



The Lay Communiqué

Magazine of The 11th Episcopal District Lay Organization
African Methodist Episcopal Church
Digital / Web Edition



The 15th Edition of the Web AMEC Lay Magazine † 2nd/3rd Qtr. Issue † March 2024 ~ August 2024

Online Content updates are continuous ~ Please send your events & other AME flyers for publication!



"PARK VIEWS FROM BETWEEN THE ROSENS" (AJSG) ~ ORLANDO, FL | 2024 LAY CONVENTION AREA

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Eleventh Episcopal District Lay Organization President: Ms. Patricia H. Wright † West Coast Conference
EED Lay Organization Director of Public Relations: Ms. Robbyn M. Hopewell † West Coast Conference
Digital Communiqué Magazine design/maintenance by AJSG ~ EEDLO Web Servant † East Conference

AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

ELEVENTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT ANNUAL CONFERENCE



“IT’S A NEW SEASON”

*I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth; do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”
- Isaiah 43:19*

September 11 - September 13

159th Session of the Florida Conference

St. James AME Church - Quincy, FL
The Rev. Jessica Muse Ford, Host Pastor
The Rev. Dr. Tan C. Moss, Host Presiding Elder

September 25 - September 27

125th Session of the Central Annual Conference

Allen Chapel AME Church - Daytona Beach, FL
The Rev. Eddie Lake, Host Pastor
The Rev. Dr. Lorenzo Laws, Host Presiding Elder

October 9 - October 11

134th Session of the South Annual Conference

Mt. Olive AME Church - Ft. Myers, FL
The Rev. James C. Givens, Host Pastor
The Rev. Henry E. Green, Jr., Host Presiding Elder

October 16 - October 18

84th Session of the West Coast Annual Conference

New Bethel AME Church - Lakeland, Florida
The Rev. Dr. Nathan Mugala, Host Pastor
The Rev. Jimmy J. Thompson, Host Presiding Elder

October 30 - November 1

149th Session of the East Annual Conference

St. Paul AME Church - St. Augustine, FL
The Rev. Dr. Alesia Ford Burse, Host Pastor
The Rev. Karl V. Smith, Host Presiding Elder

November 7 - November 8

84th Session of the Bahamas Annual Conference

Robinson-Morris Chapel AME Church - Nassau, Bahamas
The Rev. Howard F. Williamson, Host Pastor
The Rev. Dr. Ranford Patterson, Host Presiding Elder



African Methodist Episcopal Church
Eleventh Episcopal District
WEST COAST CONFERENCE
WOMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY
Annual Conference Convention Day

New Bethel AME Church
2122 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave – Lakeland, FL 33805

~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~

Join Us for A Joyous Celebration of Extraordinary Mission Work!
November 12, 2024

The Schedule

Worship Experience - 9:45am

Business Session -10am

VIP Luncheon – Noon

Night In White – 6pm

Rev. Jacquelyn Bogen

Preacher



Rt. Rev. Marvin C. Zanders, II

Presiding Prelate

Mrs. Winifred Houston Zanders

Episcopal Supervisor

Mrs. Laurastine D. Lemon

Episcopal President

Mrs. Valarie Russ, Conference President

Rev. J. J. Thompson, Host Presiding Elder

Mrs. Kathryn Thompson, Host Consultant

Ms. Jeanette Daniels, Host Area Chair

Rev. Nathan Mugala, Host Pastor

Mrs. Brenda Mugala, Host Advisor

Mrs. D. Jean Johnson

Host Local President



11th District LAY ORGANIZATION

Executive Board Meeting

JAN. 3-4, 2025

HILTON HOTEL

PALM BEACH PBI



John Love, President



Rhoshonda Herring, DOLA



Dante Buckson, YAR

Strong in Unity and Love
1 Timothy 6:11-12

Rev. George Hardy

Coordinator, 11th District Sons of Allen

Friday Evening Preacher

*Engaging Men in
Worship and Service*



Rev. Dr. Robert Jackson

Pastor, St. Paul AMEC, Miami

Saturday Workshop Presenter

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TCR BREAKING NEWS



Breaking News: Episcopal Assignments for 2024-2028

Editor's Note: Due to a computer connection issue, an draft of the email was sent out sent out. When we were notified of the error, we attempted to correct it, but the connection cut out in the middle of our edits. Please accept our sincerest apologies.

Bishop Assignment Retirement Year

Bishop Wilfred J. Messiah 19th Episcopal District 2028

Bishop Paul J. M. Kawimbe 14th Episcopal District 2036

Bishop James L. Davis 7th Episcopal District 2028

Bishop David R. Daniels, Jr. Ecumenical Officer and Endorsing Agent 2032

Bishop Samuel L. Green, Sr. 1st Episcopal District 2036

Bishop Jeffery N. Leath, Sr. 16th Episcopal District 2032

Bishop Reginald T. Jackson 2nd Episcopal District 2028

Bishop Harry L. Seawright 13th Episcopal District 2032

Bishop Michael L. Mitchell 6th Episcopal District 2036

Bishop Ronnie E. Brailsford 10th Episcopal District 2032

Bishop Stafford J. N. Wicker 3rd Episcopal District 2036

Bishop Silvester S. Beaman 12th Episcopal District 2036

Bishop Marvin C. Zanders II 11th Episcopal District 2040

Bishop Francine A. Brookins 5th Episcopal District 2048

Bishop Frederick A. Wright 4th Episcopal District 2032

Bishop Erika D. Crawford 8th Episcopal District 2048

Bishop Julius H. McAllister, Jr. 9th Episcopal District 2044

Bishop Vernon R. Byrd, Jr. 17th Episcopal District 2032

Bishop Henry A. Belin III 15th Episcopal District 2040

Bishop Jeffrey B. Cooper II 18th Episcopal District 2032

Bishop Gregory V. Eason 20th Episcopal District 2036

Bishop E. Earl McCloud, Jr. Located 2028

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The Christian Recorder is the official newspaper of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the oldest continuously produced publication by persons of African descent.

Bishop David R. Daniels, Jr., Chair of the General Board Commission on Publications

Rev. Dr. Roderick D. Belin, President/Publisher of the AME Sunday School Union

Dr. John Thomas III, Editor of *The Christian Recorder*

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The Lay Communiqué

The Eleventh Episcopal District Lay Organization Convention Newsletter



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Opening Worship
Executive Board Meeting
First Timers Workshop

EEDLO OFFICERS

Bishop Frank Madison Reid III, Presiding Prelate
Mrs. Marlaa Hall Reid, Episcopal Supervisor
Patricia H. Wright, President
Teresa White, Director of Lay Activities
Ashley Blakely, Young Adult Representative
Robbyn Hopewell, Director of Public Relations
Reginald Hardee, Central Conference President

‘Floor-shaking’ worship opens EEDLO convention

An air of celebration filled the room. The choir sang. The floor shook. All this ushered in the 80th Annual Convention of the Eleventh Episcopal District Lay Organization. On Tuesday night, delegates and guests gathered at the Opening Worship Service under the theme “8 Years of Grace: Navigating the Course Ahead.”

This marks Eleventh Episcopal District President and Connectional Lay Organization Director of Lay Activities Patricia Wright’s swan song as Episcopal President. She drew praise for her innovative leadership from Eleventh Episcopal District Presiding Prelate Bishop Frank Madison Reid, III.

Worship continues on reverse

Worship Continued

Setting the tone was a choir made up of members of the Central Annual Conference. "I Made it Out," "Jesus Is Mine, and "There Is No Other Way" inspired handclapping and singing along.

This paved the way for Bishop Reid to present the preached word. He charted his course from Mark 4:35-41. It tells the story of Jesus calming a storm on the Sea of Galilee. Bishop Reid talked about how navigation is necessary to "close out and cross over to the other side."

Bishop Reid took the navigation theme a bit further in talking about the voting strength of the Eleventh Episcopal District, especially when it comes to the upcoming General Conference in Columbus, Ohio. "Navigation demands that we be connected." He said, "If we are one in the spirit when we go to Columbus, we will elect two Bishops."

Bishop asked: "Do you care about your true self? When you care about God and care about others, then God makes you an unstoppable team." He then encouraged the congregation to read the book "Unstoppable Teams" by Alden Mills. It tells how to put together teams that can accomplish any objective.



FOR MORE PHOTOS & VIDEOS



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ORGANIZATION

THE LAY COMMUNIQUE STAFF

Robbyn Hopewell, EEDLO Director of Public Relations

Shrin Bryant, South Conference Central District Recording Secretary

LaTanya Cherry-Ginetta, Central Conference Director of Lay Activities

Joyce C. Pink, West Coast Conference Historiographer

Henry Love, Quincy/Monticello District Lay Organization President

Six first time attendees join the 'FamiLay' at opening workshop

Eleventh Episcopal District Lay Organization Director of Public Relations Robbyn Hopewell gathered with six first time attendees representing the Central, West Coast and Florida conferences in Salons 13 and 14 for the annual First-Timers Workshop. Attendees asked questions about the upcoming officers elections and got tips about lunches out, important reports and the voting process as well as a detailed explanation of the agenda of activities from June 18-21 at the Rosen Plaza Hotel in Orlando, Florida. The new cohort was excited about the week of fellowship to come.



Executive Board meets to discuss election, anvil award and general conference information

Connection Lay Organization Director of Lay Activities and Eleventh Episcopal District Lay Organization President Patricia H. Wright called the EEDLO executive board to order at 2:16 p.m. on Tuesday, June 18 to illuminate the upcoming election process and other important information the would come before the full organization body during the 80th Annual EEDLO convention. Following robust discussion, the board voted to proceed with the recommended election process. The group also voted to allow the scholarship and awards committee to review and update the anvil award criteria.

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Lay Benevolence Service

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Ashley Blakely, Young Adult Representative
Robbyn Hopewell, Director of Public Relations
Reginald Hardee, Central Conference President

Three candidates vie for first vice president role

Wednesday's forum for the First Vice President position of the Eleventh Episcopal District Lay Organization was charged with energy and anticipation. Three dynamic candidates—EEDLO Young Adult Representative Ashley Blakely, East Conference Lay Organization President Nicholas Causey, and EEDLO Second Vice President Lothar Cherry—each delivered compelling presentations and outlined their vibrant visions for the future.

Blakely kicked off the session with enthusiasm, emphasizing action and readiness. She passionately detailed her plans to boost membership and engage new groups, drawing from her 20-plus years of experience in teaching, mentorship, and fellowship.

Candidates continues on next page



EEDLO President Patricia H. Wright celebrates 8 years of grace in final report

When the slick blue booklets came out for distribution, convention attendees snapped them up like gold. It was another highly-produced, beautifully-appointed reminder of the eight years of excellence we've come to expect from Connectional Lay Organization Director of Lay Activities and outgoing Eleventh Episcopal District Lay Organization President Patricia H. Wright.

Wearing a boat captain's hat, President Wright detailed her term as the organization's eighth leader with a retrospective view of triumph for her final President's Message at the 80th Annual EEDLO Convention. A pandemic, which could have halted so many ministries, only served to catalyze and strengthen the EEDLO to stronger attendance and adoption of technology.

In addition to continuing the ministry virtually, President Wright also led a return to in-person meetings when the EEDLO hosted the Connectional Lay Organization Biennial in Orlando on the heels of the 2021 General Conference. Much of her work introduced the talent and training of the 11th Episcopal District to the world.

"For eight years, we have been charged, challenged and championed. We have been inspired, inspected and ignited. It has been my privilege, my honor, to be your president for eight years," President Wright said. "You have grown me. And certainly we hope that because our lives have intersected, you too have grown and been impacted in a meaningful way."

Candidates continued

Causey followed with a powerful recount of his lifelong dedication to service. From his days as a Marine to his extensive roles within the church, Causey's story is one of relentless commitment. His vision fosters collaboration and ethical leadership and combines with his rich experience.

Cherry concluded with highlighting her deep understanding of the organization as she spoke passionately about the importance of preparation and training. Her 36 years of educational experience added weight to her vision of moving forward together.

President Wright reminded everyone that the candidates strive to serve, not run against each other. "Because two people won't get the amount of votes to make them first vice president does not diminish their skills," she emphasized, highlighting the importance of unity. The EEDLO's future looks bright, driven by a collective commitment to growth and excellence.

Finance team presents budget for 2024-2028 term

Eleventh Episcopal District Lay Organization Treasurer Sharon Causey presented an operational budget for the 2024-2028 administrative years that anticipated significant growth. During Wednesday morning's business session of the 80th Annual EEDLO Convention, Presiding Officer EEDLO First Vice President John Love opened the floor for questions following Causey's thorough reading of the document formulated by the Committee on Stewardship and Finance.

EEDLO Second Vice President Lothar Cherry inquired about the \$2,000 allocated toward benevolence annually and if the organization had historically exceeded that amount. Causey explained that it depended on the year, but the record recently suggests no need to increase the allocated amount.

Causey's motion for the approval of the budget passed unanimously when the Chair Love called for the question.

Moving forward, the next administration is expected to increase revenues at the annual convention and retreat by \$5,000 and \$2,500, respectively. In turn, an additional \$10,000 a year will be allotted to the fees associated with the annual convention, specifically the event's planning.

FOR MORE PHOTOS & VIDEOS



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ORGANIZATION



Rev. Dr. Julius McAllister Jr. greets the EEDLO ahead of General Conference

In a riveting address, Rev. Dr. Julius H. McAllister Jr. electrified the Eleventh Episcopal District Lay Organization with his vision for leadership within the African Methodist Episcopal Church as a candidate for Bishop at the upcoming General Conference.

Speaking to an energized audience, the pastor of Bethel A.M.E. Church in Tallahassee outlined the essence of true leadership. "Leadership is about having a prophetic vision for the future and turning theory into action," he declared. His words met with applause. Rejecting self-centered leadership, he emphasized that genuine leaders are driven by a burning passion to make a difference.

Rev. McAllister championed investing in people over buildings, spotlighting his efforts in outreach, affordable housing, and addiction recovery in the Tallahassee area. "Leadership means making a prophetic investment in people," he asserted, drawing cheers of agreement.

"Together, we can climb any hill and coast down to a brighter future," he concluded.

THE LAY COMMUNIQUE STAFF

Robbyn Hopewell, EEDLO Director of Public Relations
Shrin Bryant, South Conference Central District Recording Secretary
LaTonya Cherry-Ginetta, Central Conference Director of Lay Activities
Joyce C. Pink, West Coast Conference Historiographer
Henry Love, Quincy/Monticello District Lay Organization President

Health walk kicks off ministry of movement

While the early bird gets the worm, the early riser gets the exercise. At 5:45 a.m. walkers met in the lobby to stretch and prepare to hit the road. The sessions, which meet each morning of the convention, often turn into laps and laughter. So it has been with convention-goers since the leadership of Eleventh Episcopal District Lay Organization President Marian Bacon White.

"We came to one of the conferences, I think it was in Jacksonville, and I said, 'Madam President, we need to make sure we come to convention fit. Our bodies, our minds, everything.' " says Connie E. Jenkins-Pye of the Florida Conference. The women talked about health topics and "decided that they needed to get delegates up and moving," said Jenkins-Pye, the chair of the Health Committee who walks 5 miles a day. She says that everyone needs an exercise routine. "Just 30 minutes a day of some type of movement helps."



Lisa Thomas of the West Coast Conference made her first trek with the group on Wednesday. "They did it in the Bahamas, but I never got up early enough, so I made every effort to do this because I'm in a regular routine at home to walk three days a week. Since I'm at the convention this week, I wanted to do my three days." Thomas says she walks 3-and-a-half to 5 miles a day. "Walking with the group this morning, I was appreciative of the fellowship. That was a plus."

Lay Benevolence Service brings praise



In a night brimming with spiritual energy, Rev. Helen Johnson-Ford, the Pastor of New Bethel A.M.E. Church in Altamonte Springs, delivered an inspiring sermon at the Lay Benevolence Service centered on the theme "Ministry of Love." Rev. Johnson-Ford's message, anchored in Isaiah 61, radiated hope and assurance.

She spoke passionately about God's promise of "double for your trouble," reminding the congregation that despite life's trials, God's grace is abundantly rewarding.

Her recounting of the Lay Organization's history, marked by unwavering resilience and determination, served as a powerful reminder of the strength found in faith.

The service featured a moving Scripture reading from Colossians 1:3-14, emphasizing themes of steadfast faith, deep love, and continuous spiritual growth. The praise team's electrifying worship further ignited the congregation's spirit, turning the gathering into a joyous celebration of divine goodness.

Rev. Johnson-Ford's sermon was deeply moving, touching the hearts of all present. Her powerful words of encouragement and faith resonated with the congregation, inspiring them to reflect on their own spiritual journeys and the significance of love and service in their lives.

The night concluded on a high note, leaving the congregation with a renewed sense of community and spiritual rejuvenation. The service underscored the transformative power of love and service, reminding everyone of the profound impact of unwavering faith and the enduring promise of God's blessings.

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The Eleventh Episcopal District Lay Organization Convention Newsletter



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Banquet honors stalwart laity and stellar students

It was a night of surprises and honors as the the 80th Annual Eleventh Episcopal District Lay Organization Convention held its Awards Banquet.

With the theme “Navigating Excellence,” master of ceremonies Connectional Lay Organization Chaplain Charlie Nichols guided the evening with inventive stories about the program participants and jokes for all to enjoy.

The heart of the evening was the awards presentations, which included six new recipients of the Selmo Bradley Scholarship, valued at \$2,000 per student.

Banquet continues on next page

Banquet continued

This year's deserving honorees were: Brooke Stakley, a member of the Florida Conference's Gregg Chapel A.M.E. Church in Fort Walton Beach; Shakari Bell, a member of the South Conference's Payne Chapel A.M.E. Church in West Palm Beach; Jade White, a member of the Central Conference's St. Mark A.M.E. Church in Orlando; Shanaya Brown, a member of the East Conference's Greater Bethel A.M.E. Church in Gainesville; Morgan Pratt, a member of the East Conference's St. Paul A.M.E. Church in Jacksonville; and Tamea Saunders, a member of the Bahamas Conference's Robinson-Morris A.M.E. Church in Nassau, Bahamas.

Following the scholarship presentations, two new members were inducted into the EEDLO Hall of Fame—Shirley Harris of Greater New Hope A.M.E. Church in Jacksonville and Florida Conference Lay Organization President Donald Russell.

EEDLO Second Vice President Lothar Cherry received the Community Service Award and Outstanding Clergy of the Year was awarded to Orlando District Presiding Elder Milton Broomfield.

Connectional Lay Organization Director of Lay Activities and outgoing EEDLO President Patricia H. Wright surprised West Coast Conference Lay Organization President Lolita D. Brown with the Excellence in Service Award. She also awarded the Soldier of the Cross Award to East Conference Lay Organization President Nicholas Causey and Donald Russell.

In between official awards, special presentations honoring the tenures of President Wright, EEDLO Director of Lay Activities Teresa White and Young Adult Representative Ashley Blakely were bestowed by officers from across the district. Current and past officers from the last eight years also received recognition.

THE LAY COMMUNIQUE STAFF

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LaTonya Cherry-Ginetta, Central Conference Director of Lay Activities
Joyce C. Pink, West Coast Conference Historiographer
Henry Love, Quincy/Monticello District Lay Organization President



Incoming EEDLO officers share their visions for the future

Power Session 1 on Thursday was charged with energy and anticipation as incoming leaders—Young Adult Representative Dante Buckson, Director of Lay Activities Rhosonda Herring, and President John Love—delivered compelling presentations during the session titled "Navigating the Course Ahead: Beyond the Horizon." Attendees were left buzzing with enthusiasm for the future.

Buckson kicked off the session with heartfelt gratitude and infectious enthusiasm. He detailed his ambitious plans for the next four years, focusing on leadership development, intergenerational collaboration, professional growth, and robust membership retention. "We've got work to do, and together, we can make an impact!" Buckson declared. He also unveiled the theme for the young adult ministry: "Impact in Action."

Herring followed with vibrant energy. Her excitement was palpable as she outlined bold plans to foster leadership, creativity, faith, and faithfulness within the organization. Herring emphasized the importance of being advocates and leaders, creating an atmosphere of trust and collaboration. She promised dynamic activities designed to retain, recruit, and reclaim members, ensuring every voice is heard and valued.

Love concluded the session with a rousing speech that set the tone for his administration. With a blend of humor and earnest resolve, Love praised the outgoing leaders and committed to immediate and impactful action.



His charismatic delivery and bold plans invigorated the audience, making it clear that under his leadership, the organization is poised for greatness.

Power Session 1 concluded with unity and excitement, promising a dynamic, inclusive, and collaborative journey ahead. The energy in the room was electric, with members leaving inspired and ready to contribute to the organization's vibrant future.

Rev. Dr. Ronnie Clark addresses convention

Rev. Dr. Ronnie L. Clark, pastor of Hurst Chapel A.M.E. Church in Winter Haven, told the 80th EEDLO Convention that he has dedicated his life to transformational work—healing families and growing churches. That's why he is seeking Episcopal office. Rev. Clark touted his resume of establishing healthcare clinics in Polk County, providing care to 40,000 people, and helping pass laws to protect children and decriminalize poverty. His vision is to elevate his ministry, bringing transformational leadership to the A.M.E. Church at a higher level.



‘Hot Topics’ session sparks spirited debate among laity

On Thursday morning, the room was on metaphorical fire. Power Session II took on the subject “Hot Topics.” The hourlong discussion on sensitive subjects was facilitated by Connectional Lay Organization Director of Lay Activities and Eleventh Episcopal District Lay Organization President Patricia H. Wright, EEDLO DOLA Teresa White and EEDLO Young Adult Representative Ashley Blakley.

Topic 1: “Should General Conference delegates represent the interests of themselves, those who elected them or their Bishop?”

“We also are to respect constituted authority.” Someone added, “The Bishop and delegation have thought things through, we still have to think for ourselves.”

Topic 2: “When lay people have the knowledge, training and understanding, why do we quiet our voices when it’s time to speak up?”

Topic 3: What should the church’s stance be on same-sex commitment service?

Reference was made to legislation addressing those unions. “We can’t let what’s going on in society creep into church legislation. “God’s word still stands” Others invoked inclusion. “Jesus said to love everyone.” There was talk of sin by others and selected judgement.

Topic 4: How are friendships killing our church? What is causing us to ignore wrongdoing, create positions, show bias and grant privileges? Is being a minister a family business or a calling?

“Putting people in the wrong position is killing the church. Too often we don’t hold friends accountable.” The session ended with someone saying, “Blood is thicker than water. But we need to talk about the blood of Christ and the living water.”



Convention-goers vote electronically in new election procedure

Voting Day at the 80th Annual Convention of the Eleventh Episcopal District Lay Organization began on Thursday morning with a primer on the voting process coming from Election Committee Chair Garian Cason of the East Conference.

Cason presented recommendations from the committee on how votes should be cast: electronically or by paper ballot. A motion was carried to use an electronic method involving iPads and laptops.

Bahamas Conference Lay Organization President Valderine Evans waited in the hall to point voters toward the hospitality suite that served as the secured polling place. Only additional members of the Election Committee (Wanda Berry Glover, West Coast Conference; Lonnie Ford, Central Conference; Stephanie Gilliam-Brown, South Conference; and Allen Owens, Florida Conference) and those in line to vote could enter the room. “It was very easy,” said Tangela Wilson of the Central Conference.

The polls closed at 1 p.m. Results will be announced on Friday.

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The Eleventh Episcopal District Lay Organization Convention E-Newsletter



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Election Results
Memorial Service
South Conference Hosts

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John Love, President
Rhoshonda Herring, Director of Lay Activities
Dante Buckson, Young Adult Representative
Shrin Bryant, Director of Public Relations
Reginald Hardee, Central Conference President

New EEDLO executive board elected and installed at convention's end

After four rounds of voting, Lother Cherry was elected First Vice President of the Eleventh Episcopal District Lay Organization at the 80th Annual Convention. The subsequent three rounds were needed because no candidate received a majority of the vote in the previous rounds.

Before voting began, Connectional Lay Organization First Vice President Dr. Henderson praised CLO Director of Lay Activities and outgoing EEDLO President Patricia Wright and members of the 11th District. In the first round on Thursday, 136 votes were cast."

Election continues on next page

Election continued

The results were: 55 votes (40.4%) for Ashley Blakely, 26 votes (19.1%) Nicholas Causey, and 55 votes (40.4%) for Lothar Cherry.

Dr. Henderson presided over the process that began on Friday morning and went into the early afternoon. Dr. Henderson declared all offices vacated, allowing for the final stage to begin.

In the second round, 109 votes were cast. The results were: 43 votes (39.8%) for Ashley Blakely, 17 votes (15.7%) Nicholas Causey, and 49 votes (45.4%) for Lothar Cherry.

In the third round, 105 votes were cast. The results were: 41 votes (39.05%) for Ashley Blakely, 13 votes (12.38%) Nicholas Causey, and 52 votes (49.52%) for Lothar Cherry.

After that round, a motion was made to follow Standing Rule #6, Section D, which allows reducing the number of candidates in a contested election by going to a simple majority vote after the first ballot.

In the fourth round, 100 votes were cast. The results were: 37 votes (37%) for Ashley Blakely, 6 votes (6%) Nicholas Causey, and 56 votes (56%) for Lothar Cherry. The results brought applause for the top vote-getter. Then ended with a motion that carried to award President Wright the title of President Emeritus.



2024-2028 EEDLO Executive Board

President: John Love, Florida Conference
1st Vice President: Lothar Cherry, Central Conference
2nd Vice President: Robbyn Hopewell, West Coast Conference
3rd Vice President: Esther Ferguson, Bahamas Conference
Recording Secretary: Phillis Filer, East Conference
Assistant Recording Secretary: Evelyn Odom, South Conference
Corresponding Secretary: Robyne L. Edwards, East Conference
Treasurer: Sharon Causey, East Conference
Financial Secretary: Annie G. McCelvy, Florida Conference
Parliamentarian: Rebecca D. Williams, West Coast Conference
Director of Lay Activities: Rhoshonda Herring, East Conference
Chaplain: LuCretia McBride, East Conference
Historiographer: Joyce Pink, West Coast Conference
Director of Public Relations: Shrin Bryant, South Conference
Young Adult Representative: Dante' Buckson, East Conference

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ELEVENTH EPISCOPAL DISTRICT LAY ORGANIZATION
80TH ANNUAL CONVENTION, ORLANDO, 2024

SCAN ME!
TO TAKE THE SURVEY



HELP US IMPROVE THE CONVENTION EXPERIENCE BY TAKING A BRIEF SURVEY.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE SURVEY WILL BE ENTERED IN A DRAWING TO WIN A GIVEAWAY FROM THE EEDLO CONVENTION.

EEDLO.ORG



Lay soldiers receive final memorials in annual ceremony

The EEDLO 80th Convention paused for a memorial service, led by Sister LuCretia A. McBride. The service, filled with hymns, prayers, and readings, honored the lives of the departed.

The program opened with "Down at the Cross," followed by Scripture readings from Psalm 90:1-6, 12; Romans 8:35-39; and John 14:27. Sharon Causey performed a solo, and Sister Peggy Rice Johnson delivered a poignant reading. A "Celebration of Life" PowerPoint presentation and candle lighting by Sister Lother Cherry added warmth.

Honored were:

Robert J. Wright Sr. - West Coast Conference
Denise Thompson Holmes - South Conference
Elzora White - West Coast Conference
David Turner - East Conference
Patricia Johnson - Central Conference
Winston McGill - Central Conference
Johnell Linton - Central Conference
Thomas Mitchell, Jr. - Central Conference
Murray Adams - Central Conference,
Lindsey Glenn - West Coast Conference
Janet Lee - West Coast Conference
Dr. Alma Hires - West Coast Conference
Dorothy Thomas - South Conference
Emma Oretha Brizilla Kelly - Bahamas Conference
Katherine Inez Petty - Bahamas Conference

The service concluded with a bell ringing for each, Sister Barbara Patterson's closing prayer, and the hymn "When We All Get to Heaven."



South Conference Lay reminds us 'How Sweet It Is' in host presentation

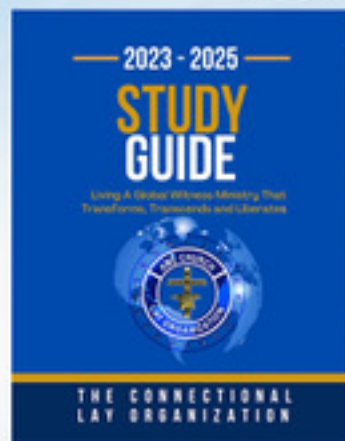
During the final session of the EEDLO 80th Convention, the South Conference Lay Organization made a memorable presentation with a heartfelt serenade to the tune of "How Sweet It Is." South Conference Lay President Evelyn Odom delivered the spoken part, welcoming everyone on behalf of the organization and inviting them home to the South Conference in 2025. The tailored lyrics emphasized the South's welcoming spirit and readiness to host next year's event. The chorus, "We just want to stop and thank you, Laity," resonated deeply, setting a sweet tone for the convention and highlighting the organization's dedication and unity.





THE CONNECTIONAL LAY ORGANIZATION
OF THE AME CHURCH

Announces



THE 2023-2025 STUDY GUIDE

A COLLECTIVE EFFORT FROM LAITY
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The Revised Common Lectionary ~ a Service of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library ~ Year B

Season after Pentecost / Year B	First* reading and Psalm	Alt* First reading and Psalm	Second reading	Gospel
Ninth Sunday after Pentecost July 21, 2024	2 Samuel 7:1-14a Psalm 89:20-37	Jeremiah 23:1-6 Psalm 23	Ephesians 2:11-22	Mark 6:30-34, 53-56
Tenth Sunday after Pentecost July 28, 2024	2 Samuel 11:1-15 Psalm 14	2 Kings 4:42-44 Psalm 145:10-18	Ephesians 3:14-21	John 6:1-21
Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost August 4, 2024	2 Samuel 11:26 - 12:13a Psalm 51:1-12	Exodus 16:2-4, 9-15 Psalm 78:23-29	Ephesians 4:1-16	John 6:24-35
Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost August 11, 2024	2 Samuel 18:5-9, 15, 31-33 Psalm 130	1 Kings 19:4-8 Psalm 34:1-8	Ephesians 4:25-5:2	John 6:35, 41-51
Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost August 18, 2024	1 Kings 2:10-12; 3:3-14 Psalm 111	Proverbs 9:1-6 Psalm 34:9-14	Ephesians 5:15-20	John 6:51-58
Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost August 25, 2024	1 Kings 8:(1,6,10-11), 22-30, 41-43 Psalm 84	Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18 Psalm 34:15-22	Ephesians 6:10-20	John 6:56-69
Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost September 1, 2024	Song of Solomon 2:8-13 Psalm 45:1-2, 6-9	Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9 Psalm 15	James 1:17-27	Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23
Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost September 8, 2024	Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23 Psalm 125	Isaiah 35:4-7a Psalm 146	James 2:1-10, (11-13), 14-17	Mark 7:24-37
Holy Cross September 14, 2024	Numbers 21:4b-9 Psalm 98:1-5 <i>or</i> <i>Psalm 78:1-2, 34-38</i>		1 Corinthians 1:18-24	John 3:13-17
Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost September 15, 2024	Proverbs 1:20-33 Psalm 19	Isaiah 50:4-9a Psalm 116:1-9 <i>or</i> <i>Song of Solomon 7:26 - 8:1</i>	James 3:1-12	Mark 8:27-38
Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost September 22, 2024	Proverbs 31:10-31 Psalm 1	Song of Solomon 1:16-2:1, 12-22 <i>or Jeremiah 11:18-20</i> Psalm 54	James 3:13 - 4:3, 7-8a	Mark 9:30-37
Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost September 29, 2024	Esther 7:1-6, 9-10; 9:20-22 Psalm 124	Numbers 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29 Psalm 19:7-14	James 5:13-20	Mark 9:38-50

The Revised Common Lectionary ~ a Service of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library ~ Year B

Season after Pentecost Year A	First* reading and Psalm	Alt* First reading and Psalm	Second reading	Gospel
Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost October 6, 2024	Job 1:1, 2:1-10 Psalm 26	Genesis 2:18-24 Psalm 8	Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:5-12	Mark 10:2-16
Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost October 13, 2024	Job 23:1-9, 16-17 Psalm 22:1-15	Amos 5:6-7, 10-15 Psalm 90:12-17	Hebrews 4:12-16	Mark 10:17-31
October 14, 2024	Joel 2:21-27 Psalm 126		1 Timothy 2:1-7	Matthew 6:25-33
Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost October 20, 2024	Job 38:1-7, (34-41) Psalm 104:1-9, 24, 35c	Isaiah 53:4-12 Psalm 91:9-16	Hebrews 5:1-10	Mark 10:35-45
Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost October 27, 2024	Job 42:1-6, 10-17 Psalm 34:1-8, (19-22)	Jeremiah 31:7-9 Psalm 126	Hebrews 7:23-28	Mark 10:46-52
November 1, 2024 <i>(Sometimes observed on the first Sunday in November)</i>	Song of Solomon 3:1-9 or <i>Isaiah 25:6-9</i> Psalm 24		Revelation 21:1-6a	John 11:32-44
Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost November 3, 2024 <i>(If All Saints not observed on this day)</i>	Ruth 1:1-18 Psalm 146	Deuteronomy 6:1-9 Psalm 119:1-8	Hebrews 9:11-14	Mark 12:28-34
Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost November 10, 2024	Ruth 3:1-5; 4:13-17 Psalm 127	1 Kings 17:8-16 Psalm 146	Hebrews 9:24-28	Mark 12:38-44
Twenty-Sixth Sunday after Pentecost November 17, 2024	1 Samuel 1:4-20 1 Samuel 2:1-10 **	Daniel 12:1-3 Psalm 16	Hebrews 10:11-14, (15-18), 19-25	Mark 13:1-8
Reign of Christ Twenty-Seventh Sunday after Pentecost November 24, 2024	2 Samuel 23:1-7 Psalm 132:1-12, (13-18)	Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14 Psalm 93	Revelation 1:4b-8	John 18:33-37
Thanksgiving Day, USA November 28, 2024	Joel 2:21-27 Psalm 126		1 Timothy 2:1-7	Matthew 6:25-33

ADVENT SEASON

A time of promise, preparation, hope, and anticipation
as we look forward to Christmas Day.

** In a very few instances in the Lectionary, no Psalm reading is offered for reasons relating to the thematic nature of the Day.



BETHEL AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH LAY ORGANIZATION DEVOTIONAL | OCTOBER 2024

501 West Orange Avenue | Tallahassee, Florida
Bishop Julius Harrison McAllister, Jr., Senior Minister

Tuesday, *Onyx* October 1, 2024

“Why Can’t Our Children Find Us?”

“People were bringing children to Him in order that He might touch them, and the disciples spoke sternly to them.” – Mark 10:13 NRSV-UE

In 2010, thousands of civil rights activists from across the world descended upon the oldest Historically Black University in the South, Shaw University, to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. Among the celebratory activities, various workshops and panels focused on the ongoing struggle for equality in a myriad of areas, took place. During these sessions, some participants blamed immorality in Black communities for the supposed wayward and reckless behavior of youth. Others called upon leaders to center the needs and concerns of historically marginalized children and teenagers in order to create realistic solutions. Then, others trivialized these needs and prioritized other issues. However, artistic activist, Harry Belafonte, who was also in attendance, exclaimed, “Why can’t our children find us? Why can’t they hear us more clearly? What are we so busy doing that we can afford to abandon them and then have the arrogance and the nerve to accuse them of being lost?” Over 14 years later, this challenge still exists.

The first Sunday in *Onyx* October is also the Twentieth Sunday After Pentecost on the Christian Liturgical Calendar. The concurrent Gospel reading is Mark 10:2-16, in Year B of the “Lectionary” found on page 795 of the *African Methodist Episcopal Church Hymnal*. In the first ten verses of this scriptural passage, a delegation of Pharisees attempted to entrap Jesus by asking Him questions about the sanctity of marriage. In response, Jesus did not delve into controversial theological frameworks, but emphasized the centrality of love, dedication, fulfillment and unity of mind and spirit. In verses 13-16, crowds began bringing their children to Jesus. Here, one will find the disciples abandoning the concerns of parents and children. The disciples spoke harshly to the families, hoping that they would disperse – dismissing their importance. Maybe the disciples were tired and irritated – who knows, but that was no excuse. Jesus was greatly displeased, corrected the disciples and asked the people to bring their children to Him to be blessed.

Children deserve love, attention, guidance and protection. They should not be killed by indiscriminate military warfare in Gaza and Lebanon. They should not be given automatic assault rifles as birthday presents. They should not be taunted and threatened in Springfield, Ohio, due to racist remarks made by political candidates aspiring for the highest executive offices in the United States. Children deserve fully-funded Head Start, Pre-K, and after-school academic enrichment programs. They deserve quality, culturally inclusive Church School, Bible Study, Youth Church, and Vacation Bible School initiatives in their places of worship.

In the AME tradition, babies are brought forward to be baptized. We, as congregants, are asked by the pastor, to verbally proclaim that we will “order our lives after the example of Christ, that these children surrounded by steadfast love, may be established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal” (Page 801 of the *African Methodist Episcopal Church Hymnal*). We, not just the parents, are obligated to welcome, bless and guide children, but when we fail to participate, deliberate, execute and assess the appropriate programming, our complacency, indifference and inactivity figuratively speaks “sternly to them.” One will soon ask, as the now Late Mr. Belafonte did over 14 years ago, “Why can’t our children find us?” All of us have a role to play in this matter. Make sure that you are not speaking “sternly to them”...i.e., Children, Teenagers, Young Mothers/Fathers, Parental Guardians...for they are needed to play an indispensable role in our churches. Don’t cause Christ to become “indignant” with you, “for it is to such as these [Children] that the kingdom of God belongs.” (~10:14). Selah.

The Bethel AME Church Lay Organization of Tallahassee, Florida, remains fully committed to the teaching, training and equipping of Methodists for liberating service in the church, community, country and world. Please join us at our next local Lay Meeting, tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, *Onyx* October 15, 2024, at 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. in Efferson-Morgan Fellowship Hall of Bethel AME Church. Refreshments will be served.

-Brother Kyle Harris, Ph.D., Contributor and Local Lay President



BETHEL AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH LAY ORGANIZATION DEVOTIONAL | AUGUST 2024

501 West Orange Avenue | Tallahassee, Florida
Bishop Julius Harrison McAllister, Jr., Senior Minister

Sunday, *Sable* September 1, 2024

“GIVE ME A CLEAN HEART!”

**“It’s not what goes into your body that defiles you; you are defiled by what comes from your heart.”
– Mark 7:15 NLT**

Southern University and A&M College alumna, Dr. Margaret Pleasant Douroux, composed the lyrics and tune to the popular gospel song, “Give Me A Clean Heart” in the year, 1970. This accomplished Black Maestra served in the field of music education and leadership in the California Public School System and in Protestant and Catholic Churches in the state. Currently retired after 60+ years in active musicianship, Dr. Douroux still provides experienced instruction, wisdom and guidance to young and budding musicians. Dr. Douroux’s fine compositions continue to inspire artists, ideologies and institutions around the world. “Give Me A Clean Heart” is found on page 461 in the *African American Heritage Hymnal*, which is used in a number of progressive AME Churches to compliment, enhance and diversify corporate worship experiences. In this musical prayer, Dr. Douroux’s writes, “Give me a clean heart so I may serve thee. Lord, fix my heart so that I may be used by Thee...”

The first Sunday in *Sable* September is also the Fifteenth Sunday After Pentecost on the Christian Liturgical Calendar. The concurrent Gospel reading is Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23, in Year B of the “Lectionary” found on page 795 of the *African Methodist Episcopal Church Hymnal*. In this scriptural passage, a second delegation of Jerusalem Pharisees unwarrantedly observed that some of Jesus’ disciples failed to engage in ceremonial handwashing before eating. They criticized Jesus for not ensuring that His disciples followed Jewish tradition. Jesus admonished the Pharisees for sanctifying human/cultural traditions in an effort belittle and exclude people. In verse 6 of this passage Christ said, “You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, for he wrote, ‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.’” To provide clarity to the laity in the midst, Christ said, “It’s not what goes into your body that defiles you; you are defiled by what comes from your heart.” The hearts of the Pharisees were not clean. They did not have good intentions. They needed to ask God to “Give [Them] A Clean Heart.”

Currently, at every level of religious and secular government, there are people in positions of power and influence, like the Pharisees, who honor Christ with their lips, but their hearts are far from Him. They sing the doxology weekly in Sunday worship experiences, but fail to research and implement cutting-edge initiatives to attract and retain new members. The vehemently advocate for “one nation under God,” but fail to legislate livable wage increases for citizens at or below the poverty line. They call for “thoughts and prayers” after school shootings, but are silent on stricter gun control policies. They raise educational standards in K-20 public schools by creating competitive metrics that continually reward those institutions historically resourced by racist policies, while simultaneously limiting equitable funding to minority serving institutions, which, in turn, breeds frenzy, anxiety, finger-pointing, turnover, closures and despair.

FAMU alumnus, Reverend Attorney Reginald Williams, Jr., writes in *Moving the Masses, Pillars of Prophetic Preaching*, that “[ministry] should be supported by, and lead to the creation of programs, policies, and practices which empower people to live into God-desired alternatives.” Are our actions and plans having a lasting positive impact on future generations? Jesus knew that the various ceremonial traditions of the Pharisees, were divisive and would be unnecessary, because of His sacrificial crucifixion, resurrection, ascension and second-coming. He was the inclusive alternative. Ask God to “Give [You] A Clean Heart” to make equitable decisions.

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-Brother Kyle Harris, Ph.D., Contributor and Local Lay President



BETHEL AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH LAY ORGANIZATION DEVOTIONAL | AUGUST 2024

501 West Orange Avenue | Tallahassee, Florida

The Reverend Dr. Julius Harrison McAllister, Jr., Senior Minister

Thursday, *Ancestral* August 1, 2024

“IGNORANCE IS DANGEROUS!”

“They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of their ignorance and hardness of heart.” – Ephesians 4:18 NRSV-UE

During my K-12 educational experience, situated in a small, rural town in southwest Georgia; my father was my only Black male teacher. He taught high school courses in the field of agriculture, like animal science, agricultural education, carpentry, horticulture, landscaping and soil science. I enrolled in one of his courses during my freshman and senior years, respectively. My father’s classes were lively, interactive and always filled to the brim with students, who were overwhelmingly Black. Not only did he teach agrarian skills and concepts; he also taught Black students how to strategically maneuver successfully through racist White America. In most cases, my dad exclusively handled disciplinary problems in his classroom to keep young Black kids from being railroaded into school to prison pipelines. Occasionally, he would encounter an openly defiant student, who forced him to refer the student to the school administration for elevated disciplinary action, which traditionally did not end well for Students of Color. However, right before sending the unruly student to the principal, he would say to the class, “You see class, Ignorance is Dangerous.”

The first Sunday in *Ancestral* August is also the Eleventh Sunday After Pentecost on the Christian Liturgical Calendar. The concurrent Epistle reading is Ephesians 4:17-25, in Year B of the “Lectionary” found on page 795 of the *African Methodist Episcopal Church Hymnal*. In this scriptural passage, the Apostle Paul reminded aspiring and seasoned Ephesian church leaders that “ignorance is dangerous.” In verse 18, Paul writes, “they [Gentile unbelievers] are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of their ignorance and hardness of heart.” Throughout the lectionary passage, the Apostle Paul reminded leaders to be open, honest, grounded, sensitive, progressive, resourceful, transformative, and communal. If not, they could be easily tempted to display and practice deceit, short-sightedness, futility, corruption, lust and other forms of lewd living, which was characteristic of ignorant and stubborn Gentile unbelievers in this particular epistle. Such a loose lifestyle could endanger the effectiveness of the early church.

In 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., wrote and successfully published, *Strength to Love*. In this work, Dr. King encouraged readers to dismantle societal oppression through the utilization of authentic love for one another. In chapter four of his text titled, “Love in Action,” Dr. King wrote, “Nothing in all the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity.” He goes on to write, “Never must the church tire of reminding men that they have a moral responsibility to be intelligent.” Nine years later, James Baldwin reminded readers in *No Name in the Street* that, “ignorance allied with power is the most ferocious enemy justice can have.”

Historically, the United States has immorally capitalized on exploiting the ignorant. This nation made it a crime to teach enslaved Black people to read and write. This nation withheld federally funded public education in southern states until Reconstruction. This nation maintained separate but unequal schools well into the mid-twentieth century. As a consequence, books, curricula and pedagogy was largely written and designed by privileged white men who had little to no appreciation for African American culture. By the time Black scholars were allowed to make a impact in the academy, over 300 years of racist white, patriarchal, heteronormative scholarship had been institutionalized. The current oppressive, white-centered American educational infrastructure has produced a capitalistic system that dumps more Students of Color into “pipe-dream” sports programs, prison and poverty instead of higher education programs that beget socio-economic mobility, solidarity, empowerment, public service and financial freedom. It has also produced a pervasive, ignorant, and racist mindset that believes Black people are inferior, not opportunities. This system has not utilized God’s *Strength to Love*; it has only produced “no names” in the streets.

State-sponsored ignorance has created a dangerous situation for Black people across the Diaspora. There is a direct correlation between race, poverty, educational attainment and crime in the United States. Books that unpack these findings are currently being banned in public, K-20, state schools across America. As a result, these schools continue to produce a disproportionate number of “darkened,” hopeless students, “alienated from” God and His authentic love. This is not civic leadership; it’s exploitation. “As the chief moral guardian of the community, the church” (MLK) has a divine responsibility to intervene and eradicate this vicious cycle. In the words of my father, “You see [people], Ignorance is Dangerous.” -Brother Kyle Harris, Ph.D., Contributor and Local Lay President



BETHEL AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH LAY ORGANIZATION DEVOTIONAL | JULY 2024

501 West Orange Avenue | Tallahassee, Florida

The Reverend Dr. Julius Harrison McAllister, Jr., Senior Minister

Monday, *Jubilant* July 1, 2024

“A MIGHTY WORK!”

“And He could there do no mighty work.” – Mark 6:5a KJV

In *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, Alex Haley transcribed the life of Civil Rights Activist, El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, as he verbally recounted it. While incarcerated, Malcolm became increasingly aware of the historic institutional and systemic injustices adversely affecting Black communities in the mid-20th century. He worked tirelessly, even in prison, to shift the blame from Black people (self-hate) to racist systems that created and sustained ignorance, poverty and crime. At times, his work of liberation yielded little results. In one interview, X told Haley, “A lot of these black convicts still wouldn't believe it unless they could see that a white man had said it.” In Saint Mark's Gospel, Jesus experienced a similar situation.

The first Sunday in *Jubilant* July is also the Seventh Sunday After Pentecost on the Christian Liturgical Calendar. The concurrent Gospel reading is Mark 6:1-6, in Year B of the “Lectionary” found on page 795 of the *African Methodist Episcopal Church Hymnal*. In this scriptural passage, an enlightened Jesus returns to do restorative work in his hometown of Nazareth. At the time, Nazareth was colonized by an oppressive Roman regime that treated Jewish people as second-class citizens, while simultaneously and arbitrarily creating a Jewish middle class of hyper religious leaders, through stolen resources, power and influence. Consequently, these Jewish zealots did the dirty work of disparaging the impoverished Jewish majority, to maintain this caste system, failing to realize that the Roman Empire was the ultimate benefactor of their behavior. This toxic, legalized collusion birthed generational poverty, wherein any of dreams of socio-economic mobility for the majority of Nazarenes were non-existent. So much so, until it created a Nazarene poverty mindset. They asked, “Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him” ~ (6:2b-3). Normalized negative perceptions of Nazareth were also societal, in Saint John's Gospel, chapter 1, Nathaniel responded to Phillip, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” The weight of poverty and despair was so great that, “He [Jesus] could there [Nazareth] do no mighty work, save that He laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them” ~ (6:5).

Over the past seven days, there have been a number of political events that have caused American panic and despair. On Thursday, June 27th, a presidential debate littered with “alternative facts” and the optical questions of mental acuity took place. On Friday, June 28th, in *City of Grants Pass, Oregon v. Johnson*, the Supreme Court legalized the arrest and detainment of homeless people in America. And today, in *Trump v. The United States*, the Supreme Court ruled that American presidents are given presumptive immunity from prosecution while serving in office. In Associate Justice Sonia Sotomayor dissenting opinion, she asserted that this decision makes a sitting president a “king above the law.” The 2024 presidential election results and the aftershocks of the two previously named Supreme Court decisions could have catastrophic effects on BIPOCs in America.

How will you respond? Will you give the defeated Nazarene response that historically underserved communities can't raise up anyone capable of closing race, income and gendered disparities in American healthcare, employment, housing and education? Ephesians 6:12 says, “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” The demonic force of classism begot discrimination and despair in Nazareth. The deeply entrenched, dark demonic force of racism continues to yield unfair judicial rulings, which cause many to question their faith in Christ. However, we must be careful not to let Satan's forces overwhelm us. For Hebrews 11:6, says “...without faith it is impossible to please God!”

Although many questioned and rejected Malcolm's motives due to cognitive dissonance, he remained faithful to the work of complete liberation. Mark 6:5a, says, “[Jesus] could there do no mighty work.” The latest political decisions may cause one to feel that God can no longer do a mighty work in America. However, it is imperative that you remain prayerful and faithful and also organize, advocate and vote. Jesus wants to bring justice, repair and restoration to *American Nazareths*. However, you are His spiritual instrument. Therefore, it is up to YOU to execute a mighty antiracist, anticapitalistic work in your church, classroom, civic club and neighborhood. Selah.



BETHEL AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH LAY ORGANIZATION DEVOTIONAL | JUNE 2024

501 West Orange Avenue | Tallahassee, Florida

The Reverend Dr. Julius Harrison McAllister, Jr., Senior Minister

Saturday, *Jet* June 1, 2024

“Powers Engaged!”

“Then [Jesus] said to them, “The Sabbath was made for humankind and not humankind for the Sabbath.” -Mark 2:27 NRSV-UE

African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church Hymn number 242 is, “A Charge to Keep I Have,” written by one of the key leaders of the Methodist Movement, Charles Wesley. In the 18th century, Charles and his brother John preached to ordinary people in churches, open fields and on street corners in Europe and North America. During this time, Western Europeans and its North American colonists were making millions from the Transatlantic Slave Trade, but the Wesley brothers opposed it. The majority of white clerics deemed slavery to be a “necessary evil,” and the Wesley brothers faced a significant amount of ostracization for their stance in religious and secular circles. However, they had God’s “Charge to Keep.” Toward the end of verse 2 of this hymn, Charles writes, “O May It All My Powers Engage To Do My Master’s Will.” These brothers were fully-engaged in the spiritual, socio-economic and political activities of their time. Although, the Wesley brothers opposed inequality, the Methodist Church soon surrendered to the lucrative dark money that produced racist church policy and cultural self-interests that, unfortunately, upheld the institution of slavery, causing Richard Allen and the majority of Black people to leave the denomination and establish the AME Church in opposition.

This week, the former President and 2024 Republican National Convention presumptive nominee, Donald Trump was found guilty of 34 felony counts of falsifying business records. Instead of “Evangelical Christians” supporting another candidate, their allegiance to Trump only hardened. Over 34 million dollars was donated to the campaign, in less than 24 hours after the guilty verdict was announced – arguably, the highest amount of campaign dollars ever amassed in such a short period of time - in American History. Many of these donors are in lock-step with Project 2025, also known as The Presidential Transition Project. It is a conglomerate of conservative platforms that are currently advertising, selecting, training and endorsing legislators to enact policies to expand the powers of the executive branch. Project 2025 is laying the foundation for these policies to take immediate effect after the inauguration of the next conservative president – Donald J. Trump. Federal Title 1 programs to assist lower-income children, who are overwhelmingly Black and Brown, will be set to expire and will be devolved to state executives. The military will be deployed to racially profile, track down, detain and deport undocumented immigrants. Biden-era executive order climate change initiatives will be rolled back. All of these policies are fully supported by Christian Nationalists, who argue that such immediate action will cause America to turn back to its original Christian ideals. The Pharisees upheld similar policies 2,000 years ago. Yet, Jesus opposed them.

The first Sunday in *Jet* June is also the Second Sunday After Pentecost on the Christian Liturgical Calendar. The concurrent Gospel reading is Mark 2:23 – 3:6, in Year B of the “Lectionary” found on page 795 of the *African Methodist Episcopal Church Hymnal*. In this scriptural passage, one will find Jesus breaking man-made doctrines concerning the Sabbath. On one occasion, the disciples were hungry. Jesus sanctioned their work in preparing their meal on the Sabbath. On another occasion, Jesus provided free healthcare to a man with a withered hand. When approached by the Pharisees, Jesus answered, “The Sabbath was made for humankind and not humankind for the Sabbath.” After which, the Pharisees conspired to bring about His crucifixion.

Today, Children of Color in K-20 public institutions are hungry for an inclusive, antiracist curriculum that affirms their humanity. Millions of women across America would like their reproductive rights restored. Project 2025 is seeking to further restrict DEI programs at the federal level and enact even harsher restrictions on women. Is the church aligned with those who hunger and desire justice, restoration and reparations or is it complicity aligned with man-made religious stipulations that produce generational poverty, crime, disease and toxic mental health? Author Cole Arthur Riley reminds us in *This Here Flesh: Spirituality, Liberation and the Stories That Make Us*, that, “We cannot trust a society that makes judgments on the morality of a person without taking responsibility for how its own morality has instigated the conditions that call for such desperate decision-making.” The Wesley brothers, Richard Allen and other activists vehemently opposed legalized religious and secular policies that produced human suffering. Their unrelenting, divinely-infused, supernatural powers were fully engaged. Are yours? The American moral compass is drastically changing right before our eyes! Get on the right side of this. Be Like Christ! Be Engaged!

.Brother Kyle Harris, Ph.D., Contributor and Local Lay President



BETHEL AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH LAY ORGANIZATION DEVOTIONAL | MAY 2024

501 West Orange Avenue | Tallahassee, Florida

The Reverend Dr. Julius Harrison McAllister, Jr., Senior Minister

Wednesday, *Mahogany* May 1, 2024

“Don’t Be Bamboozled!”

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.” – 1 John 4:1 NRSV-UE

On October 6, 2000, New Line Cinema released Spike Lee’s *Bamboozled* to general audiences across the United States. In this film, frustrated Black artist, Pierre Delacroix creates *Mantan: The New Millennium Minstrel Show*, a show depicting historic racialized stereotypes of Black people, to infuriate his insensitive white boss, Thomas Dunwoody, into terminating his employment contract. Unfortunately, Delacroix’s plot backfires. Dunwoody and growing audiences loved the show, causing many fans to dress in Blackface to promote the film. Monitoring the ever-increasing financial revenue, wherein a large portion would line his pockets, Delacroix unfortunately embraces *Mantan*. Delacroix’s assistant, Sloane Hopkins, attempts to convince him and the *Mantan* actors that the show was inherently racist. Unfortunately, Delacroix has his mind affixed on the growing revenue and fame. At *Mantan*’s height, one of Delacroix’s formerly homeless actors, quits after being enlightened by Hopkins. The other actor is abducted and subsequently killed by an outraged gang. The entire *Mantan* project crumbles, as Hopkins shoots Delacroix in an angered scuffle, while trying to explain to him the demeaning aspects of the show. All of the main characters of the film were, in some way, tragically bamboozled by a warped ideology, a geopolitical phenomenon, a demonic spirit called racialized capitalism.

The first Sunday in *Mahogany* May is also the 6th Sunday of Easter on the Christian Liturgical Calendar. The concurrent Epistle reading is 1 John 4:1-11, in Year B of the “Lectionary” found on page 795 of the *African Methodist Episcopal Church Hymnal*. In this scriptural passage, one will find John the Apostle strongly encouraging early believers to spiritually discern those who carry the Gospel. In verse one, John writes, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.” During the 1st Century AD, many prophets failed to acknowledge the full humanity, divinity and character of Christ, due to the prevailing politically-endorsed and heavily-monetized Jewish and Hellenistic customs that stereotyped people based on class, ethnicity and gender. The Apostle John reminds the early church that prophets must increasingly emulate Christ’s character and agape love in their interactions with others. Prophets who fail to do this, embrace the spirit of the antichrist (1:3).

Unfortunately, in 21st century America, the spirit of the anti-Christ still rears its head in the form of racism, and one of its major byproducts – whiteness – which has employed organized oppressive violence in its ongoing 500+ year saga of colonial and imperialistic ventures. Its human instruments, “false prophets,” sometime traditionally adorned in monarchical gowns, presidential suits, clerical garments and judicial robes tend to readily confess Christ. However, their hearts and actions are far from Christ’s antiracist and anticapitalistic character. Western racism is so complex, insidious and highly funneled with “dark money,” until most Prophets align with it, by either openly endorsing it or fearfully remaining silent on the issue. These “false prophets” openly support political demagogues who publish *God Bless the USA Bibles*, but stoke the fires of gun violence, racism, sexism and xenophobia. These “false prophets” remain conspicuously quiet on Palestinian genocide, mass incarceration and increasing legislation outlawing diversity, equity and inclusion programs in public k-20 educational settings. Prophets who fail to speak, act and organize against systemic oppression, do not possess the spirit or power of Christ. They do not activate the Holy Spirit’s power within them that is far greater than any demonic force of this world (1:4). As a consequence, the “false prophets” fail to properly prepare, teach and equip congregations in the Holy Dismantlement of demonic institutions created on the centrality of whiteness and antiblackness. Black Feminist, Octavia Butler, wrote in *The Parable of the Talents*, “Choose your leaders with wisdom and forethought. To be led by a coward is to be controlled by all that the coward fears. To be led by a fool is to be led by the opportunists who control the fool.”

Like Pierre Delacroix, Thomas Dunwoody, and the *Mantan* actors, some “prophets” also engage in corruption, arbitrary and capricious power and other temporary pleasures associated with racialized capitalism. Test their spirit by His Spirit. Don’t be bamboozled!

-Brother Kyle Harris, Ph.D., Contributor and Local Lay President

February 2024

2

East Conference Lay Organization Convention
Historic Mt. Zion-Jax ~ 7:00 p.m.
Bishop Reid ~ Speaker

6

DART Clergy Conference, Florida Hotel
1500 Sandlake Road
Orlando, FL ~ 2:35 pm
Bishop Reid is the Keynote Speaker

7

Daytona Beach District Conference
St. James-Titusville ~ 7pm
Bishop Reid ~ Opening Night Preacher

16

Eleventh Episcopal District Founders' Day
St. Stephen AMEC ~ Jacksonville, FL
General Conference Delegation Meeting

16-18

Eleventh Episcopal District
37th Annual Black Heritage Weekend
Edward Waters University, Jacksonville, FL

20-23

2024 Global Development Council Meeting
Hilton Hotel – Sandton, South Africa

March 2024

1-2

Eleventh Episcopal District ~ Lay Learning Retreat
Tampa, FL

6

South Georgia Annual Conference
Bishop Reid ~ Ordination Preacher ~ 7pm

9

Men's Day
Allen Chapel – Wabasso - Rev. Tamika Moore
Bishop Reid ~ Preacher ~ 4pm

10

98th Church Anniversary
Greater Mt. Pleasant ~ Rev. Dr. Santarvis Brown
Bishop Reid ~ Preacher ~ 4pm

14-16

Eleventh Episcopal District ~ Midyear
Rosen Centre Hotel, Orlando

17

Mortgage Burning
Stephen, Leesburg – Rev. Woodrow Leeks
Bishop Reid ~ Preacher ~ 11am

March 2024 (continued)

21-23

Connectional Christian Education Meeting
St. Paul, Montgomery, AL

24

PALM SUNDAY

Mortgage Burning
Greater Payne-Jax ~ Rev. Kennetta Carter
Bishop Reid ~ Preacher ~ 4pm

29

GOOD FRIDAY

31

EASTER / RESURRECTION SUNDAY

Bethel AME Church ~Tallahassee, FL
Rev. Dr. McAllister
Bishop Reid-Preacher ~ 9:30 a.m.

April 2024

10

Edward Waters University
Founder's Day Convocation

May 2024

7-14

YPD - Self Denial Week

11

Edward Waters University Commencement
Jacksonville, FL

12

Mother's Day

16-18

23rd Annual Sons of Allen Retreat
Hosted by Florida Conference

27

Memorial Day Observed

June 2024

16

Father's Day

24

General Board and Investiture, Orlando, FL
Investiture Worship – for Bishop Reid

25

General Board Meeting, Orlando, FL

29

Birthday of Bishop Frank M. Reid, III

July 2024

4
Independence Day

14
Eleventh Episcopal Day, CDMC Ceremony
Rosen Centre, Orlando, FL

15-18
Eleventh Episcopal District, CEYLC
Christian Education Youth & Leadership Congress
[Bishop Reid's Retirement Celebration](#)
Rosen Centre, Orlando, FL.

August 2024

14-20
Pre-General Conference – Revisions Committee
Columbia, Ohio

19-20
Pre-General Conference – Credentials Committee
Columbus, Ohio

19-20
Pre-General Conference - Rules Committee

20
General Conference Commission

21-28
AMEC General Conference
Columbus, Ohio

September 2024

2
LABOR DAY

7
Florida Conference YPD Annual Day

10
Florida Conference WMS Annual Day

11-13
Florida Annual Conference

21
Central Conference YPD Annual Day

24
Central Conference WMS Annual Day

25-27
Central Annual Conference

October 2024

5
South Conference YPD Annual Day

8
South Conference WMS Annual Day

9-11
South Annual Conference

12
West Coast Conference YPD Annual Day

15
West Coast Conference WMS Annual Day

16-18
West Coast Annual Conference

26
East Conference YPD Annual Day

29
East Conference WMS Annual Day

30-November 1
East Annual Conference

November 2024

7-8
Bahamas Annual Conference

9
Bahamas Conference YPD Annual Day

TBD
Eleventh Episcopal District Planning Meeting
Rosen Centre Hotel, Orlando, FL

28
THANKSGIVING DAY

December 2024

7
Day of Sharing, Florida Conference
Day of Sharing, East Conference

14
Day of Sharing, Central Conference
Day of Sharing, West Coast Conference

15
Day of Sharing, South Conference

25
CHRISTMAS DAY

THE 2024 LITURGICAL COLOR CALENDAR for The African Methodist Episcopal Church

2024 LITURGICAL COLOR CALENDAR

COLORS FOR THE AME CHRISTIAN YEAR

In the Christian year of our church, we recognize two cycles: the Christmas Cycle (Advent-Christmas-Epiphany) and the Easter Cycle (Lent-Easter-Pentecost). Within each cycle are a preparatory season symbolized by the color purple and a festival season symbolized by the color white. Between each cycle follows an ordinary time of growth symbolized by the color green in the Seasons After the Epiphany and After Pentecost. Therefore, there is a sequence of seasons using purple, white, and green in that order twice each year.

PURPLE is a color of both penitence and royalty used during the preparatory seasons of Advent and Lent. Alternative colors of royal blue or violet may also be used during Advent.

WHITE and **GOLD** are joyous and festive colors used during the Christmas and Easter seasons (except on the Day of Pentecost) and in other seasons on festive days such as Baptism of the Lord, Transfiguration, Trinity, All Saints, and Christ the King. White may also be used at weddings. At services of Holy Communion white linens on top of the Lord's Table are the tradition of the AME Church, and are used on the first Sunday, regardless of the Holy Season that is celebrated. Therefore, even if the first Sunday of the month is the first Sunday of Advent, the color used in the pulpit remains white.

GREEN is a color of growth used in the Seasons After the Epiphany and After Pentecost, except when special days call for white or red.

RED is a color of fire, symbolizing the Holy Spirit. It is used on the Day of Pentecost and at other times when the work of the Holy Spirit is emphasized. Red is also the color of blood - the blood of Christ and the blood of martyrs. Because of its intensity, red is most effective when used occasionally rather than continuously for a whole season. It is appropriate for evangelistic services, for ordinations and consecration, for church anniversaries and homecomings, Founder's Day, and for civil observances such as Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, and Thanksgiving. It may be used during Holy Week, beginning with Passion/Palm Sunday, to symbolize the blood of Christ.

BLACK is a color of death used on Good Friday and Holy Saturday and for funerals. Gray is its alternative.

Although the use of these colors is based on broad ecumenical tradition, other colors have been and are being used in Christian churches. Creativity and use of alternates with colors bring new meaning to the worship experience. Examples include African prints or variations, pink during the third week of Advent and black on Good Friday.

It is always a good policy when in doubt, to seek guidance from a presiding elder, senior pastor, Christian education director, or other person designated by the pastor. These persons will be helpful in providing information on appropriate colors for preparing the sanctuary.

JANUARY						
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FEBRUARY						
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APRIL						
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JULY						
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AUGUST						
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SEPTEMBER						
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OCTOBER						
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NOVEMBER						
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DECEMBER						
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Connectional Lay Organization Theme

“Living a Global Witness Ministry That Transforms, Transcends and Liberates”

The Scriptural Reference: Luke 4: 18-19

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

Living a Global Witness Ministry means that we intentionally, on purpose, in an unabashed way, in a public way, in a relational way, desire to bring witness that is different, daring, innovative, engaging and liberating.

We serve a church that spans 39 countries, 5 continents, speaks countless languages, is governed by democracy, aristocracy, monarchy amid a plethora of cultures and yet believes in **THE SAME GOD**. We are separated by miles, resources, agendas, political interests and for the past 18 months we can add pandemic to the mix of reasons that we are apart. We have been kept together through the innovation of technology, the willingness to transform to a different way of thinking and worshipping and witnessing. We have had to transcend the usual way of doing things so that all could be privileged to a liberating gospel. We as the Organized Lay Organization have had to step up and be demonstrative of the outcomes we are desirous of seeing. In other words, Living A Global Witness Ministry That Transforms, Transcends and Liberates is where our mission rests.

Living A Global Witness Ministry that Transforms is real life ministry. Everybody seems to be using the word “transformation” to describe the impact of what they are doing. There is transformational leadership, transformational management, transformational development, transformational business, transformational care, transformational learning, transformational marketing!

Living A Global Witness Ministry that Transcends goes beyond borders and boundaries. It is the charge and chance for us to extend ourselves beyond our comfort zones to communicate and create avenues that will reach generations, open minds and activate people to engage in a unifying work.

Living A Global Witness Ministry that Liberates frees one to be liberal in praise, in service and witness. The gospel is a message of freedom and liberation — the ministry of Jesus was that of liberating captives. The gospel tells us that it is through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that we can courageously leave our comfort zones to reach, teach, preach and serve others just like Christ did in the synagogues.

AS YOU PLAN YOUR LAY PROGRAM...

Use the Connectional Theme in your programs. The artistic rendering that supports the theme is included here. It is NOT the lay Logo, but a rendering. Feel free to use it, coupled with the theme, as you plan your lay programs.

In planning your lay programs and activities try to incorporate the theme or components thereof as a way to continuously keep persons aware of it.



This is the Lay Logo. It is the **ONLY** Lay Logo. It does not change.

Artistic rendering for the Current Connectional theme. It is **NOT** the Lay Logo!



The Bishop is on the MOVE...



The itinerancy is a traveling ministry. It is the portal through which the clergy moves. In the AME Church one thing that is certain is that movement will occur within the leadership of our Zion. Nothing makes that point more clearly than a review of what will and may occur in 2024 with mandated movement for over 55% of the Bishops in AME Church.

Indicated with **GREEN shaded box** below are moves that must occur in 2024. A **RED shaded box** indicates no move is mandated but one can still occur. The Ecumenical and Located Bishop may also impact the assignment rotation. 2024 will be a time of Episcopal Moves. Stay Tuned!!!

Mandated Movement				
YES	NO	DISTRICT	Bishop	NOTE
GREEN		1	Bishop Julius Harrison McAllister, Sr.	Retirement Date 2024
GREEN		2	Bishop James Levert Davis	8 Year Law
	RED	3	Bishop E. Earl McCloud Jr.	Assigned - GC 2021
GREEN		4	Bishop John Franklin White	Retirement Date 2024
GREEN		5	Bishop Clement W. Fugh	Retirement Date 2024
GREEN		6	Bishop Reginald T. Jackson	8 Year Law
GREEN		7	Bishop Samuel Lawrence Green Sr.	8 Year Law
	RED	8	Bishop Stafford J. N. Wicker	Assigned - GC 2021
GREEN		9	Bishop Harry Lee Seawright	8 Year Law
GREEN		10	Bishop Adam J. Richardson Jr.	Retirement Date 2024
GREEN		11	Bishop Frank Madison Reid III	Retirement Date 2024
GREEN		12	Bishop Michael Leon Mitchell	8 Year Law
GREEN		13	Bishop E. Anne Henning-Byfield	Retirement Date 2024
	RED	14	Bishop Paul J.M. Kawimbe	Assigned - GC 2021
	RED	15	Bishop Silvester S. Beaman	Assigned - GC 2021
	RED	16	Bishop Marvin Clyde Zanders II	Assigned - GC 2021
	RED	17	Bishop David Rwhynica Daniels	Assigned - GC 2021
	RED	18	Bishop Francine A. Brookins	Assigned - GC 2021
	RED	19	Bishop Ronnie E. Brailsford Sr.	Assigned - GC 2021
	RED	20	Bishop Frederick Allen Wright	Assigned - GC 2021
	ECUMENICAL	Ecumenical	Bishop Jeffrey Nathaniel Leath	Assigned - GC 2021
	LOCATED	Located	Bishop Wilfred Jacobus Messiah	Assigned - GC 2021