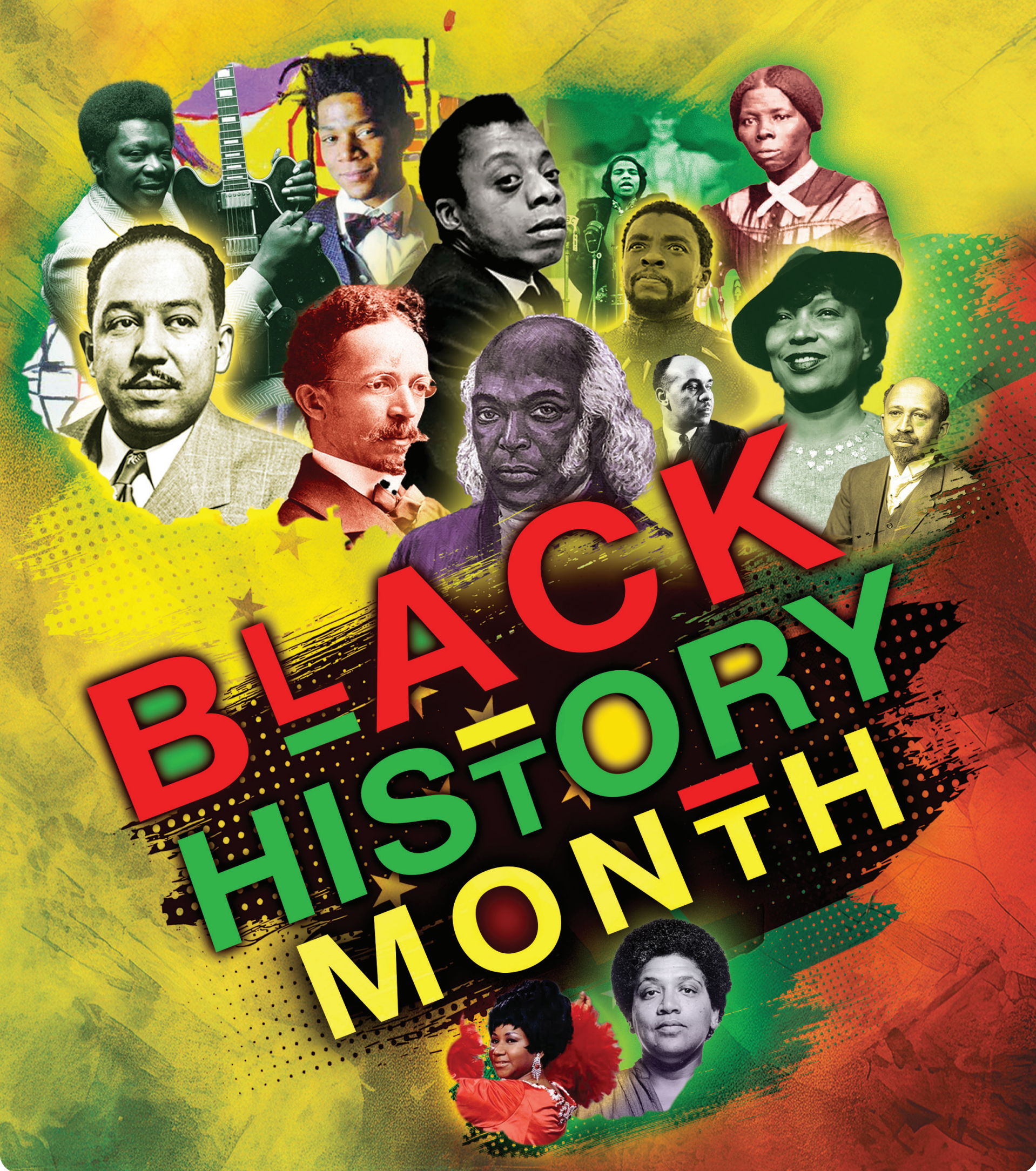


THE STAR OF ZION

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**BLACK
HISTORY
MONTH**

Official Voice of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

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

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

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Accelerating Communication About The Freedom Church

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There Is No American History Without Black History



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

Sara Clarke Kaplan, Executive Director of the Antiracist Research & Policy Center at American University in Washington D.C., stated these words, "There is no American history without African American history." Kaplan further submits that the Black experience is rooted in "everything we think of as 'American history.'" Kaplan has a valid point. The frame of the United States of America is a byproduct of the direct blood, sweat, and tears of Black efforts. A result of chattel slavery pressed upon people who were stolen and could not run fast enough nor swim far enough back home without paying the ultimate price. An aftereffect of a system created to benefit those in power and reduce Black people to property. *There is absolutely no American history without Black history.*

The month of February is recognized annually as Black History Month. It originally came about in 1926 as "Negro History Week" during the second week of February (to fall in line with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass). Historian and scholar Dr. Carter G. Woodson is revered as the father of Black history and first established Negro History Week with the hope to honor Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass for their noteworthy connection and contributions to the Black community surrounding freedom and rights. Dr. Woodson also sought to uplift the achievements of all Black people. After all, *there is no American history without Black history.*

Continued on Page 16



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WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF BLACK HISTORY?

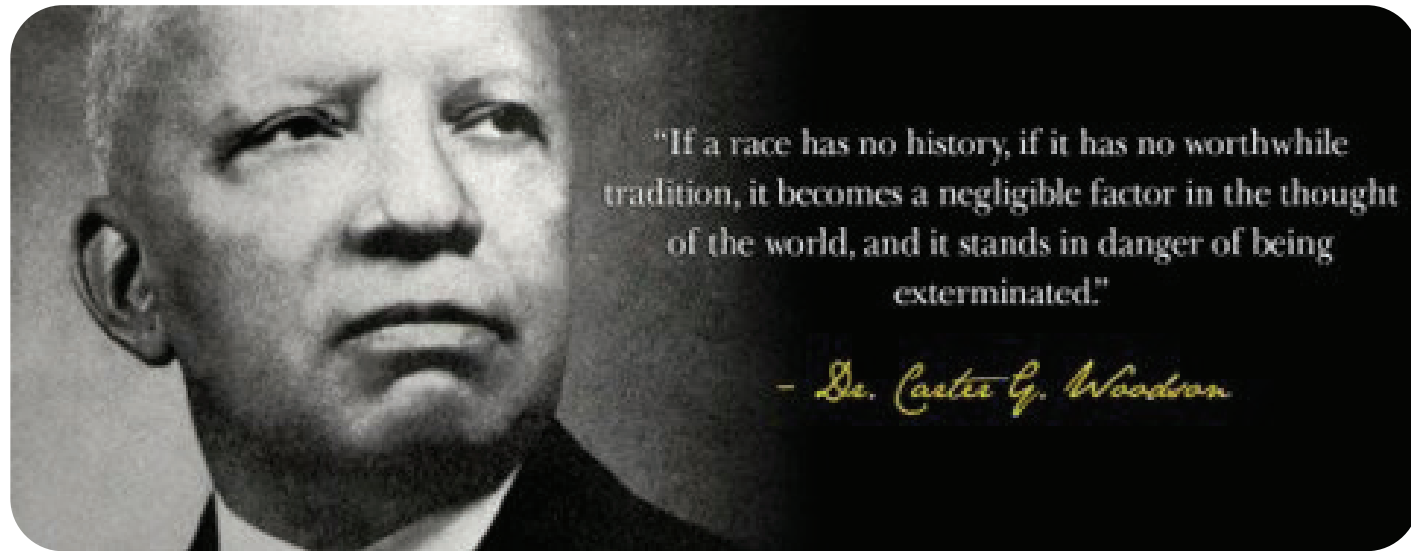
By Debra Chappelle-Polk
Zion Spotlight Editor

“A man without any history is like a tree without roots.” - Malcolm X

opening the door to the enactment of federal laws restricting/prohibiting African American history being taught in schools across America.

White America is attempting to whitewash slavery to assuage their conscience and shield their children from the brutality enslaved people suffered at the hands of their white slave masters. According to one candidate running for the highest office in our country, “slavery benefitted and helped some African Americans develop skills such as being a blacksmith.” Civil rights leaders, clergy, and politicians have called this outrageous assertion offensive and racist. The Washington Post slammed this candidate’s view noting that “...enslaved Africans were already skilled.”

“Won’t it be wonderful when Black history and Native American history and Jewish history and all of U.S. history is taught from one book. Just U.S. history.” - Maya Angelou



THE HISTORY OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The story of Black History Month began half a century after the 13th Amendment abolished slavery in the United States. Recognizing the dearth of information on the accomplishments of Blacks, in 1915, Dr. Carter G. Woodson, a Harvard-trained historian and Rev. Jesse E. Moorland founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, now called the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH). The organization is dedicated to researching and promoting achievements by Black Americans and other peoples of African descent. The group sponsored a national Negro History Week, choosing the second week of February to coincide with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. The event inspired schools and communities nationwide to organize local celebrations, establish history clubs and host performances and lectures.

“A man without knowledge of himself and his heritage is like a tree without roots.” - Dick Gregory

In the decades that followed, mayors of cities across the country began issuing yearly proclamations recognizing “Negro History Week.” By the late 1960s, thanks in part to the Civil Rights Movement, and a growing awareness of Black identity, “Negro History Week” had evolved into Black History Month on many college campuses.

President Gerald Ford officially recognized Black History Month in 1976, calling upon the public to “seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history.”

“The thing about Black history is that the truth is so much more complex than anything you could make up.” - Henry Louis Gates

Yes, there has been progress. Black Americans made significant advances in business, law, education, entertainment, and professional sports. Black homeownership and entrepreneurship have increased as well. There have also been many “firsts” in our history, most notably Barack Obama, America’s first Black President and Kamala Harris, America’s first woman of color Vice President. While we should acknowledge these “firsts,” we must not become complacent or satisfied with the “first” recognition. Recognition should be the norm, not the exception. Black Americans have been elected to offices at all levels of government – federal, state, and local across the country. As if in direct response, however, egregious voter suppression laws have been passed. White supremacists have boldly come out of hiding; gun violence and hate crimes have increased at an alarming rate.

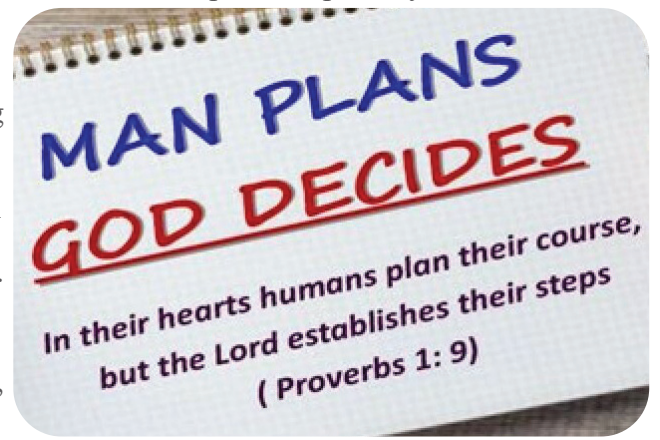
The state of Florida has attempted to ban AP (Advance Placement) African American studies because the course, according to the governor, “lacks educational value.” Florida may be just the tip of the iceberg,

While campaigning in New Hampshire, another candidate, who is also running for the highest office in the land, could not or would not state that slavery was the root cause of the Civil War. Ironically and by way of an explanation stated, “it always comes down to the role of government and what the rights of the people are., ...they need to make sure that you have freedom.” Obviously, enslaved people were not part of the population who needed to ensure their freedom.

“A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.” - New York Essays

The phrase “stay woke” has long been used in Black communities to indicate staying alert to others’ deception--especially law enforcement--as a survival mechanism. In 2014 “stay woke” became common usage among Black Lives Matter activists after the police killing of Michael Brown, bringing it into the wider lexicon.

In Florida, WOKE is used as an acronym for “Wrongs to Our Kids and Employees.” The Anti-WOKE law was enacted to combat “woke indoctrination” in Florida businesses and schools by prohibiting instruction that could make some parties feel they bear personal responsibility for historic wrongdoings because of their race, sex, or national origin. “Stay Woke” has been distorted and turned into an anti-Woke campaign bumper sticker.



Black history (a/k/a American history) is being rewritten. So, what will Black History be like in the future? Will there even be Black History Month? Now, more than ever we must use every tool in the toolbox to stop the forces of evil from stripping away the freedoms so many have worked and died for. We cannot allow the blood, sweat and the tears our ancestral warriors shed to have been in vain. We must not allow our history to be erased from history books. We must not allow the evil plans of some to write our history and dictate our future. We must **STAY WOKE & VOTE.**

LET THEM PLOT AND LET THEM PLAN

MAN MAKES PLAN

GOD MAKES DECISIONS

Ellis Dogbe-Gakpetor Earns Top Award

By Star of Zion News

Headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, the Society for Financial Education and Professional Development (SFEPD) was established in 1998. A brainchild of Theodore 'Ted' Daniels, SFEPD was one of the first nonprofits to deliver customized financial literacy programs and professional development opportunities for people in communities nationwide. Since 2017, SFEPD has hosted a Student Ambassador Program to train college students to teach their peers about financial education. The program targets students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) many of whom are first-generation, to help them manage their finances better and build wealth. Currently, SFEPD has Student Ambassador Programs at 35 colleges and universities throughout the nation.

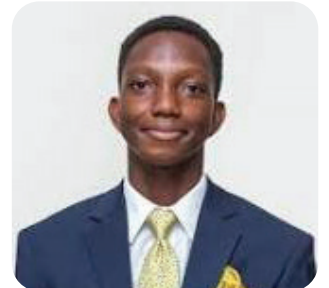
SFEPD trains Student Ambassadors in personal finance concepts to enable them to lead and teach engaging classes to fellow students. Moreover, HBCU business school professors and SFEPD's financial educators, mentor the ambassadors and help them to create innovative workshops and presentations. In this way, the students develop leadership skills and act as champions of financial literacy on their college campuses. At Livingstone College, associate professor of Accounting and Business in the Bishop George E. Battle, Jr., School of Business, Entrepreneurship, Innovation, and Technology, Dr. Terrence Simon

serves as the campus advisor of approximately ten student ambassadors.

As part of the program, student ambassadors are offered the opportunity to obtain points in efforts to earn a financial scholarship. Livingstone's ambassadors coordinated educational events, taught financial classes, and developed programs to reach their peers. Sessions regarding saving, investing, banking, budgeting, credit, debt, student loan management, and financial goal setting, have all been a part of Livingstone College's programming. Through this unique learning initiative, Livingstone's students gained financial knowledge and skills that provide them a foundation for economic success, and the student ambassadors demonstrate leadership success.

As a result, Honors scholar Ellis Dogbe-Gakpetor of Accra Ghana is the SFEPD fall 2023 Top Ambassador of all competing institutions. Gakpetor stated, "My primary goal is to gain a greater understanding and become more literate in financial undertakings in an effort to help increase fair and impartial economic opportunities throughout the mosaic world."

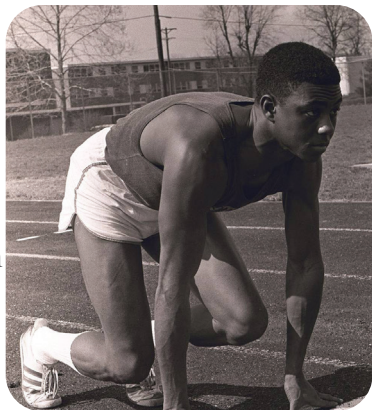
Dogbe-Gakpetor is a freshman double-majoring in business and computer information systems. Other notable members of the campus ambassador program include, Denayih Coleman, Ar'Jah'Naye Spivey, Emile Dogbe-Gakpetor, Paul Tako, and Sila Tako.



Celebrating Jim Green: Pioneer, Hall of Famer Who Made a Difference

By Lula K. Howard

The University of Kentucky dedicated the newly constructed **Jim Green Track and Field Center** on Wednesday, December 13, 2023, in Lexington, Kentucky. The new indoor training facility was named for Jim Green, the first African American student athlete to graduate from the University of Kentucky (1971). His family, church family, former track team members, current track and field athletes, Omega Phi Psi Louisville Chapter fraternity, friends, and many others witnessed the dedication ceremony.



The ceremony highlighted the groundbreaking career of a UK alumnus and is a testament to him who laid the groundwork in 1968. UK's Athletic Director, Mitch Barnhart, stated he was "Pleased that the facility is named in honor of 1971's fastest man in the world, Jim Green."

Jim Green, a native of Eminence, Kentucky, sprinted on an old railroad track bed across from his high school. The school didn't have a track. He ran faster than any athlete in Kentucky high school history, setting state records in three events. He played on the football team and scored 10 touchdowns in one high school football game. In the 1967 State Track Meet, Green set records that will stand forever in both the 100-yard dash and the 220-yard dash as Kentucky has since switched to meters for track marks.

In 1968 Green came bursting out of Eminence a 'rising star' to the University of Kentucky. About 150 colleges and universities tried to recruit him. However, UK track coach Press Whelan was the successful recruiter. "Coach Whelan told me it would be tough, said Green, "but UK had to break the color barrier." (*The Courier-Journal Bob Hill column, 9/27/2007*)

Despite facing overt racism and withstanding racial slurs while quietly winning the races at many competitions, he had the will to win and the will not to lose. Green succeeded at the highest levels of collegiate sport. He was the first African American student in the Southeastern Conference (SEC) to win NCAA and SEC Championships. He was a two-time NCAA Champion winning the indoor 60-yard dash in 1968 and 1971. He earned All American honors six times and won eight SEC individual events including the indoor 60-yard dash (1968,1971).

Green was one of the SEC's pioneers of integration and on September 28, 2007, his 60th birthday, was an inductee into the UK Athletics Hall of Fame. He is an inductee in eight Halls of Fame, including Eminence High School Hall of fame. The City of Eminence created the Jim Green Walking Trail in 2020 after transforming the old railroad track bed into two miles track to honor the hometown star.

During the ceremony speakers cited Green's biography and some of their statements follow.

"Today's about a lot more than a building," said UK Athletics Director Mitch Barnhart. "Today is about Jim Green and a lifetime of knocking down barriers, first for himself and ultimately for others."

UK President Dr. Eli Capilouto said Green helped put UK track on the map, but more importantly, made the university change to become more inclusive and accepting of all people, regardless of race or color. "Today we celebrate a man who made a difference," said Dr. Capilouto, "a man who has transformed the landscape and the trajectory of so many communities." "Thank you, Jim Green, for leading the way and paving the future."



Lonnie Green, UK track and field and cross-country head coach, said, "When I met Jim Green for the first time, the sincerity of the man and who he is just blessed my heart." "He was concerned not just about the African American student-athlete, he was concerned about students in general and we thank Jim for being that person who stepped up."

"The story of Jim Green is a story of a fight for equal participation in sports," said Ambassador Kelly Kraft, "I think Jim is a pioneer." She recalled a 2019 Dunn Center interview when Jim was asked how he wanted to be remembered. "Well," Jim said, "remember me as a person who tried to make a change not a change only for me but a change for every student who comes to the university." "Mr. Green, this is your dream. Mr. Green, this is your legacy, this is your finish line," said Ambassador Kraft, and concluded saying, "Jim Green blazed the path for future students who would have no barriers to crossing the finish line. Mr. Green, this is your finish line."



Honoree Jim Green – "I am grateful today; this is not about me. This is about my family also because without family, you don't get far...I am so excited that a little old kid from Eminence, KY has something named after him. I'm thankful and hopeful the new class of young student-athletes get to enjoy this new facility."



Green took time to thank his wife, his family, fraternity, and many other influential people in his life and athletic career. He became emotional as he spoke about Coach Pres Whalen, whom he had a personal relationship with for 54 years. He also became emotional talking about his parents, Dennis, and Evelyn Green. "I thought about my mom and dad," said Green, "how great it would be for them to be here today; this is theirs, not mine. They got me here; I just finished the race."

"My name may be on the building but Eminence, KY, helped me put it there and if it wasn't for the support I got from the people in my hometown, maybe I wouldn't have all these accomplishments. I am a living witness that you can come from a small town and your dreams can come true."

As Green concluded, he asked his fraternity to come forth. Theta Omega Phi Psi Chapter presented beautiful flowers to Jim's wife, Eva, and presented a \$5,000 gift to the UK Athletics Department. Jim and Eva Green presented a \$25,000 gift to the UK Athletics Department.

In 2019, UK recognized Green by renaming its annual indoor meet the "Jim Green Invitational." In February 2022, the UK Board of Trustees approved \$20 million to build the indoor track facility "as part of \$30 million in approved funds for three UK Athletics capital projects, (UK Athletics website).

The building was made possible by UK Athletics fund raising and a \$7.5 million gift from Joe and Ambassador Kelly Craft whose generosity has helped improve several UK Athletics facilities.

In addition to the building, a statue was unveiled that showcases Jim Green sprinting and lists his numerous accomplishments as a U K athlete.

Jim, his wife Eva Kennedy Green, daughter, Alysa Green Delaney, son-in-law, Dustin, and grandchildren, Addison, and Ava, are members of Stoner Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church in Louisville, KY.

Sources: *Lexington-Herald Leader, Kentucky Sports Article, Dec. 13, 2023 www.Kentucky.com/sports/college/KentuckySports/article283026303 Courier-Journal Column by Bob Hill, September 2007 Family emails and notes.*

A Musical Shoutout to The New Year by the Nurturing North Charlotte District

By G. Joyner-Johnson, Reporter
Photos by Rev. Clarence Jones & Sis. Syteria Puryear

As 2023 drew to a close, Dr. Wardell Henderson, the Presiding Elder of the North Charlotte District brought the district churches together with a musical concert featuring the choirs of the North Charlotte District Churches. Scheduled to begin at 2:30 PM, those who arrived close to that time had difficulty finding parking as the expansive parking lot and the lot across the street and side street parking were full to overflowing.

The churches and their choirs gathered at the Greenville AME Zion Church which seats at least 750, was packed to capacity and standing



well, “God Is Wonderful” (Union Bethel Choir, “Hallelujah” (Mowing Glade), and “God Said He’d Make Everything Alright” (Jonahville).

Remarks given by Mrs. Myrtle Henderson include high praise for the participating choirs and her shout-out scripture was from Psalms 51:15 “O Lord, open my lips and my mouth shall show forth Your praise.”



The final shout-out remarks and scripture came from Presiding Elder Henderson from Proverbs 3:5-6, “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths.” He gave the Invitation to Salvation and the Altar Call.

The final musical shoutout was “Total Praise” by all choirs combined until the choir loft was overflowing as well. They sounded heavenly and the entire congregation stood on their feet, praising the Lord! Elder Henderson pronounced the benediction and the fellowship that followed was continued as everyone left the sanctuary and proceeded to their cars and continued praising the Lord as 2023 was ending and 2024 was arriving in a few hours. Hallelujah! What a time!

room only remained. Each of the eighteen district churches was represented by its choir/ quartet, duet, etc. The pastor of each church was asked to give a shoutout scripture or word as their choir entered or left the choir loft.



There was excitement in the air and Rev. Cathy Henderson kept the congregants in an atmosphere of high praise as she and Rev. Mark



Evans served alternately as the masters of ceremony and kept the choirs moving as if they were a well-orchestrated event at the Belk Theatre.

Music ministries included children’s choirs, quartets, men’s choirs as well as church/sanctuary choirs. Most brought their musicians while



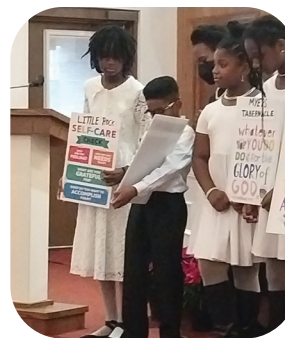
others used the district musicians. Each choir was limited to one selection with the host church choir rendering the first selection. Some renditions included: “How Great is Our God” (Torrence Grove), “Rainbow in the Sky”(Bethesda), “You Have Rescued My Life”(Columbus Chapel), “Giving Honor”(Myers Tabernacle-Men’s Quartet), “Emanuel”(Clement Memorial-Children), “He’s Coming Back Again”(Little Rock Men’s Choir), You Can Look for Me”(Huntersville), “Yes, I’m A Believer”(Hopewell Children), “I’ve Got A Home In Beulah Land”(Caldwell Chapel), “Lord, You’ve Been So Good”(Reeves Temple) and “Lord Keep on Blessing Me”(Torrence Chapel). The final group included Rock-



North Charlotte District WH&OMS District Project

By G. Joyner-Johnson, Reporter
Photos by Ms. Cicely and Ms. Tiffany McCain

The North Charlotte District WH&OMS Parent Body presented a Self-Care and Wellness District Project at the Greenville Memorial AME Zion Church, Dr. Sheldon R. Shipman, Pastor. The sanctuary was beautifully adorned with poinsettias and seasonal music was provided by Ms. Joyce Zimmerman and Mr. Jonathan French. Mrs. Roye Buck is the District President and Ms. Castella Conner, Life Member's Chairman served as the program coordinator assisted by Rev. Wanda Merriweather (YAMS Coordinator), Ms. Olivia Stinson (Secretary of Youth), Ms. Millie Ruscito (Superintendent of BUDS) and Mrs. Cassandra Stephens (Secretary of Supply).



in four groups and then sub-categories by the amount raised. The top three contestants in each category received a crown presented by Dr. Wardell Henderson, the Presiding Elder of the North Charlotte District.



Group 1

- 3rd place: Little Rock - Jennifer Mitchell
- 2nd place: Greenville Memorial - Gwendolyn Johnson
- 1st place: Torrence Capel - Tina Gabriel

Group 2

- 3rd place: Myers Tabernacle - Susan House
- 2nd place: Watkins Chapel - Eutrilla Norman
- 1st place: Bethesda- Betty Connor

Group 3

- 3rd place: Caldwell Chapel - Phyliss Dalton
- 2nd place: Jonahville- Shirley Alexander
- 1st place: Mowing Glade - Inez Stanford

Group 4

- 3rd place: Columbus Chapel - Doris Chisholm

2nd place: Reeves Temple - Maggie Smith

1st place: Wesley - Tiara Jones

Closing remarks were given by Ms. Conner, Mrs. Myrtle Henderson and Presiding Elder Wardell Henderson. The program was closed with the Missionary Benediction.

Rev. Henrico White the pastor of Weeping Willow AME Zion Church served as the Master of Ceremonies. He kept the program light-hearted and moving along with laughter and love. After the opening devotions, each Parent Body President (contestant) of all the district churches was then escorted into the sanctuary by their pastor and their Bud of Promise who held a sign on wellness. The Buds of Promise under the direction of Ms. Olivia Stinson blessed the congregants by singing two Christmas carols and explaining what self-care and wellness meant to them as indicated by their sign.

Mrs. Barbara Rainey, a member of Myers Tabernacle AME Zion Church read a poem she had written with an emphasis on self-care and wellness during the Christmas season entitled "Tis the Season." Included here are a few excerpts:

"The cost of that "must live tree has skyrocketed then you check the lights. They say one monkey doesn't stop no show, well one faulty bulb will cause a blackout for the entire string. Gifts to buy and you're spent out, now you may have to cut back on your menu. It's time out for blaming Santa Claus. Take a look in the mirror. YOU have forgotten the real reason for the season, taken Christ out of Christmas and as Christians, we should never forget the blessed birth of our Savior."

Rev. White then presented the contestants who were elegantly dressed



Palmetto Annual Conference 133rd Session Convenes at the Kenneth Monroe Transformation Center

By Reverend Patty S. Smith, Reporter

Rock Hill, SC-The One Hundred Thirty-Third Session of the Palmetto Annual Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church was held September 14-16, 2023. Theme: "A Movement Empowered by the Holy Spirit: Strengthening our Fellowship, Serving Our Flock, Sharing Our Faith and Securing Our Future." Bishop Dennis Proctor & Mrs. D. Diane Proctor, Associate Bishop & Missionary Supervisor, Retired Bishop Warren Brown, Mrs. Lovetta J. Holmes, Missionary Supervisor and Mrs. Shelia Monroe, Dean of Missionary Supervisors were all in attendance. Reverend Dr. Alvin McLamb, Host Presiding Elder (Columbia-Camden District) and the Reverend Dr. Victor C. Wilson, Presiding Elder (Spartanburg District). The Host Church was Jones Memorial A. M. E. Zion Church and Host Pastor the Reverend Thelma Gordon.

Thursday evening opened with the Worship Service led by Reverend Thelma Gordon, Worship Leader. The Host Church, Jones Memorial AMEZ Church rendered music along with Greater St. John AMEZ Church Choirs. The sermon was delivered by the Reverend Derrick Scurry entitled, "I'm Blessed and I'm Blessed by the Blood" (Ephesians 1: 3-7.). The Opening and Organization of the Annual Conference was held immediately following the service, which included the Nominating Committee's Report.

The following Pastors requested to retire: **The Reverends Terrence Jones & George Rhodes, Jr.** It was moved and seconded. Bishop Monroe expressed gratitude to both ministers for their work and service in the AMEZ Church. The Rules and Credentials Reports were given followed by the seating of the delegates and alternate delegates. **The 134th Palmetto Annual Conference will be hosted by St. Matthew AMEZ Church September 12-14, 2024. The following dates were given for the Check-up Meetings as follows: January 20, April 6, and June 8, 2024.** The Reverend Dorothy Patterson along with the following guests were recognized as follows:

ENCED /Central N.C/Laurinburg District:	Rev. Sharon Newton
ENCED /Central N.C/Durham District:	Rev. Reginald Broadnax
Northeastern/New Jersey/Camden	Rev. Jimmie Miller
Northeastern/New Jersey/Camden	Rev. Dr. Melanie Miller
SAED/South Carolina Conference	Rev. Deloris Berry
SAED/Georgia/Atlanta	Rev. Eldren Morrison
SAED/South Carolina Conference	Rev. Lawrence Ganzy
SAED/South Carolina Conference/Rock Hill	Rev. Timothy Mayers
North Eastern Episcopal District	Rev. Vernell Stukes
North Eastern Episcopal District	Tyrone McKenzie(Bishop Proctor's Marshal)
SAED/Pee Dee Conference	Rev. Rolly Dawkins
SAED/South Carolina Conference/Rock Hill	Rev. Lawrence Ganzy
SAED/Pee Dee Conference/Lancaster	Rev. Eric Franks
Hon. Kenneth Gist (Mayor)	Woodruff City Mayor Rev. Dorothy Patterson



- etc.) Before naming chairs for these programs, be sure these chairs have studied the **Won by One** Bible Study Course.
2. Develop a Guest Package for persons attending the worship or Bible Study with information about how to become Christian and what steps are necessary to unite with the local congregation.
3. Do a spiritual gift survey to determine who in the congregation possesses the gifts of evangelism and pastoral care.
4. Plan a congregational faith demonstration as a means of bringing glory to God and edification to the congregation. Such a demonstration should be done to enhance the fellowship, the relationship and the faith of the congregation as they repair a home of one of the seniors or raise funds to support a student in college.
5. It is important for the local congregation as well as the annual conference to be intentional about financial planning. Read and study Howard Dayton's book **YOUR MONEY COUNTS**. Prepare a seminar for the congregation on financial planning.
6. Develop an Endowment Fund for the future operations of the church's ministry. (Resources are available)

Presiding Elder Rev. Dr. McLamb asked for a motion to receive this powerful, thought-provoking, challenging address and recommendations. Rev. Dr. Victor C. Wilson moved to receive the report with love and recommended that a copy be included in pastoral packages and read on the first Sunday of the conference year. Seconded by Rev. Dr. Reid White. (Bishop noted that he will provide to anyone who asks for the report). Bishop Proctor addressed the conference with the Great Offering following. The conference was pleased to receive greetings from Bishop Hilliard Dogbe, Presiding Prelate of the Western West Africa Episcopal District.



W. H. & O. M. Society

Mrs. Lovetta Holmes, Missionary Supervisor-Presiding

New Quadrennial Theme:

"Reaching the Masses in an Ever-Changing World: The Journey Continues": Self-Care and Wellness, Equality and Justice, Leadership and Legacy, and Empathy and Compassion.

Greetings were given by Missionary Supervisor-Mrs. Lovetta J. Holmes, Associate Missionary Supervisor- Mrs. D. Diane Proctor, and Mrs. Sheila Monroe, Dean of Missionary Supervisors. Greetings were also given by the former Recording Secretary – Mrs. Chantay Bouler along with Mrs. Rosetta Dunham, WH&OMS Executive Director. Mrs. Holmes highlighted the 30th Quadrennial and thanked the missionaries for their support. Rev. Patty Smith was also recognized on her election as the



Friday morning, Bishop Kenneth Monroe gave the Episcopal Address. Presiding Elder McLamb stated: "the address expressed a positive truth. There is a paradox between the past, present, and future. We are living at this present time and encapsulated in the future." Bishop Monroe offered the following recommendations:

1. It is difficult for any congregation to grow unless that congregation attracts guests. A systematic plan or plans to solicit new people to the congregation is essential (Friend

& Family Day or Month, Church Rally Day, Evangelism Month,



Thank You

**Reverend Patricia "Patty" Surratt-Smith
Elected 9th WH&OMS Connectional 2nd Vice-President
2023-2027**

Happy Agape Love Month

**Sending my love and sincere appreciation
to the missionaries across Zion!
Thank God for His favor!**

*For we walk by faith and not by sight.
2 Cor. 5:7*



Connectional Second Vice President. Rev. Melissa Benton, Columbia-Camden District President, submitted her written report. Reverend Patty Smith, Spartanburg District President presented her report in a Video Presentation. Ms. Sandy Norman moved to accept and refer the report. Mrs. Vanessa McLamb seconded the motion. Unreadiness was given by Ms. Sandy Norman who made a presentation to Rev. Patty Smith on behalf of the Spartanburg District WH&OMS; Revs. Samontra Carter & Tammie Wheeler on behalf of Delta Signa Theta Sorority, Inc; and Rev. Gary Smith (family) and Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion Church. Motion carried.

The following guests were recognized as follows:

SAED/South Carolina /Rock Hill District:
Rev. Grady Sharps

SAED/South Carolina /Rock Hill District:
Rev. J. Martin and Mrs. Chantay Boulter, Jr.

SAED/South Carolina /Rock Hill District:
Rev. Henry Gregory

SAED/Pee Dee /Lancaster District:
Rev. Eddie and Mrs. Barbara Boykin

SAED/ Pee Dee /Cheraw-Bennettsville:
Rev. Dr. Jerret Fite

ENC/Central N.C. Conference/Fayetteville District
Rev. Dr. Keith Tillett

Northeastern (New York Conference)
Rev. Dr. Alfred Carson

Western NC
Rev. Dr. Dwayne Anthony Walker

Piedmont/WCNCC/Greensboro
Rev. Dr. Daran Mitchell

The Conference was greeted by Candidates for Bishop: Rev. Dr. Daran Mitchell, Rev. Alfred Carson, and Rev. Dr. Dwayne Anthony Walk-

er. Conference paused for lunch with Bishop Warren Brown giving greetings and the prayer.

Friday Afternoon:

The Visionary Moment: *Securing Our Future: A Movement of the Holy Spirit was delivered* by Reverend Shannon Hancock, Conference Evangelist from St. Matthews A.M.E. Zion- Kansas City, MO-Focus Scripture: Ephesians 4: 17-24. The following questions were raised by Reverend Hancock:

Is the Church adequately insured?

Do we have disciples and not just church members?

Have we informed people of the risk of discipleship? The session ended on a high note with thanks to Reverend Hancock.

Report of the Credentials Committee was given by Rev. Tonya Jackson in preparation for the Election of the Delegates/Alternate Delegates to the General Conference as follows:

Spartanburg Lay Delegates:

1. New Hope A.M.E. Zion Church:
Ms. Juanita Gage Moore/No Alternate listed
2. New Prospect A.M.E. Zion Church:
Dr. Vanessa Watt / Ms. Mildred A Wofford
3. Greater St. John A.M.E. Zion Church:
Mrs. Angel Underwood/Ms. Rosa Davis
4. St. Matthew A.M.E. Zion Church:
Ms. Narissa Route /Ms. Linda Sartor
5. Trinity-Woodruff A.M.E. Zion Church:
Ms. Mattie Norman/ Ms. Phyllis Norman
6. Trinity - Whitmire A.M.E. Zion Church:
Ms. Jaquwonda Dawkins/Ms. Betty Hall Tucker
7. Beatty's Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church:
Mrs. Ruthie Holmes//No Alternate
8. Smalls Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church:

- Dominique Evans/Ida Mae Johnson
9. Metropolitan A.M.E Zion Church:
Ms. Marilyn Graham/Mrs. Helen Elaine Sturdivant
 10. Pleasant View A.M.E. Zion Church:
Mrs. Diane Brice/Riley Cloud
 11. Chestnut Ridge A.M.E. Zion Church:
Ms. Mary Robinson/Ms. Teresa Dawkins
 12. Gabriel A.M.E. Zion Church:
Ms. Leslie Townsend/Mrs. Melody Watt
 13. Bethesda A.M.E. Zion Church:
Ms. Linda C. Gaither/ No Alternate
 14. St. Luke A.M.E Zion Church:
Ms. Patricia Jeter/Mrs. Rachel Miller
 15. Stephen Grove A.M.E. Zion Church:
Ms. Teresa Rice Howell/ Renna Farr
 16. Williams Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church:
Ms. Jackie Jones/Mrs. Julia White (Alt. seated)
 17. Cedar Grove A.M.E. Zion Church:
Ms. Cynthia Epps/Janice Epps
 18. Spring Hill A.M.E. Zion Church:
Mr. Edward Howell/No Alternate
 19. Rice Chapel
Ms. Sharon Goode/Ms. Deloris Salters (no seated delegate)
 20. Mt. Visit
Mr. Walter Woodard/Ms. Roxie Woodard
 21. Shekinah Glory A.M.E. Zion Church:
Mr. Johnny Campbell/Ms. Frances Campbell
 22. Bethel #1 A.M.E. Zion Church
Ms. Phyllis Hall/ Mr. Eugene Long (no seated delegate)

Columbia-Camden District Lay Delegates:

1. Jones Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church:
Mrs. Karen Scott/Mrs. Loranda Melton
2. Antioch A.M.E. Zion Church:
Mrs. Isabelle Wise/Mrs. Nancy Griffin
3. Baum Temple A.M.E. Zion Church:
Ms. Linda Whetsell/Clayretha Abernathy
4. Ebenezer A.M.E. Zion Church:
Mrs. Michelle Thompson-Young/ Ms. Carol Jackson Thompson
5. Good Hope A.M.E. Zion Church:
Mr. Kenneth Alexander/Mrs. Ernestine Alexander
6. Edwards Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church:
Mr. Albert Warren/Ms. Lucinda Wilson
7. Rossville A.M.E. Zion Church:
Mrs. Peggy Sparkman / Ms. Bernice Walls
8. Mt. Nebo A.M.E. Zion Church:
Ms. Maggie Massey/ Ms. Lucinda Worthy
9. Paradise A.M.E. Zion Church:
Ms. Dequitta Kennedy/Mrs. Valentina Boulware
10. Temple of God A.M.E. Zion Church:
Mr. Charles Moultrie/ Dr. Barbara Montgomery
11. Pleasant Grove #1 A.M.E. Zion Church:
Mrs. Bridgette Holmes/ Mrs. Teresa Fields
12. Old Mt. Zion A.M.E. Zion:
Ms. Ella Fulton/ Ms. Gladys Samuel
13. Fairview A.M.E. Zion Church:
Mrs. Andreasia Brown/ Mrs. Karonda Hardrick
14. New Vision A.M.E. Zion Church:
Mrs. Deanna Grant/Ms. Thomasina Journette
15. Beaver Creek A.M.E. Zion Church:
Ms. Cherese Ealy/ Ms. Aquasia Miller (No delegate)
16. Clinton Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church:
Ms. Georgette McQuillia-Hayes/ Ms. Ladovia Williams (No delegate)

17. Camp Welfare A.M.E. Zion Church:
Ms. Rachel Mills /Ms. Melissa Lamar
18. Pleasant Grove #2 A.M.E. Zion Church:
Mrs. Darlene McQuiller/Mrs. Annie Gustus
19. Good News A.M.E. Zion Church: N/A

Rev. Dr Terry Jones served as poll director for the General Conference Delegate Elections.

The Election of General Conference Delegates

Bishop Monroe stated the following persons would assist persons in voting:

To assist laity - Rev. Dr. Alfred Carson and Rev. Grady Sharps. To assist clergy persons in voting - Rev. Dr. Daran Mitchell and Rev. Dr. Paul Murphy.

Elected officers for Lay College (Chairperson)- Mrs. Ruthie Holmes moved that Dr. Vanessa Watt serve as the Chairman of the Lay College. Motion was seconded by Teresa Rice Howell. Motion carried. Secretary-Ms.Linda Gaither moved to elect Mrs. Angel Underwood as the Secretary of the Lay College; Motion was seconded by Dr. Vanessa Watt. Motion carried.General Conference Ministerial Delegates in the order of election:

1. Rev. Dr. Robert T. Benton
2. Rev. Dr. Alvin McLamb
3. Rev. Dr. Victor C. Wilson
4. Rev. Sandra Flemming
5. Rev. Tammie Wheeler
6. Rev. Thelma Gordon

Rev. Gary Smith moved that the top three persons receiving the highest votes will serve as alternate delegates. Motion was seconded by Rev. Rebecca Edwards. Motion Carried. General Conference Ministerial Alternate Delegates in order of election:

1. Rev. Derrick Scurry
2. Rev. Iris Kennedy
3. Rev. Gary Smith

General Conference Lay Delegates in order of election:

1. Ms. Vanessa Watt
2. Ms. Marilyn Graham
3. Mrs. Annie Williams
4. Mrs. Loranda Melton
5. Ashley Melton
6. Ms. Sandy Norman

General Conference Lay Alternate Delegates in order of election:

1. Dr. Vera Jeter Jones
2. Sis Phyllis Norman
3. Mattie Norman.

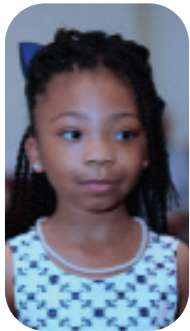
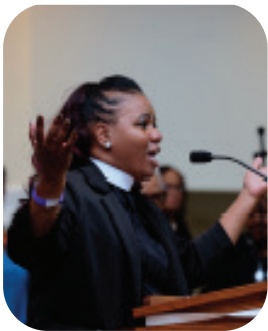
Conference continued with Report from Christian Education (Video presentation and written report)-Ms. Ashley Melton, Conference Director. Rev. Dr. Alvin W. McLamb moved that this report be received and referred. Mrs. Linda P. Jones seconded the motion. Unreadiness with presentations to Miss Melton: Rev. Dr. Sherri Ashbee, Mrs. Linda Jones, Rev. Vanessa Wilson (on behalf of CED directors). Mrs. Loranda Melton, Rev. Thelma Jones (Jones Memorial), Dr. Vanessa Watt. Motion carried.

Next, the Penny Brigade Report was given by Dr. Vanessa Watt. Gabriel AMEZ Church won for Small Church Category and New Prospect AMEZ Church for the Large Church Category for the Spartanburg District. The Columbia-Camden District Small Church Category: Good News won and the Large Church Category Jones Memorial AMEZ Church respectively.

Lay Council Report was given by Mrs. Annie Williams, Conference President.

Friday Evening

The Annual Sermon was delivered by Bishop Dennis Proctor Mes-



sage (Mark 16:9-11) Northeastern Episcopal District “The Least Likely Person in the Worst Possible Place at The Worst Possible Time with the Best Possible News.” Reverend Iris Kennedy served as Worship Leader and the following guests were recognized along with Rev. Dr. Lester A. McCorn, Clinton College President as follows:

Northeast/New York Conference/ New York City Rev. Dr. Alfred Carson
Piedmont/WCNCC/Greensboro Rev. Dr. Daran Mitchell

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| Clinton College | Rev. Archinya Ingram |
| Clinton College | Rev. Herbert Crump, Jr. |
| Clinton College | Rev. Dr. Lester McCorn |
| ENCED/Central NC/Sanford District | Rev. Dr. Paul G. Murphy |
| ENCED/Central NC/Fayetteville District | Rev. Dr. Leon Newton |
| Piedmont/WCNCC/ | Rev. Reginald Keitt |
| SAED/Pee Dee/Lancaster | Rev. Sandra Sistare |
| SAED/Pee Dee/Lancaster | Rev. April Wolfe |
| SAED/South Carolina/ | Rev. Michael Frencher |

Saturday Morning

Reverend Brenda Black-Weathers served as the Worship Leader followed by **The Visionary Moment “Securing Our Future: A Movement of the Holy Spirit”** delivered by Reverend Shannon Hancock, Conference Evangelist from St. Matthew AMEZ Church. Her biblical reference was John 8:1-11. The Lay Council resumed their report with the presentation of Slate of Officers by the Chair, Rev. Benson I. Watt, III as follows:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| President: | Mrs. Annie Williams |
| 1 st VP | Mrs. Angel C. Underwood |
| 2 nd VP | Mrs. Loranda Melton |
| Recording Secretary: | Ms. Jeanette Wise |
| Treasurer: | Ms. Mildred Wofford |
| Financial Secretary: | Ms. Josephine Gilliam |
| Chaplain: | Mr. Lawrence Jackson |

Rev. Benson I. Watt, III moved that the slate of officers be elected as Lay Council Officers.

Motion carried. Seconded by Mrs. Linda P. Jones. The Evangelism Re-

port followed by Reverend Tammie, Wheeler Conference President. Rev. Monica Davis moved to accept the report. Rev. Christopher Tony White seconded the motion Unreadiness with presentation by Rev. Patty Smith, who presented Rev. Wheeler a gift on behalf of Delta Sigma Thet Sorority, Inc. Motion carried.

The following reports were given and received as follows: Men of Zion (Reverend Derrick Scurry; Ushers (Ms. Marilyn Graham); and Ministers’ Spouses & Widows(ers) Fellowship (Mrs. Marilyn Scurry); Voter Registration (Rev. Eric Rice-Video Presentation) and Home Missions (Reverend Vanessa Wilson).

Next, the Columbia-Camden District Home Mission Worker of the Year Recognition was highlighted as follows: Mrs. Deanna Grant- New Vision AME Zion Church and the Spartanburg District Home Mission Worker of the Year Recognition – Ms. Teresa Rice Howell, Stephen Grove AME Zion Church. The Queens were as follows: Runner Up Category I - Antioch – Ms. Josephine Edmonds and Runner Up Cat II - Gabriel Ms. Makayla Berry. Queen Cat I - Jones Memorial -Ms. Sholandra Tolliver. Queen Cat II – Old Mt. Zion- Mr. Leroy Giles.

Presentations to Rev. Thelma Gordon, Chair were given by Rev. Vanessa Wilson and the District Presidents – Rev. Brenda Black Weathers and Mrs. Virginia Morgan respectively.

Admissions Report followed by Reverend Dr. Alvin McLamb. Holy Orders by Reverend Dr. Victor Wilson. **Necrology Report-Video Presentation was given by Linda P. Jones. followed by Rev. Pamela Wofford, Statistician. Passing of Character followed. Rev. Dr. Alvin W. McLamb moved that the character of ministers of the Spartanburg District be passed for another year. Rev. Wannalyn Barnett and Rev. Rebecca Edwards seconded the motion. Motion Carried. Rev. Dr. Victor C. Wilson moved that the character of ministers of the Columbia-Camden District be passed for another year. Rev. Iris Kennedy seconded the motion. Motion Carried.**

Guests in attendance were as follows:

ENCED/Central/Durham District-Rev. Dr. Julian and Mrs. Deborah Pridgen.

Greetings were given by retired Bishop George Walker, Sr. and Bishop Dennis Proctor. Finance Committee Report by Rev. Dr. Robert Benton. Courtesy Committee Report by Rev. Patty Smith & Committee Members.

Reading of Appointments were read by Bishop Kenneth Monroe followed by the closing of the 133rd Session of the Palmetto Annual Conference along with the Benediction.

Photos by: Mr. Chris Gordon, Conference Photographer

Youth and Buds of the Wilmington District Demonstrate Self-Care and Wellness

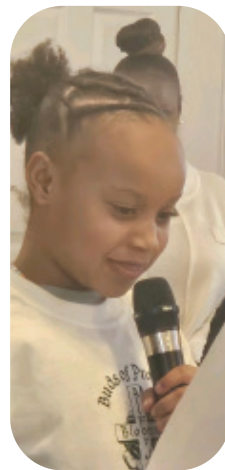
By LaVerna Hargrove, Wilmington District Reporter

The Wilmington District Women’s Home and Overseas Missionary Society, Delma S. Jones, Missionary Pres-ident, held it first Mass Meeting of the 2023-2024 Cape Fear Conference Year on Saturday, January 6, 2024, at Browns Chapel AME Zion Church, Southport, NC pastored by Reverend Avery McAllister. The first element of the theme Reaching the Masses in an Ever-Changing World—The Journey Continues: Self Care and Well-ness was the focus for the Youth and Buds of Promise.

The Buds of Promise and Youth Missionaries focus began with the reading of the scripture by Tristan Holden of Christian Chapel AME Zion Church, Leland, NC. Dr. Alexander Jones, Presiding Elder of the Wilmington District introduced the messenger has a herald of the gospel. Reverend Bettejean Payton. The meditation was given by Reverend Bettejean Payton, Pastor of the St. Phillip AME Zion Church, Wilmington, NC. The scriptural foundation of the message, *Amen*, was 2 Corinthians 11:23-28. As we begin the new year, we can recount the events of our lives that were not always pleasant, we can still say Amen it was all for the glory of God. Music was provided by the Browns Chapel Choir.



Tristan Mason OF Christian Chapel AME Zion Church reads the scripture during the first WH&OMS Mass



Wilmington Buds share presentations on Self Care and Wellness

Following the reflective and challenging meditation, Ms. Makyah McNeil of Moores Chapel, Leland, NC, the Youth Delegate to the WH&OMS Quadrennial Convention in July of 2023, reported that of the 942 dele- gates, 118 represented the Eastern North Carolina Episcopal District, Senior Bishop Kenneth Monroe, Presiding Prelate, Shelia Monroe, Missionary Supervisor; and the Celeste Chadwick, Yams Coordinator of the Wilmington District received the Yams Award.



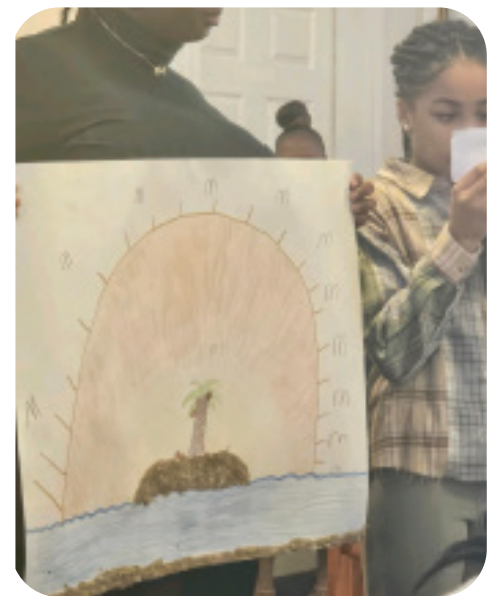
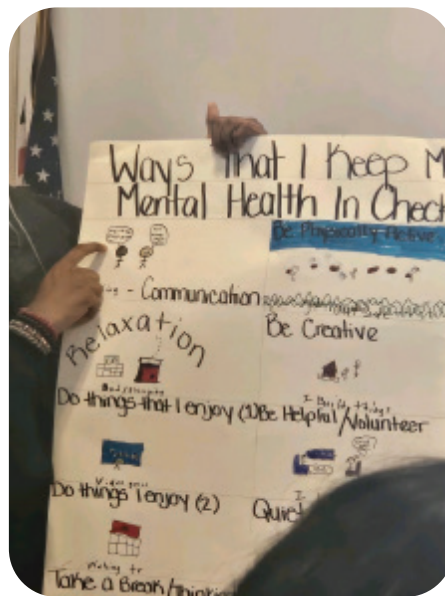
Reverend Bettejean Payton, Pastor of St Phillip AME Zion Church, Wilmington, NC bring the message of Amen to the Wilmington District WH&OMS first Mass Meeting

The Wilmington District WH&OMS President, Delma Jones introduced the Buds Superintendent Dr. Deshondra Smith and Youth Secretary, Mrs. Detra Johnson as the focus of the Mass Meeting shifted to the Buds and Youth.

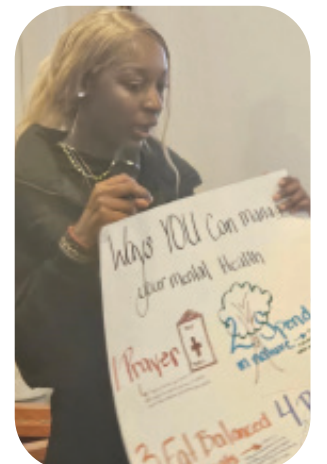
Energetic, eager artistic Buds and Youth presented illustrations on Self Care and Wellness. The lesson on Self Care was most potent when the Buds gave presentations on events that made them sad and events that made them feel happy. This presentation reminded adults that care must be taken when giving correction to our Buds and Youth.

This session was concluded with a three-part litany on Effective Self Care.

Dr. Alexander Jones, Presiding Elder of the Wilmington District reminded the congregation that self-care is an obligation of all Christians as the body is a temple unto the Lord.



Wilmington Buds share presentations on Self Care and Wellness



Williams Promoted to Director of Hood Seminary's Thriving Congregations Initiative



By Dr. Vincent W. Howell

Salisbury, NC. – January 3, 2024 - Dr. Rona M. Williams has been promoted to Director of the Congregational Faith and Learning Center (TCFLC) at Hood Theological Seminary (HTS), Salisbury, NC. She steps into this role following Dr. Vincent W. Howell, who will serve as Hood's Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program, and Adjunct Professor of Leadership Ministry. This appointment is effective January 1, 2024.

of the Congregational Faith and Learning Center starting in 2024. She has been providing great support and direction in working with Dr. Vincent Howell the past two years. He is now the Director of Doctor of Ministry program at Hood. Dr. Williams brings a varied background to the position as she is an executive pastor, an attorney, and has tremendous technological and marketing skills. She will continue elevating the Congregational Faith and Learning Center in its efforts to support God's churches through faith, learning, and thriving."

Hood Theological Seminary, located at 1810 Lutheran Synod Drive in Salisbury, NC, is a graduate and professional school sponsored by the A.M.E. Zion Church and approved by the University Senate of The United Methodist Church. Its student body, faculty and staff currently comprise persons from many different denominations. Hood's mission is to prepare women and men for bold and creative leadership for the Christian church for a diverse world.



The Congregational Faith and Learning Center, which is branded faithlearnthrive.org, has as its goal to provide training and faith engagement directly to congregations in the community by being a place to "educate, empower, and equip" congregations to thrive. Williams previously served as Project Coordinator and Associate Director.

Educationally, Williams earned a B.A. from Winthrop University, and earned a Juris Doctor degree from the University of South Carolina School of Law. Williams was a member of Hood's 2023 graduating class, where she earned the Master of Divinity degree.

Dr. Vincent W. Howell, the center's founding director, stated, "I am excited that Rev. Williams has accepted this new role. She has a passion for building stronger churches and brings a strong focus on ministry innovation and creativity; this helps churches not only to relate to all generations and cultures of people, but to thrive in a changing church landscape."

John Everett, MBA, and Hood's Director of Institutional Advancement, speaks of Williams' leadership in this role, stating, "We are excited that Dr. Rona Williams will assume the role of Director



2024

BOARD OF BISHOPS

INTERNATIONAL MINISTERS AND LAY ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL MEETING

ROCK HILL, SC

FEBRUARY 20 -23, 2024



CAMBRIA Rock Hill
UNIVERSITY CENTER
354 TECHNOLOGY CENTER WAY | ROCK HILL, SC 29730
803-324-0004

STANDARD KING OR DBL/DBL	\$124.00
KING SUITE (1 BR) OR EXTENDED STAY KING SUITE	\$144.00



TOWNE PLACE SUITES
ROCK HILL
2135 TABOR DRIVE
ROCK HILL, SC 29730
803-327-0700

KING STUDIO	\$124.00
2 BEDROOM SUITE	\$174.00



FAIRFIELD INN AND SUITES
ROCK HILL
578 GALLERIA BLVD. ROCK HILL, SC 29730
803-325-2700

STANDARD DOUBLE	\$109.00
STANDARD KING	\$114.00
EXECUTIVE KING	\$119.00



HAMPTON INN
ROCK HILL
2111 TABOR DRIVE ROCK HILL, SC 29730
803-325-1100

STANDARD DOUBLE	\$134.00
STANDARD KING	\$134.00
KING STUDY	\$159.00

Black History Month 2024 – African Americans and the Arts



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

By Rev. Allison N. Lee, Ed.D., MTS
Photo by Henry Ossawa Tanner entitled *The Banjo Lesson*

Various forms of art have long been a source of expression, empowerment, and preservation for Black and Brown people. The theme for Black History Month 2024 is African Americans and the Arts. According to the Association for the Study of African American Life and History's (ASALH) webpage, this theme recognizes that "...in fields of visual and performing arts, literature, fashion, folklore, language, film, music, architecture, culinary and other forms of cultural expression, the African American influence has been paramount." The theme, 'African Americans and the Arts,' speaks to the blended history of both art and the "African, Caribbean and Black American lived experiences."

Historically, forms of Black art have either been appropriated and/or their excellence denied by mainstream culture. Even with the lack of cultural acceptance or a white-washing of Black art, down through the years, Black art has continued as a way to: pass down stories, express individual and communal circumstances, empower others to meaningfully move forward, to convey both beautiful and ugly truths in a ways that brings about justice, and to pause and provide context to what is happening here and now. About his use of art through photography, Gordon Parks stated,

"I suffered first as a child from discrimination, poverty...So I think it was a natural follow from that that I should use my camera to speak for people who are unable to speak for themselves."

The Association for the Study of African American Life and History



chronicles some of the earliest Black art taking place before the American Revolution, at which point, "enslaved Africans of the Lowcountry began their more than a 300-year tradition of making sweetgrass baskets, revealing their visual artistry via craft." The ASALH speaks to the distress of those in bondage giving birth to the Negro spirituals such as "All God's Children Got Shoes," "Wade in the Water," "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," and "There is a Balm in Gilead." In addition to Negro Spirituals, blues musicians - such as BB King - fostered the development of music that became the core for many other forms of music, inclusive of gospel and soul.

In addition to music, photography, and basket-weaving, literature has been a strong and influential contribution to Black art. Poets such as Phyllis Wheatley, Langston Hughes, and Audre Lorde are hailed as literary giants. Authors such as Zora Neale Hurston, Bell Hooks, Alex Haley, Ralph Ellison, and W.E.B. Du Bois are revered for using their lived experiences to pen contributions that spoke to the Black condition. Painters such as Henry Ossawa Tanner and Jean-Michel Basquiat are also known for their contributions.

Black art was seen in full bloom during the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s and 1930s, the Black Arts Movement in the 1960s, the breakout of hip-hop, and the rise of Afrofuturism - Black history x technology and science (Black Panther). The recognition of African Americans and the Arts as the 2024 Black History Month theme is one that is due its proper respect. May we be ever aware of the ways in which Black art has informed being and created space in our doing?"

There Is No American History Without Black History

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Continued From Page 2



The idea behind Negro History Week (and ultimately Black History Month) stemmed from Woodson's presence at a 1915 celebration which was held to highlight the 50th anniversary of emancipation. Woodson became motivated - in partnership with others - to found the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH). This group was designed to motivate scholars to study and speak

to Black history at a time when institutions of learning, by and large, were both currently and had previously been refusing to do so. Encouraged by Woodson, his fraternity, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., launched "Negro History and Literature Week" in 1924. Two years following this, in 1926, in order to bring continued attention to Black

history, Negro History Week was officially launched by Woodson and the ASNLH. As the years passed, and in light of the ongoing struggle for equality and equity + the Civil Rights Movement, many naturally started to refer to Negro History Week as Black History Month.

President Gerald Ford implored the country to, "seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history." In 1976, Black History Month came to be what it is known as today. *There is no American history without Black history.*

Today, Black History Month calls us to pause yearly in order to observe and lift up the accomplishments of Black Americans. Adults and children alike may learn about inventor Garrett Morgan, who created the three-way stoplight. They may hear about Maya Angelou and her meaning-making associated with poetry. They could be made familiar with Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson and her fight for equity or athlete Sha'Carri Richardson on her journey of resilience. Black History Month is intentionally set in the acknowledgment and encouragement of the achievements of all Black people. *There is no American history without Black history.*



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

Freedom's Eve: A Gullah Geechee Watch Night and Emancipation Day Celebration

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



The term *Gullah Geechee* refers to the descendants of Africans who were enslaved on the rice, indigo, and Sea Island cotton plantations of the lower Atlantic Coast. The Gullah Geechee culture calls to mind the Sea Islands of South Carolina and Georgia and sweetgrass baskets. Yet the cultural legacy of the ancestors still runs warm in the veins of many. It is more than a cultural memory—it is alive and well! The Gullah Geechee Heritage Corridor extends from Wilmington, North Carolina, to Jacksonville, Florida. The Gullah Geechee people are descendants of the Africans

who were enslaved on the rice, indigo, and Sea Island cotton plantations of the lower Atlantic Coast. Many came from the rice-growing region of West Africa.

The Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission, in partnership with The International African American Museum, The Upperman African American Cultural Center of UNCW, The National Park Service, and The Wilmington District of the A.M.E. Zion Church presented to the community the commemoration service of *FREEDOM'S EVE* at Warner Temple A.M.E. Zion Church in Wilmington, NC, on December 31st, 2023.

On December 31, 1862, enslaved Gullah Geechee people gathered in sacred spaces and places of worship to await the new year and the beginning of a new life. They gathered on *FREEDOM'S EVE*, awaiting the break of day, January 1, 1863, the effective date of the Emancipation Proclamation and the end of slavery.

I have attended many watch night services over the years, but nothing like this. This was a truly immersive cultural experience. We were ushered into the service by the procession of the African American Dance Ensemble of Durham, NC. The pulse of the drums created a shift in the atmosphere that took our hearts and minds on a journey that was enlightening and entertaining. The song of the gathering is "We've Come This Far by Faith," led by Kristen Jamison. Jamison has opened for and/or done background for the likes of Anita Wilson, Le'Andria Johnson, Travis Greene, Myron Williams, Kim Burrell, Kierra Sheard, and Donald Lawrence, to name a few. She was featured as a top 20 finalist on season 7 of BET's Sunday Best. Her vocal instrument carries in it a yoke-destrating anointing that is undeniably a gift from God.

Rev. Sean Palmer, a local pastor, and director of the UNCW Upperman Center, led us in an interactive libation ceremony. We were welcomed by Dr. Aurelio Givens, Faith-Based Engagement Manager of The International African American Museum. The occasion and purpose were given by Mrs. Tyanna West, Coordinator of NC Civil Rights trail, NC AAHC, who is also a Gullah/Geechee descendant. At the event, West says, "It was nice to be in a space with my people celebrating the liberation of our ancestors and ourselves."

The service featured moving performances by the African American Dance Ensemble and Chronicles of Adam. An extremely poignant performance by the Geechee Gullah Ring Shouters of Darien, GA, transported us back in time to what it must have been like for our ancestors. This performance included stacked bales of cotton, a noose, and the rusted chains of slavery.

Rev. Dr. Clifford Barnett said of this event, "Hosting the Freedom's Eve program this year was an honor. I thoroughly enjoyed the performances by all who performed. The part that really shook me to my core was when one of the performers put a chain around his neck like he was being sold at an auction. At that moment, the atmosphere shifted for me to be more than a performance. It became *really* real. I could actually see my great-great-grandfather being one of those being sold on the block. More than that, I saw myself with that chain choking my neck. It reminded me of the struggle I must never forget."

There was a similar service happening simultaneously in Charleston, SC. I believe that the goal of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission is simultaneous Freedom's Eve Services from one end of the corridor to the other so that all of us will remember the struggle that we must never forget.

The program in its entirety can be viewed on the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor's YouTube page.

March Is Mission Educators Month!

Mission Educators Training:
*Continuing to Meet the Masses
Through Self-Care &
Wellness*



USA-Session 1:

Friday, March 1, 2024
8:30pm Eastern Time
7:30pm Central Time
5:30pm Pacific Time

OVERSEAS-Session 2:

Tuesday, March 26, 2024
7:00pm Eastern Africa Time
5:00pm London Time
12:00pm Eastern Time



Mrs. Mattie Taylor, Presenter

Good News Editor,
Former WH&OMS Connectional
Editor Women's Section *Missionary Seer*



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Connectional 2nd Vice President



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❖ **Zoom Link:** <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86973633344?pwd=srefTlM8bu164bsjvGj9r148whO19.1>

Meeting ID: 869 7363 3344, Passcode: MISSIONS
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Memo: Support for Education Overseas

Recording of Sessions
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A Passion for Planning



By Rev. Dierdre' R. Parker
Entertainment & The Arts Editor
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The National Coalition of Black Meeting Professionals is a non-profit organization that focuses on the training needs of African American meeting planners. Membership includes meeting planners across numerous businesses, such as civil rights organizations and religious and fraternal organizations. NCBMP holds an annual conference to assist with the educational advancement of its members, to enhance the professional status of association executives, stimulate managerial opportunities, develop a network for us in the hospitality industry, and to educate and assist youth interested in careers in the hospitality industry. The organization's 40th Annual Conference was held December 6-9th in Atlanta, GA. There, A.M.E. Zion's very own Rev. George E. McKain, Director of Public Affairs & Social Concerns, was recognized with the prestigious Chairman's Award.



NCBMP board members identify an individual who is a trailblazer within the hospitality community. Rev. McKain has been blazing trails in Zion since 1978, when he was elected Eastern Region Youth President. It was the toss of a walkie-talkie in 1983 that opened up the world of planning for Rev. McKain. He was at a conference simply to give greetings as the National Youth President when a food allergy created an emergent situation that put him at the juncture of keeping it going or letting it fall apart. It was the beginning of an adventure with the church that has taken him literally around the world.

The recognition, though well deserved, took Rev. McKain totally by surprise." It was the 40th year, and we knew that two founders would be honored." Unbeknownst to him, all things were working together. One colleague ushered him to one of the sponsored tables. He didn't really pay any attention to that because he does a lot of work with the sponsors. When it was time for the award, Rev. McKain stated that he was not even paying attention as the presenter spoke so eloquently of how the recipient was able to get you straight both professionally and spiritually. He was just ready for the singer. When his name was called, he was in total shock. "I had to fight the tears. I am not one who is ever without words."

When asked about the ways he has been able to blaze trails in the industry, this is what he said:

"With our major meeting once every four years, the General Conference, I started an intern program where young people can be nominated, or they can apply to learn the industry. Some of those young people are leaders in the church today. Some have gone on to be DEI directors and presiding elders. These programs are designed to make leaders in the world and in the church." Speaking to Rev. McKain was so inspiring. He continues to use his gifts and influence to create seamless experiences for us as we attend the myriad meetings, conferences, and conventions. His contributions to our beloved Zion make it possible for us to participate in two of the major activities involved in being a good Zionite: meeting and eating. May your work continue to bless our lives, and may God continue to bless you.

The Color Purple Remix: A Review

Rev. Dierdre' R. Parker
Entertainment and The Arts Editor
Entertainment_Arts@starofzion.org
Photos by Rev. Dierdre' R. Parker

Having had the privilege of appearing in the stage version of this musical twice as Sofia, I jumped at the opportunity to see the stage and screen mashup of this beloved classic.

When I entered the lobby, I was greeted by a sea of various shades of purple. It was beautiful. What was even more beautiful was the multiple generations of families present. There were mother and daughter duos wearing purple hats that matched their personal style. Sons and mothers playfully bickering over which snacks to purchase. Classmates of varying decades. We were directed by the event planner to the 2 reserved viewing rooms. With popcorn on my left and a blue



raspberry Icee on my right I hunkered down with excited anticipation. The moment we'd all been waiting for had finally arrived. Spoiler alert!

There will be no spoilers. I don't want to ruin this experience for anyone. I will, however, share some things that I found delightful about the film. Yes, delightful. Remember, if you are not interested in movies where the characters burst into elaborate song and dance numbers then this version of The Color Purple is probably not for you. Having said that, let's get into it.

From the beginning this film proves that we are *outside* outside, because that is where the musical and dance numbers take place. The two sisters, Celie and Nettie are first seen sitting in a large tree playing like two carefree little girls. Right away we see that Blitz Bazawule, the director for this version has found the joy inside this tragedy.



“I watched several musicals getting ready to make this film and the best ones were the ones that had a source for their music. The best power of musicals is when the music kicks in when the words are not enough” Bazawule said in an interview with BroadwayWorld.com.

The principle characters, Miss Celie (Fantasia Barrino-Taylor), Sofia (Danielle Brooks), and Shug Avery (Taraji P. Henson), were perfectly cast. In case you were worried, don't. Taraji can saaaaanng! Danielle Brooks brought a youthful exuberance to Sofia that is more nuanced than the 1985 interpretation Brooks is not new to this role; she played Sofia in the 2015 Broadway Revival. Brooks' mentor was the

one and only original Sofia, and one of the executive producers of this film, Oprah Winfrey. Brooks' Golden Globe nomination was well deserved. And speaking of Golden Globe Nominations, the 2004 American Idol winner Fantasia Barrino-Taylor did not disappoint vocally, nor in the characterization of the beloved and down-trodden Miss Celie. There was a strength present even in Celie's brokenness. The sisterhood that she developed with the other women in her world sustained her. The sisterhood is what sustained many of us in the worst of times. Maybe that is why The Color Purple is “The Musical About Love.” The Color Purple opens in wide release on Christmas Day. It is well worth the price of admission.

HEALTH & Wellness



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

The Heart: Not Just an Organ, But A Muscle!

By Daman De Leon, Health & Wellness Editor

It's February – American Heart Month – a time when the nation spotlights heart disease, the No. 1 killer of Americans.

President Lyndon B. Johnson, among the millions of people in the country who'd had heart attacks, issued the first proclamation in 1964. Since then, U.S. presidents have annually declared February American Heart Month.

Throughout the month, the American Heart Association's “Heart to Heart: Why Losing One Woman Is Too Many” campaign will raise awareness about how 1 in 3 women are diagnosed with heart disease annually.

The first Friday of American Heart Month, this year Feb. 2nd, is also National Wear Red Day as part of the AHA's Go Red for Women initiative. Coast to coast, landmarks, news anchors and neighborhoods go red to raise awareness and support for the fight against heart disease. For more information on the event and other activities during the month, visit goredforwomen.org.

This year, the federally designated event is even more important due to the impact of the coronavirus on the public's heart health, including potential harmful effects on the heart and vascular system, according to recent research.

Also, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many people have delayed or avoided going to hospitals for heart attacks and strokes – netting poorer outcomes and prompting the AHA to create “Don't Die of Doubt,” a national awareness campaign that reminds people that hospitals are the safest place to go when you have symptoms.

While in lockdown, more people have engaged in unhealthy lifestyle behaviors, such as eating poorly, drinking more alcohol and limiting physical activity, that can contribute to heart disease.

Meanwhile, heart disease continues to be the greatest health threat to Americans and is still the leading cause of death worldwide, according to the AHA's Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics – 2023 Update.

The update, published in the association's flagship journal Circulation, reports that nearly 18.6 million people across the globe died of cardiovascular disease in 2019, the latest year for which worldwide statistics are calculated. That's a 17.1% increase over the past decade. And 523.2 million cases of cardiovascular disease were reported in 2019, a 26.6% increase over 2010. In 2020 in the United States, coronary heart disease (CHD) was the leading cause (41.2%) of deaths attributable to CVD in the United States, followed by stroke (17.3%), other CVD (16.8%), high blood pressure (12.9%), heart failure (9.2%), diseases of the arteries (2.6%).

During American Heart Month, the AHA and other organizations reinforce the importance of heart health, the need for more research and efforts to ensure that millions of people live longer and healthier.

In most cases, heart disease is preventable when people adopt a healthy lifestyle, which includes not smoking, maintaining a healthy weight, controlling blood sugar and cholesterol, treating high blood pressure, getting at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity a week and getting regular checkups.

4 REASONS TO GIVE BLOOD

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DHHS: Blood Donation Process | DHHS: Am I Eligible to Give Blood? | DHHS: Why Blood Donation is Important
[Find a Blood Drive Site Near You](#)

8 Ways to Honor Black History Month



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

Evolving from “National Negro Week” established by Carter G. Woodson in 1926, Black History Month was celebrated everywhere in America since 1970. In February 1969, educators and students involved in the Black United Student Organization at Kent State University proposed for an entire month dedicated to celebrating Black history in America. The first celebration of Black History Month took place at Kent State a year later, from January 2 to February 28, 1970. No matter your race, you should take time to observe and celebrate Black History Month. It is not only important that we, as Americans, celebrate our African-American children this month but also educate our children of all races on WHY we celebrate this month.

Below are just a few examples of ways we can honor Black History not only this month but every month.



1. Educate Yourself on the Black History in Your Community

We as humans were created to learn. Learning about not only our own culture, but the cultures of others is extremely important so we can also educate our children. There are many websites, books, podcasts and videos that teach us the history of

African-American people. The Many Ways to Learn Black History has excellent resources to begin learning about Black history.

2. Visit a Black or African-American History Museum

Museums are great ways to honor Black history. Almost every state in the U.S. has a Black history museum or African-American heritage site. There are so many amazing opportunities to learn about black history in your area, not only by visiting the museums but also by partaking in their virtual tours as well. If a museum or heritage site is not available in your area, visit the Black History Mobile Museum, which traverses the country all of February and through the summer.

3. Learn about Black Music History

Black music changed the American music culture centuries ago. From spiritual blues to the rise of jazz, hip-hop and R&B. Black music has had a tremendous impact on the music most of us listen to today, which is why it is so important that we recognize and educate ourselves on where it all started. There are so many ways to listen to and experience the power of Black music history online. A great site to visit is Exploring the History of Black Music, which explains the history in depth. Another great resource is the Black Music History Library.

4. Read Books Written by Black Authors

Another very beneficial way you can honor Black history is by supporting Black authors. Reading is an excellent way to open our eyes to other realities and also find perspectives that relate to our own. Oprah Magazine’s 30 Best Books by Black Authors offers some examples of amazing books written by Black authors.

5. Watch Films or Videos by Black Creators

Another very beneficial way you can honor Black history is by supporting Black authors. Reading is an excellent way to open our eyes to other realities and also find perspectives that relate to our own. Oprah Magazine’s 30 Best Books by Black Authors offers some examples of amazing books written by Black authors.

6. Support Black-owned Businesses

It is so important to be intentional about supporting the Black-owned businesses in your community. Some of the ways you can do so are by patronizing, recommending, and sharing reviews of Black-owned businesses and restaurants, supporting and investing in Black-owned banks, stores, etc. There are so many ways to support Black-owned businesses and doing these things can make a huge difference in the community.

7. Support Influential Black-led Non-profits

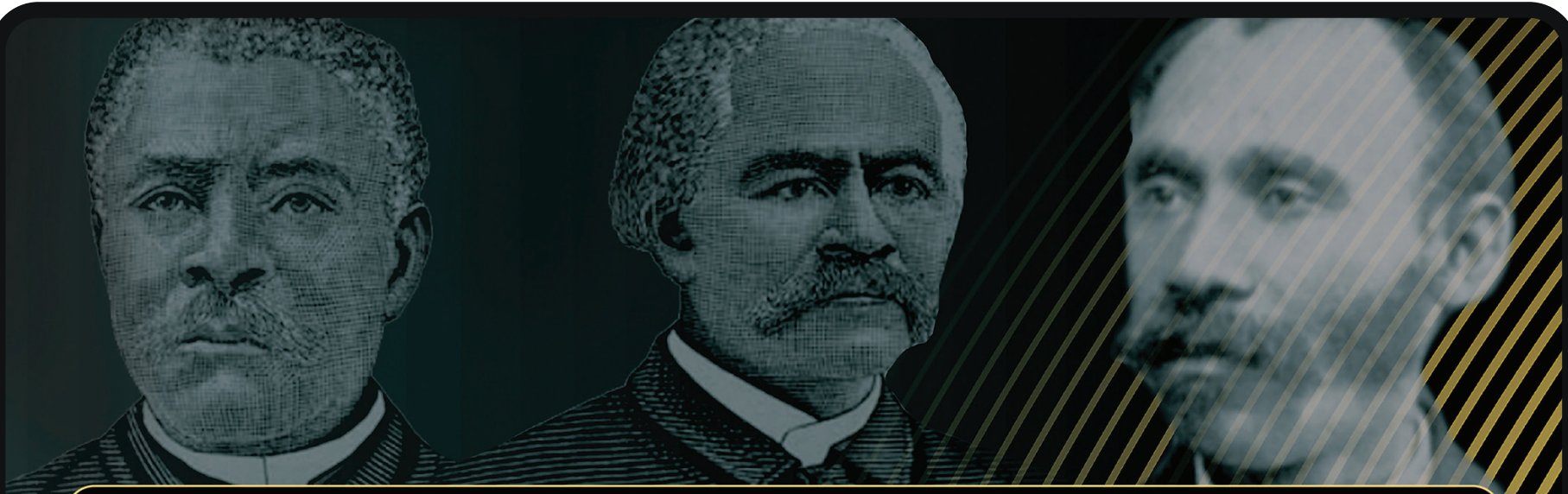
Non-profits are funded year-round by people like you. Whether it’s by donating money, time, or resources; it all makes a difference. There are racial justice activists who work tirelessly to advocate for the equal treatment of Black people. We often underestimate the power of us coming together to make a difference through the promotion of Black-led nonprofits in our communities. It is time to start getting involved and making a difference. 20 Black-led Nonprofit Organizations offer some amazing organizations to choose from.

8. Organize a Diversity and Inclusion Event

Creating an environment of diversity and inclusion is something that can be life changing to people in our community. Organizing a diversity and inclusion event in your area is a great way to make a difference. <https://www.banzai.io/blog/produce-inclusive-events> provides valuable information so you can begin planning an event in your area. Perhaps you might want to reach out to local organizations to help with your function.

Although these are all ways we can honor Black History Month, these are also great things to implement in our day-to-day life throughout the year. It is important to remember that Black history is something we should choose to honor no matter the month. Black history is American history and has made our country into what it is today.





Celebrating 130 years



Founders week dates

MONDAY, MARCH 4TH | MOTIVATIONAL MONDAY (VIRTUAL)
 8:45AM | Link: <https://bit.ly/4aVWRtP>
 Speaker - Rev. Dr Danielle Brown
 Shiloh Baptist Church, Plainfield, NJ

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6TH | 1894 LUNCHEON
 11:30PM - 1:00PM

FRIDAY, MARCH 8TH | FOUNDERS DAY CELEBRATION
 Speaker - Rev. Dr Kevin Cosby
 President of Simmons College- Kentucky

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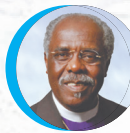
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Dr. Dana Stilley
Financial Freedom Editor
FinancialFreedom@StarOfZion.org

The Holidays are Over! Now What?

By Dr. Dana Stilley
Financial Freedom Editor

The holidays are now behind us, and if you are anything like me, you may find yourself with a little more debt than you anticipated from shopping during November and December. Vowing to do better this holiday season, I spent time reviewing my options and planning. Here are some things for you to contemplate.

First, don't let credit card debt linger by just making the minimum payments each month. Remember that credit card interest is compounded, which simply means that interest is added to your balance. If you fail to pay the balance in full each month, interest is added to your balance at the end of the next month. In essence, you pay interest on interest, and the item that you purchased on sale no longer seems to be such a bargain.

Should you find yourself with too many credit card balances, debt consolidation may be beneficial. Be sure to do your homework and consider your credit score, your ability to make the new payments, and the impact on your budget. Other options to pay down debt include concentrating on paying off credit card balances that have the largest interest rates first. To determine what is best for you, make a list of all your credit cards, outstanding balances, and interest rates. Eliminating the costliest debt first may free up funds to add to your savings and get you back on the path to financial freedom.

Next, begin preparing now for your holiday spending at the end of the year. One option available to you is to open a Christmas club account. Christmas club accounts allow for savings with no minimum balance requirements or fees. The savings become available to account holders prior to the holiday season, just in time for shopping. Popular in the early 1960s and 70s, these types of accounts are still available at some community banks, credit unions, and select employers. If you are unable to establish a Christmas club account, try saving on your own. The same amount of money that you would have deposited into the Christmas club account, you can add to a piggy bank or secret stash at home.



THE STAR OF ZION

Celebrates



MS. ALEXXIS HUTCHINSON
**ON BECOMING OUR
EDITOR IN SPORTS**

“With a 15-year career in sports spanning both the collegiate and professional levels, I am thrilled to connect with everyone about all matters sports-related with Zion in mind. Through The Star of Zion, I am eager to engage in celebrating, empowering, and informing Zion’s youth and adults about activities and opportunities for success in sports and athletics. I welcome everyone to join me at the new “Playmakers Corner” within The Star!”

CONTACT: SPORTS@STAROFZION.ORG

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

Rhandi M. Stith

April 26, 1955 - January 14, 2024



“We remember before Our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

I Thessalonians 1:3

The life of Rhandi Mattie Stith began April 26, 1955 when God blessed the late Betty V. Smith Stith and George Hogben Stith. After a fruitful life she transitioned to eternal rest with the Lord on January 14, 2024.

A most unique character, Rhandi’s journey of development began as she attended the Public Schools of Rye and New Rochelle, New York. She then journeyed into her higher education at Livingstone College of Salisbury, NC and The College of New Rochelle of New Rochelle, NY for the degrees that prepared her for the fulfilling work in Elementary Education, challenging the revealing gifts she nurtured especially with her 1st Graders. These same gifts would lead her into greater works as God would use her to impact generations.

Rhandi began her walk into Christian maturity following after and developing with her mom as a member of St. Frances

A.M.E. Zion Church of Port Chester, NY. Her gifts were nurtured here in Sunday School, Junior Choir, the Teenage Cultural Club into various District and Conference Programs and events. In 1995 she and Mom relocated to New Rochelle, NY and transferred their membership to St. Catherine A.M.E. Zion Church. Here as she matured in God she became a Life Member of the Lay Council, a Life Member of the Women’s Home and Overseas Missionary Society then Secretary of Y’s for WHOMS, Member of the Audio Visual Ministry, Mass Choir and Director of Vacation Bible School for Christian Education.

Climbing and expanding her borders, she rose to serve on The Westchester District with the Lay Council and as Missions Education Director for WHOMS. Her faithfulness and genuine commitment became evident and she became President of The New York Conference Lay Council President. Watch out, cause ‘Here She Comes...!’ Taking it to the Next Level she Coordinated Sponsorship/Partnership with AARP and NY Conference Laity. Then shared most unselfishly the resources and assisted other Annual Conference Lay Councils into like relationships. She was the Coordinator for

WHOMS and Balm in Gilead Programs, Mass Choir, and Board Member for The M. Ardelle Shaw Retreat Center

Elevating to serve with The Connectional Lay Council, Rhandi became the Editor of The Connection Newsletter serving 4 Administrations from 1997 - 2017. She was Editor of “Equipping the Laity, Chronological Endeavors of the Connectional Lay Council of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church 1948- October 2011. She was Northeastern Episcopal District Regional VP from 2019 - Present. In this work she coordinated Regional Academies, Guided regional lay activities for publication in The Connection Newsletter and developed programs to grow Lay Council Memberships. For over 20 years, she was a Volunteer Assistant with/for the Director of Public Affairs and Social Concerns assisting Rev. McKain in serving the conventions at every level. Also involved and faithful servant with The International Ministers and Lay Association, she served as their Chairperson for The Annual Recognition Banquet and was Recipient of The President’s Award under Dr. Kevin McGill’s administration. A General Conference

Delegate since 2008, she has been appointed and served on Commission on Judiciary and Global Missions Administration Board. She was just Duly Elected as Delegate for the upcoming 2024 General Conference.

She accepted the Global Mindset of The Freedom Church, and in good order both supported and attended to serve and represent around the world. She journeyed to share and build the work in Bahamas, Jamaica, and in Ghana, West Africa. Her most recent and final journey was January 2-9, 202, when she attended the Women’s Home and Overseas Missionary Society Regional Convention in Ghana supporting her Godbrother, Bishop Hilliard and Missionary Supervisor Cynthia Dogbe. Her support and works allowed her to also share in programs of The National Council of Churches USA and travel for World Methodist Council to England and Singapore. Her advice to many and most, “On a personal note, If you haven’t traveled to Western West Africa, I plead with you to consider making the trip. Our people, the work and the cultural immersion are thrilling. As for the people, you will witness the amazing things they accomplish and without the fiscal abundance by which we measure the achievable. Your life will be significantly broadened in so many ways upon a visit to Bishop Dogbe’s episcopal work.”

Rhandi was a “Foodie.” If not the Oyster Stew on holidays, Roast Duck or Chitterlings, Very rare Steak Ginger Beer or Chocolate candy bars from Ghana, Big Nana’s Pizza or Grub Hub, it may have been the Hot Pastrami sandwiches triple wrapped in Foil she’d bring to bless her friends with at connectional meetings on Day One! She was a Charter Member of the Mother/Daughter “Admiration Society” “The pride of my life is my Daughter Rhandi. As an adult she has become a real partner in my ministries as well as exploring her own and as my traveling companion.”

Dr. Betty v. Stith - 1999

“I, as your daughter, whom know You Best, can testify first hand that All that is said about You is true. You are the Best Mother that God could have blessed and daughter to have.”

Rhandi - 1999

Immediate Family members preceding her in death are her father, George Hogben Stith, and her mother, Dr. Betty V. Smith Stith. Rhandi leaves to Celebrate her life gifts and All the memories Special Children, Godbrothers and sisters, Spiritual Brothers and Sisters, Childhood Friends, Nieces. Nephews and dear friends, both clergy and lay. The names we know are many.

Rev. Dr. William M. Jordon, III

October 21, 1946 - January 07, 2024



Rev. Dr. William Mansfield Jordan III of Charlotte, NC, departed this life at home on January 7, 2024.

Rev. Dr. Jordan was born on October 21, 1946, in Washington, DC to the late Mr. William M. Jordan Jr. and the late Ms. Sarah Louise Hampton Smith Jordan. He was preceded in death by his grandson, Master Wesley T.R. Jordan, his youngest son, Mr. Julian J. Jordan Sr. and his oldest sister, Mrs. Sandra E. McDaniel.

Rev. Dr. Jordan graduated from Eastern High School in Washington, DC, with recognition for his athleticism being noted in several newspapers for playing in the DC Citywide Football Championship. He then entered Morgan State College, in Baltimore, MD, where he took his first airplane trip with his team to the Orange Blossom Classic in Miami, FL during his freshman year. Rev. Dr. Jordan received further education from Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte, NC with an Associate Degree in Law Enforcement. Afterwards, he went to Pfeiffer University to receive a Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminal Justice. Ever in the pursuit of knowledge, Rev. Dr. Jordan was accepted into Hood Theological Seminary, in Salisbury, NC. There, he enjoyed dynamic lectures, met colleagues with whom he would forge lasting friendships, such as the 'BBQ Gang' and received a Master of Divinity. He went onto further his theological study by receiving a Doctor of Ministry Degree, after having successfully defending his thesis; "God's Gift to the Church: Leaders Equipping the Saints for Ministry."

Rev. Dr. Jordan always had a strong work ethic, whether working as a camp counselor in his youth during the summer or starting an Environmental Services company with his own bare hands, to leading more than 20 churches to spiritual success. Rev. Dr. Jordan worked for 25 years, until retirement from Central Piedmont Community College as the Director of College Security. There he managed the safety of all the CPCC's campuses and was fortunate to shake the hands of 4 United States Presidents. He also served 15 years as a Charlotte

Mecklenburg County Sworn Reserve Police Officer.

Although, Rev. Dr. Jordan was honored by the success of his secular career, he was most grateful for his ministerial journey. It began when God saved Rev. Jordan at the early age of 21 under the ministry and tutelage of Elder Earl C. Cannon, Superintendent of the E.C. Cannon Memorial District in the Church of God in Christ, Inc. Under his leadership, Rev. Dr. Jordan was met with the opportunity to learn spiritual disciplines, how to be led by the Holy Spirit and how to shepherd as a pastor in Hamlet, NC. After a time, he joined the African Methodist Episcopal Zion denomination through the inspiration of his wife, who accompanied him with a music ministry as well as different programs and Missionary societies in each church. It was in Zion, where he truly fulfilled his life's calling. For it took him first into the mountains of Tennessee, where he was appointed to New Zion AME Zion church in the Blue Ridge Conference. After growing the church from 15 members to over 66, he was transferred to 3 other churches, all of which he left in better condition before being moved to the Western North Carolina Conference. On the North Charlotte District, Rev. Dr. Jordan served for 20 years and 6 months building memberships, and by the grace of God, a new church for Rockwell AME Zion! Rev. Dr. Jordan was then transferred to the West Central North Carolina Conference as Presiding Elder of the Wadesboro-Monroe District. There he grew the district through the Holy Spirit, in leadership, in membership and in prosperity. He was an anointed servant-leader, who successfully mentored several men and women in their ministries.

Rev. Dr. William M. Jordan III leaves to cherish his memories, his wife of 38 years, JoAnn Wykle Burgess Jordan, his children: Mr. Ray Burgess of the home, as well as Deacon William M. Jordan IV (Lynne) of Chesapeake, VA and Rev. Lea'Ve L. Jordan of Charlotte, NC from his previous marriage to Mrs. Leve

W. Espinosa. He also leaves his sister Loretta 'Cookie' Ewell (McIntosh) of Upper Marlboro, MD, 12 grandchildren, and 4 great-grandchildren along with a host of cousins, nieces, and nephews. He leaves a legacy behind to all who will carry the torch of God's love through the Holy Spirit.

Shakeem Jawon Bunyon Bristow

August 11, 2001 - January 9, 2024 (age 22)



Mr. Shakeem Jawon Bunyon Bristow, age 22, of Sanford, NC entered eternal rest on Tuesday, January 9, 2024.

Shakeem Jawon Bunyon Bristow, 22, of Sanford, North Carolina, passed away on January 9, 2024, at UNC Hospital in Chapel Hill from injuries he sustained in a car accident. Shakeem made a profound difference in his 22 years of life. He was respectful, tenderhearted, kind, obedient and compassionate. He knew and loved the Lord and diligently sought to grow in his relationship and to live

by God's commands. His electric smile and infectious personality endeared him to everyone he met. He loved being outdoors, walking and exploring in the woods finding "treasures". He loved taking care of animals, always wanting to take in any animals he came across. He was industrious, taking what others might consider junk, and making it into birdhouses, bird feeders, sling shots and other creations. He loved crafts and made his own bracelets and necklaces. He loved traveling, especially going to the beach and new experiences. He recently took up fishing and loved going fishing with his brothers and other family members. He loved to eat and loved cooking and creating new dishes with his mom that he would then take credit for. He had a heart for the homeless and less fortunate and always wanted to

give and help those in need. One of his stated goals was to build tiny homes for homeless people when he earned enough money. He eagerly & faithfully volunteered and gave monetarily to support the community outreach programs at Mt. Moriah. He helped to provide, prepare, and serve lunch once each month at the Bread of Life/Salvation Army in Sanford with his parents. Shakeem was a genuinely good person who loved God and strived to live out God's commandments and to witness to others. He loved his immediate and extended family and was so happy to have so many aunts, uncles, and cousins who were such a blessing to him. He loved serving others and was always willing to help. Shakeem is already being missed by all of us who love him.

Shakeem was born on August 11, 2001, and until age nine (9), was reared by his biological grandparents, Mr. Francis and Mrs. Mary Bunyon. His grandparents' influence was evident in Shakeem's life and personality as he took on many of their loving ways and likes. He attended St. James AME Church in Sanford with his grandparents. He attended Floyd Knight and B. T. Bullock Elementary Schools in Sanford through third grade. In 2011 when his grandparents' health began to decline, Terry & Linda Bristow became Shakeem's foster and then adoptive parents. Shakeem became a vibrant part of the Bristow & Taylor Families, the Mt. Moriah A. M. E Zion Church Family and the Raleigh District of the A. M. E. Zion Church Family. He attended Grace Christian School in Sanford from 4th through 8th

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Continued on Next Page

Grades where he began to thrive educationally and socially. Because of Shakeem's strong work ethic, persistence, willingness to use the tools he learned and with help that God sent through his mother, and two special teachers—Mrs. Lynn Kruger and Mrs. Barbara Keller, Shakeem was able to rebound and recover from many of his early educational deficits. He attended Lee County Senior High School from grades 9 - 12. Shakeem was a proud 2020 graduate of Lee County High School where he played on the varsity football and wrestling teams and was a faithful member of the Junior ROTC (JROTC) program for 4 years where he earned the rank of Cadet First Lieutenant. He participated on the Rifle team and in parades with JROTC. Through JROTC, Shakeem also learned discipline, leadership skills and to be a responsible, independent thinker. This helped him to stand for and do what was right, avoiding many of the temptations, peer pressures, and many experiences in High School and life. Shakeem was a student at Central Carolina Community College in the Sustainable Agriculture program. Since June 2020, Shakeem has been employed with the contracted maintenance provider at Pfizer in Sanford (currently Harvard). He loved his job and the people he worked with. His workday began at 5:00 pm. He would leave home faithfully at 4:30 pm to make the 20-minute drive to work to make sure he got to work on time. He never called out. He rarely took days off and often received accolades and monetary bonuses for doing exceptional work and exceeding standards.

Shakeem loved attending and being a member of Mt. Moriah AME Zion Church, as well as attending services and conferences on the District, Conference and Connectional levels. He was grateful to have the members of Mt. Moriah and the Raleigh District as part of his supportive village who he grew to love and respect and who became his teachers, mentors, and friends. At Mt. Moriah, he was a Junior and later Senior Usher & Acolyte. He attended Sunday School each week and served as Mt. Moriah's delegate or alternate delegate to the Raleigh District Church School Convention several years. He loved singing with the Youth and Children's Choir on 4th Sundays and assisting in worship, often being called on to read the scripture or to pray. He faithfully served as a Junior Trustee until age 18 and then became the youngest member ever of the Trustee Board at Mt. Moriah. Shakeem took his duties as trustee seriously and served faithfully throughout his tenure. He participated with the youth department of Mt. Moriah and served on the kitchen committee.

Shakeem represented the Raleigh District several years as a member of

the Bible Bowl Team and placed every year in the Raleigh District Black History Bowl. He also served as Chaplain of the Raleigh District Varick International Christian Youth Council.

Shakeem is preceded in death by his uncle, Winford (Jr.) Clegg.

He is survived by his paternal grandmother, Mary Bristow of Sanford, NC; maternal grandparents, Francis and Mary Bunyon, L. B. and Mary Taylor and Stella Murchison; biological mother, Tasha Bunyon of Sanford, NC; parents, Terry and Linda Bristow of Sanford, NC; sister, Tiera D. Thomas (Sherrard) of Ft. Moore, Georgia; brothers, Jay'Inn and Zachariah Bunyon Bristow, of the home; aunts and uncles, Mary Henderson, Annie Lee, Rutha Jones, Earlean Harris, Charlene Gage, L. B. Taylor, Jr (Naomi), Dian Taylor, Barbara Jennings (Larry), Alma Sherman (Michael), JoAnn Gulley, Gregory Taylor (Gregory Chandler), Julie Bunyon, Seltina Bristow and Anthony Bristow (Maria), Tony Murchison, and Al Smith; nephews, Kai and Kairo Thomas; niece, Kaila Thomas, and many, many, many, cousins and friends who all helped shape Shakeem into the awesome person he was.

Shakeem is still making a difference even in death through organ and tissue donations that will help save or improve the lives of many. To honor Shakeem's life example of giving and helping others, the family has requested that in lieu of flowers that donations be made to the Outreach Program at Mt. Moriah AME Zion Church through cashapp (\$mtmoriah03) or by sending donations to 5448 Highway 158 Business, Henderson, NC 27537. Please designate "Outreach Program" in the for or memo section. Let us all endeavor to keep Shakeem's memory alive by following his life example of loving God as evidenced by helping & serving others.

ATTENTION: Everyone that enters the funeral home and or attends services- **MUST WEAR A MASK**

"We Do Not Own Copyrights To The Background Music"

Thank you for helping us protect the families and communities we serve.

Professional services entrusted to Knotts Funeral Home-Sanford, NC

CLASSIFIEDS

Virtual Candidate Forums and Interviews Press Release

To The A.M.E. Zion Church constituency,

By approval of the Board of Bishops, this missive serves to give direction on extending invitations to Episcopal and General Officer Candidates to participate in candidate forums and personal interviews.

Knowing the enormous amount of time afforded to campaigning and the ongoing demand of time necessary to care for your churches, ministries, and families, all Candidates are being instructed to refrain from accepting invitations for collective candidate forums or individual interviews regarding their campaigns from anyone, other than the following:

1. Invitations from Bishops to their Areas;
2. Invitations from Connectional Organizations, i.e., WH&OMS, CLC, IMLA, Presiding Elders' Council, CED, etc.;

3. Individual Campaign Marketing Materials

Further, we are asking all individuals, churches, presiding elder districts, and other organizations outside of those mentioned to refrain from inviting candidates to forums or individual interviews.

Thank you for your cooperation in keeping order during these times.

Sincerely,

Dr. J. Elvin Sadler,
General Secretary-Auditor



THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH GENERAL OFFICER JOB DESCRIPTION

Chief Communications Officer



Position Title:
Chief Communications Officer

Classification:
Exempt

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

Reports to:
Chairman of an Administrative Board of Com-

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

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

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

PERSONAL MATURITY AND MINISTRY-CONGRUENT CHARACTER
Must be emotionally healthy, resilient, constructive, and wise, demonstrating the personal qualities that mark strong leadership and durability. They will require strong interpersonal skills and should be recognized as servant-leaders, outgoing, and friendly.

FAMILY ALIGNMENT
The General Officer must be able to balance wisely the responsibilities of home and work.

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

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

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

munications

General Description:

Summary/Objective

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

Essential Functions:

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

THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH GENERAL OFFICER JOB DESCRIPTION

Chief Financial Officer



Position Title:
Chief Financial Officer

Classification
Exempt

Salary Grade/Level/Family/Range
Determined by Connectional Budget Department's predefined range.

Reports to
Chairman of and Connectional Budget Board

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) is responsible for the management and general oversight of the fiscal affairs of the Denomination. The CFO serves as a member of the Central Management Team (CMT) and provides general advice and guidance to the fiscal affairs of the Church.

Essential Functions:

1. Receive and deposit in a bank of good reputation to the credit of the Connectional Budget Department all of the Connectional Budget and disbursement of same (serves as clearing house).
2. Responsible for financial planning and record keeping.
3. Keeps a separate as well as an aggregate account of connectional finances for each Annual Conference.

General Description:

Summary/Objective

4. Reports to the Presiding Bishop at the sitting of each Annual Conference the amount of Connectional Budget received for the conference year.
5. Manage payroll for Connectional Claimants.
6. Audited financial reporting on a semi-annual basis to the Board of Bishops, annually to Connectional Council and quadrennial report to the General Conference.
7. Consultant to Site Commission for General Conference.
8. General Conference preparation

Qualifications and Competencies:

SPIRITUAL MATURITY AND VITALITY

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

PERSONAL MATURITY AND MINISTRY-CONGRUENT CHARACTER

Must be emotionally healthy, resilient, constructive, and wise, demonstrating the personal

qualities that mark strong leadership and durability. They will require strong interpersonal skills and should be recognized as a servant-leader, be outgoing and friendly.

FAMILY ALIGNMENT

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

MINISTRY CALLING AND GIFTING

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

1. Detail oriented with a passion for figures
2. Minimum of 10 years' experience in upper management of an organization with a budget of at least \$2 million such as non-profit, small business, or mission directed company
3. Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college/university in Finance/Accounting or Business Administration.
4. Acceptable bond in the sum of \$1,000,000.00

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

Convention Manager for the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

AME Zion Corporate Headquarters, Charlotte, NC 28269



The mission of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church is to increase our love for God and to help meet the needs of humankind by "Loving God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with our entire mind, and to love our neighbor as ourselves."

Summary of Position: The General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion

(AMEZ) Church directs that there shall be a Convention Manager. The Convention Manager is responsible for all aspects of Conferences, Meetings, and Events under the guidance of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and is amenable to the Connectional Budget Board.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities:

- Finalizes the negotiations of contract venues for space, services, and catering to support assigned meetings and conferences.
- Compiles a list of prospective event venues, conducts venue visits with the sponsoring departments, e.g., the Board of Bishops, Lay Council, Women's Home and Overseas Missionary Society (WH&OMS), the Christian Education Department (CED), and the International Ministers and Lay Association (IIMLA), and provides guidance on the final selection.
- Shall function as the Liaison between the Site Committee and the various convention sites being considered by the departments.
- Shall provide a detailed analysis of all proposals and present them to the committee of the departments.
- Performs pre-event responsibilities for assigned events, including, but not limited to, producing attendance data for Bishops, General, and Connectional Officers.
- Coordinates follow-up with vendors, hotels, and other venues.
- Manages event marketing to include mass email distribution and

postal mail functions.

- Works closely with the team members of the sponsoring departments relative to their meeting/conference needs.
- Provides oversight for effective customer service in such areas as - display/exhibit registration and management; sponsorship sales and fulfillment; post-conference administrative and financial actions; formatting and posting of proceedings, logistics, and other administrative actions required to ensure successful events.
- Performs on-site management in coordination with the sponsoring department of the assigned event and serves as a liaison between the venue support staff and the sponsoring department. This may include registration, attendee/customer service fulfillment, food and beverage delivery, audio-visual services delivery, security, local transportation, sponsorship fulfillment, and display/exhibit delivery.
- As defined by the CFO, performs financial duties which may include, but are not limited to, contributing to developing detailed budgets for the assigned meetings,
- Ensures that events meet legal, safety, and health requirements/regulations, i.e., obtains necessary permits from fire and health departments.
- Coordinates transportation for special guests, attendees, speakers, or other parties.

Required Qualifications and Skills:

- Must have a minimum experience of ten years in a related role within the Meeting and Event Management/Planning Industry.
- Must have Church Meeting planner experience.
- Must be able to exercise good judgment in a variety of situations.
- Must have strong written and verbal communication skills.
- Must have good administrative and organizational skills.

- Must be able to multi-task and work closely with all levels of the organization.
- Must be able to work independently from conception to completion.
- Must be able to work under pressure and oversee various activities.
- Must be able to maintain confidentiality under guidance from the CFO.

Preferred Qualification:

- Must have a working knowledge of the A.M.E. Zion organization.

- Current A.M.E. Zion local church membership is a plus.

Interested Applicants should email their resume to:

cfoamez@gmail.com

A reference letter from your current Pastor (and your Bishop, if applicable) must accompany your resume if you are a member of the A.M.E.Z. Church.

Resumes and Reference letter(s) will be accepted electronically only.

Preferred file formats: .doc, .docx & PDF

*Deadline for Applicant Submission: **March 22, 2024***

THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH GENERAL OFFICER JOB DESCRIPTION

Chief Operating Officer and Business Manager



Position Title:
Chief Operating Officer and Business Manager of the Publications House

Classification:
 Exempt

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

Reports to:

Board of Bishops and Board of Communications

General Description:

Summary/Objective

The Chief Operations Officer (COO) is a member of the AME Zion Central Management Team; specifically, the Central Management Team and has oversight of the day-to-day operations of the Corporate Headquarters. The COO is charged to advance strategic projects that direct, administer and coordinate the cross-functional administrative staff activities and functions for an overall efficient, effective, safe and legally fully compliant general office and headquarters environment.

The General Manager of the Publishing House executes authority under the supervision of the Board of Communications as provided, to regulate the publication, production, sale and distribution of the literature of our Church, Sunday Schools and Young People's Societies; except for that which belongs to the Editorial Department.

The COO will serve the church by providing strategic leadership to the administrative operations of the AME Zion Corporate Headquarters. Working under the direction of the BoB, the COO will facilitate the vision, development of new programs and projects in keeping with desired objectives and outcomes; will maximize the effectiveness of existing programs and give leadership to both staff and volunteer members engaged in this support ministry. The COO will contribute to the team spirit and morale through personal leadership, exemplification, fellowship, encouragement, cooperation, prayer, support and other appropriate ways; as they serve the Lord Jesus Christ, The African Methodist Epis-

copal Zion Church and the BoB.

THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH GENERAL OFFICER JOB DESCRIPTION Chief Operating Officer and Business Manager

The COO shall make a semi-annual report as directed to the Board of Bishops; an annual report to the Connectional Council; and a quadrennial report to the General Conference.

The General Manager of the Publishing House serves both as its day-to-day operating staff manager and its overall business decision-making manager. The General Manager has authority to hire and to establish the terms and conditions of employment relationships. All financial records – sales, receipts, expenditures and other business transactions - must be kept in separate accounts ready; at all times, for review and audit analyses.

The General Manager shall make, as directed; a quarterly report to the Board of Communications; in addition, to an annual report to the Connectional Council; and a quadrennial report to the General Conference.

Essential Functions:

- Meet regularly with the BoB to clarify vision, goals, desired outcomes and strategies
- Lead the Management Team in development of responsive strategic plans and implementation schedules,
- Foster clear communication of the vision and implementation plans throughout the departments and staffs,
- Monitor progress, identify and help to resolve significant operational and human resource issues,
- Provide team leadership and knowledge based guidance to headquarters, general officers and department head administrative efforts and projects,
- Evaluate the evolving infrastructure, administrative workflows and operational needs that strengthen the overall headquarters effectiveness and efficiency
- Foster a safe, legally compliant and conducive environment where working relationships among staffs, boards and churches are handled within sound business processes and outcomes are Christ-cen-

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- Advocate and conduct general officer team meetings that foster team-spirit, open communications, shared responsibility and consensus resolution
- Represent Zion by serving at denominational levels with BoB awareness, in community and civic organizations and encourage management team members to do the same.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Advocate and encourage the development and adoption of common business processes that:

- Cause headquarters administrative staffs to be more effective
- Support human resource skills development, performance planning and job performance evaluation
- Establish specific and measurable department goals and outcomes
- Provide common human resource policies relative to selection, task assignments, performance evaluation, counsel and discipline, employer benefits, complaint resolution and employment separation.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Work with the Chief Financial Officer to advocate and encourage the development and adoption of common business processes that

- Support zero-based organizational budget plans and measurements
- Provide for overall financial oversight, actuals to plan, outlook projections and audit readiness,
- Define the cyclic planning guidelines that assure consistency with church policies; BoB, CBB, and administrative board requirements and direction

Human Resources

Work with the Chief Financial Officer to advocate and encourage the development and adoption of common business processes that

- Establishes and maintains the human resource function including:

- Recruitment, hiring, and compensation
- Benefits administration and oversight
- Professional training and development, including new employee orientation
- Retention and retraining strategies
- Regulatory oversight and legal compliance
- Ensure that the human resource function is properly resourced.

Qualifications:

SPIRITUAL MATURITY AND VITALITY

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

PERSONAL MATURITY AND MINISTRY-CONGRUENT CHARACTER

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

FAMILY ALIGNMENT

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

MINISTRY CALLING AND GIFTING

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

CREDENTIALS:

COO should have minimum of 10 years' experience in upper management of a church, nonprofit, or mission directed company or function. They should have demonstrated experiences and significant accomplishments within multi-functional, cross-functional and integrated management organizations. They shall have; at minimum, a master's degree from an accredited college/university.

All serious application inquiries must send resumes to AMEZionadm@gmail.com by February 28, 2024, for consideration.

VICYC's Executive Committee Appointment Application

The 2022-2026 Executive Committee of the VICYC of the Christian Education Department - A.M.E. Zion Church is now accepting candidate applications for four (4) Members-at-Large and Treasurer to serve in connective youth ministry.

Ideal Candidates:

1. Must be between the ages of 15-21.
2. Must be properly received into membership in the A.M.E. Zion Church and considered a member in good standing.
3. Must possess good moral standards assessed by the Word of God.
4. Must Plan to attend the 2024 & 2025 Winter Meetings on Christian Education and also attend the Quadrennial on Christian



Education in 2026.

ALL APPLICATIONS ARE TO BE SUBMITTED BY February 15, 2024, at 11:59 PM EST

<https://forms.gle/6qTCvbN3BMc3rrHr9>

The Appointment Application Requirements are as follows:

- Completed Online Application
- Statement of Faith that describes what it means to be a credible, committed Christian Disciple
- Three (3) references for consideration, which must include the applicant's Local Pastor, CED Director, Bishop

Following the Application being submitted, each candidate will go through an interview process, and at the conclusion of the process, each candidate will be notified of the status of their candidacy.

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Looking Back to Move Forward

Hustlers Die Young

Written by, Dr. Anthony T. Browder
Submitted by, Rev. Dr. Sarah Fleming

During the 20 years since the riots of the 1960s, it appears that little progress has been made in the African American community. Crime is at an all-time high. Unemployment is even higher and drugs are tearing apart the soul of most neighborhoods. All of these are having an adverse effect on or black youth.

In one of my many community lectures, I asked a group of high school students what their plans were for the future. For those who had given it some thought, the typical response was that they wanted to become a professional athlete or entertainer. But there were a couple of students who had different aspirations... they wanted to be hustlers.

This response disturbed me because the likelihood that an aspiring youngster will become a professional athlete or entertainer is slim, but attainable. The key to success is hard work. But a young person does not need a key to become a hustler. All he needs to know is how to pick a lock. Achieving this life goal requires a parasitic mentality.

Those who choose to become hustlers begin their careers by either selling drugs or committing robberies. Both roads lead to quick money, fast living and ...a dead end street. Unfortunately, there are hundreds of black youth who choose to take this route.

On any given day, you can see these teenagers driving Mercedes' or BMW's wearing designer sweat suits and eyeglasses and carrying handbags which cost more than most folks pay for rent. Where are the parents of these children and why don't they care/

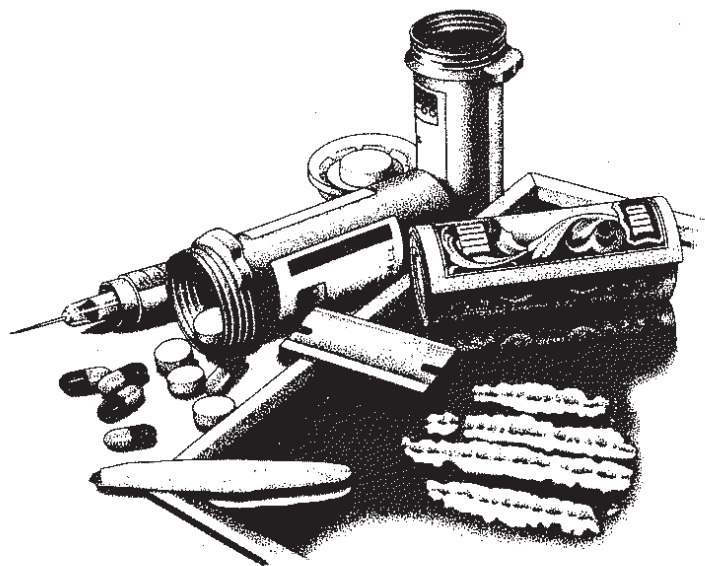
Unfortunately, many of these teenagers make more money in a month than their parents make in a year. I am bothered by the fact that most of these young people have very little regard for their lives and even less for the lives of other. Most are out of touch with anything outside of their immediate environment, and see only those things which bring immediate gratification.

It's a shame to see teenagers walking around with hundreds of dollars worth of gold jewelry around their necks, never realizing that most of that gold comes from South Africa. They don't care to know that the South African government exports \$50 million a day in gold while black miners die at the rate of 33 a day. They don't realize that they are helping to enslave their own brothers.

Many of these teens are unaware that the dangerous period in the life of a black male is between the ages of 13 and 25. This is the time when many youth become disillusioned with school, get involved with drugs, and turn to a life of crime. All these activities contribute to the development of a permanent underclass with little or no hope for improvement for themselves or their future families.

There are very few drug pushers or thieves. Most die early in life. Those who do survive often wish they were dead. They live out their lives in the prisons and flop houses of this nation. It is not a pretty picture.

In most instances, people who take a wrong turn in life do so because they lack guidance and exposure. People who become successful, set their sights on a particular goal early in life and continually strive toward it. Those who are unsuccessful habits early in life



It is a simple case of cause and effect. We all get out of life what we put into it. The habits we cultivate in our youth determine how we will live our adult lives. Just ask the person who sits behind a desk or the one who sits behind bars.

There are no simple solutions to this position. It is a complex situation which affects us all. Therefore, we are all required to be actively involved in seeking solutions. Our youth are our future. We can't afford to turn our backs on them.

Everyone---parents, educators, businessmen and others---must become involved and do whatever they can to influence and improve the life of at least one youth. All of our lives depend upon this.

Commentary

Throughout the last decade I have received hundreds of letters from brothers and sisters in the prison system. The majority of these letters are from persons under 35 who are doing time for various drugs

related offenses.

Many of the letters are from hustlers who never dreamed that they would end up in prison. Few if any ever thought about the death and destruction that they brought to their families and their community. Now, locked behind bars, many are beginning to come to their senses, and realize how their choices affected their lives and the lives of others.

Most are now reading regularly for the first time in their lives. Their minds are being transformed while their bodies are imprisoned. Many have read my books and have expressed thanks for the knowledge and information the books exposed them to. They write requesting additional books, material and information.

Like Malcolm X, during his imprisonment, many inmates are undergoing profound changes of consciousness. Imprisonment can be a cathartic experience for those who are ready to be transformed. If only they could have begun this change of consciousness before they became hustlers and committed crimes which resulted in them being locked away in the prime of their lives.

If they are lucky, many persons who are incarcerated will return to their communities. But because of a prior conviction many will not be able to vote or have many opportunities for legitimate economic advancement. What can be done to help them? What can be done to prevent young sisters and brothers from following in their footsteps?

If white youth were locked up at rates similar to those of African American youth, Congress would declare a national emergency. Parents, teachers, ministers, politicians and business leaders would demand solutions to this tragic and unacceptable loss of life. But too many voices are quiet. Is it because the lives being destroyed belong black and brown youth? Whatever the reason, it is a sad commentary of America's values.

You don't have to wait for politicians to initiate change. You can start by developing relationships with youth in your community and creating alternatives to life in the streets. You can begin by listening to them, talking to them and teaching them that they are loved and that there is a place for them in their community.



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QUADRENNIAL
GENERAL CONFERENCE

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2024

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