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THE STAR OF ZION

JANUARY 2024 | VOL 148 NO. 1 | STAROFZION.ORG | THE OFFICIAL VOICE OF THE A.M.E. ZION CHURCH



ZION

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

HAPPY

2024

NEW YEAR!



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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★ The Star of Zion ★

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Editor@StarOfZion.org
- Zion Spotlight Editor**
Mrs. Debra Chappelle-Polk
ZionSpotlight@StarOfZion.org
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- Financial Freedom Editor**
Dr. Dana Stilley
FinancialFreedom@StarOfZion.org
- Lifestyle Editor**
Ms. Angel Eason
Lifestyle@StarOfZion.org
- Star of Zion Office**
704-688-2577
Office@StarofZion.org
- Subscriptions Department**
704-688-2561
Subscribe@StarOfZion.org
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It's A New Season

By Mr. Darin Kent
Editor-in-Chief



To my beloved family of believers of The A.M.E. Zion Church and Esteemed Subscribers to the Star of Zion,

As we stand on the threshold of a new year, I am honored to address you as the Chief Communications Officer and the Editor in Chief of the Star of Zion. In 2023, we have witnessed the unfailing hand of God's favor upon our beloved church, guiding us through challenges and showering us with blessings that testify to His grace.

Additionally, let us pray for God's favor to continue in 2024 with the election of our new episcopal leaders during our General Conference in Greensboro, NC. This year will indeed be a time of renewal as fresh visionaries step forward to lead us into a future filled with hope and purpose. Let us embrace this transition with faith, knowing that God's plan for the Freedom Church is always one of prosperity and growth.

Speaking of growth, I am delighted to share that our family of subscribers has expanded by 350 individuals, a testament to the compelling content and spirit of unity that the Star of Zion fosters. Our commitment to staying connected has led us to launch a new website and expand our presence on social media platforms such as LinkedIn and X (formerly known as Twitter), in addition to our regular channels on Facebook and YouTube.

Furthermore, I am thrilled to announce that we are continuing to bolster the amount of Star of Zion and A.M.E. Zion programming accessible on AMEZ.TV, our denomination's 5th Periodical. AMEZTV is available now online at AMEZ.TV and for download on all Roku, and tvOS devices. This platform is a hub for all A.M.E. Zion programming, providing a convenient space for our community to engage with our rich heritage and stay informed.

I encourage each of you to subscribe not only to the Star of Zion but also to The Quarterly Review and AMEZ.TV. Your individual subscriptions are vital in supporting our collective productivity and outreach efforts.

As we embark on this new year, I humbly ask for your prayers for the A.M.E. Zion Church and all of God's people. Together, let us lift our voices in unity, seeking divine guidance and blessings for the journey ahead.

May this year be filled with God's grace, joy, and prosperity for each one of you.

Happy New Year!



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

Buffalo New York Health Ministry Honored

St. Paul's A.M.E. Zion Church - Buffalo
Faith Health Ministry

Our Mission:
To work together with the Pastor, Leader of Leaders, Class Leaders, and the congregation to enhance the "whole" person, mind, body, and soul. To promote the healing ministry of the A.M.E. Zion Church as stated in the Book of Discipline

Rev. Amos Goodwine, Jr., BA
Senior Pastor
St. Paul's A.M.E. Zion Church
facebook.com/stpaulsamesionbuffalo
youtube.com/stpaulsamesionbuffalony5428

Yvonne Askew, MSN Ed., RN-BC
Faith community Nurse

St. Paul's Health Ministry sends Gods blessings to the additional Balm in Gilead award recipients!

By Yvonne D. Askew, MSN Ed.
RN-BC Faith Community Nurse

The Balm in Gilead Inc. highlights congregational health ministries from across the United States by presenting the "Best Practice Awards" at their 10th Annual Healthy Churches Conference. The St. Paul's A.M.E. Zion Church of Buffalo, NY, where the Rev. Amos Goodwine Jr is pastor, was selected as a recipient of one of the Healthy Churches 2023 Best Practice Awards, for doing exceptional work around health promotion and prevention; working to change health outcomes among their church members and the community they serve.

St. Paul's health ministry provides community education, health counseling, and health information for its members and visitors alike. CPR classes, Congregational Health Promoter (CHP) training, a space for the distribution of COVID-19 vaccine, providing food from our "silent food pantry" which sits as an extension of other referred community-based food pantries, while assisting nursing assistant students with basic needs, highlights some of their activities.

The health ministry is staffed by a trained Faith Community Nurse (FCN) and congregational members known as Congregational Health Promoters that are interested in the overall health of its members.

Building healthy relationships and offering a listening ear, they provide a source of comfort and knowledge of community resources that can assist those they touch. Many of which are caregivers needing some support and direction in providing care to their loved ones, the CHPs are ready to help, along with the lead nurse who keeps the information supplied up to date. All visitors are met by one of our team members, providing a hearty welcome and needed items for a rich worship experience.

The base of our Faith Health ministry is the ability of the FCN to bring their knowledge of the physical body, mind, and spirit to those within their faith belief system, as we know our FCN is good at teaching

about disease progression, treatment options and the possible or inevitable consequences. With the use of the items in her toolbox, the use of active listening, asking open-ended questions, and making a connection, bolsters relationship and trust, applying a sense of worthiness to the individual being non-judgmental. True caring must be shown for the individual to trust the health ministry team with their innermost feelings, experiences, and desires. Caring for individuals, groups, families, and our surrounding community places us in a position of granted trust that can be maintained if it does not break the privacy of one-on-one conversations. (The church grapevine is real!) Privacy must be maintained for a relationship to grow and flourish and for the ultimate assistance of the individual.

However broken trust can lead to losing the relationship and the individuals not receiving the assistance needed. The trained faith ministry members are aware of this, but untrained members of other churches will reap repercussions. FCNs are mandatory reporters of abuse and are required to inform authorities of their knowledge. This might seem as a breach of trust to some but individual safety is of the utmost importance. If the conversations are leading towards such information, the toolbox will have a step-by-step approach to acquire and report the information without jeopardizing individual safety.

St. Paul's Faith Health Ministry brings hope and light to the world that seems despairing. How you may ask? Why by being the eyes, ears, hands, feet, and heart of the one they represent by their faith to the world. Showing the last, and least, the compassion, support, and direction, being that advocate while empowering the voice lost due to life circumstances. The results of these actions can allow the lost and least to devise a different outlook and/or perspective on the community/society and may turn their disappointment to satisfaction, fulfilling their needs as they give thanks for this day and all future days in their life to God.

Congratulations St. Paul's of Buffalo, NY!

Dr. Charlean Batten Mapson: Seeing the Sermon

By Laverna Hargrove
Wilmington District Reporter

On November 18, 2023, Reverend Dr. Charlean B. Mapson was honored by the Hood Theological Seminary (HTS) 1885 Society by being inducted into the society and receiving the Alumni Award for Community Leadership and Social Witness. This award is presented to an alumni whose exceptional leadership and unique contributions to community engagement reflect genuine empowerment, creative collaboration, and spiritual outreach. The HTS 1885 Society began these awards more than ten years ago. What Dr. Mapson did to accomplish this feat is a lesson in 'seeing a sermon rather than hearing one.' Her service extends far beyond the pew, addresses all age groups and special populations, and leaves no issue omitted while embracing technology to lessen apprehension about communicating health and welfare concerns to those who can help.



Dr. Mapson,
HTS 1885 Society Award Recipient

Reverend Dr. Charlean Batten Mapson, the daughter of the late Charlie Batten, Jr. and the late Anna Rean Batten, answered the call of God to teach, preach, and serve mankind as a minister of the Gospel in 1997. She received her Deacon's ordination in 2003 by Bishop George E. Battle, Jr. and her Elder's ordination in 2006 by Bishop Richard K. Thompson.

She went on to study to show herself approved at Hood Theological Seminary in 2013, graduating Magna Cum Laude in 2016 after completing the Master of Divinity Degree program in just 2.5 years and recipient of the Student Recognition Faculty Award. She began studying for her Doctor of Ministry degree at Duke University in 2018 and graduated in 2021.

Dr. Mapson knows no boundaries to service. Her service is like a pebble cast into a pond—it reaches into depths and surfaces not seen or known at first glance.

Community service became pivotal in her life as she began volunteering to feed the homeless in her hometown of Atlanta, Georgia, during holidays with one of the largest social services organizations in North America, *Hosea Feed the Hungry and Homeless*, under the leadership of Rev. Hosea Williams, civil rights activist, businessman, philanthropist, scientist, and politician while she was in high school. Her high school matriculation took place at Benjamin E. Mays Academy of Science and Mathematics. Upon high school graduation, she attended Clark Atlanta University (CAU), where she received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Chemistry with a minor in Engineering. While at CAU, she served as the inaugural president of the Atlanta University Center (AUC) chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) and a national officer of NSBE as National Pre-College Initiative Chairperson. In 1991, the AUC chapter of NSBE honored her with the creation of an annual award and scholarship bearing her name, *"The Charlean Batten Leadership Award."*



After moving to Wilmington she has been active in the Wilmington community for many years with service in various capacities. In previous years, she has served on the Boards of Cape Fear Habitat for Humanity, Friends of New Hanover County Public Library, member of the Wilmington Planning Commission, and the 1898 Racial Reconciliation Committee.

Dr. Mapson began her pastoral ministry at the Johnson Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church in Leland, North Carolina. During the two and a half years of service in this charge, twenty-three members were added to the congregation under her leadership. She implemented several youth ministries, including a step team (in partnership with the graduate chapters of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and Delta Sigma The-

ta Sorority, Inc.); she implemented youth and children's Bible study and Sunday School classes; and implemented a summer day camp for youth and children.

She served successfully for seven years as pastor of the historic Saint Mark A.M.E. Zion Church in Whiteville, North Carolina. While serving at the St. Mark Church, she led the church in a \$250K renovation project and had the church entered in the state's historic registry. She initiated monthly community discussions on the topic of racial reconciliation after the shooting of Micheal Brown in Ferguson, Missouri in 2014; partnered with the Presbyterian Church to implement the Circles of Hope program for single parents living in poverty; organized and maintained the Whiteville Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance; and implemented several feeding programs for area families in need; partnered with another church of the denomination and a local Food Lion store. Additionally, she initiated a support group for parents of children with special needs and participated in the Reimagining Health Collaborative (RHC) held at Duke Divinity School. RHC is a program that seeks to bridge the gap between the church and those suffering from mental health issues.



Dr. Mapson, Pastor
Price Cathedral A.M.E. Zion Church,
Wilmington, NC



The Solidarity Service Brought Black & White
Together to Remember Charleston



Law enforcement officers from
surrounding areas joined at St. Mark for
dialogue about partnerships



Racial Reconciliation sessions held (mayor of
Whiteville was in attendance) at St. Mark

She served as pastor of the historic St. John A.M.E. Zion Church in Wilson, North Carolina, for two years. She implemented and taught Special Needs Sunday School and Vacation Bible School classes. Implemented a financial reporting system for the Wilson District as chair of the Budget and Finance Committee.

She is currently the proud pastor of the Price Cathedral Church in Wilmington, North Carolina, where she led the congregation to partner with city officials, non-profit resource organizations, civic groups, other denominations, and members of the public for outreach to the community. In July 2023, Price Cathedral received a \$12,000 grant from Partners in Health and Wholeness to help meet the mental health needs of people of color in the community. Dr. Mapson has partnered with two other churches in the district, St. Andrew, pastored by Rev. Patricia Smith, and Warner Temple, pastored by Dr. Clifford Barnett, to meet a greater need. Currently, Dr. Mapson leads a series of Zoom information sessions to protect seniors from false and misleading offers.

Presenting outreach ministries using the talents and interests of the congregation is key to the success of the outreach efforts. The Community Care Ministry led by Chanel Washington and Blair involves all age groups with an interest in gardening. Last spring, with group effort, a garden of fruits and vegetables was planted on a strip of lawn in front of the church to help feed the community. The uniqueness of the garden was it yielded crops in the colors of the A.M.E. Zion logo. Some

participants were either Zion-born or Zion-bred; all were Zion-fed. Plans are underway to produce more fruits and vegetables this year.



Dr. Mapson has served the connec-tional level of the A.M.E. Zion Church as the former General Youth Secretary of the Women’s Home & Overseas Missionary Society for the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, serving 2003- 2011, imple-menting the Youth Empowerment Statement, Y-M-S song (to the tune of YMCA), and the Vickie Awards, honoring students excelling in aca-demics and the arts.

Her doctoral thesis, entitled Inclusion of the Autism Population in Church-es, Schools, and Communities, led her to begin the recently completed season 1 of her first podcast, “Let’s Talk Autism with Dr. C...” Podcast



Partnering to bring the mountain to Mohammed

on Spotify. A prolific writer, in January 2016, she published “Christianity, Christian Symbol-ism, and the Ku Klux Klan” in The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church Quarterly Review. Furthermore, she has written for the African Methodist Episco-pal Zion Church School Herald, Sunday School Literature, and the Women’s Home & Overseas Missionary Society. On January 31, 2005, she and Reverend Don-ald R. Mapson were blessed with a son, Jadon Hassani Mapson, who has Autism. She is a loud and proud Autism mother and a fierce “Autism Mama Bear!”.

Her renowned service and ded-ication to others are appreciated and acknowledged at local and state government levels as well. In May 2021, she was named by Governor Roy Cooper to serve on the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities. In February 2022 (less than a year after the appointment), she was elected chair of the council’s Community Living Committee. In November 2021, she was appointed to the New Hanover County/City of Wilmington Community Relations Advisory Commit-tee.

Dr. Mapson is a member of the Wilmington District, where Dr. Alex-ander L. Jones is the Presiding Elder of the Cape Fear Conference for the Eastern North Carolina Episcopal District. Senior Bishop Kenneth Monroe is the Presiding Prelate.



IYABODE F. AKINSANYA-BEYSOLOW, M.D., M.P.H., APPOINTED DIRECTOR OF HEALTH MINISTRY FOR THE A.M.E. ZION CHURCH

Charlotte, NC - November 30, 2023 – The Board of Bishops of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion (A.M.E. Zion) Church proudly announces the appointment of Dr. Iyabode F. Akinsanya-Beysolow, a distinguished medical professional as the Director of Health Ministry for The A.M.E. Zion Church. Dr. Akinsanya-Beysolow brings a wealth of expertise and a commitment to public health to her new role, having previously served as a National Expert Medical Officer for the Centers for Disease Control.



During her tenure consulting with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention from June 2008 to 2014, Dr. Akinsanya-Beysolow demon-strated exceptional leadership and knowledge in the field of public health. Additionally, with a proven track record in infectious diseases research and containment strategies, Dr. Akinsanya-Beysolow played a pivotal role in developing comprehensive public health interventions during the COVID-19 Pandemic, showcasing a deep understanding of epidemiology and effective disease control measures. Her expertise has been instrumental in shaping national health policies and strategies, making her a valuable addition to The A.M.E. Zion Church’s Health Ministry.

In addition to her national service, Dr. Akinsanya-Beysolow directed the health suite for the 2008 and 2021 General Conferences of The A.M.E. Zion Church. Notably, Shaw Temple A.M.E. Zion Church hosted these conferences, showcasing her ability to coordinate and manage health-related initiatives on a large scale within the church culture.

Her dedication to global health is evident in her leadership of four In-tercontinental Health teams to Monrovia, Liberia, during her member-

ship at Shaw Temple A.M.E. Zion Church. Dr. Akinsanya-Beysolow also led the Central Southern Africa Episcopal District of The A.M.E. Zion Church on a health missions team to Cuanza Norte Province, Angola, in 2019.

Looking ahead, Dr. Akinsanya-Beysolow will lead a missions trip for the Alabama-Florida Episcopal District in June 2024 to Rwanda, Central Africa. Her commitment to serving communities globally reflects the values of The A.M.E. Zion Church and rein-forces the organization’s dedication to improving the health and well-being of people around the world.

Prior to her current role, Dr. Akinsanya-Beysolow served as an Urgent Care Pediatrician at Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta, where she demonstrated a passion for providing quality healthcare to children in urgent situations.

The Board of Bishops expresses its confidence that Dr. Iyabode F. Akinsanya-Beysolow’s extensive experience and unwavering commit-ment to public health will significantly contribute to the growth and impact of The A.M.E. Zion Church’s Health Ministry.

About The A.M.E. Zion Church and the Director of Health Ministry position: The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church is a historical-ly African-American Christian denomination that has played a crucial role in advancing social justice, education, spiritual development, and community empowerment. The Director of Health Ministry will oversee the operations of the Public Health Director’s Office to meet public health service requirements and needs of The A.M.E. Zion Church and to improve the overall well-being of The A.M.E. Zion Church constitu-ents and community. The Health Ministry within the church focuses on promoting physical, mental, and spiritual well-being among its mem-bers and the communities it serves.

DR. LISA MOORE, APPOINTED DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRY FOR THE A.M.E. ZION CHURCH

Charlotte, NC - November 30, 2023 – The Board of Bishops is delighted to announce the appointment of Dr. Lisa Moore as the new Director of Music Ministry for The African Methodist Episcopal Zion (A.M.E. Zion) Church. A highly accomplished and esteemed psalmist and music director, Dr. Moore brings a wealth of experience and passion for music ministry to her role. The Board of Bishops recognizes her exceptional talent and dedication, making her a valuable asset to The A.M.E. Zion Church's vibrant musical tradition.

Dr. Lisa Moore is a resident of Jackson, Mississippi, where she was reared under the velvet and steel hands of parents who insisted that she attend church weekly and dive deep into the music and arts offered through Sunday Church School, elementary school, and community activities. As a child, she could easily be found wherever music was playing and choirs were singing. Once she realized that God had given her the gift of music, she forged ahead wholeheartedly, using her voice to give God praise and bring him glory.

Dr. Moore is an alumna of Jackson State University, having earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English, a Master of Science Degree in Education Administration, Supervision and Leadership, and a Doctorate Degree in Early Childhood Education. Dr. Moore formerly served as a teacher, an elementary school principal, and currently serves as a high school administrator within the Jackson Public School District in Jackson, Mississippi.

An elastic talent, Dr. Moore easily moves from serving as an educator to Worship Leader and Director of Choirs at Cathedral A.M.E. Zion Church in Jackson, Mississippi. She has served in this capacity for over thirty-three years and has led the music department through three live recordings. Moreover, she has conducted numerous music clinics as well as served as guest soloist and choir director for various choirs.

Among the plethora of musicianship awards, Dr. Moore is a recipient of the Mississippi Announcers Guild "Woman of Excellence" Award and the Mississippi Music Awards for Best Lead Singer and Choir Director. She has been honored to record with national artists and groups, including The Mississippi Mass Choir, The Canton Spirituals, and Yolanda Adams. Most recently, Dr. Moore served as Music Director for the Southwestern Delta Episcopal District Mass Choir for the 2023 Connectional Council meeting held in New Orleans, Louisiana.



Dr. Moore is the founder of God's Girl Unlimited, an organization that impacts the lives of women through inspirational summits and community service. Furthermore, in Zion, she is a Local Preacher, the Christian Education Director of the Jackson-Panola District, and a Connectional officer, serving as Corresponding Secretary for The Assembly of Christian Educators.

Dr. Moore earnestly listens for the voice of God that through music, worshippers may be brought into His presence. It is her hope that every corporate worship experience transcends the ephemeral moment of sounds and lyrics to bring about a transformation in the hearts of God's people.

In welcoming Dr. Lisa Moore to the esteemed position of Director of Music Ministry, The A.M.E. Zion Church is poised for an exciting new chapter in its musical journey. Dr. Moore's impressive credentials and commitment to artistic excellence align seamlessly with the values of The A.M.E. Zion Church. The Board of Bishops expresses confidence that under her guidance, the Music Ministry will continue to flourish, enriching the spiritual experience for congregants and fostering a deeper connection through the transformative power of music. The A.M.E. Zion Church looks forward to the harmonious and inspirational direction that Dr. Lisa Moore will undoubtedly bring to this integral aspect of worship within the church community.

About The A.M.E. Zion Church and the Director of Music Ministry position: The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church is a historically African-American Christian denomination that has played a crucial role in advancing social justice, education, spiritual development, and community empowerment. The Director of Music Ministry for The A.M.E. Zion Church will serve as a versatile consultant across all church departments while spearheading impactful musical initiatives at key events, including but not limited to the Connectional Council, Board of Bishops Meeting, and General Conference. This role epitomizes a harmonious fusion of strategic leadership and musical expertise, enriching the spiritual fabric of the church's diverse ministries.

COMMEMORATIVE COINS CELEBRATE THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF HARRIET TUBMAN'S BIRTH

By Debra Chappelle-Polk
Zion Spotlight Editor

"A Golden experience for the Gold standard!!"

- Bishop Dennis V. Proctor

New York, NY - The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church has worked tirelessly to preserve the legacy of Harriet Tubman, and no one more so than Mrs. Karen V. Hill, (picd.) President & CEO Harriet Tubman Home, Inc., and The Harriet Tubman National Historical Park.

It is through her efforts that the 2024 Harriet Tubman Commemorative Coins were struck at the U.S. Mint in Philadelphia on November 28, 2023. The event was hosted by Ventris C. Gibson, Director of the United States Mint. Ms. Gibson is the first woman and the first African American to lead the United States Mint.

In 2018, Mrs. Hill, along with Sen. Charles Schumer, (D. NY) and John Katko (former U.S. representative for NYS 24th congressional district) wrote Public Law 117-163, known as the Harriet Tubman Bicentennial Commemorative Coin Act. Mrs. Hill said, "the notion that Harriet Tubman should be on coinage was the brainchild of Rep. Katko

and the late Rep. Elijah E. Cummings. (D. MD 7th)." The commemorative coins celebrate the 200th anniversary of Harriet Tubman's birth and grants authority to the U.S. Mint to produce and sell \$5 gold coins, silver dollars, and half-dollar clad coins.

In July 2023, Karen Hill and Ventris Gibson were both in New Orleans at the Board of Bishops Connectional Council Faith and Practice Summit when the final designs of the coins were unveiled.





The commemorative coins pay tribute to three significant periods in Harriet Tubman’s life and work: The \$1 coin commemorates Tubman’s death-defying work with the Underground Railroad, which freed slaves by smuggling them out of the South and into the North and even Canada through a network of safe houses and brave accomplices. The Harriet Tubman Bicentennial clad half dollar honors her work as a scout, spy, and nurse for the Union Army during the Civil War. The \$5 gold coin serves as a tribute to her life after the Civil War and the 54 years she lived as a free woman in Auburn, New York. “It was here in Auburn,” Mrs. Hill said, “where Tubman established free universal healthcare for everyone, which she dispensed through the John Brown Hall Infirmary on her property. Tubman also established senior housing for the former indigent slaves so that they could age in dignity and grace. She sheltered children and battered women during a time when such subjects were taboo in public life. One of her greatest achievements was her \$500.00 pledge to the historic Thompson Memorial AME Zion Church. This church has been restored and will open to the public in the spring of 2025.”

The purchase price of each \$5 coin will include a \$35 surcharge; a \$10 surcharge is included in the purchase price of each dollar; a \$5 surcharge is included in each half dollar’s price. In accordance with the legislation, the net surcharges, after the U.S. Mint recoups its production and associated costs, are to be divided equally between the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati, Ohio, and The Harriet Tubman Home, Inc. in Auburn, New York, “for the purpose of accomplishing and advancing their missions.”

Bishop Dennis V. Proctor, Presiding Prelate of the North Eastern Episcopal District of the A.M.E. Zion Church and member of the Harriet Tubman National Historical Park Board of Directors called the event “A Golden experience, for the Gold standard!! The life of the coins far exceeds our mortal bodies! Unborn generations will be able to look at [the coins] and learn of the heroic exploits of this faithful and fearless servant of God.” He said it was “a privilege and a divine joy” and thanked Mrs. Ventris C. Gibson, Director of the Mint, and “our own sisters Karen Hill, Karen Krieger, and their teams for making this unimaginable dream become a reality. My wife and I are more than proud to be a part of this Zion legacy!! Let Mt. Zion Rejoice!!!”



Bishop Michael Frencher, Sr., President of the Board of Bishops (Midwest Episcopal District), posted the event on Facebook: “I was blessed to be one the persons present to strike one of the first Harriet Tubman commemorative coins and meet many of the persons who made it possible. We were blessed to be taken on a tour of the Mint and see firsthand how

the coins were made.” He added, “Harriet Tubman was a freedom fighter of first magnitude, and it was a thrilling and historic moment to see her recognized by so many others around the world.”

Bishop Frencher also praised Bishop Proctor, Sisters Hill, and Krieger for “their excellent leadership in ensuring that Harriet Tubman’s esteemed legacy is recognized not only in the AME Zion denomination but also by people all over the world.”

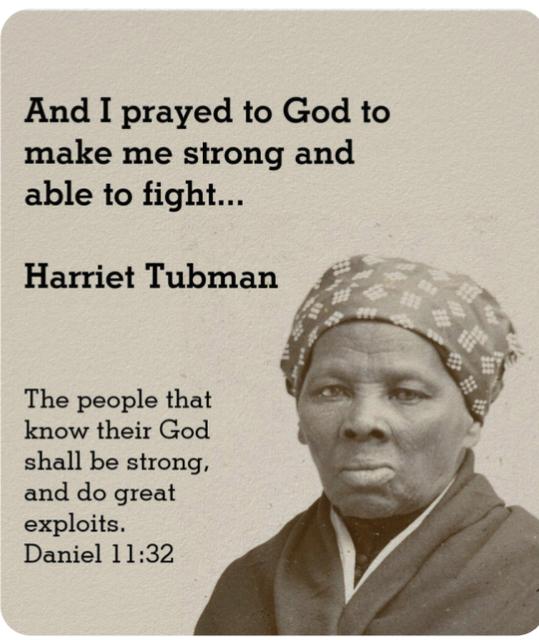
Presiding Elder A. Alfred Carson (New York and London-Midland Conference) was also present for this momentous occasion. “To be a part of and to witness this historical event for one of Zion’s greatest Shereroes was a humbling experience.”

He credited Bishop and Mrs. Proctor for their leadership and thanked Sis. Hill for her steadfast devotion to the legacy of Harriet Tubman. “I just simply felt proud to be a member of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and am inspired to continue the fight for freedom here in 2023 and beyond.”

Robert Portman, the former U.S. Senator from Ohio; Woodrow Keown, President and Chief Operating Officer of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati; and Daon Jones, Chief Communications Officer at Procter & Gamble, were among the other guests at this historic event.

In some ways, the 2024 Commemorative Coin Program is a consolation prize for Harriet Tubman after years of activism to place her on the \$20 bill. Presiding Elder Carson said, “It is finally time for Harriet Tubman to receive her just due and be recognized. We want to see her not only on the silver dollar but on the \$20 bill, which will hopefully happen in 2028.” For this to happen, it is imperative that we vote.

For information about the commemorative coin program, visit online <https://www.usmint.gov/learn/coin-and-medal-programs/commemorative-coins/harriet-tubman> and <https://www.coinworld.com/news/us-coins/designs-revealed-for-2024-tubman-commemorative-coins>



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NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION - CLEAN UP THE MESS!

By Debra Chappelle-Polk
Zion Spotlight Editor



“IT’S A MESS! -- the whole thing is a mess” or “We’re in a mess” or “Things got messy.” How many times have we uttered those words to describe a myriad of situations and circumstances? How many times have we beseeched the Lord on bent knees, heads bowed --“Lord, if you just get me outta this mess, I promise, I’ll never do it (the mess) again?”

Webster’s Dictionary defines MESS thusly: 1) a dirty or untidy state of things or of a place; 2) a situation or state of affairs that is confused or full of difficulties. Webster’s definition of “mess” aptly describes what we have been experiencing for decades: political unrest, social injustice, racial injustice, and rumors of war that have become reality. We are still wrestling with the residual effects of a global pandemic, as well as the effects of climate change, etc. The “mess” list is long.

So, the question becomes, how do we clean up the mess? And more importantly, how do we clean up the mess without making more of a mess? It is not easy. There is no one-size-fits-all answer. Nonetheless, we must try. January, as the first month of the year and the month of resolutions, is a good place to start. Using January as the starting point, what can we do to clean up the mess? First, we must continue to pray for peace. God hears and answers prayers. We must pray individually and corporately for humanity. We must pray to end hatred and terrorism – *foreign and domestic*. We must pray and ask God to open our minds and learn to co-exist with others who are not from our “tribes.” Second, we can resolve to do what we promised to do last year: eat healthier, exercise, spend wisely, etc. On a more personal level, we can resolve to declutter our lives which may include ridding ourselves of certain (messy) relationships. The list of well-intentioned resolutions is also long.

Simply wanting to clean up the mess, however, is not enough. We need to find ways to implement our resolutions and stick to them. One way to do this is to share our resolutions with others. “When you keep resolutions a secret, no one is going to check up on you. You’re only accountable to yourself,” says Joe Ferrari, professor of psychology at DePaul University in Chicago. He also suggests having a Resolution Party. “Having a party to publicly share your resolutions is an admirable way to ring in the New Year.”

Add Marvin Gaye’s classic hit, “What’s Going On,” to the playlist for

the guests at your Resolution Party. Marvin’s words not only lyrically lay bare the ills of the world, but they also offer solutions:

Mother, Mother

There’s too many of you crying.

Brother, brother, brother.

There’s far too many of you dying.

You know we’ve got to find a way.

To bring some lovin’ here today, yeah

Father, Father, Father

We don’t need to escalate.

You see, war is not the answer.

For only love can conquer hate

You know we’ve got to find a way,

To bring some lovin’ here today.

Picket lines and picket signs

Don’t punish me with brutality.

Talk to me, so you can see,

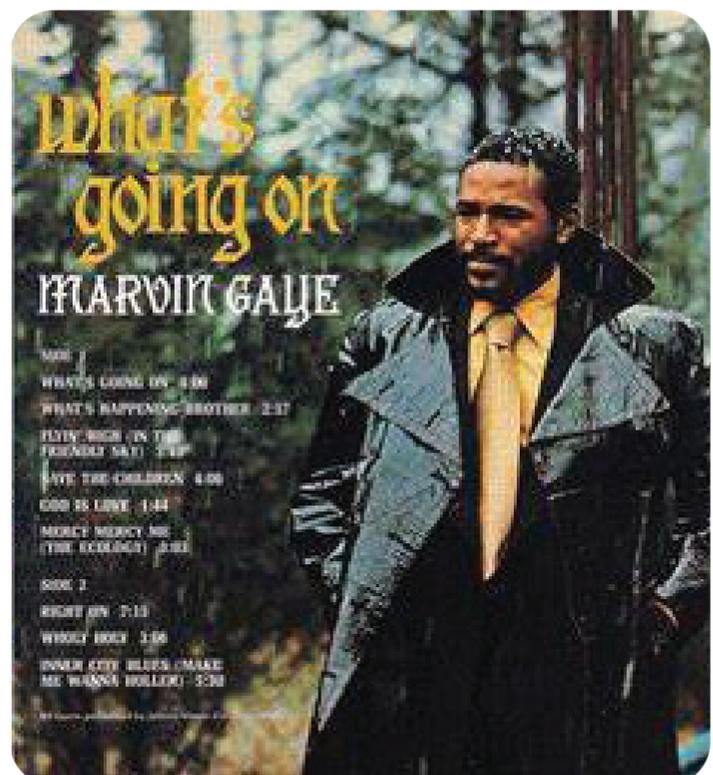
Oh, what’s going on!

The song was released in 1971. It’s 2024 (53 years later), and the mess is eerily similar: political unrest, social injustice, racial injustice, and rumors of war that have become a reality. What’s going on and what are we going to do about what’s going on?

Resolution for 2024: Clean Up The Mess!

Another resolution: **STAY WOKE & VOTE!**

May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus. Romans 15:5 ESV



Add Marvin Gaye’s classic hit, “What’s Going On,” to the playlist for

CELEBRATING REV. LULA G. WILLIAMS WITH PRAYER

By J. Fairbanks Leach
Contributing Writer, MSWF Prayer Coordinator

The October monthly Prayer Call-in Service of the A.M.E. Zion International Ministers' Spouses & Widow(ers) Fellowship experienced a Prayer Call-in Service unlike ever before. We shared a Spirit-filled celebrative Prayer Service on October 16, 2023. It was indeed uniquely different as we celebrated the Life, Love, and Legacy of the Rev. Lula G. Williams, (pictured) second president of our Fellowship.

August 3, 2023, the A.M.E. Zion International Ministers' Spouses & Widow(ers) Fellowship reached fifty-two (52) years of age with uninterrupted service in Zion Methodism. We rejoiced considering the prime blessing that our second president, the Rev. Lula G. Williams, is still actively and productively fellowshiping with us. It was an exceptionally significant occasion blessed by God.

Our historical gears shifted into high as we remembered that when our Founder, Mrs. Beulah Crockett, had with great concern noted the sparsity of fellowship among the minister's wives and widows in our beloved Zion and had determined to 'do something about it'. Miss Beulah, believing in the necessary protocol, first talked with her husband, Rev. J. W. Crockett, to receive his blessings and then those of her Episcopal leader, Bishop Stephen Gill Spottswood. Having begun things decently and in order, Mrs. Crockett then shared her organization-birthing proclivities with fellow A.M.E. Zion wives and widows who attended the WH&OM Convention in Buffalo, NY. Miss Beulah suggested an official meeting be held. Missionary Supervisors, in support of Miss Beulah's idea for an organization, met with spouses in their areas to garner support.

It is here that our honoree comes on the scene as she offers her home for the meeting. Mrs. Lula Williams' husband, Rev. Milton Williams, was pastor of The Shaw Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church in Buffalo, NY, and was hosting the Convention. It was of a surety that Miss Beulah Crockett was operating under the influence of a Holy unction. Great interest was indicated by the copious number of Wives and Widows who filled Mrs. Williams' home. It became the delivery room for Miss Beulah's Baby, the "National A.M.E. Zion Minister's Wives Fellowship." During the second meeting in May 1972, Beulah M. Crockett was elected president of the National A.M.E. Zion Ministers' & Widows Fellowship.

Rev. Lula Williams continued working with the Fellowship and, in 1986, was elected the second president of the Fellowship. She guided the organization, round by round, with meticulously creative and dynamic leadership. It was in 1988 that Rev. Lula's beloved husband, Rev. Milton A. Williams, Sr., was elevated as 82nd Bishop of the A.M.E. Zion Church. This, of course, interrupted his Spouses' tour of duty as president of the Fellowship. There is an uncontested concept that Rev. Lula G. Williams is the only Missionary Supervisor to serve as president of the A.M.E. Zion National Ministers' Wives and Widows Fellowship, albeit for a very short time.

Fast forwarding to the evening of October 16, 2023. The International Ministers' Spouses & Widow(ers) Fellowship Prayer Call-in Service used the Theme, "Celebrating the Life and Legacy of The Rev. Lula Williams with Prayer." Some eighty-plus Spouses and Widow(ers) gathered

across Zion Methodism via Zoom and telephone to share in this celebration with prayer for the 2nd president of our treasured Fellowship.

A great attempt was made to involve persons in this Prayer Service who had served with Rev. Lula and Bishop Milton Williams during their tour of duty as Presiding Prelate and Missionary Supervisor. The president of the International Ministers' Spouses & Widow(ers) Fellowship, Rev. Robin Stitt and Rev. Michele Long, Spiritual Life Chair, presented our honoree, Rev. Lula G. Williams. Persons sharing their gifts and talents in this August event were Rev. Margaret Anderson, Mrs. Pat Smoke, Rev. Ruby Miles, Mrs. Geraldine Walker, Mrs. Rosa Randall, Mrs. Lovetta Holmes, Mrs. Barbara Carr, Mrs. Georgia Thompson, Rev. Mamie Maize Cooper, Mrs. Margaret Brown Jackson, Mrs. Aurelia Brown, Mrs. Ava Morrow, Rev. Esther Rose, Rev. George Maize, III, Rev. Andrea Wiley and J. Fairbanks Leach. Each prayer offered was void of asking God for anything. Instead, each petitioner prayed fervent, heart-warming prayers full of thanks for God's goodness, mercy, and grace. Solos beautifully rendered spoke to the honoree's Christian profile and personality. One solo epitomized Rev. Williams' life, "May the Work I've Done Speak for Me." The prayers and musical renditions in succession were like the stoking of a fireplace whereon a log has been placed. When the time came for "A Dialogue with The Rev. Lula G. Williams", she briefly registered her surprise as she was not fully aware of the true course of this Prayer



Service. Shortly thereafter, Rev. Williams shifted gears and, with quiet but profound God-imbued synergy, stoked embers burning already on the hearth of our hearts from the prayers and musical renditions. Rev. Williams, with a Spirit-filled dialogue on "Traveling Light," gave concrete reasons why we should pack only Christian-enhancing items that would give us "Traveling Light" rewards for our journey here on earth. She encouraged us not to carry baggage that would hamper our progression heavenward. Whatever spaces occupied by the virtual body of Spouses and Widow(ers) surely felt the fire radiating from the "Traveling Light" fireplace as the airways were replete with Amens, Praise the Lord, and other sanctions of worship. Rev. Williams' words of wisdom caused many of us to feel the heat, be it comfortable or with a burning sensation in whatever bay we happen to occupy on our Christian journey.

In the book of Isaiah, these words are found . . . "Ah, how beautiful the feet of those on the mountain who declare the good news of victory, of peace and liberation, The voice that calls to Zion, *that chosen place for God's promise people*, announcing to them "Your God rules!" *The Voice*. The prevailing feeling is we were blessed to have sat at the feet of one with a choice calling and beautiful feet if you please. she shared the Word of God in a soul-searching way. Rev. Williams' message encouraged us Spouses & Widow(ers) to take inventory of our luggage to make sure we don't try to arrive at St. Peter's Check-up meeting with our Michael Kors bags crammed with burdens of shame, doubt, envy, self-reliance, untruths, hypocrisy, and many other sins that will have us tendered a slip saying, 'no admittance'. Rev. Williams impressed upon us that "Jesus Saves."

We left our Prayer Call-in Service in a mode of thanksgiving, praise, jubilation, and, yes, an insatiable desire to take inventory of our luggage. Kudos and many thanks to our Second President, Rev. Lula G. Williams. We thank God for the privilege of sharing with us a phenomenal woman of God.

Strategic Community Partnerships Make Way for Huge Community Blessings

By St. Stephen Communications Team



What began as a lofty goal to help 500 families with gifts for Christmas resulted in a remarkable community event that blessed over 700 families, which includes close to 2,000 children this holiday season—through the combined efforts of St. Stephen A.M.E. Zion Church, Community Karma, and The Asbury Park Little League, the Asbury Park Toy Drive proved to be a tremendous success. This event was the culmination of months of hard work, planning, fundraising, and organizing. It also represented the third community event sponsored by the three organizations. Rev. Quavon Newton, Pastor of St. Stephen, spoke about the importance of establishing relationships with community partners, “Last year, we were able to provide gifts for every child that came to church on the Sunday before Christmas. While that was a blessing, just a year later, we are still going to give gifts to the children in our congregation, but we have also provided presents for almost 2,000 children in the community. Everyone can do something, but when you create strategic community partnerships, your reach can extend beyond what you can even imagine.”



The power of these partnerships has helped St. Stephen to grow not just in numbers, but the church community has grown stronger, serving together to help make a difference in the community. Volunteers spent the two weeks leading up to packing close to 600 gift bags for families that had pre-registered. Each bag included gifts for each child in the family, handpicked according to their age and interest, a grocery store gift card for the family, and wrapping paper to make sure that the parents or caregivers had everything they needed to ease the financial burden during the holiday season. Sister Dottie Stevens was able to encourage her employer to adopt a family and in doing so, her job was able to work together to collect all the items on a family’s wish list. Sis Stevens was glad to connect her church family, ministry, and her job “I am so proud to be an employee of Coral Harbor Rehab, a local nursing facility in the community. Like my church, they’re always ready to support, and when I asked our administrator to support St. Stephen and adopt a family for Christmas, she immediately jumped into action. The assignment was completed with extras.”



Volunteers from St. Stephen and the community, along with helpers from all over the Camden District, were also present on Saturday to help register families, pass out gift bags, and prepare bags for families who registered on the spot. When asked what it was like to be a part of such an event, Sis. Karen Shorter, a member of St. Stephen, said, “Giving back to the community always warms my heart. The teamwork was like no other. From gathering 586 bags off the truck on Friday evening

to listening to families in line on Saturday say, ‘thank you because we didn’t know how we were going to provide this year,’ we are blessed to be a blessing.” Presiding Elder Laticia Hill Godette, who, along with her husband, First Gentleman Dante Godette, adopted five families, each having six members in the family, echoed those same sentiments. “I am extremely proud of Pastor Quavon Newton, his beautiful wife, and his faithful church family. Pastor Newton is an asset to the Camden District and a loyal team member. Pastor Newton specializes in forming strategic community partnerships to reach the masses. Pastor Newton is innovative and serves God with a spirit of excellence. He is making a difference in Asbury Park, New Jersey, as he focuses on kingdom building. Teamwork makes the dream work.” The 7 am Prayer Line also came together to support an additional five families of six. Members of the congregation adopted families, donated toys, and did whatever was necessary to help ensure that members of the community, which included members of the church, received the help they needed. As one member who received gifts said, “It is hard for everyone this time of year, especially this year. I am thankful to be able to be here serve but also here to receive gifts that will make my kids Christmas.”



The continued support of the Kiwanis Club and the Church of Philadelphia, as well as the support of local businesses who hosted fundraising events, held benefit concerts, and encouraged their customers to drop off toys in the collection boxes throughout town, helped to make the event an astounding success. In addition to the community partnerships, Ja’ Sir Taylor, NFL cornerback for the LA Chargers who is a native of Asbury Park and former AP Little League player, made a generous contribution that helped purchase additional toys so that there would be toys for every family and child who needed them. The collaboration between St. Stephen, Community Karma, Asbury Park Little League, in collaboration with all the community partners is making a huge difference and support grows with every event. The combined totals of Community Day in August, Community Thanksgiving and The Asbury Park Holiday Toy Drive, this partnership has helped close to 3,500 families. The strength of these partnerships made the Toy Drive an enormous success and planning for next year will begin shortly after the new year.



On Saturday, December 16, 2023, during the toy distribution, members of St. Stephen’s Hospitality Team were on site, sharing information about church service times, online availability and offering prayers. Families accepted prayer on site and there were visitors in church on Sunday that said they were there because of the Toy Drive and the warm reception they received. One new family joined the church and others accepted salvation. Bishop Dennis V. Proctor, Presiding Prelate of the North Eastern Episcopal District summed up the weekend’s events by saying “This is major ministry!!!”

The Union Springs District's Monumental Conference Year Ends Bittersweet

By Cannesta Felton
US District CED

Macon County, AL--- The Union Springs District of the Alabama Conference had a fruitful conference year that began on a high note and ended on a bittersweet note for two district-leading organizations in A.M.E. Zion infrastructure.

The **WH&OM Society**, under the leadership of Mrs. Artie Cobb, celebrated several events, but it was their April Anniversary program celebrating 143 years that was the conference's most outstanding event. During the program, the department presented its district Senior Queens, who have represented their churches and communities since 2020, when they were chosen, and when COVID changed the nature of the work of the project. The contestants, all over the age of 70, competed for the title of Union Springs District Senior Queen and included 2nd Runner-up from Ross Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church, Mrs. Lucille Davis; 1st Runner-up from County Line A.M.E. Zion Church, Mrs. Catherine P. Jones; and Mrs. Sally Echols of Tyson Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church, who earned the distinction of Senior Ms. Union Springs District. "I wanted to highlight not only the strong women of Zion who are responsible for the society's growth and accomplishments but also women in our local churches who have worked tirelessly throughout the years within their church doing whatever was needed for the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God," said Mrs. Cobb in reference to her motivation for a Ms. Senior Pageant.



As a result of the contest and several other initiatives throughout the conference year, the entire department was able to attend the WHOMS Quadrennial in New Orleans in July. The ladies ended the conference year with a long goodbye to Mrs. Cobb who was active in WHOMS for years as the wife of the late Presiding Elder James Cobb but took on the responsibility of supervisor in 2012. Mrs. Cobb has moved further into the state of Georgia, but her wonderfully laid plans, ministries, services, and her unique ideas for inclusion and fundraising will remain in the hearts and minds of the missionaries across the Union Springs District and the Alabama Conference for years to come. The department members who worked with Mrs. Cobb the last few years are Rev. Tina Betts, Patricia Felton, Berniece Fitzpatrick, Elizabeth Richardson, and Linda Williams. These missionary ladies expressed their appreciation to Mrs. Cobb with accolades and gifts. Presiding Elder Rev. Dr. Grimmert presented Mrs. Cobb with a beautiful plaque for her many years of dedicated service and thanked her for a job well done.

The **Christian Education** department was continuously busy as all the directors together created, developed, organized, presented, and addressed issues and events that are important to the church and to the African American community. They began the conference year with a busy December that included a journey to Tuscaloosa, AL, to worship at Hunter's Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church for the CED Advent Service and their Alabama Conference annual "Christmas Cheer," a project

that blesses an entire family but has a special emphasis on gifting children with clothing, age-appropriate toys and games, and toiletries. As is its tradition, the department produced four publications that were dispersed throughout the district: a Black History program, Sunday School Convention, and June Vacation Bible School. Ms. Nadine Ivy, District Director of CED, was presented the Eichelberger Award from the Alabama Conference CED in late summer. During Christian Education Month, the final program of the conference year was a service held on September 16, 2023, featuring youth who identified scriptures appropriate to every aspect of one's emotional and mental health. The guest speaker for this occasion was the Honorable Anthony Daniels, Alabama House Representative for District 53 and former student of CED District Director, Nadine Ivy. Representative Daniels is the youngest and the first African American Minority Leader in the Alabama House of Representatives. In his message, Mr. Daniels acknowledged his childhood and high school days when he was a student of Ms. Ivy's and Coach Huffman's, both of the Union Springs District. Mr. Daniels stressed the importance of the church in pushing the ideas of voting rights and standing up for what is morally and ethically right. Representative Daniels is recognized for his expansion bills that give local farmers opportunities for sales and product growth. In addition, Representative Daniels made the congregation aware of his push for legislation to correct the state's redistricting map to allow an additional Black majority district to account for the fact that the state is 27% Black. He is a staunch believer in protecting the voices and rights of African Americans. In his final remarks Representative Daniels encouraged the congregation to continue its efforts in Christian education and its work with children and youth, for the church has a special place in the shaping and molding of young minds, and this influence should not be put aside or minimized. His remarks aligned perfectly with the mission of CED.

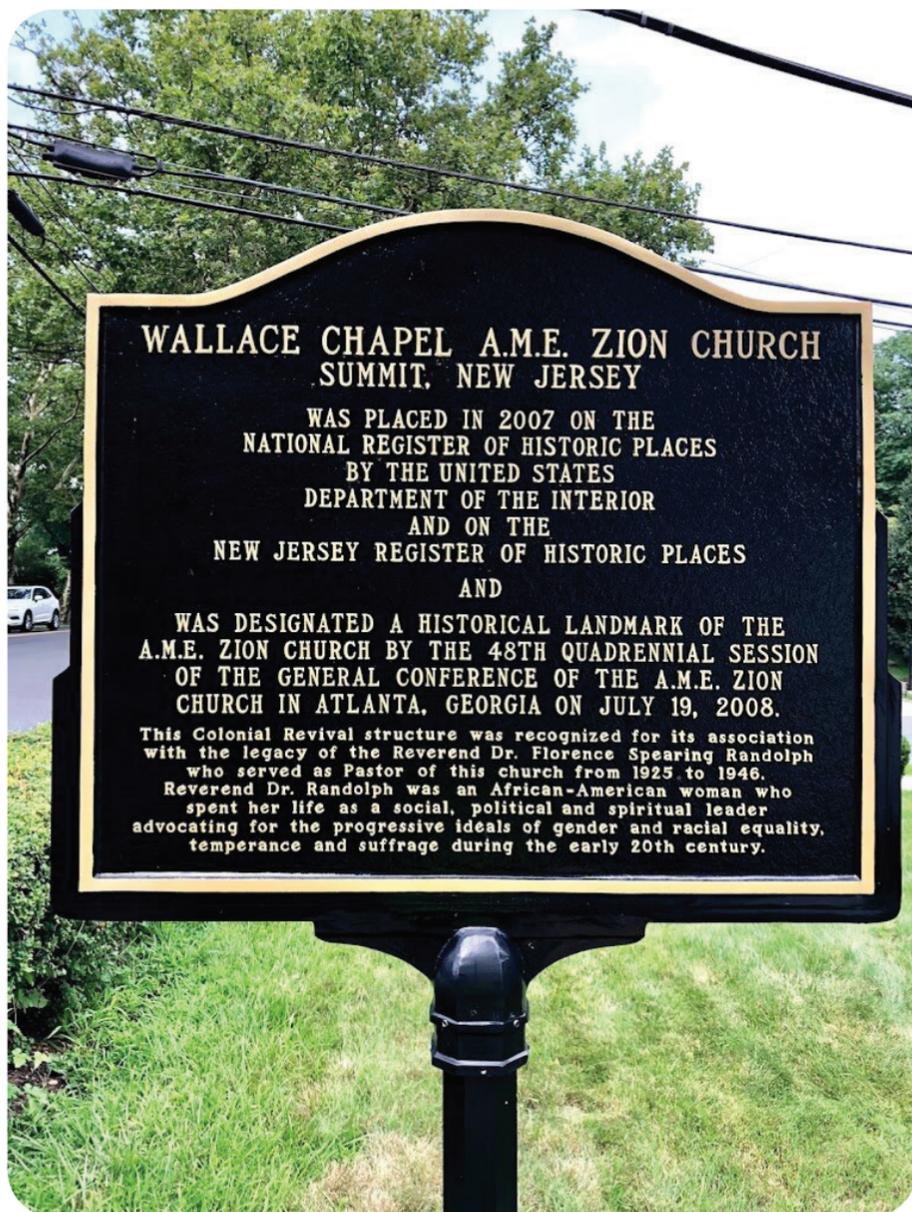


The end of this conference year also marked the end of more than 30 years of active and dedicated service from director Nadine Ivy, who resigned in early September. At the CED Observance service, Ms. Ivy received a beautiful plaque from Presiding Elder Rev. Dr. Fredna Grimmert to commemorate her faithfulness to CED. Director Hattie Rowell presented gifts from the CED directors, Marycile Echols, Cannesta Felton, Mary Anna Smith, and Marie Whatley. The department is committed to continuing the work to weave faith into learning while helping others find meaning and purpose in God's will for life. Ms. Ivy's stamp on this district leaves such a strong impression that much of her work is a legacy and will continue to be implemented for years to come.

The Union Springs District was blessed to have strong, innovative leadership in both the WHOMS and CED departments. The members look forward to growing and developing the departments while recognizing the successes of leadership of the past. To God be the Glory!

WALLACE A.M.E. ZION CELEBRATES 100 YEARS

By Debra Chappelle-Polk
Zion Spotlight Editor



New York, NY ... Wallace Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church (Summit, New Jersey), where Reverend Dr. Denison D. Harrield, Jr., has been Pastor for decades, celebrated its 100th anniversary in September 2023. Wallace Chapel is in the Jersey City District of the New Jersey Annual Conference of the North Eastern Episcopal District, of which Bishop Dennis V. Proctor is the Presiding Bishop.

The Grand Worship Service celebrating Wallace Chapel's 100th anniversary was held on Sunday, September 10, 2023. Bishop Dennis V. Proctor was invited to preach the anniversary sermon but, due to illness, was unable to do so. Missionary Supervisor, Mrs. D. Diane Proctor was able to attend, and Presiding Elder Rev. Dr. Laticia Hill Godette preached an encouraging and uplifting anniversary sermon.

Rev. Dr. John E. Carrington (97 years old), the only living former pastor of the church, was in attendance, along with Summit's Mayor, Common Council members, city residents, other church representatives, and the Wallace Chapel Church family. Reflecting on the service, Rev. Harrield said, "Everyone had a glorious time worshiping God as we thanked God for the battles and blessings over these 100 years."

Also included in the celebration were the outstanding contributions and achievements of Wallace Chapel's second pastor, Rev. Dr. Flor-

ence S. Randolph, a former General President of the Women Home & Overseas Missions Society (WH&OMS) of the A.M.E. Zion Church and founder of the Supply Department of the WH&OMS. Because of her untiring, diligent efforts, Wallace Chapel is not only listed as a historic site on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places and on the New Jersey Women's Heritage Trail but was also designated a Historical Landmark of The A.M.E. Zion Church in 2008 by the General Conference of the A.M.E. Zion Church in Atlanta, GA.



Rev. Harrield said the theme, "100 Years of Battles and Blessings While Trusting God," is most appropriate and speaks to "how the congregation stuck together the two years during COVID.

Every member stayed with us." He said, "There's been so many [other] things; we've grown; we've really grown spiritually in terms of the faith of our membership and seeing how God has blessed us during these years in spite of the challenges, the battles and the struggles that we've had." The theme, he said, also "reflected Wallace Chapel's devotion to the community by bringing affordable housing to the area, by opening its doors to help other churches and groups, and by having the historical significance of the church to the area recognized."

Rev. Harrield also shared an article recently written in the Morristown My Paper by Elsie Walker about Wallace Chapel. Rev. Harrield provided Ms. Walker with the church's historical background, as well as present-day church milestones and community outreach projects. In 2009, Wallace Chapel members were active in promoting and working for the building of more low-income, affordable housing in Summit. Morris Habitat for Humanity was the direct sponsor in partnership with the Summit Interfaith Council, of which Pastor Harrield was the President, the City of Summit, the Summit Affordable Housing Corporation, and others. On January 15, 2012, these efforts were realized when six units of low-income, affordable housing at 39 Morris Avenue (one block from Wallace Chapel) were dedicated.

"Light overcomes darkness, and we are thankful that this newspaper in Morristown, which we had never heard of, reached out to us and wrote this positive news story."

Rev. Harrield said, "Wallace Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church is thankful to God for His many blessings as we continue to be a shining beacon of light, faith, hope, and love. We are not a mega-church in terms of membership, building or budget size, etc., but we try to be a mega light that brightly shines in this community to make a difference for good for all people."

YOUNG'S TEMPLE OBSERVES 142ND ANNIVERSARY



Young's Temple A.M.E. Zion Church History "Reflections of a Glorious Past" 1881-2023

By Ruth Thompson

Young's Temple A.M.E. Zion Church Morristown, TN, observed its 142nd Anniversary on October 15, 2023. The church is a part of the Asheville District of the Blue Ridge Conference and is probably one of the oldest churches in the conference. The theme was "Celebrating Our Past with Hope for Tomorrow." The service was dedicated to the memory of the forefathers and saints of old who had paved the way. The church, through the years, has been fraught with innumerable trials and tribulations. Without the faith, wisdom, integrity, and powerful spirit of the saints of old, the church would not have existed,

Young's Temple originated in 1881. Its first pastor was Rev. Robert Rusell, who traveled on horseback preaching at Morristown in the morning and at Russell Chapel in Rogersville in the afternoon. The Church is named for Rev. D. J. Young, for whom little information is available.

In 1942, the church was heavily mortgaged and destined to be sold as a dance Hall. Through the efforts of the pastor and prayer warriors, the church was saved, and the mortgage burned in 1945.

In 1963, Urban Renewal acquired the property, and the church was forced to move to its present location.

In 2020, Covid wreaked havoc as the membership went from 40+ to 15+.

The Sunday morning message was delivered by Minister DeShano Dukes (COGIC), He spoke on "Don't Let the Green Grass Fool You". Sunday afternoon, the message was delivered by Elder J.W. Dukes, pastor of COGIC He spoke on "The Church will Never Die" (Matthew 24:13). Elder Dukes challenged the members to "stay in the church" He said, "Since Covid the devil has encouraged many to join bedside and Morningside but as you see the day of the Lord coming make you way to the church. Learn how to submit. The mission is how to say "yes Lord. Say, My mind is made up, my heart is fixed, I'm going all the way. Stay in the church Everything's going to be alright".

Young' Temple has had some 46 pastors to grace its pulpit. Reverends Warren Brown and J.W. Wactor were elevated to the Bishopric. The church sits atop a hill with a cross in its center, which, when lit, can be seen for miles around. The membership is small in number but large in faith. The faithful few keep the home fires burning. The current pastor is Rev. Wayne K. Purcell. The presiding Elder is Rev. Herbert Grant. Bishop is the Rt. Rev. Darryl B. Starnes.



Hood Theological Seminary Holds 1885 Society Annual Dinner



By Dr. Reginald Boyd, Jr.

The HTSNAA 1885 Society Dinner is a special occasion dedicated to fellowship and celebrating both alumni and the seminary. The evening of November 16th, beginning at 6:00 PM EST, commenced with registration and a warm welcome. Dr. Timothy Freeman, President of the Hood Theological Seminary Alumni Association (HTSNAA), extended greetings, and the Chaplain of the HTSNAA, Dr. Yolanda Alston-Foster, led a prayer.



The official welcome and occasion were presented by Rev. Eleanor Wilson. Dr. Vergel Lattimore, the seminary president, then addressed the attendees, offering greetings and inviting everyone to be part of the HTS community.

Frederick Cannady, representing the Student Government Association (SGA), extended warm greetings and a hearty welcome to the guests at this annual event. The guest speaker was introduced by HTSNAA Vice President Dr. Reginald Keitt. The theme for the event, “Making Disciples Using Hybrid Ministry,” set the tone for Dr. Corey Walker’s impactful speech, which provided valuable insights for all in attendance.

Dr. Corey Walker gave these highlights: We find ourselves at a critical juncture for humanity. The current trajectory of our civilization, marked by exploitation, the violation of human values, and the squandering of resources, cannot persist. This unsustainable path has led to upheavals, affecting both the innocent and the guilty.

In 1968, Charles H. Long pointed out that the visibility of the black community in America presents both a challenge and an opportunity—a call to develop a theology of freedom, one that embraces the concept of a new humanity. The theme “Making Disciples Using Hybrid Ministry” prompts us to reflect on how we can renew our commitment to envisioning a new humanity within our immediate society and church, particularly during this moment of shared crisis.

Understanding that the medium is the message, technology becomes a crucial tool for advancing our theological imagination and fostering new forms of community. However, as Dr. Walker emphasizes, technology alone cannot transform bad theology into liberating theology. It may inadvertently contribute to the creation of negative communities and distorted self-understandings.



While hybrid ministry offers numerous blessings, it requires profound theological reflection and practice. If we fail to respond to the current moment with a deep theological understanding that facilitates liberation and the freedom of all people, we risk preaching a flawed theology—one that should be allowed to fade away.

In simple terms, any theology that denies the humanity of any part of God’s created order is inherently flawed and should be discarded. It is imperative that we embrace the challenge of crafting a theology that is life-giving, loving, and liberating. A black seminary, with its unique approach and interpretations, exists to help us comprehend the reality of our world without simply imitating the dominant society’s narrative...

We stand as a testament to the promise of a loving, liberating, and life-giving God, bearing witness to the hope that God is a deity of justice rather than an advocate for empire. God aligns not with injustice but with those who tirelessly strive for justice each day. Our stance as witnesses emphasizes that God does not take sides in favor of the rich against the poor, the unjust and powerful, or the wealthy over the marginalized; rather, God stands with the oppressed.

We extend eternal gratitude to Dr. Corey D.B. Walker for his poignant reminder that we bear the responsibility of ensuring that technology is utilized in a manner that promotes a profound and thoughtful theology, one that authentically continues the mission of Jesus Christ.

10th Winter Commencement of Livingstone College



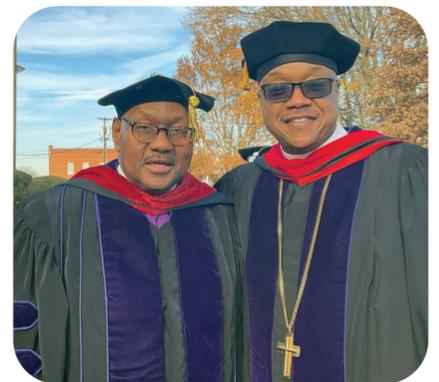
Livingstone College hosted its 10th Annual Winter Commencement on Friday, December 8, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. in Bishop James Varick Auditorium, recognizing graduates who earned an Associate of Science in Culinary Arts, a Bachelor of Arts in English, Liberal Studies, Music, Psychology and Sociology; a Bachelor of Science in Biology, Business Administration, Computer Information Systems, Hospitality Management, Sport Management, a Bachelor of Social

Work; and honoring three champions of change, each of whom received an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters degree.

As official stage guests and graduates processed to Edward Elgar’s tune, *Pomp, and Circumstance*, played by the college’s chair of music, Dr. Lawrence Quinnett, 13th President Dr. Anthony J. Davis opened the pro-

gram with a heartfelt welcome, reciting “Somebody Said It Couldn’t Be Done,” a poem by Edgar Albert Guest. As he shared with those present his ordained journey to the presidency of Livingstone College, Davis remembered, “I sat in the seats you were sitting in 2001.”

Board of Trustee member Bishop Eric Leake, who also serves as presiding prelate of the Southwestern Delta Episcopal District of the AME Zion Church, provided the Invocation as a collective selection, *Lift E’vry Voice*, followed by Rev. Dr. Dwayne Anthony Walker, chaplain for the college’s Board of Trustees rendered Romans 8:28-39 as the ceremony’s scripture.



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Bishop Darryl B. Starnes Sr., vice chairman of the college's Board of Trustees and presiding prelate of the Piedmont Episcopal District of the AME Zion Church, greeted attendees referencing the lifetime graduation experience while extending salvation as president of the



Faculty Assembly Dr. Da'Tarvia Parrish charged the Class of 2023 to remember their irrepressibility as a Livingstonian. The final platform of greetings concluded with 95th SGA president Matthew Clinton, who congratulated his peers on their academic journey.

Choral selections by both the Concert and Gospel Choirs filled the audience's hearts as commencement speaker Dr. Steve Perry stated, "I came here for a graduation, but this is a revival." Perry, educator and founder of Capital Preparatory Schools, encouraged graduates to celebrate acts great and small. He stated, "I thank each of you for taking what has been given to you and turning it into this day. In our community, you do not earn it alone. Join me in celebrating those folks who supported you whether they are here in spirit or body."

Perry, who recognizes the strength in community, challenged graduates to think collectively. Perry stated, "Getting there by yourself leaves you by yourself. Instead of wasting time trying to impress people with who you are, make a difference in the people who helped you to get there." He continued, "Some people poured all they had in you because they



saw something in you they wished they had in themselves. They need you to make a difference. A degree does not make you better than anybody. It makes you a better somebody."

Following Perry's inspiring reckoning, he, along with president and CEO of The Annie E. Casey Foundation Lisa M. Hamilton and Grammy-nominated Stella Award-winning Gospel Artist Brian Courtney Wilson, underwent honorary degree conferrals. The newly minted Dr. Brian Courtney Wilson sang his hit recording, *Waiting*, that followed with Dr. State Alexander, vice president of Communication and Public Relations, recognizing special guests who included Salisbury City



councilman Harry McGlaughlin, Mayor Barbara Mallett of East Spencer, members of the AME Zion Church and more.

President Davis, vice president for Academic Affairs Dr. Dawn McNair, and the college's Registrar, Wendy R. Jackson, facilitated degree awards to the undergraduates who celebrated in their unique ways, highlighting their personal affiliations and accomplishments while crossing the stage.

Following, president of the Livingstone College National Alumni Association (LCNAA) Bruce Stanback officially inducted the graduates in LCNAA as members.



Songstress Virginia

Rush sang, *How Great Thou Art* and President Davis followed with his official charge to the graduating class, stating, "You don't have next. You have now," while explaining the need for quality educators, social workers, scientists, and more. "It is today that our best work can be done," Davis continued. "Why be good if great is possible? You are the sons and daughters of the stone who affirmed that no matter how dark the night is, we believe in the coming of the morning. What are you going to do with it now?"

The collective stood to sing *My Livingstone*, the college's alma mater, and Bishop Brian R. Thompson, presiding prelate of the Western Episcopal District of the A.M.E. Zion Church and member of the college's



Board of Trustees, provided the Benediction.

Sport Management graduate Devon Drakeford of Charlotte, North Carolina, stated, "I simply feel good about today. I was able to serve the college as the mailroom director while earning my degree. Overall, I learned a great deal, met great people, and made great connections. I thank Livingstone College for what they've done for me, and most of all, the magnificent celebration today was truly a culmination of what you can expect to experience, whether a student or employee at Livingstone College."

Livingstone College Division of Business Dean Retires



The Faculty Assembly of Livingstone College recognized the retirement of longstanding professor Raejshwar D. Sharma at its monthly meeting on Friday, December 1, 2023. Faculty Assembly president Da'Tarvia Parrish acknowledged R.D. Sharma as an astute leader and great friend. After placing a sash on Sharma printed, "The Legend has Retired," Parrish stated, "Dr. Sharma has been an inspiration and champion for diversity and inclusion at Livingstone College. His leadership has permitted our students and faculty to engage in an international market and has changed the landscape of higher education at HBCUs."

In a visual presentation of Dr. Sharma through the years to the tune of "Wake Up Everybody," Vice President of the Faculty Assembly Damein Greatheart, who serves in the Division of Business under Dr. Sharma, shared his appreciation for Sharma's 28 years of service.

Other recognitions included certificate presentations from Division Chairs Drs., Tarsha Reid and Hasan Crockett, and Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Dawn McNair, who presented a crystal award.

A native of India, Dr. Raejshwar Sharma began his tenure at Livingstone in 1994 as an adjunct in the Department of Business and was soon retained as a full-time employee in 1995. By 2000, Dr. Sharma was appointed Division Chair (Dean) for the Bishop George E. Battle School of Business, where he has served for over two decades. Under his leader-



ship, the division has developed multiple programs including eSports, Hospitality and Management, and Culinary Arts. It has developed an international student exchange program with Invertis University in Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, India.

Former student Jordan Walker commented in a Facebook post, "Dr. Sharma was a big influence in helping shift my culinary career, and I became more analytical with his words of wisdom. I appreciate him and his open-door policy." RD Sharma leaves a legacy of professional service and congeniality. He has touched the lives of many Livingstonians and has contributed to the Rowan-Salisbury community and beyond. Forever a Blue Bear, Livingstone College wishes him a happy retirement.





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

Broome Elected as President of the North Carolina Council of Churches

“Sometimes it seems like to tell the truth today is to run the risk of being killed. But if I fall, I’ll fall five-feet four-inches forward in the fight for freedom. I’m not backing down.”

— Fannie Lou Hamer

By Rev. Allison N. Lee
Social Justice Editor

On Tuesday, December 5, 2023, Rev. Dr. Hanna Broome was elected as President of the North Carolina Council of Churches during a meeting of the Council’s Governing Board in Greensboro, North Carolina at the Trinity African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Dr. Broome’s election is a historic one – in the 88 year existence of the Council, she is the first Black woman to serve in the role of president.

History of North Carolina Council of Churches

According to the official website, the North Carolina Council of Churches was, “...founded in 1935 to address racial inequality.” Its mission statement reads, “We enable denominations, congregations, and people of faith to impact our state on issues such as economic justice and development, human well-being, equality, and compassion and peace, following the example and mission of Jesus Christ.” This organization is noted as being one of the earliest places in which Black and White leaders were able to hold space together and share honest conversation about challenges plaguing the greater community. The website for the North Carolina Council of Churches states, “The Council has often acted courageously in the face of hostility and always spoken prophetically in the face of injustice.” The Council focuses heavily on:

- Partners in Health and wholeness
- Eco-Justice Connection and NCIPL
- Racial Justice
- Criminal Justice Reform
- Gun Violence Protection
- Workers’ Rights
- Healthcare Justice
- Public Education, and
- Farmworkers.

The council is made up of, “...26 judicatories, 18 denominations, and seven individual congregations.” The North Carolina Council of Churches is progressive in nature, while using a faith lens as a point of reference.

Pathway to Leadership

When asked about how she came to be integrated with the work of social justice, Dr. Broome stated, “I initially did not know it as social justice – it was just me surviving.” Dr. Broome’s lived experience(s) of societal ills heaped upon her as a Black woman and people that she has encountered through the years sparked in her the inclination to use her voice to speak truth to power in places where silence and mistreatment had long been normalized. As Dr. Broome encountered housing inequities, navigated school systems as a parent of color, and became continually attuned to the pervasive reality of systemic injustices, she rose to the occasion of standing in the gap spiritually, relationally, and politically. Dr. Broome vocalized her turning point - “...and then realizing that these voices – nobody heard because we were in a certain socio-economic space or we were statistics and our voices did not matter. Our children’s voices did not matter. I have been fighting for that ever since.”

Though Broome is new to this position, she is no stranger to the work of social justice, having served as a long-time endorser of and advocate for

equity. In addition to her new role, Dr. Broome presently serves as the Director of Religious Affairs for Repairers of the Breach and has a strong track record of serving and leading the community through various organizations such as: the North Carolina Poor People’s Campaign – Moral Movement, the National Council of Negro Women, the Board for a Racially Equitable and Transformed Harnett County (BREATHE), and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

Dr. Broome believes wholeheartedly in the ministry of mentorship and community. A native South Carolinian, she grew up at the feet of her grandmother feeding people in the community and her father taking in young boys and helping them to turn their lives around. At a young age, Dr. Broome took to heart her grandmother’s quote, “If nobody cares for

you, I care for you.” Standing on the shoulders of early childhood giants and able to empathize with the unseen and unheard, Dr. Broome has made it her life’s mission to *hear, see, and advocate* for those who need a champion. Dr. Broome attributes more of her growth and development to her sons, her father, the late Robert Lee Broome, the late Joyce Davis, Bishop George Crenshaw & Mrs. Laurena Crenshaw, Bishop Kenneth Monroe, Fannie Lou Hamer, Rev. Dr. Evalina Huggins, Rev. Dr. Sondra Coleman, Dr. Jermaine Armour, and Bishop William Barber.

Intersectionality of Faith, Education, & Justice

Interfaced with her zeal for speaking to and acting on matters of injustice, Dr. Broome is a woman of faith and an ordained elder within the ranks of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, having served as both a pastor and presiding elder.

On the role that faith plays in the work she does, Dr. Broome expressed,

“Where there’s breath, there is hope. With all of the darkness that we see in this world, if I did not have my faith that it could be better or faith in standing strong and being resilient, I might have let the darkness have its way. I know that there is hope and that there can be change – I have seen it and taken part in it. I serve a God of the Resurrection – there is always going to be life after death, hope in hopeless situations, and *light*. We are supposed to shine it into the darkness; I stand on my faith.”

Isaiah 61 is a centralizing Scripture for Dr. Broome as she carries the mantle before her. She is often reminded of these words,

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; 2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; 3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.”

A member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, a graduate of the University of South Carolina – Upstate with a BA, Columbia International Seminary with a Master of Divinity, and most recently, Drew University with a Doctor of Ministry in Courageous Leadership in a Changing Culture, Dr. Broome utilizes both practice and education as she continues to shatter glass ceilings both within Zion and the ecumenical community beyond.

Looking Ahead

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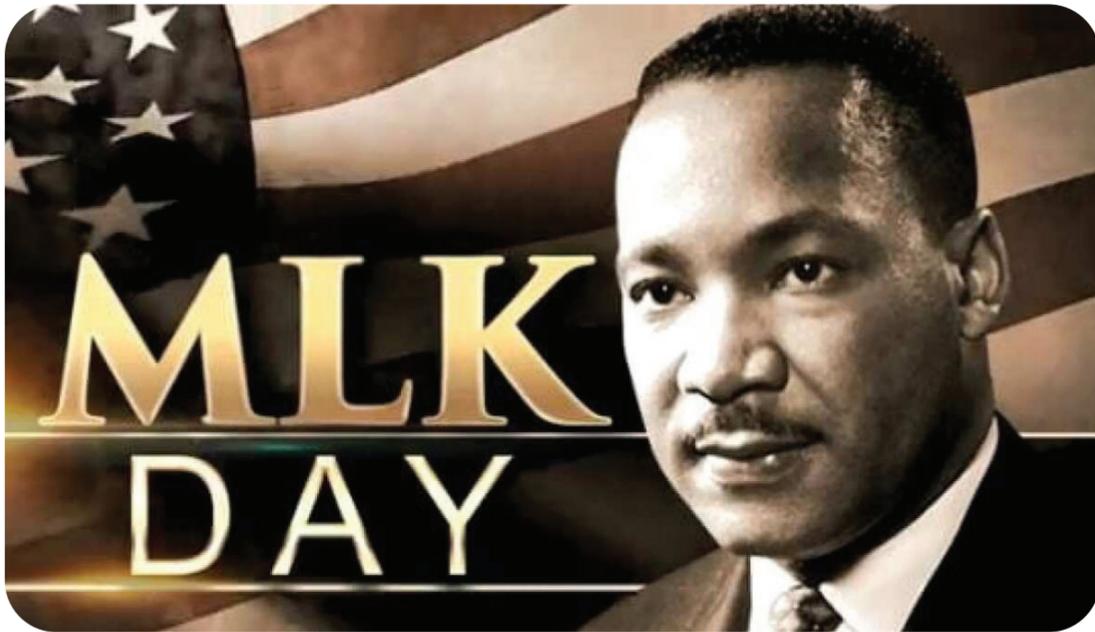
President Broome's election is a hallmark of transformation. Her tenure promises to follow in this same vein as she focuses on the continued and increased leadership of the Council to over 30,000 churches in the state of North Carolina. A woman of action, she is serious about the North Carolina Council of Churches being steadfast in not just organizing and meeting, but in also doing the work, so as to make a difference.

With respect to her outlook on things to come, Dr. Broome's overarching goal has a focal point of inclusivity – to have an inclusive Gov-

erning Board that represents all voices of Christianity and crosses the lines of race, gender, sexual orientation, culture, and socio-economic status. Dr. Broome is adamant about going deeper relating to what it authentically means to embrace others in a way that is illustrative of the Kingdom and believes that everyone can take part. She states, "It does not matter what you have encountered in your past; you can still be an agent of change."

Broome will serve a two-year term.

A New Level



"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'"

– Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

**By Rev. Allison N. Lee, Ed.D., MTS,
Social Justice Editor**

These words - spoken by the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. - are a gripping and thought-provoking prompting to examine the ways in which we show up for others. This quote is a mirror that beckons us past the mundane and self-serving into the deepest levels of introspection. A magnifying glass through whose lens we can view and review more closely the existence or lack thereof of our own social conscience. *This quote* is a thermometer that checks the temperature of our individual humanitarianism, as well as that of the organizations, institutions (CC: churches), and groups that we are each associated with. These words are an invitation calling each person who comes across them to meditate on a heart posture of goodwill and advocacy toward others, not just in mindset but also in action.

Dr. King's rhetorical question is one that many

of us can, perhaps, provide a perfunctory answer for. We can say that we participated in Habitat for Humanity and took part in building homes for the unhoused – in doing so, good was done. Some would say that they volunteered during the holiday season at food banks or in shelters, providing food or clothing to those in need – in doing so, good was done. Yet others would offer that they have given of their time, talent, and/or treasure to ministry and/or in the school system – in doing so, good was done. All of these are valid offerings for ways in which we can actively *do* for others.

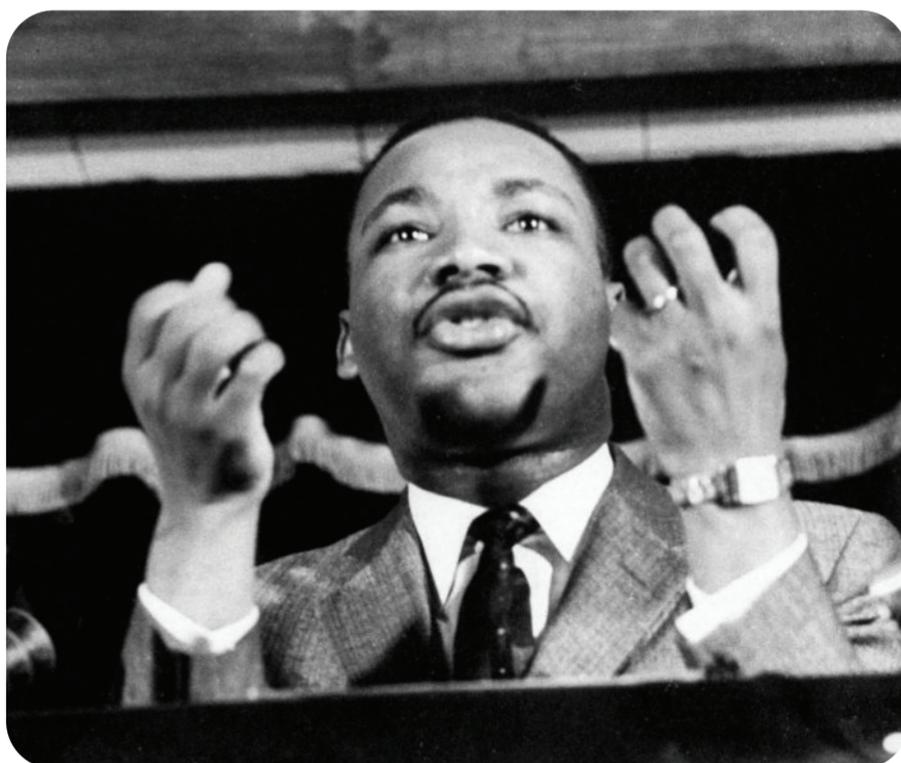
In this New Year and in a world that is by no means short of the need for continued and increased implementation of benevolence, what would it look like to go *further* in our execution of service? To build homes with Habitat for Humanity on Saturday *and* to encourage our policy-makers to take action. To volunteer our service in food banks *and* to stock the food pantries in our *own* churches

in order to regularly give to those in need. To speak to our neighbor(s) *and* to listen closely to the response given. To donate school supplies to a teacher *and* show up at school board meetings to lift our voices. Could it be that we are each being summoned into a new level of "life's most urgent and persistent question?"

2024 makes 41 years (1983) since the passage of legislation that called into effect a new federal holiday in observance of the late Martin Luther King Jr. The annual day of remembrance and service takes place on the 3rd Monday of each January, which either falls on or close to Dr. King's birthday each year, which is on January 15th. The United States observed Martin Luther King Jr. Day, also known as MLK Day, for the

first time in 1986. Following the inaugural observance, each state followed suit over time to recognize and implement this day of significance. MLK Day is one that pays homage to Dr. King's legacy, honors the fight for civil rights, and charges the public with action and change. Many regard it as a *day on* rather than a day off, which is demonstrated through parades, breakfasts, marches, community service efforts, and the like, all in the name of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

As we pause to honor and reflect upon the transformative work and service of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., may we endeavor to first continually challenge self to take a hard look at how it is that we are serving others and then to rise to a new level. May we be intentional in our striving toward dismantling systems that were built to hinder progress and subjugate hope. May we be resolute in our demand for and movement toward justice.



THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH
MID-ATLANTIC EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

*“SO, IF ANYONE IS IN CHRIST, THERE IS A NEW CREATION: EVERYTHING
— OLD HAS PASSED AWAY; LOOK, NEW THINGS HAVE COME INTO BEING!”
2 CORINTHIANS 5:17*



BISHOP W. DARIN MOORE
PRESIDING PRELATE
MRS. DEVIETA C. MOORE
MISSIONARY SUPERVISOR

Happy
NEW YEAR!

We pray for you Peace, Love, Joy, and Renewal in 2024.



Rev. Dierdre R. Parker-Rowson
Entertainment & The Arts Editor
Entertainment_Arts@StarofZion.org

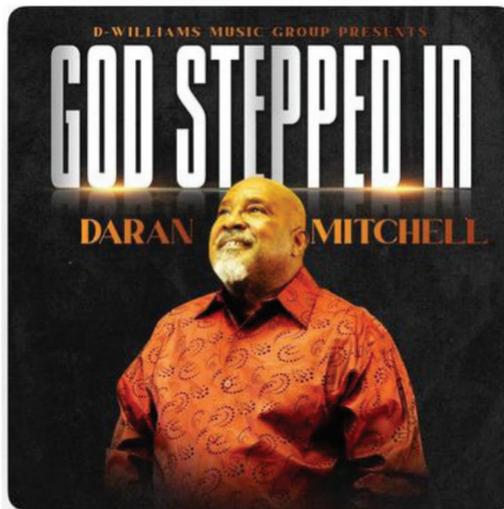
God Stepped IN: A New Single by Dr. Daran Mitchell

Rev. Dierdre R. Parker
Entertainment_Arts@StarofZion.org

Dr. Daran Mitchell is a prolific pontificator, a professor of preaching, a sought-after revivalist, a pastor, and a jazz aficionado. Recently, he added recording artist to his list of titles. With not much more than a social media status update, Dr. Mitchell released the single, *God Stepped In*, on Spotify and other streaming platforms. Because Dr. Mitchell is known as a hymnologist, it was unexpected to discover that this release was not a hymn. Upon this discovery, we immediately reached out to Dr. Mitchell to find out what inspired him to make this bold step and to share with our readers what the experience of being in the studio was like.

SoZ: Dr. Mitchell, thanks for agreeing to talk to me about your new single. I want to jump right in and ask you what inspired you to record this song.

D. Mitch: *(Chuckles)* Well... I always wanted to do it. I just didn't think I had the voice to do it. Let alone when you think about the song that was recorded, it was way out of my wheelhouse, to be honest with you. I always thought that I would record a hymn or hymns. You know, that's what I became known for. I don't want to say famous, but I'm known for singing hymns. Hymns are a genre of music that I love. I grew up singing hymns as a child. And, of course, entering the ministry, I had to lead prayer meetings in my home church, and I really took an interest in memorizing the hymns. I've always loved hymns. But I think the main thing was it was something different, something that stretched me, and then I got some encouragement from Dr. David Williams, who's a dear friend and a classmate in seminary. He kept pushing, saying, "Mitch, you ought to do it." He would shoot me some songs, and I would check them out. We actually did a song together a few years ago called *Rise*. I really enjoyed that experience. Then he said, "It's time for you to do something on your own." He sent me a couple of songs, and we landed on this one. He gave me vocals, and at first, you try to do it the way you heard it. He said, "No, you gotta make it your own." So I said, "Let's do it". And after a couple of tries, there you have it. I think, for the most



part, I wanted to just do it to say to myself you can do this. But I had people supporting me too. My wife and son were always encouraging me to do it. And, of course, Philippians 4:13...

SoZ: What was your experience like in the studio?

D. Mitch: The experience was great. It was so different from anything that I've done. I'm still in this space where I want to learn new things and try new things. Being in the studio, man... When I got in there, it was like, "Whoa... I'm really in here. God, you got to help me through this." I'm a perfectionist. So I'm listening to myself, trying to get the note right, breathing, and all those kinds of things. The engineers were really patient with me. Dave said, "Mitch, you love jazz. Feel it. You have to hit

the note perfectly." This is not like singing *Let Mount Zion Rejoice*; this is not that kind of party. NO. It was "feel the rhythm, feel the rhyme..." I started feeling it, and the more I felt it, I started to get into it, and the song got into me. The lyrics spoke to me where I was and where I have been since the pandemic. All of this really helped me to get into the song and realize that it would be a blessing to so many people.

SoZ: What was the lyric in this song that really resonated with you?

(At this point, he pauses and looks heavenward. He is silent for two minutes before he answers.)

D. Mitch: This has been a tough time. I thought this named the space where many of us are trafficking. This has been a tough time. That by itself got me. Just wrapping around that, God's presence in the midst of these tough times. I'm thankful that God touched David with those lyrics and touched my voice to be able to communicate those lyrics.

SoZ: What advice would you give to someone who is being compelled by God to do something out of their wheelhouse?

D. Mitch: Trust God and the people around you that God is speaking to and through.

*Dr. Mitchell's single, *God Stepped In* is available on YouTube.*

Temple Building

Rev. Dierdre R. Parker
Entertainment_arts@starofzion.org

It's a brand-new year! So many of us use the beginning of a year to implement new habits and routines, or to get rid of old ones. So, we make New Year's Resolutions. In case you've been living under a rock, a New Year's Resolution is a promise that you make to yourself to start doing something good or stop doing something bad on the first day of the new year. In a Forbes Health/One Poll Survey of one thousand US adults, nearly 48% of respondents listed improving fitness as their top priority for 2024. However, an article posted by OSU Fisher College of Business indicates that forty three percent of people abandon their resolutions by the end of January. Another twenty three percent quit by the end of the first week. Only nine percent



of Americans make successful changes through New Year's Resolutions, yet every year we continue to make them. We reached out to Cliff Barnett Jr. of Temple Builders Fitness Ministry for some insight on how we can become successful at what 48% of surveyed Americans have prioritized.

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 1 Corinthians 6:19
"Taking care of our bodies is not only a personal responsibility but also a reflection of our commitment to Christian living, which promotes healthy living in mind, body and spirit." On a bright Thursday morning late last year, we sat down with young Barnett to discuss 5 things that we can begin right away to get us on the path toward building a healthier earthly temple. Here is what he had to say:

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1. Start now. Waiting until the new year really doesn't get you anywhere. Wait to start, what makes you think you will progress in the New Year? Start now. It doesn't have to be anything super extensive. Doing something for 10-15 minutes. There are things that we can do now that will help us gain momentum as we progress into the new year. Also keep in mind that tomorrow is not promised. Use the time you have today.
2. Be consistent. Consistency is key. It doesn't matter how long you're doing something or the intensity of it. If you are consistent, you will see results. There is a study that came out that says people doing a brisk walk for 11 minutes a day had better results than people who went to the gym and do different exercises once or twice a week.
3. Do something that you enjoy doing. If it's gardening, walking, fitness classes, aerobics, or core work. Whatever it is that you are enjoying, build on that.
4. As a nutrition coach I gotta go here: Eating whole foods. Not eating whole foods is a contributor to many of the health problems that we face, especially as African Americans. What I mean by whole foods is your produce, meat, eggs. God made foods vs. man made foods. The beef from a cow, the eggs from a chicken, veggies, and fruits. Not processed or ultra processed foods. Your processed foods are things like canned vegetables. They are still in their natural form but they had to be put in the cans and preservatives are added. Your ultra processed potato chips, these are the foods that we love but aren't good for us, popcorn, sodas, popcorn, sodas. These are all contributing factors to why many of us are so unhealthy. Just by eliminating those foods alone, you are going to see progress, I promise you!
5. Prepare your own foods. Here's an example. One of my clients loves sausage egg and cheese sandwiches. One day I looked at how many calories one of these sandwiches has. For one sandwich it is 500 calories. You can reduce the number of calories by half just by making it at home. On top of that you are saving more money by making it at home.

"What about water?", I ask.

I tell my clients to drink a gallon of water. Everybody may not be able to do that. I would say start with at least a half-gallon and work up from there."

For more information, weight loss help, improvement of overall health or for support and accountability follow Temple Builders Fitness Ministry on Facebook, tbfitmin on Instagram, or visit the website at www.tbfitnessministry.com. Free virtual consultations are available.

Bidding Adieu 2023 at a Winter Art Market

By Asia Brown

One of the last events of 2023 that I attended was the McColl Center's Front Lawn Friday + Winter Art Market. I was invited by a friend whose wife was an artist featured in the showcase. For the nearly two decades that I have lived in the Charlotte area, this was my first time visiting the McColl Center. I was amused when I discovered that it sits adjacent to the Charlotte Ballet. The first and last time that I visited Charlotte Ballet was in 2015, following a disastrous audition for the Debbie Allen Dance Academy (DADA).

The Winter Art Market at the McColl Center was a subtle yet vibrant display of local artists. Having recently worked in a museum setting, I engaged more with a few of the artists' work and the inspiration behind it than I normally would if I were casually strolling through. I appreciated the live music given by a cover band playing Christmas tunes throughout the evening as guests engaged with artists in the Winter Art Market. Touring the other levels of the McColl Center was quite interesting, as I was able to enter multiple studio spaces belonging to artists-in-residence. Monique Luck was the only artist-in-residence whom I was able to meet (again) and tour her studio. One collage work that Monique was working on stood against the opposite wall, as grand and radiant as her spirit.

As I toured the remaining studio spaces and artwork on the upper levels of the McColl Center, I marveled at the architecture of the former Gothic-Revival style church. There is something very charming about old brick-style buildings, especially when a space like the McColl Center still maintains a quaint aesthetic to its renovated structure. In a New South city like Charlotte, preserving architectural remnants of the



city's past gives the Queen City character.

Before I left the Front Lawn Friday + Winter Art Market, I purchased a few art pieces from three different artists: Liza Cucco, Elizabeth Núñez, and Amy Yarger. Although I only stayed for one hour, I am glad that I did come out on that rainy Friday night. I realized that as a writer, I am an artist too, and artists need community. If you are an artist, you cannot forsake attending or joining events that showcase local artists. There is a synergy formed from connecting with other creative souls, whether you are supporting them financially or supporting them with your presence and engaging fellow artists about their artistic process.

The McColl Center is located at 721 N. Tryon Street in Uptown Charlotte.



Mr. Daman Deleon
Health and Wellness Editor
Health_Wellness@StarOfZion.org

Staying Well This Winter:

Choose to stay well this winter. Arm yourself with these tools!!

**By Iyabode (Yabo) Beysolow, MD, MPH,
Director of Health Ministry, The A.M.E. Zion Church**

As the winter season progresses, we are hearing more coughs and sneezes. Some of us are coming down with respiratory illnesses such as the flu, COVID-19, or respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). These respiratory illnesses are caused by viruses (germs), most of the time leading to cold-like symptoms, but they can also be more serious, causing difficulty breathing or even pneumonia. So, how do we protect ourselves and our families this season?

The power to protect ourselves and our families is in our hands.

Eating nutritious, well-balanced meals with vegetables and fresh fruits every day and exercising daily helps to keep our immune systems working well to fight germs.

You can choose some everyday preventive actions to stop germs from spreading:

- Washing our hands often with soap and water
- Wearing a mask in crowded spaces, particularly indoor spaces
- Improving the ventilation in indoor spaces to avoid viruses spreading
- Staying home when sick (except to seek healthcare) to avoid spreading illness to family and friends

And finally, we want to stay up to date on our vaccines to protect ourselves from serious complications of diseases such as the flu or COVID-19.

I thought the flu was just a bad cold!

Unfortunately, it is not. If you've had the flu, you know that it can keep you down for several days. You may miss work/school or family events. You may also spread the flu to others who are more vulnerable to severe complications from the flu, such as older family members or babies/young children.

If you have chronic medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, heart, lung or kidney disease, you are more likely to end up in the hospital if you end up with the flu. The flu can cause your asthma or diabetes to flare up or worsen, even if it was stable before. The flu can also be deadly.

Bottom line: No medicine, no vaccine is 100% effective. Getting a flu vaccine may not prevent you from getting the flu altogether, but it surely decreases your chance of getting seriously ill or dying from the flu, because you are vaccinated. If you think of driving a car, getting vaccinated is like wearing your seatbelt. The seatbelt may not stop an accident, but it can decrease your chances of getting seriously injured. It's not too late for your flu shot.

Did you know that the risk of having a heart attack or stroke is significantly increased if you have the flu? A 2018 study found that the risk of having a heart attack was six times higher within a week of having had a flu infection, particularly among older adults and people who were experiencing their first-ever heart attack. www.cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/heart-disease.htm.

So, should you still be worried about COVID-19? Isn't the pandemic over?

Unfortunately, no! Just because the pandemic has been designated as over, it does not mean that the COVID-19 virus is gone. The COVID-19 virus is still causing illnesses, hospitalizations and, unfortunately, deaths every week in the U.S., <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#data-tracker-home>, and around the world, <https://covid19.who.int/>.

Some people who have had a COVID-19 infection, even those who had a mild case, have developed long-term complications. Some of the complications include persistent brain fog, anxiety, depression, and heart and

lung complications in both adults and children. These symptoms can last for weeks to months. This is sometimes called Long COVID.

Just as with the flu, when older adults, people who are immunocompromised, and people with certain disabilities or underlying health conditions get infected with the COVID-19 virus, they are more likely to get very sick and suffer complications.

A few common questions about COVID-19:

I already got sick with COVID-19 several times. What is the point of getting another COVID-19 vaccine?

Even, if you have been infected with the COVID-19 virus before, it's important to stay up to date on your COVID-19 vaccine. Your immunity (protection) from a prior COVID-19 infection wears off over time, it is not permanent protection.

So, if you have not already done so, get your updated COVID vaccine to:

- lower your chance of not getting sick again.
- lower your chance of having to be hospitalized if you do get sick.

Talk to a healthcare provider today about the best time to get your updated COVID-19 vaccine dose.

I have had several doses of the COVID-19 vaccine already. Why do I need more? Protection from COVID-19 vaccines wears off after several months. Even if you have had multiple doses of the COVID-19 vaccine in the past, you are not up to date if you have not received the newer, updated COVID-19 vaccine. It's important to stay up-to-date on your vaccines to stay protected.

If you have a severely weakened immune system (such as in people who recently had or are undergoing treatment for cancer or organ transplants), you may need multiple doses of the COVID-19 vaccine over time in order to stay protected. Getting infected with COVID-19 when you have a weakened immune system could lead to hospitalization

or even death.

Respiratory Syncytial Virus

You may have heard about the virus called RSV (respiratory syncytial virus). It has been around for a long time. We normally hear about it affecting children and babies. For most people, it causes mild cold symptoms for a few days, but in some babies and younger children, it can cause them to wheeze or end up in the hospital needing oxygen. But do you know that RSV can lead to breathing difficulties, pneumonia, hospitalization, and other complications in older adults as well? If you are 60 years or older, ask your healthcare provider today about RSV and whether the RSV vaccine is suitable for you.

Symptoms of the flu, COVID-19, and RSV are very similar. Coughing, runny nose, fever, and sneezing are a few of the symptoms you might have with any of these.

SOURCE: NFID

The only sure way to know that you may be sick with flu, COVID-19, or RSV is to get tested. Getting tested is especially important if your symptoms are getting worse.

Stock up on free COVID tests that you can take at home by going to www.COVID.gov.

You can fill out a form and have tests sent directly to your home. You can find in-person locations to get tested for COVID-19 at testinglocator.cdc.gov.

For more details, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/index.html>.

HOW TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FLU, RSV, COVID-19, AND THE COMMON COLD

Common symptoms may include cough, headaches, sneezing, runny nose, and congestion. Different symptoms may include:



	COLD	FLU	COVID-19	RSV
ACHES	XX	XXX	XX	X
DIFFICULTY BREATHING	X	X	XXX	XX
FATIGUE	XX	XXX	XXX	X
FEVER	X	XXX	XX	XX
LOSS OF TASTE OR SMELL	X	X	XX	X
SORE THROAT	XXX	XX	XXX	X
WHEEZING	X	X	X	XXX

New Year, New Chapter: Let's get it!



By **Daman De Leon**
Health and Wellness Editor

In Greco-Roman Mythology, the Romans worshipped a Deity who went by the name Janus. Janus was depicted as having two faces that faced opposite directions. Some portrayals of him are of a being with two heads also. Before engaging in battle, the Romans would pray to this particular entity due in part to their perspective that each new battle would result in a victory, and every conquered territory was perceived as a new beginning or new chapter. Thus, the name Janus is the inspiration for the name JANUARY. Janus was depicted as the god of gateways, the god of doors.



There's something special about the new year. It is a time of hope, opportunity, and the joy of new possibilities. For many, the new year symbolizes starting fresh, a chance to turn over a new leaf and pursue new goals. No wonder New Year's resolutions are so popular. About

half of Americans make resolutions each year. However, less than 10 percent of them actually achieve the goals they set. In fact, Strava, a fitness app with access to millions of user profiles, was able to pinpoint a "Quitter's Day" based on its data points. (In case you were wondering, it's the second Friday of January.) This date signifies when we are most likely to give up on the fitness goals we set in the new year.

Other studies have shown that two-thirds of people will give up on their New Year's resolutions before the beginning of February (ref). The takeaway? Resolutions are feel-good moments, but they all too often fall by the wayside—and quickly.

I don't necessarily believe in "New Years Resolutions". Instead, each year, I write my goals down and post them to my personal archives. Then, at the start of each new year, I grade myself based on how well I achieved those goals and set brand new ones. Some of my resolutions I keep and turn into daily habits, while others I discard in favor of other things. Thanks to these commitments, I no longer drink sugary drinks (18 years), floss daily (15 years), work out every night (10 years), eat less sugar (6 years), practice intermittent fasting (5 years), write regularly (4 years), cook for my family (3 years), maintain a blog (2 years), and get more sleep (1 year).

As 2024 kicks off, I want to share some of the best tips I've found for committing to a New Year's resolution—and then sticking with it:

- Set **REALISTICALLY ATTAINABLE** goals
- Trust the process
- Embrace the struggle
- Stay prayed up!
- Stay the Course

In conclusion....trust God and **DON'T GIVE UP.**

FINANCIAL FREEDOM

In a Relationship with Money



Dana G. Stille
Financial Freedom Editor
FinancialFreedom@StarOfZion.org

By **Dr. Dana G. Stille**
Financial Freedom Editor

For many adults, the start of a new year means setting the stage to implement positive changes in the coming months. After spending time reflecting on the ups and downs of the previous 12 months, many people contemplate ways that they can improve their own lives and the lives of their families. The results often end with the determination to adjust some habits: eating habits, spending habits, exercise habits, and relationship habits. One relationship that is often overlooked is our relationship with money. In order to successfully reach financial freedom, we must develop and maintain a healthy relationship with our money.

A relationship with money? What exactly is a relationship with money? Consider how you value and spend money. Are you a spender, saver, gambler, or splurger? Does money 'burn a hole in your pocket?' Do you worry about making more money or don't think about money at all? A relationship with money is developed and shaped by our values, experiences, and emotions. Like our relationships with people, our relationship with money sometimes may result in feelings of insecurity or fear. It may also reveal our long-term goals and aspirations.

If you understand how money works and use it effectively to maintain good health and eliminate stress in your life, then you more than likely

have a healthy money relationship. On the other hand, typical signs of an unhealthy relationship include apprehension about spending too much or not having enough to spend. Those in unhealthy money relationships are also more likely to fall for get-rich-quick scams and believe that money is the answer to all of life's problems.



Take some time this month to think about your relationship with money and whether it is "normal or secure," or unhealthy." If your money relationship requires some work, start by thinking about how you want the relationship to change and set reasonable, measurable goals to get you there. Be intentional, but also remember to give yourself grace.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Ms. Angel Eason
Lifestyle Editor
Lifestyle@StarOfZion.org

New Year's Resolutions God's Way Part 2

Conversation with Rev. Darlene

By Angel Eason
Lifestyle Editor

Setting goals and resolutions for the year is great, but are you making sure that God is at the forefront? Last year, I had the opportunity to have a conversation with Rev. Darlene R. Counts, Associate Minister at Judah Temple A.M.E. Zion Church, about this important topic. We are continuing the conversation with part 2 as we embark on 2024.



Are New Year's resolutions, goal setting, or setting intentions biblical?

I would say it is not specifically biblical in terms of New Year's resolution. The Bible does share how we can make plans for our lives, but we are still following the spirit of God. A scripture that comes to mind is Proverbs 19:21, "many are the plans of the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand."

That simply means that we can make plans for our lives, goals, and things we want to change, but it is all about the orchestration of God's plan for our lives. Our purpose aligns with how God sees us as believers and how the direction of our lives is going.

Often with setting intentions and New Year's resolutions, we come up with ideas, but we are not always intentional that they are God's ideas.

Another familiar passage of scripture that people may use is Proverbs 3:6, "Trust the Lord with all your heart and lean not to your own understanding." That comes with obedience to the path that God has you on and how you can walk in the will of God even with the desires you have for yourself.

It is personal but not biblical, for growth and development.

Last year, life was "lifing" for a lot of people, what are ways we can reset to feel refreshed in our spirits when creating goals?

The first inclination as life has "lived" and sometimes we might have not fulfilled the things we wanted to. I would say to reflect on what did not work so that you can get some type of knowledge to make it work the next time around. Decluttering is also important.

To refresh means, at some point, it was fresh; "How can I make whatever goal fresh again?" or "How can I make the goal I have accomplished better?"

There is also prioritizing your goals and putting the things important to you first. A lot of times, when we do things to refresh ourselves, we do the things we love the most. Whether it is self-care, travel, or whatever brings you the most joy. A lot of times, when you prioritize from most important to least important, it will bring you more motivation and excitement to get the things done on your list.

Create healthy habits and do things that will ignite your spirit, for example, your passions, gifts, or things you always wanted to do.

When life begins to "life," you lose motivation from the spiritual and natural. It is important to surround yourself with people who understand your gifts and purpose.

Go after the things that bring you joy. This looks different for everyone. There is no cookie-cutter way. Everyone's joy is not the same, it does not look the same.

Goals and resolutions are a part of living.

How do you intentionally set goals in God's way?

Setting goals in God's way begins and ends with Him. When we are seeking after God about the things that He desires for us, he will give us the timing. He will allow the timing to flow as it needs to.

For example, you want to write a book.

God will make the provisions. The Holy Spirit knows our abilities,

and it is important when we are intentional to allow the Holy Spirit to govern us on how to fulfill those goals.

There is no specific way of setting goals. You have to be real with yourself about your goals and be true to yourself. For some people, starting off with one goal is fine. Prioritize what you're going to execute, and if that is one thing, that is okay. Do your best at that one thing.

When God says no or not yet to a goal or a resolution, how do you process this?

There is a purpose behind every response. The reason why it is hard to process a no from God is because, naturally, we do not like being told no. For example, as children, we did not like for our parents to tell us no.

When we are told no, we have an attitude. We live in a popcorn society. We live in an "I" society. Instead of looking at the perspective that God's no or not yet can be beneficial. We patronize God in this way that he is loving, and he is always going to say yes. He is also a God who takes away. He is also a God who is strategic in what he does. What is being questioned is your reality of who God is. We have to be careful at taking God's no or not yet as rejection. Getting a no and not yet are a part of the faith journey. God is not a yes man. He is like a



parent figure.

What advice do you have for someone who has never set goals at the beginning of the year but would like to set them this year? What is a good starting point?

The first step is to talk to God, "I know what my life looks like right now; show me, God, where you want me to start. If there is anything on this list that you do not approve of, show me. If there are things you want to work on, show me. God, help me stick to that one goal until it is at a good place where I can pick up another one. As I go throughout this year, continue to show me. As you are shaping and molding, detoxing me from things I should not be doing, show me your purpose for me."

This is a way for you to stay in alignment.

Are there books you recommend for goal setting?

Purpose Driven Life by Rick Warren

A GLOBAL LEADERSHIP VIEW OF THE A.M.E. ZION CHURCH



1. Bishop Kenneth Monroe
EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
 Office: P.O. Box 1167, Fuquay Varina, NC 27526
 Office: (919) 554-8994; Fax: (919) 556-6049
 Email: encedistrict@gmail.com
 District includes: Albermarle, Cape Fear, Central North Carolina, North Carolina, Virgin Islands
Mrs. Sheila W. Monroe, Missionary Supervisor



2. Bishop Darryl B. Starnes, Sr.
PIEDMONT EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
 3225 West Sugar Creek Road, Charlotte, NC 28269
 Ph: 704-904-9817 Fax: 704-599-0485
 Email: BishopDBStarnes@aol.com
 District includes: Blue Ridge, West Central North Carolina, Western North Carolina, Jamaica (all divisions)
Mrs. Camille C. Starnes, Missionary Supervisor



3. Bishop Dennis V. Proctor
NORTH EASTERN EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
 8369 Governor Grayson Way, Ellicott City, MD 21043
 Ph: (410) 418-4364 Fax: (410) 418-5834
 Email: BishopProctor@aol.com
 District includes: New England, New Jersey, New York, Western New York, Bahamas and London-Midland
Mrs. D. Diane Proctor, Missionary Supervisor



4. Bishop Mildred B. Hines (Deceased)
SOUTH ATLANTIC EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
 Office address: 5115 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 620, Los Angeles, CA 90036
 Mailing address: P.O. Box 10272, Rock Hill, SC 29730
 Ph: (323) 930-7862; Mobile: (323) 559-0098
 Email: bishopmildred.hines@gmail.com
 District includes: Georgia, Palmetto, Pee Dee, South Carolina, South Korea
Mrs. Lovetta J. Holmes, Missionary Supervisor



5. Bishop W. Darin Moore
MID-ATLANTIC EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
 Office: 9701 Apollo Drive - Suite 245, Largo, MD 20774
 Ph: (301) 322-3866; Fax: (301) 322-3862
 Email: office@amezma.org; bishop@amezma.org
 District includes: Allegheny, East Tennessee-Virginia, Ohio, Philadelphia-Baltimore, Virginia, Barbados, Guyana-Suriname, St. Vincent
Mrs. Devieta Moore, Missionary Supervisor



6. Bishop Seth O. Lartey
CENTRAL SOUTHERN AFRICA EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
 2361 Olivet Church Rd, Winston-Salem, NC 27106
 Ph: (336) 529-8496
 District includes: East Angola, West Angola, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia
Mrs. Jacqueline Inez Williams-Lartey, Missionary Supervisor



7. Bishop Michael Angelo Frencher, Sr.
MIDWEST EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
 2935 Shady View Drive, High Point, NC 27265
 Cell: (336)-312-8245 Fax: (336)-886-4300
 Email: bishopmafrencher@gmail.com
 District includes: Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, Tennessee, Trinidad-Tobago
Mrs. Gelenia Aaron Frencher, Missionary Supervisor



8. Bishop George Crenshaw
ALABAMA-FLORIDA EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
 3605 Sandy Plains Road, Suite 240-238, Marietta GA 30066
 Ph: 706-633-4801 Office: 334-269-6365; Email: bishopgdcrenshaw@aol.com
 District includes: Alabama, North Alabama, South Alabama, Central Alabama, West Alabama; Cahaba, Florida, S. Florida, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, North Kivu, South Kivu
Mrs. Laurena Crenshaw, Missionary Supervisor



9. Bishop Hilliard Dogbe
WESTERN WEST AFRICA EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
 West Africa Address: A.M.E. Zion Church Episcopal Residence/Office; P.O. Box GP 22220, Accra, Ghana / Aggrey Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church, P.O. Box MP 522, Mamprobi-Accra, Ghana, West Africa
 Office: 233-30-703-0241 Cell: 233-24-782-2440
 Email: hdogbe@hotmail.com bishopwwa@gmail.com
 District includes: North Ghana, West Ghana, Mid-Ghana, Liberia, East Ghana, Cote D'Ivoire and Togo; *Mrs. Cynthia Dogbe, Missionary Supervisor*



10. Bishop U. U. Effiong
EASTERN WEST AFRICA EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
 Office: Anderson Memorial A.M.E Zion Church, Diamond Hill, Calabar Annex/Postal: 57 School Road, Satellite Town, Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria
 Ph: +234 803 6765 479 Email: effiong_uduak@yahoo.com
 District includes: Nigeria, Central Nigeria, Rivers Nigeria, Lagos-West Nigeria, Mainland Nigeria, Northern Nigeria, Cross River Nigeria, South-Eastern Nigeria, Southern and Akwa Nigeria, Port Harcourt
Mrs. Promise Effiong, Missionary Supervisor



11. Bishop Brian R. Thompson, Sr.
WESTERN EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
 Office: 5760 Yadkin Rd, Fayetteville, NC 28303
 Ph: (916) 270-6700
 Email: bishopthompson106@gmail.com
 District includes: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Oregon-Washington, and Southwest Rocky Mountains
Rev. Felica Thompson, Missionary Supervisor



12. Bishop Eric L. Leake
SOUTH WESTERN DELTA EPISCOPAL DISTRICT
 Episcopal Residence: 123 Sagefield Square, Canton, Mississippi 39046
 Residence: 1529 Tina Lane, Flossmoor, IL 60422
 Ph: (708) 724-3017 Email: bishopericleake@gmail.com
 District Includes: Arkansas, India, Oklahoma, Louisiana, South Mississippi, Texas, and West Tennessee-Mississippi, India
Mrs. Jean McMurray-Leake, Missionary Supervisor



Bishop Joseph Johnson (Retired)
 45 Awesome Ridge, Garner, NC 27529
 Ph: (704) 877-9646
 Email: djjj85@windstream.net



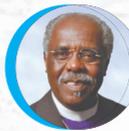
Bishop Nathaniel Jarrett (Retired)
 18031 South Pheasant Lake Drive, Tinley Park, IL 60477
 Ph: (708) 802-9873
 Email: rtrvjr@aol.com



Bishop Warren M. Brown (Retired)
 4010 Castile Square, Austell, GA 30106
 Ph: (678) 574-2725
 Email: brownamez@aol.com



Bishop Marshall H. Strickland (Retired)
 2000 Cedar Circle Drive, Baltimore, MD 21228
 Ph: (410) 744-7330
 Fax: (410) 788-5510



Bishop George W. Walker Sr. (Retired)
 3654 Poplar Road, Flossmoor, IL 60422
 Ph: (708) 799-5599 Fax: (708) 799-5584
 Email: gwalker047@aol.com



Bishop George E. Battle Jr. (Retired)
 18403 Dembridge Drive, Davidson, NC 28036
 Ph: (704)-895-2236 (H) (704)-332-7600
 Email: bishop84senior@yahoo.com



Bishop S. Chuka Ekemam Sr. (Retired)
 P.O. Box 1149, Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria
 Tel: +234-803-213-3767 or +234-803-301-8280
 Email: bishopamezng@yahoo.com or schukaekemamsr@gmail.com

GENERAL OFFICERS

Rev. Dr. J. Elvin Sadler, General Secretary-Auditor
P.O. Box 26770, Charlotte, NC 28221-6770

Ph: (704) 599-4630; Fax: (704) 688-2549; Email: jesadler@amezion.org

Rev. Al Hamilton, Chief Financial Officer, Department of Finance
P.O. Box 26770, Charlotte, NC 28221-6770

Ph: (704) 599-4630; Fax: (704) 919-5580; Email: alchamilton@amezion.org

Rev. Julius Walls, Chief Operating Officer / Business Manager
P.O. Box 26770, Charlotte, NC 28221-6770

Ph: (704) 599-4630; Fax: (704) 688-2541; Email: jwalls@amezion.org

**Mr. Darin Kent, Chief Communications Officer
Editor, The Star of Zion**

P.O. Box 26770, Charlotte, NC 28221-6770

Ph: (704) 599-4630, ext. 2577; Email: cco@amezion.org

Rev. Dr. D.B. Cannon,

Dept. of Global Missions Office & Missionary Seer Editor

P.O. Box 26770, Charlotte, NC 28221-6770 Ph: (704) 599-4630;

Email: dbcannon@amezion.org For articles/info: missionaryseergm@gmail.com

**Rev. Patrick Barrett, Secretary-Treasurer,
Christian Education Department**

P.O. Box 26770, Charlotte, NC 28221-6770

Ph: (704) 599-4630 Fax: (704) 688-2550; Email: pbarrett@amezion.org

**Dr. Eleazar Merriweather, Director
Dept. of Church Growth & Development**

3225 Sugar Creek Road, Charlotte, NC 28269

Ph: (704) 599-4630; Fax: (704) 688-2547; Email: emerriw721@amezion.org

Rev. Dr. George E. McKain, Director of Public Affairs & Social Concerns

P.O. Box 26770, Charlotte, NC 28221-6770

Ph: (704) 599-4630, ext. 316; Email: GEMcKain2@amezion.org

Dr. David A. Aiken, Sr. Executive Director, Zion's Benefit Services
P.O. Box 217114, Charlotte, NC 28221; Ph: (704) 714-1505; Cell: (917) 837-5173; Email: DAikenSr@amezion.org

FORMER GENERAL OFFICERS

Dr. Raymon Hunt
Dr. W. Robert Johnson, III
Dr. Kermit DeGraffenreidt
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Dr. Shirley Welch
Dr. Otis McMillian
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Mr. Herbert Watkins
Dr. William Mckenith

JUDICIAL COUNCIL

The Hon. Adele M. Riley, President

625 Ellsworth Drive, Trotwood, Ohio 45426

Email: mariley310@yahoo.com

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6608 Cartwright Drive, Columbia, SC 29223

Rev. Dr. Lisa T. McDow, Esq., Clerk

Post Office Box 2541, Wilmington, NC 28402-2541

Rev. Dr. Derrick R. Anderson, Chaplain

4650 Shookstown Drive, Kannapolis, NC 28081

Rev. Dr. Richard Austin, Esq.

1415 Earham Drive, Dayton, OH 45406

Dr. Marsha C. Grayson, Esq.

88 Roberts Street, Philadelphia, PA 15219

Dr. William Stokes

5821 West Tree Drive, Anchorage, AK 99507

Rev. Dr. Joseph A. Tolbert, Sr., Esq.

104 Black Avenue, Bessemer, Alabama 35020

Dr. Yvonne A. Tracey

502 Ferndale Drive, Salisbury, NC 28147

CONNECTIONAL LAY COUNCIL

Mr. Joseph King Davis, President

1018 Southpoint Crossing Durham, NC

Ph: (919) 236-3740; Email: jkdjr1911@frontier.com

Mrs. Leondras "Lele" Davis, 1st Vice President

419 Eberle Way, Matthews, NC 28105

Ph: (704) 321-7022; Cell: (704) 562-0402; Email: CLC.FVP@gmail.com

Mrs. Connie Bell Wright, 2nd Vice President

822 Polk Street, Charlotte, NC 28206

Cell: (704) 724-2759; Email: CLC2VP.ConnieBellwright@gmail.com

Mrs. Mireille Landrum, Recording Secretary

506 Lincoln Crest Cir., Austell, GA 30106

Ph: (678) 809-5253; Cell: (678) 420-8919; Email: clcsecretary11@gmail.com

Mr. Ned D. Highsmith, Financial Secretary

125 Kenneth Carter Rd, Clinton, NC 28328; Ph: (910) 592-4294; Cell: (910) 590-9284; Email: clcfinancialsecretary@aol.com

Mrs. Cynthia White, Treasurer

1257 W. 27th, Norfolk, VA 23508

Ph: (757) 235-2475; Email: clctreasurer11@aol.com

Mr. Jerry McCombs, Chaplain

P. O Box 1444Newton, NC 28658

Ph: (828) 310-6918; Email: clcchaplain21@charter.net

Mrs. Lula K. Howard, President Emeritus

4009 Landside Dr., Louisville, KY 40220

Cell: (502) 494-9527; Email: Lmkhoward330@gmail.com

WOMEN'S HOME & OVERSEAS
MISSIONARY SOCIETY

Mrs. Sandra B. Crowder, International President

100 East Ocean View, Suite 1110, Norfolk, VA 23503

PH: 757-761-6280 Email: sandracrowder@yahoo.com

Dr. Peggy Lindsey-Owens, First Vice President

503 McLean Street, Raeford, NC 28376 Ph: 910-875-5803;

Email: mspeggy@earthlink.net

Rev. Patricia "Patty" Surratt-Smith, Second Vice President

PO Box 1424, Shelby, NC 28151 Ph: 704-281-1544;

Email: ladypattysmith@gmail.com

Mrs. Rosetta J. Dunham, Executive Director

P.O. Box 26846, Charlotte, NC 28221-6846

Email: rodunham@amezion.org

Mrs. Effie B. Woodard, Recording Secretary

108 Effie Lane/PO Box 662, Broadway, NC 27505 Cell: 919-356-6608;

Email: effiebwoodard@gmail.com

Ms. Verdelle Cunningham, Treasurer

1 Dally Road, Unit 208, Hillsborough, NJ 08844

Ph: (917) 742-5565; Email: oliver1447@att.net

Ms. Karlease M. Smalls, Connectional Coordinator of YAMS

1436 McBeth Drive, Kannapolis, NC 28038

Ph: (H) 704-298-0487; (C) 917-371-3464 Email: karleasemalls@yahoo.com

Ms. Melva Polk Wright, Connectional Secretary, Youth Missionary Society

438 Parkview Court, Unit C, Salisbury, MD 21804

Ph: (443) 880-5728; Email: principalmelva1960@gmail.com

Mrs. April C. Davis, Connectional Superintendent, Buds of Promise

9233 Mountain Aire Circle, Charlotte, NC 28214; Home: 704-394-0577; Cell:

980-298-0298; Email: apriladavisforbuds@yahoo.com

Mrs. Jo-Ann Monroe, Connectional Secretary, Bureau of Supply

40 East Sidney Ave., #12B, Mt. Vernon, NY 10550

Ph: 914-224-7621; Email: jom4supply@gmail.com

Mrs. Joy Williamson Foster, Connectional Chairman, Life Members Council

229 Academy Lane, Middletown, DE 19709

Ph: 302-563-0222; Email: mailto:Joy2023LM@gmail.com

Ms. Camryn Ivey, Director of Communications

1610 Cox Road, Matthews, NC 28104

Ph: 704-907-0208; Email: camrynivey@gmail.com

INTERNATIONAL MINISTERS
& LAY ASSOCIATION

President, Rev. Dr. Anthony Witherspoon

4556 Behlmann Farms Blvd., Florissant, MO 63034

Ph: (314) 533-0316; Email: anwitherspoon1@gmail.com

First Vice President, Mrs. Lula K. Howard

4009 Landside Dr., Louisville, KY 40220-3080

Cell: (502) 494-9527; Email: lmkhoward330@gmail.com

Second Vice President, Rev. Dr. Myrtle Bowen

12006 Othman Court, Ft. Washington, MD 20744

Ph: (301) 237-7755; Email: PEBowen50@gmail.com

Executive Director, Rev. Dorothy Patterson

48 West 17th Street, Bayonne, NJ 07002

Ph: (551) 206-1499 Email: Kleinz1@aol.com

Secretary, Ms. Marie Denise Niles

718 Decatur Street, Brooklyn, NY 11233; Ph: (917) 373-5237

Email: mdn929@gmail.com

Assistant Secretary, Mrs. Carlous E. Tyrance

11508 Turnstone Ct., Charlotte, NC 28226

Ph: (704) 541-5237; Email: ctyrnc@bellsouth.net

Treasurer, Rev. David T. Miller

P.O. Box 6753, Harrisburg, PA 17112

Ph: (717) 712-4709; Email: revdmillersigma@icloud.com

Financial Secretary, Rev. Dr. Maurice Harden

6101 Clarks Fork Drive, Raleigh, NC 27616

Ph: (704) 202-8437; Email: pastormharden@gmail.com

Chaplain, Rev. J. Martin Boulter, Sr.

114 Pelham Lane, Fort Mill, SC 29715

Ph: (803) 448-7100; Email: jmboulter@compurium.net

DEPARTMENT OF
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Rev. Johngerlyn "Jonse" Young, President, President

Assembly of Christian Educators (ACE)

1663 Coalcar Ct. SE, Kentwood, MI 49508

Ph: (616) 581-5358; Email: Jyoungace@gmail.com

Bro. Dion Harris, Chairperson

Young Adults in Christian Ministries (YACM)

Email: Djharris2012@gmail.com

Mr. Ezekiel A. Perez, President

Varick International Christian Youth Council (VICYC)

Ph: (408) 757-9249 Email: ezekeiel1132@gmail.com

Mr. Andre Griffin, Parliamentarian (VICYC)

Phone Number: (336) 660-8745 Email: griffinatf@gmail.com

COLLEGES

Livingstone College, Rev. Dr. Anthony Davis, President

701 W. Monroe Street, Salisbury, NC 28144; Ph: (704) 216-6151

Fax: (704) 216-6217; Internet: www.livingstone.edu

Clinton College, Dr. Lester A. McCorn, President

1029 Crawford Road, Rock Hill, SC 29730

Ph: (803) 327-7402; Fax: (803) 327-3261

Hood Theological Seminary, Dr. Vergel Lattimore, President

1810 Lutheran Synod Drive, Salisbury, NC 28144

Ph: (704) 636-7611; Fax: (704) 636-7685

Lomax-Hannon Junior College, Rev. Wallace L. Noble, President

725 Conecuh Street, Greenville, AL 36037; Ph: (334) 382-2115

A.M.E. Zion University, Rev. Mulbah Gray, President

P.O. Box 1960, Monrovia, Liberia, West Africa; Ph: 011-231-261-071

Hood-Speaks Theological Seminary, Dr. Donald J. Ekpo, President

Ndon Ebom, Uruan.LGA, P.O. Box 2503, UYO, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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Post Office Box 1646, Lumberton, NC 28358

Ph: (910) 612-7948; Email: Fsbrownyes@gmail.com

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239 Woodville Rd, Hertford, NC 27944; Ph: (252) 312-8733

Email: edentondistrictamez@gmail.com

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6020 Kempton Court, Salisbury, Md 21801

ph: (704) 796-2979 Email: tojunamac41@yahoo.com

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414 Smokey Mountain Drive, Maryville, TN 37801

Ph: (865) 335-7527; Email: we41602@aol.com

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7 Spring Hollow Drive, Crystal Springs, MS 39059

Ph: (601) 573-4636; Email: brooks4L@yahoo.com

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38780 Orchid View Place, Apt. 303, Palmdale, California 93550-6526

Ph: (661) 227-4816 or (910) 262-8382; Email: alonzobraggs@gmail.com

Rev. Dr. Evalina Huggins, Chaplain

3921 23rd Place, Temple Hills, MD 20748; Ph: (301) 980-8793

Email: Evalina45@gmail.com

Rev. Dr. Erlinda Dobson, Parliamentarian

2920 NC Hwy 55 West, New Bern, NC 28562; Ph: (252) 670-1127

Email: pedobson@newberndistrict.com

Rev. Dr. Joel D. Miles, Senior Advisor to President

8400 S. Damen Avenue, Chicago, IL 60620; Ph: (773) 405-6375

Email: revjdmiles@yahoo.com

Rev. Hanna Broome, Chief Strategist

P.O. Box 26181, Fayetteville, NC 28314-2967; Ph: (864) 525-4679

Email: hrb8792@gmail.com

Rev. Derrill Blue, Chief Technology Officer

39 Warwick Ave, Rochester, NY 14611; Cell: (405) 821-1333

Fax: (585) 546-1652, Office: (585) 546-5007; Email: derrillblue@gmail.com

Rev. Rochelle McEntyre, Assistant Recording Secretary

702 Whitehead St., Key West, FL 33040. Email: rochellep16@aol.com

INTERNATIONAL MINISTERS' SPOUSES
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Rev. Patty Smith, President

PO Box 1424 Shelby, NC 28151;

Ph: (704) 281-1544; Email: ladypattysmith@gmail.com

Rev. Robin Stitt, First Vice President

3705 Rosedown Drive Matthews, NC 28105

Ph: (704) 287-3608 (C); Email: rahbyn10@gmail.com



Rev. Ronald Nathan
World Politics Editor
WorldPolitics@StarOfZion.org

Silent Suffering: The Untold Struggles of Christians in India

By Florence Krupanand
Edited by Joshua Ebenezer

Introduction: Whispers in the Wind:

In the quiet spaces between prayers, a lament rises—a poignant cry echoing through time. A story of the Christian community in India, grappling with relentless attacks that have left thousands displaced and hundreds grieving.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” - Matthew 5:10

Section 1: Hearts Bruised, Souls Tested

As daylight fades on what were once peaceful homes, a profound test of faith unfolds. Families torn apart, dreams shattered, and acts of worship transformed into battlegrounds of conviction.

“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” - Psalm 34:18

Section 2: Wandering Souls: Seeking Refuge in the Unknown

Amidst the wilderness of displacement, these souls embark on a pilgrimage of uncertainty. Each step carries the weight of history as they seek refuge and revival. Churches, once sanctuaries of peace, now stand resilient, testament to a faith that weathers storms.

In the midst of chaos, prayers rise—an anthem of hope echoing in hearts refusing to be silenced. Each prayer is a plea for understanding, compassion, and the restoration of a fractured harmony.

Despite persistent hatred, these souls cling to their faith. Unbroken and unwavering, their spirits rise above the storms of hate seeking to consume them.

“But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.” - Isaiah 40:31

Section 3: A Message

Before we conclude, let me share a heartfelt message from Florence, a voice from the heart of the storm:

“My Dear Zion Family, I trust this message reaches you in a moment of peace. I find it necessary to bring to your attention some distressing events unfolding within our ZION Branch Churches, particularly those nestled in villages and the heart of tribal areas.

In the month of August, a distressing incident unfolded in an interior tribal village, where a revered pastor faced a harrowing attack orchestrated by Hindu activists. Their fury resulted in the burning of the pastor’s humble abode and church, constructed with a thatched roof. The pastor himself endured a degrading ordeal—half of his head and mustache forcibly shaved, clothing stripped away, and his body smeared with cow dung. A symbolic march through the village, a rope around his neck, served as a stark warning to those embracing their faith.

Swift action was taken upon



receiving the desperate call from the pastor’s wife. Town pastors and law enforcement were dispatched, prompting the activists to hastily retreat. Our response extended beyond immediate moral and material support; we are actively engaged in the reconstruction of their dwelling. Our journey unfolded, leading us from the town to the tribal village nestled amidst mountains. A singular bus served as our mode of transport, stretching the duration to a taxing 7 hours due to frequent stops in every village. We found ourselves standing for over four hours until a kind soul offered a seat to us.

In preparation for our visit, we gathered essential supplies from our home—rice, lentils, oil, flour, potatoes, along with personal items like shirts and pyjamas. Additionally, we thoughtfully brought three sarees, traditional Indian attire, for the pastor’s wife.

Upon arrival, our focus shifted to supporting the pastor and his family. A night of prayer and encouragement ensued. Understanding the dire circumstances, we extended financial assistance to aid in the construction of their new dwelling.



Another lamentable incident unfolded during a family celebration within another village church. Hindu activists disrupted a prayer meeting, unleashing violence upon the congregation. Women were targeted, enduring physical assault, their traditional sarees torn, and some sustained injuries, necessitating hospitalization. Gratefully, the government has extended aid for their recovery.

A fresh challenge has arisen as unidentified individuals seek information about our churches. Precautionary measures have been instituted, with members cautioned against divulging details without consulting the pastor.



The gravity of the situation intensified on September 10th, with yet another church in an interior village falling victim to an attack. The assailants coerced the congregation into acknowledging their Hindu god, employing weapons, force and intimidation. Timely intervention, in collaboration with law enforcement, resulted in the apprehension of several culprits, including a leader of an all-India Hindu activists group.

We as leaders and missionaries advocating for church planting and conversions, our roles have rendered us susceptible targets. During our travels, a disconcerting pattern emerged—a persistent shadowing by Hindu individuals, equipped with saffron scarfs and brandishing hockey sticks and cricket bats. This development necessitates urgent prayers and support, particularly in acquiring a dedicated church vehicle to fortify our mobility and security.



I implore you to keep the entirety of the Indian Christian community, as well as our missionary endeavors, in your thoughts and prayers. Your solidarity and support serve as pillars of strength as we persist in our pursuit of expanding His Kingdom.”

Section 4: Unveiling the Reality: Statistics Speak Louder Than Words

Before we conclude, Florence’s plea for solidarity is underscored by sobering statistics that shed light on the severity of the situation faced by Christians in India. UCF, an organization diligently compiling data on atrocities against Christians, has expressed deep discontent with the government’s response to a crucial petition in the Supreme Court.

In April, the Centre informed the Supreme Court that claims of rising attacks were fabricated, maintaining an “exaggerated” and misleading narrative. A.C. Michael, the UCF’s national coordinator, emphasized that the government data downplays the severity of the situation. The UCF

has filed a petition with the apex court, decrying the increasing number of attacks and false police cases against minority community members, aligning with the enactment of anti-conversion laws in multiple states.

Michael detailed the distressing incidents, citing attacks on pastors, forced conversions, and disruptions in prayer meetings. The UCF report paints a grim picture, revealing that in the first half of 2023, the Christian community faced over 400 hate crimes, averaging more than two incidents per day, with several districts witnessing regular incidents. Countless of which go unreported.



“This year we have just completed half a year of 190 days and we have already witnessed 400 incidents of violence against Christians across 23 States in India,” stated the report. Comparatively, during the same period from January to June 2022, there were 274 incidents of violence against Christians.

The report emphasizes the alarming rise in violence, with June alone witnessing 88 incidents, averaging almost three incidents per day. Florence, echoing the report, highlights that Christians, despite being victims, face more FIRs than the accused, showcasing the failure of authorities to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of mob violence.

Section 5: Conclusion - A Call to Solidarity and Prayer

In the face of these alarming statistics and harrowing stories, we are compelled to extend a heartfelt call to action. Florence’s plea for soli-

darity resonates not only with the Christian community in India but with compassionate hearts worldwide.

A Call to Prayer: Finding Strength in Unity

The righteous cry out and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. The Lord is close to the brokenhearted, and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” (Psalm 34:17-18)

In the quiet corners of your hearts, let there be a space reserved for India. Pray for the safety and resilience of the Christian community facing adversity. Pray for understanding, compassion, for strength. Let our prayers echo across borders, bringing solace and strength to those who need it most.

A Call for Solidarity: Providing Resources

“Share with the Lord’s people who are in need.” - Romans 12:13

As we conclude, let us unite in providing essential resources to those affected—the displaced families, the pastors rebuilding their churches, and the victims of violence. Your support can make a tangible difference in alleviating their suffering, offering a glimmer of hope amidst the darkness.

Although we continue to face enormous challenges, threats, assaults, insults and persecution, It is by God’s Abiding Faithfulness and His Promises that keep us going. He stands by us, His Presence goes with us and Surely He gives us rest in the roughest waters.

In the Midst Of Persecution The Word of The Lord Grew Mightily and Prevailed.

OPINION

GOD AIN’T THROUGH WITH US YET: A Call for Seniors to Stay the Course

By Reverend Leona Nicholas Welch
Founder/Connectional Director, S.A.G.E.

The righteous will flourish like a Palm Tree...They will bear fruit in old age.

Psalm 92:12-14

MY DEAR FELLOW PEOPLE OF AGE AND WISDOM: My Dear Seniors Saints, as citizens in God’s Kingdom, workers in His Vineyard, and members of The Body of Christ, we are not off the hook for witnessing, presenting, influencing, and educating others into a life with Christ. To this cause, I offer the following points:

1. God did not hone our gifts this long and enhance our walk throughout the years for us to let it all just fade away because we find ourselves with a few aches and pains in our bones.
2. Our gifts must be offered continuously. We still have drive! We still have passion! There is still excitement enough among us to keep Jesus Christ lifted up, and there is still a fire to be set among us for the sake of Christ.
3. “Senior” denotes development, advancement, and growth. In this vein, if we are Seniors for anything on this earth, we must be Seniors for Christ. It is not over until God says it’s over. *Let everything that has breath praise the Lord (Psalm 150:6)!* As for Seniors, and our witness for

Him, even if that breath is sometimes slowed, it is still breath, and the God that breathed that breath into our lungs, expects us to use it for Him until He takes it back.

4. In the book of Revelation, we are told to OCCUPY until Christ returns. We must understand that this does not mean pulling up a rocking chair and sitting in it until He comes back. It’s war talk. It means to continue to do recognizance – go in and check out the place and hold it for Him (Numbers 14: 17-20), and to remain courageous in the doing (Joshua 1).
5. Seniors must remain in place, marking time when it is called for and moving out when the battle cries are given (to a hospital, a neighbor in need, a family member in trouble, a church task to be performed, a testimony to be given, a teachable moment to be well used). Seniors cannot break rank. This would weaken the chain of strength, and all ranks must persist in occupying – each in his/her own God-Given capacity.
6. We are vital, because we house a lot of facts, information, substance, and wisdom among us. We have a lot more educating to do: by word, by action, and even yet, for some, by formal instruction.

For the world to stop listening to its aged citizens would be like cutting down trees while the sap is still flowing. So, I assume to speak for all of us aged people in the following words: **HEY WORLD, BRING YOUR BUCKETS, COME SIT AT THE FEET OF OLD PEOPLE AND LET THE SAP OF WISDOM DRIP UNTIL YOUR BUCKETS ARE FULL.**



SENIORS ADVANCING GOD'S EXCELLENCE
Rev. Leona Nicholas Welch, Founder
Connectional Coordinator

The Seniors Ministry is called SAGE for its primary emphasis on honoring and supporting that group in our society and church life that strongly, characteristically, and essentially imparts wisdom and grace into our lives, by means of their longevity and experience, and in the case of the Christian world, their seasoned walk with God. The acronym, SAGE, reads out as SENIORS ADVANCING GOD'S EXCELLENCE. We understand that the first group among God's people that should represent excellence and promote cause, is the group called, Seniors. Through SAGE, the elders of our churches and communities, of our districts and our conferences step up to the plate for Jesus.

OVERALL GOAL

The Seniors Ministry is designed for participation from women and men. The aim of SAGE is to minister the needs of Seniors as well as to promote the cause of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom Building plans of Christ. SAGE will foster the care and concern of seniors of the church and surrounding communities.

MISSION STATEMENT

The AME Zion Church Seniors Ministry shall be a high-profile, vital, Christ-Centered group of Co-Ed senior-aged individuals who exists to promote the cause of Jesus Christ through His command GO YE THEREFORE ... as well to LOVE ANOTHER ... and to CARRY ONE'S BURDENS ... Recognized by the name, Seniors Advancing God's Excellence (SAGE) this ministry shall work diligently to advance the kingdom building cause of Christ, while supporting efforts of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, under the authority of the General Conference. S.A.G.E. functions to foster care and concern of senior members of the church and surrounding communities, via education in social, health, and spiritual concerns, offering seminars and activities to enhance the collective and individual Christian walk, while encouraging and utilizing the gifts of Seniors. Uplifting and advancing the EXCELLENT NAME OF JESUS CHRIST is the ultimate goal of this ministry.

S.A.G.E. was adopted into the General Conference in 2020.

SAGE OBJECTIVES

1. To uplift and advance the Excellent Name of Jesus Christ.
2. To foster the care, concerns and gifts for senior members of our church and civic communities; via Social, Health, and Spiritual education and participation.
3. To further offer seminars and activities to enhance to collective and individual Christian walk..

Eliza Yvonne Baskerville

October 22, 1952 - December 2, 2023



Eliza Yvonne Baskerville (Durham), known by Yvonne, was born on October 22, 1952, in Riverhead, Long Island, NY, to Rev. Dr. John E. and Mrs. Jessie Durham. She lived a life of faith, family, and service. Her commanding presence lit up any room she walked into.

As a child, Yvonne was a disciplined student, immersing herself in the subjects of history and geography, earning induction into The National Honor Society. She learned to play the piano at an early age which fed her love for music. With an abundance of family living nearby,

Yvonne could often be found playing softball in the yard of her childhood home or cooking using fresh vegetables from her parent's garden. Living close to the water, she loved spending time at the beach and listening to the sound of the waves.

After graduating high school, Yvonne went on to attend Rider University, in Lawrenceville, NJ, where she earned her bachelor's degree in Sociology in 1974. Afterwards, she pursued her Master of Social Work, (MSW) at Howard University (1976), as well as a Master in Public Administration, (MPA) from Southeastern University (2004). As an alumnus, she was a recipient of the Gordan E. Prichard Award for volunteerism and service with Rider University for providing leadership in the Alumnae of Color Affinity Group, which established an endowment fund for minority students. She retired from a fulfilling and rewarding 36-year career with the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services in 2014, having worked as a licensed clinical social worker, budget analyst, and program manager impacting aging and elderly care.

While attending graduate school at Howard University, Yvonne would meet the love of her life Lewis Baskerville, of South Hill, Virginia when she was introduced to him by her sister. Lewis is an honorably discharged US Army Vietnam Veteran, awarded the Purple Heart (twice), and Bronze Star for bravery in combat. At the time of their meeting, Lewis was working in the office of Veterans Affairs at Federal City College (now known as the University of The District of Columbia). After a year-long courtship, Yvonne and Lewis would be married in 1976, establishing their lives in Washington, DC. They would go on to have two children - Janel and Justen - to complete their family.

Yvonne was a relentless advocate for her children's development and education, while also instilling a strong sense of community in their lives and exposing them to unique experiences. The family would join the Washington, DC chapter of Tots & Teens, Inc., an African-American family-based organization, where Yvonne would hold a variety of leadership positions and facilitate strong social bonds with other like-minded families. Yvonne would also hold positions as the Parent-Teacher Association President while her children attended Alice Deal Junior High School, and joined a variety of parent councils of the DC Public Schools. The family would also travel regularly, spending time with relatives and close friends to reinforce the children's exposure to new environments and diverse perspectives.

Yvonne was a music enthusiast, which coupled with her vocal talents, led her to become a vocalist at a young age. She shared her gifts across many gospel choirs including Durham AME Zion (Bayshore, NY), Trinity AME Zion (Washington, DC), and Union Wesley AME Zion (Washington, DC). Additionally, Yvonne enjoyed lending her voice to community choirs. She was a member of the Brentwood High School Concert Choir

which toured Europe in 1970 and was a founding member of the Heritage Signature Chorale (HSC), serving as the chorale manager in 2000. With HSC, she would perform in dozens of venues in Washington, DC, including The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, as well as Carnegie Hall in New York City. Yvonne remained an actively engaged and dedicated member of HSC through early 2023.

Yvonne was undeniably dedicated to her faith and church community. She served in leadership roles as a youth, including church sexton, organist, choir member, Sunday School secretary, and founding member of her father's church, Durham AME Zion in Bayshore, Long Island, New York. As an adult, her commitment to the church continued as a lifetime member of the International AME Zion Church. Yvonne was an officer and active member of the Mid-Atlantic Lay Council. She was elected President of the local Lay Council and was a member of the Women's Home and Overseas Missionary Society (WHOMS); Voices of Inspiration Choir; and several scholarship ministries. At the conference level, she served as Chair of the Election and Budget Committee; member of the Connectional Lay Council (CLC) Executive Board; member of Mid-Atlantic Episcopal District (MAED) Resolutions Committee; and member of the Voter Registration Committee. Yvonne's service extended even further as a budget and finance committee member and President of the Melda Martin Student Financial Aid Committee at Trinity AME Zion Church.

She was the first elected Vice President for the International Connectional Lay Council (CLC) of the AME Zion Church, serving on both the Executive Board and the George Leake Scholarship Committee of the Young Adult Initiative. As Vice President, she also served as convention chair; delegate in 2013 and 2017; and organized two evangelistic retreats. Furthermore, Yvonne was the first chair of the CLC Young Adult Initiative and served on the board for four years. Yvonne was elected lay delegate to the AME Zion Church General Conference (2008, 2012, 2016, 2020, and 2024).

Her dedication to community service led her to lend her passion, time, and energy as Director of Buds of Promise; President of Tots and Teens, Inc.; Co-Chair of the Aging in Place Committee for the Crestwood neighborhood; member of the DC Mayor's Committee on Aging; and a volunteer with the AARP Long-Term Care Ombudsman Office where she advocated for the elderly in nursing homes.

Yvonne joined the Federal City Alumnae Chapter (FCAC) of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., in 1979. Her involvement as a Diamond Life Member of the chapter, allowed her to continue to support her community through service and volunteerism in countless capacities. She proudly served as chapter treasurer; member of the finance and Founder's Day committees; book club member; and Delta D.E.A.R.S.

Outside of her community involvement, Yvonne enjoyed playing tennis, golf, reading, puzzling, arts and entertainment, culinary experiences, traveling, playing the organ and piano, and spending time with her family and friends.

Yvonne was a loyal and devoted wife, dedicated mother, and engaged grandmother. She could regularly be found traveling with her husband Lewis, most recently visiting Alaska and Mexico. She supported and took active interest in her children's graduate school educations, hobbies, business endeavors, and career development. She frequently attended her grandson's soccer and basketball games and took her granddaughter to gymnastics class and Disney on Ice performances.

She transitioned to be with her Lord and Savior peacefully, with her family by her side, at her home in Washington, DC on Saturday, December 2, 2023, at the age of 71. Yvonne is survived by her husband of 47 years, Lewis Baskerville; daughter, Janel Baskerville Turner (Devonn Turner); son, Justen Baskerville; grandchildren, Aaron and Aria Turner; sister, Shirley D. Richardson; former brother-in-law, Robert E. Richardson; and a host of extended family and friends. Her caring, supportive, and dedicated spirit will truly be missed by all she knew and loved.

OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Notice of Vacancy

The Board of Connectional Trustees of The A.M.E. Zion Church announces the retirement of the Executive Director of Zion Benefits Services.

The Search Committee for Zion Benefits Services will begin the process of interviewing candidates for the position of Executive Director.

The ideal candidate will possess the following qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university
- Ten-plus years of experience in the financial services industry
- Series 6 and 7 licenses
- Five-plus years senior management experience
- Experience handling revenue in excess of 2.5 million dollars



- Able to pass a background check.
- Satisfactory Credit Score
- Knowledge of A.M.E. Zion Church Discipline, governance, and Polity a plus.
- Three references from previous colleagues, one of which should be a direct supervisor. If a member of The A.M.E. Zion Church, recommendations from their Pastor, Presiding Elder, and Presiding Bishop.

The Executive Director will serve on the General Officers Team as a collaborative partner and report to the Chair of the Board of Connectional Trustees.

All inquiries must be made to the Office of the General Secretary-Auditor by filling out the application packet at <https://www.ameziongsa.com/general-officers> by (January 15, 2024).

For further information, contact Dr. Kay Gabriel in the Office of the General Secretary-Auditor at kaygabriel@amezion.org or (704) 688-2574.

THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH GENERAL OFFICER JOB DESCRIPTION

Chief Communications Officer

Position Title:
Chief Communications Officer

Classification:
Exempt

Salary Range:
Determined by Connectional Budget Department's predefined range.

Reports to:
Chairman of and Administrative Board of Communications

General Description:
Summary/Objective
Responsible for the management of the A.M.E. Zion Church brand and public relations aspect within the A.M.E. Zion Church. The Chief Communications Officer will build and sustain the Church's reputation for quality worship, reliable ministry, and church integrity. The Chief Communications Officer will write and deliver press releases and handle all communication sent to the public. In addition, the Chief Communications Officer will.

Essential Functions:

- Determines communications strategy and execute programs to deliver communications objectives including:
- Develop communication strategies for delivery of corporate culture and business strategy.
- Manage media relations and maximize media opportunities.
- Develop strong relationships with media reps.
- Create and launch press releases and marketing campaigns.
- Contact members of the media to set up interviews with Bishops.
- Get Church featured on radio, TV, or the Internet.
- Ensure that all opportunities for the Bishops are fully vetted.
- Supervise Managing Editor in their efforts to oversee the Church publications including:
- Star of Zion
- Church School Literature (content supervised by Christian Education Department)
- Missionary Seer (content supervised by Global Missions)
- A.M.E. Zion Quarterly review
- Manage Church brand across publications and social media presence including:

- Create rich and creative content that is optimized for search engines
- Develop and implement the Church's social media strategy
- Manage the national conventions from conception by the department through to reflective review of the event.
- Provide planning assistance to the Annual Conferences in planning their local meetings advising them on site selection, pricing and payment terms, program development etc.???

Qualifications and Competencies: (*Educational, Work Experience*)

SPIRITUAL MATURITY AND VITALITY

Must meet all the biblical qualifications for church leadership. They will need seasoned faith and maturity as demonstrated by many years of consistent and faithful Christian living and service.

PERSONAL MATURITY AND MINISTRY-CONGRUENT CHARACTER

Must be emotionally healthy, resilient, constructive, and wise, demonstrating the personal qualities that mark strong leadership and durability. They will require strong interpersonal skills and should be recognized as a servant-leader, be outgoing and friendly.

FAMILY ALIGNMENT

It is essential that the General Officer be able to balance wisely the responsibilities of home and work.

MINISTRY CALLING AND GIFTING

Should be able to verbalize a sense of God-given calling to vocation. They must have gifts that are strategic to the fulfillment of the position description: leadership, administration, and teaching.

Communications experience with multiple stakeholder groups. Early experience may include journalism, work in a public relations agency or an MBA-type background in strategy or business development. In addition, the CCO will need comprehensive knowledge of current literature and best practices in public relations, marketing, communications, community relations and public affairs.

All serious inquiries on applying must be sent to Dr. Kenneth Lewis @ Revkilewis@gmail.com by February 29, 2024, for consideration.



FREEDOM Sings

THE AME ZION INTERNATIONAL MUSIC MINISTRY IS

**CALLING for ALL SINGERS
and LITURGICAL DANCERS**

to join Freedom Sings, the themed Musical presentations for the Board of Bishops &

the Ministers and Lay Association Mtg.

HELD AT THE **Kenneth Monroe Transformation Center**

ON **February 20-23, 2024**

Rock Hill, South Carolina

Dr. Lisa Moore

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRY OF THE AME ZION CHURCH

PLEASE
COMPLETE THE
FORM IN ORDER
TO RECEIVE THE
MUSIC AND
AVAILABLE
REHEARSAL DATES
AND LOCATIONS.
LET MOUNT ZION
REJOICE!



PSALM 48:11-14



THE A.M.E. ZION INTERNATIONAL MUSIC MINISTRY



BOARD OF BISHOPS

& International Ministers and Lay Association

Rock Hill, South Carolina

February 21-23, 2024

SCHEDULE OF MASS CHOIR REHEARSALS

Choir Members and Liturgical Dancers from all Episcopal Districts are invited to participate. Virtual rehearsals are available for participants who are unable to travel to rehearsal sites. Use the JotForm below to Sign-Up.

Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church

401 N. McDowell St. Charlotte, NC

Rev. Dr. Dewayne Walker, Pastor

Sid Oliver, Conductor

- 01/08/24 - 7pm
- 01/22/24 - 7pm TC
- 01/29/24 - 7pm
- 02/05/24 - 7pm

New Home A.M.E. Zion Church

3290 Charlotte Hwy York, SC

Rev. Henry Gregory, III, Pastor

Bro. Carlton Small, Conductor

- 01/20/24 - 2pm
- 01/22/24 - 7pm TC
- 02/10/24 - 11am

Rock Grove A.M.E. Zion Church

1460 Margaret St. Rock Hill, SC

Rev. Michael A. Frencher, Jr., Pastor

Rev. Michael A. Frencher, Conductor

- 01/22/24 - 7pm TC
- 02/05/24 - 7pm

Shaw Temple A.M.E. Zion Church

775 Hurt Rd Smyrna, GA

Rev. Dr. Eldren Morrison, Pastor

Jon Rankins, Conductor

- 01/20/24 - 12pm
- 02/10/24 - 12pm

Mass Choir Rehearsal with Dr. Lisa Moore

The Kenneth Monroe Transformation Center - Rock Hill, SC

January 22, 2024 6:30pm and February 19, 2024 6:30pm

Virtual Rehearsals

Please use the form below to request virtual links and dates.

<https://form.jotform.com/233544685728064>