

African Methodist Episcopal Church Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization

SIXTIETH (60TH) ANNUAL SESSION

The Diamond Anniversary Year – Laity Synergized-5th District Unified, A Holy Nation

FIFTH DISTRICT LAY CONVENTION

Hosted by: The Pacific Northwest Conference Lay Organization
(Alaska, Montana, Oregon, Washington)



June 29th – July 1st 2017 | Seattle Airport Marriott Hotel, Seattle, WA



Mr. Simeon P. Rhoden Jr. MBA

Episcopal District Lay President



Introduction

- To: Bishop Clement W. Fugh, Presiding Prelate of the Fifth Episcopal District; Mrs. Alexia B. Fugh, Episcopal Supervisor; Dr. Willie Glover, Connectional Lay President; Connectional Officers; Mr. Simeon Rhoden, President, Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization; Fifth District Lay Officers; Presiding Elders; Pastors; Clergy; Delegates; Visitors and Friends

It is in the joy of Jesus I welcome the Fifth Episcopal District Lay Organization to my home, the Pacific Northwest of the African Methodist Episcopal Church!

The Lay Organization continue to do a consistent and persistent work throughout the 5th and within the communities. The 59th Mini Convention Session, held just prior to the General Conference in Los Angeles, CA, ended on a high note and since that time, we have been very busy!

- We elected a full slate of Delegates to the 35th Biennial Session of the Connectional Lay Organization, and we were able to submit not only the District's registration, but also every Conference and Local Lay Organization Registration on time!
- The Budget & Finance Team presented round reports...signifying that the Lay Organization's operational & scholarship accounts continues to operate in black
- The Scholarship Committee presented recommendations to add two new scholarships for community & church service and together we approved the recommendations.
- The 7th Annual Evening of Elegance & Scholarship Reception recognized the late Fred Stewart, past President of the 5th District and at the 8th annual reception, recognized those persons who served as President of the 5th District Women in Ministry & those Clergy and Lay persons elected to serve on the General Board
- We contributed financial support of \$1K to the Investment of our Presiding Prelate as President of the Bishop's Council and 30 of you volunteered to serve on the Hospitality Committee

Our main focus however has been on teaching and training led by the Director of Lay Activities, Judge Patricia Mayberry. You can find the majority of the her workshop/training material online at 5th District Lay. ORG for downloading. We want to take this time to thank her for 8 years of service as the District's Director of Lay Activities

It is a blessing having Bishop Clement W. Fugh and Supervisor Alexia Fugh as our Episcopal Leaders! They have actively participated and have shown their support to the Lay Organization in presenting workshops and training, attending meetings and other activities throughout the District, and providing financial support; but most important, they have shown their love for laity and it was quite obvious.

60th Annual Session



Statistics & Overview

Episcopal District: 5 President: Mr. Simeon P. Rhoden Jr.

Conference areas: Pacific Northwest, Southern California, Midwest, Desert Mountain, Missouri, & California

Number of Churches: 2013: 210 2014: 209 2015: 211 2016: 213

Number of Organized Lay Organizations: 2013: 144 2014: 146 2015: 149 2016: 179

Number of Delegates to the 2017 Biennial: 85



Workshop and Trainings 2014: 14 2015: 15 2016: 18

Workshop/Training Titles: Our Director of Lay Activities, Judge Patricia Mayberry has traveled extensively throughout the District and the Connection providing training and conducting workshops on Lay Training straight from the Lay Study Guide as well lessons enhancing existing topics focusing on the community, the growth of the Lay Organization and the AME Church



Accomplishments:

- Evening of Elegance: Celebrated its 8th Anniversary, where both Laity and Ministerial come together for fellowship. This year we raised over \$37K dollars for both the organization and the 5th District Scholarship Fund
- Scholarship: Where the 5th District Lay continues to disburse scholarships to a deserving returning college students and a high school graduate. Amounts totaling \$9K is giving annually to well deserving students: Bishop T. Larry Kirkland Scholarship of Excellence, Fred. J Stewart Scholarship of Achievement, Community Service, and Church Service
- The Conferences collaborated with the District to complete and finalize the sale of the Jubilee



Bibles, a project that started over 25 years ago. We were able to give back funds to each conference for its commitment through the process.

- We continue to support the methods of our esteemed Lay Activity Director, Judge Patricia Mayberry, to effectively teach and train with a purpose.

- The continued effort to support our Youth and Young Adults and creative incentives to maintain their presence

- The 5th District Lay Organization has been operating in the black for the past 7 years! We are not in debt to anyone or any organization

- Through the efforts of our 3rd Vice President, Barbara Moore, we collected over 5,000 pair of socks to donate to the Union Gospel Mission of Seattle, WA

- At our 59th & 60th Annual Session, we collected funds through our LAOS (Lay Agape Outreach Service) initiative, and donated those funds to an identified, non-profit, organization in need.

- We are excited about our Lay leaders representing beyond the District:

- *Judge Patricia Mayberry, President of the Judicial Council

- *Jacqueline Dupont-Walker, Social Action Commission (Connectional Church)

- *Tamika Townsend-Jones, General Board

- *Randolph Scott, General Board

- *Kidijah Brown, YA General Board

- *Ada Groff, Corresponding Secretary (Connectional Lay)

- *Dr. Verda Bradley, CLEDC (Connectional Lay)



What Are We Doing Next?

Goals & Objectives for the next 4 years:

- Together we will define a Vision Statement incorporating the Mission of the AME Church, The Lay Organization and embracing the theme, “A Holy Nation”, implemented by our Episcopal Team
- Together we will submit constitutional edits to the Connectional Lay Organization redefining and clarifying the following:
 - Standing Committees
 - Amendments
 - President Emeritus
 - Parliamentarian Position
 - Implied Powers: Constitution & By-Laws
- Together we will create legislation effecting change in our church surrounding the following:
 - Members in “Good & Regular Standing”
 - Language that investigates churches that are in financial despair and those that are suffering in growth
- Together we will support the Council of Bishops in opposing the new American Health Care Act. This proposal, if enacted into law and signed by the president would do great harm to a majority of the American people. This proposal takes away healthcare for millions of Americans, and increases premiums for those who retain healthcare.
- Together we will be intentional to be “out of the box” thinkers on how to invite and welcome Young Adults, between the ages of 18 – 35 and embrace those Gen Xers between ages of 36 – 50, to be members of our local, conference, and district lay societies.
- Along with the Director of Lay Activities and the Conference Presidents, we will purposely teach lessons from the Lay Study Guide, encouraging uniformity, and will be intentional in making sure everyone is well versed in understanding the Constitution and his/her by laws of their local, conference, district, and connectional lay society.
- We will not be behind on matters that could affect our lives and the mission of the church. For example:
 - We will be intentional about informing the church on social issues and political issues affecting our communities and the church. Such as letting everyone know about the new passport law, laws on immigration and the twisted language perpetuating racism and inequalities, and protecting our communities against violence
 - We will be inclusive of others, embracing them into the church and reminding them that salvation comes through accepting Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior



Recommendations

Constitution & By-Laws Amendments

- Under ARTICLE XIV – COMMITTEES, Section 2, of the revised Constitution & By-Laws of the Lay Organization. The language currently reads, “Standing Committees shall be the following: Proposed Legislation, Constitution and By-Law, and AMEV – Alert.” I recommend that the 5th District Constitution & By-Laws Committee, submit to this body for acceptance, language that amends the current language to read, “Standing Committees shall be the following: Legislation, Constitution and By-Laws, AME V-Alert, and Budget & Finance.”
- Under ARTICLE XVI – AMENDMENTS, Section 1 of the revised Constitution & By-Laws of the Lay Organization, The language currently reads, “Amendments to the Constitution and By Laws of the Connectional Lay Organization may be made by filing a copy of the proposed amendment with the Connectional President and Secretary. The Secretary shall send an official copy of the proposed amendment to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee at least six months or (180) days prior to the meeting of the Connectional Lay Organization’s Biennial Session. The Constitution and Bylaws Committee shall send copies of proposed amendments, by certified mail and/or electronic communication to each of the Episcopal District Presidents. Two-thirds vote of the members present and eligible to vote at the Biennial Session shall be required to effect an amendment. Amendments will take effect at the close of the General Conference ratifying Amendments. I recommend that the 5th District Constitution & By-Laws Committee, submit to this body for acceptance, language that amends the current language to read, “The Secretary shall send an official copy of the proposed amendment to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee at least 3 months or (90) days prior to the meeting of the Connectional Lay Organization’s Biennial Session.”
- Under ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP, Section II, b, of the revised Constitution & By-Laws of the Lay Organization. The language currently reads, “all persons holding the designation &/or office of President Emeritus.” This language is ambiguous and leaves room for interpretation. I recommend that the 5th District Constitution & By-Laws Committee, submit to this body for review and acceptance, language that defines the role of President Emeriti, provide pre-qualifications, and implement a formal selection process. In addition, clearly define which level President Emeriti are to be recognized.
- Under ARTICLE VIII – QUALIFICATIONS, Section 12. Parliamentarian, of the revised Constitution & By-Laws of the Lay Organization. The language currently reads. “Qualifications. Any candidate seeking the office of Parliamentarian must demonstrate: They are a registered Parliamentarian in good and regular standing of the National Association of Parliamentarians or an equivalent certification at the time of nomination. Where there are no qualified candidates, the President, with the approval of the Executive Board and for any fee that will be required may contract for such services to be provided, at a competitive rate to the organization as needed. Preference will be given to members of the AME Church in good and regular standing.” I recommend that the 5th District Constitution & By-Laws Committee, submit to this body for review and discussion, that the underlined language be stricken. The language currently conflicts with the Nominating Committee’s process to certify candidate’s eligibility and limit the powers of that committee. This language also limits the voting power of the Delegates to the Annual or Biennial Convention, taking away his/her opportunity to select who they would want to serve.



Recommendations

5th District Consideration

- **Lay Day:** As we celebrate our extraordinary history, our Incredible future is greater than our proud past...for the best is yet to come for the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Throughout the Connectional Church, the Local Lay Organizations celebrate “Lay Day” as a symbolic way to recognize the establishment of the Lay Organization. According to history, the Organization, like many in our church, at any early age, did not keep official records that would serve as reference material. As a District, I recommend to this body that the Fifth Episcopal District officially recognizes the 2nd Sunday of October, as its official “Lay Day”. It is my hope that the District will be inspired, enlightened and support the 2nd Sunday in October, as the District’s official day of recognition. Upon approval, it will then be forwarded over to the Bishop’s Office to be officially implemented on the Planning Calendar as a day of recognition of the establishment of the Laymen’s Organization and its first recorded history dating back to 1912.

NOTE: This does not warrant Conference/Local Levels to change its Lay Day celebrations.

60th Annual Session

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Questions

