

THE STAR OF ZION

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MERRY CHRISTMAS

AND A BLESSED NEW YEAR!



ZION



Official Voice of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

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

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

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JESUS CHANGES HEARTS:

President Donald J. Trump included

By Reverend Leona Nicholas Welch

He who is without sin, let Him throw a stone at her first (John 8:7). Here Jesus comes to the rescue of a woman brought to Him to be stone for adultery. Jesus' own word included forgiveness and compassion. Mary Magdalene received the Master's compassion and repented of her sins; subsequently, becoming an avid and constant friend and follower of the Lord. Jesus changed Mary's heart.



Lord, what do you want me to do (Acts 9:6) This has to be the most crucial and life-changing question anyone can ask of God. Here, Saul, radical persecutor of Christians, now being transformed to Paul by Jesus, poses this most urgent question to Jesus after being knocked off his horse and blinded on the road to Damascus to kill Christians. Paul became the most highly devoted and effectual apostle and writer of God's Word, more radical and faithful in his teachings for Christ as he once was against him. Jesus changed Saul's heart.

Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom (Luke 23:42). Here are the words of a man dying on a cross next to Jesus. Once a murderous thief, a man without conscience or compassion for others, he is now humbled by the innocence and loving demeanor of Jesus, and is changed just by Jesus' presence. Jesus changed the heart of this thief.

And so, here we are, for many, it did not turn out the way we desperately wanted it to. Our candidate did not win. Donald J. Trump has been elected again as president of the United States. We have deep and troubling concerns regarding the results of this election. Now what? My answer: We must deeply and constantly remember that God is still God, mighty, faithful, and in control. We must remember that He still loves us and keeps us. Most importantly, besides remaining sober and alert (1 Peter 5:8a), being righteously supportive, and doing our individual share of keeping our corner of the world running smoothly and justly, we absolutely must remember that we serve a God who is still in the business of changing hearts – just as willingly as He did when He walked this earth.

Continued on page 4



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

'TIS THE SEASON



By Debra Chappelle-Polk, Zion Spotlight Editor

December 2024, New York, NY.... The Christmas Season is one of the most joyous times of the year. We are celebrating the birth of Jesus, the light of the world! For many, Christmas traditions include trimming trees, stuffing stockings, giving gifts, and gathering with friends and family for dinner. For some, Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without the holiday office party(ies) and Christmas bonuses.

A few years ago, we celebrated the Christmas Season during a devastating pandemic. We got through it because we refused to be distressed, dismayed, or discouraged, trusting and knowing that God had a plan.

This year, we are celebrating the Christmas Season following an election season. For many (and I count myself among the many), the results of the 2024 election were devastating. The victory many prayed for didn't happen. Our hopes were dashed. Many said the election would be historic. They were right for all the wrong reasons, and a twice-impeached former president and convicted felon will hold the highest office in the land for the next four years. Once again, we will not be distressed, dismayed, or discouraged. We will survive, trusting and knowing that God has a plan.

HEALING & DECOMPRESSION

On Wednesday, November 6th, The Cathedral of St. John the Divine, located in upper Manhattan in New York City, held an interfaith post-election day service. The invitation to the service read as follows:

"We are people of moral courage. We are guided by the shared values of dignity, justice, and peace. These values don't change with each election cycle. In this moment of waiting and uncertainty, as

our country determines our next elected leaders, we choose to step forward as people of faith – standing firm in who we are and who God has called us to be. We choose to reaffirm our commitment to one another and these shared values, knowing that when we stand shoulder-to-shoulder in the struggle for justice, we are more powerful, more sustainable, and closer to a world where the dignity of all is recognized and upheld."

Rev. Dr. Malcolm J. Byrd, Pastor of Mother A.M.E. Zion Church, and the Paul Robeson Ensemble participated in the service. Clergy from various faiths offered prayers for healing, dignity, peace, and justice. Rev. Al Sharpton, President of the National Action Network (NAN), gave the closing prayer. It was a wonderful gathering.



LET THERE BE PEACE ON EARTH - "Let peace begin with me; let this be the moment now. With every step I take, let this be my solemn vow; to take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally. Let there be peace on earth, and let it

begin with me."

The song was written by Jill Jackson-Miller and Sy Miller in 1955 and is performed worldwide throughout the year, particularly during the Christmas season. In 1967, Mahalia Jackson sang "Let There Be Peace on Earth" at her concert in Berlin. The words were powerful in 1955 and 1967 and are just as impactful today, perhaps even more so.

It's a tall order, and it isn't easy, but let's give peace a chance. Rather than settling our disputes with violence and bloodshed, let's try talking to each other, especially to those on the other side. Political scientists, campaign strategists, and historians will dissect and analyze the results of the 2024 election for years to come. In the meantime, let's prepare our hearts for the coming of the Prince of Peace. Let peace begin with us. There is no better way to celebrate the birth of Jesus, *the true meaning of Christmas*, and God's greatest gift to humanity.

Merry Christmas!



OUTLAST THE STORM

by Daniel Webb

Drowning in a Storm?

Scan the code to watch the book video trailer.



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CAIDEN D. SPEARS IS NEW YORK'S YOUNGEST AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALE TO HOLD A PRIVATE PILOT LICENSE – PART 2

By Debra Chappelle-Polk, Zion Spotlight Editor

December 2024, New York, NY... In June 2024, Ingrid Spears, reached out to The Star of Zion and asked if we would write an article about her son Caiden's "remarkable journey." We said, "Absolutely!", and Part 1 of Caiden's story appeared in the July 2024 edition. This is some of what Caiden said:

"My name is Caiden Spears, and I am a 17-year-old teen aviator who recently graduated on June 1st, 2024, from Cardinal Hayes HS, located in the South Bronx, NY. I am sharing my story because on May 25th, 2024, I received my Private Pilot License, and I am now the youngest African American male to hold a Private Pilot License from the FAA in the State of New York."

Caiden and his mother are members of Greater Centennial A.M.E. Zion Church in Mount Vernon, NY, where the Reverend Dr. Stephen Pogue is Pastor, and credit him for his unwavering support.

This is Part 2 of Caiden's story:

Flying my Pastor and being the pilot in command of the aircraft was one of the best experiences since becoming a licensed pilot. When I was 15 years old, I told my flight Instructor I wanted to take my Pastor, the Rev. Dr. Stephen W. Pogue of Greater Centennial A.M.E Zion Church, on a flight. Pastor Pogue knew I was studying for my pilot license and always told our congregation and me that he was ready to fly with me, and he would say, "at least I know Caiden, I don't know the other pilots I've flown with". He would say that a lot. I was amazed that he had a lot of confidence in me. When I told my instructor of my plan, he came up with a better idea and said, "why don't you wait until you get your license, and you can fly him without me?" He told me that I would be solely in charge of the aircraft without an instructor on board. That sounded like a better idea and a way to show my Pastor all that I knew.

On May 11, 2024, I passed my oral exam and on May 25, 2024, I passed my check ride with the Designated Pilot Examiner where I had to fly and do different maneuvers over the Long Island Sound. I earned my Private Pilot License on that day at the age of 17, making me the youngest African American male in NY with a Pilot license. On June 1,



2024, I graduated from Cardinal Hayes HS in the Bronx and moved over 1000 miles away on June 3rd to attend flight school in Olive Branch, Mississippi. As a licensed private pilot, I can now rent the airplane I was trained to fly without an instructor, and I am the pilot in command of whatever aircraft I rent. I told my mom I wanted to return to New York and fly Pastor Pogue as promised. I went on the computer, rented a Piper Archer (N727AC), and paid the insurance.

On July 3rd, Pastor Pogue showed up at Republic Airport ready to fly. He was excited and so was I. It was a beautiful summer evening

to take a flight. He watched me do my pre-flight checklists and while on the aircraft, I gave the safety briefing and prepared for takeoff. My mom's headset was not working, so we had to shut the plane down, leave the aircraft, and return to the flight school to get a new headset. All passengers

must have working headsets per FAA guidelines. We took care of that glitch and were now prepared for takeoff around 6 pm. We took off using runway 32 from Republic Airport. Our destination was Brookhaven Airport. Pastor had an amazing view of the coast with turquoise water, and he took many photos. I was also able to record the entire flight. Brookhaven Airport is an "unmanned" airport, which means that there are no control towers. The pilots must basically look out for and communicate their positions to each other. We landed at Brookhaven Airport around 7 pm. The airport was calm, and there was not a lot of flight traffic. It is a very nice low-key airport with one restaurant. We wanted to get what's known as a "\$200 hamburger," but the restaurant was closing for the day.

I was excited that everything went as planned. It was now time to fly back to Farmingdale Airport. Our flight went well, and Pastor Pogue had the opportunity to take control of the plane during the cruise portion of the flight. This was definitely a rewarding and unforgettable experience. Not many teen pilots get the honor of renting an airplane and flying their pastor. I am so glad that I did. I will never forget this day.

Caiden Spears, Licensed Private Pilot

Future Boeing 777 Captain



Continued from pg 2

We feel confident in asking God for all manner of things; but for some reason, we too often fail to ask him to change a heart. If never before, now is the time. Jesus can change any heart, Donald Trump included. President Trump's heart is not out of God's reach, nor is his need for God's love and protection off limits to him. We still have hope, and we believe that God is still in charge of America (and the world). Yes, Jesus can change a heart. So –

LET US PRAY:

Dear Father in Heaven, things did not turn out the way we hoped they would in this presidential election, but Dear God, our hope has not run out. We hope for peace, safety, and the right to pursue happiness for all people. We hope for harmony, even in our differences. We hope for honor and protection of our constitution and for financial stability and even prosperity for our country and for our citizens in their personal lives. We hope for safety in our homes, and public gathering places.

Dear God, we hope for a strong and viable education system, and that our financial support systems remain in place and be strengthened. We hope, Dear Father, to be able to continue to freely worship you. For these and all blessings we hope and trust in you, Dear God.

Father, we understand that the rule for our country rest with our newly elected president, Donald J. Trump; so, Father, we lift him up to you that you might create in him a clean heart... and renew in him a right spirit to sustain him as he goes about performing his presidential duties for the good of all and for your glory. We pray that you keep him safe, guide him, and give him your wisdom. Our hope and our trust are in You, Dear Father. In Jesus' Name, we pray.

BISHOP DARRYL & MRS. CAMILLE STARNES

ZION



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



Senior Bishop & Presiding Prelate
Piedmont Episcopal District

.MERRY.

Christmas

FROM OUR FAMILY TO YOURS

Commissioner Vilma D. Leake Honored with the 2024 Frederick Douglass Award for Lifelong Advocacy and Humanitarian Service

By Jacqueline Anthony

Commissioner Vilma D. Leake, a trailblazer in education, entrepreneurship, and public service, has been awarded the prestigious 2024 Frederick Douglass Award for her unwavering dedication to the betterment of her community. With an impressive career, this accolade further solidifies her legacy as a trailblazer whose impact spans across local, state, national, and international platforms. Commissioner Leake's contributions have profoundly changed the lives of countless individuals, particularly within Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, where she has served on the Board of County Commissioners from 2008 until the present.



Since her election to the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners, Commissioner Leake has been a steadfast advocate for her community, and she has never missed a meeting. A retired educator with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education from Livingstone College and a Master's Degree from the University at Buffalo, Commissioner Leake's passion for learning has been evident throughout her career. She also completed her principalship certification at UNC Chapel Hill and pursued doctorate coursework at the University of San Francisco. Her role as a resolute public education leader began with her election to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education, where she served to champion policies for student success and led efforts to provide mental health support within schools. Notably, she founded Project Motivation Inspiration, which encouraged at-risk youth to stay in school and pursue their goals, a legacy that continues to inspire educators today. Her solid educational foundation propelled her into a distinguished career in public service.

Commissioner Leake has championed education advocacy for decades, both in her role as a County Commissioner and previously as a member of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education. During this time, she advocated for increased teacher salaries, which made headlines when she led a historic protest in 1989, rallying 20,000 teachers to the state capital in Raleigh, NC. Her work in education has left a profound mark. She was the North Carolina Association of Educators' President for 16 years and was on the Executive Board for the North Carolina Unit in Raleigh. As a member of the Public Education Steering Committee of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC), the National Board of the Large Urban Counties Caucus for the National Association of Counties (NACo), and Founder of the African American Faith Alliance for Educational Advancement, a 501c3 Nonprofit, Commissioner Leake has championed causes that promote the well-being of students and families which reflects her unwavering commitment wherein she advocated for mental health professionals in schools and the need for holistic family support to strengthen communities.

Commissioner Leake's work is not limited to education; it extends to economic development with the founding of the Small Business Consortium (SBC), an impactful initiative that is designed to empower small business owners in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. What began as a modest group of five grew into a thriving network of over 1,700 business owners, all receiving help from Commissioner Leake's visionary leadership. The SBC promotes economic growth, encourages networking, and provides development opportunities to local entrepreneurs, particularly women and minority-owned businesses. Her advocacy for small businesses is just one facet of Commissioner Leake's commitment to economic justice. Recognizing the importance of entrepreneurship in driving economic empowerment, she started community forums that strengthened relationships between small businesses and

government contractors. Today, the SBC continues to play a vital role in Mecklenburg County's economic landscape.



Beyond her roles in government and education, Commissioner Leake's commitment to the welfare of her constituents earned her numerous accolades for her leadership and humanitarian efforts, including the Legends Award, the Maya Angelou/Elizabeth Ross Dargan Lifetime Achievement Award (from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Education Association), and the Paul Leroy Robeson Award from The A.M.E. Zion National Church, among many others. She sponsored nine women to go to Africa, and her global humanitarian outreach includes multiple trips to Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria, and Sweden, where she donated books, clothes, and computers to build churches and support local communities. A library in Nigeria now bears her name, a testament to her global influence.


As an active member of the historic Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church in Charlotte and the oldest and active Retired Missionary Supervisor, duly elected in 1972 when her husband, the late Reverend George Junius Leake, III, was elected Bishop in The A.M.E. Zion Church, serving Missouri to Alaska. She has held leadership roles in the Women's Home and Overseas Missionary Society of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, where she was elected First Vice President for two terms, 1987-1995, and founded the "Walk-a-Mile for Second Mile" initiative that raises crucial funds for missionary work at home and abroad and promoting health and well-being through outreach programs. Dr. Leake has been a Delegate to the General Conference of The A.M.E. Zion Church since 1998 to the present. She has supported missions that impact communities locally and internationally. Commissioner Leake's valuable contributions to the Charlotte community continue through various civic and social organizations such as The Eastern Star, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., the Black Political Caucus, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Executive Board Member of the NC Democratic Party, Chair of Precinct 138 in Mecklenburg County, the Black Political Caucus of Mecklenburg County, the National Council for Negro Women, and Jack and Jill of America. Also, she served as a model for Belk's yearly fundraiser, Serenade to Autumn. Commissioner Leake's tireless efforts have been recognized as a true humanitarian and enthusiastic champion of the underserved. Her legacy as a trailblazer for women and African Americans continues to inspire future generations.

Receiving the Frederick Douglas Award is a testament to Commissioner Leake's lifelong dedication to education, public service, and advocacy for marginalized communities. With an unwavering commitment to justice, equity, and economic opportunity, her legacy is one of a steadfast advocate who has never wavered in her mission to bring positive change to her community and beyond. With over 16 years as a County Commissioner, 11 years on the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education, and a lifetime of service to the people of Mecklenburg County, she is still an unstoppable force, driven by her passion for justice, equality, and progress. Her lifelong work exemplifies the legacy of Frederick Douglas himself, and this award acknowledges her unwavering commitment to building stronger communities, empowering the next generation, and fighting for equality for all. Commissioner Leake remains a beacon of hope and service to her community and the world at large.

Dr. Leake loves people, and for her, it's all about the people. Congratulations, Commissioner Vilma D. Leake, on this well-deserved honor for your mission to create opportunities for others.

MERRY CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY NEW YEAR

*May God continue to richly bless you with hope,
joy, and peace throughout the coming year.*



**BISHOP W. DARIN MOORE, PRESIDING PRELATE
MRS. DEVIETA C. MOORE, MISSIONARY
SUPERVISOR OF
THE EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA EPISCOPAL DISTRICT**



*"For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders, and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."*

Isaiah 9:6

“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests!”

- Luke 2:14

*Merry
Christmas*

To All our Zion Family!

**Bishop & Mrs.
George D. Crenshaw**

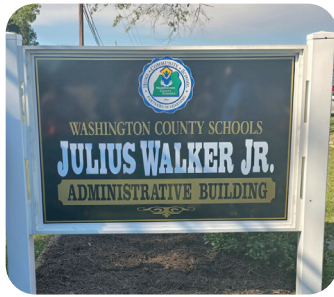
Presiding Prelate & Missionary
Supervisor for the Northeastern
Episcopal District



JULIUS WALKER, JR.'S LEGACY IS CEMENTED IN STONE

By Lucy Beamon
Photos By Lucy Beamon

I was recently contacted by Mrs. Lucy Beamon, SOZ Contributor and member of Bethel A.M.E. Zion Church, Elizabeth City, NC, requesting that the SOZ share an article (which is printed below) published in the Roanoke Beacon Newspaper about Julius Walker, Jr.



Mr. Walker is a member of Morning Star A.M.E. Zion Church in Roper, NC (Edenton District; Albemarle Conference), where the Rev. Fondella Leigh serves as the Presiding Elder. Julius Walker is 79 years old and has been a member of The A.M.E. Zion Church his entire life. For over 20-plus years, Mr. Walker has served as the Preacher's Steward, Class Leader, Superintendent of Church School, and Church School teacher. He has also served as a Trustee. On the District level, he is the Director of Men of Zion; on the Conference level, he is the Albemarle Conference Lay Council President.

On October 17, 2024, the Central Support Office Building of the Washington County School District was named "The Julius Walker Jr. Administrative Building," a designation meant to honor a lifetime of tireless service, unwavering commitment, and leadership. Julius Walker Jr.'s over 40-year legacy in the Washington County School District has been etched into the hearts and minds of generations. From the classroom to the halls of administration, Walker has left an undeniable mark on his community and his name is spoken highly across vast swaths of Eastern North Carolina.

As one might imagine, Thursday afternoon's ceremony was well-attended, with scores of family members, friends, old coworkers, and

many more gathering on the grounds of Central Support for the occasion. Several visitors, many of whom also possessed hefty legacies, rose to share their stories about Walker and the impact he's had on their lives.



Unsurprisingly, some of the greatest speeches and tributes of the day came from members of Walker's extended family. Walker's grandson, Shawn Walker Jr., spoke briefly about the impact his grandfather had on his upbringing. In particular, the young Murray State University basketball star spoke about how proud he was of his grandfather and how important it is to leave a legacy of love and wisdom to a community.

"I just want to say how proud I am to have you as my grandfather," Shawn Jr. said. "I'm also proud of your success. To me, success is about how many people you've blessed. Everyone that's here in this audience today, my grandfather has blessed you in some way, whether that was in love, wisdom, understanding, or monetary means. Seeing what he has accomplished should make all of us ask the question, what is it that we all want to leave behind...we can't all have our name on a sign, and we can't all hold public office... But what we can do is love each other...which is the greatest legacy we can leave behind for generations to come."

Walker's children, Kendra Walker Powell and Coach Shawn Walker Sr., also heaped similar praises on their father. As far as Powell was concerned, it was her father's attitude towards his fellow man, rather than his myriad of accolades, that had made all the difference in his life.

CONGRATS TO JULIUS WALKER, JR.

LAY SUNDAY CELEBRATION AT FIRST A.M.E. ZION CHURCH

By Rose B. Davis

December 2024, Knoxville, TN.... On Sunday, October 20, 2024, the Knoxville District Lay Council celebrated Lay Sunday at First A.M.E. Zion Church located at 1900 McCalla Avenue in Knoxville TN, where Rev. Michael J. McNair is Pastor. Ms. Tanika Harper was the Lay Hour speaker.



Ms. Harper is a Knoxville native and proud alumna of Austin-East High School. It was there that her foundation was established. She continued her education at the University of Tennessee, earning a Bachelor of Arts in English and a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology. Ms. Harper also holds a Master of Science degree in Criminal Justice and a Master of Science in Ethics and Leadership.

Ms. Harper is an entrepreneur who has ownership in four small businesses, all of which help create opportunities for under-resourced neighborhoods. Her mission is to uplift and elevate youth and young adults who lack the tools and resources needed to excel. She uses her platform to train, facilitate, encourage, and motivate. She is the Founder and CEO of The Shora Foundation which means Safe Place in Nigeria and has been serving East Knoxville for more than 15 years. The Shora Foundation is a community asset, volunteer-driven,



and provides a safe place for children.

The Knoxville District Lay Council service began with storytelling. Our focus was to have our members share their faith journey: the who, what, when, and how they were led to the Lord, noting that we all have a story to tell. Ms. Harper shared how all her successes in life can be attributed to her "Faith Journey."



Ironically, our speaker's message was right in line with our storytelling on the district level. She talked about how her choices and directions in life encountered roadblocks and pitfalls along the way, and how the redirects from the Lord guided her.

We were all enlightened and blessed to have her share the security, faithfulness, and joy of placing all our trust in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Pictured with the speaker are the local Lay President Rose B. Davis and other Lay Sunday participants.

L-R Candice Hampton, Sonja Armstrong, Monique Washington, Ms. Tanika Harper (speaker), Rose B. Davis, Angela McNair, Rev. Michael J. McNair Pastor



WISHING YOU TO BE FILLED WITH
HIS LOVE & WRAPPED IN HIS
PEACE AS WE CELEBRATE THE
MIRACLE OF HIS BIRTH.

Love Peace
& Joy

Bishop & Mrs. Hilliard Dogbe,
President of the Board of
Bishops

Presiding Prelate & Supervisor
Western West Africa Episcopal
District



LIFTING A STANDARD - NEED LEADERSHIP TRAINING INSTITUTE



Thurmond, Pastor of St. Paul C.M.E. Church, Savannah, GA.

The meeting and the praise and worship services were spirit-filled.

By M. Denise Niles
Photos By M. Denise Niles

December 2024, Brooklyn, NY., On Thursday morning, November 7th, members of the Northeastern Episcopal District gathered at the Cross Street A.M.E. Zion Church, Middletown, CT., for our Leadership Training Institute.

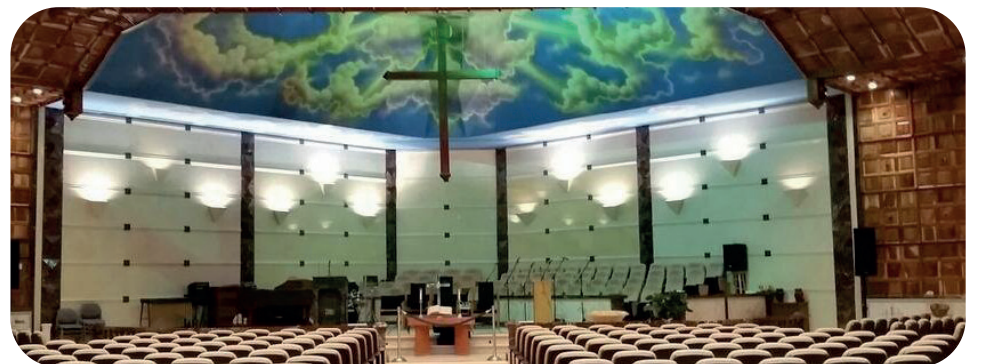


This was the first such meeting under the leadership of our newly appointed Episcopal Leaders, Bishop George D. Crenshaw and Mrs. Laurrena Crenshaw.

After praise and worship, Bishop Crenshaw presented vision casting teaching, focusing on ministries that foster evangelism and church growth. Bishop Crenshaw highlighted ministries from his 12 successful years as pastor of the Shaw A.M.E. Zion Church (Smyrna, GA.) as ways to grow the church. Later in the day, we attended the following breakout sessions held at the church and the nearby Wadsworth Mansion:

- Developing A Culture of Evangelism
- Ministry and Marketing: This Is Our Story
- Evangelism in Context: Inner City, Rural, Suburban, Urban
- Evangelism 101: Jump Starting Evangelism
- Faith Sharing: A Matter of Life and Death
- Sick and Shut-In Ministry
- Speaking Truth to Power: Evangelism Rooted in Social Justice
- Youth and Children Evangelism

During the Thursday evening service, we were blessed by the music ministry of the NEED Mass Choir. The preacher for the evening was The Rev. Quavon Newton, Pastor of St. Stephen A.M.E. Zion Church, Asbury Park, NJ. On Friday morning, The Rev. Dr. Eleazar Merriweather, Executive Director of the Department of Church Growth and Development, led a Plenary Session on the Theme: Lifting a Standard: Evangelism. After lunch, attendees went to Breakout Sessions again. The preacher for the Friday Evening service was the Rev. Dr. Da'Henri



Rev. Dr. Malcolm J. Byrd, Senior Pastor at Mother A.M.E. Zion Church in Harlem, NY, led the breakout session Speaking Truth to Power: Evangelism Rooted in Social Justice.

A welcome program was held for Bishop and Mrs. Crenshaw on Saturday, November 9th, at 11 am. Special presentations were made to Mrs. Laurrena Crenshaw by the NEED District Presidents of the Woman's Home and Overseas Missionary Society. Presiding Elder Jacqueline King of the Boston District led the other 11 Presiding Elders in a presentation to the Bishop entitled "The Best Place to Be." Each Elder boasted all of the highlights from their Districts: in education, travel, food, and sports.

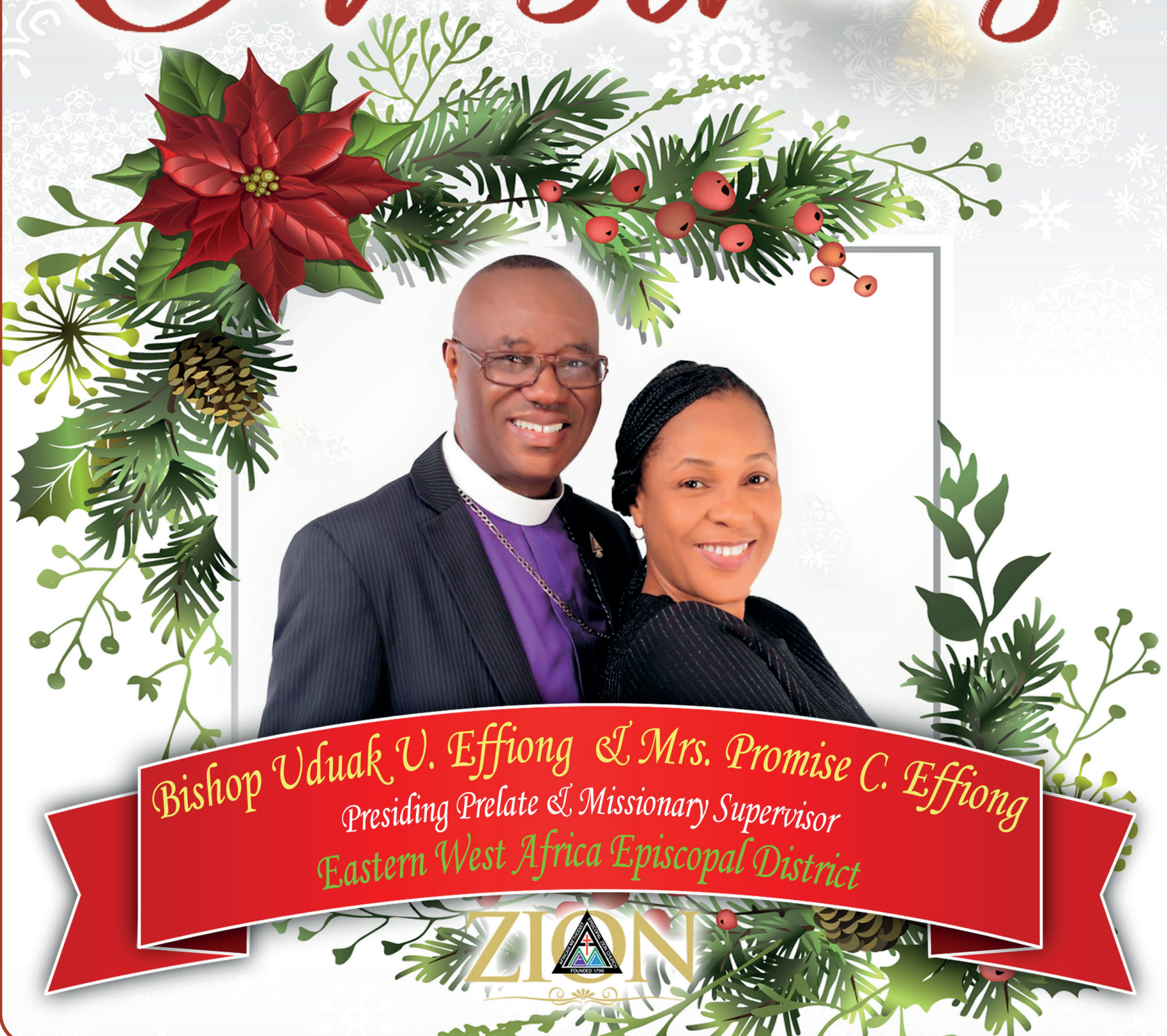


Many thanks to all who planned and executed this excellent Leadership Training Institute. Special thanks to Rev. Robyn Anderson, Host Pastor; Rev. Moses Harvil, Host Presiding Elder; Rev. Dr. Jonathan Counts, Chapel Dean; Rev. Dr. Wallace Noble, Academic Dean; and Rev. Quavon Newton, Administrative Dean.

“In Him was life and that life was the light of men”

John 1:4

MERRY
Christmas



Bishop Uduak U. Effiong & Mrs. Promise C. Effiong
Presiding Prelate & Missionary Supervisor
Eastern West Africa Episcopal District



OHIO CONFERENCE WELCOMES BISHOP BRIAN R. THOMPSON, SR. & MISSIONARY SUPERVISOR REV. FELICA THOMPSON AT THE 1ST CHECK-UP MEETING

By Patricia M. Wilson, Beth-El A.M.E. Zion
Photos By Patricia M. Wilson

November 2024, Cleveland, OH...., On September 28, 2024, the Ohio Conference gathered to report on our labors since the June Annual Conference. The packed-to-the-walls Check-Up Meeting was held at Ruth A.M.E. Zion Church in Sharon, PA (Akron District) where the Rev. Marion Wheeler is Pastor and Rev. Dr. Curtis T. Walker Sr., is Presiding Elder.



The morning scripture, John 15:9-17, was read by Presiding Elder Rev. Dr. Audie V. Simon I (Cleveland District). Rev. Dr. Curtis T. Walker Sr., introduced and presented the meditation speaker, Bishop Brian R. Thompson Sr.

The Mistress of Ceremonies for the occasion was the Honorable Judge Adele M. Riley, President of the Judicial Council of the A.M.E. Zion Church and member of St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church in Dayton, Ohio. Rev. Rosalyn Mitchell-Martin gave the invocation and Rev. D'Andre James-Daniels eloquently shared the occasion.



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The St. James A.M.E. Zion Church Choir from Massillon, Ohio under the direction of their pastor, Rev. LeCounte Nedab, blessed everyone with their songs of praise.

Expressions of Welcome were given to Bishop and Rev. Thompson from the Lay Council, Christian Education, W.H.&O.M. Society, Minister's Spouses & Widows, Ministers, and Presiding Elders.

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Bishop Thompson's meditation, "*What Matters Next is What Matters Most*" was taken from Matthew 14:25-29, which happens to be his personal theme and now the Mid-Atlantic Theme.

Bishop Thompson painted a picture of wanting to go to a high-rise restaurant and trying to use an elevator that would not reach the necessary floor. He decided to return to the main floor to get better directions and, with the new directions, was then able to reach the high-rise restaurant. He shared that sometimes, we are not willing to go higher. Bishop told us that we are not at our last destination; it is not our last stop; God has something greater for us. He also reminded us that the Gospels were written by four men who told the story from their own view; however, they all had the same ending.

He stated that sometimes we have "stinky" thinking, and believe that God can do for everyone else, but not for ourselves. We, too, can

receive a miracle. Sometimes, things may have to get dark (like during the fourth watch) for God to do some things. Our shouting and praising do not mean that you have seen dark times or been through some things. Each one of us has our own personal storm. Bishop Thompson reminded us that Jesus will come to us sometimes, even before we know we need Him.



Bishop's points were:

- **We got to be willing to take some risk.**
- **We must recollect the radicalization of our redemption.**
- **Must remember the realized divine reverence.**

Following the Expressions of Welcome, Missionary Supervisor and Bishop gave remarks.

But hold on, we were not finished!

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Bishop Thompson said he thought the church would "empty out" following the business session. Bishop Thompson does not know the Ohio Conference, yet! Not only did everyone stay for the welcome program, but the Columbus-Cincinnati District rented a bus just to travel to the Check-Up Meeting.

Following worship service, we quickly moved into the business session of the Check-Up Meeting. Reports were given by the District Presidents of the Women's Home and Overseas Missionary Society (Lucille Gooden, LaVon Moore, Pamela Valentine), Christian Education (Dr. Monica Posey), Conference Studies (Rev. Dr. Curtis Walker), Home Mission and Conference Workers (Sharon Simmons), and Lay Council (Anita Rankin).

Presiding Elder Rev. Dr. Michael Posey (Columbus-Cincinnati District) reported on the Ministry of Kindness and Rev. George Smith-Whitfield gave an overview of our next Annual Conference.

Our three Presiding Elders, Rev. Dr. Audie Simon I, Rev. Dr. Michael Posey, and Rev. Dr. Curtis Walker reported on the financial and spiritual state of their respective districts. The Conference Financial report was last. Bishop Thompson gave the benediction.

Bishop Thompson and Missionary Supervisor Rev. Thompson are excited to be with Mid-Atlantic and the Ohio Conference family. They look forward to getting to know each of us and "may stop in" unannounced, at any of our churches on any given Sunday.

Welcome, and we look forward to working and fellowshiping together!

College Seeks New Leadership Clinton College President



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



By The Star of Zion

Rock Hill, SC, November 26, 2024: The Clinton College Board of Trustees is pleased to announce its

search for an energetic, educationally qualified, and mission-focused individual to serve as the College's new President. Clinton College is a historically black, private institution with a strong liberal arts tradition. The college was founded in 1894 by the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church to meet the needs of descendants of slaves who did not have access to higher education.

For well over a century, Clinton has provided a learning milieu for eager students and dedicated faculty and staff to engage in an educational process that focuses on high academic achievement and positive moral, ethical and spiritual development. The learning opportunities promoted by this process results in capable graduates with leadership qualities and civic behaviors to make significant contributions to the global society.

Strategically situated in the business and educational corridor between Charlotte, NC, and Columbia, SC, Clinton College is a Christian-based institution located in Rock Hill, SC. As a fully accredited higher education entity, it offers both associate and bachelor's degrees and has a mixed-generational student body. Currently, Clinton is entering a growth phase featuring increases and advancements in student enrollment, physical plant, state and federal funding, and alumni and community support. The new President of Clinton College will have opportunities to leverage and directly apply his or her skills, knowledge, and experience in the areas of Leadership, Administration and Planning, Communication, Personnel Management, External Relations, fundraising, and (in some cases) Teaching.

The successful candidate for the Presidency of Clinton College will have the education, training, and experience to be able to demonstrate (among other things) the following:

- a commitment to holistic student development and a vibrant Christian

faith.

- an understanding of the multi-faceted demands of the academic enterprise at the collegiate level.
- a deep commitment to academics and be resolute in advocating for academic integrity, intellectual freedom, and excellence in and out of the classroom.
- a high interpersonal versatility, with a drive to succeed through and with others.
- a strategic and aligned operational approach to planning and task completion that advances the college in academic, social/community, physical, and technological areas.

Information regarding how to apply, what materials are required, and the official Job Description and Application Form for College President can be found on the Clinton College website at <https://clintoncollege.edu/>

Job Description Link: <https://www.clintoncollege.edu/Content/Uploads/Clinton/images/Job%20Description%20-%20President%20for%20Clinton%20College.pdf>

Application Link: <https://form.jotform.com/243226020929149>

Applications are not taken by phone. Please do not make phone calls. To be considered for a position, please follow the application process.

Clinton College looks to employ individuals who are committed to advancing our mission of producing graduates who can pursue useful and productive careers. In addition, we seek to be a leader in employee development through comprehensive compensation and a friendly and respectful work environment. Clinton College does not discriminate based on race, color, national or ethnic origin, or physical handicap in its educational programs or activities, including admission and employment.

Hood Theological Seminary Hosts Annual ICFSH Fall Conference

By Kelly Bryant

Hood Theological Seminary hosted the Annual International Center for Faith, Science, and History (ICFSH) on October 11, 2024, titled "Soil and Souls in Dialogue."

The keynote speaker was Dr. Stephanie Boddie, Associate Professor of Church and Community Ministries, Baylor University, Waco, Texas. Dr. Boddie, in her talk, made comparisons between the planet and personal struggles. She also discussed food insecurity within churches and mental droughts within the church. In addition, Dr. Boddie described the importance of church gardens and their critical role in church discipleship. The worship facilitator was RevDele, Founder of Soil and Souls. She discussed how she has worked with nature in the past, how nature has impacted her relationship with God, and the importance of getting youth involved with Soil and Souls.

There were also two scientists who spoke during the conference. The first scientist was Stephanie M. Burks, who is a science educator and



Biology instructor at Hinds Community College on the Utica campus. The second scientist was LaBarron K. Hill, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Health Psychology at NC A&T University. He discussed cardiovascular disease and hypertension with African Americans and how chronic stress within African Americans is related to hypertension because of past discrimination and racism. Dr. Hill also discussed how mindfulness helps with having less stress, that it is associated with being less stressed about discrimination and leads to better overall health. In relation to nature, Dr. Hill described how it helps to spend time outside and be in nature to relieve stress.

The entire recording of the conference can be found at <https://shorturl.at/jvbGW>.

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

GOD GAVE HIS GREATEST GIFT TO US ON THAT FIRST
CHRISTMAS DAY
AND MAY THE WONDER OF IT ALWAYS GUIDE AND LIGHT YOUR
WAY...
WISHING YOU

Joy & Peace
AT CHRISTMAS
AND THROUGHOUT
THE NEW YEAR

Bishop Brian R. Thompson
Rev. Felica R. Thompson
Presiding Prelate &
Missionary Supervisor
of the Mid-Atlantic
Episcopal District



ZION



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

MERRY CHRISTMAS

BECAUSE OF JESUS, WE HAVE PEACE
 THAT SURPASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING,
 WE HAVE JOY THAT IS UNSPEAKABLE, WE
 HAVE A LOVE THAT IS EVERLASTING
 AND UNCONDITIONAL, AND WE HAVE
 NOTHING TO FEAR, BUT SO MUCH TO
 HOPE FOR! MAY CHRIST BE EXPERIENCE
 & PRAISED!

ZION

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

**BISHOP ERIC LEAKE & MISSIONARY SUPERVISOR JEAN
 MCMURRAY-LEAKE & SOUTH ATLANTIC EPISCOPAL DISTRICT**

Clinton College Board of Trustees Announces the Departure of President Dr. Lester A. McCorn and Appointment of Interim Leadership

By Mr. William T. McDaniel III

Rock Hill, SC – Clinton College today announces the departure of Dr. Lester A. McCorn, the institution's 13th President, following a remarkable seven-year tenure marked by academic expansion and institutional growth. Dr. McCorn's leadership has left an indelible impact on Clinton College, helping to solidify the institution's foundation for future success.

During his time at Clinton College, Dr. McCorn achieved several transformative milestones, including:

- Introducing five new bachelor's degree programs: Nursing, Cybersecurity, Elementary Education, Interdisciplinary Studies, and a pending Bachelor of Public Health (BPH).
- Developing a state-of-the-art digital library.
- Improving the brand and the face of Clinton College.

The Board of Trustees has named Archinya Ingram as interim president. Ingram currently serves as Senior Vice President of Business Services and Chief Financial Officer, bringing nearly two decades of Clinton College leadership and financial expertise to the position.

"We are grateful to Dr. McCorn for his vision and dedication, which have propelled Clinton College forward in significant ways," said Bishop Eric L. Leake, Board Chair. "His commitment to academic innovation and student success has been instrumental in shaping the institution's trajectory. As we embark on a new chapter, the Board is



confident in Mrs. Ingram's ability to guide Clinton College with grace and determination during this transition."

To secure the college's long-term leadership, the Board of Trustees is launching a 4–6-month executive search to identify and install Clinton College's next president. In the interim, Ingram will lead the college with a focus on stability and continuity for the

2024–25 academic year.

"I am honored to serve as Interim President and continue building on the strong foundation Dr. McCorn has established," said Archinya Ingram. "My priority is to ensure our students, faculty, and staff experience a seamless transition as we move forward together. Clinton College remains committed to academic excellence, community engagement, and spiritual growth."

The Board of Trustees is committed to a thorough and inclusive search process to identify a visionary leader who will advance the college's mission and build on the legacy of our first 13 presidents. Students, families, and the broader community will remain informed throughout this leadership transition. Regular updates will be shared through emails, newsletters, the college's website, and social media platforms to ensure transparency and engagement. Additionally, the administration will host virtual and in-person forums to address any questions or concerns from students, parents, and stakeholders. Clinton College values the trust and partnership of its community and will continue to prioritize open communication to support a smooth and successful transition for all.

Clinton College Celebrates Four Students Awarded Rev. Jesse Jackson Career Scholarship

By Rev. Roderick J. Josey, Education Editor

Clinton College is thrilled to announce that four exceptional students have been awarded the prestigious Rev. Jesse Jackson Career Scholarship, each receiving a generous scholarship of \$10,000! This scholarship is a significant recognition of their hard work, dedication, and commitment to service.

The Rev. Jesse Jackson Career Scholarship is designed to provide financial assistance and mentorship opportunities to students attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) or Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs). Its primary goal is to nurture leadership potential grounded in service while promoting a spirit of social justice and positive social change.

This year's scholarship recipients have demonstrated outstanding academic achievements and a strong dedication to community service, embodying the values of leadership and social responsibility that the scholarship represents.

Please join us in congratulating the following students on this remarkable achievement:

- **Jasmine Woodard, Junior, Nursing**



Jordan Snipe-Campbell, Junior, Business Administration

- **Desmond Williams, Junior, Business Administration**

- **Kiana Philadelphia, Senior, Business Administration**

These students are now part of a legacy that champions both educational excellence and a commitment to transforming society. We are proud of their accomplishments and look forward to seeing the impact they will continue to make in the world.

Clinton College celebrates this exciting moment and thanks the Rev. Jesse Jackson Career Scholarship for its ongoing support in empowering the next generation of leaders!

Zion Spotlight: Rev. Dr. Lester McCorn

A Legacy of Transformation at Clinton College

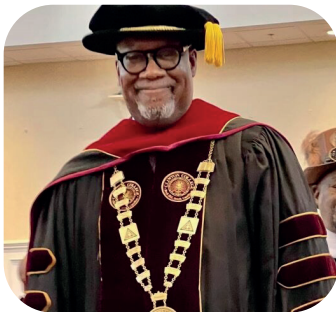
By Rev. Roderick J. Josey, Education Editor

As President of Clinton College since 2017, Rev. Dr. Lester McCorn has left an indelible mark on the institution, guiding it through remarkable growth and innovation. Under his leadership, the college transitioned from a two-year institution to offering a suite of four-year degree programs, including nursing, cybersecurity, and public health. This shift not only expanded academic opportunities but also positioned Clinton College as a beacon of progress in higher education.



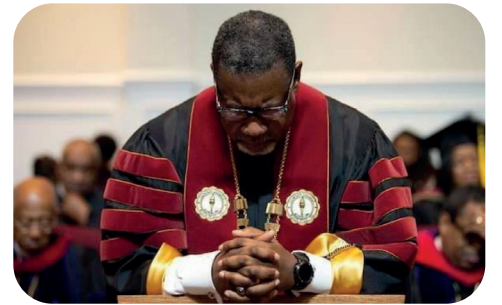
Clinton College aims for record-breaking fall enrollment despite spring storm damage
heraldonline.com

Dr. McCorn's tenure was characterized by a focus on academic excellence, infrastructure enhancement, and community impact. He secured over \$20 million in grants, including \$1.5 million from the U.S. Department of Energy to establish a state-of-the-art cybersecurity program. Enrollment at Clinton College increased by 27% in Fall 2024, while retention and graduation rates rose by 20% and 25%, respectively. Notably, the college's accreditation was reaffirmed for ten years with no recommendations, a testament to the institution's robust academic and administrative framework.



Key achievements during his presidency include the construction of Clinton's Digital Library and Learning Commons, a new Academic Center for Excellence, and a Nursing Simulation Lab, cementing the college's commitment to student success and cutting-edge education.

As Rev. Dr. McCorn embarks on his next chapter as President-Elect of Paine College, he carries forward his visionary leadership. Starting in January 2025, he aims to honor Paine College's storied legacy while advancing a strategic vision for its future. Dr. McCorn's deep roots in faith and education continue to guide his mission to empower historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and their communities.



The A.M.E. Zion church celebrates Dr. McCorn's extraordinary contributions to Clinton College and offers blessings for his journey at Paine College, where his leadership will undoubtedly inspire new heights of achievement.



- Master of Divinity • Master of Theological Studies
- Doctor of Ministry • Master of Arts in Chaplaincy
- Master of Arts in Christian Education
- Master of Arts in Christian Ministry
- Graduate Certificate Programs • Continuing Education



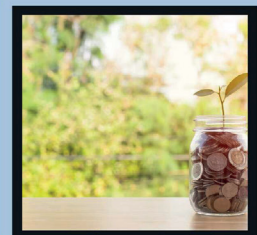
Gifted Faculty



Accessible Campus



Diverse Community



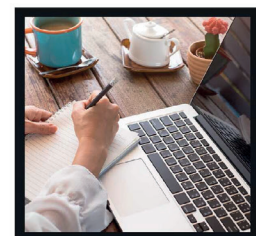
Affordable Tuition

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Hood Theological Seminary is sponsored by the A.M.E. Zion Church, approved by the University Senate of The United Methodist Church, and fully accredited by the Association of Theological Schools.

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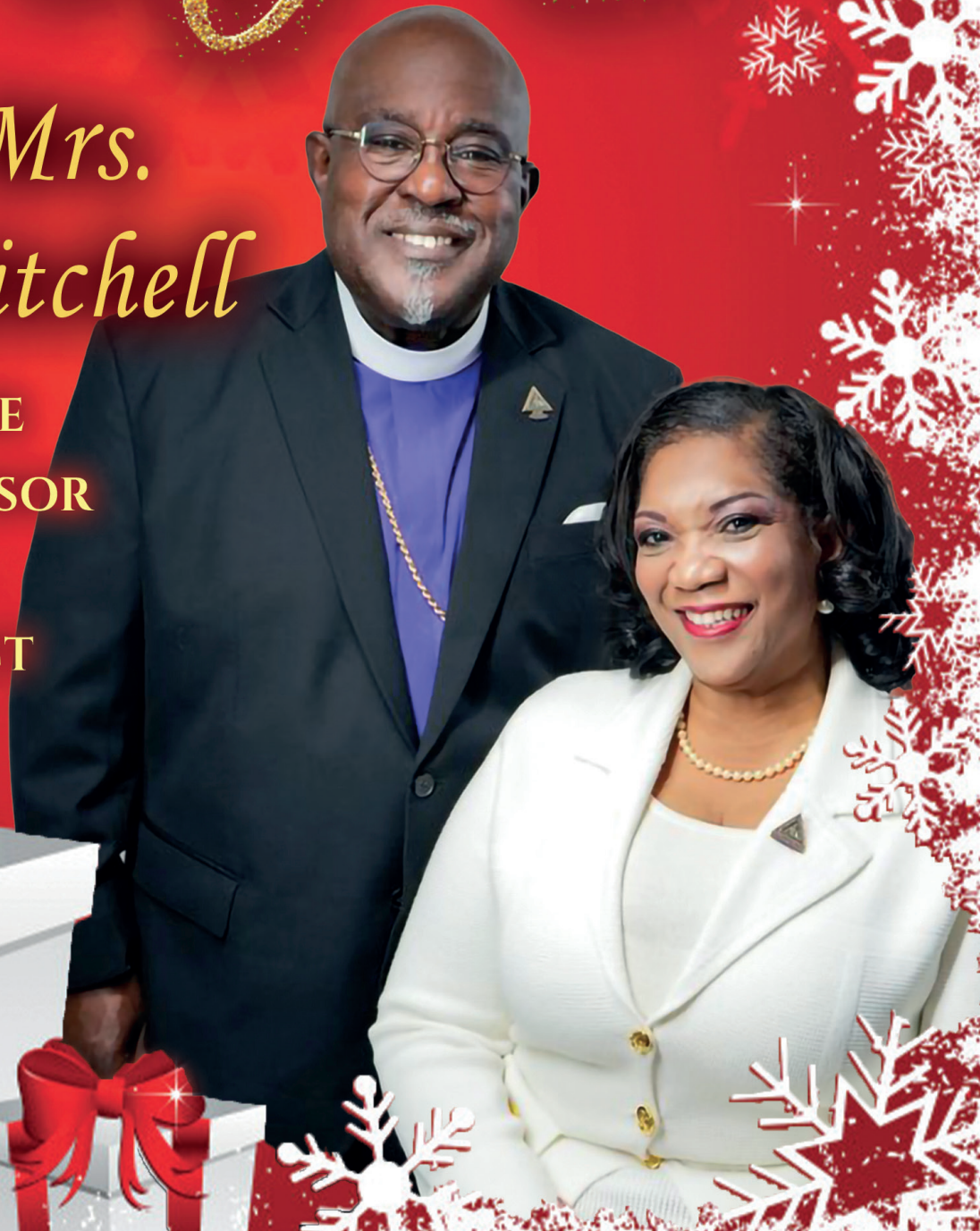


THE A.M.E. ZION CHURCH
The Freedom Church

Merry Christmas

*Bishop & Mrs.
Daran H. Mitchell*

PRESIDING PRELATE
MISSIONARY SUPERVISOR
MIDWEST
EPISCOPAL DISTRICT



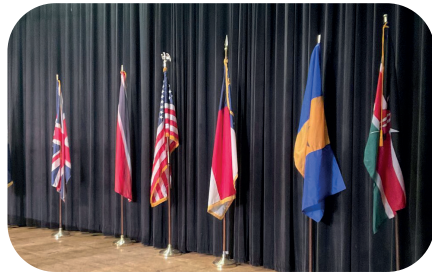
Livingstone Celebrates International Education Week

By Star of Zion News

The U.S. Departments of Education and State have a joint initiative, International Education Week (IEW), that not only celebrates the benefits of international education and exchange worldwide but also permits educational institutions the opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate their diversity each year in November.

The week of November 18-22, Livingstone College joined many around the world in an opportunity to highlight the value of global and cultural competencies and promote programs that help campuses develop global skills for success in the 21st century. With over 40 international Presidential Scholars, the Honors Program hosted a plethora of activities that promote global awareness and kinship. Programs included Model United Nations, Financial Literacy for International Students, Storytelling with Livingstone's international alumni, a parade of international flags, and even a soccer match competition.

Masa Simovic of Montenegro said, "Dr. Simon's financial literacy presentation was eye-opening. The actionable information discussed the importance of having a U.S. bank account, told us about forms and procedures needed to be completed by the IRS, and so much more invaluable knowledge of this country's rules. I am looking forward to



build bridges. During the student soiree event, international students displayed their culinary skills with home dishes such as Jollof rice and kelewele with other students. Osei shared, "These events will be memorable even after we graduate from here. I am very grateful for this opportunity to share a piece of home with others and feel part of something larger than myself."



As faculty, staff, and students joined the many events, the transformative power of embracing connection, celebrating diversity, and learning from and alongside people who have different life experiences fostered the development of open minds and collaborative work for global awareness.

learning more in January."

As more people are crossing borders to pursue education, students like Robert Osei of Ghana have come to realize international education can unlock not only opportunities but also friendships and the potential to

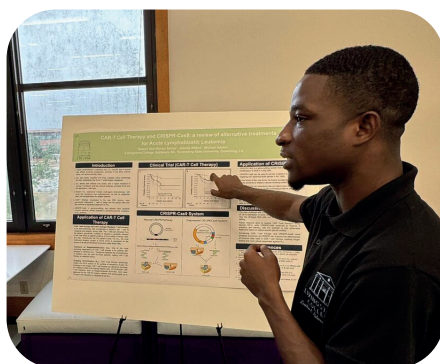


Livingstone Freshmen Attend National Academic Conference

By The Star of Zion

The 33rd National Association of African American Honors Programs (NAAHP) Annual Conference was hosted by Prairie View A&M University from October 31 to November 2, 2024, in Prairie View, Texas. Livingstone College presidential scholars Robert Osei Bonsu Senior, Muhammad Ibrahim, Te'J Rodriguez, and Carter Thompson traveled with NAAHP National Parliamentarian Laura Johnson, Director of Andrew Carnegie Library at Livingstone, to compete with over 30 other HBCUs in quiz bowl, debate, Model United Nations, and paper/poster presentations.

As NAAHP fosters academic excellence, leadership, and community engagement while also celebrating the rich cultural heritage of African Americans, Livingstone showcased its community service initiatives related to voter education efforts and engaged in quiz bowl and student research presentations. Te'J Rodriguez, a political science major from Greenville, North Carolina, presented Straight Outta Concrete: An Examination of Misogyny, Violence, and Afrocentricity in the Genre Gangsta Rap, which examined the relationships between African Amer-



ican audiences and communities, rap music lyrics and videos, Black collective self-esteem, and attitudes towards women.

Ghana natives Robert Osei Bonsu Senior and Muhammad Ibrahim shared a STEM poster CAR-T Cell Therapy and CRISPR-Cas9: A Review of Alternative Treatments for Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia, a safety endeavor to add complementary and alternative therapies for terminal diseases, and Carter Thompson of Indianapolis, Indiana gained recognition for his outstanding performance in quiz bowl and talent showcase featuring his guitar and vocal talent display.

Rodriguez said, "I was awakened to so many things at this conference. From the presence of HBCUs to the power of networking and the purpose of competition, this experience has inspired me to elevate my dreams and pursue them with tenacity."



Merry Christmas

**PRESIDING PRELATE &
MISSIONARY SUPERVISOR**

**SOUTHWESTERN
DELTA
EPISCOPAL
DISTRICT**

ZION

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



**BISHOP ANTONY
WITHERSPOON**

**REV. DR. KAY
GABRIEL**

PAINE COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES SELECTS DR. LESTER MCCORN AS NEXT PRESIDENT OF PAINE COLLEGE

By Helene T. Carter

Augusta, Ga... The Board of Trustees of Paine College is pleased to announce the appointment of Rev. Dr. Lester A. McCorn as President-select. Known for his transformational leadership in higher education, Dr. McCorn brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to Paine College. McCorn will assume the presidency of the college on January 1, 2025.



Since 2017, McCorn has served as President and Professor of Christian Leadership at Clinton College located in Rock Hill, South Carolina. He is an ordained elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. He served as pastor of churches in Boston, Connecticut, Atlanta and as Senior Pastor of the Historic 1,500-member Pennsylvania Avenue AME Zion Church in Baltimore, Maryland.

A native of Worcester, Massachusetts, McCorn earned a Doctor of Ministry from the United Theological Seminary (Dayton, OH) in 2011; a Master of Arts from Chicago Theological Seminary (Chicago, ILL) in 2003; a Master of Divinity Studies from Yale University School of Divinity (New Haven, CT) in 1999; a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies from Charter Oak State College (Newington, CT) in 2001; and a Bachelor of Arts in Religion and Sociology from Morehouse College (Atlanta, GA) in 1989.

“Dr. McCorn is a proven leader who has demonstrated a clear and concise vision for institutional change, while identifying and executing a comprehensive plan designed to achieve successful student outcomes,” stated Michael Thurmond, Chairman of the Paine College Board of Trustees.

During McCorn’s seven-year tenure as president of Clinton College, the institution:

- Added five new bachelor’s degrees: Nursing, Cybersecurity, Elementary Education, Interdisciplinary Studies and pending a Bachelor of Public Health (BPH);
- Increased student enrollment by 27% in fall 2024;
- Improved student retention by 20% and graduation rates by 25%;
- Established a Department of Sponsored Programs and Grants and secured over \$20 million in grants and awards;
- Granted \$1.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy to fund a Cybersecurity program;
- Constructed the first Digital Library and Learning Commons at an HBCU (2021) with a state-of-the-art Cybersecurity Lab and a new Academic Center for Excellence, with faculty offices, writing lab and a new Nursing Simulation Lab; and
- Earned ten years accrediting reaffirmation by the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS), with no recommendations, findings, or suggestions in 2023.

McCorn stated, “I am honored to accept the presidency of Paine College. My acceptance originates from a place of deep respect and admiration for the legacy and significance of this historic institution. Connect-

ing Paine College’s historic past with a strategic vision for the future will catapult this institution into unparalleled prominence in American higher education. I relish the opportunity to collaborate with Paine College’s trustees, administrators, alumni, students, faculty, stakeholders, and civic and business leaders to realize our vision for higher education excellence.”

McCorn is married to Mrs. Charlene M. McCorn, an elementary school teacher in Fort Mill, South Carolina. They are the proud parents of four adult children and five grandchildren. He is a proud Life Member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

Dr. Cheryl Evans Jones, outgoing president, recently retired after 31 years of distinguished service at Paine. Dr. Jones played a pivotal role in the development of the Transformation Plan that will carry forward under the leadership of President-select McCorn. She is committed to working with the Board of Trustees to ensure a smooth and orderly transition.

Although formal introductions commenced with students, faculty, staff, alumni, friends, and local business leaders on October 18th, the College will organize additional focus group meetings with the campus family, stakeholders, business and community leaders, to share in the excitement of this new chapter in the history of the Institution. President-select McCorn will host a series of listening sessions designed to gather feedback from constituents and community partners to chart a course for Paine College.

The College invites media outlets to direct inquiries to Helene Carter, VP of Institutional Advancement, at (706) 821.8323 or hcarter@paine.edu.

About Paine College

Paine College, located in Augusta, Georgia, is a private, four-year HBCU that is affiliated with the United Methodist Church and the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. Paine offers a liberal arts education and is accredited by the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS).

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MERRY
Christmas
&
HAPPY NEW YEAR



Rev. Jimmie Miller

Bishop Melanie Rogers Miller

Mrs. Rosalyn Holland



— The A.M.E. Zion Church —

Forging Freedom: The Abolitionist Legacy & The Future of Impact Investing



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

By Rev. Dr. Sidney S. Williams, Jr.

As the United States approaches its 250th anniversary, we are reminded of the nation's complex history—one marked by profound struggles for freedom and equality. In this moment of reflection, the intersection of the abolitionist movement and modern impact investing offers a compelling framework to examine how resources can be mobilized for systemic change.

A Historical Blueprint: Richard Allen and the Abolitionist Movement

Richard Allen, founder of The African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church provides a timeless example of how faith, community leadership, and financial innovation can converge to transform society. As detailed in Richard S. Newman's *Freedom's Prophet: Bishop Richard Allen, the A.M.E. Church, and the Black Founding Fathers*, Allen's story is one of resilience and resourcefulness.

Allen transformed a blacksmith shop into Bethel A.M.E. Church, creating not just a place of worship but a sanctuary for abolitionist organizing and community empowerment. This transformation was made possible by strategic financial partnerships, including support from Quaker abolitionists in Philadelphia, who purchased investment notes to fund Allen's vision. Newman writes, "Allen's genius lay not only in his spiritual leadership but in his capacity to create a sustainable institution that addressed the immediate and long-term needs of his people" (*Freedom's Prophet*, p. 102).

This collaboration represents an early form of impact investing—where financial resources are intentionally directed to support social justice and community well-being. By blending mission and capital, Allen and his allies laid the groundwork for a model that continues to inspire.

The Role of Modern Intermediaries

Today, Allen's legacy finds new life in the work of community-based intermediaries. These organizations bridge the gap between philanthropic funders and grassroots movements, ensuring that resources flow equitably to communities that need them most. As a recent essay in *Nonprofit Quarterly* notes, "A new generation of leaders is emerging in communities of color that asserts its autonomy from traditional organizational structures and directly challenges conventional philanthropic thinking and practices."

These intermediaries do more than allocate funds—they center community voices, embed equity into grantmaking practices, and challenge the systemic inequities of traditional philanthropy. Their mission is to empower movements, reduce bureaucratic barriers, and ensure that resources align with the priorities of those who serve.

Oikos Institute for Social Impact: Continuing the Mission

The Oikos Institute for Social Impact, co-founded by Rev. Dr. Sidney Williams and Rev. Dr. Reginald Blount, exemplifies this modern intermediary model. Inspired by the legacy of leaders like Richard Allen, Oikos supports Black churches in addressing systemic inequities and fostering community transformation.

In addition to providing technical assistance and advocacy, Oikos has established a loan fund to help churches and community organizations access the capital necessary for their initiatives. This loan fund was made possible through the foundational support of the Southern Reconstruction Fund, Napoleon Wallace, and the Nathan Cummings Foundation. These partners share Oikos' vision of equipping underserved communities with resources to create sustainable economic and social impact.

Furthermore, Oikos recently achieved Certified Development Entity



(CDE) certification and intends to apply for Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) certification in 2025. These advancements position Oikos as a vital resource for Black churches seeking to build sustainable, community-driven initiatives.

Much like Allen's Bethel A.M.E. Church, Oikos operates as a hub of social and economic empowerment, aligning financial tools with the needs of marginalized communities. By asking, "What do you need?" before designing its programs, Oikos ensures its work reflects the priorities of those it serves, creating solutions that are both equitable and impactful.

A Call to Action

As we reflect on 250 years of American history, the lessons of the abolitionist movement and the vision of leaders like Richard Allen remind us that liberation requires more than good intentions—it demands strategic action and investment. Organizations like Oikos demonstrate how the principles of abolitionism can inform today's efforts to dismantle systemic inequities and build a more just society.

This anniversary is a moment not only to celebrate but to recommit ourselves to the unfinished work of justice. By aligning our resources, policies, and practices with the needs of underserved communities, we honor the legacy of those who fought for freedom and ensure that their vision continues to guide our path forward.

Richard Allen's story, as told in *Freedom's Prophet*, challenges us to reimagine what is possible when we combine faith, innovation, and action. His work—and the work of modern intermediaries like the Oikos Institute—provides a blueprint for how we can invest in communities to create lasting change.

As we forge ahead, we invite leaders, organizations, and allies to join us in this critical work. The next Fishing Differently conference, scheduled for September 3-5, 2025, in Philadelphia, will provide an opportunity to deepen these conversations and explore actionable strategies. Together, let us draw on this rich history to build a future where resources flow equitably, communities thrive, and justice prevails.



Rev. Dierdre R. Parker
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Cable and Streaming Services Showcase Black Christmas Movies Throughout December

By R. Thomas Umstead

Black viewers looking to see themselves reflected in original Christmas films will have plenty to choose from in December as cable networks and streaming services such as OWN, BET+ and Lifetime offer several original holiday movies featuring predominantly Black casts and storylines.



Movies such as *Brewster's Millions: Christmas* (BET+), *Mistletoe & Matrimony* (OWN) and *Make or Bake Christmas* (Lifetime) feature veteran stars as Vivica A. Fox, Jackee Harry, China Anne McClain, Romeo Miller, Telma Hopkins, Tia Mowry, Terri Vaughn, Vanessa Bell Calloway and Essence Atkins in stories that celebrate the holiday season through narratives that reflect Black culture and traditions, according to network executives.

"OWN has long been a pioneer in creating original holiday movies that resonate deeply with Black audiences, showcasing diverse talent at the forefront of our storytelling and bringing families together during this special time of year," OWN President Tina Perry said.

Such movies also have appeal beyond Black viewers. Amazon Prime Video's 2023 original movie *Candy Cane Lane* (<https://www.amazon.com/Candy-Cane-Lane-Eddie-Murphy/dp/B0CGNN63MH>) starring Eddie Murphy finished among the top 20 most-watched Christmas films airing in November and December of last year, besting such perennial classics as *It's A Wonderful Life*, *Die Hard* and *Scrooged* across cable, broadcast and streaming services, according to a Samba TV viewership survey.

"The holiday season is about families and togetherness, and I feel like that's an opportunity that's been taken up by major networks for decades," BET Plus' BET Plus VP of content programming, strategy and original movies Marvin Neil said in a 2023 interview (<https://www.nexttv.com/news/bet-plus-wraps-up-new-holiday-movies-leading-into-christmas>). "The problem is major networks weren't really showcasing the black holiday experience the way we felt we deserved, so we were very intentional about really targeting the holiday season as a moment to tell relatable stories for our viewers and for a broader audience."

The movies also allow Black actors and producers to flex their creative juices within the festive genre. Gospel music icon Kirk Franklin, who produced Lifetime's 2022 holiday film *The Night Before Christmas*, said in a 2022 interview (<https://www.nexttv.com/news/kirk-franklin-bringing-gospel-music-to-lifetimes-holiday-movie-fare>) that he wanted to create holiday films that feature the familiar storylines of romance, joy, love and spirit told through the music and themes inspired by urban culture.

"Sometimes holiday films don't get a chance to showcase the origins of urban culture and urban celebration of the holidays but still be inclusive to everyone and anyone so that they are able to find their same spirit within narratives that are uniquely ours," Franklin said. "It's very important to be able to represent all communities when you talk about storytelling on the screen."

Here are new Black holiday movies to watch for the rest of the holiday season.

Make or Bake Christmas (Lifetime) December 1

(<https://www.mylifetime.com/movies/make-or-bake-christmas>)

Brewster's Millions: Christmas (BET+) December 5

(<https://www.bet.plus/video-clips/0wfgb8/brewster-s-millions-christmas-brewster-s-millions-christmas-trailer>)

A Very Merry Beauty Salon (Lifetime) December 7

(<https://www.mylifetime.com/movies/a-very-merry-beauty-salon>)

A Season to Remember (OWN) December 7

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p4SGnYdCFig>)

Too Many Christmases (BET+) December 12

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFPPTVdfEmA>)

Mistletoe & Matrimony (OWN) December 14

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p4SGnYdCFig>)

Queens of Christmas (BET+) December 19

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4WKix88H018>)

24-Karat Christmas (OWN) December 21

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p4SGnYdCFig>)

Blended Christmas (BET+) December 25

(<https://blackgirlnerds.com/blended-christmas-premiering-on-bet-this-holiday-season/>)

Along with new original films, streaming services are also showcasing classic holiday films with black leads and storylines, such as:

The Perfect Holiday (Tubi TV)

<https://tubitv.com/movies/528613/the-perfect-holiday>

Last Holiday, (Amazon Prime Video) <https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/amzn1.dv.gti.e72efaa8-9294-44ce-85da-3238a25838c7?tag=justus0byi-20&token=ADE07EB7B9E7DB86DEEEF0D5D4F-C5F0B5FB44D3F>

Jingle Jangle: A Christmas Journey

<https://www.netflix.com/title/80232043>

The Best Man Holiday

<https://www.amazon.com/Best-Man-Holiday-Monica-Calhoun/dp/B00HY18DWS>

This Preacher's Wife (Fubo) <https://www.fubo.tv/welcome/program/MV000489980000/the-preachers-wife?irmp=1206980&irad=599309>

From Children's Ministry Leader to Children's Book Author: Ashley Newton's Journey to Inspiring Children's Faith

By St. Stephen Media Team

Mrs. Ashley Newton, the First Lady of St. Stephen A.M.E. Zion Church in Asbury Park, NJ, has always been driven by a vision: to create a welcoming and transformative environment where children can learn about Christ, build lasting friendships, and grow in their faith. This mission has inspired her latest venture—a heartfelt children's book titled *Zeke's Journey to Children's Church*. The story follows Zeke, a young boy whose initial apprehension about attending children's church transforms

into excitement and joy after experiencing the warmth, fellowship, and teachings within the faith-based community.

Lady Newton's journey to writing this book is deeply rooted in her own experiences leading children's ministry. Her leadership at both St. Stephen and Varick Memorial A.M.E.Z Church in New Haven, CT, has left a lasting impact. Under her guidance, children's ministries at both churches have grown exponentially, serving as a model for others. During the pandemic, she hosted virtual Children's Church after Rush Temple's Sunday service and had children as far away as Italy joining

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Continued on next page

MERRY CHRISTMAS & Happy New Year

BISHOP DWAYNE A. WALKER
MRS. DONNA SMITH-WALKER



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



**Presiding Prelate & Missionary Supervisor
Alabama - Florida Episcopal District**

Merry Christmas



**BISHOP BERNARDO NGUNZA & PAULA NGUNZA
PRESIDING PRELATE & MISSIONARY SUPERVISOR**

*Central Southern Africa
Episcopal District*

in. When asked what inspired her to write this book, she said, “As a mother of two children who love going to Children’s Church every Sunday and have seen the transformative power of a thriving children’s ministry, I wanted to share a story that captures the joy and feeling of belonging that we seek to create every week.” On a personal level, she added, “we sit at home and make up stories and silly songs as a family, so this came so naturally.”

Lady Newton draws on her background in educational leadership to design engaging curriculums, train volunteers, and create spaces where children not only learn about Christ but also develop a genuine love for attending church. Her work was incredibly influential at Varick Memorial, where her efforts transformed the children’s ministry into one of the church’s most vibrant programs. Rev. Eldren Morrison, the former pastor, reflected on her contributions, saying: “The children’s ministry at Varick Memorial exponentially grew under the guidance and direction of Sis. Ashley Newton. She was a capable and visionary leader. The children’s ministry initially accomplished two important things for the church. It ensured that we were developing the faith of our children. We wanted our kids to know Jesus, and they enjoyed learning so much that they started discipling other children, and the ministry grew.” He added “Sis. Newton challenged church leaders to think differently about children’s ministry. She led in investing resources into our most precious resources, and the ministry was one of the most active and sought-after. We thought that having the children in their own dedicated space would free up much-needed room in the sanctuary for the three worship services. However, the children outgrew their dedicated space, and we had seating challenges in the sanctuary and space challenges in the children’s church.” This recognition speaks to the remarkable results she continues to achieve. Her ability to inspire church leaders to think differently about children’s ministry and to invest in the spiritual development of their youngest members has been significant. It also speaks to the potential that churches have when pastoral leadership supports and encourages children’s ministries.

The pastor of St. Stephen, Rev. Quavon Newton, remarks on how Mrs. Newton’s leadership philosophy is shaped by her understanding of the



importance of educational frameworks and faith-based nurturing. He said, “I’m especially excited about this book because I have witnessed how hard she works to create structure, so children’s ministry activities run smoothly. We have young children, and if we weren’t the leaders here, in this church, this is still the type of experience we would want for our kids.” Ashley has such a keen ability to motivate everyone around her. Rev. Newton adds, “one thing we have done at St. Stephen is to empower our members to become active in our various ministries, and Ashley has been very instrumental in encouraging people to push out of their comfort zones and participate in roles that they ordinarily wouldn’t. It has been inspiring to see how many more people have become involved in all of the things we have been able to do in our church and this community.” Concerning the Children’s Ministry, she recognizes that volunteers may come from diverse professional backgrounds, but their shared love for children and God can be harnessed to create impactful programs. She invests time in training volunteers, many of whom have no formal background in education, to ensure they are equipped to foster a safe, welcoming environment for children.

Zeke’s Journey to Children’s Church was inspired by the many stories Lady Newton has witnessed throughout her career as an educator and ministry—stories of children overcoming, discovering a sense of belonging, and deepening their faith. This story reflects the journey that so many take for the first time, finding their sense of community within the larger church community. For Newton, Zeke’s story mirrors the journey of her own children, who have grown up in a thriving faith community shaped by their parent’s vision and dedication. Through this book, Newton’s vision is twofold: she hopes to inspire churches to invest in their children’s ministries, creating spaces where children can encounter Christ in meaningful ways, and she also hopes that this book will bring joy to the children who read it. When her 7-year-old daughter, Eden, read it for the first time, she remarked on how it captured how she feels about children’s church: “I like Children’s church just like Zeke in the book. It’s fun, and we get to learn more about God with our friends.” *Zeke’s Journey to Children’s Church* is available for purchase online through Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and Apple iBooks.



The 1885 Society Dinner

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

On Thursday, November 21, 2024, at 6:00 pm, the Hood Theological Seminary National Alumni Association held its annual 1885 Society Dinner at the Aymer Center on the campus Of Hood Theological Seminary. The 1885 Society, so named for the year of the seminary's founding, is the Alumni Association's premiere fund-raising arm for HTNSAA student scholarships. To complete this goal, Alumni and Faith Friends are asked to donate \$1885.00 towards the Student Scholarship Fund (this can be done incrementally). The Association honors those who complete the commitment by inducting them into the Society as Founding Members.



The Aymer Center was beautifully decked out in black and silver, with scintillating centerpieces adorned with silver flowers. Beautifully color-coordinated place settings that bespoke elegance with a dash of pomp and circumstance. The attendees understood the assignment and showed up bedazzled, elegantly coiffed, and groomed to perfection. Not only was this an elegant night, but it was also an engaging one. Some moments felt like a family reunion as former classmates and friends reconnected with smiles, hugs, and raucous reminiscences of shared history at our beloved Hood Seminary.

The HTSNAA President, Rev. Dr. Timothy Freeman, and HTS President Dr. Vergel Lattimore greeted us. Rev. Dr. Yolanda Foster ('19, '23) led us in prayer. We were welcomed by Rev. Eleanor Wilson ('19), and Rev. Elliot Crowder ('20) offered a blessing of the food. We dined on a feast of well-sea-



soned chicken breast, mixed vegetables, garden salad, tea, lemonade, and peach cobbler for dessert.

The highlight of the evening (for me) was the word delivered by Bishop Theresa E. Snorton, Ecumenical Bishop & Program Development Officer of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. Her message from Romans 12:1-2 was "Out with the Old and in With the New: Reconnecting Ministry to serve the present age." She reminded us that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. She reminded us that old wineskins cannot contain new wines. We cannot become so comfortable with the current that we miss the latest move of God. Bishop Snorton's message spoke to us on social, institutional, and personal levels. It was certainly apropos for the current sociopolitical climate in this country.

The culmination of the evening was the awards and pinning ceremony. Kimberly Clarke Turner received the Award for Distinguished Service. Adrian Lanette Harper was awarded for her work as a Community Leader and Social Witness, and Rev. Dr. Kevin Griffin received the Excellence in Pastoral Ministry Award.

Rev. Dr. Latitia Hill Godette was inducted into the 1885 Society as a Founding member. Dr. Godette is known throughout the denomination for her heart for ministry and "just doing the work." She is a glass ceiling breaker and a prolific preacher in her own right. She is currently the Presiding Elder of the Wadesboro-Monroe District. Bishop Daran Mitchell and Supervisor Rev. Lynn Kennedy Mitchell were also present. Bishop Mitchell was pinned during this ceremony as he and Rev. Tamica Robinson ('19) had not been pinned at the time of their induction.

It was a beautiful evening with a beautiful cause and a beautiful outcome. If you would like to become a member of the 1885 Society, contact Dr. Reginald Boyd, Alumni Engagement, at 704-763-6455.

Merry Christmas

TO ALL OUR ZION FAMILY





BISHOP & MRS. GEORGE W.C. WALKER, SR.

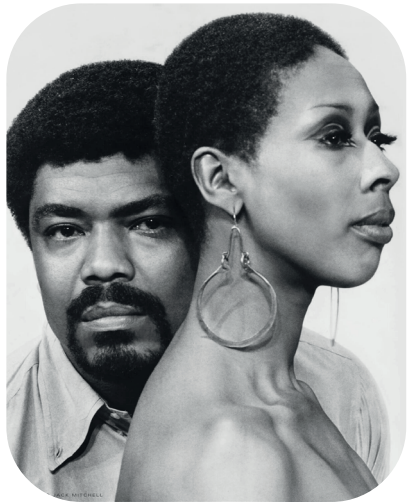
Elected 1988 - Retired 2012

"For unto us a child is born; unto us a Son is given. And the government shall be upon his shoulders. And His name shall be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." - Isaiah 9:6

The Passing of a Legendary Legacy

By Dierdre R. Parker. Entertainment & The Arts Editor

As a kid, I wanted to be a dancer like Lola Falana. If you don't know Lola Falana, then you don't know Sassy, and you don't know Cutsey, and you don't know Demure because she was all of that and then some. Now, if I was going to be a dancer, there was only one place for black dancers: The Alvin Ailey School of Dance. I knew about the Alvin Ailey School of Dance because sometimes, PBS would show them dancing. It was so beautiful. I was mesmerized by the grace and agility with which



they moved. I would try to emulate their movement in my play, but I never quite captured it. I lost interest in dance because I quickly discovered that my dexterity and grace were displayed more on the page than on the stage.

Even after I lost interest in dance, I didn't lose interest in the Alvin Ailey Dance Company. Over the years, I watched them from time to time. I was aware of Judith Jamison. I knew her to be the quintessential, statuesque beauty—the brilliant and passionate student

who became the teacher. I, like many of us, was saddened by her passing. Even though I never met her, her importance to the culture is



immeasurable. Her contributions to the world of dance will live on in the lives of the students whose lives she touched. One such student is Olivia Jackson. Olivia posted a heartfelt tribute to Ms. Jamison on social media. I will share it with you here:

What a legacy! I am so honored to say that not only did I meet one of my dance idols, but I also had the opportunity to be nurtured by her. I studied at the @theaileyschool Summer Intensive in the summer of 2009. Fresh out of High School, I had no idea what I wanted to do with my gift of dance or where it was going to lead me.



However, my mom spent her last to make sure I went to this Summer Intensive. It changed my life forever. On day one of the Ailey intensive, I met Judith Jamison. She expressed to all of the dancers that summer how important we were. She reminded us how talented we were to be accepted into the summer intensive program. What a privileged position we were in to learn amongst the professional dancers that summer. I was so nervous to meet such an icon. Ms. Jamison made it her business to educate us on how important black dancers are to the industry and how important our history is to America.

She is the Epitome of a phenomenal black woman. I wish I could tell her that I am a professional dance teacher and that her photo lives in my classroom right beside Alvin Ailey.

Heaven gained another one.

WISHING ALL A

Merry Christmas

May you find peace, love and the true spirit of the Holiday Season



Bishop & Mrs. S. Chuka Ekemam, Sr.
Elected 1988 - Retired 2012



Mr. Daman De Leon
Health and Wellness Editor
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Coping with Grief During the Holiday Season



By Daman De Leon, Health and Wellness Editor

Losing a loved one is never easy. I've experienced the death of both of my parents within the span of the past four years, and the tears don't stop. The emptiness is still there. The pain of not being able to call my mother and enjoy Scrabble with her and the void of not being able to travel to see my father and enjoy a game of Chess with him at times seems so surreal. Our Faith teaches us that although death is not the end (John 11:25-26), our humanity still feels the void left by our departed loved ones. The holiday season can be especially challenging if you're dealing with the death of someone close to you. Whether it was a recent loss or one that occurred some time ago, feelings of grief can be heightened and may seem overwhelming during the holiday season.

This is the time of year known for traditions and togetherness with family and friends, yet you may face challenges in how you celebrate and gather. Understanding how grief affects you, having conversations about plans with those close to you, and finding ways to remember your loved ones can help restore a sense of balance through this time. These actions also can help you navigate through rough spots and find warmth in special, unexpected places.

Grief and bereavement are universal, understandable human responses to loss, but how each person processes the various symptoms and reactions can vary greatly because each person is different; how and when those feelings surface will vary.

There is no predictable timetable or pattern. While you may feel it on an emotional level or in your everyday behaviors and relationships, grief also has its physical effects, which are important to note. You might recognize that you tire more easily, have trouble eating or sleeping, or seem more susceptible to headaches and other illnesses. You might even notice that you have difficulty concentrating and a low tolerance level.

These symptoms occur because the part of the brain responsible for emotion and stress is activated during the grieving process, so normal brain functioning is interrupted. Grief can change brain chemicals and

hormonal functioning, and your immune system can be compromised.

Pay close attention to your health and take good care of yourself while grieving. It's important to take it easy and be gentle with yourself. Try to eat healthy foods and get enough rest. You're not imagining these reactions. They are real.

If you're experiencing these feelings, it's a good idea to see your health care team to ensure that all is well and have added guidance during this difficult time.

Some of what you're experiencing may include responses that don't feel socially acceptable. You might find that tears come easily in unexpected places, or you can't cry — the tears just won't come. You might feel so down or exhausted that you have trouble just getting out of bed or off the sofa. You might realize that the coping responses you've developed might not be the healthiest.

The important thing to remember is that you are a unique person. Honor your process, and acknowledge that this is how you respond and are attempting to cope. There is no right or wrong way to grieve. Try to go at your own pace.

It may be beneficial to seek grief counseling or join a grief support group. Knowing that you're not alone can make a world of difference. Connecting with those who understand or are going through a similar situation can provide new perspectives, affirm that what you are going through is normal, and offer much-needed support.

You're grieving because you've loved, have been loved, and continue to love. An important part of your healing this holiday season may be to embrace the love and memories you've shared with your loved ones.

Sharing stories among family and friends, making favorite foods, looking at photographs of happy memories, or other activities may help you find a connection. Pay attention to whether this warms you or becomes too hot to touch. Let your feelings be your guide. Finding the path to navigate through all the season's activities may provide a sense of empowerment.

Wishing you peace through the holiday season.



8 Ways to Support an Alzheimer's Caregiver

By Alzheimer's Association – Western Carolina Chapter
Photo By BARBARA KINNEY

November is National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month and Family Caregivers Month. To mark these events, the Alzheimer's Association Western Carolina Chapter is encouraging people to lend a helping hand to more than 373,000 North Carolina family members and friends serving as Alzheimer's caregivers.

“The demands of being an Alzheimer's caregiver are all-encompassing and increase over time as the disease progresses, said Katherine L. Lambert, CEO of the Alzheimer's Association - Western Carolina Chapter. “This month, we are recognizing family caregivers for all they do every day to support people in their lives living with dementia, and invite the public to identify ways to support them as caregivers.”



Providing help and support to caregivers can be easier than most people think. Even little acts can make a big difference. The Alzheimer's Association Western Carolina Chapter offers these suggestions:

- **Learn:** Educate yourself about Alzheimer's disease—its symptoms, progression, and the common challenges facing caregivers. The more you know, the easier it will be to find ways to help.
- **Build a Team:** Organize family and friends who want to help with caregiving. The Alzheimer's Association offers links to several free online care calendar resources that families can use to build their care team, share tasks, and coordinate helpers.
- **Give Caregivers a Break:** Make a standing appointment to give the caregiver a break. Spend time with the person living with dementia and allow the caregiver a chance to run errands, go to their own doctor's appointment, participate in a support group, or engage in an activity that helps them recharge. Even one hour could make a big difference in providing the caregiver with some relief.

- **Check-In:** Many Alzheimer's and dementia caregivers report feeling isolated or alone. So, start the conversation – a phone call to check in, send a note, or stop by for a visit can make a big difference in a caregiver's day and help them feel supported.
- **Tackle the To-Do List:** Ask for a list of errands that need to be run – such as picking up groceries or prescriptions. Offer to do yard work or other household chores. It can be hard for a caregiver to find time to complete these simple tasks that we often take for granted.
- **Be Specific and Be Flexible:** Open-ended offers of support (“Call me if you need anything” or “Let me know if I can help”) may be well-intended but are often dismissed. Be specific in your offer (“I'm going to the store, what do you need?”). Continue to let the caregiver know that you are there and ready to help.
- **Help for the Holidays:** Holiday celebrations are often joyous occasions, but they can be challenging and stressful for families facing Alzheimer's. Help caregivers around the holidays by offering help with cooking, cleaning, or gift shopping. If a caregiver has traditionally hosted family celebrations, offer your home instead.
- **Join the Fight:** Honor a person living with the disease and their caregivers by joining the fight against Alzheimer's. You can volunteer with your local Alzheimer's Association chapter, participate in fundraising events such as Walk to End Alzheimer's and The Longest Day, advocate for more research funding, or sign up to participate in a clinical study through the Alzheimer's Association's Trial Match.

The Alzheimer's Association Chapters in North Carolina offer free education programs and support groups to help all area caregivers and their families. For a complete list or to register for upcoming programs, visit act.alz.org/ncmonth-lyprograms.

To learn more about Alzheimer's disease, support families and people living with the disease and information on the Alzheimer's Association - Western Carolina Chapter, visit alz.org/northcarolina or call 800.272.3900.



MERRY
Christmas

God's Blessing upon
You & Your Family
This Holiday Season



BISHOP & MRS. JOSEPH JOHNSON
Elected 1992 - Retired 2004

Holiday Tradition and its Significance in the Black Church

By Daman De Leon, Health and Wellness Editor

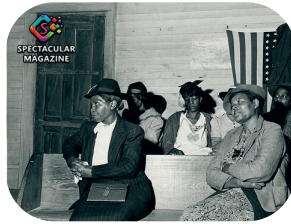
Christmas, Kwanzaa, and additional holiday traditions that may be rooted in the Black Community play a significant role within our culture.

On the night of December 31, 1862, enslaved and free African Americans gathered, many in secret, to ring in the new year and await news that the Emancipation Proclamation had taken effect. Just a few months earlier, on September 22, 1862, President Abraham Lincoln issued the executive order that declared enslaved people in the rebelling Confederate States legally free. However, the decree would not take effect until the clock struck midnight at the start of the new year. The occasion, known as Watch Night or "Freedom's Eve," marks when African Americans across the country watched and waited for the news of freedom. Today, Watch Night is an annual New Year's Eve tradition that includes the memory of slavery and freedom, reflections on faith, and a celebration of community and strength.

Watch Night service is rooted in African American religious traditions. During the first Watch Night, many enslaved African Americans gathered to pray, worship, sing, and dance. At the time, enslaved black people could find little respite from ever-present surveillance, even in practicing their faith. White enslavers feared that religion, which was often used to quell slave resistance, could incite the exact opposite if practiced without observance. They wrote laws that restricted worship and large gatherings, such as that in the 1848 Georgia Slave Code:

"No person of color . . . shall be allowed to preach, to exhort, or join in any religious exercise with any persons of color, either free or slave, there being more than seven persons of color present." - 1848 Georgia Slave Code

Despite these laws, enslaved people sought to exercise their own religious customs, including Christianity, Islam, and indigenous faith practices reflective of the homes from which they were stolen. They convened at praise houses on plantations or secretly gathered in the woods, where they practiced their faith under the protective cover of the trees and brush in what became known as "hush harbors." As Charlotte Martin, a formerly enslaved woman from Florida, recounted, "[The



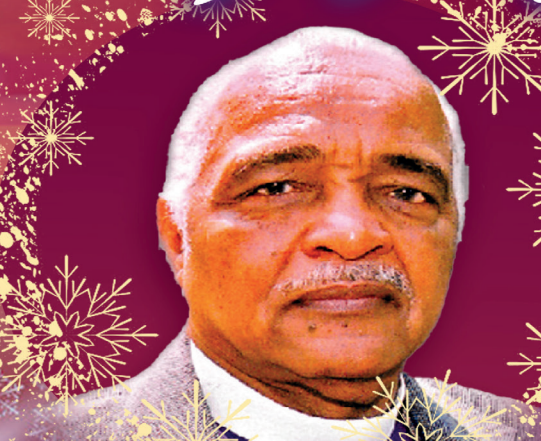
plantation owner] would not permit them to hold religious meetings or any other kinds of meetings, but they frequently met in secret to conduct religious services." Charlotte's own brother was beaten to death for participating in such secret worship meetings. However, enslaved people persisted in their faith practices as forms of resistance and freedom.

This spirit is still visible in Watch Night services today. The Watch Night service typically begins around 7 pm on December 31 and lasts through midnight, as faith leaders guide congregants in praise and worship. Many congregants across the nation bow in prayer minutes before the midnight hour as they sing out "Watchman, watchman please tell me the hour of the night." In return the minister replies "it is three minutes to midnight"; "it is one minute before the new year"; and "it is now midnight, freedom has come," to bless their transition into the new year.

The occasion is customarily marked by celebrations of fellowship and a worship service, followed by a fortuitous meal on New Year's Day. Celebratory foods include a diverse collection of culinary traditions that can be traced back to Southern superstition, influenced by beliefs across West Africa. Chief among these foodways is the practice of eating collard greens, representing the promise of prosperity, and eating black-eyed peas with rice, also known as Hoppin' John. Traditionally, Hoppin' John consists of black-eyed peas, rice, red peppers, and salt pork, and it is believed to bring good fortune to those who eat it. Before finding its way into American traditions, the black-eyed pea (also known as cowpea) traveled from Central Africa to the West Indies and finally to the Carolinas in the early 1700s. Many West African cultures regard the pea as lucky, and memories of its luck remained with enslaved black people in the American South and still endure today. Though Hoppin' John is a common dish prepared for Watch Night, the foods prepared in observance of the tradition are incredibly diverse and reflective of regional, temporal, and cultural differences within the African American community. Some other common dishes include candied yams, cornbread, potato salad, and macaroni and cheese.

Initially meant to welcome emancipation, today the Watch Night service encourages reflection on the history of slavery and freedom, as well as reflection on the past year—both its trials and triumphs—while also anticipating what the new year will have in store. It is a continuation of generations of faith that freedom and renewal lie ahead.

Happy Holidays




REJOICE

As We Celebrate The
birth of Our Savior

Bishop Marshall Strickland

Elected 1992 - Retired 2004



Surviving the Holidays While Grieving



Ms. Angel Eason
Lifestyle Editor
Lifestyle@StarOfZion.org



By Angel Eason, Lifestyle Editor

Holidays are a time of celebration, joy, thanksgiving, and appreciation. However, if you are grieving, they can also bring feelings of sadness, emptiness, and disappointment. Finding ways to take care of yourself during this season is essential. I had the opportunity to connect with Dr. Ian Bell-Jefferson, a Doc-

toral student of Clinical Psychology at California Southern University and a member of First A.M.E. Zion Church—San Francisco, about navigating grief during the holidays.

What are some ways that people can get through the holidays while grieving?

- Do not isolate yourself. You can spend time alone but do not dwell in loneliness.
- Spend time with your family, church family, and friends in person or via video chat apps.
- Practice gratitude daily by praying, meditating, and focusing on the good things in your present life. Even just 1 minute of reflecting on what you are grateful for helps to maintain positive mood levels
- Listen to uplifting music to boost your mood

How to take care of loved ones and yourself?

- Find time to do the things you enjoy, such as crafting, decorating, participating in holiday activities, and listening to your favorite music station.
- Spend time in nature: walk, watch nature videos, or drive somewhere peaceful.
- Get 6-8 hours of sleep per night.
- Do not skip meals; eat plenty of fruits and veggies for needed vitamins and nutrients for energy.
- Stay active! Engage in physical activity, even if it takes 5 minutes to stretch daily.
- Try to avoid processed foods and sugary drinks. Stay hydrated by drinking water instead.

How do we honor loved ones who recently passed?

- Always keep a special place in your heart honoring your loved ones and

reflecting on the memories you share.

- Keep a picture or a sentimental item around to help you feel connected to the spirit that watches over you.

What final advice do you have for those experiencing grief during the holidays?

Understand the five stages of grief by Kuebler-Ross:

1. Denial
 1. In this stage, you are not able to process the loss of the loved one. The emotions and thoughts are so intense, and your brain cannot conceptualize that the person is no longer physically present. Mentally and emotionally, you cannot understand that they are not here anymore.
2. Anger
 1. In this stage, you experience a valid emotion. When we lose a loved one, we have no control over it. It is that feeling of not being in control of that person being here on earth. You feel helpless.
3. Bargaining
 1. In this stage, you experience different thoughts. "If I had just been there." You feel like it is your fault and feel guilty and ashamed towards losing your loved one.
4. Depression
 1. In this stage, you experience a natural mood that many people experience. When you lose someone, you feel sadness, pain, excruciating sorrow, hopelessness, and difficult emotions.
5. Acceptance
 1. In this stage, you are at peace with the loss of your loved one. You can honor the loved one and think about their memories. You are content with their passing. You may still experience the other steps in the acceptance stage, as grief is not linear.

What resources are there for those who are grieving?

Find a therapist:

- therapyforblackgirls.com
- betterhelp.com
- christiancounselingcenter.org

Books:

- Hope and Healing During the Holidays by Jayne Flaagan
- Surviving the Holidays Without You by Gary Roe

Merry Christmas

May your best gift this holiday be of love, peace & happiness.
May the Grace & Peace of our Lord be with you.

Bishop & Mrs. Nathaniel Jarrett
Elected 1996 - Retired 2008



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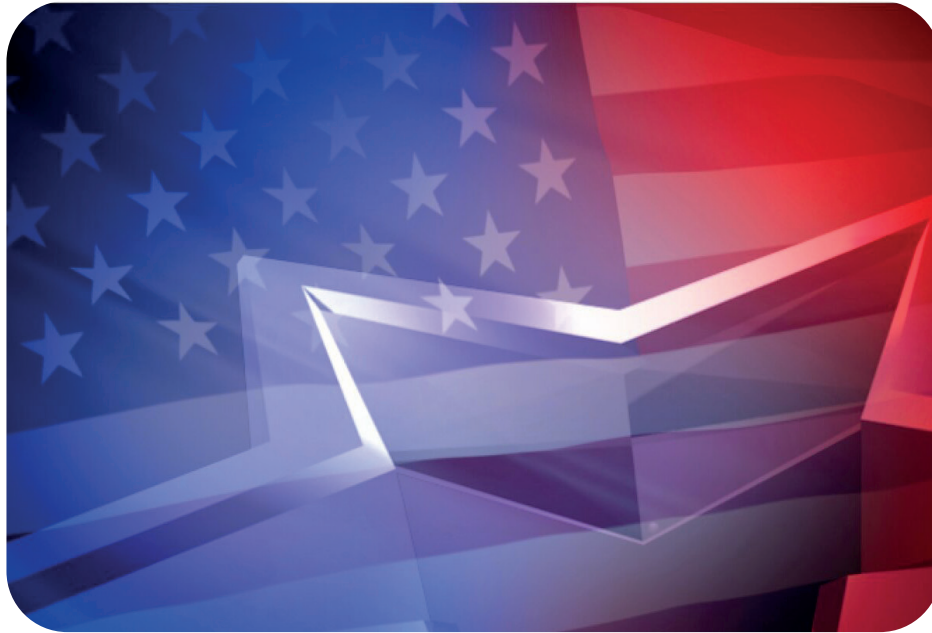
The People Have Spoken, Now What?

By Dana G. Stilley, Financial Freedom Editor

On November 5, 2024, the voters of this nation elected Donald J. Trump as our next president. While many are overjoyed with decision, just as many are not. The current divide in this country has caused many to reflect and pontificate on why voters chose Trump. Was it fear, his perceived machismo, misogyny and or racism? Many pundits do seem to agree that voters in large part selected Trump because of frustration with high prices and a true belief that under his leadership things might change and Americans – all Americans- will benefit financially from a Trump administration.

A close examination of the country's current economic picture shows slowing inflation, wage increases, a relatively low unemployment rate and a robust stock market. These factors however have not trickled down to more money in our pocketbooks. Will any of Trump's suggestions in his economic plan help? Let's take a closer look.

Throughout the campaign season we constantly heard about tariffs. Tariffs are taxes paid to the federal government on imported or exported goods. The Trump plan promises to impose tariffs of at least 10% tariff



on all goods coming into the US, and 60% on all goods coming from China. Economists agree that most companies will pass the added cost of tariffs on to consumers by increasing the prices of the goods. Prices that Americans already think are high, could become higher.

Another plan espoused by Trump is mass deportation of undocumented immigrants, under the assumption that this will make more jobs and housing available to citizens. However, mass deportation could prove to be extremely detrimental to the U.S economy. The agricultural and construction industries rely heavily

ly on undocumented workers, and more that 1 million undocumented immigrants are entrepreneurs that generated more than \$ 27 billion in income in 2022. A mass deportation of undocumented immigrants will disrupt services and impact resources that are integral to our daily lives. Supply and demand will be impacted, and the U.S economy could be severely reduced.

These are just two contradictions that will surely affect our economy, and households, and our path to financial freedom in the coming days. Remain diligent and continue to focus on your plan. Now more than ever we must be informed and engaged.





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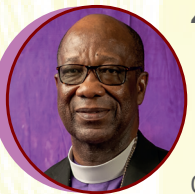
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Livingstone College Finishes Strong in the CIAA, Building Legacy Both On & Off the Field



Alexis Hutchinson
Sports Editor
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By Alexis D. Hutchinson, Sports Editor

Livingstone College wrapped up a memorable 2024 football season, finishing 5th in the CIAA with a 4-3 conference record and a 6-4 overall mark. The Blue Bears closed the season in style, securing a hard-fought 15-10 victory over regionally ranked Johnson C. Smith University in the historic Commemorative Classic—a rivalry dating back to the very first Black college football game.



His performance was a testament to his hard work and dedication.

Congratulations also go to all the Blue Bears who earned All-CIAA honors:

First Team All-CIAA
•Defensive Lineman: Davion Watkins

Second Team All-CIAA

- Place Kicker: Jason Zapata
- Defensive Lineman: Osmanis Aguilera
- Defensive Back: Kevin Larkins Jr.



The Blue Bears' 2024 season boasted a .600 winning percentage under the steady leadership of Head Coach Sean Gilbert. Victories over Virginia University of Lynchburg, Allen University (SC), Lincoln University (PA), Elizabeth City State University, Johnson C. Smith, and a thrilling Homecoming win against Fayetteville State University at Alumni Memorial Stadium highlighted the year. As Coach Gilbert concludes his second season, he continues to rebuild the tradition and legacy of Livingstone College Football, and fans are excited to see what year three holds under his guidance.

But the impact of this football season extended beyond the field. During Homecoming week, the Livingstone football program celebrated a significant community service achievement: a generous \$107,000 donation from the Darrelle Revis Foundation. This contribution will help address childhood hunger and make a lasting difference in the community. The partnership between the football program and the Revis Foundation demonstrates how sports can drive meaningful, Christ-centered change, reflecting the spirit of service and outreach.

Defensive lineman Davion Watkins earned a well-deserved spot on the All-CIAA First Team, leading the Blue Bears with 47 tackles (26 solo and 21 assisted) across 10 games. Watkins led the conference in tackles for loss and was second in sacks, recording 6 solo sacks and 1 assisted.

Looking to the future, Livingstone Athletics has launched a fundraiser to build a brand-new locker room for the football program. They are calling on local businesses and individual supporters to get involved. Sponsorship opportunities not only offer promotional benefits but also show a commitment to the team's growth and development. Every contribution, big or small, helps. Additionally, community members are encouraged to spread the word—by sharing flyers, talking to friends, and using social media to raise awareness.

For those interested in making an impact, please reach out to Athletic Director Clifton Huff or Assistant to the Athletic Director Kayla Price at Livingstone College's Department of Athletics.

Through faith, teamwork, and community spirit, Livingstone College continues to build a football legacy that uplifts the entire community. Go Blue Bears!

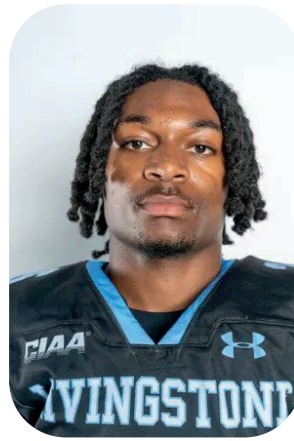


Who You Wit!!

By Rev. Roderick J. Josey, Education Editor



The 2024 Commemorative Classic delivered a thrilling showdown, as Livingstone College claimed a hard-fought 15-10 victory over Johnson C. Smith University (JCSU) on November 9. Held at Alumni Memorial Stadium in Salisbury, this historic rivalry between two of the oldest Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in football history once again showcased its fierce competitive spirit.



Livingstone's win not only marked their first winning season (6-4) since 2015 but also spoiled JCSU's hopes of advancing to the CIAA Championship. The Blue Bears' defense played a pivotal role, forcing critical stops and securing the game with a clutch interception in the final moments. Offensive highlights included Calvin Scott's 64-yard touchdown catch and Bryce Robinson's scoring grab, which built an insurmountable lead.

For JCSU (8-2), the defeat capped a bittersweet season that started with an 8-0 streak—the

program's best start in history. However, back-to-back losses to Fayetteville State and Livingstone ended their dreams of a title bid. Despite this, their season remains notable for significant milestones, including eight wins, their most since 1975.

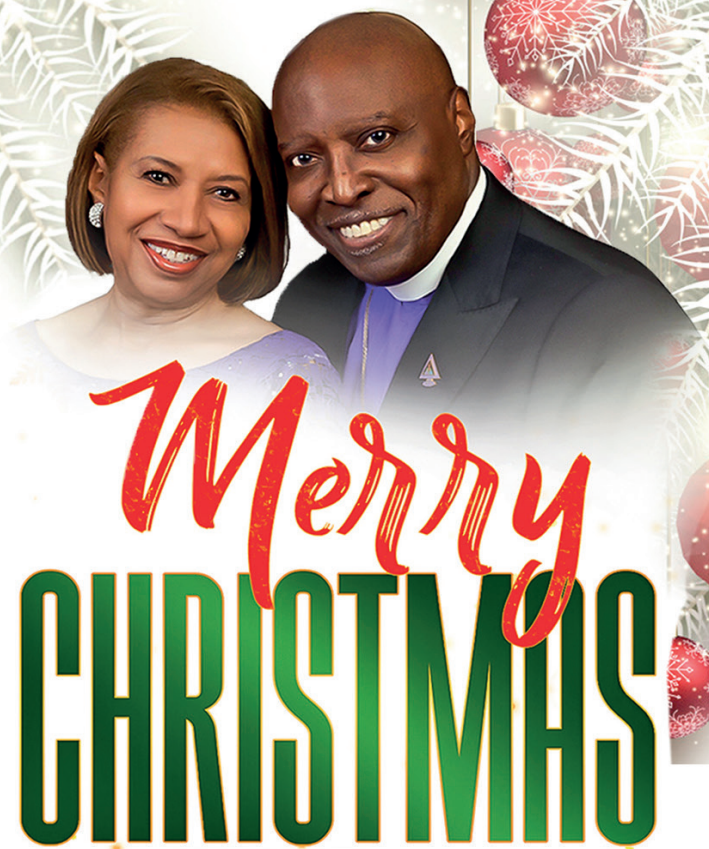
Livingstone's head coach, Sean Gilbert, praised his team's resilience and growth, highlighting their determination to capitalize on opportunities. JCSU, meanwhile, acknowledged the need for improvement as they look to regroup during the offseason.



The Commemorative Classic, which began in 1892, remains a cornerstone of HBCU sports culture, and this year's game upheld its legacy with an electrifying contest that left fans chanting, "Who you wit?!" LLLLCCCC!!!!

ROMANS 15:13

MAY THE GOD OF HOPE FILL
YOU WITH ALL JOY AND
PEACE AS YOU TRUST IN
HIM, SO THAT YOU MAY
OVERFLOW WITH HOPE BY
THE POWER OF THE HOLY
SPIRIT



Merry
CHRISTMAS

BISHOP & MRS. DENNIS V. PROCTOR

ELECTED 2008 - RETIRED 2024

Celebration of Life for Mrs. Sylvia Tucker

Sunrise: August 16, 1923 – Sunset: October 18, 2024

By Brenda T. Sullivan

Sylvia Stinson Tucker, daughter of the late Elmore Fredrick Stinson and Beulah Connor Stinson, was born on August 16, 1923, in Mecklenburg County. She departed her earthly life into God's arms on October 18, 2024, at her home. She is preceded in death by her husband, Quincy Tucker; daughter, Ruby Diane Tucker; 8 siblings, Esther S. Johnson, John D. Stinson, James S. Stinson, Jennie S. Ross, Cheeseman Stinson, Walter Stinson, Hazel Stinson and William Stinson; and great-grandson Montavious D. Sullivan.

Sylvia attended Mecklenburg County Schools and graduated from Huntersville High School, Huntersville, NC, in 1942, Morgan Band Beauty College, Charlotte, NC, in 1945, and Bands Beauty College in 1959. She was employed at Bands Beauty College as an Instructor, Burlington Mills, Cashion's in the Deli & Bakery Department, Huntersville Oaks Nursing home in the Salon, she was a caregiver and retired as self-employed from Tucker's Beauty Salon. She married Quincy Tucker on May 2, 1942, and 2 daughters were born.

During her youth, she was a member of Torrence Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church until her parents moved to Union Bethel A.M.E. Zion Church. During this time, she served as a Missionary, President of the Usher



Board, Deaconess, Superintendent of Sunday School, Sunday School Teacher, Director of the Christian Education Department, Senior Choir, and Financial Secretary and Treasurer of the Hallelujah Chorus (67 years and member for 70+ years). She also served on the District Level as Director of the Children's Department for the North Charlotte District.

She was a member of the N.C. State Beauty Culturists' League, member of the National Beauty Culturists' League, Dean of Pledge by N.C. State, Secretary of Alpha Phi Chapter, 1st Anti Basileus for 12 years and 2nd Anti Basileus.

Sylvia loved to cook and bake. She was best known for her Coconut Pineapple Cake, Sticky, Sweet Potato Pies, Egg Custard and her homemade yeast rolls.

Sylvia is survived by: her daughter, Brenda Sullivan (Michael) of Charlotte, NC; 2 grandchildren, Miki Sullivan and Delvin Sullivan (Demetree) of Charlotte, NC; 4 greatgrandchildren, Ayanna Oten of Charlotte, NC, Omarion Bodrick of Charlotte, NC, Amiah Sullivan of Kernersville, NC and Nevaeh Benton-Sullivan, of Charlotte, NC; great-great grandson, Chozyn Caddy; Godson, Ellison L Bowman, Sr (Linda); god grandchildren, Jackie Carr, Charlotte, NC, Wendy Carr, Charlotte, NC, Dawn Carr, Raleigh, NC, Angelica Mackin, Charlotte, NC, Oneijh Stroud, Charlotte, NC, Akilah Gordon, Zaire Gordon, Charlotte, NC and Gary Adams, Charlotte, NC, whom they all called her Big Mama or Grandma. She shared her devotion with so many nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends. She will truly be missed but not forgotten.

MAY THE PEACE & BLESSING OF CHRISTMAS BE YOURS & MAY
THE COMING YEAR BE FILLED WITH HAPPINESS.

Merry
Christmas



BISHOP & MRS.
MICHAEL A. FRENCHER, SR.

ELECTED 2012 - RETIRED 2024

MERRY CHRISTMAS Greetings

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

*From the Department of
Records & Research
of the A.M.E. Zion Church*

*Rev. Dr. & Mrs. J. Elvin Sadler
General Secretary-Auditor*

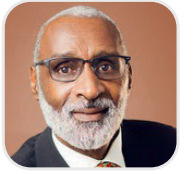
BLESSED CHRISTMAS TO ALL

From THE A.M.E. ZION PUBLISHING HOUSE

REV. JULIUS WALLS, JR.
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

CHAMOS THOMPSON
ASSISTANT TO COO
COORDINATOR OF PUBLISHING HOUSE

Unmute Gaza



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

By Ronald A. Nathan, World Politics Editor

Photos By © Getty Images, © Adobe Stock, © Wikipedia, © NBC News

As I viewed puffs of smoke rising in the distance the signs of bombs raining down on Gaza, I was reminded of the wisdom of David recorded in 2 Samuel 24:14 and 1 Chronicles 21:13. "Let us fall into the hands of the LORD, for his mercy is great; but do not let me fall into human hands."

Gaza is a small territory located on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea. It is twice the size of Washington D.C., and smaller than the Republic of Barbados. It is one of two territories that make up the State of Palestine, the other being the West Bank. It was possibly one of the most densely populated countries in the world.

However, it has fallen into the human hands of its' surrounding neighbour, the State of Israel. The evidence is clear for the blind to see that the actions being taken by the State of Israel against the State of Palestine have gone far beyond a fit of anger sparked by the atrocities of February 7, 2023. This is a deliberate continuous embargo and war meant to obliterate the Palestinian people off the face of their land. Gaza is the centre of this humanitarian catastrophe.

Who pressed the mute button so that we are unable to hear the cries of Gaza's babies, the sick, the aged, the hungry and the prisoners? Gaza has been muted! We have to ask now what has so desensitised the international community that we have become comfortable with our complicity in the destruction of the people in the Palestinian-Occupied Territories.

It is not complicated, as we are being told. What is at play is a series of political arrangements by power brokers in high places who are using our complacency and complicity to gain a military and economic advantage in the region. The State of Palestine is in its way.



So, in the most technological age in human history, we are not hearing the cries coming out of Gaza, as 86% of its population faces food insecurity. One million, eight hundred and forty thousand (1,840,000) people are facing high levels of acute food insecurity.

With internet images of Israel greening the desert, two-thirds of Gaza's population are consuming less than 16 fluid ounces of water, the internationally recommended amount of drinking water for good health.

Less than 20 miles away from some of the most advanced medical innovating companies in the world, access to the most basic health care for a child in the West Bank and Gaza has deteriorated.

Elaborate high-rise accommodations are flying up into the skies all across Israel, while 90% of its Palestinian population has been displaced from their homes since October 7, 2023.

The United Nations agencies, Non-Governmental Humanitarian Organizations, and independent press services are being squeezed out of the

*Rev. Al & Marguerite
Hamilton*



Chief Financial Officer

REJOICE...

IN THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS,
WHICH IS **PEACE**,
THE MIRACLE OF CHRISTMAS,
WHICH IS **HOPE**,
AND THE HEART OF CHRISTMAS,
WHICH IS **LOVE**.

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

contested zones, which is tantamount to silencing the weakened voices of the Palestinian people.

This is ethnic cleansing at its finest, a present-day example of apartheid, and akin to the months before the Rwanda genocide, the silence is deafening. Israel's extensive use of explosive and incendiary weapons over the past thirteen months has resulted in mass casualties, including the killing of many multi-generational families. The figures should speak for themselves: 41,870 persons have died, which is 1 in every 55 persons living in Gaza. These faceless and voiceless numbers include 16,756 children and 11,346 women.

What we are hearing through the general media is that the victim is Israel, and the enemy is the tyrants of February 7th, 2023, led by Hamas, Hezbollah, and other Extreme Islamic forces. Israel has extended



its natural justice claim to defend itself through its invasion of Gaza, carpet bombing the territory, and mass detention of civilians, as we talk about being fair.

If there is not some radical change at an international level, what we can expect is mass starvation of Palestinians, increased annexation of



Palestinian land, hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees pouring into the surrounding nations, and almost total denial of any wrongdoing by Israel and its Western supporters.

Where are the prophetic voices like Jeremiah or the apostolic writers like Matthew to amplify the message "A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more." Let us unmute Gaza. Using God's merciful words, God spoke up and said, 'Enough! Withdraw your hand! Israel and your Western supporters, Stop the War'!

MERRY
CHRISTMAS
And a Happy New Year

From:

AND THE DEPARTMENT OF

GLOBAL MISSIONS

REV. DR. DWIGHT B. CANNON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, THE MISSIONARY SEER



Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
Rev. Patrick A. Barrett, II · General Secretary



Official Statement from the Board of Bishops of The A.M.E. Zion Church Concerning the United States Elections

“And so, Lord, where do I put my hope? My only hope is in YOU.”
(Psalm 39:7 NLT)

By The Board of Bishops, The A.M.E. Zion Church

The results of the U.S elections have been received by some in this country with excitement; however, those same results have caused many others pain and genuine fear of the consequences. The purpose of this letter is not to relitigate the issues raised during the divisive campaign, but it is to offer voice and solidarity with those who are deeply concerned about the most vulnerable in our society. As Dr. Martin Luther King said, “We have some difficult days ahead.”

We lament the missed opportunity of what might have been even while we are firmly grounded by a “Faith that will not shrink, though pressed by every foe. That will not tremble on the brink of any earthly woe.”

We lament for a country that appears further away from living as the “Beloved Community” where every human is fully valued and loved as Divine Image Bearers, even while we are fortified in knowing that “Truth crushed to earth will rise again.”

Yes, our lament is both painfully real and deeply righteous, yet our hope is as strong as ever. As leaders of “The Freedom Church,” we’ve got a good memory. We, as a people, have been through difficult times before, and GOD has always transformed the setbacks into steps forward. GOD has done it before; now watch GOD do it again.

When asked, “What should we do now?” Our response is that we must do what our people always do: be persistent in our resistance against hate, injustice, and violence.

We fervently pray for the deeply flawed and fractured country we love. Lord, heal our land. We pray for Vice President Harris, who ran a campaign demonstrating the amazing possibilities within our reach but still beyond our grasp. We pray for President Biden, who is a truly decent man who has moved our nation forward.

And we pray for our once and future President that he might become better than his rhetoric, finally realizing that he is to be President of all of the people and that if America is to be truly great, she must be a nation of love, truth, kindness, opportunity, and justice for all.

So, when we are asked, “Watchman, what of the night?” Our united response is, “The morning cometh, and also the night.” Yet be reminded of the words of Joseph Charles Price, “No matter how dark the night, we believe in the coming of the morning.”

We are the Board of Bishops of The A.M.E. Zion Church, “The Freedom Church:”

Sincerely,

- | | |
|---|--|
| The Board of Bishops of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church | Bishop Seth O. Lartey, Located |
| Bishop Hilliard K.D. Dogbe, President | Bishop George W.C. Walker, Sr., Retired |
| Bishop Darryl B. Starnes, Sr., Senior Bishop | Bishop Samuel Chuka Ekemam, Sr., Retired |
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| Bishop Melanie R. Miller | Bishop Michael A. Frencher, Sr., Retired |
| Bishop Dwayne Anthony Walker | |
| Bishop Bernardo Ngunza | |

Done This The 8th Day Of November 2024

merry
CHRISTMAS

From the Department of
CHURCH GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH
DEPARTMENT OF CHURCH GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT
www.ameziondevelopment.org

REV. DR. ELEAZAR MERRIWEATHER
Executive Director

50 Year Anniversary

By Rev. Johnny Johnson Jr.

The children of Johnny Sr. and Gwendolyn Johnson happily announce their parents' 50th wedding anniversary. Johnny and Gwendolyn were married on November 2, 1974. They were blessed with three children: Rev. Johnny Jr. (Cortney), Maurice (Donnecia), and Joy DeAnn. They are both lifelong members of Blackwell Israel Samuel A.M.E. Zion in Chicago, IL. Johnny has served as a Trustee for 40+ years. Gwendolyn is the District Director



of CED for the Advancing Chicago District.

Congratulations to them both on 50 years of love and marriage.

Machismo Misogyny Dooms Harris Presidency

By Rev. Dr. Garrett M. Thomas

“We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal.” And we do mean men. We hold these truths to be manifest that there is no equality, that women are of a lesser quality, and that they are the weaker sex. And we do mean sex. We hold these truths as prima facie evidence that the majority of Americans are underlings who would rather see democracy fall to the whims of an immoral, unrepented, felonious, brutish dictator than to see a woman assume leadership. And we do mean assume. America has spoken. Loudly and emphatically, America has declared that this is a nation built by men, for men. America has spoken and chosen misogyny and machismo.

The election of Donald J. Trump to another term in the White House despite Project 25, his claim to be a dictator – especially on day one, his vow to terminate every prosecutor who investigated the crimes of which he is accused – or who brought indictments against him, his suggestion that his political rivals should face firing squads and be



handled by the armed forces, along with his dismantling of women's rights to health care says more about the sad state of American culture and morality than it does about him. The ascension of Donald J. Trump to the head of state and the head of American politics was buoyed by a natural proclivity of men to dominate women. It has awakened a dormant Neanderthal-like mentality in men of various races and ethnicities with a vengeance. Black men, Latino men, and white men alike have chosen to elect a leader who exhibits no redeeming quality other than masculinity, as if, somehow, femininity is a quality for which there is no redemption.

Trump defeated Hillary Clinton in 2016, lost to Joe Biden in 2020, and has now defeated Kamala Harris in 2024. According to CBS News, an overwhelming majority of white men voted for Trump. That is no surprise, but it is bewildering that the majority of Latino men voted against Harris, and white and Latino women voted against her at a rate of forty-five and nearly forty percent, respectively (CBS News, 2024). It is even more than apparent that no woman would have won

Merry Christmas



Rev. Darell Williams
Executive Director



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

From
Zion Benefits Services



FOUNDED THE
ZBS
ZION BENEFITS SERVICES INC.

May your Christmas Sparkle with moments of love, laughter & goodwill.
May the year ahead be full of contentment & joy

this election, even with clear indications that she is the most qualified candidate and the most dignified human being. Furthermore, it is quite probable that any democratic man would have defeated Trump. If Tim Walz had been at the head of the ticket, he would have won, despite the fact that most Americans never heard of him until this summer. Harris' loss is merely due to her gender. At a rally prior to the election, Michelle Obama stated, "By every measure," Vice President Kamala Harris "has demonstrated that she's ready. The real question is, as a country, are we ready?" (CBS, 2024). America has unequivocally asserted we are not ready.

Many pundits have claimed that the Democrats "don't know how people think anymore" (Matthews, 2024), and that the border crossings, the economy, inflation, the war in Israel, and the war in Ukraine are the reasons the Republicans took back the white house and congress. Those same pontificators enthusiastically demonstrated their favor for Harris before election night, yet they now seek to find fault with her party and her campaign strategy. The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves, that we are underlings" (Shakespeare, 1599). The fault is not due to some deficiency in campaign strategy or political ideology on the part of Harris and the democrats but due, in most part, to our preference for patriarchy.

The proof is in the dearth of female bishops in our churches. The scarcity of females who head our cities as mayors or lead our states as governors evinces our penchant for preferring males in positions of leadership. According to the New York Times, "Mr. Trump's testosterone-driven campaign capitalized on resistance to electing the first woman president" (Baker, 2024). Ellen Silverman-Popper, in a letter to The Times, wrote, "Misogyny won Tuesday night. Kamala Harris's greatest deficit was being born with the XX chromosomes, making her a woman. Unlike most of the rest of the world, this country is not ready for a female head of state" (New York Times, 2024). There have been scores of female heads of state throughout world history, including Golda Meir of Israel (1969 - 1974), Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan (1988 - 1990 and 1993 - 1996), and Margaret Thatcher of the United Kingdom (1979 - 1990); and dozens of women are currently serving as national presidents such as Claudia Sheinbaum of Mexico, Sandra Mason of Barbados, and Ingrida Šimonytė of Lithuania (CNN, 2024).

America is hailed as the leader of the free world and the defender of democracy but has most often been the master of the free world and the epitome of hypocrisy. Our laws dictate that employers cannot discriminate based on race, religion, sexual orientation, or gender and the assertion of The Apostle Paul that there is no differing nationality,

no class, and no gender; but we are all one in Christ, both mirror the fundamental elements of the constitution that speak of equality. Yet, the unspoken constitution in the barrooms, boardrooms, barbershops, and bedrooms of the majority of ordinary Americans demands the subjugation of women, the mothers of future misogynists, the birthers, and nurturers of future chauvinists. It boggles the mind that men would grow up to perpetuate the subordination of their mothers, sisters, and daughters. Must another generation perish in the wilderness before we can all walk together into the promised land of freedom and equality? It appears so. Yet, in her concession speech, Harris said, "Hear me when I say, the light of America's promise will always burn bright as long as we never give up and as long as we keep fighting" (Harris, 2024); therefore, we must all use this moment, and the next four years, to teach our young the meaning of these actions, the future consequences of our actions, and the lessons to be learned regarding all our actions in these historic times.

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May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, So that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Romans 15:13

THE WOMEN'S HOME & OVERSEAS MISSIONARY SOCIETY

Merry Christmas

*may God's Love, joy and
peace be with you during this
holiday season.*



ZION

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

**MR. DARIN & NINA
KENT**

**THE
STAR OF ZION**

**YOUR A.M.E. ZION
COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT**