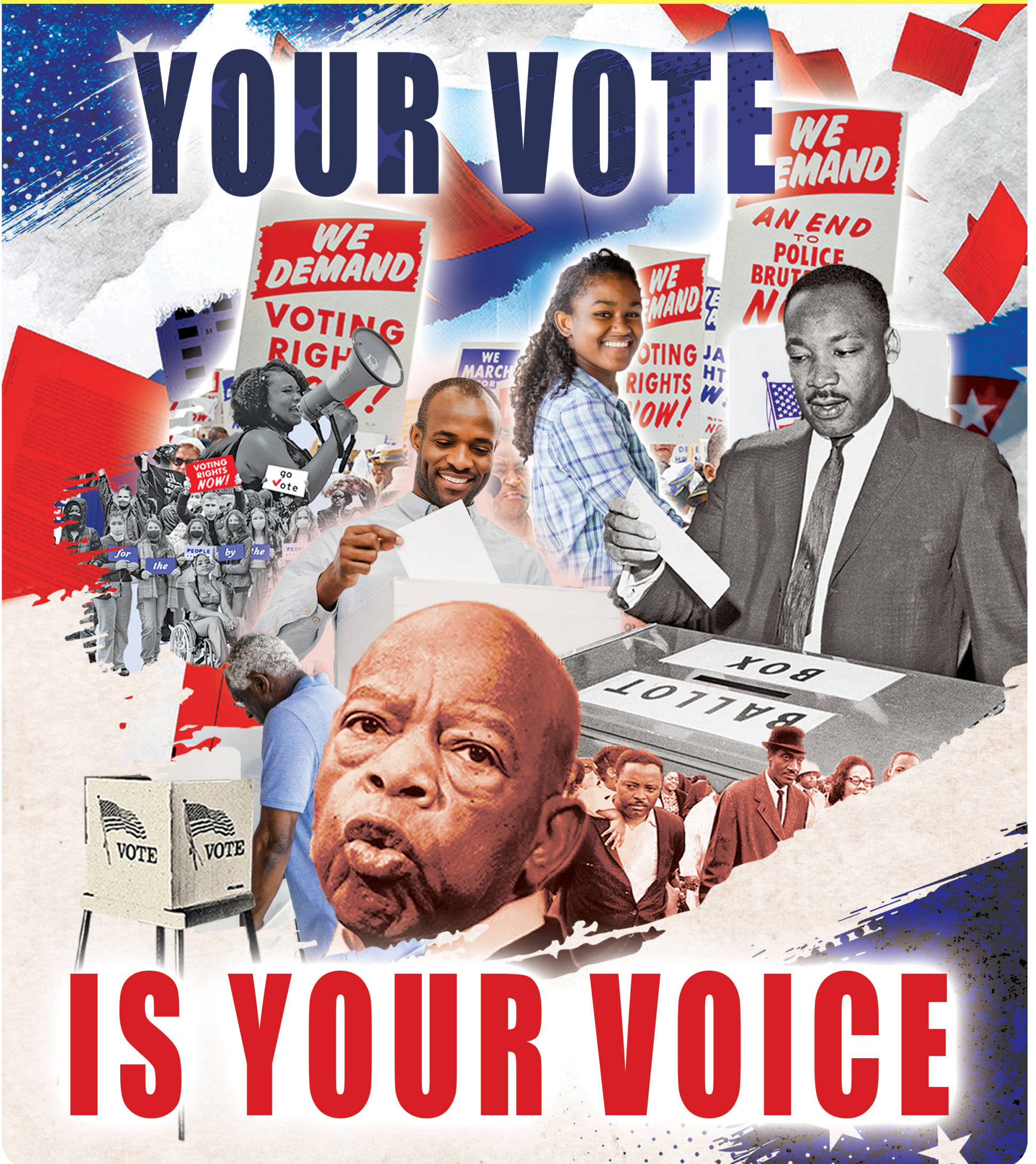


# THE STAR OF ZION


OCT 2023 | VOL 147 NO. 10 | STAROFZION.ORG | THE OFFICIAL VOICE OF THE A.M.E. ZION CHURCH

# YOUR VOTE








# IS YOUR VOICE





# THE STAR OF ZION

Official Voice of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

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

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

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## YOU CAN WALK ON WATER: Empowerment in Jesus

By Reverend Leona Nicholas Welch



WE ARE NOT powerless people. We are not lost nor abandoned in this world. We are not paupers. We are not orphans. We should not cower to the enemy, nor should we walk around this world as though we do not have authority to take control. And WE SHOULD NOT WALK IN FEAR. We have every reason to have courage in Our God, for He is ever-present, always ready to give us His hand to keep us from falling, and to pick us up when we do fall.

Therefore, with all confidence and surety, we can believe that we are OVERCOMERS. In fact, by the strength God gives us through His Son Jesus Christ, WE ARE EMPOWERED. Yes, WE CAN WALK ON WATER!

In God's Holy Word, (Matt 14:22-33) we are given an account of Jesus leaving the mountainside one night after a day of heavy ministering, and walking toward the apostles who are in a boat, on the shore. Jesus is walking on the water. We recall the apostles' fear at the sight, and we hear Peter, in his typical impetuous, but sincere manner, ask Jesus to let him come to Him on the water. As the story goes, Jesus does summon Peter to come to him. Dear Peter, eager to get to Jesus, strikes out, making his way to the Lord. He is actually walking on the water – that is, until he becomes distracted by the roaring of the wind and the crashing of the waves. It is then, that our brother, Peter, takes his eyes off Jesus, and begins to sink.

There is a depth of teaching locked into this account. Here, briefly, I would like to present four very potent thoughts for consideration:

1. By Jesus' invitation to "come," Peter was accomplishing the task. He was getting to Jesus.
2. Peter was in Jesus' very presence, but lost trust and confidence when he took his attention off Jesus and began to focus on the din of the storm, the crashing waves and roaring wind.
3. Peter did have the presence of mind and heart to call out to Jesus to save him.
4. Jesus did just that. He reached out His hand and caught Peter.

This story speaks of the Apostle, Peter, but the reality is, this is your story. This is my story. No, we cannot walk on H2O. But there are many things, many times, many situations in our lives that seem as insurmountable as the lake and the winds and the fearful sounds that caught Peter up in fear. These, we can see as our WATER challenges and as our WATER obstacles that can cause us to quit when we could have finished.

Each of us has had those situations in our lives when we asked Jesus for a blessing, some grace, some provision – looking to overcome a trial or to accomplish that which seems impossible. As with Peter on that lake, we hear Our Lord, and we strike out to follow His instructions. In fact, we are experiencing a surge of confidence and accomplishment; but woe- and- behold, our world around us begins to shake and tremble with doubt. We stop listening to our Divine Leader. We allow the roaring of disbelievers and the winds of nay-sayers and discouragers to drown out the voice of Jesus, and to obliterate His presence. We sink into the deep waters of worry, confusion, doubt, and discouragement- right in the face of Jesus. Like Peter on the Lake, we are in His presence, yet we fear and give up. Oh, we of little faith, Jesus admonishes us.

Thank God! Thank the Holy Spirit for doing for us what He did for Peter on the lake that day. He gives us the presence of mind and heart to call out to the One who sent us out in the first place. We find that space inside ourselves where we knew all along, that Jesus can put us back on track. Jesus can reach out and catch us and save us from ourselves and from those who are misleading us. Thank God and the Holy Spirit, for that quickening of our spirit that causes us to call out like Peter, LORD SAVE ME!

At that moment, in that reaching out, and in that stern, but loving admonishment, "You of little faith," Jesus is actually empowering Peter, showing Peter, teaching Peter. Jesus is restoring Peter's faith in those words and in the reaching out to save Him.

We are not powerless people. We are not abandoned to swim or drown, that is to sink. God has not given us that spirit of fear, but most truly, He has given us the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7). My Dear Sisters and Brothers, My Sanctified Siblings, Stay sober and alert (1Peter 5:8). Don't let the enemy fool you. YOU CAN DO THIS! Be encouraged. No, you cannot walk on H2O, but with the power of Jesus Christ, YOU CAN WALK ON WATER!





Mrs. Debra Chappelle-Polk  
Zion Spotlight Editor  
ZionSpotlight@StarOfZion.org

# WE MUST REGISTER TO VOTE

**YOU MUST REGISTER TO BE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE IN FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL ELECTIONS.**

By Debra Chappelle-Polk  
Zion Spotlight Editor

New York, NY - **ELECTIONS HAVE CONSEQUENCES** are not just words put in quotation marks. **ELECTIONS HAVE CONSEQUENCES** is not just an expression or cliché. It's reality. You would have to live on planet Mars, not to have noticed that life on planet Earth over the past five years has changed dramatically. It is imperative that we encourage members of our churches and communities, especially our young adults, to vote.

Recent decisions rendered by justices and judges sitting on Supreme Court, Federal, and State Court benches will have far reaching effects for decades to come.

- Affirmative Action overturned.
- Roe v. Wade overturned, which permits states to restrict a woman's access to reproductive healthcare.
- Student debt forgiveness legislation ruled unconstitutional.
- Redistricting is used to strategically and systematically erode our constitutional right to vote.

Despite the rise in gun violence, lawmakers have failed to enact commonsense gun control laws. Despite overwhelming evidence of climate change and its devastating effects, clean air legislation has not been enacted.

School boards are banning books and closing libraries. Governors are prohibiting AP (Advanced Placement) Black studies curriculum in schools across the country. Black history is being erased, rewritten and/or whitewashed.

### VOTER REGISTRATION TIPS:

Check your registration status, especially if you have recently moved. Check the location of your voting site. Early voting sites may be different from voting sites on election day. Visit [vote.gov](http://vote.gov) and/or other websites to begin the voter registration process. Select your state or territory. Depending on its rules, you will find instructions on how to register online; by mail; in-person at your local election office.

**Other ways to register:** download the National Mail Voter Registration Form. Check with local government offices to see if you can register in person. Register at your department of motor vehicles office and armed forces recruitment centers. Contact state and county public assistance offices such as SNAP/food stamps.

**Absentee Ballots:** The Federal Voting Assistance Program lets you register to vote and request an absentee ballot if you are a U.S. citizen living outside the U.S.; a service member stationed abroad; spouse or eligible family member of a service member stationed abroad.

*No right is more precious in a free country than that of having a voice in the election of those who make the laws under which, as good citizens, we must live. Other rights, even the most basic, are illusory if the right to vote is undermined. Our Constitution leaves no room for classification of people in a way that unnecessarily abridges this right.*

*Justice Black on the right to vote as the foundation of democracy in*

*Wesberry v. Sanders (1964)*

LIVINGSTONE COLLEGE REPRESENTS:

**HOMECOMING GOSPEL JUBILEE**

DATE: **OCTOBER 18, 2023**  
LOCATION: HISTORIC FRONT LAWN

CONCERT WILL BEGIN AT 7 PM EST

**ARTIST: THE WALLS GROUP**  
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH FOOD TRUCK TUESDAYS  
FOOD TRUCKS OPEN AT 4:30



# Call to Honor A.M.E. Zion Veterans and First Responders



You are invited to contribute to the Veterans Day article to be published in the Star of Zion's November Issue.

Here is your opportunity to honor a veteran or a first responder who is a member of The AME Zion Church. Veterans served in the following US Armed Forces: Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and Navy. We are also honoring Merchant Marines as they were considered veterans before 1945.

*First Responders include law enforcement and firefighters.*

## Guidelines:

1. Please submit a paragraph of 75 words maximum at 12PT Times New Roman Font with the following description of your honoree:
  - \* Full name and title (Rank)
  - \* Service and Rate (Specialty or Job)
  - \* Retired or Honorable Discharge
  - \* Campaigns served (i.e., WW1, Korean War, Vietnam, Desert Storm, War on Terror)
  - \* Medals or Special Awards. (i.e., Purple Heart, COM, NAM)
  - \* Church, Conference, and Episcopal District of membership,
2. Please submit a photo (a clear headshot is preferable), separate from the paragraph. Please ensure the photo is clear and in .jpg, .png, or .tiff format.
3. The deadline for your submission is October 5, 2023.
4. Only submissions for veterans who are members of The A.M.E. Zion denomination will be accepted.
5. Memorials for deceased veterans are welcome.
6. Please email your submission to: [stpaulwingpastor@gmail.com](mailto:stpaulwingpastor@gmail.com).

If you have any questions or concerns, please email Rev. Dr. Melanie Miller at [stpaulwingpastor@gmail.com](mailto:stpaulwingpastor@gmail.com). Thank you

## Greensboro District Holds its First Mass Meeting of the 2023-2024 Conference Year First Responders



By Mrs. Nina R. Ingram  
Greensboro District WH&OMS Reporter

*It took only one glance at the table—filled with a trifold display of photos and a collection of other memorabilia—to feel the spiritual energy of the 'WH&OMS' 30<sup>th</sup> Quadrennial Convention held July 22-28, 2023 in New Orleans, Louisiana.*

The Greensboro District Women's Home and Overseas Missionary Society (WH&OMS) held its first Mass Meeting of the 2023-2024 Conference Year on Saturday, August 19, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. at St. Stephen AME Zion Church, High Point, NC where Pastor Reverend Dr. Reginald Keitt and his congregation served as hosts to the meeting.

The Mass Meeting was truly a blessing. The spirit remained high and missionaries responded in wonderful numbers representing churches from across the district—the Uwharrie Mountains area, the sand hills, the foothills of the Piedmont, and the lower Danville, Virginia area. Dr. Edna Adams-Fulton, our Missionary District President, presided over the service.

The Call to Worship and Invocation preceded the morning hymn "My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less" which was followed by the Scripture reading, 1 John 5:1-9 (NIV), by Mrs.

Janet Person, and a moving and loving prayer was provided by Ms. Janie Cunningham. Words of Welcome were graciously extended by St. Stephen First Lady Mrs. Tawania Keitt on behalf of the entire St. Stephen Church family. Following the beautiful words of welcome, Mrs. Christine Murdock introduced Ms. Takiyah Starks of Wake Medical Center who presented a well-informed health moment on 'A Focus on Alzheimer's Disease and African Americans'.

Reverend Kevin Gibson provided musical selections during the Mass Meeting. The morning mediation speaker, the Reverend Dr. Daran H. Mitchell, Pastor of Trinity A.M.E. Zion Church, was introduced by Dr. Keitt. In keeping with the scripture lesson, Dr. Mitchell reminded us of our 'source beyond our resources'—sometimes we forget the source 'Jesus, the Christ'—we must constantly look inward, we must take responsibility, there is something in us that God wants to awaken, we must reach the point where we can 'take up our beds and walk'. What a



powerful message. Our souls were blessed by the inspiring meditation.

Our Missionary President Dr. Edna Adams-Fulton and the Executive Board gave beautiful reports of one significant thing that stood out for them. The sharing and the pictorial collage made the Convention sessions ‘come alive’ for all of us. We were made to feel a real sense of presence. Moreover, we were quite pleased to learn that the Piedmont Episcopal District was honored with being the winner of the Banner Contest. Congratulations!

Ms. Cynthia Marshall provided the financial report, after which, an election of officers was held during the Mass Meeting service. It was concluded that the Greensboro District Women’s Home & Overseas Missionary Society Officers will remain the same for the 2023-2024 Conference Year. The Youth Missionary Society (Y’s) Secretary Mrs. Janice Spearman led the nomination for the election of Treasurer, Corresponding Secretary, and Recording Secretary. It was moved and properly seconded that Mrs. Linda Goins, Ms. Dwan Wall, and Ms. Phyllis Marshall be re-



tained in these positions, respectively.

A banner presentation representing attendance support was presented by Ms. Phyllis C. Marshall to the following churches: Bellview, Long Leaf, Oak Grove (3 way-tie); Snow Hill; and Trinity.

Mrs. Jacquelyn Covington gave a courtesy report expressing enormous gratitude and thanks to all as she lifted up highlights from the Mass Meeting.

Dr. Adams-Fulton thanked everyone for their participation and presence at the **First Greensboro District Mass Meeting of the 2023-2024 Conference Year**. In the absence of Presiding Elder, Dr. Michael E. Ellis, Dr. Reginald Keitt and Dr. Daran Mitchell gave closing comments. Dr. Mitchell asked Mrs. Renee’ Ellis to also greet the missionaries. She thanked the missionaries for a beautiful and informative meeting. She also reminded everyone that Covid is still here, and we must wear our masks. There being no further comments or business, the meeting adjourned with the Missionary Benediction.

## St. Stephen A.M.E. Zion Church holds its First Community Day



By Ashley Newton and Celia Cattani  
Contributing Writer

St. Stephen A.M.E. Zion Church in Asbury Park, NJ hosted its inaugural Community Day on Saturday, August 26, 2023. The visionary behind the event, Rev. Quavon Z. Newton was inspired to hold such an event from the moment he arrived at St. Stephen, the first Sunday after his appointment noting the spacious parking lot and how it was the perfect space for outdoor ministry. The church partnered with two community organizations, Asbury Park Little League and Community Karma to organize and distribute over 1,000 backpacks filled with grade-appropriate school supplies for students in the Asbury Park community.

In addition to backpacks being distributed, professional hairstylists and barbers offered free hair braiding and haircuts to make sure any child who wanted to, received a brand-new hairstyle to start the school year with. The day was filled with activities and entertainment. Families were able to enjoy live performances from Lakehouse Music Academy, area dance teams, drill squads and musical performances from St. Stephen’s own music director Zal Walton Jr., musician Will Dunn aka Fred Soul and a solo dance performance from Pheonix Joyner, a member of St. Stephen’s Devoted Dancers 4 Christ. Families also received school uniforms, footwear, and free books at the event. There was face painting, crafts, games, an ice cream truck, a bounce house and activities for children and their families to enjoy.

“The partnership with Asbury Park Little League and St. Stephen AME Zion Church is a dream come true and this collaborative approach has allowed us to reach more families in need - I can’t wait to work together on our next project,” said Celia Cattani, Found-



er of Community Karma. Pastor Quavon Newton of St. Stephen added “this Community Day was proof that we can foster social cohesion to address the local challenges that many are facing. Today, families were fed, clothed and prepared to begin the school year with confidence. We are committed to continuing to find ways to come together to address the social concerns of the Greater Asbury Community.” Coach Will Wright shared their sentiments and said “Education is our passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to the children who prepare for it today.”

Support from both the City of Asbury Park as well as the Asbury Park Chamber of Commerce added to the success of the event. St. Stephen was also blessed to have sponsorship from Godette Health and local businesses including Georgies, The Stone Pony, Tangled Up in Green, BP on Main St., and Asbury Park Book Cooperative. Corporate sponsors included Jersey Central Power & Light, ICIMS, Aetna and Pepsi. There was also support from Kiwanis of Asbury Park, Church of Philadelphia and Community Affairs and Resource Center.

The members of St. Stephen began sorting and packing backpacks with supplies two weeks before the event and on the day of led arts and crafts, games, made sure everyone stayed hydrated in the August heat and with the help of Everybody Eats, who cooked and served over 1500 hamburgers, hot dogs and snacks for all who attended. The St. Stephen ministerial team was also present, taking prayer requests, offering salvation and were delighted to share that members of the community received salvation and new members were added to the church.



If you are interested in learning more about future events, contact [office@ststepenamez.org](mailto:office@ststepenamez.org)



# BISHOP THOMPSON AND BISHOP HUNTER TO BE HONORED

By Dr. Larry B. Johnson  
Contributing Writer

Kannapolis, North Carolina, was the home of Bishop Richard Keith Thompson and Bishop Louis Hunter. It is also the home of the Kannapolis African-American Museum and Cultural Center, Inc., which will celebrate its Tenth Anniversary on October 7, 2023, at 6:00 PM at the Laureate Center in downtown Kannapolis. Ten years have passed since the organization began its mission “to collect and preserve the history and culture of African-Americans in Cabarrus and Rowan County, North Carolina, and to serve, engage, and enrich communities through diverse activities that enhance the quality of life in a cultural center setting.” To see how that mission has unfolded, you are invited to visit the website at [www.kaa-macc.org](http://www.kaa-macc.org).

As part of its yearly gala, KAA-MaCC (as it is called) recognizes individuals who have demonstrated significant meritorious achievement and service as citizens or natives of Kannapolis and of Cabarrus and Rowan counties. Based on its selection criteria, the late Bishop Richard Keith Thompson and the late Bishop Louis Hunter, Sr. have been nominated to receive the organization’s Lifetime Achievement Award. As natives of Cabarrus and Rowan counties, respectively, they excelled in their roles as religious and social leaders with honor, recognition, distinction, and excellence. Recognition of individuals like them in the KAA-MaCC Hall of Fame helps to maintain the spirit, pride, and sense of community as well as serve as a historical account of the Afri-

can-American presence in the local area and beyond. Bishop Thompson grew up as a member of Marable Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Kannapolis, Cabarrus County; and Bishop Hunter was a member of the Sandy Ridge African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Landis (Rowan County). Both Zionites dedicated their careers and lives to leadership and service in such a marvelous way, beginning with their roots in our local area. Indeed, Zionites, like others across the globe, will want to be a part of this historic occasion in some way.

Along with Bishop Thompson and Bishop Hunter, four other individuals will be honored: Judge Jerry Blackwell, social changer; Mr. Charles A. Cannon (posthumously), entrepreneur and business executive; Mr. James Donaldson (posthumously), local artist and civic leader; Mr. Kenneth B. Geathers, Sr., social and political advocate; and Dr. Norma H. Sermon-Boyd, educator.

Tickets for KAA-MaCC’s Tenth Anniversary and Induction Ceremony may be purchased at Eventbrite via <https://bit.ly/3Yz6ZDb> for this historic event. Sponsorships and souvenir journal advertisements may be submitted to the KAA-MaCC administrative office via email submission to [info@kaa-macc.org](mailto:info@kaa-macc.org) and by mailing the payment to Post Office Box 494, Kannapolis, NC 28082-0494.

For additional information, please contact Jacqueline Anthony at 704.925.1314.

**10<sup>th</sup>**  
KAA-MaCC

*Anniversary & Hall of Fame Inductions*

*A Decade of Making a Difference:  
Capturing Our History and Culture*

**Aria Janel**  
Mistress of Ceremony  
Anchor/Reporter W700 at Savannah, GA

**Willie A. Deese**  
Keynote Speaker  
Ret. Pharmaceutical Executive & Corporate Board Member

**Bishop Richard K. Thompson**  
(deceased)

**Bishop Louis Hunter Sr.**  
(deceased)

**Judge Jerry W. Blackwell**

**Charles A. Cannon**  
(deceased)

**Dr. Norma H. Sermon-Boyd**

**Kenneth Geathers, Sr.**

**James W. Donaldson**  
(deceased)

*Saturday, October 7, 2023 @ 6 p.m.*

[www.kaa-macc.org](http://www.kaa-macc.org)     [bit.ly/3Yz6ZDb](https://bit.ly/3Yz6ZDb)



Souvenir Journal Info



# VICYC at the 2023-2024 Albemarle Annual Conference

By Sister Iasia Collier,  
 Albemarle Conference, VICYC President & Kai Henry,  
 VICYC Director of Public Relations  
 Submitted by Lucy Beamon,  
 Elizabeth City District CED Director

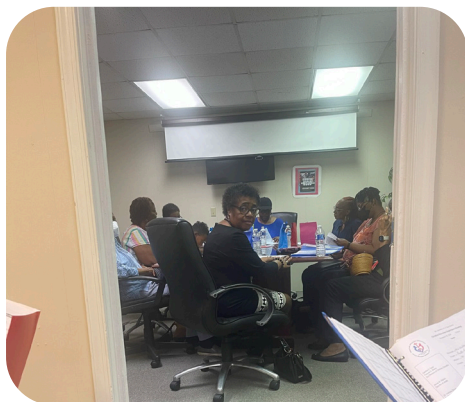
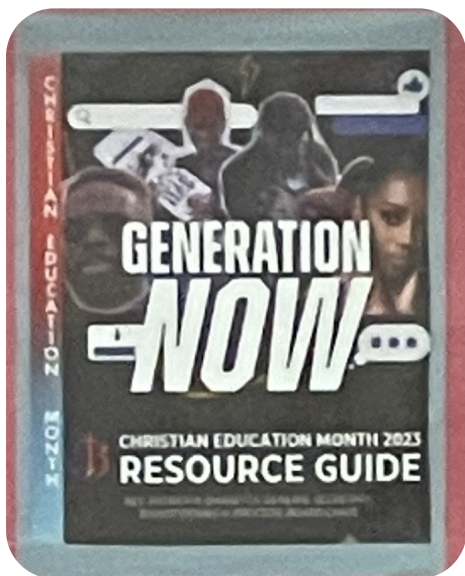
The first meeting for the 2023-2024 Albemarle Conference VICYC Officers took place at the Elizabeth City District office on Saturday, September 9, 2023. The Albemarle Conference consists of the Elizabeth City District, under the leadership of Presiding Elder Donald Jones, and the Edenton District which is led by Presiding Elder Leigh. The 2023-2024 VICYC officers are President- Sister Iasia Collier, Treasurer -Jarrett Dobie, Director of Public Relations - Kai Henry, and Chaplain-Davonte Williams. Our President, Sister Iasia Collier led the meeting with our Conference Director, Mrs. Gloria Spence in attendance.

During our meeting, we had an opportunity to talk about ourselves and learn from each other. We also learned about the duties of our offices and various aspects about the A.M.E. Zion church policies and procedures.

We discussed going to Truthville 2023 on December 27-30, where we

will have the opportunity to meet other officers and youth all around Zion. Afterward, Sister Iasia Collier, our local VICYC President quizzed us on some of the details of the VICYC, its purpose, and functions.

It was truly a very informative meeting. We were able to meet face-to-face for the first time since COVID-19, which provided a personal touch. We became familiar with our roles and were given the task of studying our VICYC and A.M.E. Zion Church history information, and to come prepared to be quizzed again on the information at our next meeting. Meetings will be held once a month either in person or on ZOOM. We were also given the task of submitting event ideas to enjoy in the future. Prior to adjourning, our Director of Public Relations Kai Henry, took beautiful pictures of the meeting to be included in our local history. She also took pictures of the meeting being held in the adjacent room, of the Christian Education local officers and church representatives. That meeting was led by Mrs. Lucy Beamon, District Director of Christian Education, and was attended by Mrs. Sandra Davis, Director of Children and Mrs. Lilian Dance, Director of Adults. They focused on CED Month and incorporated the new theme; Generation NOW” throughout the Conference Year. We definitely had a progressive meeting, while enjoying Jesus and each other!





# MARCH ON WASHINGTON:

*“... MORE THAN A COMMEMORATION, IT’S A CONTINUATION.”*  
*-Rev. Al Sharpton, Founder National Action Network*



**By Debra Chappelle-Polk**  
 Zion Spotlight Editor

Washington D.C. - On Saturday, August 26, 2023, over 170,000 people converged on Washington, D.C., to commemorate the 1963 March on Washington, where Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his famous “I Have A Dream” speech. The 2023 March was organized by Rev. Al Sharpton, Founder of the National Action Network, in coordination with other civil rights organizations, community activists, and churches across the country. Rev. Sharpton emphasized that the 2023 March was much more than a commemoration --- “It is a continuation of Dr. King’s dream.”



Rev. Sharpton invited Rev. Dr. Malcolm J. Byrd, Senior Pastor at Mother A.M.E. Zion Church, to address the crowd. Rev. Byrd thanked Rev. Sharpton for the opportunity and applauded him for his tireless fight for justice and equality for all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation. He asked the intergenerational, interracial crowd “to make some noise” and, with his fist raised, evoked the NAN mantra: “What do we want?” The resounding response was “justice!” Rev. Byrd said it is a shame that 60 years after the 1963 march, many of the challenges in our communities remain the same. As we go back home, the challenge of racism, classism, all of the ‘isms’ and phobias imaginable still exists.” However, Rev. Byrd said, “We also come here today to be empowered to meet these challenges when we return home.”

Rev. Dr. A. Alfred Carson, a Presiding Elder in the Northeastern

Episcopal District, attended the march, as did Dennis V. Proctor, Presiding Bishop of the Northeastern Episcopal District, who also addressed the crowd. Bishop Proctor said he remembered being at the 1963 March when his father, the late Rev. Emory Proctor, “was up here, and I was out at the reflection pool. It is amazing what a generation of legacy makes.” He shared a teaching moment. “The Lincoln Memorial was dedicated in 1922 to an entirely segregated audience. Nothing of Lincoln’s emancipation of millions of Black people from the institution of slavery was even mentioned. The theme of that age was parades and parties. It took four years for an organization to find the value of using this structure for a place of demonstrations. That organization was the African American Episcopal Zion Church in 1926.” Bishop Proctor said, “I stand today in that legacy of freedom fighters and freedom movers Frederick Douglas, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, all bastion leaders of the A.M.E. Zion Church and today our pledge is not to let the movement die, but to continue until victory is won.”



Bro. Kermit Morris, Director of the Men’s Ministry at Mother Zion, and his daughter, Taylore Renee, arose before dawn to get on one of the 15 free buses stationed in front of the NAN headquarters on W. 145th and Lenox Avenue in Harlem. Bro. Morris said, “On that bright and sunny day, I was full of hope; the same hope I believe felt among those that arrived at the Lincoln Memorial sixty years ago.” This was his daughter Taylore’s first march. Bro. Morris said, “She was as excited as I was to be present at this event.” They listened as Andrew Young, descendants of Dr. King, veterans, sororities, fraternities, union leaders, and other dignitaries addressed their concerns so that “America would hear their voices and feel the tsunami of enthusiasm and demand for change.” Bro. Morris said, “As I looked upon my daughter, I came to the resolve that this march was not idle. It is the same energy seen sixty years ago. This experience has affirmed my thoughts that the best is yet to come.” He quoted Francis of Assisi: “Start by doing what’s necessary; then do what’s possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.”



# Looking Into the Heart of a Giver: A Testimony of Healing and Ministry

By David Michael Burton & Leon Person  
Contributing Writer

In Acts 20:35, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, states, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” The Apostle Paul, in 2 Corinthians 9:7, states, “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.” During the Christmas season, when we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, it is essential that we remain ever mindful that our Heavenly Father revealed His heart to all of humanity by way of giving us His greatest gift; “For God so loved the world that He gave us His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” If we examine John 3:16 closely, we will see that we are presented with a gift within a gift; essentially two gifts: Jesus Christ and everlasting life. Indeed, such gifts were given unto us with a purity of heart, and our hearts are to be reflected in a likewise manner when we give unto others.

Beloved, to look into the heart of the giver is to engage in an act of self-reflection. It is an opportunity for us to take an introspective look into the state of our hearts. In the beginning of January 2022, New Years Day to be exact, I was blessed with such an opportunity. I prayed to the Lord and asked for the gift of healing; and I prayed continuously for this particular gift. Certainly, I did not know how or when this gift would manifest, or if it would be manifested at all. Nevertheless, I remained faithful unto the Lord with my prayers; for as it states in 1 Thessalonians 5:17, we are to “pray without ceasing.” Although I was not aware of it at the time, I was being prepared to look into the heart of the giver; that is to say, my heart was being prepared to offer up a sacrifice; one that would involve one of my own body parts. In effect, I would become the answer to my own prayer: to receive the gift of healing.

Fast forward to May of 2022, when my friend, and now blood brother for life, Leon Person, received news from his doctor that it would be at least eight years before he would be called to receive a kidney; and this was not a guarantee. By this time, Leon had already been on dialysis for two years. Moreover, Leon was also suffering from other health complications, and without a kidney, death was bound to be knocking at his door. Indeed, the news that he had received from his doctor was not encouraging, and not surprisingly, my brother began to feel depressed as he was without hope. Thanks be to God, the Lord placed within my heart the faithfulness to press on and inquire about my blood type.



Hebrews 11:1 tells us that “faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Certainly, I was unaware of what laid ahead. Nevertheless, I remained steadfast and immovable in my faith. Upon learning that my blood type is universal, I took that as a sign that the Lord was preparing Leon and myself both for a miracle; indeed, a miraculous healing was underway. Ultimately, what would solidify my decision to donate one of my kidneys was seeing the expression on my brother’s face while he was in the presence of his

three grandchildren; that was the happiest that I had ever seen Leon. Therefore, it was my observation of this experience that left such an indelible impression on my heart. Certainly, the Lord was making it clear that He was answering my prayer. Thus, on November 17, 2022, the decisive moment had arrived, as my body was offered up as a living sacrifice, thereby saving the life of my brother. Thankfully, the kidney transplant operation was a success; however, the surgery was not without a cost.

In Luke 14:28, Jesus Christ speaks on counting the cost. The cost of sacrificing one of my kidneys included the following: being in surgery for seven hours, being on medical restrictions for seven weeks, and being out of work for the same length of time. Despite the cost of my body being sacrificed, I count it all gain, as it is a blessing to be a blessing unto others. Certainly, such an experience was manifested at this time as my brother, Leon, was given an extension on his life. In the days following the kidney transplant, Leon stated the following: “No



one has ever loved me like you. I love you for life, my brother.” Such an expression of gratitude made my sacrifice worthwhile. Moreover, the experience of being used as a sacrifice serves as a catalyst for what is needed in the African-American community.

It is a tragedy that African-Americans are more at risk for kidney failure than any other race. According to the American Kidney Fund, “More than 1 in 3 kidney failure patients living in the United States are African-Americans. Diabetes is the number one cause of kidney failure. It causes nearly half of all cases of

kidney failure in the United States.” Indeed, this is a grim statistic. Thankfully, this statistic is reversible; and the solution in reversing this destructive trend can be found among ourselves. Thus, it has been impressed upon Leon and myself to initiate a healing ministry; one that involves a kidney donor registry (both living and nonliving) among the members of the A.M.E. Zion denomination; this healing ministry should also include a registry of blood and stem cell donors. The potential for lives being saved are virtually endless as the wait time to receive a kidney would be dramatically reduced; no longer would it be necessary to rely upon a national registry. Given that such a ministry does not exist, it is incumbent upon Leon and myself to lead by example, thereby planting the seed that will perpetuate the sustainability of life. Ultimately, a ministry of healing is cultivated by the virtue of love; for it was love that motivated me to be my brother’s Keeper. As the Apostle Paul states in 1 Corinthians 13:13, “And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” When we look into the heart of the giver, we should find love, and act accordingly.

*DAVID BURTON IS A LOCAL PREACHER AT MT. HOPE A.M.E. ZION CHURCH & FULL-TIME MDIV. STUDENT AT HOOD SEMINARY*

*LEON PERSON IS A MEMBER OF MT. HOPE A.M.E. ZION*



# WOMEN'S HOME & OVERSEAS MISSIONARY SOCIETY "CAPTIVATING" CHARLOTTE DISTRICT MISSIONARIES PRESENT "SELF-CARE AND WELLNESS" MASS MEETING

By Mrs. Barbara W. Rush,  
Charlotte District Missionary President

In the quiet and serene setting of the Steele Creek AMEZ Church in Charlotte, NC pastored by Rev. Dr. Monte Witherspoon-Brown, and home of newly elected Connectional Officer of Buds of Promise, Mrs. April Davis; Charlotte district missionaries, pastors, ministers, and Charlotte District's Presiding Elder Rev. Dr. Andrew Smoke, all excitedly assembled to begin the journey of Self Care and Wellness - 2023-2024 Conference Year.

Laying aside every weight that so easily besets us, and the adornment of the usual Missionary attire, missionaries were dressed casually and comfortably, as they were welcomed to an early Saturday morning "Chat and Chew" continental-style (healthy) breakfast. This meeting was planned as a launching of this year's theme of taking better care of self and being well, so as to help others on the journey to being the best for God. As usual, Charlotte District missionaries were silenced as a familiar theme song, "How to Reach the Masses – Help Me Lift Jesus" was being played on the sound system.



Speaker: (At Podium) Mrs. Beverly W. Hunt/Presiding Elder  
Andrew B. Smoke (Seated)

Self-Care and Wellness Meditation Speaker Mrs. Beverly Hunt, Parent Body President at Moore's Sanctuary AMEZ Church, began the meditation with warm-up movements, inviting all in attendance to sing along with the theme song, "You Make Me Happy". Mrs. Hunt's spiritual meditation, entitled "Finishing Strong," admonished everyone to take better care of themselves and to do what it takes to be well, to finish the race of life strong!

Mrs. Hunt stressed the importance of spiritual healing/wellness which calls for developing and strengthening our relationship with God; practicing the presence of God-cultivating an awareness of the living Christ in the quiet moments and in the noisy/busyness throughout the day to remain in fellowship with God at all times; the necessity of beginning and ending each day by spending quality time in His presence in an effort to hear from Him as He unveils His plans and purposes for us. Missionaries were challenged to eat healthy, engage in daily exercise and/or physical activity, get rid of stress-related issues/matters, engage in activities that promote joy and peace, and take doctor-prescribed medication for self-care and well-being.

Charlotte District Missionary President, Mrs. Barbara Rush distributed daily devotionals for everyone entitled: Jesus Calling-Enjoying Peace in His Presence by Sarah Young to be used in enjoying and spending daily time and peace in God's presence.

District Officers & Ecumenical Staff (YAMS - Beverly Hough; Youth-Angela Young; BUDs – April Davis; Life Members – Sandra Allgood; Bureau of Supply – Frances Hunter & Rev. Kristian Hunter; Missions Education – Mary McDuffie) presented "break out" sessions stressing the Self-Care and Wellness theme as it relates to each individual group. Participants were involved in vibrant and lively discussions concerning self-care and wellness, as well as activities to be implemented in local churches throughout the conference year.

Former Missionary Supervisor, Shirley McCoy, an unearthed jewel in the Charlotte District, discussed "Highlights" and brought clarity to the importance of understanding "Resolutions and Recommendations" that were voted on and implemented at the 30<sup>th</sup> Quadrennial Convention.

Attendance Banners were awarded to churches of each category: Small (O'Connor Grove AMEZ), Middle (St. Mark AMEZ), and Large (Weeping Willow AMEZ). Banners were awarded for having the most members in attendance at the Mass Meeting.

Final remarks were made by Presiding Elder Andrew Smoke. His remarks included acknowledging the importance of adhering to and being intentional in following the Self-Care and Wellness theme for missionaries, pastors, and all, for this conference year. Missionaries experienced a great and informative introduction to this year's theme. All were dismissed with the Missionary Benediction; determined, equipped, and ready to go forth to be better, and to make a difference in the lives of others.

The Journey Continues!

Mrs. Barbara W. Rush, Charlotte District Missionary President

Rev. Dr. Andrew B. Smoke, Presiding Elder

Mrs. Camille C. Starnes, Missionary Supervisor

Bishop Darryl B. Starnes, Piedmont Episcopal District



Charlotte District Missionary Officers – (Facing Photo)  
Left to Right: Rev. Kristian Hunter, Sandra Allgood, Angela Young, Barbara Rush,  
Frances Hunter, Beverly Hogue, April Davis



# Rockwell A.M.E. Zion Church Celebrates 158 Years with Gospel Icon John P. Kee

By Valerie Maureen Starks,  
 Director of Media, Rockwell A.M.E. Zion Church

Oh, how wondrous! It's an evening you'll never forget! Rockwell A.M.E. Zion Church and Reverend Jordan B. Boyd are celebrating in praise of 158 years with none other than Gospel Icon Pastor John P. Kee. It's the church's largest-ever homecoming concert and fundraiser. Join in as you're invited to attend on October 22nd at 6:30p from this historic church, located in the heart of the Derita community - 6101 Rockwell Church Road.

The fire will be lit, setting the roof on fire like only Pastor John P. Kee can! A native of Durham, NC who grew up in his teens in Charlotte's Double Oaks community... you know him as a solo artist as well as with the renowned New Life Community Choir!

Pastor Kee accolades include numerous awards and nominations. In the late 1980's he was crowned the Prince of Gospel. This legendary gospel artist has received hundreds of proclamations from various cities and to name a few: 26 Stellar Awards; 2005 International Gospel Hall of Fame Inductee; A Trailblazer Award from Former President

Bill Clinton; 28 GMWA Excellence Awards; Seven Grammy nominations; Two Grammy Awards; Two Billboard Music Awards; One Emmy Award and One Soul Train Award.

You can support Rockwell AME Zion Church, the second oldest church in Charlotte today, and be part of this year's 158th celebration! Did you know Rockwell has been a pillar of the community? It's a forerunner in not only addressing spirituality but also impacting the overall improvement of African-American health, education, socioeconomics, etc. The church has also received numerous awards and recognitions to this point.

The growth of the church in recent years has included a track and field, fruits and vegetable garden, fellowship center, clothing closet, activities for seniors, etc. Everything that Rockwell does is focused on enhancing the quality of life for its members and the community it is anchored and serves. They have also fostered many partnerships with the City and County to further make a difference.

"Through a Christian Foundation of Love, We Welcome All and Serve All." This is the Mission Statement of Rockwell AME Zion Church!

Go to [www.Eventbrite.com](http://www.Eventbrite.com) to get your tickets ASAP. It will be an epic 158-year celebration! Don't miss it!

ROCKWELL A.M.E. ZION CHURCH  
**HOMECOMING CONCERT**  
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 CHARLOTTE, NC 28269

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 Select Number of Tickets to purchase  
 Type in your information and purchase ticket  
 Once complete, E-ticket will be sent to email

**PURCHASE TICKETS HERE**



# Two Salisbury Pastors Co-teach Preaching and Worship classes at Hood Theological Seminary



By Kelly Bryant  
Contributing Writer

This year at Hood Theological Seminary, there will be a unique utilization of two professors teaching Preaching and Worship classes who are local pastors. The Seminary will have two prominent Salisbury pastors as the leading instructors. Rev. Dr. Derrick R. Anderson of Soldiers Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Downtown Salisbury and Rev. Dr. Robert Black of St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Downtown Salisbury. The two churches of these pastors are within a few blocks of each other in Salisbury, North Carolina.

"I welcomed the opportunity to team up with Robert in teaching Worship and Preaching at Hood, where I received my M.Div. in 1983," said Anderson. "Our congregations have been working and worshipping together for years. Though Robert (Dr. Black) and I have different backgrounds, we both have a passion for theological training and a wealth of experience to share with our students. This concept of team teaching is just one example of how Hood Theological Seminary is a blessing to theological education and the Salisbury community."

Dr. Anderson has been pastoring for over 42 years in six congregations throughout the country. He completed his Master of Divinity from Hood and his Doctor of Ministry from Asbury Theological Seminary. Dr. Black has served congregations in Washington, DC, and Greensboro, NC. He completed his Master of Divinity from Virginia Theological Seminary and his Doctor of Ministry in Preaching from the University of the South (Sewanee).



"St. Luke's and Soldiers Memorial have been deepening the relationship between our congregations for several years, so having the oppor-

tunity to collaborate in this course furthers the connection between our churches," said Black. "I receive so much from these students who are hungry to grow as preachers and worship leaders across the Church. Their questions, insights, and dedication are an inspiration to me and a testament to the Spirit's activity. The Salisbury community is blessed by the ministry of Hood Seminary, and having pastors teaching this very practical course about worship and preaching is a sign of Hood's commitment to equipping the Church of the 21<sup>st</sup> century to thrive."



The two pastors will be teaching Worship and Preaching I in the first semester and Worship and Preaching II in the second semester. These are required courses for students who are seeking to complete the Master of Divinity Degree, which is required for ordination as a pastor, priest, or rector in many denominational churches such as the AME Zion Church, the Episcopal Church, the United Methodist Church, the Lutheran Church, and the Presbyterian Church just to note a few. Dr. Anderson and Dr. Black will be co-teaching these classes to students of various backgrounds, diverse church experiences, and different denominations.

Hood is honored to have two distinguished Salisbury pastors who are willing to serve their churches and educate and support future pastors and priests.

Hood Theological Seminary (HTS) is a graduate and professional theological school in Salisbury, North Carolina, dedicated to the education and preparation of women and men for bold and creative leadership in the Christian church and for a diverse world. The Seminary is approved for the following degree programs: General Theological Studies Certificate, Biblical Studies Certificate, United Methodist Studies Certificate, Christian Education Certificate, Master of Divinity, Master of Theological Studies, Master of Arts in Chaplaincy, Master of Arts in Christian Education, and Doctor of Ministry. The Seminary is approved by the University Senate of The United Methodist Church (UMC) and is the only Seminary in the United States sponsored by the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (AMEZ).

## The Quarterly Review Partners with Rev. LaKeshia Womack & Rethinking Church Strategies LLC

By Rev. Dr. Reginal Broadnax  
Editor, The Quarterly Review

The pandemic has changed so much of how we live, where and how we travel, how we interact with each other; and most specifically, how we do ministry. In the past 5 years, the landscape for ministry has completely changed, and many of the strategies and programs of the pre-pandemic era may not be sufficient to meet the needs of a post-pandemic landscape.

This Quarter, The Quarterly Review has partnered with Rev. LaKeshia Womack and Rethinking Church Strategies LLC, to engage in a discus-

sion of how we might re-think how ministry is done in a post-pandemic climate. As one of the articles suggest, certain trends and changes had begun to take place before the pandemic began; however, the pandemic has exacerbated the causes of some of those trends, but it has also provided us an opportunity to move forward into this century with a new vigor for ministry. A preview of some of the articles include, Creating an Impactful Ministry, Reimagining Sacred Spaces, The Digital Mission Field, Rethinking Christian Education, and Economic Empowerment. Each of these articles not only help us to re-think how we have engaged ministry previously, but also provide us with ideas and tools that will help us to be impactful in our ministries going forward. We hope that the October Issue of The Quarterly Review will help you to re-think various aspects of ministry and community engagement, so that our ministries can be more impactful, and meet the needs of both our congregations and our communities.



*The A.M.E. Zion*  
Quarterly Review



# Hood Theological Seminary: Fall 2023 Messenger-Williams Family Community Education Initiative Book Study

The Messenger-Williams Community Education Initiative is an extension of the Hood Theological Seminary's new Messenger and Williams Family Chair in Theology and Ethics. There will be courses offered at various times throughout the year. Course topics will vary but will consistently deal with issues of faith, ethics, and community. The courses are open to the general public.

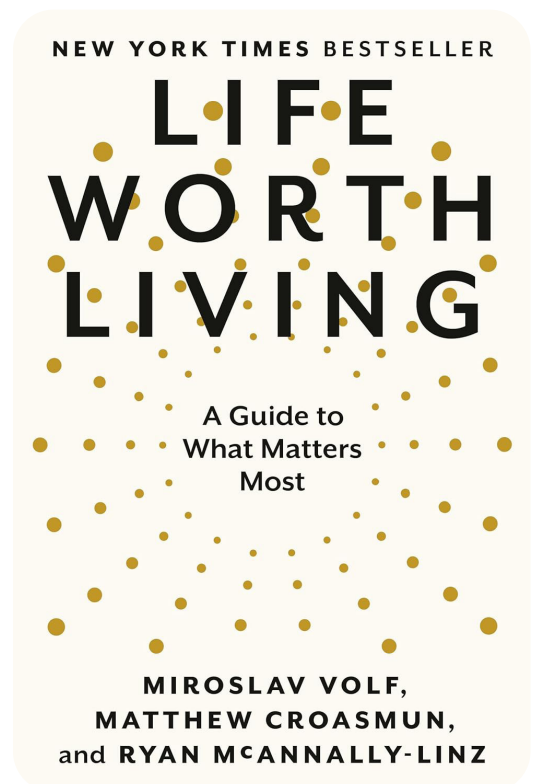
The Fall 2023 Messenger-Williams Community Education Initiative is devoted to a discussion oriented, group study of *A Life Worth Living*, named after its authors' highly sought-after Yale undergraduate course. This course will take place October 2-October 20, 2023.


Drawing from the major world religions and from impressively truthful and courageous secular figures, *A Life Worth Living* is a guide to life's most pressing question, the one asked of all of us: How are we to live?

This instant *New York Times* best seller is based on Yale's popular undergrad class on the age-old question of the meaning of life. Students have called the class life-changing, and readers who experience this book's wisdom and new perspectives should feel the same way.

**Facilitator:** Trevor Eppheimer, PhD. Messenger-Williams Family Associate Professor of Theology and Ethics at Hood Theological Seminary (Salisbury NC). Please contact Dr. Eppheimer for any questions at [teppheimer@hoodseminary.edu](mailto:teppheimer@hoodseminary.edu).

For more information including participation options, schedule, and registration, please go here: Welcome Hood Theological Seminary ([hoodseminary.edu](http://hoodseminary.edu))





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# The American Association of University Women-Salisbury

By Rev. Sam Brown  
Contributing Writer

The American Association of University Women- Salisbury kicked off their 2023-2024 fiscal year with the theme Back-to-AAUW on Monday, September 11 from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. at Rowan Public Library. An organization missioned for advancing gender equity through research, education, and advocacy, under the leadership of the 2023-2025 president, Dr. Da'Tarvia A. Parrish, the Salisbury branch will continue to forge forward with the organization's framework, in hopes of gaining Five-Star national recognition. "We must do our best to embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion that will foster fair and impartial opportunities to all. AAUW stands for justice, and we stand with AAUW," Dr. Parrish stated to members and guests in attendance.

The program continued with college students of Livingstone and Catawba who were awarded scholarships from the branch to attend the National Conference for Collegiate Women Student Leaders (NC-CWSL) in May of 2023 at University of Maryland at College Park. Jalen Brooks and Mia Mason of Livingstone engaged digitally, sharing



their positive networking experiences. Suzie Rodriguez of Catawba spoke of the leadership impact component of NCCWSL that extended to her current position as president of the Student Government Association.

The chapter's vice president Diane Labovitz and Secretary Erin Wood, added to the rally-themed event with social media boosts, t-shirts, and women empowerment *swag*. Treasurer Eileen Hanson-Kelly lent her expertise to the purpose and passion of continuing the work of AAUW. "We've lost so much since the pandemic. Women lost employment because they are the primary caretakers, and even more the overturn of Roe v Wade was true hit to women and reproductive rights. 50 years of progress was reversed. We must continue to work," said Eileen, as she challenged attendees to become Legacy Circle members.

The night concluded with an extensive list of programs by co-vice presidents of programming, Nicole Oehmen and Ruby Walker. With much conversation about voting and election awareness and engagement, the dynamic duo encouraged all to become AAUW two-minute activists and join committees of interest. Salisbury's Mayor pro-tempore Tamara Sheffield added key dates and location for voting, as well as photo identification requirements.

As the goal of AAUW is to promote economic security, education, and advocacy, the Salisbury branch will host programs to alleviate these issues through challenging pay equity and student loan forgiveness, fighting for equal opportunities in education and access to STEM, and legal advocacy on local, state, and federal levels to support laws and policies and legislation that enable women's success. For more information about Salisbury-AAUW, <https://salisbury-nc.aauw.net/>. For information about national AAUW visit [www.aauw.org](http://www.aauw.org).

- OCTOBER 2023: Women Who Lead: Meet 'She' Candidates

Monday, October 9, 2023 from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. Join us on Zoom to engage with women in leadership, learn about AAUW policy stances, and explore the views of official Rowan-Salisbury representatives and beyond!

- NOVEMBER 2023: The Gender Pay Gap and the Workplace

Monday, November 13, 2023 from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. Hosted at RPL, this hands-on workshop is designed to assist women in the employment search arena. Learn the do's and don'ts of job applications, and how to research your target salary, highlight your accomplishments and find the right words and the confidence to negotiate for better benefits and more.

- DECEMBER 2023: Rallying for Reproductive Rights: RoCo Pro Roe?

Monday, December 11, 2023 from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. AAUW supports choice in determining one's reproductive life and increased access to health care and family planning services. Join us at RPL to learn about efforts made by the AAUW national public policy team, coalitions formed with gender equity and reproductive rights organizations, and ways to support reproductive justice and bodily autonomy in Rowan County

- JANUARY 2024: New Year – New You – New Policies

Monday, January 8, 2023, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. Together we can reach gender equity in education, economic security, and leadership. Come to RPL to learn more and share your voice about AAUW's priority issues and how we can work to achieve our mission: Equity for all, in Rowan County. Wear fit gear for health and wellness components.

- FEBRUARY 2024: Black HERstory, Women in the Movement

Monday, February 12, 2024 from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. You don't want to miss the Salisbury branches of AAUW and NAACP for conversations with native civil rights activist and writer DeeDee Wright, author of *The (Wright) Thing: My Life in the Civil Rights Movement and Beyond*. Join us at RPL for living HERstory and to witness the power of organic voices and personal narratives.

- MARCH 2024: Global Missions and International Women's Day

Monday, March 11, 2024 from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. Celebrate with women around the globe and join us for an International Women's Day recognition at RPL. This cultural festival will highlight the progress made towards achieving gender equality and women's empowerment and discuss pertinent topics in an effort to strive for a greater momentum towards gender equality worldwide.

- APRIL 2024: AAUW-Salisbury Annual Meeting and Elections

Monday, April 8, 2024 from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. Join us at RPL for our annual meeting and elections to cast your vote for the 2025-2027 Vice President of Programs and Treasurer as well as the 2026-2028 Executive Officer Nominating Committee!



- MAY 2024: The Scholars of Helen S. Goldman Gathering

- JUNE 2024: Full STEM Ahead

Monday, May 13, 2024 from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. at Rufty-Holmes Senior Center The Helen S. Goldman Memorial scholarship awards high school young women entering college. Scholarships through application are provided to selected local women as a tribute to former AAUW leader Helen S. Goldman. The AAUW-Salisbury branch has a long tradition of hosting a fellowship event to engage with and honor Goldman scholarship recipients. Join us to meet this year’s impressive scholars!

Monday, June 10, 2024 from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. AAUW’s strategic plan includes goals of championing equal access in education, particularly STEM, and ensuring education at every level is free from sex and gender discrimination. Join us at RPL for an evening focused on these issues, including an introduction to local and statewide STEM initiatives.

## 2023 Livingstone College Prep Rally



By Rev. Sam Brown  
Contributing Writer

Livingstone College began its first week of the school year with a lyceum hosted by the 13<sup>th</sup> President of Livingstone College, Dr. Anthony J. Davis. On Wednesday, August 23, 2023, the campus assembled in Bishop James Varick Auditorium for a pep-rally style event that welcomed a spirit-filled atmosphere of academic fellowship and school

pride. Themed, *Reset: Return to Community*, President Davis reiterated tenets of the Livingstone College brand under his leadership. He stated, “We are on a journey to become a resilient, relevant, and respected HBCU. We’ve got work to do with our culture, our climate, and our campus community.”

With firm support from the administration, faculty, staff, and student-leaders, Davis was lauded with applause and cheers that demonstrated a united and new sense of community among the Blue Bears. Denoting a student-focus administration, Davis engrossed on students exploring their possibilities and releasing their power. He remarked, “Everyone has potential. What are you going to do to ignite it?”

Mister Livingstone College, Jalen Robinson was excited about the energy and newness of the environment. He said, “I’m truly blessed to have President Davis in this leadership position during my senior year. Not only do I feel great about Livingstone’s future, I am also inspired to be more intentional about mine.”

The event concluded with a collective chant led by President Davis in kinship of the African American tradition of *call and response*. He questioned, “Who ya wit?” – an inquisitive charge that warrants a collective and hearty response by all Blue Bears assembled to shout, “LC!”



Senior Lafayette Thompson



Students standing to welcome President Davis



Mister Livingstone College Jalen Robison and his court



President Davis addresses the assembly



# 2023 Presidential Scholars reception

By Rev. Sam Brown  
Contributing Writer

On Thursday, August 24, 2023 from 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. Livingstone College welcomed and celebrated its new 2023 Presidential Scholars in the F. George Shipman Annex building. Hosted by the 13<sup>th</sup> president, Dr. Anthony J. Davis stated it essential to “celebrate students who demonstrate academic promise and prowess.” This year, under the leadership of Anthony Brooks who serves as the vice president for enrollment, the admissions team was intentional about recruiting top academic students whereas approximately 40 scholars have joined the Blue Bear family, with grade point averages ranging from 3.8 – 4.5. Another 40, identified as Board of Trustee scholars, have academic averages from 3.5 – 3.7.

Moderated by the executive assistant to the president and the vice president for communications, Dr. State Alexander; all senior administrative staff members, and academic division chairs attended the event to delight in the presence of scholarship. Adding to the personnel was Da’Tarvia A. Parrish who will serve as the director for the newly reinstated Honors Program. Dr. Parrish welcomed the scholars stating, “I thank God for the opportunity to invest in brilliant young minds and I thank you for choosing Livingstone College. With curricula framed in complex learning and appropriate career opportunities, we are equipped and ready to lead you.”

Other greetings were extended by the vice president for Academic Affairs, Dr. Dawn McNair, the college’s senior vice president and chief operating officer, Dr. Maria Lumpkin, the Student Government Association president Matthew Clin-

ton, and Presidential Scholar and Miss Livingstone College, Akera Barnes; while campus minister, Rev. Lloyd Nivens IV rendered prayer.

Senior business administration major Christian Bussey said, “It’s a breath of fresh air to see this number of freshmen enter the program. Like me, I am confident they will have a rewarding experience that will allow them to tap into their passion, purpose, and power.”

The event concluded with all students gifted dry-fit polo style shirts from President Davis and First Lady, Jacqueline Davis. Music professors Lawrence Quinnett and Timothy Gray were the evening entertainment, and a light reception of nourishment themed in Honors delicacies and treats was enjoyed by all in attendance.





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# 2023 March on Washington



Rev. Dr. Allison Lee  
Social Justice Editor  
SocialJustice@StarOfZion.org

By Allison N. Lee  
Social Justice Editor



*“We cannot walk alone. And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back.”*  
– Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Saturday, August 26<sup>th</sup> marked the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the March on Washington. This year’s march was at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C., and organized by the Kings’ Drum Major Institute and the National Action Network. Thousands of people assembled in the United States capital at the historic spot where Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered his legendary, moving, and meaningful, “I Have a Dream” speech on August 28, 1963 with 250,000 people present. The programming of the March felt chilling when contemplating the place that America was in 60 years ago interfaced with where America stands today with the recent Supreme Court rulings that have legally struck down decades of racial, justice-driven, and societal progress with votes from the highest court in the land. It also felt soul-stirring, listening

to the words spoken so eloquently and directly by those who took the stage to demand justice and equity that is rightfully due. Arndrea King who is the daughter-in-law of the late Dr. King stated, “We are here to liberate the soul of a nation, the soul of democracy from those forces who would have us all go backwards and perish rather than go forward as brothers and sisters.”

The program was five hours long and highlighted several known speakers who shared thoughts, gave charges, and expressed concern surrounding the ubiquity and gravity of systemic racism. Speakers also talked about gun violence, rights for those within the LGBTQIA and Asian American communities, poverty, hate crimes, ending anti-semitism, voting rights, red lining, etc. Several of the speakers were women, highlighting – even in the midst of continued societal upheaval – the progress made since the first March on Washington in 1963 when only one woman was featured during the event. Pamela McDonald who was present at the 1963 March on Washington and was eight years old at the time shared her knowledge of one woman speaking back then who was from the same home state of Arkansas as McDonald. McDonald celebrated how far things had come regarding the inclusion of women. Even with the celebration, many were disappointed when thinking about the quarter of a million people present in 1963 compared to a significantly reduced turnout sixty years later.

Rev. Al Sharpton, founder and president of the National Action Network, which co-sponsored the event stated, “Sixty years ago, Martin Luther King talked about a dream. Sixty years later we’re the dreamers.” Sharpton went on to talk about the reality that dreamers are faced with those who are scheming to undue, attack, and go against the dream. As we continue to reflect on how far we have come and the number of miles remaining before sleep comes, may we remember that the dream lives on in each of us. May we remember that in the words of poet Robert Frost, “The only way out is through, and the only good way through is together.” May we continue to partner in conceptualization of thought, conversation, consultation, creation, and implementation. May we continue in the words of the Negro National Anthem, Lift Every Voice and Sing “...let us march on ‘til victory is won.”

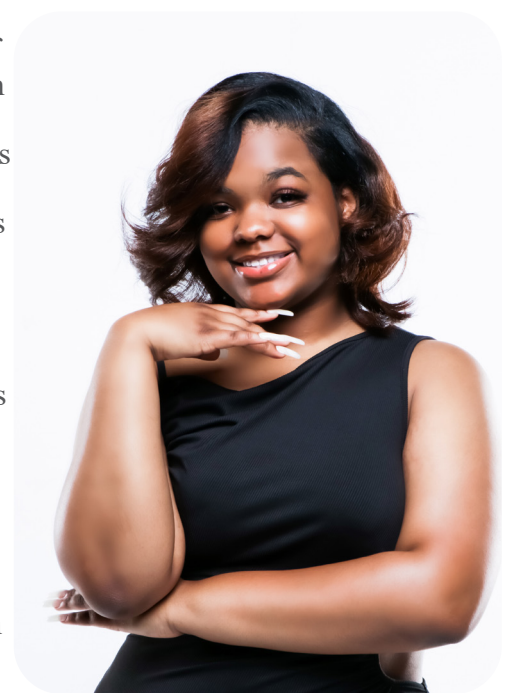
## Progression and Reconstruction, Part II

By Camryn Covington  
Connectional VICYC Southeastern Regional Vice President  
Piedmont Episcopal District  
Western North Carolina Annual Conference  
Greenville Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church

Constructing strong youth councils holds vital significance in ensuring that the church flourishes. There are a plethora of reasons that youth councils are just as much of a need as they are a want within Zion. Beyond the church, the presentation of sturdy youth councils sends a message to the youth that they are heard and there is a space for them to be influential. Youth feeling as if they have no voice or representation in the church plays a leading role in keeping the youth away from the church. I believe that seeing the evolution of councils that stand for and with them will aid in changing that. To have the experience of a youth council both in local and district areas will serve as motivation for youth to become and remain active within the church. This is possible because access to positive images of surrounding role models that are both within the same age range and facing many of the same worldly struggles and frustrations shows youth that there is always a place for them. Successful and developing youth councils within Zion allow youth platforms to proudly represent Christ

and express their faith outwardly. The biggest reward of being a part of any Zion youth council is having like-minded friends who devote themselves to growing in Christ and will willingly hold their colleagues accountable for doing the same. For each and every one of the prior listed details, it is a goal of mine to establish both local and district cabinets within my region. Next, I will discuss the thoughts I have in mind to see to it that this plan comes to fruition.

Locally, my strategies for youth council construction include but are not limited to: interactive social outreach, in-person workshops surrounding youth and their importance to the church, workshops expounding on spiritual growth and having pride in knowing God as a young person, and service projects. Each of these





ideas not only creates room for councils to form, but they also will assist in waging the gap between the youth of Zion and Zion's elders. On a district level, ways that I will foster the growth in councils includes: traveling to churches, traveling to different conferences, and hosting routine bible study sessions that will be catered to youth while remaining inter-generational. In these councils, I find it essential that the youth serving on them are dedicated to much bigger objectives than doing work for the church or making a statement to the youth keeping eyes on them. I believe that the first step to accepting a responsibility as sacred as serving on a youth council is establishing the fact that you want to grow as an individual, and you want to grow within Christ so that your time serving Him on Earth prepares you for the harvest you will reap following your time on Earth. It is my belief that each of my ideas for working toward proficient local and district cabinets will show to be effective, because each idea caters to youth in a way that will allow them to flourish and expand creatively. Each idea also incorporates the involvement of the adults and elders of Zion, minimizing the gap between the current and future leaders of Zion so that we may bring out the best in one another

for the general betterment both of and in our work for Christ. The coming together of the Youth of Zion and the Elders of Zion introduces a platform for innovation and the opportunity for Youth and Elders to learn from one another, and, I wholeheartedly have faith that my approach will make that happen.

There is a familiar Bible verse in Luke 12:48 that so eloquently states "To whom much is given, much is required." As God has placed me in the position to serve as a regional VICYC V.P., I learn daily that this is a statement that holds true. That very quote as it relates to my position held within VICYC tells me "Enveloped in a great title and anointing lies an even greater responsibility." While serving as a connective officer responsible solely for my region and as a daughter of the King, my responsibilities are clear. I greatly appreciate the opportunity to express my hopes to make a positive impact within Zion's youth by way of this letter. May God bless each eye that reads, each ear that hears, and each heart that feels. Amen.

## The Significance of Voter Education



By Allison N. Lee  
Social Justice Editor

Around certain times of year (this is one of them) and when tragedies or situations occur that go against the grain of what various groups of people believe, voices are united in saying, "This is why we need to vote," or "Your vote matters." The aforementioned statements are both true, *and*, it is important for us to remember that voting and the education of voters is important all 365 days of the year. It is not just enough that we vote, but that we are educated in our vote.

According to the United States Election Assistance Commission, voter education is defined as,

"...the act of providing voters with basic information about the voting process and elections. Voter education materials can be delivered through events, websites, mailings, and advertising. Some topics covered by voter education materials include how to register to vote, viewing a sample ballot, or providing information about accessible voting."

### Why is educating voters important?

- **Process** – Voter education matters because voting for the first time or even from one cycle to the next can be chal-

lenging or even daunting for some, if, procedural steps are uncertain. We educate others and need to be educated ourselves regarding voting in order to know the steps required, which will help to ensure as seamless of a process as possible.

- **Polls** – Knowing the polls in the area, the hours of operation at the poll one will vote at, early voting specifics, and what to expect when arriving at the polls (process) can help to alleviate stress and ensure clarity.
- **Politics** – Voter education pertaining to the communication of current issues ahead of Election Day gives those who will be headed to the polls time to process and reflect on where they are mentally, culturally, societally, personally, etc., with certain voting matters. Being educated on the issues at hand helps voters to cast their ballots responsibly, instead of blindly picking a response at the polls.
- **People** – Sometimes voting is taking place around specific issues. Much of the time, we are also voting to elect officials who will deal with the issues on behalf of the general public, whether at the local, state, or federal level. It is necessary for a portion of voter education to consider and deal with the teaching of what those who are running stand for. Knowing the platform of those offering themselves and being aware of professional and political histories are key elements in voting.

- **Past** – Awareness of how far suffrage (for women and Black & Brown people in particular) has come should help us all to remember why it is vital for us to show up at the polls. Voter education does not only speak to where we are currently and/or where we are headed, but from whence we have come.
- **Power** – Power here is used as a synonym for rights. Educating voters is significant because voters need to know the power had in voting rights. Late Civil Rights Activist & Politician John Lewis once said, "The vote is precious. It is the most powerful non-violent tool we have in a democratic society, and we must use it."

Let us strive to exercise both our individual & collective power and constitutional right to vote at the polls and bring others along with us. As we are signing up to pass out pamphlets, make phone calls, canvas neighborhoods, teach workshops, work at polls, and read up on candidates + voting issues, may we be reminded of the significance of voter education.



# The 48 Hour Film Project.



Rev. Dierdre' R. Parker-Rowson  
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By Rev. Dierdre' R. Parker-Rowson  
Entertainment & The Arts Editor

Make a movie in a weekend? Who does that? Contestants in the 48-hour Film Project that's who! Teams of filmmakers have just one weekend, from 7:00pm on Friday 'til 7:30pm on Sunday to write shoot, edit and create a soundtrack for a short film. They are given a genre, a character, a prop, and a line of dialogue, and 48 hours to complete the project.

In the weeks that follow, screenings are held in each competing city and a winner is chosen to represent that City in *Filmapalooza*. This is a world-wide competition began in 2001 in Washington DC created by Mark Ruppert and is produced by Ruppert and Liz Langston. This year's competition included members of the AME Zion Church. Rev. Craig Douglass and son Jonathan participated on a team with writer/director and all-around creative Johnetta Warren-Askew and her partner/husband Marvin R. Askew of Expressed Entertainment of Buffalo, NY. The film that they produced is titled *Line of Sight*. I had the privileged pleasure of discussing what the process was like for them and what their next steps in this competition would be. A little research revealed that this dynamic duo has a creative love story that would rival any film that was entered into the competition.

When asked how they met Warren-Askew replied, "I say he sat on my futon and never left." This brought a boyish grin to Mr. Askew's face. "When I first started, my studio was my house. My bedroom doubled as a bedroom by night and a studio by day. A friend of mine brought him over to record his spoken word album." Their eyes sparkle as they glance at one another. "We are both spoken word artists and though we frequented the same spots and had some of the same friends, we had never met." Once they finished his project they began working on other projects and the rest, as they say is history. The way they look at each other and lean into each other. The way they smile and swell with pride when the other is speaking is a part of beautiful love story spans continents and is one worth sharing, but let's get back to this 48-hour Film Project portion of the story.

"This is something that I wanted to do for a very long time," Askew says. "I wasn't able to do it because of my military commitment at the time." Mr. Askew is retired from the United States Air Force. "I wanted to do



it for the experience because everyone was telling me how fun it was to write, shoot and edit a film in 48 hours."

"You don't find out the genre until the launch party. That's when we found out what genre, prop, line of dialogue and character would be included in the film," Warren-Askew says. "It's all about preparation and teamwork. Making sure everyone knows what their job is and having a game plan," she adds. "We wrote on Friday. The writers met at 7:00pm, we wrote 'til it was done. I continued to edit and start with the prop list and character list after some of the writers left. The production came in at 10:00pm, led by Marvin. The Saturday call time was 6:00am so that we could start shooting. Sunday was all editing. We got about 4 hours of sleep the entire weekend. But we had a good time doing it. We showed the film to the cast and crew on Sunday night at the studio. They absolutely loved it! Everybody wants us to turn it into a feature film because it was a cliff-hanger." While the Askews did not have the results of the competition at the time of the interview, don't worry, we will not leave you hanging. There will be a follow up on how the film *Line of Sight* fared in the competition. Stay tuned.

## AWARENESS

By Rev. Dierdre' R. Parker-Rowson  
Entertainment & The Arts Editor

[ə'wɜrnəs]: knowledge or perception of a situation or fact

The month of October invites us to be aware of the many things that people deal with daily. These include Breast Cancer Awareness, Dyslexia Awareness, AIDS Awareness, Colon Cancer Awareness, ADHD Awareness. This is not an all-inclusive list. A quick Google search produced a list that is longer than the number of days in the month.

Awareness can be used to raise money for research and support. Awareness can also be used to produce empathy for those whom our society has marginalized. We have these *awareness* months, because if we, ourselves, do not face these illnesses or issues, we often don't even acknowledge their existence. This month, which also includes Domestic Violence Month, is as good a time as any for me to come to terms with something that I have been in denial about for the past six months.

Domestic Violence is described by the Department of Justice as a pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner. We tend to think of DV as *only* physical. It can also be emotional, economic, psychological, and sexual. It includes a pattern of coercive behaviors that manipulate, humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, threaten, blame, hurt, injure, or wound someone.


If you are reading this and you *KNOW me*, know me, you are probably thinking just as I did. *Not Ms. Women's Empowerment Super Black Girl Magic!* And that is what is so insidious about it. There is a pattern that begins so subtly, that you are not even sure that it is what it is. Like contractions, the incidents start coming more frequently and more intensely until it is threatening to kill you and throwing your belongings in the yard and marking them with a sign that says "free." You find yourself wondering what just happened. If any of what you have read so far resonates with you, please know that you are not alone. Talk to someone. If your situation has not turned physically violent at this point, it does not mean that it won't. Do not allow yourself to be convinced that none of this would have happened if you hadn't done whatever it is that your partner is trying to convince you that you did.

Maybe you're still hoping that your situation will change. Anything *is* possible. Just remember that you deserve to be treated with respect. You deserve to be safe. Remember that love is patient and kind. It is not proud or rude or boastful, nor does it keep records of when it has been wronged. Love will not threaten your life or belittle you or try to humiliate you. I do not believe that it is God's will for you to endure assaults on your person whether they be physical or otherwise. Help is available. Domestic Violence Hotline 800-799-SAFE (7233)

Text START to 88788, thehotline.org.

While Domestic Violence is the focus of this article, it is not the only issue that is important. We all face myriad issues daily. When we are aware it allows us to engage our fellow human beings with compassion and love.



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# The Harvey B. Gantt Center Celebrates Its Inaugural Children's Book Fair

By Asia Briana Brown  
Contributing Writer  
Photo Credit: Gantt Center Website

The Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture hosted its inaugural Children's Book Fair Festival Saturday, September 23, 2023, from 10:30 AM – 5:30 PM. The Gantt Center, which will celebrate fifty-years of establishment next year, is celebrating reading for children—ages four and up—as a space to explore creativity and imagination and all the incredible places one could go through literature.

The Gantt Center's Children's Book Fair Festival featured a diverse collective of Black authors and illustrators both local and beyond North Carolina, including the New York City Lincoln Center's first poet-in-residence, Mahogany L. Browne, and award-winning author, Tameka Fryer-Brown. Kids enjoyed story time with the authors, interactive art-making workshops, and have a chance to win prizes and giveaways from Charlotte Public Library.

Adults were able to participate with their kids in a multigenerational drum circle and explore the Gantt's Center's vendor marketplace from local artisans. If you visit the Gantt Center's Museum Store on the first floor, you will find a consignment section located on the wall behind the front desk which displays a variety of handcrafted items by local artisans, including vegan leather handbags, bath salts, candles, and kitchenware such as aprons and oven mitts. If you have not visited the Museum Store, the Children's Book Fair Festival is a perfect time to explore all that the Gantt Center has to offer both Charlotte residents and visitors. For nearly fifty years, the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture has been serving the Charlotte community with insightful art exhibitions, engaging community discussions, and live entertainment, hosting multi-talented artists this year, including Harvey Cummings

II, Nnenna Freelon, and Mercury Carter. The Gantt Center has three exhibitions on display: *where the sun shines*, a solo exhibition displaying colorful cultural commentary by Charlotte native, Stephanie J. Woods; *Seeing Stars*, which features twenty-two vi-

visual artists from the diverse Fischer / Schull collection, and *my Presence is Present: interpretations of afrosurrealism from the American South*, which beautifully weaves together all three exhibitions.

If you are living in Charlotte or are planning your next trip to the Queen City, take your family and friends to the Harvey B. Gantt for African-American Arts + Culture and explore the Children's Book Fair Festival. There will be events and activities for all ages, opportunities to connect with local artisans and various authors and illustrators. Support the Gantt Center and its continued commitment to educate everyone who visits on the unique history, contributions, and community of African-American artists and artisans.

## Children's Book Fair Festival





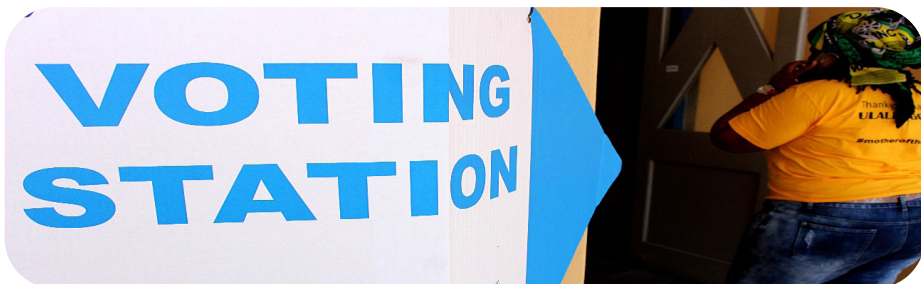


Mr. Daman DeLeon  
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# The Voice of Voting



By Daman De Leon  
Health & Wellness Editor



The Voting Rights Act had an immediate impact. By the end of 1965, a quarter of a million new Black voters had been registered, one-third by federal examiners. By the end of 1966, only four out of 13 southern states had fewer than 50 percent of African Americans registered to vote. The significance of this phenom was monumental in the progression of Black People here in America, and essential in eliminating the racial disparities caused by discrimination and the total marginalization of disenfranchised Americans (Black and Brown Communities-of-Color).

Voting was risky for Americans of African Descent just 70 years ago. Black people were filled with many obstacles that prevented them from voting. Some had to be landowners, some had to be sponsored by White personnel, some had to pay fees. Some were tested. Many people died for that right. It is too important for us not to vote, and if we want to have a democracy, we need to participate in it. We can't hope that situations will change. We have to be active in helping candidates get elected who will create that change. The fight for African Americans' right to vote dates back to the late 1800s. Freed Blacks in New York briefly held the right to vote before the Civil War, and there were similar instances in other Northern states. African American men were given the right to vote with the passage of the 15th amendment in 1870 as one of the "Reconstruction Amendments" after the Civil War. The Reconstruction era ended in 1877 with President Rutherford B. Hayes explicitly ending federal oversight of Southern states to fund public schools, establish charitable institutions, raise taxes, and fund public improvements to incorporate newly freed Blacks into the fabric of daily life as citizens and equal participants in America.

During Reconstruction, the Black vote's influence materialized as African Americans won election to local, state, and national offices. Black men won election to state legislatures and Congress indicating an impending drastic social change. Starting in 1868, we see white supremacist groups, precursors to the Ku Klux Klan, use violence to suppress the Black vote, and fraud was rampant. Many congressional elections in the South were contested.

Such tactics were used because white political leaders quickly realized that African Americans are independent political beings whose participation in elections can upset the 'balance' that previously existed without their involvement. These political leaders could not appeal to Black people and/or Black people were not responsive to their appeals because their appeals were rooted in the subjugation of the racial group for the foreseeable future, southern Democrats would/could not count on Black support.

President Lyndon Johnson signed the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which reinforced the 15th amendment of nearly a century earlier. The Voting Rights Act outlawed discriminatory voting practices and effectively provided African Americans the right to cast ballots freely. Despite the 1965 law, Blacks were still denied the right to vote. In some cases, by violence and in many instances through suppression and misinformation tactics. One year after the Voting Rights Act, civil rights activist James Meredith was shot and wounded during a voter registration march between Tennessee and Mississippi. Undaunted, 4,000 African Americans registered to vote in Mississippi the day after the shooting as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Stokely Carmichael joined the march. Suppression efforts have continued, and, in 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court eliminated the federal government's ability to block states' voting restrictions. In doing so, the high court effectively struck down a significant part of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which has led to restrictive laws that have primarily affected African American voters. "In a general sense, the power of the vote is absolutely critical to the creation and maintenance of an equal society, and that's why ruling classes fought the concept of universal suffrage for so many years in Europe and the U.S.," remarked Amber Dozier, the managing partner, and chief strategy officer of the *ABCD & Company*, a Rockville, Maryland-based marketing firm.

"In the case of African-Americans, voting is even more important because the laws of this nation have been historically designed in a way that leads to the de facto economic, cultural/social, and political subjugation or African-Americans," Dozier added.

"The Constitution, a document that framed the legal and political essence of America, declared the African-Americans were three-fifths of a White person – all for the purpose of amassing political power through the vote."

In conclusion, let us continue to progress in voicing our societal concerns via the power of the ballot. The path has been set for us, and the door opened. Only the destination is known, never the journey!



# Breast Cancer and Raising Awareness

By Daman De Leon  
Health & Wellness Editor



It comes around every year in October, and this October is no exception. It is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, a time to raise awareness about breast cancer risks, the importance of screenings, and options for treatment. Breast cancer is one of the most common kinds of cancer in women. About 1 in 8 women born today in the United States will get breast cancer at some point. Make a difference! Spread the word about mammograms, and encourage communities, organizations, families, and individuals to get involved. With early detection and treatment, most women can survive breast cancer.

The U.S. Health Department of Health and Human Services offers this information regarding Breast Cancer:

- Among Women, Breast Cancer is the most common newly diagnosed Cancer
- In 2022, there were approximately over 8,000 new diagnoses for women ages 38-50
- Breast Cancer is the second-leading cause of Cancer deaths in Women
- It is estimated that 2,410 more Women will die of Breast Cancer before 2024

Breast Cancer Awareness Month began in 1985 as a partnership between the American Cancer Society and the pharmaceutical division of Imperial Chemical Industries. Betty Ford helped kick off the week-long event, as she was herself a survivor of breast cancer. She was diagnosed when her husband, Gerald Ford, was president of the United States and brought even more attention to breast cancer.

Different people have different symptoms of breast cancer, while some do not have any signs or symptoms at all. It is important to know how your breasts normally look and feel to be able to recognize any changes that may occur. While knowing what to look for is important, regular mammograms and clinical breast exams are crucial, as these tests can help detect breast cancer before symptoms show.

#### Signs of breast cancer may include:

- Lump in the breast or underarm (armpit)
- Swelling or thickening of all or part of the breast

- Dimpling or skin irritation of breast skin
- Redness, scaliness or thickening of the nipple or breast skin
- Nipple discharge (other than breast milk)
- Any change in the size or shape of the breast
- Pain in any area of the breast

Getting screened is always the most essential step in prevention. A Mammogram is a low-dose x-ray picture of the breast. Early detection of breast cancer can improve a woman's chance of survival and mammograms are the best tool to find breast cancer early, when it is easier to treat and before it is big enough to feel or cause symptoms. Women should ask their healthcare provider if and when a Mammogram is right for them.



#### How Can I Lower My Risk?

There are many factors that can influence your breast cancer risk such as family history and getting older. There is no sure way to prevent breast cancer, but lifestyle changes can help lower your risk of breast cancer such as:

- Keep a healthy weight and exercise regularly.
- Choose not to drink alcohol, or drink alcohol in moderation.
- If you are taking hormone replacement therapy or birth control pills, ask your doctor about the risks.
- Breastfeed your children, if possible.
- If you have a family history of breast cancer, be sure to talk to your doctor about ways to lower your risk.

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## Domestic Violence: Stop the Silence

By Daman De Leon  
Health & Wellness Editor

The Month of October has many cultural awareness platforms. One of them is Domestic Violence. The Church and other faith-based initiatives are relatively quiet on this issue.

Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) evolved from the “Day of Unity” held in October 1981 and conceived by the *National Coalition Against Domestic Violence*. The intent was to connect advocates across the nation who were working to end violence against women and their children.

The Day of Unity soon became an entire week devoted to a range of activities conducted at the local, state, and national level. The activities conducted were as varied and diverse as the program sponsors but had common themes:

- Mourning those who have died because of domestic violence
- Celebrating those who have survived
- Connecting those who work to end violence

These three themes remain a key focus of DVAM events today. In October 1987, the first Domestic Violence Awareness Month was observed. That same year marks the initiation of the first national domestic violence toll-free hotline.

In 1989, the U.S. Congress passed Public Law 101-112 designating October of that year as *National Domestic Violence Awareness Month*. Such legislation has passed every year since with National Coalition Against Domestic Violence providing key leadership in this effort. Each year, the Day of Unity is celebrated the first Monday of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Whereas domestic violence victim advocates, domestic violence service providers, domestic violence first responders, and other individuals in the United States observe the month of October, as “National Domestic Violence Awareness Month” in order to increase awareness in the United States about the issue of domestic violence;

Domestic violence is prevalent in every community, and affects all people regardless of age, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, gender, race, religion, or nationality. Physical violence is often accompa-

nied by emotionally abusive and controlling behavior as part of a much larger, systematic pattern of dominance and control. Domestic violence can result in physical injury, psychological trauma, and even death. The devastating consequences of domestic violence can cross generations and last a lifetime.

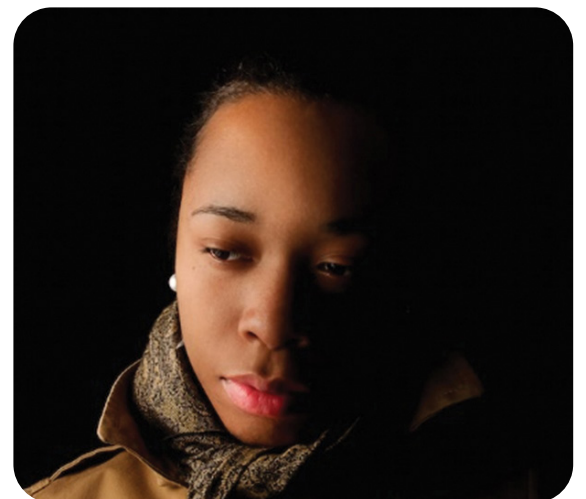
Although there has been substantial progress in reducing domestic violence, an average of 20 people are physically abused by intimate partners every minute. This equates to more than 10 million abuse victims annually. 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men have been physically abused by an intimate

partner, and 1 in 5 women and 1 in 7 men have been severely physically abused by an intimate partner. Millions of Americans live in daily, silent fear within their own homes. In addition, every year millions of children are exposed to domestic violence. Domestic violence incidents affect every person within a home and can have long-lasting negative effects on children’s emotional well-being, and social and academic functioning.

Let us collectively continue to bring awareness to such a volatile phenom in our homes and communities.

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By Dr. Dana Stilley  
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Election Day is fast approaching, and this year, when we cast our votes, there will be no presidential candidate on the ballot. This fact is of great concern to many, as the voter turnout in years when a president is not being elected is generally lower. This lower voter turnout means that every vote counts and increases the need for voters to understand exactly what is at stake in a local election.

Local elections determine who will be responsible for making the decisions that impact our daily lives, and economic conditions. The

# Local Elections Matter

determination of concerns such as education reform, safe and healthy drinking water, the maintenance of streets and bridges, law enforcement budgeting, public transit, and the enactment of ordinances are decisions that will be made by those elected to city and municipal government positions.

The power to set these policies, which are designed to protect and serve your community, directly impacts your quest toward financial freedom. Your tax rate, home value, travel, and car maintenance costs will be directly affected by the decisions of local elected officials. You should take the time to learn the viewpoints and values of local candidates, as well as the propositions they support. Most importantly, you should begin to make your plan to get to the polls and exercise your right to vote. Local elections matter!

## LIFESTYLE

# Why Vote? A Conversation with an Election Assistant/Auditor



Ms. Angel Eason  
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By Angel Eason  
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Elections are coming up soon across the nation. Are you registered to vote? Are you planning to vote in the upcoming election?

I had the opportunity to speak with Sharon Denise Turner, Election Assistant/Auditor for the Voter Registration Office in the City of Norfolk (Virginia), and Former Chief of Elections at the Berkley Polling Place in Norfolk, Virginia about the importance of voting.

Sharon Denise Turner is a member of Hood Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church, Pastor, Rev. Samuel Warren, Jr, Norfolk, Virginia.

### 1. Why is voting important?

We have struggled for so long to have the right to vote. If we don't vote, there is no change. Voting helps us with change; change which is necessary, especially for African Americans. Our ancestors struggled, fought, were abused, and killed just for us to have this right. People have forgotten where we have come from and taken it for granted. No, we may not always get the candidate(s) of our choice but at least we have done our part.

### 2. Why is it important to vote in the local elections?

It is important to vote in local elections because a lot of times those candidates may be running in the general election. I'm not sure where this mentality came from about not voting in the smaller elections but only voting in the major elections. You get to know the candidates in the local (smaller) elections which helps you to make an informed decision if they run in the general elections.

For example: What is their platform? What do they believe in? What do they stand for?

We must always be informed. You cannot make a good decision without knowing what the candidates stand for.

Vote in every election because it makes a difference.

### 3. What are the voting requirements? Does it differ based on your home state?

It differs from state to state. In Virginia, you must be 18 and registered. Even those with felonies, their rights must have been restored by the

Virginia Governor. After this has been done, they can register and be able to vote.

Every state has a website with voting requirements, how to register, and eligibility. Also, if you do not have access to a local computer. Call your local registration office for assistance.

### 4. Sometimes it feels like voting does not change anything. What's your response to this?

We all kind of feel this way at some point. I have worked in the Voter Registration Office for 11 years and I can see how every vote counts regardless. For me, a no vote is a vote for the other party. Vote whether your candidate wins or not. Voting allows you to voice your opinion. It makes a difference in the number of votes each candidate receives. The change may not come immediately. As time goes on, legislation changes and voices are heard, then you will be able to say, I remember voting back then and now it has come to pass.

Young people are our future and our today. It is important that you continue to vote. There is no change without your vote.

### 5. What options are there for people who are busy? What do you suggest for those who have to go to voting locations and the lines are really long?

You can vote by absentee (early) voting (in VA). Check your state's website for requirements for absentee voting. Some of our cities also have satellite offices that are open where you can go and vote before election day; therefore, avoiding long lines.

I recommend everyone to vote in every election. If you do not vote, you are not a part of the change. Sometimes it takes years and years for us to see change. It means a lot to me to see our young people vote.

A lot of college students will vote, even though their residency is somewhere else. Check your state's voter registration website to see requirements. You can go to your local voter registration office to find out all the required information that you need.

**I encourage the young people to get involved, stay engaged, call**





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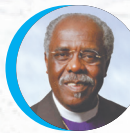
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# Black Faith and Political Action

By Rev. Ronald Nathan  
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The Black Church Political Mobilisation: A Manifesto for Action has been published by the National Churches Leaders Forum in the United Kingdom. This is a further sign of the growing maturity and confidence of the African and Caribbean Churches in the United Kingdom which was deemed the sleeping giant by British social commentators for over fifty years.

The May 20 launch of what is popularly called the Black Church Political Manifesto addresses both the British Political establishment and Black Christian Community with an insightful, prophetic and practical challenge.

The Black vote in several UK cities can make the difference between which of the two major political parties, the Conservatives (the current governing party) or the Labour party (the current opposition party) gets into power after the next general elections. The next United Kingdom general elections is scheduled to be held no later than 28 January 2025.

Furthermore, research has shown that the Black Church is one of the fastest growing sectors of the Christian community in the United Kingdom. The manifesto strategically places the Black Church in a position to extract from the government concrete promises about public holiness and righteousness in public policies especially around its 11 policy areas.

What is sometimes missed with both the first edition published in 2015 and the current edition is the theological and programmatic challenges that the Manifesto addresses within the African and Caribbean churches.

It is quite interesting that in many of our congregations we are familiar with the biblical text we read and champion the lives of Moses, Daniel, Joshua, Esther, and Deborah to name a few and totally ignore the fact that these anointed personalities were politicians. In other words, what we do is to make the Old and New Testament of the Bible conform to the thought and idea that true spirituality is devoid of political engagement. To hold such an ideological position maybe a contemporary religious emphasis but it is neither biblical nor is it Christian. That emphasis was birth in the bosom of colonialism and was utilised in European colonies to make the growing black Christian population passive. It was part of colonial mission theological education designed to keep slaves in their place and to undermine any possible revolt or uprising by the colonised.

So the publication of the Black Church Political Manifesto 2023 is an instrument to bring a rebalancing of the biblical concepts of 'faith' and 'works'. Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature must include the political world and the politicians. The gospel as defined by Jesus in Luke 4:18-20 clearly speaks to a release of Pentecostal power 'the Spirit of the Lord is upon me' in the fields of poverty reduction, health and prison reform and the removal of oppressive forces. The liberating agency, the Church, with its message of salvation from sin has to locate the good news in the spiritual, physical, social, psychological, and political realities that dehumanises and diminishes the Image and Likeness of God in persons of colour.



Jesus's teaching, the Gospel, is littered with symbolic and intentional challenge, to the status quo of the first century that corrupted the body, mind and spirit of the human community.

The Black Church Political Manifesto is therefore a clear indication of a theological shift taking place in the minds of the leaders of African and Caribbean churches in the United Kingdom. This shift in theology anticipates a shift in mission, i.e. mobilization of the faithful in the pews. The Manifesto illustrated by its eleven policy areas that there is work to be done and that this call to action is part of our civic duty and Christian discipleship.

The National Church Leaders Forum by its very existence represents a call for unity between the diverse expressions of Black Christian Faith in the United Kingdom. Its' inherited task is to garner the substantial human, social, intellectual, economic and political resources into a focused workable programme for the local church. This would result in significant impact on the community beyond the church walls. The work of the NCLF going forward is to further assist the pastor, elder, deacon, youth leader, choir leader, Sunday and Sabbath school teacher in this theological and ecclesiological process.

Alongside the church and trustees boards has to come the social justice committee that would flag up the inequalities in treatment at the education and penal institutions. Items for prayer must be identified for the prayer warriors, but they cannot stop there. Collections and fund raising events will also be organised for the financing of legal and advocacy work.

The National Church Leaders Forum have already established eleven forums on their website [www.nclf.co.uk](http://www.nclf.co.uk) covering the eleven policy areas of the manifesto. African and Caribbean Christian communities will be able to engage in these online discussion groups. Further to this the NCLF will roll out a national programme that will tour the country from London to Glasgow encouraging the African and Caribbean churches to network and enter into collective action around the Manifesto's policy areas.

In the foreword of the Black Church Political Mobilisation: Manifesto for Action several church leaders point out that "we, therefore, the National Church Leaders Forum, have considering that given this post-Brexit era, the Black Lives Movement, and the creation of the United Nations Permanent Forum on People of African Descent, to whom much is given much is required".



# World Methodist Council seeks General Secretary



The World Methodist Council is seeking a General Secretary to serve as the Chief

Executive Officer for a five-year term commencing in August 2024.

The General Secretary and the Council President are the Principal Officers of the Council.

The General Secretary will promote the Vision and Mission of the World

Methodist Council and maintain a focus for the Council in fulfilling its purposes as described in the Constitution; to encourage new initiatives

and, with the Officers of the Council, to provide strong and effective leadership of the Methodist Council's activities.

Applicants may be Lay or Ordained and will be a member in good standing with their respective Church, which is a member Church of the Council.

It is envisioned that the General Secretary will work from an office established in the Conference and/or Church where they currently reside.

To request a copy of the Job Description, please e-mail:

[office@worldmethodistcouncil.org](mailto:office@worldmethodistcouncil.org).

Applications close on Friday, 1 December 2023.

## 'YOU CAN COUNT ON U.S.'

By Rev. Ronald Nathan  
World Politics Editor



The United States of America's Secretary of State, Antony Blinken unequivocally stated that the Caribbean Community of 15 nations can count on the United States of America to stand shoulder to shoulder as a 'neighbour', 'partner and friend'.

The occasion was the 45<sup>th</sup> general meeting of the Caribbean Community and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the regional grouping held in the twin island republic of Trinidad and Tobago from July 3-5, 2023. Secretary of State Blinken representing the White House and Hakeem Jeffries the US Congress delegation declared that they came 'to strengthen relationships and deepen our long-standing ties with the region'.

CARICOM leaders and the US delegation agreed that they have had a long standing relationship with each other. There has been some agreement and progress on food security, firearms detection, foreign debt and climate related issues.

Also reflecting in this relationship is the sizable Caribbean diaspora that calls the US home and their substantial financial remittances that keeps many Caribbean households afloat. Diplomatically and politically however it would be a misstep to think of the relationship as an equitable and respectful one.

Three current regional issues illustrate the gap between CARICOM's domestic policy and the United States' foreign policy. They relate to Haiti, Cuba and Venezuela. CARICOM and the people of the Caribbean are convinced that Haiti's future must be determined by the Haitian people, they must devise the plan, lead the plan, and the plan be supported by CARICOM and the international community inclusive of the USA, Canada and France.

CARICOM is emphatic that the blockade on Cuba is illegal and must be removed. For 30 years CARICOM has support the UN General Assembly call for the end to this barbaric piece of US legislature. It verges on a crime against humanity that is dressed up as a support for the human rights of persecuted Cubans. 184 nations of the international community have supported the UN resolution against the embargo with America using its veto to uphold a 60 year economic stranglehold on the people of Cuba.



The third area of disagreement is the US sanctions on the nation of Venezuela. This act has a direct effect on CARICOM nations to access cheaper oil from their South American neighbour.

The Atlantic Council, a U.S. think tank, warned that the Caribbean is suffering from an energy crisis and that its dependence on heavy fuel oil is leading to high electricity prices.

So after all the pomp and ceremonies of the official visit to the Caribbean is over the proof in the pudding will be what happens in the region on those matter of our independence and sovereignty. Will our big neighbour from the north, the USA stand with us or stand on top of us?

Rev. Ronald A. Nathan, is the World Politics Editor and pastor of the Hoggard AME Zion Church, Barbados.





### The late, Mrs. Janie Speaks

A Heart for Missions in Ghana



1922-2010

- Served as the Missionary Supervisor from 1972 through 1980 to the Africa Episcopal District.
- Appointed by and served alongside her husband, the late Bishop Reuben L. Speaks, the 76th Bishop elected in the line of succession in The AME Zion Church.
- The Janie A. Speaks AME Zion Hospital started as a tiny clinic on land given to The AME Zion Church by a chief (2004) and expanded to a Multi-Purpose Medical Block three years later.
- The hospital was named in her honor because of the work she did in Ghana.
- Speaks had been on hand for the original dedication of land and returned for the rededication in 2007 at the age of 84.
- The expanded block had a full-time doctor and nurse provided by the government.
- It served as the only medical facility for a wide area in the Ashanti region.
- The long building had a section for children and facilities for examinations, testing, and treatment.
- The hospital now retains a staff of over 150 and has units for men, women, ob/gyn, a records department, a laboratory,



## A Heart for Overseas Mission - The Bartimaeus Project

in Conjunction with the Department of Global Missions of the AME Zion Church

*Advancing the Work of Overseas Missions*

**THE JANIE SPEAKS A.M.E. ZION HOSPITAL**  
Afrancho, Akumadan, Ghana  
**and AME Zion Schools across Ghana**  
**PLEASE DONATE TOWARDS OUR GOAL OF \$40,000.00**

Janie Speaks is a faith-based health facility with the following projects: Expansion of the main building, which includes two-Operating Rooms, a Women's/OB Ward, a Men's Ward, and a Neonatal Unit. There are over 615 AME Zion Schools in Ghana, and many need assistance to provide the quality education they desire for their students, including textbooks, overhead projectors, paper, pencils, and technology

### Mission Goal:

- To support the work of the staff of The Janie Speaks Hospital and the clergy and members of The AME Zion Church as they continue the work begun by The AME Zion Church and reflect the passion and overseas missions work of the late Missionary Supervisor, Mrs. Janie Speaks to ensure the access of quality health care for the citizens of Ghana to help to complete the following projects:
  - Completion of the addition
  - Enhanced development of the Neonatal Ward
  - Establishment of a Dialysis Clinic
- To assist AME Zion Church Schools in acquiring educational equipment, materials, resources, and staff to provide quality education for their students.

**How to Donate:**

**1) Make checks or money orders payable to:**  
St. Paul AME Zion Church  
1130 Lower Ferry Road  
Ewing, NJ 08618  
ATTN: For Ghana Overseas Missions

**2) Electronically:**  
Givelify  
St. Paul AME Zion, 1130 Lower Ferry Road, Ewing, NJ  
CashApp - \$StPaulAMEZEWing  
Website: <https://www.st-paulchurch.com>  
**NOTE:** All disbursements will be made through the Department of Global Missions to the Western West Africa Episcopal District for action.

For more information, please contact The Bartimaeus Project via email [thebartimaeusproject@gmail.com](mailto:thebartimaeusproject@gmail.com)

## A Heart for Overseas Mission

### The Bartimaeus Project

in Conjunction with  
The Department of Global Missions of the AME Zion Church

*Advancing the Work of Overseas Missions*

JANIE SPEAKS A.M.E. ZION HOSPITAL  
Afrancho, Akumadan, Ghana  
AME ZION SCHOOLS ACROSS GHANA

<p><b>CIRCLE OF FRIENDS</b></p> <p>UP TO \$299</p> <p>Recognition in published articles and reports</p> <p>Name or organization's name engraved on the Circle of Friends bronze plaque</p> <p>Note: The Circle of Friends plaque will be displayed as on the donor wall at the Janie Speaks hospital or AME Zion School</p>	<p><b>IMPACT PARTNERS</b></p> <p>\$300 - \$999</p> <p>Recognition in published articles and reports</p> <p>Name organization's name on an individual bronze Impact Partner's plaque</p>	<p><b>PASSIONATE PROMOTERS</b></p> <p>\$1,000 - \$2,499</p> <p>Recognition in published articles and reports</p> <p>Name or organization's name engraved on an individual silver Passionate Promoter's plaque</p>	<p><b>LEGACY SPONSOR</b></p> <p>\$2,500 +</p> <p>Recognition in published articles and reports</p> <p>Name or organization's name engraved on an individual gold Legacy Sponsor's plaque for Janie Speaks AME Zion Hospital or an AME Zion School</p>	<p><b>GOAL</b></p> <p>\$40,000.00 USD</p> <p>To support the work of the staff of The Janie Speaks Hospital and the clergy and members of The AME Zion Church as they continue the work begun by The AME Zion Church to ensure the access to quality health care and education for the citizens of Ghana.</p> <p>1. Projects include the Completion of the addition Enhanced development of the Neonatal Ward, and Establishment of a Dialysis Clinic.</p> <p>1. To assist AME Zion Church Schools in acquiring educational equipment, materials, resources, and staff to provide quality education for their students.</p>
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The Janie Speaks Hospital is a faith-based health facility determined to provide quality health care to the citizens of the Ashanti region of Ghana. There are over 615 AME Zion Schools in Ghana endeavoring to provide quality education to children and youth of Ghana.

A HEART FOR OVERSEAS MISSIONS





# Busyness is Not a Badge of Honor Secretary

By Rev. Dr. Delessyn A. Kennebrew, J.D., M.Div.  
Contributing Writer

In the fall of 2011, I resigned from my first full-time ministry position after a time of prayer and fasting. It was a hard decision that was only made easier by the deep sense of peace I had within. After I resigned and stopped working in ministry day to day, the first item on my agenda was sleep. Sleep. I was physically, emotionally, and even spiritually exhausted but I did not realize how exhausted I was until I stopped. I was in bed for two weeks giving my body permission to heal herself, to recover from doing too much, to reset after being so busy.

After those two weeks, I promised myself that I would treat myself better. I know that people of faith can often struggle with honoring their own needs. We will say yes when we really want to say no. We will take on one more volunteer opportunity when we are already over-extended. We will add another standing meeting to our calendar that is already filled to the max. And there is no one reason that is all-encompassing for why we will live this way. A few reasons include guilt, worry about what others will think about us, trying to prove that we are good people, ego, and so many other reasons. No matter the reason, none of these reasons are reason enough to give and give to the detri-

ment of your physical, emotional, or spiritual health.

I am now content with a calendar that is not filled to the max. Even when there is a season of busyness, I am intentional about naps, re-scheduling or canceling meetings when possible, and delegating if that is a visible option. I have learned how important it is to set, articulate, and maintain healthy boundaries in all relationships and commitments. I have learned to pause before I say yes or no to that next invitation. I have learned that I have nothing to prove to anyone. I am called to be faithful to the One who has called me, and the One who has called me continues to invite me to serve and rest, rest and serve.



## Vote for the Firestarter

By Seven-Hazel Boone  
Contributing Writer

I am Seven-Hazel, and today I want to share with you why **our** candidate, The Reverend Dr. Anthony Witherspoon, is intergenerational.

Have you ever met someone who you think believes in you a little too much? They believe you can **really** do **all** things through Christ who strengthens you. Not only do they believe you can do these things, to make sure you do it - or even perhaps to check on your progress - they sometimes do it with you. In fact, their involvement begins to make **you** believe, *I can really do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

Well, we all have met someone like that. In fact, he is the reason we are all here today. Someone who believes in us. Someone who cheers us on. Someone who puts a little *fire* in us along our journey. Most of all, the beauty of it is, it doesn't matter if you're nine months old, nine years old, nineteen years old, 39 years old, 69 years old, or 99 years old - we have all felt this *fire* in our interactions with Dr. Witherspoon.

Today, I am a black belt in karate - thanks to a little *fire* from Dr. Witherspoon. I am a pretty good tumbler in gymnastics - thanks to a little *fire* from Dr. Witherspoon. I am the fastest female on my track team - thanks to a little *fire* from Dr. Witherspoon. I am a better basketball player - thanks to a little *fire* from Dr. Witherspoon. Moreover, I stand here today, willing, and able to speak to you - thanks to a little *fire* from Dr. Witherspoon.

Fire for the Witherspoon for Bishop 2024 campaign is: Fiscally sound, Intergenerational, Relational, and Experienced. However, Witherspoon is: W-willing, I-inspirational, T-transparent, H-honest, E-empowering, R-resilient, S-saved, P-purposeful, O-optimistic, O-open, and N- nice.

So, I encourage you to vote for someone, and encourage others to vote for someone who is intergenerational and who invests in everybody. Dr. Witherspoon told me everyone has gifts to give, and I believe that.

I pray for Dr. Witherspoon and wish him well on his journey. Also, I thank God for knowing him, and for the opportunity to be a witness and attest to his *Fire*.

14-year-old Seven-Hazel Boone of New Hope AME Zion Church in Salisbury, North Carolina attended the Witherspoon for Bishop 2024 campaign event, *The Fire Starter* at Livingstone College. There, she shared these words.





# Shining The Light On Darkness For Church Growth

By Rev. Deborah Johns  
Contributing Writer

The book of Judge tells the story of what happened to the children of Israel after they entered the promised land. They began a long period of going from serving God wholeheartedly to leaving God and following the world system and worshipping Satan. They worshipped Satan by following the people of the world to worship false gods.

*Judges 10:6 And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the Lord and served not him.*

This false god worship led the children of Israel into eating sacrifices to the dead, bowing down to idols, indulging in sexual orgies (Num. 25:1–11; Ps. 106:28), sexual excesses and perversions (Isa. 57:3–10), including copulation with animals (Hos. 13:2) pedophilia or intercourse with children, and homosexuality. Baal has a wife known as the goddess Ashtaroth (Judg. 2:13) or \*Asherah (Judg. 6:30; II Kings 16:32–33) and is considered a mother - god, a fertility god and is represented by an erected pole or tree near an altar, usually an altar to Baal. She is also known as the Queen of Heaven and the violent “Virgin Anath.» This is what Baal (the Bull) and Asherah worship is. These other gods they worshipped also included child sacrifices. Although we do not call on the names of these gods today, the behavior of worshipping these gods exists today in all forms. People may not call it worship, but Satan receives it as such. People may not call abortion worship, but the enemy uses these child sacrifices for his glory and power due to the innocent blood that is shed.

The main reason the children of Israel fell away from God is because they did not obey God to get rid of all the people in the land that God had given them. As they, the Children of Israel, grew in number, they were to take new areas of land within the promised land and totally destroy the occupants. They were not to keep or live with their enemy because they would be exposed to the lifestyle and belief system of their pagan neighbors. In order to not defile God’s people, he instructed them to kill them all, including women and children. But because the children of Israel lost faith to believe God would give them total victory to conquer their land during each generation, they began to compromise when things got tough and allowed their enemy to dwell amongst them.

God requires us to believe him for his promises even when it looks like failure is imminent. That is why “*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1).*” If God gives us a promise, we must never back down from trusting him. Usually, it is only just a test. Or it may be a period in which the blessing is on the way, but in the spirit, there is a war going on for our benefit. We saw that in Daniel chapter 10. Daniel was fasting and praying but did not get an answer for 21 days because Satan tried to block it. Had Daniel given up before his answer, he would have nullified his blessing. How do you give up by speaking or acting in unbelief before God answers or delivers on his promise? We must decide to stand with God and his word even if we never see it fulfilled in our lifetime. Some prayers God may choose to answer after our death. But He never forgets if we stand in faith until the end. In fact, in the book of Revelations, there are a couple of references to the prayers of the saints that God acts upon. God had stored them for use in the appointed time (Revelation 5:8, 8:5).

Rather than obey God and remain in faith with God, They began to make excuses for why they could not eliminate all of the enemy. Just like we make excuses about getting rid of all of our sins and influences of the world run by Satan. We keep saying, “We all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Yes, that is true, but sin should become past tense (see 1 Corinthians 6:9-11). We should be saying we used to

do those things. Why? Because God told us to.

Rather than obey God and trust him, they chose to enslave their enemy. But they forgot that slaves lived with and influenced their masters. As a result, they began to fall away from God until time passed, and God took his hedge of protection away from them, and then foreign invaders came and enslaved them as punishment from God. When it got so bad for them, they would remember the true and living God and confess and repent of their sins. Then God would elevate a leader from the midst of them as

a Judge who would lead them out of captivity with the help of God. They would then wholeheartedly worship the true and living God until everyone who knew God and lived during the lifetime of the Judge died, and then the people would go back to imitating the world. Why, because they still had the influence of those slaves who worshipped Satan in their midst, and they failed to train the next generation.

What they failed to realize is that the only solution once they intermingled was to convert their enemy amongst them to true God worship. But they never did! Eventually, this mistake would lead them to be sent into exile from the promised land years later.

But what is the moral of this story for us? As the church, we must first assess ourselves to see if we are individually and collectively walking with God. How? Jesus said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God (Matthew 4:4).” We must live according to all the council of God through the Holy Bible. The Apostle Paul said:

*1 Corinthians 6 : 9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor male prostitutes, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 Such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, and you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus by the Spirit of our God. (MEV)*

We read this scripture, and we all have seen one or more of these sins active and alive in our churches at all levels of the church, including Bishops, Pastors, Elders, Local Preachers, and Laity. I am not saying this to point the finger or to hurt feelings. However, if we want the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church to grow, we must eliminate sin in the camp. We must align ourselves with God by agreeing with his word. We recognize that we live amongst the enemy. They must either be converted or treated like outsiders that need to be converted. We must not live with them in our personal circles of influence. After all, the Word says, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness ( 2 Corinthians 6:14)?

The story of Judges is a lesson for us to follow so that we can avoid the devastating consequences of losing God’s favor. We all must help one another in our walk with God. The Bible teaches us:

*Matthew 18: 15 “Now if your brother sins (trespass) against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he does not listen, then take with you one or two others, that by the testimony of two or three witnesses, every word may be established. 17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.*





The word trespass means “To be without a share in; to miss the mark; to miss or wander from the path of uprightness and honor; to do or go wrong; to wander from the law of God, violate God’s law, sin (blueletterbible.com).” Thus, we are called to go to our brother or sister when we become aware of them living in sin because the wages of sin is death. First, we go to them one on one. Then, if they do not listen, take a witness, and go again. Then, if they don’t listen, take it to the Pastor and/ or Quarterly Conference. Yes, we must go public because confessed sin closes the door to Satan. It also teaches our children who are watching that there are consequences for sin. It also teaches others to get themselves together so that they have no reason to be called out.

In the case of church leadership (Bishops, Elders, Deacons, Local Preachers), we are to consider 1 Timothy 5: 19 (Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before **two** or three **witnesses**) before anything is made public.

In the book of Judges, all the people had to confess and repent before God acted to deliver them. Yes, it was a corporate and personal confession. God himself said:

*2 Chronicles 7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*

All sin must be placed under the blood through confession and repentance. Then, the open door to Satan is closed, and we are entitled to pray to God for healing and go into spiritual warfare to receive deliverance. However, if we continue to deny our sin, we remain in darkness and in the power of Satan. If we die in that state of sin, we die and go to hell.

If what I have shared has offended you or made you say ouch, then good. Because the truth hurts and the word of God cuts. Now you know God loves you because you have been warned to make

## OBITUARIES

# Burkett Witt, first Black Mayor of Athens TN, Left Impact On Community

By Annette W. Braden

Burkett Levon Witt of Athens, TN, faithful member of St. Mark A.M.E. Zion Church, departed this life on August 11, 2023, at the age of 97. A man of strong faith, humility, love, and joy, he served communities near and far until the latter years of his life.

Born May 26, 1926, he was the youngest child of the 10 children of Henry and Mary Bell Witt. Burkett’s parents instilled in him the doctrine that honesty, hard work, and faith in God would enable him to achieve whatever he desired. Despite the ever-present racial bias that he confronted during his childhood, youth, and much of his adulthood, he didn’t allow menial jobs, segregated schools, unequal pay, unfair housing practices, or any of the many acts he confronted, to block his path to achievement.

During World War II. at the age of 18, Burkett joined the U.S. Navy, where he served for four years. It was during this time when assigned as a cook at the naval hospital, that he began developing his culinary skills. Following his discharge from the service, he was hired at Tennessee Wesleyan University (TWU) to manage the food service department. Burkett developed lasting relationships with faculty, students, and staff. He also worked with students in both the Youth for Christ and Campus Life programs of TWU. He expanded his culinary network, cooking for various restaurants and continuing to hone his skills. Later, with his devoted wife, Mildred, he became an entrepreneur, launching a janitorial service and then two “Burkett’s Barbeque” restaurants. His twin gifts of making friends and cooking good food propelled him to the top of his life’s goals.

Burkett was concerned about the racial strife in Athens and sought to understand and determine how the hatred and bigotry that existed could possibly be changed. He decided that attending city council meetings might enable him to get some answers and direction in addressing the problem. He then ran for city council – and lost. But that loss didn’t deter him, and he ran again. The win of his second race would be repeated seven times resulting in his serving 33 years. Athens City Council Chambers were renamed the Burkett L. Witt Council Chambers in his



honor. He would go on to be elected the city’s, and be among the state’s, first Black mayor in recent times, serving 1983-1985. He was appointed to the Human Relations Committee, which brainstormed ways to bring integration into the community. Other appointments would follow, including serving on the Board of Directors for McMinn County Savings and Loan, and the Athens Utility Board. The former mayor of Bradley County (TN), who had known Burkett when he was a student at TWU said, “Burkett probably did as much for civil rights in McMinn County as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. did for the nation.”

In 2014, Burkett was awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Public Service from Tennessee Wesleyan University, on the same day that his grandson, Joshua Bragg, received his undergraduate degree from TWU.

Graduate and former students at the university established a scholarship in Burkett’s and Mildred’s honor. One of them wrote a song about his life, another wrote and published his biography, and numerous students submitted letters of acclamation in his honor. Anyone staying at the Fairfield Inn & Suites will find their stay on Burkett Witt Boulevard.

Throughout his life, Burkett lived what he spoke, “Love isn’t love until you give it away.” He served St. Mark A.M.E. Zion Church (Athens) untiringly, for most of his life. His wife, Mildred, was the pianist. As chair of the Trustee Board, he made sure that everything was in order and ran smoothly; he also served as chair of the Lay Council. Burkett was the Varick Christian Endeavor (VCE) leader for many years. His humility, selflessness, love, and generosity touched countless lives, as he led, guided, encouraged, and supported many.

Mildred preceded him in death in 2000 after 55 years of marriage. He leaves to celebrate his memory and life a daughter, Gwendolyn Witt McCowan; sons, Harold Witt (Linda), and Brian Witt; grandchildren, Lori Royal (Louie), Pamela McCowan, Dr. Reginald Witt, Candice and Crystal Witt, Destinee Witt, S. Fitzgerald Haney; great-grandchildren, Joshua L. Bragg (Katie), Trey Royal (Kelsey), Kyla Royal Martin (Nick); great-great-grandchildren, Leyonah Royal, Malakai Royal, and Stella Bragg, and many, many other relatives and friends.



# Patrice Lachelle Elder-Relford

November 3, 1969 – August 29, 2023

**Patrice Lachelle Elder-Relford** was born November 3, 1969 in the “City of Motown” Detroit, Michigan. She was raised in Massillon, Ohio, and she was the daughter of Lottie Elder and Emanuel Riggins. Patrice is the third child of six. Her family affectionately called her, “Bighead.” Patrice told the story that when she started kindergarten, the teacher was calling the roll and called her birth name Patrice Elder. She did not answer. After calling the roll the teacher asked, “are you Patrice Elder?” She replied “no, my name is “Bighead”.

At an early age, Patrice gave her life to Christ. She was baptized as a child at Shiloh Baptist Church in Massillon, Ohio. She loved to sing in the various choirs of the church and participate in plays during Christmas and Easter. Patrice shared that her maternal grandmother, Birtha Flowers, was a big part of her young spiritual formation. She would go with her grandmother to visit the sick and shut-in members and attend missionary meetings.

Patrice attended Whittier Elementary, Longfellow Junior



ing all of her love into her family.

In 1995, Patrice and Brian were assigned to their first pastoral appointment at Corinth AME Zion Church in Silar City, North Carolina. It was there that the membership was very patient with this young inexperienced pastor and first lady. Patrice connected with the members and received great mentorship. In 1997, Brian and Patrice were assigned to Logan Temple in Knoxville, Tennessee. Patrice started a summer enrichment ministry called Begin-A-New without any funding. Patrice challenged the members and the ministries of the church to support the enrichment program by not only giving in a monetary way but also giving of their time to work the program. In 2006, Patrice and Brian went to Lomax Temple in Detroit, Michigan. Patrice worked with the Christian Education Department. She loved working with children, and she eventually became the leader of Children’s Church. Patrice gave the message for Sunday worship for the first time in her life, at Lomax. In July of 2019, Patrice and Brian came to Union Wesley AME Zion Church in Washington DC where Patrice’s leadership and influence increased tremendously. She not only was the speaker for Lay Sunday, but Patrice was the co-teacher for bible study with her husband. Together they did bible study virtually for over two years providing a lot of video footage that will allow her legacy to live on. Patrice was not only

the first lady of Union Wesley, but she was also a respected voice of influence within the church.



High and Washington High School in Massillon. She played basketball, and she excelled in track. Patrice was a part of Massillon’s summer track team program. This specialty team competed in meets throughout the state. She ran the third leg of the four by 100-meter relay. The team qualified to compete in Hershey, PA against the best in the country. She graduated from high school in 1988.

Upon completing high school, Patrice received two college letters of acceptance. One from the Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio and Livingstone College in Salisbury, North Carolina. Patrice

chose Livingstone College where she enjoyed singing in the Prayer Meeting Choir and the Concert Choir. If you ever heard her sing, you knew she was blessed with a masterful voice. She graduated in 1995 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics.

On August 12, 1989, Patrice married the love of her life, Brian Relford. Patrice and Brian met in their hometown of Massillon, Ohio where they had several encounters over a short period of time. They first caught each other’s eye at St. James AME Zion church during a college information session, followed by the high school basketball game where a mutual cousin spoke to each of them about their shared interest in one another. That’s how their love story began. Soon after, they married and began their family. She was the devoted mother of Brian Scott Jr., Rachel Janel, and Sarai Patrice. Patrice loved being a mother and a wife, and she committed herself to pour-





Patrice was her own person and had her own goals. She enjoyed gardening, and watching things grow was a true passion of hers. She strongly believed that “we as a people need to get back to growing our own food and then and only then do we know what we are eating.” She was a lifelong lover of reading. She believed that reading allowed her to travel to places she may not be able to physically go to as well as to learn. Patrice found great fulfillment in cooking. She had a wide variety of ethnic foods that she could cook well. Naturally she made great soul food, but Patrice could also make Japanese, Chinese, Thai, Greek, Mediterranean and even vegan. Everything Patrice made was from scratch, for example, pancakes, biscuits, desserts, lemonade and ginger beer. She fed her family’s souls and bodies well.

On August 12, 2023, Patrice and Brian celebrated their 34<sup>th</sup> wedding

anniversary. Patrice was a blessing to the people who came into her life. She was a pastor’s wife and first lady for over 28 years. She was an original, authentic individual that will be deeply missed. She was without a doubt a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and she believed in the resurrection.

Patrice leaves to cherish life, her husband, Brian, her children Brian Jr., Rachel, Sarai and granddaughter Braelin, her mother, Lottie, siblings Carlton, (Donna), Monique (Uthman), Shawn (Candice), Alonzo (Charla), Dominic (Michelle) and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and extended family and friends.

# Shirley Ann Bailey Goddard

April 16, 1951 – September 2, 2023

*“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.” 2 Timothy 4:7*

**Shirley Ann Bailey Goddard** was born on April 16, 1951, to the late Harold and Martha Singleton Bailey. She was the eldest of eight children. Shirley was reared by her paternal great uncle and aunt, the late Samuel, and Susie Lane Bailey. Her grandparents, the late Benjamin and Rebecca LaBrew Bailey and the late Dan and Elizabeth Moye Singleton also played an integral part in her upbringing. She departed this earthly life on Saturday, September 2, 2023.

Shirley was educated in the Richland One Schools, attending Waverly Elementary, W. A. Perry Middle, C. A. Johnson High, and Columbia High Schools. Although she graduated from Columbia High School, she celebrated reunions with the C. A. Johnson Class of 1969. She did further studies at Richland Technical College, now Midlands Technical College.

Shirley met the love of her life, Richard Micheal “Fuzz” Goddard while in 8<sup>th</sup> grade at W. A. Perry Middle School. They dated throughout high school and married after graduation. They recently celebrated their 55<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. To that union, two children were born.

In 1974, Shirley began employment with the State Government while working with the Division of Employment and Training. While in State Government, she held jobs such as Data Manager, Research Analyst, and Data Control Clerk. She also worked with the Office of Management Information System. She retired from the State Government in 2008.



Shirley lived in a loving and Christian home and was brought up in Sidney Park C.M.E. Church where she received Christ at the age of 13. Her greatest joy was serving and praising God for all her blessings. Her favorite scripture was Psalm 23. She moved her membership to Jones Memorial A.M.E. Zion under the pastorate of Rev. Dr. Vincent Meekins. Shirley loved Jones Memorial dearly and gave her time, talent, and treasure. She worked faithfully, diligently, and conscientiously to do God’s will. Over the years, Shirley worked tirelessly in many organizations within the local church and in the Columbia Camden District.

Shirley enjoyed sports, especially football. Her favorite professional football team was the Washington Redskins. She and Richard were season ticket holders at the South Carolina State University football games.

One sister, Karen Bailey, and a brother, Robert Bailey preceded her in death.

She leaves to cherish her memories her husband, Richard; son, Richard Michael Goddard II (Tara), and daughter, Viva Renee’ Goddard, both of Columbia, SC; grandsons, Brannon Michael and Brenton Thommas Goddard of Columbia, SC; one great-granddaughter, Kinsley Kori Goddard; sisters, Merlene Bailey and Castine Bailey Simons, both of Columbia, SC; brothers, Melvin Jerome Bailey of Columbia, SC; Gregory Leon Bailey (Debra) of Eastover, SC and Ronnie Bailey of Laurel, MD; brothers-in-law, Robert A. Goddard (Geraldine) of Columbia, SC and Emmett Tolliver (Lisa) of Royal Oaks, MD; and a sister-in-law, Darmay Tolliver of Baltimore, MD; special Aunt, Lillian Ellison, and a host of nephews, and nieces.



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FEBRUARY 20 -23, 2024



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