my perception to reflect on the fellowship with loved ones resulting from this time of year. I will always be quick to educate the true, White Supremacist Colonial Ideology behind it...but I will always conclude with the understanding of how to still incorporate inner peace and fellowship as well.

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YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT: BE GOOD TO YOUR HEART THIS HOLIDAY SEASON!

Written by, **Written by Daman De Leon, Health and Wellness Editor, The Star of Zion**

As the holiday season approaches us, let us be mindful of what we consume. Many of us have those cravings for specific delicacies, pastries, or dishes that only mama can make. Not to mention unfortunately the very things that taste so good to us tend to be the worst things for our bodies health-wise (i.e. “Soul Food”, and that’s a topic in-and-of itself for a later article). There is a financial component to it as well. It’s unfortunate that the deliciously tasting consumables are so cheap but the healthy stuff is the most expensive. Go figure.

We’re only given one (physical) body, and God commands us to be good stewards of our bodies (1 Cor. 9:27; Titus 1:8; 1 Cor. 3:16-17), and that includes what we put inside our bodies. Our diet is essential to how our internal organs function, and all of our organs are co-dependent on one another. However there is one organ that feeds all of our other organs with that vital life plasmic fluid called blood: the Heart.

Research suggests African-Americans may carry a gene that makes them more salt-sensitive, increasing the risk of high blood pressure and heart disease. African-Americans are disproportionately affected by obesity. Among non-Hispanic blacks 20 and older, 63 percent of men and 77 percent of women are overweight or obese. Now while heart disease is the leading cause of death for all Americans, heart disease develops earlier and deaths from heart disease are higher in blacks, due in part to risk factors such as high blood pressure, obesity, and diabetes. While heart disease is the leading killer for all Americans, African-Americans and Hispanics face even greater risks. Annapoorna Kini, MD, professor of medicine and cardiology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai discusses why the statistics are higher for these individuals. According to Dr. Kini, the prevalence of high blood pressure in African-Americans is the highest in the world. Research suggests African-Americans may carry a gene that makes them more salt-sensitive, increasing the risk of high blood pressure and heart disease. African-Americans are disproportionately affected by obesity. Among non-Hispanic blacks 20 and older, 63 percent of men and 77 percent of women are overweight or obese. African-Americans are more likely to have diabetes than non-Hispanic whites. The American Heart Association recently issued a scientific statement highlighting the public health burden of cardiovascular disease in Hispanics and calling for the development of culturally tailored interventions and the prioritizing of Latinos in the nation’s heart-health-improvement goals. Dr. Kini added that lifestyle modifications and decreasing weight are strategies to prevention of heart disease.

1. Get your blood pressure checked each year.

High blood pressure, or hypertension, increases the risk for

heart disease and stroke and is highest among African Americans—more than any other population in the world, according to the American Heart Association. When high blood pressure goes unchecked for a long period of time, it can wreak havoc on a person’s heart and arteries. The danger with high blood pressure is that the damage occurs over time, and it often goes undiagnosed. The best way for adults 18 years old and older to monitor their blood pressure is to make sure they get it checked every year, says Dr. Irobunda. “We like to see blood pressure numbers in the 120 over 80 range. Anything higher than 130 over 80 is considered high blood pressure.” Annual checkups allow a person to keep tabs on their blood pressure and modify any habits that need tweaking in order to get it under control.

2. Understand the risk factors.

According to Dr. Irobunda, there are two different types of risk factors for heart disease: the ones we can control and the ones we cannot. “While you can’t control your age, gender, or family history, there are risk factors that can be modified like high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, high cholesterol, smoking, and a sedentary lifestyle”

African Americans are disproportionately affected by obesity, according to the American Heart Association and are more likely to have diabetes than non-Hispanic whites. Both predispose someone to having high cholesterol and high blood pressure, which increase your risk for heart disease. Obesity and Diabetes are complex but modifiable risk factors that deserve a team approach to treat. Working with a doctor and dietitian can be tremendously helpful.

3. Know your family history.

You can’t change the genes that were passed down to you, but you can become aware of your family history and know if you are considered high-risk. “Knowing whether heart disease runs in your family can prompt someone to pay closer attention to their heart health and start getting screened at an earlier age,” says Dr. Irobunda.

4. Chronic stress plays a role.

“Stress is something that is often overlooked when talking about risk factors for heart disease,” says Dr. Irobunda. “Those who have undergone trauma or live in an unstable environment are more likely to develop stress from an early age.” He adds that stress can lead to an increase in certain hormones like adrenaline that can elevate blood pressure. If this stress continues long-term, it can lead to permanent hypertension or a permanent heart condition.

“When people are stressed, they may begin to smoke, drink, or overeat,” says Dr. Irobunda. “They also may become

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT: BE GOOD TO YOUR HEART THIS HOLIDAY SEASON! CONTINUED...

hypervigilant, which can raise their heart rate and lead to high blood pressure and an irregular heart rhythm.”

There is a level of complexity to stress, and it can be challenging to address. But lowering your stress level goes a long way in improving your heart health. This includes getting enough sleep and trying to manage stress in healthy ways like through exercise and taking care of your mental health.

5. Be aware of the warning signs of heart disease.

There are different warning signs depending on the type of heart disease. For heart failure, these signs and symptoms include unexplained shortness of breath, difficulty lying down at night without feeling short of breath, and swelling in the legs. For coronary artery disease, a condition in which the arteries become narrow and constricted, one might have chest pain, chest pressure, or discomfort in the neck or jaw.

In contrast, high blood pressure often doesn't have any signs or symptoms until it's too late. “This is why it's called the silent killer,” adds Dr. Irobunda. “And why it is so crucial to manage blood pressure before it gets out of control.”

6. Adopt healthy habits.

While you cannot turn back time or change your DNA, there are several lifestyle habits Dr. Irobunda says can improve heart health and reduce your risk for developing heart disease:

- Take control of your blood pressure.
- Eat a healthy diet that is low in salt and rich in potassium (for example, a plant-based diet that favors fresh fruits and vegetables over highly processed foods).
- Don't smoke.
- Reduce alcohol intake.
- Exercise regularly for better weight control.
- Understand and manage stress triggers.

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Professor, Medicine, Cardiology, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

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UNFORGETTABLE



“We have all seen it...’Nana’ (Grandma) can’t seem to remember where she placed the pot, she likes to cook her greens in. Or ‘Pop-pop’ (Grandpa) can’t find his hat, keys, or anything else he likes to have around. Or they BOTH tend to call us by someone else’s name, be it one of our siblings, or just by the name ‘Chile’. While incidents/occurrences like these are easy to overlook....and even sometimes borderline humorous...they require immediate attention should they become frequent occurrences. On August 13th the Theatrical Stage Production ‘Unforgettable’ premiered in Charlotte, North Carolina. Written, Produced, and Directed by Garrett Davis, the story focused on the bringing awareness to Alzheimer’s Disease, and its cognitive effects and the growing disproportionate rates it has within minority communities. There were two Acts, and each consisted of a transitionary flow from effect to denial, to acknowledgement to healing.

“Mama D is an elder who is enjoying life with her son, Bryan, his wife Mia, and their son Junie (Bryan Jr.). Mama D unfortunately begins to experience severe bouts of neurological issues such as memory loss & cognitive displacement. Mia, Junie, and Mia’s brother Scottie all take notice and become concerned, Junie receives comfort from his girlfriend CC, who recognizes Mama D’s symptoms and educates him (Junie) on Alzheimer’s Disease. Junie listens carefully and believes Mama’s condition to be the early stages of Alzheimer’s. However, when they inform

Bryan of their observations and their concerns regarding Mama D, he vehemently disregards their discretions and reminds his family there is nothing wrong with his mother. When Mama D’s condition begins to slowly worsen, the family bonds together, relying on their faith and love for one another, with Bryan finally conceding that his mother requires professional assistance.

“The Theatrical Production consisted of testimonies from various local figureheads such as Brigida Mack, and a closing Epilogue by the Playwright, Garrett Davis of GDavisTV. On Thursday, August 4, 2022, the Star of Zion live streamed an exclusive interview with two very important individuals to the success of this play. Mr. Garrett Davis, the playwright of Unforgettable and Dr. Carl V. Hill, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion chief at the Alzheimer’s Association. The Star of Zions very own Rev. Dierdre Parker-Rowson conducted the interview in which the gentlemen share in depth perspectives of what inspired them to cultivate this piece of work and the positive impacts it has on the fight against Alzheimer’s. “The play gives an opportunity for those that may have never dealt with Alzheimer’s directly to develop empathy.” Commented one of the guests. Both Dr. Hill and Mr. Davis share their personal experience with Alzheimer’s and how that serves as the driving force and inspiration being their work.

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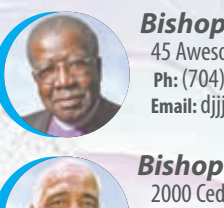
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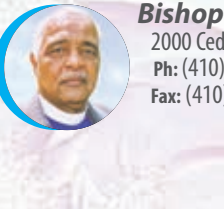
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Official Statement

From The Board Of Bishops Concerning The Suspension Of Seth O. Lartey As An Active Bishop Of The A.M.E. Zion Church

This serves as official notification that pursuant to our authority granted under Paragraph 128 in the Book of Discipline, the Board of Bishops announces the immediate suspension of Seth O. Lartey as an active Bishop of The A.M.E. Zion Church.

This action is taken due to Bishop Lartey's failure to comply with the terms he agreed upon to resolve the issue of inappropriate use of funds allocated from the Connectional Budget Office to Lomax-Hannon Junior College.

In a signed letter dated July 6, 2022, Bishop Lartey states; "I humbly submit to the Board of Bishops in accepting the sanctions consistent with verifiable proof and our church law that the board may choose to impose." Sadly, as of this date, he has not fulfilled that promise. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the Board of Bishops to act decisively to protect the integrity of our process and ensure accountability on all levels of our beloved Church.

The gravity of this action weighs heavily upon your Board of Bishops and we grieve that Bishop Lartey's continuing refusal to accept responsibility and follow through on his signed agreement have left us with no alternative to this action; however, while these actions are immediate they are not terminal. The final disposition of the matter shall be at the seat of the General Conference as the first order of business.

During the term of his suspension, Bishop Lartey will:

1. Be immediately enjoined from operating in the office of the Episcopacy. He shall not speak or act with ecclesiastical or administrative authority within or beyond the confines of The A.M.E. Zion Church. He shall not represent, entangle, or promote himself as a leader in or representative of The A.M.E. Zion Church in connection with any image, contract, authority, or conveyance (e.g., in raising funds), whether within or outside of the United States. This prohibition includes photos, fliers, podcasts, social media posts, etc.
2. Be prevented from participating in Board of Bishops Meetings, Connectional Meetings, Board of Trustees of our educational institutions, or any position that is bestowed upon him by virtue of his status as a Bishop.
3. Have no standing to represent The A.M.E. Zion Church in any ecumenical or civic association and he must communicate such to any current affiliations.

The Board of Bishops appoints forthwith Bishop Hilliard Dogbe to supervise the East Angola, West Angola, South Angola, and Namibia Annual Conferences and Bishop U.U. Effiong to supervise the South Africa, Malawi, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe Annual Conferences.

We call upon all members to pray earnestly for the Board of Bishops and our beloved Zion. We also ask that you pray for Bishop & Mrs. Lartey and his family. Please pray for the clergy and laity of the Central Southern Africa Episcopal District and Bishops Dogbe and Effiong as they provide episcopal oversight to the area.

The Board of Bishops of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

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Bishop Warren Matthew Brown, Retired

Bishop George Edward Battle, Jr., Retired

DONE THIS THE 17TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 2022



CELEBRATION OF TRIUMPH FOR REVEREND HAROLD L. JORDAN

The Reverend Harold Leon Jordan made his triumphant entry into his heavenly home on Friday, May 13, 2022.

Harold Leon Jordan was born on May 21, 1946, to the late J. B. & Leona Sherrill Jordan in Rowan County, North Carolina. He was one of thirteen children, which includes his twin sister, Carolyn Leona Jordan Lawson.

Reverend Jordan was baptized at an early age at Oak Grove Baptist Church, China Grove, where he maintained his membership until 1969. After his marriage on November 30, 1968, to the love of his life, Judy Ann Russell, he joined Sandy Ridge A. M. E. Zion Church, Landis.

After graduating from Aggrey Memorial High School, Landis, in 1964, Harold attended Rowan-Cabarrus Technical College. He attended Hood Theological Seminary and received a diploma in Christian Ministry on May 10, 2003. He received a BS degree in Business Administration from Livingstone College on May 5, 2007. In the year 2020, he was inducted into the Livingstone College Hall of Fame.

In 1983, God changed his life and Harold received the power of the Holy Spirit. He held various leadership positions at Sandy Ridge Church that included Sunday school teacher, Sunday school superintendent, class leader, bible study teacher, finance committee chairman, and church van driver. He was known for his love of children and young adults who anxiously awaited a hug and Double Bubble bubble gum each Sunday. He will be remembered as a mentor and confidante.

In the year 2000, Harold accepted the call into ministry. He preached his initial sermon on Palm Sunday, April 8th, 2001; thusly, becoming a local preacher, and subsequently, an associate minister under the leadership of Rev. Bobby L. Smith.

Reverend Jordan was ordained Deacon by Bishop Cecil Bishop in May, 2004, and ordained Elder by Bishop George W. C. Walker, Sr., in November, 2005. He received his first pastoral appointment in June, 2004 to the Salisbury District at Providence A.M.E. Zion Church, Salisbury. In October, 2010, he was appointed to the Mowing Glade A.M.E. Zion church in the North Charlotte District by Bishop Walker. In February, 2013, Reverend Jordan returned to the Salisbury District after an appointment by Bishop George E. Battle, Sr., to Third Creek A.M.E. Zion Church, Cleveland, where he faithfully served until his passing. Prior to his first pastoral appointment, he was granted permission by the Reverend Herbert R. Warren Jr., Salisbury District Presiding Elder, to accept an invi-

tation to preach the Word of God to the Cedar Grove Presbyterian Church family and continued in that capacity for several months.

Rev. Jordan had a love and sense of compassion for others which laid the foundation for his life and ministry as a humble servant of God. He was quickly recognized, by even strangers, as a kind pastor with a loving heart, friendly spirit, and a delightful sense of humor which brought much joy and laughter to everyone he met.

A retired Chaplain from Rowan Hospice & Palliative Care, he will be forever known as a Chaplain who was inspired to bring the absolute best possible spiritual care to his patients and their families. Rev. Jordan was highly respected and recognized in Rowan and surrounding counties as one who was filled with genuine love as he ministered to those in their last and final days during his 10 years as a Hospice Chaplain.

Rev. Jordan was serving in multiple church positions, which in the Salisbury District included Chief of Protocol, Chairperson of the Evangelistic Committee, and Prayer Coordinator; and in the Western NC Conference included Prayer Coordinator, Evangelistic Committee member, and State of the Church Committee member. He was also Vice-Chair of the Blackwelder Park Precinct of the Rowan Democratic Party, member of the NAACP, and former president of the Salisbury/Rowan Ministerial Association.

Harold was preceded in death by his siblings, Bennie Mae Jordan Heggins, Willie "Pap" Jordan, Annie Mae Jordan, Annie Ruth Jordan, Queen Jordan Farris, and Aaron Jordan; also, his beloved mother-in-law, Margaret Ellen Reid Russell Sherrill.

Left of cherish his memory is his wife, Judy, after being happily married for 53 years, their love for each other shone so brightly as they walked hand-in-hand in their Christian journey; the proud parents of one son, Justin Harrison Jordan (Kyshon); also, three brothers, Nathaniel (Ruth) Jordan, Henry Jordan, and Cecil (Rev. Ann) Jordan; three sisters, Lila J. Partee, Yvonne J. (Carl) Harper, and Carolyn J. Lawson; sisters-in-law, Mary Frances Jordan, Jeanette Jordan, Jennie R. Wright, and Bettye Russell; brothers-in-law, William Farris and John (Valorie) Russell; spiritual son in the ministry (Salisbury District) Reverend Morgan Glenn, close friends, Reverend Eddie (Barbara) Fortson, and Bobby Propst; a host of God-children, nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.

Rev. Harold Leon Jordan lived his life so that men and women, boys and girls, would know that Jesus lives, because He lived in him.

ZION

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



Save the Dates



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

December 27-30, 2022

February 14-17, 2023

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



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

July 18-21, 2023

July 22-28, 2023

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



52nd Quadrennial General Conference

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

July 24-28, 2024

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