

"WHAT ABOUT ME?"
Rev. Al Sharpton Preaches
at Greater Centennial in
Mount Vernon, New York

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THE STAR OF ZION

JULY 2023 | VOL 147 NO. 7 | STAROFZION.ORG | THE OFFICIAL VOICE OF THE A.M.E. ZION CHURCH

THE STAR OF ZION CONGRATULATES
THE WOMEN'S HOME & OVERSEAS
MISSIONARY SOCIETY




ON THEIR
30TH QUADRENNIAL CONVENTION
JULY 22ND - 28TH 2023
NEW ORLEANS, LA

Submitted by Jacqueline L. Anthony

The Quadrennial Convention is the legislative body of the Women's Home and Overseas Missionary Society

(WH&OMS), in that it participates in making its own laws (ratified by the General Conference) and it elects its general officers. It also provides opportunities for worship and fellowship (Adlise I. Porter Expo/President's Gala, Overseas Luncheon, Agape Luncheon, and Quadrennial Banquet),



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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November 2023 Issue.....	October 15, 2023
December 2023 Issue.....	November 15, 2023

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programs to implement the purpose, reports and business as needed.

One of the important activities of the Quadrennial Convention is the action by delegates concerning the recommendations/resolutions submitted.

Delegates from around the world participate in the election of connectional officers at each quadrennial convention. At the 30th Quadrennial Convention, seven elected officers from the 2015-2023 quadrennium will retire. Congratulations to the newly elected officers for the 2023-2027 quadrennium.

For each convention, the Executive Board selects a song or hymn to be used as the general theme song throughout the convention.

Delegates at the 1995 convention adopted a resolution that provided for outreach at each quadrennial convention. The constitution was amended that “the WH&OMS’ mission outreach during Quadrennial Conventions shall include presentations to designated organizations in the local area where the Quadrennial Convention meets.

Publication of convention registration, lodging, proposed programming, and activities, etc., is a must for a successful convention experience. One very popular media produced by the Society to publicize pre-convention news and herald convention programming is the Convention Monitor which is prepared by the Director of Communications. Also, the Quadrennial Theme Logo, a pictorial depiction of the quadrennial themes based upon interpretation of the Theme Prospectus, will be presented to the attendees.

*See you in New Orleans
July 22-28, 2023!*



“WHAT ABOUT ME?”

Rev. Al Sharpton Preaches at Greater Centennial in Mount Vernon, New York

Submitted by Debra Chappelle-Polk
Zion Spotlight Editor, The Star of Zion
Email: ZionSpotlight@StarofZion.org

New York, NY - On Sunday, June 11, 2023, Reverend Al Sharpton, Founder and President of the National Action Network (NAN), served as the guest speaker at Greater Centennial A.M.E. Zion Church in Mt. Vernon, New York, where Rev. Dr. Stephen W. Pogue is pastor. The service began with Praise & Worship - “*God Is*.” The scripture lesson, Psalm 91:1-4 was read by Rev. Hyacinth Rock, who also led the morning altar prayer. Rev. Kellie Y. Wofford (Assistant to the Pastor) acknowledged the Mayor of Mount Vernon, Shawyn Patterson-Howard, and thanked her for “being in our midst.” She also acknowledged Rev. Dr. Malcolm J. Byrd, who is the pastor of Mother A.M.E. Zion Church and Director of Operations at NAN.

Before introducing the guest speaker, Rev. Byrd told the congregation he wanted to acknowledge “one of his closest friends and one of the greatest people on this earth, your Pastor, the Reverend Stephen W. Pogue.” Rev. Byrd said, “I know he’s watching,” and asked the congregation “to show him and the First Lady some love.” Rev. Byrd greeted the ministers, officers and members: “Let me tell you Greater Centennial how fond your pastor is of you. He knew he would be out of the country and knew he would need ‘the greatest preacher south of heaven and north of hell’ to supply the pulpit in his absence. God sent the Reverend Al Sharpton, a great preacher, a leader, host of Politics Nation, and frequent commentator on MSNBC. Rev. Sharpton is committed and has been called by God to lead the fight for human dignity, freedom and liberation. Rev. Sharpton speaks truth to power, demanding that ‘Pharaoh, let my people go.’” Rev. Byrd asked Greater Centennial “to stand on your feet and give a rousing round of applause to the leader of Black America and God’s preacher for this morning, the Reverend Al Sharpton.”

Rev. Sharpton greeted the ministers, officers, and members of Greater Centennial. He thanked Rev. Pogue for the honor and thanked God for allowing him to see another day. He said too often we get up in the morning like we’ve done something to earn another day. He went on to say, “I don’t care that we come to church or how saved we look to others, we’ve all done something, that if God checked the record, none of us would have got up this morning.” Rev. Sharpton thanked God for looking beyond his faults as he woke up morning and for supplying his needs. He also thanked Rev. Byrd for his eloquent introduction.

Rev. Sharpton said many think The Reverend Al Sharpton is just a title, “but I am a preacher first and I need to be in church on Sunday. In these times if you’re not anchored in something, you’ll float in anything. The reason our people have survived all these years is because of our faith in God.” Sharpton said some say that’s old school. “Well, if that’s old school, what’s new school?” He said, “You don’t know what’s happening from one day to the next. We woke up the other morning to winds blowing clouds of smoke and an orangey-red sky. Even with all of today’s technology, man cannot stop the winds from blowing. “It’s God’s way of showing us He’s still in charge.”

Rev. Sharpton told the congregation he was going to Florida to preach the funeral of Ajike “AJ” Owens, a young mother of four who was shot through a door and killed by her neighbor, a 58-year-old white woman, over a dispute because her children had been playing in the front yard in their development. It took the authorities four days to arrest the woman. “Had it been the other way around,” Rev. Sharpton said, “an arrest would have been made immediately.” This is the same state banning Black history. Rev. Sharpton said he had recently been in Mississippi with Mrs. Myrlie Evers to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the assassination of her husband, civil and voting rights activist, Medgar Evers, who was killed in the driveway of their home by white supremacists. “We are here 60 years later in Mount Vernon, New York --- y’all have moved up from the Bronx – but some are too lazy to get out and vote; a right many fought and died for.” He said we talk so much about what we want, but we haven’t used what God has given us.

“We’re good at complaining, but we’re not good at being involved.” He reminded the congregation there will be buses leaving from Mount Vernon for the August 26th March on Washington commemorating Dr. King’s “I Have a Dream Speech” 60 years ago. Sharpton said he recently talked to a radio caller who said he was tired of marching. “So, I asked him what’s the last march you’ve been to?” The caller said he had never been on a march. Rev. Sharpton said people stood up and marched to give us a better life. “The whole Bible is full of struggle and God is reminding us to stand up.” He said Exodus is all about the struggle against slavery. The Book of Esther is about a prophetess who stood up against the genocide of her people. He then asked the congregation to turn to Genesis 16:10-11 which reads: *The angel of the Lord also said to her, “I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude.” And the angel of the Lord said to her, “Behold, you are pregnant and shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, because the Lord has listened to your affliction.”*

Rev. Sharpton said he had wrestled with this scripture. The Bible tells us about the lineage of Abraham and Sarah, but Abraham had another child. Today, we would call him “the outside child.” Continuing, he reminded us that Sarai gave Abram “permission” to lay with her maid-servant, Hagar, who would give birth to a son called Ishmael. Sarah was okay with this, until she wasn’t. “Sometimes,” Rev. Sharpton said, “folks are okay with things, until things go wrong.” The Bible says that Sarah became brokenhearted and bitter, and Abraham didn’t know what to do. God stepped in and made Sarah fertile and had a son, Isaac. The situation had changed. The “outside” son and “legitimate” son could no longer co-exist in the same place. Hagar and Ishmael were sent away. “This,” Rev. Sharpton said, “gets to the heart of the sermon.”

Hagar is sitting under a tree with her son Ishmael, cast out and destitute. She had done what she had been instructed to do. What about me, Lord? Sharpton said he thought about how all of us have been an ‘Ishmael’ in this life. “We’ve all been in a position where we were not the favored one.” In fact, the fight for our civil rights in this country begs the question: what about us? “We built this country. We made cotton king and tobacco road.” What about us? “There’s money for migrants coming into this country, but no money for schools in Mount Vernon.” What about us? Hagar asked what about us? God answered Hagar, “Out of him will come great nations.”

Rev Sharpton said, “I came here today to tell Greater Centennial that we are not the outside child of God. We all have God-given talents; but we’re not all the same and we’re not perfect.” In fact, Sharpton said, he preferred to be around people who’ve been through something. “If you ain’t never been through something, you can’t get through something. If you’ve never been through been through the fire, you’re just guessing at what God can do. I know there’s someone here today who’s going through something. We all got a ‘what about me story.’”

Rev. Sharpton shared one of his “what about me stories.” A reporter from the New York Times wanted to do a profile on him and wanted to run with him for a few weeks. He consented. The reporter met him one Saturday at a NAN rally at the House of Justice in Harlem. After the rally, one of the NAN staff members told Sharpton he shouldn’t bring the reporter to their church because he [the reporter] wouldn’t understand our church. Reverend said “alright, but he can’t really write my story unless he goes to church.” He told the reporter they were going to church on Sunday. The reporter said that’s wonderful, as he had always been intrigued by the Black church. Rev. Sharpton asked, “what you mean by that?” He wasn’t sure if he was being insulted, but took him to church anyway. When the reporter entered the church, he saw a man clapping his hands up and down and asked what does that mean. Rev. Sharpton replied, “you don’t know the man’s story.” Five years ago, the man was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer. During a prayer meeting, the man got down on his knees and prayed, “Lord, if it be your will, heal my body.” The man should have been dead 4 ½ years ago. So, every time the man comes into the church, he starts clapping

his hands.

The reporter then noticed a woman jumping up and down, who looked as if she would keel over; he asked what does that mean. Sharpton told him the woman had once been married, had two children, a girl and a boy. She and her husband once owned a business, a home, and a Cadillac. One day, the husband left her, the little girl and the little boy with nothing, but God restored her and “made a way out of no way.” Reverend told the reporter the reason he knew that woman’s story was because “*he* was that little boy.”

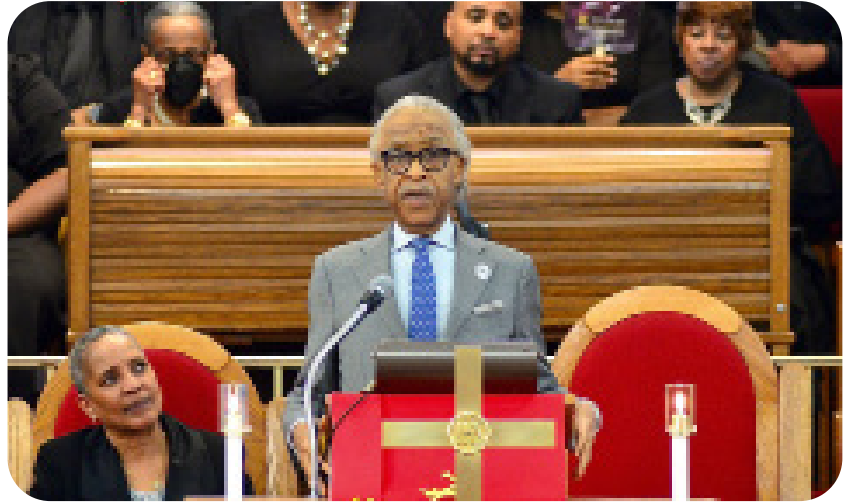
Rev. Sharpton said he has experienced many ups and downs in his life. “I’ve been lied on, cheated, talked about, stabbed and mistreated, but through it all I’ve learned to lean on and trust in Jesus.”

Rev. Kellie Y. Wofford thanked Rev. Sharpton for his preached word, saying, “we have all been blessed.” She said she could hardly contain herself because she had a “what about me story,” and asked if anyone there was here today with a “what about me story?” Several ‘Amens’ were shouted.

“But I came here today to tell you, all you gotta do is say to God, what about me?”

Rev. Al Sharpton.

“Oh what a worship experience we had.” Greater Centennial Facebook 6.11.23 post.



Acolyte Virtual Conference Prepares Next Generation of Leadership

Submitted by The Star of Zion

God be praised for a powerful Acolyte Virtual Conference! The outpouring of support for the Bishop Stephen Gill Spottswood Acolytes of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church - the newly organized juvenile ministry in the Christian Education Department - was tremendous, with an astonishing 155 people registered.

This exciting virtual meeting allowed children, youth, and adults from all over the connection to discuss leadership. The theme was, “Cultivating a new generation of leaders (Ephesians 4:11-14).” The conference addressed vision, inspiration, innovation, communication, authenticity, self-awareness, open-mindedness, flexibility and responsibility. These qualities were highlighted and taught to prepare the young people for leadership roles in the life of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and beyond.

Thank you to Bishop Kenneth Monroe, Senior Bishop, Bishop Dennis V. Proctor, Christian Education Department Board Chair, Bishop W. Darin Moore, 1st Vice Chair, Bishop Nathaniel Jarrett, 2nd Vice Chair, Mrs. Ava Swinton, 3rd Vice Chair, and the Rev. Patrick A Barrett II, General Secretary for your full support.

Thank you to the sponsors: Rev. Dr. Lorenza Ricardo Meekins, Hood Memorial AME Zion Church (Richmond, VA), Rev. Rhema Dawson-Murdock, Alleyne African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (Philadelphia, PA), Rev. Dr. Anthony Witherspoon (candidate for Bishop), Rev. Dr. Evalina Huggins (candidate for Bishop), Rev. Daran H. Mitchell (candidate for Bishop), Freedom Temple African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (Baltimore, MD), Christian Education Department of the Alabama/Florida Episcopal District and the Christian Education Department of South Delta Episcopal District.

The Rev. Brandon M. Moore, pastor of the Faith African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (Atlanta, GA), was dynamic and powerful! His preachment was masterful! All of our young people, from elementary school to college, participated in the devotions with exuberance and excellence!

The Acolyte Task Force was spectacular! Reid Chandler and Mr. Robert



Goodman were superb as they taught the role of the Acolyte. The Rev. Lessie Simpson and Rev. Irene Pyke ministered in the Prayer War Room. Thank you to the Rev. Dr. William Leon Ward and Riley Chandler who taught “Lead like Jesus - Engaging the Community through Leadership.” Dr. Ward provided insight on how Acolytes should follow the example of Christ in their engagement to the community. Acolytes are to not only minister to chancel and pulpit areas, but also the community at large. Miss Samia Richardson (Samaria Richardson) taught, “Ministering to the flock - Service with a Smile.” This teenager from Simon Temple AME Zion Church facilitated an engaging session on the Acolyte’s role in ministering to the congregation through servant leadership.

The Fireside Chat with the Bishops was amazing! Thank you Bishop Brian R Thompson Sr., Bishop Michael A. Frencher, Bishop George D. Crenshaw and Bishop Kenneth Monroe for your transparency, heartfelt wise council and practical recommendations of how the acolytes can be more effective through leadership, discipleship and service.

The Acolyte Night of Worship on Sunday, April 23, 2023 at 6PM EST was AMAZING! This event boasted over 5500 viewers, 792 comments and 118 likes. The broadcast reached across the world into Africa and Europe. Thank you, Darin Kent and The Star of Zion for producing the Acolyte Virtual Conference and Night of Worship. Thank you to the Rev. Dr. Laticia Hill Godette who taught and preached under the anointing. Her preachment about Elijah and Elisha’s relationship was medicine for the soul that rendered spiritual healing. Thank you Freedom Temple AMEZ and Psalmist Winslow Ratliff Jr. for your ministry of song.

The Stephen Gill Spottswood Acolytes of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church are gearing up for the National Acolyte Festival on October 6, 7 & 8, which is the weekend of Columbus Day. Please scan the QR Code and register!



REV. ALMA COLES CHARLES Inducted Into 2023 DLA Hall of Fame

Submitted by Debra Chappelle-Polk
Zion Spotlight Editor, The Star of Zion
Email: ZionSpotlight@StarofZion.org

Fort Belvoir, VA - On May 18, 2023, Rev. Alma Coles Charles, along with six former Defense Logistics Agency employees, became the newest members of DLA's Hall of Fame. The ceremony was held at DLA Headquarters in Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

Rev. Alma Coles Charles serves as pastor of St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church in Meredithville, VA, Mid-Atlantic Episcopal District, Virginia Conference, Petersburg District.

The induction ceremony was covered by Nancy Benecki, DLA News Division. An excerpt of the article is reprinted below:

DLA Director Navy Vice Adm. Michelle Skubic, who served as the host of the ceremony, said the members of the Hall of Fame are among those responsible for the success of the organization. Established in 1998, this year marks the 25th anniversary of DLA's Hall of Fame. "This year's inductees served a combined total of 132 years of federal service and brings the total number of Hall of Fame members to 143. That's an impressive amount of experience, especially when you consider the quality of their service during their incredible careers." She said, "Our impeccable reputation, earned over nearly 62 years of outstanding support to our warfighters and our nation, can be attributed to these remarkable individuals and many like them. Whatever successes we achieve today, whatever insights and innovations, can be traced back to such legacies as our Hall of Fame."

Charles, the former division chief of DLA Aviation's Aviation Commodities Division, started her 40-year career in 1972 as an inventory management specialist at the Defense General Supply Center. According to her nomination, her career showcased her leadership skills, supply expertise, foresight, operational experience, and dedication to the agency's mission.

Charles was an essential part in sustaining about 1.5 million national item identification numbers supporting 1,800 weapons systems. She helped introduce the automated inventory management system and the first online requisition processing system, both of which evolved into systemic processes that are still in use today.

As the enterprise transitioned to Business Systems Modernization in 2004, Charles became the supplier operations chief for the Aviation Commodities Division. She led her team through the transition by implementing training plans and moving most of the transferred employees into new roles.

Charles twice served as the temporary deputy director of supplier operations, where she was responsible for 800 acquisition workforce professionals who executed over 30,000 monthly contracting actions. During one of her tenures in the role, Charles was asked to address workforce reshaping issues due to organizational structure changes. She ensured the workload was distributed and skill gaps were covered by updating and improving training and career development programs.



Charles supported her employees and understood how their actions were critical to weapons system sustainment, according to the nomination. She also championed change, diversity, inclusion, and equality.

She encouraged employees to reach their highest potential, which was reflected in their personal performance as well as the consistently high level of success within all functional areas within the division. Charles's leadership, mentorship and professional guidance have influenced a variety of current DLA Aviation leaders including supervisors, division chiefs, directors and deputy chief of staff.

Charles earned numerous honors and awards, including the Distinguished Career Service Award, which is the federal government's highest honor for civilian employees.

Each inductee received a medal to wear during the ceremony, as well as a commemorative plaque, a congratulatory letter from the DLA director and a DLA Hall of Fame lapel pin. Inductees' spouses or family members received a certificate of appreciation.



CONGRATULATIONS TO REV. ALMA COLES CHARLES!

ELIZABETH CITY DISTRICT KEEPS YOUTH INVOLVED

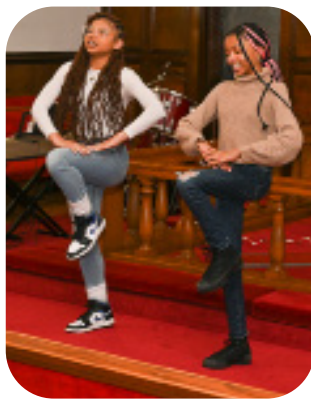
Written by Mrs. Lucy Beamon
Submitted by Debra Chappelle-Polk
Spotlight Editor, The Star of Zion
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“From Darkness to Light- Rebuilding Our Sunday School”

Sunday School Convention

Elizabeth City, NC - On March 18, 2023, the Elizabeth City District Christian Education Department Church School Convention was held at Mt. Lebanon AME Zion Church, where the Rev. Javan Leach serves as Pastor. We had an awesome time sharing our theme, “From Darkness to Light- Rebuilding Our Sunday School.” Each department shared information about the importance of Sunday School and how we can revitalize and rebuild our churches. Each church shared its interpretation of the theme through songs, cheers, pictures, poems, and banners. The Convention included: an opening processional filled with marching and waving flags during the opening processional, breakout sessions for each Christian Education department, theme representations and reports from each Sunday School, lunch, and fellowship. We truly enjoyed the creative ways they expressed what the theme meant to them.



Our Presiding Elder is the wonderful Rev. Dr. Donald Jones, and our department directors are: Mrs. Sandra Davis Director of Children, Ms. Thelma Jordan Director of Youth, Rev. Wanda Johnson Director of Young Adults, and Mrs. Lillian Dance Director of Adults. Mrs. Gloria Spence is our Conference Director and Rev. Dr. Joseph Walton is our CED Conference Chair.

Elizabeth City Courthouse Visit: On Monday, April 9, 2023, five youth and five adult members of St. James AME Zion Church were in-

vited to be the guests of Honorable Judge J.C. Cole. Judge Cole spoke to the young men in his chambers before the afternoon session began and during afternoon break. He told them that his demeanor would be different in court than what they see in the church.

During our visit, we talked about the importance of making good choices in life to stay on the path of good citizenship, as well as the path of righteousness. “When you don’t make good choices, other people get to choose for you,” said Judge Cole. We discussed at length the dangers of drugs and alcohol, as well as the company we choose to keep. The young men were asked what the lessons they learned and one responded, “Don’t be late for court or not show up because you will go to jail.” Although this is true, we also wanted them to understand that God is with us everywhere we take him - whether that be at school, work, or church, we can lean on HIM for guidance, especially as it relates to choices we make.

This was actually the second time our youth visited Judge Cole as his special guests in the courtroom.



Yard Cleanup:

Trustee Board member, Bro. Keith Mallory, asked the older youth of St. James if they wanted to earn some money cleaning a neighbor’s yard. They all jumped at the chance. On Saturday, April 22, 2023, four youth members arrived at the work site at 7:30 a.m. They worked for four hours and helped haul four loads to the dump. Going forward, the plan is to start a business helping members of the community and, at the same time, show our youth how to earn their own money.

We thank Reverend Earnest Cole Jr., Brother Keith Mallory, and all the members of St. James AMEZ for investing in our youth members!



Alabama/Florida Episcopal District's 2023 Men of Zion Retreat

Written by Rev. Larry Jacobs
Submitted by Debra Chappelle-Polk
Spotlight Editor, The Star of Zion
Email: ZionSpotlight@StarofZion.org

Greenville, AL - The Alabama/Florida Episcopal District 2023 Men of Zion Retreat was held June 2-3, 2023, on the historic campus of Lomax-Hannon College in Greenville, Alabama, under the leadership of Rev. Larry Jacobs, Episcopal Director. Men and boys from A.M.E. Zion churches in Alabama, Florida, Georgia and Mississippi were in attendance. We were blessed by the presence of our bishop, the Rt. Rev. George D. Crenshaw, on both days of the retreat.

Highlights of the retreat on Friday included a "Stop the Violence Forum" with Sheriff Christopher West of the Lowndes County Alabama Sheriff's Department. Sheriff West briefed the men on the changing laws in Alabama that will affect young people. Checkers, chess, and horse-shoe tournaments were also held. The men closed out Friday night with an old-fashioned Fish Fry.

On Saturday morning, "What's Working Men In Action!" was shared by Bro. Johnny Lee of the Tuscaloosa/Bessemer District, Bro. Jeff Wells of the Florida Annual Conference, and Rev. Anthony Thames of the South Alabama Annual Conference. A number of the AFED Men of Zion conferences have awarded sizeable scholarships to young men in our episcopal area.

We were blessed by Pastor Rodney Jones on Saturday during the "Brother-2-Brother" session. Pastor Jones is an EMDR II Therapist with a Masters' degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and Psychology from Troy State University. He has served as president of the Pensacola NAACP and regional director for the State of Florida with the NAACP. He is currently the Pastor and CEO of New World Believers and President of Movement for Change in Civil Rights. His testimony and poetry electrified attendees.

Ethan Hill of Ethan's Heart-Bags4Blessings shared the work of his



non-profit organization. Ethan is 12 years old and has dedicated half of life providing survival supplies to the homeless population in an innovative way. When Ethan was 6 years old, he used his own money to purchase supplies for a homeless man. Each year, Ethan's Heart-Bags-4Blessings has steadily grown and has been able to help the unhoused survive living on the streets. Ethan Hill's charity has served thousands of homeless people in Birmingham. He created the first-of-its-kind Ethan's Heart Free Mobile Store and Educational Unit, which is a fully customized mobile trailer store where individuals *shop free of charge* for the supplies they need. The mobile store was parked on campus during the retreat for attendees to tour. The Men of Zion made a financial donation to this ministry.

Another retreat highlight was the 32-player Game-Zone Truck, where the youth were able to play and compete in the latest electronic games. The Health Fair offered tests for high blood pressure, diabetes, and other medical disorders.

The 2023 Zion Men's Retreat closed out with a hearty lunch and prayer. Everyone -- *the men and the youth* -- thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

The Kennedy-Connelly Educational Assistance Fund Awards Educational Funds

Submitted by The Eastern Shore District of the Philadelphia-Baltimore Conference

Salisbury, MD- The Eastern Shore District of the Philadelphia-Baltimore Conference is pleased to announce the continuation of its educational assistance program to support and encourage post-secondary, undergraduate education, and vocational training at an accredited institution.

The Kennedy-Connelly Educational Assistance Fund Committee has awarded \$2,000 to Kennedie Johnson and Kurtis Thomas, Jr., based on their church membership, activities, community service, endorsement from their Pastor and Presiding Elder William E. Kelly, who serves the Eastern Shore District.

Kennedie is a sophomore, majoring in Accounting at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore in Princess Anne, Maryland. She has maintained a 3.6 GPA while completing a rigorous academic schedule and maintaining membership in the Models Collective Club.

She is an active member of St. James A.M.E. Zion Church under the leadership of Rev. Dr. David L. McLendon. She is a member of the Praise Team, Mass Choir, Liturgical Dance team and Puppet Ministry, she also served as the youth delegate for the Women's Home and Overseas Missionary Society's (WH&OMS) 29th Quadrennial Convention in 2019,



held in Orlando, Florida. Kennedie volunteers at Horizons Summer Camp, the Community Vegetable Garden and nursing homes. She is the daughter of Ms. Roben McGriff-Thompson.

Kurtis is a 2023 graduate of Wicomico Senior High School, with a 3.3 GPA. While completing his academic studies, he received Presidential and Honor Roll awards, as well as the "Mind in Motion" award. He also excelled in athletics while participating on the track, football, and basketball teams.

He is an active member of St. John A.M.E. Zion Church in Laurel, Delaware, under the leadership of former pastor, Rev. Tashanika Thomas. He participated in Sunday School and attends worship services regularly. He contributed to media support during online and hybrid services. In the pastor's absence, he also supported the media/online technology role independently. In addition, he also participated in youth events and Christian Education Department (CED) seminars offered by the district and connectional winter meetings. Kurtis also volunteered as an usher for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration.



He will be attending Frostburg State University in Frostburg, Maryland in the fall to pursue a degree in Exercise Science. He is the son of Rev. Tashanika and Mr. Kurtis Thomas, Sr.

Blue Ridge Holds 133rd Session

Submitted by Ms. Ruth L. Thompson
Photographs by Rev. Dale Simmons

Black Mountain, NC - The 133rd Session of the Blue Ridge Annual Conference was held May 24-27, 2023, at the beautiful and scenic Walls-Battle Conference and Retreat Center in Black Mountain, North Carolina. Bishop Darryl B. Starnes serves as Presiding Prelate. Sister Camille Starnes serves as Missionary Supervisor. Bishop Brian R. Thompson, Sr. serves as Associate Bishop. Rev. Felica R. Thompson serves as Associate Supervisor. Rev. Herbert Grant (Asheville) serves as Host Presiding Elder. Dr. J. Ruth Davis serves as Hendersonville District Presiding Elder. The session's motto was, "Holiness Unto the Lord." The Quadrennial Theme is "The Freedom Church: A Movement Empowered by the Holy Spirit."



Bishop Starnes welcomed the delegation and said, "What a blessing to be at another annual conference. I want it to be a means of grace. God loves the Blue Ridge Conference." He challenged the ministers to be examples to the people of God. Prayer coordinators offered prayers for the conference, the Associate Bishop and his wife, the episcopal address, the speaker, and others. Rev. Mary Scott, the pastor of Mt. Zion A.M.E. Zion Church, delivered a powerful and moving opening message entitled, "Knock, Knock, the Door is Open (Revelation 4:1)."

Bishop Thompson presented Bishop Starnes for his episcopal address on Wednesday afternoon. Bishop Starnes set the tone for the conference with a thought-provoking address on "The Evidence of a Spiritually Empowered Church." He identified and briefly described 14 evidences of a spiritually-empowered church. Copies of the address are available electronically.

Following Bishop Starnes' address, Reverend Wanda Merriweather of the North Charlotte District, gave an enlightening workshop on sexual misconduct prevention.



Presiding Elder Herbert Grant delivered a powerful and profound sermon Wednesday evening entitled, "Doors That No Man Can Shut (Revelation 3:7-8)."

The election of delegates to the General Conference happened Thursday. The ministerial delegates elected were: Dr. J. Ruth Davis, Rev. Herbert Grant, Rev. Andrea Purcell and Rev. William Eric Staley. Lay delegates were Ms. Annette Staley, Mrs. Eslinda Webster, Ms. Annie Craig, and Mr.



William McDowell.

The Lay Luncheon was held Thursday afternoon. The speaker for the occasion was Rev. Dr. Anthony J. Davis, who is the president of Livingstone College.

Rev. Andrea Purcell, the pastor of Matthew Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church, delivered the education sermon - "The Theology of Being Pressed Down but Not Forsaken (1.Cor. 2)" - on Thursday evening.

On Friday morning, Associate Missionary Supervisor Rev. Felica R. Thompson delivered the WHOMS prayer meditation. She blessed the conference with the message of "Prayer Still Works." Sis. Camille Starnes provided the moments of sharing.

The Home Missions Luncheon was held Friday afternoon. Bishop and Mrs. Starnes crowned Mrs. Joanna Howard of Harris Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church in Canton, North Carolina, as Queen of the Blue Ridge Conference.

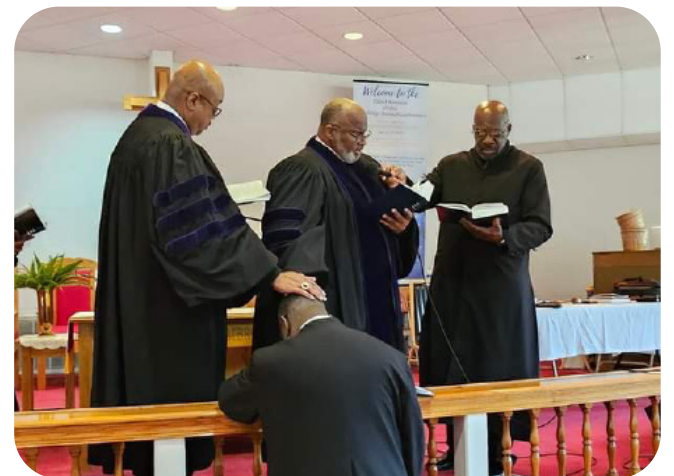
Associate Bishop Brian Thompson delivered a powerful, moving, and enlightening message on Friday evening entitled "As Long as the Door is Open, There's Hope (Luke 7:11-17)."



Saturday was Youth Day. Saturday morning, the delegation enjoyed liturgical dancing from Alia, who is a member of Hopkins Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church in Asheville, North Carolina, as well as the praise team from Young's Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church of New Market, Tennessee. Rev. Anthony Davenport, pastor of Macedonia A.M.E. Zion Church in Swannanoa, North Carolina, delivered the morning's message, "Keep Knocking at the Door Because Prayer will Change Things."



Bishop Darryl Starnes delivered the closing message. He spoke on "Sharing Our Faith by Proclaiming Christ's Gospel (Romans 15:18-21)." During his sermon, he said, "Our goal in fully proclaiming Christ's Gospel is to bring people to God. We must proclaim it by words, deeds, by signs and wonders, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Our focus must be on the lost".



During the 133rd session, four pastors requested and were granted the state of retirement. They were Rev. Mildred Twitty, Rev. Richard Blanton, Rev. Robert McDowell and Rev. Margie Hines. The conference attendees thanked them for their service.

One of the major highlights of the conference - four young people accepted Christ!

Several people described the conference as a "glorious time," which included excellent sermons and powerful prayers.

The 133rd Session concluded with attendees singing "Take the Name of Jesus with You," as well as the benediction delivered by Bishop Starnes.

Greensboro District's WH&OMS Fourth Mass Meeting Prayer Breakfast – Conference Year Ending 2022-2023

Submitted by Mrs. Nina R. Ingram

Greensboro District WH&OMS Reporter

“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God: and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.” 1 John 4:7-8 KJV

Greensboro, NC - The Greensboro District Women’s Home and Overseas Missionary Society held its fourth Mass Meeting of the Conference Year on Saturday, May 6, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. at Wesley Chapel (NC) AME Zion Church, where the Reverend Dr. Tracii Miller is Pastor. The Wesley Chapel pastor and congregation served as hosts of the meeting. Mrs. Loretta Woodle of Wesley Chapel (NC) gave a beautiful welcome.

The Greensboro District Secretary of Supply Mrs. Janice Holt presided over the first part of the Mass Meeting with emphasis on the 2022-2023 Missionary theme, “The Great Commission: #MissionsMatter-Globally Committed to Agape Love.” The invocation was followed by the opening congregational hymn, “Love Lifted Me.” Mrs. Georgia Jones (Mt. Olivet) read the scripture, 1 John 4:7-12, followed by the responsive reading, which was led by Mrs. Donna Bradby (Mt. Olivet).

Agape prayers were humbly submitted to our Almighty God. Mrs. Vernice Coley of Wesley Chapel (NC) offered Agape prayer for our children, youth, and young adults (Isaiah 61:9); Mrs. Tawania Keitt, (St. Stephen) offered Agape prayer for persons suffering from mental health issues (Philippians 4:6-7); Ms. Sarah Evans, (Mt. Olivet) offered Agape prayer to love our neighbor (Mark 12:31); and Mrs. Betty Kelly (Mt. Olivet) offered Agape prayer to purify our hearts (Philippians

Love.” Following the very powerful message, Pastor Miller extended an invitation to Christian discipleship.

Our District President, Dr. Edna Adams-Fulton, presided over the second part of the Mass Meeting. The offering was received by Reverend Dr. Keitt. A special appeal was made by Secretary of Supply Holt to support students at Livingstone College and Clinton College for their basic personal needs. Secretary of Supply Holt committed to a personal match of funds raised. Mrs. Linda Goins (Trinity) gave the financial report; and Ms. Phyllis Marshall (St. Stephen) provided the attendance/awards report. A Certificate of Attendance was received by the following churches: Bellview (lower level); Hood Chapel and Wesley Chapel, Virginia (middle level); and Mt. Olivet (upper level).

Mrs. Sheryl McAdoo (Trinity) provided a very warm and pleasant courtesy report.

Our Missionary President, Dr. Adams-Fulton, extended a heartwarming ‘thank you’ to all who helped make the fourth Missionary Mass Meeting Prayer Breakfast a success. She thanked everyone for their presence and participation. President Adams-Fulton also thanked Secretary of Supply Holt for her leadership. Following the remarks, the fourth



4:8-9).

The morning meditation speaker was Rev. Dr. Tracii Miller. Following Dr. Miller’s introduction by Reverend Dr. Reginald Keitt (St. Stephen), a praise dance by Ms. Gail Gaines (St. Phillip), and a song by the Mt. Olivet and Wesley Chapel (NC) choirs, Pastor Miller blessed us with a fiery and thought-provoking message. Pastor Miller’s text was taken from 1 Corinthians 16:14 and her subject was “Do Everything in





Illuminating Highlights of Loving Louisville District

Submitted by Rev. Y. Michelle Washington

Louisville, KY - Several Louisville District Pastors spent quality time in meditative prayer and restoration at the AGAPE Wilderness Retreat Center in Bedford, Kentucky from March 9-12, 2023.

Those in attendance included the Presiding Elder of the Louisville District, Rev. Dr. O. Lacy Evans, Rev. Marcia Cole- Morton, Midwest Prayer Coordinator and Pastor of Stoner Memorial AMEZ, Rev. Barbara A. Haigler, Pastor of Broadway Temple AMEZ, Dr. Valerie J. Washington, Pastor of Hughlett Temple AMEZ, Rev. Y. Michelle Washington, Pastor of Jones Memorial AMEZ, Rev. Rivers C. Sumpter, Pastor of Walters Clement AMEZ, and Rev. Brenda G. Evans, Supply Pastor, Brown Temple AMEZ. Rev. Steven L. Walker, Sr., and Rev. George R. Phillips participated virtually.

A very wonderful Christian couple, Mr. and Mrs. Susan and Mark Smithson, served as our hosts and chefs. The meals were delicious and Lenten friendly, served in a quiet and relaxing setting. When I spoke with Mrs. Susan, she said owning and operating the retreat center was their way of giving back and providing service for the blessings they have received.

Presiding Elder Evans said in planning the conference year, it had been a long while since the pastors had been in retreat and he felt it was time to get away.

Our retreat consisted of morning prayer times, and meditational messages on sharing our faith. On the first day, the meditation was given by Rev. Y. Michelle Washington from Mark 6:30-38 entitled "Get Alone With God." The next day, our meditation message was brought to us by the longest serving pastor in the Kentucky Conference, Rev. Rivers C. Sumpter. He shared a message based on Acts 3: 1-10 entitled "A Different Definition of Sharing Your Faith."

Afterwards, we hosted the Pastor/Chaplain Rev. Alesia Terrell virtually who gave wonderful presentation on "Emotional and Spiritual Care for Ministers." Her presentation covered much-needed topics on time management, physical well-being, spiritual well-being, emotional well-being, relaxation, exercise, and benediction. Although Rev. Terrell's disclaimer was that she is not a medical doctor or licensed therapist, licensed nutritionist, or licensed physical therapist, her information was beneficial in all areas based on her professional and personal experience, academic studies, and prayer.

We continued our retreat that afternoon with a virtual book discussion led by Rev. Thomas Grinter on the book, "Building The Body:12

Characteristics Of A Fit Church" by authors Gary L. McIntosh and Phil Stevenson. Rev. Grinter led us through the book and asked questions he had posed at a church when he was Supply Pastor at New Hope AMEZ Church in Salisbury, NC.

The final morning of the retreat ended with a wonderful message from Presiding Elder, Rev. Dr. O. Lacy Evans entitled "Grace Serving" from John 21: 15-16 (NLT). He reminded us by being saved by Grace allows us serve with Grace. Rev. Evans used the acrostic for Grace in his message - "G" meant "we must be genuine." "R" stood for "we must be responsible, reminding us that in the text, Jesus commanded Peter three times to be responsible for the lambs or sheep. "A" reminded us that we must be accountable. "C" equaled committed, meaning there is no room for apathy, or negligence since we have been given the privilege of being co-laborers. "E" meant effective and entrusted, since we are empowered by Jesus to do equipping of the saints.

As the Louisville district pastors left the retreat, we were renewed and we pledged to gather as a team to review and learn from the book and discuss it as a pathway to enhancing our work at the local church level.



The Louisville District marched right into Lenten worship at Walter Clements AMEZ Church with Maundy Thursday messenger, Rev. George R. Phillips, and the wonderful Seven Last Sayings of Christ by the Traveling Ministers of the District, concluding with Sunrise Service preached by Rev. Brenda Evans.

The loving and luminous Louisville district concluded the district conference year with a wonderful, spirit filled District Conference, hosted by Spradling Memorial AMEZ Church, where Rev. Steven Walker Sr. serves as pastor. The

Louisville District guest preachers were powerful in their presentations of the word - Rev. David L. Snardon, who is pastor of Joshua Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church and President of Interdenominational Ministerial Coalition (IMC) and Rev. Adam C. Carter, who serves as pastor of More Than Conquerors Christian Church. The Conference concluded with video presentation given by Bishop Leake for the Evangelism and Growth seminar series asking, "Can My Church Make A Comeback?" The presentation asked and answered in the affirmative with good directions on how to come back. Friday night, Women's Home And Overseas Missionary Society (WHOM&S) worship service concluded with a message by Rev. Y. Michelle Washington and a powerful altar prayer call of the church by Rev. Marcia J. Cole-Morton. The Spirit of the Lord truly hovered over the One Hundred Fifty Sixth Session of the Louisville District Conference.

SOZ Selects Karla Redditte as New Managing Editor

Submitted by The Star of Zion

Charlotte, NC -We'd like to welcome Karla Redditte as the newest member of The A.M.E. Zion Church Communications Department. Beginning this month, Karla will serve as the managing editor of The Star of Zion.

In her new role, Karla oversees teams of writers, editors, and graphic designers in an effort to continue the paper's advancement in inspirational and educational content for a global impact within The A.M.E. Zion Church and beyond.

"The Star of Zion has prayed and fasted to build a passionate team of journalists to provide content for the people of The A.M.E. Zion Church and Christendom as a whole," declares Mr. Darin Kent, Editor in Chief. "Our print and digital layout adjustments, reconnection with our district reporters and the hiring of category editors to produce a quality publication are some of the reasons we garnered the welcomed attention of Ms. Redditte."

While Karla is new to our team, her resume proves she is not new to the field of communications. She is an award-winning television journalist based in Charlotte, North Carolina.

She is a consummate media professional whose experience also includes social media content creation, media relations, print, blogging, digital content writing, travel writing, videography, photography, and editing.

Karla is a true storyteller with an ability to connect with any audience. Throughout her 20-year career, she has covered several major stories, including Hurricane Katrina, the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination, and the unveiling of Kehinde Wiley's "Rumors of War" in New York's Times Square, which was created in response to the Confederate monuments throughout the nation.

Karla is a native of Memphis, Tennessee. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications from Loyola University-New Orleans, as well as a Master of Arts degree in Journalism from the University of Missouri - Columbia, which is ranked nationally as one of the top journalism schools in the country.

Karla also descends from a long line of Methodists. Although she grew up within the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, her great-grandfather, Rev. William A. Redditte, served as an A.M.E. Zion Church itinerant elder in Mississippi, specifically in Clarksdale and Indianola.

When Karla is not working, she travels the world. Her most recent stops include Portugal, Peru, South Africa, Cuba, Brazil, Haiti, India, and Senegal.

She is a proud member of the National Association of Black Journalists, the Society of Professional Journalists, and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated.

"I'm excited to work with this talent-

ed team of journalists for the oldest African American newspaper still operating in North Carolina. How cool is that?!", said Redditte. "And what is even more exciting is this is Kingdom work. Our goal is to continue to operate in excellence in everything ranging from content to sources to the overall presentation. This is an important ministry, and I look forward to joining this team in our quest to spread even more good news to current and future readers of The Star of Zion."

Karla vows to uphold the mission of The Star of Zion, which is to raise the consciousness of readers with news that is current, relevant, and dependable, under the guidance of our core values: truth, faith, and love.

"We are truly blessed to have Ms. Redditte in this leadership role and are confident in her ability to take the Star to even higher heights in the future," said Mr. Kent. "God's hand has been all over her life and career thus far. Now we can't wait to experience her ministry impact with us."

If you have story ideas, submissions, or you simply want to say hello, feel free to email Karla Redditte at ManagingEditor@starofzion.org.

THE STAR OF ZION

Celebrates

MS. KARLA REDDITTE
ON BECOMING OUR MANAGING EDITOR

"I'm excited to work with this talented team of journalists for the oldest African American newspaper still operating in North Carolina. What is even more exciting is this is Kingdom work. Our goal is to continue to operate in excellence in everything ranging from content to sources to overall presentation. This is an important ministry, and I look forward to contributing to this team in our quest to spread even more good news to current and future readers of The Star of Zion."

CONTACT: MANAGINGEDITOR@STAROFZION.ORG

MR. DARIN KENT - CHIEF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER, EDITOR IN CHIEF OF THE STAR OF ZION

NYC District Christian Ed Dept. Honors Sis. Dianne M. Chappelle & Bro. Cartez Johnson

Submitted by Debra Chappelle-Polk
Zion Spotlight Editor, The Star of Zion
Email: ZionSpotlight@StarofZion.org

New York, NY - Dedicated. Faithful. Intelligent. Loyal. Steadfast. Selfless. These are just some of the words used to describe Sis. Dianne M. Chappelle and Bro. Cartez Johnson at the New York City District's Christian Education Department's honoree luncheon on Saturday, June 10, 2023. The luncheon was held at Mother A.M.E. Zion Church, which is Sis. Chappelle's home church and where she served as Director of Christian Education for over 20 years before relocating to Concord, North Carolina. The fellowship hall of Mother Zion was filled to capacity with friends, family members and church family members, all who turned out to salute the honorees.

Dr. Xellex (a/k/a Dr. X) Rivera, ACE First Vice President, NY Conference Board of CED & Tech Co-Chair, served as Mistress of Ceremonies and opened with a recitation of **Living Legacy**, a poem written by Catherine Pulsifer, which so aptly described the two honorees: *"How you act, what you do today is a living legacy on display. Kind acts, kind words you speak give us a peek. How you make others feel is a legacy revealed. It is not material things short term money brings, but helping others will always be a true living legacy. If we look at your life today what type of legacy do you display?"* (Editor's Note: Please visit [PickMeUpPoetry](http://PickMeUpPoetry.com) to view the entire poem)

There was a standing ovation and thunderous applause as the honorees and dais guests entered; Bro. Cartez Johnson, his wife, Mrs. Betty Johnson and son Cartez Johnson, Jr.; Sis. Dianne M. Chappelle; Presiding Elder Rev. Dr. A. Alfred Carson and First Lady Mrs. Dorian Carson. A musical selection by Rev. Monica Marshall (Pastor, Varick Memorial) followed.

Christian Education Co-CED District Director and program co-chair, Sis. Katrina Brown welcomed all "to celebrate this grand occasion in honor of two people who have been Christian educators my entire life."

Celebratory remarks and tokens of appreciation were shared by friends and family. Sis. Veronica Cook, Leaders of Leaders (Mother Zion) thanked Sis. Chappelle for her leadership. Milagros Cintron said she had been one of "Mama Dianne's" Sunday School kids and thanked her for her guidance. "She has always been a rock in my life," said Cintron.

Mrs. Betty Johnson read portions of a love letter she received from Cartez in 1966 before they were married. She said her husband didn't know she was going to read the letter. Guests laughed and clapped when Cartez later said he still had the dress she wore on their first date and "it still fits her." Everyone felt the love they've shared for over 50 years.

NY Conference Christian Ed Officers Mrs. Irene C. Boykin and Ms. Terneisa Lynn Calhoun (Co-Conference CED Director) and Mrs. Regina Johnson (Family Life District President) presented the honorees with beautifully engraved plaques as well as tokens of appreciation, which, in Mrs. Boykin's words, "they can spend." Mrs. Boykin told the gathering that members of her family and the Johnson family had "crossed paths" many years ago at different times, although it was a confluence of events that brought them all together.

Wilma Johnson, Bro. Johnson's younger sister, read what she called "a living eulogy," which highlighted her brother's life work and accomplishments in Christian Education. "He is a good father, husband, brother and a faithful servant."

Presentations thanking Sis. Chappelle for her faithful service were made by Rufus Canty, chair of the Mother Zion Board of Trustees, Sis. Wendy Grimes Jones, Local Parent Body President WH&OMS, Sis. Lovell C. Jackson, Lay Council President and Veronica Cook on behalf of Eula Phillips, Leader of Class 4.

Dr. X then introduced Rev. Dr. Malcolm J. Byrd, who is pastor of Mother A.M.E. Zion Church. Dr. X said Rev. Byrd, "is the pastor of this great church, as well as a change agent in the community." Rev. Byrd thanked for her kind words and asked everyone to stand. "The AME Zion Church in general, and the Christian Ed Departments of Rush Temple and Mother Zion in particular, have both benefitted from the brilliance and dedication of our honorees," he said. "After the last

few days of dust, smoke-filled air and dark clouds the sun is shining because Heaven is happy about what's happening in this space today." Rev. Byrd said he missed Sis. Dianne's presence at Mother Zion and said, "her pew was still there and she could come back at any time." He also "praised" Bro. Johnson on his dapper attire. He then introduced Presiding Elder Rev. Dr. A. Alfred Carson.

The Presiding Elder thanked Rev. Byrd and Dr. Rivera and said he was glad to be here to pay

tribute to the honorees. "We rejoice with the New York City District Christian Education Department as we celebrate the more than 20 years of stellar service of our honorees, Bro. Johnson and Sis. Chappelle," said Elder Carson. When he was asked for his approval for this event, he said, "Absolutely. It is necessary to stop and praise and to say thank you." Elder Carson has had long associations with the honorees. Bro. Johnson was the Director of the Christian Ed Dept. when he was pastor at Rush Temple. Elder Carson said Bro. Johnson "rose to the cream of



the crop." He recalled that for many years, Sis. Dianne was one of the chaperones at the mid-winter CED meetings. Everyone in the room who had ever attended a mid-winter CED meeting knew what a daunting task that was and applauded Sister Dianne for her "courage."

Before Rev. Xavier Hunter, Pastor of Rush Temple, blessed the food, Rev. Monica Marshall and Sis. M. Denise Niles sang a stirring rendition of "I Made a Vow."

After lunch, Sis. Chappelle addressed the gathering. She acknowledged Presiding Elder Carson, Rev. Dr. Byrd, Rev. Hunter, Bro. Cartez Johnson, Conference and District Officers, Sis Dorian Carson, family and friends - "all who thought it not robbery to celebrate with Bro Johnson



and I on this special occasion."

She shared her Christian Ed "resume." In 2000, she was appointed to the Hudson River District as Director of Family Life by Bishop George Walker. She recalled thinking that, once the NYC District was created, that would be the end of that. "But," she said, "that would not be the case." In 2001, Bishop Walker appointed her Director of Youth for the newly created NYC District, a position she held until 2010 when Bishop Battle appointed her Assistant Director. She served in that role until 2022. Sis. Chappelle has served under four Bishops - Walker, Battle, Holmes and Proctor; two Presiding Elders - Rev Frank E. Jones and Rev. Dr. A. Alfred Carson, and four Pastors - Reverends Durant,

Smith, Chapple and Byrd. She was the Director of Christian Ed at Mother Zion until moving to North Carolina in 2022. Sis. Chappelle said, "it has been a journey, a ministry that is dear to my heart which I fell in love."

She paraphrased Hebrews 6, saying, "God is not unjust to forget my/our work and labors of love which we have shown toward His name. When we minister to the saints and do ministry, we are cautioned not to become sluggish, or lazy. We must run well to finish to the end, remembering that the reward lies ahead."

She encouraged Christian Educators to keep the faith, persevere and remain steadfast. She said, "Be obedient to God's will, and surely God will bless you after you have endured to obtain the promise. I love you all and thank you so very much!"

Honoree Bro. Cartez Johnson addressed the gathering singing, "Another Day the Lord Has Kept Me." His sister, Ethel Cochran, accompanied him and the audience sang along. The selection was particularly moving. Bro. Johnson told the gathering he has been facing some serious health challenges over the last 5 years. He saluted his wife of over 50 years, family, and friends for their love and support. He also thanked the Conference and the New York City District for honoring him. "Through the years the Lord has been good to me. I've learned that people don't have a heaven, but God does."

Before the festivities came to a close, Sis. Elizabeth Chappelle-Meeks, ACE Recording Secretary, honored her mother (Dianne Chappelle) in a moving tribute.

Kudos to Program Co-Chairs Sis. Chappelle-Meeks and Sis. Katrina Brown, as well as the committee for putting together a wonderful afternoon of celebration with good food and fellowship. There was also a beautifully crafted souvenir journal with expressions of appreciations from various churches and friends.



Every Member a Christian, every Christian a worker, every worker trained. A worker that needeth not be ashamed, this we ask in Jesus' name. Amen - Sunday School Benediction

South Mississippi Annual Conference "Goes Fishing"

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Aurelia Jones-Smith
SMAC Star of Zion Reporter

Canton, MS - In Matthew 4:18-20, the Bible says Jesus, as He walked on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers who were fishermen casting their net into the water. He invited them to follow Him with the promise that He would make them "fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

On Saturday, April 22, 2023, Bishop Eric Leake and Missionary Supervisor Jean McMurray-Leake of the Southwestern Delta Episcopal District (SWDED) led the South Mississippi Annual Conference (SMAC) on a "fishing expedition." The evangelism outreach event designed to "fish for men" was organized by Dr. Belinda Johnson, Director, SMAC Department of Evangelism, along with the Evangelism Director of each District, Rev. Acquanetta Johnson (Canton) and Rev. William Johnson (Jackson-Panola). The "fishing" territory was the neighborhood surrounding the host church, St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church in Canton, MS, where Rev. Terry White serves as the pastor and Dr. Floyd Chambers as the Presiding Elder.

Although much work had been put into the planning and execution of the event by the Bishop, Dr. Johnson, and others, especially the host church, further groundwork was laid on the event's eve by the SMAC/SWDED Prayer Ministry, coordinated by Rev. Bonnie Travis. Aided by the Prayer Coordinator for each District, Rev. Acquanetta Johnson (Canton), and Rev. Dr. Senetra Murray (Jackson-Panola), prayer warriors arrived in rainy conditions and saturated the grounds and atmosphere with prayer. By the power of prayer, an amazingly crystal clear-blue sky appeared for the outdoor event on the following day.

Members of the Conference arrived ready to launch out into the "deep," sporting t-shirts designed specifically for the occasion. Following prayers offered by various prayer warriors, Bishop Leake and Dr. Johnson gave instructions for launching out and reaching out to souls.

Eight teams were sent out, equipped with the Spirit of prayer and items such as gospel tracts, wrist bands, treats, and flyers inviting persons to the midday service. On the perimeters of the church's parking lot, booths were set up to welcome and assist those who came onto the church grounds. Attendees were treated to free education materials for preschoolers and older children, voter registration assistance, information pertaining to health care and wellness, materials about Zion from the SMAC Lay Council, and even snacks. Outside the church's fence were prayer warriors inviting passersby for prayer. Assuring there was something for all, other departments, mainly the Missionary Society

and Christian Education, gathered children inside for games, and youth to hear speakers on topics such as drug abuse and suicide. At the designated time, teams returned and enthusiastically shared news about how well they had been received.

The midday service featured evangelistic preaching. Bishop Leake drew from the pool of Conference Evangelists. They did not disappoint. Each brought a very powerfully anointed meditation. Included were Rev. Darlene White (also the first lady at St. Paul-Canton); Rev. Angela Brown (also the first lady at Greater Murphy A.M.E. Zion Church-Camden); Rev. Heidi E. Jones (Cathedral A.M.E. Zion Church-Jackson and visiting elder at Victory A.M.E. Zion Church-Jackson); and Rev. William Johnson (Cathedral A.M.E. Zion Church -Jackson and Jackson-Panola District Evangelism Director). Bishop Leake rounded out the service with a fiery, Spirit-filled word from the Lord and an invitation to receive the purpose of the event, Jesus Christ.



Johnson Excels to Western North Carolina Conference Position

Submitted By Rev. Diane Commander

CHARLOTTE, NC - Gloria exhibits outstanding love, dedication and commitment to the Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church Family and Zion. Under the Pastorate of Rev. Dr. Dwayne A. Walker, Gloria joined Little Rock 14 years ago. Even though she retired from

Walter Reed National Hospital for Military Medicine, she has never stopped working. She currently serves as the Lay Council President and Coordinator of the C. D. Rippy Scholarship Fund at Little Rock. Gloria serves as a very energetic member for a host of ministries throughout the church: Assistant Secretary of the Walker for Bishop 2024 Campaign, Military, Public Relations, Quilting and WH&OMS; collaborates with the Bread of Life Ministry to get food to the needy; serves on the Board of Trustees and the Board of Evangelism. Not only has she received a Little Rock Day Plaque for displaying "Excellence in Ministry", but she has also served as the General Chairperson for this annual celebration. She also works part-time at the office of the Star of Zion (Official Voice of the A.M.E. Zion Church).

She is a loving mother to her son,

Darryll, who not only brought her 50 yellow roses for her 50th Anniversary Graduation Celebration from Livingstone College, but on a "got to see my mama visit" took his mom shopping and bought her a brand-new car (Love in Action!) Gloria loves her family and is extremely fond of her nephew Bradley who spends time with her during the summer months.

On Saturday, May 27, 2023, Mrs. Gloria Joyner Johnson was elected to serve as the Recording Secretary of the Lay Council for the Western North Carolina Conference. What a Blessing...

When I think about my friend Gloria, I am reminded of the quote by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "If I can help somebody as I pass along, if I can cheer somebody with a word or a song. If I can show somebody he's traveling wrong, then my living will not be in vain. Keep Soaring my friend - God's Gets the Glory!"



Clinton College Hires Rev. Dr. Jerret Fite as New Division of Religious & Ministry Studies Chair



He is married to Attorney Andrea Leslie Fite and they have two boys, Jeremiah and Aaron, and his precious baby girl, Maya.

Dr. Fite lives by the motto, "Only what you do for Christ will last!"

Submitted by Kristen Brown
Email: kbrown@clintoncollege.edu

Rock Hill, SC - Clinton College recently hired Reverend Dr. Jerret Fite as the new Division of Religious and Ministry Studies chair. No stranger to Clinton College, Dr. Fite most recently served as a professor of religion and serves as chair of the faculty council. Dr. Fite was named Faculty of the Year in 2021. He brings practical experience to the role of division chair, having accepted the call into ministry in 2002. Dr. Fite currently serves as the pastor of Robinson A.M.E. Zion Church in Cheraw, SC, where he continues to move ministry in a positive direction.

"Dr. Fite is not only a champion for Christ, but our students," said Dr. Toneyce Randolph, Vice President of Academic Services. "Since beginning my tenure here at the college, I have seen how Dr. Fite's infectious spirit and personality reign supreme over the campus. We are extremely elated to have Dr. Fite join the academic administrative team here at Clinton College."

He serves God ecumenically as well as throughout the community, including the NAACP, the Balm in Gilead, and Habitat for Humanity. Dr. Fite is a proud member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Incorporated, and Kappa Kappa Psi National Honorary Band Fraternity.

Dr. Fite graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and a minor in History from North Carolina Central University. While at NC Central, Dr. Fite was the recipient of the prestigious Chancellor's Leadership Award which is granted to outstanding seniors who exhibit a commitment to excellence in the classroom and the community. In 2015, Dr. Fite earned a Master of Divinity from Gardner-Webb University, and in May of 2018, he earned a Doctorate of Ministry from Hood Theological Seminary.



Clinton College Announces New Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program

Submitted by Kristen Brown
Email: kbrown@clintoncollege.edu

Rock Hill, SC – Clinton College has launched a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree program, which will begin in fall 2023. The launch of this program makes Clinton the second historically black college to currently offer a BSN in the state of South Carolina.

"With the launch of our new nursing program, we hope to enroll and produce a diverse population of nurses to address the national nursing shortage," said Dr. Lester A. McCorn, President of Clinton College. "Clinton is dedicated to equipping our nursing students with the right knowledge and tools to provide exceptional care to those in South Carolina and beyond."

Led by the Director of Nursing, Dr. Glenda Sims, Clinton College

will offer hands-on experience for our students using state-of-the-art simulators located in the nursing lab. The simulators mimic illnesses and medical conditions that students will see during clinicals. Clinical simulation prepares students for real-world experiences in the medical field.

"Clinton College recognizes the urgent need to promote health within our community, we seek to do this through programming aligned with the mission and heritage of the college," said Dr. Toneyce Randolph, Vice President of Academic Services. "We endeavor to establish a professional nursing program where graduates will safely and enthusiastically lead and where graduates will positively impact their communities through the practice of nursing."

In addition to the Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Clinton has added Healthcare Administration, Cybersecurity, Interdisciplinary Studies, Elementary Education, and Music degrees to its new academic catalog.

Hood Theological Seminary Donor and Scholarship Recognition Program



Submitted by Carol Palmer

Salisbury, NC - The Hood Theological Seminary (HTS) held its 19th annual Bishop James Walker Hood Donor & Scholarship Recognition Program on May 19, 2023. This event recognizes and thanks those donors whose support reaffirms Hood's mission and unique investment in the future of the church and society.

Dr. Vergel Lattimore, President of HTS and Professor of Pastoral Psychology and Counseling, provided an update about the direction and vision of the Seminary. The keynote speaker for the evening was Richard P. Blankenship, CFA, Principal at Franklin Street Partners. Mr. Blankenship discussed philanthropy, types of donors who support organizations, and the importance of giving back to the community. Dr. Trevor Eppheimer, Academic Dean of HTS, gave an update about the highlights of the academic life of the seminary including new programs being offered to students and the community. Graduating student Mark McRacken emphasized how the scholarship assistance that he received as a student has supported his studies and was critical in assisting him to graduate in May.

The evening concluded with the presentation of the annual Bishop James Walker Hood Awards. The Zion Heritage Appreciation Award was given to Mrs. Sondra B. Crowder, the International President of the Women's Home & Oversees Missionary Society of the A.M.E Zion Church, for her continued support of the church and the community, as well as for her outstanding missionary leadership work. The Community Donor Award was presented to the Cannon Founda-

tion for its long-term service and support in Western North Carolina, Rowan County and Cabarrus County. The Legacy Donor Award was given to Darrell Hancock and his law firm for his supporting of the Seminary for over twenty years. The Individual Donor Award was given to Mrs. Shirley McCoy for her generous support to the students and faculty at HTS. Finally, the Alumni Donor Award was given to Rev. Harold Robinson, MDiv.'98, an alumnus who has been a true blessing to HTS with his artistic donations to the Seminary.



Hood Theological Seminary Adds New Academic Programs

Submitted by Carol Palmer

Salisbury, NC - Hood Theological Seminary has added two new academic programs. The first program, the Master of Arts in Christian Education (MACE), provides a concentration in Christian Education within the Master of Divinity Program. However, this new degree program is designed to further undergird persons whose primary responsibility is within educational ministry. This degree is designed to provide sufficient nurture and educational opportunities to further enhance faith development/spiritual formation and increase the value of Christian education as ministry.

The second degree is the Certificate in Christian Education (CCE) Program. Hood is offering a Certificate in Christian Education as a non-de-

greed program to provide nurture for persons serving in educational ministry within various congregations and denominations. It is not embedded as a concentration within any of the master's degrees offered. This Certificate in Christian Education is designed to prepare persons (clergy or lay) for leadership in Christian Education on denominational, judicatory, regional, ecumenical, or congregational levels and other arenas requiring such expertise. The target audience is also for those who have not earned a bachelor's degree, but possess a high school diploma, high school equivalency or an associate degree. For more information on the Master of Arts in Christian Education (MACE), or the Certificate in Christian Education (CCE) Program, visit www.hoodseminary.edu.

Hood Theological Seminary Celebrates 22nd Commencement



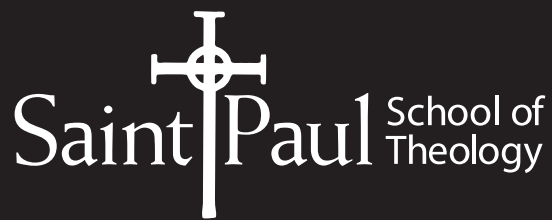
Submitted by Carol Palmer

Salisbury, NC - Hood Theological Seminary celebrated its 22nd commencement on Saturday, May 20, 2023, at Varick Auditorium on the campus of Livingstone College.

Family and friends gathered to support the 2023 graduating class of Hood Theological Seminary.

Dr. Delores Brisbon served as the 2023 Commencement Speaker. During her speech, Dr. Brisbon encouraged students to be their “authentic selves” in dealing with life’s challenges.

The Doctor of Humane Letters was awarded to the Honorable Adele M. Riley, and the highlight of the graduation service was the conferring of nine Doctor of Ministry degrees, thirty-one Master of Divinity degrees, and two Certificates.



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Livingstone College Holds Annual Honors Convocation

Submitted by Rev. Sam Brown
Education Editor, The Star of Zion
Email: admin@starofzion.org

On Wednesday, April 19, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. in Varick Auditorium, Livingstone College affirmed its commitment to celebrating students with records of academic achievement at the annual Dr. Samuel E. Duncan Honors Convocation. Under the leadership of President Dr. Anthony J. Davis, this year's theme, "Academic Excellence: The Foundation for the Career Journey Ahead," acknowledged the college's history of servant-leadership through the works of President Duncan, and demonstrated the resilience of the institution guest speaker, alumnus Rev. Eldren Morrison.



Student Ne'Khia Ray of Alpha Phi Sigma National Criminal Justice Honor Society presided over the program, while Student Government Association president and member of Phi Beta Lambda Honor Society, Michael Gilyard, provided the Statement of Occasion. Campus Minister Rev. Lloyd Nivens IV opened with prayer, which was followed by the Negro National Anthem, as the entire audience stood proudly and collectively to sing, "Lift Every Voice and Sing."

Miss Livingstone College, Ashleigh Clark, a member of Pi Gamma Mu, greeted the student body, and President Anthony J. Davis introduced the speaker, Rev. Eldren Morrison, pastor of Shaw Temple AME Zion Church in Smyrna, Georgia. Rev. Morrison challenged students to seek confidence and competence by gaining information, inspiration, imagination, and illumination, while highlighting Jesus is the light of the world. The Livingstone College Gospel Choir closed this portion of the program in song with "Glory, Glory, Glory."

Senior Business Administration major, Varvara Papakonstantinou, a member of Alpha Kappa Mu Honor Society, stated, "This year's speaker was empowering, relatable, and encouraging. I have been excited about my post-undergraduate plans, but this event has added confidence and pride to what I am currently feeling."



Following the Honors Convocation Address, students were recognized for stellar achievements in three categories: Institutional Awards, Individual/Organizational Awards, and Presentation Awards. Seniors Juliet Makena and Varvara Papakonstantinou were big winners of the day as both students were recognized as recipients of the Lamp of Knowledge, which is an award presented to the graduating senior with the highest cumulative grade point average and who has matriculated at Livingstone College from the freshman to the senior year. Both women have membership in Alpha Kappa Mu Honor Society, earned a Gold Medal for a 4.0 cumulative grade point average, are members of the Honda Campus All-Star Challenge Club, and are affiliated with the campus chapter of American Association of University Women. Juliet Makena also earned the Abbie Clement-Jackson Award, which is an honor presented to the student who has



contributed most to the campus to foster better human relations.

Another big winner was junior, Taimoah Garlo, a criminal justice major from Durham, North Carolina. Taimoah received the Class of 1954 Scholarship, which is presented to a student who demonstrates good citizenship, high character, and serves the campus and community. Taimoah also received the Livingstone College National Alumni Association Scholarship, the Forty Under 40 Scholarship, a Gold Medal for a 3.9 cumulative grade point average, and was recognized as a Presidential Merit Scholar.



In an atmosphere filled with resourceful young men and women eager to engage in opportunities beyond measurable bounds, the event was a joyous occasion for the Livingstone College family. From alumna Carmen Burton presenting the Salisbury-Rowan-Davie Alumni Chapter Scholarship, to Jeremiah Brown representing the Frank R. Brown Gamma Mu Chapter Scholarship, students of Livingstone College felt embraced and they recognized the investment organizations like the United Negro College Fund, the Livingstone College National Alumni Association, and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church makes in their lives.



Over 250 students were acknowledged for their academic success, and the event echoed the sentiments of President Anthony J. Davis. Livingstone College students are relevant, resilient, and ready.

Category One Awards: Institutional Awards

THE LAMP OF KNOWLEDGE – Juliet Makena and Varvara Papakonstantinou

Presented to the graduating senior with the highest cumulative grade point average and who has matriculated at Livingstone College from the freshman to the senior year.

THE COLLEGE ACHIEVEMENT AWARD – Alexis Lake

Presented to the student who makes the most outstanding single contribution in any field during the school term.

THE E. MOORE AWARD – David Bradford and Terrance McPherson

Presented to a young man in recognition of intellectual attainment, high character, service to the College, initiative, efficiency and Christian ideals.

THE DR. J.T. WILLIAMS AWARD – Zion D. Williams

Presented to the young man in the junior class who best exemplifies scholarship, excellent character and good citizenship.

THE JENNIE HARRIS-WILLIAMS MEMORIAL AWARD – Asiyah Clifton

Presented to the young woman in the junior class who best exemplifies scholarship, excellent character and good citizenship.

THE ABBIE CLEMENT-JACKSON AWARD – Juliet Makena

Presented to the student who has contributed most to the campus to foster better human relations.

THE LULA MONTGOMERY AWARD – The Psychology Club

Presented to the organization making the most outstanding contribution to the College.

Category Two: Individual/Organizational Awards

THE CIVITAN CLUB AWARD - Alexis Lake

Presented to an education student who has demonstrated outstanding scholarship, citizenship and character.

CLASS OF 1954 SCHOLARSHIP – Taimoah A. Garlo

Presented to a Livingstone College senior who demonstrates good citizenship, high character, and is involved in school and community activities.

THE TRUMILLER WIMBERLY RAMSEUR et al ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP – Akera Barnes and Carrington Hayward

Student(s) must be full time, a resident of the State of New York, have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher and demonstrate financial need.

THE REVEREND MALONE SMITH JR. ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP – Gregory Champion

Student(s) must be full time, a resident of Alabama, and have a 2.7 GPA or higher

MAMIE LEDBETTER TURNER ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP – Jada Lightsey and Jahleel Morman. Full-time student, cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 and demonstrate financial need.

MARGARET C. WOODSON FOUNDATION ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP – Anandie Bruner, Natasha Campbell, Denayih Coleman, Freddy Cuthbertson, Sharika Cuthbertson, Devon Drakeford, Ty'Zhanae Garrett, Jinka Glenn, Damian Grooms, De'Nya Harriston, Salina Holmes, Lee Boyd Kennedy, Roberta Means, Bishop Norman, Jonathan Nunn, Messiah Robinson, Sequaia Robinson, and Autumn Wolfe

Student(s) must be full time, a resident of Rowan County and have a 2.5 or higher gpa

Category Three: Presentation Awards

DR. CATRELIA S. HUNTER ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP – Terrance McPherson

Presented by Garette Hunter. Awarded to a junior majoring in business or education with a GPA of 2.5 or higher.

THE HIAWATHA AND LURENDA BERRY SCHOLARSHIP – Christian Bussey

Presented by Deborah F. Johnson. Awarded to students who demonstrate leadership potential and academic excellence. Student must have a GPA of 2.5 or higher.

JOHN SHEPARD AND ANNIE CARR LEAZER SCHOLARSHIP – Shawnae Y. Robertson

Presented by Deborah F. Johnson. Student must demonstrate leadership potential and academic excellence and have a GPA of 2.5 or higher. (In memory of Samuel S. Leazer)

NC BLACK CAUCUS – Stephen Allen, Elijah Puranda, Alexis Cokley, Darnell Langford, Marquis Brunson, Ben Coates III, Lafayette Thompson, Jordan Geddie, Jeffrey Steele, Ayannah and Steele

Presented by Warren Arrington. Students must reside in North Carolina, required GA 2.5 or higher, must participate in 20 hours of community service, and be an upperclassman.

NC Z. SMITH REYNOLDS SCHOLARSHIP – Samantha Sheff and Natasha Campbell

Presented by Warren Arrington. Funds have been given to the NC Legislative Black Caucus Foundation to be distributed to Black women attending one of the 10 public or private HBCUs within the state. Students must have a 2.5 or better, participate in economic and social community activities, and be an upperclassman.

THE LIVINGSTONE COLLEGE NATIONAL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION SCHOLARSHIP – Taimoah Garlo, Devon Drakeford, and Jalen Robinson

Presented by Dr. Da'Tarvia Parrish. Student(s) must be full time with a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher and exhibit good moral character.

SALISBURY-ROWAN-DAVIE ALUMNI CHAPTER SCHOLARSHIP – Damian Groomes

Presented by Carmen Burton. Presented to a Livingstone College student from the Salisbury, Rowan, Davie area who has demonstrated good citizenship, and is involved in school and community volunteer activities.

THE CHARLOTTE ALUMNI CHAPTER – Devon Drakeford, Brianna Pierce, and Jalen Robinson

Presented by Mr. Lee Howard. Must be enrolled as a full-time student, have a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or above, a resident of Cabarrus, Gaston, Iredell, or Mecklenburg County and possess all around good qualities with morals and values.

WASHINGTON AREA ALUMNI CHAPTER - Louis Gilbert Jr.

The Washington Area Alumni Chapter provides a scholarship to area students who are in "good academic standing" with at least a 2.5 GPA, have completed at least one semester of study, and are currently enrolled full time at Livingstone College.

ST. PETER'S AME ZION CHURCH SCHOLARSHIP – Lee Boyd Kennedy

Presented by Ms. Deborah Johnson Student must have a GPA of 3.2 or above, is involved in extracurricular activities at the College, in the community and in church, and demonstrate financial need.

FRANK R. BROWN GAMMA MU CHAPTER SCHOLARSHIP - Jeremiah S. Brown

Presented by Mr. William C. Chisolom. Awarded to a male student with a GPA of 3.5 or higher.

THE MITCHELL J. HARRIS ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP - Jahleel Morman

Presented by Deborah Johnson. Student(s) must be full-time, have a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher, history major and demonstrate financial need.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARDS

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN SCHOLARSHIP (AAUW) - Eve Beyan, Nia McDougald, Raven McCoy, Akera Barnes, and Mia Mason

Presented by Ms. Bessie Hutchins AAUW provides scholarships for qualified female students to help bridge the funding gap for women in higher education. AAUW addresses equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research.

HONDA CAMPUS ALL-STAR CHALLENGE TEAM - Juliet Makena, Captain, Emile Dogbe-Gakpetor, , Cameron Manns, Christian Bussey, Jacob Adkins, and Varvara Papakonstantinou.

Presented by Dr. Da'Tarvia Parrish. The Honda Campus All-Star Challenge is a quiz bowl tournament administered by the College Bowl for

historically black colleges and universities, and funded by Honda, The American Motor Company. Each year, over 100 institutions showcase the academic excellence of HBCU students as teams engaged in serious competition displaying a scope of knowledge, teamwork, and sportsmanship.

FORTY UNDER 40 - The Office of Alumni Affairs sponsored an inaugural Forty under 40 fundraiser to support the mission and initiatives of the institution. The honorees designated their gift to support students within various majors based on grade point average, community service, and moral character.

Presented by Ms. Vincia Benjamin Miller. The recipients are; Terrance McPherson, Talia McDowell, Tania Starkie, Sharde Brooks, Joel Hutchinson, Shawnae Robertson, Jonathan Nunn, Curtxavier Fryson, Dakiya Wilson-Thomas, Madison Clay, Jacob Adkins, Malik Head, Jaetavion Edwards, Sila Tako, Jalen Brooks, and multiple campus organizations.

ALBERT STOUT SCHOLARSHIP

Presented by Dr. Yvonne K. Tracey. Sponsored by the Albert S. Stout, Sr. Scholarship Fund Committee of the A.M.E. Zion Church, Piedmont Episcopal District, Western North Carolina Conference, Bishop Kenneth Monroe, Presiding Prelate. The scholarships provide merit or financial assistance to full-time students. Students must have a 2.5 GPA for financial assistance and 3.00 GPA for merit scholarships. Recipients are; Jalen Brooks, Madison Clay, Tiffany Chandler, Ashleigh Clark, Emile Dogbe-Gakpetor, Michael Gilyard, Joshua Lattimore, Cameran Manns, Destiny Marcus, and Denarea McMillian.

2023 Honors Societies Inductees

Alpha Kappa Mu Honor Society, Advisors Drs. Da'Tarvia A. Parrish and Obafemi Balogun

The Alpha Psi Chapter of Alpha Kappa Mu aims to promote high scholarship and encourages sincere and zealous endeavors in all fields of knowledge and service; to cultivate a high order of personal living; and to promote scholarly endeavor in others.

Inductees: Andrea Anderson, Akera Barnes, Juliet Makena, Varvara Papakonstantinou, and Samantha Sheff

Alpha Phi Sigma Criminal Justice National Honor Society, Advisor Bessie Woods Hutchins

The Zeta Mu Chapter of Alpha Phi Sigma aims to honor and promote academic excellence, community service, educational leadership, and unity in the field of Criminal Justice.

Inductees: Akera Barnes, Lydia Chapple, Taimoah Garlo, Bianca Liles and Nekhia Ray

Beta Kappa Chi National Scientific Honor Society, Advisor Dr. Josette Wilkes

The purpose of BKX is to encourage and advance scientific education through original investigation, the dissemination of scientific knowledge, and the stimulation of high scholarship in pure and applied science.

Inductees: Wynashia Bratcher, Thalia Carter, Madison Clay, Saanaudia Deloatch, Jaden Echols, Anna Evans, Sha'Terra Ferrell, Chance Landers, Kansas Mundell, Madalynn Payne, Taryn O'Neal, Julian Perkinson, Akirah Robinson, and Kaley Woodruff

Theta Alpha Kappa National Honor Society for Religious Studies and Theology, Advisors Rev. Drs. Michael Ellis, Johnnie P. Henderson, and Troy Russell

TAK is the national honor society for religious studies and theology that relates scholarly organization of the American Academy of Religion, an affiliate organization of the Society of Biblical Literature. It is the only national honor society dedicated to recognizing academic excellence in baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate students and in scholars in the fields of religious studies and theology.

Current Member: Chester Brown

North Carolina Omega Chapter of Pi Gamma Mu International Honor Society in Social Sciences, Advisors Drs. Da'Tarvia A. Parrish, Nicole Oehman, and Mrs. Nailiah McDowell

Pi Gamma Mu is the oldest and preeminent honor society in the social sciences. It encourages and recognizes superior scholarship in social

science disciplines and fosters cooperation and social service among its members. The North Carolina Omega Chapter serves various social science disciplines which seek to understand and explain human behavior and social relationships.

Inductees: Andrea Anderson and Samantha Sheff

Sigma Tau Delta International English Honor Society, Advisor Da'Tarvia A. Parrish, Ph.D.

In the United States of America, Europe, and Caribbean, scholars gather to confer distinction for high achievement in English language and literature in undergraduate, graduate and professional studies. The Alpha Theta Pi Chapter is fully committed.

Inductees: Vashti Cofer and Samantha Sheff

Phi Alpha Honor Society for Social Work Majors, Advisor Dr. Walter Ellis

The Lambda Xi Chapter of Phi Alpha fosters high standards of education for social workers and provide a closer bond while promoting scholarship and humanitarian goals and ideals.

Current member: Shawnae Robertson

Phi Beta Lambda National Business Honor Society, Student Advisor Emile Dogbe-Gakpetor

Phi Beta Lambda's mission is to bring business and education together in a positive working relationship through innovative leadership and career development programs.

Inductee: Sy'Mone Bulluck

Pi Lambda Theta Education Honor Society, Advisor Charlease Roper

Pi Lambda Theta is a division of PDK International, one of the nation's most prestigious education honor societies. Established in 1910, Pi Lambda Theta serves to recognize outstanding students who intend to pursue careers in education.

Inductees: Terrance McPherson Jr., Jaden Echols, Markeysha McLean,

Alexis Lake, and Uttkarsh Bhatt

The Livingstone Solomon Carter Fuller Honor Society for Psychology majors, Advisors Drs. Charles Pinckney, Alvin Kidd, Angela Thorpe-Moss, and Mrs. Tai McMiller

The Solomon Carter Fuller Honor Society in Psychology is named after the first African American psychiatrist an alumnus of Livingstone College, encourages excellence by recognizing students who wish to make a significant contribution to the community.

Inductees: Allyssa Fryer, Aaleayah Odem, Keyanna-Resper Robinson, and Zion Williams

Interfaith America and Religious Diversity

Interfaith America inspires, equips, and connects leaders and institutions to unlock the potential of America's religious diversity. Livingstone College has partnered with the organization in three holistic entities that promote health and wellness, academic resources, and civic engagement. Programs include Interfaith and HIV/AIDS Awareness, Vote is Sacred, Interfaith in Curriculum, and Podcast features. Current student awardees include: **Jacob Adkins, Marquisha Bates, Shanique Brinkley, Eve Beyan, Christian Bussey, Jalen Brooks, Emile Dogbe-Gakpetor, Michael Gilyard, Colin Goodloe, Bria Griffith, Alexandria Griffin, Salina Holmes, Juliet Makena, and Varvara Papakonstantinou**

The Honors Program of Livingstone College

Livingstone College Honors Program offers a curriculum of interdisciplinary excellence designed to challenge and prepare academically gifted students to grow, serve, and lead. The primary goal is to develop and maintain an elite body that promotes superior performance in academia, high ethical standards, community service, and unity and friendship.

Honors Senior Thesis: *Managing the Impact of Covid-19 on Small Private HBCUs* by Emile Dogbe-Gakpetor

Livingstone College's Sorority Luncheon Encourages Excellence



Written by Dr. Da'Tarvia A. Parrish
 Submitted by Rev. Sam Brown
 Education Editor, The Star of Zion
 Email: admin@starofzion.org

Salisbury, NC - Livingstone College's *Sisterhood, Scholarship, Service and Spirituality Sorority Luncheon* was held May 1, 2023, 11:30 a.m. at the School of Hospitality and Management. This year's theme, "The

Legacy Continues," was a torch passing event, as the college's former first lady, Dr. Faleese Moore-Jenkins who began the luncheon in 2016, extended the flame of sisterhood to the current first lady, Dr. Jacqueline Davis. Dr. Davis served as the formal hostess. Both leading women are members of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated whereas the event welcomes all sorority members on campus, and selected representatives from the Rowan-Salisbury community to convene in white, for inspiration, mentorship, professional development, and sisterhood.

Associate vice president of student affairs, Title IX coordinator, and member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated, Terri Stevenson, presided over the occasion. Gretchen Dunlap of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, provided an opening prayer and grace, while student members of the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) engaged in a litany. Cailyn Coleman of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, Raven McCoy of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, Alyssa Walker-Gurnell of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated, and Jana Foster-Harris of Sigma Gamma Rho, Incorporated, celebrated the strength, power, passion, beauty, courage, and faith of women in Greekdom who have led

and shape our mosaic world.

The event's speaker was Attorney Ginger Cartwright, JD, Ph.D., who serves as General Counsel for Livingstone College. Dr. Faleese Moore-Jenkins introduced Cartwright, a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, as, "a lady who stands on her own. A Christian. A person who is a good wife, mother, a good friend, and a good servant."

Attorney Cartwright's message was undergirded with a biblical framework, referencing the apostle Paul as a mentor to Timothy, while incorporating a candle lit ceremony with Proverbs 31:10, read by Vincia Miller of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated. Reminding the women that service is their common trait, Cartwright actively engaged the audience with a familiar tune, "This Little Light of Mine," requesting participants to stand and sing collectively. "Let your light shine so bright you will illuminate a path for others. If your flame flickers, be sure to reconnect to the source. You are the light of the world," Cartwright affirmed to attendees. Moreover, Cartwright challenged young women to survey themselves for knowledge and truth, find a way to serve, and let excellence be their brand. Cartwright added, "Always do the right thing for the right reasons. Excellence is unforgettable."

The event closed with a sister circle and prayer by Campus Minister, Rev. Lloyd Nivens IV.



Dr. Da'Tarvia Parrish to serve as Livingstone College's Faculty Assembly President



Submitted by Rev. Sam Brown
Education Editor, The Star of Zion
Email: admin@starofzion.org

As Livingstone College's academic year ends, many offices, including the Faculty Assembly, are meeting in preparation for the upcoming year. From curriculum additions to the election of new officers, the April faculty meeting was business as usual with a new beginning for a campus veteran. In the fall, associate professor Dr. Da'Tarvia Parrish, will lead the faculty as its incoming president.

Dr. Parrish began her tenure at Livingstone College in 2005. An interdisciplinary scholar, she has taught courses in English, History, and Humanities, and implemented the college's Honors Program. "I am excited about this new journey of servant-leadership," said Dr. Parrish. "I am extremely proud to be a part of a diverse group of professionals, some who led me in my undergraduate experience."

A Livingstonian and fifth generation Zionite, Dr. Parrish is well versed in the operations of the college and its relationship with the denomina-

tion. "Without a doubt, the strength of Livingstone College is its undergirding from the AME Zion Church," she said. "Together, the two are solutions for 'one'!"

Her cabinet includes instructor Damein Greatheart in computer information systems as vice president, associate professor Washella Simmons in English as secretary, mathematics educator Karam Batra as treasurer, and assistant professor Bessie Hutchins in criminal justice as parliamentarian.

As faculty members close out the year with final examinations and ceremonies, Parrish claims, "I am looking forward to building a rewarding new year with our new president."



Four Livingstone College Students Attend AAUW National Conference

Written by Dr. Da'Tarvia A. Parrish
Submitted by Rev. Sam Brown
Education Editor, The Star of Zion
Email: admin@starofzion.org

Salisbury, NC – Four Livingstone College students recently attended the American Association of University Women's (AAUW) National Conference for College Women Student Leaders on May 31-June 3, 2023, at the University of Maryland at College Park. Akera Barnes, a junior from Elmont, NY, seniors Jalen Brooks from Washington, DC, and Juliet Makena of Nairobi, Kenya, as well as Miss Freshman Mia Mason of Salisbury, North Carolina, all received full scholarships from AAUW to attend an event for developing leading professionals.

Empowering women since 1881, AAUW hosts this conference every year, inviting hundreds of college women from around the country for three days of leadership training, inspiration, and networking – in hopes of turning a moment into a movement.

The conference does more than address important and contemporary women leadership issues. The event is a platform where participants

will develop and strengthen their voices, skill sets, and mindsets for leadership. Moreover, college women can build a professional tool kit for postgraduate life, and gain a better understanding of local, national, and global issues and policies affecting women. This year's theme is "Engage, Learn and Lead: Step Into Your Power!," encouraging growing professionals to leave with skills and confidence.

Upon return, participants shared their experiences with the Salisbury Branch of AAUW and future aspirants. Livingstone College AAUW representative Bessie Hutchins stated, "We are excited to send a cohort of women to represent Livingstone while gaining the skillset and knowledge of transformative leadership."

Award recipient Juliet Makena is interested in the variety of featured workshops, in particular - *How to Advocate for Yourself in Professional Spaces*. "As an international student, my experience of navigating spaces without kinship has been difficult," said Makena. "I hope to find solutions aligned with my career vision to advocate with purpose, intention, and direction."

The young women traveled independently to the conference, whereas their meals and lodging were included in their awards. Mia Mason and Juliet Makena were also scholarship recipients of the Salisbury AAUW Branch's award.



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Growing and Connecting Graduates



Submitted by Rev. Sam Brown
 Education Editor, The Star of Zion
 Email: admin@starofzion.org

Salisbury, NC - Livingstone College hosted its 141st Commencement Service on Saturday, May 6, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. in Bishop James Varick Auditorium. The center aisle of the college's graduation ceremonies is traditionally filled with black gowns of young men and women completing their undergraduate baccalaureate degree journey. However, recently, it is easy to notice the aisle has grown in number and color, adding silver and gold.

For decades, Livingstone College has formally recognized and included its Golden graduates, denoting members of the alumni who commenced 50 years of the dated ceremony. Now, under the leadership of current Alumni Affairs director Vincia Benjamin-Miller, the recognition of Silver graduates, alumni who commenced 25 years of the dated ceremony, has been reinstated. "Our Silver graduates are mostly alumni who are mid-career professionals, rearing families, and generally busy with the everyday hustles and bustles of life," said Benjamin-Miller. "Engaging them and officially connecting them to their alma mater is essential to the growth and sustainability of our Livingstone family."

Antoinette Dawson Cody serves as the agent for the Class of 1973's commencement activities. She has also served as the group's organizer since its 30th class reunion. A native of Kinston, NC, Cody came to Livingstone College, sharing part of her undergraduate experience with older brother, Archie Dawson. Cody is not only committed, but she is firmly connected to the college as she too serves as the director of Christian Education at Little Rock AME Zion Church in Charlotte, and her daughter, Ashana Cody, is a 2005 graduate of Livingstone.

Twenty-five was the magic number for the Silver graduates of 1998, who also had 25 alumni to return. Orlando Ray Mitchell, who is also a Kinston, NC native, served as the class agent. A youth member of Mount Moriah AME Zion Church, Mitchell boasts of his sense of belonging at Livingstone. "Growing up Zion, you always hear wonderful things about the college, and when I finally enrolled, it felt good to see both familiar and unfamiliar faces," said Mitchell. "For me, Livingstone College is, and has always been a family." Mitchell currently serves as the director of student activities at Winston-Salem State University.

Within the class of 1998 is one of the college's athletic Hall of Fame members, Quincy Morgan. A native of Beech Island, South Carolina, Morgan earned his way to Livingstone on an athletic scholarship and soon became a member of the 1997 and 1998 CIAA championship football teams. "I am blessed at the opportunity to partake and share in these events with others who walked the same path as me," said Morgan. "Being a Blue Bear truly changed my life by molding me into the man I am today." Morgan is a non-trading technical support consultant at Bank of America in Charlotte.

The Office of Alumni Affairs is consistently planning and creating avenues for the college's more than 7,000 alumni members to officially connect with the institution. To learn more about membership, alumni are asked to contact Vincia Miller at vmiller@livingstone.edu.

Picture captions:



1. Class of 1973 agent Toni Dawson Cody with her pastor, Rev. Dr. Dwayne Walker of Little Rock AME Zion Church in Charlotte. Dr. Walker is also a Board Member at Livingstone.



2. Golden graduates who are members of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.



3. Quincy Karl Morgan and Orlando Ray Mitchell, Class of 1998

Livingstone College's Dogbe-Gakpetor Earns NBA Internship



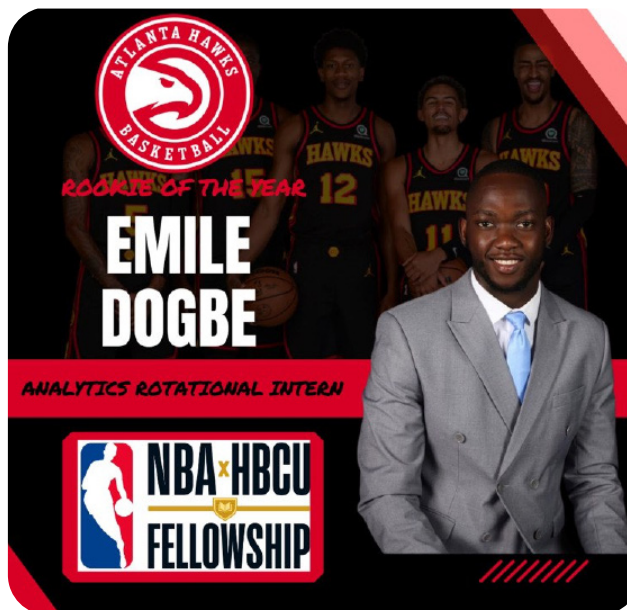
Written by Dr. Da'Tarvia A. Parrish
Submitted by Rev. Sam Brown
Education Editor, The Star of Zion
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Livingstone College honors student and student basketball coach Emile Dogbe-Gakpetor will gain

a professional experience this summer with the Atlanta Hawks, through the nationwide National Basketball Association (NBA) Historically Black College and University Fellowship Program.

A student with Microsoft Office and analytics expertise, strong critical thinking, analytical and problem-solving skills, and a desire to work in sports business, Emile is the ideal candidate for this opportunity.

The Atlanta initiative, specifically named HBCU Analytics Rotational Program, is sponsored by the Atlanta Hawks and State Farm Arena. Their program is precisely geared to expose interns to the career pathways in analytics and data synthesis career pathways. The program intern at this location will rotate through the Human Resources, Marketing, CSR, Basketball Operations, and Finance departments to explore how analytics are utilized to support business. Moreover, each intern will spend one week with each department, whereas at the end of the



rotation, the intern is responsible for producing a report providing a solution to a business opportunity, using analytics. Lastly, interns will be exposed to many business leaders across the organization who will share their career journey.

Emile stated, "I am excited because I can network and engage with professionals, merging two things I love; analytics and sports." When asked what part of the fellowship opportunity he thought most beneficial, he stated, "In addition to gaining experience regarding the day-to-day operations, I am looking forward to assisting with the digital overview report and category, brand and fanbase research, and providing analyses for key metrics related to social media post efficiency, to include measures such as performance by content type, time, and relevancy by platforms."

James Stinson, who is Livingstone's head men's basketball coach, stated, "This is the type of opportunity we want our students to have. Emile is a great asset to our team."

The Fellowship Program is a paid 12-week summer internship which runs from May through August.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Social Justice for Gen Z

Submitted by Allison N. Lee
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Email: socialjustice@starofzion.org

Happy July! With K-12 students out of school for the summer, now is a perfect time to have a conversation or integrate social justice ideas into discussions with them. The John Lewis Institute for Social Justice defines social justice as "a communal effort dedicated to creating and sustaining a fair and equal society in which each person and all groups are valued and affirmed; promoting a just society by challenging injustice and valuing diversity."

Taking part in conversations around matters of equity and social justice can increase skills in critical thinking, advocating for self and others, teamwork, and project management.

According to Dr. Emily Penner, who is an assistant professor of education at the University of California, Irvine, students who are allowed the opportunity to deal with matters of race and identity openly often engage more in group settings, attend school more regularly, have higher rates of completion and stronger grades, and are able to solve problems from a wider array of perspectives.

Social justice concerns are regularly the topic of discussion across several individual and intersecting spheres. The earlier that we as a nation, and particularly, we as a community, can begin the conversation around what is generally fair and create awareness for our young people around barriers to equity and equality, the better.



5 Tips to Educating Gen Z About Social Justice

- Educate Self.**
In order to talk to youth about what social justice is, its necessity, and how to recognize violations of it, it is important that those doing the teaching are clear on the lesson. Take the opportunity to research and review articles, videos, podcasts, etc. that are situated around social justice in order to build, maintain, and/or sharpen personal skillset.
- Create comfortable space.**
Whether talking with youth and kids about social justice matters at home, church, or in the community, ensure that the space is one that is mentally, emotionally, and spiritually open and receptive to the conversation. Discussions around fairness should stem from an environment that upholds the same value.
- Allow youth to form their own opinions.**
Rather than immediately cluing others into personal thoughts, allow them the opportunity to express what they feel from their vantage point. Allowing youth to form their own opinions now plays a crucial role in the agency to think and implement in the future.
- Use current events as a conversation starter.**
Current events are a phenomenal place to start when looking for examples of inequity.
- Be curious with.**
Ask questions that will open the conversation up and invite in more discussion. Correct from a place of curiosity in addition to fact.

Being intentional about creating learning opportunities for Gen Z is vital to the future of our society. Continual exposure to social justice in childhood and teenage years deepens awareness and encourages advocacy in the years to come.

NAACP

The A.M.E. Zion Church Leads with NAACP In Issuing Travel Advisory in Florida

Submitted by Rev. George McKain II
Director of Public Affairs and Social Concerns
NAACP Contact: Chyna Fields cfields@naacpnet.org

May 20, 2023

A Call To Action has been given. A resetting of our value and charge to lead and build, nurture and guide, and equip the masses to serve and represent. With fire burning inside as was the Wesleyan Call from Aldersgate, The A.M.E. Zion Church has actively endorsed the NAACP TRAVEL ADVISORY on The State of Florida. In the unanimous vote by the Board of Directors, we were well represented by Bishop Dennis V. Proctor.

As a member of the Board, he was an advocate for us not settling anymore but rather rising with wisdom offer a cultured approach to shake up the system and with wisdom arm our people. The Freedom Church yet maintains its call to disciple all people and to serve them fair and equally. Bishop Proctor spoke to us from the Board Meeting in San Francisco and challenges us to share and support this mandate.



WASHINGTON – Today, the NAACP Board of Directors issued a formal travel advisory for the state of Florida. The travel advisory comes in direct response to Governor Ron DeSantis' aggressive attempts to erase Black history and to restrict diversity, equity, and inclusion programs in Florida schools.

The formal travel notice states, "Florida is openly hostile toward African Americans, people of color, and LGBTQ+ individuals. Before traveling to Florida, please understand that the state of Florida devalues and marginalizes the contributions of and the challenges faced by African Americans and other communities of color."

"Let me be clear - failing to teach an accurate representation of the

horrors and inequalities that Black Americans have faced and continue to face is a disservice to students and a dereliction of duty to all," said **NAACP President & CEO Derrick Johnson**. "Under the leadership of Governor Desantis, the state of Florida has become hostile to Black Americans and in direct conflict with the democratic ideals that our union was founded upon. He should know that democracy will prevail because its defenders are prepared to stand up and fight. We're not backing down, and we encourage our allies to join us in the battle for the soul of our nation."

The travel advisory was initially proposed to the Board of Directors by NAACP's Florida State Conference. NAACP's collective consideration of this advisory is a result of unrelenting attacks on fundamental freedoms from the Governor and his legislative body.

"Once again, hate-inspired state leaders have chosen to put politics over people. Governor Ron DeSantis and the state of Florida have engaged in a blatant war against principles of diversity and inclusion and rejected our shared identities to appeal to a dangerous, extremist minority," said **Chair of the NAACP Board of Directors, Leon Russell**. "We will not allow our rights and history to be held hostage for political grandstanding. The NAACP proudly fights against the malicious attacks in Florida, against Black Americans. I encourage my fellow Floridians to join in this fight to protect ourselves and our democracy."

Following Gov. DeSantis' so-called leadership in driving the state to reject students' access to AP African American studies courses in March, the NAACP distributed 10,000 books to 25 predominantly Black communities across the state in collaboration with the American Federation of Teachers' Reading Opens the World program. The majority of the books donated were titles banned under the state's increasingly restrictive laws. The NAACP continues to encourage local branches and youth councils to start community libraries to ensure access to representative literature.

The NAACP encourages Florida residents to join this effort to defeat the regressive policies of this Governor and this state legislature. Interested residents and supporters can visit www.naacp.org for additional information and updates.

naacp.org/articles/naacp-issues-travel-advisory-florida

The Right to Vote

Submitted by Allison N. Lee
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Humans often attempt to suppress that which cannot be controlled and subdue that which threatens power and challenges the status quo. On the smallest scale, during cold & flu season, cough drops and syrups are often hard to find. People clear them from the shelves for two reasons: 1) to make themselves feel better, and 2) to subdue that which has the power to change feeling, situation, or course of direction. Cough medicine is a suppressant for that which we consider to be harmful.

If we take things a step higher, in the body of Christ, we stifle what is different. Music, preaching, people, and situations that are not palatable to those in power are oftentimes seen as a hindrance to the organization. Instead of coming together to work effectively, we divide in order to secure our piece of the pie. While I can believe that suppression of a sort plays its role in some areas of our lives – because let's be honest, some things need to be kept in check – suppression has no place in the arena of voter rights.

Voter suppression is defined by the Encyclopedia Britannica as "any legal or extralegal measure or strategy whose purpose or practical effect is to reduce voting or registering to vote by members of a targeted racial group, political party, or religious community."

Inequity regarding the polls has long been a wrinkle sewn into the fabric of the United States of America, most often directly affecting Black Americans. The 15th Amendment granted the right to vote to Black men (passed by Congress in 1869 and ratified in 1870), the 19th Amendment granted women the right to vote (passed by Congress in 1919 and ratified in 1920), and in the latter half of the 1900s, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (a mere 58 years ago) came into fruition.

Tactics created and implemented to dissuade the Black vote have been seen across time through literacy tests, closed polls, voter misinformation and complex election procedures, poll taxes, strict voter photo ID laws, gerrymandering, long lines, lack of accessibility for the differently abled, early voting limitations, and many more. Voter suppression seeks to undermine an action that should undergird fairness, and instead caters

to the wishes of those who stand to benefit from minorities not having the opportunity to cast votes.

At present, in many places across the country, early voting is the most popular method of making one's voice heard. In North Carolina, Senate bills 747 and 749 threaten to make it possible to limit the number of early voting polls open in an area, as well as whether or not early voting could take place in a particular county. In addition

to concerns about early voting, these bills would restrict voting rights overall, limit absentee voting, and make same-day voting much more challenging. CNN has communicated that, "proposals in two states would open new doors for election results to be overturned." According to the Brennan Center for Justice, "state legislatures have passed a near-record number of new restrictive voting laws so far this year, while a pro-democracy movement presses on."



What Can I Do?

- Get the facts around voter suppression initiatives and share information with other individuals, in churches, and organizations.
- Urge representatives to pass pro-voter legislation.
- Register voters in your local community.
- Join an organization that fights against voter suppression.
- Make a plan around voting day and see it all the way through to completion.

Voting rights are not meant to be suppressed. It is imperative that we as a people continue to apply pressure in the needed spaces. White House Press Secretary, Karine Jean-Pierre states,

"When it comes to our democracy, and who we determine to have the right to vote - our most sacred of rights - patience is no virtue. We must never be patient when someone else's rights are in the balance. We cannot wait on laws, or elected officials, or anyone else. The only virtue when it comes to the right to vote is impatience."

May we remain aware of the battle that rages on. May we exercise impatience in a way that demands change.

ENTERTAINMENT & THE ARTS

Famed jazz musician Branford Marsalis performs spectacular concert in Charlotte

Written by Asia Briana Brown
Submitted by Rev. Dierdre R. Parker-Rowson
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June 15, 2023

Charlotte, NC - In the 18th season of its jazz concert series, Knight Theater hosted "An Evening with Branford Marsalis: 'Romare Bearden Revealed.'" Marsalis, who is an award-winning saxophonist, bandleader, composer, and his band, played a setlist mostly comprised from his 2003 album, "Romare Bearden Revealed," which is a homage to Charlotte-born artist Romare Bearden.

Marsalis, who usually travels with his quartet - pianist, Joey Calderazzo, bassist Eric Revis, and drummer Justin Faulkner - performed with two additional musicians, including trumpeter Russell Gunn, and guitarist J.C. Martin, which Marsalis acknowledged made his band a sextet (six group members) for this performance.

I first witnessed Marsalis play in-person in 2014 with his quartet, Calderazzo, Revis, and Faulkner, in Kenan Auditorium at my alma mater, the University of North Carolina at Wilmington.

At the start of his setlist, Marsalis mentioned that Martin was a former student of his at North Carolina Central University. (Marsalis belongs to NCCU's jazz faculty.) Marsalis also announced that the night prior, he had received an honorary Doctor of Arts degree from Duke University. Throughout the evening, Marsalis often humorously referred to himself as a "doctor" whenever he educated the audience on the history behind an original set, including "Sea Breeze," a composition co-written by Bearden.



The banter among the Marsalis sextet made an already exciting and masterful concert experience more engaging. The audience loved it, occasionally shouting, "It's okay" whenever the sextet delayed the introduction of a new set, which appeared unrehearsed yet seamless.

Marsalis often told the audience that his band is "stupid" in how they joke with one another onstage. They were simply having fun together.

This casual banter among jazz musicians is as essential to jazz bands as the performance itself, like free-verse poetry, flowing boundaryless across structure and conformity.

In traditional jazz bandleader fashion, Marsalis gave each of his band members the spotlight during each set of the concert. Marsalis alternated between his alto and tenor saxophone for different sets as Faulkner gave electrifying drum solos, especially during the set, "Steppin' on the Blues."

Marsalis consistently demonstrated his mastery not only as a saxophonist but as a bandleader. After one set, Marsalis whispered to his guitarist, Martin, to which Marsalis later revealed to the audience that he did not like the sound of Martin's guitar.

Martin briefly exited the stage with his original guitar and reappeared with a Dobro guitar. The guitar change produced a tonal quality that satisfied Marsalis.

After completing their final setlist to a standing ovation, the Branford Marsalis sextet reemerged for an encore performance, concluding with an electrifying rendition of Duke Ellington's "It Don't Mean A Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)." The audience erupted as Marsalis and his band finished the popular tune and exited the stage.

"An Evening with Branford Marsalis: 'Romare Bearden Revealed'" was not merely a jazz concert, but an immersive cultural experience merging the visual with the performative, Bearden with Marsalis, and Charlotte art with New Orleans jazz.

The Little Mermaid and the Importance of Representation

Submitted by Rev. Dierdre R. Parker-Rowson
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June 13, 2023

Fayetteville, NC - "It is one of my favorite movies. I remember the day you came and got me from the playground and you showed me the video through the fence. We watched it every day," said Tyanna West to her mother about the animated version of *The Little Mermaid* movie. That movie was released on video (VHS) in 1990. She was six years old. They did indeed watch it every day.

The movie is based on the book by Hans Christian Andersen. It was originally published in 1837. It is the story of Ariel, the youngest of the daughters of King Triton, who longs for a life out of the sea. She wants to trade her fins for legs and discover what it is like to be a part of the human world. It is a story that has captivated audiences for years. When it was announced that Disney would be making a live action version of the movie, fans were excited! Well, most of them were excited until it was announced that Ariel would be played by Halle Bailey. When Disney released the first trailer of the movie there were two diametrically opposed reactions. There were videos of little Black girls excited to see that Ariel looked like them, some even in tears. Then, there was the racist hate, like memes of Ariel with extremely dark skin splashing out of the sea on a watermelon. There was even a Facebook group called "Christians Against the Little Mermaid (Boycott Halle Bailey)" with over six thousand members who were cautioned not to be "too racist" in their comments.

None of that stopped the movie from being a box office smash. According to Box Office Mojo, the movie has made more than \$414 million worldwide, which shakes out to about \$228 million domestic and \$184 million worldwide.

Halle Bailey does an excellent job of bringing Ariel (who is a mythical creature, by the way) to life. On the screen, she displays the perfect balance of the innocence and independence of a young girl trying to figure out who *she* wants to be in a world that tries to tell her who she *should* be. If that theme is not important to you, then maybe you will be moved by the diversity of the characters. The cast of the movie is representative of the world around us. From the daughters of Triton, to the people in the palace, every ethnicity was represented. Maybe ethnic diversity is not important to you. Okay. The movie is visually beautiful. From the movement of the hair underwater, to the vibrant colors on the land, this movie is a feast to the eyes.

The real selling point is the singing. Halle Bailey's voice is ethereal. It is velvety smooth, rich, and sweet. Melissa McCarthy, who plays Ursula the Sea Witch in the movie, says that being able to hear Halle humming between takes was like receiving a gift.

This movie was everything it promised to be and so much more. No matter your age, gender, or ethnicity, it is a beautiful example of how love can bring us all together.



Meditation: Biblical or Not?

Submitted by **Daman De Leon**
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Hindu meditation. Buddhist mindfulness. Transcendental Meditation (TM). Eastern Mysticism.

These forms of meditation are all identified with religious faiths whose roots are found in the Far East. More than 20% of the world's population practice these faiths and their spiritual traditions. When one thinks of meditation, a very broad image of mystical/spiritual trance-like activity may come to mind. Some of those who piously practice Christianity have asked, "Since the Bible instructs us to avoid practicing anything deemed spiritual outside of our faith, are we condemned for doing such?" Well, the answer is not so cut-and-dry.

The Bible says, "God blesses those who both delight in and meditate on God's teaching: 'but their delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law they meditate day and night.'" (Psalm 1:2)

Jesus gained strength and discernment in meditation. Before Jesus appointed the 12 who would become his apostles, Luke 6 tells us, "One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God."

In early Christianity, desert monks gathered to hear scripture recited in public by the Laity, and would then recite those words privately in their cells. For them, meditation was memorization and recitation of scripture, primarily as a verbal exercise.

What is Meditation?

The term "meditate" originates from the Latin word *Meditatum*, which means, "to ponder." Monk Guigo II introduced this terminology for the first time in the 12th century AD.

An Indian by the name of Paramahansa Yogananda, is credited as 'the father of meditation' in the West. Paramahansa travelled from India to America in 1920 and established an alternative spirituality that became very popular in the West.

Meditation is readily available in countless forms. Meditation apps promise to reduce your anxiety and help you sleep better at night. There are classes, online courses, retreats and stacks of books that will lead you to inner serenity. Almost all secular meditation resources use reflective thinking, controlled breathing and the practice of accepting your life and thoughts as is and without judgment. These practices clear your mind of mental clutter and help you be present in the moment, they relieve stress and improve focus.

There are many benefits to meditation, but the problem is none of them involve a Savior. They only involve temporary relief from the pressures of life.

Biblical Meditation

Biblical meditation is entirely different, it has a different focus, a different application and a different outcome.

Secular meditation is focused on letting go of our attachment to everything but the present moment, the present breath. Biblical meditation is focused on clinging as close as we can to the ways, promises, and words of God. One of the first times the Bible mentions meditation is in Joshua 1:8, and it reads, "Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and success-

ful." In these verses, the focus of the meditation is on the words of Scripture. The Bible also mentions meditating on God's unfailing love (Psalm 48:9), on God's works and all his mighty deeds (Psalm 77:12), on God's precepts and his ways (Psalm 119:15) and on God's promises (Psalm 119:148).

When meditation is mentioned in the Bible, it also describes what we should do after we meditate on God's word and ways. James 1:25 says, "But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it - not forgetting what they have heard but doing it - they will be blessed in what they do." Biblical meditation has a clear path for you to follow, a compassionate Savior to walk with you and the Holy Spirit to guide you.

Can you see how meditation on Scripture employs every advantage of secular meditation and then some? You get the same pause, the same mental reset, but you also get infinitely more. Daily time spent meditating and then acting on God's word changes everything from the inside-out and as James 1:25 says, the changes it makes move us towards freedom and blessing.

Prayer and Meditation

Biblical meditation and prayer go hand in hand. A beautiful example of this is Psalm 143:5 and 7-8. While the psalmist is struggling deeply and expressing his pain to God, he is also meditating on what God has done in his life and praying to ask God to answer again like he has before!

"I remember the days of long ago; I meditate on all your works and consider what your hands have done... Answer me quickly, Lord; my spirit fails... Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I entrust my life."

In the midst of our prayers, let us also include a remembrance of who God is, what His word says, and what He has done in the past. Meditation fills us with God's truth and prayer is the overflow.



Take a moment now to contemplate how you can fix your focus on God and include biblical meditation in your daily life. What do you think it would look like if you detached yourself from self-driven patterns of thought and, instead, fixed your mind on the immovable truth of the word of God? Today is a great day to start!

In conclusion, Meditation in and of itself is a personal practice of self-edification, just as one's spiritual journey. One must find the intricate balance within themselves according to their own personal relationship with God, and develop this according to whatever level of faith or spiritual practice(s) in which they choose to indulge. Consider and balance both the scientific and the spiritual intricacies.

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Nutrition Deficiency: Know the Signs

Submitted by Daman De Leon
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We only receive one body in this lifetime, and it is imperative that we take care of it. The Word mandates that we are good stewards of our bodies (1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19-20). Our bodies are so important that the Bible call them “temples” of God. It has also been scientifically proven that the healthier humans are, the happier they are.

Recently conducted research has led modern scientists and nutritionists to conclude that humans have two types of age: your BIOLOGICAL age, and your CHRONOLOGICAL age. Biological age is defined as being how old you are molecularly and cellularly. Chronological age is defined as being the number of years you live.

It is also understood that what we put into our bodies either nourishes, or creates a deficiency, thus contributing to our depleting our overall health.

Getting adequate nutrition isn't always easy. And for older adults, that's especially true. You might not be as active as when you were younger, so you might need fewer calories. Yet research shows that older people may need more of certain key nutrients, such as B vitamins and calcium.

Unfortunately, nutrient deficiencies and malnutrition can persist for a long time before they show up in physical signs or symptoms. Still, there are a few indicators you -- and your doctor -- can monitor.

1. Unexplained Fatigue

Fatigue is a common side effect of iron deficiency, which can lead to anemia, indicated by low levels of red blood cells. Anemia can also show up as abnormal paleness. However, remember: other conditions can cause excessive fatigue, including heart disease, depression, or thyroid disease.

It is wise to alert your doctor if you feel unusually weak or tired. Your doctor may prescribe supplements if you have anemia.

2. Brittle and Dry Hair

Hair, which is made up mostly of protein, serves as a useful diagnostic marker for nutritional deficiencies.

“When an older person's hair looks brittle, dry, and sparse, it's often a sign that their diet is inadequate,” says Kathleen Niedert, RD, director of clinical nutrition and dining services for Western Home Communities in Iowa.

Brittle hair can signal a deficit of essential fatty acids, protein, iron, and other nutrients. Some hair loss is usual with age. But if hair begins to fall out at an unusual rate, nutrient deficiencies may be the cause. Once your doctor identifies the deficiencies, you can treat them with nutrient-rich foods and supplements.

3. Ridged or Spoon-Shaped Nails

Like hair, nails serve as an early warning sign of an inadequate diet. A spoon-shaped nail, in which the nail curves up from the nail bed like a spoon (a condition called koilonychia) can be an indicator of iron-deficiency anemia.

If you have iron-deficiency anemia, your doctor may recommend iron pills and iron-rich foods such as liver and shellfish like clams, oysters, and mussels.

4. Mouth Problems

Cracking or inflammation at the corners of the mouth (a condition called angular cheilitis) can be a warning sign of either riboflavin (B2) deficiency



or iron deficiency. An unusually pale or swollen tongue is a warning sign of iron or B-vitamin deficiency. A condition called burning mouth syndrome, which continues to puzzle researchers, may arise when iron, zinc, or B-vitamin levels fall below the required level.

Again, once you've confirmed your specific nutritional deficiencies, they can be treated with nutrient-rich foods and supplements.

5. Diarrhea

Chronic diarrhea can be a sign of malabsorption, which means nutrients are not being fully absorbed by your body. Malabsorption can be triggered by infection, surgery, certain drugs, heavy alcohol use, and digestive disorders such as celiac sprue and Crohn's disease.

It's important to consult your doctor if you have persistent diarrhea.

6. Apathy or Irritability

Unexplained mood changes, especially feeling apathetic or irritable, can be symptoms of a serious medical condition like depression. But they can also be symptoms that your body isn't getting the energy it needs.

If you have persistent low mood or forgetfulness, it's important to get checked out by your doctor.

7. Lack of Appetite

With age, appetite often diminishes. Taste buds lose their sensitivity. If you also become less active, you may need fewer calories. Medications can also dampen appetite.

“Chronic lack of appetite is a serious warning sign that you may be at risk of nutritional deficiencies,” says Nancy Wellman, RD, past president of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. If you find yourself skipping meals because you're not hungry, talk to your doctor.

Blood tests can indicate if you're deficient in a number of key nutrients. By assessing your food intake, a registered dietitian can also spot nutritional deficiencies.

“The important thing is to alert your doctor quickly if your appetite changes or you begin skipping meals,” Wellman says. That way, you can head off nutritional problems before they cause serious trouble.

In conclusion, nutritional values are to be instilled in us at a young age. Other factors that play a vital role are culture, societal pressure, and cultural norms. Let us be diligent not only in theological ministry, but the “ministry” of caring for our “temples” as well.

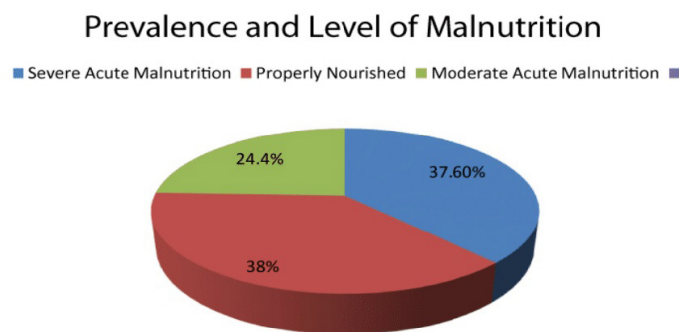
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Free or Affordable Things to Add to Your Summer Bucket List

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School is out and the kids are at home. You are sitting on your couch thinking about activities and things to do before the end of the summer besides going to Disney. I have curated a list of free or affordable things to take advantage of in your backyard this summer.



Outdoors

1. Go hiking.
2. Head to the beach. Are you located on the east coast? Myrtle Beach and Virginia Beach are great places to visit!
3. Float on the river.
4. Draw a hopscotch board and teach your kids how to play.
5. Go to the community or city pool. One of your family members or friends has access to a community pool. Ask them for a pool day. Visit your local recreation city or Boys and Girls Club and ask about pool access. Hotels offer pool access for a small fee.
6. Read a book outside. You can borrow books from your local library for free (eBooks or hard copies). Sign up for a library card.
7. Be a tourist in your city. Go to your city or surrounding cities' websites and look for free things to do around the city.

8. Go to the botanical garden.

Indoors

1. Go to an art museum. Many museums offer free admission on certain days and hours.
2. Search for free summer camps.
3. Go to a local bookstore.
4. Host a movie night with snacks. Invite your family and friends over to hang out.
5. Volunteer. Find a cause in your local community that you support and offer your time.
6. Create a Family Fun night.
7. Host a game night at your local A.M.E. Zion Church



If you decide to host a game night at your church, provide snacks and a good time for all ages. Send pictures to be featured in the *Star of Zion* to Angel at lifestyle@starofzion.org.

That is all for now, if you have items you would add to this list, please share them with me, Angel Eason, at lifestyle@starofzion.org.

FINANCIAL FREEDOM

Moving Toward Entrepreneurship

Submitted by **Dana G. Stille**
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The “great resignation” is a term coined in May 2021 by Anthony Klotz, a professor of business administration at Texas A&M. Correlated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the “great resignation” refers to the alarmingly high rate of people who resigned from their jobs during a time of low unemployment and an increased demand for labor. Between April 2020 through March 2022, 3% of the workforce left their jobs – an estimated 4.5 million workers.

While some of these exits were for very logical reasons related to the health and safety of one’s family, or lack of childcare, the COVID-19 pandemic caused others to rethink their career goals and quality of life. Consequently, a lot of people have opted to explore the world of entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship is defined as setting up a business and taking on financial risks in the hope of making a profit. Often deemed good for the economy, developing a business is often a monumental task. Basic steps include creating a business plan, developing a business structure, funding the business, choosing a name, registering the business and filing for the required licenses and permits with the appropriate municipalities and state – all before marketing your product and completing sales.

For those considering starting a business, there are some important things to consider. First, about 90% of startups fail with the majority of new businesses failing between the second and fifth year of existence. Second, entrepreneurs typically do not get time off, and work approximately 60 hours per week. Third, new businesses generally take 2-3 years to become profitable.

If you are ready to join the “great resignation” and start your own venture, it is important that you are prepared. Have a nest egg that will sustain you for at least six months. Be prepared for long hours, a little stress, and less income. Write your plan and work your plan.

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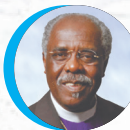
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Exploring the Challenges

Submitted by Zion Shoulders
Sports Editor, The Star of Zion
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June 15, 2023

One frequently asked question revolves around the lack of representation of our athletes at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). It is a valid concern, but many overlook the factors influencing their college choices.

A crucial factor that often goes unnoticed is the insufficient athletic funding at many HBCUs. This lack of financial support makes it challenging for student-athletes to secure full scholarships, leading many African American athletes to choose schools that offer better resources.

During my time at Howard University, I had the opportunity to interact with numerous student-athletes. Through these interactions, I came to realize that many of them face the challenge of relying on grants and loans, even while competing at the Division 1 level. As an African American, I would want a genuine desire to showcase my talents at an HBCU. However, the decision becomes more complex when there is the possibility of attending another institution for free.

Limited scholarship opportunities at HBCUs are not recent. They have long been a prevailing challenge. Johnny Jones, the head coach of Texas Southern University, acknowledges the unique difficulties he faces in recruiting top talent due to the inability to compete with powerhouse schools' full scholarship offerings. Prominent figures like Deion Sanders at Jackson State University and Hall of Famer Ed Reed, former head coach of

Bethune-Cookman University, also encountered this challenge.

However, it is not only about scholarship money. In 2019, Mychale Salahuddin, a football player at North Carolina A&T, transferred to the University of Pittsburgh. Reflecting on his experiences at both institutions, he remarked, "The PWI (predominantly white institutions) and HBCU facilities are completely different. There's not enough money at HBCUs, and there needs to be more structure."

While we certainly encourage students to choose HBCUs, we cannot expect them to compromise their well-being and happiness for an institution. It won't be easy for HBCUs, but change is necessary to ensure they have the resources to recruit and offer student-athletes an athletic package on par with other colleges.



NIL Unlocking Opportunities

Submitted by Zion Shoulders
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After years of prohibiting student-athletes from profiting off their image and likeness, the NCAA and law officials finally made the right decision. In the summer of 2021, states began legalizing the ability of student-athletes to earn money using their name, image, and likeness (NIL).

NIL allows high school and college students to monetize their personal brand, enabling them to make money through brand deals, meet and greets, private camps, sponsorships, social media campaigns, and more. This addition is remarkable because it allows athletes to grow and expand beyond their athletic abilities.

Many businesses have now partnered with these athletes to promote their brands. Athletes have joined forces with prominent companies such as Nike, Adidas, Fashion Nova, McDonald's, Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers, and numerous other major chains and brands. It's not only large corporations that are partnering with these athletes. Small black-owned businesses are also playing a crucial role in supporting their own communities.



For instance, Jamal Stenson, co-owner of the Houston food truck The Fry Guys, sought a new way to market his recently opened business. Understanding the power of sports marketing, he took a unique approach by choosing Texas Southern University quarterback Andrew Body as the spokesperson for his food truck last year. Logically speaking, it was a brilliant move from a business perspective. College students love chicken and fries, so why not use a popular and influen-

tial figure to help promote it?

In an interview with The Defender Network, Stenson expressed, "It's just a good look. The college kids can benefit, and I can also represent HBCUs, HBCU sports, and things of that nature. It will ingratiate us to the community by having someone like Andrew, especially as the quarterback of TSU and a talent like him."

Nothing is more rewarding than when two entities can collaborate to build something more significant. Fry Guys is thriving because it has an esteemed athlete representing the brand in the local area, and Body benefits by earning some money while also gaining knowledge and experience in running and growing a business.



As NIL expands, one can only hope that more big and small businesses will engage with student athletes from HBCUs. This partnership will not only benefit both parties but also elevate and improve the standards of HBCUs as they strive for development and success.

Dendere provides drug rehabilitation in Zimbabwe, requires funding

Written by Primrose Phiri and Munyaradzi Chonyera
Submitted by Rev. Ronald Nathan
World Politics Editor, The Star of Zion
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Domboshava, Mashonaland East, Zimbabwe -A drug and substance abuse rehabilitation center has opened in Domboshava, some 30 kilometres north east of the capital Harare, to assist combating the scourge that has become a national problem.

The Dendere Rehabilitation Center, which means “nest” in the Shona language, is a symbol of home and love, according to authorities.

Fashioned on a residential concept, it draws inspiration from the nest where parent birds put their time, their love and their energy into creating the best nest to protect their eggs in to nurture their young in that same nest before they are ready to go off into the world.

This is what the rehabilitation center is aiming to do. “The center has capacity to house 14 clients at a given time,” explained Primrose Phiri, who is a co-founder of the rehabilitation center. “The main focus is on the psychotherapeutic management given to drug addicts.”

“It helps the patient to get rid of substance abuse as well as process abuse. The treatment includes mainly counselling by profession-



als, medication for depression. It also offers different programs like residential treatment, support groups, extended, recovery houses, and out-patient,” added Munyaradzi Chonyera, a co-founder of the center.

Drug addiction and substance abuse have increased exponentially in recent years, and has been compared to a cancer that is crippling the mental and physical well-being of mostly young people, rendering them lifeless, focus less and directionless. The scourge is also threatening economic and social stability.

Substances commonly used in Zimbabwe are glue, Broncleer (a cough syrup), mangemba (local concoction), cane sprits, marijuana, codeine and methamphetamine (crystal meth).

In previous years, drug and substance abuse was prevalent among street kids who did this for different reasons, including relieving stressful situations, courage boosting for engaging in criminal activities and as sedating substances to help them sleep.

However, because of the current high unemployment in Zimbabwe, combined with poverty and despair, there have been increasing numbers of youths who are turning also to using drugs as a way of entertainment.

Some well-off kids, as well as some young professionals who indulged for recreational reasons and become addicted, have also been wasted after they have not received treatment and therapy.

Alarming

There have been an alarming number of admissions at hospitals because of methamphetamine use among youth compared to other conditions. Recent statistics from the Zimbabwe United Nations Association (ZUNA) in their statistics cited that 65 of Zimbabwean youths suffer from substance abuse related mental illnesses.

In 2019, Harare hospital psychiatric unit treated 150 substance abuse cases. That number spiked to 850 in 2020 and continued to rise in 2021.

With the problem at hand and driven by the need to help, we decided that something has to be done. We wanted to address the crisis that the country is having and help a generation. (We call it the lost generation.)

The huge number of substance abusers is making it very hard to get necessary rehabilitation. There is a massive shortage of substance and drug abuse treatment facilities in the country.

The country is also facing challenges with regards to shortage of health professionals. According to the Ministry of Health in its National Mental Health Services Strategy (2019-2023), out of nearly 16 million people, Zimbabwe has 17 psychiatrists, 14 clinical psychologists and 917 mental health nurses.

After realizing that the generation is being destroyed, the idea of starting a rehabilitation center emerged, considering also that we have a shortage of substance and drug abuse facilities in the country.

This urgent need necessitated the setting up of Dendere Rehabilitation Center, but it will require financial support.

“Currently, the center is self-funding the project and we have made a remarkable progress, but we also have a long way to go considering that we are still starting and also the economic situation in our country that we are operating from,” said Phiri. “We could do with all the help we can get, be it prayers, advice, mentorship, expertise, financial, equipment (beds, oxygen tanks, defibrillators, solar system, board games, security alarm system, perimeter fencing, blankets, stoves, frers, towels, bedsheets), and any other help we can get for us to continue with the work,” she appealed.



Munyaradzi John Chonyera

Born 21 May 1977

Degree in International Business Management at the University of Furtwangen in Germany.

Worked for over 12 years as business development manager for an American company called Flex Automotive.

He sacrificed to leave his wife and 4 kids (between 4years and 12years) in Germany and decided to move back to Zimbabwe and give back to his home country after spending over 20 years in Germany. His wish is to make a difference in his country of birth as he did in Germany. This idea of the rehabilitation was born after him seeing the spiralling substance abuse amongst youths the last years whilst visiting his home country. After over 2 years of research the decision was reached now act.



Primrose Phiri is a Zimbabwean national with a passion for youths and preservation of the family fabric. She holds a bachelor’s degree in sociology and a diploma in systemic counselling.



“The will to win”

sankofa

Looking Back to Move Forward

NEW WORLD PROFITED FROM 'BLACK GOLD'

Written by Dr. Delores Smith

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Sarah Fleming

Farming, metallurgy, and architecture among glorious gifts imported

Traveling across the Sudan, we reach a vast area west of Egypt known in ancient times as the Kingdom of Ghana. Without boundaries, this area is viewed as well-established with a political system closely resembling the hierarchy of democracy. In addition, this region can boast of having given to the world the first iron weaponry. The inhabitants of the Kingdom of Ghana had perfected the art of melting metal and reshaping it into fine tools of war.

Although there was a constant battle among the diverse cultures of this region to maintain or gain control, there existed a Code of War. It was understood that the men fought, leaving the women, children, and elderly well protected from the spoils of war. Further, once the conflict ended, it was a practice to re-staff the losing village with the needed manpower to preserve the culture.

The Kingdom of Ghana fell to the Mandingos, led by Mansa Musa. Under his capable leadership, the region expanded into the kingdom of Mali where agriculture, scholarships, and trading were extended. Mansa Musa is credited with having developed the credit system and is reputed to have nearly bankrupted Alkebu-lan (Africa) with his lavish gold trading. The kingdom of Mali was conquered by Askia Toure, who increased the territorial holdings, expanded on the scholarship system already in place, and extended the trading of gold, salt and other goods across the international contribution to the world was the establishment of the Royal Service (civil service system), which is still in practice in cultures around the globe.

It was during this period of international trading that the value of the black man became known to the Western world. The black man's skills in agriculture, architecture, irrigation, navigation, and metallurgy were in high demand as the European nations began their exploration of other portions of the world.

Consequently, the Europeans negotiated with the African kingdoms to purchase the services needed to settle their new colonies. It was with this understanding that the first 16 to 20 Africans transported to the New World would be indentured servants and that they were willingly traded. It is important to understand that the cultures of Alkebu-lan had a serfdom system in place which was akin to the indentured servant system, and therefore was not reluctant, at first, to trade the skills for payment.

The serfdom system was in no way comparable to the system of slavery. It was a system characterized by the following:

1. You became a servant by way of war, famine, debt, or crime.
2. You could offer your services to the king as a tribute.
3. You were not treated cruelly.
4. You could grow within the system and could even become king.
5. You could keep your culture.
6. You could marry and maintain your family.

7. You were in service for a definite period of time unless you committed murder or practiced witchcraft. For these two crimes, serfdom was for life.
8. Once you served your time, you could return to your community as a hero.
9. You could maintain your religious beliefs.
10. You could become a part of the ruling system.

Believing that their captives were being sold into a serfdom system and understanding the need for the skills by the Western world, the first group of persons assigned was done so without thought that they would be put in a slave system. The Western community recognized the talents of the black men and women they encountered and soon labeled them Black Gold, Black Ivory, or Black Cargo. These labels were of high value and thus, the skills the sons and daughters of Alkebu-lan brought with them were also considered of premium quality and worth.

This precious cargo was now the Gross National Product of a new nation and they quickly utilized their know-how to build the farms, the plantations, the cities, and the economy of the New World across the Atlantic, known as America. It was these valued services that were to soon engulf a proud and talented people into a system of slavery that was intended to last their lifetime. Black Americans' contributions to the glory of this country started with the first migration and have continued throughout



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YSU graphic

Evangelism: Not For The Novice

Submitted by Rev. Deborah Johns
Texas Annual Conference

Evangelism is the epitome of going into battle (Ephesians 6:10-17). When we share the gospel and someone receives salvation, that is one less person in the Kingdom of darkness and one more in the Kingdom of God. It is a war that we fight for souls. However, like any good soldier, we must be trained and tested for readiness before we can enter any battle.

This war we fight is spiritual warfare since we wrestle against spiritual forces in high places. In order to fight, we must have on the whole armor of God. Any holes or missing components of one's armor leaves a person open to defeat or being harmed mentally or physically or even distracted so that we never obey Christ in making disciples.

When we get on the battlefield (the time of our salvation), we become a target for the enemy. Any open doors we have will be used by the enemy to sneak in, kill, steal or destroy us and those closest to us. Open doors include any area in our life we have not aligned with scripture or where we walk in sin that has not been brought under the blood through confession and repentance. Although God gives us a season of grace, it is important that we realize the need to suit up as soon as possible because we never know when our season ends.

How do we close doors? We sanctify ourselves (renew our mind, submit our body as a living sacrifice and obey God's commandments- Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 4:14-32). We confess all unconfessed sins by naming them and repenting of them to God. We should pray and ask the Holy Spirit to bring any to our remembrance that we may have forgotten. After confessing and repenting, pray that God will heal, deliver and restore to us anything lost as a result.

Next, we must forgive everyone - any offense that we carry from any time in our life - and we must not hold any ought against them. For example, if you say you forgave a person but you refuse to forget what they have done to you. Or at the mention of their name, you still experience negative feelings. This is an indication of ought. This must be addressed since it is not complete forgiveness (Matthew 5:23-24). How? By purposing your heart to forgive them and praying that God will bless them and take away anything not righteous in us concerning that person. We keep praying until those feelings are gone.

Finally, we break any generational curses. One is caused by being born out of wedlock (Deuteronomy 23:2) and affects the children to the tenth generation. The second comes from parents who worship Satan through false religions including witchcraft, divination, palm reading, and any activity that originated out of false religions such as Yoga, martial arts, and mindful meditation (Deuteronomy 5:9). This impacts

up to the fourth generation. We must renounce and ask for God's forgiveness to break these curses for personal involvement. For generational involvement, we must forgive our forefathers, renounce those activities and ask forgiveness on behalf of them and then plead the blood to break any curses affecting the current and future generations in the name of Jesus. This is what it means when scripture says, "first get the beam out of our own eyes. Then we can see clearly to get the plank out of our neighbor's eye (Matthew 7:5)."

A born-again believer who refuses to sanctify themselves and put on the whole armor is like a soldier sent into war without any armor, weapons or basic training. Eventually, the enemy will easily destroy that person. When that person is destroyed, others around them may also be destroyed as collateral damage. This is the same as building your house on sand instead of the rock. When the storms come, you are washed away.

As you can see, there is a lot of personal work involved in preparing yourself to enter the war for souls. It takes a lot of time, in fact, years. This is not something a baby Christian can or desire to do without teaching and training. However, if you press on and fight for your own personal freedom in Christ, you will see the fruits of the Spirit operating in you. You will have perfect peace whether things are going well or not. Most of all, God will bless you with wisdom, knowledge, protection, and will supply your needs naturally. Then, serving God by witnessing to you neighbors, co-workers, friends, family and strangers will be a desire that God places in you.



Evangelism is not for the novice or the newbie. There is a real war going on and the enemy takes no prisoners. That is why Jesus spent over three years training his first disciples. Being Jews, they already had religious training in the Old Testament as their foundation. So, instead of saying, evangelism is for the pastor or the preacher, consider the fact that Jesus sent out not only the 12 leaders, but the 72 follower disciples (Luke 9 & 10). He meant for every born-again believer to strive towards evangelism as a personal goal that only comes with spiritual maturity. It is a fight that requires personal struggles that lead to spiritual maturity that leads to the understanding and knowledge of the need to evangelize the world. It is a fight that stay in until we die. If you ever stop fighting, the enemy still comes to kill, steal or destroy but it is hard to get to a moving target.

So get up! Keep growing in the knowledge of the things of God. Keep sharing what you learn with those around you. Volunteer to teach the things of God in your home, on your job, at schools, or anywhere you have opportunity. You may be called to a person that no one else will reach. If you fail to prepare yourself, they may be lost. Remember, the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Are you willing to be one of the few?



Hooks 4 Bishop 2024: Let's Reimagine Zion

Let's live up to our legacy. "The Freedom Church"

I have served in the Mother Conference of Zion Methodism my entire ministry. While some may see this as a limited default, I see it as a humble privilege to be amongst the few who get to set the tone for the entirety of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. I like to think that "Mother" is where leaders are born. I firmly believe that I have been spiritually consigned from birth to be a leader, Pastor, and bishop in the A.M.E. Zion Church. While I'm not your typical leader, my past accomplishments in Corporate America, Business, and Church have established me as a confident, consistent, strategic, and capable leader.

I cut my teeth on the sacred pews of the New York Annual Conference, serving as Pastor in all three Districts. My first appointment as Pastor of St. Mary A.M.E. Zion church grew from as few as fifty members to over five hundred active members. The emergent growth of St. Mary comprised families who helped to shape an entire community into a better place to live by engaging in local politics, business, the local school system, and the general quality of life for all its neighboring residents. My influence and leadership have positively impacted many of the people I have served, evident by their continued updated testimonies.

While my pastorate at St. Paul A.M.E Zion church was brief, we realized many practical accomplishments. Our involvement with the local school board presented a much needed and powerful voice for the many families who were being taken advantage of by members serving on the school board who lived outside of the community and sent their children to private schools, taking away valuable resources allocated towards educating and developing our children. Getting involved in public housing was another critical and necessary need for me as a leader. Many of our members did not own homes and needed an advocate to teach them how to become homeowners and business owners and even get loans and resources to improve their lives.

I currently serve as Pastor of one of Zion's most influential pulpits with staggering claims and a historical edifice in constant need of maintenance and repair. The Bedford Stuyvesant area of First Church has been gentrified, with many indigenous citizens moving or dying out. However, First Church is thriving, vital, and relevant under my leadership. We have partnered with several entities that use our facilities to accomplish their missions that align with ours. Sharing resources with the same constituents has helped us facilitate our mission, maintain our building, and grow our Church.

Everything about my past opportunities as a Pastor, Entrepreneur, and Senior Manager serving in corporations has prepared me to operate in the highest office in our Church. I have used my educational training and gained experience to become an effective leader with consistent abilities to foster growth, changes, and congregational preparedness. I know I will be a practical Bishop in the A.M.E. Zion church because I am ready, willing, and able to lead in that capacity. Aside from my God-given abilities, my life learning, and gained skills, I love the Lord and the people of God and am willing to serve God and His people with the best of my abilities, passion, faith, and love.

Education

2006-2007

MBA

Dowling College

2007 – 2010

Doctor of Education and Public Policy

Dowling College

2017-2019

Masters of Divinity

Princeton Theological Seminary

My Vision For Zion: L.E.A.D. Let's Reimagine Zion

And of the children of Issachar, men who understood the times, to know what Israel ought to do. 1 Chronicle 12:32

As believers, how well do we understand the world around us? It's very easy to get discouraged. However, we must walk by faith, not by what we see. We see a world in big trouble, a people who have fallen far away from God. However, we can understand what's needed to escape our mess through God's perspective. But to obtain God's perspective, we must seek God's perspective.

The men of Issachar understood the times they lived in and acted accordingly. Rather than living with worry and fear, let us Reimagine Zion. Let us LEAD our generation out of darkness and into the promise, out of lukewarmness, and into Christian discipleship. Let us LEAD our people out of complacency and into relevancy.

My Vision for Zion is to Lead Lead through the Legacy of the Freedom Church

We already have the Legacy. Let's own it! Let's live up to it.

By living up to our Legacy, I'm asking Zion to consider the essential underpinning of our faith and go back to it. I genuinely believe in God's power, the word of God, and the hearing of the voice of God by the sheep of God. Once I'm a consecrated Bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, I will lead us to a place of reconciliation, repentance, and accountability.

Yes, we have a strong legacy, but could Legacy alone be our sustainabil-



ity? I think not. We should learn from our past, particularly our founding fathers and patriarchs of old, who lit a torch and blazed a trail for us to follow and make our Church stronger than ever. We must now choose to light the torches and set the stones for many generations to come. We must hand over a more vital, reliable, relevant, and god-fearing church to the next generations.

While a Church is not a business, it has characteristics that function as a business. Therefore, we must consider how a church should or could serve in today's post-covid world. For instance, the Church had to adapt to new paradigms while and during the surge of the pandemic. We now do things many never thought we would do to function or maintain our local congregations. What we, in essence, had to do was to adapt. However, adaptation is not a sign of robust and reliable leadership, forward thinkers, or resisters to the decaying norms of society. Still, adaptation is the exact opposite of what I think God expects us to do. God expects us to lead and not be led.

My Vision for Zion is to Lead

Effective and Efficient leadership in the Freedom Church

In 2024 Zion will need to make a choice. We will need to choose new leaders. But not just any leader. We will need to be tried and tested, proven, and sure leaders: people with backbones, not popularity, but the anointing, the gifts, and experience to lead. We need a fearless leader. Leaders who are not afraid to think outside of the box. It's time we take our place on the frontlines of the fight for justice in our nation.

Our young people, people that look like you and me, are constantly mistreated, racially profiled, and marginalized. We are always asked to make more bricks by the pharos of our day, find our straw, and pull ourselves up by our bootstraps. We live in a rigged system, and I can't tell you how many protests, rallies, and marches I participated in during the shut-down, before and after the shutdown. Young people are being murdered in classrooms and in places they should be safe. We have witnessed our people being targeted, executed, and unjustly accused of things simply because of the color of their skin.

We have seniors gunned down in supermarkets, and young Queens gunned down in their sleep. I want to use the highest platform in our Church, the most sacred desk in Zion, to speak truth to power and hold lawmakers, politicians, law enforcement, and large corporations accountable when they injure our community. Once I'm consecrated as a Bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, we won't be silent on matters of injury to our community. We will use our influence and God-given authority to demand justice and a cure for harm done to us.

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My Vision for Zion is to Lead

Accountability to and accountable through the Freedom Church

We must be accountable to our community; we got a taste or a test during COVID. We must ask ourselves whether the community missed us when we were closed, and our churches were on lockdown. I'm not talking about the members who saw the shutdown as an opportunity to make their move away from the Church. I'm talking about those who depend on us for service. They need our doors to be open.

Did they miss us? The world is ever-changing, but our Lord remains the same. The winds of change would not toss us about if we strategize, think outside the box, and use the gifts God has given to the Church to edify the body of Christ. It was unpleasant and degrading to be given orders from the world during the pandemic. Non-believers, politicians, mayors, governors, and even a president who had not our interest at heart directed us through the most horrific times in our lives.

We can't remain quiet, particularly in times of deep despair. But we must be trailblazers, tone-setters, and people equipped with the power and knowledge of the word of God. We should know what God is saying to the Church. But we need to know what God is saying, and once we know, we need to move and speak with holy boldness! If we must pray and fast, and fast and wait, then let's do that.

My Vision for Zion is to Lead

Drive and determination for the Freedom Church

We must have the Drive and determination to infiltrate the norms and lowers standards of the world with the world of God, even if it's unpopular.

We must have the Drive and determination to teach our kids. We are in an all-out war. Censorship of books, history, Legacy, and the black presence and experience in America is being whitewashed. We have several accredited institutions of higher learning. Let's partner with these institutions and educate our people, minister, and laity.

We don't want God to call us wicked because we refuse to grow, refuse to multiply, refuse to take our talents, and do bigger.

I'm a tried, tested, and proven leader. I'm not popular, but I'm real. I'm faithful, and I'm equipped for the task of leading our Church. I'm educated, I'm practical, I think big, and I live strong. I'm gifted and quiet, and I'll fight for the weak, the poor, and the strong. I love God, and I love people.

Hooks for Bishop

Not because you know me, but because you know HIM!



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ZION'S STRONG FUTURE!

MELANIE MILLER

STRONG Vision



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