Back to the Basics Lay Training 101

"I am asking the Lay Organization to please go back to your churches and train the Laity of the Church ."

> Bishop T. Larry Kirkland Desert Mountain Annual Conference August 2009

LAY ORGANIZATION PURPOSE

Our primary purpose is to organize and train the laity of the church, so that each member may use to the maximum, the abilities and skills granted by God in assisting with the improvement and extension of God's Kingdom, and creating Happiness, Peace, and Harmony among our church family.



MODULE ONE

CHURCH
ORIGINS AND
HISTORY



KNOW YOUR CHURCH

The African Methodist Episcopal Church

- The African Methodist Episcopal Church has a unique and glorious history.
- First major religious denomination in the Western World that had its origin over sociological and theological beliefs and differences.
- Rejected the negative theological interpretations which rendered persons of African descent second class citizens.
- Theirs was a theological declaration that God is God all the time and for every body.
- The church was born in protest against slavery and against dehumanization of African people, brought to the American continent as labor.

KNOW YOUR CHURCHThe African Methodist Episcopal Church

Mission

The African Methodist Episcopal Church is to minister to the spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional, and environmental needs of all people by spreading Christ's liberating gospel through word and deed. At every level of the Connection and in every local church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church shall engage in carrying out the spirit of the original Free African Society, out of which the AME Church evolved: that is, to seek out and save the lost, and serve the needy.

Why is the church called the African Methodist Episcopal Church and what does it mean? (Who are we?)

- African Our Heritage
 - The word African means that the church was organized by people of African descent and heritage. It does not mean that the church was founded in Africa, or that it was for persons of African descent only.
- Methodist Form of Worship (chosen by our founders)
 - Richard Allen believed that Methodism was best suited for Black people because it allowed for a liberal expression of feelings and emotions during worship. The church's roots are of the family of Methodist churches. Methodism provides an orderly system of rules and regulations and places emphasis on a plain and simple gospel.
- Episcopal Form of Government (chosen by our founders)
 - The church is administered by bishops that are elected by the General Conference versus Congregational where the local congregation is independent and not subject to any outside authority.

Church Symbol



The Cross - symbolizes the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the power of Salvation, and God's abounding Grace.

The Anvil - represents the enduring spirit of the founding fathers of the AME Church. A converted blacksmith's shop served as the first AME place of worship. The anvil is known as an indestructible object that last through multiple lifetimes.

And so it is with God. He cannot be worn down or broken. He is eternal. The anvil represents the beginning of the AME Church as well as the longevity and lasting strength of our Lord.

The shape of the emblem is in the form of a three-pointed shield; the three points being symbolic of the original motto of the A.M.E. Church. "God our Father, Christ our Redeemer, Man our Brother."

Current motto: "God Our Father, Christ Our Redeemer, Holy Spirit Our Comforter, Humankind Our Family", adopted at the 2008 General conference in St. Louis, MO.

A. M. E. History – How we got started

- 1787
 - Free African Society founded, April
 - Richard Allen and others walked away from St. George Methodist Church, November after suffering years of unkind treatment from white's
 - The church's founding is based on social, not theological reasons
- 1794
 - Bethel Church was established at 6th Street and Lombard in Philadelphia
 - Allen used an anvil from his blacksmith shop as a pulpit to deliver sermons
- 1816
 - Allen called Black churches in MD, DE, NJ, and PA to meet in Philadelphia
 - This meeting led to organization of the AME Church as a Connectional Denomination
 - Daniel Cokerelected Bishop; resigned
 - Richard Allen elected and consecrated as the first Bishop

The Free African Society

- The Free African Society was founded on April 12, 1787—approximately seven months before Allen and others left Saint George's Methodist Episcopal Church.
- Its principal founders were Richard Allen and Absalom Jones, but it also included other prominent black leaders as well as persons such as Joseph Clarke—a white Quaker who became its Treasurer.
- The Society, though not religiously affiliated, proved to be much like a church in serving the black community. It gave aid to the widowed, the sick, and the jobless. It regulated marriages and kept record of marriages, since they were not recorded for blacks at the time by the civil government.

The Free African Society

- Its charter stipulated that the Treasurer would always be a Quaker, who was most often white, the society eventually began to take on a Quaker form of worship which deeply disturbed Richard Allen, since he preferred that the worship be Methodist. Being unable to accept these practices and verbalizing his concern eventually caused him to be "READ OUT" of the Free African Society on June 20, 1789.
- In 1791, the Society also decided to purchase a permanent place of worship for its "African Members" with which Allen also agreed. History records that Dr. Benjamin Rush (a signer on the Declaration of Independence), Robert Ralston and even President, George Washington supported this effort and made financial contributions to Richard Allen in support of it.

The Free African Society

- The Society eventually decided the church would become Episcopalian and asked that Allen accept the role as its Pastor and Rector. He declined stating that he was, and would forever be a Methodist.
- Absalom Jones accepted the offer and Saint Thomas Episcopal Church was born—the first "African" Episcopal Church in America, with its first "African" pastor—which opened its doors on July 17, 1794 and still exists to the present day.
- The Free African Society ceased to exist around 1885, though the exact reasons why it ceased to exist are unknown. One of the reasons is believed to be that it never quite recovered from the Yellow Fever Epidemic, during which it amassed a substantial debt.

The Four Horsemen

There were four pioneers instrumental in the development of the AME Church known as the Four Horsemen. They were:

- Henry McNeil Turner Twelfth Bishop of the AME Church.
 Established the AME Church in West and South Africa.
- Daniel Payne Sixth Bishop of the AME Church.
 First Bishop in the AME Church to have formal theological seminary training. Responsible for the AME Church's attention toward trained Ministry. Founded Wilberforce University in 1856.
- William Paul Quinn Fourth Bishop of the AME Church.
 Organized Churches in Missouri and Kentucky. Delivered the first written Episcopal Address at the General Conference in 1848.
- Richard Allen Founder and First Bishop

Nature of the Church

- Not segregated because we were formed as a protest against segregation
- Forced to concentrate on Black church members because of American racism
- Missionary efforts are largely for Blacks, also because of American racism

Our Books

- The Bible Our highest authority
- The Book of Discipline Our law
- The Church Hymnal Our book of worship

WHAT WE BELIEVE

- The 25 Articles of Religion
- The Apostles' Creed
- The General Confession
- The Catechism on Faith

Questions?

The History of the AME Church is rich!

Small Group Discussion:

- (1) What do you think about how the history of the AME Church is so closely tied to the history of African Americans? Provide 2 examples.
- (2) What are some creative ideas that can be used by Lay organizations to teach the AME history to local church members. Be prepared to share 2 ideas.

MODULE TWO

AFRICAN
METHODIST
EPISCOPAL
CHURCH
PERSONNEL



The Bishops Council of 1887

BISHOPS

Chief Officers of the Connectional Organization

Elected for life by the General Conference which meets every four years

Must appear before the General Conference Episcopal Committee for examination credentials, general physical and mental health, administrative decisions and to receive their district or special assignment.

Bound by the laws of the church to retire following their 75th birthday

Presides over an Episcopal district for not more than 2 consecutive 4 year terms

GENERAL OFFICERS

Elected by General Conference

Must run for re-election at each General Conference

Bound by the laws of the church to retire following their 75th birthday

Responsible for the operations of the departments of the AME Church

Provides an Annual Report to the General Board

PRESIDING ELDERS

Presiding Elders are the assistants to the Bishop. They serve as middle management and their role is administrative and advisory.

Appointed by the Bishop to supervise pastors in a (regional) district known as a Presiding Elder's District within an Annual Conference

Holds a Quarterly Conference in every church every 3 months, 4 times a year to determine the efficiency of the pastor, the effectiveness of the ministry of the church and give proper direction to all the affairs of the church.

Presides over a District Conference, Church School Convention or Allen Christian Fellowship in his or her District. At the end of an Annual Conference year, the Presiding Elder reports to the Bishop at the Annual Conference and makes recommendations for pastoral appointments.

Bound by the laws of the church to retire following their 75th birthday.

PASTORS

Receive a one (1) year appointment to a church, on the recommendation of the Presiding Elder and with the approval and final appointment of the Bishop.

Is in full charge of the Church and is an ex-official member of all boards, organizations and clubs of that Church.

Ministerial Orders

DEACON: Two years in the annual conference; can preach; can assist the elder after he/she has consecrated the elements for communion; in the absence of the elder can baptize and marry.

ELDER: Served as deacon for two years; full responsibilities of a clergy person: preach, give communion, baptize, marry and bury the dead.

LOCAL MINISTRY

Local Deacon: ordained to serve the local church

Local Elder: ordained to serve the local church

Exhorter: Lay officer licensed by quarterly conference to hold

prayer meetings; is under the direction of the pastor

Local Preacher: licensed by quarterly conference to preach in the local

church

Superannuated

Preacher: no longer active because of age or disability

OTHERS

Licentiate: not over 50 yrs old; admitted on trial to Annual Conference

Supernumerary: no charge because of health or another reason

Evangelist: conducts revivals; is amenable to quarterly, district, and

the Annual Conference

Questions?

Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

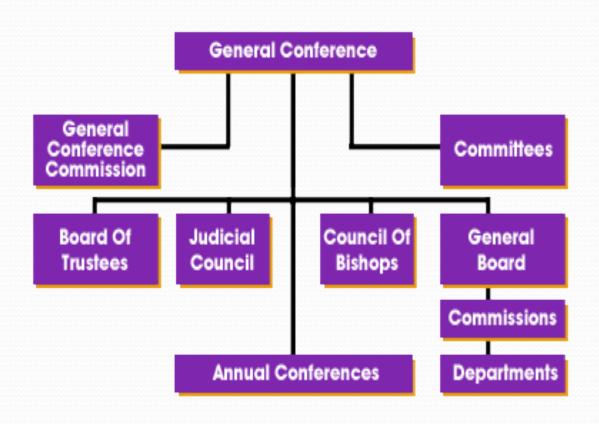
Mark 16:19-20

Small Group Discussion:

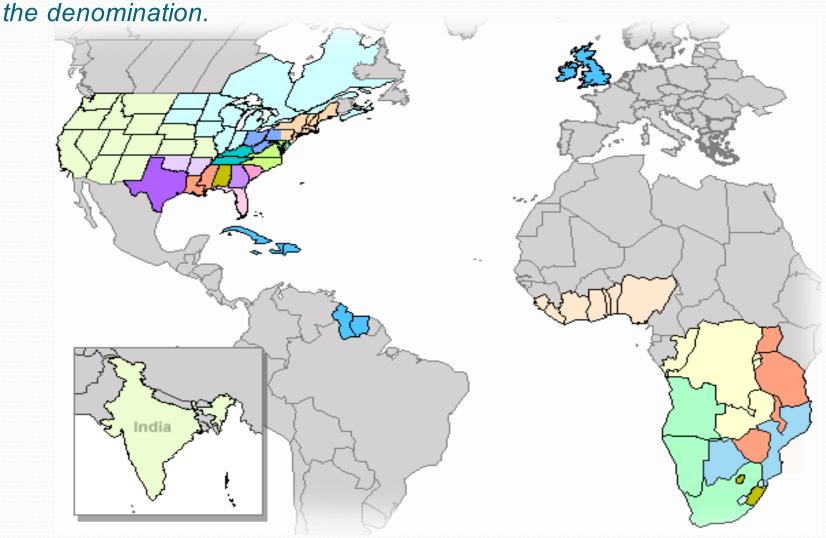
- (1) What do you think about the process on how individuals enter into the AME Church ministry? Is it effective? Are there any issues that need to be addressed and what are they.
- (2) Suggest 3 ways for the Laity to positively address concerns with the local Pastor, Presiding Elder or Bishop.
- (3) How do we as Laity address serious issues (substance abuse, sexual misconduct, stress, etc.) with regard to ministers in our churches? Should there be a structure in place for ministers to receive help if they make mistakes? What would that look like?

MODULE THREE

AFRICAN
METHODIST
EPISCOPAL
CHURCH
STRUCTURE



Today the AME Church comprises over 2.5 million members, 8,000 ministers, and 7,000 congregations in more than 30 nations in North and South America, Africa, Europe and Asia in 20 Episcopal districts and hosts 122 annual conferences. Twenty bishops and 12 general officers comprised the leadership of



- OUR STRUCTURE THE AME CONNECTION
 - The General Conference
 - The Council of Bishops
 - The Board of Trustees (formerly Board of Incorporators)
 - The General Board
 - The Judicial Council
 - The General Officers
 - Global Witness and Ministries (Missions)
 - Research and Scholarship (Historiographer and AME Review)
 - The Christian Recorder
 - Treasurer/CFO
 - The Sunday School Union
 - Annuity Investments and Insurance
 - (Pensions; Ministerial Annuities, Minimum Salary; Salary Supplement)
 - Christian Education
 - Church Growth and Evangelism (Church Extension and Evangelism)
 - General Secretary/Chief Information Officer

OUR STRUCTURE - THE AME CONNECTION

CONNECTIONAL OFFICES/DEPARTMENTS

Women's Missionary Society Young People's Division

Missionary Magazine Connectional Council

Connectional Lay Organization Women in Ministry

Sons of Allen Presiding Elders Council

Connectional Music AME Chaplains

CONN-M-SWAWO+PK's Connectional Health Commission

Social Action Christian Debutante-Masters

OUR STRUCTURE - THE AME CONNECTION

CONNECTIONAL COMMISSIONS

Statistics and Finance Publications

Church Growth and Development Annuity Investments and Insurance

Christian Education Seminaries, Universities,

Colleges and Schools Women in Ministry

Social Action Lay Organization

Global Witness and Ministry Economic Development

Chaplains African Development

Health Ministry and Recruitment

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Composed of all traveling and local elders, deacons, licentiates, presidents of the Conference Lay Organization and Missionary Society, Conference Directors of Christian Education, YPD and Music; together with one elected lay member and lay person between the ages of 18-30.

The Annual Conference is incorporated and a legal and sovereign body.

The Bishop is the President of the Annual Conference

Reports are given from pastors, presiding elders, committees

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Ministers and one lay delegate from each church deliberate on church business and vote on issues

Elect delegates to the General Conference

Examine, admit and ordain candidates for ministry

Assignment of Pastors to local churches by the Bishop

The Episcopal District Budget must be approved through its Annual Conferences.

DISTRICT CONFERENCE

Composed of all traveling ministers, local preachers, evangelists, Presidents of the Lay Organizations and Missionary Societies, one Steward from each Quarterly Conference within a Presiding Elder District and one youth representative from each church.

Meets once each year and is in session for not less than 2 days

The Presiding Elder is the Chairperson of the Conference

Examines all itinerant ministerial candidates and recommends their admission to the Annual Conference

May have a Church School Convention that will provide training for teachers and have a District Superintendent that would report on the condition of church schools in the district.

QUARTERLY CONFERENCE

Composed of all traveling preachers, supernumeraries, retired ministers, local preachers, exhorters, stewards, stewardesses, trustees, class leaders, general officers, deaconesses, licensed missionary workers, evangelists, superintendents of the church school, presidents of the Allen Christian Fellowship, Missionary Societies, administrators of the AME institutions, organizations and agencies, provided they are members of the AME Church.

Meets every 3 months or 4 times a year in every church

Quarterly conference, called by the presiding elder to receive a full report by answering specific questions regarding conversions, membership, baptisms, church property, church budget, etc.

Confirms or rejects Stewards nominated by the Pastor.

CHURCH CONFERENCE

A meeting of the members and minister residing and worshipping at a given place for the consideration and transaction of local church business.

The minister in charge is the presiding officer.

The duties of the church conference may be many and varied, dealing with recommending ministerial candidates for admission to the Annual Conference, adopting petitions to the bishop, church budget, encouraging church unity, information on mission work, benevolence issues, the Pastor reporting his labors, burdens, cares and whatever else will promote the kingdom of God on earth.

Authorize the Trustees of a local church to take out a mortgage for or on church property.

OFFICIAL BOARD

Composed of class leaders, exhorters, deaconesses, stewards, trustees, stewardesses, presidents of all organizations including the Lay Organization and, officers of the Junior Church. Local preachers are honorary members.

The pastor is a member of the Board and its chairperson ex-officio.

The board should meet at least once every month.

The duties of the church conference are to receive reports on the finances of church, information about members from class leaders and can appoint committees to investigate rumors concerning the spiritual or moral standing of members.

Authorize the Trustees of a local church to take out a mortgage for or on church property.

Questions?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

What issues affect the church today that you would like to see discussed at the Annual Conference?

How could a local lay organization engage better with their delegate to get issues discussed at the Annual Conference?

Is there enough transparency in the administration of the church regarding budgets, church law, accepted practices, etc.? If not, how can the Lay organization be more effective in getting information to the laity of the church?

What type of issues is a church conference called at your local church? Do you receive advance notice a church conference will be held and its subject matter? How effective are church conferences?

What do you think about the process on how individuals enter into the AME Church ministry? Is it effective? Are there any issues that need to be addressed and what are they.

How can the Lay organization help church leaders (clergy and lay) better understand their role and responsibilities in the overall working of the church?

MODULE FOUR

AFRICAN METHODIST
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
LOCAL CHURCH
AND THE
LAY ORGANIZATION



"Upon this rock, I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matthew16:18

African Methodist Episcopal Church

• THE LOCAL CHURCH STRUCTURE

LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

Official Board Steward Board

Trustee Board Church School

STEWARDESS BOARD DEACONESSES BOARD

CLASS LEADER MISSIONARY SOCIETY

CHOIR LAY ORGANIZATION

USHER BOARD GREETER/ANNOUNCEMENT CLERK

WHERE DO YOU SERVE?

LAY ORGANIZATION - MAJOR OBJECTIVES

TO INSTILL IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHURCH A LOVE FOR, AND AN APPRECIATION OF THE HISTORY, TRADITION, AND PRINCIPLES OF AFRICAN METHODISM.

TO KEEP FOREVER ALIVE, THE SACRED MEMORY OF RICHARD ALLEN, OUR ILLUSTRIOUS FOUNDER.

TO ADVOCATE RESPECT AND LOYALTY AT ALL TIMES TO CONSTITUTED AUTHORITY AND LEADERSHIP.

TO ENCOURAGE THE LAITY TO SUPPORT THE TOTAL PROGRAM OF THE CHURCH IN THE LOCAL CONGREGATION, IN THE COMMUNITY, AND THROUGHOUT THE CONNECTION.

TO ENCOURAGE, STIMULATE, AND EDUCATE THE LAITY OF THE CHURCH IN THE HISTORY, DEVELOPMENT, AND ORGANIC LAWS OF AFRICAN METHODISM.

TO FOSTER A SYSTEMATIC AND REGULAR STUDY OF THE DISCIPLINE OF THE AMEC, AND PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE, TO THE END THAT GREATER KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION MAY BE DISSEMINATED AMONG THE LAITY, AND WITH THE PURPOSE OF ENCOURAGING LAY MEMBERS TO PARTICIPATE MORE LARGELY IN THE GENERAL FUNCTIONING AND SUPERVISION OF THE AMEC.

LAY ORGANIZATION - MAJOR OBJECTIVES

TO FOSTER, INFLUENCE, AND SUPPORT ALL CONSTRUCTIVE AND PROGRESSIVE LEGISLATION FOR THE CHURCH THAT PROMOTES THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS CHRIST.

TO PROMOTE THE SPREAD OF PERSONAL EVANGELISM THROUGH ACTIVITIES DESIGNED TO PREPARE LAY MEMBERS FOR APPROPRIATELY CONVEYING GOD'S WORD.

TO PROVIDE TRAINING IN CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP WHICH CAUSES LAY MEMBERS TO RECOGNIZE THAT STEWARDSHIP ADDRESSES MORE THAN GIVING MONEY.

TO PROVIDE FOR THE ORDERLY AND SYSTEMATIC TRAINING OF LAY PERSONS, ESPECIALLY OFFICERS, IN ORDER THAT THEY MIGHT MORE EFFECTIVELY, PERFORM THEIR DUTIES.

TO PROMOTE ACTIVITIES WHICH WILL RESULT IN HARMONIOUS FELLOWSHIP, FOR LAY PERSONS.

TO HELP IN THE SUPPORT OF THE A.M.E. EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

GET THE TOTAL CHURCH ACTIVE IN THE LAY ORGANIZATION!!!

- (1) Provide training workshops and invite all organizations and ministries. Include the clergy.
- (2) Find out who in the church knows how to do workshops. Give them a Lay topic (duties of a trustee, team building, fundraising, etc.) and invite them to be a speaker at a Lay meeting or sponsored event.
- (3) Approach and invite youth or young adults to create a Face book page for the Lay Organization where church history can be placed and notice of Lay training events can be posted.
- (4) Put a notice or flyer in the church bulletin to invite all history buffs to workshops on the various aspects of the AME Church history.
- (5) Ask your pastor to team up with the Lay Organization and other local area AME churches to bring Connectional, District and Conference leadership to your church that will do training workshops. Serve as greeters and provide the meal or refreshments.
- (6) Plan and organize a trip to see Mother Bethel or the General Conference.

Questions?

But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living.

But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

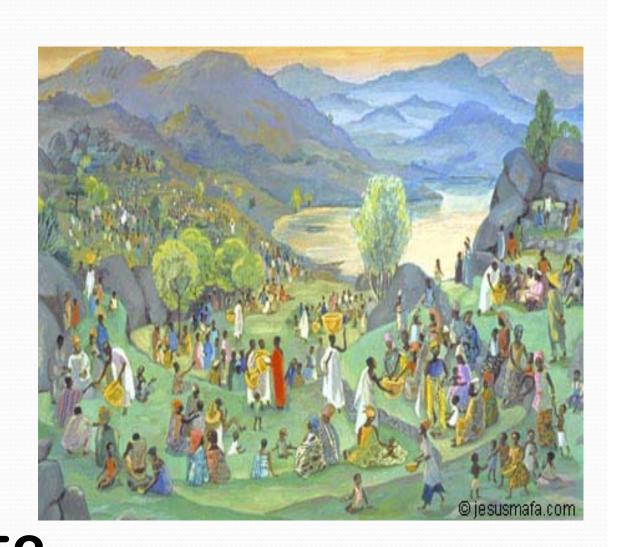
Joshua 24:14-16

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- (1) How many church organizations does each group member belong to (if any). Each group member share why they enjoy serving in those capacities.
- (2) Create a 3 minute presentation that could be given to members of the following organizations/ministries inviting them to a Lay training workshop:
 - Trustees Board
 - Steward Board
 - Class Leaders
 - Church School Class (High School) / YPD / Young Adult Choir
 - Marriage Ministry
 - Singles Ministry
 - Ministerial Staff

MODULE FIVE

CANIBE A
DELEGATE
TO THE
GENERAL
CONFERENCE?



DELEGATES TO THE LAY ELECTORAL COLLEGE

- In order to be a delegate to the Lay Electoral College, a member from the local church must be elected by church members. The election must take place no less than three months before the convening of the Electoral College.
- The pastor of the local church shall publish a notice of the Church Conference to elect lay representatives or delegates to the Electoral College at least two weeks prior to the election. Only full members 18 years and older of said local church are eligible to vote or be elected.
- A majority of those present and voting shall determine the elected delegate and alternate. No proxy shall be counted at the local or Electoral College election.

DELEGATES TO THE LAY ELECTORAL COLLEGE

- Each station shall elect a youth delegate to the Electoral College at the same time, but in a separate place from the adult delegate election.
- Anyone who votes for delegates to the Electoral College from the local church and to the General Conference from one Electoral College may not vote where any other Electoral College is concerned.
- Lay members elected by the Electoral College must be (1) a member of the College and (2) a person of good, natural, or acquired ability, who knows and loves the Doctrine and Discipline of the AME Church. (3) They need to have maintained full, good and regular membership in said Church four consecutive years next preceding the General Conference. (4) They must be a member of their local church for six months next preceding the meeting of the Electoral College. No lay member shall vote or be voted for more than once in a quadrennial as a delegate to the Electoral College.

LAY ELECTORAL COLLEGE

- The adult lay delegate from the local church hosting the meeting of the Electoral College shall take the chair for the purpose of presiding and processing the voting to elect a temporary chairperson and secretary. After devotion, the College shall elect a chairperson, secretary, two tellers and two clerks. The College shall then proceed to elect from its members by ballot, delegates of whom one must be a youth, between the ages of 18 to 30 years, and alternates.
- If when results are announced, a member of the College desires to contest the results, the chairperson shall permit that member to count the ballots in the presence of the members of the College, before the meeting of the election recesses or adjourns.

LAY ELECTORAL COLLEGE

- If an error is discovered, the election shall be declared void. The
 College shall elect delegates as provided by law. The College shall
 present the Annual Conference with all ballots cast during the election
 when certification of the election is presented to the Annual Conference.
- If in the composition or activity of the Electoral College, a law of the church is violated, complaints may be made to and a hearing held at the next session of the Annual Conference, which shall adjust the matter.
- Secretary of the Electoral College prepares a certified report of the proceedings of the Electoral College, including an accurate list of the College and the delegates elected, in the order of their election. Must be forwarded to the Bishop of the District and the Secretary of the Annual Conference within 30 days after the election.

LAY ELECTORAL COLLEGE

- The Electoral College shall give each lay delegate and alternate a Certificate of Election. The chairperson and the Secretary of the Electoral College shall sign the certificate. It shall be presented to the Annual Conference for record.
- The Annual Conference shall give each delegate a Certificate of Election, signed by the Bishop and the secretary.
- It shall be unlawful for any minister to interfere in any way in the Electoral College.
- Each Episcopal District Lay President shall be a member of the General Conference by virtue of his position.

Questions?

THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE - "CHALLENGING YOUR WIT"

- Ima Delegate holds membership in Allen AME Church. She attends once a month, but has political savvy superior to the other members. She convinced her best friend from a sister church to nominate her to be a delegate to the General Conference. After her nomination, a member challenges her eligibility. What qualifications must be used in determining her eligibility?
- The Desert Mountain Conference elected 9 Lay delegates through the Electoral College. Three of the Lay delegates were under the age of 30 years. During the next session of the Annual Conference (3:00 pm that same afternoon), John Laymen objects to the results. Mr. Laymen states the law permits only one youth delegate. Bishop Discipline looks puzzled when he hears the complaint. How should it be resolved? Procedurally discuss your answer.

THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE - "CHALLENGING YOUR WIT"

 Susie Do right challenged the presence of the delegate from Faithful AME Church (Ms. Repeat) at the Electoral College. Ms. Do right complained about Ms. Repeat because Faithful AME elected her as their delegate during the last quadrennial. Ms. Do right believes sending the same delegate 4 years later violates church law. Can Ms. Repeat represent her church at the Electoral College?

Additional Lay Workshops Available from the Desert Mountain Lay Organization

LAY WORKSHOPS

- Those Amazing Church Officers
- The Model Church in the New Millennium
- Purpose of the Lay Organization
- Conducting New Members Training
- Understand the Lay Organization Structure
- Liturgical Colors and Church Etiquette
- AME Church Leadership
- Steward and Trustee Leadership
- AME JEOPARDY

Questions?