

He Answers  
the Call...  
The Right Reverend  
Dr. Kenneth Monroe

Pg  
**10**

Naturalised  
Americans be  
Woke and Vote

Pg  
**41**

# THE STAR OF ZION

JULY 2024 | VOL 148 NO. 7 | STAROFZION.ORG | THE OFFICIAL VOICE OF THE A.M.E. ZION CHURCH

## ZION



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

# 52<sup>ND</sup> *Quadrennial* GENERAL CONFERENCE


JULY 24-28, 2024

THE SHERATON FOUR SEASON HOTEL

JOSEPH S. KOURY CONVENTION CENTER

GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA





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.

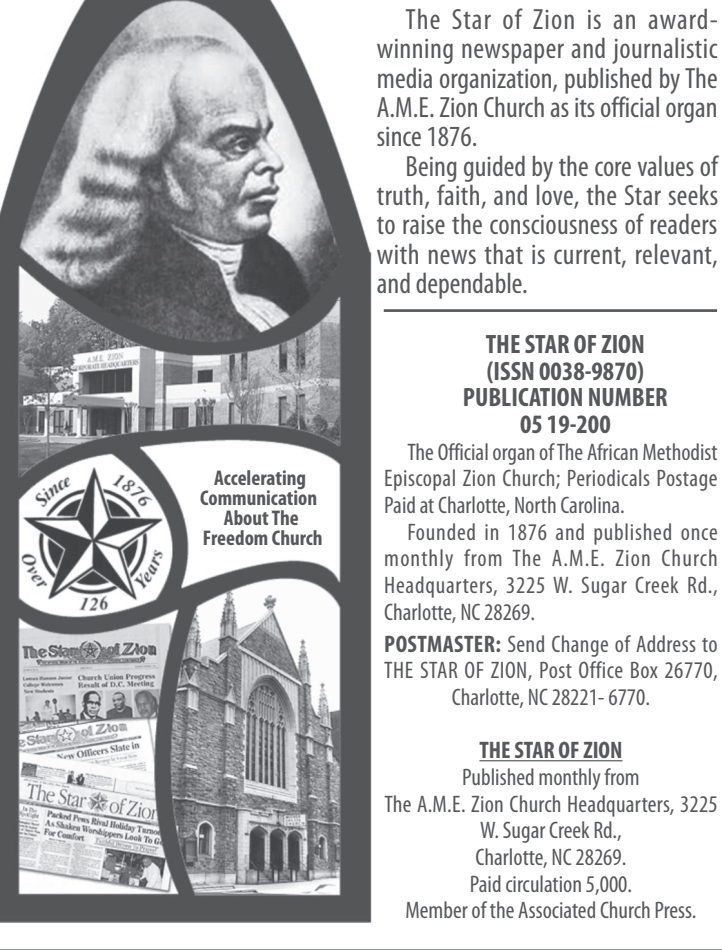
**THE STAR OF ZION**  
(ISSN 0038-9870)  
PUBLICATION NUMBER  
05 19-200

The Official organ of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church; Periodicals Postage Paid at Charlotte, North Carolina.

Founded in 1876 and published once monthly from The A.M.E. Zion Church Headquarters, 3225 W. Sugar Creek Rd., Charlotte, NC 28269.

**POSTMASTER:** Send Change of Address to THE STAR OF ZION, Post Office Box 26770, Charlotte, NC 28221-6770.

**THE STAR OF ZION**  
Published monthly from  
The A.M.E. Zion Church Headquarters, 3225 W. Sugar Creek Rd., Charlotte, NC 28269.  
Paid circulation 5,000.  
Member of the Associated Church Press.



★ The Star of Zion ★

**COMMUNICATIONS BOARD**

- Chairman:**  
Bishop George D. Crenshaw
- First Vice Chairman:**  
Bishop Brian R. Thompson, Sr.
- Second Vice Chairman:**  
Bishop George E. Battle, Jr.
- Third Vice Chairperson (Layperson):**  
Ms. Marilyn Graham

- PIED** Rev. Dr. David A. Williams  
Ms. Carlous Tyrance
- ENC** Rev. Dr. Florence S. Brown  
Ms. Nora K. McNeill
- MW** Rev. Todd Jarrett  
Ms. Martha Scudder
- NE** Rev. Kenneth Lewis  
Mrs. Mattie Taylor
- SA** Rev. Sandra Sistare  
Ms. Marilyn Graham
- MA** Rev. D'Andre W. James-Daniels  
Mrs. Debra P. Dennison
- AL/FL** Rev. Dr. Erskine Faush, Jr.  
Mrs. Elizabeth Jackson
- SWD** Rev. Gary Adams  
Ms. Pamela Brown
- WD** Rev. Kaloma Smith  
Mr. Clyde Ellis Virges
- CSA** Rev. Seth Moulton  
Mrs. Melanie Parker
- WWA** Rev. Sharon Mitchell  
Mr. Daniel Brown
- EWA** Rev. Johnny Ruff  
Mr. Nse Joseph Edem

- Editor in Chief**  
Mr. Darin Kent  
[Editor@StarOfZion.org](mailto:Editor@StarOfZion.org)
- Zion Spotlight Editor**  
Mrs. Debra Chappelle-Polk  
[ZionSpotlight@StarOfZion.org](mailto:ZionSpotlight@StarOfZion.org)
- Education Editor**  
Rev. Roderick J. Josey  
[Education@StarofZion.org](mailto:Education@StarofZion.org)
- World Politics Editor**  
Rev. Ronald Nathan  
[WorldPolitics@StarOfZion.org](mailto:WorldPolitics@StarOfZion.org)
- Health and Wellness Editor**  
Mr. Daman De Leon  
[Health\\_Wellness@StarOfZion.org](mailto:Health_Wellness@StarOfZion.org)
- Social Justice Editor**  
Rev. Dr. Allison Lee  
[SocialJustice@StarOfZion.org](mailto:SocialJustice@StarOfZion.org)
- Entertainment & The Arts Editor**  
Rev. Dierdre' R. Parker  
[Entertainment\\_Arts@StarofZion.org](mailto:Entertainment_Arts@StarofZion.org)
- Financial Freedom Editor**  
Dr. Dana Stilley  
[FinancialFreedom@StarOfZion.org](mailto:FinancialFreedom@StarOfZion.org)
- Lifestyle Editor**  
Ms. Angel Eason  
[Lifestyle@StarOfZion.org](mailto:Lifestyle@StarOfZion.org)
- Sports Editor**  
Ms. Alexxis Hutchinson  
[Sports@StarofZion.org](mailto:Sports@StarofZion.org)
- Star of Zion Office**  
704-688-2577  
[Office@StarofZion.org](mailto:Office@StarofZion.org)
- Subscriptions Department**  
704-688-2561  
[Subscribe@StarOfZion.org](mailto:Subscribe@StarOfZion.org)
- SUBSCRIPTION RATES**  
**One Year** - \$38.00  
**Single Copy** - \$4.00  
**Bundle** (50 Copies): \$100.00

**Notice to Star of Zion Reporters  
Article/Ad Submission Deadline Dates**

- August 2024 Issue.....July 15, 2024  
September 2024 Issue.....August 15, 2024  
October 2024 Issue.....September 15, 2024  
November 2024 Issue.....October 15, 2024  
December 2024 Issue.....November 15, 2024

IN THIS  
ISSUE  
PAGES

LOOK  
INSIDE

03-17  
ZION  
SPOTLIGHT

18-27  
EDUCATION

27  
SOCIAL  
JUSTICE

28-30  
ENTERTAINMENT  
& THE ARTS

31-33  
HEALTH &  
WELLNESS

34-35  
ROAD TO GENERAL  
CONFERENCE 2024

36-37  
GLOBAL  
LEADERSHIP

39  
FINANCIAL  
FREEDOM

39  
SPORTS

40  
OBITUARIES

40-41  
WORLD  
POLITICS

42-43  
OPINION

# Is The A.M.E. Zion Church Still “The Freedom Church”? New Book Replies

By Reverend William McKenith, Ph.D.

*Notice: We are pleased to announce that the long anticipated Contemporary History of The A.M. E. Zion Church book has been completed. The authors, Bishop George Walker and Rev. Dr. William McKenith, will be on hand for the book's release at the 52<sup>nd</sup> General Conference in Greensboro.*

*The Contemporary History of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church: “The Freedom Church,” 1972-2016 (AME Zion Publishing House, 2024) recounts the contemporary religious and social mission of one of America’s oldest Black denominations. The co-authors elevated The AME Zion Church’s continued contributions in the cause of Black liberation during the contemporary period in an effort to address whether the Church is still “The Freedom Church.” The authors lofty pursuit evolve through a study of the Church’s theology and its practical implications for missions.*

To launch their inquiry, Bishop Walker and Dr. McKenith set out to define what it means to be “The Freedom Church.” If “The Freedom Church” is defined by its practices, it would prove difficult in comparing the Church’s social activism of one period in America’s political history to the social activism of a disparate time in history with its own set of unique challenges to Black life.

The authors propose a different methodology. Rather than define “The Freedom Church” on the radicalism or moderation of its resistance, perhaps it is more prudent to clarify its meaning on the basis of its ethos or purpose, which is the moral, intellectual, and social development of the race and society. Accordingly, the practices required to meet the aims of “The Freedom Church” would necessarily change to meet the changing existential crisis threatening Black life and prosperity in any given moment in history.

The Church’s ethos and practices during the contemporary period are evaluated on three levels. Firstly, *The Contemporary History of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church* articulates a nuanced norm of liberation theology, calling it “Zion Methodism Theology of Liberation.” It is a theological method that unequivocally argues that Christian redemption is both personal and social.

.....  
*Continued on page 14*





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

# HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY: Celebrate Freedom

By: Debra Chappelle-Polk, Zion Spotlight Editor

New York, NY... July is a month that symbolizes summer, ambition, and contentment. July's birthstone is the ruby, which represents satisfaction and happiness. Its birth flowers are the larkspur or the water lily, which have different meanings depending on their colors. The zodiac signs for July are Cancer and Leo, which are associated with emotions, creativity, and leadership.

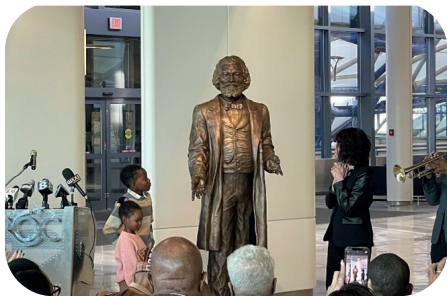
One of America's most important and celebrated holidays falls on the fourth day of July. Also called Independence Day, the Fourth of July commemorates the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, which declared the original colonies to be free from British rule. There are barbeques, beach parties, and fireworks exploding all over the country in celebration. Savvy consumers can save on everything from home appliances to summer clothing to automobiles during Fourth of July door-busting sales, which usually last for weeks. Politicians running for re-election make speeches touting their accomplishments, trying to convince people to give them another term of office. First-time candidates make speeches trying to convince people to vote for them as they offer something better than the current office holder.

On July 5, 1852, Frederick Douglass gave a speech at the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society in Rochester, New York, celebrating the signing of the Declaration of Independence. It was biting oratory in which Douglass told his audience, "This Fourth of July is yours, not mine. You may rejoice, I must mourn." And he asked them, "Do you mean, citizens, to mock me, by asking me to speak to-day?" Standing before the assembly, he asked another question:

"What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July? I answer. A day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him, your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty, an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sound of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciation of tyrants brass fronted impudence; your shout of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanks-givings, with all your religious parade and solemnity, are to him, mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy -- a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages. There is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices more shocking and bloody than are the people of the United States, at this very hour."

The major theme of the speech was how America was not living up to its proclaimed beliefs. Douglass noted how Americans are proud of their country and their religion and how they rejoice in the name of freedom and liberty and yet, they do not offer those things to millions of their country's residents.

On July 5, 2020 -- the 168<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that speech -- a statue of Frederick Douglass that had been erected in Rochester, New York in 2018, was torn down. The statue was found at the brink of the Genesee River gorge about fifty feet from its pedestal with damage to the base and a finger. Carvin Eison, SUNY Brockport professor, filmmaker, and head of the organization responsible for the memorial speculated that it was vandalized in response to the removal of Confederate monuments in the wake of the George Floyd protests.



In October 2022, a bronze statue of Frederick Douglass was unveiled by the Rochester Community Media Center at the Frederick Douglass Greater Rochester International Airport.

The African Methodist Episcopal Zion denomination played a vital role in abolitionist and Civil Rights Movements. James Varick, the founder and first Bishop of the A.M.E. Zion Church was a fierce opponent of slavery and openly supported its abolition. He often preached sermons on this



subject and fought for equal rights for African Americans, the most notable being the "Sermon of Thanksgiving on the Occasion of the Abolition of the African Slave Trade," on January 1, 1808. In 1821, James Varick and other Black New York City leaders petitioned the New York State Constitutional Convention to grant Blacks the right to vote. Six years later Varick helped establish Freedom's Journal, the first Black newspaper in the United States. [www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Article/CS4415](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Article/CS4415)

On July 4, 1827, James Varick and his congregation celebrated victory when New York finally enacted the final emancipation of Negro slaves. Two weeks after the celebration, on July 22, 1827, Varick passed away in his New York City home. Originally, he was buried in the Colored Union Cemetery (now Woodlawn, Bronx, NY). His remains now repose in the crypt of the Mother African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Harlem.



"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Those words, written in Declaration of Independence, are frequently quoted by millions of Americans. The words should be instilled in the hearts of all, as God, our creator intended.

Source References: Historical Document: "The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro" 1852 Africans in America; Goggle; Wikipedia; BlackPast

## The Coppinville Experience

FROM POVERTY TO GOD'S WILL



The Autobiography of Frederick L. Hamilton



# A Seed of Hope: Exploring the Potential Revival of the Black Methodist Church in America

By Rev. Kelcy G. L. Steele, Ph.D, M.Div, BA

The Black Methodist Church, a cornerstone of African American religious and social life for centuries, finds itself at a crossroads. Decades of declining membership, aging congregations, and societal shifts have left many questioning its future. However, amidst these challenges, seeds of hope are being sown, hinting at a potential revival on the horizon.



This past week at the New England Annual Conference under the leadership of Bishop Dennis V. Proctor & Missionary Supervisor D. Diane Proctor, I witnessed young, emerging voices being used as Oracles of God to declare both prophetic and hopeful words for this new generation of Zionites. It was humbling to see those who you have mentored in Conference Studies now stand on Major platforms in the past that were reserved for veterans. There is a rebirth taking place and bishops are appointing young adults to district offices, as well as building a strong team of multimedia experts so that we may serve this present age. There is a great need for intergenerational leadership to prepare us for the revival that's about to hit Zion.

## Are you ready for a Re-engaging with Social Justice?

One key factor fueling this potential resurgence is a renewed focus on social justice. The Black Church has always been at the forefront of the fight for equality, and today's generation, deeply affected by movements like Black Lives Matter, is finding resonance in this legacy. Churches are increasingly becoming hubs for activism, addressing issues like police brutality, mass incarceration, and economic inequality. This renewed commitment to social justice is attracting younger generations seeking spiritual grounding alongside tangible action.



## Are you ready to Embracing Cultural Relevance?

Recognizing the need to remain relevant, many Black Methodist churches are embracing contemporary forms of worship and community engagement. Gospel concerts, spoken word events, and social media outreach are bridging the generational gap and fostering a sense of belonging. By incorporating elements of contemporary culture while staying true to their core values, these churches are creating spaces that feel both



familiar and exciting.

## Are you ready to Harnessing the Power of Technology?

The COVID-19 pandemic, while presenting immense challenges, also forced the Black Church to embrace technology like never before. Online services, virtual bible studies, and social media engagement have expanded reach beyond geographical limitations, connecting with those who may not have otherwise engaged. This digital presence has the potential to continue attracting new members and fostering a sense of community even beyond physical walls.



## Are you ready to Nurturing Future Leaders?

Recognizing the importance of passing the torch, many Black Methodist churches are investing in youth leadership programs. By providing mentorship opportunities, theological training, and platforms for young voices, they are empowering the next generation to lead and shape the future of the church.



While signs of revival are evident, it's crucial to acknowledge the challenges that persist. Socioeconomic disparities, internal theological debates, and competition from other denominations require ongoing attention and innovative solutions.

The future of the Black Methodist Church remains unwritten, but the seeds of hope are undeniable. By embracing social justice, adapting to cultural shifts, harnessing technology, and nurturing future leaders, this historic institution has the potential to experience a powerful resurgence, continuing its legacy of faith, resilience, and community empowerment for generations to come.





# AL/FL Men of Zion Episcopal Director

By Rev. Larry Jacobs

GREENVILLE, AL.....The men of the Alabama/Florida Episcopal District gathered for their annual retreat on the historic campus of Lomax-Hannon College in Greenville, AL, from May 31 – June 1, 2024. Rev. Larry Jacobs is the Episcopal MOZ Director, and Bishop George D. Crenshaw is the Presiding Prelate.



The retreat opened on Friday, May 31, 2024, with Rev. Alonza Crenshaw, treasurer, registering attendees. Opening prayer and welcome were given by Rev. Jacobs, and Bishop Crenshaw greeted attendees. Friday evening was filled with fun, fellowshiping, and the annual fish fry. Young and old enjoyed chess, checkers, and a horseshoe tournament under the direction of Rev. Kenneth Diggs.

Highlights of Saturday, June 1, 2024, included recognizing Mr. Tereance I. Pinkney, a member of Big Zion A. M. E. Zion Church in Mobile, AL, as the Alabama/Florida Episcopal District Men of Zion

Man of the Year. Mr. Pinkney led the Hillcrest High School Boys Basketball team of Evergreen, AL, to the AHSAA Class 3A Alabama State Championship. Mr. Jerome Sanders, a Financial Advisor and Principal Securities Registered Representative with Principal Financial Group and a member of Hope Chapel A. M. E. Zion Church in Whistler, AL, presented a financial planning seminar. He presented information on retirement plans, exit strategies, investments, and financial strategies to help individuals work toward financial freedom. A Health and Wellness Seminar was presented on Prostate Cancer, Mental Health, and Alzheimer's Disease.

Presenters were Mr. Jerry Feagin, prostate cancer survivor; Ms. Mary Fitzpatrick, Community Mental Health Licensed Professional Counselor; and Mr. Billy Curtis, Alabama Alzheimer's Association, who spoke on the Impact Of Alzheimer's Dementia In Our Community. Presiding Elder Jeffrey Cammon (Tuscaloosa-Bessemer District), along with Rev. Leon Henderson and Rev. Alonza Crenshaw, shared tips for a successful life during the Wisdom Of The Elders Forum. Mr. Shomari C. Figures, congressional candidate for the newly created U. S. House of Representatives Congressional District 2 in the State of Alabama, addressed attendees and solicited support in his bid for this office.



Youth activities for the day were coordinated by Rev. Kenneth Diggs, which included a bounce house and waterslide. Rev. George Garrison, in partnership with an auto supplier, secured free motor oil and other auto supplies for all attendees. Bishop Crenshaw gave closing remarks and Rev. Jacobs prayed for attendees and gave remarks.



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

The Communications Department of the A.M.E. Zion Church  
**Presents**

# MEDIA MINDS

When a Crisis Hits the Kingdom



**With Mr. Darin Kent**  
Chief Communications Officer,  
The A.M.E. Zion Church

**Special guest:**  
**Rev. Kristen Berry**  
Berry Communications  
Consulting Services





**August 22nd**  
**@ 8 PM EST**



**WATCH LIVE** 









# ALLEGHENY CONFERENCE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE BLOOMS FROM A MUSTARD SEED AND CULMINATES INAUGURAL YEAR WITH HOPE!

By Shirley A. Taylor



At the behest of the Allegheny Conference Presiding Elders, Rev. Dina L. Martin and Rev. William R. Hogans, and the leadership of Presiding Prelate Bishop W. Darin Moore, the Allegheny Conference Department of Social Justice was established in October 2023. The work of the department is orchestrated by Shirley A. Taylor, Conference Director; Larenda Hall, Coordinator of Churches; Lucille Prater-Holliday, Community Coordinator; Moses Nelson, Data Analysis & Statistical Reporting; and Rev. Mitzila Hogans, Spiritual Advisor.

## ESTABLISHING THE FUNDAMENTALS

Recognizing that Jesus is the Supreme Seeker of Justice, the Word of God reveals there are two qualities that must be present in the pursuit of justice: “just behavior” (doing what’s right) and “just treatment” (doing what’s fair). This is the framework upon which the department decided to fulfill its assignment. Our first works largely focused on installing department fundamentals and educating the Conference on who we are and what we do as it relates to our Vision and Mission.

We adopted the motto, “When some are diminished – All are diminished.” Our department colors are the four primary colors that dominate Black History Month: Black to represent resilience, fairness, and balance, which are key principles of justice; Red to symbolize the blood that was shed by Jesus and the innocent Black lives throughout history for liberation that unites all people; Yellow, to convey optimism, justice, and equality, and Green to symbolize the rich greenery and other natural resources of the environment in the land God has given us.

We chose the department song “A Great Work” by Brian Courtney Wilson and the rally song “Keep the Faith” by Charles Jenkins. We decided on October as our Month of Observance to coincide with the commemoration of the work of James Varick, our Founder and first Bishop, whose acts for social justice established A.M.E. Zion as the Freedom Church. We believe our logo embodies every aspect of our vision and A.M.E. Zion’s reputation as the “Freedom Church”.

## RESPONDING TO THE VISION

The A.M.E. Zion Churches are agents of social change because of our people’s longstanding encounters with injustice. This is not something we just say; it has been and continues to be our lived experience, even after over 75 years of failed civil rights legislation. We accept that just behavior and just treatment cannot be legislated. Therefore, it is our belief that the change we seek can only be attained through a change in

hearts. It is this core principle that is the source of our vision, which is “To establish fair and equal justice through the transformation of hearts by promoting just behavior and just treatment in all that we do: as a Church, as Residents in the Community, as Participants in the Society, and as Representatives of Christ in the World.”

Our overall objective is to equip the people of God for life discipleship in the world and in the kingdom of God by transforming hearts in ways that can change the world. We believe transformation starts within the Body of Christ through the institution of complementary working relationships with departments whose ministries are about Kingdom Building. The departments we have deemed to be Transformational Ministries are Christian Education (reaching minds), the Lay Council (reaching Laity), and the Missionary Society (reaching the Masses).

## RESPONDING TO THE MISSION

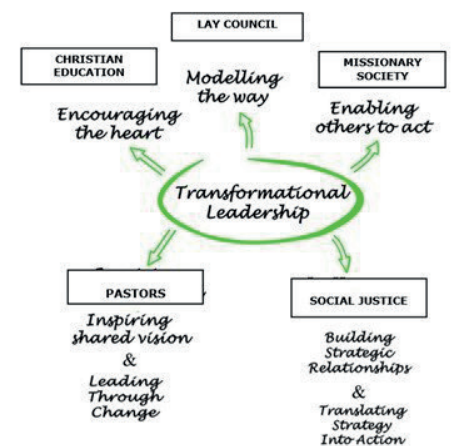
Our mission is “To champion the causes of Equal Rights, Equal Opportunity, and Equal Justice by addressing the systemic failures that adversely affect the quality of life for marginalized and working-class people. Our work is structured around the original initiatives of the first African Methodist Episcopal Church and is undergirded by six Pillars: Criminal Justice Reform, Economic Justice; Education Reform & Student Empowerment; Environmental Justice, Racial Equality & Responsive Government, and Voter Education & Empowerment. These categories represent the major areas that are the most contributory to injustices for people of color.



Each Pillar is designed to operate as its own “Think Tank” and consists of a dedicated Team whose responsibility is to bring the ministry’s social justice goals into concrete manifestations. Each Pillar is sanctioned by an operative scripture to serve as a beacon to keep us focused on the charge and to whom we seek to glorify. We also created a department resource guide to equip each local church with the tools needed to establish and maintain its own Social Justice ministry.

## RESPONDING TO CHALLENGES FOR THE 2024 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

The department is active in all Project 100 initiatives. We publish educational materials to promote Mail-in Ballots and smart-voting, we initiated several letter-writing campaigns and participated in testimonials and Days-of-Action for Voting Rights and Voter Access. We partner with 16 social justice advocacy organizations and subscribe to multiple news sources, nationally and internationally, to stay abreast of current affairs.



For the final quarter, in February, we created a Black History Month Program for every local church. Components included weekly educational handouts of historical civil rights icons and a current-day Black



leader. We sponsored a Black History T-shirt fundraiser and created a collective Commemorative Black History Program for the last Sunday, with a message about the Freedom Church and Congregants sporting their Black History T-shirts.



In March, we sponsored a Movie Night to commemorate the anniversary of “Bloody Sunday”. In addition to tasty hot dogs and a few healthy snack choices, attendees were educated on how far we have come with voting rights and how far we have yet to go. There were six voter resource areas accommodating voter registration, voter ID verification, mail-in ballot materials, sign-ups for rides to the polls in the Project 100 database, and more. The event was also designated as an official State of Union Watch Party location and was the only event in Allegheny County that was hosted in an African American community.

**ON THE HORIZON FOR CY 2024-2025**

Looking towards the new Conference Year, our immediate plans are to install a Social Justice Ministry in each local church in the Conference, execute GOTV strategies for the 2024 Presidential Election, and strengthen strategic relationships using a model we designed for Transformational Ministries. We aim to construct our own website, and through the inspiration of Presiding Elder William R. Hogans, we are changing our department song to the Black National Anthem, “Lift Every Voice and Sing”. The original department song, “A Great Work,” will be adopted as our Theme Song.

It is with heartfelt gratitude that we thank Bishop Moore and the Presiding Elders of the Allegheny Conference for an assignment that allows us to be intentional Ambassadors for Christ. It is our prayer that the work sustains a pathway to “Train up the CHURCHES in the way THEY should go, and when THEY MATURE, they WILL NOT depart from it.” ~ Proverbs 22:6 (SJV)\*

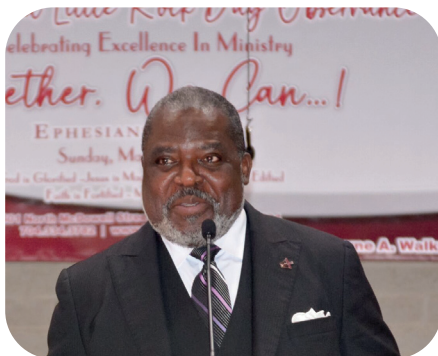
# Celebrating 35 Years of Pastoral Ministry and Community Involvement

By G. Joyner-Johnson  
Photos By Anika Robinson and Linda Kennedy

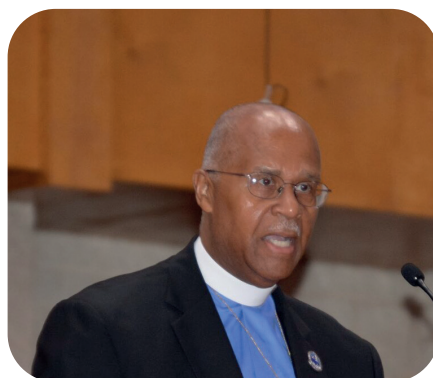
On Sunday, April 14, 2024, a great celebration that had been planned to celebrate Rev. Dr. Dwayne A. Walker came to a successful conclusion at Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church in Charlotte, NC, where he has served as pastor for 19 years. After having led congregations in Detroit, MI, and Indianapolis, IN, where in those communities, he served as administrator of a child development center, on the board of several organizations such as the United Negro College Fund, Volunteers of America, and Celebration of Hope. Dr. Walker continued to serve the community and city of Charlotte as a member of the Planning Commission, leading the community concerning social injustices and hosting community organizers while leading the congregation in spiritual and numerical growth.



Rev. Dr. Clifford A. Jones, Sr. and the Friendship Missionary Baptist Church Choir, along with invited elected officials and community leaders, were in attendance to honor Dr. Walker for his accomplishments as a pastor and community leader. The Little Rock Adult liturgical dancers also ministered during the celebration.



Rev. George W.C. Walker, Jr., the younger brother of Dr. Walker, presided over the Service of Celebration. He is the pastor of the St. Mark A.M.E. Zion Church in East Chicago, Indiana. After the invocation and the hymn of praise, the Old Testament scripture was read by Rev. S. Franklin Russell, pastor of the Myers Tabernacle A.M.E. Zion Church, and the New Testament scripture was read by Rev. Henrico White, pastor of the Weeping Willow A.M.E. Zion Church, both located in Charlotte, NC. Rev. Dr. Grant Harrison, Presiding Elder of the Salisbury (NC) District, offered the prayer.



Rev. Belinda Austin, associate minister at Little Rock and the Chairperson of the committee for this occasion, gave the welcome and the statement of occasion. She reviewed the accomplishments of Little Rock since Dr. Walker arrived as pastor in 2005. Among those accomplishments was the re-purchase of the old Little Rock church building



from the city where the mortgage was burned the same day, the growth of the congregation, not only numerically but also spiritually, to the point where there are now over fifty ministries of which many are of the evangelistic nature reaching out into the community and beyond. The most recent accomplishment under Dr. Walker’s leadership was the completed construction of a 110-unit apartment building, Varick, on 7th, in collaboration with the city of Charlotte, the Laurel Street Developers, and the Little Rock Community Development Corporation. Of those 110 apartments, fifty-six are designated as affordable, and the rest will be leased at market rate.

Mayor of Charlotte, Honorable Vi Alexander Lyles, began her tribute to Dr. Walker by reading from 1 Peter 5:1-2 as it reminds her of Dr. Walker as a compassionate and generous community servant who cares about not only his people but all people whose rights may be infringed upon.



Minister Corine Mack, president of the Charlotte Mecklenburg NAACP, spoke of the protective nature of Dr. Walker during peaceful demonstrations that have taken place in the city as they marched together to protest many acts of social injustice and/or wrongful actions by police. Rev. Kenneth Robinson, the pastor of the Creek Church and President of the Concerned Clergy of Charlotte, remarked on the friendship he and

.....  
Continued on next page



Dr. Walker have developed since working together to effect change in the city for social justice and especially the lack of effective public education for people of color in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg County schools.



Mr. Mark Jerrell, Vice Chair of the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners, brought greetings and read a proclamation on the Board's behalf to proclaim April 14, 2024, as "Dr. Dwayne A. Walker Day." This resulted in thunderous applause and a standing ovation!



Congresswoman Alma Adams, representing the 12th District of North Carolina expressed high regard for Dr. Walker as a pastor, community leader and family leader who is as close as a phone call, who is respected not only in the church community but the community at large.

Ms. DeAndra Walker, the first-born daughter of Dr. Walker, with her sisters Dana, Daivene, and Deborah, brought many accolades for their father. Then Dylan, the first grandchild, gave remarks of love, amazement, and awe for his grandfather on behalf of the other grandchildren, Meliya and Aila.



Rev. Dr. Wardell Henderson commented on the remarkable accomplishments of Dr. Walker as the pastor of Little Rock and as the first pastor of the North Charlotte District. He and his wife appreciate the thoughtfulness and many kind expressions from Little Rock under Dr. Walker's leadership. Presiding Elder Henderson presented his friend, the preacher of the afternoon, Rev. Dr. Clifford A. Jones, Sr., pastor of the Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, Charlotte, NC.



Dr. Jones considers Dr. Walker a "son" and a friend in the ministry. He extolled the characteristics of love, compassion, and leadership in the church and the community. He preached from 2 Corinthians 5: 16-21. The title of the sermon was "A Christian Witness for the Kingdom." This requires one to be justified, reconciled through Christ, and have salvation. We, as Christians, are ambassadors for the Kingdom of God. After the word was delivered, the invitation to Christian Discipleship was extended.

Rev. Dr. J. Ruth Davis-Shields, Presiding Elder of the Hendersonville District, pastor of the Zion Grove A.M.E. Zion Church, and co-chair of the Walker for Bishop 2024 Campaign Committee, presented the Honoree, Dr. Dwayne A. Walker.

Dr. Walker and his wife, Donna, both expressed their thankfulness for the love and caring spirits expressed to them. His desire and qualifications to become an episcopal leader and Bishop in The A.M.E. Zion Church are on display for anyone to examine. From being a youth pastor at John Wesley A.M.E. Zion Church (Washington, DC) to being the pastor of Jones Tabernacle in Chicago and then being appointed to the pastor of Little Rock, Dr. Walker has a legacy of leaving ministries better than when he founded them, not only spiritually, but civically as well. His compassion and love for people, regardless of their condition, can be found in the lives of his family, church, and community. He has been the face and voice of Zion, not only locally but statewide and nationally. Just check the record.



After Dr. Jones's benediction, everyone was invited to a reception in the fellowship hall. Excellence in Ministry was on display for the entire celebration. Many thanks were extended to Rev. Belinda Austin, Chairperson for the celebration, and the members of this committee members, Mrs. Glain Lewis, Mrs. Shabara Ellis, Mrs. Kym Johnson, Mrs. Harriett Feimster, Mrs. Antoinette Cody, Dr. Angelia Fryer, Rev. Lea'Vee Jordan, Mrs. Diana Davis, Ms. Deborah Walker, Mrs. Daivene Cannon, and Ms. Stephanie Haynes.

God Did It!

## History in the Skies: Youngest African American Male in New York Earns Private Pilot License

By Caiden Dominick Spears

To The Star of Zion Family,

My name is Caiden Spears and I am a 17-year-old teen aviator who recently graduated from Cardinal Hayes HS located in the South Bronx, NY. I am sharing my story because on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024 I received my Private Pilot License and I am now the youngest African American male to hold a pilot license in the state of New York.

I developed my love for aviation at six years old. While living close to LaGuardia airport, my grandmother always tells the story of walking me to kindergarten, and whenever he saw an airplane in the sky, I would say, "Grandma, I am going to fly one of those big planes one day." I began teaching myself the layout of the various airline cockpits

using computerized programs. While in elementary school, I was fortunate enough to connect with a Jet Blue Pilot who, at the time, provided biweekly simulation sessions on an FAA-certified flight Simulator. A few months later, I attended the Aviation4Us Ground School, where I completed my discovery flight at age 14. I was the only student at graduation to receive an honors award for flying. My instructor told the audience, "I have no doubt that Caiden will go on to become a Commercial Pilot." At the ceremony, I also received a Certificate of Merit from the NYS Assembly and a Certificate of Merit from the NYS Senate.





During the summer of 2019, I was introduced to the ACE Academy by United Airlines Captain. I attended the virtual Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals (OBAP) ACE academy at JFK in 2020 and in person in 2021. In 2020 I also attended the Red Tails Flight Academy virtual Ground School where I was invited to be a guest speaker. I continued with biweekly flight lessons, leading me to complete my first solo flight at Republic Airport in Farmingdale, NY, on August 3, 2022, shortly after my 16th birthday. This was not a planned day but one where my instructor told me I was ready to solo after completing my preflight checks and performing a few take-offs and landings. My instructor said, "You are going to solo now; just bring my airplane back," and he exited the plane. As I sat on the taxiway alone, I was taken by total surprise as I thought this was just a regular lesson. This was the first time that I served as the pilot in command of my plane. There was no instructor on board to guide me. I pulled from all that I had learned. It was nerve-wracking, to say the least, but I was prepared and completed the task at hand with flying colors. It was also the first step of me demonstrating total responsibility and maturity at the age of 16. Upon completion of my solo flight, I felt empowered, and my drive to go further was magnified. I realized that I was not only a 16-year-old holding an FAA student pilot license, but I was a leader in my school and community and a role model for my peers.

I completed my Private Pilot's License on May 25, 2024, making me the youngest African American teenager in New York at the age of 17 to hold a Private Pilot License. In an industry where only 3.4% are black, I am extremely proud of my accomplishments.

I realize that my chosen career path in aviation is a little different than what would be considered the "norm" for my peers. Some will go on to 4-year universities, while others will pursue a trade. I am not of the mindset that individuals who do not pursue a higher education, such as a 4-year degree, cannot be successful, but those who pursue a higher education are exposed to more opportunities on personal and social levels and are more willing to be active participants in various events. I know that I am well-rounded and will achieve my goal of becoming a commercial pilot.

My pathway is unique to me and my personal goal of becoming an airline pilot; therefore, the blueprint to my success has already been mapped by my mentors at various airlines. Although I will not be attending a 4-year university initially, my vocational path will allow me to immerse myself deep into my studies and will lead me directly into my career with my end goal of earning my BSc in Aviation.

Growing up and attending school in the South Bronx where young boys are often featured on the news in a negative light: robbing, stealing, and even killing people. I wanted to share my story to share hope and encourage someone else. From a young age, I realized that I am a leader and not a follower. I know that I have a very unique path to reach my goal and it is not the same as others. I am ok with standing out and being unique. I see the end goal for me, and it is very bright. I am determined to stay focused and do what I have to do to get there.

I am currently a member of Greater Centennial A.M.E. Zion Church in Mt. Vernon, NY, where my Pastor is The Rev. Dr. Stephen W. Pogue. Prior to COVID-19, I served with my brother on the Youth Usher Ministry. I have helped with the Toy Donations and served as a Registrar at the Back to School event. The journey to becoming a pilot and being a full-time student has not been easy. I am grateful to God for the messages my Pastor has preached, which have helped me along my journey. These messages have not only motivated me but also refueled me each week to keep pressing toward my goal. Sometimes, adults do not think young kids pay attention in church, but my Pastor's messages have helped me during the difficult times I faced trying to test for my pilot exam. In July, I would be honored to take him on his first flight with me. I have been looking forward to flying him for a while now, and I thank God for the upcoming opportunity to make it a reality.

I have dedicated countless hours to mentoring the youth in and outside of my school in the South Bronx and recognize the impact that guidance can have on shaping their futures. My most recent and impactful accomplishment was being selected by my school's principal, Mr. William Lessa, to be a President's Men at my school. The President's Men are a group of elite students who work directly for the school's President and represent the school at community, social, alumni, admission events, and funerals. This position has allowed me to exemplify integrity, leadership, and service. This is a huge accomplishment for me because I reflect on my early elementary school days of being a mediocre B/C+ student. When I found my passion for aviation while in the 7th grade, I began to see an improvement in my grades. I even surprised my mom when I graduated with honors. Fast forward to becoming a President's Men, I know that my Principal saw leadership qualities in

me that I had begun to work on during the previous years. As a President's Men, my classmates look up to me as a leader. Whether attending school community events or simply lending an ear to my peers who may need guidance on what their future may be, I have made myself available.

My goal is to inspire a culture of excellence in other kids, whether it is within aviation or wherever their passion lies. I was placed in various leadership roles within the school, so it is important to conduct myself properly. Another role that I am extremely proud of is becoming the Executive Producer for our media club. One day, the teacher in charge of the media club saw my work and was pleased. He began to use me to videotape and edit various programs and school events. He then named me the Executive Producer of the Chanel H (Hayes) Club.

Outside of aviation, I have a passion for photography and videography, and I have my own LLC. I was honored to be the photographer and videographer for the NAACP 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala for the Coop City New York Chapter.

I am not only a licensed teen pilot, but I take pride in being a motivational speaker. I have spoken to over 700 students and pilots about my aviation journey. In August 2023, in New Orleans, Louisiana, I served as the Youth Day emcee at the annual Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals Pilot Conference. I took the stage in the Grand Ballroom with over 400 students and pilots in attendance. During this time, I had the opportunity to share my journey and connect with students and pilots from all over the country.

I recently graduated from Cardinal Hayes High School on June 1, 2024, at St. Patrick's Cathedral with honors and have been accepted to Luke Weather's Flight Academy located in Olive Branch, Mississippi, where I will be a part of the American Airlines Cadet Program. I am on track to become an airline pilot at the age of 23. While at Luke Weathers, I will continue to work on the rest of my ratings and complete my flight training and licenses in partnership with American Airlines. LWFA has also partnered with the local 2-year college, where I will have the opportunity to obtain my degree simultaneously. I will then continue to build the flight hours needed to fly for a Regional Airline and then transition to American Airlines as a First Officer.

I began volunteering at the age of 5, cleaning the streets with my mom, and held my first job at the age of 14 in KFC, so it is important for me to give back and be an example to those students behind me. I know the value of hard work and staying focused. You must be extremely focused as a pilot. As African-American men, we cannot limit ourselves. We have to continue to grow and seek out opportunities to learn and go higher. I was a kid with not-so-stellar grades in elementary school, but my passion allowed me to turn that completely around. I graduated from elementary school with honors and earned first and second honors throughout high school. I have a proven record of empowering my peers and have learned valuable lessons in giving back. As I pursue a higher education in the aviation industry, I have no doubt that these values will continue well into adulthood. In 5 years, the young black boy gazing into the sky, dreaming of flying one of the airplanes flying over my home, will return to the South Bronx as a First Officer with American Airlines to empower other young boys gazing into the sky to pursue their own dreams.

Respectfully Submitted,

Caiden Dominick Spears, Age 17

Licensed Private Pilot, Future Boeing 777 Captain

*Although he has set high goals for himself at a young age, he still enjoys riding his bike, playing basketball, and eating ice pops outside on the steps with his friends. His favorite pastime is to eat Chick-fil-A after every flight; thus, his flights are scheduled during the week and on Saturdays when Chick-fil-A is open.*

*Many say that Caiden has an expensive hobby, but he gently reminds them that it is not a hobby but his passion, which is leading him to his profession.*

*Caiden is mature, articulate, dedicated, and determined to achieve his goal of someday becoming an airline pilot. Caiden is currently on a non-stop flight to destination success.*

*Caiden has been accepted to Luke Weather's Flight Academy, where he will be in the American Airlines Cadet Academy.*

*Buckle up and enjoy his flight; his best is yet to come.*



# He Answers the Call....

*The Right Reverend Dr. Kenneth Monroe, Retired Bishop of the Eastern North Carolina and South Atlantic Episcopal Districts*

By Rev. Debra L. Gray  
Photos by Mr. James Feldman



*The 144<sup>th</sup> Session of the Central North Carolina Annual Conference was held on November 8 -12 2023. In the spirit of our connectional life, both lay persons and clergy came together to celebrate the end of one conference year and the beginning of another. The grandeur embedded in the familiarity of the occasion, the music and the jovial greetings framing*

*the stimulating workshops, inspiring sermons, and of course our episcopal address made the experience festive and memorable for yet another year. In addition to the normal business, this year we elected lay and clergy delegates to the General Conference. All in all, however, this year's conference was much the same as it has been every year, except it was not the same as it had been every year. The 95<sup>th</sup> Bishop in the line of succession in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the Presiding Prelate of the Eastern North Carolina Episcopal District, the Presiding Prelate of the South Atlantic*



*Episcopal District, and the senior bishop of our church was presiding over his last conference with us as our bishop.*

In honor of his living legacy, we celebrate the man, his ministry, and his uncommon leadership.

Bishop Kenneth Monroe has been a leader of leaders in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. He is a wealth of wisdom, prudence, and love. His fatherly inquiry "Are y'all living right?" has been a notable cog in our conference and episcopal gatherings. He hails from Red Springs, North Carolina and is a faithful member of St. James A.M.E. Zion Church, but he proudly admits he has been everywhere. He owes his journey to *the call*. – a call that only God can articulate in one's soul. The call is loud and yet soft, colossal and yet simple.

He was only 17 years-old when he received the call, but Bishop Monroe answered that call. Although young, he did not allow his youth to prevent him from taking this monumental step. "I was surrounded by people who encouraged me along the way. Sometimes when you're called you don't answer right away," Bishop chuckled, as he reflected on the magnitude of receiving a call from God. He was ordained by Bishop W. A. Hilliard in 1972 as a deacon and then in 1974 as an elder. At 22 years old, he began to pastor two circuit churches – Taylor's Chapel and St. Mary A.M.E. Zion Churches. "God sends



people, situations, opportunities around you so you can respond to His call. They cause you to take a look at your life and what God has in store for your life."

Beginning his undergraduate studies in our own Livingstone College where he obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Social Studies, he continued his graduate studies at Duke Divinity School. It was there that he received a Master of Divinity, and at Hartford Seminary, he received a Doctor of Ministry degree.

He spent 31 years pastoring six congregations in North Carolina, Kansas, and Connecticut. Monroe also served as a presiding elder to the Kansas City District which included churches in Kansas City, Kansas, Des Moines, Iowa, and Omaha Nebraska. He has also served as a presiding elder for the Nassau District of the Bahamas Island Conference. As a pastor and a presiding elder, he experienced the highs and lows within the challenges of ministry. Unlike many though, the driving force behind his service to the church was not a superficial one but one rooted in his call.

Of course, the highs can be really high, and the lows can be difficult, to say the least. After pastoring Taylor's Chapel and St. Mary, Bishop Monroe recalled a congregation he pastored at the age of 23. He gives a gentle laugh as he says, "I ran into some opposition."

The church was being changed from a circuit church to a station church. He comments with joy "that it is still a strong church today." Trinity of Southern Pines came next. It was there, Bishop enjoyed a nine year tenure that included a teaching position at Sandhills Community College and a renewed friendship with his classmate who was then the town manager, Neil Coleman. Longtime members of Trinity still consider him their young pastor. Our retired bishop was in his early 20's when accepting that call. At 34, he began the call in Kansas City. There were many sweet memories made there, as well as important work accomplished in the community. Bishop Monroe, along with two other Baptist preachers created the Concerned Clergy Coalition. Through their leadership, they were able to secure \$1.2 million for jobs for summer youth employment. He continued his community leadership in organizing a gang summit to address the problems of gang violence. Although, his church, Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion, suffered vandalism (broken window of the glass doors, broken windshield on the church van), the call continued to move Bishop forward. The gang summit was held, and it was a successful venture. It was also here that he met Emanuel Cleaver, the first African American mayor of Kansas City, now serving the United States House of Representatives. Most recently, Bishop was reunited with his friend at Clinton College's Commencement Ceremony earlier this year. Kansas remains a home to this day for his children and grandchildren. From Kansas City, Monroe was sent to Hartford, Connecticut where he served for 10 years.

In July of 2004, he was elected the 95<sup>th</sup> Bishop in the line of succession of our church. He was assigned the Western West Africa Episcopal District. In December of 2005, he was given the responsibility of supervising the Kentucky and Missouri Annual Conferences. In October 2006, he was able to dedicate the new Janie Speaks Hospital in Afrancho, Ghana with the support of the W.H.O.M. Society. From 2008 to 2016, he served as the Presiding Prelate of the South Atlantic Episcopal District. In 2012, Bishop Monroe was assigned the Central North Carolina and Virgin Islands Conferences. During which time in 2014, he completed the Kenneth Monroe Transforma-







tional Center in Rock Hill, South Carolina. He was declared the senior bishop of our church in 2021, and in 2022 he was once again assigned the South Atlantic Episcopal District after the death of Bishop Mildred Bonnie Hines.

In Africa, particularly in Ghana, Bishop was able to witness God’s work through him overseeing:

1. 300 convocations
2. Two hospitals
3. Over 200 schools
4. One high school in Cape Coast with more than 2,000 students

In all his pursuits, it was always the call that led the way. “The call is an act of faith because you don’t know what you’re doing.” “It’s like when I was a young boy, we lived in the little, small town of Red Springs. Telephones were there but everybody didn’t have one and you could hear people calling, calling someone’s name. You would have to stop and listen to say, ‘I think someone is calling me,’ and you would respond to that call.” Bishop Kenneth Monroe will be retired in the 2024 General Conference of our church, but he will still be answering the call in wherever it leads him and whatever it leads him to do. In Bishop’s words responding to that call and moving closer to its sound makes the call clearer and clearer to hear and to understand. Monroe’s determination

to follow each call he has received has made his leadership one of extraordinary greatness.

I believe that the character of a person is not in all that they say and do in the public’s eye, but in the small, seemingly insignificant events done privately.

One preacher in our conference shared a story with me about the deaths of his twin infant boys. He was not a preacher then, and he and his wife had not been attending service anywhere, but he knew Rev. Kenneth Monroe. His mother wanted him to ask Rev. Monroe to conduct the service for his infants, but he was reluctant to ask. The day of the babies’ burial came. It was a rainy, gloomy day. The parents sat with the funeral director at the cemetery only to see Rev. Monroe walking through the muddy terrain to support the young parents at the grave site. That father was inspired to begin attending church again. This is yet another life that the call has impacted.



“You must understand God never stops calling you. It’s never a one-time thing. There are so many things that HE has created for us to do. We won’t know until we’ve responded to the calls.”

Our retiring Presiding Prelate has answered his calls, and we are left with his living legacy to do the same.

## Little Rock Expands Territory

By G. Joyner-Johnson

*(And Jabez called on the God of Israel; saying, “Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that your hand would be with me, and that you would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!” So, God granted him what he requested.)*

- 1 Chronicles 4:10

Upon his appointment as pastor of the Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church, Charlotte, NC, Dr. Dwayne Anthony Walker arrived at the church structure built in 1981 under the leadership of Rev. Dr. William White. It was September 2005, and the structure contained the 1,000+-seat sanctuary, an education wing, and a fellowship hall. Located in uptown Charlotte, bordered by 7th and 8th Streets and North McDowell Street. The rear church parking lot was bordered by North Myers Street, which happened to end at the African-American Museum of History and Culture, the former home of Little Rock church.

This red brick edifice was built in 1911 under Rev. Douglas, who served as the pastor of Little Rock at that time. After the congregation moved across the parking lot to the current location in 1981, the “old” Little Rock Church building was sold to the city of Charlotte and became the African-American Museum of Arts and Culture. The city used this structure until the completion of the Harvey Gantt Museum of African-American History and Culture and moved all art and artifacts to the location on Mint Street.



Dr. Walker and the Trustees of Little Rock, with the approval of the membership, negotiated with the city to buy back the 1911 structure (“old” Little Rock Church). This was accomplished, and the mortgage was burned in 2009 and became the Little Rock Cultural Center.

Shortly after this acquisition, Dr. Walker envisioned further growing the Little Rock campus while addressing the serious problem of homelessness in the city. Contiguous with the Little Rock Cultural Center was a lot owned by the city but not being used. With the support of the officers and members of Little Rock, Dr. Walker proposed the city donate that land to Little Rock to build affordable housing. After strong negotiations, the city council agreed, and the deed to the land changed hands; a developer and funding were acquired, and in April 2024, the ribbon-cutting ceremony was held in the courtyard of the Varick on 7th, a 105-unit apartment building (53 units designated affordable) adjacent to the Little Rock Cultural Center. The western border of Varick on 7th is N. Alexander Street.



The Little Rock campus has grown to include two additional buildings since Dr. Walker arrived as the pastor in 2005, and the congregation has grown spiritually, numerically, and the congregation and physically as the footprint of Zion is firmly established in uptown Charlotte.

With God’s guidance, a caring heart, and the comprehensive vision of a leader, Dr. Walker has surely led God’s people to higher heights in the community, and Zion’s territory has been enlarged through “Excellence in Ministry.” To God be the Glory!







REVEREND ELDREN  
**MORRISON**  
 FOR BISHOP 2024

EVANGELISM - EDUCATION - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

WWW.MORRISONFORBISHOP.COM



*Together, We are strength for today and a bright hope for tomorrow.*



# Blue Ridge Conference Holds 134th Session

Ms. Ruth L. Thompson, Reporter

The 134<sup>th</sup> Session of the Blue Ridge Annual Conference as held May 22-25, 2024 at the beautiful and scenic Walls/Battle Conference and Retreat Center in Black Mountain, North Carolina. The Quadrennial theme was, "The Freedom Church-A movement Empowered by the Holy Spirit". Bishop Darryl B. Starnes, presided. Missionary Supervisor was Sister Camille Starnes. Presiding Elders were Dr. Herbert Grant and Dr. J. Ruth Davis.

Wednesday morning the Communion message was delivered by the Reverend Keith L. Lipsey, pastor of New Bethel A.M. E. Zion Church, Forest City, North Carolina. Rev. Lipsey delivered a most powerful and thought-provoking message on, "The Significance of the Blood" (Exodus 24:1) reminding of the body broken and the blood shed

Wednesday afternoon Bishop Starnes delivered his Episcopal Address. He spoke on "Securing our Future by thriving as a healthy congregation". As a reference he used the book by Christian A. Schwarz. The Bishop said, "Just as plants grow so do congregations", He listed the eight essential qualities defined by Schwarz as test questions. 1. Is ministry focused on equipping others to serve? 2. Are tasks in the church distributed according to the criteria of the gifts of individual Christians? 3. Is the spiritual life of members characterized by prayer, enthusiasm and boldness? 4. Are the forms, regulations and instructions of the church designed according to the criteria designed to be most useful for here and now? 5. Is visiting the worship service an inspirational experience for church members? 6. Are small groups dedicated to answering the true question and meeting the real needs of its members in holistic way? 7. Are the forms and contents of Evangelism activities relating the needs of those you are trying to win? 8. Are relationships of the members of the church by a high degree of love and affection? Bishop Starnes concluded by saying, 'sometimes we focus on how to grow the church our focus should not be on GROWTH but on the HEALTH of the church. If we focus on health we can grow our churches. The bishop closed a powerful address by quoting the words for Hymn 227 "God of Grace and God of Glory which he defined as a "series of prayers".



Wednesday evening the annual sermon was delivered by Rev. Sherman Dunmore, Sr. Rev. Dunmore delivered a challenging message on, "The Four Sides of a Man". (Rev. 4:6-7).

Thursday morning a Sexual Misconduct Prevention Workshop was held. The presenter was Reverend Wanda Merriweather of the western North Carolina Conference. Rev. Merriweather defined Sexual Misconduct according to the Discipline and enlightened the delegation on the need for background checks, child protection issues, etc.

Thursday afternoon the Lay Council Scholarship Luncheon was held. The guest speaker was The Reverend Dr. Lester McCorn, President of Clinton College, Rock Hill South Carolina. Dr. McCorn delivered a most Challenging and thought-provoking message on "One Nation Under a Groove" (1<sup>st</sup>. Peter 2:9). He spoke of music called "Funk". He said, "we need to get our groove back. We are a peculiar people. There is a difference between beat and groove. Beat is temporary. You are a chosen people, chosen in darkness, chosen to change the world. You're in this war for a reason. It's not time to sit on the sidelines. We are a royal priesthood-servants of change. We are a holy nation, set aside for service. There is something distinct about us. Be proud of our peculiarities. God gives you another view. God takes you on another path. We are not delinquent that's why we can lift every voice and sing. Nothing can stop us." Bishop Starnes defined it as a "mighty message, deep and profound".



Thursday evening was Education Night. The message was delivered by Rev. Luke Curry, Sr., pastor of Young's Memorial AME Zion Church, New Market, TN. Rev. Curry delivered a dynamic message on, "Sound the Horn" (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 7:11-16).

Friday was Missionary Day. Missionary Supervisor Sister Camille T. Starnes presided. The Prayer Meditation was delivered by Rev. Rosie Cuberson, pastor of New Zion AME Zion Church, Newport, TN. liturgical dance entitled "Walk into Your Season" was performed by Ms. Alia Caddy, youth from Hopkins Chapel, Asheville, NC. The Missionary Address was delivered by Sister Camille Starnes. Sister Starnes gave a powerful and exhilarating message on the theme of "Selfcare and Wellness". She used the topic "Taste and See" (Psalms 33:34:8). Sister Starnes spoke of eating better, spiritual, physical and mental health, She demonstrated by showing a Pruning tree she had designed. She opened her address by stating "Piedmont, it's pruning time. Sister Starnes defined it as a "time for allowing the Divine Gardner to mold and shape our lives". She said "the spiritual significance of pruning is a reward. It allows God to help us in getting



rid of things that weigh us down, Sister Starnes listed three things we must throw behind us. 1. Let go of distractions-unhealthy desires, negative thinking, personal actions. 2. Phobias-fear of change 3. Leave personal feelings behind so that our lives will become better and not bitter. She defined them as being "toxic" Prior to her message Sister Starnes

had distributed felt leaves to everyone to write down things that were weighing them down. As she closed all were thrown away. She concluded a moving and emotional message by challenging the delegation to "let the chains fall off your hands and feet and run for Jesus. She closed with the song; I am free This was defined as the" high moment of the conference.

Friday Afternoon the Home Missions Luncheon was held. Rev. Gregory Washington Gerald presided. Ms., Lisa Tucker of Harris Chapel was crowned 2024 Blue Ridge Conference Queen.

Friday evening began with the Candlelight and stoning ceremonies. This was the largest number stoned in many years. The Missionary Message was delivered by Presiding Elder, Rev. Dr. J. Ruth Davis (Hendersonville District). Rev. Davis delivered a powerful message on, "Encourage Yourself" (Psalms 3:1-4: 1st Sam 30:6). The Missionary Banner was captured by the Hendersonville District.

Saturday was Youth Day. Ms. Danielle McAdams presided over the Youth Service. The devotional service was conducted by the children and youth. An outstanding (Slide presentation) report was given by youth council president Joshua Williams. The sermon was delivered by Rev. Teresa Stewart, pastor of Thomas Chapel AME Zion Church.

Saturday afternoon the closing message and charge by Bishop Starnes. The Bishop delivered a challenging message on "Becoming Resilient Disciples of the Risen Lord" (2<sup>nd</sup>, Cor. 4:8-18) He began by defining Resilient as being "the ability to rebound or bounce back. He gave three insights into how we become resilient disciples as 1. Enduring the tough times-troubles on every hand, perplexities, persecution, tribulations, suffering. 2. being faithful to the Lord anyhow-live for the Lord anyhow-serve the Lord anyhow-preach the gospel of Jesus anyhow 3. Embrace a never give up attitude, The Bishop concluded his challenging message by saying "we secure our future by thriving as a dynamic movement, Our future is what we are becoming, We must become Godly ministers in an ungodly world. We must become resilient disciples of the risen Lord. We must endure tough times".

The 134<sup>th</sup> Session closed with the report of the courtesy committee and the reading of appointments.

The conference could be defined as spirit-filled, interesting, exciting and informative. Each day began with a series of prayers led by the conference prayer coordinators. Bishop Starnes kept the days lively and entertaining with his keen wit and sense of humor.

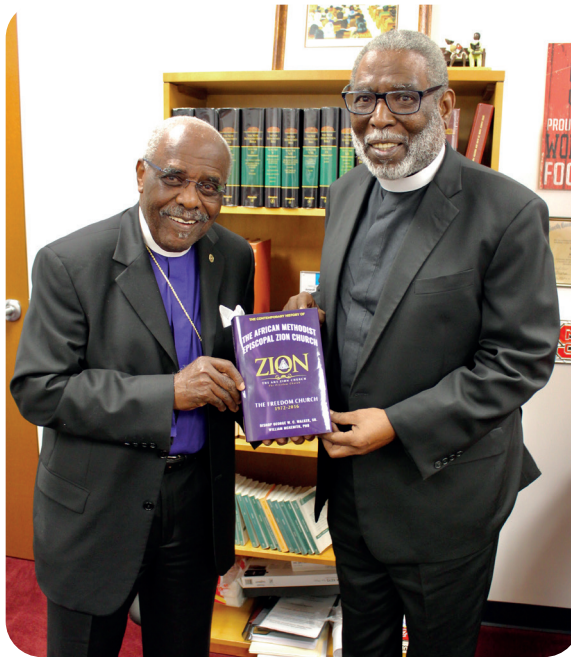


Continued from Page 2

The two are inextricably bound. Redeeming the person and redeeming society are two sides of the same coin. This theological perspective orders The AME Zion's Church's way of being in the world, which influences the church's ministry of mission evangelism and education.

Secondly, mission evangelism speaks to everything the Church does from preaching the gospel and serving the needs of the people for the sake of the individual and society's redemption. Throughout the book many instances of mission evangelism ministries at home and abroad are highlighted to demonstrate the Church's extensive global reach and diversity of services that uplifts the spiritual, intellectual, and social development of the people and the development of the communities in which the Church serves.

Lastly, The AME Zion Church has always had a penchant for



education since its founding in 1796. *The Contemporary History of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church* illustrates the vital role that both Christian education and liberal education play in the spiritual, intellectual, and social development of its constituency within the Church, the Church's non-sectarian educational institutions, and theological schools. To ensure the perpetuation and continuous viability of its educational institutions, the Church contributes an inordinate sum of money, accounting for as much as 25% of the denominational annual budget.

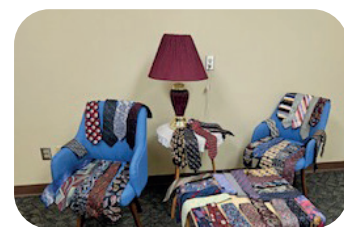
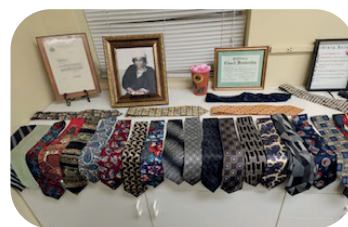
*The Contemporary History of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church* is a well-researched historical book that takes a thematic approach to the study of the Church's influence in the contemporary liberation of Africans in the diaspora and the Motherland. By liberation, the authors mean the social and spiritual uplift of an oppressed people and through their enlightenment the moral development of society

## Youth Missionary Society Collects 8555 Ties in the "5000 Ties 4 Guys" Project

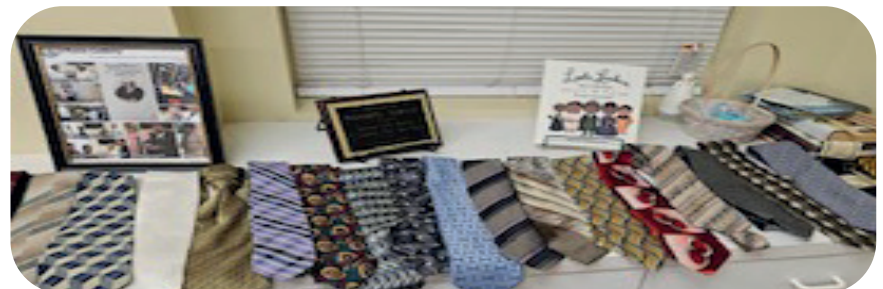
By Melva Polk Wright, Connectional Secretary  
Youth Missionary Society



The Youth Missionary Society of the AME Zion Church has completed another project in 2023-2024. "5000 Ties 4 Guys" was our first project directly benefitting the young men in our communities. The Youth Missionary Society is inclusive of young women and young men and seeks to serve them. Each Presiding Elder District was asked to collect and donate at least 50 ties. With over 120 stateside Presiding Elder



men's groups in New Jersey, high school young men's groups in Maryland and the list continues. Special thanks to all stateside Episcopal Areas for contributing to this project. Four Episcopal Areas contributed over 1000 ties, South Atlantic, North Eastern, Mid Atlantic and Eastern



North Carolina. The South Atlantic Episcopal District led the campaign with the collection of 2695 ties. Kudos to Missionary Supervisor, Lovetta Holmes. North Eastern was in second place and Mid Atlantic rounded out the top three Episcopal Areas. Special recognition goes to Missionary Supervisor D. Diane Proctor and Missionary Supervisor, Devieta Moore. We are also grateful to Missionary Supervisors Sis. Camille Starnes, Gelenia Frencher, Laurena Crenshaw, Rev. Felica Thompson and H. Jean McMurray Leake for encouraging their missionaries to participate in this project. Thank you, Zion, for assisting our Youth in aiding the young men in our surrounding communities.

Districts, that goal was reachable. We are excited to share that we exceeded our goal once again with collecting 8555 ties that were donated to young throughout our various communities. The donations were given to young men in an orchestra in the Mid-West, Young Gentle-



# The West Central NC Annual Conference Convenes in Greensboro

By Cynthia Brown, Conference Reporter

The 114th Session of the West Central NC Annual Conference came together on May 29, 2024, at the Koury Convention Center in Greensboro, NC. Bishop Darryl B. Starnes, Sr. continues to teach and pour into this conference and our Piedmont Episcopal District. Stating that the Christian Faith is not pretty, but it is beautiful. To follow Christ means that we will experience pain and, at times, even defeat. It means that we often will not look successful, but the life of faith described by Jesus in Matthew 16 offers a view that eyes have not seen, nor ears yet heard. And that is beautiful.



Bishop and Missionary Supervisor, Mrs. Camille Starnes, continue to pray for us and ask God to strengthen our walk with Him. We are always encouraged to have the passion to be the disciple needed to reach all. Under Bishop Starnes' leadership, Prayer Coordinators were always in place and set the atmosphere for the day's activities, and they were faithful to their position.



Our Opening Service on Wednesday morning was the return of Communion Service for the conference since COVID-19 precautions. The messenger was the Presiding Elder of the Rockingham District, Rev. Michael Massey, with the Rockingham District Choir rendering music. Lesson Text: I Corinthians 11: 23-25, subject "Remembering Jesus." And the afternoon brought the Episcopal Address from Bishop Starnes.



During the Wednesday Night Service, we were again blessed by the Rockingham District

Choir and the soul-stirring singing from the Wesley Chapel AME Zion Church (Asheboro, NC). Rev. Derinzer Johnson delivered the Annual Sermon, citing Acts 1:8, 2:1-4, and John 14:26, with his message, "We Need the Power, and We Need the Helper."

Thursday morning, after the prayer coordinators set the tone for our day, the Rev. Wanda Merriweather presented the "Sexual Misconduct Prevention Workshop." Much-needed information was given, with much discussion and questions following. The Lay Council Scholarship Luncheon followed with our guest speaker, Mr. Jerry McCombs, the Chaplain for the Connectional Lay Council. He spoke from the theme, "Securing Our Faith Thru Evangelism," using scripture from II Timothy 4:1-5. The Lay Hour followed, and we heard the report from our Conference Lay President, Ms. Minnie McCrae. A Stoling Ceremony was held, and we were grateful to have our guest, Dr. Mary Ponds, and Connectional Officer, Mrs. Connie Bell-Wright, to assist.



The Christian Education Department took their place on Thursday night, and following the evening devotion, the Conference Director of Christian Education, the Rev. Dr. Reginald Boyd, Jr., gave his Annual Report. The Marvin A.M.E. Zion Church Choir was present and set our souls on fire as they rendered music. The Stoling Ceremony was held, and then the preached word came from the Rev. Dr. Haven O. Anderson. He used Galatians 5:22-23 for his text and message, "The Change that Needs to Be Made."

The Missionary Convocation began after morning prayer on Friday, and the Rev. Dr. Margo Gaddy gave the Meditation. Sharing boldly from John 15:18, "Are You Being Cut Off - Are You Being Cut Back - Just Remain." The General Director of Communications, Ms. Camryn Ivey, presided over the service. A powerful Liturgical Dance by Ma-

rissa Power was done to the song "Seasons" and prepared us for Sis. Starnes delivered her Missionary Address using the theme - "It's Pruning Season," and each district wore T-shirts with the theme on them, bringing it more to life. The Spirit used Sis. Starnes mightily with her message and as she went into prayer. We were blessed with the move of God.

The Memorial Moment - Necrology Service followed the Convocation with the Rev. Cynthia Ransom, Chair, and Rev. Shirley McConnell, presiding. We were favored with a song from Ms. Cynthia Brown and the Rev. Dr. Daran H. Mitchell.

The Luncheon on Friday afternoon was a time to cheer on the various Queens from across the conference and crown our Home Mission winners. Conference Chair Mr. Bruce Stanback presided, and the Winners were from Level Three—Ms. Diane Baker from the Wadesboro/Monroe District, Level Two—Ms. Phyllis Harris from the Concord District, and also from the Concord District—Miss Madison Miller!!! Congratulations!!!

The Ordination Service was held during the afternoon, where 5 Ministers were Ordained Deacon: Karina Whitaker, Caylen Mitchell, Demetra Manns-Marsh, Krystal Isaac, and Phyllis Deese. Rev. Wayne Taylor was ordained an Elder.

Four were retired from the conference: Rev. Marvin Pearson, Rev. Columbus Kiser, Rev. Luther McClendon, and the Rev. Dr. Sherwin O. Greene.

Friday Night was the Missionary Candlelight Service; Missionary Supervisor, Mrs. Camille Starnes, led the procession with "Walk In The Light." We were blessed to hear songs of praise from the Trinity A.M.E. Zion Church and the St. Phillip A.M.E. Zion Church, both from Greensboro, NC. The Life Member Chairmen from each district called their candidates to be stoled and pinned, and they were grateful for those who had made the extra step for Overseas Missions. The message was delivered by the Rev. Dr. Lisa Caldwell, preaching "The Journey Continues" from Mark 6: 45-52. It's our tradition on West Central to receive the offering by district, and the bragging rights go to the Mighty Concord District for having the highest total on Missionary Night.

Registration for CED Youth Day took place following morning prayer and Workshops for each age group. The service followed with the Concord District Choir rendering music, and the Rev. Solomon McAuley brought the message, "God Specializes In Lost Things", from Luke 15:1-10. The Call to Prayer brought a Powerful Move of the Spirit; souls were delivered, and God was Glorified. The afternoon brought the Final Service with Bishop Starnes sharing from II Cor. 4:8-18, "Be-



coming Resilient Disciples of the Risen Lord."

After the appeal, 78 persons Secured their Salvation!!! We were then delighted to see the Grand Ushers March of West Central.

The Courtesy Committee report was given, highlighting the powerful spirit-filled time that was held during the week. Chair - Rev. Lynn Mitchell concluded by thanking Bishop and Mrs. Starnes for their Leadership and, as we heard throughout the week, that..... They Wrote A Song About - You Wanna Hear It?..... How Can We Say Thanks, For the Things That You've Done? And we say, To God Be the Glory!!!





# The Paradox of Power

By Rev. Dr. Paul G. Murphy

There's an old saying that suggests, 'Power corrupts—and absolute power corrupts absolutely.' Regardless of who the originator of this phrase may have been, we have seen the unfortunate consequences of such expressions of "pseudo-power" in so many settings and in so many ways over the centuries.

In the middle of the first century AD, Nero Cesar sought to use this corrupted power against a newly formed group, called Christians, in Rome. Adolf Hitler sought to use it to strangle the Jewish people in Germany and in several other countries during his day. The Botha regime of South Africa sought to use this deceptive tactic in their attempts to manipulate the masses of indigenous Africans into enclaves of Apartheid. And right here, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we are witnessing the rise of such an evil, even as a particular political figure seeks to manipulate the mindsets of "dumb-downed" Americans into militarized troops who would seemingly follow him "to the ends of the earth," packed in a socially-modified vehicle of corruption called, "Christian Nationalism," while touting their distorted mantra, "God, Guns and Country," rather than, "Father, Son and Holy Ghost!"

This dichotomy of ideology is nothing new. In fact, it is found in an ancient passage of Hebrew scripture, namely, Exodus 1:9-10, where the most powerful man in the world at that time, Pharaoh, king of Egypt cries out *unto his people*,

*"...Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we. Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land." (KJV)*

Now, while the implications of this skewed perspective of power, "Come on, let us deal wisely with them..." are quite obvious, we've witnessed some recent manifestations of blatant legal injustices against the survivors of the Tulsa Race Massacre, several attempts to suppress the vote, and many other disruptions of human rights by way of distorted polices. We can clearly see that there are indeed "wickedness and powers in high places" that seek not only to mold, maneuver and manipulate a polarized people into cages of economic exploitation, sexploitation and fear, but also to deal wisely and deceptively with the disenfranchised people.

There is, however, a Paradox that screams out at us from the opening words of this passage, where a certain powerful political figure, called Pharaoh, arrogantly declares, "Unto his [own] people,"

*"...Behold, the children of the people of Israel, are more and mighty than we."*

Does Pharaoh not realize what he has just said?

Do his people not realize what it is that he is really saying unto them?

Does Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and all others who would seek such corrupt power in this world not realize the corollary of what Pharaoh has just announced?

Pharaoh has just articulated, unto his [own] people, The Paradox of Power; and the essence of this Power Paradox is found in these words:

*"Behold, [they] are more and mightier than we!"*

which is also to say,

*"Behold, we are lesser and weaker than [they]!"*

Isn't it interesting how that the very people who have so openly expressed their fears and inadequacies by way of Great Replacement Theories, (that suggest that their race is quickly becoming the minority) are also the very ones who act as if they are the more and mightier group, simply based on monies stolen from slave labor?

But God, in this ninth verse, actually unveils The Paradox of Power—which is in no way related to the power that Jesus promised his followers, (*And you shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and shall become my witnesses...*).

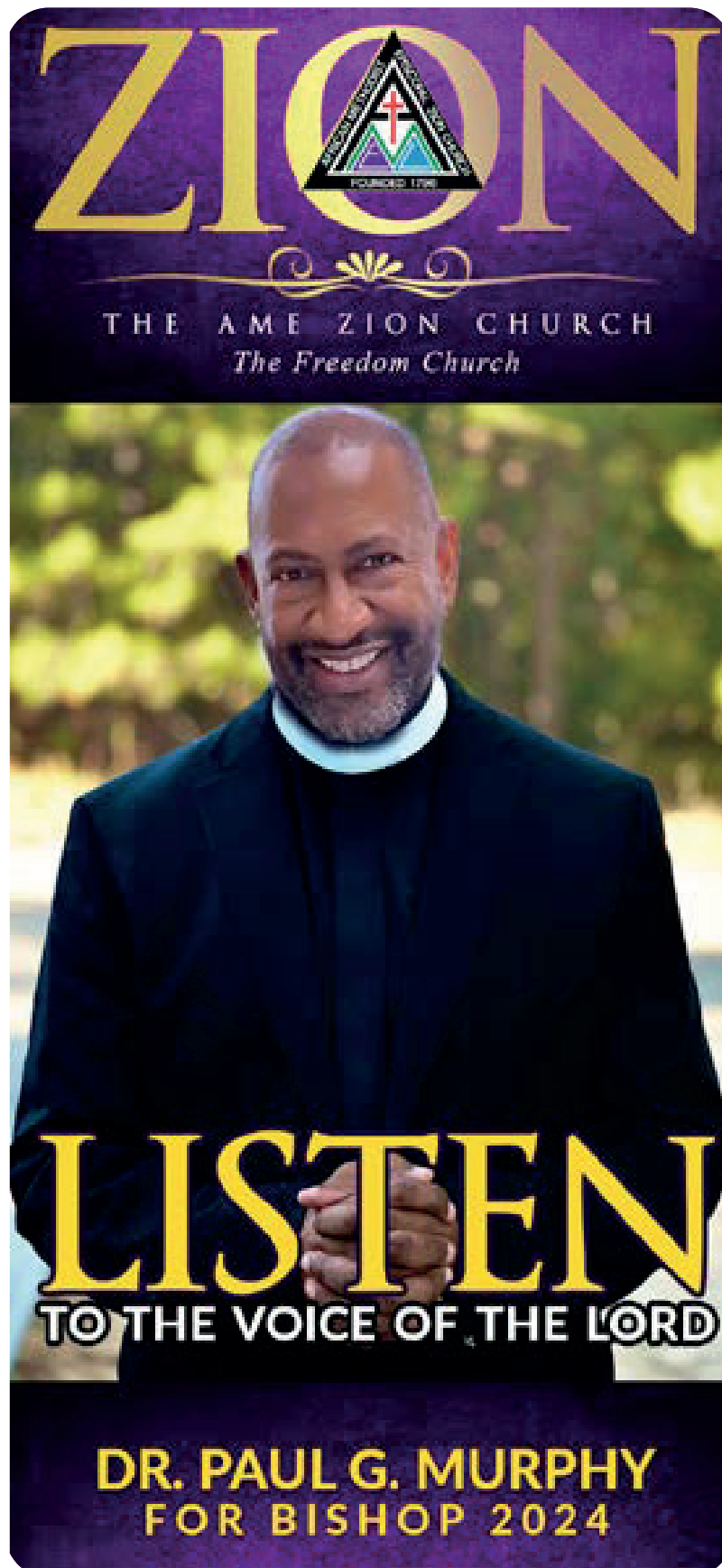
This false power is in essence an articulated inferiority that causes an implosion of identity within the people who would hear and believe this propaganda. And the resulting ideological contradictions reveal a Paradox of Flag-waving, Pro-Israel Americans, loudly chanting, "USA, USA..." while yet wearing Nazi swastikas on their arms and denying that the holocaust ever happened.

Through Exodus 1:9, God reveals unto us the hypocrisy of those who seek "absolute power," but are yet only uttering corrupt words that attempt to morph into a similitude of power—as a Paradox of Power—a version of power that ironically and paradoxically belies its own verbiage. These words of superficial power and authority only expose the real weakness, inadequacy, insecurity and inferiority that emanate from fear-driven ignorance and assumed intellectual superiority. It's as simple as that. Power that pretends to be something, when it is actually nothing, is only an appearance of power. As the LORD would remind us, there are those who have "...a form of godliness but [are] denying the power thereof,"—this Paradox of Power is, in short, "All bark, but no bite!"

In fact, in Exodus 1:9-10, Pharaoh is actually trying to "brainwash" his own people, (not anyone else), so to warp their minds and to skew their lens of perspective, causing them to believe everything he has to say unto them. This is why the first word that Pharaoh utters is, "Behold!"

One had better "Beware of what they behold," for Pharaoh invites his people to look through his own distorted lens of perspective even as he also invites his people to believe a lie about themselves, namely, that they are '*lesser and weaker than the others.*' Pharaoh does this unto the end that his people will join with him as he seeks to "otherize" and marginalize everyone else who happens not to look like himself or his people.

Pharaoh's tactic of deception however backfires; paradoxically exposing the fear that Pharaoh has of "the others"—precisely what we saw when Nero Caesar sought to intimidate a people who were not afraid





to die with the threat of death. This was the exact same rhetoric that Adolf Hitler spewed out against the Jewish people of his day simply because he feared their economic status. Yes, this was indeed the same mantra that forced the indigenous people of South Africa to have their human worth and value be determined by a literal “scale,” that would measure the color of their skin, thickness of their lips, texture of their hair and every other mechanism of race to determine who these “others” would actually be.

But most pointedly, is this not the exact same rhetoric that we are hearing in America today? This vile vomit of inferiority is being spewed out from a people who truly believe that they are actually **lesser and weaker** than the “others.” They have therefore become so fearful of those who happen to be the Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC), that they stand up and declare the pretentious narratives of white supremacy simply because they deem themselves to be weak and worthless. This is in fact the deeper and most diabolical issue we must address, even as we also seek to address and eradicate the evils of social injustices that emanate from such tragic mindsets.

But, as we consider that God chose to reveal the root of this human tragedy of racial identity right here at the opening of Exodus, (long before God would raise up that great leader, Moses, to express the True Power of God unto the end of liberating the masses), what might God be whispering unto us, His children? What might God be calling us to do today?

Might God be calling those of us who are so empowered by His Spirit to actually save the lost and help to deliver and liberate those who are trapped in those cages of self-deception? For what is the remedy for those who are Anti-WOKE and Anti-DEI, who adamantly resist to be awakened by the truth of God? What can be done to help our sisters and brothers who keep on falling into the fallacy of their own fears? What might God be expecting His Freedom Church to do today?

Although this misguided and blinded hoard of people actually believe that they are “the more and mightier,” could it be that the LORD has allowed us to be the agents of change “for such a time as this?” Yes, we must certainly continue to fight the good fight, to help the otherized and the marginalized people to recognize the fullness of their human worth and dignity, as well as their divine privilege and power of a being a True Christian, saved, transformed and liberated by the Lord Jesus Himself.

But what is it that JESUS is expecting us to do to help these people? What might JESUS be calling the Freedom Church to do? What would ultimately enable liberation for those who are so caught up in these enclaves of fear and pos-

tures of pseudo-power? What is God expecting from us, His remnant people, that would help deliver our sisters and brothers out of the grip of this Paradox of Power, so that they may no longer believe the lie, that they are “lesser and weaker,” but rather see themselves as children of the True and Living God?

Let those of us who are the children of the Most High God, who do not believe the hype and the lies of this corrupted social narrative, Rise up and Stand up, knowing that the very nature of our power, does not originate from this world, but rather we move in the Power of The Holy Ghost. Even as we continue to celebrate that, “There is Power, Power, wonder working Power in the Blood of the Lamb,” let us therefore go forth penetrating the darkness of this world with the Light of the Lord Jesus Christ, “Loving those who hate us, blessing those who curse us, praying for those who despitefully use us,” and let us never forget that we are indeed the More and the Mightier and are the only ones who can rescue our sisters and brothers through intensified moments of prayer, pressing our way unto the polls, where we, as a galvanized group that would also include this newly-liberated group of believers, can saturate our VOTE with the Righteousness of God, so that God’s will may indeed “be done on earth as it is in heaven!”

This would certainly be a most incredible moment for God’s people, delivered from the Paradox of Power!

## DR. PAUL G. MURPHY

42 years of marriage to Sharon Campbell Murphy  
four children and four grandchildren

Pastor of Trinity A.M.E. Zion Church in Southern Pines, NC; 28 years of service as pastor

Conference Studies Examiner for 24 years  
Missions work in South Africa and US Virgin Islands  
Elected Delegate for five General Conferences

Paratrooper in 82nd Airborne Division

BA degree from UNC Chapel Hill—(Music Theory and Composition)  
MDiv degree from Duke Divinity School  
DMin degree from Hood Theological Seminary

Composer—Chamber and Orchestral as well as Film and TV Musician for Central NC Annual Conference

Public Service—MCCS School Board, Teacher at The Heritage Creative Arts School, Sandhills Community College Foundation Board, Boys and Girls Club of the Sandhills Board, Southern Pines Town Council, Mayor Pro Tem, Friend to Friend Board, AMEZ-Duke HEAL collaborative, Sandhills Cooperation Association Board.



# WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

 Cash App  
\$pgmurphy79

 PayPal  
@FishermansFrontier

By Mail  
PO Box 234  
Pinebluff NC 28373

www.paulgmurphy.com  
@Dr. Paul G. Murphy





# \$1.4 Million Scholarship Program to Enhance STEM Education in Local Schools



Rev. Roderick J. Josey  
Education Editor  
education@starofzion.org

By Clinton College



ROCK HILL, SOUTH

CAROLINA – Winthrop University, Clinton College and three local school districts will partner on a \$1.4 million scholarship program to bolster the training of area STEM educators and interns through 2029.

Funds for the program, titled Working to Improve STEM Educator Recruitment and Retention through Relationships (to be known as *WISER*<sup>3</sup>), will come from the Division of Undergraduate Education in the National Science Foundation. This is the third round of NSF funding for Winthrop for this particular program which builds on prior/current Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship program grants.

The three local school districts partnering on the grant are Chester County, York District 1 and Rock Hill.

Winthrop President Edward Serna '02 said he is glad to see that Winthrop is able to partner with the school districts, as well as Clinton College, on teacher recruitment. He said the grant is one of the first opportunities for the two institutions to address the need for more STEM educators by providing education majors with high-quality preparation and with support in order to increase teacher retention rates.

“We are proud to work with our neighbors at Clinton College and area school districts to do our part in attracting STEM majors to teaching careers. We know this has been a challenge because of low teacher retention rates, but, together, our two institutions can make a big difference in how science, technology and math are taught in our community. We are ready to get to work in order to get more of our STEM majors into the field of teaching.”

Clinton College President Lester McCorn said his college is excited to partner with Winthrop on this innovative grant. “One of our strategic goals is to increase the number of minority teachers in public education, returning to one of the historic missions of Clinton College in its founding in 1894,” he said. “This is a major milestone for the



city of Rock Hill, to have these two historic institutions working together to address the need for qualified, diverse, capable teachers in science, technology, and math. I am thrilled to work with our friends President Serna and Dean (Beth) Costner in advancing citywide collaboration for a common cause. We look forward to amazing outcomes for the future of our city and region.”

Across the five-year funding period, *WISER*<sup>3</sup> will produce at least 28 new STEM educators through scholarships for high-achieving students to obtain teacher certification at Winthrop through a Master of Arts in Teaching degree, according to Associate Professor Kelly M. Costner, a member of the Winthrop grant team.

At least six will be recruited from the biology majors at Clinton College, while the remaining 22 will be Winthrop students with majors in biology, chemistry, or mathematics. The project has the potential to contribute additional research insights through paired placements in field and clinical experiences and through mentoring.

Scholarships of at least \$20,000 will support the STEM majors as they pursue teacher certification. Part of Winthrop’s plan involves the Richard W. Riley College of Education, Sport, and Human Sciences working with the College of Arts and Sciences to increase participation in the university’s STEM education programs. The students will be mentored in the participating school districts during their college preparation and once they begin teaching. Costner foresees community-building components through regular professional development and social events.

The NSF program, the Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program (Noyce) has three components. It tracks at the national level the support given to talented STEM undergraduate majors and professionals to become effective K-12 STEM teachers. It works to ensure that experienced, exemplary K-12 teachers become STEM master teachers in high-need school districts. And finally, it supports research on the effectiveness and retention of K-12 STEM teachers in high-need school districts.

Working along with Costner on the Winthrop grant leadership are faculty members Cassie Bell, Department of Biology; Jessie Hamm, Department of Mathematics; and Lisa Johnson, College of Education, Sport and Human Sciences.

For more information, contact Rae’L Smith, news and media services manager, at [rsmith@clintoncollege.edu](mailto:rsmith@clintoncollege.edu) or at 803-374-9424.

## Livingstone College professor Chief Ashanti of the Carolinas

By Star of Zion News



Livingstone College professor Felix Adusei-Danso, who serves as chair for the Department of Biology, will be inaugurated as the new Ashanti Chief of Charlotte, North Carolina, on July 6, 2024. The three-hour ceremony will showcase Ashanti culture, tradition, music, dancing, and leaders pledging an oath of allegiance to the Ashanti people. All are invited to attend.

A native of the Ashanti region of Ghana, Dr. Adusei-Danso was appointed as the Chief of Asanteman Association of the Carolinas, whereas in this capacity, he represents the current King, Nana Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, in all matters relating to Ashanti culture and traditions in North Carolina. Moreover, this position grants Adusei-Danso the title of “Nana,” as he acts for the Ashanti as one of 16 chiefs in the United States and Canada.

In efforts to preserve the Ashanti culture and tradition of Ashanti people who emigrate to various places throughout the world, natives have formed regional associations of the Ashantis. These associations have

a chieftaincy establishment consisting of the Chief (King), Queen, sub-chiefs, and sub-Queens, just as it is practiced in the Ashanti Kingdom in Ghana.

As a result, North Carolina has one of the associations, the “Asanteman Association of the Carolinas,” of which Adusei-Danso is a member. The main aim of the association is to project the Ashanti culture and traditions in the USA and teach Ashanti children (born in America) the norms, traditions, and culture of the Ashanti Kingdom so they can appreciate their roots and maintain their customs and traditions.

Dr. Adusei-Danso said, “This is a very prestigious, respected position with a great deal of responsibility. I am honored, humbled, and ready.”

On July 6 at 6:00 p.m., the Enstoolment Ceremony will commence at the Ultimate Sports and Wellness Complex in Charlotte at 500 West 32nd Street. The celebratory event is free and open to the public. Black attire is requested.



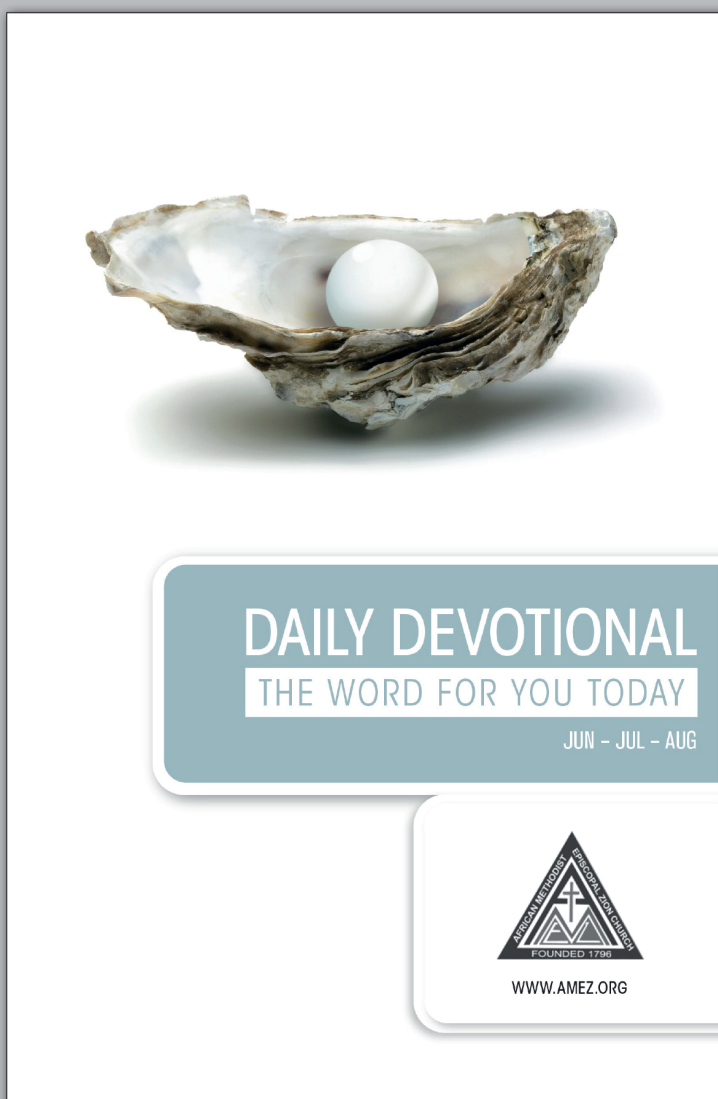


# THE WORD FOR YOU TODAY

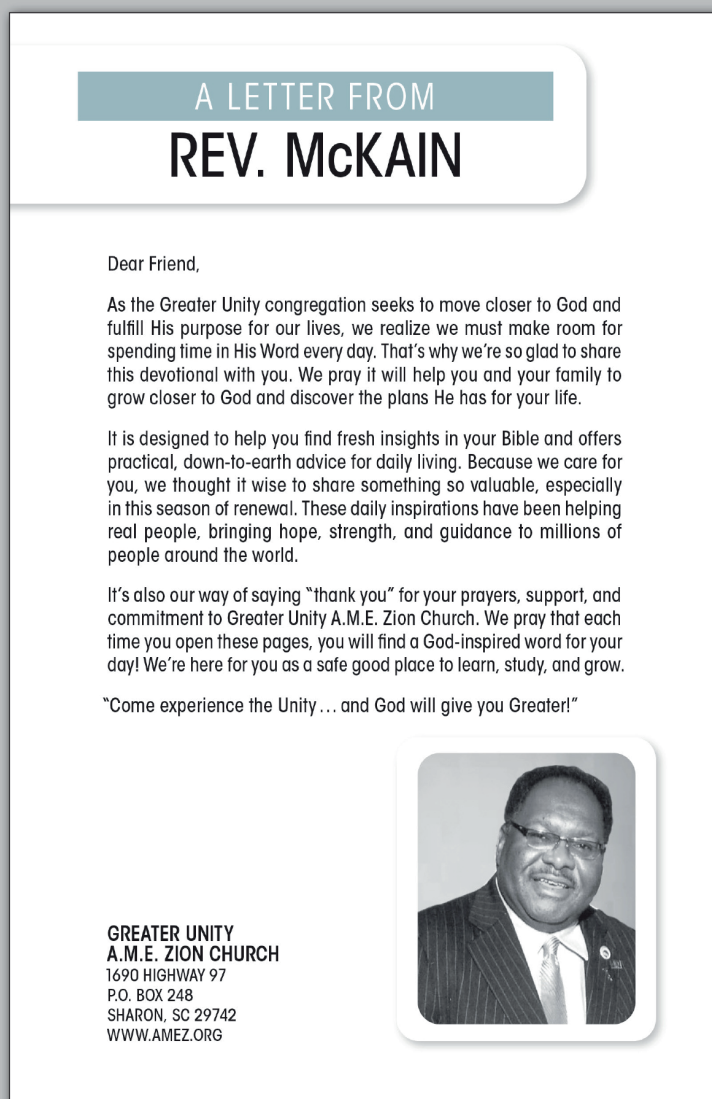
THE LEADER IN PERSONALIZED DAILY DEVOTIONALS

## Welcome to the 52<sup>nd</sup> Quadrennial Session General Conference of the A.M.E. Zion Church

We have been providing personalized devotionals  
to local churches for **25 years!**



Front Cover



Inside Front Cover

Here are a few other A.M.E. Zion Churches that have their own personalized quarterly devotional.

- Greater Warner AME Zion, TN
- St. James AME Zion, CA
- Walls Memorial AME Zion, NY
- Winston Chapel AME Zion, CA

**Come visit our booth in the Imperial Ballroom.  
See how you can have your own personalized devotional.**

[www.WordForYou.com](http://www.WordForYou.com)



# Christian Education in Public Schools by Right-wing Republicans

By Rev. Dr. Garrett M. Thomas



According to the New York Times, 28 June 2024, the Oklahoma State Superintendent of Education, Ryan Walters, a registered Republican, issued a directive that all public schools, at every level, must offer courses on Biblical instruction, including the Ten Commandments, because scripture is an “indispensable historical and cultural touchstone” (*Mervosh & Dias, 2024*). This coincides with a mandate by the State of Louisiana that the Ten Commandments must be prominently

displayed in every classroom. Separation of Church and State is the issue at hand but it is a slippery slope, not that simple. It is an act that prohibits Congress from instituting any laws sanctioning a particular religion, but it does not explicitly deny a school district or a state government from authorizing the display of religious materials or the delivery of religious instruction. Thus, lawsuits and much litigation are expected to follow these directives that should be of particular concern to members of The Black Church and the Black Community.

Another issue at hand is the implementation of Biblical instruction by an American institution that has been racist from its inception and continues to provide an inequitable educational experience for children of color, especially when spearheaded by members of a political party who have traditionally hidden behind Christianity to establish an old world order of conservatism, white-male-patriarchy, and white supremacy. White Christianity is directly culpable for constructing the notion of white supremacy and deconstructing any notion of Black equality (*Jones, 2020*). Christianity, in the hands of those on The Right, was used to overturn *Roe vs. Wade*, denying women the right to determine what happens with their own bodies and their own healthcare, and maintaining the subjugation of women. Racist zealots have used Christianity to justify discrimination in housing via redlining to establish white middle-class suburbs and impoverished Black inner city ghettos, and it was used to justify Jim Crow Segregation, slavery, lynching, mass incarceration, voter suppression, and many other social ills that disturb the Black Community today (*Alexander, 2010, Katznelson, 2005, Kendi, 2019, Pounder et al, 2003*).

On the face of it, Biblical instruction in classrooms, posters of the Ten Commandments, and even the return of prayer in the schools seem innocuous, as if little to no harm could possibly come from it, especially if other religious literary texts are granted equal time in the schools; but we must beware and consider the source, their motives, and the implications of their current actions on our future. Our Lord, in the Gospel of St. Matthew, warns us to beware of false prophets who come to us in “sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.” We shall “know them by their fruits.” Right-wing, Republican Christians have produced Donald Trump as their messiah, a conman who is a convicted felon, adulterer, pathological liar, and who claimed in 2017 that Frederick Douglass is doing a great job and will continue to do even more (*Merica, 2017*). Right-wing, Republican Christians have provided fruits of racist policies including the banning of books on social justice and America’s extensive history of racism and slavery, the eradication of the term slave master from the history books, and calling human flesh mongers and plantation owners, planters, and they have produced the Great Replacement Theory, proffering that whites are becoming the American minorities and must fight to take their country back.

A revisionist history, the propagation of alternative facts, obfuscation, prevarication, and outright denial has been the modus operandi of

The Right. Oklahoma is requiring Biblical instruction just weeks after the state supreme court dismissed the case for reparations of the two surviving members of the Tulsa Race Massacre, Lessie Benningfield Randle, 109, and Viola Ford Fletcher, 110. The court ruled that it has no authority to order a resolution or remuneration for the allegations brought against the state and that only lawmakers hold such power. Damario Solomon-Simmons, lead attorney for the plaintiffs told The Times, “Once again, the Oklahoma court system has failed the survivors. We think the decision is wrong and the reasoning is wrong” (*Burch, 2024*).

The Tulsa Race Massacre occurred in the Greenwood section of Tulsa, dubbed Black Wall Street by W.E.B. DuBois. Following the Civil War, many African Americans moved west to Oklahoma to join the Cherokee and Seminole Indigenous Americans who had been forced out there between 1830 and 1850 during the Trail of Tears to land that was unwanted by free whites and considered unprofitable because it was impossible to farm and grow crops there due to the abundance of oil underground that had yet to be discovered in the mid-19th Century (*DeBose, 2021; Parshina-Kottas et. al, 2021; Tulsa City-County Library 2024*).

Blacks in Tulsa had accrued so much wealth and education and were so magnanimous that they drew the ire of the former master class. After World War I, Black Wall St. was one of the most affluent African American communities in the entire nation. Black people owned all of the banks, hotels, oil fields, huge farmlands, schools, and many other businesses in the Greenwood section of Tulsa. On the morning of May 30, 1921, a young black man named Dick Rowland was riding the elevator in the Drexel Building at Third Street and Main Street with a white woman named Sarah Page. According to the Blacks who survived, Mr. Rowland and Ms. Page had ostensibly been having a secret love affair. The two lovers had an argument on the elevator and when they got down to the first floor, white people saw them and told the police that Mr. Rowland had attempted to rape Ms. Page on the elevator. Mr. Rowland was arrested and the fallacious report quickly spread throughout the surrounding towns. Black men then gathered their rifles and other weapons and went down to the jailhouse to protect Mr. Rowland. When the white mob arrived on June 1st, a gun battle ensued in which some white mobsters were shot and killed. They retreated but returned with increased numbers. The Black protectors were killed and Mr. Rowland was snatched from the jail cell and summarily hung (*DeBose, 2021; Parshina-Kottas et. al, 2021; Tulsa City-County Library 2024*).

The mob burned down nearly every building in the Greenwood section and killed every man, woman, and child that they could find. Some of the white people who lived nearby and owned planes flew over Black Wall Street and dropped bombs on the residents and their property. The people who survived thought that the U.S. Army/Air Force had been the ones who bombed them from the planes. The federal government has denied that claim and declared that the planes were owned and operated by private citizens. During the slaughter, many whites participated in the revelry. The entire episode was a loud party, parade, and picnic in which participants ravenously and savagely, mutilated, murdered, and raped Black people with a sense of inscrutable frivolity and immunity that boggles the mind (*DeBose, 2021; Parshina-Kottas et. al, 2021; Tulsa City-County Library 2024*).

And now the State of Oklahoma refuses to even allow the case for reparations to be heard and claims they have the authority to provide Christian Education to our children. James H. Cone, Father of Black Theology, says, “Where human beings struggle for freedom and refuse to be defined by unauthorized earthly authorities, there, Jesus Christ is present among them. His Presence is the sustaining and liberating event in the lives of the oppressed that makes possible the continued struggle for freedom (*Cone, 1975, p. 32*). We must continue our struggle for freedom by voting in every election, local, state, and federal, to keep the racist, misogynistic agenda from hiding behind Christianity to take hold of our country. We are literally fighting for the soul of the nation.



Americans United for Separation of Church and State tells Mother Jones that this fight is part of a movement known as “Project 2025” which seeks to reverse population trends by ensuring that white orphans are available for white people who want to adopt, that racial and social justice protections are dismantled and roadblocks to equality are erected to limit the civil rights of gay people and people of color, and to re-interpret freedom of religion as a tool for uninhibited discrimination. Marc Elias, a Voting Rights Attorney and founder of Democracy Docket, a website focused on voting rights and election litigation, told MSNBC on 1 July 2024 that “There is a team of MAGA extremists who are working on something called Project 2025 to execute and make much more effective Donald Trump’s retribution if and when he gets into office.” The American Christian Reich, MAGA-maniacs, are ordering Biblical Instruction and lessons on the Ten Commandments in the public school system.

It would behoove The Black Church to resist all efforts of Right-wing Republican Evangelicals to be the voice of Christianity and the vehicle for Christian Education in our public schools because their ideal Jesus is a Eurocentric, conservative with exclusivity. He is not the one to turn over the tables and wage spiritual revolution through the pulling down of strongholds and the eradication and resistance of oppression with the weapon of love and the inclusivity of whosoever will, let them come. The God of the Black Church is a God of Liberation. He is the God of the Oppressed. We can be sure that Right-wing Republicans will not

teach that truth.

**WORKS CITED**

Alexander, M. (2010). *The New Jim Crow: Mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness*. New York: The New Press.

Burch, A.D.S. (2024). *New York Times*. *Oklahoma Supreme Court Dismisses Tulsa Race Massacre Lawsuit*. 13 June 2024

Cone, J. (1975). *God of the Oppressed*. Orbis Books: New York

DuBose, E. (2021). *The Black Wall St. Times*. *Tulsa Race Massacre: The truth about Sarah Page and Dick Rowland’s Relationship*. <https://theblackwallsttimes.com/2021/08/25/tulsa-race-massacre-the-truth-about-sarah-page-and-dick-rowlands-relationship/>

Jones, R.P. (2020). *White Too Long; The legacy of white supremacy in American Christianity*. New York: Simon and Schuster

Katznelson, I (2005). *When Affirmative Action was White: An untold history of racial inequality in the twentieth-century America*. New York: W.W. Norton

Kendi, I.X. (2019). *How to be an antiracist*. Random House: New York.

U.S. Constitution (2024). <https://constitution.congress.gov/constitution/amendment-1/#:~:text=Congress%20shall%20make%20no%20law,for%20a%20redress%20of%20grievances.>

Merica, D. (2017) CNN. *Trump: Frederick Douglass ‘is being recognized more and more*. <https://www.cnn.com/2017/02/02/politics/donald-trump-frederick-douglass/index.html>


Mervosh, S. & Dias, E. (2024). *New York Times*. *Oklahoma Moves to Require Teaching the Bible in Public Schools*: 28 June 2024.

Mother Jones (2024). *Americans United for the Separation of Church and State*. *The Looming Threat of Christian Nationalism*. *Christian nationalists want to create a Christian nation*. <https://www.motherjones.com/sponsored/the-looming-threat-of-christian-nationalism/>

Parshina-Kottas, Y. et al. (2021). *The New York Times*: *What the Tulsa Race Massacre Destroyed*: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/05/24/us/tulsa-race-massacre.html>

Pounder, C.C.H, Larry Adelman, Jean Cheng, Christine Herbes-Sommers, Tracy H. Strain, Llewellyn Smith, and Claudio Ragazzi. *Race: The Power of an Illusion*. San Francisco, Calif: California Newsreel, 2003.

Tulsa City-County Library. *The Tulsa Race Riot 1921*. <https://www.tulsalibrary.org/tulsa-race-riot-1921>

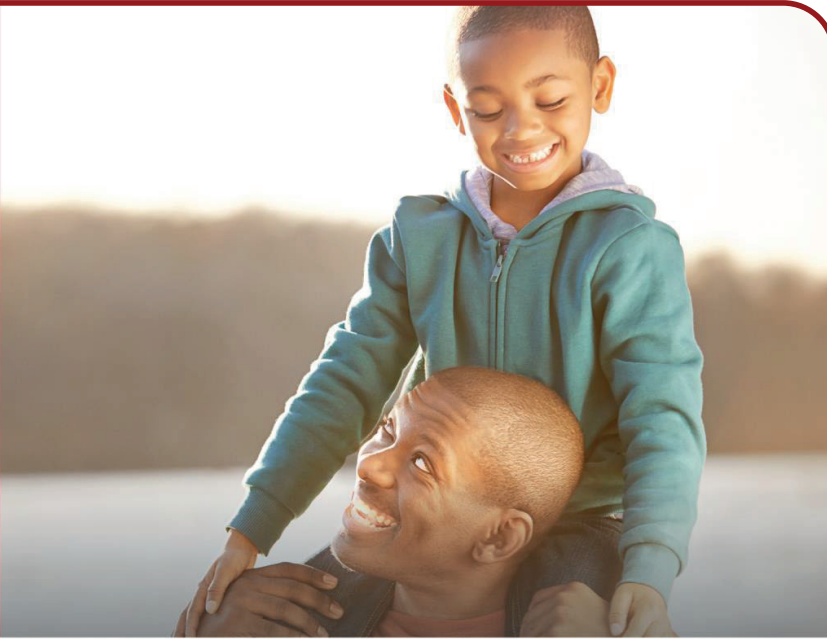


**American Red Cross**

Share your strength.

**SICKLE CELL FIGHTERS**

Patients fighting sickle cell disease may require regular blood transfusions to avoid health crises. You can make all the difference. Donate blood.



**SAVE THE DATE!**

**52<sup>nd</sup> Quadrennial General Conference of  
The A.M.E. Zion Church**

**Blood Drive**

**Friday, July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**8:00a.m.- 6:00p.m.**

**Schedule your appointment today!**

RedCrossBlood.org | Sponsor Code: **AMEZC**

Download the Blood Donor App | RedCrossBlood.org | 1-800-RED CROSS | 1-800-733-2767

© The American National Red Cross 2018 | 2018-APL-00006 | 165301



# Empowering Transformational Leaders: The Impact of the Livingstone College Preaching and Worship Institute

By Dr. Antonio L. Ellis & Bishop W. Darin Moore  
Photos By Larry Brown



The Livingstone College Preaching and Worship Institute has made a profound impact on theological education and ministry development, not only within its immediate community but also on a broader scale. Building upon the concept first introduced by the A.M.E. Zion Board of Bishops' Preaching Institute held on the campus of Livingstone College several years ago, President Anthony Davis, Rev. Lloyd Nivens, IV, Campus Minister, and their outstanding team launched the 2024 Livingstone College Preaching and Worship Institute with a commitment to equipping individuals for effective ministry through the art of preaching and worship. The Institute stands as a beacon of excellence in its holistic approach to theological, sociological, and practical ministry training. By integrating practical ministry experience, relevant training sessions, and powerful worship encounters, the gathering prepares students not only to understand scriptural concepts but also to apply them in real-world ministry settings. This emphasis on praxis ensures that participants are not only knowledgeable scholars but also skilled practitioners who can effectively serve their communities.

According to one of the keynote speakers, Rev. Dr. Gina Stewart, *"Livingstone's commitment to bridging theory and practice ensures that students are dually aligned in orthodoxy-upholding the tenets and fundamental truths of the faith and orthopraxy, putting those beliefs into action. This holistic approach results in well-rounded practitioner-scholars who are equipped with both theological knowledge and practical skills to make a meaningful difference in the church and the world while navigating the complexities of ministry with confidence, wisdom, and compassion."*

The Institute's commitment to diversity and inclusion was demonstrated by both the presenters and the attendees. Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie, General Secretary and President of the National Council of Churches, USA, opened the Institute with a powerfully prophetic message. Dr. Gina M. Stewart, Pastor of Christ Missionary Baptist Church, Memphis, TN, and President of Lott Carey Mission Convention, challenged our minds and set our hearts aflame with her profound and passionate preaching. Dr. Charles E. Goodman, pastor of Tabernacle Baptist Church in Augusta, GA, offered key insights into the current cultural realities and effective



ministry approaches. Bishop Rudolph W. McKissick, Jr. closed the Preaching Institute with a timely and challenging sermon that was the capstone for a transformational experience. During the closing worship service, the members of the inaugural class of The Right Reverend Alfred G. Dunston College of Preachers were inducted.



The Livingstone College Preaching and Worship Institute has the potential to become all the more instrumental in fostering innovation and creativity in our understanding of scripturally grounded and justice-oriented preaching, teaching, and worship. Through its emphasis on the arts of preaching and worship, the Institute encourages students to explore new ways of communicating the timeless truths of the Gospel. By embracing the power of storytelling, music, and visual arts in ministry, students are equipped to engage with congregations in meaningful and transformative ways.

The institute's emphasis on social justice and community engagement sets it apart as a leader in ministry leadership education. By challenging students to confront issues of injustice and inequality both within and outside the church, the Institute empowers future ministers to be agents of change in their communities. Through partnerships with local organizations and ministries, students have the opportunity to put their faith into action and make a tangible difference in the lives of those they serve.

In conclusion, the Livingstone College Preaching and Worship Institute has had a profound impact on the pastors, ministers, lay leaders, and students with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to be effective leaders in today's world. As it continues to shape the next generation of church leaders, the Institute will undoubtedly leave a lasting legacy of positive change and transformation in the world.



## About the authors:



**Dr. Antonio L. Ellis** is a senior professorial lecturer and director of the Institute on Education Equity and Justice at the American University School of Education in Washington, DC.



**Bishop W. Darin Moore** is the Presiding Prelate of the Mid-Atlantic Episcopal District and one of the inaugural inductees into The Right Reverend Alfred G. Dunston College of Preachers.



Strengthening • Equipping • Evangelizing



# ELECT FOR BISHOP

*Rev. Dr. Victor C. Wilson*

- **Proven Church Growth Record**
- **Proven Financial Stability Record**
- **Proven Outreach Ministries**
- **Proven Development of Laity and Clergy Record**
- **Proven Servant Leader**
- **Proven Administrative Record**



**VICTORY YOU CAN SEE**

Helping Zion To SEE

[www.wilsonforbishop.com](http://www.wilsonforbishop.com)



# Livingstone College Receives Fifth \$1 Million Donation from Anonymous Donor on June

By Rev. Roderick J. Josey, Education Editor



Salisbury, North Carolina - In a remarkable show of generosity, Livingstone College received its fifth consecutive \$1 million donation from an anonymous benefactor on Tuesday, June 11th. The significant contribution comes as a boon to the esteemed institution, solidifying its position as a beacon of educational excellence in the region.

Dr. Anthony Davis, President of Livingstone College, expressed profound gratitude for the benefactor's unwavering support, stating, "We are immensely grateful for this extraordinary act of generosity. Such a substantial donation will enable us to further enhance our academic programs, expand our facilities, and continue to provide transformative educational opportunities to our students."

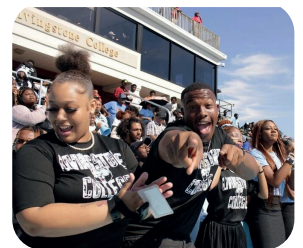


The anonymous donor, who has now become synonymous with philanthropy at Livingstone College, has consistently demonstrated a steadfast commitment to empowering students and fostering academic ex-

cellence. Their continued investment underscores the profound impact of private donations in advancing the mission of the institution.

Reflecting on the significance of this latest contribution, Dr. Davis emphasized its transformative potential, stating, "This generous donation will enable us to pursue innovative initiatives that will benefit not only our current students but also future generations of scholars. It serves as a testament to the enduring legacy of philanthropy in higher education."

Livingstone College, founded in 1879, has a long-standing tradition of academic excellence and community engagement. The institution remains dedicated to providing a supportive learning environment that empowers students to realize their full potential and make meaningful contributions to society.



As the college prepares to embark on new initiatives fueled by this latest donation, the impact of philanthropy on its continued growth and success cannot be overstated. Through the generosity of donors like the anonymous benefactor, Livingstone College continues to thrive as a leading institution of higher learning, shaping the minds of tomorrow's leaders and innovators.

## President Davis Lay Scholarship Luncheon Speaker

By Star of Zion News

President Davis continues to make an impactful impression in efforts to create a reimagined Livingstone College. On Thursday, June 6, under the leadership of presiding prelate Darryl B. Starnes, the Western North Carolina Conference of the Piedmont Episcopal District hosted its annual Albert Stout Sr. Memorial Scholarship Luncheon at the Sheraton Four Seasons-Koury Convention Center in Greensboro with Dorothy Gill-Smith, presiding. The event bears the name of a lay member from New Hope A.M.E. Zion Church in the Salisbury District.



As hundreds gathered for an occasion that provides financial assistance to Livingstone College and Hood Theological Seminary students, the program was filled with various participants to include William Manning, Barbara Mallett, Gloria Joyner Johnson, Sarah Stout, Michael Stout, Rev. Thomas Lee, Mary Ponds, and Trubbie Leeper.

The 13th President of Livingstone College opened his address quoting Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Climb Ev'ry Mountain" while referencing the founding fathers of Livingstone, who were A.M.E. Zion leaders with an audacious idea to formally educate descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States of America. "145 years later, Livingstone College is thriving," Davis stated to congregants, "send your students to Livingstone."



The President shared a few highlights of the college, including full accreditation by SACSCOC, a graduate MBA program, building renovations, strong academic classes, and the power of attending an HBCU where students are celebrated.

As the first clergy since founder Joseph Charles Price to serve as president, Davis delivered a message undergirded with biblical scholarship from Mark 5 entitled, "Confronting Critical Conditions." Davis paralleled the conditions plaguing the menaced young man in the text to the plethora of challenges college students experience while trying to pursue advanced degrees and earn a place in the mosaic world. Davis said, "Jesus talks to the conditions controlling the man . . . Confront the condition controlling our students like underfunded public schools, mental and social traumatization, poverty, education biases, school to prison pipeline, and more . . . When Jesus confronts his condition, the young man goes from being a mess to a missionary and tells anyone who will listen."



Davis reminds the audience, "Education is the tool of our emancipation. We educate students who endure, emerge, and escape. We have a mission too critical to abandon."

Following the president, four Livingstone College students, Dillion Dosithee, Joseph Bryant, Joshua Sutherland, and Zion Williams, extended expressions of gratitude to the audience as award recipients of the Albert Stout Scholarship.

The program concluded with Bishop Starnes thanking all program participants and contributors to the cause while reiterating President Davis's message. Pastor Thomas E. Grinter of New Hope and professor at Hood Theological Seminary said, "I identified with the President's words of believing in the principles of multiplication. There is almost always a challenge with students and financial and/or student accounts, and this is where Albert Stout and many other scholarships from constituents have value."

Davis expressed, "Many students will not know Albert Stout or know those who contribute in his name. We must be committed to the mission. We are here to build a bridge."



# Tennessee Legislature Approves Bill Allowing Teachers and School Staff to Carry Concealed Handguns in Schools

By Rev. Roderick J. Josey, Education Editor



In a landmark decision, the Tennessee Legislature has passed a bill permitting teachers and school staff to carry concealed handguns within school premises. The contentious bill, which has been the subject of heated debate among lawmakers and the public alike, marks a significant shift in Tennessee's approach to school safety and gun control.

Under the new legislation, educators and staff members who undergo extensive training and obtain a concealed carry permit will be authorized to carry firearms on school grounds. Proponents of the bill argue that arming teachers is a proactive measure to deter potential school shootings and protect students in the event of an armed threat.



"We live in uncertain times, and it's crucial that we take proactive steps to ensure the safety of our students and school staff," remarked

Senator John Smith, a vocal supporter of the bill. "Allowing trained educators to carry concealed firearms is a common-sense solution that empowers responsible individuals to defend themselves and others in emergency situations."



However, critics of the bill express concerns about the potential risks associated with introducing more firearms into school environments. They argue that arming teachers could escalate rather than mitigate violence, posing a threat to the safety of students and exacerbating tensions within schools.

"Schools should be places of learning and sanctuary, not armed fortresses," stated Representative Sarah Jones, a vocal opponent of the bill. "Introducing more guns into our schools creates an environment of fear and mistrust, undermining the sense of security that students and educators deserve."

The passage of the bill comes amidst ongoing nationwide discussions about gun control and school safety in the wake of several high-profile school shootings. Tennessee joins a handful of states that have implemented similar measures, reflecting divergent approaches to addressing the complex issue of gun violence in schools.

As the debate surrounding the bill continues to unfold, all eyes are on Tennessee as it navigates the challenges and implications of arming educators in the pursuit of safer schools.

## The Tribe of R.U.T.H.

By Hood Theological Seminary



The Center for Bold Leadership at Hood Theological Seminary will host its annual Transformation Retreat on Saturday, August 3, 2024, from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. This year's theme is **The Tribe of R.U.T.H.: Navigating the Path of Women of Color in Ministry.**

This one-day retreat on Hood's campus will provide a day of worship, affirmation, empowerment, nurturing, renewal, and joy. We recognize that women of color face unique challenges in their call and need the sista support and Grace that this retreat will provide. Our day will consist of inspirational speakers, special sessions on spiritual discernment, self-care and wellness, finance, sista support, and much laughter etc. The retreat is open to both clergy and lay people in ministry.

Please mark your calendars for Saturday, August 3, 2024, for this powerful day. Tickets are \$25.00. Please visit the Center's website, <https://boldlead.org>, to order your ticket.

**Now Accepting Applications**



Leadership Development Cohort

Applications are now open for our **Leadership Development Cohort**, which begins on September 26, 2024. The Cohort supports early-career clergy in their second through ninth year in pastoral ministry. Rural and small-member church pastors are especially encouraged to apply. **This year's Cohort will focus specifically on Clergy Women of Color.** The application deadline is **August 31, 2024.**

The Cohort includes:

- 1:1 Clergy Coaching
- Spiritual Direction
- Classes & Workshops
- In-person Retreats
- Wellness Coaching
  - Leadership Assessments
  - Book Study

Go to <https://boldlead.org/program/early-career-and-senior-clergy-cohort/> to apply.

School of Spiritual Direction Beyond Borders Cohort

**The next Cohort will begin in October 2024.** This two-year certification program, which is open to clergy and laity, will train you to become a Certified Spiritual Director. The training format consists of six three-day retreats (Tuesday through Thursday evenings) over two years. Students will also be required to meet with their spiritual director for the duration of the program.

Go to <https://boldlead.org/program/school-of-spiritual-direction-beyond-borders/> for additional information and to apply.

Please get in touch with Rev. Kimberly Clarke Turner at [kclarke@hood-seminary.edu](mailto:kclarke@hood-seminary.edu) or 336-324-9058 with any questions you may have.



# Everlene Davis: A Legacy of Dedication and Passion in Teaching

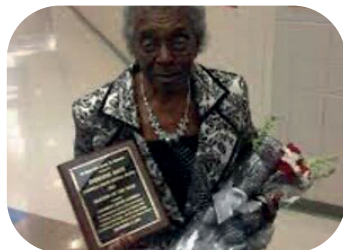
By Rev. Roderick J. Josey, Education Editor

In the heart of North Carolina, amidst the serene landscapes and rolling hills, resides a remarkable woman whose dedication to education has spanned nearly a century. Everlene Davis, at the age of 93, has been recognized and honored for her unwavering commitment to teaching, an astonishing 68-year journey that continues to inspire and uplift those around her.



Ms. Davis's story is one of resilience, passion, and an unyielding love for shaping young minds. Born and raised in the vibrant community of North Carolina, she embarked on her teaching career at the tender age of 19. Armed with determination and a genuine desire to make a difference, Ms. Davis set foot in the classroom and embarked on a journey that would define her life's work.

Over the decades, Ms. Davis's impact extended far beyond the walls of her classroom. She became a pillar of her community, a beacon of hope for generations of students who were fortunate enough to be under her guidance. Her teaching style was characterized by warmth, empathy, and an innate ability to instill a love for learning in her students.



Despite facing numerous challenges and societal changes over the years, Ms. Davis remained steadfast in her commitment to education. She embraced innovation and adapted her teaching methods to meet the evolving needs of her students, all while staying true to her core principles of kindness and compassion.



As Ms. Davis celebrates an incredible 68 years in the teaching profession, her dedication has not gone unnoticed. She has been honored by her colleagues, students, and community members for her extraordinary contributions to education. From local awards to national recognition, Ms. Davis's legacy continues to shine brightly, serving as a testament to the power of passion and perseverance.

When asked about her plans for retirement, Ms. Davis simply smiles and shakes her head. Retirement, it seems, is not on the horizon for this indomitable educator. With a sparkle in her eyes and a sense of purpose in her heart, Ms. Davis remains committed to her calling, eager to continue making a difference in the lives of those she touches.

As we reflect on the remarkable journey of Everlene Davis, we are reminded of the profound impact that one individual can have on the world. Her story serves as an inspiration to us all, a reminder to pursue our passions with unwavering dedication and to never underestimate the power of education to transform lives.

## Historic 1-Room School Started by A.M.E. Zion Minister Holding Fundraiser

By Mary Neely Grissom



I am Mary Neely Grissom, retired educator and President/Executive Director of the Historic Neely School Foundation. I am proud to share these chronological events of the historic Neely School.

In 1908, my grandfather, Julius Erastus Neely courageously founded the Neely School in China Grove, NC near Salisbury. Julius was the son of a slave. As a farmer, carpenter, a shrewd businessman and A.M.E. Zion minister, he and wife Katie recognized the importance of educating his family as well as the African American community in China Grove.

In the early 1900s, it was illegal for African American children to attend school or learn to read and write. Reverend Julius Erastus Neely took matters into his own hands. He risked everything to build a school to educate his family and his community.

The Neely family funded the school's construction on their property, supplemented by donations from family and friends of both races. The school started in a pack house loaned by a neighbor and during construction other family members provided other makeshift buildings used as temporary schoolhouses. In 1910 the 1-room Neely School house was completed and officially opened.

While the Neely School was embedded deep in the backyard of the



Neely home, it was a long walk to the schoolhouse for the children who were as young as five years of age. Even though it was on the Neely property, the building could be seen from the road. During that era, Julius knew that any form of educating African Americans was not accepted, and that alone was dangerous for the students. While they were learning, he sat on the front porch of his home with a rifle across his lap, daring anyone to come on his property and bring harm to the children who

deserved to learn how to read and write in a safe environment. This amazing school educated approximately 1,300 students (including me) before the local school system started providing schools for African Americans in 1948.

In 2010, my cousins and I, all Neely School alumni, decided to see if the school was still standing. When we found it in a dilapidated state, we decided that we wanted save and restore it.



We incorporated the Historic Neely School Foundation in 2010 as a 501c3, non-profit organization and we began raising money to fund the school's restoration and preservation.

In 2015, after moving the school from the deep wooded area to a roadside location, we reopened the restored school.

In 2017, the Neely School was designated as Rowan County's 5th Historic Landmark. In 2017, we also wrote a book, Little School in the Woods, to chronicle the family roots, school usage, and school resto-



ration.

We are currently developing the remainder of the site as a Neely Community Center, including a small building with air, heat, electricity, bathrooms, a picnic shelter, a nature trail to the original school site, and a playground.

On July 20, 2024, we will host a fundraising gala to celebrate the 150th birthday of Julius Erastus Neely and honor the continuation of his

vision for his legacy. Proceeds from this event will benefit the ongoing maintenance and growth of the Historic Neely School.

*Please visit our website to purchase tickets, make donations, and for more information: <https://historicneely->*



SOCIAL JUSTICE

# ZION CELEBRATES THE 50TH ANNUAL HARRIET TUBMAN PILGRIMAGE



Rev. Dr. Allison Lee  
Social Justice Editor  
[SocialJustice@StarOfZion.org](mailto:SocialJustice@StarOfZion.org)

By Ms. Karen Hill  
Photos By Mr. James Feldman

Against the backdrop of true Spring weather coming to Central New York, pilgrims made their way to Auburn, NY for the 50th Annual Harriet Tubman Pilgrimage. Fifty years is a hallmark and God ordained that we should be led on this occasion by a native son of the region, Bishop Dennis V. Proctor, Presiding Prelate and Chairman of the Harriet Tubman Home, Inc.

Tubman pilgrims arrived by car, coach bus, plane, and motorcycle beginning early on Friday, May 17th. The Harriet Tubman Home board and friends convened in the afternoon at the new historically restored Thompson Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Thompson Memorial, which opened its doors in 1891, is the church where Harriet Tubman worshipped and was active in lay activities. She assisted in the construction of Thompson Memorial making a \$500 pledge to its building fund in the late 1880's.

On May 17th PE Daren Jaime led those assembled in the dedication of the newly restored sanctuary which is a component of the Harriet Tubman National Historical Park operated by the National Park Service. It was amazing to witness the faithful restoration, the colors, and the stencils throughout the sanctuary. We were blessed that an electrical storm came through the area four years ago. The water damage to the already failing building revealed the original wall color and stencil pattern, a great contribution to the restoration process.



Day one of the pilgrimage weekend concluded with a reception for all attendees as we honored former Rep. John Katko, one of 11 Republicans to vote for impeachment of the former president following the January 6, 2021 insurrection at the nation's capital. Rep. Katko was honored for leading the Congressional effort with the late Rep. Elijah Cummings to place Harriet Tubman on our currency. Rep. Katko was the lead sponsor for the Harriet Tubman Bi-Centennial Commemorative Coin Act. We now have three commemorative coins available to the public for purchase. The coins are a Clad Half Dollar, Silver One Dollar, and a Gold Five Dollar.

The pilgrimage reception honored Bishop George Washington Carver



Walker, Sr. A set of three commemorative coins were presented by, HTH Treasurer, Dr. Stephen W. Pogue to Bishop Walker. It is Bishop Walker who organized the Tubman work corporately, thus allowing the A.M.E.Z Church to formalize relations with the National Park Service and other federal departments.

The main day of the pilgrimage began with a graveside memorial service for Harriet Tubman. Bishop Proctor led the early morning service sharing the significance of the occasion and his remembrances of coming to the graveside and to the homestead to honor Tubman. Bishop Proctor called on the Rev. Dr. Melanie Miller, herself, like Harriet a veteran of military service, to give remarks on the cusp of Memorial Day. Dr. Miller delivered a meditation that stayed with all in attendance. She called on all of us to remember the freedoms that Harriet dedicated her life to and that equality and social justice are still a part of our fight. Dr. Miller laid down the gauntlet for voting like your life depended on it, national elections, and up and down the ballot. We now have the obligation as freedom-loving people to protect our democracy and make America a more perfect Union.



We sojourned, at the conclusion of the graveside service, to Auburn High School where Bishop Proctor addressed the audience thanking everyone for their participation with special thanks to Missionary Supervisor Proctor who has been a true way maker in facilitating all things Tubman. Bishop Proctor then introduced Bishop Walker to give the 50th pilgrimage address.

Bishop Walker gave a sermon of hope and courage. God sent His messenger. It was prophetic for Bishop Walker to address at this point and time in our history. Bishop Walker came out of his shoes as he told the assemblage that they needed to feel the cause of freedom. It's in the earth beneath them, especially at the Tubman Park. Bishop Walker talked about our responsibility to continue in freedom's vineyard, to be invigorated by the work of Tubman.



The challenge to all freedom-loving people is to participate in efforts to ensure the next 50 years marks tangible progress in the continuum of becoming a more equitable and just society in the Tubman tradition.

The program concluded harmoniously, with everyone feeling uplifted. The resonance of having Bishop Walker and Bishop Proctor on the milestone anniversary of cannot be overstated. As the pilgrims journeyed home everyone received, in the tradition of Harriet's generosity, a grab-and-go lunch.





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

# An Attitude of Gratitude

## Meet the DIVA: Reverend Dierdre' R. Parker

By Asia Briana Brown

Meet Reverend Dierdre' R. Parker, editor of Entertainment & The Arts at The Star of Zion. A masterful wordsmith and award-winning spoken word artist, Dierdre'—also known as “Didi”—began reading the dictionary as a kid. Today, Didi continues to build upon her rich legacy as a poet, an actor, an IACC-certified life coach, an author of ten books, and an editor of one collection of poetry, *A Collection of SISTAHS: Sisters Inspiring Souls to Attain Higher Success*, and an ordained elder in The A.M.E. Zion Church. An embodiment of resilience, Didi's journey to becoming D.I.V.A. (Delivered Inspired Victorious Anointed) has been embroidered with many valleys and achievements.



Born in Southport, NC, Didi was the fifth-born of seven children. Although her mouth often got her into trouble, Didi's gift of tongue landed her first public speaking gig at age three: an Easter speech. Even the dictionary generated a new world for little Didi, experiencing childhood sexual abuse and, on her seventeenth birthday, undergoing an abortion by her parents' decision, led Didi through a dark journey that included cycles of running away. After being date raped in college, Didi ran away again and joined the army. After serving on active duty for four years, she returned home to a collateral divorce after eighteen years of marriage.

Ever victorious, Didi returned to college, enrolling at UNC Wilmington, for which, among many achievements, she participated in community theater, including playing Sofia in *The Color Purple*, serving as a radio host of *Morning Coffee with Diva* on Coast 97.3, and serving as Creative Coordinator over UNCW's premier all-female spoken word group, *SISTAHS* (Sisters Inspiring Souls to Attain Higher Success). It was at UNCW where Didi and I first met, having both been students and spoken word artists performing on campus at poetry slam contests. I invited Didi to join *SISTAHS*, which was a group that I had founded in the fall of 2012 out of my newfound love for performance poetry.



Apart from becoming the Creative Coordinator of *SISTAHS*, Didi became the mother of *SISTAHS*, always dropping gems with us during our meetings and even during our intimate Sunday brunch gatherings, which is where I ate shrimp and grits for the first time—a delicious entrée that Didi cooked. Didi was always transparent with us, often sharing her life story, from the pain to the purpose. She always pointed to God as her source of resilience and her benchmark for living an honest, truthful life. Then an ordained minister, Didi often addressed her frustration with church members who showed up on Sundays in a façade rather than being real about their struggles: an issue that still

circulates in conversations today among both church members who genuinely choose to live a life pleasing to God, Jesus Christ, and members who departed from the church because of a lack of transparency or accountability from the pulpit.

Didi's consistent transparency about her own strengths and weaknesses is what I always admired about her. Her constant encouragement and support of me is another admirable quality that I cherish. I remember shortly before graduation from UNCW in 2014, I was pursuing a career that was very different from the artistic life that I had curated—serendipitously by God's hand—during my four years at UNCW. Didi told me, “All those things that you've done will one day come together.” Years after graduation, I told Didi that she was right, as only within the last four years have I returned to sharing my writing and poetry with the community again.

Didi graduated from UNCW at age 51 with a bachelor's degree in psychology. She later wrote and produced her own one-woman show—*Becoming Diva: Unpacking the Junk in the Trunk*—which highlighted her victories over life's valleys. Continuing to inspire others with her anointing, Didi earned her Master of Divinity from Hood Theological Seminary at age 57 and is in the process of obtaining her Doctorate in Ministry from HTS.

Today, Didi also runs *Diva2de Ministries*, a faith-based non-profit for women who have experienced similar adversity to hers. *Diva2de* empowers women to reclaim their lives with continual support, practical resources, and a compassionate network. Some of those resources offered include basic household goods, groceries, and self-help seminars, such as resume writing, computer skills, and financial planning.

Regardless of each woman's present challenges, *Diva2de Ministries'* mission is “fostering resilience, promoting healing, and nurturing a sisterhood where every woman knows there is hope, help, and healing, enabling them to thrive.” Most importantly, *Diva2de* strives to promote healing and foster sisterhood among the women who participate in the ministry.

When asked what her greatest accomplishment is, Didi says, “surviving”: “A lot of women who go through some of what I've been through end up addicted, imprisoned, or sometimes with severe mental health issues. It is nothing more than the grace of God that I am alive and sane. This is the reason I started *Diva2de Ministries*. I want to help women who find themselves at the intersection of giving up or keeping on going with the resources to make it to the next intersection. Other women helped me. I want to be that for other women.”

You can find more information about Rev. Dierdre' R. Parker at [www.diva2de.com](http://www.diva2de.com).

THE STAR OF ZION

Stay in touch. Stay up to date

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

THE OFFICIAL VOICE OF THE A.M.E. ZION CHURCH FOR OVER 145 YEARS



VISIT:

[HTTPS://MEDIA.STAROFZION.ORG/STAR-OF-ZION-SUBSCRIPTION-CHECKOUT](https://media.starofzion.org/star-of-zion-subscription-checkout)



# Tiny Desk, Big Music

By Rev. Dierdre' Parker, Entertainment and The Arts Editor

An NPR (National Public Radio) Tiny Desk Concert is a huge deal! So is a Grammy Nomination. LaKecia Benjamin has three nominations and a Tiny Desk Concert. She is also one of the few women leading her own Jazz Quartet. This will ensure the coveted golden Gramophone won't elude her long. You see, Lakecia Benjamin is a worship leader.

What?

Yes. LaKecia Benjamin is a worship leader. She takes her love of God and the gift God gave her and synergizes it into a beautiful worship experience. The audience is taken on a journey that fuses spoken word, testimony, and deliverance, along with praise and worship services and infused with Jazz, and the ride is at times laid back and other times "toe-tappin' hand slappin' good"! There are moments when we can feel glossolalia in the static tongue of her instrument. In one piece, Mercy, the audience was reminded that to everything, there is a season with the refrain "let go, let flow" from her album Phoenix.



Her Tiny Desk appearance in gold and white reminded me of Earth, Wind, and Fire. She embodies those elements. Her feet are securely planted on the earth, and when she picks up that woodwind, it is FIRE! Although that was so corny you could probably shuck it, it was also accurate.

In her music, you can feel that she has been influenced by multiple genres—everything from Hip-Hop to Bluegrass and everyone from Prince to Trane. Her music has textures and layers that almost make you think you understand what it feels like to be a synesthete because you can smell and taste the music. Her energy on stage is contagious, and she quickly got the audience involved in her performance. What stood out about Benjamin for me is that, at her core, there is a quiet stillness that can only come from spending time in the Secret Place



with God.

I watched a little of the Tiny Desk Concert and a few other videos to get a feel for who Benjamin is. It becomes evident when you meet her in person (virtually) that she is a down-to-earth, confident young woman who loves the Lord but doesn't take herself too seriously. One thing she does take seriously is her love of music and her passion for the gift. I learned of LaKecia from our Editor-in-Chief, Darin Kent, who knew her from the music ministry of Greater Centennial

when they both attended.

At this point in the article, you, the astute reader, are probably wondering why this article does not include a build-up with early childhood up to the teen years and then the wonderful things that LaKecia is doing now. I will tell you why. I want you to go to AMEZ.TV or the Star of Zion Facebook page and watch the interview for yourself I don't want to spoil the experience for you by telling you in this article everything you're going to see in the video. So, after you finish reading this article and your interest has been fully piqued, go for the interview. If you have not subscribed, do that first. Then, watch the interview. LaKecia is one of us and a member of The A.M.E. Zion Church. Once you watch the interview this article refers to, watch the Tiny Desk Concert. You'll be glad you did.

We at The Star of Zion wish that LaKecia will experience all that God has in store for her and multiple Grammys!

For more information on LaKecia Benjamin and her music, visit her website: <https://lakeciabenjamin.com/>



New  
**BOOK!**



"Nuggets and..." is a treasure trove of inspired thoughts, this book brims with bite-sized wisdom encapsulated in easily digestible quotes.

Florence D. J. Clarke's collection is a luminous beacon for hearts seeking encouragement, resolve, and a swift lift in motivation. Whether you're navigating life's twists or simply craving a burst of inspiration, this gem awaits, ready to illuminate your path.



Rev. Florence D.J. Clarke, Author

For signed copies, please contact Rev. Florence Clarke at [rev\\_f\\_clarke@yahoo.com](mailto:rev_f_clarke@yahoo.com).

ORDER YOURS TODAY

Barnes & Noble



ORDER YOURS TODAY

Amazon





# Devotional Power

By Rev. Dierdre' Parker, Entertainment and The Arts Editor  
The Acolytes of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

Maybe you've seen him as the charismatic host of Star of Zion's StarCast. Perhaps you saw him as the host of Zion's Finest. Maybe you've seen him as a pastor, mentor, or acolyte director, but you've seen him; Rev. Dr. R.J. Chandler is a familiar face in our beloved Zion.



A.M.E. Zion, from birth, Dr. Chandler became an acolyte at the age of eight under the Rev. Dr. Lawrence Brown Sr. An Acolyte is entrusted and commissioned with lighting and extinguishing the altar candles. This sacred practice acknowledges God's presence in worship. At the pastor's discretion, acolytes are also given the opportunity to serve clergy within the altar area and lead formal processions and recessions.

As Dr. Chandler grew up, he took every opportunity to learn about different departments within the church. No doubt, serving in the chancel area and having access to the wisdom of the sages of the church strengthened a young Chandler and gave him a different perspective of what intimacy with God looks like. For Dr. Chandler, this provided the structure and discipline it takes to succeed in any field of study/career. And Dr. Chandler has done just that. I was given the opportunity to speak with Dr. Chandler to discuss his book: "The Power of Intentional Intimacy: 21 Days of Prayer & Fasting Will Make a Difference." For Dr. Chandler, this is not just an excellent biblical principle; it is a way of life, as this book evidences.

Fasting and Prayer are the keys by which Christians unlock the doors of revelation from God. Fasting helps us get ready for God's arrival, His presence, and manifestation. It puts us in a mindset to clean up what we can in our lives and put forth our best effort in presenting ourselves empty so that God can fill us. This devotional supports spiritual development as one grows closer to God through fasting and prayer.

Dr. Chandler is the quintessential example of how a child, trained up in the way that he should go, will not depart when he is older. Over the years, Dr. Chandler has matriculated through the various youth organizations in the church, learning, serving, and growing along the way. The training that Dr. Chandler received at a young age is undoubtedly the foundation of his desire to be intentionally intimate with God. The instructor, Dr. Chandler, allows us to take 21 days and begin the practice of intentional intimacy that will undoubtedly lead to a life impactful through the Power of God.

*The power of intentional intimacy 21 days of prayer and fasting will make a difference and is a welcomed contribution to the resources*

*available to Christians who authentically seek deeper intimacy with God in this culture of complacency and superficiality. Dr. R. J. Chandler Sr. invites us to go beyond a casual self-centered spirituality and yearn to grow in our knowledge of Jesus and ourselves.*

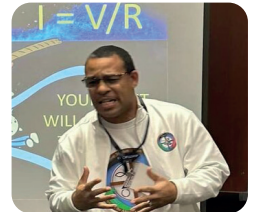
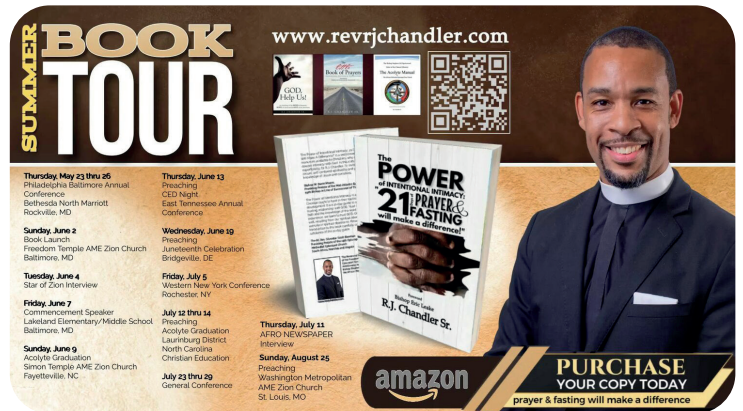
- Bishop W. Darin Moore  
Presiding Prelate, Mid-Atlantic Episcopal District  
99th Bishop in Line of Succession of The A.M.E. Zion Church

*The Power of Intentional Intimacy is a necessary book that every Christian ought to have in their toolbox for spiritual growth and development. It is a 21-day guide to a more profound and trusting relationship with God. Trust is a two-way enterprise. By faith and the knowledge of the word of God through life experience, we learn to trust God. God desires to trust us as well resulting from our spiritual obedience. Fasting is an exercise in spiritual obedience. Please read the foreword and introduction to this book carefully, or you will miss the whole substance of the 21-day guide.*

- The Right Reverend Sylvester Scott Beaman  
Presiding Prelate of the 15th Episcopal District  
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church  
South Africa, Namibia, and Angola

Zion, let us purchase this book not just to support Dr. Chandler but so that we, too, can begin the journey of becoming intentionally intimate with God.

For more information or to purchase the book [www.revjrjchandler.com](http://www.revjrjchandler.com)



## Nicole McLauchlin Live!

By Star of Zion

We are excited to announce the Live Recording of First Lady Nicole McLauchlin, wife of the Rev. Dr. Brandon D. McLauchlin in March of 2025. This endeavor aligns impeccably with her profound passion for music and her deep-rooted spiritual values. So many people in the community had the distinct pleasure of collaborating with Nicole on numerous occasions. Throughout these collaborations, Nicole's dedication to music education and her passion for integrating spiritual depth into her music have been consistently evident.



Nicole's background is as impressive as it is relevant. A graduate of Methodist University with a degree in Music Education, followed by a Master's Degree focusing on voice from the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, and a subsequent Master's in School Leadership from Long Island University, her educational journey speaks volumes of her commitment to her craft and leadership. Over her 16-year tenure as a music educator, Nicole has influenced a wide range of students, from PreK to the graduate level, instilling not only knowl-

edge but also a passion for music. Her recent venture into recording, marked by the release of her first Christmas single, "The First Noel," in December 2023, showcases her vocal talent and her ability to connect with a wider audience through her music.

Nicole's plans for a live recording are a testament to her evolving artistry and dedication to sharing her talents on a grander scale. Nicole's love for God is evident in her music and her interactions with those around her. It is this spiritual connection that imbues her music with an emotional depth that resonates with listeners, adding a layer of profound impact to her performance. Her ability to intertwine her spirituality with her musical expertise allows her to create an immersive experience that is both uplifting and inspiring. Her exceptional skills, coupled with her unwavering dedication and spiritual insight, shows that she is called for such a time as this. Her gift and anointing will not only enhance the experience for all involved but also leave an indelible mark on the hearts and minds of her audience.

There are several ways you can partner with Nicole as she is in the process of this project. If you are a songwriter and would like to submit a song to be considered for the project, you may submit to the email address below. Would you like to be a sponsor and donate to this live recording? If so, you may also reach out to her using the email for further information on how to be a blessing.

Contact Info: [nicolemaclive2025@gmail.com](mailto:nicolemaclive2025@gmail.com).





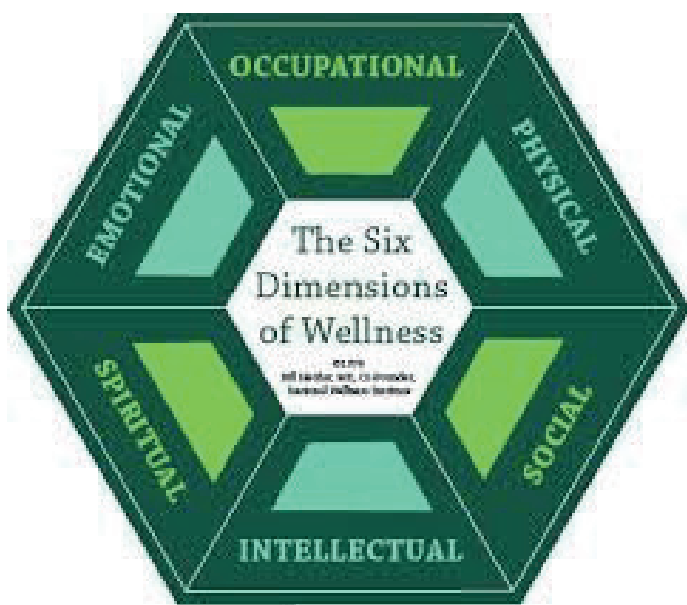
Mr. Daman De Leon  
Health and Wellness Editor  
Health\_Wellness@StarOfZion.org

# SELF Care: Making the best version of YOU

By Daman De Leon, Zion Spotlight Health and Wellness Editor

Alcohol, Communication & Assertiveness, Diet & Body Image, Mindfulness, Nature, Nutrition, Sleep, etc. These are all topics that pertain to health and self-care. July is Social Wellness Month, which promotes a theme for us as individuals to prioritize our social wellness. This is done through forming healthy relationships, strong social networks, and support systems, all of which are vital to our overall well-being. The biblical perspective on health & wellness is that the body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

The National Wellness Institute promotes what is called the *Six Dimensions of Wellness*. They are the following: Emotional, Occupational, Physical, Social, Intellectual, and Spiritual. What is Wellness? Throughout time and across cultures, the term “wellness” has been defined and applied in many ways. The National Wellness Institute encapsulates these interpretations by acknowledging that:



- Wellness is a conscious, self-directed, and evolving process of achieving one’s full potential.
- Wellness encompasses lifestyle, mental and spiritual well-being, and the environment.
- Wellness is positive, affirming, and contributes to living a long and healthy life.
- Wellness is multicultural and holistic, involving multiple dimensions.

Social wellness, or well-being, can be defined as one’s ability to effectively interact with those around him/herself and to create a support system that includes friends, family, neighbors, co-workers, etc.

Maintaining an optimal level of social wellness allows one to build healthy relationships with others. Social wellness also fosters a connection with those individuals, while contributing to one’s sense of belonging – which is important for optimal wellness. Some positive social wellness habits include the following:

- Take care of yourself. To help manage your stress, exercise, eat healthy, get enough sleep, and pursue self-care activities/hobbies
- Make connections
- Join social groups with like-minded people with whom you share common interests
- Consider adopting a pet
- Maintain Connections
- Seek help when you need it

Becoming engaged with other people in your community. Valuing diversity and treating others with respect. The ability to create boundaries within relationship boundaries that encourage communication, trust and conflict management. All are examples of good social wellness.

Improving health and wellness in your community is a noble endeavor that can have a lasting impact on the well-being of individuals and families. Here are six ways you can contribute to creating a healthier

community:

- Promote Health Education and Awareness:
  - Organize workshops, seminars, and community events to educate residents about healthy lifestyle choices, preventive care, and disease management.
  - Collaborate with local schools, community centers, and healthcare providers to develop educational programs on nutrition, exercise, mental health, and other relevant topics.
  - Distribute informational materials and resources to raise awareness about common health issues and available support services.
- Establish Community Gardens:
  - Advocate for and create community gardens where residents can grow their own fruits, vegetables, and herbs.
  - Provide education on organic gardening practices, sustainable agriculture, and the benefits of consuming fresh, locally grown produce.
  - Encourage community members to participate in gardening activities, fostering a sense of connection, physical activity, and access to nutritious food.
- Support Physical Activity Initiatives:
  - Collaborate with local recreational facilities, schools, and sports clubs to promote physical activity programs for all age groups.
  - Organize community walks, runs, or bike rides to raise awareness about the importance of regular exercise.
  - Advocate for the development and maintenance of parks, playgrounds, and walking trails to provide accessible spaces for physical activity.
- Address Food Insecurity:
  - Establish partnerships with local food banks, shelters, and community organizations to address food insecurity and provide nutritious meals to those in need.
  - Advocate for policies that support access to affordable, healthy food options in underserved areas.
  - Facilitate food drives and volunteer initiatives to collect and distribute food to vulnerable populations.
- Foster Mental Health Support:
  - Collaborate with mental health professionals, counsellors, and organizations to offer mental health support services to community members.
  - Organize workshops and support groups to address mental health challenges, stress management, and promote overall well-being.
  - Raise awareness about the importance of mental health through campaigns, educational resources, and community events.
- Engage in Policy Advocacy:
  - Advocate for policies that promote health and wellness in your community, such as smoke-free ordinances, safe walking and biking infrastructure, and access to healthcare services.
  - Collaborate with local government officials, community leaders, and advocacy groups to drive policy changes that prioritize public health.
  - Stay informed about proposed policies and regulations related to health and wellness, and actively participate in public hearings, meetings, and decision-making processes.

Remember, improving health and wellness in your community is a collective effort. By engaging with others, leveraging local resources, and promoting a culture of well-being, you can contribute to creating a healthier, happier community for all.



# Celebrating Minority Mental Health Month

By Daman De Leon, Health & Wellness Editor



Let's face it, it can be tough existing as a racial minority here in America. From 1619 to the present day, peoples of African Descent throughout the Diaspora have faced insurmountable challenges that no other ethnicity in the history of mankind have faced. Relying on ingenuity, unity, survival instincts and faith, have all the deciding factor between survival or genocidal extinction. Now there have been other groups who have faced oppression on a smaller but different scale, but the end result have all been similar: a profound psychological effect has resulted for generations that followed, and generations that are to come.

July is BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) Mental Health Awareness Month. Formally known as the Bebe Moore Campbell National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month. The CDC observes National Minority Mental



Health Awareness Month each July, and the purpose is to raise awareness of the challenges that affect the mental health of racial and ethnic minority groups. Mental Health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, act, handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is just as important as physical health throughout our lives. Mental health issues are common – more than 1 in 5 US adults live with a mental illness. Mental health issues are treatable and often preventable, but not everyone has access to the resources they need. People in some racial and ethnic minority groups face more challenges than others getting mental health care.

Many people from racial and ethnic minority groups have difficulty getting mental health care. This can be due to many different reasons, such as cost or not having adequate health insurance coverage. It may also be challenging to find providers from one's racial or ethnic group. Stigma or negative ideas about mental health care may also prevent people from seeking services. Other things in our environment can impact mental health and emotional well-being. For example, experiencing or witnessing racial discrimination or racial violence can cause stress and *racial trauma*. Poverty (or having low income) may limit access to mental health care. Poverty can also cause stress and may lead to mental health issues. Everyone benefits when people from racial and ethnic minority groups can thrive. We all have a role to play in promoting **Health Equity**.

**Individuals** can learn more about mental health. Take the time to learn

about coping with stress and responding to loss. Share information on mental health. Educate oneself about *Implicit Bias*. Implicit biases are unintentional attitudes, behaviors, and actions that are in favor of or against one person or group. Learn about *Microaggressions*. Microaggressions are everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults. They communicate negative messages to people because of their membership in a marginalized group. Microaggressions can be intentional or unintentional.

**Public Health Organizations** Ensure mental health programming incorporates perspectives, ideas, and decision-making from people from racial and ethnic minority groups at all stages of programming – from planning to evaluation. Research the data on mental health, as well as historical, social, and cultural factors impacting racial and ethnic minority groups, when developing organizational priorities and programs. Partner with other organizations to fill gaps in expertise and representation from racial and ethnic minority groups. Monitor and evaluate mental health programs for progress towards health equity and elimination of racial disparities. Incorporate and develop practices to reduce racism in programs and policies to improve mental health equity.

**Health Educators and Communicators** can take active steps to increase the reach of mental health information to racial and ethnic minority groups. This should include using culturally responsive communication outlets. Verify and promote free and low-cost mental health resources through diverse channels.

**Healthcare Systems** can screen patients for depression and other mental health conditions and refer patients to accessible mental health care services. Make mental health educational materials available to all patients during their appointments, via patient portals, and in waiting rooms. Make efforts to recruit mental healthcare providers that reflect the race and ethnicity of the populations served.

**States and Communities** can Expand community-based mental health care, including culturally responsive mental health services at low or no cost for youth and adults. Evaluate policies for their differential impact on social determinants of health. When needed, modify these policies or create new policies that ensure equitable access to resources for all people. Evaluate policies for their potential to reinforce mental health stigma and revise or remove stigmatizing policies. Encourage community and faith-based leaders to discuss mental health issues to help reduce stigma. Make efforts to ensure decision-makers reflect the races and ethnicities of the populations they serve.



## References

- Adler NE, Newman K. 2002. *Socioeconomic disparities in health: Pathways and policies*. *Health Affairs* 21(2):60-76.
- National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2004. *Understanding Racial and Ethnic Differences in Health in Late Life: A Research Agenda*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/11036>.
- Anderson NB, Armstead CA. 1995. *Toward understanding the association of socioeconomic status and health: A new challenge for the biopsychosocial approach*. *Psychosomatic Medicine* 57:213-225.
- National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2004. *Understanding Racial and Ethnic Differences in Health in Late Life: A Research Agenda*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/11036>.



# General Conference Health Fair

The Health Ministry of The A.M.E. Zion Church encourages all General Conference attendees to participate in the Health Fair on Friday, July 26, 2024. Delegates, Candidates, Family members of Candidates, Laity, guests, and the community are all invited to attend.

**There will be:**

FREE Health Screenings

Free Giveaways and Door Prizes

Health Education opportunities – Talk to specialists about heart health, kidney disease, lupus, mental health and more.

Live Healthy Cooking Demonstrations

Live exercise Demonstrations

Red Cross – Blood Drive

**Participating National Organizations include:**

- Tiger Lily Foundation
- St. Jude Cancer Prevention
- National Minority Quality Forum
- Glaxo Smith Kline, Inc.
- Sanofi, Inc.
- Good Health Wins,
- National Council Negro Women

**Participating Local Organization include:**

- Greensboro Local Health Department
- Village Heartbeat, Inc.
- Sisters Network Greensboro, NC
- Cone Health Mobile Screening Van
- Temple Builders Fitness
- Esteem Total Transformation
- Equity Builders

52ND QUADRENNIAL GENERAL CONFERENCE, GREENSBORO, NC

HEALTH MINISTRY ZION THE A.M.E. ZION CHURCH

PRESCRIBING POSITIVITY

HEALTH & WELLNESS FAIR

FRIDAY, JULY 26, 2024

10 AM - 4 PM EST

MORNING MOTION

JUMPSTART YOUR DAY WITH EXERCISE

DAILY EXERCISE ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING CHAIR YOGA, GROUP WALKS, AND MUCH MORE

THURSDAY, JULY 25, 2024 - SATURDAY JULY 27, 2024 7 AM - 7:45 AM EST



# AIM HIGH WITH HARRIS IN 2024

## Accountability • Integrity • Ministry Focus



I am The Reverend Keith I. Harris, candidate for Bishop in the A.M.E. Zion Church. My vision for our church can best be effectualized through this simple, yet powerful mantra: “A.I.M. High with Harris”, representing Accountability, Integrity, and Ministry Focus.



Lastly, “Ministry Focus” is essential. The heart of our church lies in the effective ministry that we provide to our members and the broader community. I am committed to fulfilling the mission mandate as established by Christ through the spreading of love, compassion, and benevolence to all those in need. I will work tirelessly to empower and equip our ministers and laity to become effective ambassadors of the Lord Jesus Christ.

My campaign mantra, “A.I.M. High with Harris”, embodies my commitment to elevate the standards of service and leadership within our church community.

I am urging you to join me and A.I.M. High for our beloved Zion.

Throughout my ministry, I have consistently demonstrated a dedication to accountability, integrity, and authentic ministry. I believe that by Aiming High with Harris we can collectively reach new heights, realize sustained growth and ensure the posterity of our beloved African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

First and foremost, “Accountability” is the foundation of effective leadership. As a Bishop, I vow to be transparent and amenable to each one of you. We should be accountable for our actions, decisions, and the impact they have on the entire church community. I believe that by promoting accountability, we can foster trust, unity, and a sense of responsibility that will empower our church to flourish.

Delegates, as you prayerfully contemplate the future of the A.M.E. Zion Church, I urge you to look at one who will be accountable to you and who has the integrity and passion for doing real ministry. I sincerely solicit your prayers, support, and vote at the seat of the 52nd Quadrennial Session of the General Conference.

Secondly, “Integrity” is a non-negotiable aspect of Christian character. With unwavering honesty, moral principles, and ethical conduct, I promise to lead by example. I understand the importance of upholding the values and teachings of our faith. We must ensure that integrity permeates every aspect of our church. Together, we will build a community where trust is paramount and integrity shines through in all of our endeavors.

So, remember to “A.I.M. High with Harris”, and take our church to new heights. Thank you, and God bless you all!

Blessings, *Rev. Keith I. Harris*



Presiding Elder Keith Harris is married to his childhood sweetheart and best friend Tawanda Denise Harris. They are the blessed parents

of two adult daughters Keandra A. Harris and Kiarra D. Harris.



**THE REVEREND KEITH INGRAM HARRIS**

is a native of Brooklyn, New York. He has an undergraduate degree from North Carolina Central University in Durham, North Carolina. He also holds a Masters of Divinity degree from the Hood Theological Seminary in Salisbury, North Carolina.

Reverend Harris' ministerial career includes the following achievements:

**CONNECTIONAL LEADERSHIP**

- Connectional Budget Board, 1996-2008
- Home Missions Board, 1992-96
- Restructuring Commission
- Pan Methodist Commission
- Young Adult in Christian Ministry-Steering Committee
- National Christian Youth Council-Eastern Region
- Attended The World, Methodist Conference Brighton, England, 2001; Seoul Korea, 2006; Houston Texas, 2016

**CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP**

**NEW YORK CONFERENCE**

- Admissions Committee
- Trustee Board
- Finance Committee
- Holy Orders
- Conference Examiners
- Budget and Finance
- Camp M. Ardelle Shaw Committee

**CALIFORNIA CONFERENCE**

- Treasurer
- Chairman, Admissions Committee
- Chairman, Budget Committee
- Chairman, Redevelopment Fund
- Member: Finance Committee; Admissions; Conference Studies Holy Orders



2023 LID Global Missions Sunday – Bishop Dogbe, Speaker



2023 LID Global Missions Sunday with Bishop Dogbe, Speaker



Darin Moore (speaker) at LID Maundy Thursday 2024



Rev. Keith Harris in Ghana, Africa with Bishop Dogbe\_2023



2024 Connectional Lay Council Convocation – Episcopal Candidates Forum



LID Annual Summer Cookout\_2024



Rev. Keith Harris enjoying LID "Men at The Movies" \_2023



Rev. Keith Harris – St. John A.M.E. Zion Church (TN)



Rev. Keith Harris Honoring Retiring (l-r) Emeritus Buds of Promise Superintendent Bernice Roberts and Emeritus District President Betty Ford\_Dec 2023

Reverend Keith Harris pastoral leadership began at the Dunston Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church in Polkton, North Carolina in 1989. In 1990, he was appointed to the historic Greater Cooper A.M.E. Zion Church in Oakland, California. During his administration at established an outreach ministry that fed hundreds of persons in the West Oakland community. In 1995 he was appointed to the historic First A.M.E. Zion Church of San Francisco, California. Here he led the congregation in making significant and major renovations. In 1996, he hosted the denomination's Bicentennial Parade on the West Coast. In 1998 he was appointed to the Kyles Temple A.M.E. Zion Church in Sacramento, California, where he was able to significantly reduce the debt on that congregation, and new ministries were formed to accommodate the youth, young adults and the seniors of the congregation. Rev. Harris established the fresh fruit and vegetable give-away after service, which led to the farm to table experience in the City of Sacramento.

In 2003, he was assigned to the historic Jackson Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church in Hempstead, New York. As pastor of this congregation, Jackson Memorial was able to make financial investments to help secure their future. He was able to establish an outreach ministry to feed hundreds of people weekly. Due to his progressive leadership, Rev. Harris was sought to serve on several community boards and organizations, a community task force and commissions.

Since 2014, Rev. Keith has been dedicated to serving the Long Island District in a loving and impactful way. Through his work, he has been able to strengthen the Long Island District by fostering relationships, empowering the youth, providing support for men and women, and organizing meaningful community events. He successfully established a meaningful partnership with the A.M.E. Church Jamaica Long Island District, by fostering unity and collaboration between the two sister denominations. His ministry is dedicated to creating a loving and inclusive community.



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



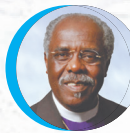
**Bishop Joseph Johnson (Retired)**  
 45 Awesome Ridge, Garner, NC 27529  
 Ph: (704) 877-9646  
 Email: djjj85@windstream.net



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



**8. Bishop George Dwayne Crenshaw**  
**ALABAMA-FLORIDA EPISCOPAL DISTRICT**  
 3605 Sandy Plains Road, Suite 240-238, Marietta GA 30066  
 Ph: 770-633-4801 Office: 334-269-6365; Email: bishopgdcrenshaw@aol.com  
 District includes: Alabama, North Alabama, South Alabama, Central Alabama, West Alabama; Cahaba, Florida, S. Florida, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, North Kivu, South Kivu  
 Mrs. Laurena Crenshaw, Missionary Supervisor



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



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



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



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



**GENERAL OFFICERS**

**Rev. Dr. J. Elvin Sadler, General Secretary-Auditor**  
P.O. Box 26770, Charlotte, NC 28221-6770  
Ph: (704) 599-4630; Fax: (704) 688-2549; Email: jesadler@amezion.org

**Rev. Al Hamilton, Chief Financial Officer, Department of Finance**  
P.O. Box 26770, Charlotte, NC 28221-6770  
Ph: (704) 599-4630; Fax: (704) 919-5580; Email: alchamilton@amezion.org

**Rev. Julius Walls, Chief Operating Officer / Business Manager**  
P.O. Box 26770, Charlotte, NC 28221-6770  
Ph: (704) 599-4630; Fax: (704) 688-2541; Email: jwalls@amezion.org

**Mr. Darin Kent, Chief Communications Officer  
Editor, The Star of Zion**  
P.O. Box 26770, Charlotte, NC 28221-6770  
Ph: (704) 599-4630, ext. 2577; Email: cco@amezion.org

**Rev. Dr. D.B. Cannon,  
Dept. of Global Missions Office & Missionary Seer Editor**  
P.O. Box 26770, Charlotte, NC 28221-6770 Ph: (704) 599-4630;  
Email: dbcannon@amezion.org For articles/info: missionaryseer@amezion.org

**Rev. Patrick Barrett, Secretary-Treasurer,  
Christian Education Department**  
P.O. Box 26770, Charlotte, NC 28221-6770  
Ph: (704) 599-4630 Fax: (704) 688-2550; Email: pbarrett@amezion.org

**Dr. Eleazar Merriweather, Director  
Dept. of Church Growth & Development**  
3225 Sugar Creek Road, Charlotte, NC 28269  
Ph: (704) 599-4630; Fax: (704) 688-2547;  
Email: emerriw721@amezion.org

**Rev. Dr. George E. McKain, Director of Public Affairs & Social Concerns**  
P.O. Box 26770, Charlotte, NC 28221-6770  
Ph: (704) 599-4630, ext. 316; Email: GEMcKain2@amezion.org

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

**FORMER GENERAL OFFICERS**

**Dr. Raymon Hunt**  
**Dr. W. Robert Johnson, III**  
**Dr. Kermit DeGraffenreidt**  
**Dr. Mary Love**  
**Dr. Shirley Welch**  
**Dr. Otis McMillian**  
**Dr. Addie Lisby**  
**Rev. Dr. Gregory R. Smith**  
**Dr. Brenda L. G. Smith**  
**Mr. Herbert Watkins**  
**Dr. William McKenith**  
**Rev. Dr. Terrence J. Jones**

**JUDICIAL COUNCIL**

**The Hon. Adele M. Riley, President**  
625 Ellsworth Drive, Trotwood, Ohio 45426  
Email: mariley310@yahoo.com

**Rev. Dr. Reid R. White, Jr., Vice-President**  
6608 Cartwright Drive, Columbia, SC 29223

**Rev. Dr. Lisa T. McDow, Esq., Clerk**  
Post Office Box 2541, Wilmington, NC 28402-2541

**Rev. Dr. Derrick R. Anderson, Chaplain**  
4650 Shookstown Drive, Kannapolis, NC 28081

**Rev. Dr. Richard Austin, Esq.**  
1415 Earlham Drive, Dayton, OH 45406

**Dr. Marsha C. Grayson, Esq.**  
88 Roberts Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219

**Dr. William Stokes**  
5821 West Tree Drive, Anchorage, AK 99507

**Rev. Dr. Joseph A. Tolbert, Sr., Esq.**  
104 Black Avenue, Bessemer, Alabama 35020

**Dr. Yvonne A. Tracey**  
502 Ferndale Drive, Salisbury, NC 28147

**CONNECTIONAL LAY COUNCIL**

**Mr. Joseph King Davis, President**  
1018 Southpoint Crossing Durham, NC  
Ph: (919) 236-3740; Email: jkdjr1911@frontier.com

**Mrs. Leondras "Lele" Davis, 1st Vice President**  
419 Eberle Way, Matthews, NC 28105  
Ph: (704) 321-7022; Cell: (704) 562-0402; Email: CLC.FVP@gmail.com

**Mrs. Connie Bell Wright, 2nd Vice President**  
822 Polk Street, Charlotte, NC 28206  
Cell: (704) 724-2759; Email: CLC2VP.Conniewright@gmail.com

**Mrs. Mireille Landrum, Recording Secretary**  
506 Lincoln Crest Cir., Austell, GA 30106  
Ph: (678) 809-5253; Cell: (678) 420-8919; Email: clcsecretary11@gmail.com

**Mr. Ned D. Highsmith, Financial Secretary**  
125 Kenneth Carter Rd, Clinton, NC 28328; Ph: (910) 592-4294; Cell: (910) 590-9284; Email: clcfiancalsecretary@aol.com

**Mrs. Cynthia White, Treasurer**  
1257 W. 27th, Norfolk, VA 23508  
Ph: (757) 235-2475; Email: clctreasurer11@aol.com

**Mr. Jerry McCombs, Chaplain**  
P. O Box 1444Newton, NC 28658  
Ph: (828) 310-6918; Email: clcchaplain21@charter.net

**Mrs. Lula K. Howard, President Emeritus**

4009 Landside Dr., Louisville, KY 40220  
Cell: (502) 494-9527; Email: lmkhoward330@gmail.com

**WOMEN'S HOME & OVERSEAS  
MISSIONARY SOCIETY**

**Mrs. Sandra B. Crowder, International President**  
100 East Ocean View, Suite 1110, Norfolk, VA 23503  
PH: 757-761-6280 Email: sandracrowder@yahoo.com

**Dr. Peggy Lindsey-Owens, First Vice President**  
503 McLean Street, Raeford, NC 28376 Ph: 910-875-5803;  
Email: mspeggys@earthlink.net

**Rev. Patricia "Patty" Surratt-Smith, Second Vice President**  
PO Box 1424, Shelby, NC 28151 Ph: 704-281-1544;  
Email: ladypattysmith@gmail.com

**Mrs. Rosetta J. Dunham, Executive Director**  
P.O. Box 26846, Charlotte, NC 28221-6846  
Email: rodunham@amezion.org

**Mrs. Effie B. Woodard, Recording Secretary**  
108 Effie Lane/PO Box 662, Broadway, NC 27505 Cell: 919-356-6608;  
Email: effiebwoodard@gmail.com

**Ms. Verdelle Cunningham, Treasurer**  
1 Dally Road, Unit 208, Hillsborough, NJ 08844  
Ph: (917) 742-5565; Email: oliver1447@att.net

**Ms. Karlease M. Smalls, Connectional Coordinator of YAMS**  
1436 McBeth Drive, Kannapolis, NC 28038  
Ph: (H) 704-298-0487; (C) 917-371-3464 Email: karleasesmalls@yahoo.com

**Ms. Melva Polk Wright, Connectional Secretary, Youth Missionary Society**  
438 Parkview Court, Unit C, Salisbury, MD 21804  
Ph: (443) 880-5728; Email: principalmelva1960@gmail.com

**Mrs. April C. Davis, Connectional Superintendent, Buds of Promise**  
9233 Mountain Aire Circle, Charlotte, NC 28214; Home: 704-394-0577; Cell:  
980-298-0298; Email: aprilDavisforbuds@yahoo.com

**Mrs. Jo-Ann Monroe, Connectional Secretary, Bureau of Supply**  
40 East Sidney Ave., #12B, Mt. Vernon, NY 10550  
Ph: 914-224-7621; Email: jom4supply@gmail.com

**Mrs. Joy Williamson Foster, Connectional Chairman, Life Members Council**  
229 Academy Lane, Middletown, DE 19709  
Ph: 302-563-0222; Email: mailto:Joy2023LM@gmail.com

**Ms. Camryn Ivey, Director of Communications**  
1610 Cox Road, Matthews, NC 28104  
Ph: 704-907-0208; Email: camrynivey@gmail.com

**INTERNATIONAL MINISTERS  
& LAY ASSOCIATION**

**President, Rev. Dr. Anthony Witherspoon**  
4556 Behlmann Farms Blvd., Florissant, MO 63034  
Ph: (314) 533-0316; Email: anwitherspoon1@gmail.com

**First Vice President, Mrs. Lula K. Howard**  
4009 Landside Dr., Louisville, KY 40220-3080  
Cell: (502) 494-9527; Email: lmkhoward330@gmail.com

**Second Vice President, Rev. Dr. Myrtle Bowen**  
12006 Othman Court, Ft. Washington, MD 20744  
Ph: (301) 237-7755; Email: PEBowen50@gmail.com

**Executive Director, Rev. Dorothy Patterson**  
48 West 17th Street, Bayonne, NJ 07002  
Ph: (551) 206-1499 Email: Kleinz1@aol.com

**Secretary, Ms. Marie Denise Niles**  
718 Decatur Street, Brooklyn, NY 11233; Ph: (917) 373-5237  
Email: mdn929@gmail.com

**Assistant Secretary, Mrs. Carlous E. Tyrance**  
11508 Turnstone Ct., Charlotte, NC 28226  
Ph: (704) 541-5237; Email: ctyrnc@bellsouth.net

**Treasurer, Rev. David T. Miller**  
P.O. Box 6753, Harrisburg, PA 17112  
Ph: (717) 712-4709; Email: revdmillersigma@icloud.com

**Financial Secretary, Rev. Dr. Maurice Harden**  
6101 Clarks Fork Drive, Raleigh, NC 27616  
Ph: (704) 202-8437; Email: pastormharden@gmail.com

**Chaplain, Rev. J. Martin Boulter, Sr.**  
114 Pelham Lane, Fort Mill, SC 29715  
Ph: (803) 448-7100; Email: jmboulter@comporium.net

**DEPARTMENT OF  
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

**Rev. Johngerlyn "Jonse" Young, President,  
President Assembly of Christian Educators (ACE)**  
1663 Coalcar Ct. SE, Kentwood, MI 49508  
Ph: (616) 581-5358; Email: Jyoungace@gmail.com

**Bro. Dion Harris, Chairperson  
Young Adults in Christian Ministries (YACM)**  
Email: Djharris2012@gmail.com

**Mr. Ezekiel A. Perez, President  
Varick International Christian Youth Council (VICYC)**  
Ph: (408) 757-9249 Email: ezekiel1132@gmail.com

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

**COLLEGES**

**Livingstone College, Rev. Dr. Anthony Davis, President**  
701 W. Monroe Street, Salisbury, NC 28144; Ph: (704) 216-6151  
Fax: (704) 216-6217; Internet: www.livingstone.edu

**Clinton College, Dr. Lester A. McCorn, President**  
1029 Crawford Road, Rock Hill, SC 29730  
Ph: (803) 327-7402; Fax: (803) 327-3261

**Hood Theological Seminary, Dr. Vergel Lattimore, President**  
1810 Lutheran Synod Drive, Salisbury, NC 28144  
Ph: (704) 636-7611; Fax: (704) 636-7685

**Lomax-Hannon Junior College, Rev. Wallace L. Noble, President**  
725 Conecuh Street, Greenville, AL 36037; Ph: (334) 382-2115

**A.M.E. Zion University, Rev. Mulbah Gray, President**  
P.O. Box 1960, Monrovia, Liberia, West Africa; Ph: 011-231-261-071

**Hood-Speaks Theological Seminary, Dr. Donald J. Ekpo, President**  
Ndon Ebom, Uruan.LGA, P.O. Box 2503, UYO, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

**INTERNATIONAL PRESIDING ELDERS'  
COUNCIL EXECUTIVE BOARD**

**Rev. Dr. Anthony K.R. Gibson, International President**  
7399 N. Shadeland Avenue, Indianapolis, IN 46250; Ph: (317) 362-5387  
Email: 7thInternationalPresident@gmail.com

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

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

**Rev. Dr. Willa Estell, Executive Secretary**  
414 Smokey Mountain Drive, Maryville, TN 37801  
Ph: (865) 335-7527; Email: we41602@aol.com

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

**Rev. Alonzo Braggs, Recording Secretary**  
38780 Orchid View Place, Apt. 303, Palmdale, California 93550-6526  
Ph: (661) 227-4816 or (910) 262-8382; Email: alonzobraggs@gmail.com

**Rev. Dr. Evalina Huggins, Chaplain**  
3921 23rd Place, Temple Hills, MD 20748; Ph: (301) 980-8793  
Email: Evalina45@gmail.com

**Rev. Dr. Erlinda Dobson, Parliamentarian**  
2920 NC Hwy 55 West, New Bern, NC 28562; Ph: (252) 670-1127  
Email: pedobson@newberndistrict.com

**Rev. Dr. Joel D. Miles, Senior Advisor to President**  
8400 S. Damen Avenue, Chicago, IL 60620; Ph: (773) 405-6375  
Email: revjdmiles@yahoo.com

**Rev. Hanna Broome, Chief Strategist**  
P.O. Box 26181, Fayetteville, NC 28314-2967; Ph: (864) 525-4679  
Email: hrb8792@gmail.com

**Rev. Derrill Blue, Chief Technology Officer**  
39 Warwick Ave, Rochester, NY 14611; Cell: (405) 821-1333  
Fax: (585) 546-1652, Office: (585) 546-5007; Email: derrillblue@gmail.com

**Rev. Rochelle McEntyre, Assistant Recording Secretary**  
702 Whitehead St., Key West, FL 33040. Email: rochellep16@aol.com

**INTERNATIONAL MINISTERS' SPOUSES  
& WIDOW(ERS) FELLOWSHIP**

**Rev. Robin Stitt, International President**  
3705 Rosedown Dr. Matthews, NC 28105;  
Ph: (704) 287-3608; Email: rahbyn10@gmail.com

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Mrs. Bessie Baker, Financial Secretary**  
10653 Stone Bunker Dr. Charlotte, NC 28227  
Ph: 704-545-0115 (H) 704-562-6857 (C); Email: bbake2@bellsouth.net

**Mrs. Marilyn Scurry, Corresponding Secretary**  
822 Purcell Drive Woodruff, SC 29388  
Email: firstladysscurry2016@icloud.com

**Mrs. Syteria Puryear, Newsletter Editor**  
8530 Walden Ridge Drive, Charlotte, NC 28216  
Ph: (704) 900-8084 (H); (704) 957-0385 (C);  
**Sis. Belinda Gibson, Parliamentarian**  
8454 Hidden Meadow Pass McCordsville, IN 46055  
Ph: 317-384-8739; Email: flbrgibson412@gmail.com

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

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

**CHIEFS OF PROTOCOL**

**Rev. Malcolm Byrd, Chief of Protocol**  
60 Peninsula Blvd., Hempstead, NY 11550  
Ph: (516) 483-2724; Email: Alphadubois@hotmail.com

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





**GET READY TO**  
**MOVE**  
**WITH MITCHELL**

**REV. DR. DARAN H. MITCHELL FOR BISHOP 2024**

 Cash App \$mitchell4zion

[www.MovewithMitchell.org](http://www.MovewithMitchell.org)

  @MovewithMitchell2024

P.O. BOX 79035 | GREENSBORO, NC 27417





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

# Economic Data versus Consumer Sentiment

By Dana G. Stilley, Zion Financial Freedom Editor

Recent news reports have indicated that the United States economy is currently quite robust. Data points to a low unemployment rate, and an inflation rate that is slowly waning.

One economic indicator, consumer sentiment, measures the level of optimism that consumers have about their finances and the state of the economy. Although consumer sentiment has been improving slowly, most consumers remain worried about high prices at the grocery store and their long-term financial stability.

In casual conversations over the past several weeks, the discrepancy between improving economic data and lived financial experiences is felt most often when seeking to provide food for one's family. Many friends complained about high prices, especially for eggs, milk, and bread - basic staples for most households. In fact, the price of eggs has risen 50% since the start of the global pandemic in March 2020. Shrinkflation is also on the minds of many. Shrinkflation, the reduction of a product's size or volume per unit while keeping the same cost for consumers, is equivalent to more money out of the consumer's pocket when families require the same volume of food. Designed to help companies manage the rising costs of goods without immediately passing price increases on to consumers, shrinkflation is often incremental. More prone to notice a price increase rather than a size decrease, consumers recognize shrinkflation at varying levels. Over

60% of shoppers perceived the effects of shrinkflation on several products, while only 25% witnessed shrinkflation on a small number of products. Furthermore, once the new sizes are on the shelf, they typically do not go away.



Ongoing concerns about the economy have led consumers to be vigilant about their expenditures, opting to spend on services and experiences versus goods when possible. Results from ConsumerWise research indicated that more people anticipate splurging at a restaurant or bar than planned purchases related to personal care, beauty, jewelry, or apparel.

Successfully navigating through challenging economic times requires planning and flexibility. I encourage everyone to make a budget and do your best to stick to it. Remember, the path to financial freedom is often long and full of hills, bumps, and curves,

<https://www.newsnationnow.com/business/your-money/inflation-grocery-prices-housing/#:~:text=Grocery%20prices%20are%20up%20by,expenses%20are%20up%20by%205.5%25>

<https://economics.td.com/us-disconnect-between-consumer-economic-data>

<https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/consumer-packaged-goods/our-insights/the-state-of-the-us-consumer>

## SPORTS

# Black Excellence in Boston

By Alexis Hutchinson, Sports Editor

The wait is finally over. After 16 long years, the Boston Celtics have once again claimed their throne among NBA champions, closing out the Dallas Mavericks in the 2024 NBA Finals with yet another undeniable performance. This victory marks their record 18th title, breaking a tie with the Los Angeles Lakers for the most in league history.



Boston's latest triumph comes on the 16th anniversary of their last championship win in 2008. This victory is also the 13th championship secured this century by one of the city's Big 4 professional sports franchises. Jaylen Brown, who was instrumental throughout the series, was rightfully voted the NBA Finals MVP.

This championship caps a remarkable postseason where the Celtics went 16-3, finishing with an overall record of 80-21. Their .792 winning percentage is the second-best in team history, trailing only the legendary 1985-86 Celtics squad.

Under the leadership of second-year coach Joe Mazzulla, the Celtics have cemented their status among the all-time greats. At just 35, Mazzulla became the youngest coach since Bill Russell in 1969 to lead a team to a championship. The presence of Russell's widow, Jeannine, and his daughter, Karen, at the TD Garden to witness this historic moment added a special touch to the celebration.

The journey to this championship began with a pivotal trade in 2013 that sent 2008 champions Kevin Garnett and Paul Pierce to Brooklyn, bringing Boston the draft picks that would eventually become Jaylen Brown and Jayson Tatum. These All-Stars have matured into a for-

midable duo, leading a Celtics team known for its prolific three-point shooting and top-tier defense.

Brown and Tatum's synergy was on full display in Game 5 of the Finals, where they combined for 31 points and 11 assists in the first half alone. Their fifth deep playoff run together finally yielded the ultimate prize, with Brown at 27 and Tatum at 26, hinting at a bright future ahead.

This year's Finals also carried a special kind of historical significance, featuring two Black head coaches: Jason Kidd of the Dallas Mavericks and Joe Mazzulla of the Boston Celtics. This milestone marks only the second official pairing of Black head coaches in NBA Finals history, recalling the 1975 showdown between KC Jones and Al Attles, and the 2017 clash between Mike Brown and Tyronn Lue. Notably, Kyrie Irving became the only player to participate in two Finals featuring Black head coaches, having played in the 2017 Finals as well.

Mazzulla's victory is more than just a win on the court; it's a celebration of hope, progress, and the remarkable leadership of Black coaches in the NBA. As the first Black head coach to secure an NBA championship since Tyronn Lue in 2016, Mazzulla's triumph resonates far beyond the game itself.

As the celebrations continue, all eyes are on downtown Boston, where fans partied into the early hours and eagerly anticipate the victory parade. The question now is whether Boston is on the brink of a new dynasty. One thing is certain: we're already excited for next season!



Alexis Hutchinson  
Sports Editor  
Sports@StarofZion.org





# Gayle Helene Tabron

## January 1, 1953 – May 13, 2024



Gayle Helene Tabron, beloved mother, grandmother, sister, and friend, transitioned on May 13th, 2024, at the Levine & Dickson Hospice House at Aldersgate in Charlotte, NC, following a brief illness. Gayle was born on January 1st, 1953, to the late Emma and James Ford in Washington, DC.

Gayle's childhood was spent in Washington, DC and Cleveland, OH where she lived with her maternal grandmother, the late Marion G. Hawkins. She was educated in Catholic schools in both cities and attended Erieview Catholic High School in Cleveland, OH. She relocated back to Washington, DC at the age of 19 and obtained her GED.

She began her career in IT as a key punch operator for Booz Allen and Hamilton. Later becoming a contractor for the federal government, taking a position as Tape Librarian at the Federal Aviation Administration. Her career spanned more than two decades with multiple agencies including the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Defense. She worked in the Pentagon, like her maternal grandmother and was present during the 9/11 terrorist attack.

Though her work was technical, Gayle expressed her creativity through many hobbies that began in childhood, including sewing, painting, decorating, and refinishing furniture. Gayle also developed a passion for gardening and flowers. It was common for her to share her knowledge and love of flowers with friends, and her grandchildren have all been garden helpers. She found solitude and relaxation in a hot bath and a good book.

Maintaining many friendships for several decades, Gayle's many close friends were more like family. Those friendships made up the vil-

lage that supported her in raising her daughters, Nakiya and Ayanna. Friends often joked that Gayle and the girls looked small but ate BIG!

Gayle and the girls joined Trinity AME Zion Church in DC at the encouragement of the late, Jacob and Annie Bigelow, who she regarded as surrogate parents. In 1992, Gayle married and, though not a permanent union, it resulted in the birth of her youngest daughter, Nayo. Gayle was a survivor who worked hard and made many sacrifices to make a comfortable life for her and her girls. In 2005, Gayle relocated to Charlotte to care for her grandmother Marion until her death in 2009. There, she continued to build community, joining Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church and becoming their office assistant for nearly 15 years. Gayle also served on multiple ministries, including Culinary, Flower, and Cultural & Heritage Awareness Weekend.

A true fashionista! Gayle's beauty and style caused her to be sought after as a model in her youth and well into adulthood. Gayle had a style like no other, making trendy hats and mismatched earrings fashionable and high heels look comfortable. She had a beauty that could pull off most hairstyles – long or short. Many wanted to mimic her style but felt they could never look as classy. Gayle had a bright smile, quick wit, and a sense of humor that will be missed.

She was preceded in death by her parents - James Ford & Emma Ford-Collins, and her grandparents - Marion G. Hawkins & Charles Green and Jesse & Alice Ford. She leaves to mourn - her daughters, Nakiya Cohen (Brenda McCrae), Ayanna Scott and Nayo Tabron; siblings - Carlton Ford (Bea), El Collins (Marie), Anita Brown, Maria Collins and Daniel Collins; grandchildren - Aniya Scott, Najiid Scott-McRae, Amara Tabron, Laurice and Christopher McCrae; great-granddaughters - Mila Scott and Kali Brooks and a host of family and close friends.

### WORLD POLITICS

## British Elections Fever and Holy Spirit



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

By Rev. Ronald A. Nathan and Rev. Dr. Derrill Blue

The United Kingdom is in the throes of electioneering and campaigning for a general election scheduled for July 4, 2024. The Rev. Dr. Derrill Blue hopped across the pond from Rochester, New York, and dropped a mighty prophetic word in London, England.



The occasion was the 28<sup>th</sup> annual session of the London District Conference of the London Midland Conference of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, and its theme was 'Growing in the Power of the Holy Spirit.' Presiding Elder Rev. Dr. Aldon Alfred Carson introduced Rev. Dr. Derrill Blue as the visionary leader and Presiding Elder of the Rochester-Syracuse District of the North-Eastern Episcopal District of The A.M.E. Zion Church who came with a word for 'such a time as this.'

The hundred-plus people in the congregation were blown over by the amazing story of how God used the Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church to bring hope and transformation to the underserved community in Rochester, New York. Dr. Blue, the special speaker for the School of the Prophets, had the congregation riveted to their seats as he spoke on the subject of 'growing your church' based on Acts 2: 1-4. He elucidated how spirituality, evangelism, and missions can result in social justice and community empowerment.

The Ransom Pentecostal A.M.E.Z. Church, was the host church for the district conference, located in the gentrified community of Battersea, Wandsworth Southwest London. Its pastor Rev. Dr. Marcus Tillery shared in the breakout session the local church's 50-plus-year history and its deep ties with the local community.

In an atmosphere filled with the electrifying presence of the Holy Spirit the congregation was challenged by Dr. Blue to become a missional church. He went on to say that having prayed the missional church then needed to turn toward their neighborhoods and communities, listen to what is happening among the people, and learn to ask different questions about what God was up to in the neighborhood.



This type of consultation he shared allowed for identifying what God wished to do through the church in the local community. Rev. Blue shared that the church that he pastored in Rochester surveyed their community and found out the community's needs. Through identification with the community, they now represent the needs of the local community at the state and federal levels. Through two initiatives, 'Project Ride' and the 'JRSP' (Job Readiness Success Program), the Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church has been able to receive a grant of US \$1.4 million to continue to provide needed services to the local community.

The conference encouraged them to locate themselves within the history of their local communities and identify the needs of their communities. A question that came from the floor was how do we, with a denominational legacy that celebrates Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, and Alexander Walters, persons whose strong faith led them to political activism, move forward when many of us hold on to a colonial theological legacy that discourages Christian engagement in political action?



The district conference was instructed to let prayer, the Holy Spirit, and the Word of God lead and guide. Rev. Blue reminded the churches that Jesus Christ must be lifted up within the community including spaces and places where the vulnerable inhabit and where power is wielded. The eight churches on the London District were told that they had responsibility to represent and protect members of the community whether they attended our churches or not.

There was a buzz of excitement as the attendees were fired up with new motivations and ideas towards growing their churches. At the concluding prayers, Spirit-filled Christians were challenged to stand up for righteous-

ness and justice wherever their feet may tread even at a time of electioneering in the United Kingdom of Great Britain.

Through Rev. Blue's presentation, it is hoped that there will be an increase in political literacy, voter registration, and general election participation by the members of the London District of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

*Rev. Dr Derrill Blue is the Presiding Elder of the Rochester-Syracuse District of The A.M.E. Zion Church and pastor of Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church, Rochester, New York, USA.*

## Naturalised Americans be Woke and Vote

By Ronald Nathan, World Politics Editor

Photos By Copyright POLITICO, Copyright NPR, Copyright Amy Tikkanen Encyclopaedia Britannica



Citizens of the United States of America who come from Africa, the Caribbean, or South America have a responsibility to be conscious of social injustice and racial inequality issues. The term 'woke' is a wake-up call to many naturalized citizens to use their newfound status to secure their civil rights. The implications of which are far-reaching.

The political default stance of many persons who migrated to the United States of America from the above-mentioned regions is to keep their heads down, don't rock the boat, make do with whatever opportunity may come their way, and thank God for America. However, this stance may no longer be a practical option for the well-being of these new citizens. America is changing, and with it could very well be the benefits you have become accustomed to having living in America.

To get involved in American politics is part of your citizens' rights, and opposing laws and legislation in your state is not unpatriotic. Voting is part of your citizens' rights. So, whether you call yourself Ethiopian-American, Nigerian American, or Caribbean-American as a naturalized citizen of the United States of America, you can defend your access to social justice and equality with your vote

Why should Africans, Caribbeans, Pacific Islanders, and South Americans who are US citizens need to sit up and take note? The American Right has begun to use the law and litigation to undermine the economic status of people of color. There is a developing strategy by the politically conservative to seek to reverse the Civil Rights gains of the 1960s and 1970s. These



policies were put in place to respond to the systemic barriers faced by historically marginalized groups. Many of these civil rights gains and affirmative programs benefit not only African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians in America, but they also benefit those who have migrated to America and have become naturalized citizens and migrant communities.

These affirmative action programs secured preference for protected groups based on race and or ethnicity, especially in areas of employment and education. If these Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion policies are changed, they will negatively impact the employment of African Americans and many naturalized citizens born in Africa and the Caribbean.

What should be of great importance to these naturalized citizens is the impact that these affirmative action policies can have on their employment opportunities and their ability to send remittances to family members who still live abroad. Remittances are financial or in-kind transfers made by migrants directly to families or communities in their countries of origin.

To put it bluntly, many African countries' strategic interests are at risk if the politically right should have their way. Here is a clear example as to how domestic American policy can have an impact on foreign nations. The United States of America is the top remittance-sending country in the world, with a total outflow of USD 79.15 billion in 2022. Remittances are, therefore, a critical source of external finance for many African countries.

One of the single greatest threat to the short-term development of African and Caribbean nations is the onslaught taking place in law and litigation against the established policies of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in America. These changes would have a negative impact upon Jamaica and Haiti whose countries are heavily dependent on remittances. Some estimates place remittances to these countries as high as 25% of their gross national product (GDP).

A decline in remittances in several Sub-Saharan African nations where presently almost 40 percent of the population live in extreme poverty, and 200 million persons would literally mean no food on the table and the children unable to go to school. Over the last decade, remittance flows to Africa doubled, reaching \$100 billion in 2022, more than funds given in Aid and or foreign investment loans.

Therefore, it is important for all naturalized US citizens to be woke. They need to register to vote, know how to use their vote and place their vote in the ballot box. Black Voters Matter and Project 100 are two of several initiatives available to assist Black voters with voter awareness and voter registration information. Every election is important, be they local, state, midterm, primary, runoff, federal and general. Every vote counts and every vote is critical in an election as they influence present and future policies of the nation.





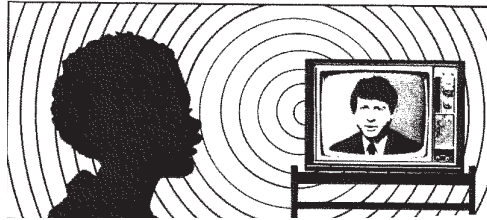
# sankofa

Looking Back to Move Forward

## Fulfilling The Need To Know

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

### Television and Its Influence on African American Children



Recent studies indicate that children who watch a lot of television are more likely to have problems adjusting to society. They are also likely to exhibit characteristics of extremely high levels of socially aggressive behavior. The influence of television on the lives of African American children is much greater than ever anticipated.

While a great deal of attention has been focused on the effects of TV on the average viewer, special emphasis must be placed on the far-reaching effects this form of electronic media has on the African American child. These children watch TV an average of 7 hours per day compared to 4-1/2 hours of daily television viewing for white children. This medium, therefore, plays a greater role in developing attitudes and behavior patterns which may affect black youth for many years to come.

The following facts are important to note:

1. Black children tend to be more emotionally involved in the plot of TV programs.
2. Black children often use TV as a substitute for other activities such as reading or interacting with other children.
3. Black children tend to use TV as a source for role model. They imitate other people's behavior, dress, appearance and speech.
4. Black children use information gathered from television for guidance and direction when making career choices.
5. TV provides examples for interacting with members of the opposite sex.
6. TV is used as a primary source of learning and perfecting aggressive behavior.
7. Black children closely identify with television characters---particularly the black characters.

You must realize that television trivializes human life by showing a murder every 57 seconds. This fact impacts directly on the high rate of black-on-black homicide. This is a cause and effect relationship. You should also realize that the high rate of teen pregnancy among blacks is directly related to the numerous programs which feature sexual promiscuity. Few television shows provide information on sexual responsibility.

#### A 1978 study completed at Michigan State University showed that:

- Black children believed that TV was very true to life.
- 46% of elementary school children believed that blacks on TV were representative of blacks in real life.
- Commercials are more believable for black children than white children.
- Over 50% of all black children between the ages of 5 and 12 believe that commercials present true and accurate information.

A 1975 study showed that most black children believed when they felt ill they should take aspirin, Tylenol, Alma Seltzer Plus or Nyquil. The same children felt that if they wanted a healthier lifestyle, they should take vitamins, drink sodas and eat fast foods. Common sense tells you that this thinking will lead to chaos, premature disease and death. Even

though television has been a negative influence on the lives of African Americans, I would be the last person to suggest that you do the impossible and turn off your TV sets! I strongly believe that "the answer to most problems can be found within the problem itself." One must first take a look at a situation and then derive a solution from that assessment.

#### We must all ask ourselves the following Questions:

1. How much time do my children spend watching TV each day?
2. How much time do I spend watching TV with my children?
3. What programs are my children watching and what are they learning from these programs?

Naturally, adults must have good television viewing habits before they can teach good viewing habits to children. It's important that adults become aware of the powerful influence of television and then develop a discriminating eye. We, in the Washington, D.C. community, are fortunate to have access to Channel 32, WHUT-TV at Howard University. We should support that station, and others like it, because it provides us with positive programming.

Now that cable television is available, many of you pay a monthly fee to watch additional programs featured on numerous channels. Have you ever wondered why commercial TV is free? It's because the advertisers pay for the air time and TV programs are packaged around the advertiser's commercials. Commercial messages provide financial support for existing television programs.

Understand that commercials are designed to influence the way you think. Viewers are programmed to be receptive to a particular product. When you are aware of these facts, it's easy to understand why these programs are offered free of charge. TV programs are specifically designed to influence the viewer's thought process. If you respond favorably to the content of the program itself, then you will be particularly susceptible to the commercial message.

Much has been written over the years about the effects and influence of television on the lives of the American viewing audience. When you take the following statistics into account, it is easy to see how important television has become in the lives of most people.

- The average American household has at least two TV sets and one VCR,
- The average American spends 1/5 of their life (approximately 15 years) watching TV.
- Of the time spent viewing TV, approximately 50 minutes of each day is spent just watching commercials. That amounts to a lifetime average of 1-1/2 years of watching just TV advertisements.

With this information in mind, it is foolish to look at TV as anything other than a molder of minds. TV is directly responsible for presenting the viewers. So watch your television with caution, and be aware of its potential mental health hazards, after all, it is you who control your TV set.

Coming soon to households throughout America---you can have your own high definition television with a flat screen over five feet wide. This TV set will come cable ready and will allow you over access to 500 channels of programming. It will have a built-in microprocessor that will allow you to block out commercials and down load the programs you want to watch when you want to watch them.

You will be able to pause the transmission of your favorite shows while



you go the bathroom, to the refrigerator, or to the store. You can send or receive e-mail and search the World Wide Web with a wireless interference, from the comfort of your living room sofa. You'll be able to do all these things and more---except find quality programming featuring African Americans.

Does this sound far-fetched? Well, it's all happening right now. This technology is available for those who can afford it and will become accessible to the masses when the prices drop. Despite these technological advances, the capacity to produce quality African American programming on television will be achieved in the near future.

In the beginning of the 1999 fall television season, the NAACP blasted the three major networks for ending African Americans from any major roles in their new shows. The networks backpedaled, scrambled to add a little color to a few programs, and said that they'll do better next season. Wink! Wink!

A recent study commissioned by the Screen Actors Guild confirmed African Americans were "Stuck in [A] Sitcom Ghetto." This report found that 52 percent of African American characters on prime time TV are seen on Monday and Friday, on sitcoms broadcasts on UPN and WB.

The study also revealed that African Americans get far less exposure on the major networks. Approximately 50 percent of the African Amer-

ican characters on Fox and NBC were on screen for less than a minute per hour. Those on CBS fared better with an average screen time of seven minutes per hour of programming.

Television has been described as the "dominate cultural form" in America and it is how our nation gains a sense of itself. Because America has yet to come to terms with the "race issue," the presence and absence of African Americans on TV reflects the power imbalance within our society.

With the increased popularity of "reality based programming," music videos and exploitative shows like Jerry Springer, we can expect our children to be turned into "short-intentioned spanned, socially inept, media junkies." Didn't you know that television is addictive? The more you watch the more you need to watch. Didn't you know that television is not benign? The steady stream of radiation, light and sound emanating from the set is absorbed into your body like a sponge. Once it gets inside of your head, the words and sounds reconfigure your thoughts and influence your behavior. They don't call the shows *programs* for nothing.

If you are concerned about drugs, violence, crime and poor role model--you need to be concerned about the programs your children watch. You need to be concerned about what you watch because your children are watching you. You re their first programmer. But who has programmed you?

# Creating a Crisis Communication Plan for Your Church

By Rev. Kristen Berry



Why should your church consider a crisis communication plan? God is in control, right? You may be thinking, "Our members are non-violent." Perhaps you are under the assumption that if a church has a strong prayer ministry, it can pray away any negative occurrences. Maybe you think that your church van

drivers are all "really careful" each time they pick up members for services. Oh, wait! Everyone at your church makes delicious food and checks it 100% of the time for any food-borne illnesses.

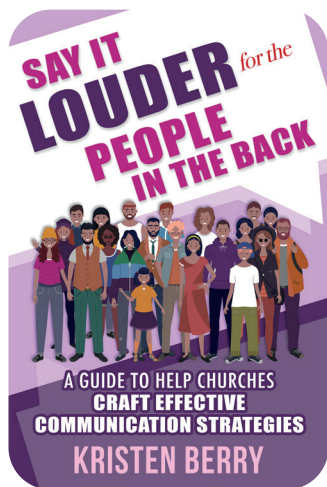
Right!

The purpose of a crisis communication plan is to ensure that the church knows how to react and how to respond in light of a crisis. You may be thinking, "Our church is in a small town. Why should we be concerned about the media anyway?" Be concerned because people talk! It may not be on the national news, but believe me, negative news gets around quicker than good news has a chance to get out of the bed! If the media outlets in your town smell of your church crisis, they are coming! Let me rephrase that: they may be running! How will you respond to the reporter's questions? Will you run away?



We live in a dangerous time. Historically and biblically, the church has had to deal with negative circumstances regarding its members. Church bombings, shootings, vandalism, thefts, and sexual misconduct are just a few examples that have occurred on church properties. Just reflect on the shooting at Mother Emmanuel A.M.E. Church in Charleston!

Certainly, each church crisis situation will not be covered by the media, but there is a chance that it may, especially if the crisis involves minors, large sums of money, death, or injury.



My experience as an assignment desk editor at a Baltimore news station opened my eyes to the wonderful world of news! I understand what goes into "making the 6:00 news". I will never forget one night I was nearing the end of my shift. At about 10:45 pm, there was activity on the police/fire scanners. There was a fire at the Maryland State Capitol building. "What do I do?" I thought. I was the only one working the desk that night, and I was ready to go home. However, it was my job to "catch" potential news stories. So, I depended on instinct. I let the producers know. We listened intently to the scanners for a few more minutes. The number of alarms continued to increase. I assigned a videographer to the scene! Sure enough, there was a fire at the capitol building. A news story was captured that quickly.



What if that building was your church? To tell you the truth, your church has either been in a crisis, is going through a crisis, or will go through a crisis! Does the church carry insurance in case of lightning striking the church? I can assume that the answer is "yes." If the church can be prepared to save money in case of an accident or flooding, be prepared to organize your team in case of a crisis. I have met pastor after pastor. After I tell them what a crisis communication plan is, they tell me, "I've never heard of that. Wow! That is needed." But they do nothing! Social media can spread a snippet of your service and send a flurry of unwanted comments your way! The need for understanding effective crisis communication practices are in more demand than ever.



The Creator has not called us to operate by chance in our assigned place of ministry. The Lord has called us to operate wisely. Let's get prepared just in case there is a storm!

For more information on creating a crisis communication plan, email Rev. Kristen Berry at [Contact@Berryconsulting.org](mailto:Contact@Berryconsulting.org) or visit [www.berryconsulting.org](http://www.berryconsulting.org).

Book available on Amazon: <https://a.co/d/04N4xymJ>



*Rev. Dr. Charbreen*  
**BATTEN MAPSON**

**PLAN**  
**MAPSON2024**  
"She has a PLAN for Zion"

- ▶ **PROMOTING**  
PERSONAL CARE AND MENTAL  
HEALTH FOR PASTORS
- ▶ **LEADERSHIP**  
LEADERSHIP IN THE NEW ERA  
OF WORSHIP
- ▶ **AUTISM**  
AUTISM AWARENESS AND  
INCLUSION
- ▶ **NURTURING**  
NURTURING ECUMENICAL  
RELATIONSHIPS

