


THE STAR OF ZION

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WOMEN'S



HISTORY MONTH

AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH
FOUNDED 1796




THE STAR OF ZION

Official Voice of The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

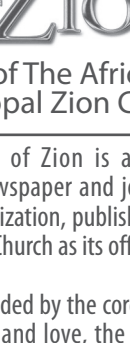



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Being guided by the core values of truth, faith, and love, the Star seeks to raise the consciousness of readers with news that is current, relevant, and dependable.

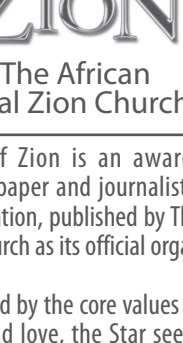
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WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH 2025

*She is clothed with strength and
dignity, and she laughs without fear of
the future.*

Proverbs 31:25 (NLT)

By Debra Chappelle-Polk, Zion Spotlight Editor

March 2025 New York, NY... It has often been stated that Black History should not be confined to 28 days (or 29 days in a leap year) in February, the designated Black History Month. The same is true -- and perhaps even more so --- of March being officially designated as Women's History Month.



It has also often been stated that women are the backbone of The A.M.E. Zion denomination. For many years, women's roles were more "nurturing" (i.e., Missionaries and Christian Educators) than "pastoral" in nature. I will go out on a limb and venture to say that women are probably the backbone of many religious denominations. However, progress has been made. There are now several ordained female ministers in The A.M.E. Zion denomination. Most historic was the election and consecration of Mildred Bonnie Hines in 2008 as the 98th Bishop in line of succession in The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. In 2024, Rev. Dr. Melanie Rogers-Miller was elected the 110th Bishop in the line of succession and now serves as the two Presiding Prelate of the Western Episcopal District. It is noteworthy that two other female ministers (Rev. Dr. Evelina Huggins and Rev. Charleane B. Mapson) also ran for Bishop at the last General Conference.



Women's History Month began as a local celebration in Santa Rosa, California. In 1978, the Education Task Force of the Sonoma County California Commission on the Status of Women planned and executed a "Women's History Week" celebration. The organizers selected the week of March 8 to correspond with International Women's Day. The movement spread across the country as other communities initiated their own Women's History Week celebrations the following year. In 1980, a consortium of women's groups and historians—led by the National Women's History Project (now the National Women's History Alliance)—successfully lobbied for national recognition. In February 1980, President Jimmy Carter issued the first Presidential Proclamation declaring the Week of March 8, 1980, National Women's History Week. In 1987, Congress passed a law proclaiming the month of March as Women's History Month across the U.S. Since 1995, each president has issued proclamations naming March as Women's History Month, according to the National Women's History Museum.

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Mrs. Debra Chappelle-Polk
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BESSIE MAE JACKSON – LOBBYIST FOR ABOLITION COMMEMORATION DAY

By Debra Chappelle-Polk, Zion Spotlight Editor

March 2025, New York, NY.; March is Women's History Month, and Bessie Mae Jackson is a woman who has made history. At the age of 94, after 16 years of advocacy throughout New York State, Bessie Mae Jackson successfully lobbied the New York State legislature to create a new New York State holiday. Her dedication and tenacity established Abolition Commemoration Day to honor the sacrifices of African Americans and all who fought to end slavery in New York State in 1827, which is held on the second Monday of every July beginning in 2021. The Abolition Commemoration Day Service has been held at Mother A.M.E. Zion Church for several years. Arilla Whitehurst, a member of Mother Zion and the New York Chapter of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), said, "The objective of the Abolition Day Committee is to spread the word and educate people about when the slaves of New York State were freed, which is similar to what Juneteenth is to the state of Texas."



Bessie Mae Jackson was born on March 9, 1926, outside of the City of Selma in Dallas County, Alabama. She is the fifth of 11 children born to Mrs. Charlie Mae and Mr. Warren Fail. Being raised in an environment where work was valued and laziness scorned, Bessie spent countless hours working in the fields harvesting crops, tending to animals at the age of six, and picking cotton on the family-owned and operated farm.

She and her family were active in church and even had a singing group. Bessie was an exceptional student and attended a one-room schoolhouse

with children of various ages, which is now on the Alabama Historic Registry. She attended several schools in Dallas County, taking on rigorous coursework and after completing the 11th grade, she moved to the Bronx, NY, and graduated from Morris High School in 1947. Bessie returned south and attended Alabama State College for two years. She then returned to New York and earned a B.S. degree in Early Childhood Education from Columbia University Teachers College in 1966. In 1976, she received a Master's degree in Curriculum Development also from Columbia University Teachers College. Although her degree was in Curriculum Development, Bessie furthered her education by participating in advanced studies in Educational Administration.



Bessie began her career as an educator in the daycare setting and eventually went into the New York City Board of Education. In 1965, she founded the NYC Day Care Workers Union Local 1707 to help guarantee the rights of daycare workers. Bessie began her career with the New York City Board of Education in 1966 as a first-grade teacher. In 1976, she was employed by Columbia University Teachers College, where she worked in the General Assistance Center for Equal Educational Opportunities as an Early Childhood Curriculum Consultant. In addition to working as a teacher, Bessie would serve as a former Supervisor and Director of Early Childhood Programs. She retired in 1988 after working more than 22 years at the Board of Education. However, Bessie never really stopped working. She took on the roles of activist, host of the "Smiling Through Tears" talk show about racial injustice, playwright, poet, lyricist, advocate, and dynamic grandmother and great-grandmother.

Bessie has served on countless boards locally and nationally. She is a life member of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) and served as National Secretary. Bessie is a life member of the National Council of Negro Women and a life member of the Williamsbridge Branch of the NAACP, where she once served on the Board of Directors as Youth Advisor and later as Education Chairperson. She served on the board of Victory Day Care Center for 25 years, where she dedicated her time to enriching the lives of children.

In 1989, Bessie founded the African American History and Culture Center in the Bronx, where she served as Director until 2000. Bessie is the current New York State Director and former President of the Bronx Branch of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History. Her love of educating youth led her to teach Sunday school at the United Christian Baptist Church, where she implemented a Vacation Bible Day Camp and breakfast program for children on Sunday mornings.

Bessie was married to the late Melton Jackson, who served in the U.S. Navy during WWII. She has one son, daughter-in-law, two grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, and a host of family and friends throughout the U.S.

Bessie's creativity sparks ideas that will only help us get further in life. She sets high standards for everyone around her and continues to lead us by example. She is a visionary, a nurturer, and often says, "If a job has to be done, and no one else is doing it, it must be my job."

REMEMBRANCE, ROLL CALL, AND REFLECTIONS...

By Celena Perry

Wallace Temple A.M.E. Zion Church, 1518 Forkner Street, Women's Home and Overseas Missionary Society, will hold its annual REMEMBRANCE AND ROLL CALL SERVICE on Sunday, February 23, immediately following the 10:00 AM Worship Service. A lifelong member of Wallace and family and friends of church members, who passed in 2024, will be remembered.

REMEMBRANCE: Larry A. Gholston is greatly missed by his church and family. He will be remembered during a memorial service that includes loved ones participating in a candle-lighting ceremony. Others to be remembered by their family are Madison "Maddie" Akins, Skilard D. Curtis, Thomas Lee Davis, Jesse C. Johnson, Sammie D. Harl-McGlothen, Doris "Pat" Raymore, Scott A. Townsend, Dyeshia "Dyce" Turner, Jonathan "NaNa" Watson, Anthony Willis, and Janet C. Woodall.



Weatherly, the granddaughter-in-law of the founding associate pastor Rev. Jesse C. Weatherly, and the wife of his son Rev. Isaac C. Weatherly, who was a former Wallace pastor and A.M.E. Zion Indianapolis District presiding elder. A native of Baton Rouge, LA, she lived in Anderson since 1926 and served her church loyally until her passing in 1994.

Both women were stalwarts of the church and community, past

W.H.O.M. Society presidents, members and leaders in numerous organizations and church ministries, and business owners. The long-time friends and family matriarchs left lasting impressions and legacies, particularly for their children and grandchildren.

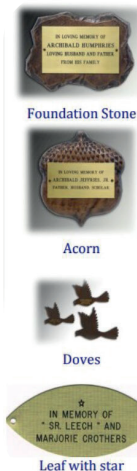
For many years, Bostic was the proprietor of Bostic's Confectionary Store on Anderson's west side, and Weatherly played an integral role in the Weatherly family's bus and taxicab companies.

Bostic's granddaughter, Dr. Treva Bostic, a psychologist working in the field of education, winemaker, and owner of Cultured Urban Winery, said her grandmother was the first business owner she ever knew. She attributes her entrepreneurial interest and endeavors to her grandmother, to whom she was very

close. She's even created and named a wine after her called "Celane's Pinot Noir Rose."

Patricia J. Coleman is one of several Weatherlys still active at Wallace Temple. Following her grandparents' example of church service, she's an usher, missionary, and member of the culinary committee, which is her favorite. She has fond memories of her grandmother's culinary skills. She was her role model who instilled in her the importance of God, church, and family.

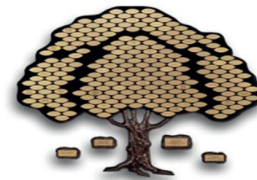
Their daughters Sharon Hudson, Celena Bostic Perry, Carolyn Scott, Shirley Jean Weatherly, and the late Mary Alice Bell, and Bell's daughter Meredith Bell Armstrong, have carried on the Roll Call tradition through the years. It was they who added the Remembrance Memorial and donated the Memorial Tree of Life that will serve the church everlastingly.



WALLACE TEMPLE
A.M.E. ZION

Memorial Tree

To console those who mourn in Zion,
To give them beauty for ashes,
The oil of joy for mourning,
The garment of praise for the spirit of
heaviness; that they may be called trees
of righteousness, The planting of the
Lord, that He may be glorified
Isaiah 61:3 NKJV



Gold tone brass leaves, bronze color stones
and acorns with brass gold tone plates,
bronze color dove with gold engraving.

Those we've lost, as well as the lives of those who remain with us, can be perpetually remembered by memorializing their life and legacy on Wallace Temple's MEMORIAL TREE OF LIFE. Prominently positioned on a wall in the Fellowship Hall since 2016, members of the church and community can purchase engraved leaves for the tree, a foundation stone or an acorn for beneath the tree, or doves that fly over the tree. If interested, brochures will be available at the church, or contact Remembrance and Roll Call coordinators Sharon Hudson at (765) 278-5343 or Shirley Weatherly at (765) 609-9530.

ROLL-CALL: the Calling of the Membership Roll will follow the Remembrance portion of the service. Traditionally, members of every age and visiting friends who may desire to participate, answer the Call by giving praise to the Lord for another year, reciting a favorite Bible Verse, and offering \$1.00 for each year of their membership or friendship with Wallace.



REFLECTIONS for Black History Month: This tradition was started well over 50 years ago by two A.M.E. Zion Missionaries Celane Bostic and Gertie Weatherly, who were often fondly referred to as partners-in-service due to their many collaborations and devotion to serving God, church, family and community.

Bostic, the niece of the 1921 founding pastor of Wallace Temple, Rev. Henry H. Horton, migrated to Anderson from Montgomery, AL, in 1940 following her uncle. She served her church faithfully until her passing in 2012, and her children and many of her family - immediate and extended - still serve there.





REJOICING, RECLAIMING, AND RENEWING: Wallace ended 2024 rejoicingly as the “Church of the Year” and sadly bid farewell to their friends, former pastor, and first lady of more than a decade. Rev. Antwaun J. Johnson and Mrs. Tawana E. Johnson have been reassigned to the International A.M.E. Zion Church. Under his pastorship, Wallace Temple was uniquely exemplary in its evangelism, community outreach, and engagement, which undoubtedly led to the Anderson Madison County Black Chamber of Commerce Religious Affairs Committee taking note. On October 20, 2024, at their Annual AMCBCC Awards Banquet, Wallace Temple was honored as

“Church of the Year for past and present contributions within the community of Anderson, IN.”



From: hosting revivals, feeding the homeless, fashion shows with pastors as models, fish fry fundraisers, a one of a kind motorcycle riders’ Bike Blessing that’s been running for 10-years, a shoe drive that collected 5,000 shoes and made a local and global impact, winter coats for kids, Christmas gifts for neighbors, Fall harvest back to school giveaways that included free back-packs, haircuts, hair braiding, and pony rides for neighborhood children – To: the still talked about two-day 100th Church Anniversary Celebration that featured an old-fashioned church cookout, saxophone gospel serenader, sermons and keynotes by an Apostle, two Bishops, and the Mayor who honored the founding pastor Rev. Henry H. Horton by dedicating Forkner Street to his memory and for his servant leadership — the small but strong in the Lord members have been a beacon of hope and a “this little light of mine, I’m going to let it shine” in the darkness for many to see for 104 years, 10 of which were under Rev. Johnson’s pastorship. It is with appreciation and gratitude that mem-

bers wish them well in their transition and future endeavors.

Rev. Timothy L. Taylor will be officiating his first Remembrance and Roll-Call service as Wallace Temple’s new and 30th pastor in over a hundred years.

He transferred to the A.M.E. Zion Indianapolis District of the Indiana Conference from the Louisville District of the Kentucky Conference,



where he was confirmed into A.M.E. Zion Church ministry in 2023. His ministerial staff currently includes Marilyn Alexander, Preacher Steward, and Rev. Terry L. Hawkins, Sunday School Superintendent. Rev. Dr. Anthony K. R. Gibson is the Presiding Elder of the Indianapolis District of The A.M.E. Zion Church and a former pastor of Wallace Temple. The Right Rev. Daran H. Mitchell is the Presiding Bishop of The Mid-West Episcopal District of The A.M.E. Zion Church.



With an initial focus on reclaiming inactive, former members and the souls of lost sheep, Rev. Taylor welcomes one and all to come to Wallace Temple for a day or for always. “You are welcome at our church home.” Come one and all and meet the new pastor as he renews Wallace’s commitment to its mission and vision and continues engaging the community, encouraging and “equipping the congregation for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.” Ephesians 4:12



ST. JAMES A.M.E. ZION: DUAL MISSIONS OF LOVE

By Debra Chappelle-Polk, Zion Spotlight Editor

March 2025, Chesterfield, S.C., Since the beginning of February, Rev. Dr. Charles Darden, Pastor at St. James A.M.E. Zion Church, has been preaching about “Showing God How Much We Love Him By Praising And Worshipping Him.” St. James A.M.E. Zion Church is in Chesterfield, S.C., and Rev. Dr. Sandra C. Sistare is the Presiding Elder.



St. James A.M.E. Zion, which is part of the Pee Dee Conference, Cheraw-Bennettsville District, South Atlantic Episcopal District, was organized by Bishop J. J. Clinton (accompanied by Revs. W. J. Moore, F. B. Moore, and Thomas Henderson, from the

North Carolina Conference), on March 24, 1867.

Rev. Darden has also incorporated the Mission Statement of The A.M.E. Zion Church, “Moving Forward Together, Repairing Relationships, Rebuilding Trust and Restoring Togetherness,” with the Women’s Home and Overseas Society’s (WH&OMS) Mission Statement “Reaching the Masses in an Ever-Changing World -The Journey Continues: Equity and Justice.” In keeping with the Mission Statement, in December, the WH&OMS recognized “Hunger in the World” and celebrated Marie L Clinton Day and Victoria Richardson Day.

Rev. Darden said, “St. James began the month of February on a high level of Love.” On February 2nd, Rev. Charles Darden, his wife, Rev. Sadie Darden, and the Missionary Department held an Agape Breakfast. On Saturday, February 8th, they attended the Agape Luncheon at The Greater Fair Plains A.M.E. Zion Church. Rev. Darden said, “Everyone looked beautiful in their red and white attire.” St. James also supported the Connectional Youth Missionary Society on January 26th via Facebook Live for their service, “There is Victory: Youth Finding Their Voice for Justice.”



On Sunday, February 9, 2025, members of St. James celebrated with their own Agape Luncheon after service. The luncheon highlighted Mary Gaithers Meek, a devoted member who started the Agape Luncheons many years ago. Everyone enjoyed soup and fellowship. Ms. Leeanna Evans, President of the Missionary Society, spoke about how many families overseas don’t have enough food. Often, all they have to eat is a bowl of soup, which is shared. She reminded us of how very fortunate and blessed we are.

ST. JAMES IS LIVING THE MISSION STATEMENTS: EVERYTHING WE DO MUST BE DONE IN LOVE.

The Workers Center for Racial Justice...

By Lynda N. Byrd

Chicago, IL - November 2024- The Workers Center for Racial Justice (WCRJ) is proud to announce Heather Wills as the Deputy Executive Director to lead and support teams in Illinois and Wisconsin. As a lifelong Chicagoan and 7-year WCRJ member, Heather brings a wealth of government, organizing, and labor experience that will help WCRJ expand operations in the Midwest. In her new role, Heather will collaborate with staff and membership to strengthen our organization's focus on labor protections, universal childcare, and improving the livelihoods of formerly incarcerated individuals.

When asked about her motivations for stepping into this role, Heather said, "I became a member because I understood that community change is not just about mutual aid and shared space, but also about creating equitable legislation that ensures resources are available to all communities. Considering the plagues of mass incarceration, the workforce crisis, and even the balance of work and family relative to childcare, I considered the Workers' Center for Racial Justice as a place I could call home and share with comrades in this work. I have been right - we have fought to ban the box for \$15 an hour minimum wage in Chicago and continue the fight for equitable childcare legislation. I am looking forward to supporting staff in their various roles, building relationships with coalition partners and allies, and creating a growing, self-sustaining organization that can provide opportunities to the communities we serve."

Heather Wills is a lifelong member of Greater Walters A.M.E Zion Church in Chicago, where she serves as a ministerial staff member. She is a product of Chicago Public Schools and a graduate of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Saint Xavier University, and Chicago Theological Seminary, where she received a Bachelor of Science in Accountancy, a Master of Business Administration in Finance and Financial Fraud and Examination, and a Master of Arts in Religious Leadership with a concentration in Social Transformation.

Heather is rooted in the work of her community; she began mutual aid efforts in her church at the age of 16 and stood on her life-long

community activism when she ran for Alderperson of the 18th Ward in February 2023, and was endorsed by WCRJ's sister organization, Center for Racial and Gender Equity.

As a seven-year member of the Workers' Center for Racial Justice, Heather is committed to the work of Black liberation and hopes to continue the good work of uplifting and liberating all marginalized communities.

About the Workers Center for Racial Justice

The Worker's Center for Racial Justice is a grassroots organization fighting for Black Liberation and for a fair and inclusive society that benefits all people. It organizes Black workers and their families to address the root causes of high rates of unemployment, low-wage work and over-criminalization impacting Black communities.

The Inclusive Democracy Teams of the organization go door-to-door in Black communities year-round, talking with residents about the issues they care about and how they can take action with WCRJ. The far-reaching engagement programs in Illinois and Wisconsin drive robust, informed



Continued from pg 2



Buthayna Kamel, an Egyptian television anchor, activist, and politician, noted that "women are always at the front of revolutions." In the United States, women have always been trailblazers in the fight for equality. On March 31, 1776, future First Lady Abigail Adams wrote a letter to her husband, John Adams, strongly urging him and the Continental Congress to "remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your

ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the husbands. Remember, all men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention are not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation."

Suffragists like Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton fought for women's right to vote. Hillary Clinton was the first female nominee for president by a major

political party. In 2016, Kamala Harris was elected the first Black female Vice President and ran for president in 2024.

Although she did not win, she must be commended and saluted. She



undertook a herculean task with grace, dignity, and intelligence. Thank you, Madam Vice President.

Women deserve to be celebrated, honored, and exalted 24/7, 365 days a year; however, the fate of Women's History Month is precarious at best. On January 20, 2025, President Trump issued an executive order condemning Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) programs as "illegal and immoral." To comply with the executive order, the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) has paused all activities and events related to

Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Black History Month, Juneteenth, LGBTQ Pride Month, Holocaust Remembrance Day, and other "special observances." Not surprisingly, the "special observances and their associated events" include Women's History Month.

The accomplishments and contributions made by women of all nationalities and ethnicities in all aspects of our lives, locally and globally, are endless and have been beneficial to humanity. Women's History Month is neither "illegal nor immoral" and must not be "paused" to comply with an executive order.

References: National Women's History Month Museum

Are YOU Willing To Take The Cure?

By Angelia J. Poole

In the Town Hall of Cornelius, NC, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day 2025 was an eclectic mix of humanity. The room was filled with men and women, seasoned citizens and young children, clergy and laity, local politicians and community members, musicians and Boy Scouts, Methodists and Presbyterians, Black people and White people. People with diverse backgrounds were unified in their celebration of one man who was described by the keynote speaker as “A drum major in our fight for freedom... his brilliance, eloquence, character, courage, and commitment enabled him to lead a movement that changed our nation and our world.”

1 Timothy 6:5-11 (NLT) was the foundation of Bishop Darryl B. Starnes’ keynote message titled, “Healing the Soul of Our Nation!” He told us that one must first acknowledge that disease is present for one to receive the prescribed healing for that disease. He opened his message by reminding us of two important dates that began the end of legalized slavery to and within our country - January 1, 1808, when the Transatlantic Slave Trade was abolished, and January 1, 1863, when President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. He clearly identified this persistent disease: Human Exploitation. In reflecting on the long history of mankind exploiting humanity, Bishop Starnes expertly outlined chilling facts of long-term exploitation and identified several of the continuing effects those atrocities have had on a variety of victims across time.

Although knowing that a disease exists is important, he was quite clear about how vital it is to identify the root cause of the disease. Both the motives behind these historical atrocities and Holy Writ (1 Timothy 6:10) confirm that ‘the love of money is the root’ of the evils that have consistently plagued us and promoted human exploitation. Bishop Starnes said, “The saddest thing is that often those who have been victims of exploitation become perpetrators of exploitation.” Unfortunately, those who



have been Infected WITH the disease often become Infectors OF the disease.

As disheartening as this disturbing truth may be, there is hope! Acknowledging the disease and identifying its root cause doesn’t just inform each of us of the challenge, but it also positions all of us to accept God’s charge to provoke healing. God directs us just as Paul directed Timothy: “Pursue righteousness and a godly life, along with faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness.” (1 Timothy 6:11b) As the affected easily identifies the infected, our focus can be misaligned towards the

offenders, posturing us towards retaliation instead of restoration. But with Paul’s admonishment, we’re directed to activate the Fruit of The Spirit and pursue the character of God! When we embrace these directives, we are compelled to pray for perpetrators’ hearts to be remolded and victims’ hearts to be mended.

It is in aligning our heart with God’s heart that we realize we all, both victim and victimizer, need the antidote to this grave disease. And in quiet self-reflection, we must each ask ourselves, “Are YOU Willing to Take The Cure?”



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The Connectional Lay Council's Thirteenth Quadrennial Lay Convention

By Mrs. Thomascena L. LeGrand

Dear Laity, greetings in the beloved name of our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ.

The Connectional Lay Council is convening its Thirteenth Quadrennial Lay Convention in Winston-Salem, North Carolina July 26 – 31, 2025.

CLC ELECTED OFFICES ARE OPEN FOR THE 2025-2029. In accordance with the Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and Bylaws of the Connectional Lay Council (CLC), individuals who offer themselves as candidates for election to the position of International President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, Financial Secretary and Chaplain of the CLC must have been a member of the CLC for a minimum of four (4) consecutive years. Candidates must obtain letters of recommendation from their Pastors, Presiding Elders, and Presiding Bishops.

Candidates who wish to be considered for an office in the CLC will need to send an email indicating their interest in the desired position to Mrs. Thomascena L. LeGrand, Chair, CLC Election Committee at tlegrand@nc.rr.com, or send a letter by mail to the CLC Office - PO Box 26770, Charlotte, NC 28221-6770, Attn: Mrs. Thomascena L. LeGrand, Chair, Election Committee.

Qualified Candidates will receive an application using the same meth-



od the request was received unless otherwise requested. Following the receipt of the applicant's letter:

1. The CLC Application and CLC Candidate's Package will be sent to the applicant and must be returned within 45 days to be eligible for the interview.
2. Following receipt of the applicant's CLC Application and CLC Candidate's Package, the applicant will be contacted to schedule an interview.
3. Following the applicant's interview, the applicant will be notified within one week of their eligibility to campaign for the respective Elected Officer's position.

*Candidates are NOT allowed to campaign until the Application process is complete.

*The Interview process must be completed 90 days before the start of the CLC Convention, July 26, 2025.

In His Service,

Mrs. Thomascena L. LeGrand,
Chair CLC Elections Committee

Mr. Joseph King Davis, Jr.,
International President



<https://clcq25.amezion.org/elections/>

Washington District Celebrates Black History

By Mrs. Wilhelmina T. Frazier

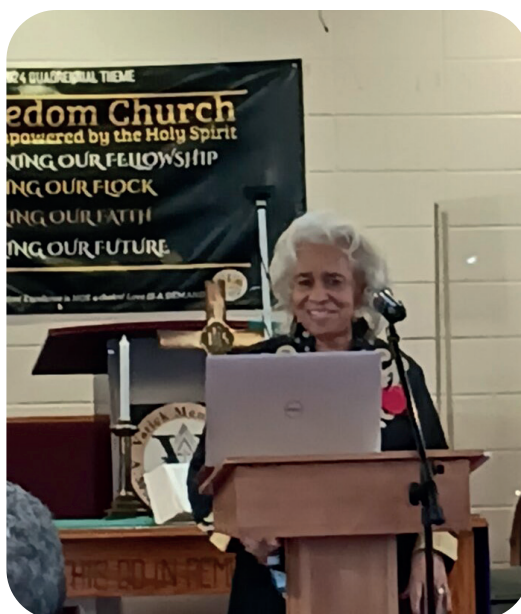
The Women's Home and Overseas Missionary Society of the Mid-Atlantic Episcopal District Philadelphia and Baltimore Conference, Washington District held its Third Quarterly Mass Meeting. The meeting was held on Saturday, February 1, 2025, at Varick Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church in Washington D.C. The Rev. Andre Greene is the pastor, and the Rev. Dr. Alvin T. Durant is the Presiding Elder. Our focus was on the second component of our Quadrennial Theme, Reaching the Masses in an Ever-Changing World: The Journey Continues! Equity and Justice with an emphasis on "African Americans and Labor."

Following an inspirational devotion led by the Varick A.M.E. Zion missionaries, we were greeted by the District President, Mrs. Annette Chisolm. She emphasized that we would celebrate Black History facts and the role of the Missionary Society of today in relationship to African Americans and Labor. Several Black History questions were asked:

Which famous author wrote the book titled "Their Eyes Were Watching God?"

Who wrote the speech "Ain't I a Woman?"

Who was the first Black billionaire in the United States?



Who was the first Black actor to win an Oscar?

Who was the first Black Congressperson?

Our Health Coordinator, Mrs. Tracy Spann-Downing informed us of health issues. Her Scripture reference was Jeremiah 8:22. The focus was on heart health. She explained the function of our heart. Mrs. Spann-Downing encouraged us to have our blood pressure checked regularly, watch our diet, exercise, and reduce stress in our lives. In order to do ministry, we must be healthy physically, mentally, and spiritually.

Mrs. Alisa DeVerteuil, Mission Education Director, gave data regarding Blacks in the labor force. She used Colossians 3:23-25 as a scripture reference. She shared information based on research done by Robert Livingston, a social psychologist and leading expert on the

science underlying bias and racism in companies and organizations. Livingston's research indicated that Black CEOs with baby faces, the teddy bear effect, are more likely to be promoted in large corporations. Livingston stated that Blacks having a baby face is one of the things that helps black leaders. This includes frequent smiling, wearing glasses, and speaking softly. Livingston's research stated that having a baby face was beneficial for Black men in leadership positions giving the perception of warmth and less threatening. Mrs. DeVerteuil expressed that we should not be judged by appearance in the workplace. She also gave data regarding Fortune 500 Companies. There are eight

Black CEOs in Fortune 500 Companies. Only 44 women are serving at the top of Fortune 500 Companies. Women make up 1% of named executive officers in Fortune 500 Companies. There are more than 21 million Black Americans in the U.S. Labor force. Blacks usually earn less than U.S. workers overall. Blacks have the highest unemployment rate of any ethnic group in the country.

Mrs. Loveleen “Dee” Perkins, former Connectional Life Members Chairman of the Women’s Home and Overseas Missionary Society, delivered an awesome Black History presentation. Her focus was on celebrating the affiliate organizations of the Missionary Society, namely, The NAACP, Bread for the World, World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women, National Council of Negro Women, Church Women United, Children’s Defense Fund, and the Balm in Gilead. She explained the role they play in reference to EQUITY and JUSTICE. Her scripture reference was I Peter 4:8-11. Dee stated that equity is a process in which we intentionally create conditions for all people, especially those who are historically marginalized. Equity is the absence of rectifiable differences among groups of people. Justice is the fair treatment of historically marginalized communities to ensure that they are thriving from generations of injustice. Justice means setting things right.



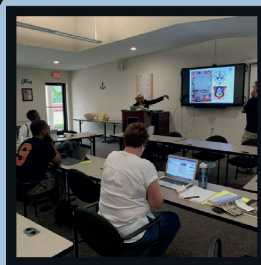
As Christians, our sense of justice is modeled by God. We are to show love, mercy, righteous holiness, and kindness to everyone. Mrs. Perkins stated that it is important for us to support our affiliate organizations in bringing about change. They are at the forefront of advocating for policy, economic empowerment, and racial equality. They create pathways for much-needed justice, especially in marginalized communities and cultures. We can make a difference by supporting these affiliate organizations. We can advocate for the rights of African Americans in labor to be treated with the dignity they (we) deserve. Mrs. Perkins encouraged us to become involved and ask ourselves: How did Jesus deal with justice and equity? As taken from our study guide, “The Women’s Home and Overseas Missionary Society is committed to advocacy and social involvement.

Therefore, the Society affiliates with organizations whose platforms speak peace, human rights, economic justice, and human development.” More information about our Ecumenical partners can be found at www.whoms.org.

It was a GREAT day. We supported Varick’s outreach ministry through the Supply Department led by Mrs. Barbara E. Murray, District Secretary of Supply. Gift cards were given to The River Terrace Group Home. Remarks were given by the Administrative Elder, Rev. Dr. Rita J. Colbert. Our Presiding Elder, the Rev. Dr. Alvin T. Durant, gave remarks led us in prayer, and blessed the delicious lunch served by the Varick missionaries. We dismissed with the Missionary Benediction.



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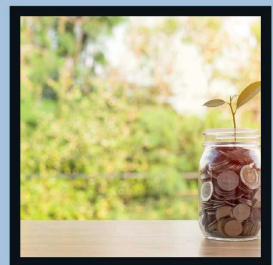
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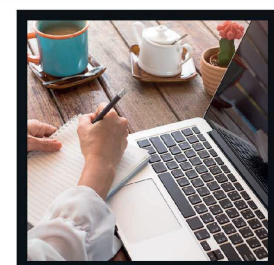
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On-Campus and Online Classes Available

The Graduating Class of the WH&OM Society EXCEL Leadership Academy

By Melva Polk Wright

The Women’s Home and Overseas Missionary Society established the EXCEL Leadership Academy as an initiative to aid in succession planning on all levels of the organization: local, district, and connections.

The history-making Cohort 1 began the process in April 2024 and concluded the final session in February 2025. During each of the five interactive and engaging sessions, guest presenters, who were outstanding in various areas of leadership, and members of the EXCEL Leadership Academy Committee shared a plethora of leadership topics and components. As a follow-up to each session, participants were assessed and provided feedback on assigned tasks.

EXCEL Cohort 1 consisted of participants from across the A.M.E.

Zion Church: Piedmont: Monica Hence, Tiffany Wilson; Eastern North Carolina: Venus Campbell, Shayla McMillan; North Eastern: Ashley Newton, Danea Sawyer (the Bahamas), Tracy Gilmore, KiRondi Branch, Tawanda Harris, Dr. Lavern Haughton White. Eastern West Africa: Christina Jacob; Mid-Atlantic: Alexxis Hutchinson, Nicole Adams, Nicole Kerr; South Atlantic: Crystal Burns, Rev. ShaCarolyn Stephens, Karonda Hardrick, Omerea Gordon; Mid-West: Virginia Adams, Monica Goodlet, Shontierra Smith, Latreasha Williams.

For their required collaborative group project, the participants were divided into three groups and will showcase their final leadership projects on Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at 8 pm EST via Zoom. All are invited to attend. Graduation for EXCEL Cohort 1 will be held on Saturday, April 15, 2025, at 5 pm as part of the 145th WH&OM Society Anniversary in Charlotte, NC.



Piedmont:
Monica Hence, Tiffany Wilson



Mid-Atlantic:
Alexxis Hutchinson, Nicole Adams, Nicole Kerr



Eastern West Africa:
Christina Jacob



South Atlantic:
Crystal Burns, Rev. ShaCarolyn Stephens, Karonda Hardrick, Omerea Gordon

Eastern North Carolina:
Venus Campbell, Shayla McMillan



North Eastern: Ashley Newton, Danea Sawyer (the Bahamas), Tracy Gilmore, KiRondi Branch, Tawanda Harris, Dr. Lavern Haughton White



Mid-West:
Virginia Adams, Monica Goodlet, Shontierra Smith, Latreasha Williams



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

Founders Day Greetings from Faculty Assembly President, Dr. Da'Tarvia A. Parrish

By Star of Zion News

Standing on the established protocol, with a heart of gratitude to God, I greet you on behalf of the faculty of Livingstone College in the spirit of the apostle Peter, who writes, "I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance."

As we gather to commemorate the 146th anniversary of the establishment of Livingstone College, we stand in a time when it is incumbent upon us to remember. For when I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me.

When James Walker Hood began in 1879 with the establishment of Zion Wesley Institute in Concord, North Carolina, Rutherford B. Hayes, the 19th President of the United States was noted as a heroic Union soldier in the Civil War. Yet one of his greatest legacies is the abrupt and premature end of the Reconstruction period, a place where Hood progressed as assistant superintendent of North Carolina Public Schools through the Freedmen's Bureau and author of the state of North Carolina's Reconstruction constitution. This progress was halted by orders of President Hayes that gave way to the enactment of Jim Crow laws mandating racial segregation and second-class citizenship for Black Americans. Also, in 1879, the United States government underwent its first shutdown in history when members of Congress refused to fund the government unless protections for Black voters were eliminated.

That year was 1879.

In 1882, Zion Wesley College met 20th President James Garfield, the only sitting member of the House to be elected to president to date, who was assassinated within six months of his election, whereas the 21st President Chester Arthur is noted for signing the Chinese Exclusion Act, the first major US law ordered to prevent all members of a certain national group from immigrating to the United States.

That year was 1882.

By 1885, with the establishment of Livingstone College in Salisbury, Stephen Grover Cleveland was the president. With a crusade for political reform and fiscal conservatism, the 22nd US President is noted as the first president to serve two non-consecutive terms, and for legislation like the Dawes Act, known as one of the most destructive US policies for Native Americans in history defining levels of "Indian-ness" while regulating land rights and tribal territories.

That year was 1885.

When I think of our founders and the challenges before them, Zion Wesley Institute to Livingstone College had six years of four different presidents, uncertain change and chaos, the disenfranchisement of African Americans, orders and acts interpreting the definition of birthright citizenship, an aggressive race-based immigration policy, and even a freeze on federal funding.

That year was 2025. Pardon me, I meant, the years were 1879- 1885.

Possibly James Walker Hood looked over to his faith-filled team and encouraged them to remember when God wanted to elevate David, he didn't send him a friend - he sent him an enemy named Goliath. I can imagine James Walker Hood, Joseph Charles Price, Thomas Henry Lomax, and Christopher Rush Harris, did not fix themselves or measure their possibilities on the leadership in a political office or a reimagined American democracy. They came together instead and simply remembered.



They remembered their families snatched from their native land, packed on ships like animals, sold across oceans and forced into bondage, to be robbed of heritage, ruined from family, razed from property, ravaged of identity, ripped from dignity, restricted from opportunity — and yet they missioned to establish an institution of higher learning, Oh, yes! They remembered.

And while they remembered . . . like the Israelites in Exodus, God remembered.

Through the process of establishing an institution, they saw God's hand protecting, pushing, and preserving. Protecting them from a fire in Concord - pushing them to England where opportunities seemed promising - and preserving them in Salisbury to be responsible handlers of power. God's hand has laid the foundation of Livingstone College and today Livingstone we must remember and be a witness to God's unchanging hand.

DEI didn't make us. G.O.D. made us in his image and in his likeness, in God's character, and in God's nature. In the beginning, there was the word, and then the word became flesh. That DNA - every molecule, every protein, physically expressed in mRNA - enabled our prophetic founders to have a mind of God, a heart of God, and hands of God. Remember the birthright of your DNA. Raise your hands. Kiss your hands. You are flesh and bone, and the blood that runs through your veins is coded and programmed in the image and likeness of God. Like our founders, who were fearless, forthright, and faithful, we've got to tap into our godliness and commit to the mission.

They knew of the constitutiveness of anti-black racism in the United States, but they remembered the mission.

They knew of the failed Reconstruction, but they remembered the mission.

They knew they had limited resources, but they remembered the mission.

And in their remembrance, the miracle of multiplication was manifested within that mission.

Price stayed in England for a year, raising 10K, because God moved hearts that led him to meet supporters like a Greg Alcorn, an Ed Norvell, and a Jason Walser - who then, in turn, used their hands - to send a telegraph to Salisbury, North Carolina to someone like a Greg Edds for the county's approval of \$1,000 and JM Gray's Delta Grove farm. Whereas that land would give the opportunity to host the head, heart, and hands of an architectural expert and a sincere political intellectual like Karen Kirks Alexander.

They remembered. They remembered. So, we must remember. All that we have needed - his hand hath provided.

Remember, we are Chosen by God.
Remember, we are precious to him.
Remember, we are Living Stones.

Reclaim your remembrance!
Recount your remembrance!
Relate to your remembrance!
Rise up in your remembrance!

Zion Wesley Institute. Zion Wesley College. Livingstone College.
Happy 146th Founders Day.

FaithLearnThrive at Hood Theological Seminary Hosts “Thrive Together: A Leadership Development Experience” to Empower Church Leaders

By Dr. Rona Williams

Salisbury, NC – February 3, 2025— FaithLearnThrive is excited to announce “Thrive Together: A Leadership Development Experience,” a dynamic one-day leadership event designed to equip and inspire church leaders from across the region. The event will take place on March 8, 2025, from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM at 9280 Davidson Hwy, Concord, NC 28027.

“Thrive Together” is open to pastors, ministry leaders, and church teams seeking fresh strategies to expand their impact, foster unity, and grow thriving communities of faith. Participants will engage in interactive workshops, practical leadership sessions, and meaningful networking opportunities.

Key Highlights Include:

- Workshop 1: Small Church, Big Impact – Discover how smaller congregations can make a significant difference in their communities.
- Workshop 2: The Power of United Vision – Learn how to rally teams around a shared vision and unlock the limitless possibilities within your ministry.
- Networking Lunch: Connect with fellow leaders, exchange ideas, and



build lasting relationships. cal insights, and practical tools to foster thriving congregations and impactful ministries. Through workshops, coaching, and leadership development programs, FaithLearnThrive inspires leaders to fulfill their God-given potential.

build lasting relationships.

•Special Giveaway: One registered church will win FREE admission to the upcoming Community Strategy Lab.

“This isn’t just another event—it’s a transformational experience designed to reignite purpose, strengthen leadership, and equip churches for greater impact,” said Dr. Rona Williams, Director at FaithLearnThrive.

The registration fee is \$15 per person, which includes light breakfast, snacks, and lunch. Registration is open now, and spots are limited.

Register today at <https://bit.ly/LDD2025>

For more information, contact Dr. Rona Williams at rwilliams@hood-seminary.edu.

About FaithLearnThrive:

FaithLearnThrive is dedicated to equipping church leaders with innovative strategies, theological

Livingstone College Faculty Goes to Ghana

By Faculty of Livingstone College

To expand global perspectives and foster cross-cultural connections, faculty members from Livingstone College embarked on an enlightening journey to Ghana. This immersive experience was made possible through a collaborative effort between Livingstone College and Culture Beyond Borders (CBB), supported by the U.S. government’s IDEAS Grant. The trip allowed faculty to engage with Ghanaian



culture firsthand, build international academic relationships, and explore the West African nation’s profound historical and contemporary significance.

The faculty delegation visited key historical and cultural sites across Accra, Kumasi, and Cape Coast. These included the National Museum, the W.E.B. Du Bois Center, the Nkrumah Mausoleum, and the University of Ghana. They also participated in a Chief’s Durbar and naming ceremony at Ntonso Village and engaged with students and educators at the Tetrefu Technical School. A particularly



emotional moment for many was the visit to the Assin Manso Slave River Site and the Cape Coast Castle, sites that bear witness to the painful legacy of the transatlantic slave trade. Through these experiences, faculty members deepened their understanding of Ghana's past and present, bringing a renewed sense of purpose to their academic missions.

Dr. Tiffany Boyd Adams, Chair of the Department of English and Foreign Language

es, described the trip as “invigorating and surreal,” emphasizing how it reinforced her pride in African heritage. She highlighted her efforts to forge connections with Ghanaian scholars and professionals to bring contemporary African narratives into her curriculum, aiming to inspire young women of color at Livingstone College.

Dr. Felix Adusei-Danso reflected on the honor of attending and addressing The A.M.E. Zion Board of Bishops Conference in Ghana. He expressed a renewed commitment to instilling academic excellence, Christian values, and a spirit of service in his students, ensuring they are prepared to thrive in a global society.



Dr. Christopher Wilks found the experience impactful in understanding Ghana's role in global history and economics. “This experience has inspired me to bring these lessons into the classroom, helping students see the connection between history, culture, and business while preparing them to lead with understanding and integrity in a global economy,” he stated.

Dr. Allan Lanton, a hydroponics research professor, spent significant time with students at Tetrefu Technical School, sharing knowledge on

sustainable agriculture. He noted that Ghana's unique soil conditions and the innovative use of self-watering wicking beds could revolutionize food production in challenging climates. “The students were eager to learn and apply hydroponic techniques to improve their agricultural output,” he shared.

Dr. Astarlove Robinson, Assistant Professor of Health & Wellness, described the trip as the most “powerful, emotional, and transformative” experience of her life. Learning about Ghana's traditional healing practices and walking in the footsteps of enslaved ancestors left an indelible mark on her. “I'm elated to share the enlightenment gained about the history of natural medicine and healing with my students and colleagues next semester,” she said.

The Livingstone College faculty's journey to Ghana was more than an academic excursion; it was a transformative experience that will shape teaching, research, and student engagement for years to come. Through new-found partnerships with Ghanaian institutions, faculty members will integrate global perspectives into their coursework, inspiring students to embrace international opportunities and cultural appreciation.

Dr. Kwesi Edwoozie, founder of Culture Beyond Borders, expressed gratitude for Bishop Dogbe's and The A.M.E. Zion Church's support in facilitating the trip. “This journey is just the beginning of a lasting relationship between Livingstone College and Ghana,” he noted. As the faculty return to their classrooms, they bring with them not only knowledge and insights but also a renewed passion for shaping the globally conscious leaders of tomorrow.



Livingstone College Scores Second Megagift in Less Than a Year

By Ms. Garette Hunter, Livingstone College

Salisbury, NC | Livingstone College's president, Dr. Anthony Davis, announced that the institution received another \$10 million megagift from the same anonymous benefactor who gifted the college \$10 million last summer to support the HBCU's “Miracle on Monroe Street” construction initiative.

Davis said the latest gift will allow the college to move to phase three of renovation projects including work to Goler Hall and Honors Hall.

“We are humbled that Livingstone received a philanthropic investment of this nature, which will enable us to provide environmentally sensitive residential spaces for our students,” David said.

Considering the impact of the withdrawal of certain federal funding in



higher education, private investments in higher education, especially at HBCUs, are more important than ever to sustain and grow the institutions. Livingstone's recent gift is the second-largest outright donation in Livingstone's history and the second transformational gift since the start of the calendar year; the college announced the receipt of a \$3 million gift in January.

Davis is closing in on raising nearly \$40 million in private gifts for the college over the past two fiscal years.

Philanthropic investments being made at Livingstone allow the college to keep pace with its growing student population. Davis said the college achieved a

13% increase in student enrollment this academic year, outpacing even the college's public HBCU siblings across the state.

Hood Theological Seminary Students Travel on Spiritual Innovation Start-Up Bus Tour

By Rev. Dierdre' R. Parker and Dr. Vincent Howell

Seven students from Hood Theological Seminary, along with Dr. Vincent Howell, Associate Dean of Hood's Doctorate in Ministry Program, flew to Princeton, New Jersey, on January 8, 2025. There, they joined students and faculty from Brite Divinity School (TX) and Princeton Theological Seminary (NJ) on a bus trip that forever changed how they will look at ministry. Hood received a grant in 2023 through Princeton, funded by Trinity Church Wall Street, to help theological education prepare faith leaders as "spiritual entrepreneurs" — people who inspire, equip, and lead congregations to become crucibles for "change-making" in their communities.



At Hood, the educational experience includes coursework and participation in the Princeton Startup Bus Tour, and it will include future experiences. This journey took these students from the frigid winds of New Jersey to the monuments

of D.C. and the hills of Tennessee to the hollers of Alabama, making stops at various churches, non-profits, and community organizations to learn about ministries that impacted communities and congregations outside the church building. The Bus trip ended in New Orleans, Louisiana. The bus stopped, but the adventure continued.



This trip was the brainchild of Kenda Creasy Dean, the Mary D. Synnott Professor of Youth, Church and Culture at Princeton Theological Seminary. Christian innovation is among her many specializations, which is what this trip was about. Spiritual Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship were the focus of the experience. To prepare for the experience, students from Hood Theological Seminary participated in a class of the same name taught by Dr. Joseph Daniels, Senior Pastor of Emory Fellowship, noted author, in the Washington D.C. Area. In this class, Dr. Daniels introduced the students to the concept of Social Entrepreneurship. Hood students completed the class during the summer of 2024. Fredrick Bellamy, Wanda Chavis, Sheresa Ingram, Maya Feemster-Jones, Rayvon Moore, Andrea Solomon, and Dierdre' Parker were the students who accompanied Dr. Howell.

Dr. Howell commented on the Hood experience: "Many people are aware of the concept of innovation. But they don't necessarily put innovation in a church or spiritual context. Teaching Spiritual Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship in seminaries and experiencing it as our students did on this trip helps to make this idea a more intentional component of theological education and practical ministry in local churches."

This was not a "wheels on the bus go round and round" trip. This was an adult version of the Magic School Bus." Students were constantly in classroom mode, with learning modules filling every moment of their time. The modules addressed things like identifying the problem you want to solve, the person affected by the problem, and the project that will address that problem. The purpose of the trip was twofold.



Firstly, to introduce the students to spiritual innovation in a concrete way. The bus stopped at amazingly innovative ministry sites that proved that our God is truly creative beyond all that we can ask or imagine.

The Princeton bus was not the only bus traveling to New Orleans. There was a bus departing from Chicago and a bus departing from Denver. These other buses had a very similar action-packed agenda to the Princeton bus. They also traveled from their starting point to various historic and ministry sites. All buses converged in New Orleans, LA, so that the students could pitch their social entrepreneur project ideas in a "shark tank" format.

The students arrived with their own ideas for a spiritual innovation project. As the bus traveled from site to site, the modules engaged the students in honing the skills of identifying the person, project, and problem. The students were broken into teams based on the "who" of their non-profit idea. The students were learning what makes a good pitch. Once they reached New Orleans, they would put their learning to the test by participating in "Pitch Fest."

While the bus tour was innovative and informative, the real work began with putting all the learning modules together and presenting a dynamic pitch encompassing the reason the non-profit exists, the people you exist to impact, and the project you will use to facilitate the impact. Student teams had four (4) minutes to pitch their non-profit idea to potential funders and backers.

The teams were made up of members of the same bus. The Hood students were on teams



that pitched ideas that promoted transportation ministries for senior citizens, self-care spaces for Black professionals, retreat spaces for working mothers suffering from burnout, using theatrical performance and senior volunteers to support youth who had experienced trauma, and a card game that facilitates difficult conversations.

The Hood students represented the Seminary well by participating in the final round showcase (top 10). Overall, “the Hood team came away with a great experience and new learning that will help us make a strong ministry impact where we serve,” said the students.

The President, Dr. Vergel Lattimore, was able to join the students for the final showcase. He had this to say: *It was most gratifying to be*



present in New Orleans as the eight Hood Seminary students held their own against the likes of Princeton and Garrett. In fact, the director of Church and Black Experience of Garrett commented about the impressiveness of the Hood students and the vital contributions that they made in sharing their gifts, thoughts, and enthusiasm. Again, I was most proud to be able to witness it all.

This trip was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create nationwide connections in the world of Spiritual Innovation. As a student who was fortunate enough to attend, I can

safely say that I came back another way.

Dierdre' R. Parker is a Doctoral Student at Hood Theological Seminary, Pastor of Terrells Chapel in Pittsboro, NC, CEO of Diva2de Ministries (a 501(c)(3) Company), and author of 13 books available on AMAZON.

Livingstone Hosts Annual Oratorical Contest

By Star of Zion News

On Thursday, February 13, Livingstone College's annual oratorical contest welcomed approximately 20 contestants to express their perspectives with the prompt, *Our founding president, Dr. Joseph Charles Price, had the vision of investing in the future by establishing an HBCU. Consider your vision for your future. What can you do today and tomorrow to make a difference? What will be your legacy?*



The collaborative efforts of Andrew Carnegie Library staff, the Honors Program, and the Department of English permitted Livingstone students to share an experience framed by historical pride and speech fundamentals.

Fredrick Little, a Gastonia, North Carolina freshman, said, “It felt good to be a part of this competition. All of the contestants personally connected their goals to Price and had pretty good speeches. It was nice.”

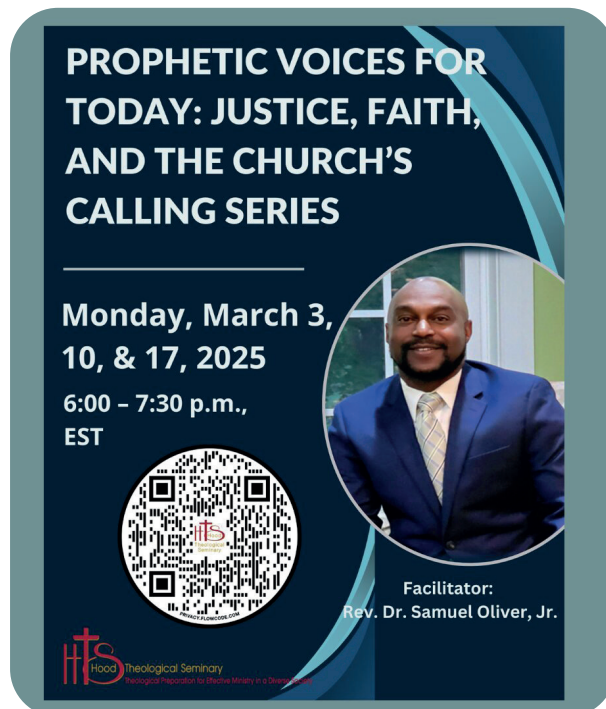
Symia Walker, a biology major from Tampa, Florida, placed first, and Harmony Clark, a business major from Hampton, Georgia, placed second. Other contestants included Leah Alford, Gianna Bush, Micah Colding, Marianne Diawara, Jacob Henderson, Hunter Howard, Bruce Jones, Niera Ovalles, De'Maurion Stewart, Christopher Washington, Rylee Watson, and Corey Williams.



Prophetic Voices For Today: Justice, Faith, and the Church's Calling Series

By Kelly Bryant

Amid a season of change and uncertainty, please join us for our Spring series of the Pathways For Tomorrow Initiative of the Lilly Endowment, Inc., for a free, three-part series open to the public via the Zoom portal. This event will take place Monday, March 3, 10, and 17, 2025, from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. EST. The facilitator will be Rev. Dr. Samuel Oliver, Jr. This lecture series examines the prophetic messages of Obadiah and Habakkuk, focusing on their relevance to the contemporary challenges faced by the Church and its call to shape God's Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Participants will explore the historical context of these prophets, analyze their critiques of injustice and national arrogance, and connect their concerns to issues of systemic oppression, religion, and the Church's role in social transformation. The series will conclude by proposing a framework for modern-day prophetic ministry, drawing on the insights of Old Testament Scholar and Theologian Walter Brueggemann and Black Liberation Theologian James H. Cone. For more information, please go here: <https://shorturl.at/j7sNs>.



Session 1 – March 3, 2025: The Arrogance of Power: Obadiah's Warning to the Nations
Session 2 – March 10, 2025: "How Long, O Lord?": Habakkuk and the Cry for Justice
Session 3 – March 17, 2025: The Prophetic Imagination Today: A Call to the Church

Each session will include time for Q&A and discussion, focusing on practical applications for the Church's ministry.

To register for the March 3 session on Eventbrite, go here: <https://shorturl.at/PNLiS>. The registration for the March 10 and March 17 sessions will be forthcoming. For questions, please contact Dr. Karen L. Owens at kowens@hoodseminary.edu.

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.

Sensational Salisbury Youth hosts Young Gifted & Black

By Star of Zion News

On Friday, February 14, the youth of the Sensational Salisbury District hosted Young, Gifted & Black, a workshop designed to promote positive opportunities for A.M.E. Zion youth to fellowship, develop talents and skills, and be introduced to and inspired by the incredible contributions African Americans have made to the global world.

Youth endeavored to give parents a Valentine's



night out from 5:00 - 8:00 p.m. while they engaged in purposeful and kingdom-building activities in Tubman Theatre at Livingstone College. Led by Courtney Wilson, a Livingstone junior and a

Soldiers Memorial member in Salisbury, attendees underwent a praise dance presentation. In contrast, Dr. Da'Tarvia Parrish of New Hope led youth in a step workshop. Participants were also exposed to African American poetry with youth district president Seven-Hazel Boone.



"I am happy to have shared this experience with other young people. I've been wanting to engage in the creative expression of praise dance, and this was my opportunity," said Aleah Mattis, a freshman from Connecticut at Livingstone. "Most of all, I'm proud to be young, gifted, and black."

Trump's Plan to Dismantle the Department of Education: A Threat to Black, Brown, and Poor Communities

By Rev. Roderick J. Josey, Education Editor

In a significant policy shift, former President Donald Trump is reportedly considering an executive order to dismantle the U.S. Department of Education to reduce federal oversight and control education policies ultimately to individual states. While some conservatives support this move, arguing that states should have more control over education,



many civil rights advocates warn that such a decision could have devastating effects—especially for Black, Brown, and low-income communities.

Since its establishment in 1979, the Department of Education has played a crucial role in ensuring that all students—regardless of race, income, or ability—have access to quality education. The department enforces civil rights laws, provides funding for schools in low-income areas, and oversees special education programs. It also protects students from discrimination through policies like Title IX, which ensures gender equity in education, and Title I, which provides financial assistance to schools serving disadvantaged communities.



If the department is dismantled, these critical protections could be weakened or eliminated, leaving states to decide how (or whether) to support historically underserved students.

Federal oversight has historically been essential in addressing educational inequalities. During the Civil Rights

Movement, the federal government—not the states—enforced school desegregation. More recently, federal intervention has helped ensure that schools in poor neighborhoods receive funding, that students with disabilities get the resources they need, and that schools do not engage in racial discrimination.

Without federal accountability, education policies would vary drastically from state to state. States with less commitment to equity could cut funding for schools in low-income areas, reduce special education services, and weaken protections against discrimination. This would disproportionately harm Black and Brown students, many of whom already attend underfunded schools with fewer resources.

According to a report, experts fear that states with weaker civil rights enforcement histories could reverse educational access and equality progress.

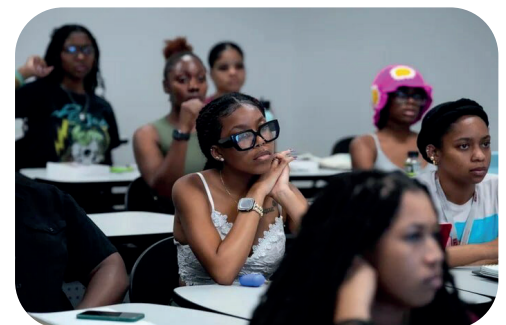
Mrs. Mallory Wright Gayle, Assistant Principal in Baltimore City Schools, expressed her concerns about the impact of this decision, stating:



“At the moment, states already have much control over their education. Funding, disciplinary procedures, and curricula—even down to teacher certification—are primarily determined at the state level. The overwhelming concern with eradicating the DOE is the underlying motive to eliminate public schools and redirect federal funding to private schooling options. However, federal funding should have federal regulation. Without federal regulation, there is no accountability for how our schools contribute to less-than-positive outcomes for Black and Brown students, in particular.”

Supporters of Trump's plan argue that eliminating the Department of Education would give states more freedom to design their education systems. However, critics point out that without federal oversight, states could cut vital programs, widen the gap between wealthy and poor school districts, and reduce funding for higher education.

Another primary concern is financial aid. Federal grants and student loan programs like Pell Grants help millions of low-income students afford college. If the federal government withdraws from education, it is unclear how these programs would continue to operate. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds could lose access to higher education simply because their state does not prioritize funding.



Educational and civil rights organizations are already opposing the proposal. Many argue that the Department of Education must ensure equal opportunities for all students, regardless of where they live. Advocates urge communities, particularly those most affected, to stay informed, speak out, and pressure lawmakers to oppose any efforts to dismantle the department.

As this proposal moves forward, churches, educators, and community leaders must actively ensure that every child—regardless of race, background, or income—has access to a quality education. This is not just a political issue; it is a moral one.

Sources:

- Wall Street Journal
- The Guardian
- New York Post

Rutgers University Cancels HBCU Conference in Response to Federal DEI Directive

By Rev. Roderick J. Josey, Education Editor

Rutgers University has canceled its planned virtual mini-conference, initially set for January 30, 2025, citing recent executive orders from President Donald Trump that target diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. The event, organized by the Rutgers Center for Minority Serving Institutions (CMSI), was designed to highlight the advantages of registered apprenticeship programs for students attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).



The cancellation was influenced by directives from the U.S. Department of Labor, which, following the executive orders, instructed organizations like Jobs for the Future (JFF) to halt DEI-related activities. JFF, a collaborator with CMSI, had been a key partner in organizing the conference.

Approximately 100 students and staff from various HBCUs had registered to attend the virtual session. The conference aimed to provide insights into enhancing access to registered apprenticeships for underrepresented groups. Citeturn0search4



The decision has drawn criticism from New Jersey political figures. Newark Mayor Ras Baraka condemned the move, describing it as “an utter failure of courage in the face of political foolishness.”

Nolan Scott, a college student in Charlotte, NC, expressed his concerns:

“It’s honestly very disheartening to see how political decisions are actively dismantling opportunities for underrepresented students. The cancellation of Rutgers University’s virtual mini-conference is more than just an isolated event; it’s a reflection of the deliberate attack on diversity, equity, and inclusion in education.

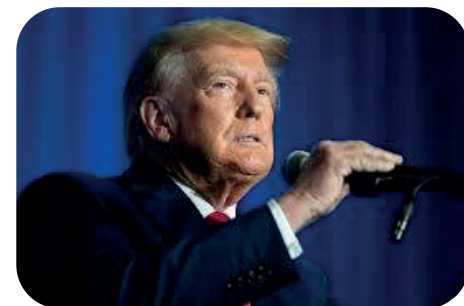
This conference was designed to provide HBCU students with crucial

resources and access to apprenticeship programs—opportunities that could impact their career paths. To see such an important initiative shut down due to executive orders is both unfair and frustrating. It raises the question: What message does this send to students who rely on DEI programs to break barriers in their education and professional lives?



Education should be about expanding access, not restricting it. Limiting DEI only creates more obstacles for those who have historically been excluded from certain opportunities. While colleges and universities like Rutgers are being forced to comply with these policies, it’s imperative that they and other institutions find ways to continue supporting underrepresented communities.

Trump and his administration have made it very clear that they do not care about the impact of canceling DEI initiatives. If they did, they would realize how essential these programs are for students who rely on them to access opportunities they have historically been denied. The message is clear: The well-being and progress of non-white, non-male students are not priorities in this administration’s vision for education or the workforce.



So, what can we do? We have to stay informed and vocal and keep pushing forward. If the government doesn’t prioritize equality, then we must find ways to support one another through student activism, community-led initiatives, and holding schools accountable. History has shown that progress doesn’t come without resistance, and if this second Trump era is about erasing opportunities, then our response must be to create even more.

The impact of these changes goes beyond a canceled conference. It’s about real students losing real opportunities, and that’s something we should all be deeply concerned about.”

This incident reflects a broader trend as educational institutions nationwide navigate the implications of federal directives affecting DEI programs. Many universities are reassessing their initiatives to ensure compliance while striving to uphold their commitments to diversity and inclusion.

The abrupt cancellation underscores the challenges that DEI-focused programs face amid evolving federal policies. Institutions like Rutgers are compelled to balance adherence to new regulations with their dedication to supporting underrepresented communities.

https://www.insidehighered.com/news/quick-takes/2025/01/24/rutgers-cancels-hbcu-event-align-trump-dei-orders?utm_source=chatgpt.com

https://thegrio.com/2025/01/27/rutgers-university-forced-to-cancel-hbcu-conference-to-appease-trumps-anti-dei-executive-orders/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

<https://apnews.com/article/trump-dei-college-university-9f26a-51617744de5c3f929a293027758>

Who's That Lady?

Meet Archinya Ingram, Interim President of Clinton College

By Rev. Roderick J. Josey, Education Editor

Archinya Ingram, a dedicated and influential leader in higher education, has recently been appointed as Interim President of Clinton College, succeeding Dr. Lester A. McCorn. Her extensive experience and contributions over nearly two decades at Clinton College make her uniquely suited to



lead this historic institution during its transitional phase.

Background and Professional Journey

Mrs. Ingram's career at Clinton College began with roles emphasizing financial and administrative expertise. As the Senior Vice President for Business Services and Chief Financial Officer, she played a pivotal role in the institution's fiscal stewardship and strategic planning. Her leadership extends beyond Clinton College; she has been an active figure in the Association of Business Administrators for Christian Colleges (ABACC),

serving as a board member and later as Vice President. Her efforts have consistently focused on advancing financial literacy and resource optimization in higher education.

Impact at Clinton College

During her tenure, Ingram has been instrumental in shaping Clinton College's operational strategy, including digital initiatives like providing Microsoft Surface devices to students to bridge the technology gap. This innovation highlights her forward-thinking approach to enhancing accessibility and modernizing educational delivery.

Vision as Interim President

In her interim role, Ingram focuses on ensuring stability while continuing to build on the institution's legacy. She aims to strengthen Clinton College's position as a premier historically Black liberal arts college, emphasizing ethical leadership, digital learning, and workforce development. Her leadership underscores a commitment to fostering academic and spiritual growth among underserved students.

As Clinton College embarks on this new chapter, Archinya Ingram exemplifies resilience and progress, embodying the institution's mission of holistic education. With her at the helm, Clinton College is poised for an era of innovation and community impact.





Miss Samia Richardson, President
Simon Temple AME Zion Church
Fayetteville, NC



@acolytesamez or
acolytesamez@gmail.com

PLEASE GIVE: **Givelify** **zelle** \$



SAVE THE DATE

ACOLYT VIRTUAL

CONFERENCE

THEME THE SEASONS OF CHANGE

Ephesians 4:20-24 - "ALL thingz NEW!"

Rev. Dr. R.J. Chandler Sr., International Director of Acolytes

3.29.25
11AM - 3PM EST

ZION

MORNING PREACHER
Rev. Irene R. Pyke
Wallace Temple AME Zion Church
Bayonne, New Jersey

\$25.00 Registration



AFTERNOON PREACHER
Rev. Quavon Newton
St. Stephen AME Zion Church
Asbury Park, New Jersey

ACOLYTES PARTICIPATE AT THE BOARD OF BISHOPS WINTER MTG.



We are so proud of our Acolytes participating at the Board of Bishops Winter Meeting in Mobile, Alabama. They served with excellence!

Miss Abrianna Smith and Katelyn Smith.

Asbury Chapel AME Zion Church
Rev. O'Neil Wiley, Pastor

Mobile District
Rev. Dr. Titus Thorn,
Presiding Elder

MUSIC & WORSHIP FESTIVAL

Mother AME Zion Church
Harlem, NY

SAVE THE DATE: OCTOBER 10 - 12, 2025

LITURGICAL MINISTRY | DEACONESS | MUSIC & ARTS | ACOLYTES | MIME | POETRY | HYMNODOLOGY | LITURGY | PRAYER | USHERS | GREETERS

MUSIC & WORSHIP FESTIVAL

CALLING ALL WRITERS!

Dr. Lisa Moore
International Director of Music

SAVE THE DATE: OCTOBER 10 - 12, 2025

Music is essential to worship. The International Music Ministry of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church is recording original music that will be performed at all music festivals. We are looking for writers who will generously give of their talent and gifts to the ministry. All original submissions are due by April 15, 2025.

UPCOMING EVENTS

ACOLYT VIRTUAL

ACOLYT LEADERSHIP

zelle
acolytesamez@gmail.com

Rev. Dr. R.J. Chandler Sr., International Director of Acolytes
Bishop Darn H. Mitchell, Worship & Ritual, 1st Vice Chairman
Bishop Uduak Effiong, Worship & Ritual Chairman

WORSHIP & MUSIC FESTIVAL
(22 and Older) REGISTRATION: \$50.00
LUNCHEON INCLUDED
18 and 21 REGISTRATION: \$50.00
LUNCHEON TICKETS: \$20.00
GLOW CONCERT: \$50.00 (ADULTS ONLY)

MUSIC & WORSHIP FESTIVAL

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2025
5:00PM - 7:00PM: Registration
7:00PM - 8:00PM: Worship Practicum (All Areas)
8:00PM - 9:00PM: Turn Up for the Glow Up Concert
9:15PM - 10:15PM: Choir Rehearsal
10:15PM - 10:30PM: Acolyte Mixer
"Know your Church"

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2025
8:00AM - 10:30AM: Morning Glory Worship
10:45AM - 12:30PM: Worship Practicum (All Areas)
12:45AM - 2:00PM: Zion Excellence Awards Luncheon (Included in Registration)
Tickets: \$100.00

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2025
9:00AM - 10:30AM: Worship Experience
10:30AM - 11:00AM: Installation of Acolytes
11:00AM - 12:00PM: Confirmation of Acolyte Officers
12:00PM - 1:00PM: consecration of Deaconess
1:00PM - 2:00PM: Bishop George D. O. Oshun

ONLY Registered Acolytes are free! All acolytes must register with the Board of Acolytes.
Acolytes are encouraged to have four to a room unless a parent or chaperone stay in the room. For more info: acolytesamez@gmail.com

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Rev. Alicia Lewis-Davis,
Pastor

Greenville District,
Rev. Dr. Mark Hawkins,
Presiding Elder

#zionexcellence
#acolytesamez



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

Statement from The A.M.E. Zion Board of Bishops Concerning Recent remarks by Senator Tommy Tuberville

“But let justice roll down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.” (Amos 5:24)

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

The recently televised comment by Senator Tommy Tuberville stating, “We gotta get rid of this nonsense of social justice,” reflects a profound ignorance of the struggles of millions of Americans over hundreds of years, including his own Alabamian constituents. Many have been arrested, beaten, and even murdered as they protested for basic human rights long denied them and their communities. They are martyrs for the social justice Senator Tuberville calls “nonsense.”

Either Senator Tuberville is dangerously uninformed about what social justice truly is and its essential role in challenging this nation to embody its professed yet unfulfilled ideals, or he is parroting the morally repugnant sentiments of racism.

The Board of Bishops meeting in the great state of Alabama condemns, in the strongest terms possible, Senator Tuberville’s statement and calls for immediate retraction. Failure to do so is

an ugly stain that brings shame upon himself, upon his office, and upon Alabama.

We honor the powerful legacy of social justice forged in Alabama and represented by a great cloud of witnesses, including great Civil Rights luminaries such as Mrs. Rosa Parks, Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Rev. Dr. Solomon Snowden Seay Sr., The Honorable John Lewis, Mrs. Amelia Boynton Robinson, Mr. John LeFlore, and Reverend H.K. Matthews.

Justice, love, and mercy are foundational to what it means to be a Christian, and what it means to be a decent human being. Sadly, based on his remarks, the Senior Senator from Alabama falls short of those standards.

In the Name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Liberator;

We are the Board of Bishops of The A.M.E. Zion Church:

Bishop Hilliard K. D. Dogbe,
President of the Board of Bishops

Bishop Darryl B. Starnes, Sr.,
Senior Bishop

Bishop W. Darin Moore

Bishop George D. Crenshaw

Bishop Uduak U. Effiong

Bishop Brian R. Thompson, Sr.

Bishop Eric Leake

Bishop Daran H. Mitchell

Bishop Anthony N. Witherspoon

Bishop Melanie R. Miller

Bishop Dwayne A. Walker

Bishop Bernardo J. Ngunza

Bishop Joseph Johnson, Retired

Bishop Marshall H. Strickland, Retired

Bishop Nathaniel Jarrett, Jr., Retired

Bishop George W.C. Walker, Sr., Retired

Bishop Samuel Chuka Ekemam, Sr., Retired

Bishop Warren Matthew Brown, Retired

Bishop George Edward Battle, Jr., Retired

Bishop Kenneth Monroe, Retired

Bishop Dennis V. Proctor, Retired

Bishop Michael A. Frencher, Sr., Retired

Done this the 11th Day of February 2025



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

Colorectal Cancer: Get screened & Know the Signs

By Daman De Leon, Health and Wellness Editor

Eartha Kitt. Natalie Desselle. Chadwick Boseman. The aforementioned are just a select few of Black Celebrities that have succumbed to Colorectal Cancer in recent years. Colorectal Cancer, more commonly known as *Colon Cancer*, according to the CDC, is one of the deadliest and most aggressive cancers; however, if caught early enough, it is also one of the most treatable. Colorectal cancer (CRC) is the third most common cancer in black men and women. African Americans are also diagnosed with CRC and young-onset CRC more often than members of other communities in the US. Colorectal cancer can be prevented through screening and is treatable when caught early. Generally, African Americans

are at higher risk for this type of cancer than other racial or ethnic groups in the US. More than one in three will be diagnosed with this type of cancer in their lifetime.

COMMON SYMPTOMS

Colorectal cancer first develops with few, if any, symptoms. If symptoms are present, they may include:

- A change in bowel habits: These include diarrhea, constipation, a change in the consistency of your stool, or finding that your stools are narrower than usual
- Ongoing stomach pains: Such as those from cramps, gas, pain, the feeling of being full or bloated, or that your bowel does not empty completely
- Rectal bleeding: Blood (either bright red or very dark) in your stool
- Weakness or fatigue: These may be in addition to unexplained weight loss, nausea, or vomiting. Colorectal cancer can develop without symptoms. That's why on-time screening is critical.

STAGES OF DIAGNOSIS

Colorectal cancer is 90% beatable when caught early through screening. Once the cancer has spread, it becomes much more difficult to treat. Nearly one in four colorectal cancer cases in African Americans are diagnosed at stages when it is harder to treat. If you have symptoms, speak with a medical provider immediately.

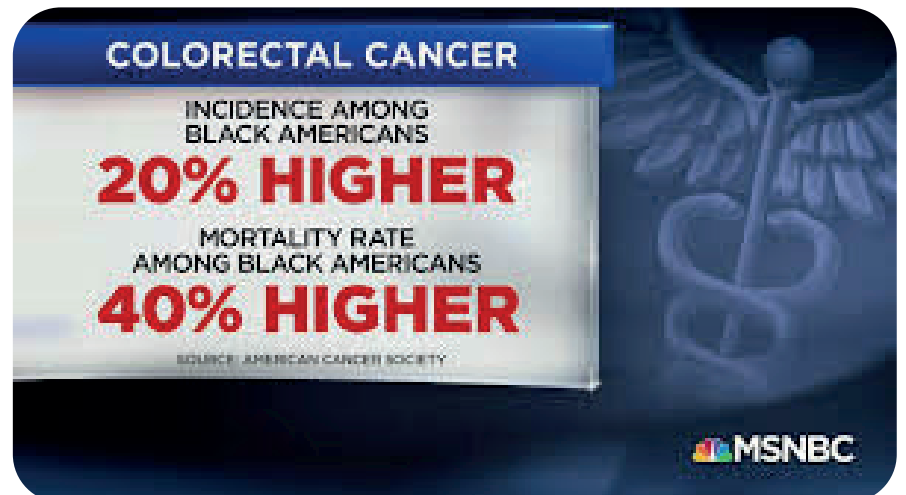
PREVENTION

GET SCREENED

Colorectal cancer can easily be prevented through screening. Colon cancer and rectal cancer are also highly treatable if caught early. All African Americans should have screening tests starting at age 45. Screening tests can be completed in a clinical setting or at home. Talk to a doctor about what's right for you. Learn more at GetScreened.org.

FAMILY HISTORY

Most people with colorectal cancer do not have a family history of the disease. But some families have more cancer than we would expect.



This suggests a genetic and/or hereditary factor. You are at increased risk if one immediate family member (parent or sibling) or multiple relatives have colorectal cancer or polyps—abnormal growths in the colon or rectum. Talk with your family about their medical history so you can take control of your health. If you're at increased risk, please talk with a doctor about how and when you should be screened.

LIVE A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Beyond screening, there are many things you can do to live a healthy colon lifestyle. Know your risk factors and family history. Most importantly, listen to your body. If something doesn't feel right or changes, take control and speak to your doctor. Pre-existing conditions that increase risk of colorectal cancer include type 2 diabetes, obesity, inherited syndromes including Lynch, and inflammatory bowel disease.

Tips for a healthier colon:

- Eat fiber (fruits and vegetables)
- Drink plenty of water
- Take in whole grains
- Drink low-fat or fat-free milk
- Eat lean proteins (chicken, turkey) instead of processed meats (hot dogs, lunch meat)
- Reduce excess sugar and fried foods
- Limit alcohol intake
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Don't smoke
- Exercise regularly
- Monitor bathroom habits for any changes

References

- Mandel JS, Bond JH, Church TR, Snover DC, Bradley GM, Schuman LM, Ederer F. Reducing mortality from colorectal cancer by screening for fecal occult blood. Minnesota Colon Cancer Control Study. *N Engl J Med.* 1993;328(19):1365–1371.
- Holme O, Loberg M, Kalager M, Bretthauer M, Hernan MA, Aas E, Eide TJ, Skovlund E, Schneede J, Tveit KM, Hoff G. Effect of flexible sigmoidoscopy screening on colorectal cancer incidence and mortality: a randomized clinical trial. *JAMA.* 2014;312(6):606–615.

Soul Food: Good for the Soul?

By Daman De Leon, Health and Wellness Editor

March is National Nutrition Month, and “*Soul food*” is a phrase that commonly describes foods once enjoyed in the homelands of previously free Africans and adopted in the United States following Africans’ voyage to the U.S. on slave ships. Old and New World crops, European and Native American influences, and African traditions have all contributed to soul food cuisine. Following their integration into Western culture, African foods were significantly modified. Many adaptations made by necessity during slavery to traditional African foods decreased their nutritional value and compromised their inherently nutritious properties, starting relatively unhealthy dietary patterns.

Many of these unhealthy adaptations have persisted across generations and have helped contribute to the development of chronic diseases and decreased life spans in many African Americans, who currently suffer higher rates of some chronic diseases over Americans of other races.

It is helpful for physicians to understand the history of soul food and how it evolved over the years as it relates to chronic disease and health in African American populations.

About soul food

The phrase *soul food* is thought to have become prominent during the Black Power movement of the 1960s when the word soul was commonly used to describe Black culture.

Black-eyed peas, yams, and sweet potatoes are a few of the foods that commonly appear in soul food dishes. Enslaved Africans also brought over okra and the kola nut, which Western Africans often chewed as a source of caffeine for energy. The kola nut is also heralded as a primary driver in the soda pop industry and a key ingredient in the original cola formulation.

Many fruits and vegetables brought from Africa grew well in America, so enslaved Africans planted gardens to help sustain themselves and others in their community.

American modifications lead to decreases in nutritional properties

Enslaved Africans used knowledge from their heritage to create what we now call soul food, a cuisine enjoyed by many that is inextricable from the American South. For example, gumbo, a renowned dish in New Orleans, is usually thickened with okra and is a version of a Senegalese stew made in plantation kitchens by enslaved Africans. As previously mentioned, many of the tweaks to soul food made during slavery decreased the nutritional value of traditional African dishes and contributed to unhealthy dietary patterns.

Enslaved Africans used knowledge from their heritage to create what we now call soul food, a cuisine enjoyed by many that is inextricable from the American South.

Millet and sorghum, cereal grain plants rich in nutrition, were commonly found in early Senegal and Sudan. They were especially prized in areas where rice and wheat were difficult to grow. The typical African meal used millet and sorghum as a type of porridge in stews and sauces. Sorghum is naturally rich in B vitamins and is a good source of protein and nutrients needed for survival in hot African climates.

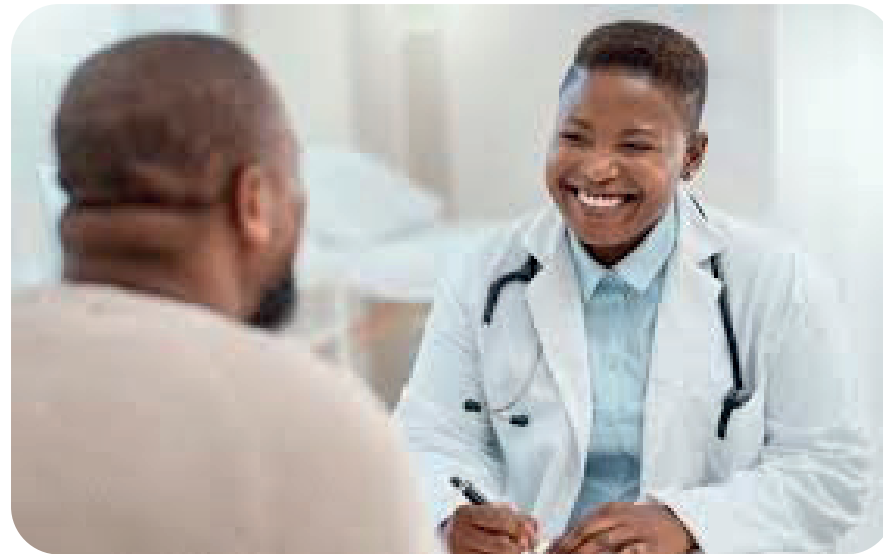
Millet and sorghum lack gluten, so the bread made from these grains is unleavened and flat. These “flatbreads” inspired the soul food classic: hot water cornbread. These breads were created to help scoop up food and replace utensils at meals. Enslavers usually forbid enslaved Africans from using utensils for cooking and eating due to fearing they could be used as weapons during a revolt.

While sorghum and corn grain have nutritional benefits, hot water cornbread is typically fried in a skillet with butter and salt. This modified practice reduces the bread’s nutritional value by adding large amounts of salt and fat that can contribute to chronic diseases like obesity and cardiovascular disease.

How traditional staples have evolved over time

The yam is a staple in African culture. Enslaved Africans were adept at preparing yams and sweet potatoes due to their physical similarities. While enslaved Africans no longer had access to the African yam, they were able to substitute sweet potatoes for yams in meals due to the physical and textural similarities between the two vegetables.

Yams can be prepared in multiple ways, and a standard method is pounding. A gelatinous consistency is produced when pounded yams are combined with water and spices. This creation is known as fufu.



By minimizing additives, this traditional African dish maintains the nutritional value of the yam. Fufu can be compared to another soul food classic: sweet potato casserole, usually prepared by beating sweet potatoes into a thick consistency. Sweet potatoes are naturally high in vitamins and fiber. They are also fat-free and contain fewer calories than white potatoes. However, the typical sweet potato casserole is prepared in a way that minimizes these benefits. Once the butter, sugar, and marshmallows are added, this dish no longer offers the same nutritional value inherent in the sweet potato or African yam.

The sweet potato casserole is another example of an adaptation made during slavery that increased the sugar content of a previously healthy dish. While these foods were modified for survival during slavery, they have contributed to the development of chronic disease and decreased life spans.

The effects of taking away the health benefits of staple foods

African Americans are more likely to be diagnosed with some chronic diseases, such as diabetes, than Americans of other races. An improved diet could reduce the negative effects of many of these diseases, specifically obesity and diabetes. Unfortunately, economically disadvantaged African Americans commonly eat meals containing high amounts of fat, salt, and carbohydrates.

These nutrient patterns align with cultural food preferences for soul food dishes that have been passed through generations via recipes and preparation techniques. In addition, financial constraints and food access issues limit many African Americans’ ability to purchase foods like fruits, vegetables, lean meat, and fish, which are usually more expensive than fatty, processed foods.

To change the future, we should understand and acknowledge the past. Knowledge is power, and good health should be attainable for all. The ingenuity of enslaved Africans helped them survive slavery, forcing them to alter the foods of their ancestors. Returning to traditional foods and preparation methods could improve health, attenuate chronic disease among people of color, and serve to celebrate African heritage. In addition, learning about the indigenous crops of Africa that contributed to Western culture may help us better appreciate the contributions of our ancestors and better understand American history.

Little Rock PHEN Prostate Cancer Disparity Rally Mobilizes Charlotte Community for Life-Saving Awareness

By Dianna Davis, Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church

Charlotte, NC – January 25, 2025 – The Prostate Health Education Network, Inc. (PHEN), a leading non-profit organization committed to eradicating prostate cancer disparities affecting Black men, successfully hosted the Charlotte Prostate Cancer Disparity Rally at Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church. The event brought together faith leaders, medical professionals, community advocates, and prostate cancer survivors to drive awareness and encourage early detection screenings.

A Call to Action for Early Detection

Bishop Darryl B. Starnes, Sr., Presiding Senior Bishop and Presiding Prelate of the Piedmont Episcopal District of The A.M.E. Zion Church, urged Black men to prioritize their health. “For lifesaving information about early detection screening, please visit PHENPSA.com,” he stated. “We want all our A.M.E. Zion Churches throughout the nation to be a part of this fight against prostate cancer.”

Event Highlights and Distinguished Speakers



The rally featured remarks from esteemed faith leaders and medical professionals, including:

- **Rev. Dr. Derrill A. Blue**, Pastor, Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church
- **Ms. Tomeeka Miller**, Special Assistant to the President, PHEN
- **Rev. Adrian Backus**, Director of Church Partnerships and Outreach, PHEN
- **Reverend Scot C. Moore**, Presiding Elder
- **Dr. Iyabode Beysolow, MD, MPH**, Director of Health Ministry

Educational Panels and Key Discussions

Dr. Keith Crawford, PHEN's Director of Clinical Trials and Patient



Education, moderated insightful panel discussions on:

- **Early Detection Screening** with prostate cancer survivors and healthcare professionals.
- **Understanding Treatment Options** featuring leading oncologists and urologists.
- **Clinical Trial Participation** to educate the community on research opportunities.
- **Prostate Cancer and Genetics** highlighting the role of family history in cancer risk.



Mobilizing the Charlotte Community

A panel discussion on community mobilization featured:

- **Mr. Tony Hill**, Director of Health Policy, PHEN, and prostate cancer survivor.
- **Mr. Mark Jerrell, MBA**, Chair of the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners.

A United Effort to End Prostate Cancer Disparities

The rally concluded with closing remarks and prayers from **Rev. Adrian Backus** and **Rev. Dr. Derrill A. Blue**, emphasizing the commitment of faith and health leaders in addressing prostate cancer disparities.

PHEN continues its mission through strategic partnerships with faith-based organizations, healthcare providers, and community leaders to drive impactful education and advocacy efforts.

For more information on prostate cancer awareness and early detection, visit **PHENPSA.com**.



Historic Collaboration between Men of Zion, Health Ministry of The A.M.E. Zion Church, and The Prostate Health Education Network

By Dr. Beysolow, Director of Health Ministry,
The A.M.E. Zion Church

Churches: Sign up for free access to resources from the Prostate Health Education Network <https://phen-church.org/amezion/>.

On January 25, 2025, in Charlotte, N.C., under the leadership of Bishop Darryl B. Starnes Sr., Presiding Bishop of the Piedmont Episcopal District of The A.M.E. Zion Church, and in the presence of Bishop Dwayne A. Walker (Alabama-Florida District) and Retired Bishop Michael A. Frencher Sr., a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by Presiding Elder Scot Moore, Director of Men of Zion of The A.M.E. Zion Church; Dr. Yabo Beysolow, Director of the Health Ministry of The A.M.E. Zion Church; and Reverend Adrian Backus, Director of Church Partnerships and Outreach for the Prostate Health Education Network (PHEN), a leading advocacy organization that focuses on patient education and initiatives nationwide regarding prostate health and prostate cancer.

The signing took place during PHEN's Charlotte Prostate Cancer Disparity Rally at the Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church in Charlotte, N.C., hosted by Reverend Dr. Derrill A. Blue, Pastor of Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church, along with its members. PHEN, established in 2003 by Thomas A. Farrington, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to eliminating prostate cancer disparities among Black men. The Disparity Rally featured a screening and an event aimed at informing men in the community about their prostate cancer risk, along with an awareness event that included prostate cancer survivors and prostate cancer treatment specialists.

What does this collaboration mean for The A.M.E. Zion Church?

Through this strategic partnership, A.M.E. Zion congregations and communities around the world can benefit from the education and awareness opportunities offered by PHEN. With a mission focused on addressing the racial disparity in prostate cancer, PHEN's programs and initiatives include patient education and awareness webcasts and webinars. It also has a unique partnership with Churches that provides screening and testing

opportunities and access to life-saving diagnosis and treatment options. PHEN will also engage in A.M.E. Zion Conferences and events throughout the U.S.

The mission of the Health Ministry of The A.M.E. Zion Church is to increase awareness about health conditions that impact our communities, increase health literacy and self-advocacy, and decrease health disparities. The mission of Men of Zion is to engage, equip, and empower all men to maximize their potential with an emphasis on health, wellness, and wholeness.

This collaboration marks a significant step toward ending prostate cancer in African American men. Prostate cancer is the most common cancer among men in the United States, excluding skin cancer.

African American men are more likely to develop prostate cancer compared to other men, are more than twice as likely to die from it, tend to be diagnosed at a younger age, and generally have more advanced disease when it is detected.

How can your church sign up to receive access to this vital information? <https://phenchurch.org/amezion/>. Share these valuable resources with your congregation and community!

Resources

· Learn more about prostate cancer: signs and symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment options in our first article in this series: "Prostate Health and Prostate Cancer – Get the Facts" at *Star of Zion*

· Learn more about PHEN and view all their educational resources at <https://www.prostatehealthed.org/page.php?id=99>

· Watch a video from Bishop Darryl B. Starnes encouraging all men to get tested and screened for prostate cancer: https://phentv.com/aiovg_videos/bishop-darryl-starnes-urges-black-men-to-seek-early-detection-to-put-an-end-to-the-prostate-cancer-racial-disparity/. Taking part in PHEN's Charlotte Prostate Cancer Disparity Rally, Bishop Darryl B. Starnes, Sr., the Presiding Senior Bishop and Presiding Prelate of the Piedmont Episcopal District of The A.M.E. Zion Church, recorded a video highlighting the importance of early prostate cancer detection.

· Watch a video of the Charlotte Prostate Cancer Disparity Rally at <https://phentv.com/prostate-cancer-education-for-african-american-men/community-rally/charlotte-nc/>



Hairston's Helping Hand Ministry



Ms. Angel Eason
Lifestyle Editor
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By The Star of Zion

Under Velveeta Hairston's leadership, the Hairston Funeral Home is intentionally investing in future generations in the Rowan-Salisbury community and Livingstone College. After a presentation by the funeral home and the Honors Program at the college's signature event, *Fridays at the Stone*, Hairston was led to invest in the Honors Program, stating, "We live by the gift of giving."

In addition to a monetary contribution of \$1,000, Hairston Funeral Home visited Livingstone to share its towel ministry with Presidential Scholars, who are international students. "We are grateful for Mrs. Hairston's generosity and her endeavors to share love and time with us," said Emmanuel Amponsah, a freshman from Ghana.

Hairston shared her experience



as a Livingstonian with scholars, and her staff members Sandra Corpening and Phillip Caldwell joined Hairston and scholars in prayer, led by international student Robert Osei of Ghana.

"The Presidential Scholars of Livingstone College appreciate being on the receiving end of alumna Velveeta Hairston's gifts. Her investment will support our leadership and mentoring efforts of access to internship opportunities through reflective coaching designed to help students with a record of academic achievement understand their talents and interests, choose a career goal, map pathways through education, and navigate challenges. Our students are talented, and alumni support in time, resources, and financial contributions are always welcomed," said Honors Director Dr. Da'Tarvia Parrish.

For years, Hairston Funeral Home has invested in the community with scholarships for high school seniors in Salisbury to attend college, sanitation, support to elderly care facilities and patients, and many other ways of asking from community members. The late Tommy Howard Hairston, Sr., founder and visionary of Hairston Funeral Home, passed away in 2022, whereas Velveeta and committed staff continue to enhance and elevate the vision.

To learn more about Hairston Funeral Home, visit <https://www.hairstonfh.com/>

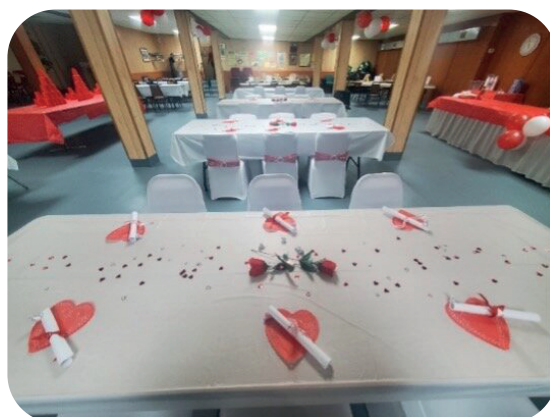


Night of Hearts

By Homewood A.M.E. Zion Church

Valentine's Day can be a difficult time. Watching couples holding hands, smiling at each other while having dinner as you sit alone. Some may remember loved ones who have gone on, not being able to show love to them until they meet again in heaven.

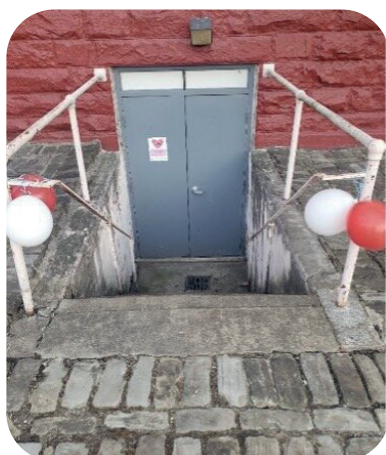
February 14, 2025,
here at Homewood A.M.E.



Zion Church, our "Night of Hearts" was an evening to uplift hearts, showing 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 in action. The atmosphere of beautiful décor and the smell of fried chicken welcomed guests as they came into the Fitch Fellowship Hall.

The initial smiles on their faces continued throughout the night. We played games, gave away prizes, listened to soft jazz music, and painted pictures to take home for remembrance of a new feeling for Valentine's Day.

God showed up and revealed Himself to be the soother of hearts. How do I know He was there? Proverbs 17:22 says, "A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones." No dry bones left Homewood A.M.E. Zion church that night.



Spring Cleaning: A Conversation with a Professional Home Organizer

By Angel Eason, Lifestyle Editor

It's March, which means two things are in full swing: Women's History Month and the season of spring cleaning. I had the opportunity to talk with Katherine, the CEO of Tidy Milso, about her journey, challenges, and the impact she's making as a professional organizer in the world of organization and entrepreneurship.

1. What inspired you to become a professional organizer?

I started the business in 2020, and my desire to help people organize started in 2017.

It was a few years after my husband and I graduated college, and he decided he was going to join the military. I didn't take it seriously until he came home and shared his date for basic training. As a big planner, I thought about how I could plan for this. I saw a blog that recommended all these things I should do: lose weight, pay off debt, declutter, and read a book. Being an overachiever, I did all those things.

I lost 40 lbs., and we ended up paying over 80k in debt. I gathered from the book *Live More, Want Less* the idea that we can take back control of our lives. After decluttering, before virtual organization was a thing, I talked to my husband on the phone, and we got rid of 20 bags of stuff. I remember sharing on Facebook, and people responded. Even at that time, I didn't see it as a business.

In 2020, I came across Marie Kondo. I watched her Netflix show not once, not twice, but three times. I was trying to get confirmation, "Is God trying to show me this because I am supposed to meet this woman and be doing this."

I found out she had a certification program. After we finished our debt-free journey, my gift to myself was her certification program, and I started the business that month.

It wasn't a straight and narrow path. With the pandemic happening, so many people were looking for professional organizers, which highlighted my desire to start a business.

2. As a Black woman in this industry, have you faced any unique challenges or experiences?

It's predominantly white women in the industry; they are at the top and making the money.

I never had those feelings of imposter syndrome. It was like my previous experience in property management. I did recognize earlier that many white women were getting more opportunities, including brand partnerships, and had a higher social media following.

As someone with a Communications background, as a society, when we see ads, and we see white women, we lock in a little longer. This is from seeing them from decades to decades in ads. I try my best when I see an ad, and it's a person of color to continue to watch it. Those metrics are what people are looking at to create opportunities for businesses.

With Black Lives Matter, it highlighted a lot of the Black professional organizers and those established. Six months into the business, I was getting articles and people were featuring my business.

My following is not a lot, but I recognize that my followers are true



followers. They engage in my content, spread my name to others, and attend my events. When I started my business, I had to differentiate myself from being hired help and being the CEO, the boss, that I am. Tidy Milso is my brand, my business.

Running a home-based service business can sometimes lead to misunderstandings, where I may be seen as hired help. However, ultimately, when someone hires me, it is to provide a professional service.

3. What's your best advice for someone overwhelmed by clutter but doesn't know where to start?

I always start with a mindset that is as glorious as social; it's an emotional and physical process. You go through your collection of items from 10 to 20 years. The best tip is to prepare your mindset and to make sure you're ready to take it on.

Think about what you want to declutter and set expectations. For example, if you want to declutter your closet, the expectation is that you will get through it all in one weekend. This is unrealistic. Make the larger task more manageable, like tackling a section of your closet.

4. Are there any underrated or surprising organizing hacks you swear by?

As a millennial, I can relate to the trend of holding onto iPhone boxes. I recommend my clients keep their boxes until we've finished organizing. Certain boxes, like the sleek white iPhone box, can be repurposed and add an aesthetically pleasing touch.

5. Why do you think spring cleaning is such an important ritual?

January is "Get Organized Month," but many set intentions in March, naturally gravitating toward spring cleaning and decluttering. As nature blossoms and renews in spring, it's the perfect time to reset your home and take inventory of what to keep and what to let go of.

6. What's one organizing habit every woman should adopt this year?

I always say the bedroom is the mind of the home. I encourage people to create a system for their bedside table and make it as clutter-free as possible. By having a tidy space, you have a tidy mind.

"Starting and ending the day with a clear mind."

7. What has been the most rewarding part of running your business?

By far, my clients! When they achieve success and mention my role, it feels incredibly rewarding. Hearing that I made a positive impact on their lives is truly heartwarming.

8. What's next for you? Do you have any upcoming projects or goals?

Being a published author. The Room for Romance event series.

9. How can we connect with you?

On all socials @tidymilso and my website, tidymilso.com.

I hope this conversation with Katherine, a Professional Organizer, inspires you to start your spring cleaning, just as it inspired me!





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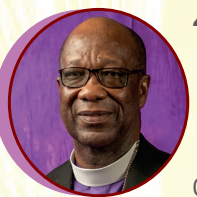
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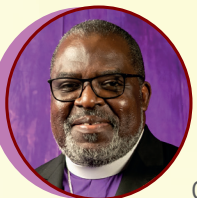
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The Department of Education: There Should be No Debate



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

By Dana G. Stilley, Financial Freedom Editor

With every day comes news regarding a shift in our political landscape that may affect our quest for financial freedom. Most recently, we have heard about the gutting of the Department of Education (DOE), and many are asking about the impact on them and/or my family.

Our president, Mr. Trump, is of the belief that the funding for the DOE is too high and that the department is “indoctrinating young people with inappropriate racial, sexual, and political material.” It is his desire to push funding currently associated with the DOE down to the state level. As conversations about this initiative continue to bombard the media, it appears that many are not fully aware of what the DOE does and how it affects K-12 schools.



First, let’s examine what the DOE does. Essentially, the agency has a budget of nearly \$80 billion, which pays for a variety of education grant programs, including the two largest for K-12 schools, Title I and IDEA. Title I (\$18.4 billion) addresses high populations of low-income students. Title I funds support the education of more than 26 million children in roughly 60% of public schools. IDEA (\$14.2 billion) helps schools pay for special education services for students with disabilities. IDEA lays out the requirements schools need to follow in providing special education. In the 2022 – 23 school year, 7.5 million students received services under the IDEA. During emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal Education Department provided Congress-approved supplemental funding for schools. Another major responsibility of the DOE is to identify, investigate, and resolve school violations of civil rights laws.

The finances provided by the DOE provide much-needed support to millions of students along the education pathway, from toddlers and pre-K to those seeking higher education. Without access to those dollars, low-income students are at risk of losing teachers, counselors, mental health programs, and family resource engagement programs, not to mention the loss of curricular materials. Regarding higher education, the elimination of federal funds will surely be chaotic for institutions, decrease access to a college education, ultimately widen the college access gap, and exacerbate the existing inequities in degree attainment, career readiness, employability, health and wellness, and the attainment of financial freedom.

First, the dismantling of the Department of Education could result in approximately 4,000 people losing their jobs. A disruption to employment impacts income but may also affect one mental and physical health. Losing one’s job may also result in insurance coverage loss. All of these factors have negative effects on the attainment of financial freedom.



Moreover, being educated significantly impacts career prospects. More education leads to increased job opportunities, greater earning potential, and improved job security. Without a DOE available to provide necessary support to millions of children, far less children will be academically successful and experience the significant financial return that accompanies higher education.



For me, there is really no debate about the merits of the Department of Education. The long-term ramifications of dismantling the DOE have the potential to be staggering and cause severe harm to this country and to many, many communities. Let’s do what we can to ensure that it remains.

Ms. Nora Katherine Mcneill

By Reverend Kenneth Lamont Swann, M.Div., MACL Secretary

MS. NORA KATHERINE McNEILL transitioned from Earth to Glory on Friday, February 7, 2025. She served as the Director of Christian Education of the Central North Carolina Conference, The A.M.E. Zion Church.

Funeral arrangements are posted in a jpeg file. If it is not visible, please visit the funeral home website for complete information.

Christian Educators attending the funeral are requested to wear navy



blue and the CED ACE Stoles.

Cards and condolences may be sent to the family home: 56 Delaney Court, Dunn, NC 28334

Condolences and letters of sympathy may be sent to the conference email address: centralnconference@gmail.com

Online condolences and expressions may be sent to the funeral home: <https://www.daffordfuneralhome.com>

"When we all get to heaven, what a day of rejoicing that will be, when we all see Jesus, we will sing and shout victory."

The Personnel Committee of the WOMEN'S HOME AND OVERSEAS MISSIONARY SOCIETY

declares that the following positions will be open as of the 31st Quadrennial Convention July 2027.

OPEN POSTIONS

- International President *
- First Vice President
- Second Vice President
- Recording Secretary
- Treasurer *
- Coordinator Young Adult Missionary Society
- Secretary Youth Missionary Society *
- Superintendent Buds of Promise Juvenile Missionary Society
- Secretary Bureau of Supply *
- Chairman Life Members Council
- Director of Communications

Any person aspiring for office must follow the procedure below:

- Must submit a letter of intent and vitae
- Must submit three letters of reference: from the Episcopal leaders, from the Presiding Elder, and from the Pastor
- Incumbents for the same office must submit a letter of intent to the Office of the Executive Director.

Please note that the office of Treasurer must have all required documents to the Office of the Executive Director no later than July 15, 2026.

The candidate must meet with the WH&OMS Personnel Committee at the site of the July 2026 Connectional Council for an interview and certification.

The office of Treasurer has additional, specific requirements which must be met before being accepted as a candidate and being allowed to campaign.

Candidates for all offices are expected to be thoroughly versed on the description for the office as found in the 2024 WH&OMS Society Constitution and By-Laws.

* Indicates that as of July 2027, the current incumbent will have served two terms and will be retired from this office.



**All required documents must be sent to the Office of the Executive Director:
Mrs. Rosetta J. Dunham,
P.O. Box
26846, Charlotte, NC 28221-6846
by January 1, 2027, the filing deadline.**

**Ms. Melva Wright, Chairman
Personnel Committee
Mrs. Sandra Crowder
International President**

Zion's Rosa

The Grand Lady - Rosa A. Lott

1903-1952

By Carolyn M. Jacobs

Miss Rosa A. Lott was born on August 26, 1903, in Citronelle, AL. Miss Lott was a member and musician for Nazarene A. M. E. Zion Church in Citronelle. She received her early education in Citronelle, completing the seventh grade at Citronelle Colored School, which was located next to Nazarene A. M. E. Zion Church. Nazarene donated the land for the school. There was no institution for higher learning for black students after they completed seventh grade in Citronelle and surrounding communities. Only a select few local black students were able to receive a high school education whose parents were financially able to send them to school in Mobile, AL, boarding schools in the state or to live with relatives in cities outside the state of Alabama.



After completing seventh grade at Citronelle Colored School, Miss Lott attended Tuskegee Institute High School to attain her high school training. Upon completing her education, she returned to Citronelle and was hired as a teacher at Citronelle Colored School. She later became principal of the school. It was at this time that Miss Lott became dedicated to establishing a high school for black youths in Citronelle and north Mobile County. After countless meetings with the Mobile County School Board, the board reluctantly added grades eight and nine to the curriculum of Citronelle Colored School. This feat was indeed an accomplishment for the Citronelle Community. After this initial victory, Miss Lott became more determined than ever to ensure that the black youths of the community would be afforded the advantage of attending a full four-year high school education in their own community. Miss Lott became a "committee of one" to champion the cause of a high school being built in the community for black students.

Because of Miss Lott's tenacious courage and persistent determination, she was always available to attend numerous conferences with the superintendent and school board members of Mobile County about the feasibility of a Black high school in the Citronelle Community. These conferences were always held in Mobile, which presented a problem for Miss Lott since she did not own a car, nor could she drive one. She had to depend on public transportation or the kindness of friends who, on rare occasions, would drive her to the meetings in Mobile. Finally, a few of the citizens of Citronelle felt Miss Lott was making progress in her quest for a high school for Black students, and both black and white citizens lent their support.

The board finally agreed to construct a school if an acceptable land site of numerous acres could be obtained. Miss Lott plunged into the land search. She was extremely confident that a suitable site could be found in the Citronelle area. However, because of some legal

problems and many petty prejudices, no land seemed to be available. The school board decided to move the site to another location if it was in Northern Mobile County. Thus, Mt. Vernon, AL, was being considered. Miss Lott, along with black and white citizens of Citronelle, were crushed. At this point, Mr. B. L. Onderdonk, a prominent White citizen of Citronelle, came to Ms. Lott's rescue and decided to help in securing an acceptable parcel of land. Mr. Onderdonk was instrumental in persuading Mr. Zack Fischer, a local Black businessman and building contractor, to sell to the school board the number of acres of land it required. Mr. Fischer readily agreed. In September 1949, Citronelle Consolidated School—Grades 1-12, opened its doors to the Black children of the following communities: Citronelle, Cedar Creek, Walker, Vineland, Chunchula, Mauvilla, Gulfcrest and Kushla. Only High school students came from Mt. Vernon, Mavico, and Chestang. Because of her love for and commitment to young people, Miss Lott saw the need for a high school for black students.



Therefore, it was largely through her untiring effort that the Citronelle Consolidated School was built. She served as principal until her death in 1952. In 1958, the school was renamed Rosa A. Lott High School in honor of Miss Lott. In 1969, due to the integration of Mobile County Public School, Rosa A. Lott High School became Rosa A. Lott Elementary School, serving grades one through five. Today, Rosa A. Lott School serves as a middle school for grades six through eight. The Rosa A. Lott Historic Preservation Society was founded by Mrs. Roslyn Carter and other concerned citizens to keep the legacy of Miss Lott alive and active. Each year, the organization celebrates the legacy of Miss Lott with a Green and White Gala, worship service at Nazarene A. M. E. Zion Church, and other activities.

The Rosa A. Lott House was dedicated on October 15, 2022. On September 6, 2024, the society hosted a ribbon-cutting for several road signs in the Citronelle Community commemorating Miss Lott's life and legacy.

Four signs were erected, each one containing a word that related to Miss Lott's character: hero, educator, pioneer, and humanitarian. The signs are located at Nazarene A. M. E. Zion Church, Main Street, the Lott House, and the intersection of Lebaron Avenue and US Highway 45. A historical marker is located at the sight of the present-day Rosa A. Lott Middle School. Miss Lott allowed God to order her steps so she could fulfill the vision God gave her of higher education for Black youth in the community. She committed her work to the Lord, and He made a way.





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

Reclaiming Economic Agency Part 2



By Rev. Ronald A. Nathan, World Politics Editor
Photos By © Ribao Technology, © Alamy

All over the world, pre-existing cultural bonds of shared geography, shared history, or shared social proximity have been used by ethnic, racial, and cultural groups to leverage economic gain and social mobility. Yet, when such ideas are articulated by people of African descent, especially in the context of confronting racism and redressing historical wrongs, resistance often emerges.

Critics may accuse such efforts of fostering “reverse racism.” As people of colour, we are made to feel defensive or uneasy about supporting one another economically due to the deep mistrust that has been cultivated in our communities over past centuries.

In her groundbreaking work, *Post-Traumatic Slave Syndrome*, Dr. Joy DeGruy examines how the psychological scars of slavery continue to affect individuals within the African Diaspora. The trauma of enslavement has led to a pervasive mistrust, not only between Africans and African descendants but also within our communities.



Moreover, alongside this internalised mistrust is the lingering belief in what Rudyard Kipling once termed “The White Man’s Burden”—the misguided idea that white people have to manage the affairs of non-white populations, whom they perceive as less developed. This ideology has permeated society for generations and continues to influence attitudes toward economic solutions for people of African descent. Dr. Claud Anderson, a prominent African-American economist and thought leader, has observed that “nobody wants to propose Black solutions for Black prob-

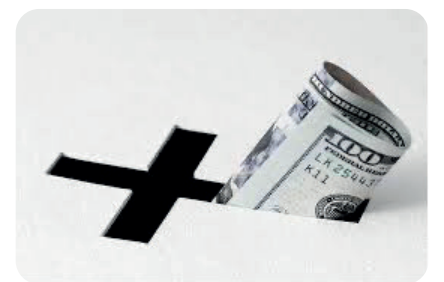
lems.” He argues that society tends to recommend broad, generalised solutions for all minority groups, even when the issues are specific to Black communities—whether in the West or in Africa.

Dr. Anderson’s analysis extends to how racism operates in economic terms: “The sole purpose of racism,” he asserts, “is to maintain and ensure that the white majority, along with its ethnic subgroups, continues to dominate and use Black people as a means to produce wealth and power.” This harsh reality underscores the importance of rebuilding our communities from within and transforming our everyday social networks into vehicles for empowerment.

What does this look like in practice? It means taking deliberate steps to foster trust within our communities—trust in each other, trust in our businesses, and trust in the economic systems we create. This trust must go beyond interpersonal relationships and extend to the ways we organize and monetize our collective efforts. By doing so, we can turn our shared experiences, cultural heritage, and histories into tools for economic upliftment, ensuring that our networks are used not only for survival but for thriving in an increasingly competitive global economy.

Building cooperative economic systems isn’t just a theoretical exercise; it’s a critical necessity for our collective future. It’s about more than just “buying Black” or supporting local businesses—it’s about creating a sustainable, self-sufficient ecosystem that reinforces the idea that when one of us succeeds, we all succeed. Just as other communities have used their cultural bonds to foster wealth and social mobility, so too can we harness the power of our shared identity to reshape our economic destiny.

To truly uplift ourselves and future generations, we must dismantle the barriers of distrust, move beyond the fear of “reverse racism,” and invest in our economic solutions. It is time to reclaim our economic agency and empower ourselves through cooperative economics, grounded in group solidarity and a deep belief in our collective potential. The institution of the Black Church, regardless of its theological, historical, or denominational diversity, plays a crucial role in reclaiming e



ZISAM! We Shine On!



By Phoebe Akotey

Zion Students and Associates Ministry (ZISAM) is the students' ministry in the Western West Africa Episcopal District that seeks to foster unity and fellowship among Zionites in different educational institutions. ZISAM became necessary as the church was losing its youth and young adults to other denominations on various tertiary campuses. The formation of the ministry has aided in the retention of Zion students in their mother churches. The ministry also serves as a platform to harness and groom leaders and unite people of different conferences,

was the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Students Association, which sprang up in the University of Education, Winneba, the University of Cape Coast, and Ho Polytechnic, now Ho Technical University.

Under the leadership of Bishop Dogbe, these unions were harmonized and renamed to Zion Students and Associates Ministry (ZISAM), with guidelines stated in the church's Evangelism Policy. In addition, the Evangelism Director, Rev. Dr. Christian Ahortor, Rev. Justice Aggrey,



ethnicities, and backgrounds.

ZISAM has undergone significant changes in name and structure over the years. The Varick Students Union, now defunct, was the first student union by A.M.E Zion tertiary students. It comprised students who were members of the Varick Cathedral in Cape Coast. Later, there



ZISAM coordinator, and the Deputy coordinator, Rev. Bannister Tay, along with other ministers and patrons, have steered the affairs of ZISAM on various campuses. Subsequently, putting in more structure and support to grow the ministry.

ZISAM is now present in six leading tertiary institutions, namely the University of Education, Winneba and Ajumako campus; the University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast; Ho Technical University, Ho; the



Takoradi Technical University, Takoradi; the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi; and the University of Ghana, Accra. It is worth noting that all ZISAM chapters were founded by Zion students on the various campuses.

ZISAM is also active in some senior high schools. The ministry is to be established in all tertiary institutions (universities, technical universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, etc.) in countries of the Episcopal district. Associate members of ZISAM include lecturers, administrators, and tutors.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS ARE NOT MULTIPLE-CHOICE

By Rev. Charlene Gomez

Dear Readers,

How lovely it is to turn on our televisions, enjoy social media, and bask in the musical diversity of our choice. We passionately cheer for our favorite sports and attend restaurants, parks, and theaters freely, celebrating the diversity of our national melting pot. Because of the current political ball of confusion, many are volatile, silently suffering from political anxiety disorder from witnessing the current events of our nation.



How dare one be brave enough to stand and guard against the subliminal messages that are swiftly unveiling a vibrant display of immense racism in our nation that leaves all concerned filled with uncertainty. I beseech you to be mindful and guard your Christian virtue against a heart of division that has plagued our nation in the past. Our current political system is in turmoil. Violent protests, delusional political injustices, and multiple leaders with federal indictments. Please, America, let's exercise unified strength. Listen to the sounds of the

brokenhearted as we respond and advocate for. Social injustice.

After World War II, Niemöller openly spoke about his own early complicity in Nazism and his eventual change of heart. His powerful words about guilt and responsibility still resonate today.



First, they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me. —Martin Niemöller

The Ten Commandments are not Multiple Choice.
Breaking News America, It's Time to Pray!!!!
I ain't going to let nobody turn me around; I will be a respecer of all persons and make Heaven crowded.

Love Generously,





BISHOP DARRYL B. STARNES SR.
BOARD CHAIR
CHURCH GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

THE CHURCH GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT QUADRENNIAL CONGRESS

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FROM SURVIVING TO THRIVING
ACTS 2:42 - 47



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