

The Virginia  
Annual Conference  
Holds 158th Session

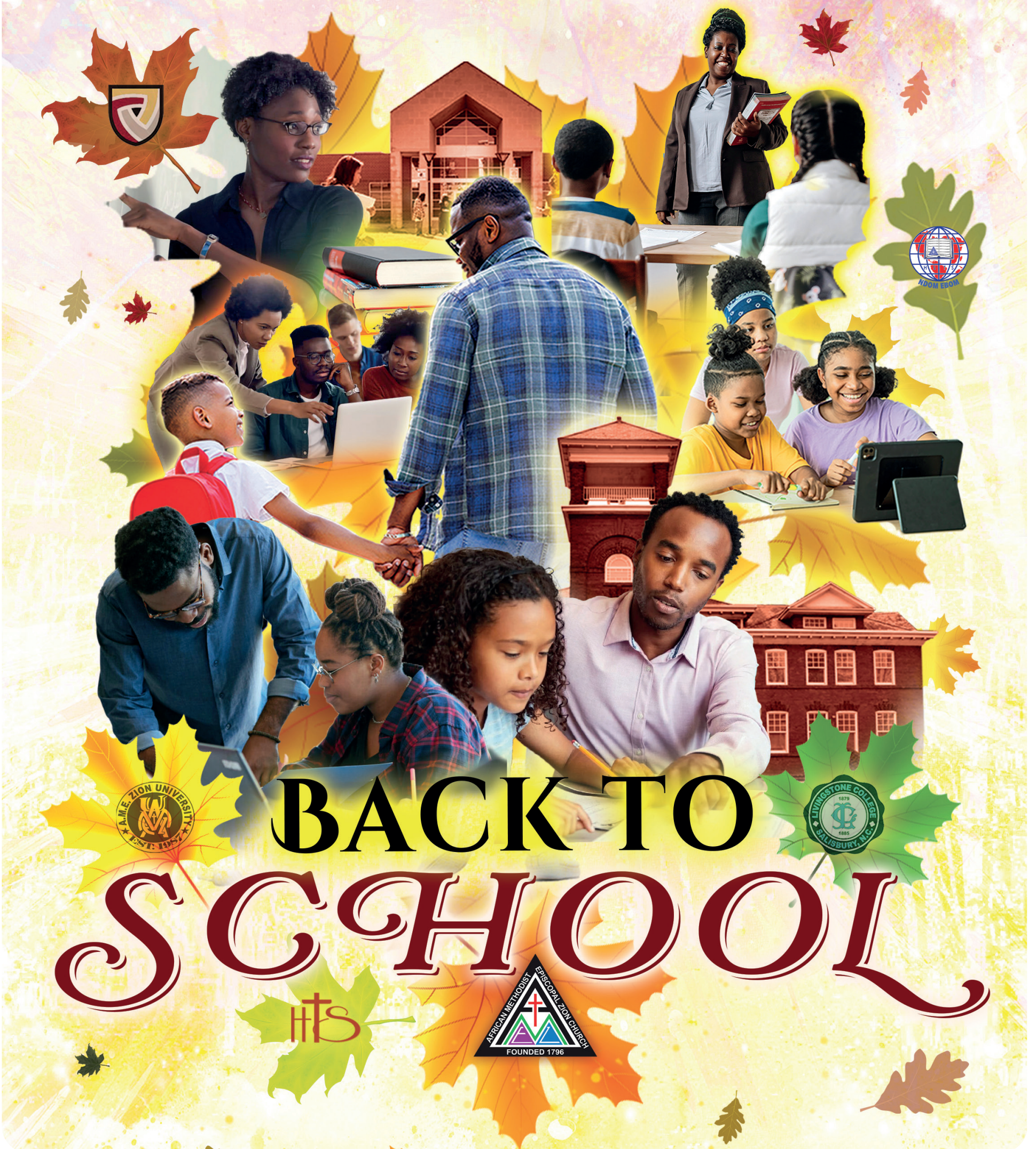
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# THE STAR OF ZION


SEPTEMBER 2024 | VOL 148 NO. 9 | STAROFZION.ORG | THE OFFICIAL VOICE OF THE A.M.E. ZION CHURCH



## BACK TO

# SCHOOL





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

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

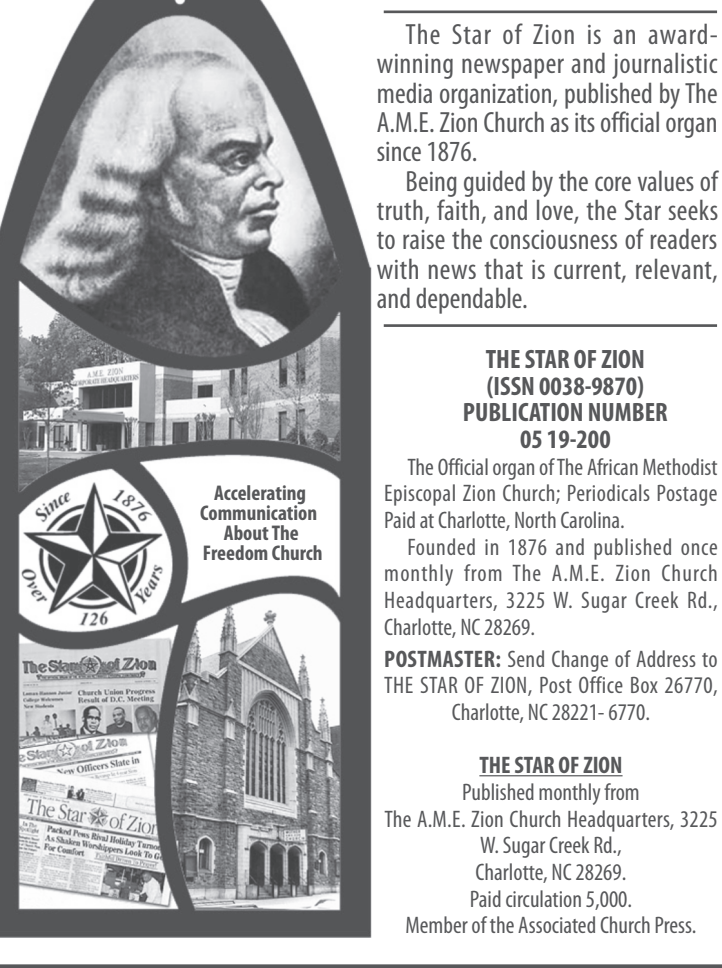
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# BE A BLESSING: Vote!

## The Jesus Thing To Do

By Reverend Leona Nicholas Welch

Many of us find ourselves countering a common and disturbing declaration these days concerning casting a vote, specifically now, for the president of our country. Echoing throughout our land, bouncing off the walls of the home, the church, schools and colleges, storefronts, through the airways of parks, in grocery stores – you name it – wherever people gather and share ideas, these dismal, apathetic and even fatalistic sentiments against voting can be heard.



Political talk heats up the airways these days, and the hottest debates or quarrels are centered around statements such as, "I don't have anything to vote for," or "What's the use...," or, "My vote won't count anyway." There are many varieties of this sentiment, but they all suggest a serious misunderstanding of THE SPIRITUAL SIDE OF VOTING.

Let us put aside, for the moment, the social ramifications of failing to exercise our right/duty to vote. We all understand that no vote is a vote; it simply boosts the opponent's chances. We know well that we should never, nor will we ever, abandon the historical and treacherous journey of Black people in America to vote.

For now, let us focus on how Jesus, Himself, might well feel about the apathy and hopelessness surrounding the vote, and what He might say to someone who is able but refuses to cast one. There is no need to presuppose, second guess or imagine a response from Jesus in this matter. We can find words and situations that let us know that Jesus is a proponent of governing bodies and the law of the land, and subsequently, would urge people to vote.

Even before Jesus speaks directly, we hear God espousing a governing structure when He has Moses tell the Israelites, "Choose some wise, understanding, and respected men from each of your tribes,



Mrs. Debra Chappelle-Polk  
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# 180th Session of the New England Annual Conference

By Rev. Robin Woods-Barrant, Pastor of John Wesley A.M.E. Zion Church, North Attleboro, MA.

The 180<sup>th</sup> Session of the New England Annual Conference convened on June 13, 2024, under the incisive leadership of the Right Reverend Dennis Vernon Proctor at the Trumbull Marriott Shelton Hotel in Trumbull, CT. The host church was Mount Olive A.M.E. Zion in Waterbury, CT, where Rev. Kelsey Hopson is the Pastor.



The Mt. Olive servants wrote a new book on how to host an annual conference. Their organizational prowess was on display even before the conference began and once onsite, attendees found all was in place for a smooth conference experience. The men and women of Mt. Olive were the first to arrive and the last to leave each day and always had kind words to share and smiles on their faces, no matter the need or request.

Our reception was warm, welcoming, and bitter-sweet: The sweet part was experiencing the joy of gathering for holy conferencing, where we spent time with friends and colleagues from across the New England Conference. The bitter part was knowing that this was the last New England Conference with Bishop and Mrs. Proctor as our episcopal leaders after eight short years. We will miss so much about these dynamic servants of God, not the least of which is that they are true to their character, using time judiciously even though no one would have complained had they done otherwise. They communicated verbally and nonverbally that they loved the work and people of the New England Conference.



As our episcopate, Bishop Proctor ensured that all the necessary business was completed according to the Book of Discipline. This is just how Bishop Proctor operates; you can count on him to get it done if it is scheduled.



I've said it before, and it bears repeating: The highlight of our Annual Conference is receiving spiritual direction and our charge from our episcopal leader. Bishop Proctor would have been forgiven if he had taken his foot off the spiritual petal and sought to teach and encourage



less in his final episcopal address, but that just isn't Bishop Dennis Proctor's way. In his final address before the Conference, Bishop Proctor taught and encouraged clergy and laity alike because he knew each group depended on the other.

Bishop Proctor titled his episcopal address "A Dangerous Supposition: The Danger of Supposing that Jesus Is With You," based on Luke 2:41-49 and made the following points:



1) Jesus' parents missed Him when they needed Him. They went a day's journey before they knew he wasn't with them; children were almost beasts of burden in those days. We, too, allow Jesus to get out of the mix, so what we need the most isn't there.

2) You may find Jesus where you left Him. Sometimes, we suppose we have a relationship with Jesus without evidence. Are people having to look around you to see Jesus? Some people, from the pulpit to the pew, are simply supposing that Jesus is with them.

3) Once you find Jesus, the Lord will always be with you. Make sure our connection with God is built on more than mere supposition, that you can feel Him. Jesus will be with you until the bitter end. You don't have to suppose!

My reporting doesn't do justice to Bishop Proctor's message, because the Conference erupted in praise and adoration to God as he concluded his final Episcopal Address.

Other highlights of the New England Conference included the following preachers: the Opening session - Rev. Monique Sanders; Christian Education - Rev. Isaiah McCorkle; Lay Council - Rev. Kenneth I. Lewis, and Missionary (WH&OMS) - Rev. Dr. Jonathon Counts. We were blessed to have our illustrious and regal Missionary Supervisor, Mrs. D. Diane Proctor lead NEC missionary sessions for a final time.

The New England Conference ended on July 15, 2024, with the Reading of Appointments for Conferences, Districts, lay and clergy positions, and pastoral assignments.

Members of the NEC gathered for holy conferencing and the Spirit of God transformed a hotel ballroom into a sanctuary. The ballroom at the Trumbull Marriott Shelton Hotel in Trumbull, CT., will never be the same.

# Celebrating Zion Clergywomen through Fashion at the 52nd General Conference

By Angel Eason, Lifestyle Editor  
Photos By Jenna Wright

I was scrolling on Facebook and came across a post that was shared about a shirt with Zion Clergywomen in the center. It stopped me in my tracks as a daughter of a Zion Clergywoman.

I had the opportunity to chat with J. Hayes McLendon via Zoom, a member of Robinson A.M.E. Zion Church, Cheraw-Bennettsville District, Pee Dee Conference, in the South Atlantic Episcopal District, the lead for the creation and distribution of the Zion Clergywomen shirt spotted at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Quadrennial General Conference.

**Where did the idea come from for the creation of the Zion Clergywomen shirt?**

I started this interest in clergywomen about 14 years ago. I collected gospel albums at that time. I got hold of an album from Mount Sinai Holy Church of America. I started researching them, and they had a lot of women Bishops, and that was very different for me at the time. That was before I came to Zion. When I came to Zion, my Presiding Elder was a woman. I was raised by women and my grandmother was the most impactful person in my childhood.

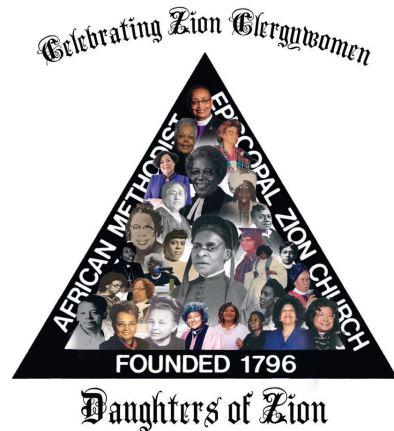
Once I got into Zion, I started doing history work. I was the Pee Dee Conference Historian for about five years under Bishop Hines. In the books I was reading about Zion's history, I was looking for information on women in leadership, particularly clergywomen, and I couldn't find much.

That turned into the Zion Clergywomen Project, which started 6-8 years ago. I published some timelines in 2018 and mailed them all over the denomination for people that were interested. I have interviewed different clergywomen. I met the Rev. Dr. Gloria Snipes of the Philadelphia - Baltimore Conference while working on this project and she became my mentor. I have met a lot of other clergywomen and supported women who were candidates for the episcopacy. Eventually, I hope to write a book.

Headed to the General Conference, I wanted something to celebrate clergywomen. We have all these accomplished clergywomen and there's not much about them out there. This idea came up less than a month before the conference. I got with a friend of mine who is a graphic designer and it rolled into the t-shirts that we have.

**How were the Clergywomen chosen for the graphic?**

The women who have been the center of my research have personally



Top down, from left to right: Bishop Mildred B. "Bonnie" Hines\*, first woman bishop; Rev. Dr. Melba W. Clark\*, first woman presiding elder in Virginia Conference; Rev. Dr. Ocie M. Brown\*, first woman candidate for bishop; Rev. Dr. Florence Brown, first woman presiding elder in Cape Fear Conference; Rev. Dr. Harriet O. Hooks\*, first statewide woman presiding elder; Rev. Dorothy Hawkins\*, first woman presiding elder in Mid-Atlantic area; Rev. Dr. Florence Sparring Randolph\*, first woman pastor; Rev. Lillian T. Brunson\*, pioneer pastor and first clergyperson General Conference Delegate; Rev. Mabel "Sister Gay" Phillips\*, pioneer builder and evangelist; Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Green Dolan\*, pioneer pastor and community activist; Rev. Lou B. "Sister" Holliday\*, trailblazing clergyperson pastor and celebrated Western NC Conference ecologist; Rev. Naomi Washington Mims\*, first pastor and namesake of Naomi Temple Church, Roosevelt, NY; Rev. Julia A.J. Foster\*, first woman ordained; Rev. Dr. Mattie Walker\*, veteran pastor and church builder; Rev. Dr. Gloria Morris Snipes, trailblazing pastor and Presiding Elder in Mid-Atlantic area; Rev. Dr. Florence Sparring Randolph\*, founder of WHOMS Bureau of Supply; Rev. Dr. Mozella Mitchell, scholar and first woman presiding elder in Alabama/Florida area; Rev. Dr. Sandra K. Burton, first woman presiding elder in NC; Rev. Dr. Bona Walker Karla Smart\*, distinguished scholar, ecumenist, and first woman presiding elder in Philadelphia-Baltimore Conference; Rev. Dr. Bonye A. Fincountry, presiding elder and Bishop's Administrative Assistant, Eastern West Africa Episcopal District; Evangelist Rev. Minnie Gray\*, noted revivalist; Rev. Dr. Gloria Snipes\*, second woman candidate for bishop; Rev. V.J. (Vivian) Ouellet\*, first woman pastor appointed to a first church pulpit; Rev. Dr. Ocie M. Brown\*, first woman presiding elder in Central NC Conference; Rev. Dr. Barbara LaFosse\*, first woman presiding elder in Texas Conference; Rev. Dr. Cynthia Willis Stewart\*, first woman presiding elder in NY Conference; Rev. Dr. Gloria Morris Snipes, renowned evangelist known for her signature "Joy, Joy" affirmations; and Rev. Dr. Dorothy George Johnson\*, champion for the advancement of clergywomen and missionary superintendence. \*denotes clergyperson in deceased

Submitted by:  
J. Hayes McLendon  
Pee Dee Conference

impacted my life. They're major trendsetters. The one thing I considered when I selected them was that they must be retired or deceased. I have no clergywomen who are active. The only exception is the Rev. Dr. Bonye A. Fincountry, an active Presiding Elder and Administrative Assistant in the Eastern Western Africa Episcopal District. I wanted to include at least one clergy woman from our churches around the world.

**How was it for you to see people wearing the shirts at the General Conference?**

When we go to these conventions, everyone is planning their outfit. I always try to select one day when I wear red, a red blazer; that's my signature and favorite color. I wore red on Friday at the conference. I knew that I wanted to wear the clergywoman shirt on Saturday. The idea was that I was going to buy 5-10 of the shirts, and close friends and I would wear them and send them to the women who were alive on the shirt. I then thought some people were going to want to participate in this, and that's why I made the order (posted it on Facebook). It was a 2-3 day turnaround for the orders for 100 shirts. I said on the Facebook post that I would wear it on that Saturday, election day, at the General Conference. We had women running for the episcopacy.

I wasn't expecting people to join me. My best friend was at the conference, and he wore the shirt. I started looking around, and I saw 5-6 people wearing them. People were stopping and asking about who was on the shirt. I saw a layperson and clergy from Piedmont District and saw them in the shirt. I was so excited.

It was a blessing to see people wearing it and for people to engage with it. That was the point. I wanted to promote celebrating Zion Clergywomen.

**"Look at Bishop Hines." "Oh my gosh, I remember her."**

**"Who's that on that shirt?"**

**"I want one of those."**

**Is there a profit for the shirt?**

There was no profit or gain. It was simply to promote celebrating clergywomen and their history.

**The major question is, how can others order a shirt and support this initiative?**

We are working on that. I did get a few requests from women in the Missionary Society. There are missionary women on the shirt, Dr. Dorothy Sharpe Johnson, champion for the advancement of clergywomen and Missionary Supervisor and Rev. Dr. Florence Sparring Randolph, founder of the WHOMS Bureau of Supply.

When I put out the next order, it will be blasted on social media. The next roll out will happen in September. People will have the new shirts by November/December. I want to give people time to order and to reach people who are not on social media.

We have a new woman, Bishop; thank you, Jesus, and the graphic will be updated. Bishop Miller will be added to the graphic, and I want to add more global women.

What an amazing initiative and project celebrating Zion Clergywomen. Reach out to Hayes at [zionhistorian@gmail.com](mailto:zionhistorian@gmail.com) for more information.



# McKain Celebrated at General Conference

By G. Joyner Johnson  
Photos by Brian Thompson II

During the 52nd session of the General Conference of the A.M.E. Zion Church, the program coordinators could not let the occasion end without honoring the retiring Director of Public Affairs and Social Concerns, Rev. Dr. George E. McKain.



So, on July 26, 2024 the Guilford ballroom was packed with over 400 people to show appreciation for the dedication and devotion Dr. McKain had given to Zion, which he loves.

As the Master of Ceremony, Rev. Herbert Crump, Jr. guided those gathered through an evening filled with accolades for the honoree. After the opening prayer by Bishop Michael A. Frencher, Sr., everyone was filled with great anticipation of



what was about to happen.

Words of congratulations were extended from an ecumenical representative, Rev. Dr. Roderick Lewis. A Spoken Word was expressively given by Ms. Sarah Kinard as well as a special salute by Ms. Nicole Drakeford.

Mr. Bruce Stanback, President of the Livingstone College National Alumni Association, spoke about the significance of this occasion. Christa George of Visit Charlotte spoke about the joy she has had working with Dr. McKain while planning special events for Zion. Mr. Kelley Harrill, General

Manager of the Four Seasons Sheraton at Greensboro, gave a historical chronology of his relationship with Dr. McKain from the 1980s when he was at Livingstone College attending a connectional meeting at this very hotel, which was then a 250-room Holiday Inn. They became friends, and as the hotel grew to the 1000-room facility it is today, Dr.



McKain's growth through the decades from Livingstone student and pastor to church leader in charge of conventions, so did their friendship and respect for each other. Mr. Harrill's affection for Dr. McKain was further exhibited as this celebration was sponsored by the Four Seasons Sheraton Hotel!

Retired General Officers who had served with him through the years, offering congratulatory comments included Dr. Mary Love, Rev. Dr. Raymon Hunt, and Dr. Shirley Welch. Their emotional tributes were felt throughout the ballroom.



Familial words of affection came from his spiritual mothers, Mrs. Ina Faye Hughes White and Mrs. Connie Farrow who knew "George" from the time he was a young lad, told of heartwarming events in her home that made everyone laugh. His sister, Ms. Bonnie McKain and Bishop Brian Moore, his spiritual brother also spoke of their affection and love for "George."

Rev. Dr. Glenn Grayson, a fraternity brother, represented the Phi Beta Sigma fraternity with great enthusiasm, exhibiting a great love for his



Sigma brother for everyone's enjoyment.

Bishop W. Darin Moore and Bishop Kenneth Monroe presented gifts to Dr. McKain after he was escorted to the dais by Ms. Brenda Brown, his office assistant. Dr. McKain expressed his thanks to everyone who assisted in planning the event, those who had worked with him throughout the years, and those who were in attendance. He stated he would be around to assist and consult and otherwise be of service to Zion in any capacity he is able.

Bishop George D. Crenshaw offered the closing prayer and blessed the food which was a delicious smorgasbord which included never-ending food stations around the perimeter of the ballroom. There was shrimp & grits, carving stations, the George McKain chicken and waffles, macaroni and cheese, fruit, veggie and cheese trays desserts which included ice cream and cake, cheesecake, bread pudding, lemon pie and various beverages.

It was an excellent expression of love and appreciation for a much-loved and respected servant-leader.

# MOVING FORWARD AND STAYING READY

By Debra Chappelle-Polk, Zion Spotlight Editor  
Photo by Vincent Alban/Reuters - Vice President Kamala Harris - West Allis, WI., July 23, 2024.



September 2024, New York, NY - Elections have consequences, and the consensus is that the November 2024 election may be one of the most consequential elections in decades. Many believe democracy itself is at stake. Seeds of doubt have already been planted that the electoral process is rigged, and there has been a proliferation of “election deniers” because of false claims that the 2020 presidential election was stolen. According to The Brennan Center for Justice\*, “Election denial poses an ongoing threat to U.S. democracy... [and] the attempts to undermine safe and secure elections are evolving.”

Voter suppression tactics and laws have been enacted in some states. These tactics include refusal to concede, refusal to certify election results, recruiting election deniers to serve as poll watchers and workers, threats against election officials and workers, voter intimidation, mass challenges, election police forces, and disinformation.

Some politicians are harkening back “to the good ole days” (a/k/a, the Jim Crow era), promising “to make America great again.” Despite these promises, tactics, and laws, we are moving forward. We are rallying the troops and are ready to fight for a country that protects all its citizens’ rights (including voting rights). We’ve done it before, and we can do it again.

Many know the saying, “Stay Ready, So You Don’t Have to Get Ready! Will Smith used it in a motivational blog: “If you make yourself ready for anything that life throws at you, and be ready to embrace and experience it fully, you’ll eventually seize your perfect opportunity to do something you want in life.”

Medium, an internet website, says, “This nugget of wisdom has been used in sports, military training, and personal development, but what does it mean? Regardless of the context, the meaning is the same: Be ready to seize an opportunity or handle a challenge without having to scramble or miss out altogether due to lack of preparation.”

“Stay ready, so you don’t have to get ready” was the title of Rev. Audrey Williamson’s sermon on Sunday, August 4, 2024, at Mother A.M.E. Zion Church. Rev. Williamson related her sermon to **Joshua 1:5-7**: “*Just as I was with Moses, I will be with you. No one will be able to stop you all your life. I will not abandon you. I will never leave you. Joshua, you must be strong and brave! You must lead these people so that they can take their land. I promised their fathers*

*that I would give them this land. But you must be strong and brave about obeying the commands my servant Moses gave you. If you follow his teachings exactly, you will be successful in everything you do.*”

The date and title of Rev. Williamson’s sermon are significant because two weeks earlier, Joseph Biden, the 46<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, announced his decision not to run for a second term. It was a courageous decision. The following day, President Biden announced and endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris as the democratic nominee for president. It was both a wise and forward-looking decision.

On August 2<sup>nd</sup> DNC Chairman Jaime Harrison and DNCC Chair



Minyon Moore said, “With the support of 99% of all participating delegates in the virtual roll call, Vice President Harris has historic momentum at her back as we embark on the final steps in officially certifying her as our Party’s nominee. We thank the thousands of delegates from all across the country who took seriously their responsibility throughout this process to make their voices – and the voices of their communities – heard.”

Get Out the Vote and Voter Registration campaigns have begun in churches nationwide. Prominent North Carolina civil rights leader Bishop William J. Barber II spoke at the 2024 Quadrennial General Conference in July and stressed the importance of voting. He also outlined the Poor People’s Campaign’s National Call for Moral Revival Demands for 2024, a 17-point agenda for churches to encourage people in their communities to vote. The agenda can be found on the Poor People’s Campaign at [info@poorpeoplescampaign.org](mailto:info@poorpeoplescampaign.org). Bishop Vashti McKenzie, President and CEO of the National Council of Churches, also spoke at the General Conference and said, “We must be concerned, committed and courageous” and get out the vote.

Elections have consequences. We must stay focused and be intentional in our efforts to ensure our voices are heard and our votes are counted. We’re not going back. We are moving forward.

Stay Ready, So You Don’t Have to Get Ready! Side note: Zionites have always been ready for such a time as this.

**\*The Brennan Center for Justice works to strengthen democracy, end mass incarceration, and protect liberty and security. Offices are in Washington, D.C., and New York City.**

**Reference Sources: Google/Medium is a website for human stories and ideas; Brittany Bernstein National Review MSN**

# NEW ERA AT WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN A.M.E. ZION CHURCH

By Georgette Williams, Contributor

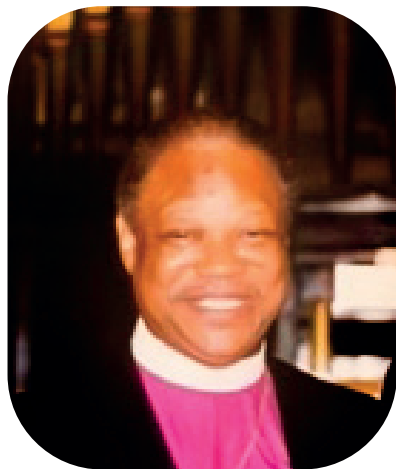
September 2024, St. Louis, MO... I have been a member of Washington Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion Church in St. Louis, Missouri my entire life. I was a pre-teen when Rev. Dr. Arthur Marshall, Jr. was Pastor at Washington Metropolitan from 1961 until he became the 73<sup>rd</sup> Bishop in the line of succession in 1972. It seemed like I was just beginning to understand the role of a pastor and his family and the impact they would have on the church. Rev. Marshall was a big supporter of Livingstone College and started "The Livingstone College Alumni Associates." The organization would become an important part of my life in the future.



Rev. Richard L. Fisher would be the next pastor our family would come to know and love. I'm sure his sermons were the first ones I considered meaningful. It probably had a lot to do with what was happening in my life at the time. I can still remember him saying, "You have not, because you ask not." Rev. Fisher also married me and my husband. We always imagined that he would perform our vow renewal ceremony 25 years later. I was probably too busy starting a family to realize he was running for bishop until the announcement came in 1984. He is now the 79<sup>th</sup> Bishop in the line of succession.



Rev. Clarence Carr came next. His "Children's Moments" during the worship service would have a special meaning for our family. All three of our children were born during his tenure. I had been singing my whole life, but under his leadership, I finally understood how the anthem and the scripture connected. After we sang an anthem, he would explain to the congregation which scripture the song was taken from. Rev. Carr's sermons helped me better understand the connection between music and the Word. We were excited when he became the 89<sup>th</sup> bishop in the line of succession in 1992.



Rev. Dr. Staccato Powell joined us in 1992. His family was our family. Their children participated in many of the children and youth programs, and his wife was a leader in her own right. He was there until June of 1999, when he asked not to be reappointed. He would, however, become the 102<sup>nd</sup> Bishop in the line of succession in 2016.

In October of 1999, we received Rev. Anthony Noland Witherspoon. For almost 25 years, he has nurtured the families, members, children, and youth of Washington Metropolitan. Even suffering through the loss of his wife, Rev. Witherspoon remained our strong leader. It was a bittersweet moment as we witnessed him become the 109<sup>th</sup> Bishop in the line of succession at the 52<sup>nd</sup> General Conference in July 2024, but we know that God has more work for him to do.



This will be a **NEW ERA**. As the congregation awaits the appointment of a new leader, we trust God will continue to bless us. We thank God that through it all, we are still here!

To God be the Glory!

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# St. Stephen Asbury Park hosts 2nd Annual Community Day And Provides Backpacks for Over 1400 Students

By St. Stephen Communications Team

Asbury Park, NJ- For the second year in a row, St. Stephen A.M.E.Z Church, Community Karma, and Asbury Park Little League, in collaboration with various community organizations, came together for Community Day on Sunday, August 25th. Immediately after Sunday's Worship Service, church members, and volunteers from all over the greater Asbury Park community came together to give back to the community and prepare children and families for the upcoming school year. Community Day 2024, which took place in the parking lot of the St. Stephen

A.M.E.Z Church, kicked off with a Resolution from the State of New Jersey Senate and General Assembly by Senator Vin Gopal and Assemblywomen Margie Donlon and Luanne Peterpaul presented to the organizers for all their efforts and success. In the weeks leading up to the event, volunteers

packed over 1,400 backpacks filled with school supplies to be distributed to children and families. While it was strongly recommended to pre-register, anyone who attended and needed a backpack received one. Organizations collected so many backpacks that there were still bags and supplies available for pick-up the week following the event. Rev. Quavon Newton, Pastor of St. Stephen, expressed his gratitude for the work of all the volunteers, "every time we have an event, I am astounded at how everything comes together. We [St. Stephen] are a part of this community, and we are doing our part to take care of our community and the people in it. We never have to beg for help; people show up and keep showing up, day after day. We had volunteers at the church packing bags and helping to organize all day, every day, for weeks. It's truly a blessing to see and be a part of."

In addition to backpacks and school supplies, Everybody Eats, a local organization, fired up the grill and fed over 1,000 people. Local barbers and hair braiders generously offered their time and skills, giving



free haircuts and braiding styles so that children of all ages would feel good and look their best to start the school year. The St. Stephen Health and Wellness Ministry provided on-the-spot health checks, ensuring attendees had access to essential healthcare services. In a show of civic engagement, the Monmouth Ocean County Pan Hellenic Council,



representing the Divine 9 organizations, conducted a voter registration drive. They registered many first-time voters and helped verify voter eligibility for others.

The St. Stephen's Women's Home and Overseas Missionary Society, led by Sis. Sabrina Fowler, with the help of First Lady and District Officer Sis. Ashley Newton collected new and gently used school uniforms and back-to-school clothing that were freely given to children







of all ages, along with 200 pairs of brand-new shoes. The Asbury Book Cooperative was also represented, handing out hundreds of free books to promote literacy and encourage reading just in time for the school year.

Community Day featured a host of fun-filled activities for the whole family. There were games, face painting, arts and crafts, bounce houses, and lots of free treats including popcorn, cotton candy, and Italian ice. In a powerful demonstration of faith and support, the St. Stephen Evangelism Ministry offered prayer and the message of salvation to attendees. Many individuals took this opportunity to accept Christ and receive prayer. Bishop George D. Crenshaw, Presiding Prelate of the North Eastern Episcopal District, showed his excitement for the work



being done at the St. Stephen church, "I am grateful for the visionary leadership displayed by Pastor Newton and the insightful community partnership of the St. Stephen Church. Lives are indeed being changed and hope restored!"



St. Stephen A.M.E.Z Church, Community Karma, Asbury Park Little League, and all participating organizations helped fill St. Stephen's parking lot with more than just tangible items. The atmosphere was filled with generosity, love, and an overwhelming sense of community. Community Day has become a highly anticipated and carefully planned event, an end-of-summer tradition to continue year after year. Celia Cattani, Community Karma's founder, remarked, "Community Day gives everyone in Asbury Park an opportunity to come together and support children and families to have a great school year. Community Karma is excited to be a partner in this effort and grateful to the donors and volunteers who help make this all possible."



*Since the inaugural Community Day, St. Stephen has partnered with Community Karma and Coach Will Wright, President of the Asbury Park Little League Board of Directors, for a Community Thanksgiving, Holiday Toy Giveaway, and the Family Festival: Honoring Our Fathers, in collaboration with the United Fellowship Food Pantry for the NJ N2Shore Festival, which was a celebration of fatherhood. Collectively, the partnership has fed close to 5,000 people, helped over 700 families, including nearly 2,000 children, with gifts during the holiday season, and provided over 1500 children with back-to-school supplies this summer and last year. They have also brought an immeasurable amount of joy to the Asbury Park community. The overwhelming success of the trio's efforts highlights the power of collaboration and the importance of coming together to uplift and support our community. As Coach Will reminded the organizers, "We make a living by what we get- we make a life by what we give. Never stop giving!"*



# Clinton College Students Honored as 2024 White House HBCU Scholars



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

By Rev. Roderick J. Josey, Education Editor

cation to her studies and involvement in campus activities made her a standout candidate for this honor. Ayanna's commitment to positively impacting her community and beyond reflects the values Clinton College instills in its students.

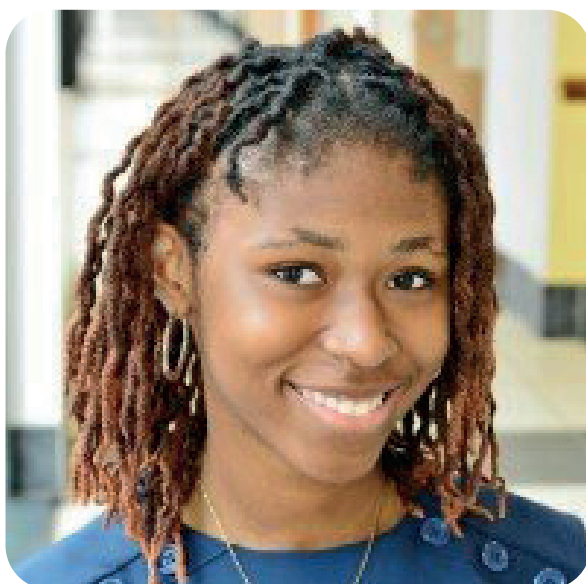


Mr. Benz Joseph, who hails from Paris, France, brought an international perspective to the Clinton College community. As Homecoming King, Benz was recognized for his academic excellence, charismatic leadership, and active participation in campus life. His journey from Paris to Rock Hill is a testament to his determination and ambition, which undoubtedly contributed to his selection as a White House HBCU Scholar.

Clinton College, Rock Hill, SC—Clinton College proudly celebrated the achievement of two of its brightest students, the 2024 White House HBCU Scholars. Miss Ayanna Anderson, a senior business administrator from Charlotte, North Carolina, and Mr. Benz Joseph, a sophomore majoring in business administration and the reigning homecoming king originally from Paris, France, received this prestigious recognition.

The White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) selected Ayanna and Benz for their outstanding academic achievements, leadership skills, and commitment to their communities. The selection places them among an elite group of students nationwide who exemplify excellence at their respective institutions.

Miss Ayanna Anderson's journey at Clinton College was marked by her academic rigor, leadership roles, and passion for business. Her dedi-



This recognition is not only a testament to the hard work and dedication of Ayanna and Benz but also a reflection of the support and guidance provided by Clinton College's faculty and administration. As White House HBCU Scholars, they were expected to continue their journey of excellence, representing Clinton College on a national stage and inspiring future generations of students.



**CLINTON**  
COLLEGE | EST. 1894

Golden Bear Pride resonated throughout the Clinton College campus as the community came together to celebrate this significant achievement. Congratulations to Ayanna Anderson and Benz Joseph for their well-deserved recognition as 2024 White House HBCU Scholars. Clinton College and The A.M.E. Zion Church are immensely proud of both of you!

# Livingstone College Receives \$8 million During The Opening Week Of School

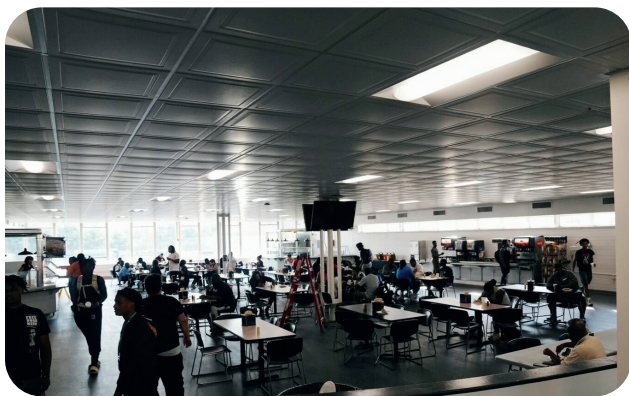
By Garrette Hunter

Salisbury, NC | Livingstone College has 8 million more reasons to be grateful as students begin classes this week. Dr. Davis, the 13th President of Livingstone College, announced that the college had received an additional \$8 million donation from its anonymous donor.



Last month, the college received an unprecedented \$10 million donation, the largest in the institution's history. At present, the anonymous donor has gifted the college \$25 million over the past nine months. This funding will be used for the continuation of the 'Miracle on Monroe Street: Livingstone College Reimagined' infrastructure and capital projects.

As students returned to campus, they were welcomed to a newly updated dining facility. The facility, which features new flooring, has also increased in capacity, providing students with a better dining experience. Renovations are still underway for Tucker and Dancy residence halls, expected to be completed by fall 2025. Phase 2 of the dining hall renova-



tions will begin in the spring as well as renovations to Tucker and Babcock Halls.

Dr. Davis encourages community members to continue supporting Livingstone College and its students as it works towards becoming the premier private HBCU in North Carolina. Please join us for our first home game at Alumni Stadium on August 31st against the University of Charleston.



For the latest updates on our ongoing renovations and upcoming capital investments, follow us on our official Instagram page @LivingstoneCollege or subscribe to our YouTube channel @Livingstone-College.

### About Livingstone College:

*Livingstone College, founded in 1879, is a private, historically black college in Salisbury, North Carolina. The College offers a wide range of undergraduate programs and provides a transformative educational experience to its diverse student body. With a focus on academic excellence, leadership development, and community service, Livingstone College prepares students to become global leaders in their chosen fields.*

# Hood Theological Seminary Appoints Bishop Michael A. Frencher to be The A.M.E. Zion Bishop-in-Residence



By Hood Theological Seminary

Bishop Michael A. Frencher (retired) has been appointed to be The A.M.E. Zion Bishop-in-Residence at Hood Theological Seminary, effective September 1, 2024.

As The A.M.E. Zion Bishop-in-Residence, he will teach, preach, advocate for the Seminary, and work with students as required.

Bishop Frencher is the 101st Bishop in Succession of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and was elected at the 49th Quadrennial Session of the General Conference of The A.M.E. Zion Church in July 2012. He is originally from Detroit, Michigan, and has pastored churches across South Carolina, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania. Bishop Frencher also taught at Hood Theological Seminary for 17 years. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of



Detroit, a Master of Divinity degree from Hood Theological Seminary, and a Doctor of Ministry degree from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. In 2013, he was awarded the Doctor of Divinity degree from Hood-Speaks-Theological Seminary in Nigeria. He was the recipient of the 2023 Distinguished Trustee Service Award, which honors distinguished Alumni and Trustee Emeritus – Bishop George E. Battle, Jr.

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

# The A.M.E. Zion Church Launches Compelling Preachers Institute in Greensboro



Greensboro, NC – July 22-23, 2024\* – The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church kicked off the week with the inaugural Compelling Preaching Institute, drawing an impressive attendance of 276 participants. Taken place in Greensboro, North Carolina, this two-day event marked a significant milestone for the Church’s ministry by aiming to enhance the preaching skills of its clergy and lay leaders.

Dr. J. Elvin Sadler, the Institute’s host and General Secretary Auditor of The A.M.E. Zion Church, welcomed attendees with a warm address and emphasized the power of the Word to empower individuals to preach and minister effectively. “Through the Word of God, we are given the power to preach to His people,” Dr. Sadler stated, setting the tone for the Institute’s focus on dynamic and impactful preaching.

The event featured enriching sessions, with The A.M.E. Zion Church International Choir providing inspirational music. Under the direction of Dr. Lisa Moore, the choir blessed us with the songs, “For the Rest of My Life I Will Trust Him,” led by Mr. Ion Siler, and “You’re Worthy to Be Praised.”

Dr. Dominique A. Robinson, the grant manager for the Institute, reflected on the event’s significance. She highlighted the Wesleyan Quadrilateral—Scripture, Tradition, Reason, and Experience—as foundational principles for The A.M.E. Zion Church’s preaching and teaching.

Dr. Robinson also expressed the importance of successfully launching the Compelling Preaching Institute, which was made possible by a five-year grant. She emphasized the importance of such initiatives in equipping church leaders with the tools and insights needed to engage

and uplift their congregations.

The institute’s keynote preacher, Dr. William H. Curtis, Senior Pastor of Mount Ararat Baptist Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, delivered a powerful sermon. It was based on Luke 10:36-37 and titled “It’s All About the Neighbor.” Dr. Curtis emphasized the importance of compassion and neighborly love. Throughout the sermon, he posed thought-provoking questions that challenged attendees to consider their roles in serving others.

Following the evening service, the Institute transitioned into a captivating session of deeper dialogue with Dr. Curtis called the “Homiletic Hangout.” This session was moderated by Dr. Robinson and offered valuable insights into Dr. Curtis’s approach to preaching, preparation, and personal experiences.

Dr. Curtis emphasized that preaching transcends merely interpreting biblical texts; it involves engaging with contemporary culture. “We don’t just exegesis text. We exegesis culture,” he remarked. This approach ensures that sermons resonate deeply with the audience’s current context and challenges.

Dr. Curtis discussed the levels of scholarship he employs when preparing his sermons, ranging from basic to advanced levels. “The goal is to drive the writer, not just to rely on average scholarship,” he noted. Additionally, he acknowledged the evolution of his preaching style, which was influenced by various figures and experiences over the decades.

Reflecting on his journey, Dr. Curtis advised younger preachers to avoid being swayed by external accolades. “Don’t be romanced by a robe. Know that you are necessary,” he emphasized. This counsel stresses the importance of authenticity and purpose in ministry.

One of his most rewarding experiences came from observing the impact of his sermons on visitors. “Seeing how a sermon resonates with someone new to the church is incredibly fulfilling,” he shared.

The Homiletic Hangout with Dr. William H. Curtis provided attendees with profound insights into the art of preaching, blending traditional scholarship with contemporary cultural relevance. As the conversation concluded, it was clear that Dr. Curtis’s commitment to impactful, culturally-attuned preaching continues to inspire and shape the future of ministry.

Greensboro, NC – July 23, 2024 – As part of the Compelling Preaching Institute, Dr. Elvin J. Sadler, the Institute’s host and General Secretary Auditor of The A.M.E. Zion Church, delivered a profound Centering Moment. “The Incarnation-al Experience Human Flourishing,” Dr. Sadler’s reflection, drew from the scripture Luke 6:27-38, emphasizing the embodiment of love and compassion in everyday life.



In his statement, Dr. Sadler explored the concept of incarnation, not just as a theological doctrine but as a lived experience that fosters human flourishing. He urged attendees to embody the teachings of Jesus, particularly those highlighted in the passage, which called for love, mercy, and forgiveness to even be given to one's enemies.

"The essence of the incarnation is about bringing divine love into tangible actions that uplift and nourish the human spirit," Dr. Sadler explained. He stressed that this call to love transcends mere tolerance, pushing believers to actively seek the well-being of others, including those who may oppose them.

He encouraged the attendees to let this message shape their preaching and ministry. "As preachers and leaders, we are called to model this incarnation-al love, demonstrating through our actions and words the possibility of true human flourishing," Dr. Sadler urged.

The Centering Moment set a contemplative and inspirational tone for the day's proceedings. It reminded all present of the transformative power of living out the teachings of Jesus in practical, everyday ways. Dr. Sadler's insights provided a fitting foundation for the Institute's focus on compelling and culturally relevant preaching.

After the centering moment with Dr. Sadler, our morning preliminary speaker was Dr. Teresa Fry Brown, a renowned scholar and preacher who delivered an insightful session on "Black Methodist Preaching." Her presentation offered a rich overview of the historical and contemporary dimensions of Black Methodist preaching, exploring its foundations, evolution, and unique characteristics



Dr. Fry Brown began by tracing the roots of Methodist preaching to the early 1820s, highlighting the Wesleyan model as a response to membership decline. She then delved into the distinctive features of Black Methodist preaching, characterized by a strong oral tradition, narrative storytelling, and "plantation protocol," a term she used to describe the historical context and cultural practices that shaped early Black preaching styles. Dr. Fry Brown emphasized the role of Black preachers like Richard Allen, James Varick, and Hoosier, who integrated Quaker quietism with Methodist zeal. This combination created a unique preaching style that resonated with African American congregations.

She also highlighted the transition from classical to contemporary Black preaching, emphasizing the moral character of the Bible, imaginative elaboration, and the use of call and response. However, she cautioned against potential pitfalls, such as becoming predictable or theologically shallow.

During the Lunch and Learn luncheon, Dr. Howard-John Wesley discussed the topic "Preaching is a Marathon, Not a Sprint," which



allowed attendees to focus on the continuous development and refinement of preaching skills. Seven essential steps to becoming a better preacher were outlined, including listening to other preachers, persistent study, and living with the Scriptures.

Dr. Wesley stressed the importance of practice in preaching, noting that "practice does not make perfect; practice makes permanent." He emphasized that excellence in preaching is not accidental but a result of deliberate effort and continual self-assessment.

The session concluded with a discussion on evaluating one's preaching, underscoring that the pulpit is "the one place we can get away with mediocrity and the last place where it should be found." Preachers were encouraged to seek feedback and strive for excellence, ensuring their messages were substantive, well-structured, and stylistically compelling.

Dr. Wesley shared various rhetorical tools to enhance preaching, including illustrations, alliteration, intertextuality, and humor. He advised preachers to listen to other voices to broaden their perspectives and enrich their preaching style.

Later that day, attendees broke into groups for different lecturing sessions regarding their time in ministry and academic status. This allowed presenters to gain more insight and provide dialogue with attendees based on the expertise and information provided for them.

The second day concluded with a glory-filled closing service preached by Dr. Dominique A. Robinson Isaiah 6:1 "The Requirements to be Compelling". Her sermon focused on seeking God's presence and then in his presence you can recognize that God has need of you. Dr. Robinson also mentioned that we have to be able to embrace death and embrace what needs and has died. In this new season, it was in dark places we were able to see God even through the pandemic. She highlighted that we should not be the king. King Uzziah misinterpreted his role that led him to be struck with leprosy. In our church, we have become the "king" and not until oppressive systems in the Church die that people will see God.

The two-day launch of the Compelling Preaching Institute was an incredible success. From the valuable information shared to the engaging presenters and the enriching fellowship, the event exceeded expectations. The A.M.E. Zion Church is eagerly anticipating the next institute, which will provide an opportunity for scholars, preachers, and laity to embrace and deepen their understanding of the art of preaching.



# The Virginia Annual Conference Holds 158th Session



By Angel Eason, Lifestyle Editor  
Photos By Mrs. Regina Rivera

The Quadrennial Theme: “The Freedom Church: A Movement Empowered by the Holy Spirit –Strengthening Our Fellowship, Serving Our Flock, Sharing Our Faith and Securing Our Future”

*“Studies have shown that it’s not that young adults are less spiritual than millennials; it’s that they are less tolerant of inauthentic people. They believe they don’t have to go to institutionalized churches to be spiritually vibrant. I believe that is a drastic error. The trick of the enemy is always to distract us from the things that make us strong. What has made our community strong is family, community, and the church.” - Bishop W. Darin Moore during the Episcopal Address*

The 158th Session of the Virginia Annual Conference was held June 20 - 23, 2024, at the Sheraton Hotel in Norfolk, Virginia. Bishop W. Darin Moore serves as the Presiding Prelate. Mrs. Devieta Moore serves as the Missionary Supervisor. There are three districts under the Virginia Conference: The Newport News District under the leadership of Host Presiding Elder Rev. Dr. Vincent Jones, The Norfolk District under the leadership of Presiding Elder Rev. Kenneth Crowder, and the Petersburg District under the leadership of Rev. T. Kenneth Venable.

The Communion Service ushered in a special anointing that filled the room. Rev. Dr. Kenneth Zollicoffer, Pastor of David Temple A.M.E. Zion Church, delivered the communion meditation, “God Still Hears the Blood (Genesis 4:1-10).”

The Lay Council Luncheon was held in the afternoon hour and officers were installed and new members received their stoles during the special ceremony led by Bro. William English, the Virginia Conference Lay Council President.

During the Episcopal address, Bishop W. Darin Moore asked the leaders, “Do you want to be made well?” He suggested that rather than having a planning meeting, a retreat to create goals would be better. He preached a word: Mic check, one, two, three....

The Christian Education Service was held on Thursday evening. Rev. Dr. Lester A. McCorn, the 13th President of Clinton College, delivered the sermon - “They Not Like Us” (1 Peter 2:10).” A spin on the



THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH  
MID-ATLANTIC EPISCOPAL DISTRICT

## THE 158TH SESSION OF THE VIRGINIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Mrs. Devieta C. Moore, Missionary Supervisor  
Bishop W. Darin Moore, Presiding Prelate  
Mid-Atlantic Episcopal District

Presiding Elder Vincent M. Jones, Sr. Newport News District  
Presiding Elder Kenneth W. Crowder Norfolk District  
Presiding Elder T. Kenneth Venable Petersburg District

HOLY COMMUNION MEDITATION  
Rev. Dr. Kenneth L. Zollicoffer, Pastor  
David Temple A.M.E. Zion Church  
Courtland, VA

EDUCATION NIGHT PREACHER  
Rev. Dr. Lester Agyei McCorn  
President, Clinton College  
Rock Hill, South Carolina

FRIDAY MORNING MEDITATION  
Rev. Alma Coles Charles, Pastor  
St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church  
Meredithville, VA

WHOMS CONVOCATION PRESENTER  
Mrs. Sandra B. Crowder,  
International President  
The A.M.E. Zion Church WHOMS

SCHOOL OF THE PROPHETS PRESENTER  
Mr. Darin Kent, CCO  
The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church  
Chief Communications Officer  
18th Editor in Chief of the Star of Zion

MISSIONARY NIGHT PREACHER  
Rev. Sheleta E. Fomby  
Sepania Ministries, Inc.  
Washington, DC

SATURDAY MORNING MEDITATION  
Rev. Kevin L. Knight, Pastor  
Red Oak Grove A.M.E. Zion Church  
Gates, NC

THURSDAY - SUNDAY JUNE 20 -23- 2024  
NORFOLK SHERATON HOTEL  
777 WATERSIDE DRIVE, NORFOLK, VA 23510

song, “They Not Like Us” by Kendrick Lamar #IYKYK. The Stoling ceremony was held for Christian educators led by Rev. Dr. Sandi B. Hutchinson.

On Friday morning, Reverend Alma Coles Charles, pastor of St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church, delivered the morning meditation.

The Missionary Convocation led by Missionary Supervisor, Mrs. Devieta Moore, was held on Friday afternoon, Mrs. Sandra B. Crowder, the International President of the Women’s Home and Overseas Missionary Society presented on the Journey through Self Care and Wellness. Rev. Wilmer Williams was the Meditation Speaker for the Missionary Luncheon which focused on self-care and mental health.





Mr. Darin Kent, the Chief Communications Officer and Editor of the Star of Zion, presented on Securing Our Future. He reminded the laity and clergy the power of technology and social media and ways to utilize them for the uplifting of the kingdom.

The Missionary Candlelight Service was held on Friday evening. Rev. Sheleta E. Fomby delivered a powerful message. A highlight of her message was, “What do you do when the God you expect, is not the God that you experience?”

Saturday morning, the Christian Educators hosted the Christian Education Convocation led by Rev. Dr. Sandi B. Hutchinson, Mid-Atlantic Co-Episcopal Director, and Virginia Conference Director. Each district came together to honor the Bishop and the 2024 graduates.

The Lay Council recognized the scholarship winners from each district. Each recipient received \$5,000 for the academic year.

The Scholarship Recipients are:

Jeremiah Hinton, Norfolk District, member of the Zion Chester A.M.E. Zion Church

Tatiana Stevens, Newport News District, member of Greater Walters A.M.E. Zion Church

A Red Carpet Affair: “Remember the Time,” The Quadrennial Banquet was held on Saturday night honoring the Bishop. It was a night filled



with joy, laughter, and dancing as the Mid-Atlantic shared farewell messages to the Bishop and Missionary Supervisor.

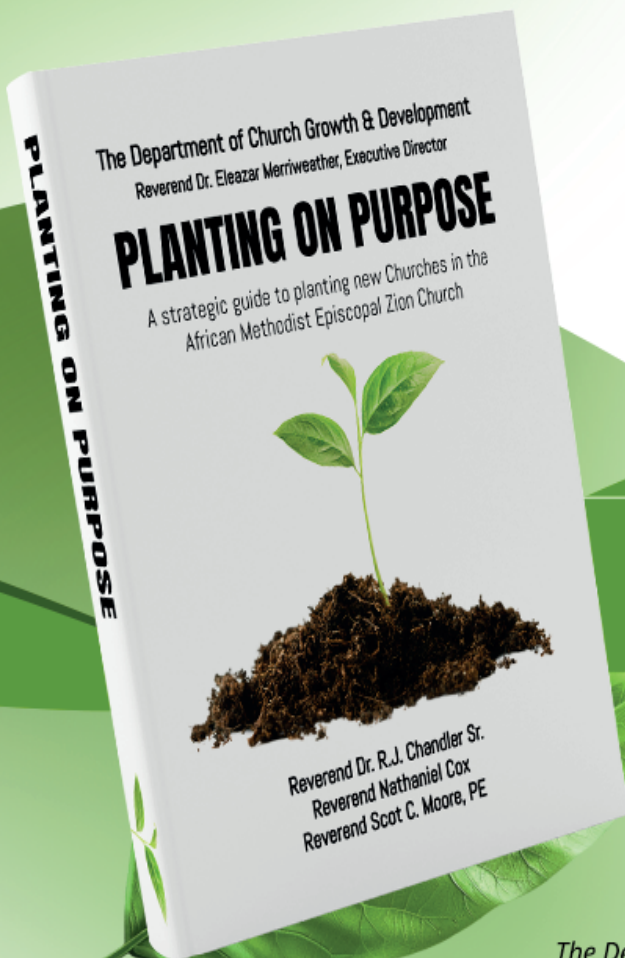
Bishop Darin W. Moore shared a powerful message during the Sunday worship service. The multigenerational Ushers shined during the Grand March and had everyone on their feet. The conference wrapped up with the reading of appointments. The closing hymn was “God Be With You Till We Meet Again.”

The conference closed with reading of appointments and farewells to Bishop W. Darin Moore and Missionary Supervisor Devieta Moore as they transitioned to a different Episcopal area.

**The Department of Church Growth & Development**  
 Reverend Dr. Eleazar Merriweather, Executive Director

**PLANTING ON PURPOSE**

A strategic guide to planting new Churches  
 in the **African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church**



PRICE

**\$25.00**

**BY REV. DR. R.J. CHANDLER SR. (AUTHOR),  
 NATHANIEL B COX (AUTHOR),  
 SCOT C MOORE (AUTHOR)**

**ON SALE NOW**



*The Department of Church Growth & Development (CGD) has assembled an exceptional team of pastors with a wealth of experience and expertise. These leaders are dedicated to coaching and educating others in the principles and practices of planting new churches. Their insights and knowledge form the backbone of this manual, which we pray will provide a valuable resource for those called to the ministry of church planting.*

# THE MARGARET S. WILLIE SCHOLARSHIP FUND CONGRATULATES THE 2024 RECIPIENTS

By Joy Williamson-Foster, Connectional Chairman Life Members Council & Scholarship Committee Chairman

The Margaret S. Willie Scholarship Fund was established in 1984 at a Women's Home and Overseas Missionary Society Executive Board Meeting held in Kansas City, Missouri. Mrs. Margaret S. Willie, 8th General Chairman of the Life Members Council along with her husband, Mr. Earl Willie provided the initial funds to establish the Scholarship. For over 39 years, the Margaret S. Willie Scholarship fund has awarded over eighty well deserving students attending A.M.E. Zion

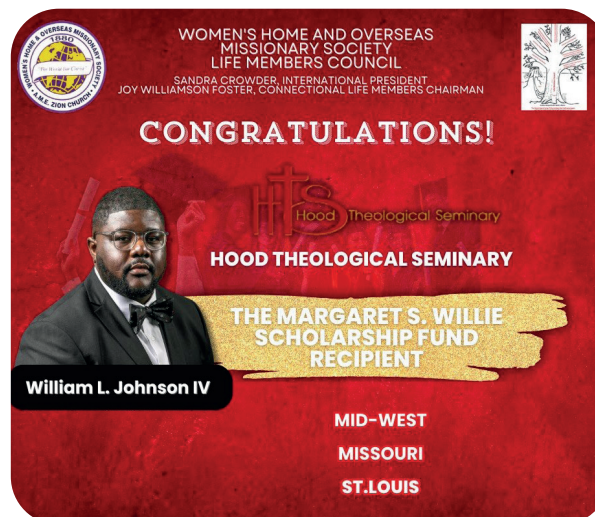
Colleges and Universities.

The Women's Home and Overseas Missionary Society, Mrs. Sandra B. Crowder International President, and Mrs. Joy Williamson-Foster, Connectional Chairman, Life Members Council, congratulate the 2024 Margaret S. Willie Scholarship recipients.

We salute our 2024 Scholarship recipients and wish them a wonderful academic year.



~ Miss Kaity Zungbey- a student at Livingstone College is from the Western West Africa Episcopal District, East Ghana Annual Conference.



~Mr. William Johnson IV -a student at Hood Theological Seminary is from the Mid-West Episcopal District, Missouri Annual Conference.



~Rev. Karen Robinson-a student at Hood Theological Seminary is from the Mid-Atlantic Episcopal District, East Tennessee & Virginia Annual Conference.

*Continued from pg 2* .....

and I will set them over you" (Deut. 1:13). This verse alone gives legitimacy to a prescribed structure of rule. This structure has grown and become a sophisticated paradigm of order, which necessarily has adopted a democratic form of selection that we know as voting.

Jesus Christ Himself made it clear one day that He did, indeed, uphold the law of the land concerning the collection of taxes. Recall the story that has the Pharisees trying to catch Jesus in an error by asking Him whether they should pay taxes. After having them bring a denarius to Him, Jesus asked them whose image was on the coin. When they answered that it was Caesar's, Jesus gave them a straightforward, simple response: "Give unto Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's" (Mark 12:1-17).

What, then, is Caesar's (the government's)? Paying taxes is Caesar's. Doing jury duty is Caesar's. True, these practices are mandated by the law of the land and are held to The Letter of the Law, but we can make an argument for classifying voting as belonging to Caesar in the Spirit of the Law. No one is forced to vote. That is the beauty of it

all; by strife and tribulation, we have gained the privilege and right to vote. Let's take it a step further. The Word of God tells us to "Carry one another's burdens" (Gal 6:2), "As far as it depends on you, live at peace with one another" (Rom. 12:18), as well as "...love one another..." (John 15:12).

The above three scripture verses by no means place a demand on anyone to vote, but these verses speak of helping one another, taking the responsibility to live in peace, and loving one another. Can we not say, then, that voting is functioning under government rule in the Spirit of the Law and that Jesus upheld the Letter of the Law but honored the Spirit of the Law? Since Jesus obeyed all of these moral laws, helping others, bringing peace, and loving all, and since voting, itself, is a people carrying the burden of government life together, helping to bring about peace and love together – can we not say that voting is, for sure, THE JESUS THING TO DO!





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

# You Must Be Registered to Vote



By Debra Chappelle-Polk, Star of Zion Spotlight Editor

### VOTER REGISTRATION TIPS:

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

**Other ways to Register:** Download the National Mail Voter Registration Form. Check with local government offices to see if you can register in person. Register at your Department of Motor Vehicle Office and Armed Forces Recruitment Centers. Contact state and county public assistance offices such as SNAP/food stamps.

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

There are several online sites with information regarding voting requirements. The U.S. Vote Foundation is one such organization that provides voter information.

The table below lists the early voting (EV) dates.

**Notes:(1) - All mail election. This state conducts elections entirely by mail. All registered voters should automatically receive a mail-in ballot.**

**Definitions: EARLY VOTING (EV):** Early voting usually refers to voting that takes place at specially designated early voting sites inside a voting booth.

**IN-PERSON ABSENTEE VOTING (IPA):** In-person absentee voting usually refers to going through the absentee balloting process in-person at a local election office.

While these two terms are often used interchangeably to refer to any voting done in-person before election day - most states only use one or the other.

For more voting information, visit [All States' 2024 Early Voting Dates Chart | U.S. Vote Foundation](#)

2024 U.S. Vote Foundation is a 501(c)3 registered non-profit organization and does not support or oppose any political candidate or party. Overseas Vote is an Initiative of the U.S. Vote Foundation.

## Voting Dates By State

State	Early Voting	In-Person Absentee	2024 Election Dates	2024 Gen Election EV Dates
Alabama			Alabama Election Dates	Early voting not offered in AL
Alaska		✓	Alaska Election Dates	Mon Oct 21 - Tue Nov 5
Arizona		✓	Arizona Election Dates	Wed Oct 9 - Fri Nov 1
Arkansas	✓		Arkansas Election Dates	Mon Oct 21 - Mon Nov 4
California <sup>(1)</sup>		✓	California Election Dates	Mon Oct 7 - Tue Nov 5

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Continued on next page

State	Early Voting	In-Person Absentee	2024 Election Dates	2024 Gen Election EV Dates
Colorado <sup>(1)</sup>	✓		Colorado Election Dates	Mon Oct 21 - Mon Nov 4
Connecticut	✓		Connecticut Election Dates	Mon Oct 21 - Sun Nov 3
Delaware	✓		Delaware Election Dates	Fri Oct 25 - Sun Nov 3
District of Columbia	✓		District of Columbia Election Dates	Mon Oct 28 - Sun Nov 3
Florida	✓		Florida Election Dates	Sat Oct 26 - Sat Nov 2
Georgia	✓		Georgia Election Dates	Thu Oct 15 - Fri Nov 1
Guam		✓	Guam Election Dates	Mon Oct 7 - Thu Oct 31
Hawaii <sup>(1)</sup>	✓		Hawaii Election Dates	Tue Oct 22 - Tue Nov 5
Idaho		✓	Idaho Election Dates	Mon Oct 21 - Fri Nov 1
Illinois	✓		Illinois Election Dates	Thu Sep 26 - Mon Nov 4
Indiana		✓	Indiana Election Dates	Tue Oct 8 - Mon Nov 4
Iowa		✓	Iowa Election Dates	Wed Oct 16 - Mon Nov 4
Kansas		✓	Kansas Election Dates	Wed Oct 16 - Mon Nov 4
Kentucky		✓	Kentucky Election Dates	Thu Oct 31 - Sat Nov 2
Louisiana	✓		Louisiana Election Dates	Fri Oct 18 - Tue Oct 29
Maine		✓	Maine Election Dates	Sun Oct 6 - Thu Oct 31
Maryland	✓		Maryland Election Dates	Thu Oct 24 - Thu Oct 31
Massachusetts	✓		Massachusetts Election Dates	Sat Oct 19 - Fri Nov 1
Michigan		✓	Michigan Election Dates	Sat Oct 26 - Sun Nov 3
Minnesota		✓	Minnesota Election Dates	Fri Sep 20 - Mon Nov 4
Mississippi		✓	Mississippi Election Dates	Mon Sep 23 - Sat Nov 2
Missouri		✓	Missouri Election Dates	Tue Sep 17 - Mon Nov 4 (with excuse) Tue Oct 22 - Mon Nov 4 (without excuse)
Montana		✓	Montana Election Dates	Mon Oct 7 - Mon Nov 4
Nebraska		✓	Nebraska Election Dates	Mon Oct 7 - Mon Nov 4

State	Early Voting	In-Person Absentee	2024 Election Dates	2024 Gen Election EV Dates
Nevada <sup>(1)</sup>		✓	Nevada Election Dates	Sat Oct 12 - Fri Nov 1
New Hampshire			New Hampshire Election Dates	Early voting not offered in NH
New Jersey	✓		New Jersey Election Dates	Sat Oct 26 - Sun Nov 3
New Mexico	✓		New Mexico Election Dates	Tue Oct 8 - Tue Nov 5
New York	✓		New York Election Dates	Sat Oct 26 - Sun Nov 3
North Carolina		✓	North Carolina Election Dates	Thu Oct 17 - Sat Nov 2
North Dakota	✓		North Dakota Election Dates	Contact Local Election Office to Confirm Dates and Times
Ohio		✓	Ohio Election Dates	Tue Oct 8 - Sun Nov 3
Oklahoma		✓	Oklahoma Election Dates	Wed Oct 30 - Sat Nov 2
Oregon <sup>(1)</sup>		✓	Oregon Election Dates	Thu Oct 31 - Tue Nov 5
Pennsylvania		✓	Pennsylvania Election Dates	Mon Sep 16 - Tue Nov 5
Rhode Island	✓		Rhode Island Election Dates	Wed Oct 16 - Mon Nov 4
South Carolina	✓		South Carolina Election Dates	Mon Oct 21 - Sat Nov 2
South Dakota		✓	South Dakota Election Dates	Fri Sep 20 - Mon Nov 4
Tennessee	✓		Tennessee Election Dates	Wed Oct 16 - Thu Oct 31
Texas	✓		Texas Election Dates	Mon Oct 21 - Fri Nov 1
Utah <sup>(1)</sup>	✓		Utah Election Dates	Tue Oct 22 - Fri Nov 1
Vermont <sup>(1)</sup>		✓	Vermont Election Dates	Tue Oct 1 - Mon Nov 4
Virginia		✓	Virginia Election Dates	Fri Sep 20 - Mon Nov 4
Virgin Islands	✓		Virgin Islands Election Dates	Mon Oct 14 - Mon Oct 28
Washington <sup>(1)</sup>	✓		Washington Election Dates	Fri Oct 18 - Tue Nov 5
West Virginia	✓		West Virginia Election Dates	Wed Oct 23 - Sat Nov 2
Wisconsin		✓	Wisconsin Election Dates	Tue Oct 22 - Sun Nov 3
Wyoming	✓		Wyoming Election Dates	Tue Oct 8 - Mon Nov 4



Rev. Dierdre R. Parker  
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# Meet Dr. Teresa L. Fry Brown

By Rev. Dierdre R. Parker, Entertainment & the Arts Editor  
Photos By Dierdre R. Parker & Roderick Josey

TERESA L. FRY BROWN IS A GLASS CEILING SMASHER.

As we sit in the moment of having a woman as the Democratic Presidential Nominee and electing only the *second* woman bishop in our beloved Zion's 228-year history and considering the draconian proposals put forth in Project 2025, it is obvious why women's voices in leadership roles are necessary. While our voices are necessary, they are often resisted, devalued, or outright ignored.



During the General Conference, I had the opportunity to sit and talk with Reverend Dr. Teresa Fry Brown. Dr. Fry Brown was one of the speakers for the Compelling Preaching Initiative. She is herself a glass ceiling breaker. We sat in the room that housed the Black History Exhibit created by Dr. Mary Love.

Who is Dr. Teresa Fry Brown?

Dr. Teresa Fry Brown is the Bandy Professor of Preaching in the Candler School of Theology at Emory University. Many consider this position to be the country's premier chair in Homiletics. She was the first African American woman to attain the rank of full professor. These few accomplishments mentioned do not begin to scratch the surface of the depths of Dr. Teresa L. Fry Brown. She has authored four books, including *Can a Sistah Get A Little Help: Encouragement for Black Women in Ministry*. Her accolades are many. She continues to rack them up. I wanted to know what inspires her and what strengthens her. I wanted to know what the road to shattering glass ceilings was paved with. As I sat talking to a woman currently *making* black history, we were surrounded by pictures of Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman; I felt connected to something much bigger than myself.

**Would you introduce yourself to us?**

I usually say I'm William and Naomi's child from Independence, MO. What I did, I have been able to accomplish by the grace of God. My professional titles are Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, GA. I am The Bandy professor of preaching at Candler. In my church, I'm the President of the General Officers Council, as Executive Director of Research and Scholarship, Editor of the A.M.E. Review, and historiographer. A post that I retire from on August 28th of this year. Praise God, after 12 years, I was elected in 2012.

My personal titles are, I am the second oldest child of William and Naomi Fry from Independence, MO. I am the older sister who raised the five younger ones. Because my brother died, I'm now the matriarch of the family. I am a mother to Veronica Nadine, my only child, and a grandmother to Jonathan David Perry, my grandson.

I was married to Frank David Brown for 23 years, and then he died. I also have two children, bonus children Christopher and Karen, five grandsons, and, I think, four great-grandchildren.

They live in Colorado, which is a place away from where I am now.

I'm a sister, an aunt, a friend, a preacher, a teacher, and an author. I think that's it.

**Well, that's a lot.**

Oh, a cook, a singer, a dancer (we laugh). Uh. Some years ago, I started a liturgical Dance group at my church for women over 50. They've proliferated across Atlanta and are called the platinum praise dancers. My oldest dancer was 84.

**That is wonderful.**

So yes, that's what I do.

**You mentioned poetry when you were speaking the other night. Do you write poetry?**

When I write sermons, the poet comes out because of my love of language. I grew up in a time when you had to memorize all kinds of things. We had to memorize Paul Laurence Dunbar, and my mother was a church musician, so music was always in the background of everything we did. I think is absolutely phenomenal and something that I wish more people were attentive to. I was a speech-language pathologist in one of my earlier careers, so I know the power of voice. The power of stringing together vowels, consonants, and all these other kinds of things to create a word that hasn't been there before is phenomenal.



When I started college, I majored in German and took six years of Latin. There's just something about the human voice and the mind. As a speech-language pathologist, I helped people reattach to language and worked with children, adults, and stroke patients. Language is the essence of your soul.

A lot of my work, even in teaching preaching, is embodiment. It is how we use our voices, sounds, and presence in a room and in our bodies. This is very interesting because of my introverted nature. My mother's friend said they did not know I had a face until I was eighteen; I was such an introvert.

I grew up in Independence, MO, a little hamlet outside of Kansas City, where there were 100 black people in a population of about 100,000 people. I transported myself out of poverty and racism and what I now know is sexual oppression by reading. I read widely. My first love was language. I have collections of books, thousands of books. I center myself when I can write something or play with language. If I can play with language, it stimulates something in me. It's both soothing, creative, and generative.

**Wow, you just blew my mind. I grew up reading the dictionary. I also love words.**

I have to consider how people receive language. When I write, I may not use long sentences, metaphors, or similar elements. My contemporaries think I do too much. Younger people want to add music to their writing. They tell me they're drawn to it because they can create and put their own music to it.

I have a great love of music. Music is everywhere in our house, and my late husband also had a beautiful tenor voice. On road trips were singing everything. Understand that we hear music in utero. The type

of music we adhere to is played for us in utero. I'm watching children's shows now. The music of the children's shows is such that it hooks them. And it tends to go more to the higher register, which I find very interesting. I wonder what it does to children with hearing loss who cannot hear the higher registers. Are they left off from all these little children's shows? You didn't ask me that, but that's where my head goes. As a former speech-language pathologist, I taught anatomy, neurology, physiology, and biology, and the types of readings I do span disciplines.

### On Education

You cannot succeed with entitlement. You can't succeed with someone doing your work for you and shortcutting what you're doing.

**Yes. It appears that it has become more important for students to be able to pass tests than to learn the material or to develop critical thinking.**

My daughter is a teacher. For the last 17 years, she has worked in middle school. Her doctoral research was on African American males. One of the things in her research and some other people that I've talked to who teach now in middle school is when school boards who often didn't understand education were elected, but that didn't mean it exactly moved to the test being the standard. They're the teachers with the entire year teaching children how to pass a test but not how to consume and digest information. Yeah. So that's been going on for 20 years, leading to people who come into jobs or, dare I say, no, I will say people who come through boards of examiners (the A.M.E. version of Conference Studies). They will expect to be passed on to big churches and never have to work their way through to get to know the people in the 1st place, leading to more dysfunction in ministry (and people leaving it) than ever before.

**I want to shift gears, and I want you to talk a little bit about womanism.**

**We're in such an exciting time right now because we will elect the first Black Woman President of the United States. Throughout your journey, I know that it wasn't easy, given all that you've accomplished.**

Uh. I could spend all day showing you the scars, but I won't. Some of them are still weeping. I was in seminary in 85. Jackie Grant, Doris Williams, Emilie Townes, and Katie Cannon. We're at Union. The study of Black women's history, raising black women's voices, and who black women are began there in a seminary setting, of women who are also church women. My grandmother was the womanist that they studied. They studied black women in history to see how they navigated being human in dehumanizing situations. Not just from the majority race but also in their own homes. How women of faith who were raised in this system raised the babies, including the boy babies for white, to take their spot in society. But you don't have a brain; you have to submit, not the biblical submission. You have to be less than. And so when they started that study, I was in seminary.

My grandparents desegregated the library in Sedalia, MO, so their children could have a place to get the books. I did not know that until I was forty-five because my grandmother was a domestic. My grandfather was the head of the Deacon board at the church and the treasurer of the church, and he was the mechanic. My grandmother was a member of the missionary society, and she was a domestic on my father's side. My step-grandmother was a domestic. My grandfather was a Pullman Porter. So they all worked in these jobs that were looked at as, if we look at the Republican playbook, are Black jobs.

So, in the 60's, I'm going around with my Angela Davis 'Fro and black gaucho pants and hat, and I'm, you know, I'm raising money for protest and everything else. I went through a period where I was



embarrassed because my grandparents were domestics, and I would see them in public: yes, *ma'am*, and no, *ma'am*. My grandmother is having to take care of white children. And I was wearing clothes that they brought home, food, and all that other stuff.

But I'm this radical out here doing my thing, right? When I was a child, I spoke as a child... By the time I get to seminary. I had a master's degree and a bachelor's degree. I had been in law school. I started studying the Lives of Historically black women. I was like, wait a minute. These are women in my family.

That's the grounding of womanism. So, when we talk about critical engagement and womanism, that means we're thinking people; that we have brains, but we also think of ways to navigate oppressive situations so that the enemy doesn't *know* what we think. So, I learned that in male-structured environments (things that I've been in forever because I'm doing all this stuff that men are supposed to do: ministry, leadership, and

the academy), I learned how to have an idea and give just enough of it away so they think they came up with it. But it's *my* idea, and I can go ahead and work on that thing because they're going to be too lazy to do what I just gave them the idea for. I get permission to do what I know is going to be best. That's what you do. This is how my grandmother navigated everything to the point that when the people she worked for 50 years were sick and dying, their children cared so much for my grandmother that they wouldn't make a move unless Tessie told them to do it.

After my grandfather died, my grandmother was getting close to 100. They drove across town to make sure she had food and care in her house because Tessie's the one who raised them. When we talk about traditional communalism, that means that we care. Yes, we're individuals, but we care about the entire body of people. That outlier over there, the little girl who suffered something that she can't articulate, that we don't need to know everything about it, but we know because we're paying attention that there's something in that child that needs to be covered, that needs some intercession, that needs to be advocated for without her having to tell you what it is. And not to inflict more pain on whatever she/he is going through or trying to decide. My grandmother taught me that I don't have to be like someone else to do what God called me to do. I like music, and I like to write. I intercede when labels come because that's still my child regardless of race, ethnicity, or sexuality.

This is not the end of my conversation with Dr. Teresa L. Fry Brown, but this is where I will stop. The conversation was extremely rich and seasoned generously, with windfalls of wisdom drizzled in a savory vocabulary that punctuated passion with humor and experiential flavor. In this exciting and pivotal moment in the history of this country and the life of our church, I pray that we are ready as a church and as individuals for this season as God shines new light on the ways that we can truly win with black women.

For books or more information, links below

<https://candler.emory.edu/faculty-profiles/teresa-l-fry-brown/>

<https://www.wob.com/en-us/books/author/teresa-l-fry-brown>

[https://www.instagram.com/teresa\\_fry\\_brown\\_/?hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/teresa_fry_brown_/?hl=en)

# Earth, Wind & Fire: Still Fire After 50 Years

By Asia Briana Brown



Queue the music: that famous guitar riff and explosive horn section introduces arguably the greatest band to take the stage: Earth, Wind & Fire. “You’re a shining star / No matter who you are / Shining bright to see / What you can truly be.” On Tuesday, August 13, 2024, Earth, Wind & Fire set Charlotte ablaze during a concert at the PNC Music Pavilion. Headlining their Heart & Soul tour with the band Chicago this year, Earth, Wind & Fire ignited the Charlotte crowd by performing a string of their hit songs, which has captivated diverse audiences for more than fifty years.

The Heart and Soul tour marked my first Earth, Wind & Fire concert. Although I was born nearly two decades after the band’s inception, my childhood was surrounded by the joyful melodies of Maurice White, Philip Bailey, Verdine White, and their incredible horn section. I thank my mom, who shared her love of one of her favorite bands with me throughout my childhood and into adulthood. I remember Mom having EW&F’s All ‘n All album on cassette tape, which she kept in a black hardback briefcase, alongside hundreds of other cassette tapes of her favorite artists.



During our frequent road trips together, Mom would always have Earth, Wind & Fire on rotation: among her favorite songs to sing were “Fantasy,” “September,” and “Boogie Wonderland.” For years, “Let’s Groove Tonight,” “Boogie Wonderland,” and “Fantasy” have become my favorite EW&F songs. So, when Earth, Wind & Fire performed these songs at the PNC Music Pavilion back-to-back—“Fantasy,” “Boogie Wonderland,” “Let’s Groove Tonight,” and “September”—the whole crowd stayed on their feet: jamming, clapping, singing, and smiling. What I experienced a glimpse of during Chicago’s performance of their hits, I embodied during EW&F’s performance: I could feel the emotion from all the generations that have experienced this band from the 1970s to today.

I could see my mom dancing in the living room and at her last birthday celebration in March 2021. Especially during Earth, Wind & Fire’s performance of “Fantasy”—which I have been replaying in recent weeks—I felt as if I were in tune with my mom, singing alongside her in the car during a road trip. I could hear her melodic voice and see her joy whenever she grooved to EW&F songs or recounted a story from her earlier years in New Orleans, watching her mother and other family members, many of whom are now deceased, dance their stress away to the soulful, electrifying sounds of Earth, Wind & Fire.

There were so many memorable moments during Earth, Wind & Fire’s performance at the PNC Music Pavilion. One remarkable note is that the group sounds the same as their albums and their other live performances that I have watched on television. To preserve their sound for over fifty years, look and move sveltely—even nearly eight years after the death of their founder and bandleader, Maurice White—Earth, Wind & Fire still “got it” as folks say. The love and unity model that White envisioned for this group was so palpable and visible in Charlotte at the PNC Music Pavilion: a diverse audience that spanned age and racial backgrounds celebrated together. The intergenerational impact that Earth, Wind & Fire has is one of many distinguishable traits of the band’s staying power and cultural relevance.

I enjoyed the energy and the uplifting atmosphere that Earth, Wind & Fire cultivated in Charlotte, and I felt their performance was too short when they bowed before the audience. The band closed the show by reuniting with Chicago to perform a few more hits from each band.

EW&F opened with “In the Stone” and performed “Got to Get You Into My Life” with Chicago, concluding a thrilling evening where multiple generations—parents, grandparents, young adults, aunts, and uncles—came together to share their love for two beloved music groups.

Before departing at the PNC Music Pavilion, the couple in the row beside me—who were dancing and singing with beers in tow throughout Earth, Wind & Fire’s performance—told me that I had a “glow” while the band was onstage and asked me how I knew EW&F because I “looked so young.” I did not have time to say, “My mom,” as they were passing me to exit the row, but I laughed as I greeted them on their way out.

Earth, Wind, & Fire is not “old school.” This band sounds both new and nostalgic; the group members are both a pastime and a good time. You can see both your parents’ era and a fun era. That is greatness, folks: Earth, Wind & Fire. You can see the band in concert in more select cities this year on its Heart & Soul Tour.

Do not forget to bring your groove. You cannot sit down once Earth, Wind & Fire enters the stage.

# The Glow Up

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

There was a crisp, calm anticipation in the air for what was to come. As we entered, we were given our choice of light-up "party favors." As we entered the worship space, the lights were dim, but the glow-ry of the Lord met us there.

The Glow Up service opened with intercessory prayer by Rev. Jessica Franks and Mr. Noah Waters. These young people petitioned heaven on behalf of their peers, our church, and our world. After the thermostat was set, the VICYC/YACM Choir led us into worship as we let the Glory of the Lord Rise among us.

The Choir singing was beautifully harmonious and filled with genuine adoration for the Lord. Rev. Lloyd Nevins led the choir in a rousing rendition of God is My Everything that brought the house down. But that second selection, "I've Been Through Too Much (not to Worship Him)" was sung with such passion and conviction that every corner of the room was filled with the manifested "glow-ry".



There was one young man whose worship touched my heart. I could see on his face that his worship was experiential. I saw him the next day and I

had an opportunity to ask him about the service. I asked him what was behind his worship. He said, "I just thought about how good He's been, and I just couldn't help it." That young man was R.J. Chandler. (Shout out to his parents, right?)

Bishop Frencher introduced the speakers, Rev. Kiara Watson, pastor of Rock Hill A.M.E. This was a tag-team preaching exhibition. Church, Pageland, SC., and Rev. Tyquan Alston, Pastor, St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church. After a rousing version of "Excellent" my first time experiencing tag-team preaching began. Rev. Watson took the podium first.

1 Timothy 6:6-12 MSG

The Topic was "That's enough"

Up first, Rev. Watson reminded us that on social media, we often see only a snapshot of other people's lives and then want to imitate them. When you try to be like everybody else, you won't know who you are. There will be times and places when some pruning will have to be done. If you get so frustrated with your pruning season, you might miss out on your purpose.

What does it mean to live a godly life of Worship? It means understanding that in God, you are enough. Your heart posture is important. Your heart posture is rooted in recognizing that God is in control.

Rev. Alston then steps up to tell us of the tension in the text. Rev. Alston contends that the tension is found in verse 10, where it talks of the love of money. When we feel that we deserve better than what God has blessed us with, we become deflated, defeated, and disturbed.

I have never preached at any event bigger than a district gathering, so I



don't know what it is like to preach at the General Conference. I'm sure that it was anxiety-inducing. I must be honest and say that while these preachers are obviously great preachers, I expected something else. It seemed that they had rehearsed it very well. Maybe it was just my perception of what this service would be like. I thought it would be something geared toward a younger audience. An audience whose attention must be captured in 140 characters or less. The only thing that differentiated this service from the others was the age of the preachers and the lighting. I wanted to hear something that would pop out and show ninjas the

Godly Life of Worship. I wanted to see demonstrably that they not like us. I wanted to see costumes instead of clergy collars. I wanted to see a little swag, a little drip, and a little innovation.

We have think-tank conversations on how to engage the younger generations that are missing from our churches, and I feel like we had an awesome opportunity that we did not maximize. This is no shade to the preachers who were on the dais. They did their thing. This is more about looking for ways to find a balance between tradition and innovation. This is about tapping into what could've made this service a crusade where young people are giving themselves to the cause of Christ. Yes, there were young people involved in every aspect of the service. But can we be honest? Most of the young people that we see at our churches have already been convinced. What are we doing to convince the ones who have not? Don't we want to show them how to live the Godly Life of Worship, too?





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



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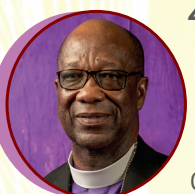
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Dr. Dana Stilley  
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# Politics and the Purse



By Dana G. Stilley, Financial Freedom Editor

Election Day in our country is November 5th this year. Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates are flooding the airwaves with messages designed to convince voters to cast their ballots for them. At the federal level, the major topics of concern for voters include the Israel-Hamas conflict, our nation's borders, gun safety, and the economy.

As we move closer to November, each 'top of the ticket' candidate is expected to outline a policy that will lower inflation, increase jobs, lower taxes, and provide a better financial life for everyone. These issues surely have the capacity to impact our financial future, however, we also must remember that down ballot elections are very important too. In fact, the majority of the legislation that impacts our daily lives is determined by the local elected officials in our respective areas.

Generally, state legislators are responsible for passing a budget and adopting legislation. Budget appropriations often include funding for public schools and the mental health system, fighting crime, and providing affordable housing. Local elections often include county legislators, town supervisors, town councils, mayors, and trustees. Decisions regarding land use, zoning, trash pickup, snow removal, and public safety fall under this level of jurisdiction or trickle down to smaller, more specific boards and commissions made up of persons who were appointed by these elected officials. To pay for these services and more, assessments in the form of taxes are allocated.

Political choices impact the purse. Take the time to familiarize yourself with the values, goals, and promises made by those who are seeking elected office. Are they touting change that will be beneficial to you? Does their platform positively impact your family's finances and the pursuit of financial freedom? Local elections matter, too!

# Ruth Ellen Carrow Grimes

## March 13th, 1940 - August 12th, 2024

### Health & Wellness Editor's Homegoing Tribute to Loving mother, a "Daughter of Zion"

Ruth Ellen Carrow Grimes was born on March 13th, 1940, in Kinston, North Carolina, to the Rev. Eli Edward Carrow and Addie Mae Brewer.



At the tender age of 5 years, Ruth displayed resilience and strength when stricken by Polio. She was eventually able to develop functional ability and continue life with the cheerful optimism and bubbly, ecstatic personality she became known for.

Ruth received her education in the Lenoir County Public School System, attended Adkin High School, where she was an active Cheerleader, and graduated in the Class of 1958.

Ruth relocated to New York City during the tumultuous 1960s. At a time when racial tensions in the U.S. were at an all-time high, she embarked on a career in civil service, serving in the Dept. of Social Services, as well as the 44th Precinct of the New York City Police Department. She also served as an Emergency Dispatcher/ Communications Specialist during her tenure in both the NYPD as well as the Kinston PD.

Upon relocating to Kinston in 1987, Ruth joined the St. Augustus

A.M.E. Zion Church. A piously devout woman who loved the Lord, she exercised her faith diligently through her work in the "Buds of Promise" (a ministry focusing on the Christian Education and development of children and youth). She also balanced this same passion to serve in her professional life as a DT (Developmental Technician) Employee at the Caswell Center in Kinston, which is a state-operated facility that houses and cares for youth, adults, and seniors with special needs.

Ruth's sweet, southern-belle persona and her melodramatic sense of humor was infectious to everyone she encountered. She had several hobbies and pastimes she enjoyed, most of which involved critical thinking mind exercises. She loved to crochet and would create clothing and material to donate to needy children and homeless shelters during the holiday periods. She was also a known "Scrabble Queen" and would routinely play and "take on all newcomers," as she would put it.

Ruth remained strong and battled through many adversities in her life, and persevered as her mobility began to slowly deteriorate due to the post-polio syndrome she battled later in life. She transitioned into glory to be with her Lord on August 12th, 2024, expeditiously.

Ruth will forever be remembered and cherished within the hearts of those who knew her.

*Additional info: my mother was the daughter of the Rev. Eli Carrow, former pastor of St. Thomas AME Zion Church in Haverstraw, New York, and Step-daughter to the Rev. Thelma I. Carrow.*

# Mrs. Minerva "Bebe" Waltower Bass

## January 10, 1932-July 8, 2024

Minerva (Bebe) Waltower Bass was born January 10th, 1932 at Henry Ford Hospital, Detroit MI She was the second of five children. She received her formal education in the Hamtramck, Michigan School System District. Graduating January 1951 with Honors-National Honors Society: She was always very studious and was active in student organizations and was a trailblazer being a member of the Debate Team.

Her education continued as she attended Wayne University, now Wayne State University, Detroit, MI. She pursued advanced training in Laboratory Technology.

Education: Parkside Labs, Martin Place Hospital (Both Locations) Kirwood Hospital, and North Detroit General Hospital. In 1969 she went into Insurance Corporate and was employed at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan where she retired from twice as she completed her work career.

Church Religious Affiliation: Spiritual Christian Evangelism, Born into the Methodist Faith; St. Peter AME Zion Church (Hamtramck, MI,) Christian Education Ministry, The Art Ensemble Choir and having served as Conference Delegate. Changing her religious association when she was baptized as a Jehovah Witness where she served many years along with her husband as a shepherd in the congregation.



Hobbies: Enjoyment of flowers and plants, working in the garden, feeding the birds and squirrels and caring for and feeding stray cats. She also enjoyed craft shows antique shows, and enjoyed Needlepoint crafts. Preceded in Death By: Parents Napoleon and Mary Saxton Waltower, Sibling; Mark and Marian, Eugene and Napoleon and her Beloved (Sweetie Pie) Husband, Bass, Jr.

Minerva made her transition on Monday, July 8th, 2024 at 6:38 pm at Carmont Regional Medical Center, Gastonia, North Carolina.

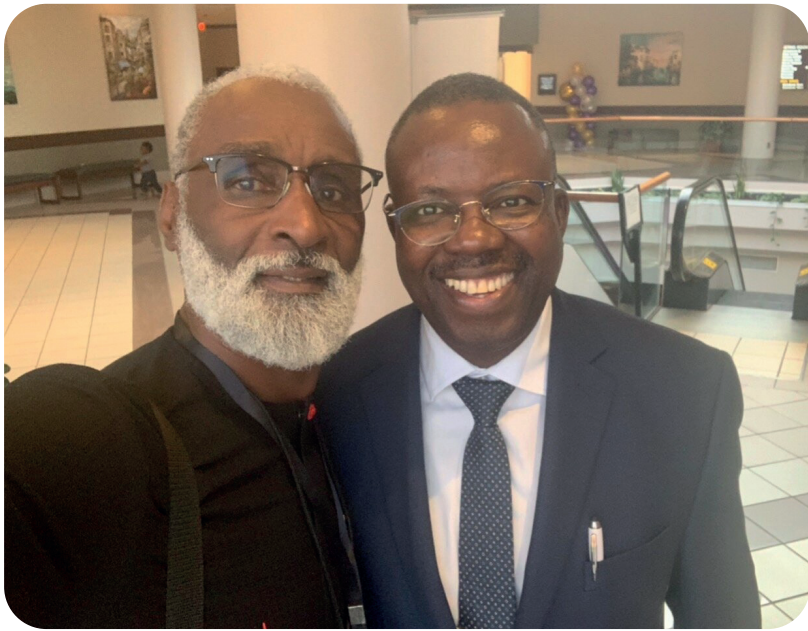
Family to Cherish her memories: Daughter Marguerite (Al) Hamilton; Gastonia, NC, Bonus Grand-Daughters: KaJuana (Scott) Perry, Winston-Salem, NC, MarQuisha Hamilton, Raleigh, NC. Four Bonus Great Grand-Daughters and Great Grand Son, and two Bonus Great Great Granddaughters.

Dear Cousins Sylvia Taylor, Park Chester, Bronx, New York and Sharon Burke, Detroit MI. Brother-in-Laws Ronald (Laraine) Bass, Sr., Detroit, MI and Tyrone (Sharon) Bass, Detroit MI. Longtime neighbor and Special Friend Mattie Thompson, Detroit MI, and a host of nephews, other relatives and many ... many ... friends.



Rev. Ronald Nathan  
World Politics Editor  
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# Spotlight on Bishop Bernardo J. Ngunza



By Rev. Ronald A. Nathan, World Politics Editor

Nathan: Congratulations, Bishop Bernardo Joao Ngunza, on your recent election as the 112th bishop in The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church's line of succession. Your appointment as the third Indigenous prelate in Africa is certainly welcomed.

Bishop Ngunza: Thank you very much for your kind words, Rev. Nathan. I am indebted to God for His call to the Christian ministry and for giving me this opportunity to serve Him and my church, The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, in this leadership capacity. I also want to thank you for this opportunity to speak to the Star of Zion readers about the work and ministry of the Central Southern Africa Episcopal District.

Nathan: "The Central Southern Africa Episcopal District consists of the countries of Angola, North and South Kivu (DRC), Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, and ." "Can you help our readers to understand some of the opportunities and challenges facing the Central Southern Africa Episcopal District?"

Bishop Ngunza: "The total square mileage of the seven countries within this episcopal district is half that of the United States of America, and their joint populations a quarter of that of Europe". "So, we do recognise that this a vast and diverse district with over 350 ethnic groups; this presents us with exciting evangelistic and missions' opportunities". "By God's grace, we look forward to a great harvest."

Nathan: Bishop Ngunza, Angola, has a population of 35 million, of which 60% are 25 years and under. How do you see the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church rising to the challenge this youthful population presents?

Bishop Ngunza: We currently have several activities organized for our nation's youth centered around our Youth department. First, our evangelism committee targets youth through evangelistic outreaches, such as street preaching and watch-night services. Many of our young people come to Jesus Christ and join the church because of these activities.

Second to evangelism is the need for appropriate education for the youth of Angola. We encourage our youth to stay in school or return to school and get educated. However, we are acutely aware that there are many obstacles to gaining a good education, one is finding the finances necessary. Two, those who can access higher education have difficulty finding suitable jobs and end up unemployed. This brings them high levels of frustration and bewilderment, and this leads many of them into drug addiction, alcoholism and prostitution.

If our country is to prosper and take advantage of its considerable wealth, we must have a highly skilled workforce. To have a highly skilled workforce, we must offer our youthful workforce a quality ed-

ucational system for all. These are just some of the challenges we are facing right now, but with the help of God, we are working on ways to assist our youth for the benefit of the church and Angolan society.

Nathan: One of the unique characteristics of the CSAED is that it extends the work of the A.M.E. Zion Church into the Portuguese-speaking community of which Angola and Mozambique are members. Brazil has the largest Portuguese-speaking population in South America. So, given the close historical and cultural ties between the two countries, do you see any possibility of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Angola reaching across the Atlantic to this South American nation, where 55.5% of the population is of African descent?

Nathan: Bishop Ngunza, the flagship project of constructing an episcopal residence and headquarters, was mentioned in the CSAED District Episcopal report at the 52nd general conference. Could you tell us a little more about this project?

Bishop Ngunza: I am pleased to say that the construction of the Episcopal residence is now completed. We hope to finalize the A.M.E. Zion Church Headquarters in Angola this year, serving the Central Southern Africa Episcopal District.

Once the headquarters is completed, we intend to establish a university with a theological school that will be hosted there. The theological school will train and educate our pastors and ministers for ministry in Angola and beyond.

The other university departments would cater to the wider educational needs of the people of Angola and contribute to the nation's development. The creation of the university would also provide new employment opportunities for church members and other qualified persons.

Nathan: Wow, Bishop Ngunza, it is wonderful to hear of the evangelistic fervour of the A.M.E. Zion church in the CSAED. Are there any other mission-related programmes taking place now you wish to highlight?

Bishop Ngunza: We are indeed excited by the work of our evangelism committee, which travels across the country to different provinces (states) to share the gospel and open class stations, which become churches within a year or two. One such class station is in Cabinda. (Cabinda is a province in North Angola on the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo.). We are now building a church there. To God Be the Glory.

Nathan: I know that I speak on behalf of the A.M.E. Zion Churches across Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, and North America when I say, 'Our prayers are with you and our fellow Zionites in the Central Southern Africa Episcopal District.' We certainly look forward to entering partnerships and collaborations for the growth of Zion and the extension of the Kingdom of God. Thank you for speaking with us, and may God bless you in your leadership of this developing and growing episcopal district.



# Journey to Kigali, Rwanda, June 2024

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



Bishop George D. Crenshaw, Presiding Prelate, Board of Bishops, A.M.E. Zion Church and Presiding Bishop of the Alabama-Florida Episcopal District and the Great Lakes Region, along with Missionary Supervisor Laurena Crenshaw, humbly led a team of 27 persons from the United States to Kigali, Rwanda, from June 6 – June 15, 2024.

The Great Lakes Region encompasses Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, North Kivu, South Kivu, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Tanzania, Kenya, and Zambia were welcomed into the region as Provisional Conferences.

The Great Lakes Region, under the leadership of Presiding Elder Felix Uwamahoro, Lady Uwamahoro, their family, and the entire Mount Carmel A.M.E. Zion Church family, welcomed the team from the United States and treated us with the utmost hospitality. The



trip to Rwanda was organized and implemented under the leadership of Dr. Iyabode (Yabo) Beysolow, Reverend Andrea Afolabi-Jallah, RN, co-founders of Life's Mission, Inc., and Rev. Dr. Sondra Coleman of the Alabama-Florida Episcopal District.

The purpose of the trip was multi-fold:

- to worship and fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Rwanda
- to conduct the business of the second session of the combined Annual Conferences for the Great Lakes Region
- to conduct classes at the Bishop Crenshaw Theological Institute for ministers attending the Annual Conferences
- to provide free health education to hundreds of citizens in Kigali, Rwanda, focused on the prevention of hypertension, diabetes, high cholesterol, pediatric-specific conditions, dental hygiene, mental health, and other general conditions
- to provide free reading glasses (over 2000 pairs), clothing, toiletries, supplies and refreshments to the church congregation, Annual conference attendees and the surrounding community. Donated items were collected by mission team members from across the

U.S. and Zion to take with us to Kigali

- to deliver free, donated medical supplies (gloves, masks, etc.) to a clinic serving low-income individuals without insurance.

Several hundred men, women, and children were served daily over the course of 4 (four) days.

Over 300 children and youth were served dinner as they participated in Bread, Books, and Bible on one night of the Conference.

The team from the United States led by Bishop George D. Crenshaw included ministerial staff, laypersons, physicians, and nurses. Members of the team from the United States included:

1. Bishop George D. Crenshaw
2. Missionary Supervisor Laurena Crenshaw
3. Reverend Julius Walls, Chief Operating Officer, A.M.E. Zion Church
4. Reverend Dr. Thaddeus Steele, Director, Bishop George Crenshaw Theological Institute
5. Iyabode (Yabo) Beysolow, MD, MPH, Director, Health Ministry, A.M.E. Zion Church
6. Reverend Andrea Afolabi-Jallah, RN, BSN, MPH, Clinical Team Lead
7. Presiding Elder Dr. Titus Thorn
8. Lady Lourdes Thorn
9. Presiding Elder Dr. Kathy McFadden
10. Presiding Elder Fredna Grimmatt
11. Presider Elder Greg Harris
12. Lady Autavia Harris
13. Presiding Elder David Knight
14. Reverend Dr. Sondra Coleman
15. Reverend Dr. Merchuria C. Williams
16. Reverend Milton Stubbs
17. Valentina Stubbs
18. Reverend Melvin Mungin
19. Reverend Renee Adams
20. Sister Sedia Beysolow
21. Sister Chrissandra Abdullah
22. Sister Jeneh Logan, RN
23. Sister Helene Johnson King
24. Sister Rhonda Swinney, RN
25. Sister Jerusha Perry, RN
26. Sister Ianna Odulaja
27. Sister Tiarra Deveaux

*Under the leadership of Bishop George D. Crenshaw, several similar mission trips have occurred: to Liberia (four trips between 2008 and 2013) and Angola (one trip in 2019).*

*Please enjoy the second of two articles submitted by our Mission team members (Sister Helene Johnson-King), who share his perspective and experience*

# Tourism: A Double-Edged Sword

By Ronald A. Nathan, World Politics Editor  
Photos By © Daily Mail, © Canarian Weekly, © Adventure Lux Travel Agency, © Business Insider



'Your Paradise, Our Hell' was not the subject of some theological discourse at an eminent religious department at Harvard, Virginia, or Livingstone College. It was the work of graffiti artists plastered on several walls and buildings in the tourist enclave of Tenerife in the Canary Islands. Five million persons visit the Canary Islands, a Spanish enclave off the coast of North-West Africa, every year.

The provocative statement reflects the juxtaposition of the tourist and the resident experiences. It articulates the growing frustration of locals with the inequality due to the privilege and power of tourists in some of the most beautiful places in the world. It enunciates in theological terms the mystery as to how one location can generate two conflicting emotions. It also illustrates the complexity of the availability of cheap world travel and the current environmental crisis and the challenges they bring to governments.

Tourism is pitted to be one of the fastest-growing global industries. International and governmental agencies responsible for tourism regularly highlight the blessings and positive effects of tourism on employment, wealth creation, and the economy. Little is said of the problems that arise with the tourist's arrival that must be mitigated, such as soil erosion, natural resource attrition, waste and air pollution accumulation, and biodiversity endangering. Furthermore, the ongoing tension



arises between providing resources to enhance the tourism product and the sums needed to provide essential services for the local citizenry.

Take, for example, the Caribbean, which is the most tourism and travel-dependent region in the world. The travel industry and tourism contributed US\$50.5 billion to the local Caribbean economies in 2022. This is estimated to grow to US\$90 billion in the next eight years. The Bahamas, Barbados, Dominican Republic, and Grenada all point to growing tensions around tourism's impact on the local economic, socio-cultural, and environmental scene. In the Caribbean, there are high levels of poverty and unemployment, with low levels of educational attainment. Tensions are further exacerbated by the rising cost of land for local housing spiked by hotel construction and the restricted access of nationals to tourist beaches and amenities.



It is feared by some that this growing local frustration towards tourism can escalate beyond graffiti on walls and buildings. It has become expedient that regional bodies such as the Caribbean Tourism Organisation and the *Tourism Council of the Canary Islands* will strategise to nip these negative experiences and tensions in the bud.

Their discussions must be widened beyond ministries of tourism and chambers of commerce to improve the tourism sector's attractiveness and competitiveness and include local communities in the planning processes.

Given that the locals are the primary beneficiaries of future tourism developments, their outlooks should also shape the sustainable policies to maximise the potential benefits and minimise the negative impacts of tourism.

Tourism and government officials worldwide should be mindful that the locals' writing on the wall could also facilitate a loss of privilege, status, and property, as was the case at Belshazzar's feast (Daniel 5).



## Our Mission Trip to the Land of a Thousand Hills Rwanda

By Helene Johnson-King

After months of planning and preparing for our Mission Trip to Rwanda, we finally began our trip on Thursday, June 6th. As planned, many travelers would fly into New York at the JFK airport so we could travel together as a team on the same airline. What a day. For most, our trips began with earlier flights from other states. It would definitely be a long day. Oth-



ers experienced missed or canceled flights. Notwithstanding, God was in control.

Our trip from JFK to Rwanda was pleasant but long. We left JFK, New York, at about 6:15pm Eastern Time and arrived in Kigali, Rwanda, on June 7th at about 6:50pm local time (CAT), which would have been midday 12:50 pm US EST. We had an approximate 3-hour layover in Brussels, arriving there at 7:40am and leaving at approximately 11:00am.

On the evening of June 7th, we arrived in Kigali. After

getting our visas and going through customs, Pastor Felix and his church members welcomed us at the airport. It is impressive how all travelers and luggage were accounted for on arrival except for one traveler's luggage.

After arriving at the Kigali Marriott and checking into our hotel rooms, we met up in the dining area and enjoyed an excellent dinner. Our meals were without issues. The buffet-style meals at the Marriott were beyond expectations.

After getting all rested on our first night, we met in the hotel's dining area for breakfast. We enjoyed a scrumptious Saturday breakfast before heading out to visit the Kigali Memorial and do some shopping. At the Memorial, we first watched a short documentary before being escorted through the various rooms with details of the 1994 genocide timeline that the Rwandans experienced. Although we can see their commitment to moving forward as a nation, we still could feel their pain in this moment. We heard it in the voice of our tour guide. He was 8 years old when the genocide took place. The mass graves within the memorial site told the story. The solemn faces of family and loved ones visiting the site also expressed the unforgotten pain. Yet their resilience and boldness were present in their narratives of the untold stories. The sign overlooking the mass graves read, "Kwibuka 30, Remember, Unite, Renew." Kwibuka in Kinyarwanda means "to remember." The number 30 means notes that 2024 marks thirty years since millions of innocent people brutally lost their lives.



During our visit to the Memorial, we also learned that the Tutsi and Hutu, which we recognize as the Rwandan tribes, were originally classified as: the Muhutu, Mututsi, and Mutwa. The Mutwas were considered the handcrafters. The Mututsis were considered the families with less than 10 cattle, and the Muhutus owned more than 10 cattle. For political and economic reasons, the Belgians introduced tribal systems, which created a division among the Rwandans, determining their identities by their noses and skin color. Rwandans were issued identification cards stating their identity as one of the three tribes. Since the genocide, the RFK (Robert F. Kennedy International Human Rights Federation) and Gacaca (transitional justice organization of the people that addressed lower-level offenders of



the genocide) have been credited for promoting peace within Rwanda. The government and its people now foster a society of patriotism and not identities. Citizenship as a Rwandan is more important than tribal or class identity.

After leaving the Memorial, it was time for lunch. We visited a local restaurant where we enjoyed some favorable roasted chicken and beef. After being energized by our lunch, we were then prepared to shop, bartering at times with the locals on prices or conversion rates.



Day three in Kigali was spent worshipping. Our God had brought us to this land to serve others. The service was fulfilling both in terms of singing and message. What a blessing. The tempo had been set. Each morning, we returned to the church for the health fair, and our day began with a strong message and uplifting singing. We may not have understood the meaning of some songs, but we felt the spirit. We were entertained by the dances of the church youth. It was by no mistake that the messages being delivered each morning fell on the ears of those who could hear. Matthew 11:15 reads, "He

who has ears to hear, let him hear!" The word was always a right now message. In some instances, it felt like it was the day of Pentecost; before the pastor delivering the message could complete a sentence, the translators were already speaking. I felt the movement of the Holy Spirit. God was indeed present at all times.

We would leave the Marriott at 7:15 am every morning to get to the Mount Carmel Celebration Church. After praise and worship, we would head to the various tents to serve. In serving, I always stayed energized and could see that the younger adults were passionate about what they were doing. All volunteers worked well as a team to assemble gift bags and assist however needed. The temperature was very forgiving, with the nice cool breeze blowing into the tents at times.



What can I say? Our work was done. We did all we could, hoping we could have done more, but satisfied that we had done something. We know we made an impact just by the number of people turning up each day and by the smiles on their faces upon being served. We accomplished a successful trip by working alongside church members, including youths who served as translators and crowd control.

On Wednesday, the last day of the health fair and A.M.E. Zion conference, we visited a local Ivuriro clinic to present medical supplies. In keeping with Kigali's cleanliness, like all the other places we visited during our trip, the clinic was clean despite not having the technology we are accustomed to here in the US.



On Thursday, our last day before our departure on Friday from Kigali, we visited Hotel des Mille Collines, famously known as Hotel Rwanda. This hotel became famous because many families took refuge here during the Rwandan genocide. Our next stop was the Niyo Arts Center, founded by Niyonsenga Pacifique. Niyo was two years old during the genocide. He is a painter, drummer, and musician. The community center is dedicated to improving the well-being of Rwandan society through art.

What a trip. I could go on and on about beautiful Rwanda, the land of a thousand hills, the clean air, and just being in God's beauty and making new friends. Thanks to Bishop Crenshaw, Missionary Supervisor Crenshaw, Dr. Beysolow, and Rev. Jallah for allowing me to be a part of this journey. This is definitely not my last. I applaud you all for making an effort to change lives. As my father would say, "Impression without expression leads to frustration." I can see that your faith is definitely in action. Be blessed.

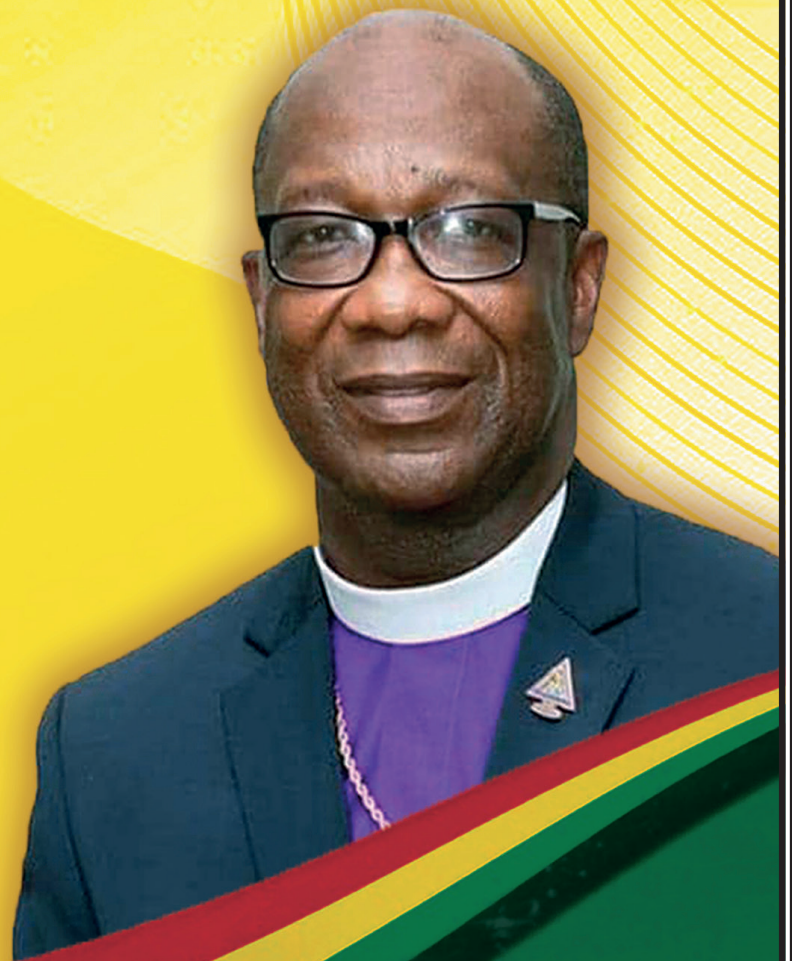
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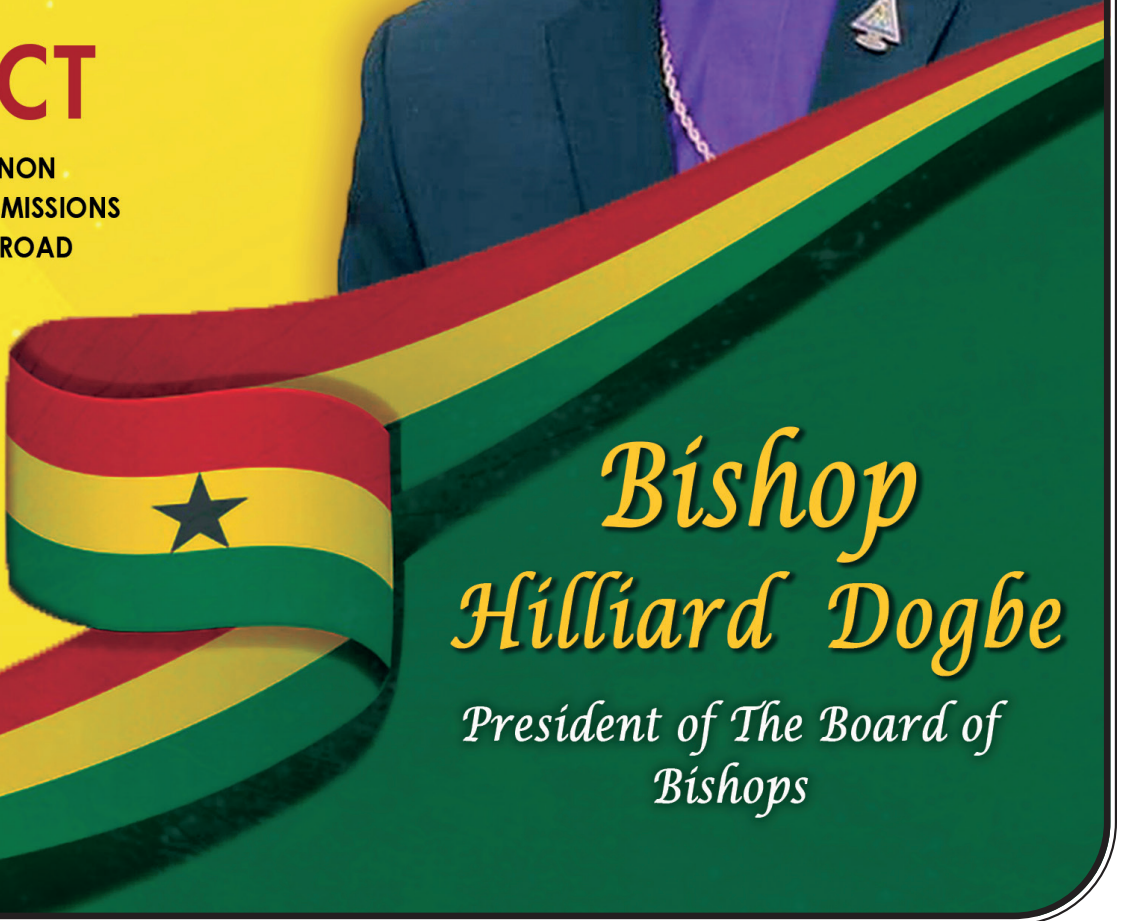
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