

# THE STAR OF ZION

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# WOMEN'S




# HISTORY



— MONTH —





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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**Zion Spotlight Editor**

Mrs. Debra Chappelle-Polk  
[ZionSpotlight@StarOfZion.org](mailto:ZionSpotlight@StarOfZion.org)

**World Politics Editor**

Rev. Ronald Nathan  
[WorldPolitics@StarOfZion.org](mailto:WorldPolitics@StarOfZion.org)

**Health and Wellness Editor**

Mr. Daman De Leon  
[Health\\_Wellness@StarOfZion.org](mailto:Health_Wellness@StarOfZion.org)

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[SocialJustice@StarOfZion.org](mailto:SocialJustice@StarOfZion.org)

**Entertainment & The Arts Editor**

Rev. Dierdre' R. Parker  
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**Financial Freedom Editor**

Dr. Dana Stillely  
[FinancialFreedom@StarOfZion.org](mailto:FinancialFreedom@StarOfZion.org)

**Lifestyle Editor**

Ms. Angel Eason  
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**Sports Editor**

Ms. Alexis Hutchinson  
[Sports@StarofZion.org](mailto:Sports@StarofZion.org)

**Star of Zion Office**

704-688-2577  
[Office@StarofZion.org](mailto:Office@StarofZion.org)

**Subscriptions Department**

704-688-2561  
[Subscribe@StarOfZion.org](mailto:Subscribe@StarOfZion.org)

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# THE A.M.E. ZION CHURCH PLEDGES \$65K TO REVITALIZE ITS COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

By Debra Chappelle-Polk, Zion Spotlight Editor  
Photos by James Feldman

February 2024

Rock Hill SC - The Board of Bishops and International Ministers & Lay Association met for their annual meeting from February 20-23, 2024, in Rock Hill, SC, at the Kenneth Monroe Transformation Center. During its opening legislative session on Wednesday, the Board of Bishops elected Bishop George Dwayne Crenshaw (Presiding Prelate, Alabama-Florida Episcopal District) to serve as President.

Before the office of the presidency's medallion was bestowed upon the new president, Bishop Darryl B. Starnes, Sr. (Presiding Prelate, Piedmont Episcopal District) thanked outgoing President Bishop Michael Angelo Frencher, Sr. (Presiding Prelate, Midwest Episcopal District) for his outstanding leadership. After much applause and a standing ovation, members from the Alabama-Florida Episcopal District congratulated Bishop Crenshaw on his new appointment. They thanked him and expressed their gratitude for his many years of leadership. They also thanked Mrs. Laurena Crenshaw "for being the woman beside the man" and gave her a beautiful bouquet.

Newly elected President Crenshaw thanked the Board for their confidence and everyone for their love and support. He said the night before, he had prepared an excellent 40-minute speech. "Last night, I asked my wife to look it over..." She did, gave it back to him this morning, and told him if he read it slowly, "it would take about 7 minutes." Everyone laughed when Bishop Crenshaw smiled and said, "So here's my best 7 minutes." He recalled that in 1979, the singing group Shalamar recorded a hit song, "The Second Time Around." The song's message was that the second time around was better than the first time. Paraphrasing the theme, he announced that Project 100 would be a top priority during his tenure as president. The organization he birthed into existence was instrumental in defeating Donald Trump in 2020 and would be needed a second time to combat Trump's Presidential campaign during this upcoming election season.



He continued to outline his two initiatives in his speech, where he challenged each Episcopal District to register a minimum of one thousand first-time voters. "Our goal is to register a minimum of 10,000 first-time voters in the 2024 presidential election." As a kickoff to this voter registration drive, he asked the world to tune into an upcoming Star of Zion broadcast with Bishop William Barber entitled "Voices from the

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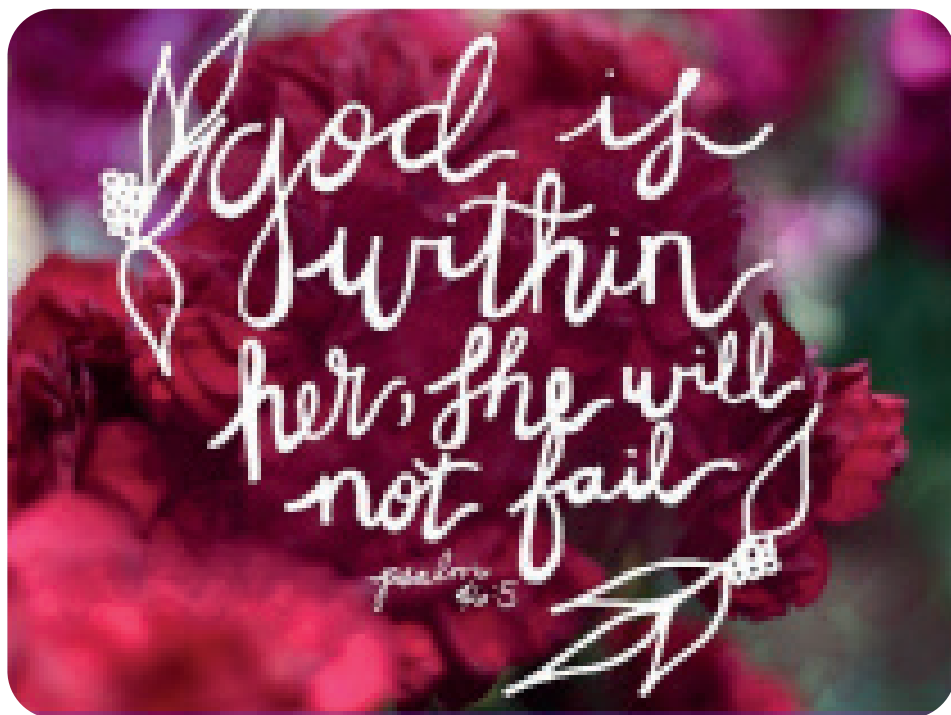
Watch The 2024 Board of Bishops & IMLA Annual Meeting on AMEZTV





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

# MARCH IS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



By Debra Chappelle-Polk  
Zion Spotlight Editor

## March 2024

**New York, NY...** It has often been stated that the African American story should not be confined to 28 days (or 29 days in a leap year) in February, the designated Black History Month. The same is true -- and perhaps even more so --- of March being officially designated as Women's History Month. Women deserve to be celebrated, honored, exalted 24/7, 365 days of the year and a special tribute is due and owing particularly to the Women of Zion.

In July 2022, the Star of Zion began a series entitled "**Clergywomen in Zion,**" in which female clergy were asked to write about their ministries and to share their thoughts and experiences as female clergy. One of the first submissions (October 2022) entitled "*And Yet She Persisted,*" was written by the Reverend Audrey Akins Williamson, Th, M.; The Rev. Nina M. Neely Minister for Christian Education, Mother a.m.e. Zion Church. In her article, Rev. Williamson talked about her visit to the Smithsonian Museum of African American History. "As I made my way through the many floors of the cultural section, I was, of course, interested in the most compelling aspect of how each religious body would be highlighted. I found it interesting and refreshing that as I approached the AME Zion offering, it was the uplifting of women's ordination that was emphasized."

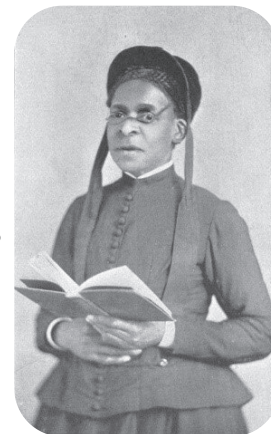
Jarena Lee (February 11, 1783 – February 3, 1864), the first woman preacher in the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME), was once denied the right to preach by Bishop Richard Allen. After hearing her stand before people in a prayer meeting, Bishop Allen relented and accepted that she was indeed called by God in 1817; however, it was nearly 200 years later that she was "ordained" posthumously in 2016.

The museum gave space to the Reverend Mary J. Small, who, in 1898, was the first woman to receive Elders' orders in Methodism.

The Reverend Mary Julia Small was born on October 20, 1850, in Murphy's Boro,



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



Julia Foote was born on May 21, 1823, in Schenectady, New York, and moved to Boston in 1839 following her marriage to George Foote. In her autobiography, *A Brand Plucked from the Fire: An Autobiographical Sketch*, Julia Foote placed great emphasis on her commitment to religion. She shed light on the discrimination that African American people face in the United States and the prejudices against women that exist. She used her religious voice and impact to spread far-reaching messages about these major societal issues. She felt that if women read, heard, and grasped the power of the gospel, they would be free from prejudices and discrimination, and she actively sought for women to be able to preach in churches. Julia preached across the United States and Canada for over 50 years. She brought along other women and spoke about the issues that African Americans face in society. She discussed their spirituality and argued that people should strive to achieve Holiness. She also stressed slavery's impact on African American families, the financial hardships that African Americans faced, and the evils of lynching. Church leaders Bishop Alexander Walters, Cicero R. Harris, and William Davenport wrote about Julia's great influence on the Holiness movement. She was a dearly beloved evangelist, mentor, and friend. She was the first woman ordained as a deacon in the A.M.E. Zion Church in 1894 and the second to be ordained as an elder in 1899. Julia Foote was living with Bishop Walters's family when she died in November 1901. She was buried at Cypress Hill Cemetery (New York). Her grave, previously unmarked, was identified, and a headstone was placed by the Mother Church of our denomination in 2016. Jerena Lee, Mary Julia Small, and Julia Foote were early pioneers in Zion Methodism. The story of Zion marks the many accomplishments and history-making appointments and elections within the A.M.E. Zion Church. Most notably, the Reverend Florence Spearing Randolph was appointed to pastor several churches in the denomination, including Wallace Chapel Church in Summit, New Jersey, where she served for over 20 years. And most historic is the election and consecration of Mildred Bonnie Hines, the 98<sup>th</sup> Bishop in line of succession in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Class of 2008.

From Mary to Sojourner to Harriet to Michelle, Kamala, and Ketanji, women have played an integral part in virtually every aspect of society, and nowhere is this more evident than in the Black Church. Zion is blessed to have been surrounded by strong, capable, and beautiful women – *past, present, and future*. In her article, Rev. Williamson summed it up nicely and precisely: "These bold women, called by God created and paved a road less traveled for Women in Zion, and it is this backdrop and rich, courageous history that Clergy Women in Zion stand today."

*A special thanks is extended to all contributors to the Clergywomen in Zion series: Rev. Denise Davenport, Pastor Caldwell A.M.E. Zion Church, Bronx, NY (Sept. 2022); Rev. Nicolle Jean-Simon Harris, Pastor Duryee Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church in Schenectady, NY. (Dec. 2022); Rev. Robin Woods-Barrant, Pastor John Wesley A.M.E. Zion Church, North Attleboro, MA (Sept. 2023).*



# Cherishing the Bond of Sisterhood

By Rev. Dr. Melanie Miller

*But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go, I will go, and where you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me." When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her. Ruth 1:16-18*

The book of Ruth opens with the tragedy of a woman, Naomi, that masks the bonds of sisterhood that had developed between her and her daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah. The Scripture gives strong indications that they shared something much more profound than a mother-daughter bond that developed and was nurtured over ten years before the deaths of Naomi's sons. Along with the death of Naomi's husband and two sons, I imagine many shared experiences, conditions, and concerns became the hallmark of their relationship. During those ten years, these three women interacted in ways in which they provided support and encouragement, rebuke and correction, mentorship, counseling, and a foundation and shoulder to stand on, which extended beyond their marital connection and ignored the lack of a blood tie. Unspoken words, covert actions, and compassion for another person sealed their fate without them giving it a name. But for us, it is an opportunity to witness three women living in the natural formation of the bond of sisterhood.

I was blessed always to have some form of sisterhood in my life. I was born into the Rogers sisterhood of Barbara, Janice, and Tonya, extended to my cousin sisterhood of Virginia, Joann, Teresa, Lynn, and Fran. I was raised through high school in the sisterhood of skipping to school arm-in-arm with Vanessa, heart entwined forever with Leslie and Delores, and cherished memories with Cheryl, Eleanor, and Dorothy. While attending Rutgers University, I understood what it meant to be a part of a sisterhood with my roommates, Beverly, Yvette, Virginia, and Marie, and Malik Melodies Sisterhood, Inc. However, every day, new sisterhoods manifest around me as my line sisters and Sorors of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., the women of The AME Zion Church, my clergy sisters across denominations, neighbors, former students, and coworkers. These connections often began as friendships but morphed into something more powerful, the bond of sisterhood with the same characteristics found in the relationship between Naomi and her daughters-in-law. We as women must cherish this bond as it is intrinsic to our becoming, belonging, and succeeding in the purpose God has created for us.

## Becoming through Shared Experiences, Conditions, and Concerns

The concept of becoming carries definitions that are the basic structure of the life's journey of many of my sisters. We all go through the process of becoming something or passing into different states of existence. Michelle Obama tackles the concept of becoming in her memoir *Becoming*. She portrays it as the ability to adapt to the many changes she has gone through in her life. The key that she expounds upon to becoming is to avoid getting stuck in any stage by holding fast to the identity found at that stage or the beliefs, culture, tradition, or ideologies germane to that season of life. She states,

Becoming isn't about arriving somewhere or achieving a certain aim. I see it instead as forward motion, a means of evolving, a way to reach continuously toward a better self. The journey doesn't end.

Becoming is an ongoing process of evolving and self-creation with the understanding that more change is always required.

Naomi started as a wife and mother of two sons, who left their hometown of Judah when it was experiencing a famine. Sometimes, sisters will take drastic measures in the best interest of their family and others, becoming something else for the situation. They settled in Moab, which was unaffected by the famine. Here, Naomi experiences a significant blow to the state of being a wife and mother in a foreign land; she becomes a widow at the death of her husband and, soon after, a mother-in-law to two Moabite women. For ten years, she becomes connected to these two women, though it is initiated by their marriage

to her sons.

Now, however, three women have begun to be something they once were not before the marital status of Naomi's sons changed. They shared the experience of being wives to Jewish men and living in the land of Moab. At the ten-year mark, they all experience another major shift in their status at the death of both of Naomi's sons. They all have become widows living in the land of Moab. They all share the same conditions and concerns as women without a covering, women who in that society had no property or wealth, and women whose value and worth were found in the men they married or gave birth to, who were now nonexistent. The Scripture does not describe all their experiences and how they turned into this sisterhood, how Naomi qualified or was accepted into this bond with Ruth and Orpah, or how she acquired the status of a beloved sister. We do know from the words in this Scripture that Naomi points out a trait most common in sisterhood relationships: kindness. She commends Ruth and Orpah for their kindness, generosity, helpfulness, and caring to her and her sons. Naomi reciprocated their kindness, and the relationship established through marriage was transformed into and turned out to be a sisterhood reflected in the following actions. Many women will agree that sisterhood is a relationship of action more so than the words that we express.

In Ruth 1:8-9, Naomi implores Ruth and Orpah to return to their mother's home and pray for them. Her prayer denotes how she has come to care for them, perhaps because of their kindness or because she desires that they not have the same life she has come to know as a widow and grieving mother. Her words portend a desire that their next evolution would be one where they would be able to begin their lives anew with new husbands that she would not be able to birth for them or ones they would wait for.

Though this relationship seems like a mother-daughter relationship formed, I, and many other women, can see the sisterhood that developed. Many women and I have forged bonds of sisterhood with our birth mothers, those who adopt us as and assume the role of mothers or serve as our big sisters or mentors. In the text, Naomi does not refer to Ruth or Orpah as a daughter. She directs them to go home to their mothers, making it clear that she is not. She further removes herself from the role of mother to Ruth and Orpah by identifying her sons as their dead husbands, further delineating no mother-daughter ties. However, her words reflect deep care for them and a desire for them to have good lives in the home of another husband. In turn, they desired to go with her and not be separated. Their bond of sisterhood appears to have been forged by their shared experience of being women loving and connected to the same men, shared conditions of women, whose worth and livelihood were found in the men they were married to or shared a bloodline, and in this, the bond of sisterhood was formed and cherished.

The bonds of sisterhood that I share with women worldwide brought us together because of our shared experiences, conditions, and concerns. My college roommates and I were shaping our futures while learning how to make good life decisions, cultivate healthy relationships, and grow up to be strong women and leaders in our homes, jobs, and communities. Now, most of my sisterhoods revolve around the church, not only The AME Zion Church but the universal church of God and conducting ministry. Our experiences, conditions, and concerns vary, but they have many common denominators, beginning with being women in a male-dominated and culture-oriented calling. I cherish these bonds of sisterhood because these women understand me, and many intentionally provide the care, support, rebuke, mentorship, and counseling I need, whether I know it or not, seek it or not, to become who God has purposed me to be. They help fuel the courage to defy the bonds of tradition, norms, policies, and practices that threaten to bind me to and have me stuck in one status of life, but to transform, evolve, and receive new identities as I continue to become. I used my time, talent, and resources to help my sisters become. I was guiding my sisters like Niatika from cheerleader to executive for the government and now entrepreneur, encouraging and supporting sisters like Terry as she navigates education, ministry, industry, and relationships, pulling and pushing sisters like Netetia into networks needed to complete her job, and providing a platform for clergywomen to speak to the world. I cherish the bond of sisterhood as it helps us to help one another be-



come what God has purposed us to be.

**Belonging through the Bond of Mutual Feelings of Kinship and Closeness**

The *Cambridge Dictionary* defines belonging as “a feeling of being happy or comfortable as part of a particular group and having a good relationship with the other members of the group because they welcome you and accept you.” The preceding passages reflect that Naomi belonged in this sisterhood that developed between her, Ruth, and Orpah. Though she implored them to leave her and prayed for their security, her kisses and weeping communicate the grief of losing these women with whom she shared this bond. Her actions and their strong request to remain with her and return with her to Judah reflected the mutual feelings of kinship and closeness indicative of the bond of sisterhood. They belonged to that sisterhood of a vital connection. Even though Orpah conceded to Naomi’s request, it does not reflect that she desired to extract herself as they all wept aloud at the impending separation because I am sure Naomi’s words held meaning and wisdom to them. Naomi’s words provided the guidance they needed, the rebuke they needed, the caring they required, with their future in mind, and to keep them from being stuck and identified as widows for the rest of their lives. It would give them the opportunity as young women to create new states of belonging that transcend the bitterness of being a widow without the experience of having a life partner, bearing children, and establishing other bonds they share.

Belonging to my sisterhoods can be a challenge when culture swallows our efforts whole. Have you ever heard the phrase, “Culture eats strategy for dinner?” A culture filled with its traditions, policies, practices, and beliefs, including an understanding of the word of God, can pit sister against sister. It also creates an environment of competitiveness to be the only girl in the room, at the table, and in the know, which overshadows the existence of the sisterhood bonds that continue to thrive despite it. Though very powerful, these conditions meet their match when sisters find bonds that seal their belonging. Being accepted for who you are, how you are, and all other good or bad characteristics you possess and feeling welcome in an unwelcoming society brings immeasurable comfort and happiness that extends into the joy God intends for us to have. The beauty of it is that the more we intentionally make our sisters feel welcome and accepted, the more we heighten their feelings of value to the sisterhood and the organization, the family, the community, and the church. The more we belong, the more culture has to shift to make room for us as individuals and sisters. Then, our bonds of sisterhood will be cherished by us and by all who are benefactors of the change that has occurred for the glory of God and the good of His people.

**Succeeding through the Cherished Bond of Sisterhood**

Naomi had a plan for Ruth and Orpah and was determined to succeed. Her bitterness fueled her plan because of the loss of her husband and two sons. She had become a grieving widow who now belonged to a group of grieving widows. In her plan, she desired that the other widows, Ruth and Orpah, not remain in that state. Her goal was for them to have a better future. A future awaits them in their mother’s home and the marriage to another man. She partially succeeded in her efforts, and Orpah finally conceded to her efforts with a kiss goodbye. However, when it came to Ruth, it appears the bond formed between them was too strong for them to let go of, so she clung to Naomi. Naomi continued to work on her plan, even interjecting an additional benefit to returning to her people like Orpah, that she would return to her gods. Until now, Naomi had only mentioned God when it came to her bitterness as the Lord turned His hand away from her. She felt that God had neglected her in the deaths of her husband and sons.

However, that became the lynchpin of Ruth’s plan, which obliterated Naomi’s and sealed their bond of shared sisterhood. She would worship Naomi’s God, the one Naomi felt neglected her, witnessed Naomi and her sons worshipping, the one she prayed to for them, asked to bless them, and expressed appreciation for their kindness. Her new faith and decision to worship Naomi’s God reflected where the root of her cherishing this sisterhood derived. Ruth’s reply not only asked her to stop urging her to leave or turn her back on her, but it also communicated the bond’s depth. She was going wherever Naomi went; wherever she lived, she was living there, too. Whatever people she belonged to, she would belong to. And, wherever she died, she would die and be buried right alongside her. Those things symbolized the bond of sisterhood, but her conversion from whatever gods she worshipped back home to faith in Naomi’s God, the Lord Almighty, reflected success in God’s plan. Naomi realized that Ruth was determined, and I am sure Ruth’s statement of conversion was more than enough to convince her, so she stopped urging her to go. As a result, if you read the book of Ruth in its entirety, you find that because of the bond of sisterhood Ruth and Naomi shared and their collective faith in God, even through the grief, they succeeded in Naomi’s plan of Ruth having a promising future, but they succeeded in Naomi’s joy being restored.

My sisters and I have enjoyed many successes and experienced many failures. However, if we continue to immerse our bonds of sisterhood in the word of God and spread the love of God to one another, our successes will outweigh our failures. Despite any rejection, denial, neglect, or persecution we come against, if we cherish the bonds of sisterhood in Christ Jesus, we already have the victory.

**CED DIRECTOR NADINE IVY’S FORMER STUDENT ANTHONY DANIELS RUNS FOR U.S. CONGRESS**

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

March, 2024, New York, NY., The Honorable Anthony Daniels is a former student of Alabama District CED Director Nadine Ivy (picd). He is also the youngest and the first African American Minority Leader in the Alabama House of Representatives (D-Huntsville). He has led the House Democratic Caucus since February 22, 2017, and is now running for Congress in the newly created 2nd Congressional District in the United States House of Representatives.



he stressed the importance of the church in pushing for voting rights and standing up for what is morally and ethically right. Rep. Daniels is responsible for the expansion bills that gave local farmers opportunities for sales and product growth. He also talked about and made the congregation aware of his push for legislation to correct the state’s redistricting map which would allow for 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.

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.

Rep. Daniels holds BA and MA degrees from Alabama A&M University. He resides in Huntsville, Al. with his wife and three children.

In September 2023, Representative Daniels was the guest speaker when Director Nadine Ivy received the Eichelberger Award from the Alabama Conference Christian Education Department. In his remarks,



# Little Rock Hosts District Missionaries for Two Services

By G. Joyner Johnson, Reporter  
Rev. Clarence Jones, Photographer

On Saturday, January 13, 2024, the North Charlotte District Supply Department and the Youth Missionary Society convened at Little Rock AME Zion Church, Dr. Dwayne A. Walker, Pastor. Beginning at 8:30 AM, the District Supply Department Prayer Breakfast was held in the fellowship hall. Each local church had been asked to collect and bring personal toiletry items for the students at both Clinton College and Livingstone College.



Mrs. Angela Caldwell, the Local Supply Secretary, the host Supply Secretary had prepared magnificently from the smallest detailed decorations to interfacing with the Culinary Ministry in planning the menu, preparing and serving the full breakfast.

The District Supply Secretary, Mrs. Cassandra Stephens presided over the breakfast and guided everyone to a meditative, prayerful stance. The theme was "Reaching the Masses in An Everchanging World-The Journey Continues: Self-Care and Wellness". After giving the call to worship, Mrs. Stephens prayed for Self-Care. Seven local church

Supply Secretaries prayed for the following: Mental Wellness, Emotional Wellness, Physical Wellness, Environmental Wellness, Spiritual Wellness, Recreational Wellness and Social Wellness. Each prayer was accompanied by a Bible verse from either the Old Testament or the New Testament.

The Meditation Speaker was Rev. Jarma Chisholm, pastor of the Columbus Chapel AME Zion Church. Speaking on Mental Health Wellness, she used Proverbs 3:5 as the scriptural reference. We must trust and seek God for every point of wellness. Our spiritual wellness has a trickle-down effect as our response to trouble in our lives is a



reflection of our Godliness. We must be well to do well and not become weary in well-doing.

After the breakfast was served, the beautiful gift baskets of toiletries were presented to Mrs. Mir-



riam Rush from Livingstone College and Mrs. Hayden from Clinton College. They thanked the North Charlotte District missionaries for caring for the students needs with the assurance that the supplies were definitely needed and appreciated.

After remarks from Dr. Dwayne A. Walker, Mrs. Myrtle Henderson and Presiding Elder Dr. Wardell Henderson, the attendees then recessed from the fellowship hall to the sanctuary for the Youth Missionary Society worship service.



"It's Cool to Refuel" was the youth take on "Self-Care and Wellness." Ms. Olivia Joy Stinson, The District Youth Secretary was the presiding officer. The Call to Worship was by Master Nolan Scott. Ms. Joye Soares and Ms. Zania Stinson also led during the devotion. The message was delivered by Rev. Danielle Phifer Singletary, pastor of Mainville AME Zion Church, Mocksville, NC. Ms. Olivia Joy Stinson led the youth and the congregation in the Youth Recruitment Litany.



The stoling ceremony was led by Ms. Castella Conner, District Life Members Chairperson during which seventeen persons received stoles. The district sponsored two alternate youth delegates to the 30th Quadrennial WH&OMS Convention. Ms. Mikayla Howard and Ms. Camryn Covington each reported the top three things they were most impressed with at the convention. They enjoyed the opening worship service processional, the overseas delegation and their various languages, the President's Gala, the reading of the resolutions and the Overseas Luncheon. They thanked the Presiding Elder Henderson and the North Charlotte District for providing them with such a special opportunity. After remarks by Ms. Olivia Stinson, Mrs. Roye Buck, District Missionary President, Mrs. Henderson, Presiding Elder Henderson made remarks and led the Missionary Benediction.

# Little Rock Students Receive CD Rippy Scholarships

By G. Joyner Johnson  
Reporter

On Sunday, February 4, 2024, twelve members of the Little Rock AME Zion Church, Charlotte, NC each received a check for two hundred dollars for their continuing education at various accredited institutions of higher learning. The CD Rippy Scholarship was established by the pastor, Dr. Dwayne A. Walker upon his arrival at Little Rock as the pastor in 2005.

Only members of Little Rock are eligible to receive the funds which are given twice per school year. Qualifying criteria include being an active member in at least one of the over fifty ministries at the church and proof of current enrollment among others.

Members contribute to the scholarship fund through the envelope system or the online platforms, designating CD Rippy Scholarship Fund. Also contributing significantly to the fund annually is the Men's Boosters Ministry led by Mrs. Christopher Caldwell who transitioned on October 21, 2023. They raise funds from their annual golf tournament for the scholarship fund. Thanks to the Men's Booster's sizable contributions, the individual scholarship range from \$200-\$750.

For this semester, a first-time donation was given by the men of the Pi Phi chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity. They were invited to Little Rock by Mr. Robert Horsley and worshipped with Little Rock in November 2023.

The recipients show their appreciation by writing "Thank You" notes to Dr. Walker and the members of Little Rock, which are read during the worship service.



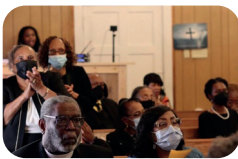
# North Charlotte District Seasoned Saints on Parade

By G. Joyner Johnson, Reporter  
Rev. Clarence Jones, Photographer

The Columbus Chapel AME Zion Church was transformed into the likes of a Broadway theatre for the North Charlotte District Lay Council Annual Seasoned Saints Program!



Rev. Jarma R. Chisholm, the host pastor and the congregation provided a welcoming environment for participants and the congregations of the churches of the North Charlotte District, Dr. Wardell Henderson, Presiding Elder. Following the Praise and Worship portion of the program, Rev. Chisholm presided over the remainder of the service. After the opening hymn, "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah", the scripture and prayer, Sis. NaKisha Deshield and Ms. Sandra Y. Pickens, the 1st Vice President of the District Lay Council welcomed those present and reviewed the occasion. The Clement Memorial Youth Choir sang "Shake the Devil Off" and "Inside Out" to get the talent show get started for the seniors.



Eighteen district churches participated with senior citizens showing their talent by acting (Myers Tabernacle, Caldwell Chapel), poetry (Watkins Chapel, Reeves Temple, Little Rock), readings (Wesley, Mowing Glade) and



songs (Greenville Memorial, Torrence Chapel, Rockwell, Bethesda, Union Bethel, Columbus Chapel, Huntersville, Jonahville, Torrence Grove, Hopewell, Union Bethel).



Each church brought cases or storage bins full of snack foods for the Livingstone College students. As they study, they may not have the funds to purchase snacks. A van was packed full of the snack foods and taken by Mrs. Miriam Rush, Executive Administrative Assistant at Livingstone back to the college's food pantry. Mrs. Rush thanked the North Charlotte District for all their contributions to the students. She was overwhelmed by the quantity of food being donated. She stated the snacks were needed and would be greatly appreciated by the students.



Final remarks were given by Ms. V. Carolyn Hubbard, District Lay Council President, 1st Lady Mrs. Myrtle Henderson and Presiding Elder Wardell Henderson.



## Continued from Page 2

Margins" on February 26, 2024, @ 8 PM. The event will be streamed on AMEZ.TV for free and available on all Star of Zion social media platforms.

Bishop Crenshaw unveiled his second initiative, "to support our Zion Communications' Department." In short, to provide professional AV and Technology services to our departments, districts, and local churches, the church needs capital investment to purchase high-value equipment. Bishop requested a \$50,000 goal for our capital investment to reach this goal. He said, "the Communications Department has stated, and I quote, 'with the growing demand for immersive and engaging worship experiences, investing in audio/visual technology is paramount.'" Bishop Crenshaw then asked other departments and members to pledge to help us meet our \$50,000 goal, allowing our Communications Department to work optimally. He told the church that "in the spirit of unity, cooperation, and a tremendous amount of generosity, our General Officers, who we call the 'Dream Team,' have, with the support of their board chairs and departments, already pledged \$18,000 of the \$50,000 for this significant upgrade."



pal District). Bishop Dogbe spoke of Bishop Proctor's many ministerial accomplishments within Zion and his activism for social justice within the Black Community. Following a stirring rendition of "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," the congregation rose as Bishop Proctor took the pulpit and offered a prayer. "Oh God, you are not a mighty God; you are the mighty God."

The following day, the church's business was conducted well with God's presence and provision. On Thursday evening's worship service, Bishop Crenshaw addressed the microphone to conclude worship before leaving to attend to the unfinished business from the previous day. After further discussions with his colleagues on the Board of Bishops, each board member was prepared to invest individually in the Communications Departments to purchase high-value equipment. In a tremendous move of the Holy Spirit, not only were pledges given from the Board of Bishops but also from other Zion Departments, including the Lay Council, a plethora of candidates for the episcopacy, various ministries, and organizations. That night, our largest donation was from the Women's Home & Overseas Missions Society, for eight thousand dollars. The \$50,000 goal was exceeded by approximately \$15,000, bringing the total pledges to roughly \$65,000. The unity expressed by Zion was indeed a historic moment. Bishop W. Darin Moore, who facilitated the pledge offering (Presiding Prelate, Mid-Atlantic Episcopal District), applauded Bishop Crenshaw's initiative and stated, "We are investing in ourselves." Zion's Chief Communications Officer, Mr. Darin Kent, thanked Bishop Crenshaw, the Board of Bishops, General Officers, and the various ministries for their support. He reiterated the need to invest in the Communications Department. He emphasized that the funds would be used appropriately and with the intent to spread the gospel within our denomination and throughout the world.

After the service concluded, we spoke with Bishop Crenshaw and asked him what this moment meant to him. He applauded his colleagues' support of this effort, stating, "Leadership displayed by the Board of Bishops has always been the catalyst for Zion's forward movement." When asked how this God moment will impact the church, he simply said, "God is encouraging Zion to dream again."

**If you would like to join us in our journey, send your pledge to the Communications Department; please send checks made payable to The A.M.E. Zion Church to 3225 West Sugar Creek Road, Charlotte, NC 28269. You can also send digital donations via CashApp to \$TheStarOfZion with the note: "Communications Pledge."**

The Board of Bishops/IMLA Meeting concluded on February 23, 2024.

Wednesday evening worship service opened with singing, followed by the Call to Worship led by Bishop Eric L. Leake (Southwestern Delta Episcopal District), who read the scripture lesson from 1 Thessalonians, Chapter 5, beginning at verse 13. Bishop Darryl B. Starnes, Sr. (Presiding Prelate, Piedmont Episcopal District) delivered the prayer.



"Lord, we were glad when they said let us go in the house of the Lord, for we can truly say that we've been blessed; I got a testimony." Bishop Brian R. Thompson, Sr. (Presiding Prelate, Western Episcopal District) thanked The Hymn Choir: "We are blessed to have beautiful angelic voices all over the Zion denomination." The offering was lifted by Bishop Kenneth Monroe (Presiding Prelate, Eastern South Carolina Episcopal District). Bishop Hilliard Dogbe (Presiding Prelate, Western West Africa Episcopal District) introduced the preacher for the evening, the 97<sup>th</sup> Bishop in the line of succession, Bishop Dennis V. Proctor (Presiding Prelate, North Eastern Episco-





# Rev. Dr. Evalina Huggins Is Leaning Into Ministry

By Mrs. Velina B. Glenn

Evalina Huggins is a driven, passionate, energetic, authentic, intelligent, and compassionate Servant Leader who has provided stellar leadership for over 40 years in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. But did you know that in 1984, while attending Atlantic Christian College in Wilson, NC, Bishop James Clinton Hoggard sent her on loan to the Christian Church Disciples of Christ, where she was both ordained and sent to Pastor in that denomination while maintaining her credentials in Zion? I am writing this article because many want to know who Dr. Huggins is. Where does she come from? And what's next in her life and ministry? I hope this article will compel you to get to know her for yourself, and I am sure your encounter will be fruitful, fulfilling, and maybe even funny. You may even walk away with these descriptive words to describe her: authentic, honest, genuine, and down to earth.



Appointed to serve by the Prince George's County Executive

For some, Dr. Evalina Huggins may have appeared out of nowhere. Still, for those who have their ears to the ground and can feel the pulse and heartbeat of Zion, then you know she is an outstanding Pastor and progressive Presiding Elder whose work can be seen and felt across the length and breadth of the church. And, before I go too far, she is a preacher par excellent. Without fanfare, Dr. Huggins has been an agent of change, transformation, and hope for people in the church and communities where she has been blessed to serve. When I asked her why she does not share all the accomplishments she has achieved as a leader, her response was, "Listen, I have never sought to do ministry for accolades or affirmation, which is why I have almost found it impossible to go around and talk about the kind(s) of ministry that God has gifted and graced me to share. The bottom line is that I've always sought to improve what I was given, and I discovered that each accomplishment, assignment, and appointment made me better."

Who is this lady? Where did she come from? And what's next for her? Well, let's start with who she is... Dr. Huggins, or "Easy E" or "Revalina" to some, is the only daughter of Elvin and Martha Huggins. She graduated from TC Williams High School in Alexandria, Virginia. She matriculated at Atlantic Christian College in Wilson, North Carolina, where she received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Religion and Philosophy. She minored in Spanish, History, and Coaching Athletics. With the aid of Bishop James Clinton Hoggard and his ecumenical ties, she attended Lexington Theological Seminary, where she received a Master of Divinity degree and a degree in Counseling (a dual degree program). She went to Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, to work on her Doctorate but found herself pursuing a Doctor of Education degree at the Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, IL. She received her Doctor of Ministry degree from Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, DC. Lastly, she obtained an Associate's degree in Mortuary Science from the University of the District of Columbia.

Ultimately, she received a Doctor of Ministry degree from Wesley Theological Seminary. In 2012, she returned to the University of the District of Columbia for an Associate's degree in Applied Sciences, graduating with a Mortuary Science degree.



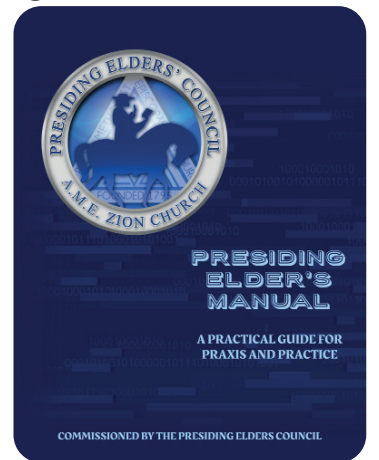
Planting New Society - Restoration AME Zion

Dr. Huggins reached the Supervisory Level in Clinical Pastoral Education while working at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, DC, where she was assigned to work

with the criminally insane. She is also Certified in Missouri as a Qualified Mental Health Professional, licensed in Maryland as a Professional Counselor, and licensed in Washington, DC, and Maryland as a Funeral Director and Embalmer with privileges in Virginia. All of her life

experiences have led to the publication of three books entitled "A Few Days of Rest: Exploring Sabbath in Life and Ministry," "Press Your Claim: A Paradigm for Preaching out of Personal Experiences," "The Work and Ministry of Class Leaders – A Historical and Contemporary Perspective." Dr. Huggins is currently the compiler of the first Presiding Elders Manual for the office of the Presiding Elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

If this is not enough, did I tell you she has written and managed over 7 million dollars in grants since 2020? She has received National, State, and local grant funding for the local church, the Baltimore District, where she is the Elder, and the Mid-Atlantic Episcopal District. These grants have helped to fund the restoration of the church she is currently pastoring. She is undertaking a 10-million-dollar restoration, rehabilitation, and expansion project funded 95% by grant and community funding. In the district, she received several grants that assisted in planting a new congregation, provided resources for her Evangelism department, supported the WHOM Society, and assisted several of her small congregations with programmatic support. In the Mid-Atlantic Episcopal District, she has written and served as the project manager for five grant awards through the University of Maryland Department of Health. These funds have allowed her to employ pastors and lay persons across the Episcopal area to engage in COVID referrals, education, and event planning for various health disparities. These funds have also assisted local churches significantly, allowing them access to alternative income streams to do ministry.



Preparing for the publication of the Presiding Elders Manual

Despite the multiple projects she manages, along with giving oversight to 19 churches in her district, mentoring young preachers, serving on the Conference and Connec-tional level, working as Chaplain of the Presiding Elders' Council, serving as a reader across Zion for her doctoral thesis, building and restoring a new church, and Pastoring; Dr. Huggins like so many of us is the glue that holds her family together. She loves to travel, cuddle with her two English Bulldogs, Tank and Thor, and make Zion and Emani happy. With no biological children, she is pursuing legal custody of her great-nephew and niece, Zion and Emani, who have brought much joy to her life over this past year. This is a lady who learned to "lean into life and ministry."

Where did she come from? Dr. Huggins was born to sharecropper parents in Columbia, South Carolina. She and her three brothers learned the value of hard work early in life. She discovered that while the cotton and tobacco fields, soybean crops, and wood-burning stoves were rough on family life, it was the family supporting and loving each other that brought them through "Jim Crow" and the racism she first encountered in the deep South. When I asked her what that was like, she said, "I watched my father, a strong black man, lower his head in the presence of Whites or move to the opposite side of the street if they were walking," and my mother be forced to take care children that were not her own. I did not understand it then, but I do now, given the climate that we live in today." This has given her a strength and resilience that most people don't understand or misunderstand. From a distance, Dr. Huggins wears her strength, but up close and personal, you will find her to be one of the most compassionate, giving, and genuine people you will ever encounter. What stands out to every person who meets her is her comedic personality. She loves to laugh and to make others laugh, which is also a trait that endears her to others.



New Church at \$10 million

Where did she come from? Well, I'm glad you asked. Dr. Evalina



Huggins is a product of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, where she has been nurtured all her life. While a native of Columbia, South Carolina, she grew up in the Alleyne AME Zion Church in Alexandria, Virginia. It was here that her grandparents, Sunday School teachers, and youth workers made sure she attended church and became involved in the church. Like so many of you reading this article, the BUDS of Promise and other WHOMS departments and the Christian Education work both in the local church and the district where her faith formation began. Dr. Huggins admits that her parents did not attend church faithfully, but the church was where she was affirmed. The church seemed to recognize the gifts in her and began to cultivate those gifts by giving her opportunities to be involved and, ultimately, to lead her peers.



Dr. Huggins' involvement in the church helped to motivate her to accept her call at 15 years of age under the late Henry Hampton Sink, then Presiding Elder. At the direction of Bishop Charles H. Foggie, she was asked to "wait" and continue to grow spiritually by serving as an Exhorter. Under the leadership of Presiding Elder James W. Page, she was referred the very next year to Bishop James Clinton Hoggard, who issued her the local preachers license in 1982 and, subsequently, the very next year, her traveling preacher license, given that she was preparing to go off to college. In 1984, Dr. Huggins left for college and came home to find that Bishop Milton A. Williams was the new Bishop who ordained her a Deacon in 1986 and an Elder in 1987. "I always believed the Lord has his hand upon my life and ministry from the very beginning and always gave me leadership that helped to develop me," says Dr. Huggins. And the rest is history.

Who is she? Well, she has served in seven pastorates and at the District and Conference level in almost every capacity. Secretary of the Philadelphia and Baltimore Conference for 24 years, Instructor for conference studies, Home Missions treasurer, Mid-Atlantic Leadership Dean,

Conference Trustee, and so on... But if you ask her the most excellent highlight of her ministry, she will say, "the honor of having someone call you Pastor." Dr. Huggins has been elected to eight consecutive General Conferences as a delegate, so she has learned and traveled the church. Simply put, she is a phenomenal woman. Who is she, a WOMAN who has learned to lean into all God promised for her life and ministry?

What is next for the Rev. Dr. Evalina Huggins? "I wish people would stop asking me that question because none of us know what is next in our lives except God. I have learned to take one day at a time and make the most of the day that God has given. There have been times when I have been able to do this without compromise, and then there are other times when I have failed myself and God miserably, but aren't you glad we serve a God who favors us repeatedly...". More than anywhere else in my conversation with Dr. Huggins, I felt her heart here as she was willing to share with me that while God has gifted and graced her to serve as a Preacher and Pastor, she understands God's choice to use her with her flaws, faults, and failures, is nothing more than the grace of God extended towards her.

"Easy E," as she is affectionately known, is focused on rebuilding and restoring the Scotland A.M.E. Zion Church. She must still manage and write grants designed to help others. She has nineteen churches in her district that needs her continual leadership and collegiality. She has a Presiding Elders' manual to complete before the General Conference. She has teaching and preaching obligations which demand her attention. She has members that need the care and love of their Pastor. She must work even harder to ensure community engagement is not lost among everything else she has to do. She has councils and boards that require her voice and leadership. She has a family that sees her as the Spiritual matriarch. She has Zion and Emani, who need her love as much as she needs theirs. And finally, she has "Tank" and "Thor," her English Bulldogs, who need to go for a walk... Dr. Huggins says, "Whatever God has destined for me next, I've got to trust him through the process while leaning into the ministry God has set before me."

THE A.M.E. ZION CHURCH

**Congratulates**

**OUR NEW PRESIDENT**

**OF THE BOARD OF BISHOPS**

**BISHOP GEORGE DWAYNE CRENSHAW**



# ZION'S CENTENARIAN COTERIE! LOYALTY & ROYALTY - CELEBRATING ZION'S 100-YEAR-OLD (AND COUNTING) MEMBERS

By Debra Chappelle-Polk  
Zion Spotlight Editor

*ZION'S CENTENARIAN COTERIE is a new and exciting STAR OF ZION Spotlight feature. Celebrating our centenarians is an idea whose time has come and is long overdue. It has been created because of conversations I've had with other Zionites requesting that the STAR OF ZION acknowledge members of their congregation who are 100-plus years young. Our Super-Seniors are Loyal and Royal. Their devotion to the Zion denomination deserves to be praised, honored, and treasured.*

*Please submit names, bios, and pictures of our living legends to be included among Zion's Centenarian Coterie to Debra Chappelle-Polk, Zion Spotlight Editor @ ZionSpotlight@StarOfZion.org*

**CENTENARIAN** [sen te narian] (noun) a person who is 100 years old or older.

**Coterie** [code da re] (noun) an intimate and often exclusive group of persons with a unifying common interest or purpose.

**KATHERINE NICHSON (September 9, 1920)** Katherine Nichson (nee Derrciott) was born in New York City at Harlem Hospital on September 9, 1920; she attended school in Harlem and still resides in Harlem. At age 103, Katherine Nichson is Mother A.M.E Zion Church's oldest living member. "Mother Nichson," as she is affectionately called, joined Mother Zion in 1923. She was among the first 90 children who were received into the Mother AME Zion Junior Church, which was organized on January 6, 1924, by the then Pastor, Reverend Dr. James W. Brown. Mrs. Nichson is a Missionary, Lay Council member and served as Leader of Class #13 for many years. Prior to the pandemic, she attended Sunday School on a regular basis.



Mother Nichson is a natural born storyteller. For the last few years, she has been living at the Harlem Center for Nursing & Rehabilitation. Members and friends visit with her and look forward to hearing the latest news from her. On any given day, she regales "her audience" with stories about Mother Zion and the Harlem Community past and present. She is also an activist and is a member of Community Board #5. She has been involved with the Fred Samuels Democratic Club and is a longtime member of The National Action Network (NAN).

Katherine Nichson is not shy about voicing her opinion and giving advice – particularly to young people: "I want them to get involved in politics. It is the most serious time in my lifetime where people need to exercise their right to vote, because it is the best way to honor the people who died fighting for this right." In 2020, members of Mother Zion, along with local politicians and community leaders celebrated her 100th birthday with an outdoor party in front of the church. The Amsterdam News covered the event as well, noting, ... "was born into the women's rights movement, Katherine Nichson encourages everyone to vote."

She married Willie Don Nichson on July 4, 1948. She has three sons, one of whom was a police officer. She acknowledges that there are some officers who are not compassionate towards Black lives. Following the George Floyd murder, she stated, "putting a knee on someone's neck is a terrible tragedy. Our policemen need to be informed that life is precious. They need to look in the mirror and ask themselves: 'Are you about destroying humanity?'"

Mrs. Nichson's father fought in World War I as part of the Harlem Hell Fighters, 369<sup>th</sup> Division. One of her most cherished possessions is the coveted Croix de Guerre medal given to her father by the French government as one of the 171 fighters in recognition of their service.

She is also proud of the fact that while her family moved quite a bit when she was a child, she had perfect attendance at school, "I never missed a day."

Mrs. Nichson calls Mother Zion her fortress and has served under many pastors, including its present pastor, Rev. Dr. Malcolm J. Byrd, who calls her name on many a Sunday morning. She has benefitted from her positive attitude towards life and counts her blessings every day.

**MRS. POSEY JOHNSON (February 17, 1924)** "If the Lord sees fit on February 17th, I will be 100 years of age".

The Lord "saw fit" and Mrs. Posey Johnson celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on February 17, 2024. Longtime friend J. Fairbanks Leach said: "In a lot of places and for a very long time when one speaks these two words, "Posey Johnson", the hills of Zion Methodism reverberate with honorable positivity. The Buds of Promise, W.H. & O.M. Society, Christian Education Department, Connectional Lay Council, and the International Ministers' Spouses & Widows(ers) Fellowship, well, almost every area of Zion Methodism will confirm that they were Posey Johnson's work areas. In service to God, Miss Posey allowed no 'grass to grow under her feet'. It is a true fact that Miss Posey is an indisputable wonder."



Posey Johnson was born in Gilford County, North Carolina. She and her siblings (1 brother and 3 sisters) walked walk miles to Palmer Institute as her father wanted them to have a solid good education. She attended Sedalia High and graduated from Winston-Salem Teachers College. She taught grades 4-5-6-7 at Carver High, Mt. Olive, NC.

She joined St. Andrew A.M.E. Zion Church, Wilmington, NC., in 1949 where her late husband, the Rev. Robert Wesley Johnson pastored, and she still attends whenever she has a caring St. Andrew 'Uberite'. J. Fairbanks said, "Miss Posey's life and service in Zion was done in indelible ink as there are many young clergy and theologs in our pulpits who will testify to the teaching and love they gained from her in the Buds and every other facet of Zion." The Rev. Dr. Malcolm J Byrd, Pastor Mother A.M.E. Zion agrees and remembers her fondly.

On February 19, 2024, members of the International Ministers' Spouses & Widows(Ers) Fellowship (IMSWF) held their Black History Prayer Call-in Service. Mrs. Leach said, "We have in our midst an IMSWF Widow who has blazed an admirable trail in Zion Methodism, quietly and unassuming. I plan to use all widows in the program as we try to weave the Service around Miss Posey and Black History." During the service, her favorite gospel song(s) and hymns were performed and her favorite scripture, Psalm 27, was read.

Posey Johnson served under Bishops George Battle, Richard Thompson, W.W. Slade, Herman Anderson, William Hilliard, George Leake, and Joseph Johnson. Her Zion affiliations include Women's Home & Overseas Missionary Society (WHOMS- Buds) Lay Council, Christian Ed and IMSWF. She also worked with the Church Women United, National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), and the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

Posey Johnson remembers one of the daily quotations posted on the



bulletin board by Dr. Charlotte Hawkins, President of Palmer Institute: **“Egotism, sensitivity, and pride are enemies that will keep you from becoming educated”.**

Posey Johnson said someone recently asked her how it feels to be 100 years old. She told them, “I don’t know, I’ve never been 100 years old.” Posey Johnson is abundantly blessed to still have an abundance of love and keen intellect.

**WILLIAM MCKINLEY JORDAN (January 21, 1923)**

William M. Jordan was born in Reelsboro, North Carolina on January 21, 1923, and celebrated his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday with friends and family. William, like many young African American children living in the south in the 1920s, walked 3 miles a day each way to a one-room schoolhouse with his brothers and sisters. At age 16, he enlisted in the United States Navy and did his boot camp training in Little Creek, VA. William served on the USS Cincinnati and Denebola which were cargo ships; the USS Alco & Arcadia, which were transport ships, and the Gillespie, a destroyer ship. During his naval career, he travelled to Brazil, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Cuba,



and Barbados. He was discharged in 1954 at the rank of Steward First Class. In recognition of his service, William was awarded the American Defense Services medal, the American Area Campaign medal, and the World War II Victory medal.

In 1957 William moved to New Rochelle, New York where he landed a job as a private chauffeur for a multi-million-dollar man whose last name was Rosenfield. Soon after, William moved to Brooklyn, NY where he met and married Margie Redish. Sadly, Margie passed away on May 10, 2020. They had been married for 60 years. William and Margie raised their sons, Keith and Robert in the home they purchased in Jamaica Queens in 1962. He has been a member of the Beach Light Masonic Lodge #76 for 40 years and served as Worshipful Master for 3 years. He retired from the US Postal Service in 1988.

William McKinley Jordan joined Rush Temple A.M.E Zion Church in Jamaica Queens, New York in 1965 and served as Chairman of the Trustee Board for 4 years. He is the proud Grandpa to Kenneth 28, Maya 22, Emerson 5, and Ellison 3. He still lives in the home he shared with his wife Margie, and still attends services at Rush Temple on a regular basis.

**GOD’S CONTINUED BLESSINGS TO ALL OF ZION’S CENTENARIANS!**

EDUCATION

# Livingstone College Announces Its Second 1-Million-Dollar Gift From Anonymous Donor During the 145th Founder’s Day Celebration

By Garette Hunter  
Communications & Public Relations

Salisbury, NC - To most of the nation, February is widely recognized as Black History Month, where the achievements of black excellence are remembered and celebrated throughout. This February is especially significant for Livingstone College as it commemorated its 145th Founder’s Day in honor of its founder and first president, Dr. Joseph Charles Price.



donor is transformative for Livingstone College and will continue to impact the ongoing work being executed on the campus,” Dr. Davis shared after the program.

“This second unrestricted contribution of this nature speaks to this community’s confidence in the leadership of my presidency and this administration, and for that, we are grateful.” In addition to this news, Dr. Davis also announced that three residence halls on campus would be renovated and opened by July 2024. Livingstone College’s Board of Trustees also approved a \$7 million investment plan to renovate Aggrey Cafeteria.



During the celebration, Dr. Anthony J. Davis, the 13th president of the college, announced that the college had received a second \$1 million gift from an anonymous donor. This community member had previously given the same amount four months earlier, which was the largest individual outright contribution ever made to the college. “Receiving two \$1 million contributions from an anonymous





# Livingstone College's Andrew Carnegie Library Hosts Exhibits & Student Competitions

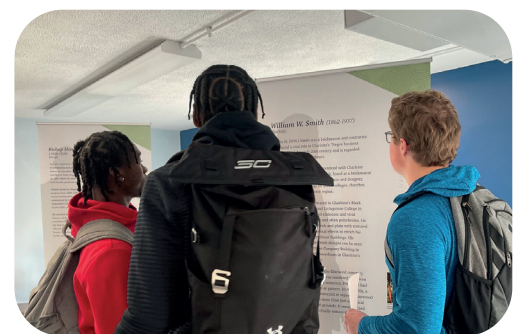
By Star of Zion News

Under the leadership of director Laura Adair Johnson, the Andrew Carnegie Library at Livingstone College has been filled with learning fun and adventure for students and the Rowan-Salisbury community. Since February 1st, visitors have been able to enjoy two exhibits: The Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History traveling exhibit and Exploring Human Origins: What does it mean to be human, and We Built This: Profiles of Black Architects and Builders in North Carolina.

vant today? Present a five-seven minute oration that demonstrates your knowledge of the history of Livingstone College and understanding of the plight of HBCUs through the years for their contributions to the American fabric and upward mobility.



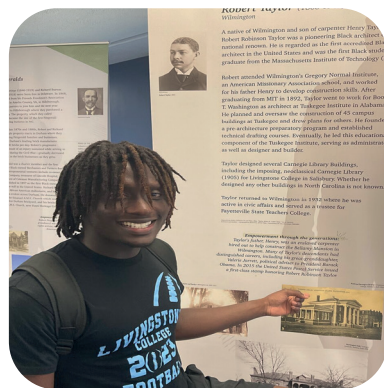
The first-place winner was senior and SGA President Matthew Clinton,



whereas freshman class president Andrew Foster placed second. Other contestants were Jacobee Dorn, Tyrese Fields, Leandra Ellison, Jahmier Harris, Mia Mason, Alyssa Merideth, and Kamari Scales. Jahmier Harris, a freshman Biology major from Los Angeles, California, said, "I am so grateful to have this opportunity to share with my peers. We were all nervous, but this experience helped us to build self-awareness and confidence, and the preparation increased my love and appreciation for Livingstone and the HBCU experience."

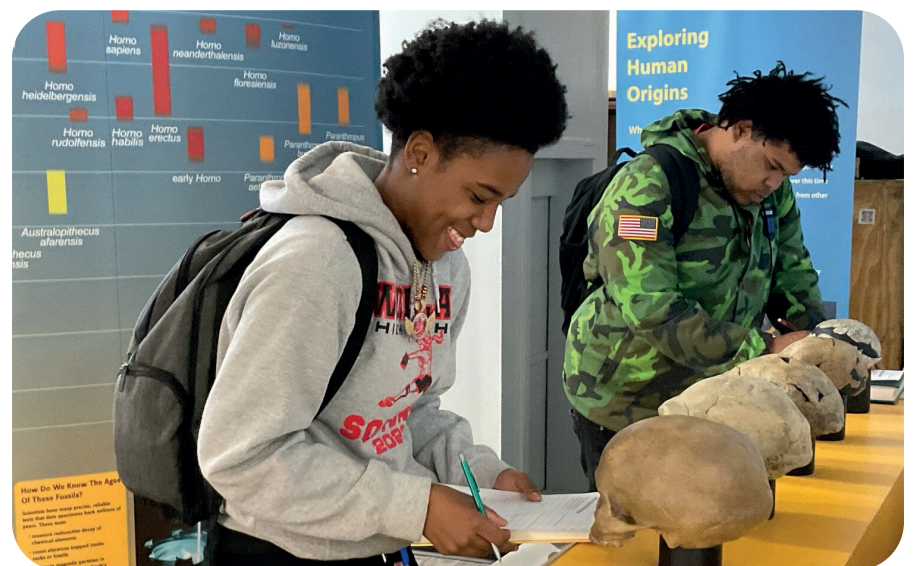
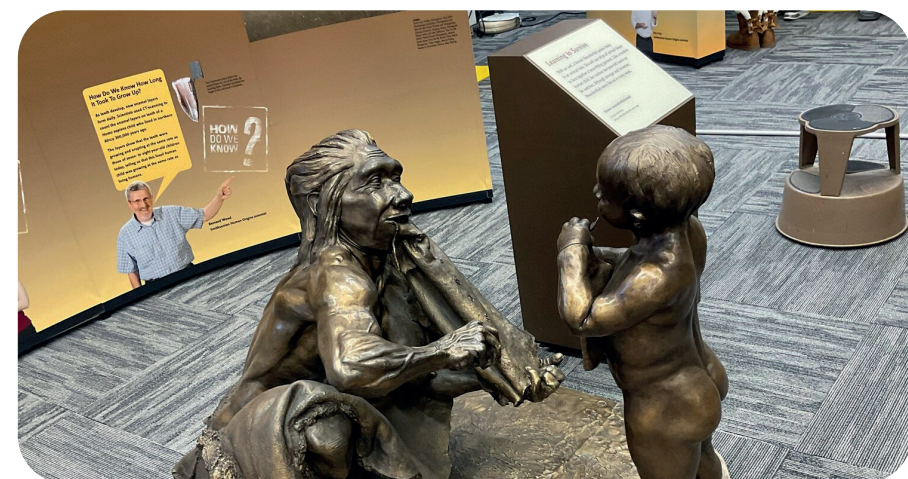


As Livingstone College is celebrating its 145th Founder's Day, the library also hosted its annual oratorical contest on Wednesday, February 14th. In contrast, the exhibits have made a difference in the increase of traffic in the library and an increase of interest in library activities. This year, a dozen students signed up to participate in the oratorical contest with the prompt, Dr. Joseph Charles Price was an infamous orator who once stated, "No matter how dark the night, I believe in the coming of the morning." Considering the plight of HBCUs in America, why would Price comment as such? How is this quote relevant today?



The event was moderated by Faculty Assembly Vice President Damein Greatheart and judged by English instructors Donna Girouard and Vashti Cofer and Circulation Librarian Gregory Hill.

Other members of Andrew Carnegie Library's staff include Kim Allman, Jeffrey Cockerl, Obadiah Johnson, and Kieran Mouritsen.





# Livingstone College Advances in Quiz Bowl Tournament

By Star of Zion News

Livingstone College competed in the National Qualifying Tournament of the 35th Honda Campus All-Star Challenge (HCASC), America's premier academic competition for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) students on Saturday, February 10th at North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro, North Carolina.

In the tournament, four-student teams faced off in head-to-head competition and quickly answered questions about history, science, literature, religion, math, the arts, pop culture, and sports against their opponents. Finishing third at the NC A&T State University location, Livingstone is one of 64 teams competing for institutional grants from Honda and a spot in the HCASC National Championship Tournament taking place on the American Honda corporate campus in Torrance, Calif., April 6-10, 2024.

The Livingstone team includes captain and junior Business Administration major Jacob Adkins ofolina; junior Business Administration major Christian Bussey of Pensacola, Florida; freshman Dunn, North Car English Education major Kamari Scales of Gibsonville, NC and freshman Biology major Kielee Jones of Houston, Texas. The team is coached by faculty Dr. Da'Tarvia Parrish. Team captain Jacob Adkins said, "I am really happy Honda provides this opportunity for us. At Livingstone, we're building a team with people I would not have ever met. I am quite pleased with our performance at the tournament and our team overall because we have brain chemistry, and everyone pitches in the best they can. Also, it's pretty amazing to meet other scholars from different HBCUs throughout the nation and build a network with purposeful and like-minded people."

HCASC is a year-round program celebrating Black excellence and showcasing the academic talents of top HBCU students from across the country. HCASC challenges students to expand their scope of knowledge on a wide range of topics while also helping to develop their leadership and collaboration skills. With the opportunity to compete against students from other HBCUs, participants network, build camaraderie, and gain mentorship opportunities with HCASC alumni. This year, Honda will provide more than \$500,000 in institutional grants to the participating HBCUs, with many of the schools utilizing the grants to fund student scholarships. More than 170,000 scholars have competed in HCASC since the academic tournament was established in 1989.

**For more information about Honda Campus-All Star Challenge, contact:**

Lillian E. Parker, Honda Campus All-Star Challenge: [lillian@hcasc.com](mailto:lillian@hcasc.com) Zeshan Kazmi, American Honda Motor Co., Inc.: [zeshan\\_kazmi@na.honda.com](mailto:zeshan_kazmi@na.honda.com) Connect with HCASC via social media using #HCASC: Facebook: [www.facebook.com/HCASC](http://www.facebook.com/HCASC) | Instagram: [www.instagram.com/the\\_hcasc](http://www.instagram.com/the_hcasc)



## Miss Livingstone College Shares In Youth Empowerment

By Star of Zion News

On Saturday, January 20, 2024, Miss Livingstone College Akera Barnes joined Miss North Carolina USA and Miss North Carolina Teen USA in a Raleigh community event, "Princess for a Day."

With the purpose of youth empowerment, the program was designed by Coressa Williams for girls aged 3-16 to engage in etiquette skills that promote confidence in social contexts and foster poise and grace for self-development.

The three crowned queens played a vital role in serving as representation of royalty for the program participants. Moreover, the opportunity served a dual purpose as the crowned queens gained experience in confidence and leadership development. Akera said, "Throughout my childhood, I struggled with self-esteem. I am blessed today to share in another girl's story, measures on how to discover and, most importantly, define beauty and self."

With her platform "VIEW," an acronym for vision, intention, execution, and win, Akera wants to continue to be intentional in her reign as Miss Livingstone College, focusing on events that encourage self-discovery and empower young girls in confidence and self-acceptance. Thankful to her mentor, Karmeisha Tuck of Karm Kharm's, Akera

believes, "We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give."





# Livingstone College to Host Preaching and Worship Institute

Featuring Renowned Speakers Rev. Dr. Marcus Cosby, Rev. Dr. Gina Stewart and Rev. Dr. Charles Goodman Jr.



By Rev. Lloyd Nivens  
LNivens@livingstone.edu

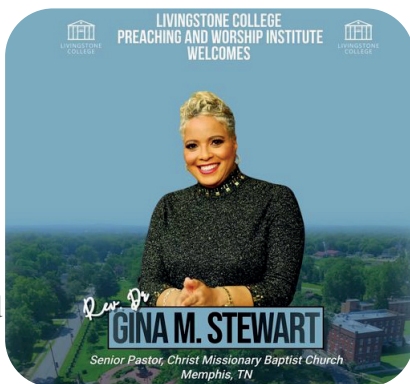
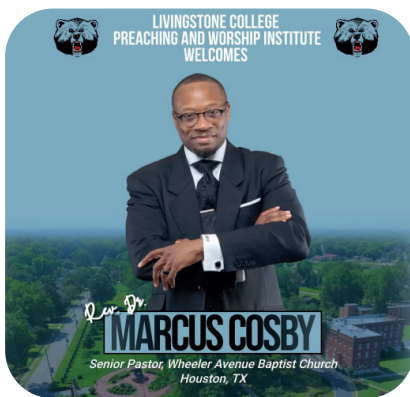
Salisbury, NC- Livingstone College is proud to announce the upcoming Preaching and Worship Institute, a transformative event designed to equip and inspire individuals in the ministry. This institute will feature esteemed speakers Rev. Dr. Marcus Cosby, Rev. Dr. Gina Stewart, and Rev. Dr. Charles Goodman, who are widely regarded for their exceptional preaching and leadership.

The Preaching and Worship Institute will take place on April 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>, 2024 on the beautiful campus of Livingstone College, located in Salisbury, NC. This event aims to provide a platform for pastors, ministers, worship leaders, and individuals passionate about preaching and worship to enhance their skills and deepen their spiritual understanding.

Reverend Dr. Marcus Cosby, A prolific preacher and respected leader in the Christian community, Dr. Cosby brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the Institute. His insights into the art and practice of preaching are sure to captivate and inspire attendees.

Reverend Dr. Gina Stewart, Renowned for her engaging and thought-provoking sermons, Dr. Stewart is a trailblazer in the field of preaching. Her unique perspective and deep understanding of scripture make her a sought-after speaker at conferences and events worldwide.

Reverend Dr. Charles Goodman Jr. with a passion for equipping the next generation of preachers, Dr. Goodman is committed to empowering individuals to proclaim the Word of God with boldness and authenticity. His practical wisdom and engaging teaching style make him a beloved mentor and teacher.



### Registration Information:

Livingstone College is honored to host such esteemed speakers who exemplify excellence in preaching and worship. The institute aligns with the college's mission to provide a holistic educational experience that prepares individuals for lives of leadership and service. By bringing together individuals who are passionate about preaching and worship, Livingstone College aims to foster a supportive and empowering community. Registration for the Preaching and Worship Institute is now open. Early registration is encouraged, as spaces are limited. To learn more and secure your spot, visit <https://bit.ly/livingstonepreachinginstitute>

Don't miss this opportunity to be a part of an unforgettable experience of learning, growth, and spiritual renewal. Join us at the Livingstone College Preaching and Worship Institute 2024 and take your preaching and worship ministry to new heights!

### About Us:

Livingstone College, founded in 1879, is a private historically black college located in Salisbury, North Carolina. The college offers a range of undergraduate programs in various disciplines, including liberal arts, education, business, and sciences. Livingstone College is committed to providing a nurturing and empowering environment that promotes academic excellence, personal growth, and social responsibility.

Department of Spiritual Life Presents: **LIVINGSTONE COLLEGE PREACHING AND WORSHIP INSTITUTE**  
April 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Register here today!

**Hotel Information**  
Holiday Inn Express  
125 Marriott Cir,  
Salisbury, NC 28144  
Rate: 129.00/Night  
Mention: LC Preaching and Worship Institute

Early Bird Registration: \$75.00  
Pre-Registration: \$100.00  
On-Site Registration: \$150.00

Rev. Lloyd Nivens IV, Senior Campus Minister  
Dr. Anthony J. Davis, 13th President Livingstone College

**LIVINGSTONE COLLEGE PREACHING AND WORSHIP INSTITUTE**

**MORNING GLORY WORSHIP**  
APRIL 4TH, 2024  
9:00 AM

Rev. Brittany White  
Senior Pastor, Center Emmanuel AME Zion Church

LIVINGSTONE COLLEGE CULINARY AND HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT CENTER  
530 Jake Alexander Blvd.  
Salisbury, NC 28144

Rev. Lloyd Nivens IV, Senior Campus Minister  
Dr. Anthony J. Davis, 13th President of Livingstone College



# Livingstone Hosts “We Built This” Exhibit Celebrating NC Black Architects

By Star of Zion News

Livingstone College celebrated the opening of traveling exhibit, “We Built This: Profiles of Black Architects and Builders in North Carolina,” on Thursday, February 1, 2024 in the Shipman Science Building with noted architect and politician, Harvey Gantt. As headliner of the series, Livingstone’s president Dr. Anthony J. Davis regarded Gantt as “a genius, a gentleman, and a gift,” referencing the multiple constructions authored by Gantt, his contributions to iconic culture and people, and his work in the political arena.



In presentation, Gantt showcased his architectural handiwork and his strategy with partner Jeffrey Huberman on how to be deliberate when creating diverse employment opportunities. Gantt stated, “If you want diversity [in architecture], you must be intentional about it. Women, people of color – and if you’re looking for colors – you don’t go to North Dakota. You go to North Carolina A&T, Tuskegee, Howard.”

Moreover, Gantt recalled discriminatory times he faced but encouraged others to keep believing and trying. He said, “Sometimes it wasn’t easy to get a project. I’d show up and suddenly the job was unavailable. The feeling of being qualified and not getting it. Never let rejection because of race ruin your pursuit. There are enough good folks in America who will appreciate your talent.”

In the audience sat former employee of Harvey Gantt, Mayor of Salis-



bury Karen Alexander. Alexander expressed gratitude for Gantt giving her the opportunity to develop as a budding architect and inspiring her to start her own architectural firm. Alexander said, “Thank you for all the opportunities you gave me. You are a man of dreams who inspires others to have dreams.”

Depicting more than 300 years of craftsmanship, the “We Built This” exhibit celebrates the history and legacy of Black builders and craftspeople in the state of North Carolina, showcasing more than two dozen personal profiles and historic context on significant topics including slavery and Reconstruction; the founding of Black churches and Historically Black College and Universities (HBCUs); Jim Crow and segregation; and the rise of Black civic leaders and professionals.

Free and open to the public until February 29, 2024, the exhibit is housed in Andrew Carnegie Library and sponsored by Preservation North Carolina, Historic Salisbury Foundation, Livingstone College, and Rowan Public Library. Tour hours are Monday-Thursday from 9:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. and Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Visitors are asked to register by emailing [jcockerl@livingstone.edu](mailto:jcockerl@livingstone.edu).



## ANDREW CARNEGIE LIBRARY

*Presents*

FEBRUARY 1, 2024 – MARCH 15, 2024

FEB 1

**OPENING OF “WE BUILT THIS” EXHIBIT**  
 Profiles of Black Architects and Builders in North Carolina.  
**February 1 - 29, Monday through Thursday 9:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. | Friday 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**  
 Visitors must Register by emailing [jcockerl@livingstone.edu](mailto:jcockerl@livingstone.edu)

**GUEST SPEAKER, MR. HARVEY GANTT, ARCHITECT AND POLITICIAN**  
 Reception at **5:30 p.m.** in the Shipman Science Building  
 Followed by **Mr. Harvey Gantt** speaking at **6:30 p.m.**  
 With opening remarks by **Dr. Anthony J. Davis, 13<sup>th</sup> President**.  
 Reception to follow.

This exhibit is sponsored by Preservation North Carolina, Historic Salisbury Foundation, Livingstone College, and Rowan Public Library.




FEB 5

**RIBBON CUTTING AND OPENING OF THE SMITHSONIAN EXHIBIT**  
 Exploring Human Origins  
 11:00 a.m. (Livingstone Students, Faculty, and Staff)  
 6:00 p.m. (Salisbury Community)

Exhibit will be in the Andrew Carnegie Library February 1 – May 15, 2024  
**Monday through Thursday 9:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. | Friday 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

This exhibit is in partnership with Smithsonian Institute, American Library Association, Hood Seminary, and Livingstone College



FEB 6

**RIBBON CUTTING AND SPECIAL EXHIBITS AT HERITAGE HALL**  
 Heritage Hall will be open for the month of February.  
**Monday through Friday 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**  
 Visitors must register to attend by emailing [kallman@livingstone.edu](mailto:kallman@livingstone.edu)



FEB 14

**BLACK HISTORY ORATORICAL CONTEST**  
 2:00 p.m. – Andrew Carnegie Library  
 This contest is for current Livingstone College students only.  
 For more information contact: [ljohnson@livingstone.edu](mailto:ljohnson@livingstone.edu)  
More details will be provided via the student email distribution list.



FEB 15

**GUEST SPEAKER, MR. ANTHONY HUNT, ARCHITECT, DESIGNER AND BUILDER**  
 6:00 p.m. in the Andrew Carnegie Library – Reception



FEB 22

**GUEST SPEAKER, MR. RAYNAL “SHAKA” HARRIS, ARCHITECT AND PRODUCER**  
 6:00 p.m. in the Andrew Carnegie Library - Reception



[www.livingstone.edu](http://www.livingstone.edu)



# Attend the Spring 2024 Messenger-Williams Family Community Education Initiative at Hood Theological Seminary



By Kelly Bryant

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

The Spring 2024 Messenger-Williams Community Education Initiative will look at the reading *The Question of God: C.S. Lewis and Sigmund Freud Debate God, Love, Sex, and the Meaning of Life* (The Free Press, 2003) by Dr. Armand M. Nicholi, Jr.


The Spring 2024 Messenger-Williams Community Education Initia-

tive will be devoted to a five-week study of *The Question of God* starting February 26 – March 29, 2024. Participants will explore such topics as the existence of God, the source of morality, what makes human life worth living, the meaning of suffering, and whether death is our only destiny.

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



For more information, including participation options, schedule, and registration, please go here: <https://www.hoodseminary.edu/Initiatives/community-education-initiative/current-course-offering>



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# Truthville '23: The Great Exchange!

By Daman De Leon  
Health and Wellness Editor  
Photos By James Feldman

The Christian Education Department of the AME Zion Church's Annual Winter Meeting for 2023 was titled *Truthville 2023: The Great Exchange* and was nothing short of perfection at its finest. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the congregational fellowship of believers from near and far served its general purpose, which is to spread the Gospel, make disciples, and uplift the Church (Matt. 28:19).

From Dec. 27<sup>th</sup> - Dec. 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Zionites from throughout the Connection convened on downtown Raleigh, NC, at the Raleigh Convention Center. An estimated 2,000+ attendees from various Episcopal Districts, both domestic as well as international, graced the North Carolina State Capitol with the presence of humility, grace, and servitude.

The Quadrennial Theme for the CED is *Engage, Educate, and Elevate*, with the central focus on the 2023 sub-theme of *Educate*.

The Convention was blessed with powerful, spirit-filled preaching and teaching throughout its entirety, with illustrious speakers such as the Rev. Dr. Otis T. McMillan, Bishop Sherman Blandon, Rev. Dr. Danielle Brown, and Award-Winning Gospel Artist Pastor John P. Kee, and many more.

Innovative programs were implemented for this year's Winter-Meeting which made it stand from past Conferences, these include, but are not limited to:

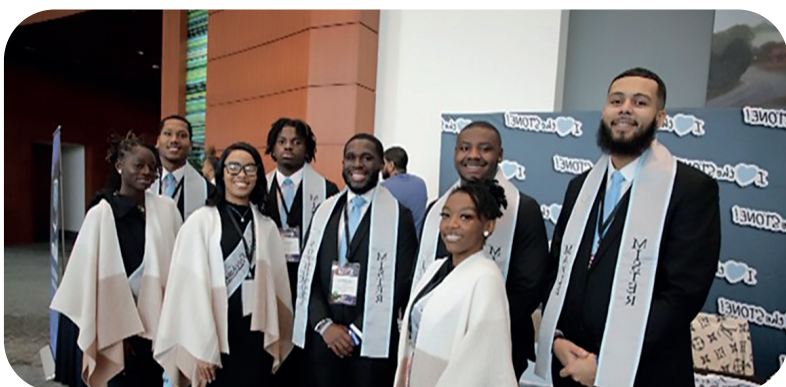
- Truthville "Hotspots"
- A Health Suite
- The Acolyte Steamshop
- Varick's Children's Winter Camp
- Zumba
- Power-Walking
- A Decompression Room

Each day was an exciting new venture, with creating discipleship at the forefront of every workshop, business session, and prayer meeting. Various Vendors provided a variety of quality retail products and services, some of which have maintained a productive covenantal partnership with the AME Zion Church for many years.

The Truthville '23 Kickoff began with the CED Staff and Officer's Opening Worship, with worship led by the Rev. Scott Cunningham, and Rev. Xavier Hunter as the Evangelist.



Representation was on hand from various entities affiliated with the AME Zion Church, including the prestigious Livingstone College Royal Court.



## Truthville 2023 Opening Program: Amazing Relay



Facilitated by Rev. Robyn Perkins and Ms. Stephanie Perry



(l. to R. Christian Education Board: Bishop Dennis Proctor, Bishop Darin Moore, Mrs. Ava Swinton)

## Truthville Opening Worship Service: The Baton Pass

Evangelists: Rev. Dr. Otis McMillan and Rev. Nathaniel Cox



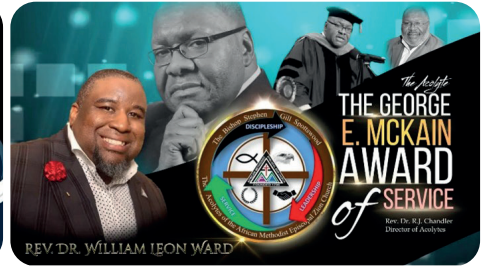
Introduced as the "Tag-Team", by the Rt. Reverend Darrin W. Moore, the Truthville '23 Opening Worship Service blessed attendees with a bilateral sermon by the Rev. Dr. Otis McMillan and the Rev. Nathaniel Cox, Pastor of the Grace AME Zion Church in Raleigh NC. The message came Acts 11:20. "Passing the Baton: being Barnabas in a World where everyone wants to be Paul". Key Points stood out from the message: (1) Ministry is a Relay-Race, and life consists of many Relay-Races, (2) The Baton represents the Faith, and we as Believers must not "drop the Baton". 55 Souls came to Christ, and 30 answered the call to ministry. "Life is a Marathon, and sometimes the runner tires and grows weary...and the only way they can be successful is for the other runner receiving the Baton is to encourage and reassure them to continue" – Rev. Nathaniel Cox

## Morning Plenary Session

Facilitated by the Rev. Dr. Danielle Brown

The Relay: Thinking as an Intergenerational Church





**The Kathryn G. Brown Black Excellence Rally & Luncheon**

**The Family Meeting: Candidates Forum**



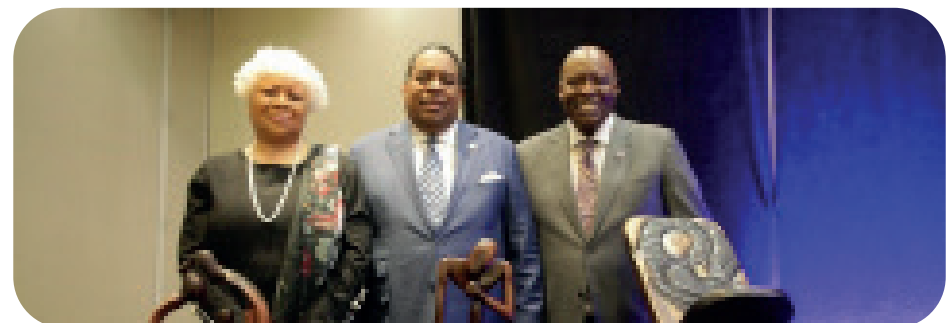
The Kathryn G. Brown Black Excellence Rally & Luncheon, attributed to the loving memory of one of Zion's Brightest Stars, and one of the strongest anchors of Christian Education, the late Rev. Dr. Kathryn G. Brown. The Theme of the Luncheon: *"Excellence without Excuse"*.

The Opening of the Program consisted of a beautiful visual showcase of Rev. Brown's various network of accomplishments throughout Zion and Education, along with her abundant Community Outreach. Tributes were followed by the Rev. Mark Thomas, Pastor of Contee AME Zion Church, Washington DC, and Rev. Solomon McAuley, Pastor of Pleasant Grove AME Zion Church, Concord NC and NEXTGEN Leader, and Dr. Shaunte Brown-White, Prof. of Dept. of Mass Communication, North Carolina Central University, Durham, NC.

In commemoration of Rev. Brown's staunch advocacy of education, four Scholarships were awarded to various Zionites.

Recipients:

- The Rev. Adriane Newton Scholarship – Ms. Madison Davis
- The Rev. Dr. Kathryn G. Brown Scholarship – Mr. Kordell Green
- The Brenda G. Award of Excellence – Rev. Lessie Simpson
- The George E. McKain Award of Service – Rev. Dr. William L. Ward



Hosted by the Rev. Dr. Darius Benton

The Candidates for the Episcopacy of the AME Zion Church adjourned in an informative panel-discussion answering questions poised by the youth and young adults. The Candidates answered various thought-provoking questions regarding the involvement of youth within the Church, societal issues/norms that affect youth in the Church, and agendas they wish to implement upon election to the episcopacy.





**Victory Night Worship Service**

Evangelist: Rev. Dr. Danielle Brown, Shiloh Baptist Church, Plainfield, NJ

The VICYC Victory Night Worship Service was delivered by the Rev. Dr. Danielle Brown. The VICYC Theme “Standing on Business” established a spirit of diligence with the youth of the connection. Dr. Brown blessed the congregation with the powerful message “Get your game up”, urging congregants to not be afraid nor reluctant to go to the next level in their walk with Christ.

**Truthville Morning Worship (featuring/led by YACM)**



Featuring the YACM Choir Evangelist: Bishop Sherman T. Blandon, Mt. Moriah Community Church, Raleigh, NC

The YACM-led Morning Worship Service was blessed with musical ensembles from the YACM Choir, followed by the Morning Word delivered by Bishop Sherman T. Blandon. The Message Theme was “Transition”, which included a thorough breakdown of understanding the varying forms of transition in our lives, and our Christian journeys,

and congregants were challenged to face transitions when God calls us, and how we must always prepare for it.

**Drum Majors For Education: Board Chair Celebration Luncheon**



**VICYC Mid-Day Worship**



Evangelist: Rev. Daquan Bimbo, Mt. Hope AME Zion Church Princess Anne, MD

**VC Live! Varick’s Children Closing Program**



**Truthville Closing Worship Featuring Truthville Worship & Arts Ministries and Pastor John P. Kee**

As we continue to execute on the great commission outlined in our Faith, the greatest Christian Education Annual Convention known as the Winter Meeting will continue to soar to new heights and new horizons, all empowered by God the Holy Spirit. Next Year: ELEVATE!





# State Of The Youth 2023

By Ezekiel A. Perez  
 President, Varick International Christian Youth Council  
 Photo by BND Productions, LLC Brian Thompson



Raleigh, NC- To the Connectional Officers of The Varick International Christian Youth Council, to the Conference and District Delegates and Alternate Delegates, to our guests and all of those assembled, I Ezekiel A. Perez greet you in the matchless and marvelous name of our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ. It is often said we are the church of tomorrow, but I stand here today to direct you with just one word NOW. Scripture says, this is the day the Lord hath made. I want you to look around, this time last year we were in Chicago and a lot of you weren't there due to travel challenges with Southwest Airlines or maybe just because of financial situations. How far have we come? Now it is time we build upon what we have established. Our church has a rich history and a strong foundation. It is our duty to build upon that framework, for our present time, and to ensure a vibrant future for generations to come.

First, I want to recognize the importance of spiritual growth. As the youth of the AME Zion Church, we must actively engage in our faith, seeking a deeper understanding of the teachings and principles that guide our church. Just to name a few, Let us regularly engage in church services, participate in bible study sessions, lead faith-based initiatives, and promote community outreach. We can kingdom build by nurturing our spiritual selves, strengthen our connection with God and put on the full spiritual armor of God - your helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, a belt of truth, shoes of the gospel of peace, pick up your shield of faith, and take up your sword of the spirit- to be better equipped to face life's challenges with grace and resilience.

Ecclesiastes 7:12 states, "For wisdom is a defense, and money is a defense: but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it." This scripture undergirds the necessity of education in the life of a believer. Education is not only a means to personal growth, but-it is a powerful tool to uplift our community. Let us prioritize our studies, pursuing academic excellence with diligence, determination and dedication. Whether in middle/high school, college, vocational training or serving in our nation's armed forces, let us strive to acquire the knowledge and skills that will enable us to make a meaningful contribution to society today. For those of you that have been keeping up with VICYC you know that at this winter meeting we awarded 3 students with the Roosevelt L. Thompson Scholarship which is a huge honor when you begin to think about his accomplishments at such a young age. Roosevelt Thompson a Arkansas Native upon graduation attended Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut where he received many honors as he Majored in History, economics and Political Science not only was Thompson a scholar and a leader, but he was also a man of service. Thompson not only volunteered to tutor for the New Haven Public School System but also took part in a work-study opportunity to work at city hall and eventually work on Former President Bill Clinton's Campaign Team when running for Governor. Roosevelt Thomson was a recipient of the Rhodes Scholarship which is a post-graduate award given so that young people from around the globe can attend Oxford University. Although Roosevelt Thompson didn't get to attend Oxford, I believe that he succeeded at creating a legacy that continues to live on. I truly believe that Roosevelt L. Thompson is the definition of excellence without excuse.

Zion has always been a pillar of support for its members, and as the youth, we should actively participate in community outreach programs,

social initiatives, and service projects. Let us first identify the needs of our communities, talk to residents and community leaders to comprehend the most pressing issues that are challenging your community. Then, schedule and organize regular community engagement opportunities where youth members can participate. Let us make a larger goal to Involve the entire congregation. This expands the community impact, offers intergenerational bonding, and it creates a sense of shared purpose in the membership.

In the book of Romans 12:2 it says "do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." When this Cabinet was elected in 2022 Rev. Dr. George McKain charged us to be "Intentional." Let's talk about it. What does it mean to be Intentional? We must make deliberate choices and meaningful steps in every aspect of our involvement in the church. Embracing intentionality can significantly enhance our impact and contribution to Zion. In an effort to strengthen Youth engagement we must be intentional with the Programming and the work that is done in our respective regions.

- How can we be intentional? Let us count the ways (1) We can engage in Meaningful Discussions to include depth and transparency on relevant and pertinent topics. We can share diverse perspectives and seek understanding while participating in these conversations because Intentional Engagement will lead to both personal and collective growth. (2) We must leverage technology. Let's maximize social media outlets such as Instagram, Facebook, Tiktok and the various platforms that makes our reach extensive, while we thoughtfully ensure our online presence reflects high morals, ethical standards, and christian values of the church. (3) We must build our collective. Let's join together in an intergenerational band and be drum majors for the Lord. We can work collaboratively with other local youth-based organizations, and other departments within our church. Building strong relationships with our seniors and young adults and create a sense of unity that fosters theoretical practices, resources, and support.

Under the leadership of the current administration, we have established communication with leaders of both the CME and AME Churches in efforts to advance youth ministry. In our efforts to be intentional with methodism, we have built relations and rapport that have helped to spread our doctrine amongst youth. Moreover, in our intentions, we not only contribute to the church.

but also grow personally and spiritually; thus granting a stronger and more vibrant future for our God's kingdom.

I am often asked where I see VICYC going and my answer is simple - FORWARD. I believe we have a bright future ahead of us and with the utilization of technology, leadership development initiatives and advocacy for social justice. We can further advance the AME Zion Church in all ways imaginable. The National Christian Youth Council (NCYC) was formed in 1930 and changed its name to VCYC then to ViCYC. This body is the first organization in the Christian Education Department of the AME Zion Church, and after 93 years of life, I have high aspirations for this organization. I stand here before you today with three key initiatives of my administration. SLT - spiritual growth, leadership development and technology efficiency, are our key components moving forward.

As I continue to humbly serve this body, I ask for your support in these endeavors. In closing, I leave you words of the Harvard scholar and black social advocate, W.E.B. Du Bois. He proclaimed, "Now is the accepted time, not tomorrow, not some more convenient season. It is today that our best work can be done and not some future day or future year. It is today that we fit ourselves for the greater usefulness of tomorrow." And in the words of the the psalmist David who proclaimed, This is the day the Lord hath made.

May God Bless you and may Heaven smile upon you!

Humbly Submitted,

Ezekiel A. Perez

President, Varick International Christian Youth Council

Christian Education Department, AME Zion Church

vicycpresident22@gmail.com



# A Transformative Week of Study & Worship at United Theological Seminary



By Rev. Roderick J. Josey M.A. M.Div

Dayton, Ohio - In a transformative week of study and worship, General Secretary Rev. Dr. Elvin Sadler, along with the distinguished faculty, staff, and a cohort's of 250 Doctor of Ministry (D.Min) students gathered at United Theological Seminary for their Spring Intensive in Dayton, Ohio. The atmosphere was charged with intellectual rigor, spiritual exploration, and a shared commitment to ministry.



The hallmark of the week was the exhaustive yet rewarding workload of classes, a testament to the dedication of educators and students. The General Secretary - Auditor of The A.M.E. Zion Church, Rev. Dr. Elvin Sadler, who also serves as the Dean of the United Theological Seminary Doctoral Program, led the charge in fostering an environment that propelled individuals towards academic excellence and spiritual growth.

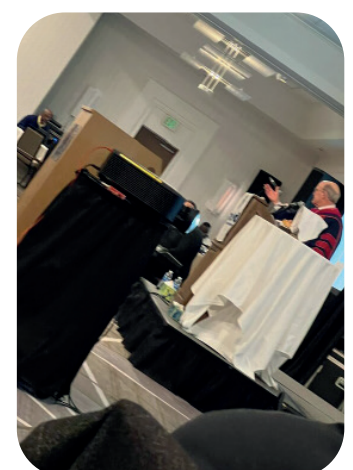
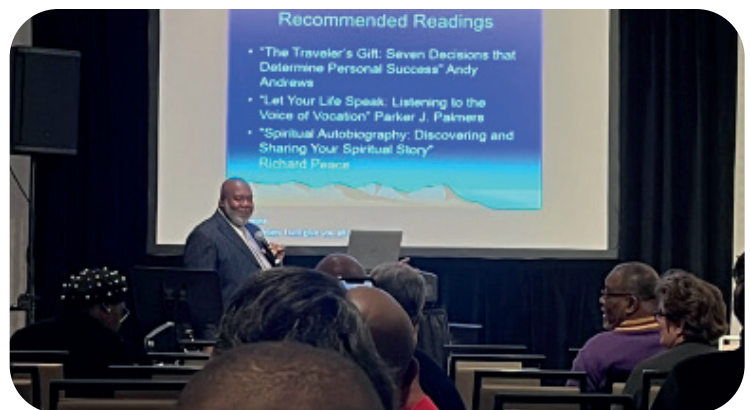
The cornerstone of this liberating experience was the impactful preaching that resonated throughout the campus. Notable speakers, including Rev. Dr. Dominique Robinson, Rev. Dr. Gina Stewart, and Rev. Dr. Joel Gregory, graced the stage, delivering sermons that stirred the souls of the D.Min students. The plenary teachings from Rev. Dr. Cheryl Bridges Johns and Rev. Jerry M. Carter, Jr., Ph.D., added depth and insight, enriching the intellectual tapestry of the week.

Amidst the theological exploration, the students had the privilege of basking in the wisdom of these esteemed scholars. Rev. Dr. Elvin Sadler encouraged them to “do their best to present themselves to God

as approved by him, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15, NRSV). This scripture became a guiding light, inspiring students to embrace their calling confidently and competently.

The week concluded with a palpable readiness to embark on the ministry journey. As the D.Min students disperse, their hearts are filled with gratitude for the opportunity to delve into diverse study areas under renowned scholars’ mentorship. A collective celebration and prayer resonate for each Zion scholar, acknowledging their unique paths and contributions to the Kingdom.

In the spirit of continuous growth and enlightenment, the Spring Intensive at United Theological Seminary has set a precedent for future academic and spiritual endeavors, fostering a community dedicated to advancing the divine calling of ministry.





# Retreat: Trauma-Informed Theology



Rev. Dierdre' R. Parker  
Entertainment & The Arts Editor  
Entertainment\_Arts@StarofZion.org

By Rev. Dierdre' R. Parker  
Entertainment & the Arts Editor



February 2, 2024 Durham, NC- Lately there has been a lot of discussion around Trauma-Informed Care in the field of human services. Trauma informed care recognizes the presence of symptoms of trauma and the role that trauma could play in an individual's life. On a systemic or institutional level, Trauma-Informed Care changes the culture to emphasize respecting and appropriately responding to the effects of trauma at all levels. While attending a pastor's retreat for the Durham District of the Central North Carolina Conference, we were introduced to the concept of Trauma-Informed Theology. Trauma Informed Theology argues that care of traumatic wounding must include all dimensions of the human person including spiritual practices, religious rituals, community participation, and theological thinking.

The concept was introduced by Rev. Dr. Micah L. McCreary who was the featured speaker at this retreat. Not only is Dr. McCreary the author of Trauma and Race a Path to Wellbeing, he is president of New Brunswick Theological Seminary. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Engineering from the University of Michigan; a Master of Divinity from the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology and a Master of Science and Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from Virginia Commonwealth University. While this scaled down list of academic achievement is impressive, what was most impressive to this writer was his regular, degular, schmegular personality. He was transparent and authentic and it gave the room permission to be the same. He was willing to share some of his own personal trauma and the way it impacted his life and made it easy for us to draw the parallels in our own.

The retreat was organized by Rev. Tamaro Howze. Rev. Howze also possesses a list of academic matriculations from prestigious institutions,

yet he, too, remains down to earth and approachable. He recognizes the importance of self-care for leaders. He says, "Just as much as the spiritual health of the people whom pastors lead matters, clergy health matters too. Pastors are burned out and tired. I wanted them to know that I care about and support their ministries." Rev. Howze is furthering his education as a doctoral student at Campbell University, while working in his local church, and actively participating as a husband and father in the life of his growing family. What is most impressive about Rev. Howze, to me, is that he is 'bout that life. He does not just care about pastors; he cares about people. Once a month he has Church in the Streets, a ministry partnership that goes where people are and meets them where they are, physically emotionally and spiritually. Rev. Howze's passion for people and his understanding of Trauma-Informed Care operates from the philosophy that we are all human beings who have had experiences, some traumatic, that have shaped us and when we address the whole person, we have the opportunity to show them that the love of God extends past the wall of the sanctuary on Sunday between the hours of 11:00am and 1:00pm. The love of God can find you wherever you are.

Because of this shared understanding of the human condition, it is no surprise that Rev. Howze would bring such a practitioner of Trauma-Informed Theology as Dr. McCreary, to speak to pastors. As pastors we often speak with our congregants about their individual traumas. At times, we may not be equipped to handle the intricacies of trauma symptoms. This retreat taught us that it is acceptable, and necessary, to recognize that some situations require a different level of care. In these situations, it is better to refer your congregants to trained, licensed mental health professionals. It does not mean that your faith is lacking. This retreat was a reminder that faith is action. It is okay to have Jesus and a therapist too.

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McCreary, Micah, L. 2023. "Trauma and Race: A Path to Wellbeing."

## HEALTH & *Wellness*



Mr. Daman De Leon  
Health and Wellness Editor  
Health\_Wellness@StarOfZion.org

# Understanding & Preventing Heart Disease

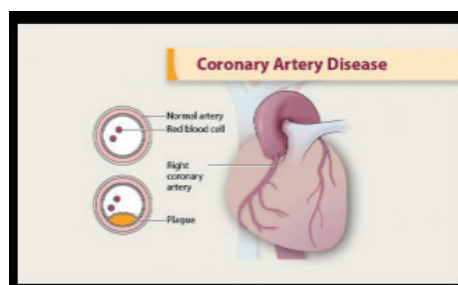
By Yabo Beysolow, M.D., M.P.H., Director of Health Ministry  
Prescribing Positivity series from the Office of Health Ministry,  
The A.M.E. Zion Church

### What is the function of our heart?

- The heart is a muscle that pumps blood around our body as it beats. The blood carries oxygen and nutrition to all the parts of our bodies. Blood also carries away things that we do not want or need in our bodies (waste products).
- Your heart also regulates your blood pressure. It is vital to have a healthy heart to ensure that all our organs and body parts work correctly.

### What is heart disease?

Like any other part of your body,



your heart can become injured or diseased.

Many heart conditions can be called 'heart disease'. One condition you may hear about most often is called coronary artery disease (CDC: Coronary Artery Disease), which can lead to heart attacks.

Coronary artery disease occurs when there is a buildup of plaque (cholesterol and other substances) in the walls of the blood vessels (arteries) that carry blood to the heart. This plaque buildup causes the inside of these arteries to get narrower over time, and this can lead to a partial or total block of blood flow through the arteries.

Source: CDC: Coronary Artery Disease

What happens when blood flow is blocked, and the blood does not get to where it is supposed to?

- If blood flow is blocked to a muscle, all the nutrition and oxygen the blood is carrying to that muscle does not get there. Then, the muscle becomes injured. The heart is a muscle. When blood flow does not get to the heart like it should, it can lead to a heart attack or heart failure.



Make this section “signs of a heart attack or heart failure” a side box.

**What are some signs/symptoms of a heart attack or heart failure?**

Some people may not know they have heart disease. It may be ‘silent’. Some people may not get diagnosed until they have a heart attack, arrhythmia (palpitations) or heart failure.

- Symptoms of Heart attack: Chest pain or discomfort, upper back or neck pain, indigestion, heartburn, nausea or vomiting, extreme fatigue, upper body discomfort, dizziness, and shortness of breath.
- Arrhythmia: Fluttering feelings in the chest (palpitations).
- Symptoms of Heart failure: Shortness of breath, fatigue, or swelling of the feet, ankles, legs, abdomen, or neck veins.

If you or someone you are with is experiencing any of these signs or symptoms, call 911 immediately. Do not wait to call.

**What puts someone at risk for heart disease:**

Having the following conditions:

- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- High blood cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Being overweight or obese

Making the following lifestyle choices:

- Having an unhealthy diet
- Not being physically active, not exercising
- Drinking alcohol excessively

**What can I do to prevent heart disease?**

Choose to make healthy, positive lifestyle changes!

- Choosing healthy foods and drinks
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Exercising regularly
- Not smoking
- Managing your stress levels

Always consult your healthcare provider when starting an exercise program or a new diet program.

**(Another Side box)- Know your numbers...**

**Know your numbers! If you already have high cholesterol, high blood pressure or diabetes, start working on controlling them and lowering your risk of heart disease.**

Make sure you know your numbers:

- What Your Cholesterol Levels Mean
- What do your blood pressure numbers mean?
- your diabetes numbers. Tests for Diagnosing and Monitoring Diabetes

Work with your healthcare provider to get your numbers under control and take your medicines as prescribed.

**Sidebar Graphic (Blood pressure)**

Source: AHA: Blood pressure levels

**Did you know that heart disease can present differently in men and women?**

**Blood Pressure Categories**



BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY	SYSTOLIC mm Hg (upper number)		DIASTOLIC mm Hg (lower number)
NORMAL	LESS THAN 120	and	LESS THAN 80
ELEVATED	120-129	and	LESS THAN 80
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 1	130-139	or	80-89
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 2	140 OR HIGHER	or	90 OR HIGHER
HYPERTENSIVE CRISIS (consult your doctor immediately)	HIGHER THAN 180	and/or	HIGHER THAN 120

[heart.org/bplevels](http://heart.org/bplevels)

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States. It is also the leading cause of death in African Americans in the U.S. Heart attacks, and heart disease may present differently in women versus men. Women need to be alert and not ignore warning signs.

Many women may not have any symptoms of heart disease, but some may have the following symptoms when they are moving around or even when they are resting.

- a dull or heavy ache or discomfort in their chests (angina)
- pain in the neck, jaw or throat
- pain in the upper abdomen or back

Other symptoms that women may have include feeling nauseous, vomiting, excessive tiredness (fatigue) or tiredness that will not go away.

Watch this short but essential video from Dr. E. Sanchez, American Heart Association, on how women’s symptoms may differ from what men experience when having a heart attack: <https://youtu.be/io-4Ovh-Q2IA>.

**What is a stroke?**

**F.A.S.T. Warning Signs**

Use the letters in F.A.S.T. to spot a Stroke

- **F = Face Drooping** – Does one side of the face droop or is it numb? Ask the person to smile. Is the person's smile uneven?
- **A = Arm Weakness** – Is one arm weak or numb? Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?
- **S = Speech Difficulty** – Is speech slurred?
- **T = Time to call 911** – Stroke is an emergency. Every minute counts. Call 911 immediately. Note the time when any of the symptoms first appear.

**Other Stroke Symptoms**

Watch for Sudden:

- **NUMBNESS** or weakness of face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of the body
- **CONFUSION**, trouble speaking or understanding speech
- **TROUBLE SEEING** in one or both eyes
- **TROUBLE WALKING**, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- **SEVERE HEADACHE** with no known cause

A stroke is a ‘brain attack’. Just like you can have a heart attack when the blood supply to your heart is blocked, you can suffer a stroke when the blood supply to your brain gets blocked. The brain does not get the oxygen and nutrients it needs from the blood. Brain cells die off within minutes when they do not get this oxygen. This leads to a stroke. Also, a stroke can occur when a blood vessel in the brain bursts.

**Sidebar graphic - Stroke symptoms**

Call 911 immediately if you or someone you are with is showing or experiencing these signs or symptoms. Every minute is vital to help prevent brain function loss from a stroke.

Source: AHA: Stroke symptoms

**For further information:**

High blood pressure: <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure>

Diabetes: <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/diabetes>

Stroke: <https://www.cdc.gov/stroke/about.htm>

Heart Disease: <https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/>

**Article References:**

CDC Heart Disease

American Heart Association: Heart Attack, High Blood Pressure, Stroke



# What's Next: Awareness, Action, or Both?

By Daman De Leon  
Health & Wellness Editor

The Month of March is essential for various reasons. It's the period in which we are one-quarter through the Calendar Year; it is the Month that ushers in the Spring Season, and it is also the time of year when we recognize Women's History Month. However, the Month of March is also recognized as the Month in which we take the time to bring attention to two vital health components: Developmental Disabilities and Kidney Health.

## Chronic Kidney Disease

According to the CDC, approximately 1 in 7 Americans suffer from Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD). That's around 15% of U.S. Adults (approx.. 37 Million Individuals). Kidney Disease is one of the leading causes of death in the United States.<sup>1</sup>

### What are the signs to look for?

People with CKD may not feel ill or notice any symptoms. The only way to find out for sure if you have CKD is through specific blood and urine tests.<sup>1</sup> In the early stages of kidney disease, you may not have symptoms.

Symptoms can develop if kidney disease is not found early or gets worse over time despite treatment.

Symptoms can include:

- weight loss and poor appetite
- swollen ankles, feet or hands – as a result of water retention edema.
- shortness of breath
- tiredness
- blood in urine
- an increased need to urinate – particularly at night
- difficulty sleeping (insomnia)
- itchy skin
- muscle cramps
- feeling sick
- headaches
- erectile dysfunction in men

### Preventable Methods/Risk Management

According to the CDC, preventing chronic kidney disease (CKD) and its complications is possible by managing risk factors and treating the disease to slow its progression and reduce the risk of complications. To keep healthy kidneys, it is important to control those risk factors for CKD that can be modified.

- Lose weight if you are overweight.
- Get active. Physical activity helps control blood sugar and blood pressure levels.
- Quit smoking.
- Getting a checkup? Make sure to get your kidneys checked too. Make sure you are also seeing a nephrologist (kidney doctor) routinely.
- Take medications as directed.
- Keep your blood pressure below 140/90 or ask your doctor what the best blood pressure target is for you.
- If you have diabetes, stay in your target blood sugar range as much as possible.
- Stay in your target cholesterol range.
- Eat foods that are lower in salt.
- Eat more fruits and vegetables.

## Developmental Disabilities

The 2023 theme for Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, focused on the question, *What's Next?* With this theme, the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors, aka the NACDD plans to highlight change and innovation – what individuals and communities are doing to move past discussions and execute innovative plans on education, employment, and accessibility. The purpose is to help raise awareness about people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Developmental Disability is a diverse group of chronic conditions that are due to mental or physical impairments. A developmental disability can occur before, during, or after birth. Common, well-known developmental disabilities include autism, Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, and Fragile X Syndrome. Here are some facts and statistics on developmental disabilities.

- Developmental Disability is a severe, long-term disability that affects cognitive ability, physical functioning, or both.
- Approximately 1 in 6 or about 17% of children aged 3 through 17 have one or more developmental disabilities.
- The prevalence of developmental disability among children has increased over the past years, between 2009-2011 and again between 2015-2017. (<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/developmentaldisabilities/features/increase-in-developmental-disabilities.html>).
- In a study published in the Journal of Pediatrics in 2019, describing how often children in the U.S. were diagnosed with developmental disabilities between 2009 and 2017, some groups of children were more likely to have been diagnosed with a developmental disability than others: males greater than females and children from families with incomes below the federal poverty level.

Some strategies for working with both adults and children with developmental disabilities include (1) Emphasize and focus on the strengths, not the weaknesses (2) Treat the same as others (3) Learn the true meaning of "Inclusion" and be sure to implement.

Those with intellectual and developmental disabilities often require special care and unique communication techniques or exhibit behavior that others may consider "difficult." The more people who understand the correct strategies for working with adults with developmental disabilities, the higher their quality of life will become.

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

# Women's History Month

By Rev. Allison N. Lee, Ed.D., MTS

Women are a force. *Do you feel it?* It is the *existence*, the *embrace*, and the *energy* of women – it surrounds us. *Can you hear it?* It is the voices of women who have historically and still continually advocate for self through demanding respect, equity, and the dismantling of a patriarchy that has for too long cast shadows – both intentionally and inadvertently – over the extraordinary and significant personhood and contributions of women – their voices empower us. *Can you see it?* It is the creativity in physicality, the beauty in being, the influence of lives touched by women or bearers of light – this uniqueness uplifts us. *Do you know and believe it?* The Divine at work in *women*; especially *women* – this is a blessing to us. Women are a force.

## Background – Women's History Month

In 1981 Congress passed Public Law 97-28 which granted permission for and requested Presidential approval to declare the week of March 7, 1982 as the first ever “Women's History Week.” This was a momentous resolution, as it sought to officially and publically recognize through celebration the noteworthy and leading contributions of “American women of every race, class, and ethnic background” to the United States of America. Public Law 97-28 details the role played by women in the procurement of women's suffrage, “...the abolitionist movement, the emancipation movement, the industrial labor union movement, and the modern civil rights movement” in addition to what was listed earlier on in the resolution. It goes on to state that in spite of the historic contributions of women, “...the role of American women in history has been consistently overlooked and undervalued in the body of American history.” This resolution was repeatedly passed by Congress for the next five years, until the National Women's History Project implored Congress to do more. In 1987, Congress then passed Public Law 100-9, which moved the country away from Women's History Week and into what was pronounced then and continues to this day as “Women's History Month.”

## Women's History Month Theme – 2024

Each year, Women's History Month has a named theme that honors women who have been instrumental in that particular area. This year, the theme is *Women Who Advocate for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*. This subject commends women who are using their voices and experiences in order to level the playing field and are lobbying for inclusion and allyship in their various career fields and areas of interest. Some of this work deals with: gender equality in the workplace, disability culture, and support of caregivers. According to the National Women's History Alliance, this also includes exploration of “harmful social pol-

icies and behaviors” and the establishment and expansion of strategic programming across every sector – educational institutions, the military, business organizations, and federal organizations.

## International Women's Day

Within Women's History Month for the United States, but celebrated on a global scale, is International Women's Day. Celebrated annually on March 8<sup>th</sup>, International Women's Day honors women's rights, inclusive of the continued fight for: reproductive rights, gender equality, domestic violence and all violence against women. It has been said that International Women's Day is what gave birth to Women's History Month. In New York on March 8, 1857, textile workers gathered in order to protest inequitable working conditions for women. On March 8<sup>th</sup> of 1908, there was another protest in which women organized and marched through the Lower East Side. Beginning in 1910, March 8<sup>th</sup> became annually known as International Women's Day.

Similar to the theme for Women's History Month within the United States of America, the theme for International Women's Day is #InspireInclusion. The International Women's Day website provides a list of ways that groups and organizations can support, include and value women:

- forging women's economic empowerment
- recruiting, retaining and developing female talent
- supporting women and girls into leadership, decision-making, business and STEM
- designing and building infrastructure meeting the needs of women and girls
- helping women and girls make informed decisions about their health
- involving women and girls in sustainable agriculture and food security
- providing women and girls with access to quality education and training
- elevating women and girl's participation and achievement in sport
- promoting creative and artistic talent of women and girls, and
- addressing further areas supporting the advancement of women and girls.

## Moving Forward

As we celebrate and uplift women during Women's History Month 2024 and International Women's Day, may we continue the fight toward equity. May we explore the spaces that continue to fall short of respecting and honoring women in order to tear down structures that no longer work and implement safe spaces. May we be brave enough to practice inclusion and confident enough to raise our voices against mistreatment and degradation. May we all be aware that women are worthy simply because. May women continue to pave the way and walk boldly in authority, while being accepting of rest that does not have to be earned nor asked for. Happy Women's History Month!

# Oikos Institute for Social Impact Honored: Traditioned Innovation Award

By Athena Piryliis-Johnson

Durham, NC, January 2024 – The Oikos Institute for Social Impact is honored to be named one of the 2023 Traditioned Innovation Award winners by Leadership Education at Duke Divinity. The Oikos Institute is being recognized for assisting over 70 faith-based organizations nationwide in implementing their F.I.S.H. Capitals (Finance/Faith; Intellectual, Social, Human) and utilizing their assets to drive communal transformation and economic mobility.

The Traditioned Innovation Award from Leadership Education at

Duke University pays tribute to initiatives that honor the past, envision the future, and inspire leaders to creatively confront social and financial challenges while remaining true to their institution's mission and convictions. The award encourages Christian leaders to reflect on their convictions and daily activities, aiming to bear witness to the reign of God.



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Continued... next page



Victoria White, Managing Director of Grants and Awards at Leadership Education highlighted the significance of the Traditioned Innovation Award: “The Traditioned Innovation Award recognizes and affirms the faithful and innovative work of an outstanding community initiative rooted in Christian practices. This year the award focuses on catalytic organizations that are effective in their own community while also nurturing groups with a similar vision for thriving communities.”

The Oikos Institute empowers faith communities and anchor institutions to harness the power of their assets, to become catalysts for communal transformation and economic renewal. Central to their teachings is the principle of responsible stewardship of resources and assets, cultivating collaborations among faith communities, other anchor institutions, and stakeholders and accessing patient capital and grants for mission-aligned real - estate development projects to serve societal needs. By addressing the needs of underserved communities, Oikos and the congregations they work with, actively contribute to mitigating social and financial challenges. This award serves as a reaffirmation of

the Oikos Institute’s unwavering commitment to innovative approaches to missional work.

“We are deeply honored as this acknowledgment reaffirms our dedication to Fishing Differently™ – a commitment to transformative actions that leave a lasting impact on communities,” says CEO and Co-Founder, Rev. Dr. Sidney Williams, Jr.

“This award serves as a testament to the collective efforts of our team. It encourages us to continue our mission of fostering thriving communities through innovative and faith-driven initiatives,” states Executive Director and Co-Founder, Rev. Dr. Reginald Blount. For more information about the Oikos Institute for Social Impact, please visit <https://oikosinstitute.org/>.

**Press Contact:**

Athena Piryliis-Johnson, Director of Marketing and Client Relations, Oikos Institute for Social Impact, [apiryliis@oikosinstitute.org](mailto:apiryliis@oikosinstitute.org), 973-222-0420

## President Parrish and AAUW Members Challenge Gender Wage Gap

North Carolina Employment Agencies:

The Salisbury Branch of American Association of University Women (AAUW) call to your attention Executive Order 93, whereas North Carolina enacted a state-wide law effectively, April 2, 2019, when Governor Roy Cooper declared state agencies may not request pay information from applicants, nor rely upon previously obtained historical salary information when determining an applicant’s wages. As AAUW is committed to workplace and economic equity, we recognize certain systemic practices contribute to the very real, persistent, and harmful - gender pay gap.



Did you know, white women working full time in the United States of America are paid just 84 cents to every dollar earned by white men, black women earn 71 cents, Latinx women earn 53 cents — and the consequences of this gap affect women throughout their lives? The pay gap follows women into retirement, and as a result of lower lifetime earnings, women receive less in Social Security and pensions; thus in terms of overall retirement income, women have only 70% of what men do.

The gender pay gap is the result of many factors, inextricably linked to the history of labor in America, including race and ethnicity, disability, access to education, and much more. As a result, different groups of women experience very different gaps in pay. The gender pay gap is a complex issue that warrants inclusive solutions; and that’s why AAUW is in support of the possibilities Executive Order 93 can create if fully implemented throughout the state, according to the governor’s directives.

Permit us to share, AAUW NC has recently conducted an audit of county job applications statewide to gain a clearer picture of the practice of requesting salary history data of job applicants within our state. Moreover, in viewing sample job applications, we found 78 of 100 counties in North Carolina are non-compliant with the Governor’s order, as multiple applications request work experience details questioning the candidate’s prior salary. The counties include: Alamance, Alexander, Alleghany, Anson, Avery, Beaufort, Bertie, Bladen, Brunswick, Burke, Cabarrus, Caldwell, Camden, Carteret, Caswell, Catawba, Chatham, Chowan, Clay, Columbus, Craven, Cumberland, Currituck, Dare, Davie, Durham, Duplin, Edgecombe, Forsyth, Franklin, Gaston, Gates, Granville, Greene, Guilford, Halifax, Harnett, Haywood, Henderson, Hoke, Hyde, Iredell, Jackson, Johnston, Lee, Lenoir, Marin, McDowell, Mecklenburg, Mitchell, Montgomery, Moore, Nash, Northampton, Onslow, Pasquotank, Pender, Perquimans, Person, Pitt, Polk, Randolph, Robeson, Rockingham, Rowan, Rutherford, Sampson, Stanly, Stokes, Surry, Swain, Transylvania, Tyrell, Union, Warren, Wilson, Yadkin, and Yancey.

Members of AAUW know certain questions, especially about previous salary, disadvantage those who may have experienced low pay due to

gender and/or ethnicity bias. More specifically, the gender wage gap hurts North Carolina’s families, businesses and economy; and North Carolina women and families deserve more. Data reports, women in North Carolina currently earn 19 percent less than men on average. While median earnings for men in North Carolina are \$45,000, women in our state earn just \$36,400, putting women’s pay in North Carolina 32nd in the nation. If current trends continue, working women in North Carolina will not see equal pay until 2060 - and women of color will have to wait even longer.

It’s the simple truth and statistics show, women in North Carolina and across the country continue to earn less than men. With women historically earning less on average than men, requiring job applicants to report salary history can perpetuate gender pay inequities. Furthermore, research shows women get paid less than men in their very first jobs, even when controlling for occupation, college major, hours worked, location and demographics. Also, women are less likely to negotiate their salaries - and when they do negotiate, women are more likely to receive negative feedback and less likely to be promoted. Ultimately, relying on salary history can enable the pay gap, based on wrong assumptions that the prior salary was fair or free from bias.

Many states across the country are increasingly enacting salary history bans; and a growing body of evidence demonstrates a correlation with subsequent higher pay rates for women. Executive Order 93 is fair and just as it prohibits state agencies under the Governor’s oversight from requesting salary history from job applicants and directs them to avoid relying on previously obtained salary history to determine an applicant’s income. Moreover, Executive Order 93 directs the North Carolina Office of State Human Resources to remove employment salary history fields from state employment applications. As state employee salary history is a public record, the Executive Order mandates the Office of State Human Resources work to ensure previous salary information is not used in a discriminatory way. Thus, we are standing to ask employing agencies, and persons with business and socioeconomic influence and/or the authority to make decisions, to comply with the precedent set by the state of North Carolina and remove salary history information from job applications; and further - revise human resources policies to stipulate a ban on the consideration of salary history in pay packages. Simply put, the same work deserves the same pay.

Your prompt attention and action to this matter is greatly appreciated. We look forward on moving progressively to pay equity in America.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Da'Tarvia Parrish".

Da'Tarvia A. Parrish, President with the Members of AAUW Salisbury Branch





Ms. Angel Eason  
Lifestyle Editor  
Lifestyle@StarOfZion.org

By Angel Eason  
Lifestyle Editor

Black love is revolutionary.

When you look back on our history as Black people, everything was done to keep Black love from happening. During the institution of slavery, families were torn apart due to the killings of mothers and fathers, and families were separated over and over again.

Our ancestors paved the way for us to be able to legally marry. As I was thinking about how radial Black love is, I thought to reach out to a few couples in Zion to see if I could discuss and/or receive responses to common questions regarding marriage today.

As a younger adult, yes, a younger adult, it is refreshing to see couples withstand the trials and tribulations of life and come out on top with the help of God. Growing up, Black love was displayed in my home, family, church, and community. I have been able to witness it up close and personal through the love of my parents. Unconditional love is a type of love that is recited in wedding vows and shown in the day-to-day of life.



tion that was a part of it – laughter  
Pastor Kelsey Steele - We met at Morning Star Baptist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina. The first time we hung out was at a Charlotte NAACP Branch



Meeting held at Weep Willow A.M.E. Zion Church. I knew it was love because we both had the same mutual interest in advocacy and education for Black people. She would always carry herself in a classy and distinguished manner. I was attracted to her zeal for the Lord, her love for the church, and her overall ministry mentality.

Lady Natasha Steele - We exchanged numbers at an NAACP meeting because we were both youth advisors. I knew he was the one because we shared the same family values and drive for social justice; God revealed him in a dream.

**What are the foundational principles that keep your relationship strong?**

Presiding Elder Vincent Jones - We live by Genesis 2:24 "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." The principle of leaving family and cleaving to each other. That cleaving causes us to become one person. A lot of times we tell people if you don't see the other one, the two of us are one person.



Even when we do marriage counseling, this is when the math goes off the screen because one plus one equals one and not two.

Dr. Montina Jones - The power in the word of cleaving. You are together for better or for worse. You have a resolve or a commitment to cleave to stay together, to stick it out, and to be there for each other.

Pastor Kelsey Steele - I believe the foundational principles that keep our relationship strong are a solid prayer life and a mutual understanding that we have been partnered to make an impact and spread the love of Christ to everyone we come in contact with. I believe that all relationships come with weaknesses and challenges, however, the joy of the Lord has continued to be our strength for over fifteen years, four states, five churches, and four Episcopal areas.

Lady Natasha Steele - Honoring God, honoring our vows, extending each other grace, and Godly council are the foundational principles that keep our relationship strong.

**In what ways do you center God in your marriage?**

Presiding Elder Vincent Jones - We do a lot of praying together and keep God at the center. During good times, we ask for directions and when things are challenging, we also seek God's direction. We have open communication. We don't just let things happen or assume we understand each other.

Dr. Montina Jones - Not only do we pray with each other, we pray for each other. Throughout the day, I will think about my husband and lift him in prayer. I will ask God to cover him and continue to anoint him. There are times he will call me on the phone and say I felt the urge to pray for you. Prayer is a hallmark and integral part of our relationship.

Pastor Kelsey Steele - The way we center God in our marriage is to always understand that we have a shared faith. Although she is formally Baptist and I am a legacy Zionite it took some time to get adjusted to a huge denomination while at the same time cultivating a personal prayer

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Continued... next page



Pastor & Mrs. Steele



Presiding Edler Jones & Dr. Jones

Two married couples, Presiding Elder Vincent Jones and Dr. Montina Jones (Newport News District, Virginia Conference), Pastor Kelsey Steele and Lady Natasha Steele (Varick Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church), answered a few questions about their love for each other and how it is everlasting.

I interviewed Presiding Elder Vincent Jones and Dr. Montina Jones via Zoom and received written responses from Pastor Kelsey Steele and Lady Natasha Steele. I appreciate both couples for spending time to provide advice and wisdom about their journey in marriage.

**How did you meet and how did you know this was the love for you?**

Dr. Montina Jones - I was a paper girl in Elizabeth City, North Carolina. I had a good and strong arm and could throw the paper.

Presiding Elder Vincent Jones - She caught my attention because she was the only paper delivery girl in town. I tried to get her attention which I had little success at doing. Finally, I asked well why won't you talk to boys and she said my dad said you have to talk with him first. I made my way to her house to ask for permission. Her dad wanted to know who I was, well who my parents were. Once he found out, he said sure.

Dr. Montina Jones - I had long bushy ponytails and he said when I rode the bike he could see the wind blowing through my ponytails. He said they were so beautiful.

Presiding Elder Vincent Jones - When she said the hair caught my at-



life and worship time. I view marriage somewhat as an altar where our very lives have been sacrificed for the greater good and our relationship is the greatest offering that we can give Christ. We also keep God in our marriage by serving together in various ministries in our local church and district. God has allowed us to serve as thought partners to each other in both our secular and ecclesial careers. We both by the grace of God have careers in Education where she serves as a teacher at Betsy Ross School and I serve as the Dean of Students at COOP High School and the School Board President of the Booker T. Washington Academy. We both by the grace of God serve his church. I pastor Varick Memorial. AME Zion Church, New Haven and she serves as the Hartford District YAMS Coordinator. I believe that God is the center and the glue that holds everything together.

Lady Natasha Steele - We center God in our marriage by praying before making big decisions, worshipping together, and partnering in ministry.

### How do you preserve yourself in your marriage?

Presiding Elder Vincent Jones - We do things to keep the spark alive and we always remember how it was when we were dating. It's been fifty years and we still have date nights. People look at us and ask why are y'all dating and it's because we started dating.

We like to share the joy of marriage. We ask people how long they have been married. In the grocery store the other day, we asked the young lady how long she'd been married and she said thirteen years. She asked my wife, and my wife said fifty years and she said "What." She froze because she hadn't heard of relationships lasting this long.

Dr. Montana Jones - and we dated four years before we got married.

Presiding Elder Vincent Jones - We don't have special days. Valentine's Day is a waste of time, resources, and money. Why not have Valentine's Day every day? Buy me some chocolate in July. We don't use a special day to celebrate.

Dr. Montana Jones - I don't know what that could look or feel like because we have become one. My husband is probably one of the smartest people I know. I see the gifts in him and I'm so excited about the gifts God has given him/ I continue to encourage, motivate, and inspire him. He does the same for me and brings out the best in each other.

Who would have thought that two young people from Elizabeth City, NC could have lived such a good life and a rich togetherness ordained by God? We have been places that we never thought or dreamed that we would have the opportunity to do.

Pastor Kelsey Steele - I must admit that marriage can be somewhat of a dichotomy on one end you are an individual and on the other end, you have become one. I believe that it's very important to preserve yourself and never lose your sense of identity. I believe that we have given each other room to be who we authentically have been created to be by not placing on each other unrealistic expectations. We are one yet we have different thought patterns, hobbies, and perspectives.



Lady Natasha Steele - I preserve myself in marriage by practicing my love languages, planning vacations alone or with other couples, spending time alone, and going on dates.

### What advice do you have for newly dating and/or engaged couples?

Presiding Elder Vincent Jones - This dating thing, I don't know how you can get people to ask God if this is the one for me. You have to make certain that your mate is your friend. The problem is when you have a relationship to have a relationship, and you leave God out of the equation, you are going to start behind the eight ball. You're already behind and that's when people start asking, why are we always struggling? You have to make sure that this is the one God ordained. You have to make sure that they are your friend. I don't want to be with anyone that is not my friend. We had a special kinship before we got married.

Dr. Montana Jones - When my husband walks into the room, my heart still goes pitter-patter. He puts a smile on my face and joy in my heart. The flame is still there just as much if not even more than it was 54 years ago. He is my friend.

We always tell each other and we don't let a day go by without saying I

love you.

I'm a morning person and he's not. Usually, when I wake up I say good morning, I love you. So that usually gets our day started.

Presiding Elder Vincent Jones - She's so joyful as soon as she wakes up.

Pastor Kelsey Steele - I've been out of the game for over fifteen years and I heard that the dating pool is not what it used to be and most single people have adopted the mentality that I can do bad all by myself. I believe the advice that I would give to a newly dating or engaged couple is that you have to be patient and allow God to present you with somebody that will blow your mind and rock your world. My advice is to get your affairs in order and make sure you are financially, spiritually, and intellectually mature to connect with somebody else. We are living in an age where you need to check credit scores, health statuses, and mental evaluations.

Lady Natasha Steele - My advice is to find yourself, set boundaries, and enjoy the journey of falling in love.

### What advice do you have for couples that are struggling right now?

Presiding Elder Vincent Jones - The biggest thing we do is to go back to the vows you made in the presence of God and man. The vows are still there. They didn't have an expiration date. For better or for worse. I know people get excited on their wedding day. You need to refresh and go back to the vows you made to God and before man. You made the vows between each other. Those things are promises that you made to God and each other.

We said for better or for worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, and until death do us part. Now and then when the challenges get strong, we go back to those vows and God promised he would be with us. A lot of times when couples want to write their vows, I frown against it. They leave out so many promises including the promises of God. For example, I'm going to be with you in sickness and in health. That means when you're not well, I'm going to say see you or bye, I hope you make it.

Dr. Montana Jones - I'm going to go to 1 Corinthians 13:4 "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud." That's our relationship and who we are. We have this scripture in our bedroom that we pass several times throughout the day. I get emotional thinking about how we live.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning has a poem that tells it all about how you become one and remain one even until and after death as husband and wife.

Through it all, we have learned to trust in Jesus, we have learned to trust in God. He has led and guided us and walked with us every step of the way. For that, we say to God be the glory for the great things He has done. We hope that when people see us as one, they can see the love and the Christ-centered union that God has put together.

Pastor Kelsey Steele - There are no perfect marriages because they are all made up of imperfect people. They may have a quirk that frustrates you, or you may still be angry about something they did a year ago. I believe to make a marriage work, you must be willing to forgive your spouse for what angers or hurts you. If your spouse is not taking advantage of your forgiveness and is sincerely trying to be better, take steps towards forgiveness no matter how often necessary.

Lady Natasha Steele - My advice for couples that may be struggling is to take time to reset, pray before making decisions, and seek Godly counsel with a counselor or therapist.

Black love is revolutionary. Black love is keeping God first.

As you read the responses from both couples, I hope you experienced pure joy like I did to understand what true love looks like for these couples and how vital is it to center God in your relationship, in your marriage. As an unmarried person, the couples' responses, reminded me to think about a few things before getting married: 1. Keep God at the center; allow Him to approve of the person first 2. Make sure I like the person 3. Read through the traditional wedding vows; am I ready to uphold the vows forever with this person?

*Thank you for reading. Do you have your own Black love story you want to share? Share at [lifestyle@starofzion.org](mailto:lifestyle@starofzion.org).*



# A New Year: Volunteer

By Asia Briana Brown

Spring is almost here, but there is still much time to make an impact in 2024: volunteer. While every new year does not promise a guarantee on our resolutions, volunteering to impact your community produces lifelong benefits. In the past two years, I joined great outreach organizations such as the Charlotte Mecklenburg Dream Center.

The Charlotte Mecklenburg Dream Center was founded in 2014 by husband-and-wife team, Jim and Karen Noble. A branch of the Los Angeles-based Dream Center Network, CMDC's mission, according to its website is to "raise up disciples and transform communities through consistent, Christ-centered, community-based engagement, and meeting the needs of the whole person—spirit, soul, and body." The Dream Center meets the needs of its community by hosting and performing outreach to Charlotte's underserved and homeless population throughout the week.

Volunteers can join any program throughout the week to serve the Charlottean community. A few of the programs that I have participated in include Sunday Meal Service, Friday Night Food Prep, Friday Night Street Ministry, YTH Night Live, and Adopt-A-Block. The beauty of these programs is that one can serve both adults and children throughout these ministries. Particularly, Adopt-A-Block often serves three underserved neighborhoods in Charlotte: J.T. Williams, Reid Park, and Thomasboro. On its website, CMDC states its mission for these neighborhoods is "to give hope and bring transformation . . . through consistent and dedicated home visits, relationship building and physi-

cal acts of service."

Through experience, Adopt-A-Block enables more direct engagement with the people whom one is serving: both the children and sometimes, their parents or guardians. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is preached, and residents are fed, ministered to, and are free to enjoy a day of fun, catered, specifically, for them. Friday Night Food Prep allows volunteers to assemble 120-160 World Famous Charlotte Mecklenburg Dream Center Chili Cheese Hot Dogs for the Street Ministry team to distribute to the homeless population in Uptown Charlotte. CMDC calls this population their "friends."

This is the heart of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Dream Center: to serve people as if they were their own friends and family members. The Dream Center also hosts a church service every Sunday, named Restoring Place Church (also known as the Dream Center Church of Charlotte). If you want to make an impact this year, consider volunteering with the Dream Center if you share the same heart as the CMDC posts on their website: "To See Lives Transformed Through the Power of the Gospel."

This Lenten season brings reminders of that Gospel message most profoundly noted in John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Let this year be the year that you share that Gospel message through serving those who may never hear the gospel or know God's love without your presence in their lives.

## FINANCIAL FREEDOM

# Women's Fight for Financial Rights and Freedom



Dr. Dana Stillely  
Financial Freedom Editor  
FinancialFreedom@StarOfZion.org

By Dr. Dana G. Stillely  
Financial Freedom Editor

In recognition of Women's History Month in March, I sought to explore the pursuit of financial freedom strictly from a woman's perspective. I quickly discovered that the path to financial freedom for women began with a long fight for financial and civil rights; for women's financial freedom women has been blocked by the government and society since our country was founded.

Since the early 1800s, women faced financial hurdles that were not only gender-based but racially-based as well. The enslavement of Black people prohibited Black women from gaining or fighting for any rights. On the other hand, White women faced coverture, which legally mandated that a married woman's existence was merged with her husband's, thereby removing any independence of her own. The beginning of the Suffrage Movement in 1848 and the official end to slavery in 1865 were major steps for women in the fight for their rights. By 1900, legislation allowing women to have their own property and to maintain their wages had been passed. By 1910, 7.8 million women were employed in the US vs. 2.6 million in 1880. Typically, White women who were married did not enter the workforce during that time. Single White women held jobs as clerks, typists, or teachers. Black women, single or married, who were forced to work to make ends meet were restricted to jobs in agriculture, personal service, or domestic.

Decades later, the passing of key legislation such as The Equal Pay Act of 1963, The Civil Rights Act of 1965, and Title IX in 1972 helped women of all races to forge their independence and seek job opportunities that offered increased wages. Although the passing of Roe vs. Wade in 1973 is often considered only in the context of reproductive health, the ability to make choices regarding reproduction directly impacted women's financial strength. Furthermore, by the early 1990s, women were moving away from traditional jobs such as teaching and nursing and finding employment as doctors, attorneys, and professors. Today,

women are CEOs of Fortune 500 companies, college presidents, and entrepreneurs.

Even with these noted advances in employment, securing financial freedom remains difficult for most women. The systemic inequality that existed hundreds of years ago remains today and is clearly exhibited by the continuing wage gap. In 2022, White women earned 83% of what White, non-Hispanic men earned, while Black women earned 70%, and Hispanic women earned 65%. This gap in earnings, equivalent to thousands of dollars each year, has stayed relatively the same for the past 20 years and must be addressed for women to make significant financial strides.

The world's wealth is estimated to be controlled by women by the year 2030 due to changing demographics in the baby boomer generation. However, financial freedom and the creation or preservation of generational wealth and financial assets require women to increase their financial proficiency in terms of education, planning, investing, and financial management relationships. This month, begin to draft your plan to move toward financial freedom.





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 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



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**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



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**NORTH EASTERN EPISCOPAL DISTRICT**  
 8369 Governor Grayson Way, Ellicott City, MD 21043  
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 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



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**SOUTH ATLANTIC EPISCOPAL DISTRICT**  
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 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



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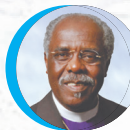
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 45 Awesome Ridge, Garner, NC 27529  
 Ph: (704) 877-9646  
 Email: djjj85@windstream.net



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 2000 Cedar Circle Drive, Baltimore, MD 21228  
 Ph: (410) 744-7330  
 Fax: (410) 788-5510



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 18031 South Pheasant Lake Drive, Tinley Park, IL 60477  
 Ph: (708) 802-9873  
 Email: rtrejvr@aol.com



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 3654 Poplar Road, Flossmoor, IL 60422  
 Ph: (708) 799-5599 Fax: (708) 799-5584  
 Email: gwalker047@aol.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



**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  
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**ALABAMA-FLORIDA EPISCOPAL DISTRICT**  
 3605 Sandy Plains Road, Suite 240-238, Marietta GA 30066  
 Ph: 770-633-4801 Office: 334-269-6365; Email: bishopgdcrenshaw@aol.com  
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 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  
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**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  
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**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



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**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  
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 Mrs. Jean McMurray-Leake, Missionary Supervisor



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



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**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

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3225 Sugar Creek Road, Charlotte, NC 28269  
Ph: (704) 599-4630; Fax: (704) 688-2547;

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

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419 Eberle Way, Matthews, NC 28105  
Ph: (704) 321-7022; Cell: (704) 562-0402 ; Email: CLC.FVP@gmail.com

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822 Polk Street, Charlotte, NC 28206  
Cell: (704) 724-2759; Email: CLC2VP.ConnBellwright@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

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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: clchchaplain21@charter.net

**Mrs. Lula K. Howard, President Emeritus**  
4009 Landside Dr., Louisville, KY 40220  
Cell: (502) 494-9527; Email: Lmkhoward330@gmail.com

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100 East Ocean View, Suite 1110, Norfolk, VA 23503  
PH: 757-761-6280 Email: sandracrowder@yahoo.com

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503 McLean Street, Raeford, NC 28376 Ph: 910-875-5803;  
Email: mspeggy@earthlink.net

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PO Box 1424, Shelby, NC 28151 Ph: 704-281-1544;  
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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: aprilDavisforbuds@yahoo.com

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40 East Sidney Ave., #12B, Mt. Vernon, NY 10550  
Ph: 914-224-7621; Email: jom4supply@gmail.com

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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

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& LAY ASSOCIATION**

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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@comporium.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: ezekiel1132@gmail.com

**Mr. Andre Griffin, Parliamentarian (VICYC)**  
Phone Number: (336) 660-8745 Email: griffinatt@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

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

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7399 N. Shadeland Avenue, Indianapolis, IN 46250; Ph: (317) 362-5387  
Email: 7thInternationalPresident@gmail.com

**Rev. Dr. Florence Brown, First Vice President**  
Post Office Box 1646, Lumberton, NC 28358  
Ph: (910) 612-7948; Email: Fsbrownyes@gmail.com

**Rev. Fondella A. Leigh, Second Vice President**  
239 Woodville Rd, Hertford, NC 27944; Ph: (252) 312-8733  
Email: edentondistrictamez@gmail.com

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414 Smokey Mountain Drive, Maryville, TN 37801  
Ph: (865) 335-7527; Email: we41602@aol.com

**Rev. Lelar H. Johnson, Treasurer**  
7 Spring Hollow Drive, Crystal Springs, MS 39059  
Ph: (601) 573-4636; Email: brooks4L@yahoo.com

**Rev. Alonzo Braggs, Recording Secretary**  
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  
& WIDOW(ERS) FELLOWSHIP**  
**Rev. Robin Stitt, International President**  
3705 Rosedown Dr. Matthews, NC 28105;  
Ph: (704) 287-3608; Email: rahbyn10@gmail.com

**Mrs. E. Delores Cowherd, First Vice President**  
41 Edge Lane Willingboro, NJ 08046  
Ph: (609) 491-0355(C) 609-871-5933(H); Email: edcowherd@gmail.com

**Rev. Michelle Long, Second Vice President**  
4146 Thomas Sam Dr. Rock Hill, SC 29732  
Ph: 803-684-3520 (H) 803-627-6129 (C); Email: settav@bellsouth.net

**Mrs. Tojuna McLendon, Third Vice President**  
6020 Kempton Court, Salisbury, MD 21801  
Email: tojunamac41@yahoo.com

**Rev. Andrea A. Wiley, Recording Secretary**  
1660 Woodberry Drive Mobile, AL 36695  
Ph: 419-350-6019 (C) 251-635-0099 (H); Email: sylviaiv614@gmail.com

**Mrs. Tawanda Harris, Assistant Recording Secretary**  
125 St. Pauls Rd. North Hempstead, NY 11550  
Ph: (916) 996-9149 Email: zwrddirector@gmail.com

**Mrs. Jeryl Anderson, Treasurer**  
12803 Bald Eagle Dr. Charlotte, NC 28215  
Ph: 919-749-3000; Email: jzanderson12@yahoo.com

**Mrs. Bessie Baker, Financial Secretary**  
10653 Stone Bunker Dr. Charlotte, NC 28227  
Ph: 704-545-0115 (H) 704-562-6857 (C); Email: bBake2@bellsouth.net

**Mrs. Marilyn Scurry, Corresponding Secretary**  
822 Purcell Drive Woodruff, SC 29388  
Email: firstladyscurry2016@icloud.com

**Mrs. Syteria Puryear, Newsletter Editor**  
8530 Walden Ridge Drive, Charlotte, NC 28216  
Ph: (704) 900-8084 (H); (704) 957-0385 (C);

**Sis. Belinda Gibson, Parliamentarian**  
8454 Hidden Meadow Pass McCordsville, IN 46055  
Ph:317-384-8739; Email: flbrgibson412@gmail.com

**Mrs. Connie C. Shumake, Historian**  
4522 Southern Pkwy Louisville, KY 40214  
Ph: 504-905-2957; Email: c.shumake@twc.com

**Mrs. J. Fairbanks Leach, Reporter (Prayer Coordinator)**  
2224 High Wheel Drive, Suite 119, Xenia, Ohio 45385  
Ph: 937-372-1079; Email: Jfairlea3671@sbcglobal.net

**CHIEFS OF PROTOCOL**  
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60 Peninsula Blvd., Hempstead, NY 11550  
Ph: (516) 483-2724; Email: Alphadubois@hotmail.com

**Dr. Kathy Thomas McFadden, Assistant Chief of Protocol**  
7025 Brassie Bend, Montgomery, AL 36116  
Ph: (334) 467-6777; Email: katmcfadden@yahoo.com



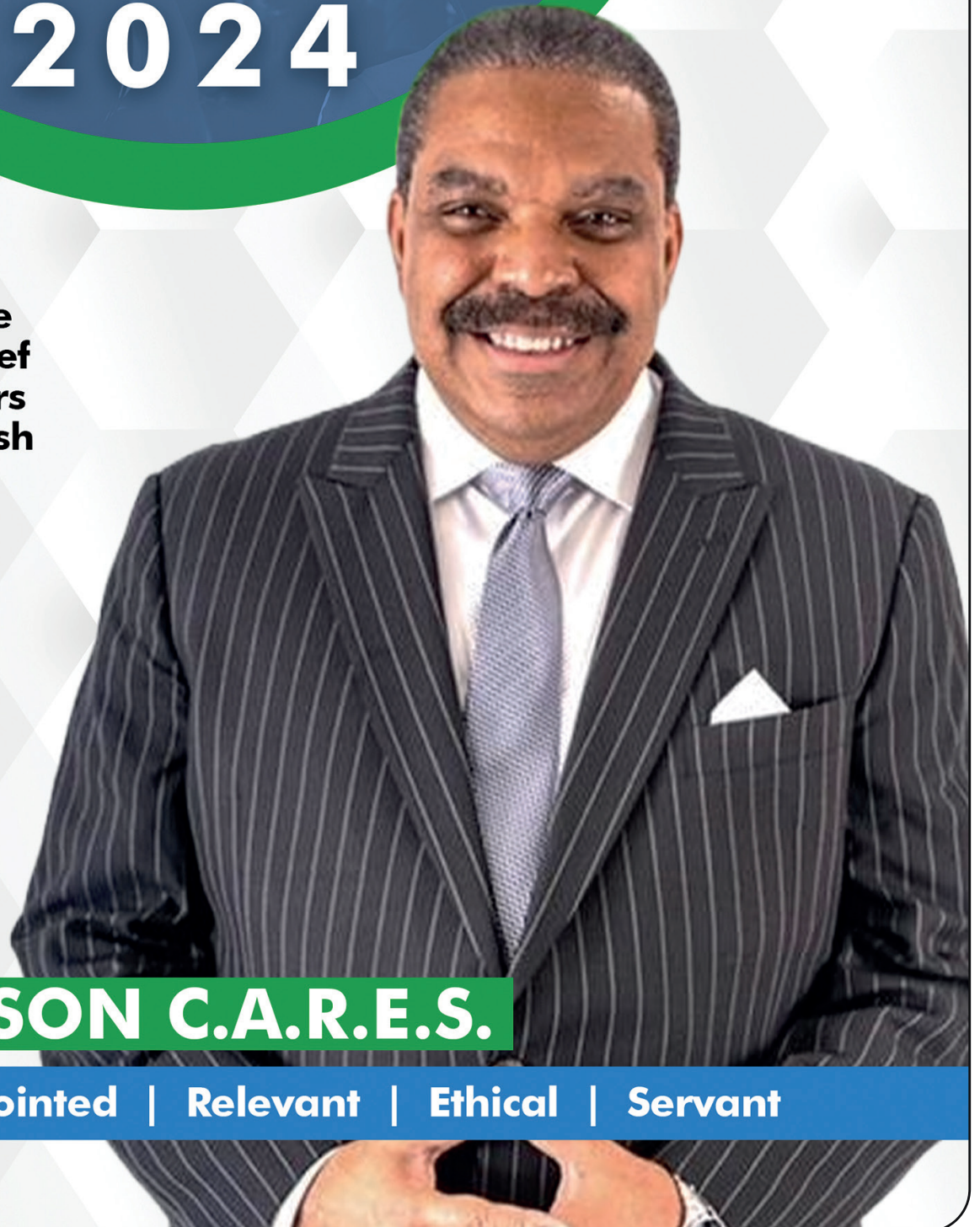
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Alexis Hutchinson  
Sports Editor  
Sports@StarofZion.org

# Divine Achievements: Celebrating Our Youth (Youth Missionary Society Spotlight Awards)

By Alexis D. Hutchinson  
Sports Editor

During the 30th Quadrennial of the Women's Home and Overseas Missionary Society, Mrs. Melva Polk Wright, the Connectional Secretary for Youth, took a moment to honor the accomplishments of our dynamic youth through the presentation of the "Youth Missionary Society (YMS) Spotlight Awards." These awards, categorized into Academics, The Arts, Community Service, and Athletics, were established to commend outstanding youth within the denomination.



In the domain of athletics, awardees of the YMS Spotlight Awards were acknowledged for their outstanding contributions spanning steadfast support, participation in all-star games, inclusion in all-district/all-region/all-state teams, reception of notable awards recognizing their prominence in their respective sports, and those who received mentions in news clippings or stories, spotlighting their excellence in a specific game or their overall prowess in their chosen sport.

Let's take a moment to cast a spotlight on and applaud the outstanding youth award winners from the 30th Quadrennial in New Orleans.

- Eastern North Carolina Episcopal Area: *Zoe Patterson*
- Piedmont Episcopal Area: *Deshawn Coulter*
- Northeastern Episcopal Area: *Al Vernon Davis*
- Mid-Atlantic Episcopal Area: *Domenique Sexton*
- Mid-West Episcopal Area: *Josiah Bridgeman*
- Alabama – Florida Episcopal Area: *Faith Smith*
- Southwestern Delta Episcopal Area: *Laila Young*
- Honorable Mention: *Andrew Williams*

After the quadrennial event last summer, every awardee was presented with a unique gift from the Connectional Secretary recognizing and honoring their exceptional athletic ability within their respective sport.

During the 2024 Friday Night Lights Youth Celebration, commemorating the anniversary of the Youth Missionary Society, the Connectional Secretary extended recognition to additional student-athletes. The January 2024 Youth Spotlight Recipients in the sports category are:

- Northeastern Episcopal Area: *Mason Davis, Reginald Lawrence, Jr., Marne't Bell, Maurice Daniels, Jr.*
- South Atlantic Episcopal Area: *Kamron Patterson, Amariah Shields, Brandon Tillman, Kosh Cue, Arione Truesdale, Anthonio Truesdale, Iyanna Boatwright, Cordelia Willis*
- Mid Atlantic Episcopal Area: *Amanda Ballard*



Let's pause and extend our heartfelt congratulations to the student-athletes throughout Zion! While the skills required for victory are crucial for team triumph, the journey itself holds equal significance. These student-athletes have exemplified Christian behavior through their words and actions, honoring the game with respect for their team, opponents, and officials. Publicly acknowledging our youth is not only essential but also merits recognition from our church to celebrate our Christian athletes who express their faith through sports.

If you have any special recognitions, accomplishments, signing days, or draft days, please let us know so the individuals may be recognized within "The Playmakers Corner."

## A Seat at the Table and Making HERstory: Celebrating the Impact of Black Women in Sports for Women's History Month

By Alexis D. Hutchinson, Sports Editor



Women have always played a vital role in shaping history, yet their accomplishments are frequently overlooked or erased. As we celebrate Women's History Month, we honor the courageous and brilliant women who have propelled our society toward a more equal union, especially in the realm of sports. As your new Sports Editor, it feels fitting that my inaugural article coincides with Women's

History Month. There's nothing more fulfilling than spotlighting the women who shattered glass ceilings in the world of sports. Thanks to these women, I am a professional in the sports industry, having managed athletes, collaborated with professional teams, orchestrated events for the Final Four Men's Basketball Tournament and NCAA College Football National Championship, and contributed to the success of the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA), a top athletic conference in Division II.

While sports are often associated with men, it is becoming increasingly prominent to find that more and more breakthroughs are driven by women. Shirley Chisholm said, "If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair." Not only did some pull up a chair, but many also now sit on sport thrones!

Black women, in particular, have left an indelible mark both on the playing field and in the boardroom that will influence the world. Over the past few years, their success, presence, accomplishments, and influence have experienced a significant surge. Consider Jalen Hurts (Philadelphia Eagles), a top NFL quarterback, whose success in the boardroom was shaped by a woman negotiating his contract, a black woman, Nicole

Lynn. Lynn, armed with degrees in Sports Marketing and Law, negotiated a record-breaking \$255 million contract extension for Jalen Hurts, making him the highest-paid player in the NFL at that time. In today's sports landscape, having a Black woman in your corner is a recipe for success. Despite constituting a small percentage in the business of sports, this underrepresented group often serves as an essential force behind the scenes within the space.

Over the past five years, groundbreaking achievements have been made by Black women in sports. Cynthia Marshall became the first Black woman CEO in the NBA with the Dallas Mavericks, Sandra Douglass Morgan became the first Black woman president of an NFL team with the Las Vegas Raiders, and agent Nicole Lynn became the first Black woman to represent an NFL draft pick and now serves as president of football operations for KLUTCH Sports Group. KLUTCH Sports Group represents some of the world's most prominent athletes across major professional sports. Furthermore, Sandra Douglass Morgan holds the distinction of being the first Black woman to serve as vice chair of the Super Bowl host committee. We salute these women!

The A.M.E. Zion church also has its own starting line-up connection with women in sports. Some of our all-star lineup includes:

Sharonda Sampson-Anderson, a standout Track and Field athlete at Livingstone College, was recently honored for her achievements as part of the All-American 4x400 relay team, leading to her induction into the Livingstone College Athletic Hall of Fame last fall. Notably, Sampson-Anderson is also the mother of NBA star



Zion Williamson and family  
at the New Orleans Pelicans  
Introductory Press Conference  
Photo Credit: NBA

Continued... next page





Zion Williamson and his mother at College Signing Day to Duke Photo Credit: Yahoo Sports

Zion Williamson. During Zion's youth leagues on the AAU circuit, she served as his coach, providing valuable trial-by-fire experience against older competitors. She also coached him at Johnakin Middle School in Marion, SC, where she led the team to an impressive 8-1 record and a conference title.



Clinton College awarded 3 academic scholarships to high school seniors of The AME Zion Church at CED Winter Meeting Photo Credit: President, Dr. Lester McCorn, Clinton College

With almost 25 years of experience, Dr. Angelyne Brown has served as an athletic director and head women's basketball coach. Currently, she holds the position of Vice President for Enrollment and Student Success at Clinton College. Dr. Brown boasts a



Clinton College Graduation with her father retired Bishop Brown Photo Credit: President, Dr. Lester McCorn, Clinton College

remarkable coaching record, winning nearly 80% of her games during a successful tenure at Clark Atlanta University (CAU). She later coached at the NCAA Division I level, including a stint at Morgan State University and then at Division II, Livingstone College.

Notably, during her eight years at CAU, she led the team to victory in the 1999 Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SIAC) tournament championship. Dr. Brown is the daughter of retired Bishop Warren Matthew Brown.

Tiffani-Dawn Sykes assumed the role of Vice



AD Sykes with FAMU Athletic Ambassador, Chad "Ocho Cinco" Johnson Photo Credit: FAMU Athletics

President and Director of Intercollegiate Athletics at Florida A&M University on January 4, 2023. Her appointment coincided with the 50th anniversary of Title IX. Notably, she is the first woman to hold this position for all sports since the program's inception in 1899. In December, Sykes made history as the first female director of athletics to win the Cricket Celebration. The Cricket Celebration Bowl is a post-season college football game that showcases the conference champions from the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) and the Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC). Managed by ESPN Events, its mission is to offer schools, alumni, fans, and sponsors a top-tier bowl experience while perpetuating the celebration of the heritage, legacy, pageantry, and tradition of Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Additionally, she is the daughter of Rev. Dr. Sandi B Hutchinson, Co-Episcopal Director for Christian Education for the Mid-Atlantic and Pastor of Gabriel Chapel A.M.E Zion Church (Chesapeake, VA). Proudly, she's also my sister.



AD Skyes in front of the Nike YardRunners Display on FAMU Campus Photo Credit: FAMU Athletics

Last summer, Jaia Thomas, CEO of Diverse Representation, introduced National Black Women in Sports Day on July 7 annually. This day celebrates the significant contributions of Black women in sports, including athletes, agents, coaches, sport administrators, and sport professionals. Establishing a dedicated day offers vital exposure for young Black girls, potentially inspiring them to pursue careers in sports. Additionally, the 5th Annual Sports Power Brunch, presented by Coca-Cola Zero Sugar, took place last month in Las Vegas during Super Bowl Week. Created by LaTonya Story, CEO and Founder of LPS Consulting PR, this memorable event celebrates the most powerful women in sports and empowers women to thrive in the sports industry and beyond. This month we salute and celebrate the impact of black women in sports for Women's History Month!

## OBITUARIES

# Rev. Dr. Juanita Greene

## October 31, 1950 - February 2, 2024

By Meredith Greene

Reverend Doctor Juanita Greene of Charleston, SC transitioned from labor to reward and eternal rest on Friday, February 2, 2024 in Enterprise, AL. She was born on October 31, 1950 and is the eldest child of the late Mr. James W. Greene and Mrs. Julia Mae (Cross) Greene. She is the granddaughter of the late Rev. Edmund Jacob Cross of Morris Brown and Ward African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Churches, Philadelphia, PA.



Nita, as family and friends affectionately knew her, grew up in Ebenezer AME Church in Charleston, SC under the leadership of the late Rev. B.J. Finklea. She graduated from Charles A. Brown High School, where she participated in numerous activities to include the senior and junior choirs, the All City Choir, and theatrical productions. Rev. Dr. Greene attended the University of South Carolina where she earned a Bachelor of Music and later earned a Master of Music from Michigan State University. As a Ford Foundation Doctoral Fellow, she completed Post Graduate study at Columbia University, NY. She also earned a Master of Theology and Doctorate of Ministry in Bible from Covington Theological Seminary, GA. As a student of music, she embraced the concert stage as she began her professional career as an opera singer performing for audiences across the U.S., Canada, and Europe. After a successful career in music, she transitioned to a career in social services, clinical counseling, and community development and worked for several years with organizations including the New York City Housing Authority and Fresh Air Fund.

Rev. Dr. Greene, a devoted servant of God, embarked on her ministerial journey with unwavering faith and dedication. Her response to the call of ministry took her first to Staten Island, NY, where she established the Park Hill Outreach Ministry, which provided for the spiritual and social needs of the people there. She became an ordained minister in 1986 with the African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ) Church and devoted her life to others. Over a distinguished career as a full-time minister, she pastored several churches to include Peoples AMEZ Church, Carteret, NJ; Thompkin Chapel Metropolitan AMEZ Church, Chattanooga, TN; Alleyne Memorial AMEZ Church, Phila-

delphia, PA; and Saint Paul AMEZ Church, Johnson City, TN. Under the administrations of the late Bishop Enoch Benjamin Rochester and Bishop Warren Matthew Brown, she also served on the mission fields of the AMEZ Church in Central and South Africa (Malawi, Johannesburg, St. Pietersburg, Seshego, and Durban). Additionally, she served as an assistant dean at Covington Theological Seminary and served on the ministerial staff at Simon Temple AMEZ Church, Fayetteville, NC. At the time of her transition, she was a faithful member of Johns Chapel AME Church, Enterprise, AL.

Rev. Dr. Greene continued her service and advocacy efforts through her affiliations with the National Council of Negro Women, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., the Staten Island AIDS Task Force, The President's Advisory Board of the College of Staten Island, the Multicultural Peer Leadership Program, Students Against Violence Everywhere, the Clergy Koinonia of Greater Chattanooga & Vicinity, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and many other organizations. Her commitment to faith, service, and community exemplified the transformative power of God's grace. She has been a pastor, leader, teacher, advocate, and innovator and has served with integrity, distinction, and resolve.

Rev. Dr. Greene is preceded in death by her parents; sister, Angela Nadine Greene; brothers, Cecil William Greene and James Anthony Greene; and niece, Breanna Janei Greene. She leaves a legacy of love and is survived by her two daughters, Andria Nicole Greene, Schenectady, NY and Meredith Renee Greene, Enterprise, AL; son, Michael Alexander Greene, Oaklyn, NJ; family matriarch and cousin, Mrs. Anna Ford and her husband, James Ford; siblings, Rev. Patricia G. Edwards, Ms. Shirley A. Greene, Rev. Pamela L. Ward, Leonard E. Greene, and Kevin L. Greene. She is also survived by nieces and nephews, Aaron Jacob, Monica Gale, Angel Elisabeth, Brittany Janelle, Breina Jayde, and Brah'e Jose.'

Rev. Dr. Greene will be laid to rest in Whitehall, SC on February 17, 2024 with services at Whitehall A.M.E. Church followed by internment at Pynes Community Cemetery. Visitation will start at 11:30am and the funeral service will start at 1pm.



# We Make Eagles: Mr. Kenneth Earl Jones

The life of Mr. Kenneth Earl Jones ended abruptly for him, and it came to a devastating end for us when he sat down in his favorite chair on Saturday, July 1st, 2023.

At his side was the love of his life, his devoted wife of 46 years, Mrs. Jean Walton Jones, and their two children, Kendra and Micah. Micah was just returning home after attending his best friend's grandmother's funeral. They have been extremely devoted to their parents all of their lives. The intense pain of Kenneth's loss is ongoing and excruciating to all of us who knew and loved him.

Kenneth was a lifelong member of the African Methodist Episcopal A. M. E. Zion Church. His spiritual journey began at Butler Chapel A. M. E. Zion Church in Greenville, AL, under the pastorate of the late Reverend Doctor James E. Cook.

After graduating college from Tuskegee Institute located in Tuskegee, AL, Kenneth and Jean joined Mount Zion A. M.E. Zion Church of Montgomery, AL. It was at Mount Zion that the Jones Family asked Reverend Claude A. Shuford to permit them to organize Troop 224.

This scouting ministry has been the only complete African American scouting ministry in Montgomery, AL. Mr. Jones, as the scouts affectionately called him, said, "I think that we have found our niche."

This statement was an understatement of his life in ministry at Mount Zion. Twenty-one years later and fifteen Eagle Scouts later, Kenneth and Jean have become the scouting gurus of the black churches of Montgomery, Alabama. No other African American church has produced one-fifth of the Eagle Scouts of Troop 224. The evidence of his

life proves that we make Eagles! Mount Zion's words of gratitude are beyond expression as we consider this monumental accomplishment. In addition, Kenneth's first Eagle Scout was his own son, Mr. Micah Walton Jones, Pastor Shuford's godson.

These Eagles are our pride and joy. Five (5) of the Eagle Scouts were members of Mount Zion. As a result of this, Mount Zion's scouting ministry is an ongoing outreach ministry of the Christian Education Department. We make Eagles!



Finally, as we move forward, Mrs. Jean Jones, Mount Zion's Executive Officer, and Reverend Shuford have asked a retired Colonel and pilot, Mr. Michael Hanshaw, to serve as the interim Scout Master. Colonel Hanshaw has been a tremendous help serving as Troop 224's Assistant Scout Master alongside Mr. Jones for several years.

Therefore, the choice was immediate and with no uncertainty. Mount Zion's commitment remains tremendous to the Scouting Ministry. Another Eagle is flying our way within six months!

We thank God for the late Mr. Kenneth Earl Jones. Although he never achieved the rank of Eagle Scout himself, he has influenced countless young men and established a legacy here at Mount Zion with the Scouting ministry. Because of his dedication and selflessness, we have the capability to continue his work.

We solicit your prayers for his wife, children, four brothers, family, and friends.

To God BE The Glory!

## WORLD POLITICS

# AFRICA- We are not Beggars!



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

By Ronald A. Nathan  
World Politics Editor

Africa is trying to change the colonial narrative of being 'the white man's burden'. This framework that projects Africa as dependent on European charitable goodwill is being challenged. African leaders have stated emphatically at international forums that they have not come with a begging bowl but with well thought out negotiating positions backed by comprehensive policies for mutual partnership and sustainable development.

It seems however, the former colonial nations and their supporting international financial institutions are not listening. Whether at the US-Africa Summit, Russia-Africa Summit, Saudi-Africa Summit, Africa-Turkey Partnership Summit, India-Africa Forum Summit, China-Africa Summit, Africa-South America Summit or the World Economic Forum, the policymakers all seem to be 'hard ears'. They are just not hearing what Presidents, Akufa-Addo, Kagame, Museveni, Ruto, have been saying, nor are they comprehending the pronouncements of Messrs Haki, Lumumba and Traore. Africa is desirous of a new partnership that is based on a position of mutual understanding, equitable resource sharing, and sustainable development.



Moussa Faki Mahamat

This consensus is based on strategies and policies geared towards accelerating Africa's inclusive and sustainable development. The Africa Union Extraordinary Summit on Industrialisation and Economic Development held in Niamey, Niger, 25 November 2022, and the African Economic Conference held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 16-18 November 2023, have both reinforced the call for agreements and actions that will quicken the pace of development in Africa as encapsulated in the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement. This is the script that Africa's leaders are reading from as they attend these multi-lateral and international fora.

Maybe the former colonial powers and Western International financial institutions will hear the progressive voice of the Deputy-Secretary General of the United Nations, the British-Nigerian, Ms. Amina J. Mohammed. Ms. Mohammed who at the recently concluded Italy-Africa Summit urged, the International Financial Institutions to seek "a different way of working to realise the potential of Africa". She pointed out that "these institutions were set up some 80 years ago, and there was now a need for a refresh, so they can be fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century". Let those who have ears to hear ...let them hear the new narrative coming out of Africa.



Deputy Secretary General  
of the United Nations  
Ms. Amina J. Mohammed



REV. DR.  
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A  
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 WITH A PROVEN  
 TRACK RECORD  
 OF

- ADMINISTRATIVE ACUMEN
- FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY
- INSIGHT AND FORESIGHT FOR CREATIVE MINISTRY
- EDUCATIONALLY PREPARED
- AUTHENTIC PERSONALITY FOR COMPASSIONATE LEADERSHIP

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 DEMANDS  
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